



Food for Play Policy

Creative Stars Day Nursery makes every effort to ensure that all children are safeguarded and well cared for. At Creative Stars Day Nursery, we have adopted this policy to reflect our commitment to ensuring that all the children in our care have quality play opportunities which are safe.

Our aim is to ensure that 'food for messy play' activities are age appropriate and are linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage which actively promotes children's creative and sensory development. The tactile experiences gained during these activities help children experience a variety of textures. Using 'food for messy play', children can learn to explore and experiment using all their senses. They can feel, smell, pour and mix to see what happens next. Babies and toddlers develop hand/eye coordination along with fine motor skills.

We always check for allergies and dietary requirements before engaging in the activities using food. All activities are supervised to ensure the children's health and welfare is always our top priority. Utensils and other equipment used during these activities are regularly cleaned and the children are encouraged not to eat the 'play' food or put play equipment into their mouths, although sometimes this is unavoidable.

Procedure

This procedure is for staff and covers all activities that children take part in which contains food (includes nursery made play dough).

- only food supplied by the nursery can be used for 'messy food' activities. This is because the 'food' supplied has been risk assessed and is age related.
- Plan 'messy' food activities after considering children with food allergies. The allergies board can be found in the kitchen and the main floor.
- Check all 'food for messy play' prior to use to make sure it is not out of date.
- Room Leaders will liaise with each other when carrying out weekly planning using 'food for messy play' to share the activity where possible to cut down on food wastage.
- Small group activities using food have more effect and must be supervised.
- Keep the food with the activity and not around the room. Food used for messy play should be presented in ways that make the food appear differently to the way it would be presented for eating, e.g., in trays (small and large), with added food colouring, raw or dried when normally eaten cooked etc.
- Children should be discouraged from eating and putting 'play food' into their mouths.
- Play food must never be left out overnight in the nursery. Wet food should be disposed of in the kitchen bin. Dried food should be inspected for possible reuse. Dried food that can be reused should be stored in a container labelled with the original expiry date on the packet, the date the food was stored and the contents.

The following foods can be used for 'messy' play activities:

Children under 2 years: Oats, Rice Krispies, Custard, Dyed cooked pasta, Jelly, Canned peas, Instant mashed potato, Baked beans, Play dough, Cloud dough (4 cups of plain flour + 1 cup of vegetable oil).

Children over 2 years: All of the above and including Pulses, Dried pasta, Rice and cornflour
Care must be taken with the size so as not to be a choking hazard - Raw root vegetables)

This policy was reviewed on: 15.08.23

Date of next review: 15.08.24