



## Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary Requirements Policy

### Introduction:

Maryland Care & Early Education Centre recognises the importance of healthy eating to the growth and development of young children and is committed to supporting the healthy food and drink choices of children in their care.

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 and supporting the National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings.

Further, Maryland Care & Early Education Centre recognises 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.

The service is committed to ensuring adequate health and hygiene practices are followed when handling preparing and storing food as per the Food Standards Code and Food Act 2023.

### Aims:

- To role model healthy eating and activity throughout the day to all children and families
- To promote the 6 key *Munch and Move* messages to encourage healthy, active habits in children from a young age
- To develop menus in accordance with Good for Kids Good for Life and ensure that is aligns with the Caring for Children Guidelines
- To support families in educating their children about healthy food choices

Legislative requirements / Sources:
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### Education and Care Service National Regulations 2011

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
160	Child enrolment records to be kept by approved provider and family day care educator
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies and procedures

### Children (Education and Care Services) National Law 2010:

167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazard
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### National Quality Standards (NQS):

#### Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety

2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted
2.1.3	Healthy lifestyles	Healthy eating and physical activity is promoted and appropriate for each child

#### Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

6.1	Supportive relationships with families	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role
6.1.2	Parents views are respected	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing

### Early Years Learning Framework V2

#### Outcome 3 – Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and wellbeing

## Sources:

- Food Standards Code and Food Act 2023
- Australian Government: Get Up and Grow – Healthy eating and physical activity for early childhood
- Food safety requirements for children’s services in NSW November 2023  
foodauthority.nsw.gov.au
- Food standards Australia and New Zealand 2023 3.2.2A – foodsafety.org.au
- Munch and Move – healthykids.nsw.gov.au
- Caring for Children Birth - 5 years
- CELA
- ACECQA

<b>Implementation:</b>
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### Professional development of staff and educators

- Educators and staff will attend *Munch and Move* professional development training or receive similar training and information when needed
- All educators will have access to the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings  
<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/directorcoordinator-book>
- Staff employed to prepare meals and/or devise menus 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
- Ensure all requirements under the Food Standards Code and Food Act 2023 are met

### The Approved Provider will:

- Ensure that all children have access to safe drinking water at all times
- Ensure that children are offered food and beverages appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis throughout the day
- Ensure that food and beverages provided are nutritious and adequate in quantity and take each child’s individual dietary requirements, growth and development needs into consideration and any specific cultural, religious or health requirements are met
- Ensure that the service displays an accessible menu which accurately describes the food and beverages provided by the service each day
- Allocate finances for training and food safety
- Allocate finances to ensure provisions of nutritionally balanced and culturally sensitive meals are required

**The Nominated Supervisor will:**

- Ensure that all children have access to safe drinking water at all times
- Ensure that children are offered food and beverages appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis throughout the day
- Ensure that food and beverages provided are nutritious and adequate in quantity and take each child's individual dietary requirements, growth and development needs into consideration and any specific cultural, religious or health requirements are met
- Ensure the service menu is consistent with Early Childhood Education and Care nutrition guidelines and that the service displays an accessible menu which accurately describes the food and beverages provided by the service each day. Maryland Care and Early Education Centre will display the menu two weeks in advance and can be emailed or copied for parents upon request
- Ensure that educators are aware of and 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
- Ensure that the menu is diverse and reflects the cultural backgrounds of families and the local community
- Ensure that as per centre policy that Maryland Care and Early Education Centre remains 'nut free' and that all dietary requirements relating to medical conditions are adhered to
- Ensure all requirements are being met under the Food Safety Standard Code and Food Act are being met
- Maintain all records as required by the Food Safety Standards Code and Food Act 2023

**Staff and Educators will:**

- Ensure that healthy eating is promoted through role modelling and eating with the children
- Actively supervise children during meal times
- Help children make healthy food choices
- Ensure that all meal times are positive, relaxed and social
- Encourage children to try new foods
- Ensure that children's food likes and dislikes are respected
- Ensure that children are positively involved in meal times
- Adhere to best practices and service policy in regards to the safe storage and heating of both expressed breast milk and formula (see Bottle Feeding Policy and Bottle Feeding Procedures)
- Ensure that they implement adequate health and hygiene practices and use safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children
- Ensure that as per centre policy that Maryland Care and Early Education Centre remains 'nut free' and that all dietary requirements relating to medical conditions are adhered to

- Ensure that the introduction of solid foods to babies and toddlers is done in consultation with families and in line with recognised guidelines
- Ensure that food is reheated in microwavable dishes i.e glass and not in melamine bowls or plates
- Complete appropriate training as per service requirements

### **Supporting families**

- Staff and educators will support families' choices regarding infant feeding, including breast feeding and bottle feeding
- Maryland Care and Early Education will provide families with up to date information on dietary requirements of young children to ensure optimal growth and development and provide families with opportunities to discuss ways to maximise the health and well-being of children
- Staff and Educators will provide families with daily information about their child's intake of food and drinks throughout the day
- If food is to be bought from home for medical or cultural reasons educators and staff will ensure that all food meets current dietary guidelines and is nut free. Where possible Maryland Care and Early Education Centre strives to provide all meals for children whilst being cared and educated at our service taking into account individual medical and cultural requirements
- If children require special dietary plans and provisions, a signed letter from a GP, dietician or nutritionist is required to verify this individual need.
- Families are encouraged to share menu ideas and recipes

### **Encourage and Support Breast feeding and appropriate introduction of solid foods**

- Apply current national infant feeding recommendations
- Support mothers to continue breastfeeding until babies are at least 12 months of age while offering appropriate complementary foods from around 6 months of ages
- In consultation with families, determine appropriate foods (type and texture) are introduced around 6 months of age
- In consultation with families, offer a variety of foods to babies from all food groups

### **Education and Information**

- Educators will engage children in learning experiences that are fun and enjoyable and incorporate key messages around healthy eating
- Educators will implement learning experiences guided by the EYLF principles and incorporated into the child's sense of identity
- Families will be provided with current information about recommended guidelines around dietary requirements, screen time and physical activity

## Special occasions and celebrations

- Maryland Care and Early Education Centre encourages the celebration of special occasions and cultural celebrations. If food is to be brought into the centre to share we request that it be 'nut free' and be pre-packaged and clearly labelled with the ingredients
- Other food free ways of celebrating will also be considered
- Educators and staff will use these times to promote healthy eating by discussing 'sometimes' and 'everyday' foods
- Centre cook can provide a birthday cake which is free from additives and free of artificial colours for a small cost to families

<b>Review:</b>
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This policy is the intellectual property of Maryland Care & Early Education Centre and is created with consultation of staff and families attending the service. This policy will be reviewed annually. This policy is available in other languages upon request.

Reviewed: October 2023

Next Review: October 2024