



*'Where learning
is fun'*

MEAL TIME POLICY

Quality Area 2 – Children's Health and Safety

OBJECTIVE

To create a safe and pleasant eating environment which also encourages the development of independence, social skills as well as knowledge of basic hygiene and good eating habits

PROCEDURES

Educators never deny children access to food. Food is never used as a punishment or reward.

Educators talk to the children about food and what they will be eating at each meal time.

Educator's model healthy eating behaviors by sitting with children at meal times and interacting with them.

When presenting food to children Educators will be mindful of and make adjustments for children with additional needs and particularly fussy eaters.

Educator's follow the Services daily routine regarding meal times. Educators are flexible and encourage progressive meal times.

Educator's follow the Services Weekly Menu regarding food which is to be provided to the children.

Educators will set a time limit of 20 to 30 minutes for a meal. After this time Educator's will remove any uneaten food.

Upon enrolment families will be asked about any food allergies, intolerances and food preferences that a child may have. This information will be communicated to all Educator's and meal preparation staff. Sydney Services Only will also inform Kids Gourmet Food.

Staff preparing and serving meals will be aware of children with any food allergies, intolerances or food preferences to ensure that food served to each child is safe and appropriate.

Staff will ensure that waiting times for any meal is minimal.

Children are never forced to eat their entire meal, only encouraged, children will be asked "have you had enough", before they are asked to leave the meal table.

Children under 2 years are seated in age appropriate seating e.g. high chair

We incorporate dental health in our Meal Time policy by asking the children to “swish and swallow” with water after lunch. This aids in the removal of food left in the child’s mouth after eating.

Before serving children a cooked or reheated meal, Check that the food has cooled before giving it to the child. Remove a small piece of food with a spoon to another plate and test the temperature of the food with your hand. Throw this piece of food away and wash the spoon.

Tongs, spoons or other appropriate utensils will be used by educators and children when handling food.

Visual communication supports will be used - Educators working in a Preschool room will place a tablecloth on the meal table to help children understand where meals are to be eaten.

Staff actively assist babies and toddlers with their feeding when and where required.

Records are kept and provided to families regarding the amount of food their child has eaten.

During meal times, Educator’s and children will follow the Services Hygiene Policy.

The Service provides a pleasant eating environment by allowing the children to choose meal partners and providing a variety of lunch settings e.g. picnic lunch on the grass.

Self-help skills are encouraged by;

- Nominating a child/children to help pack away after lunch time.
- Educators are sensitive to young children who choose to eat with their hand as they are developing their feeding skills using utensils.
- Where appropriate after meal time children are encouraged to place their dirty spoon/fork, bowl and cup into scrap bowls.

To prevent children choking;

- Children must be supervised at all times while eating or drinking.
- Children should always be seated when eating and drinking.
- Children will not be served small hard lollies, nuts, popcorn, and grapes (unless grape is sliced in half). Educators in the Wombat Room assess safety of crackers before serving to a child.



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Policy Sources:

- NSW Health *Munch & Move* program resources available on the Healthy Kids website www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au
- *Caring for Children: Birth to 5 years (Food, Nutrition and Learning Experiences)*, NSW Ministry of Health, 2014.
- *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (5th edition), June 2013.

Last Update: 8 March 2020