

## NUTRITION, ORAL HEALTH AND ACTIVE PLAY POLICY

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**Mandatory – Quality Area 2**

**Precious Gems Childcare Pty Ltd trading as "Kids Haven Childcare"**

- Quality Area 2.1.1** Wellbeing and comfort – Child's wellbeing and comfort  
**Quality Area 2.1.2** Health practices and procedures – illness, management & hygiene practices  
**Quality Area 2.1.3** Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.

### Legislative Requirements/ Educational & Care National Regulations

- National Law Section 51(1)(a)** Ensures the safety, health and wellbeing of the children being educated and cared for by the service;  
**National Law Section 167** Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards  
**National Law Section 169(2)(4)** **Offence relating to staffing arrangements** – An Approved provider & a nominated supervisor of an education and care service must ensure that each educator educating and caring for children for the service meets the qualification requirements relevant to the educator's role as prescribed by the national regulations.  
**National Law Section 175** **Offence relating to requirement to keep enrolment and other documents**

- Regulation 77** Health, hygiene and safe food practices  
**Regulation 78** Food and beverages  
**Regulation 79** Service providing food and beverages  
**Regulation 80** Weekly menu  
**Regulation 88** Infectious diseases  
**Regulation 89** First aid kits  
**Regulation 90** Medical conditions policy  
**Regulation 91** Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents  
**Regulation 97** Emergency and Evacuation policy  
**Regulation 122** Ensuring children are actively supervised at all times  
**Regulation 162** Health information to be kept in enrolment record  
**Regulation 168** Education and care service must have policies and procedures  
**Regulation 175** Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority  
**Regulation 176** Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

### Related Service policies

- *Administration of First Aid Policy*
- *Control of Infectious Disease Policy*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*
- *Supervision of Children Policy*
- *Handwashing Policy*
- *Medical Condition Policy*
- *Administration of Medication Policy*
- *Covid-19 Management Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Enrolment Policy*
- *Immunisation Policy*
- *Pregnancy in Early Childhood Policy*

## PURPOSE

Precious Gems Childcare acknowledges the importance of healthy eating, oral health and physical activity and its contribution to good health and overall wellbeing.

This policy provides guidelines to:

- promote a healthy lifestyle and support children, staff, educators and families at the service to eat nutritious food, maintain oral health and participate in physical activity and active play

- ensure national and state guidelines and recommendations about nutrition, oral health and physical activity are met
- ensure that the dietary and cultural needs of children and families are taken into consideration when planning menus and implementing nutrition, oral health and active play activities.

## POLICY STATEMENT

### 1. VALUES

Precious Gems Childcare is committed to:

- creating policies and practices that promote a healthy lifestyle and ensure national and state guidelines and recommendations about safe food preparation, nutrition, oral health and physical activity are met
- ensuring the buildings, grounds and facilities enable healthy eating, oral health and active play
- creating a culture in which all community members are respectfully supported to eat healthily, maintain good oral health and be active
- providing children with formal and informal opportunities to learn about food, nutrition, oral health and health messages about physical activity
- ensuring staff and educators have access to resources and support for their own healthy eating, oral health and physical activity
- engaging families, the service community and expert organisations in the promotion and implementation of healthy eating, oral health and active play initiatives.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day-to-Day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, families, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Kids Haven Childcare.

## PROCEDURES

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Ensuring that the service environment and educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for eating, oral health and active play ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> )	R	√	√		
Embedding opportunities to learn about healthy eating and oral health and the importance of physical activity in the educational program, throughout the year	R	√	√		
Ensuring that age-appropriate adult-guided and child-initiated active play is planned on a daily basis across all age groups		√	√		√

Discussing healthy eating choices with children and introducing the concept of 'sometimes' and everyday foods and drinks		✓	✓	✓	✓
Providing a variety of cooking and food experiences that support children to develop food literacy and positive habits relating to food		✓	✓		✓
Role-modelling positive eating, drinking and physical activity behaviours, promoting a healthy relationship with food and interacting with children at meals times		✓	✓	✓	✓
Providing a positive eating environment and sitting and interacting with children at mealtimes		✓	✓		✓
Providing adequate supervision ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) for all children at all times, including at mealtimes	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	✓		✓
Encouraging children to be independent at snack/mealtimes e.g. opening lunchboxes, pouring drinks, self-feeding, serving and using utensils in a culturally-sensitive way		✓	✓		✓
Ensuring that cultural and religious practices/requirements of families are accommodated to support children's learning and development	<b>R</b>	✓	✓		
Providing ongoing information, resources and support to families, to assist in the promotion of optimum health, including oral health and active play, for young children ( <i>refer to Sources</i> )	<b>R</b>	✓	✓		
Recognising families, educators and staff as role models and encouraging them to bring/use foods and drinks that are in line with the service's <i>Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play Policy</i>	<b>R</b>	✓			
Providing and promoting healthy, nutritious food for snacks/meals, including fruits and vegetables in line with the service's <i>Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play policy</i> , where applicable, and discouraging sometimes/discretionary food options	<b>R</b>	✓		✓	
Ensuring the implementation of adequate health and hygiene procedures, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service ( <i>Regulation 77</i> ) ( <i>refer to Hygiene Policy and Food Safety Policy</i> )	<b>R</b>	✓	✓		✓
Ensuring measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies and/or diabetes ( <i>refer to Anaphylaxis Policy, Asthma Policy, Diabetes Policy and Food Safety Policy</i> )	<b>R</b>	✓	✓		✓
Ensuring that all ECT, educators/staff are aware of, and plan for, the dietary needs of all children	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>			
Ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of a child's food allergies and/or other medical conditions on enrolment or on initial diagnosis	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>			
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 ( <i>refer to Anaphylaxis Policy, Asthma Policy and Diabetes Policy</i> )					
Communicating regularly with ECT, educators/staff regarding children's specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs, including food preferences				√	
Ensuring that fresh drinking water (preferably tap water) is readily available at all times, indoors and outdoors, and reminding children to drink water throughout the day, including at snack/lunch times ( <i>Regulation 78(1)(a)</i> ) (Only tap water and plain milk are encouraged.)	<b>R</b>	√	√		√
Ensuring that children can readily access their own clearly labelled drink containers (where this is a service practice)		√	√	√	√
Ensuring that best practices are followed in relation to bottle feeding and sipper cups as outlined in the NHMRC Infant Feeding Guidelines	√	√	√		√
Ensuring oral hygiene practices are undertaken at the service where appropriate	√	√	√		√
Providing opportunities for children to learn about, and develop skills for oral health through the educational program, including age-appropriate tooth brushing		√	√	√	√
Ensuring that food and drinks are available to children at frequent and regular intervals throughout the day ( <i>Regulation 78(1)(b)</i> )	<b>R</b>	√			
Providing food and drinks at regular intervals, and encouraging children to actively participate in, and enjoy, snack/mealtimes without feeling rushed		√	√		√
Ensuring educators and staff are supported to access a range of resources and professional development to increase their capacity to promote healthy eating, oral health and active play initiatives for children	√	√			
Registering and engaging the service with the Achievement Program ( <i>refer to Sources</i> )	√	√			
Providing families with information and strategies to promote healthy eating, oral health and active play and how to access relevant services (including local dental clinics)	√	√	√		
Developing links with local and regional health services, community organisations and businesses that provide expertise, resources and support for healthy eating, oral health and active play	√	√	√		
Ensuring that food and drinks are not used as an incentive or reward	√	√	√		√
Ensuring staff and educators are supported by having healthy food options in the staff room, for staff meetings and for professional learning (if applicable)	√	√			
Ensuring that discretionary food and drinks do not appear in any sponsorship, fundraising or marketing activities	√	√			

Considering this policy when organising excursions, service events and any sponsorship or marketing opportunities	√	√	√		
Ensuring celebrations and other service events promote healthy food options and limit discretionary options	√	√			
Developing and reviewing guidelines for celebrations, fundraising activities and other service events in consultation with educators, staff, parents/guardians and families to focus on healthy alternatives	R	√			
Ensuring the layout of the grounds and buildings is inclusive of the diversity and abilities of all children and encourages physical activity and movement	R	√			
Ensuring recommendations about physical activity and screen time from the Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (Birth to 5 Years) are met	R	√	√		
Ensuring children are not sedentary or inactive for more than 1 hour at a time, with the exception of sleeping		√	√		√
Supporting children to develop collaboration skills during play		√	√		√
Ensuring that children are taught how to use equipment safely	R	√	√		√
Planning and providing active play and movement experiences that are age-appropriate, inclusive of diversity and abilities and support children to develop fundamental movement skills		√	√		√
Considering opportunities for children to be physically active indoors, particularly in adverse weather conditions		√	√		√
Dressing their child/ren so they can engage safely in active play		√	√	√	√
Ensuring service facilities and equipment enable active travel and road safety for children, staff, educators and families	R	√			
Supporting, promoting and encouraging active travel to and from the service ( <a href="#">Regulations 100 -102</a> )	√	√	√	√	√
Providing age-appropriate traffic safety education, including pedestrian and passenger safety to both children and parents/guardians at the service	R	√	√		
Using and promoting local parks, bike paths and recreation facilities, where appropriate, to encourage physical activity.	√	√	√		
Ensuring there is a suitable space for breastfeeding and storage of breast milk is available (delete is not applicable)	R	√			
Ensuring space and facilities are available to allow staff and educators to store and prepare healthy food safely	R	√			
Ensuring healthy eating, oral health and active play information and policy requirements are included in the educator and staff induction	R	√			
Ensuring educators and staff are supported to be physically active and minimise sedentary behaviour, both inside and outside of work hours	R	√			
Supporting students and volunteers to comply with this policy while at the service	R	√			

Where food is provided at the service:					
Ensuring the provision of nutritionally-balanced and culturally-sensitive meals, in line with the Australian Dietary Guidelines and Infant Feeding Guidelines, as required	R	√			
Ensuring that staff who are responsible for menu planning participate in regular nutrition and safe food handling training, and are kept up to date with current research, knowledge and best practice	R	√			
Ensuring that food and drink provided by the service is nutritious, varied, adequate in quantity and appropriate to children's growth and development, and meets any specific cultural, religious or health needs ( <a href="#">Regulation 79(1)</a> )	R	√			
Ensuring the service menu has been assessed by the Healthy Eating Advisory Service's FoodChecker tool and meets the criteria determined	R	√			
Ensuring that a weekly menu is displayed in a location accessible to parents/guardians, and that it accurately describes the food and drinks to be provided by the service each day ( <a href="#">Regulation 80(1)</a> )	R	√			
Displaying menus, sharing recipes and encouraging feedback about the food provided at the service.	R	√			

### 3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

#### Background

There are many benefits to promoting a healthy lifestyle in early childhood education and care settings, including the positive impact this has on each child's learning and development. Being made aware of positive eating behaviour, oral hygiene practices and the importance of physical activity from an early age can instil good habits that will remain throughout a person's life. Staff are well placed to build this awareness among children and their families, while respecting lifestyle choices, and cultural and religious values.

As a health promoting service it is recognised that every member of the service impacts on children's health. Children, staff, educators and families can be supported to eat healthily, maintain good oral health and be physically active through teaching and learning opportunities, policies, creating a safe and healthy physical and social environment and developing community links and partnerships.

#### Nutrition

The foods we eat provide our body with the nutrients we need to stay healthy. Good nutrition is the balanced eating of a variety of foods, and is especially important for children as they require a large amount of nutrients for growth and development. Research has shown that, when offered a variety of healthy foods, children can and do make good choices. It is also important to provide preschool children with a good foundation in healthy eating, as most children have formed lifelong eating habits before they reach school age.

#### Oral health

Tooth decay is Australia's most prevalent health problem despite being largely preventable. It is important to note that oral health promotion is complementary to promoting healthy eating.

Oral health behaviours have a major influence on children's health and wellbeing and a direct impact on their growth and development. Oral diseases can negatively affect individuals through pain, discomfort, general health and quality of life. Poor oral health can limit a child's capacity in biting, chewing, smiling, speaking, and psychosocial wellbeing. 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.

### Active play

Active play (refer to *Definitions*) develops a strong and healthy body, builds motor and co-ordination skills, creates a sense of wellbeing and helps protect children from disease. Active play is about moving, being and doing.

A strong sense of health and wellbeing, supported by good nutrition, oral health and an active lifestyle, can provide children with confidence, energy and optimism that will contribute to their ability to concentrate, co-operate and learn (*Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, – refer to *Sources*). Learning about healthy lifestyles, including nutrition, oral health and active play, links directly to Outcome 3 in both the *Early Years Learning Framework* and the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (refer to *Sources*).

The Australian Government has guidelines, recommendations and resources for healthy eating and physical activity in early childhood settings including the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Australian Dietary Guidelines* and *Infant Feeding Guidelines*, the *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* resources and the *National Physical Activity Recommendations for Children 0-5 Years* (refer to *Sources*). Practical, healthy eating advice is also available to early childhood services and schools via a telephone advice line: the Victorian Healthy Eating Advisory Service (Healthy Eating Advisory Service – refer to *Sources*), run by Nutrition Australia. Early childhood education and care services can also register and implement the *Achievement Program* (refer to *Sources*). This program is designed to create safe, healthy and friendly environments for children, staff educators and families, by promoting physical, mental and social health and wellbeing.

### **Legislation and standards**

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* including Regulations 77–78, 79–80 (if the service provides food), 168
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Food Act 1984* (Vic)
- *National Quality Standard* including Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*

## **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.

**Active play:** Play that involves large muscle-based activities that are essential for a child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth and development incorporating:

- child-initiated active play, which is developed by the child through exploration of the outdoor environment, equipment and games
- adult-guided active play which encourages children's physical development through promoting movement skills in a non-competitive environment
- physical activity, which includes sport, incidental exercise and many forms of recreation.

**Adequate supervision:** (In relation to this policy) supervision entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including



during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.

Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- developmental profile of each child and of the group of children
- experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

**‘Discretionary’ foods and drinks:** Food and drink items that are high in fat, sugar and salt, and that contain minimal vitamins, minerals or fibre. These can also be referred to as ‘sometimes’ foods and drinks.

**Healthy eating:** Describes eating patterns that provide all the recommended nutrients for growth and development, and good health and wellbeing, now and in the future. It also refers to preparing, serving and eating food in a way that recognises its importance as a social and cultural activity.

**Nutrition:** The process of providing or receiving nourishing substances.

**Oral health:** The absence of active disease in the mouth. Oral health is fundamental to overall health, wellbeing and quality of life. A healthy mouth enables people to eat, speak and socialise without pain, discomfort or embarrassment.

## 5. ‘SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

### Sources

- Australian Research Centre for Population Oral Health 2011 ‘Dental caries trends in Australian school children’ *Australian Dental Journal* Vol 56, pp 227-30
- *Australian Dietary Guidelines* (2013) National Health and Medical Research Council: [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au) (Search *Guidelines and publications under A-Z*)
- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:* [www.education.gov.au](http://www.education.gov.au)
- Better Health Channel: [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)
- Cavallini, I and Tedeschi, M (eds) (2008) *The Languages of Food: recipes, experiences, thoughts*. Reggio Children Publications
- Dental Health Services Victoria: [www.dhsv.org.au](http://www.dhsv.org.au)
- Food Safety Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services: [www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety](http://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety)
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand: [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)
- *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood:* [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)
- *The Achievement Program* is a health and wellbeing initiative for early childhood services, schools and workplaces: [www.achievementprogram.health.vic.gov.au](http://www.achievementprogram.health.vic.gov.au)
- Healthy Eating Advisory Service: [www.heas.health.vic.gov.au](http://www.heas.health.vic.gov.au)
- *Infant Feeding Guidelines* (2013) National Health and Medical Research Council: [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au)
- Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (Birth to 5 years): [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)



- Nitzke, S, Riley, D, Ramminger, A and Jacobs, G (2010), *Rethinking Nutrition: Connecting Science and Practice in Early Childhood Settings*. Redleaf Press, St Paul, USA
- Oberklaid, F (2004), *Health in Early Childhood Settings: From Emergencies to the Common Cold*. Pademelon Press, NSW
- *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (5<sup>th</sup> edition, 2013) National Health and Medical Research Council: [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au) (Search A-Z listings of all resources and type title into 'Filter by key word')
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*: [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

## ATTACHMENTS

Nil

## AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Precious Gems Childcare on 1st December 2022

**REVIEW DATE: 1/01/2024**