



NUTRITION AND ACTIVE PLAY POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 2

PURPOSE

Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. acknowledges the importance of healthy eating and physical activity and its contribution to good health and overall wellbeing.

This policy provides guidelines to:

- promote a healthy lifestyle and support children, staff, educators, and families at the service to eat nutritious food, maintain oral health and participate in physical activity and active play
- ensure national and state guidelines and recommendations about nutrition, oral health and physical activity are met
- ensure that the dietary, developmental, and cultural needs of children and families are taken into consideration when planning menus and implementing nutrition, oral health and active play activities
- ensure the safe storage and preparation of food.

POLICY STATEMENT

Values

Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. is committed to:

- creating policies and practices that promote a healthy lifestyle and ensure national and state guidelines and recommendations about safe food preparation, nutrition and physical activity are met
- ensuring the buildings, grounds and facilities enable healthy eating and active play
- creating a culture in which all community members are respectfully supported to eat healthily and be active
- providing children with formal and informal opportunities to learn about food, nutrition and health messages about physical activity
- ensuring staff and educators have access to resources and support for their own healthy eating and physical activity

Scope

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, other staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc., including during offsite excursions and activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Ensuring that the service environment and educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for eating and active play	R	√	√		
Embedding opportunities to learn about healthy eating and oral health and the importance of physical activity in the educational program, throughout the year	R	√	√		
Ensuring that age-appropriate adult-guided and child-initiated active play is planned on a daily basis across all age groups		√	√		√
Discussing healthy eating choices with children and introducing the concept of 'sometimes' and everyday foods and drinks		√	√	√	√
Role-modelling positive eating, drinking and physical activity behaviours, promoting a healthy relationship with food and interacting with children at meals times		√	√	√	√
Providing a positive eating environment and sitting and interacting with children at mealtimes		√	√		√
Providing adequate supervision for children, including at mealtimes	R	R	√		√
Encouraging children to be independent at snack/mealtimes e.g. opening lunchboxes, pouring drinks, self-feeding, serving and using utensils in a culturally-sensitive way		√	√		√
Ensuring that cultural and religious practices/requirements of families are accommodated to support children's learning and development	R	√	√		
Providing ongoing information, resources and support to families, to assist in the promotion of optimum health for young children	R	√	√		
Recognising families, educators and staff as role models and encouraging them to bring/use foods and drinks that are in line with the service's <i>Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play Policy</i>	R	√			
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 (<i>Regulation 77</i>)	R	√	√		√
Ensuring measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies and/or diabetes	R	√	√		√
Ensuring that all ECT, educators/staff are aware of, and plan for, the dietary needs of all children	R	R			
Ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of a child's food allergies and/or other medical conditions on enrolment or on initial diagnosis	R	R			
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				√	
Communicating regularly with ECT, educators/staff regarding children's specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs, including food preferences				√	

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))	R	√	√		√
Ensuring that children can readily access their own clearly labelled drink containers		√	√	√	√
Ensuring that food and drinks are available to children at frequent and regular intervals throughout the day (Regulation 78(1)(b))	R	√			
Ensuring educators and staff are supported to access a range of resources and professional development to increase their capacity to promote healthy eating and active play initiatives for children	√	√			
Ensuring that food and drinks are not used as an incentive or reward	√	√	√		√
Considering this policy when organising excursions, service events and any sponsorship or marketing opportunities	√	√	√		
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	R	√			
Ensuring the layout of the grounds and buildings is inclusive of the diversity and abilities of all children and encourages physical activity and movement	R	√			
Ensuring recommendations about physical activity and screen time from the Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (Birth to 5 Years) are met	R	√	√		
Ensuring that children are taught how to use equipment safely	R	√	√		√
Planning and providing active play and movement experiences that are age-appropriate, inclusive of diversity and abilities and support children to develop fundamental movement skills		√	√		√
Considering opportunities for children to be physically active indoors, particularly in adverse weather conditions		√	√		√
Ensuring service facilities and equipment enable active travel and road safety for children, staff, educators and families	R	√			
Supporting, promoting and encouraging active travel to and from the service (Regulations 100 -102)	√	√	√	√	√
Providing age-appropriate traffic safety education, including pedestrian and passenger safety to both children and parents/guardians at the service	R	√	√		
Using and promoting local parks, bike paths and recreation facilities, where appropriate, to encourage physical activity.	√	√	√		
Ensuring space and facilities are available to allow staff and educators to store and prepare healthy food safely	R	√			
Ensuring healthy eating and active play information and policy requirements are included in the educator and staff induction	R	√			
Ensuring educators and staff are supported to be physically active and minimise sedentary behaviour, both inside and outside of work hours	R	√			
Supporting students and volunteers to comply with this policy while at the service	R	√			

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. Staff are well placed to build this awareness among children and their families, while respecting lifestyle choices, and cultural and religious values.

As a health promoting service it is recognised that every member of the service impacts on children's health. Children, staff, educators and families can be supported to eat healthily, maintain good oral health and be physically active through teaching and learning opportunities, policies, creating a safe and healthy physical and social environment and developing community links and partnerships.

Active play develops a strong and healthy body, builds motor and co-ordination skills, creates a sense of wellbeing and helps protect children from disease. Active play is about moving, being and doing.

A strong sense of health and wellbeing, supported by good nutrition and an active lifestyle, can provide children with confidence, energy and optimism that will contribute to their ability to concentrate, co-operate and learn. 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.

The Australian Government has 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, the Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood resources and the National Physical Activity Recommendations for Children 0-5 Years. Practical, healthy eating advice is also available to early childhood services and schools via a telephone advice line: the Victorian Healthy Eating Advisory Service (Healthy Eating Advisory Service) run by Nutrition Australia. Early childhood education and care services can also register and implement the Achievement Program. This program is designed to create safe, healthy and friendly environments for children, staff educators and families, by promoting physical, mental and social health and wellbeing.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Food Act 1984 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard including Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

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

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au

Definitions

Active play: Play that involves large muscle-based activities that are essential for a child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth and development incorporating:

- child-initiated active play, which is developed by the child through exploration of the outdoor environment, equipment and games
- adult-guided active play which encourages children's physical development through promoting movement skills in a non-competitive environment
- physical activity, which includes sport, incidental exercise and many forms of recreation.
- active travel, which includes walking, cycling, scootering or any similar transport where physical activity is used to travel.

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.

Healthy eating: Describes eating patterns that provide all the recommended nutrients for growth and development, and good health and wellbeing, now and in the future. It also refers to preparing, serving and eating food in a way that recognises its importance as a social and cultural activity.

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"

Sources and related policies

Sources

- Australian Dietary Guidelines 2019, National Health and Medical Research Council: <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines>
- Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:
- <https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/belonging-being-becoming-early-years-learning-framework-australia>
- Better Health Channel: www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au
- Dental Health Services Victoria: www.dhsv.org.au
- Food Safety Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services: www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand: www.foodstandards.gov.au
- Department of Health (2013) Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood: <https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-gug-staffcarers>
- The Achievement Program is a health and wellbeing initiative for early childhood services, schools and workplaces: www.achievementprogram.health.vic.gov.au
- Healthy Eating Advisory Service: www.heas.health.vic.gov.au
- National Health and Medical Research Council, Infant Feeding Guidelines: information for health workers (2012): <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/infant-feeding-guidelines-information-health-workers>
- Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (Birth to 5 years): <https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/npra-0-5yrs-brochure>
- Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Adults: <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-publth-strateg-phys-act-guidelines#npa1864>
- National Health and Medical Research Council, Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (5th edition, 2013): <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services>
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: www.education.vic.gov.au

Service policies

- Anaphylaxis
- Asthma
- Curriculum Development
- Dealing with Infectious Diseases
- Dealing with Medical Conditions
- Diabetes
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Excursions and Service Events
- Food Safety
- Hygiene
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Inclusion and Equity
- Road Safety and Safe Transport
- Sun Protection

Evaluation

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

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- 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
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (Regulation 172 (2)).

Attachments

- Nil

Authorisation

This policy was adopted by the Committee of Management of Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. on 6 June 2022

Review date: June 2026