This policy guide has been designed to give information to those who provide or serve refreshments to children in a health, social care, or educational and childcare setting.

**HEALTHY EATING POLICY**

**What is a snack?**

A ‘Snack’ means food and drink consumed between meal times – it does not mean small, light or replacement meals.

**Are snacks necessary?**

Not always, it depends on how much food and drink is consumed at main mealtimes, the level of activity in between, even how hot or cold the weather is.

**What makes a good snack?**

Foods that are healthy and tooth friendly with:

* No added sugars
* Very little salt
* Not too much saturated fat

Fresh fruit and vegetables are ideal as a snack food, no fat, no salt, no added sugars and so many to choose from! At Baby Bears Day Care we encourage children to snack on fruit and vegetables as this will help them to reach the recommended 5 a day. Apple slices, Orange or Satsuma segments, Strawberries or Raspberries, Kiwi fruit, Banana, Carrot batons, Cucumber or Corn sticks are excellent snacks.

Dried fruit and products which contain dried fruits together with fruit juices are best kept to mealtimes as they are NOT considered to be tooth friendly due to the high sugar content.

Other suitable snacks are small pieces of bread, toast or crumpets, spread thinly with butter or polyunsaturated margarine, with a smear of savoury yeast extract (Vegemite or Marmite) or low-fat cheese spread or small cubes of hard cheese. Breadsticks, rice cakes, crackers, or crisp breads are good, but check packaging for hidden sugars or salt.

The safest drinks to serve between meals are plain water or semi skimmed milk for children; full fat milk for under 2’s as per the government guidelines. Other drinks should only be given at mealtimes. ALL drinks should be served in an open cup. Babies from six months old should be introduced to drinking from open cups without spouts or lids for their drinks too!

Remember that many popular ‘convenience’ snacks contain large amounts of saturated fat, salt and hidden sugars. Confectionary, cakes, biscuits, jams, crisps, and fizzy drinks all contain added sugars, saturated fat or salt, these should be avoided as snacks between meals.

**Lunch**

The nursery will provide a well-balanced nutritional meal at midday. We understand the diverse needs of each child and cater for all children, if for some reason a child falls asleep when meals are offered a meal will be served and kept in the kitchen for when the child awakes, once the child awakes the meal will be reheated and serve to the child within their room.

**Mealtimes**

Mealtimes should be a social and relaxing time of the day. Staff members will where practicable be sitting at the table with the children and setting an example of good table manners at mealtimes. Children will sit in smaller groups to make it a social occasion.

All children will be encouraged to eat their meals but never forced. Drinks will be offered to each child at the start of their meals and desserts will never be withdrawn if any child does not eat their meal. Unless requested by parents/carers upon signing the child up. A healthy alternative can be provided. Staff will make this an enjoyable time for all children.

Sometimes children may need added encouragement and support during mealtimes and a food diary may help to give further support to both the child and their parents/carers. Good communication between staff and parents/carers will be encouraged at all times.

A daily diary for all children will be completed, which will detail what meals were offered and how much the child has eaten that day. This will include Breakfast, Snacks am/pm, Lunch and Teatime. This is called the care diary and it is on the Tapestry platform we use to communicate with parents/carers.