

Nutrition and Beverages

Policy Statement

Meerilinga recognises the importance of healthy eating to promote the growth and development of young children and is committed to supporting the healthy food and drink choices of children in our care. It is acknowledged that the early childhood setting has an important role in supporting families in healthy eating. Our service therefore recognises the importance of supporting families to provide healthy food and drink to their children.

Policy Purpose

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) Services are required by legislation to ensure the provision of healthy foods and drinks that meet the requirements for children according to the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*. It is essential that our service partners with families to provide education about nutrition, and promote healthy eating habits for young children to positively influence their health and wellbeing, and reduce the risk of diet-related conditions and chronic diseases in children.

We believe in providing a positive eating environment that reflects dietary requirements, cultural and family values, and promotes lifelong learning for children, as we commit to implementing and embedding the healthy eating key messages.

We recognise food is used to help celebrate special occasions in different families, cultures and festivals. Food is an important part of any celebration in all nations of the world, regardless of culture or religion.

Scope

This policy applies to families and staff including volunteers and students engaged with Meerilinga. The daily nutritional needs of a child will be in context for the number of hours in a service on any given day for the duration of that child's attendance.

Exclusions

Policy Review

At least annually or from time to time the organisation may make changes to this policy to improve the effectiveness of its operation and customer service.

Implementation

Learning about healthy lifestyles, including nutrition is integral to children's wellbeing and self-confidence and embedded in everyday routines and experiences. Children, families and staff will be encouraged to develop healthy eating choices. Families are to ensure that children have food according to the time of day before arriving.

Children are to bring their own fruit/snack in a 'child friendly', clearly labelled and clean container sufficient for the duration of stay, this can include morning or afternoon tea and lunch (in full day sessions).

We encourage parents to send a variety of healthy food choices with no preparatory needs such as cooking and heating. Pre-cut fresh fruits and vegetables, cheeses, unflavoured milk, yogurt, and whole grain breads or crackers are good options.

Choices should also consider children's age and experience in managing their food and beverage needs independently so avoiding complex mixing, peeling, difficult packaging and where children may be transitioning between first and adult teeth, temporarily preparing foods by removing hard skins and pre-cut. Many common foods present choking hazards such as sausage skin, chunks of meat or cheese, whole grapes or raw vegetables. Guides and ideas on foods to prepare can be located at

<http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/resources/children>

Water is the primary drink and children have accessibility to their water bottles throughout the session. Children are to bring their own clearly labelled and clean water bottle each session sufficient for the duration of stay.

Rolling morning or afternoon tea is encouraged and children have access to their food and water throughout their stay. Families are to advise educators if children's food needs refrigeration.

Restrictions are in place to ensure protection of children and others with food sensitivity or allergy and only healthy options are demonstrated and encouraged. Nuts (including fillings or foods containing nuts), popcorn/corn chips, cordials, juices, junk food, flavoured milks and treats are not accepted for food and beverage items at the service.

Eggs and fillings or foods containing eggs or containers will not be accepted on days where a person is known to have a sensitivity or allergy. Educators will advise families of days these products will not be accepted.

Nutrition and Beverages Process

Process Owner	CEO
Effective Date	14 June 2017
Date of Last Revision	1 July 2016

Process Details

	Description
1.	<p>Families and children will be supported with information on suitable food and drink to pack for their children. Information about child nutrition and safe food practices are promoted to families on a regular basis through resources, e news, parent sharing involvement activities. Families will be consulted and asked to share family and multicultural values and experiences to enrich the variety and enjoyment of food. Consideration will be given to the special dietary needs of all children participating and these will be recorded and acted on by Educators. The importance of healthy food choices and experiences will form the basis for regular and active inclusion in all children's program. Families are provided with daily information about their child's intake and experiences with food and drink.</p> <p>Other sources of information for families can be found at</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition Australia – www.nutritionaustralia.org • Fussy Eaters ECA Everyday Learning Series - http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/parent-resources/childrens-health-nutrition/ <p>Raising Children Network www.raisingchildren.net.au</p>
2.	<p>Food and water will be available at all times and emergency nutritious fruit/vegetable/multigrain crackers will always be available. Furniture and utensils will be age appropriate and developmentally suitable to encourage children to be positively involved in and enjoy food occasions. Setting up café style social spaces is encouraged. Sufficient spare water bottles and food containers will be maintained in a clean and hygienic manner for use when items are forgotten.</p>
3.	<p>Educators and others as directed will ensure annual updates are maintained on food safety, storage and handlings guidelines and procedures. http://www.imalert.com.au/foodsafety/training Procedures will be actively embedded in everyday experiences and routines. These will be adhered to at all times at the service and modelled to children and families;</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handwashing. • Clean storage and eating environments. • Refrigeration cleanliness and temperatures maintained. • Adequate and age appropriate utensils. • Safety risk plans and procedures to minimise cross contamination, choking, medical reactions, hazards in food experiences and routines. • Supervision. • Accessibility strategies for all children to their food and drinks. • Local communication strategies for information sharing. • Medical and emergency treatment plans.

Process Details

	Description
4.	<p>Educators role model and discuss healthy eating and dental care with the children using resources from;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNAC http://snacwa.com.au/ • Get Up and Grow Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/phd-qug-staffcarers, and • Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia http://www.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/qug-family-toc~qug-family-guidelines <p>as well as arranging health visitors such as child health, dentist or nutritionist. Opportunities for food experiences can include self-grown foods from the service gardens with family permission. Risk management plans should include the choices on the type of food plants considered, known or likelihood of food sensitivity or intolerance, choking, excessive preparation, checking for toxicity for all or part of a plant, plant pests or diseases, pesticide bans or other hazards.</p>

Associated Documents

Personnel Records of FoodSafe

Medical and Emergency Policy and Procedures

Risk Management Plans – gardens/food experiences/Visitors(Incursions)

Cleaning, maintenance, workplace safety schedule/audits/records.

Guidelines for Advisor

Nominated Officers and Educators have equal responsibility to ensure that the Education and Care Services National Regulations [and National Quality Standards are implemented and followed](#) as service benchmarks to meet each child's daily nutritional needs and safe food handling irrespective of the program of attendance.

Thereby common threads of responsibility and opportunity are:

1. Enabling nutritionally adequate food and beverage for children – food is provided by families and the environment should also take into account a child's preferences, cultural, physical, social, emotional and educational needs and development and always offer a positive experience.
2. Food and beverage is never a reward, punishment, coercion or withheld.
3. Fostering nutritionally positive attitudes and food and beverage preferences in young children through being positive role models for children; carrying out nutrition education activities with children aimed at broadening a child's awareness of a wide variety of food and the links between health and nutrition.

Strategies can include;

- Teach children about food and nutrition.
 - Food awareness activities from garden to table and a variety of cultures included in the teaching curriculum.
 - Children will be encouraged to get practical experience in food preparation.
 - Foods being eaten by the children will be discussed with them.
 - To provide an eating environment that assists the transmission of family and multicultural values.
 - Educators sit and engage with children unhurried at food time.
 - Special occasions may be celebrated with culturally appropriate foods or sometimes foods from the approved list with the approval of each parent. Foods of multiple ingredients or cooking process for sharing can be made entirely at the service in the community kitchen.
 - Families will be invited to at least one food occasion each year.
 - Food and beverage experiences provide opportunities for encouraging self-help, independence, social skills, learning and understanding.
4. Ensuring children with allergies/intolerances/dietary exclusions will have Action Plans developed in consultation with parents, staff (and medical professionals updated annually excluding cultural exclusions). This will be displayed and accessible at nominated positions within each service that is identified on the emergency plan for all workers. Products that give severe allergic reactions to any child or person in attendance will be wrapped and secured to be sent back home.
 5. Days when foods or products where known allergies/intolerances will not be accepted must be clearly visible and communicated to every parent/carer and regularly reviewed as new enrolments/diagnosis are advised.
 6. Providing nutrition information onto parents of children. It is important to establish links with family members to encourage parent participation in the services nutrition experiences. Parent's knowledge, beliefs and food preferences play a key role in establishing a child's eating pattern and behaviour.
 7. Information recognised by health and dental authorities on dental health and nutrition relating to different age groups of children will be promoted at the service in a variety of accessible and non-static methods. Health practices in the service will be evident.
 8. When food is prepared as part of the children's curriculum of experiences, the ingredients and preparation techniques used will be hygienic and safe and contribute to children's nutritional needs.
 9. Ensuring spaces and facilities allow and support for breastfeeding/formula preparation for infants.
 10. The regular review of practices and remedial actions are documented, communicated, monitored and reported.

Review of practices can be combinations of discussion, research, and accessing expertise, professional development, consulting and observing and modelling occurring of practices with educators, families, children, experts and others that are consistent with meeting exceeding standards of practice. Guidelines for review of practices can be found at <http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/3%20-%20Guide%20to%20the%20National%20Quality%20Standard%20FINAL-3.pdf>

Guidelines for achieving exceeding practice descriptors is located at;
http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/Assessment%20and%20Rating/1-NQS-Assessment%20and%20Rating%20Instrument_120522_%20FINAL-1.pdf

Documentation and improvement and can be combinations of tracking changes to the Quality Improvement Plan, implementing revised routines and transition plans, continuous improvement form, risk management plan, maintenance, audit monthly reporting, meeting minutes, e news and internal communications.

Records Management

Title	Location	Responsible Officer	Minimum Retention Period
• Anaphylaxis Management Plan	ELP	Children and Family	3 yrs from last attendance
• Allergy/Intolerance Plan	ELP	Children and Family	3 yrs from last attendance
• Excursion/Incursion Form	ELP	Children and Family	3 mths from event
• Risk Management Form	ELP	Children and Family	3 mths from conclusion of program
• Refrigerator Temperature Form	ELP	Children and Family	3 mths from conclusion of program
• Staff Development	WLEED	CEO	7 yrs from exit

Reference

- Education and Care Services National Law Act (WA) 2012 - *October 2018*
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (WA) 2012 - *October 2018*
- ACECQA - National Quality Standards - *February 2018*
- ACECQA - Belonging, Being & Becoming - Early Years Learning Framework
- Code of Ethics - Meerilinga
- Code of Conduct - Meerilinga
- Australia New Zealand Food Act 2008, Food Standards Code. www.foodstandards.gov.au
- Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood
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Mapping Policy and Processes

Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012	
Section	167

Education and Care Services National Regulations (WA) 2012	
Regulations	77, 78, 90, 168(a)(i)

Standards for RTOs 2015	
<p>Vocational Education and Training is a significant contributor to Australia's economy domestically, being the primary mechanism to meet the skilling needs of the Australian community. The standards give the community confidence that RTOs are delivering quality training and assessment that is highly regarded both locally and overseas.</p>	

Policy Area	National Quality Standards Early Childhood	National Standards for Volunteering Involvement 2015	Standards to Community Services	Standards to Family Support
Children's Programs	QA 1 - 1.1, 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.2, 1.2.1. QA 2 - 2.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.2.1, 2.2.2. QA 5 - 5.1, 5.2. QA 6 - 6.1, 6.2. QA 7 - 7.1, 7.1.1, 7.1.2, 7.2.1, 7.2.3	NA - The individual cultural / health needs are considered.	NA - The individual cultural / health needs are considered.	NA - The individual cultural / health needs are considered.