

Nutrition, Food and Beverage, Dietary Requirements Policy Preschool



Introduction	We recognise the importance of supporting families in providing healthy food and drink for their children and encourage positive healthy food and drink choices through discussions with children.
Eligibility	This policy applies to all Learning Links Preschool staff and staff involved in the delivery of services to children. The term staff applies to employees, students and volunteers.
Policy	<p>Preschool staff are required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that good nutrition is essential for each child’s healthy growth and development. • Assume a proactive role in supporting families and providing them with current information and resources to allow them to support children’s nutrition and development based on recommended nutritional practice/s. • Implement food experiences as part of the educational program that are consistent with Munch and Move and Get Up and Grow resources as well as being culturally appropriate for the child and family. • Provide a positive, relaxed environment for children to eat meals and support children in developing good eating habits through educator modelling. • Maintain high standards of hygiene throughout all food preparation. • Encourage families to share recipes and traditions to incorporate into the Preschool program. • Implement the Munch & Move Program key messages implemented in service delivery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support to breastfeed ○ Choose water as a drink ○ Choose healthier snacks ○ Eat fruit and vegetables ○ Move your body every day
Strategies	<p><u>Promoting healthy food and drinks</u> Learning Links staff promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage families to pack both fruit and vegetables in their child’s lunch box where possible. • Encourage children to eat food provided in their lunchbox. • Discourage the provision of processed snack foods high in fat, salt and sugar and low in essential nutrients in children’s lunchboxes. Examples of these foods include lollies, chocolates, sweet biscuits, chips, oven-baked crackers and corn chips. <p>The service accommodates some processed foods being provided based on children’s sensory processing needs where applicable.</p> <p><u>Inclusion of children with specific diets</u> Some children at Preschool may need to follow a specific diet based on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with anaphylaxis or food allergies and intolerances • Children with a diagnosed condition • Children with cultural and life choices. <p><u>Promoting health and safety with Food and Drink with children and families</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day. • Be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances and specific diets and consult with families to develop individual management plans. • Not leave children unattended during mealtimes where choking may be an additional risk. • Encourage children to remain seated while eating and drinking. • Sit with children at mealtimes to role model healthy food and drink choices and actively engage children in conversations about the food and drink.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 their peers. • Respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, do not insist they eat. • 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. <p><u>Safe food handling</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and provide opportunities for educators to maintain knowledge about early childhood nutrition. • Use appropriate storage for children's lunch boxes. Food must be stored in the fridge under 5 degrees Celsius, or families will provide hot food in thermoses. Educators must use gloves and /or tongs to serve food that has been made with children as part of a learning experience. • Children and staff wash and dry their hands using soap, warm water and hand towels before handling food or eating meals . • Children will be discouraged from handling other children's food and utensils.
Values	<p><u>Promote lifelong learning for children, educators and families about healthy food and drink choices</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Provide opportunities for gardening and sustainable practices to support children's knowledge and understanding of farm to table. <p><u>Support breastfeeding</u></p> <p>Preschool recognises that families have the right to decide whether they will breastfeed, and each family's decision will be accepted and respected. Our service will provide a supportive environment by providing suitable spaces and resources to mothers breastfeeding their infants at the service.</p> <p><u>Encourage communication with families about the provision of appropriate healthy food and drinks for children while they are attending the service</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Nutrition Policy to is available to all families and is accessible at all times on the Preschool website. • Provide families with information about food and nutrition such as Munch and Move resources and other Healthy Eating Guidelines.
Roles and Responsibilities	<p><u>Approved Provider</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011. • Ensure the Preschool implements adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children. <p><u>Nominated Supervisor</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food are implemented at the preschool. • Ensure children being cared for by the service have access to safe and clean drinking water at all times. • Ensure children's lunch boxes are accessible to children throughout the day. • Ensure that, where food and beverages are supplied by the service, they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nutritious and adequate in quantity ○ Chosen with regard to the dietary requirements of individual children • Maintain all records and requirements as required by the Food Safety Standards Code and Food Act 2003. <p><u>Educators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to the strategies and practices of the Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary Policy. • Ensure children's individual dietary needs are adhered to.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide positive mealtime experiences for children. • Respect the individual needs and choices of children. • Actively supervise children during mealtimes. <p>Families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with educators regarding children's specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs. 																								
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Related Legislation, Standards, Documents	<p>Legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and Care Services National Law Act: Section 167 • Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 78-80 • Work Health and Safety Act <p>Sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – www.acecqa.gov.au • Healthy Kids NSW – www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au • Nutrition Australia – www.nutritionaustralia.org 																								
Outcome Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Quality Standard, Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice • National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety • National Quality Standard, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment • National Quality Standard, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements • National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children • National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities • National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership 																								
Review	<p>This policy and guidelines will be reviewed every two years and will incorporate current information, legislation and feedback as required.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>This policy is owned by: Preschool</p> <p>Procedure Updated on: 30 August 2023 This version updated by: Director, Preschool Version No. 2.0 Version approved by: GM, Service Quality, Risk and Compliance This procedure can be viewed on: Learning Links Intranet, Story Park and Preschool Website</p> <p>Procedure due for review: 30 August 2025</p>																								