



### Introduction

- This policy is regarding the provision of healthy food and drink while children are at preschool, and the promotion of normal growth and development.
- The Preschool is committed to implementing the healthy eating key messages in the Australian Infant Feeding Guidelines and Australian Dietary Guidelines as outlined in the Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood resources. The service will also refer to other government bodies such as the Department of Health, the National Health Medical Research Council and state/territory public health initiatives (Munch & Move) in relation to healthy eating and menu planning resources.
- Further, we recognise the importance of supporting families in providing healthy food and drink to their children. It is acknowledged that the early childhood setting has an important role in supporting families in healthy eating.

### Goals

Our Preschool recognises the importance of healthy eating to the growth and development of young children and is committed to supporting the healthy food and drink choices of children in our care.

Forbes Preschool will:

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

### Policy

When food is provided by the preschool:

- Provide children with a wide variety of healthy and nutritious foods for meals and snacks including fruit and vegetables, wholemeal products, dairy products etc.
- Plan and display if and when we do offer food, for example breakfast, special lunches, fruit break.
- Plan healthy snacks to complement what children have brought in and to ensure the snacks are substantial to meet the energy and nutrient needs of children.
- Vary the meals, cooking experiences and snacks to keep children interested and to introduce children to a range of healthy food ideas.

## Nutrition, Food and Beverages

---

When food is brought from home:

- Provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and suitable for children's lunchboxes.
- 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.
- 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). Examples of these foods include lollies, chocolates, sweet biscuits, muesli bars, breakfast bars, fruit filled bars, chips, oven-baked crackers and corn chips. The service can accommodate some processed foods based on children's sensory processing needs where applicable.

*Professional development of staff and educators*

- educators will attend Munch and Move professional development training or receive similar training and information;
- educators will have access to the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings.

Safety

- Ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day.
- Be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances and special diets and consult with families to develop individual management plans.
- Ensure young children do not have access to foods that may cause choking.
- Ensure all children remain seated while eating and drinking.
- Always supervise children while eating and drinking.

Safe Food Handling

- The service will apply current national food safety standards and recommendations, as well as information from applicable state food authorities.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for cooking staff and educators to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood nutrition.
- Provide food to children that has been stored, prepared and served in a safe and hygienic manner and to promote hygienic food practices
- Encourage the use of gloves to be worn or food tongs are used by all staff handling 'ready to eat' foods.
- Children and staff wash and dry their hands (using soap, warm running water and single use or disposable towels) before handling food or eating meals and snacks.
- Food is stored and served at safe temperatures ie below 5°C or above 60°C.
- Separate cutting boards are used for raw meat and chicken and utensils and hands are washed before touching other foods.
- Children will be discouraged from handling other children's food and utensils.
- Food-handling staff attend relevant training courses and pass relevant information onto the rest of the staff, including the Food Safety Supervisor.

## Nutrition, Food and Beverages

---

Provide a positive eating environment which reflects cultural and family values

- 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.
- 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.
- Encourage the children to assist to set and clear the table– providing opportunities for them to develop independence and self-esteem.
- 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.
- Do not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for disciplinary purposes. Never denigrate a child about the food they have brought from home.

Promote lifelong learning for children, early childhood staff and families about healthy food and drink choices

- 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.
- Encourage children to participate in a variety of ‘hands-on’ food preparation experiences.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in discovery learning and discussion about healthy food and drink choices. Encourage communication with families about the provision of appropriate healthy food and drinks for children while they are attending the service
- Provide access to a copy of the Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary Requirements Policy to all families upon orientation at the service. Families will be provided with opportunities 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. Details of any dietary restrictions will be kept in children’s enrolment record.
- 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 newsletters, during orientation, information sessions and informal discussion

## *The Approved Provider will:*

- Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011.
- Allocate finances for training and food safety.
- Allocate finances to ensure provision of nutritionally balanced and culturally sensitive meals as required.
- Ensure that the service implements adequate health and hygiene practices and 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 adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food are implemented at the service to minimise risks to children.
- Ensure children being cared for by the service have access to safe drinking water at all times and are offered food and beverages on a regular basis throughout the day.
- Ensure that, when food and beverages are supplied by the service, they are:
  - nutritious and adequate in quantity
  - chosen with regard to the dietary requirements of individual children
- Ensure that, when food and beverages are provided by the service, a weekly menu that accurately describes the food and beverages to be provided is displayed at the premises in a location accessible to parents.

## *Staff and educators will:*

- Adhere to the strategies and practices of the Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary Requirements Policy.
- Ensure children's individual dietary needs are adhered to.
- Provide positive meal time experiences for children.
- Respect the individual needs and choices of children.
- Actively supervise children during meal times.
- Adhere to the service's Hygiene and Infection Control Policy.
- Preschool Educators will role model healthy choices at mealtimes
- A 'Fruit First' approach will be encouraged
- Provide a basket of fruit and other healthy snacks that will be readily available
- Ensure water will be provided both indoors and outdoors.
- Provide a drink bottle upon enrolment to encourage drinking water.

## Related Documents

Munch and Move