



# LINKS CHILDCARE POLICIES & PROCEDURES

## Nutrition and Eating Policy

Last Review Date: April 2023

Policy No. 22

Issued: 2012

### Policy Statement

Links Childcare believes that children should develop healthy eating habits from a young age for both the pleasure of having a wide variety in their diets and gaining knowledge about nutrition. Our meal times are treated as an opportunity for social interaction as well as laying the foundations about making healthy choices. This policy is available to all on [www.linkschildcare.ie](http://www.linkschildcare.ie) (<https://linkschildcare.ie/about-us/our-policies/>) or contact us at [info@linkschildcare.ie](mailto:info@linkschildcare.ie).

### Principle

This policy is underpinned by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and the Department of Health Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Pre-School Services 2006.

### Procedure

- We encourage the nutritional and overall well-being of all children in our care.
- We support children to develop lifelong healthy eating practices and a positive approach towards food in partnership with parents.
- We recognise the dietary needs of all children and aim to ensure that all children's individual and cultural needs are met.
- Food is only purchased from reputable suppliers who comply with food safety practices.
- The storage, preparation of food in the crèche complies with HACCP requirements.
- Good nutrition is essential for children of pre-school and school going age. Making healthy food choices enables children to attain their optimum growth, development and health potential. Healthy eating allows children to take full advantage of the opportunity to learn and to play during the day in our care and at home.
- All our meal and snack times are treated as a social occasion. We create a relaxed atmosphere, plenty of time is given to each child to finish or decide when they have enough eaten. We encourage children to be independent at meal/snack times, feeding themselves, taking their own food portions, pouring their own drinks and helping with the cleaning up afterwards.
- All adults working with their particular group of children sit with them at meal/snack times and listen, chat and make this an enjoyable social occasion. Babies will be held upright for bottle feeding, bottles will not be propped up for any reason, (bottle feeding time will be seen as a time to develop relationships between baby and adult).
- Spoon-fed babies will be positioned so that they can see other children eating and are included in the dining experience.
- A 3-week menu will be on display in advance.
- Meals will be prepared by qualified chefs and will be well balanced and provide for a wide variety of food from each of the main food groups daily:
  - Carbohydrates (rice, cereal, bread, pasta)
  - Vitamins and Minerals (Fruit and vegetables)
  - Protein (Meat/Fish/Vegetarian alternatives/Dairy products)
- Processed foods and meats such as chicken nuggets, burgers and sausages will never be served
- Fizzy drinks will not be served at any time in the crèche.
- Good table manners and positive behaviour is encouraged at mealtimes
- Alternative meals will be offered to children should the staff member deem it necessary.



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### Procedure around infants and babies:

- Infants will be held upright for bottle feeding, bottles will never be propped. Bottle feeding will be seen as a time to build warm, nurturing relationships between infant/baby and adult. Mothers will be supported to continue breastfeeding their children, breast milk will be labelled and stored in the designated fridge.
- Formula milk feeds for infants will be provided by parents and ready to use. Staff will not make up formula feeds.
- Our staff will work closely with parents when their baby is being weaned, either off breast milk or onto solid feeds. We will introduce drinks from a feeding beaker or cup from about six months. We will allow children to use their fingers to eat food and help to feed themselves. We will never add food to baby's bottle. We will avoid adding sugar or salt to food. We will avoid using packet sauces, soups or stock cubes, as the salt content is high.

### Procedure for all other children:

- Full fat milk will be served with morning and afternoon snacks.
- Potable drinking water will be available at all times.
- Water will be served with main meals.
- All children will have suitable food available depending on their age, development and needs, using the recommended servings table as a guide.

### Children in crèche for more than 5 hours per session (full day care)

- At least two meals and snack for example – breakfast, snack, lunch
- If children are there for a long day, an evening meal will also be provided.

### Children in crèche for up to 5 hours maximum per session (part-time day care)

- At least one meal and snack – snack and lunch.

### Children in crèche for up to 3.5 hours per session (sessional pre-school service)

- One snack – for example snack (provided by parent)

### Sharing with Parents/Guardians:

Children's food and drink intake throughout the day will be recorded in the daily diaries, this will be shared with each child's parent/guardian at the end of the day. A record will be held on the premises. Parents will be advised if their child is not eating well and a plan put in place in co-operation with the parent. Recipes and food ingredients will be available to parents. Parents/guardians will be consulted around the dietary or religious requirements of their child and plans put in place to meet these.

### Special Dietary Needs

Where a child has special dietary needs, these needs supersede the guidelines expressed in this policy. Special dietary requirements will be met and parents will be asked for guidelines to follow in relation to the child's diet.



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### Allergies:

Staff will be made aware if any of the children in our setting have any of the following allergies: - Peanuts and tree nuts - Sesame and other seeds - Fish and shellfish - Dairy products - Eggs - Soya - Wasp or bee stings - Natural latex rubber - Penicillin and other drugs The 14 top allergens served in the service food will be noted on the daily menu board to inform parents.

### Prevention measures:

Care will be taken to prevent accidental consumption of foods which a child may be allergic to.

- A chart will be kept in each room with the name of the child and the allergy type. If a child's name/photo needs to be displayed in a room for safety purposes, permission will be sought from parents.
- When preparing food, great care will be taken to ensure no allergic food type will come into contact with other foods
- For severe allergic reactions, children may use an injectable adrenaline aka Epi-pen/Anapen/Jext. Staff will be trained on their use and what to do in the event of anaphylactic shock.

### Parental Guidance for Healthy Snacks

Links Childcare operates a Healthy Eating Policy. All children attending full day/half day care are provided with a healthy fruit snack in the morning. Pre-School sessional children are advised to bring a healthy snack to Pre-School each day to consume during the morning. Parents are advised to provide their child with a healthy snack (non-perishable foods).

Advice to parents on healthy snacks:

- Provide a varied, nutritious, balanced snack
- Choose a snack low in added sugars
- Sugary beverages should be avoided

Snacks should not include:

- Sweets
- Chocolate
- Crisps
- High added sugar foods
- Birthday Treats

It is the policy of Links Childcare not to administer 'Birthday Treats', of any kind, provided by parents. The crèche will celebrate the birthday occasion in a manner suitable to the crèche setting without interfering with eating plans or HACCP regulations



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### Review

Management, in consultation with staff, monitors and reviews the effectiveness of this policy yearly or as required.

<b>Review Dates:</b>	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	January 2020	October 2020	April 2023
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