



FOOD & NUTRITION for Childcare settings

Section 7

Putting it into practice

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Code of practice for the provision of food and drink in childcare settings

The following code of practice pulls together all the best practice guidance. You can use the code of practice to tell parents, carers, visitors, inspectors about your overall approach to food and drink provision.

Example

- 1 I / we have developed a food and drink policy**
to support health and wellbeing of the children in our care. It covers all aspects of our approach to food and healthy eating and how we talk to parents and children.

- 2 I / we plan varied menus and snacks in advance**
to ensure variety in taste, texture and colour, taking into the account sustainability of food.

- 3 I / we provide meals, snacks and drinks that meet the national best practice food and drink standards and guidance**
to ensure the children in our care receive the right balance of energy and nutrients for healthy growth and development.

- 4 I / we have a positive eating environment**
to encourage children to eat well, develop good eating habits and social skills, and learn about healthy food through play and activities.

- 5 I / we follow food safety and hygiene regulations in all aspects of food and drink provision**
to ensure the children in our care are safe from any risks in relation to food.

Developing a food and health policy

A food and drink policy:

- is a plan of action to ensure everyone follows best practice and is consistent in their approach to food and drink with children in their care
- enables everyone to be involved in agreeing the approaches – staff and parents and children
- can provide information to new parents
- can include food brought into the setting by parents, where relevant, supporting families to make healthier food choices.
- can be used as evidence to demonstrate your commitment to the health and wellbeing of children to prospective parents, the local authority, other partners and Care Inspectorate Wales

The information in the policy will vary with the number, age and needs of children in your care and the type of setting you are and what food is provided. The code of practice can be used to set out the policy.

The following examples outline what a sample food and health policy may look like for specific settings. Remember when developing a policy for your own setting involve staff, parents and children to ensure it meets everyone's needs.

Full day care setting

Sample food and health policy for day care setting providing meals, snacks and drinks

Infants and young children

- We will provide a supportive environment for mothers who wish to continue to provide breast milk for their infant.
- We will work with parents to provide appropriate and recommended foods for babies in our care.
- We will follow safe feeding practices for babies receiving infant formula e.g. babies will be held upright while bottle feeding, no bottles will be propped.

We plan varied menus and snacks in advance

- Our menus will be on display in advance.
- Recipes will be available to parents upon request.
- Parents are encouraged to offer menu suggestions or comment on the policy.

We provide meals, snacks and drinks that meet the national food and nutrition for childcare settings – best practice guidance

- All children will have suitable food available depending on their age, development and needs, using the recommended portion sizes for their age group. This will include children with special dietary requirements.
- All food standards and guidance will be complied with.
- Breakfast will be available for children not having it at home. Parents are responsible for informing the setting if their child needs breakfast on arrival.
- Plain water and plain milk will be the drinks offered. Water will be available at all times.



We have a positive eating environment

- Carers will sit with the children when they eat and encourage good eating habits and table manners.
- Children will be given plenty of time to eat.
- Children will sit when eating or having a drink.
- Withholding food will not be used as a form of punishment.
- Parents are asked not to send sweets, crisps and other snack foods to the setting.
- Birthday party food should be discussed in advance with the staff and follow best practice guidance.
- Events are held regularly that celebrate foods from different cultures.

We follow food safety and hygiene regulations in all aspects of food and drink provision

- All food in the setting will be stored, prepared and served following regulated food safety and hygiene practices.
- Staff will have appropriate qualifications in food hygiene and safety.
- A specific allergy plan will be in place for individual children to prevent and manage allergic reactions.

Communication with parents

- We will display the policy to all parents and visitors and it will be reviewed annually.
- Parents will be informed of what and how well their child is eating.
- Parents of children on special diets will be asked to provide as much information as possible about suitable foods. In some cases, parents may be asked to provide food themselves.
- Parents will be given information on our approach to food brought in from home.

General environment

- Children will be encouraged to play outside every day, weather permitting, to ensure they receive sunlight which helps their bodies to make vitamin D, as well as providing regular physical activity.

You can also have a mission statement displayed in your setting and in your information packs for parents.

Sample

Our setting is committed to providing the children in our care with nutritious balanced meals, snacks and drinks, which meets the children's individual dietary needs.

We comply with Welsh Government's national minimum standards for food and drink provision and aim to demonstrate best practice in all our approaches to food and health.

We provide a social environment that supports and encourages children to eat well and learn about healthy eating through aspects of their play and learning.



Play groups and sessional care settings

Sample snack and drink policy for play groups and sessional care

- We only serve snacks that meet the national food and nutrition for childcare settings – best practice guidance and are nutritious and protective to teeth.
- The only drinks offered at snack time are water or milk.
- We do not use squashes, fruit drinks or fruit juices.
- We are registered with the local authority as a food provider.
- Our staff that handle food have an up to date Food Safety in Catering Certificate.
- All food and drink is stored safely.



Out of school care setting

Sample policy for out of school care serving light meals, snacks and drinks for older children

- We provide light meals, snacks and drinks that meet the national best practice food and drink standards and guidance.
- Fresh drinking water is available to children at all times.
- We are registered with the local authority as a food provider.
- Our staff that handle food have an up to date Food Safety in Catering Certificate.
- All food and drink is stored safely.
- We ask parents about any special dietary requirements, preferences or allergies the child may have, record them and inform all staff to follow instructions.
- Children attending all day will be offered a midday meal or packed lunch, which can be provided by parents.



Self monitoring and Action Plans

The following action plans are to help you:

- check that you have implemented the guidance and have put everything into practice
- demonstrate how you meet the child care regulations and supporting National Minimum Standards – for food, drink and health needs of children
- aim for ‘excellent’ ratings in your CIW inspection
- demonstrate the positive changes achieved from putting the guidance into practice
- show how you meet best practice, in line with inspection frameworks.

Remember to adapt and personalise these to your own setting and the range of food you provide.

Action plans

ACTION PLAN 1 – POLICY			
Name of setting:		Completion date:	Review date:
We have a food and drink policy / statement which supports the health and wellbeing of the children in our care and covers all aspects of our approach to food and healthy eating.	Is in place and can be demonstrated by:	Actions needed:	By date:
<p>The food and drink policy / statement:</p> <p>Is in place and reviewed annually, as a minimum.</p> <p>Is shared with all staff where relevant.</p> <p>Is shared and discussed with parents.</p> <p>Has supporting information on display and / or available for staff and parents.</p>			
FOR GROUP DAY CARE SETTINGS			
We ensure staff have the appropriate knowledge and skills to support our food and drink policy.			
There is a named person(s) with overall responsibility for food and drink across the setting (food policy, food provision, food in learning and play).			
There is a minimum of 1 existing staff member that has attended the Level 2 Agored Cymru Community food and nutrition skills for early years course.			
All food handlers have had food hygiene training to a Level 2 food safety in catering standard.			
Staff have had advice on meal and menu planning from a recognised source.			

ACTION PLAN 1 – POLICY

Name of setting:	Completion date:	Review date:
<p>We have a food and drink policy / statement which supports the health and wellbeing of the children in our care and covers all aspects of our approach to food and healthy eating.</p>	<p>Is in place and can be demonstrated by:</p>	<p>Actions needed:</p>
<p>FOR INDIVIDUAL CHILD MINDERS</p> <p>I ensure that I have the appropriate knowledge and skills to support my food and drink policy / statement.</p>		<p>By date:</p>
<p>I have had training in food safety and hygiene to the appropriate level for my needs.</p> <p>I have had advice or training from a recognised source to be able to provide quality, healthy food for the children in my care.</p>		
<p>I / We use healthy food choices to support other aspects of children’s learning and use best practice guidance for using food in activities with children.</p>		
<p>I / We include helping children to learn about tooth brushing and foods and drinks that can help to protect teeth.</p>		
<p>I / We ensure fresh water is available and accessible to all.</p>		
<p>Lidless cups are the main provision from 1 year of age.</p>		
<p>I / We provide for special dietary needs and diverse diets.</p>		
<p>Children of all cultures and religions in my / our setting are able to have meals and snacks which meet their dietary needs.</p>		
<p>Where possible children will all receive similar meals and snacks.</p>		

ACTION PLAN 1 – POLICY

Name of setting:		Completion date:	Review date:
We have a food and drink policy / statement which supports the health and wellbeing of the children in our care and covers all aspects of our approach to food and healthy eating.	Is in place and can be demonstrated by:	Actions needed:	By date:
I / We aim to meet the needs of children who have special dietary needs for medical reasons, food allergy, special educational need or disability.			
I / We communicate with children and parents / carers to ensure:			
Information about menus, meals, snacks and drinks is available to all parents.			
There are opportunities for parents to give suggestions and feedback on meal choices.			
There are opportunities to talk about timing of meals and how this fits with meal routines at home.			
Information is fed back to families about what their children have eaten and if they have accepted or refused new foods.			
There are opportunities at meal times to talk to children about healthy foods and act as positive role model to help children develop good eating habits and social skills.			

ACTION PLAN 2 – MENU PLANNING & FOOD PROVISION

Name of setting:	Completion date:	Review date:	
<p>I / We plan varied menus and snacks in advance which meet the national food and nutrition for childcare settings – best practice guidance</p> <p>*Full day = provision of meals, snacks and drinks across the day, which may include breakfast, lunch and tea.</p>	<p>Is in place and can be demonstrated by:</p>	<p>Actions needed:</p>	<p>By date:</p>
Menus for meals and snacks are planned in advance.			
Menus consist of a 3 week cycle (minimum).			
Menus are changed at least twice a year and seasonality is considered.			
Menus include details of all meals, snacks and drinks that are offered.			
Regular meals and snacks are offered every 2–3 hours.			
Meals and snacks are varied to include a range of colours, textures and tastes across the week.			
We ensure religious, cultural and special diet requests are incorporated into menu planning.			
The menu includes a meal based on beans, pulses or meat alternative for all children, at least once a week.			

ACTION PLAN 3 – FOOD, DRINK AND MEAL STANDARDS

Name of setting:	Completion date:	Review date:
I / We provide meals, snacks and drinks that meet the national food and nutrition for childcare settings – best practice guidance		
DRINKS I / we provide milk or water only for children in our setting*. Water is freely available throughout the day. *unless exceptional individual circumstance.		

Fruit and vegetables For a full days menu I / we provide:	Is in place and can be demonstrated by:	Actions needed:	By date:
'5 a day' including a range of vegetables, salads and fruit across meals and snacks Or If no tea time meal is provided I / we provide '4 a day' across meals and snacks.			
Dried fruit is provided with main meals only, not as a snack.			
Correct portion sizes are offered.			

Dairy and alternatives For a full days menu I / we provide:	Is in place and can be demonstrated by:	Actions needed:	By date:
2 portions of milk and dairy foods each day, which can include 1 as a snack.			
If milk alternatives are provided for children with a diagnosed allergy, they are unsweetened and fortified with calcium.			

Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins. For a full days menu I / we provide:	Is in place and can be demonstrated by:	Actions needed:	By date:
A portion of beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat or other proteins at each main meal. (2 a day, 1 serving at lunch and 1 serving at tea time, main meals). A portion may sometimes served at breakfast).			
A variety of options from this food group, across the week.			
Oily fish on the menu once a week, at least.			
Portion sizes that are correct for the requirements of the child.			
Good quality processed meat or fish products no more than twice a week.			
For Vegetarians: 2-3 portions of beans, pulses, eggs or other meat alternative across the day.			
A portion of beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat or other proteins as part of snacks once or twice a week.			

Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates For a full days menu I / we provide:	Is in place and can be demonstrated by:	Actions needed:	By date:
A portion of foods from this group at every meal.			
A portion of foods from this group as part of snacks at least one each day.			
A variety of types of these foods across each week.			
Lower sugar breakfast cereals if relevant.			
Fried starchy foods no more than once a week at lunch / tea.			
Portion sizes that are correct for the requirements of the child.			

SALT I / we ensure that we keep salt intakes low:	Is in place and can be demonstrated by:	Actions needed:	By date:
Salt is not added to cooking or at the table.			
Foods products labelled high in salt are not used – such as packet soups, stock cubes.			
We provide bread and bread products with lower salt content – choosing those which are labelled as low (green) or medium (amber) in salt.			
Sauces are home made whenever possible e.g. pasta sauce, white sauce, cheese sauce.			


ACTION PLAN 4 – ENVIRONMENT

Name of setting:		Completion date:	Review date:
<p>I / We have a positive eating environment and encourage children to eat well and develop good eating habits and social skills, and learn about healthy food through play and activities.</p> <p>I / we provide or encourage:</p>	<p>Is in place and can be demonstrated by:</p>	<p>Actions needed:</p>	<p>By date:</p>
A suitable environment that promotes healthy eating and drinking as a pleasurable experience.			
Children to be involved in preparing and cooking or serving foods where appropriate, and helping to set the table and tidy up.			
Children to be independent at meal and snack times and make their own food choices and try new foods.			
An agreed approach to managing choosy eating including use of non food rewards.			
Children to eat in small groups with a familiar carer.			
<p>Activities and experiences which involve children in making decisions about healthy food choices.</p> <p>This includes having story books which refer to healthy food choices.</p>			
Healthy choices for birthdays and celebrations.			
Food is not used as a reward for doing well or for comfort e.g. if fall or have a bump.			

Food Hygiene and safety is covered by regulation and inspection by environmental health officers – information and checklists are provided in Safer Food Better Business.

Resources and support for settings

Training

Training	Contact
Food Hygiene courses.	<p>See Safer Food Better Business for information on training</p> <p>www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/safer-food-better-business</p> <p>Contact Local Environmental Health Department and / or local Workforce Development team.</p>
NVQ level training is available from local colleges in catering and food preparation skills.	<p>See local college prospectus for courses e.g.</p> <p>Level 1 NVQ Food preparation and cooking.</p> <p>Level 2 City & Guilds Diploma NVQ Food Production and Cooking.</p>
<p>Nutrition Skills for Life® – Early Years Course.</p> <p>Specific to early years and children.</p> <p>Sgiliau Maeth am Oes®</p>  <p>Nutrition Skills for Life</p>	<p>Public Health Dietitians in health boards</p> <p>The following link has contact details for your health board:</p> <p>www.nutritionskillsforlife.com/</p>

Links to awards and schemes

Award	Who can apply and how
Healthy Pre School Settings Scheme – All Wales	
<p>This is a national award scheme for pre schools to work to promote and protect all aspects of health including physical, emotional, mental and social health as well as the wellbeing of their whole community.</p> <p>Settings work towards demonstrating achievements in the areas of curriculum, ethos, physical environment and community relations.</p> <p>Nutrition, food hygiene and active play form a key part of the award.</p>	<p>Organisations / settings delivering pre school provision can express an interest in the scheme including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full day care nurseries • Cylchoedd meithrin • Sessional childcare • Child minders • Play groups • Flying Start child care settings <p>Contact Sarah Andrews, Programme Manager for Healthy Settings, Public Health Wales.</p> <p>www.phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/welsh-network-of-healthy-school-schemes/#healthy</p>

Award	Who can apply and how
Gold Standard Healthy Snack Award Scheme and Gold Plus Award	
<p>Local Areas covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swansea Bay health board area • Cardiff & Vale health board – Cardiff area • Cwm Taf Morgannwg health board – Merthyr and Bridgend areas • Hywel Dda health board area • Aneurin Bevan health board area. <p>Recognises and celebrates quality snack provision in a healthy and safe environment.</p> <p>Award criteria for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision of healthy snacks and drinks • appropriate hygiene standards • provision of a suitable eating environment • dental health standards <p>The award is recognised by Care Inspectorate Wales and the healthy pre-schools scheme.</p>	<p>Playgroups, nurseries, cylchoedd meithrin, child minders, parent and toddler groups, out of school child care clubs, youth clubs.</p> <p>To check who can apply and how, contact the local Public Health Dietitian in your health board.</p>
Tiny Tums / Boliâu Bach	
<p>Local Areas covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Wales Betsi Cadwaladr health board <p>Awarded to nurseries and other childcare settings who are achieving best practice in food and drink provision.</p> <p>Support and guidance is provided.</p> <p>The award lasts for 3 years and is recognised by Care Inspectorate Wales and the Healthy Pre-School Scheme as a sign of high quality.</p>	<p>Early years child care settings including; child minders, nurseries, cylchoedd meithrin, playgroups, family centres.</p> <p>To be eligible for the award, a member of staff from the setting needs to complete the Community Food and Nutrition Skills for Early Years Course.</p> <p>A shorter course is available for settings that provide only snacks and drinks.</p> <p>Menus and food policy are submitted to the Public Health Dietetic Team for assessment against the Tiny Tums / Boliâu Bach standards.</p>
Bach a lach	
<p>Local area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powys <p>Powys “Bach a lach” pre-school award scheme which promotes physical activity and healthy eating in pre-school settings.</p> <p>A broader scheme that includes food and drink.</p>	<p>All pre-school settings in Powys.</p> <p>Contact the healthy schools scheme.</p>

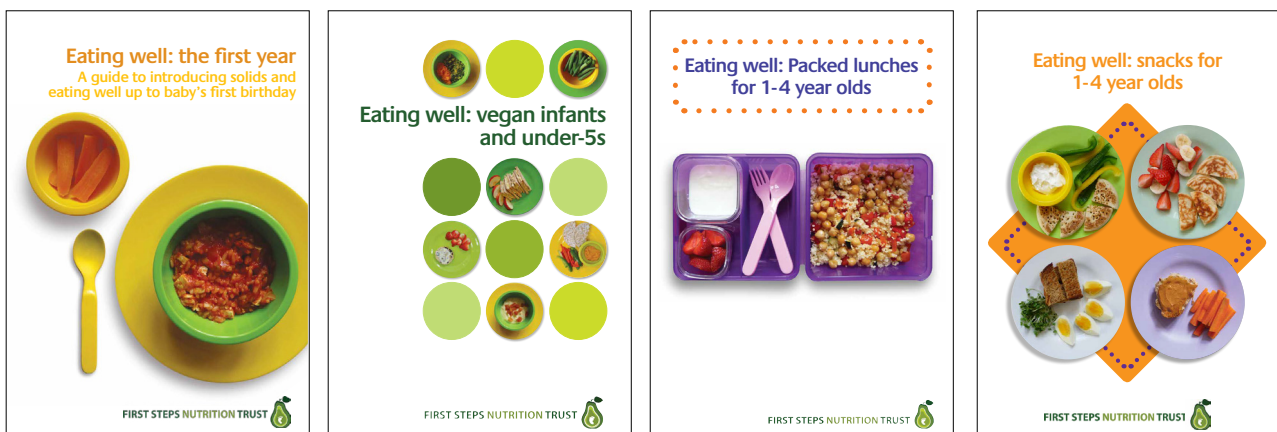
Award	Who can apply and how
Play, Learn and Grow Healthy / Chwarae Dysgu a Thyfu'n Iach	
<p>The Healthy Friends workshop provides information and guidance on setting up a buddy system within individual settings, allowing older children to lead on activities with younger children. This workshop can help all children improve their physical activity levels and knowledge of nutrition through a range of peer led, fun healthy activities.</p>	<p>After school clubs via Clybiau Plant Cymru.</p>

Resources for food and nutrition

First Steps Nutrition Trust – Publications

- 'Eating Well: the first year. A guide to introducing solids and eating well up to baby's first birthday'
- 'Eating Well: vegan infants and under 5's'
- 'Eating Well: packed lunches for 1-4 year olds'
- 'Eating Well: snacks for 1-4 year olds'
- 'Eating Well: 6 months to 2 years for South Asian children'

www.firststepsnutrition.org



We would like to acknowledge the use of food group and meal portion size pictures in the guidance from First Steps Nutrition Trust.

British Dietetic Association Food Fact Sheets

Healthy Eating for Children

www.bda.uk.com/resource/healthy-eating-for-children.html

Diet Behaviour and Learning in Children

www.bda.uk.com/resource/diet-behaviour-and-learning-children.html

Public Health Wales information services / library

For leaflets:

- Eatwell Guide
- Also 10 Steps to a Healthy Weight www.everychildwales.co.uk/

Public Health Network Cymru

www.publichealthnetwork.cymru/en

Public Health Network Cymru is a professional network for all those working and interested in public health issues and provides information and support. Join the network for free.

Peas Please

Information campaign on promoting more vegetables in the diet.

www.foodfoundation.org.uk/peasplease/

The Vegetarian Society of the UK

The Vegetarian Society is a registered educational charity offering support, advice and free resources to families, individuals, health professionals, caterers and many others.

www.vegsoc.org

British Nutrition Foundation

www.nutrition.org.uk

Resources for special diet provision

Allergy UK

www.allergyuk.org/information-and-advice for information on managing food allergies in school and childcare settings, including guidance on being 'allergy aware' and example allergy protocols.

NHS 111 Wales

www.111.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/a/article/alergeddbwyd/

The Anaphylaxis Campaign

The Anaphylaxis Campaign publishes food lists and campaigns for better labelling on food.

www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/

Further information in relation to special diets for children can be obtained from the Paediatric Dietitians at your health board.

The Food Standards Agency

Website for guidance on Allergens and Intolerances, Safer Food Better Business, Food premises registration and Allergen safety alerts.

www.food.gov.uk

Coeliac UK

Website: www.coeliac.org.uk – Helpline: 0333 332 2033

www.coeliac.org.uk/food-industry-professionals/caterers-and-restaurateurs/providing-gluten-free-meals/ as well as a gluten free check list.

Infant feeding

UNICEF / Baby Friendly Initiative

www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/

Every Child Your Pregnancy and Birth Booklet

Handbook given to all first time mums on pregnancy, and the first few years.

www.everychildwales.co.uk/professional-information-page/#:~:text=Every%20Child%20Your%20Pregnancy%20and%20Birth%20booklet%20This,of%20booklets%20to%20replace%20Bump%2C%20Baby%20and%20Beyond

Services and programmes

Nutrition Skills for Life®

Support and training around good nutrition for your setting.

www.nutritionskillsforlife.com/



Designed to Smile – oral health programme

www.phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/designed-to-smile/



Healthy Start Scheme

Details of entitlement and how to access the scheme can be found on the Healthy Start website.

www.healthystart.nhs.uk

