

# Yarram Early Learning Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play Policy

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

## PURPOSE

Yarram Early Learning acknowledges the importance of healthy eating and physical activity, and its contribution to good health and overall wellbeing.

This policy provides guidelines to:

- Create environments that support good oral health, healthy eating and physical activity for children, families, staff and management at the service
- 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 incursion and activities.

## POLICY STATEMENT

## VALUES

Yarram Early Learning 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 service are consistent with national and state guidelines and recommendations
- Providing children and families with opportunities to learn about food, nutrition 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 service.
- Ensuring outdoor play is offered to children throughout all seasons and staff and parents/guardians ensure children are dressed appropriately for varying weather conditions.
- Staff ensure that meal times are relaxed and flexible by utilising outdoor meal spaces when appropriate.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Responsible Person, staff,

students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Yarram Early Learning.

## BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

### Background

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 instil good habits that will remain throughout a person's life. Staff are well placed to build this awareness among children and their families, while respecting lifestyle choices, and cultural and religious values.

The foods we eat provide our body with the nutrients we need to stay healthy. Good nutrition is the balanced eating of a variety of foods, and is especially important for children as they require a large amount of nutrients for growth and development. Research has shown that, when offered a variety of healthy foods, children can and do make good choices. It is also important to provide preschool children with a good foundation in healthy eating, as most children have formed lifelong eating habits before they reach school age. Yarram Early Learning provides many opportunities for children to experience a range of healthy food, and to learn about food choices from staff and other children (*Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, p30 – refer to Sources).

### Food Practices

Yarram Early Learning requires parents to supply a suitable lunch box that contains:

- A Morning Snack
- A Lunch Meal
- An Afternoon Snack

Bringing a lunch box from home is one procedure that helps support the notion of building independence and continuity between care practices used in the home and at Yarram Early Learning. The service has the requirements for any food that requires heating or refrigeration, suitable snack items include: sufficient fruit and /or vegetables, whole or cut, for morning and afternoon tea, bread rolls, sandwiches, noodles, cheese and biscuits, ensuring that children eat their healthy food options first. The children will spend meal times both indoors and outdoors, providing opportunities for flexible and relaxed eating.

### Active Play

Active play (play that involves using the large muscles in the body) develops a strong and healthy body, builds motor and co-ordination skills, creates a sense of wellbeing and helps protect from disease. Active play is about moving, being and doing. Yarram Early Learning Children enjoy outdoor play throughout all seasons, weather permitting.

A strong sense of health and wellbeing, supported by good nutrition and an active lifestyle, can provide children with confidence, energy and optimism that will contribute to their ability to concentrate, co-operate and learn (*Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, p30 – refer to Sources).

Learning about healthy lifestyles, including nutrition and active play, links directly to Outcome 3 in both the *Early Years Learning Framework* and the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (refer to Sources).

## Guidelines for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

The Australian Government has produced guidelines, recommendations and resources for healthy eating and physical activity in early childhood settings, including the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia* (refer to Sources) and the *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* resources (refer to Sources). Practical, healthy eating advice is also available to early childhood services and schools via a telephone advice line: the Victorian Healthy Eating Advisory Service (VHEAS – refer to Sources), run by Nutrition Australia. Early childhood education and care services can also register for the *Victorian Prevention and Health Promotion Achievement Program* (refer to Sources). This program is designed to create safe, healthy and friendly environments for learning, by promoting physical, mental and social health and wellbeing.

## Comfortable Clothing

The Yarram Early Learning environment is filled with opportunities for play, and children are encouraged to explore a wide range of materials, including many sensory activities such as sand/mud play, finger paint and clay. It is important that parents provide clothes for children that allow them to feel comfortable move freely and can stand a little dirt. Children are also encouraged to dress and undress by themselves. It is therefore important that parents avoid 'lace up' sneakers and boots, braces and belts, garments that button or zip at the back and any item of clothing that is beyond the child's ability to put on or take off by themselves. Each child should bring a complete change of clothes to kindergarten. All clothes should be clearly labelled, as no responsibility is taken for lost clothing and wet or dirty clothing is sent home in a sealed plastic bag.

## Clothing Safety

With regards to general clothing safety, a few tips to remember:

- Dress your child/ren at all times in low fire risk clothing.
- Remember to purchase low fire risk sleepwear.
- Select colourful clothing as bright colours will improve the chances that your child/ren can be seen by motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.
- Ensure shoes are well fitting, comfortable and suitable for outdoor play, climbing and self help. Remember to always assist children with bike helmets. . Pull on boots or Velcro shoes are recommended (most 3 – 5 year old children are unable to tie laces). In the interests of child safety, parents are requested not to send children to kindergarten wearing thongs, clogs or 'party shoes'. Children are required to wear shoes at all times while outdoors except when in the sandpit.
- From September through to April all children are required to wear an approved sun hat when playing outdoors – refer to *Sun Protection Policy*. Throughout the winter months Yarram Early Learning recommends that parents provide a warm hat (e.g. beanie) to be worn outdoors.
- Ensure that children are dressed appropriately to promote free air flow around their bodies when they are in the car.
- Dress your child/ren in a hat and light protective cotton clothing during the summer months and use plenty of sunscreen for singlet hats are not to be

worn. A hat should be kept in your child's bag all year round in case the UV level raises to 3 or above. ( see SunSmart Policy)

- Allow children the opportunity to make individual choice in regard to clothing preferences.
- Outdoor play is important throughout all seasons and staff ensure parents/guardians are informed to make certain children are dressed appropriately for varying weather conditions.

See National Childcare Association Council Inc website:

[http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educatorresources/factsheets/qias\\_factsheet\\_15\\_children's\\_clothing%20.pdf](http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educatorresources/factsheets/qias_factsheet_15_children's_clothing%20.pdf)

Yarram Early Learning staff respect individual children's clothing preferences and will at all times acknowledge cultural differences in relation to clothing / dress codes.

## Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 77–78, 79–80 (if the service provides food), 168*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- *Food Act 1984 (Vic), as amended 2012*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety*
  - Standard 2.1: Healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in the program for children
  - Element: 2.1.3 Healthy lifestyle Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with families and communities*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*

## DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Responsible Person, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

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

**Adequate supervision:** (In relation to this policy) **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 staff 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 staff
- 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 skill of each educator
- need for staff to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

**Oral Health:** Oral health is multifaceted and includes the ability to speak, smile, taste, touch, chew, swallow and convey a range of emotions through facial expressions with confidence and without pain, discomfort and disease of the craniofacial complex.

**Healthy eating:** Describes eating patterns that provide all the recommended nutrients for growth and development, and good health and wellbeing, now and in the future. This means eating a wide variety of foods from the five food groups each day including: fruit, vegetables and legumes/beans, grain foods (mostly wholegrain), dairy (milk, yoghurt, cheese) and alternatives, and meat (lean meat, poultry, fish) or alternatives (eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans). It also refers to preparing, serving and eating food in a way that recognises its importance as a social and cultural activity.

**Nutrition:** The process of providing or receiving nourishing substances necessary for health and growth.

**'Sometimes' foods and drinks:** Food and drink items that are high in fat, sugar and salt, and that contain minimal vitamins, minerals or fibre.

## SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

### Sources

- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:*  
[http://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/belonging\\_being\\_and\\_becoming\\_the\\_early\\_years\\_learning\\_framework\\_for\\_australia.pdf](http://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf)
- *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia* (currently being reviewed):  
[www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/n29-n30-n31-n32-n33-n34](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/n29-n30-n31-n32-n33-n34)
- Food Safety Victoria, Department of Health – Food Safety and Regulation: 1300 364 352
- Better Health Channel: [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)
- Cancer Council Australia – for information on sun safety:  
[www.cancer.org.au/sunsmart](http://www.cancer.org.au/sunsmart)
- Cavallini, I and Tedeschi, M (eds) (2008), *The Languages of Food: recipes, experiences, thoughts*. Reggio Children Publications
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand – for information on food safety and food handling: [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)

- *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood*  
[www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-early-childhood-nutrition-resources](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-early-childhood-nutrition-resources)
- Kids and Traffic – Early Childhood Road Safety Education Program:  
[www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au](http://www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au)
- Go For Your Life [www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au](http://www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au)
- Kidsafe: the Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia – for information on preventing childhood accidents in children under the age of 15 years: [www.kidsafe.org.au](http://www.kidsafe.org.au)
- Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne, *Limit 'Sometimes' Foods Background Paper*
- Nitzke, S, Riley, D, Ramminger, A and Jacobs, G (2010), *Rethinking Nutrition: Connecting Science and Practice in Early Childhood Settings*. Redleaf Press, St Paul, USA
- Oberklaid, F (2004), *Health in Early Childhood Settings: From Emergencies to the Common Cold*. Pademelon Press, NSW
- National Health and Medical Research Council (2005), *Staying Healthy in Child Care: Preventing infectious diseases in child care*: [www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines) (Note: this publication is currently being revised and will have significant changes. It is important that services refer to the most up-to-date version of this resource.)
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*:  
[www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/eyldf/default.htm](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/eyldf/default.htm)
- *Victorian Prevention and Health Promotion Achievement Program*:  
[www.health.vic.gov.au/prevention/achieve\\_early\\_childhood.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/prevention/achieve_early_childhood.htm)

## Service policies

- *Anaphylaxis Policy*
- *Asthma Policy*
- *Curriculum Development Policy*
- *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy*
- *Diabetes Policy*
- *Excursions and Incursion Policy*
- *Food Safety Policy*
- *Hygiene Policy*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Sun Protection Policy*

## PROCEDURES

### **The Approved Provider 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 promote healthy eating and oral health in the service and at home, including accessing local dental services to assist in the promotion of optimum health for young children (refer to sources)
- Supporting educators and staff to access resources and professional development to increase their capacity to promote oral health and healthy eating initiatives

- Healthy eating and oral health information is included in staff orientation/induction
- 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 (regulation 77) (refer to *hygiene policy* and *food safety policy*)
- Ensuring that all staff comply with the *food safety act*
- Ensuring that all 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 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
- 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, both indoors and outdoors and reminding children to drink water throughout the day, including at snack/lunch times (Regulation 78(1)(a))
- Ensuring that food and drinks are available to children at frequent and regular intervals throughout the day (Regulation 78(1)(b))
- Ensuring that celebrations, fundraising activities and other Incursion are consistent with the purposes and values of this policy and service procedures.
- Promoting that breastfeeding is welcome at the service
- Ensuring that celebrations, fundraising activities and other Incursion are consistent with the purposes and values of this policy and service procedures, discouraging 'sometimes foods' and encouraging healthy alternatives.
- Healthy food options are encouraged for staff at staff meetings and professional development opportunities.
- Promoting that breastfeeding is welcome at the service, and that there is suitable space for breastfeeding and storing breastmilk.

### **The Responsible Person is responsible for:**

- Ensuring that the service environment and the educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for 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 service (regulation 77) (refer to *hygiene policy* and *food safety policy*) ensuring that all staff comply with the *food safety act* ensuring that all 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 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 both indoors and outdoors, and reminding children to drink water throughout the day, including at snack/lunch times (regulation 78(1)(a))

- Ensuring that the service environment and the educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices, in line with the Australian Dietary Guidelines and supporting good oral health and active play.
- Ensuring that food and drinks are available to children at frequent and regular intervals throughout the day (regulation 78(1)(b))
- Ensuring that cultural and religious practices/requirements of families are accommodated to support children's learning and development
- Developing and reviewing guidelines for celebrations, fundraising activities and other incursion in consultation with staff, parents/guardians and families
- Developing links with local and regional health services, community organisations and businesses
  - that provide expertise, resources and support for healthy eating and active play.
  - Ensure food and drink are not used as a bribe, incentive or reward
- **The Supervisors and relevant Room Leader are responsible for ensuring volunteers and students are following this policy and the outlines procedures.**

### **Responsible Person and staff are responsible for:**

- Complying with the service's *Nutrition and Active Play Policy* and with the *Food Safety Act*
- 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 on enrolment at the service 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 incursion
- 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 through discussions, newsletters, notice boards and parent communication group meetings.
- 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
- 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
- Encouraging educators to engage children in active learning experiences around healthy eating and oral health
- Oral hygiene practices are promoted and undertaken at the service when appropriate
- 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 service
- Promoting safe behaviour through daily practice as part of the program.
- Ensure food and drink are not used as a bribe, incentive or reward

### 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 Responsible Person prior to the child's commencement at the service, and requirements change over time (refer to *Anaphylaxis Policy*, *Asthma Policy* and *Diabetes Policy*)
- Communicating regularly with 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 nutritious food and drinks for celebrations, fundraising activities and incursion, consistent with service policy
- Encouraging children to exercise by engaging in active play, and walking or riding a bike to the service where appropriate
- Discussing appropriate road traffic safety and car safety practices, and role-modelling this behaviour.

## EVALUATION

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

- Regularly seek feedback from 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 service's policy review cycle, or as required
- Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any change to this policy or its procedures.

## **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by Yarram Early Learning Incorporated in June, 2020

**Review:** June 2022