



Isabella Plains Early Childhood School

Making little tummies smile

Already active supporters of nutrition and healthy living, Isabella Plains Early Childhood school decided to reinforce these healthy messages with a visit from larger than life friends, Busy Broc and Posh Pear.

“We had an event for the whole school, including families, where Kulture Break visited and engaged the students with their healthy messages,” said Louise McCormick, the school’s Fresh Tastes coordinator. “We followed the event with cooking sessions to help reinforce the messages.”

The school signed up to the ACT Government’s Fresh Tastes service to pull together their ideas into a clear, yet flexible, framework.

“Being an early childhood school, we have always been interested in the wellbeing of families as well as nutrition,” said Louise. “Fresh Tastes is another aspect of this and it seemed like a very natural progression from what we were already doing. It is good to have a framework to work under.”

Represented by all different areas of the school and parents, the school set up a vibrant team of 10 people to address a number of Fresh Tastes action areas.

“We get together twice per term and also communicate via email,” explained Louise. “It is important to create a culture so that everyone owns the actions, otherwise it isn’t sustained. The people in the team have been very dedicated.”

One of the actions the team introduced is a positive note from the children’s ‘food friend’, Busy Broc.

“The note says congratulations to the child for trying a healthy food and making their tummy smile,” said Louise. “The children take the note home and have a conversation with their parents about what food they have tried – either out of their own lunchbox or during a cooking session.”

The note template, along with a range of other resources for teachers, are saved in a central folder so each educator can support the framework.

Many ideas have been initiated by the Fresh Tastes parent/teacher team and by both individuals and class groups.

“We’ve had tasting sessions, training for teachers, we’ve sought grants and had celebratory (healthy) breakfasts,” said Louise.

It takes time, but Louise has noted changes to some lunch boxes and there is a greater general awareness of healthier options around the school.

“You won’t see a cupcake at our events! And if you see any icing on a fruit muffin for example, it will be made with cheese for a healthier option,” Louise said.

“I can’t emphasise enough that this is about the school culture,” Louise said. “You need a strong team to drive it and to create small, ongoing changes to make it sustainable.”

Fresh Tastes is open to all primary schools across Canberra. Contact the Fresh Tastes team for information about how your school can get involved.