

Enjoyable Lunchtimes

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Week

Our fact sheets provide plenty of tips and ideas to create positive, enjoyable and nourishing lunchboxes.

Supporting Positive Lunchtime Experiences

By creating a supportive environment, teachers and educators can play a key role in fostering a positive relationship with food for children. Consider the following ways you can support positive lunchtime experiences for children at your school or early years service.

Avoid judging lunchboxes

- Focus on creating a non-judgmental and inclusive space where children feel comfortable with the food in their lunchbox.
- Ask children to talk about the contents of a child's lunchbox.
- Great news - it's one less thing you have to do!

Foster social connections

- Use lunchtime as an opportunity for positive interactions.
- Encourage children to enjoy their lunch together as a social experience.



Create an enjoyable eating environment

- Use lunchtime as an opportunity for positive interactions.
- Offer opportunities for children to eat at tables or seated areas and provide enough time for them to sit and enjoy their lunch.

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Tailoring Lunchboxes

All children's feeding journeys are unique, which means their lunchboxes will often look different. By understanding where a child is in their food journey, we can help help them grow and thrive. Here are some tips to help adapt lunchboxes for some different types of sensory needs and preferences.

Sensory seekers

- Children seek out the world with all their senses, often seeking big flavours and textures.
- Include foods with big textures like crunchy crackers, carrots and apples, chewy dried fruits, or roasted chickpeas.
- Try offering big flavours like foods that are pickled or have herbs, spices or flavourful dips.

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Sensory avoiders

- Children seek mild flavours, consistent textures and may prefer foods that are soft and smooth. They might not like touching food with their bare hands.

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Timid tastebuds

- Use bento-style lunchboxes to keep foods separated.
- Include utensils to help pick up food like a fork, spoon, chopsticks, or food picks.

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Shy sippers

- Children might need some extra motivation or reminders to drink their water.

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- Include ice cubes and use insulated drink bottles to keep water cool.
- Experiment with different spoons or straw bottles that make drinking easier.
- Add a squeeze of fresh lemon or orange for a flavour twist.

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Being respectful of children's diverse needs includes recognising that every child and every lunchbox is different, don't compare!

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Positive Food Language

How we TALK about food shapes how children THINK about food and their relationship with food. Try these approaches that can help support positive food relationships.



JUDGEMENTS VS ALL FOODS FIT

- Labels like 'unhealthy', or 'good/bad', reduces need to moral judge.
- Celebrate all foods for their role in fueling our bodies, supporting growth, - beyond labels of 'healthy' or 'unhealthy'.

CHEWY
CRUNCHY
SPICY
SOUR
JUICY
COLD
SWEET

OPINIONS VS FACTS

- Describing foods as 'yummy' or 'meh' are opinions, and opinions not always shared by everyone.
- Instead, use factual describing words, like crunchy, juicy, cold, savoury, or sweet.

MANY WAYS TO LEARN

- There are many ways to explore foods beyond just taste.
- Some children, especially those with timid taste buds, might be more comfortable exploring new foods with their eyes, nose, ears, or hands.
- Try talking about what you like to explore new foods, or describe what you notice using your senses!

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Lunchbox Tips for the School Transition

School lunchboxes can be a big change for children starting school. Here are some ideas to make the transition easier.

Check containers are easy to open

Check that children are able to open their containers and packets that you put in their lunchbox. Some can be tricky!



Getting kids involved

Some kids have ideas on what they would like in their lunchbox. Some also like to help prepare and pack it.



Talk about food safety

Where food is not stored in a fridge and only has an ice pack, explain which foods would be good to eat first. E.g. cheese, yoghurt, meat or eggs.



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Lunchbox Notes

Brighten your child's day by adding these to their lunchbox for a nice surprise!

Always * proud of you!



Enjoy your meal!



Be * amazing today!



Have a fun day!



You've got this!



Good luck today!



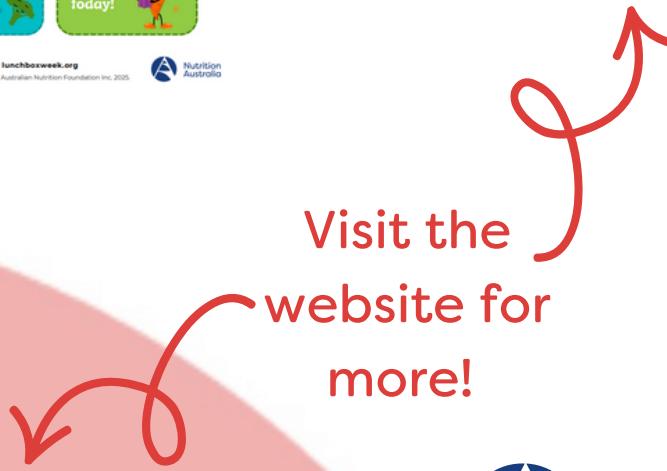
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