

A guide for families

Nutrition Guidance and Safer Eating

At Hordle Explorers Nursery, we follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Nutrition Guidance, which aims to ensure every child receives the right balance of healthy food and drink each day. A good diet in the early years helps children grow, learn and develop positive eating habits for life. This information sheet explains the key principles of the guidance and how you can support your child's healthy eating at home and in nursery.

The Key Principles of EYFS Nutrition Guidance

Balanced Meals & Snacks

Children should be offered a variety of foods from the 5 main food groups every day:

-  Fruit & Vegetables – at least 5 small portions daily
-  Starchy Foods (whole grain bread, rice, pasta, potatoes) – with each meal
-  Dairy or Alternatives (milk, yogurt, cheese, calcium-fortified alternatives) – 2–3 portions daily
-  Protein Foods (meat, fish, eggs, beans, pulses) – 2 portions daily
-  Healthy Fats (oils, nut butters, seeds, avocado) – in small amounts

Portion Size

- Portions are child-sized – smaller than adults but enough to satisfy hunger (please see below for further detail).
- Children's appetites vary day to day; they should be encouraged but never forced to eat.

Drinks

- Water and milk only are recommended between meals.
- Avoid juice, squash, and fizzy drinks as they contain added sugars.

Limiting Foods High in Sugar, Salt & Fat

- Biscuits, cakes, crisps and sweets should be occasional treats only.
- No salt or sugar should be added to children's food.

Eating Environment

- Mealtimes should be calm, social and positive.
- Children should be encouraged to feed themselves and try new foods.
- Role modelling is important – children copy adult eating habits.

HEALTHY EATING IN THE EARLY YEARS IS CRUCIAL FOR RAPID PHYSICAL GROWTH, BRAIN

DEVELOPMENT AND ESTABLISHING LIFELONG HABITS, SUPPORTING EVERYTHING FROM STRONG

BONES, ENERGY LEVELS, CONCENTRATION AND BETTER COGNITIVE FUNCTION

Portion Sizes

When serving food, it might be helpful to remember that smaller hands means smaller tummies.

It's best for younger children to have food 'little and often' rather than offer 'big' meals which may encourage them to overeat and over time, stretch their tummy. Please see this guidance from the NHS which helps guide families with portion sizes for the different food groups. →

| Food | Hand Portion | Guide for 1-2 years | Guide for 3-4 years |
|---|---|--|--|
| Fruit and vegetables 5 a day | Cupped hand  | - ¼ apple - ½ clementine - ¼-½ small to medium banana - 4-5 raw veg sticks - 1 tbsp cooked veg | - ½ apple - 1 clementine - ½- 1 small to medium banana - 5-6 raw veg sticks - 2 tbsp cooked veg |
| Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta, and other starchy foods 3 main meals 1-2 snacks | Clenched fist  | - ½ slice of bread/medium chapatti - 1 small potato - 2-3 tbsp of rice/pasta - 3-4 tbsp of cereal | - 1 slice of bread/medium chapatti - 2 small potatoes - 3-4 tbsp of rice/pasta - 4-5 tbsp of cereal |
| Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins 2-3 a day | Open palm  | - 1-2 tbsp beans, pulses, dahl - ½ -1 tbsp fish - ½ slice of meat (1 tbsp chopped) - ½ egg | - 2-3 tbsp beans, pulses, dahl - 1-1½ tbsp fish - 1 slice of meat (2 tbsp chopped) - 1 egg |
| Dairy and alternatives 3 a day | Two thumbs  | - 1 cup (100ml) - 1-2 sticks hard cheese (1 tbsp grated) - 1 tbsp of plain unsweetened yoghurt | - 1 cup (150ml) - 2 sticks hard cheese (2 tbsp grated) - 2 tbsp of plain unsweetened yoghurt |

How you prepare food is important

Young children's food should be cut into **small, manageable** pieces to reduce the risk of choking.

Where possible, food should be cut **lengthwise**, into **baton-shaped, smaller pieces**. This applies to foods like grapes, sausages, cherry tomatoes and chunks of meat. Round shapes can easily block a child's airway and can cause them to choke. Please click [HERE](#) for the Food Standards Agency guidance.

Hard foods such as raw carrots should be softened by cooking or cut into thin sticks. More information can be found on the NHS webpage [HERE](#).

Ideas for a healthy and balanced packed lunch

- ★ Chicken or lentil wrap with salad, yogurt, and chopped fruit
- ★ Pasta with tomato sauce, vegetables and cheese with chopped fruit
- ★ Oatcakes with cheese spread and tomatoes with a yoghurt
- ★ Wholemeal pitta bread filled with chicken, lettuce and grated carrot
- ★ Cheese and cucumber sandwich on wholemeal bread with pepper batons and chopped fruit

★ Drink: Water or milk



Please click [HERE](#) for further packed lunch ideas, courtesy of NHS Healthy Families.



Foods to avoid



✗ Sweets, chocolate, crisps

✗ Salty foods

✗ Fizzy or sugary drinks

✗ Foods containing nuts (due to allergies)



Fussy Eaters

We understand that some children are 'fussy' and may refuse certain foods. This is nothing to be worried about.

As long as your child eats some food from the 4 main food groups each day, this is enough to keep them full and healthy. Find further NHS guidance about what to feed young children [HERE](#).

Keep trying to reintroduce new foods. Ensure you stay calm and positive when serving new meals and if possible, try and eat at the same time as your child.