Nutrition/food/beverages/dietary requirements Policy

1. Policy Statement

Research has shown that one in five pre-schoolers 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.

2. Legislative Requirements

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011:

77 Health, hygiene and safe food practices

(1) The approved provider of an education and care service must ensure that the nominated supervisor and staff members of, and volunteers at, the service implement:
   a) adequate health and hygiene practices and
   b) safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food
   c) to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service.

(2) The nominated supervisor of an education and care service must implement, and ensure that all staff members of, and volunteers at, the service implement:
   a) adequate health and hygiene practices; and
   b) safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food

78 Food and beverages

(1) The approved provider of an education and care service must ensure that children being educated and cared for by the service;
   a) have access to safe drinking water at all times; and
   b) are offered food and beverages appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis throughout the day

(2) The nominated supervisor of an education and care service must ensure that children being educated and cared for by the service;
   a) have access to safe drinking water at all times; and
   b) are offered food and beverages on a regular basis throughout the day

79 Service providing food and beverages

(1) The approved provider of an education and care service that provides food or a beverage to children being educated and cared for by the service must ensure that:
   a) the food or beverage provided is nutritious and adequate in quantity; and
   b) the food or beverage provided is chosen having regard to the dietary requirements of individual children taking into account:
      i) each child’s growth and development needs; and
      ii) any specific cultural, religious or health requirements

(2) The nominated supervisor of an education and care service that provides food or a beverage to children being educated and cared for by the service must ensure that:
   a) the food or beverage provided is nutritious and adequate in quantity; and
   b) the food or beverage provided is chosen having regard to the dietary requirements of individual children taking into account:
      i) each child’s growth and development needs; and
      ii) any specific cultural, religious or health requirements

80 Weekly menu

(1) The approved provider of an education and care service that provides food and beverages (other than water) to children being educated and cared for by the service must ensure that a weekly menu;
   a) is displayed at a place at the education and care service premises accessible to parents of children being educated and cared for by the service; and
   b) accurately describes the food and beverages to be provided by the service each day

(2) The nominated supervisor of an education and care service that provides food and beverages (other than water) to children being educated and cared for by the service must ensure that a weekly menu;
   a) is displayed at a place at the education and care service premises accessible to parents of children being educated and cared for by the service; and
   b) accurately describes the food and beverages to be provided by the service each day.

Links to National Quality Standard:

2.2.1 Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate for each child.

2.2.2 Physical activity is promoted through planned and spontaneous experiences and is appropriate for each child.
3. Who is affected by this policy?
   a) Children
   b) Staff
   c) Parents
   d) Management

4. Implementation

   UWSELL centres will:
   A. role model healthy eating and activity throughout the day to all children and families;
   B. promote the six key Munch and Move messages to promote healthy, active habits in children from a young age;
   C. develop menus in accordance with the Australian Government Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood Settings, and the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia; and
   D. support families in educating their children about healthy food choices.

   The Approved Provider will:
   A. Ensure that all children have access to safe drinking water at all times;
   B. Ensure that all children are offered food and beverages appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis throughout the day;
   C. All educators will attend Munch and Move professional development training or receive similar training and information;
   D. All educators will have access to the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings; and
   E. Staff employed to prepare meals will be qualified in an approved training course on food handling, nutrition and hygiene, and be provided with ongoing professional development opportunities to refresh their knowledge of children’s dietary needs, food handling and hygiene procedures.
   F. Ensure that food and beverages provided are nutritious and adequate in quantity, and take each child’s individual dietary requirements, growth and development needs and any specific cultural, religious or health requirements;
   G. Ensure that the service displays an accessible menu which accurately describes the food and beverages provided by the service each day; and
   H. Ensure that educators and staff are aware of the need to implement adequate health and hygiene practices and use safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service.

   The Nominated Supervisor will ensure that:
   A. All children will have access to safe drinking water at all times;
   B. All children are offered food and beverages appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis throughout the day;
   C. Food and beverages provided are nutritious and adequate in quantity, in consideration of growth and development needs, any known food allergies and intolerances of specific children, and in line with recommended dietary guidelines, and will take into consideration each child’s individual dietary requirements, growth and development needs and any specific cultural, religious or health requirements;
   D. The service displays an accessible menu which accurately describes the food and beverages provided by the service each day;
   E. The menu is diverse and will reflect the cultural backgrounds of families and the local community;
   F. Educators and staff implement adequate health and hygiene practices and use safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children; and
   G. Ensure that as per the Medical Conditions Policy the centre shall remain a nut free centre and that all dietary requirements relating to medical conditions are adhered to.

5. Sources
   • Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
   • Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
   • National Quality Standard 2010
   • Community Child care Co-operative

6. Review

   The policy will be reviewed annually. Review will be conducted by management, employees, parents and any interested parties.