

BOTTLE SAFETY AND PREPARATION POLICY

We have 2- and 3-year-old children within our service who still have bottles sometimes at rest time. This makes it imperative that education and care services implement and maintain the highest level of hygiene practices. Our Service will ensure that safe practices are consistently maintained for handling, storing, preparing and heating breast milk and formula, and sterilising bottles and teats.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

| QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY | | |
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| 2.1 | Health | Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted |
| 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 SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS | |
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| 77 | Health, hygiene and safe food practices |
| 78 | Food and beverages |
| 168 | Education and care services must have policies and procedures |
| 170 | Policies and Procedures to be followed |
| 171 | Policies and procedures to be kept available |
| 172 | Notification of change to policies or procedures |

RELATED POLICIES

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| Breastfeeding Policy Dental Health Policy Health and Safety Policy | Nutrition and Food Safety Policy Sleep and Rest Policy Work, Health and Safety Policy |
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PURPOSE

To ensure our Service maintains a safe and hygienic environment for all toddlers requiring a bottle, educators will sterilise and 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.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, educators, staff, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, volunteers and visitors of the Service.

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 Service procedures at all times.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/MANAGEMENT WILL ENSURE:

- educators, staff, students, visitors and volunteers have knowledge of and adhere to this policy
- families are aware of this *Bottle and Safety Preparation Policy*
- educators are aware of and strictly adhere to the procedures for washing and sterilising bottles and teats, and 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.
- educators give infants or children bottles before going to bed (in a cot or bed).
- infants are given only breast milk, formula, or cooled boiled water. They are not given fruit juice in their bottle due to the increased 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 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
- ensure infants and children are not given fruit juice in their bottle due to the increased risk of tooth decay
- give bottle-fed infants or children their bottles before going to bed
- ensure children are not put in cots or in beds with bottles as per the *Dental Health Policy*
- rinse children's bottles thoroughly after use and leave to air dry before placing in the child's bag
- adhere to each child's feeding routine
- 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:

- read and comply with the policies and procedures of the Service
- be informed during orientation that children's bottles must be clearly labelled with the child's name
- label bottles or zip lock bags containing breast milk 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 clearly labelled, multiple small quantities to prevent wastage
- keep formula powder at the service so that the formula can be prepared as required. (Formula must be in its original tin and must be clearly labelled with the child's name.)
- provide a labelled bottle(s) for use at the Service for children
- be encouraged to communicate regularly with educators about children's bottle and feeding requirements
- not put fruit juice in children's bottles as per our *Dental Health Policy*.

STERILISED IN DISHWASHER

Ensure the dishwasher reaches a safety temp of 80+ degrees to kill germs, bacteria and to sterilise. To rinse the bottle before going into the dishwasher and to let it dry thoroughly before putting it away.



CHEMICAL STERILISING

Chemical sterilisation is achieved using cold water and a non-toxic liquid or tablet that is added to cold water to create a sterilising solution that is highly effective in killing bacteria. It is extremely safe to use and can be applied to the skin or even swallowed with no harmful effects. Educators need to check that there are no air bubbles left in the bottles to ensure complete sterilisation.

Always read the manufacturer's instructions to ensure the solution is mixed correctly and items are left in the solution for the required amount of time: Generally, they are sterile after half an hour and can be safely left in the solution for up to 24 hours. The solution must be changed daily.

Avoid leaving sterilised empty bottles out on work surfaces as they will quickly lose their sterility. Ideally, sterilisers have built-in storage facilities and bottles can be removed when required.

Note: Dishwashers can be used to clean bottles and equipment, but these items must still be sterilised – the dishwasher does not sterilise.

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
- Shake off excess water. There is no need to dry these items.
- 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

Before 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).



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

The *Bottle Safety Preparation Policy* will be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if there are changes to legislation, ACECQA guidance or any incident related to our policy. Feedback will be requested from children, families, staff, educators and management, and notification of any change to policies will be made to families within 14 days.

CHILDCARE CENTRE DESKTOP- RELATED RESOURCES

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| Bottle Preparation Audit Breast Milk Preparation Procedure | Formula Bottle Feeding Preparation Procedure |
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SOURCES

Australian Breastfeeding Association www.breastfeeding.asn.au

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*

Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care. *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood*.

Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care. *Pregnancy, birth and baby*.

Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council. (2013). Eat for health: Infant feeding guidelines: Information for health workers. [Eat for health: Infant feeding guidelines: Information for health workers](#).

ECA Code of Ethics. (2016). [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2025)

Food Standards Australia – www.foodstandards.gov.au

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2024). *Staying Healthy: preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (6th Ed.). NHMRC. Canberra.

NSW Government, The Sydney Children’s Hospital Network. (2024). [Introducing fluids](#)

NSW Ministry of Health. (2014). Caring for children birth to 5 years: Food, nutrition and learning experiences. [Caring for children birth to 5 years: Food, nutrition and learning experiences](#).

Safe Food and Health Service Executive. (2013). How to prepare your baby’s bottle.



REVIEW

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| POLICY REVIEWED BY | Allana Young | Service Manager, Staff, Board of Management | 23/02/26 |
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