

Nutrition Policy

We will promote healthy eating within The Ark through projects we do with the children, through communication with the children's parents/carers and the structure of the day. We are committed to equality of opportunity (please see our Equal Opportunities policy), and plan our programme to extend the children's experience and knowledge of other cultures, celebrations and festivals, to include the different foods eaten. We will try to make the children aware of the different food groups and the need for a balanced diet through play and discussion. Our admission form, which will be completed by parents in respect of every child, asks the parents to record if the child suffers from any allergies (including food intolerance) and whether the child has any special dietary requirements (e.g. vegetarian, religious, cultural, medical).

We will provide healthy snacks and milk for the children at snack time and water is available for whenever the children are thirsty (the children are made fully aware of this when they join us.) On special occasions such as birthdays, cake may be made available. All meals are home cooked using locally sourced fresh ingredients where possible. No artificial colours flavours or preservatives are used in foods. No salt is added during cooking. All meat is from J Mato & Son Ltd butchers shop in Blandford.

We request that parents support us in our healthy eating aims when providing packed lunches for their children in the following ways:

- Lunch boxes must be clean and clearly named, inside and out
- Any items requiring refrigeration should be labelled with the child's name and placed in the fridge by staff
- Drinks should be packed in a non-breakable container with the child's name on it
- Foods such as crisps, chocolate, sweets or fizzy drinks should be avoided, as should any other foods with high levels of additives/colourings as some children are highly sensitive to these ingredients which can severely affect their behaviour and/or make them sick
- Foods with a nut content should be avoided as children with a severe allergy to nuts can suffer extreme reactions even via indirect contact
- Fruit or vegetable and dairy snacks are encouraged

We are, of course, conscious of parental choice and where possible will comply with parent's wishes regarding the above.

We will promote hygiene by ensuring the children wash their hands before snacks or meals (for further information please see our Health and Safety policy). We will try to make snacks and meals sociable occasions with the children sitting down together in small groups. We will also ask our staff when eating with the children to adhere to this policy. We will endeavour to inform parents how well children having hot meals provided by The Ark have eaten.

For those having packed lunch, any uneaten food will be left in the children's lunch boxes in order that parents can then see what the child has or has not eaten.