

# The Golden Apple Award

Celebrating positive nutrition, hygiene  
and oral health principles  
in a pre-school setting

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# Getting started

1. Pick a Golden Apple Leader - a member of your group who is enthusiastic about the scheme. The Golden Apple Leader is responsible for cascading information about the scheme to other staff, parents and children. They will also check that your group is keeping to the snack and hand washing policies.
2. In this pack you will find copies of the Golden Apple criteria and a sample Snack Policy. These show what you need to have in place to receive an award. The snack policy can be adapted to suit your circumstances.
3. In this pack you will also find a sample Hand Washing Policy.
4. We recommend that you inform parents/carers of your intention to work towards the Golden Apple Award. We have enclosed a sample poster which you may use, or you may prefer to design your own. Newsletters and display boards are also good ways of keeping families informed.
5. Your first grading, for a bronze, silver, or gold award, will take place approximately three months after you receive this pack. Your Golden Apple Award status will then be re-evaluated annually.

**If you need further help or support please email: [foodsafety@bury.gov.uk](mailto:foodsafety@bury.gov.uk)**



# The Golden Apple Award Criteria

## Bronze Award

1. A written snack policy is implemented in your setting: food and drinks containing sugar are not provided at snack time.
2. A Hand Washing Policy is implemented in your premises.
3. All food must be prepared in a hygienic manner, satisfying the requirements of the Food Hygiene Regulations.
4. Fruit and/or vegetables are provided as a snack for children at least once a day.

## Silver Award

All of the above plus two of the following.

5. A sugar free reward system is in place for good behaviour and birthday celebrations.
6. Oral health promotion such as Smile Month occurs at least once a year.
7. Staff actively encourage families to continue with the Golden Apple Principles at home, for example, eating 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day. This could be via newsletter articles, recipes, display boards or a parents' resource box.
8. At least one member of staff preparing food has a formal food hygiene qualification.

## Gold Award

All 8 criteria.

# General principles for a healthy, balanced diet

Giving children a healthy, balanced diet teaches positive eating habits that they can use as young adults and as parents themselves. Planning menus ahead ensures the best food choices are made and that meals are varied.

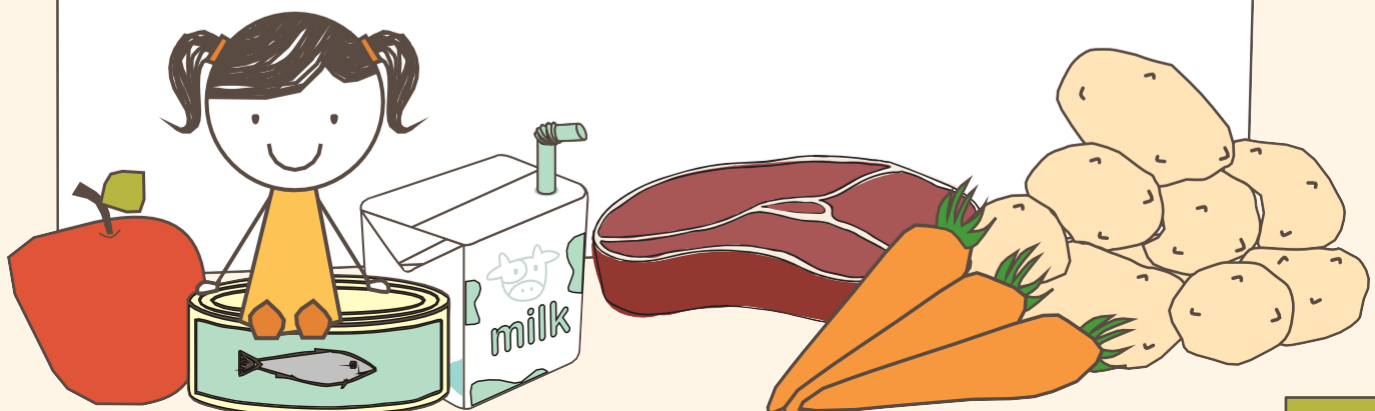
Remember to include these sorts of foods everyday:

**Bread, rice, pasta, breakfast cereals, potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams.** These foods are an important source of energy and provide fibre, B vitamins and some calcium. A minimum of one portion eaten at each meal, plus one snack, is recommended.

**Milk, cheese and yoghurt.** These foods provide protein, calcium, fat and vitamins A and D. Protein is important for growth and calcium in bone development. To be served 2-3 times daily in meals, snacks and drinks.

**Meat, fish, eggs, beans, peas, lentils, tofu.** These foods provide protein and important minerals such as iron and should be served at each main meal. Oily fish such as salmon, sardines and mackerel are a good source of omega-3 - try and introduce as part of a varied diet at least once a week. When planning your menu, try to avoid processed meat/fish more than once a week (e.g. sausages and burgers) as these can be high in saturated fat and salt.

**Fruit and vegetables.** These foods provide essential vitamins (especially vitamin C) and minerals, fibre and antioxidants. Serve with each meal, plus one as a snack. Antioxidants are known to be protective against cancers and fibre helps to keep our gut healthy. Remember to eat a rainbow, choose a variety of colours to get the most benefit.



Children grow very quickly and are usually very active, subsequently they need plenty of energy (calories) and nutrients.

Most toddlers can eat the same food as adults, served in smaller sized portions. As they cannot eat large amounts at one sitting, a diet too low in fat or too high in fibre is not suitable for children under the age of two. High starchy foods such as wholemeal rice and wholemeal pasta are bulky and can fill up a child up too quickly, preventing them from having enough room to get all the energy they need.

Remember that some fat is necessary to provide essential vitamins such as A,D and E. It is therefore especially important to give children varied meals and snacks packed with calories and nutrients such as full fat milk and dairy foods, meat and eggs.

Between the ages of two and five years old, children should be making a gradual move to eating family food which is lower in fat and higher in fibre.

Please also consider the following when planning meals:

1. Young children should be offered a wide variety of foods to introduce them to different tastes and textures.
2. Meals and snacks should be attractive and served in a pleasant, sociable environment. Children should have enough time to eat and should be praised for trying new foods. It is good practice for staff to encourage good table manners and social skills.

**Please refer to the 'Eat Better, Start Better Voluntary Food and Drink Guidelines for Early Years Settings in England' for detailed guidance in planning your food provision.**



# Snack policy

## Why do we need a Snack Policy?

Parents, carers, staff and health professionals working together can improve the health of children in Bury. The Oral Health Survey of 5-year-olds (2022) reported that 34.6% of children in Bury had experienced tooth decay. We are delighted to share that the latest [Survey \(2024\)](#) reported this figure is now **22.1%**. Thank you for your hard work in promoting healthy policies and toothbrushing to help reduce tooth decay. (Public Health England, 2022).

Dental decay is caused by the frequency of sugary food and drinks in the diet. By limiting sweet foods and drinks to main mealtimes we can cut down on the number of acid attacks and reduce the risk of decay. Having a Snack Policy will reduce the risk of dental decay to the children in your care.

Promotion of fruit and vegetables will also help reduce the risk of heart disease, some cancers and many other health problems.

It is very important to establish balanced eating habits early on in life. A balanced diet is vital for a child's growth, development, and health in adulthood. Eating habits formed in childhood tend to be continued into adulthood, so we need to encourage good habits early in a child's development.

## What is a snack?

For the purpose of the scheme, a snack is defined as any food or drink offered to a child other than at the three main meals - breakfast, lunch and evening meal.

Breakfast and the evening meal may be provided at home, or by the nursery. Nurseries should be clear, when planning their menus, whether the meals they provide are main meals or not. You must consider whether the food provided late in the afternoon or early evening is served as a main meal or as a light snack with children being expected to eat a main meal with their families later. This decision will influence the types of food you choose to serve.

### **Suggested Healthy Snack Policy**

We aim to provide healthy snacks and drinks for children attending our childcare setting.

- Water and milk will be provided between meals.
- Fruit and/or vegetables will be provided as a snack at least once a day.
- Foods that are high in saturated fat, sugar and salt will not be provided as snacks.

### **Suitable food for snack time**

Your group has the opportunity to introduce your children to new flavours and foods which are nutritious and tooth friendly.

### **Healthy snack ideas**

- Fruit cut up into bite size pieces. made into fruit kebabs or served with natural yogurt for example oranges, melon, banana, pineapple, pears, strawberries, apples.
- Raw or steamed vegetables such as carrots, broccoli, peppers, celery, sweetcorn, cucumber, tomatoes. Larger items cut into finger foods.
- Bread, fresh or toasted, for example pitta, bagels, French stick, crumpets, chapatti, cheese scones, rolls, or homemade pizza (thick-based with different toppings).
- Sandwiches or jacket potatoes served with a selection of savoury fillings for example egg, grated cheese, salad, cooked sliced meats, canned fish.
- Dips such as humous, cottage cheese, mint yogurt dip, mild tomato salsa with crackers, bread sticks or rice cakes.
- Cubes of cheese.
- Plain unsweetened and unsalted popcorn.
- Pasta or rice salad, for example with tuna or salmon and sweetcorn.

### Note before serving:

- Large seeds and pips should be removed from all fruit and vegetables.
- Cut small round foods like grapes, strawberries and tomatoes lengthways and into quarters to help reduce the risk of choking.

### Snacks to avoid

- Food that is high in saturated fat, sugar and salt. For example, sweets, lollies, jelly containing sugar, biscuits, cake, crisps, cereal bars, pastries, chips, pasties, jam, chocolate, toffee, honey, salty snacks, highly processed foods.
- Although dried fruit counts towards your 5-a-day, it should only be consumed at mealtimes because of the high natural sugar content.
- Children who regularly eat foods such as salted savoury snacks, processed and tinned foods are probably getting more salt than they need. Salt should not be added to food during cooking, or at the table.

### Drinks for snack time

- The only suitable drinks to provide between meals are water or milk. Children over the age of one can drink cow's milk. Whole milk should be provided for children under two years old, semi-skimmed milk can be offered to children over two years.
- Unsuitable snack drinks: all sugary drinks like hot chocolate, flavoured milk, fizzy pop, cordial (including sugar-free), fruit juice, flavoured water, fizzy water, baby juices, milkshakes, smoothies.



- Fruit juices, fruit smoothies and sugar-free cordials are included in the above 'unsuitable' list because they contain natural sugars that can cause tooth decay if drunk too frequently between meals. 100% fresh juice and fruit smoothies should only be drunk at main meals.
- There are other benefits of having fresh juice and smoothies combined with a meal, for example the vitamin C in these two drinks can help in the absorption of iron.
- Tea and coffee are not recommended because they limit the absorption of iron in the diet and should not be given to a child under 5 years of age.

### Birthday, celebrations and rewards

On special occasions the child needs to be made to feel special. This can be achieved in a number of ways with a **sugar-free** reward system in place.

When parents bring in sweet treats it pressurises other parents to do the same. If there are 30 children in your group this could add up to a lot of sweets! The only suitable time to have cake is with a meal and sweets should not be provided. Pens, pencils and stickers are an alternative type of treat.

Various techniques have been favoured in different settings. For example, when it is a child's birthday, they sit in a special chair and are presented with a candle (e.g. a number four) to blow out. A photo is taken and the class sing Happy Birthday. Alternatively, a birthday crown can be worn, or a fancy dress costume of a fairy or a knight in armour.



# 5 A DAY

## What is 5 A DAY?

5 A DAY is the key message to encourage more people to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables each day. Fruit and vegetables provide important nutrients that our bodies need to function and stay healthy.

## Health benefits

- Evidence indicates that eating at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day could lead to a reduction of up to 20% in overall deaths from chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke and cancer (Department of Health).
- Eating more fruit and vegetables can also help to increase fibre intake in the diet which is important for bowel health and helps prevent constipation.
- Eating more fruit and vegetables instead of sugary drinks and foods can help prevent tooth decay.

## What counts towards 5 A DAY?

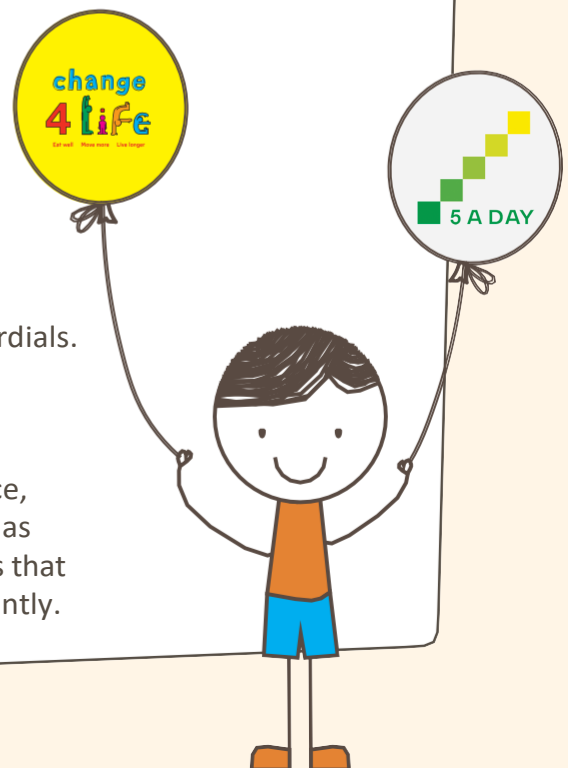
Fruit and vegetables are sold fresh, frozen, tinned, dried and as 100% fresh fruit juice all count towards 5 A DAY.

## What doesn't count as one portion?

Jam, ketchup, potatoes, nuts, seeds, coconuts, cordials.

## Important note:

- Always eat dried fruit and 100% fresh fruit juice, smoothies with a meal rather than as a snack, as these foods or drinks are high in natural sugars that can cause tooth decay if consumed too frequently.



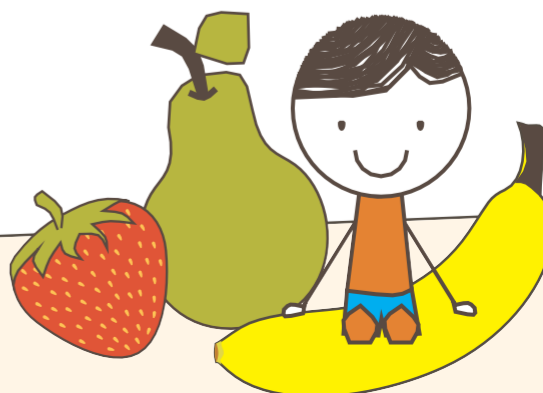
- 100% pure fruit juice, beans and pulse vegetables (e.g. baked beans) only count as one portion no matter how many times you have them in a day. Variety is key!
- Always try to buy tinned fruit in fruit juice, rather than syrup.
- Always try to buy tinned vegetables in water, with no added salt or sugar.
- Always try not to overcook vegetables, or leave them standing in water for a long time before cooking.

### What is one portion for adults?

- A portion of fruit or vegetables is about 80 grams.
- One medium fruit: a banana, a medium apple, or one slice of melon.
- Two small fruits: two satsumas, two plums, two halves of tinned peach, three dried apricots, three sticks of celery, or two kiwis.
- A handful of very small fruit: one handful of grapes, one tablespoon of raisins or sultanas, seven strawberries.
- A 150ml glass of 100% pure fruit juice.

### What is one portion for children?

- One portion for a child is smaller than that of an adult. An approximate guide: one portion is roughly the size of the palm of a child's hand.
- 75ml of 100% pure fruit juice. This is half of an adult portion. You could fill the remainder of the glass up with water.
- For babies under two years old it is recommended that fruit juice is diluted, one part juice to 10 parts water because of the risk of acid erosion on newly-formed teeth.



# Hand Washing Policy

Many infections can be passed person to person, from hand to mouth, including food poisoning and many gastrointestinal infections such as *Shigella sonnei* dysentery.

Correct hand washing is a very effective way of controlling the spread of infections.

## Key points for hand hygiene

Staff and children should follow the recommended hand washing procedure as follows:

1. Wet hands under warm running water.
2. Apply soap, preferably an anti-bacterial liquid one.
3. Rub hands vigorously for at least 15 seconds. Wash all surfaces including backs of hands, wrists, fingers, thumbs and in between fingers.
4. Rinse well under running water.
5. Dry hands, preferably with a single use disposable towel.
6. Children should be adequately supervised when washing their hands and singing a suitable song may help to make it fun and last the required amount of time.



### **Staff must wash their hands:**

- a. When they enter the premises and before going home.
- b. Before they prepare, serve or eat food.
- c. After they change nappies, handle soiled clothing, or wipe the nose of a child.
- d. After any cleaning procedure.
- e. After contact with blood or bodily fluids.
- f. After they have been to the toilet, either themselves or with a child.
- g. After handling pets, pet cages or other pet objects.
- h. After outdoor activities
- i. Before giving or applying medication.

### **Children should wash their hands:**

- a. Before they eat or drink.
- b. After they use the toilet, or after having their nappies changed.
- c. After playing outside.
- d. After handling pets, pet cages or other pet objects.

### **Hand washing: A very simple act that can have a big impact!**

Teaching good hand washing techniques and habits can have a big effect on reducing sickness rates of both staff and children. Good habits established at an early age will have a life-long effect.

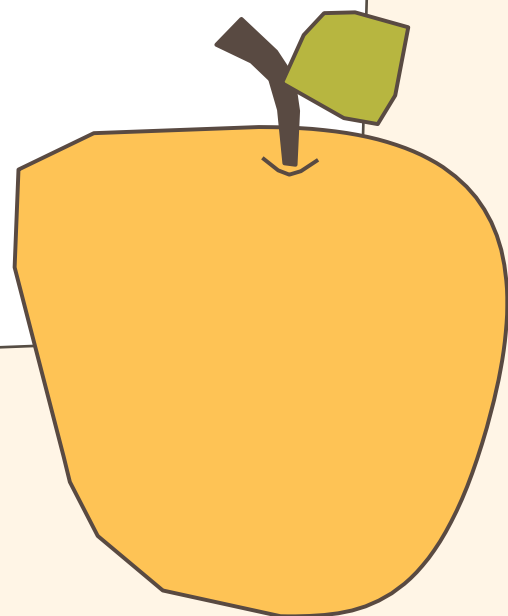
## Notice to parents

We are taking part in a scheme called the **Golden Apple Award** to help reduce tooth decay and promote good diets and hygiene amongst our children.

To attain this award, we will be providing tooth-kind snacks and drinks for your children at snack time.

To help us achieve this award, we kindly request that sugary drinks, snacks, and treats are not brought on site.

**Thank you**



# Useful references

**Bury Oral Health Improvement training, resources and campaigns**  
[Oral Health Improvement Bury | The Bury Directory](#)

**Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance**

This guidance supports providers to understand how to implement the existing EYFS requirement

**NHS Better Health, healthier families**  
<http://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families>

**First Steps Nutrition Trust**

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

[Eating Well in the Early Years – First Steps Nutrition Trust](#)

**Essential Parent eCare System**

Public Health are supporting EYS practitioners to be trained on [Essential Parent](#) – an evidence based digital library, providing a vast number of high-quality resources at your fingertips. The system enables the sending of resources directly to parents/carers via text or email. To gain access to this function or to find out more contact **Tracey Coatman**, Public Health Practitioner (Start Well) [t.coatman@bury.gov.uk](mailto:t.coatman@bury.gov.uk).

**5 A DAY**

[5 A Day - NHS](#) Evidence of health benefits of fruits and vegetables

**NHS Get Help to buy food and milk (Healthy Start Scheme)**  
[www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk)

**Food banks and pantries**

<https://theburydirectory.co.uk/bury-food-banks>

**Infectious Diseases and Control**

[www.gov.uk/health-protection/infectious-diseases](http://www.gov.uk/health-protection/infectious-diseases)

**Food Hygiene and Food Safety**

[www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/caterers/food-hygiene](http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/caterers/food-hygiene)

[www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/caterers/sfbb](http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/caterers/sfbb)

<https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-and-welfare/food-safety>

[www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/allergy-guide/allergen-resources](http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/allergy-guide/allergen-resources)

# The Golden Apple Team

If you require further information on the Golden Apple scheme or would like to know when your next assessment is due, please contact:

## **Oral Health Improvement Lead Practitioner Bury**

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Oral Health Improvement

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