



Nutrition, Food, Beverages & Dietary Requirements Policy

Introduction:

Maryland Care & Early Education Centre 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 in their care.

This policy concerns the provision of healthy food and drink while children are in care and the promotion of normal growth and development. The service is committed to implementing and supporting the National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings.

Further, Maryland Care & Early Education Centre recognises 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

Aims:

- To role model healthy eating and activity throughout the day to all children and families
- To promote the 6 key *Munch and Move* messages to encourage healthy, active habits in children from a young age
- To develop menus in accordance with Get up and Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood Settings (Australian Government Publication) and Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia
- To support families in educating their children about healthy food choices

Legislative requirements / Sources:

National Quality Standard -2.1.1 & 2.2.2

Education and Care Service National Regulations: 77, 78, 79 & 80

Get up and Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood Settings

Good for Kids, Good for Life

Implementation:

Professional development of staff and educators

- Educators and staff will attend *munch and move* professional development training or receive similar training and information when needed
- All educators will have access to the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings
- Staff employed to prepare meals and/or devise menus will be qualified in an approved training course on food handling, nutrition and hygiene and be provided with ongoing professional development opportunities to refresh their knowledge of children's dietary needs, food handling and hygiene procedures

Provision of food and drinks at the service

The Approved Provider will:

- Ensure that all children have access to safe drinking water at all times
- Ensure that children are offered food and beverages appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis throughout the day
- Ensure that food and beverages provided are nutritious and adequate in quantity and take each child's individual dietary requirements, growth and development needs into consideration and any specific cultural, religious or health requirements are met
- Ensure that the service displays an accessible menu which accurately describes the food and beverages provided by the service each day
- Ensure that educators are aware of the need to implement adequate health and hygiene practices and use safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure that all children have access to safe drinking water at all times
- Ensure that children are offered food and beverages appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis throughout the day
- Ensure that food and beverages provided are nutritious and adequate in quantity and take each child's individual dietary requirements, growth and development needs into consideration and any specific cultural, religious or health requirements are met
- Ensure the service menu is consistent with Early Childhood Education and Care nutrition guidelines and that the service displays an accessible menu which accurately describes the food and beverages provided by the service each day.

Maryland Care and Early Education Centre will display the menu two weeks in advance and can be emailed or copied for parents upon request

- Ensure that educators are aware of and implement adequate health and hygiene practices and use safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service
- Ensure that the menu is diverse and reflects the cultural backgrounds of families and the local community
- Ensure that as per centre policy that Maryland Care and Early Education Centre remains 'nut free' and that all dietary requirements relating to medical conditions are adhered to

Staff and Educators will:

- Ensure that healthy eating is promoted through role modelling and eating with the children
- Help children make healthy food choices
- Ensure that all meal times are positive, relaxed and social
- Encourage children to try new foods
- Ensure that children's food likes and dislikes are respected
- Ensure that children are positively involved in meal times
- Adhere to best practices and service policy in regards to the safe storage and heating of both expressed breast milk and formula
- Ensure that they implement adequate health and hygiene practices and use safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children
- Ensure that as per centre policy that Maryland Care and Early Education Centre remains 'nut free' and that all dietary requirements relating to medical conditions are adhered to
- Ensure that the introduction of solid foods to babies and toddlers is done in consultation with families and in line with recognised guidelines
- Ensure that food is reheated in microwavable dishes i.e glass and not in melamine bowls or plates

Supporting families

- Staff and educators will support families' choices regarding infant feeding, including breast feeding and bottle feeding
- Maryland Care and Early Education will provide families with up to date information on dietary requirements of young children to ensure optimal growth and development and provide families with opportunities to discuss ways to maximise the health and well-being of children
- Staff and Educators will provide families with daily information about their child's intake of food and drinks throughout the day
- If food is to be bought from home for medical or cultural reasons educators and staff will ensure that all food meets current dietary guidelines and is nut free. Where

possible Maryland Care and Early Education Centre strives to provide all meals for children whilst being cared and educated at our service taking into account individual medical and cultural requirements

- If children require special dietary plans and provisions, a signed letter from a GP, dietician or nutritionist is required to verify this individual need.

Education and Information

- Educators will engage children in learning experiences that are fun and enjoyable and incorporate key messages around healthy eating
- Educators will implement learning experiences guided by the EYLF principles and incorporated into the child's sense of identity
- Families will be provided with current information about recommended guidelines around dietary requirements, screen time and physical activity

Special occasions and celebrations

- Maryland Care and Early Education Centre encourages the celebration of special occasions and cultural celebrations. If food is to be brought into the centre to share we request that it be 'nut free' and be pre-packaged and clearly labelled with the ingredients
- Other food free ways of celebrating will also be considered
- Educators and staff will use these times to promote healthy eating by discussing 'sometimes' and 'all the time' foods
- Centre cook can provide a birthday cake which is additive and free of artificial colours for a small cost to families

Review:

This policy is the intellectual property of Maryland Care & Early Education Centre and is created with consultation of staff and families attending the service. This policy will be reviewed annually. This policy is available in other languages upon request.

Reviewed: September 2018

Next Review: September 2020