



RESOURCE MANUAL

Birth to Five years



**MAKE
HEALTHY
NORMAL**



Acknowledgements

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Munch – Encouraging healthy eating

Welcome to the *Munch* section of the *Munch & Move Resource Manual*. This section aims to support Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services to promote the key *Munch* messages to children and their families. In this section you will find information on providing safe and appropriate food and drink to infants, toddlers and preschool aged children, along with detailed information relating to each key *Munch* message.

In addition, there are *Munch* learning experiences that are fun, exploratory, play-based children's activities designed to promote positive attitudes towards healthy food and drinks. The learning experiences are relevant to ECEC services that provide food to children in their care as well as those where food is brought from home.



Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings

Good nutrition is vital for young children to support growth and development and to provide the energy children need to power through their day. A set of 10 **Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings** have been developed by child health and early childhood professionals in collaboration with the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing and feature in the *Get Up & Grow* resources⁷. These guidelines are listed below and appear separately in the appropriate sections of *Munch*.



1. Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended, with positive support, for babies until around six months. Continued breastfeeding is recommended to at least 12 months - and longer if the mother and baby wish.
2. If an infant is not breastfed, is partially breastfed, or if breastfeeding is discontinued, use an infant formula until 12 months of age.
3. Introduce suitable solid foods at around six months.
4. Make sure that food offered to children is appropriate to the child's age and development, and includes a wide variety of nutritious foods consistent with the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*.
5. Provide water in addition to age-appropriate milk drinks. Infants under the age of six months who are not exclusively breastfed can be offered cooled, boiled water in addition to infant formula.
6. Plan mealtimes to be positive, relaxed and social.
7. Encourage children to try different food types and textures in a positive eating environment.
8. Offer an appropriate amount of food, but allow children to decide themselves how much they will actually eat.
9. Offer meals and snacks at regular and predictable intervals.
10. Ensure that food is safely prepared for children to eat – from the preparation stages to consumption.

Healthy Eating Guideline 4:

Make sure that food offered to children is appropriate to the child's age and development, and includes a wide variety of nutritious foods consistent with the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*.



The Australian Dietary Guidelines

The *Australian Dietary Guidelines*⁹ and the *Infant Feeding Guidelines*¹⁰ were developed by food and nutrition experts and are based on the best available scientific evidence about food, nutrition and good health. These Guidelines are updated periodically to incorporate advances in nutrition science.

The five *Australian Dietary Guidelines* relevant to children in your care are set out below. They are not listed in order of importance.

Guideline 1

To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, be physically active and choose amounts of nutritious food and drinks to meet your energy needs.

- Children and adolescents should eat sufficient nutritious foods to grow and develop normally. They should be physically active every day and their growth should be checked regularly.

Guideline 2

Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five groups every day:

- Plenty of vegetables, including different types and colours, and legumes/beans
- Fruit
- Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties, such as breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa and barley
- Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans
- Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or their alternatives, mostly reduced fat (reduced fat milks are not suitable for children under the age of two years).

And drink plenty of water.

Guideline 3

Limit intake of foods containing saturated fat, added salt, added sugars and alcohol.

- a. Limit intake of foods high in saturated fat such as many biscuits, cakes, pastries, pies, processed meats, commercial burgers, pizza, fried foods, potato chips, crisps and other savoury snacks.
 - Replace high fat foods which contain predominantly saturated fats such as butter, cream, cooking margarine, coconut and palm oil with foods which contain predominantly polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats such as oils, spreads, nut butters/pastes and avocado.
 - Low fat diets are not suitable for children under the age of two years.
- b. Limit intake of foods and drinks containing added salt.
 - Read labels to choose lower sodium options among similar foods.
 - Do not add salt to foods in cooking or at the table.
- c. Limit intake of foods and drinks containing added sugars such as confectionary, sugar-sweetened soft drinks and cordials, fruit drinks, vitamin waters, energy and sports drinks.
- d. If you choose to drink alcohol, limit intake. For women who are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding, not drinking alcohol is the safest option.

Guideline 4

Encourage, support and promote breastfeeding.

Guideline 5

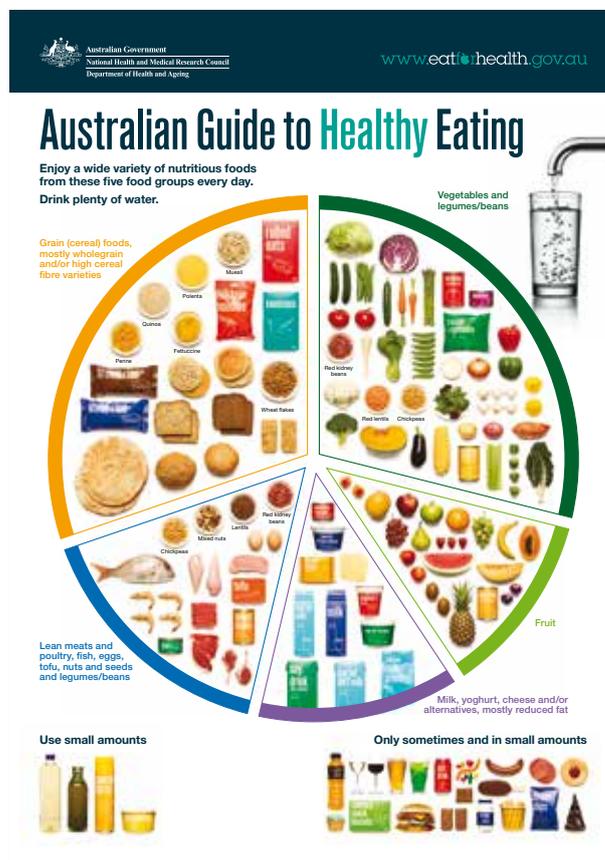
Care for your food; prepare and store it safely.

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

The *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* (AGTHE)¹¹ uses a plate model, divided into different sized segments to indicate the proportions of food that should be consumed from each of the five basic food groups to promote good health. The AGTHE applies to children from two years of age through to adults.

The AGTHE promotes an every day eating pattern based on:

- plenty of vegetables, legumes and beans
- plenty of grain (cereal) foods (including bread, rice, pasta and noodles), preferably wholegrain
- moderate amounts of fruit
- moderate amounts of lean meat, fish, poultry and/or alternatives
- moderate amounts of milk and dairy products (reduced fat milk is suitable for children over two years of age with normal growth and a good appetite)
- consuming plenty of water.



Source: NHMRC, 2013

Some foods are not positioned on the healthy eating plate but sit outside it in the lower right hand corner. These are regarded as 'Foods to Limit: Discretionary choices' because they do not provide essential nutrients. These 'Foods to Limit: Discretionary choices' should only be eaten sometimes and in small amounts. Examples include sweet biscuits, cakes, desserts and pastries; processed meats and fattier/salty sausages; ice cream and other ice confections; confectionary and chocolate; savoury pastries and pies; potato chips, crisps and other fatty and/or salty snack foods including some savoury biscuits; and cream, butter and spreads which are high in saturated fats; and sugar-sweetened soft drinks and cordials.



Oils are represented in a small section outside the plate in the bottom left hand corner. It is recommended that they be consumed in small quantities.

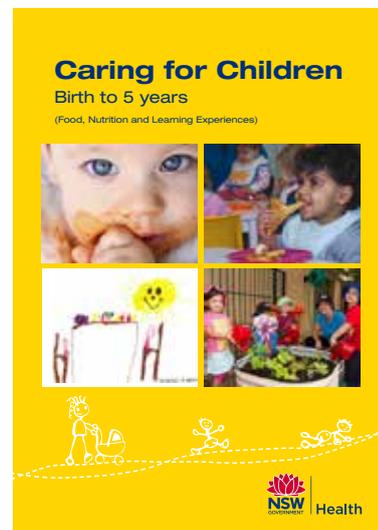
Key nutrients provided by the different food groups

Children need to consume a variety of food from each of the basic food groups to ensure their nutritional requirements are met.

Five basic food groups	Main nutrients provided
Bread, cereals, rice, pasta, quinoa, barley, oats, polenta, noodles – wholegrain types are the best	complex carbohydrate, iron, B group vitamins, energy and dietary fibre
Vegetables and legumes (kidney beans, soy beans, chickpeas, lentils)	vitamins and minerals, antioxidants and dietary fibre
Fruit	vitamins and minerals, antioxidants and dietary fibre
Milk, yoghurt and cheese – reduced fat for children over the age of two years	calcium, protein and vitamins
Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts, seeds and legumes (tofu, lentils, tempeh)	protein, iron, zinc, Vitamin B ₁₂ and essential fatty acids
*Be aware of food intolerances, allergies or anaphylaxis	

For ECEC services providing food for children from birth to five years of age, the *Nutrition Checklist for Menu Planning* found in the *Caring for Children*¹² resource is an ideal tool to plan a well-balanced menu based on the five food groups. This will ensure that all children are provided with a variety of healthy, appetising food during their time at the ECEC service.

For ECEC services where food is brought from home, the *Lunchbox Checklist for Food Brought from Home* found in the *Caring for Children*¹² resource is a useful tool to help families plan and pack a healthy lunchbox.





Supporting a positive approach to food and eating

ECEC services are ideally placed to provide opportunities for children to be exposed to a variety of healthy food choices and positive learning experiences from an early age. ECEC services can also provide information to families from recognised health authorities about the benefits of healthy food and drinks for children, along with practical ideas and advice.

How educators can give positive messages about healthy food

- Role model your own enjoyment of eating healthy foods and drinking water.
- Use positive language when discussing healthy food and drinking water with children.
- Discuss your healthy food choices with children. The way you eat and look after your own body sends a strong message to children.
- Offer a healthy second course (dessert) as part of the main meal – not allowing dessert unless the first course has been eaten implies that dessert is something special rather than an equally healthy part of the meal.
- Do not use 'sometimes' food as a reward as this may invite a preference for less healthy food choices and teach children to eat when they are not hungry.
- Offer a wide range of foods at ECEC service celebration days, serving healthy foods alongside 'party treats'.

Healthy Eating Guideline 6:

Plan mealtimes to be positive, relaxed and social.

A happy, relaxed mealtime reduces stress levels and helps children to develop good eating habits. The eating environment should be comfortable and safe with no or limited distractions. Children should be seated at mealtimes and encouraged to be independent, serving and feeding themselves where possible and learning to drink from a cup. Time and a relaxed atmosphere will be needed to allow children to practice these skills.

Some suggestions to make mealtimes positive and enjoyable:

- Organise high chairs, chairs and tables in a safe and attractive manner that encourages social interaction.
- At least one educator should sit at the table with the children, being helpful and enthusiastic about the meal and eating the same food.
- Educators should actively engage in conversations with children during mealtimes. This builds relationships and fosters opportunities for related learning experiences.
- Create a relaxed atmosphere at mealtimes where children have ample time to eat and enjoy their food. There is no need to rush.
- Older toddlers and preschool aged children can assist to set and clear the table and serve their own food and drink providing opportunities for them to develop independence and self-esteem.
- Respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, do not insist they eat.
- Be patient with messy or slow eaters.
- Do not make a fuss or over-react to mealtime mess or food left uneaten.
- Allow young children to eat with their fingers especially while learning to use cutlery.
- Encourage children to try different foods but do not force them to eat.



Utensils and furniture

To assist children to develop independence and eating skills, ECEC services should provide the following:

- Child-sized furniture including high chairs that conform to Australian/New Zealand Standards (AS/NZS).
- Age-appropriate cutlery and serving ware.
- Cups that are small enough for children to hold comfortably – sipper cups with a handle and spout lid are useful for younger children.
- Special equipment as required for children with additional needs.



Introducing new foods

Children may be reluctant to try new foods and need encouragement to do so. It is important to know that children often need to be exposed to a food repeatedly (up to 15 times) before they will start to accept the taste and/or texture of that food. Keep offering the food to the child, show that you enjoy eating it and encourage the child to at least touch, smell and taste the food.

Educators have an important role to play in assisting and supporting families as they introduce new foods to their young children at home. It is important for educators to document what and how much each child has eaten while in care to provide each family with an overall picture of their child's daily food intake and progress with trying new foods.

Healthy Eating Guideline 7:

Encourage children to try different food types and textures in a positive eating environment.



It is also important to expose young children to a variety of different food types and textures to broaden their food preferences. This will increase the likelihood that children will become varied eaters as adults.

How ECEC services can support the introduction of new foods to children

- Have a written planned menu (at least two weeks or longer) on display, which includes a wide variety of foods and periodically introduces new foods – pictures/photos of some of the food/drink provided are beneficial to include on your menu, and recipes from the menu to share with families are useful to have on hand too for interested families.
- Encourage families to view the menu so they know what the ECEC service plans to offer children in the coming weeks.
- Provide information to families about introducing new foods to children eg 'Encouraging children to try new foods and managing fussy eaters' factsheet housed on the NSW *Healthy Kids* website – www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au
- Serve a new food alongside a favourite/familiar food.
- Present new foods in different ways, eg if introducing a new vegetable, offer it raw (if appropriate eg added to a fruit platter) or mixed in with other foods eg finely chopped mushroom added to bolognese sauce.
- Never assume a child dislikes a particular food. Remember that children often need many exposures to a new food before it is liked or accepted.
- Give positive feedback for trying new foods or foods previously rejected.
- Do not make a fuss if a child does not want to try a new food as this can place a negative focus on that food.
- Eat with the children. Educators are strong role models for children.
- Discuss new foods with the children; talk about food in terms of colour, texture, flavour and shape.
- Allow children to explore new foods by looking, smelling and touching them before tasting.
- Involve children in food preparation (where appropriate) to help familiarise them with new foods.



How much should children eat?

Healthy Eating Guideline 8:

Offer an appropriate amount of food, but allow children to decide themselves how much they will actually eat.

Parents and carers are responsible for decisions about what children are provided to eat, however children should decide how much of that food they actually eat. This allows children to tune into their appetite and respond to their body's natural signals of hunger and fullness. Young children often eat variable amounts at different meals and on different days, this is to be expected.

Children who are forced or pushed to eat more than they want can lose their ability to determine when they are satisfied. This has been found to increase the risk of developing obesity later in life. There are a number of reasons why a child may refuse to eat or not want to finish what is on their plate. The child may be:

- anxious about trying new foods
- expected to eat more food than they need
- not be feeling hungry
- feeling satisfied with the amount they have eaten
- overtired and need sleep
- affected by illness
- demonstrating their independence by refusing food
- feeling stressed or anxious if new to the care environment.

Safe food handling

Healthy Eating Guideline 10:

Ensure that food is safely prepared for children to eat – from the preparation stages to consumption.

It is important to practice food safety when handling and preparing food and drink or when using food as part of a learning experience with young children. This will help prevent food-borne illnesses. Always follow safe food practices that include the following:

- Safely store, identify and handle expressed breastmilk and infant formula.
- Wear disposable gloves and use utensils such as tongs or spoons to serve food.



- Cover and refrigerate food prepared in advance.
- Discard food that has been out of the refrigerator for more than two hours.
- Do not reheat food more than once.
- Discard leftover food from the table or individual plates.
- Educators and children who are not well should not handle food (or any equipment or surfaces used for the preparation and serving of food).
- Do not allow plates, cups and eating utensils to be shared.
- Do not allow children to eat food dropped on the floor.
- Keep perishable food cold when transporting.
- Store perishable food in the refrigerator.
- Wash fruit and vegetables well.
- Use separate equipment (eg chopping boards, knives) to prepare raw and cooked foods.
- Clean and sanitise all equipment and food preparation areas well before and after use.
- Air drying equipment is preferred. If tea towels are used they must be clean and dry and changed after each drying up session.
- Ensure the refrigerator keeps food at 5°C or below. Check the food temperature regularly using a probe thermometer.
- Make sure all equipment is in good condition with no cracks or chips.



All educators and children must wash hands thoroughly using warm running water and soap before preparing or eating food and drink. Hands should be dried thoroughly using a single-use towel eg disposable paper towel.

Children in ECEC settings are considered to be a 'vulnerable group' because their immune systems are not fully matured. For more information on the legislation of food handling for vulnerable groups, refer to Food Standards Australia New Zealand, Food Safety Standard 3.3.1. www.foodstandards.gov.au/code/userguide/pages/aguidetostandards3314569.aspx

Further information on bacteria in food, including high-risk and low-risk foods, can be found in the *Get up & Grow* Staff and Carer Book (see Resource list at the end of this section).

Educators can also undertake Safe Food Handling training to gain a deeper understanding of how to ensure the hygienic delivery of food to children.



Food allergies and intolerances

Children with food allergies or food intolerances need to be accommodated and managed within ECEC services.

It is important that educators work in partnership with families to develop individual management plans for children with food allergies or intolerances. Identification of the food/s that cause an allergic reaction or food intolerance should be determined and documented by a doctor or specialist as the offending ingredient may be found in a number of different foods and professional advice is required.

Food allergy

Food allergies can be life threatening. They are caused by a reaction of the immune system to the protein components of particular foods. Foods most likely to cause allergic reactions are peanuts, tree nuts (brazil, cashew, hazelnuts, almonds), fish, shellfish, egg, wheat, milk, soy and sesame.

Allergies typically develop during the first year or two of life in approximately one in 20 children. Such children can develop acute, severe reactions unexpectedly, often the very first time they are exposed to the food.

Food allergy reactions tend to occur immediately after the problem food has been touched or eaten. Symptoms can range from mild to potentially life threatening. All staff need to know how to recognise an acute allergic reaction. The signs to look out for are either one or a combination of the following:

- rapid spreading welts or itchy rash over any part of the body
- large vomit immediately after eating the food
- swelling around the mouth, eyes or face
- wheezing (breathing with a husky or whistling sound) or breathing difficulties
- allergic shock and loss of consciousness

Food intolerance

Food intolerances are reactions to certain food chemicals found both naturally in foods (such as salicylates, amines and glutamates) or added (such as artificial colours, flavours and preservatives).

Food intolerances are more difficult to diagnose and generally less severe than allergic reactions. In sensitive children, reactions can develop over time and depend on the amount and frequency of the number of different foods in a child's diet.

In young children, signs of food intolerance may include:

- skin rashes
- blocked nose
- feeling sick/upset stomach
- headaches
- irritability/behavioural changes
- tiredness/sleep disturbances
- loose stools.

How ECEC services can manage food allergies and intolerances in children

- Be aware of children who have food allergies or intolerances prior to those children starting at the ECEC service.
- Ask parents of children with a known food allergy/intolerance to provide individual management plans from their doctor or specialist, including a list of foods/ingredients to be avoided. Regularly consult with these parents to ensure that the management plans are current and the restricted foods have not changed.
- All staff working with children need to be aware of the early symptoms of food allergy and must know what action to take.



- Always inform the family immediately if a reaction occurs, even a minor event, so that it can be followed up with a doctor.
- Sensitively display relevant information on each child with a food allergy/intolerance (eg list of foods to avoid) in the kitchen area and play areas near where food is served.
- Implement strategies to ensure children with food allergies/intolerances get the correct food. For example, if appropriate, specific plates may be used for children with allergies/food intolerances. Separate food preparation equipment may need to be used.
- Closely supervise children with food allergies/intolerances at high risk times when food is present (eg mealtimes, cooking and craft activities).
- Ensure all staff are aware of possible cross-contamination in the kitchen and eating areas.
- All staff involved in food purchasing and preparation are required to be competent at reading and understanding food labels, including ingredient lists. This is to ensure food prepared does not contain traces of the relevant allergens.
- Ensure all staff involved in food preparation use non-latex gloves to prevent transfer of allergens.
- Check that craft materials do not contain allergens - eg yoghurt and milk containers; egg cartons.

Depending on the severity of the reaction, urgent medical treatment may be required. ECEC services should have a detailed policy and procedure (including action plans) for dealing with such an event.

Foods that present a choking risk

How educators can minimise the possibility of choking

- Be aware of foods that potentially present a choking hazard.
- Always supervise children while eating and drinking, including bottle feeding.
- Ensure children remain seated while eating and drinking.
- Encourage children to eat and drink slowly.
- Check all foods brought from home to make sure there are no choking risk foods in lunchboxes.
- Avoid giving large chunks of any food – always cut food into smaller pieces.
- Ensure educators are trained in first aid procedures for treating children and babies who experience choking.



Foods that are potential choking hazards	How to make these foods safer
Hard foods: raw carrot sticks, celery sticks, raw apple pieces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • steam vegetables until soft • slice hard fruits into tissue-thin slices • grate raw vegetables and hard fruits
Foods with skins and/or bones: sausages, chicken, fish with bones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remove the skin, gristle and bone pieces and cut the edible portions into very small pieces
Small round foods: peas, grapes, cherry tomatoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strain, puree, finely mash or squash cooked peas • cut grapes or cherry tomatoes into smaller pieces

Avoid:

- corn chips, potato chips
- popcorn, lollies, bubble gum, whole nuts, jelly beans
- seeds (eg, watermelon, pumpkin, sunflower)
- raisins
- dry, hard biscuits.

Remove all objects and toys that are small enough to be swallowed from areas in the ECEC service that are accessible to, and used by, children under the age of three years.

Oral Health

Oral health is a vital part of every child’s overall health and wellbeing. It is important to establish healthy eating and drinking habits from an early age as food and drinks that promote good nutrition also promote good oral health.

How educators can promote good oral health

- Feed babies sitting up, not lying down. When lying down, fluid stays in the mouth for too long and the baby or toddler may develop early tooth decay. Any drinks containing natural or added sugars (eg all milks, fruit juices, soft drinks, cordials) can cause decay.

- Do not allow babies to continue to suck on a bottle while they are sleeping as other tooth and oral problems can develop such as the early loss of baby teeth, new permanent teeth decaying as they erupt and abnormal development of the dental arch with the need for future orthodontic treatment.
- Do not dip pacifiers/dummies in sweet foods such as sugar, honey or golden syrup.
- After feeding, wipe baby's teeth with a moist cloth to prevent tooth decay.
- Promote and serve healthy food to children – keep sugary and sticky foods such as cakes, biscuits, fruit bars, muesli bars, pastries, lollies or chocolate as 'sometimes' food and not part of the everyday diet.
- Promote the use of a cup instead of a bottle for children who have reached six months of age as this reduces the time that decay-producing sugars are in contact with the teeth.
- From 12 months of age, all toddlers should be offered all drinks, including milk, in a cup.
- Serve water and milk as the drinks of preference - avoid giving young children acidic and sugary drinks such as fruit juice (including no added sugar juice), cordial and soft drink, as they contribute to tooth decay.
- Encourage children to rinse their mouths with water after meals.
- Use early childhood rhymes to promote children's oral health, eg 'The Toothbrush Song'.
- Provide information to families from a reputable source about daily dental care for young children to help set them up with good, lifelong healthy habits.



Key Message – Encourage and support breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is universally accepted as the best way to feed a baby as it provides many immediate and long term health benefits for mother and baby.

A parent's first contact with an ECEC service is often before the arrival of their baby. It is important that educators discuss breastfeeding with parents at this early stage and outline how the ECEC service supports mothers to continue breastfeeding while babies are in care.

Healthy Eating Guideline 1:

Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended, with positive support, for babies until around six months. Continued breastfeeding is recommended to at least 12 months and longer if the mother and baby wish.

Australian and international health authorities recommend exclusive breastfeeding until around six months of age as breastmilk contains all the nutrients a baby requires in their first six months of life. At around six months of age, most babies are ready for the introduction of solid foods. Breastfeeding should, where possible, be continued until 12 months of age or longer as it will continue to provide health benefits well into the baby's second year of life.

Benefits of breastfeeding

Breastfeeding provides a range of important benefits for both mother and baby.

Benefits for baby

- Helps baby develop a strong immune system and provides antibodies which give resistance to a number of infectious diseases.
- Helps reduce the risk of asthma and allergies.
- Provides perfectly-balanced nutrition which contributes to baby's optimal growth, eyesight and cognitive development.
- Supports optimal development of baby's jaw and mouth.
- Easy for baby to digest and can prevent gastrointestinal illnesses.
- Provides baby with a range of tastes and flavours, which come from mother's varied food intake. This early taste exposure may help children accept a greater range of food as they grow older.
- Reduces the likelihood of baby becoming obese in childhood, adolescence and early adulthood.
- Reduces the risk of SIDS.





Benefits for mother

- Breastmilk is an inexpensive, natural, convenient and fully transportable food for baby.
- Breastfeeding is safe and convenient.
- Reduces mother's risk of pre-menopausal breast and ovarian cancer.
- Reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes among women with a history of gestational diabetes.
- Promotes attachment and bonding between mother and baby.

How ECEC services can support this key message

ECEC services play an important role in encouraging and supporting mothers who wish to continue breastfeeding. It is important to let mothers know early on that it is possible to continue breastfeeding when their child attends the ECEC service, (eg. when the mother returns to work or study).

ECEC services can support mothers to breastfeed in the following ways:

- Making it known that your ECEC service is 'Breastfeeding Friendly'.
- Informing parents, at the initial point of contact of support strategies offered at the ECEC service.
- Supporting mothers to breastfeed their babies at the ECEC service.
- Providing a quiet, comfortable and hygienic place for mothers to breastfeed or express milk, acknowledging that some mothers prefer a more private space for breastfeeding.



- Up-skilling educators to ensure they are aware of the benefits of breastfeeding.
- Ensuring current and practical breastfeeding information is available for both educators and families, sourced from recognised health authorities.
- Ensuring the ECEC service's nutrition policy includes suitable protocols for the appropriate storage, handling and feeding of expressed breastmilk (EBM) or that your ECEC service has a separate breastfeeding policy with this information included.
- Providing breastfeeding mothers with advice on transporting and storing EBM at the ECEC service.
- Working with the family to develop an individual feeding management plan for the baby that includes instructions on what to do if the ECEC service runs out of the baby's EBM.

Speak with the Australian Breastfeeding Association Ph: 03 9885 0855 or visit www.breastfeeding.asn.au/services/welcome for information on how to promote your ECEC service as "Breastfeeding Friendly". "Breastfeeding Welcome Here" stickers can be ordered free of charge. The "Breastfeeding Zone" sticker can either be ordered or downloaded from the *Get Up & Grow* website. Mothers who want advice or assistance with breastfeeding are advised to contact the Breastfeeding Helpline Ph: 1800 686 268. Educators can also contact this 'Helpline' for advice.

Handling expressed breastmilk (EBM) in ECEC services

Mothers can continue to breastfeed when their child is in care by expressing breastmilk for their baby and bringing the EBM to the ECEC service.

As breastmilk is a body fluid, it is very important that safe food handling practices are followed to protect the health and wellbeing of the baby. The ECEC service should ensure that policies and procedures include detailed information on the safe transportation of EBM from home to the ECEC service and the safe storage and handling of EBM at the ECEC service.

Important notes about EBM:

- *Give EBM only to the baby for whom it is intended.*
- *EBM is a different colour and consistency to cow's milk or infant formula. It may have a bluish tinge and because it is not homogenised or pasteurised, it will separate when refrigerated. After warming, gently shake the EBM to mix it again.*
- *EBM should not be frozen or heated more than once.*
- *Once warmed, EBM should be offered to the baby immediately and any leftovers discarded.*

The ECEC service should provide families with the following information regarding the safe transportation and storage of EBM.

Transporting EBM

- Store the EBM in sterilised, closed bottles for transportation. Use of smaller bottles (120mls) will reduce wastage.
- All bottles should be labelled with the baby's name, the contents of the bottle, and the date and time the breastmilk was expressed.
- All EBM should be cooled in the refrigerator before transporting to the ECEC service. Cooled or frozen EBM bottles should be transported in an insulated container with frozen cooler bricks (eg a small esky with a freezer brick).
- Place all EBM bottles in the refrigerator (or freezer) immediately upon arrival at the ECEC service.

As EBM is a body fluid, the ECEC service must have protocols in place to ensure the correct EBM is given to the correct baby. Should an incident occur where a baby receives the incorrect EBM the service should follow their procedures for reporting and managing serious incidents.

Storing EBM

- Any frozen EBM that has thawed (wholly or partially) during transportation to the ECEC service should be immediately stored in the refrigerator and used within 24 hours. Do not re-freeze.
- All non-frozen EBM should be stored in the back of the refrigerator, not inside the refrigerator door. Fridge temperature should be below 5°C to limit the risk of food poisoning.
- All leftover, thawed or non-frozen EBM should be discarded at the end of the day.
- Frozen EBM can be stored for up to two weeks in a freezer compartment inside the refrigerator, or for up to three months in a freezer section of a refrigerator that has a separate freezer door.
- Once EBM has been given to a baby, discard any EBM left in the bottle.



Put a sign on the ECEC service refrigerator asking parents and educators to put all EBM bottles in the main part of the refrigerator, not inside the door. Breastmilk can be stored in the refrigerator for no more than 24 hours.

Thawing frozen EBM

When frozen EBM is brought to the ECEC service, it is critical that educators adhere to the following procedures to protect the health and wellbeing of the baby.

- Do not leave frozen EBM standing at room temperature to thaw. It must be thawed slowly in the refrigerator, eg overnight.
- Do not use a microwave or boiling water to thaw frozen EBM.
- If the EBM needs to be thawed quickly, hold the bottle under cool running water and gradually add warmer water until the EBM becomes liquid. Once thawed this way it can be stored in the refrigerator for **no more than four hours** before use.

Be prepared - know when baby is likely to need a feed and thaw the EBM shortly before this time.

Warming EBM

- Feeding a baby cold EBM is not harmful, however drinks warmed to room temperature flow better from the bottle and seem to be preferred by babies.
- Do not overheat EBM – it can curdle the milk and destroy the nutrients.
- Do not use a microwave to heat EBM as the milk is not heated evenly. This can produce ‘hot spots’ which may scald the baby. Microwaves can also destroy some of the nutrients and antibodies in the breastmilk.
- Just prior to use, stand the bottle upright in a container of hot water (not boiling) until the contents reach body temperature. This is best determined by gently shaking the bottle (mixing contents and temperature) and dropping a little of the EBM onto your wrist (unbroken skin) - it should feel comfortably warm. Always remember to wash your wrist/hands afterwards.
- Once warmed, EBM should be offered to the infant immediately and any leftovers discarded.

Bottle feeding with EBM

Feeding a baby is a significant opportunity for positive one-to-one interaction between the baby and the educator. It is preferable that the baby and the educator are familiar with each other, and where possible the same educator should feed the baby to provide consistency of care.



If more than one baby is receiving breastmilk at the ECEC service, ensure that two staff members check that the name on the bottle is that of the baby about to be fed. A feeding record should be signed.

The baby should be held in a semi-upright position when being fed. It is unsafe to feed babies when they are in a lying down position. Babies who are prop fed or fed lying down are at a higher risk of choking and developing middle ear infections.

It is important that educators establish a feeding plan for each baby, in consultation with the parents, to support the transition from breast to bottle/cup drinking. Breastfed babies may be reluctant to take a bottle at first as a hard rubber teat feels and tastes very different to soft skin. Suggest to parents that they offer baby a bottle at home before he/she starts attending the ECEC service to accustom baby to the bottle. Also encourage parents to bring baby to the ECEC service for several short visits (preferably at feed time) before being left for longer periods. This provides an opportunity for an educator to feed the baby EBM from a bottle or cup with a parent present.

Strategies to use if baby is having difficulty taking a bottle at the ECEC service:

- Ask the mother to leave some clothing that smells of her. If baby cuddles into this while feeding, it may assist her to accept the EBM.
- Feed baby in a quiet, relaxing space, without distractions.
- Gently rock and/or walk around to help settle baby enough to feed.
- Talk softly, humming or crooning to settle baby.
- Offer EBM in a small cup or from a spoon if this is developmentally appropriate.
- Avoid switching between different types/ shapes of teats. Stick with one that the parent provides and be patient while the baby learns to feed from it.



Educators please note:

- *Breastfed babies may require more frequent feeds than bottle-fed babies, as breastmilk is digested more rapidly.*



- Babies may have an unsettled feeding pattern at certain times and temporarily need more breastmilk. This commonly occurs around the ages of six weeks, three months and six months. Inform the mother so together the feeding plan can be adjusted.
- Do not offer the EBM fed baby any formula or other liquid unless this has been discussed and agreed to by the mother.

The primary educator should review the feeding plan regularly with the mother to ensure the baby's needs are being fully met. For further information, refer to the Australian Breastfeeding Association's Caregiver's Guide to Breastfeeding at: www.breastfeeding.asn.au/bfinfo/caregivers.html

Infant formula

Healthy Eating Guideline 2:

If an infant is not breastfed, is partially breastfed, or if breastfeeding is discontinued, use an infant formula until 12 months of age.

Parents who are providing infant formula for their baby also require support by the ECEC service. Formula-fed babies should receive infant formula until 12 months of age and then be transitioned to full cream cow's milk (if no allergy to cow's milk).

ECEC services should request that parents provide sterilised bottles and teats, as well as pre-measured powdered formula, each day. Bottles and containers of measured amounts of formula should be labelled with the baby's name, date and amount of water to be added. Additional information on preparing infant formula can be found in the *Caring for Children*¹² resource and in the *Get up & Grow Staff and Carer Book*⁷.

Transition to solids

In the first six months of life, babies depend on breastmilk (or infant formula) as their only source of nourishment.

Healthy Eating Guideline 3:

Introduce suitable solids at around six months.

Most babies are physically ready for the introduction of solids and other fluids around six months of age.



Baby's first solid food is an important milestone for the family as well as the baby. Educators need to work closely with families to ensure:

- family values and cultural beliefs are respected
- families are provided with supportive information from a recognised health authority
- there is consistency in the food offered to the baby between home and the ECEC service.

Some families may benefit from advice about when to start solids – some may want to start too early and others may wish to delay. It is important that ECEC services access current and correct information from recognised health authorities to assist parents and educators to manage a baby's transition to solids.

Encourage parents to check the ECEC service menu regularly as they may like to introduce their baby to new foods at home before they are offered to them at the ECEC service.

Readiness for solid food

There are a number of reasons for introducing solids at around six months of age:

- Baby's kidneys and digestive system have matured enough to cope with food other than breastmilk (or infant formula).
- Baby has improved head and neck control and can now hold their head in the midline, which enables food to be easily and safely swallowed.
- Baby's feeding skills have progressed from sucking to biting and early munching, with the disappearance of the 'tongue-thrust' reflex. When this reflex is still strong, baby uses his tongue to push out anything that is in his mouth. When this reflex disappears, the tongue can now move food to the back of the mouth so it can be swallowed.
- Baby has increased their energy and nutritional needs, which will no longer be satisfied by breastmilk (or infant formula) alone.
- Baby's stores of iron and zinc (present from birth) are almost depleted by six months of age. Delaying the introduction of solids increases the risk of iron deficiency anaemia.
- Baby begins to show a greater awareness and interest in food.

Introducing solids too early can lead to:	Introducing solids too late can lead to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased exposure to pathogens (bacteria) in foods, which can cause foodborne illness • rejection of the spoon, which may be interpreted as rejection or dislike of food • decreased breastmilk production • increased load on the baby's kidneys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • slowed growth • micronutrient deficiencies – especially iron and zinc • delayed development of motor skills needed for feeding, such as chewing • reduced willingness to accept new tastes and textures

Hints when introducing solids:

- Start by introducing a small amount of suitable food after a breastmilk or formula feed.
- Make sure the texture is developmentally suitable and avoid foods that pose a choking risk. As babies are learning to eat, some spluttering and gagging may occur when new food textures are introduced. This is different to choking and is not a cause for concern. However, choking that prevents breathing is a medical emergency.
- Foods can be introduced in any order and at any rate, as long as the first solids are rich sources of iron.
- Allow babies to explore their food, as opportunities to touch, smell and taste foods is an important part of learning how to eat.
- Multiple attempts may be needed before a new food is eaten or even tried – patience and persistence is required.
- Introduce foods that have a wide variety of colours and flavours before the age of 12 months – this will help the child accept a wider variety of food as they grow older.
- If pouches or sachets of pre-made baby food have been sent from home, do not allow baby to suck pureed food directly from the pouch. Place it into a bowl and feed with a spoon.
- Always allow babies to eat to their appetite. Do not push them to finish the last few spoonfuls or empty the bottle if they have indicated that they have had enough.
- If the baby is unable to finish all of the food or milk offered, discard all leftovers. Do not reheat and offer at another time.



Food and drinks in the first 12 months

First Foods

Introduce blended, soft food first and then progress to a broader variety of food textures (Refer to “A guide to introducing food types and textures in the first 12 months” table on page 35).

Gradually change the texture of food between six and 12 months of age to help babies develop their eating skills. By about eight months of age, most babies will be able to manage mashed and minced foods with soft lumps and finger foods that require biting and munching.

Avoid adding salt, sugar or fat to baby's food so they can enjoy the taste of natural flavours.



A guide to introducing food types and textures in the first 12 months

Baby's age	Types of food and consistency	Examples of food that can be consumed
Birth to around 6 months	Liquids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breastmilk or infant formula
Around 6 months	Smooth, blended, finely mashed food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breastmilk or infant formula Iron-fortified infant cereals Cooked, blended lean meat (eg beef, lamb, liver, veal, chicken, pork, fish without bones) Mashed plain tofu Blended/finely mashed, cooked legumes, including kidney beans, baked beans, chick peas and lentils Blended/finely mashed, cooked vegetables (all types and colours) Blended/finely mashed cooked, fresh and canned fruit (eg apple, pear, banana, mango) Grains and cereals that can be blended or finely mashed such as rice, pasta, semolina, oats, quinoa, couscous, pearl barley, noodles, polenta Whole cooked egg, such as soft scrambled egg Smooth nut pastes eg peanut butter Dairy eg as cheese sauce, plain full fat yoghurt, custard, small amounts cow's milk used in cereal and cooking Introduce infants to cup drinking by offering cooled, boiled water in a sippy cup after meals
6 to 12 months	Transition from blended food to soft lumps, minced, coarsely mashed, finely chopped, grated and shredded textures, including finger foods. Encourage infants to feed themselves.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to offer a variety of foods as above, ensuring the texture changes so that infants are encouraged to bite, munch and chew foods Encourage independent feeding using finger foods.

12 months+	Family foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide variety of food from all food groups, with varying textures and flavours • Small chopped pieces, finger foods and mixed textures • Breastmilk if continuing to breastfeed • Plain pasteurised full-cream cow's milk can be offered as a drink to replace infant formula. Toddler formula is not necessary • Offer food before milk to protect small appetites. <p>Continue to avoid hard foods that pose a choking risk.</p>
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Please note:

- *Honey* may contain bacterial spores that can cause infant botulism if given to babies under 12 months of age. Do not use honey as an ingredient or offer as a food for infants under 12 months.
- If the ECEC service has a 'nut-free' or 'nut aware' policy then peanut butter must not be provided to any child. Being 'nut-aware' in ECEC services is not mandatory, however due to the serious nature of nut allergies such a policy is advisable if any child attending the service has a nut allergy.



Key Message – Choose water as a drink

Healthy Eating Guideline 5:

Provide water in addition to age-appropriate milk drinks.

Water

Water is vital for the body to function and to maintain good health, making up 50% to 80% of body weight. Drinking water every day helps to:

- ensure adequate hydration
- maintain body temperature
- maintain regular bowel activity
- quench thirst.

Tap water that contains fluoride is the best choice as this helps to protect and strengthen children's teeth. Bottled water does not contain fluoride and contains packaging that is environmentally unfriendly.

As babies and young children can become dehydrated quickly, it is important for educators to encourage children to consume water regularly throughout the day. Sometimes young children are too busy to notice their own thirst, or they mistake thirst for hunger.



Toddlers require around 1 litre of fluid each day and preschool aged children around 1.2 litres of fluid each day to remain hydrated (more in hot weather and during physical activity). ECEC services should ensure drinking water is readily available and offered to all children throughout the day.

Most children enjoy drinking water if they get into the habit from an early age. This habit is then likely to continue throughout life. Check with families about offering cooled, pre-boiled water as an additional drink in a bottle or cup from six months of age. After 12 months of age, it is not necessary to pre-boil water.

Milk

For young children, water and milk are the best drink choices. Milk and milk products are an important source of nutrients. It is recommended that children have at least two serves of dairy each day.

1 serve = 250ml (1 cup) cow's milk or calcium enriched soy milk
= $\frac{3}{4}$ cup yoghurt
= 40g (2 slices) of hard cheese

For ECEC services that provide food, it is recommended that children receive a minimum of one dairy serve during eight hours of care.

A good way to help meet this requirement is to provide a small cup of milk (100ml) at morning and afternoon tea and offer yoghurt, home-made custard, a milk pudding or cheese at one of the meals or snacks.

Reduced fat or 'lite' milk (approximately 2% fat) is suitable for children over two years of age. Reduced fat milk contains much the same nutrients as full cream milk but is lower in saturated fat and energy content. Children under two years of age still require the additional energy provided by full-cream milk.

Powdered, evaporated or U.H.T. (long life) milks are equally nutritious alternatives to fresh milk. Many non-dairy milks are now available. Soy milk, enriched with calcium is suitable for most children who cannot tolerate cow's milk (check with parents). Oat, rice, almond, quinoa and coconut milks are not suitable substitutes for cow's milk, as they do not provide the necessary nutrients for young children.



Fruit Juice

Fruit juice is not recommended as a regular drink for infants or young children for the following reasons:

- A piece of fruit is a healthier choice than fruit juice as it provides fibre, is more filling and the chewing involved helps maintain oral health.
- Drinking too much fruit juice, with or without added sugar may cause diarrhoea and contribute to tooth decay.
- Drinking fruit juice throughout the day can reduce a child's appetite for eating food because it fills them up. This can easily lead to poor food intake overall and result in the child being labelled as "fussy" with food.
- If juice is consumed regularly in addition to other foods, a child can gain excess weight easily because of their higher energy intake.
- While fruit juice does provide Vitamin C, children can easily get enough Vitamin C from eating fruit and vegetables each day, eg tomato, capsicum, strawberries, kiwifruit, mandarin, orange and rockmelon.
- Juice and fruit juice drinks should never replace water as a thirst quencher and are not a suitable alternative to milk.

Fruit juice is not a necessary part of a healthy, balanced diet. Excessive fruit juice can have adverse effects. If fruit juice is provided, limit to no more than half a cup per day and dilute with water. Never offer fruit juice in a bottle.

Other sweet tasting drinks

Giving children sweet drinks from an early age will reduce their desire and preference for drinking plain water and encourage a 'sweet palate'. It is not recommended that ECEC services provide sweetened drinks such as fruit juice, fruit juice drinks, cordials, soft drinks, flavoured mineral waters, vitamin water or sports drinks as they contain too much sugar and displace water as a drink. Some of these drinks also contain high amounts of sodium and caffeine.

Artificially-sweetened drinks such as 'diet' and 'no sugar' drinks are not recommended. While low in kilojoules, they still taste very sweet, encouraging a preference for sweet drinks and are usually acidic, which is damaging to teeth.



Appropriate drinks for babies and young children

Type of drink	Birth to 6 months	6 to 12 months	1 to 2 years	2 to 5 years
Breastmilk	Exclusively breastfed	Breastmilk + solids	Continue as long as mother and child wish, feeding after food.	Continue as long as mother and child wish, feeding after food.
Infant formula	If not receiving breastmilk or in combination with breastmilk.	If not receiving breastmilk or in combination with breastmilk.	Toddler formula not necessary.	Toddler formula not necessary.
Cow's milk (full cream and reduced fat) (fresh, powdered and UHT milk)	Not suitable	Not suitable as the main milk drink, but small amount of full cream milk can be added to food, cereal and used in cooking from 6 months of age.	Full cream cow's milk as a drink.	Reduced fat cow's milk as a drink is suitable.
Soy milk (enriched with calcium) (fresh or UHT)	Not suitable	Not suitable	May be used if child has a cow's milk allergy or intolerance, with approval from parents. Choose full fat soy milk.	May be used if child has a cow's milk allergy or intolerance, with approval from parents. Reduced fat ('lite') soy milk is suitable.
Oat, rice, barley almond, quinoa or coconut milk	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable as a replacement for cow's milk (unless medically advised).	Not suitable as a replacement for cow's milk (unless medically advised).
Water	Not necessary.	Cool boiled water. Encourage use of a sipper cup instead of bottle.	Prompt children to drink water regularly.	Prompt children to drink water regularly.
Fruit Juice	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not necessary.	Not necessary. If providing, offer once per day only and dilute 1 part juice with 1 part water.
Cordial, soft drink, fruit juice drink, flavoured mineral water, vitamin water, sports drink	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable



How ECEC services can support this key message

- Ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day.
- Integrate the 'choose water as a drink' key message into the everyday curriculum.
- Refer to the blue pages in the *Munch Learning Experiences* section for suggested learning experiences to promote this key message with older toddlers and preschool aged children.
- Include a section on choosing water as a drink in the ECEC service nutrition policy.
- Set a good example by drinking and enjoying water in front of the children.
- Use positive language when talking to children about water as a drink.
- Where food and drink is provided by the ECEC service, offer water with lunch and milk with morning and afternoon tea.
- Add fruit ice cubes or frozen pieces of fruit to the water - ensure safety.
- Water bottles can be frozen in warmer months.
- When out and about, show children how to use water bubblers/fountains.
- Use straws and decorated cups.
- Display photos of the children drinking water – add these photos to the children's portfolios.
- Where food and drink is brought from home, encourage families to bring water, instead of juice and other sweet drinks.
- Provide information for families from recognised health authorities about the importance of giving children water as a drink. This information, including the related *Munch & Move* fact sheet and newsletter snippets, can be incorporated into newsletters, parent information handouts, information displays, etc.



Key Message - Eat more fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are a key part of a healthy, balanced diet for everyone, including children. They provide a wealth of nutrition, helping to support optimal growth and development in young children. Regular consumption of a wide variety of fruit and vegetables may help prevent a range of chronic diseases that develop later in life, such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and some forms of cancer.

Select fresh fruit and vegetables in season when they taste best and offer best value for money. Frozen and tinned vegetables and fruit are good alternatives when fresh are not available.

How much fruit and vegetables?

The recommendation for children aged two to three years of age is one serve of fruit and two and a half serves of vegetables and for children aged four to eight years of age one and a half serves of fruit and four and a half serves of vegetables, per day.

One serve of fruit equals:

- One medium piece of fruit such as apple, banana, pear, orange
- Two small pieces of fruit such as apricot, mandarin, plum or kiwi fruit
- One cup of canned fruit (in natural juice)
- One and a half tablespoon sultanas or four dried apricots, only occasionally.

One serve of vegetables equals:

- Half cup of cooked or raw vegetables
- One cup of salad vegetables
- One small potato
- Half cup of legumes such as lentils, chickpeas or kidney beans.

The amount a child will eat at one time will vary depending on their age, appetite and activity levels. Older children (eg four to five year olds) may be eating more than these amounts.

If a child is in care for eight hours per day, they should receive a minimum of half of these amounts ie one serve of fruit and two serves of vegetables during that time. For all children, any additional intake of fruit and vegetables should be encouraged. Guidelines to ensure menu planning meets these recommended serves is included in the *Caring for Children* resource.



Fruit and vegetables can easily lose their appeal if they are offered to children in a bruised or deteriorated state. Avoid overripe fruits and vegetables that may discourage children from wanting to eat them again.

Some children may find it challenging to learn to like the natural flavour of fruit and vegetables. Offering fruit with yoghurt or custard and vegetables with a dip or cheese sauce can help to improve acceptance. Children may be more willing to try a new food when it is accompanied by a familiar food or flavour.



Fruit

Fruit is usually well-liked by children. A piece of fresh fruit is packed with natural goodness, is unprocessed and comes in its own environmentally friendly packaging. Fresh fruit is a healthier choice compared to fruit juice drinks, fruit bars and fruit straps.

While dried fruit can be counted as part of children's daily fruit intake, it is energy-dense (ie a lot of kilojoules in a small amount) and tends to stick to children's teeth, increasing the risk of dental decay. It is also easy to over-consume dried fruit. It is recommended that children do not consume more than one serve of dried fruit each day.



Vegetables

Children need encouragement and plenty of opportunities to eat more vegetables. Children's intake of vegetables is generally not as good as their intake of fruit. Offering a variety of different vegetables (many different colours, both cooked and raw) helps to make an attractive, nourishing meal or snack.

It is important to be creative when introducing young children to different vegetables if we are to help children develop a liking for them.



Vegetable snack and meal ideas

Below are some simple suggestions for interesting vegetable-based snacks and meals. Incorporate these into your menu and share them with families. You may need to modify the texture of some according to the child's age.

✓ Vegetable Dips and spreads

Make a spread by blending chickpeas with lemon juice. Mash avocado for guacamole. Make salsa by stirring finely chopped tomatoes, capsicum and onion into tomato passata. Beetroot can be blended with ricotta cheese for a bright-coloured dip.

✓ Vegetable dipper cups

Place some dip (eg hummus, guacamole, tzatziki) into the base of a small cup. Put vegetable sticks (capsicum, carrot, celery, cucumber) in the cup – if necessary, blanch or steam hard vegetables until soft. Use a scooped out small, wholegrain roll instead of a cup.



✓ **Celery submarines**

Cut washed and trimmed celery into short sticks (eg 5cm lengths) and steam lightly. Fill with cottage cheese, ricotta or spreadable cream cheese. Top with sultanas or grated carrot.

✓ **Mini potato cups**

Cook small potatoes in their skins. Scoop out some of the inside cooked potato and fill the hollow with a dollop of creamed corn or baked beans. Top with grated cheese.

✓ **Beans in a cup**

Serve warm baked beans in a cup with grated cheese.

✓ **Mini pizza**

Top half a wholemeal English muffin with a thin spread of tomato paste (low salt). Cover with grated or finely-chopped vegetables. Top with cheese. Toast under the grill. This is a great activity to involve children in.

✓ **Vegetable chips**

Sweet potato, potato and parsnip can be sliced very thinly and baked until crisp.

✓ **Sushi**

Roll steamed rice and thinly sliced salad vegetables in seaweed (nori sheets). Slice into rolls (eg 3cm lengths).

✓ **Rice Paper Rolls**

Roll thinly sliced salad vegetables, shredded lettuce and noodles in rice paper sheets. Slice into manageable lengths (eg cut in half).

✓ **Vegetable soup**

Explore easy recipes to cook a variety of hearty vegetable soups. Thick vegetable soup with a breadstick or toast fingers makes a great winter snack.

✓ **Wholemeal pita pocket bread**

Fill pita pocket with mashed boiled egg, lettuce, grated carrot and some spread (eg hummus).

✓ **Top up meals with vegetables**

Add extra chopped vegetables to soups, stews, casseroles or pasta; add canned or pre-cooked brown lentils to spaghetti bolognese; layer thin slices of pumpkin and eggplant into lasagne; mix finely grated/chopped vegetables into rissoles/patties, meatloaf and pasta dishes.



How ECEC services can support this key message

All ECEC services

- Include a section on promoting fruit and vegetables in the ECEC service nutrition policy.
- Integrate the key message 'eat more fruit and vegetables' into the everyday curriculum.
- Refer to the blue pages in the *Munch Ideas and Learning Experiences* section for suggested learning experiences to promote this key message with older toddlers and preschool aged children.
- Use positive language when talking to young children about fruit and vegetables.
- Display photos of the children eating fruit and vegetables – add these photos to the children's portfolios.
- Develop a small fruit and vegetable garden in your outdoor area involving both children and families.
- Prepare food with children using fresh fruit and vegetables – use produce from the ECEC service garden.
- Share fruit and vegetable recipes and ideas with families.
- Provide information for families from recognised health authorities, about the benefits and importance of giving children fresh fruit and vegetables – this information, including the related *Munch & Move* fact sheets and newsletter snippets, can be incorporated into newsletters, parent information handouts, information displays, etc.



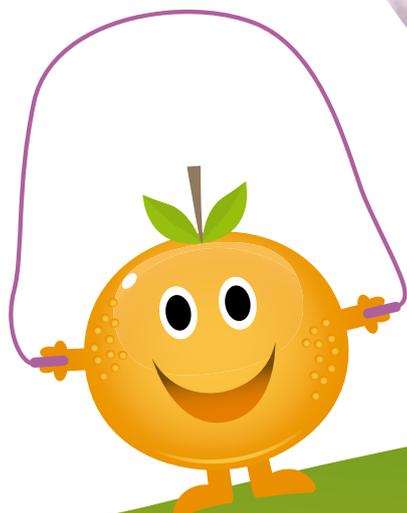
Where food is provided by the ECEC service

- Have a planned written menu offering a variety of fruit and vegetables that reflects the recommended daily requirements.
- Prepare and offer fruit and vegetables in a way that is appropriate for the age and development of the child, eg cooked, stewed, pureed, mashed, raw and grated.
- Encourage children to taste all fruit and vegetables offered and serve them to all children, regardless of whether you think they will eat them or not. Introduce new fruit and vegetables alongside favourites children already know and enjoy eg add a raw salad vegetable such as cherry tomatoes or crunchy green beans to the fruit platter.

Where food is brought from home

- Provide families with creative and cost-effective suggestions for including fruit and vegetables as part of a healthy lunchbox.

When educators eat and enjoy fruit and vegetables every day, children are encouraged to also try them and eat fruit and vegetables more often.



Key Message – Choose healthier snacks

Snacks are as important as meals in meeting children’s nutritional needs and maintaining their energy levels. Children have small stomachs and variable appetites, so they do better with eating small amounts of healthy food often during the day.

Healthy Eating Guideline 9:

Offer meals and snacks at regular and predictable intervals.

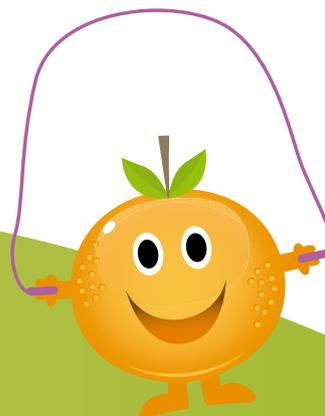
Children need a daily eating routine that ideally includes three meals and two or three snacks. The best snacks are those based on fruit and vegetables, dairy products and wholegrain breads and cereals.

Many commercial snack foods, packet snacks and drinks are high in added sugar, saturated fat, salt and low in nutrients. This makes them poor choices for children of all ages. Examples include sweet biscuits, cake, pastries, muesli bars, potato chips, savoury crackers, soft drinks, cordial, lollies and chocolates. These foods and drinks should be offered only sometimes and in very small amounts – perhaps best left for celebration days or parties.

Healthy snack ideas

Examples include:

- fresh fruit – pureed, mashed, chopped, sliced
- fresh fruit and veggie platter
- fruit salad
- stewed or canned fruit
- frozen or dried fruit
- fruit smoothie
- yoghurt – can also be used as a dip for fruit or to dollop on top of fruit
- custard with fruit
- cheese slices or cheese sticks
- vegetable sticks served with a dip (eg hummus or mashed avocado)
– if necessary blanch or steam hard vegetables until soft
- cheese slices, tomato, avocado on wholegrain crackers or crispbreads
- small potatoes topped with cheese and baked in the microwave oven
- toasted sandwiches with baked beans





- rice crackers, rice cakes or corn thins, serve plain or add a spread of cottage or cream cheese, top with tomato or grated carrot
- scones or pikelets – plain, fruit or savoury
- toasted English muffins – serve plain or top with melted cheese
- small fruit or cheese and vegetable muffins
- fruit bread or crumpet – serve with cottage cheese, ricotta or cream cheese and/or top with banana or strawberries
- bread cases with creamed corn or baked beans and cheese
- wholewheat breakfast biscuits topped with banana
- bread fingers with cheese and tomato.

How ECEC services can support this key message

All ECEC services:

- Include a section on the promotion of healthier snacks in the ECEC service nutrition policy.
- Integrate the key message 'choose healthier snacks' into the everyday curriculum.
- Refer to the blue pages in the *Munch Learning Experiences* section for suggested learning experiences to promote this key message with older toddlers and preschool aged children.
- Encourage young children to taste all snacks offered.
- Display photos of the children eating healthy snacks – add these photos to the children's portfolios.
- Prepare healthy snacks with the children.

- Share healthy snack recipes and ideas with families.
- Use positive language when talking to young children about healthy snacks.
- Set a good example by eating and enjoying healthy snacks with the children.
- Provide information for families from recognised health authorities about the benefits and importance of giving children healthy snacks – this information, including the related *Munch & Move* fact sheets and newsletter snippets, can be incorporated into newsletters, parent information handouts, information displays, children’s portfolios, etc.

Where food is provided by the ECEC service:

- Plan healthy snacks on the menu to complement what is served at mealtimes.
- Vary the snacks on the menu to keep children interested and to introduce children to a range of healthy snack ideas.
- Ensure that snacks are substantial enough to meet the energy needs of children. It is recommended that at each snack time children are offered a bread/cereal-based food *and* a fruit/vegetable choice along with milk (refer to the *Nutrition Checklist for Menu Planning* in the *Caring for Children*¹² resource for a selection of sample menus and healthy snack ideas).

Where food is brought from home:

- Provide guidelines to families that promote healthy snacks in lunchboxes. Include practical ideas and suggestions on the types of healthy snacks to bring and appropriate amounts to pack.
- Promote less packet snacks (for both nutrition and environmental reasons).



For more information relating to *Munch*

- **Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia** www.allergyfacts.org.au
- **Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA)**. The following web-links provide information and resources on infant feeding and allergy prevention for families, schools and ECEC services:
www.allergy.org.au/hp/papers/infant-feeding-allergy-prevention
www.allergy.org.au/schools-childcare
- **Australian Breastfeeding Association**. Visit this website for supportive breastfeeding information: www.breastfeeding.asn.au. *Breastfeeding Welcome Here* kits are available from: www.breastfeeding.asn.au/services/welcome. The Breastfeeding Helpline is a 24 hour free call number: 1800 686 268.
- ***Caring for Children: Birth to 5 years (Food, Nutrition and Learning Experiences)***. This NSW Ministry of Health resource covers many aspects of food and nutrition from birth to five years, relevant to all early childhood settings. It includes sections on nutrition, food preparation (including menu planning and recipes) and healthy eating learning experiences. Available to all ECEC services participating in the *Munch & Move* program. Copies can also be downloaded from the NSW *Healthy Kids* website: www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/teachers-childcare/food-and-nutrition/publications.aspx
- **Eat for Health – Australian Dietary Guidelines**. This website provides advice about the amount and kinds of foods that we need to eat for health and wellbeing along with resources, calculators and games: www.eatforhealth.gov.au
- **Ethnic Community Services Co-operative** has a Bicultural Support Pool with a wealth of information regarding working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities: <http://ecsc.org.au/>
- **Food Standards Australia New Zealand**. Download a copy of the Food Standards Code listing requirements for foods - including food safety, additives and labelling: www.foodstandards.gov.au/code/Pages/default.aspx



- **Get Up & Grow resources.** The Commonwealth Government have developed a comprehensive set of resources entitled *Get Up & Grow* designed to be used in a wide range of early childhood settings by directors, educators and families. They support a consistent, national approach to early childhood nutrition and physical activity. The resources include a director /coordinator book, a staff and carer book, a cooking for children book, a family book, posters, brochures and stickers: www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/phd-early-childhood-nutrition-resources
- **Healthy Fundraising: Ideas to promote health while still making a profit,** by Cancer Council NSW. Booklet available from: www.cancercouncil.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/09271_CAN3042_HealthyFundraising_FINAL.pdf-low-res-for-web.pdf
- **NSW Healthy Kids** is a joint initiative of the NSW Ministry of Health, the Heart Foundation, NSW Office of Sport and NSW Department of Education and Communities. This site provides supportive information on promoting children's physical activity, as well as information and resources to support the *Munch & Move* program: www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au
- **Heart Foundation.** Visit this website for information on healthy living including healthy eating, healthy recipes and active living: www.heartfoundation.org.au/
- **NSW Early Childhood Environmental Education Network (ECEEN).** The ECEEN supports educators, carers and parents of young children by providing the resources and information necessary to facilitate meaningful environmental education into children's daily experiences. ECEEN provides resources for setting up vegetable gardens and related activities: www.eceen.org.au
- **NSW Government's Human Services (Community Services)** website provides information booklets for Aboriginal parents and carers on basic child development (birth to 5 years of age), including healthy eating and physical activity. There are different booklets representing the Aboriginal regions throughout NSW: www.community.nsw.gov.au/parents,-carers-and-families/parenting/for-aboriginal-parents-and-carers
- **NSW Little Smiles: Dental Health Resource Package for Childcare Professionals (2010).** Download from www.health.nsw.gov.au/oralhealth/Publications/nsw-little-smiles.pdf

- **Raising Children** website and resources. This Australian parenting website supported by the Australian Government offers information for parents on healthy eating for children:
http://raisingchildren.net.au/nutrition/babies_nutrition.html
http://raisingchildren.net.au/nutrition_fitness/toddlers_nutrition.html
http://raisingchildren.net.au/nutrition_fitness/preschoolers_nutrition.html
- **Starting Family Foods – Introducing your baby to solid foods** (2014). This NSW Ministry of Health brochure is an easy guide for parents on introducing solid foods to babies. A PDF version can be downloaded from:
www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/downloads/file/teacherschildcare/NPR3493NSWHealth12ppDLbrochureFINAL_seppages.pdf
- **Sydney Markets – Fresh for Kids**. This website provides information on healthy eating for children with a focus on fruit and vegetables and healthy lunchbox and snack ideas: www.freshforkids.com.au
- **The Children’s Hospital at Westmead** provides fact sheets for parents about healthy eating, weight management, allergies, special diets and caring for children’s teeth: www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/fact-sheets



Munch ideas and learning experiences

The possibilities for integrating play-based *Munch* learning experiences into the everyday curriculum are endless. Play provides opportunities for children to learn as they discover, create, improvise, imagine and have fun. Learning experiences where children are engaged in play are good opportunities to educate young children about the *Munch* key messages.

Discussions with young children about food and drink should focus on the positive. Describing or labelling food or food components (such as sugar or fat) as 'good' or 'bad' is not recommended. All young children should be encouraged to develop a positive and relaxed attitude towards food and eating.

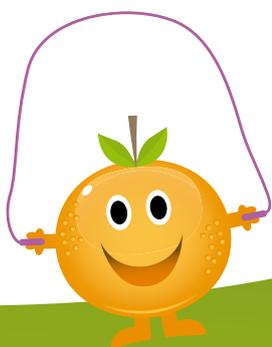
It is an adult's responsibility to provide children with appropriate amounts of healthy and nutritious food and the child's responsibility to decide what to eat and how much. When considering ways to help young children learn about healthy eating, keep in mind that nutrition is a complex science and many nutrition concepts are abstract and difficult for young children to understand (eg food groupings based on the nutrients they provide, energy balance, nutrients within food that cannot be seen). Children are usually ready to learn such concepts in middle to upper primary school. The early years are a time to focus on building a sense of curiosity about food and explore the wide variety of delicious, healthy food available.

Learning experiences

When planning *Munch* learning experiences it is important to consider the children's identity, interests and abilities and to scaffold their learning from the 'known' to the 'unknown'. Begin with simple language and simple concepts for very young children. This can then be widened as the children become familiar with the topic.

Implement the principles of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) by:

- adopting holistic approaches
- being responsive to children
- planning and implementing learning through play
- practicing intentional teaching
- creating environments that have a positive impact on children's learning
- valuing the cultural and social context of children and their families
- providing for continuity in experiences and enabling children to have successful transitions
- assessing and monitoring children's learning to support them in achieving learning outcomes
- allowing children to explore foods – where they have come from, how they were cooked, etc.



Importantly, to learn about nutrition children should have the opportunity to be involved with actual food. 'Hands-on' experiences help children develop healthy eating habits and can complement other learning.

This section of the *Munch & Move Resource Manual* will assist you in planning and implementing *Munch* learning experiences by providing you with ideas. These learning experiences are designed to encourage educators to promote children's exploration, awareness and enjoyment of healthy eating from a young age and provide ECEC services with the option to incorporate a 'whole of service' approach when embedding the *Munch* key messages.

It is intended that all children attending the ECEC service will have the opportunity to participate in *Munch* learning experiences as part of their weekly program. Spontaneous learning experiences to support the *Munch* key messages should be integrated throughout each day. Intentional *Munch* learning experiences are also recommended and should be offered on a regular basis to further promote the key messages to children, other staff and families. Where appropriate, the *Munch* learning experiences should be teamed up with discussion around healthy eating.

For more examples of healthy eating learning experiences, please see the *Healthy Eating Learning Experiences Resource* on the *Munch & Move* resource page (www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au).

Safety

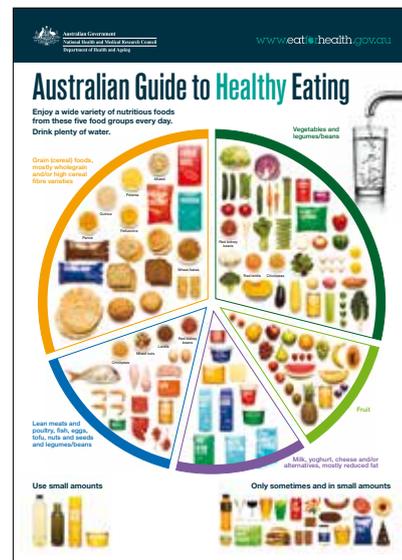
Care should be taken when using actual food in learning experiences:

- Be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances and special diets.
- Ensure no poisonous parts of fruits or vegetables are used or eaten, including:
 - The leaves or vines of tomatoes (avoid any green parts as they are toxic).
 - The leaf blade of rhubarb (which is toxic).
 - The kernel of stone fruit (such as apricot, cherry, peach, plum, as the kernel is poisonous).
 - Avocado leaves (which are toxic).
 - Potatoes that have any green skin, green flesh, sprouts, stems and leaves, as these are toxic.
- Some foods may present a choking risk. Educators need to consider the age of the children when undertaking *Munch* experiences.
- Safe food handling requirements must be maintained at all times.
- Choose food experiences that limit children's contact with heat or sharp implements.

Safety is paramount at all times. All learning experiences must be supervised. Provide constant, close supervision of any learning experience which involves water. Ensure water is emptied immediately once constant supervision ceases and the activity concludes.

Ideas to assist with promoting the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* with children and families

- Use the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* healthy food plate model as placemats – children can view the food they have in their lunchboxes or on their plate, and identify if it is on the healthy eating plate.
- Make two copies of the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* healthy food plate - one template can be laminated and with the other healthy food plate template cut the food groups into sections and laminate them individually. The children can use this as a puzzle. Be sure to include the 'sometimes' food, as educators can ask "Why doesn't this piece fit into the everyday plate?"
- Print a blank copy of the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* healthy food plate model and encourage the children to draw their favourite food in each food group.
- Print a blank copy of the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* healthy food plate and children can pick out pictures from food magazines to paste into the different food groups.
- Place an A3 *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* healthy food plate poster in the eating area for children to view, this can be used to spark conversation with children about 'everyday' and 'sometimes' foods.
- For the older children, cut the individual pieces of food out and laminate each one. Print and laminate a blank *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* healthy food plate and ask children to place the food into the different food groups.
- Place the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* healthy food plate in the newsletter to promote 'everyday' foods with children and families.
- Place the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* healthy food plate poster in the home corner area.



www.eatforhealth.gov.au



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Key Message: Choose water as a drink

Why do we need water?

All living things need water to survive. Without water, your body will stop working properly. Water makes up more than half of our body and we cannot survive for more than a few days without it. Our body has lots of important jobs to do and it needs water for many of them.

Benefits of drinking tap water

- Drinking water is the best way to quench your thirst.
- Helps to keep us cool when we exercise.
- Is good for our skin and teeth.
- Keeps our tummies working properly and helps us go to the toilet.

As adults, we understand how important it is to teach children about the benefits of drinking water. It is through intentional and spontaneous experiences, daily conversations, sharing resources, and role modelling that can assist children in developing lifelong habits.

Water has to compete with a variety of different drinks (soft drinks, sports drinks, cordial, flavoured milk), which means that educators need to be purposeful in sharing this key message with children. There are many opportunities throughout the day to promote water with the children.

Munch ideas to promote 'Choose water as a drink'

We make playdough each week don't we? Next time you make it with the children purposely leave the water out. Ask the children why the playdough is not working? When the children identify that the playdough did not turn out because the water was missing, then you can use this as a teachable moment to discuss the importance of water.

What else needs water to survive?

What would happen if we didn't water our plants, or give our animals water?

What do you think would happen to us if we didn't drink water?

In the morning we brush our teeth, have a shower, and brush our hair. We don't think twice in doing these things...the reason is because it is a habit.

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Munch & Move CD – 'Water, Water, Water' (Track 4) - Have a timer set and each time the timer goes off, play the 'Water, Water, Water' song and everyone stops to get a drink of water (including educators).

Painting with water on concrete – As the water evaporates into the concrete, compare this to how our body loses water, and how we need to continue to drink water throughout the day to ensure we stay hydrated. On the warmer days discuss how the water evaporates quicker, and how we should drink more water on those hot days.

Does your water station look appealing? Set up the water station so that it is a place where children will want to stop what they are doing to get a drink and relax/socialise. Suggestions include:

- Place a tablecloth on the table/bench.
- Display the "Choose water as a drink" fact sheet.
- Add pictures of children around the world drinking water or pictures of children who attend the ECEC service drinking water.
- Add small chairs or lounges near the drinking area to encourage children to visit this area when they need to have time out of their play to relax.

How much sugar is in this drink? - Have a variety of different types of drinks (juice, soft drink, sport drinks and water). Ask the children to guess how many spoonfuls of sugar are in each drink. Use this opportunity to discuss the benefits of water - *Remember to keep the display out for the families to see.*

Drink Cards – Visual displays are a perfect way to share information with children and families. Visit the *Munch & Move* resource page (www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au) to download the drink cards that can be displayed at the water station, front foyer, newsletter or on a *Munch & Move* wall display.



'Rethink Sugary Drink' – This website highlights the amount of sugar in sweetened beverages such as soft drink, energy drinks and sports drinks. The website hopes to encourage Australians to rethink their sugary drink consumption and switch to water, reduced-fat milk or unsweetened options.

Water bottles - Ask parents to bring in a 'water bottle' rather than a 'drink bottle'. Having 'water bottles' rather than 'drink bottles' automatically informs families that water is the fluid recommended at the ECEC service.

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Remember, if it is something that happens every day....it becomes a habit!!

Transitions - Encourage children to have a drink during transitions - on their way outside, after group time, coming in from outside, after language and music experiences.

Gardening with children - Use this time to discuss the importance of water with children.

- *What would happen if we didn't care for our garden?*
- *Why do plants need water?*
- *Where does the water go?*



Whilst exploring in the garden the children may discover that there is a plant/flower that needs extra love and care. Take a photo of it and ask the children "why do you think this plant/flower is not standing tall?" Encourage the children to continue to care for the plant/flower ie by watering. Over the coming weeks have discussions with the children and document how the water has helped make the plant strong again (just like water makes our bodies strong). You could then use these photos to make sequencing cards for the children.

Water drop picture - Print a few copies of the *Munch & Move* water drop character. Cover the water drop characters in contact and place them on the floor, in a long line leading towards the water station. This is a simple and effective way to draw children's attention to the water station. You could also use these during transitions, "*Jump onto the water drops all the way to the water station*".



"Have a drink of water when I say the word...." - Ask the children to bring their water bottles to the language experience. Each time you say a particular word in a book, children consume some water.

Working hard - I need a drink of water! - Place a water jug next to busy areas eg construction area. Role model drinking water by saying "*All this building has made me thirsty*". This could spark discussion about builders, concreters, etc needing to drink lots of water when they are working.

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Create your own water lotto game – Lotto could be used to discuss water with the children. You could source photos of water in a glass, water being poured from a bottle, water coming from a tap, waves at the beach, etc.

Questions you could ask the children

- *Where does water come from?*
- *How do people from around the world collect water?*
- *What happens if we waste the water?*
- *How does the water get into our taps?*
- *Discuss water pipes, and relate this to 'our pipes' in our body.*
- *How many cups of water do we need to drink each day?*

Hint: Toddlers need about 1 litre of fluid a day (4 cups) and preschool aged children around 1.2 litres a day (approximately 5 cups) - more in hot weather and/or when engaging in physical activity.

Extension

- Research how people around the world collect water.
- Children could make rain gauges to place outside when it rains.
- Rain cycle sequencing game.



Link the key message to familiar books - such as:

- 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' by Michael Rosen
- 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' by Eric Carle
- 'Wombat Stew' by Marcia Vaughan
- 'Tiddalik the Frog' by Robert Roennfeldt
- 'The Crocodile Who Didn't Like Water' by Gemma Morrison

As you prepare, implement and evaluate your learning experiences, it is important to remember to be purposeful and reflective with the questions that you ask children:

- *If we go on a bear hunt, will we need to pack water to keep us hydrated?*
- *Do you think the bear drinks water?*
- *The caterpillar has eaten lots of food, what do you think will help the caterpillar feel better?*
- *What would happen if we didn't add water to the 'Wombat Stew'?*
- *What would happen if water ran out? ('Tiddalik')*
- *What other animals don't like water?*

Link the key message to familiar music – such as:

Music is a fantastic way to explore many of the key messages for *Munch & Move*, including 'Choose water as a drink'. Have you heard the 'Robot Song' by Jingle Jam? This song is popular with children as the robot loses all its energy when its battery runs out resulting it to fall dramatically to the ground. What a perfect teachable moment to discuss:

- *Why did the robot run out of battery?*
- *What do you do when you feel like you're running out of energy?*
- This is a perfect opportunity to then discuss how important it is to keep hydrated throughout the day.

Remember when documenting this for the families, be sure to link this with the key message 'Choose water as a drink'.



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Encouraging children to drink milk

Why do we need to drink milk?

Milk is an important source of nutrients for young children - protein, calcium, zinc, vitamin A.

Did you know . . .

- Provide full cream milk for children under 2 years of age.
- Provide reduced-fat milk for children over 2 years of age - *now eating a broader range of foods that contribute fat and kilojoules.*

Experiences to promote dairy

- **What dairy foods are and where they come from.** Use visuals and/or real products for this learning experience and encourage children to draw pictures of dairy foods or cut out pictures in magazines.
- **Sorting food into food groups.** "What food group does the cheese belong in?"
- **How much milk** (dairy foods) do we need each day to keep our teeth and bones strong? (*2 cups [500mls] of milk for preschool aged children*).
- **Taste testing** different dairy products: yoghurt, cheese, milk, homemade custard.
- **Create posters** of all the dairy foods that the children love to eat.
- Blend a fruit smoothie – add banana, strawberries or other interesting combinations. Encourage children to taste test.
- **Find pictures, books or even a model of the human skeleton.** Use the opportunity to talk with children about the importance of eating dairy foods to build strong bones.
- **Research with the children about local dairy farms,** you could ask someone to come into talk to the children about the process of making dairy, or if possible, organise a visit to a local dairy farm.
- **Make your own sequence cards** on the process of turning the milk from the cow into cheese or yoghurt. Call it 'Farm to Table' sequence game.
- **Guess who's mouth this is?** Children love it when you tell them they have a milk moustache, so why not make this in to a game. When children have a drink and they are left with a milk moustache, take a close up photo of their mouth, and laminate the pictures. After you have collected a variety of different pictures, you could play 'Guess who's drinking the milk'. The children can guess whose mouth belongs to which friend.
- **Gather related photos, posters and books.** Send the 'Dairy for Young Children' fact sheet home to families.
- Remember how powerful **role modelling** is!!!



Fact Sheet

DAIRY FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Munch & Move

For young children, water and milk are the best drink choices. Milk and milk products are an important source of nutrients such as calcium, protein, energy and vitamins B₂, B₁₂ and A.

What milk should my child be drinking?

- Infants 0-12 months of age should only be given breastmilk, or milk replacer.
- Breastfed infants: Give with iron-fortified formula for infants under 12 months of age and formula without iron for ages 12-24 months, although iron is needed in small quantities with cereal and iron-fortified.
- Children aged 1-2 years of age should be given full cream milk with 3.5% fat.
- Children under 2 years of age still require the additional energy provided by full cream milk.
- For children aged 2 years and older reduced fat milk (2% fat) is recommended. Reduced fat milk contains the same amount of calcium, protein, and vitamins B₂ and B₁₂, but is lower in saturated fat and energy content.

Types of milk for children over 12 months

Cow's milk is a good source of nutrients including protein, fat and vitamins A, B₂ and B₁₂ and may be fortified with vitamin D. However, consumption of 1-2 cups (250-500ml) per day of ultra-processed or ultra-pasteurised milk may place at children's children's at risk. Many plant-based milk substitutes don't have the same range of nutrients as cow's milk. They are generally lower in protein and have fewer calories and vitamins. Check these milk substitutes look for varieties fortified with calcium and B₁₂. **Always choose the ultra-pasteurised ultra-processed variety cow's milk. Don't, however, choose and natural milk as not suitable substitutes for cow's milk, as they do not provide the necessary nutrients for young children. Encourage children to drink plain, unflavoured milk.**

How much dairy food is needed every day?

It is recommended that children have at least 1-2 cups (250-500ml) dairy each day. What does 1 cup look like?

- 1 cup (250ml) cow's milk, cream, condensed, evaporated or UHT (ultra-pasteurised) milk
- 1/2 cup (125ml) yoghurt
- 1/2 cup (125ml) soft cheese, such as cheddar

Did you know?

- Milk contains a protein called casein, which helps protect teeth from decay by forming a protective coating for teeth.
- Dairy food with calcium will help children build strong bones.

Source: Australian Government Department of Health, 2015. www.health.gov.au

NSW Health

For more information and ideas on healthy eating and physical activity go to www.health.gov.au

Key Message: Eat more fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are so much fun to eat because they come in different shapes, sizes and colours. They also taste so good. Our bodies love them because they keep us healthy and full of energy. It is fun for children to explore a variety of vegetables and fruits and see how they look, feel and taste.

Creative ideas to promote 'Eat more fruit and vegetables

- **Eating the colours of the rainbow** – Make a large mural of the colours of the rainbow with the children and display it on a wall. Ask the children to draw pictures of different coloured fruits and vegetables and place it on the rainbow. They could even cut these out of magazines, or bring photos from home.
- **Fruit kebabs.** Using a variety of seasonal fruits encourage children to create their own fruit kebabs. Paddlepop sticks cut in half are age appropriate for young children.
- **Fruit smoothies** – add spinach too.
- **Fruit or vegetable of the week** – Educators research a different fruit or vegetable with the children. These could be included on the menu, or displayed on a table for children to view. For example, it could be carrot week - you could create your own carrot sequencing cards to see how the carrot grows.
- Each week take a **photo of your ECEC service's vegetables growing in the garden** and create your own sequencing cards.
- Place a fruit or vegetable on the drawing table for the children to **draw**.
- **Compare raw fruits and vegetables to cooked fruits and vegetables** – add raw broccoli or raw cauliflower to the vegetable platter.
- Plan weekly **cooking experiences** based on what children enjoy eating (share this information with families too).
- Have a variety of different artificial fruits and vegetables for children to play with in the home corner area.
- Make a trail to find the fruit bowl in the ECEC service. Laminate pictures from the front door to lead the way to the fruit and vegetable bowl.
- **Make connection with your local grocer**, ask them about the weekly specials, and share this with the families. Display pictures of the 'ideal lunchbox' for parents to view and ensure it includes a variety of different fruits and vegetables.



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- Cutting **pictures of food** out of magazines. Provide the children with a **paper plate** and they can cut and paste the everyday foods onto the plate. This can be sent home with the children to share with their families.
- Ask the families to send in their favourite meal recipe that includes different vegetables and create a **cookbook** for families to buy as a fundraiser.
- **Match colours** to fruits and vegetables. For example, yellow – lemon, purple – grapes, green – avocado.
- **Exploring concepts** such as heavy, light, smooth, rough, round, long, when talking about fruits and vegetables.
- During **play in the dramatic area**, discuss healthy food options, eg “Can I please order a bowl of vegetables?”
- **Change the words from a popular book** to promote eating more fruit and vegetables. For example, refer to the short video clip of an educator sharing the story ‘Handa’s Surprise’ on the NSW *Healthy Kids* website.
- Be a **positive role model** when consuming food and drink whilst in front of the children.



Hint: Most families are time poor. Share some time-saving tips on how to pack fruits and vegetables into their child’s lunchbox, for example:

- When cutting up the vegetables for dinner cut up extra to use for the children’s lunchboxes.
- Share ideas for healthy dips, eg tzatziki, hummus.
- Did you know that if you squeeze lemon on an already cut apple, this will prevent the apple from turning brown.
- Share recipes with families. Is there a particular meal that children enjoy? Print out a recipe and place it next to the sign in book.

Researching a vegetable – choose a vegetable with the children to explore. Find out:

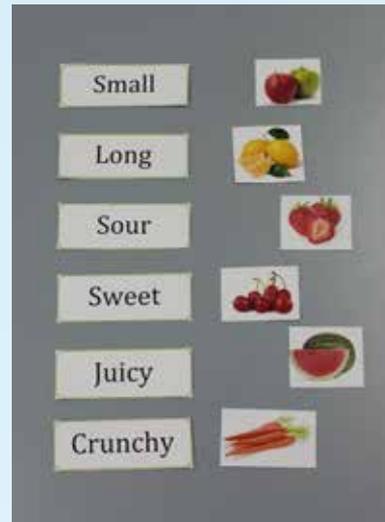
- *Where does it grow (on a plant or in the ground)?*
- *Does it have seeds?*
- *Does the outside of the fruit or vegetable look different from the inside?*
- *Explore different vegetables from around the world.*
- *Make sequence cards for children to learn about the cycle.*



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Make your own lotto matching games

- The children match the whole fruit or vegetable to pictures of what that fruit or vegetable looks like cut open.
- Match the fruit to the relevant seeds.
- Take a close up picture of children eating different fruits or vegetables and create a lotto game.
- Make laminated cards with describing words such as 'crunchy', 'sweet', 'soft', 'long', 'short'. Make small picture cards of fruits and vegetables and encourage the children to match the descriptive words to the fruits and vegetables.



Some families may get their groceries ordered and delivered to home, which means some children may not often walk into a grocery store and see the variety of different fruits and vegetables that are available. Creating learning experiences for children to explore and learn about the range of fruits and vegetables available is important.



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Food for thought

Imagine going out to a restaurant to eat and the menu was written in another language. *How would you feel if you had no idea what you were ordering? Would you feel excited about the surprise meal that would soon be put in front of you? Or would you be feeling anxious and unsure about what you had ordered?*

Now think of children in an ECEC service where meals are prepared for them. Sometimes on the menu they may come across fruits or vegetables that are unknown to them, such as an avocado or eggplant. These may be foods that they have never tried or even heard of. Imagine how they would feel as it was put in front of them to eat. It may be similar to the feeling of ordering from a French menu, when you are unable to read French.

This is why it is important to explore a variety of different fruits and vegetables with the children (even if you have a cook at your ECEC service or children bring in lunchboxes).

Pumpkin experience – Buy a pumpkin and place it on a table where children and families enter the room. Place the 'Eat more fruit and vegetables' fact sheet next to the pumpkin. The purpose of this learning experience is to subtly draw attention to the pumpkin and start conversations about the pumpkin.

During an intentional group time experience explore the pumpkin with the children. Reflective questions to ask the children to consider could be:

- *Is the pumpkin heavy?*
- *What colour is it?*
- *Is the outside of the pumpkin smooth or rough?*
- *If I cut the pumpkin open and look inside the pumpkin. Does it look different to the outside?*
- *What colour is the inside of the pumpkin?*
- *How many seeds can we see?*
- *I wonder what it tastes like when it is raw?*
- *Do you think pumpkin tastes different raw to when it is cooked?*
- *What types of meals can we cook using pumpkin?*
- *Is pumpkin an 'everyday' food or a 'sometimes' food (it would be good to have the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating - healthy plate model close by to use as a reference).*
- *What other fruits and vegetables are the same colour as the pumpkin?*
- *Do you think all pumpkins look the same? Research this on the internet with the children.*
- *Do you think we could grow our own pumpkins in our vegetable garden?*
- *Who eats pumpkin at home?*
- *What meal could we make with pumpkin?*

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Extend on this learning experience by making pumpkin sequencing cards for children to use. Send home a recipe with the children to share with their families. In the winter they may like a recipe for a creamy pumpkin soup, or in the summer you may find a nice pumpkin, feta and spinach salad recipe you would like to share.

Link the key message to familiar books - such as:

- 'Growing Vegetable Soup' by Lois Ehlert
- 'Handa's Surprise' by Eileen Browne
- 'Oliver's Vegetables' by Vivian French
- 'I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato' by Lauren Child
- 'Eating the Alphabet' by Lois Ehlert
- 'The Magic Lunchbox' by Angela Barrett

As you prepare, implement and evaluate your learning experiences, it is important to remember to be purposeful in the questions that you ask children:

- *What types of vegetables would you put into your vegetable soup?*
- *Handa only has fruit in her basket. What vegetables could Handa collect as well?*
- *Is there a vegetable that you have never tried? What was it?*
- *Is a tomato a fruit or a vegetable?*
- *Really quickly, as I call out each letter of the alphabet, can you tell me a fruit or vegetable that starts with that letter?*
- *What types of things do you think The Magic Lunchbox would spit out?*



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Link the key message to familiar music - such as:

Be creative and make up a song about fruit and vegetables.

Ask the children to help you to create a song about their favourite fruit or vegetable. Use the *Munch & Move* CD (also available for download) as a springboard. 'Fruity Treats', 'Super Me' and 'Where We Go Shopping' are fantastic songs which promote and support the key message Eat more fruit and vegetables.

Ask the children to help make up songs or rhymes about fruits and vegetables. Children often have the best ideas of what they would like included in the 'made-up' song. Why not change words to familiar songs?

Here is the popular song 'Down at the Station' that has been adapted to include words that highlight fruit and vegetables:

**Down at the fruit shop early in the morning,
See the green apples all in a row.
See the yellow peaches, round and furry,
Crunch, crunch, crunch and watch me grow.**

**Down by the vegie shop early in the morning,
See the green broccoli all in the row,
See the orange carrots, tall and slender,
Crunch and crunch and watch me grow.**



Key Message: Choose healthier snacks

- Take a **photo** of children’s healthy lunchboxes and display them in the ECEC foyer, newsletter, and emails for families.
- **Take photos of ‘sometimes’ snacks** that come into the ECEC service and provide families with healthy alternatives (visuals work well here). Remember to visit the NSW *Healthy Kids* website to source healthy food templates and pictures.
- **The healthy lunchbox game.** Collect and laminate a variety of different foods that could go into a lunchbox (ensure you include some ‘sometimes’ foods in there too). Spread the pictures on the ground and ask the children to create their own healthy lunchbox. Be sure to have the *Australia Guide to Healthy Eating* healthy plate model close by.
- **Share healthy snack recipes** - Ask families to provide a healthy snack recipe which can then be collated into creating a healthy snack recipe book. The recipe book can be shared with families.
- **The ‘Magic Lunchbox’ book** – this is a great resource developed by NSW Health which promotes healthy lunchbox choices. Use this book to guide conversations on ‘what healthy snacks can I put into my lunchbox?’
- Use opportunities throughout daily routines to **discuss healthy ‘everyday’ foods** (during dramatic play, meal times, etc).
- **Be creative with the snacks** – share these ideas with families. You could do this during ‘special celebrations’ to show families the different ways to be creative.
- **Discussion during meal times.** Place the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* healthy plate model in the eating area for children to discuss the healthy food they are consuming.
- **Share resources on healthy snack ideas to educate families** eg the *Munch & Move* fact sheet; healthy lunch box ideas and the *Caring for Children* resource; plus there are many websites that are listed in the manual.
- **Healthy cooking night.** Invite families to come into the ECEC service to share healthy cooking ideas. This is a perfect opportunity to share the *Munch & Move* resources with families.
- To encourage families to bring in snacks that meet the *Healthy Eating Guidelines*, provide them with a list of approved snacks that could be brought in. This is a great resource to distribute to families at orientation.



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- Encourage dramatic play about healthy snack foods.

Link the key message to familiar books - such as:

- 'The Teddy Bears Picnic' by Jimmy Kennedy
- 'Tooth and Nale' by Michael Lindsey Simpson
- 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' by Eric Carle

As you prepare, implement and evaluate your learning experiences, it is important to remember to be purposeful in the questions that you ask children:

- *There is a lot of 'sometimes' food at the picnic. What are some healthy 'everyday' snacks that we could pack in our picnic basket?*
- *Why is 'sometimes' food not good for our teeth?*
- *Why do you think the very hungry caterpillar felt sick?*

Link the key message to familiar music - such as:

- Use related songs eg from the *Munch & Move* CD – 'My lunchbox', 'Where we go shopping' and 'Picnic day'.

With the children construct a song that promotes the key message – 'Choose healthier snacks'.



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