



Chelmer Village Hall, Chelmer Village Square, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 6RF  
Telephone: 07901 886488  
Registered Charity No. 1054083

### 3.02 Food for play and cooking activities

Some parents and staff may have strong views about food being used for play. It is important to be sensitive to these issues. For example, children who are Muslim, Jewish, Rastafarian, or who are vegetarian, should not be given any food to play with that contains animal products (Gelatine). Parents' views should be sought on this. In some cases, it is not appropriate to use food for play at all, particularly in times of austerity.

- Food for play may include dough, corn flour, pasta, rice, food colourings/flavourings.
- Vegan jelly may be sourced and consent given by parents
- Food for play is risk assessed against the 14 allergens referred and is included in the written risk assessment undertaken for children with specific allergies.
- Staff are constantly alert to the potential hazards of food play, in particular choking hazards and signs of previously undetected allergies.
- Pulses are not recommended as they can be poisonous when raw or may choke.
- Dried food that is used for play should be kept away from food used for cooking.
- Foods that are cooked and used for play, such as dough, have a limited shelf life.
- Cornflour is always mixed with water before given for play.
- Cornflower and cooked pasta are discarded after an activity; high risk of bacteria forming.
- Utensils used for play food are washed thoroughly after use.

#### Children's cooking activities

- Before undertaking any cooking activity with children, members of staff should check for allergies and intolerances by checking children's records.
- Children are taught basic hygiene skills such as the need to wash hands thoroughly before handling food, and again after going to the toilet, blowing their nose or coughing.
- The area to be used for cooking is cleaned; a plastic tablecloth is advised.
- Children should wear aprons that are used just for cooking.
- Utensils provided are for children to use only when cooking, including chopping/rolling boards, bowls, wooden spoons, jugs, and are stored in the kitchen.
- Members of staff encourage children to handle food in a hygienic manner.
- Food ready for cooking or cooling is not left uncovered.

- Food play activities are suspended during outbreaks of illness.

Playdough and raw (uncooked flour)

All flour including cornflour is raw until the point it is heated or cooked. Raw flour poses a risk of E.coli to young children and current advice is that it is not used for play, or for uncooked playdough recipes

Rainbow Pre-school ensure that:

- Only playdough that has made with cooked flour is used
- If a child or member of staff is allergic to any of the ingredients they must be replaced, and a safe alternative used.
- Staff have up to date information about children's allergies or concerns about a potential allergy and these are clearly displayed.
- If a younger child is likely to put the playdough in their mouth, a safe alternative is provided.
- Children and staff wash their hands before and after the activity.

### **Other activities with flour**

**Baking** - we will do baking activities where flour is used and then the food is cooked. We will ensure that the activity is risk assessed and children do not eat the uncooked flour or the mixture