NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY PROCEDURE

Policy Hierarchy link	Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*:* 168(2)(a) National Quality Standard 2.2.1 Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (NSW) Food Act 2003 (NSW)
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Superseded Documents	
File Number	Contact the Records & Archives Office.
Associated Documents	

Version	Authorised by	Approval Date	Effective Date
1.0	Vice President, University Services	11 November 2013	11 November 2013

1. Purpose and Scope

UNSW Early Years Centres recognize their responsibility to provide food and nutrition education that is consistent with national dietary guidelines for children and takes into account children's age, cultural background, religion and medical needs. In long day care, each child needs to be provided with at least 50% of the recommended daily intake (RDI) of nutrients. The Centres will provide appropriate nutrition in proportion to the time spent in care. They will also work with children and families to develop positive attitudes and habits with respect to food and nutrition. They will provide an inviting atmosphere, which encourages social engagement and unhurried meal times.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, students and family members acting as primary contact staff.

2. Definitions

3. Procedure

3.1 Encouraging Healthy Eating Habits

The Centres aim to:

- Provide a varied menu from across the 5 food groups (bread and cereals, fruit and vegetables, meat and vegetarian protein alternatives, milk and dairy foods, fats) during daily mealtimes within the centre.
- Provide a menu that includes morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea reflecting healthy choices. Dessert may be provided, on occasion, as a treat.
- Encourage children to taste new foods.
- Provide variety in tastes, textures, colours and flavours.
- Use fresh fruit and vegetables which reflect seasonal change.

- Reduce the amount of sugar and salt in the preparation of meals.
- Provide nutritional education which includes opportunities outside of mealtimes to taste and talk about different foods, likes and dislikes.
- Provide current nutritional information and resources to families and staff.
- Implement practices which reflect positive role-modelling with regard to nutrition and healthy eating habits.
- Support children's involvement in food preparation activities, through such things as preparing food with educators, growing a vegetable or herb garden, composting and worm farming.
- Offer children water - after milk bottles, lunch and before rest - as part of dental hygiene. (See also *Dental and Oral Hygiene Procedure*).
- Have drinking water available to children at all times throughout the day.
- Provide utensils and furniture that encourage comfort and independence for children and that is appropriate for the staff serving and eating with the children.

3.1.1 Birthday Celebrations

- Birthday times are important times to celebrate. Each centre will work with families and children to enjoy this time and ensure it is inclusive of all children.

Please do not bring lollies, sweets, chocolate or cakes onto the premises without first checking with the centre for protocol.

3.2 Encouraging Communication about Nutrition and Mealtimes

The Centres will encourage communication by:

- Displaying written menus outlining the meals provided for children throughout each day as well as information on any changes.
- Providing verbal and written information about individual children and their food intake during the day.
- Facilitating information exchange between parents and educators about individual children's likes and dislikes, cultural requirements and medical needs. This can be achieved through a variety of strategies such as communication books, enrolment forms, providing menus to parents in advance where special needs exist etc.
- Inviting families, staff and children to contribute to the menu by sharing popular home recipes and asking for comments on draft menus prior to their commencement.
- Inviting families to join the children for a meal or social gathering.
- Working with families through discussion and strategy sharing, supporting children's healthy eating habits and assisting in situations where a child's eating habits are challenging.

3.3 Supporting Individual Needs of Children

The Centres will:

- Make food available to children outside of the usual mealtimes as required.

- Support and work with parents and specialists in order to assist children with particular feeding, health or medical requirements. Children who require it will have a special feeding plan written and adopted in consultation with families, specialists and staff.
- Ensure that for children who have allergies or intolerances of certain foods, verification and guidance from an appropriate professional body is provided to the centre. Such information must be maintained up to date by the family. (See also *Allergy and Anaphylaxis Procedure*.)
- Provide current and regularly updated information about issues on allergy/intolerance, breast feeding, developmental milestones and stages for eating.
- Supervise children at all times whilst they are eating.
- Prohibit the use of foods known to cause extreme reactions in children as a safety measure, e.g. peanuts (See 3.3.1 *Allergy Aware Centre*).
- Avoid foods that are known to be a high risk for choking such as popcorn, seeds, raw hard vegetables and apple skins (for children under two).

3.3.1 Allergy Aware Centre (includes no nuts or nut products)

- In order to minimise potential **life threatening** contact with allergens, for children who have severe allergic reactions towards nuts the Centres provide "Allergy Aware Environments".
- Nuts and nut products are excluded from the menus and not kept on any centre's premises.
- Parents are requested to ensure that NO FOOD containing nuts or nut products is brought in from home.
- Staff are to ensure that the food that they bring in to the centre does not contain nuts or nut products.

*Refer to the **Allergy and Anaphylaxis Procedure*** for more information***.***

3.4 Valuing Diversity in Menu Planning

The Centres will:

- Provide menu choices which reflect cultural diversity and food preferences, including recipes provided by families and meals enjoyed by children.
- Use various eating implements and environments for mealtimes, e.g. chopsticks, spoons, forks, fingers, table and chairs, low tables, cushions and picnics.
- Provide food that reflects the special occasions and festivities celebrated by families at the Centre and within the wider community.

3.5 Social Aspects of Eating

The Centres will:

- Ensure that food is never used as a reward or punishment. Children will be encouraged to eat and try foods, but never forced.
- Create a physically pleasant environment for children to eat meals.

- Use small, social groups of children sitting with a staff member and encourage children to remain seated until they have finished eating.
- Encourage the development of independence, decision-making and self-help by providing age appropriate cutlery and giving children a choice during morning/afternoon tea and snack time.
- Encourage social interaction and discussion amongst children and adults. Staff will sit with the children and join them for meals.
- Offer children a choice of food and small portions to begin with. Those who finish their portions and are still hungry will be offered another serving of the meal.
- After meals, children will be encouraged to scrape the food from their bowls, pack away their bowls, cups and cutlery before moving away to another experience.
- Regard bottle-feeding as a "meal time" where staff sit with younger children offering social contact and ensuring children's safety.

3.6 Breastfeeding/ Bottle Feeding

Mothers who are breast feeding their child, as well as parents/guardians who bottle feed, are encouraged and welcome to feed their child at the Centre. Engaging in meal times at the centre can be beneficial for the relationship, the child's nutritional needs as well as offering other children opportunities to be introduced to diverse mealtime experiences and other families.

3.7 Infants' Nutrition

Introduction of solids will occur in consultation with families and in line with the current Australian Dietary guidelines.

- Families will provide a list of foods introduced to children prior to it being offered at the centre.
- It is recommended that the first solids should be iron enriched infant cereal.
- Following this a puree of individual fruits; vegetables; meats; poultry or fish may be introduced gradually in any order. Also at this stage finger foods such as toast or rusks may be offered.
- Next mashed or chopped foods will be offered. At this stage egg yolk, cereal, yoghurt, custard and pasta may also be introduced individually. It is not necessary for children to have teeth to be offered the range of textures.
- Honey will not be served to children under 12 months unless it is 'sterilised honey'.
- Cow's milk will be provided to children over the age of 12 months in consultation with the child's family.
- By 12 months of age it is expected that food will replace milk as the main source of nutrition, children will be eating family meals and having 600mls of milk (or dairy food equivalents) per day.

3.8 Food Hygiene

Food will be prepared, stored and served hygienically by:

- Ensuring at least one staff member has undertaken a recognised food handler's course.

- Providing food handling, storage, and heating training for staff on a regular basis to maintain high hygiene standards.
- Promoting effective practice for storage and use of bottles, formula, breast milk, and food provided by families.
- Displaying relevant and current procedures for food preparation and food handling in the food preparation areas and playrooms.
- Displaying current safety/hygiene principles in kitchen/bathroom areas for families and staff.
- Keeping daily checks on fridge and freezer temperatures; checking temperature of incoming goods.
- Ensuring meal preparation areas are kept clean, with regular cleaning of the different areas within the kitchen.
- Ensuring all children and adults wash hands before and after eating as well as prior to preparing or serving food. Food will be served using utensils or tongs.
- Ensuring food that has been served to children is not reused, that thawed food is not refrozen, and heated food is not reheated.
- Ensuring that the equipment that the food is served onto including crockery, cutlery and tables are clean and disinfected if necessary before food preparation or eating.

3.8.1 Food Hygiene for Infants

Educators will:

- Encourage families to provide sterilized bottles and teats for their infant
- Wash hands prior to preparing or handling food, expressed milk or formula
- Prepare formula strictly according to instructions on container
- Store bottles of infant milk in the refrigerator
- Warm bottles following centre procedures and in consultation with families requests
- Discard left-over infant formula after each feed
- Ensure infants are not lying flat when offered a bottle
- Ensure that children do not have bottles in bed

3.9 Kitchen Safety

- Children will always be accompanied by an adult if in the kitchen.
- Cooks will wear protective clothing and closed-in shoes.
- When the kitchen is unattended the door will closed at all times.
- All cleaning substances will be kept in locked cupboards. Children will not be allowed near the oven or dishwasher unsupervised.

4. Review & History

5. Acknowledgements

The following references and documents were used extensively in the development of this policy, and are useful resources to assist in implementation of the policy:

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

NSW Food Authority

Farmer, S. (1995). Policy development in early childhood services. Sydney, Community Child Care Cooperative.

Nicol, D. (1995). Thought for food: A starting point for children's nutritional meals. Canberra, Australian Early Childhood Association.

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (NSW)

Food Act 2003 (NSW)

Health and Safety in Children's Centre's: model policy and practices, 2003 UNSW.

NHRMC Dietary guidelines for children and adolescents in Australia, April 2003

Caring for Children-Birth to 5 years 5th edition (Food, Nutrition and Learning Experiences). A practical guide to offering the best nutrition possible for children aged from birth to five years, whilst in care.

http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/teachers-childcare/food-and-nutrition/publications.aspx

Munch and Move Program http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au

Australian Guide for Healthy Eating http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au

Websites reviewed November 2014

Appendix A: History

The authorisation and amendment history for this document must be listed in the following table. Refer to information about Version Control on the Policy website.

Version	Authorised by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections modified
1.0	Vice President, University Services	11 November 2013	11 November 2013	
2.0	Early Years Management	11 November 2014	11 December 2014	