

NUTRITION & FOOD SAFETY POLICY

Our Service recognises the importance of safe food handling and healthy eating to promote the growth and development of young children and is committed to supporting the healthy food and drink choices of children in our care. It is acknowledged that the early childhood setting has an important role in supporting families in healthy eating. Our Service therefore recognises the importance of supporting families to provide healthy food and drink to their children.

We are committed to implementing the healthy eating key messages outlined in the Australian Dietary Guidelines and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating. We utilise the Australian Government’s *Get Up & Grow-Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* and *Eat for Health* resources.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: 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 lifestyles	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
80	Weekly menu
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

PURPOSE

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 our Service 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 chronic adult conditions such as obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Our Service 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 in our care and the promotion and education of healthy choices for optimum nutrition.

We believe in providing a positive eating environment that reflects dietary requirements, cultural and family values, and promotes lifelong learning for children, as we commit to implementing and embedding the healthy eating key messages into our curriculum and to support the *National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings* outlined in the *Get Up & Grow* resources.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, visitors, and management of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service has a responsibility to help children to develop good food practices and approaches, by working with families and educators.

Although the service does not provide food, food that is brought along with children to the service will be served at various times throughout the day to cater for all children's nutritional needs.

Mealtimes reflect a relaxed and pleasant environment where educators engage in meaningful conversations with children. This assists in creating a positive and enjoyable eating environment.

NUTRITION

Encourage and support breastfeeding and appropriate introduction of solid foods

Our Service will:

- Provide a suitable place within the Service where mothers can breastfeed their babies or express breast milk.
- Support mothers to continue breastfeeding until babies are at least 12 months of age while encouraging parents to provide appropriate complementary foods from around 6 months of age.
- Ensure the safe handling of breast milk and infant formula including transporting, storing, thawing, warming, preparing, and bottle feeding.
- In consultation with families, offer cooled pre-boiled water as an additional drink from around 6 months of age.
- Where breastfeeding is discontinued before 12 months of age, substitute with a commercial infant formula (provided by the family).
- Always bottle-feed babies by holding baby in a semi-upright position.
- Encourage parents to ensure that appropriate foods (type and texture) are introduced around 6 months of age.
- Encourage parents to adjust the texture of foods offered between 6 and 12 months of age to match the baby's developmental stage.
- Encourage parents to offer a variety of foods to babies from all the food groups.
- Always supervise babies while drinking and eating, ensuring safe bottle-feeding and eating practices at all times.

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

Our Service will:

Where food is brought from home:

- Provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and that are suitable for children's lunchboxes.
- Provide information to families on how to read the *Nutritional Information Panel* on food and drink labels.

- 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/or sugar, and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes. Examples of these foods include lollies, chocolates, sweet biscuits, some muesli bars, breakfast bars and fruit filled bars, and chips.

MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/EDUCATORS WILL:

- Ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day in both the indoor and outdoor environment.
- 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.
- Ensure all children are always supervised children whilst eating and drinking.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for educators to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood nutrition.
- Display nutritional information for families and keep them regularly updated.
- Ensure infants are fed individually by educators.
- Ensure age and developmentally appropriately utensils and furniture is provided for each child.
- Not allow food to be used as a form of punishment or to be used as a reward or bribe.
- Not allow the children to be force fed or being required to eat food they do not like or more than they want to eat.
- Encourage toddlers to be independent and develop social skills at meal times.
- Establish healthy eating habits in the children by incorporating nutritional information into our program.
- Talk to families about their child's food intake and voice any concerns about their child's eating.
- Encourage parents to the best of our ability to continue our healthy eating message in their homes and to provide healthy food in children's lunchboxes.

Creating a positive learning environment

Our Service will:

- 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.
- Choose water as a preferred drink.
- 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.
- Encourage older toddlers and pre-schoolers to assist to set and clear the table and serve their own food and drink, providing opportunities for them to develop independence and self-esteem.
- 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.
- Not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for disciplinary purposes.
- Role-model and discuss safe food handling with children.

Service Program

Our Service will:

- 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.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in discovery learning and discussion about healthy food and drink choices.
- Embed the importance of healthy eating and physical activity in everyday activities and experiences.

Cooking with children

Cooking experiences may sometimes be carried out with the children as a part of the program. On these occasions participating educators will be vigilant to ensure that the experience remains safe, and relevant food hygiene practices are adhered to.

Communicating with families

Our Service will:

- Provide a copy of the Nutrition Policy to all families upon orientation at the Service.
- Provide opportunities for families to contribute to the review and development of the policy.
- 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.
- 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 factsheets, newsletters, during orientation, information sessions and informal discussion.

Source

Australian Breast-Feeding Association Guidelines: <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/>

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. (2009).

Food Act 2003

Food Regulation 2015

Foodsafety.gov. (2019): <https://www.foodsafety.gov>

Food Safety Standards (Australia only). (2015): <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/industry/safetystandards/Pages/default.aspx>

Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Act 1991

Food Standards Australia New Zealand. (2016). Safe Food Australia – A guide to the food safety standard (3rd Ed.):

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/publications/Pages/safefoodaustralia3rd16.aspx>

Food Standards Australia New Zealand: <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2017).

National Health and Medical Research Council. Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013): <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-dietary-guidelines>

National Health and Medical Research Council. Department of Health and Ageing. Infant Feeding Guidelines. (2013): https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/n56b_infant_feeding_summary_130808.pdf

National Health and Medical Research Council. Eat for health: <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/>

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

The Australian Dental Association: <https://www.ada.org.au/Home>

The Department of Health. Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood – Staff/Carers Book: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-gug-staffcarers>

DOCUMENT CONTROLS:

MALLEE KIDS CHILD CARE POLICY	
Reference Number	HSW13
Version	v1.0
Responsible Officer	General Manager Corporate & Community
Date Adopted	September 2019
Review Date	September 2020

Author (to whom changes are to be recommended)			
Position	Incumbent		
Chief Executive Officer	Matthew Morgan		
Contributors			
Position	Incumbent		
Reviewed by			
Position	Incumbent	Review Date	
General Manager Corporate & Community	Katrina Fromm	September 2019	
Approved by			
Position	Incumbent	Approval Date	
CEO	Matthew Morgan	September 2019	
History			
Date	Author	Revision	Nature of Change
Sep 2019	Matthew Morgan		New Policy Created
Publication			
<p>This is a policy of the District Council of Karoonda East Murray for the operation of the Mallee Kids Child Care service and will be available for inspection at Mallee Kids Child Care at 12 North Terrace, Karoonda or via the service website, www.malleekids.com.au .</p>			