Bradgate preschool Healthy eating Policy

At Bradgate preschool we aim to implement the whole setting approach to healthy eating in order to improve the health of children, their families and staff. We will equip our children with the knowledge, understanding and skills that enable them to make the sort of choices that lead to a healthy lifestyle and develop to their full potential. In our setting children will be provided with a range of opportunities to learn about food and make healthier food and drink choices.

We regard snack time and lunch time as an important part of the settings day. Eating represents a social time for children and adult’s and helps children to learn about healthy eating. At snack times we aim to provide nutritious food which meets the children’s individual dietary needs.

Children have access to fresh fruit and healthy snacks on a daily basis. Our preschool offers children the opportunity to take part in preparing snack and being involved in deciding which fruits and vegetables they would prefer.

Our children take part in cooking activities that are linked to the learning experiences given within the setting. Meals and snacks are seen as a fun opportunity to extend children’s learning in a social situation. When planning for children’s learning, food preparation, snack times and lunch times are noted as an area to develop.

**Policy Aims.**

* To enable healthy food choices through the provision.
* To provide healthy, balanced and nutritious food/drink choices throughout the day (or time children are in the setting) and ensure any food brought in from home compliments this e.g. packed lunches.
* To ensure that all aspects of food and drink promote the health and well-being of the children, staff and visitors to our setting.
* To ensure food is nutritionally appropriate to the age/stage and dietary needs of each child.

**Procedures**

We follow the below procedures to promote healthy eating in our setting.

* Before a child starts with us we provide parents with an admission form that requests their child’s dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies.
* We display current information about individual children’s dietary needs on a clear poster in the area we prepare snack. This ensures all staff and volunteers are fully aware of them.
* We encourage our parents to send the children into preschool with a named, refillable bottle of water. This is accessible to the children throughout the session and will be refilled if needed.
* All staff and children will wash their hands before handling food, after using the toilet and before eating snack and packed lunch.
* We ensure that all members of staff who prepare and serve food have a current Food Hygiene certificate.
* Appropriate food safety precautions are taken when food/milk is prepared or stored. These vary depending on the food on offer and include ensuring that adequate storage and washing facilities are available and that suitable equipment is available. Any food safety hazards are identified and controlled. Information is cascaded to everyone who is involved with food related activities in the setting.
* The setting will provide a clean, sociable environment for children to eat their snack and packed lunch. Children will be encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners and will be given plenty of time to eat. Staff will help to ensure a safe, enjoyable experience at eating times and will encourage and model healthy eating.
* Parents/carers will be informed verbally at the end of the session if their child is not eating well.

**Food Play**

We ensure any food we use for play with the children is carefully supervised. We will use the following procedures to ensure children are kept safe:

* Choking hazards are checked and avoided
* We will not use whole jelly cubes for play. If we do use jelly to enhance our play then all jelly will be prepared with water as per the instructions and then used
* Small objects such as dried pasta and pulses will only be used under supervision
* All allergies and intolerances will be checked and activities will be adapted to suit all children’s needs so no child is excluded
* All activities including food will be included on the planning sheets showing all allergens so all staff are aware of the ingredients
* Children’s allergies will be visible to staff when placing out food play activities to ensure all needs are met
* Any cooking activities will be checked prior to start to ensure all children are able use all the ingredients based on their individual needs
* We will not use food in play unless it enhances the opportunities children are receiving from the activity. Many of the food will be reused in other activities, especially the dry materials.

**Special diets/medical requirements**

We recognise that some children may require special diets. In this case parents/carers are asked to make us fully aware of this through our admission procedure. Individual care plans/Health care plans may need to be created for children with special dietary needs/requirements. These will document symptoms and adverse reactions, actions to be taken in an emergency, emergency contact details along with any food requirements e.g. allergies etc. On some occasions this may require parents/carers to supply the food ingredients themselves.

**Cooking and special occasions**

Foods maybe prepared and served during special celebrations such as pancake day, multi-cultural festivals or sensory tasting activities. Cooking activities may include a mixture of healthy foods or treats. During birthdays or particular family celebrations children are welcome to bring in a healthy treat to share with their friends and staff. Any treats bought in from home must be nut free and discussed with staff prior to the celebration. Staff will ensure that these foods are in line with each child’s dietary requirements to ensure no child is made to felt segregated. If it is not possible for a particular child to enjoy the treat provided due to dietary needs staff will discuss an alternative with the child’s parents before the occasion.

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