

“VACCHO gave me ideas on what the kids would eat and ideas on what to change”.

Tameaka Morgan,  
centre cook



Berrimba Child Care Centre is a multifunctional Aboriginal child care centre, which includes an after-school program and holiday program. They care for 35 children and have 15 staff.

### Meeting the menu planning guidelines

Berrimba is a part of [Smiles 4 Miles](#) (S4M), an initiative of Dental Health Services Victoria, which assists early childhood services to encourage and promote good oral health habits and healthy eating among children in their care.

The Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) and Echuca Regional Health worked together to assist Berrimba to meet the requirements of the S4M program. With the support of the [Healthy Eating Advisory Service](#) (HEAS), they have created a menu that meets the Victorian [Menu planning guidelines for long day care](#)

The centre used HEAS' free online menu assessment tool, [FoodChecker](#), to ensure they were providing nutritious food and drinks to the children in their care. They made simple small changes, such as replacing white bread with wholemeal bread and adding more vegetables to their meals.

Importantly, there was buy-in from the staff. The centre cook appreciated that healthy eating in the centre affects the children's development and can expose them to food that they might not have at home. There was also management support for these menu changes. The centre manager, Leona Cooper, is very passionate about promoting healthy eating from a young age for children's overall development and wellbeing.

The whole centre feels a sense of pride in achieving their S4M award; and the children have benefited from the consistent health eating messages and menu this achievement has brought about.

### Berrimba's tips

**Involve your families and community:** Berrimba did this by creating a recipe book to provide ideas on what to try at home that the children love at the centre. They hope this will help have a positive effect on the meals eaten at home.

**Engage with your local support services:** Berrimba's success was made possible by using the various support services available to them.

**Take a staged approach:** If your service is looking to make some positive healthy eating changes, Tameaka Morgan the centre's cook recommends that you, “Start small. Use small steps, don't try and do if all at once, and let the kids ease into it.”

Educators can encourage children to 'have a little bite' to see what the new foods taste like. Using this approach at Berrimba, gradually the children felt more comfortable trying the new foods and now they love them!

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