

**Food, drink and Oral Health**

**Policy statement**

Our provision regards snack and meal 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 and oral health. At snack time we 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.
* We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs – including any allergies - are up-to-date.
* We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
* We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
* We have drinks bottles, provided by parents, available for the children at all times. Children are regularly encouraged to have a drink especially in hot weather or after physical activity.
* In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.

***Packed lunches***

Within the setting children who attend an afternoon session are required to bring packed lunches, we:

* Suggest packed lunches contain an ice pack to keep food cool during warm weather.
* Provide parents with healthy eating advice and support in a constructive way if required or requested. This includes encouraging parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit and a milk based deserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraîche. If a child has a sweet treat we encourage the child to eat this at the end of the meal.
* We discourage (but do not ban) sweet drinks and can provide children with water.
* Ensure staff sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

**Dental Hygiene**

Recent research shows that 25% of five-year-olds in England had experienced tooth decay. Tooth decay is not only painful but will affect the child’s sleeping, socialising and school attendance. Oral health is included in our curriculum (Physical development- Health and Wellbeing) and we provide many opportunities for learning through-out the day e.g., when washing babies encourage the children to clean the babies’ teeth, having the dental kit out in the role play area and having books available that refer to dental visits. In addition to this we will include oral hygiene in our planning weeks such a ‘smile week’ and community hero’s- inviting a dentist or dental nurse into the setting.

We will provide families with information on oral hygiene regularly through newsletters, facebook and e mail. This will include advice on healthy lunchboxes and drinks. If we have concerns, we will work with the parents to address these.

We will promote healthy eating within the setting including providing healthy and varied snack choices. We will provide Milk and Water at snack time.

We support staff to train in promoting good oral health

Further information and support can be found on the website

www.stop-the-rot.co.uk.

NHS Eatwell guide

-https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide