



## Nutrition Policy (CHS 10)

### Policy Rationale

At Cooks Hill Preschool we are committed to providing a **safe**, welcoming and happy place for children. We nurture children to show care and respect for themselves by promoting healthy eating habits for young children to positively influence their health and wellbeing.

Cooks Hill Preschool believes in providing a positive eating environment that reflects dietary requirements, cultural and family values, and promotes lifelong learning for children. We commit to implementing and embedding the healthy eating key messages outlined in the *NSW Health's Munch & Move program* and to support the *National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings* outlined in the *Get Up & Grow* resources.

Further, Cooks Hill Preschool 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 children and their families in healthy eating.

### Strategies, Practices and Procedures

*Our aim is to promote healthy foods and drinks based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the Dietary Guidelines for Children.*

- Provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and suitable for lunchboxes.
- Cooks Hill Preschool is a nut free zone. We request that nuts and nut products are not included in packed lunches. We request that parents and carers observe the 'Medical Conditions Policy' for further information.
- Encourage children to eat the more nutritious foods provided in their lunchbox, such as sandwiches, fruit, vegetables and cheese, before eating any less nutritious food provided.
- The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating recommends, water is the best choice of drink. Therefore, children are recommended to drink water throughout the day.

#### Cooks Hill Preschool Incorporated

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- Discourage the provision of highly processed food and drink high in fat, salt or sugar, and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes. Examples of these food/drinks include: lollies, chocolate, sweet biscuits, cakes, prepackaged muesli and breakfast bars, fruit filled bars and packet chips.
- Educators will provide feedback to parents when non-recommended food or drinks are packed. E.g. verbal feedback at pick-up or lunch box notes.

#### *Promote safety*

- Ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day, in both indoor and outdoor environment.
- Be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerance, and special diets. Consult with families to develop individual management plans.
- Minimise the risk of choking through provision of supervision and ensuring all children remain seated while eating.

#### *Safe food handling*

- Encourage educators to undertake professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood nutrition.
- Provide food to children that has been stored, prepared and served in a safe and hygienic manner and to promote hygiene practices.
- Children and educators wash and dry their hands [using soap, warm running water and paper towel] before handling food or eating meals and snacks.
- Food is stored and served at safe temperatures – below 5°C or above 60°C.
- Ensure fridge and freezer temperatures are taken daily.
- If cooking experiences involve raw meat, separate cutting boards and utensils will be used, and hands washed before touching other foods.
- Children will be discouraged from touching other children's food and utensils.

#### *Provide a positive eating environment which reflects cultural and family values*

- Ensure that educators sit with 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 recognize, 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.

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- Encourage children to assist to set and clear the table and serve their own food and drink – providing opportunities for them to develop responsibility, independence and self-esteem.
- Respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, do not insist they eat.
- Be patient with messy or slow eaters.
- Encourage children to try different foods but do not force them to eat.
- Do not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for behaviour management purposes.

*Promote lifelong learning for children, educators 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, drink and lifestyle choices.

*Encourage communication with families about the provision of appropriate healthy food and drinks for children while they are attending Preschool*

- Provide a copy of the Nutrition Policy to all families upon enrolment at the Preschool. Families will be provided with opportunities to contribute to the review of this policy.
- Request that details of any food allergies or intolerances, or specific dietary requirements be provided to the Preschool, and work in partnership with families to develop an appropriate response so that children's individual dietary needs are met.
- Provide feedback to parents when non-recommended food or drinks are packed. E.g. verbal feedback at pick-up or lunchbox notes.
- Communicate regularly with families and provide information and advice on appropriate food and drink to be included in children's lunchboxes. This information may be provided to families in a variety of ways including factsheets, newsletters, during orientation, information sessions and informal discussion.

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**The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will use best endeavours to:**

- Ensure the Preschool operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011.
- Allocate finances for training and food safety.
- Ensure the Preschool implements adequate health and hygiene practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimize risks to children being educated and cared for by the service.
- Ensure children being cared for by the service have access to safe drinking water at all times and are offered food and beverages on a regular basis throughout the day.

**Early Childhood Educators will use best endeavours to:**

- Adhere to the strategies and practices of the Nutrition Policy.
- Ensure children's individual dietary needs are adhered to. Provide positive mealtime experiences for the children.
- Respect the individual needs and choices of children.
- Actively supervise children during mealtimes.
- Adhere to the service Hygiene strategies outlined in the Dealing with Infectious Diseases policy.
- Ensure the food they bring to the service for their own lunch, meets with the criteria within this Nutrition Policy.

**Families will use best endeavours to:**

- Communicate regularly with educators regarding children's specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs including food preferences.
- For Morning Tea please provide fresh fruit and/or vegetables, prepared at home and housed in a container. Fruit sticks, snack packs and cheese sticks are not considered viable substitutes.
- Birthday cakes and 'party days' are an exemption to this rule, however shared foods brought along to the preschool should be nut-free and prepared in a nut-free way, to reduce the cross-contamination of allergens.
- If packaged foods are brought to the preschool for the children to share, retaining packaging with the ingredients list can assist staff to determine if all ingredients are safe for the children at the service.

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#### Links to Legislation & National Quality Standards

- ✓ Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: 78-80
- ✓ Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167
- ✓ Guide to the National Quality Standard ACECQA (2011): 1-7
- ✓ Work Health and Safety Act 2011

#### References

- This policy has been adapted from Community Early Learning Australia (CELA)

**Policy Updated:** \_\_\_November 2019\_\_\_    **Policy Review:** \_\_\_ November 2020\_\_\_