

Background



Developing the Food and Beverage Classification System

July 2007

Developing the Food and Beverage Classification System has been a complex and time consuming process. There were a number of steps involved, broadly they were:

- reviewing other classification systems (nationally and internationally)
- taking advice from stakeholder advisory group and youth advisory group
- convening a technical advisory group to develop the technical aspects of the nutrient criteria
- developing a Food and Beverage Classification System for New Zealand education settings
- developing the resources and support programme for the classification system implementation.

Throughout this process the Ministry of Health has worked closely with the Ministry of Education.

Other classification systems

Two classification systems that were identified as being key resources were the Waitemata DHB Beverage Guidelines and the Fresh Tastes @ School programme run by New South Wales Health and NSW School Canteen Association. These organisations were generous enough to agree to the Ministry of Health using aspects of their work in the development of our FBCS.

A number of other existing school and early childhood education service food and Beverage classification systems were identified. Most were not relevant to the New Zealand setting due to their divergent approaches to determining how food was classified. As well, most were often only applicable to their specific setting and few, if any, had been evaluated.

Advisory groups

A stakeholder advisory group was convened to provide input into the planning and development of the framework and to identify key issues the technical group needed to consider. The stakeholder advisory group met twice over the course of 6 months. Membership of the stakeholder advisory group is listed at the back of this document.

The Ministry of Health convened a group of young people to provide input into the design and implementation of the classification system, and to other relevant Healthy Eating-Healthy Action work. The group is called Rise e Tū. The input of children and young people to this initiative is crucial to gaining support and ensuring that it is relevant to young people. The Ministry of Health hopes that Rise e Tū members will act as advocates for healthy change in their communities and lives.

The nutrient criteria

A technical advisory group was convened to develop the technical detail of the classification framework. Group members were selected on the basis of having a tertiary nutrition qualification and/or experience in developing classification systems for use with New Zealand children. This group met frequently for 8 months over the course of 2006/2007. Membership of the technical advisory group is listed at the back of this document.

The group agreed upon key overall approaches to developing the system. Given the differences in nutritional requirements and education settings, separate classification systems for early childhood education (ECE) services and schools were developed by the technical group. The schools' classification framework was developed first, followed by the framework for ECE services. A sub-group of technical group members with relevant expertise to the ECE setting developed specific nutrient criteria for that setting. All decisions were signed off by the entire group.

The Australian and Waitemata District Health Board systems were used for a starting point for the classification framework. The results from the 2002 National Children's Nutrition Survey and the Ministry of Health Food and Nutrition Guidelines for 0-2, 2-12-year-olds and adolescents were key Ministry of Health documents that were considered when developing the criteria. Other, non-Ministry data on children's diets was also considered. Food modelling was undertaken as the system was developed.

The prevention of obesity was a primary driver of this work. However, it was agreed that a healthy diet consists of many factors other than energy-density. Other dietary factors that contribute to good health are incorporated into the classification system, such as dietary variety, eating from the four food groups, reducing the amount of fat, salt and added sugar consumed, and increasing fibre consumption.

The support resources and programme

The final classification system is a technical document. Schools and ECE services are not expected to interpret or use the nutrient criteria. The Ministry of Health has developed support resources for schools and ECE services that explain the classification system and provide advice to help schools and ECE services implement the system. These support resources are being launched on July 17.

To further help implementation of the classification system, a support programme has commenced. This includes opportunities for representatives from all schools and ECE services to attend professional development workshops and access expertise and financial support for healthy eating initiatives through the Nutrition Fund. The Ministry of Health is currently working to determine additional support needs, and a package of support will be developed in the near future. A product database listing **everyday** and **sometimes** food products and beverages will be available later in 2007 to assist in choosing healthy foods and beverages.



Stakeholder Advisory Group Membership

NAME	ORGANISATION
Professor Jim Mann (Chair)	University of Otago
Heather Ballantyne	New Zealand Education Institute Representative
Nicola Potts	New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association Representative
Carolyn Watts	Quigley and Watts Ltd
Maggie McGregor	National Heart Foundation Representative
Mafi Funaki-Tahifote	Pacific Island Heart Beat Representative
Sarah Besley	National Heart Foundation Representative
Jude Woolston	Counties Manukau DHB
Diane O'Sullivan	New Zealand Parent Teacher Association Representative
Robyn Toomath	Fight the Obesity Epidemic
Cliona Ni Mhurchu	University of Auckland
Sue Scarlett	Wellington Eating Disorder Services
Michelle Mako	Health Sponsorship Council
Jenny Reid	New Zealand Food Safety Authority
Jan Pearson	Cancer Society of New Zealand Representative
Sue Price	Health Promoting Schools, Public Health South
Kate Smallman	Diabetes Project Trust
Barry Hambleton	Principals Federation Representative
Craig Gough	Te Hotu Manawa Māori Representative
Susan Young	New Zealand School Trustees Association Representative
Elizabeth Stewart	Diabetes New Zealand Representative
Yvonne Townsend	HETTANZ Representative
Nicola Ehau	Hutt Valley District Health Board
Brenda Cutress	Food Industry Group Representative
Robert Bree	Food Industry Group Representative

Technical Advisory Group Membership

NAME	ORGANISATION
Carolyn Watts (Chair, until 3 April 2007)	Quigley and Watts Ltd
Chris Cook (from January 2007)	Auckland Regional Public Health
Julie Dick	New Zealand Dietetic Association
Makuini McKerchar (until March 2007)	Public Health South
Dave Monro	National Heart Foundation
Mafi Funaki-Tahifote	Pacific Island Heart Beat
Carole Gibb	Food Standards Australia New Zealand
Bronwen King	Community and Public Health
Julie Carter	Waitemata District Health Board
Rachael Taylor	University of Otago
Kate Sladden	Auckland Regional Public Health
Christine King	New Zealand Nutrition Foundation
Phillippa Hawthorne	New Zealand Food Safety Authority
Cathy O'Leary	Eurest Foods
Dale Bramley (until February 2007)	Waitemata District Health Board
Jasmine Hoetjes	Auckland Regional Public Health
Barbara Randall (from February 2007)	Capital and Coast District Health Board
Sharon Pihema (from March 2007)	