



## **Nutrition, Food, Dietary Requirements and Food Handling Policy**

**Policy Number:** 24  
**Date Updated:** 15/6/26

### **Rationale and Policy Considerations**

Lifestreamers Early Learning understands it has a duty of care to ensure that children's nutritional needs are met and food is prepared and stored safely. Good nutrition is essential to healthy living and enables children to be active participants in play and leisure. All children have the right to develop to their full potential in an environment which provides for their health and wellbeing.

Children are especially prone to food borne illness because their immune systems are still developing and they cannot fight infection as well as adults can. The main causes of food borne illness are inadequate cooking; improper temperature control, contaminated equipment; unsafe food sources; and poor personal hygiene.

The Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 requires that approved provider/nominated supervisor/coordinators take reasonable care to protect children from foreseeable risk of harm, injury and infection.

### **Scope**

This policy is for all employees, children and families of Lifestreamers Early Learning (LEL)

### **Most relevant policies and procedures**

- Diversity and Inclusion
- Health, Hygiene and Infection Control
- Medication and Medical Conditions
- Partnerships and Communication with Families

### **Policy Statement**

Meal and snack times will provide positive learning experiences for children, who will be encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. Parents/Guardians will be consulted and asked to share family and multicultural values and experiences to enrich the variety and enjoyment of food planned to meet each child's daily nutritional needs. The service will strictly follow recommended safe food storage and preparation guidelines contained within the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia to ensure children's protection from food borne illness.

### **Policy Principles**

#### **Training and professional development**

- Educators will be provided with annual professional development to refresh their knowledge of food handling and hygiene practices. New educators to the service will be required to complete training within two months of appointment.
- Educators, students and volunteers role model healthy eating behaviours and practices and follow the Nutrition, Food, Dietary Requirements and Food Handling Policy.

#### **Personal hygiene and health of food handlers**

New educators will be inducted into the centre and be required to follow the principles and practices with regard to Personal Health and Hygiene. Existing educators will read the policy each year as a refresher to ensure standards are met. The most important things to know are:

- When preparing food, wear hats/ hairnets, gloves over jewellery on hands if they are in direct contact with food.
- Do not eat over unprotected food (that will be served to others) or food contact surfaces.
- Food handlers are expected to wash their hands whenever their hands are likely to contaminate food, this includes washing their hands:
  - immediately before working with ready-to-eat food or after handling raw food
  - immediately after using the toilet
  - before they start handling food or go back to handling food after other work

- after smoking, coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief or disposable tissue, eating, drinking or using tobacco or similar substances
- after touching their hair, scalp or a body opening
- Correct hand washing procedure:
  - Use the hand washing facilities provided by the centre
  - Clean their hands thoroughly using soap
  - Use running water (We don't normally use warm water to wash hands)
  - Dry their hands thoroughly on a single use paper towel
- The health of food handlers
  - It is very important that people who may be suffering from or carrying certain illnesses do not handle food or food contact surfaces. This is particularly important if they are likely to contaminate food while they are working.
  - If a food handler has been diagnosed with any of the following food borne diseases: Hepatitis A; Norovirus; Typhoid fever; Shigellosis; Staphylococcal or Streptococcal disease; the food handler will cease all contact with food and food contact surfaces; and not return to food handling duties until medical clearance is provided.
  - If a food handler has an exposed wound or cut or infected skin sore, they will cover it with a bandage and highly visible waterproof covering.
  - If a food handler has any discharge from their ears, nose or eyes, they will take medication to stop any nasal or other discharge that may contaminate the food.
  - The Nominated Supervisor will not disclose any of the above medical information to anyone with the exception of the proprietor of the business or a food enforcement officer, without the consent of the food handler. The company will not use this information for any purpose other than to protect food from contamination.

#### **Provision of healthy nutritious snacks and meals**

- The weekly menu is displayed in an accessible and prominent area for parents to view.
- Lunches are made by our in house cook.
- Food preparation facilities will be maintained in a hygienic condition in accordance with Health, Hygiene and Infection Control policy.
- The service will provide children with balanced snacks consistent with the Australian Government Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings and/or the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia, that meet the recommended daily nutritional needs of children within each age grouping, are adequate in quantity, and take into account the child's growth and development needs.
- Snack and meal times will be treated as social occasions. Educators will sit with the children and interact with them to encourage healthy eating habits and an appreciation of a variety of foods.
- In following with dietary guidelines, children will be discouraged from eating lollies, soft drink etc. while at the centre. Furthermore, children will be encouraged to drink water or milk in cups or bottles. Juice and cordial will not be served to children. Parents who supply these drinks in their child's bottle will be asked to provide another bottle for their child while at the centre. The juice bottle will be kept in the fridge for the child to drink on the way home. Water will be available for the children at all times.
- Educators will ensure they role model healthy eating habits. This means maintaining good personal nutrition while eating with the children at meal times.
- Snack and meal times will be set to a regular schedule but individual needs will be accommodated.
- The importance of good healthy food, and hygienic and safe food handling and storage practices will be discussed with children as part of their daily program.
- Educators will be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances and special diets and their individual health management plans, and have their food allergies mat ready before meal times.
- Mealtimes will be used to discuss cultural differences and similarities. These issues will also be addressed throughout the course of the program both in planned and spontaneous experiences.
- All children and educators will wash their hands with soap and running water and dry well prior to preparing, serving or eating food.

- Children will be encouraged to help set up and pack away the eating area. All children will be encouraged to feed themselves and staff will be available to help if needed.
- It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the educators are made aware of any allergies or food restrictions. In some cases, parents will be asked to provide special foods for allergy needs. Allergy and food restriction information will be requested from parents annually to enable accurate updating.
- Information relevant to child and family health, nutrition, hygiene and dental care will be available to parents. Furthermore, new information will be passed on to parents through the centre newsletter.
- Food will not be used as a reward, nor will children be denied food as a punishment.
- The centre will provide morning and afternoon tea each day.
- Birthdays will be celebrated by a special afternoon tea prepared by the centre. Cakes and treats from home will not be permitted due to the increased prevalence of allergies in children.
- Children will always be supervised when eating.

#### **Consulting and communicating with families**

- Children will be encouraged to try new food but will never be forced to eat. Their food likes and dislikes and the family's religious and cultural beliefs or family lifestyle i.e. vegetarianism, will always be respected. The centre will discuss with families which mealtime practices can be accommodated within the service and those which cannot, due to health or hygiene concerns.
- Where children are on special diets the parents/guardians will be asked to provide a list of suitable foods and their child's food preferences. A Health Management Plan will be completed by management in consent with parent/guardian detailing allergies. Medical confirmation of a child's allergies will be required. Refer also to the service's Medications and Medical Conditions Policy.

#### **Dietary guidelines for children and adolescents**

- Encourage and support breast-feeding.
- Children need sufficient nutritious foods to grow and develop normally.
- Physical activity is important for all children and adolescents.
- Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods.
- Children and adolescents should be encouraged to:
  - Eat plenty of vegetables, legumes and fruits
  - Eat plenty of cereals (including breads, rice, pasta and noodles), preferably wholegrain
  - Include lean meat, fish, poultry and/or alternatives
  - Include milks, yoghurts, cheeses and/or alternatives. Reduced fat milks are not suitable for young children under 2 years, because of their high energy needs, but reduced fat varieties should be encouraged for older children and adolescents
  - Choose water as a drink
  - Alcohol is not recommended for children
- Care should be taken to:
  - Limit saturated fats and moderate total fat intake
  - Low fat diets are not suitable for infants
  - Consume only moderate amounts of sugars and foods containing added sugars
  - Choose low-salt foods
  - Care for your child's food: prepare and store it safely

#### **Heating of Solids**

- Solid foods must only be heated once, stirring to avoid "hot spots" which could cause burns to a 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.
- If food has been heated up and there are leftovers, these can be used for the child for up to 4 hours, after this time they will be sent home so the parent/guardian can see how much has been eaten but it is recommended this food is no longer safe to be given to your child for consumption.

## Guidelines for Infants

- Feeding schedules will be flexible for children under 12 months of age.
- Breastfeeding and Expressed Breast Milk ( EBM)
  - Where possible, the service may also support mothers who are able to return to the service to breastfeed their child throughout the day. It is essential that services recognise that families have the right to decide whether they will breastfeed their child while they are at the service and each family's decision should be accepted and respected.
  - Arrangements for comfortable breastfeeding at the centre can be made. Alternatively breastmilk can be expressed for feeding by the educators.
  - Parents will give EBM to staff immediately upon arrival to the centre to be placed in the refrigerator in bottles clearly labelled
- Infant Bottles
  - **Preparing formula**
    - Wash hands thoroughly and clean work bench.
    - Pour recommended amount of boiled water into the bottle (refer to original tin)
    - Do not compact the formula powder in the scoop, ensure the correct ratio
    - Add formula to the bottled of boiled water
    - Place cap and shake until thoroughly mixed
  - **Heating bottles**
    - Stand bottle in bottle warmer for 4 – 6 minutes
    - Before feeding the child, check the temperature of the milk by letting a small drop fall on the inside of your wrist
    - Do not microwave breastmilk
    - Do not refreeze thawed milk
  - **Storing breastmilk and formula**
    - Store prepared milk in the fridge, check that they are labelled with the child's name and document it on the bottle receipt log
    - Store breastmilk on a shelf on the fridge, not in the door (to be used within 24 hours)
    - Any formula should be thrown out if the child does not finish it
  - **Breast milk can be stored in several ways, which include:**
    1. Refrigerated for 3 to 5 days at 4 degrees Celsius or lower.
    2. Store breast milk on a shelf of the refrigerator, not in the door
    3. Frozen in a separate freezer section of a refrigerator for up to 3 months at a temperature of -18 degrees Celsius. If being frozen in a freezer compartment inside the refrigerator (as opposed to a freezer with a separate door), the breast milk should only be stored for 2 weeks.

## Educators who Breastfeed at the Service

- The service recognises the importance and benefits of breastfeeding and that many women will return to work before they wish to wean their children. Requests for allowances to be made for educators 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 in her choice to continue breastfeeding her child.
- On return to work from maternity leave, female educators may seek to change their work arrangements. The returning educators will have a meeting with the Nominated Supervisor to try and work out an arrangement which suits the educator, the Nominated Supervisor and also the running 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.

## Dental Health

- The centre liaises with families to establish dental health practices that are workable at home and at the centre.
- The centre systematically incorporates information on dental health practices into the children’s program, including tooth brushing, ‘tooth friendly’ snacks, and going to the dentist.
- Children will be encouraged to drink water to remove food debris after every meal or snack.
- Children will be served nutritious snacks, which limit the sugar intake and avoids items such as lollies, chocolates, sweet drinks etc.
- Children will be given water while at the centre. Bottles with juice will not be given to children as it increases the risk of cavities.
- Children with bottles for rest time will be given these before rest times, followed by water to rinse their mouth. Bottles will not remain where they can be sucked over an extended period. Where possible, children will be given water in their bottles to help prevent decay.
- Information on effective tooth brushing techniques will be provided to families.
- When cleaning teeth is included in the program, each child’s individual toothbrush will be rinsed after each use and stored in clean individual, enclosed containers. Toothbrushes will be soaked in Milton each fortnight.
- Educators role model good dental health practices.
- The centre will provide information to families on dental health principles relating to different age groups of children, as recommended by recognised health and dental health authorities. Wherever possible this information will be provided in families home languages.
- The centre will be aware of dental first aid. Arrangements are made for dental health professionals to visit the service to talk with educators, children and families about dental health.

## Cultural Differences

- If a family has cultural beliefs that they wish for educators to observe, this will be noted during enrolment.

## Related Legislation and Documents

- Department of Health. IM ALERT
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991
- Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (WA) 2012
- National Quality Standard
- Early Years Learning Framework for

## Document History

Version	Date updated
Nutrition Policy	23-9-11
Nutrition, Food, Dietary Requirements and Food Handling Policy	30/4/13
Nutrition, Food, Dietary Requirements and Food Handling Policy	29/12/2014
Nutrition, Food, Dietary Requirements and Food Handling Policy	1/6/16
Nutrition, Food, Dietary Requirements and Food Handling Policy	19/9/18
Nutrition, Food, Dietary Requirements and Food Handling Policy	14/10/19
Nutrition, Food, Dietary Requirements and Food Handling Policy	21/12/22
Nutrition, Food, Dietary Requirements and Food Handling Policy	7/4/23
Nutrition, Food, Dietary Requirements and Food Handling Policy	11/03/2024
Nutrition, Food, Dietary Requirements and Food Handling Policy	29/01/2025