

7.11 (e) Food Allergy, Intolerance and Special Dietary Needs Policy

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| Policy number: 7.11(e) |
| Date last reviewed: July 2023 |
| Reviewed by: Child Care Team |

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| This policy relates to | |
| Human Services Quality Framework | |
| National Quality Standards Early Childhood Education & Care | 2.1.3 Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child. |
| HCS | |
| Reference | Menu's prepared in accordance with the guidelines below |

Purpose

The service will endeavour to maintain a safe environment for all children including children who have allergies or intolerances to certain foods or special dietary needs.

Background

Children develop allergies to foods while others may be sensitive or intolerant to some chemicals (natural or added) in foods.

Policy

Food Allergy

Allergic reactions are caused by a reaction of the body's immune system to a protein in a food. The most common source of food allergy in children under five are cow's milk, soy, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, sesame, fish and shellfish. Even very small amounts of food can cause an allergic reaction. Food allergies occur in around one in 20 children and some of these allergies are severe. Symptoms of an allergic reaction are usually immediate and can include hives or a rash on the skin, swelling of the lips, tongue or mouth, vomiting, diarrhoea, or difficulty breathing. Severe cases of allergic reaction can lead to an anaphylactic reaction, where breathing becomes extremely difficult. This can cause loss of consciousness and severe injury or death.

If a child is believed to have a food allergy they need to be properly diagnosed by a doctor or dietician who will provide information regarding a diet that is adequate for the child. Copies of any diagnoses and action plans are to be given to the educator and the service.

The service needs to be advised of any food allergies, food intolerance or special dietary requirements, possible symptoms and the action that should be taken if an allergy occurs. This should be documented on an allergic reaction action plan. Where the allergy is severe, parents will be requested to allow sharing of information of a child's allergy with other parents to ensure that food provided by other children does not put the child with the allergy at risk. All parents need to give consideration to other children with severe allergies to ensure that food provided does not put that child at risk.

Children who are beginning solid foods will be encouraged to gradually introduce one food at a time to ensure any allergies are detected. New foods should be introduced to children at home prior to care and discussed with educator. Foods that may be unsuitable or unsafe for a child will not be given. Educators will discuss individual requirements with parents and together plan the introduction of new foods.

Food Intolerance

Food intolerance or sensitivity typically results in less severe reactions than allergy. Usually, a larger dose of food is required to cause a reaction from food intolerance. Symptoms of food intolerance can include headaches, skin rashes, and stomach upsets. It is important to work with parents to develop a plan to manage a child's food intolerance which minimises the child's exposure to particular foods.

Procedure for a Child with Allergy or Intolerance in Care

- Information on individual children's allergies or special diets is sought on enrolment and updated regularly;
- If allergy or intolerance is suspected, parents should be encouraged to have their child properly diagnosed by a doctor;
- Information (preferably from a doctor or dietician) should be provided to the service identifying food that a child should avoid and a management plan completed noting possible symptoms and appropriate action or treatment;
- Educators will take special care to ensure children do not share food and that food provided for special occasions (i.e. birthdays, picnics) is safe and suitable for all of the children in care;
- Educators ensure that children avoid exposure to food they are allergic to - this is the only way to manage a food allergy. This means avoiding exposure at all times – mealtimes, during cooking and craft activities;
- Children with food allergies must be closely supervised at meal times and snack times.

Other health conditions associated with food such as diabetes and coeliac disease (gluten allergy) will also be discussed as above with a management plan completed to ensure children's needs are accommodated.

Educators will be required to undertake specific training if caring for children that have peg feeding. This will be identified and planned for prior to care occurring unless the parent is at the home and responsible for all peg feed procedures.

Relevant Legislation

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
51(1)(a) Conditions on service approval (safety, health and wellbeing of children)
77 Health, hygiene and safe food practices
78 Food and Beverages
79 Service providing food and beverages
80 Weekly menu
168 Education and care service must have policies and procedures

Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (ANZFA)
www.foodstandards.gov.au

Key Resources

Good Food in Family Day Care – A Food and Nutrition Information Kit
Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing: *Food Safety: Allergies and Intolerances*
www.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/gug-carer-toc~gugcarerfoodsafety
Anaphylaxis Australia: Starting Kinder or Preschool with Food Allergies
www.allergyfacts.org.au
www.allergyfacts.org.au/PDF/AAI%20Starting%20preschool.pdf
The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne: Childcare and Children's Health Vol 10 No 1: *Allergies and Anaphylaxis*
www.rch.org.au/emplibrary/ecconnections/CCH_Vol10_No1Mar2007.pdf
www.rch.org.au/ecconnections/publications/index.cfm?doc_id=11283
Qld Government Community Child Health Service
http://access.health.qld.gov.au/hid/IncidentsInjuriesandPoisonings/AllergicReactions/foodAllergy_is.pdf
Nutrition Australia: *Food Allergy / Lactose Intolerance*
www.nutritionaustralia.org/
www.nutritionaustralia.org/sites/www.nutritionaustralia.org/files/Lactose%20Intolerance.pdf
Raising Children Network: *Food Allergies and Intolerances – An Overview*
http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/allergies_intolerances.html/context/644
Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing: *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood – Staff and Carer Book*
www.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/gug-carer-toc
www.health.qld.gov.au/ph/documents/caphs/27100.pdf