

**Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.**

## Top tips: Food safety

**All early years practitioners are required to take the necessary steps to keep children safe and well and this includes food preparation and food handling.**

Babies' and young children's immune systems are still developing and as a result they are more susceptible to foodborne illnesses.

Knowledge of allergies and choking hazards is also required. Here are some tips to help keep children safe and well in your setting:



- Ensure that children are adequately supervised whilst eating and that they are in sight and hearing of an adult
- Collect all necessary information from parents/carers regarding food allergies or sensitivities. Check with parents and staff regularly to keep the information current and records updated
- Cut food into appropriately sized pieces e.g. grapes, strawberries, cherry tomatoes should be cut length ways and quartered. Slice large fruit, hard fruit and vegetables into strips rather than chunks. Soften hard fruit and vegetables and remove skin when first giving to weaning babies. Remove stones, pips and bones from food. For further detailed information on how to prepare food for young children please refer to the [Early Years Choking Hazards poster](#)
- Ensure that all staff involved in food handling and preparation are adequately trained in food hygiene and consistently follow strict hygiene guidelines. This includes handwashing, wearing clean clothing/aprons and using clean utensils and equipment to avoid cross contamination
- Ensure that there is an area adequately equipped with suitable facilities for food preparation e.g. for washing fruit/vegetables, preparing bottles for babies etc
- Store food safely and at the correct temperature to prevent the growth of harmful bacteria. Keep fridges, freezers and food preparation areas clean and regularly check expiration dates
- Discuss safe eating habits with the children such as the importance of chewing food and not rushing while eating. Ensure eating times are relaxed and enjoyable

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- Maintain accurate records of purchases, where from, dates, preparation and how much is consumed. This information will be valuable if you have any food poisoning outbreaks
- Ensure staff are trained in emergency procedures such as Paediatric First Aid and know how to respond to choking incidents or allergic reactions. For added reassurance you could apply to be awarded [Millie's Mark](#) which will demonstrate that you go above and beyond the basic requirements
- Communicate any incidents to parents and request that they keep you updated of any food related incidents away from the setting.

### **NDNA products to support you with these tips**

- [Level 2 Food Safety and Hygiene](#) – online course
- [Millie's Mark](#) – gold standard in paediatric first aid.

**And more resources at [www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna](http://www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna)**