

Children's Health & Safety

# Nutrition and Food Safety Policy.

## Our Vision.

To give every child **the best start in life.**

## Our Mission.

To deliver high quality childcare and exciting learning opportunities for every child, giving them a head start as they prepare for school.

## Our Values.

- |                |                                                                                                                    |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Care</b>    | We take care of the children entrusted to us and our dedicated staff. All are appreciated and diversity is valued. |
| <b>Quality</b> | We maintain the highest standards in care and safety and provide exceptional early years education.                |
| <b>Service</b> | We provide exceptional service and are integral to supporting parents bringing up children.                        |
| <b>Value</b>   | We provide outstanding value for our families.                                                                     |



Busy Bees Early Learning Australia Services are required by legislation to ensure the provision of healthy foods and drinks that meet the requirements for children according to the **Australian Dietary Guidelines**. It is essential that our Services partner with Families to provide education about nutrition and promote healthy eating habits for young children to positively influence their health and wellbeing.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS (NQS)	
QUALITY AREA 1 – Educational Program and Practice	
1.1 - Program	1.1.3 – Program Learning Opportunities
1.2 - Practice	1.2.1 – Intentional Teaching
QUALITY AREA 2 – Children's Health and Safety	
2.1 - Health	2.1.2 – Health Practices and Procedures
	2.1.3 – Healthy Lifestyle

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS	
Part 6	Operating an Education and Care Service (Law – 167)
Part 4.2	Children's Health and Safety (Reg – 77, 78, 79, 80, 90, 91)
Part 4.7	Governance and Leadership (Reg – 162, 168, 170, 171, 172)

RELATED POLICIES	
Bottle Preparation and Safety Policy	Health and Hygiene Policy
Breastfeeding Policy	Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
Child Enrolment and Orientation Policy	Medical Conditions Policy
Educational Program Policy	

## PURPOSE

Busy Bees Early Learning Australia 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 beverage choices for children in our care. This policy affirms our position on the provision of healthy food and the promotion and education of healthy choices for optimum nutrition.

We are committed to ensuring consistently high standards of food preparation, storage, and transportation are being met, and ensuring all reasonable precaution to minimise the risk of children choking or suffering allergies and anaphylactic reactions to food allergens, will be observed. Children will be served food that is appropriate for their age and stage of development, while ensuring that no known allergens are served to children.

We believe in providing a positive eating environment that reflects dietary requirements, cultural and Family values, and promotes lifelong learning for children. We are committed to embedding healthy eating key messages outlined in the [Munch & Move](#) program into our curriculum and to supporting the *National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings* outlined in the [Get Up & Grow](#) resources.

## SCOPE

Children, Busy Bees Employees, Visitors and Families

## POLICY

Busy Bees Early Learning Australia has a responsibility to help children to develop good food practices and approaches by working with Families and is committed to the safety of all children and adults attending the Service.

Healthy eating habits will be embedded by incorporating nutritional information into daily routines. Awareness and understanding of healthy food and drink choices will be learnt by including in the children's program, a range of learning experiences encouraging children's healthy eating. Opportunities for children to engage in discovery learning and discussion about healthy food and drink choices will be provided, and children will be encouraged to participate in a variety of 'hands-on' food preparation experiences.

In partnership with Families, the Service will develop an appropriate response or individual management plan for children with known food allergies, food intolerances, cultural or religious dietary restrictions and special diets, so that all children's individual dietary needs are met. Management plans will be kept in line with the Medical Conditions Policy and related procedures that include ongoing monitoring and audits.

Busy Bees employees endeavour to recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and will 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. Age and developmentally appropriate utensils and furniture will be provided for each child.

Mealtimes will reflect a relaxed and pleasant environment where employees sit with children to role-model healthy food and drink choices and actively engage children in conversations about the food and drink provided. Food will be served at various times throughout the day to cater for all children's nutritional needs.

Employees will not consume or take into care environments, take away, 'junk' foods, hot or soft drinks. Unless eating a healthy meal or snack with the children, all employee food is to be consumed in the designated staff room and not in front of the children.

Children will be supervised while drinking and eating, ensuring safe bottle-feeding and eating practices.

Children will be encouraged to assist to set and clear the table and serve their own food and drink, where appropriate, providing opportunities for them to develop independence and self-esteem. They will be encouraged to try different foods but not forced to eat them, and each child's appetite will be respected if the child is not hungry or is satisfied.

Children will wash and dry their hands before handling food or eating meals and snacks and be encouraged to use utensils when self-serving food. They will be discouraged from handling other children's food and utensils.

Cooking experiences may be carried out with the children as a part of the program. On these occasions participating employees will be vigilant to ensure that the experience remains safe, and relevant food hygiene practices are adhered to. Tie up any long hair and always be aware of heat.

To reduce the chances of harmful germs spreading through food, children should only prepare food that will be cooked afterwards – any germs in the food will be destroyed when the food is cooked. Foods suitable for cooking activities include cooked biscuits, fresh pasta, soups and pizza. Foods not suitable for cooking activities include biscuits or slices that do not need cooking and are therefore not exposed to high temperatures. Refrigeration does not kill germs.

However, if the food will not be cooked, the risk of spreading germs can be lowered if each child only prepares food that they will eat themselves.

Do not allow children to eat uncooked mixtures, such as uncooked biscuit dough or cake batter

Food will not be used as a reward or bribe, and food will not be withheld from children.

### Food Safety

All Services where food is prepared for children will be licensed with the local authority and will have a Food Safety Program, qualified Food Safety Supervisor, and all Busy Bees employees will undergo annual Food Handling training that aligns with National Food Safety Standards.

Food will be prepared in accordance with the Food Safety Program and will comply with Food Safety Standards. All Food Safety Records will be completed and kept for auditing purposes.

Busy Bees Services will strictly adhere to food hygiene standards to prevent the risk of food poisoning. 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.

All food will be stored and served at safe temperatures (below 5°C or above 60°C), with consideration to the safe eating temperature requirements of children. Foods will be cooked or reheated to 75°C or higher to ensure any harmful bacteria have been destroyed. Utensils or tongs will be used when handling and serving food.

All Services will maintain a food probe thermometer that is to be calibrated in line with the Food Safety Program requirements to ensure its accuracy. Thermometers that contain button batteries are not permitted on site.

Employees will practice and role model, strict hand washing hygiene before and after handling food, and each time they enter the kitchen. Hands must be washed with soap and warm water and dried using paper towel before handling food, even when using gloves.

As per the Staying Healthy in Childcare 6<sup>th</sup> Edition guidelines, it is not necessary to wear gloves when preparing food if hands are clean and dry and skin is not broken. Gloves must be worn if there is broken skin or may be worn when preferred by an individual handling food. Gloves must be changed between handling different food and changing tasks as they are not a substitute for clean hands.

Employees preparing food will cover wounds or cuts with a blue coloured, waterproof dressing (that will easily be seen if it falls off), and gloves will be worn over any dressings. Fingernails will be trim and clean. Nail varnish and acrylic nails must be covered by gloves. Jewellery, watches, and fitness devices will not be worn. Hair will be clean, tied up and away from the face area, facial hair will be covered, hairnets will be used where deemed required.

Employees who are feeling unwell must inform management and will not prepare or handle food.

Food preparation areas and surfaces will be cleaned both before, after, and during any food preparation. Floors will be cleaned after each meal.

**Allergen Management**

To minimise cross-contamination and ensure that food allergies and intolerances are catered for, separate knives and utensils will be used for different foods. Hand hygiene will be practiced, and where gloves are worn, they will be changed between handling different food and changing tasks.

A colour-coded cutting board system will be in place. Recommended colours are:

Blue	Seafood
Red	Raw Meat
Brown	Cooked Meat
Yellow	Poultry
Green	Fruit and Vegetables
White	Bakery and Dairy

Employees preparing food for children with food allergies or intolerances will be proficient at reading ingredient labels. All food must be securely covered until received by the child to prevent possible cross-contamination.

Children with food allergies and/or intolerances will be served their meals and snacks individually on an easily identifiable plate or container in line with the Busy Bees Food Safety Colour Coding System which includes individualised placemats and colour cards.

Red bowls and plates will be used for children with identified allergies and known anaphylaxis.

Allergy and Intolerance Registers will be in place and must be kept current. A copy of the register will be located in the kitchen and on the food trolley used to deliver meals to children. The register must be checked when serving children food at all mealtimes.

To minimise the risk of anaphylaxis, Busy Bees Services will apply Allergy Awareness guidelines where it is known that a child who is being educated and cared for is susceptible to severe allergy or anaphylaxis to a particular food, and an Allergy Aware Notice will be displayed in the entrance of the service.

We are mindful that a variety of allergies may exist, and therefore it is not possible to exclude all foods that can cause an allergic reaction. As nut and egg allergies are among the most common, they may take precedence.

**Choking Hazards**

To help prevent choking the following safe eating practices will be implemented.

Children must be:

- Seated and remain calm when eating and drinking
- Encouraged to chew food well and not overfill their mouth
- Encouraged to take their time while eating
- Provided with the time to eat at a leisurely pace

Employees will minimise choking hazards by ensuring food is cut into small pieces and are textured appropriately according to the age of the child - i.e. grapes and cherry tomatoes are cut into quarters, cheese chunks are finely chopped or grated, ensure membrane is removed from stringy vegetables and citrus fruits, raw vegetables are soft-cooked, serve seedless fruits, closely monitor children chewing seeds or popcorn etc.

## Menus

Seasonal menus will be provided on a minimum four-week rotation cycle and are regularly reviewed.

Menus will be displayed that accurately describe the food and beverages that will be provided each day in an accessible area of the Service for Families to view.

Menus will be developed in consultation with children, employees, and Families, and will consider the age, stage of development and chewing ability of the children, allergies and dietary requirements. They will be consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines and provide children with at least 50% of the recommended dietary intake for all nutrients.

Busy Bees will consult with health professionals to support the menu development including dietitians for children with special dietary requirements such as allergies, vegetarians and vegans.

Busy Bees will respect and accommodate children's cultural or religious dietary practices as requested by Families where possible. In some instances, Families may be requested to supply their own food.

Menus will provide 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. Healthy snacks on the menu will complement what is served at mealtimes and ensure the snacks are substantial enough to meet the energy and nutrient needs of children.

## Food Brought in From Home

In Services where food is not provided, Families are supported and encouraged to provide a variety of healthy options for their child, while adhering to allergy guidelines of the Service. Children will be encouraged to eat the more nutritious foods provided in their lunchbox, such as sandwiches, fruit, cheese, and yoghurt, before eating any less nutritious food provided.

Food should be transported in an insulated lunchbox with cooler bricks. Lunch boxes can be placed in the Service refrigerator upon arrival but must be unzipped, at least a third of the way, for cool air to circulate and keep the contents cold.

Food provided from home that requires reheating must be tested to ensure it reaches a temperature of 75°C or higher when being heated.

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.

Lunchboxes and drink bottles must be taken home each day for cleaning.

When Families provide cake/cupcakes/food items to share in the setting, make sure:

- They are store-bought and enclosed in sealed packaging
- Ingredients are listed on the packaging
- The 'use by' date is clearly labelled

If the birthday child is wishing to blow out a candle, to prevent the spread of germs through saliva on the whole cake, Families will provide a separate cupcake for the birthday child and enough cupcakes for all the other children or a large cake that can be cut and shared.

**Beverages, Water and Drink Bottles**

Children will be offered beverages appropriate to their needs on a regular basis throughout the day. Safe drinking water will be readily available for children to drink throughout the day in both the indoor and outdoor environment. Employees will encourage all children to drink water freely.

To ensure this, all infants and children can also access their own drinking bottles throughout their daily routine. Employees will consistently refill and refresh the water throughout the day.

We request Families send a water bottle for their child every day. It is important that the bottle is clearly labelled with the child's name and is suitable for the child's age and abilities. At the end of each day, all Families are to take the water bottles home for a thorough clean before bringing back to the Service on the child's next day of attendance.

**SOURCES**

[ACECQA](#)

[National Quality Standard](#)

[Education and Care services National Regulations](#)

[Education and Care Service National Law Act 2010](#)

[Early Childhood Australia](#)

[Raising Children - Separation Anxiety in Children](#)

[Raising Children - Dummies](#)

[Queensland Health - Dummies and Pacifiers](#)

[Water Bottles - A how to for cleaning](#)

**VERSION CONTROL**

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years and/or in line with legislation and organisation requirements.

Version	Date	Owner	Responsibility	Change Description
1	01/10/2023	Chief Pedagogy & Safeguarding Officer	Policy Development Officer	Replace all previous versions
2	26/09/2024	Chief Pedagogy & Safeguarding officer	Policy Development Officer	Revised in line with new Staying Healthy in Childcare glove guidelines and Food Safety allergens.

This document is uncontrolled when printed and may be varied, replaced, or terminated without notice.