

What's in a serve?

Early childhood services

This document should be used alongside the Menu planning guidelines for long day care. [The Menu planning guidelines](#) also specify the types and amount of foods to supply each day. There are also guidelines for [family day care](#).

What's in a serve?

A 'children's serve' refers to the portion 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. [1]

Use the table below to make sure you offer enough food from each core food group to meet the nutrition needs of 1-5 year old children in care.

Essential foods for menu planning

Food group	One child's serve is
Lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes/beans	<p>50g of raw meat/poultry or equivalent, such as:</p> <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 or 50g canned or cooked fish • 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) • 1 egg • 20g dry weight Textured Vegetable Protein (TVP) • 85g tofu • 60g hummus

Food group	One child's serve is
Lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes/beans (continued)	<p>This is equal to half a serve of lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes/beans in the Australian Dietary Guidelines.</p> <p>Note: Offer 1 children's serve of lean meat, poultry, fish or alternatives per child per day to meet the Menu planning guideline requirements.</p>
Fruit	<p>75g of fruit or equivalent, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75g fresh fruit* (1 small piece, ½ medium piece or equivalent amount of 2–3 types) • 75g (½ cup) diced, cooked or canned (drained) fruit • 15g dried fruit# <p>This is equal to half a serve of fruit in the Australian Dietary Guidelines.</p> <p>Note: Offer 1 children's serve of fruit per child per day to meet the Menu planning guideline requirements.</p>
Vegetables and legumes/beans	<p>75g of vegetables/legumes or equivalent, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75g fresh, frozen, canned (drained) or cooked vegetables* (½ cup cooked, 1 cup salad, ½ medium potato) • 30g dry weight beans or legumes or 75g (½ cup) cooked or canned beans or legumes (drained) <p>This is equal to one serve of vegetables and legumes/beans in the Australian Dietary Guidelines.</p> <p>Note: Offer 1–1½ children's serves of vegetables and legumes/beans per child per day to meet the Menu planning guideline requirements.</p>
Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives	<p>100mL of milk or equivalent, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100mL milk/calcium fortified soy or rice drink • 50mL evaporated milk • 15g milk powder • 100mL custard • 80g yoghurt/calcium fortified soy yoghurt • 15g hard cheese (1 slice), 50g ricotta cheese <p>This is just under half a serve of milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives in the Australian Dietary Guidelines.</p> <p>Note: Offer 2 children's serves of milk, yoghurt, cheese or calcium fortified alternatives per child per day to meet the Menu planning guideline requirements</p>

Food group	One child's serve is
Grain (cereal) foods	<p>1 slice of bread or equivalent, such as:</p> <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 • 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) <p>This is equal to one serve of grain (cereal) foods in the Australian Dietary Guidelines.</p> <p>Note: Offer 2 children's serves of grain (cereal) foods per child per day to meet the Menu planning guideline requirements.</p> <p>35g raw potato can be counted as grain food if the menu meets minimum vegetable requirements</p>

* 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 .

Dried fruit leaves a sticky residue on teeth and can contribute to tooth decay. If included on the menu it should only be offered once per week.

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