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Minister for Health and Ageing

THE HON KATE ELLIS MP

**Minister for Early Childhood Education, Child Care and Youth, and
Minister for Sport**

MEDIA RELEASE

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Health Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings

The Minister for Health and Ageing, Nicola Roxon and Minister for Early Childhood Education, Kate Ellis, today launched new Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for early childhood Settings, developed with the assistance of a consortium led by the Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

The guidelines, titled *Get Up & Grow*, provide information to support healthy behaviour in children aged five years and younger attending early childhood education and care settings, including centre-based care, family day care and preschools.

According to the 2007-08 National Health Survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, there has been a steady increase in overweight and obese children in Australia since 1995. The guidelines, a 2007 Federal election commitment, form part of the Government's *Plan for Early Childhood and Plan for Tackling Obesity*.

The Government has committed \$4.5 million over five years for the Department of Health and Ageing to develop the guidelines in consultation with childhood health and early childhood professionals. State and Territory governments were also consulted in the development of these resources.

The guidelines are evidence-based and support a consistent, national approach to childhood nutrition and physical activity.

The guidelines are consistent with Australian nutrition and physical activity recommendations for young children and include books, posters, stickers, flyers and a CD-ROM.

Ms Roxon said the Government was committed to providing comprehensive guidelines to assist professionals working in early childhood education and care settings. .

"I am very pleased to help launch the *Get Up & Grow* guidelines which will help Australian children have a healthy start to life.

“The guidelines are a highly valuable resource for people working with children and their families.”

Ms Ellis said it was critical to establish healthy habits in the early years of a child’s life.

“Healthy eating and physical activity for all Australians, particularly children, is an important factor in maintaining good health,” she said.

“The number of overweight and obese children in Australia highlights the need for the Government to tackle this issue head-on.”

Get up and Grow packs will be available to all early childcare settings. Copies of the packs, or individual items in the packs, can be ordered from the Department of Health and Ageing’s website at www.health.gov.au. Those without internet access can call the Department of Health and Ageing on 1800 020 103.

For all media inquiries, please contact the Minister's Office on 02 6277 7220.