



Healthy food supply and nutrition policy

National Quality Standard Area 2 | Children's health and safety

Children have the right to experience quality education and care in an environment that safeguards and promotes their health, safety, and wellbeing.

Purpose

Department preschools, children's centres, and kindergartens support healthy choices by promoting healthy eating and physical activity. Learning about healthy lifestyles in the children's everyday routines and experiences is encouraged by this site.

A strong sense of health and wellbeing supported by good nutrition and an active lifestyle provides children with confidence, energy and optimism that contributes to their ability to concentrate, co-operate, and learn.

Learning about healthy lifestyles, including nutrition and physical fitness, is integral to wellbeing and self-confidence

This policy applies to all staff at this site.



Food curriculum

Our food and nutrition curriculum:

- > Is consistent with the *Australian Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*, and the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*.
- > Includes activities that provide children with knowledge, attitudes and skills to make positive healthy food choices and learn about the variety of foods available for good health.
- > Includes opportunities for children to develop practical food skills like preparing and cooking healthy food.
- > Is integrated into our program and consistent with the Early Years Learning Framework and NQS.
- > Lunchtime is part of the curriculum and children are encouraged to talk about food and nutrition in a positive, relaxed, social eating environment where self-help skills are promoted.
- > We positively encourage children to eat and support them to put left over food back in their lunch boxes in order to help families to plan future meals.

The learning environment

We believe that early childhood is an important time for establishing lifelong, healthy eating habits and can benefit the children in the following ways:

1. Maximises growth, development, activity levels and good health
2. Minimises the risk of diet related diseases later in life
3. Good nutrition contributes to good health and wellbeing and this is vital for positive engagement in learning activities
4. Children should be eating crunchy foods (in line with advice from speech pathologists and dentists)
5. Use our garden to learn about and experience growing, harvesting and preparing nutritious food

Therefore:

- > Our staff model and encourage healthy eating behaviours
- > Food and drink are consumed in a safe, supportive environment for all children
- > Parents and caregivers are encouraged to supply healthy foods that fit within the **Right Bite** strategy for their children

Our site:

- > Provides rewards/encouragements that are not related to food or drink
- > Understands and promotes the importance of breakfast and regular meals for children
- > Teaches the importance of healthy meals and snacks as part of the curriculum
- > Is a breastfeeding friendly site

Food supply

Families are asked to provide healthy food for their child to eat. Lunches are stored inside but are not refrigerated; therefore cool packs are required and are to be supplied by families. Educators are unable to reheat food. If children require warm food, families need to pack it in a thermos already heated. Please ensure that all lunch boxes, containers and drink bottles are clearly named.

Emergency Food provision

On occasion children may come to Preschool without food, not enough food or their food may become inedible during the day. When this happens, the Centre will contact the family to arrange for food to be provided. If family are unable to attend the Centre, we will provide emergency food for the child. Emergency food kept on site has a long shelf life and is stored in a cool dry place. Children's allergies, health needs and expiry dates of emergency food stores are checked before children are provided with food. If staff have been

unable to inform families of emergency food provision at the time it is provided, they will inform families at pick up time.

Snack time

Generally, the less packaging in a lunch box the healthier it is for children. Fresh fruits, vegetables or a piece of cheese are recommended for snack time. We understand that from time-to-time families may run out of fruit. A healthy sandwich (multigrain or wholemeal bread), with savoury filling, dried fruit, or plain unsalted crackers (e.g., Vitawheats) are acceptable. Children will be encouraged to eat their fruit first.

This:

- > Provides children with important minerals and vitamins
- > Encourages a taste for healthy foods
- > Encourage healthy food and drink choices
- > Encourages chewing which promotes oral muscle development
- > Ensure healthy food choices are promoted and are culturally sensitive and inclusive

Lunch time

The Healthy Eating Guidelines apply to lunchtime. We encourage healthy food and drink choices for children in line with the **Rite Bite Strategy**. Parents are encouraged to follow the above guidelines and speak with staff if they have any issues. A healthy lunch box might include a sandwich, wraps, sushi, rice crackers, fruit, yoghurt, cheese, vegie sticks etc. Please avoid sending chocolate, muesli bars, roll ups, Nutella, lollies, chocolate chip biscuits, buns, muffins, cakes, sweet slices, chips, crisps etc.

Progressive snack

The Kindy and Occasional Care programs provide opportunities in the morning and afternoon for children to eat when they are hungry and recharge for the remainder of the session. Children are supported to recognize when they are hungry and independently access their snacks. A snack table is set up exclusively for snack times and is kept clean for eating.

Water

Children have fresh, clean water available at all times and are encouraged to drink water regularly throughout the day. Children are also encouraged to bring their own named drink bottle, which they can place on the trolley for easy access throughout the session.

Special occasions and birthday guidelines

Please do not send cakes or other birthday food treats with your child. We will celebrate children's special events in culturally considerate ways that do not involve food or gifts at children's request.

Food safety

Our site:

- > Promotes and teaches food safety to children during food learning/cooking activities
- > Promotes and encourages correct hand washing procedures with children
- > Cooks healthy options using produce from our kindergarten garden
- > Provides recipes for families – there are recipe books in our parent library
- > Provides a fridge for the storage of children's lunch boxes in extreme weather (temperature is checked daily)
- > Does not reheat children's food
- > Children will sit down to eat

- > Children will not share their food with other children

Supporting Families

- > We connect with health professionals to support families and children with nutrition, eating and drinking
- > We provide information from health professionals to families and caregivers on the Healthy Eating Guidelines through a variety of media such as regular newsletters, policy development and review, information on enrolment, poster displays and the website

Guidelines for Children with specific Dietary Requirements

We liaise with families to ensure a suitable food supply for children with health support plans that are related to food issues (e.g., allergies, dietary requirements, diabetes, cultural and religious etc.). please speak to staff regarding your child's individual needs.

Allergy aware

It is a requirement that all food provided for your child does not contain an allergen that may impact a child currently attending the Centre. At times, there are children enrolled who have an anaphylactic allergy to nuts, eggs, and egg products or other foods. This means that there can be serious and even fatal consequences for these children if they come into contact with these ingredients. Parents and caregivers are asked to provide lunchbox foods that do not contain allergens the Centre has identified. Products containing "traces of nuts" which are found on most packaged foods are generally fine unless there is a child with specific allergy to traces as well. Information about allergens not to include in children's lunches will be sent to families via email and displayed by the entrance to the Preschool.

What happens when an allergen containing food or not enough food is supplied? If your child has an allergen containing food item, a three stage response will occur. The food item will be placed in the kitchen to be returned to the child at the end of the day. The parent/carer will be contacted on the day (either in person or by phone). Your child will be supplied with an alternative healthy food by staff, for example a piece of fruit, something from our vegetable garden or some savoury crackers. A staff member will follow-up with the parent/caregiver if allergen containing foods continue to be supplied. If not enough food is supplied a similar response will occur. Staff will offer support to families where any food related concerns arise.

Supporting information

See also risk assessment for food,

Approvals

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Approved by: Heather Fuss | Director, Ardtornish Children's Centre

Approved by: Governing Council, Ardtornish Children's Centre

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