# Early childhood services menu planning guidelines and self-assessment tool

## Morning and afternoon tea provision only

These menu planning guidelines and self-assessment tool are based on the *Australian Dietary Guidelines1* and the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating2* and are consistent with the recommendations in the Australian Government’s *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood3.* Following these guidelines will help your service strengthen its practice in Quality Area Two of the National Quality Standard4. Following these guidelines will also help your service meet criteria 1, 2 and 3 of the Tasmanian *Move Well Eat Well* - Early Childhood Award Program5.

### Process

* Use a separate copy of the self-assessment tool **for each two week block** (fortnight) of your menu.
* For each cooked/prepared menu item, please provide a recipe (including ingredients, quantities and serve sizes).

If you have any questions, please contact the dietitians at Public Health Services, Department of Health Tasmania [community.nutrition@health.tas.gov.au](mailto:community.nutrition@health.tas.gov.au) or for queries about the *Move Well Eat Well* - Early Childhood Award Program requirements contact [movewelleatwellEC@health.tas.gov.au](mailto:movewelleatwellEC@health.tas.gov.au)

| Vegetables and legumes/beans | Tick if meets guideline | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A variety of vegetables and/or legumes/beans are offered each day. Aim for at least two to three different types each day and five different types each week.  \* Some hard vegetables (such as carrot and celery) will need to be cooked, mashed, grated or very finely sliced to prevent choking in children under three. | Two to three types of vegetables each day | | | | | |
|  | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thu | Fri |
| Week 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Week 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Five types of vegetables each week | | | | | |
| Week 1 |  | | | | |
| Week 2 |  | | | | |

| Fruit | Tick if meets guideline | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A variety of different fruit is offered each day. Aim for at least two to three different types each day and five different types each week.  \* Some hard fruit (such as apples) will need to be cooked, mashed, grated or very finely sliced to prevent choking in children under three.  \*Fruit bread is not counted towards a serve of fruit. | Two to three types of fruit each day | | | | | |
|  | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thu | Fri |
| Week 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Week 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Five types of fruits each week | | | | | |
| Week 1 |  | | | | |
| Week 2 |  | | | | |
| Dried fruit is not offered more than once each week.  \*Dried fruit is a concentrated source of sugar which leaves a sticky residue on teeth and can contribute to tooth decay. If included on the menu it should be offered no more than once each week. |  | | | | | |

| Promotion of vegetables and fruit | Tick if meets guideline | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| For each occasion that food is served, vegetables and/or fruit are offered.  This promotes to children and staff that vegetables and fruit are a normal part of everyday eating.  Examples include:   * Serving vegetables alongside other morning or afternoon tea snacks: chopped vegetable sticks\*, roasted vegetable pieces, cherry tomatoes\*, snow peas\*, vegetable purees as dips, ‘vegetable hair’ made using a mandolin or spiralizer. * Yoghurt and fruit or fruit smoothies.   \* Some foods will need to be cooked, mashed, grated, or finely sliced to avoid choking in children under three. |  | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thu | Fri |
| Week 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Week 2 |  |  |  |  |  |

| Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives | Tick if meets guideline | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or calcium fortified alternatives (for example soy milk) are offered 1–2 times each day.  *\** Full fat varieties of milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives should be used for children less than two years. Reduced fat products are suitable for children over two years of age.  \* Cream, sour cream and butter are not substitutes for milk, yoghurt and cheese, or alternatives should not be included on the menu or used in recipes.  \* Flavoured milk is not an appropriate drink for young children and should not be offered.  \*Ensure alternative products such as soy drinks and soy yoghurt are calcium fortified with at least 100mg calcium per 100ml. |  | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thu | Fri |
| Week 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Week 2 |  |  |  |  |  |

| Grain (cereal) foods | Tick if meets guideline | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grain (cereal) foods are offered at least once each day. |  | Mon | | Tues | | Wed | Thu | Fri |
| Week 1 |  | |  | |  |  |  |
| Week 2 |  | |  | |  |  |  |
| High fibre varieties (for example wholegrain and wholemeal) are offered at least three times each week, preferably every day. |  | | | | | | | |
|  | | Mon | Tues | Wed | | Thu | Fri |
| Week 1 | |  |  |  | |  |  |
| Week 2 | |  |  |  | |  |  |

| Fats and oils | Tick if meets guideline |
| --- | --- |
| Polyunsaturated and/or monounsaturated oils and spreads are used in cooking and baking.  Examples include: sunflower, safflower, canola, olive, peanut, sunflower, soybean and sesame oil. |  |
| Butter, cream, sour cream, coconut cream, coconut oil, copha, palm oil, ghee and lard are not used in cooking or on the menu. |  |

| ‘Sometimes’ food and drinks | Tick if meets guideline |
| --- | --- |
| ‘Sometimes’ food and drinks are not offered on the menu.  These are foods and drinks which are high in saturated fat, added sugar and/or added salt, and low in fibre and have little nutritional value.  Examples of ‘sometimes’ food and drinks include:   * chocolate and confectionery * high fat/salt savoury biscuits, chips * high sugar/high fat cakes, slices and biscuits * ice cream, cream, dessert yoghurts and high sugar custards (list continues on next page) * fried foods (for example hot chips) and pastry based foods (for example pies, sausage rolls and pasties) * takeaway foods high in salt, sugar and saturated fats * some processed meats (for example sausages, frankfurts/hot dogs, salami, Strasburg, Devon, some commercial chicken nuggets and fish fingers) * soft drinks, fruit juice and fruit drinks, cordial, sports drinks, flavoured mineral water, energy drinks and flavoured milk. |  |

| Salt | Tick if meets guideline |
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| Salt is not added to cooking or available at the table.  \* Salt is often added to foods that are processed (for example some breakfast cereals and bread), preserved (for example tuna in brine, smoked goods, ham) or cooked in salty solutions (for example some sauces or stocks) or foods that have flavours added (for example some savoury biscuits and pasta sauces). |  |
| When selecting packaged foods, choose ‘low salt’, ‘reduced salt’ or ‘no added salt’ products whenever possible. For example tinned foods, gravy and stock powders. |  |

| Baked Items | **Tick if meets guideline** |
| --- | --- |
| Baked items are not offered every day.  \* If provided, they should not contain large amounts of fat and sugar. Sugar should be limited to ¼ cup for every one cup of flour. Include some fruit or vegetables and use wholemeal flour or half wholemeal and half white flour. |  |

| S**preads and toppings** | **Tick if meets guideline** |
| --- | --- |
| Sandwiches, crackers and toast are filled or topped with everyday foods from the five food groups. For example, cheese, vegetables (tomato or avocado), lean meats, eggs and hommus.  Note: Cream cheese has less calcium and protein than other cheeses so shouldn’t be used regularly in place of other cheeses.  Spreads such as jam, syrups, honey, vegemite, jars of cheese spread are not offered more than once per week. |  |
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| **Drinks** | **Tick if meets guideline** |
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| Water is offered at all meals and is available freely throughout the day. |  |
| Plain milk is another good option for children:  Children under the age of two years are given full-fat milk only.  Reduced fat milk is ok for children two years and over. |  |
| Soft drinks, fruit drinks, cordial, sports drinks, sports waters, flavoured waters, flavoured mineral waters, iced teas and energy drinks are not offered on the menu.  Flavoured milk and fruit juice are also not appropriate drinks for young children and are not offered on the menu. |  |
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| Breast milk, infant formula and cooled boiled tap water are the only drinks provided to infants under 12 months of age. |  |

| **Food variety** | **Tick if meets guideline** |
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| The menu includes a variety of tastes, colours and textures and flavours for example vegetables and fruits in a rainbow of colours. |  |
| Morning tea and afternoon tea are based on foods from the five food groups. |  |

References

1 [*Australian Dietary Guidelines*](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au), National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013, http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au

2 [Australian Guide to Healthy Eating](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au), National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013, http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au

3 [*Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood*](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-early-childhood-nutrition-resources), Commonwealth of Australia, 2009, http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-early-childhood-nutrition-resources

4 [National Quality Standard, Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority](http://www.acecqa.gov.au), http://www.acecqa.gov.au

5 [*Move Well Eat Well*](http://www.movewelleatwell.tas.gov.au/) Early Childhood Award Program, Department of Health Tasmania, http://www.movewelleatwell.tas.gov.au/

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| *please do not reproduce this tool without the following acknowledgement:*  *Move Well Eat Well* Award Program, Public Health Services, Department of Health, TAS. 2018 |  |

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