

## Food and Nutrition Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011

---

Regs	77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
	78	Food and beverages
	90	Medical conditions policy
	91	Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
	162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
	168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures

QA	2.1.1	Each child's health needs are supported
	2.1.3	Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
	2.2.1	Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate for each child
	2.3.1	Children are adequately supervised at all times
	2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury
	5.1.2	Every child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning

### Background

---

Good nutrition is essential to healthy living and enables children to be active participants in play and leisure. Education and care settings provide many opportunities for children to experience a range of healthy foods and to learn about food choices from educators and other children (*Early Years Learning Framework*, page 30; *Framework for School Age Care*, page 30).

### Policy statement

---

The Yellow Cottage 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 the



healthy eating key messages outlined in Munch & Move and to supporting the National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood. Further, The Yellow Cottage 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

---

- Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents.
- Provide a positive eating environment which reflects cultural, religious and family values.
- Promote lifelong learning for children, early childhood educators and families about healthy food and drink choices.
- Encourage communication with families about the provision of appropriate healthy food and drinks for children while they are attending The Yellow Cottage.

The Yellow Cottage will:

Where food is brought from home:

Provide information to families that is readily accessible to assist them on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children of preschool age which are suitable for children's lunchboxes. The Yellow Cottage has developed a set of lunch box traffic lights to help families in their choices for healthy lunch box ideas that are allowed at The Yellow Cottage.

On arrival at The Yellow Cottage families place morning tea in the morning tea baskets, lunch boxes and drink bottles into the fridge on either the Green or Orange side depending on what room they are in.

At the Yellow Cottage we encourage children to eat the more nutritious foods provided in their lunchbox, such as sandwiches, fruit, cheese and yoghurt, before eating any less nutritious food provided.

We have a progressive morning tea, children will eat fresh or dried fruit and/or vegetables and drink water, when they feel hungry during the morning play session. Instead of all children eating at a set time, they are able to snack anytime during the allotted time period. This is designed to get away from rigid timeframes that may not suit all children. Each child's morning schedule is different. They wake up and eat at different times, and some may eat a lot for breakfast while others may have only had something small. Progressive morning teas give older children the flexibility to decide when to have their morning snack. They can finish an activity without rushing to pack up and eat when they're feeling hungry. It also lets supervising educators have greater interaction with individual children as there are fewer children eating at the same time. Staff monitor which children have eaten and remind the children who haven't to have some morning tea. Exceptions will only be made where a child has special dietary requirements.

At lunch time children will also drink water. Other drinks will only be permitted where a child has a special dietary requirement.

We discourage the provision of highly processed snack foods high in fat, salt and sugar and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes. Examples of these foods include lollies, chocolates, sweet biscuits, muesli bars, breakfast bars, fruit filled bars, chips, oven-baked crackers and corn chips. These foods will be sent home in a labelled brown paper bag with a note explaining they are not suitable for The Yellow Cottage lunch boxes. At lunchtime the staff ask children to choose something for their afternoon tea. This gives each child a sense of agency in their food choices. These choices are labelled with each child's name and placed in the afternoon tea basket which is stored in the fridge until afternoon tea.



We ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day. Staff will be aware of adequate fluid intake for children and the need to increase fluid intake on hot days, after exercise and when children are unwell.

The Yellow Cottage is aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances, special dietary needs and cultural nutritional requirements and consult with families to determine specific food related requirements and develop individual management plans. The Yellow Cottage is a nut free zone, and no nuts or nut products are allowed to be packed into lunch boxes. Lunch boxes are checked daily by educators. QA 2.2.1

The Yellow Cottage acknowledges Birthdays are an important part of a child's life, and educators and children care encouraged to celebrate them at the Centre. Parents are welcome to bring a cake to share. We strongly encourage cup cakes. QA 2.2.1

The Yellow Cottage will:

- minimise the risk of choking through provision of appropriate foods and supervision.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for educators to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge and skills related to early childhood nutrition, food safety and hygiene.

Health, hygiene and safe food practices

The Yellow Cottage asks Parents/carers are asked to pack food that does not require heating. The Yellow Cottage ensures children and staff wash and dry their hands (using soap, running water and single use or disposable towels) before handling food or eating meals and snacks. Children's hand-washing practices are observed at all times.

We provide a positive eating environment which reflects cultural and family values.

The Yellow Cottage will:

Ensure that educators sit with the children at meal and snack times to role model healthy food and drink choices and actively engage children in conversations about the food and drink provided.

Endeavour to recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from different cultural and religious backgrounds.

Create a relaxed atmosphere at mealtimes where children have enough time to eat and enjoy their food as well as enjoying the social interactions with educators and other children.

Respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, educators do not insist he/she eats.

Be patient with messy or slow eaters.

Encourage children to try different / new foods but will not force them to eat.

Not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for disciplinary purposes.

Promote lifelong learning for children, early childhood staff and families about healthy food and drink choices.



Foster awareness and understanding of healthy food and drink choices through including in the children's program a range of learning experiences encouraging children's healthy eating.

Encourage children to participate in a variety of "hands-on" food preparation experiences.

Provide opportunities for children to engage in discovery learning and discussion about healthy food and drink choices.

#### Links to other policies

---

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Injuries, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Student, Volunteers and Visitors Policy

#### Sources, further reading and useful websites

---

##### Sources

- Early Years Learning Framework 2009
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- National Quality Standard 2011
- Queensland Health. (n.d.). *Formula Feeding*.  
<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/ph/documents/childhealth/28107.pdf> accessed 21 March 2012

##### Further reading

- Better Health Channel. (2011). Fact sheet: Child care and healthy eating.
- [http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcv2/bhcv2/pdf.nsf/ByPDF/Childcare\\_and\\_healthy\\_eating/\\$File/Childcare\\_and\\_healthy\\_eating.pdf](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcv2/bhcv2/pdf.nsf/ByPDF/Childcare_and_healthy_eating/$File/Childcare_and_healthy_eating.pdf)
- Nutrition Australia. (2009). *Get up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for early Childhood*  
[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/A8053821E32DED8DCA25762C001D60CA/\\$File/P3-5616%20Family%20Book%20Combined%20SCREEN.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/A8053821E32DED8DCA25762C001D60CA/$File/P3-5616%20Family%20Book%20Combined%20SCREEN.pdf) accessed 10 March 2012
- Nutrition Australia. (n.d.). – *Factsheets for Healthy Eating*  
<http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/resources>
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2003). *The Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia incorporating The Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers*



[http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files\\_nhmrc/publications/attachments/n34.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/n34.pdf) accessed 10 March 2012

#### Useful websites

- Nutrition Australia – [www.nutritionaustralia.org/vic/nutrition-services-early-learning-centres](http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/vic/nutrition-services-early-learning-centres)
- Queensland Health – [www.health.qld.gov.au](http://www.health.qld.gov.au)
- Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne – [www.rch.org.au](http://www.rch.org.au)

## Review

The policy will be reviewed annually by:

- Management
- Employees
- Families
- Interested Parties

Last reviewed: 14/2/2015

Date for next review: 14/2/2015