



## Partnerships Nursery

### Early Years Food & Healthy Eating Policy

**Statement/Aims:** At Partnerships nursery we encourage children to develop a positive attitude to food and healthy lifestyles. This is achieved through adopting a whole setting approach which encompasses children, their families and staff. 'Good health in the early years helps to safeguard health and wellbeing throughout life. It is important that children develop healthy habits when they first learn about food and activity' (Early Years Foundation Stage, DfES, 2008)

Date of Policy: November 2010

Review date: November 2011

## **Introduction**

This policy recognises that children under the age of 5 years have different nutritional needs to those of older children and adults. They have a high energy and nutrient requirement in relation to their size. Healthy eating messages aimed at adults are not wholly appropriate for children in early years. Early years is an important time to shape food preferences and habits, by allowing children to make their own selections through guided choice, this can have a positive impact on health in later life.

This policy covers general nutrition guidance; children have individual needs which should be acknowledged. If parents/carers have any concerns they should discuss these with their Health visitor, GP or a dietitian.

N.B. points identified with (EYFS) are linked to statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage which sets the legal requirements relating to learning, development and welfare of children from birth to five.

## **General**

- Those responsible for food preparation and handling of food must be competent to do so (EYFS) and will have the appropriate food hygiene/safety qualifications
- Information must be made available to parents/carers regarding food and drinks provided for the children (EYFS) e.g. Menus will be displayed for parents/carers to see
- If agreed with parents/carers, children who do not receive breakfast at home will be offered this on arrival. Breakfast cereals will be non-sugar coated varieties
- If parents provide packed lunches or other foods from home, the nursery will inform them about what can be transported and stored safely and about appropriate food content (EYFS)
- Staff will be good role models for healthy eating
- Whole nuts will not be served due to risk of choking

## **Allergies/Food Preferences/Special Diets**

- The setting will obtain and record necessary information from parents/carers regarding any ethnic/cultural or special dietary requirements, preferences or food allergies in advance of the child being admitted to the nursery. This will be reviewed during attendance at the nursery (EYFS)

## Nutrition

- The setting will provide healthy, balanced and nutritious meals, snacks and drinks (EYFS)
- Foods from the four main food groups will be offered every day (starchy carbohydrates, fruit and vegetables, milk and dairy foods and proteins\*)
- Main meals will include foods from the following food groups: starchy carbohydrates, protein, dairy and fruit and vegetables\*
- No salt will be added to foods and foods high in salt (e.g. gravy granules, stock cubes, ready-made sauces etc) will be used as little as possible. If these are used these will be the lowest salt variety available
- Foods containing added sugar will be confined to meal times to reduce the risk of dental decay

### \*Food Groups

**Starchy Carbohydrates include:** Breads, cereals, pasta, rice, potatoes – these provide a good source of energy

**Fruit and Vegetables include:** fresh, frozen, tinned (fruit in juice, vegetables in water with no added salt or sugar), dried and juiced fruit and vegetables (dried and juiced fruit should only be consumed as part of a meal) – these provide a good source of vitamins and minerals

**Dairy foods include:** milk, cheese and yoghurts- these provide a good source of calcium for healthy teeth and bones

**Foods containing protein include:** meats, fish, eggs, pulses and nuts (whole nuts will not be served due to risk of choking) – these are required for growth and repair

## Meal Times

- Nursery staff will pro-actively involve children at meal times to create a social occasion which provides opportunities to promote children's social and educational development as well as encourage good eating habits and table manners
- Fussy eaters will be encouraged (but not forced) to eat. Praise will be given when the child eats, food will be removed without judgement if the child refuses food
- If a child refuses the main course a portion of dessert will still be offered
- Children will be given as much time as they need to finish meals

## **Snacks**

- Snacks will be offered between meals to ensure children receive appropriate levels of energy and nutrition, for example at mid morning and mid afternoon
- Snacks will be low in sugar - No dried fruit, biscuits, cakes or confectionary will be offered at snack time to reduce the risk of dental decay

Suitable snacks include fresh fruit, natural yoghurt, vegetable sticks with dips, sandwiches, homemade pizzas, homemade potato wedges, savoury pancakes, couscous or rice salad, plain popcorn etc. For more information refer to the guidance produced by the Caroline Walker Trust detailed in the useful information section

## **Drinks**

- Children will have access to drinking water at all times (EYFS)
- Children under the age of 12 months will be given breast or formula milk and water
- Children aged 1-2 years of age will be given whole cows milk, those over the age of 2 years may be offered semi-skimmed milk
- The only drinks provided throughout the day at any time other than with meals will be milk and water
- Diluted pure unsweetened fruit juice may be served with main meals (diluted to ½ water ½ juice)

## **Celebrations and Rewards**

- Children will be rewarded without the use of confectionary or other foods e.g. praising children, stickers, reward charts, certificates etc
- The setting will encourage staff to be innovative in the way birthdays and festivals are celebrated e.g. without the use of foods high in added sugar and salt
- Where birthday cakes are brought into the setting, they will take into account possible allergies/special diets of other children and will be eaten at meal times e.g. as a dessert or sent home with the child at the end of the day with parents/carers
- Parents/carers will be discouraged from bringing 'party bags' of confectionary into the setting
- Parents/carers will be consulted over appropriate ways to celebrate ethnic/cultural and religious occasions

## Infant Feeding

### Breastfeeding/formula milk

The setting will support breastfeeding mothers by:

- Ensuring breastfeeding mothers are made welcome and are able to breastfeed their baby in the nursery
- Encouraging parents to bring expressed breast milk into the setting, this should be transported in a cool bag, clearly labelled with the name of the infant, date and time. Breast milk should be stored in accordance to the latest guidelines (see useful information section). Two members of staff should check that the express breast milk is given to the relevant child

For information on the Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme see useful information section

- Formula milk should be prepared, transported and stored in accordance to the latest guidelines (see useful information section)

### Weaning

The Department of Health recommends babies should not be weaned until around 6 months and that solid food should never be introduced before 4 months (17 weeks) of age

- The above guidelines will be shared with parents to enable them to make an informed choice regarding weaning
- The introduction of solid foods will be carried out by the setting in accordance to the parent/carers wishes
- The Department of Health currently recommends that; Infants under 6 months of age will not be given: foods containing gluten, eggs, fish, shellfish, liver, nuts and seeds, soft or unpasteurised cheese, low fat foods, honey, sugar and salt
- Each infant should be assessed individually, dependent on their age and readiness for solids. Infants who are weaned around 6 months of age should move onto lumpier textures and soft finger foods more quickly than those started earlier to ensure continued development of normal feeding behaviour
- Once infants are competent in taking solids a variety of foods from the 4 main food groups should be included in the weaning diet to ensure their nutritional requirements are being met
- Honey and salt will not be given or added to foods given to children under 12 months of age
- Preterm babies need special consideration and advice should be sought by parents/carers from the health visitor/medical team/dietitian who are caring for them

For more information on weaning refer to useful information section

## Top Tips for Good Practice

- Use wipe clean table cloths or place mats to create a 'dining room' environment at meal times
- Use child sized cutlery and crockery
- Involve children in table setting and clearing away after meals
- Meal times can be used as an opportunity for children to learn about healthy eating and socialising

### References

Caroline Walker Trust. 2006. Eating well for under 5's in childcare

DfES. 2008. The Early Years Foundation Stage

Department of Health North West. 2009. Best Start for Life: Guidelines for food, nutrition, play and physical activity for early years childcare

The Stationery Office Limited. The Education (Nutritional Standards and School Food) (England) Regulations 2007 No. 2359

### Acknowledgements

Nursery Nutrition Steering Group

Liverpool Community Nutrition and Dietetic Department, Liverpool Community Health Infant Nutrition Programme Manager, Liverpool Primary Care Trust

Liverpool Community Health Trust, Directorate of Community Dental Health Early Years team

For further information or additional copies of the policy please contact  
HM Partnerships, Burlington House, Crosby Road North, Liverpool L22 0QB  
E: [info@hmpartnerships.co.uk](mailto:info@hmpartnerships.co.uk) T: 0151 928 7830

## Useful information

### National

**Early Years Foundation Stage** – [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/eyfs](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/eyfs)

**Eating Well for Under 5's in Child Care, Caroline Walker Trust** – Guidance that provides definitive advice on what eating well means for this age group. It provides both nutritional and practical advice to all those who are involved in the early years sector. [www.cwt.org.uk](http://www.cwt.org.uk)

**Children Eating Well (CHEW)** – resources to purchase that illustrate portion sizes for children of different ages. [www.cwt-chew.org.uk](http://www.cwt-chew.org.uk)

**Food Standards Agency – Eat well** – [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk) [www.eatwell.gov.uk](http://www.eatwell.gov.uk)

**Five a Day** – [www.5aday.nhs.uk](http://www.5aday.nhs.uk)

**North West Dental Health** – [www.northwestdentalhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.northwestdentalhealth.nhs.uk)

**Healthy Start** – Families who are eligible can get free vouchers every week which you swap for milk, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and infant formula milk. You can also get free vitamins which are available at Liverpool Children's Centres and designated Health Centres. <http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>

**Department of Health Leaflets** download, order free online or by phone 0300 123 1002

**Off to the Best Start** - This leaflet contains information about breastfeeding  
[http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod\\_consum\\_dh/groups/dh\\_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh\\_107908.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_107908.pdf)

**Breastfeeding and Work** - This leaflet explains how you can breastfeed and work.  
[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_082505](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_082505)

**Guidance for Health Professionals on Safe Preparation, Storage and Handling of Powdered Infant Formula**

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod\\_consum\\_dh/groups/dh\\_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh\\_063693.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_063693.pdf)

**Bottle feeding** - This leaflet contains information on how to make up feeds as safely as possible to reduce the risks of giving formula milk to babies  
[http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod\\_consum\\_dh/groups/dh\\_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh\\_100127.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_100127.pdf)

**Weaning**

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_4117080](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4117080)

## Local

**Liverpool Community Nutrition and Dietetic Department** – queries about nutrition in early years  
Tel: 0151 295 3865 Email: [Clare.Jones@LiverpoolCH.nhs.uk](mailto:Clare.Jones@LiverpoolCH.nhs.uk)

**Liverpool Community Health Trust, Directorate of Community Dental Health Early Year's team** - for advice and support on dental health in early years  
Tel: 0151 285 2811

**Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme** – The Liverpool Primary Care Trust and Liverpool City Council Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme supports the needs of breastfeeding women, babies and families. Those premises signed up to the scheme will provide a welcome, safe and clean and comfortable environment to mothers who want to breastfeed, with appropriate levels of support from friendly staff.

If you wish to sign up to the breastfeeding welcome scheme or would like posters raising awareness of breastfeeding , please contact: Infant Nutrition Programme Manager, Liverpool PCT, 1 Arthouse Square, 61-69 Seel St, L1 4AZ or email [Kate.McFadden@liverpoolpct.nhs.uk](mailto:Kate.McFadden@liverpoolpct.nhs.uk)

**Breastfeeding website for Liverpool** – [www.amazingbreastmilk.nhs.uk](http://www.amazingbreastmilk.nhs.uk)

**Liverpool BAMBIS** (Babies and Mums Breastfeeding Information and Support)  
Liverpool BAMBIS offer breastfeeding peer support to mums and families throughout Liverpool, from pregnancy onwards. We are always looking for women who would be interested in training to become volunteer peer supporters.  
Tel: 0151 702 4411 Email: [bambis@lwh.nhs.uk](mailto:bambis@lwh.nhs.uk)