

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 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. We promote healthy eating using group meal times, adult interactions and modelling. At snack and meal times, 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. (See the Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies Policy.)
- The parent is asked to record information about each child's dietary needs on their Family account.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs – including any allergies - are up-to-date. This is recorded on Family which parents have constant access to.
- 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 display the menus of meals/snacks for parents to view.
- 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 include a variety of foods from the four main food groups:
 - meat, fish and protein alternatives;
 - 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 take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and we are especially vigilant where we have a child or staff 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 provide a vegetarian alternative on days when meat or fish are offered and make every effort to ensure Halal meat or Kosher food is available for children who require it.
- 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 meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and adults participate.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food 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 meal or 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.

Packed lunches

Where we cannot provide cooked meals and children are required to bring packed lunches, we:

- Ensure parents are asked to use an ice pack for perishable contents of packed lunches;
- inform parents of our policy on healthy eating;
- inform parents that we do not have facilities to microwave cooked food brought from home;
- encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based deserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraîche, where we can only provide cold food from home. We do not allow drinks, we provide children with milk and 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;
- 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.

Bottles

Where a child is taking formula milk

-parents provide bottles each day

-parents provide either ready made formula in single serve containers or sterile water and measured out formula powder in a sealed separate container for staff to prepare in nursery

- bottles and milk are stored in labeled containers in room with the child's name clearly visible

- bottles are made up at the times suggested by parent or at a time the staff feel is necessary
- a bottle warmer is used to heat milk if necessary and this is done away from children's reach
- where a bottle has been heated, staff test the temperature of the milk on their skin before giving it to a baby
- prepared milk is used immediately and if not consumed it is dispose of immediately
- staff assist babies with feeding and never leave a baby to self feed with a bottle

Where a child is taking Breastmilk

- parents provide bottles each day
- parents provide expressed breastmilk in the bottle and it is stored in the fridge in a container with the child's name clearly visible
- bottles are made up at the times suggested by parent or at a time the staff feel is necessary
- a bottle warmer is used to heat milk if necessary and this is done away from children's reach
- where a bottle has been heated, staff test the temperature of the milk on their skin before giving it to a baby
- prepared milk is used immediately and if not consumed it is dispose of immediately
- staff assist babies with feeding and never leave a baby to self feed with a bottle

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)

This policy was adopted by	Peekaboo Childcare	<i>(name of provider)</i>
On	11/1/21	<i>(date)</i>
Date to be reviewed	11/1/22	<i>(date)</i>
Signed on behalf of the provider		
Name of signatory	Alexandra Morton	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Managing Director	

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)