

Avoca Beach Preschool

Background

Good nutrition is essential to healthy living and enables children to be active participants in play and leisure. Education and care settings provide many opportunities for children to experience a range of healthy foods and to learn about food choices from educators and other children (*Early Years Learning Framework*, page 30; *Framework for School Age Care*, page 30).

Policy statement

This Policy details the Service's approach to mealtimes when the food and beverages consumed by children while at the Service are provided by the Service. It also describes the way educators use mealtimes for a happy and social occasion, and for developing lifelong healthy food choices.

Strategies and practices

- The Service's *Nutrition, Food and Beverage* Policy is explained to parents at enrolment.
- At enrolment, parents provide the Service with details of their child's food and drink allergies and of any cultural preferences in food. The enrolment form has provision for parents to provide the Service with details of any special dietary requirements (e.g. allergies, culture, religion, food preferences). Parents are asked to update this information when any changes occur.
- The Service serves all of the children's food and drink requirements over the day – with the exception of babies' bottles. The food and drink are nutritious, appropriate to each child (as detailed in the enrolment form) and consistent with *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood*, and/or *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*.
- The weekly menu accurately describes the food and beverages for each day and is displayed prominently for parents.
- The Service maintains a list and photographs of children with special food requirements for health or medical reasons (e.g. allergies, intolerances). This information is displayed in the food preparation areas and strategically throughout the Service. Relief staff are informed of these dietary requirements when they begin their shift.
- Meals served to children with dietary requirements/restrictions and allergies/intolerances are served on distinctive plates.
- Food is presented attractively. Pureed meat, vegetables and fruit will be offered to younger children (0-2 years).

Nutrition, Food and Beverages – Service Provided

- The healthy eating message is promoted and positively reinforced amongst families through notice boards, newsletters, information nights, educator-parent meetings, the website and up-to-date materials from recognised authorities.
- Educators promote healthy eating in children by including the topic in daily routines and in other intentional teaching such as role-modeling, discussions, songs, stories, games, using different cultural meal settings, and cooking experiences. Children’s preferences and comments about the menu are recorded daily on the Menu Daily Feedback Form which informs future menus.
- Meal times are relaxed, pleasant and unhurried. Educators sit and eat with the children, maintaining good personal nutrition, and talk with them on topics of interest, including, but not limited to, healthy food and nutrition.
- Developmentally appropriate eating utensils and furniture are provided for each child. Children, including toddlers, are encouraged to be independent and develop social skills at meal times.
- Food is never used to reward or punish children.
- Children are encouraged to eat, but they are not required to taste new foods, to eat food they do not like or to eat more than they want.
- Safe drinking water is readily accessible to children at all times, and educators encourage children to drink water at frequent intervals.
- Children who are hungry at other than meal times are given food.
- Staff follow all regulatory requirements for preparing and serving food. These include handwashing, wearing gloves, using tongs to handle food, ensuring children do not share utensils or use those that have been dropped. (Refer to the *Service’s Food Preparation, Storage and Handling Policy*).
- Parents are informed of their child’s food and beverage intake in the child’s Communication Book (infants and toddlers) and Daily Feedback Sheet (older children). Educators discuss face-to-face with parents any concerns about a child who has not eaten well.
- Foods likely to cause choking such as carrot and celery sticks, are not served to children under 3 years.
- Babies are fed individually by educators.
- Birthdays are an important part of a child’s life, and educators and children are encouraged to celebrate them at the Service. Parents are welcome to bring a cake to share. Only purchased cakes still in the original wrap or container, with a current use-by date and a full list of ingredients, can be brought into the Service.
- The Service is a nut free zone, and no nuts or nut products are served.
- The Service provides staff with appropriate training in safe food handling. They are provided with current information on nutrition for young children, with special regard to cultural preferences.

Nutrition, Food and Beverages – Service Provided

- Parents are surveyed twice per year to obtain their feedback about the Service’s menu (e.g. child’s likes, dislikes, individual needs, cultural appropriateness). They can choose to complete the Menu – Parent Survey (Brief) or the Menu – Parent Survey (Detailed).
- Educators seek children’s opinion of the menu and help them to complete the Menu – Child Survey. The results are collated on the Menu – Child Food Survey Results.

Additional safe practices for babies

- Educators follow the Service’s written Expressed Breast Milk (EBM) and Formula – Storing and Heating Procedure when storing and heating babies’ bottles.

Responsibilities of parents

- To provide the Service with details of their child’s known food allergies at enrolment, and to inform the Service immediately any changes occur.
- To discuss their child’s food allergies, if any, with them (older children) and to ensure they understand the importance of not sharing food.

Procedures and forms

- Daily Feedback Sheet
- Expressed Breast Milk (EBM) – and Formula – Storing and Heating Procedure
- Menu – Child Food Survey Results
- Menu – Child Survey
- Menu – Parent Survey (Brief)
- Menu – Parent Survey (Detailed)
- Menu Feedback Form

Links to other policies

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Injuries, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Student, Volunteers and Visitors Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011

Regs	77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
	78	Food and beverages
	90	Medical conditions policy
	91	Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
	162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
	168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures

Nutrition, Food and Beverages – Service Provided

QA	2.1.1	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation
	2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
	2.1.3	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child
	2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
	5.1.1	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included

Sources

- Better Health. (2017). *Breast milk – expressing breastmilk*. <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/breastfeeding-expressing-breastmilk> accessed 30 December 2020
- Early Years Learning Framework 2009
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Framework 2018 (September 2020 Update): Section 4 – Operational Requirements <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/Guide-to-the-NQF-September-2020.pdf> accessed 30 December 2020
- NSW Health. *Breast feeding your baby*. <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/kidsfamilies/MCFhealth/Publications/breastfeeding-your-baby.pdf> accessed 30 December 2020

Further reading and useful websites (Consistent with the approach of the National Quality Framework, the following references have prioritised efficacy and appropriateness to inform best practice, and legislative compliance over state or territory preferences.)

- Australian Breastfeeding Association – <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/> accessed 30 December 2020
- Nutrition Australia. (2009). *Get up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for early Childhood (Staff and Carer handbook)*. [https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/2CDB3A000FE57A4ECA257BF0001916EC/\\$File/HEPA%20-%20B5%20Book%20-%20Staff%20and%20Carer%20Book_LR.pdf](https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/2CDB3A000FE57A4ECA257BF0001916EC/$File/HEPA%20-%20B5%20Book%20-%20Staff%20and%20Carer%20Book_LR.pdf) accessed 30 December 2020
- Nutrition Australia. (2017). *Factsheets*. <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/resources> accessed 30 December 2020
- Nutrition Australia – <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/vic/nutrition-services-early-learning-centres> accessed 30 December 2020
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2003). *The Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia incorporating The Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers* http://childaustralia.mrooms.net/pluginfile.php/4134/mod_page/content/38/diet-guidelines.pdf accessed 30 December 2020

Policy review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

Nutrition, Food and Beverages – Service Provided

Version Control

Version	Date Reviewed	Approved By	Comments/Amendments	Next Review Date
1	8 January 2018	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated to changed NQF requirements 1 February 2018. Service to modify policies to its specific needs.	
2	6 September 2019	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references.	
3	29 November 2020	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references.	
4	30 December 2020	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references.	

- This policy has been approved by Much and Move

Date reviewed: July 2021

Next Review: July 2022

Reviewed by: Jessica Adlard