

As young children (particularly those under 12 months) are still developing their immune system, they are more susceptible to food borne illnesses and infection. This therefore makes it imperative that education and care services implement and maintain the highest level of hygiene practices. Our Centre will therefore ensure that safe practices are consistently maintained for handling, storing, preparing and heating breast milk.

To ensure our Centre maintains a safe and hygienic environment for all infants and toddlers requiring a bottle, educators will prepare bottles safely and hygienically in accordance with recognised guidelines and best practice. All educators preparing and/or handling bottles will have undergone training in safe food handling.

During their first year of life, babies are at their most vulnerable to viruses, bacteria, and parasitic infections, due to their immune system not yet being fully developed. Unsafe or careless food handling practices can therefore lead to anything from a mild attack of thrush to a more serious condition of gastroenteritis, all of which are similar to food poisoning and can cause vomiting and diarrhoea, and subsequent dehydration.

To ensure that bottles are consistently prepared in a safe and hygienic manner Educators will adhere to Centre procedures at all times.

*Management will ensure:*

- Ensure that the Nominated Supervisor and educators are aware of the procedures for preparing, heating and storing bottles of formula and breast milk.
- Ensure that children have access to safe drinking water at all times and are regularly offered food and beverages appropriate to their individual needs
- Infants over 6 months of age are given small amounts of cooled boiled tap water in addition to breastmilk or formula as required.
- Develop procedures for the safe storage and heating of food provided in bottles.
- Procedures for the safe storage and heating of food provided in bottles are strictly adhered to.
- Infants are given only breast milk, formula, or cooled boiled water: They are not given fruit juice in their bottle due to the increase risk of tooth decay.

*A Nominated Supervisor/ Certified Supervisor will:*

- Ensure that educators implement the procedures for preparing, heating and storing bottles of formula and breast milk.
- Adhere to the procedure for the safe storage and heating of food provided in bottles.
- Infants over 6 months of age are given small amounts of cooled boiled tap water in addition to breastmilk or formula as required.
- Infants and children are not given fruit juice in their bottle due to the increase risk of tooth decay
- Ensure families are familiar with their responsibilities in accordance with this policy.

*Educators will:*

- Implement safe food handling practices.
- Seek to provide a supportive environment for breastfeeding.
- Adhere to the procedure for the safe storage and heating of food provided in bottles.
- Store all bottles in an appropriate area for food preparation that complies with the food safety standards for kitchens and food preparation areas.
- Adhere to the procedure for the safe storage and heating of food provided in bottles.
- Provide infants over 6 months of age with small amounts of cooled boiled water in addition to breast milk or formula.
- Not give Infants fruit juice in their bottle due to risk of tooth decay.
- Ensure families are familiar with their responsibilities in accordance with this policy.



#### *Families will:*

- Be informed during orientation that children's bottles must be clearly labelled with the child's name.
- Be encouraged to supply breast milk in well labelled, multiple small quantities to prevent wastage.
- Be encouraged to keep formula powder at the centre so that the formula can be prepared as required. Formula Dispenser must be clearly labelled with the child's name.
- Label bottles containing breast milk or formula with the date of preparation or date of expression.
- Attempt to bring enough sterilised bottles each day to meet their child's requirements.
- Supply breast milk in multiple small quantities to prevent wastage.
- Be asked to provide a labelled bottle(s) for use at the centre for children having regular cow's milk in their bottles,
- Be encouraged to communicate regularly with educators about children's bottle and feeding requirements.
- Infants and children are not given fruit juice in their bottle due to the increase risk of tooth decay

#### **Preparing, Storing and Heating bottles**

Bottles of breast milk and formula need to be carefully prepared, stored and heated. Breast milk contains the mother's antibodies, which help prevent illness in infants. Encourage and support mothers of infants up to 12 months old to provide expressed breast milk, or to visit the education and care service to feed their infants.

#### **Preparing bottles**

When preparing formula, always wash your hands first, and ensure that work surfaces, bottles and other equipment are clean. Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully. Boil water and leave to cool for approximately 30 minutes. This will ensure that the water is not too hot (70°C is the best temperature to prepare formula as it will dissolve easily).

#### **Storing bottles**

For safe storage of formula and breast milk, refrigerators must be kept at 5°C or below and should have a non-mercury thermometer to monitor the temperature.

- Formula or breast milk must be kept refrigerated or frozen if not being immediately consumed.
- Whenever possible, make up formula as it is needed. Formula should not be refrigerated for more than 24 hours.
- Any remaining formula should be thrown out if an infant does not finish a bottle: It should not be frozen or reheated.
- Prior to placing bottle in the fridge staff will check that it/they are labelled with the child's name and the date the bottle was prepared.

#### *Breast milk can be stored in several ways, which include:*

1. Refrigerated for 3–5 days at 4°C or lower (4°C is the typical temperature of a standard fridge). Store breast milk at the back of the refrigerator, not in the door
2. Do not store bottles inside the refrigerator door.
3. Frozen in a separate freezer section of a refrigerator for up to 3 months; if your freezer is a compartment inside the refrigerator, rather than a separate section with its own door, then only store the breast milk for 2 weeks.

#### *Frozen breast milk can be thawed by:*

1. In the refrigerator and used within 24 hours
2. Standing the bottle in a container of lukewarm water and used straight away.

#### **Heating Bottles**

- Stand the bottle in a container of hot water for no more than 15 minutes.
- Before feeding the infant, check the temperature of the milk by letting a little drop onto the inside



of your wrist—it should feel comfortably warm or even a little bit cool.

- Never microwave breast milk.
- Never refreeze thawed breast milk.
- Only warm the milk once, and discard any warmed milk that has not been used.

### **Bottled Breast Milk**

Breastfeeding is important for infant's nutrition. Australian and international health authorities recommend exclusive breastfeeding until around 6 months. At around 6 months, solid food can then be offered while breastfeeding is continued until 12 months or longer if the mother and baby request.

Early Childhood Education and Care Services have an important role in supporting mothers to continue to breastfeed, as returning to work is a common reason given for stopping breastfeeding. Educators will inform mothers that the provision of breast milk is supported at our centre.

Breast milk contains the mother's antibodies, which help prevent illness in infants. It is important to encourage and support mothers of infants up to 12 months old to provide expressed breast milk, or to visit the education and care service to feed their infants.

#### *Management will ensure:*

- Nominated Supervisor and educators are aware of the procedures for preparing, heating and storing bottles breast milk.
- Procedures for the safe storage and heating of food provided in bottles is developed.
- Parents are aware that the centre is a 'breastfeeding friendly' centre.
- Families are provided with breastfeeding information during enrolment and orientation.
- A welcoming environment is provided for mothers to comfortably breastfeed or express breast milk.
- Breast milk can be stored and handled safely at the centre.
- Families are provided with accurate nutrition and feeding information.
- Culturally appropriate pictures and posters of breastfeeding are displayed.
- Easily accessible brochures, pamphlets and other resources about breastfeeding are displayed.
- Staff and families are educated, that a mother may breastfeed their child at the centre, as this is their legal right.
- An individual breastfeeding support plan is developed in consultation with families, including arrangements for what we as a centre do if we do not have enough expressed breast milk to meet the child's needs.
- Literature is updated and distributed to staff as required to support 'best practice'.

#### *A Nominated Supervisor/ Certified Supervisor will:*

- Ensure that educators implement the procedures for preparing, heating and storing bottles of breast milk.
- Adhere to the procedure for the safe storage and heating of food provided in bottles.
- Provide mothers with a private, clean and quiet place to breastfeed their children or express milk. This will include electrical outlet, comfortable chair, change table and nearby access to hand washing facilities.
- Stimulate participatory learning experiences with the children related to breastfeeding and offer children's books that contain pictures of breastfeeding, play dolls that are nursing and other learning experiences that normalise breastfeeding.
- Establish and maintain connections with local breastfeeding support networks.
- Maintain current printed or electronic lactation resources available to families and employees.
- Refer mothers with breastfeeding concerns to appropriate resources, including support centres offered by VIC Health, Australian Breastfeeding Association groups or private lactation consultants.

#### *Educators will:*

- Ensure all bottles are stored in the fridge at all times until heating is to commence.
- Ensure frozen breast milk is de-frosted in the fridge until heating.



- Ensure, for occupational health and safety reasons, while bottles are heating in their containers, they are to be placed in a sink where possible or as far from all bench edges and work spaces.
- Ensure that bottles are not to be re-heated at any time.
- Discard bottle content if not used after 30 minutes.

#### *Families will:*

- Be informed during orientation that children's bottles must be clearly labelled with the child's name.
- Label bottles containing breast milk with the date of preparation or expression.
- Be encouraged to supply breast milk in well labelled, multiple small quantities to prevent wastage.
- Be encouraged to communicate regularly with educators about children's bottle and feeding requirements.

### **Storing bottles**

Breast milk needs to be kept refrigerated or frozen. Keep a non-mercury thermometer in your fridge so that you can check that the temperature is below 5°C. All bottles need to be labelled with the child's name and the date the bottle was prepared or brought in by the parent.

- Breast milk can be stored in several ways, which include:
  1. Refrigerated for 3–5 days at 4°C or lower (4°C is the typical temperature of a standard fridge). Store breast milk at the back of the refrigerator, not in the door.
  2. Frozen in a separate freezer section of a refrigerator for up to 3 months; if your freezer is a compartment inside the refrigerator, rather than a separate section with its own door, then only store the breast milk for 2 weeks. Frozen in a deep freeze (–18 °C or lower) for 6-12 months.
- Frozen breast milk can be thawed by:
  1. Placing in the refrigerator and used within 24 hours.
  2. Standing the bottle in a container of lukewarm water and used straight away.

### **Staff Training**

Our centre will:

- Provide orientation for new staff to the breastfeeding policy and offer appropriate training, including using a cup or spoon for feeding, where an infant will not accept a bottle.
- Ensure all staff that have responsibility for care of infants and children are able to provide basic breastfeeding information and are able to refer mothers with breastfeeding concerns to appropriate resources, including support centres offered by NSW Health, Australian Breastfeeding Association groups or private lactation consultants.
- Ensure staff encourage parents to develop babies' individual breastfeeding support plans and regularly update their plans, with support from NSW Health, Australian Breastfeeding Association groups or private lactation consultants where appropriate.
- Ensure all staff promote exclusive breastfeeding until babies are about 6 months old with continued breastfeeding to one year and beyond.

### **Support for Educators and Mothers who are Breastfeeding**

We aim to work with families with children who are still being breastfed and provide supportive environment by feeding children breast milk supplied by the families. We support mothers who wish to breastfeed at the centre by providing a quiet, relaxing place with a comfortable chair for mothers to breastfeed or express milk. Educators will take into account mothers' preferences for privacy.

The centre will:

- Treat requests for support to continue breastfeeding sympathetically and reasonably, and make all reasonable efforts to support the staff member.
- Provide breastfeeding employees with a flexible schedule for breastfeeding or pumping to provide expressed breast milk for their children.



- Provide breastfeeding employees with a private, clean and quiet place to breastfeed their babies or express milk, including an electrical outlet, comfortable chair, a change table and nearby access to hand washing facilities.

All reasonable efforts will also be made to support educators who continue breastfeeding their child when they (return to) work at the centre. For example, an educator returning from maternity leave may have a meeting with the Nominated Supervisor to discuss:

More flexible work arrangements

The provision of lactation breaks for the educator to express milk or breastfeed her child. Educator to child ratios will not be compromised during these breaks.

**Source:** Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, Early Years Learning Framework, National Quality Standard, Food Standards Australia New Zealand, Safe Food Australia, 2nd Edition. January 2001, Caring for Children- Food, Nutrition and Fun Activities, 4th Edition 2006, Australian Guide for Healthy Eating, National Health and Medical Research Council. (2005). Staying Healthy in Child Care (5<sup>th</sup> Edition), Food Safety Standards Australia 2001, Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Act 1991, Food Standards Australia New Zealand Regulations 1994, Food Act 2003, Food Regulation 2004, Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000, Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2001, Dental Association Australia, Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers, Feeding and Nutrition of Infants and Young Children, Australian Breast Feeding Association Guidelines.

**Date Implemented:** 16/04/2012

**Review Completed:** 01/04/2019

**Schedule for Review:** 01/04/2020

National Quality Standard – NQS		
Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety		
2.1	Health	Each child’s health and physical activity is supported and promoted
2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child’s wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child’s needs for sleep, rest and relaxation
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.1.3	Healthy Lifestyles	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
Education and Care Service National Regulations		
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices	
78	Food and beverages	
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures	

