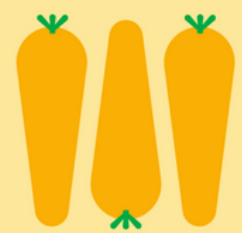


No pressure lunchboxes

A guide to easing lunchbox pressure
for both you and your child.



Healthy Eating
Active Living

How much do I pack?

Packing the right amount of food can be tricky; you won't always get it right. Children's hunger can change from day to day, or even during the day. Try to pack enough so your child feels full, but not so much that food often goes to waste. Too much food can overwhelm young children.



Some days the lunchbox will come home full. Don't worry, your child will make up for it at other meals. If this happens often, pack a bit less next time.



Some days the lunchbox will come back empty, and your child might say they didn't have enough to eat. They'll make up for it by eating more at afternoon tea or dinner. If this happens, pack more food or include more filling options next time.

You choose what to pack. They choose what to eat



Your role is to decide what is packed in your child's lunchbox. Offering them options (e.g. 'would you like an apple or an orange?') can help children feel in control. However, the final decision on what to pack should be up to you.



Your child's role is to choose what they eat from what you have provided. This helps children to build a healthy relationship with food and eat to their appetite.

Top 3 tips



Pack enough food so your child can eat until they are satisfied.



Include mostly foods your child knows and has eaten before.



Provide a 'good enough' lunchbox – it doesn't need to be perfect.

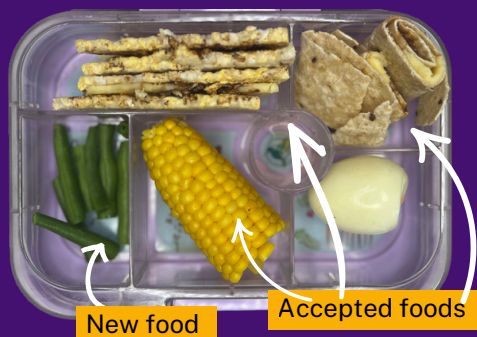
I ate my sandwiches at morning tea because that's when I was hungry



What do I pack?

- ✓ Pack mostly foods your child knows and you are confident they will eat (**accepted foods**). This helps to make sure children don't go hungry.
- ✓ Try including a **new food** or one your child isn't familiar with yet. Children's diets become more varied as they get used to new foods. This usually happens after they have been offered the food a number of times (sometimes lots!).

Including new foods



- Preschool can be a good place to include some 'new' foods. A different environment and eating with other children can help foods become accepted.
- Be aware of high allergen foods. If your child hasn't eaten these before, it's best they are introduced at home. [Click here](#) for a list of high allergen foods.

Save their favourites for home

- Children don't always need a treat in their lunchbox; save these to eat at home.
- You may need to check your service's nutrition policy for some foods.



Should I include all of the food groups?

- The 5 food groups include meat/protein, cereals, dairy, vegetables and fruit.
- The lunchbox is a good opportunity to provide a variety of foods; but you don't have to include all 5 food groups every day.
- There are opportunities at breakfast, dinner and on weekends to offer more variety.
- *The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* has more detail on the 5 food groups. You can use this as a guide to help you decide what to pack.
- Don't stress about how much your child eats; this is up to them.

No meat or protein?
You can offer those
at dinner



Doesn't include all
food groups, but is
enough to feel full

The 'good enough' lunchbox

...has enough food in it for your child to feel full.



No veg? You can offer this at afternoon tea.



Left over from breakfast



Lacks variety, but other food groups can be offered at dinner



Couldn't get to the shops but still includes enough filling foods

Lunchbox savers

Frozen or canned fruit & veg can be cheaper



Buy fruit & veg in season

If food is brought home, use as a snack or add to dinner



Pack water

Use leftovers

Prepare yourself rather than snack packs



Every child and every lunchbox is different. Don't compare.

What else?

Here are some other things to consider when packing the lunchbox:

- How many opportunities are there to eat? Morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea?
- Can your child open their food? Have they got someone to help them? Do they need a fork/spoon?
- Allowing your child to be involved in packing their lunchbox can help. Let them choose from options you decide.

When are you most hungry?

Would you like an apple or orange in your lunchbox?

Did you have enough food?

Keep in mind...

Some children:

- ✓ Have a big appetite.
- ✓ Eat less variety and take longer to accept new foods.
- ✓ Have a smaller appetite.
- ✓ Eat a small breakfast and lots at preschool.
- ✓ Have a good variety of foods in their diet.
- ✓ Prefer to eat lots for breakfast and dinner and less at preschool.

Need help?



Are you having big challenges with feeding your child?

- If your child eats a very limited diet, their accepted foods may not fit within your preschool's nutrition policy. Speak with educators about working together to support your child's feeding.
- Your GP or Child and Family Health nurse can help you support your child's feeding.

Growing Healthy Eaters



Want to learn ways to help your child become a healthy eater? Register for our online session for parents in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven.

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/growing-healthy-eaters-tickets-1043407408647>

Child and Family Health Clinics



For more information and to find your nearest Child and Family Health Clinic.

<https://www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au/services-clinics/child-family-centre>

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