



## Links

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**Education and Care Services National Regulations:** 77; 78; 79; 80; 90; 91; 162; 168  
**National Quality Standard:** 1.1.3; 2.1.3

## Policy statement

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Tropics Early Learning aims to ensure that the nutritional needs of all children attending the centre are met. We will provide a relaxed, social mealtime environment, and ensure that the foods we provide are healthy, and safe for children to eat. We also aim to support, and adequately provide for children with food allergies, dietary requirements and restrictions, and specific cultural and religious practices.

We believe that good nutrition is essential to physical and mental health and enables children to be active participants in learning and play. We will provide opportunities for children to experience a range of healthy foods, and to learn about positive food choices.

## Implementation

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### In order to meet the nutritional needs of children we will:

- Ensure children have access to, and are encouraged to access, safe drinking water at all times. Water will be offered as the main drink throughout the day, with a drink of milk offered at either morning or afternoon tea.
- Ensure that children are offered food and beverages throughout the day that are appropriate to their nutritional and specific dietary needs, based on written advice from families, that is collected upon enrolment in the centre, included in their medical management plan, and updated as required.
- Provide a weekly menu of food and beverages that based on the Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013, <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/>, and ensure that foods provided are consistent with the centre menu, located in each room where it can easily be viewed by families, and in the Foyer area at the entrance to the Centre.
- Follow the Australian Dietary Guidelines when serving different types of foods, and use as a guide for serving sizes - <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/eat-health-calculators>
- Provide families with daily information about their child's food and beverage intake, and ensure they are informed of any changes in the menu.
- Encourage families to implement positive nutrition habits at home, providing information and healthy food ideas in newsletters, on notice boards, in the enrolment information, online programming systems, email and verbally.
- Communicate with families regarding any concerns about their child's eating habits.
- Engage children in a range of interesting experiences and conversations relating to nutrition and healthy eating. We will incorporate nutritional information into our educational programs.
- Special occasions (such as birthdays) will be recognised, and celebrated on a monthly basis, with limited use of 'sometimes' foods (e.g. cake). All children and educators who have had a birthday in that month will be acknowledged and celebrated together.

### To support the nutritional needs of infants we will:

- Encourage and support mothers to continue breast feeding and provide a comfortable space where they can breast feed and/or express milk.
- We will support educators who choose to continue to breastfeed their child when they return to work at the Centre, with more flexible work arrangements, and the provision of lactation breaks.
- Feed babies individually, promoting a more intimate relaxed mealtime experience.

**To provide relaxed, social mealtime environments, where children can try new foods and enjoy their meals, we will:**

- Make mealtimes relaxed and pleasant, and timed to meet the needs of the children. Where possible, progressive mealtimes will become a part of the program, allowing the children to eat when they are hungry.
- Not allow food to be used as a form of punishment, or as a reward.
- Not allow children to be force fed, nor require them to eat foods they do not like, or do not want to eat.
- Encourage toddlers to be independent, and develop self-help and social skills at mealtimes.
- Encourage educators to present themselves as positive role models, sitting with children at meals times, eating with children at mealtimes, while maintaining good personal nutrition habits (especially when visible to children).

**To ensure that mealtimes are safe for children, we will:**

- Provide food that is hygienic, by following the centre's Food Safety Program.
- Ensure children are provided with foods and beverages that reduce the risk of them choking.
- Provide age and developmentally appropriate utensils and furniture for each child.
- Provide educators with relevant nutrition and food safety training.

**Dental Hygiene and Care**

To promote good dental health behaviour, and to help reduce the prevalence of dental caries (tooth decay) in children, we will:

- Integrate educational information and guidelines on good dental health practices into the daily routine.
- Provide dental and oral health education to children and families (e.g. distributing literature on dental care practices, displaying posters, etc).
- Actively encourage good dental health practices.
- Avoid letting babies go to sleep with bottles of milk, juice, or any other sweet liquid.
- Provide foods with low sugar content at meal times, offer healthy fresh foods.
- Encourage children to drink water after their meals, to rinse their mouths.
- Only offer water and unflavoured milk to drink throughout the day.
- Inform parents/guardians of any incident, suspected injury or issue with their child's dental health. This may include teeth and gums, gum swelling, infection in the mouth, or problems, pain or discomfort the child has with chewing, eating or swallowing.

**Dental Accidents**

In the case of a knocked out or chipped tooth, our educators will ensure that the child's parent/guardian is notified as soon as practicable, and an Incident, injury, trauma and illness record is completed.

Treatment of a knocked out or chipped tooth includes:

For younger children:

- remain calm and try to locate the tooth. It is important to know if the tooth, or tooth fragments, have been inhaled.
- If tooth has been inhaled, medical advice must be sought.

- Gently rinse the tooth in clean water or milk to remove any blood or dirt, place it in a clean container or wrap it in cling wrap, to give to the child's parent or dentist.
- Seek dental advice as soon as possible and ensure that the tooth/tooth fragment is taken to the dentist with the child.

For older children or adults:

- Gently rinse the tooth fragments in clean milk or water to remove excess dirt or blood
- Handle the tooth by its crown, not its root, being careful not to rub off the endothelial fragments on the root of the tooth – these are needed for the tooth to take if replaced by the dentist.
- In an adult, or older child who can be relied on not to swallow the tooth, it is preferable to replace the tooth back into the socket. (Ensuring that the tooth is placed in the socket the correct way around, in its original position, using the other teeth next to it as a guide). Hold the tooth in place by gently biting on a clean handkerchief or gauze pad. If unable to reinsert the tooth, ensure it stays moist at all times by placing it in clean milk, sterile saline, or clean water.
- Seek dental advice as soon as possible (preferably within 30 minutes to avoid more damage to the tooth)

Sources: *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011; My Time Our Place, Framework for School Aged Children; Guide to the National Quality Standard; Get Up and Grow: Healthy eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood; Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013; Australian Breast Feeding Association Guidelines; Dental Association Australia*

Policy Redeveloped January 2023 (see archived policies for previous versions)

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