

Nutrition, Food, Beverages & Dietary Requirements

Inner West Council Children's Services have developed these Guiding Principles and consider them to be the policies and procedures required by law under the NSW Education & Care Services Regulations (2011 SI 653) – NSW Legislation. These Guiding Principles are relevant to all stakeholders including educators, staff, families and community who attend or visit our learning services.

Purpose:

Our commitment to children's health, safety and wellbeing includes: –

- role modelling food safety and hygiene practices,
- supporting healthy food and beverage choices.
- Provision of a high standard of food safety, hygiene.
- Respect for children's individual dietary choices and requirements.
- Acknowledgement and catering of children's cultural heritage food choices or beliefs.

Guiding Principles and Embedded Practice:

We prioritise children's health, safety and wellbeing. This includes safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, as well as providing food and beverages that are nutritious, appropriate in serving size for each age group and chosen based on each child's dietary and medical requirements.

We actively monitor and manage key food safety risks related to food temperature control, food processing, cleaning and sanitising.

We provide options to ensure all food likes, dislikes or intolerances are catered for.

We promote a healthy lifestyle, including healthy eating and physical activity. We support children and families' understanding about the importance of nutrition and food choices.

We value our families and their cultures, customs and religious traditions relating to food.

We work with our families to ensure that the food and beverages we provide to their children reflect their preferences.

We incorporate children's agency and decision-making into our educational program. We plan mealtimes and other food-related experiences to support children's choice, exploration and involvement.

Feedback from families, the team and children about our menu is sought and this informs menu planning.

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Food and beverages supplied to children are appropriate:

Food will be sufficient in quantity, always high quality and appropriate to the needs of each child. The Munch & Move program recommends that services offer the following quantities of food per child per day:

- **Protein:** ¾ of a serve per child
- **Vegetables or legumes/beans:** 2 serves per child
- **Fruit:** 1 serve per child
- **Wholegrain cereal foods and breads:** 2 serves per child

Food is to be offered throughout the day as required, according to each child's needs. Crackers, yoghurt and fresh fruit or vegetables, for example, can always be made available if children express the feeling of hunger.

Children have access to fresh water at all times of the day, including at mealtimes.

Services engage in open communication and collaboration with families to meet each child's food and beverage needs.

Services share and communicate with families to ensure that they have up to date and relevant information to support making nutritious choices.

Weekly menu:

- is to be displayed at each service for families to see;
- must accurately describe the food and beverages provided;
- changes to the menu must be communicated to families on that day via the electronic childcare management system or an agreed procedure;
- cycle varies by service, seasons and cultural considerations. A balance of fresh fruit, vegetables, white and red meat, lentils, fish, dried fruit, dairy produce (or alternatives), wholemeal products and water and variety of textures and colours of offered.
- Pre-prepared foods are limited.
- is informed through Healthy Eating Guidelines and can be supported by external bodies such as Munch & Move. Feedback is sought from children, families and educators.

Families are discouraged from bringing food onto the premises with children, in prams or in bags left at the service keep all children safe.

Services where families provide lunch for their child are encouraged at orientation and through ongoing conversations and sharing of up-to-date information to provide fresh, nutritious foods respectful of our Allergy Aware Zone. We ask families to save items such foods such as lollies, chips or juice for the home. This includes Vacation Care.

As we acknowledge the role food plays in celebrations, we encourage discussion between families and the NS when deciding if a food should be brought to the service.

Children with medical conditions around nutrition:

Should a child require alternative nutritional methods due to a diagnosed medical condition or intolerance, or specific needs including gastronomy feeding – the Nominated Supervisor will work with the family to develop and communicate a Risk Minimisation & Communication Plan in accordance with the child's Action Plan, or letter from a Doctor, and provide training to educators to support children's needs.

Food Allergy, Intolerance and Dietary Restrictions:

Our services are Allergy Aware Zones. We have children enrolled across our services with food intolerances and allergies, ranging from mild to severe, or in some cases life threatening anaphylaxis.

Suitable safe foods will be provided for children with allergy, intolerance or other food restrictions in consultation with families and information provided on the enrolment form and medical action plans.

Diagnosed medical conditions will be managed per our Care of Children with Medical Conditions Guiding Principle, including the development and communication of Risk Minimisation & Communication Plans to keep children safe.

New foods will only be introduced to infants after consultation with families.

The role of the Cook (and casual cook) is to be:

1. Aware of and follow the documented procedure for preparing and serving food to children with medical and dietary conditions always. This could include, but it not limited to, labels with the child's photograph, name and allergen to be placed onto all meals prepared for that child;
2. Informed in advance of change of days **and/or** casual days of any child with a medical condition related to food; and be proactive in finding out this information in advance;
3. Handling, preparing and serving food safely to avoid cross-contact with allergens;
4. Store allergen-free products separately from allergen-containing produces to prevent cross contamination. Use separate storage areas, equipment and utensils. Also store allergen-free used kitchen utensils in a closed container between use.
5. Clearly labelling allergens on food products, menus and storage containers to prevent accidental exposure to allergens.
6. Recording date food was prepared and labelling ingredients within frozen foods made by the cook, including baby foods.
7. Offering alternative options or modifications to accommodate their needs;
8. Following a regular cleaning schedule is essential for maintaining an allergy-free commercial kitchen.

Mealtimes are positive and provide choices for children:

Educators:

- Make mealtimes a positive and social experience by sitting and eating with children, role modelling healthy eating.
- Support children's independence during mealtimes, respecting agency and choices and appropriate serving sizes for small tummies.
- Positive conversations about the food being eaten and the trying of new foods.
- Allow children to eat at their own pace, for example progressive mealtimes and children who like to eat at a slower pace.
- Ensure families are aware of children's eating habits and any changes.
- Ensure all children are catered for, including providing an alternative as required.
- Reflect regularly on the menu including the presentation of food after observing children's eating patterns and preferences.
- Involve children in the preparation of meals and snacks as part of the program.
- Intentionally plan experiences to teach children about food and nutrition

Breastfeeding and Bottle-fed infants:

Breastfeeding is welcome and encouraged. All services provide a safe, quiet space to support breastfeeding.

Families who bring expressed breastmilk to the service should ensure the milk is:

- in a sterilised, closed container;
- labelled with the child's name and use-by-date.
- stored in the fridge or freezer.

The Nominated Supervisor is to ensure the procedure for safe storage, preparation and disposal of expressed breastmilk is displayed in the bottle preparation areas.

Sterilised bottles and equipment for breastmilk – Families are to provide:

- **sterilised** equipment for feeding, such as bottles, teats and other utensils.
- Used bottles will be returned to the family each day.
- **The Nominated Supervisor** will ensure new families are informed of this requirement during orientation.

Baby Formula in bottles – Families are to provide:

- pre-made individual formula bottles which are sterilised and labelled with the child's name and use-by-date (no more than 24 hours after preparation).
- These will be stored in the main kitchen area unless adequate space is available in the bottle preparation area.

Educators will:

- prepare and warm breastmilk and formula bottles just prior to their feeding time using a bottle warmer or upright in warm water for no longer than 15 minutes.
- test the temperature of milk before feeding (no hotter than body temperature).
- Breastmilk and prepared formula is stored in the fridge for the day it is received only and at room temperature for 2 hours - before needing to be discarded.
- Hold and feed, never having their bottle propped up to feed by themselves. Once babies can hold their own bottle, they must be actively supervised while feeding.
- Never put babies to sleep in a cot or bed with a bottle.

Food Safety Guidelines:

Young children are more at risk from food poisoning because their bodies and natural immune defences are not fully developed. We therefore follow the Food Safety Guidelines and ensure these three tools are implemented (category one business):

1. A qualified onsite Food Safety Supervisor is designated to each service;
2. All food handlers are trained in food safety and hygiene, or can demonstrate adequate skills and knowledge, and;
3. We have procedures in place to check and show our food is safe.

Food Safety Supervisor (FSS) :

Effective December 2024, each IWC service who prepares and serves food for children must:

- appoint a certified Food Safety Supervisor.
- At IWC - the FSS is usually the cook, with the NS also holding the FSS qualification.
- The FSS qualification must always be kept current.
- A copy of the certificate must be kept on display at each service.

The FSS has the authority and ability to give direction on the safe handling of food and their role includes:

 <p>Oversee day-to-day food handling</p>	 <p>Ensure food safety risks are managed</p>	 <p>Share skills and knowledge</p>	 <p>Promote positive food safety practices</p>
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Food Handler Training for all educators:

In addition to the FSS, every staff member serving food to children must complete the free online food safety training program. [Food Handler Basics training | NSW Food Authority](#)

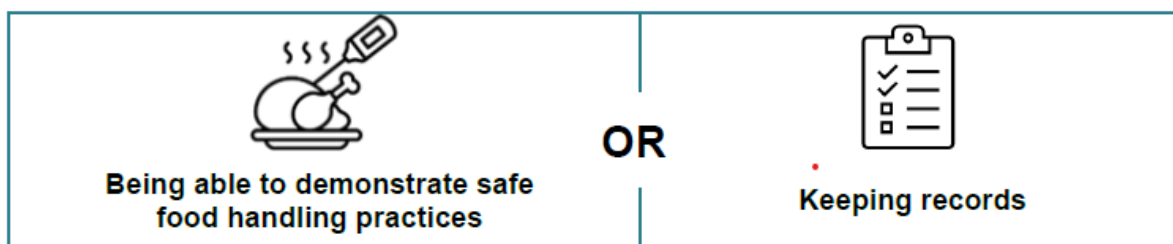
Food Handler training courses will be refreshed as follows:

Cooks	Annually - unless they have completed the Food Safety Supervisor certificate within the year.
Other Food Safety Supervisor (such as the NS)	Annually - unless they have completed the food Safety supervisor certificate within the year
Food Safety Supervisor meeting criteria - FDC Educator	Annually - unless they have completed the food Safety supervisor certificate within the year
Staff replacing the cook	Annually unless they have completed the food Safety supervisor certificate within the year
OSHC team	Annually unless they have completed the food Safety supervisor certificate within the year
May Murray & Globe Preschool	Annually unless they have completed the food Safety supervisor certificate within the year
****All other Educators, FDC team and FDC Educators	Once every 2 years
Admins	NA
MYB	NA

Showing Food is safe:





We actively monitor and manage key food safety risks related to food temperature control, food processing, cleaning and sanitising daily. Our Cook's maintain written records as evidence that we are:

- Receiving;
- Storing;
- Processing;
- Displaying and transporting potentially hazardous food; and
- cleaning and sanitising.



Key components of our food safety plans include:









- Safe handling of food.
- Food contamination.
- Cleaning and sanitising.
- Personal hygiene including Hand Hygiene.

 <p>Safe handling of food</p> <p>Temperature control for potentially hazardous food, understanding the temperature danger zone</p>	 <p>Food contamination</p> <p>Strategies to separate raw and cooked food, allergen management, food storage, and use of separate utensils and chopping boards</p>	 <p>Cleaning and sanitising</p> <p>Correct procedures for cleaning then sanitising, using food-safe chemicals and/or heat as a sanitiser</p>	 <p>Personal hygiene</p> <p>Obligations for sick employees, handwashing, uniforms and grooming of hair, nails and skin.</p>
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Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF) include:

Potentially hazardous foods are foods with certain characteristics that support the growth of bacteria, or the production of toxins, and must be kept at 5°C or colder, or 60°C or hotter, to stay safe to eat. They are foods you would keep in the fridge at home.




Examples of potentially hazardous foods include:

 <p>Raw and cooked meat and poultry</p> <p>Deli meat, burgers, curries, kebabs, pâté, meat pies</p>	 <p>Foods with eggs, beans and nuts</p> <p>Quiche, aioli, mayonnaise, mousses, tofu</p>	 <p>Dairy and foods containing dairy</p> <p>Milk, dairy desserts, fresh cream, custard, cheese</p>	 <p>Cooked rice and pasta</p> <p>Fried and plain rice, spaghetti, carbonara, lasagne</p>
 <p>Seafood</p> <p>Sushi, prawns, fish, mussels, oysters, shellfish</p>	 <p>Sprouted seeds</p> <p>Alfalfa sprouts, clover sprouts, chickpea sprouts</p>	 <p>Cut fruits and vegetables</p> <p>Cut melon, salads, pre-cut fruit trays</p>	 <p>Foods containing potentially hazardous foods</p> <p>Sandwiches, pizzas, rice rolls.</p>

Foods not considered potentially hazardous include:

- raw whole fruit and vegetables
- bread
- biscuits
- crackers and crispbreads
- plain cakes.

What needs to be documented:

<p>Receipt</p> 	<p>Receiving delivery of our food:</p> <p>The temperature of <u>each</u> cold product must be checked with a food thermometer upon delivery to the service. Potentially hazardous foods (PHF) will only be accepted if they are delivered within the temperature of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 5°C or below; or → 60°C or above (deliveries of hot food). <p>What needs to be shown : The temperature of potentially hazardous food (PHF) when received.</p> <p>What needs to be recorded: Date, food received and food temperature.</p> <p>Suggested frequency: Each delivery.</p>
<p>Storage</p> 	<p>Storage of PHF in fridges and cupboards:</p> <p>Potentially hazardous foods must be stored within correct temperature control.</p> <p>What needs to be shown: The temperature of potentially hazardous food during storage.</p> <p>What needs to be recorded: The date and temperature of the refrigerator, freezer and storage cupboards.</p> <p>Suggested frequency: Daily</p> <p>Freezing food storage and requirements:</p> <p>Correct labelling of all foods stored within the freezer (including frozen baby food). Labels must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The name of the food; → Any allergens present in the food must be identified; → List of all added ingredients; → The name of the person freezing the food; → Date of packaging; → Use by Date OR Best Before Date.
<p>Cleaning and sanitising</p> 	<p>Cleaning and sanitising</p> <p>We ensure equipment is in a clean and in sanitary condition including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → eating and drinking utensils - immediately before each use; and → the food contact surfaces of equipment - whenever food that will come into contact with the surface is likely to be contaminated. <p>What needs to be shown: That eating and drinking utensils and food contact surfaces have been cleaned and sanitised when required.</p> <p>What needs to be recorded: If using heat, the temperature the water reaches to sanitise the surfaces, contact time and date. If using chemicals, how and when the chemicals are used to sanitise the food contact surfaces, date. If using a commercial dishwasher, the setting recommended by the manufacturer for sanitising.</p> <p>Suggested frequency: Daily.</p>

Inspections of food preparation areas:

Authorised officers from local councils, also known as environmental health officers inspect children's services premises under the Food Regulation Partnership with the NSW Food Authority. IWC will work with environmental health officers to routinely inspect our services to check compliance and standards.

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) Menus:

Each child is encouraged to eat breakfast at home or at our OSHC service. Afternoon tea will be provided.

School Holiday Care Services do not provide food for children. All children must bring their own lunch in a labelled lunch box.

Parents are asked to pack a variety of delicious and nutritious snacks for a long, active day.

Educators are not to leave the service to purchase food for children.

Children's Voices and Agency:

Our team encourage children to eat through role modelling and verbal cues, but they will never be expected to or forced to eat any food they do not like or do not wish to eat.

Alternatives will be sought for any child who does not like or want to eat the food provided, to ensure they are able to eat.

Menus can be evaluated to ensure children's food preferences are supported as much as possible.

If children request food or tell us they are hungry throughout the day, food will be provided in the form of fruit, cheese or crackers or another everyday food item.

Children will never be denied every day, healthy foods if they ask for more.

Any specific dietary arrangements in place due to medical or health needs in will be discussed and strategies in place from open consultation with the family and written instructions from the child's doctor.

Legislative Requirements:

Section/regulation	Description
Regulation 77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
Regulation 78	Food and beverages
Regulation 79	Service providing food and beverages
Regulation 80	Weekly menu
Regulation 90	Medical conditions policy
Regulation 91	Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
Regulation 160	Child enrolment records to be kept by approved provider and family day care educator
Regulation 162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
Regulation 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Regulation 169	Additional policies and procedures – family day care
Regulation 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Regulation 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Regulation 172	Notification of change to policies and procedures
Standard 3.2.2A	Food Standards Code – Food safety management tools

Definitions:

ACECQA – Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority

EYLF – Early Years Learning Framework

FDC – Family Day Care Officers

IWC – Inner West Council

GP – Guiding Principle

NQF – National Quality Framework

NQS – National Quality Standard

NS – Nominated Supervisor

RP – Responsible Person.

OSHC – Out of School Hours Care

RMCP – Risk Minimisation & Communication Plan

Educators – all staff responsible for supervising and educating children.

Staff or Team – all staff including administration officers, cooks and educators.

Related Legislation and Online Resources:

<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/>

[NutritionFoodBeveragesDietaryRequireGuidelines.pdf \(acecqa.gov.au\)](#)

[Food_safety_requirements_for_children's_services_guideline_FINAL.pdf \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

https://www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/migration/SGSHHS_CFHN/documents/PreparingFormulaFeedsandSterilisingBottles.pdf

[Food Handler Basics training | NSW Food Authority](#)

[Showing food is safe | NSW Food Authority](#)

[FA5512308_Template_1_Supplier_details.pdf](#)

www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au

Healthy Eating Guidelines <https://healthykids.nsw.gov.au/>

Related Guiding Principles, Forms & Attachments:

- Medical Action Plans for individual children.
- Risk Minimisation & Communication Plan (RMCP)
- Food Safety Plan
- Caring for Medical Conditions in Children Guiding Principle
- Safe Rest and Sleep Guiding Principle

Version Control - PROTOCOL HISTORY:

Version	Amended By	Changes Made	Date
1		Merged legacy protocols	February 2020
2	Senior Manager Children's Services	Consistent terminology	June 2020
2	Children's Services Operations Team	Re-written due to evaluation and new legislation	February 2025
Document:		Meals, Nutrition & Food Safety	<i>Uncontrolled Copy When Printed</i>
Custodian:		Children's Services	Version Version 01
Approved By:		Senior Manager Children's Services	Location: Children's Services
Adopted By:		Children's Services	Publish Location 03.Service Operations
Adopted Date:		June 2025	Next Review Date June 2028 or when changes to legislation occur



I have read and I understand this Nutrition, Food, Beverage & Dietary Requirements Guiding Principle. I agree to adhere to the requirements and procedures as outlined. I know how to access this Guiding Principle should I need to refer to it at any time to support me in my role to ensure children's safety and wellbeing is always maintained.

Nutrition, Food, Beverage & Dietary Requirements | June 2025