

# Using Positive Language around food

By changing our language about nutrition, we assist children in building positive relationships with food. These phrases are examples of how we can discuss foods in a positive and neutral manner.

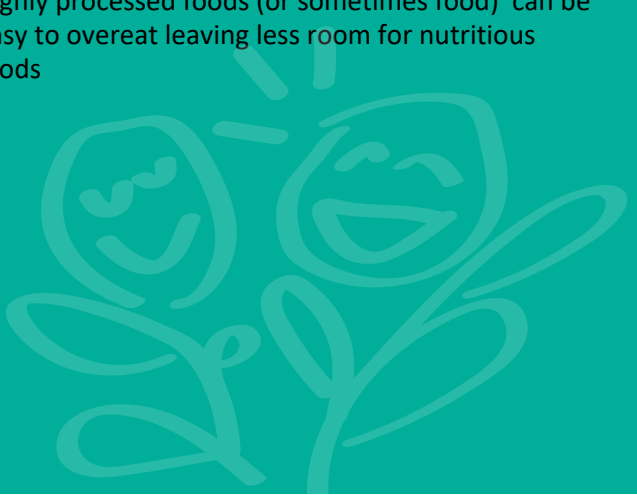
## Talk about the properties of food

- Sight or appearance: What colour is it? What shape is it?
- Touch: Does it feel (slimy, smooth, bumpy, rough)?
- Smell: What does it smell like?
- Taste: Does it taste (e.g. salty, sweet, sour)?
- Texture: What does it feel like in your mouth (e.g. crunchy, smooth, mushy, chewy)?
- Colour: Carrot sticks are orange and crunchy.
- Does it make your mouth water?
- Can we eat it raw or cooked?

## Talk about food and the environment

- Most 'sometimes' food comes in single use plastic that ends up in land fill
- Eating more fresh fruit and vegetables allows us to reduce single use plastic that other foods are packaged in
- A lot of water, energy and land are used when creating highly processed food for little to no nutritional benefit
- Eating more foods that are grown and made locally means less transport and more money and jobs staying local
- Australia uses around 2600 gigalitres of water to grow food that is wasted – this equates to the volume of water in five Sydney Harbours
- Eating more plant based foods such as nuts, legumes, grains, fruit and vegetables can help reduce our environmental impact

## Talk about how food can help our body and mind

- Food with protein helps build our muscles (e.g. meat, fish or eggs)
  - Delicious every day foods help us go about our day with ease and energy
  - Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables helps our bodies be healthy
  - Fruit has lots of fibre which creates good gut bacteria which helps improve our immune system and bowels
  - Grainy or wholemeal foods have fibre that helps keep us full
  - Foods with calcium help our teeth and bones be strong (e.g. milk, cheese and yoghurt)
  - Everyday foods like vegetables improve our mood and concentration helping us learn
  - Eating lots of everyday food increases the opportunity to develop our cooking and creative skills
  - Highly processed foods (or sometimes food) can be easy to overeat leaving less room for nutritious foods
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To help children build positive relationships with food, we can:



## Try to avoid:

### Using negative language around the implications of sometimes food

- You have to eat all of your vegetables or else
- Fruit is good or guilt free
- Chocolate is bad for us
- Carbs (like bread) are fattening
- If you don't eat your carrots you will go blind



## Instead use:

- Is your tummy full?
- Fruit is an everyday food
- Chocolate is a sometimes food
- Wholegrain carbohydrates such as wholemeal and grainy bread, gives us sustained energy to play sport
- Carrots and other colourful vegetables help our eyes be healthy

### Labelling Food with Emotive Language or myths

- Lollies are full of sugar, unhealthy and fattening
- Soft drinks rot your teeth
- Junk food makes you fat



- Lollies are a sometimes food
- Soft drink has a lot of sugar; too much sugar flowing around our teeth can damage them and cause holes
- Too much 'sometimes foods' is not great for our body or mind

### Using gendered language around food

- Steak is a man food
- Salad is for girls
- Real men don't eat quiche
- Girls get the pink lollies



- Iron in steak helps our bodies grow
- A salad has lots of ingredients, something for all of us
- Aren't we lucky that we can all enjoy quiche, it's very versatile
- What colour would you like?

### Using food as a reward

- Nice work on your quiz, here is a chocolate
- Good job, let's have cake
- It's our birthday, you get a lolly from the jar
- The class has behaved well, you earned pizza day



- Reward with activities- go outside, dance, play ball
- Lead a game or program
- Email or calling a parent about good behaviour
- House points, recognition board or free time
- Lunch with the Teacher

### Focusing on don't or can't messages

- Don't eat that, it's full of fat/sugar/salt
- Don't eat chocolate, it makes you unhealthy
- If you don't eat that, you can't have dessert
- You shouldn't eat junk food
- I am on a diet, I can't have that



- Would you like some 'e.g. fruit' it's crunchy and sweet
- Let's savour this chocolate as we only eat it sometimes
- There is some dessert if your tummy is not too full
- Highly processed food has very little nutritional value
- I am eating food that helps my body feel good, so I will skip that today, I might have some another day

## Lesson plans and resources that may be of interest:

- Lesson [plans](#) Taste and Learn for Early Years (CSIRO)
- Book list, games and [activities](#) for Early Years (Healthy Eating Advisory Service)
- Lesson [Plan](#) Happy Food for level 3-4 (Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation)
- Lesson [Plans](#) podcasts and videos about all things food (Hort Innovations [Phenomenom](#))
- Lesson [Plans](#) demonstrating how our environment can make choosing health challenging (ABC digibooks)
- Lesson [Plans](#), resources and [video](#) to understand the food system and choosing everyday food options for levels Foundation - Year 8 (Inspiro Health)
- Lesson [Plans](#), resources and professional development around Sustainability for Early Years through to secondary school (Resource Smart Schools and [EASL](#))

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