

# Healthy Eating Policy

"Good health in the early years helps to safeguard health and wellbeing throughout life. It is important that children develop healthy habits when they first learn about food and activity" (Early Years Foundation Stage, DfES, 2008)

## **Statement/Aims:**

At The Community Playgroups we encourage children to develop a positive attitude to food and healthy lifestyles. This is achieved through adopting a whole setting approach which encompasses children, their families and staff.

## **Introduction**

This policy recognises that children under the age of 5 years have different nutritional needs to those of older children and adults. They have a high energy and nutrient requirement in relation to their size. Healthy eating messages aimed at adults are not wholly appropriate for children in early years. Early years is an important time to shape food preferences and habits, by allowing children to make their own selections through guided choice, this can have a positive impact on health in later life.

This policy covers general nutrition guidance; children have individual needs which should be acknowledged. If parents/carers have any concerns they should discuss these with their Health Visitor, GP or a dietician.

N.B. points identified with (EYFS) are linked to statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage which sets the legal requirements relating to learning, development and welfare of children from birth to five.

## **General**

Those responsible for food preparation and handling of food must be competent to do so (EYFS) and will have the appropriate food hygiene/safety qualifications.

Information must be made available to parents/carers regarding food and drinks provided for the children (EYFS) e.g. Menus will be displayed for parents/carers to see, including a list of allergens in the food provided.

If parents provide packed lunches or other foods from home, the playgroup will inform them about what can be transported and stored safely and about appropriate food content (EYFS).

Staff will be good role models for healthy eating.

Whole nuts will not be served due to risk of choking and because of potential allergies.

### **Allergies, Food Preferences and Special Diets**

The setting will obtain and record necessary information from parents/carers regarding any ethnic, cultural or special dietary requirements, preferences or food allergies in advance of the child being admitted to the playgroup. This will be reviewed during attendance at the playgroup (EYFS).

### **Nutrition**

The setting will provide healthy snacks and drinks (EYFS). A starchy carbohydrate, fruit or vegetables, and milk or water will be offered every day. No salt or sugar will be added to foods and foods high in salt will not be served. Snacks will be low in sugar - No cakes or confectionary will be offered at snack time to reduce the risk of dental decay; however, on occasion raisins or biscuits will be offered as a treat. Suitable snacks include fresh fruit, natural yoghurt, vegetable sticks with dips, sandwiches, toast, crumpets, and crackers etc.

### **Snack Time**

Playgroup staff will pro-actively involve children at snack times to create a social occasion which provides opportunities to promote children's social and educational development as well as encourage good eating habits and manners. Fussy eaters will be encouraged (but not forced) to eat. Praise will be given when the child eats, food will be removed without judgement if the child refuses food.

### **Drinks**

Children will have access to drinking water at all times (EYFS). Children will be offered semi-skimmed milk or water at snack time. The only drinks provided throughout the session will be milk and water.

## Lunch Club

Packed lunches must be supplied by parents and carers for lunch club. Children will be encouraged to eat their sandwiches first, followed by their fruit. We do ask that parents and carers refrain from putting chocolate, fizzy drinks, energy drinks or crisps in their child's packed lunch. A sandwich, yoghurt, piece of fruit or vegetable sticks, and a drink is sufficient. We also ask that parents do not provide their children with chocolate spread or jam sandwiches. If you require further guidance on items to put into your child's packed lunch, please see the playgroup leader.

## **Celebrations and Rewards**

Children will be rewarded without the use of confectionary or other foods e.g. praising children, stickers, reward charts, certificates etc. The setting will encourage staff to be innovative in the way birthdays and festivals are celebrated e.g. without the use of foods which are high in added sugar and salt.

Where birthday cakes and party bags are brought into the setting, the playgroup will take into account possible allergies and special dietary requirements of other children and these will be sent home with the child at the end of the session with the parents or carers. Parents and carers will be consulted over appropriate ways to celebrate ethnic or cultural and religious occasions.

## **Breastfeeding**

The setting will support breastfeeding mothers by:

- Ensuring breastfeeding mothers are made welcome and are able to breastfeed their child in the playgroup.
- Encouraging parents to bring expressed breast milk into the setting, this should be transported in a cool bag, clearly labelled with the name of the child, date and time. Breast milk should be stored in accordance to the latest guidelines. Two members of staff should check that the expressed breast milk is given to the relevant child.