

03 Food Safety and Nutrition Procedures

03.2 Food for Play & Cooking Activities

Our Approach

At Peekaboo Childcare, we sometimes use food during sensory play and cooking activities because it helps children learn through touch, exploration and creativity. We always make sure activities are safe, hygienic and respect each family's needs and beliefs.

★ Respecting Cultural, Religious & Personal Beliefs

Some families may prefer their child not to use food in play. This may be for cultural, religious or personal reasons (for example Muslim, Jewish, Rastafarian, vegetarian or vegan families).

We also understand that using food for play may feel inappropriate during times of financial hardship, so we remain sensitive to this.

Food We May Use for Play

These items may be used in sensory or creative activities:

- Dough (only cooked playdough)
- Cornflour (always mixed with water)
- Pasta
- Rice
- Food colourings/flavourings

✗ We do NOT use:

- Jelly cubes
- Raw pulses (poisonous and choking risk)
- Raw flour

Food used for play is always stored separately from food used for meals.

⚠ Allergy & Safety Checks

Before any food-based activity we:

- ✓ Check children's individual allergy records
- ✓ Follow all 14 major allergen guidelines
- ✓ Update and display allergy information for staff
- ✓ Closely supervise children to prevent choking or accidental eating

If any child is likely to mouth or eat the materials, we provide a safe alternative.

Hygiene Rules for Food Play

To keep everyone safe:

- Cornflour is always mixed with water first
- Cooked pasta, cornflour mixtures and cooked food used for play are thrown away the same day
- Utensils are washed thoroughly
- Food play activities are stopped during any illness outbreaks

Play food is kept for a very short time and replaced when needed to avoid bacteria.

Playdough & Flour Safety (Important Update)


According to new government & FSA guidance:

All flour is raw until cooked — even cornflour.
Raw flour can contain E. coli.

This means:

 Allowed:

- Cooked playdough only
- Heat-treated / pre-cooked flours
- Cornflour mixed safely with water

 Not allowed:

- Raw flour
- Uncooked flour playdough recipes
- Any flour-based play for children who may eat it- alternative can be provided

Children and staff must wash hands before and after using playdough.

Cooking Activities With Children

Cooking is a lovely learning experience and we keep it safe by ensuring:

- ✓ All allergies/intolerances are checked first
- ✓ Hands are washed at the start and after toilet use, nose blowing or coughing
- ✓ Tables are cleaned and wiped

- ✓ Children use clean tools (bowls, boards, spoons, jugs etc.)
- ✓ Food is kept covered when cooling
- ✓ Any cooked food going home is placed in a paper food bag and refrigerated

Flour in baking

We *do* use flour in baking because the food is fully cooked, which makes it safe. Children must not taste raw mixtures and activities are always supervised.

Cleaning & Safety After Activities

- All equipment is washed
- Any used food is disposed of safely
- Surfaces are cleaned
- Hands are washed

We stop any food play immediately if children are unwell or if there is an outbreak.