



Periwinkle PRESCHOOL

for Rudolf Steiner
early childhood education

Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary Requirements

Nutrition

*Children do not learn through instruction or admonition but through imitation.
Good sight will develop if the environment has the proper conditions
of light and color, while in the brain and blood circulation,
the physical foundations will be laid for a healthy sense of morality
if children witness moral actions in their surroundings.
Rudolf Steiner, The Education of the Child*

By the time children in NSW reach kindergarten, almost 18% are either overweight or obese. The 2007 *National Children's Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey* found that the dietary patterns of many Australian children are less than optimal with high consumption of salt and saturated fat, and low consumption of fruit and vegetables. Given that children are increasingly spending long periods of time in centre-based care, early childhood educators can model healthy eating and encourage young children to make healthier food choices. This can contribute to the prevention of weight problems in children, allowing children to thrive physically, socially and intellectually, and in turn contribute to prevention of nutrition-related chronic diseases.

Rudolf Steiner Educational Philosophy reinforces the importance of practical activities of daily life as part of early education. At Periwinkle Preschool we make growing, preparing and eating healthy foods a focus of our curriculum program. The food program and domestic work aspect of the program allows educators to engage children in learning experiences that are fun and enjoyable and incorporate key messages around healthy eating and skills for life. Like all aspects of the Periwinkle program, the food program is guided by NQS, EYLF principles and Steiner philosophy. The food program also supports each child's growing sense of personal identity and sense of being, belonging and becoming.

We recognise 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.



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Goals

Our goals for promoting good nutrition are to:

- embrace the Steiner Educational Philosophy of healthy nutrition for young children including, where possible, organic wholefood, grains and fresh fruit & vegetables
- provide children with access to safe drinking water at all times
- offer food and beverages appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis throughout the day
- support families in educating their children about healthy food choices.

Strategies

- Provide children with a wide variety of healthy and nutritious foods for breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea considering each child's individual dietary requirements, growth and development needs and any specific cultural, religious or health requirements.
- Plan and display the service seasonal menu that is based on sound menu planning principles and meets the daily nutritional needs of children whilst at Periwinkle Preschool.

Promote Safety

- Ensure water is readily available for children to drink 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 all children remain seated while eating and drinking.
- Always supervise children while eating.

Safe food handling

- Encourage and provide opportunities for cooking staff and educators to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood nutrition.
- Provide food to children that has been stored, prepared and served in a safe and hygienic manner and to promote hygienic food practices
- Ensure food tongs are used by all staff & children handling 'ready to eat' foods at the table.
- 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.



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- Food is stored and served at safe temperatures ie below 5°C or above 60°C.
- Food-handling staff attend relevant training courses and pass relevant information onto the rest of the staff.
- Children will be discouraged from handling other children's food and utensils.

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

- 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 children 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.
- Respect each child's appetite. 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 different foods but do not force them to eat.
- Do 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

- 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.



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

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011. • Allocate finances for training and food safety. • Allocate finances to ensure provision of nutritionally balanced and culturally sensitive meals as required. • Ensure that the service implements adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service.
Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food are implemented at the service to minimise risks to children. • Ensure children being cared for the service always have access



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<p>& Educational Leader</p>	<p>to safe drinking water and are offered food and beverages on a regular basis throughout the day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that where food and beverages are supplied by the service, they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ nutritious and adequate in quantity ○ chosen with regard to the dietary requirements of individual children • Ensure that seasonal menu accurately describes the food and beverages to be provided is displayed at the premises in a location accessible to parents.
<p>Early Childhood Educators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to the strategies and practices of the Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary policy. • Ensure children’s individual dietary needs are adhered to. • Provide positive meal time experiences for children. • Respect the individual needs and choices of children. • Actively supervise children during meal times. • Adhere to the services Hygiene Policy.
<p>Families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate regularly with educators/staff regarding children’s specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs, including food preferences. • Contribute menu ideas and recipes.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every two years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the



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service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Related Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 78-80
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Related Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks

- National Quality Standard: 1.2.3, 2.1.3, 5.1.2, 6.1.2
- Early Years Learning Framework: Outcome 3 – Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and wellbeing

Sources

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) –

www.acecqa.gov.au

Healthy Kids NSW – www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au

Nutrition Australia – www.nutritionaustralia.org

Food Standards Australia New Zealand – www.foodstandards.gov.au