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Charity ref: 1147389
Ofsted: EY457353

Healthy Food and Drink Policy

Statement of Intent

The Children's Ark regards snack and meal times as an important part of the day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and provides an opportunity to develop speech and language skills and to learn about healthy eating.

Methods

- Before a child starts to attend the Ark, we find out from parents/carers their children's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies or cultural requirements.
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in her/his registration record and parents sign the record 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 up-dated record to signify that it is correct.

- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs within the setting (kitchen wall) so that all 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 are committed to promoting healthy eating and provide guidance to parents/carers providing food for their children on a range of suitable healthy snacks, and foodstuffs through newsletters, in the prospectus and by sending recipes home.
- We provide opportunities for children to learn to grow food, prepare food, and learn about a healthy diet, hygiene and oral health.
- When food is provided we ensure that it is healthy, balanced and nutritious, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We ensure that all staff receive food hygiene (renewed every three years) and health and safety training (renewed every five years).
- We are registered with Environmental Health.
- Staff are encouraged to bring in a healthy lunch box to set a good example to the children.

- We include foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- Through discussion with parents and research reading by staff, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups, to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, and about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.
- We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff 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 provide a daily written sheet detailing what they have eaten and drunk for all children under two years. In addition parents and carers of all children will be advised if their child is not eating well.
- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence though making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- We have fresh water constantly available for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can access water at any time during the session/day.

- Milk or water is offered to all children at snack times unless parents request otherwise.
- Fruit and something savoury is provided at snack times (mid morning, mid-afternoon and 4.p.m).
- We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in the setting and also to mark containers.
- School lunches are available to buy from the school reception, for all children.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we have rules about children sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- We notify Environmental Health and Ofsted in writing as soon as it is reasonably practicable to do so, but in any event not later than 14 days after the event has occurred, of any food poisoning incident affecting two or more children looked after in the setting.
- We welcome breastfeeding families and encourage mothers to continue to provide breast milk for the children in our care.
- Formula milk needs to be provided unmade (boiled water in bottle and powder separate).

- Children will have equal access to outdoor and indoor areas. This will ensure that they have an opportunity to be exposed to summer sunlight which helps their bodies to make Vitamin D.

Packed Lunches

For those children attending lunch we:

- Inform parents of our policy on healthy eating.
- Inform parents about what can be stored safely. All lunch boxes are kept cool and we request that parents label them. If they are not labelled the staff will write on the child's name with a permanent pen.
- Inform parents that we have facilities to microwave cooked food brought from home.
- Encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit and milk based desserts such as yoghurt or fromage frais. We discourage sweet drinks and provide children with water.
- Discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cake or biscuits. We expect the children to eat savoury items first then fruit and any sweet products provided last.
- Provide children bringing packed lunches with plates and cups and cutlery as required.
- Ensure staff sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion

This policy was adopted at a staff meeting of The Children's Ark:

Signed.....

Print Name.....

Dated.....

And at The Children's Ark committee meeting:

Signed by chairperson.....

Print Name.....

Dated.....

Date of review.....