



# Nutrition and Meal Times

## Policy Statement

*Meal times provide positive learning experiences for children, who will be encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. Families are consulted and asked to share family and cultural values and experiences. This will enrich the variety and enjoyment of safe and adequate food, planned to meet a minimum of 50% of each child's daily nutritional needs. NBCA respects feeding choices of families, and strive to work in partnership to meet the individual needs of all children.*

## Implementation

- Healthy eating is promoted through routines and programs.
- Food offered will be consistent with Food Safety Standards, advice from relevant health authorities and the services Food Safety Plan.
- The chef and/or cook will have undertaken recognised training in nutrition for young children. Staff will be encouraged to attend nutrition training for young children, as required.
- There will be a minimum of one (1) Food Safety Supervisor, who has undertaken appropriate training at each service.
- Staff will be anaphylaxis and allergy aware. It will be a shared responsibility between staff and families to ensure a safe, allergy aware environment.
- Information on nutrition, age appropriate diet, food handling and storage will be available to staff and families.
- Families will be asked to share information about their child's food likes and dislikes. Family practices will be respected at mealtimes and may be incorporated into the program, where possible.
- Where children require special diets, the family is required to provide a list of suitable foods and their child's food preferences. The food safety supervisor will consult with the family upon enrolment in relation to what food the service can provide. Consultation between the families, educators, food safety supervisor and the kitchen staff must be ongoing to ensure up-to-date information is maintained whenever the child's diet changes.
- All dairy provided by the service will be full cream for children under two (2) years of age, and reduced fat for children over two (2) years of age.
- Families will be advised of their child's daily food intake.
- Food is only to be reheated once, following strict guidelines set out by Nutrition Australia and the FSANZ 2009 (Food Safety Standards)



- The importance of good, healthy food will be discussed with children as part of the program. Cooking activities implemented with the children will reflect a wide variety of inclusive experiences.
- The rotating/cyclic menu is prepared in advance and available for families and staff. The menu will be well balanced, including a variety of the five main food groups in appropriate proportions. Meals will contain minimal amounts of sugar, salt and fat. Recipes from a variety of cultures will be offered to the children. Bush tucker ingredients are also on the menu.
- The menu will be audited regularly by Nutrition Australia.

## Meal Times

- Educators will sit with the children, and are encouraged to eat a child-sized portion of the meal to advocate good eating habits and an appreciation of a variety of foods. Meal times will be a rich and social occasion.
- Children will be encouraged to try new food, however their choices will be respected and an alternative may be offered.
- Morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and a late snack will be provided daily. Meals and snacks will be appropriate to the children's developmental needs and provide at least 50% of their daily Nutritional requirements as recommended in the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia (Nutrition Australia).
- Water is available at every mealtime and throughout the day. Milk will be offered at least once daily.

## Meal Procedure

- Educators and children to wash and dry hands prior to setting up and/or for meal times.
- Children will be encouraged to serve their own drinks and food at the table, where possible and/or be offered choices.
- A protective barrier will be used for serving food.
- Educators to check allergy lists, to ensure children are not given/ access food they cannot have.
- Food is to be placed into smaller serving containers from the main container.
- Children are encouraged to collect their own crockery and cutlery, food is placed in the centre of the table with serving utensils. Educators are encouraged to help and support children serving their own food, as needed.
- Any leftover food is to be covered and returned to the kitchen, following food safety guidelines.
- Educators will encourage children to avoid sharing food and utensils, eating food or using utensils that have dropped on the floor.
- Children will be encouraged to place scraps and dirty dishes into appropriate containers, and wash their hands and faces after their meal.
- Excess food scraps to be removed from bibs, washers and tablecloths.
- Dirty bibs, washers and tablecloths to be placed into dirty washing basket/bucket and taken to the laundry. Please soak any heavily stained items.
- Tidy meal areas, as required.
- All dirty dishes, plates, cups, cutlery are to be placed into the designated dirty dishes containers and transported to the kitchen, as soon as possible.

## Bottles

- Bottles are to be heated in warm water or bottle warmers, following instructions accompanying each warmer. Bottles are not to be heated in a microwave.
- Heated milk is to be consumed within one (1) hour, or disposed of.
- Heated bottles are not to be re-heated or refrigerated.



- Milk should be heated to body temperature or lukewarm. Check the milk temperature by dripping a small amount out of the teat onto the inside of the educator's wrist, ensure the teat does not touch their skin.
- Cow's milk will be provided by the service, families are to provide an empty bottle.
- Bottles provided must have a secure lid, clearly labelled with the child's name.
- Bottles are to be stored on a shelf in the refrigerator not in the refrigerator door.
- Children over twelve (12) months of age will be offered tap water to drink unless otherwise specified by the family. Children under the age of twelve (12) months will be offered cooled boiled water.
- Children will be encouraged to transition from a bottle to a cup from twelve (12) months of age.
- Used bottles are to be rinsed and placed into the child's bag, after use.

## Formula

- Families are to provide formula in pre measured containers and a bottle of measured water. Educators will mix this as required. Formula cannot be brought to the service already made up.
- It is recommended families provide extra bottles of water and formula, should their child requires additional bottles throughout the day.
- The service will work with families to ensure children's health and nutritional needs are being met, including weaning from breast milk/formula to milk.

## Breast Milk

- NBCA services provide a supportive environment for breastfeeding mothers and family visits to feed young children.
- Mothers who visit the service to breastfeed will have access to a private, comfortable area to feed their children, if required. Families must ensure any expressed breast milk provided is clearly labelled with the child's name. Families are encouraged to provide breast milk in multiple small quantities to prevent wastage.
- Frozen breast milk should be thawed quickly, but without using boiling water to avoid curdling. The container is placed under cold running water, gradually allowing the water to get warmer until the milk becomes liquid. Alternatively, it can be left in the refrigerator to defrost. If defrosted under water, it must be used immediately. If defrosted in the refrigerator it must be used within twenty four (24) hours.
- Breast milk must be heated using warm water or a bottle warmer on the lowest setting.
- Gently roll the bottle or cup of breast milk before being consumed.
- Any leftover breast milk must be disposed of. It will not be refrozen, reheated, or placed back in the refrigerator.
- Breast milk can be stored in the refrigerator for forty eight (48) hours or freezer for six (6) to twelve (12) months. Frozen breast milk cannot be stored at the service.



## Policy Links

### Policies:

- Dental Health
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Duty of Care
- Food Safety
- Health, Hygiene and Infection Control
- Medical Conditions
- Workplace Health and Safety

NQS: 2.1.3 and 7.1.2

Regulations: 77 – 80 and 168

### Sources:

- ACT Health
- Community Early Learning Australia – document tbc
- National Quality Framework (ACECQA 2020)
- Education and Care Services National Law (2011) – Section 51 (1) (a) Conditions on service approval (safety, health and wellbeing of children)
- Nutrition Australia
- Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (5<sup>th</sup> edition) 2013
- [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)
- [www.infantformula.com.au](http://www.infantformula.com.au)

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