

### **malkara** Malkara Specialist School

#### **Healthy choices – can we eat it, yes we can!**

**Malkara is a school for children with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities, so their approach to introducing Fresh Tastes to students has taken a whole-of-school commitment.**

“We do find that some of our students eat a very limited diet and are not as likely to try new things,” explained Dagmar Martin, Malkara School’s Executive Teacher and Fresh Tastes coordinator. “With our introduction of Fresh Tastes, students have now been encouraged to smell, touch and taste different healthy foods.”

When Malkara started with Fresh Tastes, they spent a term showcasing healthy food throughout the school.

They named classes around fresh foods (e.g. Red Apples and Aqua H2Os), set up a resource kit in the library, put up posters, themed their assembly time, and even created a simple school song.

“Using the Bob the Builder tune, we all join in and sing: Healthy choices, can we eat it, yes we can!” said Dagmar.

**The best part of the Cooking Food action area for Malkara is just how practical it is, offering all students a chance to participate in a sensory way.**

“We do have a kitchen, but we have also set up some classroom kits that teachers can take into classes for the students to participate in cooking at all levels, including food preparation,” explained Dagmar.

“The student participation and engagement during cooking lessons has increased over the term as they are learning to use utensils to cut, pour, mix, spread and grate,” said Dagmar.

Some children have cooked recipes such as Lunar New Year noodles (with grated carrots, bean sprouts or nori), fruit and vegetable kebabs and scrambled eggs.

“The cooking lessons also provide many positive communication opportunities for great discussions about what we are doing,” said Dagmar.

The Fresh Tastes approach at Malkara has also linked well with their visiting dental program, particularly given many students are reluctant to go to the dentist.

“We can talk about how food and drink affects your teeth as well,” said Dagmar. “This has been really successful and well supported by parents.”



*Fresh Tastes is open to all primary schools across Canberra. Contact the Fresh Tastes team for information about how your school can get involved. Fresh Tastes is part of the ACT Government’s Healthy Weight Initiative supporting a healthy, active and productive community.*