



Nutrition, food, drink and dietary policy

PURPOSE

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011 SI 653) - NSW Legislation, all early childhood education and care services must have policies and procedures in place in relation to nutrition, food, drink and dietary requirements. Our policy is consistent with these regulations.

As part of our commitment to children's health, safety and wellbeing, we role-model food safety and hygiene practices, as well as supporting healthy food and drink choices according to each child's needs. (Reference: ACECQA Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary guidelines policy guidelines)

At Thorndon Park Kindergarten support:

- nutrition, food, drink and dietary requirements to promote growth, sustained energy and learning
- the creation of a positive nutrition, food and drink environment in partnership with community and families
- children to develop autonomy and independence in relation to their personal wellbeing
- and given consideration to cultural, religious and community
- environmentally responsible practices
- awareness of the impacts of development, health and medical conditions on children's nutrition and dietary requirements.

POLICY PRINCIPALS

The principles we apply to our decisions and practices about nutrition, food, drink and dietary requirements include:

- prioritising children's health, safety and wellbeing. This includes safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food as well as providing a safe and positive environment for consuming food and drink brought from home
- promoting a healthy lifestyle, including healthy eating and physical activity appropriate for each child.
- valuing and respecting each family's culture, customs and religious traditions, and support children's dietary requirements, food and drink restrictions and food preferences.

Nutrition, food and drink practices and strategies

Promote a positive eating and food learning environment

We will:

- role model and promote positive eating practices, including foods consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines at mealtimes.
- support individual children's health, development and growth, including taking into consideration the impacts of medical conditions and disability on children's nutrition, food, drink and dietary needs.
- support children and families' specific cultural, spiritual and religious values and requirements.
- ensure children have access to drinking water at all times.
- provide reminders at breaks and mealtimes to drink water; offering drinks appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis.
- support sufficient food availability to meet children's dietary requirements.
- incorporate opportunities for children to develop practical food skills, through preparing and cooking healthy food as a part of the curriculum.
- incorporate eating at scheduled break times where food is consumed in a positive social environment with peers and educators.
- our kindergarten provides the experience of growing, harvesting, preparing and consuming nutritious foods in consultation with local community members.
- provide information to support healthy eating.
- provide hand washing facilities for everyone and promote correct hand washing procedures with children and educators.
- invite families in to enjoy cooking experiences with the children.

Food Supplied by families and kindergarten staff

Food is supplied by families or caregivers for their children daily for snack and lunch times. The preschool provides suitable food when it is a part of the program or when the children do not have an adequate snack or lunch provided.

Special events may include families bringing food to share. Our kindergarten has the following guidelines for the provision of food at kindergarten:

- *Morning Snack Time*

Parents and caregivers are asked to supply food primarily from the Everyday Foods or Green Foods Category, to:

- provide children with important minerals and vitamins
 - encourage a taste for healthy fruit and vegetables
 - encourage chewing to promote oral muscle development
- *Lunch Time Food*
- Parents and caregivers are asked to pack nutritious foods
- Fresh sandwich/wraps filled with meat, cheese, salad, spreads (no nuts).
 - Salads, sushi, quiche, frittata, rice, noodles.
 - Fruits, yoghurt, unsalted crackers
 - Drink- water only.

- *Afternoon Snack*

Educators inform children that they may access their lunch box for an afternoon snack during designated times, with opportunities for self-selection supported in a supervised and safe manner.

Allergen management and supervision protocols remain in place at all times when children are eating.

- *Storage and heating of snacks and lunch*

Families are advised to:

- use icepacks to keep food kept in children's bags cool. A thermos can be used to keep lunches warm, however food provided from home is unable to be re-heated.
- water is encouraged at all times and filtered pura-tap water is available at kindergarten. Children are required to bring a named water bottle to kindergarten; however, cups are available for children to borrow as required.

- *Special Events*

Throughout the year the kindergarten may celebrate a significant event or cultural foods days that may include sharing of a wide range of traditional foods. Guidelines that restrict these celebrations may be exempted on these occasions. However, all restricted foods i.e., nut and nut products, will still be excluded. Educators provide families with advice around the provision of food during these events

Whilst it is our intention to acknowledge and celebrate children's birthdays through singing. We ask that no birthday cakes/food items are provided for birthday celebrations.

- *Support Plans – food related*

Health support plans will be implemented with children who have additional health requirements relating to dietary requirements. Action and response plans will consider emergencies and treatment for potential risks associated with food.

Communicate positive and culturally responsive food practices with families

We will:

- consult with families about individual children's developmental needs, dietary requirements and dietary restrictions (including, health and medical needs, food and drink allergies, food and drink intolerances and developmental, cultural and religious food restrictions). This information will be included in the children's enrolment records.
- Support the development of inclusive health support planning to meet children's nutrition, food, drink and dietary requirements and eating environment through implementing the department's <Health support planning for children and students in education and care settings>
- inform families of the preschools' risk minimisation strategies to support children with anaphylaxis, food and drink allergies, food and drink intolerances and restrictions.
- inform and support families to understand that children's voice and agency is a part of the educational program, including mealtimes and other food and drink related experiences.
- Consult with families about their cultural, spiritual and religious values and requirements to support individual children's needs and all children's cultural understandings.

Communicate positive and culturally responsive food practices with families

We will:

- ensure children and staff implement safe hygiene and hand washing practices and safe practices for handling, preparing, storing and eating food.
- actively supervise children at all times when they are eating and drinking, ensure they are seated and provide adequate time to eat and drink, to minimise risk of choking. Choking hazards (food types and sizes) will be considered when preparing, cooking or sharing foods with children, appropriate to age and ability.
- ensure all staff comply with the department's Anaphylaxis and allergies procedure including promoting an allergy-aware environment and developing and implementing risk minimization strategies.
- ensure food is stored within food safe limits.

Create an inclusive and family-friendly environment

We will:

- provide a supportive environment for families to feed their babies and young children, including comfortable seating and facilities to heat bottles.
- promote environmentally responsible and sustainable food and drink practices for food and drink bought to our preschool.

Roles and responsibilities

Preschool director

Lead the development and implementation of this policy in consultation with families and educators and

ensure it reflects your preschool community and that it is accessible and communicated to all families and

educators.

Ensure compliance with the department's related policies and procedures including:

- Supporting children and students with anaphylaxis and severe allergies
- First aid procedure
- Health support planning for children and students in education and care settings

Responding to instances of variations in practices to this policy on a case-by-case,

ensuring each child's developmental and cultural needs are supported and families' decisions and food choices are respected.

Supporting educators to access professional development opportunities to broaden their understanding of children's nutrition, eating behaviours and creating positive and safe eating environments and learning.

Educators

Role model food safety practices, healthy eating and drinking practices and support families understanding of the preschool's approach to nutrition and healthy eating.

Work with other educators, families, and health professionals to implement action plans to support children with specific dietary, eating and drinking requirements, including children with developmental, health and medical conditions.

Raise any issues or concerns regarding implementation of this policy with the preschool director

Families

Provide information to the preschool director about their child's dietary requirements and health support needs, together with the appropriate and current documentation,

equipment and medication.

Support implementation of the preschool's policy.

Seek information and support from our educators about the preschool's nutrition and food practices and raise any concerns with educators or the preschool director.

Governing council

Nutrition, food, drink, and dietary policy

Endorse this policy.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Roles and responsibilities:

Kindergarten Director and staff monitor and review the effectiveness of the Nutrition, food, drink and dietary Policy, along with the Governing Council, as required (minimum every three years).

Approvals

File: Healthy Food and Nutrition Policy

Status: [Approved](#)

Version: 1.0

Policy officer: [Samantha Chirgwin, Thorndon Park Kindergarten](#)

Approved by: [Governing Council Management Committee](#)

Approval date: [6th August, 2018](#)

Review Date: [6th August 2018](#)

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Version: 1.3

Policy officer: [Kate McMahon, Thorndon Park Kindergarten](#)

Approved by: Governing Council Management Committee

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Amendment(s): changes to policy detail wording as per SA Ed Department Updates