

FOOD, BEVERAGES, NUTRITION AND DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

POLICY

A healthy balance of food and beverages in sufficient quantity should be provided on a daily basis to children in care.

Children should have access to safe drinking water at all times and will be offered food and beverages on a regular basis throughout the day.

PROCEDURE

Family day care educators must complete a recognized and accredited food safe course.

Family day care Educators will independently decide the structure of who provides meals to the children in care (e.g. the Educator, the parents or a combination of both).

A family day care Educator who provides food or beverages to the children they care for at the service must ensure that the food or beverage provided is nutritious and adequate in quantity. The food or beverage provided must be chosen having regard to the dietary requirements of individual children, taking into account each child's growth and development needs as well as any specific cultural, religious or health requirements.

A family day care educator who provides food and beverages (other than water) to the children they care for at the service must ensure that a weekly menu is displayed at a place at the family day care residence or approved family day care venue accessible to parents of children being educated and cared for by the service; and accurately describes the food and beverages to be provided by the family day care educator each day.

Care should be taken to avoid allergy-inducing food and drink (in children with known conditions). Any diagnosed allergies of the child must be clearly written on the enrolment form. Parents also need to provide a management/action plan and appropriate medications for children with life threatening allergies or conditions (e.g. anaphylaxis).

Educators can choose to be a service that is 'free' of certain high allergy foods if this is what they believe is in the best interest of all the children in their care (e.g. nut free). Parents will be notified of this upon enrolment.

Water will always be readily available for children to drink. Water is a very important part of a healthy food intake for children and will be encouraged. Parents are to save drinks of juice for children to consume at home.

Parents will give initial advice to Educators with respect to a child's routine and food requirements and continue to consult and exchange information with the Educator as the child grows.

Children with fussy eating habits will be encouraged to try new foods, and parents will be advised if their child is not eating well. Educators and parents are encouraged to share any helpful information, strategies and guidance on eating and nutrition.

The provision or denial of food will never be used as a form of punishment.

Families will be advised of changes to the Food and Nutrition Policy/ procedures before they are implemented.

Educators and Educator Assistants are required to role model good nutrition by eating a healthy snack with the children if necessary. Educators and Educator Assistants are not permitted to consume any 'junk' foods or foods that children are not encouraged to eat, in the presence of the children.

Children are encouraged not to bring 'junk' foods or age inappropriate foods to the service or consume these while at the service. These types of foods are not encouraged as they do not provide for the nutritional needs of the children; can cause issues between children at the service; and can put children with allergies at risk.

Sweet treats such as chocolate cakes, lollies, and sweet biscuits are only allowed in small quantities on special occasions such as Birthdays, Christmas party celebrations etc, however, nutritious foods are encouraged over these sweet treats.

Food will be served at safe temperatures and food safety and hygiene is of paramount importance. Educators, Educator Assistants and children will wash their hands before handling food or participating in food related activities.

Children's independence is encouraged at all times with the children (e.g. feeding themselves, pouring drinks, putting scraps into bins, etc.) within their own capabilities.

Children are encouraged to be seated for a meal. Being seated also provides opportunities for social interaction and better consumption and digestion of food. Small children should never be left alone while eating.

Parents of children under 1 year old will need to supply either formula or expressed breast milk. Formula will need to be premeasured into serving sizes and the bottles provided by the parents will need to have the correct amount of water ready in the bottle appropriate to the amount of premeasured formula. Expressed breast milk must have the date it was expressed clearly marked on the container. If the breast milk has been pre-frozen it will also need the date it was frozen clearly marked on the container.

Safe eating practices will be implemented to minimise risk of choking e.g. babies will be nursed when feeding from bottles until they are comfortable holding their own bottles.

RELEVANT LAWS, SOURCES AND OTHER PROVISIONS

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (77; 78; 79; 80)

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