

Early Learning

Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play

Overarching Statement

The Keeping Children Safe Policy of the Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania (*refer to Sources*) is the overarching whole of church policy to be implemented by individuals and entities involved with or connected to the Uniting Church. All children who are involved in any of the Church's activities, events or programs have a right to feel and be safe. The Church is committed to provide safe environments where children are cared for, respected, nurtured and sustained.

DOCUMENT TITLE & NUMBER		NUTRITION, ORAL HEALTH AND ACTIVE PLAY POLICY		
Content Owner	Uniting Early Learning – Head of Early Learning			Page No. Page 1 of 7
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The latest version of this policy can be found at <https://vtuniting.sharepoint.com/sites/Intranet/SitePages/Policies-and-Procedures.aspx>

Policy Statement

Uniting Early Learning is committed to:

- actively promoting nutritious food and positive eating habits that contribute to healthy growth and development in children;
- encouraging and promoting physical activity by providing a range of active play experiences for all children at all services;
- providing a safe, supportive and social environment in which children can enjoy eating, develop self-help skills and learn about their own well-being;
- encouraging and facilitating children's active participation and decision making at mealtimes;
- consulting and working collaboratively with families in regard to their child's nutrition and dietary requirements, including responding appropriately to food allergies and recognising cultural and religious practices, and lifestyle choices;
- ensuring that food and drink items provided by the service are consistent with national and state regulations, guidelines and recommendations;
- providing children and families with opportunities to learn about food, nutrition, oral health and healthy lifestyles;
- ensuring adequate health and hygiene procedures, including safe practices for handling, preparing, storing and serving food;
- providing a supportive environment for mothers to breastfeed.

DOCUMENT TITLE & NUMBER	NUTRITION, ORAL HEALTH AND ACTIVE PLAY POLICY			
Content Owner	Uniting Early Learning – Head of Early Learning			Page No. Page 2 of 7
Document Author	Practice Manager	Document Version	V 3.0	Policy No. 001
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Executive Summary

Uniting Early Learning acknowledges that every member of the service impacts on children's health and can contribute to creating an environment that promotes healthy eating and good oral health. 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, development and wellbeing. Promoting awareness of positive eating behavior, good oral health and the importance of physical activity from an early age can instill good habits that will remain throughout a person's life. Information sharing with families is integral to understand children's individual likes, dislikes, special dietary needs and any cultural and religious requirements related to their wellbeing.

Educators play a key role in modelling and reinforcing an active and healthy lifestyle. Intentional teaching practice will provide child-focused, planned and incidental experiences that promote nutrition, sound oral health and physical activity that builds upon children's development.

Children require opportunities to learn to be responsible for their own health and physical wellbeing. Encouraging active engagement, conversations and decision-making about healthy choices, dental hygiene and physical fitness will provide the foundation for children's optimum growth.

Current Environmental Context

The responsibilities of each relevant party are noted in *Attachment 1a*.

Attachment 1a: Responsibilities relating to the Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play Policy

References/Sources

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Keeping Children Safe Policy of the Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, Approved May 2017.

Uniting Early Learning acknowledges the contribution of the Banyule Community Health service in the development of this policy. This policy was reviewed by the Health Promotion Project Officer in March 2018.

DOCUMENT TITLE & NUMBER	NUTRITION, ORAL HEALTH AND ACTIVE PLAY POLICY			
Content Owner	Uniting Early Learning – Head of Early Learning			Page No. Page 3 of 7
Document Author	Practice Manager	Document Version	V 3.0	Policy No. 001
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- *Access and Equity policy Level 2*
- *Anaphylaxis appendix policy*
- *Asthma appendix policy*
- *Dealing with Medical Conditions policy*
- *Diabetes appendix policy*
- *Educational Program and Practice policy*
- *Excursions Regular Outings and Service Events policy*
- *Food Safety policy*
- *Hygiene and Infectious Diseases policy*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness policy*
- *Inclusion and Diversity policy Level 1*
- *Sun Protection Policy*

DOCUMENT TITLE & NUMBER	NUTRITION, ORAL HEALTH AND ACTIVE PLAY POLICY			
Content Owner	Uniting Early Learning – Head of Early Learning			Page No. Page 4 of 7
Document Author	Practice Manager	Document Version	V 3.0	Policy No. 001
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Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

DOCUMENT TITLE & NUMBER	NUTRITION, ORAL HEALTH AND ACTIVE PLAY POLICY			
Content Owner	Uniting Early Learning – Head of Early Learning			Page No. Page 5 of 7
Document Author	Practice Manager	Document Version	V 3.0	Policy No. 001
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- Achievement Program: www.achievementprogram.health.vic.gov.au
- Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code
- Australian Breastfeeding Association www.breastfeeding.asn.au
- *Australian Dietary Guidelines* (2013) National Health and Medical Research Council: <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/n55>
- Better health Channel www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

DOCUMENT TITLE & NUMBER	NUTRITION, ORAL HEALTH AND ACTIVE PLAY POLICY			
Content Owner	Uniting Early Learning – Head of Early Learning			Page No. Page 6 of 7
Document Author	Practice Manager	Document Version	V 3.0	Policy No. 001
Date Published	10/05/2018	Revision Due Date	06/06/2019	

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- Cavallini, I and Tedeschi, M (eds) (2008), *The Languages of Food: recipes, experiences, thoughts* Reggio Children Publications
- *Children's Services Regulations 2009*: Regulations: 79, 80, 81
- Dental Health Services Victoria – includes resources on oral health: www.DHSV.org.au
- Early Learning Association Australia – Road Safety Education <https://elaa.org.au>
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 77–78, 79–80
- *Food Act 1984* (Vic), as amended 2012 [Food act legislation](#)
- Food Safety Victoria, Department of Health – *Food Safety and Regulation*: 1300 364 352
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand – for information on food safety and food handling www.foodstandards.gov.au
- *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood*: www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-early-childhood-nutrition-resources
- Healthy Eating Advisory Service: <http://heas.health.vic.gov.au/> phone 1300 225 288 or email heas@nutritionaustralia.org
- *Infant Feeding Guidelines* (2012) National Health and Medical Research Council : <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/n56>
- Kids and Traffic – Early Childhood Road Safety Education Program: www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- Nitzke, S, Riley, D, Ramming, A and Jacobs, G (2010), *Rethinking Nutrition: Connecting Science and Practice in Early Childhood Settings*. Redleaf Press, St Paul, USA
- Nutrition Australia-*Healthy eating in the National Quality Standard*: [Healthy Eating in the NQS](#)
- Tasmanian Licensing Standards for Centre Based Child Care 5 (2014) Standard 13

Authorisation

This policy was adopted by Uniting Early Learning on 10/05/2018.

Review:

This policy is due for review by 06June 2019.

DOCUMENT TITLE & NUMBER	NUTRITION, ORAL HEALTH AND ACTIVE PLAY POLICY			
Content Owner	Uniting Early Learning – Head of Early Learning			Page No. Page 7 of 7
Document Author	Practice Manager	Document Version	V 3.0	Policy No. 001
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