

# Early Childhood Management Services

## Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety Early Childhood Education

### Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary Requirements Procedure (Including Breastfeeding)

#### Procedure

#### Food allergies/intolerances/specific dietary requirements

The Nominated Supervisor Centre Director/Educators will:

- At enrolment, request that details of any food allergies or intolerances or specific dietary requirements be provided to the service and work in partnership with families to develop an appropriate response so that children’s individual dietary needs are met
- Support all children with food allergies and ensure that the required documentation (ASCIA Management plan) has been received and the ECMS Anaphylaxis Policy and Procedure is strictly adhered to
- Complete Risk Management and Communication Plan relating to food allergies in conjunction with the family
- Notify the parents of their responsibility to inform Educators/staff of any foods their child is not able to eat for any reason by adding the relevant information to the child’s enrolment form and advising Educators/staff on any changes to this requirement
- Ensure that each child’s food allergies, intolerances and preferences are clearly documented and communicated to the centre cook and Educators
- 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
- Commit to providing menus which will as far as possible reflect the cultural composition of the families currently using the centre based services. The service will endeavour to be sensitive and responsive to special medical, religious, and cultural diets
- Ensure families are provided with opportunities to contribute to the review and development of the policy

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- In kindergarten, 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

Educators/staff:

- Who are directly involved in food preparation, undertake Food Safety Supervisor, Nutrition and Hygiene training as deemed necessary by Department of Human Services and Food Safety Audit recommendations
- Who are involved in food handling and serving undertake yearly informal food safety, nutrition and hygiene training from Food Safety Supervisors via staff meetings.

### Breastfeeding and Breast Milk

Educators / staff will:

- Support mothers who are breastfeeding by providing a suitable place within the service where mothers can breastfeed their babies or express breastmilk
- Support mothers to continue breastfeeding until babies are at least 12 months of age while, in consultation with parents offering appropriate complimentary foods from around 6 months of age as per the National Health and Medical Research Council Infant Feeding Guidelines (2012)
- Ensure the safe handling of breastmilk 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 as stated by the parents
- Always bottle feed babies by holding baby in a semi-upright position
- Always supervise babies while drinking and eating, ensuring safe bottle feeding and eating practices at all times.

### Infant formula and Expressed Breast Milk (EBM)

Management of EBM:

- Parents may choose to supply expressed breast milk for their child while in child care or they may choose to come to the service to breastfeed their child
- Parents wishing to attend the service to feed their child will be encouraged and supported to do so
- Additional support can be sought from the Australian Breastfeeding Association 1800 686 268

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When expressing breastmilk, mothers should:

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water
- If using a breast pump, sterilise it according to the manufacturer's instructions and ensure the storage bottle is sterile
- Refrigerate or freeze milk immediately after expressing
- Discard any breastmilk that has been thawed, then warmed but not used
- Freeze milk that will not be used within two days. NHMRC Infant Feeding Guidelines: Information for Health Workers (2012) refer to a maximum refrigerated storage time of no longer than 72 hours
- Date containers at the time of collection and use the oldest milk first
- Parents are required to provide EBM in clearly named and dated Infant feeding bottles

In giving EBM, Educators/staff will ensure:

- Refrigerated EBM will be warmed in its bottle in a jug of hot water (not boiling) until the EBM reaches room temperature. After warming, gently shake the milk to mix it again. Several batches of EBM expressed at different times may be mixed and/or stored together to make enough EBM for one feed. EBM will not be re-warmed or re-served if the child does not consume the full contents on the first feeding
- Do not overheat or boil EBM as this can destroy valuable nutrients in breast milk. It is not recommended to use a microwave to thaw or heat EBM
- Frozen EBM can be warmed quickly, but not in boiling water, or thawed slowly in the refrigerator, e.g. overnight. Frozen EBM will not be left to stand at room temperature. Frozen EBM will be thawed with warm water, as the water cools further warm water is added until the EBM becomes liquid. It is then transferred to a sterilized feeding container, and stored in the refrigerator for no more than four hours, then warmed as required
- Breast milk will not be frozen or heated more than once. Small amounts of EBM will be offered to infants at a time. If the infant is not hungry Educators/staff will not then have to throw out large quantities of EBM. If the baby needs more, another small amount will be prepared.

## Management of infant formula

- Parents are required to provide unopened infant formula tin clearly named for staff to prepare as per the instructions. Cans will be dated upon opening and will be discarded after 4 weeks
- Infant formula will be stored in the coldest section at the back of the fridge and, if refrigerated, discarded after 24 hours

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- Infant formula will be warmed by placing the container in warm (not boiling) shallow water until warm or through use of a commercial bottle warmer. Educators/staff will not use a microwave as it reheats unevenly
- Infant formula that is removed from refrigeration should be used within 1 hour or discarded. Because of the possible bacterial contamination, formula remaining in a bottle 1 hour after the start of feeding should also be discarded
- Bottles are not to be reheated after a child has drunk part of the bottle; any unused formula is to be discarded.
- Cooled boiled water is available to children under 12 months of age to drink at meal times and throughout the day.

### Introducing Solids

- The average age for babies to commence solids is around 6 months, however all babies are different and advice can be sought from Maternal and Child Health Nurse
- Introduction to solids should commence with a single food e.g. infant rice cereal and should commence with a teaspoon once a day increasing the amount by a teaspoon each day until baby is eating 2 tablespoons
- ECMS staff will not introduce a new food to a child for the first time whilst at the service and will communicate with parents about which solids have been previously introduced and only include these in their diet.

### Where food is provided by ECMS, Educators/staff 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
- In Early Learning Centres, ensure the service menu is reviewed by the Healthy Eating Advisory Service and meets the criteria determined
- 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 in care
- Plan healthy snacks on the menu to complement what is served at mealtimes and ensure the snacks are substantial enough to meet the energy and nutrient needs of children
- Vary the meals and snacks on the menu to keep the children interested and to encourage the children to consume a wide range of healthy foods
- Staff in the Early Learning Centres will discourage the provision of food from home for children as the menu provided is sufficient to meet children's needs. If a child requires specific food to be brought from home (without this being medically necessary), consent for this needs to be under the discretion of the

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Centre Director. ECMS requires parents to complete and sign the Food brought from Home Register.

### When food is brought from home, ECMS Educators/staff will:

- Provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and suitable for children's lunchboxes
- Encourage children to eat the more nutritious foods provided in their lunchbox, such as sandwiches, fruit, cheese and yoghurt, before eating any less nutritious food provided
- Discourage the provision of 'sometimes' foods which are high in fat, salt and sugar and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes. Examples of 'sometimes' foods include lollies, chocolates, sweet biscuits, muesli bars, breakfast bars, fruit filled bars, chips, oven-baked crackers and flavoured corn chips (see appendix 1).

### General practices

All ECMS staff/Educators will:

- Ensure water (preferably tap, or cooled boiled water for children under 12 months) is readily available for children to drink both inside and outside throughout the day
- Be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances and special diets and consult with families to develop individual management plans
- Ensure young children do not have access to foods that may cause choking
- Ensure all children remain seated while eating and drinking
- Always supervise children while eating and drinking
- Encourage and provide opportunities for cooking staff and Educators to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood nutrition
- Ensure gloves are worn or food tongs are used by all staff handling 'ready to eat' foods
- 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
- Food is stored and served at safe temperatures i.e. below 5°C or above 60°C
- Food is stored and served as directed by each service's individual Food Safety Plan
- Children will be discouraged from handling other children's food and utensils
- Food-handling staff attend relevant training courses and pass relevant information onto the rest of the staff

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- 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
- Staff and Educators are supported by having healthy food options in the staff room, for staff meetings and for professional learning
- 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 pre-schoolers to assist to set and clear the table and serve their own food and drink – providing opportunities for them to develop independence and self-esteem
- Encourage children to participate in a variety of ‘hands-on’ food preparation experiences
- Provide opportunities and experiences for children in the educational program to engage in discovery, learning and discussion about healthy food and drink choices
- Respect each child’s appetite and encourage progressive meal and snack times where possible. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, do not insist he/she eats
- Be patient with messy or slow eaters
- Encourage children to try a variety of foods but do not force them to eat
- Do not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for disciplinary purposes.

## Birthdays and family celebrations

- If families wish to celebrate a birthday or other family or cultural celebration they should discuss this with nominated supervisor/Educators to determine the best way to do this. This will include taking into account allergies and other dietary or cultural requirements. Each service will have its own birthday celebration traditions/processes that they will inform families of
- Birthdays, family celebrations and cultural celebrations are recognised and celebrated with limited use of ‘sometimes’ food. Healthy food options, such as fruit and vegetables, or non-food related celebrations will be encouraged.
- If families request to bring in celebration food, this is required to be commercially prepared (i.e. birthday cake). Families also need to provide the original packaging including a list of ingredients
- Staff will provide a cake alternative for blowing out candles to help minimise the spread of germs
- It is recognised that not all families will want to celebrate birthdays and families are encouraged to discuss their family’s special events and occasions for

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celebration so that they can be contribute to the community life of ECMS and the children’s curriculum.

### Programming and Planning

All ECMS staff are to be aware of food related play opportunities within their programming and planning and minimise the risks of this play in accordance with the individual child circumstances. Examples include (but not limited to) the use of egg cartons in craft activities for a child with an egg allergy, the use of “Nut cereal boxes” in box construction activities for a child with a nut allergy, the use of playdough for a child with wheat/gluten allergies and the use of balloons or band-aids for a child with a Latex allergy.

### Hot drinks

- Hot drinks can only be prepared and consumed in areas inaccessible to children.

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## Appendix 1

### Examples of 'sometimes foods' include:

- Chocolate, confectionery, jelly
- Sweet biscuits, high fat/salt savoury biscuits, chips
- High sugar/high fat cakes and slices
- Cream, ice cream
- Deep fried foods (e.g. hot chips) and pastry based foods (pies, sausage rolls and pasties)
- Most fast food and takeaway foods
- Some processed meats (e.g. sausages, frankfurts/hot dogs, salami, strasbourg, devon, some commercial chicken nuggets and fish fingers)
- Soft drinks, fruit juice and fruit drinks, cordial, sports drinks, energy drinks, flavoured milk and flavoured mineral water
- Sometimes foods can also referred to as 'discretionary' or 'extra' foods.

## Appendix 2

### Healthy eating guidelines

- Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended, with positive support, for babies up to six months. Continued breastfeeding is recommended for at least 12 months – and longer if the mother and baby wish
- If an infant is not breastfed, is partially breastfed, or if breastfeeding is discontinued, use an infant formula until 12 months of age. Introduce suitable solids at around six months
- Make sure that food offered to children is appropriate to the child's age and development, and includes a wide variety of nutritious foods consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines
- Provide water in addition to age-appropriate milk drinks. Infants under the age of six months who are not exclusively breastfed can be offered cooled boiled water in addition to infant formula
- Plan mealtimes to be positive, relaxed and social
- Encourage children to try different food types and textures in a positive eating environment
- Offer an appropriate amount of food, but allow children to decide themselves how much they will actually eat
- Offer meals and snacks at regular and predictable intervals
- Ensure that food is safely prepared for children to eat – from the preparation stages to consumption.

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