

<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>Nutrition, food, beverages and Dietary Requirements</b>
<b>Effective Date:</b>	December 2016
<b>Review Date:</b>	As required

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

This policy is concerned with the establishment of healthy eating and drinking habits for children and with ensuring that mealtimes are viewed as an opportunity for positive social interactions with and amongst the children. Good nutrition is necessary for the active growth and development that takes place in early childhood.

To support the development of healthy eating habits ICC will:

- Provide snacks and meals at the Centre that are varied, interesting and nutritionally sound – based on the national dietary guidelines for children (National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings).
- Present and serve food in ways which can promote and develop children's social skills and encourage their participation in food preparation.
- Role model healthy eating and encourage young children to make healthier food choices

## **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

This policy was developed according to the following resources: the Accreditation Helpline, Central Coast Area Health Service Nutrition Department, Caring for Infants by Health and Family Services and ICC family feedback.

This policy was ratified by the Management Committee in May 2003. It was reviewed by staff and Management Committee after the Draft Health and Safety in Child Care Centres Model Policies and Practices – 2003, was consulted in October 2005. Reviewed again in July 2007 – no changes made. Changes made to include references to the Children's Services Regulation 2004 after a Department of Community Services spot check in January 2008. Reviewed and these changes approved by the Management Policy Sub-Committee group in February 2008. Reviewed again in December 2010 – no changes made. In 2017 changes were made to reflect the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. Reviewed in 2016 and no changes made.

## **SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

Inner City Care (ICC) recognises the importance establishing healthy eating habits for optimal growth and developmental outcomes. We are committed to supporting

the children in our care to develop positive, healthy approaches to their food and drink choices. We view mealtimes to be an opportunity for positive social interactions, in an atmosphere that reinforces positive attitudes to food and eating.

## **POLICY DETAIL/ BUSINESS RULES**

### **ICC will encourage, support and promote breastfeeding and work with parents to support the appropriate introductions of solid food**

- Apply current national infant feeding recommendations.
- Support breastfeeding mothers by providing 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 breastmilk and infant formula including transporting, storing, thawing, warming, preparing and bottle feeding.
- In consultation with families, offer filtered water as an additional drink from around 6 months of age.
- Always bottle feed babies by holding baby in a semi-upright position. Encourage the child to hold the bottle independently to promote self-help skills (when child reaches an appropriate age).
- Always supervise babies while drinking and eating - ensuring safe bottle feeding and eating practices at all times.
- In consultation with families, determine appropriate foods (type and texture) are introduced around 6 months of age. New foods should only be added after consultation with parents.
- In consultation with families, offer a variety of foods to babies from all the food groups. Food consumed should be variously interesting, nutritious and easily consumed. Special care should be taken to maintain nutrient value in the food, and not simply overcook it in an effort to make it readily digestible. The texture of the food should be varied once babies have passed the “mushed food” stage.

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

- Provide children with a wide variety of healthy and nutritious foods for meals and snacks including fruit and vegetables, wholegrain cereal products, dairy products, lean meats and alternatives.
- Plan and display the service menu (at least two weeks at a time) that is based on sound menu planning principles and meets the daily nutritional needs of children whilst in care.
- Plan healthy snacks on the menu to complement what is served at mealtimes and ensure the snacks are 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.

## **The following broad, meal related guidelines have evolved over time. ICC serves meals:**

- that are whole and fresh
- high in natural fibre
- low in salt and added sugars
- that comprise lean red meats a minimum of 4 times per fortnight
- that comprise chicken, fish, pork, veal a minimum of 3 times per fortnight
- that comprise vegetarian dishes a minimum of twice per fortnight
- that are consistent with recommended balances of the 5 food groups
- the ingredients of which are stored, prepared and served in a hygienic manner
- that are sensitive to individual developmental and dietary needs, restrictions and preferences
- that are prepared in ways that maintain the maximum amount of nutritional value
- that promote the social aspect of mealtimes
- that facilitate some participation in meal preparation to develop children's skills
- that combine the intake of liquid: milk and water is served regularly throughout the day; soft drinks or flavoured milk will not be served (juice and cordial will not be provided by the Centre).
- that are within the budget.

## **Please note:**

- For children under 3 there is a limited ability to fully digest some high fiber foods, for example beans.
- Foods which fall outside the guidelines – junk food and sweets, etc. – will not be offered as bribes or rewards.

### **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.
- Ensure young children do not have access to foods that may cause choking.
- Ensure all children remain seated while eating and drinking.
- Always supervise children while eating and drinking.

### **Safe food handling**

- Encourage and provide opportunities for cooking 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
- Ensure gloves are worn or food tongs/utensils are used by all staff distributing foods (if utensils are used there is no need for educators to wear gloves too).
- Children and staff wash and dry their hands thoroughly before handling food or eating meals and snacks.
- Food is stored and served at safe temperatures i.e. 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.
- Ensuring that individuals preparing and handling food know, follow and adhere to the appropriate hygiene procedures. This includes:
  - o Washing their hands

- o Keeping their personal hygiene at a high level. For example, tying their hair back
- o Covering cuts with a band aid and gloves
- o Not changing nappies before preparing food.

### **Provide a positive eating environment which respects cultural and family values**

Educators will:

- Sit with the children during meal and snack times to provide a positive role model, to maintain a relaxed, social, enjoyable atmosphere 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.
- Encourage older toddlers and preschoolers to assist to set and clear the table, to serve their own food and drink and to eat independently – providing opportunities for them to develop independence and self-esteem.
- Respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied educators will not insist he/she eats.
- Be patient with messy or slow eaters. Slow eater should be encouraged to take their time and enjoy their meal.
- 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.

### **Responding positively to issues at mealtimes**

Children have limited choices about what they eat – it is often what adults serve them rather than what they most wish to eat – and we should respect the choices they do make within the limits we set. Sometimes children may use food to gain attention and/or achieve other goals. They will eat if they are hungry and should not receive reinforcement for negative behaviour. *Food should not be used as a punishment or reward.* Dessert should not be withheld as a punishment for previous refusal – that may reinforce the perception of food as something to be toyed with, and deny the child the nutritional value of the second course. Dessert should incorporate fruits and other healthy “sweets” as much as possible and be nutritionally sound as it forms an essential part of the meal.

Fussy eaters are encouraged to eat what is being served. However, if a child does not even try the main meal they will be given bread and salad. Dessert will still be offered but it will be in the form of fruit or yoghurt – not the ice cream or ice blocks which may be on the menu. The lunch will be wrapped up without any fuss and the child will be told they will be offered it again after sleep time (the majority of the time the children are more than happy to eat the meal at that time). If a child tastes the main meal and declares they do not like it, this is fine and normal dessert will be offered to them. It is important that staff consult with parents on any issues rising from individuals at mealtimes. This and any strategies should then be communicated to all staff so that there can be consistency for the child. Snacks in the form of fruit can be given outside of meals if a child is hungry.

Children may be given small portions to commence with. This removes the pressure from having to 'eat it all' and it minimises waste and shows respect for the earth's resources. Children should be encouraged to finish what is on their plate before being given seconds. Be aware that children may not like what remains on their plate, but may still be hungry and wanting something else being offered. Adults should respect that children have different tastes and preferences.

### **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.
- Ensure eating utensils and the furniture used when eating is of a shape and size that encourage development of eating skills and independence in eating by children.
- Encourage children to participate in a variety of 'hands-on' food preparation experiences.
- The Centre seeks to compliment the pleasurable nature of mealtimes by involving children in food preparation and the set-up for mealtimes – and support experimentation in line with an inclusion philosophy.
- 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 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.
- We request that details of any food allergies or intolerances or specific dietary requirements be provided to the Centre. We will strive to 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.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
Approved Provider/Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011.</li><li>• Allocate finances for training and food safety.</li><li>• Allocate finances to ensure provision of nutritionally balanced and culturally sensitive meals as required.</li><li>• Ensuring the Centre implements adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children.</li></ul>
Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure adequate health and hygiene practices for handling, preparing and storing food are implemented at the service to minimise risks to children.</li><li>• Ensuring children have access to safe drinking water and healthy food on a regular basis throughout the day.</li><li>• Ensuring that the weekly menu, which accurately describes the meals is on display for parent.</li></ul>

<p>Early Childhood Educators</p> <p>Certified Supervisor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring the dietary needs of individual children are meet.</li> <li>• Respecting the needs and choices of the individual children.</li> <li>• Ensuring mealtimes for children are a positive experience for children.</li> <li>• Supervising children during mealtimes.</li> <li>• Ensuring older children have unlimited access to their bottles.</li> <li>• Offering younger children access to their bottles frequently throughout the day (for younger children bottles will be monitored closely to reduce the risk of cross-infection)</li> <li>• Encouraging all children to drink water throughout the day, refill the bottles when necessary.</li> <li>• Adhering to ICC's Health and Hygiene Policy.</li> <li>• Encourage children to use water to rinse their mouths after eating – particularly after lunch to prevent tooth decay</li> <li>• Promote healthy food choices</li> </ul>
<p>Families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring a water bottle is provided for their child each day. Please take home, clean, refill and return the bottles (the bottles kept at the Centre are offered to the children on a regular basis throughout the day).</li> <li>• Communicate to educators their child's dietary requirements, likes, dislikes and any cultural or other requirements families have regarding their child's nutrition</li> <li>• Contribute menu ideas and recipes.</li> </ul>



## **AUTHORITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES**

The Centre Director is responsible for ensuring all ICC staff have training in this policy.

All ICC staff are accountable for the implementation of this policy.

## **RELATED GUIDELINES, STANDARDS, FRAMEWORKS**

**-National Quality Standard, Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice– Standards 1.1, 1.2**

**-National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety– Standards 2.1, 2.2, 2.3**

**-National Quality Standard, Quality Area 3: Physical Environments 3.2**

**-National Quality Standard, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements– Standards 4.1, 4.2**

**-National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children– Standards 5.1, 5.2**

**-National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities – Standards 6.1**

**-National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management – Standards 7.1, 7.3**

## **RELATED LEGISLATION**

**Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167**

- Fail to protect children from harm and hazards

**Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 78-80**

- Access to safe drinking water and regular food and beverages (Regulation 78)
- Service providing food and beverages (Regulation 79)
- Weekly menu (Regulation 80)

**Work Health and Safety Act 2011**

## Sources

- Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. (2009). *Get Up Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood & Grow: Staff and Carer Book*.
- New South Wales (NSW) Food Authority. (2015). Health and Hygiene Requirements of Food Handlers.
- Nutrition Australia – [www.nutritionaustralia.org](http://www.nutritionaustralia.org)
- Healthy Kids NSW

## OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

Children's Services Regulation 2004  
Dental Care Policy  
Food Preparation and Handling Procedure.  
Health and Hygiene Policy

## APPROVAL

Approved by Management Committee	
<div> <div>Signature:</div> <div>Title:</div> </div> <div> <div>Date:</div> </div>	
Meeting number and date:	
Resolution number:	
Policy Owner:	Inner City Care
Effective Date:	
Review Date:	

