



2.28 Nutrition, Food and Beverages Policy

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

Aim

Bellinghen Preschool will promote an awareness of nutrition that is consistent with national dietary guidelines for children, adolescents and national infant feeding guidelines, state regulations, food safety principles, and that is appropriate to their age, cultural background, religion or medical needs.

Background

Children in their first five years of life are developing rapidly and require a nutritious and safe diet for their intellectual, behavioural and physical development. Education and fun learning activities in relation to healthy eating are also important for children's development.

Research has shown that one in five preschoolers are either overweight or obese. By the time children in NSW reach kindergarten, almost 18% are either overweight or obese. The 2007 *National Children's Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey* found that the dietary patterns of many Australian children are less than optimal with high consumption of salt and saturated fat, and low consumption of fruit and vegetables. Given that children are increasingly spending long periods of time in centre-based care, early childhood educators can role model healthy eating and encourage young children to make healthier food choices. This will contribute to the prevention of weight problems in children, allowing children to thrive physically, socially and intellectually, and in turn contribute to prevention of nutrition-related chronic diseases.

Relevant Legislation

- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 , Section 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2018

Links to the National Quality Standard:

- 2.1 Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted
- 2.1.3 Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child

Key Resources:

- Get Up and Grow – Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood. Department of Health and Ageing 2009
- Munch and Move Resource Manual. NSW Department of Health 2017

Goals

Bellinghen Preschool will:

- ~ Role model healthy eating and activity throughout the day to all children and families;
- ~ Promote the five key Munch and Move messages to promote healthy, active habits in children from a young age:
 1. Choose water as a drink
 2. Eat fewer snacks and select healthier alternatives
 3. Eat more fruit and vegetables
 4. Get active for an hour or more each day
 5. Turn off the television or computer and get active

Support families in educating their children about healthy food choices.

Practices

Families provide food and drinks for their children at our service. Each day families are required to provide nutritious food and water for – Morning Tea, Lunch and crunch and sip.

To provide food, and food & nutrition education at our preschool that is consistent with national dietary guidelines for children, state regulations, food safety principles and that is appropriate for their age, cultural background, religion or medical needs, the preschool will:

- **Ensure all children will have access to safe drinking water at all times. Promote drinking water** for usual drinking requirements, provide safe drinking water to children and educators at all times, and **ensure children have adequate fluid intake** during their care. (Be aware that the fluid requirements of children increase in certain circumstances such as hot weather, after exercise or when they are ill)
- **Ensure all children are offered food and beverages appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular and predictable basis throughout the day**
- **Promote development of eating skills and independent eating by:**
 - ~ Giving children control over how much they eat
 - ~ Encouraging children to serve own food and drink and clear table after meal – providing opportunities for them to develop independence and self-esteem.
- **Provide a positive eating environment that helps to communicate family and multicultural values by:**
 - ~ Encouraging families to send a wide range of nutritious food that would represent theirs or other cultures
 - ~ Ensuring food is not offered as punishment or reward,
 - ~ Providing information to families outlining the preschool's policies and approaches taken to meet the nutritional needs of children through good brought from home, including special dietary needs, culture and religion
- **Provide** a friendly, relaxed and comfortable environment that will help to achieve a stress-free meal time for both children and educators. Meal time is a time for encouraging healthy and safe eating practices, socialising and learning. Morning tea and lunch is eaten at tables and on floor mats in small groups of 6 to 8 children. Educators sit with the children and act as role models.
- **Educators are to supervise and encourage safe eating behaviours**, discuss healthy food choices and appropriate hygiene, e.g. sitting while eating any food, avoiding small hard foods like nuts and lollies, educators sitting with children while they are eating, washing hands before eating, ensuring that the eating environment is clean at all times. Be patient with messy or slow eaters. 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.
- **Understanding, respecting and handling eating behaviour or children (including refusal of food by children)** Children are encouraged with verbal positive reinforcement to eat their morning tea and lunch but are never to be forced or harassed for not eating food. If children regularly refuse to eat food strategies should be discussed with families and it may be suggested that parents take the child to a family doctor or dietician for a review.

Food Safety

- **Safe hand-washing practices are observed at all times**
- **Present strategies for preventing choking accidents caused by food.** Children are encouraged to be seated when eating and drinking and are to be supervised at all times.
- **Provide strategies for how the preschool will accommodate children with special dietary needs** (See Managing Children with Diabetes and Managing Food Allergies and Anaphylaxis).
- Children will be discouraged from handling other children's food and utensils.

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

- **Form a collaborative partnership for developing policies, practices and education** with children's families and nutrition and health professionals
- **Nutrition, Food Beverages and Dietary Requirements Policy will be given to families** on enrolment, and other information given regularly throughout the year in articles in the newsletter, notes and brochures sent home and visiting speakers.
- **Provide feedback to parents if their child is not eating well.**

- **Promote principles of safe food handling and storage of food brought from home.** Families are encouraged to use one large nude food lunch box and to place foods in the refrigerator on the verandah.
- **Communicate regularly with families about food and nutrition** related experiences with in the service and provide up to date information to assist families to provide healthy food choices at home
- **Request 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.

Professional development of staff and educators

- **Educators will attend Munch and Move professional development training** or received access to similar training and/or information
- **All educators will have access to the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings.**
- **Awareness of culturally diverse foods and their preparation.** Discuss issues relevant to food and nutrition at staff meetings in relation to cultural events.

Approved Provider will:

Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2018

Nominated Supervisor will:

Ensure children have access to safe drinking water at all times & offered food and beverages on a regular basis throughout the day

Educators/Certified Supervisors will:

Adhere to the strategies and practices of this 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

Families will:

Communicate regularly with educators/staff regarding children's specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs, including food preferences

Policy reviewed February 2013

Policy reviewed May 2016

Policy reviewed July 2018

Related Policy

- Managing Children with Diabetes
- Managing Food Allergies and Anaphylaxis

Date endorsed 18th July 2018

Date to be reviewed July 2021