

QUALITY AREA 2
CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

FOOD POLICY

(Nutrition, food, beverages and dietary requirements)



BACKGROUND

Children in Long Day Care receive a large part of their daily food intake whilst in care. It is therefore essential that Gumnut Gardens provide nutritious and balanced food and drink to the children in our care. It is important that carers are informed of the menus at Gumnut Gardens and how the dietary requirements of their children are met in our Service. The culture and rituals surrounding food are an important part of Gumnut Gardens' philosophy and consequently food is considered not only as physical nourishment but also as an integral part of social, cultural and familial life.

AIM

1. To provide food, and food and nutritional education, that is consistent with the national dietary guidelines for children, adolescents and national infant feeding guidelines.
2. To provide food and beverages appropriate to the age, cultural background or medical needs of children attending Gumnut Gardens.
3. To maintain Gumnut Gardens' ecofriendly philosophy and provide organic food whenever practicable and possible.
4. To minimize the environmental impact of the food provided at Gumnut Gardens.
5. To engage in sustainable food production practices, as far as is practicable, with a view to supplementing purchased ingredients.
6. To comply with state regulations and general principles of food safety and food preparation.
7. To develop an awareness of, and positive attitudes towards, appropriate food choices.
8. To develop an awareness and an enjoyment of the social and cultural significance of food.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
National Quality Standards 2011
Work Health and Safety Act 2011
Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011
Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991
Food Standard Australia New Zealand Regulations 1994
Food Act 2003 (NSW)
Food Regulation 2010 (NSW)

LINKS TO THE NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD

Standard 2.1 - Each child's health is promoted

Element 2.1.1 - Each child's health needs are supported.

Element 2.1.3 - Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.

Standard 2.2 - Healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in the program for children

Element 2.2.1 - Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate for each child.

WHO IS AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

Children

Families

Staff

Visitors

Volunteers

Management

IMPLEMENTATION

It is Gumnut Gardens' responsibility to help children and parents develop good food attitudes and habits. In order to achieve this, Gumnut Gardens will:

- provide a menu consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines
- cater to the individual needs of children in relation to culture, vegetarianism, allergies and any medical conditions
- present food in an attractive manner
- develop an awareness of cross-cultural eating patterns and related food values
- provide safe food, i.e. hygienically sound and with reduced risk of choking
- ensure meal times are relaxed, pleasant and timed to meet the needs of the children
- prohibit the use of food as punishment, reward or bribe
- prohibit any form of force feeding
- encourage independence and social skills at meal times
- establish healthy eating habits in the children by the incorporation of nutritional education into the program
- communicate with parents / guardians about their child's food intake, i.e. to display the menu for the nursery, report any concerns regarding children's eating habits
- inform parents / guardians of children's nutritional needs through posters and information
- provide safe drinking water to children and staff at all times, and ensure children have adequate fluid intake during their care
- encourage parents to follow up the "healthy eating" message at home. This policy and information provided to parents throughout their child's enrolment will support the parents in doing this.

- motivate staff to present themselves as role models, maintaining good personal nutrition, and to eat with the children at meal times
- provide nutrition and food safety training opportunities for staff including awareness of culturally diverse foods and preparation.
- provide information to staff about understanding and handling eating behaviors of children (including refusal of food by children)
- any unused or uneaten food will not be reused for human consumption.

The special needs of infants will be considered, Gumnut Gardens will:

- Encourage and support mothers with infants to continue to breast feed as long as possible
- If infants need extra fluids, cooled boiled water will be provided
- Provide a supportive environment for breast feeding mothers to use while visiting Gumnut Gardens
- Encourage introduction of solid foods at about six months
- Provide gluten free cereal, pureed vegetables, and fruits as first solids
- Introduce iron containing foods such as meat, poultry, fish, legumes and whole grain cereals between 6 to 9 months
- Provide a suitable range of food textures according to age and development of the infant
- Encourage the use of a cup rather than a bottle from 12 months of age

To comply with Gumnut Gardens' ecofriendly policy, Gumnut Gardens will:-

- Purchase organic ingredients as far as is practicable.
- Purchase meat from butchers who maintain a paddock to plate philosophy.
- Only purchase free-range eggs and purchase free range poultry products.
- Choose products that minimize packaging or use recyclable or bio-degradable packaging.
- Endeavour to supplement purchased ingredients with food produced at Gumnut Gardens.
- Maintain a vegetable patch, herb garden, fruit trees and chicken coup as far as is practicable and as far as council permits.
- Make food from first principles as much and as often as possible.

To develop both an awareness, and an enjoyment, of the social and cultural significance of food, the Gumnut Gardens will:-

- Engage the children in age-appropriate activities regarding food production, such as watering the vegetables, collecting eggs or picking fruit.
- Teach children, in an age appropriate way, how to share a meal with others. For example, children will be required to wash hands before eating, the children will be taught to set the table, pass platters of food for sharing and clean up afterwards.
- Encourage the children to participate in the preparation of food for special cultural events. For example the children can participate in making hot cross buns for Easter and matzo dumplings for Pass Over.
- Celebrate a variety of cultural events as appropriate to the culture and religion of the children attending Gumnut Gardens.
- Encourage parents to give talks about food from their cultural background and the most memorable feasts from their own childhood.

The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will ensure that this policy is maintained and implemented at all times.

SOURCES

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
Guide to the National Quality Standards 2011
Work Health and Safety Act 2011
Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011
Healthy Kids www.healthykids.gov.au
Better Health Channel www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au
NSW Health www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au
NSW Food Authority www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au
National Health & Medical Research Council www.nhmrc.gov.au

REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed annually by management, employees, parents and any interested parties.

Reviewed: July 2009, July 2010, July 2011, March 2012, February 2013, February 2014, August 2014, June 2015
Date for next review: June 2016