



FOOD TO MAKE THEM SHINE

### How *Kindy Kitchen* Links to the Early Years Learning Framework

#### Practices

Holistic approaches – *Kindy Kitchen* uses wholesome, natural food to contribute to the program’s holistic approach to teaching and learning.

Responsiveness to children – Teachers are able to respond to children’s choices and food interests by offering a variety of different stories (in rhyme) and recipe creations, each focussing on a different core ingredient.

Intentional teaching – *Kindy Kitchen* offers preschools the ability to be intentional in teaching children about healthy food choices. For example, teachers can explain why people need to make healthy food choices and how healthy eating contributes to learning, growth and development.

Learning through play – *Kindy Kitchen* gives children permission to ‘play’ with food by using rhymes and food-preparation experiences that stimulate all areas of development. These food games give children permission to engage with food in a new and exciting way, and actively encourage children to eat the food they have created in an environment in which they feel happy, secure and confident.

Learning environments – *Kindy Kitchen* is a learning environment that is set up intentionally to promote healthy eating. This environment is made accessible to children, as there are stories and food for them to engage with, as well as utensils they can confidently use.

Cultural competence – *Kindy Kitchen* promotes other cultures, as there are fruit and vegetables from all over the world that can contribute to a healthy diet. *Kindy Kitchen* is a useful tool for making children aware of other cultures and for introducing culture through food – not just as a tokenistic learning experience, but as an authentic experience.

Continuity of learning and transitions – *Kindy Kitchen* provides ongoing learning opportunities, as each recipe can be adapted and extended to suit the needs of a particular age group. Each recipe will

offer new challenges, and *Kindy Kitchen* allows children to effectively transition from simple recipes to more challenging ones. The program does this by increasing a child's engagement and learning with the resources offered: reading rhymes, reading recipes, selecting ingredients, and food preparation all assist in developing skills such as cognition, language and fine motor control.

Assessments for learning – *Kindy Kitchen* experiences provide ongoing opportunities for the assessment of learning. Whether rhyming or cooking, talking or creating, the program connects with children's learning and provides opportunities to assess children's individual skills, strengths and interests for further planning and assessment.

## **Principles**

Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships – Through respectful and reciprocal relationships, children feel comfortable to explore new food options that will benefit their bodies.

Partnerships with families – *Kindy Kitchen* enables teachers to build partnerships with families around healthy eating, as families and teachers work together to create healthy food choices in the home and classroom.

High expectations and equity – *Kindy Kitchen* has a high expectation for all children's learning and development in the area of health and making healthy food choices. The activities and recipe choices have been specifically created to appeal to a variety of children with different strengths and fine motor abilities, with the aim of improving dietary habits in *all* children.

Respect for diversity – *Kindy Kitchen* encourages children to respect diversity by using a selection of foods from cultures represented in the service and the wider community.

Ongoing learning and reflective practice – The implementation of *Kindy Kitchen* enables educators to reflect on the children's engagement with healthy food. And by offering children a healthy food program, educators are able to foster all areas of children's development. If it is made part of the everyday practice, *Kindy Kitchen* will empower children and educators to reflect on the reasons for making healthy food choices, and how this impacts on daily life.

*Some examples of how Kindy Kitchen contributes to children's development:*

This food program contributes to the holistic program by bringing children together to reflect on healthy and wholesome food choices. It promotes language development, as the rhyming component encourages oral self-expression and increased vocabulary. *Kindy Kitchen* stimulates creativity and the cognitive imagination via stories, illustrations and imaginative recipes. The recipe component encourages children to experiment with numbers, scale and measurement. The program promotes self-esteem through empowering children to make healthy food choices, and it promotes physical development as children incorporate these new health values into their day-to-day lives.

## **Learning outcomes**

Children have a strong sense of identity – By making fruit and vegetables visually enticing and fun to eat, *Kindy Kitchen* allows for children to identify with their healthy self. Through this exploration of foods, educators can support the holistic development of children.

Children are connected with and contribute to their world – The recipe stories give educators a means to actively engage children in both food creation and food education, encouraging children to be connected with and to contribute to the world. The program teaches children about food that is good for their growing bodies, and helps develop an awareness of other cultures in the process.

Children have a strong sense of wellbeing – *Kindy Kitchen* contributes to children's sense of wellbeing by actively engaging them in experiences that promote health, emotional and physical wellbeing. It allows them to discuss the benefits of eating well in a way that is fun, supportive and easy to understand.

Children are confident and involved learners – *Kindy Kitchen* encourages children to take responsibility for the preparation and assembly of food. It also empowers children to make the right food choices, and inspires confidence in children and the choices they make.

Children are effective communicators – The *Kindy Kitchen* rhymes contribute to language development and offer children a fun way to learn about healthy food. The rhymes will introduce children to a new vocabulary that they can incorporate into their daily conversations.

*This document was prepared and written by Jessica Rosman, in collaboration with Leora Coleman who has a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Education) and who currently teaches Certificate III and Diploma in Children's Services. All text copyright © Jessica Rosman 2013*