



Education  
and Training

# Healthy eating in the National Quality Standard

A guide for early childhood  
education and care services



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# Introduction

The National Quality Framework<sup>1</sup> helps children get the best start in life by raising quality and consistency in education and care services across Australia, including kindergartens, long day care, family day care and outside school hours care. An important objective of the National Quality Framework is to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of all children attending education and care services.

The purpose of this resource is to assist education and care services to provide appropriate nutrition to children, promote healthy eating and meet the requirements of element 2.1.1 of the National Quality Standard<sup>2</sup> (NQS) and the National Legislation which comprises the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*<sup>3</sup> (National Law) and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*<sup>4</sup> (National Regulations).

Anyone involved in promoting healthy eating or providing food and beverages to children in Victoria can use this resource. This includes directors, coordinators, early childhood teachers, educators, cooks and other staff. Authorised officers can also use this resource to assist them in determining whether education and care services meet the requirements of element 2.2.1 of the NQS and the National Regulations.

## How to use this guide

The information in this resource is divided into the following guides according to type of service:

- [Guide A: Long day care services providing food and beverages](#)
- [Guide B: Outside school hours care services providing food and beverages](#)
- [Guide C: Family day care services providing food and beverages](#)
- [Guide D: Kindergarten and other education and care services where food and beverages are not provided by the service](#)

Each guide provides examples of how providers, services and supervisors might meet their obligations under the NQS and National Legislation. This guide does not replace the NQS and National Legislation and is provided solely for guidance and assistance. Approved providers and those working directly with children should read and understand the NQS and National Legislation.

As a general approach, each guide highlights key items of the NQS and National Legislation but it is not exhaustive. This information is provided as guidance only.

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<sup>1</sup> Information about the National Quality Framework is available at: [www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/introducing-the-national-quality-framework](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/introducing-the-national-quality-framework)

<sup>2</sup> Available at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqf.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqf.aspx)

<sup>3</sup> Available at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqf.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqf.aspx)

<sup>4</sup> Available at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqf.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqf.aspx)

# Background

Education and care services must meet the requirements of the National Quality Framework; the National Law, the National Regulations and the NQS.

## The National Quality Standard

Education and care services are assessed and rated against the NQS. There are seven quality areas, each containing standards and elements. Healthy eating and children's nutrition is included in *Quality Area 2 - Children's health and safety*.

### Quality Area 2 - Children's health and safety

*Quality Area 2 - Children's health and safety* focuses on supporting and promoting children's health and safety when they are attending education and care services. In particular, element 2.2.1 states that:

*Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate for each child.*

### What are the requirements for healthy eating and children's nutrition?

The NQS and National Regulations require that all services (whether or not they provide food and beverages):

- actively promote healthy eating (element 2.2.1)
- have in place policies and procedures in relation to nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements and ensure policies and procedures are followed (regulations 168(2) and 170)
- ensure children have access to safe drinking water at all times (regulation 78)
- ensure children are offered food and beverages appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis throughout the day (regulation 78).

In addition, services who provide food and beverages must:

- ensure that food and beverage is nutritious and adequate in quantity (regulation 79)
- ensure that food and beverage is appropriate for each child's growth and developmental needs and cultural, religious or health requirements (regulation 79)
- have the weekly menu displayed and accessible to parents and carers of children being educated and cared for by the service (regulation 80)
- ensure that the weekly menu accurately describes the food and beverages to be provided by the service each day (regulation 80).

## Guiding principles

Information in this resource is based on principles in the:

- *Australian Dietary Guidelines*<sup>5</sup>
- *Get Up & Grow* resources<sup>6</sup>
- *Menu planning guidelines for long day care, family day care and Food and drink guidelines for outside school hours care*<sup>7</sup>.

## Links with the Achievement Program

Achieving a 'meeting' or 'exceeding' rating for element 2.2.1 will help education and care services who are registered with the Achievement Program<sup>8</sup> meet the Healthy Eating and Oral Health benchmark.

The Achievement Program is supported by the Victorian Government and aims to improve people's health where they live, learn, work and play.

The initiative encourages education and care services to adopt a whole-service approach to health promotion. This includes developing a healthy physical and social environment, creating healthy policies, providing children with opportunities to improve their health and wellbeing and ensuring positive engagement and partnerships with families and the community.

The Achievement Program for early childhood education and care services closely aligns with the NQS and *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*<sup>9</sup>.

## Definitions

### Infants

The term 'infant' refers to a child aged less than 12 months. This is consistent with terminology in the National Health and Medical Research Council *Infant Feeding Guidelines*<sup>10</sup>.

### The five food groups

The *Australian Dietary Guidelines* recommend five food groups which should be enjoyed every day for good health. These include:

- fruit
- grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties e.g. breads, breakfast cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, couscous, barley, quinoa, polenta, flour, crispbreads, rice cakes
- lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes/beans
- milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives
- vegetables and legumes/beans.

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<sup>5</sup> National Health and Medical Research Council, *Australian Dietary Guidelines*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2013. Available at: [www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au).

<sup>6</sup> Australian Government Department of Health, *Get up & grow: healthy eating and physical activity for early childhood resources*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2013. Available at: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-early-childhood-nutrition-resources>.

<sup>7</sup> Healthy Eating Advisory Service, *Menu planning guidelines*, Department of Health & Human Services, 2012. Available at: [www.heas.health.vic.gov.au](http://www.heas.health.vic.gov.au)

<sup>8</sup> Information about the Achievement Program is available at: [www.achievementprogram.health.vic.gov.au](http://www.achievementprogram.health.vic.gov.au).

<sup>9</sup> Available at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/edcare/Pages/veyladf.aspx>.

<sup>10</sup> National Health and Medical Research Council, *Infant feeding guidelines: Information for health workers*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2013. Available at: [www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au).

### Iron-containing foods

The *Infant Feeding Guidelines* recommend that the introduction of solid foods at around 6 months should start with iron-containing foods. Examples of iron-containing foods which are suitable for infants include:

- iron-fortified infant cereals
- pureed meat, poultry and fish
- cooked tofu and legumes.

### Discretionary choices

In the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*, the term 'discretionary choices' describes food and beverages which are not necessary to be part of a balanced diet. These should not be available on the regular menu at early childhood education and care services. Examples of discretionary food and beverages include:

- confectionery, chocolate, jelly, lollies
- high fat/sugar sweet biscuits
- chips and high fat/salty savoury biscuits
- high fat/sugar cakes and slices
- cream and ice cream
- deep fried foods
- sausage rolls and pasties, most fast food and takeaway foods
- some processed meats (e.g. sausages, frankfurts/hot dogs, salami, strasburg, devon, some commercial chicken nuggets and fish fingers)
- soft drinks, fruit drinks, cordial, sports drinks, sports waters, flavoured waters, flavoured mineral waters, iced teas and energy drinks.

Whilst some discretionary choices may be provided for special occasions and celebrations, the following items should *never* be provided:

- sugary drinks (e.g. cordial, soft drinks, fruit juice drinks, energy drinks, sport drinks)
- confectionery (e.g. lollies, candy, sweets, chocolate, jelly)
- deep fried foods (e.g. deep fried potato products, chicken nuggets, fish fingers).

Some baked items (e.g. cakes, scones, muffins, loaves) which include fruit and vegetables and some wholemeal flour may be included on the regular menu.

In education and care services where food and beverages are not provided by the service, services should encourage parents not to provide discretionary food and beverages. It is recommended that education and care services include this requirement in their policy relating to nutrition, food and beverages and dietary requirements (regulation 168(2)). A strategy should be in place to address this issue with parents who provide discretionary food and beverages in their children's lunchboxes.



## Guide A: Long day care services providing food and beverages

Item 1: Education and care services implement a policy regarding nutrition, food and beverages and dietary requirements (regulations 168 and 170)		
Working towards	Meeting	Exceeding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service does not have a healthy eating policy</li> <li>• Policy is out of date</li> <li>• Policy does not adequately address dietary requirements</li> <li>• Policy does not address infant feeding (if applicable)</li> <li>• Policy is not adhered to and procedures are not followed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to date healthy eating policy<sup>11</sup> is implemented and adhered to</li> <li>• Policy based on credible sources and reviewed regularly</li> <li>• Policy adequately addresses:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ dietary, cultural and religious requirements</li> <li>○ special needs for children with allergies</li> <li>○ food and beverages brought from home</li> <li>○ infant feeding and</li> <li>○ breastfeeding (if applicable)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Service working towards the Healthy Eating and Oral Health Benchmark of the Achievement Program</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to all points in the 'Meeting' column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A separate healthy eating policy is implemented for staff members, encouraging staff to bring healthy food and beverages</li> <li>• Service working towards has met the Healthy Eating and Oral Health Benchmark of the Achievement Program</li> <li>• Smiles 4 Miles service has been awarded</li> </ul>

<sup>11</sup> Services must have in place policies and procedures in relation to - nutrition, food and beverages and dietary requirements (regulation 168(2)).

Item 2: Food and beverage is nutritious and adequate in quantity (regulation 78 and 79)		
Working towards	Meeting	Exceeding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food and beverages from the five food groups not provided daily, especially fruit, vegetables and milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives</li> <li>Water not freely available at all times (regulation 78)</li> <li>Sugar provided with breakfast cereals</li> <li>Discretionary choices on the regular menu<sup>12</sup> <i>Some discretionary choices may be provided for special occasions. However, the following should never be provided:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sugary drinks</li> <li>confectionery</li> <li>deep fried foods</li> </ul> </li> <li>Daily menu does not include morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea</li> <li>Second helpings not provided</li> <li>Food and beverages not available outside of routine meal and snack times if required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food and beverages from the five food groups provided daily, especially fruit, vegetables and milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives</li> <li>Tap water is freely available at all times (regulation 78)</li> <li>Sugar not provided with breakfast cereals</li> <li>Discretionary choices not on the regular menu <i>Some discretionary choices may be provided for special occasions. However, the following should never be provided:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sugary drinks</li> <li>confectionery</li> <li>deep fried foods</li> </ul> </li> <li>Daily menu includes morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea</li> <li>In addition, breakfast and late snack provided for children in care more than 8 hours</li> <li>Dinner provided for children in care at dinner time</li> <li>Children encouraged to eat according to appetite (e.g. serving themselves, second helpings provided)</li> <li>Food and beverages available outside of routine meal and snack times if required</li> <li>Service working towards the Healthy Eating and Oral Health Benchmarks of the Achievement Program</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to all points in the 'Meeting' column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Menu meets the <i>Menu planning guidelines for long day care</i><sup>13</sup></li> <li>Staff trained on developing menus based on the <i>Menu planning guidelines for long day care</i></li> <li>Service has met the Healthy Eating and Oral Health Benchmark of the Achievement Program</li> <li>Smiles 4 Miles service has been awarded</li> </ul>

<sup>12</sup> Some baked items (e.g. cakes, scones, muffins, loaves) which include fruit, vegetables and some wholemeal flour may be included on the regular menu.

<sup>13</sup> Healthy Eating Advisory Service, *Menu planning guidelines for long day care*, Department of Health & Human Services, 2012. Available at: [www.heas.health.vic.gov.au](http://www.heas.health.vic.gov.au).

Item 3: Food and beverage is appropriate for each child's growth and development (regulation 79)		
Working towards	Meeting	Exceeding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breastfeeding not supported (if applicable)</li> <li>No facilities for storing infant formula and expressed breast milk (if applicable)</li> <li>Only pureed vegetables offered to infants who have started solids</li> <li>Iron-containing foods not offered daily for infants from around 6 months</li> <li>Solids do not progress in texture for infants from around 6 months (e.g. mashed, lumpy, chopped, finger foods)</li> <li>Children over 12 months not eating from the regular menu</li> <li>Menu does not include a variety of tastes, colours, textures (e.g. crunchy, soft) and flavours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breastfeeding supported (if applicable)</li> <li>Adequate facilities for storing infant formula and expressed breast milk (if applicable)</li> <li>Iron-containing foods offered daily for infants from around 6 months</li> <li>Infants from around 6 months provided with foods of progressing textures according to need (e.g. mashed, lumpy, chopped, finger food)</li> <li>Children over 12 months provided foods from the regular menu</li> <li>Menu includes a variety of tastes, colours, textures (e.g. crunchy, soft) and flavours</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to all points in the 'Meeting' column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff trained on developing menus based on the <i>Menu planning guidelines for long day care</i></li> <li>Service joined 'breastfeeding welcome here' program (see <i>Additional information and resources</i>)</li> <li>Smiles 4 Miles service has been awarded</li> </ul>
Item 4: Food and beverage is appropriate for each child's cultural, religious or health requirements (regulation 79)		
Working towards	Meeting	Exceeding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No appropriate alternatives for children with allergies (e.g. rice/soy milk, gluten free food)</li> <li>No appropriate alternatives for children with religious or cultural requirements (e.g. halal/ kosher)</li> <li>Menu does not include meals from different cultures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate alternatives provided for children with allergies and health requirements (e.g. rice/soy milk, gluten free food)</li> <li>Appropriate alternatives provided for children with religious/cultural needs (e.g. halal/ kosher)</li> <li>Menu includes a variety of meals from different cultures</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to all points in the 'Meeting' column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative meals and snacks are planned to be similar to the regular menu</li> <li>Healthy eating activities embedded in the program consider appropriate cultural, religious and health requirements of children</li> </ul>
Item 5: Healthy eating is promoted (Element 2.2.1 and regulation 80)		

Working towards	Meeting	Exceeding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All meals, snacks and beverages not documented on menu</li> <li>• Menu not displayed</li> <li>• Food used as a reward or punishment</li> <li>• Educators do not demonstrate positive role modelling to reinforce healthy eating practices (e.g. not sitting with children at mealtimes, eating or drinking discretionary choices in front of children)</li> <li>• Healthy eating materials are not (e.g. brochures, pamphlets, posters) displayed at service and available for parents and carers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Menu accurately describes food and beverages provided (regulation 80)</li> <li>• Menu displayed and accessible to parents and carers (regulation 80)</li> <li>• Furniture and utensils are age appropriate and developmentally suitable to enjoy mealtimes</li> <li>• Educators demonstrate positive role modelling to reinforce healthy eating practices with children during mealtimes</li> <li>• Healthy eating materials (e.g. brochures, pamphlets, posters) displayed at service and available for parents and carers</li> <li>• Experiences, resources and equipment about healthy eating available at the service for children</li> <li>• Service working towards the Healthy Eating and Oral Health Benchmark of the Achievement Program</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to all points in the 'Meeting' column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on healthy eating and oral health are provided for parents e.g. brochures, pamphlets, newsletters, recipes, information sessions</li> <li>• Healthy eating activities embedded in curriculum e.g. cooking healthy foods with children, growing and picking vegetables</li> <li>• Service has met the Healthy Eating and Oral Health Benchmark of the Achievement Program</li> </ul>

## Guide B: Outside school hours care services providing food and beverages

Item 1: Services implement a policy regarding nutrition, food and beverages and dietary requirements (regulations 168 and 170)		
Working towards	Meeting	Exceeding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service does not have a healthy eating policy</li> <li>Policy is out of date</li> <li>Policy does not adequately address dietary requirements</li> <li>Policy is not adhered to and procedures are not followed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to date healthy eating policy<sup>14</sup> is implemented and adhered to</li> <li>Policy based on credible sources and reviewed regularly</li> <li>Policy adequately addresses:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dietary, cultural and religious requirements</li> <li>special needs for children with allergies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>In addition to all points in the 'Meeting' column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A separate healthy eating policy is implemented for staff members, encouraging staff to bring healthy food and beverages</li> </ul>
Item 2: Food and beverage is nutritious and adequate in quantity (regulations 78 and 79)		
Working towards	Meeting	Exceeding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breakfast does not include grain (cereal) foods or milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives daily</li> <li>Afternoon tea does not include fruit, vegetables and milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives daily</li> <li>Water not freely available at all times (regulation 78)</li> <li>Sugar provided with breakfast cereals</li> <li>Discretionary choices on the regular menu<sup>15</sup></li> </ul> <p><i>Some discretionary choices may be provided for special occasions. However, the following should never be provided:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sugary drinks</li> <li>confectionery</li> <li>deep fried foods</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breakfast not provided in morning session</li> <li>Afternoon tea not provided in afternoon session</li> <li>Second helpings not provided</li> <li>Food and beverages not available outside of routine meal and snack times if required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breakfast includes grain (cereal) foods or milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives daily</li> <li>Afternoon tea includes fruit, vegetables and milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives daily</li> <li>Tap water is freely available at all times (regulation 78)</li> <li>Flavoured milk not provided every day</li> <li>Sugar not provided with breakfast cereals</li> <li>Discretionary choices not on the regular menu</li> </ul> <p><i>Some discretionary choices may be provided for special occasions. However, the following should never be provided:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sugary drinks</li> <li>confectionery</li> <li>deep fried foods</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breakfast provided in morning session</li> <li>Afternoon tea provided in afternoon session</li> <li>Children encouraged to eat according to appetite (e.g. serving themselves, second helpings provided)</li> <li>Food and beverages available outside of routine meal and snack times if required</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to all points in the 'Meeting' column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Menu meets the <i>Food and drink guidelines for outside School hours care</i><sup>16</sup></li> <li>Fruit and vegetables provided at breakfast</li> <li>Grain (cereal) foods and meat/ alternatives provided at afternoon tea</li> <li>Plain milk offered as a drink</li> <li>Staff trained on developing menus based on the <i>Food and drink guidelines for outside school hours care</i></li> </ul>

<sup>14</sup> Services must have in place policies and procedures in relation to - nutrition, food and beverages and dietary requirements (regulation 168(2)).

<sup>15</sup> Some baked items (e.g. cakes, scones, muffins, loaves) which include fruit, vegetables and some wholemeal flour may be included on the regular menu.

<sup>16</sup> Healthy Eating Advisory Service, *Food and drink guidelines for outside school hours care*, Department of Health & Human Services, 2012. Available at: [www.heas.health.vic.gov.au](http://www.heas.health.vic.gov.au).

Item 3: Food and beverage is appropriate for each child's growth and development (regulation 79)		
Working towards	Meeting	Exceeding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Menu does not include a variety of tastes, colours, textures (e.g. crunchy, soft) and flavours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Menu includes a variety of tastes, colours, textures (e.g. crunchy, soft) and flavours</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to all points in the 'Meeting' column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Menu meets the <i>Food and drink guidelines for outside school hours care</i></li> <li>Staff trained on developing menus based on the <i>Food and drink guidelines for outside school hours care</i></li> </ul>
Item 4: Food and beverage is appropriate for each child's cultural, religious or health requirements (regulation 79)		
Working towards	Meeting	Exceeding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No appropriate alternatives for children with allergies (e.g. rice/soy milk, gluten free food)</li> <li>No appropriate alternatives for children with religious or cultural requirements (e.g. halal/ kosher)</li> <li>Menu does not include meals from different cultures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate alternatives provided for children with allergies (e.g. rice/soy milk, gluten free food)</li> <li>Appropriate alternatives provided for children with religious or cultural requirements (e.g. halal/ kosher)</li> <li>Menu includes a variety of meals from different cultures</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to all points in the 'Meeting' column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative meals and snacks are planned to be similar to the regular menu</li> <li>Healthy eating activities embedded in the program consider appropriate cultural, religious and health requirements of children</li> </ul>
Item 5: Healthy eating is promoted (Element 2.2.1 and regulation 80)		
Working towards	Meeting	Exceeding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All meals, snacks and beverages not documented on menu</li> <li>Menu not displayed</li> <li>Food used as a reward or punishment</li> <li>Coordinators do not demonstrate positive role modelling to reinforce healthy eating practices (e.g. not sitting with children at mealtimes, eating or drinking discretionary choices in front of children)</li> <li>Healthy eating materials (e.g. brochures, pamphlets, posters) are not displayed at service or available for parents and carers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Menu accurately describes foods and beverages provided (regulation 80)</li> <li>Menu displayed and accessible to parents (regulation 80)</li> <li>Furniture and utensils are age appropriate and developmentally suitable to enjoy mealtimes</li> <li>Coordinators demonstrate positive role modelling to reinforce healthy eating practices with children during mealtimes</li> <li>Healthy eating materials (e.g. brochures, pamphlets, posters) displayed at service and available for parents and carers</li> <li>Experiences, resources and equipment to support healthy eating available at the service for children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In addition to all points in the 'Meeting' column:</li> <li>Information on healthy eating and oral health are provided for parents and carers e.g. brochures, pamphlets, newsletters, recipes, information sessions</li> <li>Healthy eating activities embedded in curriculum e.g. cooking healthy foods with children</li> </ul>

## Guide C: Family day care services providing food and beverages

Item 1: Services implement a policy regarding nutrition, food and beverages and dietary requirements (regulations 168 and 170)		
Working towards	Meeting	Exceeding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service does not have a healthy eating policy</li> <li>• Policy is out of date</li> <li>• Policy does not adequately address dietary requirements</li> <li>• Policy does not address infant feeding (if applicable)</li> <li>• Policy is not adhered to and procedures are not followed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to date healthy eating policy<sup>15</sup> is implemented and adhered to</li> <li>• Policy based on credible sources and reviewed regularly</li> <li>• Policy adequately addresses:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ dietary, cultural and religious requirements</li> <li>○ special needs for children with allergies</li> <li>○ food and beverages brought from home</li> <li>○ infant feeding and breastfeeding (if applicable)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Service working towards the Healthy Eating and Oral Health Benchmark of the Achievement Program</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to all points in the 'Meeting' column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A separate healthy eating policy is implemented for staff members, encouraging staff to bring healthy food and beverages</li> <li>• Service working towards has met the Healthy Eating and Oral Health Benchmark of the Achievement Program</li> </ul>
Item 2: Food and beverage is nutritious and adequate in quantity (regulations 78 and 79)		

Working towards	Meeting	Exceeding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food and beverages from the five food groups not provided daily, especially fruit, vegetables and milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives</li> <li>• Water not freely available at all times (regulation 78)</li> <li>• Sugar provided with breakfast cereals</li> <li>• Discretionary choices on the regular menu<sup>16</sup></li> <li>• <i>Some discretionary choices may be provided for special occasions. However, the following should never be provided:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ sugary drinks</li> <li>○ confectionery</li> <li>○ deep fried foods</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Daily menu does not include all meals (including dinner), snacks and beverages required according to service's policy</li> <li>• Second helpings not provided</li> <li>• Food and beverages not available outside of routine meal and snack times if required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food and beverages from the five food groups provided daily, especially fruit, vegetables and milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives</li> <li>• Tap water is freely available at all times (regulation 78)</li> <li>• Sugar not provided with breakfast cereals</li> <li>• Discretionary choices not on the regular menu <i>Some discretionary choices may be provided for special occasions. However, the following should never be provided:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ sugary drinks</li> <li>○ confectionery</li> <li>○ deep fried foods</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Daily menu includes food and beverages required as per service's policy</li> <li>• Dinner provided for children in care at dinner time</li> <li>• Children encouraged to eat according to appetite (e.g. serving themselves, second helpings provided)</li> <li>• Food and beverages available outside of routine meal and snack times if required</li> <li>• Service working towards the Healthy Eating and Oral Health Benchmark of the Achievement Program</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to all points in the 'Meeting' column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Menu meets <i>Menu planning guidelines for family day care</i><sup>17</sup></li> <li>• Staff trained on developing menus based on the <i>Menu planning guidelines for family day care</i></li> <li>• Service working towards has met the Healthy Eating and Oral Health Benchmark of the Achievement Program</li> </ul>
<b>Item 3: Food and beverage is appropriate for each child's growth and development (regulation 79)</b>		
Working towards	Meeting	Exceeding

<sup>15</sup> Services must have in place policies and procedures in relation to – nutrition, food and beverages and dietary requirements (regulation 168(2)).

<sup>16</sup> Some baked items (e.g. cakes, scones, muffins, loaves) which include fruit, vegetables and some wholemeal flour may be included on the regular menu.

<sup>17</sup> Healthy Eating Advisory Service, *Menu planning guidelines for family day care*, Department of Health & Human Services, 2012. Available at: [www.heas.health.vic.gov.au](http://www.heas.health.vic.gov.au).



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breastfeeding not supported (if applicable)</li> <li>No facilities for storing infant formula and expressed breast milk (if applicable)</li> <li>Only pureed vegetables offered to infants who have started solids</li> <li>Iron-containing foods not offered daily for infants from around 6 months</li> <li>Solids do not progress in texture for infants from around 6 months (e.g. mashed, lumpy, chopped, finger foods)</li> <li>Children over 12 months not eating from the regular menu</li> </ul> <p>Menu does not include a variety of tastes, colours, textures (e.g. crunchy, soft) and flavours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breastfeeding supported (if applicable)</li> <li>Adequate facilities to store infant formula and expressed breast milk (if applicable)</li> <li>Iron-containing foods offered daily for infants from around 6 months</li> <li>Infants from around 6 months provided with food of progressing textures according to need (e.g. mashed, lumpy, chopped, finger food)</li> <li>Children over 12 months provided foods from the regular menu</li> <li>Menu includes a variety of tastes, colours, textures (e.g. crunchy, soft) and flavours every day</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to all points in the 'Meeting' column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Menu meets <i>Menu planning guidelines for family day care</i></li> <li>Staff trained on developing menus based on the <i>Menu planning guidelines for family day care</i></li> </ul>
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**Item 4: Food and beverage is appropriate for each child's cultural, religious or health requirements (regulation 79)**

Working towards	Meeting	Exceeding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No appropriate alternatives for children with allergies (e.g. rice/soy milk, gluten free food)</li> <li>No appropriate alternatives for children with religious or cultural requirements (e.g. halal/ kosher)</li> <li>Menu does not include meals from different cultures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate alternatives provided for children with allergies (e.g. rice/soy milk, gluten free food)</li> <li>Appropriate alternatives provided for children with religious/cultural needs (e.g. halal/ kosher)</li> <li>Menu includes a variety of meals from different cultures</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to all points in the 'Meeting' column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative meals and snacks are planned to be similar to the regular menu</li> <li>Healthy eating activities embedded in the program consider appropriate cultural, religious and health requirements of children</li> </ul>

**Item 5: Healthy eating is promoted (Element 2.2.1 and regulation 80)**

Working towards	Meeting	Exceeding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All meals, snacks and beverages not documented on menu</li> <li>Menu not displayed</li> <li>Food used as a reward or punishment</li> <li>Educators do not demonstrate positive role modelling to reinforce healthy eating practices (e.g. not sitting with children at mealtimes, eating or drinking discretionary choices in front of children)</li> <li>Healthy eating materials (e.g. brochures, pamphlets, posters) are not displayed at service or available for parents and carers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Menu accurately describes food and beverages provided (regulation 80)</li> <li>Menu displayed and accessible to parents (regulation 80)</li> <li>Furniture and utensils are age appropriate and developmentally suitable to enjoy mealtimes</li> <li>Educators demonstrate positive role modelling to reinforce healthy eating practices with children during mealtime</li> <li>Healthy eating materials (e.g. brochures, pamphlets, posters) displayed at service and available for parents and carers</li> <li>Experiences, resources and equipment about healthy eating available at the service for children</li> <li>Service working towards the Healthy Eating and Oral Health Benchmark of the Achievement Program</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to all points in the 'Meeting' column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information on healthy eating and oral health are provided for parents e.g. newsletters, recipes, information sessions</li> <li>Healthy eating activities embedded in curriculum e.g. cooking healthy foods with children, growing and picking vegetables</li> <li>Service working towards has met the Healthy Eating and Oral Health Benchmark of the Achievement Program</li> </ul>



## Guide D: Kindergarten and other education and care services where food and beverages are not provided by the service

**Note: Regulations 79 and 80 do not apply where food is not provided by the service**

Item 1: Services implement a policy regarding nutrition, food and beverages and dietary requirements (regulations 168 and 170)		
Working towards	Meeting	Exceeding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service does not have a healthy eating policy</li> <li>• Policy is out of date</li> <li>• Policy does not adequately address dietary requirements</li> <li>• Policy does not address infant feeding (if applicable)</li> <li>• Policy is not adhered to and procedures are not followed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to date healthy eating policy<sup>17</sup> is implemented and adhered to</li> <li>• Policy based on credible sources and reviewed regularly</li> <li>• Policy adequately addresses:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ dietary, cultural and religious requirements</li> <li>○ special needs for children with allergies</li> <li>○ food and beverages brought from home</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Service working towards the Healthy Eating and Oral Health Benchmark of the Achievement Program</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to all points in the 'Meeting' column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A healthy eating policy is implemented for staff members, encouraging staff to bring healthy food and beverages</li> <li>• Service working towards has met the Healthy Eating and Oral Health Benchmark of the Achievement Program</li> <li>• Smiles 4 Miles service has been awarded</li> </ul>
Item 2: Promotion of food and beverage that is nutritious and adequate in quantity		
Working towards	Meeting	Exceeding

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<sup>17</sup> Services must have in place policies and procedures in relation to - nutrition, food and beverages and dietary requirements (regulation 168(2)).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No strategy for addressing unhealthy lunchboxes or discretionary choices provided by parents</li> <li>• Water not freely available at all times (regulation 78)</li> <li>• Some discretionary choices may be provided for special occasions. However, the following should never be provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ sugary drinks</li> <li>○ confectionery</li> <li>○ deep fried foods</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Appropriate times for children to eat are not scheduled throughout the day/session</li> <li>• No extra food available for children who are hungry after finishing their lunchbox</li> <li>• Food and beverages not allowed outside of routine meal and snack times if required</li> <li>• No strategy in place for when insufficient food is provided</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy<sup>18</sup> in place for addressing unhealthy lunchboxes or discretionary choices provided by parents</li> <li>• Tap water is freely available at all times (regulation 78)</li> <li>• Some discretionary choices may be provided for special occasions. However, the following should never be provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ sugary drinks</li> <li>○ confectionery</li> <li>○ deep fried foods</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Appropriate times for children to eat are scheduled throughout the day/session</li> <li>• Extra healthy foods available for children who are hungry after finishing their lunchbox</li> <li>• Food and beverages allowed outside of routine meal and snack times if required</li> <li>• Strategy in place for when insufficient food is provided</li> <li>• Children encouraged to eat according to appetite</li> <li>• Service working towards the Healthy Eating and Oral Health Benchmark of the Achievement Program</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to all points in the 'Meeting' column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff are trained on healthy eating for children</li> <li>• Service working towards has met the Healthy Eating and Oral Health Benchmark of the Achievement Program</li> <li>• Smiles 4 Miles service has been awarded</li> </ul>
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<sup>18</sup> Strategies should ensure the dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times and be respectful of families values and beliefs.



**Item 3: Food and beverage is appropriate for each child's growth and development (regulation 79)**

Working towards	Meeting	Exceeding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents and carers not encouraged to provide a variety of tastes, colours, textures (e.g. crunchy, soft) and flavours in children's lunchboxes</li> <li>Parents and carers not encouraged to provide a healthy lunchbox</li> <li>Parents and carers not discouraged from providing discretionary choices<sup>19</sup></li> </ul> <p><i>Some discretionary choices may be provided for special occasions. However, the following should never be provided:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sugary drinks</li> <li>confectionery</li> <li>deep fried foods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents and carers encouraged to provide a variety of tastes, colours, textures (e.g. crunchy, soft) and flavours in children's lunchboxes</li> <li>Parents and carers encouraged to provide a healthy lunchbox</li> <li>Parents and carers discouraged from providing discretionary choices</li> </ul> <p><i>Some discretionary choices may be provided for special occasions. However, the following should never be provided:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sugary drinks</li> <li>confectionery</li> <li>deep fried foods</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to all points in the 'Meeting' column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff are trained on healthy eating for children</li> </ul>

**Item 4: Food and beverage is appropriate for each child's cultural, religious or health requirements (regulation 79)**

Working towards	Meeting	Exceeding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No appropriate alternatives for children with allergies (e.g. rice/ soy milk, gluten free food) if insufficient food is provide by families</li> <li>No appropriate alternatives for children with religious or cultural requirements (e.g. halal/ kosher) if insufficient food is provide by families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents and carers requirements regarding children's cultural, religious or health needs are supported</li> <li>Appropriate alternatives provided for children with allergies (e.g. rice/soy milk, gluten free food) if insufficient food is provided by families</li> <li>Appropriate alternatives provided for children with religious or cultural requirements (e.g. halal/ kosher) if insufficient food is provided by families</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to all points in the 'Meeting' column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healthy eating activities embedded in the program consider appropriate cultural, religious and health requirements of children</li> </ul>

**Item 5: Healthy eating is promoted (Element 2.2.1 and regulation 80)**

Working towards	Working towards	Working towards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food used as a reward or punishment</li> <li>Parents not encouraged to provide a healthy lunchbox</li> <li>Parents not discouraged from providing discretionary choices<sup>19</sup></li> </ul> <p><i>Some discretionary choices may be provided for special occasions. However, the following should never be provided:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sugary drinks</li> <li>confectionery</li> <li>deep fried foods</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educators do not demonstrate positive role modelling to reinforce healthy eating practices (e.g. not sitting with children at mealtimes, eating or drinking discretionary choices in front of children)</li> <li>Healthy eating materials (e.g. brochures, pamphlets, posters) are not displayed at service or available for parents and carers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food never used as a reward or punishment</li> <li>Furniture and utensils are age appropriate and developmentally suitable to enjoy mealtimes</li> <li>Educators demonstrate positive role modelling to reinforce healthy eating practices with children during mealtime</li> <li>Healthy eating materials (e.g. brochures, pamphlets, posters) displayed at service and available for parents</li> <li>Experiences, resources and equipment about healthy eating available at the service for children</li> <li>Parents encouraged to provide a healthy lunchbox</li> <li>Parents discouraged from providing choices</li> </ul> <p><i>Some discretionary choices may be provided for special occasions. However, the following should never be provided:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sugary drinks</li> <li>confectionery</li> <li>deep fried foods</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service working towards the Healthy Eating and Oral Health Benchmark of the Achievement Program</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to all points in the 'Meeting' column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information on healthy eating and oral health are provided for parents and carers e.g. newsletters, recipes, information sessions</li> <li>Healthy eating activities embedded in curriculum e.g. cooking healthy foods with children, growing and picking vegetables</li> <li>Service working towards has met the Healthy Eating and Oral Health Benchmark of the Achievement Program</li> </ul>

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<sup>19</sup> Some baked items (e.g. cakes, scones, muffins, loaves) which include fruit, vegetables and some wholemeal flour may be included on the regular menu.

# Additional information and resources

Practical information to help education and care services meet the NQS and the National Regulations:

## Healthy Eating Advisory Service

[www.heas.health.vic.gov.au](http://www.heas.health.vic.gov.au)

### Healthy eating policy resources

- *Developing a healthy eating policy*
- *Checklist: What to include in a nutrition and healthy eating policy*

### Menu planning guidelines and resources

#### Long Day Care

- *Menu planning guidelines for long day care*
- *Menu planning checklist for long day care*
- *Ingredient quantity guide for long day care menus*
- *How to plan a menu for long day care*
- *Sample two-week menu for long day care*

#### Family Day Care

- *Menu planning checklist for family day care*

#### Outside School Hours Care

- *Food and drink guidelines for outside school hours care*
- *Food and drink checklist for outside school hours care*
- *Sample menu for outside school hours care*

#### Infants

- *Menu planning for babies*
- Information about safe handling of breast milk and appropriate preparation of infant formula is available in the Get Up & Grow Staff/Carers book at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-gug-staffcarers>

### Budgeting

- *Managing food costs*

### Training

- Free online and face to face training workshops on promoting and providing healthy food and beverages in long day care and outside school hours care.

### Promoting healthy eating

- *Cooking with kids*
- *Healthy eating games and activities*
- *Video: How to promote healthy eating in early childhood services.*

### Food and drink ideas

- *Fruity fun snacks for kids*
- *Making veggies fun for kids*
- *Grainy goodies for kids*
- *Breakfast ideas for outside school hours care*
- *Snack ideas: Morning and afternoon tea*
- *Delicious dips and healthy dippers*
- *Four steps to a healthy vegetarian meal*
- *The keys to a healthy sandwich*



- *Healthier baked items*
- *Healthy food swaps*

### Allergies and intolerances

- *Introduction to food allergy and intolerance*
- *Developing an allergy policy and allergy action plans*
- *Food intolerance*
- *Low allergy items to stock the pantry*
- *Reading food labels to avoid food allergies and intolerances*
- *Recipe modification*
- *Cow's milk allergy*
- *Egg allergy*
- *Fish and shellfish allergy*
- *Nut allergy*
- *Sesame allergy*
- *Soy allergy*
- *Wheat allergy*
- *Coeliac disease*

### Recipes

- Red meat, pork/poultry and fish recipes
- Vegetarian meals
- Morning and afternoon tea

### Case studies

See how others have created healthy changes in their education and care services.

### Menu assessments

Visit the Healthy Eating Advisory Service website to find out how to have your menu assessed.

## Lunchbox and educational resources

### Healthy Eating Advisory Service

[www.heas.health.vic.gov.au/schools/healthy-lunchboxes](http://www.heas.health.vic.gov.au/schools/healthy-lunchboxes)

- *Pick & Mix 1-6 lunchbox resource*

### Nutrition Australia

<http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/resource>

- *What's for lunch? factsheet*
- *Packing a school lunchbox dvd*
- *Lifting the lid on lunch poster*
- *Healthy Eating Pyramid poster and magnet*

### Better Health Channel

[www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)

Various healthy eating and lunchbox resources

### Dental Health Services Victoria

<https://www.dhsv.org.au/professionals/early-childhood>

Various oral health information and resources

### Healthy Kids Association

<http://healthy-kids.com.au/parents/>

Various healthy eating and lunchbox resources

## Heart Foundation

Lunchbox lifesavers. Available at: <http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/healthy-eating/mums-united/tools/Pages/lunchbox-lifesavers.aspx>

## VACCHO

Tucker talk tips 4 kids – healthy lunchbox ideas <http://www.vaccho.org.au/assets/01-RESOURCES/TOPIC-AREA/NUTRITION/VACCHO-LUNCH-BOX.pdf>

## The Australian Breastfeeding Association

<https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/services/welcome>

- 'Breastfeeding welcome here' program
- Training and education
- Information and research
- Resources and services

## Government guidelines and resources

### Eat for health

[www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)

- *Australian Dietary Guidelines*
- *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*
- Leaflets, brochures, summary booklets, educator's guide, posters

### Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood

- Healthy eating and physical activity guidelines for centre-based care, family day care and pre-school
- Directors/coordinators book
- Staff handbook
- Family book
- Cooking for children book
- Posters
- Stickers
- Brochures
- Resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander childcare educators, families and carers

These resources promote the key messages included in the healthy eating and physical activity guidelines. They are designed to be used in centre-based care, family day care and pre-school. Available at:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-early-childhood-nutrition-resources>

### Start them right

A parent's guide to eating for under 5s (by Tasmanian Department of Health & Human Services & Lady Gowrie Tasmania). Available at:

[http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/81769/53063\\_start\\_them\\_right\\_booklet\\_spreads.pdf](http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/81769/53063_start_them_right_booklet_spreads.pdf)

## Programs

### Achievement Program

[www.achievementprogram.healthy.vic.gov.au](http://www.achievementprogram.healthy.vic.gov.au)

The Achievement Program gives you a simple, evidence-based framework to create a healthy learning environment and support the health and wellbeing of everyone in your service. Give children the best possible start to their learning and development and boost staff productivity – at any age, healthy people perform better.

Join the growing membership of early childhood education and care services and through your online portal, access, a range of resources and receive the support you need along the way.

## **Smiles 4 Miles**

<https://www.dhsv.org.au/oral-health-programs/smiles4miles>.

Smiles 4 Miles is an initiative of Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV) which uses a settings-based approach to improve the oral health of children and their families in high risk areas of Victoria.

The program is based on the World Health Organisation's Health Promoting Schools Framework and is delivered predominantly in long day care services and kindergartens.