



NUTRITION, FOOD,
BEVERAGES AND
DIETARY
REQUIREMENTS
POLICY
P4.0322.3

NUTRITION, FOOD, BEVERAGES AND DIETARY REQUIREMENTS POLICY

DIVISION: Sport, Community and Activation

BRANCH: Community Outcomes - Family Day Care

CATEGORY: 3

PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Good nutrition and physical fitness contribute to children’s health and wellbeing and are central to a healthy lifestyle. The Family Day Care (FDC) setting offers many opportunities for children to learn about healthy eating choices and the importance of physical activity for their growth and development.
- 1.2 Each child has dietary needs related to their growth and development and can also be a requirement of their culture, religion, and individual health care needs. To ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of children while they are in care, each child’s dietary needs must be addressed and met.
- 1.3 We prioritise children’s health and safety and promote the implementation of food safety practices that ensure food is handled, prepared, and stored hygienically minimising risk to children’s health.
- 1.4 The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* require approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place in relation to nutrition, food, beverages, and dietary requirements.
- 1.5 The National Quality Standard requires education and care services to have practices embedded in service provision for ensuring each child’s dietary needs are met, healthy eating and physical activity is promoted, and food is handled, prepared, and stored safely.

2. OBJECTIVE

- 2.1 To ensure we have processes in place for assessing and meeting each child’s dietary needs, promoting practices that support their normal growth and development and ensuring safety through healthy and hygienic food handling.
- 2.2 The healthy eating key messages of the NSW Health Munch and Move program and the healthy eating guidelines of the Get Up & Grow Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood resources are embedded in everyday practice.
- 2.3 We recognise the importance of supporting families in providing healthy food and drink to their children and communicate with families regularly about appropriate dietary recommendations for infants and children.

3. SCOPE

3.1 This policy applies to:

- Camden Council FDC Service
- Staff
- Educators
- Children enrolled in an FDC Service and their families
- Residents
- Students.

4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 **Approved Provider** means a person who holds a provider approval (*Children (Education and Care) Services National Law*). A provider approval authorises a person to apply for one or more education and care service approvals and is valid in all jurisdictions. The Approved Provider for the purposes of this policy is Camden Council.
- 4.2 **Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)** means the independent national authority that assists governments in administering the National Quality Framework including the provision of guidance, resources, and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.
- 4.3 **Co-ordination Unit** means the Camden Council FDC principal office and main faculty for running the Service from which staff work.
- 4.4 **Dietary Requirements** means special considerations for each child’s growth and development related to their food and drink intake and can be cultural, religious or health requirements.
- 4.5 **Educational program** means a program that is delivered in accordance with the National Quality Framework, is based on the individual ages, developmental needs and interests of each child and engages and supports them to achieve the outcomes of the National Approved Learning Frameworks.
- 4.6 **Educator** means an individual suitably qualified and registered by Camden Council FDC to provide education and care and refers to the educator as the business owner, educator assistant or relief educator.
- 4.7 **Family Day Care (FDC)** means a type of education and care service that is run from the educator’s own residence or an approved venue for the purpose of educating and caring for small groups of children aged 0-12 years.
- 4.8 **FDC Service** means the FDC education and care business of each individual educator or refers to Camden Council FDC Service.
- 4.9 **Food Safety** means safe practices for handling, preparing, and storing food to minimise risks to children.

- 4.10 **National Quality Standard (NQS)** means a national benchmark for early childhood education and care and outside school hours care services in Australia. Services are assessed and rated by the Regulatory Authority in their state against seven quality areas that specify important outcomes for children.
- 4.11 **Nominated Supervisor** means a person appointed by the Approved Provider and who has given consent to be appointed to be in day to day charge of a service and must be contactable during the hours FDC Educators are providing education and care.
- 4.12 **Resident** means any person aged 18 years or over who resides, or intends to reside permanently, or temporarily resides for more than three weeks, at the educator's FDC Residence.
- 4.13 **Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan** means a plan developed with a child's parents to ensure that the risks relating to the child's specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition are assessed and minimised.
- 4.14 **Staff** means employees of Camden Council FDC.

PART 2 - POLICY STATEMENT

5. PRINCIPLES

- 5.1 We prioritise children's health, safety, and wellbeing. This includes safe practices for handling, preparing, and storing food, as well as providing or encouraging the provision of food and beverages that are nutritious and adequate in quantity, and chosen based on each child's dietary requirements.
- 5.2 We promote healthy lifestyle choices, including healthy eating and physical activity, and are committed to implementing and embedding the healthy eating key messages of the NSW Health Munch and Move program. We support children and families' understanding about the importance of nutrition, healthy food choices and adequate physical activity.
- 5.3 We value the uniqueness of each child and acknowledge the individual health, culture, customs, and religious traditions that affect their dietary needs. We work with families to ensure that the food and beverages we provide to their children reflect their preferences.
- 5.4 We support family's decisions in relation to the food and beverages they provide and give guidance from recognised authorities on healthy eating and physical activity.
- 5.5 We incorporate children's agency and decision-making into our educational program. We plan mealtimes and other food-related experiences that enable this.

6. CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Considerations for breast feeding and the introduction of solid food:
- 6.1.1 Educators will always consult with families about feeding infants and will follow current national infant feeding recommendations.
- 6.1.2 Support mothers to continue breastfeeding until babies are at least 12 months of age in line with current recommendations.

- 6.1.3 Create a supportive physical environment for mothers who wish to attend the FDC residence to breastfeed whilst their baby is in care.
 - 6.1.4 Ensure the safe handling of breastmilk and infant formula including transporting, storing, thawing, warming, preparing and bottle feeding.
 - 6.1.5 In consultation with families, offer cooled pre-boiled water as an additional drink from around six months of age.
 - 6.1.6 Always bottle feed babies by holding baby in a semi-upright position.
 - 6.1.7 When a child is being introduced to solids, usually around six months of age, educators will consult with families about the process for introduction and if providing the food themselves, will discuss and determine appropriate foods (type and texture) to be introduced.
 - 6.1.8 If providing food for children, educators will consult with families about offering a variety of foods to babies from all the food groups.
 - 6.1.9 Support families decisions in relation to the food and beverages they provide and give guidance from recognised authorities on appropriate solid foods.
 - 6.1.10 Always supervise babies while drinking and eating to ensure safe bottle feeding and eating practices.
- 6.2 Considerations for providing food for children:
- 6.2.1 Plan and display a menu that is based on menu planning principles and meets the daily nutritional needs of children for the duration of their time in care.
 - 6.2.2 Ensure food and drink provided is nutritious, based on each child's dietary requirements and in accordance with the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the Australian Dietary Guidelines.
 - 6.2.3 Ensure adequate quantities of food are provided for each child across their day.
 - 6.2.4 Vary the meals and snacks on the menu to keep children interested and to introduce children to a range of healthy food ideas.
- 6.3 Considerations for food brought from home:
- 6.3.1 Provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and suitable for children's lunchboxes.
 - 6.3.2 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.
 - 6.3.3 Discourage the provision of highly processed snack foods high in fat, salt, and sugar and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes (where possible).
 - 6.3.4 Ensure families provide an adequate quantity of food for their child's day.

6.4 Considerations for promoting safety:

- 6.4.1 Educators will participate in professional development related to nutrition for children and safe food handling.
- 6.4.2 Educators will apply current national food safety standards and recommendations, as well as information from NSW food authorities.
- 6.4.3 Educators will be aware of the individual dietary requirements of children in their care including food allergies, food intolerances and special diets and consult with families to develop individual Risk Minimisation and Communication Plans for managing the risk while the child is in care.
- 6.4.4 Ensure young children do not have access to foods that may cause choking.
- 6.4.5 Always supervise children while eating and drinking.
- 6.4.6 Implement all procedures related to this policy.
- 6.4.7 As part of the registration process, educators are required to consult with the local government authority on home-based food preparation.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Approved Provider

- Ensure that obligations under the National Quality Framework are met.
- Ensure procedures are in place for health and hygiene practices, safe premises and equipment and align with Australian food safety standards and NSW requirements for education and care settings.
- Ensure children have access to safe drinking water at all times and are offered food and beverages appropriate to each child's needs on a regular basis throughout the day.
- If educators provide meals, ensure the food and beverages provided are nutritious and adequate in quantity, and chosen based on each child's dietary requirements (accounting for their growth and development needs, as well as any specific cultural, religious or health requirements).
- If educators provide meals, ensure they display and make accessible to family members a weekly menu which accurately describes the food and beverages to be provided by the service each day.
- Ensure that child enrolment records include any special considerations for the child, such as cultural or religious dietary restrictions, as well as any health-related dietary restrictions.
- Ensure Risk Minimisation and Communication Plans are developed for children with medical conditions that can be impacted by food.
- Ensure that healthy eating is promoted.
- Ensure that no child is ever disciplined using nutrition, food, or beverages.

- Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators, staff, and volunteers follow this policy and related procedures.
- Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators, staff, students, and families, and available for inspection.
- Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will affect the fees and charges and/or significantly impact the service's education and care of children or the family's ability to utilise the service.

7.2 Nominated Supervisor

- Ensure that regulatory obligations are met in relation to nutrition, food and beverages, and dietary requirements.
- Ensure educators are implementing procedures for nutrition, food and beverages, and dietary requirements.
- Ensure educators implement adequate health, hygiene, and safe food handling practices.
- Ensure educator's practices for preparing and storing food are in line with Australian food safety standards and NSW requirements for education and care services.
- Ensure children have access to safe drinking water at all times and are offered food and beverages appropriate to each child's needs on a regular basis throughout the day.
- Ensure if providing food, educators are providing nutritious and adequate quantities of food and drink that is planned based on each child's dietary requirements (accounting for their growth and development needs, as well as any specific cultural, religious or health requirements).
- Ensure if providing food, educators display and make accessible to family members a weekly menu which accurately describes the food and beverages to be provided each day.
- Ensure that child enrolment records include any special considerations for the child, such as cultural or religious dietary restrictions, as well as any health-related dietary restrictions.
- For children with medical conditions that can be impacted by food, consult with the child's family and the educator to develop a Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan, and ensure the educator is implementing the plan.
- Ensure that educators have systems in place for ongoing communication with families about children's nutritional and dietary requirements.
- Ensure educators include healthy eating and knowledge of nutrition into their program planning and involve children in decision-making about healthy food and beverage choices.
- Ensure educators are adequately trained in the nutritional requirements of infants and children and safe food handling.

- Ensure educators have and keep current Anaphylaxis Management and First Aid training.
- Provide families and educators with information related to health and nutrition.
- Consult with the local government authority on home-based food preparation.
- Ensure this policy and related procedures are reviewed and amended in accordance with changes to requirements and best practice recommendations.

7.3 Coordination Unit Staff

- Ensure they follow Camden Council FDC policy and procedures and implement and maintain all requirements under these and as directed by the nominated supervisor.
- Implement this policy and related procedures.
- Monitor and ensure educators practices align with this policy and related procedures.
- Engage in discussions with educators that facilitate critical reflection on how they implement this policy and its procedures.

7.4 Educators

- Ensure adequate health and hygiene practices are followed, as well as safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, in line with Australian food safety standards and NSW authority requirements.
- Ensure children have access to safe drinking water at all times and are offered food and beverages appropriate to each child's needs on a regular basis throughout the day.
- If providing food and beverages, ensure that it is planned in accordance with the recommended dietary requirements for each child's growth and development and specific cultural, religious or health requirements, and is adequate in quantity.
- If providing food, ensure a weekly menu is developed, displayed and accessible to families which accurately describes the food and beverages to be provided by each day.
- Ensure families are encouraged to include on child enrolment records any special considerations for their child, such as cultural or religious dietary restrictions, as well as any health-related dietary restrictions.
- For children with medical conditions that can be impacted by food, consult with the family and Co-ordination Unit in the development of a Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan and implement the plan whilst the child is in care.

- Monitor children's food and beverage intake to ensure it is adequate and appropriate to each child's needs.
- Maintain ongoing communication with families about any changes to children's dietary requirements and if providing food, ensure these changes are reflected in the mealtimes.
- Support parent's decision making regarding the food provided by them for their child.
- Provide guidance to families from recognised authorities on healthy eating, transitioning to solid foods and physical health.
- Encourage families to provide adequate and nutritional meals for their children.
- Implement and reflect on program planning to:
 - Promote healthy eating and knowledge of nutrition by children, e.g. eating with the children, conversations during mealtimes around food.
 - Promote healthy eating among families.
 - Involve children in decision-making about healthy food and beverage choices, e.g. having them assist with food preparation.
- Have and keep current approved First Aid and Anaphylaxis Management training.
- Participate in professional development about nutrition for infants and children and safe food handling.
- Implement safe food handling practices.
- Consult with the local government authority on home-based food preparation.

7.5 Families

- Ensure the service is advised of their child's dietary requirements – relating to their child's growth and development needs, as well as any specific cultural, religious or health requirements – at the time of enrolment, and that this information is kept up to date.
- Should their children have a medical condition that can be impacted by food, work with the service to develop Risk Minimisation and Communication Plans.
- If food is provided by the educator, read the service's weekly menu, and provide any feedback.
- if providing food and beverages from home, ensure these are nutritious and plentiful and that they are in line with service requirements (e.g. that they do not contain allergens that could harm other children at the service), noting that the service is not required to serve food and beverages from home to children.

8. INDUCTION AND ONGOING TRAINING

- 8.1 Induction and ongoing professional development will be implemented for all educators and staff, focusing on this policy and related procedures.
- 8.2 Information will be shared with relief educators on induction and as relevant to the environments that they are working in, their shift responsibilities and the children in their care.

9. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

- 9.1 This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this policy every three years.
- 9.2 Families, educators, and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.
- 9.3 In accordance with regulation 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

10. SOURCES AND RESOURCES

- [ACECQA](#)
- [Australian Dietary Guidelines | Eat For Health](#)
- [Food Standards Australia](#)
- [Get Up & Grow- Healthy eating and physical activity for early childhood](#)
- [Nutrition Australia](#)
- [Staying healthy- Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#)

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RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE INSTRUMENTS: *Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW)*
Education and Care Services National Regulations
National Quality Standard | Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)

RELATED POLICIES, PLANS AND PROCEDURES: Administration of first aid policy
Dealing with infectious diseases policy
Dealing with medical conditions in children policy
Dietary requirements procedure
Educational programming procedure
Enrolment and orientation policy
Excursion policy
Governance and management policy
Mealtimes procedure
Menu procedure
Providing a child safe environment policy
Safe storage, heating and preparation of food and drinks procedure

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR: Director Sport, Community and Activation

APPROVAL: General Manager through the Executive Leadership Group.

HISTORY:

Version	Approved by	Changes made	Date	EDMS Number
1			May 2013	
2			August 2019	
3	ELG	Minor amendments. Name changed from Food and nutrition and safe food handling	23/06/2022	22/310261