

ORAL HEALTH POLICY

Best Practice - Quality Area 2

PURPOSE

The Eureka Community Kindergarten Association acknowledge the importance of oral health behaviours that contribute to overall health and wellbeing. As a health promoting service we will promote the oral health of children, educators, staff and families through learning, policies, creating a safe and healthy physical and social environment and developing community links and partnerships.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

The Eureka Community Kindergarten Association Inc is committed to:

- Creating environments that support good oral health and general health
- Encouraging children to make healthy food and drink choices.

2. SCOPE

It is recognised that every member of the service impacts on children's health and can contribute to creating an environment that promotes oral health. All members of our service including educators, staff, children, families and volunteers will be supported to meet this policy. As such, this policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, families, children and others attending the programs and activities of all licensed services managed by the Eureka Community Kindergarten Association Inc.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Oral health behaviours have a major influence on children's health and wellbeing and a direct impact on their growth and development. Early childhood education and care services play an important role in promoting young children's oral health. This is a time when lifelong oral health behaviours are being formed.

Oral health is essential for children's overall health and wellbeing. Oral diseases can negatively affect individuals through pain, discomfort, general health and quality of life. The main oral health condition experienced by children is tooth decay, affecting over half of all Australian children, making it five times more prevalent than asthma.¹ Tooth decay is Australia's most prevalent health problem despite being preventable.²

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Oral health: Eating, speaking and socialising without discomfort or embarrassment.³

Healthy eating: Eating a wide variety of foods from the five food groups each day. These are:

- fruit
- vegetables and legumes/beans
- grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain
- milk, yoghurt, cheese, and alternatives
- lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes/beans.

Healthy eating also means eating in a way that is socially and culturally appropriate, having regular meals and snacks and eating food to satisfy hunger, appetite and energy needs.⁴

'Sometimes' foods and drink: Food and drink items that are high in fat, sugar and salt or a combination of these.⁵ They typically have very little nutritional value and are often processed and packaged. Examples include: confectionary, muesli bars, biscuits, cakes, pastries, pies, processed meats, potato crisps, savoury snacks and sweet drinks like soft drink, cordial and fruit juice.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

1 Australian Research Centre for Population Oral Health 2011. Dental caries trends in Australian school children. Australian Dental Journal, Vol 56, pp 227–30

2 Rogers J, Prevention and Population Health Branch, Government of Victoria, Department of Health, 2011, Evidence based oral health promotion resource

3 UK Department of Health (1994) in Spencer, JA, Australian Health Policy Institute, Commissioned Paper Series 2004 (dental)

4 Nutrition Australia Victorian Division, www.nutritionaustralia.org

5 Get Up and Grow Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood. Australian Government, 2009

6 Australian Dietary Guidelines, National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013, <http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au>

7 Get Up and Grow – Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood. Commonwealth of Australia 2009

Service policies

- *Nutrition and Active Play Policy*
- *Food Safety Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- ensuring that families have access to a copy of all service policies
- ensuring that the Nominated Supervisor and all staff follow the policies and procedures of the service
- ensuring that educators, staff, families and children are active participants in the development and implementation of the whole service Oral Health Policy.
- ensuring sometimes foods and sweetened drinks (juices, cordial and soft drinks) are not provided by the service and are discouraged from being sent from home.
- ensuring safe drinking water (preferably tap water) is available indoors and outdoors at all times and is accessible to children.
- ensuring that children are encouraged to drink water regularly. Only tap water or plain milk is provided.
- ensuring any sponsorship, advertisements or marketing of food and drinks are consistent with the service's Healthy Eating and Oral Health Policies. Fundraising activities include consideration of the Oral Health Policy and promote healthy lifestyle messages, for example, fundraising using toothpaste and toothbrushes, fruit and vegetable boxes direct from growers, etc.
- supporting services to develop processes for children to undertake oral hygiene practices in the service where appropriate.
- recognising that as role models, educators, staff and families are encouraged to bring foods and drinks that are in line with the service's healthy eating and oral health policies.
- ensuring oral health practices from diverse cultural practices and traditional beliefs are respected and valued within the service.

- ensuring children have opportunities to learn about, and develop skills for oral health through the educational program.
- ensuring educators are supported to access a range of resources to increase their capacity to promote oral health initiatives for children.
- ensuring educators, staff and families are provided with information, ideas and practical strategies on a regular basis to support oral health in the service and at home.
- supporting collaboration with local health professionals, services and other organisations to support educators to deliver and promote oral health initiatives
- ensuring that celebrations, fundraising activities and other service events are consistent with the purposes and values of this policy and service procedures

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- following the policy and procedures of the service
- ensuring staff talk to children about age appropriate tooth brushing and why this is important.
- ensuring educators, staff, children and families are key partners in developing and supporting oral health initiatives.
- ensuring children have opportunities to learn about, and develop skills for oral health through the educational program.
- ensuring families' experiences, expertise and interests are drawn upon to support oral health initiatives
- ensuring families and children from culturally diverse backgrounds are consulted to ensure cultural values and expectations about oral health are respected.
- ensuring that the service environment and the educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for eating
- ensuring that educators and staff role-modelling positive eating and drinking behaviours
- ensuring that fresh drinking water (preferably tap water) is readily available at all times, and reminding children to drink regularly throughout the day, including at snack/meal times
- ensuring that children can readily access their own clearly labelled drink containers (where this is a service practice)
- providing families with information on oral hygiene and how and where to access local dental services.
- working with local health professionals, services and other organisations to support educators and staff to deliver and promote oral health initiatives.

Certified Supervisors and other educators are responsible for:

- following the policies and procedures of the service
- talking to children about age appropriate tooth brushing and why this is important.
- ensuring that the service environment and the educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for eating
- ensuring that educators and staff are role-modelling positive eating and drinking behaviours
- ensuring children have opportunities to learn about, and develop skills for oral health through the educational program.
- ensuring families' experiences, expertise and interests are drawn upon to support oral health initiatives
- ensuring families and children from culturally diverse backgrounds are consulted to ensure cultural values and expectations about oral health are respected.
- ensuring that the service environment and the educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for healthy eating
- ensuring that fresh drinking water (preferably tap water) is readily available at all times, and reminding children to drink regularly throughout the day, including at snack/meal times

- ensuring that children can readily access their own clearly labelled drink containers (where this is a service practice)

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- reading and complying with the policies and procedures of the service
- 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 (refer to *Anaphylaxis Policy*, *Asthma Policy* and *Diabetes Policy*)
- encouraging their child/ren to drink an adequate amount of water
- providing healthy, nutritious food for snacks/meals, including fruits and vegetables where applicable
- providing healthy, nutritious food, including fruits or vegetables for sharing at morning or afternoon tea, where applicable
- providing nutritious food and drinks for celebrations, fundraising activities and service events, consistent with service policy

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

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
- notify families at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Eureka Community Kindergarten Association Inc on 1/12/15

Last reviewed: 1/05/2018

REVIEW DATE: 1/05/2020

Operational procedures may be modified as per the delegation's policy to meet ECKA's needs.