

Food safety

Why is food safety so important for young children?

The [EYFS framework](#) requires providers to take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well – and you must be confident that those responsible for preparing and handling food in your setting are competent to do so.

Tragically, a child dies in the UK every month from choking and hundreds more require hospital treatment. It can happen quickly and it can happen to anyone.

Food safety advice for children age 5 and under

How to reduce the risk of choking

Food preparation:

- remove any stones and pips from fruit before serving
- cut small round foods, like grapes, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, lengthways and into quarters
- cut large fruits like melon, and hard fruit or vegetables like raw apple and carrot into slices instead of small chunks
- sausages should be avoided due to their high salt content, but if offered to children these should be cut into thin strips rather than chunks and remove the skins
- remove bones from meat or fish
- do not give whole nuts to children under five years old
- do not give whole seeds to children under five years old
- cut cheese into strips rather than chunks
- do not give popcorn as a snack
- do not give children marshmallows or jelly cubes from a packet either to eat or as part of messy play activities as they can get stuck in the throat
- do not give children hard sweets