



The **Nourishing Hawke's Bay: He wairua tō te kai** surveyed early learning services across Hawke's Bay in term four 2020 about the healthiness of food environment policies and practices.

Aiming to improve food environments for children in Hawke's Bay



60 registered early learning services across Hawke's Bay

Response rate of **38%** of invited centres



90% Centre Manager / Director / Head Teacher / Kaiwhakahaere

6% Teachers

4% Parents / whānau / volunteers

Policies* on food and beverages



97% have food and / or nutrition policies



87% have drinks / beverages policies

Only **1 of 14** policies provided was "water-only"



4 policies mention water as "preferred or recommended"

*a written policy / procedure or guideline, for staff and / or parents

Provision of kai

1/3

provide **all** meals/snacks

serve food about **four** times per day

Almost

1/2

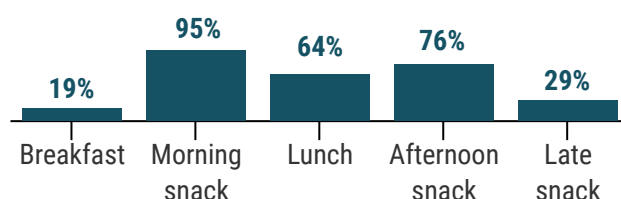
provide **some** meals/snacks

serve food about **twice** per day

1/4

provide **no** meals/snacks

Of centres providing **all** or **some** kai (n = 42), they provided...



Of centres providing **all** kai, at least a **morning snack** and **lunch** was provided

Recommendations - what is needed?



A water-only policy

Preferred / recommended is not strong enough



Professional learning and development for teachers



More participation in food and nutrition programmes

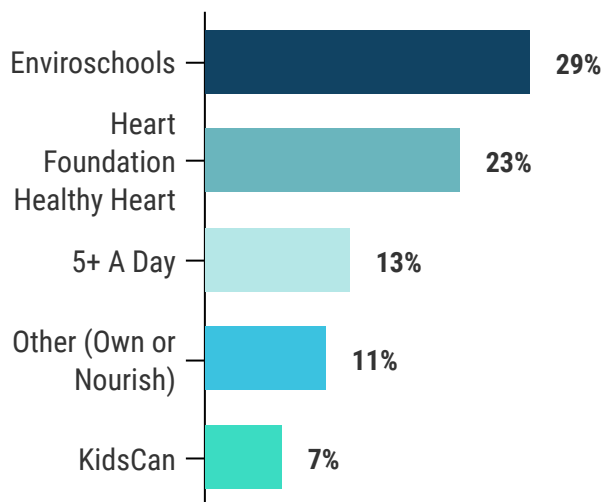


Greater communication about policies with whānau

Programmes and barriers



Many centres participate in Food and /or Nutrition Programmes (62%)



Around half of centres report barriers to providing or promoting healthy food to children / tamariki (58%)

The most common barriers are:



Lack of support from parents / whānau (32%)



Concerns about food-related choking (30%)



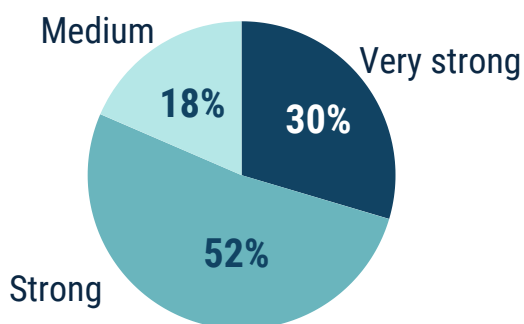
Concerns about food intolerances or allergies (25%)



Insufficient funds (21%)

Culture around healthy eating

Most centres have a strong culture around healthy eating



Very strong = policies in place, strong healthy food practices, staff / parents strongly support healthy food kaupapa

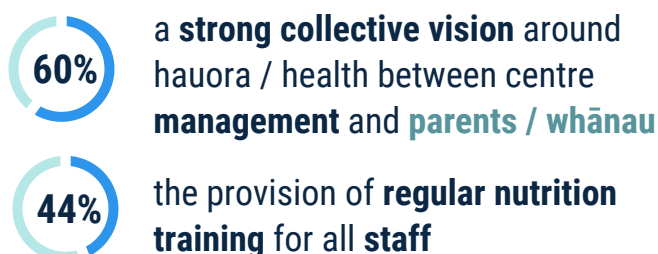
Strong
Medium = some policies and practices support healthy food, mixed support from staff / parents for healthy food kaupapa

We asked centres how much they agreed with the following statements

There was strong support for...



There was moderate support for...



*aggregate of 'strongly agree' and 'agree' responses

Special occasions and fundraising



Food and drinks for **special occasions** are **mostly healthy** when provided by the centre

Almost **3/4** of centres **provide** food / beverages for special occasions

The ratio of green to red items is...



Green items ('everyday' healthy items like fruit, vegetables, plain milk, cereals, bread, etc.)

Red items ('occasional' unhealthy items - muffins, pizza, sausage rolls, cake, flavoured drinks & chips)

4/5 allow children to bring food / beverages for special occasions **from home**

The ratio of green to red items is...



Food for special occasions brought from **home is less healthy** than food provided by the centre



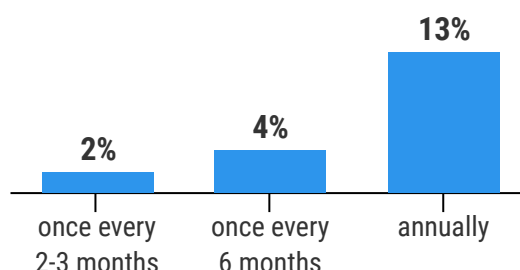
Few centres use food and beverages in fundraising, and only infrequently. When food is used in fundraising, it's generally not healthy

1/5 centres use food and / or beverages in fundraising

The ratio of green to red items used in fundraising



How frequent do centres fundraise?



What might enable healthier food environments in early learning services?

Healthy eating in curriculum

Recipe ideas

More flexible MoE guidelines

Funding to provide healthier kai

Parent education

Healthy Heart programme

More buy-in from staff

Vege gardens

"We monitor and **communicate** verbally & face to face / newsletters with matua.

We now have **cake only for birthday** celebrations (used to be multiple pizzas).

We worked really hard for 2 years changing culture and aligned it to **physical active play** with Sports Hawke's Bay but it's now established.

Lots of communication within staff team & with parents, also a **milestone in our strategic plan under sustainability.**"

Early learning services policy analysis



This policy analysis used the **shortened WellCCAT-NZ tool (14 centres)***

Average **comprehensiveness** score

5/10

Average **strength** score

1.2/10

Most policies did not use strong prescriptive wording, rather focusing on encouragement and recommendations



Many centres did not separate food safety / hygiene guidelines from nutrition guidelines.



Most centres did not communicate their policy with parents and caregivers.



Many policies mentioned that **staff consistently role modelled** healthy eating

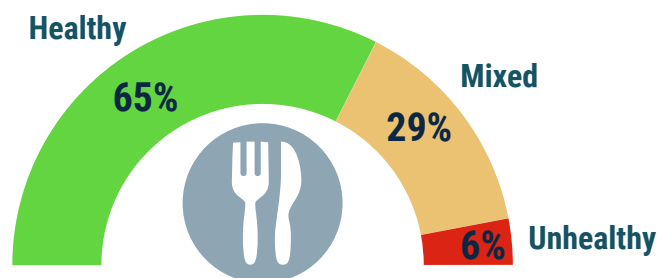


*WellCCAT = Wellness Child Care Assessment Tool

Menu analysis



2/3 of the food on the daily food menus in centres is healthy*



The proportion of unhealthy items varied across centres from 0% to 36%



*According to 2020 NZ Ministry of Healthy Food and Drink Guidance for Early Learning Services (18 menus analysed)

Summary of key findings

 **Almost all** centres report having **policies on food and beverages**

 **Most** centres **provide kai**

 **Many** centres **participate** in Food and /or Nutrition Programmes

 **Around half** centres **report barriers** to providing or promoting healthy food to children/tamariki

 Food and drinks for **special occasions** are **mostly healthy** when provided by the centre

 When food is used in **fundraising**, it's generally **not healthy**

Most centres have a **strong culture** around healthy eating

Full results available at: <https://www.eit.ac.nz/research-innovation/nourishing-hawkes-bay-he-wairua-to-te-kai/>

For more information, please contact: nourishinghb@eit.ac.nz

Nourishing HB: He wairua tō te kai has ethic approval from the EIT Research Ethics and Approvals committee (Ref 20/03).

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