

Tocumwal Pre-School

SECTION: 2 – Children’s Health and Safety

POLICY NO: 2.4.0

POLICY: Nutrition and healthy eating practices

REVIEW DATE: 15.2.18

DATE OF APPROVAL:

Introduction

Good nutrition is essential to healthy living and enables children to be active participants in play and leisure. Our Centre provides many opportunities for children to experience a range of healthy foods and to learn about food choices from educators and other children. Learning about healthy lifestyles, including nutrition is integral to children’s wellbeing and self-confidence (Early Years Learning Framework, page 30). Maintaining healthy and nutritious eating practices and implementing safe food practices is important for high quality care. Food experiences need to be reflective of local culture and diversity, meet individual dietary requirements and include seasonal produce. Foods need to be colourful, fragrant, have different textures and be presented in an inviting way.

Goals – What are we going to do?

Our Centre 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. The Centre provides a variety of food and cooking experiences to enhance the children’s knowledge about food, nutrition and healthy eating practices. The Centre is committed to implementing the healthy eating key messages outlined in Munch & Move and to supporting the National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings as outlined in the Get up & Grow resources. This information will be shared with families and children and learning about healthy lifestyles underpins everyday routines and experiences.

National Quality Framework, Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice

Standard 1.1 The educational program enhances each child’s learning and development..

- 1.1.2 Each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interest are the foundation of the program

National Quality Framework, Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety

Standard 2.1 Each child's health and physical development is supported and promoted

- 2.1.3 Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.

Strategies - How will it be done?

The Approved Provider will:

- Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Amended Regulations 2014
- Allocate finances for training and food safety.

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- 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.
- 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. (See Section 2, Policy 2.3.0 Managing Food Allergies & Anaphylaxis)
- 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 newsletters, during orientation, information sessions and informal discussion.
- Promote healthy eating habits by making meal and snack routines positive, social experiences. Children will be encouraged to talk about the foods they are eating and discuss nutrition, food preferences and healthy choices.

- 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.
- Discourage the provision of highly processed snack foods high in fat, salt and sugar and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes. Examples of these foods include lollies, chocolates, sweet biscuits, muesli bars, breakfast bars, fruit filled bars, chips, oven-baked crackers and corn chips.
- Encourage families to provide food that is consistent with the *Australian Government guidelines Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood*, and/or *The Australian Dietary Guidelines and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*
- Ensure adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food are implemented at the service to minimise risks to children
- Ensure children being cared for by the service have access to safe drinking water at all times and are offered food and beverages on a regular basis throughout the day
- Ensure that food provided is chosen with regards to the dietary requirements of individual children and takes into account food intolerances or allergies, cultural and family preferences and children's likes and dislikes and that staff will respect these choices when planning food experiences to meet the needs of children and families (refer Section 2, Policy 2.3.0 Managing Food Allergies & Anaphylaxis)
- Ensure that children who have not eaten at the routine time or who are hungry are provided with food at times other than during routine meal and snack times
- Acknowledge children's age and development and encourage staff to assist children to implement self-help skills to feed or service themselves.
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times when they are eating and drinking.
- Encourage families and staff to share recipes and cooking skills and interests with the children. Cooking experiences need to be considerate of food intolerances and children's culture.
- Provide information on healthy foods and nutrition to families and staff on a regular basis using resources from recognised nutrition authorities. This information will also be available in home languages. Food and nutrition will be discussed with children regularly at meal times and incorporated into the Centre's curriculum to increase children's knowledge of nutrition, food types and food sources.

Educators will:

- Adhere to the strategies and practices of the Nutrition and healthy eating practices Policy.
- Ensure children's individual dietary needs are adhered to.
- Be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances and special diets and consult with families to develop individual management plans
- Respect the individual needs and choices of children.
- Actively supervise children during meal times.
- Adhere to the services Hygiene Policy.
- 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.
- Model, reinforce and implement healthy eating and nutrition practices with children during mealtimes
- Utilise resources when planning food experiences that reflect and are consistent with the Australian Government guidelines Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood, and/or the key messages outlined in Munch and Move
- Provide positive meal time experiences for children by sitting with the children at all meal and snack times to role model and discuss healthy eating choices, caring for their bodies and nutrition.
- Acknowledge children's individual food preferences and children will be encouraged to try a range of foods without being required to eat food they don't like or to eat more than they want and no child will be forced to eat or have food withheld at any time.

Families will:

- Communicate regularly with educators/ staff regarding children's specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs, including food preferences and/or allergies or intolerances

- Contribute program ideas and recipes.

Evaluation

The Centre will provide nutritional food experiences for the children, reflecting diverse family backgrounds and children's individual food preferences or tolerances. The routine is planned to ensure meal and snack times are positive experiences for staff and children where children's choices are respected. Meal and snack times are social experiences where staff and children discuss healthy food choices, nutrition, food types and food sources.

Statutory Legislation & Considerations

- *National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care, February 2018*
- *Education and Care Services National Amended Regulations 2014, Regulations 78–80, 168*

Sources

- Department of Education and Communities - www.dec.nsw.gov.au
- Community Childcare Co-operative Ltd. (NSW) - www.cccnsw.org.au
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) www.acecqa.gov.au
- Healthy Kids NSW: www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au
- Nutrition Australia: www.nutritionaustralia.org
- Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (2009), Get up & grow: Healthy eating and physical activity for early childhood—Directors/co-ordinators book.
[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/EA1E1000D846FOAFCA257BF0001DADB3/\\$File/HEPA%20-%20A4%20Book%20-%20Directors%20Book%20-%20LR.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/EA1E1000D846FOAFCA257BF0001DADB3/$File/HEPA%20-%20A4%20Book%20-%20Directors%20Book%20-%20LR.pdf)
- Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (2009), Get up & grow: Healthy eating and physical activity for early childhood—Family book
[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/F5698F4E9CB73B94CA257BF000217BF6/\\$File/HEPA%20-%20B5%20Book%20-%20Family%20Book_LR.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/F5698F4E9CB73B94CA257BF000217BF6/$File/HEPA%20-%20B5%20Book%20-%20Family%20Book_LR.pdf)
- Guide to the National Quality Framework, February 2018.