

Nutrition

The foods we eat provide our body with the nutrients we need to stay healthy. Good nutrition (refer to *Definitions*) is especially important for children as they require a large amount of nutrients for growth and development.

Research has shown when offered a variety of healthy foods, children can and do make good choices. It is also important to provide kindergarten children with a good foundation in healthy eating and oral health, as most children have formed lifelong 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.

Oral health behaviours have a major influence on children's health and wellbeing and a direct impact on their growth and development. Oral diseases can negatively affect individuals through pain, discomfort, general health and quality of life. Poor oral health can limit a child's capacity in biting, chewing, smiling, speaking, and psychosocial wellbeing. The main oral health condition experienced by children is tooth decay affecting over half of all Australian children, making it five times more prevalent than asthma.

Active Play

Active play (refer to *Definitions*) develops a strong and healthy body, builds motor and co-ordination 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, oral health and an active lifestyle, can provide children with confidence, energy and optimism that will contribute to their ability to concentrate, cooperate and learn (*Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, p30 – refer to *Sources*). 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* (refer to *Sources*).

The Australian Government has produced guidelines, recommendations and resources for healthy eating and physical activity in early childhood settings, including the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia* (refer to *Sources*) and the *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* resources (refer to *Sources*) and the *National Physical Activity Recommendations for Children 0-5 Years* (refer to *Sources*).

Practical, healthy eating advice is also available to early childhood services and schools via a telephone advice line: the Victorian Healthy Eating Advisory Service (Healthy Eating Advisory Service – refer to *Sources*), run by Nutrition Australia.

Progressive meal times

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 meal times into the educational program allows children to choose to eat when they are hungry, rather than according to a timetable. 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 meal times and allows for a

	<p>smoother flow throughout the day. Children can make decisions based on their own needs, and can be supported to access food and water throughout the day by educators/staff, who actively participate in meal times.</p> <p>A decision with respect to incorporating progressive meal times into the educational program must take into account the needs of all children at the Service, particularly children with specific medical conditions such as diabetes. National Regulations require services to ensure that children with medical conditions are able to participate fully in the educational program, and are not discriminated against in any way.</p>
<p>Definitions:</p>	<p>Active play: large muscle-based activities that are essential for a child’s social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth and development incorporating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child-initiated active play, which is developed by the child through exploration of the outdoor environment, equipment and games • adult-guided active play which encourages children’s physical development through promoting movement skills in a non-competitive environment • physical activity, which includes sport, incidental exercise and many forms of recreation <p>Adequate 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 each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary. 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 • 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 skill of each educator • need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies) <p>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.</p> <p>Nutrition: the process of providing or receiving nourishing substances.</p> <p>‘Discretionary’ foods and drinks: food and drink items that are high in fat, sugar and salt, and that contain minimal vitamins, minerals or fibre. These can also be referred to as ‘sometimes’ foods and drinks.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

References:	<p><i>Australian Dietary Guidelines</i> (2019 National Health and Medical Research Council: www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications)</p> <p>Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (Birth to 5 years): HTTPS://WWW.HEALTH.GOV.AU/INTERNET/MAIN/PUBLISHING.NSF/CONTENT/NPRA-0-5YRS-BROCHURE</p> <p><i>Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:</i> HTTPS://DOCS.EDUCATION.GOV.AU/DOCUMENTS/BELONGING-BEING-BECOMING-EARLY-YEARS-LEARNING-FRAMEWORK-AUSTRALIA</p> <p>Better Health Channel: www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au</p> <p>Cancer Council Australia – for information on sun safety: www.cancer.org.au/sunsmart</p> <p>Dental Health Services Victoria: WWW.DHSV.ORG.AU</p> <p>Department of Health (2013) <i>Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood</i>: : HTTPS://WWW.HEALTH.GOV.AU/INTERNET/MAIN/PUBLISHING.NSF/CONTENT/PHD-GUG-STAFFCARERS</p> <p>Food Safety Victoria, Department of Health – Food Safety and Regulation: WWW2.HEALTH.VIC.GOV.AU/PUBLIC-HEALTH/FOOD-SAFETY</p> <p>Food Standards Australia New Zealand – for information on food safety and food handling: www.foodstandards.gov.au</p> <p>Kids and Traffic – Early Childhood Road Safety Education Program: www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au</p> <p>KidSafe: the Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia – for information on preventing childhood accidents in children under the age of 15 years: www.kidsafe.org.au</p> <p>Murdoch Children’s Research Institute, Royal Children’s Hospital Melbourne, <i>Limit ‘Sometimes’ Foods</i> Background Paper</p> <p>National Health and Medical Research Council, <i>Infant Feeding Guidelines: information for health workers</i> (2013): HTTPS://WWW.NHMRC.GOV.AU/ABOUT-US/PUBLICATIONS/INFANT-FEEDING-GUIDELINES-INFORMATION-HEALTH-WORKERS</p> <p>National Health and Medical Research Council, <i>Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (5th edition, 2013)</i>: HTTPS://WWW.NHMRC.GOV.AU/ABOUT-US/PUBLICATIONS/STAYING-HEALTHY-PREVENTING-INFECTIOUS-DISEASES-EARLY-CHILDHOOD-EDUCATION-AND-CARE-SERVICES</p> <p>Nitzke, S, Riley, D, Ramminger, A and Jacobs, G (2010), <i>Rethinking Nutrition: Connecting Science and Practice in Early Childhood Settings</i>. Redleaf Press, St Paul, USA</p> <p>Oberklaid, F (2004), <i>Health in Early Childhood Settings: From Emergencies to the Common Cold</i>. Pademelon Press, NSW</p> <p><i>Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework:</i> https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/veyldf.aspx#link36</p> <p><i>The Healthy Early Childhood Services Achievement Program</i> https://www.achievementprogram.health.vic.gov.au/education/early-childhood-services</p>
Related Policies:	<p><i>Early Years Policy - Excursions and Service events</i></p> <p><i>Early Years Policy - Hygiene</i></p> <p><i>Early Years Policy - Managing medical conditions</i></p> <p><i>Early Years Policy - Diabetes</i></p> <p><i>Early Years Policy - Anaphylaxis</i></p> <p><i>Early Years Policy - Asthma</i></p>

	<p><i>Early Years Policy - Sun protection</i></p> <p><i>Early Years Policy - Road safety education and safe transport</i></p>
Related Legislation:	<p><i>Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code</i></p> <p><i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</i></p> <p><i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</i></p> <p><i>Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010</i></p> <p><i>Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 including Regulations 77–78, 79–80 (if the service provides food), 168</i></p> <p><i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)</i></p> <p><i>Food Act 1984 (Vic)</i></p> <p><i>National Quality Standard including Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety</i></p> <p><i>Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004</i></p>

NUTRITION, ORAL HEALTH AND ACTIVE PLAY POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 2

SCOPE

This policy applies to the staff, students on placement at kindergartens, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of the Macedon Ranges Shire Council's Early Years Services.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Approved Provider and Persons with Management or Control are responsible for:

- ensuring the Service environment and educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for eating, oral health and active play (refer to *Definitions*)
- ensuring food and drinks are given as a necessity and not used as a bribe, incentive or reward
- providing ongoing information, resources and support to families, to assist in the promotion of optimum health, including oral health, for young children (refer to *Sources*)
- recognising families, educators and staff as role models and encouraging them to bring/use foods and drinks in line with the *Early Years Policy - Nutrition, Oral Health 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 (*Regulation 77*) (refer to *Early Years Policy – Hygiene*)
- ensuring all educators/staff comply with the *Food Safety Act*
- ensuring all educators/staff are aware of a child's food allergies and/or other medical conditions on enrolment or on initial diagnosis
- ensuring all educators/staff are aware of, and plan for, the dietary needs of all children and in particular children diagnosed with diabetes (refer to *Early Years Policy – Managing medical conditions*)
- ensuring measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination of food given to children with diagnosed food allergies and/or diabetes (refer to *Early Years Policy – Managing medical conditions*)
- ensuring celebrations, fundraising activities and other Service events are consistent with the purposes and values of this policy
- developing and reviewing guidelines for celebrations, fundraising activities and other Service events in consultation with educators, staff, parents/guardians and families
- developing links with local and regional health services, community organisations and businesses who provide expertise, resources and support for healthy eating, oral health and active play
- ensuring fresh drinking water (preferably tap water) is readily available at all times, indoors and outdoors, and reminding children to drink water throughout the day, including at snack/lunch times (*Regulation 78(1) (a)*). Only tap water and plain milk are encouraged
- ensuring staff and educators are supported by having healthy food options for professional learning
- ensuring Service facilities and equipment enable active travel and road safety for children, staff, educators and families
- ensuring educators are supported to access resources, tools and professional learning to enhance their knowledge and capacity to promote healthy eating, oral health and active play initiatives for children, developing adult guided and child initiated active play experiences
- ensuring space and facilities are available to allow staff and educators to store and prepare healthy food

The Nominated Supervisor and Persons in Day-to-Day Charge are responsible for:

- ensuring the Service environment and the educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for eating, oral health and active play
- embedding opportunities to learn about healthy eating and oral health and the importance of physical activity in the educational program throughout the year
- 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 (*Regulation 77*) (refer to *Early Years Policy – Hygiene*)
- ensuring all educators/staff comply with the *Food Safety Act*
- ensuring all educators/staff 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 (refer to *Early Years Policy – Managing medical conditions*)
- ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of, and plan for, the dietary needs of all children and in particular children diagnosed with diabetes (refer to *Early Years Policy – Managing medical conditions*)
- ensuring fresh drinking water is readily available at all times, and reminding children to drink water throughout the day, including at snack/lunch times (*Regulation 78(1)(a)*)
- ensuring food and drinks are available to children at frequent and regular intervals throughout the day (*Regulation 78(1)(b)*)
- ensuring age-appropriate adult-guided and child-initiated active play is planned on a daily basis
- developing and reviewing guidelines for celebrations, fundraising activities and other Service events in consultation with educators, staff, parents/guardians and families to focus on healthy alternatives
- providing families with information and strategies to promote healthy eating, oral health and active play and how to access relevant services (including local dental clinics)
- developing links with local and regional health services, community organisations and businesses that provide expertise, resources and support for healthy eating, oral health and active play
- considering this policy when organising excursions and Service events (refer to *Early Years Policy - Excursions and Service events*)
- ensuring the layout of the grounds and buildings is inclusive of the diversity and abilities of all children and encourages physical activity and movement
- ensuring recommendations about physical activity and screen time from the Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (Birth to 5 Years) are met while children are at the Service
- encouraging active travel to and from the Service
- ensuring that cultural and religious practices/requirements of families are accommodated to support children's learning and development

All staff are responsible for:

- complying with *Early Years Policy - Nutrition, oral health and active play policy* and the *Food Safety Act*
- implementing adequate health and hygiene procedures, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, to minimise risks to children (refer to *Early Years Policy – Hygiene*)
- being aware of a child's food allergies and/or other medical conditions on enrolment at the service or on initial diagnosis

- implementing measures to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies and/or diabetes (refer to *Early Years Policy – Managing medical conditions*)
- working with families and specialist services to support children with specific dietary requirements for which the goals and strategies will be part of the child’s individual learning plan and/or medical action plan
- being aware of and planning for the dietary needs of all children
- being aware of and planning for the dietary needs of children diagnosed with diabetes (refer to *Early Years Policies – Managing medical conditions and Diabetes*)
- ensuring the Service environment and educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for eating, oral health and active play
- discussing healthy eating choices with children, introducing the concept of ‘sometimes’ and every day foods and drinks
- role-modelling positive eating, drinking and physical activity behaviours and promoting a healthy relationship with food
- exploring and discussing diverse cultural, religious, social and family lifestyles
- considering this policy when organising excursions and Service events (refer to *Early Years Policy - Excursions and Service events*)
- providing a variety of cooking and food experiences that support children to develop food literacy and positive habits relating to food
- ensuring that food and drink are not used as an incentive, bribe or reward at any time
- supporting students and volunteers to comply with this policy whilst at the Service
- informing parents/guardians of current information relating to healthy eating, active play, oral health initiatives and how and where to access public dental services
- ensuring fresh drinking water is readily available at all times, reminding children to drink regularly throughout the day, including at snack/meal times
- ensuring children can readily access their own clearly labelled drink containers
- providing food and drinks at regular intervals, and encouraging children to actively participate in, and enjoy, snack/meal times without feeling rushed
- providing adequate supervision (refer to *Definitions*) for all children during meal/snack times
- providing a positive eating environment and sitting and interacting with children at meal times
- providing opportunities for children to learn about, and develop skills for oral health through the educational program, including age-appropriate tooth brushing
- encouraging children to be independent at snack/meal times e.g. opening lunchboxes, pouring drinks, self-feeding, serving and using utensils in a culturally-sensitive way
- planning and providing outdoor, active play which is stimulating, promotes skill development, considers safety issues and provides adequate supervision (refer to *Definitions*)
- planning and providing active play and movement experiences which are age-appropriate, inclusive of diversity and abilities and support children to develop fundamental movement skills
- considering opportunities for children to be physically active indoors, particularly in adverse weather conditions
- ensuring children are not sedentary or inactive for more than one hour at a time, with the exception of sleeping
- supporting children to develop collaboration skills during play
- providing daily opportunities for all children to participate in active play
- encouraging children to exercise by engaging in active play, and walking or riding a bike to the Service where appropriate
- acting as positive role models by engaging in physical activity

- ensuring screen based activities do not exceed the recommendations in the Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (birth to 5 years) for all children while at the service
- providing age-appropriate traffic safety education, including pedestrian and passenger safety to children at the service
- promoting safe behaviour through daily practice as part of the program

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 staff prior to the child's commencement at the Service, and if/when requirements change over time (refer to *Early Years Policy – Managing medical Conditions*)
- communicating regularly with educators/staff regarding their child's specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs, including food preferences
- encouraging their child to drink an adequate amount of water and discouraging 'discretionary' drinks
- providing healthy, nutritious food for snacks/meals, including fruits and vegetables in line with the *Early Years Policy - Nutrition, oral health and active play*, where applicable
- providing nutritious food and drinks for celebrations, fundraising activities and service events, consistent with Service policy
- encouraging children to exercise by engaging in active play, and walking or riding a bike to the Service where appropriate
- dressing their child/ren so they can engage safely in active play

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

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback regarding the effectiveness of this policy
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the Service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any change to this policy or its procedures