

Food Play Policy

ICP Nurseries believe food is a precious resource that not everyone can easily access and therefore results in children and families going hungry. Children should be taught the value of food and conversations about where food comes from is essential for children to understand that food can be sourced by growing it. It is important that we create a culture of respecting food and not being wasteful. We also recognise that there are benefits to providing food play activities for children, for example, food play can create a multi-sensory experience or be used to develop fine motor skills. Food play can also encourage children to be more adventurous with their food choices.

Before setting up a food play it is important that any ingredients being used in the activity do not compromise the health of children with serious allergies and does not include foods that are on ICP Nurseries banned food list. It is essential for practitioners to consider what the learning opportunity for the children is and also ensure that the activity promotes the children's imagination and is not prescriptive. The choke tester should be used before any food play is used with children under 2.

Food play may include:

- Pasta
- Uncooked Rice
- Cereals
- Cornflour
- Herbs and spices
- Fruit/vegetables
- Flour (when used as an ingredient)

When flour is used in play on its own it can cause a risk to children's health through a condition called 'Baker's lung' so should always be used as an ingredient, for example, in playdough. Jelly play is also prohibited as it poses a choking hazard. Food play should always be supervised by an adult.

We also recognise that providing real fruit and vegetables in the home-corner is much more beneficial than providing plastic alternatives. With real fruit and vegetables children can experience texture, weight, temperature and smell. Before putting these into a home-corner we need to explain to the children about looking after food. Practitioners need to support by observing and role modelling how we care for food. Practitioners can also facilitate the learning by cutting open the fruit and vegetables so that these can be explored further.