

NUTRITION/HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

6.1 Nutrition

Nutritionally balanced meals are provided for the children. Regulations require that the Centre provide 50% or 1/2 of the child's nutritional requirements. Each child is provided with morning tea, a 2-course lunch, and afternoon tea. The menu changes each week and a copy is posted on the notice board at the entrance to the Dolphin room and Penguin Room as well as on the noticeboard near the kitchen entry.

The children are not forced to eat their meal but they are encouraged to taste all foods. Children are encouraged to become independent with their feeding and eating skills. Staff and children eat at the same table promoting social interaction and a pleasant atmosphere at meal times.

Please note on your enrolment form and inform staff if your child has a particular food allergy or special diet. If your child is on a special diet it will be necessary for the parent to supply such food or drink eg. Soy milk for their child's time at the Centre. No reduction in fees will be granted due to these circumstances.

We are happy for parents to send along a birthday cake for their child, please just check with staff to ensure there are no special dietary needs for that day.

Babies on formula need to have their bottles made up at home and labelled with their child's name. This ensures that each baby gets only their bottle, and their correct formula. Parents can also bring the formula in a special divided container, with the formula powder already measured out. The formula will then be added to the water before the bottle is given to the child.

Our service offers opportunities and support to families to continue to provide breast milk for children in our care. We have facilities to store breast milk and use the recommended procedure for re heating the bottles.

This policy was reviewed by staff, parents and management committee of Raymond Terrace Early Education Centre in January 2014.

6.2 Nutrition Policy

Raymond Terrace Early Education Centre recognises the importance of healthy eating to the growth and development of young children and is committed to supporting the healthy food and drink choices of children in their care. This policy concerns the provision of healthy food and drink while children are in care and the promotion of normal growth and development.

Our service recognises the importance of supporting families in providing healthy food and drink to their children. It is acknowledged that the early childhood setting has an important role in supporting families in healthy eating.

This policy aims to:

- Encourage and support breastfeeding and appropriate introduction of solid foods.
- Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents.
- Provide food to children that has been stored, prepared and served in a safe and hygienic manner and promote hygienic food practices.
- Provide a positive eating environment which reflects cultural and family values.
- Promote lifelong learning for children, early childhood educators and families about healthy food and drink choices.
- Encourage communication with families about the provision of appropriate healthy food and drinks for children while they are attending the service.

Encourage and support breastfeeding and appropriate introduction of solid foods

The service will:

- Apply current national infant feeding recommendations.
- Provide a suitable place within the service where mothers can breastfeed their babies or express breast milk.
- 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.
- Ensure appropriate foods (type and texture) are introduced around 6 months of age.
- Adjust the texture of foods offered between 6 and 12 months of age to match the baby's developmental stage.
- Offer a variety of foods to babies from all the food groups.
- 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.

The service 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 alternatives.
- Plan and display the service menu (at least two weeks at a time) that is based on sound menu planning principles and meets the daily nutritional needs of children whilst catering for their tastes.
- Plan healthy snacks on the menu to complement what is served at mealtimes and ensure 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.
- Ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day.
- Offer food and drink at regular and predictable intervals.
- Be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances and special dietary needs and consult with families to determine specific food related requirements and develop individual management plans.
- Minimise the risk of choking through provision of appropriate foods and supervision.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for cooking staff and educators to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge and skills related to early childhood nutrition, food safety and hygiene.

Provide food to children that has been stored, prepared and served in a safe and hygienic manner and promote hygienic food practices.

The service:

- Ensures children and staff wash and dry their hands (using soap, warm running water and single use or disposable towels) before handling food or eating meals and snacks. Children's hand-washing practices are observed at all times.
- Discourages children from handling other children's food and utensils. Ensures food-handling staff attend relevant training courses and pass relevant information on to the rest of the staff.
- Has a comprehensive Food Safety Policy that is used to guide all aspects of safe food handling practice at the service.

Provide a positive eating environment which reflects cultural and family values.

The service will:

- Ensure that educators 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.
- 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 preschoolers to assist to set and clear the table and serve their own food and drink to foster children's independence and self-esteem.
- Respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, educators do not insist he/she eats.
- Be patient with messy or slow eaters.
- Encourage children to try different / new foods but will not force them to eat.
- Not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for disciplinary purposes.

Promote lifelong learning for children, early childhood staff and families about healthy food and drink choices.

The service 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.

Encourage communication with families about the provision of appropriate healthy food and drinks for children while they are attending the service.

The service will:

- Provide a copy of the Nutrition Policy to all families upon orientation at the service. Families will be provided with opportunities to contribute to the review and development of the policy.
- Display the menu so that families know what their children are offered each day.
- Ensure educators take time to discuss mealtimes with families and that families are regularly informed about the quantity and types of food their child is eating.
- Communicate regularly with families about food and nutrition related experiences within the service 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 newsletters, during orientation, information sessions and informal discussion.
- Celebrate special occasions with limited use of 'sometimes' foods, and with no special focus on food. Alternatives to using foods to celebrate are considered.

Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011

Healthy Kids, NSW Health. www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au

This policy was reviewed by staff, parents and management committee of Raymond Terrace Early Education Centre in January 2014.

6.3 Food allergy policy

There is a difference between a food allergy and anaphylaxis.

Allergies occur when an overactive immune system produces antibodies against substances in the environment that are normally harmless.

Anaphylaxis is a severe and sudden allergic reaction to the release of histamine and other defensive chemicals. It occurs when a person is exposed to an allergen (such as a food or an insect bite). Reactions usually begin within minutes of exposure and can progress rapidly at any time over a period of up to two hours. Anaphylaxis is potentially life threatening and always requires an emergency response. Fortunately anaphylactic reactions are uncommon and usually preventable.

The centre aims to ensure that any child with allergies is provided with an environment that is safe and allows them to participate in the daily routine of the service without the risk or fear of being exposed to traces of the allergen. This will be achieved through;

- Ensuring all children's allergies are displayed in each area.
- Ensuring that all staff have a current first aid certificate as well as specialized training in the Management of Anaphylaxis.
- Developing a crisis plan to be used in the event that the allergic child has symptoms that suggest they are having an allergic reaction.
- Ensuring medication is properly stored and not expired.
- Ensuring medication is available and staff are aware of how to administer it.
- Ensuring a doctor's recommended emergency action plan is in place. This should outline the symptoms of anaphylaxis, and should contain a photo of the child. This should be displayed in each area- dolphin room, penguin room, kitchen and staff room.
- Eliminating the allergen from the allergic child's environment.
- Communicating with the parents.

Source: Health and Safety in Children's Centres: Model Policies & Practices, 2003.

Caring For Children. NSW Health 2005

Community Child Care Co-operative. A guide to enrolling a child with severe food allergies in a child care service.

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

This policy was reviewed by staff, parents and management committee of Raymond Terrace Early Education Centre in December 2013.