

FOOD PREPARATION, STORAGE AND HANDLING POLICY



Policy Statement

This Policy details how the Service ensures that its staff prepare, store, handle and serve food and drinks safely and hygienically, and in accordance with all relevant regulations and standards. The Service provides staff and parents with up-to-date information on safe food practices, and intentionally teaches children these practices.

Strategies and Practices

- The *Food Preparation, Storage and Handling Policy* is available to families upon enrolment and staff upon induction.
- Educators are provided with training regarding food preparation, storage and hygiene practices during the induction process. All staff systematically and consistently implement the Service's policies and procedures relating to food.
- Parents provide food for their children to consume at the centre. The service provides milk, cheese, plain crackers, wholemeal bread, Nuttlex and Vegemite for morning tea.
- Staff are responsible for preparing the shared fruit and vegetable platters as well as the cheese, plain crackers, wholemeal bread and Vegemite, for morning tea.
- Educators are aware of potential choking hazards and take this into consideration when preparing morning tea and reheating/serving lunch. Precautions taken by staff include but are not limited to:
 - Cutting apple, celery, carrots etc into batons
 - Cutting cherry tomatoes and grapes in quarters, lengthways
 - Popcorn is only permitted for children in Investigators and Inventors Rooms
 - Sausages – skin removed and cut into batons for younger children
 - Skin is removed from fruit and vegetables for younger children
 - Blueberries are monitored and cut in half as needed
 - Cheese is cut into squares – not chunks
- Daily Morning Tea Menus are displayed on the fridges in each room detailing that a fruit and vegetable platter, wholemeal bread butter and vegemite, and milk and water are served for morning tea. The educator who prepares morning tea records the fruit and vegetables that are offered each day.
- Educators follow all regulatory food handling and hygiene practices at all times. These include handwashing, using tongs to handle food and ensuring children do not share utensils e.g. spoons or use those that have been dropped.
- Educators ensure that children wash hands using appropriate hand washing techniques before and after eating and taking part in cooking experiences.
- The operating temperatures of the refrigerators in each room are checked daily with a thermometer and the results recorded on the Fridge Temperature Control Log. Temperatures are adjusted if required.
- Families must place their child's lunch box in the refrigerator in their child's room upon arrival at the Service. The lunchbox is to be clearly labelled with the child's full name. The service promotes the use of non-insulated lunchboxes for temperature control purposes.

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- Families are welcome to bring in food for their child that requires reheating. Before serving reheated food to a child, Educators check the temperature with a thermometer to ensure it has reached the recommended minimum of 60°C. The food is then transferred into a bowl/plate. Before serving it to the child, educators allow the food to cool sufficiently.
- Food thermometers used by the service are cleaned with hot water and paper towel in between each use to avoid cross contamination.
- Any food that has been reheated but has not been consumed by the child will be disposed of.
- Educators are to follow the Reheating Food Procedure.
- Clearly labelled bottles of Expressed Breast Milk or formula, are stored in a temperature controlled refrigerator before reheating using a bottle warmer.
- Educators are to follow the *Storing, Preparing, Heating and Providing Bottles to Children Procedure*.
- Families have the option of using a communication book where educators can record information regarding food/bottle intake for babies and toddlers, and other daily information. In consultation with families, educators will keep a record of the times and amounts of milk that were served to children in their bottles.

References

- *Education and Care Services National Law*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations*
- *Guide to the National Quality Framework*
- *Food Safety Standards Australia New Zealand. (2001). Safe Food Australia. A Guide to Food Safety Standards. 3rd Ed. http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/publications/documents/complete_safefood.pdf*
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012). *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services. 5th edition.*
- *Expressing and storing Breastmilk* www.breastfeeding.asn.au/breastfeedinghelpline
- Dr Brenda Abbey (Childcare by Design)

Policy Review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part of the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities, where necessary, as part of the review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.