

Mealtime Management Policy

Effective Date: 13/01/2026

Kids Cubby Early Intervention (KCEI) is committed to providing evidence-based, individualized and comprehensive feeding and swallowing support. KCEI staff are continually undertaking ongoing professional development as well as regular mentoring sessions to ensure they are up to date on recent evidence and approaches, to be able to make the most appropriate and informed decisions regarding your mealtime and feeding needs.

What will this support look like?

1. Once a family has voiced feeding concerns and would like to commence support, a number of questionnaires will be completed to gather information, such as feeding history, medical history and current food preferences.
2. A mealtime observation will be conducted with a range of food textures where possible. This will allow the clinician to observe the child's oral structures and coordination. In some cases, the clinician may request to attend a family mealtime.
3. A mealtime management plan may be drawn up if there is any concern of aspiration or choking. This plan will be individualised and will outline all recommendations to promote safe eating and drinking for your child. The plan will be distributed to all appropriate persons involved in the child's care, including Day Cares, Preschools and Schools.
4. Referrals to other external health professionals may also be recommended to ensure a collaborative approach to managing any feeding concerns. This could include an Occupational Therapist, Paediatrician, Dietitian, General Practitioner (GP) and an Ear Nose and Throat Specialist (ENT).
5. A therapy approach will be decided on, and the family will be provided support. On occasions, the support may focus on the parents, to build their capacity to then support the child in the home environment. Therapy goals may include increasing chewing strength and increasing range of foods consumed.

Note: The mealtime management plan will be adjusted as often as necessary, however will be formally reviewed every 3-6 months to ensure it remains current and accurately reflects the most up to date information to ensure continued safety, as well as encourage progress.



Choking and aspiration

‘Choking’ and ‘Aspiration’ are defined as:

- Choking: A medical emergency that occurs when a foreign object, such as food or a small toy, blocks the airway, preventing effective breathing.
- Aspiration: The accidental entry of food, liquid or other materials into the airway or lungs.

If there are incidents of these when your child is eating and drinking, a number of preventative measures will be put in place to reduce any chance of recurrence. These include, but are not limited to:

- Modifying the child’s diet. This could look like modifying the consistency of the food and/or drinks that the child is consuming. These modifications will follow the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) framework.
- Creating a mealtime management plan. Adjustments may need to be made to any existing plan to accurately reflect new recommendations.
- Complete training with those involved in the child’s care. This includes distributing the new plan, discussing through what it means and how to effectively implement.

If a severe choking incident occurs when the Speech Pathologist is present, then triple 0 may be called and an ambulance requested.

Policy Review Date: January 2027

