

Whole setting approach to food and healthy eating

EYFS Nutrition Guidance April 2025 - Good nutrition in the early years is crucial for setting the foundations for a lifetime of good health. From September 2025, providers will be required to have regard to the new nutrition guidance, meaning they must take it into account and should follow it unless there is good reason not to.

Our setting

- Children have the choice of milk or water at snack times
- Parents provide pack lunches. Guidance is given on portion control and balance meals when they start our setting.
- Parents provide 2 snacks a day. 1 for morning and 1 for afternoon. Snacks are fruit or vegetables. Parents are discouraged from sending in confectionary as a snack or treat. Guidance is given to parents on pouches.
- Parents are given chocking guidance when they start our setting. Fruit is prepared according to this guidance. If not prepared, staff ensure it is done before giving it to the children.
- All staff have Paediatric First Aid.
- Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day. Staff inform children how to obtain the drinking water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.
- Meal and snack times are organised as social occasions.
- At special events we ensure portions are appropriate for child's size and appetite. We continually monitor to ensure they get enough energy and nutrients. We start meals with small servings with options to have more.
- We avoid making children finish everything on their plate or eat more than they want to.
- We avoid offering rewards for children for finishing everything on their plate e.g. Stickers or dessert
- Children who are showing signs of 'strong food preferences, or aversions to food' are not forced to eat anything they do not want to.
- Staff recognise the signs that a child has had enough and remove uneaten food without comment.
- Children are not made to stay at the table after others have left if they refuse to eat certain items of food.
- Fresh drinking water is available at all times and easily accessible.
- Sugary drinks are not served.

Linking food with learning

- Sensory play - Through open-ended exploration of materials and their properties, it allows children to use their natural curiosity and engage their senses at the developmental stage right for them. They learn cognitive skills while they exercise motor, language, and social skills.
- Cooking - The children explore a culinary (cooking) experience. We look at recipe cards, talking about amounts of ingredients and the five main food types / healthy options as well as having fun cooking different food every week. Cooking is a fantastic activity to do with young children: they can learn and practise a wide range of skills, and it gives them an understanding of food and where it all comes from. It is one of the most fun, therapeutic and interactive activities. The children develop a healthy relationship with food and get to take their cooking home.

- Fruit and vegetable patch - Growing is an area of great fascination for children and offers much experience of “learning by doing” alongside physical activity, collaboration, talk, healthy eating and the foundation of lifelong positive attitudes. Young children are very curious to learn about the environment that surrounds them, and being in the garden provides the opportunity to explore different smells, senses and tastes. It also shows them how to care for our planet. Growing food helps young children understand what good food is, how it grows, and that it tastes delicious. It creates a sense of community from working together.

Inclusiveness and cultural responsiveness

- All staff show sensitivity in providing for children’s diets, allergies and cultural or ethnic food preferences. A child’s diet or allergy is never used as a label for the child, they are not made to feel ‘singled out’ because of their diet, allergy or cultural/ethnic food preferences.
- Staff discuss and record children’s dietary needs, allergies and any ethnic or cultural food preferences with their parents/carers. A child’s special dietary requirements are recorded on registration to the setting and information is shared with all staff.
- Up-to-date information about individual children’s dietary needs is displayed so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed.
- All staff have training on allergies, intolerances and dietary requirements.

Working with parents

- Staff work in partnership with parents/carers to support them with children who are showing signs of ‘food preference or aversion’ and sign post them to further advice, for example, How to Manage Simple Faddy Eating in Toddlers (Infant & Toddler Forum)
<https://infantandtoddlerforum.org/health-and-childcare-professionals/factsheets/>
- Managers send out guidance on portion control, balanced diets, allergies and intolerances and oral health and choking when children first start nursery.
- On special occasions such as birthdays, parents can bring in something from home but in appropriate portion sizes. If a large cake, staff will cut into appropriate portion size to send home. Parents have the choice whether to accept the treat to give to their child. A healthy alternative to cake or sweets are recommended.

Useful Links

[BBC One - Panorama, The Truth about Baby Food Pouches](#)
[Information for parents](#)
[Better Health - Start for Life](#)
[Feeding, weaning, and healthy eating | Worcestershire County Council](#)
[Best Start Worcestershire](#)
[Preparing Food Safely](#)
[EYFS Nutrition Guidance April 2025](#)
[Eatwell Guide](#)
[Early Years Food Choking Hazards](#)
[How To Resuscitate A Child](#)
[Appropriate Food Preparation - Weaning](#)