SECTION 2

Services and Educators' Knowledge, Experience and Insights



Various pathways for knowledge sharing

One of the key elements of the Staff and Family Engagement module is the expertise and role of ECEC educators. ECEC services are well positioned as sites of knowledge and expertise in child development, as well as brokers of knowledge and connections between other specialists within the early childhood development sector. The role of educators and services as a broker can occur in a variety of ways and have a number of benefits; this section provides support in two ways:

Educators and services sharing details of approaches taken in services which align to best practice

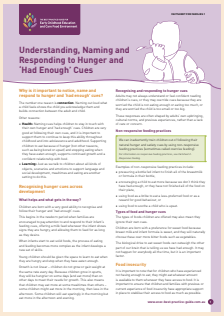
Here the families not only benefit from getting a better understanding of what happens during the day in relation to food environments, but they also have the information to adopt elements of those practices at home if they choose to.

Alternatively, having a better understanding of what is happening in services during the day with respect to food environments may highlight differences and allow for clearer communication and understanding between staff, services and families.

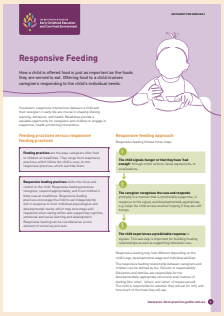
The resources below have been developed by adapting sections of the Mealtime Environment and Practices and Menu and Meal Quality modules, making the information relevant and practical for families.

Services may wish to share these resources with families asking for further information about a variety of topics.

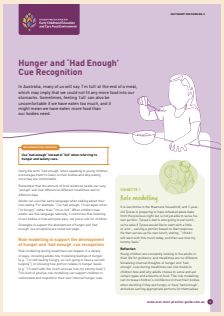
Support resources specific to mealtimes



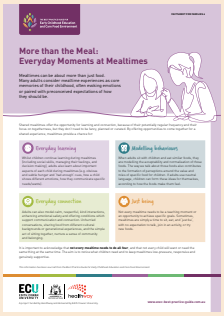
Understanding, Naming and Responding to Hunger and 'Had Enough' Cues



Responsive Feeding



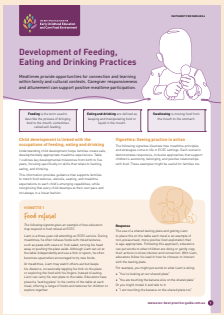
Hunger and 'Had Enough' Cue Recognition



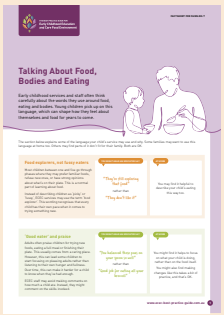
More than a Meal: Everyday Learning at Mealtimes



Supporting Food Preferences, Food Acceptance and Food Diversity

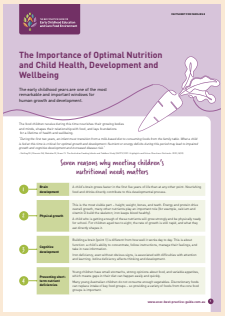


Development of Feeding, Eating and Drinking Practices



Talking About Food, Bodies and Eating

Support resources specific to meals and menus



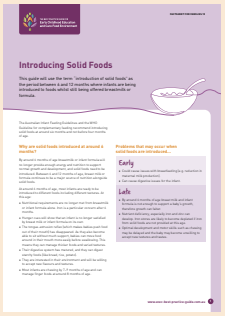
The Importance of Optimal Nutrition and Child Health, Development and Wellbeing



The Australian Dietary Guidelines and the Australian Infant Feeding Guidelines



Supporting Breastfeeding and the use of Infant Formula



Introducing Solid Foods

The role of food education

Food education can play a part in how services engage with families to support participation, connection and learning. In practice this can mean inviting families into cooking, gardening and tasting experiences, sharing what children are exploring and learning about food, and using everyday food moments to build children's confidence, curiosity and food knowledge – strengthening the partnership between home and service. The Food Education module provides details, recommendations, learning experiences and case studies that further explores and supports this important topic area.

See Food Education module

EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK
Outcome 3, Outcome 4

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD
QA1, QA6

Reflective questions

- *How do we engage in sensitive, family-centred conversations when sharing observations about a child's eating, feeding or mealtime experiences?*
- *How inclusive and responsive is our mealtime environment for children with diverse sensory, cultural, developmental, medical or feeding needs? What adjustments could further support participation and engagement?*
- *Are there any barriers within our environment, routines or practices that may unintentionally restrict children's participation, comfort or enjoyment during mealtimes?*