



Healthy Eating and Nutrition

At Acorn Playgroup and Pre-school, we provide a safe, nourishing, and developmentally appropriate food environment for all children. This policy aligns with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Nutrition Guidance (April 2025) and the EYFS reforms effective from September 2025. We aim to promote healthy dietary habits, prevent food-related incidents, and collaborate closely with families to support the nutritional needs of every child.

Age-Appropriate Nutrition and Feeding Practices

Children can be enrolled at Acorn Playgroup and Pre-school from their second birthday therefore our healthy eating and nutrition practices cater from this age.

Young Children (2–5 years):

- Parents and carers provide a snack and packed lunch (for children attending lunch club) which is prepared at home. Guidance is given to parents/carers to provide meals which are balanced and align with government portion size guidance.
- Parents are advised that foods which pose a choking risk (whole grapes, popcorn, raw carrot sticks, etc.) are cut appropriately before being placed into their child's snack pots or lunch boxes. Foods which have not been prepared in the correct way are removed.
- Snack and lunch times are calm, social experiences which promote positive eating behaviours.

Allergen Management and Choking Prevention

- Before a child starts at Acorn Playgroup and Pre-school, we collect comprehensive dietary information, including allergies and intolerances. Parents share information about their children's dietary needs on an on-going basis with their key person. This information is shared with all staff who are involved in the care of the child.
- Health care plans are created with input from parents/ carers and updated regularly.
- A staff member is designated daily to check all snack and lunch boxes and is responsible for verifying that each child's food is safe and does not contain any prohibited items.
- Children are never permitted to share food and are closely observed during mealtimes.
- Choking incidents are documented and reviewed as safeguarding "near misses".
- All staff are Paediatric First Aid (PFA) trained.
- Care is taken to ensure that children with food allergies do not have contact with food products that they are allergic to including planning where children sit during meal times and ensuring hand washing is undertaken as soon as a child has finished eating.
- Risk assessments are conducted for each individual child who has a food allergy or specific dietary requirement.

Communication with Parents

- Ongoing communication is encouraged around food preparation, preferences and concerns.
- Parents/carers are involved in planning and catering for their child's dietary needs and health care plan reviews.

- We provide resources to support healthy eating at home, including government guidance on portion sizes and food safety.
- Feedback is welcomed to inform continuous improvement.

Mealtime Environment

- Children are encouraged to select their own snacks and lunches and pour their own drinks to foster independence.
- Practitioners sit at the same level, facing the children to monitor for allergic reactions or choking.

Food Safety and Hygiene

- All staff have Level 2 Food Hygiene (Early Years) certification.
- Food is stored and served following Food Standards Agency (FSA) guidance.
- Kitchen and preparation areas are cleaned daily, and equipment is sanitised. Our 'Kitchen' policy is followed for general hygiene and safety in food preparation areas.
- Fridge temperatures are checked daily.

Further Guidance

[Safer Food Better Business for Caterers](#) (Food Standards Agency)

Alongside our Safer Eating Policy, this policy was adopted by Acorn Playgroup and Pre-school on 01 September 2025