



## **Nutrition Policy**

### **Rationale:**

To promote the health and wellbeing of all children and staff within Blenheim Early Childhood Centres Inc (BECC)  
To ensure BECC promotes the Ministry of Health (MoH) Guidelines in “Reducing food-related choking for babies and young children”. Ensure that food is served at appropriate times to meet the nutritional needs of each child attending.

### **Purpose:**

1. To help support and encourage parents to provide healthy lunch box food for their children.
2. To promote in all children a healthy understanding and attitude towards food.
3. To promote with staff a healthy understanding and attitude towards food
4. To promote and encourage MoH choking guidelines - included in this policy are examples of how to alter high-risk food to lower its choking risk.
5. To provide an environment that uses family and cultural values to support healthy nutrition guidelines.

### **Guidelines:**

1. BECC provide educational information for parents regarding best practice in relation to managing risk of choking, healthy food choices with their children e.g. information at time of enrolment, Parent evenings, pamphlets etc.
2. Staff ensure there is a safe physical environment for children when eating:
  - At all times will supervise all children when they are eating.
  - Have an appropriate ratio of adults to children at mealtimes.
  - Minimise distractions and encourage children to focus on eating.
  - Ensure there is a designated time where children sit down to eat, rather than continuous grazing.
  - Ask children not to talk with their mouths full.
  - Have children sit up straight when they are eating. Sitting down and maintaining good posture are essential for safe eating and drinking. Do not allow walking, running or playing while children are eating.
  - Place food directly in front of the child. This helps to prevent them twisting around to the left or right, which can cause them to lose control of the food in their mouth.
3. Qualified Teachers will hold current first aid certificates which cover choking first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
4. Lunch box guidelines including the MoH guidelines to reducing food related choking for babies and young children will be included in the introduction pack to parents.
5. Included in this policy (see below) is a meal guideline (centres do vary so please ask the team) for a child's day at preschool, children can eat more at preschool and we recommend to include more than they would usually eat at home.
6. Staff will approach the parent individually if a child's lunch box is not consistent with the expectations of the centre.
7. Staff will regularly educate the children on the healthy values of food and how it links to their own health.
8. Staff will role model healthy eating.
9. Water and milk (not flavoured) are the only liquids to be consumed at preschool.
10. Lollies and chocolate are discouraged at preschool.
11. Infants under the age of 6 months and other children unable to drink independently are to be held semi-upright when being fed.
12. Any infant milk given to a child under the age of 12 months is of a type approved by the child's parent.
13. Parents are supported to breastfeed their children. For mothers who choose to breastfeed a comfortable area will be made available for them.

Nutrition Policy 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**Reference: Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 46  
Licensing Criteria Health and Safety HS19, HS21, HS22, HS23**

14. Adults and children use good hygiene practices when dealing with food around meal times and Tikanga practice as outlined by the centre.
15. Allergies, food intolerances and special dietary requirements will be a shared responsibility of the child's family and the preschool. If a child's allergy is life threatening a plan will be in place to ensure that all staff know of emergency protocols.
16. At the discretion of the Head Teacher a food maybe excluded from a child's room at preschool or from the whole of the preschool. This would only be done in the event of a child having a severe food allergy that has been affirmed by a relevant medical professional.
17. When baking/cooking with children staff will only choose nutritional foods that are compliant with MoH Guidelines to reduce choking risk.
18. Each preschool has a nutritional folder with a range of useful information available to both parents and staff. Everyone will be encouraged to use it.
19. Funds are available for resources to support nutrition education.
20. Nutrition related professional development for staff will be sourced.
21. Birthdays are a time for celebration, however we encourage a healthy option to be brought in to share with friends e.g. fruit kebabs or platters (all food must be complaint with the MoH Guidelines to reduce choking). Please talk to your child's teacher of your plans for your child's preschool birthday celebration.
22. For safety reasons teachers encourage parents to use an alternative to glad wrap/cling wrap.

**How to alter high-risk food to lower its choking risk – reference from “Ministry of Health Reducing food-related choking for babies and young children at early learning services”**

'Soft' means the food can be easily squashed between your thumb and forefinger, or on the roof of your mouth with your tongue.

Food characteristics	Examples	Choking risk	Changes to reduce risk	
			1-3 years old	4-6 years old
<b>Small hard food</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pieces of raw carrot, apple or celery</li> </ul>	Difficult for young children to bite through and break down enough to swallow safely. Pieces can become stuck in children's airways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grate raw carrot, apple or celery, spiralise to create vegetable or fruit spirals, slice thinly using a mandolin.</li> <li>• Cook until soft and cut into strips (around 4–6 cm long)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare as for 1–3 years.</li> <li>• Raw or cooked vegetables or fruit cut into sticks (approximately 4–6 cm long) that can be picked up with one hand.</li> </ul>
<b>Small round or oval food</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit with stones and large seeds or large pips like watermelon</li> <li>• Grapes, large berries, cherry tomatoes</li> <li>• Raw green peas</li> </ul>	Small round foods can lodge in children's airways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove stones and large seeds or large pips.</li> <li>• Quarter or finely chop grapes, berries and cherry tomatoes to an 8mm x 8mm size or smaller (about half the width of a standard dinner fork).</li> <li>• Cook and squash with a fork</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Halve or quarter grapes, berries and cherry tomatoes</li> <li>• Whole cooked green peas are acceptable.</li> </ul>

<b>Food with skin or leaves</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chicken</li> <li>Lettuce and other raw salad leaves, spinach, cabbage</li> <li>Stone fruit (e.g., plums, peaches, nectarines)</li> <li>Apples and</li> </ul>	Food skins are difficult to chew and can completely seal children's airways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove skin from chicken.</li> <li>Finely slice or chop salad leaves, spinach and cabbage.</li> <li>Grate raw carrot, apple or celery, spiralise to create vegetable or fruit spirals, slice thinly using a mandolin.</li> <li>Cook until soft and cut into strips (around 4–6 cm long) that can be picked up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove skin from chicken.</li> <li>Finely slice or chop salad leaves, spinach and cabbage.</li> <li>Prepare as for 1–3 years.</li> <li>Raw or cooked vegetables or fruit cut into sticks (around 4–6 cm long) that can be picked up with one hand.</li> </ul>
<b>Compressible foods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pieces of cooked meat</li> </ul>	Can fit into the shape of the airway and get wedged tightly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cook meat until very tender.</li> <li>Choose mince, shred or chop meat to 8mm x 8mm sized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare as for 1–3 years; or offer thin strips of meat (around 4–6 cm long) that can be picked up with one hand or</li> </ul>
<b>Food with bones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fish</li> <li>Chicken</li> </ul>	Small bones present a choking risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove all bones.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove all bones.</li> </ul>
<b>Thick pastes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nut or seed butter</li> </ul>	Can fit to the shape of a child's airway or stick to	Use smooth thick pastes sparingly, spreading thinly and evenly onto bread.	Use smooth thick pastes sparingly, spreading thinly and evenly onto bread.
<b>Fibrous or stringy food</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raw pineapple</li> </ul>	Fibres make it difficult for children to break up the food into smaller pieces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peel the skin or strong fibres off where possible.</li> <li>Slice these foods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peel the skin or strong fibres off where possible.</li> <li>Slice these foods</li> </ul>

Policy Name: Nutrition Policy Location: Health and Safety Manual	
Short footer name	Nutrition Policy
Consultation	Parents, staff, BOT
Policy ratified	25 <sup>th</sup> May 2021
Introduction Date	21 <sup>st</sup> September 2005
Automatic review date	2024
<p><b>This policy will need to be reviewed to ensure that it continues to be appropriate and effective. Policy statement should be reviewed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>if any of the statutory source change or</li> <li>if any roles are amended or</li> <li>if any part of the policy becomes ineffective or problematic or</li> <li>if there are any suggestions for improvement or</li> <li>the policy is scheduled for automatic review.</li> </ul>	

Nutrition Policy 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**Reference: Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 46  
Licensing Criteria Health and Safety HS19, HS21, HS22, HS23**

Chairperson .....

Date .....

Nutrition Policy 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**Reference: Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 46  
Licensing Criteria Health and Safety HS19, HS21, HS22, HS23**