

NUTRITION

Reviewed Feb 2023

INTRODUCTION

Alstonville Community Preschool is committed to implementing the healthy eating key messages in the *Australian Dietary Guidelines* as outlined in the *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* resources. The preschool 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 (for example: *Munch & Move NSW*) in relation to healthy eating resources.

GOALS

It is acknowledged that an early childhood setting has an important role in providing a positive environment for healthy eating and Alstonville Community Preschool is committed to promoting and supporting healthy food and drink choices for children enrolled and supporting families to provide healthy food and drink to their children for the promotion of optimal growth and development.

STRATEGIES

Educators at Alstonville Community Preschool will:

1. Encourage and support breastfeeding and appropriate introduction of solid foods

Encourage and support breastfeeding by providing a suitable place within the preschool where mothers can breastfeed their infants or express breastmilk.

2. Promote healthy food and drinks based on the *Australian Dietary Guidelines* and the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*

At this preschool all food is brought from home, however educators will:

- 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, vegetables, fruit, cheese and yoghurt, before eating less nutritious food provided such as chocolates, sweet biscuits, muesli bars, breakfast bars, fruit filled bars, chips and savoury crackers. These foods can be high in fat, salt and sugar and low in the essential nutrients required for children's growth and development.
- discuss the foods being eaten by the children, or grown in the preschool garden and used for cooking with them;
- be positive role models in all aspects of nutrition and hygiene.

3. Promote safety

Educators will:

- ensure water is readily available for children to consume throughout the day.
- be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances and special dietary requirements and consult with families to develop individual management plans.
 - where a child has a severe allergic or anaphylactic reaction to a particular food (e.g. peanuts), parents of other children will be asked to avoid packing that food in their child's lunch box;
- always supervise children while eating and drinking to reduce the risk of choking, and ensure children remain seated during these times;
- promote knowledge of good oral health through learning experiences and encouraging children to drink water with and after each meal;
- ensure any fundraising promotes healthy or active lifestyles and advocates for children's wellbeing.

4. Safe Food Handling

Educators will:

- be aware of current national food safety standards and recommendations as well as information from applicable State/Territory authorities;
- provide food and drinks to children that have been stored and served in a safe and hygienic manner;
- children and staff wash their hands (using soap and warm running water) and dry them thoroughly before handling food or eating meals and snacks.
- if serving/eating shared food from a platter, tongs will be used by staff and children;
- food for children's consumption is stored and served at safe temperatures i.e. below 5°C. Food bought from home will not be reheated at preschool.
- ensure that any communal food eg. cooking experiences, is prepared using proper food handling procedures (i.e. hands are washed, benches, chopping boards and utensils are clean) and if using raw meat or chicken, separate cutting boards are used and utensils and hands washed before touching other foods
- discourage children from handling or eating other children's food.

5. Provide a relaxed, positive eating environment that reflects cultural and family values

Educators will:

- create a relaxed atmosphere at mealtimes, providing children with enough time to eat and enjoy their food as well as engage in social interactions with educators and other children;
- sit with the children at meal and snack times to role model healthy food and drink choices and actively engage children in conversations about nutritious foods and healthy bodies;
- recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- encourage children to help set and clear the table and serve their own food and drink, where applicable, providing opportunities for them to develop independence, confidence and self-esteem;
- respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, educators will not insist they eat;
- not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for disciplinary purposes.

6. Promote lifelong learning for children, educators, staff and families about healthy food and drink choices.

Educators will:

- foster awareness and understanding of healthy food and drink choices through including a range of learning experiences in the preschool program which encourage healthy eating and provide practical experience in food preparation ie cooking.
- when cooking with children, choose recipes and food awareness activities from a variety of cultures;
- have opportunities to participate in regular professional development opportunities to broaden their knowledge and understanding of children's nutritional requirements;

7. Encourage communication with families about the provision of appropriate healthy food and drinks for children while they are attending the preschool

Families will:

- have access to a copy of the *Nutrition Policy* upon enrolment and will also be provided with opportunities to contribute to the review and development of this policy;
- receive regular information and advice on appropriate food and drinks to be included in children's lunchboxes. This information may be provided in a variety of ways including factsheets, newsletters, weekly floorbooks, information sessions and informal discussion with educators.
- receive regular communication about food and nutrition related experiences within the preschool program and be provided with up to date information about healthy food choices for home;

- provide details of any food allergies, intolerances or specific dietary requirements to the preschool, and work in partnership with educators to ensure that children’s individual dietary needs are met. Details of any dietary restrictions will be kept in children’s enrolment record.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Authority/Responsible for
Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the preschool operates within the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations 2011. • Allocate finances for training and food safety. • Ensure the preschool implements adequate health and hygiene practices and safe food handling, preparing and storing foods to minimize risks to children being educated and cared for by the service.
Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food are implemented at the preschool to minimize risks to children. • Ensure children have access to safe drinking water at all times and are offered food and beverages on a regular basis throughout the day; • Ensure that where food and beverages are supplied by the preschool ie cooking experiences, they are nutritious and chosen with regard to the dietary requirements of individual children. • Ensure the educational program supports learning for children, and communication with families in a variety of ways, about healthy food and drink choices to ensure the promotion of normal growth and development for all children.
Early childhood educators Responsible persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to the strategies and practices of this Nutrition Policy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure children’s individual dietary needs are promoted whilst at preschool; - ensure the educational program supports learning for children, and communication with families in a variety of ways, about healthy food and drink choices to promote optimal growth and development for all children. - provide positive meal time experiences for children. - respect the individual needs and choices of children. - actively supervise children during meal times. - adhere to the preschools’ Hygiene and Infection Control Policy as applies to food handling and safety
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate regularly with educators/staff regarding their children’s specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs, including food preferences; • Contribute family ideas and recipes for cooking experiences

MONITORING, EVALUATION and REVIEW

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the preschool will review this policy every two years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

Relevant Links to the National Quality Standard (NQS):

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD		
Concept		Descriptor
QA1		Educational program and practice
1.1	Program	The educational program enhances each child's learning and development.
1.1.1	Approved learning framework	Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
1.1.2	Child-centred	Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
1.1.3	Program learning opportunities	All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.
1.2		Practice
1.2.1		Intentional teaching
1.2.1		Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.
1.2.2		Responsive teaching and scaffolding
1.2.2		Educators respond to children's ideas and play and extend children's learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback.
1.2.3		Child directed learning
1.2.3		Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.
1.3		Assessment and planning
1.3.1		Educators and co-ordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child.
1.3.1		Each child's learning and development is assessed or evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection.
1.3.2		Critical reflection
1.3.2		Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, drives program planning and implementation.
1.3.3		Information for families
1.3.3		Families are informed about the program and their child's progress.
QA2		Children's health and safety
2.1		Health
2.1		Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
2.1.3		Healthy lifestyle
2.1.3		Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
QA5		Relationships with children
5.1		Relationships between educators and children
5.1		Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
5.1.2		Dignity and rights of the
5.1.2		The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
QA6		Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
6.1		Supportive relationships with families
6.1		Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.
6.1.2		Parent views are respected
6.1.2		The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.

Education and Care Services National Regulations:

77	Health, hygiene, and safe food practices
78	Food and beverages
79	Service providing food and beverages
90	Medical conditions policy
91	Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures

Sources

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) www.acecqa.gov.au
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand www.foodstandards.gov.au
- Safe Food Australia, 2nd Edition. January 2001
- Department of Health: Nutrition and Healthy Eating (includes Get Up and Grow Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood resources) - www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/get-up-grow-resource
- Australian Dietary Guidelines www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines