



Bottle Feeding Policy

Rationale/Aim:

Feeding babies bottles is a vital part of our service. At Maryland Care & Early Education Centre we endeavour to ensure the nutritional needs through bottle feeding are met for our babies in a safe, hygienic and in a nurturing manner to further enhance the baby's sense of belonging to our service.

Current research indicates:

- Any form of the baby's bottled milk should not be heated in a microwaves as it reduces the nutritional value of the milk, causes hot spots and could cause burning and some plastics in bottles react to the microwaves and could be harmful to babies.
- Propping a young baby's bottle to enable baby to self-feed can be harmful and could cause ear or lung infections.
- Putting babies into cots or beds with bottles is not recommended as this could cause problem with developing teeth.
- Dental hygiene research also indicates that children over the age of two years should not use bottles rather they should use sipper cups.
- In accordance with the NSW Health initiative 'Munch and Move' the recommendations for children over 12 months is that they can have full cream cow's milk till the age of 2 years and then consume reduced fat milk from 2 years onwards.

Legislative requirements / Sources:

www.breastfeeding.asn.au
www.kidshealth.chw.edu.au
www.raisingchildren.net.au
www.kidsafensw.org.au
www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/teachers-childcare/munch-and-move.aspx
www.health.nsw.gov.au/heal/Publications/Caring-for-Children-Manual.pdf

Implementation:

See Bottle Feeding Procedures

The Feeding Environment and Safe Positioning

Suitable feeding positions

(i) Infants should be in a semi-upright or upright position when being fed.

Example:

- on your lap facing to the side or in front
 - in a semi-reclined seat if requiring trunk and head support
 - in a stable baby chair if able to sit independently
 - in a high chair (ensure good trunk support and safety strap used through legs to avoid slipping)
- (ii) Where possible, feed infants in a quiet area with less distractions.

Unsuitable feeding positions

(i) It is unsafe to 'prop' feed an infant. 'Prop feeding' is when the bottle is propped up by a cushion, towel or other support in order to keep it in the infant's mouth. This means that a person is not holding the bottle and the child is left unsupervised whilst feeding. Prop feeding is an unsafe practice, as it increases the risk of choking and possible overfeeding.

(ii) Avoid feeding in areas that have a lot of noise and distractions.

(iii) Lying infants in a cot, on the floor or on cushions is not recommended for feeding. If the infant is supervised, being propped up in a sitting position on a pillow is acceptable.

(iv) Sitting to the side of the infant requires them to turn their head to the side for food. The child's trunk is less stable and they are not feeding with head in the midline position.

Unsuitable feeding positions can increase the risk of problems such as:

• Tooth decay

Do not leave infants feeding from bottles while they are lying down or going off to sleep. This encourages them to continue to suckle on the bottle whilst sleeping. In this position, fluid stays in the mouth for too long and the baby may rapidly develop tooth decay (also called early childhood caries). It is important to avoid this habit, even if the baby does not appear to have cut any teeth yet – emerging tooth buds are still at risk of decay. The early loss of baby teeth can lead to ongoing dental, orthodontic and oral health problems in the future.

Any drinks containing natural and/or added sugars (e.g. all milks, fruit juices, soft drinks, cordials) can cause tooth decay and tooth erosion.

Pacifiers/dummies should always be sterilised prior to use and never be dipped in sweet foods such as sugar, honey or golden syrup.

• Choking

Infants who are fed while lying down or who are 'prop fed' are at a higher risk of choking.

Never add infant cereal or any other ‘food’ to an infant’s bottle of milk.

If you suspect or can see that any other food or flavouring has been added to a bottle of milk that has been provided for the child, discard it and prepare a fresh bottle. It is important to then inform the family that this is not in line with your service’s feeding policy.

• **Middle ear infections (Otitis media)**

Allowing infants to bottle feed while lying down may increase the risk of middle ear infections.

Breast fed babies:

- Educators support and encourage breast feeding for babies. We endeavor to continue feeding baby’s breast milk either through expressed milk or by mothers feeding their child when in our environment.
- Breast milk spills will be cleaned with neutral detergent and water. If breast milk comes into contact with educators or other children’s exposed skin the area will be thoroughly washed with warm soapy water
- Mothers are welcome to attend the centre throughout the day to breast feed their child as needed. If required private space for breast feeding mothers will be provided at the service.

Formula fed babies:

- Families are required to supply their baby’s formula for the day. We prefer that bottles be provided with the exact amount of boiled water and separately in individual serves with the formula measured exactly according to directions on the container of the formula.
- Bottles with water and separate formula will be stored in locked cupboards.

Cow’s milk and other milk alternatives (babies over 12 months) fed babies:

- The service will supply cow’s milk and other milk alternatives (when required) to babies over 12 months.
- Families will only need to supply a clearly labeled bottle with baby’s name on bottle, cap and top. Educators will fill these bottles when required.

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.

Created: October 2015

Review: October 2016