

Nutrition Policy and Procedure

Title:	Nutrition Policy and Procedure		
Last Reviewed:	October 2015	Next review due:	September 2018
NQF Reference:	National Law section 167 National Regulations 77, 78, 79, 80, 168 NQS 2.1; 2.1.2; 2.1.3		

Rationale

Developing healthy eating habits and attitudes during childhood is important for long-term nutritional wellbeing. Healthy eating habits, together with regular physical activity, contribute to a child's physical growth, capacity to learn and the development of a positive body image and self-esteem. Good nutrition also prevents illness and health problems such as obesity.

Policy

Blackmans Bay Childrens Services has the responsibility and opportunity to educate children about food and nutrition. Food provided by Blackmans Bay Childrens Services will be nutritious and varied, taking into account a child's physical, social, emotional, cultural and educational needs and development.

Meal times and experiences involving food will provide positive learning experiences for children, who will be supported and encouraged to develop healthy eating habits.

Parents will be consulted and encouraged to share family and multicultural values and experiences, to enrich the variety and enjoyment of food and to meet the children's nutritional needs. Blackmans Bay Childrens Services will provide an eating environment that reinforces family and multicultural values.

Procedure

It is important to encourage children's and parent's participation in the service's nutrition program. Parent's knowledge, beliefs and food preferences play a key role in establishing a child's eating patterns and behaviours.

To promote nutritionally positive attitudes and food preferences educators will:

- Provide positive role modelling to children regarding food, nutrition, eating habits and attitudes to food.
- Use meal times as an opportunity to encourage positive eating habits, interactions, discussions and an appreciation of the variety of food and the benefits of water. Meal times will be used as a positive experience to discuss the importance of healthy food and drink options.
- Include nutritionally focused educational activities within the program to broaden children's awareness of a wide variety of food and the links between health and nutrition.
- Provide parents with information regarding healthy food options for their child. Information on nutrition, food handling and storage will be displayed at the service and provided to parents. Parents will be encouraged to pack water only for their child. Fizzy and sugary drinks will be sent home, with a positive explanation regarding the health benefits of water.
- Ensure drinking water is available and accessible at all times to staff and children.
- Ensure that each child has enough to eat. Where a child attends the service with an inadequate amount of food, the service will provide a substitute meal for the child.

However, this will be monitored and sensitively discussed with the parent. A fee will be applied in line with the service's fee policy and procedure.

- Communicate, where practicable, to parents the amount their child has eaten and drank, their food preferences and interests while attending the service.
- Encourage children to wash their hands before and after handling food or eating.
- Handle, prepare and store all food hygienically, in line with *Food Safety Manual for Tasmanian Education and Care Services (DHHS)* requirements. Food will be stored and served at safe temperatures.
- Ensure menus developed by the service are nutritionally balanced and planned with input from children, parents and staff, to reflect the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*. Where possible, fresh produce will be used.
- Where possible, meals and drinks will reflect a variety of cultural backgrounds, including those of the local community, where:
 - multicultural differences will be recognised and accepted;
 - food awareness activities will be chosen from a variety of cultures; and
 - special occasions may be celebrated with culturally appropriate foods.
- Invite parents to at least one food occasion each year.
- Children with allergies or intolerances are required to have a current action plan developed in consultation with parents, staff and a medical practitioner. The requirements of children with special dietary needs must be known and implemented by educators, with the action plan clearly displayed for staff information and updated annually.
- Where children are on a special diet, the parents may be asked to provide a list of suitable and unsuitable foods, their child's preferences or to supply food to meet dietary requirements.
- Children will be encouraged to try different food but will never be forced to eat. Children's food likes and dislikes and their families religious and cultural beliefs regarding food will always be respected. Food is never to be used as a form of punishment either by its provision or denial.
- Age appropriate dental health discussions and practices, such as a visit from the local dental nurse, dental displays or providing water for children to drink and rinse their mouth with after meals will be included in the program. Information from recognised health and dental authorities will be available to parents to support children's dental health practices.
- During vacation care (OSHC only), parents will be asked to provide their child's lunch and drinks, except when otherwise stated on the vacation care program.
- Due to the severe allergic reaction of some children, all persons associated with the service are to support the service's 'allergy aware' status.

In implementing this and to minimise a child's exposure to nuts and other allergens, Blackmans Bay Childrens Services does not permit products containing allergens (e.g. nuts) to be bought on to the service premises. These products will be disposed of, with the reason discussed with the parent or an explanatory note outlining the reason why sent home. (For additional information see the service's *Medical Conditions Policy and Procedure* and child's individual medical action plan).

Nutrition Policy and Procedure

- Meal times will be available at regular intervals within the program, with small, nutritious snacks being available to children as required or on request. Children shall be allowed to eat meals without being rushed or forced.

Links to other policies or documents

- Supervision Policy and Procedure
- Medical Conditions Policy and Procedure
- Infectious Diseases Policy and Procedure

Sources

- *Food Act 2003*, incorporating the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*
- *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*
- *Food Safety Manual for Tasmanian Education and Care Services (DHHS)*
- Tasmanian Food and Nutrition Policy 2004
- Staying Healthy (5th Edition)
- www.schools.nsw.edu.au
- *Education and Care Services National Law*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations*