**Nutrition and Food Safety Policy**

**Rationale**

To ensure all practical steps are taken by employees and whānau to ensure tamariki nutritional food at appropriate times to meet their health needs and the alike are undertaken in a safe manner that adheres to Licensing Criteria for Education and Care Services 2008 (amended 2022), the Food Act 2014, and best practice Ministry of Health young children food guidelines

**Objective**

To provide for the health and safety of all tamariki with regards to nutrition and food safety at Country Kidz through providing healthy food choices that are quality, varied, and of sufficient quantity that meet nutritional and developmental needs. To provide tamariki with constant supervision during eating. To support and encourage whānau to supply tamariki with healthy food choices that support tamariki wellbeing and nutritional needs.

**Policy**

Our Centre endeavours to provide an environment in which children’s wellbeing is promoted and they are kept safe from harm. Country Kidz ensures that tamariki receive nutritional food at an appropriate time to meet their health needs and in a safe manner. We are also committed to ensuring a high level of hygiene is maintained while preparing, serving, and storing food. In line with licensing criteria , we maintain records of kitchen cleanliness, kai that is served, and whether tamariki have participated in the same.

As part of the enrolment process, all whānau are provided with a copy of Ministry of Health Reducing Food-Related Choking for Babies and Young Children at Early Learning Services. Country Kidz actively encourages and promotes healthy eating guidelines. Our learning community strives to provide ongoing opportunities to strengthen engagement in food and nutrition knowledge and experience. Kai preparation, cooking, and general kitchen etiquette are a regular part of the curriculum at Country Kidz to support learning and development in this area. This also provides opportunities to further learning regarding the celebrations, foods, and delicacies of all cultures.

**Implementation**

The following protocols are used at Country Kidz with regards to tamariki nutritional needs and food safety:

* Country Kidz provides food at appropriate times to meet the nutritional needs of each child while they are attending and all kai provided is of sufficient variety, quantity, and quality to meet the child’s needs. While Country Kidz has set kai times, allowances are made for tamariki who are demonstrably hungry or for medical/personal reasons require a specialised meal schedule.
* Country Kidz has designated eating spaces in both the inside and outside environments.
* Hand washing for all tamariki is undertaken prior to all mealtimes.
* All food allergies must be declared to Country Kidz with regards to tamariki at enrolment. This information is then displayed in designated eating spaces and in the kitchen to ensure all employees are aware of known allergies and intolerances of tamariki.
* Food is prepared, served, stored hygienically, and same recorded. Records are maintained and kept for three months. A fridge is provided to tamariki for any kai that may need to be kept cool until mealtimes.
* Country Kidz only provides morning tea and is, therefore, exempt from conditions under the Food Act 2014. However, we still adhere to food assurance quality guidelines and meet licensing criteria to ensure safe food handling.
* Food provided by Country Kidz aligns with Ministry of Health guidelines for reducing food-related choking for babies and young children at early learning services. High risk foods are not provided by Country Kidz.
* Country Kidz is a NUT FREE zone in the interest of eliminating risk to tamariki with nut allergies. If tamariki arrive with nuts or nut-based products, the items will be removed from the lunchbox and replaced with kai from Country Kidz.
* A supply of suitable drinking water is available to tamariki at all times, and this is accessibly appropriate for developmental stage.
* Tamariki are seated at all times while eating.
* Tamariki are actively supervised at all times, that is, an employee is assigned to oversee tamariki when they are eating and will not undertake other tasks whilst doing so. When tamariki are eating, an employee in close proximity will hold an up-to-date First Aid Certificate.
* There is an employee with a current First Aid NZQA accredited certificate present for every 25 tamariki eating.
* Whānau are encouraged to adhere to the Ministry of Health guidance to reduce food-related choking, which is provided as part of the enrolment of all tamariki.
* Whānau are encouraged to provide nutritious wholefoods such as fruits, vegetables, sandwiches, including baking and protein choices in amounts that are appropriate for tamariki age and developmental stage. If enough kai is not provided, Country Kidz will supplement with additional food and discuss with whānau the additional nutritional needs of the child through positive guidance.
* Tamariki with additional needs who may not be able to eat or drink independently are provided with one-on-one supervision during mealtimes.
* Under two year old’s and tamariki unable to drink independently will be held upright when being fed or hydrated and NOT be propped up.
* Any infant milk given to tamariki under the age of 12 months is approved by the child’s parent.
* Country Kidz ensures there is a hygienic preparation of bottle feeding, including sterilisation of all bottles for infants and takes care to follow the instructions of whānau and the product instructions provided.
* All Country Kidz employees are aware of the Nutrition and Food Safety Policy and the Ministry of Health Reducing Food-Related Choking in Babies and Young Children at Early Learning Services as part of their training and induction and participate in the regular review of this policy.+
* Special events such as birthdays and cultural celebrations are a time when food is often provided to be shared. Tamariki with known allergies are supervised when selecting from shared food to mitigate risk. However, foods for celebrations must still adhere to the NO NUT policy that Country Kidz actively maintains.

*Aligns with:*

*Licensing criteria for centre-based ECE services 2008 as amended 1 January 2022*

*Education (early Childhood Centres) Regulations 2008*

*County Kidz Parental Involvement Policy*

*Ministry of Primary Industries National Programmes*

*Ministry of Health Reducing Food-Related Choking in Babies and Young Children at Early Learning Services*

*Country Kidz Health and Safety System*

*Food Act 2014*

*Country Kidz Enrolment Form*

*Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities*

*Our code, our standards – Code of professional responsibility and standards for the Teaching Profession*

**Review**

Review when there is a significant change to legislature or as part of the annual management plan.

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| **Authorised:** |  |
| **Date:** | December, 2023 |
| **Next Review:** | Add to Annual Management Plan for June, 2024 not withstanding a change in legislation or criteria |