



Fussy eating is a problem of the past for Alexi after her mum, Dee, attended a workshop. Picture: MARK STEWART N43DT300

Taking the bite out of food fight

Program puts children's healthy eating options on table

Health | Anna Prytz

DEE Pakendorf's daughter, Alexi, had stopped eating anything except yoghurt. The three-year-old's fussy palate and inability to embrace nourishing foods was becoming a nightmare at the dinner table. "It was a battle all the time," Ms Pakendorf said. "It was a real nightmare because you worry that they won't get enough nutrients and get quite sickly, so you keep trying to make them eat and it becomes such a stressful fight." The answer to Mrs Pakendorf's plight lay in Doncare and Man-ningham Community Health

Service's Eat Your Vegies Please workshop. Doncare parent educator Sue Kerchhoff said the program aimed to provide parents with coping mechanisms for the common problem. "Parents do think they're a failure if their child develops poor eating habits, but we want to take that pressure off," Ms Kerchhoff said. "It's perfectly natural for your children to go through different phases." Dietitian Karen Lovell said the key to eating lay in "division of responsibility". "Basically, the parents provide and the children decide," she said. "You can't force them be-

cause that causes a lot of tension, but if you just provide healthy food and don't indulge sweet snacking just because you're so glad they're eating something, they'll develop their own way of approaching it." Mrs Pakendorf said the two-session workshop had "very beneficial" results. "We just didn't push Alexi, but stopped providing exactly what she did want as well," she said. "It's been really effective. It was gradual and so a lot less stressful." The next workshop will run at Doncare on Thursdays from May 26 to June 2. Cost: \$30. Bookings: 9841 4215.