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Training Depot Day Nursery

Nutrition Policy

Menus and Snacks

The Nursery provides all food, snacks and drinks. Meals are cooked by a health and hygiene certificated person. We have two seasonal menus: October – April is the winter menu, April – September is the summer menu. The menus are displayed on a 4x weekly cycle on the Family Food First information board situated just outside the office. All menus have been approved by the Family Food First team and meet the criteria for nutrition and variety. Any dietary needs, either for allergies or culture, will be met by the Nursery. A doctor's/hospital letter may be required for allergens. Medication and/or epi pens will need to be on our premises at all times or the child will not be allowed into the Nursery. Parents are required upon registration to provide this information.

The Nursery provides breakfast, a cooked lunch and dessert and two nutritious snacks per day. The timings are included on every menu.

Mealtimes

At each snack and mealtime, the children sit at size appropriate tables and chairs and use size/age appropriate utensils. Open topped cups are provided for all age groups. A small portion of protein, two vegetables and a carbohydrate are initially served, with second helpings as an option, if available. Children are encouraged to try all food on their plate, but are never forced. Dessert is served regardless, unless otherwise expressed by parents.

Children in the Cubs room have a daily food diary for parents to read. Children in the Tigers room have a main room diary where information is logged and passed on to the parents. Children may eat at their own pace.

Mealtime Behaviour

Nursery staff eat with the children at each meal and snack time, children are expected to remain seated whilst eating and noise is to be kept to a minimum, please/thank you and table manners are always encouraged. This is also an opportunity for the children to practice their signing. Children are discouraged from throwing food or eating off others' plates. Pouring drinks and plate scraping are taught. Children can access the food independently when they would like a second serving to encourage independence. Each day there are two different children helpers who assist during meal/snack time. They are distinguishable by their red or yellow tabards with 'Helper' on. Meals are always served regardless of any negative behaviour and food is not used as reward or punishment.

Positive behaviour at mealtimes is always praised.

Educational Links

Cooking and food preparation are a part of the children's daily activity. All children are encouraged and given the opportunity to use all their senses during cooking activities and mealtimes, whilst also learning about food origins and cooking processes, children have a role throughout and are able to taste the end product. Savoury food activities are encouraged. If the children prepare foods that include sugar, children will consume it as part of a meal, or parents will be given it to take home. We have a wide variety of cultural clients and parents who are invited and encouraged to bring in recipes or join in the cooking sessions. These must also be consistent with the Family Food First ethos. Parents are invited to come along on picnics, trips, mums and dads breakfasts and attend events held by the Nursery throughout the year. Parents are asked not to bring foods along unless given permission for dietary requirements and they meet the Family Food First criteria.

Drinks

Water is available throughout the day; jugs are kept on view at a height children can see. Water is also available during outdoor play.

Only milk and water are offered at main meal or snack times.

Open-topped cups are provided for all the children from the start of Nursery at 10 months.

Celebrations

Sweet foods are limited to lunch time dessert only, which generally consist of fruit and full fat milk. BIRTHDAY/LEAVING or any other CELEBRATION CAKES or SWEET TREATS will NOT be accepted into the Nursery. Alternatives for these treats are encouraged, with ideas on display. Parents are advised to ask for ideas. These guidelines also apply during other celebrations such as religious festivals, fun days, fetes and Christmas.

Any celebration meals will be served in the same way as a normal meal i.e. one source of protein, one carbohydrate and two vegetables, with milk or fruit desserts.

Parents are asked to abide and co-operate with this standard during all celebrations.

Guidance will be given for any requests from the Nursery for parents to share food from home with us.

Health and Hygiene

Children may eat outside during a planned activity where appropriate measures have been put into place for seating and hand washing.

Children are encouraged to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds.

Children must wash their hands before and after every snack and mealtime.

Children must wash their hands before and after cooking, gardening, contact with animals and messy activities.

Children are expected and encouraged to wash their hands after every visit to the bathroom and all aspects of personal hygiene.

Staff and visitors are also expected to abide strictly to the above rules.

Information and Guidance

A Family Food First information board is located outside the office. It is accessible to all parents/carers. Information regarding oral health, exercise, breast feeding, recipes, food groups, snack ideas, children's work and photographs are displayed to promote and encourage all aspects of Family Food First.

There is also information on the Healthy Start scheme, application forms for Healthy Start vouchers and information on available free vitamins for pregnant mothers.

There is also a leaflet stand for parents to help themselves to.

Breast Feeding

We have two comfortable private areas available should any parent wish to breast feed their child/baby whilst at the setting. The designated areas are not signposted as they are not in areas of the building that parents would usually need access to during drop off or collection. However, posters are situated in a central area informing parents that breast feeding is welcome and private areas are available to them. A member of staff will happily assist in showing them where to go and ensure that they have access to anything they may need.

Breast milk can be stored in a separate fridge to the Nursery supplies.

Physical Activities

Children should have at least three hours per day of physical exercise. One of these hours is achieved through structured adult led activities and outdoor play during the Nursery day. The hour is broken down into 10-20 minute sessions throughout the day. We also have routine visits from a Active Luton, Dance Flavourz and many other agencies to highlight the importance of physical activities.

A physical activity plan is in place both in Tigers and Cubs rooms and is completed each day by staff members taking the session.

All children are encouraged to take part in every session and sessions are adapted if necessary, depending on the children's needs.

Bottles, Dummies and Lidded Cups

Bottles, dummies and lidded cups have been associated with affecting children's teeth and speech. Using a bottle, dummy or lidded cup is not recommended for prolonged periods as children are more likely to require dental treatment at a young age due to tooth decay from excessive sucking of dummies or drinking from bottles, especially those that contain sweetened drinks such as hot chocolate or juices.

Bottles, dummies and lidded cups can also affect children's speech development and their sipping and swallowing reflex due to sucking only.

We accept children may need these comforters during their settling in period but would work towards using open-topped cups and the absence of dummies with parent's support soon after.

St Anne's

We have a small plot of land at an old people's residential home for growing vegetables. Children are taken there regularly in small groups to plant and maintain the area and when the herbs or vegetables come to fruition, they will be brought back to Nursery to use in meals or snacks. Parents have also helped out with the planting and will continue to be invited along in the future.

Fussy Eating

Children who are fussy eaters will be encouraged to eat the snacks and meals provided by the Nursery. We discourage food being brought in from home as this does not really tackle the problem and at times the food can be unhealthy and with no variety. Smaller portions can be given and children can help in the preparing and serving. Parents will also be asked to work in partnership to implement strategies encouraging their child to eat both in the setting and at home. A child will never be force fed. Children will not be made to feel different from others and the same amount of encouragement is given to all children during mealtimes to try the different foods that have been served, without causing embarrassment or stress to individual children. The more fuss that is made, the less likely they are to eat and this can cause consistent negativity regarding food. Food diaries may be kept to be shared with parents or health practitioners.

Reviewed by June 2021 by Miss Sandhya