

Food and Nutrition



Policy

The encouragement of healthy eating patterns amongst children, educators and families is important to this centre and therefore all educators are to abide by the Australian Food Safety Standards Code. Children are to be provided with appropriate and nutritious food whilst in care. Healthy eating will be encouraged and supported throughout our program and practices. We will work with families and support them to ensure this policy is fulfilled. Janelle Street also ensures that it is nut free.

Background

The Australian Food Standards Code sets standards to ensure food in Australia is safe and suitable for us to eat. It includes standards for food additives, food safety, labelling and foods that need pre-approval such as Genetically Modified (GM) foods. To this end as far as these standards apply to young children Janelle Street Centre will comply with the standards. Healthy eating in early childhood is important for healthy growth and development and can assist in preventing childhood obesity, tooth decay, constipation and iron deficiency. Dietary habits formed in the early years are likely to continue into adulthood and the promotion of healthy eating in early childhood settings provides an important contribution to the prevention of adult chronic diseases such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, Type II diabetes and certain cancers.

The relevant National Quality Standards and recommendations, namely: **Standard 2.1** Each Child's Health is Promoted and **Element 2.1.3** Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Are Promoted and Appropriate for Each Child, are embedded into the program for children and food and drinks used in Janelle Street Centre are to be nutritious and appropriate for each child.

Practices

1. Encourage and promote healthy food and drink

Janelle Street Centre will:

Provide clear information to families on recommended and non-recommended food and drinks for children's lunchboxes.

Ensure recommended and non-recommended food guidelines are consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines and promote foods from the five food groups (vegetables, breads and cereals, fruit, dairy and meat and meat alternatives) and discourage "discretionary" foods (e.g. lollies, chocolates, sweet biscuits, muesli bars, breakfast bars, fruit filled bars, chips, oven-baked crackers and corn chips). This information will be advised to parents on enrolment and they will receive an information sheet on what families can and cannot bring to Janelle Street Centre.

Monitor children's lunchboxes daily in accordance with lunchbox guidelines. Parents/caregivers are required to provide their children with at least 3 nutritious meals – morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea – whilst at the Centre and are also encouraged to provide a piece of fruit or vegetable in their child's lunchbox. Families will be provided with regular appropriate information on nutrition according to families' needs.

Not normally allow high fat and sugary foods such as soft drinks, flavoured milk, lollies, roll-ups, chocolates, chocolate coated foods to be given at the Centre. Variations to this rule will be at Director and educators' discretion and family informed.

Provide feedback to parents when non-recommended food or drinks are packed, e.g. through lunchbox notes, verbal feedback at pick-up, through communication books. Products containing nuts supplied by families will not be given to children and will be returned home.

Provide parents with verbal feedback if their child is not eating well

Ask families to bring their child at least 1 drink bottle filled with water. Promote water and plain milk as suitable drinks for consumption in care. We will provide safe drinking water to children at all times to ensure all children have adequate fluid intake.

Offer food and drink at regular and predictable intervals.

Allow children at the centre early or late to eat at the staff's discretion.

Be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances and special dietary needs and consult with families to determine specific food related requirements and develop individual management plans. Lists of all children's known allergies will be displayed in the Toddler/Preschool Kitchen and staff will be made aware of these allergies.

Minimise the risk of choking through provision of appropriate foods and supervision.

Ensure families are aware of what nut free foods and spreads are appropriate to provide for their children

Provide consistency in all rooms.

not use food as a source of punishment or reward.

Allow children to bring in birthday cakes to share with peers. Allergies and intolerances will be catered for.

2. Provide food to children that has been stored, prepared and served in a safe and hygienic manner and promote hygienic food practices.

Janelle Street Centre will:

Place all lunch boxes in the refrigerator to eliminate food poisoning from not being stored at correct temperature.

Ensure children and educators wash and dry their hands (using soap, running water and single use or disposable towels) before handling food or eating meals and snacks. Children's hand-washing practices will be observed at all times.

Discourage children from handling other children's food and utensils.

3. Provide healthy learning experiences

Janelle Street Centre will:

Foster awareness and understanding of healthy food and drink choices through including in the children's program a range of learning experiences encouraging children's healthy eating.

Encourage children to participate in a variety of 'hands-on' food preparation experiences.

Provide opportunities for children to engage in discovery learning and discussion about healthy food and drink choices.

Encourage families to come and cook with children.

promote healthy eating through programming and spontaneous discussions and games.

4. Provide a positive eating environment which reflects cultural and family values

Janelle Street Centre will:

have at least one educator to sit with the children at meal and snack times to role model healthy food and drink choices and actively engage children in conversations about the food and drink provided.

Provide positive comments about healthy eating and trying new foods

Endeavour to recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Create a relaxed atmosphere at mealtimes where children have enough time to eat and enjoy their food as well as enjoying the social interactions with educators and other children.

Encourage older toddlers and pre-schoolers to assist to set and clear the table and serve their own food and drink to foster children's independence and self-esteem.

Respect each child's appetite ensuring that if a child is not hungry or is satisfied, educators do not insist he/she eats.

Be patient with messy or slow eaters.

Encourage children to try different / new foods but will not force them to eat.

Not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for disciplinary purposes.

5. Encourage and support breastfeeding

Janelle Street Centre will:

Apply current national infant feeding recommendations.

Provide a suitable place within the service where mothers can breastfeed their babies or express breast milk.

Support mothers to continue breastfeeding until babies are at least 12 months of age while offering appropriate complementary foods from around 4-6 months of age.

Ensure the safe handling of breast milk and infant formula including transporting, storing, thawing, warming, preparing and bottle feeding.

In consultation with families, offer cooled pre-boiled water as an additional drink from around 6 months of age.

Substitute with a commercial infant formula where breastfeeding is discontinued before 12 months of age

Supervise babies while drinking and eating – ensuring safe bottle feeding and eating practices at all times.

6. Ensure all staff members have appropriate knowledge and skills in the area of healthy eating

Janelle Street Centre will:

Support regular Healthy Eating education for primary contact staff

Include information on the nutrition policy as part of staff orientation

7. Ensure communication with families regarding healthy eating and breastfeeding

Janelle Street Centre will:

Provide a copy of the Nutrition Policy to all families upon orientation at Janelle Street Centre and throughout the year as necessary.

Families will be provided with opportunities to contribute to the review and development of the policy.

Ensure educators take time to discuss mealtimes with families and that families are regularly informed about the quantity and types of food their child is eating.

Communicate regularly with families and provide information and advice on healthy eating, breastfeeding and appropriate food and drink to be included in children's lunchboxes. This information may be provided to families in a variety of ways including newsletters, during orientation, information sessions and informal discussion.

8. Monitoring and review

Janelle Street Centre will:

Include nutrition/lunchboxes as a standing item on the staff meeting agenda.

Review the Nutrition policy every 12 months.

Sources

<https://goodforkids.nsw.gov.au> (accessed October 25, 2023)

<https://healthykids.nsw.gov.au> (accessed October 25, 2023)

www.health.gov.au/health-topics/food-and-nutrition/about/food-standards-and-safety (accessed October 25, 2023)

Compilation of “Food and Nutrition”

Adopted: October 05, 2011 - Review No. 7: June 20, 2018

and “Nutrition”

Adopted: September 03, 2014 - Review No. 3: September 20, 2018

Adopted September 30, 2019

Review No. 4: September 14, 2023