

Healthy Eating & Nutrition Policy and Procedure Template

Sample Policy Statement – At our service we believe that good health in the early years helps to safeguard children’s health and well-being throughout life. We believe it is important that children develop healthy eating habits when they first learn about food and activity. We Treat mealtimes as an opportunity to promote children’s social development, while enjoying food and highlighting the importance of making healthy choices.

Legislation & Regulation:

The Child Care Act 1991

The Child Care (Pre-School) Regulations, 2006.

I.S: 340 Hygiene and Catering Requirements.

I.S: 344 Guide to Good Hygiene Practices in Domestic Premises.

Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Pre-Schools, Health Promotion Unit, Department of Health.

Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998

E.C (Quality of Water Intended for Human Consumption) Regulations 1998

E.C. Hygiene of Foodstuffs Regulations 2000 (S.I.165 of 2000)

Issues to consider when developing a healthy eating and nutrition policy:-

Regulation 5 -

Assessment Criteria	Practice Signposts	Documentation
<p>1(a) Eating and drinking</p> <p><i>Example</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promotion of healthy food • availability of snacks and drinking water • supervision, timing of feeding and encouragement for self-feeding if appropriate • availability of menus • availability of age appropriate feeding equipment • children’s choices 	<p>Adults who:</p> <p>Provide a varied, nutritious, balanced diet, which is ample and is available when needed.</p> <p>Are flexible, relaxed, sociable and encourage children to enjoy meal times in an unhurried manner.</p> <p>Encourage and support self –feeding</p> <p>Ensure drinking water is freely available</p> <p>Provide furniture, crockery and cutlery that are safe, age appropriate and easy to manage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition policy • Menus • Parents handbook • Food pyramid poster • Photographs • Child records

Pre-School Regulations – Regulation 26

Children in day care up to 3.5 hours – Offer 1 meal & 1 snack eg. Snack & Lunch or breakfast & snack.

Children in day care up to 5 hours - Offer at least 2 meals & 1 snack eg. Breakfast, snack & lunch (it is not necessary to have a hot meal).

Children in day care for more than 5 hours –Offer at least 2 meals & 2 snacks, eg. Breakfast, snack lunch & snack. 1 meal should be a hot meal.

Points to consider when developing Healthy Eating and Nutrition Policy and Procedures:

- Nutritional value of food
- Breast feeding
- Weaning
- Limited use of processed food including salt / additives
- Provision of food by parents
- Daily menu
- Meals
- The Food Pyramid.
- Snacks and drinks
- Special dietary needs & allergies
- Food safety
- HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point)

Procedures:

- Full fat milk will be served with morning and afternoon snacks. A low-fat or semi-skimmed milk option will be available at parents' request for children over 2 years of age, who eat a varied diet.
- Potable drinking Water will be available at all times.
- Fizzy drinks and fruit squash will not be provided.
- Diluted pure unsweetened fruit juice will be served with main meals.
- Children will have access to bread or fruit if they are hungry between scheduled meal and snack times.
- Mothers will be supported to continue breastfeeding their children.
- Infants will be held upright while bottle feeding. No bottles will be propped.
- Formula milk feeds for infants will be provided by parents and ready to use. Staff will not make up formula feeds. (This will depend on the individual service).
- A weekly menu will provide the children with varied foods. A 3 week menu will be on display in advance. Recipes and food ingredients are available to parents.
- Parents are encouraged to offer menu suggestions or comments on the nutrition policy.
- All children will have suitable food available depending on their age, development and needs, using the recommended servings table as a guide.
- Breakfast will be available each morning. Parents are responsible to inform the pre-school if their child needs breakfast on arrival.
- Children will be allowed to have dessert if they do not eat their main course.

- Parents will be advised if their child is not eating well.
- Parents of children on special diets will be asked to provide as much information as possible about suitable foods. In some cases, parents may be asked to provide food themselves.
- Carers will sit with the children when they eat and encourage good eating habits.
- Children will sit when eating or having a drink.
- Withholding food will not be used as a form of punishment.
- Parents are asked not to send sweets, crisps and other snack foods to the pre-school.
- Birthday party food should be discussed in advance with the staff.
- All food in the pre-school will be stored, prepared and served using good food safety practices.
- Staff will receive training in relation to healthy eating and food safety.
- Children will be encouraged to play outside every day, weather permitting, to ensure they receive sunlight which helps their bodies to make vitamin D.
- This policy will be displayed in the reception area. It will be reviewed annually.

(Taken from Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Pre-School Services, Health Promotion Unit, Department of Health).

Parental Responsibilities

If the child needs a special diet, it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian(s) to inform the Service Manager of this, so that arrangements can be made to accommodate the child's requirements.

- Some special diet requirements such as gluten-free (coeliac), diabetic, nut-free or milk free, can be quite complex. The parent should provide a copy of the diet sheet prepared for the child by a Dietician.
- Lists of prepared foods are available to give information on products that are free of
- a particular item such as milk or gluten.
- If a food allergy is suspected, the parents should be encouraged to discuss this with their doctor. It is unwise to restrict children's food choices without professional assessment and individual information.

Peanut allergy

- Peanut allergy is usually severe - sensitive individuals may even react to peanut dust. Care should be taken to prevent accidental consumption of food containing nuts or nut products or food that has come into contact with them.
- Preparing food for peanut allergy sufferers in a designated area may help.
- Peanut butter should be avoided and many prepared foods can contain nuts or nut flour.
- Careful checking of food labels is necessary. Children with severe food allergies are advised to carry identification.
- It is recommended that children with a family history of asthma, eczema, hay fever or food allergy should avoid peanuts and peanut products until the age of 3 years. Whole nuts are not recommended for children under 5 because of the risk of choking.
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Food Purchase

- Buy food that is clean and undamaged.

- Buy food from a reputable source where it is stored in a clean and safe manner.
- Read the labels on foods. The ingredients are listed by order of weight with the largest amount first. Check for added sugar and salt as well as animal products and nuts if you wish to avoid these.
- Note the ‘use by’ or ‘best before’ date. Eat it, cook it, freeze it or throw it out by the date.
- Once the food is opened, use it as a fresh food. The ‘use by’ date applies to unopened food.
- Keep cold foods cold on the way home from shopping or check that delivery trucks do so.

Food Preparation & Safety:

Since 1998 it has been a legal requirement for all food businesses to have a food safety management system based on the principles of HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points). HACCP is a systematic approach to identifying and controlling hazards (i.e. microbiological, chemical or physical) that could pose a danger to the preparation of safe food.

- Frequent hand washing and hand washing between tasks is essential.
- Staff with cuts and sores must have them covered with waterproof plasters.
- Staff who are ill should not prepare food for others.
- Food provided for young children must be stored, prepared and presented in a safe and hygienic environment.
- Infants and Toddlers may have a lower resistance to food poisoning so extra care is needed when preparing food for this age group.
- Fruit and vegetables should be washed well and peeled
- Separate chopping boards, cloths and utensils must be used for raw and cooked food and washed thoroughly between uses.
- All prepared food in the kitchen should be covered.
- Cold Food must be kept cold in a fridge or freezer.
- Hot Food must be kept very hot while waiting to be served.

Note: Food & Nutrition Guidelines for Pre-School Services available from the Health Promotion Unit of each local Health Service Executive offers guidance on this topic. The Childcare (Pre-School Services) Regulations, 2006 also set out guidance in this matter in the Explanatory Guide to the Regulations.

This policy was adopted by: NAME OF SERVICE

Date: _____

Signed by: _____ **On behalf of Management**

This policy will be reviewed (insert date here) on _____ in collaboration with staff and parents and in line with Legislative changes and Guidelines.

