

**HEALTH
PROMOTING
SERVICE**

Criterion 7

a) Curriculum - The curriculum incorporates the Australian Dietary Guidelines, the Infant Feeding Guidelines and the 24 hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (for Birth to 5 years) and aligns with relevant National Quality Standards and the Early Years Learning Framework.

b) Policy - All Move Well Eat Well - Early Childhood Award criteria are included within policy and planning documents endorsed by the service management.

c) Families, educators and staff - Families, educators and support staff have access to policy documents and ongoing information, ideas and strategies to promote healthy eating and active play.

To meet this criterion include the following in your service's practice and policy:

Criterion 7a Curriculum

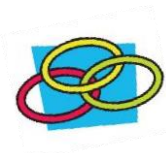
- The curriculum incorporates the National Quality Standards and Early Years Learning Framework around healthy eating and active play, to guide service practice, policy and environment (not required for Child and Family Centres).
- The curriculum incorporates the Australian Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents, the Infant Feeding Guidelines and Australia's 24 Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (Birth to 5 years).
- For Child and Family Centres:* The curriculum, program and services of the Child and Family Centre reflect the healthy eating and active play components of the National Quality Standards and are underpinned by the Early Years Learning Framework.

Criterion 7b Policy

- Each of the *Move Well Eat Well* criteria is addressed in policy, through an existing policy or a specific *Move Well Eat Well* policy.
- There is a staff health and wellbeing policy in place at the setting which promotes the modelling of healthy eating and physical activity practices.
- The policy documents are approved by the service governing body and/or proprietor.
- Each new and existing staff member is provided with an overview of the *Move Well Eat Well* – Early Childhood Award policies and practices.

Criterion 7c Families, educators and support staff

- New families to the service are provided with information about breastfeeding, healthy eating, physical activity and health and safety policies.
- Families, educators and support staff are included as partners in the program's policy development and revision.
- Families, educators and support staff have access to regular information ideas and strategies to promote and support healthy eating and physical activity policies and initiatives.



Quick tip: It is OK to copy and paste the dot points from the previous page into your policy if it is happening in practice.

Add your 'Health Promoting Service' progress sticker to your Member Certificate when all parts of this criterion are happening in practice and written into policy.

Why is this criterion important?

Healthy eating and physical activity are essential behaviours for the wellbeing of babies, children, adults and for the health of our community. Early childhood education and care services are shown to be effective settings, improving the outcomes for young children and have the opportunity to influence knowledge, understanding and behaviours around healthy eating and active play. Evidence has shown that to make a sustained health difference to children, families and community, children's settings, such as early childhood education and care services, need to work towards achieving the following:

- coordinated policies across all areas of influence on the setting
- infrastructure and assigned staff to support coordination of multiple programs
- formal and informal mechanisms for cooperation across the setting, programs and workforce professions
- ongoing workforce development
- ongoing knowledge exchange, transfer and development
- regular monitoring and reporting on progress
- explicit procedures to identify emerging issues, trends and priorities
- explicit plans for sustainability.¹

Reasons for action

Research shows that a child's experience in their first five years sets the course for the rest of their life.² The key protective factors that make a significant difference to improving outcomes for children include:

- secure attachment with a primary carer
- breastfeeding
- good nutrition and physical activity, and
- stimulating play-based learning experiences.³

Higher quality early childhood education and care is associated with positive socio-emotional outcomes for children.⁴ Quality early learning is reflected in the day-to-day experience of children, such as having:

- warm, positive and stimulating adult-child interactions
- age-appropriate experiences
- a safe and healthy environment.⁵

Health promotion programs, such as *Move Well Eat Well*, have an important place in early childhood education and care settings. The *Move Well Eat Well* – Early Childhood Award Program helps services work towards quality education and care standards and outcomes as determined in the following key sector national and state frameworks and curricula:

- The National Quality Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care Services
- The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia

In the early childhood setting curriculum means 'all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster

children's learning and development.' Belonging, Being & Becoming the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. ⁵

Settings like Early Childhood Services are important places for the promotion and practice of healthy eating and active play. Healthy eating and active play benefit children by:

- helping to keep children happy and strong ^{6, 7, 8, 9}
- promoting health and wellbeing including mental health and wellbeing in childhood and adult life ^{10, 11}
- helping them to learn to enjoy a wide variety of foods and develop confidence in their bodies ⁸
- increasing fine and gross motor skills and balance, agility, flexibility, coordination and cardio-vascular health ¹²
- contributing to an energy balance assisting in weight management ¹²
- learning to cooperate, share, problem solve and resolve conflict ¹²
- practising nurturance, guidance and other pro-social behaviours ¹²
- acting out skills and situations for life-developing communication skills. ¹²

National Quality Standards alignment

The National Quality Standards comprise guiding principles, quality areas, standards and elements for early childhood education and care services. The Quality Areas provide educators and support staff with a legislative and quality framework for the whole service. In meeting the *Move Well Eat Well* Award, a service can demonstrate elements within all these Quality Areas. The final criterion – Health Promoting Service – requires that there is policy, planning and promotion for the six key health messages across the entire setting and its community.

The Quality Areas are:

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children's health and safety
3. Physical environment
4. Staffing arrangements, including staff-to-child ratios and qualifications
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Leadership and service management.

Curriculum alignment

The Australian Early Years Learning Framework is a national curriculum framework for early childhood educators in all early childhood education and care settings who work in partnership with families and children from birth to five years. Services can document their principles and practices incorporating the six *Move Well Eat Well* criteria into the key learning outcomes for children from birth to five years, covering the transition to school. The Learning Outcomes aim to ensure:

1. Children have a strong sense of identity
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
4. Children are confident and involved learners
5. Children are effective communicators.

Tips and strategies

Planning and documenting

Your particular service or group of services may wish to focus on one criterion for the Award at a time. Individuals or small groups could take responsibility to review different criteria. It is up to you how you work towards the Award.

Aligning with the National Quality Standards and Early Years Learning Framework

Align your *Move Well Eat Well* criteria, policy and practices with your service response to the National Quality Standards, where age-appropriate. Use your service response to the criteria as recorded examples of meeting elements within the Standards. Align your *Move Well Eat Well* criteria policies and practices, within the language and guidance of the Early Years Learning Framework.

Family and community involvement

There are a range of ways to seek family and community involvement including:

Displays:

- Set up attractive and informative noticeboard displays. Distribute tip sheets. Promote the use of the *Move Well Eat Well* icons so families become familiar with them.
- If your service has a family library, include pamphlets and easy to read information on healthy eating and active play.
- Have a photo album of the children having healthy meals and snacks and involved in active play.
- Ensure families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have access to your policies in a visual format – why not have a poster with the key points translated and use photos to show what the service is promoting.

Promoting your policy:

- When your service develops a new policy ensure all stakeholders are involved in the development, evaluation and review.
- Promote your policy of healthy eating and active play at enrolment and continue promotion throughout the year.
- Create a one-page version of the policy that is easy for all families to access.

Events and service activities:

- Engage families in your promotional events and special days.
- Service gardens or community gardens are an excellent way of involving your families and community from development stage through to managing and harvesting.
- Organise guest speakers for family evenings to talk about nutrition and active play.

Communication:

- Include articles on key health messages in your service newsletter. The *Move Well Eat Well* website information will also be available to support you with this.
- Share information with families about the foods their child is trying or enjoying or the physical activities the child is participating in. Also gather information about what they like at home, for example new foods they may have tried with the family.

Overcoming potential barriers

Some families may feel the service does not have a right to have policies in place to promote healthy eating and/or active play and may feel they are being told what to do:

- At enrolment speak with families about the learning and quality frameworks your early childhood education and care service operates under. Provide take-home copies of your policies, principles and practices that promote healthy food and active play.
- When policies are updated make sure families are involved and are kept up to date with the changes. This means everyone has ownership and is therefore more likely to support it.

Activities

Families and policy development and practice

Involve educators and families in developing the healthy food and active play policies and, if necessary, seek professional input from community dietitians or a physiotherapist. Policies are most successful when those involved have been consulted or regularly communicated with for their input. This creates a sense of ownership. Ask families to contribute ideas of healthy eating experiences, recipes or active play ideas. Use the talent, knowledge and enthusiasm of extended family members to offer learning experiences for all the children: intergenerational and cross-cultural music, song, dance and games:

- Learn a Viennese waltz, an African dance, an Irish jig, a circle dance, make a Chinese dragon and dance.
- Learn old-time children's games, musical chairs, red light green light, hopscotch, a range of singing games.
- Stage a little Olympics or world games with help from family and community.

Inter-generational and cross-cultural recipes, diverse fruit and vegetable and serving experiences:

- hold a formal 'high tea' with cucumber sandwiches, make fruit damper, try avocado dips, fruit kebabs. Visit the ['Limit Sometimes Foods'](#) section of the website for recipe ideas.
- celebrate at Chinese new year, Harmony Day, Seniors Week and encourage your community to work with you.

Curriculum and Policy Alignment with Move Well Eat Well

Each of the *Move Well Eat Well* criteria supports the National Quality Standards and Early Years Learning Framework. Each of the following stories is an example of how early childhood education and care services can align with state and national policy.

Criterion 1 Tap into Water

A service runs a play-based learning activity that encourages children to understand the importance of water for the growth of plants, animals and for their own bodies. The children share a story, *Precious Water* by Brigitte Weninger. Water bottles and cups, individually decorated by each child, are filled with water and the children have a drink. A water break is a regular part of each child's day and after physical activity. Children are encouraged to self-pour, refill and serve water to their classmates as a social experience. (EYLF Outcomes 1,2,3,4,5, and NQF Standards 1,2,3,5).

Criterion 2 Plant Fruit 'n' Veg

An educator involves three children aged two to four years in the day's meal planning, preparation and sharing. A range of whole fruit and vegetables are displayed in the fridge and children pick their favourite colours or shapes for each particular meal or snack. The educator involves the children in the preparation of the food and its display on a plate as they talk about where the fruit and vegetables are grown – underground or on trees. (EYLF Outcomes 1,2,3,4,5, and NQF Standards 1,2,3,5).

Criterion 3 Limit 'Sometimes' Foods and Criterion 4 Move, Play and Go

At the beginning of each new year a Child and Family Centre with children aged six months to five years sets up a display in the foyer with the *Move Well Eat Well* 'Eat A Rainbow' poster as its centrepiece and provides family tip sheets on limiting 'sometimes' foods. Families new to the service are given copies of the service policy on lunch box contents, water bottles, fruit and vegetable only breaks, and service policy on other ways of celebrating birthdays and events to replace cakes and sweets. Children and families are involved in designing new ways to celebrate in the centre through costume, music, dance and play. (EYLF Outcomes 1,2,3,4,5 and NQF Standards 1,2,5,6,7).

Criterion 5 Turn off, Switch to Play

An educator of children aged one to three years developed policies in consultation with her scheme management that outlined a no-screen time approach at her home. The educator provided a positive and colourful brochure on the range of activities and practices she used to ensure the children had a balance of adult-initiated active play through music and movement indoors and outdoors, and child-initiated active play each day. The children's families were inspired by the brochure and the 'no-screen' policy and sought advice from the educator to support them to introduce this in their home. (EYLF Outcomes 1,2,3,4,5, and NQF Standards 1,2,3,5,6,7).

Criterion 6 Stride and Ride

Educators at a service in an inner-town location noticed a number of their families brought their babies in prams every morning, yet did not seem to know each other very well. A pram walking group with a difference was suggested by educators and some keen family members. One morning each fortnight all children gather with educators and families with prams to take walks centred around interesting features of the street, the town and the landscape. Road safety was programmed as an ongoing lesson each fortnight. (EYLF Outcomes 1,2,3,4,5, and NQF Standards 1,2,3,5,6).

Criterion 7 Health Promoting Service

Management, educators and families in a small rural child care service with children aged six months to five years agreed to work corroboratively on developing and revising their service children and staff health and wellbeing policies every six months. Children and extended family were invited to a meeting on a Saturday afternoon to share a meal with the management committee and staff and review the service's policy. The current and required standards and policies were written on butcher's paper and revised on the walls during the afternoon; the extended gathering were invited to comment. From one of these sessions a 'positive suggestion' board (with suggestion cards available) was placed in the foyer for families and visitors to add thoughts and suggestions around healthy eating and active play for the staff, children and families of the service. A 'response' space was left for service and community feedback on these suggestions. (EYLF Outcomes 1,2,3,4,5 and NQF Standards 1,2,3,4,5,6,7).

Success stories

Early childhood curriculum, planning and action

Every year Giggles Early Learning Service participates in Harmony Day, working closely with the International Friendship Group. All children are encouraged to participate in cooking activities with a special focus on food from other cultures. Children share lunch. Parents and families are invited to come along to the service to share their cultural cooking practices and recipes with the children. One year, a parent originally from Africa held an activity with the children cooking rotis and butter chicken.

Early childhood health promotion

Educators at Rainbow Child Care Centre communicate healthy eating ideas to parents and families through newsletters, displays and nutrition evenings. A Public Health Services dietitian has visited the centre to run parent sessions about fussy eaters, healthy snack foods, lunch box ideas and what children should be eating throughout the day while at care. Rainbow Child Care Centre has also made the most of the Community Dietitian's and *Move Well Eat Well's* great resources including healthy eating display kits.

Breastfeeding friendly policy

A Child and Family Centre is a 'Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace'. This means the whole setting is supportive of breastfeeding and can provide comfortable spaces where mothers can breastfeed.

Where to go next



Website

The following sections of *Move Well Eat Well* website can help provide support and useful tools to help you with the 'Health Promoting Service'; message and criterion:

- [Health Promoting Service 'Early Childhood Services' section](#)
- [Health Promoting Service 'Families' section](#)
- ['Like' Move Well Eat Well on Facebook](#)

References

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