



## LIMIT 'SOMETIMES' FOODS

### Criterion 3

- a) 'Sometimes'\* food and drinks are not included in planned menus and are discouraged in lunchboxes sent from home.
- b) 'Sometimes' food and drinks are not used as a reward or an incentive and are limited in the wider service environment.

To meet this criterion include the following in your service's practice and policy:

#### Criterion 3a Menus and Lunchboxes

- 'Sometimes' foods and drinks are not included in snacks or meals provided by your service.
- Strategies are in place to communicate with families about not packing 'sometimes' foods and drinks in lunch boxes brought from home.
- For services that provide snacks and/or meals: completion of the 'Menu Planning Assessment Tools' is submitted to Public Health Services Dietitians (not required for Child and Family Centres).

#### Criterion 3b Service Community

- Your service has strategies and policies in place to limit 'sometimes' foods and drinks in the wider service community (e.g. fundraising, celebrations, excursions cooking activities and other special events).
- Educators and staff do not use 'sometimes' foods or drinks as a reward or incentive.
- Your wider service community (e.g. management/administration, committees, family support groups, other programs, suppliers and visitors) is encouraged to support the limiting of 'sometimes' food and drinks.

**Quick tip: It is OK to copy and paste the above dot points into your policy if it is happening in practice.**



Add your 'Limit Sometimes Foods' progress sticker to your Member Certificate when all relevant parts of this criterion are happening in practice and written into policy.

#### Why is this criterion important?

- 'Sometimes' foods and drinks <sup>1</sup> have little nutritional value. Eating a variety of 'everyday' foods helps to support children's health and wellbeing. <sup>2</sup>
- "Experiences with eating early in life can affect attitudes and habits later on, as well as influence health."<sup>6</sup>

\*'Sometimes' foods and drinks include chocolate, confectionary, sweet drinks, crisps, chips, fried foods and some cakes, biscuits and pastry items that are high in fat, sugar or salt.

## Reasons for action:

### Menus and lunchboxes

- 'Sometimes' foods and drinks fill children up and leave little room for 'everyday' foods. <sup>4</sup> Australian toddlers are getting 30% of their daily energy from 'sometimes' foods and drinks and children 4-8 years old are getting 37%. <sup>3</sup> While only 5.4% of Tasmanian children aged 2-18 years ate the recommended daily serves of fruit and vegetables. <sup>5</sup>
- Encouraging a wide range of 'everyday' foods and drinks helps children to develop healthy eating habits, which are likely to have a lifelong effect. <sup>2</sup>

### Rewards and incentives

Using food as a reward or incentive can:

- undermine messages about healthy eating
- teach children to eat when they are not hungry
- teach children to reward themselves with food.

For these reasons, if you choose to use rewards at your service to reinforce positive behaviour, non-food rewards are encouraged.

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## Australian Recommendations advise:

Children should be offered a wide variety of food from the five food groups every day. The five food groups are referred to as 'everyday' foods. They include:

- grain (cereal) foods
- vegetables and legumes/beans
- fruit
- milk, yoghurt, cheese and alternatives
- lean meat and meat alternatives, such as fish, eggs, tofu, beans and legumes <sup>1</sup>.

'Sometimes' foods and drinks are high in saturated fat, sugar and/or salt <sup>1</sup>. 'Sometimes' foods and drinks should not be offered in early childhood education centres. <sup>2</sup>

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## Tips and strategies

- Share information about everyday eating with families, service staff and the wider community. Find plenty of resources to share on the ['Limit 'Sometimes' Foods web page](#).
- Work as a team with the whole service community in planning and decision making around limiting 'sometimes' foods and drinks. Staff meetings are a great place to discuss.
- Provide opportunities for children to get to know and try new foods in food-related activities such as cooking or growing food.
- Be a positive role model for children by drinking water and eating 'everyday' foods.
- Promote your policies about healthy eating and physical activity within your service and to the wider service community. Create a display by putting up [information or posters about healthy snacks](#) with your service's policy about *'Limiting 'Sometimes' Foods'* alongside it.

### Linking with families

It is really important that you take the time to connect with families about the work you are doing to help their children grow happy and strong. Here are some things that you can do:

- When the child enrolls tell families about your service's healthy eating policies. It is a good idea to explain in person and provide a simply written information sheet. Make sure you are clear about what foods and drinks can be sent in lunchboxes or foods that are offered by the service.

- If you are a lunch box service, the [snack poster](#) and the [lunchbox poster](#) from *Move Well Eat Well* can be displayed.

## Overcoming potential barriers

### Changing the food offered or requested at your service

Involve families as much as you can, ask for their suggestions and communicate why decisions have been made in your service.

### When 'sometimes' foods are still being sent

Parents or carers may still want to send 'sometimes' foods to your service. It may be useful to find out the reasons why they want to send them. For example:

- they may not understand why your service avoids 'sometimes' foods
- they may feel they haven't been given a voice and not enjoy being told what to do
- they may worry that their child won't have enough to eat during the day
- they may feel guilty for being away from their child and want to send favourite foods to make up for the separation.

### Overcoming obstacles

It may help to spend some time with the parent or carer to understand their perspective and to explain:

- reasons for your policy
- that you offer a variety of foods at each meal and snack so that all children can find something to eat if they are hungry
- that their child will be supported to feel happy and safe
- there are many resources on the [Move Well Eat Well Families page](#) about 'sometimes' foods.

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## Activities

### Food tasting

Try tasting and comparing different foods within a food group with children. The colour, taste, texture and smell will be different between the varieties of foods. For example try different breads (white, rye, wholemeal, pumpernickel, raisin and flat breads) or cheese or fresh herbs.

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### Wrapper-free days (for services where children bring food from home)

Wrapper-free days are environmentally friendly and promote 'everyday' foods. On wrapper-free days families are asked to pack wrapper-free foods in their child's lunch box. In the lead up to wrapper-free days, educators can encourage children to talk about and draw ideas of what could be in their lunch box. Some services also work to reduce waste by composting food scraps. These activities make great links to being a sustainable early childhood service.

### Birthday ideas

Instead of a birthday cake, celebrate with non-food ideas. You could make up a book of all the children's favourite activities. The birthday person could choose a special activity they would like to do on that day. [Find more celebration ideas](#).

## Photograph display

Photographs of meals served at the centre are a good way of showing families what their children eat. This can be done as a display or in a photograph album.

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## Success stories

### Wrapper-free lunches for sustainability

Wrapper-free lunch box displays have been used at Giggles Early Learning Service to encourage parents to select wrapper-free options when packing their children's lunches. Educators talk regularly with the parents about alternatives to packaged foods and suggest other choices to these foods such as fresh fruit, vegetables, yoghurt and crackers in re-usable containers. The service has a Sustainable Futures policy which states that wrapper-free lunch options should be promoted. Waste from fruit and vegetables are taken to the worm farm in the playground by the children. Soil from the worm farm is used in the service's vegetable garden.

### Multiple messages

Educators at Discovery Early Learning Centre, Sacred Heart, use a range of strategies to pass on messages about limiting 'sometimes' foods. These include:

- lunch box ideas posters displayed in the service
  - lunch box ideas in new family booklets for parents
  - articles and tips for parents in the centre's monthly newsletter
  - fact sheets about everyday eating for families
  - at meal times children are always encouraged to 'try some of your growing food first'.
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Where to go next



Website

The following sections of *Move Well Eat Well* website can help provide support and useful tools to help you with the 'Limit Sometimes Foods' message and criteria:

- [Limit Sometimes Foods 'Early Childhood Services' section](#)
  - [Limit Sometimes Foods 'Families' section](#)
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## References

1. National Health and Medical Research Council (2013) The Australian Dietary Guidelines. Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council.
2. Department of Health and Ageing (2009) Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings. Commonwealth Government of Australia.
3. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2014). Australian Health Survey: Nutrition First Results – Foods and Nutrients, 2011-12, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/4364.0.55.007~2011-12-Main%20Features~Discretionary%20foods~700>
4. Public Health Services (2015) Start Them Right, a parent's guide to eating for under 5s. Department of Health and Human Services, Tasmania, in partnership with Lady Gowrie Tasmania.
5. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2016) National Health Survey: First results, 2014/15. Canberra, ABS Catalogue No. 4364.0.55.001, accessed 04.12.2017 at <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4364.0.55.0012014-15?OpenDocument>.
6. Public Health Services (2016) Tucker Talk- A nutrition education manual for child health nurses. Department of Health and Human Services, Tasmania.