

	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Nutrition and Active Play Policy and Procedure</h2>
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Authorisation	Director City Life
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Responsible Officer	Manager Families and Children
Policy Owner	Early Childhood Coordinator

1. Purpose

Melton City Council is committed to:

- promoting a healthy lifestyle for children at the service, including eating nutritious food and participating in physical activity
- providing opportunities for Active Play
- encouraging children to make healthy lifestyle choices consistent with national guidelines and recommendations
- ensuring that the dietary and cultural needs of children and families are taken into consideration when planning menus for service events and activities
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- providing a safe, supportive and social environment in which children can enjoy eating
- consulting and working collaboratively with families in regard to their child's Nutrition and dietary requirements, including responding appropriately to food allergies and recognising cultural and religious practices, and lifestyle choices
- ensuring that food and drink items provided by the service are consistent with national guidelines and recommendations
- ensuring adequate health and hygiene procedures, including safe practices for handling, preparing, storing and serving food

1.1. This policy has been adapted from *PolicyWorks* Manual - National Quality Framework released by the Early Learning Association Australia.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Person in day-to-day charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending Melton City Council programs and activities.

This policy includes Melton City Council children's services that don't directly care for children but have a role in the promotion of health, wellbeing and safety of children within families and the community.

3. Background

There are many benefits to promoting a healthy lifestyle in early childhood education and care settings, including the positive impact this has on each child's learning and development. Being made aware of positive eating behaviour and the importance of physical activity from an early age can instil good habits that will remain throughout a person's life. Staff/educators are well placed to build this awareness among children and their families, while respecting lifestyle choices, and cultural and religious values.

Nutrition

The foods we eat provide our body with the nutrients we need to stay healthy. Good Nutrition is the balanced eating of a variety of foods and is especially important for children as they require a large amount of nutrients for growth and development. Research has shown that, when offered a variety of healthy foods, children can and do make good choices. It is also important to provide preschool children with a good foundation in Healthy Eating, as most children have formed lifelong eating habits before they reach school age.

Oral health

Tooth decay is Australia's most prevalent health problem despite being largely preventable. It is important to note that oral health promotion is complementary to promoting healthy eating.

Active Play

Active Play (play that involves using the large muscles in the body) develops a strong and healthy body, builds motor and coordination skills, creates a sense of wellbeing and helps protect from disease. Active Play is about moving, being and doing.

A strong sense of health and wellbeing, supported by good Nutrition and an active lifestyle, can provide children with confidence, energy and optimism that will contribute to their ability to concentrate, cooperate and learn. Learning about healthy lifestyles, including Nutrition and Active Play, links directly to Outcome 3 in both the Early Years Learning Framework and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.

Progressive Mealtimes

In recognising children as active participants in their own learning, children should be encouraged to make meaningful decisions about elements of their own education and care. Incorporating progressive mealtimes into the educational program, where appropriate, allows children to choose to eat when they are hungry. Children can gather in small groups to enjoy meals together, without interrupting the needs and play of others. This also encourages quieter, more social and meaningful interactions at mealtimes and allows for a smoother flow throughout the day. Children can make decisions based on their own needs, considering also children with specific medical conditions such as diabetes, and can be supported to access food and water throughout the day by staff/educators, who actively participate in mealtimes.

4. Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy and related procedures. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *Glossary of Terms*.

Word/Term	Definition
Active Play	Large muscle-based activities that are essential for a child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth and development.
Adequate Supervision	<p>(In relation to this policy) Supervision entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.</p> <p>Adequate Supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate Supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe and/or hear each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary.</p> <p>Variables affecting Supervision levels include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• number, age and abilities of children• number and positioning of educators• current activity of each child

Word/Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)• developmental profile of each child and of the group of children• experience, knowledge and skills of each educator• need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies)• sole workers responding to care needs.
Healthy Eating	Describes eating patterns that provide all the recommended nutrients for growth and development, and good health and wellbeing, now and in the future. It also refers to preparing, serving and eating food in a way that recognises its importance as a social and cultural activity.
Nutrition	The process of providing or receiving nourishing substances.
‘Sometimes’ Foods and Drinks	Food and drink items that are high in fat, sugar and/or salt, and that contain minimal vitamins, minerals or fiber.
Oral health	The absence of active disease in the mouth. Oral health is fundamental to overall health, wellbeing and quality of life. A healthy mouth enables people to eat, speak and socialise without pain, discomfort or embarrassment.

5. Responsibility/Accountability

5.1. The Approved Provider, according to Regulations is responsible for the implementation of this policy. This will be achieved through the Leadership Group and their service staff:

- that the service environment and educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for eating and Active Play
- providing ongoing information, resources and support to families, to assist in the promotion of optimum health for young children
- the implementation of adequate health and hygiene procedures, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service (National Regulation 77)
- that all staff/educators comply with the *Food Safety Act*
- that all staff/educators are aware of a child’s food allergies and/or other medical conditions at enrolment or on initial diagnosis
- measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies and/or Diabetes
- that all staff/educators are aware of, and plan for, the dietary needs of children diagnosed with Diabetes
- providing healthy suggestions for morning/afternoon tea and/or lunchboxes for children
- discouraging parents/guardians from providing children with ‘Sometimes’ Foods and Drinks
- that fresh drinking water is readily available at all times, and reminding children to drink water throughout the day, including at snack/lunch times (National Regulation 78)
- that food and drinks are available to children at frequent and regular intervals throughout the day (National Regulation 78)

- that celebrations and other service events are consistent with the purposes and values of this policy and service procedures.

Where food is provided at the service:

- allocating finances to ensure the provision of nutritionally balanced meals, as required
- that staff/educators who are responsible for menu planning participate in regular Nutrition and safe food handling training, and are kept up to date with current research, knowledge and best practice
- that food and drink provided by the service is nutritious, adequate in quantity and appropriate to children's growth and development, and meets any specific cultural, religious or health needs (National Regulation 79)
- that a weekly menu is displayed in a location accessible to parents/guardians, and that it accurately describes the food and drinks to be provided by the service each day (National Regulation 80)

5.2. The Nominated Supervisor/Person in Day-to-Day Charge are responsible for:

- ensuring that the service environment and the educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for eating and Active Play
- ensuring the implementation of adequate health and hygiene procedures, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service (National Regulation 77)
- ensuring that all staff/educators comply with the *Food Safety Act*
- ensuring that all staff/educators are aware of a child's food allergies and/or other medical conditions on enrolment or on initial diagnosis
- ensuring measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies and/or Diabetes
- ensuring that all staff/educators are aware of, and plan for, the dietary needs of children diagnosed with Diabetes
- ensuring that fresh drinking water is readily available at all times, and reminding children to drink water throughout the day, including at snack/lunch times (National Regulation 78)
- ensuring that food and drinks are available to children at frequent and regular intervals throughout the day (National Regulation 78)
- ensuring that cultural and religious practices/requirements of families are accommodated to support children's learning and development
- developing links with local and regional health services, community organisations and businesses that provide expertise, resources and support for Healthy Eating and Active Play

Where food is provided at the service:

- managing the service's food budget
- ensuring that food and drink provided by the service is nutritious, adequate in quantity and appropriate to children's growth and development, and meets any specific cultural, religious or health needs (National Regulation 79)
- ensuring that a weekly menu is displayed in a location accessible to parents/guardians, and that it accurately describes the food and drinks to be provided by the service each day (National Regulation 80)
- ensuring that the service is registered and working in line with the *Food Safety Act* and National Regulations
- ensuring that any staff/educators involved in food preparation, serving and storage, comply with the *Food Safety Act*.

5.3. All educators are responsible for:

- complying with the service's *Nutrition and Active Play Policy and Procedure* and with the *Food Safety Act*
- implementing adequate health and hygiene procedures, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, to minimise risks to children
- being aware of a child's food allergies and/or other medical conditions at enrolment or on initial diagnosis
- implementing measures to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies and/or Diabetes
- being aware of, and planning for, the dietary needs of children diagnosed with Diabetes
- ensuring that the service environment and the educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for eating and Active Play
- discussing Healthy Eating choices with children, introducing the concept of 'Sometimes' Foods and Drinks, and role-modelling positive behaviours
- exploring and discussing diverse cultural, religious, social and family lifestyles
- considering this policy when organising excursions and service events
- supporting students and volunteers to comply with this policy while at the service
- keeping parents/guardians informed of current information relating to Healthy Eating and Active Play
- ensuring that fresh drinking water is readily available at all times, and reminding children to drink regularly throughout the day, including at snack/mealtimes
- ensuring that children can readily access their own clearly labelled drink containers (where this is a service practice)
- providing food and drinks at regular intervals, and encouraging children to actively participate in, and enjoy, snack/mealtimes without feeling rushed
- providing Adequate Supervision for all children during meal/snack times
- encouraging children to be independent at snack/mealtimes (e.g. opening lunchboxes, pouring drinks, self-feeding, serving and using utensils in a culturally sensitive way)
- planning and providing outdoor Active Play that is stimulating, promotes skill development, considers safety issues and provides Adequate Supervision
- considering opportunities for children to be physically active indoors, particularly in adverse weather conditions
- providing daily opportunities for all children to participate in age-appropriate Active Play
- acting as positive role models by engaging in physical activity
- minimising and closely supervising screen-based activities, in line with recommended guidelines
- providing age-appropriate traffic safety education, including pedestrian and passenger safety to both children and parents/guardians at the service
- promoting safe behaviour through daily practice as part of the program.

Where food is provided at the service:

- displaying menus, sharing recipes and encouraging feedback about the food provided at the service.

5.4. Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- complying with the requirements of this policy

- providing details of specific Nutritional/dietary requirements, including the need to accommodate cultural or religious practices or food allergies, on their child's enrolment form, and discussing these with the Nominated Supervisor/Primary Nominee/educators prior to the child's commencement at the service, and if requirements change over time
- communicating regularly with staff/educators regarding children's specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs, including food preferences
- encouraging their children to drink an adequate amount of water
- providing healthy, nutritious food for snacks/meals, including fruits and vegetables where applicable
- encouraging children to exercise by engaging in Active Play or walking to the service where appropriate
- discussing appropriate road traffic safety and car safety practices, and role-modelling this behaviour.

5.5. Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

1. Procedure

1.1. In terms of health, hygiene and safe food practices

The staff, educators and volunteers at the service implement:

- adequate health and hygiene practices
 - safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food
- to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service.

1.2. In terms of food and beverages

The staff, educators and volunteers must ensure that children being educated and cared for by the service:

- have access to safe drinking water at all times
- are offered food and beverages appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis throughout the day.

Any special dietary needs are to be discussed between the parent/guardian and educator prior to care commencing. Parents/guardians are to supply food for special diet or where required.

All food and drinks should be appropriately stored, used according to instructions on labels and consumed by the expiry date.

1.3. In terms of service providing food and beverages

Parents/guardians, staff and educators that provides food or beverages to children being educated and cared for by the service must ensure that, in addition to the above:

- the food or beverage provided is nutritious and adequate in quantity
- the food or beverage provided is chosen having regard to the dietary requirements of individual children taking into account:
 - each child's growth and development needs
 - any specific cultural, religious or health requirements
- food and drink is offered to children at regular intervals with extra care taken to offer water more regularly in hot weather
- the child's individual needs determine the amount of food required. Educators must not force a child to eat under any circumstances.

- Parents/guardians are asked to provide a named insulated lunch box to help keep food stored at the correct temperature and parents/guardians should advise staff/educator if a fridge is required to store food or drink. Children and families with special dietary requirements (e.g. for health or religious reasons) will be supported to follow any management strategies in place.
- Parents to provide toothbrush and toothpaste for after meal brushing (preference only)

1.4. In terms of the weekly menu

Staff and educators that provide food and beverages (other than water) to children being educated and cared for by the service must ensure that a weekly menu:

- is displayed at the education and care service premises in a place accessible to parents/guardians
- accurately describes the food and beverages to be provided by the service each day.

To avoid doubt, this regulation does not apply to food and beverages provided by a parent/guardian or family member for consumption by the child.

1.5. In terms of Family Day Care (FDC), as per educators and;

- Food requirements and the person responsible for the provision of meals are to be determined by the parent/guardian and educator at the interview prior to care commencing.
- All meals provided by the educator are to be charged as per the fee schedule.

1.6. In terms of bottle-fed or breast fed babies

- Milk for infants that are not yet on solid foods can be provided by the parent and should be stored in the baby's labelled drinking bottle, in an appropriately insulated bag or service refrigerator. Individual needs of the baby regarding heating up processes should be discussed with the educators.
- Breast feeding mothers are able to provide expressed breast milk or visit during a session to feed their baby.

1.7 In terms of oral hygiene and health staff and educators will:

- Encourage children, who are old enough to rinse their mouth with water after each meal or bottle, or to brush their teeth (preference).
- Support and supervise children when brushing their teeth if toothbrush is provided by parent.
- Communicate to families any signs they notice of tooth cavities or visible decay gum swelling, mouth infection or pain or discomfort experienced by children when eating or chewing.
- Respect the cultural diversity of families through recognising and valuing cultural and traditional beliefs about food and oral health.

1.8 In terms of Active Play

The educator, through appropriate planning, will contribute to each child's social, physical, emotional, intellectual, language and creative potential and will provide activities and opportunities for play that are appropriate to the developmental age and stage of the children.

The educator will provide a balance of:

- indoor and outdoor activities
- active and quiet activities
- activities that can be freely chosen by the child

- promote active play and educate visitors and families on its benefits.

1.9 The parent/guardian will;

- provide appropriate clothing and footwear to engage in Active Play
- Ensure clothing is provided to ensure Active Play in all safe weather conditions
- Acknowledge that active play is a part of a quality and ongoing program and not an optional aspect.

1.10 In terms of outdoor Active Play

An approved outdoor play area will be available to each child throughout the year. Children will have access to this area each day unless due to unsafe weather conditions. The outside areas to which children have access to must be kept tidy and free from rubbish, animal excrement or other potentially hazardous material.

6. References, Sources, Links to Legislation and Other Documents

6.1. Please refer to Reference and Sources page.

6.2. Legislation and standards

- *Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:*
- *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 including Regulations 77–78, 79–80 (if the service provides food), 168*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- *Food Act 1984 (Vic)*
- *National Quality Standard including Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*

6.3. Related service policies:

- *Anaphylaxis Policy and Procedure*
- *Asthma Policy and Procedure*
- *Educational Program Development Policy and Procedure*
- *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy and Procedure*
- *Diabetes Policy and Procedure*
- *Excursions and Service Events Policy and Procedure*
- *Food Safety Policy and Procedure*
- *Hygiene Policy and Procedure*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy and Procedure*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy and Procedure*
- *Sun Protection Policy and Procedure.*