



HEALTHY EATING LEARNING
EXPERIENCES RESOURCE



Acknowledgements

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In developing this resource, every effort has been made to acknowledge the original sources of information and to seek permission to reproduce published work.

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Photographs used in this resource have a signed consent form from each child's parent or carer. Please note that the *Munch & Move* program supports the wearing of appropriate hats for sun protection, however in some photographs the child is either in the shade, under a protective outdoor roof or the child's hat has been temporarily removed so that his/her face can be seen.

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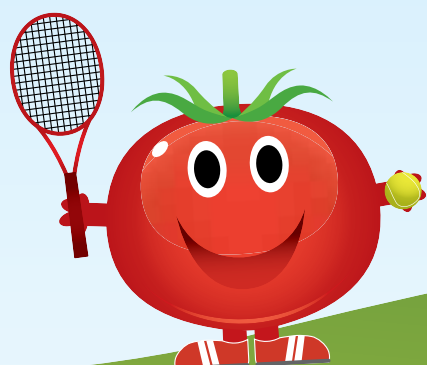
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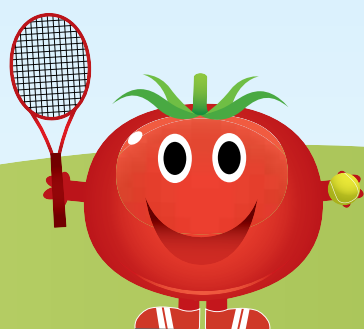
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Introduction



Introduction

This *Healthy Eating Learning Experiences Resource* has been designed to provide early childhood educators with suggestions for a range of fun, innovative and developmentally appropriate learning experiences that can be included and incorporated into everyday routines, interactions and curriculum. It is designed to complement the information, resources and suggestions provided in the *Munch & Move Resource Manual – Birth to Five Years*.

Please note: Each of the suggested experiences can and should be adapted to suit individual children's age/stage of development, identity, interests and abilities.

What is *Munch & Move*?

Munch & Move is a fun, play based program that supports the healthy development of young children from birth to five years of age attending early childhood services across NSW. The program supports educators to encourage children's healthy eating and physical activity through relevant learning experiences, resources and interactions.

Why do we need *Munch & Move*?

As children spend significant amounts of time in early childhood education and care services, these services provide ideal settings to promote appropriate healthy eating and physical activity habits.

Key risk factors for overweight and obesity, such as physical inactivity and poor diet, are modifiable. They can be addressed from an early age through positive, health promoting messages and strategies.

The six key messages that form the basis of *Munch & Move* are:

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

Each of these key messages is of equal importance in promoting healthy, active habits in children from a young age. The *Munch & Move Resource Manual* provides detailed explanations and support for you to implement each key message with the children, families and your service community.



The *Munch* key messages that will be targeted throughout this resource are as follows:

- Choose water as a drink
- Eat more fruit and vegetables
- Choose healthier snacks

***Munch & Move* and the National Quality Framework**

Research shows that the first five years of a child's life shape future health, learning and social development and outcomes. In recognition of this, in 2012 the Australian Government, in partnership with all States and Territory governments, established the National Quality Framework (NQF) to drive continuous improvement in early childhood education and care¹. The NQF is made up of the National Quality Standard (including the approved learning framework), the Education and Care Services National Regulations, and the Education and Care Services National Law.

***Munch & Move* and the National Quality Standard**

Munch & Move links to all seven quality areas of the National Quality Standard (NQS)¹:

- Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
- Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 3: Physical environment
- Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
- Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
- Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership

The *Munch* key messages, and suggestions throughout this resource link primarily to:

NQS Standard 2.1 - Health

Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.

Element 2.1.3 - Healthy Lifestyle

Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.



Munch & Move and the Early Years Learning Framework

Standard 1.1 of the NQS states; "Quality educational programs use an approved learning framework to guide curriculum decision-making and facilitate a shared understanding of children's learning and development". *Belonging, Being and Becoming, The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF)* is the approved learning framework that will be referred to throughout this document². The framework is based around five **Principles**, eight **Practices**, and five **Learning Outcomes** which communicate expectations for children's learning and guide educators in developing quality programs for children.

The EYLF and the *Munch & Move* program place a strong emphasis on **play based learning**. They each, in turn, recognise the importance of intentional teaching, where educators are deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and actions to scaffold the children's existing knowledge and skills.

The suggested learning experiences throughout this resource link closely with the principles, practices and learning outcomes from the EYLF. You will find suggested links throughout, but as every experience will be adapted and modified to suit the context of your service, you will undoubtedly find many other links.

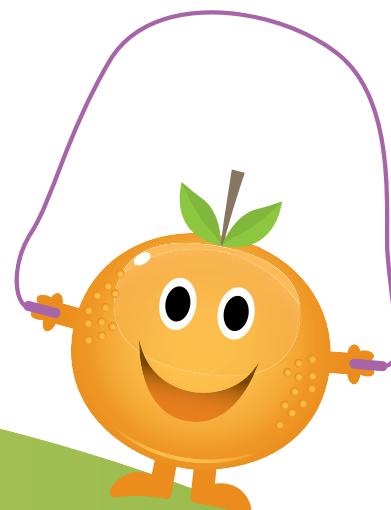
The *Munch* key messages and suggestions throughout this resource link primarily to:

EYLF Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing.



For ease of use, suggested learning experiences have been categorised under: books and literature; songs; rhymes and music; experiments; group games; vegetable gardens; and cooking.



Play Based Approach

We can make an endless amount of plans, but the true magic of teaching and learning comes from your spontaneous, genuine and thoughtful interactions, provisions and relationships with the children. Promoting a play based, child-centred environment encourages children to create, explore, practice and interact with materials, equipment, peers and adults.

EYLF Practice: Responsiveness to children

In response to children's evolving ideas and interests, educators assess, anticipate and extend children's learning via open ended questioning, providing feedback, challenging their thinking and guiding their learning. They make use of spontaneous 'teachable moments' to scaffold children's learning.

EYLF Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Promote children's ability to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing by engaging them in experiences which promote healthy lifestyles and good nutrition.

Role model healthy habits and your enjoyment of a healthy lifestyle.

Eat with the children, talk positively about healthy foods, drink plenty of water, and get active!



The benefits of fruit and vegetable experiences

Identifying different fruits and vegetables and their properties provides children with opportunities to explore and develop an interest in different foods. This assists with the development of life-long healthy eating habits.

Discussion and investigation are encouraged, and the opportunities for extending interests that arise are endless!

Note:

In line with the EYLF Principle 'Respect for Diversity', *Munch & Move* is about providing education and promoting healthy lifestyles in a respectful manner, not judging lifestyle choices of families and individuals. Educators should think critically about opportunities and dilemmas that can arise from diversity and involve family and community members in understanding choices which lead to healthier lifestyles.



Healthy Messages for ALL AGES

This resource has been developed to be used with **all ages** of children in the early childhood education and care setting. You may think to yourself “well, young babies are too little... we’ll start *Munch & Move* once they are pre-schoolers”. In fact it is never too early to interact positively with children about food and nutrition. Rather than solely focussing on planned learning experiences, the most valuable opportunities for learning with babies and toddlers tend to come about through relationships, spontaneous interactions and intentionally selected and placed resources.



Look for this box throughout the document for ideas of how learning experiences can be modified to be suitable for different age groups.

Your Interactions are Vital

As Lauren (educator) and Macey (11 months) water the garden together, Lauren chats away about the different herbs and vegetables. “There’s the basil, give the basil lots of water so that it stays healthy”. Macey reaches over to touch the basil. Lauren helps her to gently pick some leaves and says “Good idea, we can add this to our lunch”. Lauren smells the basil and says “Oh it smells so yummy Macey, here, you have a smell!” Macey moves her nose over to the basil in Lauren’s hand and scrunches her nose up, smelling the basil...

Macey is learning that food comes from the garden, and that the garden needs water to grow. She’s exploring and is exposed to different herbs. Through Lauren’s enthusiasm and role modelling she is helping Macey to attribute positive feelings towards unfamiliar food items. These are quite significant spontaneous interactions, wouldn’t you agree?

NQS Guidance for Element 1.2.2

Educators use spontaneous 'teachable moments' and incidental opportunities to enhance children's play and scaffold their learning.



"That's the way Macey, when you drink up all your water you grow big and strong just like our plants do when we water them!"



You can see in this example how the educator helped Macey to assimilate her recent experience with water from one context to another – from watering the garden to drinking her water.

Resources

Almost any resource can be used to promote the *Munch* key messages with considered interactions and scaffolding from a '*Munch* enthusiast'. Consider ways that you can promote the *Munch* key messages through the resources that you provide. Some suggestions for resources which can be used daily include:

- A4 photographs or images which support the key messages e.g. a child/ children drinking their water or milk, bowls of fruits and vegetables, healthy food plate, different meals, etc. Display images around the room, use as placemats, make your own books, laminate and cut into puzzle pieces... the list is endless.
- Picture books – either made or purchased, which depict images of fruits and vegetables encourage discussion and provide exposure to potentially unfamiliar food items.



An important note about safety

Safety is paramount at all times. All learning experiences must be supervised. Provide constant, close supervision of any learning experience which involves water. Ensure water is emptied immediately after use.

- Hygiene, food allergies, food intolerances and special diets should be considered at all times when planning and implementing cooking experiences. Follow your service's safe food handling procedure.
- Ensure no poisonous parts of fruits or vegetables are used or eaten, including:
 - o The leaves or vines of tomatoes (avoid any green parts as they are toxic)
 - o The leaf blade of rhubarb (which is toxic)
 - o The kernel of stone fruit (such as apricot, cherry, peach, plum, as the kernel is poisonous)
 - o Avocado leaves (which are toxic)
 - o Potatoes that have any green skin, green flesh, sprouts, stems and leaves, as these are toxic.
- Some foods may present a choking risk. Educators need to consider the children's age and stage of development when undertaking *Munch* experiences.
- Conduct a risk assessment when necessary to avoid potential hazards.



Books and Literature



Books and literature form a powerful tool to motivate and teach young children, and are a vital element in all early childhood programs. Books and literature also provide an ideal vehicle for:

- Introducing and reinforcing the *Munch & Move* key messages.
- Leading to discussions and role play.
- Developing nutrition knowledge and healthy habits for life.
- Developing group skills.

EYLF Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

Through books and literature, children are encouraged and invited to interact verbally and non-verbally. They are given the opportunity to use language and representations to share and project meaning. Educators help children to engage with a range of texts as they read and join in play, engaging children in conversations about images and print. Through extending and building on these experiences, children are given the opportunity to express ideas through the creative arts, and begin to use letters and words to convey meaning.



There are an abundance of children's books which promote healthy eating, but really... when you have your *Munch & Move* hat on, the key messages can be incorporated into any story!

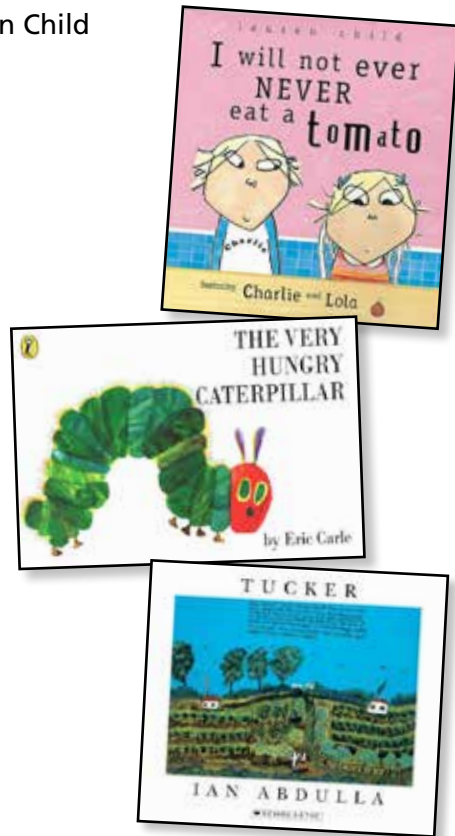


Books! Books! Books!

There's a good chance that you already have several *Munch* related books at your service. Do any of these suggestions ring a bell? Have a look at your bookshelves with fresh eyes and harness those teachable moments when you can incorporate the *Munch* key messages.

Some suggestions include:

- ***I will not ever NEVER eat a tomato***, by Lauren Child
- ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar***, by Eric Carle
- ***Giant Hiccups***, by Jacqui Farley
- ***Fruit***, by Jillian Powell
- ***Scallywag***, by Jeanette Rowe
- ***How do I eat it?*** by Shigeo Wantanabe
- ***The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch***, by Ronda and David Armitage
- ***Tucker***, by Ian Abdulla
- ***Growing Vegetable Soup***, by Lois Ehlert
- ***Mealtime***, by Maureen Roffe
- ***There's a hippo on our roof eating cake***, by Hazel Edwards
- ***The wide-mouthed frog***, by Keith Faulkner
- ***Yummy! A book of delicious pop-ups***, by Keith Faulkners
- ***The beastly feast***, by Bruce Goldstone
- ***Cool as a Cucumber***, by Sally Smallwood
- ***Eating the Alphabet***, by Lois Ehlert
- ***Food for Thought***, by Joost Elffers and Saxon Freymann
- ***A fruit is a Suitcase for Seeds***, by Jean Richards
- ***Sweet as a Strawberry***, by Sally Smallwood

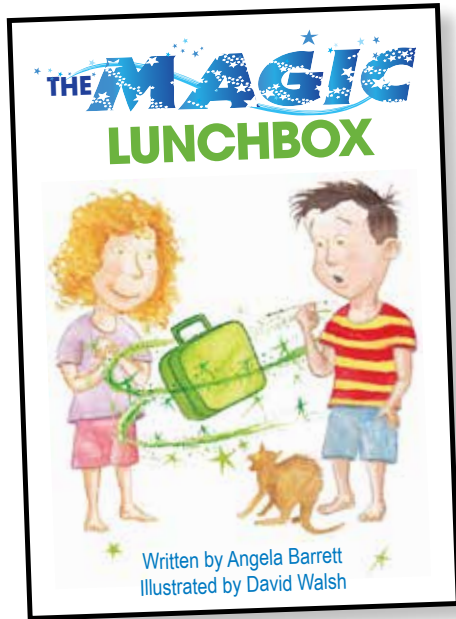


Truly, the list is endless. It is up to you as educators to bring the stories to life, and at the same time, teach children about the *Munch* key messages.



EYLF Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing when they begin to understand aspects of healthy lifestyles and good nutrition. Educators promote this learning when they engage children in experiences, conversations and routines that promote healthy lifestyles and good nutrition.



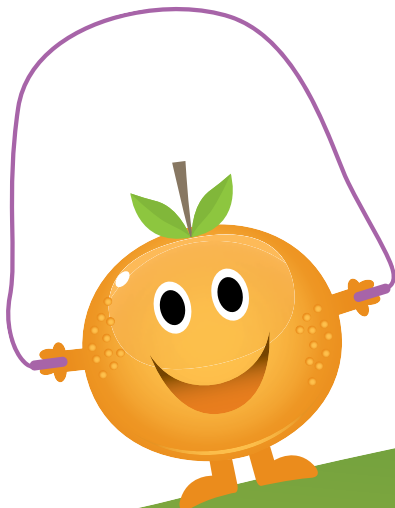
The Magic Lunchbox is a captivating, fun story about packing a healthy lunchbox. This book and supporting resources have been developed by Central Coast Local Health District.

The Magic Lunchbox storybook and supporting resources are perfect tools for promoting the *Munch* key messages with the children in your service.

A PDF version of the book and all supporting resources are available free to download! Visit www.healthpromotion.com.au/Magic_Lunchbox/MagicLunchbox_Index.html

EYLF Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

Educators support children to express ideas and make meaning when they ask and answer questions during the reading or discussion of books or other texts.

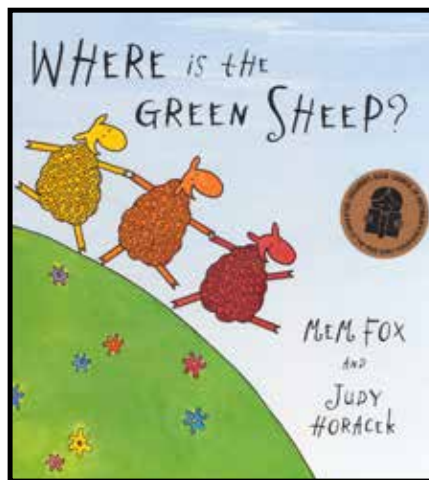


Remember that the *Munch* key messages can be incorporated into almost any story, regardless of whether the topic is food based. Let's have a look at an old favourite: ***Where is the green sheep?*** by Mem Fox and Judy Horacek.

"Here is the brave sheep! Sometimes we need to be a little bit brave to try new foods don't we?"

"Look at the sun sheep! He must be getting pretty hot! Remember that we need to drink more water in the hot weather!"

"Look at that green sheep! What else is green? Can you think of any green foods? Or red foods like the red sheep? Yellow? Orange?"



"I can see the sheep having a picnic! What healthy foods could we have at our picnic?"

"This sheep has fruit on his head! What fruit can you see? Have you tried those fruits? We can try them together!"

"When we cut an apple in a certain way, it makes a star too! Just like here with the star sheep! We can try that at morning tea time!"

You may choose to plan an extension experience, or simply leave it at the spontaneous comments and discussions that arise during the story. The important thing is that you recognise and act on these teachable moments, and keep your *Munch & Move* hat sparkling!



Eat a Rainbow!

Recommended ages: 2 to 5 years

What you need:

- Foods of a variety of colours; and/or
- Pictures of foods of a variety of colours; and/or
- Books depicting different foods; and
- Rainbows drawn or painted by the children.

What to do:

There are many possibilities to incorporate the *Munch* key messages here. Some suggestions include:

- Lay a picture of a rainbow on the floor or table, or make rainbow place mats. Match different food items from lunchboxes or images of foods to the different colours on the rainbow.
- Discuss and identify all the foods that the children can think of for each colour of the rainbow.
- Identify any foods that the children haven't tried and organise a tasting.
- Encourage the children to mark the different colours they've eaten that day on the rainbow.
- Identify colours that are eaten least and brainstorm foods or strategies to include them.
- Make your own, or provide books which depict foods of different colours.

Did you know...

Different coloured fruits and vegetables contain different vitamins. Therefore it is important to 'eat a rainbow' every day!



Blue and purple fruits and vegetables help us to remember things.

Green fruits and vegetables help our eyes to see, and to build strong bones and teeth.

Red fruits and vegetables help our hearts to beat and our brains to learn.

Yellow and orange fruits and vegetables help to keep our heart and eyes healthy.

White fruit and vegetables help to keep our heart healthy.



NB: The book *Eating the Rainbow*, published by Star Bright Books is available in several different translations.

EYLF Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing when they begin to understand nutrition and its effect on health and wellbeing.



Make Your Own Books

Recommended ages: Birth to 3 years

Research shows that newborn babies enjoy looking at high contrast images. Babies develop positive feelings towards books and images as they enjoy the comfort of being close to you and hearing your voice as you read.

What you need:

- Photographs of a range of different fruits and/or vegetables. Be sure to include cut fruits/vegetables as this often looks different to the whole item (and nature makes some truly beautiful and intricate patterns);
- Drawings, paintings, collage, photographs or other representations that the children have made and/or fruits or vegetables;
- Photographs of the children enjoying different foods;
- Any images related to healthy eating; and/or
- Images of fruits and/or vegetables of all colours – ‘eat a rainbow’.

What to do:

- Laminate the images and bind with string/spiral/rings.
- Use the books in a variety of different ways – adult led, child initiated and free play are all wonderful opportunities to promote children’s interest, wonder and understanding of these different food items.

Encourage children aged 3 to 5 years to narrate individual pages, or to create stories around the images. Document the comments respectfully, and make books that the children can return to again and again!



Songs, Rhymes and Music



Songs, rhymes and chants are not only enjoyable, but they create wonderful teaching and learning opportunities. It is easy to make up or adapt your own songs or rhymes related to food or nutrition. For example,

"Mary had a bunch of grapes, bunch of grapes, bunch of grapes. Mary had a bunch of grapes, munch, munch munch..."

Use the songs and rhymes spontaneously at any time throughout the day, during meal times, or during intentional teaching experiences.

Here's an example of a 'healthy rap' made up by a creative (and passionate) educator from Wollongong:

Fruit and Veg Rap

In the tune of "I'm a little teapot" and get the children to clap their hands to the beat of "we will rock you".

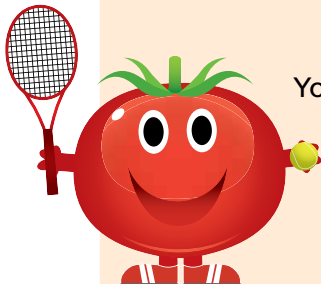
"I'm a crunchy apple, in your fruit bowl
Cut me into pieces or eat me whole
When you're feeling hungry
And want something to crunch
Reach in the fruit bowl and munch munch munch
I'm a crunchy apple....." *(Repeat twice).*



"I'm a juicy orange, in the shape of a ball
I'm round and orange and not very tall
But when you're after something to drink and eat
Come pick me up, I'm your healthy treat
I'm.... a juicy orange...." *(twice).*

"I'm Mr Broccoli, I'm a vegetable
You can cook me and eat me
I'll make your belly full
I'm green and bushy and look like a tree
I'm really really healthy and very yummy
I'm.....a piece of broccoli" *(twice).*

"I'm a piece of corn, I'm as juicy as can be
You can eat me from the cob, I am really healthy
Yellow's my colour, and I grow on a stalk
Scoop me up everyone
Put me on your fork
I'm.....a piece of corn" *(twice).*



NQS Guidance for Element 1.1.1

Educators consolidate and extend children's communication by engaging them in singing songs and playing with words and sounds.

Songs to sing and groove to CD

The *Munch & Move* CD is designed specifically to support the key messages in a fun, play based manner. You can download the songs and the songbook on the Healthy Kids website. www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/munch-move-resources/music.aspx



Song 4: Water, Water, Water

This song is intended to encourage children to choose water as a drink. Some simple actions could be included such as children mimicking turning on a tap, pouring from a cup and sipping from a bottle.

***Munch* Key Message: Choose water as a drink**

Song 7: Fruity Treat

This song reinforces the message that fruit tastes delicious and is good for you. Make up simple actions such as tapping knees for the first verse, pretending to peel fruit for the second verse and pretending to cut fruit into slices for the third verse. Or why not play this song during meal times?

***Munch* Key Messages: Eat more fruit and vegetables
Choose healthier snacks**



Song 8: My Lunchbox

This song talks about healthy foods in lunchboxes. It provides ideas for healthy lunches and snacks and teaches children that healthy food will help them to grow.

***Munch Key Messages:* Eat more fruit and vegetables
Choose healthier snacks**

Song 10: Super Me!

This song focuses on the benefits to our bodies when we eat our vegetables. Fundamental movement skills of hopping, running, leaping and jumping are also included.

***Munch Key Messages:* Eat more fruit and vegetables
Choose healthier snacks**

Song 11: Where We Go Shopping

In this song the family goes to the supermarket. The food groups are separated into 'families' and characteristics of each food group are described. Extend this song with a visit to the supermarket, or creating a supermarket dramatic play area.

***Munch Key Messages:* Eat more fruit and vegetables
Choose healthier snacks**

Song 13: Picnic Day

The intention of this song is to take children on an experience of a picnic day. This song gives children ideas about what food, drinks and items they could take on a picnic.

***Munch Key Messages:* Choose water as a drink
Eat more fruit and vegetables
Choose healthier snacks**

Experiments



EYLF Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

When children are provided with opportunities to explore ideas, experiment with complex concepts, and hypothesise, they develop many skills and processes including:

- Problem solving
- Inquiry
- Experimentation
- Hypothesising
- Researching
- Investigating

Through these types of learning experiences, children are encouraged to make predictions about aspects of the natural world and create representations to communicate ideas. They are given the opportunity to adapt what they have learned from one context to another (e.g. plants need water to grow and our bodies need water to be healthy).

EYLF Practice: Intentional teaching

In these intentional teaching experiences, educators use strategies such as modelling and demonstrating, open questioning, speculating, explaining, engaging in shared thinking and problem solving to extend children's thinking and learning.

Did you know...?

Once we begin to feel thirsty, our bodies are already dehydrated. Remind children to drink small amounts regularly throughout the day, and be an **active role model!**



Coloured Carnations

Recommended ages: 3 to 5 years

What you need:

- White flowers – carnations, chrysanthemums or daisies work well, but any white flower should be sufficient.
- Food colouring (at least two colours) and water.



What to do:

- Fill each glass about $\frac{3}{4}$ full and add 5-6 drops of food colouring per glass.
- Place one flower in each glass.
- Discuss and record what children think might happen after the flower has been in the water for a period of time. Perhaps you could ask the children to draw their predictions.
- After 2 hours, observe the petals for any colour change, then after one day note any changes again.
- Talk to the children about the results, why do they think this happened?

Why?

This learning experience allows children to hypothesise, experiment and explore the properties of water and plants. Just as the plant 'drinks' the water and distributes it to different parts, so too do our bodies soak up the water and distribute it to different body parts to keep them healthy.

Extensions:

- Try with other materials such as chalk, a sponge, wood etc. Observe how the water is absorbed, guess outcomes, conduct experiments and encourage children to document the process through drawing and other creative means.
- Lead on to discussions about water in our body, what do we need water for? How much of our body is made up of water?

Did you know...?

Water...

- Helps to keep us cool when we exercise
- Helps quench our thirst
- Is good for our skin
- Is good for our teeth
- Helps us to go to the toilet properly/regularly



My Body is Like an Ocean

Recommended ages: 2 to 5 years

What you need:

- Chalk and a flat, clear outdoor area, or butcher's paper and markers.
- Either something to represent water (get creative here... blue cellophane is great, but allow the children to choose anything they like), or water!

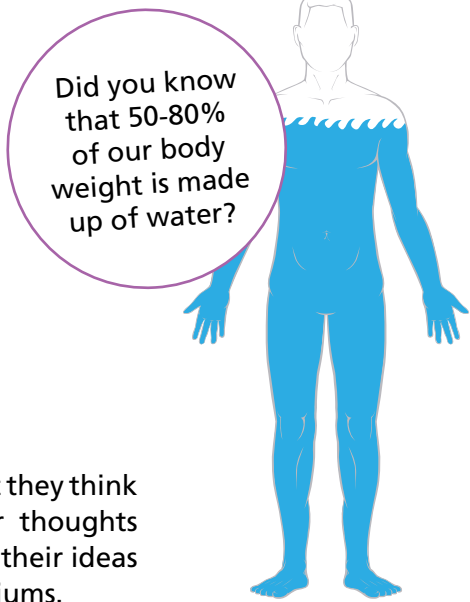
What to do:

- Brainstorm with the children about what they think is inside their bodies. Document their thoughts yourself, or have the children represent their ideas through drawing or other creative mediums.
- Explain to the children about the quantity of water that makes up our body. You may like to show this in creative ways like filling a glass half (or more) full, or use containers, sandpit toys, whatever you like!
- There are a few variations of what to do next. You may like to go outside and have the children draw around each other's shadows, or each other's bodies with chalk. Or you may choose to do the same on paper so that the displays can be retained.
- Represent the percentage of their bodies that is filled with water. If you are outside, carefully tip water into the body outlines, and then observe the water evaporate by the sun. A great talking point!

Extensions:

- Instead of using water to 'fill' the bodies, use cut outs of 'every day foods' to fill the healthy bodies.
- Discuss how water affects our body temperature! After vigorous physical activity, encourage the children to feel their *body temperature* by putting their hand on their forehead. After a big drink of water, ask them to feel their forehead again and observe any changes in temperature.

If there's any water left in the cup, tip it on the garden – plants need water to grow just like we do!



Where does our drinking water come from?

Recommended ages: 3 to 5 years

What to do:

- Research the main source of drinking water in your area.
- Research how water gets to taps in your area.
- Make models with the children of a dam/pipes, etc.

For example, in Sydney water is sourced from dams, the ocean, and water recycling plants. Water is transported through pipes, pumps and reservoirs to move the water to us. On the way to our taps, the water is cleaned through water filtration plants, reservoirs, pumping stations, wastewater treatment plants and water recycling plants. The water comes through 21,000 kilometres of pipes to get to us!^a.

For children aged 1 to 3 years, less structured water play can provide many opportunities for spontaneous interaction around the key message 'Choose water as a drink'. Provide resources such as pipes, funnels, water wheels and containers of all shapes and sizes.

Extensions:

- Water has to go through 'pipes' in our bodies. Some of it is absorbed by our major organs, and some of it helps food to move through our digestive system, including the 6 metres of our small intestines!
- Explore a variety of water sources in Australia such as tank water, bore water, spring water, windmill pumps, etc.
- Not all countries have access to clean drinking water. Explore water sources around the world.



^aSource: Sydney Water

Where does rain come from?

Recommended ages: 3 to 5 years

What you need:

- A very simple water cycle diagram such as this. Adjust diagram to be suitable for children's age/stage of development.
- A sunny day, a large bowl, clear plastic wrap, a coffee cup, a large rubber band and water.



What to do:

- Ask a group of children "Where does rain come from?".
- Document their responses yourself, or ask the children to draw/represent their thoughts.
- Explain the concept of precipitation/evaporation (using language appropriate to the age/stage of the children).
- Invite the children to join you in an experiment where you can make it rain inside a bowl!
- Fill the large bowl about $\frac{1}{4}$ full with water (warm water will help to speed up the results), and place the empty cup in the centre (the water should not be high enough to go into the cup).
- Tightly wrap the plastic wrap over the top of the bowl, and secure with the rubber band. Place a small weight (such as a stone) in the centre of the plastic wrap to weigh it down.
- Place the bowl in the sun.
- Encourage the children to guess what will happen (hypothesise) and document their thoughts.



The water will begin to evaporate from the bowl and condense on the plastic wrap. The weight of the stone will create a funnel like effect, and the condensed water will drip into the cup, filling it seemingly by magic!

Where you go from here will depend on the age/stage and interest of the children.

Link this experiment and learning to the *Munch* key message of 'Choose water as a drink'. Our organs use up the water in our body to make them function. Water is also expelled through urine or sweat, similar to the 'precipitation' experiment. We need to replace the water regularly to stay healthy.

With younger children, you may like to pour water on a path on a hot day, draw a circle around it, and observe the process of evaporation for yourselves! Remember that it's your interactions that turn these experiences into opportunities to promote the Munch key messages.

Extension:

- Explore droughts and floods and the impact of these – particularly on farmers.

Other similar experiments include:

- Place water (coloured water works best) in a zip lock bag and tape it to the window. Mark the level of the water and observe changes over a couple of days (the water droplets will at first condense at the top of the bag, reducing the original water level, but as they grow in weight, they will fall back into the bottom of the bag).
- Place water in a clear plastic cup and add food colouring. Place another plastic cup upside down on top (creating an enclosure). Place on the windowsill. The water will condense to the top of the top cup, but the colouring will not. The droplets that condense will be clear!

EYLF Practice:

Responsiveness to children

Educators value and build on children's strengths, skills and knowledge to ensure their motivation and engagement in learning.

Learning through play

Educators engage in sustained shared conversations with children to extend their thinking. They create learning environments that encourage children to explore, solve problems, create and construct.

Intentional teaching

Educators who engage in intentional teaching recognise that learning occurs in social contexts and that interaction and conversations are vitally important for learning.

Sugar Shenanigans

Some sugar is necessary in our diets, but it is all of the added (and often hidden) sugars which create health problems. Even in drinks such as juice, the sugar content can be staggering!

Here we will investigate and display the hidden sugar content of some popular drinks.

Recommended ages: 4 to 5 years

What you need:

- Drink label.
- Sugar cubes or a teaspoon and bag of sugar to make your own display. It is more visually effective to use real containers and real sugar.



	PER SERVING	% DAILY INTAKE* PER SERVING	PER 100ml
ENERGY	655kJ	8%	187kJ
PROTEIN	<1g	<1%	<1g
TOT. TOTAL	<1g	<1%	<1g
SATURATED	0g	0%	0g
MONOSACCHARIDES	25.4g	51%	7.3g
SUGARS	25.4g	51%	7.3g
POLYSACCHARIDES	0.3g	1%	0.1g
TOTAL FIBRE	0.3g	1%	0.1g
ENERGY FROM CARBS	259kJ	32%	75kJ
ENERGY FROM FAT	12mg	1%	0.3mg
ENERGY FROM PROTEIN	23mg	46% RDP	6.6mg

What to do:

- First and foremost, discuss with the children why too much sugar may not be healthy for our bodies. Ask the children to brainstorm and record their responses in any way you like.
- Explain in very simple terms the fundamental reasons why sugar should be avoided:
 - o Tooth decay
 - o Lack of nutrition
 - o Risk of getting sick (diabetes, heart disease etc.)
 - o Weight gain
- Use a fruit juice drink (or any other drink container) and encourage the children to guess how many cubes/teaspoons of sugar it contains.
- Now look at the food label. Every 5g of sugar is equal to one teaspoon (or sugar cube). In the example provided, there is a whopping 7 teaspoons of sugar!!
- Emphasise the *Munch* key message 'Choose water as a drink'.

EYLF Outcome 2: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Children are empowered to take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing when they show an increasing awareness of healthy lifestyles and good nutrition. Educators promote this when they engage children in experiences, conversations and routines that promote healthy lifestyles and good nutrition.

Extensions:

The ways of extending on this experience are never ending. Some suggestions include:

- Make comparisons of sugar content between popular packaged food items and whole foods (e.g. a fruit strap versus an apple). Visit the Healthy Kids website to access the *Food and Drink Cards*, developed by Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/munch-move-resources.aspx



- Use images or resources which show sugar content of different items.

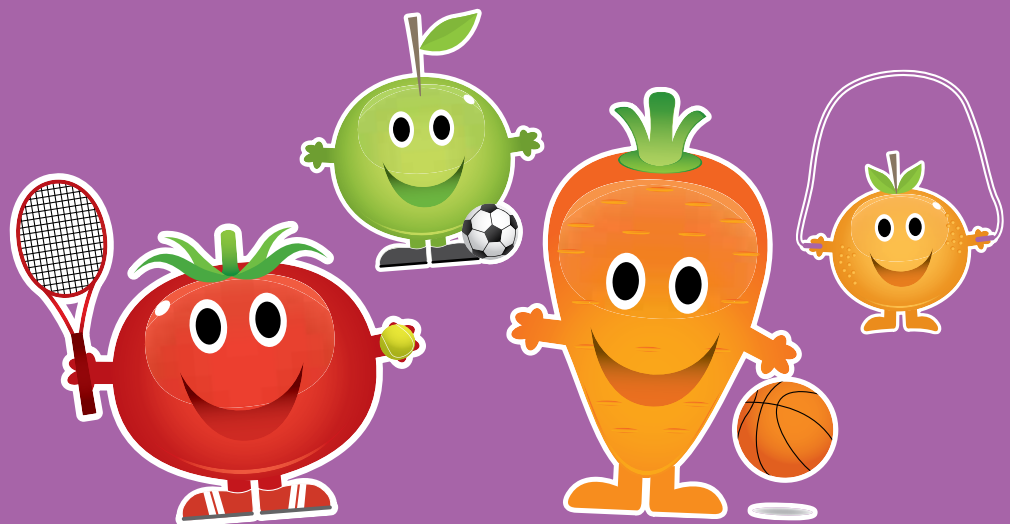


Source: Rethink Sugary Drink www.rethinksugarydrink.org.au

- Conduct experiments such as watering one plant with water and another one with soft drink and see which one thrives (the sugar content in the soft drink will prevent the soil from absorbing the water – just as sugar prevents our organs from functioning at full capacity).
- Sing the 'Water water water' song (from the *Munch & Move* CD) with the children, or make up/adapt your own songs to promote 'Choose water as a drink'.



Group Games



EYLF Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

Group activities provide many opportunities for learning. Through shared play experiences, children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect. When educators support children's efforts to ask questions and guess outcomes, the children are developing their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.



Tips:

- Search the internet for images of fruits and vegetables, or take your own photos to use.
- Laminate the images and store in a box, bag or pouch for easy access.

NQS Guidance for Element 5.2.1:

Children are involved in collaborative projects that involve research, planning, problem solving and shared decision making.

Celebrity Fruit and Vegetable Heads

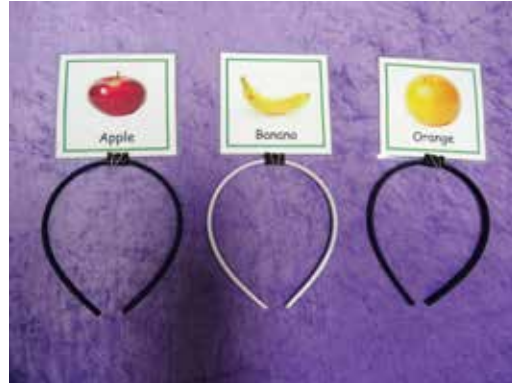
Recommended ages: 3 to 5 years

What you need:

- Laminated pictures of fruits and vegetables.
- 3-4 headbands.
- Fold back clips/bulldog clips.

What to do:

- Select 2-3 children to be 'in'. They will each wear a headband which displays a different image of a fruit or vegetable (it might be helpful for the educator to be 'in' for the first time you play).
- Encourage the children who are 'in' to ask descriptive 'yes' or 'no' questions to help them to identify which fruit or vegetable is on their headband. Help the children to think of questions, such as "Am I red? Am I yellow? Am I sweet? Do you need to peel me? Am I crunchy?" etc.
- Encourage the other children in the group to answer the questions with 'yes' or 'no'.
- Encourage the children to continue asking questions until they guess which fruit or vegetable they 'are'!



For children aged 2-3 years, provide the actual fruits or vegetables (or pictures) in front of them, to help them remember characteristics for their questions.

For children aged birth to 2 years, make the picture cards into a book (see 'Make Your Own Books' experience) to promote familiarity with different fruits and vegetables.



Why?

This experience gives children the opportunity to explore, consider and remember characteristics of a range of different fruits and vegetables in a fun, playful manner.

EYLF Practice: Learning through play

Play promotes positive dispositions towards learning.

EYLF Principle 1: Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships

Educators participate in the game, and offer hints or assistance where necessary. When educators are attuned to children's thoughts and feelings, they support the development of a strong sense of wellbeing.

Involving families and community:

EYLF Principle 2: Partnerships

Partnerships involve educators and families working together to explore the learning potential in every day events, routines and play. Involve families by sharing descriptions and photographs of the children engaging in this experience. Ask families if they use any less common vegetables at home that could be included in the game.

Do you know this less common vegetable? It's okra! Okra is commonly used in Indian cooking.



Fruit and Vegetable Matching Game

Recommended ages: 3 to 5 years

What you need:

- Images of fruits and vegetables. Copy and paste the images onto a format with approximately 9 squares.
- Print, laminate and cut out the same images as on the card.



What to do:

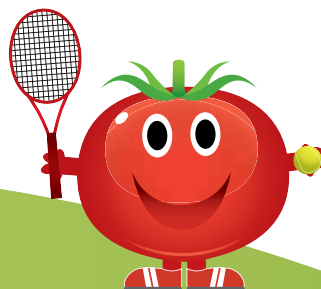
- Play as a group (children take turns turning a card over and attempting to match it to their card) or provide the resources for the children to match individually, or to create their own version of the game.

Variation:

- For an additional challenge, on the base card, include images of the whole fruit or vegetable, and on the matching cards provide images of the fruits or vegetables cut in half.

EYLF Practice: Responsiveness to children

Strengthen learning relationships with children by respecting, trusting and sharing decisions with the children. Involve them in co-ordinating the rules or guidelines for the game, and encourage them to help each other to adhere to them.



Fruit and Vegetable Memory Game

Recommended ages: 3 to 5 years

What you need:

- Images of fruits and vegetables. Print out and laminate – two of each.

What to do:

- Lay all of the cards face down so that only the blank back of the card can be seen.
- Encourage the children to take it in turns to flip two cards over at a time. If they do not match, turn them back over. If they are the same, match the cards up and move them over to the side.
- During the game, encourage the children to identify the fruits and vegetables on the cards. If there are any that they are unfamiliar with, explore this further through a tasting or by exploring the real thing.

For younger children leave all of the cards face up and encourage them to match, classify and/or describe.

Look! Here's one apple, and here's another apple which is the same!
We had apple with our morning tea today didn't we?

Why?

These experiences promote memory recall skills in a playful environment. Children are given the opportunity to explore and discuss the properties of different fruits and vegetables. Spontaneous discussion around the *Munch* key messages by educators will enhance the overall outcomes of this experience.

EYLF Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Children show an increasing awareness of healthy lifestyles and good nutrition when educators engage children in experiences and conversations which model and reinforce good health and nutrition with children.



Lucky Dip

Recommended ages: 2 to 5 years

What you need:

- A bag that is not see-through, e.g. canvas bag.
- 5-10 pieces of fruits and vegetables that will be easy to identify, such as:

Banana	Orange
Broccoli	Celery
Carrot	Beans
Pineapple	Capsicum
Strawberry	Corn cob

EYLF Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

This experience allows children to develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency. They are required to take turns, remain open to new challenges and discoveries, and persist when faced with challenges. Educators are able to support children's efforts, showing delight, encouragement and enthusiasm for children's attempts.

What to do:

- Place one item at a time into the 'feely' bag.
- Invite one child to reach in and feel the item.
- Encourage the child to describe what it feels like (e.g. spiky, furry, soft, small, big, etc.), and then guess which fruit or vegetable they think it might be.
- Give encouragement and ask leading questions to support the child to guess.
- If they guess correctly, congratulate them and place a new item in the bag, ready for the next child. If the child is unable to guess, perhaps you could see if one of the other children would like to try.

Variations:

- Include one or two less common fruits or vegetables to provide a challenge, e.g. pomegranate, eggplant, okra, etc.
- Use this opportunity to also explore the names of fruits and vegetables in the home languages of children and educators at the service.
- Include a tasting at the end, or extend on another day with a blind taste test.
- Instead of verbally labelling the fruit or vegetable, children could be given the opportunity to draw or creatively represent the fruit or vegetable first.

- Children can draw or represent the fruit or vegetable after the experience or at a different time. Why not cut the item in half and encourage the child to create a representation of the inside?

Why?

This experience encourages children to recall characteristics of different fruits and vegetables, and transfer knowledge from one context to another. They use their sensory skills to explore, and have the opportunity to express their thoughts and ideas verbally.

EYLF Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

This experience and the extension suggestions provide children with the opportunity to transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another. Educators draw children's attention to patterns and relationships in the environment and in their learning. Children are encouraged to use their senses to explore natural items.

For children aged 2 to 3 years, select only a couple of common fruits and/or vegetables and explore the items prior to playing.

For children aged 12 months to 2 years, place common fruits such as a banana into the bag and explore together one on one.



Snap!

Recommended ages: 3 to 5 years

What you need:

- Laminated images of 'every day foods' (use the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* to prompt you as to which foods to include). Provide two of each image.

What to do:

- This game can be played either with or without adult involvement. Children take half the cards each and take turns placing the cards down in a pile face up. When the cards match, they shout 'snap!' The player who shouts 'snap' first takes the pile and the game continues. The 'winner' of the game will end up with all of the cards.



Variations:

- Rather than shouting 'snap', the children shout the name of the fruit or vegetable.
- Play a treasure hunt – give each of the children one of the cards and have them find the corresponding card which you have hidden in the play area (indoors or outdoors). You may also like to incorporate fundamental movement skills into the search!

Why?

This experience is familiarising children with foods that they should be eating every day for good health. It promotes discussion and can be extended into many learning areas. Matching and classification are valuable mathematical and language skills. Socially, children are learning to take turns and follow rules.

EYLF Practice: Learning through play

When children play with other children they create social groups, test out ideas, challenge each other's thinking and build new understandings.

For children aged birth to 2 years, display the images at eye level. Provide the matching cards for the children to look at and explore. From about 12 months children may be able to match the images.

For children aged 2 to 3 years, play a less formal game with the playing cards. Have all of the cards face up on the table and encourage children to find matching cards. Remember to help the children identify the different foods, and use these teachable moments to promote the *Munch* key messages.

Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (AGTHE)

Recommended ages: 2 to 6 years

What you need:

- A circle of some description. Get creative! Why not use a hoop, or draw a plate on some cardboard... draw on the floor with chalk... the only limit is your imagination!
- Representations of different food and drink items. Again, be creative and flexible with this. You might have some food packaging, some real food items, play food items, pictures cut from catalogues or magazines... it's really up to you!

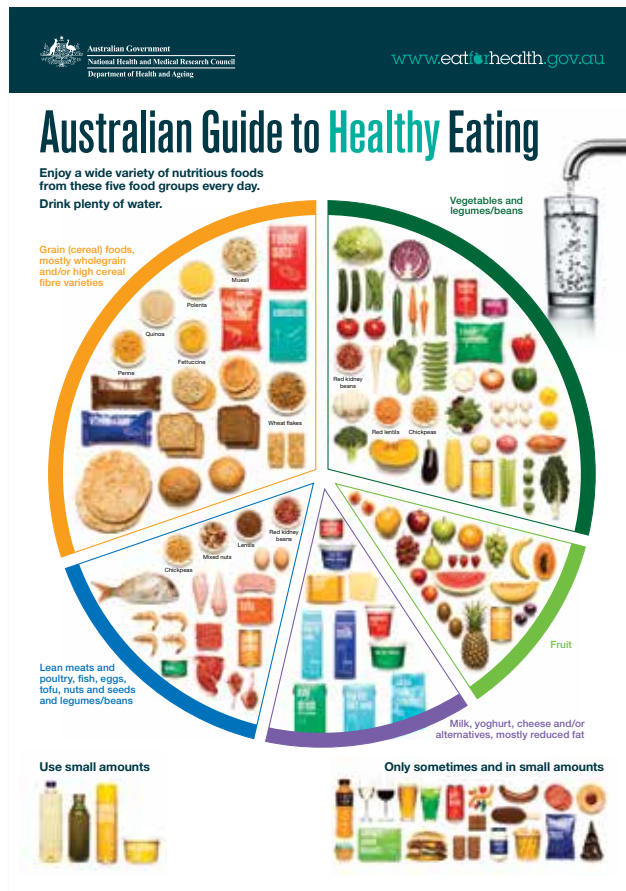
What to do:

- Children take turns selecting a food item and categorising it into the appropriate food group.
- Take time especially to talk about 'sometimes foods', which are placed outside of the plate because they are not essential to provide the nutrients that our bodies need every day.

NB: Access a blank template of the AGTHE (and other useful resources) on the Eat for Health website: www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/N55i_A4_agthe_blank_hi_res.pdf

Variations:

- Encourage children to cut out different food and drink items from catalogues or magazines. Distribute plates and help the children to divide the pictures into different food groups, or separate into 'every day foods' and 'sometimes foods'.
- Children categorise their lunchbox items or sample lunchboxes provided by you.



Source: NHMRC 2013

For children aged 12 months to 3 years, provide images of 'every day foods' from catalogues or magazines and use them for collage or other craft. Promote discussion about 'every day foods' with the children through spontaneous, responsive interactions.

EYLF Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

By learning about, identifying and exploring the properties of healthy foods, children learn to take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing.

Case study:

"During our 'morning meeting', it has become part of our daily routine for one child to come and choose items to place in our teddy bear's lunchbox. We have laminated a whole lot of pictures of different food items for the children to choose from. We cross check each item with the healthy food plate to decide whether it is an 'every day food' or a 'sometimes food'. Since we do this every morning, the children are becoming really familiar with 'every day foods' and 'sometimes foods'. We don't spend a lot of time on it, just a couple of minutes really... then we reinforce the key messages throughout the day – mainly through spontaneous interactions, but we use intentional teaching experiences also".

Kate, Educational Leader.



NQS Standard 2.1 - Health

Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.



At Kate's service, the children are familiar with the terms 'every day food' and 'sometimes food'. They are not terms that are only used during planned learning experiences, they form part of the everyday language of the educators and children, and the words mean exactly what they say - some foods should be eaten every day, and some should only be eaten sometimes.

Experiences and routines promoting healthy eating and nutrition should be a part of our every day routines. After all; we eat every day, don't we?

Extensions:

- Teddy bear's picnic.
- Sending a bear home – ask children/families to record what the bear eats at the children's homes (and educators' homes).

Involving families and community:

By incorporating this experience into the children's daily routine and displaying the lunchbox, you are sharing information about appropriate lunchbox items in a non-confrontational manner.

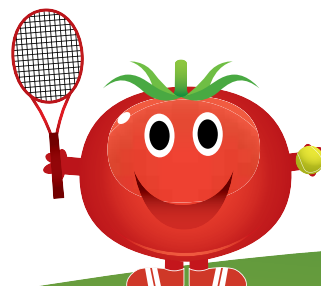
NQS Quality Area 6
Collaborative partnerships with families and communities.

Even if your service provides all food, it is still beneficial for children and families (particularly school-leavers) to have ideas about appropriate lunchbox items.



There are several resources available to support families with healthy lunchbox ideas. South Eastern Sydney Local Health District has developed a range of posters and other relevant resources to support you. They are available from

www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/Planning_and_Population_Health/Health_Promotion/Healthy_Weight/munch.asp



Nude Food

Recommended ages: 2 to 5 years

What to do:

- Collect all of the waste and packaging from a day's lunchboxes.
- As a group, have the children classify each waste item into one of three categories:
 - Garbage
 - Recycling
 - Compost/worm farm
- Discuss the amount of garbage produced and make a display.
- Demonstrate how it is usually the 'sometimes foods' which create landfill waste. 'Every day foods' are often whole foods, of which the scraps can be composted.

NB: If the children do not bring lunchboxes to the service, ask families or educators to bring in food packaging to be used in the experience.

EYLF Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

Educators promote children's respect for the environment when they embed sustainability in daily routines and practices. Children develop an awareness of the impact of human activity on environments and the interdependence of living things.

Extension:

- Start a worm farm or compost so that the organic waste can be used effectively (see the Vegetable Gardens section).

Variation:

- Make a matching game with images of packaged foods and images of 'nude' foods that could be included in lunchboxes instead. Do as an experience with the children and then display for families.

Why?

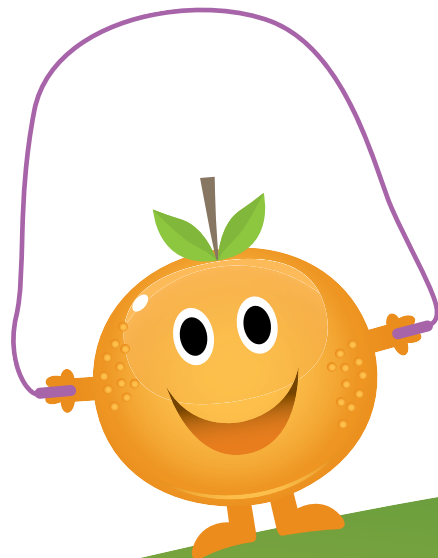
Packaged foods often contain hidden sugars, salts and preservatives. Food labelling can be deceiving and downright confusing. Whole foods are not only better for our bodies, but better for the environment too!

Involving families and community:

- Display posters comparing the cost of packaged versus non-packaged foods.
- Provide easy recipe ideas.
- Collect recipe ideas from families and share with other families.
- Make a recipe book and use it as a fundraiser!

EYLF Principle: Partnerships

Partnerships are based on the foundations of understanding each other's expectations and attitudes, and build on the strength of each other's knowledge. By sharing and discussing healthy food options with families in meaningful ways, we build and foster these partnerships, and healthy communities.



Food Relay

Recommended ages: 3 to 5 years

What you need:

- Images of food – cut from magazines/printed photos or real food items such as packaging, fruit or vegetable items, or play food items.
- Two baskets – one labelled 'every day foods', one labelled 'sometimes foods'.

What to do:

- Place the baskets at one end of the room (or outdoor area) and the food items at the other end.
- Ask the children to line up near the baskets.
- One at a time, the children run and collect a food item, then run back and place it in the 'every day foods' or 'sometimes foods' basket.
- Once all of the children have had a turn, gather in a group to look inside the baskets and discuss if the foods have been put in the right place.
- Use the AGTHE plate to help you to classify the foods into the appropriate food groups, and 'sometimes foods'.

Variation:

- Instead of running, choose other fundamental movement skills for the children to practice as they go to and from the baskets.

Why?

Of course this game could be played just sitting on the floor or at a table, but by incorporating the 'relay' aspect, we add another element of fun to the whole experience, whilst incorporating physical activity!

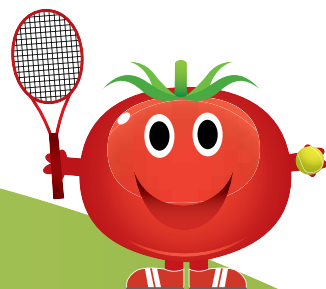
EYLF Practice:

Holistic approaches

While educators are likely to plan this experience with a specific focus, they also pay attention to children's physical, personal, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing as well as cognitive aspects of learning.

Learning through play

Play such as this can expand children's thinking and enhance their desire to know and to learn.



Cultural Exploration

In Australia we are truly fortunate to have access to such a vast array of multicultural culinary delights. We can explore foods from different cultures in many ways. One suggestion is to taste test and explore one type of food and how this varies in different cultures. For this example we have used dips, crackers, bread and biscuits.

Check beforehand to ensure that you are aware of any allergies/intolerances.

Recommended ages: 2 to 5 years

What you need:

- Saos and vegemite (Australia)
- Pappadams (India)
- Bruschetta (Italy)
- Baguette (France)
- Pita bread (Middle East and Africa)
- Tzatziki (Greece)
- Hummus (Middle East)
- Refried beans (South America)
- Salsa (South America)
- Tahini (Middle East)



NB: These are just suggestions – be sure to include foods that are relevant to the families and community in your area.

What to do:

There are a number of ways to explore these different food items. From simply providing a variety of dips and breads at meal times, to creating a structured learning experience involving taste tests and/or geographical information about where the food originates from. You may also choose to turn this into a cooking experience.

Extensions:

- Invite family or community members to the service to conduct cooking experiences with the children, or to share in meal times.
- Include cutlery and crockery from a variety of cultures.
- Provide dramatic play resources from a variety of cultures.
- Research different cuisines and cultural traditions.

EYLF Practice: Learning through play

This experience gives children the opportunity to test out ideas, challenge each other's thinking and build new understandings.

Farm to Table

Recommended ages: 3 to 5 years

What you need:

- Picture of a cow, a chicken and a plant.
- Pictures of eggs, milk, yoghurt, rice, beef, cooked chicken, other vegetables.
- 3 baskets or containers of some description.

What to do:

- Attach the pictures of the cow, chicken and plant to the baskets.
- Place the food pictures face down in the centre of the circle.
- Children take turns picking a card and placing it in the cow, chicken or plant basket (where they think the food originates).
- Encourage discussion with the children, ask questions and promote reflective thinking.



Variations:

- Make cheese with the children
- Participate in a chicken hatching program where children can observe the life cycle of a chicken.
- Explore how grains or pulses such as rice, wheat or lentils grow.
- Look at why it is harder to classify packaged food items. Essentially packaged items tend to have more additives and preservatives, meaning that the ingredients don't fall under the categories of animal or plant.
- Make links to the vegetable garden.
- Make links to water.

Why?

Children begin to learn where their food comes from.

EYLF Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Promote children's ability to take increasing responsibility for their own health and wellbeing by engaging them in experiences and conversations that explore food sources and food cycles.

EYLF Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

Promote children to become socially responsible and show respect for the environment by discussing the ways that the life and health of living things are interconnected.



Vegetable Gardens



With a focus on sustainability, many services have worked hard to develop, build and maintain vegetable gardens, with varying results. Often, competing priorities take over and leave the garden a little neglected. Of course some educators will be more interested in and enthusiastic about the garden than others. Ultimately, the immense learning and enjoyment that children (and adults) get from the garden make it worth the effort!

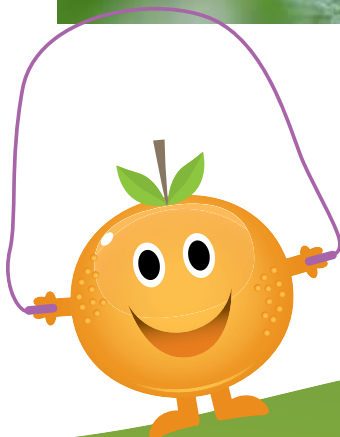
If your service is yet to build a vegetable garden, there are things that you need to know:

- There are often grants available to support you to create a vegetable garden. Look online for current funding available in your area.
- Involve families, community members and community groups. You will find contact details for local community groups on your council website.

Some parents, grandparents and other family members will be avid gardeners. Invite them to participate in the developing and maintenance of the garden, and to talk to the children!

NQS Element 6.1.1

Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.



EYLF Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

Children are becoming socially responsible and showing respect for the environment when they explore relationships with other living and non-living things and observe, notice and respond to change. By embedding sustainability into daily routines and practices, children develop an awareness of the impact of human activity on environments and the interdependence of living things.

For a vegetable garden to be successful, you need to make wise plant choices and incorporate sustainable garden practices. A little hard work goes a long way, and equals a LOT of fun!

Safety first:

- Conduct regular risk assessments to ensure the safety of children and adults in and around your garden area.
- At all times when handling soil or potting mix, adults and children must wear sturdy garden gloves.
- Open bags of soil products slowly, away from your face, and dampen potting mix before using.
- Closely follow the instructions found on bags containing potting mixes, manures, composts and other organic materials.



Access the Nursery and Garden Industry Australia resource *KidsGrow Munch and Crunch Garden*. www.ngia.com.au/Folder?Action=View%20File&Folder_id=131&File=Munch_and_Crunch.pdf

This document describes specific learning opportunities created by exploring the food cycle with children – from growing, harvesting, handling, preparing, eating, and composting.

EYLF Practice: Holistic approaches

Educators foster children's capacity to understand and respect the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land.

Garden Learning

Really, the opportunities for learning in the garden are endless. Some examples include:

- Watering the garden is a wonderful experience for all ages, and creates plenty of opportunities to talk about the key message 'Choose water as a drink'.
- With pre-school age children, conduct discussions or experiments on how we can keep the soil damp; hypothesising and documenting as you go.
- Planting seeds in egg cartons is also suitable for all ages, the level of involvement from educators will vary according to age of children. When the seedlings are big enough, help the children to transfer them carefully into the garden.
- Create a worm farm or compost heap – teaching children about sustainability and creating your own fertiliser.
- Make 'hairy heads' by putting sprouting seeds such as alfalfa or grass seeds into old stockings or mosquito netting with some soil or sawdust. Tie it off with a rubber band then decorate the face. Rest on top of a clean yoghurt container (or other similar container) with a little water in the bottom, and observe the 'hair' grow over the coming days.
- Collect excesses of produce and give (or sell at a nominal cost) to family members with a recipe suggestion.

"If we want children to flourish, become truly empowered; let us allow them to love the earth before we ask them to save it". (David Sobel, 1996)

NQS Element 3.2.3

The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally sustainable.



Composting

Recommended ages: 2 to 5 years

What you need:

Starting a compost heap is easier than many people think, and presents many opportunities for learning. Compost is made by layering plant and other organic materials, then turning regularly to create oxygen, and keeping moist to encourage decomposition.

Did you know...?
About half of the waste that we throw in the bin is food and garden vegetation which can be composted!

Worm farms:

How wonderful it is to learn the true value of these small wriggly miracle creatures! By their activity in the soil, worms create better drainage, increased nutrients in the soil, and a more stable soil structure – leading to healthier soil and healthier plants. After a few weeks, ‘worm wee’ will begin to collect at the bottom of the worm farm. It may sound icky, but worm wee is some of the best fertiliser around and should be celebrated!

There are different composting and worm farm systems available for purchase, or they can be made quite easily with the right materials. Most local councils provide information about composting and worm farms, and some will even offer financial support for you to get started. It’s worth having a look on your local council website for more information.

EYLF Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

Experiences such as this help children to investigate, project and explore new ideas. They predict and hypothesise, and show growing awareness of, appreciation and care for nature.

For children aged birth to 12 months, talk about what you are doing as you collect the scraps at meal times. For example, “Omkaara I’ll put your scraps in here so that we can feed our worms some delicious lunch!”



For children aged 12 months to 2 years, continue to talk about composting during spontaneous interactions. Toddlers enjoy helping – encourage them to scrape their plate, and help them to separate rubbish from compostable waste. Involve children in compost and worm farm experiences at a safe, developmentally appropriate level.

You will also find helpful hints and tips for composting and worm farming here:

- Clean up Australia Ltd: Worm Farming fact sheet
https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/ed061800/files/uploaded/clean_up_australia_worm_farm_factsheet-2017.pdf
- Foodwise: A beginner's guide to worm farming
www.foodwise.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Worms-ONLINE-1.pdf
- Foodwise: A beginner's guide to composting
www.foodwise.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Compost-ONLINE.pdf
- Hawkesbury City Council: Composting and worm farming workshop manual: www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/110414/CR-TutorialPDF-Wormfarm-V01_hTnyLpJ.pdf



Image provided by HNELHD at Stroud Preschool

Growing Carrot Plants from Carrot Tops

Growing carrot tops is easy, rewarding and fun! The leaves will grow and flower, but it is important to understand that the actual carrot itself will not grow again. They make pretty houseplants, and the leaves are actually edible (but quite bitter).

Recommended ages: 2 to 5 years

What you need:

- Any type of plate.
- Water.
- Enough carrot tops (with about one inch stub of carrot still on them) for at least one per child.



What to do:

- Create a shallow pool of water on the plate and place the carrot stubs in the water.
- Encourage the children to hypothesise as to what will happen, discuss and/or create representations of the children's hypothesis through drawing, modelling or other creative means.
- Check the plates regularly to ensure that there is still adequate water.
- In a few days you will notice that the carrot tops have developed roots!
- Observe the plants growth over a period of time, and eventually you may like to plant them in pots and send them home as house plants!

EYLF Practice: Learning environments

Learning environments support all aspects of children's learning and invite conversations between children, early childhood educators, families and the broader community.

Variations:

- At the same time as growing the carrot tops, you may like to plant some carrot seeds in the garden... or do this experience while you already have carrots growing. Investigate the different parts of vegetables – above the ground and below the ground.
- You can try this with the bottom of celery, the top of beetroot, radish, or by placing the white end of green onions in a glass of water and changing the water every day. You can even plant the top of pineapples in the garden! Amazing!!



Cooking



Children learn through engaging in real life experiences. When we involve children in cooking, they are much MUCH more likely to try different foods. Measuring and timing recipes and portioning foods give children the opportunity to learn about quantity, measurement and mathematics. As well as this, they learn valuable skills such as turn taking, food hygiene, textures, smells, tastes, the list goes on!

Cooking experiences also create opportunities to increase children's cultural awareness. Sharing and appreciating foods and recipes from different cuisines allows children to experience the look, taste, smell and texture of foods from other cultures. By acknowledging and incorporating families' food preferences, habits and customs, we promote inclusion and understanding – celebrating difference rather than avoiding it.

For a successful cooking experience:

- Invite families and/or community members to participate in cooking experiences. Incorporate foods and recipes from a variety of cultures and value the contribution of family members.
- Allow plenty of time, and ensure that you have everything that you need before you begin.
- Ensure that you have adequate staff. At least one staff member will need to be completely involved in the experience without distraction.
- Encourage children to participate in each step of the recipe that is appropriate to their age/stage of development.
- Involve children in tasks such as washing fruits and vegetables, measuring out ingredients, or stirring in mixing bowl.
- Young children can practice using plastic or butter knives to cut soft items such as banana.

EYLF Principles

Through our secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships with children we help them to develop the skills and understandings they need to participate in the group experience and interact positively with others. Families are invited to participate in cooking experiences in a variety of ways, developing and strengthening **partnerships**. Children's skills and abilities are respected, and educators have **high expectations** for children's capacity to participate. **Diversity is respected** and celebrated with the enjoyment of foods from a variety of cultures, and educators take on the role of co-learners with the children, valuing the richness of local knowledge shared by community members **(ongoing learning and reflective practice)**.



Included in this resource are some suggested recipes for cooking experiences with children. When choosing recipes for cooking experiences, consider safety, practicality, nutrition, and of course, deliciousness! Use fruits and vegetables in sweet dishes to demonstrate the versatility of these gorgeous gifts from nature.

Extensions:

- Compost/worm farm scraps from the cooking experiences.
- Make a service recipe book – you could even use this as a fundraiser!
- Set up dramatic play areas as restaurants, kitchens, picnics, etc.



Food safety: hygiene and food allergies should be considered at all times when planning and implementing cooking experiences. Follow your service's safe food handling procedure to ensure safety. Some important points include:

- Check beforehand to ensure that you are aware of any allergies/intolerances.
- Educators and children need to wash their hands with soap and dry thoroughly before handling food.
- When handling cooked or 'ready to eat' foods, a barrier such as tongs or gloves must be used.
- Fruits and vegetables should be washed well.
- Always supervise children closely during cooking experiences.
- If in doubt about children's safety, do it yourself.



Stuffed Celery Sticks

Time: Approximately 10 minutes

Ingredients		Serves		
		4	20	60
Celery Sticks		4 long	20	60
Sultanas		½ cup	2 ½ cups	7 ½ cups
Filling 1				
	Reduced fat spreadable cream cheese	¼ cup (60g)	1 ¼ cups (300g)	3 ¾ cups (900g)
	Small carrot	1/2	2 ½	7 ½
Filling 2				
	Hummus	¼ cup (60g)	1 ¼ cups (300g)	3 ¾ cups (900g)
Filling 3				
	Reduced fat ricotta	¼ cup (60g)	1 ¼ cups (300g)	3 ¾ cups (900g)
Filling 4				
	Natural or reduced fat flavoured yoghurt	¼ cup (60g)	1 ¼ cups (300g)	3 ¾ cups (900g)

Directions:

1. Educators (or older children) trim the ends of the celery sticks. Children wash each stick.
2. Children to wash and grate carrot.
3. Children take turns to combine ingredients, and then place selected fillings along celery stick.



Jacket Potatoes

Time: Approximately 35 minutes

Ingredients		Serves		
		4	20	60
Potatoes		4	20	60
Filling 1				
	Frozen peas	½ cup	2 ½ cups	7 ½ cups
	Sweet corn kernels	½ cup	2 ½ cups	7 ½ cups
Filling 2				
	Diced tomato	½ cup	2 ½ cups	7 ½ cups
	Diced onion	½ cup	2 ½ cups	7 ½ cups
	Lean ham	2 slices	10 slices	30 slices
Filling 3				
	Spicy salsa or bolognaise sauce (warmed)	½ cup	2 ½ cups	7 ½ cups
Filling 4				
	Baked beans	½ cup	2 ½ cups	7 ½ cups
Toppings				
	Reduced fat cheese (grated)	½ cup	2 ½ cups	7 ½ cups
	Light sour cream	½ cup	2 ½ cups	7 ½ cups
	Reduced fat plain yoghurt	½ cup	2 ½ cups	7 ½ cups

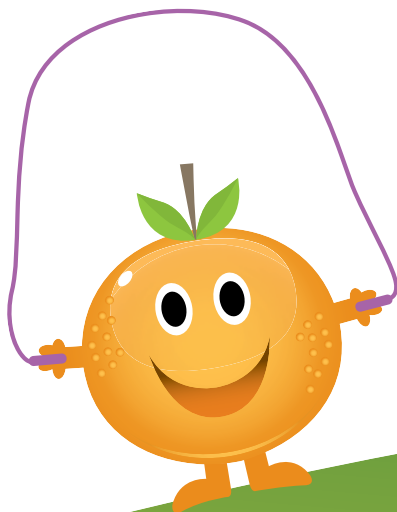
Directions:

1. Educators to cook whole potatoes until soft: boil, bake or microwave.
2. Let the potatoes cool enough to touch and cut the potatoes in half.
3. Provide each child with one or two potato halves and their own bowl. Children can scoop out the flesh from the centre of the potato into their bowl, leaving about a 1 cm shell.
4. Assist children to mash with a fork.

5. Children can then add their choice of the filling ingredients to the mashed potato and mix.
6. Educators assist the children to spoon the filling into the potato shells.
7. Place the potatoes in the microwave and cook on high for 5–10 minutes, or bake in the oven until heated through and golden brown (about 15 minutes).



Recipe adapted and image sourced from www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au



Fruit Kebabs

Time: Approximately 10 minutes

Ingredients	Serves		
	4	20	60
Bananas	1	5	15
Strawberries	½ punnet	2 ½ punnets	7 ½ punnets
Kiwi fruit	2	10	30
Mandarins or oranges	1	5	15
Watermelon	Small wedge	¼ large	1
Low fat Greek yoghurt	200g	1kg	3kg
Bamboo skewers	4	20	60

Directions:

NB: Depending on the age and abilities of the children, they may or may not be able to cut some of the fruit themselves using butter knives.

1. Cut the sharp ends off the skewers or for younger children you may prefer to use paddle-pop sticks. Children soak bamboo skewers for a few minutes to stop them from splintering.
2. Children peel and cut bananas into bite size pieces.
3. Children wash the strawberries and cut or pull the top off each once washed.
4. Educators peel each kiwi fruit and children cut into bite size pieces.
5. Children peel and separate mandarin segments/educators peel and cut orange.
6. Educators cut watermelon into manageable slices, children cut into bite size pieces.
7. Educators help children thread fruit onto skewers.

Serve with low fat Greek yoghurt if desired.



Corn and Zucchini Fritters

Time: Approximately 20 minutes

Ingredients	Number of fritters		
	12	24	72
Corn kernels, drained	2 cups	4 cups	12 cups
Zucchini, grated	300g	600g	1.8kg
Eggs	2	4	12
Reduced fat milk	½ cup	1 cup	3 cups
Wholemeal self-raising flour	1 cup	2 cups	6 cups
Reduced fat cheese (grated)	½ cup	1 cup	3 cups
Chopped parsley	2 Tbs	4 Tbs	12 Tbs
Chopped chives	2 Tbs	4 Tbs	12 Tbs

Directions:

1. Educators help children to safely grate zucchini and add to mixing bowl. Children measure out corn kernels, cheese and herbs and add to bowl.
2. Children (depending on age) crack the eggs into a separate bowl (remove any shell), then measure out milk and flour and add to this bowl. Children can take turns whisking this mixture.
3. Educators help the children to tip the zucchini mixture into the egg mixture, and children can take turns stirring it all together.
4. Educators heat a little oil in a non-stick fry pan over medium heat. Using a tablespoon, place heaped spoonfuls of the mixture in the pan and cook in batches. Using a spatula, turn them once, until golden and cooked through. Drain on paper towel, cover and keep warm as you cook remaining fritters.

Serve with salad.

Recipe from www.healthyfoodguide.com.au



Sweet Potato Balls

Time: 30 to 40 minutes to cook sweet potato (do this beforehand)
15 minutes to combine ingredients and roll

Ingredients	Number of balls		
	6	24	62
Sweet potato	$\frac{3}{4}$ small	3 small	9 small
Desiccated coconut	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	1 cup	3 cups
Pitted dates	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	1 cup	3 cups
Rolled oats	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	1 cup	3 cups
Coconut oil	1 tsp	1 Tbs	3 Tbs
Ground cinnamon	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp	1 tsp	3 tsp
Vanilla extract	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp	1 tsp	3 tsp
<i>Desiccated coconut (optional-to garnish)</i>			
<i>Sesame seeds (optional-to garnish)</i>			

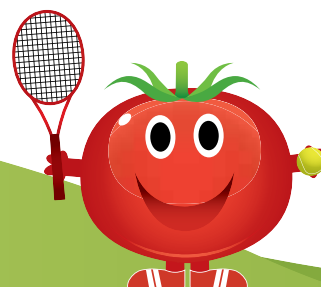
Directions:

1. Educator to pre-bake sweet potatoes for 30 to 40 minutes. Remove potatoes from oven when very soft and natural sugars have started to caramelize on the outside. Allow to cool at room temperature, about 30 minutes.
2. Children to help measure and place all ingredients in a bowl.
3. Tip all ingredients into a food processor. Process until smooth and well combined, similar to a dough.
4. Turn the dough out onto a clean cutting board, and divide into small sections. Children to roll their own ball/s. Place on tray with children's names written on baking paper.
5. Chill in the freezer for 10 to 15 minutes until cool.



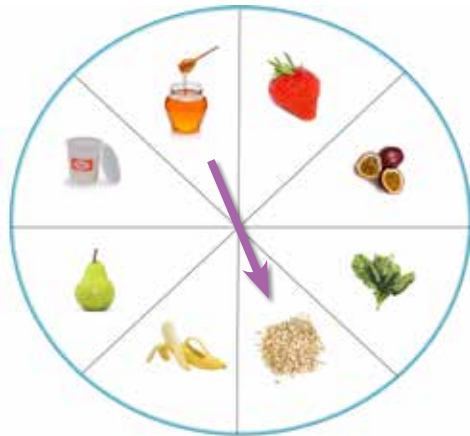
Enjoy as is, or roll the balls in desiccated coconut or sesame seeds to garnish.

Adapted from www.shape.com/healthy-eating/healthy-recipes/cinnamon-sweet-potato-truffles



Spin a Smoothie

Time: Approximately 10 minutes



Fruit smoothies are delicious and nutritious. Add a little 'spin' to smoothie making experiences by using a spinning wheel to choose the ingredients!

Spinach can be added to any smoothie with minimal, if any, effect on the taste! It's a wonderful way to add a serve of vegies, and spinach is full of vitamins, antioxidants and minerals!

Ingredients	Serves		
	6	25	60
Reduced fat milk	600 ml	2.5 litres	5.5 litres
Yoghurt, plain, reduced fat	300 ml	1.75 litres	3.5 litres
Fruit (a selection)	1 ½ cups	6 cups	13 cups
Rolled oats	1 cup	4 cups	9 cups
Honey	1 tsp	4 tsp	9 tsp
Spinach or other leafy greens	1 cup	4 cups	9 cups

Directions:

1. Blend milk, yoghurt, chopped fruit and vegetables, rolled oats and honey in blender until smooth.
2. Pour and serve straight away.

REMEMBER: Honey can contain botulism so should not be given to any infants under 12 months of age.

This includes honey used as an ingredient in a recipe as cooking honey does not destroy any botulism present.

Carrot and Parsnip Muffins

Time: 15 minutes preparation + 25 minutes cooking

Ingredients	Serves		
	12	24	60
Wholemeal self-raising flour	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	5 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups
Carrot	1	2	3
Parsnip	1	2	3
Grated parmesan cheese	2 Tbs	4 Tbs	6 Tbs
Chopped parsley or basil (from the garden!)	2 Tbs	4 Tbs	6 Tbs
Eggs	2	4	6
Reduced fat milk	1 cup	2 cups	3 cups
Oil	2 Tbs	4 Tbs	6 Tbs
Salt	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp	$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp

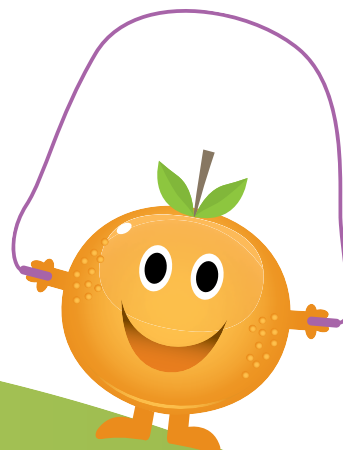
Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 190°C. Lightly spray muffin trays with oil.
2. Grate carrot and parsnip and place in a bowl.
3. Sift flour into the bowl and add cheese and salt. Gently fold together.
4. In a separate bowl, mix eggs, oil and milk. Pour into the dry ingredients.
5. Lightly combine but do not over mix.
6. Spoon into a greased 12 muffin tray and bake for 25 minutes or until golden brown and firm to touch. Cool on a wire rack.

Variation:

- Substitute zucchini for parsnip (squeeze out extra moisture). Add corn, spinach or other vegetables to mix it up a bit!

Recipe adapted from Gofor2and5.com.au



For more information
relating to *Munch*



References





www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au

