

If your OSHC resembles most Australian homes, food waste likely makes up a the largest portion of overall waste. Reducing the amount of food thrown away will benefit the environment and save money.

Conduct a Food Waste Audit

To gain an understanding of what ends up in the rubbish bin, have children begin to track food waste. Conducting a food waste audit is a great way for children to make a direct impact on an important environmental issue, learn new skills and habits and have fun! Children could track food waste, along with plastic and other waste. There are many online guides to assist with food waste audits – from simple to more comprehensive options.

If the waste audit reveals that a large percentage of waste is uneaten, edible food. These ideas can help reduce that food waste before it ends up in the bin:

1. Serve smaller portions of food on smaller dishes with the option for seconds.
2. Try using smaller plates/bowls as we tend to over fill plates when self-serving.
3. Allow children enough time to eat – some are naturally slower than others or get distracted easily.
4. Consider a menu change - ask children why they don't like the menu items that commonly end up in the bin.



Composting and Worm Farms

Does your OSHC compost food scraps and food waste? If not, it's easy to started. Take a look at our [Making Your Own Compost](#). Remember, composting food is a last resort, the aim is to prevent food waste first!

An earthworm farm can be made from any large container. For example, an old bath tub or styrofoam box makes an ideal home for earthworms. This resource from Landcare Australia provides a step by step guide to [Building Your Own Wormfarm](#).



Reducing waste in the OSHC kitchen

- Revise the current menu, recipes and portion sizes offered to students to identify sources of waste.
- When purchasing food, consider food that is already in storage to ensure this is used first. Rotate pantry items regularly to ensure older products are used first.
- Store food correctly to minimise waste from food spoilage. Ensure dry foods are stored in airtight containers. Keep a thermometer in the fridge to monitor the temperature of cold items. Avoid overloading the fridge as cold air is unable to circulate effectively and keep food cold.
- Reduce packaging going to landfill by choosing items where the packaging can be recycled e.g. paper, cardboard containers instead of plastic ones.
- Buy in dry goods in bulk if your service has the facilities to store food safely. This reduces packaging and food miles.
- Reuse leftovers wisely. e.g. include leftover tomatoes and vegetables to make pasta sauce, ripe fruit frozen for smoothies or fruit muffins.