

BOTTLE SAFETY & PREPARATION POLICY

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 service will therefore 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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| 2.1.2 | 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 |

RELATED POLICIES

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| Bottled Breast Milk Policy Nutrition & Food Safety Policy | Work Health & Safety Health & Safety |
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PURPOSE

To ensure our service maintains a safe and hygienic environment for all infants and 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 educators, staff, management, 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.

Management will ensure:

- That the Nominated Supervisor and educators are aware of the procedures for sterilising bottles and teats, and preparing, heating, and storing bottles of formula and breast milk.
- Procedures for the safe sterilisation of bottles and teats are strictly adhered to.
- 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 sterilising bottles and teats, and 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.
- 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.
- Ensure families are familiar with their responsibilities in accordance with this policy.

Families will:

- Be informed during orientation that children's bottles must be clearly labelled with the child's name.
- Label bottles containing breast milk or formula 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 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 for use at the service for children having regular cow's milk in their bottle.
- Be encouraged to communicate regularly with educators about children's bottle and feeding requirements.
- Not put fruit juice in children's bottles.

STERILISING BOTTLES, TEATS, AND DUMMIES

After sterilising any item for infants, it is important to remember not to touch any part that will go into the baby's mouth with your hands. Generally, all sterilising systems come with tongs for this purpose, which must also be sterilised with the items.

Always read and follow the manufacturer's instructions that come with the sterilising system and ensure that the recommended sterilising times are strictly adhered to.

Prior to using any sterilising system or device or removing items from a steriliser staff will wash their hands. This is the single most effective way of preventing the spread of infection.

Steam Sterilising

- **Electric steam sterilising** is based on hospital methods and is quick and efficient, taking eight to twelve minutes plus cooling time. Care must be taken that only equipment that is safe to boil is sterilised in this manner. For example, some parts of breast pumps cannot be boiled. Bottles, teats and other items must be placed upside down and must have sufficient room (not touching any other item) to ensure they are fully sterilised.
- **Microwave steamers** take around five to eight minutes to work, plus cooling time. Note that metal utensils cannot be used in microwaves. Where possible leave the lid on the steriliser until it has cooled sufficiently to prevent steam burns. If using a microwave for sterilising, ensure that a purpose designed sterilisation container is being used.

Boiling

- Most bottle-feeding equipment must be boiled for at least 10 minutes. Ensure the pot you use is large enough for all bottles to be completely submerged and use the pot exclusively for sterilising. Be aware that teats that are frequently boiled become sticky and may need to be replaced more frequently than if using other sterilisation methods.

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.
- 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).

When preparing infant formula always closely follow the instructions on the tin. In general:

- Always wash hands thoroughly prior to preparing formula.
- Do not compact the formula powder in the scoop, and always ensure the correct ratio of formula to water as specified on the tin: too little formula powder may leave the infant hungry, whilst too much can cause constipation.
- Always use a sterilised knife to level the top of the scoop when measuring the formula powder.
- Without touching the teat shake the bottle well to mix the contents.
- Cool the made-up formula as quickly as possible: If using immediately run under cold tap water or place in a large bowl of cold water (with the lid on to avoid contaminating the teat).
- If not using immediately made-up formula should be cooled and stored in the fridge.

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 a bottle in the fridge, staff will check that it is labelled with the child's name and the date the bottle was prepared.

Breast milk can be stored in several ways, which include:

1. Refrigerated for 3–5 days at 4°C or lower. Store breast milk on a shelf of the refrigerator, not in the door.
2. Frozen in a separate freezer section of a refrigerator for up to 3 months at a temperature of -17°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:

1. In the refrigerator and used within 24 hours.
2. If using immediately, stand the bottle in a container of lukewarm water.

Sources

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority 2014

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

National Health and Medical Research Council 2012 - Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services.

NSW Ministry of Health 2014 - Caring for children birth to 5 years: Food, nutrition and learning experiences. <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/health/Publications/caring-for-children-manual.pdf>

Safe Food and Health Service Executive 2013 - How to prepare your baby's bottle

REVIEW

| POLICY REVIEWED | February 2019 | NEXT REVIEW DATE | February 2020 |
|-----------------|---|------------------|---------------|
| MODIFICATIONS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-worded opening statement and purpose. • Combined with <i>Sterilising bottles and teats policy</i>. • Added sections: <i>Storing sterilised bottles</i> and <i>Preparing formula</i>. • Changed heading from <i>Storing bottles</i> to <i>Storing breast milk and formula</i>. • Changed heading from <i>Cold water sterilising</i> to <i>Chemical sterilising</i>. • Additional information added to points. • Rearranged the order of points for better flow • Sources checked for currency. • New sources added. | | |
| POLICY REVIEWED | PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS | NEXT REVIEW DATE | |
| February 2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added the ‘related policies’ list • Included statements regarding handling & storage to further support compliance | February 2019 | |
| October 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated the references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard | February 2018 | |
| February 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor terminology changes made. | February 2018 | |