

Nutrition and Food Policy

Link to Every Child Matters: Be Healthy

**Links to the Early Years Foundation Stage: Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements:
Health: Food and Drink 3.45-3.47**

Introduction

The nursery aims to implement the whole setting approach to healthy eating in order to improve the health of children, their families and staff.

We will equip our children with the knowledge, understanding and skills that enable them to make the sort of choices that lead to a healthy lifestyle and develop to their full potential.

In our setting children will be provided with a range of opportunities to learn about food and make healthier food and drink choices.

All the meals served are prepared on the nursery premises and the menus are designed to be low in fat, salt and sugar. The menus are reviewed on a regular basis and have been approved by a dietician. Children have access to fresh fruit on a daily basis. The nursery does not have set times for snacks and fresh drinking water is available throughout the day for the children to help themselves. Children learn about the importance of eating five pieces of fruit and/or vegetables a day. They take part in cooking activities that are linked to the learning experiences given within the setting. Meals and snacks are seen as a fun opportunity to extend children's learning in a social situation. When planning for children's learning, meal and snack times are noted as an area to develop.

Food Co-ordinator

Food provision and our policy for healthy eating and good nutrition is co-ordinated by Kittie Methuen-Jones.

Additionally, the following members of staff are involved in Healthy Eating as part of the Leicestershire Healthy Tots programme:

Emma Ruckley (Stars Room)

Caroline Kay (Rocket room)

Donna Faull (Galaxy Room)

Policy Aims

The main aims of our policy are:

1. To enable healthy food choices through the provision of information and development of appropriate skills and attitudes.
2. To provide healthy, balanced and nutritious food/drink choices throughout the day (or time children are in the setting) and ensure any food brought in from home compliments this.
3. To ensure that all aspects of food and drink promote the health and well being of the children, staff and visitors to our setting.
4. To ensure food is nutritionally appropriate to the age/stage of each child.

Equal Opportunities

We offer a balanced and nutritional menu over the day that takes into account all children's religious and medical needs.

Learning through Food

Within the daily routine of the nursery we offer:

Breakfast, Snack, Lunch, Snack and Tea.

These meal times are interactive with children having a self-help breakfast bar, older children having a self-help snack bar, children helping to prepare snack and seeing the food in its original form or shopping for food for snack times.

Activities are offered regularly with the children such as food tasting, cooking, fruit kebab making and exploring textures of food through play. Encouragement to learn about growth and change of food through planting is explored with the children both indoors and out with planting and growing activities.

As a nursery we value children's learning and development across all aspects of the curriculum and learning about food ignites interests and development within many areas such as Health and Self-care and physical development.

The setting feels that it is essential that good nutrition and learning opportunities around food is embedded in all aspects of food provision and learning over the day and there is consistency in approach across the whole day.

Resources/Teaching

The nursery encourage children to be involved in activities surrounding food and healthy eating from preparing snacks to cooking and role playing with food in their everyday play. The children have access daily to role play scenarios involving food in every room throughout the nursery, are encouraged to prepare and help with snack as well as cooking.

The children will use the community to access shops, greengrocers in order to select foods to use within the nursery for activities and meal times, we have links with dentists and hygiene professionals to encourage healthy eating and hand washing.

The nursery promotes positive attitude towards foods during meal times and has selected round or hexagonal tables to help with social communication during meal times.

Food and Drink throughout the nursery

Food provided at Small World Nursery will be age appropriate and parent/carers will be informed about the food/drink their child has consumed through the completion of their daily diary.

Staff responsible for the preparation and handling of food must be competent to do so. The nursery employs two cooks that prepare the meals served to the children and the practitioners are required to complete a level 2 food hygiene course as soon as possible. (Certificates for these courses can be found on the kitchen door behind the Environmental health information).

Food Play

We ensure any food we use for play with the children is carefully supervised. We will also use the following procedures to ensure children are kept safe:

- Choking hazards are checked and avoided
- We will not use whole jelly cubes for play. If we do use jelly to enhance our play then all jelly will be prepared with water as per the instructions and then used
- Small objects such as dried pasta and pulses will only be used for older children and under supervision
- All allergies and intolerances will be checked and activities will be adapted to suit all children's needs so no child is excluded

- All activities including food will be included on the planning sheets showing all allergens so all staff and parents are aware of the ingredients
- Children's allergies will be visible to staff when placing out food play activities to ensure all needs are met
- Any cooking activities will be checked prior to start to ensure all children are able use all the ingredients based on their individual needs
- We will not use food in play unless it enhances the opportunities children are receiving from the activity. Many of the food will be reused in other activities, especially the dry materials.

Menu Planning

The setting will provide children with a healthy, balanced, nutritious, tasty and varied diet. The menu will be culturally diverse if appropriate.

Menus are planned using the Nutrition for Healthy Tots guidance. The 'menu planning checklists' from the guide are used to ensure menus fulfil all the required criteria.

All children will have food/drink provided suitable for their age/stage of eating. The introduction of a weaning menu ensures the babies under 12 months receive a balance diet that does not exceed daily allowances for inhibited foods such as salt and sugar.

On enrolment, the parents are given a Parents Information Book which has an example of a nursery menu. They are also available on our website, and are displayed outside each room and on the kitchen door.

Nutrition

- All meals and snacks provided are nutritious, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar, salt, additives, preservatives and colouring.
- Menus are planned in advance and food offered is fresh, wholesome and balanced.
- A diet encompassing food from a range of cultures ensures that children from all backgrounds encounter familiar tastes and that all children have the opportunity also to try unfamiliar foods.
- The dietary rules of religious groups and of vegetarians / vegans are known and met in appropriate ways.
- Menus of meals/snacks are displayed for the information of parents
- If a main meal is offered, the following elements are included: protein for growth, carbohydrate for energy, essential minerals and vitamins in raw foods, salads and fruits and healthier unsaturated fats.

Drinks

- Fresh drinking water will be available at all times. For under 3's- the children's cups are accessible so the children can get their own drink from the tray. For the pre-school, water is constantly available via our water fountains and at all times of the day, and children are actively encouraged to help themselves particularly after physical exercise.
- Water, Semi-Skimmed Milk or diluted fruit juice is available at meal times. The fruit juice is diluted to 1 part juice to 10 parts water.
- Full Fat milk is provided for children under the age of one.
- Children under the age of one will have formula milk provided from home.

Breakfast

Breakfast is an important meal that should provide 25% of a child's energy requirement and contributes significantly to their vitamin and mineral requirements.

The breakfast menu includes:

- A Selection of breakfast cereals- Rice Krispies, Cornflakes, Weetabix, Cheerios and Malties.
- White or brown toast.

Morning and/or Afternoon Snacks

We understand that snacks can be an important part of the diet of young children and can contribute positively towards a balanced diet and the daily energy and nutrient needs.

Small World Nursery discourages parents from providing sugary snacks, instead we provide a range of fruit, a starchy snack such as crackers and a protein rich food such as cheese spread.

We ensure the snacks we provide are healthy and nutritious by offering a wide range of fruits and vegetables including familiar fruits and vegetables such as:

Apples, bananas, pears, oranges, cucumber, grapes, carrots, peppers, tomatoes and melon.

As well as introducing unfamiliar fruits such as:

Papaya, kiwi, mango, apricot, cherries, pineapple and Guava.

Nursery Menus/Meals

Food prepared by our catering team is healthy, balanced and nutritious and meets the guidance in the Nutrition for Healthy Tots guide.

As a nursery we encourage food provided by our catering team but understand there may be instances where food is brought from home. We will arrange this in consultation with all involved to ensure that it complements our food ethos.

Healthy options will be available and promoted at meal times. Children/parents/carers will be consulted about food choices where appropriate. Parent/carer(s) questionnaires are given out twice per year and these include a section that invites parents to comment on the food served at nursery including suggestions about food we could serve.

Packed Lunches

On enrolment, parents are given the opportunity to choose whether they would like their child to have a nursery dinner or a packed lunch. If parents choose for their child to have a packed lunch, they are provided with a leaflet about what sort of food their child's packed lunch should contain.

We encourage parents and carers to provide children with packed lunches that complement our healthy food ethos. We ask that, to achieve this, parents use the principles of the 'eatwell plate'. This will ensure children having packed meals have a healthy balanced meal. We also direct parents to the "Change 4 Life" website that includes ideas for healthy packed lunches.

Where parents have chosen to provide a packed lunch instead of a cooked lunch, the nursery will:

- ensure perishable contents of packed lunches are refrigerated or contain an ice pack to keep food cool;
- inform parents of our policy on healthy eating;
- encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based deserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraîche.
- discourage sweet drinks, we will provide children with water or diluted fresh fruit juice;
- discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort;
- provide children bringing packed lunches with plates, cups and cutlery; and
- ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

Use of Food as a Reward/Special Occasions

We do not encourage the regular eating of sweets or other foods high in sugar or fat, especially as a reward for good behaviour, or other achievements. Other methods of positive reinforcement are used.

Equally withholding food will not be used as a punishment.

We encourage diversity around food and encourage everyone to share food customs at special occasions/special festivals.

Rewards

- Children will be rewarded with praise, stars and stickers. Food and sweets will not be used as a reward

Birthdays and Celebrations

- Birthdays will be celebrated in ways that don't involve confectionery, cakes or biscuits, with the exception of a small birthday cake to take account of ethical, religious and medical dietary requirements of children and staff.
- Ideas for culturally appropriate ways to celebrate cultural and religious occasions will be discussed with parents/carers.

Special Dietary Requirements

The setting will provide food in accordance with children's religious beliefs and cultural practices as required.

Allergies / Preferences

We are a nut free setting. We display notices to this effect and clearly state this in our packed lunch guidelines. This is to protect any child or adult who attends who may have a severe allergy to nuts.

In addition to this:

- We obtain necessary information from parents in advance of a child being admitted to the provision, including: the child's special dietary requirements, preferences or food allergies.
- Written parental permission will be requested at the time of the child's admission to the provision, regarding the seeking of any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment in the future.
- All practitioners are fully aware of children who may have allergies, as every room has a copy of all the children with special dietary requirements in their room. Any special requirements are stated on the child's enrolment form that is filled in by the parents and we will work with the family to help provide the child with a healthy, balanced diet.

Special Diets

Vegetarian Diets

A vegetarian option will be provided at meal times every day.

Special Diets- Medical

We recognise that some children may require special diets. In this case parents/carers are asked to make us fully aware of this. Individual care plans/menus need to be created for children with special dietary needs/requirements. These should document symptoms and adverse reactions, actions to be taken in an emergency, and emergency contact details, along with any particular food requirements e.g. for high-energy diets, allergies. Caterers will work closely with parents/carers and where possible meals will be provided. There may be occasions where parents/carers will be asked to provide the meals or food ingredients themselves.

The dietary needs of children are listed with their picture in the food serving areas to ensure all staff that work within that area are fully informed. With our placemats for children these are a traffic light system. A red placemat is used for allergies, yellow placemats are used for preferences and dietary requests and green is used for children who can have everything that is on the menu.

The catering team have detailed lists of the children within the setting that have dietary needs and what these are, to use for when they are preparing the meals.

Food Safety- Milk and Food

Appropriate food safety precautions are taken when milk/food is prepared or stored. These vary depending on the food on offer and include: ensuring that adequate storage and washing facilities are available; that food handlers undergo appropriate food safety and hygiene training; and that suitable equipment and protective clothing are available. Any food safety hazards are identified and controlled. Information is cascaded to everyone who is involved with food related activities in the setting. We have food safety information displayed in the appropriate areas.

Food hygiene matters should be included in staff inductions and on-the-job training and available to all staff.

Infant Milk

The nursery respects and follows the individual preferences of the families that care for babies and the choice of whether they use breast milk and/or formula is supported.

The storage of infant milks are as follows:

For breast milk we follow the Department for Health guidelines of storing the milk in a fridge that is under 4 degrees on the day that it is to be used.

For formula milk the bottles are prepared as the baby needs them by adding the powder to the water (70 degrees or above) and allowing the water to cool. The bottle will be discarded after a period of one hour.

Breastfeeding/Bottle feeding

If mothers are breastfeeding their child, the nursery provides a family room for the mother to come in to feed or to store the expressed breast milk in the fridge. If parents are bottle feeding their child, bottles should be brought in with a measured amount of milk and a sterilised bottle. The feed will be made up as and when needed with water that has been boiled less than half an hour. Any unused milk will be thrown away.

The Food and Eating Environment

The nursery will provide a clean, sociable environment for children to eat their meals. Children will be encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners and will be given plenty of time to eat.

Carers will feed infants and sit with older children while they eat and will provide a good role model for healthy eating. Staff are encouraged to eat with the children either what they are eating or a healthy alternative.

Staff will help to ensure a safe, enjoyable experience at meal/snack times and will be able to encourage healthy eating. The use of praise and encouragement through stickers is used for children who are reluctant to try foods and working closely with parents is important to us as a setting.

Parents/carers will be informed if their child is not eating well, through a daily diary system and/or at hand overs at the end of the child's sessions.

Parents/carers will communicate the stage of eating the child is at when they join the setting and any food preferences will be noted for the individual child through the 'getting to know you booklet' and regular updates during their time with us.

Our food, eating environment, activities and ethos aim to:

- promote healthy lifestyles through healthy eating and drinking
- present consistent, informed healthy eating messages.
- support and encourage good table manners and social eating skills.
- provide a good role model by having carers sit with children while they eat.
- encourage children to exercise healthy choices with regards to eating and drinking
- have supportive staff who encourage children to observe the social rituals of mealtimes including the use of 'please' and 'thank you'.
- work with parents/carers around the provision of healthy food and drinks by making healthy eating information available such as leaflets, posters, policies and websites..

Leading by Example and Staff Training

Early Years Practitioners, assistants and caterers, have a key role in influencing children's knowledge, skills and attitudes about food, so it is important that they are familiar with healthy eating and nutrition guidelines. Any changes to guidelines regarding eating and nutrition will be cascaded to staff through staff training sessions and meetings.

It is essential that staff are committed to setting an example with food in the setting. The nursery staff are encouraged to promote healthy eating at all times and when in contact with children they are not eating unhealthy foods or drinks to ensure that they are good role models. During meal times the staff eat what the children are eating or a healthy alternative.

Training

We will regularly organise opportunities for staff to receive information on healthy eating, oral health, food safety and hygiene, Paediatric first aid training and health and safety.

Food Related Action Plans

As a setting we are aware that we need to ensure healthy and nutritious food is available across the day. The healthy eating criteria must be fulfilled for us to gain Healthy Tots status.

Consultation/Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy has been developed through wide consultation with the whole setting community. The policy and its impact is reviewed on an ongoing basis to reflect guidance. The policy is communicated to the entire community and new families/staff to our setting are made aware of its importance.

Small World Nursery holds a parents evening twice a year and we give out a parents questionnaire to invite parents feedback, including views about the nursery menus. This feedback is then collated and we create action plans to carry forward any suggestions into our development plan.

Legal framework

- Regulation (EC) 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs.

Further guidance

- Safer Food, Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2011)

This policy was adopted by	Small World Nursery
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On	19 th September 2015
Updated on	9 th September 2019
Date to be reviewed	August 2020
Signed on behalf of the provider	
Name and role of signatory	Melanie Whitley (Nursery Manager)