

FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY

Updated: April 2025



What are we talking about in this document?

This policy discusses nutrition, food and beverage requirements and food safety.



Who is this for?

This policy applies to children, families, staff, students, visitors and management of the service.



Why do we need this policy?

This policy provides guidelines to ensure all staff store, prepare, provide and cook food in a safe and hygienic manner in accordance with contemporary research, relevant food legislation and the service's food safety program. Early education and care services have an important role to support families to provide healthy food and drink to their children.

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Key Terms		
Term	Meaning	Source
Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ)	Food Standards Australia New Zealand is a statutory authority in the Australian Government Health portfolio. FSANZ develops food standards for Australia and New Zealand.	https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/code/Pages/default.aspx
Infant	A child under the age of 1 year.	
Food Safety Program	A Food Safety Program is a written document indicating how a business will control the food safety hazards associated with the food handling activities of the business.	https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/code/Pages/default.aspx



The Important Stuff

- Each service has a Food Safety Plan that directs the safe food practices the service follows.
- Breastmilk must be clearly labelled with the child’s name and the date it was expressed. Two educators must check the label before heating.
- Families are responsible for measuring formula and supplying in pre-measured quantities and supplying pre-measured boiled water in bottles, as well as cleaning and sterilising their child’s bottles.
- The menu must be displayed for families and must be current and accurately reflect the food being served.



Procedures and Guidelines

Food hygiene and safety

Food poisoning is caused by bacteria, viruses, or other toxins being present in food and can cause extremely unpleasant symptoms such as diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach cramps, and fevers. As a result of their developing immune systems, children under the age of five years are vulnerable to food poisoning and at a greater risk of developing serious health complications ([ACECQA, 2020](#)).

Our Service will strictly adhere to food hygiene standards to prevent the risk of food poisoning. Food will be prepared in accordance with the service’s Food Safety Program. All kitchens and food preparation areas will comply with Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ). All staff involved in the stages of food handling have the skills and knowledge to ensure food safety is a priority.

Services will follow their Food Safety Program in relation to:

- *Buying and transporting food*
- *Storing food*
- *Preparing and serving food*
- *Cleaning*
- *Personal hygiene for food handlers*
- *Staff who are handling food responsibilities.*

Milk feeding

Families are to supply milk in accordance with below:

- Formula – Each day, families are to provide ready-to-use, bottles of the correct amount of pre-boiled, cooled water and pre-measured powdered formula. It is not safe for families to bring pre-prepared infant formula due to the risk of bacteria growth after preparation. Bottles must be clearly labelled with the child’s name.
- Breast milk – families are to provide daily, ready-to-use bottles or pouches of fresh or frozen breast milk, clearly labelled with the child’s name and date expressed.
- Cow’s milk – Families are to provide empty ready-to-use, sterilised and clean bottles clearly labelled with the child’s name. Keiki will supply cow’s milk or alternative non-nut milk. Cow’s milk should not be given to infants under 12 months of age. Reduced-fat milk is not recommended for children under the age of two.
- Milk alternatives – Keiki will supply non-nut milk alternatives for children who do not drink cow’s milk for any reason. Families are to provide ready-to-use, sterilised and clean bottles clearly labelled with the child’s name. Milk alternatives are not recommended for children under the age of 12 months.

Storage of bottles

Families are to place their child’s clearly labelled bottles/pouches filled with breast milk in the fridge, but not in the door of the fridge on arrival each day. Staff are to confirm that bottles are correctly stored and labelled.

If possible, frozen breastmilk will be stored in the freezer compartment of the fridge and warmed from frozen. If when transported to the service, some of the frozen breastmilk has begun to defrost, it will be placed in the fridge to defrost before heating and consumed within 4 hours. Extra care will be taken when heating frozen breast milk to ensure no hot spots.

- Bottles filled with pre-boiled water are to be labelled and correctly stored in the room’s designated place, as discussed with families at orientation.

Safe storage guidelines

Breast Milk Status	Storage at Room Temperature (26°C or lower)	Storage in refrigerator (5°C or lower)	Storage in freezer
Freshly expressed into sterile container	6–8 hours If refrigeration is available store milk there	No more than 72 hours Store at back, where it is coldest	2 weeks in freezer compartment inside refrigerator (–15°C) 3 months in freezer section of refrigerator with separate door(–18°C) 6-12 months in a chest or upright manual defrost deep freezer that is opened infrequently and maintains ideal temperature (–20°C)
Previously frozen (thawed)	4 hours or less – that is, the next feeding	24 hours	Do not refreeze
Thawed outside refrigerator in warm water	For completion of feeding	4 hours or until next feeding	Do not refreeze

Infant has begun feeding	Only for completion of feeding	Discard	Discard
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Formula that has been at room temperature for less than 1 hour may be stored in a refrigerator for up to 24 hours (in a sterile container), discard any refrigerated feed that has not been used within 24 hours.

Source: <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/infant-feeding-guidelines-information-health-workers>

Preparation of milk procedure

Preparation of the Bottle –

1. Ensure the bottle preparation area is clean.
2. Wash hands as per the hand washing procedure. Hands should be washed between different tasks and between each step of the feeding procedure.
3. Remove bottle/pouch from fridge or from storage area in the room.
 - Check the label. If it is breast milk, two educators must check it is for the correct child and that the milk is no more than 3 months old if frozen, 6-12 months old if deep frozen and no more than 48 hours old if fresh.
4. Carefully place bottle of previously boiled water, breast milk or pouch of breast milk into the Tommie Tippee Pouch & Bottle Warmer easy lift cradle, leaving the lid on to maintain hygiene.
 - Place the cradle into the unit and add 250mls of water.
 - Press the power button to turn on the unit. The LED will flash and beep once to show the unit is on standby mode.
 - Select the bottle type, press until the LED is adjacent to your requirement.
 - Select starting temperature – press until the LED is adjacent to the correct temperature of feed.
 - Select feed size – press until the LED is adjacent to the amount of feed to be warmed.
 - Press the power button, the unit will beep once to show the cycle has started, when the cycle finishes the unit will beep three times and LEDs will keep flashing while the feed is still warm. Pressing any button will stop the LED flashing or it will automatically switch off after 45 minutes.
 - Remove the feed after the cycle is complete, taking care to not touch the water inside the unit as it will have heated during the cycle.
 - Empty unit and dry with a cloth.
5. If heating boiled water for **formula**, add the pre-measured powder and shake well to ensure it is mixed.
If heating **breast milk**, carefully and slowly invert the bottle/pouch at least 10 times to remove any hot spots.
6. After removing bottle/pouch from hot water, let it sit for 1-2 minutes. Pour pouch into sterilised bottle.
7. Drop a little milk on the back of your hand/inside of your wrist/or any skin that is not broken or use a food probe thermometer to check the temperature. Do not touch the teat to your skin.
 - The temperature of the milk should feel just warm (about body temperature, or a maximum of 37 degrees Celsius).
 - If the liquid is too hot, run the bottle under cold water until it reaches the appropriate temperature and retest the liquid before feeding the child.

- If a food probe thermometer is used, it must be sterilised after each use.

Clean up –

- Do not refreeze or reheat breast milk or formula.
- Families may supply milk in small quantities to prevent wastage, if it is recognised that a child prefers smaller feeds while at Keiki.
- After use, all bottles and teats should be rinsed in cold water and sent home to be washed and sterilised.

Source – Infant Feeding Guidelines 2012 <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/infant-feeding-guidelines-information-health-workers#block-views-block-file-attachments-content-block-1>

Use of electric bottle warmer

- Only use bottle warmers that have the ability to heat to room temperature and are safe for breast milk.
- Only use a bottle warmer that has a thermostat, is clean and well maintained.
- Ensure manufacturer's instructions are followed and have the instructions displayed near the bottle warmer.
- Only warm bottles for a maximum of 10 minutes.
- Check the temperature of the milk before feeding.

Feeding

- Nurse infants when feeding and do not prop bottles. Propping a bottle is dangerous as it increases the infants' risk of choking or developing an ear infection.
- Hold the infant close to the body, maintain eye contact, use a soft voice and smile. This is a valuable and positive time for one-on-one interaction with the child.
- Wind the infant as required, during and after the feed.
- Infants and children who require a bottle prior to resting must be given this before rest time. Children should never be placed in bed or a cot with a bottle or cup.
- When children can hold their own bottles educators will promote self-help skills by providing them with the opportunity to feed themselves under direct supervision. Children will be held or placed next to an educator on a cushion while feeding from their bottles.
- Children will always be directly supervised while feeding.
- Educators will record the child's milk consumption on the daily record, via Xplor.

For infants and young children

- The service supports mothers who wish to return during the day to breastfeed their child.
- Children under one year of age will be fed either breast milk or formula unless written instructions from the child's doctor are provided by the family.
- It is a parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure bottles and sippy cups are washed and sterilised.
- Milk is prepared in accordance with recommendations from recognised authorities as well as following instructions from the family. In absence of a clear directive, educators will follow the procedure above. Microwaves will not be used to heat milk or water in order to reduce the risk of creating hot spots which could burn the child, to avoid BPA being released into the milk or water and to avoid destroying the immunological properties in breast milk.

- Bottle preparation areas will be physically separated from the nappy change facilities to prevent cross-infection.
- The service will ensure the safe handling of breast milk and infant formula including transporting, storing, thawing, warming, preparing and bottle feeding.
- In consultation with families, educators will offer cooled pre-boiled water as an additional drink from around 6 months of age.
- Educators will ensure babies' feeding experience is calm and comforting.
- Educators will engage gently with feeding babies using appropriate words and songs.
- Educators will work in close consultation with the family to ensure appropriate weaning foods (type and texture) are introduced.
- The service will offer a variety of foods to babies from all the food groups and adjust the texture of foods offered between 6 and 12 months of age to match the baby's developmental stage.
- Educators will supervise babies whenever they are drinking and eating - ensuring safe bottle-feeding and eating practices at all times.

To reduce the risk of choking in infants and older children, all educators will ensure:

- All children are supervised while eating and drinking from bottles
- Children are not put to bed with a bottle (as per Sleep, Rest and Relaxation Policy)
- Bottles are never propped up. Only children who can safely hold their own bottle are supported in feeding without an educator holding the bottle.
- Children are awake and alert when being offered food or bottles.
- Children are never forced to eat.
- Babies are never offered pieces of hard raw fruits and vegetables, popcorn or other hard foods.

Food provided by the service

- Keiki services that provide food for children are required to meet the requirements set out in their Food Safety Program. As well as setting out core requirements, the program contains useful advice and guidelines to help all staff understand their responsibilities and the importance of the Food Safety Program.
- All kitchens and food preparation areas must comply with Food Safety Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ), the Education and Care Services legislation and local council building requirements.
- Menus are developed taking into consideration the nutritional, dietary and cultural requirements of the children enrolled at Keiki Early Learning. Seasonal fruit and vegetables are included in the menu as Keiki recognises that fresh ingredients may have a higher nutritional value.
- Staff will ensure all food served at the service is purchased, stored and prepared in a hygienic and safe manner in accordance with relevant legislation and the Food Safety Program.
- Staff will ensure food is prepared and served in an appealing manner.
- Staff will not supply children with options such as crackers throughout the day. If a child is hungry, they will be offered a nutritional option to snack on.

Food provided by parent/guardian (if service permits)

- Staff must ensure that children do not share parent-provided food and drinks.
- See Lunch Box information below.

Allergies and special dietary requirements

- Ensure information stating the service is an allergy-aware service is clearly visible to all staff, families and visitors to the service.
- Be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances and special diets and consult with families to develop individual health care plans.
- Ensure that the photograph and support information of any child with food allergies is pinned to the health care plan board in a discreet part of the room, whilst visible to staff.
- Coeliac disease –
 - The severity of coeliac disease differs. If a child with coeliac disease consumes gluten, they may have mild symptoms such as a sore stomach or may have a more serious reaction such as vomiting. However, in all children with coeliac disease, any gluten is harmful to the bowel and can cause complications immediately as well as later in life.
 - Use separate chopping boards and utensils for gluten-free food preparation. Ensure that all foods to be served to a child on a gluten-free diet are stored and prepared separately. Ensure that there is no risk of cross-contamination with gluten-containing foods.
- In the case of a reaction, follow the child's Health Care, Medical Management and/or Action Plan. Refer to the [Incident, Illness and Administration of First Aid Policy](#).

Mealtimes

- Staff will role model healthy eating practices, by participating in mealtimes with children to assist in creating a positive learning environment.
- Children are to be seated in suitable chairs, with any fitted safety harnesses secured.
- Children are reminded to remain seated while eating.
- Children are encouraged to develop self-help skills through the provision of appropriate opportunities to serve and feed themselves.
- Food is prepared and served in an age-appropriate and safe manner. Further information can be located via [this link](#).
- Drinking water is available to children at all times. Staff must encourage children to drink water at the completion of each meal to assist in clearing the mouth of excess food.
- Educators will monitor the consumption of food for all children throughout the day and communicate this information with families. (Xplor and/or Communication Books).
- Infants who need to be fed by educators will have direct supervision by educators.
- Age and developmentally appropriate utensils and furniture will be provided for each child.
- Food should never be used as a form of punishment or to be used as a reward or bribe.
- Mealtimes are recognised as social occasions. A relaxed atmosphere is created at mealtimes where children have enough time to eat and enjoy their food as well as enjoy the social interactions with educators and other children.

- Educators respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, they will not insist he/she eats more.
- Educators are patient with messy, slow or sensory-challenged eaters.
- Children are encouraged to try different foods and their decision is accepted if they choose not to.
- Healthy eating habits are established by sharing information about healthy foods in the room in fun and age-appropriate ways.
- If a child does not like the food being served, they will be offered an alternative meal.

Staff training

- Nominated staff will be required to undergo training to obtain a Food Safety certificate.
- Cooks must be competent in basic food handling, knowledgeable about allergies, and hold a current Food Safety Supervisor Certificate.
- The Centre Coordinator must hold a current Food Safety Supervisor Certificate.

Family communications

- Nutritional information for families will be displayed and regularly updated.
- Staff will ensure the weekly menu is accurate and describes the food and beverages provided each day of the week and is displayed in an accessible and prominent area for families to view.
- Educators will communicate with families if there is any concern about a child's food intake and eating habits.
- Information will be shared with families through a variety of ways to support and encourage continued healthy eating in the home.
- Families will have access to this policy via a link to the Policy and Procedure website page.
- Families will be provided with opportunities to contribute to the review and development of the policy and the service menu.
- Families will provide details of any food allergies or intolerances or specific dietary requirements to the service. The service will work in partnership with families to develop an appropriate response so that children's individual dietary needs are met.
- The service will communicate regularly with families about food and nutrition related experiences within the service and provide up to date information to assist families to provide healthy food choices at home.
- See links below for information for families.

Birthdays and special events

No food is to be brought into the service for special events or birthdays. Each Keiki Early Learning Service has its own ritual to celebrate these special occasions in the children's lives and will communicate directly with families.

Educational program

Through the educational program, the service and educators will

- Foster awareness and understanding of healthy food and drink choices through natural opportunities at mealtimes as well as providing age-appropriate information and play experiences to enhance each child's understanding of healthy eating.

- Encourage children to participate in 'hands-on' food preparation experiences when possible.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in discovery learning and discussion about healthy food and drink choices.
- Create herb and vegetable gardens that can be used within the kitchen
 - Children can assist in the collection and harvesting of their home grown produce to add to the service menu.
 - Where possible, the service cook/nutrition coordinator to speak to the children about the cycle of plants and vegetables.

Cooking with children

Cooking can help develop children's knowledge and skills regarding healthy eating habits. Cooking is a great, fun activity and provides opportunities for children to be exposed to new foods, sharing of recipes and cooking skills. On these occasions participating educators will be vigilant to ensure that the experience remains safe, and relevant food hygiene practices are adhered to.

Lunchboxes (service specific and educational program)

What can families do to improve lunch box safety?

- Use insulated lunch boxes or cooler bags.
- Pack a frozen drink bottle or freezer brick inside the lunch box or bag, next to foods that should be kept cold for example soft cheese, yoghurt, meat and salad.
- Keep lunchboxes in the fridge until you are leaving home.
- Whole fruits, vegetables, hard cheeses, meat and fish in cans, bread, crackers and some spreads are safe without an icepack or other cold source.
- Keiki Early Learning services are allergy aware. Avoid packing nuts or foods that are considered allergen.

What should be packed in a child's lunch box?

Include 1-2 services of each food group

- Vegetables
 - A small salad, veggie sticks
 - Leftover roasted/stir fried vegetables
 - Sliced or grated veggies in a sandwich, wrap, sushi, rice paper rolls etc
 - Zucchini slice, vegetable quiche
 - Stuffed potato with cheese, corn, beans and tomato
 - Ants on a log (celery filled with cream cheese and topped with raisins)
- Fruit
 - Whole or sliced fruit
 - Fruit salad (use lemon juice to stop browning)
 - Tinned fruit (in juice)
 - Fruit kebab (thread fruit onto pop sticks)
 - Frozen fruit (berries, mango) served with yoghurt
- Protein
 - Leftover grilled or roasted meats
 - Boiled egg (on its own or in sandwiches) – unless the service is egg free.
 - Tinned tuna/salmon
 - Legumes i.e. roasted chickpeas
 - Meat sushi (cheese or veggie stick rolled up in sliced beef)
 - Falafels, meat or fish patties, meatballs, rissoles

- Dairy
 - Yoghurt tubs or pouches
 - Cheese sticks/slices
 - Plain UHT milk boxes
 - Ricotta, cottage or cream cheese spread on sandwiches, wraps and crackers
- Grains
 - Pasta, couscous, noodles, quinoa, barley, rice
 - Rice or wheat crackers
 - English muffins, crumpets, pancakes, pikelets, bagels
 - Savoury or sweet homemade muffins
 - Sushi, rice paper rolls, mini pizzas, toasties.

Tips for a stress free lunch box

- Plan your lunchboxes for the week.
- Cut up fruit/vegetables in bulk, store in air-tight containers in the fridge.
- Make double of recipes and freeze – muffins, quiches and pizzas freeze well.
- You can also freeze sandwiches (omit fillings that won't freeze well, i.e.: lettuce, cucumber).
- Use leftovers, cook extra of your dinner meal, and add to lunch boxes the next day.
- Stock up on convenient, shelf stable items like fruit tubs, crackers, UHT milks, roasted chickpeas, dried fruit, canned fish, muesli bars, plain popcorn etc.

Links for families

- [The A-Z of Your Child's Nutrition | Keiki Early Learning](#)
- [Fruit & Veggie Fun for Pre-Schoolers | Keiki Early Learning](#)
- [Packing Lunchboxes For Fussy Eaters | Keiki Early Learning](#)
- [Healthy eating \(healthywa.wa.gov.au\)](http://healthywa.wa.gov.au)
- [The guidelines | Eat For Health](#)
- [Food & nutrition - Healthy Kids \(healthy-kids.com.au\)](http://healthy-kids.com.au)
- [Healthy Lunch Box | Cancer Council NSW](#)



Supporting Documents

Policies

- [Incident, Illness and Administration of First Aid Policy](#)
- [Cleaning of Service & Equipment Policy](#)
- [Health & Hygiene Policy](#)
- [Medical Conditions Policy](#)
- [Safe Sleep and Rest Policy](#)

Other Documents

- [Preparation of Bottle Procedure](#)



Sources

- ACECQA – Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority.
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- Food safety standards. [Food safety standards \(Australia only\) \(foodstandards.gov.au\)](#). (2015).
- Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Act 1991
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand Regulations 1994
- Work Health and Safety Act 2020. (2022).
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- Australian Breastfeeding Association. Using expressed breastmilk in ECEC settings.
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- Infant Nutrition Council. [Infant Feeding Info - INC - Infant Nutrition Council](#).
- Raising Children. Choking prevention and chokings risks. [Choking prevention & hazards: children | Raising Children Network](#). (2020).
- Coeliac Australia. <https://www.coeliac.org.au/s/>. (2023)
- NSW Ministry of Health. [caring-for-children-manual.pdf \(nsw.gov.au\)](#). (2014)
- ACECQA. Keeping children’s food safe. [Keeping children's food safe | ACECQA](#). (2020)



Links to Regulations		
National Quality Standard		
Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety		
2.1	Health	Each child’s health and physical activity is supported and promoted
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.1.3	Healthy Lifestyles	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities		
6.1	Supportive relationships with families	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.
Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership		
7.1.2	Management systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.

Education and Care Services National Regulations	
12	Meaning of a serious incident
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
78	Food and beverages
79	Service providing food and beverages
80	Weekly menu
90	Medical conditions policy
91	Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed



Review & Document Control	
Policy Reviewed	Modifications
August 2017	Extension of Policy from regulations and set out expectations for all parties
13 th November 2017	Panel review policy. Changes included slight grammatical errors and a section about labelling the food with the child’s name and type of food to ensure all educators know which child is to receive the specially prepared food (Mandy B)
8th January 2018	Quality Area updated to reflect changes to NQS. Centre Director term to Coordinator.
10th November 2018	Grammatical errors corrected.
June 2019	Updated onto new format and new Keiki logo added

6 th May 2020	Coordinator meeting informed changes. Added more food safety information (Buying and transport. Storing. Preparing and serving. Cleaning. Personal Hygiene and food handler information). Set it out clearer. Added information about birthdays. Added to ensure weekly menu is displayed for families. Added information about reviewing food safety plan.
15 th June 2020	Checked against staying healthy.
June 2021	Review conducted throughout organisation. Change to layout (new template). Food Safety information first. Nutrition next. Added section regarding Babies and Infants as well as reducing choking risk. Added to educational program- create herb and vegetable gardens for produce to add to meals and cook/nutritional coordinator to interact with children. A separate Policy for 2 plus/3 plus and OSHC services created as they do not have babies and do not provide meals. Also added online shopping information, cooking temp to 75c and cooking with children.
October 2021	Removed food safety information-this can be viewed in service’s Food Safety Program. Added more information about milk feeding. Restructure of policy. Combined 2Plus and OSHC policy and this policy. Feedback received from Hamersley and Mindarie Keys, changes made.
November 2022	New format. Spelling and grammar check. Sources reviewed and updated.
May 2023	Added information about Coeliac Disease & links to related policies.
June 2023	Added guidelines for using bottle warmers.
August 2023	Changed nut free to allergy aware.
November 2023	Updated to include requirement for a food safety supervisor.
January 2024	Update to clarify harnesses on chairs used where fitted.
October 2024	Added that breastmilk can be deep frozen 6-12 months.
April 2025	All services have received a bottle warmer that is safe for breast milk warming. Updated to new template.

Disclaimer

It is each employee, family and visitor to the service’s responsibility to read, understand, follow and address any concerns with management about this policy.

Are you looking at the most recent version of this document?

You can find it at: <https://keikiearlylearning.com.au/policies-and-procedures/>

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