



Healthy Eating Policy & Procedure

Version 1:

Board Approval: August 2019

Due for Review: August 2021

Responsibility of: Childcare Development Manager

Policy Statement

Finglas Childcare Ltd believes that good health and good food in the early years helps to safeguard children's well-being throughout their lives. In our Early Years Settings(EYS) it is important that children develop healthy eating habits from a young age for both having the pleasure of having a wide variety in their diets and gaining knowledge about nutrition. Our meal times are treated as an opportunity for social interaction as well as laying the foundations about making healthy choices.

Rationale

This policy is underpinned by the Child Care Act 1991(Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and the Department of Health Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Pre school Services and the 3 week Menu Plan-A resource for Pre Schools 2006.

Scope of Policy

This Policy on Healthy Eating is available to all parents/guardians of children when they register their child. There will be a copy kept in the policy folder at reception at all times.

Staff, volunteers and students will be made aware of it at induction and encouraged to read it.



Policy and Procedure

Food and drink provided by Finglas Childcare Ltd are nutritious and comply with the dietary or religious requirements of all children. We commit to consulting with parents on these and catering for individual food preferences and customs as much as is practical.

Parents of children with special dietary needs will be asked to provide as much information as possible to the Early Years Setting (EYS) (including filling in special dietary requirements on registration sheet and additional information on the “Getting to know you” form) and on occasion may be asked to provide food themselves. Allergies/intolerances will be brought to the attention of the cooks and senior early years practitioners in the room.

A two weekly menu which provides children with a variety of healthy foods is on display at reception. Any changes to these menus will be noted to parents/guardians and any foods that are substituted will be of equal nutrient value. The main meal served in our full day locations will include appropriate servings of protein, starch, dairy, vegetables and iron. Allergens are noted on the menu.

All children will have suitable food available to them. Milk and water are available with meals and fresh fruit is served in each session. Water is available throughout the day in each care room. Mothers are supported to continue breast feeding their children and an appropriate space will be allocated to breastfeeding mothers.

Our bottle storage, bottle heating, bottle and spoon feeding procedures will be implemented at all times. Feeding beakers or cups will be encouraged from 6 months. Parents will provide formula milk feeds ready to feed as staff will not make up formula feeds. Weaning of children will be initiated by parents and supported by the crèche.

All our meal and snack times are treated as a social occasion, tables are set with the help of the children with table clothes, place mats and appropriate delph and cutlery. Plenty of time is given to children to finish their food. We encourage children to be independent at meal time, feeding themselves, pouring their own drinks and helping with the tidy up afterwards. Staff will sit with children, taking time to eat along with them to encourage healthy eating habits. Children will be encouraged to sit while eating or drinking.



Children's hands will be washed before each meal.

Each child has a duplicate book and a copy of what the child has eaten will be sent home daily, or a record will be available in the care room. Meals will be served at the same time each day.

Withholding or threatening to withhold food will not be used as a behaviour management strategy.

In all locations healthy unsugared cereals will be served each morning. No salt or sugar will be added to food prepared on site.

Parents are welcome to bring a birthday cake to the EYS to celebrate their child's birthday but no other sweets etc. will be accepted. A note will go home to the parents/guardians of the other children in the room to advise them of the allergens in the cake that will be in the room the following day.

Food is only purchased from reputable suppliers who comply with food safety practices. All food in the EYS is stored, prepared and served using Safe Food Ireland food safety practices. A HACCP system is in operation and all catering staff are trained in food handling and safety.

In Part Time/Sessional locations where parents bring in children's lunches they are asked to provide a healthy lunch such as sandwiches, pitta breads and wraps with salad/ cheese/ meat/fish, fruit or pasta as healthy options. Water or milk are also provided. Sweets, biscuits, chewing gum, crisps, chocolate spread or fizzy drinks will not be accepted.

I acknowledge that I had read and understand the Policy Document.

1) _____

Date: _____