**Sunflowers Preschool**



**Food and Nutrition Policy**

**From September 2025, providers must take the ‘Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance, April 2025’ into account and should follow it unless there is good reason not to.** This aim of this guidance is to support providers to understand how to implement the existing EYFS requirement that states: ‘Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, these must be healthy, balanced and nutritious’. This policy was adopted by Sunflowers Preschool on 1st May 2025.

Legislation this publication refers to The EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements are given legal force by Regulations1 made under section 39(1)(b) of the Childcare Act 2006.

**This guidance is for** early years providers in England who are caring for early years children aged 0-5 years, including: early years providers (including childminders and settings providing wraparound care before and after school or during the school holidays) registered with Ofsted in the Early Years Register or with an Early Years Childminder Agency.

It may also be of interest to:

• parents and/or carers to help them with providing healthy, balanced and nutritious

food

• Ofsted inspectors

• local authorities.

The early years are a crucial time to reduce health inequalities and set the foundations

for a lifetime of good health.

**Providing healthy, balanced and nutritious food ensures that all children:**

• Get the right amount of nutrients and energy they need while they are growing rapidly, which is especially important for children who might not have access to healthy food at home. This can help prevent children from becoming overweight or obese.

• Develop positive eating habits early on. Children’s early experiences with food can shape future eating habits. This can impact children’s long-term health including maintaining a healthy weight, and good oral health.

**Guidance for children aged 1 to 5 years**

A healthy plate

At Sunflowers preschool we encourage children to eat a balanced diet containing a wide variety of fruit and vegetables. We also encourage parents to plan meals and snacks that include a variety of food and drinks from the 4 main food groups every day. The more children try new foods, the wider the range of nutrients they will get from their meals.

Children eat together at the setting. Children are more likely to try different foods if they see their peers eating it. For example, children who won’t touch watermelon at home might happily try some if they see their peers eating it at the setting. It is also a good opportunity to introduce children to some foods they may not experience at home.

**The 4 food groups**

Children aged 1 to 5 years have different nutritional requirements to adults. They need to be fed a healthy balanced diet with a range of foods.

The Eatwell Guide uses government advice to show what a healthy and balanced diet looks like. It shows what a balance of foods should look like in one day or over a whole week. The advice in the Eatwell Guide applies to children from the age of 2 years.

A healthy, balanced diet is based on the 4 main food groups (fruit and vegetables; potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates; dairy or dairy alternatives; and beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins). These provide essential nutrients to help children grow and develop.

Sunflowers preschool must have an awareness of allergies. All staff handling food have undertaken their ‘Food Hygiene Level 2’ and ‘Food Allergen Awareness’ training. Further guidance on this can be found in the section on ‘Food allergies’.

**Our staff make sure that food is prepared appropriately to minimise any risk of choking, which we request parents do for packed lunches**.

The Food Standards Agency has 2 posters on how to prepare food safely to avoid choking.

**Food and drink guidelines at a glance**

To help provide children with healthy, balanced and nutritious food, the following categories have been used in the food and drink guidelines:

• Provide – Where the guidelines advise that a food or drink should be provided use these to plan your meals, drinks and snacks.

• Limit – Where the guidelines advise that foods should be limited, these should be restricted as detailed in the specific guideline. This will help to decrease the amount of sugar, salt and saturated fat in children’s diets and increase the variety of foods they are offered.

• Avoid – Where the guidelines advise that a food or drink should be avoided, these should not be provided as part of any meals, drinks or snacks.

**Food and drink guidelines**

**Fruit and vegetables**

These include:

• fresh, frozen, tinned or dried fruit and vegetables

• pulses such as lentils and beans.

• Provide at least 1 portion of vegetables and/or fruit as part at each main meal (breakfast, lunch, dinner) and as part of some snacks (not including dried fruit).

• Provide a variety of vegetables or fruit across the day and each week.

• Limit baked beans to once a week if this is being counted as a vegetable.

• Avoid dried fruit as a snack. It should only be provided as part of a meal.

• Avoid fruit tinned in syrup and choose fruit tinned in juice.

• Avoid added salt and sugar in tinned vegetables and pulses and choose no added salt and sugar options or those tinned in water.

**Starchy Carbohydrates**

These include:

• bread

• potatoes, sweet potatoes, and other starchy root vegetables

• pasta and noodles

• rice and other grains

• breakfast cereals.

• Provide a portion of starchy food as part of each main meal (breakfast, lunch and tea) each day.

• Provide plain starchy food such as plain savoury crackers, or unsalted unsweetened rice or corn cakes as part of at least 1 snack each day.

• Provide at least 3 different types of starchy food and a variety of wholegrain and white starchy foods across breakfasts, snacks, lunch and tea each week.

• Provide wholegrain starchy foods for at least 1 breakfast, lunch and tea each week.

• Limit sugar and salt content in breakfast cereals. Choose those with the lowest sugar and salt content which are labelled as ‘low’ (green).

• Limit the salt content in bread and bread products. Choose those with a lower salt content which are labelled as ‘low’ (green) or ‘medium’ (amber) in salt.

• Limit starchy foods which have been fried to a maximum of once a week (e.g. chips, fried rice

and fried noodles).

• Limit tinned pasta in sauce (e.g. spaghetti hoops) and choose no added sugar options.

• Avoid cereals labelled as ‘high’ (red) in sugar such as sugar-coated or chocolate-flavoured

cereals.

• Avoid flavoured dried rice, pasta and noodle products e.g. packets and pots of instant flavoured noodles, pasta and rice.

**Dairy and plain, fortified plant-based alternatives**

These include:

• milk

• cheese

• yoghurt and fromage frais.

• Provide 3 portions of milk and unsweetened dairy foods each day (which includes those provided at home).

• Provide non-dairy alternatives that are unsweetened and calcium fortified (e.g. oat milk or soya milk).

• Provide full fat dairy foods (such as cheese and unsweetened yoghurt and fromage frais) for children under the age of 2 and gradually introduce lower-fat dairy options after this age.

• Avoid sweetened yoghurts and fromage frais (including non-dairy alternatives) and choose plain unsweetened options.

**Proteins**

These include:

• beans, pulses and nuts

• meat and poultry

• fish and shellfish

• eggs

• meat alternatives.

• Provide a portion of protein as part of lunch and tea each day.

• Provide a variety of protein sources as part of lunch and tea across the week.

• Provide at least 1 lunch and 1 tea for children each week which uses beans, lentils, pulses or

a meat alternative as the protein source.

• Provide vegetarian and vegan children with a variety of protein sources such as beans, pulses, and meat alternatives each week as part of lunch and tea.

• Provide oily fish (such as salmon, sardines or mackerel) at least once every 3 weeks; this can be provided as part of lunch or tea. When oily fish is not provided as a main meal in the week, you could try to provide oily fish as a snack.

• Limit oily fish to a maximum of twice per week.

• Limit the provision of processed meat products (e.g. sausages, breaded chicken, meatballs), processed fish products (e.g. fish fingers, fish cakes), and products made from meat alternatives (e.g. vegetarian sausages), to once a week for each of the 3 types as these products can be high in saturated fat and salt.

**For all foods**

• Avoid foods high in saturated fat, salt, and/or sugars like cakes, sweet and savoury pastries,

biscuits, crisps, chocolate and other confectionary.

• Avoid artificial sweeteners as they may encourage children to prefer very sweet foods

**Drinks**

• Provide children with access to water throughout the day.

• Provide only fresh tap water and plain milk to drink.

• Provide whole milk, semi-skimmed cow’s milk or unsweetened calcium fortified non-dairy

alternatives for children from 1 year of age.

• Avoid skimmed and 1% cow’s milk.

• Avoid sugary drinks (including fruit juices, squash and smoothies).

**Traffic light food labels**

Some food labels use red, amber and green colour coding to tell us if a food has high,

medium or low amounts of fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt:

**• red means high**

**• amber means medium**

**• green means low.**

In general, a food or drink that has mostly greens on the label is a healthier choice. Red means the product is high in fat, saturated fat, salt or sugars, and we should avoid giving these to children and try to choose products which are low or medium in saturated fat and sugars, and low in salt.

The colour coding covers a range of amounts of the particular nutrient so a food labelled as medium’ for sugars can have 5g - 22.5g of sugar per 100g of the food. This means some foods in this category still contain a significant amount of sugar. To cut down on sugary foods look at the amount of sugar per 100g of the food (usually on the pack) and choose products with the lowest sugar content.

As young children (under 2 years) need a higher fat diet than older children and adults, there is no need to compare foods to choose lower-fat options. We can gradually introduce lower-fat dairy options for children older than 2 years.

The NHS has further information about information about food labelling.

**Portion size for children aged 1 to 5 years**

A portion size for a child aged 1 to 5 is generally smaller than an adult portion. Portion size refers to 1 part of a meal. For example - 1 portion of vegetables alongside a portion of carbohydrates and a portion of protein could be 1meal. There are no official guidelines on exactly how much food children need. Portions should be appropriate for a child’s body size and appetite.

For toddlers, portion size is usually roughly the size of their clenched fist. About half a piece of fruit (cut appropriately) or a tablespoon of vegetables is a good portion size for a snack.

You should monitor your child’s appetite and adjust portion sizes to make sure they get enough energy and nutrients. It can be helpful to start meals with small servings (they can always ask for more if they are still hungry).

**Sunflowers preschool aims to avoid:**

• making children finish everything on their plate or eat more than they want to

• offering rewards to children for finishing everything on their plate (e.g. stickers or dessert).

When serving food to children, we always make sure to cut food to a size that’s right for a child’s size, age and stage of weaning. This helps avoid choking.

**Early Years settings must take into account the EYFS nutrition guidance, especially:**

• Portion size for children aged 1 to 5 years

• Considering dietary requirements in early years

• Communicating with parents and/or carers

• Developing a food and nutrition policy

• Food brought in from home

• Cost-effective healthy food

• Planning food activities

• Meeting the needs of all children, including children with additional support needs

and other special diets

• Allergies, intolerances, and coeliac disease

• Food for religious faith and beliefs and

• Safely managing special dietary requirements

**Guidance for children aged 1 to 5 years - key takeaways:**

**• make sure children eat a balanced diet covering the 4 main food groups**

**• avoid foods and drinks high in salt, sugar and saturated fat**

**• milk and water are the only drinks you should offer**

**• children should eat a variety of fruit and vegetables to access different vitamins**

**and nutrients.**

Sunflowers preschool aim to include seasonal fruit and vegetables to ensure a wide range of different tastes, textures and colours are offered to the children. This will give children the chance to try different foods throughout the year.

Upon registration and throughout the child’s time with us, Sunflowers preschool continues to seek feedback from parents and/or carers on menus (especially regarding cultural preferences or dietary requirements) in order to ensure the snacks provided meet the individual needs of each child.

**Consider dietary requirements**

When creating menus, Sunflowers preschool should also consider substitutions and replacement ingredients for children with special dietary requirements. These may be linked to food allergies, intolerances or coeliac disease, religious and cultural beliefs, and vegetarianism or veganism.

Parents and/or carers may be able to help the early years setting by sharing guidance already provided by a healthcare professional. Early years providers are not expected to be experts. Advice and guidance from appropriately qualified health professionals should always be sought if required to help with menu planning. Further information to help you consider dietary requirements in early years can be found in the section on ‘Meeting the needs of all children’.

**Menu planning - key takeaways:**

• menus for children should be planned carefully. Menus should consider the

nutritional value and include a variety of foods

• when creating menus, you should include substitutions for children with special

dietary requirements.

The only drink provided by Sunflowers preschool are:

* Fresh drinking water (available throughout the day and offered as appropriate to children)
* Plain whole or semi-skimmed cow’s milk or unsweetened calcium fortified non-dairy alternatives

**Communicating with parents and/or carers**

At Sunflowers preschool, we believe working alongside parents and/or carers to be essential to ensuring children are provided with healthy, balanced and nutritious food in the setting and at home.

The child’s key person, will create a strong, ongoing relationship with both the child and their parents and/or carers to ensure the child’s needs are met. This includes clear communication with parents and/or carers about the setting’s approach to food provision and children’s food intake across the day. We believe ongoing discussions about the child’s cultural and dietary needs are crucial in creating a safe and inclusive environment for all children to eat. The Key person plays a central role in facilitating these conversations, helping to meet the dietary requirements of all children and supporting them in their development.

**Food brought in from home**

Sunflowers preschool request the parents of all children attending the afternoon sessions to provide their child with a cold packed lunch.

It is important to ensure that food provided from home aligns with the healthy options offered by the setting, so that children receive consistent messages about nutrition.

**Food safety and hygiene**

All foods brought from home will be checked for potential allergens so that the risk of cross contamination is reduced.

All food served to children must be prepared in a way to prevent choking.

The Food Standards Agency has 2 posters on how to prepare food safely to avoid choking.

Parents and/or carers are encouraged to:

• Ensure the food is suitable for their child’s individual developmental needs and prepared in a way to prevent choking.

• For perishable items that should be kept cool, pack food in insulated sealed bags. If ice packs are unavailable, the ‘4-hour rule’ can be applied. This rule allows food to be stored outside of chilled conditions for up to 4 hours, but this should only be done once during the entire storage.

• Pack foods that can safely be kept at room temperature if there is no refrigerated area for storing food brought from home. The Food Standards Agency provides advice on Listeria which has examples of ready-to-eat foods that should be eaten within 4 hours of removing them from the fridge. <https://www.food.gov.uk/listeria>

**Sunflowers preschool is unable to provide refrigeration for packed lunches of children. Likewise,**

**we are unable to reheat food brought in by children.**

**Celebrations**

Many families like to celebrate their child’s birthday and other special events by bringing in a cake or sweets to the setting to share. Sunflowers preschool will send children home with any additional gifts of food/sweets for the parents to decide if they wish their child to eat them or not. This goes for all baking and cooking done at the setting.

Parents who wish to bring in additional foods/treats for their child’s birthday, should check with a member of staff and ask to be aware of any allergens or intolerances we may have at the setting. Foods containing nuts are not permitted to go out to the children.

Any food shared in the setting will be checked for potential allergens, but the final responsibility for celebration treats lies with the parent/carers.

Planning food activities Cooking is a great experience for young children and helps to create a positive relationship with food. Some children have limited opportunities to cook or learn about food at home. You can plan fun activities for children in your own setting and also suggest activities they can do with their parents and/or carers at home.

**Meeting the needs of all children**

At Sunflowers Preschool it’s important that we cater for the cultural and dietary needs of the children in our care.

The most common dietary requirements in early years are:

**Food allergies: Allergies to foods can cause serious reactions, including death.**

**Food intolerances: Food intolerances often cause stomach pain and discomfort.**

Vegetarianism: A vegetarian won’t eat meat of any kind, including fish. They also won’t eat by-products of animal slaughter, such as gelatine. Most people who choose to be vegetarian do so for religious, health or moral reasons.

Veganism or eating a plant-based diet: A vegan is someone who eats a diet based on plants (such as vegetables, grains, legumes, nuts, seeds and fruits) and foods made from plants. Vegans don’t eat foods derived wholly or partially from animals (such as meat, fish, eggs and honey). Some people refer to this as eating a plant-based diet.

Pescetarianism: A pescetarian avoids meat but eats fish and seafood. They may also consume dairy and eggs. People choose this diet for health, environmental, or ethical reasons, believing fish is a more sustainable or ethical option than other meats.

Religious preferences: Some religions or faiths have strict dietary requirements.

Although eating certain foods won’t physically harm children, it is vital to respect their religious and cultural beliefs. Religious dietary requirements include (but are not limited to):

• only eating halal foods

• avoiding pork or beef

• keeping kosher

• eating specific foods only on certain days.

Children with special dietary requirements may need specific foods excluded or included. It is important not to exclude foods from a child’s diet without a valid reason as this may lead to unnecessary restrictions in their diet. Where a food is excluded from a child’s diet, the setting should consider substitutions and replacement ingredients.

Providers should create a safe and inclusive environment for all children to eat and children with special dietary requirements should be included in mealtimes with other children as far as possible. Only where a risk assessment concludes that a significant risk remains despite adequate training and supervision of meals and snacks times, would a child need to eat their meal separately to other children. We aim to have ongoing discussions with parents and/or carers about their child’s dietary needs. Parents and/or carers may assist by sharing guidance from healthcare professionals, and providers should seek professional advice for menu planning when needed.

**Food allergies**

Food allergies can be life threatening conditions for some children and should be taken very seriously.

Food allergies develop when the body’s immune system reacts against food proteins which it sees as invaders. It then releases chemicals to attack.

Symptoms of an allergic reaction may include:

• coughing, wheezing, breathlessness, noisy breathing or a hoarse voice

• a red raised rash (hives)

• tingly or itchy feeling in the mouth

• sneezing or an itchy, runny or blocked nose

• stomach pain

• feeling sick or vomiting

• swelling of face, lips, tongue or eyes

• difficulty swallowing

• diarrhoea

• feeling dizzy or lightheaded

• pale or floppy

• suddenly sleepy

• collapse or unconscious

These symptoms can happen on their own or they may be present in a serious reaction.

A severe reaction called anaphylaxis or anaphylactic shock can occur. This is a medical emergency that can be life threatening and needs urgent treatment. You should administer the child’s autoinjector if they have one and then call 999. You should use the child’s second autoinjector if they have one if they haven’t improved after 5 minutes.

A child who is showing signs of anaphylaxis should never walk to a new location. Where necessary, they should be carried to a suitable safe location away from an allergen (for example, if a food item was spilt in their vicinity).

Any one or more of the following symptoms may be present:

• swelling of throat, tongue or upper airways

• difficulty swallowing

• wheezing / noisy breathing

• breathing difficulty

• persistent cough

• dizziness

• feeling faint

• sudden sleepiness

• confusion

• pale clammy skin

• loss of consciousness

It’s possible to be allergic to anything, but there are 14 common allergens.

These are:

• celery

• cereals containing gluten (such as wheat, barley and oats and some flours)

• crustaceans (such as prawns, crabs and lobsters)

• eggs

• fish

• lupin (such as bread made using lupin seeds)

• milk

• molluscs (such as mussels and oysters)

• mustard

• peanuts

• sesame

• soybeans

• sulphur dioxide and sulphites (sometimes found in dried fruits and fruit juices)

• tree nuts (such as almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, brazil nuts, cashews, pecans,

pistachios and macadamia nuts).

You must find out if a child has any food allergies before they are admitted into your setting.

Children can develop allergies at any time.

As children may be trying some foods for the first time in our care all practitioners must know how to recognise the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction. If we suspect that a child has a food allergy, we will encourage parents and/or carers to seek advice and diagnosis from a doctor.

Providers will have ongoing discussions with parents and/or carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop allergy action plans for managing any known food allergies and intolerances. This information must be kept up to date by providers and shared with all staff.

Sunflowers preschool aim to always think about food allergies when food is being stored, delivered, sorted, prepared and cooked.

**Food intolerances**

Food intolerance is different to food allergy and usually occurs when the body has difficulty digesting certain foods or ingredients in food. Intolerances do not involve the immune system and are not life threatening. Food intolerances cause unpleasant symptoms such as abdominal pain or discomfort, diarrhoea, bloating, constipation, red rash, itching or eczema flares.

Some common food intolerances include:

• lactose intolerance (lactose is the sugar found in animal milk, e.g. cow’s milk, goat’s milk and sheep’s milk and can be found in foods or drinks containing animal milk, e.g. yoghurt)

• gluten intolerance or sensitivity (gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley and rye).

It is important to note that gluten intolerance is different to coeliac disease

• intolerance to some food additives or chemicals.

The diagnosis of food intolerances can be challenging. If a food intolerance is suspected, you should work with parents and/or carers to keep a diary of foods eaten at the setting and at home and any symptoms experienced. This food diary can then be discussed with a health professional. This can be a useful way to highlight patterns between foods and symptoms.

If an allergy is suspected, the food should be avoided while parents and/or carers seek input from an appropriate health professional. However, it is important not to exclude foods from a child’s diet without a valid reason as this can result in an unnecessarily restricted diet, which could have a negative impact on nutrition.

Coeliac disease Coeliac disease is a common and serious autoimmune condition that can develop at any age. Children with coeliac disease have to strictly avoid foods containing gluten, e.g. ordinary wheat flour, bread, breakfast cereals, crackers, biscuits, pastry and pasta. Many 33 packaged and processed foods contain gluten, e.g. some processed meats and fish, sausages and soups, and these need to also be avoided. Traces of gluten may also be found in foods where gluten is not an ingredient but where there has been cross contact of gluten containing foods. An example of this is oats. Oats do not contain gluten but can be contaminated by other cereals during production.

Meeting the needs of all children - key takeaways:

• make sure all staff are aware of each child’s allergies

• clearly label foods with their ingredients

• store foods and items containing allergens separately from other foods

• avoid cross-contamination by:

o washing hands

o using colour-coded equipment and utensils, or practices such as

labelling a child’s cup with their name if they have a milk allergy

o having separate preparation areas for foods that are allergens

o having rules about visitors bringing food into your setting

• if a food intolerance is suspected, work with parents and/or carers to keep a

diary of foods eaten and any symptoms experienced.

**Food for religious faiths and beliefs**

Children and their families may have specific food preferences or dietary needs according to cultural or religious beliefs.

Some families may exclude certain foods or only eat foods prepared or cooked in a particular way according to their religious faith. For example, some faith groups will follow a vegetarian diet due to both religious customs and personal choice. Additionally, fasting is common in many religions, although younger children tend to be exempt. It is important at, Sunflowers preschool, we aware how this may affect children at meal and snack times and ensure where possible that an inclusive approach is used.

Compliance with these customs may vary between denominations, branches or even families. Practitioners should engage in open communication with parents and/or carers to ensure that all food provided meets children’s food preferences and dietary needs according to their religious faiths or beliefs. This is essential for creating an inclusive environment in the setting which can support children’s wellbeing. Additionally, incorporating traditional foods from different cultures in our menus can help children feel connected to their cultural heritage.

**Children with additional support needs and other special diets**

Some children may have specific dietary needs because of physical or developmental issues, which may affect their ability to eat independently, for example difficulty with swallowing. These children may need to have their food prepared in a particular way to make it easier to eat. They may need early years settings to provide one to one support at each meal and snack time if they are unable to feed themselves.

It is also important to consider children who may experience sensory needs in relation to foods, for example, sensitivity to textures, tastes or smells, which can lead to limited preferences or aversions towards specific foods. Practitioners will consider these needs when planning menus and providing food, communicating with food service providers where required.

As well as modifying the foods offered, some adaptations to the eating environment could also be made, wherever possible, as a way to support the child at mealtimes, e.g. limiting noise and other distractions, having a cloth to wipe hands if required and not pressuring the child to eat.

If a child requires a special diet for a medical reason not discussed above, it is important we have written confirmation from their qualified health professional about the nature of their specific needs so that their nutritional requirements can be achieved. This information will be recorded, updated regularly and communicated to all staff involved in the preparing and handling of food.

For children on a special diet, the parents and/or carers and carers or registered dietitian should supply the early years setting and food service provider with details of the child’s dietary needs. This will include suitable food choices for meals and snacks, foods that should be excluded or specifically included, or supplements that may be required.

**Top tips for safely managing special dietary requirements**

Responding to the needs of children with special dietary requirements requires early and effective communication with parents and/or carers and carers as well as the food service provider and any relevant health professionals (in the case of food allergies or food avoidance for other medical reasons). Information on the needs of an individual child must be obtained in advance of them starting at the setting.

It is important that all educators understand:

• each child’s special dietary requirements including which foods or ingredients need to be avoided, and which should be included

• food modification for particular children

• how to balance safety and inclusion for each child

• their responsibility in reducing risk, for example:

• which children have allergy action plans in place, how to access these and follow:

* preparing and serving meals and snacks, making sure each child receives the correct food
* avoiding art/craft or other activities involving foods that a child is allergic to, for example, play dough or pasta (wheat/gluten), birdseed or music shakers (nuts or pulses)
* supervising children appropriately at mealtimes to avoid food sharing and cross contact
* taking care with celebrations (e.g. birthdays, festivals or holidays) where foods are brought in from home and shared by providers or parents and/or carers
* informing all parents and/or carers of the potential risk of foods brought from home for other children

• encouraging children with food allergies to ask about what is in the food that is offered to them

• warning signs or symptoms to look out for in the case of food allergies or intolerances

• which children have allergy action plans in place, how to access these and follow the procedures described within them, including action to take in case of an emergency and correct administration of prescribed medication.

**For further support and advice.**

NHS Healthy Start The Healthy Start scheme helps families from very low incomes to buy food and milk to support and encourages a healthy diet for pregnant women and children aged under 4. There may be families who attend your settings that are eligible for the scheme. The NHS Healthy Start communications toolkit can help you raise awareness of the scheme to support families.

<https://media.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/media-library>

NHS Better Health Start for Life also has recipes you can share with parents/carers.

<https://www.nhs.uk/start-for-life/baby/recipes-and-meal-ideas/?q=&Baby%27s+age=OR&Baby%27s+age=12+months+or+older&Meal+type=OR>

DfE’s help for early years providers website has 11 recipe cards for early years settings. There are 4 recipes for lunch, 3 recipes for tea, 1 snack, 1 dessert and 1 side dish that is made using leftovers. These recipes have been created to be suitable for a wide range of children, including those with special dietary requirements. Using these recipes, you can cook once and feed all the children at the same time, saving time and money.

<https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/nutrition/cost-effective-healthy-food>

The Food Standards Agency; advice on Listeria

<https://www.food.gov.uk/listeria>