

Elder Street Early Childhood Centre

Nutrition, Food and Beverages, Dietary Requirements

PURPOSE:

Elder Street Early Childhood Centre aims to promote a healthy lifestyle for children by providing food and food and nutrition education which is consistent with the National Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents, state regulations and food safety principles. These will be appropriate to the child's age, cultural background, religion and/or medical needs. 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.

BACKGROUND:

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place in relation to nutrition, food and beverages, and dietary requirements.

Early childhood services have a responsibility for the nutrition of children in their care. This is reinforced under the National Quality Framework for Early Education and Care. Practices and policies need to address issues of nutritional balance, mealtime environment, food hygiene, safety and individual dietary needs including allergies.

IMPLEMENTATION:

To ensure that our Food and Nutrition policy aims are met we will achieve the following major goals on a continued basis with support of the noted strategies. These goal headings are Food Provided to Children, Food Safety, Mealtime environments, Teaching and learning about Food and Nutrition and finally Partnerships with Families. We aim to evaluate our practices in all of these areas.

Commitment to Food Provided to Children

- Provide meals and snacks to children in our care that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents
- Meet children's nutritional requirements
- Provide meals and snacks of an appropriate portion size
- Provide the necessary number of serves of each food group for children
- Provide food that is appetising, varied and culturally appropriate
- Exclude foods that are high in sugar, fat and salt
- Exclude any form of sweetened drink (eg, juice, soft drink, flavoured milk, cordial etc)
- Provide full cream milk to children under 2 years of age with the exception of children on formula products (some families may decide to keep their child on formula for longer periods)
- Meet any special dietary needs (e.g., allergies, food intolerances, family preferences i.e., religious values)

Strategies (following guidelines of a children's service operating for greater than 8 hours per day):

Provide the following food and planning practises:

- 1 serve of meat or meat alternative
- 3 serves of vegetables (1/4 cup = 1 serve for children)
- 1 serve of fruit
- 3 serves of dairy
- 3 serves of bread, cereals, rice, pasta or noodles
- Provide water for drinking at all times, including meal and non meal times
- Provide reduced fat milk and other dairy products to children over 2 years of age
- Utilise the Good for Kids Menu Planning Checklist to plan menus and ensure that nutritional requirements and portion sizes are met.

Food Safety

We are committed to ensure that the children at the service consume food that has been prepared, stored and/or served in a safe and hygienic manner and that hygiene food handling practices are promoted.

When must food be kept under temperature control?

- You must ensure that the temperature of potentially hazardous food is either at 5°C or colder or at 60°C or hotter when it is received, displayed, transported or stored. If you want to receive, display, transport or store potentially hazardous food at another temperature, you must be able to show an enforcement officer that you have a safe alternative system in place.

Food Standards Australia Standard 3.2.2 Food Safety Practices and General Requirements sets out specific requirements for keeping potentially hazardous food at specified temperatures and for cooling and reheating.

- raw foods i.e., meat, will not come in contact with ready to eat foods i.e., fruit and vegetables as hands will be washed between exposure and separate chopping boards and utensils will be used
- gloves and/ or serving utensils such as tongs will be worn when serving food to children
- Fridge and Freezer temperatures will be checked on a regular basis to ensure correct temperature control.

Meal Time Environments

Our aim is to encourage a meal time environment that assists the transmission of family and multicultural values and to also understand the eating habits and behaviours of young children. The strategies we use to promote and meet this goal are:

- we encourage and support children to eat independently by providing an environment that has equipment suited to the size and age of the children and eating utensils (forks, spoons, cups) that provide opportunity for success.
- children sit in small groups during meals and are encouraged to chat and enjoy each other's company, often with a staff member

on hand to join in and have some food with their children whilst supporting the children's focus on their food.

- The consumption of food will be viewed by staff and promoted as a positive part of the children's day. Staff will not use food as a punishment or reward.
- Staff all have a clear understanding of the habits and behaviours of young children and whilst the staff understand their responsibility to decide what and when foods are provided to children they also respect a child's right to determine how much they want to eat.
- Staff understand that it may require up to 10 attempts of offering a food type to a child before they eat it and will continue to offer new foods to children.

Curriculum Teaching and Learning

Our goal is to provide learning experiences for children about food and nutrition both opportunistically and throughout the program. This will be carried out by:

- Teachers planning food and nutrition learning experiences consistently,
- Staff being role models that do not consume foods high in fat, sugar or salt in front of the children,
- Service offering consistent promotion of food and nutrition messages by only having healthy food fundraisers and/or special events
- Staff identifying opportunities for continuous education and promotion of healthy eating in their daily program, songs, posters, books, home corner etc.
- Staff being themselves educated and up to date with all knowledge and skills to provide all of the above.

Partnerships with Families

Our goal is to inform all families of the services' nutrition policies and practices. We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring all families receive a copy of our Food and Nutrition Policy on enrolment
- Ensure families are provided with updates on food and nutrition information via our Elder Street Weekly Check-in Communication, information on the planned and spontaneous food and nutrition learning experiences provided to the children via the daily day books and children's Individual Education Record.
- Ensure families are informed daily of what foods/fluids their child has consumed during the day via our Meal/Rest Records,

We also aim to engage families in developing, implementing and evaluating our Food and Nutrition Policy and practices. We hope to achieve this by:

- Regularly providing opportunity for all parents including our Parent Policy Review Committee to have input on the review of said policy and practice,
- Ask for input from families on our menu development via our annual Partnership with Parents Questionnaire

- Offering parents opportunities to be involved and participate in food and nutrition learning experiences at the service i.e., cooking with the children, planting vegies with the children etc

Evaluation

We aim to extend our continuing improvement plan to evaluate the services' practice in the area of nutrition. This will be achieved by the use of our Partnership with Parents Questionnaire, Parent Policy Review Committee, inviting involvement from parents in learning experiences and feedback on same.

Other Important Information

Special Diets

Any request by parents to provide or delete specific foods for children on special diets must be submitted to the Director on a form provided by the centre. The cook then keeps these forms on file. Under no circumstances will any item of food or drink be deliberately given to any child in contradiction of written instructions or requirements made by that parent.

Formulas

Elder Street Early Childhood Centre recommends that infants remain on formula as their main drink until 12 months of age. All formulas must be provided by the parents, made up in individual bottles and labelled with the child's name. The parents are asked to put them in the nursery refrigerator on arrival. Heating of formula will be conducted in bottle warmers (not microwave) to ensure temperature safety. Preparation, usage and storage instructions are displayed in the nursery kitchen for any staff to use as a guide for infant formula preparation.

Breast Milk

Elder Street Early Childhood Centre recommends and encourages that infants remain on breast milk as their main drink until at least 12 months of age. Whether bought in bottles or frozen cubes must be clearly labelled with child's name, date expressed, and or date frozen. Staff will then mark milk with expiry dates for discarding.

Reviewed: 7th April 2005 M Duffy-Fagan
 8 July 2005 M Duffy-Fagan
 16 March 2006 M Duffy-Fagan
 18 November 2008 M Duffy-Fagan and staff and Centre Review Committee
 27 March 2013 by M Duffy-Fagan and C Wilkinson
 10 September 2015 by M Duffy-Fagan and C Wilkinson
 September 2017 K Pomfrett, M Duffy-Fagan, C Wilkinson,
 September 2018 K Pomfrett, M Duffy-Fagan, C Wilkinson,
 May 2019 K Pomfrett, C Wilkinson,
 October 2021 K Pomfrett, C Wilkinson,

Source and Legislative requirements:

NSW Health – Caring for Children
Children Services Regulation 2004 –
Hunter New England Population Health, Hunter New
England Area Health Service – Good for Kids, Good for
Life Nutrition Resource Package
Healthy Kids eat well, get Active
[https://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/stats-
research/overweight-and-obesity.aspx](https://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/stats-research/overweight-and-obesity.aspx)
NSW Food Authority
Food Standards Australia
Australian Department of Health
National Quality Standard – Children's Health and Safety
National Regulations 79, 90
ACECQA – Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority