



Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play

Authorised by: This policy was adopted by the Ripponlea Kindergarten Committee of Management at a committee meeting

Approved date: 19 April 2018

Review date: April 2021

Purpose

Ripponlea Kindergarten 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 service, including eating nutritious food, practicing good oral health, and participating in physical activity
- 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 service events and activities.

Values

Ripponlea Kindergarten is committed to:

- creating policies and practices that promote a healthy lifestyle and ensure national and state guidelines and recommendations about safe food preparation, nutrition, oral health and physical activity are met
- 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, recognising cultural and religious practices, and lifestyle choices
- 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 service.

Scope

This policy applies to staff, committee members, authorised persons, parents, volunteers and students on placement working at Ripponlea Kindergarten.

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, oral hygiene practices 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.

As a health promoting service it is recognised that every member of the service impacts on children's health. Children, educators and families can be supported to eat healthily, maintain good oral health and be physically active through teaching and learning opportunities, policies, creating a safe and healthy physical and social environment, and developing community links and partnerships.

Nutrition

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.

Oral health

Oral health behaviours have a major influence on children's health and wellbeing and a direct impact on their growth and development. Oral diseases can negatively affect individuals through pain, discomfort, general health and quality of life. Poor oral health can limit a child's capacity in biting, chewing, smiling, speaking, and psychosocial wellbeing. The main oral health condition experienced by children is tooth decay affecting over half of all Australian children. It is important to note that oral health promotion is complementary to promoting healthy eating.

Active play

Active play (refer to *Definitions*) develops a strong and healthy body, builds motor and co-ordination skills, creates a sense of wellbeing and helps protect children from disease. Active play is about moving, being and doing.

A strong sense of health and wellbeing, supported by good nutrition, oral health and an active lifestyle, can provide children with confidence, energy and optimism that will contribute to their ability to concentrate, co-operate and learn.

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 (Vic)*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- *Food Act 1984 (Vic)*
- *National Quality Standard* including Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*

Related policies

- *Food Safety Policy*
- *Anaphylaxis Policy*
- *Asthma Policy*
- *Diabetes Policy*
- *Hygiene 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, oral health 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
- ensuring that all educators/staff comply with the *Food Safety Act*
- recognising families, educators and staff as role models and encouraging them to bring/use foods and drinks that are in line with the service's Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play Policy
- ensuring space and facilities are available to allow staff and educators to store and prepare healthy food
- ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of a child's food allergies and/or other medical conditions and/or cultural preferences regarding food 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 and/or cultural preferences regarding food (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 to parents
- 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
- ensuring that food and drinks are available to children at frequent and regular intervals throughout the day
- ensuring that celebrations, fundraising activities and other service events are consistent with the purposes and values of this policy and service procedures
- ensuring educators are supported to access a range of resources to increase their capacity to promote healthy eating, oral health and active play initiatives for children.

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- ensuring that the service environment and the educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for eating, oral health 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 (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 and/or cultural preferences regarding food 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 and/or cultural preferences regarding food (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
- ensuring that food and drinks are available to children at frequent and regular intervals throughout the day
- developing and reviewing guidelines for celebrations, fundraising activities and other service events in consultation with educators, staff, parents/guardians and families to focus on healthy alternatives
- 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.
- embedding opportunities to learn about healthy eating and oral health and the importance of physical activity in the educational program, throughout the year
- ensuring that age-appropriate adult-guided and child-initiated active play is planned on a daily basis across all age groups
- ensuring that cultural and religious practices/requirements of families are accommodated to support children's learning and development
- 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 and oral health
- considering this policy when organising excursions, service events and any sponsorship or marketing opportunities
- ensuring the layout of the grounds and buildings is inclusive of the diversity and abilities of all children and encourages physical activity and movement
- ensuring recommendations about physical activity and screen time from the Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (Birth to 5 Years) are met
- supporting active travel to and from the service

Other staff are responsible for:

- complying with the service's *Nutrition, Oral Health 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 and/or cultural preferences regarding food 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 and/or cultural preferences regarding food (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, oral health and active play
- discussing healthy eating choices with children, introducing the concept of ‘sometimes’ foods and drinks, and role-modelling positive behaviours
- role-modelling positive eating, drinking and physical activity behaviours and promoting a healthy relationship with food
- 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
- 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 at all times, including at meal/snack times
- providing a positive eating environment and sitting and interacting with children at meal 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 active play and movement experiences that are age appropriate, inclusive of diversity and abilities and support children to develop fundamental movement skills
- 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
- promoting safe behaviour through daily practice as part of the program.
- providing a variety of cooking and food experiences that support children to develop food literacy and positive habits relating to food
- ensuring that food and drink are not used as an incentive, bribe or reward at any time
- providing opportunities for children to learn about, and develop skills for oral health through the educational program
- ensuring children are not sedentary or inactive for more than 1 hour at a time, with the exception of sleeping
- supporting children to develop collaboration skills during play
- providing age-appropriate traffic safety education, including pedestrian and passenger safety to both children and parents/guardians at the service

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 service, 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 nutritious food and drinks for celebrations, fundraising activities and service events, 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 behavior
- dressing their child/ren so they can engage safely in active play.

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

Attachments

- Nil

Definitions

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

Active play: Play that involves large muscle-based activities that are essential for a child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth and development incorporating:

- child-initiated active play, which is developed by the child through exploration of the outdoor environment, equipment and games
- adult-guided active play which encourages children's physical development through promoting movement skills in a non-competitive environment
- physical activity, which includes sport, incidental exercise and many forms of recreation.

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, 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.

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

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. 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.

Oral health: The absence of active disease in the mouth. Oral health is fundamental to overall health, wellbeing and quality of life. A healthy mouth enables people to eat, speak and socialise without pain, discomfort or embarrassment.