

Getting started with the Menu planning guidelines for long day care

Healthy
Eating
Advisory
Service



Early childhood services

? What are they?

They assist your long day care centre to plan a nutritious and balanced menu for 1–5 year old children. The guidelines are based on the Australian Government's Australian Dietary Guidelines

i For more information

[Menu planning guidelines for long day care](#)

[Menu planning checklist](#)

[Menu planning for babies](#)



What you should know

Five food groups

All food and drinks provided should be based on the five 'core' food groups (see table 1 below).

Recommended serves

A menu should provide the recommended serves during morning tea, lunch and/or afternoon tea.

Additional serves

Breakfast and/or late afternoon snack need to provide additional serves from the core food groups.

Drinks

Water should be the main drink provided. Milk and milk alternatives are the only other suitable drinks.

What to avoid






Added fat, sugar and salt should be limited. Discretionary food should not be provided.



Getting started with the Menu planning guidelines for long day care

Table 1. Recommended minimum serves

¹ Recommended serves are calculated on foods/drinks provided during morning tea, lunch, or afternoon tea only. Foods served during breakfast and late snack are additional to this requirement.

Core food groups	Recommended minimum serves per child, per day ¹	Variety of food per fortnight
Fruit ² 	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 2-3 different types per day and 5 different types per week Limit dried fruit to once per week
Vegetables ² and/or legumes 	1 - 1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> at least 2-3 different types per day and 5 different types per week
Grain (cereal) foods 	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include high fibre (wholemeal and wholegrain) varieties at least 3 times per week, preferably every day
Milk, cheese, yoghurt and/or alternatives 	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular full fat milk, yoghurts and cheese varieties should be used between the ages of 1-2 years After 2 years of age, reduced fat varieties of milk and alternatives are suitable
Lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes/beans 	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lean red meat 4 times per fortnight Lean pork or poultry 2 times per fortnight Fish 1-2 times per fortnight Lean ham or shortcut bacon are limited to being offered once or twice per week

² Some hard, raw fruit and vegetables such as carrot, celery and apple may need to be cooked, mashed, grated or very finely sliced to reduce risk of choking in young children.

What food and drink to avoid








Discretionary foods should not be provided, for example: confectionary, fatty meats, processed meats, pastry foods, cream and high sugar/fat/salt/cakes, biscuits and drinks.

Getting started with the Menu planning guidelines for long day care

Table 2. What is a children's serve?

A 'children's serve' refers to the amount of food from each food group that is appropriate for 1–5 year-old children. To be practical in the childcare setting, the children's serve sizes have been adapted from the standard serve sizes in the Australian Dietary Guidelines.

Core food groups	One children's serve is	
Fruit² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75g fresh fruit (1 small piece, ½ medium piece or equivalent amount of 2–3 types) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75g (½ cup) diced, cooked or canned (drained) fruit 15g dried fruit (once per week)
Vegetables² and/or legumes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75g fresh, frozen, canned (drained) or cooked vegetables (½ cup cooked, 1 cup salad, ½ medium potato) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30g dry weight beans or legumes or 75g (½ cup) cooked or canned beans or legumes (drained)
Grain (cereal) foods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40g bread (1 slice, ½ medium roll or flatbread) 1 crumpet or small English muffin 30g breakfast cereal (⅔ cup), 2 Weetbix™ or similar, ¼ cup muesli or porridge 30g dry/uncooked (1/2 cup if cooked/boiled) rice, pasta, noodles, couscous, barley, buckwheat, semolina, cornmeal, quinoa, polenta 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1/3 cup of fresh/uncooked pasta 30g flour (¼ cup) 35g crispbread (3–4 cracker biscuits or crispbread, 3 thick rice cakes, 6 thin rice cakes or corn thins, 12 plain rice crackers) 35g raw potato can be counted as grain food if the menu already meets minimum vegetable requirements
Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100mL milk/calcium fortified soy or rice drink 50mL evaporated milk 15g milk powder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100mL custard 80g yoghurt/calcium fortified soy yoghurt 15g hard cheese (1 slice), 50g ricotta cheese
Lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts, seeds and legumes/beans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50g raw lean red meat (e.g. beef, lamb, kangaroo, lean pork or poultry without the bone) 30g lean cooked red meat 40g cooked chicken (skin off) 60g raw fish 50g canned or cooked fish 1 egg 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35g dry weight beans or legumes or 85g (½ cup) cooked or canned (drained) beans or legumes 15g peanut butter or nuts (if centre policy allows) 20g dry weight Textured Vegetable Protein (TVP) 85g tofu 60g hummus

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Combined summary table (of pages 2&3)

Menu planning guidelines - food groups requirements

Core food groups	Recommended minimum serves per child, per day ¹	One children's serve is		Variety of food per fortnight
Fruit²	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75g fresh fruit (1 small piece, ½ medium piece or equivalent amount of 2-3 types) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75g (½ cup) diced, cooked or canned (drained) fruit 15g dried fruit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 2-3 different types per day; and 5 different types per week Limit dried fruit to once per week
Vegetables² and/or legumes	1 - 1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75g fresh, frozen, canned (drained) or cooked vegetables (½ cup cooked, 1 cup salad, ½ medium potato) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30g dry weight beans or legumes or 75g (½ cup) cooked or canned beans or legumes (drained) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 2-3 different types per day; and 5 different types per week
Grain (cereal) foods	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40g bread (1 slice, ½ medium roll or flatbread) 1 crumpet or small English muffin 30g breakfast cereal (¾ cup), 2 Weetbix™ or similar, ¼ cup muesli or porridge 30g dry/uncooked (1/2 cup if cooked/boiled) rice, pasta, noodles, couscous, barley, buckwheat, semolina, cornmeal, quinoa, polenta 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1/3 cup of fresh/uncooked pasta 30g flour (¼ cup) 35g crispbread (3-4 cracker biscuits or crispbread, 3 thick rice cakes, 6 thin rice cakes or corn thins, 12 plain rice crackers) 35g raw potato can be counted as grain food if the menu already meets min. vegetable requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include high fibre (wholemeal and wholegrain) varieties at least 3 times per week, preferably every day
Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100mL milk/calcium fortified soy or rice drink 50mL evaporated milk 15g milk powder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100mL custard 80g yoghurt/calcium fortified soy yoghurt 15g hard cheese (1 slice), 50g ricotta cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular full fat milk, yoghurt and cheese varieties between 1-2 years old After 2 years of age, reduced fat varieties are suitable
Lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts, seeds and legumes/beans	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50g raw lean red meat (e.g. beef, lamb, kangaroo, lean pork or poultry without the bone) 30g lean cooked red meat 40g cooked chicken (skin off) 60g raw fish 50g canned or cooked fish 1 egg 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35g dry weight beans or legumes or 85g (½ cup) cooked or canned (drained) beans or legumes 15g peanut butter or nuts (if centre policy allows) 20g dry weight Textured Vegetable Protein (TVP) 85g tofu 60g hummus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lean red meat 4 times per fortnight Lean pork or poultry 2 times per fortnight Fish 1-2 times per fortnight Lean ham or shortcut bacon limited to once or twice per week
Discretionary foods should not be provided		For example: confectionary, fatty meats, processed meats, pastry foods, cream and high sugar/fat/salt/cakes, biscuits and drinks		

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