

## Food Play Policy

At Little Footsteps Childcare (Mattishall & Dereham) we have adopted a messy play 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 they 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 which stimulates their senses, they can see, feel, smell, pour, mix to see what happens next, having fun while they learn and developing their gross and fine motor skills.

At Little Footsteps staff always check for allergies and dietary requirements before engaging in the activities using real 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 ANY activity that children take part in which contains ANY food (This includes nursery made playdough).

- 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. The food is stored in the kitchen only.
- Plan 'messy' food activities after considering children with food allergies. The allergies board can be found in the kitchen and on all individual children's care plans within each room.
- Check all 'food for messy play' prior to use to make sure it is not out of date.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.
- Food should only be used in 'messy play' when something significant is planned for specific areas and to support children's learning and development.
- Children should be discouraged from eating 'play food' along with putting any equipment used into their mouths.
- Play food must never be left overnight in the nursery.
- Wet food should be disposed of in the food waste bin.
- Dried food should be disposed of in the food waste bin

The following foods could be used for 'messy' play supervised activities:

- Oats
- Rice Krispies
- Dyed cooked pasta - 2years and over only.
- Halal Jelly (cooked)
- Play dough
- Cloud dough
- Pulses
- Dried pasta – Children aged 2years and over only/focused activities
- Dried rice - Children aged 2years and over only/focused activities
- Herbs/spices
- Ice - Care must be taken with the size so as not to be a choking hazard
- Raw root vegetables/Fruit
- Corn flour