

FOOD FOR LIFE EARLY YEARS

We work to ensure that our food meets the Voluntary Guidelines for Food and Drink in Early Year Settings in England. This means that the type and amount of food served meets the nutritional requirements of the children who eat with us.

Meals and snacks are scheduled at regular times. Snacks served are mini-meals, with components as healthy as mealtime choices. Children are seated when eating meals and snacks.

Portion sizes are age appropriate. We serve small portion sizes as it is better for children to ask for seconds than to serve them too much. This helps children to recognise when they are hungry and when they have eaten enough.

Mealtimes are relaxed, calm and with shared conversation.

We eat with the children at mealtimes and eat similar healthy food. We role-model good manners and eating behaviour, direct conversation, and create a calm and relaxed eating environment.

At the same time we can supervise the children eating. This is important because choking happens quietly and immediate help is vital. Children decide which food they will eat from the food offered.

All food we serve is healthy, so whatever the child chooses will be nutritious. We trust children to know how much they want to eat and allow them to say 'no' to something they dislike. Food is not used as a reward or punishment.

Children are involved in food preparation, setting of the table, serving the food and clearing the table as much as possible. Food is used to support the development of children and they are given opportunities to explore food. Children have the opportunity to be involved in food preparation, such as chopping fruit and spreading crackers.

Children are encouraged and helped to be successful in whatever self-feeding and self-serving they are capable of doing. Food is served in a form that young children can eat with minimum assistance and without choking. Parents are advised how to prepare food to prevent choking and any choking incident occurs it will be recorded on an accident report form and parents will be notified – if choking becomes an ongoing issue for any child we will monitor and refer with parental permission.

Parents are required to provide a nut-free packed lunch which must be colourful and nutritious.

Guidance on this can be given from <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/nutrition>

We tell parents how well their child ate during the day and which foods they particularly enjoyed or tried. Children benefit when parents, carers and staff share information and work together. Our Senco is fully trained in Allergy and intolerance awareness. We rely on parent's input and will cater for any needs. We refer to <https://www.bsaci.org/> to ensure we have a good understanding of specific requirements and an action plan tailored to individual needs. There will be a Paediatric First Aider on hand during every meal time.

We support parents to do the best for their children.

We ask when food is brought from home that it meets the voluntary food and drink guidelines for early year settings. We will promote free Healthy Start vitamins to all pregnant or breastfeeding women and all children up to the age of four. <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>

We aim to provide suitable food for all. Children with special needs have their nutritional requirements taken into account. Our food reflects the ethnicity and cultures of all children attending our setting. We ask parents for advice to ensure the needs of all children are met, and we learn from parents' experiences and suggestions.

Special occasions and birthdays are celebrated with healthy food or non-food treats.

If food is used for celebrations it forms part of a balanced meal provision and does not replace healthy foods.

Only healthy drinks are provided. Water and milk are the best drinks for children's teeth and bodies. Drinks are offered in an open cup and we discourage bottles with teets or dummies upon starting nursery.