



Nutrition Policy for Pre-Schools

Policy Statement

Children in their first five years of life are developing rapidly and require a nutritious and safe diet for their intellectual, behavioural and physical development. Educational and fun learning activities in relation to healthy eating are also important.

The centre will promote sound, appropriate nutrition consistent with national dietary guidelines for children that are appropriate to their age, cultural background, religion and medical needs. This nutrition policy aims to ensure that all children in care are offered a nutritious diet.

This nutrition policy aims to:

- 1. Assist children to receive nutritious food and drink.**
- 2. Provide an eating environment that assists the transmission of family and multicultural values.**
- 3. Inform children and their families about food and nutrition.**
- 4. Support further nutrition training and learning opportunities for all staff.**

1. Assist children to receive nutritious food.

- a) Emergency food will be available for children who have brought insufficient food or need extra food.
- b) Tap water (the preferred thirst quencher) will be available at all times for children and staff.
- c) Parents will be advised of their child's food intake and if they are not eating well.
- d) If a child has special dietary needs as a result of health issues, the service together with parents, will determine how to best meet the food and nutrition needs of the child whilst in care.
- e) Information will be provided to parents and carers of children enrolled in the centre describing how to best meet the nutritional needs of children, considering special dietary needs, culture and religion
- f) Where centres provide some food and drinks (e.g. morning tea), nutritious snacks and drinks such as milk will be provided. If juice is given it will be diluted 50% with water.
- g) Develop strategies to help prevent choking accidents caused by food eg children must be seated while eating.
- h) Fundraising drives will not promote unhealthy foods such as chocolates and lollies.

2. Provide an eating environment that assists the transmission of family and multicultural values.

- a) Meal and snack times will be social events where children can relax and experience a positive eating environment that reflects family and multicultural values.
- b) Children and staff will sit together during meal times.
- c) Staff will be role models for healthy eating habits.
- d) Provide sufficient meal and snack time for children to consume an appropriate amount of food and drink as well as enjoying social interaction with other children and staff.
- e) Cultural differences will be recognised, nurtured and celebrated.
- f) Food awareness activities will be chosen from a variety of cultures.
- g) Foods will not be used to punish or reward.
- h) Provide information to families outlining the centre's policies and approaches taken to meet the nutritional needs of all children
- i) Food will not be used as a play item

3. To inform children and their families about food and nutrition.

- a) The service will provide a copy of the nutrition policy to all families at the beginning of each year, or when a child is enrolled with the service.
- b) Provide nutrition information to parents in a variety of ways including newsletters, information sessions and informal discussion.
- c) The foods being eaten by the children will be discussed with them.
- d) Food awareness activities will be included in the centre's program.
- e) Children will be encouraged to be involved in practical food preparation experiences as appropriate.
- f) Provide parents with information on both suitable and unsuitable food to pack for their children and the minimum quantities of various food needed while in care.
 - i. Suitable foods include fruit and vegetables, wholegrain cereal products, milk products, lean meats and tap water as it is the best thirst quencher.
 - ii. Unsuitable foods include processed foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar and low in essential nutrients. Examples of these include lollies, chocolates, processed fruit strips, muesli bars, chips and corn chips.
- g) Provide suitable information to assist and encourage families to provide meals and snacks that:
 - i. Meet current standards and recommendations in relation to nutritional requirements,
 - ii. Are appropriate to the child's age, cultural and religious background,
 - iii. Are appropriate in quantity (see table on last page for guidance),
 - iv. Are transported to centres within safe temperatures

4. Support further nutrition training and learning opportunities for all staff.

- a) Encourage and support all staff to attend relevant conferences and forums.
- b) Adopt nutrition training component into orientation for new staff.
- c) All staff are to be familiar with and support the nutrition policy.

NOTE: This Nutrition Policy is consistent with the current 'Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia' (2003). Foods brought from home should reflect a wide variety of nutritious foods including

- ✓ Plenty of vegetables, legumes and fruits;
- ✓ Cereals (including breads, rice, pasta and noodles) preferably wholegrain;
- ✓ Lean meats, poultry and fish (or protein alternatives);
- ✓ Dairy products, which includes milk, cheese, yoghurts (preferably reduced-fat varieties for children over the age of two)
- ✓ Water as the preferred thirst quencher;
- ✓ Foods low in salt; and
- ✓ Moderate amounts of sugars and foods containing added sugars.

Daily amounts of foods suggested to be provided in preschool. This includes morning tea and lunch.

This will provide for about 40% of a child's daily nutrition requirements. The other 60% is made up with foods served at home.

- 1. One 'child-size' serve of fruit**
 - 1 'child-size' serve of fruit to be included in a lunchbox (1 'child – size' serve = ½ medium or 1 small piece)
- 2. Two 'child-size' serves of breads and cereals**
 - (1 'child-size' serve = 1 slice bread).
- 3. One 'child-size' serve of vegetables**
 - 1 'child-size' serve of vegetables to be included in a lunchbox (1 'child-size' serve = ½ cup salad or ¼ cup cooked vegies).
- 4. One 'child-size' meat and meat alternatives**
 - 1 'child-size' serve of meat and meat alternative to be included in a lunchbox (1 'child-size' serve = 45g meat or 1 egg).
- 5. Two 'child-size' serves of dairy food**
 - (1 'child-size' serve = 100ml milk, 100g yoghurt or 1 slice cheese).

Useful references for families and preschools

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/PUBLICATIONS/synopses/dietsyn.htm>

<http://www.youngmedia.org.au/>

www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au

www.healthpromotion.com.au

This policy will assist pre-schools in complying with parts of the NSW Children's Services Regulation 2004, and parts of the Australian NCAC Quality Practices Guide (see below).

NSW Children's Services Regulation:

Part 6 licence conditions-Division 1 general- (68) Food and nutrition

NCAC Quality Practices Guide - Quality Area 6.

Principle 6.1: Staff promote healthy eating habits

Principle 6.2: Staff implement effective & current food safety & hygiene practices



NSW@HEALTH
NORTHERN SYDNEY
CENTRAL COAST
AREA HEALTH SERVICE