

FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY

Quality Areas: NQS 1 – Educational program and practice, NQS 2 – Children’s Health and Safety, NQS 6 – Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities

Policy Owner: Safety

A light blue speech bubble with a white outline, containing the text 'Why this is important' in a dark blue, handwritten-style font.

Why this is important

1.0 Introduction and Purpose

We recognise the importance of healthy eating for the growth, development and wellbeing of young children and is committed to promoting and supporting healthy food and drink choices for our children.

Our children are offered healthy food and drinks that meet the requirements for children according to the Australian Dietary Guidelines. We value families’ contributions to menu planning and partner to provide education about nutrition and promote healthy eating habits.

We believe in providing a positive eating environment that reflects dietary requirements, cultural and family values, and promotes lifelong learning for children.

Team Members will sit with children and role model healthy food and drink choices and actively engage children in conversations about the food and drink provided. We endeavour to recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children and team members from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

2.0 Who does this policy apply to:

All Team Members, Children, and Families

3.0 What is our Policy:

Centres providing food are required to meet the requirements set out in the centres 'Food Safety Program'. As well as setting out core requirements, the Program contains useful advice and guidelines to help Centre to manage this important aspect of our food service delivery.

All kitchens and food preparation areas must comply with Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ), the Local Council food licencing requirements, the Building Code of Australia, and the Education and Care Services legislation.

When developing menus, consideration will be given to nutritional, dietary, and cultural requirements. It is important to remember that fresh seasonal ingredients may have a higher nutritional value than pre-packaged stock and are often more economical.

Team members will ensure all food served at the centre is purchased, stored and prepared in a hygienic and safe manner in accordance with relevant legislation and the Food Safety Program. Team members will ensure hot meals are cooled and served to children between 50-60°C.

Centres will promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents. We will display nutritional information and weekly menu for families and keep them regularly updated.

3.1 Meal Times

Team members will role model healthy eating practices, by participating in meal times with children to assist in creating a positive learning environment. Children will be encouraged to sit down while eating and to develop self-help skills through the provision of appropriate opportunities to serve and feed themselves.

Ensure food is prepared and served in an age appropriate and safe manner. Further information can be found through accessing the [Kidsafe Factsheet](#). - Choking, suffocation, and strangulation prevention.

Particular food items pose greater choking risks to young children and extra care should be taken with these foods.

Common foods that may cause choking include:

- Hard food that can break into smaller lumps
- Raw carrot, celery and apple pieces (which can be grated finely, cooked or mashed to prevent choking)
- Nuts, seeds and popcorn
- Tough or chewy meat
- Sausages (which may have the skin removed and chopped)
- Hard lollies or corn chips

Ensure drinking water is available to children at all times. Team members will encourage children to drink water at the completion of each meal to assist clearing the mouth of excess food. The consumption of food for all children will be monitored throughout the day and communicate to families.

Infants are fed individually by team members, and we ensure that age and developmentally appropriate utensils and furniture will be provided for each child. We will support to learn independence and develop social skills at meal times. Team members will be patient with messy or slow eaters and respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, do not insist he/she eats. Children will be encouraged to try different foods but not forced to eat them. Food will not be used as a reward or as a learning resource for individual play.

Establishing healthy eating habits in the children is supported through incorporating nutritional information into our program. Families will be informed about their child's food intake and can voice any concerns about their child's eating. Parents will be encouraged to continue our healthy eating message in their homes.

We will refer to the guidelines for serving different types of food and the serving sizes outlined in the Australian Government "[eat for health calculators](#)" calculator www.eatforhealth.gov.au. We will implement policy and procedures to manage medical conditions and dietary requirements and preferences.

3.2 Parent provided drink bottle or cup

Where parents are requested to provide a drink bottle or sippy cup for their child it is the responsibility of the parent to take the drink bottle or sippy cup home to be cleaned. Team members should regularly check children have access to clean drinking water throughout the day in both the indoor and outdoor environment. Team members will rinse and refill the bottle or cup when required.

Where a parent has left the drink bottle or sippy cup at the service, educators should wash the bottle or cup at the end of the day.

3.3 Breastfeeding

We will provide a suitable place within the centre where mothers can breastfeed their babies or express breast milk. We support mothers to continue breastfeeding until babies are at least 12 months of age while offering appropriate complementary foods from around 6 months of age.

We have procedures in place for the safe handling and storage of breast milk and infant formula including transporting, storing, thawing, warming, preparing and bottle feeding. Babies are always supervised while drinking and eating to ensure safe bottle-feeding and eating practices.

3.4 Training

Each centre is required to have a currently qualified Food Safety Supervisor. The Food Safety Supervisor qualification

needs to be renewed every three years. If no other full time team members holds this qualification the Centre Manager is to undertake the training. Information on the training is found on the Guardian Way [Food Safety and Nutrition](#) page.

All team members will also receive Food Handling training every five years to support the implementation of safe food handling and allergy management practices.

3.5 Food Hygiene Practices

Gloves are/or food tongs will be used by all team members handling 'ready to eat' foods. Children will be discouraged from handling other children's food and utensils. Where there are food allergies specific process will be implemented to reduce the risk of exposure at food allergens. These procedures are outlined under the Medical Conditions Policy and Procedures.

Children and team members will wash and dry their hands (using soap, warm running water and single use or disposable towels) before handling food or eating meals and snacks. Refer to the Food Safety Plan for other hygiene practices.

4.0 Responsibilities

4.1 The Approved Provider will:

- allocate finances for food safety training and the provision of nutritionally balanced meals
- ensure adequate health and hygiene practices are followed, as well as safe premises, equipment and practices for handling, preparing and storing food, in line with Australian Food Safety Standards and any jurisdictional requirements
- ensure that child enrolment records include any special considerations for the child, such as cultural or religious food preferences, as well as any health-related dietary requirements for medical conditions
- ensure adequate time is provided for the cook/chef to undertake all tasks, including cleaning and maintaining the kitchen to meet food licencing requirements
- adequate commercial equipment is provided and maintained to meet the number of meals served and maintain a commercial food licence

4.2 The Centre Manager / Nominated Supervisor (NS) will:

- request details of any food allergy, intolerance or food preference and work with the family to develop appropriate processes so that individual children's needs are met.
- ensure adequate health and hygiene practices are followed as outlined in your Food Safety Plan and related procedures, as well as safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, in line with Australian Food Safety Standards and any jurisdictional requirements
- ensure children have access to safe drinking water at all times and are offered food and drinks appropriate to each child's needs on a regular basis throughout the day
- ensure the food and drink provided are nutritious and adequate in quantity, and chosen based on each child's dietary requirements
- ensure your Food Licence / Certificate from your local council is displayed
- display and make accessible to family members a weekly menu which accurately describes the food and drink to be provided by the centre each day. Teams may choose to display this on Storypark in addition to it being displayed in a prominent area for families e.g. the meals area or outside the kitchen
- ensure that child enrolment records include any special considerations for the child, such as cultural or religious dietary restrictions, as well as any health-related dietary restrictions
- for children with medical conditions that can be impacted by food, work with families to develop risk minimisation plans and ensure educators and staff implement these plans. Further information is available in the Medical Conditions Policy and Procedures
- ensure a BeSafe incident report is logged on the day if any incident occurs eg allergic reaction, food safety issue, foreign object in food, injury eg burn occurs for a child or team member

- ensure that a system for ongoing communication is developed and maintained between families, team members and chef/cook, so that all are aware of children’s nutrition and any special dietary requirements or medical conditions
- develop program planning that promotes healthy eating and knowledge of nutrition by children and families, and involve children in decision-making about healthy food and drink choices
- communicate regularly with families about food and nutrition related experiences within the centre and provide up to date information to assist families to provide healthy food choices at home.

4.3 Team Members will:

- handle, prepare and store food using safe practices, in line with Australian Food Safety Standards and any jurisdictional requirements
- ensure procedures are in place to prevent children being provided the wrong food or breast milk
- ensure children have access to safe drinking water at all times and are offered food and drinks appropriate to each child’s needs on a regular basis throughout the day
- monitor children’s food and drink intake to ensure it is adequate and appropriate to each child’s needs and complete the appropriate Daily Chart
- document children’s food intake after each meal time and ensure this is communicated with families every day at pick up time. Team members may communicate this verbally to families, ensure it is visible by placing it in a prominent location in their room for families and on Storypark
- be familiar with the individual needs and action plans for the children and team members with allergies or medical conditions impacted by food
- maintain ongoing communication with families and other team members (including the Nominated Supervisor) about any changes to children’s dietary requirements and ensure these changes are reflected by completing the relevant documents
- implement and reflect on program planning to promote healthy eating and knowledge of nutrition by children, e.g. eating with the children, conversations during mealtimes around food
- promote healthy eating among families
- involve children in decision-making about healthy food and drink choices
- Chief/Cook will plan the menu to ensure food and drink are nutritious, adequate in quantity, and based on each child’s dietary requirements
- Chief/Cook will complete all checks, logs and records as required in the food safety plan

4.4 Families will:

- ensure the centre is advised of their child’s dietary requirements – relating to their child’s growth and development needs, as well as any preferences or health requirements at the time of enrolment, and that this information is kept up-to-date
- provide requested medical information (eg Medical Management Plan, ASCIA Allergy / Anaphylactic Action Plan, Doctors letter advising of a food intolerance) should their children have a medical condition that can be impacted by food and work with the centre to develop a risk minimisation and communication plan
- provide clearly labelled, in date medication specified in a medical management/ action plan before the child can remain at the centre
- review the centres weekly menu and provide any feedback

5.0 Definitions

Centre Manager (Nominated Supervisor) is the Team Member appointed into the Centre Manager (Nominated Supervisor) role with the alternative being the Responsible Person who is in charge.

Children are those children potentially enrolling or currently enrolled in Guardian’s Early Learning Programs as distinct from those under 18yrs old who may be present at our facilities or events.

Families also means parent or guardian

Food Intolerance if a food is consumed and there are adverse health effects. Intolerances do not involve the body's immune system unlike an allergy or Coeliac Disease. Food intolerances have a slower onset of symptoms (eg. headaches, bloating, tummy upset) and are not life threatening. It is an expectation that the food not be provided to the child. Food intolerances are then managed the in same way as a food allergy and require a medical management plan and a risk minimisation and communication plan.

Food Preference if a food is consumed and there are no adverse health effects. The food preference is for religious, cultural or other non-medical reasons. A food preferences form would then be completed.

Infant a child under the age of 1 year

Lactose intolerance is a person's inability to digest lactase which is a sugar found in milk. If you are lactose intolerant it may mean you have a deficiency in the enzyme lactase. After consuming milk and milk products, people with lactose intolerance may experience symptoms that range from mild to severe, based on the amount of lactose consumed and the amount a person can tolerate. Common symptoms include bloating, wind, nausea and diarrhoea. Lactose intolerance is not the same as having an allergy to dairy or milk.

Milk Allergy means a person's immune system has made antibodies to milk protein. Each time they eat or drink small amounts of milk or milk products like cheese or yoghurt it will trigger an allergic reaction which could be mild or develop to be a life-threatening anaphylactic reaction.

Young Children a child aged from 1 year to school age

6.0 Tools and Resources

<p>The most important documents I need are: Food Safe Plan/Program Medical Conditions Policy Get up & grow: Healthy eating and physical activity for early childhood Food preferences form Daily Charts</p>	<p>Other supporting documents will include: Eat for health calculators Australian and New Zealand Food Standards Food Safety and Nutrition Guardian Way page Medical Conditions Guardian Way page Hand washing poster</p>
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7.0 Additional Information

[Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#)

[Nutrition Australia](#)

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2018

Guide to the National Quality Framework 2018

www.nutritionaustralia.org

[Infant feeding Guidelines](#)

[ASCIA Guidelines – Infant Feeding and Allergy Prevention](#)

8.0 Source

Regulation 77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
Regulation 78	Food and beverages
Regulation 79	Service providing food and beverages
Regulation 80	Weekly menu
Regulation 90	Medical conditions policy



- Regulation 91 Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
- Regulation 162 Health information to be kept in enrolment record
- Regulation 168 Education and care service must have policies and procedures
- Regulation 170 Policies and procedures to be followed
- Regulation 171 Policies and procedures to be kept available
- Regulation 172 Notification of change to policies or procedures

Policy owner	Chief Quality and Curriculum Officer		Content author	National Health, Safety and Risk Manager	
Date published	1/04/2024	Document version	V1.0	Revision due date	1/04/2027
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