



## Healthy Eating and Food Policy

### Policy Statement

Footprints pre-school recognises the importance of a healthy lifestyle to enable optimal growth, well-being, development and mental health of our children.

We aim to ensure that all children in our care are growing and learning well together in a healthy environment.

At Footprints we:

1. Encourage healthy food choices that are nutritious and tasty
2. Raise awareness of healthy eating
3. Encourage the idea of sourcing food locally to reduce the impact on the environment by shopping and cooking in a sustainable way.

Footprints pre-school is a large, clean, inviting environment where children are encouraged to be independent in their healthy choices. We do this in the following ways:

Talking about healthy foods and healthy food choices

Being good role models and encouraging children's social skills at snack and lunch times.

Staff monitor food choices, portion size, eating habits and encourage the children to tidy the area after use.

Children are encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners.

Only healthy drink options are encouraged – milk or water (no soda or fizzy drinks).

Children drink from open cups as this promotes good dental development.

Water is available at all times from a water cooler.

Staff will encourage children to drink water regularly.

Children will learn about food growing in the outdoor environment.

We aim to offer cooking opportunities termly for children to experience.

Children are taught basic hygiene themselves, washing their hands with soap and water before and after eating meals or snacks and after going to the toilet or handling animals.

Children are taught not to eat food that has fallen on the floor.

We understand that some children can be 'fussy eaters'. This can be a normal part of development, which affects between 10 – 20% of children under 5.

We aim to overcome a child's fear of new foods by seating fussy eaters with good eaters at snack time as a good role model.

Children should be exposed to new foods regularly at home and given choices to taste as this increases their willingness to try.

Children are praised for trying new foods and are never pressurised to eat, as we understand that these aversions may last into adulthood.

### **Communicating with children and families**

Upon enrolling at Footprints, staff will discuss our food policy with parents and chat about the eating habits of their child, plus any special dietary requirements or concerns.

Key Persons will give regular feedback to parents regarding the eating habits of their child at pre-school.

### **Special dietary requirements**

Special dietary requirements, whether these are medical, cultural or religious, are taken into account. We understand that every child needs to feel valued and included and that they can have healthy food and drink choices appropriate for their needs. Special dietary requirements are noted upon registration for all staff to be aware of.

### **Weight Management**

Footprints are aware of the health risks of being overweight or obese. We are here to help any children/parents who are worried about being overweight or obese and can advise with strategies to maintain children's weight.

### **Cultural and other Special Occasions**

It is important that children are given the opportunity to celebrate special occasions and cultural events and food & drink is often used to mark these occasions. However, many foods and drinks served at celebrations can be high in saturated fat, sugar and salt and therefore have limited nutritional value for young children.

Our 'Healthy Eating and Food Policy' enables our setting to meet the National guidelines.

Footprints will continue to promote healthy eating options and environmental practices.

This policy was adopted by Footprints Pre-school

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
On behalf of Management (Manager, Owner, Chairperson)

Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please note this is a guide to a policy and procedure. It is not meant to be directly copied and it is highly recommended that all members develop documents specific to their service and needs. This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other essentials required.