

Greenfields Children's 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 governments 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 - 6 months

Babies under 6 months of age will only be fed breast or formula milk in line with Department of Health guidelines on weaning. We realise that this age will vary slightly for each child and will work closely with parents (and Health Visitors if necessary) to decide on the most appropriate time for each child.

We require parents to bring infant formula or expressed breast milk in sterilised bottles with sterilised teats and bottle caps. Formula milk will be made as required in the nursery with parents advisement on the amount needed at each feed. Breast milk will be refrigerated then heated when required

Times given and amounts consumed will be recorded on the child's daily activity sheet.

We encourage parents to provide their own sterilised bottles and we will clean and sterilise them after use. However the nursery always has spare sterilised bottles if needed.

Babies in Early Stages of Weaning

Babies aged 6 months will begin to be fed food which is 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.

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. Each new food introduced will be discussed with parents to ensure consistency and to support progress. 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 cows' milk which we will be happy to provide.

The 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 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 in place of the meal being served.

We work in line with the EU Food Information for Consumers Regulation 2014 which outlines the 14 most common allergens, these are displayed and available for you for all of the meals we provide. If throughout the process of introducing new foods you discover that your child has an allergy, please inform the nursery and we will provide a suitable alternative.

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.

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 Services Manager at any time.