



## YACKANDANDAH KINDERGARTEN

### **ORAL HEALTH & HEALTHY EATING POLICY 2025**

#### **VALUES**

The educators, staff and management at Yackandandah Kindergarten acknowledge the importance of oral health and healthy eating which contributes to overall health and wellbeing and direct impact on their growth and development.

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.<sup>1</sup> Tooth decay is Australia's most prevalent health problem despite being preventable.<sup>2</sup>

The early childhood years are a critical period for the development of healthy habits. It is important to provide access to and establish good healthy eating and oral health practices at a young age as most children have formed lifelong habits by school age. Yackandandah Kindergarten is committed to encouraging children to make healthy food and drink choices and promoting the importance of a healthy lifestyle, which includes drinking water, eating healthy foods, maintaining oral health and physical activity. Healthy eating and active play are associated with improved learning and concentration, better mood and behaviour, healthy growth and weight and lifelong health and wellbeing.

Healthy Eating and good nutrition is essential for children's overall health and wellbeing. Poor nutrition can negatively affect individual's physical growth, general health and quality of life. The important social and cultural role of food, and the wide range of attitudes to it, is acknowledged within the service.

[Poor diet, Poor diet in children - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](http://aihw.gov.au)

The last comprehensive survey of diet in children and adolescents occurred in the National Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey 2011-13 (ABS 2014) using 24 hour dietary recall. On average in 2011-12;

- **Vegetables:** children and adolescents did not meet the recommendations
- **Fruit:** Children aged 2 to 8 did meet the recommendations, while those aged 9 to 18 did not
- **Grains:** only boys aged 4 to 11 and girls aged 9 to 11 met the recommendations
- **Lean meats and alternatives:** the majority of children did not meet the recommendations
- **Dairy products and alternatives:** Only children aged 2-3 met the recommendation for dairy consumption.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Research Centre for Population Oral Health, 2011, Dental caries trends in Australian school children, *Australian Dental Journal*, vol 56, pp 227-30.

<sup>2</sup> Rogers JG, 2011, Evidence-based oral health promotion resource, Prevention and Population Health Branch, Government of Victoria, Department of Health, Melbourne.

Yackandandah Kindergarten aims to provide children, their families, staff and educators with an environment that supports development of healthy eating and drinking patterns while also promoting the importance of physical activity and a healthy lifestyle. As a health promoting service, we will promote healthy eating and the need for good oral health to children, staff and families through learning, policies, creating a safe and healthy physical and social environment and developing community links and partnerships.

Yackandandah Kindergarten is committed to creating an environment supportive of health and wellbeing and is participating in the Achievement Program and the **Smiles 4 Miles** program.

## **GUIDELINES**

Children's nutritional, oral health needs should be considered in the context of childhood development as well as the social, cultural trends and religious beliefs which influence family food choices.

Our program encourages:

- The consumption of fruit and vegetables on a daily basis and healthy food options in line with the Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013.
- Safe eating practices.
- The development of knowledge, attitudes and skills consistent with good nutrition, physical activity, oral health and overall health for staff, educators, children and families.
- Good nutrition, oral health, physical activity and overall health for families is supported through participation in programs such as Smiles4Miles and the Achievement Program.
- Sharing information in kits distributed to families at the beginning of each kindergarten year and ongoing through brochures and newsletters.

Educators are supported to access resources, tools and professional development to enhance their knowledge and capacity to deliver healthy eating, oral health and physical activity initiatives.

Educators are supported to consume healthy foods and drinks and maintain good oral health practices at work

When food is provided to staff and educators at meetings, celebrations or events, healthy food options are included and discretionary food items discouraged.

This policy is shared with the whole service community (including management, educators, staff, volunteers, families and children with opportunities to provide feedback.

## **HEALTHY DRINK CHOICES**

- Yackandandah Kindergarten will encourage the consumption of tap water during kindergarten sessions.
- We only encourage drinking tap water and plain milk at our kinder.
- Safe drinking water is available at the service indoors and outdoors and will be accessible for all children at all times (eg. water bottles/water cooler/jugs, water fountain)
- Parents are also encouraged to provide their child with a named water container.

- ‘Sometimes’ foods and sweetened drinks, such as juices, cordial and soft drinks are not provided by the service and parents are discouraged from sending from home.
- If a child does bring a non-water drink to kindergarten, he/she will be offered tap water in line with this policy and the child will be encouraged to place the non water item in his/her bag.
- The parent will be given an information slip on why the non-water item has been sent home and encouraged to provide water.

## **HEALTHY SNACKS AND LUNCH**

- Families are encouraged to supply healthy lunchbox choices such as fruit and/or vegetables daily for children in line with the Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013.
- Children are encouraged to eat a piece of fruit and/or vegetable snack time.
- Families are encouraged to follow this suggestion at home, with information provided at enrolment and in newsletters.
- Children will be introduced to the concept of “everyday” and “sometimes” foods and drinks.
- Children are educated about healthy eating and oral health, including how to make healthy choices about food and the importance of tooth brushing.
- Food awareness activities are carried out during the year such as sowing and growing vegetables in the vegetable garden, harvesting and tasting. Food that is provided will be culturally appropriate, varied and meet the children’s developmental needs.
- Educator/staff discretion is used to suggest whether a child is able to eat these foods if they have another alternative.
- Food at Celebrations –If ‘sometimes’ foods are brought in for children to share for a celebration, healthy ‘everyday’ food options like fruit and vegetables will be offered first. This will help encourage responsible food choices, promote the use of ‘everyday’ foods in celebrations and avoid the association of ‘sometimes’ food with special occasions, making them more desirable.

*Special dietary requirements:* We strongly encourage you not to bring any nut or nut products to the centre.

## **MEAL TIMES AND EATING ENVIRONMENTS**

Meal times are seen as an opportunity for developing independence and should always be a pleasant occasion. Yackandandah Kindergarten ensures this by:

- Encouraging children to taste/try all foods, not forcing children to eat.
- Discussing nutrition and food in a positive way.
- Planning meal times for children so they are relaxed.
- Encouraging conversation between children.
- Positive role modelling from staff, parents and volunteers by eating with children and interacting with them at meal times.
- Respecting individual children’s likes and dislikes.
- Not using food as a reward or for punishment or to provide comfort.
- Ensuring that when food is provided at staff meetings, celebrations and events, healthy food option are included and discretionary/sometimes options are discouraged.
- Diversity and culture are considered when implementing healthy eating and oral health practices and when menu planning.
- Oral hygiene practices are promoted and undertaken at the service when appropriate.

## **FOOD IS NOT USED AS A REWARD, INCENTIVE OR FOR COMFORT**

- Staff will not use food as a reward, incentive or for comfort.
- Staff will use a range of strategies to accommodate this, such as verbal and non-verbal recognition, praise and encouragement, empathy reward charts and stickers, use of a 'snuggle blanket' or a hug for comfort.
- Staff will ensure parents are made aware of these and also provide guidance in the use of these for the home situation as well.

## **FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY**

- Healthy Eating and Oral Health messages have been embedded in this and other policies at our Kindergarten. Examples include the SunSmart Policy, Excursion Policy and Fundraising Policy.
- Families are informed of the policies on Kindergarten Open Days as part of the enrolment process. Families are also made aware of the policies through the preschool interview handbook given to parents at the beginning of the year. The complete Policy Folder is accessible at all times for parents to read and is located in the centre's foyer area. Newsletters, display boards and parent information nights are other opportunities to inform parents of the Preschool's policies as well as information on the importance of healthy eating, oral health and active play for young children and families.
- Families are seen as key partners in developing and supporting healthy eating, oral health and physical activity initiatives
- Educators and staff work with local health professionals, services and other organisations to support healthy eating, oral health and physical activity initiatives
- Healthy eating and oral health information is provided to families, such as information about accessing local dental services and how to create healthy and nutritious meals.

## **FOOD HANDLING & STORAGE**

Parents, staff and volunteers are to adhere to the guidelines in the centre kitchen including the guidelines for which coloured cloths to use for which tasks. Please use the paper towels to dry your hands and wearing gloves provided when preparing food.

- Children must not share cups
- Water bottles must be labelled for each individual child
- Personal Hygiene guidelines will be clearly displayed in the food preparation area for the reference of staff and families involved with preparation or distribution of food to children.
- Families will be informed of available cold storage at kindergarten to ensure parents make suitable food choices.
- Family induction encourages families to include ice bricks in lunchboxes to keep food cool and safe.
- When staff or parents prepare the food for the children to share, the following practices need to be carried out to ensure the food is safe to eat:
  - Staff/parents to wash & dry hands thoroughly before preparing the food
    - Children to wash & dry their hands before eating
    - Children to take the food they touch and not touch other children's food
    - All children to be supervised when eating.
- When perishable items (eg. yoghurt, cheese, meat sandwich fillings) are provided by the kindergarten or family, appropriate temperature storage must be available e.g. refrigerator or insulated lunch packs.
- Kitchen to be maintained in a clean hygienic standard.

**RESPONSIBILITY:**

The Oral Health and Healthy Eating Policy is the responsibility of the Kindergarten Management Committee and is to be approved by the School Council.

Healthy eating and oral health information and policy requirements are included as part of staff and educator orientation/induction process.

It is recognised that early childhood services can impact on children's health and can contribute to creating an environment that promotes healthy eating, oral health and active play. All members of the service including management, staff, children, parents and volunteers will be supported to meet this policy.

**RELATED LEGISLATION AND POLICIES**

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011:
  - PART 4.2—CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY 97 Division 1—Health, safety and wellbeing of children —Regulations 77, 78, 79, 80
  - PART 4.7—LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE MANAGEMENT Division 2—Policies and procedures — Regulation168 (2) (a) (i)
- National Quality Standard –
  - Quality Area 2- Health and Safety
  - Quality Area 6- Collaborative Partnerships with families and communities
  - Quality Area 7- Governance and Leadership
- Australian Dietary Guidelines. National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013
- Infant Feeding Guidelines. National Health and Medical Research Council, 2012
- Get Up and Grow. Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood. Australian Government, 2009
- Belonging, Being and Becoming. The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. Commonwealth of Australia, 2009
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework For all Children from Birth to Eight Years. Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2009

**VALUATION:**

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes the committee will:

- Use a quality assessment tool, for example the Preschool Quality Assessment Checklist.
- Assess whether a satisfactory resolution has been achieved for nutritional issues raised.
- If appropriate, conduct a survey in relation to this policy or incorporate relevant questions within the general parents/guardian survey.
- Take into account feedback from staff on the policy.
- Monitor complaints in relation to food and drink provided at the centre.
- Share the policy with whole service community including management, staff, educators, volunteers and families, with opportunities to provide feedback.

**ASSOCIATED POLICIES / DOCUMENTS:**

- Excursions Policy
- Fundraising Policy
- 'Smiles 4 Miles'
- Achievement Program
- Staff Health and Wellbeing PolicyFood Safety

- Anaphylaxis or Food Allergies
- Celebrations

**REVIEW:**

In accordance with the Policy Review Table, the Oral Health and Healthy Eating Policy was reviewed by the Kinder Healthy Achievement Team, the Kinder Committee of Management and endorsed by YPS Council in July 2025. Update endorsement date

The policy is next scheduled for review in September 2027. Update review date

**DEFINITIONS:**

**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. i

**Nutrition:** The process of providing or obtaining the food necessary for health and growth. ii

**'Discretionary'/'Sometimes' food and drink:** Discretionary/Sometimes food is high in fat, sugar and salt or a combination of these. iii

They typically have very little nutritional value and are often processed and packaged. Examples of discretionary food include:

- chocolate, confectionery, jelly
- sweet biscuits, high fat/salt savoury biscuits, chips
- high sugar/high fat cakes and slices
- cream, ice cream
- deep fried foods (eg. hot chips) and pastry-based foods (pies, sausage rolls and pasties)
- most fast food and takeaway foods
- some processed meats (eg. sausages, frankfurts/hot dogs, salami, strasbourg, devon, some commercial chicken nuggets and fish fingers)
- soft drinks, fruit juice and fruit drinks, cordial, sports drinks, energy drinks, flavoured milk and flavoured mineral water.

**Oral health:** A standard of health of the oral and related tissues that enables an individual to eat, speak and socialise without active disease, discomfort or embarrassment and that contributes to general wellbeing.

## **ATTACHMENT 1**

### **Australian Dietary Guidelines 1-5**

There are five principal recommendations featured in the Australian Dietary Guidelines. Each Guideline is considered to be equally important in terms of public health outcomes.

#### **Guideline 1**

To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, be physically active and choose amounts of nutritious food and drinks to meet your energy needs

- Children and adolescents should eat sufficient nutritious foods to grow and develop normally. They should be physically active every day and their growth should be checked regularly.
- Older people should eat nutritious foods and keep physically active to help maintain muscle strength and a healthy weight.

#### **Guideline 2**

Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five groups every day:

- Plenty of vegetables, including different types and colours, and legumes/beans
- Fruit
- Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties, such as breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa and barley
- Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans
- Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or their alternatives, mostly reduced fat (reduced fat milks are not suitable for children under the age of 2 years)

And drink plenty of water.

#### **Guideline 3**

Limit intake of foods containing saturated fat, added salt, added sugars and alcohol

a. Limit intake of foods high in saturated fat such as many biscuits, cakes, pastries, pies, processed meats, commercial burgers, pizza, fried foods, potato chips, crisps and other savoury snacks.

- Replace high fat foods which contain predominantly saturated fats such as butter, cream, cooking margarine, coconut and palm oil with foods which contain predominantly polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats such as oils, spreads, nut butters/pastes and avocado.
- Low fat diets are not suitable for children under the age of 2 years.

b. Limit intake of foods and drinks containing added salt.

- Read labels to choose lower sodium options among similar foods.
- Do not add salt to foods in cooking or at the table.
- c. Limit intake of foods and drinks containing added sugars such as confectionary, sugar-sweetened soft drinks and cordials, fruit drinks, vitamin waters, energy and sports drinks.

d. If you choose to drink alcohol, limit intake. For women who are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding, not drinking alcohol is the safest option.

#### Guideline 4

Encourage, support and promote breastfeeding

#### Guideline 5

Care for your food; prepare and store it safely

Source: <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines/australian-dietary-guidelines-1-5>

### **ATTACHEMNT 2**

Australian Dietary Guidelines (2013)

- Healthy Eating for Children
- Healthy Eating for Adults
- Healthy Eating for Infants

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Australian Government  
National Health and Medical Research Council  
Department of Health and Ageing

www.eatforhealth.gov.au

# Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five food groups every day.  
Drink plenty of water.



**Use small amounts**



**Only sometimes and in small amounts**

