

NUTRITION POLICY

Reviewed March 2021

RATIONALE

Early childhood education and care services are required by legislation to ensure the provision of healthy foods and drinks that meet the requirements for children according to the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*. It is essential that Alstonville Community Preschool partners with families to provide education about nutrition, and promote healthy eating habits for young children to positively influence their health and wellbeing. Dietary and healthy eating habits formed in the early years are shown to continue into adulthood and can reduce the risk factors associated with adult chronic conditions such as obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

GOALS

Alstonville Community Preschool recognises the importance of healthy eating for the growth, development and wellbeing of young children and is committed to promoting and supporting healthy food and drink choices for children in our care. This policy affirms our position on the provision of healthy food and drink while children are enrolled here and the promotion and education of healthy choices for optimum nutrition.

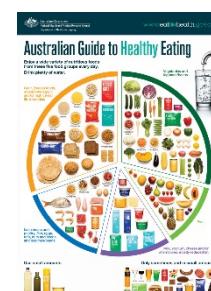
Alstonville Community Preschool is committed to implementing and embedding the healthy eating key messages outlined in the NSW Health's *Munch & Move* program into our curriculum and to support the *National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings* outlined in the *Get Up & Grow* resources. Further the preschool recognises the importance of supporting families in providing healthy food and drink to their children. It is acknowledged that preschools play an important role in encouraging, supporting and educating families in healthy eating.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The preschool recognises that the right to breastfeed is protected under federal and state legislation, and will meet our legal obligations in this regard.

HEALTHY EATING GUIDELINES

1. Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended, with positive support, for infants until around six months. Continued breastfeeding is recommended for at least 12 months – and longer if the mother and baby wish.
2. If an infant is not breastfed, is partially breastfed, or if breastfeeding is discontinued, use an infant formula until 12 months of age.
3. Introduce suitable solid foods at around six months.
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 *Australian Dietary Guidelines*
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.
6. Plan mealtimes to be positive, relaxed and social.
7. Encourage children to try different food types and textures in a positive eating environment.
8. Offer an appropriate amount of food, but allow children to decide themselves how much they will actually eat.
9. Offer meals and snacks at regular and predictable intervals.
10. Ensure that food is safely prepared for children to eat – from the preparation stages to consumption.



STRATEGIES

Our strategies to implementing this policy (procedure) include:

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

- Encourage and support breastfeeding by:
 - informing families that the service supports breastfeeding at first contact or at orientation,
 - 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 Alstonville Community Preschool all food is brought from home.

Educators:

- provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and suitable for children's lunchboxes (i.e. *Caring for Children* 'Lunchbox Checklist for Food Brought from Home for 2 to 5 year olds').
- encourage children to eat the more nutritious foods provided in their lunchbox, such as sandwiches, vegetables, 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. Examples of these foods include lollies, chocolates, sweet biscuits, muesli bars, breakfast bars, fruit filled bars, chips, high fat savoury crackers.
- ensure water is readily available (both indoors and outdoors) for children to consume throughout the day.
- are aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances and special dietary requirements 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.
- Promote good oral health through learning experiences and daily 'swish and swallow' practice.
- ensure any fundraising promotes healthy or active lifestyles and advocates for children's wellbeing.
- 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. Provide age appropriate food and drinks to children that have been stored, prepared and served in a safe and hygienic manner to promote hygienic food practices

Educators ensure:

- gloves are worn or tongs used by all staff supervising mealtimes and handling 'ready to eat' foods;
- that children and educators 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 i.e. below 5°C or above 60°C.
- that they use separate cutting boards for raw meat; utensils and hands are washed before touching other foods.
- that communal food ie through cooking experience, will be prepared using proper food handling procedures (i.e. hands are washed, benches, chopping boards and utensils are clean)
- children are discouraged from handling or eating other children's food and utensils.

- children will be encouraged to drink water with and after each meal
- where a child has a severe allergic reaction to a particular food (e.g. peanuts), parents of other children will be asked to avoid packing the offending food in their child's lunch box.
- that staff handling food attend relevant training courses and share knowledge with all educators.

4. Provide a positive eating environment that is relaxed, social and reflects cultural and family values

At Alstonville Community Preschool:

- 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.
- recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds through strong partnerships with families and community.
- 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 older toddlers and preschool-aged children to help set and clear the table and serve their own food and drink – 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, do not insist he/she eats.
- are patient with messy or slow eaters.
- encourage children to try different foods but do not force them to eat.
- never use food as a reward or withhold food from children for behaviour management purposes.
- celebrations involving food will include healthy choices and families will be invited to at least one food occasion per year;

5. Promote lifelong learning for children, educators, staff and families about healthy food and drink choices, including trying new healthy foods

We aim to:

- foster awareness and understanding of healthy food and drink choices through daily discussions, displays, and intentionally planned or spontaneous related learning experiences throughout our service curriculum.
- will include food awareness activities in the program and plan activities with children which encourage knowledge of healthy foods and enable them to have practical experience in food preparation
- choose recipes and food awareness activities from a variety of cultures
- encourage and provide opportunities for all educators and staff members responsible for providing food and drinks to the children to participate in regular professional development opportunities to broaden their knowledge and understanding of children's nutritional requirements.
- provide opportunities for families to attend information sessions related to children's nutrition and wellbeing.

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

We do this by:

- making accessible or providing a copy of the *Nutrition Policy* to all families upon enrolment', in the parent library in the foyer and on the preschool website;

- ensuring parents receive regular information about food and nutrition in newsletters, and via the preschool Facebook page;
- involving families in the review of this policy (procedure) annually.
- requesting that details of any food allergies or intolerances or specific dietary requirements be provided to the preschool, and work in partnership with families to develop an appropriate resolution so that children's individual dietary needs are met.
- communicating regularly with families about food and nutrition related experiences within the preschool program, including related professional development, and provide up to date information to assist families to provide healthy food choices at home.
- communicating regularly with families and providing information and advice on appropriate food and drinks to be included in children's lunchboxes. This information may be provided to families in a variety of ways including factsheets, newsletters, during orientation, information sessions and informal discussion. When a child's lunch contains a food which is not suitable, as per the Healthy Lunchboxes pamphlet, in the first instance a conversation will be had with the family, and after this, a friendly reminder note will be placed in the child's lunchboxes as a reminder
- displaying 'Foods for Preschool lunches' at preschool and distribute to all families in the enrolment pack;

Monitoring and Review

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Include activities achievements in the preschools' Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) where appropriate, and in annual reports or management meetings.
- include nutrition as a standing item on the staff meeting agenda.
- review this policy (procedure) annually
- provide families with opportunities to contribute to the review and development of the policy.

Relevant Links to the National Quality Standard (NQS):

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD		
	Concept	Descriptor
QA2		Children's health and safety
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.1.3	Healthy lifestyle	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.

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.
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Guide to the National Quality Standard
- Early Years Learning Framework
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand
- Safe Food Australia, 2nd Edition. January 2001
- Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood
- Infant Feeding Guidelines 2012
- Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013
- Eat for health: Dept. Health and Ageing and NHMRC
- Food Safety Standards for Australia 2001
- Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Act 1991
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand Regulations 1994
- Food Act 2003
- Food Regulation 2004
- NSW Food Authority
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011
- Dental Association Australia
- Australian Breast Feeding Association Guidelines
- Munch and Move- NSW Health initiative
- Revised National Quality Standard 2018