

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health

Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.

6.5 Food and drink



Policy statement

We regard snack and lunch times as an important part of our day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults, and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We promote healthy eating and aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs.

Procedures

We follow these procedures to promote healthy eating in our setting.

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we ask their parents about their dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (See the Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies Policy.)
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in the Registration Form.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs – including any allergies - are up-to-date.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all our staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences, as well as their parents' wishes.
- We plan snack menus in advance.
- We display the snack menus for parents to view and post them on our website.
- We provide nutritious food for all snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We include a variety of foods from the four main food groups:
 - protein
 - dairy foods;
 - grains, cereals and starch vegetables; and
 - fruit and vegetables.
- We include foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- We are a nut free zone and take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and we are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.

- Through discussion with parents and research reading, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, as well as about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.
- We show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. We do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy.
- We organise snack and lunch times so that they are social occasions in which children and adults participate.
- We use snack and lunch times to help children to develop independence through making choices, helping themselves to the snack and drink and feeding themselves.
- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and that take account of the eating practices in their cultures.
- We have fresh drinking water constantly available for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.
- In accordance with parents' wishes, we offer children arriving early in the morning, and/or staying late, an appropriate snack.
- We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in our setting.
- We give parents who provide food for their children information about suitable containers for food.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- We provide semi-skimmed milk to use on cereal and to drink at snack times.

Packed lunches

We:

- Inform parents to ensure perishable contents of packed lunches 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. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water.
- 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;
- ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion and the children have the support of the adult with opening products.

Birthday celebrations

Children should be able to celebrate their birthdays, in accordance with their culture/beliefs. We sing happy birthday to the children on their birthdays and ask them to wear a birthday hat, unless religious/cultural beliefs suggest otherwise. We do not allow children to give out sweets or food items during pre-school sessions, due to allergies/dietary requirements.

Wraparound care

The above policy also applies to those who attend any of the wraparound sessions provided by Pippin Pre-School.

Legal framework

- Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs.

Further guidance

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

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

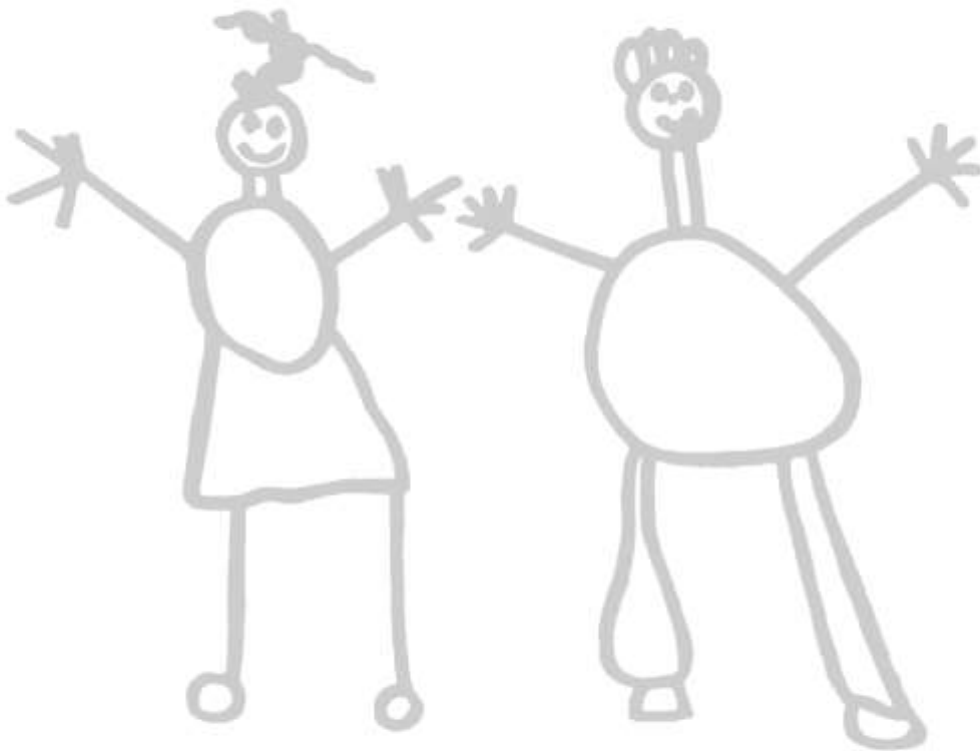
- Nutritional Guidance for the Under Fives (Ed. 2010)
- The Early Years Essential Cookbook (2009)
- Healthy and Active Lifestyles for the Early Years (2012)



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