

Nutrition, Oral Health, Beverages and Dietary Requirements Procedure

Council Early Years Services

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Approval by:	Manager Family and Children's Services	Responsible Officer:	Team Leader Policy, Learning and Quality
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1. Purpose

The aim of this procedure is to provide educators, staff and families awareness of their obligations and best practice management of nutrition, oral health, beverages and dietary requirements for Council Early Years Services.

Council Early Years Services advocate a collaborative approach which means that educators, staff, families and children all work together to support building healthy lifelong habits for children attending the service.

This procedure confirms our commitment to:

- Provide positive learning experiences at meal times, encourage healthy eating food and drink choices for all children
- Promote the importance of a healthy lifestyle, which includes drinking water, eating healthy food and maintaining oral health
- Create environments that support good oral and general health.

2. Procedure

Healthy eating and good nutrition have a major influence on children's health and wellbeing and a direct impact on their growth and development. The important social and cultural role of food and the wide range of attitudes to it is acknowledged within Council Early Years Services.

Oral Health is essential for children's overall health and wellbeing. Oral diseases can negatively affect individuals through pain, discomfort, general health and quality of life. The main oral health condition experienced by children is tooth decay, effecting over half of all Australian children, making it five times more prevalent than asthma. Tooth decay is Australia's most prevalent health problem despite being preventable.

It is important to provide access to and establish good healthy eating and oral health practices at a young age as most children have formed lifelong habits by school age.

2.1 Whole Service Engagement:

It is recognised that all members of Council Early Years Services have an impact on children's health and can contribute to creating an environment that promotes healthy eating and good oral health. All educators, staff, children and families will be supported in implementing this procedure and provided opportunities to its review process.

2.2 Nutrition:

- Safe drinking water will always be available to the children. Only tap water and plain milk will be provided by the service. Parents should provide a labelled drinking container for the day and take the container home at the end of the day to be washed. The service will provide a spare drinking container for the day if a Parent has not provided one.
- 'Sometimes' food and sweetened drinks such as juice, cordial and soft drinks are not provided by the service and parents are discouraged from sending them from home. Children will be encouraged to try new food.

Children's food preferences and each family individual requirements will be respected. This includes but is not limited to cultural, religious and dietary needs.

- Children are provided with a range of suitable choices at meal times. Children who are unable to share in the meal/s offered are provided an appropriate alternative.
- The importance of healthy food and healthy food choices is discussed with children both during planned experiences in the education program and impromptu spontaneous conversations.
- Educators/staff talk to children and families about age appropriate tooth brushing and why it is important. The services will provide families with information on oral hygiene.
- Children undertake oral hygiene practices in the service where appropriate.
- Educators/staff are supported to access resources and professional development to support oral health and healthy eating initiatives.
- Food must never be used as a reward, bribe or punishment. It may be used as a motivator or regulator if it is part of an individual plan developed in consultation with a Specialist Support Service Consultant or Early Childhood Intervention Key Worker and the Parent.
- The service will work with the local community where practicable to support the delivery of health eating and oral health initiatives.
- Educators/staff are supported by having healthy food options in the staff room, for staff meetings and for professional learning.
- Fundraising activities reflect the healthy eating procedure and promote healthy lifestyle messages.

2.3 Meal Times

- Where food is provided from the home environment, educators/staff will encourage parents to provide sufficient quantities of foods, which are culturally appropriate, nutritious and meet the needs of their child's daily dietary requirements.
- Healthy lunch boxes ideas will be provided to families through discussions, noticeboards and tip sheets throughout the year.
- Educators/staff in collaboration with families and children will check lunch boxes to check if foods are safe from commonly known allergens and will place foods that spoil into the fridge with the exception of the Preschool Service where families are asked to provide icepacks/thermal lunch boxes.
- Any time that food is prepared or re-heated at the service, the 'Food Safety Rules' from the Victorian Department of Health must be followed. ([Appendix 1](#))
- Meal times are social occasions where progressive meal times are encouraged. Educator's role model by interacting with children, to encourage good eating habits and an appreciation of a variety of foods.
- Children will be assisted where required but will be encouraged to become independent and to help themselves where appropriate. Children will be offered food throughout the day as needed.
- Table settings will be in small numbers for all meal times to allow children to chat as they enjoy their food. Tables will be attractively set out with table cloths or placemats and a centre piece, if appropriate to create a homely environment and encourage conversation between children and educators.
- Meal times are in a flexible schedule with individual needs considered and accommodated. Children who are hungry between meals will be offered small, nutritionally appropriate snacks (preschool children will have access at all times to their own food).
- Food handling practices which align with food safety procedure in storage, preparation, serving and cleaning will be maintained by all educators/staff.
- All food/drink requiring refrigeration needs to be transported to Council Early Years Services in insulated containers.

2.4 Serving Meals and Snacks

Educators and Staff are required to:

- Clean the surfaces that will come in contact with the utensils that are to be used for the meal and the table where meals will be consumed.
- Wash and dry hands thoroughly, before preparing or serving food.

- Educators/staff will encourage and support children to wash hands before and after meals.
- Educators/Staff are to wear an apron and gloves if they are serving food.

2.5 During the Meal

Educators and Staff are required to:

- Educate children that are sharing food from a common bowl or plate that tongs, spoons, or other appropriate utensils must be used to take the food they want from the common bowl or plate to eliminate germs spreading.
- Use a separate spoon for each infant that is being fed.
- Educate children in using appropriate cough and sneeze techniques when around food and at the table where food is being served or eaten.

2.6 Dietary Requirements

- Educators/staff and parent's will discuss and document any specific dietary requirements of individual children on enrolment. Discussion will include determining which foods can be provided by the service and which foods will need to be provided by the Parent. This will then be documented and followed up with all educators/staff for implementation.
- Food allergies will be managed in line with the *Medical Conditions Procedure* including relevant processes, communication and risk management plans.

2.7 Risk Management

First time food trials must be completed by parent's in the home before the food will be introduced in the service (e.g. eggs, nuts and seafood, potential high food allergens).

Educators/staff will minimise the risk of children choking by:

- Supervising children when eating.
- Encouraging children to always be seated when eating.
- Provide food that is age appropriate, when food is provided by the service.
- High-risk foods e.g. carrot, apple or celery are not given to children below 2 years of age, unless they are grated, cooked or mashed. Popcorn, marshmallow and grapes are also considered high-risk foods for choking in children under 2 years of age and will not be offered.

2.8 Engaging Children, Educators/Staff and Families:

- Educators/staff, children and families are key partners in promoting healthy eating and oral health, and include strategies to support families to develop and support healthy eating and oral health initiatives in the service and at home, including accessing local dental services.
- Educators/staff and families are provided with information, ideas and practical strategies on a regular basis to support healthy eating and oral health in the service and at home.
- Family experiences, expertise and interests are drawn upon to support healthy eating and oral health initiatives.
- Educators/staff consult with parents to share family cultural values and expectations and experiences to enrich the variety and enjoyment of food provided at the service whilst still maintaining daily nutritional requirements.

2.9 Food Related Experiences

At times food preparation, oral health and healthy eating will be included in the educational program. Careful consideration will be given to nutrition, dietary requirements, allergies, sustainable practices, waste and sensitivity to cultural practices.

Educators/staff are encouraged to engage in active learning experiences around healthy eating and oral health e.g. through growing, harvesting and healthy cooking experiences.

2.10 Celebrations

Educators/staff recognise the importance of celebrating children's birthdays, milestones and other significant occasions with their friends and peers. Religious and cultural beliefs will be respected. There are many different ways to celebrate special occasions, including but not limited to special songs, stories, games and activities, child of the day, gifts and foods. If parents choose to provide food items for the celebration, KCC Early Years Services are required to meet Victorian Food Safety Standards. When parents choose to send a food item:

- Should be shop bought with a label that states the ingredients, use by date and storage instructions
- Food items should be in line with this procedure, some examples provided below:
 - A large watermelon cut in half makes a healthy alternative to cake
 - Some services have a 'pretend cake', which is used as a prop for celebrations

Families are welcomed and encouraged to attend and participate in their child's celebrations at the service.

2.11 Bottle/Breast Feeding

Infant Feeding General

- Educators/staff will provide cooled boiled water, if extra fluids are needed.
- Educators/staff will support and encourage the introduction of solid food and iron rich foods from 6 months of age in consultation with the Parent.
- Bottled breast/formula milk will only be used once, any unused milk will be discarded.
- Educators/staff will record the amount of milk consumed and the time the milk was given to the infant.
- Educators/staff will consult with families about the nutritional requirements of infants including breast feeding, bottles and the introduction of food (see risk management section).
- Parents must provide sterilised bottles and/or cups to feed their baby.
- Families must log all incoming milk bottles into the bottle register located in the children's rooms, near the fridge.
- Bottles containing breast/formula milk will be refrigerated at 4 degrees centigrade or less.
- Educators/staff will heat breast/formula milk in the services bottle warmer as per manufacturer's instructions. If this is not available, formula or breast milk may be heated by standing them in a jug of warm water for a few minutes.
- Bottles will not be heated in the microwave.
- Educators/staff will gently swirl the bottle and test the temperature of the milk before feeding the infant.

Breast Milk

- Educators/staff will support breastfeeding mothers and will encourage breast milk as the main drink until the infant is 12 months old. When a mother chooses not to breastfeed or is unable to do, educators/staff will also respect this choice.
- Mothers are welcome to breast feed at the service or to provide expressed breast milk for educators to feed infants.
- Breast milk must be bought in to the service clearly labelled as breast milk and with the child's name clearly identified.
- Breastmilk thawed outside fridge in warm water must be stored:
 - At room temperature (26°C or lower) until the end of the feed.
 - In the fridge for four hours or until the next feed.
 - Do not refreeze previously frozen breastmilk.
- If the infant does not finish the feed of expressed breastmilk, the breastmilk cannot be used for another feed. It must be discarded.

Formula

- Parents are required to provide infant formula to the service for the infant. The bottles should be prepared according to instructions on infant formula container.
- Parents to provide all bottles and containers that are clearly labelled with the name of the formula and the child's name.

- Parents are responsible to provide bottles filled with boiled water and to measure the correct amount of formula and place in separated containers for each bottle provided.

2.12 Procedure for Long Day Care Centre's

- Menu promotes the consumption of fruit and vegetables on a daily basis and healthy food options in line with Australian Guidelines.
- Menus are assessed by the Healthy Together Healthy Eating Advisory Service to meet the nutritional requirements of children.
- The menu will provide at least 50% of the recommended daily intake of nutrients for children.
- Educators/staff will collaborate with families of children that may be on individual specialised diets. Parents will be asked to provide a list of suitable foods and their child's food preferences to assist in providing a variety of menu options.
- Breakfast is provided by the service as it is recognised there will be times that families may need their children to have breakfast at our service. Please see educators/staff for more information.
- The menus and the presentation of food will reflect a wide variety of cultures, especially the cultural backgrounds of families in the local community. Recipes for meals are available to families on request.
- Menus are reviewed each season to include seasonally appropriate food and ensure variety. Feedback about the menu is sought and welcomed from children, educators/staff and both formally and informally.
- Menus are displayed where families can access them and describe accurately the food provided. At times changes may need to be made to the menu due to unforeseen circumstances. In this instance, educators/staff will change the description of the menu on the day that the changes occur or earlier if possible.
- Educators will record foods and portions eaten by children, this information will be provided to families daily, either by verbal conversation or on the Daily Records provided in each room for families viewing.
- Educators will be supported to gain appropriate training in nutrition, food safety and food handling.
- Food brought to the service must comply with the Legislated Centre Food Program, and be logged into the Incoming Food Register. Please see educators/staff for more information.
- All new educators/staff working for the first time will be shown the allergy/preference list in each room/kitchen that clearly identifies children's allergies/medical conditions/sunscreen and food preferences on induction.
- Crockery used identifying children with any allergy will be RED in colour and will be provided to children by educators/staff directly in care of those children.

3. References

3.1 Community & Council Plan 2017-2021

- We have confidence in decision-making.

3.2 Relevant Legislation

- ACECQA Guide to the National Law and Regulations 2018
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010,
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011,
- National Quality Standard, including Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- Food Safety Rules, Victorian Department of Health, Feb 2012
- Information Privacy Act (Vic) 2000
- Victoria Food Act 2001

3.3 Charter of Human Rights

- This policy has been assessed against and complies with the charter of Human Rights.

3.4 Related Council Policies and Procedures

- Nil

3.5 Related Council Early Years Services Policies and Procedures

All Team Leaders, educators and staff working for Knox City Council Early Years Services are required to read and understand all Knox City Council Early Years Policies and Procedures.

We strongly recommend all families enrolling in Knox City Council Early Years Services read the Knox City Council Early Years Services Policies and Procedures

- Administration of Medication Procedure
- Food Safety Program (Child Care Services Only)
- Hygiene and Infectious Disease Procedure

4. Definitions

Early Years' Service:

refers to Preschool, Long Day Care, Occasional Care, Maternal & Child Health, Playgroup and Additional Services unless otherwise specified.



4 Yr old Sessional Preschool



Long Day Care



Occasional Care



Maternal & Child Health



Playgroup



Additional Services

(Enhanced MCH, Parenting Centre, Breastfeeding Support, Early Years Consultants)

Educator:

These are staff employed to care and educate children enrolled in the Early Years' Service. This may include but is not limited to an Approved Provider, Responsible Person, Nominated Supervisor Person In Day-to-Day Charge and Educational Leader.

Food Intolerance

Food Intolerance is the inability to properly digest or fully process certain food ingredients.

Healthy Eating:

Eating a wide variety of foods for the five food groups each day. Healthy eating also means eating in a way that is socially and culturally appropriate, having regular meals and snacks and eating food to satisfy hunger, appetite and energy needs.

Nutrition:

The process of providing or obtaining the food necessary for health and growth.

Oral Health:

Eating, speaking and socialising without discomfort or embarrassment.

Parent:

The term 'Parent' includes a child's legal guardian. It does not include a Parent who is prohibited by a court order from having contact with the child.

'Sometimes' Foods and Drinks:

Sometimes foods are high in fat, sugar and salt or a combination of these. They typically have very little nutritional value and are often processed and packaged.

5. Sources

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Appendix 1: Food Safety Rules – Health.vic

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/food-safety-rules-posters>

Food safety rules

Keep it hot

- Use a thermometer to make sure foods are thoroughly cooked and the centre reaches 75 °C.
- Hot food must be kept at 60 °C or hotter.
- Check that only clear juices run from thoroughly cooked minced meat, poultry, chicken or rolled roasts.



Keep it cold

- Cold food must be 5 °C or colder.
- Frozen food must be frozen hard.
- Check the temperature of fridges and cold storage areas regularly.



Keep it clean

- Use clean, sanitised and dry cutting boards, equipment and utensils.
- Clean and rinse wiping cloths after each use, and change them frequently.
- Wash and dry your hands thoroughly and regularly.



Keep it uncontaminated

- Keep raw food separate from cooked or ready-to-eat food.
- Use separate utensils and cutting boards when preparing raw and cooked or ready-to-eat food.
- Thaw food in your fridge, away from, and below, cooked or ready-to-eat food.



Keep it quick

- Limit the time that high-risk food is in the temperature danger zone (5 °-60 °C) and return to the refrigerator during delays.
- Large portions of food take longer to cool. Divide large portions into smaller batches before cooling.
- If food is kept within the temperature danger zone for a total time of 4 hours or more, throw it out.



Keep it allergen safe

- Identify allergens and label or name them in foods on your menu or display.
- Use and store foods known to contain allergens in a way that prevents them contaminating other foods.
- Train staff in food allergen risks, management and communication.



Don't let your
food turn nasty

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety

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