

get up and grow!

Children are urged to get up and grow through a new initiative by the federal government.

More and more children in Australia are adopting a sedentary or 'couch potato' lifestyle as their use of technology and social media to socialise with one another increases.

As society reshapes itself around new technology we are leaving behind the pastimes of our childhood – like the neighbourhood games of cricket, footy and hopscotch. Children can now play cricket on their Xbox or online and, as a result, the number of active children in our communities is steadily decreasing.

Recognising this trend, the federal government has committed \$4.5 million over five years to develop and distribute guidelines on healthy eating and physical activity in early childhood settings. This initiative forms part of the government's *Plan for Early Childhood* and *Plan for Tackling Obesity*.

Minister for Early Childhood Education, Child Care and Youth and Minister for Sport, The Hon Kate Ellis, said it was critical to establish healthy habits in the early years of a child's life.

'Healthy eating and physical activity for all Australians, particularly children, is an important factor in maintaining good health. The number of overweight and obese children in Australia highlights the need for the government to tackle this issue head-on,' she said.

Nutritious food and regular physical activity supports the normal growth and development of children and reduces the risk of developing chronic lifestyle diseases including obesity. It makes sense to look to the early childhood

sector and invest in resources and awareness to combat children's obesity and to promote healthy eating from a young age.

A consortium consisting of the Murdoch Children's Research Institute Centre for Community Child Health, Early Childhood Australia and The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne was contracted to develop, field test and produce the *Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines*. Extensive and

inclusive consultations with state and territory governments, child health experts, the early childhood sector and families were undertaken to inform and guide their development. The guidelines provide evidence-based, practical information and advice to support and promote healthy eating and physical activity in children attending early childhood settings including centre based care, family day care and preschools.




The guidelines were finalised on 30 June 2009 with the launch of the Get Up & Grow resources by Minister Roxon and Minister Ellis on 22 October 2009.

'WE WANT TO INSTIL GOOD LIVING AND EATING HABITS AT A YOUNG AGE...'

The Minister for Health and Ageing, The Hon Nicola Roxon MP said, 'It is clear that as a nation, we needed to focus on a number of key aspects of children's education, health and well being. It may be cliché to say it, but the future of our country is in the hands of the young and how we prosper as a nation will be determined by our children, and our children's children.'

'These guidelines will serve as an important tool for professionals working in early childhood settings and should be viewed as guidelines, based on evidence – not laws and rules that must be obsessively followed. The guidelines' important purpose is to build healthier, happier kids.'

Minister Roxon concluded, 'We want to encourage and improve the health of all Australians, including the youngest members of our community. We want to instil good living and eating habits at a young age, so that when our kids grow up, they are able to enjoy a high quality of life, and pass these habits onto their children. This is good for the community, good for our health system, good for our economy, and good for people.'

The new guidelines are linked to the new National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care currently being developed by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. 

To view and download the publications visit www.health.gov.au and click on the Publications, Statistics and Resources tab along the top. Search for Get Up & Grow 'By Title' or search 'By Health Topic' and choose 'Child Health'. Alternatively, type <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-early-childhood-nutrition-resources> into your web browser.

You can also order through:

National Mailing and Marketing
PO Box 7077
Canberra Mailing Centre ACT 2610

T: (02) 6269 1080
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health@nationalmailing.com.au



The resources entitled Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood consist of:

Directors/Coordinators Book – the most detailed of all the guidelines resources. Provides practical information and advice on early childhood healthy eating and physical activity, how to develop nutrition and physical activity policies and ways to support and encourage staff, carers and families.

Staff/Carers Book – provides practical information and advice on early childhood healthy eating and physical activity to all staff and carers in early childhood settings.

Family Book – provides families with practical information and advice to support healthy eating and encourage physical activity in young children.

Cooking for Children Book – provides information and advice on early childhood nutrition, menu planning and food safety. This book contains delicious and nutritious recipes for settings and families.

Get Up & Grow Posters – six posters for early childhood settings to encourage healthy eating and physical activity in young children. Features key messages from the Get Up & Grow resources and beautiful early childhood pictures.



Get Up & Grow Stickers – four full colour stickers for early childhood settings.



Get Up & Grow Brochures – fourteen full colour brochures covering the essential healthy eating and physical activity topics to support settings, staff and families. Features key messages from the Get Up & Grow resources and beautiful early childhood pictures.