

NUTRITION, ORAL HEALTH AND ACTIVE PLAY POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 2

PURPOSE

Lake Boga Preschool acknowledges the importance of healthy eating, oral health and physical activity and its contribution to good health and overall wellbeing.

This policy will provide guidelines to:

- promote a healthy lifestyle to children, educators and families at the service, including eating nutritious food, the importance of oral health and participating in physical activity
- provide opportunities for active play
- encourage children to make healthy lifestyle choices consistent with national and state guidelines and recommendations
- ensure that the dietary and cultural needs of children and families are taken into consideration when planning menus for service events and activities.

As a health promoting service it is recognised that every member of the service impacts on children's health and can promote active play, healthy eating and oral health of children, educators, staff and families through learning, policies, creating a safe and healthy physical and social environment and developing community links and partnerships. All members of the service including educators, staff, children, families and volunteers will be given a chance to review the policy, and will be supported in its implementation.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Lake Boga Preschool is committed to:

- promoting nutritious food and eating habits that will contribute to healthy growth and development in children and good oral health
- providing a safe, supportive and social environment in which children can enjoy eating and being active
- consulting and working collaboratively with families in regard to their child's nutrition and dietary requirements, including responding appropriately to food allergies and recognising cultural and religious practices and lifestyle choices
- ensuring that food and drink items provided by the service are consistent with national and state guidelines and recommendations
- providing children and families with opportunities to learn about food, nutrition, oral health and healthy lifestyles
- ensuring adequate health and hygiene procedures, including safe practices for handling, preparing, storing and serving food
- encouraging physical activity by providing a range of active play experiences for all children at the service.
- ensuring educators, staff, children and families are key partners in developing and supporting healthy eating, oral health and active play initiatives in the service.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisors, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, families, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Lake Boga Preschool.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

There are many benefits to promoting a healthy lifestyle in early childhood education and care settings, including the positive impact this has on each child's learning and development. Being made aware of positive eating behaviour, oral hygiene practices and the importance of physical activity from an early age can instil good habits that will remain throughout a person's life. Educators/staff are well placed to build this awareness among children and their families, while respecting lifestyle choices, and cultural and religious values.

Nutrition

The foods we eat provide our body with the nutrients we need to stay healthy. Good nutrition is the balanced eating of a variety of foods, and is especially important for children as they require a large amount of nutrients for growth and development. Research has shown that, when offered a variety of healthy foods, children can and do make good choices. It is also important to provide preschool children with a good foundation in healthy eating, as most children have formed lifelong eating habits before they reach school age.

Oral Health

Tooth decay is Australia's most prevalent health problem despite being preventable¹. It is important to note that oral health promotion is complementary to promoting healthy eating. Education and care settings provide many opportunities for children to experience a range of healthy food, and to learn about food choices from educators and other children (*Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, p30 – refer to *Sources*).

Oral health behaviours have a major influence on children's health and wellbeing and a direct impact on their growth and development. Oral diseases can negatively affect individuals through pain, discomfort, general health and quality of life. Poor oral health can limit a child's capacity in biting, chewing, smiling, speaking, and psychosocial wellbeing. The main oral health condition experienced by children is tooth decay affecting over half of all Australian children, making it five times more prevalent than asthma.

Active Play

Active play (play that involves using the large muscles in the body) develops a strong and healthy body, builds motor and co-ordination skills, creates a sense of wellbeing and helps protect from disease. Active play is about moving, being and doing.

A strong sense of health and wellbeing, supported by good nutrition, oral health and an active lifestyle, can provide children with confidence, energy and optimism that will contribute to their ability to concentrate, co-operate and learn (*Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, p30 – refer to *Sources*). Learning about healthy lifestyles, including nutrition, oral health and active play, links directly to Outcome 3 in both the *Early Years Learning Framework* and the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (refer to *Sources*).

The Australian Government has produced guidelines, recommendations and resources for healthy eating and physical activity in early childhood settings, including the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Australian Dietary Guidelines* and *Infant Feeding Guidelines* (refer to *Sources*), the *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* resources (refer to *Sources*) and the National Physical Activity Recommendations for Children 0-5 Years (refer to *Sources*). Practical, healthy eating advice is also available to early childhood services and schools via a telephone advice line: the Healthy Eating Advisory Service (refer to *Sources*), run by Nutrition

Australia. Early childhood education and care services can also register for and implement the *Achievement Program* (refer to *Sources*). This program is designed to create safe, healthy and friendly environments for learning, by promoting physical, mental and social health and wellbeing.

A decision with respect to incorporating progressive meal times into the educational program must take into account the needs of all children at the service, particularly children with specific medical conditions such as diabetes. The National Regulations require services to ensure that children with medical conditions are able to participate fully in the educational program, and are not discriminated against in any way.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*
- *Australian Dietary Guidelines. National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013*
- *Belonging, Being and Becoming. The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. Commonwealth of Australia 2009*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 77–78, 79–80 (if the service provides food), 168*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- *Food Act 1984 (Vic)*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety*
 - Standard 2.2: Healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in the program for children
 - Element 2.2.1: Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate for each child
 - Element 2.2.2: Physical activity is promoted through planned and spontaneous experiences and is appropriate for each child
 - Quality Area 6 – Collaborative Partnerships with families and communities
 - Quality Area 7 – Governance and Leadership
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development framework for all Children from Birth to Eight.*

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – Comlaw: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/>

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Active play: Large muscle-based activities that are essential for a child’s social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth and development.

- **Child-initiated active play** is developed by the child through exploration of the outdoor environment, equipment and games.
- **Adult-guided active play** encourages children’s physical development through promoting movement skills in a non-competitive environment.

- **Physical activity** includes sport, incidental exercise and many forms of recreation.

Adequate supervision: (In relation to this policy) **supervision** entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.

Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- developmental profile of each child and of the group of children
- experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

Healthy eating: Eating a wide variety of food from the five food groups each day. These are: fruit, vegetables and legumes/beans, grain (cereal) foods-mostly wholegrain, milk/yogurt/cheese and alternatives, lean meat/ poultry/ fish/ eggs/ tofu/ nuts/ seeds. Healthy eating also means eating in a way that is socially and culturally appropriate, having regular meals and snacks and eating food to satisfy hunger, appetite and energy needs.

Nutrition: The process of providing or receiving nourishing substances.

Oral health:

The absence of active disease in the mouth. Oral health is fundamental to overall health, wellbeing and quality of life. A healthy mouth enables people to eat, speak and socialise without pain, discomfort or embarrassment.

'Sometimes' foods and drinks: Food and drink items that are high in fat, sugar and salt, and that contain minimal vitamins, minerals or fibre.

'Everyday' foods and drinks: Is suitable for everyday consumption, such as grains, vegetables, fruits and yoghurt.

Food Literacy:

Food Literacy is 'a collection of inter related knowledge, skills and behaviours required to plan, manage, select, prepare and eat food to meet (dietary) needs'.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- *Achievement Program* is a health and wellbeing initiative for early childhood services, schools and workplaces. Contact: www.achievementprogram.healthytogether.vic.gov.au ; phone: 1300 721 682 or email: admin@achievementprogram.org.au
- *Australian Dietary Guidelines* (2013) National Health and Medical Research Council: <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/n55>
- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:* <http://education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework>
- Better Health Channel: www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

- Cancer Council Victoria – for information on sun safety: www.cancervic.org.au/sunsmart
- Cavallini, I and Tedeschi, M (eds) (2008), *The Languages of Food: recipes, experiences, thoughts*. Reggio Children Publications
- Dental Health Services Victoria – includes resources on oral health: www.dhsv.org.au
- Early Learning Association Australia – Road Safety Education: https://ela.org.au/services_resources/our_services
- Food Safety Victoria, Department of Health – Food Safety and Regulation: 1300 364 352
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand – for information on food safety and food handling: www.foodstandards.gov.au
- *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood*: www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-early-childhood-nutrition-resources
- *Healthy Eating Advisory Service* (HEAS) provides advice for Victorian early childhood education and care services, primary and secondary schools, hospitals and workplaces on healthy eating, including:
 - over-the-phone advice from nutrition experts on providing healthy food and drink to children
 - menu assessments
 - direct contact through an easy-to-access email address (Nutrition Australia).
 Contact HEAS: <http://heas.healthytogether.vic.gov.au/>
 phone 1300 225 288 or email: heas@nutritionaustralia.org
- *Infant Feeding Guidelines* (2013) National Health and Medical Research Council: <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/n56>
- Kids and Traffic – Early Childhood Road Safety Education Program: www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au
- Kidsafe: the Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia – for information on preventing childhood accidents in children under the age of 15 years: www.kidsafe.org.au
- Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, Royal Children’s Hospital Melbourne, *Limit ‘Sometimes’ Foods* Background Paper: [http://www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au/hav/admin.nsf/Images/Limit_sometimes_foods_background_paper.pdf/\\$File/Limit_sometimes_foods_background_paper.pdf](http://www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au/hav/admin.nsf/Images/Limit_sometimes_foods_background_paper.pdf/$File/Limit_sometimes_foods_background_paper.pdf)
- *National Physical Activity Recommendations for Children 0-5 Years*
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/health-pubhlth-strateg-phys-act-guidelines#npa05>
- Nitzke, S, Riley, D, Ramminger, A and Jacobs, G (2010), *Rethinking Nutrition: Connecting Science and Practice in Early Childhood Settings*. Redleaf Press, St Paul, USA
- Oberklaid, F (2004), *Health in Early Childhood Settings: From Emergencies to the Common Cold*. Pademelon Press, NSW
- *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (5th edition, 2013) National Health and Medical Research Council: <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/ch55>
- SNAC – a website that provides activities, recipes, fact sheets and discussion boards to support early childhood educators. Developed by Edith Cowan University: <http://snacwa.com.au/>
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/edcare/veyldframework.pdf>

Service policies

- *Anaphylaxis Policy*
- *Asthma Policy*
- *Curriculum Development Policy*
- *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy*

- *Diabetes Policy*
- *Excursions and Service Events Policy*
- *Food Safety Policy*
- *Hygiene Policy*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy*
- *Sun Protection Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- ensuring that the service environment and educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for eating, oral health and active play
- providing ongoing information, resources and support to families, to assist in the promotion of optimum health, including oral health, for young children (refer to *Sources*)
- recognising families, educators and staff as role models and are encouraged to bring foods and drinks that are in line with the service's Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play policy.
- ensuring the implementation of adequate health and hygiene procedures, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service (Regulation 77) (refer to *Hygiene Policy* and *Food Safety Policy*)
- ensuring that all educators/staff comply with the *Food Safety Act*
- ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of a child's food allergies and/or other medical conditions on enrolment or on initial diagnosis
- ensuring measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies and/or diabetes (refer to *Anaphylaxis Policy*, *Asthma Policy*, *Diabetes Policy* and *Food Safety Policy*)
- ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of, and plan for, the dietary needs of children diagnosed with diabetes (refer to *Diabetes Policy*)
- providing healthy suggestions for morning/afternoon tea and/or lunchboxes for children including fruit and vegetables and other healthy foods in line with the Australian Dietary Guidelines, rather than 'sometimes' foods and drinks
- ensuring that fresh drinking water (preferably tap water) is readily available at all times, indoors and outdoors, and reminding children to drink water throughout the day, including at snack/lunch times (Regulation 78(1)(a)). Only tap water and plain milk are encouraged.
- ensuring that food and drinks are available to children at frequent and regular intervals throughout the day (Regulation 78(1)(b))
- ensuring that celebrations, fundraising activities and other service events are consistent with the purposes and values of this policy and service procedures. Celebrating with a focus on healthy alternatives is encouraged.
- Ensuring educators and staff are supported to access professional development and resources to enable them to deliver healthy eating and oral health education.
- Ensuring healthy eating and oral health information and policy requirements are included in educator and staff orientation/induction.
- Ensuring partnerships are established with relevant organisations and health professionals to support healthy eating and oral health practices where appropriate.
- Ensuring diversity and culture are considered when implementing healthy eating and oral health practices

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- ensuring that the service environment and the educational program supports children and families to learn about and make healthy choices for eating, oral health and active play
- ensuring the implementation of adequate health and hygiene procedures, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service (Regulation 77) (refer to *Hygiene Policy* and *Food Safety Policy*)
- ensuring that all educators/staff comply with the *Food Safety Act*
- ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of a child's food allergies and/or other medical conditions on enrolment or on initial diagnosis
- ensuring measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies and/or diabetes (refer to *Anaphylaxis Policy*, *Asthma Policy*, *Diabetes Policy* and *Food Safety Policy*)
- ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of, and plan for, the dietary needs of children diagnosed with diabetes (refer to *Diabetes Policy*)
- ensuring that fresh drinking water (preferably tap water) is readily available at all times, indoors and outdoors, and reminding children to drink water throughout the day, including at snack/lunch times (Regulation 78(1)(a)). Only tap water and plain milk are encouraged.
- ensuring that food and drinks are available to children at frequent and regular intervals throughout the day (Regulation 78(1)(b))
- food and drink are not used as an incentive, bribe or reward at any time.
- registering and engaging the service with the *Achievement Program* (refer to *Sources*) **Lake Boga Preschool is registered with the Achievement Program through Swan Hill District Health.**
- healthy body image and an enjoyment of eating are encouraged by the service.
- ensuring that age appropriate adult-guided and child initiated active play is planned on a daily basis
- ensuring that cultural and religious practices/requirements of families are accommodated to support children's learning and development
- developing and reviewing guidelines for celebrations, fundraising activities and other service events in consultation with educators, staff, parents/guardians and families to focus on healthy alternatives
- keeping parents/guardians informed of current information relating to healthy eating, oral health and active play
- the service will regularly provide families with information on oral hygiene and how and where to access public dental services.
- breastfeeding at the service is welcomed and an appropriate comfortable space is provided for mothers to breastfeed.
- developing links with local and regional health services, community organisations and businesses that provide expertise, resources and support for healthy eating, oral health and active play.
- educators are supported to access a range of resources to increase their capacity to promote healthy eating, oral health and active play initiatives for children.

Certified Supervisors and other educators/staff are responsible for:

- complying with the service's *Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play Policy* and with the *Food Safety Act*
- implementing adequate health and hygiene procedures, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, to minimise risks to children (refer to *Hygiene Policy* and *Food Safety Policy*)
- Food and drink are not used as an incentive, bribe or reward at any time.
- being aware of a child's food allergies and/or other medical conditions on enrolment at the service or on initial diagnosis
- implementing measures to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies and/or diabetes (refer to *Anaphylaxis Policy*, *Asthma Policy*, *Diabetes Policy* and *Food Safety Policy*)

- being aware of, and planning for, the dietary needs of children diagnosed with diabetes (refer to *Diabetes Policy*)
- ensuring that the service environment and the educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for eating, oral health and active play
- discussing healthy eating choices with children, introducing the concept of 'sometimes' and 'everyday' food and drinks
- role-modelling positive eating, drinking and physical activity behaviours
- exploring and discussing diverse cultural, religious, social and family lifestyles
- as role models, Educators, staff and families are encouraged to bring foods and drinks in line with the service's Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play policy
- Educators and staff at Lake Boga Preschool involve children in healthy food experiences through growing foods and cooking with them. Fruit and vegetables are promoted as the healthy option.
- Children are encouraged to taste a wide variety of foods with a range of flavours, colours, textures and aromas through planned food experiences.
- Staff and Educators are supported by having healthy food options for themselves, during session times, at staff meetings and at professional learning.
- Healthy body image and an enjoyment of eating are encouraged by the service.
- considering this policy when organising excursions and service events
- supporting students and volunteers to comply with this policy while at the service
- keeping parents/guardians informed of current information relating to healthy eating, oral health and active play
- The service will regularly provide families with information on oral hygiene and how and where to access public dental services.
- ensuring that fresh drinking water (preferably tap water) is readily available at all times, indoors and outdoors, and reminding children to drink regularly throughout the day, including at snack/meal times
- ensuring that children can readily access their own clearly labelled drink containers (where this is a service practice)
- providing food and drinks at regular intervals, and encouraging children to actively participate in, and enjoy, snack/meal times without feeling rushed
- providing a positive eating environment with relaxed, social and enjoyable experiences by educators and staff sitting with the children at meal and snack times for socialisation and learning
- encouraging children to be independent at snack/meal times e.g. opening lunchboxes, pouring drinks, self-feeding, serving and using utensils in a culturally sensitive way.
- Opportunities to learn about and develop skills for healthy eating and oral health are embedded in the educational program, including age appropriate tooth brushing.
- Educators talk to children about age appropriate tooth brushing and why this is important.
- Oral hygiene practices are promoted and undertaken at the service when appropriate.
- Educators are supported to access a range of resources to increase their capacity to promote healthy eating and oral health initiatives for children.
- providing adequate supervision (refer to *Definitions*) for all children during meal/snack times
- encouraging children to be independent at snack/meal times e.g. opening lunchboxes, pouring drinks, self-feeding, serving and using utensils in a culturally-sensitive way
- planning and providing outdoor, active play that is stimulating, promotes skill development, considers safety issues and provides adequate supervision (refer to *Definitions*)
- considering opportunities for children to be physically active indoors, particularly in adverse weather conditions
- providing daily opportunities for all children to participate in age-appropriate active play
- acting as positive role models by engaging in physical activity

- minimising and closely supervising screen-based activities, in line with recommended guidelines
- providing age-appropriate traffic safety education, including pedestrian and passenger safety to both children and parents/guardians at the service
- promoting active travel where appropriate and providing space at the centre for families to leave active travel equipment
- promoting safe behaviour through daily practice as part of the program.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- complying with the requirements of this policy
- providing details of specific nutritional/dietary requirements, including the need to accommodate cultural or religious practices or food allergies, on their child's enrolment form, and discussing these with the Nominated Supervisor prior to the child's commencement at the service, and if requirements change over time (refer to *Anaphylaxis Policy*, *Asthma Policy* and *Diabetes Policy*)
- communicating regularly with educators/staff regarding children's specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs, including food preferences
- encouraging their child/ren to drink an adequate amount of water (preferably tap water), and discouraging 'sometimes' drinks
- providing healthy, nutritious food for snacks/meals, including fruits and vegetables where applicable
- providing healthy, nutritious food, including fruits or vegetables, in line with the service's *Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play policy*, for sharing at morning or afternoon tea, where applicable
- providing nutritious food and drinks for celebrations, fundraising activities and service events, consistent with service policy
- encouraging children to exercise by engaging in active play, and walking or riding a bike to the service where appropriate
- discussing appropriate road traffic safety and car safety practices, and role-modelling this behaviour.

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

Evaluation

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from educators, staff, parents/guardians, children, management and all affected by the policy
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required with members of the service
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any change to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Lake Boga Preschool on 24th August 2012

**REVIEWED: AUGUST 2016 AND NOVEMBER 2017 AND SEPTEMBER 2021
(SMILES FOR MILES PROGRAM)**

Reviewed: September 2021 (also reviewed by dietician for Smiles for Miles Award- Swan Hill District Health)

Next Review: August 2022