

Infant 1 Food Program & Baby Led Weaning

Information for families

Thank you so much for trusting us with your tiny little one. As your child transitions to eating whole food, we want you to know that we work within the Baby Led Weaning technique in our Infant 1 program. All foods from the catered meal program work well and have been adjusted and planned to support children's growth and development when it comes to eating.

What is Baby-Led Weaning? (Copied directly from the website <http://www.babyledweaning.com>)

Baby-led weaning is, it must be said, a somewhat cheesy term for just letting your infant self-feed. You cut food up into manageable sticks and offer it, they eat. It's really pretty simple.

The key difference between BLW and traditional weaning, when you think about it, is in the order that children learn to eat. With a puree, they learn to swallow first and then chew, which works fine until they meet a lump. With BLW, the babies learn to chew first and swallowing might come some time later.

It's 'baby-led' in the sense that you let them do what they need to do while they're learning, and as the parent you resist the urge to get wound up in knots about how much they're eating, whether they like the food you thought they'd like and whether it's smushed into the nearest curtain. The main thing is... it's all good clean (messy) fun.

What about Milk?

As recommended by the WHO, children under the age of 12 months should be garnering the majority of their nutrition from the milk source chosen by the family; either breastmilk or formula. After the age of 1, there is a shift to the main source of nutrition being the solid foods they eat and not the milk they consume. Basically, before 12 months, milk is provided as the main and solid food is introduced and explored, while after 12 months, food is offered first and milk comes second.

How will we know what has been tried?

The foods offered are shared in the BW app everyday along with a note as to how much was eaten. If desired by the family, one idea would also be to keep a list of offered foods for reference. This could be accomplished by taking notes of the specific foods from the app (carrots or broccoli, watermelon or bananas)

With BLW, there is no timeline of what should be introduced when, simply eating what the family is eating and taking notes of any possible reactions is the plan!

Why do you use this method and not the traditional way?

With BLW we put our trust in the children to learn while they eat. We also trust the process and know that we will meet their nutritional needs with the milk they are provided. We teach the social aspect of sitting down to a meal, learning from watching our peers and we grow independence with hand to mouth.

Can we send our own food just in case?

We respectfully ask that you do not send anything outside of breastmilk or formula. Following BLW, it is integral to offer exactly what is being eaten by the group (in this case the class) in manageable sized bites or strips to explore themselves and not to mush or blend the food and feed it to the child. Alongside the Montessori philosophy as well as the Nurturing Hearts vision, this process, at its roots, instills independence and belief in oneself as capable.