

Healthy Eating Policy

We recognise the importance of a healthy diet in children's development. The impact a poor diet has on the health and general wellbeing of children has been well documented. What children eat plays an important part in keeping happy, healthy and growing and developing properly. We will continually strive to promote a healthy life style for the children in our care.

1. Healthy Eating - Water and Drinks

We ensure water and fruit is available for children at all times in all rooms throughout the centre and children are encouraged to drink.

- Other drinks on offer should be full fat milk and diluted fruit juice (recommended 1 to 10 parts water). Fruit juice should only be given at mealtimes.
- All other drinks such as fruit juice drinks, squash, cordial, and milkshake syrups are discouraged.
- Cups with non drip lids should not be used; the sucking method used can delay the development of muscles used for chewing and speaking, and dental cares.
- Staff ensure that children under one year old have appropriate food and fluids to meet their nutritional needs.

2. Healthy Eating - The Food Provided

We provide children and infants in day care with meals and snacks that are healthy, appetizing and that meet their nutritional needs. 3-weekly menus are on display and parents/carers are informed each day via a daily log of what food and what amounts their child has eaten.

- Menus will be planned to meet the minimum food requirements. Menus will be displayed for parents and staff
- A wide range of healthy, additive free food will be available. This should include foods to meet the dietary, religious and cultural requirement of all children including, vegetarian, halal and kosher as appropriate. Children who have dairy free diets should be offered suitable calcium enriched alternatives
- Parents and Carers will be informed of the healthy eating policy from the beginning and consulted on their child's dietary needs regularly. They will be advised if their child is not eating well.
- Parents with children on special diets will be asked to provide details on any special food needs.

We will provide food to children which has been stored, prepared and served in a safe, hygienic manner and to promote hygienic food practices.

- All staff should have an awareness of safe food handling and hygiene and should promote good practice to children by example; e.g. wash their hands before handling food or eating meals and snacks
- Staff receive regular training updates in food hygiene

3. Health Eating – the Ethos and Environment

We provide culturally appropriate foods and an eating environment that promotes family values such as eating together, sharing food, and promoting good communication and table manners. Provide children with learning experiences about food and nutrition:

- All rooms should incorporate food awareness in their Foundation Stage frameworks; in long, medium and short term planning and for their plans for individual children
- Practitioners should set an example by eating the same food as the children and sharing in this social time. Only food available for the children should be consumed during group meal and snack times (with medical exceptions).
- Special occasions such as Birthdays and cultural and religious festivals should be celebrated with the focus on the event rather than sugary and fatty foods; a small cake and fruit is suggested of parents wish to bring in food. Party packs and other 'party foods' will be activity discouraged (see also 'Celebrating Birthdays')
- Practitioners should keep abreast of local and national initiatives to promote healthy life styles, involve other partners to incorporate them in the centre curriculum and provide information for parents and Carers
- The centre and its staff Work with partnership agencies to promote a healthy environment and healthy lifestyles in the Early Years settings to all children and their families.

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