5 SIMPLE STEPS TO DEVELOPING HEALTHY EATING GUIDELINES

These steps for developing Healthy Eating Guidelines are suitable for a group session or service provided for a couple of hours with parents/carers and children attending together, for example, playgroups.

**Step 1**
- Provide a copy of the Sample Healthy Eating Guidelines to all of the group’s parents, carers and staff.

**Step 2**
- Involve staff, parents and carers in the development of the group’s guidelines to help them make it easier to put into practice.
- Hold a discussion with parents, carers and staff about current practices - this could be done during morning tea.
- Identify any new or alternative points to include in your guidelines, consider culturally appropriate foods and allergies where appropriate.

**Step 3**
- Review comments and update guidelines according to any discussions and decisions made.
Guidelines may be developed more informally using the sample policy as a guide for discussion and the parents/carers agreeing in principle.

**Step 4**
- Distribute the guidelines to staff, parents and carers
- Communicate the expectations regarding the food and drinks that are encouraged and those that are discouraged from being brought to the group session or service to parents/carers in a supportive and inclusive manner.
- Include the guideline in your group session or service orientation/registration pack (or equivalent) for new families using your service.
- Include the guideline in your sign in area or display where it is accessible to all staff and families

**Step 5**
- Review food and nutrition practices every 12 months or as necessary to ensure they are consistent with your service guidelines.
- Update the guidelines and discuss with parents/carers as required.

The NSW Ministry of Health wishes to acknowledge the following sources: South Eastern Sydney and Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health Districts Healthy Eating and Active Play at Playgroup manual and case studies, and the NSW Ministry of Health Munch and Move program and Local Health District resources.

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You need to consider the following areas when developing your guidelines for healthy eating at a group session/service:

1 Healthy food and drink choices
   - What food and drinks will be provided? (group session or service / parents from home)
   - What food and drinks will not be provided?
   - When will food and drink be provided?

2 Eating environment
   - How will your group session or service promote a relaxed and sociable environment that reflects family and cultural values?
   - How will your group session or service include parents, carers and children in food preparation, consumption and food awareness activities?

3 Food safety
   - How will food and drinks be stored, prepared, served and eaten safely?

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