



HEALTHY EARLY YEARS LONDON

Monkey Puzzle Golders Green

Food and Drink Statement

Date: April 2019

Date to be reviewed: Dec 2021

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 menu meets the Voluntary food and drink guidelines for Early Years settings in England and we have a 5 star hygiene rating from the Local Authority.

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. 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 breakfast between 7:30am-9am; we serve a variety of healthy options such as Weetabix, Porridge, Rice Krispies and Cornflakes. We then serve snack at 10am, lunch at 11:30am, snack at 2.30pm and a light hot or cold meal at 3:45pm. All meals are freshly prepared onsite by our nursery chef.

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. 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. Practitioners model this behaviour for the children themselves.

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 and independent 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 and oversee dietary needs. Staff also support children when eating by showing them how to use knives and forks to feed themselves and promote independence.

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. Limited amounts of dried fruit is served as part of a snack so as not to cause tooth decay. 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.

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 food related sensory activities, for example fruit painting, cornflour play, making sensory bottles, and pasta play; in food preparation, such as simple cold dishes like making sandwiches and have a cooking club every other week in which they create, mould, feel, assess and eat their produce. Children are encouraged and helped to be successful and independent in many ways, for example self-serving, using knives and forks independently, as well as helping to set the table for meal

times. 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. When creating our menus, we ask for parents input to see what they would like on the menu and if it is feasible to make. As part of our healthy eating programme our menu consists of salmon, vegetables, and salads. We also offer seasonal changes and ask parents for suggestions relating to their culture to encourage diversity in meals.

We support parents to do the best for their children

We regularly provide parents with information about the importance of a healthy diet in our monthly newsletters and on the parent noticeboard via leaflets. We will also be encouraging 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, weaning and fussy eating.

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 considered. 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 reflects 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 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 doesn't replace healthy foods. Low sugar options are provided wherever possible. Chocolate is never used in the setting.

Only healthy drinks are provided

We follow strict hygiene and procedures guidelines on preparing and using formula milk. Parents provide their preferred brand in the first year of life which is stored/heated as per strict guidelines in our milk kitchen. 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 provide full fat milk for children between one and two; we 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 the staff room is available for this in privacy. We can direct mothers to where they can access further breastfeeding support.

We have received appropriate training

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