

Community Pre-schools Food Hazard Checklist

A food hazard checklist devised for Managers and Leaders of Community Preschool settings is essential for maintaining a safe and healthy environment for young children. By adhering to these guidelines, educators and caregivers can minimise risks and promote the well-being of the children under their care.

Checklist Overview

This checklist is divided into key areas to ensure every aspect of food safety is covered, including hygiene, storage, preparation, serving, and handling allergies.

Hygiene Practices

- **Handwashing:** Ensure all staff and children wash their hands before handling food, after using the toilet, and after outdoor activities.
- **Sanitisation:** Regularly clean and sanitise all food preparation surfaces, utensils, and equipment.
- **Personal Hygiene:** Staff must wear clean aprons, tie back hair, and avoid touching food directly with hands.

Food Storage

- **Temperature Control:** Store perishable foods at the correct temperatures (below 5°C for refrigeration, and below -18°C for freezing).
- **Labelling:** Clearly label all food items with expiry dates.
- **Segregation:** Separate raw foods from cooked foods to prevent cross-contamination.

Food Preparation

- **Choking Prevention:** Avoid serving small, hard, or sticky foods like nuts, popcorn, or whole grapes. Cut food into age-appropriate sizes.
- **Cooking:** Ensure all food is cooked to the correct internal temperature to eliminate harmful bacteria.
- **Cross-Contamination:** Use separate chopping boards and knives for raw meat and other foods.

Food Serving

- **Supervision:** Monitor children during meal times to prevent choking or improper handling of food.
- **Allergen Awareness:** Ensure food is served according to children's dietary requirements and allergies.
- **Clean Serving Area:** Make sure serving tables and chairs are clean and sanitised before meals.

Allergy and Dietary Management

- Allergen Identification: Maintain an up-to-date list of each child's allergies and dietary restrictions.
- Emergency Procedures: Have a clear plan for managing allergic reactions, including access to epinephrine auto-injectors.
- Communication: Inform staff, parents, and children about allergens in food and the steps taken to prevent exposure.

Training and Education

- Staff Training: Ensure all staff are trained in food hygiene, allergen awareness, and emergency procedures.
- Child Education: Teach children the importance of washing hands and eating safely.

Regular Audits

- Inspection: Conduct routine checks of food storage, preparation areas, and hygiene practices.
- Feedback: Encourage staff to report any potential hazards or concerns.