

Acorn Child Care Centres

Policies and Procedures



2.2 Food Preparation, Storage and Handlings

Background

Contaminated food can result in nasty experiences such as diarrhoea, vomiting, cramps and fever. These experiences can be particularly serious for young children whose health systems are still developing, and in extreme cases can be fatal.

In Australia, early childhood education and care services are expected to implement practices which meet *Food Standards Australia New Zealand* and other relevant federal, state and territory and council regulations in the way food and drinks are prepared, stored, handled and served.

The only food consumed at the centre is prepared in the kitchen. The highest level of hygiene is encouraged in these areas of the centre. Only staff with a current certificate of food handling prepare meals.

Policy statement

This Policy details how the Service ensures that its staff prepare, store, handle and serve food and drinks safely and hygienically, and in accordance with all relevant regulations and standards. The Service provides staff and parents with up-to-date information on safe food practices, and intentionally teaches children these practices.

Strategies and practices

Knowledge

- The Service aligns its food preparation, storage and hygiene practices with the requirements of *Food Standards Australia New Zealand*, and updates them – and its policies and procedures – annually and whenever new information is released. QA 2.1.3
- Educators are provided with professional development and training opportunities in food preparation, storage and hygiene practices which are also an agenda item at team meetings. All staff are expected to systematically and consistently implement the Service's Policies and Procedures relating to food. QA 2.1.3
- Educators are considered to be role models and, when eating with the children, are expected to uphold good personal nutrition. QA 2.2.1
- The Service provides families with information about food safety at enrolment and through a variety of means such as the Parent Handbook, notice boards, newsletters, educator-parent meetings and the website. QA 2.1.3
- Educators intentionally teach children the importance of food safety and hygiene practices during both planned and spontaneous experiences. QA 2.1.3

Food Handling

Acorn Child Care Centres

Policies and Procedures



- Before preparing, handling and serving food, staff wash their hands in accordance with the procedures in the Handwashing Poster – NHMRC, and then put on disposable gloves. QA 2.1.3
- Staff maintain a high level of personal hygiene (e.g. hair tied back, blue band aids on cuts before putting gloves on, no hand jewellery except wedding rings). QA 2.1.3
- Food is always served using tongs and gloves. Where possible, food is served in individual plates or bowls. QA 2.1.3
- Leftovers are always discarded – never reheated. Food prepared at the Service is refrigerated in sealed containers as soon as it is made, and thawed and/or reheated once only. QA 2.1.3
- Tables are washed with Useall, and dried before and after being used for meals. QA 2.1.3

Children and Eating

- Educators ensure that children wash hands using appropriate hand washing techniques before eating and drinking. QA 2.1.3
- Educators intentionally teach children to turn away from food when they cough or sneeze, and to follow up with washing hands. QA 2.1.3
- Children are required to sit down when eating. QA 2.3.1
- Children are discouraged from sharing food. QA 2.1.4
- Children are provided with their own drinking and eating utensils at mealtimes. Educators ensure that children do not use drinking or eating utensils which have been dropped on the floor or used by another child. They remind children that sharing during meals can spread germs that could make them or other children sick. QA 2.1.4
- Children are encouraged to wash face and hands after eating. QA 2.1.3

Cooking experiences

- Educators check that each child and the other educators involved wash their hands before taking part in children's cooking experiences. QA 2.1.3
- Educators and children follow other food safety and hygiene practices (e.g. tie back long hair), and cover prepared food until served. QA 2.1.3

Kitchen Practices

- The designated food preparation area in the kitchen is used for that purpose only, and is cleaned before and after use. The rubbish bins are emptied at the end of the day. The kitchen floor is swept as and when required, and mopped daily. QA 2.1.3, 3.1.1

Acorn Child Care Centres

Policies and Procedures



- To prevent cross-contamination between work areas, staff use the Wash Cloths Colour Chart to select the appropriate cloth. In addition, cleaning implements such as gloves and scourers are confined to specific areas. The coloured wash cloths are washed and replaced frequently. QA 2.1.3
- All plates, bowls, crockery and any other food utensils used by children and in the preparation of food are washed in the dishwasher. QA 2.1.3
- If the dishwasher is not in service, all plates, bowls, crockery and any other food utensils used by children and in the preparation of food are washed in water as hot as possible with detergent, rinsed in clean hot water and allowed to air dry. If drying is still required, a clean tea towel is used, and the tea towel replaced after use. QA 2.1.3
- Children's food utensils and crockery are stored in a cupboard with easy access to ensure hygienic handling. QA 2.1.3
- Plastic plates, bowls and cups with deep scratches are replaced. QA 2.1.3

Kitchen Hygiene

The following cleaning routines are to be maintained

As Necessary

- Dishwasher checked and emptied.
- The kitchen is treated for insects and vermin as necessary or annually.

Daily

- All preparation surfaces are washed with detergent.
- Rubbish and compost bins are emptied when full and at the end of each day.
- Microwave oven is cleaned.
- Oven and stove tops are cleaned.

Weekly

- The following surfaces are washed with detergent – shelves, bench tops, cupboard fronts, interior cupboard surfaces, drawers, Pantry & Store.
- Inside and top of fridge is cleaned.

3-Monthly

- Range hood is cleaned.
- Defrost Freezer

Food storage

Acorn Child Care Centres

Policies and Procedures



Shelf Items

- Staff inspect all food items when first brought into the Service to ensure they are all in good order and well within their use-by period. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1
- All items are labelled with the date of entry to the Service so that the first in, first out (FIFO) rule can be easily followed. Any food removed from its original packaging is stored in an air-tight container labelled with the contents, the use-by date, and the date of storage. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1
- All items are stored on shelves that are well-ventilated, pest-free and out of direct sunlight. QA 3.1.1
- Food areas, cupboards and appliances are cleaned thoroughly and regularly. QA 3.1.2

Refrigerator and Freezer Items

- The operating temperatures of the refrigerators and freezers are checked twice daily with a thermometer and the results recorded on the Temperature Control Log – Daily. Foods are stored at the correct temperature depending on the product. Cold foods need to be stored at less than 5 degrees (C) and frozen foods at minus 18 degrees (C). QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1
- Refrigerators and freezers are cleaned regularly, and seals checked for signs of mould. QA 3.1.2
- Appropriate storage containers and wraps are used (e.g. freezer safe containers, moisture-proof wrap such as foil and freezer bags). When wraps are used, food is completely covered. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1
- Any food removed from its original packaging is stored in an air-tight container labelled with the use-by date, the contents, and the date it was stored. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1
- Staff inspect all food items to be refrigerated when the items are first brought into the Service to ensure they are all in good order and well within their use-by period. Any food removed from its original packaging is stored in an air-tight container labelled with the contents, the use-by date, and the date of storage. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1
- Raw and cooked foods are stored separately to avoid cross-contamination. Raw foods are stored on shelves below cooked foods so that juices do not drip and contaminate the cooked food. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1
- Fruit is refrigerated over the weekends.
- Hot food, once prepared, is kept in the oven or on the stove (above 60°C) until it is time to be served. The food is then left covered until it is sufficiently cool for children to eat. Educators check the food's temperature before giving it to the child by removing a small piece of food with a spoon and testing the temperature on the inside of the wrist, and then discarding the food tested. All food is served within two hours of being cooked. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1

Acorn Child Care Centres

Policies and Procedures



- Foods are thawed overnight in the fridge or in the microwave – never on a bench top. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1
- Spoiled food is disposed of immediately into bins.

Food Transport

- Transported on a sturdy trolley
- Foods will be covered at all times during transport.
- Foods will be maintained at a temperature which meets the correct food temperature criteria.

Expressed Breast Milk/Formula Bottles

- Children's bottles containing EBM or formula are stored at the rear of the body of the refrigerator and not in the doors. QA 2.1.2, 2.2.1
- Bottle contents are thawed and/or heated according to the Service's Expressed Breast Milk (EBM) and Formula – Storing and Heating Procedure. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1
- The temperature of the milk is tested before giving it to the child. Educators test the temperature by shaking the bottle and sprinkling a few drops onto the inside of the wrist. The temperature should match body temperature. QA 2.3.2
- The educator responsible for feeding a particular child checks that the name on the bottle being used is the name of the child to be fed. QA 2.3.2
- Any milk not consumed is discarded. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1
- Children are not allowed to walk around with bottles, and babies are never left unattended to feed with bottles 'propped-up' to them. QA 2.3.1
- The amount a child drinks is recorded in the child's individual daily report, and this record made available to parents at the end of each day. QA 2.3.1
- Dummies or bottles are never shared. QA 2.1.3
- Bottles, teats and teat covers are rinsed well in cold running water as soon as possible after the completion of the feed and left to air dry. It is recommended that parents wash these items thoroughly at home. QA 2.1.3

Additional safe practices for babies

- To ensure that staff take every precaution in following health and safety procedures when storing and preparing babies' breast milk or formula.

Responsibilities of parents

- To correctly prepare and deliver bottles of EBM/formula for their child to the Service in accordance with safe food guidelines (available from the Service).

Acorn Child Care Centres Policies and Procedures



- To read the child's individual Communication Book at the end of each day.

Links to other policies

- Educational Program
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Handwashing Policy
- Interactions with Children Policy
- Nutrition, Food and Beverages Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy

Sources, further reading and useful websites

- Early Years Learning Framework 2009.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Food Safety Information Council. (2003). *Knowing your fridge*.
http://www.logan.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/4089/knowingyourfridge.pdf
accessed 23 November 2013
- Food Safety Standards Australia New Zealand. (2001). *Safe Food Australia. A Guide to Food Safety Standards*. 2nd Ed.
http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/publications/documents/complete_safefood.pdf
accessed 23 November 2013
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011.
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012). *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*. 5th edition.
http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/ch55_staying_healthy_cildcare_5th_edition_0.pdf accessed 23 November 2013
- Queensland Health. (n.d.). *Formula Feeding*.
<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/ph/documents/childhealth/28107.pdf> accessed 23 November 2013
- Australian Breastfeeding Association – <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/>
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand –
<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>
- Nutrition Australia – <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/vic/nutrition-services-early-learning-centres>
- Queensland Health – <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/>
- Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne – <http://www.rch.org.au/home/>

Acorn Child Care Centres Policies and Procedures



- Safe Food Australia – <http://www.safefoodaustralia.com.au/>

Date(s) reviewed:

14/03/2016						
05/09/2018						
27/05/2019						

Next review Date: 27/05/2020