



FEEDING POLICY

At Little Steps Day Care, meal times are a time for the children to enjoy trying new foods, be sociable with each other and learn how to become independent when feeding themselves.

Children need to feel in control of their eating.

Children eat best when they can pick and choose from the available foods. Therefore, at Little Steps Day Care we provide a range of different foods for the children to try and allow them the freedom to turn food down if they do not want it. In the under 2's room, the children are served a selection of foods in their bowl and are given the freedom to eat what they like. If a child refuses a specific food, they are encouraged but not pushed to eat it.

As the children get older they are taught to self-serve for all snacks and meals, choosing what and how much they would like to eat. The staff will support the children to make healthy choices and understand portion sizes. They are offered water and milk, which they are also encouraged to pour for themselves.

Children are erratic about their eating.

On some days, children have big appetites and on other days they do not. But they will eat, if you trust and respect their need to eat in their own way. At Little Steps we respect a child's wish to refuse food. After a child refuses food, staff will give the child space and time before offering again. They will repeat this process until the child has refused the food 3 times, after which the food will be removed, and the child will carry on with their daily routine. We do not offer alternative food if a child chooses to refuse what is offered.

Children need scheduled eating times.

Young children have small stomachs and high energy requirements. Our meals and snacks are set out so that the children eat every two to three hours. We don't hand out food or beverages (other than water) between scheduled feeding times as this affects the children's appetite when mealtimes or snack times comes around. If a child is asleep through a snack time, unless they wake within half an hour of snack time, they will be given food at the next meal, otherwise giving them a snack too close to their next meal will prevent them wanting to eat their meal and have a knock-on affect for the rest of their day.

Children need moral support to do a good job with eating.

Staff sit down and sometimes eat with the children in our setting at snack and mealtimes. They provide encouragement and conversation during meals but don't try to take over their job of eating; the children are encouraged to try for themselves. Those children just learning to feed themselves will be offered a spoon to play with in the early stages and will progress to attempting to scoop and put food in their own mouths.

Bottle Feeding



Infants that are being bottle fed will be offered milk following their feeding schedule at home. A child's key carer will discuss this with parents to determine their needs.

Weaning

When an infant begins their feeding journey, key carers will work with parents to determine their stage of weaning and work together to gradually progress them from puree, small lumps to full solids.

Baby led weaning is supported at our setting if the food being served allows for this. With meals that are not suitable to be eaten with hands, infants will be given some finger food to feed themselves while a practitioner offers them food from a spoon.