

# Understanding the recipes

## Ingredients

Ingredient quantities are given for 5 or 20 portions (10 or 20 for cakes and desserts), so can be easily used for small or large groups of children, and can be multiplied up where needed. Ingredients used are in line with dietary advice and best practice guidance for childcare settings<sup>2</sup>. For example:

- canned pulses contain no added salt or sugar
- canned fruit is canned in juice and not syrup
- full fat milk, yoghurt and cheese are used
- 'spread' used on toast, crackers, is a vegetable oil-based spread (for example sunflower spread).

Alternatives to spreads: try using these ideas as a change to the usual vegetable oil spread:

- **Cream cheese** – try adding fruit or vegetables on top, or herbs for extra flavour!
- **Mashed avocado** – try adding black pepper, lemon or lime juice
- **Houmous** – choose a lower salt option
- **Homemade fish pate (e.g. sardine, mackerel)** – Recipes available
- **Smooth peanut butter** – Choose one without added sugar and salt (*unsuitable for children with a nut allergy*)
- **Mashed banana** – try adding cinnamon for extra flavour!
- **Cottage cheese** – try adding different flavours such as chives or pineapple
- **Mashed boiled egg with cream cheese**
- **Homemade tzatziki** (recipe available)

- **Mashed tinned sardines or mackerel** in a tomato sauce
- **Mashed tinned tuna** – choose tuna in water, and add to cream cheese or yogurt
- **Homemade tomato sauce with grilled cheese.**

## Milk provision

Where milk is provided as a drink or on breakfast cereals, this is whole milk for children aged 1 to 2 years, and semi-skimmed milk for children aged 2 years and over.<sup>viii</sup>

For more information on alternatives to cows milk refer to Bump, Baby and Beyond<sup>3</sup>, or NHS Choices website<sup>4</sup>, or the First Steps Nutrition Trust resource 'Good food choices and portion sizes for children 1-4<sup>5</sup>.' Morning and afternoon snacks include the choice of milk or water as a drink for children. This enables settings to provide drinking milk for children (for example as part of the Nursery Milk scheme<sup>6</sup>), and for children to choose whether they would like milk or water with their snack.

Oily Fish – are good sources of omega 3 fatty acids, an important type of fat, and it is recommended to include this at least once a week in your menus. Recipes that include oily fish are: sardine pate on toast, homemade mackerel pate, salmon and vegetable rice salad, salmon and broccoli pasta, salmon and pea risotto.

## Typical portion sizes

Each recipe includes typical portion size information for children aged one to four years. These portion sizes are based on the energy and nutrient requirements of children

viii Children aged one to two years should have whole milk and dairy products to ensure they provide enough energy and other nutrients. After the age of two years, children can gradually move to semi-skimmed milk as a drink, as long as they are eating a varied and balanced diet and growing well. Avoid skimmed and 1% fat milk for children under five years, as they don't provide enough energy for young children. If only one type of milk is available, or you are providing milk as a drink to children under two years old, use whole milk and dairy products to ensure that all children (including younger children and those who don't eat well) do not miss out on energy and important nutrients. For more information, see [www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/milk-dairy-foods.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/milk-dairy-foods.aspx)

aged one to four years. In order to ensure that the energy and nutrient needs of those in the group with the highest requirements are met, these are based on estimated average energy requirements for children aged three to four years, and for other nutrients, on the highest requirements within the one to four years age range. This means that the typical portion sizes stated on the recipes will be appropriate for children with the highest requirements (generally children aged three-four years), and smaller portion sizes may be appropriate for children younger than this (children one to two years old). As children's requirements for growth and activity, and their appetites will vary, young children should be encouraged to eat healthy food according to their appetite. Children should not be expected to finish everything on their plate, and should be allowed to eat their dessert even if they have not finished their main course. If children are still hungry after their main course, they should have the opportunity to have second helpings.

If you are providing meals to older children, up to 12 years, you can use the same recipes and serve larger portions sizes. Refer to First Steps Nutrition, Eating well recipe book: Simple, cost effective ideas for the whole family, for a guide to portion sizes and additional recipes. [www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-early-years](http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-early-years)

## Allergen information

Each recipe/ingredient list states which of the 14 allergens covered by EU and UK food labelling legislation are present (based on allergens typically included in commonly available brands of each ingredient). It is important to remember that products can be reformulated, that different brands may contain different allergens, and that children can have allergies to ingredients and foods not covered by the labelling requirements. If you are preparing food for a child with a food allergy, always make sure you check the packaging for all ingredients and products you are using. Allergens covered by the legislation should be highlighted (for example in **bold**) on the ingredient label of products or you can request this information from suppliers.

## Recipe adaptations for infants 7–12 months

Each of the recipes included within this document includes a box with a typical portion size for infants aged 7-12 months, and any additional information for preparation and serving of the recipe for these age groups (for example where particular ingredients should be omitted). However, it is important to remember that these are just a guide, and the meal patterns, milk intakes and amounts of food will vary between individual children, and settings should discuss this with families.

When preparing food for infants, also remember that:

- salt should not be added to food served to infants, and stock cubes and gravy shouldn't be used either
- there is no need to add sugar to food for infants.