

Let's Discuss - *Food Handling*

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By now you will have read a lot about nutrition and healthy eating for children and have attended training in your area and received the *Eat Smart Play Smart* book.

Healthy eating and good food practices go hand in hand.

Remember you have a duty of care to ensure you follow food safe laws which include appropriate food handling practices.

Hygiene and good food handling practices

- Low standards in food handling practices can lead to all kinds of harm, from mild to very serious illness, sometimes even death.
- Legislation has been developed to cover all aspects of food handling in the food business. Children's services come under this legislation because meals or snacks are prepared for the children. Website: www.foodstandards.gov.au
- Hygiene and good food handling practices are so important to prevent food from becoming contaminated.
- If food is already contaminated, refrigeration or freezing will not stop the process.
- You may purchase food that is fresh and within date, but the way it is transported to the service and how long the food is out of refrigeration adds to the chance of food becoming contaminated.
- Attend training to learn how to store, prepare, cook and serve food in a hygienic manner.
- Attend training on infection control and cross contamination.

What to look for when shopping

Check the product carefully for any signs of damage:

- Dented cans
- Leaking cartons, cans, bottles or containers
- Torn or ripped packaging
- Swollen chilled food packages and cans
- Cracked eggs
- Broken or imperfect seals
- Dairy products and other chilled/frozen foods left out of refrigerators
- Products with moulds, discolouration or infestation
- Products in loose vacuum packs

Important Facts

Perishable food such as sandwiches, custard, milk, yoghurt etc. should not be left out of refrigeration. If taken out on excursion an esky should be used to store the food.

Cleaning chemicals should be stored in a locked cupboard to prevent unauthorised access.

Cleaning rosters with dates should be on display and monitored to ensure that the process is taking place on a regular basis.

When you go shopping always go directly home or to the service.

Don't leave your groceries in a hot car. If you are travelling long distances (more than half an hour), put your chilled and frozen goods into a cooler for the trip. If you anticipate a long drive, avoid buying hot foods.

When you arrive at the service immediately pack chilled and frozen goods into the refrigerator or freezer.



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Department of Health Information Sheets

It is imperative that all services obtain information on good food handling and hygiene practices from the Department of Health website: www.health.wa.gov.au , and follow their guidelines on:

- Washing hands/ use of gloves
- Cleaning work tops
- Cleaning chopping boards (acrylic material rather than wood)
- Keeping washing sponges separately (colour code)
- Cleaning utensils
- Personal hygiene
- Appropriate clothing
- Illness, skin conditions, cuts etc.
- Correct way to handle raw food and meat to prevent contamination
- Correct temperature to store foods
- Correct temperature for cooking foods
- Correct way to store food in pantry
- Correct manner of storing food in a refrigerator
- Correct cleaning of kitchen or food preparation area
- Correct method of drying kitchen utensils
- How contamination of food is caused

Does your policy reflect Quality Assurance Principles?

The following example policies reflect Quality Assurance Principles:

- The importance of good healthy food, and hygienic and safe food handling and storage practices, will be discussed with children as part of their daily program. (OSHCQA Principle 6.2)
- All children and staff will wash their hands prior to preparing, serving or eating food. (OSHCQA Principle 6.2)
- Centre staff will be provided with on going professional development opportunities to refresh their knowledge of children's dietary needs, food handling and hygiene practices. (OSHCQA Principles 6.1 and 6.2)
- Information on nutrition, food handling and storage will be displayed at the centre and provided to parents/ guardians. (OSHCQA Principle 6.2)
- Children will be encouraged to try new food but will never be forced to eat. Their food likes and dislikes and the families religious and cultural beliefs will always be respected. Children will be involved in planning, preparing and cooking snacks as part of the activity program. They will learn how to store, prepare and serve food hygienically as part of these activities. (OSHCQA principle 6.1)

Useful Food Safety Contacts:

Food Safety Information Council Website: www.foodsafety.asn.au Phone: (02) 6254 4896
Website contains fact sheets; posters; quizzes; articles; Food Safety Matters educational materials; video clip; brochures.

Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing—Food Safety and Surveillance Section
Email: foodsafety@health.gov.au Phone (02) 6289 5131
Australian Government policy on food safety regulation; promoting a nationally consistent approach to food safety policy and legislation.

Children & Community Services (Outside School Hours Care) Regulations 2006

Regulation 35—Cleanliness, maintenance and repair of place

- (1) A licensee must ensure that the place and all equipment and furnishings at the place are maintained in a thoroughly safe, clean and hygienic condition and in good repair.
- (2) A licensee must ensure that the place is kept free from rodents, cockroaches and other vermin.

Regulation 83—Hygiene standards

A licensee must ensure that contact staff members observe and maintain reasonable standards of hygiene in the provision of the outside school hours care service

Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance

Principle 6.1

Balanced and healthy eating is promoted by the service.

Principle 6.2

Staff implement effective and current food handling and hygiene procedures.