

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 and formula.

## **Purpose**

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.

## **Implementation**

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:*

- That the Nominated Supervisor and educators are aware of the procedures for preparing, heating and storing bottles of formula and breast milk.
- Procedures for the safe storage and heating of food provided in bottles are strictly adhered to
- Infants over 6 months of age are given small amounts of cooled boiled water in addition to breastmilk or formula as required
- 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/ Responsible Person will:*

- Ensure that educators adhere to 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
- Provide infants over 6 months of age with small amounts of cooled boiled water in addition to breast milk or formula as required
- Ensure infants 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
- Wash hands thoroughly and wear gloves when preparing 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
- Adhere to each child's feeding routine
- Ensure families are familiar with their responsibilities in accordance with this policy



- Document the amount of milk each infant consumed including the time of feeds
- Communicate regularly with families about infant and children's feeding patterns and routines

#### *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.
- Attempt to bring enough sterilised bottles each day to meet their child's requirements
- Formula been brought to the centre should be in a Formula Dispenser and must be clearly labelled with the child's name.
- Label bottles containing breast milk or formula with the date of preparation or date of expiration.
- Attempt to bring enough sterilised bottles each day to meet their child's requirements.
- 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.

#### **Storing Sterilised Bottles**

- If not using sterilised bottles immediately, care needs to be taken to store them correctly to avoid them coming into contact with bacteria.
- Ensure your hands and the work bench are clean.
- Using sterile tongs, place the teat 'upside-down' in the bottle, and place the sterilised cap and lid on the bottle.
- Store bottles in a clean place away from dust.
- If not used within 24 hours sterilised bottles should be sterilised again before use.

#### **Preparing Formula**

- Ensure your hands and the work bench are clean.
- 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).

#### **Formula Bottle Preparation Procedure**

1. Thoroughly wash hands and wear gloves when preparing bottles
2. All bottle preparation will be completed in the designated bottle and food preparation area
3. The bottle and food preparation area will always be clean and hygienic and will only ever be used for the purpose intended
4. All food and bottles will be kept totally separate from the nappy change and toileting areas
5. Prepare formula as per the instructions on the formula container and use the provided scoop for measurement, using cooled boiled water for infants under 12 months of age.
6. Once formula is made it must be used or kept in the refrigerator. Discard any leftover formula
7. Formula bottles will not be re-heated as this can allow germs to grow
8. Formula will be warmed by standing the bottle in a container of hot water
9. Do not warm bottles in the microwave as microwave ovens distribute heat unevenly. Water in the milk can turn to steam that collects at the top of the bottle, and there is a danger that the infant could be scalded.
10. Test the temperature of bottle contents by placing a few drops on the inside of the wrist before feeding the child
11. Supervise children with bottles at all times. Children will not be placed on beds or in cots for feeding as this can be a choking hazard.
12. Give bottles to children before going to bed to reduce the risk of tooth decay
13. Rinse all children's bottles thoroughly after use and leave to air dry before placing in child's bag
14. Communicate regularly with families about children's bottle and feeding requirements.
15. Communicate with families about the amount of milk taken by the child and any changes in feeding patterns or routines at the education and care Service.



## Heating bottles

- Heat bottles once only
- Do not allow a bottle to cool and then reheat as this can allow germs to grow.
- 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 small drop fall on the inside of your wrist
- Do not microwave breast milk or bottles
- Do not refreeze thawed breast milk
- Discard any milk that has not been used

## Storing Breastmilk and Formula

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:*

- Refrigerated for 3–5 days at 4°C or lower
- Store breast milk on a shelf of the refrigerator, not in the door
- Frozen in a separate freezer section of a refrigerator for up to 3 months at a temperature of -18°C. If being frozen in a freezer compartment inside the refrigerator (as opposed to a freezer with a separate door), the breast milk should only be stored for 2 weeks.

*Frozen breast milk can be thawed:*

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

*Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services- 5<sup>th</sup> Edition*

## Breast Milk Preparation Procedure

1. Breast milk that has been expressed should be brought to the Centre in a clean sterile container labelled with the date of expression and the child's name.
2. We encourage families to transport milk to the Centre in cooler bags; this should be immediately given to the educators, who will put it in the refrigerator.
3. We will refrigerate the milk at 4°C until it is required
4. Thoroughly wash hands and wear gloves when preparing bottles
5. All bottle preparation will be done in the designated bottle and food preparation area
6. The bottle and food preparation area will always be clean and hygienic and will only ever be used for the purpose intended
7. All food and bottles will be kept totally separate from the nappy change and toileting areas
8. Breast milk will be warmed and/or thawed by standing the container/bottle in a container of warm water
9. Shake the bottle before feeding the infant and check the temperature of the milk on the inside of the educator's wrist to ensure it is not too hot
10. If the Centre does not have enough breast milk from the family to meet the child's needs that day, individual families will be consulted on what the Centre should do in these circumstances
11. To avoid any possible confusion, we will not store unused milk at the Centre
12. Unused milk will be returned to families at the end of the day when they come to collect their child



13. A quiet, private space with a comfortable chair will be provided for mothers/women to breastfeed or express milk. A sign will also be placed on the door when the mother/woman is using the facilities.

**Source:** Australian Breastfeeding Association [www.breastfeeding.asn.au](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au) Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014). Australian Government Department of Health. Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood. <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-early-childhood-nutrition-resources> Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council. (2013). Eat for health: Infant feeding guidelines: Information for health workers. [https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the\\_guidelines/n56b\\_infant\\_feeding\\_summary\\_130808.pdf](https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/n56b_infant_feeding_summary_130808.pdf) ECA Code of Ethics. (2016). Education and Care National Regulations. (2011). Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2018). (Amended 2020). National Health and Medical Research Council. (2013). *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*. Caring for children birth to 5 years: Food, nutrition and learning experiences. <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/heal/Publications/caring-for-children-manual.pdf> Safe Food and Health Service Executive. (2013). How to prepare your baby’s bottle.

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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	

