



# HEALTHY EATING AND ORAL HEALTH POLICY

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## Best Practise – Quality Area 2

### PURPOSE

The educators, staff and committee of management acknowledge the importance of healthy eating and oral health behaviours, which contribute to overall health and wellbeing.

This policy confirms our commitment to:

- encourage children to make healthy food and drink choices
- promote the importance of a healthy lifestyle, which includes drinking water, eating healthy food and maintaining oral health.

As a health promoting service we will promote healthy eating and oral health to children, educators, staff and families through learning, policies, creating a safe and healthy physical and social environment and developing community links and partnerships.

### POLICY STATEMENT

#### BACKGROUND

Healthy eating and good nutrition have a major influence on children's health and wellbeing and a direct impact on their growth and development. The important social and cultural role of food, and the wide range of attitudes to it, is acknowledged within the service.

Oral health is essential for children's overall health and wellbeing. Oral diseases can negatively affect individuals through pain, discomfort, general health and quality of life. The main oral health condition experienced by children is tooth decay, effecting over half of all Australian children, making it five times more prevalent than asthma.<sup>1</sup> Tooth decay is Australia's most prevalent health problem despite being preventable.<sup>2</sup>

It is important to provide access to and establish good healthy eating and oral health practices at a young age as most children have formed lifelong habits by school age.

#### WHOLE SERVICE ENGAGEMENT

It is recognised that every member of the service impacts on children's health and can contribute to creating an environment that promotes healthy eating and good oral health. All members of our service including educators, staff, children, families and volunteers will be supported in implementing this policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Research Centre for Population Oral Health, 2011. Dental caries trends in Australian school children. Australian Dental Journal, Vol 56, pp 227–30.

<sup>2</sup> Rogers J, Prevention and Population Health Branch, Government of Victoria, Department of Health, 2011, Evidence-based oral health promotion resource

## DEFINITIONS

**Healthy eating:** Eating a wide variety of foods from the five food groups each day. These are:

- fruit
- vegetables and legumes/beans
- grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain
- milk, yoghurt, cheese, and alternatives
- lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes/beans.

Healthy eating also means eating in a way that is socially and culturally appropriate, having regular meals and snacks and eating food to satisfy hunger, appetite and energy needs.<sup>3</sup>

**Nutrition:** The process of providing or obtaining the food necessary for health and growth.<sup>4</sup>

**'Sometimes' foods and drink:** Sometimes foods are high in fat, sugar and salt or a combination of these.<sup>5</sup> They typically have very little nutritional value and are often processed and packaged. \* See appendix 1.

**Oral health:** Eating, speaking and socialising without discomfort or embarrassment.<sup>6</sup>

## PROCEDURES

### Healthy policies

- Educators, staff, families and children are active participants in the development and implementation of the whole service healthy eating and oral health policy.
- Educators, staff and families are provided with information about policy requirements.

### Healthy physical environment

- The service menu promotes the consumption of fruit and vegetables on a daily basis and healthy food options in line with Australian Guidelines.<sup>5,7</sup>
- Families are encouraged to provide fruit and vegetables daily in children's lunchboxes and other foods in line with the service's healthy eating and oral health policy.
- 'Sometimes' foods and sweetened drinks, such as juices, cordial and soft drinks, are limited in their provision by the service and families are discouraged from sending from home.
- Safe drinking water is available at the service and is accessible to all children. Children are encouraged to drink water regularly. Only tap water is provided.
- Cooking and food experiences provided in the service focus on healthy food options and promote fruit and vegetables.
- Children are encouraged to taste a wide variety of foods with a range of flavours, colours, textures and aromas through food experiences
- The service seeks to ensure any sponsorship, advertisements or marketing of food and drinks are consistent with the service's healthy eating and oral health policy.
- Children undertake oral hygiene practices in the service where appropriate.

### Healthy social environment

- Breastfeeding at the service is welcomed and an appropriate comfortable space is provided for mothers to breastfeed or express milk.
- The service provides a positive eating environment with relaxed, social and enjoyable experiences by:

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<sup>3</sup> Nutrition Australia Victorian Division, [www.nutritionaustralia.org](http://www.nutritionaustralia.org)

<sup>4</sup> <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/nutrition>

<sup>5</sup> Get Up and Grow Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood. Australian Government, 2009

<sup>6</sup> UK Department of Health (1994) in Spencer, JA, Australian Health Policy Institute, Commissioned Paper Series, 2004 (dental)

<sup>7</sup> Australian Dietary Guidelines, National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013, <http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au>

encouraging independence at meal and snack times

educators and staff sitting with the children at meal and snack times to role model healthy eating and for socialisation and learning giving children plenty of time to eat and socialise.

- Food and drink are not used as an incentive, bribe or reward at any time.
- As role models educators, staff and families are encouraged to bring foods and drinks in line with the service's healthy eating and oral health policy.
- Healthy body image and an enjoyment of eating are encouraged by the service.
- Food and oral health practices from diverse cultural backgrounds and traditional beliefs are respected and valued within this service.

## **Learning and skills**

- Educators and staff involve children in healthy food experiences through discussion and involvement in the kindergarten's vegetable garden.
- Opportunities to learn about and develop skills for healthy eating and oral health are embedded in the educational program.
- Educators talk to children about age appropriate tooth brushing and why this is important.
- Educators are supported to access a range of resources to increase their capacity to promote healthy eating and oral health initiatives for children.

## **Engaging children, educators, staff and families**

- Educators, staff, children and families are key partners in developing and supporting healthy eating and oral health initiatives in the service.
- Educators, staff and families are provided with information, ideas and practical strategies on a regular basis to support healthy eating and oral health in the service and at home.
- Families' experiences, expertise and interests are drawn upon to support healthy eating and oral health initiatives.
- Families and children from culturally diverse backgrounds are consulted to ensure cultural values and expectations about food, eating and oral health are respected.
- The service will regularly provide families with information on oral hygiene and how and where to access public dental services.

## **Community partnerships**

- The service works with local health professionals, services and other organisations to support educators and staff to deliver and promote healthy eating and oral health initiatives.

## **Related legislation and policies**

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011:

- PART 4.2—CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY 97 Division 1—Health, safety and wellbeing of children — Regulations 77, 78, 79, 80
- PART 4.7—LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE MANAGEMENT Division 2—Policies and procedures — Regulation 168 (2) (a) (i)

National Quality Standard 2011 – Quality Area 2

Get Up and Grow. Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood. Australian Government, 2009

Belonging, Being and Becoming. The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. Commonwealth of Australia, 2009

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework For all Children from Birth to Eight Years. Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2009

Guide to the National Quality Standard. ACECQA, 2011

Australian Dietary Guidelines. National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013

## ATTACHMENTS

APPENDIX 1 – Examples of “sometimes foods”

APPENDIX 2 – Healthy Eating Guidelines

APPENDIX 3 – Oral Health Messages

## AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Jack & Jill Beaumaris Kindergarten Inc. on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016

**REVIEW DATE:** JULY 2018

## APPENDIX 1

Examples of ‘sometimes foods’ include:

- chocolate, confectionery, jelly
- sweet biscuits, high fat/salt savoury biscuits, chips
- high sugar/high fat cakes and slices
- cream, ice cream
- deep fried foods (e.g. hot chips) and pastry based foods (pies, sausage rolls and pasties)
- most fast food and takeaway foods
- some processed meats (e.g. sausages, frankfurts/hot dogs, salami, strasbourg, devon, some commercial chicken nuggets and fish fingers)
- soft drinks, fruit juice and fruit drinks, cordial, sports drinks, energy drinks, flavoured milk and flavoured mineral water. <sup>8</sup>

Sometimes foods may also be referred to as ‘discretionary’ or ‘extra’ foods.

## APPENDIX 2

### Healthy Eating Guidelines<sup>5</sup>

- Make sure that food offered to children is appropriate to the child’s age and development, and includes a wide variety of nutritious foods consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines
- Provide water.
- Plan mealtimes to be positive, relaxed and social.
- Encourage children to try different food types and textures in a positive eating environment.
- Offer an appropriate amount of food, but allow children to decide how much they will actually eat themselves.
- Offer meals and snacks at regular and predictable intervals.
- Ensure that food is safely prepared for children to eat – from the preparation stages to consumption.

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<sup>8</sup> Healthy Eating Advisory Service menu planning checklist

## APPENDIX 3

### Oral Health Messages for the Australian Public<sup>9,10</sup>

- Use an appropriate fluoride toothpaste (e.g. child's toothpaste) over the age of 18 months.
- Brush teeth and along the gum line twice a day with a soft brush.
- Drink plenty of tap water (fluoridated if available).
- Limit sugary foods and drinks.
- Choose healthy snacks – fruits and vegetables.

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<sup>9</sup> [Roberts-Thomson, K](#) (2011) Oral health messages for the Australian public. Findings of a national consensus workshop, *Australian Dental Journal*, 2011; 56(3):331–5.

<sup>10</sup> Infant Feeding Guidelines, National Health and Medical Research Council, 2012, <http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au>