

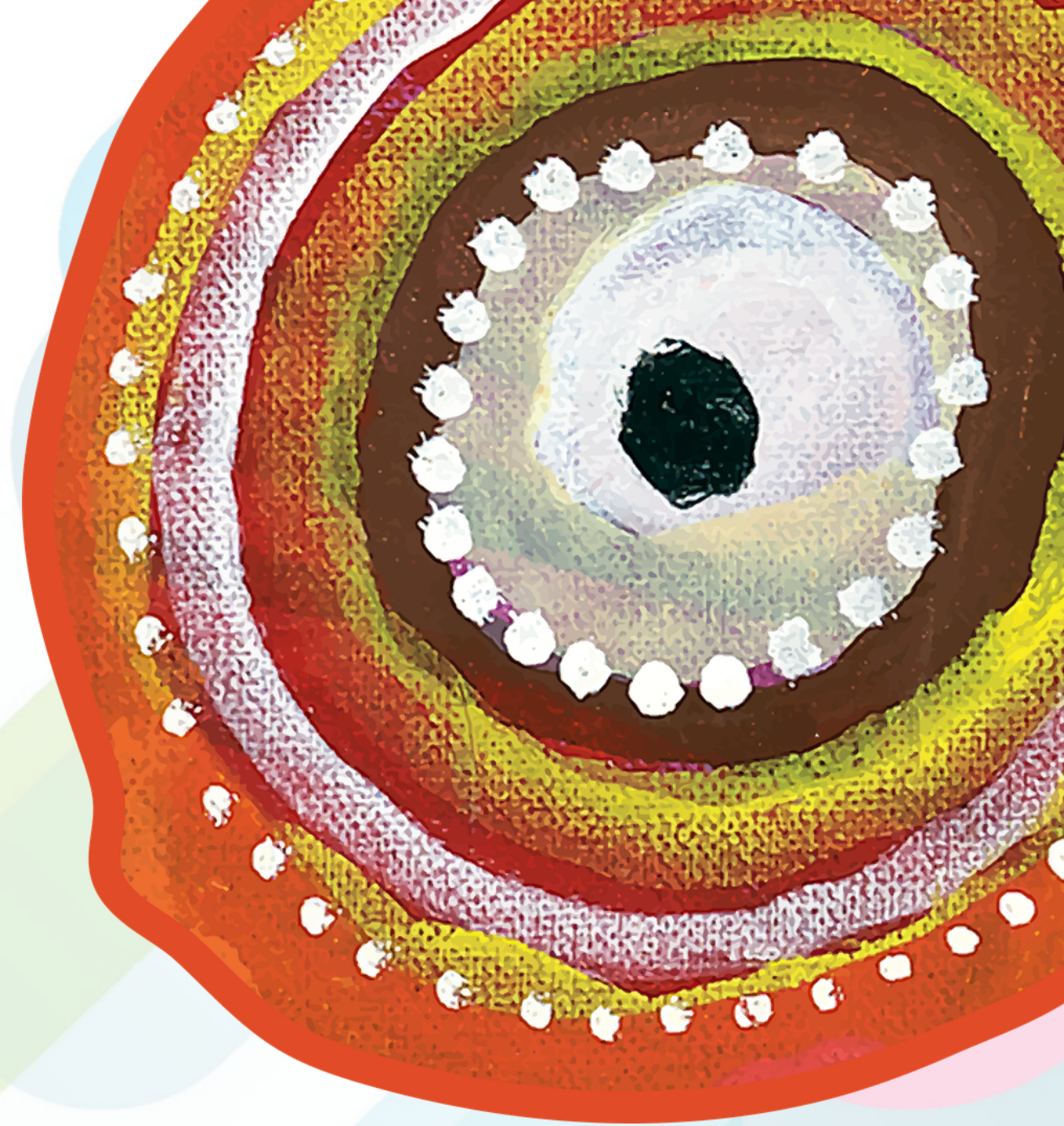
Food, bodies and lunchtimes at Ripponlea Primary School

Lunchtime Expectations Project



**We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander people as the first peoples and
Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land
and waterways on which we live and we
acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.**

**We honour and pay our respects to Elders past
and present.**



Who we are



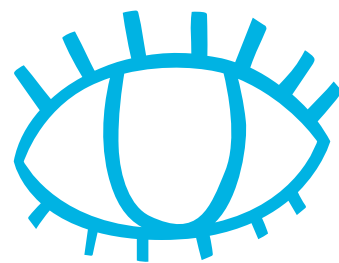
Our role in Health Promotion

- Understand the systemic drivers of weight stigma and translate evidence into practice
- Support food environments
- Advocate for developmentally-appropriate nutrition education
- Grow educators, teachers and staff awareness of how to support children to develop a positive relationship with food and their bodies

What We Will Cover

- Context
- Lunchtime Expectations - the process, what we heard, what's now happening at RPS
- Practical takeaways you can apply at home

Body Image: 4 Aspects



The way you **see** your body is your perceptual body image. This is not always a correct representation of how you actually look



The way you **feel** about your body is your affective body image. Feelings may include happiness or disgust, but are often summarised as the amount of satisfaction or dissatisfaction you feel about your shape, weight and individual body parts.



The way you **think** about your body is your cognitive body image. This can lead to preoccupation with body shape and weight.



The **behaviours** you engage in as a result of your body image are your behavioural body image. When a person is dissatisfied with the way they look, they may isolate themselves or employ unhealthy behaviours as a means to change appearance.

Evidence by Age

3

Children aged **3-5 years** are aware of dietary restriction as a means to lose weight and they exhibit weight bias

5

At **age 5**, 90% of boys and 92% of girls have indicated a preference for not inviting children in a larger body to their birthday party, and perceiving thin-to-average sized children as 'good'

9

Body dissatisfaction begins in ages prior to puberty (data reporting on **9-12 year olds**)

12

More than half (53.8%) of young people (**12-18yr olds**) reported being dissatisfied with how their body looks.

12-18

75.5% of young people wished they were thinner/ leaner.

“

“Isn't that too many carbs?”

Male teacher year 5/6, during food learning demonstration in school classroom

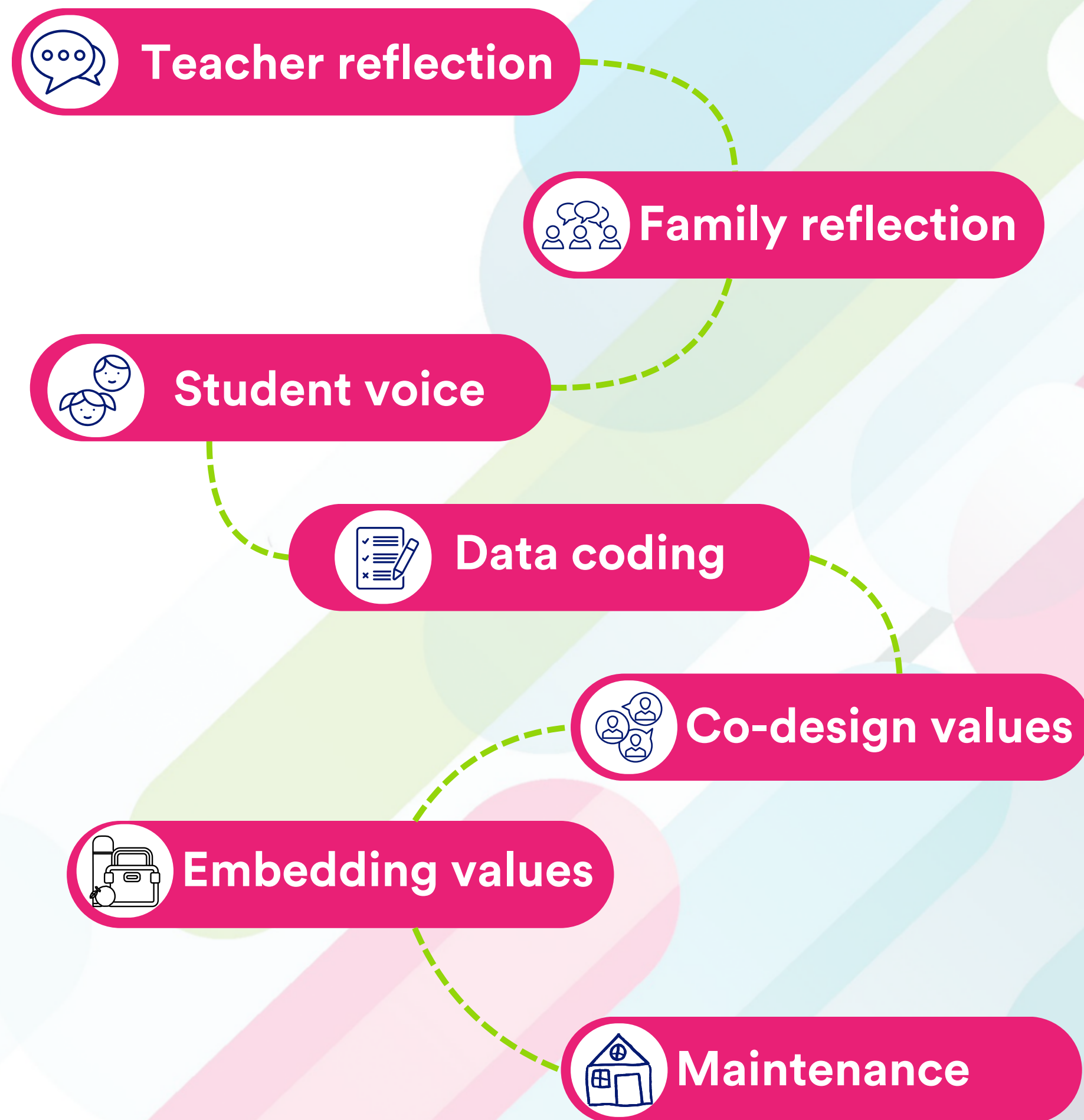
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Lunctime Expectations

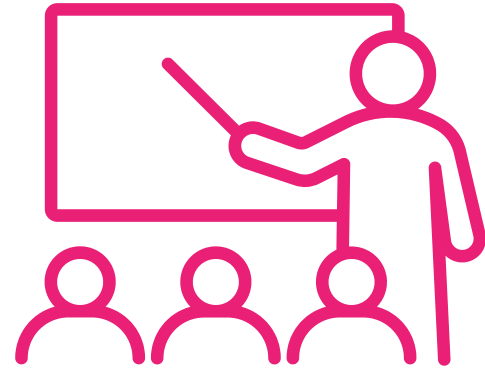
Creating the conditions so that all students can grow up to have a respectful relationship with food and their bodies

- Partnership with Butterfly Foundation, Embrace Collective and local primary schools
- Shifting conditions within the school environment to support child eating and fostering protective factors
- Increasing consistency of practice from home to school

Lunchtime Expectations



Luncheon Expectations



100% of teachers



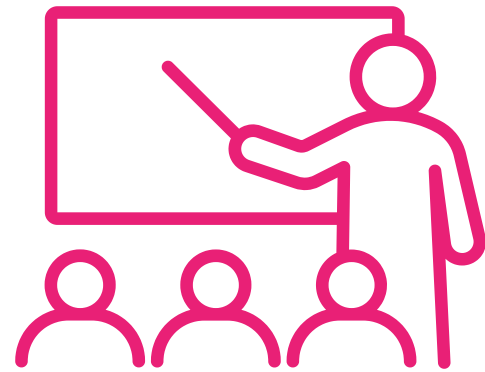
40% families



35 students

- 15 students from grades F-2
- 12 students from grades 3 & 4
- 9 students from grades 5 & 6

Luncheon Expectations



“ Families expect us to make sure all the lunchbox/food is eaten ”

“ No direct teaching [about food], only in discussion if something comes up ”



“ Sometimes my son says he didn't get enough time to eat his lunch. Kids should be given as much time as possible, and not feel rushed when they want to get out and play ”

“ Other kids police food/nude food and what others are bringing ”

“ ...to not be judgemental about foods or bodies ”

Luncheon Expectations



“What does healthy mean?”

“Wish it was longer - longer recess”

“I don't like to be rushed when i'm eating”

“We often pick the food quickest to eat like muesli bars, cookies, crackers, things not in a container, stuff that you can just grab”

“When you're feeling strong.
Sugar isn't healthy.”

“Good for you.”

“Things that won't make you gain weight.”

“Sugar isn't healthy.”

“If you want to eat unhealthy food, you need to keep it balanced”

“Keep your body in shape”

Food Environment Value Statements

Respectful Lunchtime Routine

The school is committed to calm and predictable eating breaks that promote connection and mutual respect. Our practices support inclusive attitudes toward all foods and bodies, ensuring language and expectations reflect the diversity of our community.

Structure and Timing

We ensure students have protected and predictable eating times by implementing a consistent whole-school structure that provides adequate time to eat, along with flexible options for finishing food when needed.

Food Learning and Diversity

Our school is committed to a learning environment where conversations about food and bodies are safe, respectful, and celebrate the diversity of our community. We support teachers to build confidence in these areas and ensure students receive inclusive, evidence-informed learning that broadens their understanding of health and fosters positive body image.

Implementation

Term 1

Focus on structure and timing

Term 2

Focus on respectful lunchtime routine
Supporting teachers with planning developmentally appropriate food learning
Family webinar

Term 3

Delivery of developmentally appropriate food learning
Student focus group

Term 4

Year 5 & 6 body image incursion

Continue applying, reinforcing and embedding the Food Environment Value Statements

Practical Takeaways



Division of Responsibility



Parents Provide

What, When and Where to eat



Children Decide

**Whether to eat, How Much, and in
What Order.**

Lunchboxes

- 1 Pack enough food so your child can eat until they are satisfied.
- 2 Include mostly foods your child knows and has eaten before.
- 3 Provide a 'good enough' lunchbox - it doesn't need to be perfect.

Lunchboxes

Avoid checking, monitoring or questioning food that has/has not been eaten while at school.



“I am wondering if there are particular foods you would love to have in your lunchbox?”

“Can I help in some way to make eating your lunch while at school easier?”

“I notice you have some food left in your lunchbox, should I pack less tomorrow or would you like to finish it now?”

Food Education

- Piaget's theory of cognitive development
 - Preoperational stage (age 2-7 years)
 - Concrete operational stage (7-11 years)
 - Formal operational stage (11 years +)
- Children are concrete thinkers until approx. age 12
- Nutrition concepts are abstract, we cannot see, touch, or taste the nutrients in food

Food Education: Under 7 (ish)



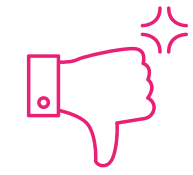
Say:

1. Colour, shape, taste, texture, sound, smell
2. How it grows
3. Recognising hunger and thirst



Do:

- Cooking and growing food
- Independence skills (eg. practice peeling their own fruit, opening lunchboxes, carrying full school bag, opening packages, using cutlery)
- Positive role modelling
- Nurture body trust
- Recognise that all food helps our bodies grow, play and learn



Don't:

- Talk about portion sizes or how much or little children are eating
- Show children how much sugar or fat is in food
- Moralise food (healthy/unhealthy or good/bad)

Food Education: Ages 7-11



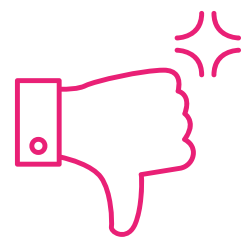
Say:

1. Core food groups (e.g. What foods are made from milk? Is a tomato a fruit or a vegetable?)
2. Farm, processing, plate
3. Culture and food origins



Do:

- Explore how food connects self, family, culture, tradition, nature and community
- Nurture body trust
- Recognise that all food helps our bodies grow, play and learn
- Learning about food hygiene and processing (e.g. processing milk so it is safe to drink, or making cheese and bread)
- Introduce food literacy skills about sourcing foods, building a meal that is diverse and filling.



Don't:

- Talk about portion sizes or complete food diaries
- Show children how much sugar or fat is in food
- Moralise food (healthy/unhealthy or good/bad)
- Don't calculate BMI, speak about 'obesity' as a disease or shame body types

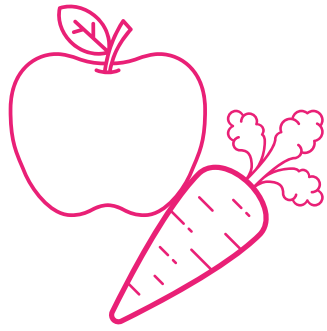
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**‘I don't want to eat because I will
put on weight’**

Year 5/6 student - Local Primary School

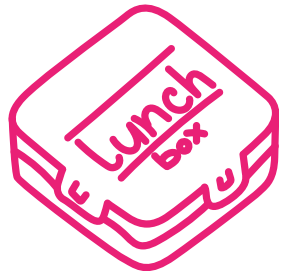
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Food Education: Ages 7-11



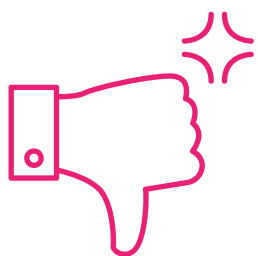
Brain breaks / "crunch and sip"

Avoid policing food choices or pressuring eating. Provide an opportunity for children to stand, stretch, move, dance. Expand what is included.



Lunchboxes

You have your reasons for packing lunchboxes the way you do. Discuss with your child that all lunches look different and we try not to comment on other peoples choices. All food is welcome. Children should be free to eat foods from their lunchbox in the order of their choosing.



Avoid moralising food

'Healthy / unhealthy'

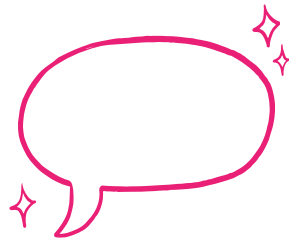
- Perceive foods as less tasty
- Can lead to stress and anxiety

'Everyday / sometimes'

- Abstract concept and looks very different person to person
- Focus on role modelling how this looks in practice

Food Education: Ages 12+

Say:



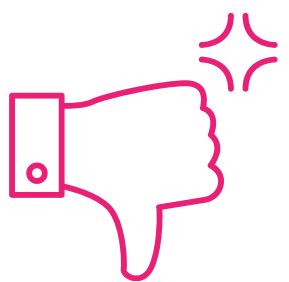
1. Acceptance and diversity in food and bodies
2. What it does for our bodies without morality
3. Practical skill building
4. Validate experience of changing bodies and questions about food

Do:



- At this age, teens can begin to learn about nutrition and health in a way that is empowering and non-judgemental
- Nutritional profile of foods and how they interact with our bodies
 - 'Fibre is in wholegrains, vegetables and fruit aids digestion'
- Teach them to plan, prep and cook meals
- Teach them to critically think about media

Don't:



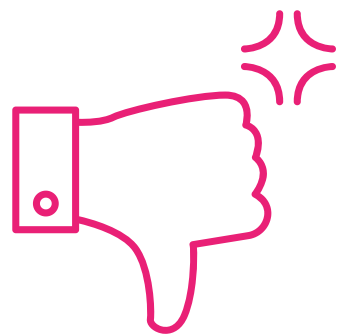
- Talk about macro's, food tracking, BMI calculating
- Moralise food (healthy/unhealthy or good/bad)
- Frame body sizes as conditions (eg. obe*ity)
- Shame body types

Language - Food



Do:

- Model calm, neutral and non-judgemental language around food.
- Focus conversations on enjoyment, connection and body trust rather than nutrition.
- Talk about foods using the five senses, by calling it what it is or food origins.
- Build a meal.



Don't:

- Comment on how much or little someone is eating.
- Label foods as 'good/bad' 'healthy/unhealthy' 'sometimes/everyday'.
- Negatively talk about your own eating habits in front of children.
- Label foods as 'treat' or 'special' - Food is food.

Language - Bodies



Young person	Adult
“How do you think this outfit looks?” or “I’m too XYZ for this outfit?”	“How do you feel in the outfit?, “If it works for you, it works for you.”
“I’m so fat”	“What makes you say that?” “Everybody has fat on their body, and bodies come in different shapes and sizes. Bodies are meant to be different.” “It can feel tricky/awkward/uncomfortable when bodies change and grow”
“I can’t eat that, it has so much sugar in it.”	“What made you think that?” “Are you worried about how the food affects your body?” Then redirect toward body trust: “Our bodies are really clever. They use carbohydrates, including sugar, for energy. ” “We don’t need to be scared of foods.”
“[person] looks so fat/thin in that.”	“Remember we don’t comment on people’s bodies, all bodies are so different. You can always talk to me if you have questions or worries though.”

Resources

- [Embrace Collective: Families](#)
- [Embrace Collective: Flip the Script Language Guide](#)
- [No Pressure Lunchboxes](#)
- [Lunchbox Ideas: Build a Lunch](#)
- [Ellyn Satter's Division of Responsibility](#)
- [Eating Disorder Families: Nourish Nurture Notice](#)

Support

- The Butterfly National Helpline offers free and confidential support to anyone concerned about eating disorders or body image issues. The counsellors offer support over the phone, via email, and by online chat. Click [here](#) for more information and to access the Butterfly National Helpline.
- Eating Disorders Victoria (EDV) offers a free and confidential service, EDV Hub, providing information and support for people experiencing eating disorders or those who are supporting them (e.g., health professionals, family). Click [here](#) for more information and to access the EDV Hub.

Thank you

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