



# FOOD & NUTRITION

for Childcare settings

## Section 4

Food and nutrition: standards,  
guidelines and menu planning

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# Section 4

## Food and nutrition: standards, guidelines and menu planning

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# Your complete guide to providing a healthy balanced diet for children in your care

## Food and Nutrition



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 right amounts and by creating an environment that encourages children to develop positive attitudes to food and their health. This section

provides all you need to know about the food and drink you provide to ensure it meets the dietary recommendations for children in your care.

### What are nutrients?

The body needs energy, nutrients and water for healthy growth and development.

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

- **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 section 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 1.

For more information on the recommended amount of nutrients for older children, 5–12 year olds, see Appendix 2.

## Balancing requirements throughout the day

**Younger children need healthy snacks between meals that are the appropriate portion size for their age, to meet their nutritional requirements**

**Table 1** outlines how much food should be provided across a full day in child care, if all meals are provided, to meet the nutritional requirements for 1–4 year olds.

The example menus provide these amounts based on lunch being the main meal and tea a light meal, but these can be reversed to fit with the type of setting provision.

It also gives approximate timings as a guide.

This allows for 10% of requirements to be met at home from an additional snack and drink e.g. a small glass of milk and a portion of fruit.

However, in practice children will have meals in different settings across the day e.g. home, school, childcare, so some flexibility will be required. For other variations see the practice point on meal planning on p38.

Considerations for wrap around care are covered in Section 5.

**Table 1: Proportion of energy and nutrients provided across full day care**

8am	Breakfast	20% of total daily intakes
10am	Mid morning snack and drink	10% of total daily intakes
12pm	Lunch – savoury main meal and dessert	30% of total daily intakes
2:30pm	Mid afternoon snack and drink	10% of total daily intakes
4:30pm	Tea – savoury light meal and dessert	20% of total daily intakes

### 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 guidance 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
	LOW	LOW	HIGH	MED
13%	4%	7%	38%	15%

of an adult's reference intake  
Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/ 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 aged 1–4 years 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 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, snacks and drinks. 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 with The Best Practice Guidance, 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 1 & 2.

### 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 a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. This means eating more beans and pulses and sustainable sources of fish and less red and processed meat. Red meat is a good source of iron for young children but a suitable range of vegetarian food can also provide sufficient iron. The example menus have a variety of meals based on beans, pulses and fish to provide more ideas for your setting.

See p48 for more information on providing a more sustainable diet, and Appendix 4 for the sustainable food checklist.



### 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 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 such as plain yoghurt, cream cheese and full fat plain milk.
- Children 2–5 years can change to lower fat dairy foods and semi-skimmed milk if they are eating well. Skimmed and 1% fat milks are not suitable as a main drink for children under 5 years.

Some children may drink milk alternatives e.g made from soya, nuts or oats. This may be because of a medical reason (see p 53) or parental choice.

The type of fat is also important:

- **Saturated fat** is mainly from animal sources: dairy e.g. butter, lard, cream, ghee, full fat milk, ice cream; fatty and cured meats, sausages; coconut oil and palm oil.
- **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](http://www.firststepsnutrition.org) for more information.



## 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. **Information on healthy hydration is found on page 15.**



## 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](http://www.nurserymilk.co.uk/about-nursery-milk-scheme)

## 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.

For Vitamin D there are specific recommendations:

- babies who are being breastfed are given a daily vitamin D supplement from birth containing 8.5-10mcg of vitamin D to make sure they get enough
- babies who are having infant formula should not be given a vitamin D supplement until they're having less than 500ml (about a pint) of infant formula a day, as infant formula is fortified with vitamin D
- children aged 1–4 years old should be given a daily supplement containing 10mcg of vitamin D all year round
- parents of older children should also consider giving them a daily supplement of Vitamin D all year round.



## Healthy Start

Children in your care may be receiving Healthy Start which aims to provide a nutritional safety net for low income pregnant women and families with children up to 4 years of age and young pregnant women (under 18 years of age). They are entitled to vouchers that can be exchanged for cows' 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 [www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthy-start-vouchers/do-i-qualify/](http://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 and bowls are sized as follows:

Small bowl – 8cm (depth 3cm)



Large bowl 12 cm (depth 7cm)



Large Plate 20cm



# Planning the day and weeks food

## Example of a weeks menu

### Week 1: Early years (children aged 1-4 years)

Spring / Summer



Menu	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Breakfast</b> Planned to provide <b>20%</b> 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	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
<b>Mid-morning snack</b> Planned to provide <b>10%</b> 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
<b>Lunch</b> Planned to provide <b>30%</b> 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
<b>Mid-afternoon snack</b> Planned to provide <b>10%</b> 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
<b>Tea</b> Planned to provide <b>20%</b> 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
<b>Note: Fresh drinking water must be available and accessible at all times.</b>					

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.

### A 3–4 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. This should apply to a full menu with meals, snack and drinks as well as a snack and drinks menu.

Example menus for a 3 week menu cycle for Spring & Summer and Autumn & Winter

including snacks, drinks and meals is provided in Best Practice Guidance – Menus and recipes.

Use the food standards, menu planning guidance, practice point tips, and the example menus and recipes to produce a menu cycle that will meet the health needs of growing children, 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**
- food standards **how often, how much, and which different types** of food and drink to provide for meals.



**This section on food and drink standards and guidance is divided into:**

**4 A Settings that provide drinks and snacks only**

**pg 15**

**4 B Healthy hydration for all settings**

**pg 21**

**4 C Settings that provide a range of meals which can  
include breakfast, main meals, light meals, snacks and drinks**

**pg 24**

# 4 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, and high in nutrients. 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 energy intakes each for mid morning and mid afternoon, 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>Sessional care – provide a starchy food such as crackers, bread sticks, rice cakes as part of most snacks.</p> <p>Full day care providing meals and snacks – provide a starchy food such as crackers, bread sticks, 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 44 food labelling).</p>
Fruit and vegetables	<p>Provide vegetables and/or fruit as part of all snacks.</p> <p>Dried and pureed 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>One portion as part of a snack can contribute to the 3 portions of dairy and alternatives required daily.</p> <p>A cup of milk counts as dairy if providing milk to drink or a portion of cheese or plain yoghurt.</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, sticky foods.

Always ensure young children are supervised when eating.

Walking or running around with food is also a safety hazard, Children should be sitting when having food and drink.

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

**Figure 1: Snack ideas for 1–4 year olds**

<p>Pitta bread with tahini dip and apple</p> 	<p>Crumpets, soft cheese and peppers</p> 	<p>Wholemeal roll with peanut butter and carrot</p> 
<p>Banana, blueberries and yoghurt</p> 	<p>Peppers and carrot sticks</p> 	<p>Oatcakes, cottage cheese and peppers</p> 
<p>Mozarella and green beans</p> 	<p>Breadsticks, bean dip, tomato and avocado</p> 	<p>Rice cakes, cheese and tomatoes</p> 
<p>Sliced boiled egg with toast and cress</p> 	<p>Chopped chicken sandwich with pineapple</p> 	<p>Sweet potato wedges and yoghurt dip</p> 

Similar snack ideas can be found in the menus and recipes, there is also an example 3 week snack menu cycle.

### Practice point

#### Food hygiene and safety

Help children to learn basic hygiene themselves – for example washing their hands with liquid soap and running 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 for more information on food hygiene and safety.



## Three week example snack menu for childcare settings – spring/summer (children aged 1-4 years)

Week 1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Mid-morning snack</b> Planned to provide <b>10%</b> of a child's daily nutritional requirements	Breadsticks and mixed vegetable sticks	Toasted crumpet, spread and strawberries	Yoghurt and sliced grapes	Wholemeal toast with spread and mangetout	Banana slices
<b>Mid-afternoon snack</b> Planned to provide <b>10%</b> of a child's daily nutritional requirements	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
Week 2	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Mid-morning snack</b> Planned to provide <b>10%</b> of a child's daily nutritional requirements	Beanie dip and bread sticks	Pepper sticks and tomato slices	Wholemeal toast with spread and kiwi fruit quarters	Banana slices	Bagel and cream cheese with carrot sticks
<b>Mid-afternoon snack</b> Planned to provide <b>10%</b> of a child's daily nutritional requirements	Nectarine slices	Oatcakes and cream cheese with apple slices	Cucumber and carrot sticks	Crackers, tzatziki and tomato slices	Melon and blueberries
Week 3	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Mid-morning snack</b> Planned to provide <b>10%</b> of a child's daily nutritional requirements	Peach slices and plain yoghurt	Breadsticks with carrot and pepper sticks	Mixed berries and plain yoghurt	Wholemeal toast and spread with apple slices	Sugar snap peas and houmous
<b>Mid-afternoon snack</b> Planned to provide <b>10%</b> of a child's daily nutritional requirements	Crumpets and spread with kiwi fruit quarters	Banana and yoghurt	Pitta bread and tuna dip with cucumber sticks	Pepper sticks and cheese (sliced or cut into sticks)	Rice cakes, cucumber sticks and tomatoes

**Drinks: Milk or Water**

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

### Snacks to avoid

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

**Savoury pre-packed snacks** – can be high in salt and low in beneficial nutrients and are not recommended.

Children can get involved in preparing home made snacks which will help improve their familiarity with different fruit and vegetables, and they are likely to be cheaper.

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

**Tree Nuts and peanuts** – tree nuts and peanuts can cause severe allergic reactions in

children suffering from a nut and/or peanut 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.

**Tree nuts** – include almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts

(See p.49 for more information on 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 or carers is crucial and they 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:

- Practice 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.



#### Top Tips on how to include more vegetables and fruit

- 1 Have fresh fruit easily available in the setting.
- 2 Start a fruit and vegetable tuck shop 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.

#### 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. Dried fruit contains sulphur dioxide as a preservative, which could be an allergen.

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



## For older children, up to 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 for 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 best practice to encourage continuation of water and plain 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 (lower in sugar) with milk or plain yoghurt or fromage frais Plain Yoghurt or fromage frais English muffins or bagels Sandwiches using different types of bread Filled pitta, bagels, rolls, wraps Pasta salads Raw vegetables with dips <b>Cold sandwich fillings /toppings:</b> Cream cheese or cottage cheese with added fruit, vegetables or herbs such as chives Houmous – choose lower salt option Home made tzatziki (see menus and recipes) Home made fish pate, such as sardine or mackerel (see menus and recipes) Peanut butter – choose one without added sugar or salt (unsuitable for children with a peanut allergy**) Boiled egg mashed with low fat cream cheese or low fat mayonnaise Cheddar cheese with salad Bean salad Mashed tinned tuna – choose tuna in water and add to cream cheese or yoghurt Mashed avocado with black pepper and lemon juice Mashed banana and add cinnamon Combinations of nuts** and seeds without added fat, sugar or salt Range of fresh fruit and raw vegetables	Toast with unsaturated* spread, peanut butter** 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 Home made pizza slice with toppings e.g. vegetables or cheese Jacket potato <b>Hot toppings or fillings for jacket potatoes:</b> Home made tomato sauce with grilled cheese, baked beans, chilli con carne, curry (meat or vegetable), ratatouille, tuna (tinned in water or oil), chicken with low fat mayonnaise, cheese/cream cheese/cottage cheese 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"> <li>• fridge, toaster and microwave</li> <li>• table top stove</li> <li>• full kitchen facility</li> </ul>

\*Unsaturated spread – Unsaturated fats are healthier fats and these spreads will include vegetable, rapeseed, olive and sunflower oils.

\*\*See section on allergies.

**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
<b>Week 1</b>	Chicken and tomato panini Fresh fruit	Home made Pizza with vegetable toppings Apple berry fool	Ham rolls or peanut butter and banana sandwiches Cucumber sticks	Mexican bean wrap with pepper and carrot sticks	Tuna pasta salad Fresh fruit
<b>Week 2</b>	Omelette and baked beans Fresh fruit	Choice of sandwiches Fruit smoothie	Jacket potato with low fat cream cheese and chives Selection of vegetables and cherry tomatoes	Noodles with vegetables and beans Fresh fruit	Toasted sandwich Fresh fruit
<b>Week 3</b>	Tomato and basil pasta bake	Tortilla wrap filled with mashed tinned tuna with low fat cream cheese and sweetcorn Fresh fruit	Roast vegetable and chickpea cous cous Or, savoury tuna and cous cous	Pitta bread with houmous Cucumber and carrot salad	jacket potato with coleslaw (home made with carrots, cabbage and low fat mayonnaise with plain yoghurt) Apple berry fool
<b>Soups if offered</b>	Easy minestrone	Leek, potato and pea	Carrot and lentil	Pea and spinach	Carrot and potato
<b>Drinks</b> Vary over the week and aim for more water	Milk or water	Milk or water	Milk water	Milk or water	Milk or water

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

**For more ideas** – look at the menus and recipes section and adapt portion sizes for your age group.

For more recipes and example portion sizes for different age groups see:

[www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-early-years](http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-early-years)

**Eating well recipe book** – Simple cost effective ideas for the whole family.

**If you are able to make soup in your setting**

– preparing nourishing homemade soup using lots of vegetables and pulses can be a great way to involve children in a healthy food activity and to eat it afterwards. Remember to follow strict food hygiene procedures.



## 4 B: Healthy Hydration for children aged 1-12

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.

**Infants under 6 months** will be having breast milk or infant formula as their only source of nutrition. This should be continued when starting to introduce foods, from around 6 months of age, up to 12 months of age. See Section 2 and 3.

From 12 months of age, full fat cows' milk can be introduced as the main milk drink and continued until at least two years old, (unless having an alternative milk). Semi skimmed milk can be introduced from 2 years providing

the child is a good eater and a variety of foods are taken.

Plain water should also be provided as a regular drink.

**Offer young children 1–5 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.**

Health professionals agree that cups without a lid are best to help children to learn to drink. Childcare staff have a role in helping children progress from a bottle or cup with lid to a 'free flowing' or 'lidless cup' by around one year of age.

From 5 years the same advice applies to promote water as the main drink, and semi skimmed milk for this age group.

### Practice Point: Food Hygiene & Safety

#### Hygiene and safety with drinking water

Cups for drinking water should be washed daily and stored upside down overnight.

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

- Bottles are washed with hot soapy water and rinsed daily.
- Bottles are sent home for parents/carers to wash.

## Drinks to provide in childcare settings

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

### Water

**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.

Children may need more water during hot weather and when doing extra physical activity.



### Milk

- Plain milk should be offered in addition to tap water.
- Full fat milk should be the main milk drink until at least two years old.
- Semi skimmed milk can be introduced from 2 years providing the child is a good eater and a variety of foods are taken.
- Childcare settings that have children mainly under 2 years should only have full fat milk.



#### Remember:

##### Under 5's

Skimmed milk is not suitable as the main drink for children under five years of age.

##### Over 5's

Semi skimmed or Skimmed can be the choice in out of school care settings.

**Milk alternatives made from oats, soya or nuts may be requested for children and brought in by parents/carers. These need to be unsweetened and fortified with calcium.**

*Note: Where there are concerns that a child is not drinking enough because they won't have milk or water then this needs to be considered on an individual basis and discussed with parents for a suitable alternative.*

### Practice points

#### 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/](http://www.designedtosmile.org/welcome-croeso/welcome/)

Activity sheets to support learning about healthy choices are available at: [www.designedtosmile.org/info-pro/information-for-schools-and-nurseries/](http://www.designedtosmile.org/info-pro/information-for-schools-and-nurseries/)

**For older children** using time to encourage them 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.

## Other drinks should not be provided in childcare settings

Here's the reasons why:

### Fruit juice and fruit smoothies

When fruit is blended into a juice or smoothie the sugar content in the fruit is released as free sugar and can cause tooth decay. They are also acidic which can erode children's teeth.

Although fruit juice does contain nutrients such as Vitamin C, at this young age it is NOT recommended as part of drink provision in childcare settings.



### Low calorie squashes, no added sugar or reduced sugar drinks, flavoured water

Low calorie squashes, no added sugar or reduced sugar drinks and flavoured water should not be offered. They can contribute to, or cause, tooth erosion and can encourage a preference for sweetened drinks.



### Sugary drinks

Sugary drinks such as lemonade, colas, squashes and fruit juice drinks contain added sugars 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.



### Tea and coffee

Tea and coffee are not advised as they contain caffeine and tannins.

Caffeine acts as a stimulant and tannins interfere with the absorption of iron.



### Practice point

#### Educate older children 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.

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.

For food hygiene and regulation in out of school childcare and holiday care – see Section 6.

# 4 C: Settings which provide meals, snacks and drinks for younger children 1–4 years

## 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, snacks and drinks 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 Shepherds 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. [www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/labelling-guidance.pdf](http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/labelling-guidance.pdf)

### Practice point

Remember to have plain tap water freely available to children.



# 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.

Food & Nutrition standards	Best Practice to include these healthy choices	Preparation do's and don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aim for each full day's menu for childcare settings to offer '5 a day' including a range of vegetables, salads and fruit.</li> <li>Include with breakfast, main meals, and as snacks.</li> <li>Dried fruit with meals only.</li> <li>Avoid fruit juice, and juice drinks.</li> <li>Provide correct portion sizes for age group.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Vegetables and salad</b></p> <p>All types of <b>fresh, frozen and tinned vegetables</b> – for example, fresh broccoli, frozen peas, tinned sweetcorn, courgettes, pak choi, okra.</p> <p><b>Salad vegetables</b> – for example, lettuce, watercress, cucumber, tomato, raw carrot, raw pepper, radish and beetroot.</p> <p><b>Remember:</b> 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><b>Do</b> offer different fruits and vegetables at meals and snacks.</p> <p><b>Do</b> choose tinned vegetables and pulses without added salt and sugar.</p> <p><b>Do</b> choose reduced salt and sugar tinned baked beans.</p> <p><b>Do not</b> overcook fresh vegetables or cut them up a long time before cooking and leave them in water;</p> <p><b>Do not</b> cook vegetables early and re-heat before serving, as these practices all reduce the vitamin content.</p>
	<p><b>Fruit</b></p> <p><b>Fresh fruit</b> – such as apples, bananas, pears, grapes, kiwi fruit, oranges, satsumas, plums, berries, melon or mango.</p> <p><b>Tinned fruit in juice</b> – for example, peaches, pears, pineapple, mandarin oranges or apricots.</p> <p><b>Stewed fruit</b> such as stewed apple, stewed dried fruit, stewed plums or stewed rhubarb.</p> <p><b>Dried fruit</b> such as raisins, dried apricots, dates, dried figs, prunes – as part of meals only.</p>	<p><b>Do</b> buy fruit in season and cook and freeze in batches for future use e.g apples, pears, berries, plums, following food safety regulations.</p> <p><b>Do</b> serve dried fruit with meals or as part of puddings and not on their own as snacks.</p> <p><b>Do not</b> choose tinned fruit in syrup.</p> <p>A small amount of sugar can be added to sweeten very sour fruit in dessert recipes e.g in a few recipes 20g -30g or 1-1/2 tbsp. of sugar is used for 10 portions (Apple and rhubarb crumble, baked apple with cinnamon).</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 7 or [www.publichealthnetwork.cymru/en/topics/nutrition/nutrition-skills/](http://www.publichealthnetwork.cymru/en/topics/nutrition/nutrition-skills/)



## Fruit and Vegetables

### Examples of average portion sizes for 1–4 year olds

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



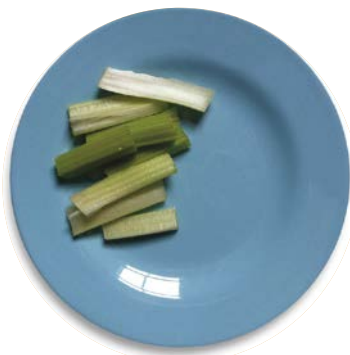
Broccoli (40g)



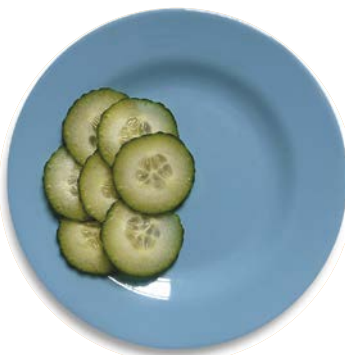
Swede (40g)



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



Watermelon (40g)



Half a banana sliced



## 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 children aged 1–4 approximate guide is 40g as shown, you can weigh a couple of times to see what it looks like and have the portion size pictures on display.

For more information on buying punnets or bags of fruit and numbers of portions see Appendix 3.

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
- 1 medium tomato or 6–7 cherry tomatoes
- A dessert bowl of salad greens.

### Practice point

#### 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.

All fruit and vegetables should be washed before eating.

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.

### Practice point – Food hygiene & safety

#### 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, *sticky foods*.

Always ensure young children are supervised when eating

Children should be sitting to eat and drink, if they are walking or running around with food this is also 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.

Food & Nutrition Standards	Best Practice to include these healthy choices	Preparation do's and don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a portion of foods from this group at every meal.</li> <li>• Provide as part of snacks, at least one each day.</li> <li>• Provide a variety each day.</li> <li>• Provide bread and bread products with lower salt content.</li> <li>• Provide lower sugar breakfast cereals.</li> <li>• Provide correct portion sizes.</li> <li>• Serve home made or frozen chips/potato wedges/potato products, stir fries or egg fried rice no more than twice per week (one lunch and one tea).</li> <li>• If bought 'ready to cook' products, choose those lower in salt and fat.</li> </ul>	<p><b>All types of bread</b> – wholemeal, brown, wheatgerm, 50/50 white/wholemeal, white, multigrain, soda bread, potato bread, chapattis, naan bread, rolls, bagels, pitta bread, wraps, tortilla.</p>	<p><b>Do</b> choose bread and bread products with lower salt content – those labelled green (low) or amber (medium) in salt.</p>
	<p><b>Potatoes or sweet potatoes</b> – boiled, mashed, baked or wedges.</p> <p><b>Yam</b>, and other starchy root vegetables.</p> <p><b>Pasta and noodles</b> – wholewheat and white.</p> <p><b>Rice</b> – brown and white.</p> <p><b>Other grains</b> such as couscous or bulgur wheat, maize (polenta) and cornmeal.</p>	<p>Limit the use of processed foods and cook from scratch wherever possible. This can maximise the nutritional quality in the food and minimise levels of salt and sugar from a young age.</p> <p><b>Do</b> use monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats in cooking, but limit fried starchy foods to no more than once each week</p> <p><b>Do not</b> use fried rice or flavoured dried rice in packets, and pasta and noodles in pots.</p> <p>If using processed products choose options which are lower in fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt, those labelled green or amber.</p>
	<p><b>Breakfast cereals</b></p> <p>Lower sugar cereals which are not sugar coated or contain chocolate, and low-salt cereals such as porridge, puffed wheat, wheat bisks, crisped rice or flaked wheat.</p> <p>Fortified cereals are a good source of iron.</p>	<p><b>Do</b> vary breakfast cereals and add cut up fresh fruit – see breakfast recipes.</p> <p><b>Do</b> check labels – If a food contains more than 22.5g of sugar per 100g, it is considered a high-sugar food. For breakfast cereals for children the lower the better, look for less than 15g sugar per 100g.</p>

### 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 to provide a range of fibre in the diet.

## Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates

### Examples of portion sizes

#### Bread

Wholemeal toast 25g



Pitta bread ½ pitta bread 30g



Rice cakes 1 rice cake 10g



#### Potatoes

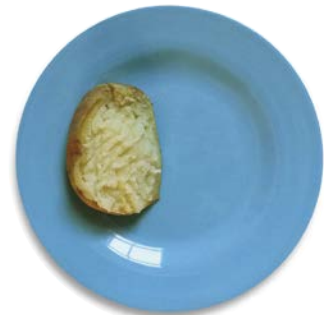
New potato slices 80g



Mashed sweet potato 80g



Jacket potato 80g



#### Pasta and noodles, rice and grains

White spaghetti 80g



Couscous 80g



Brown rice 80g



#### Breakfast cereals

15g puffed wheat & 100ml milk



12g Porridge oats with 100ml milk



20g wheat Bisk & 100ml milk



## 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

Food & Nutrition standards	Best Practice to include these healthy choices	Preparation do's and don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide one portion of beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat or other proteins at lunch and tea.</li> <li>Provide as part of snacks once or twice a week.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Beans, pulses</b> – includes a variety of beans, lentils and peas such as butter beans, kidney beans, chick peas, lentils, processed peas or baked beans.</p> <p><b>NB</b> these can be included 'once' as part of '5 a day'.</p>	<p><b>Do</b> buy tinned pulses with no added salt and sugar.</p> <p><b>Do</b> choose lower-salt and low-sugar baked beans.</p> <p><b>Do not</b> add salt to dishes made with pulses such as dahl.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a variety across the week.</li> <li>Provide a minimum of one lunch and one tea for all children each week using pulses or meat alternative.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fish</b> – White fish such as cod, haddock, plaice and coley.</p> <p>Oil-rich fish such as herring and mackerel, salmon, trout, sardines or pilchards.</p> <p>Tuna (tinned or fresh) does not count as an oil-rich fish but is a good source of nutrients.</p>	<p><b>Do</b> check fish dishes are free of bones.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aim to serve oily fish once a week.</li> <li>Serve correct portion sizes.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Eggs</b> – Boiled (hard or soft), scrambled or poached, or in an omelette.</p>	<p><b>Do</b> buy eggs with the lion mark.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good quality* processed meat, and processed fish products should not be served more than twice a week in total.</li> <li>Serve Vegetarians 2–3 portions of beans, pulses, eggs, or other meat alternative across the day.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Meat</b> – All types including beef, lamb, pork, chicken and turkey.</p> <p><b>Other proteins</b> – such as soya mince, textured vegetable protein, quorn or tofu used in preparation of home made dishes.</p>	<p><b>Do not</b> serve good quality processed meat or fish products more than twice a week in total.</p> <p><b>Do not</b> use processed meat or fish products which contain high amounts of fat and salt (labelled red).</p> <p><b>NB</b> Limit Quorn™ and soya based meat alternatives to two times per week**.</p>

\*Products that are labelled lower in salt and fat (amber and green), and meat products containing at least 70% meat.

\*\* these protein sources are low in fat & not a good source of iron for young children.

### 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.

#### 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.

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

### Examples of portion sizes

#### Meat and Poultry

Chicken slices 45g



Pork cubes 40g



Minced Beef 50g



#### Fish

Canned tuna 40g



Sardines 50g

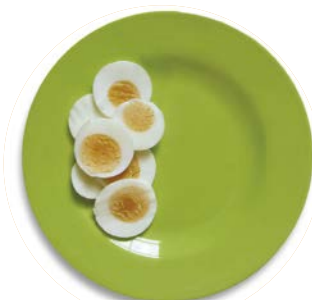


White fish 40g



#### Eggs and pulses

Boiled egg 50g



Red kidney beans 40g



Baked beans 55 g



#### Practice point

##### Processed food

This term can be confusing as it means any food that has been altered in some way during preparation such as baking or freezing, e.g. bread, breakfast cereals, tinned vegetables can be healthy choices.

Some processed foods that we buy are less healthy because of the amounts of sugar, salt and fat added during processing, e.g. pies, cakes, sugary cereals, crisps. But we can choose healthier ones by checking the labels. With young children it is very important as it is easier to go over the recommended amounts. See food labelling section.

## Dairy and alternatives

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

Food & Nutrition Standards	Best Practice to include these healthy choices	Preparation do's and don't's
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide 3 portions of dairy and alternatives each day, including those provided at home.</li> <li>Can provide one portion as snack.</li> </ul>	<b>Milk</b> Full fat milk should be served for infants and children under 2 years old. Children older than 2 can have semi-skimmed milk provided they eat a well-balanced diet. Pasteurised cow, goat, sheep milk. Calcium fortified soy milk.	<b>Do not</b> provide unpasteurised milk and milk drinks with added sugar. <b>Do not</b> provide skimmed milk to any children under 5 years.
	<b>Cheese</b>	<b>Do not</b> provide unpasteurised cheese and mould-ripened (blue-vein) cheese. <b>Do</b> use vegetarian cheese for children who are vegetarian.
	<b>Plain yoghurt and fromage frais</b>	<b>Do</b> choose plain or natural yoghurts and fromage frais for dessert. It is preferable to add fresh fruit to natural plain yoghurt or fromage frais. Plain yoghurts can be used as a snack (see snack menu).
	<b>Home made puddings made from milk and milk based sauces</b>	<b>Do not</b> offer ice cream and sweetened frozen plain yoghurt between meals as these can damage teeth and encourage a preference for sweet tastes. Butter and cream are fats – see section on oils and spreads and foods labelled high in fat.

### Practice point

#### 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.

### Practice point

#### How much milk over a day

Milk will still be an important drink for young children in the first five 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 a portion of dairy food or alternative at a meal time. This provides the recommended 3 portions of dairy and alternatives a day. Check with parents about how much milk their child has at home.

## Dairy and alternatives

### Examples of portion sizes

Milk 100–150ml of full fat milk



Grated cheddar 15g



Cheese triangle 18g



Cottage cheese 30g



Greek Plain yoghurt 60g



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, as 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 and 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.

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, the type of fat is important. 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.

See also pg. 8.

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

### Foods labelled high in fat, sugar and salt

This includes products such as cakes, biscuits, pastries and pies, sugary soft drinks, chocolate and sweets and some prepared snacks. These foods are not needed in the diet for adults or children. To give children the best start keep sugar and salt intakes low and use the right type of fats. The menus and recipes follow this guidance.

Although young children do require a bit more fat in their diet for energy, they get this from the other food groups in the Eatwell Guide.

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

### 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**

Banana porridge with toasted fruit bread



Granola with plain soya yoghurt and kiwi



Wheat biscuits with blueberries and plain yoghurt



Porridge with milk



Wheat biscuits with peach and almond



Wheat biscuits with apple and raisins



Omelette, tomatoes and toast



Scrambled egg with mushrooms and toast



## 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 lunch
<b>Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates</b>	<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>
<b>Fruit and vegetables</b>	<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>
<b>Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins</b>	<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>Good quality processed meat, and processed fish products should not be served more than twice a week in total.</p>
<b>Dairy and alternatives</b>	<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>
<b>Drinks</b>	<p>Children must have access to drinking water.</p> <p>Provide only fresh tap water or plain milk.</p>

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

Baked bean and sausage hot pot



Creamy chicken and leek hotpot



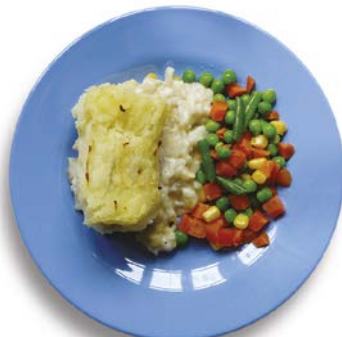
Vegetable biriyani



Tuna pasta



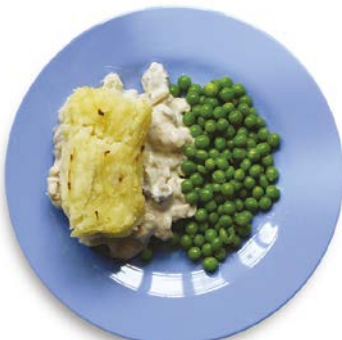
Fish pie



Easy minestrone soup



Chicken and mushroom pie



Goulash



Some of these recipes or similar ones can be found in Menus and Recipes.

## Tea

Good communication between the setting and parents/carers is key as to whether a child may require tea or they are having a meal at home with the family – see practice point below.

Food groups	Food and drink standards at tea
<b>Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates</b>	<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>
<b>Fruit and vegetables</b>	<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>
<b>Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins</b>	<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>Good quality processed meat, and processed fish products should not be served more than twice a week in total.</p>
<b>Dairy and alternatives</b>	<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>
<b>Drinks</b>	<p>Children must have access to drinking water.</p> <p>Provide only fresh tap water or plain milk.</p>

### Practice Point

The tea time meal can be tricky for settings as children may be leaving at different times and may or may not be having a main meal at home with family.

Good communication with parents/carers is key and always ensure food provide is balanced and nutritious.

#### Example scenario

A child in full day care until about 5.30 -6pm and not having a meal when they get home.	Should have a full day 's food intake including mid afternoon snack and tea time meal with dessert.
A child being picked up at 4pm and going home to have a meal with family	Should have the mid afternoon snack before being picked up.
A child being picked up at 4.30- 5pm and having a small meal/supper snack at home	Your setting may provide a tea time light meal for these children using the menu ideas or a more substantial snack .

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

Chicken and sweetcorn soup



Jacket potato with vegetable chilli



Pitta bread with felafel, houmous and carrot salad



Vegan pizza with salad



Jacket potato with tuna, sweetcorn and soft cheese



Peanut butter sandwich with carrot and cucumber



## 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 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, plain 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.

Soya, tofu and Quorn™ are also good sources of protein but are lower in iron and fat, so limit to 2 times per week.

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



## Additional guidance on salt, sugars and desserts, puddings and cakes

### Salt – how much?

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

Having too much salt 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.

Most salt that children eat is found in processed foods. Use the food and drink standards to limit these foods and to check food labels to choose products lower in salt. Cooking guidance states no salt to be used in cooking.

### 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
- Buy tinned pulses without added salt
- Make sauces using ripe tomatoes and garlic

*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).*



## Guidelines for Free sugars

Government recommendations in 2017<sup>1</sup> are to have very small amounts of sugar in the diet in the form of free sugar. Free sugars are any sugars added to food or drinks, or found naturally in honey, syrups and unsweetened fruit juices.

Free or added sugar is found in cakes, biscuits and sugary puddings, biscuits, jams. Drinks with free sugars include squashes, fruit juices and smoothies, pureed fruit, juice drinks, fizzy drinks, flavoured milks, milkshakes. 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 contain 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 and juice drinks.



### Practice point

It is best to avoid foods containing sweeteners if you have a range of age groups in your care as they are not suitable for very young children. Use natural sweeteners such as fruit.

Artificial 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 high fructose corn syrup, dextrose, glucose – see food labelling section.

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

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

### Artificial sweeteners

Aspartame (E951)

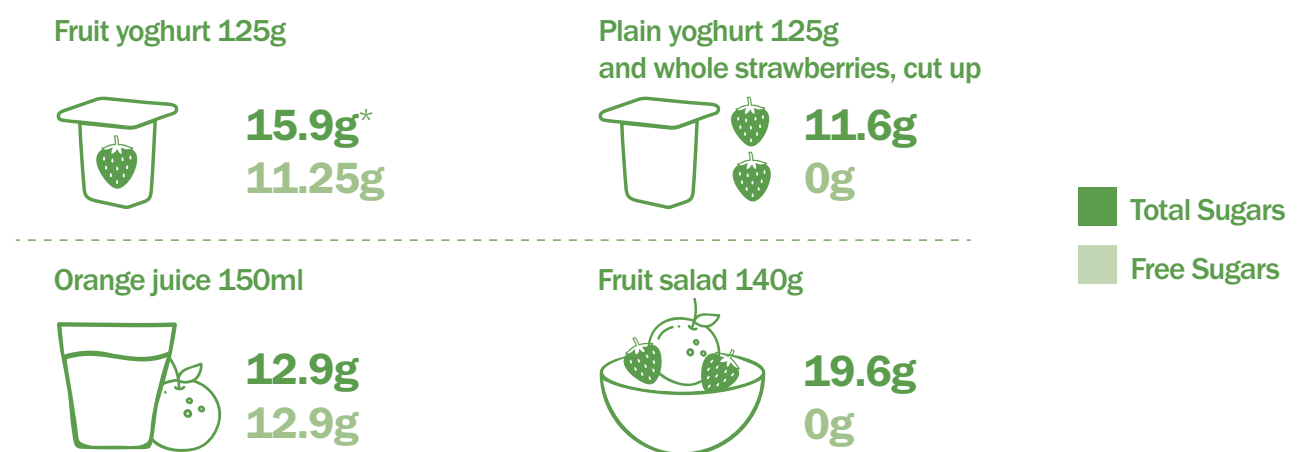
Saccharin (E954)

Sorbitol (E420)

Acesulfame K (E950)

Sucralose (E955)

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



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

## 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.

### Examples of desserts meeting the food & drink guidelines using typical portion sizes for children aged one to four

Apple crumble



Poached pear with greek yoghurt and honey



Fruit scone with strawberries



Scotch pancakes with sliced banana and strawberries



Bananas and custard



Raisin cookie with pear



# 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 may be better value than cheaper, fattier meats as there is less waste.
- 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 food labels and choose those that are lower in salt or sugar. This is also important for any foods, specifically aimed at young children.
- 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, honey, invert sugar, maltodextrin, treacle and syrup.

**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

## Buying processed foods

Reading nutrition labels can help you choose between processed products and find those that are lower in fat, salt and sugar content.

Most pre-packed foods have the nutrition information on the front, back or side of the packaging.

If the processed food you want to buy has a nutrition label that uses colour-coding, you will often find a mixture of red, amber and green.

When you're choosing between similar products, try to go for more greens and ambers, and fewer reds if you want to make a healthier choice.

But remember, for children, cooking from scratch you have more control over the nutritional quality of food and you can share the recipes and ideas with them.

## Food additives

Some additives are important in terms of preserving food. Manufacturers must state what additives or colours are in the food. Additives are listed by category name ( e.g colouring, emulsifier) and their 'E' number . This means it has passed safety tests for use in food.

For children certain colours used in foods should be avoided:

**Tartrazine (E102)**

**Quinoline Yellow (E104)**

**Sunset Yellow (E110)**

**Carmoisine (E122)**

**Ponceau 4R (E124)**

**Allura Red (E129)**

If these colours are used in foods or drinks they must state on the label that '*may have*

*an adverse effect on activity and attention in children*'.

You might find these colours in:

- Confectionery, cakes, soft drinks, fruit juice drinks, ice cream, milk shake syrups and topping sauces, 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.

## Allergens

Allergens are highlighted in the ingredients list. It is essential to read the ingredients list if you are trying to avoid an ingredient or allergen.

## Ready made and take away meals

**Best practice** – it is best to limit or avoid ready made and take away meals . Cooking from scratch gives you more control over the nutritional content and you can use food as a tool for developing children's knowledge about food, where it comes from and the meals they eat.

## Using external caterers

You may be a setting that uses meals bought in from the local school which should meet the school food standards. Or you may buy in meals from a catering provider – if you do this then talk to your caterer about this guidance and give them a copy. Explain how important it is for them to provide you with the meals that meet the guidance.

For more information on food labelling see:

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-to-read-food-labels/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-to-read-food-labels/)

### 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 cheaper healthier products in bulk can be more cost effective such as for tinned and frozen products.

**Table 5: Remember Important nutrients**

Good sources of iron and zinc in the food groups.

Food Groups	Iron	Zinc
<b>Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy foods</b>	Wholemeal bread Wholewheat pasta Brown rice Fortified breakfast cereals	Wholegrain and wheat germ bread Fortified breakfast cereals Plain popcorn
<b>Fruit and vegetables</b>	Dark green leafy vegetables: broccoli, spinach, cabbage Dried apricots, raisins	
<b>Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins</b>	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
<b>Dairy and alternatives</b>		Whole and semi-skimmed milk Other dairy products e.g. plain 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.



## Eating well sustainably

Childcare settings can play a key part in the well being of future generations in Wales<sup>2</sup>, 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: [www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-sustainably](http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-sustainably)

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

See Appendix 4 for a sustainable food checklist.

## 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 the cereals are not high in sugar or salt.

If children are drinking a milk alternative e.g. soya, nut, oat, this is usually not recommended before 2 years. If buying milk alternatives always choose those that are unsweetened and fortified with calcium.

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

# 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 need. See Section 1, Appendix 1 for childcare regulations.

## 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. 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 <sup>1</sup>	Buddhist	Rastafarian <sup>2</sup>	Vegan
<b>Eggs</b>	No Bloodspots	Yes	Yes	It varies	It varies	It varies	No
<b>Milk/Yogurt</b>	Not with meat	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	It varies	Calcium fortified from plant source only
<b>Cheese</b>	Not with meat	Yes	It varies	Yes	Yes	It varies	Vegan cheese only
<b>Chicken</b>	Kosher	It varies	Halal	It varies	No	It varies	No
<b>Lamb/Mutton</b>	Kosher	It varies	Halal	It varies	No	It varies	No
<b>Beef/beef products</b>	Kosher	No	Halal	No	No	It varies	No
<b>Pork/pork products</b>	No	Rarely	No	Rarely	No	No	No
<b>Fish</b>	With scales, fins and back bone	It varies	It varies	With fins and scales	It varies	Yes	No
<b>Shellfish</b>	No	It varies	It varies	It varies	No	No	No
<b>Butter/Ghee</b>	Kosher	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	It varies	No Vegan spreads such as nut spreads
<b>Lard</b>	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
<b>Cereal foods</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Nuts/Pulses</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Fruit/Vegetables<sup>3</sup></b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Fasting<sup>4</sup></b>	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

## Types of 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 are covered in the main planning meals section.

## 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 or lacking 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 will be necessary to complement the menu. The Vegan Society recommends that vegans take supplements of Vitamin B12, Vitamin D, calcium and iodine.

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.

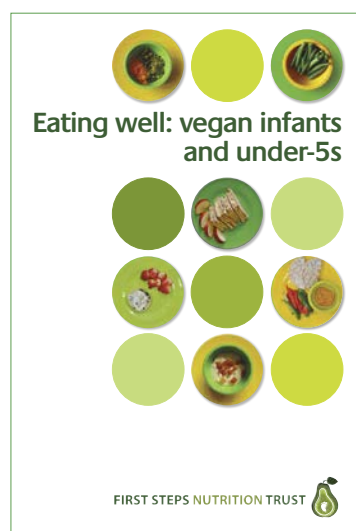
Work in partnership with parents/carers to devise a suitable menu for the child including foods the child is familiar with at home, and which particular foods are to be avoided e.g. gelatine and rennet. You may need to ask families to provide appropriate foods and seek advice from a dietitian.

### For more information:

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/vegetarian-vegan-children/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/vegetarian-vegan-children/)

[www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-early-years](http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-early-years)

Practical and visual guide on providing meals for vegan children [www.vegansociety.com/](http://www.vegansociety.com/)



## Provision of special diets for medical reasons

A special diet is one that cannot be selected freely from the main choices available.

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

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 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.

If a parent is requesting avoidance of a key nutrient in the diet, such as dairy food but has not had medical advice then it is best to ask them to seek advice from a health professional to help you provide the appropriate diet.

**See appendix 4 for example procedure for managing request for a special diet**

## Food Allergy

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<sup>3</sup>.

 <p><b>Grawnfwydydd sy'n cynnwys glwten</b> Gwenith (megis gwenith yr Almaen, Khorasan, Kamut), Rhyg, Haidd, Ceirch</p> <p><b>Cereals containing gluten</b> Wheat (such as Spelt, Khorasan, Kamut), Rye, Barley, Oats</p>	 <p><b>Wyau</b> Eggs</p>	 <p><b>Cnau Coed</b> Tree Nuts</p>	 <p><b>Pysgnau</b> Peanuts</p>	 <p><b>Llaeth</b> Milk</p>
	 <p><b>Molysgiaid</b> Molluscs</p>	 <p><b>Pysgod</b> Fish</p>	 <p><b>Cramenogion</b> Crustaceans</p>	 <p><b>Soia</b> Soya</p>
 <p><b>Sylffwr Deuocsid (sulffitau)</b> <b>Sulphur Dioxide (sulphites)</b></p>	 <p><b>Bys y blaid</b> Lupin</p>	 <p><b>Hadau Sesame</b> Sesame Seeds</p>	 <p><b>Seleri</b> Celery</p>	 <p><b>Mwstard</b> Mustard</p>

## 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, Food Information (Wales) Regulations 2014, to give details about the allergens in the food they provide. This should include allergen training and should have procedures in place to ensure consumers (i.e. children) are not put at risk. More information is available on [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk).

### There are 14 allergens covered by this requirement:

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

Note: types of nuts include: almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashews, pecan nuts, brazil nuts, pistachio nuts, macadamia

It is important to remember that children can have allergies to foods and ingredients not covered by this list. These will not be **emphasised** 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, snacks and drinks are provided for them:

- Guidance for food preparation and catering for food allergens is found in Section 6 and is covered by Food Safety Regulation information from the FSA.

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.

## Examples of specific allergies

### Peanut Allergy

Peanut allergy usually produces a severe reaction. Care must be taken to prevent accidental consumption of food containing peanut products or food that has come into contact with them. Preparing food for peanut allergy sufferers in a designated area may help. Peanut butter must be avoided and many prepared foods can contain peanuts, peanut oil or peanut 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 peanut allergy should have been seen by a Dietitian.

## Cows' milk protein allergy (CMPA)

Cows' milk protein allergy is rare but is the most common form of food allergy in childhood, particularly under 1 years of age and generally resolves in the first 3 years of life. An infant's immune system can react to proteins in milk and in some cases the reaction is immediate.

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.

## Alternatives

Ready-made soya, hemp, oat, coconut or other milk alternatives 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.

Alternative milks can also be used in cooking from 6 months for children who exclude all dairy products from their diet.

The Food Standards Agency does not recommend giving rice milk to children under 5 years old.

Only use milk alternatives that have been fortified with calcium and which are unsweetened. **Note:** Organic products do not always have added calcium.

More detailed information on infant's with cow's milk protein allergy is found in Section 2.

A milk free diet may also be necessary for children who are lactose intolerant; when an infant or child has difficulty digesting lactose, the sugar naturally occurring in milk and all milk-based foods. Lactose intolerance in infants and children is rare, but some level of 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.

Food intolerances do not involve the immune system and tend to occur more slowly. Symptoms may depend on the amount of food that has been eaten, and are generally not as severe as a food allergic reaction.





## Other medical conditions

### Coeliac disease

Coeliac disease is an autoimmune disease which effects a small number of children. 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. All foods which contain these cereals must be avoided. Most children with coeliac disease can tolerate gluten free oats, however, problems can occur if oats are processed in the same place and can become contaminated with gluten. Gluten is commonly found in foods such as bread, breakfast cereals, biscuits, pasta and cakes but also some sauces, ready meals and sausages.

### Alternatives

There are a good variety of gluten-free foods and ingredients available.

These will be labelled 'gluten free'. Many products will now carry the crossed grain symbol for gluten free product certification, which is a registered trademark.

Advice on foods to choose, foods to avoid and menu adaptations will need to be provided by the parent/carer and, where necessary, a dietitian. Coeliac UK also provide help and advice as well as information on shopping for gluten free foods.

**NB** play-dough is made from flour as are home-made play material often used in childcare settings and pasta shapes and are 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.

### Diabetes

Type 1 diabetes is a serious condition that requires constant management through diet and administering insulin. Children with Type 1 diabetes will require understanding of how different foods affect blood glucose levels. If you are responsible for the care of a child with type 1 diabetes, you should have contact with the local diabetes team who may be able to provide training on diet management. Parents will have all the information on what their child is able to eat and when.

### 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. Try also 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 food needs to be excluded is replaced with a food from the same food group, wherever possible, so that the nutritional content of the meal is not affected.

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.

For more information and guidance to support children with additional needs, see section 5.

# References

1. Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (2015). Carbohydrates and Health Report. Available at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/sacn-carbohydrates-and-health-report](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sacn-carbohydrates-and-health-report)
2. Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Information available at: <https://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/150623-guide-to-the-fg-act-en.pdf>  
<https://futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>
3. Welsh Government (2015). Infant feeding guidelines from birth to 12 months. Available from: <http://howis.wales.nhs.uk/doclib/english-infant-feeding.pdf>.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

### Recommended amounts of nutrients for 1-4 year olds

The recommended nutrient content of an average day's food and drink over a period of one week or more (1 to 4 year old children) using the nutrient framework as agreed by the External Reference Group (based on needs of those with highest energy and nutrient requirements).

Nutrient	Min/Max	Full day (breakfast, 2 snacks, lunch, tea)	Morning session: Snack and lunch	Afternoon session: Snack and tea	Snack only	Lunch only	Breakfast/ tea only
Energy (kcal)	Approx.	1108	492	369	123	369	246
Fat (g)	Max	43.1	19.2	14.4	4.8	14.4	9.6
Total carbohydrate (g)	Min	147.7	65.6	49.2	16.4	49.2	32.8
Dietary fibre (g)	Min	13.5	6.0	4.5	1.5	4.5	3.0
Free sugars (g)	Max	14.8	6.6	4.9	1.6	4.9	3.3
Protein (g)	Min	15.4	6.8	5.1	1.7	5.1	3.4
Iron (mg)	Min	6.9	3.0	2.3	0.7	2.3	1.6
Zinc (mg)	Min	5.2	2.3	1.7	0.6	1.7	1.2
Calcium (mg)	Min	360	160	120	40	120	80
Vitamin A (µg)	Min	400	176	132	40	136	92
Vitamin C (mg)	Min	27	12	9	3	9	6
Sodium (mg)	Max	900	400	300	100	300	200
Salt (g)	Max	2.25	1.00	0.75	0.25	0.75	0.50

Ref: Children's Food Trust (2016)

## Nutrient framework for younger infants, under 1 year

Nutrient framework for infants 7 to 9 months and 10 to 12 months (for all meals and milk provided across the day).

Nutrient	7-9 months	10-12 months
Energy (kcal) (MJ)	682 (2851)	682 (2851)
Protein (g)	13.7	14.9
Iron (mg)	7.8	7.8
Zinc (mg)	5.0	5.0
Calcium (mg)	525	525
Vitamin A (ug)	350	350
Vitamin C (mg)	25	25
Sodium (mg)	400	400
Sodium (mg)	400	400
Salt (g)	1.0	1.0

Ref: Children's Food Trust (2016)

## Appendix 2

### Recommended amounts of nutrients for older children 5–12 year olds

Estimated Average Requirements for children				
	Males		Females	
Age (years)	MJ/d	kcal	MJ/d	kcal
4	5.8	1386	5.4	1291
5	6.2	1482	5.7	1362
6	6.6	1577	6.2	1482
7	6.9	1649	6.4	1530
8	7.3	1745	6.8	1625
9	7.7	1840	7.2	1721
10	8.5	2032	8.1	1936
11	8.9	2127	8.5	2032
12	9.4	2247	8.8	2103

### Dietary reference values for carbohydrate and fat as a percentage of energy intake

% Daily Food Energy	
Total Carbohydrate*	50%
of which free sugars*	Not more than 5%
Total Fat	Not more than 35%
of which Saturated Fat	Not more than 11%

### Protein

Reference Nutrient Intake for children Age group	RNI per day (g)
4-6 years	19.7
7-10 years	28.3

**Dietary Fibre – new recommendations were made by SACN in 2015 for the population aged 2 years and over**

Age group	Recommended intake per day (g)
2-5 years	15
5-11 years	20
11-16 years	25
17 years and over	30

## Appendix 3

### Portion sizes for buying fruit and vegetables

Types of fruit/vegetables	Package size (grams)	Number of portions per pack
Clementine's	600g	15
Small Apples	520g	13
Grapes	500g	13
Plums	400g	10
Raspberries	150g	4
Strawberries	300g	8
Blueberries	150g	4
Frozen raspberries	350g	9
Frozen blueberries	400g	10
Frozen mango	500g	13
Pears	610g	15
Kiwis	360g	9
Mango	150g	4
Tinned Pineapple	432g	11
Tinned sliced peaches	410g	10
Tinned mandarins	298g	8
Cherry tomatoes	250g	7
Red pepper	160g	4
Carrots	1000g	25
Mushrooms	380g	10
Leeks	500g	13
Onions	1000g	25
Frozen Peas	1000g	25
Sugar snap peas	150g	4
Broccoli	350g	9
Tinned Sweetcorn	200g	5
Frozen sweetcorn	1100g	28
Frozen green beans	900g	23

# Appendix 4

## Sustainable Food Checklist

	Principle	Action	Do we do this ?
Planning sustainable menus	Have fewer meat dishes	Follow Welsh Government, Food and Nutrition for childcare settings – Best Practice Guidance to provide at least one meat free day a week.	
	Pulses, beans and peas	Use more in recipes.	
	Use sustainable fish	Use oily fish once a week and buy from sustainable sources.	
	Limit processed foods in menus	Follow Welsh Government, Food and Nutrition for childcare settings – Best Practice Guidance for use of processed foods from the different food groups.	
	Plan a variety of meals and snacks using seasonal produce	Plan menus around produce that is in season.	
Shopping for Food	Think Local	Buy foods which have been packaged and processed as locally as possible.	
	Bulk Buying	This can provide better value and you can freeze seasonal produce for use later.	
	Look for sustainable food accreditation	Buy products with symbols that indicate food is from a sustainable source e.g. tinned tuna.	
Storing Food	Reduce food waste	Ensure use of appropriate portion sizes for children.	
	Recycle food waste	Use composting and/or local council food waste schemes.	
	Packaging and recycling	Buy food that has minimal packaging, no packaging or packaging that can be recycled.	
Useful resource	Love Food Hate Waste	<a href="http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/">www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/</a>	

# Appendix 5

## Introduction

The following templates are to help you plan and provide a special diet for an individual child.

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**Template 1** outlines the process for obtaining all the necessary information to provide a special diet.

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**Template 2** is a plan to help you to record all the necessary information for providing an individual child with a special diet to meet their needs.

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**Template 3** is a plan to help you to record all the necessary information for providing an individual child with additional needs a modified diet to meet their needs.

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You may wish to adapt these plans for your own requirements and record keeping processes and attach additional information such as a sample menu or recipes or specific guidance provided by the parent and /or health professional.

**Remember when asked to provide a special diet for medical reasons** to consider all other relevant policies and procedures such as:

- Medication policy and procedures and specific training requirements
- Data protection and confidentiality policy. Such information is considered as special category information for data protection purposes and needs to be kept secure. Settings should undertake a risk assessment and ensure information is handled in an appropriate and effective way to avoid risk of harm e.g. gaining parental consent for the display of specific food and diet information for staff use
- Insurance policies.

## Template 1: Example procedure for requesting a special diet

		Date	In place (✓ or ✗)
<p><b>Request information from the child's parent/carer, so you are aware of the child's dietary requirements before they start at the setting.</b></p>	<p>If a special diet is requested for medical reasons, request written confirmation of the allergy/medical need from the child's GP, dietitian or other medical professional.</p> <p>This is to make sure children are not having key foods removed from their diet without a diagnosed medical need.</p>		
<p><b>Work with the child's parent/carer (and health professionals if required) to write and agree a clear plan of how to manage the child's special dietary requirement.</b></p> <p><b>See example plans for provision of a special diet and provision of a diet for a child with additional needs.</b></p>	<p>The plan should describe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• details of their special dietary requirements</li> <li>• how meals and snacks will be provided</li> <li>• precautions to take during activities involving food e.g. craft/messy play</li> <li>• the action to take in the event of an emergency (e.g. allergic reaction), including names, dose and administration of prescribed medication, and the staff trained to administer it.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Ensure that all staff know and understand fully about an individual child's special dietary requirements, and how these are being met, to ensure appropriate food is provided.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all staff can see the information, for example by displaying details and photos of children with special dietary requirements in the kitchen, and also where food is served to the children, taking into account data protection requirements.</li> <li>• Identify if staff need training to understand different special diets and how to ensure children are provided with food appropriate for their needs.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>For specific food allergies or food avoidance:</b></p> <p><b>Ensure that the information you have about the food used in recipes is correct</b></p> <p><b>Ensure that staff know how to deal with a severe allergic reaction and follow the procedure in the written allergy plan.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow standard recipes</li> <li>• have a process in place to update ingredients and allergen information when products are changed or reformulated</li> <li>• have a process in place to avoid cross-contamination ( see SFBB) to include good hygiene (effective cleaning practices); and separation and labelling of ingredients.</li> </ul>		

## Template 2: Individual plan for provision of special diet

	Date	Changes or review with date:
Named member of staff with overall responsibility for managing special diets. (Usually the manager)		
Child's name:		
Child's key carer(s):		
Details of dietary requirement: Condition e.g. diabetes, coeliac disease, food allergy.		
Special Diet required: (This may be provided by an individually prepared diet plan).		
List of foods and drink that can be eaten. ✓		
List of foods and drink that cannot be eaten. ✗		
Type and severity of potential symptoms.		
Action to take in an emergency.		
Allergen policy action plan required and in place.		
<b>Meals, snacks and drinks provided from menu.</b> Describe what can be provided from the standard menus. <b>Or</b> adaption or alternative to food or ingredient in recipes. <b>Or</b> special bought product. This may include an attached menu which has been adapted to meet the needs of the individual child with recipes as appropriate.		
Breakfast		
Mid morning snack		
Lunch meal		

		Date	Changes or review with date:
Mid afternoon snack			
Tea meal			
Drinks			
<b>Precautions to take:</b> Food in play & learning activities. Food Preparation & Cooking.			

Parental consent:

I consent to the information contained within and accompanying this form to be stored in my child's individual care folder and shared with the people referenced in this form, as required.

I consent to the name, photograph and type of special dietary requirement of my child to be displayed discreetly if appropriate, to assist the staff preparing, handling and serving food to provide the agreed special diet.

Name of child \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/carer \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Template 3: Individual plan for provision of special diet for a child with additional needs

	Date	Changes or review with date:
Named member of staff with overall responsibility for managing special diets. (Usually the manager)		
Child's name:		
Child's key carer(s):		
Additional support needs that effect eating.		
<b>Diet required:</b> e.g. Texture modification. Limited food range. Help with eating and drinking. Help with food selection.		
<b>Meals, snacks and drinks provided from menu:</b> Describe what can be provided from the standard menus. <b>Or</b> adaption or alternative to food or ingredient in recipes. <b>Or</b> special bought product. This may include an attached menu which has been adapted to meet the needs of the individual child with recipes as appropriate.		
Breakfast		
Mid morning snack		
Lunch meal		
Mid afternoon snack		
Tea time meal		
Drinks		

		Date	Changes or review with date:
<b>Precautions to take:</b> Food in play & learning activities. Food Preparation & Cooking.			

Parental consent:

I consent to the information contained within and accompanying this form to be stored in my child's individual care folder and shared with the people referenced in this form, as required.

I consent to the name, photograph and type of special dietary requirement of my child to be displayed discreetly if appropriate, to assist the staff preparing, handling and serving food to provide the agreed special diet.

Name of child \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/carer \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_