

Menu Planning in Queensland ECEC settings

The National Quality Framework

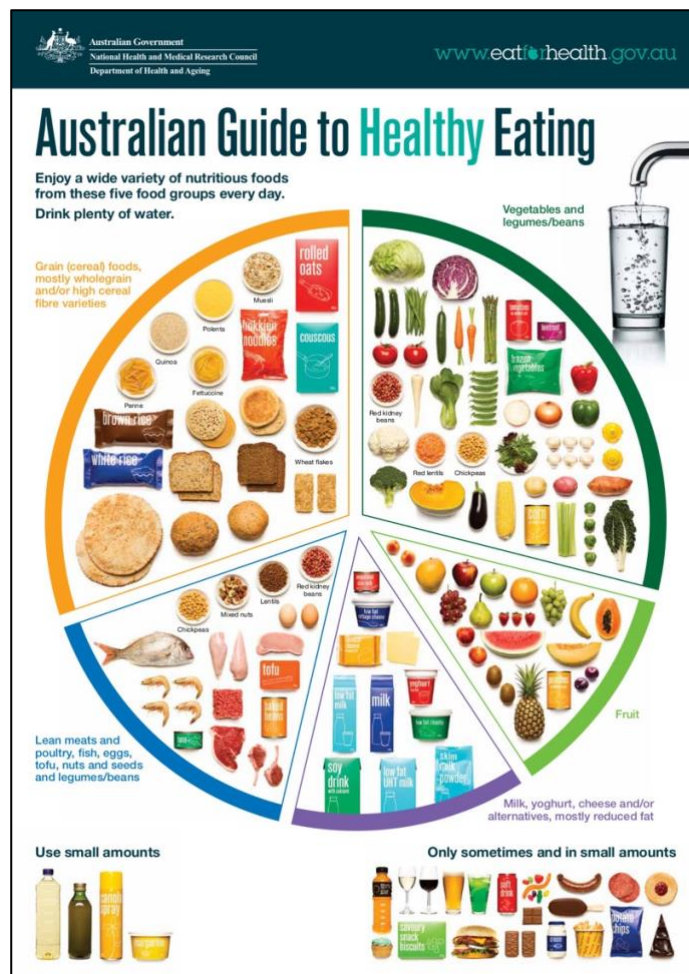
The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority's (ACECQA) Guide to the National Quality Framework (updated 2023) states that Assessors may observe children "being provided with food that is consistent with the:

- *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood, and/or*
- *Australian Dietary Guidelines"* (p169).

Menu planning in Queensland ECEC settings

In Queensland, it is generally accepted best practice that Early Childhood Education and Care services providing food to children provide food in a manner that:

- is consistent with the [Get Up and Grow Guidelines](#).
- provides opportunity for children to consume at least 50% of their [Australian Dietary Guidelines](#) core food group requirements across morning tea, lunch and afternoon.
- limit discretionary food on the menu.
- Food provided to children under 12 months of age should be in line with the [Australian Infant Feeding Guidelines](#) (2013).



How many serves?

The tables below outline the recommended serves of core food groups per day for children and the minimum number of serves that should be provided in care across morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.

Table 1: Recommended minimum serves per day for children 13 – 24 months

Food Group	Serves required per day	Serves required in care 50%
Vegetables & legumes	2	1
Fruit	½	¼
Grain (cereal) foods	4	2
Lean meat and alternatives	1	½
Milk, yoghurt, cheese & alternatives	1	½

Table 2: Recommended minimum serves per day for children 2-3 years

Food Group	Serves required per day	Serves required in care 50%
Vegetables & legumes	2 ½	1 ¼
Fruit	1	½
Grain (cereal) foods	4	2
Lean meat and alternatives	1	½
Milk, yoghurt, cheese & alternatives	1 ½	¾

Table 3: Recommended minimum serves per day for children 4-8 years

Food Group	Serves required per day	Serves required in care 50%
Vegetables & legumes	4½	2 ¼
Fruit	1½	¾
Grain (cereal) foods	4	2
Lean meat and alternatives	1½	¾
Milk, yoghurt, cheese & alternatives	1 ½ - 2	1

Guiding principles for food provision in ECEC

- Expose children to a variety of food foods from the core food groups
- Consult with families to tailor food provision to the cultural, religious, and social food preferences, and dietary requirements of children in the centre
- Take a whole of centre approach – have children and families involved in planning the menu

More information, menu planning tools and support is available from Nutrition Australia Queensland's [Food Foundations Program](#).

What is a serve size?

VEGETABLES AND LEGUMES/BEANS



- 75g of vegetables
- 1/2 cup cooked green or orange vegetables
- 1 cup leafy salad veg
- 1/2 cup cooked dried or canned beans/lentils
- 1/2 medium potato

For children 4 years of age or less, slice cherry tomatoes in half and soften hard vegetables by steaming

FRUIT



- 150g of fresh or canned fruit
- 1 medium apple, banana, orange
- 2 small apricots
- 1 cup diced/canned fruit
- 30 dried fruit

For children 4 years of age or less, slice round fruit like grapes in half and soften hard fruit by steaming

GRAIN (CEREAL) FOODS



- 1 slice of bread
- 1 medium roll
- 1/2 cup cooked rice, pasta, noodles (35g uncooked)
- 1 small English muffin
- 2/3 cup wheat cereal flakes

LEAN MEATS AND POULTRY, FISH, EGGS, TOFU, NUTS AND SEEDS AND LEGUMES/BEANS



- 65g cooked lean meats such as beef, lamb, veal, pork (100g uncooked)
- 80g cooked lean poultry such as chicken or turkey (100g uncooked)
- 100g fish
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup cooked/canned legumes
- 30g nut butter

MILK, YOGHURT, CHEESE AND ALTERNATIVES



- 1 cup milk
- 2 slices (40g) cheese
- 3/4 cup (200g) yoghurt
- 1/2 cup ricotta or cottage cheese

If offering plant-based milk like soy, oat or rice milk, choose a product that is fortified with Calcium (100mg Calcium per 100mL)

Note: hard and round pieces of fruit, vegetables, round pieces of sausages, hard nuts and popcorn are a choking risk for children aged 4 or less.