

Developing a Nutrition and Feeding Policy

A written nutrition and feeding policy is a beneficial tool for childcare providers and staff as well as children and their families as it

- Establishes best practice around nutrition, food safety, hygiene, eating behavior, mealtimes, curriculum and/or activities.
- Defines responsibilities for nutrition, feeding and food safety issues.
- Encourages open, helpful, regular communication and dialogue between families and childcare staff.
- Provides direction for intervention and action.

A nutrition and feeding policy can include anything you and your staff feel is important and should ideally be developed with consultative support from all the members of your childcare community. Your policy may need to

- Establish how meals and snacks will be offered
- Outline of age appropriate portion sizes and servings
- Describe meal and snack schedules
- Provide details about the eating environment
- Direct staff and parents regarding safe and appropriate foods brought from home
- Provide direction on the management of food allergies and sensitivities
- Establish guidelines regarding infant feeding
- Encourage and support breastfeeding as the optimal choice
- Provide guidance for modifications required to accommodate special dietary needs eg. vegetarianism or religious/cultural food practices
- Support food and food choices produced in a sustainable manner
- Outline how food will be made available on special occasions and celebrations
- Ensure the provision of nutrition education for children and childcare staff to support making healthy eating activities a part of everyday learning

Samples of statements that you may want to include in your policy:

“Food will not be given as a reward or to comfort children.”

“Special celebrations will focus on non-food activities. Crafts teach children and families that not all holidays or celebrations require candy or sweets.”

“Only water will be offered as a beverage between planned meals and snacks. Bottles or sip cups of any other liquid such as juice, fruit punch, Kool-Aid, soft drinks, etc....will be sent home with parents stating that we have a “no-juice” policy.”

“As weather permits the environment will include outdoor eating experiences for the children

“Mealtimes will be calm and pleasant experiences, focusing on the social interaction between children and between children and staff. Children will be encouraged to undertake discussions about food, healthy food choices and foods from other cultures.”

For further information, refer to the Food Flair manual or contact your Licensing Officer.