



## **WEANING POLICY**

Weaning, also known as introducing your baby to solid foods, starts when your baby is around 6 months old.

It is very common for babies to experience a growth spurt at around 4 months old which can make them temporarily hungrier, but although your baby might seem ready, alongside NHS guidance, we do not advise parents/carers to start giving their baby any solids before 6 months.

Whilst introducing babies to solid foods, it is very important to continue offering breast milk or first infant formula as this is their main source of energy and nutrients.

Each baby is different and together you will fall into a mealtime routine which suits your needs. We recommend that you have a conversation with your Health Visitor for information and tips on weaning, especially if you're feeling unsure when to start.

There are three clear signs which, together, show your baby is ready for solid foods alongside breast milk or formula.

- They can stay in a sitting position and hold their head steady
- They can coordinate their eyes, hands and mouth so that they can look at the food, pick it up and put it in their mouth, all by themselves
- They can swallow food rather than spitting it out

It is advised to begin weaning at around 6 months old as prior to this, breast milk or first infant formula will provide the energy and nutrients that are needed until 6 months old, your baby will have had the time they need to develop to be able to cope with solid foods, babies may be more willing to explore the foods and feed themselves. At this age babies will also be more confident to move the food around their mouths, chewing and swallowing.

The Lodge understands and encourages parents to follow their desired method of weaning whether that is 'Baby Led Weaning' which involves no pureed foods and letting them explore all foods at their pace, or choosing to begin with pureed food and progressing to whole foods at baby's pace. The staff within The Lodge will be here to support all Parents/Carers and babies on their weaning journey.

Sometimes whilst a baby is weaning, an allergies and intolerance to certain food(s) may arise. The Lodge Day Nursery will plan and communicate with parents before the baby starts at the setting, in how we can support their baby's weaning process as we understand that this can be an anxious time for parents. If we suspect a child is allergic to a certain food, we will make a note of any symptoms and keep a daily food diary for parents to be able to liaise with their local GP before we offer that food again.

During a baby's weaning journey, our staff within the Discoverers room will be able to work with parents/carers, assisting and answering questions or queries may they arise.