



Nutrition Policy Food, Beverages, Dietary Requirements and Food handling

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

Policy Statement

Tathra Preschool is committed to implementing the key healthy eating messages in the Australian Dietary Guidelines as outlined in the Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood resources. Tathra Preschool will also refer to other government bodies such as the Department of Health, the National Health Medical Research Council and public health initiatives such as Munch & Move in NSW in relation to healthy eating. Additionally, we recognise the importance of supporting families in providing healthy food and drink to their children. It is acknowledged that the early childhood setting has an important role in supporting families in healthy eating.

Policy Goals

Our preschool recognises the importance of healthy eating to the growth and development of young children and is committed to supporting the healthy food and drink choices of children and families at Tathra Preschool.

Strategies: How will it be done?

Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the Australian Dietary Guidelines

Tathra Preschool will:

- Provide information to families starting at induction on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and suitable for children's lunchboxes.

- Encourage families to avoid highly processed snack foods high in fat, salt and sugar and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes. Examples of these foods include lollies, chocolates, sweet biscuits, muesli bars, breakfast bars, fruit filled bars, chips, oven-baked crackers and corn chips.

Promote safety:

- Ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day.
- Be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances and special diets and consult with families to develop individual management plans.
- Ensure all children remain seated while eating and drinking.
- Always supervise children while eating and drinking.

Safe food handling

- Ensure gloves are worn or food tongs are used by all staff handling food.
- Children and staff wash and dry their hands (using soap, running water and single use or disposable towels) before handling food or eating meals.
- Food is stored and served at safe temperatures i.e. below 5°C or above 60°C.
- Children will be discouraged from handling other children's food and utensils.

Provide a positive eating environment which reflects cultural and family values

- Ensure that educators sit with the children at mealtimes to role model healthy food and drink choices and actively engage children in conversations about the food and drink provided.
- Recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Create a relaxed atmosphere at mealtimes where children have enough time to eat and enjoy their food as well as enjoying the social interactions with educators and other children.
- Respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, do not insist they eat.
- Be patient with messy or slow eaters.
- Do not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for disciplinary purposes.

Promote lifelong learning for children, early childhood staff and families about healthy food and drink choices.

- Foster awareness and understanding of healthy food and drink choices through including in the children's program a range of learning experiences encouraging children's healthy eating.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in discovery learning and discussion about healthy food and drink choices. Encourage communication with families about the provision of appropriate healthy food and drinks for children while they are attending Tathra Preschool.
- Work in partnership with families to develop an appropriate plan for children with any food allergies and intolerances so that children's health and safety remains paramount. Details to be kept on child's enrolment record.
- Communicate regularly with families about food and nutrition related experiences at Tathra Preschool and provide up to date information to assist families to provide healthy food choices at home.
- Communicate regularly with families and provide information and advice on appropriate food and drink to be included in children's lunchboxes. This information may be provided to families in a variety of ways including newsletters, during induction, information sessions and informal discussion.

Encourage and support breastfeeding.

Tathra Preschool will:

- Provide a suitable place within the service where mothers can breastfeed their babies or express breast milk.
- Support mothers to continue breastfeeding until babies are at least 12 months of age.

Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider:

- Ensure Tathra Preschool operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011.

- Ensure that Tathra Preschool implements adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the preschool.

Nominated Supervisor:

- Ensure adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing, and storing food are implemented at the preschool to minimise risks to children.
- Ensure children being cared for by the preschool have access to safe drinking water at all times.

Educators:

- Adhere to the strategies and practices of the Nutrition, Food, Beverages, and Dietary Requirements Policy.
- Provide positive mealtime experiences for children.
- Respect the individual needs and choices of children.
- Actively supervise children during mealtimes.
- Adhere to the service's Hygiene and Infection Control Policy.

Families:

- Work in partnership with teachers and educators to provide healthy food choices in children's lunch boxes.

Monitor, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the preschool will review this Policy every 3 years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the preschool will ensure that families of children enrolled at the preschool are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the preschool; a family's ability to utilise the preschool; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Relevant Legislation

- ◁ Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167
- ◁ Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 77-80, 162(e), 168(2)(a)(i)
- ◁ Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Guidelines, Standards and Frameworks

- ◁ National Quality Standard, Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice - Element 1.2.3: Child directed learning
- ◁ National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety - Element 2.1.3: Healthy lifestyle
- ◁ National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with children - Element 5.1.2: Dignity and rights of the child
- ◁ National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities - Element 6.1.2: Parent views are respected
- ◁ Early Years Learning Framework: Outcome 3 – Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and wellbeing

Sources and References

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

- < Australian Dietary Guidelines - www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines
- < Department of Health: Nutrition and Healthy Eating (includes Get Up and Grow Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood resources) - www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/get-up-grow-resource-collection
- < National Health Medical Research Council - Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services - www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services
- < Nutrition Australia – www.nutritionaustralia.org
- < Food Standards Australia New Zealand – www.foodstandards.gov.au
- <2021, Community Early Learning Australia (CELA).

Updated

April 2024

Review Date

2027 or when procedure, practice or legislation changes.