



Healthy under 5s



Healthy food, drinks and eating habits help children grow and learn. Orchard Children's Centre has been part of Bedfordshire NHS' Healthy Under Fives award for the past seven years. This ensures that we offer healthy snacks, opportunities to be physically active and to learn about healthy eating and good oral health. This policy covers our Nutrition Policy and our Celebrations Policy.

Snack

- The children's centre will supply healthy snacks at sessions where appropriate.
- The snack menu will be checked by the Healthy Under 5s dietician.
- Cultural or personal food beliefs will be handled with respect and sensitivity by children's centre staff, and parents/carers opinions will be taken into account when planning future menus.
- Parents are asked to let us know whether their child has any allergies or special dietary needs when signing their child in for the session, and are responsible for the foods their children eat whilst at the session. Where possible if the centre staff are notified in advance of a dietary need we will amend our menu to accommodate this.
- Parents/carers are asked not to bring their own snack as we only have snacks as approved by the dietician, and because there may be children with allergies in the session or in the next session.

Snack times

- We use a 'rolling snack', so that children can come when they are hungry, during the session.
- Snacks will be served at appropriately sized tables and chairs with child size bowls, plates and cutlery.
- Parents/carers are asked to wash their child's hands before eating, and after using the toilet.
- Children will be encouraged to try new and varied food and given the opportunity to help themselves to more from the platters provided.
- We encourage children to remain at the table whilst eating.
- Children's centre staff will not use food as a reward for "good" behaviour and all children will be offered an equal opportunity for food and drink.

Drinks

- Milk and water will be offered during snack time and be available throughout the session.
- Drinks will be offered in either open top plastic cups or open top "doidy" cups to encourage young children to drink from an open top cup.
- Doidy cups will be available for families to buy and to borrow to try out before purchase.

Building parents' and carers' knowledge

- Visitors will be invited from oral health and dietetic services to visit and offer advice and education to parents/carers and children, including ditch the dummy and bottle to cup sessions.

- Opportunities to taste, play with and explore food will be offered regularly at our stay and play sessions.
- Courses will be run to give parents ideas for healthy meals.
- If sweet foods are made during sessions parents/carers will be asked to take those foods home to eat at the appropriate times – such as after a main meal.
- Sessions will also incorporate oral health based activities such as tooth cleaning on a model of a mouth.
- Weaning sessions will be offered to inform parents of suitable foods from 6 months.
- At our postnatal groups we provide information and have discussions about weaning and breastfeeding.

Celebrations

- We discourage families from bringing in food to celebrate a child's birthday.
- Should parents/carers provide a birthday cake we will explain the policy and ask them to take it home.
- To celebrate special occasions and festivals such as Chinese New Year, Christmas, Diwali and others, we will vary our normal snack menu to include healthy themed snacks and meals to give children a good opportunity to taste foods from other cultures.
- If we provide food for any celebration the menu will be agreed with the dietetic service.

Baby feeding

- Orchard Children's Centre will offer support to women to enable them to breastfeed as long as they want, including mixed feeding and expressing.
- The centre participates in Unicef's Baby Friendly Award, with Bedfordshire NHS.
- All staff are trained to support breastfeeding in all sessions and specifically at the Baby Brasserie sessions.
- Parents/carers who are giving formula milk will also be able to access support and information through the children's centre, using the guidance from the Department of Health, for making up bottles and the recommendation that stage one milk is all that is needed.

Healthy Start

- The children's centre will promote the Healthy Start scheme and provide vitamin drops and tablets for those on the scheme.

Policy Agreed	March 2015
Next Review Date	March 2016
Headteacher	Tracey Callender
Chair of Governors	Mark Liddiard
Children's Centre Co-ordinator	Catherine Williams