

## Procedure related to nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements

Associated National Quality Standard	Education and Care Services National Law or Regulation	Associated Department policy, procedure or guideline
2.1	78 79	Nutrition in schools policy

### Our Aim

Our preschool will:

- Role model healthy eating and activity throughout the day to all children and families;
- Promote the six key Munch and Move messages to promote healthy, active habits in children from a young age;
- Support families in educating their children about healthy food choices.

### Food and Nutrition

The preschool does not provide regular meals, parents/carers provide lunch, a small snack for morning tea and a piece of fruit or vegetable for afternoon fruit break.

Families are encouraged right from the beginning to provide nutritious foods for their children at preschool. This is done at our parent information session, in our information booklet, our school website by preschool signage, posts on Seesaw and daily discussion with families. At our preschool interviews, families receive an orientation bag which includes information on healthy lunch box ideas, these are Munch and Move resources (translated resources are provided when available).

They are made aware that we are a nut aware preschool and foods that contain nuts are discouraged at preschool at all times. Other allergens (e.g. sesame seeds, eggs etc.) are discouraged at preschool as the need arises. We have a nut aware poster displayed on our front door and foyer.

Through curriculum, healthy food choices are promoted using the terms 'everyday foods and sometimes foods'. Chocolate or chocolate products, chips, lollies, sweet biscuits or cakes are strongly discouraged at preschool.

- There is an exception for when a child celebrates a birthday. An allowance is made for the child to share this experience with their preschool friends, ensuring a sense of

belonging. If families would like to provide cake we encourage them to provide individual cupcakes or doughnuts so that cross contamination when blowing out candles does not occur. If a child is identified at risk of anaphylaxis we ask that the family provides Parents of children with allergies will be asked to supply a substitute food to be frozen and given on special occasions such as birthdays.

If a child brings any discouraged food items a conversation is had with the families for example: at pick-up time or via phone call. A follow up private message with Munch & Move resources may also be used to remind the family about our healthy eating recommendations.



In some situations, the child may be given permission to consume their food, if this is the main food item and it doesn't pose a safety risk (i.e. allergies). Parents will then be contacted and provided with alternatives for future lunches. If possible, an alternative will be offered for that day and the food sent home.

At meet the teacher meetings which are held in term 1 each year, educators explain the impact of healthy lifestyles and provide examples of healthy food choices for preschool to parents.

Preschool regularly join the whole school for activities, during these times preschool procedures are followed by staff.

## Access to Safe Drinking Water

Children must have access to safe drinking water at all times ([regulation 78](#)). Families are required to bring a full water bottle with a closed mouth piece each day and which is refilled by staff as needed.

Water bottles are stored in children's lockers This can be accessed while the children are indoors or outdoors. If a child does not have a water bottle a cup is provided for the child on the lunch trolley so they have access to drinking water at all times.

The term 'water bottle' is used with families and children as a opposed to drink bottle so that families understand that only water is recommended as the healthiest drink at preschool and not juice, cordial or flavoured milk.

## Eating Routines

The preschool daily routine includes regular periods the children are able to consume the food they have brought from home. To meet children's range of requirements, the strategies we implement are:

- The preschool provides the opportunity for progressive morning tea. The children are educated from the beginning of the year, that they can access their healthy snacks at any time during the morning. The children are provided a designated space that is set up prior to arrival.
- In the case of wet weather, a table is set up indoors for the children to use if needed.

Eating routines are regularly reviewed, to ensure individual needs are being met. There is no onus on the preschool children to eat at the same time as the K-6 children. Lunch is a shared experience, where educators and children eat together, and a learning opportunity created, it is an opportunity for educators to model, implement and reinforce healthy eating practices. It also provides opportunity for the children to develop their independence, social and self-help skills to support a successful transition to school.

# Storing Children's Food Safely

[Regulation 77](#) requires the safe storage of food. This is done by advising families to pack their child's lunch into a cooler bag or insulated lunchbox containing an ice brick.

An example of ice bricks is shown to the families upon orientation. Signs are displayed in the foyer to remind parents to provide an ice brick daily. We have additional ice bricks for use if a child does not have one upon arrival.

When families arrive at preschool they are asked to unpack their child's lunch box and check that they have an ice brick. Children place their lunchbox in their lockers where they have access to it all day. During arrival times educators often remind families to ensure that their child's food is stored safely, families are also reminded periodically via signage or posts on Seesaw.

In the case where the ice brick may be deemed insufficient due to the perishable food item provided, the lunch will be placed in the preschool fridge located in the preschool kitchen and families reminded of examples of what to bring.

Families are told at the parent information session that foods provided need to be able to be eaten cold. Preschool does not reheat food for children.

## Children with Food Allergies or at Risk of Anaphylaxis

When a child enrolls with a medical condition such as anaphylaxis, first the SAO-p will notify the preschool teacher and then the preschool teacher will organise to consult with the family to develop an **Individual Health Care Plan** before they commence preschool. This meeting must include:

- the development of an individual risk management plan for the child
- development of a communications plan
- the family being given a copy of the Department's Student Health in NSW Schools policy

The family must provide a medical management or action plan for the child, developed and signed or stamped by a medical practitioner. If the child is at risk of anaphylaxis, this is the [ASCIA Action Plans for Anaphylaxis \(personal\) for use with EpiPen](#). Families then need to provide the preschool with relevant medication and fill out the appropriate **Medication Record**.

When developing the individual risk assessment for these children educators will consider:

- Where the child will be seated to eat
- How other children will be taught not to share food
- If the lunches of other children will be monitored for trigger foods
- How the supervision plan may need to be modified during eating periods.

When RMP and health plans are finalised, these are shared to the team during wellbeing meetings. Information is also displayed in our preschool office and inside casual folders.

## Food Preparation and Handling

In preparing for a group cooking experience, educators should familiarise themselves with the food safety guidelines in part 3.5 of [Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#).

Department policy states that peanuts, tree nuts or any nut produce cannot be used in curriculum or extra curricula activities (this does not include foods labelled as 'may contain traces of nuts'). Additionally, any ingredient for which a child has a known allergy, intolerance or is at risk of anaphylaxis is avoided.

Procedure due for revision March 2021

During enrolment and orientation, educators collect information related to foods a child cannot eat for religious or cultural reasons. Before special events where food will be shared, educators liaise with families of the children in the situations above, to ensure their child's health and wellbeing needs are met.

## Cooking with the Children

Children love to cook. Cooking is a safe and enjoyable activity for children in preschool, provided these precautions are followed:

- Make sure children and educators wash and dry their hands before and after cooking
- Always be aware of the dangers of heat
- Tie up any long hair
- Cover and seal any cuts or sores
- To reduce the chances of germs being spread through food, it is recommended that children only prepare food that will be cooked afterwards—any germs in the food will be destroyed when the food is cooked. However, if the food will not be cooked, this risk can be lowered if children only prepare food to eat themselves.
- If children have had vomiting or diarrhoea, they should not participate in cooking activities until they have been symptom-free for 48 hours. If the preschool has recently had, or is currently experiencing, an outbreak of gastrointestinal disease, we will not hold children's cooking activities.
- Use appropriate coloured boards for food preparation
- Replace cutting boards and washing-up cloths on a regular basis
- Use tongs or spoons when serving food
- Keep food covered until served
- Only use food designated coloured cloths
- check current medical conditions for allergens/ reactive foods

## Key Resources

Leading and Operating Department Preschool Guidelines

[Anaphylaxis Procedures for Schools](#)

[Healthy Kids Fact Sheets](#)

[Munch and Move](#). Healthy Kids: eat well, get active

[Get up and grow: Healthy eating and physical activity for early childhood resources](#). Australian Government Department of Health

[Promoting healthy eating and nutrition in education and care services – Early childhood resource hub](#)

[Department of Primary Industries NSW Food Authority](#)

[Staying Healthy in Childcare](#)

[foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/retail/childrens-services](http://foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/retail/childrens-services) - 'Food brought from home' factsheet

---

## ■ 3.5 Food safety

---


Education and care services must prepare and provide food in a way that is safe for the children in their care, to reduce the risk of spreading infectious diseases through food. Standard 3.3.1 of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code states that education and care services must have a documented food safety program. Food safety is monitored by the health department in each state and territory; check your health department's website for the specific requirements for food safety.

Food is an excellent place for germs to grow—in the right conditions, the number of bacteria in food can double every 30 minutes. Germs that do not grow in food can still be passed from person to person in food. Germs that are common on our skin and in the environment can cause food poisoning if they grow to large numbers in food.

For these reasons, food safety is an important part of infection control in education and care services. The best ways to prevent diseases spreading through food are hand hygiene; not sharing food, plates or utensils; preparing and storing food properly; and keeping food preparation areas clean. Disinfectants are not routinely needed in food preparation areas if surfaces are thoroughly cleaned with detergent in hot water and allowed to dry.

This section highlights the basic principles of food preparation. For more detailed advice on food safety, see your education and care service's food safety plan.

---

 **See Part 1 – Concepts in infection control for more details on how hand hygiene and effective environmental cleaning can help break the chain of infection**

---

Education and care services in which staff both change nappies and prepare or serve food on the same day have more than three times as many cases of diarrhoea as settings in which educators and other staff do not do both these jobs on the same day. For this reason, the person who prepares and serves food should, wherever possible, not be the person who changes nappies or helps children go to the toilet on that day.

Always wash and dry your hands before handling food. There is no need to wear gloves when preparing food if your hands are clean and dry. Gloves are not a substitute for clean hands.

### 3.5.1 Basics for meals and snacks

- Clean the surfaces that will come in contact with the food and with the utensils that are to be used for the meal.
- Wash and dry your hands thoroughly before preparing or serving food.
- Check that all children have washed and dried their hands before they eat or drink.

The same guidelines apply when you are preparing to give an infant a bottle as when you are preparing food for older children to eat.

During the meal:

- If children are sharing food from a common bowl or plate, make sure they understand that they need to use tongs, spoons or other appropriate utensils to take the food they want to eat. Remind them that they cannot touch food that is being shared because this can spread germs that might make them or other children ill. This is why it is important to use utensils, not your hands, when taking food from a common bowl or plate.
- Do not allow children to share individual eating or drinking utensils, or take food from other children's plates or bowls.
- Use a separate spoon for each infant you feed.
- Teach children to turn away from food when they cough or sneeze, and then to wash their hands.
- If you are interrupted to care for another child while preparing food or spoon-feeding an infant, be sure to wash your hands again before you continue.

### 3.5.2 Preparing food

Always wash and dry your hands before handling food. Education and care services must have a hand basin (separate from the kitchen sink), soap and disposable towels in the kitchen so that educators and other staff who are preparing food can easily wash their hands. Check your state or territory's food safety legislation for any other requirements.

All staff should wear clean overalls or an apron when working in the kitchen. The kitchen should be fly-proof and vermin-proof.

#### Heating and cooling food

Keep food hot (more than 60°C) or cold (5°C or less);<sup>17</sup> otherwise, do not keep it at all. Heating and cooling food properly will help prevent germs from growing in the food.

Australia's food safety standards state that reheated food should reach 60°C. Heating to this temperature will destroy germs that may have grown in the food since it was cooked. However, it is recommended that food is reheated until it reaches 70 °C, and should stay at this temperature for 2 minutes. This is because the education and care service may not know if the prepared food has been within the temperature 'danger zone' (5–60°C).

Heat food, or milk for bottles **once only**. Do not allow it to cool and then reheat it—this can allow germs to grow.

<sup>17</sup> Food Standards Australia New Zealand 2007, 'Food safety standard 3.2.2: Food safety practices and general requirements', in *Food safety standards*, FSANZ, Canberra.

Use a food thermometer to ensure that cooked or reheated food reaches the correct temperature. Keep a non-mercury thermometer in your fridge so that you can check that the temperature is below 5°C.

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.

Throw out all leftovers. Tell parents what food their child left, but do not return the leftover food to the parents.

## Separating raw and cooked foods

If foods have been properly reheated, any germs that were in the food will have been killed. It is important not to let raw food come in contact with cooked food, because the raw food may have germs in it.

To prevent cross-contamination between raw and cooked foods:

- keep raw and cooked foods separate, even in the fridge
- keep cooked food above uncooked food in the fridge
- use separate utensils (such as cutting boards and knives) for raw and cooked food.

# Food brought from home



Safe food handling at home is important. Young children and babies do not have fully developed immune systems, so they are more likely to become sick from eating unsafe food than healthy adults with a mature immune system.

Food handling includes activities such as preparing, storing and transporting food for children.

If food is prepared at home and taken to the children's service, it is a good idea for parents to work together with staff to provide safe food for their children.

## Preparing

- Wash and dry your hands properly before preparing food
- Encourage everyone at home to always wash and dry their hands before eating or cooking, after using the toilet, after touching animals, after sneezing and coughing, and after handling rubbish
- Don't prepare food if you have an infectious illness
- Wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly in clean, drinking-quality water just before preparing
- Use a clean chopping board and knife each time, or thoroughly clean them between different food types (eg between raw and ready-to-eat food)
- Keep raw foods (eg raw meat, chicken, eggs) separate from cooked foods (eg frittata, cooked chicken) or ready-to-eat foods (eg sandwiches, cut fruit) to avoid spreading harmful bacteria through cross contamination

- Check 'use-by' dates so you don't use food that is out of date

## Serving

- Make sure your fridge is set at 5°C or lower and that your freezer is working properly
- If you make lunch the night before, store it in the fridge overnight



## Transporting

- Pack food in an insulated lunch box or a cooler bag
- Place a frozen drink bottle or ice block inside to help food stay cool
- Or pack food that doesn't need to be kept cold, eg sandwiches with shelf stable sandwich spreads (eg 100% fruit spread or Vegemite™), UHT dairy products and whole fruits (not cut up)

## Supplying breastmilk or infant formula safely

Breastmilk or infant formula should be supplied in clean and sterilised bottles that are clearly labelled with the child's name and date of preparation.

Formula bottles that will be made up at the children's service should have the correct amount of boiled water or formula powder measured out (follow manufacturer's instructions carefully).

Breastmilk bottles or prepared formula bottles should be stored in the main part of the fridge (not in the door) until ready to be transported. They should be transported in a cooler bag or esky with an ice brick.

