

# Healthy eating Policy

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# Policy

**Title:** Healthy eating

**From:** Early Years Centre

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017

At the Early Years Centre, we recognise that diet is crucial to children's health and wellbeing and supports their ability to maintain focus and develop accordingly.

We believe that it is very important to establish good eating habits early in life and we aim to provide nutritious, healthy, balanced food, which meets the children's' individual dietary requirements. We avoid serving foods with large quantities of sugar, salt, additives, preservatives and colourings.

Snacks, lunches and high teas are planned and supplied by the University catering services. They use the Southampton Nutrition Checklist to ensure that meals on offer are nutritious and tasty and provide a balanced diet appropriate to the age of the children. No additional salt is used when preparing cooked foods. Dietary requirements for individual children are discussed with parents/carers before the child starts at the Centre.

To promote healthy eating at the Early Years Centre we will:-

- Provide healthy food and drink options throughout the extended day.
- Provide for individuals' needs (cultural, ethical and medical).

We will record information about each child's dietary needs on their registration records and parents sign to signify that it is correct. We will regularly consult with the parents to ensure that our records of their child's dietary needs, (including allergies and religious beliefs) are kept up-to-date and are correct. The dietary requirements of religious groups and vegetarians/vegans will be met in appropriate ways. We provide a vegetarian/vegan meal every day for children who are not allowed meat or fish. In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another. We have different coloured plates which are used at lunch time so staff can easily see which children have an allergy e.g.: Green plate is vegetarian/vegan; Red plate is for normal meal. We display current information about individual children's dietary needs, including a photograph, so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them. We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies.

- Staff act as positive role models by eating with the children and actively encouraging the children to try new foods.
- We encourage parents to improve their knowledge of the benefits of healthy eating and how a healthy diet can be achieved. This is done through displays, newsletters, leaflets, events and workshops that invite them to observe and or work with their children on Healthy eating themes that promote the key healthy eating messages.
- Encourage the children's understanding of not wasting food.
- We support the promotion and practice of breastfeeding and baby led weaning.
- Parents can supply breakfast for their child and this will be served until 8.30am. We encourage parents to supply cereals that are lower than 15g of sugar per 100g of product in order to meet the food based standards for the Southampton healthy early years award.

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- 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 parent's wishes.
- We provide snacks, lunch and an afternoon tea that meets the nutritional requirements of the Southampton healthy Early Years award food based standards.
- We display the meal menus for the parents' information on a notice board.
- We provide a variety of foods from the four main food groups e.g.:- meat, fish and protein alternatives, dairy foods, fruit and vegetables, grains and cereals.
- We take great care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- We use meal and snack times to help children develop independence through making choices, serving drinks and feeding themselves.
- We provide children with appropriate utensils that are appropriate for their age and stages of development.
- 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.
- For children who drink milk, we provide one third of a pint of whole pasteurised milk for children aged 12 months to 2 years or semi skimmed pasteurised milk for children over 2 years.
- For all children under one we provide parents with daily written information about feeding routines, intake and preferences.
- The menu of meals and snacks is displayed in a prominent position for parent's information.
- When preparing food with children as a cooking activity, we will keep sweet foods to a maximum of once in every four cooking activities. A variety of dishes are cooked including healthy breakfasts, main meals, snacks and desserts.
- We provide nutritious food for all meals and snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- Quantities offered take account of the ages of the children and extra servings of starch and fruits and vegetables are available.
- The dining environment is welcoming, clean, promotes healthy eating and positive social interaction and adequate time is given to eat food.
- We work closely with parents / carers to ensure consistency of approach between home and the centre. When children start with us, we explain our principles and share our policies with parents
- We do not use food as a reward or the withholding of food as a punishment. It is important for healthy eating habits that children do not develop such associations with food.
- We plan in line with the EYFS for the children's activities that demonstrate opportunities to learn about: food, growing, healthy eating, the importance of drinking water, healthy cooking, healthy teeth, washing hands, food tasting, and food from different cultures.

# Policy

Parents will be made aware of the new legislation from the 'Food Standards Agency' which relates to 14 Allergens. A poster will be displayed daily informing the parents of the foods the children will be given and what if any allergens are included in each meal.

For more information please follow the link below

<http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/allergy-guide/allergen-resources>