**Canossa Kindergarten**

**Background**

Good nutrition is essential to healthy living and enables children to be active participants in play and leisure. Education and care settings provide many opportunities for children to experience a range of healthy foods and to learn about food choices from educators and other children (*Early Years Learning Framework*, page 30; *Framework for School Age Care,* page 30).

**Policy statement**

This Policy details the Service’s approach to mealtimes when the food and beverages consumed by children while at the Service are provided by their parents. It also describes the way educators use mealtimes for a happy and social occasion, and for developing lifelong healthy food choices.

**Strategies and practices**

* The Service’s *Nutrition, Food and Beverage* Policy is explained to parents at enrolment. Parents are provided with information about nutritious, age-appropriate food and drink, and with healthy lunch box tips.
* At enrolment, parents provide the Service with details of their child’s food and drink allergies and of any cultural preferences in food. The enrolment form has provision for parents to provide the Service with details of any special dietary requirements (e.g. allergies, culture, religion, food preferences). Parents are asked to update this information when any changes occur. This information is needed for those times when children may be offered items not from home (e.g. birthday cake, cooking).
* With the exception of drinking water, parents supply all of their children’s food and drink requirements while at the Service and for excursions. Parents are encouraged to pack in their children’s lunch boxes only food that is consistent with *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood*, and/or *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*. The healthy eating message is promoted and positively reinforced amongst families through notice boards, newsletters, information nights, educator-parent meetings, the Service’s website and up-to-date materials from recognised authorities.
* Educators promote healthy eating in children by including the topic in daily routines, modelling, discussions, songs, stories, games, using different cultural meal settings, and cooking experiences.
* Meal times are relaxed, pleasant and unhurried. Children choose what to eat from their lunch boxes. Educators sit and eat with the children, maintaining good personal nutrition. They help them open any sealed containers, and talk with them on topics of interest, including, but not limited to, healthy food and nutrition.
* The Service maintains a list and photographs of children with special food requirements for health or medical reasons (e.g. allergies, intolerances). This information is displayed in the food preparation areas, eating areas and strategically throughout the Service. Relief educators are informed of these dietary requirements when they begin their shift.
* Developmentally appropriate eating utensils and furniture are provided for each child. Children are encouraged to be independent and develop social skills at meal times.
* Food is never used to reward or punish children. Whilst children are encouraged to eat healthy food from their lunchboxes, they are not required to eat food they do not like or to eat more than they want.
* Safe drinking water is readily accessible to children at all times, and educators encourage children to drink water at frequent intervals.
* Educators follow all regulatory food handling and hygiene practices at meal times. These include handwashing, wearing gloves, using tongs to handle food, ensuring children do not share utensils or use those that have been dropped. (Refer to the Service’s *Food Preparation, Storage and Handling Policy*).
* Educators discuss face-to-face with parents any concerns about a child who has not eaten well.
* Educators monitor the safety and suitability of foods.
* Parents are asked to place a cold brick in their child’s lunch box. The lunch box is to be clearly labelled with the child’s full name.
* Birthdays are an important part of a child’s life, and educators and children are encouraged to celebrate them at the Service. Parents are welcome to bring a cake/iceblocks to share.
* The Service is a nut free zone, and educators take all reasonable steps to ensure this mandate is upheld. Children are actively discouraged from sharing food. Educators remove from lunch boxes any products suspected of containing nuts, and these products returned to parents when they collect their child.
* Educators receive current information on nutrition for young children, with special regard to cultural preferences.

**Responsibilities of parents**

* To provide food and beverages for their child which are consistent with the Service’s *Nutrition, Food and Beverage Policy*.
* To provide the Service with details of their child’s known food allergies at enrolment, and to inform the Service immediately any changes occur.
* To discuss their child’s food allergies, if any, with them (older children) and to ensure they understand the importance of not sharing food.

**Procedures and forms**

* Daily Feedback Sheet

**Links to other policies**

* Enrolment and Orientation Policy
* Excursion Policy
* Injuries, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
* Medical Conditions Policy
* Student, Volunteers and Visitors Policy

**Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011**

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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 |

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| QA | 2.1.1 | Each child’s wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child’s need for sleep, rest and relaxation |
|  | 2.1.2 | Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented |
|  | 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 |
|  | 5.1.1 | Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included |

**Sources**

* Children’s Health Queensland. (2017). *Expressing breast milk for your baby.* <https://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/fact-sheet-expressing-breast-milk-for-your-baby/> accessed 24 December 2017
* Early Years Learning Framework 2009
* Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
* Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011
* Queensland Health. (n.d.). *Formula Feeding*. [https://www.health.qld.gov.au/\_\_data/assets/pdf\_file/0026/160829/formula\_feeding.pdf](https://www.health.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0026/160829/formula_feeding.pdf%20) accessed 24 December 2017

**Further reading and useful websites**

* Australian Breastfeeding Association – [https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/](https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/%20) 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](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/childcare-and-healthy-eating%20) 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/$File/HEPA%20-%20B5%20Book%20-%20Staff%20and%20Carer%20Book\_LR.pdf](https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/2CDB3A000FE57A4ECA257BF0001916EC/$File/HEPA%20-%20B5%20Book%20-%20Staff%20and%20Carer%20Book_LR.pdf%20%20)  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](http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/vic/nutrition-services-early-learning-centres%20%20)  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> accessed 24 December 2017
* Queensland Health – [http://www.health.qld.gov.au/](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/%20) accessed 24 December 2017
* Royal Children’s Hospital Melbourne – [http://www.rch.org.au/home/](http://www.rch.org.au/home/%20) accessed 24 December 2017

**Policy review**

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual 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 the Service’s commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

**Version Control**

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| **Version** | **Date Reviewed** | **Approved By** | **Comments/Amendments** | **Next Review Date** |
| 1 | 8 January 2018 | Dr Brenda Abbey (Author) | Updated to changed NQF requirements 1 February 2018.  Service to modify policies to its specific needs. |  |