

Nutrition, Food and Beverages – Service Provided



Background

Good nutrition is essential to healthy living and enables children to be active participants in play and leisure. Education and care settings provide many opportunities for children to experience a range of healthy foods and to learn about food choices from educators and other children.

Policy statement

This Policy details Little Learners Day Care Centre's approach to mealtimes when the food and beverages consumed by children while at the Service are provided by the Service. It also describes the way educators use mealtimes for a happy and social occasion, and for developing lifelong healthy food choices.

Strategies and practices

- The Service's *Nutrition, Food and Beverage* Policy is explained to parents at enrolment.
- At enrolment, parents provide the Service with details of their child's food and drink allergies and of any cultural preferences in food. The enrolment form has provision for parents to provide the Service with details of any special dietary requirements (e.g. allergies, culture, religion, food preferences). Parents are asked to update this information when any changes occur.
- The Service serves all of the children's food and drink requirements over the day – with the exception of babies' bottles. The food and drink are nutritious, appropriate to each child (as detailed in the enrolment form) and consistent with *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood*, and/or *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*.
- The weekly menu accurately describes the food and beverages for each day and is displayed prominently for parents.
- The Service maintains a list of children with special food requirements for health or medical reasons (e.g. allergies, intolerances). This information is displayed in the food preparation areas and strategically throughout the Service. Relief staff are informed of these dietary requirements when they begin their shift.
- Birthdays are an important part of a child's life, If your child attends the service on the day of his/hers birthday, kitchen staff will make a cake on the premises to have for afternoon tea.
- Meals served to children with dietary requirements/restrictions and allergies/intolerances are served on red plates/bowls.
- All meals are prepared on the premises at the Service. We ensure they are nutritious & meet guidelines.
- Food is presented attractively. Pureed meat, vegetables and fruit will be offered to younger children (0-2 years).

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- The healthy eating message is promoted and positively reinforced amongst families through notice boards, newsletters, information nights, educator-parent meetings, the website and up-to-date materials from recognised authorities.
- Educators promote healthy eating in children, by including the topic in daily routines and in other intentional teaching such as role-modelling, discussions, songs, stories, games, using different cultural meal settings, and cooking experiences.
- Meal times are relaxed, pleasant and unhurried. Educators sit and eat with the children, maintaining good personal nutrition, and talk with them on topics of interest, including, but not limited to, healthy food and nutrition.
- Developmentally appropriate eating utensils and furniture are provided for each child. Children, including toddlers, are encouraged to be independent and develop social skills at meal times.
- Food is never used to reward or punish children.
- Milk & Water are supplied throughout the day at the Service.
- Children are encouraged to eat, and taste new foods. They are not required to eat food they do not like, or to eat more than they want.
- Safe drinking water is readily accessible to children at all times, and educators encourage children to drink water at frequent intervals.
- The Service provides all crockery and cutlery for the children. **Drink bottles and sippy cups are not permitted from home.** Health and safety is maintained for all children.
- Staff follow all regulatory requirements for preparing and serving food. These include handwashing, wearing gloves, using tongs to handle food, ensuring children do not share utensils or use those that have been dropped. (Refer to the *Service's Food Preparation, Storage and Handling Policy*).
- Parents are informed of their child's food and beverage intake on the Daily Feedback Sheet (Under 3's). Educators discuss face-to-face with parents any concerns about a child who has not eaten well.
- Because of the increasing number of children at risk of anaphylaxis, the Service is a 'Nut-Free and Egg Free Zone' & a 'No Food from home Zone' (i.e. no nuts or foods containing nuts or nut derivatives can be brought into or used in the Service).
- All cooking activities – handling, preparation, consumption of food – take into account children's individual needs and known allergies.
- The Service provides staff with appropriate training in safe food handling. They are provided with current information on nutrition for young children, with special regard to cultural preferences.

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- Parents are surveyed to obtain their feedback about the Service's menu (e.g. child's likes, dislikes, individual needs, cultural appropriateness). They can choose to complete the Menu – Parent Survey (Brief) or the Menu – Parent Survey (Detailed).
- Educators seek children's opinion of the menu and help them to complete the Menu – Child Survey.

Additional safe practices for babies

- Educators follow the Service's written Expressed Breast Milk (EBM) and Formula – Storing and Heating Procedure when storing and heating babies' bottles.

Responsibilities of parents

- To provide the Service with details of their child's known food allergies at enrolment, and to inform the Service immediately any changes occur.
- To discuss their child's food allergies, if any, with them (older children) and to ensure they understand the importance of not sharing food.

Links to other policies

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Injuries, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Student, Volunteers and Visitors Policy

Sources

- Better Health. (2013). *Breast milk – expressing*. http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Bottle_feeding_with_expressed_breast_milk accessed 24 November 2013
- Early Years Learning Framework 2022
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2018.

Further reading and useful websites

- Australian Breastfeeding Association – <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/> accessed 24 November 2013
- Better Health Channel. (2011). *Fact sheet: Child care and healthy eating*.

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[http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcv2/pdf.nsf/ByPDF/Childcare_and_healthy_eating/\\$File/Childcare_and_healthy_eating.pdf](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcv2/pdf.nsf/ByPDF/Childcare_and_healthy_eating/$File/Childcare_and_healthy_eating.pdf) accessed 24 November 2013

- Nutrition Australia. (2009). *Get up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for early Childhood* http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/pdf/doha/Family_FT.pdf accessed 24 November 2013
- Nutrition Australia. (n.d.). *Factsheets for Healthy Eating* <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/resources> accessed 24 November 2013
- Nutrition Australia – <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/vic/nutrition-services-early-learning-centres> accessed 24 November 2013
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2003). *The Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia incorporating The Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers* http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/n34.pdf accessed 24 November 2013
- Royal Children’s Hospital Melbourne – <http://www.rch.org.au/home/>

Policy review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur, and any issues identified as part the Service’s commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.