

# NUTRITION, ORAL HEALTH AND ACTIVE PLAY POLICY



*Play, laugh...  
...learn, grow!*

## **Mandatory – Quality Area 2**

### **PURPOSE**

Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc acknowledges the importance of healthy eating, oral health and physical activity, and its contribution to good health and overall wellbeing.

This policy will provide guidelines to:

- promote a healthy lifestyle to children at the centre including eating nutritious food and participating in physical activity.
- create environments that support good oral health and general health.
- encourage children to make healthy food and drink choices.
- provide opportunities for active play.
- encourage children to make healthy lifestyle choices consistent with national and state guidelines and recommendations.
- ensure that the dietary and cultural needs of children and families are taken into consideration when planning menus for centre events and activities.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

#### **1. VALUES**

Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc is committed to:

- promoting nutritious food and eating habits that will contribute to healthy growth and development in children.
- providing a safe, supportive and social environment in which children can enjoy eating.
- consulting and working collaboratively with families in regard to their child's nutrition and dietary requirements, including responding appropriately to food allergies and recognising cultural and religious practices, and lifestyle choices.
- ensuring that food and drink items provided by the centre are consistent with national and state guidelines and recommendations.
- providing children and families with opportunities to learn about food, nutrition oral health and healthy lifestyles.
- ensuring adequate health and hygiene procedures, including safe practices for handling, preparing, storing and serving food
- encouraging physical activity by providing a range of active play experiences for all children at the centre
- ensuring breastfeeding is welcomed at the centre and an appropriate, comfortable space is provided.

#### **2. SCOPE**

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisors, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc.

## DEFINITIONS

**Active play:** refer to definitions.

**Healthy eating:** refer to definitions.

**Nutrition:** refer to definitions

**Discretionary/Sometimes food and drink:** refer to definitions.

**Oral Health:** refer to definitions.

## PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- ensuring that all staff and volunteers have access to this policy and have a clear understanding of the procedures and practices outlined within
- ensuring that the centre environment and educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for healthy eating and active play.
- providing ongoing information, resources and support to families, to assist in the promotion of optimum health for young children.
- ensuring the implementation of adequate health and hygiene procedures, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the centre (Regulation 77) (refer to *Hygiene Policy* and *Food Safety Policy*)
- ensuring that all educators/staff comply with the *Food Safety Act*
- ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of a child's food allergies and/or other medical conditions on enrolment or on initial diagnosis.
- ensuring measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies and/or diabetes (refer to *Anaphylaxis Policy*, *Asthma Policy*, *Diabetes Policy* and *Food Safety Policy*)
- ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of, and plan for, the dietary needs of children diagnosed with diabetes (refer to *Diabetes Policy*)
- providing healthy suggestions for morning/afternoon tea and/or lunchboxes for children in line with the Australian Dietary Guidelines
- ensuring that fresh drinking water (preferably tap) is readily available at all times, and reminding children to drink water throughout the day, including at snack/lunch times (Regulation 78(1)(a))
- ensuring everyday food is promoted at the centre and education about 'sometimes' food is embedded in the program.
- ensuring that food and drinks are available to children at frequent and regular intervals throughout the day (Regulation 78(1)(b))
- reviewing staff training needs in relation to understanding and implementing effective oral hygiene practices in early childhood settings
- ensuring the Nominated Supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers at the centre implement and promote adequate oral health hygiene practices.
- ensuring that celebrations, fundraising activities other centre events, sponsorship and marketing opportunities are consistent with the purposes and values of this policy and centre procedures.
- ensuring educators are supported to access resources, tools and professional learning to enhance their knowledge and capacity to develop adult guided and child initiated active play experiences and promote healthy eating.
- recognising educators, staff, children and families as key partners in developing and supporting oral health initiatives

- ensuring educators, staff and families are provided with information, ideas and practical strategies on a regular basis to support oral health in the centre and at home.
- ensuring that when food is provided to staff and educators at meetings, celebrations and events, healthy food options are included, and discretionary food/drink options are discouraged.
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Where food is provided at the centre:

- allocating finances to ensure the provision of nutritionally balanced and culturally sensitive meals, as required.
- ensuring that staff who are responsible for menu planning participate in regular nutrition and safe food handling training, and are kept up to date with current research, knowledge and best practice.
- ensuring that food and drink provided by the centre is nutritious, adequate in quantity and appropriate to children's growth and development, and meets any specific cultural, religious or health needs (Regulation 79(1))
- ensuring the menu meets the Australian Dietary Guidelines and Infant Feeding Guidelines and has been assessed using the Healthy Eating Advisory Service (HEAS) Food Checker Tool and meets the criteria determined.
- ensuring that a weekly menu is displayed in a location accessible to parents/guardians, and that it accurately describes the food and drinks to be provided by the centre each day (Regulation 80(1)).

**All Early Childhood Staff are responsible for:**

- promoting a healthy physical environment
- ensuring the centre promotes the consumption of fruit and vegetables on a daily basis and healthy food options in line with Australian guidelines.
- ensuring that the centre environment and the educational program supports children and families to learn about and make healthy choices for healthy eating and active play.
- ensuring the implementation of adequate health and hygiene procedures, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the centre (Regulation 77) (refer to *Hygiene Policy* and *Food Safety Policy*)
- ensuring that all educators/staff comply with the *Food Safety Act*
- ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of a child's food allergies and/or other medical conditions on enrolment or on initial diagnosis.
- ensuring measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies and/or diabetes (refer to *Anaphylaxis Policy*, *Asthma Policy*, *Diabetes Policy* and *Food Safety Policy*)
- ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of, and plan for, the dietary needs of children diagnosed with diabetes (refer to *Diabetes Policy*)
- ensuring that fresh drinking water is readily available at all times, and reminding children to drink water throughout the day, including at snack/lunch times (Regulation 78(1)(a))
- ensuring that children are encouraged to drink water regularly.
- ensuring sometimes foods and sweetened drinks (juices, cordial and soft drinks) are not encouraged in the centre.
- ensuring that food and drinks are available to children at frequent and regular intervals throughout the day (Regulation 78(1)(b))

- ensuring children undertake oral hygiene practices in the centre where appropriate.
- ensuring that cultural and religious practices/requirements of families are accommodated to support children's learning and development.
- assuring that the centre seeks sponsorship, advertisements or marketing of food and drinks are consistent with this policy.
- developing and reviewing guidelines for celebrations, fundraising activities and other centre events in consultation with educators, staff, parents/guardians and families, and in line with this policy
- developing links with local and regional health services, community organisations and businesses that provide expertise, resources and support for healthy eating and active play.
- engaging children as active learners in healthy food, oral health and active play experiences through the educational program
- discussing healthy eating choices with children, introducing the concept of 'sometimes' foods and drinks,
- ensuring that as role models, educators, staff and families are encouraged to bring foods and drinks that are in line with this policy.
- role-modelling positive eating, drinking and physical activity behaviours.
- exploring and discussing diverse cultural, religious, social and family lifestyle
- ensuring that oral health practices from diverse cultural practices and traditional beliefs are respected and valued within this centre.
- ensuring that the centre will provide families with information on oral hygiene and how and where to access public dental services.
- ensuring that families' experiences, expertise and interests are drawn upon to support oral health initiatives.
- ensuring that families and children from culturally diverse backgrounds are consulted to ensure cultural values and expectations about oral health are respected.
- ensuring that the centre works with local health professionals, services and other organisations to support educators and staff to deliver and promote oral health initiatives.
- considering this policy when organising excursions and centre events
- supporting students and volunteers to comply with this policy while at the centre.
- keeping parents/guardians informed of current information relating to healthy eating and active play and engaging them as key partners in initiatives.
- providing a positive eating environment with relaxed, social and enjoyable experiences by educators and staff sitting with the children at meal and snack times to role model healthy eating and for socialisation and learning
- encouraging children to be independent at snack/mealtimes e.g., opening lunchboxes, pouring drinks, self-feeding, serving and using utensils in a culturally sensitive way
- ensuring food and drinks are not used as an incentive or reward.
- ensuring that age-appropriate adult guided and child initiated active play is planned on a daily basis across all age groups.
- planning and providing outdoor, active play that is stimulating, promotes skill development, considers safety issues and provides adequate supervision (refer to *Definitions*)
- considering opportunities for children to be physically active indoors, particularly in adverse weather conditions
- providing daily opportunities for all children to participate in age-appropriate active play.
- acting as positive role models by engaging in physical activity

- minimising and closely supervising screen-based activities, in line with recommended guidelines
- providing age-appropriate traffic safety education, including pedestrian and passenger safety to both children and parents/guardians at the centre
- promoting active travel where appropriate and providing space at the centre for families to leave active travel equipment.
- promoting safe behaviour through daily practice as part of the program.

Where food is provided at the centre:

- managing the centre's food budget
- ensuring that food and drink provided by the centre is nutritious, adequate in quantity and appropriate to children's growth and development, and meets any specific cultural, religious or health needs (Regulation 79(2))
- ensuring the menu meets the Australian Dietary Guidelines and Infant Feeding Guidelines and has been assessed using the Healthy Eating Advisory Service (HEAS) Food Checker Tool and meets the criteria determined.
- ensuring that a weekly menu is displayed in a location accessible to parents/guardians, and that it accurately describes the food and drinks to be provided by the centre each day (Regulation 80(1))
- ensuring that the centre is registered and working in line with the *Food Safety Act* and National Regulations
- ensuring that the cook, and any staff involved in food preparation, serving and storage, comply with the *Food Safety Act*
- facilitating training of staff to assist in compliance with the *Food Safety Act* e.g., safe food handling courses.

**Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- complying with the requirements of this policy
- providing details of specific nutritional/dietary requirements, including the need to accommodate cultural or religious practices or food allergies, on their child's enrolment form, and discussing these with the Nominated Supervisor prior to the child's commencement at the centre, and if requirements change over time (refer to *Anaphylaxis Policy*, *Asthma Policy* and *Diabetes Policy*)
- communicating regularly with educators/staff regarding children's specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs, including food preferences
- encouraging their child/ren to drink an adequate amount of water.
- providing healthy, nutritious food for snacks/meals, including fruits and vegetables where applicable
- providing healthy, nutritious food, including fruits or vegetables for sharing at morning or afternoon tea, where applicable
- providing nutritious food and drinks for celebrations, fundraising activities and centre events, consistent with GRPSA policy
- encouraging children to exercise by engaging in active play, and walking or riding a bike to the centre where appropriate.
- discussing appropriate road traffic safety and car safety practices, and role-modelling this behaviour.

**Volunteers and students, while at the centre, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.**

## **EVALUATION**

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from educators, staff, parents/guardians, children, management and all affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness.
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy.
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice.
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the GRPSA policy review cycle, or as required.
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any change to this policy or its procedures.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Additional information

## **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2012.

Reviewed and Approved: 28<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

Reviewed and Approved: 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

Reviewed and Approved: 28<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

**REVIEW DATE:** APRIL 2023

## **ATTACHMENT 1 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Oral health behaviours have a major influence on children's health and wellbeing and a direct impact on their growth and development. Early childhood education and care services play an important role in promoting young children's oral health. This is a time when lifelong oral health behaviours are being formed.

Oral health is essential for children's overall health and wellbeing. Oral diseases can negatively affect individuals through pain, discomfort, general health and quality of life. The main oral health condition experienced by children is tooth decay, affecting over half of all Australian children, making it five times more prevalent than asthma. Tooth decay is Australia's most prevalent health problem despite being preventable.

### **Oral Health Messages for the Australian Public**

- Breast milk is best for babies and is not associated with an increased risk of dental decay.
- A cup can be introduced at around six months, to teach infants the skill of sipping drinks from a cup.
- Put an infant to bed without a bottle or take the bottle away when the infant has finished feeding. Don't let the infant keep sucking on the bottle.
- Use an appropriate fluoride toothpaste (e.g., child's toothpaste) over the age of 18 months.
- Children should have an oral health assessment by the age of two.
- Brush teeth and along the gum line twice a day with a soft brush.
- Drink plenty of tap water (fluoridated if available).
- Limit sugary foods and drinks.
- Choose healthy snacks – fruits and vegetables.
- Pregnant women should have their oral health assessed and treatment needs addressed.