

# Greenfields Childcare Centre

## Feeding and Mealtimes in the Baby Unit



### Introduction

At Greenfields we aim to provide a healthy, balanced diet for all our children. We treat mealtimes as an opportunity for children to learn social skills and to interact with one another by creating a 'family' type situation. We do not serve meat or meat products to children under five and we are working towards the government's recommended 'five a day' guidelines.

In the under two's unit, we give consideration to the stages of weaning and to helping our children learn to feed themselves. We do this in partnership with parents to ensure that the time spent at nursery fits in with the child's routine and so that both parties are clear about the child's needs and the parent's wishes.

Although all the children in the unit may be at different stages, we have basic guidelines to which we work:



### Babies aged 6 weeks – 16 weeks

Babies under sixteen weeks of age will only be fed breast or formula milk in line with department of health guidelines on weaning. We require parents to bring in ready prepared infant formula or expressed breast milk in sterilised bottles with sterilised teats and bottle caps. Bottles are labelled with the child's name, stored in a refrigerator and fed to babies as required in accordance with parent's wishes. Times given and amounts consumed will be recorded on the child's daily activity sheet. Unused milk is discarded and bottles will be washed and placed with the child's personal belongings. Parents are reminded that empty bottles are not sterilised and they should wash and sterilise them at home before use. If, however, an additional bottle is required to offer cooled boiled water to a child, nursery staff will wash and sterilise one of the child's empty bottles.

pureed to produce a smooth texture. Foods used will include fruit, vegetables, baby rice and potatoes - all without added salt or sugar. The food is given in small quantities and as a supplement to continued milk feeds. Breast milk or infant formula in bottles will continue to be provided by parents. Parents who wish their child to be fed with pre-prepared jars or boxed baby meals will be required to provide them.

### **Babies aged 7 – 9 months**

Babies in the second stage of weaning will continue to be given similar foods as those in the early stage but additional foods will be introduced and the food will be processed to be a more lumpy consistency and thicker purees used. Soft finger foods will also gradually be introduced, for example melon, toast fingers and cheese cubes. Parents will continue to supply milk at this stage.

### **Babies aged 10 - 12 months**

Food for babies at this stage will be the same as that served to the older children but will be mashed to a lumpy consistency. Finger foods will be fully introduced at this stage, for example, sandwiches and plain breadsticks. Parents will continue to provide milk up to 12 months.

### **Toddlers over 12 months**

At this stage, the children's food is served chopped rather than blended and they will have finger food at snack time and tea time. Children will be encouraged to learn to feed themselves. Parents may continue to provide milk at this stage if they wish or may request that their child drinks cow's milk which we will be happy to provide.

These stages of weaning are in accordance with general guidelines but can be adapted to suit individual children's needs. Parents with specific wishes in relation to their child's food should discuss them with nursery staff in the baby unit who will record details in the child's records and communicate them to other staff.



### **Foods which we avoid**

In addition to meat products we avoid serving foods containing gluten, eggs, soft cheese, citrus fruits, foods containing nuts and foods with added sugar or salt, to babies under 6 months.

In addition to meat products, we avoid serving soft cheese, eggs, honey, foods containing nuts and foods with added sugar or salt to children under 12 months.

The weekly menu for the nursery is on display in the baby unit. If there is any food which you do not wish your baby to eat, please let nursery staff know.

We keep a supply of fresh fruit, rice cakes, bread sticks, raisins, yoghurt and mild cheese cubes in the baby unit which can be offered in place of desserts on the menu. Please request these when you bring your baby to nursery at the start of the session. We can also serve toast with low sugar, seedless preserve for tea in place of the meal being served.

### **Also note**

We will record all that your baby has eaten on their daily activity sheet and let you know if there is something they particularly enjoy or seem to dislike. We will also inform you of their progress in learning to feed themselves.

If your child is taking vitamin supplements recommended by your health visitor due to ongoing breast feeding, we would prefer that you administer them at home.

### **And finally**

Please feel free to discuss this information and any other matters relating to feeding your child with the nursery staff or the Childcare Manager at any time.