

1 minute guide: Choking

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.

It is important that practitioners know how to prepare foods safely to help prevent choking, but also how to respond to a choking incident. The EYFS requires providers to take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well and must be confident that those responsible for preparing and handling food are competent to do so.

Food choice and Preparation

You should consider the age and stage of a child when choosing appropriate snacks and meals.

Choking can happen with any foods but firm foods, bones and small round foods that can easily get stuck in the throat present a higher risk. The Food Standards Agency has produced a poster which outlines essential steps to prevent choking. They have also produced a table which details key foods and advice for how to serve them safely. These can be found [here](#). CAPT (Child Accident Prevention Trust) have a poster Finger Food without the Fear. RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) also have a poster on [Choking hazards in the home](#). Both can be printed and displayed in your setting and shared with parents.

You can also find additional guidance on food safety and example menus [here](#).

Staff deployment

The Statutory Requirements for the **Childminders** EYFS 2024 now states that:

- 3.39 *Childminders must ensure that children are adequately supervised, including whilst eating, and decide how to use any assistants to ensure children's needs are met.*
- 3.40 Whilst eating, children must be within sight and hearing of the childminder and/or assistants.

The Statutory Requirements for the **Group and school-based providers** EYFS 2024 now states that:

- 3.35 Providers must ensure that children are adequately supervised, including whilst eating, and decide how to use staff to ensure children's needs are met.
- 3.36 Whilst eating, children must be within sight and hearing of a member of staff.

Snack and mealtimes can be incredibly busy in settings and often coincide with staff breaks. You must ensure children are adequately supervised at all times whilst eating. All children should be seated appropriately and never left alone whilst eating, this includes bottle feeding. It is not recommended that children eat whilst in car seats as it is not possible to ensure adequate supervision whilst driving. Similar consideration should also be given to walking with children seated in a front facing pushchair. Children should not be walking around whilst eating, the rules and expectations of the setting should reflect this.

Training

All Early Years settings should have enough qualified first aiders to respond to incidents quickly.



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The EYFS for **childminders** states:

3.34 At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present and must accompany children on outings. The certificate must be for a full course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A. PFA training must be renewed every three years and be relevant for people caring for young children and babies.

The EYFS for **group and school-based providers** states:

3.29 At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present and must accompany children on outings. The certificate must be for a full course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A. PFA training must be renewed every three years and be relevant for people caring for young children and babies.

3.30. Providers should take into account the number of children, staff, and layout of premises to ensure that a paediatric first aider is able to respond to emergencies quickly.

All paediatric first aid training should include specific instruction on how to respond to a child who is choking.

All first Aid given to a child in the event of a choking incident should be seen by a GP/Nurse. All incidents of choking should be recorded as an accident/incident and shared with parents. Where a child loses consciousness or requires hospitalisation for more than 24 hours you must notify Ofsted within 14 days or as soon as is reasonably practicable.

The Statutory Requirements for the **Childminders** EYFS 2024 states that:

- *3.55 Childminders must be confident that they, or any assistants responsible for preparing and handling food, are competent to do so.*
- *Childminders should consider whether paediatric first aiders need to undertake annual refresher training, during any three-year certification period to help maintain basic skills and keep up to date with any changes to PFA procedures*

The Statutory Requirements for the **Group and school-based providers** EYFS 2024 states that:

- *3.56 Providers must be confident that those responsible for preparing and handling food are competent to do so. All staff involved in preparing and handling food must receive training in food hygiene.*
- *Providers should consider whether paediatric first aiders need to undertake annual refresher training, during any three-year certification period to help maintain basic skills and keep up to date with any changes to PFA procedures.*



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