

NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY POLICY**WHY?**

Thrive Group Tasmania understands that positive nutrition is integral to children's health, wellbeing and confidence. It supports their growth and development and plays a crucial role in preventing illness and disease.

Thrive also recognises the early years are vital in establishing positive lifelong eating habits and food attitudes.

Staff and Educators in Thrive early childhood settings are uniquely placed to support children's learning about health lifestyles, including positive food choices and eating habits.

WHO?

This policy applies to families, staff and Educators enrolled with, or working in the following Thrive Children's Services:

- Early Learning Services
- Outside School Hours Care Services
- Family Day Care Services

WHAT?**Guide for Practice**

Thrive services will be guided by the following:

- The Australian Dietary Guidelines
- Infant feeding guidelines
- Get Up and Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activities Guidelines for Early Childhood
- Move Well, Eat Well – Early Childhood Award Program developed by the Tasmanian Department of Health in collaboration with the child care sector
- Food Safety Guide for Family Day Care Educators 2012: Tasmanian Department of Health
- Food Safety Manual for Tasmanian Educator and Care Services: Tasmania Department of Health (Long Day Care Centres, Outside School Hours Care).

Thrive's Family Day Care Services and all eligible Thrive Centre Based Services are members of the Move Well, Eat Well Program and are committed to working with families to implement and sustain healthy eating habits and active play messages.

Key Messages

- Food and drinks provided in Thrive services will be nutritious, adequate in quality and consistent with Australian Dietary Guidelines. They will also consider children's individual dietary requirements related to their growth and development and any specific cultural, religious and health needs.
- Health promotion with families will be a focus and information/resources provided about nutrition healthy eating and breastfeeding.
- Children will be provided with opportunities to learn about healthy lifestyles and develop independence and responsibility around positive food choices and eating habits.
- Adequate health and hygiene practices and safe procedures for handling, preparing and storing food will be implemented to minimise risk to children.

HOW?

Please refer to the Nutrition and Food Safety Procedure (following this Policy).

WHEN?

Long Day Care/Outside School Hours Care staff and Family Day Care Educators are to:

- Implement the key nutritional messages on an ongoing basis
- Comply with food safety requirements at all times
- Undertake food safety training every three years
- Promote the key nutrition messages with families on an ongoing basis
- Discuss a child's dietary needs with families at the time of the initial interview
- Follow management plans at all times where a child has a specific food allergy
- Develop and display weekly menus on an ongoing basis where services will be providing food and beverages
- Provide families with ongoing feedback regarding their children's food and beverage intake
- Provide children with opportunities to learn about positive food choices and eating habits on an ongoing basis.

Thrive will provide all employees 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 that the amendments apply to.

All persons covered under the paragraph 'Who' who 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 AND FOOD SAFETY PROCEDURE**HOW?****Implementing Food and Beverage Guidelines**

In accordance with the Australian Dietary Guidelines (see diagram at Appendix A), Thrive recommends:

- Safe drinking water as the preferred drink for hydration for toddlers and older children attending Thrive services. Water will be available at all times, offered regularly to children (both indoors and outdoors) and provided with each meal and snack for children aged one year and over. For Thrive services providing care for infants (0-12 months), cooled boiled water is offered to babies under six months who are not exclusively breastfed and to all infants from six to twelve months.
- Foods from the following five food groups as a part of meals/snacks and lunch boxes in Thrive services: plenty of vegetables of different types and colours; a variety of fruit; grain (cereal) foods, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quince and barley; lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, legumes and beans; milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or their alternatives, mostly reduced fat (although not for under two years of age).
- Intake of the following foods containing added fat, sugar and/or salt (which are also known as sometimes foods or discretionary foods) will be limited in Thrive services: sweet biscuits, cakes and desserts; processed meats and sausages; ice cream, confectionary and chocolate; meat pies and other pastries; commercial burgers, hot chips and fried foods; crisps and other fatty and/or salty snacks; sugar sweetened cordials, soft drinks and sports drinks.
- Sometimes foods and drinks are not included regularly in snacks or meals provided by Thrive services. Thrive has strategies in place to discourage families from providing sometimes food and drinks in lunch boxes brought from home. Only water or plain milk is provided by Thrive services at snack and meal times.
- Services support parents wishing to breast feed. A welcoming and supportive environment will be provided by making a comfortable space available for mothers to express milk or breast feed where possible, and by providing information and showing Thrive's support of their choice. Thrive services have safe handling practices for breast milk labelling, storage and use, as recommended in the Infant Feeding Guidelines and Breast Milk and Infant Formula Safe Handling Practices and Guidelines, courtesy of the Tasmanian Public Health Services community dietitians.

Please see the Infant Feeding Procedure document at appendix B for further information on storage, heating and preparation of breastmilk and infant formula.

Where Long Day Care, Outside School Hours Care and Family Day Care Educators are supplying meals/snacks, some important considerations include

- Planning menus using the Australian Dietary Guidelines, the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and healthy food groups as a reference point
- Developing and displaying a weekly menu which is readily accessible by parents and details foods to be provided to children each day
- A variety of age appropriate fruit and vegetables to be served daily
- On each occasion, that food is served, fruit and/or vegetables will be offered

- Sometimes foods and drinks will not be included in snacks or meals provided by Thrive's services
- Only water or plain milk will be provided by Thrive at snack and meal times
- Food will be provided on a regular basis
- Being inclusive and incorporate foods from all cultural backgrounds
- Provide parents with ongoing feedback about their child's food and drink intake.

Where Families Supply Meals/Snacks

Some important considerations include:

- Actively encouraging families to provide healthy everyday food and beverage choices
- Families are requested to include a variety of fruit and vegetables in the lunchbox each day
- Thrive has strategies in place to discourage families from providing sometimes food and drinks in lunchboxes brought from home
- Positively support families in understanding the basis of Thrive's healthy eating focus by providing regular information, resources and recipes.

The Wider Thrive Service Community

Thrive's services have strategies in place to limit the availability of sometimes foods and drinks in the wider service community, such as for fundraising, celebrations, excursions, staff meetings and training. Thrive encourages and supports the limiting of sometimes foods at these occasions, and the provision of healthy everyday food options.

Thrive's wider service community (i.e. management, administration, committees, family support groups, suppliers and visitors) are encouraged to support the limiting of sometimes food and drinks.

For birthday celebrations, Thrive encourages the focus of the occasion away from the food and places it on the environment (children should wear a special hat/badge/look after a special birthday bear for the day etc.).

Thrive asks families who bring in a birthday cake to choose a recipe that is a healthy option; low in fat/sugar, and if possible, inclusive of fruit or vegetables, such as a carrot cake, banana or apple cake. Alternatively, small individual muffins/cupcakes are a good option for small portions.

Thrive can provide recipes and ideas for healthy cake, cupcake and muffin options to families, if required.

Training

Thrive will actively encourage services to undertake training in Nutrition and Healthy Eating. Safe Food Handling training must be undertaken every three years.

Training options will include face-to-face learning, self-paced learning and on-line modules e.g. I'm Alert www.imalert.com.au

Children's Individual Dietary Requirements

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

Where requirements are health/medical related i.e. due to food allergies, intolerances, risk of anaphylaxis or a diabetic condition, staff/Educators will request a management plan prior to care commencing. They will also undertake a risk assessment and implement strategies to avoid child exposure to allergen(s).

Strategies may include adopting a 'nut aware' or 'allergy aware' stance within the staff member/Educators own service community; having a clear system for identifying individual children and the foods they can and can't be given; and supervising eating times to reduce the likelihood of food sharing. Services will adhere to appropriate management plans at all times.

Where dietary requirements have a cultural or religious basis, these needs will be respected and supported by individual services.

Health Promotion

Staff/Educators will work in partnership with families in a variety of ways. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Explaining Thrive's approach to nutrition and the underpinning evidence base i.e. National Guidelines together with membership of Move Well, Eat Well Program at the time of enrolment.
- Develop strategies which promote positive food options e.g. providing lunchbox/snack ideas/pamphlets and healthy everyday food recipes, distributing Get Up and Grow Family booklets and Move Well, Eat Well resources; setting up food displays with photos of recommended foods in the service; inviting families to training; and engaging in ongoing discussions and sharing of information.
- Services will be supported in maintaining their own up-to-date understanding of nutrition and healthy eating considerations; promoting and implementing the organisation's key nutrition messages; and in accessing nutrition resources; nutrition and food safety specialists and other relevant community networks.

Children will be provided with opportunities to learn about healthy lifestyles and develop independence and responsibility around positive food choices and eating habits

Thrive encourages services to:

- Use mealtimes as an opportunity for Educators to encourage children to try new and different fruit and vegetables, which have a range of textures, flavours, colours and aromas
- Support children to try new foods
- Present food in a fun and appealing way
- Ensure that Educators and support staff sit with children during meal times, encouraging healthy eating behaviours and role modelling healthy eating practices, showing enthusiasm for everyday foods
- Involve children in food related experiences which promote healthy lifestyles and good nutrition e.g. cooking and growing
- Support children in exercising their independence from a young age, e.g. serving food and feeding themselves
- Create a relaxed, social and enjoyable meal environment where children have seating, tables and utensils appropriate to their age
- Be flexible in giving children plenty of time to eat without feeling rushed or pressured and not requiring children to eat food they don't like or to eat more than they want
- Food is not used as behaviour management strategy

Adequate health and hygiene practices and safe procedures for handling, preparing and storing food will be implemented to minimise risks to children

Choosing and Storing Food

If services are buying packaged food, staff/Educators need to check the 'best before' or 'use by' date.

Foods need to be chilled in the fridge to slow growth of micro-organisms. The fridge needs to be kept at or below 5 degrees Celsius and the freezer between minus fifteen degrees Celsius and minus eleven degrees Celsius.

The fridge needs to be cleaned regularly and food must be stored away from cleaning agents and insecticides.

Cooked dishes/foods need to be placed in the fridge if not being eaten immediately. Food taken on excursions needs to be kept cool.

Preparing Foods Safely, Staff/Educators need to:

- Use good hygiene i.e. wash hand in soap and warm running water and dry on a clean towel before touching the food
- Wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly before eating or preparing them
- Keep food preparation areas clean, particularly surfaces, cutting boards and any bowls/utensils used
- Avoid raw foods such as eggs, meat, chicken or seafood, coming in to contact with cooked or ready-to-eat foods. Keep cutting boards and servicing plates separate.
- Cook foods, particularly poultry and meats, thoroughly and at the right temperature
- Avoid preparing foods if you are ill. Any cuts/sores must be covered
- Reheat meals until steaming hot throughout
- Reheat breast milk in warm to hot water only (not in the microwave)
- Reheat cows milk or formula preferably in warm to hot water. However, if choosing to use a microwave, ensure the following steps are followed:

Removal of teat/bottle top before placing in the microwave; adequate rotating and shaking of the bottle directly after microwaving; letting the bottle rest for 1- 2 minutes before testing the temperature; check the temperature of the formula/milk on the inside of the wrist before giving it to the child.

For detailed infant feeding safe-handling practices for labelling, storage, preparation and use of breastmilk and formula, please refer to the *Infant Feeding Procedure document, courtesy of Public Health Services and the Move Well Eat Well Program.*

All Family Day Care Educators will receive a hard copy of the publication 'Food Safety Guide for Family Day Care Educators' 2012 prepared by PublicHealth, Department of Health, Tasmania. This publication can also be accessed from www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/peh/food_safety (under the fact sheet section).

Each Centre Based Service will receive a copy of the 'Food Safety Manual for Tasmanian Education and Care Services' 2013 prepared by Public Health, Department of Health, Tasmania. This publication applies specifically to Long Day Care Centres plus Outside School Hours Care and Vacation Care services. It can also be accessed from www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/peh/food_safety (fact sheet section).

These Procedures relate to legislation as detailed in the Nutrition and Food Safety Policy.

H7 THRIVE GROUP TASMANIA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Children's Services

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.

POLICY VERSION & REVISION INFORMATION:

Policy Authorised by: General Manager
Review Date/s:
Review Date: As required by the GM or as legislation changes

Original Issue: Jul19
Current Version: Mar 22Ver1
NOTE: The digital version of this document is the most current version. Printed versions cannot be relied upon for accuracy and are always superseded by a digital copy.