



Focus on Sustainability

National Recycling Week

Planet Ark's National Recycling Week held from 11 - 17 November 2024 promotes the importance of reducing, reusing and recycling.

Teaching children about recycling and sustainable practices highlights the importance of looking after our environment and at the same time encourages responsibility, creativity and fosters new skills. Environmental education is vital for the future of our planet but also fascinating for young developing minds, and it provides children the chance to get involved in everyday chores and make a positive difference.

Planet Ark is asking Australians to *Join the Cycle* - check out their free [Resource Hub](#) to help recycle, reduce waste and contamination, and engage with positive sustainable actions at your service.

If you have questions or would like more information, please reach out to your Health Promotion Officer or the Good for Kids team at HNELHD-GoodForKids@health.nsw.gov.au.

Link to NQS:

Element 3.2.3 Environmentally responsible



Introducing Children to Recycling and Sustainability

Activities to involve children in recycling and sustainability during National Recycling Week:

Teach children how to sort rubbish from recyclables

Learning proper rubbish disposal practices should start when children are preschool age. Introduce the main categories of recyclable materials e.g. paper, plastic, metal, glass; set up bins at your service and label them with the different types of waste. You could create posters with images of each type of waste to help children recognise which items go in which bin.

Use a compost bin or create a worm farm

Show children that food waste can also be recycled. Create a compost bin where children's meal leftovers can be deposited. Make it part of your daily routine to empty scraps into the compost bin and periodically transfer the contents into an outdoor composter. Use this opportunity to teach children about the composting process and how food can be recycled into nutrient-rich soil.

If you have limited space, a worm farm is great for turning your kitchen scraps into rich fertiliser for your centre's garden or veggie patch. Worm farms can be made, or purchased, and come in a variety of styles to suit different environments. This too can be a great learning experience for children, as they see the worms in action breaking down food waste and learn to care for them by feeding them food scraps.

Plant a veggie garden

Engaging children in a veggie garden can improve their attitude towards vegetables and their confidence to taste new foods. It also teaches children about where their food really comes from - it doesn't begin at the supermarket! Help children feel involved and increase their responsibility by asking them to help with maintenance tasks such as watering, pest patrol and picking.

Commute by foot or bike

Commuting on foot or by bike is a better choice for your health as well as for the environment. Explain to children about traffic pollution and how changes in our behaviour such as reducing car trips can have a positive impact on the planet.

Check out [Home | Love Food Hate Waste \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://www.nsw.gov.au/home/love-food-hate-waste) for more information about food waste recycling.

Link to NQS:

Element 2.1.3 Healthy lifestyle

Element 3.2.3 Environmentally responsible



Support for Families: Fussy Eating

Supporting Fussy Eaters

A happy and relaxed meal time reduces stress levels and helps children to develop good eating habits.

- Try varying the way foods are prepared e.g. cooked, raw and crunchy, grated.
- Don't assume a child dislikes a food. You may need to offer a new food up to **15** times for children to accept it!
- Growing fruit and vegetables is a fun way for children to learn about food.
- Role model by eating and enjoying a range of healthy foods yourself.
- Don't use food as a bribe or reward.
- Avoid grazing through the day. Have a predictable meal and snack routine.
- Don't make mealtimes a battleground. Mealtimes should not be associated with stress.

Children love to help with food preparation!

Logos: NSW Health Hunter New England Local Health District, Good for kids good for life, Artwork: 'The Heart of a Child' Wormiri Artist Lara West

Supporting Healthy Eating Choices

We all make choices when it comes to eating. Individual food choices and appetites vary significantly, especially for children between the ages of 3-6 years. Here are some strategies for families and carers to support children in making healthy food choices.

How to support healthy eating choices

Families and Carers

Families and carers can support children at mealtimes by deciding:

- 1. What type of food is provided**
- 2. What time to eat**

This is particularly important for children who are exploring different food and eating choices. This process gives children access to a variety of foods, and provides a regular eating routine.

Children

Once the food is provided, children can then decide:

- 1. If they want to eat**
- 2. How much they want to eat**

Allowing children to make these choices supports their natural ability of knowing how much food their body needs, and helps them to learn when they feel hungry or full.

Handy hints about child eating behaviours

- Children often balance out how much they eat over a few days (e.g. if they aren't hungry today they'll likely make up for it tomorrow).
- Children may use food as a way of exploring their independence (e.g. liking a food one day and refusing it the next).
- A lot of options on the plate can sometimes be overwhelming and cause children to eat less.

A useful tip: To understand how much a child is eating, track their appetite over a full week rather than over one day or meal.

How can I tell if my child is eating enough?

If your child is happy, energetic and tracking well on their growth chart, they are likely eating enough.

What to do if you are concerned

If you are concerned about your child's diet or growth speak with your doctor or Child and Family Health Nurse.

For easy ideas and tips on packing healthy lunchboxes visit: www.goodforkids.com.au

Good for Kids would like to acknowledge EATCL&E222 and the Global Childcare Network for the provision of information for this resource.

Logos: NSW Health Hunter New England Local Health District, Good for kids good for life, Artwork: 'The Heart of a Child' Wormiri Artist Lara West

1 - <https://www.goodforkids.nsw.gov.au/media/1881/supporting-healthy-eating-choices.pdf>

Do parents often tell you their child is a fussy eater? Does it cause stress at mealtimes? They are not alone!

It's important that parents understand that fussy eating is a normal part of children's development as they learn about their environment, show some independence and develop their appetite. But feeding children doesn't have to be a struggle.

The idea of **'Parents Provide, Children Decide'** allows kids to eat when they are hungry and say when they are full. The parent's job is to provide healthy food and the child's job is to decide what and how much to eat. At the same time as helping children develop good eating habits for life, this approach allows parents to relax and trust their children's appetite.

The **PICNIC project** is a free program available to parents and carers of children aged 0-6 years. The program supports parents through the often challenging first years, helping create a more relaxed feeding journey short term, and children will grow up eating a better quality, more varied diet, eating the right amount for their growth and development and having a good relationship with food.

The PICNIC project can provide support to families through online workshops, online open Q&A sessions, online parent community and access to dietitian support. You may like to share the **PICNIC project website** with families at your service.

Our Good for Kids resources (featured on the left) can be shared with families to help take the stress out of mealtimes:

- [Supporting Fussy Eaters \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://nsw.gov.au)
- [Supporting Healthy Eating Choices \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://nsw.gov.au)

Link to NQS:

Element 6.1.3 Families are supported

Professional Development: PICNIC in Early Education

PICNIC in Early Education is an extension of the PICNIC program providing a free education program for Early Childhood Education and Care staff that aligns with the Early Years Learning Framework. The program consists of 3 self-directed learning modules, as well as resources and support. Each module is about 40 minutes long and they include videos, text, quiz questions, practical tools, and links to resources.



What are the benefits?

PICNIC in Early Education will provide you with the latest evidence-based information on child feeding and provide practical tools for your service. The aim is to create a positive mealtime environment that is enjoyable for both educators and children.

For more information and to register your interest, please email PICNIC in Early Education lead, Alison Walton at alison.walton@health.nsw.gov.au

Link to NQS:

Element 7.2.3 Development of professionals

Out and About: Munch & Move Armidale trip



Two of our Health Promotion Officers, Kayla and Jayde visited ECEC services in the Armidale region during October.

During their busy three-day trip, Kayla and Jayde delivered a Munch & Move Express workshop, facilitated an Aboriginal ECEC Educator network meeting as well as visited local ECEC services to talk about all things Munch & Move.

TG's Child Care – Kirkwood St and TG's Childcare and Preschool were super excited to learn more about the Munch & Move program and have been busy implementing program practices at their service. Thanks to TG's for having our team visit!

Where to get more information?

Good for Kids Early Childhood Education and Care on Facebook: [Facebook](#)

Munch & Move e-learning: [Click here to register](#)

Good for Kids Resources: [Resources | Good for Kids, Good for Life \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

Embedding Aboriginal Perspectives in Munch & Move: [Embedding Aboriginal Perspectives: A Guide for Early Childcare Services | Good for Kids, Good for Life \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

Australian Breastfeeding Association: [Australian Breastfeeding Association](#)

Mini Moves Fundamental Movement Skills resources: [Mini Moves - Munch & Move](#)

Small Bites for Big Steps: [Small Bites for Big Steps - Munch & Move](#)

