



How Children's Health Queensland formed strong partnerships for ABC

Children's Health Queensland credits partnerships with cafe vendors and suppliers for their implementation of the A Better Choice strategy.

Health and Wellbeing Queensland's [A Better Choice](#) strategy (ABC) aims to encourage healthier food and drink options in healthcare facilities across the state, including at Children's Health Queensland (CHQ).

At CHQ their successful implementation of the ABC strategy can be attributed to the strong partnerships they have forged with their vendors and suppliers.

Through these strong partnerships, a positive space has been created to collaborate, educate and build productive healthy food and drink environments.

Relationships matter

CHQ's Food Service and Nutrition Support Quality Coordinator, Rachel, is a staff champion behind the onsite implementation of the ABC strategy.

In the last few years, she and her team have made strong progress in increasing the availability of healthy foods and drinks in the Health Service. With support from management and hospital dietitians, they have shown dedication in creating strong relationships with onsite food retailers, vendors and suppliers.

This has had a positive impact on CHQ's successful implementation of the ABC strategy.

Shared goals

The team at CHQ acknowledge that to achieve successful outcomes all parties need to work together with open communication, collaboration, and a shared goal to create healthy food and drink environments. Building rapport with CHQ's vendors and suppliers is integral, and it can be particularly helpful to align their needs with the goals of the ABC strategy.

Maintaining regular communication with these vendors and suppliers has created space to collaborate and source suitable healthier alternatives for the outlets at CHQ.

Key tips for building relationships with suppliers and vendors to implement the ABC strategy include:

- Make contact to develop a rapport with vendors and suppliers
- Set up a meeting to explain the ABC strategy
- Utilise various communication channels including face-to-face, email or phone.

Explaining A Better Choice

The CHQ team highlight the importance of assisting vendors and suppliers to understand the ABC strategy and guidelines, and why they are being implemented. As an example, educating suppliers on why there are limits on sugar-sweetened beverages can help to promote water as the drink of choice.

The team aim to have conversations with vendors and suppliers in person where possible, and at earliest convenience, to build rapport and ensure they are receptive and open to future suggestions.

A Better Choice

Healthy options made easy



By enabling suppliers to better understand the impact they can have on consumer food choices, they will be more driven to participate in the ABC strategy.

Healthy swaps

It is a common challenge in hospital facilities to stock vending machines with healthier food and drinks that meet the guidelines in the ABC strategy.

The CHQ team recommends collaborating with vendors and directly communicating the specific product swaps, for example, switching to low-fat cheese and crackers and bottled water instead of sugary beverages.

Following an ABC audit, Rachel met with a vendor to identify products that needed removing due to limited nutritional value. Together they made specific product swaps to meet the ABC requirements.

Tips for working with suppliers and vendors for A Better Choice:

- Establish a rapport with vendors and suppliers and collaborate to better understand their business needs.
- Explain the ABC strategy and its background to vendors and suppliers
- Be specific when recommending product swaps.

'Dedicating time and energy to communicating with vendors and suppliers is key to successfully implementing the ABC strategy in CHQ vending machines,'

Rachel, CHQ's Food Service and Nutrition Support Quality Coordinator



Example of a healthy sandwich swap at a Children's Health Queensland retail outlet.