

Childcare Centre Cook Job Description

A comprehensive job description template
for Australian early childhood services

Centre Name: _____

Location: _____

Employment Type: _____

Reports To: _____

Date: _____

DISCLAIMER

This template is provided for general informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. It is designed to reflect Australian workplace standards and early childhood education practices at the time of publication. You should review and tailor this template to suit your centre, service type, applicable modern award and specific requirements. For complex situations, independent legal or HR advice should be sought. RosterElf Pty Ltd accepts no liability for any loss arising from reliance on this document.

Table of Contents

1. Position Overview	3
2. Key Responsibilities	3
3. Required Skills and Attributes	5
4. Qualifications and Requirements	6
5. Working Conditions	7
6. Award Information	7
7. Expected Behaviours	8
8. Application Process	8

1. Position Overview

1.1 Position Title

Childcare Centre Cook / Early Childhood Cook / Centre Chef

1.2 Position Summary

The Childcare Centre Cook is responsible for preparing nutritious meals and snacks for children attending the early childhood education centre. This role requires menu planning based on dietary guidelines, managing food allergies and intolerances, maintaining strict food safety compliance, and operating the kitchen to provide healthy, age-appropriate meals that support children's growth and development.

The position involves developing weekly menus, cooking breakfast, morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea, managing dietary requirements including allergies and cultural preferences, maintaining HACCP food safety systems, ordering supplies, managing kitchen inventory and budget, and maintaining comprehensive documentation. The cook works closely with educators and families to ensure all children receive appropriate nutrition in a safe environment.

1.3 Reporting Structure

This position reports to:

- Centre Director
- Assistant Director / Educational Leader

1.4 Employment Type

This position is available as:

- Part-time (regular days based on centre operations)
- Full-time (38 hours per week)

2. Key Responsibilities

2.1 Menu Planning and Development

- Develop weekly and seasonal menus meeting Australian Dietary Guidelines
- Plan age-appropriate meals for infants, toddlers and preschoolers
- Ensure nutritional balance and variety in daily menus
- Create menus that encourage healthy eating habits
- Accommodate seasonal ingredients and sustainability
- Plan special occasion meals and celebrations
- Review and update menus based on feedback and nutritional guidelines

2.2 Meal Preparation and Cooking

- Prepare and cook breakfast, morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea
- Cook meals for multiple age groups with different textures and portion sizes
- Prepare infant formula and bottle feeds following parent instructions
- Adapt meal textures for infants and young toddlers
- Present meals attractively to encourage children to eat
- Prepare meals within tight timeframes for service times
- Cook large quantities while maintaining quality and nutrition

2.3 Dietary Management and Allergy Control

- Manage food allergies and intolerances with strict separation procedures
- Prepare individual meals for children with dietary restrictions
- Follow medical dietary plans and ASCIA Action Plans
- Accommodate cultural and religious dietary requirements
- Maintain current allergy lists and dietary requirement registers
- Label allergen-free meals clearly and safely
- Communicate dietary needs with educators and families

2.4 Food Safety and Hygiene Compliance

- Maintain HACCP-based food safety management system
- Monitor and record food storage temperatures daily
- Follow strict food handling and hygiene procedures
- Ensure correct hot and cold holding temperatures
- Store, label and rotate food supplies using FIFO method
- Clean and sanitize kitchen equipment and surfaces
- Respond to and report food safety incidents immediately

2.5 Kitchen Management and Operations

- Order food supplies and ingredients within budget
- Manage kitchen inventory and stock levels
- Control food costs and minimize wastage
- Maintain and service kitchen equipment
- Report equipment faults and arrange repairs
- Ensure adequate supplies for daily operations
- Liaise with suppliers and delivery personnel

2.6 Documentation and Record Keeping

- Maintain food safety temperature logs and cleaning schedules
- Keep current allergy and dietary requirement lists

- Document menu variations and substitutions
- Record food incidents and near-misses
- Maintain records for regulatory compliance and audits
- Complete food delivery and storage checklists
- Display current menus for families and regulatory review

3. Required Skills and Attributes

3.1 Essential Skills

Cooking for Large Groups and Children

Ability to prepare nutritious meals for 30-100+ children daily. Experience cooking for groups with varied needs. Skills in preparing age-appropriate textures from purees for infants to finger foods for toddlers. Understanding of child-friendly cooking methods and presentations that encourage eating.

Food Safety and HACCP Knowledge

Comprehensive understanding of food safety principles and HACCP systems. Strict adherence to temperature control, cross-contamination prevention, hygiene practices and documentation. Knowledge of high-risk foods and vulnerable populations. Ability to identify and respond to food safety hazards.

Nutrition Awareness for Children

Understanding of nutritional requirements for children aged 0-6 years. Knowledge of Australian Dietary Guidelines and early childhood nutrition recommendations. Ability to plan balanced menus with appropriate portions. Awareness of foods to avoid for young children and healthy eating principles.

Allergy and Dietary Management

Meticulous attention to food allergies, intolerances and dietary restrictions. Ability to read ingredient labels, identify hidden allergens, and maintain strict separation procedures. Understanding of anaphylaxis risk and emergency procedures. Cultural sensitivity regarding dietary requirements.

Organisation and Time Management

Excellent organisational skills to manage multiple meal services daily. Ability to plan preparation sequences and coordinate timing. Efficient work practices to meet strict mealtimes. Skill in managing multiple dietary requirements simultaneously.

3.2 Personal Attributes

- Meticulous attention to detail, especially regarding allergies
- Genuine care for children's health and wellbeing
- Calm and organised under pressure
- Flexibility to adapt to changing needs
- Team player who communicates effectively with educators
- Reliable and punctual
- Initiative to solve problems independently
- Commitment to quality and standards

- Respectful of cultural diversity
- Professional and hygienic work habits

4. Qualifications and Requirements

4.1 Mandatory Requirements

- Food Safety Supervisor certificate (SITXFSA005 or equivalent)
- Working with Children Check (current and valid)
- National Police Check (no older than 6 months)
- Ability to work legally in Australia
- Physical capability to perform kitchen duties
- Understanding of anaphylaxis and emergency response

4.2 Desirable Qualifications

- Commercial cookery qualification (Certificate III in Commercial Cookery)
- Experience in childcare or institutional catering
- Food allergy awareness training
- First Aid certificate (HLTAID012 or equivalent)
- ASCIA anaphylaxis training
- Nutrition or dietetics knowledge
- Experience with dietary planning and menu development

4.3 Experience

Previous experience cooking for large groups is essential. Experience in childcare centres, kindergartens, schools or healthcare facilities is highly desirable. Demonstrated experience managing food allergies and dietary restrictions is important. New graduates with commercial cookery qualifications will be considered with comprehensive induction and training in childcare food service requirements.

5. Working Conditions

5.1 Hours of Work

- Typical hours: 7:00am - 3:30pm or 8:00am - 4:30pm
- Early starts required for breakfast preparation
- Monday to Friday during centre operating hours
- Centre closed on public holidays and school holidays
- Regular hours with minimal weekend or evening work
- Roster provided in advance

5.2 Physical Requirements

- Standing for extended periods during cooking and preparation
- Working with heat, hot equipment and cooking appliances
- Lifting and carrying food supplies and equipment
- Bending, reaching and repetitive movements
- Manual handling of pots, trays and cooking equipment
- Ability to work in warm kitchen environment

5.3 Work Environment

- Commercial kitchen environment within childcare centre
- Often working alone or with minimal kitchen assistance
- Close proximity to childcare rooms and children
- Fast-paced environment with strict deadlines
- Interaction with educators, children and families
- Exposure to noise from kitchen equipment and children

5.4 Special Considerations

- Responsibility for food safety affecting vulnerable children
- Sole responsibility for all meals in smaller centres
- Managing multiple simultaneous dietary requirements
- Working to strict meal service times
- High level of accountability for allergy management
- Requirement to maintain professional boundaries with children

6. Award Information

6.1 Modern Award Coverage

This position is covered by the Children's Services Award 2010 (MA000120). The award sets minimum pay rates, penalties, allowances and conditions for employees working in children's services including long day care, preschools and kindergartens.

6.2 Classification Level

Childcare Centre Cooks are generally classified under the Children's Services Award as Level 2-3 support workers with food preparation duties. The specific classification depends on qualifications, experience and the range of responsibilities:

- Level 2: Support worker undertaking food preparation duties
- Level 3: Support worker with Certificate III qualification and/or higher level food preparation responsibilities

The exact classification will be determined based on qualifications held and duties performed.

6.3 Ordinary Hours and Penalty Rates

Standard hours of work and penalty rates under the award:

- Ordinary hours: Monday to Friday, typically within centre operating hours
- Saturday work: 150% of ordinary rate (if required)
- Sunday work: 200% of ordinary rate (if required)
- Public holidays: 250% of ordinary rate (if required)

Most childcare centres operate Monday to Friday only, so weekend and public holiday work is rarely required. Casual employees receive a 25% casual loading. Refer to the Children's Services Award 2010 for current rates and detailed conditions.

7. Expected Behaviours

7.1 Professional Conduct

- Arrive early and ready to begin cooking on time
- Maintain high standards of personal hygiene and presentation
- Wear appropriate kitchen uniform including closed shoes
- Follow centre policies and procedures at all times
- Maintain confidentiality regarding children and families
- Communicate professionally with all staff and families

7.2 Food Safety Standards

- Never compromise on food safety procedures or hygiene
- Complete temperature monitoring and documentation daily
- Report food safety concerns or equipment faults immediately
- Follow strict handwashing and hygiene protocols
- Maintain clean and organized kitchen environment
- Ensure all food safety systems are functioning correctly

7.3 Allergy Management

- Review allergy lists daily before cooking
- Check ingredients and labels for every meal
- Maintain strict separation for allergen-free meals
- Label all individual dietary meals clearly
- Never take shortcuts with allergy procedures
- Report any allergy incidents or near-misses immediately

7.4 Communication and Teamwork

- Communicate menu changes and dietary issues with educators
- Respond positively to feedback from staff and families
- Alert educators to food service delays or issues
- Work cooperatively with all centre staff
- Share information about children's eating and preferences
- Participate in centre meetings and planning when required

8. Application Process

8.1 How to Apply

Interested candidates should submit:

- Current resume/CV including work history and experience
- Cover letter outlining relevant cooking experience
- Copy of Food Safety Supervisor certificate
- Copy of Working with Children Check
- Copy of National Police Check (within 6 months)
- Copies of relevant qualifications (cookery, first aid, etc.)
- Contact details for at least two professional referees

8.2 Selection Process

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to:

- Initial phone interview to discuss experience and availability
- Face-to-face interview with centre management
- Kitchen tour and discussion of menu requirements
- Verification of qualifications and clearances
- Reference checks with previous employers
- Trial shift or cooking demonstration (may be required)

8.3 Equal Opportunity

We are an equal opportunity employer and welcome applications from all qualified candidates regardless of age, gender, cultural background, disability or other characteristics protected by law.

Position Acknowledgement

I have read and understood this job description. I understand that my duties may be varied from time to time to meet the operational needs of the centre.

Employee Name: _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

For Manager Use Only

Manager Name: _____

Manager Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____