

MAYOR OF LONDON

HEALTHY EARLY YEARS LONDON

Cornerstone Under 5's Food and Drink Statement

Date 17/03/2021

Date to be reviewed 17/03/2023 no later than 17/03/2024

Aims

As a Healthy Early Years London setting we want to ensure that we promote the health and well-being of the whole setting community through all aspects of food and nutrition and provide consistent messages to children, parents and staff.

Our food meets the Voluntary food and drink guidelines for Early Years settings in England/ We are working towards meeting the Voluntary food and drink guidelines for Early Years settings in England

<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/resources-and-publications/information-guides/eat-better-start-better-discount>

We consider sustainability when choosing foods to serve:

<http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/pdfs/Eating%20well%20sustainably.%20A%20guide%20for%20Early%20Years%20Settings.pdf>

Our meals and snacks are scheduled at regular times

Either a meal or a snack is offered to children at least every 1½ – 3 hours. Children are offered food every three hours. Children arriving early and/or staying late will be offered an appropriate meal or snack.

This is because children have small stomachs and high nutrient needs as they grow and develop, to play and learn. Only drinking water or milk is provided. Fresh drinking water is available at all times.

We serve age appropriate portion sizes

We serve small portion sizes on child sized plates. It is better for children to ask for seconds than to serve them too much. Children are not praised for finishing the food on their plate. This helps children to recognise when they are hungry and when they have eaten enough. Snacks served are mini-meals, with components as healthy as mealtime choices.

Meal and snack times are relaxed, calm and with shared conversation

Meal and snack times are recognised as an important time to develop verbal skills as well as a time to learn about healthy eating. We eat with the children at mealtimes and eat the same food. We can easily offer help, role model good manners and eating behaviour, direct conversation, and create a calm and relaxed eating environment. At the same time, we can supervise the children eating.

Children are encouraged to try healthy food

Children are encouraged to have a little of the different dishes on their plate and have a balanced diet. Dried fruit is not served as part of a snack as this can cause tooth decay. Children are allowed to say 'no' to foods and all food served is healthy. Food is not used as a reward or punishment. Children are not praised for finishing the food on their plate but will be praised for trying different foods.

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We use food to support the development of children

All children in our setting are given opportunities to explore food using their different senses. Children are involved in growing food and in food preparation, such as simple cold dishes for example, sandwiches, fruit salads etc. Children are encouraged and helped to be successful in whatever self-feeding and self-serving they are capable of doing to support their growing independence. Food is served in a form that young children can eat with minimum assistance and without choking; the texture changing from soft mashed food to adult texture by the age of 12 months.

Parents and/or carers are given information on the meals and snacks provided

We tell parents and/or carers how much their child ate during the day and foods they particularly enjoyed or tried. Children benefit when parents and practitioners share information and work together. Before a child starts to attend the group, staff discusses with parents the child's dietary needs, including any allergies, and make appropriate arrangements to meet them.

We support parents to do the best for their children

We ask for food brought from home to meet Voluntary food and drink guidelines for Early Years settings in England. We encourage eligible pregnant women and mothers with children under four to register with the Healthy Start scheme and access the weekly food vouchers and free Healthy Start vitamins. We provide effective support and information for parents and carers about all aspects of feeding infants and young children. We refer families to HENRY services/workshops parenting programmes on healthy eating and HENRY infant feeding support service

We provide suitable food for all

We follow Department of Health (DH) guidelines on introducing solid food for babies from around six months, when they are displaying signs of being ready. Children with complex needs have their nutrition needs taken into account. A food/drink substitution, made in the case of allergies or other dietary requirements, will be similar in nutrient content to the food/drink it replaces. Foods served reflect the ethnicity and cultures of all children using the provision. Parents and/or carers are asked for advice to ensure the needs of all children are met and we/I learn from carers and parents' experiences and suggestions.

Special occasions and birthdays are celebrated with mostly healthy foods or with non-food treats

We promote non-food celebrations and treats, such as craft projects or stickers, which are pleasant alternatives to birthday sweets. If food is used for celebrations it forms part of a balanced meal provision and does not replace healthy foods.

Only healthy drinks are provided

We follow DH guidelines on preparing and using formula milk. We/I only give children first infant milk and only for the first year of life, practising responsive bottle-feeding. Drinks are offered in an open cup from six months and bottles are stopped at one year. Water and milk are the best drinks for children's teeth and bodies. We/I provide full fat milk for children between one and two; we/I do not use skimmed milk for children under five. Drinking water is available at all times. Juice (even diluted juice) or other sugary drinks are not provided.

We have a supportive breastfeeding environment

Breast milk is the ideal source of nutrition for infants for at least the first year of life. We have refrigerated storage space for expressed breast milk which is clearly labelled with name and date. Mothers are welcome to breastfeed (or express breastmilk) and a secluded space will be provided, if required. We can direct mothers to where they can access further breastfeeding support.

We have received appropriate training

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We have received food safety and hygiene training if involved in preparing and handling food. We have undertaken other relevant training to keep me up to date on healthy drinks and foods suitable for children under five.