

Volume 1



Llywodraeth Cymru
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FOOD & NUTRITION

for Childcare settings

Section 4

DESIGN SAMPLE

Best Practice Guidance

Volume 1 Section 4

Food and nutrition: standards, guidelines and menu planning

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Your complete guide to nutrients and food, balancing requirements and a healthy balanced diet for children 1–12 years

Nutrition and food



Children need to eat the right balance of energy and nutrients to have healthy growth and development, to achieve a healthy weight and to help protect against certain diseases.

The childcare setting can play an important part in this, by providing nutritious food in the correct portions and by creating an

environment that encourages children in their care to develop positive attitudes to food and their health. This section provides all you need to know about the food you provide to ensure it meets the dietary recommendations for children in your care.

What are nutrients?

There are 2 main types of nutrients in addition to water, that the body needs to provide essential nourishment:

Macro nutrients are: protein, carbohydrate, fats	Micro nutrients are: vitamins and minerals e.g. Vitamins A, C & D, Minerals – iron, calcium
	

- **A Nutrient framework** sets out the proportion of nutrients that a population group such as young children, should receive.
- **Food standards** outline the types of food that young children should be offered at each meal e.g breakfast, main meal or a snack, or overall in a day to meet the recommendations for nutrient intake.

To provide practical guidance for you to use, the nutrient requirements for young children have been translated into food and drink standards with guidance on types of food and portion sizes for each meal and snack.

A separate volume of example menus and recipes is provided.

For more information on the recommended amount of nutrients for an average day for 1–4 year olds, divided into meals and snacks, see Appendix 2.

For more information on the recommended amount of nutrients for older children, 5–12 year olds, see Appendix 3.

Balancing requirements throughout the day

Table 1 outlines how much food should be provided across a full day in child care to meet nutritional requirements.

Table 1: Balancing requirements	
Breakfast	20% each of total daily intakes
Mid morning snack and drink	10% of total daily intakes
Lunch	30% of total daily intakes
Mid afternoon snack and drink	10% of total daily intakes
Light tea	20% each of total daily intakes

This allows for 10% of requirements to be met at home. However, in practice children will have meals in different settings across the day e.g. home, school, childcare and this should be considered, (see section 5).

What is the ideal healthy balanced diet?

Eating well and having a healthy lifestyle can help us all feel our best and make a big difference to our long term health. The Eatwell Guide is used across the UK to help everyone understand what the ideal balance of foods is for a healthy diet. Remember that it applies fully to children from the age of 5, but from aged 2–5 years children can be gradually moving toward the same balance of foods as adults. This guide shows you what the main differences are and what you should be providing for younger and older children in your care.

How much and what types of food to have during the day

The Eatwell Guide encourages us to choose a variety of foods from the 5 food groups to help us get the wide range of nutrients our bodies need to stay healthy.



Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy foods



Fruit and vegetables



Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins



Dairy and alternatives



Oils and spreads

Eatwell Guide

Check the label on packaged foods

Each serving (150g) contains

Energy	Fat	Saturated	Sugars	Salt
1046kJ 250kcal	3.0g	1.3g	34g	0.9g
13%	LOW	LOW	HIGH	MED
13%	4%	7%	38%	15%

of an adult's reference intake

Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 637kJ/ 167kcal

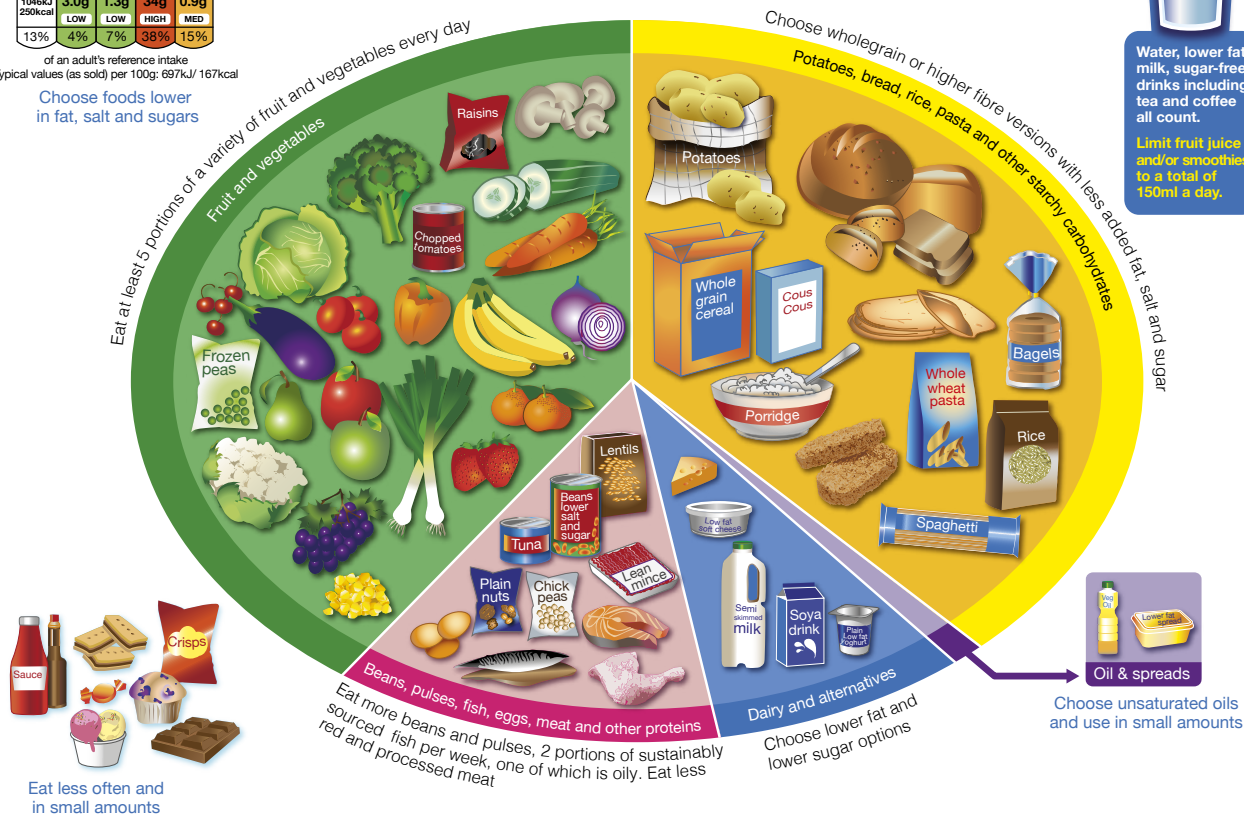
Choose foods lower in fat, salt and sugars

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.



Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.

Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.



The Eatwell Guide (2017) replaces the Eatwell Plate and includes a few changes as a result of more research and talking to the public.

What's new:

- Information on drinks and hydration.
- A message on labelling to help people choose, cook and eat healthier options.

What's different:

- Foods high in fat, sugar and salt moved to the outside as they are not considered an essential part of the diet.
- Fruit juice and fruit smoothies – are now in the drinks message and 150ml maximum counts as one portion of fruit.
- Knife and fork have been removed to reflect food intake over a day or week rather than one meal.

Per day 2000kcal 2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS

Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh Government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

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Note on energy

The energy requirements on the Eatwell Guide are based on adults. The menus and recipes in this guidance are based on the requirements for children in your care.



The Eatwell Guide shows how much of what we eat overall should come from each food group:

- Eat at least 5 portions of fruits and vegetables every day.
- Base meals on potatoes, bread, rice, pasta or other starchy carbohydrates; choosing wholegrain versions where possible.
- Have some dairy or dairy alternatives (such as soya drinks); choosing lower fat and lower sugar options.
- Eat some beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins (including 2 portions of fish every week, one of which should be oily)
- Choose unsaturated oils and spreads and eat in small amounts.
- Drink 6–8 cups/glasses of fluid a day.
- If consuming foods and drinks high in fat, salt or sugar have these less often and in small amounts.

Anyone with special dietary requirements or medical needs might want to check with a registered dietitian on how to adapt the Eatwell Guide to meet their individual needs.

The Eatwell Guide for children in your care – what's important and how does it differ for infants and children under 5 years.

The Eatwell Guide does not fully apply to children under 2 as they have specific nutritional needs. Infants and young children have high nutrient requirements relative to their size as they are still undergoing quite rapid growth and development and are usually very physically active. They require an energy and nutrient dense diet which should be provided by regular meals and snacks. Between the ages of 2 and 5 years, children can gradually move to eating the same foods as the rest of the family in the proportions shown in the guide.

Eating a variety of foods from the five food groups of the Eatwell Guide is important in the early years, including a range of fruits and vegetables. However, it is important to note that there are key differences in the recommendations for adults and older children compared to the nutrition guidelines for pre-school children.

So how does the guidance differ for young children?

Energy

The calorie requirements shown on the Eatwell Guide apply to adults. The menus and recipes in Volume 2 are based on calorie requirements for young children 1–4 years.

It is more important that young children are:

- Offered regular, nutritious meals and snacks (3 meals a day and 2–3 snacks) along with plenty of active play, rather than focus on calories.
- Given portion sizes appropriate to their age or let them help themselves, but be guided by their appetite.

More information on the requirements for different age groups can be found in Appendix 2 & 3.

Fibre

The Eatwell Guide encourages wholegrain and higher fibre starchy foods to meet the recommended amount for adults of 30g per day. For children aged 2–5 this is halved to 15g. No specific recommendations are made for children aged under 2 years, but as the diet becomes more varied, increasing amounts of whole grains, pulses, fruits and vegetables is encouraged.



Alternatives to meat

The Eatwell Guide encourages us to eat less red meat and replace this with alternative sources of protein e.g. beans, other pulses and poultry. Red meat such as beef or lamb is a valuable source of iron and useful to include in weekly meal plans for young children, if not vegetarian. A suitable range of vegetarian foods can also provide sufficient iron.



Fat, oil & spreads

Young children need more of their energy from fat than older children or adults, to provide a concentrated source of energy. Important fats are those that provide essential fatty acids for brain development, and they provide Vitamins A, D, and E.

- Low fat diets are not appropriate for children under 5 years as they are unlikely to provide the calories needed for growth.
- Children under 2 years should be given full fat dairy foods e.g. yoghurt, cream cheese and milk.
- Children 2–5 years can change to lower fat dairy foods and semi-skimmed milk if they are eating well. Skimmed and 1% milks are not suitable as a main drink for children under 5 years.

Some children may drink cow's milk alternatives e.g., soya or nut milks. For children under 2 years, this will usually follow discussion with a health professional.

The type of fat is also important:

- Saturated fat is mainly from animals: cheese, meat, meat products e.g. sausages, butter, cakes and biscuits.
- Unsaturated fat is mainly from plants and fish: vegetable oils, sunflower oil, and fat spreads labelled high in polyunsaturated or monounsaturated

The food standards, guidance and recipes all take into account the types of fat used.



Drinks

Tea and coffee are not appropriate for young children. The only drinks they need are water or plain milk as these are protective to their teeth. Milk will still be an important drink for young children in the first four years of life. Children should be offered around 300-400 ml of milk a day. This could include a cup of milk at one of their snack times and a cup of milk in the evening, and a portion of dairy food or alternative at a meal time. This provides the recommended 3 portions of dairy and alternatives a day.

Visit www.firststepsnutrition.org for more information.



Extra Vitamins

It is recommended that infants and children aged 6 months to 5 years have daily vitamin drops of vitamins A, C and D; unless as an infant they are drinking around 500ml (1 pint) or more of infant formula milk a day. This is important even if they are eating well and spending time outdoors in the sunshine.

It is also recommended that babies who are being breastfed are given a daily vitamin D supplement from birth and older children should consider taking a daily supplement of Vitamin D during the autumn and winter.



Pure Fruit Juice

Pure Fruit Juice is a good source of vitamin C but contains natural sugars that can cause tooth decay. It is also acidic and may erode children's teeth. Fruit juice should not be given in childcare settings for under 5's. From around age 5 it's ok for children to have undiluted fruit juice or smoothies, but have occasionally and no more than one glass (about 150ml) in a day served with a meal, this will count as one of their '5 a day'.



Healthy Start

Children in your care may be receiving Healthy Start which aims to provide a nutritional safety net for some families in receipt of benefits. They are entitled to vouchers that can be exchanged for cow's milk, fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables and infant formula as well as coupons for free vitamin drops containing vitamins A, C and D.

Practice point

It is helpful to display information about Healthy Start in your setting. For further information visit <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthy-start-vouchers/do-i-qualify/> or ask your local Family Information Service.

Older children should follow the Eatwell Guide for all food and drink.

How to use the food and drink standards and guidance

The food photos illustrate typical portion sizes for 1–4 year olds of foods from each food group, and how they should be put together in each meal. The plates are sized as follows:

Small bowl – 8cm (depth 3cm)

Large bowl 12 cm (depth 7cm)



Large Plate 20cm





Planning the day and weeks food

Planning menus in advance for your setting can:

- Ensure variety and balance to meet the standards and guidance.
- Reduce overall cost of food.
- Reduce and minimise waste.
- Ensure children who attend on only 1 or 2 days a week do not get the same food each time.
- Help with staff cover, as all staff will know what food is provided.
- Inform parents and carers on what is provided, as well as pass on good practice.

Aim for a 3 week cycle for both a snack and drinks menu and a full day care menu

Use the food standards, menu planning guidance, practice point tips, and the example menus and recipes in Volume 2.

Produce a menu that meets the needs of a healthy growing young child, with the right balance of energy and nutrients.

For each food group, there is information to explain:

- the **types of food and drink** included in the food group
- **why the food group is important**
- **food safety information**
- **guidelines** for planning menus
- typical **portion size** information

Food standards describe **how often, how much, and which different types** of food and drink to provide for meals.

The food and drink standards and guidance are divided into:

- Settings that provide drinks and snacks only.
- Settings that provide full day care with a range of meals which can include breakfast, main meals, light meals, snacks and drinks.

Part A: Settings providing snacks and drinks only

For younger children 1–4 years

Why do young children need snacks?

Young children often have small appetites and need regular meals together with 2-3 snacks per day. Healthy snacks are important to help meet the energy needs of children and to provide important nutrients. They should be low in free sugars to help prevent tooth decay. If you are providing regular care, it is best to

plan a snack menu to ensure variety across the week and a balanced nutritional content.

Snacks and drinks should provide around 10% of total daily intakes each for mid morning and mid afternoon, for energy, this amounts to around 120 kcals. Snacks can be given from all Food Groups – see **Table 2**.

Table 2

Food Groups	Food Standards for Healthy snack choices
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy foods	<p>Provide a starchy food such as crackers, breadsticks, rice cakes as part of at least one snack per day.</p> <p>Provide at least 3 varieties of starchy foods across snacks each week.</p> <p>Choose bread and bread products with lower salt contents. Choose those which are labelled as low green or medium amber in salt (see page 42 food labelling).</p>
Fruit and vegetables	<p>Provide vegetables and fruit as part of all snacks.</p> <p>Dried fruit should not be provided as snacks.</p> <p>Use a variety of fruit and vegetables and encourage more vegetables.</p>
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins	<p>Foods from this group provide a useful source of iron and zinc and can be used as part of snacks once or twice per week.</p>
Dairy and alternatives	<p>Provide one as part of snacks per day to contribute to the 3 portions of dairy and alternatives required per each day.</p>

Remember
vegetables are a really good choice as a finger food snack and for dips, see examples on the snack menu.

Practice Point

Preventing choking

To avoid choking, cut small foods like tomatoes, grapes and blackberries into quarters and ensure sausages are cut into very small pieces. Think twice before offering very young children hard foods such as unripe fruit, or hard cubes of cheese (grate or slice instead), slippery foods such as tinned peaches or sticky foods.

Always ensure young children are supervised when eating.

Walking or running around with food may also be a safety hazard.

Adapted from, The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents – ROSPA guidance for parents

Figure 1: Snack ideas for Early Years settings



Snacks to avoid

Sugary snacks can cause tooth decay, particularly if eaten between meals. Sugary foods can also lead to excess calorie intakes. These include sweets, chocolate confectionery, biscuits, sugary pastries, sugary desserts, sweetened cereals.



Crisps, and savoury snacks are very high in salt and are not recommended.

Nuts – whole nuts can cause choking in young children and should not be given.

Nuts – especially peanuts can cause severe allergic reactions in children suffering from a nut allergy. All settings should have an allergy plan in place on the use of nut products such as ground nuts and nut butters such as peanut butter.

(See section X for more information allergies and special diets).

Childcare providers are ideally placed to encourage healthier options, and often children who refuse certain foods can be encouraged with positive reinforcement to increase the variety of healthier snack foods. Working closely with parents is crucial and parents should be involved in discussions about any changes to the food and drinks you provide.

Snack time also provides an excellent opportunity for children to:

- Practise personal hygiene by washing their hands before eating/drinking (see section 6)
- Learn about healthy snacks and drinks
- Develop independence and start making their own choices
- Try new foods and chat to staff about their likes and dislikes (see section 5)
- Talk to each other and develop social skills

However, you shouldn't need to avoid nut products if there are no children at risk. See allergy section to keep up to date

Practice point

Dried Fruit

Dried fruit is fine to eat as part of a pudding or after a meal but can damage teeth if eaten between meals as a snack, because of their sticky and sugary consistency.

Avoid dried fruit as a snack between meals for all children.





Drinks

Having enough to drink is vitally important for young children as they are more likely to get dehydrated, especially when being active and when it's hot. Children can learn from developing good habits for drinking plain tap water regularly, and being encouraged to drink as they may not remember to have a drink by themselves.

Milk and water are the only suitable drinks for the first year and should be continued in the early years to establish good habits.

Offer young children 1-4 years about 7-8 cups or beakers a day to make sure they are having enough drink for their needs, based on cups of 100-150ml.

Nb for younger than 12 months, see section 2.

Nursery milk scheme

Children who are under 5 and attend an eligible setting for 2 hours or more may receive 189mls (1/3pt) milk each day free of charge

Babies under 12 months may receive powdered infant formula made up to 189ml (1/3pt). For more information:

www.nurserymilk.co.uk/about-nursery-milk-scheme

Cups or beakers for water should not be shared and there needs to be clear procedures in place for washing e.g put through the dishwasher weekly, in addition to regular washing during the day.

Top Facts about fruit juice and fruit smoothies



- 1** When fruit is blended into a juice or smoothie the sugar content in the fruit is released and can cause tooth decay. They are also acidic which can erode children's teeth.
- 2** Although fruit juice does contain nutrients such as Vitamin C, at this young age it is best avoided to protect teeth.
- 3** Making smoothies can be a good way of getting young children involved in a healthy food activity, (see section X) but only do so occasionally and have as a dessert with meals.

Do's	Dont's
Tap water should be available to drink at any time of the day, and children should be encouraged to help themselves. Water quenches thirst, does not spoil the appetite and does not harm teeth.	Sugary drinks such as lemonade, colas, squashes and fruit juice drinks contain added sugars and are acidic and are not necessary in a child's diet. They may also contain caffeine These drinks are not recommended and should not be offered. They are a poor source of nutrients and contribute to tooth decay and erosion.
Children may need more water during hot weather and when doing extra physical activity	Low calorie squashes, no added sugar or reduced sugar drinks, flavoured water, should not be offered as they can also contribute to or cause tooth erosion and can encourage a preference for sweetened drinks.
The only drinks that should be offered are tap water and plain milk. Full fat milk should be the main milk drink until at least two years old, but semi skimmed milk can be introduced from this age providing the child is a good eater and a variety of foods are taken. Skimmed milk is not suitable as the main drink for children under five years of age. When only one type of milk is provided in an early years setting it should be whole milk.	Tea and coffee are not advised for under 5's as they contain caffeine and tannins. Caffeine acts as a stimulant and tannins interfere with the absorption of iron.

Alternative milks such as oat, almond, and soya may be requested for children and brought in by parents/carers. These need to be unsweetened and fortified with calcium.

Practice point for snacks and drinks

Healthy teeth

Young children are particularly vulnerable to tooth decay and this can have a big impact on the development of their adult teeth, which is why it is so important to have tooth friendly snacks and drinks. www.designedtosmile.org/welcome-croeso/welcome/

Food hygiene and safety

Help children to learn basic hygiene themselves – for example washing their hands with soap and water before eating meals or snacks, after going to the toilet or handling animals; not eating food that has been on the floor (see Section 6).

Part A: Settings providing snacks and drinks only

For Older children 5–12 years, snacks and light meals

Continuing good practice from other settings such as school and home will help children to understand the importance of good food and healthy drinks to a healthy lifestyle.

The same principles can apply as with younger children but with more variation. Children attending care settings may require a more substantial snack, if not eating at home

until later. It is good practice to encourage continuation of water and milk as the main drinks.

Variation in pick up times and meal times at home makes it difficult to predict requirements so it is best to provide a healthy nutritious snack.

Table 3: Snacks and light meals for older children

Cold healthier snack choices	Hot healthier snack/light meal choices	Equipment and facilities/storage needed
Breakfast cereal with milk or yoghurt Plain Yoghurt* or fromage frais English muffins or bagels Currant/raisin bread Sandwiches using different types of bread Filled pitta, bagels, Rolls, wraps Pasta salads Raw vegetables with dips Sandwich fillings/toppings: cheese, hard-boiled egg, peanut butter**, houmous, sliced meat, bean salad, tinned fish Combinations of nuts** and seeds without added fat, sugar or salt. Range of fresh fruit	Toast with spread, peanut butter** Toasted teacakes, crumpets or bagels Toasted sandwiches, warm pitta, paninis or wraps Tortillas, fajitas, burritos, quesadillas, enchiladas Toast with baked beans, cheese, eggs (scrambled, boiled or poached) Omelette or Spanish omelette Tortilla (thick omelette with potatoes or vegetables) Quiche Pizza slice with toppings e.g. vegetables or cheese Jacket potato Fillings and /or toppings: cheese, cottage cheese, coleslaw, baked beans, chilli, vegetable chilli, curry, tuna, ratatouille, chicken mayo, cheese savoury pasta, rice or noodles with home prepared meat or vegetable-based sauce Fishcakes Home made Soup	Assess what facilities you have in your setting Assess what can be provided with these facilities Ensure health and safety regulations covered Plan a snack/light meal menu around provision e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fridge, toaster and microwave • table top stove • full kitchen facility

*see section on food labelling

**see section on allergies



- 1 Have fresh fruit easily available in the setting.
- 2 Start a fruit and veg. tuck shop or coop with older children.
- 3 Try savoury dips with cut up vegetables – children can join in the preparation.
- 4 Do an activity to create more ideas and then try them out.
- 5 If able to make soup – make it veggie.

Drinks for 5–12 years

The same advice applies to promote water as the main drink, and semi skimmed milk, with occasional alternatives e.g making fruit smoothies.

Children should always be encouraged to take drinks regularly as they may not remember to have a drink by themselves.

Some supermarkets are now banning the sale of sports energy drinks to under 16's – get young people in your setting to talk about it.

Food hygiene and regulation for after school / holiday care - see Section 6.

Educate about sports and energy drinks and their impact on health

Energy drinks can contain high levels of caffeine, usually about 80 milligrams (mg) of caffeine in a small 250ml can – this is similar to 3 cans of cola or a mug of instant coffee.

Practice point

Hygiene and safety with drinking water

If children are drinking from water bottles then these are not shared and there are clear procedures in place for washing water bottles, e.g:

- Bottles are sent home for parents/carers to wash.
- All bottles are put through dishwasher weekly.

Figure 2: Healthy Hydration

Children aged 1–4

Water or milk are the best choices for young children to drink.



Children aged 5–12

Drink plenty

Water is the best choice for hydration, it has no extra calories and doesn't harm teeth.



Can have once a day

Fruit Juices and smoothies although nutritious they contain free sugars which can damage teeth maximum intake one small glass a day at meal times – this counts as one of your 5 a day.



Have regularly

Milk is a good source of nutrients, protein, B Vitamins and Calcium. From age 5 children can drink semi skimmed or skimmed milk if eating ok. Watch out for sugar content of milk shakes and hot chocolate.

Not suitable for children

Sport and energy drinks

Sports drinks can be high in sugars and energy drinks may contain high levels of caffeine or other stimulants and are not suitable for children.



Occasionally

Sugar free drinks

These don't have added sugars but its best to try and avoid developing a taste for sweet drinks. Fizzy drinks are acidic and can erode teeth and some may contain caffeine.



Occasionally (in small amounts if caffeinated)

Tea and Coffee

Caffeine is naturally present in tea and coffee, high intakes should be avoided in young children and use decaffeinated tea and coffee with no added sugar.



Avoid

Sugary drinks

Provide sugars and little nutrients, fizzy sugary drinks will also be acidic and may contain caffeine.



Practice point

Using time to encourage children to learn more about how sugary drinks impact on their health can help them to make informed choices and support decisions on what drinks should be offered in the setting.

Table 4: 3 week example snack and light meal menu

Out of school care settings aged 5–12 year olds.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Grilled cheese pannini Fresh fruit	Pizza Apple berry fool	Ham rolls or peanut butter and banana sandwiches Cucumber sticks	Mexican bean and cheese wrap Red pepper and celery	Tuna pasta salad Fresh fruit
Week 2	Omelette and baked beans Fresh fruit	Choice of sandwiches Fruit smoothie	Jacket potato with low fat cream cheese and spring onion Selection of vegetables snacks and cherry tomatoes	Noodles with vegetables and beans Fresh fruit	Toasted sandwich Fresh fruit
Week 3	Tomato and basil pasta bake Minty melon lollies	Tortilla wrap Fresh fruit	Roast vegetable and chickpea cous cous Or, savoury tuna and cous cous	Pitta bread with hummus Cucumber and carrot salad	Cheesy veg top muffins Apple berry fool
Soups if offered	Easy minestrone	Leek, potato and pea	Carrot and lentil	Pea and spinach	Carrot and potato
Drinks Vary over the week and aim for more water	Milk, juice or water	Milk, juice or water	Milk, juice or water	Milk, juice or water	Milk, juice or water

Part B: Settings providing full day care with meals and snacks

Menu Planning

Menu planning is essential to achieving a well-balanced and healthy diet for the children in your care. It will help you to meet the childcare regulations that apply for food and drink and the health needs of children. It will also help you to demonstrate excellent practice in the quality of the food you provide.

Menu planning should be undertaken by a member of staff with the relevant knowledge and skills and an understanding of children's nutritional needs.

The menu planning guidance set out below can be used to help you produce a written menu covering all food provided i.e. meals, snacks and drinks.

Top tips for menu planning



- 1 Plan menus for all the meals and snacks you provide for a 3 week cycle** – this will help to ensure there is variety and balance from each of the main food groups and helps planning for shopping and preparation.
- 2 Plan each meal and snack menu to meet the food and drink guidelines provided** – this will help to ensure that children in your care receive the correct amount of nutrients at each meal (important if moving between settings).
- 3 Plan menus to include a variety of colours, tastes and textures to make meals more interesting and appetising.** For example serve crunchy vegetables that require chewing (appropriate to age group) with soft dishes such as Shepherd's Pie.
- 4 Plan alternating a cold meal with a hot dessert to add variety.**
- 5 Plan for preparation and cooking time** – look at what you are cooking each day, and avoid having a main course and dessert which will take a lot of time to prepare. Divide the food preparation so that it is equally spread throughout the day. You may find that you are limited by what you can fit in the oven and on the hob. Take this into account when planning your menu.
- 6 Home-made dishes will generally be healthier than ready meals** because you can select your ingredients carefully and the salt content is likely to be lower.
- 7 Make sure menus cater for all cultural, religious and dietary needs** and only give specific individual meals if absolutely necessary. Try adapting usual recipes for some diets, if necessary.
- 8 Introduce new menu cycles at least twice a year**, this will help to introduce new recipes and ensure seasonality.
- 9 Talk to parents when planning menus**, this helps to ensure the right balance of foods and avoids duplication of meals.
- 10 Minimising waste/use of left overs** – planning menus and ingredients lists can minimise food waste and maximise use of all food e.g. left overs in recipes. Remember to follow the rules about storing and keeping food.

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/labelling-guidance.pdf>

Food groups and standards

Fruit and Vegetables

Why is this food group important? Fruit and vegetables are an important source of vitamins A & C, minerals such as zinc and iron and dietary fibre.

Best Practice to include these healthy choices	Preparation do's and don'ts	Food standards
<p>Vegetables and salad</p> <p>All types of fresh, frozen and tinned vegetables – for example, fresh broccoli, frozen peas, tinned sweetcorn, courgettes, pak choi, okra.</p> <p>Salad vegetables – for example, lettuce, watercress, cucumber, tomato, raw carrot, raw pepper, radish and beetroot.</p> <p>Pulses – includes beans (kidney, haricot, pinto, butter), chick peas, lentils and baked beans.</p> <p>Remember: Remember: potatoes are a starchy food and not included as a vegetable and do not contribute to one of your 5 a day, however sweet potatoes, parsnips, swedes and turnips do.</p>	<p>Do offer different fruits and vegetables at meals and snacks.</p> <p>Do choose tinned vegetables and pulses without added salt and sugar.</p> <p>Do choose reduced salt and sugar tinned baked beans.</p> <p>Pulses and beans only count as a vegetable once per week.</p> <p>Do not:</p> <p>Overcook fresh vegetables; cut them up a long time before cooking and leave them in water; cook them early and re-heat before serving, as these practices all reduce the vitamin content.</p>	<p>Aim for each full day's menu for childcare settings to offer '5 a day' including a range of vegetables, salads and fruit.</p> <p>Include with breakfast, main meals, and as snacks.</p> <p>Dried fruit with meals only.</p> <p>Avoid fruit juice, and juice drinks.</p> <p>Provide correct portion sizes.</p>
<p>Fruit</p> <p>Fresh fruit – such as apples, bananas, pears, grapes, kiwi fruit, oranges, satsumas, plums, berries, melon or mango.</p> <p>Tinned fruit in juice – for example, peaches, pears, pineapple, mandarin oranges or apricots.</p> <p>Stewed fruit such as stewed apple, stewed dried fruit, stewed plums or stewed rhubarb.</p> <p>Dried fruit such as raisins, dried apricots, dates, dried figs, prunes – as part of meals only.</p>	<p>Do serve dried fruit with meals or as part of puddings and not on their own as snacks.</p> <p>A small amount of sugar can be added to sweeten very sour fruit in dessert recipes.</p>	

Practice point

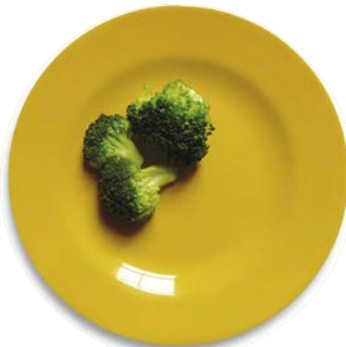
Training for all practitioners on Food and Nutrition skills is offered by the 'Nutrition Skills for Life' programme across Wales, for more information see section 5 or www.publichealthnetwork.cymru/en/topics/nutrition/nutrition-skills/

Examples of portion sizes

1–2 tablespoons cooked vegetables
such as carrot and peas (40g)



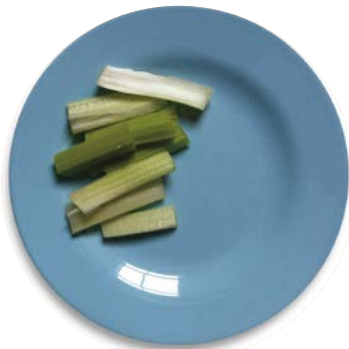
Broccoli (40g)



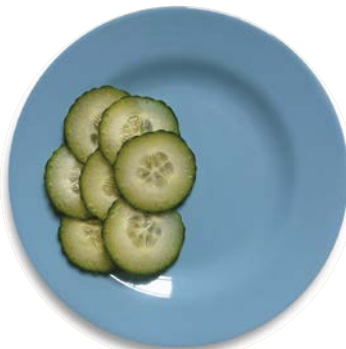
Swede (40g)



4–6 raw vegetable sticks (40g) such as
celery or carrot



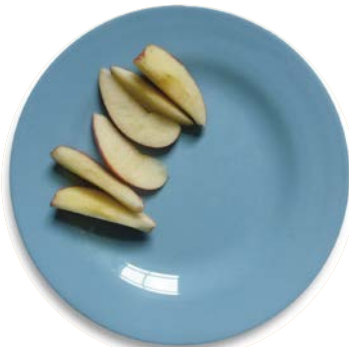
Cucumber slices (40g)



Beetroot (40g)



½ a large piece of fruit such as half an
apple or half a pear



Mixed berries (40g)



1–2 tablespoons fruit canned
in natural juice



1–2 tablespoons of stewed fruit



What counts as 5 A Day?

In general the amount children should eat depends on their size and age, as a rough guide, one portion is the amount they can fit in the palm of their hand.

For older children and adults a portion is 80g of fruit, or vegetables, which is:

- A large slice of fruit like melon or pineapple
- 1 medium apple, banana or pear
- 2 smaller fruits like plums or satsumas
- 7 strawberries or 20 raspberries
- 1 handful of grapes
- 3 heaped tablespoons of peas, beans or pulses
- 3 heaped tablespoons of veggies like sliced carrots, mixed vegetables or corn
- 4 heaped tablespoons of cooked green veggies like cabbage and spring greens
- 2 spears of broccoli or one medium tomato
- A dessert bowl of salad greens.

Practice points

Buying fruit and vegetables

Choose fruit and vegetables in season where possible as they will be tastier, cheaper and more likely to be locally grown.

Try growing fruit and vegetables in pots or bags and fresh herbs in window boxes, to teach children how to grow food and where food comes from. Remember food safety advice when washing and preparing these – see Section 6.

Food hygiene & safety

All fruit and vegetables should be washed before eating.

Preventing choking

To avoid choking, cut small foods like tomatoes, grapes and blackberries into quarters and ensure sausages are cut into very small pieces. Think twice before offering very young children hard foods, such as unripe fruit, or hard cubes of cheese (grate slice instead) slippery foods such as tinned peaches or sticky foods.

Always ensure young children are supervised when eating

Walking or running around with food may also be a safety hazard.

Adapted from, The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents – ROSPA guidance for parents.

Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates

Why is this food group important? Starchy foods provide energy, carbohydrate, fibre and B vitamins.

Best Practice to include these healthy choices	Preparation do's and don'ts	Food standards
All types of bread – wholemeal, granary, brown, wheatgerm, white, multigrain, soda bread, potato bread, chapattis, naan bread, rolls, bagels, pitta bread, wraps, tortilla	Do choose bread and bread products with lower salt content – those labelled green (low) or amber (medium) in salt	Provide a portion of foods from this group at every meal Provide as part of snacks at least one each day Provide a variety each day
Potatoes or sweet potatoes – boiled, mashed, baked or wedges Yam , and other starchy root vegetables	Don't use processed potato products eg. waffles or smiley faces should be avoided as, they are high in fat, sugar and /or salt Do use monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats in cooking, but limit fried starchy foods to no more than once each week	Provide bread and bread products with lower salt content Provide low sugar breakfast cereals Provide correct portion sizes
Pasta and noodles – wholewheat and white Rice – brown and white Other grains such as couscous or bulgur wheat, maize (polenta) and cornmeal	Limit tinned pasta in sauce, its much better to make home made Don't use fried rice or flavoured dried rice in packets and pasta and noodles in pots	Limit fried starchy foods to no more than once each week
Breakfast cereals – low sugar, low-salt cereals such as porridge, puffed wheat, wheat biscuits, crisped rice or flaked wheat. Fortified cereals are a good source of iron	Do choose breakfast cereals which are not sugar coated or contain chocolate NB If a food contains more than 22.5g of sugar per 100g, it is considered a high-sugar food, but with cereals for children the lower the better, look for less than 15g sugar per 100g	



Practice point

Whole grain and high fibre

No specific recommendations are made for children aged under 2 years, but as the diet becomes more varied, increasing amounts of whole grains, pulses, fruits and vegetables are encouraged.

Examples of portion sizes

Bread

Wholemeal toast 25g



Pitta bread ½ pitta bread 30g



Rice cakes 1 rice cake 10g



Potatoes

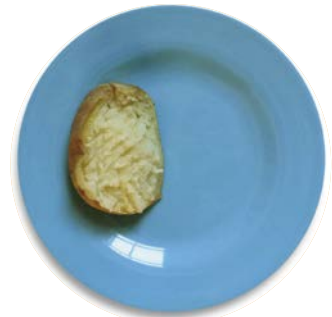
New potato slices 80g



Mashed sweet potato 80g



Jacket potato 80g



Pasta and noodles, rice and grains

White spaghetti 80g



Couscous 80g



Brown rice 80g



Breakfast cereals

Puffed wheat



Porridge



Wheat biscuits



Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins

Why is this food group important? Foods from this group provide protein, iron and zinc. Oily fish provides omega 3 fats, Vitamin A and Vitamin D

Best Practice to include these healthy choices	Preparation do's and don'ts	Food standards
Beans, pulses – includes a variety of beans, lentils and peas such as butter beans, kidney beans, chick peas, lentils, processed peas or baked beans	Look for tinned pulses with no added salt and sugar Dahl and other dishes made from pulses should be made without adding a lot of oil and salt Choose lower-salt and low-sugar baked beans	Provide one portion of beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat or other proteins at lunch and tea Provide as part of snacks once or twice a week Provide a variety across the week Provide a minimum of one lunch and one tea for all children each week using pulses or meat alternative
Fish – White fish such as cod, haddock, plaice and coley. Oil-rich fish such as herring and mackerel, salmon, trout, fresh tuna, sardines or pilchards. Tinned tuna does not count as an oil-rich fish but is a good source of nutrients.	Make sure fish dishes are free of bones	Aim to serve oily fish once a week
Eggs – Boiled, scrambled or poached, or in an omelette	Eggs with the lion mark and are ok to eat soft	Serve correct portion sizes Processed products should not be served more than once in a week in total i.e. 1 processed meat, fish or other protein
Meat – All types including beef, lamb, pork, chicken and turkey	Don't use processed meat products which are high in fat and salt, such as crumb-coated chicken products, burgers, pies and tinned meats. Serve good quality varieties of processed fish or meat products no more than once a week. Examples include fish fingers, fish bites, good quality sausages or burgers. See food labelling section to see what is meant by 'good quality'	Vegetarians serve 2–3 portions of beans, pulses, eggs, or other meat alternative across the day
Other proteins – such as soya mince, textured vegetable protein, quorn or tofu	Processed products made from meat alternatives (e.g. vegetarian sausages, burgers and pies) can also be high in fat or salt and should not be served more than once in a week for children who are vegetarian	

Practice point

Vegetarians should have 2–3 portions of pulses, eggs, meat alternatives per day and ensure variety

e.g. bean and tomato gnocchi bake, rice cakes and hummus, pea and potato omelette.

For Vegans – see special diet section. Pulses can also be used to replace some of the meat or fish in dishes such as casseroles or curries.

Examples of portion sizes

Meat and Poultry

Chicken slices 45g



Pork cubes 40g



Minced Beef 50g



Fish

Canned tuna 40g



Sardines 50g

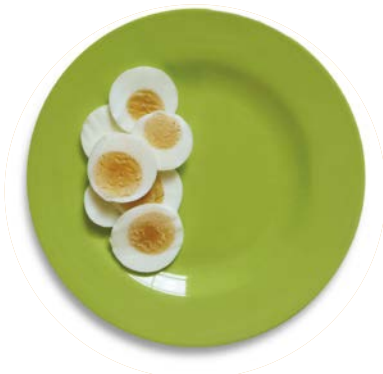


White fish 40g



Eggs and pulses

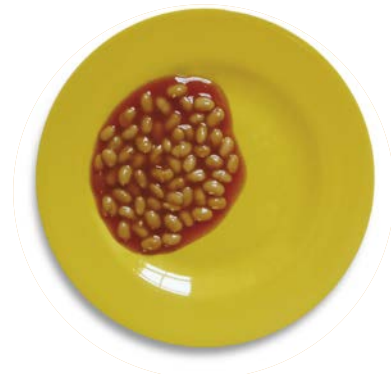
Boiled egg 50g



Red kidney beans 40g



Baked beans 55 g



Practice point

Sustainable sources

If you are buying fish from a supermarket, look for the blue and white logo of the Marine Stewardship Council, which guarantees sustainability.

Dairy and alternatives

Why is this food group important? Foods from this group are a good source of energy, protein, calcium and Vitamin A.

Best Practice to include these healthy choices	Preparation do's and don'ts	Food standards
Milk – Whole milk should be served for under-2s. Over-2s can have semi-skimmed milk provided they eat a well-balanced diet Pasteurised cow, goat, sheep milk Calcium fortified soy milk	Do not provide unpasteurised milk and milk drinks with added sugar	Provide 3 portions of dairy and alternatives each day, including those provided at home Can provide one portion as snack
Cheese	Do not provide unpasteurised cheese and mould-ripened (blue-vein) cheeses Vegetarian cheese should be used where appropriate	
Yoghurt and fromage frais	Do choose plain or natural yoghurts and fromage frais for dessert It is preferable to add fresh fruit to natural yoghurt or fromage frais. Plain yoghurts can be used as a snack (see snack menu)	
Puddings made from milk and milk based sauces	Don't offer ice cream and sweetened frozen yoghurt between meals as these can damage teeth and encourage a preference for sweet tastes Butter and cream are part of fats group – see section on fats	

Practice points

Food safety and hygiene

Rice drinks – children under 5 years should not be given rice drinks as they may contain small amounts of arsenic.

Unpasteurised milk and cheeses and mold ripened cheeses such as brie or camembert, and danish blue, should not be given as these may cause food poisoning in young children.

How much milk over a day

Milk will still be an important drink for young children in the first four years of life. Children should be offered around 300-400 ml of milk a day. This could be as a cup of milk at one of their snack times and a cup of milk in the evening, and portion of dairy food or alternative at a meal time. This provides the recommended 3 portions of dairy and alternatives a day.

Examples of portion sizes

Milk 100–150ml of whole milk



Grated cheddar 15g



Cheese triangle 18g



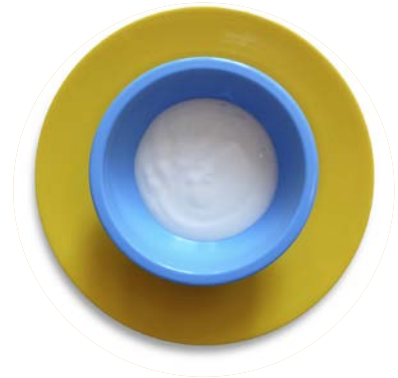
Cottage cheese 30g



Greek Yoghurt



Plain yoghurt (full-fat) 60g



Practice point

Preparing meals

- Cooking from scratch can be more cost effective than using bought ready made products e.g making a tomato sauce from tinned tomatoes, onion and herbs instead of a jar of ready made sauce. It will also be healthier and likely to contain less salt and easier to identify allergens.
- Fruit yoghurt is best made with plain whole yoghurt and fresh, stewed, tinned or frozen fruit, checking it's the right consistency for the children's age.
- Batch cooking and freezing additional portions can be cost effective to reduce time spent cooking, particularly if you have smaller numbers of children or some with a specific food allergy such as dairy free. Always check food safety advice when storing, freezing and reheating foods.

Oils and spreads

Young children need more of their energy from fat than older children or adults, to provide a concentrated source of energy.

There is no need to compare foods to choose lower-fat options. However, when catering for younger children, try to choose products which are low or medium in saturated fat and higher in unsaturated fats:

- Use monounsaturated (rapeseed or olive oil) or polyunsaturated fats (sunflower or

safflower oil) in cooking but try not to fry foods too often.

- Use fat spreads labelled high in monounsaturates or polyunsaturates.

Older children over 5 years of age in out of school care can have low fat spreads and milk and other low fat Products.

Meal planning and standards

Breakfasts

Breakfast is an important meal for young children. Some may have had breakfast before they arrive and some will need it when they arrive.

Food groups	Food and drink standards at breakfast
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates	Provide one portion of these foods as part of breakfast each day. Provide a variety across the week e.g cornflakes, wholegrain toast, porridge. Provide bread and bread products with lower salt content. Provide low sugar breakfast cereals. Provide correct portion sizes.
Fruit and vegetables	Provide a portion of vegetables or fruit at breakfast each day.
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins	These foods provide a useful source of iron and zinc and can be provided as part of breakfast.
Dairy and alternatives	Breakfast can include one of the 3 portions of dairy foods each day – one of these can be part of breakfast e.g milk on cereal, yoghurt or glass of milk.
Drinks	Children must have access to drinking water. Provide only fresh tap water or plain milk.

Practice point

Talk to parents/carers and make sure you have a clear written plan on who needs breakfast and keep an up to date record for staff.

Examples of breakfasts meeting the food and drink guidelines using typical portion sizes for children aged one to four years



Lunch

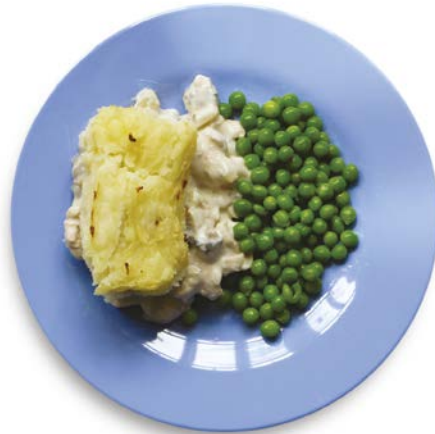
This may be the main meal of the day for some children and should contain the right balance of foods from the Food Groups, as shown:

Food groups	Food and drink standards at breakfast
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates	<p>Provide one portion of these foods as part of lunch each day.</p> <p>Provide at least 3 different starchy foods as part of lunches each week e.g pasta, rice, potato.</p> <p>Provide bread and bread products with lower salt content.</p> <p>Provide correct portion sizes.</p>
Fruit and vegetables	<p>Provide a portion of vegetables and/or fruit as part of lunch each day.</p> <p>Provide a variety of vegetables and fruit across the week at lunchtime.</p> <p>Check product labels if using tinned, choose lower salt, sugar.</p>
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins	<p>Provide a portion of these foods at lunch each day.</p> <p>Provide a variety across the week at lunchtime.</p> <p>Provide one lunch each week which uses pulses or a meat alternative as the protein source.</p> <p>Provide oily fish once a week.</p> <p>Processed* products should not be served more than once in a week in total, i.e. 1 processed meat, fish or other protein.</p>
Dairy and alternatives	<p>Lunch can include one of the three portions of dairy foods each day – one of these can be part of lunch e.g a milk based pudding.</p>
Drinks	<p>Children must have access to drinking water.</p> <p>Provide only fresh tap water or plain milk.</p>

**processed meat or fish products include crumb coated chicken products, sausages, burgers, pies and tinned meats, fish bites.*

Processed meat alternatives include vegetarian sausages, burgers and pies.

Examples of lunches meeting the food and drink guidelines using typical portion sizes for children aged one to four years



Tea

Good communication between the setting and parents/carers is key as to whether a child may require tea or having at home.

Food groups	Food and drink standards at breakfast
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates	<p>Provide one portion of these foods as part of tea each day.</p> <p>Provide at least 3 different starchy foods as part of teas each week e.g pasta, rice, potato.</p> <p>Provide bread and bread products with lower salt content.</p> <p>Limit tinned pasta in sauce.</p> <p>Avoid flavoured dried rice, pasta and noodle products e.g packets of instant flavoured noodles, pasta, rice.</p> <p>Provide correct portion sizes.</p>
Fruit and vegetables	<p>Provide a portion of vegetables and/or fruit as part of tea each day.</p> <p>Provide a variety of vegetables and fruit across the week at teatime.</p> <p>Check product labels if using tinned, choose lower salt, sugar.</p>
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins	<p>Provide a portion of these foods at tea each day.</p> <p>Provide a variety across the week at teatime.</p> <p>Provide one tea each week which uses pulses or a meat alternative as the protein source.</p> <p>Provide oily fish once a week.</p> <p>Limit the amount of meat products, fish products and processed meat alternatives to once a week.</p>
Dairy and alternatives	<p>Tea can include one of the three portions of dairy foods each day – one of these can be part of tea e.g a milk based pudding.</p>
Drinks	<p>Children must have access to drinking water.</p> <p>Provide only fresh tap water or plain milk.</p>

Examples of teas meeting the food and drink guidelines using typical portion sizes for children aged one to four years





Guidelines for salt– how much?

Salt is needed by the body to maintain fluid balance and for nerve and muscle function

Having too much salt though can give children a taste for salty foods and this can lead to high blood pressure later on.

Children should only have the equivalent of less than half a teaspoon of salt per day, (3g) which they will get as part of their normal diet intake.

Salt is mainly found in processed foods – which is why the food standards state to only use processed meat or fish once a week, if at all, and cooking guidance states no salt to be used in cooking.

Food labelling, flavour enhancers are often used to bring out the flavour in foods, but can be high in sodium – e.g monosodium glutamate (MSG E621).

Practice point

Limit the amount of salt in children's diets by:

- Not adding salt to cooking or at the table
- Not using packet soups, stock cubes, packet sauces
- Limiting the use of processed foods
- Cooking from scratch
- Checking labels and choose low salt products

What to use instead:

- Flavour with herbs and spices
- Fresh vegetables or frozen will not contain added salt – if you do buy tinned vegetables get them without added salt
- Do the same with tinned pulses
- Make sauces using ripe tomatoes and garlic



Guidelines for sugars

Government recommendations (2017) have advised we have very small amounts of sugar in the diet in the form of added sugar, sugar found in cakes, biscuits and sugary puddings, biscuits, jams. This needs to start from an early age and is particularly important in helping to protect young children's teeth.

Young children are vulnerable to tooth decay, because the enamel on their teeth is not as strong as on adult teeth. Decay in children's teeth can affect the development of their adult teeth.

Foods such as whole fruit and milk contains essential nutrients and also sugars but these are not as damaging to children's teeth as the sugar added to foods such as sweets, cakes,

chocolates, sugary drinks, juice drinks, and the sugar found naturally in fruit juice.

Foods and drink labelled as low sugar, reduced sugar, no added sugar are often sweetened with artificial sweeteners.

Artificial sweeteners

Aspartame (E951)

Saccharin (E954)

Sorbitol (E420)

Acesulfame K (E950)

Sucralose (E955)

Sweeteners are not allowed in foods specially prepared for infants under 12 months and young children 1–3 years.

Practice point

Avoid artificial sweeteners as it encourages a sweet taste and use natural sweeteners such as fruit.

Sweeteners are often found in fruit juice drinks, squash, yoghurts and fromage frais, baked beans, sauces and dressings, flavoured crisps and snacks.

Remember honey, treacle, syrup are all forms of sugar and food labels may also list different types of sugar such as fructose corn syrup, dextrose, glucose – see food labelling section.

Designed to Smile

If a setting has been invited to participate in Designed to Smile they can contact their local Services <http://www.designedtosmile.org/welcome-croeso/welcome/>

Designed to Smile will continue to work with childcare settings identified as target sites to deliver a fluoride tooth-brushing programme to 0–3 year olds. Home packs will be provided to these children.

Childcare settings can help familiarise children with visits to the dentist through role play in the childcare setting using stories, pictures and puzzles.

Positive messages that dental teams help people to look after their teeth should be emphasised.



Figure 3: Free sugars include added sugar, syrups, honey and juice but not fruit or sweeteners

Fruit yoghurt 125g



15.9g*
11.25g

Plain yoghurt 125g and strawberries



11.6g
0g

Orange juice 150ml



12.9g
12.9g

Fruit salad 140g



19.6g
0g

Total Sugars
 Free Sugars

*Includes naturally occurring milk and fruit sugars as well as added sugar. Source: Public Health England.

Practice point

Activities for older children in out of school care can include looking at amounts of free sugar in the drinks they may have e.g. Free sugars include added sugar, syrups, honey and juice but not fruit or sweeteners.

Cola



36g
36g

Diet Cola



0g
0g

Total Sugars
 Free Sugars

Desserts, puddings and cakes

Desserts, puddings and cakes made with cereals, milk and fruit which contain natural sugars, can be included as part of a healthy balanced diet for young children and can provide a lot of essential nutrients such as calcium and iron, as well as energy.

If children regularly have foods high in fat and sugar such as fried foods, cakes, biscuits,

savoury snacks, they may consume more energy than they need and may gain excess weight. These types of foods also do not contain many good nutrients.

The examples given in this guide will help you to ensure that children have the right amount of energy and nutrients for healthy growth.

Suggested portion sizes – Rice pudding with raisins

5–11 year old



1–4 year old



Suggested portion sizes – Apple Crumble

5–11 year old



1–4 year old



Food labelling and buying healthier products

Purchasing food ingredients

Getting a balance between 'value for money' and providing 'quality' food can be a challenge, cooking from scratch can help to provide food lower in salt, sugars and saturated fats as well as being more economical.

When buying food consider the following:

- Pasta, rice and bread are economical; as are eggs, pulses and tinned fish. Lean meat is often better value than cheaper fatter varieties.
- Check the list of ingredients – the longer the list, the poorer the quality in general.
- The ingredient list on food labels starts with the main ingredient and is in weight order. Nutrition labels are often displayed as a panel or grid on the packaging, but may sometimes appear simply as text
- Compare foods and choose those that are lower in salt or sugar. If salt, sugar, or additives come high on the list it may be best to avoid.
- Nutrition information is normally given per 100 grams (100g) of the product, and sometimes per portion (such as 'one slice'), but remember the portion size may be for adults and not young children.
- Sugar may appear on labels under different names: sucrose, maltose, lactose, dextrose, fructose, glucose, glucose syrup, xylitol, sorbitol, mannitol, raw sugar, brown sugar, molasses, and honey.

Figure 4: How do I know if a food is high in fat, saturated fat, sugar or salt?

Using food labels to identify baked beans lower in salt and sugar

	LOW per 100g Less than...	MEDIUM per 100g	HIGH per 100g More than...
Fat	3g	3g - 17.5g	17.5g
Saturates	1.5g	1.5g - 5g	5g
Sugars	5g	5g - 22.5g	22.5g
Salt	0.3g	0.3g - 1.5g	1.5g

Brand 2 baked beans contain less sugar and less salt than brand 1, and are therefore a better choice than brand 1.

Baked beans – brand 1	
Nutritional information	
Typical values	Per 100g
Energy	355kJ 84 kcal
Fat	0.6g
of which saturates	0.1g
Carbohydrate	15.3g
of which sugars	5.9g
Fibre	3.7g
Protein	5.2g
Salt	1.3g



Baked beans – brand 2	
Nutritional information	
Typical values	Per 100g
Energy	311kJ 73 kcal
Fat	0.6g
of which saturates	0.1g
Carbohydrate	12.5g
of which sugars	2.8g
Fibre	3.8g
Protein	5.4g
Salt	0.8g

Practice point

Savvy shopping

Value staple foods are often no different to premium brands e.g. dried pasta, rice, tinned tomatoes, they may also contain less salt and sugar

Special discounts are often on less healthier products – if you have storage, buying in bulk can be more cost effective such as for tinned and frozen Products.

Food additives

Additives are important in terms of preserving food. Manufacturers must state what additives or colours are in the food.

For children certain colours added are advised to be avoided:

Tartrazine (E102)

Quinoline Yellow (E104)

Sunset Yellow (E110)

Carmoisine (E122)

Ponceau 4R(E124)

Allura Red (E129)

Where are they likely to be found:

- Confectionery, cakes, soft drinks, fruit juice drinks, ice cream, food colouring.
- Ready made meals and take-away meals

These are foods that are also likely to be high in sugar and unhealthy fats and low in nutrients.

Food branded for children

Be wary of some foods that are specifically branded or marketed for children as they can be higher in sugar e.g. processed fruit snacks and fruit juice drinks.

Ready made and take away meals

Best practice – these are best avoided as children can get all the nutrients they need from readily available foods and meals made from scratch.

Remember:

Off the shelf ready meals, snack foods and take aways designed for young children or adults are often high in fats, sugar and salt.

Table 5: Remember Important nutrients:

Good sources of iron and zinc in the food groups.

Food Groups	Iron	Zinc
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy foods	Wholemeal bread Wholewheat pasta Brown rice Fortified breakfast cereals	Wholegrain and wheat germ bread Fortified breakfast cereals Plain popcorn
Fruit and vegetables	Dark green leafy vegetables: broccoli, spinach, cabbage Dried apricots, raisins	
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins	Red meat, beef, lamb Canned oily fish e.g sardines, pilchards Eggs Soya beans, tofu Pulses, chickpeas, lentils, baked beans	Red kidney beans, green and red lentils Chickpeas Lean meat and dark poultry Canned oily fish e.g. sardines, pilchards Eggs Tofu and quornTM Peanuts ground nuts Sesame seeds
Dairy and alternatives		Whole and semi-skimmed milk Other dairy products e.g. yoghurt and cheese

it is important to introduce oily fish such as salmon, pilchards and sardines into the menus as it is naturally high in nutrients.



Fortified foods

Fortification is adding extra nutrients to foods. By law some foods have to be fortified e.g. in the UK white and brown flour are fortified with calcium, iron and B vitamins, which are lost when flour is processed.

Food manufacturers can also choose to add extra nutrients e.g. breakfasts cereals may contain extra B vitamins and iron and can be a useful source of these nutrients as long as not high in sugar or salt.

If children are drinking an alternative to cow's milk such as ready-made soya, hemp, oat, or coconut milk this is usually not recommended before 2 years. These need to be fortified with calcium so that children's requirements are met.

Functional food and fortified foods for adults may not be suitable for children as they may contain too much of a particular nutrient.

Eating well sustainably

Childcare settings can play a key part in the well being of future generations in Wales (ref), and contribute to doing things differently for our future generation by helping children to:

- eat a healthy balanced diet
- be physically active
- have positive mental health and well being

and by:

- providing more sustainable food as an important aspect of encouraging better food for all

Sustainable food is about food culture and how decisions made about growing, buying, storing, cooking and wasting food today will impact future generations.

You can look for ideas on how to make small changes and be able to offer more sustainable food in this booklet: http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/pdfs/Eating_well_sustainably_A_guide_for_Early_Years_Settings_2016.pdf

Find out more about the well being of future generations in Wales here: <https://futuregenerations.wales/the-future-2/>

Catering for special dietary requirements

- Childcare settings are required to obtain information about children's special dietary requirements, including food allergies and intolerances, before they attend. They also need to record and act on the information provided about children's dietary needs, Childminding and daycare (Wales) Regulations 2010.
- Childcare settings that provide any food and drink are considered as food businesses and are required to have information available on the Food Information (Wales) Regulations 2014. This should be in the form of an allergen policy, and measures in place to ensure consumers (i.e. their children) are not put at risk. This should include allergen training, for which information is available on <http://www.food.gov.uk>

Provision for cultural and specific dietary requirements

Children's cultural background has to be respected and any specific dietary requirements should be taken into account. Settings must ensure that they make appropriate provision for parental preferences including cultural and religious food sensitivities, for example the provision of halal and kosher food as appropriate.

It is important for children to learn and appreciate the diets of different cultures. Food customs may involve what foods are eaten, how the foods are prepared, what combinations of foods are used or when particular foods are eaten. Also periods of celebration and celebration foods can create opportunities for activities in the childcare setting. It is important not to make assumptions about what a child eats from their name, religion or appearance.

Some cultures have periods of fasting, though this does not apply to young children. However, the meals eaten at home may be different during fasting periods, such as a main meal late at night or breakfast very early. Check with parents if the child's food intake at the childcare setting needs to be adjusted during this time.

You will be able to find out any specific dietary requirements, when registering children in your care and plan menus accordingly. This is different from likes and dislikes, children should be encouraged to try different food tastes on a regular basis. However, they may not accept meals containing too many different or new flavours so try and introduce new tastes to your menu, one at a time. See Section 5 for further guidance.



Table 6: Cultural and religious considerations

A guide to food choices commonly observed by different religions and cultures

	Jewish	Sikh	Muslim	Hindu ¹	Buddhist	Rastafarian ²	Vegan
Eggs	No Bloodspots	Yes	Yes	It varies	It varies	It varies	No
Milk/Yogurt	Not with meat	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	It varies	Calcium fortified from plant source only
Cheese	Not with meat	Yes	It varies	Yes	Yes	It varies	Vegan cheese only
Chicken	Kosher	It varies	Halal	It varies	No	It varies	No
Lamb/Mutton	Kosher	It varies	Halal	It varies	No	It varies	No
Beef	Kosher	No	Halal	No	No	It varies	No
Pork	No	Rarely	No	Rarely	No	No	No
Fish	With scales, fins and back bone	It varies	It varies	With fins and scales	It varies	Yes	No
Shellfish	No	It varies	It varies	It varies	No	No	No
Butter/Ghee	Kosher	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	It varies	No Vegan spreads such as nut spreads
Lard	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Cereal foods	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nuts/Pulses	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fruit/Vegetables³	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fasting⁴	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

1 Strict Hindus and Sikhs will not eat eggs, meat, fish and some fats

2 Some Rastafarians are vegan

3 Jains?? have restrictions on some vegetable foods. Check with the individuals

4 Fasting is unlikely to apply to young children

Vegetarian Diets

- Lacto-ovo vegetarian – eat dairy products and eggs, do not eat red meat, offal, poultry, and fish.
- Lacto-vegetarian – will eat milk containing foods but not eggs. Do not eat meat, offal, poultry, fish and eggs
- Vegans – all animal products are avoided

Vegetarian diets

Vegetarian meals and snacks are suitable for all children and it is recommended that at least one meal a week on the main menu is based on a suitable meat alternative.

Following the food standards and guidance to provide a variety of vegetarian choices will ensure the nutritional needs of children requiring a vegetarian diet are met.

Remember:

- choose alternative sources of protein to meat and fish such as beans or pulses, soya, tofu, Quorn TM to provide protein, iron and zinc.
- other sources of iron and zinc containing foods to include are fortified breakfast cereals, bread, especially wholemeal, green leafy vegetables and dried fruit.
- fruit and vegetables should be included, as they are rich in vitamin C, which helps to absorb iron from non meat sources in the body.
- ensure an adequate calcium intake by offering milk, cheese, yoghurt and fromage frais on the menu.
- if cheese is served at the main course at lunchtime include a protein containing iron at the other main meal, for example beans, lentils or eggs.

There are a range of good vegetarian choices include in the example menus and recipes in Volume II.

Vegan diets

Vegans do not eat any foods of animal origin. This includes meat, fish and dairy foods, and also honey. Vegan diets may be low in a number of nutrients such as energy, protein, vitamins B2 and B12, calcium, zinc and iron.

These diets need careful planning and vitamin supplements may be necessary to complement the menu. The Vegan Society recommends that vegans take supplements of Vitamin B12, Vitamin D and calcium.

When preparing vegetarian or vegan meals it is important that food provided is not compromised in any way. For example, picking meat out of a dish already cooked is not appropriate. The vegetarian/vegan dish should be prepared first and the meat added later for other children.

Work in partnership with parents/carers to devise a suitable menu for the child including foods the child is familiar with at home, and which particular foods are to be avoided e.g. gelatine and rennet. You may need to ask families to provide appropriate foods and seek advice from a dietitian.

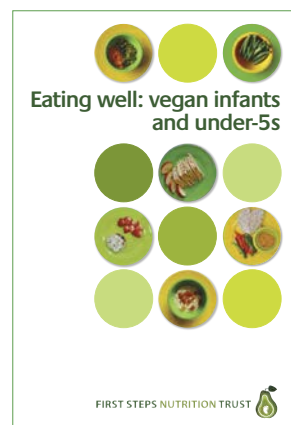
For more information:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/vegetarian-vegan-children/>

http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/newpages/Early_Years/eating_well-early_years_vegans.html

Practical and visual guide on providing meals for vegan children

<https://www.vegansociety.com/>



Provision of special diets for medical reasons

Childcare settings and their caterers should work closely with families to support children with dietary requirements for medical reasons. It is important that requests for special diets including diets for food allergies are handled sensitively and appropriately, and this can be included as part of the food and drink policy describing how these are managed, and the procedure that is followed.

The range of diets can include the texture of the food to be modified in a way that makes it easier to eat e.g. pureed or mashed, gluten-free for children with diagnosed Coeliac disease, modified diet for diabetes, allergy free: nut-free or milk-free diets.

The parent /carer will have all the necessary dietary information provided by the child's dietitian and in some cases the Dietitian may be in contact with the childcare setting directly.

Managing food allergies and intolerances

Food allergy and food intolerance are different.

Food allergy involves the immune system and is a response to specific proteins found in foods, and can occur after a trace of the allergic food is eaten. Reactions are usually

immediate and symptoms are wide ranging and may include diarrhoea, swelling of the lips, tongue or throat. The most severe reaction can result in anaphylaxis (a severe and potentially life threatening reaction). Food allergy is more common in infancy and early childhood than in adult life. About 5-8% of infants are allergic to certain foods and many children will grow out of their food allergies. However, peanut allergies are usually more persistent. The foods that most commonly cause problems in children are milk, eggs, soya, fish/shellfish, wheat, peanuts and tree nuts, (IFG 2015).

Food intolerances do not involve the immune system and tend to occur more slowly and symptoms may depend on the amount of food that has been eaten.

For confirmed food allergies there should be a protocol in place which is accessible to all staff, to ensure everyone is aware of individual children's allergies and symptoms. If you suspect that a child has a food allergy, encourage parents or carers to seek advice and diagnosis from their doctor, to ensure it is appropriately managed, and foods are only excluded from children's diets where necessary, with appropriate alternatives identified to ensure they still eat a balanced diet.



Providing food allergen information

Understanding which allergens are present in every meal and snack you provide is an important step in providing food which is safe for children with food allergies and intolerances. Since 2014, all food businesses, including child care settings have been required by law (ref), to give details about the allergens in the food they provide. There are 14 allergens covered by this requirement:

celery	molluscs (including squid, mussels, cockles, whelks and snails)
cereals containing gluten (including wheat, rye, barley and oats)	mustard
crustaceans (including prawns, crab and lobster)	nuts
eggs	peanuts
fish	sesame seeds
lupin	soya beans
milk	sulphur dioxide/ sulphites (at levels above 10mg/kg)

It is important to remember that children can have allergies to foods and ingredients not covered by this list. These will not be highlighted in bold on product ingredients lists. The same policy and procedure should be followed where a child has an allergy to a food not included on this list, to ensure appropriate and safe meals and snacks are provided for them:

Guidance for food preparation and catering for food allergens is found in Section 6 and see resources section 7.

Some settings highlight a child with an allergy by using a different coloured plate or specially marked placement. Whilst this could potentially cause the child to feel different, the settings have not seen this to be the case, and it means that all staff are aware of the allergy whichever room they work in.

More information on specific allergies

Peanut Allergy

Peanut allergy usually produces a severe reaction. Care must be taken to prevent accidental consumption of food containing nut products or food that has come into contact with them. Preparing food for peanut allergy sufferers in a designated area may help. Peanut butter should be avoided and many prepared foods can contain nuts or nut flour. Careful checking of food labels is necessary. People with peanut allergy should avoid peanuts and food containing peanuts.

There are many lists of products containing peanuts but as a general guide you should check the ingredients list of:

- Baked products, like cakes and biscuits
- Cereals
- Oriental dishes
- Crackers
- Ice creams
- Health bars
- Pastry

Children with severe food allergies are advised to carry identification. Children with a nut allergy should have been seen by a Dietitian.



Dairy-free diets

These may be necessary for children who are cow's milk protein intolerant and/or lactose intolerant. (Lactose is the sugar naturally occurring in milk and all milk-based foods). Lactose intolerance is commonly found in some Asian and African populations, and is caused by a deficiency of lactase, the enzyme required to digest lactose. Lactose intolerance causes unpleasant digestive symptoms including diarrhoea.

Milk and other dairy foods provide a substantial amount of calcium and riboflavin in the diets of children. Infants and children up to 2 years who do not have milk or dairy products should continue on the infant formula recommended to them by a doctor or dietitian.

Ready-made soya, hemp, oat, coconut or other milk alternative may be used as a main milk drink after two years of age, but the choice may depend on the individual child's nutritional status.

The Food Standards Agency does not recommend giving rice milk to children before they are four-and-half years old.

Milks should be fortified with calcium where possible. Note: Organic products do not always have added calcium. If the product is not fortified with calcium, it is likely that a calcium supplement will be required



Gluten-free diets

If a child has a diagnosis of coeliac disease this means they must follow a gluten-free diet. Gluten is the protein found in wheat, rye and barley and therefore all foods which contain these cereals must be avoided. There are a good variety of gluten-free foods available and advice on foods to choose and avoid can be given by a dietitian. Coeliac UK also provides help and advice as well as booklets outlining gluten-free foods.

NB play-dough is made from flour as are home-made play material often used in childcare settings and the pasta shapes sometimes used for collages. It is important that children with Coeliac Disease are supervised when using these materials to stop small children putting these in their mouth.

Integration

Children from an early age want to feel part of the group and not be excluded, so involve children in planning menus. If children are able to make suggestions for the menu it will give them a sense of pride and may also encourage them to eat. Also try to make food provided for special diets similar to the main menus e.g. soya milk for custard or white sauce can enable the child on a milk-free diet to enjoy custard or fish pie alongside other children. It may be possible to make up a batch of the

alternative food and freeze individual portions to save time later on.

It is also important that whatever foods need to be excluded they are replaced with a food from the same group wherever possible so the nutritional content of the meal is not affected.

A 3 week menu plan

It is recommended that a minimum of a 3 week cycle is used in childcare settings to ensure variety and to cover a range of tastes and textures.

Children with special needs, including additional learning needs and disabilities should be included in snack and meal times with other children in your setting. Children with more complex needs may require specific texture modification or more help and support to eat.

Examples of a 3 week menus cycle for Spring & Summer and Autumn & Winter including snacks, drinks and meals is outlined below and recipes are provided in Volume 2.

Week 1: Early years (children aged 1–4 years)

Spring / Summer



Menu	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast Planned to provide 20% of a child's daily nutritional requirements Drinks: Water only	Malt wheat cereal with milk and sliced banana Crumpet and spread	Cornflakes with milk, raisins and kiwi fruit quarters White toast and spread	Hard-boiled egg and tomatoes with wholemeal bread and spread Banana	Wheat biscuits with milk and mixed berries Half a slice of fruit bread and spread	Crisped rice cereal and milk Half a bagel with spread and melon
Mid-morning snack Planned to provide 10% of a child's daily nutritional requirements Drinks: Milk or water	Breadsticks and mixed vegetable sticks	Toasted crumpet, spread and strawberries	Yoghurt and sliced grapes	Wholemeal toast with spread and mangetout	Banana slices
Lunch Planned to provide 30% of a child's daily nutritional requirements Drinks: Water only	Thai chicken curry (or Thai tofu curry) with white rice Seasonal fruit salad	Lamb moussaka (or Lentil moussaka) with garlic bread and mixed salad Rhubarb fool	Pork ragu (or soya and apple ragu) with new potatoes, broad beans and courgettes Pineapple upside down pudding with custard	Salmon and pea risotto (or bean and pea risotto) Blueberry sponge cake	Bean and veggie sausage wholemeal pasta bake Plain Greek yoghurt with raspberry puree
Mid-afternoon snack Planned to provide 10% of a child's daily nutritional requirements Drinks: Milk or water	Cheese (sliced or cut into sticks) and sliced tomatoes	Pineapple slices	Mashed avocado and pitta bread	Mixed chopped seasonal fruit	Cucumber and carrot sticks with crackers and cream cheese
Tea Planned to provide 20% of a child's daily nutritional requirements Drinks: Water only	Bean and tomato gnocchi bake with bread and spread Strawberry frozen yoghurt	Tuna fishcakes (or potato and lentil cakes) with tomato relish Season fruit salad	Pasta with beans and peas Rice pudding with peach purée	Wholemeal English muffin pizza with various toppings Banana slices	Crustless quiche with potato salad and pepper sticks Apple slices and raisins

* Fresh drinking water must be available and accessible at all times.

Week 2: Early years (children aged 1–4 years)

Spring / Summer 

Menu	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast Planned to provide 20% of a child's daily nutritional requirements Drinks: Water only	Wheat biscuits with mild and kiwi fruit	Berries and yoghurt with toasted oats and cornflakes	Crisped rice cereal with milk and sliced banana Crumpet with spread	Cornflakes and mild Half a toasted teacake with spread and melon	Toasted English muffin with spread, egg and mushrooms
Mid-morning snack Planned to provide 10% of a child's daily nutritional requirements Drinks: Milk or water	Beanie dip and bread sticks	Pepper sticks and tomato slices	Wholemeal toast with spread and kiwi fruit quarters	Banana slices	Bagel and cream cheese
Lunch Planned to provide 30% of a child's daily nutritional requirements Drinks: Water only	BBQ chicken (or BBQ Quorn™ pieces) with new potatoes and toast vegetables Lemon and sultana cake	Beef and spinach curry (or chickpea and spinach curry) with white rice and naan bread Seasonal fruit salad	Steamed cod in tomato and pepper sauce (or tofu in tomato and pepper sauce) with couscous and green beans Rice pudding and raspberries	Vegetable and red lentil dhansak with brown rice Fruit, jelly and ice cream	Turkey meatballs (or veggie 'meatballs') with white spaghetti Peach fool ripple
Mid-afternoon snack Planned to provide 10% of a child's daily nutritional requirements Drinks: Milk or water	Nectarine slices	Oatcakes and cream cheese	Cucumber and carrot sticks	Crackers, tzatziki and tomato slices	Melon and blueberries
Tea Planned to provide 20% of a child's daily nutritional requirements Drinks: Water only	Couscous and chickpea salad Rice pudding and raisins	Sardine pâté (or pinto bean spread) on white toast with grilled tomatoes Fruit yoghurt pots	Billy can beans (or veggie sausage and beans) with wholemeal pasta Seasonal fruit kebabs	Lemon chicken (or Lemon soys) wrap with lettuce and cucumber Plain Greek yoghurt with strawberries and blackcurrants	Pea and asparagus frittata with new potato salad Pineapple slices

* Fresh drinking water must be available and accessible at all times.

Week 3: Early years (children aged 1–4 years)

Spring / Summer 

Menu	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast Planned to provide 20% of a child's daily nutritional requirements Drinks: Water only	Malt wheat cereal with milk Half a white bagel with spread, tomato and mushrooms	Cornflakes with milk and banana Wholemeal toast and spread	Shredded wheat with milk Toasted fruit bread with spread and kiwi fruit	Wheat biscuits with milk and raisins Half a crumpet and spread	Crisped rice cereal with milk and grapes Wholemeal toast and spread
Mid-morning snack Planned to provide 10% of a child's daily nutritional requirements Drinks: Milk or water	Peach slices and plain yoghurt	Breadsticks with carrot and pepper sticks	Mixed berries and plain yoghurt	Wholemeal toast and spread	Sugar snap peas and houmous
Lunch Planned to provide 30% of a child's daily nutritional requirements Drinks: Water only	Beef and mushroom stroganoff (or bean and mushroom stroganoff) with white rice Banana buns	Pasta primavera with garlic bread Yoghurt and dried apricots	Gammon (or Quorn™ fillet) with parsley sauce, new potatoes and green beans Seasonal fruit platter	Cod, potato and spinach curry (or lentil potato and spinach curry) with couscous Creamy apricot dessert	Chicken and vegetable pie (or cheese and vegetable pie) with roast potatoes and spring greens Summer crumble and custard
Mid-afternoon snack Planned to provide 10% of a child's daily nutritional requirements Drinks: Milk or water	Crumpets and spread	Banana and yoghurt	Pitta bread and tuna dip	Pepper sticks and cheese (sliced or cut into sticks)	Rice cakes, cucumber sticks and tomatoes
Tea Planned to provide 20% of a child's daily nutritional requirements Drinks: Water only	Savoury omelette with potato salad and cucumber Strawberry frozen yoghurt	Lamb and mint koftas (or veggie mince and mint koftas) with tomato sauce and wholemeal pita breads Apple slices and dates	Salmon and broccoli pasta (or lentil and broccoli pasta) with sweetcorn Semolina and nectarine compote	Grapes and melon	Dairy ice cream and mango slices

* Fresh drinking water must be available and accessible at all times.