

## 027: Packed Lunch Policy

To maintain healthy development and growth children need to eat a nutritionally well balanced diet. As an Early Years setting we are in a strong position to influence and can contribute significantly to improving the health and well-being of your child. Good nutrition in early childhood can help to prevent a variety of health problems, both in the short term and later in life. There is increasing concern that many children are consuming too much fat, sugar and salt and too little fibre, fruit and vegetables.

Our aim is to share information with parents around the content of a healthy packed lunch and the balance of food groups that should be provided in a packed lunch.

As a Centre we hope to positively promote the health and wellbeing of every child. We aim to support your child to foster a healthy attitude to food and work with you to ensure your child benefits from a balanced diet. Your child requires a balanced diet that includes daily intake of food groups; carbohydrates, fruit and vegetables, protein, dairy and good fats that is low in sugar, salt and excess fat.

A child's packed lunch should be based on the 'Eatwell Plate' model which shows items the 5 main food groups; (Food Standards Agency 2007).

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/the-eatwell-guide.aspx>

**Bread, Rice, Potatoes, Pasta** - these starchy foods are a healthy source of energy. Packed lunches should include 2 or more portions.

**Fruit and Vegetables** - these foods provide vitamins, minerals and fibre. Lunches should include at least 1 portion of fruit and 1 portion of vegetables / salad, or more.

**Milk and Dairy foods** - these foods provide calcium for healthy bones and teeth. Include 1 portion at lunch

**Meat, Fish, Eggs, Beans, Pulses** - these foods provide protein for growth. Packed lunches should include 1 portion of these foods

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### Drinks

Any drinks provided in lunch boxes should only include either plain water, milk (semi-skimmed), unsweetened fresh fruit juice, diluted fresh fruit juice, fruit or dairy based smoothies.

Guidelines recommend it is important not to fill up on too many foods that are high in fat and / or sugar at the expense of other more nutritious foods. Limiting high fat and sugar foods will help protect your child from becoming overweight as well as helping prevent tooth decay, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.

Sweets, chocolate, crisps, cereal bars, fruit bars, toffee/salted popcorn, squash and fizzy drinks will not provide your child with a healthy diet and must not be include in the packed lunch. Other foods and drinks high in fat and / or sugar must not be included.

To ensure consistency and to ensure a packed lunch is in line with Food Agency standards, upholds our pescatarian values, ensures other children are not exposed to potential life threatening allergens and does not pose any choking hazards to your child or any other child, packed lunches **MUST NOT** contain the following:

- Meat or meat products
- Nuts or nut products
- Fizzy / sugary drinks in cartons, bottles or cans
- Chocolate-coated products / sweets / confectionary
- Chocolate spread as a filling for sandwiches
- Chewing gum
- Sugared / toffee and salted popcorn
- Whole uncut round foods; grapes, cherries, blueberries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to provide daily information around the allergens present within any homemade foods placed in a packed lunch. Please find details of the 14 major allergens here-<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/top-allergy-types.pdf>

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It is the responsibility of parents/carers to supply an appropriate packed lunch container where food items can be stored securely.

The Centre does not have storage areas for packed lunches for nursery aged children; parents are required to bring the packed lunch to the Centre at 11.30am or 2.45pm in time for our meal routines.

This packed lunch policy fits within a wider context of promoting a whole Centre approach to food, nutrition and healthy eating.

As part of our additional services and provisions policy Bright Beginnings will provide the meals and snacks offered during the sessions your child attends. All meals are Pescatarian. Pescatarian meals and snacks do not include meat products but do include fish and eggs. The Centre provides a snack breakfast, toast or cereal, lunch (2 courses, savoury and sweet) and a two course light tea (savoury and sweet). A variety of fresh fruit, vegetables and water is also offered to children. Full details of the food we offer during the day as part of our additional services is available on our food and nutrition policy.

<b>Reviewed by</b>	Angela Hynes
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