



# Springwood and District Preschool Kindergarten

## Food, Nutrition and Meal time Policy

### **Legislation:**

*Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*

*Education and Care Services National Regulation 2018*

*United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989*

### **Quality Area 2: Children's Health & Safety**

*Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167*

*Education and Care Services National Regulations 2018: Regulations 78-80, 168*

*Work Health and Safety Act 2011*

### **Policy Statement**

This policy concerns the provision of healthy food and drink while children are in care and the promotion of normal growth and development.

The service is committed to implementing the healthy eating key messages outlined in Munch & Move and to supporting the National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings as outlined in the Get Up & Grow resources.

Further, we recognise the importance of supporting families in providing healthy food and drink to their children. It is acknowledged that the early childhood setting has an important role in supporting families in healthy eating.

### **Rationale:**

Springwood and District Preschool Kindergarten supports parents in establishing and maintaining good food habits. Early childhood is a time of growth and activity, which results in increased nutritional needs. It is important that the food and drink available to children is safe, varied, nutritious and culturally diverse. It is also important that the mealtime environment is pleasant and relaxed hereby greatly contributing to children's enjoyment of mealtimes.

### **Aim:**

- To provide a relaxed and social environment at all mealtimes and to promote good nutrition and healthy eating habits for children



- To provide families with nutritional information and food guidelines based on current recommendations
- To provide information on safe food storage and handling, allergies, nutrition and lunch box options for young children.

#### Procedure:

##### Educators are responsible for:

- Scheduling routine times for meals and snacks that meet the children's needs
- Supporting children to come to the eating area for meals and snacks
- Creating a relaxed and pleasant social environment at mealtimes by talking to the children about what they are eating, what they like, favorite & healthy foods etc.
- Respecting children's choices
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##### Parents are responsible for:

- Providing a nutritionally balanced meal for morning-tea and lunch when at preschool.
- Refrigeration of perishable foods on arrival
- Notifying staff regarding allergies or other concerns.

##### Children are responsible for:

- Deciding how much food they want to eat
- Selecting the food of choice from their lunch box at morning tea and lunch time.

#### Nutrition

- Springwood and District Preschool Kindergarten has a healthy food focus, it is requested that parents provide nutritionally based food from the food groups on the healthy food pyramid. Suggested foods include: fruit, vegetables, grained food, meat, fish or other culturally prepared foods that abide by the healthy food pyramid.
  - Eat most – plant food (vegetables, fruit, dried peas, bean, lentils, bread and cereal (preferably wholegrain).
  - Drink 4-5 glasses of water per day for children, 6-8 glasses of water per day for adults
  - Eat moderately – fish, lean meat, eggs, chicken (no skin), milk, cheese and yogurt
  - Eat in small amounts – sugars and fats
- Foods containing high fat and sugar content will be discouraged and children will be asked to take them home
- There are ten guidelines for encouraging healthy eating at Springwood and District Preschool Kindergarten as per Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia. They are:
  1. Children need appropriate food and physical activity to grow and develop normally.
  2. Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from the five food groups.
  3. Choose foods from mainly breads and cereals, vegetables (including legumes) and fruits.
  4. Low fat diets are suitable for young children after the age of 2 years, as per Munch & Move.  
*NSW Health Department.*
  5. Encourage water as a drink.
  6. Eat only a moderate amount of sugars and foods containing added sugars, for example



fruit juices are very high in sugars.

7. Choose low-salt foods

8. Eat food containing calcium

9. Eat food containing iron.

- The children will bring morning tea and lunch. If a child is without food for the day the parents will be contacted and asked to bring in lunch and a snack for the child or alternatively a sandwich or suitable food will be provided.
- Springwood and District Preschool Kindergarten is a NUT FREE preschool. Parents are reminded not to bring in products that contain nuts or traces of nuts. Parents are also asked to ensure their child has rinsed their mouth with water and washed their hands prior to coming to the preschool if they have eaten nut products for breakfast. Reminder is also displayed on arrival to the preschool to wash hands.
- For reasons of safety, behaviour, allergies and nutrition, parents are asked to please avoid sending the following foods;
  - fish with bones,
  - nuts,
  - chips,
  - seeds,
  - roll-ups,
  - chocolate,
  - chocolate and cream filled biscuits,
  - fruit sticks,
  - dairy snacks, (i.e. Yogo)

“NUDE FOOD” is best

- Children eat meals within a social environment; unsuitable foods can create inequality and confusion, and can be potential allergy concerns and possible choking hazards. It is our aim at preschool to support and encourage children to nutritious food.
- Special occasions food will not be the focus, but rather the occasion. The policy is not designed to be overly prescriptive and on special occasions other foods are appropriate, for example, a cake may be brought from home to celebrate a birthday.
- During regular staff meetings, newsletters and the notice board, food and nutrition information will be passed on to families and staff.
- Water will be accessible to the children at all times. Cordial and soft drinks will not be allowed and juice is not recommended. The children will be offered, and encouraged to drink water during and after lunch in the interests of dental hygiene. See Dental Hygiene policy for more information.
- If educators are concerned about foods provided to any particular child, this will be discussed with individual parents. Information is available to raise awareness of appropriate food choices which suit the developmental stages of the children. Food items that may cause problems for any of the reasons outlined above will be sent home with the child.
- If a child has a food allergy families will be informed – see Medical conditions – Anaphylaxis Management Policy for more information

### Health and Safety

- Food safety and hygiene practices will also be part of the mealtime experience.
- The eating area will be cleaned before presenting food and before the children eat. See Cleaning Policy for more information.



- Children with food allergies will be monitored closely
- Sensitive discussions will occur regularly to help other children understand the dangers of some foods for some children
- Children will thoroughly wash and dry their hands before eating
- Educators to serve food practice hygienic hand washing methods or gloves depending on personal preferences.
- Children are not to share food or handle the food or utensils of other children
- Any dropped utensils (if being used) are removed & quickly replaced
- The eating area will be cleaned properly following snacks or mealtimes, for safety and to minimise vermin and other pests.
- Children will always be seated when eating
- Children will never be forced to eat
- Crying or upset children will not be given food to eat until calm
- Children will need to have empty mouths before they return to play
- Educators will actively supervise children when they are eating
- Preschool staff will not reheat in the microwave for children's lunch, as detailed in other policies in section 3 health, Safety & Well Being
- Cold packs in lunch box as well as placing perishables in fridge.

### **Transition to mealtimes**

- Transitions will be used to minimise children's waiting time for food and to set the scene for mealtimes with suggestions of some social discussion topics (e.g. what happened during the playtime that morning).
- Educators will provide a short transition/group time with a story or some songs to help children slow down from their activities and begin to focus on mealtimes.
- Children will be encouraged to help set up the meal area.
- Children's wishes not to eat will be respected if they are not hungry but a 'Meal time routine and courtesy will be observed in that children come to the table and talk with their friends for a short time at meal times, as sometimes watching peers eat may change their mind about eating.

### **The eating environment**

- Meal times will be safe, calm and pleasant experiences, focusing on the social interactions between children and between children and educators. Children will be encouraged to undertake discussions about food, healthy food and food from other cultures.
- Children will be provided with tables or floor picnic mats for small groups of children to sit together.
- Educators will discuss the environment with children and what they would like – tablecloths, a centerpiece for decoration, quiet music; utensils or other items that reflect different cultures as per the Early Years Learning Framework's Principles, Practices and Learning Outcomes.
- Children will be provided with tableware (e.g. tablecloths and/ or placemats, flowers, etc.) and utensils that are attractive and the area will be maintained in a clean and aesthetic manner
- Educators will provide opportunities for children to assist in setting up and clearing away the meal environment – in line with their skills and interest.
- Snack and mealtimes will be regularly scheduled throughout the day, set up consistently to



provide continuity and assurance for children but with some flexibility for special activities (e.g. the weather, etc.)

- Where the weather permits, the environment will include outdoor eating experiences for the children.

### Good eating habits

At mealtimes, educators will encourage children to:

- Serve themselves with some assistance when required.
- Eat until they feel full, but not necessarily finishing all food.
- Chew their food well and not overfill their mouths with food.
- Develop their table manners and positive social interactions.
- Staff will role model, through eating with children at meal times.

### Interactions at mealtimes

- Interactions and conversations are primarily on the children's interests and experiences.
- Educators will encourage children to talk amongst their table group including highlighting particular activities they may have engaged in that day.
- Educators will sit down at a table when talking with children rather than always talking at them from a standing position and remain calm and accommodate children's 'messiness' at mealtimes.
- Nutrition will be discussed at mealtimes, in an informal manner
- Children's attention will be drawn to a new food or something interesting about a particular food, e.g. how beans grow; if food has been prepared differently, and any cultural factors about the food offered
- Children will be encouraged to stay at the table and talk or choose quiet activities away from the table for children who may finish eating more quickly than others
- Children will be allowed time to finish their meals.
- Teachers to make links within the programming promoting information regarding healthy food. For example a whole class food graph.

### Educational Program

- Food and nutrition activities will form an integral part of the educational program as per the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standards, particularly National Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice and National Quality Area 2 – Children's Health and Safety.
- The '*Munch & Move*' (NSW Government initiative with NSW Health) fun, play-based training program will be incorporated into the educational program at preschool. *Munch & Move* supports the healthy development of young children (birth to 5 years) by promoting physical activity, healthy eating and reduced small screen time (e.g. watching TV or DVDs, playing on computers and small hand-held games devices) for children in care. Learning through devices such as ipads etc will be promoted, as technology is important for children's learning, however this will be presented for limited sessions and not replace outdoor play but rather be presented as another tool. <http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/about-munch-move.aspx>



**Partnerships with families**

- Educators will respect family practices at mealtimes and incorporate these into the program
- Families will be encouraged to share favorite nutritious food recipes, particularly lunch box ideas and culturally diverse food
- Educators will be sensitive to any ongoing issues families may be dealing with related to the child's health and nutrition
- Educators will provide information on nutrition, healthy eating habits and the social/developmental aspects of mealtimes to families as found in *Munch & Move*
- Educators will access up to date, relevant and family friendly information from the 'Health Kids' website including lunch box ideas. <http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/>
- Educators will support and assist families in addressing issues or concerns they have about their child's eating habits.

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| Regs | 77  | Health, hygiene and safe food practices                      |
|      | 78  | Food and beverages   |
|      | 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 |

| <b>Links to Quality Areas and Standards:</b> |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Quality Area 1</b>                        | <b>Educational Program and Practice</b>  |
| 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                    |
| 1.2.1 Intentional Teaching                   | Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.   |
| 1.2.2 Responsive teaching and scaffolding    | Educators respond to children's ideas and play and extend children's learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback.         |
| 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.                            |
| <b>Quality Area 2</b>                        | <b>Children's health and safety</b>  |
| Standard 2.1                                 | Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.   |
| 2.1.2  | Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented   |
| Standard 2.1.3                               | Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.  |
| 2.2.1  | At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard                               |
| <b>Quality Area 5</b>                        | <b>Relationships with children</b>   |
| Standard 5.1                                 | Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.   |
| 5.1.1  | Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included |



**Source:**

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) (2009) *Belonging, Being, Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. Canberra:DEEWR

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) (2011) *Education and Care Services National Regulation*

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) (2009) *National Quality Standard for Early Education and Care and School Aged Children* Canberra:DEEWR

Matthews, C. (2004). *Healthy children - a guide for child care*. NSW: Elsevier.

National Health and Medical Research Council. (n.d). *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*. Retrieved 2011 from [http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/\\_files/n30.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/_files/n30.pdf)

NSW Department of Health, NSW Department of Education and Communities and the Heart Foundation. <http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/default.aspx>  
<http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/active-living/healthy-kids/Pages/resources-and-information-sheets.aspx>

Nutrition Australia <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/>

**Further reading and useful websites**

- Australian Breastfeeding Association – <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/> accessed 24 December 2017
- Better Health Channel. (2011). *Fact sheet: Child care and healthy eating*. <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/childcare-and-healthy-eating> accessed 24 December 2017
- Nutrition Australia. (2009). *Get up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for early Childhood (Staff and Carer handbook)*. [https://www.health.gov.au/zinternet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/2CDB3A000FE57A4ECA257BF0001916EC/\\$File/HEPA%20-%20B5%20Book%20-%20Staff%20and%20Carer%20Book\\_LR.pdf](https://www.health.gov.au/zinternet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/2CDB3A000FE57A4ECA257BF0001916EC/$File/HEPA%20-%20B5%20Book%20-%20Staff%20and%20Carer%20Book_LR.pdf) accessed 24 December 2017
- Nutrition Australia. (2017). *Factsheets*. <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/resources> accessed 24 December 2017
- Nutrition Australia – *Promoting health by encouraging food variety and physical activity*. <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/vic/nutrition-services-early-learning-centres> accessed 24 December 2017
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2003). *The Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia incorporating The Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers* [http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/\\_files\\_nhmrc/publications/attachments/n34.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/n34.pdf) accessed 24 December 2017

Policy Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_



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