

The Healthy Celebrations Pack:

Practical guidance on providing healthy food at celebrations & events



Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the staff at the following children's centres and schools in Luton who took the time to look at our resource and provide feedback:

Children's Centre at the Mall

Dallow Community Nursery and Children's Centre

Lewsey Children's Centre

Foxdell Children's Centre

Park Town Children's Centre

St Joseph's Infant School

Waulud's Primary School

Whipperely Children's Centre

Wigmore Children's Centre

This resource has been created by the Under 5s Public Health team of the Nutrition and Dietetic Service of Luton and South Bedfordshire.

South Essex Partnership University 
NHS Foundation Trust



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Introduction

This document has been designed to support pre-schools, nurseries, children's centres and primary schools in providing healthier food and activities for celebrations and community events.

Whether you are celebrating a child's birthday or planning a Christmas or Eid celebration, an open day or a school fete, it is good practice to ensure the food and activities you offer reflect the healthy ethos of your setting.

The Healthy Celebration Pack contains:

- Guidance on developing a celebrations policy, including good quality examples
- Great food ideas for celebrations including hot and cold buffet choices and healthy gift ideas.
- An example buffet menu plan containing guidance on quantities for catering
- Festive activity ideas for various celebrations including, Birthdays, Chinese New Year, Easter and many more
- Plans for food-based and non food-based activities
- Notes pages so you can add your own healthy celebration ideas
- Recipes and much more!

The content of the pack has been developed by Dietitians who collectively have a wealth of experience of working with children under 5 and their families. We hope you find the pack enjoyable and easy to use.





Developing a celebrations policy

Why should you have a celebration policy?

With any change in practice the best way to ensure that everyone, including parents and other professionals, are aware of any changes is to write a policy.

You may already have practices around celebrating birthdays or getting parents to bring food into settings that are thought of as 'unwritten' rules. Writing a policy simply involves collating all of these 'unwritten' rules onto paper, along with any other actions that represent healthy celebrations practice.

By developing a policy for celebrations you can ensure that any actions are agreed upon by all parties involved, which ultimately ensures consistent practice across the whole setting.

Settings are recommended to consult with parents, staff and stakeholders when developing the celebrations policy. The consultation could happen in a number of ways, such as introducing it at a governors meeting, displaying a sample policy on the notice board for parents to comment on or writing about it in a monthly newsletter.

A celebrations policy is encouraged to be a working document which will be updated and reviewed annually. A date for review should be included at the end of the policy, so everyone is aware of when the policy should be updated.

What information should be included in a celebrations policy?

Before writing the policy it is helpful to think about what currently happens with celebrations. For example:

- Do you celebrate children's birthdays?
- What events do you regularly celebrate?
- Do you have open days or fundraising events?
- Do parents often bring in food?
- Do you care for children from different ethnic backgrounds? How will you best meet their needs?

Most importantly you should find out if your setting has an up-to-date food or nutrition policy in place. This will not only help to inform you of current practice around food, it will help with organising the style of policy you will be developing. If you don't have a food or nutrition policy in place, we recommend that you look into developing one before you think about healthy celebration practice. For more information on developing food policies, please see page xx for details on how to access the Caroline Walker Trust 'Eating Well for under 5s in child care' guidance.

It is also worth remembering that celebrations do not always have to be celebrated with food. Non food based activities are just as fun and can teach children about different religious and cultural celebrations and festivals. It may also be useful to provide parents with a list of non-food gift ideas for birthdays such as stickers, or small stationary items.

Two good quality examples of celebration policies are included in this document. They both specify in more detail what is considered good practice for healthy celebrations, you can use any examples from these policies if they apply to your setting.

What foods should be provided at a healthy celebration?

Celebration foods typically contain high levels of sugar and fat. By developing a celebration policy you are taking steps to ensure that a more balanced selection of food is offered. Generally it is recommended to provide at least 60 percent fruits and vegetables or low-sugar starchy foods i.e. breads or pasta salads. The other 40 percent can be protein containing foods like meats, egg or cheese based dishes and other cold and hot finger foods. However it is important to think about the fat content of hot foods. Fried hot foods such as samosa, pakora and spring rolls contain high levels of fat and these foods should only represent 10-15 percent of your buffet menu. For more information on quantities of food to offer see our buffet menu guide on page 13.

If your celebration takes place during the day and doesn't form part of a meal, you should only offer savoury foods. This is in line with best practice for protecting children and families oral health. If your celebration event takes place over lunchtime and the food offered is part of a meal, then sweet foods can be offered. Sweet foods should be lower in sugar and contain some fruit. For healthier examples please see page 12.

Should drinks be included in the celebrations policy?

Drinks should be included in the celebrations policy. Always ensure that plain water is provided at all events. Sugary drinks such as squashes or fizzy drinks are discouraged. Sugar-free drinks are not recommended for children under 5, and as they are acidic are not safe for children's teeth. If you are going to serve fruit juice or sugar-free drinks they should be well diluted and served at a mealtime.

Developing a celebrations policy

Best steps for developing a celebrations policy

1. State your settings policy on provision of birthday cakes.
2. State what non-food-based activities you will use to help celebrate birthdays.
3. State whether you are going to advise parents about suitable foods to bring from home for birthdays or celebrations events.
4. State what you will do on occasions when cakes are provided by parents e.g. send them home at the end of the day or share as part of a meal.
5. If sweet foods are made as part of a food-based activity, state when these will be eaten. Sweet foods should only be served at a mealtime or given to the children to take home.
6. State what drinks will be available throughout the day and what they will be served in e.g. open top cups.
7. How will your setting encourage parents and staff to adopt the healthy eating messages e.g. providing a list of healthy foods to bring in.
8. State who will provide food for children on special diets.
9. Include the date which the policy has been agreed upon. Ensure a date for review is included. The policy should be signed by the manager of the setting. It is good practice to review any policy on an annual basis.
10. Ensure all parents and staff are aware of the celebrations policy. Try to display if there is space.



Example Policy 1

C

Red House Children's Centre Birthday and Celebrations Policy

We believe that birthdays and celebrations are very important in our children's lives and we look forward to celebrating them in nursery.

We also recognise that birthdays and festivals are an invaluable opportunity to include special foods and celebrate cultural diversity.

This policy covers cultural festivals, birthdays and school/nursery fetes. Religious festivals, open days and other special occasions.

Aims

We recognise the importance of making healthy food choices and aim to promote this within the celebrations of birthdays and other special occasions.

Birthdays and Celebrations

For children's birthdays we will celebrate by:

- Bringing a class or group together to sing "Happy Birthday"
- Making and giving greeting cards
- Blowing out candles on the class imitation cake.
- Providing opportunities to role play and talk about special celebrations
- Giving out non food or healthy food "treats" from the child e.g. pencils, stickers, exotic fruit or homemade bread
- Make the child feel special by awarding them special privileges for the day, for example allowing a child to wear a birthday badge, stand at the front of the class, sit on a special chair

For celebrations other than birthdays we will celebrate by:

- Using non food related activities e.g. painting, playdough
- Use food related activities e.g. food tasting
- Encourage healthy choices, but if sweet foods are provided they will be eaten at a mealtime

Celebrations are a great way to encourage children to try new foods. To respect different cultures and food choices we will:

- Be positive role models
- Celebrate a variety of different festivals across the year
- Invite parents and carers to join celebrations
- Encourage adults to try new foods
- Invite adults to cook and prepare food alongside children
- Be aware of allergies and other dietary requirements so all children are able to join in with celebrations

Parents and carers will be encouraged to support our healthy eating policy in relation to celebrations by:

- Providing non food treats for their children's friends (see list of non food treats)
- Providing healthy food treats for their child's friends e.g. fruit or vegetables
- Making healthy choices when bringing food in for their celebrations (see list for ideas)
- Being aware that if cakes are brought in for their child's class mates it will be sent home at the end of the day and not eaten at school
- Being aware that if foods sent in for celebrations do not meet the healthy food criteria they will be returned at the end of the school day
- Providing a choice of two fruit/vegetables for snack time in groups for example an apple or banana

Ideas for non food treats:

- Book/DVD or story tape for class/group
- Game or puzzle for class/group
- Stickers
- Pencil, eraser or stationary item
- A picture for classmates to colour

List of healthy foods to be provided at celebrations:

- Cheese and crackers
- Cheese and pineapple
- Fruit e.g. grapes, bananas, oranges
- Vegetables e.g. carrot sticks, celery, cucumber
- Bread sticks
- Crackers
- Plain rice cakes
- Rice dishes
- Breads
- Plain popcorn
- Vegetable pizza slices
- Vegetable samosas
- Fruit/vegetable kebabs

Drinks provided at celebrations:

- Milk and water will be available
- Diluted fruit juice can be served if the celebrations are held at a mealtime
- Soft drinks & sugar-free drinks will not be served

This policy will be circulated to all staff. All staff will be responsible for the implementation of this policy. Parents, staff and other stakeholders will be consulted in the development of the celebrations policy.

Policy Date: 12th September 2010

To be reviewed: 12th September 2011

Signed by: _____

Example Policy 2

Sunshine Nursery Celebrations Policy

Birthdays

- Birthdays held in the setting will have an emphasis on non-food based activities that make the child feel special. Children will have the opportunity of wearing a birthday hat and badge
- The distribution of cakes or sweets by parents is discouraged. If a cake is brought into the nursery, then it will be sent home with the parents.
- Parents will be given a list of non-food ideas that could be used instead of sending in birthday cake e.g stickers, stationary items

Parties and Celebrations

- Parents will be given a list of healthy food ideas to send in when having parties or celebrations.
- Parents will be invited via the newsletter to all party / celebration events.
- Art and craft and non food activities will be used to educate children about celebrations.
- If cakes or sweet foods are made as part of an activity for a celebration they will be eaten as part of a meal or sent home with parents.
- If sweet food is sent home with parents staff will ensure that parents are aware that sweet foods should be served with meals to protect children's teeth.

Drinks

- Milk and water will be provided in open top cups during parties and celebrations.
- Drinks containing sugar or sweeteners will be discouraged. Unless the meal is shared as part of a lunchtime meal.
- If drinks containing sugar are offered at lunchtime, they will be well diluted.

The celebrations policy will be updated annually in consultation with parents and stakeholders. It will be displayed on the parents notice board.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Renewal date: _____

Great food ideas for celebrations

The following food ideas are all savoury and are considered healthy and safe for teeth. They can be served at anytime of day. Many involve little or no preparation. Some of the ideas will involve cooking and the recipes for these are included in the recipe section. Foods that are available from supermarkets are also highlighted.

Key:

📖 Recipe needed

★ Available at supermarkets



Cold Finger Foods

Fruit & Vegetables

- Create your own fruit platters, try cutting fresh fruit pieces such as pineapple, melon, berries, apples & pears and serve with a plain yoghurt dip or on their own.
- Fruit kebabs are fun to make with the kids, they also look great, and you can make mini sizes using toothpicks adding 2-3 fruit pieces.
- Create your own vegetable platters; try carrot, celery, cucumber, courgette, peppers or cherry tomatoes.

Starchy options

Many of the foods listed below can be served with the dips mentioned above.

- Pitta bread strips ★
- Pitta crisps 📖
- Toast fingers ★
- Toasted Turkish bread, foccacia or panini strips ★
- Breadsticks ★
- Rice cakes ★
- Crackers ★
- Homemade popcorn ★
- Oat cakes ★
- Naan breads ★
- Tortilla chips, choose an unsalted variety ★
- Pretzels ★
- Cheese twists 📖
- Homemade wedges 📖
- Pumpkin scones 📖
- Cheesy vegetable muffins 📖
- Scones 📖

Meats

- Sliced chicken breast, turkey, roast beef or ham
- Wafer thin slices of chicken, turkey or ham
- Pastrami

Dairy foods

- Cheese cubes, try cheddar, red leicester, edam, mozzarella, feta cheese cubes ★
- Cream cheese, use as a spread or dip ★
- Cottage cheese, use as a spread or a dip ★
- Plain natural or greek-style yoghurt, use as a dip with fresh fruit ★



Deli meats can be high in salt, so include lower salt foods such as eggs, beans, fish or roast meats

Great food ideas for celebrations

Sandwiches

Freshly made sandwiches are a great way to provide healthy snack foods that are more filling than other finger foods. Choose a variety of white, wholemeal and seeded sliced breads as well as pita and other wrap style breads.

Try the following healthy fillings:

Vegetarian

- Cheddar cheese & tomato
- Cottage cheese, cucumber & chives
- Hummus, grated carrot & lettuce
- Egg, mayonnaise & lettuce or cress
- Cream cheese & cucumber
- Avocado, cream cheese, tomato & lettuce

Fish

- Tuna & sweetcorn
- Tinned salmon, green onions & cucumber
- Smoked salmon, cream cheese & cucumber

Meat

- Chicken & sweetcorn
- Chicken tikka & cucumber
- Ham/turkey ham & salad
- Roast beef, horseradish & salad
- Pate & cucumber

If offering sandwiches ensure you have at least one meat, one fish and one vegetarian option

Choose sandwich fillings with added vegetables to make them more nutritious

Only use unsaturated fat spread on sandwiches. Or use chutneys and pickles instead of spread to make them lower in fat.

To make it even healthier choose a low or reduced fat dairy food or dip!

Dips

Pre-prepared dips can sometimes contain sugar, it's best to check the ingredients list.

- Hummus - Mediterranean chickpea based dip *
- Tzatziki - Mediterranean yoghurt based dip containing cucumber *
- Guacamole - Avocado based dip *
- Salsa - Can contain high levels of sugar if bought pre-prepared, see recipe section for a good homemade version *
- Butter bean spread - Thick dip or can be used as a spread 🍴
- Cottage cheese dip - Add fresh or dried herbs and spices and/or garlic to add additional flavour *
- Taramasalata - Greek fish based dip *

Hot Finger Foods Ideas

These can also be served cold!

- Cheese or vegetable samosas * 🍴
- Pakoras *
- Spinach & cheese parcels 🍴
- Mini quiches or tarts *
- Potato skins or wedges * 🍴
- Pizza slices *
- Falafel balls * 🍴
- Savoury meatballs or rissoles 🍴
- Chicken drumsticks *
- Fishcakes 🍴
- Fish fingers *
- Vegetable frittata 🍴
- Vegetable fingers or nuggets *
- Quorn sausages *
- Vegetable dunkers *

When making hot food selections in the supermarket choose options that contain vegetables as these tend to be lower in fat and more nutritious!



Great food ideas for celebrations

Salads

- Green salad with tomatoes, carrots & cucumber
- Pasta salad with tomato & herbs *
- Coleslaw with reduced fat dressing *
- Cous Cous salad with roast vegetables *
- Potato salad *
- Rice salad *



Barbeques

When offering bbq style food on a budget, try to offer healthier alternatives to hot dogs and pre-prepared burgers, such as:

- Seasoned chicken wings, drumsticks or thighs
- Corn on the cob
- Vegetable skewers
- Vegetable & meat kebabs
- Sausages (min 60% meat) served with tomato, onions & lettuce in bread.
- Homemade burgers 🍷
- Barbequed potatoes in jackets

Healthy swaps The following popular party foods can be swapped for healthier alternatives.

Popular party food	Healthier alternative
Crisps & hot chips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitta crisps 🍷 • Popcorn • Unsalted tortilla chips • Homemade / oven wedges 🍷
Hot dogs & burgers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roasted or barbequed chicken wings, thighs & drumsticks • Vegetable skewers • Vegetable & meat kebabs • Sausage & salad buns • Homemade burgers 🍷
Cakes, pastries & sweets	<p>We don't encourage sweet party food due to the increased risk of dental decay when the food is eaten between meals, alternatives to sweet foods are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh fruit with plain yoghurt or ricotta dip • Fruit kebabs • Scones / muffins / crumpets with spread • Savoury muffins i.e. courgette & corn, cheese & ham 🍷
Ice lollies	<p>Try freezing fresh fruit on a kebab stick or a toothpick, good fruits to try are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orange • Pineapple • Watermelon

Top tips for buying food in supermarkets

All of the food ideas offered above that can be bought in supermarkets have been reviewed for fat, sugar and salt content. We have chosen products that are generally lower in sugar and have moderate to lower levels of fat, saturated fat and salt.

- Look for a traffic light label on the front and choose products that have mostly green and amber colours
- Choose savoury products low in sugar (particularly if serving food between meals), they should have no more than 5g of sugar per 100g of product.
- Steer clear of foods labelled as 'party foods' they

will be higher in fat, sugar & salt and will be more expensive

- Look at the supermarket own brand products, they are often lower in fat, sugar and salt in comparison to their branded counterparts
- Choose products that contain vegetables as these will naturally be lower in fat and will be more nutritious.
- Choose lower or reduced fat dairy foods, dips or salad dressings
- Compile a shopping list before going to the supermarket and consult the super food ideas section!

Great food ideas for celebrations

And what about sweet foods?

If you are intending to hold your event at a mealtime and would like to include some sweet foods, it is best to try to offer healthier sweet alternatives that include some fruit or vegetables. For example:

- Fruity flapjacks
- Banana bread
- Mini fruit pies
- Oatmeal & raisin cookies

If your event is held between meals a good sweet option is fresh fruit. Try offering sweeter fruits like pineapple, mango or mixed berries. You could offer them as pre-prepared kebabs, arranged on a platter or as a salad. More exotic fruits like passion fruit, pomegranate, kiwi fruit or lychees can make your fruit selection fun and interesting.

Healthy Gift Ideas

For a tombola or raffle at a celebration event we are often asked for healthy food ideas for events where prizes are on offer. The following are a few ideas which should help you continue to promote healthy messages.

Food based ideas

- Cheese & biscuit hamper: choose 3 different cheeses and include savoury biscuits and some chutney.
- Fresh fruit hamper: Ask your local green grocer to make up a gift basket
- Tinned food hamper: choose mainly savoury foods, such as olives, pickled onions, tuna, beans and pulses
- Herbs & Spices hamper: choose dried herbs such as basil, oregano, thyme or marjoram and add sea salt, peppercorns, paprika, nutmeg and cinnamon, try adding a pot plant of fresh herbs for colour.
- Curry making kit: choose good base curry spices such as ground cumin, coriander, turmeric & garam masala. Also add some dried curry leaves, cardamom, star anise and cloves. Then pop in a couple of simple recipes that use the spices you've included.
- Taste of the orient kit: add soy, hoisin and oyster sauces. Also include some sesame oil and rice vinegar, rice and wheat noodles. The pop in a few stir-fry recipes.
- Cooks ingredients kit: choose oils and vinegars for cooking, such as olive, sunflower, rapeseed or ground nut oils (for something different try adding flavoured oils). Add red wine, white wine and balsamic vinegar. Other interesting sauces include Worcester sauce, Tabasco, soy sauce or speciality tomato ketchup.
- Tea and coffee box: add a selection of teas and coffees, depending on budget you could add a mug, single cafetiere or a tea pot
- Bread box: choose a variety of different breads from the bakery. Include different spreads, chutneys or jams.

Non food based ideas

- Toiletries and soaps: cosmetic samples can make a great prize
- Books and magazines
- Gift vouchers for supermarkets or shops
- DVD's
- CD's
- Games: such as puzzles or leggo
- Sport equipment: such as a football, basketball, bats or racquets
- Flowers
- House plants

You can get children involved in healthy activities throughout the event. Please see the celebration pages for food and non-food based activity ideas.

Keeping it in budget

Even when catering for large numbers there are a few things you can do to help keep the costs down:

- Choose fruits, vegetables and meats when they are in season.
- Use value brands from supermarkets as often as possible.
- Ask local shops or businesses to sponsor your event by donating some money, food or gifts for the day.
- Ask parents to provide food or gifts for the event. To prevent any food safety concerns you can ask them to prepare food onsite, under the supervision of a staff member with a food safety certificate.

A word on food safety

If you are preparing food for the general public you should hold a valid and up to date food hygiene certificate to ensure you have the correct training to prevent food poisoning.

When involved in any kind of food preparation you should always carry out the following simple measures:

- Wash hands before preparing food and after touching raw meat
- Store raw meat separately from cooked meat
- Regularly check sell by dates on food and discard if out of date

Barbecues

- If cooking for lots of people try cooking meat in the oven and finish off on the barbecue
- Keep salads, cheeses and dips in the fridge until the last minute

Parties and Buffets

- Wait until last minute to take perishable foods, such as sandwiches and meat out of fridge
- Try not to leave food out for more than two hours.

For further information on food safety please consult the following websites:

www.eatwell.gov.uk/keepingfoodsafef/
www.nhs.uk/conditions/food-safety/

Example Buffet Plan

This represents an adult sized snack or small-meal portion.
A child's portion would be approximately half the size of an adult portion.

Food	Numbers of people			
	50	100	150	200
Starchy foods				
Breadsticks	2 x 125g packets	4 x 125g packets	6 x 125g packets	8 x 125g packets
Pita bread, cut into fingers	1 x packet of 6 (white) 1 x packet of 6 (wholemeal)	1 x packet of 6 (white) 2 x packet of 6 (wholemeal)	2 x packet of 6 (white) 3 x packet of 6 (wholemeal)	3 x packet of 6 (white) 4 x packet of 6 (wholemeal)
Plain tortilla chips	1 x 200g packet	2 x 200g packet	3 x 200g packet	4 x 200g packet
Fruit & Vegetables				
Fruit platter	2 x platters	4 x platters	6 x platters	8 x platters
Vegetable platter	3 x platters	6 x platters	9 x platters	12 x platters
Dips				
Hummus	1 x 230g pot	2 x 230g pot	2 x 230g pot	3 x 230g pot
Tzatziki	1 x 230g pot	2 x 230g pot	2 x 230g pot	2 x 230g pot
Homemade salsa	1 x 230g pot	2 x 230g pot	2 x 230g pot	3 x 230g pot
Guacamole	1 x 230g pot	-	2 x 230g pot	2 x 230g pot
Meat				
Wafer thin slices ham/turkey Wafer thin slices chicken	1 x 200g packet	2 x 200g packet	3 x 200g packet	4 x 200g packet
Sandwich platters				
Tuna & sweet corn	1 x platter	1 x platter	1 x platter	2 x platter
Egg mayonnaise with lettuce	1 x platter	1 x platter	1 x platter	2 x platter
Roast beef with cucumber & mustard	1 x platter	2 x platter	2 x platter	2 x platter
Cheese & pickle	-	2 x platter	2 x platter	2 x platter
Hot food				
Vegetable pizza fingers	2 x 300-400g pizza, cut into slices	4 x 300-400g pizza, cut into slices	6 x 300-400g pizza, cut into slices	8 x 300-400g pizza, cut into slices
Vegetable samosas/pakorras	25 pieces	50 pieces	75 pieces	100 pieces
Broccoli & cheese quiche	2 x 400g quiche, cut into slices	4 x 400g quiche, cut into slices	6 x 400g quiche, cut into slices	8 x 400g quiche, cut into slices

Costs: The menu plan has been analysed for cost, it roughly works out at £1.00-£1.20 per person.
(this was based on research carried out in August 2011 on supermarket websites)

Note:

A fruit platter will consist of roughly:

1 x box strawberries • 1/2 x melon, cubed • 1 x fresh pineapple, cubed • 1 x box of grapes

A vegetable platter will consist of roughly:

3 x large carrots • 1/2 x bunch celery • 1 x large cucumber or 3 small • 1 x red pepper • 1/2 head of cauliflower

A sandwich platter will consist of roughly:

7-8 sandwiches, cut into quarters

Portion distortion: Be careful not to over cater your event. By offering too many hot foods you can unbalance a healthy buffet menu plan. The sample buffet menu plan provides some guidance on quantities of food if catering for 50 to 200 people. Remember your buffet should be suitable for a light snack, not a midday feast!



Event Calendar

The following list contains rough dates and times for different health promotion events that are relevant to young children and their families.

There are also dates for popular religious and cultural celebrations.

This is not an exhaustive list!

Month	Festival/Celebration/Health Event
January	1st: New Year 6th: Epiphany Three King's Day 7th: Rastafian New Year 25th: Burns Night
February	Chinese New Year (Late Jan/Early Feb) 14th: Valentines Day Pancake Day (40 Days before Easter) National Heart Month National wear Red day (for the British Heart Foundation) World Cancer Day Caribbean Carnival (Late Feb/Early March)
March	1st: St David's Day (Patron Saints of Wales) 17th: St Patrick's Day Baha'I New Year Holi (Hindu Harvest Festival) No Smoking Day Mothering Sunday Salt Awareness Week
April	Passover (Jewish festival of Pesach) Easter 23rd: St Georges Day
May	1st: May Day Wesak: (Buddhist Festival, first day of full moon in May) Fitness Week Sun Awareness Week National Smile Month National Walking Month Walk to Work Week World No Tobacco Day National Family Day Fruity Friday


Event Calendar


Month	Festival/Celebration/Health Event
June	Shavuot: (Jewish festival of weeks) World Environment Day National Food Safety week Diabetes Awareness week The Big Lunch National Bike week National Breastfeeding Awareness week
July	National Childhood Obesity Week Love Parks Week
August	WABA World breastfeeding week International Youth Day
September	Jewish New Year: Yom Kippur Harvest Festival Chinese Kite festival Worlds biggest coffee morning- (Macmillan Cancer Charity Morning) World Heart Day
October	31st: Halloween Diwali: Hindu festival of lights International Walk to School Month Jeans for Genes Day World Mental Health Day Breast Cancer Awareness Month
November	5th: Guy Fawkes Day Thanksgiving 30th St Andrew's Day World Diabetes Day Anti-bullying week Universal Children's Day
December	Hanukkah (Jewish festival) 25th: Christmas Day 26th: Boxing Day World AIDS day Human Rights Day

The Islamic festivals of Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha are at different times throughout the year. Please consult with parents or carers who should be able to inform you of the correct dates.

Birthdays

Key:

 Recipe included

 Activity plan included

What are Birthdays?

The anniversary of a particular day when a person was born.


Birthdays are celebrated in most cultures. Some religions such as Jehovah's Witness don't actively celebrate birthdays and some Muslim's may not celebrate birthdays.

Most religions celebrate the birth of particular noted people, such as Christians with the birth of Jesus on Christmas day.

Non food-based activity ideas

- Classroom memory game - place school related items on a desk and allow the children 30 seconds to look at them, remove the items and see how many can they remember
- Birthday hat and badges
- Pin the tail on the donkey
- Musical statues
- Make birthday certificates
- Ask parents to bring in plants or flowers to be displayed

Food-based activity ideas

- Savoury muffins or scones 
- Exotic Fruit tasting, try pomegranate, mango, pineapple, lychee, sharon fruit or kiwi.
- Create Snack Art Animals - please see useful links and further information



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Chinese New Year

The story behind Chinese New Year

Buddha (Jade Emperor) invited all the animals to join him for a New Year's celebration and only 12 animals turned up. To reward the animals the Buddha named each year after them. This includes, Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Pig.

What is Chinese New Year?

Chinese New year is the most important holiday in the Chinese calendar - it is a time of giving, feasting and celebrating. The Chinese New Year is a celebration of change, so out with the old and in with the new!

It is a 15 day holiday starting on the first day of a new moon and ending with the full moon on the day of the lantern festival.

The date of Chinese New Year changes every year (but is usually in January or early February) and the calendar follows a 12 year cycle with each year named after a different animal.

Chinese people traditionally wear red or bright colours as it was once believed that the colour red could scare away evil spirits and bad fortune.

Non food-based activity ideas

- Become the Chinese Dragon!
Get the children to help decorate a large dragon mask, attach this to an old blanket, using staples or tape. Children can get turns to be the head of the dragon, other children can go underneath the blanket to make the body and tail. Attach more blankets to make an even longer dragon!
- Create a mask for the animal that represents the year you were born.
- Make money wallets from old wrapping paper and tape, get the children to paint them red.
- Ask the children to dress in red, orange or gold. Alternatively provide dressing up clothes of this colour. Children can make additions to their outfits with coloured paper.

Food-based activity ideas

- Crispy Spring Rolls 🍡
- Steamed Vegetable Dumplings, these can be purchased ready made from any Chinese grocery store.
- Chinese Style Noodles 🍜
- Chinese fruit tasting: mandarins, kiwi fruit, star fruit or lychees



Valentines Day

What is Valentines Day?

Valentines Day is celebrated on 14th of February each year, it is a day where people show their affection for one another.

The story behind the day is about a priest called Valentine who didn't agree with marriages being illegal thousands of years ago. He was in jail and fell in love with the jailer's blind daughter. Whilst in jail Valentine cured her blindness. On the 14th of February, before he was taken to be killed, he left her a letter, the first Valentines card which read 'Love your Valentine'.

Unfortunately historians don't believe this to be true, but it makes a nice story!



Non food-based activity ideas

- Heart Partners:
Cut out heart shapes in different coloured paper, then split them in half and hand out to the children. Each child has to find their heart partner for the day.
- Pin the heart on cupid
- Cupid says:
Just like the game Simon Says, just change Simon to Cupid
- Trees of love ✂

Food-based activity ideas

- Make heart shaped cheesy puffs, see the cheese twists recipe 🍷
- Heart shaped egg toast 🍷
- Heart shaped sandwiches - Make sandwiches with your favourite filling and cut the sandwiches using a heart shaped cutter. Would be a nice tea-time activity.
- Make milk or fruit jelly and set in a heart shaped mould (should be eaten as part of a meal)



Pancake Day

What is Pancake Day?

Pancake day is also referred to as Shrove Tuesday.

Shrove Tuesday is the last day before Lent in the Christian calendar. Shrove Tuesday always falls 47 Days before Easter

In the middle ages many people used to confess their sins and ask for forgiveness before the beginning of Lent.

Shrove Tuesday is the last day to indulge and use up any foods that are not allowed during Lent. Pancakes are eaten because they contain butter and eggs which are not allowed during Lent!

Non food-based activity ideas

- Pancake race 1:
Cut out pancakes using plain cardboard and decorate. Have one for each child, they each have to race across the room or outside with their pancake on their head. If it falls they have to return to the start!
- Pancake race 2:
Give each child a pan and cardboard pancake, they must go from one point to another and flip the pancake 3 times. (suitable for children 3 and up)

Food-based activity ideas

- Basic pancake mix, see recipe for healthy filling ideas. 🍷



Easter

What is Easter?

Easter is the most important festival in the Christian Calendar

It is a time to celebrate Jesus' resurrection from the dead, three days after he was put to death.

Holy Week

This is the week leading up to Easter Sunday and you see Jesus' arrival into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

The Passover meal which took place on Maundy Thursday where Jesus broke the bread and drank the wine.

Then on Good Friday the church mourns the execution of Jesus by crucifixion.

Easter is a sign of new life, this is where the egg symbol originated from - the oval shape was the same as a rain-drop or seed, both very important life-giving elements

Non food-based activity ideas

- Action Packed Easter Egg hunt ✂
- Make a papier mache egg with a blown-up balloon, old newspaper strips and glue. Use coloured paint and glitter to decorate.
- Make an Easter Crown instead of an Easter bonnet!

Food-based activity ideas

- Eggy Bread 🍞
- Spinach and cheese parcels 🍞
- Hard boiled egg decorating



Eid

What is Eid?

There are two Eid celebrations within the Islamic calendar year:

Eid-ul-Fitr is the three day holiday that marks the end of Ramadan

Eid-ul-Adha is the festival of sacrifice and is held to commemorate the willingness of Ibrahim to sacrifice his son Ishmael as an act of obedience to Allah. However just as Ibrahim was about to kill his son, Allah stopped him and gave him a Ram to sacrifice.

Eid begins with Muslims going to the Mosque to pray and be thankful for what they have received.

Eid is a time for being with family and friends and also for sacrifice and thanksgiving. It is obligatory to give a set amount of money to charity during this time.

Non food-based activity ideas

- Trace the outline of a hand and draw different henna designs, using glitter and glue to make it sparkle.
- Decorate a charity collection jar using glass paints, beads and glitter.
- Draw some crescent moon shapes and decorate with aluminium foil and glitter.

Food-based activity ideas

- Vegetable samosas 🍽️
- Kebabs 🍽️
- Serve naan, chappati or paratha bread with yoghurt dip. Alternatively stuff the breads with cheese, cooked potato & garlic or herbs (zatar).



Halloween

What is Halloween?

Halloween is celebrated on the 31st October. The celebration of Halloween is thought to relate to the eve of a Celtic festival of the dead called Samhain.

The word Halloween comes from "All-Hallows-Even" the night before All Hallows Day.

Halloween is related to many traditional symbols such as the carving of jack 'o' lanterns.

Traditionally turnips were used in Ireland and Scotland, however American immigrants began to carve pumpkins, which is most common now.

Trick or treating is the customary celebration at Halloween, where children go from house to house asking for treats.

It is thought that ghosts and spirits are most active on Halloween!!

Non food-based activity ideas

- Make a pumpkin seed necklace
- Handprint and foot ghosts
- Make a paper plate spider or pumpkin
- Make a wooden spoon cat, witch, monster puppet using felt, eyes and wool creating your own Halloween characters!
- Make a witches hat

Food-based activity ideas

- Sandwiches with savoury spreads cut into popular Halloween shapes.
- Make spooky coleslaw with orange carrots, red cabbage and green cabbage or beans.
- Spice up your usual dips such as hummus and tzatziki by putting them in a small hollowed out pumpkin and painting a scary face on the front.
- Make pumpkin scones 🍞



Bonfire Night

Why do we celebrate bonfire night?

In Britain, the evening of November 5th is when models of men, called guys, are burned on large fires, this is often accompanied with firework displays.

This is in memory of the failed attempt by Guy Fawkes to destroy the Houses of Parliament in London in 1605 with explosives

'Remember, Remember, the 5th November gunpowder, treason and plot'



Non food-based activity ideas

- Design and paint a colourful firework
- Make your own guy for the bonfire
- Create a fireworks display using different coloured tissue paper, wrapping paper, glitter glue, glitter pens and sequins
- Make a Catherine wheel or star shapes from play dough

Food-based activity ideas

- Make a warming soup
- Have a bonfire bbq (see the bbq ideas in the super food ideas section)
- Make Catherine wheel sandwiches
- Cut sandwiches into star shapes



Diwali

What is Diwali?

Diwali is often referred to as the festival of lights. It is one of the most well-known festivals in the Hindu calendar.

Diwali is a five day festival which honours Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. Lamps are lit in all public and private places to help Lakshmi find her way into people's homes.

The festival celebrates victory of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance and good over evil.

It is also a time to celebrate one of the Diwali legends, where after fourteen years of exile Rama and Sita return to Rama's kingdom.



Non food-based activity ideas

- Create hanging lanterns ✂
- Act out the story of Rama and Sita using masks - please see the hanging lanterns activity for book recommendations
- Use coloured powder to make a traditional Diwali decoration, called a rangoli

Food-based activity ideas

- Bake shop-bought, naan, chappati or paratha bread
- Make onion bhajis
- Make vegetable samosas 📖



Hanukkah

What is Hanukkah?

Hanukkah or Chanukah is the Jewish festival of lights.

The festival begins on the 25th day of Kislev and is celebrated for 8 days. Hanukkah is celebrated in November or December.

The word Hanukkah means re-dedication and commemorates the Jews struggle for religious freedom.

During Hanukkah, Jews follow simple religious rituals in addition to their regular prayers from the Siddur the Jewish prayer book.



Non food-based activity ideas

- Handprint Menorah:
Trace a handprint onto the pieces of paper and turn the fingers into the candlesticks of the Menorah
- Make your own mobile based on the Star of David
- Design a dreidel and have a go at spinning

Food-based activity ideas

- Make Potato Laktes 📖
- Hanukkah potato printing - cut potato into a star shape
- Make star shaped sandwiches



Christmas

What is Christmas?

On the 25th December each year, all around the world countries celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with Christmas.

It was not until Victorian times that ideas such as Father Christmas, Christmas cards and crackers were added to the celebration.

Today, families celebrate Christmas by putting up Christmas trees or decorations, eating a Christmas dinner and the opening of presents.



Non food-based activity ideas

- Homemade Christmas cards
- Christmas mobiles
- Make Christmas crackers
- Handprint snowflake painting or hand and feet reindeer
- Winter collage
- Paper plate snowman
- Pine cone Christmas tree or decoration
- Wooden spoon angel, reindeer or santa
- Christmas paper chains
- Decorate Christmas baubles
- Sing Christmas carols



Food-based activity ideas

- Use lots of Christmas fruit like cherries, clementines or mandarins
- Make a Christmas dip by layering guacamole, sour cream and salsa in a glass bowl.
- Make a Christmas vegetable skewers by using courgette or green pepper and tomato. After grilling add a cube of white cheese, such as feta, haloumi or mozzarella.
- Make Christmas pizza breads with half a baguette or an English muffin for a base, topped with green and red vegetables and white cheese.
- Try some roasting vegetables a little vegetable oil and Christmas spices, such as cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg.



Recipes

The following recipes are all savoury and are appropriate for serving as part of a buffet menu or a snack. Many of the recipes are more suitable for food-based activities and they will have been highlighted in the relevant celebration page.

Butter Bean Spread
Basic Pancake Mix
Cheese Twists
Chinese Style Noodles
Crispy Spring Rolls
Falafel Balls
Fishcakes
Heart Shaped Egg Toast
Homemade Wedges with Tzatziki
Kebabs
Pita Crisps
Potato Latkes
Pumpkin Scones
Savoury Meatballs
Savoury Muffins
Slime Sludge - or guacamole
Spinach and Cheese Parcels
Vegetable Frittata
Vegetable Samosas



Butter Bean Spread

Makes approx 350g

Method

1. Add all of the ingredients into a food processor and blend till smooth
2. Serve with pita bread, toast fingers or vegetable sticks

Nutrition Notes:

This spread is a great alternative to hummus. It contains butter beans which is a good source of protein and a great alternative to meat for vegetarians. Why not try adding it to sandwiches for a healthy tea-time meal!

Ingredients

1/2 red onion, finely chopped
1 clove of garlic, crushed
400g tin of butter beans, rinsed and drained
Juice of 1/2 a lemon
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon chopped fresh coriander or parsley
200g plain yoghurt

Basic Pancake Mix

Makes 10 - 12

Method

1. Sift the flour and salt into a large mixing bowl with a sieve held high above the bowl so the flour gets an airing.
2. Make a well in the centre of the flour and break the eggs into it.
3. Whisk the eggs - any sort of whisk or even a fork will do - incorporating any bits of flour from around the edge of the bowl as you do so.
4. Gradually add small quantities of the milk and water mixture, still whisking (don't worry about any lumps as they will eventually disappear as you whisk).
5. When all the liquid has been added, whisk until smooth, the consistency should be like thin cream.
6. Add a large spoonful of batter to a hot, greased (with spread) frying pan. As soon as the batter hits the hot pan, tip it around from side to side to get the base evenly coated with batter.
7. It should take only half a minute or so to cook; you can lift the edge with a knife or spatula to see if it's tinged gold as it should be. Flip the pancake over and cook on the other side for a few seconds only, serve hot.

Nutrition Notes:

Traditionally, pancakes are often served with sweet, sugar laden fillings which aren't great for teeth. Why not try savoury fillings which can be served at a snack time.

Savoury Fillings

- Cheese and ham
- Tuna mayo and sweet corn
- Cream cheese and sautéed mushroom or fresh herbs
- Spinach and ricotta
- Shredded chicken, mayonnaise and salad vegetables
- Roasted vegetables in a tomato sauce
- Salmon and cream cheese

For sweeter fillings try adding chopped fresh fruit such as strawberries, mango, banana or blueberries. Add a drizzle of single cream instead of honey.

Ingredients

110g/4oz plain flour, sifted
Pinch of salt
2 eggs
200ml/7fl oz milk mixed with 75ml/3fl oz water
50g/2oz unsaturated fat margarine

Cheese Twists

Method

1. Heat the oven to 220c/fan 200c/gas 7
2. Roll out the pastry, scatter over a couple of handfuls of grated cheese, then fold in half
3. On a lightly floured surface, roll out to the thickness of a £1 coin
4. Cut into 1cm strips, then twist the strips 3-4 times, press lightly to seal
5. Lay on a baking sheet, scatter over more cheese and bake for 12 minutes or until golden brown
6. Leave to cook, and then keep in an airtight container for up to two days. As they are very delicate, roll in kitchen paper before packing into a plastic container

Heart shaped for Valentines Day

- Take two strips of cheesy puff pastry, place them on the baking tray, squeeze one end together and twist the other 2 ends into the a 'v' to make a heart shape.

Nutrition Notes:

This recipe is quite high in fat due to the addition of puff pastry and cheese. However as it savoury it makes a tooth-friendly food-based activity for the children to consume at a snack time.

Ingredients

350g pack puff pastry

150g grated cheddar cheese (or handfuls)

Some flour to roll the pastry on

Chinese Style Noodles

Method

1. Cook the rice noodles according to the instructions on the packet and set aside.
2. Heat 1 tbsp of oil in a frying pan and add the beaten egg to make an omelette, flip the omelette until cooked. Or alternatively, boil the egg in a pan of water until cooked and then peel away the shell.
3. Chop the cooked egg into small pieces and set aside.
4. Heat the oil in a large frying pan or wok and sauté the onions until just soft. Add the spring onions, garlic and ginger and cook for a few minutes.
5. Add the vegetables and egg, continue to cook stirring until just tender.
6. Stir in the cooked noodles and serve

Serves 4

Ingredients

140g (5oz) rice noodles

1 egg, beaten

1/2 onion, peeled and chopped

2 tbsp toasted sesame oil

1 spring onion, chopped

1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed

1 tsp chopped fresh ginger

1/2 red pepper, deseeded and sliced

1/4 cabbage, shredded

2 carrots, peeled and cut into thin strips

55g (2oz) bean sprouts

Crispy Spring Rolls

Makes 8

Method

1. Thinly slice the spring onions, pepper and courgette. Finely chop the garlic and ginger. (You may want to use pre-chopped garlic & ginger if making with children)
2. Heat the olive oil in a large frying pan and sauté the spring onions, garlic and ginger. Add the sliced vegetables, bean sprouts and chicken. Stir fry for a few minutes on a medium heat until the vegetables are softening and the chicken is cooked.
3. Add the bean sprouts and Chinese 5 spice and stir fry for a few minutes longer. Remove from the heat.
4. Lay out a filo pastry sheet. Spoon in some of the stir fry mix across the shorter length of the sheet (making a sausage shape), leaving about 1 inch at the top and leaving an inch either side.
5. Fold in the sides of the filo pastry and then fold down the 1 inch at the top, you should now be able to gently roll the stir fry in the pastry to form a sausage shape.
6. Very lightly moisten the end of the sheet with water or oil before tucking it under and lay the roll, seam side down on a lightly greased baking tray. Repeat until all the stir fry mixture has been used.
7. Brush them sparingly with olive oil, place in the centre of the oven (gas 5, 375F, 190C) for 15 mins or until the rolls are lightly golden and the pastry is crisp.

You can replace the chicken with pork mince, tinned tuna, cooked egg or crumbled firm tofu.

Nutrition notes:

This is a lower fat version of traditional spring rolls, as they tend to be deep fried. Try making this with the children for Chinese New Year! Or they could be served as a healthy tea-time treat.

Ingredients

4 spring onions
1 clove garlic
1 red pepper
1 small/medium courgette
Handful of bean sprouts
200g chicken mince
1 tsp Chinese 5 spice
Splash of olive oil
8 filo pastry sheets

Falafel Balls

Makes 16

Method

1. Drain the chickpeas and place in a food processor with the salt, baking powder, cumin, coriander, cayenne, garlic, parsley and lemon juice.
2. Whiz until very finely chopped but not pureed (if you have time set the mixture aside for a couple of hours).
3. Heat 5cm/2inches of oil in a deep frying pan or wok.
4. Using a wet hand shape the mixture into 16 balls, then flatten slightly into patties.
5. Heat oil in a saucepan. The oil should be about 1 inch deep for suitable frying.
6. Fry in batches for about 4 minutes, turning occasionally until browned.
7. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on kitchen paper.
8. Serve 3 or 4 falafels inside a warm pitta bread pocket or with potato or rice. Drizzle with yoghurt and serve with salad or vegetables

Nutrition Notes:

Falafels are a good source of protein and can be used as a meat alternative for vegetarians. As they contain chickpeas they are also a good source of iron, particularly if served with vegetables or fruit high in Vitamin C. Serve these as a healthy snack at lunch or as part of a tea-time meal.

If your falafels break apart when frying, try adding a beaten egg to the mixture to bind. To make them lower in fat, you could bake the shaped balls in a moderate oven till golden (will need egg added).

Ingredients

400g/8oz chickpeas, canned
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 garlic clove, crushed
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
1/2 lemon, juice only
Vegetable oil for frying

Fishcakes

Makes 8 cakes or 16 bite-sized pieces

Method

1. Flake the tinned fish and mix with the mashed potatoes and the melted spread.
2. Add the spring onion and parsley. If the mixture is very stiff, moisten with a little vegetable stock or milk
3. Shape into small burgers and chill for 30 minutes or more. Alternatively, you can shape them into small balls about the size of a tablespoon for a bite-sized buffet snack!
4. Dust the burgers with oatmeal or breadcrumbs and fry until golden brown on both sides. Drain on kitchen paper
5. Serve with a side salad and potato wedges, or eat cold in a wholemeal bun or bap with lettuce and cucumber.

Are suitable for freezing once cooked.

Nutrition Notes:

To make these fishcakes lower in fat you can bake them in a moderate oven on a non-stick baking tray till golden.

Ingredients

250g tinned tuna, salmon or mackerel, drained
175g mashed potato
25g unsaturated fat margarine spread, melted
2 - 3 spring onions, finely chopped
1 tablespoon parsley, chopped
1 tablespoon liquid vegetable stock or milk
1 tablespoon fine oatmeal (you could process whole oats in a food processor until they are very fine), alternatively you can use breadcrumbs
Vegetable oil, for frying

Heart Shaped Egg Toast

Serves 1 - 2

Method

1. Place a heart shaped cookie cutter in a greased frying pan, crack the egg into the centre of the frying pan and cook
2. Once the egg is cooked, remove it from the frying pan and cutter and place in the centre of the toast.

Nutrition Notes:

For Easter themed egg toast:

Use an Easter themed cookie cutter, such as a rabbit or an egg shape.

This recipe is great to serve for breakfast, tea-time or as a filling snack.

Ingredients

- 1 egg
- 1 slice of toast
- 1 heart shaped metal cookie cutter

Homemade Wedges with Tzatziki

Serves 4

Method

1. Preheat oven to 220°C/450°C/gas mark 8. Slice each sweet potato in half lengthways. Then cut each half into three to make fat wedges
2. Mix the oil and spices in a small bowl. Brush the mixture over the wedges
3. Put the wedges in a non-stick roasting tin and bake for 15-20 minutes or until crisp and browned
4. To make the tzatziki, mix the grated cucumber and garlic with the yoghurt. Stir in the lemon juice. Cover and set aside until needed

Nutrition Notes:

This is a tooth-friendly alternative to potato wedges. Alternatively you can make this recipe with any other hard vegetable such as parsnip, potato or carrot. You can serve at a snack-time or as part of a healthy celebration buffet.

Ingredients

- 3 large sweet potatoes, scrubbed
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 tsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp paprika

For the tzatziki:

- 1/2 a large cucumber, peeled and grated
- 200ml Greek yoghurt
- 1 clove of garlic, crushed
- Juice of 1/2 a lemon

Kebabs

Makes 20 - 25 kebabs

Method

1. Add the chilli powder, garam masala, ginger, salt and beaten egg into the minced meat.
2. Mix together and make short sausage, about the size of your hand (width ways).
3. Repeat with all the mixture.
4. In a large round saucepan place a layer of kebabs, then cover with a layer of tomato and onion. Repeat with the rest of the ingredients (you should make about 3 layers).
5. Cover with a lid and cook on a medium heat for approximately 30-40 minutes.

Serve with pita bread and salad.

Nutrition Notes:

This makes a healthy lunchtime or tea-time meal. Alternatively you could prepare it as a food-based activity (the children will particularly like shaping the kebabs) and serve only 1-2 kebabs with salad vegetables as a snack.

Ingredients

500g minced beef or lamb
1 tsp paprika (or chilli powder if you prefer it hot)
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp ground coriander
1 tsp garam masala
1 tsp ginger paste
1 clove garlic crushed
1 egg
2 medium sized onions, sliced
3 large fresh tomatoes, sliced
1 tsp fresh coriander, chopped

Pitta Crisps

Method

1. Split pitta breads in half and then into bite sized triangles
2. Place on a non-stick baking tray
3. Add other ingredients if making flavoured pitta crisps (see below)
4. Bake in a hot oven for 10 minutes or until crisp
5. Allow the pitta crisps to cool on the tray. Store in an airtight container

Cheesy option:

Grated cheese, paprika and dried mixed herbs

Serve with dips such as hummus, salsa or guacamole

Nutrition Notes:

These low salt and fat crispy breads make a great alternative to potato crisps. Once made they can be stored for up to 2 days in an airtight container.

Ingredients

4 pitta bread rounds

Potato Latkes

Method

1. Grate the potatoes and place in a strainer or colander. Squeeze out as much moisture from the potatoes as you can
2. In a large bowl, combine the potatoes with the remaining ingredients, except for the oil
3. Heat about 2 tablespoons of oil in a large frying pan until it is very hot
4. Drop 2-3 tablespoons of the potato mixture into the pan for each Latke. Use the back of the spoon to flatten the mixture so that each Latke is 7-8cm diameter
5. Fry the Latkes over a medium heat for 4-5 minutes per side. Drain them on paper towels and put in the oven to keep warm.

Ingredients

5kg baking potatoes, peeled
Medium onions, chopped
2 eggs lightly beaten
1 glove of garlic
1/2 teaspoon pepper
4 tablespoons flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
Vegetable oil for frying

Pumpkin Scones

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6. Grease a baking sheet by rubbing with a little butter
2. Put the pumpkin pieces into saucepan and just cover with water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes until just tender. Drain and mash with a fork. Leave to cool
3. Sift the flour and baking powder into a big bowl. Add the butter. Using your fingertips, rub the butter into the flour until it looks like breadcrumbs.
4. Use a table knife to mix the mashed pumpkin into the flour mixture. Add the cheese and herbs, then add just enough milk to make a dough.
5. Sprinkle a little flour on a work surface and on your hands, then lightly knead the dough for 30 seconds.
6. Form the dough into a ball, then lightly pat it out to about 3cm thick. Dip a round fluted cutter in a little flour and cut out scones. Put on the baking tray, spaced a little apart.
7. Roll the spare bits of dough into a ball and flatten. Cut out the rest of the scones. Brush the tops with milk.
8. Put the scones into the oven and bake for 1-12 minutes, until risen and golden.

Cool on a wire rack.

Nutrition Notes:

For an interesting variation why not try adding

- Cheese
- Fresh or dried herbs
- Crushed chilli
- Grated courgette, carrot or tinned sweet corn

Any of these variations can be served as a snack. Top with unsaturated fat spread or cream cheese.

Makes 10 - 12

Ingredients

40g butter, plus extra for greasing
200g pumpkin flesh, cut into small pieces
225g self-raising flour, plus extra for dusting
1 tsp baking powder
Handful grated cheddar
3-4 tbsp, plus extra for brushing

Savoury Meatballs

Makes 16 meatballs or 8 burgers/rissoles

Method

1. Chop onion finely.
2. Mix minced beef with the onion, egg and black pepper.
3. To make meatballs, shape the mixture into small, bite-sized pieces of about a tablespoon. Alternatively to make rissoles or burgers, divide the mixture into 8 evenly shaped balls and lightly pat with the palm of your hand to make a patty shape.
4. Dust hands in flour and flatten each ball into a burger shape.
5. Cook on the barbeque, frying pan or under the grill until cooked - about 5 minutes each side.

Nutrition Notes:

To make the burgers even tastier why not try adding a clove of crushed garlic, spices such as cumin or coriander or some curry powder!

Ingredients

400g minced beef
1 red onion
1 small egg
1 tsp black pepper
2 tsp mixed herbs
flour, for dusting

Savoury Muffins

Makes 12

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4
2. Combine the milk, oil, yoghurt and eggs in a jug.
3. In a separate bowl, sift together the plain flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, paprika, salt and pepper. Stir in the cheddar cheese, spring onions, courgette and carrot
4. Add the liquid ingredients and mix together before spooning into a muffin tray lined with paper cases
5. Sprinkle some cheese on top and bake in the oven for 20 minutes

Nutrition Notes:

These savoury snacks are also a good tea-time treat, serve with unsaturated margarine or cream cheese spread. As they don't contain any sugar they are also good to make and serve as a snack.

Ingredients

50ml (2 fl oz) milk
50ml (2 fl oz) vegetable oil
125ml (4 fl oz) natural yoghurt
2 eggs
185g (6½ oz) plain flour
1½ tsp baking powder
½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
¼ tsp paprika
½ tsp salt and freshly ground pepper
85g (3½ oz) cheddar cheese, grated
4 spring onions, finely sliced
40g (3 oz) courgette, grated
40g carrot, grated

Slime Sludge

Method

1. Place all the ingredients in a blender or mortar.
2. Whizz or mash everything until smooth
3. Serve immediately or the avocado will discolour

Nutrition notes:

Slime sludge is better known as guacamole. Serve this healthy dip at a snack or tea-time.

Ingredients

2 avocados, peeled and stoned
2 spring onions, chopped
2 tbsp sour cream
1 tomato, chopped
Juice 1/2 a lime
Handful of coriander/
parsley leaves chopped
(optional)

Spinach and Cheese Parcels

Method

1. Pre-heat the oven to 200°C (400°F) or Gas Mark 6.
2. Cook the spinach gently until heated through. Drain and add to a bowl with the feta and cheddar cheese. Combine thoroughly.
3. Roll out the filo pastry and brush the top with the melted spread. Lay another sheet on top and brush again. Cut the pastry into strips 7cm by 20cm.
4. Place a heaped teaspoonful of the mixture in the top corner of each strip and fold over diagonally to form a triangle. Continue to fold over until you have used up the strip.
5. Place the triangles on a large baking sheet and bake in the pre-heated oven for about 15 minutes until a light golden brown.

Serve with salad and bread as part of a meal or as a nutritious buffet snack.

Are suitable for freezing once cooked.

Nutrition Notes:

These tasty parcels make a great Easter treat as spinach is in season over the spring period. As they are sugar-free they make a great buffet snack as well.

Ingredients

300g frozen spinach
75g feta cheese,
crumbled
75g cheddar cheese,
grated
10 sheets filo pastry
2-3 tablespoons
unsaturated fat
margarine, melted

Vegetable Frittata

Serves 12

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C. Grease and line base of a square cake tin 20cm round or square cake pan.
2. Cook pasta in large pan of boiled salted water until tender. Drain.
3. Heat oil in large frying pan and cook onion, courgette and mushrooms for 3 minutes until just tender
4. Combine pasta, vegetable mixture, ham, tomato, parsley and eggs in a large bowl and mix well. Season with pepper.
5. Pour mixture into prepared pan, bake for 45 minutes or until cooked through.
6. Stand for at least 5 minutes in the pan before turning out.

Nutrition Notes:

To make this dish even more economical, add vegetables that are in season. This dish is great as a tea-time meal or a savoury buffet snack.

Ingredients

1/3 cup (70g) small sized pasta (macaroni) or broken up spaghetti
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 medium onion, chopped
1 medium courgette, halved lengthways, sliced thinly
100g mushrooms, sliced
1 medium tomato, chopped
2 tablespoons parsley
6 eggs, lightly whisked
Ground black pepper

Vegetable Samosas

Method

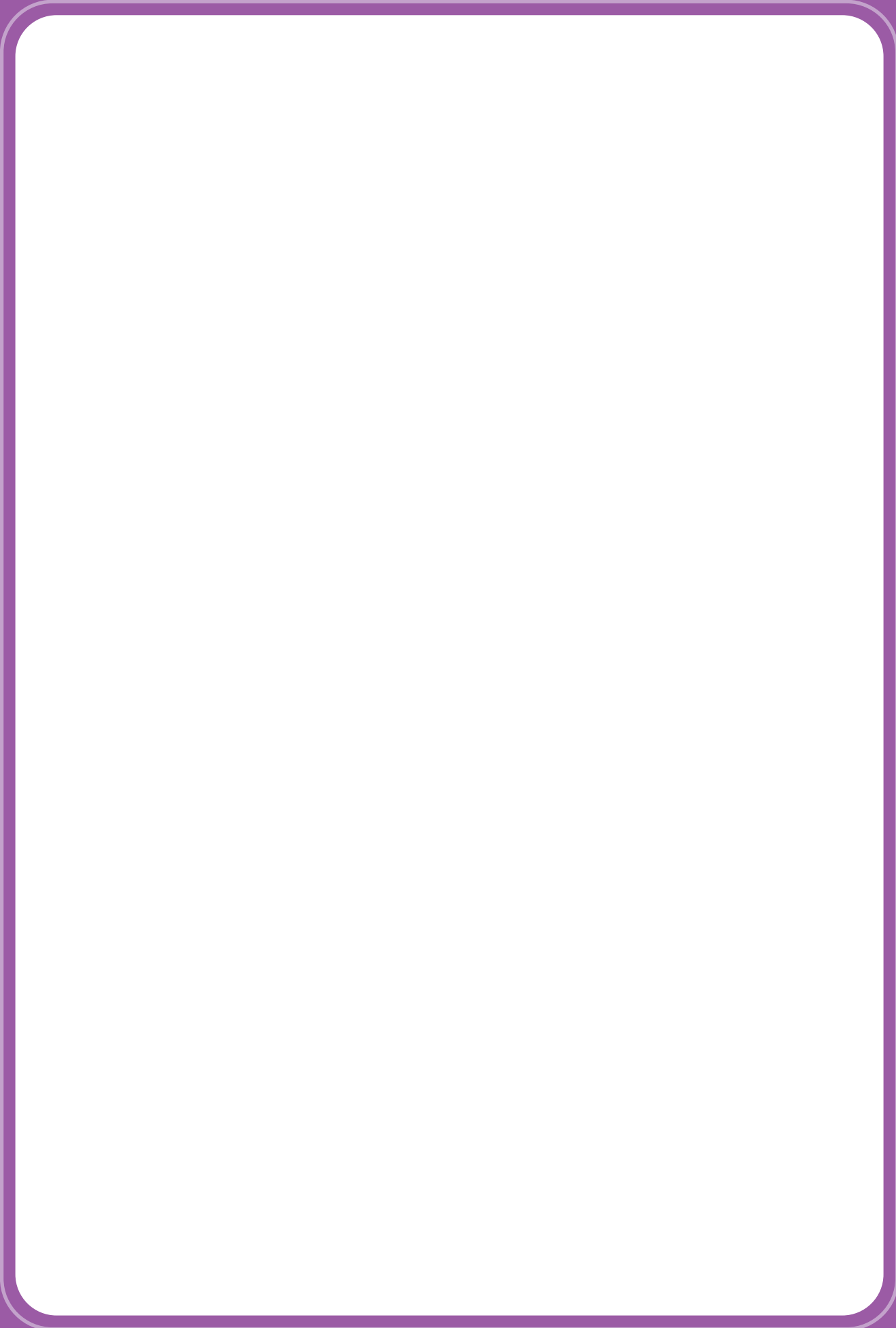
1. Preheat the oven to 180°F/gas mark 4
2. Place the potato in a saucepan, cover with water and bring to the boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 4 minutes
3. Add the carrot, sweet potato and beans and simmer for a further 4 minutes until the vegetables are beginning to soften. Drain.
4. Put the vegetable oil in the frying pan and sauté the onion, spices, garlic and ginger for 3-4 minutes until the onion is softened
5. Remove from the heat, add the chick peas, lemon juice and the cooked vegetables, stirring well.
6. In a small saucepan melt the spread and mix with the vegetable oil
7. Lay out 1 sheet of filo pastry and brush the top with the spread and oil mixture; then lay another sheet on top and brush with the spread and oil mixture again. Cut the pastry into strips about 7cm (3in) wide and 20cm (8in) long.
8. Place a heaped teaspoonful of the mixture in the top corner of the strip and fold diagonally to form a triangle. Continue to fold over until you use up the whole strip.
9. Place on a baking tray and brush the top with a little melted spread and oil.
10. Make triangles in this way until all the filling/strips are used up.
11. Bake in the oven for 15-20 minutes until golden and crisp.

Suitable for freezing; keeps for up to two days in the fridge

Ingredients

1 potato, peeled and cut into small cubes
1 large carrot, peeled and cut into small cubes
1 sweet potato, peeled and cut into small cubes
6-8 French beans, trimmed and cut into small pieces
2 tbsp vegetable oil
1/2 tsp turmeric
1/2 tsp ground cumin
Pinch garam masala
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 tsp grated fresh ginger
2 tbsp cooked chick peas, mashed slightly
1/4 onion, peeled and chopped
1 tsp lemon juice
10-12 filo pastry sheets
25g (1oz) unsaturated fat spread
2 tbsp vegetable oil

Notes



Activity plans

Hanging Lanterns

Who can participate?	Age of children: 3+ Number of children: 20
Resources / equipment	Coloured paper Scissors Pencil Tape or stapler Coloured Cellophane (optional)
Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For miniature lanterns use rectangles of paper about 10cm/4in by 5cm/2in. • Fold the paper in half to make a long thin rectangle, draw a faint line 0.5cm from the open edge - make a series of cuts to this point. • Open up the fold, join the two ends together with the tape. • You can use the coloured cellophane to make the light shine through different colours.
Early Learning Goals	<p>Personal, Social & Emotional Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form good relationships with adults and peers. <p>Problem solving, Reasoning & Numeracy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about, recognise and recreate simple patterns. <p>Physical Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handle tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control. <p>Knowledge & Understanding of the World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select the tools and techniques they need to shape, assemble and join materials they are using.
Key discussion points	<p>What do we use lanterns for?</p> <p>Discuss what Diwali is.</p> <p>Why are lanterns/lights important during this festival?</p> <p>What foods do Hindus enjoy during Diwali?</p>
Links to other activities	<p>Books</p> <p>Festival Displays by Jean Evans: This book contains lots ideas for fun & interesting displays about the main multicultural celebrations.</p> <p>Rama and the demon king by Jessica Souhami: A traditional Diwali story.</p> <p>Diwali by Chris Deshpande: Looks at how Diwali is celebrated.</p>

Activity plans

Action Packed Easter Egg Hunt

Who can participate?	Age of children: 2+ Number of children: 20+ children in groups of 4-5
Resources / equipment	Plastic Easter eggs. Paper (for clue inside egg). Pen. Prize's e.g: stickers, pencils, erasers, colouring sheet.
Instructions	<p>Instead of hiding chocolate Easter eggs, hide plastic eggs. Inside each egg hide a clue with an action that should be performed by the child that finds it.</p> <p>Action could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jump 10 times • Sing a nursery thyme • Sit down on the ground and count to 10 • Dance a jig • Hop like an Easter bunny <p>When each child has done 1-2 actions they can claim a prize</p>
Early Learning Goals	<p>Personal, Social & Emotional Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work as part of a group or class, taking turns and sharing fairly, understanding that there needs to be agreed values and codes of behaviour for groups of people, including adults and children, to work together harmoniously. <p>Communication, Language & Literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact with others, negotiating plans and activities and taking turns in conversation. <p>Physical Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move with confidence, imagination and in safety. • Move with control and coordination. <p>Knowledge & Understanding of the World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate objects and materials by using all of their senses as appropriate.
Key discussion points	<p>Why do we celebrate Easter? What animal do eggs come from? How many ways can you cook an egg? How do they like to eat their eggs? Why do we have chocolate eggs at Easter? How many eggs did we collect?</p>
Links to other activities	<p>Books: The Easter Story by Heather Amery & Norman Young: The story of Easter told in simple language with colourful illustrations. Peter Rabbits Seedlings: Peter Rabbits Easter by Beatrix Potter: Peter Rabbit and friends go on an Easter Egg Hunt.</p>

Activity plans

The Pumpkin Patch

Who can participate?	Age of children: 2+ Number of children: Work in groups of 6-8
Resources / equipment	Different varieties of pumpkins and squashes. Get at least 2 different pumpkins and 2-3 different squashes. Try butternut, Hamilton, hubbard, spaghetti & acorn squash, courgette and larger pumpkin varieties. (some may not be available in the supermarkets, so look for pumpkins in different sizes and colours, ask an attendant for help if stuck) It is best to get 2 of each, one to be cut up and tasted, one to look at and feel. Knife. Chopping boards. Spoon (to scoop out the seeds). Roasting tin / saucepan (optional). Did you know? A pumpkin is a squash! They come from the same family. The term pumpkin, comes from 'pampion' which means 'sun-baked squash' in French. Pumpkins are actually 'winter-autumn squashes'.
Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you would like children to taste the vegetable, you may want to prepare some roast or boiled chunks of before the session begins. • You may need to pre-cut some of the pumpkins, particularly the bigger varieties, as they can be difficult to cut. • Put all of the squashes on the table, so the children can see them, and pass them around one by one. • Ask the children to look, smell & feel the vegetable.
Early Learning Goals	<p>Personal Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise the importance of keeping healthy, and those things which contribute to this. • Handle tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control. <p>Knowledge & Understanding of the World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate objects and materials by using all of their senses as appropriate. • Look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change. • Find out about their environment, and talk about those features they like and dislike.
Key discussion points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss what happens at Halloween and why we celebrate it. • Why do we use pumpkins to carve faces in? Because they are in-season and are plentiful at this time of year. • Who likes eating pumpkin? What other dishes can we create with pumpkin? • Discuss vegetables and why it is important to eat them. We need vegetables for vitamins and fibre. This helps our body be healthy. For example. Fibre from vegetables helps us go to the toilet regularly and keeps our insides (guts) healthy.
Links to other activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carve pumpkins for the children to put tea-lights in. • Get the children to dry the pumpkin seeds to make bird feed. • Roast sweet corn for the children to eat. A traditional Halloween healthy treat! • Get the children to grow their own pumpkins. If you don't have any garden space you can try growing your own squashes in a pot, all you need are some peat pots, a large yoghurt container, compost & seeds for squashes or pumpkins. You may want to choose a smaller variety as they grow quite big and will need to be taken out of the container and planted in the ground.

Activity plans

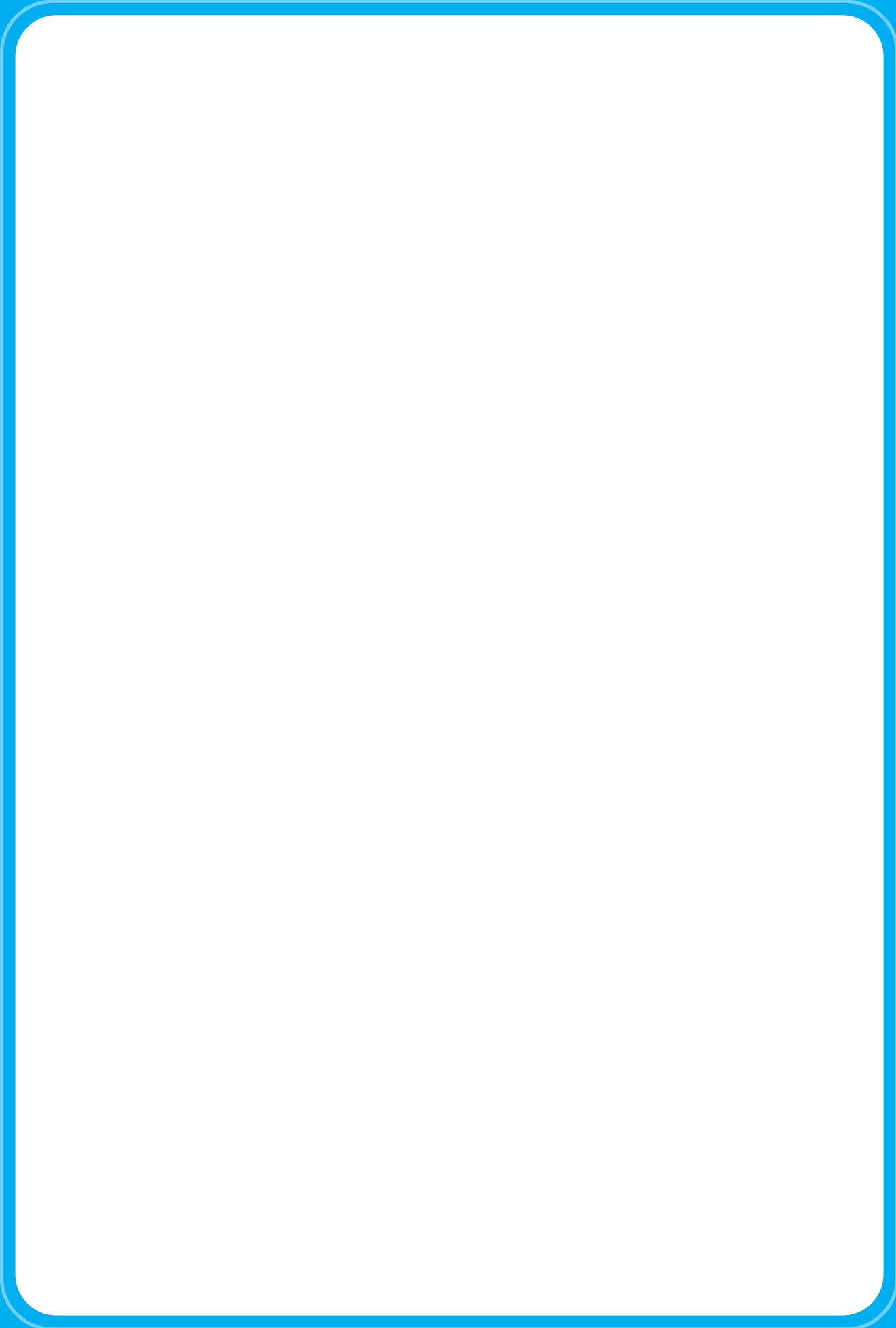
Trees of Love! - Valentine's Day

Who can participate?	Age of children: 3+ Number of children: 4
Resources / equipment	Paint (brown to make the tree base). Painting tray (Large enough to fit hand and forearm in - to make tree base). A3 sheet of white paper (or larger if more children are involved). Pink, purple, lilac, red paper. Scissors. Glue. Pens and pencils.
Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pour paint into painting tray. • Get an adult to help each child dip their arm (up to the elbow) in the brown paint, then press the paint covered arm onto the paper, ensuring that their hand is pressed flat onto the paper to make the trunks of the tree. The adult may need to roll their arm back and forth to create a wide enough tree trunk. • Cut out heart shapes using the different coloured paper. • On the heart shape have each child write or draw about something or someone that is special to them. • Stick the hearts onto the trunks, made by the fingers, to make the leaves of the tree. • Display the trees of love posters on the wall, ensure that all the children have a special message for them on the tree.
Early Learning Goals	<p>Personal, Social & Emotional Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form good relationships with adults and peers. <p>Problem solving, Reasoning & Numeracy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about, recognise and recreate simple patterns. <p>Physical Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handle tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control. <p>Knowledge & Understanding of the World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select the tools and techniques they need to shape, assemble and join materials they are using.
Key discussion points	What is Valentine's Day? Does anybody do anything special on this day? What symbol do we associate Valentine's Day with? What does our heart do in our body?
Links to other activities	Read the following stories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If You'll Be My Valentine By Cynthia Rylant. • Arthurs Valentine By Mark Brown. • What is Valentine's Day? By Harriet Ziefert. See the Valentines Day celebration day page in the 'Healthy Celebrations Pack' for more ideas on non-food and healthy food-based activities.

Activity plan template

Activity Plan:	
Who can participate?	
Resources / equipment	
Instructions	
Early Learning Goals	
Key discussion points	
Links to other activities	

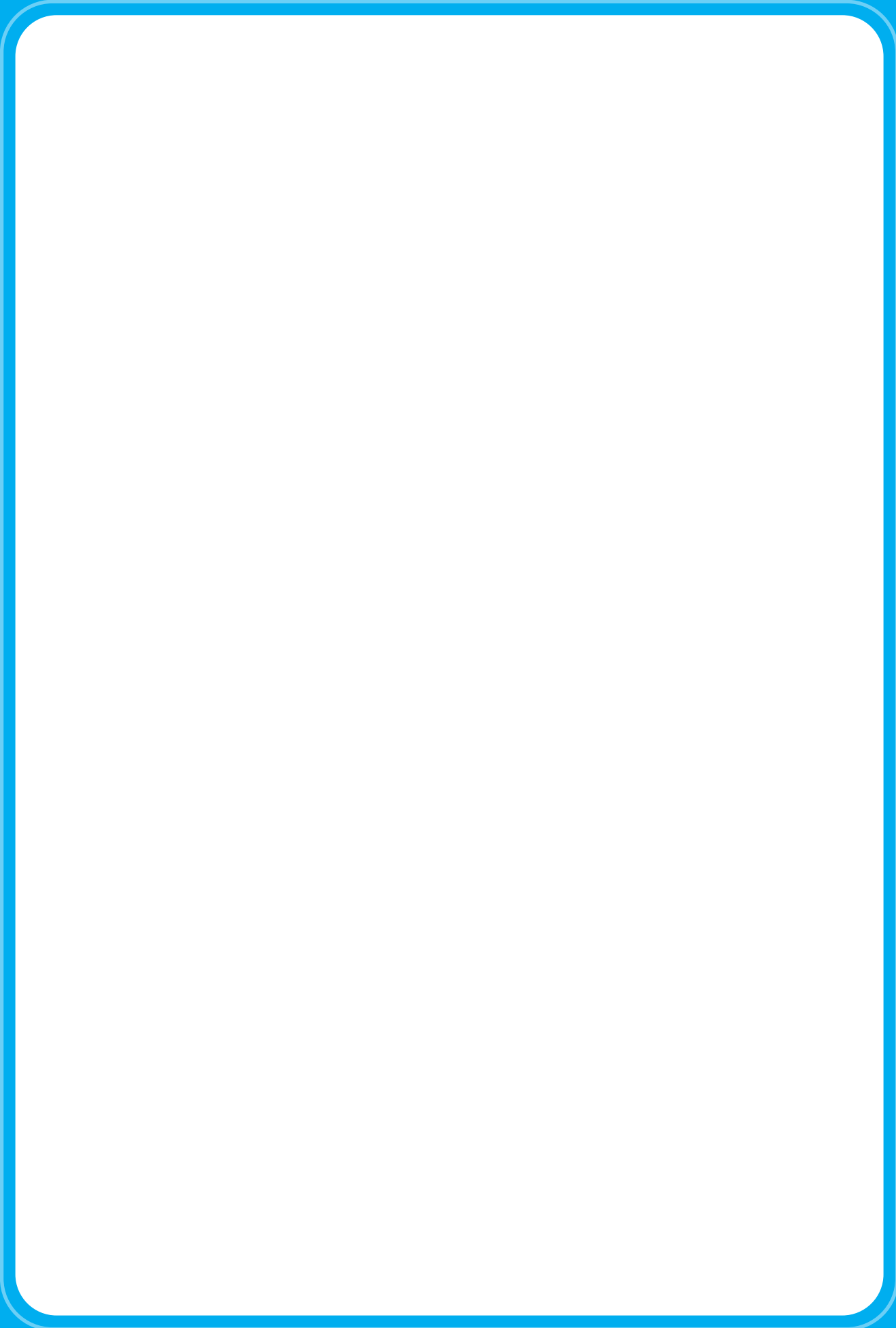
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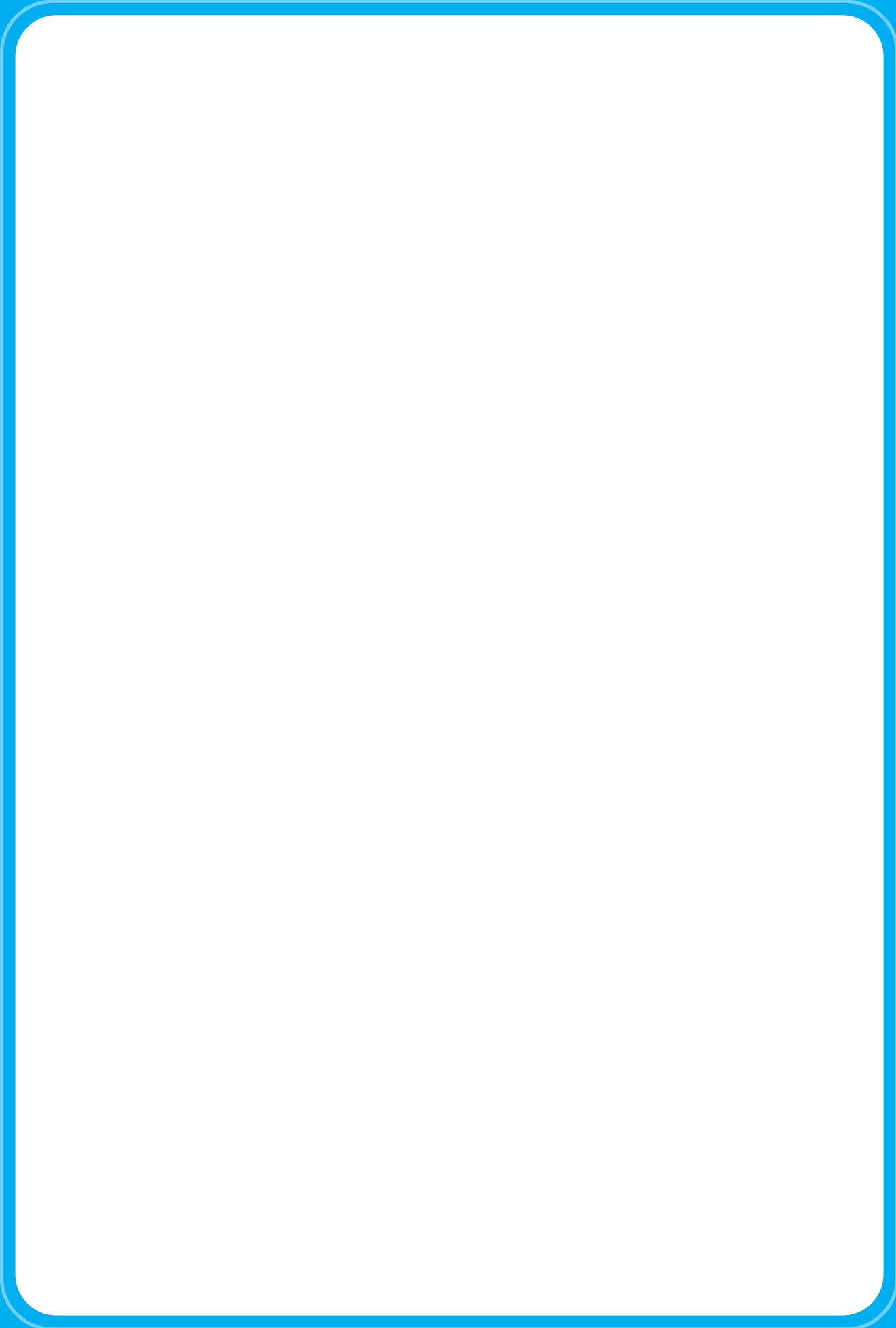
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Useful links & further information

Early Years & Schools

The Healthy Under 5s Programme:

www.healthyunder5s.nhs.uk

The HU5s website. You can check training dates, offer feedback and download useful information such as recipes.

School Food Trust:

www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk

The School Food Trust contains information and guidance on the nutritional and food based standards which have been implemented in schools.



Health-related organisations

5 a day programme:

www.nhs.uk/livewell/5aday

Provides information on why we need 5 a day and how to get your 5 a day.

The British Dietetic Association:

www.bda.uk.com

British Dietetics Association Website offering help and information on healthy, balanced diets and the Give me 5 messages.

The Caroline Walker Trust

www.cwt.org.uk

The Caroline Walker Trust is dedicated to the improvement of public health through good food. The work of the CWT is particularly targeted towards vulnerable groups and people who need special help. They produce nutritional and practical guidelines for both young and old.

The Food Standards Agency

www.eatwell.gov.uk

Food Standards Agency. This website has a wide variety of news, including many facts, resources and practical ideas.

Healthy Start Scheme

www.healthystart.nhs.uk

Healthy Start Scheme is a government scheme that provides food vouchers to teenage mums and low income parents with young children.

www.nutrition.org.uk

This website has a section on healthy lunch boxes and snacks for children.

Useful links & further information

Good sites for resources

The Comic Company

www.comiccompany.co.uk

The comic company sells resources, information sheets, books and posters that promote healthy messages. Many of the resources have been developed in conjunction with health professionals.

www.activityvillage.co.uk

Activity Village offers teachers, parents and children 1000's of pages of free activities.

www.bbc.co.uk/schools

BBC Schools website. Lots of downloadable resources and information on different religious festivals.

www.foodafactoflife.org.uk

Food a Fact of life provides free resources with key up-to-date messages around healthy eating.

www.greatgrubclub.com

Developed by the World Cancer Research Fund, Great Grub Club contains free interactive resources and information on living a healthy lifestyle.

Useful books:

Snack-Art (Creative Kids) by Elizabeth Meahl and Barb Lorseydi

A recipe and craft book that encourages fun ways to try new foods. Many of the recipes and animals use fruit, vegetables or starchy foods. Although some may contain foods that contain sugar, which won't be a safe snack, so please consult the recipe carefully.

CHEW Eating well for 1 to 4 year olds; practical guidance by The Caroline Walker Trust

This guidance contains information on eating well for 1 to 4 year olds, as well as practical guidance on portion sizes for this age group. A CDrom contains numerous breakfast, snack, lunch and tea-time meal photographs, which are served in recommended portions for this age group.

Further information and resources

The Nutrition & Dietetic Service of Luton and South Bedfordshire have many different leaflets and resources that have been designed for young children as well as older children and adults. These include leaflets on general nutrition for toddlers, starting solids, healthy snacks and much more!

If you would like any more information on this pack or any other resources that the Nutrition and Dietetic Service of Luton and South Bedfordshire have created then please contact us:

Nutrition & Dietetic Service

Dunstable Health Centre, Priory Gardens, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU6 3SU

Ph: 01582 707400 Fax: 01582 538260 Email: nursery.food@sept.nhs.uk

Website: www.eatforlife.org.uk