NOURISH

The FACTS

The Food in ACT Schools Guidelines

Preschool to Year 12
**Acknowledgements**

These guidelines have been adapted from Eat Well SA Schools and Preschools Healthy Eating Guidelines, SA Department of Education and Children’s Services. We sincerely thank the SA Department of Education and Children’s Services for allowing us to adapt their guidelines.

This document has been prepared by Community Health, ACT Health and the Curriculum Development and Support Unit, ACT Department of Education and Training (DET).

The Tuckatalk in Schools Steering Group has overseen the development of these guidelines. The Tuckatalk in Schools Steering Group comprises of:

- Child, Youth & Women’s Health Program (ACT Health)—Project officers, Senior Nutritionist, Allied Health Manager, Health Promotion Officer
- Curriculum Development and Support Unit Project Officer (DET)
- ACT Council of P&C Associations
- Association of Independent Schools ACT
- Catholic Education Office
- A School Principal (DET)
- Health Promotion and Grants Unit (ACT Health)
- Dental Health Program (ACT Health)
- Heart Foundation (ACT Division)
- Diabetes Australia (ACT Branch)
- Cancer Council (ACT Branch)

We wish to thank staff from across the ACT government agencies, non-government agencies, community group representatives and individuals who have provided their time and expertise in drafting this document.

A special thanks to:

- Dr Vivienne Lewis—Lecturer in Psychology, University of Canberra
- Viv Pearce—ACT Council of P & C Associations Representative

© Australian Capital Territory, Canberra, June 2007.

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process without permission from the Territory Records Office, Community and Infrastructure Services, Territory and Municipal Services, ACT Government, GPO Box 158, Canberra City ACT 2601.

Publication No 07/0815

For the most up to date version of this document and supporting documents visit the Department of Education and Training Website: www.det.act.gov.au/publicat/publicat.htm

Enquires about this publication should be directed to the:

Curriculum Development and Support Unit
ACT Department of Education and Training
PO Box 1584
Tuggeranong ACT 2901
Contents

- Foreword iv
- Introduction 1
- Guidelines 11
  - 1: Guidelines on curriculum and nutrition 13
  - 2: Guidelines on wellbeing 19
  - 3: Guidelines on food in school 33
  - 4: Guidelines on food safety 41
  - 5: Guidelines on partnerships 47
  - 6: Guidelines on planning healthy food practices 53
- Appendices 55
  - Appendix A: Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia 57
  - Appendix B: The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating 58
  - Appendix C: Children’s eating—behaviour and influences 59
  - Appendix D: Resources for teachers 62
- References 67
Foreword

We have great pleasure in jointly presenting Nourish—the FACTS (Food in ACT Schools) guidelines. Promoting appropriate nutrition to children and young people is essential for ensuring the health and wellbeing of the Canberra community, now and into the future. Schools form an excellent platform for interventions aimed at children and young people.

Nourish—the FACTS guidelines have been developed to guide adults in school communities to follow better practice in food and nutrition activities. They are for teaching staff, parents, canteen workers, other school staff and volunteers. The guidelines provide practical guidance on:

- curriculum and nutrition
- wellbeing
- food in schools
- food safety
- partnerships
- planning healthy food practices.

They showcase local initiatives promoting good nutrition and provide information on how to access useful resources.

Nourish—the FACTS guidelines are underpinned by a range of ACT Government strategic directions including:

- ACT Department of Education and Training Strategic Plan 2006–2009

Nourish—the FACTS guidelines can be applied to all learning programs and environments in schools and preschools. Parents and volunteers will find the guidelines helpful when providing food for special events and planning fundraising events. The guidelines recognise the inroad schools provide to the family food environment by contact with parents and educating future generations of parents.
The guidelines will be implemented in the daily work of schools and preschools through:

- the ACT Curriculum Framework, *Every Chance to Learn*
- ensuring the creation of inclusive environments for learning and wellbeing
- developing partnerships with families and communities services to support a whole-of-community commitment to wellbeing and learning.

*Nourish—the FACTS* guidelines are the outcome of a successful collaboration between health professionals, education professionals, community workers and school communities. This collaboration has resulted in guidelines that are uniquely relevant to ACT schools. We recommend you use these valuable guidelines in your school to plan your activities around food and nutrition.

**Dr Michele Bruniges**
Chief Executive
ACT Department of Education and Training

**Mr Mark Cormack**
Chief Executive
ACT Health
Introduction
Introduction

At a glance...

Purpose of these guidelines

An inclusive approach

Why have nutrition guidelines for schools?
• setting good patterns for life
• improving health and academic outcomes
• addressing weight concerns

How do we promote healthy eating?
• making healthy eating the norm
• applying nutrition knowledge
• choosing nutritious foods

What is a supportive food and nutrition environment?

Implementing the guidelines
• preschools and primary schools
• high schools
• colleges
Purpose of these guidelines

These guidelines, *Nourish—the Food in ACT Schools (Nourish—the FACTS)*, have been developed to assist ACT school communities to follow better practice in food and nutrition.

The guidelines are for teaching staff, parents, canteen workers, other school staff and volunteers.

They provide guidance on the curriculum and nutrition, wellbeing, food in schools, food safety, partnerships and policy, as well as background information and practical tips for promoting positive nutrition in ACT schools.

Promoting appropriate nutrition to children is essential for ensuring the health and wellbeing of the Australian community, now and in the future. Schools are a natural focus for interventions aimed at children and adolescents.


An inclusive approach

The curriculum framework for ACT schools, *Every Chance to Learn*, states that every school should provide a curriculum which is equitable and inclusive and which meets the needs of the whole child.

*Nourish—the FACTS* takes a whole-of-school approach to support all children and adults in the school community to make healthy eating choices.

These guidelines are based on the National Framework for Health-Promoting Schools\(^2\) and reflect the interrelationship between three important areas, as illustrated in Figure 1.
Figure 1: Health Promoting Schools Framework

Why have nutrition guidelines for schools?

Setting good patterns for life

Establishing healthy eating patterns at a young age is important for life-long good food habits—with health, social and financial benefits to individuals, families and society.

Although over the course of a school year only 16 per cent of a child’s energy intake occurs in the school setting, schools have the potential to influence attitudes and behaviours around food outside of school hours.3

Schools are not only able to influence children at a relatively early age and continue to influence them for many years; they can also influence family attitudes and behaviours around food.
Schools are workplaces for many adults, so a whole-of-school approach to nutrition can be part of workplace health promotion.

The school system has a broad reach across all socio-economic levels, so using a schools approach to promote healthy eating can help to ensure these guidelines will benefit all population groups in the ACT.

Improving health and academic outcomes

Appropriate nutrition can improve academic outcomes as well as improve physical and mental health in the short and long-term.

Children and adolescents with appropriate nutrition have improved:

- cognitive development
- attention span
- work capacity
- classroom behaviour
- attendance at school and preschool.4, 5

Addressing weight concerns

The weight of Australian children and adults is increasing.6 Excess weight is associated with a wide range of physical and emotional health issues.

Justifiable concerns about weight gain need to be balanced against the risk of increasing disordered eating. There is evidence that both overweight and healthy weight children and adolescents who attempt to change their body weight tend to become more overweight. They engage in risky weight loss behaviours such as smoking, skipping meals, fasting, taking diet pills and purging. This exacerbates the problem of weight control and interferes with the development of healthy attitudes and behaviours around food and eating.7, 8

To promote healthy weight, people need to be supported to make healthy food and physical activity choices.

Children and adolescents of all weights need to be supported (not targeted) to:

- eat well (within the context of their cultures and family)
- develop or maintain healthy attitudes towards food and eating
- engage in enjoyable physical activity and active play
- accept a wide range of body shapes and sizes.
Nourish—the FACTS promotes appropriate nutrition as a positive, pleasurable part of life rather than focusing on a negative ‘avoidance of overweight’ approach.

**How do we promote healthy eating?**

**Making healthy eating the norm**

These guidelines promote healthy eating through changes to the school ethos and environment, rather than simply by ‘teaching’ children about nutrition and a healthy diet. This is because much of our learning about food and eating occurs by observing the actions of others.

It is easier for students to make appropriate choices in an environment where healthy eating is the norm rather than the exception. Developmentally appropriate formal nutrition education in the classroom can then help students expand their knowledge and make more conscious choices about their eating.

**Applying nutrition knowledge**

Younger children require adults to apply nutrition knowledge to ensure that the available food choices are appropriate. As children mature, they begin to take on more responsibility for their food choices but still require adults to be responsible for ensuring that tasty, nutritious foods are available.

Although the family food environment is key to developing healthy food preferences in children, schools can support and extend the family's role in many ways.

*Nourish—the FACTS* encourages schools to:

- provide an environment where tasty, nutritious foods are available and promoted, for example in the school canteen, in fundraising activities by the P&C, in breakfast programs and classroom celebrations
- support children to learn about a wide range of foods as part of the curriculum by exposing them to a range of nutritious foods
- provide developmentally appropriate nutrition education
- provide adult modelling of healthy behaviours
- promote the use of positive or neutral language about food, eating and body image
- provide information to parents with practical ideas for good-tasting nutritious foods.
Family eating must always be respected and foods promoted in such a way that children are not made to feel inadequate if their families are unable to provide.

Choosing nutritious foods

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) has published dietary guidelines for Australian infants, children and adolescents, adults, and older people. These guidelines provide recommendations for healthy eating not only to reduce the risk of diet-related disease, but also to improve the community's health and wellbeing. The *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia* is at Appendix A. The *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* translates the NHMRC dietary guidelines into recommendations for particular foods and is at Appendix B.

Overall, for good health, school-aged children need to:

- drink plenty of water
- eat plenty of:
  - fruit
  - vegetables
  - legumes and cereals
- eat adequate amounts of:
  - lean meat
  - low fat milk products
- and, importantly, choose foods containing less fat, less saturated fat, less sugar and less salt.

For more information about children's eating behaviour and the development of food preferences see Appendix C.
What is a supportive school food and nutrition environment?

Elements that contribute to the overall school food environment are:

- school food and nutrition policies
- training opportunities and resources for teachers and food service staff
- guidelines for offering healthy food and drink choices
- promotion of healthy options in foods brought from home
- the curriculum content on food and nutrition
- the overall school ethos or culture on food and nutrition.

*Nourish—the FACTS* addresses each of these elements.

A supportive food and nutrition environment needs to consider nutritionally vulnerable groups and students with special needs. In the ACT, nutritionally vulnerable groups include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and youth.

In addition, some school and preschool-aged children have particular dietary needs related to medical conditions such as food allergy induced anaphylaxis, diabetes and cystic fibrosis. Schools must ensure nutrition interventions meet the needs of these students.

Implementing the guidelines

Healthy eating underpins good health and good health is a resource for life and learning.

The guidelines reflect an understanding that effective learning about healthy eating must be supported in all aspects of the learning environment.

They can be applied to learning programs and environments for all school and preschool settings including canteens, out-of-school-hours care, holiday programs and related settings.
Preschools and primary schools

Adults who must take responsibility for children’s menus in preschools and primary schools can use these guidelines to:

- decide what is on the menu for children’s meals and snacks (in school canteens, on school camps, at school events, at out-of-school-hours care)
- plan professional development priorities for school staff
- plan a school environment where healthy eating is promoted, especially with regard to food safety, fundraising activities, and appropriate health promotion projects and curriculum.

High schools

Adolescence is a time of rapid physical growth and increased energy and nutrient requirements. It is also a time of increasing autonomy. As children get older, they take greater responsibility for their own eating. Adults in high schools can use these guidelines to:

- work with students to ensure that, within the school environment, nutritious and appealing food is available and cost competitive
- model healthy behaviours and attitudes around food and eating inside and outside the classroom
- plan appropriate nutrition and food skills activities within the curriculum
- work with students to implement appropriate health promotion projects.

College

The college system for years 11 and 12 has a unique set of challenges. Adults in the school community continue to have a responsibility to advocate and model health promoting behaviour.

Colleges are encouraged to seek student input into making the onsite canteen an attractive alternative to other food outlets. Attention to the atmosphere (such as seating and décor), appealing menu choices designed with student input, and competitive pricing will encourage students to use their canteen.

The ACT Department of Education and Training website (www.det.act.gov.au) will have units of work on nutrition. These units will refer to Nourish—the FACTS guidelines as a key resource.
Guidelines
1: Guidelines on curriculum and nutrition

At a glance...

1.1 Schools are responsible for meeting the requirements of the ACT curriculum framework.

1.2 Schools are encouraged to integrate food awareness across the whole school curriculum.

1.3 Teachers are best placed to deliver curriculum content and facilitate learning.

1.4 Learning needs to be underpinned by effective teaching and learning that develops student knowledge, skills, values and attitudes.

1.5 It is recommended that teachers address issues that are relevant to students in a timely manner based on research.

1.6 It is recommended that teachers attend professional development relating to nutrition and eating issues.
1.1 **Schools are responsible for meeting the requirements of the ACT curriculum framework.**

**Rationale**

The Essential Learning Achievements (ELA) in the ACT curriculum framework identify what all students must be able to know, understand, value and do from preschool to year 10. The ELAs that relate to nutrition include:

- the student takes action to promote health and wellbeing
- the student is physically skilled and active
- the student manages self and relationships
- the student makes considered decisions
- the student designs, makes and appraises using technology.

A national perspective on nutrition and student wellbeing comes from the Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in Australia in the Twenty-first Century. Among the goals is that when learners leave school they should *have the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to establish and maintain a healthy lifestyle, and for the creative and satisfying use of leisure time*.

**Putting it into practice**

The ACT curriculum framework makes direct links to these national goals. Schools will be addressing these goals when using the ACT curriculum framework to design learning opportunities.

---

1.2 **Schools are encouraged to integrate food awareness across the whole school curriculum.**

**Rationale**

The curriculum framework for ACT schools requires all ACT schools to use the curriculum to develop each child ‘intellectually, physically, socially, emotionally, morally and spiritually’.

Adults in the school community have a responsibility to nurture the whole child, to allow each to reach their full potential ‘as a learner, as a person, as a community member and as a contributor to society’.
Learning about nutrition and healthy choices can contribute to the development of each child in all of these areas.

**Putting it into practice**

Learning should be balanced across more than one key learning area to achieve this goal. The investigation of food and nutrition, for example, can occur through studies of technology (products, processes and systems), society and environment (societies and cultures), mathematics (measurement and exploring, analysing and modelling data), values education (people’s perceptions of body image, food, culture and food) and science (energy systems, life systems, matter).

### 1.3 Teachers are best placed to deliver curriculum content and facilitate learning.

**Rationale**

Teachers are trained to design and facilitate learning. Health experts and resources within the health field can inform content, but learning is most effective when embedded within a curriculum that is delivered by the classroom teacher.

**Putting it into practice**

Teachers can selectively use resources and external agencies based on their capacity to complement learning, but these should not replace the essential role of the classroom teacher (see guideline 5.2).

Curriculum Officers in the ACT Department of Education and Training, The Catholic Education Office and The Association of Independent Schools can be contacted for health and physical activity curriculum ideas.
Learning needs to be underpinned by effective teaching and learning that develops student knowledge, skills, values and attitudes.

Rationale

Learning programs that focus solely on the acquisition of factual knowledge do not allow for deep understanding and connectedness. For example, many studies have found that an increase in nutrition knowledge does not always translate into changed behaviour. \(^{12, 13, 14}\)

In addition, education about nutrition and ‘healthy’ eating may have unintended consequences. In 2003 a study of children aged 8 to 12 years found the term ‘healthy’ had negative connotations such as being made to eat foods they did not like or not being able to eat favourite foods. \(^{15}\)

Focus group research with adolescents reinforces this. Adolescents discussed foods as either tasty, gratifying and energy-dense or as tasteless, unpleasant, healthy foods. \(^{16}\)

Putting it into practice

Emphasising the positive aspects of eating rather than the negative consequences of not eating healthily may reduce the negativity some children associate with the concept of ‘healthy eating’.

Provide a supportive environment where experiential learning can take place by:

- exposing students, especially in early childhood, to a wide range of nutritious foods—leave it up to them to decide what they want to eat
- finding opportunities to grow, prepare, cook, serve, eat, read about, see, smell and taste a range of nutritious foods in the classroom. Remember that food acceptance takes time—continued exposure without pressure is the key
- avoiding a focus on ‘nutrition’ with primary aged children, as they are unable to apply nutrition rules
- knowing your own food values—choose language carefully and avoid judgemental words that label foods as ‘good’ or ‘bad’. 
First and foremost, we want to enchant and engage the children.

Children are unimpressed by lists or pyramids that separate the ‘good for you’ from the ‘not good for you’ foods.

But get them digging and planting and picking, or get them mixing or rolling or chopping, or get them around a table with their own freshly baked pizza topped with their own tomato sauce, liberally scattered with herbs from the garden, and the result is enthusiasm, real learning and great flavours.

Stephanie Alexander
Australian restaurateur, author and initiator of The Kitchen Garden at Collingwood College

Adolescent students, and in some cases later childhood students, have the cognitive ability to make some sense of specific nutritional information.

Learning should be inquiry-based and relevant to the students, for example:

- make links between healthy food choices and other areas of wellbeing including physical activity, body image and self esteem
- find opportunities for students to be involved in food selection and change processes around food (creating healthy recipes for the canteen, designing posters, promoting fruit and vegetables)
- avoid promoting food rules or diets
- avoid programs/resources that take a problem-based approach (that is, obesity prevention)
- avoid recommending products or practices that promise quick fix, secret or miracle cures
- role model balanced eating yourself.
1.5 **It is recommended that teachers address issues that are relevant to students in a timely manner based on research.**

**Rationale**

While some health issues attract media attention and public concern, these may not necessarily be the most relevant, age-appropriate issues for the students in your class.

**Putting it into practice**

Use local statistical prevalence data to provide accurate information on issues affecting ACT youth (examples of reliable data sources can be found in Appendix D).

1.6 **It is recommended that teachers attend professional development relating to nutrition and eating issues.**

**Rationale**

Updating knowledge and understanding of the complexities of nutrition helps teachers to be more confident and effective role models and educators.

**Putting it into practice**

Schools can prioritise nutrition professional development as part of their Professional Development programs.

Requests for ACT Health Dietitians to provide updates to the whole school staff can be made by contacting Community Health Intake via email ACTCC.CCINTAKE@act.gov.au or phone 02 6207 9977.
2: Guidelines on wellbeing

At a glance...

2.1 While at school and preschool, it is recommended that students eat and drink routinely at scheduled break times.

2.2 Preschool children and primary-aged students should eat lunch in a supervised social environment.

2.3 It is recommended that students are encouraged to participate in physical activity at break times.

2.4 School children of all ages are encouraged to use internal regulation to determine their food intake.

2.5 Schools and preschools are encouraged to promote daily fruit and vegetable consumption.

2.6 It is recommended that schools and preschools support frequent drinking of fresh, clean tap water.

2.7 Food should not be used within behaviour management programs.

2.8 Adults in schools need to be aware of their responsibilities as role models.

2.9 Adults in schools should promote positive body image.

2.10 Schools need to be aware of their valuable role in recognising and preventing eating disorders.

2.11 Schools and preschools are encouraged to support community initiatives that assist groups who are at risk in relation to food and nutrition.

2.12 All worksites should be breastfeeding friendly environments.

2.13 Schools need to support students with individual religious, cultural or medical food needs e.g. allergy, diabetes.
2.1 While at school and preschool, it is recommended that students eat and drink routinely at scheduled break times.

Rationale

The early years of life are critical in establishing food attitudes and habits.\textsuperscript{18, 19} Childhood is a period of continuous education about healthy eating and drinking. Regular eating and drinking times support children to eat well.

Children eat better when they come to a meal or snack hungry but not over hungry. Having a few hours gap between eating times is also better for dental health.\textsuperscript{20}

Putting it into practice

Allow approximately two to three hours between eating breaks.

It is better for eating to occur in a relaxed and sociable atmosphere. The classroom can be temporarily transformed into an eating area as in the boxed example or a shady outdoor space can be designated as an eating area.

Provide students with continuous access to fresh, clean tap water (see guideline 2.6).

2.2 Preschool children and primary-aged students should eat lunch in a supervised social environment.

Rationale

Eating in a pleasant, relaxing environment, with enjoyable social and cultural interaction and sufficient time to eat, encourages children to develop sound eating habits and reduces the likelihood of skipping meals.

Eating with students provides staff with an opportunity to model and reinforce healthy behaviour. This also provides a structured opportunity to learn and practice personal hygiene in relation to eating (see guideline 4.1) and for learning about recycling and not littering.

Supervision also reduces the risk of choking for young children or at-risk students by discouraging playing while eating.
Putting it into practice

At least 10 minutes needs to be dedicated for sitting down and eating. Younger children will probably need more time.\textsuperscript{21}

Provide clean, attractive and shaded eating areas.

Have canteen arrangements that minimise the time students spend waiting for food.

\begin{quote}
Campbell Primary School

Children in the Junior Primary classes eat a supervised lunch in the classroom each day. Students wash their hands, put placemats on their desk and spend 10 minutes eating and chatting. This time also allows those students requiring medication to walk to the front office. Teachers who have concerns about the content of children’s lunches make contact with parents.
\end{quote}

\section*{2.3 It is recommended that students are encouraged to participate in physical activity at break times.}

Rationale

Regular physical activity is important for the health and wellbeing of children and adolescents. In addition, studies show academic performance is improved when classroom learning is complemented by physical activity.\textsuperscript{22}

Current Australian recommendations are that children aged 5–18 years engage in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per day, and that children should not spend more than two hours a day using electronic media for entertainment.\textsuperscript{23, 24}

Putting it into practice

Break times should allow time for play as well as to eat. Schools can provide suitable games equipment for children to use in break times. In wet weather, staff can organise inside activities.
2.4 School children of all ages are encouraged to use internal regulation to determine their food intake.

Rationale

Encouraging children to use their internal cues of hunger and satiety to regulate their eating (i.e. allowing them to stop eating when they have had enough, rather than when they have ‘finished what is on their plate’) is very important in helping children maintain healthy growth patterns. Appetite will vary from meal to meal and day to day depending on growth and activity levels.25

Studies show that children aged three and under are very responsive to their internal regulation. By age five they are less responsive.26 However, children who have been encouraged to focus on internal rather than external cues for determining when to stop eating show better regulation of food intake.27, 28

Encouraging students to listen to their body’s signals helps them to trust their bodies and take responsibility for their eating. (See Appendix C Children’s eating—behaviour and influences for more information on children’s eating.)

Putting it into practice

Allow children to stop eating when they have had enough. Remind them that their body will let them know when they are satisfied and that they can stop eating even if they have not finished all the food in front of them.29 (Certain medical conditions require that children eat a prescribed amount of food—consult with parents if this is the case.)

2.5 Schools and preschools are encouraged to promote daily fruit and vegetable consumption.

Rationale

National nutritional priorities for children and adolescents include increasing fruit and vegetable consumption to promote health and prevent or reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease, stroke, some cancers, Type 2 diabetes, and degenerative eye diseases.
The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating recommendations for daily intakes of fruit and vegetables for children are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children and adolescents</th>
<th>Fruit</th>
<th>Vegetables including legumes*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>age</td>
<td>servings/day</td>
<td>servings/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – 7</td>
<td>1 – 2</td>
<td>2 – 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 – 11</td>
<td>1 – 2</td>
<td>3 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 – 18</td>
<td>3 – 4</td>
<td>4 – 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Legumes are dried peas and beans e.g. red and green lentils, chickpeas, kidney beans, baked beans

What is a serve?

One serve of **fruit** is 150 grams of fresh fruit or:
- 1 medium piece (e.g. one apple)
- 2 small pieces (e.g. two apricots)
- 1 cup of chopped or canned fruit

One serve of **vegetables** is 75 grams of vegetables or:
- ½ cup of cooked vegetables or legumes
- 1 medium potato
- 1 cup salad vegetables

Many children and adolescents do not eat enough fruit and vegetables. Some children, for example those living in households with low incomes, are likely to be at greater risk of inadequate consumption.

**Putting it into practice**

Using fruit and vegetables as snacks will assist in improving the nutritional quality of the diet of children and adolescents.

School canteens can promote fruit and vegetable-based foods in an inviting way. Many examples are available from the Sydney Markets website: www.freshforkids.com.au/

Teachers can run food experience programs with seasonal fruits and vegetables for learners to look at, smell, touch and taste.

Schools and preschools can introduce a morning fruit, vegetable and water program such as Lets Get Fruity www.nutritionaustralia.org/newtemplate-fruity.asp or Crunch and Sip® www.crunchandsip.com.au/default.aspx.
Staff can contact local markets to see if fresh fruit could be supplied at a discounted rate for sports days.

Schools can purchase an apple peeler, corer and slicer machine to use at school functions and parties.

**Go for 2&5® campaign**

The need to increase fruit and vegetable consumption in Australia has been recognised by the Australian Government as a priority. In response to this the Go for 2&5® campaign has been adopted as an Australian, state and territory government health initiative.

*Go for 2&5® campaign resources are available without cost for people working with the ACT community and include:*

- brochures and booklets with serve size and nutrition information
- recipe cards
- posters
- children’s stickers and bookmarks.

To order ACT Go for 2&5® resources please contact ACT Health by emailing healthpromotion@act.gov.au or calling 02 6207 9527.

For more information on the campaign visit: [www.gofor2and5.com.au/](http://www.gofor2and5.com.au/).

### 2.6 It is recommended that schools and preschools support frequent drinking of fresh, clean tap water.

**Rationale**

Water is essential for life. A balance between fluid intake and output is important for effective body function and maintaining good health.

In the Australian climate, people, particularly young children, can be at risk of dehydration. Contributing factors include poor thirst recognition and dissatisfaction with the taste of water. Dehydration can also result from, exercise and environmental conditions such as high altitude and low humidity. Alcohol and caffeine consumption are other factors that contribute to dehydration.
Canberra’s cold winters are a particular time of concern as the cool temperatures don’t encourage fluid intake but the low humidity can increase the risk of dehydration.

Dehydration can contribute to headaches, poor concentration, tiredness and behavioural problems in the classroom. Long-term adverse health outcomes include increased risk of kidney stones, and urinary tract and colon cancer.30

Many children have problems with bowel and bladder control. Adequate fluid intake is one of the cornerstones of treatment of these conditions.

Children’s and adolescents’ fluid needs are best met by water and milk. Soft drinks, sports drinks and fruit drinks should be discouraged because they have a high sugar and energy content. They contribute to tooth decay and may displace other nutrients from the diet and affect bone mineralisation.31, 32, 33

There is also reasonable evidence that soft drink consumption is associated with overweight in children and adolescents.34

One 375ml can of soft drink contains between 9 and 14 level teaspoons of sugar.

Another concern for younger adolescents and children is the amount of caffeine in some ‘energy drinks’. The Australian Drug Foundation advises caution in using energy drinks (more information at www.druginfo.adf.org.au/).

Putting it into practice

The Canberra water supply is good quality and contains fluoride to reduce the risk of tooth decay. For this reason, tap water is a better choice than bottled water. Using tap water also reduces packaging.

Teachers can both remind and model to children to have a drink each hour or between different classroom activities.

Allowing water bottles in class and on desks for all students can encourage water drinking. Water bottles should be taken home and washed daily.

Have taps available in all classrooms where water bottles can be filled. Using taps in the toilet area or where craft supplies are being washed is not appropriate due to hygiene concerns.
Children tend to only take in a mouthful when using the bubblers. Relying on bubblers will not provide children with an adequate fluid intake.

Allowing children to use the toilet when needed is important to balance fluid intake and output and keep their bladder healthy.

For more information: [www.wateriscoolinschool.org.uk/](http://www.wateriscoolinschool.org.uk/)

### 2.7 Food should not be used within behaviour management programs.

**Rationale**

While food is a part of social events and celebrations, it should not be used as a reward or punishment for behaviour.

Children and students receive many mixed messages in relation to food. Giving foods and drinks of poor nutritional value (such as lollies, chips, chocolates and soft drinks) for good behaviour, and punishing misbehaviour by denying such foods is a contradiction to curriculum designed to empower children and students to make healthy eating choices.

This practice may make food of poor nutritional value more attractive to learners. Using any food as a reward is undesirable as it encourages children to eat when they are not hungry and to use food to reward themselves.

**Putting it into practice**

Alternative rewards and punishments could include interesting activities and non-food rewards. Some ideas are: free time, sit with friends, be a helper, play a game or puzzle, earn points towards a prize (e.g. a book or movie voucher), and lucky dip prizes (e.g. pencils, stickers).

Websites with examples of classroom rewards can be found in Appendix D.

### 2.8 Adults in schools need to be aware of their responsibilities as role models.

**Rationale**

Role modelling is very important in the development of children’s eating behaviours. Parents, teachers and other caregivers are children’s most important models.35
Teachers and parents may have their own issues around eating and body image (see guideline 2.9). To reduce the chance of passing these issues onto children around them, it is important for adults to be aware of their own behaviour and language around food and appearance.

**Putting it into practice**

Model good eating practices. For example eat all foods slowly, with appreciation and in a relaxed, guilt free manner, rather than eating quickly, secretly or all at once. This includes ‘sometimes’ foods such as chocolate, lollies, chips etc.

Use neutral language when talking about food. Instead of classifying foods as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ or ‘healthy’ or ‘unhealthy’, try ‘everyday’ or ‘sometimes’ foods instead.

Forbidding particular foods or labelling them in a negative way may set up cravings and feelings of guilt when these foods are eaten.

Avoid promoting diets, celebrities and their food or weight issues, and programs about weight loss or size bias, as these are poor role models for children.

### 2.9 Adults in schools should promote positive body image.

**Rationale**

Body dissatisfaction among young people is associated with low self-esteem and depression. Body image problems may be observed among children, adolescents and young people as eating disorders, body dissatisfaction, health-damaging weight control practices such as vomiting, fasting, laxative and steroid use, and excessive exercise.

**Putting it into practice**

Programs that focus on increasing a student's self esteem and media literacy are likely to have a positive effect on their body image—the stronger a child’s self esteem, the less vulnerable they will be to thinking that their self worth depends on their appearance.
Promote and model acceptance of all children, staff and parents of different body sizes. It is also important to model acceptance and appreciation of your own body—or at least to avoid making body complaints about yourself or others in front of children.

Discuss body image issues when they arise. Listen to a child’s concern and always be positive about a child’s body and his/her uniqueness and individuality. Reassure children that the physical changes associated with adolescence (especially weight gain for girls) are normal and that everyone develops at his/her own rate.

Have effective anti-teasing and anti-bullying strategies in place. Research tells us that being teased or bullied about our weight as children can affect our body image right up until old age.

Read children stories where the hero and heroine offer alternative role models to our current stereotyped ideals (e.g. of thin, beautiful women or of tall, muscular men).

Help children to question the images and messages from media by discussing these with them.

Keep body image and appearance in perspective. Talk to children about all the characteristics that make up a person. Openly value people for what they do and who they are, rather than what they look like.

2.10 Schools need to be aware of their valuable role in recognising and preventing eating disorders.

Rationale

Eating disorders are a psychological illness with physical consequences. They include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder, and a range of other disordered eating patterns that don’t fall into these specific categories.

Eating disorders can be found in people as young as seven and as old as 70 years. Both males and females can develop eating disorders, although they are more common in females, particularly in adolescence.

They are complex conditions caused by a combination of factors. Effective prevention requires a coordinated approach across many areas (family, individual, school, community).

The school setting has the potential to provide both opportunities and environments that foster resilience to psychological illnesses such as eating disorders, eating issues and body concerns. Some of the factors influencing
the development of eating disorders are modelling (i.e. dieting adults, or adults concerned over their size and weight), dieting, bullying about appearance, and being overweight. Schools have a role to try and prevent some of these factors affecting school children.

By creating environments supportive of healthy eating, schools can influence the student norms around eating to shift towards more balanced eating and relaxed attitudes around food.

**Putting it into practice**

Adopt a whole school approach to encourage healthy eating patterns and regular enjoyable physical activity, rather than focusing on individual children.

Schools and school staff are **not** responsible for treating overweight and obesity.

Weight loss through dieting is the greatest risk factor for developing an eating disorder. Adults in the school community should avoid discussing their own weight loss concerns or methods in front of students.

Avoid weighing children in classroom situations or engaging in other activities that may focus on body size comparisons (e.g. lining up from smallest to biggest).

Have strong anti-bullying policies and strategies, and encourage students to talk to school counsellors to discuss worries and troubles.

Use available resources to get help for the student and family.

ACT resources include:

- School counsellors
- Mental Health ACT—Eating Disorders Program: 02 6205 1519
- The Australian Psychological Society referral service: 03 8662 3300
- General Practitioners, Look in the Yellow Pages
- ACT Health Dietitians: 02 6207 9977.

2.11 Schools and preschools are encouraged to support community initiatives that assist groups who are at risk in relation to food and nutrition.

Rationale

Students who are frequently hungry and do not have access to adequate nutritious food, including breakfast, may benefit from food provided at school.

Children and adolescents who eat breakfast decrease their risk of becoming overweight and have an overall more nutritious diet, compared with those who don’t have breakfast. Eating breakfast can also help prevent headache, fatigue, restlessness and sleepiness, and help children and adolescents perform better in school through increased problem solving ability, memory, verbal fluency and creativity. A healthy breakfast correlates to less inattention and absence, improved educational outcomes and reductions in problems like depression, anxiety and hyperactivity.

One in five Australian children eat nothing at all for breakfast and one in four have an inadequate breakfast that consists of only fluids such as cordial, water, tea, coffee or soft drink.

Putting it into practice

Schools and preschools can collaborate with community agencies to establish and assist with breakfast and other food programs.

Some communities will have priority needs in this area, for example those where poverty limits healthy eating options.

Richardson Primary School

Richardson Primary School Breakfast Club is an example of collaboration between a school and community agencies to progress health initiatives.

Volunteers from a local Lutheran Church, the Department of Education, Youth and Family services, ACT Health, the Heart Foundation and members of the school community were involved in the program implementation in 2003. Food companies have provided much support through food donations.

The breakfast club meets once a week for breakfast and supervised active play. Evaluation surveys have highlighted the physical and mental health benefits of this successful school program.
Schools and preschools can communicate with students and their families about affordable, locally relevant healthy eating ideas, including the importance of breakfast and its relationship to learning and wellbeing. This can be done through the curriculum and information to parents/caregivers.

**Lyneham High School**

The refurbished student support suite at Lyneham High School includes a kitchen with a fridge, toaster, microwave and sink. Students can drop in to prepare lunches in a safe, hygienic environment.

Students who do not have food or money can access Milo, bread, spreads and fruit.

This area is staffed by the Student Welfare Executive teacher, Youth Support Worker and Careers Counsellor.

### 2.1.2 All worksites should be breastfeeding friendly environments.

**Rationale**

Breastfeeding provides immediate and long-term benefits for infants. The *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia* recommend exclusive breastfeeding for at least the first six months of life, with breastfeeding continued for 12 months and beyond as mother and infant desire. Breast milk provides the optimal nutrition for brain development and infant wellbeing.

In Australia, many children and adolescents have not been exposed to breastfeeding and do not realise that it is universally recognised as best for baby. This can make young pregnant and parenting students and their infants vulnerable to sub-optimal nutrition and it is important that they be encouraged to breastfeed.

**Putting it into practice**

The staff, parents/caregivers, students and community members who make up school and preschool communities can promote, protect and support breastfeeding.

Through curriculum delivery, both male and female students can be made aware that breastfeeding is ‘normal’ and that it has nutritional importance for infant development and future health.
Schools can support staff and students with young children to continue to breastfeed by providing an appropriate place for feeding. Students can be further supported by the provision of structures that encourage the student’s continued education.

Further information and support can be accessed by contacting the Australian Breastfeeding Association www.breastfeeding.asn.au/

2.1.3 Schools need to support students with individual religious, cultural or medical food needs e.g. allergy, diabetes.

Rationale

Adults in the school community need to be aware of and respectful of religious, cultural and medical food needs.

Students may have medical conditions that require special eating accommodations; for example, diabetes, cystic fibrosis or food allergy triggered anaphylaxis (a severe life-threatening allergic shock reaction). Mental health issues may also manifest in unhealthy eating behaviours.

Support for healthy eating for these students needs to be skilfully managed to attain health, wellbeing and recovery.

Putting it into practice

In all cases where children and students have special needs related to their eating, educators should ensure a planned approach to support that is respectful, inclusive and safe.

Schools need to liaise closely with the student, parents, carers and relevant health professionals.

Relevant ACT Department of Education policies include Health and Safety Policy: First Aid, which is at: www.det.act.gov.au/policies/pdf/firstaid.pdf
3: Guidelines on food in school

At a glance...

3.1 It is recommended that school canteens provide foods that align with the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia and The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.

3.2 Schools are encouraged to ensure that fundraising and sponsored activities on school and preschool sites that involve food or beverages are aligned with the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia and The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.

3.3 It is recommended that vending machines on school premises only dispense foods that are essential components of a healthy diet as recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia and The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating. Vending machines should be free of product advertisements.

3.4 School celebrations and events (e.g. sports days, information nights) should provide a range of foods as outlined in the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia and The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.

3.5 Schools are encouraged to work with school camp management to encourage the provision of appetising food in line with the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia and The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.

3.6 Schools are encouraged to become involved in the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI).

3.7 Schools are encouraged to establish environmental centres or gardens in their school grounds.
3.1 It is recommended that school canteens provide foods that align with the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia and The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.

Rationale

Many children and adults in the school community use school canteens for their midmorning snacks and midday meals.

Canteens have a key role in providing and promoting affordable, tasty and nutritious food and in supporting and reflecting classroom teaching on food and nutrition issues. To promote healthy eating, a whole of school approach is required with consistent messages being given in the classroom, the canteen and in other school activities.

Putting it into practice

School canteens need to abide by the requirements of their relevant sector in terms of canteen policy.

The ACT School Canteen Association (ACTSCA) is a valuable source of support and information. Schools can access the ACTSCA website: www.actschoolcanteen.org.au

More resources, including the New South Wales Fresh Tastes resources, are on the New South Wales School Canteen website: www.schoolcanteens.com.au/
Alfred Deakin High School

The Alfred Deakin High School canteen has made great progress in improving its menu. Canteen manager, Debbie Tobin, has made gradual changes to the items sold. Fresh fruit, fruit salad, salad rolls and wraps are sellers. She has also introduced home made soup in winter. Thursday is 'pasta day' and Debbie cooks the pasta and sauce from scratch.

Debbie’s focus is to promote products that are part of the 'everyday' foods in *The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*. She achieves this by placing these products in the line of vision of the customers. For example she changed the two fridges around so milk, fruit juice and water were more easily seen by the students, resulting in increased sales of these items. Soft drinks were put out of direct view, which reduced their sales. Fresh fruit is promoted by displaying it attractively in a basket on the canteen counter and pricing it competitively.

Teachers at the school read out daily specials from the canteen to their students in class. There is also a noticeboard in front of the canteen with all the specials available on the day. One lolly-free day was introduced each week with the intention of increasing that to two lolly-free days each week. The number of confectionary lines available has also been reduced.

### 3.2 Schools are encouraged to ensure that fundraising and sponsored activities on school and preschool sites that involve food or beverages are aligned with the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia and The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.

**Rationale**

The promotion and sale of confectionery and high fat, high sugar foods for profit is counter-productive to healthy eating messages within the curriculum and school and preschool environment.
Putting it into practice

*Healthy Fundraising Ideas for ACT School Communities* is a guide developed by the Heart Foundation (ACT) in conjunction with the ACT Department of Education and Training (DET). It is available online at DET’s website and the ACT School Canteen Association website. Hard copies have been distributed to schools.

The Parent’s Jury website has fundraising ideas and links to other Australian websites with ideas, see: www.parentsjury.org.au/tpj_browse.asp?ContainerID=tpj_fundraising

Alternative fundraising activities can be found in Fundraising Ideas for Healthy Kids (for schools) available from: www.nutritionaustralia.org

Schools running fetes or other food-related fundraising need to be aware of the food safety implications and be guided by the *Fetes and Fundraising Food Stalls* publication available online from ACT Health Protection at: www.health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=da&did=10086706&pid=1102547185

3.3 It is recommended that vending machines on school premises only dispense foods that are essential components of a healthy diet as recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia* and *The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*. Vending machines should be free of product advertisements.

Rationale

Vending machines are often used to dispense foods that are high in kilojoules, inconsistent with recommendations for healthy eating and heavily marketed to children and adolescents.

Snacking on unhealthy foods and drinks displaces healthier items from the diet and contributes to tooth decay, unhealthy weight and related diseases.

Putting it into practice

A British guide to successful vending of healthy foods and drinks can be accessed online at: www.healthedtrust.com/

Ideas for suitable Australian products can be found by using the product lists published by FOCIS at: www.actschoolcanteen.org.au/focis.php
School celebrations and events (e.g. sports days, information nights) should provide a range of foods as outlined in the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia and The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.

Rationale

Food is an integral part of celebration in our culture. Foods served at celebrations were originally foods that were only available seasonally or served on very few occasions. They are often high in energy and may take more time to prepare than foods eaten on a regular basis. Celebrations and events may be appropriate times for serving foods outside The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating to complement the foods recommended for everyday eating. Having a range of foods available provides opportunities for teachers to model appropriate eating behaviour.

Putting it into practice

Use Healthy Fundraising Ideas for ACT School Communities for ideas for BBQ’s and sports day catering. Available online at DET’s website: www.det.act.gov.au and the ACT School Canteen Association website: www.actschoolcanteen.org.au

For class parties encourage children to bring in a range of foods including fruit or vegetable based items.

Provide parents with written ideas, such as dips with vegetables, fruit kebabs or plates of fresh fruit, or bread/cereal based dishes like raisin bread, iced buns, savoury damper and breads (see Appendix D).

Be careful with the words used in talking about the food. Rather than describing the foods from outside the circle as ‘treat’ foods, or ‘junk’ foods describe them in more neutral terms as ‘occasional’ or ‘sometimes’ foods.
3.5 Schools are encouraged to work with school camp management to encourage the provision of appetising food in line with the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia and The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.

Rationale

When children are attending school camps they receive all of their nutrition from camp-provided meals and snacks. Therefore it is important that the food provided be both nutritious and good tasting.

Putting it into practice

Schools may be able to discuss menu options with camp management when organising school camps.

Useful websites with large-scale recipes or catering tips include:

Victorian health website:  

National Heart Foundation website:  

Jamie Oliver’s school dinners website. Download recipes from the Feed me Better school dinners pack (note this is a large file):  
www.jamieoliver.com/schooldinners/pack

3.6 Schools are encouraged to become involved in the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI).

Rationale

The food we choose to eat cannot be separated from the environment in which it is produced. The environmental impact of growing food, transporting it, marketing and packaging are all issues that need to be considered when making purchasing decisions. AuSSI involves participants in a whole school approach to work towards a sustainable future.
Putting it into practice

The AuSSI Sustainable Schools Officer can support schools to develop a school Environmental Management Plan and to develop a school garden. The Sustainable Schools Officer can be contacted at Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS).

Further information is at: www.deh.gov.au/education/aussi/

3.7 Schools are encouraged to establish environmental centres or gardens in their school grounds.

Rationale

Gardens provide context for understanding seasonality and life cycles, an opportunity to work cooperatively on real tasks and a sensory experience for students. Gardens provide opportunities for one-on-one time for teachers and students to talk as well as a common experience to build on in multiple settings, from the classroom to celebration. Students learn about where food really comes from and learn life skills such as gardening and cooking.

Gardens also provide opportunities for community involvement—links with neighbours, volunteers, parents and community businesses—and a context for rituals and celebrations.

Garden experiences reinforce classroom curriculum, provide opportunities to integrate curriculum across subject areas, and help broaden the way teachers look at both curriculum and their students.

A garden promotes risk taking, such as trying new foods, new activities and making new friends. In the garden, students build vocabulary both small and large. Students can also observe all of the principles of ecology in practice.

The skills and messages students learn about healthy food in the school garden can be transferred back to their homes.

Putting it into practice

Schools can contact identified Sustainable Schools in the ACT that have developed gardens to gain practical advice. A list of these schools is available from the ACT section of the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI): www.deh.gov.au/education/aussi/
For more information see the following websites.


Educating for a Sustainable Future—A National Environmental Education Statement for Australian Schools:

On Holy Ground—An Ecological Vision for Catholic Education in New South Wales: www.catholicearthcareoz.net/resources.html

Consuming Planet Earth—Teacher’s Resource:

Collingwood garden website: www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au

Martin Luther King Jr Middle School (Berkeley California) website:
www.edibleschoolyard.org
4: Guidelines on food safety

At a glance...

4.1 Schools should practice appropriate food safety in canteens and classrooms.
4.2 Schools are encouraged to promote effective hand washing.
4.3 It is important to support appropriate handling of lunch boxes and water bottles.
4.4 Ensure proper hygiene and food safety practices in classroom cooking activities.
4.5 Store food at appropriate temperatures.
4.1 Schools should practice appropriate food safety in canteens and classrooms.

Rationale

Despite having one of the world’s safest food-supply systems, Australia has seen an increase in the number of food-borne illnesses in the last 10 years.

Children are especially prone to food-borne illness and other infectious diseases. The main causes of food-borne illness in Australia are:

- inadequate cooking
- improper holding temperatures
- contaminated equipment
- unsafe food sources
- poor personal hygiene.

Correct food handling from ‘paddock to plate’, including transport, preparation and storage phases, is essential to minimise the risk of food-borne illness.

Even food that looks, smells and tastes good can cause food poisoning; so consistent safe food handling practices are vital.

Putting it into practice

Schools and preschools are required under the ACT Food Act 2001 to register or notify the Health Protection Service (HPS) on 02 62051700 or email hps@act.gov.au if they undertake the following activities:

- selling food, such as in the canteen
- supplying food together with accommodation, another service or with entertainment, such as in a boarding facility
- supplying food in after-school child minding or care services where a fee is paid
- catering at school and preschool functions where a fee is charged for meals
- selling and handling food at fundraising events (refer to Fetes and Fundraising Food Stalls available online from ACT Health Protection Service at: www.health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=da&did=10086706&pid=1102547185)
- raffling food and offering food as prizes or rewards.
Looking after our kids

All schools in the ACT should have a copy of *Looking after our kids*, a video and handbook resource to help schools understand and comply with the Food Safety Standards. Copies are available from ACT School Canteen Association for $35 plus $10 postage and handling, see: [www.actschoolcanteen.org.au/](http://www.actschoolcanteen.org.au/)

The Australia and New Zealand Food Standards Code, Food Safety Standards apply to all these situations, see: [www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodsafetystandardsaustraliaonly](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodsafetystandardsaustraliaonly)

Labelling of food sold in canteens is also subject to legislation. More information is at: [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)

Activities that are not covered by the *ACT Food Act 2001* and would not require any contact with the HPS include the following food which is supplied to people but which is not for sale:

- supplying food from home for snacks or lunches
- providing food from home for a child or student to share at a school or preschool social event
- preparing and consuming food as a teaching and learning activity (i.e. not for sale)
- providing food at a function for which there is no charge.

In these cases, correct food handling and storage is still of great importance to minimise the risk of food-borne illness.

### 4.2 Schools are encouraged to promote effective hand washing.

**Rationale**

Hand washing is the single most important and effective standard precaution for the control and prevention of transmission of infection in school and preschool settings. Studies have found that effective hand cleaning reduces the rate of absenteeism significantly.43
Putting it into practice

Teachers can remind children to wash their hands:

- before and after eating
- after using the toilet
- after blowing their nose or coughing or sneezing into their hands
- after handling animals
- before cooking.

Teachers can teach and role model effective hand washing to primary school children.

Effective hand washing involves the following steps:

1. Use soap and running water—warm to hot is best.
2. Wet hands thoroughly and lather with soap.
3. Rub hands vigorously for at least 10 to 15 seconds as you wash them (encourage younger children to sing a song e.g. 'Row, row, row your boat' to allow enough time for washing).
4. Pay attention to back of hands, wrists, between fingers and under fingernails.
5. Rinse hands well under running water.
6. Dry hands with a disposable paper towel. Electric hand-driers may be used.

Schools could run a campaign at the beginning of each school year to encourage effective hand washing by children.

Teaching ideas are available from:
4.3 It is important to support appropriate handling of lunch boxes and water bottles.

**Rationale**

Micro-organisms and bacteria can grow in lunch boxes and water bottles that are not properly washed or stored.

**Putting it into practice**

Schools are encouraged to ensure that lunch boxes are stored in cool conditions and not in direct sunlight. Schools can encourage parents (by reminder notes each term) to pack lunch boxes with an ice brick or frozen water bottle to reduce bacterial growth in foods.

To reduce the growth of micro-organisms in water bottles, they should be washed daily in warm soapy water, rinsed in hot water and allowed to dry before being refilled.

4.4 Ensure proper hygiene and food safety practices in classroom cooking activities.

**Rationale**

When children are involved in cooking activities, proper hygiene and food preparation can help to avoid spreading bacteria.

**Putting it into practice**

Always wash hands before cooking (See 4.2).

When cooking with young children, choose an activity that includes a cooking step to kill the bacteria that may have come from the children’s hands and noses.

As an example, choose to make muffins where the raw ingredients are cooked after being handled by children rather than chocolate crackles where the final product is chilled rather than cooked.

Ensure foods are thoroughly cooked to destroy any potentially harmful micro-organisms.
Remind children not to sneeze or cough over food. Keep food covered and serve to each child so children are not given the opportunity to handle or cough over the cooked food.

The best way to clean dishes is in a dishwasher. The inlet water for dishwashers should be above 68°C to correctly ensure that the dishes are sanitised during the cycle. If a dishwasher is not available:

- wash dishes in warm soapy water
- rinse all dishes and utensils, in hot water, after washing. Dishes should be rinsed in water at a temperature of 77°C for 30 seconds to ensure they are correctly sanitised
- air dry where possible
- if tea towels must be used, ensure they are washed daily and not used to wipe hands after preparing food
- have separate disposable paper towels for drying hands.

4.5 Store food at appropriate temperatures.

Rationale

Potentially hazardous food is food that has to be kept at certain temperatures to minimise the growth of any dangerous micro-organisms that may be present in the food, or to prevent the formation of toxins in the food.

Examples of potentially hazardous foods include:

- dishes containing cooked meat, chicken, fish or egg
- cooked rice or pasta
- salads
- dairy based foods e.g. custards, cheesecakes.

Putting it into practice

To stop bacteria multiplying, keep all potentially hazardous foods at 5°C or below, or at 60°C or above. In other words, keep cold food cold and hot food hot!

This reduces the chance of small numbers of bacteria multiplying to sufficient numbers to cause food poisoning.

More information on food safety can be found at the ACT Health Protection Service website: www.health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=da&did=10054021

Remember ...If in doubt, throw it out!
5. Guidelines on partnerships

At a glance...

5.1 Schools and preschools are encouraged to foster positive communication and relationships with families to support healthy eating outcomes for young people.

5.2 Schools and preschools need to provide sufficient information to visiting professionals and agencies who are supporting a learning program related to food or nutrition.

5.3 It is recommended that schools ensure any partnerships with food industry and related organisations, including sponsorship arrangements, support these guidelines.

5.4 It is recommended that schools collaborate with all community groups who work with food or related areas to promote an understanding of the Nourish—the FACTS guidelines.
Involving families

5.1 Schools and preschools are encouraged to foster positive communication and relationships with families to support healthy eating outcomes for young people.

Rationale

Families are primarily responsible for providing food for their children. Involving parents/caregivers in the nutrition curriculum can enable families to contribute their knowledge and expertise to school and preschool programs while also learning about the healthy eating practices being promoted through their children’s learning programs.

Putting it into practice

Provide practical information to parents about food provision at school at the beginning of each year and regularly throughout the year.

Opportunities for family support and reinforcement of nutrition and other wellbeing education can be provided by communicating with families:

- on enrolment
- through the school handbook
- in newsletters
- via the school website.

Schools can also invite parents to become involved in:

- policy development
- homework
- canteen and other food service menu planning.

ACT Health produces nutrition fact sheets available to download and photocopy or include in parent newsletters. See Tuckatalk in Schools and Tuckatalk for Under Fives at www.healthpromotion.act.gov.au
Other useful Australian websites are:

- www.meerilinga.org.au/Nutrition/LunchBoxWorld.aspx
- www.schoolcanteens.org.au/ (specific information for high school students)
- www.daa.asn.au/
- www.nutritionaustralia.org/

**Working with health services**

**5.2 Schools and preschools need to provide relevant information to visiting professionals who are supporting a learning program related to food or nutrition.**

**Rationale**

Health services have valuable expertise and resources that can assist schools and preschools to implement the healthy eating guidelines.

Educators are primarily responsible for the curriculum in schools and preschools and visiting health services should not replace this role (see guideline 1.3). Rather, they can supplement and enhance the role of the educator. By providing relevant information to visiting professionals, schools can help to ensure that their content is safe and appropriate for the audience.

**Putting it into practice**

Information provided to visiting workers could cover, for example, information about duty of care, child protection, and children with special needs e.g. food allergies.

To contact health professionals in the ACT, ring the Community Health Intake Service on 02 6207 9977.
Sponsorship/food industry

5.3 It is recommended that schools ensure any partnerships with food industry and related organisations, including sponsorship arrangements, support these guidelines.

Rationale

A consistent approach is needed to create an environment supportive of appropriate nutrition for our children.

Putting it into practice

See sections 3.2 Fundraising and 3.3 Vending machines.

Community groups

5A It is recommended that schools collaborate with all community groups who work with food or related areas to promote an understanding of the Nourish—the FACTS guidelines.

Rationale

Children need positive adult role models to help them develop healthy attitudes and behaviours to food and eating.

These guidelines provide theory and practical tips to help adults in the school community fill that role.
Putting it into practice

Provide these guidelines to adults working in the school environment. Include an outline of the key points for orientation provided to volunteers working in food or related areas such as in community gardens, breakfast programs, outside-of-school-hours (OOSH) programs, canteen or other volunteers.

Melba High School

Melba High school has a successful breakfast club, which operates twice a week from the school’s youth drop in room. The club also allows students without lunch to use food items left over from the breakfast (e.g. toast, fruit) via a lunch voucher system. The aim of the breakfast club is to assist parents and students with healthy eating behaviours.

The program started with a grant received from the Australian Government Healthy School Communities Initiative. The projects’ steering committee has established successful partnerships with Young Life, Belconnen Fresh Food Markets, Woolworths, Coles and Bakers Delight. This has enabled the breakfast club to maintain a ‘no cost’ service to students participating in the breakfast club. Funding to continue the program has recently been received from the Telstra Kids Foundation.

The ongoing support of the whole school community, which includes P&C representatives, students, teachers and youth worker, has been identified as the foundation for the breakfast club’s success.
6: Guidelines on planning healthy food practices

At a glance...

6.1 Schools are encouraged to develop a plan to implement healthy food practices within their school.
6.1 Schools are encouraged to develop a plan to implement healthy food practices within their school.

Rationale

Every school will have different priorities. Developing a written plan to implement healthy food practices at your school enables change to occur at a rate the school community is comfortable with. Major changes can often generate major ‘change back’ reactions. These reactions can be minimised by involving as much of the school community as possible in the decision making process and by making the changes one step at a time.

Putting it into practice

Helpful resources are available from the ACT Health Promotion website
www.healthpromotion.act.gov.au
or

Revisit and revise the plan at regular intervals.
Appendix A:

Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia

- Encourage and support breastfeeding
- Children and adolescents need sufficient foods to grow and develop normally:
  - growth should be checked regularly for young children
  - physical activity is important for all children and adolescents.
- Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods.
- Children and adolescents should be encouraged to:
  - eat plenty of vegetables, legumes and fruits
  - eat plenty of cereals (including breads, rice, pasta and noodles), preferably wholegrain
  - include lean meats, fish, poultry and/or alternatives
  - include milks, yoghurts, cheese and/or alternatives. Reduced fat milks are not suitable for young children under two years, because of their high energy needs, but reduced fat varieties should be encouraged for older children and adolescents
  - choose water as a drink.
- Alcohol is not recommended for children.
- And care should be taken to:
  - limit saturated fat and moderate total fat intake. Low fat diets are not suitable for infants
  - choose foods low in salt
  - consume moderate amounts of sugars and foods containing added sugars.
- Care for your child’s food: prepare and store it safely.

Appendix B:

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

Appendix C:

Children’s eating—behaviour and influences

What are our children eating?

A study of New South Wales children in years 6, 8 and 10 revealed that:

- about two-thirds eat the recommended amount of fruit each day
- about one quarter eat the recommended amounts of vegetables
- about half of all students drink more than 250ml of soft drink daily
- about one quarter eat confectionary at least four times per week.44

Data from the 1995 National Nutrition Survey45 showed that for young people aged two to 18 years, around 40% of total food energy came from ‘extra’ foods. These are foods that are recommended to be eaten ‘sometimes or in small amounts’ by the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia and The Australian Guide To Healthy Eating.

The 1995 National Nutrition Survey also showed that, on the survey day:

- 25% of two to four year olds, 37% of five to 12 year olds, and 54% of 13 to 18 year olds ate no fruit (this excludes consumption of fruit juice)
- 22% of two to four year olds, 21% of five to 12 year olds, and 16% of 13 to 18 year olds ate no vegetables.

A survey of ACT children in 2001 showed similar results to the New South Wales survey with 80% eating the recommended daily serves of fruit but only 23.9% eating the recommended serves of vegetables.46
What is healthy eating?

Healthy eating has to do with attitudes and feelings, as well as eating nutritious food. Healthy eating patterns are a combination of:

- eating enough foods to provide the nutrients necessary for growth, development and physical health
- being able to recognise and respond to one’s own internal regulation—to mostly stop eating when satisfied
- being flexible around food and eating
- experiencing eating as positive and pleasurable.47

Why do we eat what we eat?

Research shows that the food choices of children and adolescents are largely determined by their food preferences (i.e. they eat food they like the taste of)48 so a key factor in improving children’s dietary choices is to help them to learn to like a range of nutritious foods.

Our food preferences are determined by a mix of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Either at birth or very early in life, humans have a preference for sweet and salty flavours and a dislike of sour and bitter flavours. Most other food preferences occur as a result of learning about food. Our bodies quickly learn to prefer foods that provide us with energy (often high fat and or high sugar foods). This is an advantage in times of food scarcity but not an advantage when we have an oversupply of such foods, as is currently the case.

Food exposure is a major determinant of food preference. People learn to like the foods they are familiar with. Therefore the family eating environment is very important.

When children are exposed to foods on a regular basis with positive adult interaction and role modelling, foods that are not easy to learn to like become pleasurable. A family environment that provides such exposure helps children expand their range of preferred foods.49

Pressure on children to eat a particular food can often have unintended consequences, with research showing that children who are pressured to eat are less likely to learn to like those foods.50

Other influences on food choices include advertising, food availability and cost. These can all be addressed in the school setting to help make the healthy choice the easy choice.
Internal control of eating

Evidence shows that children are born with the capacity to regulate energy intake by adjusting meal size.

However, by five years of age, children are more influenced by external cues (such as portion size) for deciding how much to eat.\textsuperscript{51}

Children who are encouraged to focus on their internal signals (such as whether they feel satisfied) to decide how much of any food they are going to eat, show better self regulation of energy intake than children who are encouraged to finish the quantity of food that is presented to them.\textsuperscript{52}

A child’s appetite varies in response to their growth, activity level and state of health, so allowing a child to be responsible for the amount of food they eat is a very important factor in helping them grow at a healthy rate. In practical terms, this means that children should not be pressured to finish what is on their plate. Adults should also be aware that providing small portions, with the opportunity for children to have more if still hungry, will help children regulate food intake more effectively.

Positive and pleasurable eating

Eating is a necessary part of life. Helping our children learn to like a variety of nutritious food and respond to their internal signals of satiety helps to keep it as a positive and pleasurable experience rather than one fraught with anxiety and guilt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adults are responsible for deciding</th>
<th>Children decide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What food is made available to children</td>
<td>• Whether or not to eat what is provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When it is made available</td>
<td>• How much they will eat \textsuperscript{53}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Where it is made available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Maintaining a positive environment at eating times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D:

Resources for teachers

Background readings

- *Teachers: the key to student success* (2005), ACT Department of Education and Training
- *The Inclusivity Challenge—Within Reach of Us All* (2003), ACT Department of Education and Training
- Substance use and other health-related behaviours among ACT secondary students—results of the 2002 ACT Secondary Student Alcohol and Drug survey (repeated every three years)
  This provides ACT based data on substance use, nutrition, physical and leisure time activity, sun protection.
- *ACT Chief Health Officer’s Report 2006* (repeated every two years)
  This document details trends in health status and health needs of the ACT population. It also details recent developments in policy, programs and health promotion.
  The principles provide the evidence base recommendations for effective drug education. They are intended to guide school executive, teachers and staff, as well as families, community agencies and other stakeholders, in making decisions related to drug education practice within school communities.
The purpose of this review was to ascertain the efficacy of health promotion interventions targeted at adolescents (defined as 12 to 18 year olds). Interventions included in the review addressed six adolescent health outcome areas: depression, suicidal behaviour, alcohol and drug use, tobacco use, antisocial behaviour and sexual risk-taking behaviour. The review provides evaluation and recommendation for school based health education.

Alternatives to food as reward


www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/student/NutritionEd/Food_As_Reward_HO1.pdf

www.tn.fcs.msue.msu.edu/foodrewards.pdf

www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/hecomm/nal/ProgramsServices/SchoolNutritionProgram/SchoolNut.htm

www.interventioncentral.org/htmdocs/interventions/rewards/rewardmenu.shtml

use in conjunction with ideas below

www.interventioncentral.org/htmdocs/interventions/rewards/jackpot.shtml
Party foods for school

Dear Parent/Carer

We are having a party at school on _____________________________

to celebrate _____________________________

We would really appreciate if you could contribute some food for this party.

Some quick ideas that require little preparation include:

Fruits and vegetables
Washed grapes or strawberries.
Wedges of rockmelon or watermelon
Cherry tomatoes; snow peas and fresh beans washed and put into a bowl.
If time, wash, peel and cut carrot, celery, capsicum into sticks.

Dips
Hommos, avocado (Guacamole), cucumber yoghurt dip (Tzaiziki),
cream cheese based dips.
Serve with plain rice crackers, dried bread sticks (grissini) or vegetables as above.

Breads
Sweet or savoury breads e.g. cheese and olive breads, fruit buns with or without icing.

Popcorn (plain, not coloured)

Rice crackers

Cheese cubes with crackers

Drinks
100% fruit juice or plain soda or mineral water—we will make our own ‘fizzy drink’

If you have more time or like to cook
Scones, pikelets, banana, carrot or zucchini cake or mini muffins would be appreciated.
References
References

   http://dictionary.cambridge.org/define.asp?key=54331&dict=CALD

2. Australian Health Promoting Schools Association, 2001, A national


   M, Murphy J, 2002 ‘Diet breakfast and academic performance in
   children’, Annals of Nutrition and Metabolism, Vol 46 (Suppl 1)
   pp 24–30

   Intervention programs and underlying principles’, Australian Journal of
   Nutrition and Dietetics Vol 56 pp 156–165

   complications in children and adolescents’, Medical Journal of Australia,
   Vol 182, 3, pp 130–135

7. Spear B, 2006, ‘Does dieting increase the risk for obesity and eating
   disorders’, Journal of the American Dietetic Association, Vol 106,
   Issue 4, pp 523–525

   2006, ‘Eating Disorders in a Longitudinal Study of Adolescents: How Do
   Dieters Fare 5 Years Later?’, Journal of the American Dietetic

   the prevention of excess weight gain and obesity’, Public Health
   Nutrition Vol 7(1A), pp 123–146

    School Food Service Association, 2003, ‘Nutrition Services: An essential
    component of comprehensive health programs’, Journal of the American
    Dietetic Association, Vol 103, pp 505–514

11. The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty
    first Century—preamble and goals
    www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/policy_initiatives_reviews/
    national_goals_for_schooling_in_the_twenty_first_century.htm


17. The Collingwood garden website, viewed 20 Nov 2006


42. Ibid


