



Busy Bees Ledbury – Packed Lunch Policy

Aim

To ensure that children who bring a lunch from home to eat at Busy Bees have food which is just as healthy and nutritious as the snacks we serve throughout the day. New research shows that healthy eating in the Preschool years can influence growth and academic achievement in later life.

Why do we need a policy?

The government has placed a duty on settings to ensure that every child is healthy. In 2010, the Children's Food Trust, (previously named the School Food Trust), was asked by Government to establish an independent panel of experts to look at the existing guidance available for childcare providers on food and drink for young children. This panel, the Advisory Panel on Food and Nutrition in Early Years – which included national organisations representing children's centres, nurseries and individual childminders – looked at evidence and feedback from parents and providers of childcare. The panel found clear demand for a recognised, national source of practical guidance which all providers could choose to follow.

Eating healthily is important because:

- Good nutrition ensures that children get the right amount of energy (calories) and nutrients as children grow rapidly during this time of their life
- Good nutrition ensures children do not consume too much energy (calories) which may lead to obesity or a child becoming overweight.
- We need to encourage children to eat a wide variety of foods to develop good dietary habits for later childhood and even adulthood.
- Healthy eating habits established in childhood help children to be fitter and healthier, develop positive attitudes to food and also help them to learn more quickly and behave better.

This policy has been developed following a meeting with our Local Authority. The Professionals at the meeting highlighted the responsibility of Early Years settings in promoting healthy eating and it was suggested that all settings should write and adopt a packed lunch policy. We are aware of our responsibility in promoting healthy eating and have referred to guidelines from 'Eat Better Start Better' in the development of this policy. The following statistics demonstrate why such a policy is necessary:

- Over one fifth of children are overweight or obese by the time they start in the Reception year at School
- Type II Diabetes is becoming more common in overweight children
- Poor dental health in children
- More than 1 in 4 children could be at risk of iron deficiency which leads to slower intellectual development and poor behaviour.

To ensure we meet our responsibilities in keeping children healthy:

- We will ensure that, in line with the Statutory Framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), children will always have access to fresh drinking water.
- Tables will be cleaned prior to snack time and lunch time to ensure the area is hygienic
- Food will only be prepared by staff who hold Food Hygiene qualifications
- Staff and children always wash their hands before handling any food
- Snack times and lunchtimes are a social occasion where staff act as positive role models by encouraging healthy eating, good manners and conversations.
- We will always provide a healthy snack which children can serve themselves under supervision. Support will be given to children if needed.
- Only water or milk is served between meals

We can use the subject of food and drink to enhance the children's learning through the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development:

Meal times offer children experiences to taste different foods, overcome dislikes and learn how to share. Cooking activities offer opportunities for learning through working with others and increasing self-esteem.

Physical Development:

Fine and gross motor skills can be developed through activities such as gardening, using knives and forks, preparing food, and washing up. Mealtimes can be used to help children to make healthy food choices.

Literacy:

Many stories involve food. Use these to teach about ingredients, where food comes from and about food for special occasions and from different cultures. Language can be developed and senses explored through discussing and describing the taste, texture, size, look and smell of food.

Mathematics:

Activities such as counting out spoons and pieces of fruit when setting the table or at snack time can be used to support numeracy skills. Sorting and matching foods into different types can help promote organisational skills and reasoning. Shopping and weighing activities also contribute to children's knowledge of quantities, money and number recognition.

Communication and Language:

Sitting around a table eating food together is a good way to teach conversation and social skills such as helping your neighbours and accepting difference in culture.

Understanding the World.

Food tasting activities teach children about ingredients, the seasons and where food comes from including food from different cultures. Growing fruit and vegetables teaches children about where food comes from, about life cycles, about gardening and how to look after plants. It is also a good form of physical activity. If there is limited growing space, many vegetables and herbs can be grown on window sills and in pots or bags. For more information, see Growing Schools and the Royal Horticultural Society.

Expressive Arts and Design:

Art activities can engage children with food and alert them to colours and shapes as well as creating things for cultural celebrations.

Suggestions for food to include in a healthy packed lunch

We would ask that all parents and carers refer to the guidance below on what should be included in a packed lunch. We do appreciate that not all children may like or be used to eating some of the foods mentioned so would welcome anything you to think to be a suitable alternative.

- At least one portion of fruit or vegetables every day.
- Meat, fish or other source of non-dairy protein (e.g. lentils, beans, soya or hummus,) every day (usually as part of a sandwich, roll or salad).
- Oily fish, such as pilchards, salmon or tuna as an occasional change.
- A starchy food such as bread, pasta, rice, noodles, potatoes or other type of cereals every day.
- Dairy food such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais or custard.
- A drink: water is best followed by semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, drinking yoghurt, milk drinks or smoothies.
- Cereal bars rather than cakes and biscuits.
- Pretzels, seeds, fruit, crackers and cheese, and vegetable or bread sticks with a dip.

Suggestions for food to include less often in a healthy packed lunch

- Pure fruit juice for the high sugar content
- Snacks such as crisps due to the high salt content
- Small chocolate coated biscuits or wafers.
- Small cakes – if the child has helped bake them at home then all the better.
- Meat and pastry products such as sausage rolls or pies as they often contain lots of fats

We would appreciate it if you did not include any of these items in your child's lunch box:

- Confectionery such as chocolate bars or sweets including items such as Twix, Mars Bars, Freddos, Chocolate Buttons etc..
- Fizzy drinks as these are mostly very unhealthy.

Please remember that children do not have to bring sandwiches if they do not particularly like them. Children are welcome to bring in a roll, wrap, salad, pasta, crackers, breadsticks or couscous as an alternative.

As well as being conscious of what parents are including in their child's lunch box, we would also like to encourage parents to monitor the quantity of food. If children are bringing sandwiches, for example, you might also want to include a piece of fruit and a yoghurt – this is plenty. Children often feel very proud when they have finished all of their lunch but some children have so much food that they could not possibly eat all of it so never get praise for finishing.

We ask that all lunchboxes contain an ice pack to ensure that refrigerated items remain cool.

Special diets

Busy Bees Ledbury recognises that some children may have verified medical conditions requiring special diets that do not allow for the guidelines to be followed exactly. In this case parents are urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible.

Publication of the policy

The policy will be available on our website and will be incorporated into our welcome pack. We also inform parents on admission about this policy.

All staff will be informed of this policy and will support its implementation.

References:

<http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/advice/eat-better-start-better>

[http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/assets/eat-better-start-better/CFT%20Early%20Years%20Guide Interactive Sept%202012.pdf](http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/assets/eat-better-start-better/CFT%20Early%20Years%20Guide%20Interactive%20Sept%202012.pdf)

http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/treatments/healthy_living/nutrition/life_toddlers.shtml

<http://www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/change-for-life.aspx>

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/childhealth6-15/Pages/Lighterlunchboxes.aspx>

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