



A food policy can also be used as evidence of your commitment to healthy eating and activity for prospective clients, the local authority or the Care Inspectorate.

Framework for developing a food and nutrition policy

Developing a food policy will help everyone (managers, staff, cooks, parents and children) to create a common understanding about your approach to food provision and learning about food. The best way to achieve this is to engage with staff, parents and children in its development and review. This will allow everyone a chance to discuss, agree the aims and add to or change what is proposed. Your policy can be shared with new parents as information on your approach to healthy eating.

The information you include in a food policy will vary depending on your setting and the number, age and needs of children you care for. Here are some ideas for the sort of information you may wish to consider when developing a policy:

- What best practice guidelines are you going to use?
- What food will you provide for meals and snacks?
- What type of drinks will you provide and when will you provide them?
- How will you engage with all the parents and families of the children you care for?
- How will you provide a suitable environment for eating and how will you promote the social aspects of food and eating?
- What will be your policy on food brought in from the home?
- What will be your policy on rewards, celebrations and special events?
- How will you manage the situation when children refuse to eat or will only eat certain foods?
- What will you say to parents who send unhealthy food items from home?
- What will be your approach to learning with food?
- What will be your approach to food safety and hygiene – what policies/staff training will you put in place to ensure a safe environment?
- How will you promote breastfeeding, physical activity and good dental health?
- What will be your policy for providing food for children who require a special diet?
- How will you let all parents know about your policy?

Below are some examples of policies that can be adapted to your own needs or can be used as a discussion point with parents.

What are you going to say about developing good eating habits?

Staff and carers:

We will encourage children to enjoy sitting and eating and drinking with others and helping each other with their food and drink (e.g. at snack time, pouring the drinks).
Children will not be expected to finish everything on their plate and will be allowed extra if they are still hungry.

What will you do if a child does not eat?

If a child does not like the food:

Children who do not eat the food will be offered an acceptable alternative, e.g. a sandwich, plain crackers, cheese, fruit, and milk-based desserts.

If it is a continuing problem:

Regular informal contact with parents will let them know how their child has been eating and make them aware of any difficulties.

What advice will you give to parents about bringing food into your setting?

Bringing sweets and chocolates into the early years setting:

Confectionery will not be given to children. We ask parents not to give children sweets or chocolates to bring into the nursery, including treats such as party bags containing sweets.

For the occasional very special celebration, children may receive these as part of the activities.

Packed lunches:

We will encourage parents to provide packed lunches that contain healthy options.