

Department of Human Services

**Public Health Nutrition Program
Food and Health Development Section
Public Health Group
Rural and Regional Health and Aged Care**

PROJECT BRIEF

**Pilot Implementation of a Scheme for Recognition of
Best Practice in Food Service in Long Day Childcare
Centres in Victoria**

1. Introduction

In Victoria there are 904 licensed Long Day Childcare (LDC) centres, 714 in metropolitan settings and 190 in rural settings. Typically, these centres operate for at least 8 hours a day on normal working days for a minimum of 48 weeks per year.

Legislative and accreditation requirements provide a regulatory framework for operational aspects and minimum standards for LDC centres, including aspects relating to food and food hygiene. All LDC centres in Victoria must comply with the *Children's Services Act 1996* and the *Children's Services Regulations 1998* in order to be licensed by the Victorian State Government. The *Food Act 1984* requires that children's services providing food for the children in their care must have a Food Safety Program that is third party audited and be registered with their local council. Additionally, to be eligible to receive Childcare Assistance on behalf of parents, a centre must be registered and participating in the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) administered by the National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc (NCAC).

In 1999, a joint initiative by Curtin University of Technology and the Health Department of Western Australia (funded by the Western Australian Health Promotion Foundation) led to the development of the ***Start Right – Eat Right*** Award Scheme for LDC centres in Western Australia. Building on the legislative and accreditation requirements in Western Australia, this scheme aims to improve the food provided to children in LDC centres, in line with industry standards, through formal recognition and acknowledgement of best practice. The Award scheme has undergone an implementation and evaluation phase¹. No such program currently exists in Victoria.

¹ Pollard C, et al: Start Right-Eat Right Award Scheme: Implementing Food and Nutrition Policy in

2. Project Aim and Objectives

Based on the outcomes of and the lessons learnt from the Western Australian *Start Right–Eat Right* strategy, this project will investigate the need for, the viability of, and a process for potential statewide implementation of a scheme for recognition of best practice in food service in Victorian LDC centres.

There will be three components to this project:

- **Component 1** of the project will undertake a pilot implementation of the *Start Right-Eat Right* program in a minimum of 10 metropolitan and 10 rural LDC centres (total number of centres to be negotiated).
- **Component 2** of the project will identify the resource requirements, including requirements for LDC centre staff education, for the statewide implementation of a recognition scheme in Victoria. This component will require liaison with the TAFE sector and other education/training organisations that currently undertake education and skill development programs suitable for LDC centre staff.
- **Component 3** will make recommendation on the implementation a long-term, self-funded recognition scheme for best practice in nutrition and food hygiene in LDC centres in Victoria.

All components of the project can be undertaken concurrently.

3. Rationale

Substantial evidence exists that emphasises the importance of a high standard of practice in nutrition and food hygiene in the LDC centre settings. Centres have a major responsibility to provide safe meals that meet each child's nutritional requirements for growth and development. The LDC centre setting is also an ideal avenue to facilitate the development sound eating practices that will have a positive impact on lifetime health and wellbeing.

In other organised settings for children, such as kindergartens and schools, significant developmental work and associated programs exist that aim to improve childhood nutrition. There is an identified gap in programs available to specifically meet the needs of staff and children in LDC centres and their parents and guardians. This project will address this area of need.

4. Project Tasks

Component 1: Pilot Implementation of the *Start Right–Eat Right* Award Scheme

This component of the project will involve a pilot implementation of the existing *Start Right-Eat Right* Award Scheme developed by the Department of Health of Western Australia. This will include:

- Establishment of criteria for, and selection of, a minimum of 10 metropolitan and 10 rural (to be negotiated) LDC centres to participate in the pilot implementation of the existing *Start Right-Eat Right* Award Scheme.
- Undertaking of required modification and production of resource and support materials comprising the *Eat Right – Start Right* package to allow for the implementation of a pilot project in Victoria. Consultation with the Health Department of Western Australia regarding any modification will be required.
- Undertaking of a publicity campaign to engage participation of LDC centres in the pilot implementation component of the project.
- Provision of nutrition and food hygiene education to staff working in the LDC centres participating in the pilot implementation.
- Undertaking of the accreditation process of participating LDC centres as defined in the existing *Start Right-Eat Right* Award Scheme.
- In consultation with the Department of Human Services project manager, develop and undertake an evaluation of the pilot implementation component of the project.

Component 2: Assessment of Resource Requirements for Implementation of a Statewide Scheme for Recognition of Best Practice on Food Service.

This component of the project will:

- Identify supporting resource requirements for statewide implementation of an recognition scheme in Victoria.
- Investigate and map existing education programs currently available in each PCP catchment area in Victoria suitable to support LDC centre staff training in nutrition and food safety.
- Identify gaps in resources and training programs required to support the statewide implementation of a recognition scheme in Victoria.
- Make recommendation for further development in resources and training programs.
- Make recommendation for a process to establish community awareness and demand for a recognition scheme in Victoria.

Component 3: Recommendations for Requirements for Implementation of a Statewide Scheme for Recognition of Best Practice on Food Service.

This component of the project will make recommendation on the implementation a long-term, self-funded recognition scheme for best practice in nutrition and food hygiene in LDC centres in Victoria, including:

- A critical analysis of the need for a recognition scheme to be established in Victoria, including an assessment of the supporting resources and education programs required to support the scheme
- A detailed process for implementation of a scheme in Victoria, including the establishment of community recognition of the award.
- An estimation of the funding required for initial LDC centres implementation of a recognition scheme and potential funding sources.
- A process for long-term sustainability of the recognition scheme through a self-funded ‘user-pays’ approach.

5. Guidelines for Methodology

The consultant will be required to be rigorous in the identification and provision of a solid methodology framework to undertake this project. This will include:

- Research into the *Start Right – Eat Right* Award Scheme and adaptation of materials to ensure relevance of the pilot implementation component of the project.
- Establishment of a process of selection of LDC centres for involvement in the project to ensure representation that will reflect the range of geographical, socio-economic variables throughout Victoria.
- Implementation strategies to ensure effective outcomes of the project.
- A sound process for evaluation of the pilot implementation component of the project to ensure accuracy and appropriateness of data collection and analysis.
- A process for critical analysis of the need for, and the viability of a recognition scheme in Victoria.

6. Intended Products

Product 1:

A written report is required detailing the methodology, data analysis, outcomes and evaluation of the pilot implementation phase of the project.

Product 2:

A written report is required detailing the outcomes of the assessment of existing supporting resources and education programs for implementation of a scheme for recognition of best practice in food service in LDC centres in Victoria. The product will also make recommendation on the requirement for further development of resources and education programs.

Product 3:

A written report is required detailing a strategic plan for implementation of a scheme for recognition of best practice in food service in LDC centres in Victoria. The report will detail funding requirement for an initial implementation phase and include recommendation for long-term sustainability of the recognition scheme through a self-funded approach.

One hard copy of each product is required. Products are also required to be delivered on computer disc and prepared using Microsoft Word.

7. Selection Criteria for the Consultant

- Knowledge and understanding of the nutrition requirements for children aged 0 – 6 years.

- Knowledge and understanding of nutrition and food safety requirements in the context of LDC centres.
- Knowledge and understanding of the *Start Right-Eat Right* Award Scheme developed by Curtin University of Technology and the Health Department of Western Australia.
- Understanding of the education system in Victoria in relation to education of staff in LDC centres.
- Demonstrated ability to establish a sound methodology for, and to conduct an education/training program for staff of LDC centres.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Demonstrated understanding of the brief and required outcomes and a capacity to deliver the required outcomes within the agreed timeframe.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Management

The Department of Human Services will be the contract manager of the project. A Department of Human Services project manager will be identified for the day-to-day management issues.

Project Advisory Group

A Project Advisory Group will be formed by the Health Development Section, Public Health Group, Department of Human Services, and will provide the consultant with advice on various project issues, including communication key stakeholders, budget issues and project accountability. The Project Advisory Group will also be available to read and provide comments on early and final drafts of the products.

Consultant

Guided by feedback from the Project Advisory Group, the consultant will be required to complete all tasks necessary to achieve the intended products and outcomes (as articulated in Section 6). The consultant will be required to sign a Standard Department of Human Services contract.

The consultant will attend Project Advisory Group meetings providing project status reports. An early draft version of the final products to be submitted to the Project Advisory Group prior to the end of the contract period.

9. Budget

Funding of up to \$70,000 is available for the project. This funding is to cover all work, products and other costs required for the successful completion of the project, exclusive of GST.

A detailed budget is to be included as a part of the submission.

10. Timeline

The project will need to be completed in a within in an 18 month period from commencement of the project.

12. Submissions

- Written submissions are required to include the following sections: *Project Title, Background, Proposed Methodology, Project Timetable and Budget Justification. Curriculum vitae of person/persons to be directly involved in the project are required.*
- Potential consultants that are short listed within this process may be required to give an oral presentation of their proposal to a panel selected from the Project Advisory Group.
- Three copies of written submissions are required.
- Closing date for submissions is 18 March 2002.
- Submissions to be forwarded to:

Sue Milner
Statewide Public Health Nutritionist
Health Development Section
Public Health Group
Department of Human Services
Level 16, 120 Spencer Street
Melbourne. 3000

Phone: 03 9637 4047

Email: sue.milner@dhs.vic.gov.au