NUTRITION POLICY-Encouraging Healthy Eating and Supporting Breast Feeding

Denman Children’s centre 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. We acknowledge that the early childhood setting has an important role in supporting families in healthy eating. Denman Children’s Centre therefore recognises the importance of supporting families to provide healthy food and drink to their children.

We are committed to implementing the healthy eating key messages outlined in the Australian Dietary Guidelines and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating. We support and promote the NSW Health initiative *Munch & Move* and utilise the Australian Government’s *Get up & Grow-Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* and *Eat for Health* resources.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

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| QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN’S HEALTH AND SAFETY | | |
| 2.1 | Health | Each child’s health and physical activity is supported and promoted |
| 2.1.2 | Health practices and procedures | Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented |
| 2.1.3 | Healthy lifestyles | Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child |
| 5.1 | Relationships between educators and children | Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child |
| 6.1 | Supportive relationships with families | Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role. |

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| EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS | |
| 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 |

RELATED POLICIES

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| Bottle Safety, Preparation and Storage  Enrolment and Orientation | Hygiene and Infection Control  Interactions With Children |

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. Dietary and healthy eating habits formed in the early years are shown to continue into adulthood and can reduce the risk factors associated with chronic adult conditions such as obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Our Service recognises the importance of healthy eating for the growth, development, and wellbeing of young children and is committed to promoting and supporting healthy food and drink choices for children in our care. This policy affirms our position on the provision of healthy food and drink while children are in our care and the promotion and education of healthy choices for optimum nutrition.

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 outlined in the NSW Health’s *Munch & Move* program into our curriculumand to support the *National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings* outlined in the *Get Up & Grow* resources*.*

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, visitors, and management of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Encourage and support breastfeeding and appropriate introduction of solid foods  
Our Service will:

* 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
* ensure the safe handling of breast milk and infant formula including transporting, storing, thawing, warming, preparing, and bottle feeding
* in consultation with families, offer cooled pre-boiled water as an additional drink from around 6 months of age
* Support the transition to infant formula where breastfeeding is discontinued before 12 months of age.
* always bottle-feed babies by holding baby in a semi-upright position
* ensure appropriate foods (type and texture) are introduced around 6 months of age
* adjust the texture of foods offered between 6 and 12 months of age to match the baby’s developmental stage
* offer a variety of foods to babies from all the food groups
* Always supervise babies while drinking and eating, ensuring safe bottle-feeding and eating practices at all times.

Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents.

Our Service will:

* provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and that are suitable for children’s lunchboxes
* provide information to families on how to read the *Nutritional Information Panel* on food and drink labels
* 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
* Strongly discourage the provision of highly processed snack foods high in fat, salt, and/or sugar, and low in essential nutrients in children’s lunchboxes. Examples of these foods include sweet biscuits, some muesli bars, breakfast bars and fruit filled bars, and chips.
* Food items that should not be brought to the service include confectionary (lollies, sweets, chocolate, fairy bread, chocolate flavoured items, and jelly), sweet cakes, chips (crisps), deep fried foods (chicken nuggets, fish fingers etc.) and sugary drinks (cordial, flavoured milk, energy drinks etc.).
* ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day in both the indoor and outdoor environment
* 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
* ensure all children are always supervised whilst eating and drinking
* encourage and provide opportunities for staff and educators to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood nutrition
* share nutritional information with families and keep them regularly updated
* consider the needs of various age groups at the service- meal times may be offered progressively or at different times
* ensure age and developmentally appropriate utensils and furniture are provided for each child
* not allow food to be used as a form of punishment or to be used as a reward or bribe
* not allow the children to be force fed or being required to eat food they do not like or more than they want to eat
* encourage toddlers to be independent and develop social skills at mealtimes
* establish healthy eating habits in the children by incorporating nutritional information into our program
* encourage parents to the best of our ability to continue our healthy eating message in their homes

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

* Ensure children and educators wash and dry their hands (using soap, running water and single use or disposable towels) before handling food or eating.
* Children are encouraged to put away their own lunch boxes on arrival and pack them away on departure, however it is the family’s responsibility to ensure this occurs with labelled lunchboxes going into the fridge and water bottles going into the cart. As there is limited space in the fridge, please only send a medium sized lunchbox.
* Educators will complete a temperature check each morning at 8.30am and record the temperature on the temperature control log located on the fridge. Lunchboxes will be stored at or below 5oC.
* When reheating cooked meals from home, educators will reheat cooked food to a temperature of 70oC, using a clean thermometer to check temperature. Food will only be reheated **once.** Discard if the food is not eaten after being reheated.
* Discourage children from handling other children’s food.
* ensure all educators and staff are aware of children who have severe allergic reactions to certain foods as per ASCIA Action Plans
* ensure that children with food allergies and/or intolerances are only given food or beverages provided by the family, or where family permission has been given
* ensure that food preparation areas and surfaces are cleaned both before, after, and during any food preparation
* ensure that all cooking and serving utensils are cleaned before use
* ensure that all dishwashing cloths, sponges, brushes, and scourers are cleaned after each use
* ensure the food storage area is clean, ventilated, dry, pest free, and not in direct sunlight
* ensure refrigerators and freezers are cleaned regularly and door seals checked and replaced if not in good repair
* prevent pest infestations by cleaning spills as quickly as possible and ensuring rubbish and food scraps are disposed of frequently
* ensure that floor mops are thoroughly cleaned and air dried after each use
* Replace any cleaning equipment that shows signs of wear or permanent soiling.

Creating a positive learning environment   
Our Service will:

* 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
* choose water as a preferred drink
* 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 older toddlers and pre-schoolers to assist in retrieving their own lunchbox from the fridge and drink bottle from the trolley, 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
* not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for disciplinary purposes
* role-model and discuss safe food handling with children

Service Program

Our Service will:

* 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
* Embed the importance of healthy eating and physical activity in everyday activities and experiences.

Cooking with children

Cooking can help develop children’s knowledge and skills regarding healthy eating habits. Cooking is a great, fun activity and provides opportunities for children to be exposed to new foods, sharing of recipes and cooking skills. On these occasions participating educators will be vigilant to ensure that the experience remains safe, and relevant food hygiene practices are adhered to.

Communicating with families

Our Service will:

* provide a copy of the *Nutrition Policy* to all families upon orientation at the Service
* provide opportunities for families 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
* 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 factsheets, newsletters, during orientation, information sessions and informal discussion.
* talk to families about their child’s food intake and voice any concerns about their child’s eating
* Foods that are inappropriate at preschool will be placed in the child’s lunchbox with an ‘oops note’, stating that the food is not suitable, if possible an educator will talk to the family on collection.
* Food is available from the service e.g. sandwiches, plain crackers, fruit cups and water if needed (i.e. Child has run out of food, a lunchbox was forgotten).
* Cupcakes are permitted to be brought in by families to help celebrate a child’s birthday.
* Families of children with allergies are encouraged to provide treats to help them join in during birthday celebrations, this may include for example cupcakes to be stored frozen in the freezer, individual chocolate treats.

Source

Australian Breast-Feeding Association Guidelines: <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/>

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National Health and Medical Research Council. Eat for health: <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/>

NSW Food Authority: <http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/>

NSW Government. Healthy Kids. (2019). Munch and Move: <https://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/about-munch-move.aspx>

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

The Australian Dental Association: <https://www.ada.org.au/Home>

The Department of Health. Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood – Staff/Carers Book: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-gug-staffcarers>

Victoria State Government Education and Training Nutrition Australia *Healthy eating in the National Quality Standard A guide for early childhood education and care services*

*Work Health and Safety Act 2011*

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011.

REVIEW

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| POLICY REVIEWED BY:  Laura Short | POSITION  Nominated Supervisor | DATE  31/3/22 |

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| POLICY REVIEWED | March 2022 | NEXT REVIEW DATE | March 2023 |