



**TAP INTO  
WATER  
EVERYDAY**

## Criterion 1

Drinking water is available and accessible to children, both indoors and outdoors at all times (e. g. water bottles, water coolers, jugs).

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

### For services that provide care for babies (0-12 months)

- If needed, cooled boiled water is offered to babies under six months who are not exclusively breastfed and to all babies from 6-12 months.

### For all services

- Water is provided with each meal and snack for children one year and over.

### And one of the options below

- Water is available and accessible at all times and offered regularly to children both indoors and outdoors.
- Children have their own 'water only' water bottles for use both indoors and outdoors while at the service.



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

Add your 'Tap into Water Every Day' progress sticker to your Member Certificate when all relevant parts of this criterion are happening in practice and written into policy.

## Why is this criterion important?

Being well hydrated helps children to learn and their bodies to grow well, it may also reduce the likelihood or severity of constipation. <sup>1</sup> To promote hydration it is important to make it easy for children to access water.

## Reasons for action:

- Plain drinking water is the best drink for toddlers and older children but Australian children are still drinking too many sweet drinks. Around 30% of toddlers and 40% of children 4-8 years old had sugar-sweetened beverages on the previous day. <sup>2</sup>
- By the time they are 5 years old around half of Australian children have decay in their baby teeth. <sup>3</sup> This decay is related to eating and drinking too much sugar, and sweet drinks are the largest single source of sugar for Australian children. <sup>4</sup>
- Sweet drinks have little nutritional value and can fill children up too much so they have less space for 'everyday' foods and drinks. <sup>5</sup>

## Australian Recommendations advise:

- Babies under six months who are not exclusively breastfed can be offered cooled boiled water in hot weather if extra fluid is needed. <sup>5</sup>
  - From around 6-12 months, cooled boiled water can be offered to all babies. <sup>6</sup>
  - Plain drinking water should be the main drink for children over 12 months. <sup>6</sup>
  - Children 1-3 years need to drink around 1 litre (about four cups) of fluid a day and 4-8 year olds need around 1.2 litres (about five cups). <sup>7</sup>
  - Sweet drinks, including soft drinks, sports drinks, flavoured milk, cordial, fruit juice and fruit drinks, should not be offered to children in early childhood services. <sup>5</sup>
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## Tips and strategies

### Promoting water to children, families, staff and wider community

- Promote your service's policy to families and community and talk about the benefits of water over sweet drinks.
  - Make sure the staff at your service role model drinking water, and encourage parents to do the same.
  - Water and milk should be the only drinks stored and available at the service.
  - Put up the ['Think before you drink' poster](#) near the office or sign-in area at your service.
  - Print out resources from the [Families page](#) of the *Move Well Eat Well* website – the 'Tap into water every day' tab. Encourage families to visit the website for more information.
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### Making water accessible both indoors and outdoors

- Have jugs of water available for children to pour their own water.
  - Have drink bottles on a tray or trolley so water consumption can be monitored.
  - Choose clear water bottles or bottles with a clear strip down the side to ensure children have only water in their drink bottle. If parents are providing the water bottles ask them to send clear bottles only.
  - Consider asking a local water authority or business to sponsor purchasing water bottles for the children to reduce costs to families.
  - To help children identify their water bottle you could stick their name and photo on the bottle with clear contact, or use a picture they have drawn.
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### Keeping water bottles clean

- If water bottles are kept at the service, keeping them clean is important. Refer to ['How to care for water bottles' fact sheet](#).
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### Tap water is recommended

- However, if you are in an area where the water quality is poor, water filters, chillers or tanks can be included in your service to make the available drinking water safe and more palatable.
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### Exceptions to water policy

- Sweet drinks such as soft drinks and juice may be needed to treat hypoglycaemia in children with diabetes. This should be the only exception to water policies in services.

## “My child does not like water”

- It can be tricky if you have children coming to your service who don't drink water at home. Reassure parents that you also offer milk and have ways of making water fun for children.
- Children quickly learn to drink water when it is offered to them as the main drink. It may be helpful to share stories about other children who have adapted to drinking water.
- Make sure there is plenty of information available about the benefits of water.

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## Success stories

### Tap Juice

Educators at the Ulverstone Stepping Stones service have been referring to water as Tap Juice to encourage children to drink water. Since introducing the term, children have been drinking more and actually asking for their Tap Juice.

### Water – the preferred drink

At Sacred Heart's Discovery Early Learning Centre, water is the drink of choice. Water is available for children to pour for themselves and the centre requests that parents provide only water or plain milk as drinks sent from home.

### Water Bottles

All children in the Wombat and Kookaburra rooms (ages 3-5 years) at Stewart Child Care Service in Launceston have 'water only' bottles for use during the day. These bottles are kept at the service and disinfected at the end of each day. This ensures that children always have access to clean drinking water while at the service. Service staff have noticed that the introduction of water bottles is leading to more children drinking water.

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## 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 'Tap into Water Every Day' message and criterion:

- [Tap into Water Everyday 'Early Childhood Services' section](#)
- [Tap into Water Everyday 'Families' section](#)

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## References

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5. Department of Health and Ageing. (2013). *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings – Director/Coordinator Book*. Commonwealth Government of Australia viewed online 1 December 2017. [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/EA1E1000D846F0AFCA257BF0001DADB3/\\$File/HEPA%20-%20A4%20Book%20-%20Directors%20Book%20-%20LR.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/EA1E1000D846F0AFCA257BF0001DADB3/$File/HEPA%20-%20A4%20Book%20-%20Directors%20Book%20-%20LR.pdf).
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7. National Health and Medical Research Council. (2006). *Nutrient Reference Values for Australia and New Zealand*. Commonwealth Government of Australia.