

Food, Nutrition and Beverages



Policy Objective

To ensure the food and beverages provided to children at Hawthorn Child Care Centre are nutritious and adequate in quantity, as well as suitable for the dietary, cultural, religious, and health requirements of each child.

Implementation

Food Provided by the Centre

Hawthorn Child Care Centre will ensure that the children in our care are offered food and beverages appropriate to their needs on a regular basis throughout the day, including access to safe drinking water at all times. The food and beverages offered to children at the Centre are consistent with the Australian Government guidelines *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* and the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*. Consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*, adequate quantities of food are made available for all children, as well as sufficient food for children who request more. The Centre will offer foods and beverages which provide the children in our care with at least 50% of their recommended daily intake of key nutrients. The Centre also aims to make a significant contribution to the children's overall intake of energy, vitamins and minerals.

The food which is offered at Hawthorn Child Care is nutritionally and developmentally appropriate for each age group of children in our care, as well as being varied in type and cultural and national origin. Children are encouraged to try new foods in a supportive and positive manner.

During enrolment families are given a copy of the Food, Nutrition and Beverages policy so they are aware of the Centre's policy and procedures around food, nutrition and beverages.

Food Safety and Hygiene

Hawthorn Child Care Centre prepares and serves all meals and beverages in a safe and hygienic manner. All educators and staff at Hawthorn Child Care Centre are required to receive training in food safety and food handling no later than 1 month after employment and then yearly. Please see the Food Safety and Hygiene policy for further information on the Centre's processes and procedures around food safety and hygiene.

Beverages

Educators and staff ensure that all children have access to safe drinking water throughout the day in a manner which is developmentally appropriate for the age group of the children. Sippy cups are provided for children in the Gumnut Room; families in the Peppercorn, Banksia, and Jacaranda Rooms are asked to provide a named, developmentally appropriate, drink bottle. Cups will be provided for any child who does not have a drink bottle.

Full cream pasteurised cow's milk is offered to children over the age of 12 months at morning tea. An alternative to full cream cow's milk will be offered where required. Formula, breastmilk, and cow's milk and milk alternatives will be offered to children as per their individual routines and requirements. Children will be supported to consume beverages independently where developmentally appropriate,

Weekly Menu

Hawthorn Child Care Centre provides children with breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea, and a late snack. The food provided to children is on a 6-week rotating menu. The Centre will ensure that our weekly menus are displayed throughout the Centre and are accessible to the families in our service community. The weekly menus will accurately describe the food and beverages we serve each day, with any changes made communicated to families by posts on Skoolbag and/or SeeSaw, or through verbal conversations between educators and families.

Menus are reviewed twice yearly, and as required, to ensure that the food offered at the Centre remains in line with the Australian Government guidelines *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* and the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*, as well as reflecting the families and children in our Centre community including their cultural and national identities. Menus which are under review are sent to families, using the Skoolbag app, throughout the review process to encourage and support family input and feedback. Families are also encouraged throughout the year to contribute ideas to, and feedback on, the food offered as part of the Centre menus. This is done through the Skoolbag app.

Individual Dietary Requirements

Upon enrolment, families are asked to provide the Centre with information about their child's dietary requirements, likes, dislikes, and any other requirements families have regarding their child's nutrition. This information is used to guide the preparation of children's meals, and to help educators support children during mealtimes. The Centre will address specific dietary requirements on an individual basis and will aim to accommodate specific dietary requirements as much as possible. This includes children with food allergies, intolerances or sensitivities, medical diet requirements, specific cultural, religious, or family food requirements, or 'fussy' eaters. Children's specific dietary requirements will be displayed in the kitchen as well as in the child's room.

During the enrolment process, or as special dietary requirements arise, Centre management will work with families of children with food allergies; intolerances or sensitivities; medical diet requirements; and specific cultural, religious, or family food requirements to develop a risk management plan. For children with a medically diagnosed dietary requirement the Centre needs to be provided with documentation from a medical professional such as a paediatrician, immunologist, or paediatric dietician, outlining the child's specific medical conditions, signs and symptoms of the medical condition, and recommended emergency procedures and medications if the child is exposed to a trigger or allergen. Families are strongly encouraged to seek the input of a registered paediatric dietician to develop a meal plan for children with medically diagnosed dietary requirements.

The Centre understands that children's dietary requirements, likes, and dislikes change over time and so work with families to remain up to date with each child's food and beverage needs. Families are asked to keep the Centre informed of any progression or changes which are occurring in a child's diet whether these changes are medical or non-medical in nature. The health and safety of the children in the Centre's care is foremost, and any concerns about the child's dietary intake will be discussed and negotiated with families whenever deemed necessary by Centre management.

Introducing Food to Children

Below is the recommended schedule for introducing foods to children as outlined in the Australian Government guidelines *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood*. Hawthorn Child Care Centre follows these guidelines unless specific needs are requested by family. Educators and staff will negotiate individual requests with families however the child's safety and health are our utmost concern.

What foods should be introduced and when?

| Stage | Examples of foods that can be consumed |
|--|--|
| First foods (from around six months) | Iron rich foods, including fortified cereals (e.g. rice), vegetables (e.g. legumes, soy beans, lentils), fish, liver, meat and poultry, cooked plain tofu |
| Other nutritious foods to be introduced before 12 months | Cooked or raw vegetables (e.g. carrot, potato, tomato), fruit (e.g. apple, banana, melon), whole egg, cereals (e.g. wheat, oats), bread, pasta, nut pastes, toast fingers and rusks, dairy foods such as full-fat cheese, custards and yoghurt |
| From 12 to 24 months | Family foods Full-cream pasteurised milk |

Note 1: Hard, small, round and/or sticky solid foods are not recommended because they can cause choking.

Note 2: To prevent botulism, do not feed honey to infants aged under 12 months.

Families are asked to seek medical advice regarding the timing of the introduction of eggs, nuts, cow's milk or dairy products, fish and soy if there is a strong family history of allergies.

Food Brought from Home

Families are asked to provide their child with a morning tea option. Families in the Gumnut and Peppercorn room are asked to provide the Centre with a piece of fruit to be served on sharing platters for morning tea. Families are asked to provide fruit which is appropriate for children aged under two (soft fruits). The Centre cannot accept fruit which has been cut at home due to health and safety regulations. The fruit can be left in the designated fruit basket in the child's room.

Families in the Banksia and Jacaranda rooms are asked to provide their child with fruit of a quantity they deem appropriate for the dietary requirements of their child, as well as a dairy option if they wish (yogurt, a piece of cheese) for morning tea. Families in the Banksia room are asked to leave their child's morning tea in a clearly named container in a basket at the entrance to the room. Families in the Jacaranda room are asked to leave their child's morning tea in a clearly named container in their child's bag. If families are providing a dairy option for their child's morning tea, they are asked to use cool bags and freezer packs to keep the dairy option at an acceptable temperature according to food health and safety guidelines, or to give educators their child's dairy option so it can be stored in the refrigerator.

As the Centre provides children with nutritionally and developmentally appropriate food throughout the day it is not necessary for families to provide their child with additional foods. Weekly menus are displayed around the Centre to inform families of the food being provided to their child, and each room will provide families with information on how much food is consumed by their child each day. If families have a concern around their child's food intake during their time at the Centre, they are asked to speak to the Team Leader in their child's room, or to Centre management.

Children with food allergies, intolerances or sensitivities, medical diet requirements, specific cultural, religious or family food requirements, or 'fussy' eaters are catered for within our Centre where possible. If the Centre is unable to cater for a child's specific dietary requirements Centre management will meet with the child's family to discuss food products which can be provided by the family. Children with wheat or gluten allergies, sensitivities, or intolerances will be required to provide gluten and/or wheat free options such as bread and pasta.

Children in the Jacaranda room who attend preschool are asked to keep their lunch and snack boxes in their bags unless they contain a consumable which needs to be refrigerated. Families are asked to comply with the Centre's food allergy guidelines when packing their child's lunch and snacks for preschool.

Due to a variety of specific dietary and allergy requirements among children at the Centre, families are asked not to bring birthday cake, either store bought or homemade, into the Centre. If families wish to supply items to celebrate a child's birthday at the Centre each room will discuss what an age appropriate option may be such as Natural Confectionary Lollies, balloons, party hats, party blowers etc.

Breastfeeding, Breastmilk, and Formula

Hawthorn Child Care Centre supports families in their decision to breastfeed or formula feed their child.

Breastfeeding and Breastmilk

The Australian Government guidelines *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* recommended exclusive breastfeeding for babies until around six months of age. Continued breastfeeding is recommended for at least 12 months, and longer if the mother and baby wish.

Families will be supported by Hawthorn Child Care Centre to breastfeed their child to the recommended 12 months of age by feeding expressed breastmilk supplied by their families, and by providing an encouraging and positive environment for breastfeeding. Mothers are welcome to visit the Centre at any point during their child's day to breastfeed their child. A quiet area is available in the Gumnut Room for mothers to breastfeed.

The Centre also supports educators and staff who wish to breastfeed once they have returned to work at Hawthorn Child Care Centre. Requests for allowances to be made for educators and staff to continue breastfeeding once they have returned to work at the service will be treated sympathetically and reasonably, and all efforts will be made to support the educator or staff member in her choice to continue breastfeeding her child. On return to work the educator or staff member will meet with Centre management to make arrangements for breastfeeding which suit the educator/staff member, Centre management, and the legal and regulatory requirements of the service.

The service will provide Lactation Breaks for the educator to express milk or breastfeed her child. The Nominated Supervisor will be reasonably flexible as to when these occur. When an educator is in the process of breastfeeding her child or expressing milk, educator to child ratios cannot be compromised. Educators will work to cover the Lactation Break as they would any other break.

If a mother is unable to visit the Centre to breastfeed, we will support the breastfeeding process by providing their child with their expressed breastmilk. The Centre will follow the *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* and Australian Breastfeeding Association guidelines regarding storing and serving breastmilk:

- Breastmilk should be brought to the serviced in sterilised plastic bottles or storage bags labelled with the name of the child, and the date the bottle or storage bag was prepared and brought in by the family. Breastmilk supplied in an unnamed and/or undated bottle or storage bag will not be served.
- If breastmilk is being brought to the Centre in a storage bag, families need to provide enough sterilised, named bottles or cups for the day. Unnamed bottles or bottles with no caps will not be used to serve breastmilk to children.
- Breastmilk will be stored in the refrigerator.
- If breastmilk needs to be thawed before serving the milk will be thawed in a bowl of warm water. As the water cools, small amounts of hot water will be added until the breastmilk is liquid.
- Breastmilk can be served straight from the refrigerator however if the baby prefers warm milk the following steps will be taken:
 - The milk will be heated by standing the bottle in warm (not boiling) water. A microwave will never be used to warm breastmilk. A bottle warmer which has thermostat control may be used. Breastmilk will not be warmed in a bottle warmer for more than 10 minutes.
 - The temperature of the milk will be checked by educators and staff before being given to a baby.
 - Breastmilk will only be heated once. Any leftovers will be discarded.
- If the Centre is not provided with enough breastmilk from a family to meet the child's needs that day the family will be contacted by the service.
- Breastmilk that is not used on the day will be returned to the family or discarded at the end of the day.

Breastmilk should be continued while introducing solids, with other drinks aside from water avoided until the infant is 12 months of age.

Formula

In line with the Australian Government guidelines *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* if a baby is not breastfed, or is partially breastfed, an infant formula appropriate for the baby's age should be the only other food consumed until solids are introduced.

The Centre will follow the *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* guidelines regarding storing and serving formula:

- Families should provide bottles or sippy cups already filled with the correct amount of pre-boiled and cooled water, clearly labeled with the child's name and the date the water was prepared. Water supplied in an unnamed and/or undated bottle or a bottle without a cap will not be served.
- Formula can be supplied in clearly named sectioned containers or a clearly named tin. The tin should have the date it was opened clearly written on it. Instructions must be left as to the amount of formula to be added to the bottle or sippy cup. Educators and staff will not prepare formula bottles if the instructions are not in line with the recommendations on the tin of formula. Formula supplied in an unnamed container or tin will not be served.

- It is not recommended for families to bring pre-prepared formula for their child as there is a small risk of harmful bacteria growing in the pre-prepared formula. If a family does choose to bring in pre-prepared formula it must have been made no longer than 24 hours prior to the time to be given to the child and refrigerated. Pre-prepared formula supplied in an unnamed and/or undated bottle or a bottle without a cap will not be served.
- Pre-prepared formula will be stored in the refrigerator.
- Formula can be served straight from the refrigerator or at room temperature however if the baby prefers warm milk the following steps will be taken:
 - The milk will be heated by standing the bottle in warm (not boiling) water. A microwave will never be used to warm formula. A bottle warmer which has thermostat control may be used. Formula will not be warmed in a bottle warmer for more than 10 minutes.
 - The temperature of the milk will be checked by educators and staff before being given to a baby.
 - Formula will only be heated once. Any leftovers will be discarded.
 - Bottles will be rinsed and put in the child's bag to be washed and sterilized at home.
- If the Centre is not provided with enough formula from a family to meet the child's needs that day the family will be contacted by the service.

Infant formula should be continued while introducing solids, with other drinks aside from water avoided until the infant is 12 months of age.

Cow's Milk

As outlined in *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* cow's milk should not be given as a main drink to infants before 12 months of age. Breastmilk or infant formula should be the only food consumed until solids are introduced at around six months of age. Milk-feeding (either breastfeeding or formula) should continue while solids are being introduced, and until 12 months of age.

Cow's milk in bottles will be stored and prepared as per the formula storage and preparation guidelines. Cow's milk in an unnamed and/or undated bottle or a bottle without a cap will not be served

Mealtimes and the Eating Environment

Mealtimes and the eating environment play a large role in the nutritional outcomes of children. Hawthorn Child Care Centre aims to positively encourage the forming of good eating habits. Mealtimes will be used as an opportunity for educators and staff to sit with children and engage in conversation about healthy eating and nutrition practices, as well as the children's play and learning which has occurred during the day.

Educators in the Gumnut room will respond to babies' verbal and non-verbal cues, as well as individual routines, to guide babies' meal and beverage times. Meals are offered at routine times however educators will always respond to the children's verbal and non-verbal cues and individual routines when offering food and beverages rather than fixed times.

Children in the Peppercorn room are offered food and beverages based around routine mealtimes however these routines are flexible, and educators will always respond to the children's verbal and non-verbal cues when offering food and beverages rather than fixed times. The offering of beverages aside from water will be based on each child's individual routine.

Children in the Banksia room are offered food and beverages based around a combination of progressive mealtimes and set mealtimes. The Banksia room offers children the opportunity to consume morning tea at the time of their choosing through progressive morning tea offered between the hours of 8:30am to 10:00am. Lunch and afternoon tea are offered around routine times however educators will always respond to children's verbal and non-verbal cues when offering food and beverages rather than fixed times.

Children in the Jacaranda room are offered food and beverages based around a combination of progressive mealtimes and set mealtimes. The Jacaranda room offers children the opportunity to consume morning tea at the time of their choosing through progressive morning tea offered between the hours of 8:30am to 10:30am. Lunch and afternoon tea are offered around routine times however educators will always respond to children's verbal and non-verbal cues when offering food and beverages rather than fixed times.

Families are provided with daily information about their child's food and beverage intake in all rooms. This information is shared using the Xplor app. Families with children in the Gumnut and Peppercorn rooms are also provided with information about their child's intake of beverages (aside from water). Educators will use this information as the basis for any conversations with families about any concerns around children's food and fluid intake.

Educators and staff will ensure that:

- Children wash their hands before each meal as per the Centre's Food Health and Safety and Illness and Infectious Disease Management policies.
- Food is served in a safe and hygienic manner as per the Centre's Food Health and Safety policy.
- Children remain seated while eating and are supervised at all mealtimes to ensure a safe eating environment.
- Where developmentally appropriate children participate in setting up for mealtimes and assisting each other at mealtimes.
- Where developmentally appropriate children serve themselves lunch.
- Where developmentally appropriate children are supported by educators to feed themselves.
- Children are encouraged to try the food which is served but are never required or forced to eat food which they do not like. Food preferences are respected while at the same time a variety of foods will be offered and talked about.
- Food is never withheld or offered in response to a child's behaviour.
- Foods which are considered choking hazards are not be offered to children. Hawthorn Child Care Centre follows the Child and Youth Health guidelines in respect to making foods safer for children to consume:
 - Foods with skins - sausages, hotdogs, frankfurts
 - Remove skins, cut lengthwise, and then into small pieces
 - Round foods - grapes and cherry tomatoes
 - Cut in half.
 - Foods with seeds, pips and stones - cherries, stone fruit, olives

- Remove seeds, pips and stones and cut into small pieces.
- Foods that are hard, crunchy or stringy - hard fruit and vegetables such as raw apple, carrot and celery
 - Grate, very finely slice, cook or mash.
- Corn chips, popcorn, nuts, and hard or sticky lollies, very hard crackers that don't dissolve or break up easily.
 - Not served.
- Foods that are tough and chewy - meat with gristle and bone, tough meat
 - Remove fat, gristle and bone. Cut into small pieces. Mince, shred or slow cook.
- Foods containing small bones - fish, chicken
 - Remove bones and cut into small pieces.
- Children who have not eaten at the routine time, or who are hungry between a routine mealtime, are provided with a snack of a cracker outside of routine meal and snack times.

Nutrition Education and the Curriculum

Hawthorn Child Care is aware of, and embraces, its responsibility in contributing to children's knowledge and understanding of nutrition.

- Mealtimes are both a social and educational time within our Centre. Educators, staff, volunteers, and students take the opportunity to discuss healthy eating and nutrition with the children in a fun and positive way.
- Where developmentally appropriate, cooking experiences will be offered as part of the program. These cooking experiences will be used to further children's understandings of healthy food and nutrition.
- Nutrition education also encompasses the families in our service. Centre management, educators, and staff will share information with families on the Australian Government guidelines *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* and the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*, as well as information from recognised nutrition authorities on food and beverages, through the sharing of hardcopy information in the Centre foyer; posts on Skoolbag and/or SeeSaw; emails; and verbal conversations with families.

Dental Health and Hygiene

As part of our commitment to supporting children's development and health through good nutrition Hawthorn Child Care Centre also promotes practices which support good dental hygiene. The Centre will support good dental hygiene by:

- Offering foods which are prepared using low sugar recipes to reduce the bacteria that cause dental plaque.
- Avoiding food products, where possible, which contain food colouring, preservatives and additives.
- Providing a balanced menu which includes food from the five recommended food groups.
- Ensuring access to safe tap water containing fluoride throughout the day.
- Encouraging children to wash their mouths with water by having a drink after each meal.
- Limiting beverages brought into the Centre to breastmilk, formula, cow's milk, and water only. Cordial, juice etc. will not be given to children while in care.

- Educating children about good dental hygiene as part of each room's educational program.
- Providing information on dental health care to families from recognised health authorities through the sharing of hardcopy information in the Centre foyer; posts on Skoolbag and/or SeeSaw; emails; and verbal conversations with families.
- Providing families with the opportunity to have their child seen in-service by SA Dental Services.
- Removing toys and objects from children's mouths when seen.
- Encouraging children with dummies to place their dummies in their bag or in a storage container during play time.
- Ensuring children remain seated and supervised during all mealtimes.
- Following correct first aid procedures in the event that a child damages or knocks out a tooth while at the Centre.

Changes to Existing Policy

Information on the Jacaranda meal routine was updated. Information on the use of the Xplor app to record food intake was added.

Regulations

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2019

National Quality Standards 2

Sources

Australian Breastfeeding Association

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority

Child and Youth Health

Department for Education and Child Development

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2019

Guide to the National Quality Framework January 2020

Healthy Kids website

Mitcham Council

Raising Children Network

SA Dental Services

Supporting Documentation

Communication and Management Plan for Children with Medical Conditions

Risk Management Plan for Child with Specific Health Care Need, Allergy/Intolerance, Special Diet or Medical Condition

Review Date: July 2020

Next Review Date: July 2021