

COONARA EARLY LEARNING CENTRE POLICY NO: 25

NUTRITION AND ACTIVE PLAY POLICY

We acknowledge the importance of healthy eating, oral health and physical activity and its contribution to good health and overall wellbeing.

This policy will provide guidelines to:

- Promote a healthy lifestyle to children, educators, staff and families at the service, including eating nutritious food, the importance of oral health and participating in physical activity
- Provide opportunities for active play
- Encourage children to make healthy lifestyle choices consistent with national and state guidelines and recommendations
- Ensure that the dietary and cultural needs of the children and families are taken into consideration when planning service events and activities.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN’S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1	Health	Each child’s health and physical activity is supported and promoted
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
2.1.3	Healthy lifestyles	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS	
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
78	Food and beverages
79	Service providing food and beverages
80	Weekly menu
90	Medical conditions policy
91	Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
160	Child enrolment records to be kept by approved provider and family day care educator
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures

COONARA EARLY LEARNING CENTRE POLICY NO: 25

170	Policies and Procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

RELATED POLICIES

Administration of First Aid Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy Enrolment Policy Excursions / Incursions Policy	Family Communication Policy Governance Policy Health and Safety Policy Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy Medical Conditions Policy
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PURPOSE

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) Services are required by legislation to ensure the provision of healthy foods and drinks that meet the requirements for children according to the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*. It is essential that our Service partners with families to provide education about nutrition and promote healthy eating habits for young children to positively influence their health and wellbeing. Dietary and healthy eating habits formed in the early years are shown to continue into adulthood and can reduce the risk factors associated with chronic adult conditions such as obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Our Service recognises the importance of healthy eating for the growth, development, and wellbeing of young children and is committed to promoting and supporting healthy food and drink choices for children in our care. This policy affirms our position on the provision of healthy food and drink while children are in our care and the promotion and education of healthy choices for optimum nutrition.

Our service is committed to:

- Promoting nutritious food and eating habits that will contribute to healthy growth and development in children
- Ensuring that at times food preparation, oral health and healthy eating will be included in the educational program. Careful consideration will be given to nutrition, dietary requirements, allergies, sustainable practices, waste and sensitivity to cultural practices.
- Providing a safe, supportive and social environment in which children can enjoy eating

COONARA EARLY LEARNING CENTRE POLICY NO: 25

- Consulting and working collaboratively with families in regard to their child's nutrition and dietary requirements, including responding appropriately to food allergies and recognising culture and religious practices and lifestyles choices
- Ensuring that food and drink items provided by the service are consistent with national and state guidelines and recommendations
- Providing children and families with opportunities to learn about food, nutrition, oral health and healthy lifestyles
- Ensuring adequate health and hygiene procedures, including safe practices for handling, preparing, storing and serving food
- Encouraging physical activity by providing a range of active play experiences for all children at the service

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, approved provider, nominated supervisor, visitors, and management of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service has a responsibility to help children to develop good food practices and approaches, by working with families and educators.

NUTRITION

[Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian guide to healthy eating and the dietary guidelines for children and adolescents](#)

OUR SERVICE WILL:

[WHERE FOOD IS BROUGHT FROM HOME:](#)

- provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and that are suitable for children's lunchboxes
- provide information to families on how to read the *Nutritional Information Panel* on food and drink labels
- 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

COONARA EARLY LEARNING CENTRE POLICY NO: 25

- strongly discourage the provision of highly processed snack foods high in fat, salt, and/or sugar, and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes. Examples of these foods include sweet biscuits, some muesli bars, breakfast bars and fruit filled bars, and chips.
- food items that should not be brought to the service include confectionary (lollies, sweets, chocolate, jelly), deep fried foods (chicken nuggets, fish fingers) and sugary drinks (cordial, energy drinks).

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/MANAGEMENT WILL:

- Ensuring that the service environment and educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for eating and active play
- Ensuring that all educators and staff are encouraged to engage in active learning experiences around healthy eating and oral health e.g. through growing, harvesting and healthy cooking experiences.
- Providing ongoing information, resources and support to families, to assist in the promotion of optimum health, including oral health, for young children
- Ensuring the implementation of adequate health and hygiene procedures, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, to minimise risks to children being educated cared for by the service
- Ensuring that all educators and staff comply with the *Food Safety Act*
- Ensuring that all educators and staff are aware of a child's food allergies and/or other medical conditions on enrolment or on initial diagnosis
- Ensuring measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies
- Ensuring that all educators and staff are aware of, and plan for, the dietary needs of children diagnosed with diabetes
- Providing healthy suggestions for morning/afternoon tea and/or lunchboxes for children
- Ensuring that fresh drinking water (preferably tap water) is readily available at all times, and reminding children to drink water throughout the session, including at snack/lunch times
- Ensuring that food and drinks are available to children at frequent and regular intervals throughout the session.
- Ensuring that all celebrations, fundraising activities and other service events are consistent with the purposes and values of this policy and service

TEACHERS/EDUCATORS WILL:

- Complying with the service's *Nutrition and Active Play Policy* and with the *Food Safety Act*
- Implementing adequate health and hygiene procedures, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, to minimise risks to children
- Being aware of a child's food allergies and/or other medical conditions on enrolment at the service or on initial diagnosis and sign an acknowledgement at the commencement of each session.
- Implementing measures to prevent cross- contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies and/or diabetes

COONARA EARLY LEARNING CENTRE POLICY NO: 25

- Being aware of, and planning for, the dietary needs of children diagnosed with diabetes
- Ensuring that the service environment and the educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for eating, oral health and active play
- Ensuring that all educators and staff are encouraged to engage in active learning experiences around healthy eating and oral health e.g. through growing, harvesting and healthy cooking experiences.
- Discussing healthy eating choices with children, introducing the concept of ‘sometimes’ foods and drinks, and role-modelling positive behaviors exploring and discussing diverse culture, religious, social and family lifestyles
- Considering this policy when organising excursions and incursions
- Supporting students to comply with this policy while at the service
- Keeping parents/guardians informed of current information relating to healthy eating, oral health and active play
- Ensuring that fresh drinking water (preferably tap water) is readily available at all times, and reminding children to drink water throughout the session, including at snack/lunch times
- Ensuring children can readily access their own clearly labelled drink containers (where this is a service practice)
- Providing food and drinks at regular intervals, and encouraging children to actively participate in and enjoy, snack/meal times without feeling rushed
- Providing opportunities for children to learn about, and develop skills for oral health through the educational program
- Providing adequate supervision for all children during meal/snack times
- Positive role model eating healthy foods
- Encouraging children to be independent at snack/meal times e.g. opening lunchboxes, pouring drinks, self-feeding, serving and using utensils in a culturally-sensitive way
- Planning and providing outdoor active play that is stimulating, promotes skill development, considers safety issues and provides adequate supervision
- Considering opportunities for children to be physically active indoors, particularly in adverse weather conditions
- Providing daily opportunities for all children to participate in age-appropriate active play
- Acting as positive role models by engaging in physical activity
- Minimising and closely supervising screen-based activities, in line with recommended guidelines
- Providing age-appropriate traffic safety education, including pedestrian and passenger safety to both children and parents/guardians at the service
- Promoting safe behavior through daily practice as part of the program

FOOD HYGIENE

Food poisoning is caused by bacteria, viruses, or other toxins being present in food and can cause extremely unpleasant symptoms such as diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach cramps, and fevers. Children under five years of age are considered a high-risk group as their immune systems are still developing and

COONARA EARLY LEARNING CENTRE POLICY NO: 25

they produce less of the stomach acid required to kill harmful bacteria than older children or adults (Foodsafety.gov. 2019).

Our Service will strictly adhere to food hygiene standards to prevent the risk of food poisoning.

CREATING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Our Service will:

- 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
- choose water as a preferred drink
- 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
- 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
- not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for disciplinary purposes
- role-model and discuss safe food handling with children

SERVICE PROGRAM

Our Service will:

- 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
- provide opportunities for children to engage in discovery learning and discussion about healthy food and drink choices
- embed the importance of healthy eating and physical activity in everyday activities and experiences.

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Cooking can help develop children's knowledge and skills regarding healthy eating habits. Cooking is a great, fun activity and provides opportunities for children to be exposed to new foods, sharing of recipes and cooking skills. On these occasions participating educators will be vigilant to ensure that the experience remains safe, and relevant food hygiene practices are adhered to.

COONARA EARLY LEARNING CENTRE POLICY NO: 25

COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES

Our Service will:

- provide a copy of the *Nutrition and Active Play Policy* to all families upon request.
- provide opportunities for families 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
- 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 factsheets, newsletters, during orientation, information sessions and informal discussion.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Nutrition and Active Play Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with children, families, staff, educators and management.

SOURCE

Australian Breast-Feeding Association Guidelines: <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/>

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2021). *Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements Policy Guidelines*.

Australian Government Department of Education [*Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.V2.0, 2022*](#)

Australian Government Department of Health *Eat for Health The Australian Dietary Guidelines*
<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines>

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).

[*Education and Care Services National Regulations*](#). (Amended 2023).

Food Act 2003

Food Regulation 2015

Food Safety Standards (Australia only). (2015):

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/industry/safetystandards/Pages/default.aspx>

COONARA EARLY LEARNING CENTRE POLICY NO: 25

Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Act 1991

Food Standards Australia New Zealand. (2016). Safe Food Australia – A guide to the food safety standard (3rd Ed.): <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/publications/Pages/safefoodaustralia3rd16.aspx>

Food Standards Australia New Zealand: <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Updated 2023).

National Health and Medical Research Council. Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013):

<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-dietary-guidelines>

National Health and Medical Research Council. Department of Health and Ageing. Infant Feeding Guidelines. (2013):

https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/n56b_infant_feeding_summary_130808.pdf

National Health and Medical Research Council. Eat for health: <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/>

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

The Australian Dental Association: <https://www.ada.org.au/Home>

The Department of Health. Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood – Staff/Carers

Book: [https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/get-up-grow-resource-](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/get-up-grow-resource-collection?utm_source=health.gov.au&utm_medium=callout-auto-custom&utm_campaign=digital_transformation)

[collection?utm_source=health.gov.au&utm_medium=callout-auto-custom&utm_campaign=digital_transformation](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/get-up-grow-resource-collection?utm_source=health.gov.au&utm_medium=callout-auto-custom&utm_campaign=digital_transformation)

Victoria State Government Education and Training Nutrition Australia *Healthy eating in the National Quality*

Standard A guide for early childhood education and care services

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Carol Czaplowski	Nominated Supervisor	
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