

NUTRITION AND ACTIVE PLAY POLICY

Policy Number	P-Q2-M014	Version Number	4.00
Drafted by	Director of Education	Approved Date: Review Date:	March 2026 April 2028
Responsibility	The Board of Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children’s Centre Association (Inc.)		
Related Service Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Conditions Policy • Health and Wellbeing Policy • Anaphylaxis Policy • Asthma Policy • Educational Program Development Policy • Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diabetes Policy • Excursions and Service Events Policy • Food Safety Policy • Hygiene Policy • Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy • Inclusion and Equity Policy • Oral Health Policy 	
Legislation and Standards	<p>Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 168, 301(3)(d), 323 • Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 73, 77, 78, 79, 80, 168 • National Quality Standard 2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety - Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities - Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management 		
Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Dietary Guidelines. National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013 • Belonging, Being and Becoming. The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. Australian Government Department of Education, Version 2. • Get up and Grow. Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early childhood. Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, 2009 www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/get-up-grow-resource-collection • Guide to the National Quality Standard. Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority, 2017 • Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, for all children from Birth to Eight Years. Department of Education and Training, 2016 Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (Birth to 5 years): www.health.gov.au/topics/physical-activity-and-exercise/physical-activity-and-exercise-guidelines-for-all-australians-for-infants-toddlers-and-preschoolers-birth-to-5-years • Achievement Program https://www.achievementprogram.health.vic.gov.au • Menu planning guidelines for long day care, Healthy Eating Advisory Service, Department of Health and Human Services, State Government of Victoria, 2012 http://heas.health.vic.gov.au/early-childhood-services/menu-planning/long-day-care/guidelines • Australian Dietary Guidelines (2013) National Health and Medical Research Council: Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013 		

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children’s Centre Board of Management on 15th of August 2016.

PURPOSE

The Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children’s Centre acknowledge the importance of healthy eating and physical activity and its contribution to good health and wellbeing. This policy will provide guidelines to ensure:

- that the service implements the healthy eating key messages and supports the *National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings* (as outlined in the *Get Up & Grow* resources)
- opportunities for safe, active play are part of the daily program.
- Families are supported in providing healthy food and drink to their children.

PRINCIPLES

Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre will ensure that dietary and cultural needs of children attending are taken into consideration when planning menus and that menus are consistent with current national and state guidelines and recommendations. We are committed to ensuring:

- a safe, supportive and social environment in which children can enjoy eating;
- the promotion of nutritious food and eating habits that will contribute to healthy development and growth in children.
- we work collaboratively with families in relation to children's nutrition and dietary needs which includes responding appropriately to food allergies and recognising cultural and religious choices.
- engagement in physical activity by providing a range of active play experiences for all children at the service.

As a health promoting service it is recognised that every member of Bubup Womindjeka impacts on children's health and can promote healthy eating and active play of children, educators, staff and families through learning, policies, creating a safe and healthy physical and social environment, and developing community links and partnerships. All members of the service including educators, staff, children, families and volunteers will be given a chance to review the policy, and will be supported in its implementation

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor/s, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre.

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy.

Active Play: Large muscle-based activities that are essential for a child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth and development.

Active travel: Walking, cycling, scootering or any similar transport where physical activity is used to travel.

Adequate Supervision: Supervision entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.

Adequate Supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate Supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary.

Variables affecting Supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- developmental profile of each child and of the group of children
- experience, knowledge and skills of each educator
- need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies)
- sole workers responding to care needs.

Adult-guided active play: Play which encourages children's physical development through promoting movement skills in a non-competitive environment.

Child-initiated active play: Play which is developed by the child through exploration of the environment, equipment and games.

Healthy Eating: Eating a wide variety of foods from the five food groups each day. These are:

- Fruit
- Vegetables and legumes/beans
- Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain
- Milk, yoghurt, cheese, and alternatives
- Lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes/beans

Health eating also means eating in a way that is socially and culturally appropriate, having regular meals and snacks and eating food to satisfy hunger, appetite and energy needs.

Nutrition: The process of providing or receiving nourishing substances.

Physical activity: Movement and activity that includes sport, incidental exercise and many forms of recreation.

“Sometimes” Foods and Drinks: Sometimes foods are high in fat, sugar and salt or a combination of these. They typically have very little nutritional value and are often processed and packaged.

BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION

There are many benefits to promoting a healthy lifestyle in early childhood education and care settings, including the positive impact this has on each child's learning and development. Being made aware of positive eating behaviour and the importance of physical activity from an early age can instill good habits that will remain throughout a person's life. Staff/educators are well placed to build this awareness among children and their families, while respecting lifestyle choices, and cultural and religious values. ^[1]_[SEP]

The following principles inform our practice.

Encourage and support breastfeeding and appropriate introduction of solid foods

- Apply current national infant feeding recommendations.
- Provide a suitable place within the service where mothers can breastfeed their babies or express breast milk. Support mothers to continue breastfeeding until babies are at least 12 months of age while offering appropriate complementary foods from 4 months of age.
- Ensure the safe handling of breastmilk and infant formula including transporting, storing, thawing, warming, preparing and bottle feeding.
- In consultation with families, offer cooled pre-boiled water as an additional drink from 4 months of age.
- A cup can be introduced at around 6 months to teach infants the skill of sipping drinks from a cup.
- Always bottle feed babies by holding baby in a semi-upright position.
- In consultation with families, determine appropriate foods (type and texture) are introduced from 4 months of age.
- In consultation with families, offer a variety of foods to babies from all the food groups.
- Always supervise babies while drinking and eating - ensuring safe bottle feeding and eating practices at all times.

Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents.

- Provide children with a wide variety of healthy and nutritious foods for meals and snacks including fruit and vegetables, wholegrain cereal products, dairy products, lean meats and alternatives.
- Plan and display the service menu (at least two weeks at a time) that is based on sound menu planning principles and meets the daily nutritional needs of children whilst in care.
- The service menu is reviewed by the Healthy Eating Advisory Service and meets the criteria determined.
- Plan healthy snacks on the menu to complement what is served at mealtimes and ensure the snacks are substantial enough to meet the energy and nutrient needs of children.

- Vary the meals and snacks on the menu to keep children interested and to introduce children to a range of healthy food ideas.

Promote safety

- Ensure water (preferably tap) is readily available for children to drink throughout the day, both indoors and outdoors.
- Be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances and special diets and consult with families to develop individual management plans.
- Ensure young children do not have access to foods that may cause choking.
- Ensure all children remain seated while eating and drinking.
- Always supervise children while eating and drinking.

Provide a positive eating environment which reflects cultural and family values

- 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.
- Recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally and linguistically diverse 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.
- Encourage older toddlers and pre-schoolers to assist to set and clear the table and serve their own food and drink - providing opportunities for them to develop independence and self-esteem.
- Respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, do not insist he/she eats. If a child is hungry outside of meal times, food is offered.
- Be patient with messy or slow eaters.
- Encourage children to try different foods but do not force them to eat.
- Do not use food and drink as a bribe, incentive or 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.

Birthdays and Celebrations The service encourages the celebration of each child's birthday. Due to Food Safety guidelines, food served to the children within the service must be cooked on the premises. The service will provide a birthday afternoon tea, focused on healthy alternatives, for children if their birthday falls on the day they attend the service. Families need to notify the cook at least one week in advance if they wish this celebration to occur.

ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Approved Provider (Board of Governance) is responsible for:

The Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre Board is the Approved Provider and has ultimate responsibility for the management and control of the service.

The Board delegates operational responsibility and day to day management of the service to the Nominated Supervisor and monitors the performance of the organisation, including responsibilities contained in this policy, through regular reporting and by ensuring appropriate resources are available to carry out the organisation's functions.

The Nominated Supervisor and Responsible Person/s in Day to Day charge is responsible for:

- ensuring that the service environment and educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for 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 service (National Regulation 77) (refer to Hygiene Policy and Food Safety Policy)
- ensuring that all staff/educators comply with the Food Safety Act
- ensuring that all staff/educators are aware of a child's food allergies and/or other medical conditions at 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)
- supporting educators and staff to access resources and professional development to support healthy eating, oral health and active play
- ensuring that when food is provided to staff and educators for meetings, celebrations, and events, healthy food options are included and discretionary/sometimes options are discouraged.
- ensuring that all staff/educators 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
- discouraging parents/guardians from providing children with "Sometimes" Foods and Drinks (refer to Definitions)
- 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 (National Regulation 78)
- ensuring that food and drinks are available to children at frequent and regular intervals throughout the day (National Regulation 78)
- ensuring that celebrations and other service events are consistent with the purposes and values of this policy and service procedures.
Where food is provided at the service:
- allocating finances to ensure the provision of nutritionally-balanced meals, as required
- ensuring that staff/educators 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 service is nutritious, adequate in quantity and appropriate to children's growth and development, and meets any specific cultural, religious or health needs (National Regulation 79)
- 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 service each day (National Regulation 80)
- ensuring the service menu is reviewed by the Healthy Eating Advisory Service and meets the criteria determined.
- ensuring the layout of buildings and grounds and equipment encourages physical activity and movement all day and is inclusive of all children
- developing links with local and regional health services, community organisations and businesses that provide expertise, resources and support for healthy eating, oral health and active play
- providing families with information and strategies to promote healthy eating, oral health and active play and how to access relevant services (including local dental clinics)
- ensuring service facilities and equipment enable active travel and road safety for children, staff, educators and families
- supporting active travel to and from the service.

Educators and other staff are responsible for:

- complying with the service's Nutrition and Active Play Policy and with the Food Safety Policy

- implementing adequate health and hygiene procedures, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, to minimise risks to children (*refer to Hygiene Policy and Food Safety Policy*)
- being aware of a child's food allergies and/or other medical conditions at enrolment or on initial diagnosis
- implementing measures 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*, being aware of, and planning for, the dietary needs of children diagnosed with Diabetes (*refer to Diabetes Policy*))
- ensuring that the service environment and the educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for eating and Active Play
- discussing Healthy Eating choices with children, introducing the concept of "Sometimes" Foods and Drinks, and role-modelling positive behaviours
- exploring and discussing diverse cultural, religious, social and family lifestyles
- considering this policy when organising excursions and service events
- supporting students and volunteers to comply with this policy while at the service
- keeping parents/guardians informed of current information relating to Healthy Eating and Active Play
- ensuring that fresh drinking water is readily available at all times, and reminding children to drink regularly throughout the day, including at snack/meal times
- ensuring that children can readily access their own clearly labelled drink containers (where this is a service practice)
- providing food and drinks at regular intervals, and encouraging children to actively participate in, and enjoy, snack/meal times without feeling rushed
- providing Adequate Supervision (*refer to Definitions*) for all children during meal/snack times
- encouraging children to be independent at snack/meal times (e.g. opening lunchboxes, pouring drinks, self-feeding, serving and using utensils in a culturally-sensitive way)
- 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 and considering diversity and cultural practices acting as positive role models by engaging in physical activity
- minimising and closely supervising screen-based activities, in line with recommended guidelines
- promoting safe behaviour through daily practice as part of the program, including teaching children to use equipment safely
- displaying menus, sharing recipes and encouraging feedback about the food provided at the service.
- ensuring children are not sedentary or inactive for more than 1 hour at a time, with the exception of sleeping
- using and promoting local parks, bike paths and recreation facilities, where appropriate, to encourage physical activity.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Communicating regularly with educators/ staff regarding children's specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs, including food preferences
- Contributing menu ideas and recipes
- Notifying the cook at least one week in advance if they wish for an afternoon tea celebration to occur.
- 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/educators prior to the child's commencement at the service, and if requirements change over time (*refer to Anaphylaxis Policy, Asthma Policy and Diabetes Policy*)
- communicating regularly with staff/educators regarding children's specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs, including food preferences

Volunteers and students 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 Nominated Supervisor will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone 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 service’s policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

Relevant Forms/Documents

Version History			
Date	Version	Author/s	Details
April 2016	1.00	Chief Executive Officer	Revision for updated format, document ID, related policies and relevant legislation and standards. Addition of definitions and evaluation.
July 2018	2.00	Chief Executive Officer	To include recommendations from Healthy Eating Advisory Service Victoria
January 2020	3.00	Director of Education	Policy reviewed and updated.
January 2021	3.00	Director of Education and Chef	Reviewed and no changes made
June 2021	4.00	Director of Education	To include recommendations to align with achievement program policy requirements. Revisions include: additional sources, additional definitions, additional and updated responsibilities for nominated supervisors and educators
January 2022	4.00	Director of Education	Reviewed and no changes made.
June 2022	4.00	Director of Education	To include recommendations to align with Smiles4Miles program. Revisions include: additional source, additional point under information and background and additional responsibility for nominated supervisor
January 2023	4.00	Director of Education	Reviewed and links updated.
January 2024	4.00	Director of Education	Reviewed and links updated.
February 2025	4.00	Director of Education	Reviewed and links updated
March 2026	4.00	Inclusion Support Co-Ordinator	Policy reviewed and no changes made.