



## Factsheet for Families

# Healthy eating in child care

Healthy eating habits are formed early in your child's life and these will help your child to get the nutrition they need for optimum growth and development, as well as reducing the likelihood of illness, obesity and dental disease. Your child care service should have a nutrition policy that promotes healthy eating for children. Your service can help and encourage your family's healthy eating by providing you with information and support. They may do this through handouts, noticeboards, a parent library, the service newsletter or information sessions.

### What type of healthy eating plan should my service provide for my child?

Child care services should implement healthy eating plans for children that include a wide range of nutritious, fresh foods. There should also be a nutrition policy which reflects current recommendations from a recognised authority. When planning menus for children, foods from the following food groups should be included:

- Bread, cereals, rice, pasta and noodles
- Vegetables and legumes
- Fruit
- Milk, yogurt and cheese
- Meat, fish, poultry, eggs and nuts.

Child care professionals should also:

- Encourage your child to choose water to drink
- Limit your child's intake of saturated and trans fats, salt and sugar
- Prepare, serve and store food safely.

### How can my service help me to meet my baby's nutrition needs?

Your child care service should support you to breastfeed your baby if you wish to do so by:

- Providing you with information about breastfeeding and how this can be managed in child care
- Creating comfortable and private spaces for you to breastfeed
- Having facilities and current procedures for the correct storage, handling and re-heating of breast milk.

Your service should also work with you when you introduce solid foods to your child.

### How can my service make healthy eating fun for my child?

Child care professionals can help your child to appreciate and enjoy healthy food by:

- Communicating simple messages about food to your child. For example, that healthy foods are 'all the time foods', whereas processed foods such as lollies and chips should be 'sometimes foods'
- Respecting your child's food preferences and appetite
- Incorporating food and eating utensils from a variety of cultures on the menu
- Involving your child in meal planning and preparation, and in setting up the eating area
- Being patient with children who refuse/dislike new foods, and remembering it can take up to ten attempts for children to enjoy new flavours and textures.

Most importantly, food should never be used to reward or punish your child.

To discuss our nutrition policy and healthy eating for children at our service, please speak to:

or telephone:

