



# Food Matters

Nurturing happy, healthy children

## Foreword



Eating well is essential for children in their early years. This resource celebrates the many ways in which early learning and childcare (ELC) settings are supporting children to have positive eating experiences and enjoy well-balanced, nutritious food. I would like to thank all of the people who have worked with us to create this resource and share their stories. The contributions from children, young people, parents, practitioners and service providers have been invaluable. Their passion and drive to support children around eating well is inspiring.

The Care Inspectorate works across a wide range of registered care services, social work services and local partnerships. We exist to ensure that care services are of the highest quality and meet people's needs. Food Matters makes a significant contribution to Scotland's early learning and childcare. Many children already spend a large proportion of their day in a care setting and this is set to increase with the Scottish Government's expanded provision in ELC by 2020. This resource is timely and gives clear messages about the importance of children getting well-balanced, nutritious food in a supportive and nurturing environment.

This resource supports the Care Inspectorate strategic objective to support improvements in social care, providing assurance and building a rights-based system that is world class. By highlighting examples of good practice, we aim to promote a culture where everyone is learning from each other. This supports our Improvement Strategy, which is designed to use the evidence from scrutiny to spread what works well, so that more people can experience high quality care and support more often. I hope that you will find this a useful tool on your journey of improvement.

Scotland's new Health and Social Care Standards firmly embed a rights-based approach where quality in care is assessed through the lens of the person experiencing care. This resource highlights the relevant standards and demonstrates how early years settings can make the standards a reality for children in relation to eating well.

The Care Inspectorate is on a journey moving from being an enforcer of rules to an enabler of quality, building effective relationships to better support high quality care for everyone. This resource demonstrates our commitment to this. I very much hope it is useful to you.

**Gordon Weir**

Interim Chief Executive, Care Inspectorate

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# 1. Introduction

Food Matters is a resource that highlights examples of good practice from across the early learning and childcare (ELC) sector. We have worked alongside the sector to enable providers, practitioners and families to tell their own stories of how they are supporting children to eat well and enjoy good food every day. This resource compliments, and should be used alongside, NHS Health Scotland's Setting the Table, the nutritional guidance and food standards for the ELC sector.

Food Matters shares Unicef's core message and vision: If a child receives the right nutrition and care at the start of their lives, they'll grow up healthy and strong – and there's no limit to what they can become. This aligns with Health and Social Care Standard 1.6: I get the most out of life because the people and organisation who support and care for me have an enabling attitude and believe in my potential.

Throughout this resource, we link the examples to the new Health and Social Care Standards, which are based on human rights and wellbeing principles and set out what people should expect from their care and support. These standards are written from the perspective of the person experiencing care and support, and they are designed to drive improvement, promote flexibility and encourage innovation.

The eating and drinking elements of the Health and Social Care Standards can be found under **Standard 1: I experience high quality care and support that is right for me.** The relevant descriptive statements are listed below.

**1.33 I can choose suitably presented and healthy meals and snacks, including fresh fruit and vegetables, and participate in menu planning.**

**1.34 If I need help with eating and drinking, this is carried out in a dignified way and my personal preferences are respected.**

**1.35 I can enjoy unhurried snack and meal times in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible.**

**1.36 If I wish, I can share snacks and meals alongside other people using and working in the service if appropriate.**

**1.37 My meals and snacks meet my cultural and dietary needs, beliefs and preferences.**

**1.38 If appropriate, I can choose to make my own meals, snacks and drinks, with support if I need it, and can choose to grow, cook and eat my own food where possible.**

**1.39 I can drink fresh water at all times.**

We have also highlighted other standards that apply to the range of examples featured. We hope that this helps bring these standards to life and enhances everyone's understanding of how they can support positive outcomes for children and their families in ELC settings across Scotland. We make the link to the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators. This demonstrates how eating well and enjoying positive eating experiences contribute to children being safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. It is also aligned with our approach of putting positive outcomes for children at the forefront of our work.

Food Matters develops the same model as our resources My World Outdoors, Our Creative Journey and My Childminding Experience in sharing and celebrating good practice. It is intended to be practical, inspirational and support improvement. We worked with Scottish Government's Maternal & Infant Nutrition Co-ordinator, Education Scotland and senior health promotion specialists from NHS Lothian and NHS Borders to highlight key messages and share good practice. We hope that providers and practitioners will use this resource to initiate innovative practices to support children to eat well and have positive relationships with food.

The examples we have shared cover a variety of good practice and show how services have made significant improvements both throughout their settings and for individual children and families. These examples demonstrate a range of different approaches, some are traditional and direct while others are gentle and nurturing. These gentle and nurturing approaches are enhanced when children have developed strong attachments with key adults. In addition, they provide an opportunity to support children and their families in a way which makes them feel valued and included.

The Care Inspectorate is committed to promoting equality and Food Matters aims to support Scotland's ambition that all children will have the best start in life. We recognise that the earliest years of life are crucial to a child's development and will have a lasting impact on their health outcomes. The expansion in the annual provision of ELC services from 600 to 1140 hours for all three and four year olds and eligible two year olds in Scotland means many more of our youngest children will be spending more time in these settings. Many children will receive a considerable proportion of their daily nutrition and food experiences here. This means it is even more important that they have high quality food and are enabled to develop a positive relationship with food. The Care Inspectorate recognises that the expansion means new challenges for ELC settings to provide meals and snacks for children over the extended session times, but also that there are exciting opportunities to help children eat well and lay the foundations for a healthy diet. This approach is firmly rooted in early intervention and the aspiration in **Scotland's National Performance Framework** that we are healthy and active and that we grow up loved, safe and respected so we realise our potential.

Closing the poverty-related attainment gap is a key aim of the expansion of ELC in Scotland. Examples in this resource highlight the importance of children having access to high quality, nutritious food and understanding the difference this makes to them. We recognise that health inequalities and

associated issues such as food poverty are complex. With this in mind, we have included an example of an initiative undertaken in Dalmarnock Primary School in Glasgow even though this is not a service within our regulatory jurisdiction. This example alongside others shows the many benefits of children accessing well-balanced and nutritious food through community-based activities and support.

We recognise that many families live in challenging circumstances and the ELC sector is well placed to support children and families to explore and connect positively with food. There are some fantastic examples within this document that highlight great whole-family approaches and partnership working to help overcome barriers to eating well.

It is important the new Health and Social Care Standards that apply to eating and drinking are embraced and taken forward positively. There is a variety of options available to service providers around food provision. No matter which option they choose, it is their responsibility to ensure that children are offered well-balanced, minimally processed, nutritious and appetising meals that include fresh fruit and vegetables. Some service providers will offer children a variety of choices and others will opt to have a set menu. Where a choice is offered, providers need to ensure that children are supported by knowledgeable staff to make balanced choices. While choice is important, sometimes it is better for children to have limited choices so long as the food is of high quality, well-balanced, nutritious and appetising. Decisions around food provision and menu planning should always involve consultations with the children and their families. Children can evidence their enjoyment of food in a variety of ways, including those who may not be able to verbalise their feelings. Providers need to respond positively to the feedback, however it is given.

Some vulnerable children in ELC settings may have experienced considerable trauma in their lives. There is increasing evidence of the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and the potential for long-term, cumulative health problems. For these children, mealtimes can be especially important, giving them opportunities to experience food in a therapeutic and healthy way. Some children have had poor and disrupted early attachment experiences and may need extra support to eat well and enjoy food. Some who have experienced trauma can be wary about unpredictable things happening. For them, a reliable daily routine around food which includes consistent communication from sensitive, attuned staff can help reduce their anxiety. A positive relationship with food and enjoyable eating experiences with others has the potential to build resilience and reduce the impact of adverse childhood experiences.

This resource will be helpful for you as it provides some of the key elements that will encourage creative thinking around children's food provision. You can use these examples to think about your own service and how you can make improvements that impact positively on children's relationships with food and their eating experiences.

## Food Matters: nurturing happy, healthy children is available online

This resource is published as a printable document, but is also maintained as a live resource on The Hub. This means that services can continue to provide good practice examples for us to share on an ongoing basis. It also means we can host videos and live links to other resources. If you would like to submit a practice example, please visit [www.hub.careinspectorate.com](http://www.hub.careinspectorate.com) and click on Submit your story.

### Food Matters is on YouTube

We have produced three short documentary videos to accompany this resource. They feature staff and children from Dens Road Primary School Nursery (Page 66), Fernielea Out of School Club (Page 62) and Glen Family Centre (Page 37) telling us about their own stories. You can watch them on our YouTube channel.

[www.youtube.com/user/careinspectorate](http://www.youtube.com/user/careinspectorate)

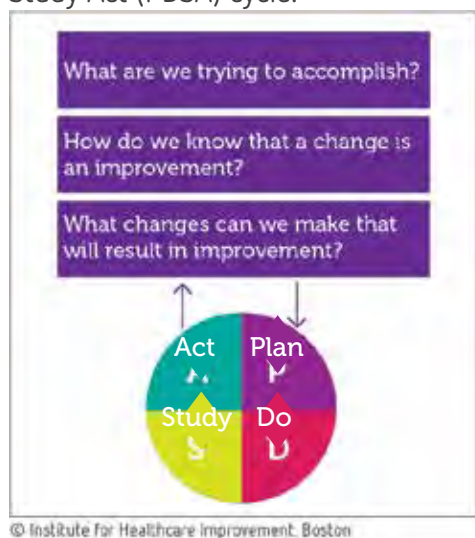


## 2. Making improvements in early learning and childcare settings

We want this resource to support care providers, practitioners and inspectors to make improvements in early learning and childcare (ELC) settings around children's eating experiences and their relationship with food. The good practice examples in this resource will support providers and practitioners when considering approaches to use.

The Care Inspectorate encourages providers and practitioners to use the Model for Improvement (MFI) when making changes so they can evidence that a change is an improvement, which they can embed into everyday practice.

The three questions in the diagram below are a good place to start before you begin the Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycle.



Source: <http://www.ihl.org/resources/PublishingImages/ModelforImprovement.jpg>

### 1. What are we trying to accomplish?

It is important to be able to say what it is we want to improve and by when. Have a clear aim and objective that is SMART:

S Specific

M Measurable

A Achievable

R Relevant

T Time specific

### 2. How do we know that a change is an improvement?

We need to make a record of where we are now and consider the changes we make to see if they do make an improvement.



### 3. What changes can we make that will result in improvement?

It is important to think about what we are able to do to actually make this improvement and come up with ideas of what we can do to make the improvement happen.

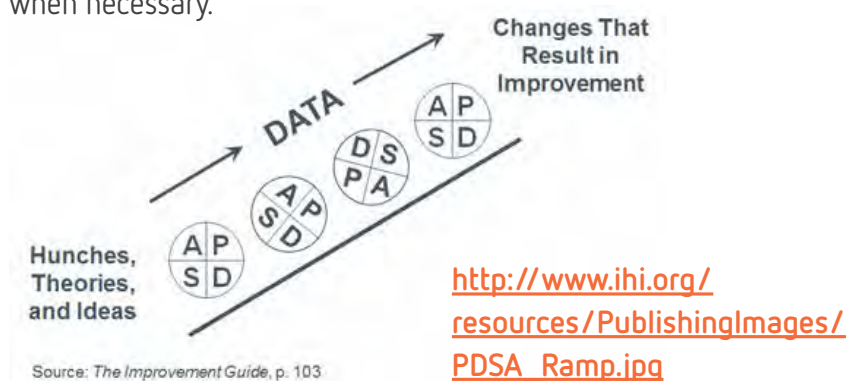
#### Good Practice Example

The example provided by Glen Family Centre demonstrates how the MFI works for them (see page 37). Staff identified the children’s lunchtime experience as an area for improvement and then undertook a series of small PDSA tests of change to bring about an improvement to the children’s experience.

The PDSA cycles included trialling different approaches.

- The service looked at staffing and made changes to improve the children’s experience.
- They began small, testing the new experience with one table of children first before increasing the scale once things were going well.
- Staff organised the dining room differently before settling on an arrangement that worked best.
- Several different sized serving utensils were tested so that the children could learn to serve themselves.
- Table cloths were trialled but removed as staff found this was a distraction because the children would often pull at them.

By using the MFI and PDSA cycles, the change to the new Swedish lunchtime experience was a success. The new approach was tested and adjusted at each step of the way with small changes made when necessary.



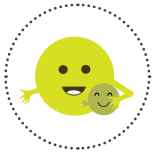
#### Further resources

A range of resources, including information on the PDSA cycle to support continuous improvement and the Care Inspectorate’s Improvement Strategy, are available on The Hub website:

[hub.careinspectorate.com/improvement](http://hub.careinspectorate.com/improvement)



### 3. Looking through the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators lens



#### 3.1 Safe

**Children and young people are protected from abuse, neglect or harm at home, at school and in the community.**

#### **Calderwood Lodge Primary School Nursery Class**

Calderwood Lodge Primary School Nursery Class is a local authority nursery based in East Renfrewshire. It provides care for a maximum of 100 children aged between three years and primary school entry. The service was inspected in December 2015 and was evaluated as being very good for the quality of care and support, the environment, staffing, and management and leadership. The inspection report noted that staff had created a very welcoming and caring setting for children and developed very positive relationships with families. Staff were very knowledgeable about individual children and understood their different interests and personalities.

Calderwood Lodge has introduced new ways of supporting children to eat well and have positive food experiences. Its aim is to help children develop new skills in practical cookery that they can use at home and to support them to be comfortable exploring different types of food in a nurturing environment.

By working with catering staff in the school's kitchen, children learn fundamental food safety and hygiene skills. They are also learning to use everyday kitchen equipment including sharp knives. Caring and nurturing staff support the children to develop their knife skills while keeping them safe. It is important children have daily opportunities to take reasonable risks and challenges that help them develop into strong and capable children.

All catering staff working for East Renfrewshire Council hold a qualification in food hygiene from the Royal Environmental Health Institute in Scotland (REHIS). Staff are knowledgeable about food safety and hygiene and are able to support the children well.

Each primary school in the local area has a seasonal fruit and vegetable box delivered from a local organic producer. This underpins the Scottish Government's vision for Scotland to become a Good Food Nation where people benefit from and take pride and pleasure in the food they produce, buy, serve and eat each day. The boxes contain a diverse range of produce such as harvest squash, purple

broccoli and kale. The catering team use them to show pupils produce in its original form, such as carrots covered in soil, and the children are often surprised as they usually only see clean vegetables in supermarkets. Children learn about the origins of the food and then participate in practical cooking sessions.

Marion Calton, head teacher at Calderwood Lodge, explains the work they have been doing around food provision.

“We work really closely with our catering staff to enhance our food education and technology programme. The children come along to the kitchens and work alongside our catering staff to prepare a variety of foods that are served as part of their lunch. Calderwood Lodge is a Jewish nursery and because of that our kitchen serves kosher food for the children who request it through their families.

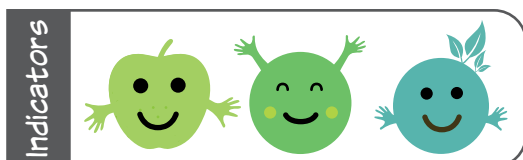
“Over the last few years we have worked really closely with East Renfrewshire Council, with catering staff, with parents and with the local Jewish community. We have reviewed the food that we offer and have looked to provide a wider range of foods that we can share with the children whilst also meeting the nutritional standards that we are expected to provide in all of our schools.

“The fruit and vegetable boxes are a new addition to the nursery this year and we are now working with our colleagues in catering to see how we can extend that right through the school through to Primary 7. We are also looking at how we can facilitate the experience for after-school clubs.”

Using the model adopted by East Renfrewshire Council, menus at Calderwood Lodge are planned using the NHS Health Scotland resource *Setting the Table*.

During lunch, children enjoy a home-like experience with a balanced and nutritious meal being offered. Staff support them to help themselves from serving dishes on the table so they can decide how much food to put on their plate. They use proper crockery and cutlery with appropriate supervision, enabling them to develop these skills.

East Renfrewshire Council focuses on providing a relaxed and nurturing environment during lunchtimes. The children sit with the same key staff in small groups ensuring continuity so they can be responsive to the children’s needs and support them to develop positive attachments where they feel loved, safe and secure. Nurturing approaches focus on building strong relationships with children and their families and have been found to improve children’s social, emotional and educational attainment.



## Fenton Barns Nursery

Fenton Barns Nursery is based in Fenton Barns, near North Berwick in East Lothian, and is provided by Fenton Barns Nursery Ltd. The service is registered to care for a maximum of 56 children aged between three months and primary school entry. It was inspected in August 2017, when it was evaluated as being very good for the quality of care and support and for the quality of the environment. The inspection report noted children were observed to be happy and confident in their surroundings and the innovative outdoor environment created a wealth of opportunities for them to engage in challenging play experiences, such as climbing trees and participating in fire-pit time.

The nursery focuses on providing children with outdoor learning experiences and supporting healthy, balanced lifestyles. Children spend the majority of their time outside exploring the spacious gardens and woodland area. The nursery has an ethos that encourages learning through natural curiosity, communication, problem solving, building relationships, questioning and creativity.

The children are actively involved in growing their own fruit and vegetables in the nursery's eco garden, which is a special section of the garden that has been designated for growing produce. This provides them with the opportunity to experience the 'seed to plate' journey and bring the food chain to life. The nursery employs a gardener who works directly with the children to extend their knowledge and get them involved in planting and nurturing their own fruit and vegetables. The children also have regular consultations with the gardener to decide what fruit and vegetables they would like to grow.

Vicky Richardson, nursery manager, describes their experience.

"The children help to nurture the fruit and vegetables by watering and weeding them. When the time is right, they harvest the produce and take them to the cooks in the kitchen where they have an opportunity to help prepare meals and snacks. The children see how their crops are used in meals and they are involved in each of the stages, from seed to plate.



“The cooks work closely with the children and parents to plan the menus and ensure different cultural and dietary needs are considered. Menus feature dishes from all around the world and when new foods are introduced they are offered to the children in a fun way to make them feel comfortable and safe. This encourages the children to try new foods even if they are not sure about them at first. They have tasting sessions where they enjoy playing with new foods, exploring the feel, smell, textures and flavours of previously unknown foods.

“Several parents have commented on how well their children eat at nursery and how pleased they are that their children have the opportunity to try new foods and extend their palates. In addition, parents can be reassured that their children’s allergies are catered for. The cooks work closely with parents and staff to make sure that the children receive nutritious meals, ensuring that the child does not miss out because of their allergy, and, most importantly, that the meals are safe for them to eat.

“The children also have the opportunity to cook on the fire pit in the nursery garden. This learning experience allows them to assess risk, build their confidence and promote their independence. They prepare the ingredients for bread, pancakes and other snacks and then cook these on the fire before eating them together around the pit. The children have discussions with each other on the rules around the fire and show understanding of why there are rules to keep them safe.”

## Comments from parents

“It is really comforting to know that my son’s allergy is being so well catered for while maintaining a varied and balanced diet. The support from Fenton Barns has been outstanding.”

“I feel that the children get a very balanced diet and the chefs have a sound knowledge of what children will and will not eat as well as being imaginative to include varieties of food which most children eat.”

“My four-year-old son loves the food he receives at Fenton Barns. We have lots of fun recreating his favourite dishes at home, all thanks to the interactive website the staff have produced showcasing various dishes and recipes.”



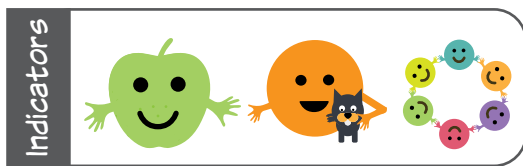
## Comments from children

"We collect the vegetables from the eco garden. I like spinach and potatoes."

"We grow and pick vegetables in the garden for our lunch."

"We tidy up our dishes and we can say what we like for dinner if they can't think of new things."

"I feel happy because I have lots of energy for playing."



## Caroline's

Caroline's is a childminding service based in Bathgate, West Lothian, and is provided by Caroline and Douglas Godden, a partnership. The service was first inspected in June 2016 when it was evaluated as being excellent for the quality of care and support, and management and leadership and very good for the quality of the environment. The report noted the childminders were nurturing, warm and affectionate towards the children. They knew them well and provided a variety of interesting activities that promoted skills development. Children had fun exploring their environment while developing independence and confidence.

Although children attending Caroline's bring their own packed lunches and snacks, the service actively supports children to eat well. The service is registered with the local authority to provide food because although it does not provide meals, it carries out food-based activities. There is an Eating Well policy in place to ensure parents are aware of the types of foods they should provide in lunch boxes and the service uses the NHS Health Scotland resource Setting the Table as guidance when planning and preparing food for the food-based activities.

The children are very enthusiastic about growing their own fruit and vegetables in the garden and vote on which vegetables they grow each year. They are also involved in buying, planting, watering, harvesting, washing and preparing the vegetables as well as deciding what to make with them. Discussions about safety take place and children are supported to peel and cut the vegetables in a safe way and wash the produce to ensure it is safe to eat. This year's herb garden provided an opportunity for them to experience new flavours and they were encouraged to use all of their senses to look, touch, smell and feel the herbs.

Caroline describes how she supports children around eating well.

*"Mealtimes and snack times are relaxed and sociable occasions with our own family joining the children whenever possible. We all participate in conversations about the food the children bring in their lunch boxes and this encourages discussions about food origins and helps extend their knowledge about the natural environment and the journey of food."*



"Newsletters and diaries provide an opportunity for the service and the families to share food experiences. Recipes are shared and children take pride in taking the vegetables home and bringing in produce that has been grown in their own garden. This provides an opportunity for families to be involved in the children's learning."

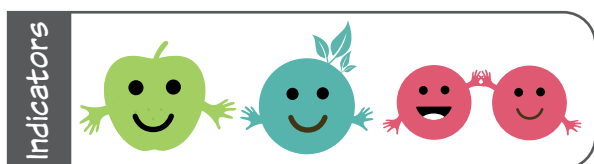
## Comments from parents

*"Encouraging outdoor activities is great and - gardening goes down especially well."*

*"Caroline's really promotes good nutrition."*

## Child's comment

*"We made Magical Unicorn Soup."*



## Health and Social Care Standards

1.25 I can choose to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational, social, creative, physical and learning activities every day, both indoors and outdoors.

1.33 I can choose suitably presented and healthy meals and snacks, including fresh fruit and vegetables, and participate in menu planning.

1.35 I can enjoy unhurried snack and meal times in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible.

1.36 If I wish, I can share snacks and meals alongside other people using and working in the service if appropriate.

1.37 My meals and snacks meet my cultural and dietary needs, beliefs and preferences.

1.38 If appropriate, I can choose to make my own meals, snacks and drinks, with support if I need it, and can choose to grow, cook and eat my own food where possible.

2.24 I make informed choices and decisions about the risks I take in my daily life and am encouraged to take positive risks which enhance the quality of my life.

## Things to think about

Think about the staff in your setting and community. How can you make the most of the knowledge, skills and experience of the people around you and those who support your setting?

Growing and harvesting food is a key life skill. What can you do to develop the opportunities for this within your particular setting?

Do children in your setting have the opportunity to experience eating locally grown produce that is in season?

Managing risk is important when supporting children to use kitchen equipment such as sharp knives. Do your staff have the skills to manage risk while supporting children to develop key life skills?

The children in these good practice examples are all being supported to explore new foods and engage in new and exciting food experiences? What else could you do?

What can you do to ensure that staff are knowledgeable and can support children to develop skills in the area of food hygiene and safety?

## Find out more

Education Scotland, Curriculum for Excellence: health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes:  
<https://education.gov.scot/Documents/health-and-wellbeing-eo.pdf>

Education Scotland, Food education – Better Eating, Better Learning - Calderwood Lodge  
Nursery Class:  
<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/practice-exemplars/hwb42-calderwood-lodge>

Education Scotland, Health and Wellbeing: responsibility of all. Making the links... making it work:  
<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/documents/hwb30-booklet.pdf>

Food Standards Agency, Guidance for Safer Food Better Business for Childminders:  
<http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/caterers/sfbb/sfbbchildminders>

Food Standards Scotland, Food Safety:  
<http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/consumers/food-safety>

NHS Health Scotland, Tackling the attainment gap by preventing and responding to Adverse  
Childhood Experiences:  
<http://www.healthscotland.scot/publications/tackling-the-attainment-gap-by-preventing-and-responding-to-adverse-childhood-experiences>

NHS Health Scotland, Setting the Table:  
<http://www.healthscotland.com/uploads/documents/30341-Setting%20the%20Table.pdf>

Scottish Government, Better Eating, Better Learning, Self-Evaluation Tool:  
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0044/00446318.pdf>

Scottish Government, Better Eating, Better Learning: A new context for school food, Appendix E: Food  
calendar: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/03/1606>





## 3.2 Healthy

**Children and young people have the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare and support to make healthy and safe choices.**

### Junior World

Junior World is a daycare of children service, based in Nairn in the Highlands, provided by CALA Integrated Services. It cares for a maximum of 80 children aged between two and 16. The service was inspected in March 2017 when the quality of care and support was evaluated as being very good and the environment was found to be good. The inspection report noted that children were well cared for by staff who knew them well and children had opportunities to engage in a varied and stimulating environment.

Jayne Mackintosh, manager, shares their story that began when a parent queried the snack provision in the out-of-school service.

“We were prompted to look more closely at the ingredients in the snacks we were providing and we recognised that some contained high levels of sugar and salt. By using the NHS Health Scotland resource Setting the Table as guidance, we could see that there were more nutritious options available. We made improvements to our snack menu to make it more nutritious, well-balanced and much more varied.”



Children and staff worked together to look at food labelling and learn about the nutritional value in foods and drinks. They looked closely at the ingredients of the preferred products and worked to see how they can create a healthier option. Children often requested crisps and chips but staff now support them to consider more balanced choices and they help children to see that some foods should be occasional as opposed to everyday foods. During lunch, children and staff engage in enthusiastic discussions around food and staff actively encourage children to choose water to help quench their thirst and avoid dehydration.

Staff wanted to increase the opportunities for high quality learning experiences in their outdoor provision and this led to their Eco Project. An unused area of the garden was found to be ideal and the project began with the addition of an old greenhouse. Children began by helping to weed the area and, due to their growing interest in this, a gardening club was formed involving children of all ages. Parents soon got involved, helping to fix the fence and gate as well as putting up a bird table.

Donations of seeds, bulbs and resources for the garden led to them growing produce. Children delighted in growing their own strawberries and commented that they tasted better than any they had eaten before. The gardening project expanded to include growing radishes, cucumbers, and tomatoes as well as herbs and flowers. The children now take extra delight in ensuring that Jayne, the manager, always has fresh flowers in her office. They also show their parents what they have been doing, taking real pride in their achievements.

Planning for the next season included an idea of planting garlic in the spring. This conversation led to discussions about seasonal foods and helped the children to develop new skills in planning ahead. The Eco Project also prompted learning around caring for and maintaining a garden, including learning about composting. Children are now so keen to compost the fruit and vegetable peelings that they are choosing to eat more fruit and vegetables.

As many children do not have access to a garden at home this project provides new opportunities for them. Many have tried home-grown products for the first time and learned how good they taste. Children are developing an understanding about food waste and the impact on the environment. They are also developing new skills in problem solving, team working, decision making and negotiating. Very importantly, they are also learning about respect, how to care for themselves, each other and the environment.

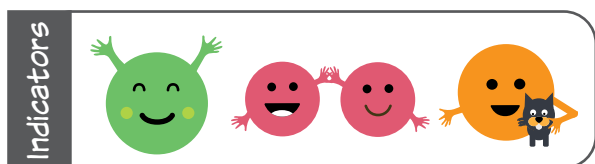
Staff keep an Eco folder to record the children's gardening activities and this is shared with parents who are encouraged to comment. Photographs are routinely used to capture children's involvement and staff will collect additional comments from the children through mind maps and graffiti boards to add to their learning journeys.

## Comments from children

*"It's good because there's tasty food we enjoy eating."*

*"When we go out in the garden all the children have fun and work well together."*

*"Instead of being stuck inside you can go out to the garden and get fresh air."*



## Killin Nursery and Killin & Crianlarich Nursery

Killin Nursery and Killin & Crianlarich Nursery are local authority nurseries based in the Stirling region. Killin Nursery is registered to provide care for a maximum of 27 children aged between birth and primary school entry. It was inspected in August 2016 and was evaluated as being very good for the quality of care and support and for the quality of staffing. Killin & Crianlarich Nursery is registered to provide care for a maximum of 16 children aged between birth and primary school entry. It was inspected in November 2016 when the quality of care and support and the quality of staffing were found to be very good. The two nurseries work closely together.

Alex Tigwell, depute headteacher, shares their story.

"We noticed over time that the contents of the lunch boxes were changing. Children were bringing more snack-size packets of meat and cheese products, biscuits, crackers, mini yogurts, smoothies and fruit products. On closer inspection, we noted that most of them had a high sugar content and others products had added sugar, which you may not have expected.

"We gathered empty packets over time and created a display for the parents' evenings on both sites. We guided them by simple statements to demonstrate the 'hidden' sugars that were masked by the use of a different word as well as the convincing marketing techniques used by the food companies. We also displayed a poster showing the recommended daily allowance of added sugar for children to highlight the quantity of sugar in each product.

"We had two filled lunch boxes on display, one showed a nutritious lunch and the other was a 'not so well balanced' example. This showed parents examples of foods to include daily and others to include only occasionally."

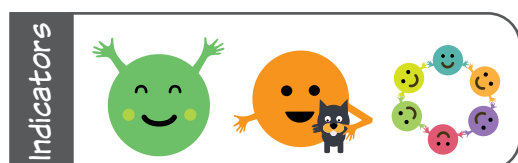
Staff were then inspired to undertake some further research into smoothies and found that while they can be a good source of nutrients and a way of introducing new tastes, there were a few things to note. Smoothies contain large quantities of blended fruit and sugar is naturally present in whole fruit but the structure of this sugar changes as it is blended. The blending process releases the natural sugars from within the cell walls of the fruit and as a result they become free sugars. Free sugars are the sugars that we need to be eating less of. This may sound complex, but the main thing to concentrate on is having a nutritious balanced diet while keeping the foods with the larger quantities of free sugars to a minimum. By reducing our intake of free sugars we will find it easier to maintain a healthy weight whilst also minimising the risk of tooth decay.

Since sharing the information with parents, staff have found the content of lunch boxes have improved and become more balanced. They are fewer smoothies, more whole fruit, more vegetable sticks, more natural yoghurt instead of pots and tubes of sugary fromage frais and there are fewer bags of crisps. Children's snacks should be nutritious and balanced as they are part of their daily intake to support their growth and development. The Eatwell Guide provides helpful information to support practitioners and parents so that when they are menu planning and making packed lunch boxes they have clear information.

## Comments from parents

*"It was a shock to read how much sugar was in a fromage frais, as my child loved them. Now I know why!"*

*"I was amazed to find sugar in unexpected places, such as cheese biscuits."*





## Cheeky Monkeys

Cheeky Monkeys is a daycare of children service based in Auchterarder, Perth and Kinross. The service is registered to care for a maximum of 69 children aged between birth and 16 years. It was inspected in April 2017 when the quality of care and support was evaluated as being very good and the quality of staffing was found to be good. The inspection report noted that positive and nurturing relationships were evident throughout the nursery and children approached staff for help and reassurance, demonstrating the trusting relationships that had developed.

Fiona McLean, manager of Cheeky Monkeys, explains how owner Ashley Craik engaged parents, children and staff around food provision and eating well.

“Ashley has a keen interest in children’s health and wellbeing with a particular focus on nutrition. When the resource Setting the Table was first introduced, Ashley held a workshop for staff to ensure that they understood the key aspects. This included general information about the importance of good nutrition and the hidden ingredients that can be found in everyday foods and drinks such as yoghurts. It also included important information about how much fluid children need each day.

“Staff were able to use their learning to stimulate discussions with parents and children when they were gathering suggestions for the menus during the year. As a result, they felt that parents would also benefit from Ashley’s workshop. So this was presented at parents’ evenings and feedback was very positive.”

Cheeky Monkeys provides a home-cooked meal for children who attend morning and full-day sessions. Menus are adapted twice a year with suggestions from parents and children. The lunchtime experience has been adapted to create a homely and supportive atmosphere where children and staff sit and enjoy a relaxed meal together. The dining area is café style with small tables and children are



supported to interact with peers and key staff to enjoy the food as well as the friendly chat. Children are supported by familiar adults with whom they have developed strong relationships. The nurturing environment helps them to feel secure and enables them to get the most out of this valuable time together. Parents are regularly invited to enjoy the positive lunch experience with their children too.

Fiona describes how even the youngest of children are involved in learning about food. "The children are supported to develop skills in food preparation in the weekly cooking classes. Their ages and stages of development are recognised so that they can participate in appropriate learning activities. The very young children in the baby room enjoy sensory sessions where they can explore new textures, tastes and smells. The children aged two and three years begin to follow simple instructions such as filling cups, using blunt knives, observing the use of scales and discussing quantities. The children aged between three and five years progress on to looking and reading recipes, learning about the ingredients and discovering where foods come from. They also take part in counting and measuring, using the scales and using sharp knives under supervision."

## Comments from parents

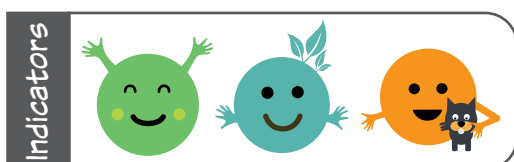
*"Cheeky Monkeys really cares about nutrition. They provide well balanced meals and snacks and have made us more aware of the foods that contain too much sugar."*

*"I was really surprised to find out how much fluid children should drink in a day. It was much more than I realised. Thank you for the information."*

*"Thank you for showing us how much sugar is hidden in the drinks we give our children. We always check this now."*

*"It's good to know how much water children should drink."*

*"Cheeky Monkeys always makes sure my daughter doesn't miss out because of her food intolerances. They always buy the substitutes at no extra cost to me."*



## Robert Owen Memorial Primary School Nursery

Robert Owen Memorial Primary School Nursery is a local authority nursery in South Lanarkshire caring for a maximum of 50 children aged between three years and primary school entry. It was inspected in September 2017 when the quality of care and support and the quality of the environment were evaluated as very good. The inspection report noted management and staff have created an inclusive and nurturing learning environment and staff have a very good approach to supporting children's individual needs, taking an early intervention approach and recognising children as individuals.

Nursery teacher Gillian McDowell describes how staff use Setting the Table guidance when planning the snack menus.

"Staff and children have regular discussions about what foods should be included on the shopping list. The children then take it in turns to choose the snacks for the following week using visual cards. These cards have been colour coded to distinguish between everyday snack choices and occasional ones. We have noticed that the children are independently beginning to identify the foods that are better for them and they have started to choose healthier options."

To extend this knowledge into children's homes, staff worked with their local Home School Partnership worker to deliver a family learning session. They invited parents to the nursery to enjoy having snack with the children. They offered a wide variety of nutritious snack choices and encouraged everyone to try something new. Feedback was very positive and some parents said they were surprised their child had tried some of the food options. Parents felt inspired to begin offering children new and healthier options at home.

### Comments from parents

*"I enjoyed coming along to the snack morning and my son enjoyed having his mum there. He opted to eat a variety of things he normally wouldn't eat at home."*

*"I enjoyed snack time with the children and parents. It allowed you to see what your child would eat that they don't eat at home. It was a great morning."*

"This morning was very worthwhile. It was really nice getting to see the variety of snacks offered to the boys and girls. It was very good for them to explain to parents what happens."



## Health and Social Care Standards

1.33 I can choose suitably presented and healthy meals and snacks, including fresh fruit and vegetables and participate in menu planning.

1.35 I can enjoy unhurried snack and meal times in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible.

1.36 If I wish, I can share snacks and meals alongside other people using and working in the service if appropriate.

1.38 If appropriate I can choose to make my own meals, snacks and drinks with support if I need it, and can choose to grow cook and eat my own food where possible.

1.39 I can drink fresh water at all times.

2.21 I take part in daily routines, such as setting up activities and mealtimes, if this is what I want.

## Things to think about

Children will get the most value out of mealtimes when they are supported by staff who know them well. How can you maximise opportunities for children to enjoy mealtimes with the same familiar staff?

Supporting children to try new foods is important. In what way can you introduce the children in your setting to new foods that are in season?

The good practice examples here demonstrate the importance of family involvement. How do you engage with parents about eating well? What else can you do?

Can you confidently engage children in conversations about eating well? Are you able to support them to choose foods that are well balanced?

How do you ensure your snack provision meets the guidance in Setting the Table?

## Find out more

First Steps Nutrition, Good food choices and portion sizes for 1-4 year olds:

[http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/pdfs/Good\\_food\\_choices\\_and\\_portion\\_sizes\\_Jan2018.pdf](http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/pdfs/Good_food_choices_and_portion_sizes_Jan2018.pdf)

First Steps Nutrition, Eating Well: Packed lunches for 1-4 year olds: [http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/newpages/Early\\_Years/eating\\_well-early\\_years\\_packed\\_lunches.html](http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/newpages/Early_Years/eating_well-early_years_packed_lunches.html)

First Steps Nutrition, Eating Well: Snacks for 1-4 year olds: [http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/newpages/Early\\_Years/eating\\_well-early\\_years\\_snacks1-4.html](http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/newpages/Early_Years/eating_well-early_years_snacks1-4.html)

First Steps Nutrition, Eating Well: Vegan infant and Under 5's: [http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/newpages/Early\\_Years/eating\\_well-early\\_years\\_vegans.html](http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/newpages/Early_Years/eating_well-early_years_vegans.html)

Food Standards Scotland, Consumers: Food labelling:

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/consumers/food-labelling>

Food Standards Agency, Eatwell Guide Booklet:

[http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/downloads/Eatwell\\_Guide\\_Booklet.pdf](http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/downloads/Eatwell_Guide_Booklet.pdf)

Food Standards Scotland, Consumers: Healthy Eating: Life Stages:

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/consumers/healthy-eating/life-stages/children>

Scottish Government, Healthier Scotland: Eat Better Feel Better:

<https://www.eatbetterfeelbetter.co.uk/>





### 3.3 Achieving

**Children and young people are supported and guided in their learning and in the development of their skills, confidence and self-esteem at home, at school and in the community.**

#### **Simpson Primary School Nursery Class**

Simpson Primary School Nursery Class in Bathgate, West Lothian, is a local authority nursery providing care for 80 children aged between three years and primary school entry. It was inspected in January 2017 when the quality of care and support was evaluated as being excellent and the quality of the environment was found to be very good. The inspection report noted that staff were providing a welcoming and inclusive environment where family links were at the centre of their ethos. Children were supported by a highly skilled staff team who worked with parents and other professionals to ensure children's health and wellbeing needs were met.

Staff at the nursery have been actively involved in making improvements to its food provision. During a training session delivered by a West Lothian Council community development officer, they were provided with information and training about becoming a Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery. This led them to develop a breastfeeding friendly policy and ensure that they were able to provide an environment where they actively support mothers who are breastfeeding and returning to work. The nursery officially became a Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery in May 2017. Breastfeeding mums are welcome to feed their babies in the nursery and there is a parent's room available if they would prefer privacy. Children are encouraged through play to see breastfeeding as the norm. Books and nursing cuddly toys are in the nursery for the children to play with and this helps them to learn that breastfeeding is the most natural way for a mother to feed her baby.

The training session with the community development officer prompted a larger discussion around children's nutrition in general. Staff were supported to be more confident around recommended serving sizes so that they could support children to recognise hunger cues and feeling full. They were initially surprised that the suggested portion sizes were much bigger than they had previously been providing. The training session made them more aware of occasions when children may need more food, for example during growth spurts or when they have been particularly active. However, each child is an individual with individual needs and staff take this into consideration.

The snack provided at the nursery is substantial, nutritious and available for most of the nursery session. This enables children to eat when they are ready and are comfortable to do so. Snack provision is not hurried and children can take as much time as they need. Some children prefer to eat with friends in a big group while others prefer to eat in a smaller group or, if they choose, by themselves. Each child is supported to make their own decisions so that they can enjoy positive eating experiences and establish positive relationships with food.

Jugs of tap water are topped up frequently so that children can pour themselves a drink of water at any time. Milk and water are both available at snack time. The quality of Scotland's drinking water is among the highest in the world so this means that children should be able to access a high quality drink at all times with no cost implications for service providers. Children will develop skills in pouring and measuring while keeping hydrated.

Following the discussions at the training session Flora Sharkey, Early Years Officer, reviewed the breakfast and snack provision. She did this by undertaking a test of change using the Model for Improvement (MFI) and Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycles. Setting the Table was used as guidance. In recognising that the previous menus had been repetitive and offered limited choice or variety, changes were made that would introduce more variety along with new tastes and textures such as pulses. Four-weekly snack menus were created to reflect seasonal changes and menus are now on display in the cloakroom area for parents to view. These are reviewed and refreshed following consultations with parents, carers, children and staff so that adjustments can be made based on what is working well.

Flora says that parents have responded well to the consultations.

"They feel more informed and have a better understanding about the importance of the content of the snacks. They can see why the nursery ensures snacks are balanced and nutritious and contain an appropriate portion of the children's daily nutritional requirements. There is now a better understanding of why some foods are described as occasional as opposed to everyday foods and they appreciate why alternatives will provide more balance.





"Children arrive at nursery from 8am and may not have had breakfast beforehand. We provide breakfast for those who need it. Children can choose from a variety of nutritious breakfast foods. We recognise breakfast as an important meal for the children and appreciate that that they will be more ready to play and learn when they are well nourished."

## Comments from parents

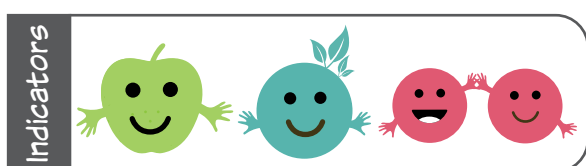
"Great variety on the menu, gives me ideas for nutritious snacks at home too."

"Since starting nursery we stopped having juice with meals and only have water or milk at home."

"The kids will try new things to eat at nursery that they won't try at home."

"There is a much improved menu of healthy home-made snacks."

"It's lovely to walk into the nursery and smell a pot of soup being prepared for the children to eat."



## Dalmarnock Primary School

**Dalmarnock Primary School is in the east end of Glasgow. More than 80 per cent of the children attending the school live in the decile of highest multiple deprivation, 60 per cent receive free school meals and 30 per cent of children have English as an additional language. There are 46 different languages spoken in the school.**

The school was asked to participate in Food, Families, Futures (FFF) project led by Children in Scotland. This is an innovative project that aims to address the major social issue of food poverty and its links with wellbeing and education. It began in the summer holidays of 2016 with a family learning club where families met for joint activities and a mid-day meal each day over a period of five weeks. The project ran again for four weeks in July 2017 and July 2018.

Elaine Kerridge, from Children in Scotland, describes this project.

“The club was jointly funded by Children in Scotland, health, housing, third sector partners and education services. Establishing successful partnerships was key to the success of the project, for funding and sustainability of support.

“In 2016, the club ran daily for between 50 to 60 families. The school was used as the base and opened up to the community at a time when it would normally be closed for the summer. Sessions for parents and children ran separately in the mornings allowing new friendships to be formed and new skills to be developed.

“The children’s programme, delivered by community partners, was pre-planned and themed across the weeks. The parents’ programme evolved from need and request. It included input from health, housing, local beauty therapists, counsellors and opportunities to sit and chat over coffee. The afternoon sessions involved facilitated learning through play sessions. Parents and children learned together and this was also facilitated by partners.

“There were many successes from the project, not just from the formation of new partnerships. A positive impact was felt in school and outwith the club with increased parental engagement noted both in the school and the community.

“Learning was used from the first programme in 2016 to inform the second and third ones in 2017 and 2018. More time was taken to plan and develop the club so that the children and their families were able to be more involved in the food aspect.

“Community partners continued to support the project and worked with parents to make hot meals for all those who attended. Working with catering partners improved the variety and quality of the food provided and improved the engagement of the children and their families with the food generally.

“There were 21 parents who gained a Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS) qualification from the experience. Food waste reduced as the summer club progressed, with children and families trying and enjoying the various dishes as the weeks went on.

“Dalmarnock summer club was a great success. It brought the community together to enjoy activities and food in the sometimes challenging holiday period. The clubs met a significant need among families and were able to build on local community assets that were already available and just needed to be better utilised.

“One of the main aims of the summer club was to offer hot and nutritious meals to families who may struggle during school holidays when free school meals are not available. The children and families were able to identify the positive impact the club was having on their physical and mental health. One parent said their child’s mental health ‘had gone through the roof’ because she felt more confident. We hope that school staff will see a longer-term impact on relationships, learning and engagement with children and their families.

“The partners running the summer clubs had daily meetings to reflect on the successes and challenges of the day. They discussed how best to support the engagement of the children and families attending.

“A key part of Children in Scotland’s role in FFF is to support the monitoring and evaluation of the club. Children in Scotland staff liaised with summer club staff in gathering attendance numbers as part of the monitoring process. They also visited the Dalmarnock club to carry out evaluation engagement sessions with children, families and practitioners. The sessions were engaging and participative and included arts and crafts, interactive voting and discussions. The monitoring and evaluating process offered a rich learning opportunity for the summer clubs, reflecting on the successes and challenges of each club and generally across the project. Areas covered in the evaluation processes included enjoyment of the club, food provision, activities and using the school as the space for the club. All of the children who were asked said they wanted the club to run again. Plans are already in place for this project to continue and develop.”

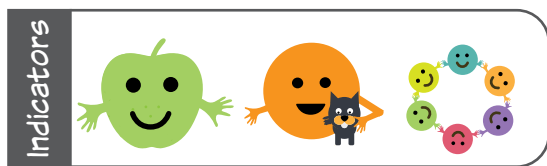
## Comments from children

*“I feel great about this summer club. And I have fun!”*

"I feel happy, I have fun!"

"I love it because it's so much fun."

"I like to be here because it gives me something to do and it makes me feel happy."



## Health and Social Care Standards

1.10 I am supported to participate fully as a citizen in my local community in the way that I want.

1.33 I can choose suitably presented and healthy meals and snacks, including fresh fruit and vegetables, and participate in menu planning.

1.39 I can drink fresh water at all times.

4.2 The organisations that support and care for me help tackle health and social inequalities.

4.11 I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice

## Things to think about

Breast milk is the ideal food for new-borns and infants and gives all the nutrients they need for healthy development. Women in Scotland have the right to breastfeed their baby in public. What can you do to provide an environment that welcomes and promotes breastfeeding?

Think about individual children in your setting. How can you ensure that snack is organised in a way that meets the needs of all of the children?

Parents, carers and families are by far the most important influences in a child's life. What can you do to develop positive partnerships with families to support shared learning?

Think about the children who receive free school meals. What can you do in the school holidays to support families who rely on these free school meals during term time?

How can you work with the wider community and other partners to share expertise and skills, and build capacity through networks of support?

## Find out more

Becoming a Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/wl/beyc/files/2011/09/Becoming-a-Breastfeeding-Friendly-Nursery.pdf>

Breastfeeding etc.(Scotland) Act 2005:

[https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2005/1/pdfs/asp\\_20050001\\_en.pdf](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2005/1/pdfs/asp_20050001_en.pdf)

NHS Health Scotland, Breastfeeding and Returning to Work:

<http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/21774.aspx>

Children in Scotland, Food, Families, Futures:

<https://childreninscotland.org.uk/food-families-futures/>

Community Food and Health Scotland: Advice and Resources on how to set up and run your project:

<https://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/advice-resources/>

Community Food and Health Scotland: Networking and Making Links:

<https://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/advice-resources/networking-and-making-links/>

Feedgood – Supporting Parents with Infant Feeding:

<http://www.feedgood.scot/>

Greener Scotland – what to plant when:

<http://www.greenerScotland.org/eating-greener/local-in-season-food/grow-your-own-food>

The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS): <https://www.rehis.com/community-training>

Scottish Government, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD>

Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative:

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/>





## 3.4 Nurtured

**Children and young people have a nurturing place to live, in a family setting, with additional help if needed or, where this is not possible, in a suitable care setting.**

### Glen Family Centre

Glen Family Centre in East Renfrewshire is a local authority service providing care for a maximum of 50 children aged between six weeks and three years. It supports the national priorities of early intervention and prevention. The centre was inspected in August 2016 when it was evaluated as being very good for the quality of care and support and for the quality of management and leadership. The inspection report noted that planning within the centre strongly reflected children's ideas and interests and showed how staff effectively promoted creativity and curiosity. Staff were observed to recognise and support children who were less confident in expressing their views and preferences. This helped children to become increasingly confident when interacting with others.

Staff at the centre identified that the lunchtime experience was an area for improvement in order to ensure very young children have a nurturing, secure and calm dining environment. To enhance the children's experiences the setting wanted to adopt a Swedish approach to eating, which embraces interaction and participation of young children within every day home-like routines.

Margaret Harper-Abdullah, head of centre, explains the issues.

"Children were eating in a variety of playrooms with a number of staff supporting them. Mealtimes were often rushed with staff taking ownership of the experiences due to the numbers of children and timescales that had to be met. All staff were involved in delivering meals and this could be very changeable due to staffing issues. The experience for children was therefore one of inconsistency of approach and an inability of children to build upon and connect with key adults during this very important and intimate care routine. Siblings often could not eat together as they were cared for in different areas of the centre. Staff lunches had also become a priority so we could ensure that all of the team had returned to their playrooms before our afternoon session started.

“With some professional enquiry and research by our team, we looked at the principles and practice of lunchtime experiences in Sweden. The Swedish approach embraces interaction and participation of young children within everyday home-like routines. It includes mealtime activities that offer the youngest children agency and opportunity to act independently and engage in social interaction with peers and key adults. We know that these approaches are recognised as the characteristics of high quality settings. We felt strongly that this approach of nurture, care, time to be with and connect with important adults during this intimate time of the day was worth considering further.

“We visited McCready Family Centre, a neighbouring centre of similar age range and demographics that already had undertaken elements of the Swedish approach. We observed, discussed and informed ourselves a little better about the benefits and principles. As a team, we then undertook a series of small PDSA tests of change. The children and team responded very positively to the home-like, relaxed, inclusive social aspects of the experience where all children come together as a family group in our family dining kitchen. Time is taken to ask and let the children decide and self-serve where developmentally possible with the focus being on the quality home-like experience for the children.

“The environment is now calm and relaxed with soft classical music playing in the background. Lunch is unhurried giving children the time and space to explore, investigate and enjoy the foods and new tastes offered. Children sit at their table with familiar, nurturing adults who know the child’s individual needs well and there is a consistent approach that supports a sense of security, familiarity and predictability for the children. This is especially important for our more vulnerable children, some of whom may have experienced adverse childhood experiences. This consistent approach from often the child’s secondary attachment figure, allows the child to feel safe, secure and able to predict and control what happens next in their day.

“The children can choose to sit in family groups with their siblings if they wish or with special friends. The family group, children and key adults enjoy a hot meal together and this affords the opportunity for rich and varied spoken language, which is inclusive of children’s cultural and socio-economic background and celebrating the rich diversity within our setting.

“The Swedish approach enables children to have control over the amount and types of food on their plate. It empowers children socially as they become familiar with eating at a table, using cutlery, pouring from a jug, making selections and choices, and being listened to and listening to others. The





children discuss common and shared topics such as recalling their play that morning and discussing their plans for later in the day. They have opportunities to listen to conversation and to express themselves in a variety of ways, both verbally and non-verbally including symbols and gesture, especially important for our youngest children and our children with additional needs. Children are given time to process and share their communication. These are key skills that all children need to develop but do not always experience and we felt it necessary to address this in our approach.

“Research tells us the younger the child, the more vulnerable their health is to the effects of poor quality nutrition. It is therefore important that adults support children to make balanced choices from the very earliest age with the resources they have. Because it is a universal experience for all our children, this normalised the intervention. We now plan to enrich the experience further by inviting parents to join us for lunch so that this approach can be modelled within the home environment.”

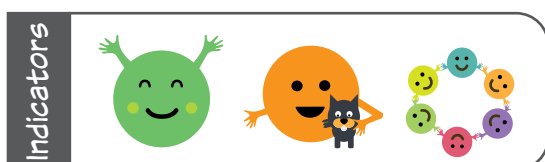
Margaret explains how they used the PDSA cycles to test and tweak the changes they made along the way.

“We trialled the approach initially on one table and observed the children and their responses. Feedback from the team was very important. We then extended this out to a maximum of three large tables plus one smaller table that was unsupervised by the adults, almost a graduation of independence that the older children can work towards if they wish. At first, we had some difficulties with maximising the space within the dining kitchen as it was quite cramped. This involved testing out various tables that would support children’s independence and self-selection comfortably to allow them to lean over and self-serve. We eventually selected longer rectangular tables that could seat the required number of children although still required them to stretch a little. We also need that larger space to support all the dishes.

“In the beginning, we had included all staff to help on a rota basis. However, we felt that this did not support consistency or ownership of the experience. We now have a small team of identified staff who consistently support the children in a way that builds on their previous experiences of lunch and in a way that the interactions and routines are predictable for the children.

“We also had to try hard to find serving spoons and tongs that were lightweight and smaller in size to accommodate the children’s small hands. So, we experimented through trial and error until we found the ones that worked well. We even tried using beautiful floral tablecloths but the younger children continually grabbed and pulled at them and this became a huge distraction throughout the experience. So, we made the decision to remove them to make the experience more relaxed and enjoyable.”

By using the MFI and PDSA cycles, the change to the new Swedish lunchtime experience was a success.



## Caroline's Peerie Moots

Caroline's Peerie Moots is a childminding service in Prestonpans, East Lothian, provided by Caroline Gray. The service was inspected in August 2017 when it was found to be excellent for the quality of care and support, the environment, staffing, and management and leadership. The report noted that Caroline works hard to ensure that she can meet the needs of the individual children. She is enthusiastic about her service and strives to provide a high quality experience for both children and their families, and provides a wide range of stimulating activities both indoors and out.

Caroline understands the importance of making food an enjoyable experience for children to ensure they have positive associations with food, which in turn helps them to develop good habits in the future.

Caroline explains her approach to mealtimes.

"My own family and my minded children all eat together around the table, and we enjoy the social side of meal and snack times. My husband, who is also my childminding assistant, and I both make an effort to sit with the children and eat the same food as them. We chat about anything and everything and make mealtimes about more than just food or eating. Mealtimes are built into my service as an important part of our day and children can take as long as they need to explore and enjoy their food. It can get quite messy but for me this is part of the process of their learning. I don't stress about the mess, I just look at it like a sensory play activity. The younger children are provided with high chairs that can be clipped to the dining table so that they are included in the chat around the table."

Caroline understands the importance of introducing a wide variety of foods to children from a young age. By encouraging them to experiment, offering a variety of foods and regularly introducing new foods from an early age, she found that they are more likely to experiment and accept different tastes and textures.



"I make trying a new food a bit exciting and involve the children in preparing it if possible. I think it is important not to pressure them into trying new food and I try to avoid this by serving it alongside other food I know they like. I will also try some myself to show them that it is OK. I serve food on the table and encourage children to help themselves. I let them choose the food they would like to try rather than presenting a plate of food in front of them, as children can find that daunting and off-putting. I praise those who try the food, regardless of whether they continue to eat it or not. We discuss that sometimes we don't like something today but maybe we will like it another day and it can be a nice surprise when we find something new that we like."

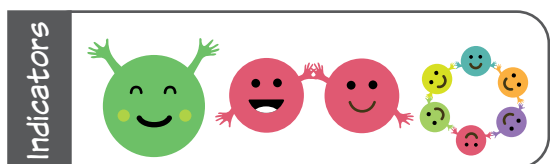
Children participate in menu planning and food preparation. For children who are less able to communicate verbally Caroline uses food picture cards to help them make choices. She is mindful of the individual needs of the children and is respectful of their feelings at each mealtime. By understanding that all of the children may not always be hungry at the same time, she is able to ensure they get the right amount of food to sustain them at the right time.

Caroline provides all of the meals and snacks for the children because she found that this gives her more control over the nutritional value of what they are eating. It also means that they are all offered the same food. This usually has a positive effect as the children all tuck in and watch their friends eating, which it is a very natural form of modelling.

Caroline has found that many children are happy to try new foods, however, this has not always been the case. "Some of the children I have cared for in the past have been quite reluctant to try new foods both at home and in my care, beyond the normal phases of toddlers and young children. Working with the family to support the child and developing a care plan, I have had to really broaden my knowledge and skills to find approaches that will support the child to explore new food, flavours and textures.

"For one child, that success came in the form of moving away from the pressure of the dining table to having our lunch at the local public garden on our walk back from nursery. I created a picnic environment, which we enjoyed in all weathers. I used pretty lunch boxes, shaped sandwich cutters and prepared fresh fruit into attractive little bags to support the little one into eating without the environment becoming pressured. The improvement took some time to embed but in time she was eating alongside her friends. She started to try a small piece of different foods and from there we were able to begin building a positive relationship with trying new foods.

"I think one key moment came when I said to her that if she tried a piece of sliced grape and didn't like it, she could throw it into the flower bed for the birds or worms to eat. We were doing a focus on birds at the time so she liked this idea. Somehow the knowledge that it was okay not to finish the food if she didn't like it and physically move it away seemed to break a barrier within her. It enabled her to take that first try."



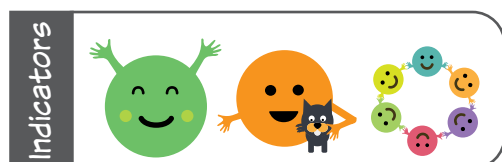
## Celia Carlin

Celia Carlin provides a childminding service in Dundee. The service was inspected in October 2016 and was evaluated as being excellent for the quality of care and support and the environment, and very good for management and leadership. The report noted that Celia encouraged healthy lifestyles and talked about this within the service. The children had lots of opportunities to be active, socialise and access fresh air. For example, they play in the garden, run around in the parks, walk to and from school, attend gymnastics and go to rhyme time in the library.

Celia Carlin provides a very sociable eating environment, she joins the children at the table and they all generally eat the same food, which she has prepared. Celia finds that children are much more willing to try new foods if they are able to see others enjoying foods which they might not choose otherwise. All of the children are encouraged to participate in menu planning and food preparation, and they take turns in choosing what to eat for lunch. Celia told us that she tries to involve and engage the children in the process of making and preparing food as well as frequently offering new tastes to them. She has noticed that many of the children will learn from their peers. They learn to sit at the table, use proper crockery and cutlery and try new foods in a relaxed and nurturing environment.

Celia described how she was able to support one little boy who had been very reluctant to try any vegetables.

*"One day another child of a similar age had requested broccoli and cheese soup for lunch, a favourite with many of the children in my care. Both children helped to peel and chop the vegetables while they all chatted about the names of the vegetables and how they grow. They then put the ingredients into the pot and grated some cheese to add at the end. I was very surprised to find that the usually reluctant boy not only tried a tiny spoonful of the soup, he then finished the small bowl before asking for more. His mum couldn't believe it either."*



## Health and Social Care Standards

1.19 My care and support meets my needs and is right for me.

1.29 I am supported to be emotionally resilient, have a strong sense of my own identity and wellbeing, and address any experiences of trauma or neglect.

1.34 If I need help with eating and drinking, this is carried out in a dignified way and my personal preferences are respected.

1.36 If I wish, I can share snacks and meals alongside other people using and working in the service if appropriate.

1.37 My meals and snacks meet my cultural and dietary needs, beliefs and preferences.

3.10 As a child or young person I feel valued, loved and secure.

5.18 My environment is relaxed, welcoming, peaceful and free from avoidable noise and smells.

## Things to think about

Think about your environment. What changes can you make that will result in an improvement? How will you know that the change is an improvement and how will you measure this?

Children need to be supported during mealtimes by staff who know them well. How do you ensure that there is continuity for the children in your setting and that you take an attachment-informed approach?

Think about the individual child and how they are feeling that day. How do you support them at mealtimes to ensure they are eating well?

How can you support children who may not be as confident as others with new tastes and experiences? How can you support families when their child has difficulties trying new foods?

What can you do to ensure staff are able to promote eating well and support families to model this at home?

With the expansion in early learning and childcare provision there may be more children staying for lunch in your setting. How will you ensure that mealtimes are positive experiences for the children?

## Find out more

Education Scotland, Nurture, Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma informed practice:  
Making the links between these approaches:  
<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/inc83-making-the-links-nurture-ACES-and-trauma.pdf>

First Steps Nutrition, Eating well: the first year, A guide to introducing solids and eating well up to baby's first birthday:  
[http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/newpages/Infants/first\\_year\\_of\\_life.html](http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/newpages/Infants/first_year_of_life.html)

Scottish Government, Building the Ambition:  
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00458455.pdf>

Scottish Government, Pre-Birth to Three.  
[https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/ELC/ELC2\\_PreBirthToThree/ELC2\\_PreBirthToThreeBooklet.pdf](https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/ELC/ELC2_PreBirthToThree/ELC2_PreBirthToThreeBooklet.pdf)

NHS Health Scotland, Fun First Foods:  
<http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/303.aspx>

NHS Health Scotland, Ready Steady Toddler:  
<http://www.readysteadytoddler.org.uk/everyday-routines/food-and-diet/index.aspx>





## 3.5 Active

**Children and young people have opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport, which contribute to healthy growth and development, both at home and in the community.**

### Sgoil-araich Taobh na Pairce

Sgoil-araich Taobh na Pairce is a local authority nursery based in Edinburgh providing care for a maximum of 40 children aged between three years and primary school entry. Its aim is to provide a Gaelic learning environment of the highest quality that enables every child to explore their world and flourish. Staff are fluent Gaelic speakers and converse with the children in Gaelic. The nursery was inspected in September 2016 when it was evaluated as being very good for the quality of care and excellent for the quality of the environment. The inspection report noted that staff knew each child very well and were able to describe how they supported them and their family. The report also noted that the confident, experienced and knowledgeable staff team provided an environment that was rich in opportunity for enquiry and learning both indoors and out.

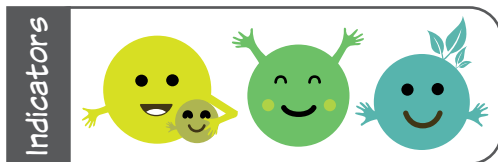
Meghan Clark, the nursery teacher at Sgoil-araich Taobh na Pairce, tells us about how they improved the snack experience for the children.

“We had noticed that many of the children who preferred playing outside were passing on the chance to eat snack because it meant they were having to stop their play, take off their outdoor kit and go inside to wash their hands. Children were often found to be hungry at the end of the nursery session once rolling snack was over.

“We know that active children need to eat regular snacks because they are growing and developing quickly and have high energy and nutrient requirements for their size. To ensure that the children’s needs could be met, we worked together to create an outdoor snack space which provides an opportunity for the children to enjoy their nutritious food and drinks there with minimal disruption to their play. Outdoor cups, plates and water jugs are now available for the children to access independently. They can enjoy their snacks at the outside table with their friends in a very sociable



environment. A canopy is in place for the rainy days and there is a portable sink for the children to wash their hands outside. To create a more cosy and homely feel, we added some bark to the metal fencing that also provides some protection from the wind. Children now enjoy sitting at the outside table in their waterproofs, jackets and boots, and are ready to jump back to play when they have finished eating.”



## Monkey Puzzle Glasgow

Monkey Puzzle Glasgow is a daycare of children service based in Glasgow and cares for 122 children aged between birth and 16 years. It is provided by Choice Start Limited. It was inspected in April 2017 when the quality of care and support was found to be very good and the quality of management and leadership was evaluated as good. The inspection report noted that children are looked after by caring and nurturing staff, and that staff at this nursery feel welcomed and valued by each other and the management team.

In 2016, Monkey Puzzle Glasgow became the first nursery to win the NHS Healthy Choices, Healthy Children Platinum Award for its pilot project Healthy Choices for Happy Children. The nursery integrated the programme into its daily schedule, immediately noticing positive results.

Lorraine Kirkwood, manager, describes how the project helped them to support children around eating well.

We provide care for children from many different cultures and several of our staff are bilingual. As a staff team, we looked at how we could promote eating well and healthy lifestyles. We covered topics such as life cycles and world food sources and gave parents and children the opportunity to share cultures within the nursery and at home. This included an event where parents were asked to join



their children for a Round the World celebration day. We asked parents and children to come along and share foods and snacks from their own cultures and we had food from each of the seven continents. We helped the children to decorate the room with flags from all of the countries and we all enjoyed foods including Greek salad, Italian pastas, Chinese stir fries, Indian curries, African jambalaya, Romanian chicken broth, Scottish oatcakes and Canadian blueberry pancakes. The children were able to sample new foods, celebrate different cultures and hear stories about why the foods meant so much.

"We have a self-service lunch room known as the wellbeing room where children come for lunch, snacks and cooking activities. There are sinks there so they can carefully wash their hands before helping themselves at the self-service stations. Children are able to choose from the options available and are supported to make balanced choices. Children who have food allergies or have particular cultural needs are well catered for and staff liaise directly with families to ensure that each child's needs are met. There is always a good selection and variety of vegetarian food and this means that many different cultural needs are met.

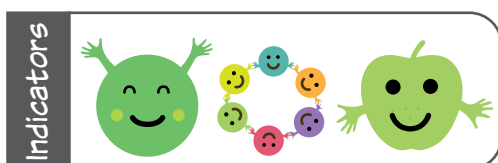
"We involve the children in menu planning and they are encouraged to give written feedback about the food daily. This influences future menu planning and prompts further discussions around food, nutrition and healthy lifestyles. The meals are freshly cooked on site by our chef who uses Setting the Table as guidance. Children and staff have enthusiastic conversations about the Eatwell Guide and exchange information about which foods are everyday foods and which are occasional foods, discussing the reasons for this.

"Monkey Puzzle also provides an after-school club for around 40 children. When they arrive from school, they are offered a substantial snack from the four-week rolling menu. This ensures that the children are well nourished and it helps them to be active and energised following their day at school.

"Staff understand the importance of outdoor play and this is something that is an integral part of the children's day. They have free-flow access to the outdoor area and there are regular visits to the local park. Health and wellbeing workshops, which have included yoga sessions, dance classes and a 2km run, help to engage the children in active play. The provision of nutritious and well-balanced meals and snacks is therefore essential for the active children."

## Comment from a parent

*"There are choices of vegetarian foods each day which is great because we know our cultural and religious needs are being considered."*



## Moorpark Early Learning and Childcare Centre

Moorpark Early Learning and Childcare Centre is a local authority nursery in Renfrewshire providing care for a maximum of 129 children aged between birth and primary school entry. It was inspected in October 2017 and was evaluated as being excellent for the quality of care and support and for the environment. The inspection report noted that Moorpark Pre-five Centre provided an excellent early learning and childcare experience for children. They offered a flexible service to meet the needs of families. Staff were highly skilled at supporting children and families and they were committed to improving outcomes for children.

Pauline Irvine, manager, describes how staff at Moorpark Pre-five Centre have adopted a holistic approach to health and wellbeing.

“We have introduced new initiatives to our service to enhance the children’s wellbeing. The lunch and snack menus have been updated to ensure they met Setting the Table guidance, including providing the children with the opportunity to experience new tastes and textures.

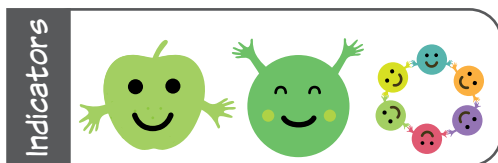
“Our new menus were designed to create opportunities that promote independence. Children are learning to use the tools and equipment for food preparation. They are also learning how and when to use everyday kitchen resources safely and appropriately. The children are developing self-reliance skills and are engaging in conversations during food preparation sessions where they can share ideas and listen to their peers. We have also introduced visual aids so that the children can familiarise themselves with the new foods on offer and this helps them to prepare for changes in the menu. The new foods are also explored through sensory experiences, which provide the children with the chance to see the foods in their raw state and the different stages of the cooking process.

“Setting the Table nutritional guidance has helped us learn about the recommended serving sizes for children and about their daily fluid requirements. It has also enabled us to become more confident about supporting children to have a nutritious, balanced diet and meet their individual needs. We have created a large display at the entrance to the centre with information about eating well. It also helps the children to recall their snack routine, a routine which is a sociable experience and a learning opportunity. Water stations enable children to have direct access to fresh water at all times. We also ensure that the very young children are supported to access fresh water.

“We have also been supporting parents to develop their knowledge of nutrition, cooking and physical fitness by delivering health clubs over a six-week period. The sessions, which are geared towards the parents’ interests, engage them in learning activities that are chosen by them. Parents choose foods that they would like to learn how to cook and at the same time they learn about their nutritional value.

They also learn about which foods are good to swap to improve the nutritional value in recipes. Other sessions included physical activities such as walking and running. Parents who had shared their difficulties with sleep and stress at the beginning of the programme were helped to learn relaxation techniques. Feedback has been very positive and parents said they felt they knew more about mental and physical health as well as cooking and nutrition.

“In November 2017, the centre ran a health and wellbeing week, which was a way of promoting holistic health. Children sold the fruit that had been grown in the garden and they chose to use the proceeds from this to buy a gift for the local firefighters. We had tasting sessions in the corridors with recipes for nutritious, affordable soups and salads provided. A nursery recipe book was produced using recipes that had been shared by parents. The aim of this was to encourage home cooking by sharing good practice. On Family Fitness Friday, parents and children were welcomed to Zumba sessions held by our staff throughout the day. It was great opportunity for us to engage with parents and have them along to support and share in their children’s activity. We are aware that family and friends have a strong influence on children’s health and wellbeing and can act as role models to shape the healthy habits and behaviours that can last a lifetime.”



## Health and Social Care Standards

1.25 I can chose to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational, social, creative, physical and learning activities every day, both indoors and outdoors.

1.35 I can enjoy unhurried snack and meal times in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible.

1.37 My meals and snacks meet my cultural and dietary needs, beliefs and preferences.

1.38 If appropriate, I can choose to make my own meals, snacks and drinks, with support if I need it, and can choose to grow, cook and eat my own food where possible.

1.39 I can drink fresh water at all times.

4.25 I am confident that people are encouraged to be innovative in the way they support and care for me.

## Things to think about

Think about the cultural diversity of the children within your setting. How can you ensure that each child feels valued and respected?

What can you do that would make families get more involved? Is there a food activity that would make them feel more involved?

Are you knowledgeable about food allergies and sensitivities? How can you support staff who lack knowledge in this area?

Children need to be hydrated at all times. How do you know that the children in your setting are properly hydrated? Have children of all ages got access to drinking water any time they want it?

## Find out more

Food Standards Scotland, The Eatwell Guide:

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/consumers/healthy-eating/eatwell>

NHS Health Scotland, Setting the Table:

<http://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/177298/nhs-setting-the-table.pdf>

NHS, Physical Activity Guidelines for Children (under 5 years):

<https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/physical-activity-guidelines-for-children.aspx>

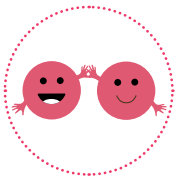
NHS, Physical activity guidelines for children and young people:

<https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/physical-activity-guidelines-for-young-people.aspx>

Royal Horticultural Society, Campaign for School Gardening:

<https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk/about-us>





## 3.6 Respected

### Cornton Nursery

**Cornton Nursery is a local authority nursery in Stirling providing care for a maximum of 66 children aged between birth and primary school entry. It was inspected in October 2016 when it was evaluated as being excellent for the quality of care and support, and for management and leadership. Staff were found to have an excellent approach to supporting children’s individual needs and children were well supported, nurtured and encouraged to achieve their potential.**

Cornton Nursery’s overarching vision is to bridge the equality gap within their community to improve outcomes for children and families. Their aim is to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality and make Cornton a better place for children to grow up.

Cornton Nursery has worked collaboratively with organisations such as Cornton Action Planning Partnership, Forth Valley NHS Health Improvement, Forth Environmental Link, Keep Scotland Beautiful, Soil Association and many more. They have been successful in applying for funding from The National Lottery Communities Fund, Education Scotland’s Food for Thought and from Stirling Council. Through effective partnerships they developed part of their grounds into a weaning garden, an outdoor space that provides children and families with opportunities to explore the value of the ‘plant to plate’ experiences. It is available for children attending the centre and provides learning experiences for the wider community as it is opened up to three local toddler groups and childminders twice weekly. The concept of the garden originally came from staff who wanted to support families to explore the importance of eating well for positive mental and physical wellbeing. Staff wanted to develop an outdoor space that would give children and families a stimulating, fun, outdoor environment where children learn to nurture living things and take responsibility in caring for these.

Staff at Cornton Nursery recognised that some parents needed support in the early days of parenting and in particular around introducing solid food (also known as weaning). This led to them to develop a seven-week family learning programme called Baby & Me.

Debbie Fraser, a family support worker who delivered Baby & Me, tells us about the programme.

“The main aim of the course was to help the parent to understand how the baby can develop a secure attachment and to enable parents to implement correct and timely weaning practices. Parents were referred for the course in a variety of ways: through their nursery, by their health visitor, by a community worker or by self-referral.

“Baby massage, practical cooking sessions and baby yoga were offered during the course. Baby massage and baby yoga are great ways for a baby to develop a secure attachment with his/her main carer and for the carer to bond with the baby. It can also help improve positive interactions with their baby.

“The seven-week course received very positive feedback. Parents found the baby massage and baby yoga sessions a lovely way to help them bond with their babies. They also found that meeting other parents was very beneficial, especially in the early days of parenthood. Health visitors commented that they found parents who attended the cooking sessions much better informed when it came to introducing solid food at the appropriate time.”

Until babies are six months old, breastmilk (or infant formula) provides all the nourishment that babies need. A recent review of the evidence maintains that waiting until around six months and following the baby’s developmental cues before introducing solid food carries significant health benefits.

Helen Arthur, depute head, says that addressing the issue of health inequalities is vitally important to all staff at Cornton Nursery.

“Staff understand the need to make sure that families are aware of their entitlement to benefits and services that can help enhance their wellbeing. They receive additional training to ensure that they are able to provide the correct advice to parents about the Healthy Start scheme, the current name for the UK welfare food and vitamin scheme that aims to improve the health of pregnant women, young mums, mums-to-be and families on benefits or low incomes. All children attending Cornton Nursery receive a home visit from a member of staff before they start and staff ensure that parents are aware of the Healthy Start scheme and that they are also aware of how to access the vouchers and the vitamins. The vouchers provide parents with access to milk and formula milk as well as fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables.

“Parents and carers are involved in every aspect of nursery life at Cornton Nursery and they are able to purchase very reasonably priced produce from the nursery’s Fruit and Vegetable Barra. At the





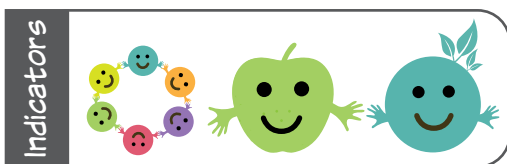
beginning and end of each nursery session, bags of fresh fruit and vegetables are available for £1 and individual pieces of fruit are available for 20p each."

Although most vitamins can be obtained through a varied and balanced diet, it is tricky to get enough Vitamin D through food sources alone. Our body needs enough Vitamin D to absorb calcium and support bone growth. It is recommended that the whole population take a vitamin D supplement to ensure we all get enough and this includes children too.

The UK Healthy Start welfare food scheme is about to be replaced by the Best Start Foods scheme by the Scottish Government. The aim is to make it easier for children to access their entitlement to free milk by delivering it as part of the ELC funded provision.

### Comment from a parent

*"I loved the Baby & Me course. It was a great bonding experience."*



## Playbarn and Playbarn Too

Playbarn and Playbarn Too are nurseries provided by Playbarn Nursery Ltd based in Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire. Playbarn provides care for 27 children aged between birth and three years and Playbarn Too provides care for 44 children aged between two years and primary school entry. Both services were evaluated as being excellent for the quality of care and support when they were inspected in November 2017. Playbarn was evaluated as excellent for staffing and Playbarn Too was evaluated as very good for staffing.

Julie Ann Wiseman is the peripatetic manager of both services. She has a special interest in providing nutritious meals for the children in the nursery. She is aware of the financial constraints some families face and tries to ensure that all of the children have a well-balanced lunch.

Food origins and sustainability is an important focus for Playbarn nurseries. They use locally-sourced produce to support their local fishing and farming industries.

Julie explains how the children learn about their heritage and their community.

"My dad, who is a fisherman, came to visit the nursery and chat with the children about fishing. They were delighted to hear his stories and to eat the fish freshly caught by him. It provided a great learning opportunity for the children. They were so excited by his visit. They wanted to know all about the big waves on the sea and were excited to learn how big the sharks were!

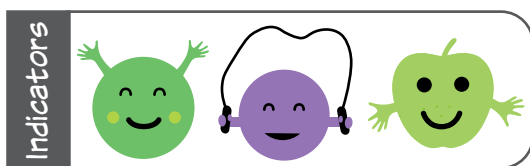
"Learning about their heritage and their community helps them to develop respect for their community and the world around them. They learn about planting and growing and then harvest the produce from their own garden. The cooks come to the playroom and chat with the children about the ingredients. They discuss the different recipes the produce is used for and engage the children in discussions where their ideas are valued. Recipes are then shared with the families and photographs are taken to show them what the children eat. We also happily welcome families for lunch."

## Comments from parents

*"I love the wide choice. I would love an adult tasting session!"*

*"It's great that the children get to try something that they might not otherwise."*

*"I think the menus are really good, really varied and lots of choices. They try things at nursery that they won't try at home."*



## Stramash Outdoor Nursery, Elgin

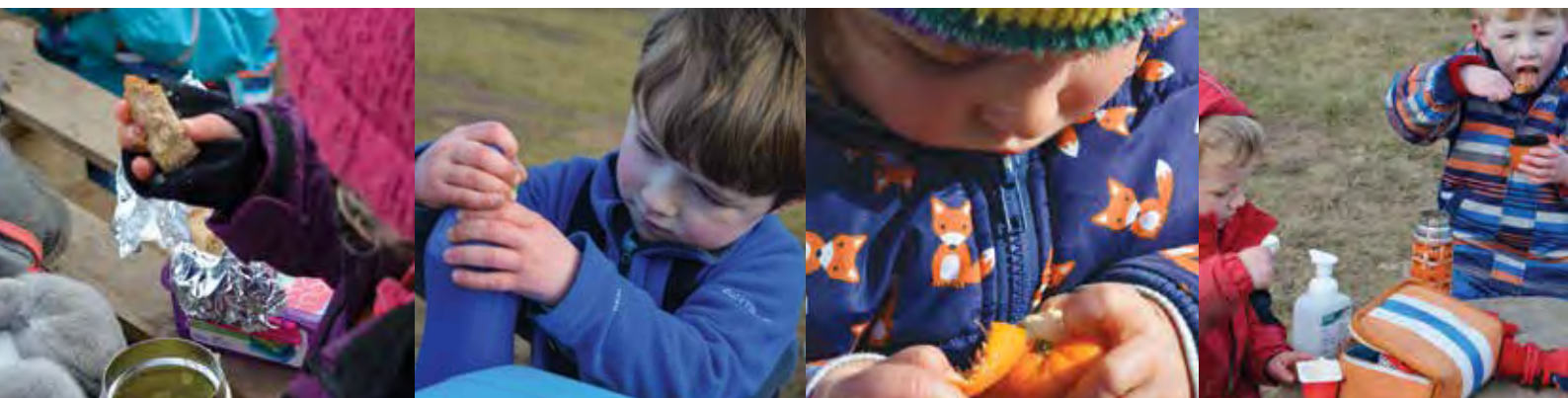
Stramash Outdoor Nursery is an outdoor nursery in Elgin, Inverness-shire, provided by Stramash Social Enterprise that cares for up to 32 children aged between two and seven. It was inspected in September 2017 and was evaluated as being excellent for the quality of the environment and very good for the quality of care and support, staffing, and management and leadership. The inspection report noted that staff created an inclusive, nurturing environment where children and their families felt welcome, listened to, valued and respected. Children were confident about expressing their thoughts, views and feelings and making choices and decisions about what they wanted to do and play with throughout the day. The report also noted that children had very good opportunities to learn, grow, practise and develop new skills.

Alasdair Davidson, from Stramash Outdoor Nursery, explains how staff support the children in their service.

“Learning about the natural environment and sustainability is part of everyday life for children in the nursery. Sustainability informs their everyday practice and is a cornerstone philosophy in how they design and interact with spaces and people. Children sing their Reduce, Reuse, Recycle song to demonstrate their commitment to the planet.

“As we are a social enterprise, we reinvest our profits back into the organisation so that positive social and environmental benefits can be maximised. On a day-to-day basis, we utilise any and all materials that might have reached the end of their original life. We repurpose them to add value to their space and in the process provide learning and development opportunities for the children. The learning opportunities are vast and include the development of communication skills, problem solving, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, team working, special awareness and coordination.

“Children attending Stramash spend all of their time outside and are active, busy children. We recognised that a rolling snack would be a beneficial way to support the children to access nourishment when they were hungry. Our ‘snack ethos’ is to open up snack as soon as the first child



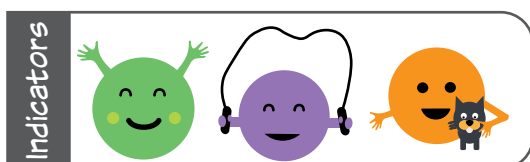
lets us know they are hungry. It then stays open until tidy up time at the end of the session. Throughout this period, practitioners will gently remind children that snack is open and children then self-assess whether they are hungry. If so, they collect their things and head to the tipi or snack area, if not they carry on playing, enjoying uninterrupted child-led play.

“We feel we understand the individual children well. We see behaviour as communication and can usually predict if a child needs to be prompted to have snack. We have found that the children are less likely to need to be prompted because they are free to make their own decisions and don't have to stop for snack when they aren't ready.

“Another benefit of the rolling snack is that there are usually smaller groups. This provides more opportunities for chatting with the children and listening to their stories, helping children to build a sense of community and also develop positive relationships with the eating experience and with food. Staff have more time to support children with everyday tasks where they might need support such as opening packaging, putting things away, doing up zips and learning to use water bottles. We have seen a marked improvement in the children's confidence and independence, as well as supporting each other. The rolling snack fits naturally with our ethos of bodily autonomy and encouraging children to problem solve and develop the skills they need for life.

**“Family involvement is important too. We ask the families to ensure that lunch boxes are filled with healthy foods. This means that children have more control over their eating. There is no need for us to intervene and get children to eat foods in a certain order, no need for unhelpful labelling of 'good' or 'bad' foods and no using food as a reward for doing something they don't want to do.**

“Our children are supported to have positive relationships with food. They eat when they are hungry and they take as much time as they need. They are supported to listen to their bodies and fuel their bodies and brains. Children learn to recognise the effects that food has on their energy levels, their emotions, and their sense of wellbeing. They are taking control of their own learning. All the time staff are communicating to the children that they not only respect them but they trust them to know their own bodies and minds.”



## Health and Social Care Standards

1.9 I am recognised as an expert in my own experiences, needs and wishes.

1.34 If I need help with eating and drinking, this is carried out in a dignified way and my personal preferences are respected.

1.37 My meals and snacks meet my cultural and dietary needs, beliefs and preferences.

4.2 The organisations that support and care for me help tackle health and social inequalities.

4.3 I experience care and support where all people are respected and valued.

## Things to think about

Are you knowledgeable about the community in which your children live and learn? In what ways are you using that knowledge to improve outcomes for children?

Are your staff suitably knowledgeable about the Healthy Start Scheme so that they can support families to access the help and support they need?

Think about the cultural diversity of the children within your setting. How can you ensure that each child and family feels valued and respected?

Are you able to support the children in your setting to recognise when they are hungry and understand the effect that food has on their bodies?

## Find out more

Education Scotland, Food for Thought Education Fund:

<https://education.gov.scot/what-we-do/ensuring-the-impact-of-cfe/Food%20for%20Thought%20Education%20Fund>

First Steps Nutrition Fund, Eating Well Sustainably: A guide for early years settings:

[http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/newpages/Early\\_Years/eating\\_well-sustainably.html](http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/newpages/Early_Years/eating_well-sustainably.html)

First Steps Nutrition Fund, Making the most of Healthy Start: A Practical Guide:

[http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/newpages/HealthyStart/healthystart\\_resource.html](http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/newpages/HealthyStart/healthystart_resource.html)

Healthy Start:

<https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>

Keep Scotland Beautiful, Food and the Environment:

<https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/sustainable-development-education/food-and-the-environment/>

Keep Scotland Beautiful, One Planet Picnic:

<https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/sustainable-development-education/food-and-the-environment/one-planet-picnic/>

NHS Health Scotland, Children and Health Inequalities:

<http://www.healthscotland.scot/population-groups/children/children>

NHS Health Scotland, Ready Steady Baby:

<http://www.readysteadybaby.org.uk/growing-together/looking-after-your-growing-baby/weaning-your-baby/index.aspx>

Scottish Public Health Network (ScotPHN), Polishing the Diamonds:

[https://www.scotphn.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/2016\\_05\\_26-ACE-Report-Final-AF.pdf](https://www.scotphn.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/2016_05_26-ACE-Report-Final-AF.pdf)

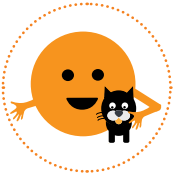
Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition, Feeding in the first year of life: SACN Report:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/feeding-in-the-first-year-of-life-sacn-report>

Soil Association Scotland, Food for Life Scotland Programme:

[\\*https://www.soilassociation.org/our-work-in-scotland/good-food-for-all/the-food-for-life-scotland-programme/](https://www.soilassociation.org/our-work-in-scotland/good-food-for-all/the-food-for-life-scotland-programme/)





## 3.7 Responsible

**Children and young people have opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles in their schools and communities and, where necessary and with appropriate guidance and supervision, are involved in decisions that affect them.**

### **Fernielea Out of School Club**

Fernielea Out of School Club in Aberdeen is provided by a voluntary management committee. The service is registered to provide out of school care for 24 children of primary school age up to 16 years old. It was inspected in August 2017 and was evaluated as being very good for the quality of care and support, management and leadership, the environment and staffing. The inspection report noted that staff had a very good knowledge and understanding of children's individual needs. Staff were found to be warm in their approach and interacted positively with the children, which helped create a nurturing environment. The report noted staff actively listened to the children and encouraged them to share their views, make choices and come up with ideas, which were then acted upon.

Manager Tessa Varley and her team reviewed the snack provision at Fernielea. They had noticed that some children were not always ready to eat at the same time as others and they wanted to include the children in planning and decision-making. After consultation with the children they introduced a new system where children were given more responsibility and were able to make their own choices.

"We all decided that a rolling snack would ensure that the children could access food when they were ready. It is now set out in a buffet-style format so the children are free to choose from a variety of items such as cold meats, fruit and vegetables, bagels and crumpets. We use Healthy Eating in Schools as nutritional guidance when planning snack menus for the school-aged children. Snack is available from 3pm when the children arrive from school and is available for most of the session but not too close to home time to ensure that the children are still able to eat their evening meal at home. Children can choose to eat at any point during this time.

"A snack card system is in place so that we are aware of who has had snack or who might need to be reminded. Each child has their own snack card, which is stuck on the fridge each day and they remove



it once they have eaten. Allowing the children freedom to choose when they have snack allows them the freedom to continue with their play or activity until they are ready and we have found that the children are much more likely to enjoy their snack this way. Feedback from the children has also been very positive.

“The menu has been created using the children’s choices and is on a four-week rotation. Children use ‘child inspector’ sheets to give feedback on the different aspects of the service and this includes snack. Every couple of months children are given the opportunity to make their suggestions and give their opinions on what is being offered. An evaluations floor book encourages them to provide honest feedback and make suggestions of how to improve the eating experience.

“Children are encouraged to help with setting up the snack area by filling milk and water jugs and topping them up when empty. They can help themselves to plates, cups and cutlery from the cupboard and help to load the dishwasher when they have finished.

“We find having a rolling snack hugely beneficial for the children as it means they are not disrupted from their play. Although they are encouraged to have some food they are never forced if they do not want a snack on that particular day. Children’s appetites and interest in food can vary from day to day and this is perfectly normal. By having a variety of options we find the children are more inclined to explore what these things are, even if it is something they have never seen before. At times we also see a ‘follow the leader’ style approach whereby less confident eaters see their friends taking food that they normally wouldn’t and are willing to try things because their friends are doing so.

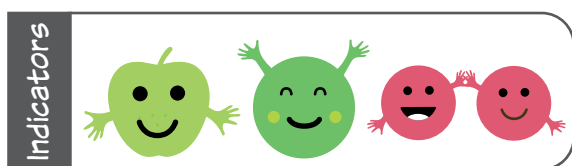
“Eating should be an enjoyable time for everyone. Our aim is to make this as simple and relaxing for the children as possible. They can enjoy snack by sitting at the table with their friends or having the table to themselves when there is no one else there at that time. The children have learned new skills such as spreading butter on toast, making a sandwich or pouring a cup of milk on their own. It is also really nice to see that the older children will assist the younger ones if they get stuck or are struggling.”



## Comments from children

*"We get to try new fruit and vegetables."*

*"If snack isn't something I like, I can ask for something else."*



## 3 Bears Nursery – Renfrew

3 Bears Nursery – Renfrew is a daycare of children service provided by 3 Bears Nursery Ltd. It is registered to care for up to 106 children aged between birth and nine years. The service was inspected in July 2017 and was found to be very good for care and support, and for management and leadership. The report noted that management and staff had created an inclusive environment where families felt welcomed and staff felt motivated, and that this had led to children becoming confident, feeling valued and eager to learn new skills.

Practitioner Leanne Harwood tells us how staff promote good practice around children's food provision and eating experiences.

"We used Setting the Table nutritional guidance to help us develop an eating well programme to inform and provide positive experiences for the children and their families. Children and staff learned about the different food groups using the Eatwell Guide as a tool. We learned how the Eatwell Guide shows how much of what we eat overall should come from each of the five food groups to achieve a balanced diet.

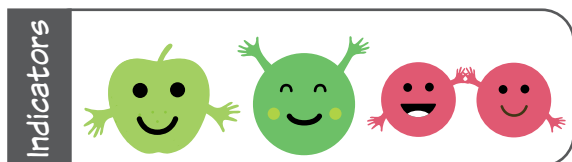
"We recognise that parents are partners in the children's learning and we understand that children will do better and achieve more when their parents are involved. During a curriculum evening, parents were invited to participate in a healthy eating workshop where they were provided with information about the five food groups and the benefits of a varied diet. Parents were keen to be involved and said they found the session very useful. As a result of this workshop, we have seen a positive change in the foods being provided in the children's lunch boxes.

"One parent told us she found the workshop particularly useful because the Eatwell Guide helped her to form conversations with her child around food and why it is important. She now uses the guide at home and has a printed copy on the fridge. At most meal or snack times the family talk about what each food gives us, such as a healthy heart or lots of energy. We recognise that these conversations around food and eating well will assist children to take more responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

"To extend the children's learning, we provide opportunities for them to sample foods from each food group. They participate in completing the nursery's shopping list, they are involved in menu planning and have responsibilities for snack preparation. As a result, they have become more aware of which foods are suitable as a snack and they are able to apply the knowledge they have gained in their everyday experiences. Children sample the different foods and are encouraged and supported to select an item from each food group for their lunch basket. Using the Eatwell Guide at snack times has helped the children to taste new foods from each section as well as helping them learn about the variety of foods that should be on their plate."

## Comment from a parent

*"We now use the Eatwell Guide to chat about what foods we should eat and why it's important."*



## Dens Road Primary School Nursery

Dens Road Primary School Nursery is a local authority nursery based in Dundee. The service is registered to provide care for a maximum of 94 children aged between two years and primary school entry. It was inspected in June 2017 and was found to be very good for the quality of care and support as well as management and leadership. The inspection report noted that there was a welcoming and inclusive ethos throughout the nursery, with staff establishing very strong relationships with families at an early stage. Staff nurtured children within a positive and respectful environment and were committed to providing the best possible outcomes for children in their care.

Lynzie Penman, a practitioner at the nursery, tells us how they worked with the children to improve their eating experiences.

“We asked the children what they would like to change about their snack area and snack provision. As they had recently visited a local café, they thought that it would be nice if their own snack area was redesigned so that they could enjoy a café-style snack experience. The children participated in discussions about the different things that they would find in a café. They wanted tablecloths, proper cutlery and crockery, homemade centre pieces and glass pouring jugs. We listened to the children’s ideas, helped them to make the changes and soon their café became a reality. They now proudly call it the Rocking Star Café.

“We encourage children to participate in all aspects of food provision. They help to set the tables for snack and to clear up afterwards. They all have responsibilities such as helping to mop up any spillages and loading the dishwasher. Although it may often be quicker and easier for us to do it for them, the children are supported to learn vital skills at an early age, skills that they will need as they grow up.

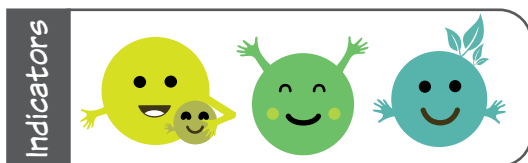
“The children are also involved in writing the shopping list for snack; they take responsibility for asking others what their preferences are to ensure that everyone’s choices are considered. Once the



shopping has arrived, the children help put it away; this enables them to carry out an everyday activity and letting them see what is available for snack as well. Visual display cards are used each day to show the children what is available and they then record their choices on a whiteboard so that their parents can see what balanced choices they have made.

“We had noticed that snack time was not always a sociable experience for all of the children. Some were not as confident as others and found it more difficult to participate in conversations. We recognised this as an area for development and created the idea of the Big Talk. We collected photographs to illustrate the children’s observed interests such as a car, a bike and an octopus, and we then displayed them on the table as conversation starters. The Big Talk now provides the quieter children with a nurturing environment where they feel safe and more confident to start a conversation. We find that the quieter children are now more able to join in and interact with their peers around the table.

“We have found that by allowing the children’s own interests to influence the snack provision, there are additional opportunities to extend other areas of the curriculum through hands-on active learning. Some children are keen to share a story while having snack and this is encouraged and respected. A favourite story is *The Disgusting Sandwich*, which allows the children to explore many different foods in a fun and relaxed way.”



## Currie Playgroup

Currie Playgroup is based in Edinburgh and run by a committee. The service provides care for a maximum of 20 children aged between two years and primary school entry during term-time and holiday care for children up to six years old. It was inspected in September 2016 and was evaluated as being very good for the quality of care and support and good for the quality of management and leadership. The inspection report noted that staff provided a caring and supportive environment, children were actively involved outdoors with a range of learning opportunities and the playgroup displayed a positive approach to children learning about eating well, healthy lifestyles and Scottish food. Children and parents were involved in these activities.

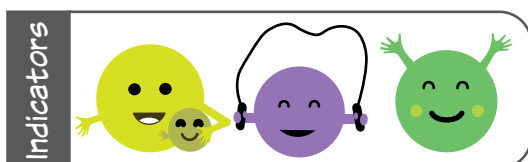
Alison Brown, a practitioner at Currie Playgroup, describes how children are actively encouraged to learn about food and the environment.

"Children are encouraged to take a keen interest in their eco journey and we have participated in the Keep Scotland Beautiful Green Flag Award Scheme. Through the topics of Health and Wellbeing as well as Food and the Environment, our children have developed their knowledge and understanding of eating well. Families are welcome to join in to enhance their children's learning and we really encourage them to participate in our nursery projects.

"We regularly have circle time discussions asking children what they would like to plant in the playgroup garden. Their ideas are then written in our floor books and the children have the opportunity to visit the local garden centre to choose what they want to grow. They learn about the different seasons and which vegetables grow best at certain times of the year. The children help to sow the seeds and plant the bulbs and are supported to nurture them. The children learn to respect the planet and begin to understand that they have a responsibility for it. They are supported to harvest the produce and use the ingredients to make nutritious soups and salads.

"The children learn about hygiene and cleanliness and they are supported to wash their hands properly before preparing the food. They also learn that some foods need to be washed before eating. The children then help to peel and chop the vegetables safely, they combine the ingredients in the pot and then smell it cooking while they wait to eat it. They then sit down with their friends to enjoy the soup that they have made using their own produce. They have even participated in helping to make their own bread to go with the soup.

*"Children at Currie Playgroup enjoy the social aspect of eating their snacks and lunches together and engage in lots of chat around the table. During these sociable occasions, staff take the opportunity to instigate conversations about eating well and healthy teeth. The children happily join in and are supported to share their knowledge."*



## Health and Social Care Standards

1.35 I can enjoy unhurried snack and meal times in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible.

1.38 If appropriate, I can choose to make my own meals, snacks and drinks, with support if I need it, and can choose to grow, cook and eat my own food where possible.

2.21 I take part in daily routines, such as setting up activities and mealtimes, if this is what I want.

2.27 As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity.

## Things to think about

How do you gather feedback from the children and families about meal provision and the snack experience in your setting?

What discussions do you have with parents around your responsibilities regarding food provision? How can you support them to understand your role?

Think about children's choices, how can you support them to take responsibility for making balanced choices while respecting their decisions?

What can you do to champion the provision of fresh, seasonal, local and sustainable produce?

What changes can you make that will provide opportunities for children to develop everyday skills around food preparation and safety?

## Find out more

Childsmile – improving the oral health of children in Scotland:  
<http://www.child-smile.org.uk/>

Education Scotland, Curriculum for Excellence: health and wellbeing, experiences and outcomes:  
<https://education.gov.scot/Documents/health-and-wellbeing-eo.pdf>

Food Standards Scotland, The five food groups:

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/consumers/healthy-eating/nutrition/the-five-food-groups>

Keep Scotland Beautiful:

<https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/>

Scottish Government, Healthy Eating in Schools: A guide to implementing the nutritional requirements for food and drink in schools (Scotland) regulations:

<https://beta.gov.scot/publications/healthy-eating-schools-guide-implementing-nutritional-requirements-food-drink-schools-9780755958306/>









## 3.8 Included

**Children and young people have help to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities and are accepted as part of the community in which they live and learn.**

### St David's Primary School Nursery

St David's Primary School Nursery is a local authority service in Edinburgh providing care for a maximum of 30 children aged between three years and primary school entry. It was inspected in November 2016 when it was evaluated as being very good for quality of care and support and staffing. The report noted that children with additional needs and those who speak English as an additional language are well supported. Staff were seen to be kind, caring and nurturing in their interactions with the children. A particular strength was the way staff promoted children's independence and supported them to be responsible and to manage tasks on their own.

A high percentage of children attending St David's Primary School Nursery speak English as an additional language (EAL). Nursery teacher Kenneth Innes says that St David's has always maintained an exceptionally high regard for snack provision and staff see it as a vital component for breaking down the language barriers. They see snack provision as an important tool for staff that provides them with an excellent opportunity to model language to help the children build their vocabulary. It also provides an opportunity for them to have fun with the children, some of whom have a tendency to be shy and quiet around adults who are speaking a different language. By providing a well thought out and planned snack time, staff are able to offer children healthy snacks in a calm and welcoming



environment. Staffing is well planned with dedicated people in place. This ensures that children's needs are met in an unhurried and nurturing environment and they feel safe being supported by key adults who understand their individual needs.

Kenneth describes how the nursery aims to support the individual needs of the children.

"We respect the children's likes and dislikes and meet their cultural and dietary requirements. A conversation on the child's first day with the parents helps establish the child's needs and an interpreter is present if needed. We are also in the process of working with City of Edinburgh Council's EAL service to roll out a system of enhanced enrolments for those families who would benefit from it. This provides parents and children with an opportunity to spend more time with staff to make the transition to nursery less traumatic. It ensures that staff have the information they need to provide the best support for the children and their families and that parents feel more comfortable leaving their child with staff who are knowledgeable about their child."

Children and staff at St David's also celebrate the diversity of the nursery family by preparing snacks from around the world. This fosters inclusiveness, provides the children with a learning experience and teaches them how to respect different cultures.

Staff keep a register to ensure that all children have an opportunity to be involved in snack preparation. Those children who may feel reluctant at first are gently encouraged and supported to be more involved. They are supported by staff who dedicate additional time to ensure that the children who do not speak English as their first language are included. Staff repeat instructions slowly, often doing this several times. They use visuals to ensure that these children can effectively participate in the preparation of snack and are able to have a nutritious snack they feel comfortable eating.

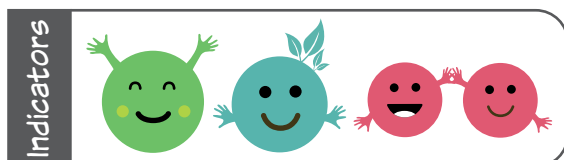
## Comments from parents

*"Everything is always fresh and tasty."*

*"The food at St David's is super tasty."*

*"It's great that the children can help prepare the food."*

*"Children are really involved in the food preparation and learn about food hygiene."*



## Pathhead Primary School Nursery

Pathhead Primary School Nursery is a local authority nursery service in Kirkcaldy, Fife, providing care for 69 children aged between two years and primary school entry. It was inspected in September 2017 when it was evaluated as being very good for the environment and good for the quality of care and support. The inspection report noted that children experienced appropriate, responsive care from carers who understood their needs and preferences and there were very good systems in place to support children with additional support requirements.

Shelley Hutchison, acting depute head, tells us how they worked hard to ensure they met one particular child's additional needs.

"Lucy, who is now aged six, has Kabuki Syndrome and previously spent two years at Pathhead Nursery. Kabuki Syndrome is a multi-system disorder that brings with it a number of different related conditions such as heart issues, chronic lung disease and gastric reflux disease. Lucy finds it difficult to eat and drink and consequently she needs to be fed via a gastrostomy button in her tummy. Whilst at nursery, Lucy needed to be given fluids through the gastrostomy button and she was given a lunchtime feed via a pump.

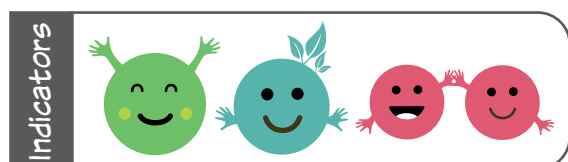
"Although Lucy could physically swallow food and drink, she lacked interest in them because she had been gastrostomy-fed since birth. She showed no interest in food and drink when she began attending nursery and would push them away. At Pathhead Nursery we recognise the development opportunities that snack time provides and appreciate it is about more than nutrition. We think of it as being a very sociable activity, which provides many opportunities for learning and making friends. Children have time to talk to and learn from their peers and from the adults caring for them.

"To ensure that Lucy was fully included in nursery life, and also to try and develop her interest in food and drink, we began encouraging Lucy to sit at the snack table with the other children. She would have her drink via the gastrostomy button while the other children enjoyed their snack. Soon Lucy began to choose herself when she would join the others at the snack table. She was initially non-verbal but would communicate her wish to go to snack by gesturing, either by pointing to the relevant Boardmarker symbols in her communication folder or by using her Go Talk machine.

"When Lucy was more familiar with the snack routine we began to offer her the food and drink that the other children were having. She initially refused but gradually she began to ask for snack, this included selecting food from the different options on offer. At first, she would ignore the food once she had selected it but her interest grew slowly and she began to touch it with her fingers. Staff were gently supportive and they made Lucy feel secure without making a fuss so that she wasn't put off. By

the time Lucy left nursery she was touching foodstuffs to her lips and also taking small amounts of liquids by mouth.

“Lucy is now in Primary 2 and still being fed via a pump but she happily joins the other children at the table. She now bites and swallows small amounts and drinks her carton of milk every day. At the nursery, we worked together with Lucy’s mum and the community nurse to make sure that we could support Lucy in the right way. We supported her in a relaxed, non-threatening way to ensure that she felt included in all aspects of nursery life. Transition from nursery to Primary 1 was made easier for Lucy through effective planning and communication.”



## First Class Day Nursery

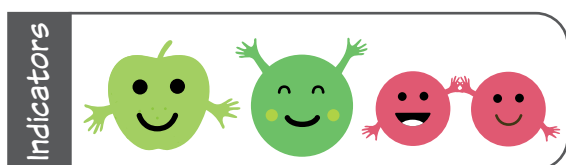
First Class Day Nursery is a daycare of children service based in Airdrie provided by Jean McGrow. The service is registered to provide care for a maximum of 37 children aged between birth and primary school entry. It was inspected in June 2017 when it was evaluated as being very good for the quality of care and support and for the quality of the environment. The inspection report noted that the children received very good support for their health and wellbeing needs and that the children were observed to be happy and confident in their environment.

Jean McGrow, manager, looked at food provision as part of their improvement plan.

“Using How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare, we looked at how we could support the families to spend quality time together while engaging in activities that would support learning. In particular, we looked at how we could support them to introduce new foods and broaden their child’s knowledge around eating well. Our staff had listened to the parents who spoke about their challenges in supporting their child to eat well. It prompted them to host tasting sessions for the children where they are offered a variety of new and diverse foods to help them to expand their palate. Children enjoyed the tasting sessions and shared their learning at home. Feedback from parents was very positive. We were then inspired to take this a step further and considered how we could involve the parents more. We decided to send the recipes home so parents and children could enjoy the

experience together. We were also mindful of the financial stresses that can affect some families and began to send the ingredients home with the children.

“Parents were very appreciative of this because it meant they could enjoy the learning experience with the children without having to shop for the ingredients after work. It also meant that all of the children could participate because there was no cost implication. So, it was an experience that included everyone. We saw that children were proud of their achievements and were keen to share stories and photographs from their family cooking experiences.”



## Anna Ritchie Nursery School

**Anna Ritchie School Nursery is a local authority nursery in Peterhead, Aberdeenshire, registered to provide care for a maximum of eight children who are not yet attending primary school. It provides nursery education for children with additional support needs on an in-reach basis. The service was inspected in February 2018 when it was evaluated as being excellent for the quality of care and support, and very good for the environment. The report noted that children were cared for by consistent staff who were skilled at building close attachments. Staff were found to be very perceptive and were seen to respond sensitively to the differing needs of children.**

Children who attend the Anna Ritchie School Nursery have been identified through the multi-agency process as requiring targeted support around specific developmental needs. Joe Davies, depute head teacher, describes how children are supported to have positive eating experiences.

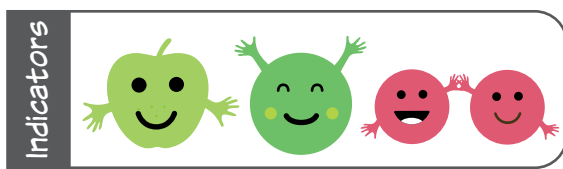
“Staff use a variety of Total Communication approaches to help children to develop key communication skills and to interact with and understand the world around them. This includes PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) which allows people with little or no verbal communication abilities to communicate using pictures.

“When using PECS, the children are supported by a trusted and familiar adult to use pictures to communicate their needs and preferences. PECS is used as a regular part of our nursery snack time and it reinforces key elements such as the importance of mealtime routines and the social element of mealtimes and eating. This system encourages independence and allows children to communicate their choices in a developmentally appropriate way. We also use it as a way of discovering children’s

changing food preferences, ensuring their needs and interests are always kept at the forefront of practice and planning. For example, children are supported to use the food symbols to help decide what will be on the menu each day. Staff use their close knowledge of the children to provide a variety of nutritious food options which help to model positive food choices for the children.

“Food-related activities also provide an excellent opportunity for us to provide a model for positive behaviours around mealtimes and eating. The positive relationships that our staff have with the children is crucial in encouraging these positive relationships with food and mealtime experiences. Moreover, PECS helps the children to understand mealtime routines and gives the children the independence to react to their own cues without adult prompting.

“The symbols used as part of PECS are also used across a variety of contexts in the nursery and school. Therefore, the early communication and interaction skills developed at nursery are embedded and consolidated as the children grow and develop.”



## Early Years Scotland

**Early Years Scotland (EYS) works directly with children and families in a variety of settings including local communities, family homes and prisons. Their work focuses on improving early learning and development through shared interactions and play.**

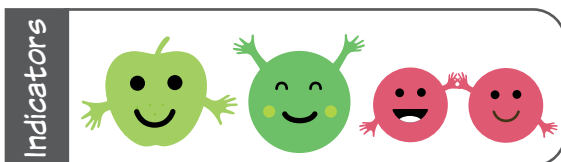
Linda Gordon, project manager, tells us about their 2 Stay, Play and Learn sessions.

“These sessions provide eligible two-year-olds and their families with the opportunity to access a unique model of provision where instead of dropping their children off at nursery the parents stay, play and learn too. This model of early learning and childcare supports parents to be fully involved and engaged in their children’s learning from the start. It offers a two-generational, play-based approach where qualified practitioners encourage and engage with young children and their parents by strengthening and improving confidence, attachments, engagement, connection and nurturing, thus improving home learning environments and attainment.

“The project in Arden, Glasgow, provides a service across different cultures. Chinese and Polish children aged two to three years attend with their parents for five mornings per week. As communication difficulties can sometimes be a barrier to learning, cooking classes have been

invaluable as a means of community engagement. The classes have helped children and families to develop their language skills, improving interactions and encouraging participation.

“When the children and families initially attended the sessions they were not as confident in engaging with each other. However, they now support, value and encourage each other in playing and learning with their own and other children. Parents are now more able to help their own children develop the confidence to make new friends, taking account of the feelings and needs of others. Friendships have formed because of the cooking classes. Families have learned to understand and respect each other’s cultures. Family learning experiences support the development of language skills and this helps them to feel valued as contributors within their community. This demonstrates how food can act as a vehicle to bring communities together to increase people’s confidence, encourage community cohesion and understanding.”



## Health and Social Care Standards

1.19 My care and support meets my needs and is right for me.

1.33 I can choose suitably presented and healthy meals and snacks, including fresh fruit and vegetables, and participate in menu planning.

1.34 If I need help with eating and drinking, this is carried out in a dignified way and my personal preferences are respected.

1.37 My meals and snacks meet my cultural and dietary needs, beliefs and preferences.

4.3 I experience care and support where all people are respected and valued.



## Things to think about

Think about how you communicate with children at meal and snack times. How can you best support their individual needs?

What can you do to make individual children feel included and supported to make decisions and choices around food?

How do you ensure and communicate that you meet the dietary, religious and cultural needs of the children in your setting?

Think about food provision and the opportunity it provides for learning. Can you think of ways to help children learn and develop their language skills?

Think about your dining environment and experience. Does it provide a sociable, inclusive experience for children?

## Find out more

Community Food and Health (Scotland), Building blocks and baby steps:

<https://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/CFHS-building-blocks-and-baby-steps.pdf>

Early Years Scotland:

<https://earlyyearsscotland.org/blog/case-study-shows-positive-impact-of-stay-and-play>

Education Scotland: How good is our early learning and childcare?

[https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/Frameworks\\_SelfEvaluation/FRWK1\\_NIHeditSelf-evaluationHGIELC/HGIOELC020316Revised.pdf](https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/Frameworks_SelfEvaluation/FRWK1_NIHeditSelf-evaluationHGIELC/HGIOELC020316Revised.pdf)

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS):

<https://pecs-unitedkingdom.com/>

## Further reading

Care Inspectorate, The Hub:

<http://hub.careinspectorate.com/>

Children in Scotland:

<https://childreninscotland.org.uk/>

Childsmile – improving the oral health of children in Scotland:

<http://www.child-smile.org.uk/>

Community Food and Health Scotland:

<https://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/>

Early Years Scotland:

<https://earlyyearsscotland.org/>

Education Scotland's National Improvement Hub:

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement>

Feedgood (Breastfeeding):

<http://www.feedgood.scot/>

First Steps Nutrition:

<https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/>

Food Standards Scotland:

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/>

Greener Scotland:

<http://www.greenerScotland.org/>

Healthy Start:

<https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>

Institute for Healthcare Improvement:

<http://www.ihl.org/>

Keep Scotland Beautiful:

<https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/>

National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA):

<https://www.ndna.org.uk/>

NHS Health Scotland:

<http://www.healthscotland.scot/>

Scottish Childminding Association:

<https://www.childminding.org/>

Scottish Government:

<http://www.gov.scot/>

Scottish Government: National Performance Framework:

<https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00497339.pdf>

Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN):

<https://soscni.org/>

Scottish Public Health Network (ScotPHN):

<https://www.scotphn.net/>

Soil Association:

<https://www.soilassociation.org/our-work-in-scotland/>

The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS):

<https://www.rehis.com/>

Unicef UK

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/>

## 5. Acknowledgements

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Children in Scotland  
Currie Playgroup  
Dalmarnock Primary School  
Dens Road Primary School Nursery  
Early Years Scotland  
Fenton Barns Nursery  
Fernielea Out of School Club  
First Class Day Nursery  
Glen Family Centre  
Junior World  
Killin and Crianlarich Nursery  
Killin Nursery  
Monkey Puzzle Glasgow  
Moorpark Pre-five Centre  
Pathhead Primary School Nursery  
Playbarn  
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St David’s Primary School Nursery  
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Simpson Primary School Nursery  
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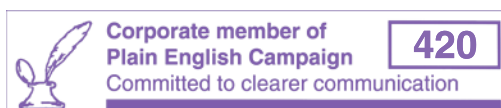
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