
INFORMATION SHEET

Long Day Care Centres and Staff

VegKit Long Day Care Study to evaluate a multi-component Initiative package to increase children's vegetable intake

Lead Researchers

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Your centre has been invited to take part in a study to improve vegetable intake in young children. Before you decide whether your centre can be involved, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. **Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with the staff at your centre.** Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you want your centre to take part. This decision is entirely up to you.

Description of the study

Did you know that only 6% of kids eat the recommended amount of vegetables? Kids eat approximately half of their daily intake while in childcare. About half of Australian children aged 2-5 years attend formal early care and education, putting you in a perfect position to have a positive impact on vegetable intake. However, we know that encouraging kids to eat their vegetables can be challenging.

This study will test initiatives that provide training and support for educators and teachers, targeting curriculum and mealtime support of vegetable acceptance in young children.

Study description

This project aims to evaluate a multi-component initiative package in long day care centres to increase 2-5-year-old children's vegetable acceptance and intake. We want to measure the impact that combining these initiatives has on children's vegetable intake and we are inviting you to participate in the research. Your centre will be randomly allocated to either the (1) multi-component initiative package, or the (2) waitlist control condition which will not use the initiative package until the end of the study.

Multi-component Initiative package

If you are allocated to the intervention group, you will use evidence-based initiatives to support long day care centres to improve vegetable intake, these are:

- 1 Mealtime training to encourage children to taste and enjoy vegetables for teachers and educators
- 2 Curriculum materials including lesson plans and teaching resources

What is the Mealtime Training for Teachers and Educators?

This initiative will provide an online training for educators to encourage healthier mealtime behaviours. The online training module will provide training to increase educators' knowledge and skills for using feeding practices that encourage children to taste and enjoy vegetables during mealtimes. The training module will take approximately 45-55 minutes to complete. Topics in the module will include an overview of the role of the educator in fostering children's vegetable knowledge and acceptance, role-modelling, shared meals, repeat vegetable exposure, sensory learning, positive mealtime environments and overcoming barriers such as fussy eating and neophobia. Educators will then be asked to apply the knowledge and strategies learnt in training during mealtimes.

What is the Taste & Learn™ Curriculum for the Early Years?

This initiative will provide an 8-week sensory-based vegetable education curriculum. The centre will be provided with lesson plans and supporting resources. The curriculum comprises (1) a series of 16 short (~10-20 minute) lessons and hands on activities delivered during intentional teaching time, (2) a series of 16 snack time occasions where vegetables will be tasted and (3) supporting resources and activities (e.g. reading corner, songs). Children will discover how to enjoy a variety of vegetables using sensory education and tasting lessons that focus on fun, involvement and experiential learning. This approach aims to positively change children's vegetable acceptance, knowledge and willingness to taste vegetables.

Waitlist control group

If your centre is allocated to the waitlist group, you will be asked to continue with your current practice. You will be asked to take part in data collection as described below. At the end of the study, all centres in the waitlist control group will be provided with access to the initiatives described above.

What will my centre be asked to do?

If allocated to use the multi-component initiative package, your centre will be asked to implement the package of initiatives over a 12-week period and take part in data collection at the end of the study. The total study period will be 12-weeks, which comprises a 4-week preparation period and an 8-week implementation period as shown in figure 1. During the preparation period centres will complete the training modules and curriculum

preparation. During the implementation period centres will implement the intervention, educators will use strategies for promoting vegetable intake during mealtimes and educators will deliver the curriculum.

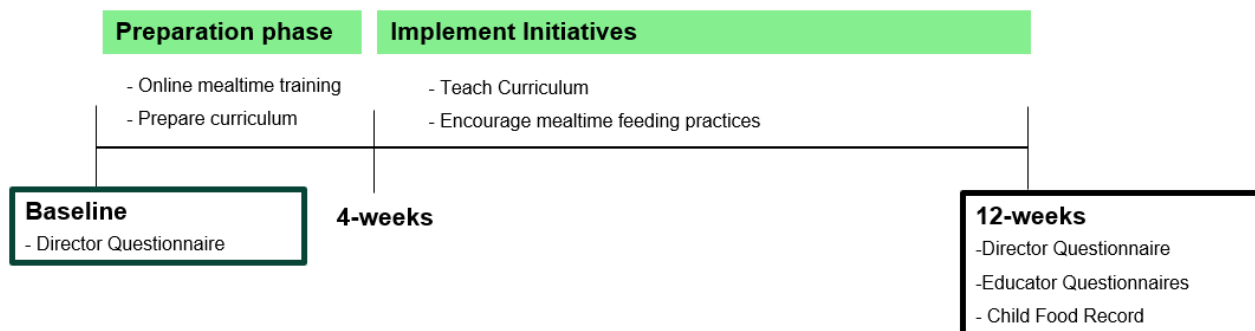


Figure 1: Timeline of the initiatives over the 12-weeks

More specifically, centre staff (directors, educators and/or teachers), and children attending your centre will be involved in this study as follows:

Directors

The director will provide consent for the centre to participate in the study. From here we will ask you for details about your Centre including number of staff, number of enrolments and average attendance. You will also be asked a few questions at the end of the study about your centre. You will also need to allow time for your staff to complete the components on the initiatives that they are participating in and time to complete the questionnaires.

Educators

Educators who will be involved in the study will be asked to provide consent before starting the initiatives. We will ask the educators to complete an online questionnaire through an email prompt at the end of the study (12-week follow-up), which will take approximately 10-15 minutes. The purpose of this questionnaire will be to collect some basic demographic information and to understand factors that influence the effectiveness and delivery of the specific initiatives (online training/curriculum), including attitudes, barriers, useability, and acceptability.

Children

At the end of the 12-weeks, your centre will receive resources to help evaluate children’s vegetable intake to see if using the initiatives has had an impact on vegetable intake. Educators involved in the study will complete this for the children in their rooms. This will involve a short online survey asking about the portion size and how often starchy, salad and cooked vegetables are eaten by each individual child while in child-care based on the past month. We will ask you to complete these surveys for the children in two rooms at the centre where the initiatives will be used. Each child should have an allocated educator to complete the survey on their behalf. The survey should take approximately 5 minutes per child to complete and there will be 4-11 children allocated per educator depending on number of staff in the room, attendance numbers and child age. Therefore, it may take 20-50 minutes per educator.

Parents

Parents will be provided with information about the study using your centre's main parent communication channel. Parents will be asked to indicate if they DO NOT consent for their child's dietary intake to be measured. This will be indicated by a tick box form signed by the parent notifying the centre that they wish their child to be excluded from dietary intake measurements. This will be returned to the centre. If parents do not want their child's dietary intake to be measured, data will not be collected from this child.

What benefit will I gain from being involved in this study?

By participating in this study, you will be contributing to the body of research that aims to improve the dietary behaviours and health of Australian children. Your centre will provide valuable insights and contribution to the development of recommendations for the childcare sector about supporting a healthy food environment. Your centre will receive access to the initiatives.

Will I be identifiable by being involved in this study?

All the information that we collect about your centre during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Children and staff will only be identified using a study identification number and any information collected that would identify individual participants will be removed. Any information identifying centres will be removed. All information and results obtained in this study will be stored in a secure way, with access restricted to relevant researchers. The parent company and names/ locations of the study centres will not be revealed in any publication arising from this research.

Are there any risks or discomforts if I am involved?

By participating in this study your centre will have to adapt the processes used at your centre and like change of any kind this may cause some discomfort for your staff while you adjust. Our research team will be available to support your centre and answer any questions you may have. As part of our research we will be asking your staff for feedback using a questionnaire, which will take time (approximately 10-15 minutes).

Any unexpected discomforts, disadvantages and risks, which arise during the research, should be brought immediately to our attention, please contact us at vegkit@flinders.edu.au or on **(08) 8201 5519**. If you have any concerns regarding anticipated or actual risks or discomforts, please raise them us.

How do I agree to participate?

We ask that Centre Directors talk with their centre staff before deciding whether the Centre should be involved in this study. If all staff agree to participate in the study, please read and sign the consent form on the next page, if reading a hard copy, please return the signed consent form via email to vegkit@flinders.edu.au.

Withdrawal rights

Staff can opt out of participating in feedback and/or questionnaires during the study should they wish not to. Participation in this study is voluntary and Centres and staff are free to withdraw from the study at any time without providing an explanation.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Only researchers listed on this form have access to the individual information provided by you. Privacy and confidentiality will be assured at all times. The research outcomes may be presented at conferences, written up for publication or used for other research purposes as described in this information form. However, the privacy and confidentiality of individuals will be protected at all times. Your childcare centre and individuals (director, staff, children) will not be named or be identifiable in any research product. No data, including identifiable, non-identifiable and de-identified datasets, will be shared or used in future research projects without your explicit consent.

Data Storage

The information collected will be stored securely on a Flinders University server throughout the study. Any identifiable data will be de-identified for data storage purposes unless indicated otherwise. All data will be securely transferred to and stored at Flinders University for five years, after publication of the results. Following the required data storage period, all data will be securely destroyed according to university protocols.

How will I receive feedback?

On project completion a summary of project results will be provided to you via email.

How is this study funded?

This study is part of VegKIT, which is a five-year national project designed to address the significant issue of underconsumption of vegetables in children and will deliver free resources for educators, health professionals and research agencies. VegKIT brings together science and industry with CSIRO, Flinders University and Nutrition Australia to deliver evidence-informed nutrition promotion with real world impact. VegKIT is funded by Hort Innovation, using the vegetable research and development levy and contributions from the Australian Government. For more information visit <https://www.vegkit.com.au/>

Ethics Committee Approval

The project has been approved by Flinders University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC project number: 4764).

Queries and Concerns

Queries or concerns regarding the research can be directed to the research team. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this study, you may contact the Flinders University's Research Ethics & Compliance Office team via telephone 08 8201 2543 or email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet, and we hope that you will accept our invitation to be involved.

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Human Research Ethics Committee in South Australia (Project number 4764). For queries regarding the ethics approval of this project please contact the Executive Officer of the Committee via telephone on +61 8 8201 3116 or email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

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