



## What YOU need to know about feedAustralia

### What is feedAustralia?

feedAustralia is an online menu planning tool designed to assist early childhood education and care providers move towards healthier menus. It is based on the NSW child care Nutritional Guidelines 'Caring for Children' and is designed by experts in the field. The feedAustralia program works by providing a platform to enter all your meals and snacks, quantities and recipes, using a searchable database of over 2,000 food items. The online menu planning tool will compare your menu with nutritional guidelines and will assist your service to make changes to meet these guidelines.

### Why focus early childhood education and care?

Foods provided in early childhood education and care settings contribute to the growth and development of children and their future eating habits. Helping services provide healthier foods is a great way to improve a child's diet and overall health, especially when full-time child care can account for up to 67 per cent of a child's daily dietary intake.

### Hold on ... What about ACECQA?

feedAustralia is a new way of looking at menus and assisting with menu planning processes. While your service may already be meeting and/or exceeding the ACECQA ratings for nutrition, feedAustralia will provide your service with a detailed tool to further improve menus so there is no doubt that they meet Australian Dietary Guidelines.

### What are the feedAustralia food group recommendations?

The feedAustralia food groups and serve sizes are based on the 2013 National Dietary Guidelines developed by the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council.

### How does feedAustralia calculate food groups?

The calculation of food groups in feedAustralia is underpinned by a comprehensive national food composition database (NUTTAB) which lists over 2,000 foods typically consumed by Australians. Using information from the Australian Dietary Guidelines, our dietitians have classed each food item to a food group together with quantities that correspond to a serve size.

### How do feedAustralia recommendations align with other state guidelines?

All states in Australia recommend that early childhood education and care providers serve foods consistent with Australian Dietary Guidelines. The cut-offs for feedAustralia are based on the key recommendation that services provide children with at least 50 per cent of the daily recommended intake for each food group within an eight hour period.

### Does providing food in line with Australian Dietary Guidelines lead to an increase in wastage?

For many services, the amount of food required to meet nutritional requirements may be more than expected. There are a number of strategies that can be put in place to reduce waste including making gradual substitutions and taking a whole of service approach. Where these strategies are employed, research suggests that changing menus does not increase wastage. In fact, it actually reduces wastage as ingredients are purchased based on the actual serving size requirements of children attending your service.

### How do you use feedAustralia for children with special dietary requirements?

feedAustralia has a built in alert system to inform and assist early childhood education and care providers in menu planning for children with allergies so they can make substitutions where required. feedAustralia is not designed specifically for children with special dietary needs or specific behaviours that may impact on what they eat. In such cases, the specific needs of these children should be discussed in detail with families and alternate menu plans developed.

### How much does it cost?

The feedAustralia program is available to all early childhood education and care providers at no cost. Services will also have access to free onboarding and support to assist with the set-up and integration of the feedAustralia program.

### When will the feedAustralia program be available?

Early childhood education and care providers are invited to register their interest in the feedAustralia program by visiting [www.feedaustralia.org.au](http://www.feedaustralia.org.au). feedAustralia will be available to all services in March 2018.