

2.24A NUTRITION, BEVERAGES, FOOD (INCLUDING HANDLING & SAFETY) AND DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Under the Australian Food Standards Code, Standard 3.2.2A child care services are now a Class 1 and Category One food premises. Child Care services are identified as a category one business who handle unpackaged, potentially hazardous food that is ready to eat. These businesses must implement all three food safety management tools (food safety supervisor, food handler training and evidence), to strengthen their management of hazards known to contribute to foodborne illness.

- This policy concerns the provision of healthy food and drink while children are in care and the promotion of normal growth and development.
- The service is committed to implementing the healthy eating key messages in the *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.
- The service is committed to ensuring adequate health and hygiene practices are followed when handling preparing and storing food as per the Food Standards Code and Food Act 2023. The NSW Food authority resources will be followed to determine best practice in food handling.

GOALS

- 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.
- We will strive to maintain good practices of hygiene and safety in line with food state and national regulations, with appropriate training and transparent records of activities and processes undertaken with food and beverages by food handlers.

STRATEGIES

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

Lindfield Montessori School will:

Where food is provided by the service:

- Provide children with a wide variety of healthy and nutritious foods for meals and or snacks including fruit and vegetables, wholegrain cereal products and dairy products.
- Plan and display the service menu termly, that is based on sound menu planning principles and meets the daily nutritional needs of children whilst in care.
- Ensure food provided is substantial enough to meet the energy and nutrient needs of children.
- Vary the meals and snacks on the menu to keep children interested and to introduce children to a range of healthy food ideas.
- Ensure a qualified food Safety Supervisor is available to supervise food handlers.
- Ensure all food handlers are trained in food safety and hygiene or can demonstrate adequate skills and knowledge around food handling and hygiene.
- Maintain a record of the food safety risk management or be able to show the food is safe according to the food authority Children's Services Voluntary Food Safety Program template. This document is stored in the school office. Relevant templates for records are kept on the school Google drive under 'Food handling'.

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.
- Maintain a balanced view of foods to allow children to have small amounts of 'sometimes' foods included from time to time in their lunchbox. This serves to promote a healthy relationship with foods and recognises the place of these types of foods in celebrations and cultural enjoyment of food. These include, but are not limited to, cakes, biscuits, confectionary.

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.

- Be aware of foods that may cause choking such as grapes and cherry tomatoes and encourage these to be cut in half to mitigate risk.
- 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 e.g. NSW Food Authority.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for staff and 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.
- 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.
- Ensure gloves are worn OR food tongs are used by all staff handling 'ready to eat' foods.
- Food is stored and served at safe temperatures, for example, 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.
- Food-handling staff attend relevant training courses and pass relevant information onto the rest of the staff.
- Staff must use a brightly coloured band aid if a cut is on their hand, if preparing/handling food for children.
- Staff must follow 'how to prepare foods safely' as per the Children's Voluntary Food Safety Program template.

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 older toddlers and 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 through the practical life food preparation activities.
- 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

- Provide a copy of the Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary Requirements Policy to all families upon orientation at the service. Families will be provided with opportunities to contribute to the review and development of the policy.
- The service will work in partnership with families to develop an appropriate response to food allergies, dietary requirements or other conditions/needs to ensure 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 the school bulletin, during orientation, our website, email, information sessions and informal discussion.

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Food safety supervisor	A person who: (a) holds a food safety supervisor certificate that has been issued within the immediately preceding period of 5 years; and (b) has the authority and ability to manage and give direction on the safe handling of food
Food safety supervisor certificate	Certification as a food safety supervisor by: (a) a registered training organisation; or (b) an organisation recognised by the * relevant authority under the application Act.
Reasonably available	Generally, means the FSS physically works on-site and oversees food handling of high-risk unpackaged foods, or can be easily contacted (e.g. by phone) if established food handling procedures are in place at the business.

Legislative Requirements

This policy refers to the legislative requirements for the nutrition, food and beverages and dietary requirements. Examples include but are not limited to:

Section/ regulation	Description
Regulation 77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
Regulation 78	Food and beverages
Regulation 79	Service providing food and beverages
Regulation 80	Weekly menu
Regulation 90	Medical conditions policy
Regulation 91	Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
Regulation 160	Child enrolment records to be kept by approved provider and family day care educator
Regulation 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures

Section/ regulation	Description
Regulation 169	Additional policies and procedures – family day care services
Regulation 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Regulation 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Regulation 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

Induction and ongoing training

Induction training and frequency of ongoing training and information will be shared to assist managers, coordinators, educators and other staff to fulfil their roles effectively.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this policy every two years.

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.

Relevant Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Standards Australia New Zealand 2023 - Find out which Food Safety Management Tools apply to your business - https://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/retail/standard-322a-food-safety-management-tools/standard-322a-food-safety-tools-quiz • Guidelines to Food Safety Supervisors (FFS) requirements - https://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/FSS_Guidelines.pdf • Showing food is safe - https://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/retail/standard-322a-food-safety-management-tools/showing-food-safe • NSW Government Food Authority - Free basic food Handlers courses www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/training/food-handler-basics-training
Related Guidelines, standards & frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
Related to NQS QA	1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 6.1
Related Policies	Nutrition requirements, Medical conditions, Child health statement
Sources & Further Reading	Policy adapted from Community Early Learning Australia

POLICY CREATED	MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
November 2024	Policy created	2026