

NUTRITION, FOOD, BEVERAGES AND DIETARY REQUIREMENTS POLICY

AIM:

- To role model healthy eating and activity throughout the day to all children and their families;
- To promote the key *Munch and Move* messages to promote healthy and active habits in children from a young age; *see attachment*
- To support families in educating their children about healthy food choices.

RATIONALE:

Research has shown that one in five pre-schoolers are either overweight or obese. By the time children in NSW reach kindergarten, almost 18% are either overweight or obese. The 2007 *National Children's Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey* found that the dietary patterns of many Australian children are less than optimal with high consumption of salt and saturated fat, and low consumption of fruit and vegetables. Given that children are increasingly spending long periods of time in childcare, early childhood educators can role model healthy eating and encourage young children to make healthier food choices. This will contribute to the prevention of weight problems in children, allowing children to thrive physically, socially and intellectually, and in turn contribute to prevention of nutrition-related chronic diseases.

PROCEDURES:

Professional development of staff and educators

- Staff and educators will have access to *Munch and Move* professional development information;
- Staff and educators will have access to the *Get Up and Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings*; *see attachment*
- Staff and educators will be provided with professional development opportunities to refresh their knowledge of children's dietary needs, food handling and hygiene procedures.

Provision of food and drinks at the service

Clarence Family Day Care will:

- ensure that all children have access to safe drinking water at all times;
- ensure that all children are offered food and beverages appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis throughout the day;
- ensure that food and beverages provided by the educator are nutritious and adequate in quantity, and take into consideration each child's individual dietary requirements, growth and development needs and any specific cultural, religious or health requirements; and
- ensure that educators and staff are aware of the need to implement adequate health and hygiene practices and use safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service.

The nominated supervisor will ensure that:

- all children will have access to safe drinking water at all times;
- children are offered food and beverages appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis throughout the day;
- food and beverages provided by the educator are nutritious and adequate in quantity, in consideration of growth and development needs, any known food allergies and intolerances of specific children, and in line with recommended dietary guidelines, and will take into consideration each child's individual dietary requirements, growth and development needs and any specific cultural, religious or health requirements;
- educators and staff implement adequate health and hygiene practices and use safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children; and
- the procedures detailed in the Allergies and Anaphylaxis Policy, and all dietary requirements relating to medical conditions are adhered to by the services educators.

Staff and educators will ensure that:

- healthy eating is promoted through role modelling and, where practical, eating with the children;
- children are encouraged to make healthy food choices;
- all meal times are positive, relaxed and social;
- children are encouraged to try new foods, and their food likes and dislikes are respected;
- children are positively involved in meal times;
- they adhere to best practices around safe storage and heating of both expressed breast milk and formula; and
- they implement adequate health and hygiene practices and use safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children; and
- they comply with the requirements of the Allergies and Anaphylaxis Policy where applicable, and that all dietary requirements relating to medical conditions are adhered to.
- the introduction of solids to babies and toddlers will be done in consultation with families and in line with recognised guidelines.
- if food is provided by the educator it complies with clause 79 (2) (3) (a) (b) and clause 80 (3) (a) (b) of the Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011.
Clause 80 (3) requires that a menu that accurately describes the food and beverages provided to children is displayed and accessible to parents.
- opportunities for physical activity are provided and encouraged.

Supporting families

- Staff and educators will support families' choices regarding infant feeding, including breastfeeding and bottle feeding;
- The service will provide families, where necessary, with up to date information on dietary requirements of young children to ensure optimal growth and development, and provide families with opportunities to discuss ways to maximise the health and well-being of their child/ren.
- The educator will verbally provide families with daily information about their child's intake of food and drinks throughout the day.

Education and information

- Educators will engage children in learning experiences that are fun and enjoyable and incorporate key messages around healthy eating;
- Implemented learning experiences will be guided by the EYLF principles and incorporate the child's identity;
- Families, where necessary, will be provided with current information about recommended guidelines around dietary requirements, TV time and physical activity.

Relevant Legislation: *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011;*
Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010

Key Resources: *Community Childcare Cooperative Ltd. NSW, Policy Template, 2012;*
Munch and Move Resource Manual, NSW Department of Health, 2010;
Get Up and Grow: Healthy Eating & Physical Activity for Early Childhood; Commonwealth Dept. of Health & Ageing, 2009;

Attachment 1

Key Munch and Move Messages

Key Message 1: Choose water as a drink.

Key Message 2: Eat fewer snacks and choose healthier alternatives.

Key Message 3: Eat more fruit and vegetables.

Key Message 4: Get active for an hour or more each day.

Key Message 5: Turn off the television or computer and get active.

Attachment 2

Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings

Healthy eating guideline 1: Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended, with positive support, for babies up to six months. Continued breastfeeding is recommended for at least 12 months – and longer if the mother and baby wish.

Healthy eating guideline 2: If an infant is not breastfed, is partially breastfed, or if breastfeeding is discontinued, use an infant formula until 12 months of age.

Healthy eating guideline 3: Introduce suitable solids at around six months.

Healthy eating guideline 4: Make sure that food offered to children is appropriate to the child's age and development, and includes a wide variety of nutritious foods consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*.

Healthy eating guideline 5: Provide water in addition to age-appropriate milk drinks. Infants under the age of six months who are not exclusively breastfed can be offered cooled boiled water in addition to infant formula.

Healthy eating guideline 6: Plan mealtimes to be positive, relaxed and social.

Healthy eating guideline 7: Encourage children to try different food types and textures in a positive eating environment.

Healthy eating guideline 8: Offer an appropriate amount of food, but allow children to decide themselves how much they will actually eat.

Healthy eating guideline 9: Offer meals and snacks at regular and predictable intervals.

Healthy eating guideline 10: Ensure that food is safely prepared for children to eat – from the preparation stages to consumption.

Physical Activity Recommendations

Recommendation: For healthy development in infants (birth to 1 year), physical activity – particularly supervised floor-based play in safe environments – should be encouraged from birth.

Recommendation: Toddlers (1 to 3 years) and pre-schoolers (3 to 5 years) should be physically active every day for at least three hours, spread throughout the day.

Recommendation: Children younger than two years of age should not spend any time watching television or using other electronic media (DVDs, computer and other electronic games).

Recommendation: For children two to five years of age, sitting and watching television and the use of other electronic media (DVDs, computer and other electronic games) should be limited to less than one hour per day.

Recommendation: Infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers should not be sedentary, restrained or kept inactive for more than one hour at a time – with the exception of sleeping.