**Busy Bodies Child Care Centre Ltd**

**Eating and Nutrition Policy**

Here at Busy Bodies we are very aware of the importance of mealtimes, eating and how these times of the day need to be carefully and respectfully managed.

In line with our overall practice our aims are to be respectful, to empower the children and to be mindful of our own and other peoples feelings and needs. It is at this early age where anxieties around food can develop and it is our main role to support the children in developing an understanding of food whilst not labelling food as good or bad or attaching any kind of emotions to food time other than a joy of being together as a group.

**Procedure**

Our Lunch Menu are planned in advance by the Head of St Laurence’s Kitchen. The food offered is fresh, wholesome and balanced and we often reflect on what the children are enjoying and what they are not enjoying.

We believe in the importance of group eating time. We offer free play and exploration both inside and outside all other times of the day. This is an opportunity for the children to explore their own ideas, play with others or play alone and follow their own play ideas. This is supported by Teachers in a respectful way via the Teachers stepping in to support teachable moments if they feel their input is needed. We believe a balance can be struck and we do have some “adult led” times during the day. These include a small group time at the start of the session to welcome everyone and group time for a story or some songs. We also have snack time and lunch time all together around the tables. Having group time together has many benefits developmentally including but not limited to communication and language, personal and social development and physical development. In our small tables of 6 children and one or two adults we can discuss what we have done before group time and ponder on what we might do next. We can talk about everything and anything and it is a great opportunity to get together for these informal meetings.

**Snack Time**

Our aim is to provide a range of food and snacks that include a variety of fruit and vegetables, toast, crackers and cheese. Parents / Carers are invited to bring in their own snacks for their child to eat at snack time if they prefer. If a child has a specific allergy or dietary requirement Parents / Carers are again invited to bring in drink and food for their child to eat or discuss with the staff team on what their child can eat and drink.

At Snack Time the children begin by washing their hands. They then choose their name from the table and choose where they would like to sit. Once all the children are sat down a plate containing a range of fruit and vegetables is places onto the table for the children to eat if they wish. A few minutes later a plate of cheese and crackers, or toast is also placed on the table. Water and Milk is provided and the children are able to pour their own choice of drink. Alternatively they can collect their drink bottle from the drinks table and bring it over. A member of staff is positions on each table. Once we have finished we take our drinks back to the table or hand our cups in to the teacher and then go and play.

**Lunch Time**

Lunch time works in a very similar way to snack time. Children choose their name and choose where they would like to sit. If they are having a hot lunch then a knife and fork is given to them with their food. If they are having a packed lunch then the lunch box is given to them. Children are given the choice what they would like to eat and in what order. Lunch boxes are placed infront of them on the table. Teachers respect the wishes and feelings of the children. When the child tells them they are full then that feeling is respected and they can stop eating. Children will be encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners, and will be given plenty of time to eat. Portion size is important for children as they have a small stomach and under developed gut which prevents them from consuming large quantities of food at a time so this will be monitored by our staff.

Once the child is finished they let a member of staff know and then they are free to leave the table.

**Rewards**

Children are not encouraged to eat anything that they do not want to. We would not demand an adult eats something they do not want and therefore why should it be any different for children. Childrens wishes and feelings are respected. No child is ever rewarded for eating more than someone else and vice versa no child is spoken to negatively for “not eating all of their lunch”. Attaching emotions and concepts such as “I get a sticker for eating all of my food” may lead to short time “success” but can lead to long term negative feelings towards food. The child learns to eat all of the food not because they wanted to but because they wanted a sticker. When you one day take away the stickers the child may be confused. It is better from an early age to respect the wishes and physical signs the child is showing. When a child is respected and trusted to make the correct decision this empowers them and they become intrinsically motivated as it felt good to them, instead of extrinsically motivated.

**Food Labels**

At Busy Bodies we try to avoid using labels such as “good”, “bad”, “healthy” and “unhealthy” to describe food. These terms should be used to describe the whole of a persons diet and attitudes to food, not specific parts of their diet. Cake is not unhealthy, vegetables are not unhealthy, it is the amount of them we eat, how often we eat them and in what combination that is.

**Teachers**

Teachers sit alongside the children to eat their lunch. Teachers set a good role to children, are mindful of their actions and also recognise the important position they have in shaping the thoughts and actions of the children at Busy Bodies. Teachers:

* Don’t prompt a child to eat something or praise them for doing so
* Don’t encourage children to eat more than they choose to. They are entitled to stop eating when there senses tell them to.
* Don’t reward or praise children for eating all of their food.
* Respect the wishes of children and are mindful of their unique thoughts and feelings. Every moment of every day is different and therefore some days a child may eat lots and other days not. A range of reasons could be responsible for this.
* Don’t withhold pudding. We do not want to encourage them to eat more than they need or to eat something they do not like in order to receive a reward.

**Parents as Partners**

Food and meal times are discussed with parents/carers on a regular basis through conversations, discussions with the learning journey and the home diary. Parents / Carers are encouraged to discuss eating habits and their own personal dietary wishes with staff

**Breakfast Club**

Busy Bodies offers a breakfast club to children who arrive before 8:30 AM. If you would like your child to have breakfast then please let a member of staff know. We have a range of breakfast cereals available as well as toast and croissants.

Water will be available at all times.

If halal meat is not available a vegetarian option may be given.

More Information can be found at:

<https://sarahockwell-smith.com/2018/04/07/why-you-should-never-praise-or-reward-a-child-for-eating/>

<https://www.alfiekohn.org/article/risks-rewards/>

This policy and procedure will be reviewed annually.

Updated on ………………………………………….. By …………………………………………………………..

This policy has been read, understood and signed by all the staff.

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