



2.28 Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary Requirements Policy

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

Policy Statement

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

Educational and engaging learning opportunities that support healthy food choices are important for children's development and self-care.

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.

As part of our commitment to children's health, safety and wellbeing, we role-model food safety and hygiene practices, as well as supporting healthy food and beverage choices according to each child's needs.

Strategies

Bellinghen Community Preschool will:

- Role model healthy eating and physical activity throughout the day to all children and families.
- Support families in educating their children about healthy food choices.
- Support children to educate their families about healthy food choices.
- 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

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

Bellingen Community Preschool 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, 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.
- Accommodate some processed foods based on children's sensory processing needs where applicable.
- Acknowledge and respect the diversity and varied capacities of families and assist children to make healthy choices where possible.

Promote 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/territory 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
- Ensure gloves are 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.

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.

- 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.

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 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. Healthy eating guidelines will also be given to families via the Family Information Guide.
- 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 and in the Children’s Health Folder in the Office.
- 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.

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.

Key Resources:

- Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – www.acecqa.gov.au
- Australian Dietary Guidelines - www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines
- 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-collection
- National Health Medical Research Council - Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services - www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services
- Nutrition Australia – www.nutritionaustralia.org
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand – www.foodstandards.gov.au

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority/Responsibility for
Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
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 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, where food and beverages are supplied by the service, they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nutritious and adequate in quantity • chosen regarding the dietary requirements of individual children
Educators/ Person in Day to Day Charge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading and complying with this policy. • Communicate regularly with educators/staff regarding children’s specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs, including food preferences.

Relevant Regulations

78	Food and beverages
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
90	Supervision during excursions.
91	Medical conditions policy
160	Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
162	Child enrolment records to be kept by approved provider and family day care educator
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

National Quality Standards

Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice		
1.2.3	Child directed learning	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.
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.

Quality Area 2: Childrens Health and Safety		
2.1.3	Healthy lifestyle	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
	Relationships between children	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships

Quality Area 5: Relationships with children		
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child.	Dignity and rights of every child are maintained

Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities		
6.1.2	Parent views are respected	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected, and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
6.1.3	Families are supported	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.

Review

POLICY REVIEWED	JANUARY 2022	NEXT REVIEW DATE	JANUARY 2025
MODIFICATIONS	NIL		