



Guidance

Nutrition and Oral Health Award for Carers of the Under 5's



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AWARD INTRODUCTION

Children's early years provide an important foundation for their future health and strongly influence many aspects of well-being. Children's food preferences and eating habits are also formed early in life with consequences for a range of health and development outcomes in later life. It is therefore important that the food provided in early years settings provides appropriate amounts of energy and nutrients and supports development of healthy eating habits in young children, both to support individual children's growth and development, and as part of national priorities to reduce childhood obesity and ensure every child has the best start in life.

A healthy, balanced diet and regular physical activity are essential for children's health and wellbeing. Good nutrition is important for children to:

- ensure they get the right amount of energy and nutrients needed to support growth, development, health and well-being
- ensure they do not consume too many calories, which may lead to overweight or obesity
- encourage children to eat a wide range of foods and develop healthy eating habits to take with them into later childhood and beyond.

Healthy eating is essential for proper growth and development in childhood. It is also important for the development of good oral health. It is important that children have healthy teeth and that good oral health behaviours are introduced in their early years. Promoting breastfeeding and establishing good nutritional behaviours in early years is the foundation in ensuring children have good oral and general health. Good oral health helps children to eat a varied diet, is important for their speech and language development, gives them confidence to smile and interact with others, contributes to general health and well-being and is essential for school readiness and education.

These guidelines (taken from Example Menus for Early Years Settings in England: Part 1: Guidance - Public Health England 2017) have therefore been produced to ensure a good standard of nutrition is provided for all children who attend childcare in Tameside and to ensure they grow healthily and to help ensure a healthy weight.

Tameside childcare providers can apply for the Nutrition and Oral Health Award for Carers of the Under 5's. This is a joint award which recognises good practice by carers of the under 5's developed by the Children's Nutrition Team and Public Health, Tameside Council.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE NUTRITION AND ORAL HEALTH AWARD FOR CARERS OF THE UNDER 5'S

Aim

To ensure that childcare providers in Tameside meet National and Local Food, Nutrition and Oral Health guidelines.

Objectives

- To reward childcare providers who promote good standards of nutrition and oral health.
- To promote childcare providers who have gained the award on relevant websites, in local press etc.
- To offer the Nutrition and Oral Health Award to all childcare providers across Tameside.
- To provide continual support to childcare providers who have gained the award.
- To evaluate the award and the award criteria in consultation with relevant agencies e.g. parents, children, Early Years Team, Public Health, Tameside Council.

Expected Outcomes

- Increase in childcare providers demonstrating evidence of meeting Tameside's Food, Nutrition and Oral Health Guidelines (based on School Food Trust Voluntary Food and Drink Guidelines for Early Years Settings in England and National Caroline Walker Trust Guidelines).
- Increase in childcare providers providing meals and snacks in line with current government dietary recommendations for infants and children aged six months to four years
- Increase in childcare providers demonstrating evidence of healthy eating policies involving staff, parents and children.
- Reduction in overweight and obese children in Reception and Year 6.
- Reduction in tooth decay in 5-year-old children.



WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA TO ACHIEVE A NUTRITION AND ORAL HEALTH AWARD FOR CARERS OF THE UNDER 5'S?

In order to achieve an award, a childcare provider needs to provide:

- **Meals and snacks of a good nutritional standard which meet evidence based healthy eating/oral health guidelines.**
- **A written food/oral health policy with involvement from staff, parents and children.**
- **A written copy of their cycle of menus.**
- **Promote regular play and physical activity.**
- **Promote evidence based weaning practices.**
- **Educational food/oral health related activities as part of learning programme.**
- **To provide meals for children with special needs e.g. particular dietary requirements.**
- **Staff are encouraged to attend Early Years Food, Nutrition and Oral Health Training. This training is run regularly by the Children's Nutrition Team and Public Health, Tameside Council.**

If you wish to apply for an award, please contact one of the team:

Children's Nutrition Team: childrensnutrition@tgh.nhs.uk / 0161 366 2349

Health Improvement Officer: Oral Health lynn.callaghan@tameside.gov.uk / 0161 342 5741



GUIDELINES INTRODUCTION

Children’s food preferences and eating habits are formed early in life with consequences for a range of health and development outcomes in later life. It is therefore important that the food offered in early years settings provides appropriate amounts of energy and nutrients and encourages the development of healthy eating habits in young children, both to support appropriate growth and development, and as part of national priorities to reduce childhood obesity and ensure every child has the best start in life.

To support healthier food provision in early years settings in line with current government dietary recommendations, a series of example menus and associated guidance has been developed by Public Health. The document ‘Example Menus for Early Years Settings In England: Part 1 Guidance’ has detailed guidelines, two three-week example seasonal menus, each including examples of breakfasts, lunches, teas and snacks, to help illustrate the types and amounts of food and drink that can be offered to meet the nutritional requirements of infants and children aged six months to four years. The principles underpinning the development of the example menus are outlined and key information on using the example menus, including advice on menu planning, food safety, managing food allergies and reading food labels, is provided. Together, the example menus and associated guidance provide an illustration of how early years settings (such as nurseries and child minders) can meet the Early Years Foundation Stage welfare requirement to provide “healthy, balanced and nutritious” meals for children, whilst supporting them to make healthier choices in relation to food and drink.

This guidance is designed to summarise Public Health’s recommendations and therefore what follows is an ‘at a glance’ look at these guidelines and the references at the end of this document are based on ‘Example Menus for Early Years Settings In England: Part 1 Guidance’. For more detail and example menus please refer to the original Public Health document.

The following symbols and terms are used in the tables to help interpret the advice and can be used to help plan menus.

	Guidelines – use these to plan your meals and snacks
	Good practice – consider these when planning your meals and snacks
Limit	Where the guidelines advise that foods should be limited, these should be provided no more than once a week. This will help to decrease the amount of sugar, salt and saturated fat in children’s diets and increase the variety of foods they are offered.
Avoid	Where the guidelines advise that food or drinks should be avoided, these should not be provided as part of any meals or snacks

ADVICE FOR INFANTS

Infants aged 0-6 months

In the UK, exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for around the first six months of a baby's life with continued breastfeeding throughout the first two years, and after that for as long as the mother wishes to continue.

Breastfeeding has long-term benefits for infants. Not breastfeeding can increase the risk of gastrointestinal, respiratory and middle ear infection. There is also an association between not breastfeeding and risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), and growing evidence that not breastfeeding may increase the risk of overweight/obesity and diabetes later in life. Breastfeeding also has benefits for the mother, with good evidence to suggest that breastfeeding decreases the risk of some types of breast cancer, and may also reduce the risk of ovarian cancer and type 2 diabetes. More information on the benefits of breastfeeding is available on the NHS and Start4Life websites.

Complementary foods should be introduced alongside breastmilk from around six months to ensure that infants get all the nutrients they need and start their food journey to ensure they develop appropriately.

If an infant is not exclusively breastfed, then infant formula suitable from birth (first infant formula) is the appropriate addition, or alternative, to breastmilk for infants in the first year of life, unless an alternative milk has been prescribed by a doctor.

Foods to avoid before six months of age

If families do offer foods earlier than six months, then it is important to remember that there are some foods which should not be given before six months of age (unless specifically advised by a health professional):

- cows' milk
- eggs
- foods containing wheat or gluten (for example bread, pasta).
- nuts, peanuts and peanut products
- seeds
- fish and shellfish

Providing food for infants aged six months

The main aims for this age group are to introduce them to a range of foods and flavours, and for them to get used to eating solid foods. Foods from the example menu offered to older infants and children can be prepared for infants just starting to eat solid foods. For example, by:

- preparing cooked vegetables, cooked fruit and soft ripe fruit into blended, or slightly lumpy textures, or by offering as finger foods that infants can pick up and feed themselves with
- preparing blended or mashed starchy foods and protein foods, or offering these as finger foods
- offering dairy foods such as plain whole milk yoghurt on a spoon

Infants aged 6-12 months

Most infants are developmentally ready for complementary feeding, the addition of solid foods alongside breastmilk (or first infant formula), at around six months of age. After about six months of age additional foods are needed to complement the nutrients in breastmilk (or infant formula) and to introduce infants to a range of tastes and textures as they start their journey to healthy family foods. When providing food for infants, it is important that settings work closely with families to ensure a consistent approach in food provision for infants, both at home and within the setting, and to support families by signposting to appropriate evidence-based advice where needed. Discuss with families their preferred style of weaning - baby-led weaning is described as giving the child only finger foods and letting them feed themselves from the start and traditional weaning is food being spoon fed in a mashed or puréed form. Some parents prefer baby-led weaning to spoon feeding, while others do a combination of both. The most important thing is that they eat a wide variety of food and gets all the nutrients they need.

Infants' first foods can include a range of foods from the different food groups, and can be provided blended, mashed and as a finger food:

- soft cooked vegetables such as parsnip, yam, butternut squash, carrot, broccoli, cauliflower
- meat such as chicken, lamb
- fish without bones
- starchy foods such as potato, sweet potato, pasta, noodles, chapatti, rice
- hard-boiled eggs
- pulses such as peas, beans and lentils
- dairy products made from whole milk, such as unsweetened yoghurt, fromage frais, custard.
- fruit (soft, or cooked without adding sugar) such as apple, pear, peach, melon, banana

Introducing a variety of foods

Offering a wide variety of different foods is important to ensure that sufficient energy and nutrients are added to the diet. It is also important that infants get used to a variety of tastes. Ensuring that savoury foods and less sweet vegetables, rather than just fruits and sweet flavoured dishes are offered can help encourage infants to accept a wide range of different tastes. It is preferable to prepare food for infants from scratch, rather than using commercially produced baby foods, as this gives greater control over the tastes and textures of food provided and can also be more cost effective. Using foods and flavours that will help infants to become familiar with the sort of foods they will be encouraged to eat as toddlers, and which allow them to share meals with others, will also help their social development.

Once food has been introduced, infants can gradually move towards eating three meals a day, including a mixture of soft finger foods, and mashed or chopped foods. Including food from each of the main food groups (fruit and vegetables, starchy foods, sources of protein and dairy foods) will provide the energy and nutrients which infants of this age need. Remember that infants and young children should never be left alone while eating, and should be closely supervised, in case they start to choke.

At about six months

The first aim of introducing solids is to familiarise infants with new tastes and textures and get them used to moving foods around their mouths and swallowing them. At about six months many infants will be able to manage a range of blended and mashed foods as well as being able to hold food and feed themselves. Some infants need a little longer to get used to new textures, so may prefer blended foods on a spoon at first. To help infants progress to a range of textures and tastes quickly, and encourage them to move lumps around their mouths and chew them, try to move on from purees to mashed foods as soon as infants can manage them. Offer finger foods for infants to hold and feed themselves alongside any blended or mashed foods. From six months of age, infants can be encouraged to drink water from a cup (or beaker with a free-flowing valve).

Around 7-9 months

By about 7-9 months, infants should be offered three meals a day (breakfast, lunch and tea), in addition to their breastmilk (or first infant formula) feeds. Infants of this age may have about four feeds a day, but should still be fed responsively to meet their individual needs. Breastfed infants will adapt their milk intake as their food intake increases; bottle fed infants will probably need about 600ml of milk a day at this age. As infants become more confident eaters, food can be offered as mashed food with increasing texture and soft lumps. Providing finger foods as part of each meal helps to encourage infants to feed themselves, develop hand and eye co-ordination and learn to bite off, chew and swallow pieces of soft food.

Around 10-12 months

Infants aged 10-12 months should be offered three meals a day (breakfast, lunch and tea) in addition to their breastmilk (or first infant formula) feeds. Infants may have about three feeds a day at this age, with infants fed infant formula drinking about 400ml daily. Breastfed infants will adapt their milk consumption as their food intake changes. Lunches and teas can include a main course, and a fruit or dairy-based dessert, to move eating patterns closer to those of children over one year, and to ensure meals are sufficiently varied and nutrient dense.

Each meal should include a finger food to encourage infants to feed themselves, and infants of this age will be able to manage a wider range of textures in finger foods, including crunchier foods such as breadsticks and raw vegetables. Food for infants aged 10-12 months can be minced or chopped, rather than mashed, and should include a wide range of different tastes and textures.

Drinks to offer from six months

Once food has been introduced, infants should continue to be given breastmilk or first infant formula, and shouldn't be given cows' milk as a drink until they are a year old (cows' milk can be used in cooking or in food from six months).

The only drinks that are recommended for infants aged 6-12 months are breastmilk, first infant formula and water. Other milks are available that are labelled as being suitable for infants aged six months and over (for example 'follow-on formula'), but these are not necessary. Infants who are not receiving breastmilk should continue with a first infant formula until one year of age, when cows' milk can be introduced as a drink. Infants should be encouraged to drink from an open cup from six months.

Encouraging infants to eat well

As well as helping ensure that children's nutritional needs are met, mealtimes provide an opportunity to support children to eat well and develop healthy eating habits for the future. Early years settings can play an important role in encouraging children to eat well, and supporting families to do so too, by providing information and reassurance.

Eating should be a sociable occasion, and mealtimes provide a good opportunity to include infants in family and setting routines. During mealtimes, ensure that infants are each given individual attention and interaction - make eye contact, and interact with and talk to infants while helping them to eat.

Mealtimes also help to develop infants' co-ordination and communication skills. Infants should be encouraged to explore, touch and try new foods. Giving infants finger foods to hold and feed themselves with, or a spoon to hold if being offered food on a spoon also helps encourage them to feed themselves. Allow infants to get messy - try not to clean their face, hands or the tray until the end of the meal. This increases sensitisation to textures and is thought to help avoid selective eating habits in later life.

How much infants eat depends on their appetite, so let infants guide you on how much food they need and never force them to eat. Look out for signs that infants might be full, such as turning their head away from the food or clamping their mouth shut. Allow plenty of time for eating, especially in the beginning and allow infants to eat at their own pace and stop eating when they are full.

Infants and children may not like new foods the first time they are offered, but after repeated tastes will learn to like new foods offered regularly, so even if a baby spits out a food initially, offer it again at another meal. Remember it may take a number of attempts for a baby to accept a new food.

Summary of guidance on choosing first foods

Information based on Start4life guidance on choosing first foods ²³		
Food group	Advice	Examples
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cook vegetables to soften them, then serve them blended or mashed, in a suitable texture for the baby, or give them as finger foods • offer a variety of vegetables including ones with bitter flavours. Offer a small amount and remember it may take many attempts for infants to get used to new foods • it's good to offer infants different foods every day • never add salt or 	Broccoli Cauliflower Green beans Carrots Parsnips Swede Courgette Avocado Peppers Mushrooms Asparagus Butternut squash Peas Spinach Kale Cabbage Choose seasonal vegetables where possible. ²⁴













	sugar to infants' food	
Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • serve blended or mashed soft, ripe fruits in a suitable texture for infants, or give them as finger foods. • harder fruits will need to be cooked to soften them. • remove any pips, stones and hard skin. • offer a small amount and remember it may take many attempts to get infants used to new foods. • it's good to offer infants different foods every day. 	Banana Apple Pear Melon Blueberries Raspberries Strawberries Peach Kiwi Mango Pineapple Plum Oranges Nectarine Papaya Choose seasonal fruits where possible. ²⁴
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • these can be cooked and mashed to a suitable texture for infants, or offered as finger foods. • cereals can be mixed with breastmilk or first infant formula, or with pasteurised whole (full fat) cows' milk (or goats' or sheep's milk) if the baby is over six months old. 	Potato Sweet potato Rice Pasta Baby Rice Porridge Oats Oatmeal Cornmeal Maize Millet Quinoa Toast Breads Chapatti Pitta Bread
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protein foods such as beans and pulses, well cooked eggs, fish and meat are all suitable foods for infants from about six months. 	Chicken Beef Lamb Turkey Fish (no bones) Egg Tofu Lentils

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as well as giving infants protein, they also contain other useful nutrients such as iron and zinc, which are important for infants. 	Pulses (for example chickpeas)
Dairy and alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pasteurised dairy foods such as pasteurised full fat yoghurt and cheese are suitable foods for infants from six months. • full fat, unsweetened or plain yoghurts are a good choice for infants because they don't contain added sugars. • whole pasteurised (full fat) cows' milk, goats' or sheep's milk can be used in cooking or mixed with food from six months, but they shouldn't be given as a drink until 12 months. 	Dairy products made from whole milk such as Unsweetened yoghurt/fromage frais, custard

ADVICE FOR CHILDREN AGED ONE TO FOUR YEARS












Breakfast

The table below summarises the key menu planning advice relating to the provision of breakfast in early years settings and the example breakfast menus found in 'Example Menus for Early Years Settings in England: Part 1: Guidance' have been planned to meet this.

Menu planning advice	Breakfast is an important meal for young children. Settings should liaise with parents to make sure that children always eat breakfast, whether at home or when they arrive at the setting.	
Food group	Guidelines	
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates		Provide a portion of starchy food as part of breakfast each day.
		Provide at least three different types of starchy food across breakfasts each week, for example cornflakes, wholegrain toast, porridge.
		Provide a variety of wholegrain and white starchy foods as part of breakfast each week.
		It is good practice to provide wholegrain starchy foods for at least one breakfast each week
		Choose breakfast cereals with the lowest sugar content. Choose those which are labelled as 'low' (green) or 'medium' (amber) in sugar.
		Avoid cereals labelled 'high' (red) in sugar such as sugar-coated or chocolate-flavoured cereals.
		Choose bread and bread products with a lower salt content. Choose those which are labelled as 'low' (green) or 'medium' (amber) in salt.
Fruit and vegetables		Provide a portion of fruit or vegetables at breakfast each day.
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins		Food from this group provides a useful source of iron and zinc and can be provided as part of breakfast.
Dairy and alternatives		It is good practice to provide three portions of milk and dairy foods each day (including those provided at home); one of these can be provided as part of breakfast.
Drinks		Children must have access to fresh drinking water.
		Provide only fresh tap water and plain milk for children to drink.


















Snacks





The table below summarises the key menu planning advice relating to the provision of snacks in early years settings and the example snack menus found in 'Example Menus for Early Years Settings in England: Part 1: Guidance' have been planned to meet this.

Menu planning advice	Plan menus for snacks to ensure that they are varied across the week and that the food provision across the day is balanced.	
		Avoid sweet foods such as cakes, biscuits and confectionery between meals.
Food group	Guidelines	
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates		Provide a starchy food such as crackers, breadsticks, rice cakes as part of at least one snack each day.
		Provide at least three different types of starchy food across snacks each week.
		Choose bread and bread products with a lower salt content. Choose those which are labelled as 'low' (green) or 'medium' (amber) in salt.
Fruit and vegetables		Provide vegetables or fruit as part of some snacks.
		Provide a variety of vegetables and fruit across the day, and each week.
		Dried fruit should not be provided as part of snacks.
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins		Foods from this group provide a useful source of iron and zinc and can be provided as part of snacks once or twice each week
Dairy and alternatives		It is good practice to provide three portions of milk and dairy foods each day (including those provided at home); one of these can be provided as part of snacks.
Drinks		Children must have access to fresh drinking water.
		Provide only fresh tap water and plain milk for children to drink.

Lunch















The table below summarises the key menu planning advice relating to the provision of lunch in early years settings and the example lunch menus found in 'Example Menus for Early Years Settings in England: Part 1: Guidance' have been planned to meet this.








Menu planning advice	Each lunch should include a main course and a dessert. Vary the desserts you offer with lunch and tea each week. For main meals (typically lunch), provide a variety of different desserts each week (for example fruit-based desserts such as apple crumble, dairy-based desserts such as rice pudding) and limit provision of cakes and biscuits.	
Food group	Guidelines	
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates		Provide a portion of starchy food as part of each lunch.
		Provide at least three different starchy foods as part of lunch each week.
		Provide a variety of wholegrain and white starchy foods each week.
		It is good practice to provide wholegrain starchy foods for at least one lunch each week.
		Limit starchy foods which have been fried to once a week at lunch.
		Limit canned pasta in sauce.
		Avoid flavoured dried rice, pasta and noodle products, for example packets and pots of instant flavoured noodles, pasta and rice.
Fruit and vegetables		Provide at least one portion of vegetables and/or fruits as part of lunch each day.
		Provide a variety of vegetables and fruit across the week at lunch
		Check product labels to choose canned vegetables and pulses without added salt and sugar, fruit canned in juice not syrup, and reduced salt and sugar baked beans.
		Baked beans can count as a vegetable only once during each week.
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins		Provide a portion of beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat (for example red meat or poultry) or other proteins (for example meat alternatives) as part of lunch each day.
		Provide a variety of foods from this group as part of lunch across the week.
		It is good practice to provide a portion each of beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat (for example red meat and poultry) or other proteins (for example meat alternatives) each week as part of lunch.
		Provide vegetarian children with a variety of protein sources such as pulses, eggs and meat alternatives each week as part of lunch.
		Provide one lunch for all children each week which uses pulses or a meat alternative as the protein source
		Provide oily fish (such as salmon, sardines or pilchards) at least once every three weeks; this can be provided as part of lunch or tea.

		Limit the provision of meat products (for example sausages, meatballs), fish products (for example fish fingers, fish cakes), and products made from meat alternatives (for example vegetarian sausages), to once a week for each of the three types.
Dairy and alternatives		It is good practice to provide three portions of milk and dairy foods each day (including those provided at home); one of these can be provided as part of lunch.
Drinks		Children must have access to fresh drinking water.
		Provide only fresh tap water and plain milk for children to drink.

Tea

The table below summarises the key menu planning advice relating to the provision of tea in early years settings and the example tea menus found in 'Example Menus for Early Years Settings in England: Part 1: Guidance' have been planned to meet this.

Menu planning advice	Each tea should include a main course and a dessert. Vary the desserts you offer with lunch and tea each week. For light meals (typically tea) provide fruit (such as seasonal fruit salad) and/or dairy-based desserts such as yoghurt, and avoid cakes and biscuits.	
Food group	Guidelines	
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates		Provide a portion of starchy food as part of each tea.
		Provide at least three different starchy foods as part of tea each week.
		Provide a variety of wholegrain and white starchy foods each week.
		It is good practice to provide wholegrain starchy foods for at least one tea each week.
		Limit starchy foods which have been fried to once a week at tea.
		Limit canned pasta in sauce.
		Avoid flavoured dried rice, pasta and noodle products for example packets and pots of instant flavoured noodles, pasta and rice.
Fruit and vegetables		Provide at least one portion of vegetables and/or fruits as part of tea each day.
		Provide a variety of vegetables and fruit across the week at tea
		Check product labels to choose canned vegetables and pulses without added salt and sugar, fruit canned in juice not syrup, and reduced salt and sugar baked beans.
		Baked beans can count as a vegetable only once during each week.
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins		Provide a portion of beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat (for example red meat or poultry) or other proteins (for example meat alternatives) as part of tea each day.
		Provide a variety of foods from this group as part of tea across the week.
		It is good practice to provide a portion each of beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat (for example red meat and poultry) or other proteins (for example

		meat alternatives) each week as part of tea.
		Provide vegetarian children with a variety of protein sources such as pulses, eggs and meat alternatives each week as part of tea.
		Provide one tea for all children each week which uses pulses or a meat alternative as the protein source
		Provide oily fish (such as salmon, sardines or pilchards) at least once every three weeks; this can be provided as part of lunch or tea.
		Limit the provision of meat products (for example sausages, meatballs), fish products (for example fish fingers, fish cakes), and products made from meat alternatives (for example vegetarian sausages), to once a week for each of the three types.
Dairy and alternatives		It is good practice to provide three portions of milk and dairy foods each day (including those provided at home); one of these can be provided as part of tea.
Drinks		Children must have access to fresh drinking water.
		Provide only fresh tap water and plain milk for children to drink.

SEVEN STEPS TO PLANNING HEALTHY MEALS, SNACKS AND DRINKS

Seven steps to planning healthy meals, snack and drinks

Step 1. Plan menus for all the meals and snacks you provide for children.

This will help you to check that food and drink provision across the day is balanced and includes variety, and also helps planning for shopping and food preparation.

Step 2. Plan menus lasting at least one week.

In practice, a menu that covers between one and four weeks will give children lots of variety. Try to make sure that children who attend your setting on the same day each week are not always provided with the same meal.

Step 3. Plan each meal and snack menu to meet the guidance for each meal and snack provided (outlined on pages 11-15).

This means that children attending your setting for sessional care or who move between different settings will still meet their nutritional requirements overall.

Step 4. Plan menus to include a variety of foods, tastes, textures and colours.

This will give children the opportunity to try a wide range of foods, and make meals and snacks colourful and tasty.

Step 5. Make sure you cater for the cultural and dietary needs of all the children in your care.

You can also plan your menus to enable children to experience food from different cultures.

Step 6. Introduce new menu cycles at least twice a year.

This will incorporate seasonality and give children the chance to try different foods.

Step 7. Share menus for meals and snacks with parents.

This can help parents to balance meals and snacks with the food they provide at home. For example, if children are having a light meal at teatime and you expect them to eat again at home, make sure that parents are aware of this.

General safety advice for children aged six months to four years at mealtimes

- infants and young children should never be left alone while they are eating, and staff should be familiar with paediatric first aid advice for children who are choking³⁷
- ensure food is cooked until steaming hot to kill harmful bacteria,³⁸ and is then cooled sufficiently before giving it to infants and young children
- ensure infants and young children are seated safely in a highchair or appropriately sized low chair, and that they are closely supervised

FOOD SAFETY ADVICE

Specific food safety advice for different types of food	
Food Group	Advice
Fruit and vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all fruit and vegetables should be washed thoroughly before being eaten or cooked for children. • to reduce the risk of choking: • offer soft fruit and vegetables as finger foods to infants to begin with, and remove any skins • remove any stones and pips before serving • halve or quarter small fruit and vegetables like grapes and cherry tomatoes • cut large fruits like melon, and hard fruit or vegetables like raw apple and carrot into slices instead of small chunks.
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoid shark, swordfish and marlin as the levels of mercury in these fish can affect a child's developing nervous system. • although it is recommended to provide oily fish in early years settings at least once every three weeks, don't provide it more than twice a week, as it can contain low levels of pollutants. • avoid raw shellfish to reduce the risk of food poisoning, and make sure any shellfish you use is thoroughly cooked. • avoid raw eggs, or food containing partially cooked eggs, for example uncooked cake mixture and runny boiled eggs. Avoid bought fresh pate (meat, fish or vegetable-based) to reduce the risk of food poisoning. • cut sausages into strips rather than chunks to reduce the risk of choking, and remove the skins for infants. • make sure fish dishes are free of bones to reduce the risk of choking. • do not give whole nuts to children under five years old, as they can choke on them. • nuts, especially peanuts, can cause severe allergic reactions in some children and all settings should have an allergy plan in place (see page 46).
Dairy and alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoid unpasteurised milk, milk drinks and cheese, mould-ripened cheeses and soft blue-veined cheese, to reduce the risk of food poisoning. • children under the age of five years should not be given rice drinks, because of the level of arsenic they contain. There is no need to avoid rice cakes, as

	<p>there are strict limits in place in Europe on the arsenic content in rice and rice products.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cut cheese into strips rather than chunks to reduce the risk of choking.
Other foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoid giving popcorn as a snack to infants to reduce the risk of choking. • avoid giving children jelly cubes from a packet as part of messy play activities to reduce the risk of choking.

Other foods and drinks to avoid for children under five years	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoid honey for infants under one year, as it occasionally contains bacteria which can make them ill.³⁹ • avoid food and drinks containing the colours Tartrazine (E102), Quinoline yellow (E104), Sunset yellow (E110), Carmoisine (E122), Ponceau 4R (E124) or Allura red (E129) as they may have an adverse effect on activity and attention in children.⁴⁰ • avoid drinks with added caffeine or stimulants • avoid tea, coffee and alcohol.

Managing food allergies, intolerances and meeting cultural needs

Early years settings and their caterers should work closely with families to support children with allergies or intolerances. As part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, settings are required to obtain information about children’s special dietary requirements – including food allergies and intolerances – before they attend, and record and act on the information provided about children’s dietary needs. It is important that requests for special diets are handled sensitively and appropriately, and this can be included as part of a policy, describing how these are managed, and the procedure that is followed.

There should be a protocol in place which is accessible to all staff, to ensure everyone is aware of individual children’s allergies and symptoms. If you suspect that a child has a food allergy, encourage parents or carers to seek advice and diagnosis from their doctor, to ensure it is appropriately managed, and foods are only excluded from children’s diets where necessary, with appropriate alternatives identified to ensure they still eat a balanced diet.

Settings must ensure that they make appropriate provision for parental preferences including cultural and religious food sensitivities, for example the provision of halal and kosher food as appropriate.

Providing food allergen information

Understanding which allergens are present in every meal and snack you provide is an important step in providing food which is safe for children with food allergies and intolerances. Since 2014, all food businesses, including early years settings have been required by law to give details about the allergens in the food they provide. There are 14 allergens covered by this requirement:

- celery
- molluscs (including squid, mussels, cockles, whelks and snails)
- cereals containing gluten (including wheat, rye, barley and oats)
- mustard
- crustaceans (including prawns, crab and lobster)
- nuts
- peanuts
- eggs
- sesame seeds
- fish
- soya beans
- lupin
- sulphur dioxide/sulphites (at levels above 10mg/kg)
- milk

It is important to remember that children can have allergies to foods and ingredients not covered by this list (and which therefore won't be highlighted in bold on product ingredients lists), and the same policy and procedure should be followed where a child has an allergy to a food not included on this list, to ensure appropriate and safe meals and snacks are provided for them.

PROMOTING BETTER ORAL HEALTH: ADVICE ON HEALTHIER EATING AND NUTRITION FOR UNDER-FIVES

Introduction

Healthy eating is essential for proper growth and development in childhood. It is also important for the development of good oral health. It is important that children have healthy teeth and that good oral health behaviours are introduced in their early years. Good oral health helps children to eat a varied diet, is important for their speech and language development, gives them confidence to smile and interact with others, contributes to general health and well-being and is essential for school readiness and education.

Sugar and tooth decay

Diets in the UK are too high in sugar, which is the leading cause of tooth decay.

It is not just about the amount of 'free sugar' in sweet food and drinks, but how long and how often the teeth are in contact with it that causes problems.

'Free sugar' includes all sugars which are added to foods and drinks by the manufacturer, during cooking or before consumption, as well as sugars naturally present in honey, syrups, smoothies, and fruit juices. It does not include sugars found naturally in whole fresh fruit and vegetables and those naturally present in milk and milk products.

All food and drink containing sugars should be consumed as part of a meal and not as a between-meal snack. It is important to recognise that honey, fruit smoothies, fresh fruit juice and dried fruit all contain sugars that can cause tooth decay and should not be consumed as a between-meal snack.

It is recommended that the average population intake of free sugars should not exceed 5% of total dietary energy for age groups from 2 years upwards. For children 4-6 years they should not exceed 19 grams of sugar per day, however many products marketed at children well exceed the daily limit for sugar. In the UK, the main source of free sugars consumed by children are:

- Soft drinks and fruit drinks
- Cereal and cereal products
- Sugar, preserves and confectionary

It is important to always check labels on products as sugars can be disguised under different names. Sucrose, glucose, dextrose, maltose, fructose, and hydrolysed starch are all sugars. Invert sugar or syrup, honey, raw sugar, brown sugar, cane sugar, muscovado sugar and concentrated fruit juices are also sugars.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding provides the best start in life. It is recommended that infants should be exclusively breastfed for around the first 6 months of life and that continuing it beyond 6 months can have beneficial effects for both mother and child. Breastfed infants benefit from a reduced risk of dental decay and are less likely to develop malocclusion of baby teeth.

Bottle Feeding

Families may choose to bottle feed their babies or mothers may be unable to breastfeed. They should be supported if, after being given advice, information, and support, they opt to bottle feed using formula milk. Only breast milk, infant formula or cooled boiled water should be given in a bottle. Sugar, honey or any other sugar-containing products or drinks must not be added to bottles. From the age of 6 months babies should be encouraged to drink from an open or free-flow cup and feeding from a bottle should be discouraged from the age of one year.



Drinks

Milk and water are the healthiest drinks for children during the day. During meal times, sips of water from an open or free-flow cup should be offered. Using an open cup, or a free-flow cup without a valve, will help your baby learn to sip and is better for their teeth.

Cows' milk is not a suitable drink until your baby is 12 months old, but it can be used in cooking or mixed with food from 6 months of age. From 12 months give pasteurised whole (full fat), or semi-skimmed. You can also give them pasteurised goats' or sheep's milk too.

Drinks to avoid

Many drinks are too high in sugar for babies and young children so it's best to avoid them if possible. Remember milk and water will keep children well hydrated.

- **Fruit juice, squash, soft drinks, and smoothies**

If you do choose to offer them, dilute with water (1 part juice to 10 parts water), and offer with a meal in an open cup/free-flow beaker to avoid tooth decay.

A child should have no more than 1 drink of fruit juice (150ml) in any 1 day as part of their five a day.

- **Fizzy drinks**

Fizzy drinks sweetened with sugar have no place in a child's daily diet. Even sugar free varieties can cause dental problems such as erosion.

- **Follow-on formula, growing-up milks, and goodnight milks**

These milks are not suitable for babies under 6 months and are unnecessary after 6 months.

- **'Baby' and herbal drinks**

Drinks like these usually contain sugars and are not recommended.

Weaning

Children's food preferences and eating habits are formed early in life and so it is important to support the development of healthy eating habits in young children. From around 6 months, infants should be introduced to a wide range of foods. Solids should be introduced alongside continued breastfeeding or infant formula; these, and water, should be the only drinks offered as infants move on to solids. Never add salt or sugar to weaning foods.

Examples of first solid foods include:

- blended, mashed, or soft-cooked vegetables (parsnip, broccoli, carrots, potato, yam, sweet potato, butternut squash)
- fruit (apple, pear, banana, strawberries, peach).
- batons (sticks) of vegetables provide healthy 'finger food' as children begin to feed themselves.
- starchy food (rice, porridge, oats, pasta)
- protein food (chicken, egg, pulses, fish)
- dairy (cheese, full fat, unsweetened natural yoghurt)

Commercial baby products

Commercially produced 'pouches' of food are increasingly common. Around one-third of commercial baby foods and drinks are packaged in pouches, many of which have nozzles and encourage young children to graze or have foods on the go. They are also marketed at babies from 4 months, which conflicts with government and NHS infant feeding guidelines and contain ingredients which are high in salt and sugar.



Healthier snacks for young children

Children should be encouraged to eat regular meals throughout the day with nutritious snacks as required. The best snacks are those which are low in added sugar. A variety of snacks should be offered including fruit, vegetables, milk, yoghurt, any type of bread, and sandwiches with savoury fillings. Do not offer dried fruit, such as raisins, apricots etc as a snack as they are high in sugar, stick to teeth and can cause tooth decay. Always promote milk and water to quench thirst and keep children hydrated.



Dummies

It is fine to give your baby a dummy but avoid using them after 12 months of age. Using dummies after this can encourage an open bite, which is when teeth move to make space for the dummy. They may also affect your child's speech development.

Discourage your child from talking or making sounds with a dummy or their thumb in their mouth, and do not dip dummies in anything sweet, such as sugar or jam.

FUSSY EATING

It's natural to worry whether a child is getting enough food if they refuse to eat sometimes. But it's perfectly normal for toddlers to refuse to eat or even taste new foods. Do not worry about what they eat in a day or if they do not eat everything at mealtimes. It's more helpful to think about what they eat over a week.

Gradually introduce other foods and keep going back to the foods they did not like before. Children's tastes change. One day they'll hate something, but a month later they may love it. Keep offering a variety of foods – it may take lots of attempts before a child accepts some foods.

Tips for parents of fussy eaters

- Give your child the same food as the rest of the family but remember not to add salt to your child's food. Check the food labels of any food product you use to make family meals.
- The best way for your child to learn to eat and enjoy new foods is to copy you. Try to eat with them as often as you can.
- If your child rejects the food, do not force them to eat it. Try to stay calm, even if it's very frustrating. Try the food again another time.
- Do not leave meals until your child is too hungry or tired to eat.
- Your child may be a slow eater, so be patient.
- Do not give your child too many snacks between meals – 2 healthy snacks a day is plenty.
- Do not use food as a reward. Your child may start to think of sweets as nice and vegetables as nasty. Instead, reward them with a trip to the park or promise to play a game with them.
- Make mealtimes enjoyable and not just about eating. Sit down and chat about other things.
- If you know any other children of the same age who are good eaters, ask them round for tea. But do not talk too much about how good the other children are.
- Ask an adult that your child likes and looks up to to eat with you. Sometimes a child will eat for someone else, such as a grandparent, without any fuss.
- Changing how you serve a food may make it more appealing. For example, your child might refuse cooked carrots but enjoy raw grated carrot.

Where there is a prolonged problem, particularly if there is a concern about a child's weight, parents/carers should be advised to contact their child's Health Visitor or GP.

HEALTHY START SCHEME

What is Healthy Start?

If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, you may be entitled to get help to buy healthy food and milk.

If you're eligible, you'll be sent a Healthy Start card with money on it that you can use in some UK shops. We'll add your benefit onto this card every 4 weeks.

You can use your card to buy:

- plain liquid cow's milk
- fresh, frozen, and tinned fruit and vegetables
- fresh, dried, and tinned pulses
- infant formula milk based on cow's milk
-

You can also use your card to collect:

- Healthy Start vitamins – these support you during pregnancy and breastfeeding
- vitamin drops for babies and young children – these are suitable from birth to 4 years old

Further Information can be found on the Healthy Start Website:

www.healthystart.nhs.uk

Parents/carers should be encouraged to obtain Healthy Start vitamins for their babies/children, either free of charge or bought.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND OUTDOOR PLAY FOR CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS

Being physically active every day is important for the healthy growth and development of babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers. For this age group activity of any intensity should be encouraged including light activity and more energetic physical activity. Providers must provide access to an outdoor play area. If that is not possible, you must ensure that outdoor activities are planned and taken on a daily basis (unless circumstances make this inappropriate e.g. unsafe weather conditions).

Babies (under 1 year)

Babies should be encouraged to be active throughout the day, every day, in a variety of ways, including crawling. If they're not yet crawling, encourage them to be physically active by reaching and grasping, pulling and pushing, moving their head, body and limbs during daily routines, and during supervised floor play. Try to include at least 30 minutes of tummy time spread throughout the day when they're awake. Once babies can move around, encourage them to be as active as possible in a safe and supervised play environment.

Toddlers (aged 1 to 2)

Toddlers should be physically active every day for at least 180 minutes (3 hours). The more the better. This should be spread throughout the day, including playing outdoors. The 180 minutes can include light activity such as standing up, moving around, rolling and playing, as well as more energetic activity like skipping, hopping, running and jumping. Active play, such as using a climbing frame, riding a bike, playing in water, chasing games and ball games, is the best way for this age group to get moving.

Pre-schoolers (aged 3 to 4)

Pre-schoolers should spend at least 180 minutes (3 hours) a day doing a variety of physical activities spread throughout the day, including active and outdoor play. The more the better. The 180 minutes should include at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity. Children under 5 should not be inactive for long periods, except when they're asleep. Watching TV, travelling by car, bus or train, or being strapped into a buggy for long periods are not good for a child's health and development. All children under 5 who are overweight can improve their health by meeting the activity guidelines, even if their weight does not change. To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, they may need to do additional activity and make dietary changes.

Physical activity ideas for under 5s

All movement counts. The more the better.

- tummy time
- playing with blocks and other objects
- messy play
- jumping
- walking
- dancing
- swimming
- playground activities
- climbing
- skipping
- active play, like hide and seek
- throwing and catching
- scooting
- riding a bike
- outdoor activities

FOOD, NUTRITION AND ORAL HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Writing a food, nutrition and oral health policy is not as difficult to do as it may sound. Many child care settings already have a lot of 'unwritten' rules about food and eating. The advantage of writing them down as a 'policy' is that everyone has a chance to agree these ideas and in addition they provide information to new parents about your approach to healthy eating. This policy should not be seen as something set in stone, but something open to regular review. You can also consider adding in good practice around physical activity and play environments e.g. promotion of play and physical activity within the childcare setting, encouraging children to play outside and promoting an active travel plan.

A whole childcare approach should be taken in the development of the Food Policy.

Staff at a day nursery may include: Manager, Cook/Caterer, Parents and Children. You could identify a member of staff to take the lead for healthy eating and physical activity.

Advice can also be sought from the Children's Nutrition Team and Public Health, Tameside Council

Aims of food policy should be:

- To ensure that consistent messages are given
- To put into practice principles of healthy eating
- To improve the health of children in the setting, and provide the best services possible
- To send out clear messages about food to the community
- To provide equal opportunities for those in the setting

Considerations for Food, Nutrition and Oral Health Policy

- Sample menus and information on cooking methods used, portion sizes, breakfast options offered.
- Snacks and drinks provided.
- Information on expressed breast milk, infant formulas and weaning advice.
- Foods brought into the setting from home e.g. packed lunches.
- Guidance on use of rewards, celebrations, special events, birthdays.
- How staff should manage children who are not eating well.
- Promoting good eating habits: staff sitting with children while they eat, teaching good eating skills and table manners.
- Consideration given to procurement of local, seasonal, sustainable foods.
- Cooking with children.
- Catering for cultural, religious, special dietary requirements, managing allergies and intolerances.
- Learning about food.
- Food safety and hygiene.
- Staff training.
- Promoting breastfeeding.
- Oral Health.
- Communicating with children and families.

Sample Nutrition Policy (taken from Caroline Walker Trust)

- A weekly menu will be displayed in advance. Recipes will be available to parents.
- The weekly menu will provide children in childcare with a tasty, varied diet.
- All the children in childcare will have suitable food made available for them.
- Children who do not have breakfast at home will be offered this when they arrive, with agreement from their parent/guardian.
- Milk will be served with morning and afternoon snacks.
- All dairy products will be full fat.
- Water will be available at all times.
- Children will have access to bread or fruit if they are hungry between meals.
- Children will be allowed to have second helpings of fruit or milk-based desserts.
- Children will still receive dessert if they refuse their main course, parents/guardians will be advised if their child is not eating well.
- Parents/guardians of children who are on special diets will be asked to provide as much information as possible about suitable foods and, in some cases, may be asked to provide the food themselves.
- A specific allergy plan will be in place to deal with any child having an allergic reaction.
- Carers will sit with children while they eat and will provide a good role model for healthy eating.
- Withholding food will not be used as a form of punishment.
- Children will be encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners and will be given plenty of time to eat.
- Advice will be given to parents about suitable foods to bring from home.
- Children will be encouraged to play outside every day, weather permitting, as sunshine helps their bodies to make Vitamin D.

Considerations for Physical Activity and Play Policy

What to consider:

- Good practice in play and physical activity environments.
- Risk assessment policy/procedures for activities.
- Consultation with parents about physical activity.
- Encouraging children to play outside, weather permitting and information on suitable outdoor clothing and sun protection.
- Encouraging children to explore the natural environment via supervised visits to parks and natural spaces.
- Active travel plan which promotes staff and families travelling to and from the setting in a healthier, more sustainable way.

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