



Food Play Policy

At New Beginnings Day Nursery, **we ensure any food we use for** play with the children is carefully supervised.

Risk Assessment and Choking Hazards

- All activities will be risk assessed prior to implementation.
- Choking hazards will be identified, checked, and avoided.
- Small objects such as dried pasta and pulses will not be used for younger children.
- Whole jelly cubes will not be used for play. If jelly is used to enhance play, it will be fully prepared with water according to manufacturer instructions before use.
- Heat-treated flour will be used where appropriate to reduce the risk of infection.

Allergies and Intolerances

- All children's allergies and intolerances will be recorded and clearly visible to staff.
- Allergies will be checked prior to setting up food-related play activities.
- Activities will be adapted to ensure no child is excluded.
- All food-based activities will be recorded on planning sheets, clearly listing all ingredients and allergens.
- Staff will ensure children's individual dietary needs are always met.

Permitted and Not Permitted Materials

Permitted

- Cooked playdough
- Hay, soil, or sawdust for farm-themed play

Not Permitted:

- Weetabix or similar cereal products for farm or sensory play



- General use of food items in play activities

Food must not be used as a play resource unless explicitly authorised by the Nursery Manager.

Exceptional Authorisation of Food for Play

Where food is exceptionally approved for play purposes by the Nursery Manager ONLY:

- It must be clearly distinguishable from food intended for eating (e.g., presented in tuff trays, coloured, raw where appropriate).
- Children must be actively discouraged from eating play food or placing equipment/utensils in their mouths.
- Sensory smell activities using food must be considered and risk assessed by the Manager.

Food for Tasting Activities

- Food for tasting activities must only be provided by the nursery.
- Tasting activities must be approved by the Nursery Manager in advance.
- Full allergen information must be available to staff and parents.

Hygiene and Storage

- Dried food used for play will be stored separately from food intended for cooking.
- Utensils used for food play will be washed thoroughly and stored separately from those used for food preparation or mealtimes.
- Food used for play will be presented in a way that clearly distinguishes it from food intended for eating (e.g., in tuff trays, with food colouring added, raw where appropriate).
- Children will be discouraged from eating play food or putting equipment and utensils in their mouths.



Shelf Life and Disposal

- Foods with a limited shelf life (e.g., dough) will be replaced regularly.
- Cooked play materials will not be stored beyond safe time limits.
- Dry food materials may be reused where safe and appropriate.

Educational Value

Food will only be used in play where it enhances children's learning opportunities and experiences. Where possible, alternative non-food materials will be used to achieve similar learning outcomes.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
1 st August 2026	Joanna Wilkinson	1 st August 2027