



Packed lunches and snacks Policy

Statement of intent

We regard snack time and lunch time as important parts of our session. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We aim to achieve this while also ensuring we follow best practice with regard to food safety and hygiene and promoting positive nutrition standards.

Early years settings have a regulatory obligation to provide healthy, balanced and nutritious food. Food provided from home should align with these nutrition standards, and to that end it is our responsibility to encourage healthier food choices for packed lunches.

When children eat together it broadens their exposure to different foods and encourages them to try foods they may otherwise be reluctant to try. Similarly, if they see other children eating things we would regard as unhealthy, such as crisps and biscuits, it encourages them to request similar foods for their packed lunches. So, in setting out some rules about what can and can't be included in snacks and packed lunches we aim to improve the general nutritional quality and also reduce the "pester power" of children asking parents for unhealthy choices because other children have them.

IMPORTANT: ALL FOOD CONTAINERS AND WATER BOTTLES MUST BE CLEARLY NAMED

NO NUTS OF ANY KIND (Includes chocolate spreads)

Drinks

- Only water to be provided. If squash is provided, we will replace it with water
- We provide milk for children who drink milk.
- A small fresh fruit juice can be included with lunch

Snacks

Please provide a snack from the following list:

- A piece of fresh fruit (any small fruit – grapes/berries/tomatoes – should be cut into quarters)
- Vegetable batons (eg carrot / peppers / cucumber)
- Portion of plain crackers / rice cakes / bread sticks
- A dip eg houmous
- Batons of cheese

Lunches

What to include:

Try to include something from each of the four food groups:

- Carbohydrates
- Fruit and vegetables
- Milk and Dairy
- Protein

Examples:

- Wholegrain sandwiches/wraps/pittas with a protein filling
- Rice or pasta salads with vegetables and/or protein
- Cooked fresh meats / boiled egg
- Fresh fruit or vegetables
- Yoghurt / custard / rice pudding – pots with a spoon only
- Occasional home baked treats such as banana bread or plain cupcakes/biscuits

Pack items that can be stored at room temperature, or ask us to put items in the fridge if necessary (these **MUST** be named)

What **not** to include:

- Crisps
- Sweets
- Processed biscuits/cakes
- “suckie” type yoghurts, or any food in pouches.
- Limit raisins to one small box, once a week (they stick to teeth)
- No ultra processed packaged food such as cheese strings, fruit winders etc (they are ultra processed and often contain lots of sugar).

Here is a visual of what we mean:

"Healthy"

A healthy packed lunch should include



"Unhealthy"

A packed lunch should avoid



Source: Food Standards Agency

There are lots of websites with ideas and pictures of interesting and healthy lunchboxes. Here's one we have found – but there are lots more:

https://www.foodforlife.org.uk/media/vsdfjizo/packed-lunches-guidance.pdf?v=9wxXsl_kpUU&list=PLVVDe5yDpj6fTaOdmqqeqjiINP--chXSM

And here's a more comprehensive PDF guide on practical ideas for packed lunches for 1 to 5 year old's from the First Steps Nutrition Trust:



First steps nutrition
Eating Well_Packed lu

The NHS “Better health healthier families” website is also really useful. From there you can download the **Food Scanner App** to help you find healthier choices while you shop. There is a link to download the App on our website or you can use this link below. The website also has lots of information on food generally as well as recipe ideas. It is well worth a look.

<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/food-facts/nhs-food-scanner-app/>

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	Child's Play Pre-School	name of setting
Held on (date)	19/08/25	
Signed on behalf of the Proprietor		
Role of signatory		
This policy was reviewed on		(date)