

POLICY & PROCEDURAL STATEMENTS

Topic: Early Learning - Nutrition, Food and Beverages, Dietary Requirements

Policy: Avenue Neighbourhood House @ Eley Early Learning Centre promotes a healthy lifestyle, including the positive impact healthy eating has on each child's learning and development. Being aware of positive eating behaviour from an early age can instil good habits that will remain throughout a person's life. 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. 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.

Relevant Legislation:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations regulation 77,78,79,80,168
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- National Quality Standard 2
- Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code
- Food Act 1984 (Vic), as amended 2012

Code of Practice:

Avenue Neighbourhood House @ Eley Early Learning Centre

- recognises children as active participants in their own learning. Children are encouraged to make meaningful decisions about elements of their own education and care.
- incorporates progressive meal times into the educational program that allows children to choose to eat when they are hungry, rather than according to a timetable. Children gather in small groups to enjoy morning and afternoon tea time and lunch, without interrupting the needs and play of others. This also encourages quieter, more social and meaningful interactions at these times and allows for a smoother flow throughout the day. Children can make decisions based on their own needs, and can be supported to access food and water throughout the day.

Feeding Guidelines:

Children Under 12 Months:

- Parents inform staff about their child's feeding schedule.

Breastfeeding including Expressed Breast Milk (EBM):

- Arrangements for comfortable breastfeeding at the centre can be made if required.
- You can express your milk for feeding by the staff.
- Parents will give EBM to staff immediately upon arrival to place in the refrigerator in bottles clearly labelled.
- Parents will discuss with staff what to do if EBM runs out.
- Breast milk cannot be heated in the microwave.
- Place the bottle containing the breast milk in a jug of cool water and slowly add warmer water to the jug until the milk reaches the correct temperature (Breast milk can only be warmed once).

Infant Formula:

- Bottles are to be made up at home and given to staff, clearly labelled for refrigeration.
- Alternatively bottles containing the correct measurements of boiled water and the correct amount of formula for each bottle can be brought in for the staff to make up. These need to be clearly labelled.

Heating bottles (excluding breast milk)

- The microwave will be used to heat the milk, but only with great care not to overheat the formula or milk. This milk can only be heated **once**, then unused heated milk must then be discarded, but recording the amount consumed on the feeding schedule.

For fridge cold milk the following applies:

- 30 sec on high for 90-120mls
- 45 sec on high for 150-180mls
- 50 sec on high for 180-240mls

Use a shorter time if the bottles are not fridge cold

- After heating, shake the bottle well to avoid “hot spots” which could cause burns to the baby’s mouth and throat.
- Test the temperature of the milk on the inside of your wrist, if it is not warm enough heat for 5-10 sec more.
- Never heat breast milk in the microwave

Introducing Solids:

- Parents need to communicate with staff when they have started introducing solids and which foods have been introduced.
- Staff encourage independence and self-help skills by allowing children to try and feed themselves with staff supervision or giving them a spoon to hold while a staff member also feeds the child with a spoon.

Heating of Solids:

- Solid food must only be heated once, stirring to avoid “hot spots” which could cause burns to the child’s mouth and throat. Check that food has cooled enough before giving it to a child. Remove a small piece of food with a spoon to another plate and test the temperature with your hand. Throw this piece of food away and get a clean spoon. Never blow on a child’s food as a means of cooling it down; this spreads your germs onto the food.
- We are a nut free centre so peanut butter, Nutella, breakfast cereals and any food containing traces of nuts cannot be brought into the centre.

Documenting Children’s Daily Intake:

With infants, staff will record how many bottles, times and mls as well as any solids consumed and inform parents upon picking up. Infants may have an individual communication book where this information is recorded for parents to take home.

Special Diets and Allergies: *Also refer to Anaphylaxis policy*

Parents need to inform staff if the child has any special diets and/or allergies.

Special Occasions/Birthdays:

A birthday is a special occasion so please feel free to send a cake. We may have children with dietary intolerances and allergies so please discuss options with staff.

Morning Tea, Lunch, Afternoon Tea:

- Adequate time is allowed for eating.
- Tables and chairs are appropriate height for children.
- We provide a calm, relaxed environment.
- Children eat as a group – meals are a social occasion.

Cultural Differences:

If your family has cultural beliefs that you wish staff to observe with your child, please communicate this to staff and write on your child's enrolment form.

Supervision During Meals:

- Staff sit with the children at lunch time and interact, providing assistance to children and conversation.
- Morning and afternoon tea are progressive and a staff member supervises and interacts with children, offering assistance when required.
- Children and staff are required to sit while eating.

Avenue Neighbourhood House Early Learning Centre is responsible for ensuring:

- the environment and educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for eating and active play.
- 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.
- that all staff and volunteer staff comply with the *Food Safety Act*.
- that all staff are aware of a child's food allergies and/or other medical conditions on enrolment or on initial diagnosis.
- measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies and/or diabetes.
- staff are aware of, and plan for, the dietary needs of children diagnosed with diabetes.
- that food and water are available to children at frequent and regular intervals throughout the day.
- adequate supervision for all children during meal/snack times.

Policy Review:

This policy will be reviewed biannually unless there are any regulatory or legislative requirements and/or any feedback from staff, parents and the community.