

Guidelines for Lunchtime Sessions

We ask all parents/carers to follow these guidelines



It is important that healthy eating habits are instilled in children from a young age. A nutritious, balanced diet is essential to a child's long-term health and development. Good nutrition is also associated with improved learning and behaviour.

Under the Early Years Foundation Stage, we are **required** to promote good health, including oral health, of children attending the setting. Meals, snacks and drinks provided must be healthy, balanced and nutritious & safe.

For healthy lunch box ideas please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes#lunchbox-recipes>

- **LUNCH BOXES & DRINKS BOTTLES MUST BE CLEARLY NAMED ON THE OUTSIDE - names must be easily visible**
- Please send a packed lunch and a **drink of water**. We can provide milk if children would prefer it.
- Please do not send squash/juice/smoothies as these are sugary and/or acidic and are not recommended.
- In line with EYFS regulations and government healthy eating guidelines, parents are requested to pack **healthy, nutritious lunchboxes**, avoiding relying on ultra-processed foods and foods containing lots of sugar or salt.

Use the food labelling traffic light system and **avoid giving children foods which are labelled as red.**

Please remember that children's oral health is also affected by their diet - **5g sugar = 1 teaspoon**

Sugar may also be listed as sucrose, glucose, fructose, dextrose, maltose, corn or rice syrup and barley malt.

We recommend lunches include

- **carbohydrate** - such as sandwiches, wraps, crackers, pasta, breadsticks, pitta bread etc.,
- **protein** - cheese, meat, egg, fish, hummus, dairy etc
- **fruit** and/or **vegetables** for vitamins and fibre (preferably *not* dried fruit).
- NO sweets or fizzy drinks are allowed and **no more than 1 small, sweet treat** (if included).

To reduce the possibility of choking, **please cut up small food items** such as grapes, cherry tomatoes, sausages etc (cut grapes in half lengthways or into quarters, sausages should be cut lengthways). We are not allowed to give children food which may be a choking hazard. Food which is not cut up will be returned.

- Please include a **spoon** or cutlery if needed.
- Unfortunately, we cannot heat any food for children.
- The children are encouraged to manage their lunchboxes independently - unwrapping sandwiches, opening cartons and packets etc. We do of course support children until they become more able 😊

It would be helpful to your children if you wrap food *loosely* (no knots!), and provide boxes etc that children can **open themselves** – this builds independence, self-reliance and helps them feel a sense of achievement. It will help your children if you practice these skills at home with them.

- **Please do not overfill lunch boxes** – although your child may 'graze' at home we find that in a busy environment, children are daunted by a large amount of food and a lot is wasted. In our experience, children eat better when they have a manageable amount in their lunchboxes.
- We always encourage children to eat the healthier items from their lunchbox before having any treats or less healthy food.
- Used cartons etc are returned for you to be aware how much food your child has consumed.
- Please clean and wipe lunchboxes daily.
- We are unable to cold store any lunchboxes and as a precaution we request that you please include an ice-pack in your child's lunchbox - this is especially important during the summer months.
- **NO NUTS.** We have children with differing medical and dietary issues at Stepping Stones and due to the possibility of severe allergic reaction we respectfully ask parents to avoid packing nut products such as peanut butter, chocolate nut spread etc. Thank you.