



Thoughtful
Food
Programme





What it's all about

First Friends is excited to announce our new early years menus for the children in our care.

These menus have been carefully designed with the health and well-being of your children at the heart.

Our primary goal is to provide your children with healthy and nutritious meals in an environment that supports healthy relationships with food.

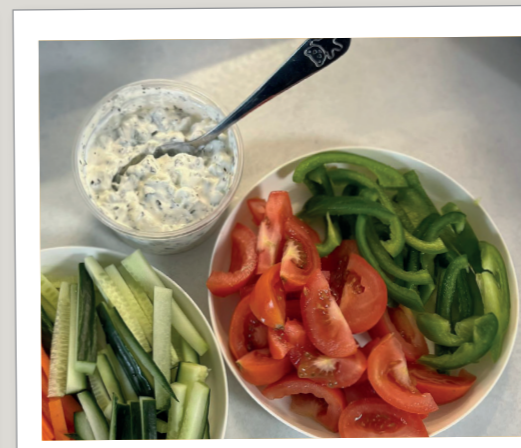
We believe that good food is essential for their growth and development.

This booklet explains the changes we are making to our menus for children in our care.



New Menus for 2024...

Our menus are full of foods that are good for our bodies, helping our children in our care to be strong and healthy.



Changes to our menus

Limited Added Sugar

We understand the importance of limiting added sugar in a child's diet.

Our menus are created with this in mind, so you can be sure that your child is not consuming excessive amounts of sugar, which can be harmful to their health.

We have researched the best food products to provide, ensuring our cereal choices and puddings do not contain added sugar and instead use natural ingredients to provide sweetness.

Majority of our pudding options are fruit or yogurt based this means there is more freedom to offer sweet treats at home without the worry of excessive sugar being a key factor in your child's diet.



Seasonal Produce

We endeavour to use seasonal produce in our meals as much as possible. As a minimum, we encourage our nurseries to purchase at least one seasonal item each week to be added to our meals, provided alongside or as a snack for our children and Educators to taste and try.

This not only ensures that the food is fresh and full of flavour and nutrients, but it also supports local suppliers, it is more cost effective, reduces the environmental impact of long-distance food transportation, and reduces the pesticides used transporting items.

We are on a sustainable journey and are looking at new ways to make a positive impact to our planet, our nurseries are provided with details of UK seasonal fruit and vegetables and when to purchase, along with information of planting and sowing to encourage growing and consumption of our own produce.

Promoting Sustainability

We care about the planet and want to teach your children to do the same. Our menus are designed to promote sustainability by using eco-friendly ingredients, reducing food waste whenever possible and reflecting on our carbon footprint from where our shopping is delivered from.

We have introduced food waste buckets and compost bins in our settings, as well as working towards achieving awards in sustainable practices.



Energy to Learn and Grow

Proper nutrition is crucial for children, especially during their early years when they are growing and learning at a rapid pace. Our menus are created to give your child the energy they need to stay active, engaged, and ready to learn. We encourage our Nursery chefs and Educators to complete nutrition training to ensure they have the essential knowledge.



Try and taste new things

We want to encourage your child's curiosity and adventurous spirit when it comes to food. Our menus provide children with opportunities to taste and try new dishes, helping them expand their palate and develop a lifelong love for diverse and healthy foods.

Starters & Mains

We have a thoughtful approach to menu planning, and one of our key strategies is the alternation between puddings and starters. By alternating the options, we ensure that children do not associate food with emotional or behavioural incentives such as finishing a main meal earns a pudding.

This approach helps them understand that food is not something to be earning or withheld but rather a source of nourishment and sustenance. Our primary message is that food is fuel for the body.

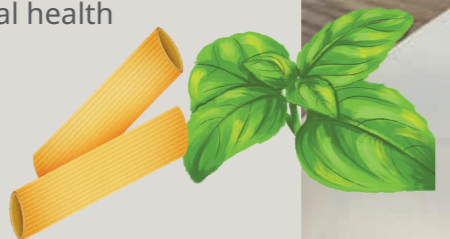
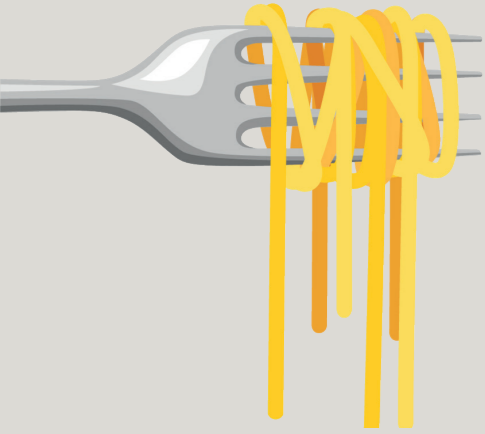
By providing a variety of options, including both starters and puddings, we emphasize the importance of eating for energy and health. Children learning that every part of their meal serves the purpose of providing them with the nutrients they need to play, learn and grown and we believe our approach contributes to a healthy relationship with food for life.



Water & Milk

We prioritise the well-being of our children by offering only water or whole milk. This deliberate choice is made to provide them with the best start in life. Water hydrates and supports cognitive development, while whole milk offers essential nutrients like calcium and healthy fats, crucial for their growing bodies and minds. By serving these options exclusively, we ensure that our children receive the nourishment they need for a bright and healthy future.





Meat free days

We have introduced meat free days as part of our menus as we recognise it can bring valuable benefits both for health of our children and well-being of our planet. Meat-free days introduce children to a diverse range of food which are rich in essential nutrients, this variety contributes to their overall health by providing vitamins, minerals, and fibre. Research suggests a diet that includes meat-free days can also help to reduce the risk of certain health conditions. It also contributes to our commitment to sustainability.

The production of meat has a substantial environmental footprint by reducing meat consumption on designated days, we contribute to a more sustainable planet; conserves resources, lowers our carbon footprint and supports a healthier environment for future generations. Incorporating meat-free days into our menu not only encourages balanced and nutritious eating habits in our children but also encourages a sense of responsibility toward the planet. It's a small change with a big impact, promoting both personal health and global well-being.

Dietary requirements

At First Friends, we take the dietary needs of our children seriously. Our commitment to their well-being extends to accommodating a diverse range of dietary requirements, including allergies, intolerances, religious considerations, and individual preferences.

Allergies and Intolerances

We understand the importance of managing allergies and intolerances. Our dedicated team works closely with parents to create safe and delicious alternatives for children with specific dietary needs. We take every precaution to prevent cross-contamination and ensure that children with allergies can enjoy their meals without worry. All our staff complete specific allergen awareness courses, as well as further learning on food hygiene and marvellous mealtimes.

Religious considerations

We respect and honour the diverse religious dietary requirement of our children and families. Our menus are thoughtfully crafted to accommodate various religious dietary practices, and we provide options that align with these beliefs. We strive to create a welcoming environment where all children can comfortably enjoy their meals.

Breakfast Bar

Our Breakfast Bars are designed to empower children to make their own breakfast choices, promoting a sense of independence and a love for wholesome foods.

Children can decide what they would like for breakfast by selecting from a variety of options. They can choose from healthy cereal options to fuel their day, add a burst of freshness with a selection of fruits or vegetables and top it off with a carbohydrate choice such as a crumpet, toast, or bagel. And of course, we always provide fresh milk and water to keep them hydrated and satisfied.

Snack Bars

Our First Friends snack bars are all about empowering children to make healthy snack choices on their terms. We operate on a rolling system, meaning children can decide if they would like a snack, encouraging independence and responsibility.

We offer a diverse array of options, from the goodness of fruits and vegetables to satisfying carbohydrate choices like rice crackers, breadsticks, pita and delightful spreads like hummus and cream cheese. Our snack bars are designed to delight taste buds and promote nutritious snacking.



Menu Examples

Breakfast

- Malted wheats, Weetabix, rice crispies, cornflakes
- Wholemeal toast, crumpet, toasted muffins
- Unsalted butter & cream cheese
- Seasonal fruit and vegetables

Tea

- Pizza muffins/ pittas/ crumpets
- Rainbow vegetable frittata
- Baked beans with cheese on wholemeal bread
- Tuna pasta salad
- Jacket potato with cheese and beans
- Soup
- Egg or ham sandwiches
- Scrambled egg and toast
- Mezze plater: chicken, dips, veggie sticks, mini wraps, grated cheese
- Puff pastry pinwheels
- Tomato and bean gnocci bake with bread
- Sweet potato & lentil soup with bread
- Chicken fajita wraps

Snacks

Carbs: bread sticks, pitta, crackers, plain rice cakes
Dairy: unsalted spread, cream cheese
Hummous, smashed avocado,



Lunch

- Chickpea & spinach Curry
- Pasta primavera with garlic bread
- Puff pastry chicken & mushroom pie
- Fish pie with mash & veggies
- Tuna and broccoli pasta bake
- Beef and spinach curry with rice
- Fish fingers, potatoes & peas
- BBQ chicken/quorn with new potatoes vegetables
- Salmon and pea risotto
- Bean and veggie sausage pasta bake
- Bean and vegetable enchiladas
- Veggie bolognese & pasta
- Chicken, potatoes, vegetables & Yorkshire pudding
- Cauliflower & broccoli crumbed bake
- Baked veggie korma
- Pork ragu with new potatoes & vegetables
- Spaghetti & meatballs with hidden veggie sauce
- Creamy chicken/Quorn curry & rice with vegetables
- Hearty beef & vegetable stew with crusty bread
- Macaroni cheese with vegetables

Pudding

- Apple crumble tart
- Banana & cinnamon rice pudding
- Monkey bread no added sugar
- Fruit cheesecake no added sugar
- Banana, carrot and sultana loaf
- Fruit skewers and yogurt dip
- Frozen strawberry yogurt



