3.12: Managing Choking Hazards Policy

In devising this policy, we have referred to the guidance within the following documents:

* Early years choking hazards food safety advice from the Foods Standards Agency.gov.uk.
* Best practice guidance: managing choking episodes in babies and children- (Care Inspectorate 2019).
* Better Lives, Better Futures. Safety: Preventing Choking NHS

Definition: A foreign object that is stuck in the pharynx (back of the throat) or trachea (windpipe) that causes a blockage or muscular spasm in the child's airway is classified as choking.

This policy relates to children in our care from the age of 2-5 years

**Signs and Symptoms**

Respiratory distress associated with:  
• Coughing,  
• Gagging,  
• Stridor (loud, harsh, high pitched respiratory sound),  
• Airway Obstruction,  
• The onset is sudden,  
• There are no signs of illness,  
• There are no clues to alert the rescuer, history of eating or playing with small items

**Sometimes choking can be silent with no sound or warning.**

**Emergency Procedure**  
When a child chokes:  
• Assess whether the child is coughing effectively, if so then no external manoeuvre is necessary.  
• Encourage the child to cough and monitor.  
• If the child's cough is ineffective, shout for help to contact emergency services immediately (999).  
• Call the child's emergency guardian/carer.

**Food Safety**  
• Pips and Stones are removed from fruit and vegetables prior to being served.  
• Fruit is halved and chopped to prevent choking episodes.  
• Large fruit is sliced into small pieces for all children within our care.

**High risk choking foods are not served to children within our care**

Such as:

Peanuts (should be avoided until 5)  
Whole grapes, grapes are always to be cut into half  
Hot dogs,  
Chocolate Mini Eggs or similar shaped items  
Large chunks of raw carrots  
Popcorn

Any boiled sweets

**Equipment**  
Supervision is required when utilising these pieces of equipment:  
• Pins,  
• Nuts and bolts,  
• Small beads under 4.45cm (1¾ inches),  
• Plastic bags and deflated balloons or pieces of a burst balloon  
• Glitter  
Staff must ensure that equipment is suitable for the age range of the children. Toys are marked with a symbol (faced scored through with '0-3' in writing) Do not rely solely on a CE mark as this only classifies a benchmark of the European law.

**Responding to a choking incident**

Our records and documents a choking incident after experienced. The record must state:  
• Child's Name.  
• Date, Time and Place of incident  
• Cause of Incident  
• Care given to the child  
• What happened to the child immediately after the incident?

A parent must be informed and medical advice sought by the parent carer after the event. OFSTED must be notified if a child requires hospital admission.

**Safety with cords & hanging resources**

When we are using resources such as string, ties, things that hang from a display etc they are safe and kept out of children’s reach. Blinds throughout the centre are not accessible to children.

**Additional Information**  
Our preschool provides opportunities to support children regarding how to eat safely and discouraging them from putting things in their mouth.

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| This policy was adopted at a meeting of | Sandbach Heath (St. John’s) Playgroup | name of setting |
| Held on |  | (date) |
| Date to be reviewed |  | (date) |
| Signed on behalf of the management committee |  | |
| Name of signatory |  | |
| Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner) |  | |