



Nutrition, Food and Beverage Safety Policy

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Policy Statement

Good nutrition is vital for healthy living, enabling children to engage actively in play and leisure. Given their developing immune systems, children are more susceptible to foodborne illnesses. To mitigate risks, Child Australia’s Services prioritize proper food preparation practices, including adequate cooking, maintaining safe holding temperatures, avoiding cross-contamination, sourcing food responsibly, and promoting personal hygiene among staff and caregivers. Child Australia’s Services ensure that children’s nutritional needs are met and that all food and beverages are prepared, stored, and handled safely within the service.

Rationale

Child Australia’s services are committed to providing food and beverages that are safely and hygienically prepared in compliance with all regulatory standards, while also meeting children’s nutritional needs. The services consider dietary requirements for medical reasons, such as allergies and intolerances, as well as dietary preferences based on cultural, religious, or other personal choices, ensuring these are respected and accommodated during food preparation.

Responsibility

Approved Provider: The Approved Provider ensures that relevant policies and procedures are in place and that there are adequate spaces, equipment and furniture to safely prepare, serve and consume food and beverages.

Nominated Supervisor and Responsible Persons: The Nominated Supervisor and Responsible Persons ensure:



- Relevant policies and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff.
- Informing parents/ guardians of relevant policies.
- Communicating children’s dietary requirements (e.g., allergies, intolerances, cultural preferences) with parents/guardians upon enrolment and children’s dietary needs must be recorded and then communicated to the Service Cook and Staff prior to the child enrolment starting at the service.
- The records of children’s’ dietary requirements are to be reviewed annually.
- The kitchen is equipped with facilities for safe food storage, preparation, and disposal.
- All staff handling food have received safe food handling training such as “I’m alert”.
- Safe food handling through an active Food Safety Plan, regular audits, and trained staff.
- Nutritious meals are provided per Australian guidelines, tailored to children's dietary, cultural, and developmental needs.
- Weekly menus are displayed, and food offered meets nutritional requirements.
- Provide a welcoming space for breastfeeding mothers.
- Schedule internal and external audits.

Staff: Staff are responsible for:

- Being familiar with and following all relevant policies and procedures.
- Only serving food if they have completed a relevant safe food handling training, such as “I’m Alert”.
- for following food safety practices, meet dietary requirements, promote healthy eating, and ensure mealtimes are enjoyable and inclusive. Staff are to ensure all procedures related to this policy are carried out and adhered to.
- Communicating children’s dietary requirements with parents/guardians.
- Ensuring individual children’s dietary requirements are met (see Allergy and Anaphylaxis Management-, and Ongoing Medical Conditions Policies)

Parents / Guardians: Parents/ Guardians will:

- Communicate their child’s dietary requirements
- Provide all necessary items needed as required for each day their child attends (i.e. bottles, drink bottle etc)
- Inform the service of any medical conditions staff have to be aware of when providing food and/ or beverages to their child (see Allergy and Anaphylaxis Management-, and Ongoing Medical Conditions Policies).



Procedures

Maintaining a Hygienic Kitchen

- The Cook is to conduct regular inspections to ensure cleanliness and functionality of kitchen equipment as per the Food Safety Plan.
- Staff and Cook are to dispose of any items and equipment that is broken and to report a hazard if it is unable to be removed.

Implement and Review Food Safety Plan

- Child Australia is to develop and regularly update the Food Safety Plan for the service.
- Nominated Supervisor is to schedule internal and external audits annually to evaluate compliance.
- The Food Safety Plan does not apply to stand alone Child Australia OSHC Services however, OSHC Services must complete regular Kitchen Cleaning Checks and Temperature Checks for refrigeration as per food safety requirements.

Recording and Communicating Dietary Requirements

- Service Management must annually review and update dietary records and communicate changes to all relevant staff. Changes are made only when there is a change to the dietary needs as indicated by the family.

Supervising Food Safety Practices

- Ensure the Food Coordinator has completed approved training in food handling and hygiene.
- Ensure that there is a Food Safety Supervisor on staff who has completed the food Safety supervisor training.
- Monitor adherence to the Food Safety Plan by conducting routine checks on food preparation and storage practices is carried out by and internal and external agency.
- Ensures that all staff are made aware of any dietary requirement and allergy or medical conditions prior to food going out, and that is clearly identified.

Access to Drinking Water

- Ensure water stations are always readily accessible to children.



Provision of Food and Beverages

- Collaborate with the Food Coordinator to provide meals that meet the Australian Government Healthy Eating Guidelines and cater to children's specific needs.
- Ensure the food menu is diverse, culturally inclusive, and adequate in quantity.
- Display a weekly menu prominently for families, with detailed descriptions of each day's meals.

All Staff Must:

Safe Food Handling and Hygiene

- Complete training in recognized food handling courses (e.g., "I'm Alert") and apply safe practices in all food preparation activities.
- Wash hands with children before handling, serving, or eating food, following the **Child Handwashing Procedure**.
- Role model healthy eating with the children.

Promote Healthy Eating Habits

- Teach children about the importance of hygiene and balanced diets through activities and discussions.
- Ensure the children program informs and teaches children of healthy eating on a regular basis.
- Make mealtimes enjoyable and treat them as social opportunities for children to engage with peers. Avoid rushing or pressuring children to eat.
- Food is not to be used as a reward or form of punishment.
- All children will be monitored to ensure that they are getting adequate food.
- Provision is made for children that may have additional dietary needs in situations where they are at risk of neglect.

Dietary Needs Compliance

- Serve food according to each child's documented dietary requirements.
- Double-check the meal allocation process to ensure children with allergies or cultural restrictions receive the correct meals.
- Follow action plans for children with medical dietary needs as per the **Medical Conditions Policy**.

Provide Accurate Dietary Information



- Service Manager will Inform the staff of their child's dietary preferences and requirements at enrolment.
- Parents are to update the service promptly if there are changes to dietary needs or preferences and ensure the following:

Medical Dietary Requirements

- Families must submit a medical action plan for allergies or other medical conditions requiring dietary adjustments, and this must be actioned prior to starting care so that a risk assessment can be communicated as well as the plan to ensure the safety of the child concerned.

Sending Food Items (If Applicable)

- Clearly label all containers or water bottles with the child's full name.
- No food items are to be brought into the service due to contamination and allergens.
- OSHC children are to keep food items in their bags, and all children in the OSHC are also made aware of the need to keep allergen food outside the service.
- Birthday celebrations are provided for by the service.

Feeding Infants Procedure

- Infants to be individually fed.
- Bottles will be supplied by parents/guardians daily.
- For **formula feeds**, parents/guardians to provide the formula in the original tin. Lid and tin need to be clearly labelled with the child's full name. The formula provided must be within its use by date.
- Boiled, cooled water will be used to prepare bottles of formula feed.
- For **expressed breastmilk (EBM)** feeds, parents/guardians to provide the breastmilk in an appropriate receptacle, clearly labelled with the child's full name, date of expression and if applicable date it was frozen.
- Non frozen expressed breastmilk needs to be stored in the back of the fridge to keep it below 5°C.
- Frozen expressed breastmilk can be stored in the freezer. Thawed breastmilk should not be re-frozen.
- For **breastfeeding mothers**, a private, inviting, and comfortable space is available.
- Each bottle feed and the consumed amount will be documented to monitor fluid input/output, especially when the weather is warm and young children are at risk of dehydration.
- Educators will communicate this information to the parents/guardians daily.



- Baby bottles should be heated by placing the bottle in a bottle warmer or warm water and always heat-tested to ensure the milk is warm but not hot before feeding an infant.
- Microwaves are not to be used for heating baby bottles.
- Introducing food and/or solids to babies will be done in consultation with families, and in line with recognised nutritional guidelines.
- Careful consideration will be given to reducing the risk of choking when choosing foods for young children.
- In case of an approved financial hardship situation Child Australia's services will ensure that Formula is provided

Breast Milk Storage and Usage Procedure

1. Label containers clearly:

- Write the date and time the milk was expressed on the container or breastmilk storage bag.
- Include the child's name if the milk is to be used in a group setting.

2. Store in appropriate containers:

- Use sterile, airtight breastmilk storage bags or food-grade containers with secure lids.

Freshly Expressed Breastmilk:

- **Room temperature (26°C or lower):** Store for **6-8 hours**.
- **Refrigerator (4°C or lower):** Store for **up to 72 hours** (best at the back of the fridge).
- **Freezer compartments:**
 - Inside a fridge (-15°C or lower): **Up to 2 weeks**.
 - Separate-door freezer (-18°C or lower): **Up to 3 months**.
 - Chest or upright deep freezer (-20°C or lower): **6-12 months**.

Previously Frozen Breastmilk (thawed in the fridge but not warmed):

- **Room temperature (26°C or lower):** Use within **4 hours**.



- **Refrigerator:** Use within **24 hours**.
- Do **not refreeze** previously thawed breastmilk.

Thawed Breastmilk Outside the Fridge (e.g., in warm water):

- **Room temperature (26°C or lower):** Use until the **end of the feed**.
- **Refrigerator:** Use within **4 hours** or until the **next feed**.

Transporting Expressed Breastmilk

1. Use an **insulated cooler bag or esky** with freezer bricks to maintain a cool temperature.
2. Transport milk:
 - Frozen: Keep it frozen during transport and refreeze upon arrival if still frozen.
 - Fresh: Use within **4 hours** if thawed during transit and do not refreeze.
3. Store milk in the fridge or freezer immediately upon arrival.

Preparing Expressed Breastmilk for Use

1. **Thawing Milk:**
 - Thaw in the fridge overnight.
 - Alternatively, place the container in **cool or warm water** to thaw. Avoid using hot water or a microwave.
2. **Warming Milk:**
 - Place the container in **warm water** until the milk reaches room or body temperature.
 - Do not overheat; test the temperature by dropping a small amount on your wrist.
3. **Serving Milk:**



- Serve the milk in a **cup, spoon, or bottle**.
- Use **fresh milk first** if available.

Safe Use and Disposal

1. Discard any milk that:
 - Was not finished by the baby/child during a feed.
 - Exceeds the storage time recommendations for its current state (fresh, thawed, or warmed).
2. Do **not reuse milk** left in a bottle or cup from a previous feed.

Hygiene Practices

1. Wash hands thoroughly before handling breastmilk or feeding equipment.
2. Sterilise feeding bottles, spoons, and cups after every use.
3. Maintain a clean preparation area and ensure storage containers are sealed tightly.

Related Documents and Forms

Child Health Policy

Ongoing Medical Conditions Policy

Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy

Child daily information sheet

Q2 Forms Children's Health and Safety Annex

References

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