

# Meals and Mealtimes: Quick Facts

* In England, the provision of meals is covered under Section 3: The Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the revised Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework.
* Babies should drink either breast or formula milk until they are 12 months old at least.
* Staff should discourage unacceptable behaviour during meals (such as standing at the table or throwing food) by removing the child from the table to wait until later to eat.
* For lunches for children in early years services there should be a balance of ingredients from each of the four main food groups.
* Snacks should be provided as pre-school children have small stomachs and will not settle during large meals.
* Drinking water should be provided throughout the day.
* Different cultures have specific dietary requirements. These should be respected and supported at mealtimes.
* Where food is provided by parents the early years service will need to ensure that the food is suitable.
* Children under three years are particularly vulnerable to choking caused by a foreign object in their airways.