

Clarence Family Day Care Service recognises the importance of safe food handling and healthy eating to promote the growth and development of young children and is committed to supporting the healthy food and drink choices of children in our care. It is acknowledged that the early childhood setting has an important role in supporting families in healthy eating. Therefore our Service recognises the importance of supporting families to provide healthy food and drink to their children.

Our Service recognises the importance of healthy eating for the growth, development, and wellbeing of young children and is committed to promoting and supporting healthy food and drink choices for children in our care. It is essential that our FDC Service partners with families to provide education about nutrition and promote healthy eating habits for young children to positively influence their health and wellbeing.

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Coordinator, Educators, Educator Assistants, children, families, and visitors of the Family Day Care Service.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Our Family Day Care Service has a responsibility to help children to develop good food practices and approaches, by working with families and educators.

If meals are provided by an FDC Educator, the FDC educator will endeavour to be consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines and provide children with 50% of the recommended dietary intake for all nutrients.

Food will be served at various times throughout the day to cater for all children's nutritional needs. Mealtimes reflect a relaxed and pleasant environment where educators engage in meaningful conversations with children. This assists in creating a positive and enjoyable eating environment.

## **NUTRITION**

### **Encourage and support breastfeeding and appropriate introduction of solid foods**

Our Family Day Care Service and FDC educators will:

- support mothers to continue breastfeeding until babies are at least 12 months of age while offering appropriate complementary foods from around 6 months of age
- ensure the safe handling of breast milk and infant formula including transporting, storing, thawing, warming, preparing, and bottle feeding
- in consultation with families, offer cooled pre-boiled water as an additional drink from around 6 months of age
- where breastfeeding is discontinued before 12 months of age, substitute with a commercial infant formula
- always bottle-feed babies by holding baby in a semi-upright position
- work with families to have appropriate foods (type and texture) are introduced around 6 months of age
- work with families to adjust the texture of foods offered between 6 and 12 months of age to match the baby's developmental stage
- always supervise babies while drinking and eating, ensuring safe bottle-feeding and eating practices at all times.

### **Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian guide to healthy eating and the dietary guidelines for children and adolescents.**

Where food is provided by the FDC educator, the FDC educator will:

- provide children with a wide variety of healthy and nutritious foods for meals and snacks including fruit and vegetables, wholegrain cereal products, dairy products, lean meats, and alternative foods high in protein
- plan and display the FDC Service menu that is based on sound menu planning principles and meets 50% of the daily nutritional needs of children
- plan healthy snacks on the menu to complement what is served at mealtimes and ensure the snacks are substantial enough to meet the energy and nutrient needs of children
- vary the meals and snacks on the menu to keep children interested and to introduce children to a range of healthy food ideas
- regularly review the menu to ensure it meets best practice guidelines

- develop the menu in consultation with children and families
- consult with health professionals to support the menu development including Dietitians for children with special dietary requirements such as vegetarian and vegans, dentists and speech therapists (if applicable)
- respect and accommodate children's cultural or religious dietary practices as requested by families

**When a child's food is brought from home, the FDC educator will:**

- provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and that are suitable for children's lunchboxes
- provide information to families on how to read the Nutritional Information Panel on food and drink labels
- encourage children to eat the more nutritious foods provided in their lunchbox, such as sandwiches, fruit, cheese and yoghurt, before eating any less nutritious food provided
- strongly discourage the provision of highly processed snack foods high in fat, salt, and/or sugar, and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes. Examples of these foods include sweet biscuits, some muesli bars, breakfast bars and fruit filled bars, and chips.
- Discourage food items that should not be brought to the FDC service include confectionary (lollies, sweets, chocolate, jelly), deep fried foods (chicken nuggets, fish fingers) and sugary drinks (cordial, energy drinks).

**APPROVED PROVIDER/ COORDINATOR WILL:**

- ensure enrolment forms include information relating to child's food preferences, allergies, intolerances, cultural or religious considerations or medical conditions which involve food or food practices
- consult with families on enrolment to develop individual management plans, including completing Risk Minimisation Plans for children with medical conditions involving food allergies, food intolerances and special dietary requirements as per Medical Conditions Policy
- ensure children's individual dietary requirements as per enrolment information or medical condition plans are communicated to FDC educators and educator assistants as required
- where food is provided by the educator, ensure FDC educators display the weekly menu in an accessible and prominent area for parents to view,
- where food is provided by the educator, ensure the weekly menu is accurate and describes the food and beverages provided each day of the week
- encourage and provide opportunities for FDC Educators to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood nutrition and food safety practices

**FAMILIES DAY CARE EDUCATORS/ EDUCATOR ASSISTANTS WILL:**

- ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day in both the indoor and outdoor environment
- be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances, and special diets dietary requirements and consult with families and management to ensure individual management plans are developed and implemented, including completing Risk Minimisation Plans for children with medical conditions involving food as per Medical Conditions
- ensure young children do not have access to foods that may cause choking
- ensure all children remain seated while eating and drinking
- ensure all children are always supervised children whilst eating and drinking
- participate in regular professional development to maintain and enhance knowledge about early childhood nutrition and food safety practices
- consult with children, families, coordinators and dietitians regarding the review of the service menu
- participate in opportunities to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood nutrition
- not allow food to be used as a form of punishment or to be used as a reward or bribe
- not allow the children to be force fed or being required to eat food they do not like or more than they want to eat
- encourage toddlers to be independent and develop social skills at mealtimes
- establish healthy eating habits in the children by incorporating nutritional information into our program
- talk to families about their child's food intake and voice any concerns about their child's eating
- encourage parents to the best of our ability to continue our healthy eating message in their homes
- ensure pets or animals are not present within the kitchen or food preparation areas.

**FOOD HYGIENE**

Food poisoning is caused by bacteria, viruses, or other toxins being present in food and can cause extremely unpleasant symptoms such as diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach cramps, and fevers. Children under five years of age are considered a high-risk group as their immune systems are still developing and they produce less of the stomach acid required to kill harmful bacteria than older children or adults (Foodsafety.gov, 2019).

FDC educators will strictly adhere to food hygiene standards to prevent the risk of food poisoning.

## **BUYING AND TRANSPORTING FOOD**

### **If FDC educators are providing meals, they will:**

- ensure food supplies have been ordered in a timely manner
- always check labels for the 'use by' and 'best before' dates, understanding that 'use by' dates apply to perishable foods that could potentially cause food poisoning if out of date, whilst 'best before' dates refer to food items with long shelf life but quality could be compromised
- avoid buying food items in damaged, swollen, leaking or dented packaging
- always check eggs: Never buy dirty or cracked eggs
- never buy any food item if unsure about its quality
- ensure fresh meat, chicken, or fish products cannot leak on to other food items
- ensure chilled, frozen, and hot food items are kept out of the 'danger zone' (5 °C to 60 °C) on the trip back to the residence by:
  - not getting chilled frozen, or hot food items until the end of the shopping
  - placing these items in an insulated shopping bag or cooler
  - immediately unpacking and storing these items.

## **STORING FOOD**

### **If FDC educators are providing meals, they will:**

- ensure the refrigerator and freezer has a thermometer and that the refrigerator is maintained at 5 oC or below and the freezer is maintained at -17 oC or below.
- ensure fridge and freezer temperatures are checked regularly or daily
- store raw foods below cooked foods in the refrigerator to avoid cross contamination by foods dripping onto other foods.
- ensure fresh meat is not stored in the fridge for more than 3 days
- ensure that all foods stored in the refrigerator are stored in strong food-safe containers with either a tight-fitting lid, or tightly applied plastic wrap or foil
- ensure that all foods not stored in their original packaging are labelled with:
  - the name of the food
  - the 'use by' date
  - the date the food was opened
  - details of any allergens present in the food.
- transfer the contents of opened cans into appropriate containers
- ensure all bottles and jars are refrigerated after opening
- place 'left-over' hot food in an appropriate sealed container in the refrigerator as soon as the steam has stopped rising. Food can be cooled quickly to this point by placing in smaller quantities in shallow containers, reducing the amount of time sitting in the 'danger zone'.
- not reuse disposable containers (e.g., Chinese food containers)
- store dry foods in labelled and sealed, air-tight containers if not in original packaging
- store dry foods in cupboards or if in a walk-in pantry, on shelving no lower than 30cm from the floor
- not place anything on the floor of a walk-in pantry (as containers of any type create easy access to shelves for mice and rats)
- store bulk dry foods only in food-safe and airtight containers
- use the FIFO (first in, first out) rule for all foods (dry, chilled, and frozen) to ensure rotation of stock so that older stock is used first
- store cleaning supplies and chemicals separate to food items
- ensure breastmilk or infant formula is stored within the main section of the fridge and clearly labelled with the child's name and date of preparation.

## **PREPARING AND SERVING FOOD**

### **If FDC educators are providing meals, they will:**

- ensure that all cooked food is cooked through and reaches 75 oC
- ensure that cooked food is served promptly, or

- use a thermometer to ensure that hot food is maintained at above 60 oC until ready to serve.
- ensure that prepared cold food is stored in the refrigerator maintained at below 5 oC until ready to serve.
- discard any cooked food that has been left in the 'danger zone' for two or more hours. Do not reheat.
- reheat cooked food (if required, for example for a child who was sleeping at lunch time) to a temperature of 70 oC (but only ever reheat once. Discard if the food is not eaten after being reheated).
- keep cooked and ready-to-eat foods separate from raw foods
- ensure foods are defrosted in the fridge or microwave
- wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly under clean running water before preparation
- ensure unused washed fruit or vegetables are thoroughly dry before returning to storage
- ensure food that has been dropped on the floor is immediately discarded
- thoroughly clean kitchen utensils and equipment between using with different foods and/or between different tasks
- avoid cross-contamination by ensuring that separate knives and utensils are used for different foods
- avoid cross-contamination. This can be done by using colour-coded cutting boards are used. Common colours are:
  - Blue: raw fish/seafood
  - Green: fruit and vegetables
  - Red: raw meat
  - Brown: cooked meat
  - Yellow: raw poultry
  - White: bakery and dairy
- ensure that gloves are changed between handling different foods or changing tasks
- ensure ingredient labels are read carefully when preparing food for children with food allergies or intolerances
- ensure that food allergies and intolerances are catered for by using separate easily identifiable cutting boards, utensils, and kitchen equipment (e.g., using a colour code, or food-safe permanent marker).
- ensure FDC educator assistants are aware of children who have severe allergic reactions to certain foods as per ASCIA Action Plans
- ensure that children with food allergies and/or intolerances are served their meals and snacks individually on an easily identifiable plate (e.g., different colour), and that food is securely covered with plastic wrap until received by the child to prevent possible cross-contamination
- ensure left-over food is stored immediately in the fridge or thrown away
- ensure the safe handling of breastmilk, including during transportation, storage, thawing, warming and during preparation

## **PERSONAL HYGIENE FOR FOOD HANDLERS**

### **If FDC educators are providing meals, they will:**

- clean clothing is worn such as an apron
- long hair is tied back or covered with a net
- hand and wrist jewellery are not worn while preparing food (e.g., rings and bracelets)
- nails are kept short and clean, and no nail polish is worn (as it can chip into food and hide dirt under the nails)
- strict hand-washing hygiene is adhered to, including washing hands each time they return to the kitchen before continuing with food preparation duties
- wounds or cuts are covered with a brightly coloured, waterproof dressing (that will easily be seen if it falls off), and gloves will be worn over any dressings

### **All FDC educators will:**

- ensure gloves (or food tongs) are used when handling 'ready to eat' foods
- ensure children wash and dry their hands (using soap, running water, and single use disposable towels or individual hand towels) before handling food or eating meals and snacks
- ensure food is stored and served at safe temperatures (below 5°C or above 60°C), with consideration to the safe eating temperature requirements of children
- ensure separate cutting boards are used for raw meat and chicken, fruit and vegetables, and utensils and hands are washed before touching other foods
- discourage children from handling other children's food and utensils
- attend relevant training courses when requested by the FDC Service.

## **CLEANING**

### **FDC educators will:**

- ensure that food preparation areas and surfaces are cleaned both before, after, and during any food preparation
- ensure that all cooking and serving utensils are cleaned and sanitised before use
- ensure that all dishwashing sponges, brushes, and scourers are cleaned after each use and allowed to air dry or placed in the dishwasher
- ensure the food storage area is clean, ventilated, dry, pest free, and not in direct sunlight
- ensure the refrigerator and freezer is cleaned regularly and door seals checked and replaced if not in good repair
- prevent pest infestations by cleaning spills as quickly as possible and ensuring rubbish and food scraps are disposed of frequently
- ensure that the floor mop is thoroughly cleaned and air dried after each use
- replace any cleaning equipment that shows signs of wear or permanent soiling.

## **CREATING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

### **FDC educators will:**

- sit with the 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
- choose water as a preferred drink
- endeavour to recognise, 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
- encourage older toddlers and pre-schoolers to assist to set and clear the table and serve their own food and drink, providing opportunities for them to develop independence and self-esteem while promoting children's agency and decision-making
- respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, do not insist he/she eats
- be patient with messy or slow eaters
- encourage children to try different foods but do not force them to eat
- not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for disciplinary purposes
- role-model and discuss safe food handling with children

## **FAMILY DAY CARE SERVICE PROGRAM**

### **FDC educators will:**

- 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 and drink choices
- embed the importance of healthy eating and physical activity in everyday activities and experiences.

## **Cooking with children**

Cooking experiences may sometimes be carried out with the children as a part of the educational program. On these occasions participating educators will be vigilant to ensure that the experience remains safe, and relevant food hygiene practices are adhered to.

## **Communicating with Families**

### **Our Family Day Care Service and FDC educators will:**

- request that details of any food allergies or intolerances or specific dietary requirements be provided to the FDC Service and FDC educator, and work in partnership with families to develop an appropriate response so that children's individual dietary needs are met
- communicate regularly with families about food and nutrition related experiences and provide up to date information to assist families to provide healthy food choices at home
- 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.

## **NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)**

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
2.1.3	Healthy lifestyles	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child

## **NATIONAL ECEC REGULATIONS**

77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
78	Food and beverages
79	Service providing food and beverages
80	Weekly menu
90	Medical conditions policy
91	Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
160	Child enrolment records to be kept by approved provider and family day care educator
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
169	Additional policies and procedures – family day care services
170	Policies and Procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

## **SOURCE**

- Australian Breast-Feeding Association Guidelines: <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/>
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2021). *Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements Policy Guidelines*
- *Food Act 2003*
- *Food Regulation 2015*
- Food Safety Standards (Australia only). (2015): <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/industry/safetystandards/Pages/default.aspx>
- National Health and Medical Research Council. Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013): <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-dietary-guidelines>
- National Health and Medical Research Council. Department of Health and Ageing. Infant Feeding Guidelines. (2013): [https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the\\_guidelines/n56b\\_infant\\_feeding\\_summary\\_130808.pdf](https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/n56b_infant_feeding_summary_130808.pdf)
- National Health and Medical Research Council. Eat for health: <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/>
- NSW Food Authority: <http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/>
- NSW Government. Healthy Kids. (2019). Munch and Move: <https://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/about-munch-move.aspx>