



Food from Home and Healthy Eating Policy

At Little explorers Preschool, we are committed to ensuring that all children, including those with allergies, special dietary needs or requirements, can enjoy their meals safely. Contamination of allergens can have severe and life threatening consequences. To prevent food related accidents, we have a Food and Nutrition Policy in place. Staff are trained in allergy awareness and follow the policies in place.

We aim to help develop an awareness in children, parents and staff that the preschool takes a proactive approach to healthy eating and we will encourage habits in childhood that can influence health and well being in later life.

Food brought in from home

We have a regulatory obligation to encourage healthier food choices for packed lunches. With this in mind, we have guidelines in place to support healthy eating and keep children safe.

- Snack must be a piece of fresh fruit or vegetable item
- All food served to children must be prepared in a way to prevent choking (see poster at end of policy)
- We do not have refrigeration so lunch boxes **must** contain an ice pack
- Lunchbox, snack items and drinks **must** be clearly labelled
- We will not reheat any food items
- All food brought from home will be checked for risk of choking and potential allergens
- No sweets
- Water or squash only in bottles please
- Foods will be sent home if not suitable
- Food and Allergy Questionnaire must be completed and kept up to date

Food Allergies, Choking and Restricted Foods

To protect children with allergies and to minimise the risk of choking the following foods must not be included in packed lunches

Allergies

- **Peanuts and tree nuts**(eg: almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashews, peanut butter or nut containing spreads)
- **Crustaceans and shellfish**(eg: prawns, crayfish. Mussels, clams, squid etc)
- **Sesame seeds and sesame based products**
- **Kiwi fruit**
- **Children are not permitted to swap foods**

Choking

- **Popcorn**
- **Marshmallows**
- **All food that might cause a choking risk**(eg: grapes, cherry tomatoes, blueberries) **must be cut up in line with the poster at the end of policy**

Restricted foods

- **Any food that requires reheating**
- **Rice dishes**
- **Fizzy drinks**
- **Sweets**

If your child's lunch box contains any of the above items they will be sent back home.

Healthy Eating Guidelines

- A piece of fruit or vegetable item should be provided for snack time

- A variety of healthy and balanced foods should be included in your child's lunchbox, further ideas can be found here www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes
- Lunchboxes should contain a balanced
- Sugary treats such as cakes, chocolate and biscuits should be limited to one a day
- We will only offer water to drink, please provide enough squash for the day if this is all your child will drink
- Further guidance on healthy eating can be found on the NHS Eatwell guide

Special Diets and Exemptions

We recognise that some children may have a special diet or do not allow for the guidelines to be met. Please discuss any extra needs with us. If your child has a medically verified diet, we will work together to create an individual health care plan.

Early years food choking hazards



Below is a table of advice on key foods for care givers who are involved with preparing and serving food for babies and young children (under 5 years old)

| Vegetable and fruits | Advice |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pips or stones in fruit | Always check beforehand and remove hard pips or stones from fruit. |
| Small fruits | Cut small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, into small pieces: cut lengthways and then again cut them in halves (quarters). |
| Large fruits and firm fruits | Cut large fruits like melon and firm fruits like apple into slices instead of small chunks. For very young children, consider grating or mashing firm fruits, or softening them up by steaming or simmering. |
| Vegetables | Cut vegetables like carrots, cucumber and celery into narrow batons. For very young children consider grating or mashing firm vegetables and legumes like butter beans, chickpeas and tofu, or softening them up by steaming or simmering. |
| Skin on fruit and vegetables | Consider removing the skin from fruit and vegetables, especially for very young children. Peeled fruit and vegetables can be swallowed more easily. |
| Cooking fruit and vegetables | Consider softening firm fruit and vegetables (such as carrots, broccoli, yam and apples) by steaming or simmering until soft. Serve cut into slices or narrow batons. |
| Meat and fish | Advice |
| Sausages and hot dogs | Cut sausages and hot dogs into short strips. Cut them in half and then lengthways or as thinly as possible. Peeling the skin off the sausages helps them to be swallowed more easily. |
| Meat or fish | Remove bones from meat or fish. Cut meat into strips as thinly as possible. Remove skin and fat from meat and fish, it will help the food pass smoothly down the throat. |
| Cheese | Advice |
| Grate or cut cheese | Grate or cut cheese into short strips. Cut lumps of cheese as narrow as possible. |
| Nuts and seeds | Advice |
| Chop or flake whole nuts | Chop or flake whole nuts, peanuts and seeds. Whole nuts should not be given to children under five years old. |
| Bread | Advice |
| White bread and other breads | White bread can form a ball shape with a dough-like texture at the back of a child's throat, if not chewed properly. Brown bread or toasted white bread are good alternatives. Cut bread, chapatis, naan bread and other breads into narrow strips. |
| Snacks and other foods | Advice |
| Popcorn | Do not give babies and young children popcorn. |
| Chewing gum and marshmallows | Do not give babies and young children chewing gum or marshmallows. |
| Peanut butter | Do not give babies and young children peanut butter on its own, only use as a spread. |
| Jelly cubes | Do not give babies and young children raw jelly cubes. |
| Boiled sweets and ice cubes | Do not give babies and young children boiled, hard, gooey, sticky or cough sweets, or ice cubes. |
| Raisins and other dried fruits | Do not give babies under the age of 1 whole raisins or dried fruits. Cut them into small pieces. |

Make sure food is prepared appropriately for children under 5 years old, see: <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/>

It is also advisable that care givers are familiar with how to respond to a choking incident, see: How to stop a child from choking: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-stop-a-child-from-choking/>

and How to resuscitate a child: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-resuscitate-a-child/>