

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-leaflet-northern-ireland.pdf](#) 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 [Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance](#)

Staff deployment & training for childminders

The Statutory Requirements for the **Childminders** EYFS 2025 now has a new section on **Safer Eating** [Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders](#) states that:

- 3.63 *Whilst children are eating there should always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate*
- 3.67 *Childminders must prepare food in a way to prevent choking. This guidance on food safety for young children: Food safety - Help for early years [Help for early years providers : Food safety](#) includes advice on food and drink to avoid, how to reduce the risk of choking and links to other useful resources for early years settings.*
- 3.69 *Children must always be within sight and hearing of a childminder or assistant whilst eating. Choking can be completely silent; therefore, it is important for providers to be alert to when a child may be starting to choke. Where possible, the childminder or assistant should sit facing children whilst they eat, so they can make sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.*
- 3.70 *When a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, providers should record details of where and how the child choked and ensure parents and/or carers are made aware. The records should be reviewed periodically to identify if there are trends or common features of incidents that could be addressed to reduce the risk of choking. Appropriate action should be taken to address any identified concerns*

Staff deployment & training for Group and school-based providers

The Statutory Requirements for the **Group and school-based providers** EYFS 2025 now has a new section on **Safer Eating** [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#) states that:

- 3.63 *Whilst children are eating there should always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate*
- 3.67 *Providers must prepare food in a way to prevent choking. This guidance on food safety for young children: Food safety - Help for early years providers [Help for early years providers : Food safety](#) includes advice on food and drink to avoid, how to reduce the risk of choking and links to other useful resources for early years providers.*
- 3.69 *Children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Choking can be completely silent; therefore, it is important for providers to be alert to when a child may be starting to choke. Where possible, providers should sit facing children whilst they eat, so they can make sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.*
- 3.70 *When a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, providers should record details of where and how the child choked and ensure parents and/or carers are made aware. The records should be reviewed periodically to identify if there are trends or common features of incidents that could be addressed to reduce the risk of choking. Appropriate action should be taken to address any identified concerns.*

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.

Useful links

Child First Aid: How to save a choking child: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fN_jrMrPLpY

Baby First Aid: How to save a choking baby: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePodw7L_mFM
[choking factsheet 2024.pdf](#)

[Choking-posters.pdf](#)

[Choking-session-plan.pdf](#)

[How to stop a child from choking - NHS](#)

[PowerPoint Presentation](#)



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