

NUTRITION POLICY

WHY?

Thrive Group Tasmania recognises the importance of healthy eating to the growth and development of young children and is committed to supporting the healthy food and drink choices of children in their care. Thrive also acknowledges the importance of supporting families in providing healthy food and drinks for their children.

Thrive promotes healthy lifestyles, including healthy eating and nutritional choices and will ensure, as far as is practicable that any food and drinks provided by Thrive are nutritious and adequate in quantity, and consider any dietary requirements and/or any specific cultural, religious or health requirements in accordance with the *Education and Care Services National Law* and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations – 78, 79, 80 and 168*.

WHO?

This policy applies to the following persons:

- Approved Provider (Thrive)
- Thrive Management
- All Staff
- Family Day Care Educators, Assistants and Relief Educators
- Volunteers
- Students on professional experience placements
- Others involved in the provision of education and care

All of the above will be made aware of the requirements of this policy and procedure and this will be undertaken as a part of the registration/induction process.

WHAT?

Early childhood settings, such as Family Day Care provide many opportunities for children to experience a range of healthy foods and to learn about food choices from Educators and other children.

Learning about healthy lifestyles, including nutrition, personal hygiene, physical fitness, emotions and social relationships is integral to well-being and self-confidence (ACARA, 2009. *Belonging, Being and Becoming*, p30).

Thrive Educators will provide children and families with age and developmentally appropriate support and information with regards to nutrition, nutritional balance, mealtime environment, food hygiene, safety and individual dietary needs including allergies.

WHEN?

Food and beverages provided by Thrive Educators will be consistent with the Australian Government Guidelines, including 'Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood' and 'Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia'. A weekly menu will be prominently displayed in accordance with regulatory requirements, where food and beverages, other than water is provided as per National Regulation 79.

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Where families provide food and beverages for their child, families will be encouraged to provide food and beverages that are in line with the mentioned guidelines above, so that they are age and developmentally appropriate and contain no known allergies to children attending Family Day Care service.

Thrive will provide all staff, Educators, Assistants and Relief Educators covered by this policy with the appropriate training so they are made aware of their responsibilities and obligations.

Thrive retains the sole discretion to reasonably vary, terminate or replace this policy from time to time. Thrive will consult before any amendments are made and will notify and train those to whom the amendments apply.

All persons covered under the paragraph 'Who' that breach this policy may be subject to the appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure or removal from the workplace or termination of services (workers, other than employees and other persons in the workplace).

NUTRITION PROCEDURE

HOW?

Food and beverages (other than water) provided by Thrive and Educators will be in accordance with the relevant Australian Guidelines, i.e. the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents, as well as the national legislation and regulations. Similarly, food and beverages will be nutritious and adequate in quantity; have regard to the dietary requirements of individual children, including each child's growth and development needs; and take into account any cultural, religious or health requirements.

Thrive and Educators will actively promote positive nutrition and a healthy environment through the implementation of the relevant Australian Guidelines and legislation and children will be provided with opportunities to learn about healthy lifestyles and develop independence and responsibility around positive food choices and eating habits. Mealtimes (including hygiene practices and preparation) will be used as positive, relaxed and meaningful opportunities for children to engage with food and extend their engagement, learning, vocabulary and development.

Positive Nutrition and the Implementation of Guidelines:

To support positive nutrition and the implementation of the mentioned guidelines, Thrive and Educators will:

Ensure drinking water is available at all times, both indoors and outdoors. Where applicable, any 'boil water alerts' that have been issued will be implemented. Children will be encouraged to drink water throughout the day, with the benefits of water discussed with children in an age and developmentally appropriate manner. Information regarding the benefits of water will also be available to families and others.

A welcoming and supportive environment will be provided for families wanting to breastfeed, bottle feed and/or express. Appropriate and safe food handling practices will be implemented in relation to breast and formula storage and use.

Distinguish between 'everyday' and 'sometimes' food and drinks, to ensure good health and nutrition. Everyday food and drink are those that fit into the five core food groups as described in the 'Australian Guide to Healthy Eating'. These provide all the nutrients essential for good health and eating a variety within each of these food groups will ensure nutritional adequacy. Sometimes food and drink are those that do not fit into the five core food groups. They are not essential for good health and are high in saturated fats, sugars, salt or a combination of these.

Provide information to families on the types of food and drinks recommended for children and suitable for children's lunchboxes. Discourage the provision of highly processed snack foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes. Some examples of these foods include: lollies; chocolates; sweet biscuits; muesli bars; fruit filled bars; chips; oven-baked crackers etc.

Plan and display a dated weekly menu, where it is accessible to parents and that accurately describes the food and beverages to be provided by the Family Day Care Educator, this also includes cooking experiences. Plan healthy snacks on the menu to keep children interested and to introduce children to a range of healthy food ideas. If the menu changes (for example, due to the unavailability of certain ingredients), parents should be informed of the substitute menu item offered to their child. This may be done through a note on a whiteboard, daily journal or communication book.

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Mealtimes will positively expose children and families to 'everyday' food and positive mealtime experiences, supporting children to develop positive eating behaviours, enjoy eating and learn about a wide variety of food. Positive mealtime experiences may include Educators: sitting together at mealtimes; sharing food awareness experiences; role modelling healthy eating; encouraging children to taste all food offered; and letting children choose what and how much they eat from what is available.

Children's Individual Dietary Requirements:

Thrive and Educators will be made aware of children with specific dietary requirements as part of the enrolment process.

Where the dietary requirements are in relation to a child's diagnosed medical condition (i.e. food allergies, intolerance, risk of anaphylaxis or a diabetic condition), in accordance with the Medical Conditions Policy, the family must supply a current Medical Management Plan (completed by a registered medical practitioner) prior to their child's commencement with Thrive. A Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan will be developed by the Educator in consultation with families and the relevant stakeholders and communicated to Thrive.

Similarly, Thrive will endeavour to recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

BREACH OF THE PROCEDURE

Any breach of this procedure may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, termination of employment.

Thrive retains the sole discretion to reasonably vary, terminate or replace this procedure from time to time. Thrive will consult before any amendments are made and will notify and train those to whom the amendments apply.