



JUMBUNNA COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL AND EARLY INTERVENTION CENTRE INC.

St 4	MEALTIME MANAGEMENT (DISABILITY)
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Policy Context – this policy relates to:	
Standards	NDIS Practice Standards
Legislation	Disability Services Act
Contractual obligations	National Disability Insurance Agency
Organisation policies	Nutrition, Food Beverages, and Dietary Requirements (QA 2p)
Forms, record keeping, other documents	Standard Mealtime Plan Individual Mealtime Plan

Policy Statement

Jumbunna is committed to ensuring that each participant requiring mealtime management (such as participants with any swallowing difficulties/dysphagia) is provided with meals which are of high quality, nutritious and of a texture that is appropriate to their individual needs. Jumbunna will educate families to support the creation of meals that are appropriately planned and meet participants' needs and preferences, including dietary intolerances, allergies, and medication contraindications.

Procedures

Mealtime management planning - intake

As part of our intake process, Jumbunna will identify all participants who have mealtime management requirements, including any difficulty with swallowing (ie dysphagia).

Jumbunna will consult with the participant and/or their representative to determine any mealtime management needs.

Jumbunna will also ensure that staff look out for potential signs and symptoms of dysphagia in participants, including:

- difficult, painful chewing or swallowing;
- coughing, choking, gagging or frequent throat clearing during or after swallowing;
- having long mealtimes e.g. finishing a meal takes more than 30 minutes;
- becoming short of breath when eating and drinking;
- avoiding some foods because they are hard to swallow;
- regurgitation of undigested food;
- difficulty controlling food or liquid in their mouth;
- drooling;
- having a hoarse or gurgly voice;
- having a dry mouth;
- poor oral hygiene;

- frequent heartburn;
- unexpected weight loss
- frequent respiratory infections
- difficulty sitting upright in chair

Mealtime management planning - assessment

Each participant who is identified as requiring mealtime management will have their individual needs assessed by an appropriately qualified health practitioner. Generally,

- A **dietician** (if involved) is responsible for assessing nutritional status and providing individually adapted nutritional advice on a participant's meal plan. Community health provides dietician services including to those with NDIS plans as there is a shortage of services
- A **speech pathologist** (if involved) is responsible for assessing individuals with feeding, eating, drinking, and swallowing difficulties. Jumbunna employs speech pathologists and supports ongoing training for clinicians in specialist feeding areas
- An **occupational therapist** (if involved) is responsible for assessing individuals who have difficulty with feeding due to a physical, cognitive, or psychological disability. The OT can suggest adaptations, techniques, positioning and/or aids and equipment to facilitate and maintain independence. Jumbunna employs occupational therapists and supports ongoing training as needed

Jumbunna will facilitate this referral/assessment process.

Staff who are concerned about a client's mealtime behaviour will complete a referral form and place in the NDIS Coordinator's referral tray. The NDIS Coordinator will gather more information if necessary and assign an appropriate therapist to observe the mealtime behaviours. If necessary, a further clinical assessment will be completed and/or relevant referrals made. A mealtime management plan will be created by the relevant staff, in conjunction with the participant/participant's carers. All staff involved with the participant will be made aware and have access to the mealtime management plan. The plan will be reviewed annually or more often at the discretion of the supervising therapist.

Jumbunna will ensure qualified health practitioners complete the following processes for participants:

- undertake comprehensive assessments of their nutrition and swallowing.
- assess their seating and positioning requirements for eating and drinking. We can provide some general supported seating options and have access to grants to apply for funds to purchase equipment for individual seating requirements.
- provide mealtime management plans which outline their mealtime management needs, including for swallowing, eating, and drinking; and
- review assessments and plans annually or in accordance with the professional advice of the participant's practitioner, or more frequently if needs change or difficulty is observed.

Participants will be involved in the assessment and development of their mealtime management plans, where they consent to this.

Strategies/recommendations will be developed for each participant as part of mealtime management planning to ensure participants are provided with meals that are:

- nutritious;
- enjoyable;
- reflective of their preferences;

- reflective of their informed choice; and
- reflective of any recommendations made by an appropriately qualified health practitioner, that are included in their mealtime management plan.

Jumbunna will ensure that each worker responsible for providing mealtime management to a participant is provided with a copy of their mealtime management plan. In addition, copies of participants' mealtime management plans will be made available where meals are provided to participants. At all times, mealtime management plans will be accessible to relevant workers.

Mealtime Management Plans will be in each child's digital record. A paper copy will be stored in the room medication folder and a record will be displayed in the staff room with the Health-Related concerns. This ensures all staff have access and are aware of the plan, including casuals, but is still confidential.

Risk management

Through mealtime planning Jumbunna will proactively manage risks for participants with chronic health risks, such as swallowing difficulties/dysphagia, diabetes, anaphylaxis, food allergies, obesity or being underweight.

Staff responsibilities

Staff at Jumbunna will prepare and provide texture-modified foods and fluids in accordance with the mealtime management plans for participants during special events. Parents will prepare and provide everyday meals and fluids. Education will be provided as required regarding nutrition, texture modification and appropriate seating to parents and workers by the relevant professionals.

Staff are to check that meals for participants are of the correct texture, as identified in their plans. Staff will be trained and will check that provided meals for participants are of the correct texture, as identified in their plans.

Staff at Jumbunna who provide mealtime management, will be responsible for understanding the needs of participants, and the steps to take if safety incidents occur during meals, such as coughing or choking on food or fluids.

During mealtimes, staff will support participants as required, in accordance with their mealtime support plans, through measures including:

- supporting participants to maintain a safe body position (this may include repositioning the participant during the meal);
- providing specific mealtime assistance techniques, including any reminders about a safe rate of eating, or a safe amount of food in each mouthful;
- responding to coughing or choking and making sure risks are monitored while a person is eating or drinking; and
- providing appropriate eating and drinking aids where required.

Staff training

Jumbunna will ensure that each worker who provides mealtime management to participants is provided with training in the preparation and provision of safe and enjoyable meals.

Staff will also be trained in the proactive management of emerging and chronic health risks related to mealtime difficulty, including how to seek help to manage these risks.

Staff will be trained in how to respond if a participant starts to choke during mealtimes, and when to call an ambulance. Staff have First aid, anaphylaxes, CPR, and asthma training.

Food storage and labelling

All meals/food will be provided by the parents, as per Jumbunna's Nutrition, Food, Beverages, and Dietary Requirements policy.

Meals to be provided to participants will be stored safely and in accordance with health standards.

Meals for participants requiring mealtime management will be clearly labelled, so as to be identified as a meal to be provided to a particular participant and differentiated from meals to be provided to other participants.

Children bring their own food in their own lunch box. We do not share food at Jumbunna.

Food which needs to be kept cold will be stored in the fridge, labelled with the participant's name.

A thermometer is stored in fridge and temperature recorded weekly to monitor it.

Food safety and appropriate food handling

All workers responsible for food preparation and/or handling will receive adequate training and be aware of relevant food handling and preparation procedures and comply with all applicable food safety standards.

Procedures for review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed and updated, if necessary, biannually, by the General Manager and any changes made will be approved by the Management Board Members.

Relevant Documents

Standard Mealtime Plan

Individualised Mealtime Plan

Mealtime Assessment Referral Pathway

Dysphagia Assessment Proforma

DOCUMENTATION

Documents related to this policy	
Related policies	
Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents	

Policy Name:	Mealtime Management (Disability)	Policy Number:	
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Date Issued:	31 August 2023	Review Date:	30 June 2025
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