

# Caring for Children

## Birth to 5 years

(Food, Nutrition and Learning Experiences)





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# Acknowledgements

*Caring for Children – Birth to 5 years (Food, Nutrition and Learning Experiences)* is based on two resources, namely *Caring for Infants - A guide to feeding 0 to 12 month-old infants in long day care centres* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2008) and *Caring for Children - Food, Nutrition and Fun Activities* (4<sup>th</sup> edition 2005).

The NSW Ministry of Health wishes to thank and acknowledge the research, writing and production of the following people in the revision of *Caring for Infants* and *Caring for Children*.

- *Caring for Infants* was originally produced by Maine Norberg, Rosemary Young and Sue Amanatidis from the former Central Sydney Area Health Service.
- This revised edition was written by Kristine Lobley, Consultant Paediatric Dietitian.
- *Caring for Children* was originally written by Carolyn Bunney and Lauren Williams.
- This revised edition was written by Carolyn Bunney, Rudi Bartl and Lesley Marshall, Nutrition Services, Central Coast Local Health District.

The NSW Ministry of Health wishes to also thank and acknowledge:

- *Caring for Infants* was originally produced by Maine Norberg, Rosemary Young and Sue Amanatidis from the former Central Sydney Area Health Service.
- Dr Rob Loblay and Dr Anne Swain from the Allergy Unit, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital for their contribution to the 'Food Allergy and Food Intolerance' section.
- The Central Coast Local Health District Cooks Network and the Northern Sydney Cooks Network for their input and recipe testing.
- The Speech Pathology team from Central Coast Local Health District for their advice on chocking and infant feeding practices.
- Services directors and cooks, early childhood nutrition experts and other representatives from the early childhood sector that contributed to the review that resulted in this edition.

The NSW Ministry of Health acknowledges the contribution of individuals in both original resources.





## Why is Food Important in Early Childhood Education and Care Services?



Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations (76000) if a service provides food and drinks, the food and drinks must be nutritious and adequate in quantity, and take into account dietary requirements appropriate to each child's growth and development needs, and any specific cultural, religious or health requirements.

An accurate weekly menu must be displayed at the service. Policies and procedures about nutrition, food and beverages, and dietary requirements must also be in place.

Many young children are being cared for in early childhood education and care services (referred to hereafter as services).

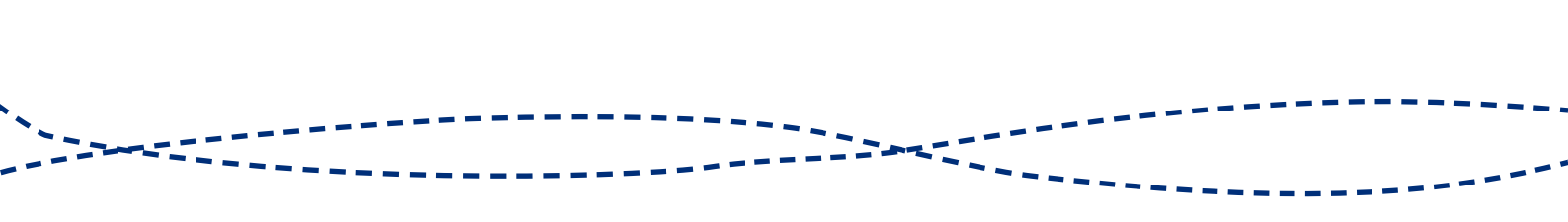
Whether food is brought from home or prepared on the premises, your service has a responsibility in regards to the food intake and nutrition of the children while they are in your care.

The early years are a time when food habits are being developed, many of which will be retained throughout life. Food should not only be nutritious, it should also help to meet the social, cultural and educational needs of the children. This learning environment can be enhanced by the inclusion of carefully chosen food awareness learning experiences.

This resource provides practical information and best practice guidelines on healthy eating and nutrition for the early childhood education and care setting (from birth to 5 years of age). It is based on three key national health documents that focus on children, namely:

- The *Australian Dietary Guidelines* (2013) which provide up-to-date advice about the amounts and kinds of foods that we need to eat for health and wellbeing. They are based on scientific evidence and research.
- The *Infant Feeding Guidelines* (2012) which provide advice about breastfeeding and infant feeding.
- *Get Up & Grow: Healthy eating and physical activity for early childhood* (2009) which provides practical information and advice on early childhood healthy eating and physical activity, how to develop nutrition and physical activity policies and ways to support and encourage staff, educators and families.

This resource is designed to be used by anyone caring for children, the term early childhood education and care service includes long day care, family day care and preschool.



It is anticipated that service directors, cooks, educators, families and (especially) children will benefit from the contents of this resource.

The content of this resource is based on experience in the field and consultation with representatives from the early childhood sector. This resource covers many aspects of food and nutrition. It is organised into five sections.

### Section 1: Nutrition for Babies and Toddlers (Birth to 24 months)

This section outlines the nutrient needs of babies and toddlers from birth to 24 months. It provides practical assistance in applying the *Infant Feeding Guidelines* including issues around breastfeeding, preparing infant formula, introducing solid foods and choking precautions. Finally, this section covers planning menus for babies and toddlers providing sample menus for 6 to 12 month olds and 12 to 24 month olds.

### Section 2: Children's Nutrition (2 to 5 year olds)

This section outlines the nutrient needs of children 2 to 5 years, to provide for their growth and activity requirements. Nutrient needs are translated into food types and amounts according to the 'food groups' and the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*. This section covers ideas for healthy morning and afternoon tea, drinks and desserts. Checklists are provided to assist services to develop or review policies related to food and beverage provision, the eating environment and nutrition education. This section also includes healthy lunchbox guidelines and ideas for families where food is brought from home. This section briefly covers food allergies, intolerances and how to deal with special diets. Finally, the important aspect of making mealtimes positive is discussed to help achieve a relaxed, happy, learning environment for all children.

### Section 3: Food Preparation and Menu Planning

This section covers issues such as safe food handling and hygiene, menu planning, food purchasing, storage and cooking hints. It also includes sample menus and a broad selection of recipes.

### Section 4: Making it Happen

This section describes each step of a continuous quality improvement process and how it can be used to improve your nutrition practices, consistent with *Caring for Children* recommendations.

### Section 5: Healthy Eating Learning Experiences

The need for children to be stimulated through learning experiences is addressed in this section. Awareness of the environment has been considered in the selection of learning experiences.



## Resources and Reference Sections and Appendix

These sections contain a list of materials that were used in the preparation of this resource as well as other useful resources.

## Alignment with the National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework (NQF) is the result of an agreement between all Australian governments to work together to provide better educational and developmental outcomes for children using education and care services.

The NQF took effect on 1 January 2012 and introduces:

- National Law and Regulations
- National Quality Standard
- National quality assessment and rating process

*Caring for Children – Birth to 5 years (Food, Nutrition and Learning Experiences)* is a best-practice resource for services that provides guidance and support for services to meet these new requirements.

## The *Munch & Move* Program

The *Munch & Move* program is a NSW Ministry of Health initiative which aims to promote and encourage healthy eating and physical activity habits in young children aged birth to 5 years.

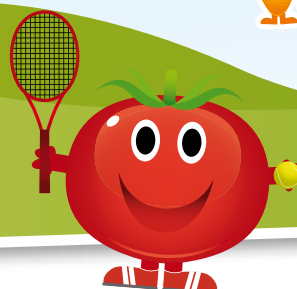
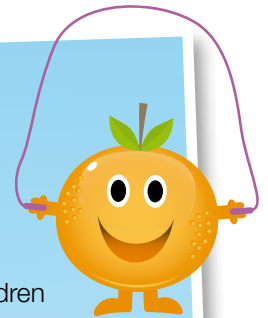
The *Munch & Move* program offers free professional development training, resources and support to early childhood educators working in NSW early childhood education and care services.

*Munch & Move* is based on six key messages:

- Encourage and support breastfeeding
- Choose water as a drink
- Choose healthier snacks
- Eat more fruit and vegetables
- Get active each day
- Turn off the TV or computer and get active.

This resource supports services, in particular cooks, to implement the four *Munch* key messages.

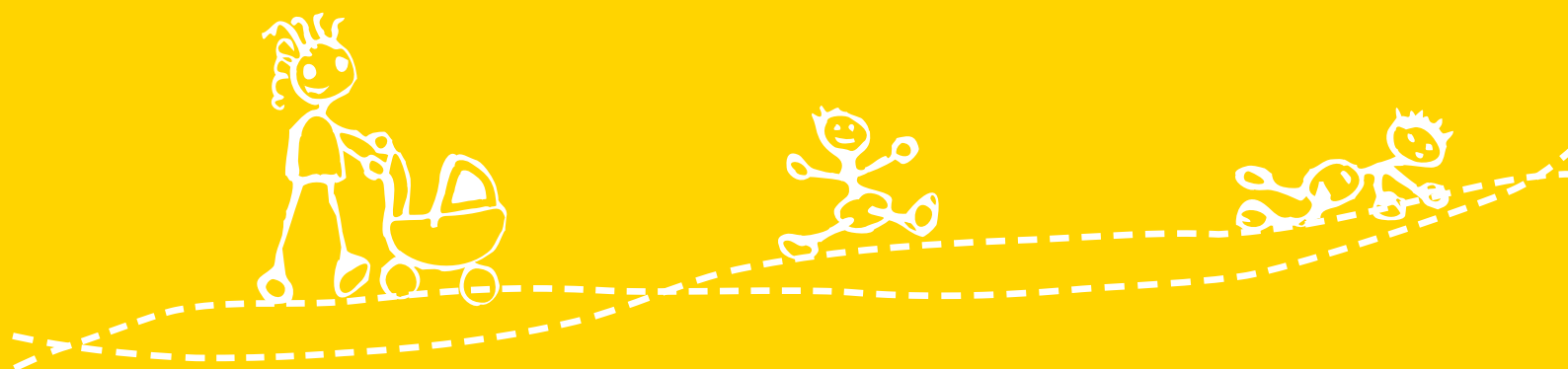
For further information, please visit the *Munch & Move* pages on the Healthy Kids website [www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au)





## Section 2

### Children's Nutrition (2 to 5 year olds)





## Forming Good Eating Habits

Good nutrition is the balanced eating of a variety of foods. The foods we eat should provide our bodies with the nutrients needed to stay healthy. Good nutrition is especially important for children because they need extra nutrients for growth and development.

Along with these high requirements, children have small stomachs and can't eat much food in one sitting. This means children need to be provided with healthy meals and nutritious morning and afternoon teas (midmeals).

Most children have well established eating habits by school age. This makes it important to support healthy eating habits as early as possible. The 2013 *Australian Dietary Guidelines* focus on developing healthy eating habits throughout life. A list of the guidelines relevant to children in your care is given over the page.

These guidelines provide up-to-date advice about the amount and kinds of foods that children need to eat for health and wellbeing. They are based on the latest scientific evidence and research.



**Guideline 1: To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, be physically active and choose amounts of nutritious foods and drinks to meet your energy needs.**

- Children and adolescents should eat sufficient nutritious foods and drinks 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 food 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 2 years)

And drink plenty of water.

**Guideline 3: Limit intake of foods containing saturated fat, added salt and added sugars.**

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 predominately saturated fats such as butter, cream, cooking margarine, coconut and palm oil with foods which contain predominately polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats such as oils, spreads and avocado.
- Low fat diets are not suitable for children under the age of 2 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.

**Guideline 4: Encourage, support and promote breastfeeding.**

**Guideline 5: Care for your food; prepare and store it safely.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> NHMRC, 2013

## Food in Care – types and quantities

The amount of food needed each day varies with the age, size and activity level of the child. Recommended Dietary Intakes (RDIs) are the amounts of nutrients which will meet the daily nutritional needs of most children.

Children in care should be provided with nutritious meals based on the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*.



**If a child is in care for eight hours or more they should receive at least one main meal and two midmeals that should provide at least 50% of the RDIs for all nutrients<sup>1</sup>.**

If a child is in care for more than eight hours, extra meals and/or midmeals (i.e. breakfast or late afternoon tea) should be provided.

### What does this mean in terms of food?

The minimum number of serves which will meet at least 50% of the RDIs for children up to six years of age can be clearly described in terms of food groups. Food can be divided into groups according to the major nutrients they provide.

- The wholegrain cereal foods and breads group provides energy, carbohydrate, protein, B group vitamins and dietary fibre.
- The milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives group provides energy, protein, calcium and the fat soluble vitamins.
- The lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, seeds and legumes/beans group provides energy, protein, iron and zinc.
- The fruit group provides carbohydrate, dietary fibre, vitamins and minerals.
- The vegetables and legumes/beans group provides dietary fibre, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and phytochemicals.

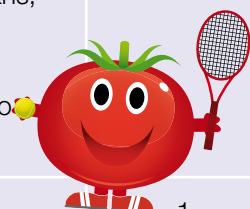
The minimum number of serves from each food group to provide a child with 50% of the RDIs have been calculated and are listed in Table 3.

<sup>1</sup> Department of Health, NSW, 1984.

<sup>2</sup> The calculations were made using the FoodWorks 2007 (version 5) software package based on Australian Food Composition Tables.

**Table 3 – Daily food amounts for children (2 to 5 years)<sup>1</sup>.**

Food Group and Serve Sizes	Minimum number of serves while in care for 8 hours	Comments
<p><b>Vegetables and legumes/beans</b></p> <p><b>Each of the following foods is <u>one</u> serve:</b></p> <p>½ cup cooked vegetables            ½ cup cooked dried, canned beans, peas or lentils            1 cup salad vegetables            ½ medium potato or sweet potato            1 medium tomato</p>	<p>2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include different types and colours.</li> <li>• Fresh, frozen and canned varieties can be used.</li> <li>• Choose canned varieties with no added salt.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fruit</b></p> <p><b>Each of the following foods is <u>one</u> serve:</b></p> <p>1 medium (150g) piece of fruit e.g. apple, banana, orange or pear            2 small apricots, kiwi fruits or plums            1 cup diced or canned fruit (no added sugar)            30g dried fruit e.g. 4 dried apricot halves</p>	<p>1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serve fresh fruit rather than juice.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Wholegrain cereal foods and breads</b></p> <p><b>Each of the following foods is <u>one</u> serve:</b></p> <p>1 slice of bread            ½ a bread roll            ⅔ cup wheat cereal flakes            ½ cup cooked rice            ½ cup cooked pasta            3 crispbread biscuits            1 crumpet            1 English muffin            1 scone</p>	<p>2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include a variety – breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa and barley.</li> <li>• Choose wholegrain or wholemeal varieties and when available varieties with added iron.</li> </ul>





<p><b>Lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, seeds and legumes</b></p> <p><b>Each of the following foods is one serve:</b></p> <p>65g cooked lean meats - beef, lamb, veal, pork, goat, kangaroo (90-100g raw)</p> <p>80g cooked lean poultry or turkey (100g raw)</p> <p>100g cooked fish (115g raw)</p> <p>1 small can fish</p> <p>2 large eggs</p> <p>1 cup cooked or canned legumes/beans</p> <p>170g tofu</p>	<p><math>\frac{3}{4}</math></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trim fat from meat where possible.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Milk, yoghurt, cheese and alternatives</b></p> <p><b>Each of the following foods is one serve:</b></p> <p>1 cup milk</p> <p>2 slices of cheese (40g)</p> <p>200g yoghurt</p> <p>120g ricotta cheese</p> <p>1 cup soy milk with at least 100mg of added calcium per 100ml</p>	<p>1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serving milk at morning and afternoon tea may be an easy and reliable way to meet this requirement.</li> <li>• Choose mostly reduced fat varieties.</li> </ul>

**Note:** If a child is in care for more than eight hours extra meals and/or midmeals (i.e. breakfast or late afternoon tea) should be provided.

<sup>1</sup> NHMRC, 2013



## The Importance of Iron

The mineral iron is important in the diet of children because:

- iron is required to make red blood cells that carry oxygen around the body. This oxygen is necessary for the body to produce energy
- iron deficiency can affect a child's cognitive development, i.e. it is needed for brain development and normal brain function
- deficiency can lead to tiredness, poor sleep and headaches
- iron can strengthen resistance to infection.

Children who are iron deficient may lack energy, be pale, tired and not interested in playing.

There are two types of iron in food:

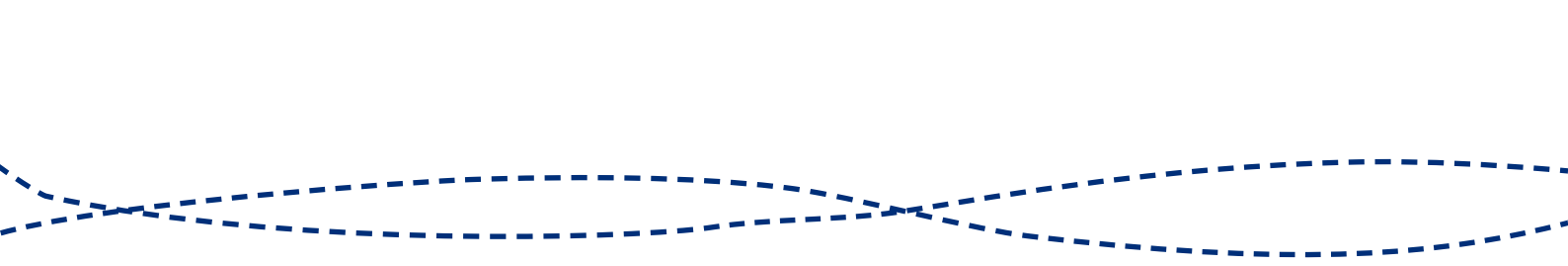
1. Haem-iron is found in animal foods such as red meat (beef, lamb, kangaroo) pork, veal, poultry, fish and shell fish. Haem-iron is well absorbed by the body. Red meat is a far better source of iron than light coloured meats.
2. Non haem-iron is found in plant foods such as wholemeal and wholegrain bread, wholemeal pasta, legumes (especially chick peas and soy beans) and breakfast cereal with added iron. Non haem-iron is not absorbed as well as haem-iron.

Vitamin C improves the absorption of non haem-iron. With non-meat meals serve foods which contain significant amounts of vitamin C. These include citrus fruits, strawberries, rockmelon, tomatoes, capsicum, kiwi fruit, raw broccoli and raw cauliflower.

Note that eggs are a nourishing food but very little of the iron they contain is absorbed.

As children have high iron requirements, both main meals and morning and afternoon tea will need to include iron rich foods. This can be challenging. The following information will help:

- Serve red meat at least six times a fortnight.
- Provide high fibre wholemeal or wholegrain bread or bread with added iron.
- Use wholemeal pasta especially with white meat or non-meat meals.
- Use at least half wholemeal flour in baked products.
- Provide breakfast cereals with added iron. Iron fortified baby cereal can be added to some baked products (see Iron Rich Muffin recipe, page 158).
- Include legumes to provide iron (e.g. chick peas, baked beans, soy beans, butter bean, brown and red lentils).
- Provide vitamin C rich raw vegetables or fruit with non-meat meals (heat destroys vitamin C).
- Some dried fruits provide iron (e.g. apricots, dates, sultanas and currants).

- 
- Milo™ is a good source of iron however, it should not be served every day. Milo™ could be provided on some days when a white meat or a non-meat dish is served. Other flavourings or powders do not contain sufficient iron and should not be used instead of Milo™.

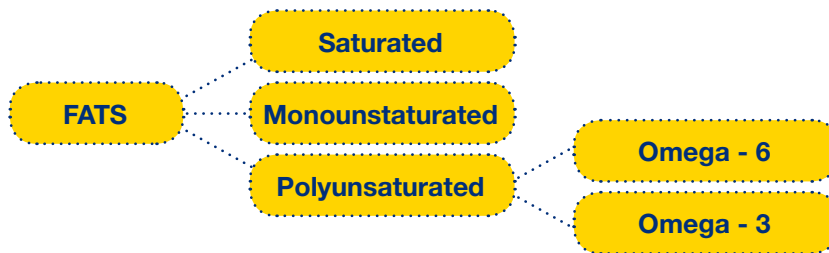
Plan menus that provide iron containing foods at both main meals and morning and afternoon tea. Providing iron containing food at morning and afternoon tea is particularly important when the main meal is a non-meat dish, light or white meat, or sandwich meal.

## Healthy Fats

Fats are an essential part of our diet. They provide energy and have many important functions in our body. They:

- Form cell membranes in our bodies.
- Help to absorb and transport fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E and K).
- Form hormones and hormone-like compounds in our bodies.
- Provide kilojoules for growth. Especially important in under two year olds when growth is the fastest.

There are three main groups of fats; saturated fats, monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats. Polyunsaturated fats can be further divided into omega-6 and omega-3 polyunsaturated fats.



It is recommended that we cut down on saturated fats found in foods because they are harmful to our health. Foods that are high in saturated fat include fatty meats, full fat cheese, cream, and processed foods including meat pies, sausage rolls, cakes and pastries. However, it is essential that we replace saturated fats with polyunsaturated fats and monounsaturated fats. Polyunsaturated fats are found in plant foods such as sunflower oil, safflower oil and some nuts as well as lean meat and seafood. Monounsaturated fats are found in olive and canola oil, avocado and some nuts.

Ensure the margarines and oils used for cooking at your service are rich in polyunsaturated or monounsaturated fats. Use the table below to help you choose a better margarine or oil. Avoid using the fats and oils listed under saturated fat.

Saturated Fat	Monounsaturated Fat	Polyunsaturated Fat
butter cream lard dripping beef fat/tallow vegetable oil (unspecified) copha/ coconut oil palm oil	canola oil olive oil canola margarine and spreads olive oil based margarines and spreads	sunflower oil safflower oil soy bean oil sunflower based margarines corn oil cottonseed oil margarines based on these oils

**Note:** Consider trans fats to be similar to saturated fats and should be avoided.

## Choking Precautions

Babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers differ in their ability to safely chew and swallow various food textures, shapes and sizes. No matter what their age, there is always the potential for children to choke on food or drink. Staff will need to be mindful of this when providing food for children in their care. Asking families for guidance regarding the chewing and swallowing ability of their child is a good starting point.

It is impossible to completely remove the danger of choking simply by removing certain foods however, there are foods that carry a high choking risk and these should be avoided. These high choking risk foods include round, hard, small and slippery foods as well as thick sticky food that is hard to swallow.

### For all children in care, especially those under four years:

- Avoid small hard foods like nuts, seeds and raw peas.
- Avoid food that can break up into small hard or sharp pieces e.g. hard pretzels.
- Popcorn may be a choking problem because of its dry, hard nature and because some of the corn may not have 'popped'.
- Slippery round foods such as grapes, cooked peas and small cherry tomatoes may need to be squashed or cut to make them safer.
- Seeds and tough skin may need to be removed from fruit.
- Skin, gristle and bone should be removed from meat and fish. Chicken skin can pose a choking problem especially if cooked by moist heat.
- Although not recommended to be served in services, if sausages or frankfurts are ever served, the skin may need to be removed if tough and chewy. Cocktail frankfurts carry a high choking risk and should never be served whole.
- Meat should be served in piece sizes that are small enough to swallow whole (just in case it slips down before it has been chewed).

### To help prevent choking follow safe eating practices

- All children should be seated when eating.
- Children should be calm when eating. Children should be encouraged to chew food well and not over fill their mouth.
- Children should understand that there is no need to hurry; there is plenty of eating time.
- Menus should be planned taking into account the age and chewing ability of the children.

## Remember

1. No food is guaranteed not to choke.
2. Children should be actively supervised when eating or drinking.
3. At least one educator who has a current first aid certificate should always be present<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> ACECQA, 2013.





## Morning and Afternoon Tea

Children have small stomachs, which limits the amount of food they can eat at one time. Well planned morning and afternoon tea is essential for children to meet their nutritional requirements.

The *Nutrition Checklist for Menu Planning* (page 92) provides guidelines for planning food at morning and afternoon tea that will complement the main meal and ensure adequate nutrition is provided.

The best foods to include at morning and afternoon tea are those consistent with the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*. Examples include plain milk, yoghurt and cheese, fresh fruit, vegetable sticks with healthy dips, vegetable pikelets, vegetable and fruit based muffins and slices, iron enriched breakfast cereals, different types of bread including fruit bread, fruit buns, bagels, sandwiches, wraps and crispbreads (include wholegrain varieties). These are foods without a lot of added saturated fat, sugar or salt.

Dried fruit is nutritious but may also add to the risk of tooth decay because of its sticky nature. Ideally teeth should be cleaned after eating dried fruit. If this is not possible provide children with water to rinse out their mouth.

Plain milk and water are the best drinks to offer at morning and afternoon tea. Providing  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125ml) of milk at both morning and afternoon tea can be an easy and reliable way to meet the one serve of dairy foods required during eight hours of care. However, if enough milk, yoghurt or cheese is included somewhere else on the daily menu (e.g. main meal or dessert), then providing milk at morning and afternoon tea is not essential.

## Ideas for Morning and Afternoon Tea

Choose foods from the following groups to plan morning and afternoon tea. Choices should nutritionally complement the main meal of the day.

*Dairy foods: Choose mostly reduced fat products for children over 2 years old.*

- milk
- yoghurt
- frozen yoghurt
- cheese
- custard
- rice pudding
- smoothies

*Wholegrain cereal foods and bread: Choose high fibre varieties or varieties with added iron where possible.*

- toast
- sandwiches
- bread sticks
- crumpets
- English muffins
- scones
- pikelets
- fruit buns
- breakfast cereals
- rice crackers/cake
- wholegrain crispbreads

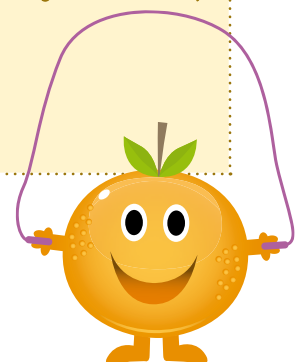
*Fruit and vegetables: Choose different colours and varieties in season.*

- cut up fresh fruit, e.g. apple, banana, mandarin, pear, watermelon, strawberries, grapes, kiwi fruit, oranges, pineapple, mango
- canned or stewed fruit in natural juice
- frozen fruit
- vegetable sticks e.g. carrots, celery, cucumber, snow peas, capsicum, served with healthy dips
- salad vegetables and vegetable pieces e.g. halved cherry tomatoes, cauliflower and broccoli florets, mushrooms
- baked beans
- corn on the cob



### Ideas for healthy dips

- > hommus (blend chick pea, tahini, lemon juice, garlic, paprika)
- > corn relish dip (mix cottage cheese or ricotta with corn relish)
- > avocado salsa (mix mashed avocado, lemon juice, refined beans and mild salsa)
- > pineapple and ricotta (mix drained, crushed pineapple and ricotta cheese)
- > creamy avocado yoghurt (mix Greek yoghurt, avocado, garlic and ground cumin)
- > tuna and ricotta with lemon juice and parsley
- > carrot dip (cook carrot until soft and mash with ricotta or creamed cheese. Add cumin for flavour)



## What to Drink

### Water

- Water is the best drink to quench thirst. Tap water is recommended.
- Children need to be well hydrated. Remind and encourage children to drink water regularly throughout the day. Children don't always feel thirsty even though they need to drink.
- Make sure that water is always available in both summer and winter, inside and outside.
- Most children will enjoy water if they get into the habit of drinking it at an early age.



### Milk

- Encourage children to drink plain milk.
- Milk provides calcium, protein and energy. Cow's milk is a good source of vitamins and minerals including vitamin A, zinc and riboflavin and may be fortified with vitamin D.
- **Children aged two years and under should have full cream milk (around 4g fat per 100ml) to help meet their energy needs. Reduced fat milk (not skim) contains 1-2 g fat per 100ml, and can be given to children over two years as long as their appetite is good and they are growing normally.**
- Powdered milk, evaporated milk and U.H.T. (long life) milks are all suitable. Follow directions when making up powdered or evaporated milk.
- Milk contains a protein called casein. Casein helps prevent tooth decay by forming a protective coating on tooth crowns. Serving milk (or other dairy food) with meals will help promote good dental hygiene.

### Soy Milk

- Children with lactose intolerance may drink soy milk instead of cow's milk. Soy milk needs to be fortified with calcium. Check the nutrition information panel to make sure that there is at least 100mg calcium per 100ml.
- Calcium fortified soy milk can be used to make custards and other milk-based desserts. Reduced fat soy milk is available.



## Non-dairy Drinks

- These include oat, rice, almond, coconut and quinoa. They are drinks, not milks and are not nutritionally equal to cow's milk. The foods these drinks are made from do not contain calcium. If these drinks are to be a source of calcium, they must be fortified with at least 100mg calcium per 100ml. If the calcium level is not indicated on the nutrition information panel, assume there is very little or no calcium.
- Growing children require protein. Cow's milk is a good source of protein, non-dairy drinks are not. Children who are having these drinks instead of cow's milk would need to have extra protein rich foods in their diet to meet their protein requirements.
- Non-dairy drinks do not provide the vitamins and minerals found in cow's milk and therefore, are not suitable alternatives to cow's milk unless medically advised.

## Juice

- Fruit juice is not recommended.
- Fruit juice lacks the fibre that is found in whole fruit. A piece of fruit is better value than a serve of juice. Drinking juice regularly, even 100% juice, can reduce appetite, encourage tooth decay and contribute to excess kilojoule intake.
- Juice should not replace water to quench thirst.
- Fruit juice should not be served instead of milk. Fruit juices with added calcium do not provide the range of nutrients obtained from cow's milk.

## Dessert

Although desserts have traditionally been part of a main meal menu, they are not essential. Dessert is however a pleasant way of completing a meal. Desserts should not be seen as a sweet treat. If served, they should make a positive contribution to a child's daily nutrition. Desserts do provide an opportunity to provide dairy foods or fruit. If a milk drink is not given at morning or afternoon tea, a milk-based dessert will help ensure children are offered the recommended amount of dairy food while they are in care. Desserts such as creamed rice or fruit crumble can contribute to the recommended number of cereal, fruit and dairy serves.

### Milk-based dessert ideas include:

- Yoghurt - fruit yoghurt or plain yoghurt with fruit added are both suitable. Yoghurt may be reduced fat for children two years and older.
- Custard - both home-made and commercial (fresh and long-life). Egg or custard powder custards are both excellent ways of including milk on the menu. Custard ideas include bread and butter custard, baked rice custard and creamed rice, tapioca, sago and couscous. Banana custard is easy to prepare. For those children who are having lactose free milk, calcium enriched soy milk can be used to make milk-based desserts.

### Fruit based dessert ideas include:

- Fruit salad – fresh or canned (in natural juice)
- Fruit kebabs – paddle pop sticks can be used instead of skewers
- Fruit platter
- Fruity couscous



Desserts that require a lot of time and effort are not necessary. Simple desserts that are easy to eat and nutritious, are good options. Light desserts are suitable for both summer and winter menus. Light desserts that are based on fruit and yoghurt or custard are often easily adapted for younger children.

Some cooks may like to prepare a 'special' dessert from time to time. Nutritious desserts can be 'special'. Examples include fruit pies or parcels made using filo pastry (no need to oil or 'butter' the pastry sheets), fruit crumble with plenty of fruit, fruit upside down cake with lots of fruit and not too much cake, and trifle with lots of fruit and custard.

It is acceptable to provide second helpings of nutritious desserts based on fruit and/or milk. It may be appropriate to allow a child to have a nutritious dessert even if they have refused to eat the main meal. This can depend on the circumstances and policy of the service.

## Food Allergies and Intolerances

Food allergies are **immune** reactions to the protein components of individual foods. The most common foods capable of causing allergies are peanut and tree nuts, egg, milk, fish, shellfish, sesame, wheat and soy.

Symptoms range from mild to potentially life threatening. Some children can develop acute, severe reactions unexpectedly, sometimes on the very first time they eat the food.

Food allergies must always be taken seriously, even in children who have only experienced mild reactions in the past. Eating the offending food can lead to anaphylaxis, which can quickly become life-threatening, requiring emergency first aid treatment.

Because food allergies are more common in small children, all educators need to know how to recognise and treat an acute allergic reaction. Typical symptoms include rapidly spreading welts, swelling, breathing difficulties and in extreme cases, allergic shock and collapse.



Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations: *'At all times and at any place that an approved service is operating, the following person/s must be in attendance and available in case of emergency – At least one educator who has undertaken anaphylaxis management training<sup>1</sup>.*

### Caring for a child with food allergies


Management involves **complete avoidance** of the offending food(s). Listen carefully to the family concerns, and make sure they bring a doctor's letter or certificate documenting which food(s) the child is allergic to. Educators should meet with the family of each child at risk of anaphylaxis to discuss the action plan and risk minimisation strategies.

Download the ASCIA Action Plans for Anaphylaxis: [www.allergy.org.au/health-professionals/anaphylaxis-resources/ascia-action-plan-for-anaphylaxis](http://www.allergy.org.au/health-professionals/anaphylaxis-resources/ascia-action-plan-for-anaphylaxis)

The Action Plan should include the child's photograph, documented confirmed allergens, family and medical practitioner contact details as well as first aid response including any prescribed medications. These need to be kept updated and should be displayed appropriately for staff as well as the families of other children. Where appropriate other children at the service, should be made aware of the serious consequences of accidental exposure.

Educators should be trained on how to recognise and respond to mild, moderate or severe allergic reactions, including training in the use of adrenaline auto injector devices (EpiPen/Anapen). Where access to face-to-face anaphylaxis training is unavailable or if educators require interim or refresher training, ASCIA anaphylaxis e-training for schools and childcare services is available from the ASCIA website [www.allergy.org.au](http://www.allergy.org.au)





Art and craft materials should be carefully checked to make sure they do not include milk cartons, egg crates or nut shells. No peanut butter or other food allergens (i.e., other nuts, egg, milk, and sesame) should be used in cooking activities, food learning experiences or games. Note however anaphylaxis is very unlikely to occur from skin contact to foods or exposure to food odours<sup>2</sup>.

### For services that prepare food

When meals are provided, the meal prepared for that child should not contain the offending ingredients (allergens).

Policies should be put in place to ensure that the care environment is safe for the child. Educators and cooks should know how to read food labels, how to provide substitutes to maintain good nutrition, and should be aware of the possibility of cross-contamination in the kitchen and eating areas.

Cooks and educators need to be aware that if a child has a food allergy all ingredients used in recipes need to be checked to ensure they do not contain traces of the relevant food allergen. For severely allergic children families may want to provide meals prepared from home.

Meals prepared at the service which contain ingredients with 'May contain traces of nuts' on a label should not be given to nut allergic children but can be served to other children.<sup>1</sup>

Cooks should discuss appropriate recipes and menus with the family. The child should be supervised during meal times and should only be given food that has been checked and does not contain the offending allergen(s). Special treats for birthdays and other celebrations should be supplied by the family.

### For services where food is brought from home

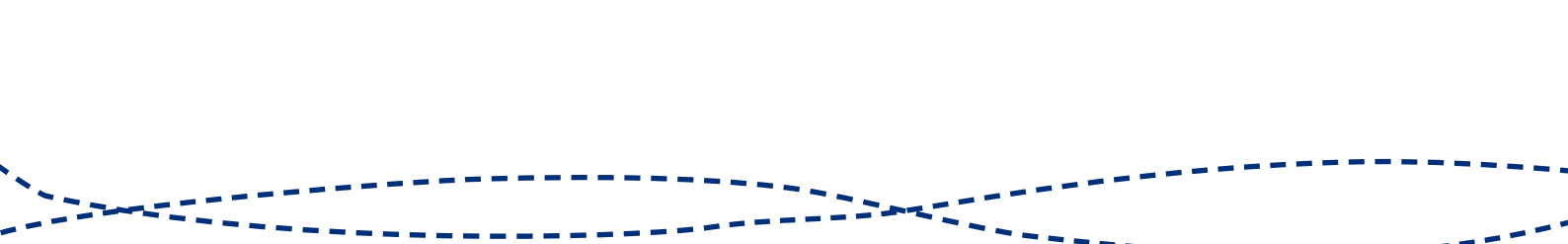
While egg, peanut and milk are the most common food allergies, peanuts and tree nuts are the most likely foods to cause fatal anaphylaxis. As a result, services may implement specific risk-minimisation strategies for nut products, but not other allergens (e.g. removal of nut products)<sup>2</sup>.

At a service's discretion, families may be asked not to send foods containing highly allergenic foods such as egg and nut products to services if there is a child at risk of anaphylaxis to these foods. Cow's milk and other dairy products are important foods in helping children to meet their dietary requirements and should not be removed from the food service; however, careful supervision is required for milk allergic children at times when other children are consuming cow's milk and other dairy products.

In some circumstances it may be appropriate that a child with a severe allergy does not sit at tables where the food to which they are allergic is being served, preferably without isolating the child.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ACECQA, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Vale S, Smith J, Said M, Dunne G, Mullins R, Loh R, et al., 2013.



If old enough, children should be educated about allergies and anaphylaxis and strategies to minimise accidental exposure. This includes hand washing before and after meals, and not sharing or swapping foods.

A number of classroom resources on anaphylaxis and food allergy are available from *Anaphylaxis Australia*. Anaphylaxis awareness week is an ideal opportunity to provide children with related activities to make them more 'allergy aware'.

### Special diets for children with food intolerances

Food intolerances are caused by the **irritant** effects of certain food substances. These can be natural food chemicals such as salicylates, amines or glutamates (natural MSG), or they can be additives such as added MSG preservatives, colourings or flavourings. In sensitive children, reactions to these substances can develop over time from the cumulative effects of many foods in the child's daily diet.

Unlike allergies, food intolerances are rarely life-threatening, though they can be very distressing for the child as well as the family. In young children, common symptoms include irritable, hyperactive or erratic behaviour, sleep disturbance, upset stomach, loose motions, feeling sick, skin rashes and blocked nose.

Because food intolerances act by chemical irritation of nerve endings, rather than through the immune system, regular allergy tests are of no value in identifying them. In the most obvious cases, families usually know which foods make their child sick, and will be able to let educators know what the child should be fed. Often, however, systematic dietary testing under the supervision of a specialist and an experienced dietitian is required.

### Caring for a child with food intolerances

There is no single 'right' diet for children with food intolerances. Once a child's intolerances are correctly identified, management involves a reduction in daily intake of the offending chemicals from all relevant food sources. Unlike allergies, complete avoidance of specific foods is rarely necessary.

The specific dietary changes required may be simple. For example, cutting out fruit juices or processed foods. More extensive modification of the child's entire diet may be needed, depending on the degree of sensitivity. Educators should take note of the family's concerns and find out what kind of reaction might occur if the child consumes too much of the offending food substances.

Certain foods like milk (and other dairy products), soy or wheat can cause either allergies or intolerances in susceptible children. In these circumstances educators should ask families to provide a medical certificate specifying the exact nature of the problem and the degree of care that needs to be taken with the relevant foods.

If a child's diet is significantly restricted, or if there is a complex problem with food allergies as well as intolerances, the advice of a dietitian experienced in children's nutrition should be sought to make sure the child's nutritional needs are being met.



## Dealing with Special Diets

In addition to food allergies and intolerances, there are medical conditions where a special diet needs to be followed. These conditions include but are not limited to coeliac disease, cystic fibrosis, failure to thrive and diabetes.

In all cases the requirements for a special diet need to be supported and documented by a health professional such as a general practitioner or dietitian.

### Summary of what to do if a child in your care requires a special diet

- Ask about dietary needs at enrolment.
- Obtain detailed written information from the family on the diet to be followed while in care, and certification for the special diet from a health professional.
- Check how long the child will be on the special diet.
- Ensure written instructions on a child's special dietary needs are easily accessible to all staff.
- Every six to twelve months ask the family whether the diet has been reviewed and obtain details of any changes.
- For information on specific special diets refer to the 'Resource' section at the back of this book.



## Developing a Nutrition, Food and Beverage Policy

A good nutrition, food and beverage policy:

- ensures quality and consistency of staff practices around food and nutrition
- makes sure that all educators, cooks and families understand the service's philosophy and practices around food, nutrition and eating issues for children in care
- develops standards and procedures in food provision and nutrition practice
- provides guidelines for new educators, cooks and new families
- enables your service to assess its performance and identify areas which need improvement
- develops and sustains changes you may want to put in place at your service.

Involve educators, cooks and families in the development and review of a nutrition, food and beverage policy. Consultation in the development and review process will help to ensure educators, cooks and families understand and support the policy.

Social, cultural factors and the age of the children who attend your service will influence the content of your policy. This will be the case whether food is prepared on site or brought from home.

The nutrition, food and beverage policy should be accessible to all staff and families.

Families should be made aware of the nutrition, food and beverage policy at the time of enrolling their children. It may even be appropriate to have a family member sign that they have read the policy and are prepared to follow the guidelines.

To guide the development or review of a nutrition, food and beverage policy use one of the following checklists that is relevant to the type of food provision at your service.



*National Regulation 168(2) (a) states policies and procedures are required in relation to health and safety, including matters relating to: (i) nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> ACECQA, 2013.

## Food and beverages

### Services preparing food

- The menu will provide at least 50% of the RDI for all nutrients when children are in care for eight hours or more. Food and drink provided should be consistent with the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*.
- A minimum two week cyclic menu is planned (using the *Nutrition Checklist for Menu Planning* page 92). The menu should be on display for families and staff. Families will be informed of menu changes.
- Morning and afternoon tea (including healthy beverages) is part of the menu and planned to contribute to the daily food and nutrition requirements of children while in care.
- A variety of fruit and vegetables are offered in recommended amounts according to the *Nutrition Checklist for Menu Planning* (i.e. two serves of vegetables and one serve of fruit).
- Special dietary needs will be accommodated.
- Food is served in a form that older children can eat without assistance.

### Services where food is brought from home

- Families will be advised on the type and amount of food to pack in order to provide at least 50% of the RDI for all nutrients if their child is in care for eight hours or more. (Refer to the *Lunchbox Checklist for Food Brought from Home* page 78).
- Families will be given specific advice on suitable and unsuitable lunchtime, morning tea and afternoon tea foods to pack for their child (refer to *Ideas for Lunchbox Food Ideas for Food Brought from Home* page 79).
- Families will be advised to pack milk or water as suitable beverages. Juice, cordial, soft drinks or sports drinks are unsuitable.
- Families will be encouraged to pack both fruit and vegetables in their child's lunchbox.
- An appropriate process is in place to deal with situations where unsuitable food is provided by families.

### All services

- Tap water is provided to quench thirst and is always available.
- Families will be informed of the eating habits and food consumption, of their children.
- Nutritious extra and/or emergency food is always available at the service.

## The eating environment

- Mealtime will reflect a positive eating environment, be stress free, allow for adequate eating time, provide an opportunity for learning, encourage social and educator/child interaction and recognise, respect and accommodate multicultural mealtime values.
- Staff will talk positively about food and role model healthy eating habits to children.



## Nutrition education

- Cultural diversity will be recognised through recipes included on the menu and food learning experiences.
- Children will have the opportunity to participate in food preparation.
- All staff will have the opportunity to attend professional development related to the food and nutrition of children in care.
- Families will be given a copy of the nutrition, food and beverage policy when they enrol their child.
- All staff should be familiar with, and supportive of, the service nutrition, food and beverage policy.
- Families will receive regular and relevant nutrition information via newsletters and other forms of communication used by the service (Refer to *Lunchbox Checklist for Food Brought from Home* and *Lunchbox Food Ideas for Food Brought from Home* page 78-79).
- The service will have a safe food handling and hygiene policy that deals with the safe storage and reheating of food brought from home.
- The service will have a breastfeeding policy that both encourages and supports breastfeeding. This could be incorporated into the nutrition, food and beverage policy or, could be a policy in its own right.

A policy template can be found on the NSW Health, Healthy Kids website  
[www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/munch-move-resources.aspx](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/munch-move-resources.aspx)

## Reading Food Labels

Unsuitable foods that are brought to, or served at services generally fall into three categories:

- foods high in fat that contain few other nutrients
- foods that are high in sugar or those that are likely to contribute to tooth decay
- foods high in salt.

New pre-packaged food items for children seem to appear every day. It is often difficult to decide whether a food should be recommended or not. Some foods will fall into a grey area. You may find the following guidelines useful for deciding if a food falls into the above categories.

### Reading ingredient lists

Most packaged food must have an ingredient list. The ingredients are listed in order of weight, from most to least.

Looking at the ingredient list can be helpful. If a type of fat, sugar or salt appears as one or more of the first three ingredients, it's probably high in those ingredients. You need to know the other names fat, sugar and salt can be listed as.

#### Other names for fat

Examples of high fat ingredients include:

Saturated Fat		Monounsaturated/Polyunsaturated Fats	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• beef fat/tallow</li><li>• butter</li><li>• dripping/lard</li><li>• ghee</li><li>• milk solids</li><li>• palm oil</li><li>• sour cream</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• cream</li><li>• vegetable oil</li><li>• coconut oil</li><li>• shortening</li><li>• chocolate</li><li>• carob</li><li>• copha</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sunflower oil</li><li>• safflower oil</li><li>• polyunsaturated vegetable oil</li><li>• soybean oil</li><li>• canola oil</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• olive oil</li><li>• peanut oil</li><li>• mustard oil</li><li>• sesame oil</li><li>• rice bran oil</li></ul>
These fats should be avoided.		These fats are a healthier choice and can be used in small amounts.	



### Other names for sugar

Examples of high sugar ingredients include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• molasses</li><li>• castor, brown, raw or cane sugar</li><li>• honey</li><li>• sucrose</li><li>• maltos</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• caramel</li><li>• syrup</li><li>• glucose</li><li>• lactose</li><li>• treacle</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sweetened condensed milk</li><li>• mannitol and sorbitol</li><li>• fructose</li><li>• malt extract</li></ul>
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### Other names for salt

Examples of high salt ingredients include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sodium</li><li>• Na</li><li>• monosodium glutamate</li><li>• sodium bicarbonate</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• baking powder</li><li>• garlic salt</li><li>• MSG</li><li>• sea salt</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• baking soda</li><li>• vegetable salt</li><li>• celery salt</li><li>• sodium ascorbate</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sodium nitrate</li><li>• sodium lactate</li><li>• Celtic' salt</li><li>• rock salt</li></ul>
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*An ingredient list for an apricot fruit bar might look like this:*

**INGREDIENTS:** *Apricots (26% minimum), glucose syrup, cane sugar, coconut, wheat starch, vegetable oil.*

Apricots are the ingredient which is present in the largest quantity, followed by glucose syrup and cane sugar.

Under the labelling laws, the percentage of apricots must be included in the list of ingredients also. This allows you to compare similar products. While the added sugar is actually the main ingredient in the product, it does not appear first on the list because it has been divided into two separate ingredients i.e. glucose syrup and cane sugar. This can occur with high fat ingredients as well.

Take care when interpreting ingredient lists, especially if there is more than one high fat or high sugar ingredient listed.



*An ingredient list for oven baked savoury snacks might look like this:*

INGREDIENTS: *wheat flour, vegetable oil, tomato powder, cheese milk solids, salt, herbs and spices, sugar, yeast, vegetable extract (corn, soy), raising extract (E341), flavouring, food acid (E30), natural colour (E100, E160c), may contain traces of nut, egg or seeds.*

Labelling laws allow people who may be sensitive to food additives or allergic to common allergens to avoid them. The main foods or ingredients in food that can cause some individuals severe adverse reactions – such as peanuts and other nuts, seafood, fish, milk, gluten, eggs and soy beans, must be declared on the label however small the amount. There must also be an advisory statement on the label where people may be unaware of a possible health risk posed by some foods – such as pasteurised milk, unpasteurised egg, aspartame, quinine, caffeine and guarana contained in foods.

Food additives must be identified, usually by a number e.g. food acid (E30) and included in the ingredient list.

A full list of numbers and additives is available on the Food Standards Australia New Zealand website ([www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)).

### Reading nutrition information panels

Most packaged foods are required to have a nutrition information panel so you can compare different products. These panels allow you to work out the fat, sugar, salt or fibre content of foods and make comparisons between different foods. All nutrition information panels have a 'per serve' column and a 'per 100g' column. Use the 'per 100g' column to make comparisons between products.

Oven baked savoury snacks:

NUTRITION INFORMATION		
Serving size 35g		
	Quantity per serving	Quantity per 100g
Energy	700kJ	2000kJ
Protein	4.2g	11.8g
Fat – total – saturated	7.8g 3.6g	22.3g 10.3g
Carbohydrate – total – sugars	21.8g 0.9g	62.3g 2.5g
Dietary fibre	1.3g	3.6g
Sodium (salt)	228mg	650mg

Ingredients: wheat flour, vegetable oil, tomato powder, cheese, milk solids, salt, herbs and spices, sugar, yeast, vegetable extract (corn, soy), raising extract (E341), flavouring, food acid (E30), natural colour (E100, E160c), may contain traces of nut, egg or seeds.

To work out the **SUGAR CONTENT** in the above product:

- Look in the 'per 100g' column
- Go to the row labelled 'carbohydrate' and to the section labelled 'sugars'
- The sugar content is 2.5g per 100g or 2.5 percent sugar

To work out the **FAT CONTENT** in the above product:

- Look in the 'per 100g' column
- Go to the row labelled 'fat'
- The fat content is 22.3g per 100g or 22.3 percent fat
- The saturated fat content is 10.3g or 10.3 percent saturated fat

To work out the **FIBRE CONTENT** in the above product:

- Look in the 'per serve' column.
- Go to the row labelled 'fibre'
- The fibre content is 1.3g per serve.

To work out the **SALT CONTENT** in the above product:

- Look in the 'per 100g' column
- Go to the row labelled 'sodium'
- The salt (sodium) content is 650mg per 100g



## Making a healthy choice

Food labels contribute to the information used to decide if a packaged food item is a healthy choice. In addition to the fat, sugar and salt content of foods, it is important to consider whether the food contains other nutrients essential for growth. Snacks that are high in fat, sugar and/or salt and low in other nutrients tend to take away children's appetites for the more nutritious foods they need.

As a general rule, food that is greater than 10 percent fat is high in fat. In some cases however, a high fat food will contain other nutrients essential for growth. These foods should still be included in children's diets, e.g. cheese and avocados.

It is not only the amount of sugar in foods that should be looked at when considering children's teeth. Foods that are sticky or that will cling to children's teeth are likely to contribute to tooth decay. These foods should be served at meal times with other foods and drinks (e.g. water or milk) or just prior to brushing teeth so that food does not cling to teeth for long periods of time and contribute to tooth decay. These practices should be included in the service's food and nutrition or dental health policy.

'No added sugar' does not indicate that a food is low in sugar. It just means no extra sugar is added to the product. For example 100% fruit juice has no added sugar but has a naturally high sugar content.

Don't rely only on front-of-pack nutrition claims (e.g. lite, low fat) to make a healthy choice. Always refer to the nutrition information panel to make sure you know what is really in the product.

There are mobile phone applications that allow you to scan the barcodes of packaged food and provide a list of similar foods that are a healthier choice.

### Compare products and aim to choose:

- non-sticky foods
- products with the least amount of added sugar
- products that have less than 3g per 100g of saturated fat
- products labelled 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt'
- dairy products and dairy substitutes with at least 100mg of calcium per 100g
- products with the highest fibre content. Choose products that contain more than 4g of fibre per serve. *Note: fibre is not in every product and therefore may not be listed on the food label.*



Some of the healthiest foods are those which may be unlabelled like fresh fruit and vegetables. Encourage children to eat fruit and vegetables.



## Managing Fussy Eating - for toddlers and young children without developmental disabilities

Normally developing toddlers often have their eating behaviours labelled as ‘fussy’ or ‘picky’. However, this ‘fussiness’ around food is to be expected and is often the result of normal changes in growth, appetite, development and nutritional needs experienced in early childhood.

Between 1 to 3 years of age, most children will display some food refusal, and an unwillingness to try new or unfamiliar foods. They may also be less willing to drink from a cup or to drink water. Remember though, that children behaving this way around food are often otherwise well, growing as expected and still meeting their developmental milestones.

For toddlers, a reduced appetite and more variable food intake is normal. This is because they are now growing more slowly than they were in the first year of life. They require less energy intake (from food and drinks) for their body weight. Developmentally, they are also becoming more independent with food and can display a degree of food neophobia (fear of new food, which peaks at around 2 years of age).

Children aged 3 to 5 years may also express disgust over some foods, labelling them as ‘yucky’ or start to reject all food on a plate if it is served with a disliked food. Most families express concern over the amounts of food their child eats, thinking it is not enough. However, food needs vary with age, size and activity. Variations also occur between children, including siblings. All of these changes should be expected and when managed with a ‘no fuss approach’, they gradually resolve by school age.

Other factors contributing to food refusal may include physical factors (tiredness, lack of hunger, teething, illness), personal/behavioural factors (independence / control, attention seeking), the feeding environment (too many distractions, influence of role models) and experiential factors (opportunities to learn to eat new foods, learned response to previous experiences).

Repeated exposure to foods is an essential part of supporting children’s healthy eating behaviours. This involves serving, looking at, smelling, touching and tasting new foods. Studies report that up to 15 exposures may be needed to increase a child’s acceptance of a new food. In practice, this means that children require daily exposure to a new food over a period of 1-2 weeks before you can expect them to eat it for themselves. Repeated exposure provides the opportunity for children to learn about and become familiar with new foods.

Rigid control over food quantities (including force-feeding and bribing a child to eat) has been shown to be counter-productive. It may result in children losing their ability to regulate their own intake according to their appetite. This can set up for long-term problems, such as overeating and can affect their growth.

## Information for services

The service can help to manage fussy eating behaviours by:

- Establishing routines around when and where food is eaten.
- Offering realistic amounts of food.
- Limiting the length of mealtimes (about 30 minutes maximum).
- Establishing a positive eating environment by encouraging children to touch, smell and taste new foods and textures (without any expectation of them swallowing it).
- Giving children praise for tasting food.
- Acknowledging children's independence and recognising children have genuine likes and dislikes.
- Having a consistent approach amongst carers.
- Leading by example through carers eating the same food at the same time with children, being enthusiastic and initiating positive discussions around healthy food.

Children can be supported by giving them the opportunity to decide whether to eat at all, how much to eat, and what foods to eat from the selection made available to them. Seeing other children eating new or different foods may encourage 'fussy eaters' to try these foods. Including children in food preparation also provides opportunity for exposure to new foods.

## Role of cooks

Cooks can help to manage fussy eating behaviours by ensuring the menu provides a variety of nutritious foods and textures. Plan menus for children to have portions that are child sized and realistic. Through the menus, new food can be introduced regularly, by providing a small amount of a new food alongside a familiar food to increase children's exposure to unfamiliar foods.

A factsheet on fussy eating can be found on the NSW Health, Healthy Kids website [www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/munch-move-resources.aspx](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/munch-move-resources.aspx)

### Remember

- "Fussy eating" is not unusual..... "good eaters" are the exception rather than the rule!
- Children's appetites vary with growth, size and activity. Variation in food intake between children is normal. Variation in the amount eaten from meal to meal and day to day is normal.
- Force-feeding or bribing is considered counter-productive. These practices do nothing to help the child learn to enjoy and eat the food for themselves. Ultimately, the amount of food eaten is the child's decision.
- Persistence pays off ...multiple (repeated) exposures to food will increase the likelihood of acceptance over time.
- Children provided with appropriate food choices will naturally self-regulate (eat as much as they need right now) according to their needs.

# Ideas for Packing Healthy Lunchboxes

## A Guide for Families

Choosing a variety of foods is important and even if children have their favourites it is wise to encourage new and different food experiences.

Don't forget eye appeal. Food that looks attractive is more likely to be eaten. Choose food that will carry without spoiling. Pack foods in a form that your child can manage.

### Morning and afternoon tea

Children have small stomachs limiting the amount of food they can eat at any one time. Therefore foods packed for these mid-meals need to be nutritious and complement the value of the lunch foods so that adequate nutrition is provided for your child, while in care.

Good food choices for morning or afternoon tea include:

- **Vegetables** – such as celery and carrot sticks, cooked jacket potatoes. Vegetables can be incorporated in pikelets, pancakes, muffins and slices.
- **Fruit** – whole fresh fruit or pieces. Commercial snack pack fruit (in natural juice) is suitable. Dried fruit provides energy and nutrients however it is sticky and can promote tooth decay. It is best eaten with other foods or when teeth can be brushed. Sticky fruit strap type snacks are not suitable.
- **Grain (bread and cereal) foods** – fruit bread or buns, English muffins, bagels, wholemeal scones and pikelets, breakfast biscuits or other high fibre breakfast cereals, plain cracker biscuits, crispbreads, sandwiches and bread rolls. Breads include wraps, bagels, rice or corn cakes, grissini, lavash, naan, rye bread, Turkish pide, focaccia, matzo, chapattis, Lebanese bread, tortillas and sourdough. Purchase breads with added iron if available otherwise, use high fibre varieties.
- **Dairy foods** – cheese, yoghurt, custard, long life milk drinks and calcium fortified soy milk. Children over the age of 2 years can have reduced fat varieties.







## Lunchtime foods

- **Sandwiches or rolls** – there are many varieties of bread, all are suitable. Choose high fibre varieties and bread with added iron when available.

*Suitable fillings or spreads include:*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• baked beans</li><li>• avocado</li><li>• banana</li><li>• salad</li><li>• Vegemite™</li><li>• spaghetti</li><li>• pineapple</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• canned salmon, tuna or sardines</li><li>• cheese</li><li>• dates</li><li>• meat rissole</li><li>• roast chicken</li><li>• roast lamb</li><li>• roast pork</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• lean ham</li><li>• lean bacon</li><li>• corned beef or roast beef</li><li>• turkey</li><li>• lentil burger</li></ul>
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Filling combinations could include:

- shaved chicken and mashed avocado
- lean roast beef, lamb or pork with tomato and lettuce
- tuna or salmon with low fat mayonnaise
- homemade rissoles (made with lean mince) with tomato or tomato sauce
- chopped skinless chicken, low fat mayonnaise and lettuce
- pastrami with salad
- avocado, bean sprouts and tomato
- lean ham and fruit chutney
- mashed sardines and tomato sauce
- lean ham and tomato, or lean ham and pineapple.

- **Baked beans or spaghetti**

- **Salads** – cut into sizes that are easy and safe for your child to eat.

- **Vegetables** – e.g. baked vegetable slice (choose ones that pack well, for example zucchini slice), left over vegetables in pocket bread, vegetable pikelets, and vegetable quiche.

- **Yoghurt** – plain or fruit.

- **Custard, creamed rice.**

- **Other ideas** – soup, falafel, lentils, beans, rice and pasta dishes. Some of these foods will need to be kept cold. You will need to find out whether your service would warm any of these foods.



## Drinks

Tap water and plain milk are recommended.

Children should be encouraged to drink water when they are thirsty.

If the service your child is attending doesn't provide milk, it is a good idea to send milk for morning and afternoon tea. Plain milk is the best choice. Long life milk drinks are suitable and easy to pack. For children who won't drink milk include yoghurt, custard or cheese as an alternate calcium source.

Calcium fortified soy milk is a suitable alternative to cow's milk.

Rice, oat, quinoa and coconut drinks are not suitable alternatives to cow's milk or fortified soy milk. These drinks should be used under medical supervision.

Juice is not a suitable substitute for milk. It is important to realise that fresh fruit is preferable to fruit juice. Do not send juice, sports drinks, cordial, soft drinks or flavoured mineral waters.

## Foods for special occasions

Food is often used to celebrate. Festivals and religious occasions provide children with the opportunity to share food experiences from different cultures. Ask about your service's policy in relation to food for special occasions such as birthdays.

## Food safety and hygiene

Food and drink sent from home needs to be safe for children to consume. Foods that are normally stored in the refrigerator must be kept cold if they are packed in a lunchbox. So:

- Use good food safety practices when preparing food at home.
- Make sure food is cold before packing into lunchbox.
- Use insulated lunchboxes or bags.
- Place small freezer bricks or frozen bottles (plastic) of water.
- Freeze tetra (long life) milk drinks before placing into lunchbox.
- Find out if your service will refrigerate foods sent from home.

Each day wash lunchboxes thoroughly with warm, soapy water and then rinse in hot water. Turn insulated lunchboxes and bags inside out to clean in corners and seams. Some may even be suitable to put in the washing machine.

Drink bottles should be washed using a bottle brush, rinsed in hot water and allowed to air dry.

# Lunchbox Checklist for Food Brought from Home for 2 to 5 year olds

## A Guide for Families

Use this checklist to help provide nutritious food each day your child is in care for eight hours or more. This usually includes morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. The recommended number of serves from each food group, while in care, is provided below.

Wholegrain cereal foods and breads	Fruit	Salad vegetables or legumes	Dairy foods or high calcium alternatives	Lean meats, chicken, fish, eggs or alternatives
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 serves	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 serve	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 serves	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 serve	<input type="checkbox"/> ¾ serve
<p><b>Each of the following is 1 serve:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 slice of bread</li> <li>⅔ cup breakfast cereal</li> <li>½ cup cooked rice</li> <li>½ cup cooked pasta</li> </ul>	<p><b>Each of the following is 1 serve:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 cup of chopped fruit</li> <li>2 small pieces of fruit</li> <li>1 medium size piece of fruit</li> <li>30g dried fruit (occasionally)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Each of the following is 1 serve:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>½ cup cooked or raw vegetables</li> <li>1 cup salad</li> </ul>	<p><b>Each of the following is 1 serve:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>250ml milk</li> <li>40g cheese</li> <li>2 slices cheese</li> <li>¾ cup yoghurt</li> <li>250ml calcium fortified soy milk</li> </ul>	<p><b>Each of the following is ¾ of a serve:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50g cooked red meat</li> <li>60g cooked chicken</li> <li>75g fish</li> <li>1 cup cooked legumes</li> <li>2 medium eggs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 wholegrain crispbreads</li> <li>• ½ bread roll</li> <li>• ½ pita pocket bread</li> <li>• ½ fruit muffin</li> <li>• 2 thick rice cakes</li> <li>• 3 corn thins</li> <li>• 1 slice fruit loaf</li> <li>• 5 water crackers</li> <li>• 2 pikelets</li> <li>• 1 small fruit scone</li> <li>• 10 rice crackers</li> <li>• ½ cup cooked pasta spirals</li> </ul> <p><i>*Choose wholegrain or high cereal fibre varieties.</i></p>	<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 medium banana</li> <li>• 1 medium bunch of grapes</li> <li>• 2 mandarins</li> <li>• 2 kiwi fruit</li> <li>• 1 medium orange</li> <li>• 1½ tablespoons sultanas</li> <li>• 1 medium pear</li> <li>• 2 small apricots</li> <li>• 2 small plums</li> <li>• 4 dried apricot halves</li> <li>• 6 large strawberries</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ½ corn cob</li> <li>• ½ cup green beans</li> <li>• ½ medium potato</li> <li>• 1 cup cucumber sticks</li> <li>• 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes</li> <li>• 1 cup carrot sticks</li> <li>• ½ cup broccoli florets</li> <li>• ½ cup 4 bean mix</li> <li>• ¼ cup hommus</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 250ml plain milk</li> <li>• 200g fruit yoghurt</li> <li>• ¾ cup custard</li> <li>• 1 cheese triangle/wedge</li> <li>• 2 slices of cheese</li> </ul> <p><i>* Choose mostly reduced fat milk and dairy products for children over 2 years of age.</i></p>	<p><b>Example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¾ cup baked beans</li> <li>• 50g lean ham</li> <li>• ¼ chicken breast in strips</li> <li>• 2 small meatballs</li> <li>• 2 medium boiled eggs</li> <li>• 1 chicken drumstick</li> <li>• 1 small 75g tin tuna or salmon</li> <li>• 1 slice of cold roast meat</li> <li>• 130g tofu</li> </ul>

# Lunchbox Food Ideas for Food Brought from Home for 2 to 5 year olds

## A Guide for Families

The following sample lunchbox menus provide the recommended number of serves from each of the food groups.

<p><b>Morning Tea</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• 1 banana</li> </ul>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• 2 wheatmeal biscuits with margarine</li> </ul>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• Small apple</li> </ul>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• Cheese triangle/ cubes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• ½ fruit muffin with margarine</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lunch</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ½ wholemeal pita bread with ham and salad</li> <li>• ½ cup raw green beans or cucumber chunks</li> <li>• ¼ cup hommus dip</li> <li>• Water</li> </ul>	<p><b>Lunch</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roast beef and salad sandwich</li> <li>• 1 small mandarin and kiwi fruit</li> <li>• Cheese stick</li> <li>• Water</li> </ul>	<p><b>Lunch</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuna, avocado and lettuce in a wholemeal dinner roll</li> <li>• Small tub yoghurt</li> <li>• ½ cup cherry tomatoes</li> <li>• Water</li> </ul>	<p><b>Lunch</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chicken leg</li> <li>• Dinner roll and margarine</li> <li>• 1½ tablespoons sultanas</li> <li>• Corn cob</li> <li>• Water</li> </ul>	<p><b>Lunch</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ½ cup pasta salad, ham and boiled egg</li> <li>• 2 broccoli florets</li> <li>• Bunch of grapes</li> <li>• Water</li> </ul>
<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• 2 pikelets</li> </ul>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrot sticks</li> <li>• ¼ cup hommus dip</li> </ul>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 fruit scone</li> <li>• Vegetable sticks with tomato salsa dip</li> </ul>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celery, capsicum and cucumber sticks with cream cheese</li> </ul>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• Celery sticks with cream cheese spread</li> </ul>

**Note:** While variety can make lunchtime interesting, sending a sandwich each day is OK. Variety can come from bread types, sandwich fillings and other foods in the lunchbox. Just make sure the choices are healthy and the bread is wholemeal, high fibre or has added iron.

### Please don't send these foods:

- Sticky snacks like some health food bars, muesli bars, lollies and fruit straps as these may cause tooth decay.
- Foods high in fat and sugar like sweet, cream-filled and chocolate-coated biscuits, chocolate and chocolate or yoghurt coated health food bars.
- Foods high in fat and salt like chips and savoury snack biscuits.



## Making Mealtimes Positive

Mealtimes provide an opportunity for children to practice social, language and self-help skills. Allowing children adequate time to enjoy their food, to make choices and interact with others helps to make mealtimes pleasant, relaxed experiences for both children and educators.

### Setting up the environment

The way in which the area used for meals is arranged can influence how pleasant and relaxed mealtimes will be for both children and their educators.

To support children's sense of belonging and encourage relaxed mealtime conversations, arrange the area so that a small group of children and an adult can be seated comfortably at each table, in much the same way that a family might eat together at home.

Lowering high chairs and moving them close to the table also helps younger children to feel part of the group and makes it easier for the adult or an older child at the table to help them with feeding. Tablecloths or placemats made by the children, and flowers picked from the garden, can make the eating area appealing.

### Mealtimes provide opportunities for learning

Children enjoy being involved in the preparation of food, setting and clearing the table and serving their own meals. These activities also provide opportunities for learning.

Setting the table involves counting out the number of bowls, plates or utensils needed, while scraping food scraps and emptying cups of water into containers for recycling can lead to discussions about being environmentally responsible.

Mealtimes also provide opportunities to practice self-help skills. Decanting milk or water into small jugs makes it easier for children to pour their own drinks. Similarly, placing large bowls and platters on each table with serving spoons or small tongs not only allows children to serve themselves but also supports them in making choices and decisions about what and how much they will eat.

### Mealtimes should be flexible

Mealtimes may need to be adapted to meet the needs of all children within the group. It is important that educators talk with families about their expectations and mealtime practices and then consider how these can be accommodated within the service so that all children feel comfortable.

Young children will often not eat in the same way from day to day or meal to meal. Growth spurts and changes in activity or interests can affect children's appetites. These changes in eating patterns are best treated in a matter-of-fact way. Healthy children will eat what they need and should not be made to eat specific foods or clean their plates.



Flexible mealtimes not only support different eating patterns but also recognise children's increasing ability to contribute to decisions about when and how much they should eat.

When children arrive early in the morning, for example, they may not be able to eat right away, particularly if they have difficulty separating from their family. Providing a breakfast table for a period of time each morning can allow children time to settle in, and then enjoy breakfast when they are ready.

In the same way, setting aside an area for morning and afternoon tea and allowing children to go to this area when they are hungry ensures children's deep engagement in play experiences is not interrupted by set mealtimes.

### The role of the educator at mealtimes

Educators are role models for children. It is important that they set aside other tasks and join children at mealtimes. As well as providing an opportunity to discuss different foods and healthy eating, relaxed mealtimes are great opportunities for educators to build their relationships with children and to 'catch up' with what is happening in children's lives.

Too much emphasis on table manners and rules about behaviour can create an unpleasant atmosphere. If some children become restless when they have finished eating they can be offered quiet activities away from the table, while the remaining children finish their meal. Food should never be used as a reward or punishment for mealtime behaviour.

There are also likely to be mishaps and spills as children learn to eat independently and serve themselves. A little mess is to be expected. Educators might keep a supply of cloths and soapy water nearby and encourage children to help clean up their spills.







## Mealtime Equipment

Confidence and independence can be nurtured and developed if children are encouraged to actively contribute to mealtime and to do what they can for themselves.

Careful choice of suitable equipment will help children develop independence at mealtimes.

Plates, bowls and cutlery should be a size and shape that will make it easier for children to independently get the food into their mouth.

Plastic utensils or cups should not have sharp edges. Avoid very thin plastic utensils, dishes and cups. With light weight plastic there is a possibility that small pieces could break off.

For young and small children choose:

- cutlery with handles about 14 centimetres long
- spoons that have a shallow, round bowl
- child sized forks with short blunt prongs
- utensils that are unbreakable.

Consider the size, shape and stability of cups and tumblers. Handles need to be a size and shape for easy and safe 'holding'. Some children may need a cup with two handles.

Chairs should give proper support with the seat a height that allows feet to rest comfortably on the floor. They should be light enough for children to move.

Furniture, cutlery and serving dishes that encourage independence are available for children with special needs. Talk to families for guidance. An occupational therapist is able to evaluate children's ability and suggest suitable equipment.

Ease of cleaning should be considered when choosing utensils and equipment.

- If purchasing plastic dishes, choose quality that does not scratch easily. Scratched plastic does not clean properly.
- All surfaces that will be in contact with food need to be easy to clean and sanitise.
- Choose plates and bowls that are light to carry and easy to stack.
- Avoid cups and plates with shapes that make them difficult to clean.
- Choose dishwasher and microwave safe equipment.
- Sipper cups for infants need special attention when it comes to cleaning.
- Tables and chairs should have a surface that is easy to clean and sanitise.



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# Apricot Chicken

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 – 1½ hours

## Ingredients

3 kg chicken thigh fillets

3 cups apricot nectar (750 ml)

¾ cup chicken stock

3 packets French onion soup

1 cup rolled oats

2 – 3 kg vegetables (frozen or chopped up fresh)

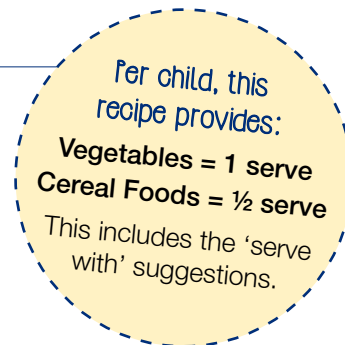
1½ kg wholemeal pasta

## Method

1. Cut chicken into bite-sized pieces. Remove visible fat. Place in casserole dish.
2. Mix nectar, stock, soup, rolled oats and vegetables and pour over the chicken.
3. Cover and cook in a moderate oven (180°C) for 1- 1½ hours or until chicken is cooked.

## Serve

Serve with the pasta.



## Helpful hints

1. Chicken breast fillets could be used instead of thigh fillets.
2. Wholemeal pasta is an important source of iron and fibre. If children are not used to wholemeal pasta perhaps it will be accepted if introduced slowly. Try mixing wholemeal pasta with 'ordinary' pasta.
3. This recipe could be cooked on the stove top rather than in the oven. Once all the ingredients are combined, place in large saucepan(s), bring to boil using moderate heat then, turn heat down and simmer gently with the lid on, until chicken is cooked. This may take less time than cooking in the oven.
4. Whether cooking in the oven or cooking on the stove top, the chicken must be cooked thoroughly i.e. no pink meat or pink juices.
5. This recipe could be made using round steak instead of chicken. Preparation steps will be the same. Cooking time will be longer (whether stewing or casseroles) to allow time for the steak to tenderize. A little extra liquid may be needed.
6. If purchasing stock look for 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' varieties.

# Asian Style Fish

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 40 – 50 minutes

**Cooking time:** 20 – 30 minutes

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Vegetables = 1 serve  
Cereal Foods = ½ serve

## Ingredients

4 kg Basa fish fillets	1 kg broccoli
½ cup soy sauce	1½ cups mushrooms (optional)
½ cup oyster sauce	1 x 410g can baby corn, cut into chunks
4 tsp. crushed ginger	4 carrots
4 tsp. crushed garlic	2 zucchini
½ cup brown sugar	1½ kg thin wholemeal spaghetti
2 tsp. five spice (optional)	6 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)
2 capsicums	
3 cups snow peas	

## Method

1. Cut up all the vegetables in sizes suitable for a stir fry. Carrots could be coarsely grated and baby corn will need to be cut into chunks.
2. Combine sauces, spices, garlic and ginger.
3. Place fish over the base of greased oven proof dishes, pour ½ the sauce mix over the fish then cover and cook in a moderate oven (180°C) until fish flesh flakes easily. This will take about 20 minutes.
4. Place water on to boil ready to cook the spaghetti.
5. While the fish is cooking, heat the oil in a large fry pan and stir fry the vegetables with the remaining sauce mix, until just tender.
6. When water is boiling, cook the spaghetti.
7. Drain the cooked spaghetti and cut the cooked fish into serving size portions.
8. Serve.

## Helpful hints

1. If using snow peas, cut in half (or smaller). Trim to remove ends and 'string'.
2. Snow peas could be replaced with peas or green beans. Frozen peas and green beans are easy to use.
3. Wholemeal spaghetti could be replaced with other wholemeal pasta.
4. Spaghetti (or other pasta) can be stirred through the vegetables or served separately.
5. Suitable vegetables in season can replace vegetables listed in ingredients.

# Baa Baa Rippy Rissoles

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 40 - 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 45 minutes – 1 hour

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 2 serves**  
This includes the 'serve  
with' suggestions.

## Ingredients

1¼ kg lamb mince	1 T crushed garlic
1 kg kangaroo mince	1½ cups breadcrumbs
1 cup black olives, chopped	4 – 5 kg potatoes
3 onions, chopped	½ kg frozen peas
¾ cup tomato paste (look for 'no added salt')	½ kg frozen corn kernels
3 T fresh oregano, chopped	3 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

## Method

1. Preheat oven to moderate (180°C). Prepare potatoes for baking. Grease a baking tray with the oil, arrange potatoes on the tray and place in the oven. Cook until soft, about 40 minutes.
2. Combine meat, onions, olives, tomato paste, breadcrumbs and oregano.
3. Roll meat into golf ball size balls.
4. Cook rissoles in batches, in a greased frying pan or electric fry pan with moderate heat. Flatten rissoles slightly when putting into fry pan and turn over half way through cooking time. Cook rissoles thoroughly, no pink meat or juices.
5. When almost finished cooking the rissoles, cook the frozen vegetables. Frozen vegetables only need to come to the boil. They do not need much cooking.

## Serve

Serve rissoles with the vegetables. Gravy or sauce could be served with the rissoles.

## Helpful hints

1. Rissoles could be cooked on a tray in the oven.
2. Rissole mix could be cooked as a 'flattish' meat loaf in the oven and then cut into serving sized pieces when cooked.
3. If rissoles are cooked in a fry pan, the potatoes could be boiled and mashed (to save turning on the oven). If mashing add 100g margarine and approximately 200ml reduced fat milk. More milk may be needed depending on the type of potato.
4. Small corn cobs would make a change from corn kernels.
5. Corn and peas could be replaced with other vegetables such as pumpkin, carrot, green beans, sweet potato and zucchini.
6. 3 slices of bread will make about 1½ cups of breadcrumbs. If making breadcrumbs, wholemeal is preferable.
7. Wheat germ or quick oats could replace breadcrumbs.

# Beef And Vegetable Pie

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 hour

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 2 serves**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Ingredients

2¾ kg good quality beef mince

2 onions, chopped

6 carrots, peeled and grated

2 kg potato, peeled and cut into chunks

2 kg pumpkin, peeled and cut into chunks

2 – 3 stalks celery, chopped

6 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

5 T margarine (sunflower, canola or olive oil margarine)

2 T Worcestershire sauce

¾ cup tomato paste (look for 'no added salt')

1½ cups beef stock

1 cup grated, reduced fat cheese

## Method

1. Heat approximately half the oil in a pan or saucepan, add the mince. Cook until brown. About 5 minutes. Stir occasionally. Remove meat from the pan.
2. Add remainder of the oil to the pan then add onion, carrot and celery and stir fry for 5 minutes.
3. Combine stir fried vegetables, meat, tomato paste and Worcestershire sauce. Bring to boil, turn heat down and simmer gently, lid on for about 15 minutes. Stir occasionally.
4. While the meat is cooking, boil potato and pumpkin until soft.
5. Mash cooked potato and pumpkin together along with the margarine.
6. Spoon vegetables and meat into oven proof dishes and spread with mashed potato and pumpkin. Smooth the top with a knife dipped in milk. Sprinkle with the grated cheese.
7. Place into a moderate (180°C) oven and heat for about 10 minutes or until a light brown.

## Serve

Serve with salad.

## Helpful hints

1. Sweet potato could replace pumpkin.
2. Mashed vegetables could be served with the meat instead of making into 'pie'.
3. Minced meat should be cooked for a total of at least 20 minutes to ensure that it is cooked thoroughly.
4. The reduced fat cheese could be replaced with ½ cup of parmesan cheese for a flavour change. Mix parmesan through the mashed potato and pumpkin.
5. If purchasing stock look for 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' varieties.



# Beef Balls And Bean Sauce

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 2½ serves**  
This includes the 'serve  
with' suggestions.

## Ingredients

2¾ kg good quality beef mince

1 cup breadcrumbs (preferably wholemeal)

2 eggs, beaten

3 onions, chopped

2 T minced garlic

2 tsp. mixed herbs

1 kg tomatoes, chopped

1 x 375g can tomato puree

4 x 400g cans red kidney beans, drained

4 kg potato

200 ml reduced fat milk

5 T margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)

## Method

1. Mix together the mince, breadcrumbs, chopped onion, garlic, egg and herbs.
2. Form the meat mix into small balls (about a heaped tablespoon) and place onto a greased baking tray. Cook for 30 minutes at 180°C.
3. Once meat balls are in the oven, boil the potatoes.
4. Puree the tomatoes, red kidney beans and tomato puree together. Place into a saucepan to reheat.
5. Mash potatoes with the milk and margarine.

## Serve

Serve meat balls with the tomato and bean sauce and mashed potato.

## Helpful hints

1. Use 1 x 800g can of chopped tomatoes instead of fresh tomatoes as well as the pureed tomato.
2. 2 slices of bread makes about 1 cup of breadcrumbs.
3. Use wheat germ or quickoats instead of breadcrumbs.

# Beef Tacos

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 – 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

## Ingredients

Taco shells (allow 2 per child)

2¾ kg good quality beef mince

2 onions, chopped or grated

2 packets of taco seasoning

2 x 400 g cans red kidney beans, pureed or mashed

2 cloves garlic, crushed or chopped finely

4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

1 jar (about 200g) taco sauce

3 zucchini, grated

6 tomatoes, chopped

1 small lettuce, chopped

500g reduced fat cheese, grated

2 capsicums, cut into strips

8 carrots, cut into sticks

4 cucumbers, cut into chunks

Per child, this  
recipe provides:

**Vegetables = 1½ serves**  
**Cereal Foods = 1 serve**

This includes the 'serve  
with' suggestions.

## Method

1. Heat oil in a large saucepan or frying pan.
2. Add the meat, onion, garlic and stir fry until meat is brown.
3. Add the taco seasoning, red kidney beans and grated zucchini and taco sauce to the meat and cook for a further 15 minutes.
4. While the meat is cooking, warm the taco shells in a moderate oven.

## Serve

Serve taco shells and meat filling, chopped tomatoes, chopped lettuce and cheese along with a vegetable platter of capsicum strips, carrot strips and cucumber chunks.

## Helpful hints

1. Tacos offer the perfect opportunity for children to serve themselves.
2. Salsa or other sauces could be used instead of the taco sauce.
3. The vegetable platter accompanies the tacos to increase the vegetable serves.
4. Bread wraps, soft tacos or mini burritos could be used instead of taco shells.

# Bobotie

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 hour

## Ingredients

- 2¾ kg good quality beef mince
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 4 onions, chopped
- 6 cups wholemeal breadcrumbs (12 – 14 slices of bread)
- 2 tsp. curry powder
- 2 tsp. turmeric
- 2 tsp. vinegar
- 12 eggs
- 1 litre reduced fat milk
- 4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

## Method

1. Soak the breadcrumbs in 1 cup of the milk.
2. Heat oil in a fry pan and brown the meat. Add the onion and garlic.
3. Combine the meat, vinegar, curry powder, turmeric and half of the beaten eggs. Place this mixture into baking dishes and pat flat.
4. Bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for 30 minutes.
5. Mix together the remaining milk and egg and pour over the meat. Return to oven and continue baking until the 'custard' is set.

## Serve

Serve with bread and salad or vegetables.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = ½ serve**  
**Cereal Foods = 1½ serves**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Grated vegetables such as zucchini and sweet potato could be added to the mince.
2. Use quiccoats instead of breadcrumbs.

# Chicken And Vegetable Ragout

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 – 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 – 1½ hours

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 2 serves**  
**Cereal Foods = 1 serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Ingredients

3 kg chicken breast fillets, cut into bite-sized pieces	250g frozen spinach
4 onions, chopped	1 x 410g can soy beans, drained
1 kg carrots, chopped	1 cup plain flour
1½ kg pumpkin, cut into bite-sized pieces	4 – 5 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)
2 kg potato, peeled and cut into bite-sized pieces	4 T margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)
500g broccoli, broken into small pieces	2 – 3 T stock powder (according to taste)
2 x 800g cans chopped tomato	2 T garlic
	8 cups rice

## Method

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan or pan, lightly brown chicken in batches and set aside.
2. Place the chopped onion, garlic, pumpkin, potato, carrot and broccoli into the pan. Cook gently until the vegetables are tender then add the browned chicken and soy beans.
3. Add the margarine to the vegetables and chicken and when margarine is melted, sprinkle in the flour, stirring all the time.
4. Add the canned tomatoes and stock powder. Continue to stir while bringing the ragout to the boil. Turn heat down and simmer gently, lid on, for 20 minutes. Stir occasionally.
5. While ragout is simmering, cook the rice.
6. Add defrosted spinach to the ragout after it has simmered for 20 minutes, reheat.

## Serve

Serve ragout with rice.

## Helpful hints

1. 4 - 5 leaves of fresh spinach could be used instead of frozen spinach. Wash fresh spinach well and chop up. Add to ragout along with other vegetables.
2. Soy beans could be replaced with other legumes such as butter beans, chick peas and red kidney beans.

# Chicken Chow Mein

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 20 – 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 40 – 45 minutes

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Vegetables = 1 serve  
Cereal Foods = 1 serve

## Ingredients

- 3 kg chicken breast fillets
- 2 onions, chopped
- ½ bunch celery, chopped
- ½ small cabbage, finely shredded
- 1 kg frozen mixed vegetables
- 1 x 750g can mixed beans (about 2 cups when drained)
- 2 packets chicken noodle soup
- 4 cups water
- 8 cups rice

## Method

1. Place rice on to cook and drain when tender.
2. While the rice is cooking, in a large boiler or two fry pans, mix together the chicken, onions, celery, chicken noodle soup, frozen vegetables and water.
3. Bring to the boil, turn the heat down and simmer uncovered for 20 minutes.
4. Add the beans, cooked rice and shredded cabbage. Heat through and serve.

## Helpful hints

1. Thigh fillets could be used instead of breast fillets. Trim all visible fat.
2. Cooked chicken could be used. Add along with the rice, beans and cabbage.
3. Cooked meat or canned fish could be used instead of chicken.
4. Noodles could be served instead of rice. Wholemeal noodles are recommended as they contribute significant amounts of iron and fibre.
5. Legumes such as butter beans, red kidney beans and soy beans, could be used instead of the mixed beans.

# Chilli Con Carne

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 minutes

## Ingredients

- 2¾ kg good quality beef mince
- 2 x 400g cans red kidney beans, drained
- 2 x 400g (approx.) cans butter beans, drained
- 3 x 420g cans tomato soup (ready to eat, not concentrate)
- 2 onions, chopped
- 1 packet of taco seasoning
- 1½ kg wholemeal pasta
- 1 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

## Method

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan or pan. Cook mince for at least 15 minutes, stirring all the time.
2. Add the beans, onion, tomato soup and taco seasoning. Bring to simmering point, turn heat down and simmer gently for 5 minutes.
3. While the meat is cooking, cook the pasta.

## Serve

Serve with the pasta and tomato wedges or slices.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. A can of diced tomato could be added to the meat mix. If this is done, one can of tomato soup may be all that is needed.
2. Other vegetables could be added e.g. peas, corn kernels and grated carrot.
3. Extra soup could be added if necessary.
4. Purchase 'salt reduced' or 'no added salt' canned products if available.
5. Tomato puree could be used instead of tomato soup.

# Fried Rice With Tofu

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 minutes

## Ingredients

500g lean bacon, chopped

6 shallots, chopped

2 capsicums, chopped

500g peas (frozen)

500g corn kernels (frozen)

3 x 420g cans mixed beans, drained (about 3 cups)

500g tofu, cubed

5 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

8 cups rice

## Method

1. Place rice on to cook and drain when cooked.
2. While rice is cooking, heat oil in pan and lightly fry the bacon, vegetables (includes beans) and tofu.
3. Combine the cooked rice with lightly fried ingredients and serve.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = ½ serve**  
**Cereal Foods = 1 serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Legumes such as chick peas, butter beans or red kidney beans could be used instead of mixed beans. Purchase 'salt reduced' or 'no added salt' legumes if available.
2. When buying tofu, choose a firm one that is less likely to break up when being cooked.
3. Lean ham could be used instead of bacon.
4. 2 kg chopped, cooked chicken could replace the tofu.
5. Fried rice could be served then garnished with slices of hard cooked egg.

# Fruity Island Curry

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 hour

## Ingredients

2¾ kg lean round steak, cut into bite-sized pieces

3 onions, chopped finely

3 tsp. curry powder

4 cups beef stock

4 cups peas (fresh or frozen)

4 cups grated carrot

1 kg sweet potato (grated)

1 T tomato paste (look for 'no added salt')

2 cups sultanas

4 cooking apples, chopped, skin on

1 cup red lentils

4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

1½ kg wholemeal pasta

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Method

1. Heat the oil and brown the meat in batches.
2. Combine the meat, stock, onion, curry powder, tomato paste and red lentils. Bring to the boil, turn heat down and simmer gently until meat is tender.
3. Add fruit and vegetables and simmer for a further 10 minutes.
4. While the meat is cooking, cook the pasta and drain.

## Serve

Serve with the pasta.

## Helpful hints

1. Browning meat in batches reduces the 'stewing' effect and meat browns more easily.
2. Other vegetables or canned legumes could be added.
3. Red lentils do not have to be soaked or precooked before adding. They soften and cook in approximately 20 minutes.
4. Other meats that would be suitable to use include blade steak, lean lamb and kangaroo steak. Minced meat could also be used.
5. If purchasing stock look for 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' varieties.



# Mustard Chicken

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 45 minutes

## Ingredients

3 kg chicken breast fillets, cut into bite-sized pieces	3 T plain flour
6 carrots, sliced thinly	3 T golden syrup
2 cups broccoli, chopped	600 ml milk
2 capsicums, chopped	3 T mustard
4 zucchini, chopped	1½ kg wholemeal pasta
2 onions, chopped or grated	
½ cup oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)	
3 T margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)	

## Method

1. Heat the oil and brown the chicken in batches. Remove from the pan and set aside.
2. Add all the vegetables to the remaining oil in the pan and stir fry for about 5 minutes or until vegetables are just tender.
3. Put pasta on to boil.
4. Combine the chicken and vegetables and set aside while making the melted butter (margarine) sauce.
5. To make sauce, melt margarine in a large saucepan, remove from heat and stir in the flour. Return to heat and gently cook for 1 minute. Remove from heat and stir in the milk. Return to moderate heat, bring to boil stirring all the time. Turn the heat down and simmer gently for 1 minute.
6. Add the golden syrup and mustard to the sauce.
7. Combine the sauce, chicken and vegetables. Reheat if necessary.

## Serve

Serve with pasta and extra salad or vegetables.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = ½ serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Cut the vegetables into similar sized pieces so that they cook evenly.
2. Brown chicken in batches to help browning.
3. Brown sugar could be used instead of golden syrup.
4. If children who are going to eat this dish are all more than 12 months old, honey could replace the golden syrup. Honey is not recommended for children under 12 months because it may contain bacteria that could be harmful to this age group.
5. Wholemeal pasta is an important source of iron. If children are not used to wholemeal pasta perhaps it may be accepted if introduced slowly. Try mixing wholemeal pasta with 'ordinary' pasta. The wholemeal portion could be increased gradually over time.

# Hawaiian Meat Balls

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 – 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 hour

## Ingredients

- 1½ cups rice
- 3 kg pork mince
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 onions, chopped
- 1 T mixed herbs
- ½ cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 3 red capsicums, finely diced
- 6 eggs, well beaten
- ½ cup plain flour for coating meat balls
- 4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

## Sauce

- 4 x 450g cans crushed pineapple, no added sugar or light syrup (don't drain)
- 200 ml soy sauce
- ¾ cup of tomato or barbeque sauce
- 1 cup (250 ml) water
- 5 T corn flour

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Method

1. Cook the rice, drain.
2. Mix together the mince, garlic, eggs, capsicum, herbs, parsley and rice.
3. Make meat balls (about 2 tablespoons of mince). Dust with flour and slightly flatten.
4. Heat oil in large pan and cook meat balls in batches. Cook for about 10 minutes (about 5 minutes on each side) or until cooked right through. Meat should be well cooked, not rare.
5. As each batch of meat balls is cooked, drain on absorbent paper and keep warm.
6. Make sauce by blending the corn flour with the water to make a smooth paste. Stir this into all the other sauce ingredients. Stir continuously over moderate heat until it comes to the boil and thickens. Pour over or serve with meat balls.

## Serve

Serve with bread and salad or a selection of vegetables.

## Helpful hints

1. Meat balls could be cooked in the oven. Place onto a greased oven tray and bake in a moderate oven.
2. Serve sauce in small jugs so that children are able to help themselves.
3. Other sauces or chutneys could replace the sauce in the recipe.

# Italian Beef And Spaghetti

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 – 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

## Ingredients

- 2¾ kg good quality beef mince
- 4 onions, chopped
- 4 carrots, chopped
- ½ cup chopped parsley
- 1 x 800g can chopped tomatoes
- 1 x 820g can tomato soup (concentrated)
- 2 tsp. curry powder
- 4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)
- 1½ kg wholemeal spaghetti

## Method

1. Heat the oil in a large pan, add the meat and cook until brown.
2. When meat is brown, add the remainder of the ingredients (except the pasta) bring to the boil, turn the heat down and simmer gently for 20 minutes.
3. While the meat is cooking, cook the pasta until just tender and drain.

## Serve

Serve with a side salad. Pasta can be stirred through the meat or served with the meat.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Extra vegetables such as zucchini and canned legumes (drained) could be added.
2. Any type of wholemeal pasta could be used.
3. Garnish with grated cheese or parmesan and chopped parsley.
4. Tomato puree could be used instead of tomato soup.

# Lamb And Noodle Hot Pot

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 – 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 – 1½ hours

## Ingredients

2¾ kg lean lamb, cubed

3 onions, chopped

4 green apples, skin on, diced

8 carrots diced or grated

½ bunch celery, chopped

4 cups diced pumpkin

1 kg frozen peas

1 T curry powder

2 x 440g cans beef or lamb soup (ready to eat)

1 x 300g can of tomato soup (concentrate)

1½ kg wholemeal pasta, cooked and drained

4 T (80ml) oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

## Method

1. Lightly brown the lamb and onion in the oil.
2. Add all the other ingredients except the pasta, to the meat.
3. Bring to the boil then reduce the heat, place the lid on and simmer gently until the meat is tender. About 1 hour.
4. About 30 minutes before the meat is finished, cook the pasta.
5. Cooked pasta can be stirred through the meat once the meat is cooked or, it can be served separately.

## Serve

Serve with salad.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1½ serves**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Pork could be used instead of lamb.
2. This dish could be cooked in a slow cooker or casseroled in a moderate (180°C) oven. If a slow cooker is used, the cooking time will be much longer and this will need to be planned for.
3. Tomato puree could be used instead of tomato soup.

# Lamb Burgers

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

## Ingredients

- 2¾ kg lamb mince
- 3 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)
- 1 cup wheat germ
- 6 carrots, grated
- 40 hamburger buns
- 200g margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)
- 10 tomatoes, sliced
- 6 cucumbers, sliced or cut into sticks
- 1 small lettuce, shredded
- 20 slices of reduced fat cheese, cut in half
- Barbeque sauce (if required)

## Method

1. Mix the wheat germ and grated carrot through the lamb mince.
2. Make mince patties and flatten so as to fit on the hamburger bun.
3. Heat the oil and cook patties for at least 5 minutes on each side.
4. Cut cucumber and carrot into sticks or slices. These can be served alongside the burgers as a finger food.
5. Slice tomato, shred lettuce and cut slices of cheese in half (ready to place onto the buns).
6. Warm or toast buns if desired. Spread buns with margarine.

## Helpful hints

1. Cucumber could be sliced and placed in the hamburger bun along with the meat however, this may make it difficult for the children to manage.
2. Breads other than hamburger buns could be used. Turkish bread could be warmed and sliced to make a 'sandwich type' hamburger. Pocket bread could also be used. If pocket bread were to be used, grated carrot and chopped up cucumber would be fine to include.
3. Meat patties could be baked in a moderate oven, instead of cooking in a fry pan.
4. Extra finger food vegetables could be served e.g. small pieces of cauliflower and broccoli.
5. Burgers offer an opportunity for children to participate by assembling their own 'meal'.
6. Beef could be used instead of lamb.

Per child, this recipe provides:

**Vegetables = 1½ serves**  
**Cereal Foods = 2 serve**

This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

# Lasagne Al Forno

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 hour

## Ingredients

2¾ kg good quality beef mince

500g (2 cups) tomato paste (look for 'no added salt')

2 tsp. mixed herbs

3 onions, chopped

2 cloves garlic, crushed

2 litres reduced fat milk

½ cup cornflour blended with 1 cup of the milk

4 eggs, beaten

2 x 800g cans chopped tomatoes

2 cups grated reduced fat cheese

700g lasagna sheets (precooked / quick cooking type)

4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Method

1. Turn oven on to moderate (180°C).
2. Heat oil in pan or large saucepan and brown the meat.
3. Add tomato paste, herbs and onion to the meat. Simmer gently for 15 minutes then turn heat off, cover and leave.
4. Combine the beaten egg and blended cornflour.
5. Heat the remaining milk along with the garlic and when almost boiling stir in the blended cornflour and egg mix. Simmer very gently for about 30 seconds, stirring all the time. Remove from heat.
6. Place a layer of lasagna sheets on the base of a greased baking dish. Layer meat, tomato, white sauce, cheese and lasagna sheets into baking dish, finishing with a layer of cheese.
7. Place into the moderate oven for 20 – 30 minutes. Remove from oven and stand for 10 minutes before serving.

## Serve

Serve with salad or vegetables.

## Helpful hints

1. If using commercially crushed garlic use 2 – 3 teaspoons.
2. ½ cup of chopped parsley could be added. This is an opportunity to use fresh parsley growing in the herb garden at your service.
3. The mixed herbs could be replaced with chopped fresh herbs such as basil and oregano (that may also be growing at your service).
4. For a flavour change, replace 1 cup of the grated cheese with ½ cup of parmesan cheese. The parmesan cheese could be mixed in with the white sauce.

# Lentil Soup

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 – 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 – 1½ hours

## Ingredients

3 cups brown or green lentils

3 cups red lentils

4 onions, chopped

10 carrots, sliced thinly or chopped

6 zucchini, chopped

½ bunch celery, chopped

4 – 5 litres water

200ml soy sauce (about  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup)

2 x 400g can soy beans (about 2 cups when drained)

## Method

1. Soak the brown or green lentils overnight if possible. Covered and refrigerated. Drain and rinse. Red lentils do not need to be soaked.
2. Combine all the ingredients in a large saucepan or boiler. Bring to the boil, turn heat down, cover and simmer for about 1 hour.
3. This soup may be pureed.

## Serve

Serve with bread or damper.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 2 serves**  
**Cereal Foods = 1 serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

If this soup is to be served to toddlers, leave soy sauce out of the recipe.

# Mince And Beans Mexican Style

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 hour

## Ingredients

2¾ kg good quality beef mince

2 onions, chopped

2 cloves of garlic, crushed

1 x 800g can chopped tomatoes

2 green capsicums, chopped

½ cup tomato paste (look for 'no added salt')

2 beef stock cubes or 2 teaspoons beef stock powder

2 x 400g cans red kidney beans, drained

1½ cups red lentils

200g corn chips, crushed

3 cups (300 g) reduced fat cheese, grated

4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

500g wholemeal pasta

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Method

1. Cook pasta and drain when cooked.
2. While pasta is cooking, heat oil in large pan and lightly brown the mince and onions.
3. Add garlic, tomato, capsicum, tomato paste, red lentils and crushed stock cubes (or stock powder).
4. Bring to the boil, turn heat down and simmer gently for 20 – 30 minutes.
5. Add the kidney beans and simmer for a further 5 minutes.
6. Divide the cooked pasta between 2 greased baking dishes, top with mince mixture then sprinkle with crushed corn chips and grated cheese.
7. Reheat in a moderate oven (180°C).

## Serve

Serve with salad and bread.

## Helpful hints

1. If using commercially crushed garlic use 2 – 3 teaspoons.
2. Stir meat mixture from time to time when simmering. If necessary add a little water.
3. The red lentils help to thicken this dish. Reduce the amount (next time) if necessary.
4. Cold, plain yoghurt served with this dish is a pleasant taste sensation.



# Minced Beef Stroganoff

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 40 – 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 45 – 50 minutes

## Ingredients

2¾ kg good quality beef mince

4 onions, chopped

8 carrots, cut into bite-sized chunks

500g mushrooms, sliced

4 cups corn kernels

4 cups peas

2 cups green beans

1 x 140g can tomato puree

2 cups beef stock

3 T gravy powder

300ml light sour cream

3 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

1½ kg wholemeal pasta

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Method

1. Heat oil in a large saucepan and brown the mince and onions.
2. Blend the gravy powder with the stock.
3. Combine all the ingredients (except pasta and sour cream) and bring to boil. Turn the heat down and simmer gently for 30 minutes.
4. Place pasta on to cook about 15 minutes before serving time. Drain when cooked.
5. Just before serving, stir the sour cream through.

## Serve

Serve with the pasta.

## Helpful hints

1. If purchasing stock look for 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' varieties.
2. Stock powder is also very suitable for making the stock. It is light to carry and well priced compared to other products. It may be lower in salt than some other products.
3. Steak could be used instead of minced beef.
4. Other vegetables could be added.
5. Could be served with mashed potato instead of pasta.

# Minestrone Soup

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 – 1½ hours

## Ingredients

5 cups (750g) uncooked legumes  
(lima, butter beans or red kidney beans)  
½ bunch celery, chopped  
500g frozen peas  
3 onions, chopped  
¼ cauliflower, cut into small florets  
250g carrots, chopped  
2 cloves garlic, crushed

½ cup chopped, fresh parsley  
1 tsp. mixed herbs  
1 x 800g can chopped tomatoes  
4 T tomato paste (optional, look for 'no added salt')  
500g wholemeal macaroni  
4 litres beef stock  
2 litres of water

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1½ serves**  
**Cereal Foods = 1 serve**  
This includes the 'serve  
with' suggestions.

## Method

1. Soak legumes overnight (covered in the refrigerator).
2. Drain off the soaking water and rinse legumes. Place into a large saucepan, cover with water and bring to the boil. Boil until tender (approximately ¾ hour) then drain.
3. Combine all the ingredients (including the cooked legumes) in a large boiler. Bring to the boil, turn the heat down and simmer gently for about 30 minutes.
4. Add extra stock or water if necessary.

## Serve

Serve with wholemeal bread, with added vitamins and minerals, if possible.

## Helpful hints

1. Minestrone soup is a great way to use leftover fresh, frozen or cooked vegetables.
2. Other legumes could be used. Examples include chick peas and soya beans.
3. Although the recipe has specified uncooked legumes, canned legumes could be used. This will save soaking and cooking time. The issue would be just how many cans of legumes would be needed. Allow approximately 2 tablespoons of drained legumes per child.
4. When purchasing canned legumes, look for 'salt reduced' or 'no added salt'.
5. Macaroni shapes could be replaced with other pasta shapes.
6. Garnish with chopped parsley for added flavour, iron and vitamin C.
7. If purchasing stock look for 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' varieties.

# Moroccan Lamb With Couscous

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 – 1 ½ hours

## Ingredients

2¾ kg diced lamb	3 x 420g cans mixed beans
2 onions, chopped	2 x 800g cans chopped tomatoes
½ bunch celery, chopped	5 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)
6 carrots, diced or sliced	16 cups couscous
3 zucchini, chopped	
1 kg pumpkin, cut into 'chunks'	
2 red capsicums	

## Method

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan and brown the lamb in batches. Set aside.
2. Lightly cook onion in the pan.
3. Combine onion, meat, celery, carrot, pumpkin and capsicum. Add the tomatoes, bring to the boil, turn the heat down and simmer gently until meat is tender. The zucchini doesn't take long to cook so can be added in the last 15 minutes or so.
4. Make couscous according to directions on the packet.

## Serve

Serve sprinkled with chopped fresh coriander (optional). This could be an opportunity to use fresh herbs from the garden. If coriander is not available, parsley would be fine.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1½ serves**  
**Cereal Foods = 1 serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Chicken could be used instead of the lamb.
2. Use wholemeal couscous if available.
3. Sweet potato could be used instead of pumpkin.
4. Legumes such as chick peas, butter beans or red kidney beans could be used instead of mixed beans.
5. If this recipe is too 'sloppy', the amount of tomato could be slightly reduced next time OR up to 1 cup of red lentils could be added at the beginning of the cooking time. Red lentils do not need to be soaked or precooked. They will cook, soften and break up in about 20 minutes.

# Saucy Beef And Vegetable Loaf

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 hour

## Ingredients

2¾ kg good quality beef mince

1 cup wheat germ

2 carrots, grated

2 cups grated pumpkin

3 zucchini, washed and grated

2 onions, chopped

¼ cup reduced fat evaporated milk

3 cups celery, finely chopped

4 eggs, beaten

2 cups rice

3 x 300g cans tomato soup (concentrate, not 'ready to eat')

## Method

1. Cook the rice and drain.
2. Combine all the ingredients (except the tomato soup) and spoon into greased baking dishes. Press down evenly.
3. Pour the tomato soup over the top of the meat.
4. Bake in a moderate (180°C) oven for about 1 hour.

## Serve

Serve with baked potato and salad or other vegetables. If baking potatoes, allow about 5 kg to cater for 40 children depending on the age and appetite of the children.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1½ serves**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. 2-3 extra cups of vegetables could be added to the meat loaf. Vegetables such as grated sweet potato, corn kernels and diced capsicum would be suitable.
2. Tomato puree could be used instead of tomato soup. 2 x 375g cans of tomato puree should be enough.

# Savoury Baked Beans With Pasta

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 minutes

## Ingredients

1½ kg wholemeal pasta

10 x 420g cans baked beans

5 onions, grated

5 carrots, grated

6 zucchinis, washed and grated

500g reduced fat cheese, grated

## Method

1. Cook the pasta.
2. While pasta is cooking, combine the beans, onion, carrot and zucchini in an electric fry pan or large saucepan, and bring to the boil. Turn heat down and simmer gently for 10 minutes.
3. Drain cooked pasta.

## Serve

Serve bean and vegetable 'sauce' on pasta and sprinkle with grated cheese.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 2 serves**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Purchase reduced salt baked beans if available.
2. Other vegetables such as grated pumpkin and grated sweet potato could be used. Also frozen peas and frozen corn are suitable.

# Savoury Chilean Mince

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Vegetables = ½ serve  
Cereal Foods = 1 serve

## Ingredients

- 2¾ kg good quality beef mince
- 2 onions, finely chopped or grated
- 5 carrots, grated
- 2 x 400g cans red kidney beans
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 3 T tomato paste (look for 'no added salt')
- 4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)
- 8 cups rice

## Method

1. Cook the rice.
2. While the rice is cooking, heat oil in a large pan and lightly cook the meat and onions.
3. Add all other ingredients to the meat and simmer gently for 20 minutes.
4. Add cooked rice to the meat and serve. Note that the rice can also be served alongside the meat.

## Helpful hints

1. Rice could be cooked ahead of time and frozen.
2. Other vegetables could be added.
3. Purchase 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' canned legumes if available.
4. About ½ cup of chopped fresh oregano or fresh parsley could be used instead of the dried oregano.

# Spaghetti Bolognaise

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 45 minutes

## Ingredients

- 2¾ kg good quality beef mince
- 4 onions, chopped
- 6 carrots, chopped or grated
- ½ bunch celery, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- ¾ cup tomato paste (look for 'no added salt')
- 2 tsp. mixed herbs
- 1 x 800g can chopped tomatoes
- 4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)
- ½ cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1½ kg wholemeal spaghetti

## Method

1. Heat the oil in a large pan, add the onion, carrot, celery and crushed garlic. Stir fry for about 5 minutes.
2. Add the minced beef and stir fry until meat is brown. This will take 5 – 10 minutes.
3. Add the tomato paste, mixed herbs and tomatoes.
4. Simmer gently for 15 minutes then fold through chopped fresh parsley and simmer for a further 5 minutes.
5. While the meat is cooking, cook spaghetti.

## Serve

Serve with salad.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = ½ serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Other vegetables could be used or added e.g. grated or diced sweet potato, peas, corn and legumes such as butter beans, red kidney beans and baked beans.
  2. Using fresh parsley is an opportunity to use fresh herbs from the garden.
  3. Fresh tomatoes could be used instead of canned tomatoes.
  4. Provide bowls of parmesan cheese for children to help themselves.
- Chopped fresh oregano could also be used.

# Sweet Chicken, Vegetables And Pasta

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

## Ingredients

3 kg chicken breast fillets, diced	½ cup golden syrup
2 onions, chopped	400 ml reduced fat evaporated milk
2½ kg mixed vegetables, frozen	1 litre chicken stock
8 carrots, diced	4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)
2 red capsicums, sliced or chopped	1½ kg wholemeal pasta
4 T grain mustard	

## Method

1. Prepare chicken and vegetables.
2. Cook pasta.
3. While pasta is cooking, heat oil in a large pan and sauté (lightly fry) onion and carrot for about 5 minutes.
4. Add the chicken and cook gently for at least 10 minutes.
5. Add stock, capsicum, mustard, golden syrup and evaporated milk. Simmer gently for 5 minutes.

## Serve

Serve with the pasta.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1½ serves**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Fresh vegetables could be used instead of frozen vegetables. They would have to be cut into small pieces and stir fried along with the carrot and onion.
2. Brown sugar could be used instead of golden syrup.
3. If children who are going to eat this dish are all aged more than one 12 months, honey could be used instead of golden syrup. Honey is not recommended for children under 12 months because it may contain bacteria that could be harmful for this age group.
4. If purchasing stock look for 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' varieties.



# Sweet Lamb Curry

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 – 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

## Ingredients

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 2¾ kg lamb mince                         | 2 cups sultanas                          |
| 2 kg frozen mixed vegetables             | 2 cups chicken stock                     |
| 3 onions (500g) chopped                  | 3 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil) |
| 4 T curry powder                         | 8 cups rice                              |
| 1 cup barbeque sauce                     |  |
| 6 Granny Smith apples, washed and grated |  |

## Method

1. Heat the oil and sauté (lightly fry) onions until tender.
2. Add curry powder and mince to the onions.
3. Stir the mince over moderate heat until brown. This will take about 8 – 10 minutes.
4. Stir in the barbeque sauce, apples, sultanas, vegetables and stock.
5. Bring to boil, turn the heat down and simmer gently for at least 20 minutes. Mixture should thicken slightly.
6. While the curry is cooking, cook the rice.

## Serve

Serve with the rice.

A little Greek yoghurt on top would add to the taste experience.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = 1 serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Curry could be served with pasta instead of rice. Wholemeal pasta will provide more iron and fibre than 'ordinary' pasta.
2. The frozen mixed vegetables could be replaced with chopped fresh vegetables or a combination of frozen and fresh vegetables.
3. Canned legumes could be part of the vegetable mix e.g. butter beans or chick peas. Purchase 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' if available.
4. There is no need to peel the apples as long as they are washed well. If no Granny Smith apples are available other types may be used.
5. If purchasing stock look for 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' varieties.

# Tandoori Chicken

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 – 1 ½ hours

## Ingredients

3 kg chicken breast fillets, diced  
Juice of 2 lemons  
300g reduced fat, plain yoghurt  
1 T crushed garlic  
2 red capsicums, diced  
2 green capsicums, diced  
500g sweet potato, finely diced or grated

500g pumpkin, finely diced  
2 onions, chopped  
4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)  
1 x 290g jar tandoori paste  
8 cups rice

## Method

1. Combine half the tandoori paste with the lemon juice and yoghurt. Add chicken and marinade overnight (covered in the refrigerator). If this is not possible, marinade for at least 2 hours (covered and refrigerated).
2. Place chicken in baking dishes, place in a moderate oven. Bake until chicken is cooked through.
3. While the chicken is cooking place the rice on to cook.
4. While the chicken is cooking, lightly fry the onion in the oil, add vegetables and continue to stir fry until vegetables are just tender. Capsicums could be added close to the end of the cooking time so that they retain their crispness.
5. Add the remainder of the tandoori paste to the vegetables.
6. Combine the vegetables and the chicken and heat through if necessary.

## Serve

Serve with rice and a salad or other vegetables.

## Helpful hints

Capsicums could be replaced with chopped celery or chopped green beans.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = 1 serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

# Tasty Scrambled Egg

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Cooking time:** 20 minutes

## Ingredients

36 eggs, beaten

3 cups reduced fat milk

3 cups (300g) reduced fat cheese, grated

300g lean ham, chopped

½ cup chopped fresh parsley

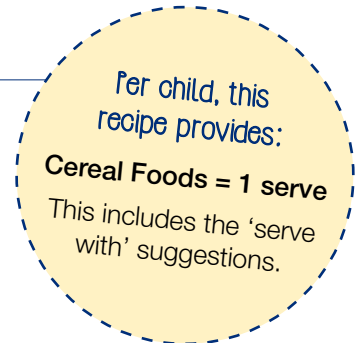
3 T margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)

## Method

1. Combine the eggs and milk then stir in the ham, cheese and parsley.
2. Melt margarine in pan, pour in the egg mix. Place lid on, turn heat down to low.
3. Stir occasionally to cook evenly.
4. Cook until completely set then remove from heat immediately.
5. While egg is cooking, make toast. Allow at least 1 slice per child.

## Serve

Serve with toast.



## Helpful hints

1. For a variation, chopped cooked vegetables could be added.
2. Grilled tomato or tomato slices could accompany scrambled egg.
3. Serve scrambled egg as soon as possible after cooked. Scrambled egg that is kept hot for any length of time is likely to overcook and spoil.
4. Try adding ricotta cheese for a different flavour.

# Tomato Glazed Meatloaf

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 – 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 hour

## Ingredients

### Meatloaf

2¾ kg good quality beef mince  
2 cups wheat germ  
3 zucchini, grated (about 3 cups)  
3 carrots, grated (about 3 cups)  
4 onions, chopped  
1 cup chopped parsley  
½ cup tomato sauce  
5 eggs, beaten

### Glaze

1 cup tomato sauce  
¼ cup Worcestershire sauce  
¼ cup brown sugar  
1 large tomato, chopped finely

## Method

1. Combine all meat loaf ingredients and mix well.
2. Press the mixture into oven proof dishes.
3. Bake in a moderate (180°C) oven for about 1 hour.
4. When cooked, remove from oven and drain off any visible fat.
5. Combine all the glaze ingredients in a saucepan and gently heat through.
6. Pour glaze over meatloaf just before serving.

## Serve

Serve with a salad or vegetables such as mashed potato plus a green and yellow vegetable.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 2 serves**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. If serving mashed potato, cook about 4 kg. This amount could vary according to the age and appetite of the children. When mashing, add reduced fat milk and margarine for a smooth, palatable result.
2. Wholemeal breadcrumbs or quickcoats could replace the wheat germ. 2 slices of bread will make 1 cup of breadcrumbs.
3. Worcestershire sauce could be replaced with barbeque sauce.

# Tuna A La Tima

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 minutes

## Ingredients

- 4 - 6 x 425g cans tuna, drained and flaked
- 2 onions, chopped
- 4 x 420g cans cream of chicken soup (condensed, not ready to eat)
- 1 kg light ricotta cheese
- 2 cups fat reduced cheese, grated
- 2 ½ cups wholemeal breadcrumbs
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1 kg wholemeal pasta shapes

## Method

1. Cook pasta.
2. Preheat moderate oven (180°C).
3. Mix the grated cheese with ½ cup of the breadcrumbs and keep aside as this will be sprinkled over the rest of the ingredients before baking.
4. Combine all ingredients including the remainder of the breadcrumbs and the cooked, drained pasta. Pour into greased ovenproof dishes. Sprinkle with the grated cheese and breadcrumb mix.
5. Bake for approximately 25 minutes.

## Serve

Serve with salad or vegetables.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = ½ serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Cooked chicken or canned salmon could be used instead of tuna.
2. Wheat germ or quick oats could replace breadcrumbs.

# Tuna And Sweet Corn Bake

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 40 – 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

## Ingredients

4 - 6 x 425g cans tuna, drained	10 T (100g) plain flour
8 cups (800g) rice	3 litres fat reduced milk
10 eggs	250g reduced fat cheese, grated
4 onions, chopped	½ kg corn kernels (frozen)
100g margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)	½ kg peas (frozen)

## Method

1. Place rice on to cook.
2. While the rice is cooking, hard boil the eggs. Remove eggs from the hot water as soon as they are cooked.
3. Melt margarine in a large saucepan, add onion and cook gently until soft. Remove from heat.
4. Stir in the flour and cook gently for 3 – 5 minutes. Remove from heat.
5. Stir in the milk and return to moderate heat. Stir continuously until the sauce comes to the boil. Turn heat down and boil gently for 2 – 3 minutes.
6. Add the drained tuna, chopped up hard cooked egg, peas, corn and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the cheese to the sauce.
7. Pour sauce into a greased ovenproof dish, sprinkle with remainder of the grated cheese.
8. Bake in a moderate oven (180°C) until heated and the cheese has melted.

## Serve

Serve with the rice, a salad and a slice of wholemeal bread spread with margarine.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = 1½ serves**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Rice could be cooked the day before and refrigerated. Rice also freezes well so, rice could be cooked well ahead of time and frozen.
2. The eggs could be hard boiled and shelled the day before then refrigerated in an airtight container until needed.
3. If there is no oven space available, the sauce could be served directly onto or with the rice and then sprinkled with a small amount of the grated cheese. There is no real need for this dish to be reheated in the oven.
4. If possible, choose tuna canned in spring water as this will reduce salt content of recipe.

# Tuna Mornay

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 – 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

## Ingredients

4 - 6 x 425g cans tuna, drained

3 x 420g cans of asparagus soup or chicken soup (concentrate, not 'ready to eat')

2 x 400g cans of chopped tomatoes

4 onions, chopped or grated

3 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

1 cup fresh wholemeal breadcrumbs

2 cups grated cheese

2 T margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)

1½ kg wholemeal pasta

## Method

1. Fry onion in the oil until it is soft.
2. Rub the margarine into the breadcrumbs then mix with the grated cheese.
3. Combine the onions, soup, chopped tomatoes and the tuna.
4. Place the mixture into greased ovenproof dishes and sprinkle with the breadcrumb and cheese mix.
5. Place into a moderate oven (180°C) for about 30 minutes or until heated through.
6. Cook the pasta while the mornay is in the oven heating through.

## Serve

Serve with side salad.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. If possible, choose tuna canned in spring water to reduce the salt content.
2. Two slices of bread makes about 1 cup of breadcrumbs.
3. Wheat germ could be used instead of breadcrumbs.
4. Canned salmon could be used instead of tuna.
5. Cooked chicken could be used instead of canned fish.
6. If consistency of mornay is too thick, add a little milk.
7. Vegetables could be served instead of a side salad.
8. Vegetables could be incorporated into the mornay along with the tuna etc.

# Tuscan Beef Casserole

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** : 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1½ hours

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Vegetables = 1½ serves

## Ingredients

2¾ kg stewing steak e.g. round or blade (cubed)	1 cup chopped parsley
3 onions, chopped	5 cups beef stock
10 potatoes cut into chunks	4 T margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)
½ bunch celery, sliced	8 T plain flour
5 carrots cut into bite-sized pieces	2 – 3 T crushed garlic
2 cups peas	¾ cup tomato paste (look for 'no added salt')
300g mushrooms, sliced	3 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)
1 x 400g can butter beans	
1 cup red lentils (uncooked)	

## Method

1. Prepare vegetables and cut up the meat.
2. Dust the meat in half the flour.
3. Heat the oil, add the garlic then brown the meat in batches.
4. Set the meat aside and lightly sauté (fry) the onion until soft. Remove from pan.
5. Melt margarine in the pan (along with the remaining oil). Remove from heat and stir in the remaining flour. Return to heat and cook for about 1 minute, stir all the time.
6. Remove from heat and slowly stir in the stock. Return to heat and bring to the boil stirring all the time.
7. Add meat and all the vegetables except the peas. Simmer, lid on for 1 – 1½ hours or until tender.
8. Add the peas 5 minutes before serving.

## Helpful hints

1. Potato could be cooked separately and mashed. Cook approximately 4kg potatoes if mashing. The amount could vary according to the age and appetite of the children.
2. Browning meat in batches will make browning easier.
3. For extra flavour, the onions could be fried until they are lightly browned.
4. This dish could be cooked in the oven as a casserole or in a slow cooker. Extra time may be needed (especially if a slow cooker is used).
5. Other vegetables could be used e.g. pumpkin, sweet potato and corn.
6. If purchasing stock look for 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' varieties.



# Vegetable And Meat Strudel

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 20 minutes (approximately)

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Vegetables = 1 serve  
Cereal Foods = ½ serve

## Ingredients

- 2 – 3 packets of filo pastry
- 2 ¾ kg good quality beef mince
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)
- ½ cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 cup chutney or tomato sauce
- 4 cups diced potato
- 4 cups diced sweet potato
- 4 cups of other vegetables such as frozen corn kernels

## Method

1. Heat the oil in a pan and brown the meat for at least 10 minutes.
2. Steam the vegetables until they are tender.
3. Mash the vegetables, add the sauce or chutney, chopped parsley then the beaten eggs.
4. Combine the mashed vegetable with the cooked meat.
5. Make individual strudel parcels using 2 sheets of filo pastry for each parcel and about half a cup of filling.
6. Place onto a greased tray (or a tray covered with baking paper) and place into moderate oven for about 10 minutes.

## Helpful hints

1. One cup of grated cheese could be added to the vegetables.
2. Other minced meat could be used instead of beef.
3. Using double thickness of filo for each parcel will help prevent the filo pastry from 'tearing'. This could be done by folding one sheet of filo in half or using 2 sheets depending on the amount of filling that is put into each parcel.
4. There is no need to oil or 'butter' between the sheets of filo pastry.
5. Prevent pastry sheets from drying out by covering with a slightly damp tea towel or plastic wrap.
6. Boxes or packets of filo pastry contain approximately 20 sheets.

# Vegetable Lentil Bolognese

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 40 – 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** approximately 1 hour

## Ingredients

- 3 x 440g cans brown lentils (6 cups when drained)
- 2 onions, diced
- 5 zucchinis, scrubbed and grated
- 5 carrots, grated
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup tomato paste (look for 'no added salt')
- 2 x 800 g cans tomatoes (chopped or pureed)
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup tomato sauce
- 1 T mixed dried herbs
- 1 T garlic (optional)
- 2 cups reduced fat cheese, grated
- 1½ kg wholemeal pasta
- 4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

## Method

1. Brown onion in oil, add garlic, zucchini and carrot.
2. Add lentils and all remaining ingredients. Simmer gently for 30 – 40 minutes.
3. While Bolognese is simmering, cook the pasta.
4. Place cooked Bolognese into a serving dish and sprinkle with the grated cheese.

## Serve

Serve with the pasta and a side salad.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1½ serves**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. The zucchini and carrot could be replaced with about 6 cups of other vegetables such as grated sweet potato or frozen corn kernels and peas.
2. About  $\frac{1}{2}$  a cup of chopped fresh herbs could be used instead of the 1 T of mixed dried herbs. This is an opportunity to use fresh herbs from the garden.
3. Parsley alone would be fine or, parsley with basil.
3. Other legumes such as cooked/canned butter beans, kidney beans or lima beans can be substituted for the brown lentils.

# Vegetable Slice

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** approximately 1 hour

## Ingredients

- 4 onions, chopped or grated
- 200g lean ham, chopped
- 6 carrots, grated
- 6 zucchini, washed and grated (skin on)
- 2 capsicums, chopped
- ½ bunch celery, chopped
- 3 cups (300g) reduced fat cheese, grated
- ½ kg frozen corn kernels
- 1 x 400g can red kidney beans, drained
- 5 cups wholemeal self raising flour
- 20 eggs, beaten
- 1½ cups reduced fat milk

## Method

1. Mix together the beaten egg and milk then combine with all other ingredients.
2. Pour mixture into greased baking dishes and bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for about 1 hour or until firm.

## Serve

Serve with wholemeal bread spread with margarine and salad.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1½ serves**  
**Cereal Foods = 1½ serves**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Corn could be replaced with peas and spinach could also be used.
2. Red kidney beans could be replaced with any other canned (or cooked) legumes such as chick peas, butter beans, bean mix or haricot beans.
3. Remove the ham to make a vegetarian option.

# Zucchini Slice

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 45 minutes – 1 hour

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

## Ingredients

- 2 kg zucchini, washed
- 4 onions, chopped
- 500g lean ham, chopped
- 3 cups (300g) reduced fat cheese, grated
- 3 cups self raising, wholemeal flour
- 2 cups corn kernels (frozen)
- 2 cups peas (frozen)
- 24 eggs, beaten

## Method

1. Grate the unpeeled zucchinis.
2. Combine all ingredients and pour into greased, ovenproof dishes.
3. Bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for 30 - 40 minutes.

## Serve

Serve with wholemeal bread spread with margarine.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = 1 serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Vegetables other than corn and peas could be used e.g. grated pumpkin, grated sweet potato or finely diced capsicum.
2. Serve with a garden salad.
3. Remove ham for a vegetarian option.
4. Add herbs such as chopped thyme or parsley for added flavour.

# Banana Bread

**Serves:** 20 pieces

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 20 – 30 minutes

## Ingredients

- 2 cup refined self raising flour
- 2 cup wholemeal self raising flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 3 cups infant rice cereal (iron enriched)
- 1 cup wheat germ
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 6 T golden syrup
- 4 eggs
- 4 large ripe bananas (or 6 smaller ones)
- 2 cup reduced fat milk
- ½ cup oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)
- 2 cups sultanas or chopped dates (optional)

## Method

1. Combine all the dry ingredients (flour, cereal, wheat germ, brown sugar and baking powder). Mix well and make sure that there are no lumps. If using sultanas or chopped dates, add now.
2. Beat the eggs and add the mashed banana, golden syrup, milk and oil. Stir and add to the dry ingredients. Mix well.
3. Grease and line the base of cake tin(s), then spoon mixture into them.
4. Bake in a slightly lower than moderate oven (170°C) to help prevent over browning or burning. Cook for 20 – 30 minutes. Test with a skewer to make sure the centre of the banana bread is cooked.

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Fruit = ½ serve  
Cereal Foods = 1 serve

# Banana Pudding

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 20 – 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 minutes

## Ingredients

250ml oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

1 cup sugar

800ml orange juice

7 eggs, beaten

3 cups refined self raising flour

3 cups wholemeal self raising flour

12 small bananas, sliced

## Method

1. Beat the oil, sugar and juice together then add the beaten eggs and mix well.
2. Fold in the flour.
3. Stir through the sliced bananas.
4. Pour into greased baking dishes and bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for 30 minutes.

## Serve

Serve warm with custard.

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Fruit = ½ serve  
Cereal Foods = ½ serve  
This includes the 'serve  
with' suggestions.

# Date Loaf

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 15 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 hour – 1¼ hours

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Fruit = ½ serve  
Cereal Foods = ½ serve

## Ingredients

4 cups dates

2 cups water

4 eggs, beaten

½ cup golden syrup

½ cup orange juice

4 cups self raising wholemeal flour

2 tsp. cinnamon

## Method

1. Combine dates and water in a saucepan and simmer gently for about 5 minutes or until dates have softened and blended in with the water. Stir from time to time.
2. Allow the date mixture to cool.
3. Combine the beaten eggs, golden syrup and orange juice then add to the cooled dates.
4. Gently fold in the flour, do not over mix.
5. Pour into two greased, lined loaf tins and bake in a slightly lower than moderate oven (170°C) for about one hour. Test with a skewer to make sure the centre of loaf is cooked.
6. Turn out onto a cake cooler. Slice when cold.

## Helpful hints

1. Two cups of grated carrot could be added.
2. Could be cooked in mini muffin tins. Reduce the cooking time.
3. If cooking in a loaf tin, to prevent over browning, the temperature may have to be reduced a little in the second half of the cooking time.
4. Cutting dates in half (using scissors) will speed up softening and help ensure there are no seeds.

# Fruit Crumble

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 20 – 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 20 – 30 minutes

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Fruit = ½ serve

## Ingredients

3 x 800g cans solid pack (pie) apples

1 cup plain wholemeal flour

1 cup wheat germ

1 cup rolled oats

1 cup coconut

1 cup brown sugar

200g margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)

## Method

1. Place fruit in oven dishes.
2. Mix dry ingredients together.
3. Melt margarine and pour over all the dry ingredients and mix well.
4. Sprinkle crumble over the fruit and bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for about 15 minutes.

## Serve

Serve with custard.

## Helpful hints

1. Any fruit could be used instead of apple.
2. If canned fruit in natural juice is used, consider that most of the liquid will need to be drained off. This will mean that more than 3 cans of fruit will be needed.
3. Stewed, fresh or dried fruit would also be suitable.



# Fruit Sponge Pudding

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

## Ingredients

5 eggs, beaten

250ml oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

1½ cups sugar

2 cups reduced fat milk

2 cups refined self raising flour

3 cups wholemeal self raising flour

3 x 825g cans fruit (in natural juice)

## Method

1. Drain most of the liquid from the fruit.
2. Combine egg, oil and sugar and beat well.
3. Fold the milk and the flour through the egg mix.
4. Place fruit into a large baking dish and cover with the sponge batter.
5. Bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for 30 – 40 minutes or until cooked when tested with a skewer.

## Serve

Serve with yoghurt or custard.

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Fruit = ½ serve  
Cereal Foods = ½ serve

# Iron Rich Muffins

**Serves:** 40 cupcakes

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 15 minutes

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Cereal Foods = ½ serve

## Ingredients

¾ cup margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)

½ cup sugar

3 T golden syrup

4 eggs, beaten

1½ cups reduced fat milk

2 cups iron fortified infant cereal

1 cup wholemeal self raising flour

2 cups refined self raising flour

Vanilla to taste

## Method

1. Cream together the margarine, sugar and golden syrup.
2. Gradually add the beaten eggs.
3. Gently stir in the milk.
4. Fold through the combined flour and cereal.
5. Spoon into patty papers or well greased cupcake tins.
6. Bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for about 15 minutes. Test with a skewer.

## Helpful hints

1. The mixture can be cooked as a slab cake then cut into the 40 serve size pieces.
2. This mixture can also be used to make a fruit upside down cake.
3. If making a slab cake or a fruit upside down cake with the mixture, the oven temperature will need to be between 150°C and 170°C. The cooking time will be approximately 20 – 30 minutes. Test with a skewer.
4. All wholemeal self raising flour could be used.
5. For variety, try adding some dried fruit like sultanas.

# Weetbix™ Slice

**Serves:** 40 serve size pieces

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 minutes

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Cereal Foods = ½ serve

## Ingredients

- 3 cups self raising wholemeal flour
- 12 Weetbix™, well crushed
- 2 cups wheat germ
- 2 cups Milo™
- 2 cups sultanas
- 10 T margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)
- 1½ cup brown sugar
- 2 T golden syrup
- 4 eggs

## Method

1. Grease a baking tin (approximately 20 x 28 cm) and line the bottom of the tin.
2. Combine the flour, wheat germ, crushed Weetbix™, sultanas and Milo™ in a mixing bowl.
3. Melt margarine, brown sugar and golden syrup together (warm only, don't allow to become hot).
4. Stir the beaten eggs and the margarine together then pour into the dry ingredients and mix well.
5. Lightly press the mixture into the prepared baking tin.
6. Bake at 150°C for 20 – 30 minutes. Cut into squares while still warm but leave to cool in the tin. This slice is soft when it is first removed from the oven but will firm up as it cools.

## Serve

Don't cook for longer than 30 minutes or slice may become too hard when cold.

## Helpful hints

Other chocolate flavourings or powders cannot replace the Milo™. The Milo™ is included to provide iron.

# Wholemeal Cheese Scones

**Serves:** 40 scones (approximately)

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 15 minutes

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Cereal Foods = 1 serve

## Ingredients

- 4 cups refined self raising flour
- 4 cups wholemeal self raising flour
- 4 T margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)
- 2 cups (200g) grated reduced fat cheese
- 2 cups reduced fat milk
- 4 eggs

## Method

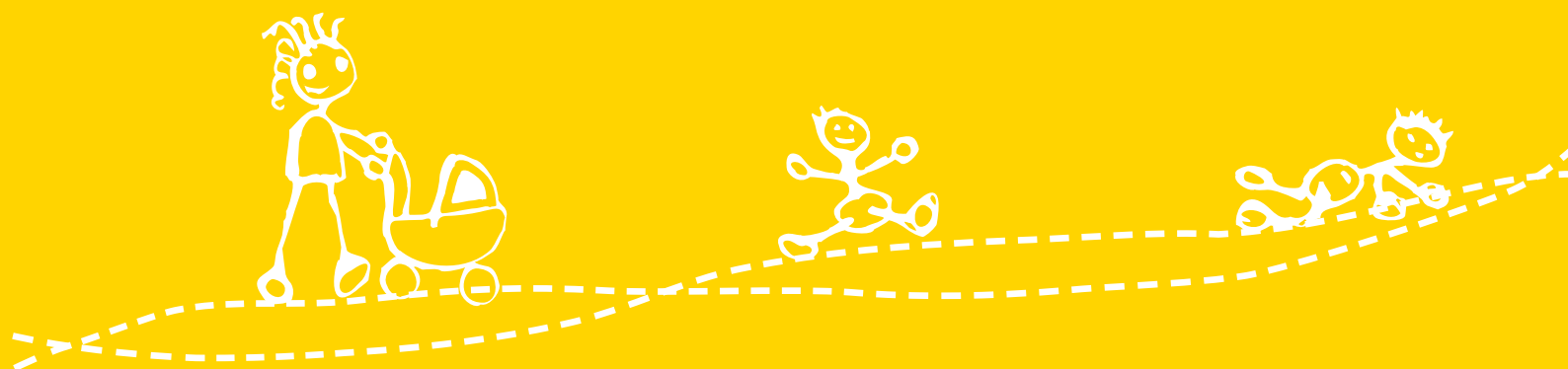
1. Beat eggs and milk together.
2. Rub margarine into combined flours then add grated cheese.
3. Stir the combined egg and milk into the flour to make a soft dough.
4. Lightly knead dough on a lightly floured surface.
5. Pat dough out to approximately 2cm thick.
6. Cut with a sharp, lightly floured cutter or knife into at least 40 scones.
7. Place onto a greased tray and bake in a hot oven (200°C - 220°C) for 10 – 15 minutes.

## Helpful hints

1. Two cups of sultanas could be added (before adding the milk and egg).
2. If dough is too sticky to knead, divide the mixture between 2 greased loaf tins and bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for 30 – 40 minutes or until cooked. Cool before slicing.
3. Dough could be cooked as a damper.
4. Instead of using a scone cutter, pat dough out to about 2cm thick then, using a sharp, floured knife, cut into square (or rectangle) scones.
5. Scones freeze well.

## Section 4

### Making it Happen





## Supporting Ongoing Improvement to Nutrition Practices of Services

Introducing new nutrition practices or improving those that currently exist should occur as part of routine quality improvement processes that are consistent with the National Quality Framework. The aim of this section is to describe each step of a continuous quality improvement process and how it can be used to improve your nutrition practices consistent with *Caring for Children* recommendations. If documented, the steps will also assist in providing evidence for demonstrating achievements and goals in the areas of child health and wellbeing (NQS Quality Area 2.2.2), and can contribute to your Quality Improvement Plan.

**Figure 1: Supporting Continuous Quality Improvement**



### Step 1: Review current practice and identify needs

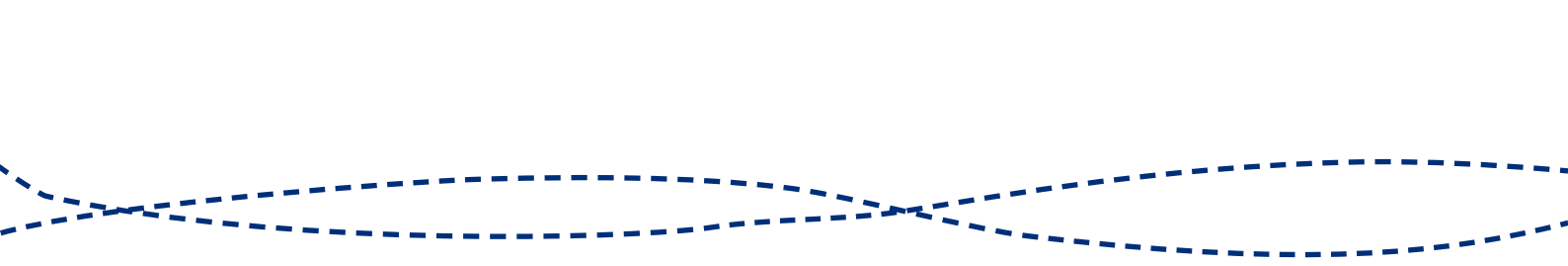
Review the *Caring for Children* resource to assess how your current nutrition practices align with those recommended. Consider what areas your service is doing well in, and record what areas require improvement. Some practices you could assess include:

#### **Policy**

- Are your nutrition policies consistent with *Caring for Children* recommendations?
- Are staff and families aware of service's food and nutrition policies?
- Do staff and families adhere to service food and nutrition policies?

#### **Food and drinks**

- For services preparing food, is the content of menus consistent with nutrition guidelines; are menus reviewed regularly?

- 
- e. For services where food is brought from home, are there service guidelines or policies regarding the type and amount of foods families should pack to meet *Caring for Children* recommendations; are families aware of these; do you have processes/ guidelines/strategies to support families to pack healthy foods?
  - f. Are staff practices and service policies regarding food safety and special dietary requirements consistent with *Caring for Children* recommendations?

#### **Nutrition environment**

- g. Do educators role model healthy eating to children?
- h. Do educators make positive statements regarding healthy eating during meal time?
- i. Do educators use non- food rewards to recognise positive behaviour?

### **Step 2: Plan for change**

Good planning will increase the likelihood that efforts to change service nutrition practices will be achieved. Following the review of current practices (step 1):

1. Prioritise and set achievable goals to improve identified practices.
2. Consider any barriers that need to be overcome and what actions may need to be taken to address these. For example, you may need to clarify roles, seek training or learning opportunities, communicate expectations to educators or families, devise new policies, implement reminders or develop resources.
3. Record in an Action or Quality Improvement Plan the goal, the actions that need to take place, when actions are to be completed and by whom (Table 4).
4. Involve the nominated supervisor, educators, cooks and where appropriate families in planning the goal. Reach consensus on which practice to improve and how this will be achieved. This could be done during routine staff or parent meetings.



**Table 4: Example Action Plan or Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for nutrition practices**

MQS/EYLF – Standard / Element	What outcome or goal do we seek?	Priority (L/M/H)	How will we get this outcome (Steps)	By who	By when	Achieved
Standard 2.2 Element 2.2.1	Provide only non-sweetened drinks and reduced fat milk for children in the 3-5 year old rooms.	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amend service food and nutrition policy to support the provision of reduced fat milk to children 3-5 years</li> <li>Change milk order to replace full fat with reduced fat</li> <li>Communicate change in milk provision to families through newsletter</li> <li>Educators to provide only non-sweetened drinks and reduced fat milk to children</li> </ul>	Nominated supervisor  Cook  Admin  All staff	6th June  21st June  9th June  25th June	

\*\* This table is based on the NQF Quality Improvement Plan template



### Step 3: Implement

Undertake the actions documented in your Action or Quality Improvement Plan. As introducing change can be difficult:

- Have the support and endorsement of nominated supervisors for any changes in nutrition practices.
- Allow sufficient time for change and acknowledge that implementation of nutrition practices may not be perfect from the beginning.
- Communicate any changes, and the rationale for these changes to service practices to staff and families.
- Integrate nutrition practices into existing service processes such as programming and child and staff orientation procedures.
- Monitor implementation progress to ensure completion of tasks documented in Action Plans.

### Step 4: Reflect and evaluate

Reflection and evaluation will enable your service to learn from the successes and challenges of efforts to improve nutrition practices. Such learning will increase the likelihood of successful implementation into the future. Key to reflection and evaluation is the collection of information to assess whether the desired changes to service nutrition policies or practices have occurred. Using this information:

1. Make an objective judgment about the success of efforts to change the nutrition practice or policy documented in the Action or Quality Improvement Plan. Record this in your plan.
2. Seek feedback from relevant staff or families about the change process (i.e. what worked well and what opportunities there are for further improvement). This could also occur at staff meetings.
3. Identify if there are opportunities for further improvement, re-set goals and attempt again practice change or if the practice or policy has been implemented adopt new goals (Step 1).
4. Monitor the on-going implementation of practices to ensure that these are sustained.

#### **An ongoing process....**

The process for bringing about change (see Figure 1) is cyclic, and therefore is a continuous process. Your service should continue to review, plan, implement and evaluate on an ongoing basis to ensure that nutrition practices are improved and improvements are maintained.

## Section 5

### Healthy Eating Learning Experiences





## Healthy Eating Learning Experiences

Learning experiences involving food and healthy eating will encourage children to develop a range of skills as well as their knowledge of food.

At this young age we are aiming for children to develop a positive and relaxed attitude to food and eating rather than creating too many rules and taboos around food. So it is important that discussions with young children about food focus on the positive and avoid describing and categorising food or specific nutrients (e.g. sugar, fat) as 'good' or 'bad', focus on food groups and use the terms 'every day' and 'sometimes' foods.



The healthy eating learning experiences outlined below are designed to encourage cooks (and educators) to promote children's exploration, awareness and enjoyment of healthy eating from a young age. Also these ideas provide cooks with the opportunity to get involved with the children.

Foods from a variety of cultures should be included, particularly those cultures represented at your service.

### **Suggested learning experiences:**

- Food Cupboard - make a food cupboard out of a large piece of cardboard by folding both of the side edges of the cardboard in to meet each other at the centre. These will form the doors of the cupboard. Inside, make shelves which will hold food pictures. Just stick in pieces of clear plastic to form pockets. Food pictures can be glued on to a cardboard backing for durability. The children can then stack the shelves with food pictures and take foods out of the cupboard to make imaginary meals. This activity could be used to make children aware of a variety of foods so try to include a range of healthy food options.
- Gardening - use gardening activities to explain how foods grow. Create a fruit and vegetable garden with children participating and observing the plants growing. Tomatoes, radishes, sweet corn, cucumber, carrots and herbs are easy to grow. Children could plant seeds in individual pots labelled with their own name. When plants are large enough, transplant into the garden and when ready, harvest for children to eat at snack time or use in lunch recipes. Seedlings with some instructions may be available to families to take home and plant in a box or garden. Around harvest time, include some of the harvest foods on the menu or for taste testing.
- A 'hands-on' healthy cooking experiences is the best way to encourage children to eat healthy snacks and to involve them in the preparation and cooking (or making if no kitchen is available) of them. Being able to prepare and cook is a great skill to have and lots of fun.

- Discuss healthy eating with the children at mealtimes, offer a range of foods from different cultures, involve children in setting up the lunch area as a restaurant, create a healthy lunch book that includes recipes and food photos and children's conversations.
- Explore the various senses associated with fruits and vegetables, such as smell, touch, colour, taste, texture and sound. Compare raw vegetables and fresh fruit to cooked vegetables and stewed fruit. For example fresh apple or stewed apple, raw and cooked carrots.
- Explore vegetables or fruits in season - ask the children if they know the name of the fruit/vegetable, have they tasted it before and talk about the colour, taste and the different ways it can be eaten.
- Prepare morning tea or afternoon tea foods that are different shades of one colour such as cucumber, green apples, celery, Chinese cabbage, avocado and green capsicums.
- Consider planning taste a rainbow weeks – featuring fruit and vegetables for different colours of the rainbow.
- Have a compost bin or worm farm at your service to show the children how food scraps can be recycled and what foods are appropriate to feed your worms (i.e. vegetable and fruit peelings).

## Development of Co-ordination and Motor Skills

By helping to prepare food for eating, children can develop and refine various co-ordination and motor skills.

Food handling skills will need to be tailored to the level of muscular development of the young child. Consider the choice of kitchen tools appropriate to each child.

Plan experiences that will minimise adult participation. Adults should be prepared to give positive instruction or provide hints on how to get the job done.

### Two Year Olds


Big muscles, for example the arm:

- Scrubbing, wiping, mopping – vegetables, bench tops, floors.
- Tear, break, snap – lettuce, cauliflower, green beans.
- Dipping – use fresh fruit and vegetables from the tear, break and snap activity.

### Three Year Olds

Medium muscles, for example the hand:

- Wrapping vegetables in foil for baking.
- Pouring liquid into sink or sand base to begin with. As skill develops children could pour liquid from a jug into a tumbler. Mark the side of the tumbler to show children when to stop pouring. Children should clean up their own spills.

- 
- Mixing easy-to-mix batters.
  - Shaking – use a small jar to shake whipping cream until butter is produced. Shake coconut and food colouring in a jar to tint coconut.
  - Spreading – use a dull knife or spatula to spread bread.

#### **Four Year Olds**

Small muscles, for example the fingers:

- Peeling – oranges, mandarins, bananas.
- Rolling – a round shape between two hands such as meat balls, dough balls.
- Juicing – using a hand squeezer.
- Mashing – use forks or hand held mashers (not electric) to mash vegetables or fruit.

#### **Five Year Olds**

Fine co-ordination:

- Measuring – using spoons and scales (show them how to pour out ingredients you've already measured, start with small amounts of dry ingredients before moving to wet ingredients).
- Cutting – using dull knives and semi-soft foods such as bananas, cooked potato and cheese.
- Grating – using a hand held upright grater to grate cheese and vegetables (watch their fingers closely so that they don't get cut or scraped).
- Peeling – e.g. carrots. Show children how to safely angle a peeler downward to remove the skin.
- Eggs - cracking and beating eggs with a fork (show them how to gently tap the shell to crack the surface and use their thumbs to pull apart the shell).

#### **Don't forget children can also help:**

- set and clear the table
- clean up – scrape the plates into the bin and stack
- collect the ingredients and equipment and put them away.

### **Social Skills**

Learning to share, serve food and eat food in an acceptable manner are social skills that may be encouraged and developed at meal time.

Don't forget food experiences that are related to season and celebrations. Include food celebration experiences of different cultures and religions particularly those represented in your service.

Perhaps this would be an ideal opportunity to involve families and the community.

Explore inviting a different family to lunch, when a child's family enjoys a meal at the service with their child.

## Vocabulary Skills

By using the correct terms for equipment, food and food processes, children are able to increase their vocabulary.

## Hygiene and Safety

Encourage positive hygiene habits such as:

- Washing and drying hands before eating or preparing foods.
- Washing fruit and vegetables before eating or cooking.
- Cleaning up after preparing and eating food.
- Try singing to the tune of 'Mary Had a Little Lamb' the following:  
    "Now it is clean up time, clean up time, clean up time.  
    Now it is clean up time and I will need your help"
- Remember cleaning up should be a part of any experience.

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 consumed, including:
  - tomatoes (avoid any green parts - leaves and vines are toxic\*)
  - rhubarb (the leaf blade is toxic)
  - stone fruit (apricot, cherry, peach, plum – the kernel is poisonous)
  - avocado (leaves are toxic\*)
  - potatoes (green skin, green flesh, sprouts, stems and leaves are toxic)
  - take care not to use flowers or plants as decorations on plates or tables that can be highly toxic.
- Some foods may present a choking risk. Cooks and educators need to consider the age and individual ability of the children when undertaking food-based learning experiences.
- Safe food handling requirements must be maintained at all times for staff and children.
- Choose food experiences that limit children's contact with heat or sharp implements.

**Note for toxic\*:** Most of these substances that are toxic need a child to consume a large amount. Generally these substances taste bitter and are unappealing to eat for both adults and children.



# Make your own Fruit Clown Face



## Materials

- Paper plates, 1 per child
- A variety of fresh fruit such as pineapple, blueberries, bananas, kiwi fruit, strawberries, oranges, rockmelon and raisins
- Small bowls
- Reduced fat yoghurt, to use as a dip
- Serving spoons

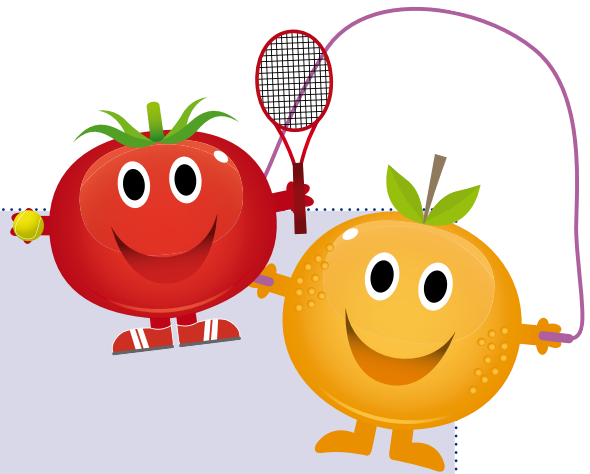
## Prepare beforehand

1. Rinse and cut the fruit into pieces.
2. Make your own Fruit Clown Face as an example.
3. Pour the yoghurt dip into small bowls for sharing. Place a spoon in each bowl.

## With the children

1. Set out cut fruits and materials on a table where children can reach.
2. Ask children to use as many different fruits as they can to make their own Fruit Clown Face.
3. When children are finished, ask them to share their Fruit Clown Face with the class. Ask questions like:
  - o What colours and shapes are the fruits you chose? Do you know their names?
  - o Which of your own clown's fruit are you most excited to eat?
  - o Which of your clown's fruits have you never tried before?
  - o Why is your Fruit Clown Face good for you to eat?
4. Pass out the yoghurt dip. Invite children to eat and enjoy their Fruit Clown Faces.

# Make your own Veggie Super Hero



## Materials

- Paper plates, 1 per child
- A variety of washed vegetables (e.g. 1 head of broccoli, 2 zucchinis, 1 small can of corn, 1 small can of sliced olives, 2 red peppers, 1 bunch celery and 3-4 whole carrots)
- Small bowls
- Hommus, to use as a dip

## Prepare beforehand

1. Rinse and cut the broccoli into small florets; the zucchini into round slices; the red peppers into thin strips and then in half; the celery into 3-inch stalks; and the carrots into 2-inch strips.
2. Drain the corn and olives.
3. Make your own Veggie Super Hero as an example.
4. Pour hommus into small bowls for sharing. Place a spoon in each bowl.

## With the children

1. Set out cut vegetables and materials on a table where children can reach them.
2. Ask children to use as many different types of veggies as they can to create their own Veggie Super Hero. Have them give their hero a name.
3. When children are finished, ask them to share their Super Hero with the class.  
Ask questions like:
  - o What is your Super Hero's name? What are his/her super powers?
  - o What colours and shapes are the veggies you chose? Do you know their names?
  - o Why did you choose the veggies you did?
  - o Which of these veggies have you eaten before? Did you enjoy them?
  - o Will this be the first time you are trying any of these veggies? Which ones?
4. Pass out the hommus. Invite children to eat and enjoy their Veggie Super Heroes.



## Resources

### General Nutrition

- **Eat for Health – Australian Dietary Guidelines**, 2013, Commonwealth of Australia: [www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)
- **Healthy Kids website** is a joint initiative of NSW Health, the Heart Foundation, NSW Sport and Recreation and NSW Department of Education and Communities. This site provides supportive information on promoting healthy eating for children as well as information and resources related to the *Munch & Move* program: [www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au)
- **Munch & Move resources:** [www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/munch-move-resources.aspx](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/munch-move-resources.aspx)
- **Get Up & Grow resources.** The Commonwealth Government have developed a comprehensive set of resources entitled *Get up and Grow* designed to be used in a wide range of early childhood settings by families, educators and carers. [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-early-childhood-nutrition-resources](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-early-childhood-nutrition-resources)
- **Go for 2&5** is an Australian Government, State and Territory health initiative, promoting the good health benefits of eating fruit and vegetables. This site includes many fruit and vegetable recipes: [www.gofor2and5.com.au](http://www.gofor2and5.com.au)
- **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](http://www.freshforkids.com.au)
- **Raising Children** website and resources. This Australian parenting website supported by the Australian Government offers information for families on healthy eating for children: [www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)
- **Kids Health, The Children’s Hospital at Westmead** provides fact sheets for families linking to children’s healthy eating, allergies, special diets and oral care: [www.chw.edu.au/parents/factsheets](http://www.chw.edu.au/parents/factsheets)
- **Nutrition Australia website:** [www.nutritionaustralia.org.au](http://www.nutritionaustralia.org.au)
  - o Healthy Food for Families (cookbook)
  - o Nutrition for Toddlers and Young Children
  - o Publications on a variety of topics
- The **Feeding and Eating Experts:** <http://www.ellynsatter.com/>



## Infant Nutrition

- **Australian Breastfeeding Association:** [www.breastfeeding.asn.au](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au).
- **Starting Family Foods** brochure. This NSW Health brochure is an easy guide for families on introducing solid foods to babies. A PDF version can be downloaded from the NSW Health website: [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)
- **Teach your baby to drink from a cup** brochure. This NSW Health brochure provides advice on how and when to teach baby to drink from a cup [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)

## Dental Health

- **Australian Dental Association** website provides information about dental health: [www.ada.org.au](http://www.ada.org.au)
- **Centre for Oral Health Strategy:** [www.health.nsw.gov.au/topics/oral.asp](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/topics/oral.asp)

## Food Allergies and Intolerance

- **Anaphylaxis Australia** website provides resources: [www.allergyfacts.org.au](http://www.allergyfacts.org.au)
- **Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Allergy Unit** Resources [www.sswahs.nsw.gov.au/rpa/allergy/](http://www.sswahs.nsw.gov.au/rpa/allergy/)
- **The Children's Hospital Westmead**, Allergy Factsheets [www.kidshealth.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/fact-sheets](http://www.kidshealth.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/fact-sheets)
- **Australian Society for Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA):** [www.allergy.org.au](http://www.allergy.org.au)
  - Prevention of Anaphylaxis in Schools, Preschools and Childcare: 2012 update
  - Action Plans for Anaphylaxis
  - Infant Feeding Advice
  - Anaphylaxis E-Training
- To order auto injection training devices:
  - EpiPen trainers: email [alphapharmss@alphapharm.com.au](mailto:alphapharmss@alphapharm.com.au)
  - Anapen trainers: email [info@analert.com](mailto:info@analert.com)
- **Food Intolerance Network:** [www.fedup.com.au/](http://www.fedup.com.au/)
- **The Gut Foundation Information** on Milk Intolerance and Milk Allergy: [www.gutfoundation.com/publications-1/milk-allergy-and-intolerance-in-children-2003](http://www.gutfoundation.com/publications-1/milk-allergy-and-intolerance-in-children-2003)



## Special Diets

Information can be obtained from the following organisations in your state or territory:

- Asthma Australia
- Kidney Health Australia
- Children's Hospital
- Coeliac Australia
- Cystic Fibrosis Federation, Australia
- Diabetes Australia
- Hyperactivity Attention Deficit Association NSW

## Safe Food Handling and Hygiene

- **NSW Food Authority.** [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry/industry-sector-requirements/childrens-services/](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry/industry-sector-requirements/childrens-services/)
- **Food Standards Australia New Zealand.** [www.foodstandards.gov.au/](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/)
- ***Staying Healthy. Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services.*** Fifth edition. 2012 (Updated June 2013) [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au)

## Multicultural Resources

- **Ethnic Child Care Family and Community Services Co-operative Limited**  
[www.eccfcsc.org](http://www.eccfcsc.org)
- The **NSW Government's Human Services (Community Services)** website provides information booklets for Aboriginal families and carers on basic child development (birth to 5 years of age), including healthy eating and physical activity. There are 9 booklets representing Aboriginal regions throughout NSW:  
[www.community.nsw.gov.au/parents\\_carers\\_and\\_families/parenting/for\\_aboriginal\\_parents\\_and\\_carers.html](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/parents_carers_and_families/parenting/for_aboriginal_parents_and_carers.html)

## Healthy Lunchboxes

- **The Magic Lunchbox** – resource for teachers  
A story book which teaches students about packing a healthy lunchbox for school.  
[www.healthpromotion.com.au/Magic\\_Lunchbox/MagicLunchbox\\_Index.html](http://www.healthpromotion.com.au/Magic_Lunchbox/MagicLunchbox_Index.html)
- Look under the 'Magic Lunchbox Resources' tab to find free education resources.
- **Healthy Kids NSW website:**
  1. Lunchbox ideas [www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/parents-carers/healthy-eating-and-drinking/lunch-box-ideas.aspx](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/parents-carers/healthy-eating-and-drinking/lunch-box-ideas.aspx)
  2. *Munch & Move* Healthy Lunchbox factsheet [www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au)

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- **Healthy Kids Association** – Packing a healthy lunchbox  
[www.healthy-kids.com.au/parents/packing-a-healthy-lunchbox/](http://www.healthy-kids.com.au/parents/packing-a-healthy-lunchbox/)
  - **Better Health Channel** – Lunchboxes: Healthy shopping ideas. [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcsite.nsf/pagesvideo/healthy\\_lunchbox\\_what\\_to\\_include?open](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcsite.nsf/pagesvideo/healthy_lunchbox_what_to_include?open)
  - **Packing a school lunchbox – Nutrition Australia DVD (15mins)**  
[www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/resource/packing-school-lunchbox](http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/resource/packing-school-lunchbox)
  - **Weighing Up Your Lunch – interactive game**  
[www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au/hav/articles.nsf/html/index.html?Open](http://www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au/hav/articles.nsf/html/index.html?Open)  
(Go for Your Life -Victorian Government)
  - **Heart Foundation** Lunchbox Ideas [www.heartfoundation.org.au/healthy-eating/mums-united/healthy-eating/Pages/Lunchbox-ideas.aspx](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/healthy-eating/mums-united/healthy-eating/Pages/Lunchbox-ideas.aspx)
  - **Fresh for Kids** Healthy lunchbox ideas  
[www.freshforkids.com.au/lunch\\_box/lunch\\_box.html](http://www.freshforkids.com.au/lunch_box/lunch_box.html)



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Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (2010) *Infant Feeding Advice*. Accessed 12th June 2014 from: [www.allergy.org.au/health-professionals/papers/ascia-infant-feeding-advice](http://www.allergy.org.au/health-professionals/papers/ascia-infant-feeding-advice)

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. *Guide to the National Quality Standard (2013)* ISBN 978-0-642-78102-4 [PDF]. Accessed 25th June 2014 from: <http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/NQF03-Guide-to-NQS-130902.pdf>

Australian Government Department of Health & Ageing. *Get Up & Grow: Healthy eating and physical activity for early childhood (Director/Coordinator Book)* Commonwealth of Australia 2009 updated in April 2013. Accessed 27th June 2014 from: [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

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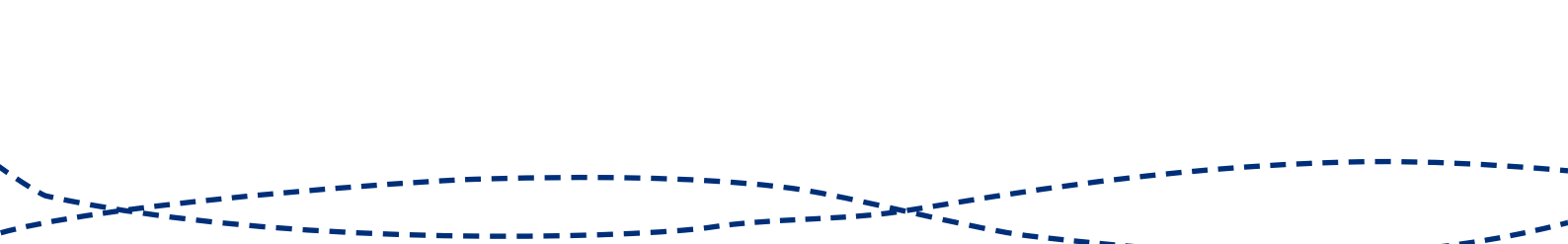
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