

FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY



POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy is to describe RECC's approach to healthy eating and provide guidance about the safe handling of food, particularly:

- To promote and implement effective food hygiene practices.
- To embed healthy eating in the program for children.
- To promote healthy eating and provide food and drinks that are nutritious and appropriate for each child.

KEY POLICY PRINCIPLES

At RECC, we engage children in experiences, conversations and routines that promote relaxed and enjoyable mealtimes and promote healthy lifestyles and good nutrition.

We follow clear procedures for the safe storage and heating of food and drink.

We do not use food to reward or punish children.

We model, reinforce and implement healthy eating and nutrition practices with children during mealtimes.

This policy is a requirement of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011 that require the centre to maintain a policy regarding nutrition, food and beverages, and dietary requirements [Regulation 168(2)(a)(i)]. It is guided by regulations 77, 78, 79 and 80 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011 related to safe food practices, the provision of food and beverages and the weekly menu.

MENU

The Centre provides a weekly menu (four week rotation), which is developed by Centre management and Chef in consultation with a qualified dietician. The menu consists of morning tea, a two course lunch, afternoon tea and a late snack. This conforms with regulation 78 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011, regarding the regular provision of food and beverages throughout the day.

In accordance with regulation 79 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011, the menu reflects the recommended nutrition guidelines for children up to 5 years old, and incorporates nutritious food and drink. This means sugary drinks such as juice or sweetened flavoured milk are not part of the weekly menu, and provision of 'Extras' (empty

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calorie food poor in nutrition, such as sweetened foods, white breads/flour) is limited and only rarely provided in any given week.

In accordance with regulation 80 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011, the menu is displayed in the foyer and in each room, is provided to parents upon request and after each menu review/change. Each room also displays an accurate record of the food and beverages provided each day and consumed by each child.

The Chef must follow the menu as displayed and ensure it accurately reflects what is served. The Chef must consult the Director where this is not feasible, to ensure the menu can be appropriately adjusted for that day as necessary. This may include instances of unanticipated problems with supplies. For ongoing problems around being able to reflect the menu the Chef must seek advice from the Centre Management Committee before making changes.

Milk provided to children in the nursery and tiny toddlers room is full-fat, and milk provided to children in the toddler and pre-school rooms is reduced-fat.

Toddlers are supported by Educators to feed themselves independently.

In accordance with regulation 78 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011, water is available to children at all times and Educators shall actively encourage children to drink this throughout the day.

Special requirements for babies

An area appropriate for breastfeeding is available to nursing mothers who wish to feed at the centre.

In consultation with parents, a variety of foods are introduced from 6 months of age.

The standard menu is adapted for babies in the nursery, with the texture of foods changing as babies develop.

In close consultation with parents, babies over 12 months of age will be encouraged to drink from a sippy cup or similar.

INDIVIDUAL FOOD AND NUTRITION REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with regulation 79 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011, educators manage the individual food and nutrition requirements of children, including their likes and dislikes, special dietary needs and cultural or other family requirements by:

- providing a broad selection of food through the menu to encourage the development of food flexibility in the child's mind.
- keeping records of particular requirements and, in consultation with families, discuss them and their management.
- requesting that parents of children with food allergies provide information relating to the allergy (refer to the Orientation and Induction Policy for further information).

SPECIAL EVENTS

Foods used on excursions or other special activities, such as birthday celebrations, take into account the importance of healthy eating and drinking. This includes providing, to the extent possible, the same foods that are available through the menu and is practical to provide at the particular event.

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RECC encourages the opportunity for children to celebrate special occasions to expose and foster understanding of a diverse range of celebrations including birthdays and cultural and religious events of significance.

Any food brought from home needs to be nut free and prepared and stored in a hygienic manner in accordance with the safe food and nut free sections of this policy. Parents should also be conscious of the Centre's policy to limit the provision of 'Extras' (empty calorie food poor in nutrition, such as sweetened foods, juice, white breads/flour).

Parents are made aware of these requirements through the distribution of this Food and Nutrition Policy and regular reminders through the newsletter and email.

INCORPORATING HEALTHY EATING IN PLAY AND EDUCATION

In accordance with the National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care, healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in each days program (Standard 2.2). Children are encouraged to make healthy food and beverage choices by participating in discussion about the food that is provided. Programming includes consideration and explicit elements of food education with a strong focus on healthy eating and caring for our bodies. Educators shall use the vegetable garden to actively reinforce messages about healthy eating.

NUT-FREE

This Centre is nut free. All products containing nuts or traces of nuts are excluded from the Centre. This includes foods which may have been cooked in peanut oil.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Families are encouraged to participate in the Centre's healthy eating program. This is done by displaying the weekly menu in the foyer, recording the children's eating behaviours throughout the day, and encouraging families to participate in 'healthy eating projects', such as the Centre's vegetable garden.

Parents are encouraged to communicate any particular ongoing food requirements to the relevant room leader in writing.

EFFECTIVE FOOD HYGIENE PRACTICES PROMOTED AND IMPLEMENTED

In accordance with regulation 77 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011 responsible Centre staff are required to ensure the safe and hygienic storage, handling, preparation and serving of all food and drinks consumed by children, including foods brought from home.

In accordance with the ACT Food Act 2001, the centre has appointed a Food Safety Supervisor. The Food Safety Supervisor gives direction about safe food handling and must hold Food Safety Supervisor qualifications issued in the last five years. The Centre's Chef (Lalith Muxxx) currently holds these qualifications.

Staff handling food receive training to ensure safe and hygienic food storage, handling, preparation and serving. A detailed procedure shall also be developed and displayed prominently in the kitchen area. It should include but not be limited to:

- storing food below 5 degrees Celsius or above 60 degrees Celsius

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- using separate cutting boards for raw meat, cooked meat, fruit and vegetables
- keeping all kitchen surfaces, implements and utensils thoroughly clean
- using tongs and/or gloves to serve food
- providing children with individual plates, cups and cutlery and discouraging children from handling other children's food and utensils
- discarding prepared meals kept at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

In accordance with the requirements of the ACT Food Act 2001, the Director is responsible for:

- ensuring the Centre's Certificate of Registration for Food Business is current and displayed appropriately;
- ensuring the appointment of a Food Safety Supervisor with the appropriate qualifications; and
- notifying the Health Protection Service of any change in the Food Safety Supervisor.

RELATED POLICIES:

Hygiene Policy

Medical Conditions Policy

Orientation and Induction Policy

SOURCES:

ACT Food Act 2001

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (www.acecqa.gov.au)

Early Years Learning Framework

Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Guide to the National Quality Standards

National Health and Medical Research Council, *Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*

National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care