



Healthy Eating Policy

A balanced diet is essential for the maintenance and protection of health, to ensure that full mental and physical potential is reached each day and to optimise growth and development. Developing a healthy diet and good eating habits early in life will lay the foundations for future health.

The statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage states:

- ☐ The provider must promote the good health of the children.
- ☐ Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, these must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.
- ☐ Provider must obtain information about any special dietary requirements.
- ☐ Fresh drinking water to be available at all times.

We recognise that children under the age of 5 years have different nutritional needs to those of older children and adults. They have a high energy and nutrient requirement in relation to their size. Healthy eating messages aimed at adults are not wholly appropriate for children in early years. Early years is an important time to shape food preferences and habits, by allowing children to make their own selections through guided choice, this can have a positive impact on health in later life.

General:

- ☐ Those responsible for food preparation and handling of food will be competent to do so and will have the appropriate food hygiene/safety training
- ☐ Information will be made available daily to parents/carers regarding the food, which has been provided for the children. Our menu and allergy content of meals is available on our websites.
- ☐ Breakfast will be on offer until 8.30am each day. Breakfast cereals will be non-sugar coated varieties.
- ☐ Staff will be good role models for healthy eating.
- ☐ We aim to ensure that the setting is nut and sugar free.
- ☐ We participate in the local authorities Health Choices Award which is renewable every three years.

Allergies/Food Preferences/Special Diets:

The setting will obtain and record necessary information from parents/carers regarding any ethnic/cultural or special dietary requirements, preferences or food allergies in advance of the child being admitted to the nursery. This will be reviewed at least on a yearly basis.

**Nutrition:**

- ☐ The setting will provide healthy, balanced and nutritious meals and snacks.
- ☐ Foods from the four main food groups will be offered every day (starchy carbohydrates, fruit and vegetables, milk and dairy foods and proteins – see Food Groups below)
- ☐ Main meals will include foods from the following food groups: starchy carbohydrates, protein, dairy and fruit and vegetables
- ☐ The menu each week will contain at least one vegetarian and a fish based main meal.
- ☐ No salt will be added to foods and foods high in salt (e.g. gravy granules, stock cubes, ready-made sauces etc) will be used as little as possible. If these are used these will be the lowest salt variety available.
- ☐ Foods containing added sugar will not be offered to children to reduce the risk of dental decay and child obesity.

Food Groups

Starchy Carbohydrates include: Breads, cereals, pasta, rice and potatoes – these provide a good source of energy.

Fruit and Vegetables include: fresh, frozen, tinned (fruit in juice, vegetables in water with no added salt or sugar), dried and juiced fruit and vegetables (dried and juiced fruit will only be consumed as part of a meal) – these provide a good source of vitamins and minerals.

Dairy foods include: milk, cheese and yoghurts- these provide a good source of calcium for healthy teeth and bones.

Foods containing protein include: meats, fish, eggs and pulses – these are required for growth and repair.

Meal Times:

- ☐ Children of all ages are sat together at laid round tables. The staff will pro-actively involve the children to create a social occasion, which provides opportunities to promote children's social and educational development as well as encourage good eating habits and table manners.
- ☐ Fussy eaters will be encouraged (but not forced) to eat. Praise will be given when the child eats and the food will be removed without judgment if the child refuses to eat.
- ☐ If a child refuses the main course, a portion of dessert will still be offered.
- ☐ Children will be given as much time as they need to finish meals.

Snacks:

- ☐ Snacks will be offered at 10am and 2.30pm to ensure children receive appropriate levels of energy and nutrition.
- ☐ Fruit and a carbohydrate. The fruit will normally be fresh. The morning carbohydrate will be something fresh such as a toasted currant bun, crumpet, English muffin, brioche etc, whereas the afternoon carbohydrate will be dried such as a rice cake, breadstick, cheese straw, cheese cracker etc.
- ☐ Purchased carbohydrate products will be low in sugar, ie 5g or under.
- ☐ Milk and water will be offered.

**Drinks:**

- ☐ Children will have access to drinking water at all times.
- ☐ Children under the age of 12 months will be given breast or formula milk as provided by the parent.
- ☐ Children over the age of 12 months will be offered whole cows milk or a non dairy substitute.

Infant Feeding:**Breastfeeding/formula milk**

The setting will support breastfeeding mothers by:

- ☐ Ensuring breastfeeding mothers are made welcome and are able to breastfeed their baby in the setting
- ☐ Encouraging parents to bring expressed breast milk into the setting. This should be transported in a cool bag, clearly labeled with the name of the infant, date and time. Breast milk should be stored in accordance to the latest guidelines (see useful information section).
- ☐ Formula milk will be prepared as and when needed.

Weaning:

The Department of Health recommends babies should not be weaned until around 6 months and that solid food should never be introduced before 4 months (17 weeks) of age.

- ☐ The above guidelines will be shared with parents to enable them to make an informed choice regarding weaning.
- ☐ The setting will carry out the introduction of solid foods in accordance to the parent/carers wishes.
- ☐ The Department of Health currently recommends that infants under 6 months of age will not be given foods that contain gluten, eggs, fish, shellfish, liver, nuts and seeds, soft or unpasteurised cheese, low fat foods, honey, sugar and salt.
- ☐ Each infant should be assessed individually, dependent on their age and readiness for solids. Infants who are weaned around 6 months of age should move onto lumpier textures and soft finger foods more quickly than those started earlier to ensure continued development of normal feeding behaviour.
- ☐ Once infants are competent in taking solids, a variety of foods from the 4 main food groups should be included in the weaning diet to ensure their nutritional requirements are being met.
- ☐ Honey and salt will not be given or added to foods given to children under 12 months of age.
- ☐ Preterm babies need special consideration and advice will be sought from the parents/carers as advised by their health visitor/medical team/dietitian.
- ☐ For more information on weaning refer to useful information section



Waste:

Leftover dishes are frozen in single portions, which are then used for babies that require blended meals or children that can't eat the planned meal for the day due to taste or allergen reasons.

All recyclable packaging is collected by Smart Waste, a local waste disposal company.

Useful Information:

Let's be Sugar Smart (Brighton & Hove) - see www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/health/healthy-lifestyle/sugar-smart-city-what-do-you-think.

Sugar Smart (NHS) - see www.nhs.uk/sugar-smart/home.

Early Years Foundation Stage - see

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/AllPublicationsNoRsg/Page1/DFE-00023-2012>

Eating Well for Under 5's in Child Care, Caroline Walker Trust - Guidance that provides definitive advice on what eating well means for this age group. It provides both nutritional and practical advice to all those who are involved in the early years sector. See www.cwt.org.uk.

Children Eating Well (CHEW) - resources to purchase that illustrate portion sizes for children of different ages. See www.cwt-chew.org.uk.

Food Standards Agency - See www.food.gov.uk.

Little People's Plates - see www.infantandtoddlerforum.org/toddler-portion-sizes.

Healthy Start - Families who are eligible can get free vouchers every week, which you swap for milk, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and infant formula milk. See www.healthystart.nhs.uk.

Off to the Best Start - This leaflet contains information about breastfeeding. See www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_107908.pdf.

Breastfeeding and Work - This leaflet explains how you can breastfeed and work. See www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_082505.

Safe Preparation, Storage and Handling of Powdered Infant Formula - This site provides guidance for health professionals. See www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_063693.pdf.

Bottle feeding - This leaflet contains information on how to make up feeds as safely as possible to reduce the risks of giving formula milk to babies. See www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_100127.pdf.

Weaning - This leaflet contains information on weaning babies. See www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4117080.