



Nutrition, Food, Beverage and Dietary Policy

Introduction:

Toukley Preschool has a responsibility to support children attending the service to develop good food habits and attitudes. By working with families and all educators, we will also aim to positively influence each child's health and good nutrition at home.

◁ This policy concerns the provision of healthy food and drink while children are in care and the promotion of normal growth and development.

◁ Toukley Preschool is committed to implementing the healthy eating key messages in the Australian Infant Feeding Guidelines and Australian Dietary Guidelines as outlined in the Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood resources. The service will also refer to other government bodies such as the Department of Health, the National Health Medical Research Council and state/territory public health initiatives (for example: Munch & Move in NSW) in relation to healthy eating and menu planning resources.

◁ Further, we recognise the importance of supporting families in providing healthy food and drink to their children. It is acknowledged that the early childhood setting has an important role in supporting families in healthy eating.

Aim:

Our service recognises the importance of healthy eating to the growth and development of young children and is committed to supporting the healthy food and drink choices of children in our care.

Implementation:

Encourage and support breastfeeding and appropriate introduction of solid foods

The service will:

◁ Apply current national infant feeding recommendations.

◁ Provide a suitable place within the service where mothers can breastfeed their babies or express breast milk.

◁ 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.

Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the Australian Dietary Guidelines

The service will:

Where food is brought from home:

◁ Provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and suitable for children's lunchboxes.

◁ Encourage children to eat the more nutritious foods provided in their lunchbox, such as sandwiches, fruit, cheese and yoghurt, before eating any less nutritious food provided.

◁ Discourage the provision of highly processed snack foods high in fat, salt and sugar and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes (where possible). Examples of these foods include lollies, chocolates, sweet biscuits, muesli bars, breakfast bars, fruit filled bars, chips, oven-baked crackers and corn chips.

The service can accommodate some processed foods based on children's sensory processing needs where applicable.

Promote safety

◁ Ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day.

◁ Be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances and special diets and consult with families to develop individual management plans.

◁ Ensure young children do not have access to foods that may cause choking.

◁ Ensure all children remain seated while eating and drinking.



◁ Always supervise children while eating and drinking.

Safe food handling

◁ The service will apply current national food safety standards and recommendations, as well as information from applicable state/territory food authorities

◁ Encourage and provide opportunities for educators to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood nutrition.

◁ Provide food to children that has been stored, prepared and served in a safe and hygienic manner and to promote hygienic food practices

◁ Ensure gloves are worn or food tongs are used by all staff handling 'ready to eat' foods.

◁ Children and staff wash and dry their hands (using soap, warm running water and single use or disposable towels) before handling food or eating meals and snacks.

◁ Food is stored and served at safe temperatures ie below 5°C or above 60°C.

◁ Separate cutting boards are used for raw meat and chicken and utensils and hands are washed before touching other foods.

◁ Children will be discouraged from handling other children's food and utensils.

Provide a positive eating environment which reflects cultural and family values

◁ Ensure that educators sit with the children at meal and snack times to role model healthy food and drink choices and actively engage children in conversations about the food and drink provided.

◁ Endeavour to recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

◁ Create a relaxed atmosphere at mealtimes where children have enough time to eat and enjoy their food as well as enjoying the social interactions with educators and other children.

◁ Encourage preschoolers to assist to set and clear the table and serve their own food and drink – providing opportunities for them to develop independence and self-esteem.

◁ Respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, do not insist he/she eats.

◁ Be patient with messy or slow eaters.

◁ Encourage children to try different foods but do not force them to eat.

◁ Do not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for disciplinary purposes.

Promote lifelong learning for children, early childhood staff and families about healthy food and drink choices

◁ Foster awareness and understanding of healthy food and drink choices through including in the children's program a range of learning experiences encouraging children's healthy eating.

◁ Encourage children to participate in a variety of 'hands-on' food preparation experiences.

◁ Provide opportunities for children to engage in discovery learning and discussion about healthy food and drink choices.

Encourage communication with families about the provision of appropriate healthy food and drinks for children while they are attending the service

◁ Nutrition Policy to be available for all families. Families will be provided with opportunities to contribute to the review and development of the policy.

◁ Request that details of any food allergies or intolerances or specific dietary requirements be provided to the service and work in partnership with families to develop an appropriate response so that children's individual dietary needs are met. Details of any dietary restrictions will be kept in children's enrolment record.

◁ Communicate regularly with families about food and nutrition related experiences within the service and provide up to date information to assist families to provide healthy food choices at home.

◁ Communicate regularly with families and provide information and advice on appropriate food and drink to be included in children's lunchboxes. This information may be provided to families in a variety of ways including Storypark, during orientation, information sessions and informal discussion.



Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider will:

- ◁ Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011.
- ◁ Allocate finances for training and food safety.
- ◁ Ensure that the service implements adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service.

Nominated Supervisor will:

- ◁ Ensure adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food are implemented at the service to minimise risks to children.
- ◁ Ensure children being cared for by the service have access to safe drinking water at all times and are offered food and beverages on a regular basis throughout the day.
- ◁ Ensure the provision of 'emergency' food for children who arrive at the centre without their lunch or morning tea.
- ◁ As per our Medical Conditions Policy, the centre shall become an allergy free centre whenever a child is enrolled at the centre with a life threatening allergy. During this time all dietary requirements relating to the medical condition of the enrolled child are adhered to as appropriate and parents/guardians of all enrolled children will be informed of the food to be restricted e.g. an 'egg free centre' for a child with a life threatening allergic reaction to egg or a 'nut free centre' for a child with a life threatening allergic reaction to nuts.

Early Childhood Educators/Responsible Person/s will:

- ◁ Adhere to the strategies and practices of the Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary policy.
 - ◁ Ensure children's individual dietary needs are adhered to.
 - ◁ Provide positive meal time experiences for children.
 - ◁ Respect the individual needs and choices of children.
 - ◁ Actively supervise children during meal times.
 - ◁ Adhere to the services Infectious Diseases and Hygiene Policy.
 - ◁ Educators will inform parents of any changes to their child's eating habits, food consumption or dietary requirements.
 - ◁ When a child is enrolled at the centre with a life threatening allergy all dietary requirements relating to the medical condition of the enrolled child will be enforced. Educators will monitor the food and beverages provided for all children to ensure they meet with the guidelines of the policy.
- All issues arising from this implementation will be referred to the Nominated Supervisor.
- ◁ Healthy eating is promoted through role modelling and eating with the children.

Families will:

- ◁ Communicate regularly with educators/staff regarding children's specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs, including food preferences.
- ◁ Contribute recipes.

Evaluation:

The service offers appropriate and healthy food and beverages to all children and meal times will be relaxed and model healthy eating to children.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child



enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Legislative Requirements:

- ◁ Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167
- ◁ Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 77-80, 162(e), 168(2)(a)(i)
- ◁ Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Links to National Quality Standard –

- ◁ National Quality Standard, Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice - Element 1.2.3: Child directed learning
- ◁ National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety - Element 2.1.3: Healthy lifestyle
- ◁ National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with children - Element 5.1.2: Dignity and rights of the child
- ◁ National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities - Element 6.1.2: Parent views are respected
- ◁ Early Years Learning Framework: Outcome 3 – Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and wellbeing

Sources:

- ◁ Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – www.acecqa.gov.au
- ◁ Australian Dietary Guidelines - www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines
- ◁ Department of Health: Nutrition and Healthy Eating (includes Get Up and Grow Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood resources) - www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/get-up-grow-resource-collection
- ◁ National Health Medical Research Council - Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services - www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services
- ◁ Nutrition Australia – www.nutritionaustralia.org
- ◁ Food Standards Australia New Zealand – www.foodstandards.gov.au
- ◁ Community Early Learning Australia (CELA)

Reviewed: August 2022