



2.0 Nutrition, Food and beverages, Dietary Requirements

Policy and Procedure

At Poonindie Early Childhood Centre we believe that adopting healthy eating habits early in life is important to enable children to develop optimally and set themselves up to carry healthy habits into adulthood. As part of our commitment to children's health, safety and wellbeing, we role model and discuss as part of our program food safety and hygiene practices.

Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all children, families, educators, management and visitors of PECC

Background

The The Education and Care Services National Regulations require approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place in relation to nutrition, food and beverages, and dietary requirements. **We are a nut free centre.**

Legislative Requirements

- Regulation 77 Health, hygiene and safe food practices
- Regulation 78 Food and beverages
- Regulation 90 Medical conditions policy
- Regulation 91 Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
- Regulation 160 Child enrolment records to be kept by approved provider and family day care educator
- Regulation 162 Health information to be kept in enrolment record
- Regulation 168 Education and care service must have policies and procedures
- Regulation 170 Policies and procedures to be followed
- Regulation 171 Policies and procedures to be kept available
- Regulation 172 Notification of change to policies or procedures

Principles that inform our Policy

We prioritise children's health, safety and wellbeing. Therefore, we reference the following resources :

- <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/media/32271>
- <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/adg>
- <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/get-up-grow-resource-collection>
- [educators guide to the early years learning framework for australia 2.pdf](#)

This includes safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, as well as providing food and beverages that are nutritious and adequate in quantity, when cooking ingredients are chosen based on each child's dietary and medical requirements.

We promote a healthy lifestyle, including healthy eating and physical activity. We support children and families' understanding about the importance of nutrition and food choices.

We value our families and their cultures, customs and religious traditions. We work with them to ensure when cooking the food and beverages we provide to their children reflect their preferences.

We incorporate children's agency and decision-making into our educational program. We plan mealtimes and other food-related experiences that enable this .

Responsibilities of the Nominated Supervisor

- Ensures all staff, educators including relief educators understand and implement the Policy and procedure by having our policy folder accessible, as part of the induction process and plan for the regular review as a team
- ensure that regulatory obligations are met in relation to nutrition, food and beverages, and dietary requirements.
- implement procedures for nutrition, food and beverages, and dietary requirements.

- ensure adequate health and hygiene practices are followed, as well as safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, in line with Australian food safety standards and any jurisdictional requirements.
- ensure children have access to safe drinking water at all times and are offered food and beverages appropriate to each child's needs on a regular basis throughout the day.
- ensure the food and beverages provided are nutritious and adequate in quantity, and chosen based on each child's dietary requirements (accounting for their growth and development needs, as well as any specific cultural, religious or health requirements)
- ensure that child enrolment records include any special considerations for the child, such as cultural or religious dietary restrictions, as well as any health-related dietary restrictions.
- for children with medical conditions that can be impacted by food, work with families to develop risk minimisation plans and ensure educators and staff implement these plans.
- ensure that a system for ongoing communication is developed and maintained between families, educators, so that all are aware of children's nutrition and any special dietary requirements.
- develop program planning that promotes healthy eating and knowledge of nutrition by children and families, and involves children in decision-making about healthy food and beverage choices.
- Provide a comfortable and relaxing space for breastfeeding mothers.

Responsibilities of Educators

- implement the Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements policy and procedures.
- handle, prepare and store food using safe practices, in line with Australian food safety standards and any jurisdictional requirements.
- ensure safeguards are in place to prevent children being provided the wrong food when having snacks and lunch by supervising eating areas.
- ensure children have access to safe drinking water at all times and are offered food and beverages appropriate to each child's needs.
- monitor children's food and beverage intake to ensure it is adequate and appropriate to each child's needs, respecting families food choices and listening to a child's reflection on the amount of food consumed.
- be familiar with the individual needs and action plans for the children in your care with specific dietary requirements, and ensure those requirements are taken into consideration, including on excursions.
- maintain ongoing communication with families and other members of staff (including the Nominated Supervisor) about any changes to children's dietary requirements and ensure these changes are reflected when cooking.

Implement and reflect on program planning to:

- promote healthy eating and knowledge of nutrition by children, e.g. eating with the children, conversations during mealtimes around food
- promote healthy eating among families.
- involve children in decision-making about healthy food and beverage choices, e.g. having them assist with food preparation
- Provide experiences in growing our own food in the veggie garden.
- Have fresh tap water available at all times and are encouraged to drink water regularly through the day.
- Will eat routinely at scheduled break times.
- Eat in a positive, social environment with staff who model healthy eating behaviours.

Responsibilities of families

- ensure the service is advised of their child's dietary requirements – relating to their child's growth and development needs, as well as any specific cultural, religious or health requirements – at the time of enrolment, and that this information is kept up-to-date.
- should their children have a medical condition that can be impacted by food, work with the service to develop risk minimisation plans.
- When the centre provides cooking experiences work with the service to ensure your child's dietary, and cultural needs are met.
- if providing food and beverages from home, ensure these are nutritious and plentiful and that they are in line with service requirements (e.g. that they do not contain allergens that could harm other children at the service), noting that the service is not required to reheat food from home to children

Procedure

Upon enrolment

- On enrolment families have the opportunity to share any dietary or medical conditions impacted by food, allergies or eating, as well as any culturally sensitive requirements for their children.
- Advise that we are a nut free centre.
- Families are encouraged to be involved in the review of food and nutrition policy.
- Information of nutrition, healthy food choices, safe food handling, hygiene and food storage is available to families via newsletters, pamphlets and posters.
- Health professionals involved in food and nutrition may be invited into the Centre to give information to families and children.

Curriculum

- Includes activities that provide children with knowledge, attitudes, cultural preferences and skills to make positive healthy food choices and learn about the variety of food for good health.
- Includes opportunities for children to develop practical food skills like preparing and cooking healthy food.
- Integrates nutrition across the curriculum where possible.
- Have the opportunity to grow and try vegetables from the garden.
- Is part of the Early Years Learning Framework
- When cooking children will work through a risk benefit
- Promotes and teaches food safety to children and hygienic practices around hand washing and food handling if cooking as part of the curriculum.
- Promotes and encourages correct hand washing procedures with children and staff.

Learning and Eating Environment

- Always have fresh clean tap water available and encourage children to drink water regularly throughout the day.
- Encourage children to bring their own named drink bottle.
- Eat in a positive, relaxed and appropriate social environment with staff who model healthy eating behaviours, respectful of family's food choices.
- Ensure snack tables are wiped down and disinfected before and after eating.
- Provide clean lunch mats that are wiped, disinfected and hung in the sun after each lunch time.

Educators will encourage and provide:

- self-help skills and independence,
- conversations to support social interaction and development of knowledge of nutrition and health.
- positively reinforce hygiene practices before, during and after food related experiences.
- Encourage children to remain seated whilst eating to minimise choking risks.
- Adequate supervision while eating

When cooking or Handling food

- Educators will follow safe food handling and hygiene practices.
- Food provided by the Centre will be prepared, stored and served hygienically.
- Food preparation facilities will be maintained in a hygienic condition.
- Staff will be trained in food safety and hygiene using the Do Food Safely online training.
- Food safety and handling is promoted to children through the curriculum.
- Management will ensure adequate hand washing facilities for everyone.
- Correct hand washing procedures are encouraged for children and staff.

This policy was created in consultation with Governing Council, staff and families.

Directors Signature _____ Chairperson Signature _____

Review Date: March 2025

Next review 2027

Modifications and changes from review:

Date: