

5.2 Food, Serving and Nutrition Policy

This service recognises and acknowledges the importance of providing food that is both nutritious and appropriate to the needs of the children. The service encourages and promotes the health and wellbeing of children by providing positive learning experiences during meal/snack times where good nutritional food habits are developed in a happy, social environment. Parents are supported to understand the benefits of this approach to nutrition for their children.



Relevant Laws and other Provisions

The laws and other provisions affecting this policy include:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act, 2010 and Regulations 2011*
- *Australian Dietary Guidelines (NHMRC 2013)*
- *Physical Activity Nutrition Outside School Hours (PANOSH) (2012)*
- *'My Time, Our Place' Framework for School Age Care in Australia*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety*
- *Policies: 2.6 – Behaviour Support and Management, 3.1 – Educational Program Planning, 3.3 – Educators Practice, 4.3 – Hygiene, 5.1 – Food Handling and Storage, 9.2 - Enrolment, 9.3 – Communication with Families.*



Procedures

Development and review of Nutrition Policy

A detailed nutrition policy will be developed with opportunities for consultation by the Approved Provider with families, educators and the community.

The policy will be based on information from recognised health authorities, which may include any or all the Commonwealth or State Government Health Departments and non-government organisations with recognised expertise in nutrition (e.g. Nutrition Australia, Heart Foundation, Queensland Health).

The Responsible Person will be responsible to regularly review, and when necessary, ensure that the service obtains a formal review of this Nutrition Policy from a recognised nutrition authority or a person duly qualified to advise in relation to it.

The Responsible Person will report to the Approved Provider in respect of the Nutrition Policy at least once a year, and whenever a change is made to this Nutrition Policy, following consultation with educators, parents and recognised nutrition authorities.

Recommended food

Information about healthy food choices is gathered from recognised authorities (i.e. Australian Dietary Guidelines, Nutrition Australia, PANOSH).

Services may also choose to reference the Queensland Education initiative 'Smart Choices - Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy'. <http://education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy/docs/smart-choices-strategy.pdf>

Provision of healthy and varied food choices

Where the service provides food, educators will seek to provide food which:

- *Is healthy, balanced, varied, age appropriate and consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines;*

- *Includes a good balance of fresh foods, as opposed to pre-packaged and prepared foods; and*
- *As far as reasonably possible, accommodates the special dietary needs of children which the service has been made aware, or becomes aware of.*

Service menus are planned ensuring that food provided is varied and encompass the main food groups as per the Australian Dietary Guidelines. Families, children and educators are encouraged to contribute ideas for the menu.

For all foods and beverages provided by the service to the children, e.g. breakfast, afternoon tea and/or additional foods provided during vacation care and/or as part of cooking activities, a weekly menu will be displayed which accurately describes the foods to be provided.

Foods provided to the children during vacation care will be decided upon following consultation with management and families of the service.

The Responsible Person will discuss with all parents/guardians any food allergies and restrictions (including cultural or religious) which are required by the parent/guardian to be enforced at the service. Details of these restrictions will be noted on the enrolment form and passed on to educators. Food allergies will be accompanied by a letter from a medical practitioner or other health professional.

The Responsible Person and educators will seek to accommodate all such reasonable nutritional needs.

Where children have special dietary needs which is not reasonable that the service meet, the Responsible Person will consult with parents and where necessary, the meal will be supplied from home.

When parents provide food for their child, healthy food and drink choices are encouraged.

The eating environment

An educator is to be always supervising in the eating areas that food is being served or heating equipment, such as toasters are present. During breakfast time the supervising educator will ensure that children are supported to safely access breakfast items and equipment such as a stepping stool is available for children to use.

Social interactions will be encouraged during meal/snack times. Educators will spend this time interacting with the children and modelling good eating and social habits.

Children will be encouraged to use effective hand hygiene practices, prior to all snack/meal times.

To ensure safety, children will be encouraged to sit whilst eating and/or drinking.

Children eating food at the service, outside the regular mealtimes of the service, will be encouraged to use effective hand hygiene practices and to sit while eating.

Serving of food

Independence will be fostered by encouraging children to serve themselves food, under supervision from educators, using appropriate equipment, e.g. tongs, spoons, jugs etc.

Educators who serve food to the children will ensure hand hygiene procedures are followed and including use of tongs and/or gloves.

At meal/snack times, educators will encourage children to try different foods and to take appropriate portions.

Breakfast hours are 6.30am until 8.00am during before school care and 6.30am until 9.00am during vacation care. Once breakfast is finished an educator will remove all items, including toasters, tongs, food, and utensils from the counter. The kitchen shutter is to be fully closed so that there is no access to the kitchen area from the OSHC room. Children are not permitted to enter the kitchen, unless under direct supervision of an educator.

Involving children

Educators involve and consult children when planning the menu and/or food activities and experiences through group meetings and/or children suggestions.

Educators will facilitate children being involved in the preparing and serving of food through 'serve-yourself' routines and cooking activities.

Educators will encourage and involve children in conversations and routines that promote healthy eating and good nutrition.

Drinking Water

The Responsible Person will ensure that children have ready access to cool drinking water and clean cups (if necessary).

Educators will encourage children to drink extra water during the summer months, supplying their own water bottle if necessary.

Educators will encourage parents to provide children with extra water to take with them on excursions.

Diverse cultural experiences

Food provided will include food from various cultures particularly those represented in the service and local community.

Families from other cultures within the service or wider community may be invited to participate in the program, providing children with food experiences from their own culture.

Food awareness activities will be chosen from a variety of cultures and may include:

- Different ways of serving the food (i.e. chopsticks);
- Different varieties of foods (e.g. feta cheese instead of cheddar); and
- Foods that may have significance within their culture (e.g. Anzac biscuits and their origin).

Communication with families

The food provided by the service is planned and as per regulatory requirements, the menu is displayed in a prominent place for families and children.

Where parents/carers are required to provide food for their children, the service will provide relevant nutritional information as well as suggestions for healthy food and drink choices.

If a child has special food needs e.g. cultural requirements or food allergies, the service will work with parents/guardians to develop a plan to meet the child's needs. Parents will inform the service of any changes.

Through the Family Handbook, parents/carers are alerted to the service's Nutrition Policy and invited to contact the Coordinator /Responsible Person at any time to discuss any concerns or feedback in relation to the Nutrition Policy, of their child's particular dietary requirements for health, or any other reason.

The Coordinator/Responsible Person will arrange at least one opportunity every thirty-six months for parents/carers to have input into the Nutrition Policy.

Professional development

As per regulatory requirements, service management will ensure that educators are provided with adequate training and instruction in relation to food handling and storage procedures.

Educators will be encouraged to attend professional development on food and nutritional related topics.

The service will ensure that information and/or fact sheets relating to food safety and nutrition are readily available for educators and families.

Food Experiences

Food will not be used in the service as punishment or reward for children.

Educators will encourage children to learn about food and nutrition through:

- *Food awareness authorities being included in the service program (e.g. Nutrition Australia);*

- *Engaging children in conversations about healthy lifestyles and good nutrition; and*
- *Inclusion of children in service meal routines.*

References

Please note: This policy has been developed in accordance with recommendations from the Australian Dietary Guidelines (NHMRC 2013) and the Queensland Health PANOSH (Physical Activity and Nutrition Outside School Hours) resource.

DATE DEVELOPED	DATE RATIFIED	DATE REVIEWED	DATE RATIFIED
August 2018	August 2018	October 2021	October 2021
		July 2023	August 2023