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Registered Charity No. 802551

**FOOD AND DRINK POLICY**

Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup regards snack and meal times as an important part of our session. Eating represents a social time for children and adults, and helps children to learn about healthy eating. At snack times, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs. All staff involved in the preparation and serving of food have taken food hygiene training and we are registered with the food standards agency with a inspection score of 5.

**Procedures**

We follow these procedures to promote healthy eating in our setting.

* Before a child starts to attend the setting, we ask their parents about their dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (See the Managing Sickness, Infections or Allergies Policy.)
* We record information about each child's dietary needs in the Registration Form and parents sign the form to signify that it is correct.
* We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs – including any allergies - are up-to-date. Parents sign the updated record to signify that it is correct.
* We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all our staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
* We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences, as well as their parents' wishes.
* We provide nutritious snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
* We include a variety of foods:
  + dairy foods,
  + grains, cereals and starch vegetables; and
  + fruit and vegetables.
* We include foods from the diet different cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
* We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and we are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
* Through discussion with parents and research reading, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, as well as about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.
* We show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. We do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy.
* We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in

which children and adults participate.

* We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
* We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for age and stage of development and that take account of the eating practices in different cultures.
* We have fresh drinking water available all morning for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.
* We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in our setting.
* We give parents who provide food for their children information about suitable containers for food.
* In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.

**Packed lunches (Lunch Club)**

We provide an opportunity in our lunch club for children to bring a packed lunch from home. We

* packed lunches are refrigerated to keep food cool;
* inform parents of our policy on healthy eating, discouraging sweet drinks, processed foods, crisps and cakes and biscuits in lunch boxes. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent.
* encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based desserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraîche.
* provide children bringing packed lunches with plates, cups and cutlery; and
* ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.