

FOOD FOR MESSY PLAY POLICY

At Victoria Road Private Day Nursery we have adopted this 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 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. Using 'food for messy play', children can learn to explore and experiment using all their senses. They can feel, smell, pour and mix to see what happens next, having fun while they learn. Babies and toddlers develop hand/eye coordination along with fine motor skills. We always check for allergies and dietary requirements before engaging in the activities using food. For babies under 12 months who do not participate in nursery food, we always request consent from parents/carers prior to babies being involved in our messy play activities. All activities are supervised to ensure the children's health and welfare is our top priority at all times. 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 (includes nursery made play dough).

- 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 taking into account children with food allergies. The allergies board can be found in the kitchen.
- Check all 'food for messy play' prior to use to make sure it is not out of date.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' in order to share the activity where possible to cut down on food wastage.
- Days should be varied each week in order for all children to have the opportunity to join in 'food for messy play' activities.
- 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.

- Children should be discouraged from eating 'play food' along with putting any equipment used into their mouths. Sometimes this is avoidable.
- Play food must never be left overnight in the nursery. Wet food should be disposed of in the kitchen bin. Dried food should be inspected for possible reuse. Dried food that can be reused should be stored in a container labelled with the original expiry date on the packet, the date the food was stored and the contents. This should then be returned to the 'play food' cupboard for future use.

The following foods can be used for 'messy' play activities with adult supervision:

Children 2 years and under

- Oats
- Rice crispies
- Custard
- Dyed cooked pasta
- Jelly
- Rice
- Instant mashed potato
- Baked beans
- Play dough (2 cups plain flour, 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, ½ cup salt, 2 tablespoons cream of tartar, up to 1.5 cups boiling water gradually added until it feels just right)
- Cloud dough (4 cups of plain flour + 1 cup of vegetable oil)

NOTE: Babies under 12 months must have a signed parent/carer consent form prior to them taking part in any 'messy' play with food in the registration pack.

Children over 2 years

- All of the above and including:
- Pulses
- Dried pasta
- Ice
- Raw root vegetables
- Cornflour

Care must be taken with the size so as not to be a choking hazard