



Eating and playing in Family Day Care

**Great spaces,
Safe spaces**



**In Australia,
more and more
children are
becoming
overweight.
By helping children
develop healthy
eating habits and
giving them lots of
opportunity to play
and move at Family
Day Care we can give
every child the best
start to life.**

Eating and playing in FDC

FDC educators need to make sure that healthy eating and physical activity (active play) are promoted and appropriate for each child. When children eat healthy food and have enough physical activity it helps them to be healthy, make friends, concentrate and learn.

Eating well is essential to healthy living and enables children to play actively. Family Day Care provides opportunities for children to learn about healthy food choices from you as their educator and also from other children. Eating habits developed as a child affect people throughout their lives.

Physical activity helps children's brains and muscles grow and helps children become confident about what they can do and enjoy being active. As an educator you need to encourage physical activity that is hard, extends thinking and offers opportunities to take some risks.

There are many parts of children's lives that make it easy for them to not be active such as cars and the use of phones and iPads. Showing children how to be active helps them develop good habits and helps them to be healthier.



Food needs to be good food

Children need good food. Good food:

- to grow
- for healthy brains and so they can concentrate
- so they don't get sick and get better quickly when they do
- so they have enough energy

Food offered to and food eaten by children at FDC must be:

- healthy food
- the right amount of food (for each child's age, size, activity level and needs)

Children **should** have:

- plenty of vegetables of different types and colours, and legumes/beans
- fruit
- grain (cereal) foods mostly wholegrain 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 - mostly reduced fat except for children under 2 who shouldn't have reduced fat milk
- lots of water

Children **should not** have:

- sweet biscuits, cakes and desserts
- meats such as ham or salami or sausages
- ice-cream, lollies or chocolate
- meat pies or sausage rolls
- hamburgers, pizza, hot chips, and fried foods
- chips or other salty snack foods
- cream and butter
- fast food like McDonalds or KFC
- soft drinks, sweet drinks, sports drinks
- too much fat, salt or sugar

The table to the right outlines half (50%) of the recommended daily servings from each of the different food groups which children need per day.

Daily recommended dietary intake for children

Essential Food group	Minimum number of serves during Family Day Care hours (= 50% of overall daily intake)	Average serve per child
Grains (mostly wholegrain), bread and cereals 	2	1 serve = 1 slice bread or 30 g or ½ cup breakfast cereal or 30 g dry or ½ cup cooked rice or 30g dry or ½ cup cooked pasta
Dairy foods & alternatives 	2	1 serve = 100ml milk or 15g cheese or 100g yoghurt or 100ml calcium fortified soy/rice milk (calcium fortified) These are modified child serves*
Meat & meat alternatives 	1	1 serve = 50g raw red or white meat or 35g cooked or 40g cooked fish 60g raw or 85g cooked legumes (baked beans, lentils, chickpeas) or 30g dry or 1 egg (60g) or 85g tofu These are modified child serves*
Fruit 	½	1 serve = ½ cup of fruit fresh, tinned or frozen or 1 medium piece of fruit (150g) or 30g dried fruit
Vegetables 	1	1 serve = 75g (1/2C) of cooked vegetables including green, orange and starchy or 75 g (1 C) raw green leafy, other salad type vegetables
Fat 	1 ½	1 serve = 1 t or 5g margarine or cooking oil or 3 t or 15ml cream or sour cream or 3 t or 15 ml coconut milk

Table from: Promoting Healthy Eating in Education and Care Services

Eating should be enjoyable

Meal times give everyone a break from play, but children continue to learn so meal times are learning times as well. Meal times are a great time to teach children about healthy food and how our bodies work.

Make sure you:

- have chairs (or high chairs) and a table that the children and you can sit at and enjoy meal times and snack times together
- have cutlery and plates that are right for the age of each child
- sit with children and show them how to eat healthy food
- help children to work out when they are hungry or full

- respond to babies' messages about hunger – they usually 'tell' you when they are hungry by crying and their faces tell you if they like or dislike the food you are offering
- tell families what their baby or child ate during the day and how much they ate and drank

Make sure you **don't**:

- use food to reward or punish or comfort children
- make a child eat a food they don't like



Encourage and support mothers to breastfeed

Breastmilk has all the nutrients a baby needs, and is the only food required until around six months. Babies should be breastfed until at least 12 months, or longer if the mother and baby wish. As a FDC educator support breastfeeding by giving babies the bottles of breastmilk their mothers bring for them and storing them safely in the refrigerator. Offer their breastmilk in the sterilised plastic bottle or cup provided by the mother. Some families will choose to feed their babies breastmilk from bottles, while others may want you to give it to them from a cup (from seven or eight months only). If a baby prefers warm milk you can heat their bottle by standing it in warm water.

Never give a baby another mother's breastmilk.

You can also support mothers to breastfeed by having a comfy chair they can breastfeed their child in when they drop off and pick up their baby.

Formula Feeding

Where mothers cannot breastfeed infant formula is the only safe alternative to breastmilk for babies under 12 months. Formula should be made up according to the family's directions. Infant formula is the only safe alternative to breastmilk for babies under 12 months.

Help families to pack good food for their child

Work out ways you can remind families to make sure there is lots of healthy food and none of the food that is not healthy for children. (Check the lists on page 4.)

Teach children about good food

Try and think of at least 2 activities per week that might teach children about good food. (Get ideas from *Munch and Move* www.nswfdc.org.au/munchandmove and *Get up and Grow* www.nswfdc.org.au/getupandgrow.)

Make sure water is available.

Water is the best drink for children. Make sure they can always get water without having to ask you. (If the taps are too high think about putting a water jug and plastic cups somewhere they can reach.) Remind them to drink regularly.

Only give babies solid food when parents ask you to

Generally this will be around 6 months. Only give solid food when parents ask you to, do not introduce them to new foods.



Food needs to be safe

Family Day Care educators must use good hygiene practices and must handle, prepare and store food safely. You have to know how to store and reheat food children bring from home safely. This is important because children can:

- choke on food
- have allergic reactions to food
- get very sick from food that is not stored or reheated properly

Breastmilk and formula

Put it straight in the fridge when the parent gives it to you. Heat it by standing the bottle in warm water. Always check the temperature of the milk before giving it to a baby. Discard leftover breastmilk or formula. Never reheat it. Never add anything except water to infant formula. Parents should bring you the bottles with water in them to which you add the formula.

Make it up as close to the time a baby will have it. Do not let a baby drink from a bottle by themselves, always hold them and the bottle. Never microwave breastmilk or formula.

Choking risks

Children can choke on food. Be very careful with hard food that can break into smaller bits, raw carrots, celery or apple (grate or mash these), seeds, popcorn and tough or chewy meat.

Food Allergies

If a child has a food allergy or anaphylaxis you need to make sure they will not come into contact with the food they are allergic to. This may mean asking other parents not to pack those foods in their child's lunchbox. Children should be told not to share food at meal and snack times.

Food poisoning

Children can get food poisoning from food that is not prepared safely. Foods that are most likely to cause food poisoning are those with milk, cheese, meat, fish and rice in them.

Be sure that everyone washes their hands before preparing food or eating. Use tongs and serving spoons to serve food. Throw away any leftover food – don't serve it again later. Don't reheat food that has already been reheated. (For example, a curry cooked the day before and refrigerated, then reheated and served the next day cannot be reheated again and served later.)

Lunch boxes

- All food brought from a child's home should be placed in the refrigerator.
- Remove the food from the lunch box or unzip the lid. Don't touch the food with your bare hands. Ask parents to label food with the child's name.

- Reheat meals sent from home that need to be eaten hot until steaming hot throughout.
- Allow the food to cool before feeding to child.



Children need lots of active play

For children under school age, active play is the best sort of physical play. Older children need more planned physical activities.

As an FDC educator you need to:

- make sure you have physical games and activities as part of the program
 - support each child to do physical things and help them learn new physical skills
 - be part of physical activity and show children it can be fun
 - make sure the children you care for have time for active play
 - talk to children about how their bodies work and how important physical activity is
 - help children to take small risks in play
 - make areas for babies to practice rolling over, sitting, crawling, standing, walking and climbing
- do activities like singing action songs, dancing, throwing and kicking balls with the children
 - limit children's use of screens while at FDC



Babies need active play

As an FDC educator you need to provide supervised floor-based play for babies under 12 months every day.

Before they walk they need time to play on their stomach and back to practice reaching, grabbing, pushing and pulling.

- Put them on their stomach to grow strong head and neck and stomach muscles. Put them on mats or rugs, put toys just out of their reach so they learn to reach and grab.
- As they become more mobile set up tunnels for them to crawl through or have strong benches they can pull up on.
- Babies need outside play as well as inside play.
- Babies need to be played with and to play by themselves.



Toddlers and pre-schoolers need active play

Toddlers and pre-schoolers need at least 3 hours of physically active play a day spread through the day.

Children learn how to walk, run, throw and catch during these years.

They need:

- unstructured 'free' play such as playing in the park or sandpits, dancing to music
- structured 'planned' play such as action games and songs
- active transport such as walking to where they need to go with less time in strollers or cars
- everyday physical tasks such as helping with gardening, setting up activities and cleaning

Children this age need to climb, balance, build, dance, kick, build, hit, dig, jump, march, walk and run.



School aged children need active play

School aged children should have at least 60 minutes of intense physical activity every day.

Children this age should be discouraged from sitting or lying down particularly by reducing use of screen time.

Children this age need:

- active play
- sports, games, physical education
- active transport such as walking to where they need to go with less time in buses or cars
- everyday physical tasks such as helping with gardening, setting up activities and cleaning



Don't Break The Law

As a Family Day Care educator you have to follow special laws about eating and playing at Family Day Care. The main laws are the ***Education and Care Services Law***, and the ***Education and Care Services Regulations***.

The best way to get an understanding of the law and regulations is to talk to your FDC Provider. They will help you to understand the law.

The other way is to read the Guide to the NQF. You can find it at www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide



GUIDE TO THE NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK



The laws and regulations are designed to keep children safe while in your care.

The most important parts of the law and regulations in regards to eating and playing require a **FDC educator** to:

- use adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food so that children don't get sick from food at your FDC (*Regulation 77*)
- make sure children can get a drink of water whenever they are thirsty and are offered food and water throughout the day (*Regulation 78*)
- make sure the food children is provided is nutritious and there is enough of it and it is age appropriate and is appropriate for a child's

culture/religion/health. (All of these only apply if you are providing the food rather than the parents.) (*Regulation 79*)

- If you do provide food rather than the parents you need to show a menu for the week that describes the actual food you will be giving children each day. (*Regulation 80*)

Where to find out more

Want to know more about eating and playing in Family Day Care?

Read



The other booklets in these series

www.nswfdc.org.au/greatspaces

Guide to the National Quality Framework

www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide

Get up and Grow Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood

www.nswfdc.org.au/getupandgrow

Munch and Move Fact Sheets

www.nswfdc.org.au/munchandmove

Promoting Healthy Eating and Nutrition in Education and Care Services

www.nswfdc.org.au/healthyeating

The Australian Dietary Guidelines

www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/The%20Guidelines/n55f_children_brochure.pdf

Watch videos



Great Spaces, Safe Spaces videos at

www.nswfdc.org.au/greatspaces

Fun Moves videos support early childhood educators to teach preschool children the 13 fundamental movement skills.

www.nswfdc.org.au/funmoves

A video about the lead up to lunch for two four-year-old children and two babies in a family Day Care home.

www.nswfdc.org.au/lunchroutines



Look at websites

www.familydaycare.com.au

www.nswfdc.org.au

www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au

Do a free online training course

www.munchandmove.com.au

Read the curriculum

The *Early Years Learning Framework* (the curriculum for FDC and other early education and care services) has been translated into 11 different languages.

www.nswfdc.org.au/EYLF

The Framework for School Aged Care (the curriculum for FDC for school aged children) is available in English only.

www.nswfdc.org.au/MTOP



Ask

The NSW Department of Education Information and Enquiries Line. The Department is the Regulatory Authority for FDC services. Call 1800 619 113 or email ececd@det.nsw.edu.au



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