



# Menu Plan for Early Learning and Care Services

**Prepared By:** Healthy Eating and Active Living, Health and Wellbeing division, HSE and the Nutrition team, Safer Food.

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# Acknowledgements

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# Introduction

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Children's early years provide an important foundation for their future health and strongly influence many aspects of well-being. Children's food preferences and eating habits are also formed early in life with consequences for a range of health and development outcomes in later life. It is therefore important that the food provided in early years' settings provides appropriate amounts of energy and nutrients and supports development of healthy eating habits in young children. This supports individual children's growth and development, and ensures every child has the best start in life.

This menu plan aims to provide a practical guide to implementing the 'Nutrition Standards for Early Learning and Care Services' published by the Department of Health and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) in 2023. The aim of the nutrition standards is to inform, develop and implement healthy eating policy and practice in Early Learning and Care Services. The nutrition standards deliver on a key action in 'First 5', the Whole of Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families which aims to ensure an optimum start for all children in Ireland. This menu plan and the nutrition standards replace previous publications; the Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Pre - School Services in 2004 and the supporting HSE Pre - school 3 week Menu Plan published in 2006.

To help provide food lower in salt and sugar for children, it is recommended that early years' settings cook from scratch as much as possible and avoid adding salt and sugar with minimal amounts of added oils and fat spreads when cooking. This menu plan's recipes have been designed for use by all regulated early years providers including children's centres, nurseries and childminders\*.

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These are described in the OECD report 'Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in the EU Quality Framework', as: "any regulated arrangement that provides education and care from birth to compulsory primary school age – regardless of the setting, funding, opening hours or programme content – and includes centre and family day care; privately and publicly funded provision; pre - school and pre - primary provision" (Government of Ireland, 2019b).

# Standard and vegetarian menu plans

## Standard, week 1

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Breakfast</b>	Serving of iron fortified low sugar and salt cereal of choice  200ml milk for cereal and to drink  Fruit serving	Serving of iron fortified low sugar and salt cereal of choice  200ml milk for cereal and to drink  Fruit serving	1 boiled egg  1 slice of wholegrain toast  200ml milk  Fruit serving	Serving of iron fortified low sugar and salt cereal of choice  200ml milk for cereal and to drink  Fruit serving	Serving of iron fortified low sugar and salt cereal of choice  200ml milk for cereal and to drink  Fruit serving
<b>Snacks</b>	Wholegrain bagel with smooth peanut/nut butter or hummus	Unsalted crackers with smooth peanut/nut butter or hummus	Pitta bread with yoghurt (tzatziki) dip and serving of vegetable sticks	Beanie dip with unsalted breadstick	Wholegrain bagel with smooth peanut/nut butter or hummus
<b>Hot meal</b>	Shepherd's pie	Chicken fajitas	Salmon and pea risotto with side of vegetables	Beef lasagne	Chicken curry with rice
<b>Snacks</b>	Fruit serving  200ml milk	Natural fromage frais  Fruit serving	Natural yoghurt  Fruit serving	Natural yoghurt  Serving of tinned fruit in natural juice	Grapes (cut into quarters)  Cheese (cut into sticks)
<b>Light/cold meal</b>	Pitta pockets with egg mayonnaise  Mixed vegetable sticks	Mixed bean tagine	Baked beans (reduced salt, no added sugar) on wholegrain toast with chopped tomatoes	Cheese toastie with sliced tomato on the side	Lentil soup with bread roll
<b>Drinks for meals and snacks</b>	Water or milk	Water or milk	Water or milk	Water or milk	Water or milk

**Note:**

- Please refer to the Nutrition Standards for Early Learning and Care Services for guidance on breakfast cereals with respect to content of sugar, salt, fibre and iron fortification.
- When serving fresh vegetable sticks e.g. carrots, these may need to be cooked (par-boil/steam) to slightly soften to prevent choking risk.
- Water or milk only to be offered at meal times.
- Vary fruit offered as a snack throughout the week and use seasonal fruit when possible.
- Non-dairy soya 'drinks' can be offered if the child is allergic to cow's milk. These should be unsweetened and fortified with calcium. Almond, coconut and rice plant-based alternatives to milk are not suitable for young children.



## Standard, week 2

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Breakfast</b>	Serving of iron fortified low sugar and salt cereal of choice  200ml milk for cereal and to drink  Fruit serving	Serving of iron fortified low sugar and salt cereal of choice  200ml milk for cereal and to drink  Fruit serving	Serving of iron fortified low sugar and salt cereal of choice  200ml milk for cereal and to drink  Fruit serving	1 boiled egg with toast (cut into strips)  200ml milk  Fruit serving	Serving of iron fortified low sugar and salt cereal of choice  200ml milk for cereal and to drink  Fruit serving
<b>Snacks</b>	Unsalted breadstick with smooth peanut/ nut butter or hummus	Wholemeal toast with smooth peanut/ nut butter or hummus	Rice cake with a serving of variety of sliced fruit	Scone with a serving of low-fat spread  Fruit serving	Unsalted crackers with smooth peanut/ nut butter or hummus
<b>Hot meal</b>	Beef chilli with boiled rice	Cheesy chicken pasta with side of vegetables	Herb baked salmon with couscous and roasted vegetables	Beef stroganoff	Pork meatballs with spaghetti and vegetables
<b>Snacks</b>	Natural yoghurt  Serving of tinned fruit in natural juices	Rice pudding and mixed berries	Natural yoghurt  Fruit serving	Mixed fruit salad  200ml of milk	Grapes (cut into quarters)  Serving of cheddar cheese (cut into sticks)
<b>Light/cold meal</b>	Pitta bread with falafel (chickpea patties)	Mexican bean wrap	Vegetable omelette with serving of bread	Zingy turkey salad wrap	Pitta pizza
<b>Drinks for meals and snacks</b>	Water or milk	Water or milk	Water or milk	Water or milk	Water or milk

## Vegetarian, week 1

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Breakfast</b>	Serving of iron fortified low sugar and salt cereal of choice  200ml milk for cereal and to drink  Fruit serving	Serving of iron fortified low sugar and salt cereal of choice  200ml milk for cereal and to drink  Fruit serving	1 boiled egg with toast (cut into strips)  200ml milk  Fruit serving	Serving of iron fortified low sugar and salt cereal of choice  200ml milk for cereal and to drink  Fruit serving	Serving of iron fortified low sugar and salt cereal of choice  200ml milk for cereal and to drink  Fruit serving
<b>Snacks</b>	Wholegrain bagel with smooth peanut/nut butter or hummus	Unsalted crackers with smooth peanut/nut butter or hummus	Pitta bread with yoghurt (tzatziki) dip  Serving of vegetable sticks	Beanie dip with unsalted breadstick	Wholegrain bagel with smooth peanut/nut butter or hummus
<b>Hot meal</b>	Shepherd's pie with lentils	Fajitas with chicken meat alternative	Pea and bean risotto	Vegetable lasagne	Chickpea curry with rice
<b>Snacks</b>	Fruit serving  200ml milk	Natural fromage frais  Fruit serving	Natural yoghurt  Fruit serving	Natural yoghurt  Serving of tinned fruit in natural juice	Grapes (cut into quarters)  Cheese (cut into sticks)
<b>Light/cold meal</b>	Pitta pockets with egg mayonnaise	Mixed bean tagine with boiled rice	Baked beans (reduced salt, no added sugar) on wholegrain toast with chopped tomatoes (quartered)	Cheese toastie with sliced tomato on the side	Lentil soup with bread roll
<b>Drinks for meals and snacks</b>	Water or milk	Water or milk	Water or milk	Water or milk	Water or milk



## Vegetarian, week 2

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Breakfast</b>	Serving of iron fortified low sugar and salt cereal of choice  200ml milk for cereal and to drink  Fruit serving	Serving of iron fortified low sugar and salt cereal of choice  200ml milk for cereal and to drink  Fruit serving	Serving of iron fortified low sugar and salt cereal of choice  200ml milk for cereal and to drink  Fruit serving	1 boiled egg with toast (cut into strips)  200ml milk  Fruit serving	Serving of iron fortified low sugar and salt cereal of choice  200ml milk for cereal and to drink  Fruit serving
<b>Snacks</b>	Unsalted breadstick with smooth peanut/nut butter or hummus	Wholemeal toast with smooth peanut/nut butter or hummus	Rice cake  Serving of variety of sliced fruit	Scone with a serving of low-fat spread  Fruit serving	Unsalted crackers with smooth peanut/nut butter or hummus
<b>Hot meal</b>	Chilli with boiled rice	Cheesy pasta with side of vegetables	Roasted tofu and vegetables with couscous	Bean and mushroom stroganoff	Vegetarian meatballs with spaghetti and side of vegetables
<b>Snacks</b>	Natural yoghurt  Serving of tinned fruit in natural juices	Rice pudding and mixed berries	Natural yoghurt  Fruit serving	Mixed fruit salad  200ml of milk	Grapes (cut into quarters)  Serving of cheddar cheese (cut into sticks)
<b>Light/cold meal</b>	Pitta with falafel (chickpea patties)	Mexican bean wrap	Vegetable omelette with toast	Tofu zingy salad wrap	Pitta pizza
<b>Drinks for meals and snacks</b>	Water or milk	Water or milk	Water or milk	Water or milk	Water or milk

# Understanding the recipes

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Ingredient quantities are given for 5, 10 or 20 portions, so can be easily used for small or large groups of children, and can be multiplied up where needed. Serving sizes may need to be adjusted to meet the needs of the children based on age range. Ingredients used are in line with Healthy Eating Guidelines for one to four years olds (Department of Health, 2020) and the Nutrition Standards for Early Learning and Care Services (DECDIY, 2023). For example:

- Tinned pulses contain no added salt or sugar
- Tinned fruit is canned in natural 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, olive or rapeseed oil spread)
- Piccolo, Knorr zero salt or Kallo very low salt stock cubes are suitable for use as low salt stock in the recipes. Homemade stock (without added salt) can also be used.

The menu plan does NOT contain:

- Chocolate, confectionery, jelly
- Sweet biscuits, high fat/salt savoury biscuits, crisps
- Cream, ice cream
- Deep fried foods and pastry based foods (pies, sausage rolls, chips etc.)
- Processed red meats, (e.g. sausages, hot dogs, salami)
- Soft drinks, fruit juice and fruit drinks, cordial, sports drinks, energy drinks, flavoured milk or flavoured mineral water
- Any added salt or sugar.

## Vegetarian meat alternatives

In both the standard and vegetarian menu plans, a variety of plant based proteins e.g. lentils, beans and peas are used. Varieties of meat alternatives are also included in the vegetarian menu plan to demonstrate how standard recipes can be adapted using meat alternatives such as mycoprotein, soya mince and tofu which are all easily accessible in the main supermarket chains including discount supermarkets.

## Milk provision

Milk is a key food for 1 to 4 year olds, providing a rich source of calcium for healthy bones and teeth.

- Full-fat milk is the only milk suitable for 1 and 2 year olds.
- Full-fat and low-fat milk is suitable for 3 and 4 year olds.
- Skimmed or fat-free milk should not be provided to 1 to 4 year olds.
- Non-dairy soya 'drinks' can be offered if the child is allergic to cow's milk. These should be unsweetened and fortified with calcium. Almond, coconut and rice plant-based alternatives to milk are not suitable for young children.
- Milk must be available to serve with cereal and combined with porridge oats.
- Offer water or milk at meals and snacks. This enables settings to provide drinking milk for children and for children to choose whether they would like milk or water with their snack or meal. In the menu plan, a dairy serving is included in all the afternoon snacks to ensure that children attending afternoon services are provided with a serving from the dairy rich milk, yoghurt and cheese food group.



# Standard/vegetarian breakfast recipes

## Week 1

Monday	
Ingredients	Typical portion size
Fortified porridge oats	30g
Milk	200ml (150ml with cereal, 50ml to drink)
Fruit e.g. sliced banana	40g
Cinnamon, ground (optional)	A pinch per serving
Method:	
1.	Stir porridge oats into milk.
2.	Bring to the boil and simmer for 3 - 5 minutes stirring continuously.
3.	Leave to stand for 1 minute and check it is the appropriate temperature before serving.
4.	Serve topped with chopped or sliced fruit or leave fruit on the side.

Tuesday	
Ingredients	Typical portion size
Wheat-biscuits	1 – 1½ biscuits
Milk	200ml (100ml with cereal, 100ml to drink)
Fruit e.g. blueberries	20 - 40g

Wednesday	
Ingredients	Typical portion size
Hard boiled egg	1 medium
Wholegrain bread, toasted	½ - 1 slice
Spread	½ teaspoon
Fruit of choice e.g. mandarin orange	20 - 40g

Week 1 Thursday Breakfast	
Ingredients	Typical portion size
Wheat-biscuits	1 - 1½ biscuits
Milk	200ml (100ml with cereal, 100ml to drink)
Fruit e.g. chopped kiwi	20 - 40g

Friday	
Ingredients	Typical portion size
Fortified porridge oats	30g uncooked
Milk	200ml (150ml with cereal, 50ml to drink)
Fruit e.g. chopped mixed apple and banana	20 - 40g
Cinnamon (optional)	A pinch per serving
Method:	
1.	Stir porridge oats into milk.
2.	Bring to the boil and simmer for 3 - 5 minutes stirring continuously.
3.	Leave to stand for 1 minute and check it is the appropriate temperature before serving.
4.	Serve topped with chopped fruit or leave fruit on the side.

## Week 2

Monday	
Ingredients	Typical portion size
Wheat biscuits	1 - 1½ biscuits
Milk	200ml (100ml with cereal, 100ml to drink)
Chopped fruit e.g kiwi	20 - 40g

Tuesday	
Ingredients	Typical portion size
Fortified porridge	30g
Milk	200ml (100ml with cereal, 100ml to drink)
Fruit e.g. blueberries	20 - 40g
Method:	
1.	Stir porridge oats into milk.
2.	Bring to the boil and simmer for 3 - 5 minutes stirring continuously.
3.	Leave to stand for 1 minute and check it is the appropriate temperature before serving.
4.	Serve topped with chopped fruit or leave fruit on the side.

Wednesday	
Ingredients	Typical portion size
Wheat biscuits	1 - 1 ½ biscuits
Milk	200ml (100ml with cereal, 100ml to drink)
Fruit e.g. sliced banana	20 - 40g

Thursday	
Ingredients	Typical portion size
Hard boiled egg	1 medium
Wholegrain toast	½ to 1 slice
Vegetable oil based fat spread	½ teaspoon per slice of toast
Milk	200ml
Fruit e.g half an orange/1 mandarin	20 - 40g

Friday	
Ingredients	Typical portion size
Fortified porridge oats	30g uncooked
Milk	200ml (100ml with cereal 100ml to drink)
Fruit chopped e.g. plums	20 - 40g
<b>Method:</b>	
1.	Stir porridge oats into milk.
2.	Bring to the boil and simmer for 3 - 5 minutes stirring continuously.
3.	Leave to stand for 1 minute and check it is the appropriate temperature before serving.
4.	Serve topped with chopped fruit or leave fruit on the side.



# Standard hot meal recipes

## Week 1

<b>Monday: Shepherd's pie</b>			
<b>Preparation time:</b> 25 minutes			
<b>Cooking time:</b> 50 minutes			
<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:</b> 210g			
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Serves 5</b>	<b>Serves 10</b>	<b>Serves 20</b>
Onion	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Garlic	1 clove	2 cloves	4 cloves
Red pepper	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Button mushroom	11 medium	22 medium	44 medium
Parsley	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons
Vegetable oil	1 tablespoon	1 ½ tablespoons	3 tablespoons
Tomato puree	1 ½ teaspoons	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons
Worcestershire sauce (optional)	A dash	A few dashes	1 teaspoon
Beef stock cube, reduced or zero salt	½ cube	1 cube	2 cubes
Lamb mince	225g	450g	900g
Potatoes, peeled	485g	975g	1.95kg
Polyunsaturated fat spread	30g	60g	120g



**Method:**

1.	Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4.
2.	Prepare the vegetables as follows: peel, wash and roughly chop the onions, garlic and potatoes. Remove the stalks and seeds from the red peppers, wash and roughly chop. Peel the mushrooms, remove the stalks, wash and slice.
3.	Wash and chop the parsley.
4.	Warm the oil in the pan, add the chopped onion, red pepper and garlic and cook until softened.
5.	Add the minced meat and cook until browned. If desired, transfer the cooked mixture to a food processor and chop for a few seconds on the pulse setting for a smoother consistency if needed. This is not essential.
6.	Prepare the reduced/zero salt beef stock by dissolving half a stock cube in 190ml boiling water.
7.	Transfer the meat and vegetable mix to a saucepan and add in the reduced/zero salt beef stock, chopped parsley, tomato puree, Worcestershire sauce and sliced mushrooms. Cook over a medium heat for about 20 minutes.
8.	Meanwhile boil the potatoes in water until tender. Drain and mash with the milk and about two thirds of the spread. Season with black pepper.
9.	Arrange the meat either in one large dish or in individual ramekins, cover with the mashed potato and dot the topping with the remaining spread. Cook in the pre-heated oven for 20 minutes.
10.	Let sit for a few minutes, then cut into portions and serve.





**Tuesday: Chicken fajitas****Preparation time:** 15 minutes**Cooking time:** 15 minutes**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 130g - 115g of fajita filling and 15g (half small wrap)

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Red pepper	1 medium	2 medium	4 medium
Onion	2 small	1 large	2 large
Paprika	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons
Chilli powder	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons
Ground cumin	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoon
Garlic powder	¼ teaspoon	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon
Vegetable oil	1 teaspoon	½ tablespoon	1 tablespoons
Chicken breast strips	200g	400g	800g
Tortilla wrap, small white	2 ½ wraps	5 wraps	10 wraps
Natural yoghurt	2 ½ tablespoons	5 level tablespoons	10 level tablespoons

**Method:**

1.	De-seed the pepper, peel the onion and finely dice both.
2.	Mix the paprika, chilli powder, ground cumin and garlic powder with the oil and coat the chicken and vegetables.
3.	On medium heat, cook the chicken and the vegetable mixture for 10 - 15 minutes until the chicken is cooked through and vegetables are softened.
4.	Heat the tortillas according to the manufacturer's instructions.
5.	Place the chicken and vegetable mix in the centre of the tortilla and a small spoon of yoghurt and roll up tightly.
6.	Cut in half and serve.

**Wednesday: Salmon and pea risotto****Preparation time:** 10 minutes**Cooking time:** 30 minutes**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 190g (includes a side serving of 20g of broccoli)

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Onion	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Garlic	1 clove	2 cloves	4 cloves
Fresh parsley	2 - 3 sprigs	4 - 6 sprigs	1 bunch
Vegetable stock (reduced or zero salt)	½ cube	1 cube	2 cubes
Boiling water	300ml	600ml	1.2L
Salmon fillet	190g	380g	760g
Vegetable oil	1 teaspoon	1 ½ teaspoons	1 tablespoon
Frozen peas	200g	400g	800g
White rice	145g	290g	580g
Broccoli	100g	200g	400g

**Method:**

1.	Dice the onion and garlic and finely chop the parsley.
2.	Dissolve the reduced salt stock cube into the boiling water.
3.	Steam the salmon until cooked through. If using a pot for steaming, use a folding stainless steel steaming basket or silicone basket. A steamer or steam oven can also be used.
4.	Meanwhile, heat the oil in a pan and add the onion. Cook for 1 - 2 minutes.
5.	Add the peas and rice and stir. Add the stock until the rice and vegetables are covered and stir. Leave to simmer until the majority of the stock has been absorbed.
6.	While the risotto is cooking, remove the outer leaves from the broccoli, trim the stem and wash. Cook the broccoli in the minimum amount of boiling water until tender but still with a slight bite to it.
7.	Check to see if the rice is cooked, if not, add more water and continue to simmer until cooked.
8.	Flake in the cooked salmon (30g per child) and combine well. Sprinkle with parsley. Serve with cooked broccoli.

**Thursday:** Beef lasagne**Preparation time:** 10 minutes**Cooking time:** 60 minutes**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 160g

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Lean minced beef	225g	450g	900g
Onion	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Garlic	1 clove	2 clove	4 cloves
Tinned tomatoes	1x 400g tin	2x 400g tins	4x 400g tins
Tomato purée	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons	8 teaspoons
Red pepper	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Button mushrooms	2 medium	4 medium	8 medium
Plain white flour	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons	8 teaspoons
Whole milk	213ml	425ml	850ml
Cheddar cheese	25g	50g	100g
Polyunsaturated spread	13g	25g	50g
Lasagne sheets	5 sheets approx	10 sheets approx	20 sheets approx



**Method:**

1. Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4.
2. Chop the onions, pepper, mushrooms and garlic.
3. Put the mince into a large pan and fry until completely brown, stirring all the time with a wooden spoon.
4. Drain off any excess fat before adding onions and garlic to mince and cook for 3 - 4 minutes.
5. Add the chopped peppers, mushrooms, tinned tomatoes and tomato sauce to the mince mixture.
6. Bring to the boil and leave to simmer on a low heat for 15 - 20 minutes.

**To make cheese sauce:**

7. Melt the spread in a saucepan.
8. Add flour and cook over a low heat for 1 minute, stirring all the time.
9. Remove from the heat and cool slightly.
10. Add the milk, salt and pepper, whisking all the time.
11. Return to the heat and bring to the boil. Keep whisking.
12. Reduce heat and cook slowly for 5 minutes, then add the grated cheese 2 minutes before the end of the cooking time.

**Final Preparation:**

13. Put a layer of meat sauce in the bottom of a casserole/lasagne dish, cover with lasagne sheets.
14. Make 1 or 2 more layers as above finishing with a layer of lasagne sheets. Cover the top layer with the cheese sauce.
15. Sprinkle the top with grated cheese and bake for 30 - 40 minutes.



**Friday: Chicken curry****Preparation time:** 10 minutes**Cooking time:** 20 minutes**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 111g (excluding rice accompaniment)

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Cooked chicken fillets	260g	460g	920g
Onion	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Red pepper	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Garlic	1 clove	2 cloves	4 cloves
Button mushrooms	5	10	20
Carrot	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Peas (frozen)	50g	100g	200g
Vegetable oil	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons
Medium curry powder	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons	8 teaspoons
Chicken stock (reduced or zero salt)	½ cube	1 cube	1 ½ cubes
Water	140ml	275ml	550ml
Plain white flour	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons
Rice (white or brown)	80g	160g	320g

**Method:**

1.	Slice vegetables and garlic.
2.	Heat the oil in a frying pan and gently fry the onions, carrot and garlic.
3.	Add mushrooms and pepper to the frying pan and cook for 2 to 3 minutes.
4.	Add the curry powder and flour to the pan and cook for 1 minute stirring all the time.
5.	Stir in the stock and cooked chicken pieces.
6.	Add the peas, reduce heat and cook slowly for 10 minutes without stirring.
7.	Serve with rice. Cook rice as per the instructions on the pack. Do not add salt.

## Week 2

<b>Monday: Beef chilli with rice</b>			
<b>Preparation time:</b> 15 minutes			
<b>Cooking time:</b> 55 minutes			
<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:</b> 220g (including rice accompaniment)			
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Serves 5</b>	<b>Serves 10</b>	<b>Serves 20</b>
Onion	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Carrot	1 small	2 small	4 small
Celery	½ stick	1 stick	2 sticks
Red pepper	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Vegetable oil	½ tablespoon	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons
Chilli powder (optional)	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons
Ground cumin	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons
Garlic	1 clove	2 cloves	4 cloves
Lean beef mince	190g	380g	760g
Red kidney beans (drained)	½ x 400g tin	1 x 400g tin	2 x 400g tins
Tinned tomatoes	1 x 400g tin	1 ½ x 400g tins	3 x 400g tins
Cold water	210ml	420ml	840ml
Brown wholegrain rice	80g	160g	320g

<b>Method:</b>	
1.	Prepare the vegetables as follows: Peel, wash and finely dice the onion and garlic. Peel, wash and dice the carrot. Wash and dice the celery. Remove stalks and seeds from the red peppers, wash and roughly chop.
2.	Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onions, carrots, celery, peppers, chilli powder and cumin. Stir and cook for 6 - 8 minutes, until vegetables soften.
3.	Add garlic and cook for 1 minute.
4.	Add beef mince, stir and use wooden spoon to break meat into small pieces. Cook for 2 - 3 minutes, until mince browns slightly.
5.	Drain and rinse kidney beans. Add to pan with tinned tomatoes and water. Stir and bring to the boil. Turn heat down and simmer for 30 minutes or until sauce thickens.
6.	Serve with brown wholegrain rice. Cook rice according to the instructions on the packet. Do not add salt.

<b>Tuesday: Cheesy chicken pasta</b>			
<b>Preparation time:</b> 15 minutes			
<b>Cooking time:</b> 30 minutes			
<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:</b> 170g (including the broccoli serving 40g)			
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Serves 5</b>	<b>Serves 10</b>	<b>Serves 20</b>
Chicken breast strips	200g	400g	800g
Pure vegetable/rapeseed oil	½ tablespoon	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons
Broccoli	200g	400g	800g
<b>Cheese Sauce:</b>			
Monounsaturated/ polyunsaturated spread	20g	40g	80g
Flour	1 level tablespoon	2 level tablespoons	4 level tablespoons
Milk	250ml	500ml	1L
Black pepper	To season	To season	To season
Cheddar cheese	35g	70g	140g
Pasta	100g	200g	400g

<b>Method:</b>	
1.	Heat the vegetable oil in a saucepan. Cook the chicken until it has turned opaque.
2.	Cook the pasta according to the instructions on the packet. Do not add salt.
3.	Prepare the cheese sauce as per recipe below.
4.	Cut the broccoli into small florets. Cook in boiling water until tender, approx. 10 minutes.
5.	Add the cooked chicken strips to the pasta, then add the cheesy sauce (recipe below) and mix through until the pasta and chicken are evenly coated.
6.	Serve with a side of broccoli (40g per child).
<b>Cheese sauce:</b>	
7.	Melt the spread in a saucepan, add the flour and cook over a low heat for 1 minute, stirring all the time. Remove from the heat and cool slightly.
8.	Add the milk and pepper, beating all the time. Return to the heat and bring to the boil, stirring continuously.
9.	Reduce the heat and cook slowly for 3 minutes.
10.	Grate the cheese. Add to the white sauce mixture and cook for a further 2 minutes.



**Wednesday:** Baked salmon with couscous and roasted vegetables

**Preparation time:** 25 minutes

**Cooking time:** 40 minutes

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 129g (includes 30g of salmon plus 1 serving each of couscous and vegetables)

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Salmon fillets	190g	380g	760g
Vegetable oil	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons
Stock (reduced or zero salt)	½ cube	1 cube	2 cube
Ground black pepper	To season	To season	To season
Boiling water	200ml	400ml	800ml
Couscous	100g	200g	400g
Olive oil	½ tablespoon	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons
Butternut squash (peeled and deseeded)	150g	300g	600g
Shallots	½ shallot	1 shallot	2 shallots
Cherry tomatoes	50g	100g	200g
Red peppers	¼ medium	½ medium	1 medium
Olives, pitted	25g	50g	100g
Fresh basil	1 teaspoons	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons





Method:	
1.	Pre-heat the grill for 10 minutes at a medium heat. Pre-heat oven at 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4.
2.	Rub a little vegetable oil over each salmon fillet.
3.	Lay salmon fillets out on the grill tray, skin side down, and season ground black pepper.
4.	Cook the salmon gently for 8 - 10 minutes or until fully cooked.
5.	Dissolve the low/zero salt vegetable stock cube in the specified amount of boiling water.
6.	Put the couscous into a large bowl and pour over the stock. Cover, then leave for 10 minutes until fluffy and all the stock has been absorbed.
7.	Finely slice the shallots, chop the red peppers and butternut squash (1cm cubes).
8.	Place a heavy based frying pan on a high heat and add half of the olive oil to the pan.
9.	Place the chopped butternut squash into the pan and fry for 3 minutes until golden and coloured. Remove from the pan and set to one side.
10.	Use the same pan to make the sauce. Add the remaining olive oil and sauté the shallots for 2 minutes.
11.	Add the cherry tomatoes and sauté until the tomatoes start to break down. Season with ground black pepper (optional).
12.	Add the red peppers, olives and chopped fresh (or dried) basil.
13.	Transfer the sauce to an ovenproof casserole dish and place the butternut squash on top of the sauce. Place into a pre-heated oven and cook at 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4 for 30 minutes until the butternut squash is tender and roasted.
14.	Once the roasted vegetables are cooked, serve on a plate with couscous and 30g of flaked salmon per child.



<b>Thursday: Beef stroganoff</b>			
<b>Preparation time:</b> 15 minutes			
<b>Cooking time:</b> 35 minutes			
<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:</b> 160g - 100g of stroganoff and 1 scoop (60g) of mash			
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Serves 5</b>	<b>Serves 10</b>	<b>Serves 20</b>
Onions	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Garlic	1 clove	2 cloves	4 cloves
Button mushrooms	14	28	56
Gherkin	15g	30g	60g
Fresh parsley	2 - 3 sprigs	4 - 6 sprigs	8 - 10 sprigs
Peas	50g	100g	200g
Beef, frying steak, thin strips	250g	500g	1kg
Vegetable oil	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons
Paprika	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons
Wholemeal flour	2 level tablespoons	4 level tablespoons	8 level tablespoons
Tomato puree	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons	8 tablespoons
Natural yoghurt	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons	8 tablespoons
Potatoes	310g	620g	1.24kg
Full-fat milk	20ml	40ml	80ml
<b>Method:</b>			
1.	Prepare the vegetables as follows: Peel, wash and roughly chop the onions and garlic. Peel the mushrooms, remove the stalks, wash and slice. Chop the gherkin and parsley.		
2.	Dice the beef.		
3.	Heat oil in a pan. Add the beef and cook for 5 minutes until it is brown on all sides.		
4.	Add the onions and garlic, cook for a further 3 - 4 minutes until soft.		
5.	Add the mushrooms and peas and cook for 2 - 3 minutes.		
6.	Add the paprika, flour and tomato puree, coating all the vegetables and cook for 2 minutes.		
7.	Then add the gherkins and yoghurt and combine well to make the sauce.		
8.	Stir in the chopped parsley.		
9.	Serve with mashed potatoes (see recipe below).		
<b>Boiled mashed potatoes:</b>			
10.	Peel potatoes and chop into 2cm cubes.		
11.	Boil in water for 15 minutes or until soft.		
12.	Drain the potatoes and then mash with the milk until a smooth consistency.		

**Friday: Pork meatballs with spaghetti****Preparation time:** 15 - 20 minutes**Cooking time:** 35 minutes**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 200g (2 - 3 meatballs with tomato sauce and a 40g serving of cooked spaghetti pasta). Serve with half serving of cooked chopped carrots (20g).

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Minced pork	185g	370g	740g
Onion, peeled	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Garlic, peeled	1 clove	2 cloves	4 cloves
Vegetable oil	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons
Tomato puree	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons	8 teaspoons
Tinned tomatoes	1x 400g tin	2 x 400g tins	4 x 400g tins
White breadcrumbs	50g	100g	200g
Egg	1 medium	2 medium	4 medium
Dried oregano	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons
Dried basil	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons
Spaghetti pasta	90g	180g	360g
Carrots	1 ¼ medium	2 ½ medium	5 medium
Water	As required	As required	As required

**Method:**

1.	Place minced meat in a large bowl.
2.	Add the breadcrumbs and the herbs.
3.	Add the egg and mix through with a fork or by hand.
4.	Fry the onion and garlic until golden brown.
5.	Add a little water and tomato puree to the pan and cook for a few minutes.
6.	Add this mixture to the minced meat and mix well.
7.	Shape into meatballs with damp hands.
8.	Cook the meatballs gently in the frying pan for 15 - 20 minutes, turning occasionally.
9.	Drain any excess fat from the pan or gently pat the meatballs with kitchen paper to remove any excess fat.
10.	Wash and peel carrots and chop into sticks. Steam or boil until softened.
11.	Add the tin of chopped tomatoes to the frying pan and season with pepper.
12.	Stir the cooked meatballs through the tomato sauce and simmer for 5 - 10 minutes before serving.
13.	Cook spaghetti as per manufacturer's instructions on the packet. Do not add salt. Serve the meatballs and tomato sauce with spaghetti and cooked carrot sticks on the side.

# Vegetarian hot meal recipes

## Week 1

<b>Monday: Shepherd's pie with lentils</b>			
<b>Preparation time:</b> 20 minutes			
<b>Cooking time:</b> 40 minutes			
<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:</b> 210g			
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Serves 5</b>	<b>Serves 10</b>	<b>Serves 20</b>
Onion	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Garlic	1 clove	2 cloves	4 cloves
Red pepper	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Button mushrooms	11 medium	22 medium	44 medium
Fresh parsley, chopped	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons
Vegetable oil	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons
Water	190ml	380ml	760ml
Tomato puree	½ tablespoon	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons
Worcestershire sauce	¼ teaspoon	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon
Vegetable stock (reduced or zero salt)	½ cube	1 cube	2 cubes
Tinned green lentils	235g	470g	900g
Potatoes	485g	975g	1.95kg
Full fat milk	40ml	75ml	150ml
Polyunsaturated fat spread	30g	60g	120g

**Method:**

1.	Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4.
2.	Prepare the vegetables as follows: Peel, wash and roughly chop the onions, garlic and potatoes. Remove stalks and seeds from the red peppers, wash and roughly chop. Peel the mushrooms, remove the stalks, wash and slice.
3.	Wash and chop the parsley.
4.	Warm the oil in the pan, add the chopped onion, red pepper and garlic and cook until softened.
5.	Drain the tinned lentils and add to the pan.
6.	In a jug, dissolve the vegetable stock cube into the boiling water.
7.	Transfer the vegetable and lentil mixture to a saucepan and add the vegetable stock, chopped parsley, tomato puree, Worcestershire sauce and sliced mushrooms. Cook over a medium heat for about 20 minutes.
8.	Meanwhile boil the potatoes in water until tender. Drain and mash with the milk and about two thirds of the spread. Season with black pepper.
9.	Arrange the lentil and vegetable mix either in one large dish or in individual ramekins cover with the mashed potato and dot the topping with the remaining spread. Cook in the pre-heated oven for 20 minutes.
10.	Let sit for a few minutes, cut into portions and serve.





## Tuesday: Vegetable fajitas with chicken meat alternative

**Preparation time:** 15 minutes

**Cooking time:** 15 minutes

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 130g (includes small wrap = 31g)

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Red pepper	1 medium	2 medium	4 medium
Onion	½ large	1 large	2 large
Paprika	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons
Chilli powder	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon	1 ½ teaspoon
Ground cumin	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon	1 ½ teaspoon
Garlic powder	¼ teaspoon	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon
Vegetable oil	½ tablespoon	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons
Chicken meat alternative pieces	250g	500g	1kg
Tortilla wrap (white or brown)	2½ small	5 small	10 small
Natural yoghurt	2½ tablespoons	5 tablespoons	10 tablespoons

### Method:

1. De-seed the pepper, peel the onion and finely dice both.
2. Mix the paprika, chilli powder, ground cumin and garlic powder with the oil and coat the chicken and vegetables.
3. On medium heat, cook the vegetable mixture for 10 - 15 minutes. Add the chicken meat alternative pieces and cook through (as per manufacturer's instructions). Stir fry vegetables until softened.
4. Heat the tortillas according to the manufacturer's instructions.
5. Place the chicken meat alternative pieces and vegetable mix in the centre of the tortilla and a small spoon of yoghurt and roll up tightly.
6. Cut in half and serve.



**Wednesday: Bean and pea risotto****Preparation time:** 10 minutes**Cooking time:** 30 minutes**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 150g (includes a 20g side serving of broccoli)

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Onion	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Garlic	1 clove	2 cloves	4 cloves
Fresh parsley	2 - 3 sprigs	4 - 6 sprigs	1 bunch
Vegetable oil	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons
Vegetable stock (reduced or zero salt)	½ cube	1 cube	2 cubes
Boiling water	300ml	600ml	1.2L
Frozen soya beans	250g	500g	1kg
Vegetable oil	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons	4 tablespoons
Frozen peas	200g	400g	800g
White rice	145g	290g	580g
Broccoli	100g	200g	400g

**Method:**

1.	Dice the onion and garlic and finely chop the parsley.
2.	Dissolve the reduced salt stock cube into the boiling water.
3.	Meanwhile, heat the oil in a pan and add the onion. Cook for 1 - 2 minutes.
4.	Add the peas, soya beans and rice and stir. Add the stock until the rice and vegetables are covered and stir. Leave to simmer until the majority of the stock has been absorbed and beans are cooked.
4.	While rice is cooking, cut the broccoli into small florets. Cook in boiling water until tender, approx. 10 minutes.
5.	Check to see if the rice is cooked, if not, add more water and continue to simmer until cooked.
6.	Sprinkle with parsley and serve with half portion (20g) of broccoli per child.

**Thursday:** Vegetable lasagne**Preparation time:** 10 minutes**Cooking time:** 50 minutes**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 170g

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Onion	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Garlic	1 clove	2 cloves	4 cloves
Vegetable oil	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons
Tinned black beans (drained)	1x 400g tin	2x 400g tins	4x 400g tins
Tinned tomatoes	1x 400g tin	2x 400g tins	4x 400g tins
Tomato puree	2 teaspoon	4 teaspoons	8 teaspoons
Red pepper	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Button mushrooms	2 medium	4 medium	8 medium
Plain white flour	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons
Full fat milk	213ml	425ml	850ml
Cheddar cheese	25g	50g	100g
Polyunsaturated spread	13g	25g	50g
Lasagne sheets	5 sheets	10 sheets	20 sheets





**Method:**

1.	Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4. Chop the onions, pepper, mushrooms and garlic.
2.	Heat the oil in a frying pan and gently fry the onions and garlic for 2 - 3 minutes.
3.	Add the chopped peppers, mushrooms and fry for a further 2 - 3 minutes.
4.	Add the tinned black beans.
5.	Add the tinned tomatoes and tomato puree.
6.	Bring to the boil and leave to simmer on a low heat for 15 minutes.
<b>To make cheese sauce:</b>	
7.	Melt the spread in a saucepan.
8.	Add flour and cook over a low heat for 1 minute, stirring all the time.
9.	Remove from the heat and cool slightly.
10.	Add the milk, salt and pepper, whisking all the time.
11.	Return to the heat and bring to the boil. Keep whisking.
12.	Reduce heat and cook slowly for 5 minutes, then add the grated cheese 2 minutes before the end of the cooking time.
13.	Put a layer of black bean sauce in the bottom of a casserole/lasagne dish, cover with lasagne sheets.
14.	Make 1 or 2 more layers as above finishing with a layer of lasagne sheets. Cover the top layer with the cheese sauce.
15.	Sprinkle the top with grated cheese and bake for 30 - 40 minutes.
16.	Let rest for a few minutes, cut into portions and serve.



**Friday: Chickpea curry****Preparation time:** 10 - 15 minutes**Cooking time:** 25 minutes**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 160g

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Tinned chickpeas (drained)	1 x 400g	2 x 400g	4 x 400g
Onion	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Red pepper	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Garlic	1 clove	2 cloves	4 cloves
Button mushrooms	5	10	20
Carrots	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Frozen peas (defrosted)	50g	100g	200g
Vegetable oil	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons
Medium curry powder	2 level teaspoons	4 level teaspoons	8 level teaspoons
Vegetable stock (reduced or zero salt)	½ cube	1 cube	1 ½ cubes
Water	140ml	275ml	550ml
Plain white flour	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons	8 teaspoons
Rice (white or brown)	80g	160g	320g

**Method:**

1.	Slice vegetables and garlic.
2.	Heat the oil in a frying pan and gently fry the onions, carrot and garlic.
3.	Add mushrooms and pepper to the frying pan and cook for 2 - 3 minutes.
4.	Add curry powder and flour to the pan and cook for 1 minute stirring all the time.
5.	Stir in the stock and chickpeas.
6.	Add the defrosted peas, reduce heat and cook slowly for 10 minutes without stirring.
7.	Serve with boiled rice. Cook as per manufacturer's instructions on packet. Do not add salt.

## Week 2

<b>Monday: Veggie chilli (with mince meat alternative)</b>			
<b>Preparation time:</b> 15 minutes			
<b>Cooking time:</b> 45 minutes			
<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:</b> 220g (includes a 40g serving of cooked rice)			
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Serves 5</b>	<b>Serves 10</b>	<b>Serves 20</b>
Onion	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Carrot	1 small	1 medium	2 medium
Celery	1 stick	2 sticks	4 sticks
Red pepper	1 medium	2 medium	4 medium
Vegetable stock (reduced or zero salt)	½ cube	1 cube	2 cubes
Vegetable oil	½ tablespoon	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons
Chilli powder	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons
Ground cumin	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons
Garlic	1 clove	2 cloves	4 cloves
Mince meat alternative	250g	500g	1000g
Tinned red kidney beans (drained)	½ x 400g tin	1x 400g tin	2x 400g tins
Tin of chopped tomatoes	1x 400g tin	2x 400g tins	4x 400g tins
Cold water	210ml	420ml	840ml
Brown rice	80g	160g	320g

<b>Method:</b>	
1.	Prepare the vegetables as follows: peel, wash and finely dice the onion and garlic. Peel, wash and dice the carrot. Wash and dice the celery. Remove stalks and seeds from the red peppers, wash and roughly chop.
2.	Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onions, carrots, celery, peppers, chilli powder and cumin. Stir and cook for 6 - 8 minutes, until vegetables soften.
3.	Add garlic and cook for 1 minute.
4.	Add mince meat alternative, stir using a wooden spoon. Cook for 2 - 3 minutes.
5.	Drain and rinse kidney beans. Add to pan with tinned tomatoes and water. Stir and bring to the boil. Turn heat down and simmer for 30 minutes or until sauce thickens.
6.	Serve with brown wholegrain rice (30 - 40g serving per child). Cook rice according to the instructions on the packet. Do not add salt.

**Note:** Instead of mince meat substitute, this recipe can be made with lentils, black beans, kidney beans or a mixture of beans as per the servings guide in the food pyramid dietary guidelines.

**Tuesday:** Cheesy pasta (with chicken meat alternative)

**Preparation time:** 15 minutes

**Cooking time:** 25 minutes

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 170g

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Chicken meat alternative	250g	500g	1kg
Vegetable/rapeseed oil	1 teaspoon	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons
Broccoli	200g	400g	800g
Monounsaturated/polyunsaturated spread	20g	40g	80g
Plain white flour	1 level teaspoon	2 level teaspoons	4 level teaspoons
Milk	250ml	500ml	1L
Black pepper	To season	To season	To season
Cheddar cheese	35g	70g	140g
Pasta	90g	180g	360g

**Method:**

1. Heat the vegetable oil in a non-stick saucepan. Cook the chicken meat alternative as per manufacturers instructions.
2. Cook the pasta according to the instructions on the packet. Do not add salt.
3. Prepare the cheese sauce as per recipe below.
4. Cut the broccoli into small florets. Cook in boiling water until tender, approx. 10 minutes.
5. Mix the chicken meat alternative through the pasta and stir in the cheese sauce. Serve with a side of broccoli.

**Cheese Sauce:**

6. Melt the spread in a saucepan, add the flour and cook over a low heat for 1 minute, stirring all the time. Remove from the heat and cool slightly.
7. Add the milk and pepper, beating all the time. Return to the heat and bring to the boil, stirring continuously.
8. Reduce the heat and cook slowly for 3 minutes.
9. Grate the cheese. Add to the white sauce and cook for a further 2 minutes.

**Wednesday: Roasted tofu with couscous and vegetables****Preparation time:** 25 minutes**Cooking time:** 45 minutes**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 145g (includes 35g of baked tofu per child)

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Tofu	175g	350g	700g
Vegetable oil	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons	3 teaspoons
Stock cube (reduced or zero salt)	½ cube	1 cube	2 cubes
Ground black pepper	To season	To season	To season
Cornflour (optional, to lightly coat tofu)	⅓ heaped teaspoon	⅔ heaped teaspoon	1⅓ heaped teaspoon
Boiling water	200ml	400ml	800ml
Couscous	100g	200g	400g
Olive oil	4 teaspoons	8 teaspoons	16 teaspoons
Butternut squash	150g	300g	600g
Shallots	½ shallot	1 shallot	2 shallots
Cherry tomatoes	3	6	12
Red peppers	¼ medium	½ medium	1 medium
Olives (pitted)	25g	50g	100g
Fresh basil (finely chopped)	3 - 4 leaves	6 - 8 leaves	12 - 16 leaves





### Method:

1.	Pre-heat oven at 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4.
2.	Dissolve the low-salt vegetable stock cube in the specified amount of boiling water.
	Put the couscous into a large bowl and pour over the stock. Cover, then leave for 10 minutes until fluffy and all the stock has been absorbed.
3.	Open the packet of tofu and drain off any excess moisture. Chop into cubes then toss the tofu in oil and place on a baking sheet. For a crispier texture sprinkle over a little cornflour and mix to coat evenly.
4.	Place tofu on a baking tray and bake until golden brown and crisp (approx. 20 minutes).
5.	Finely slice the shallots, peel, de-seed and chop the butternut squash and chop the red peppers.
6.	Place a heavy based frying pan on a high heat and add olive oil to the pan.
7.	Place the chopped butternut squash into the pan and fry for 3 minutes until golden and coloured. Remove from the pan and set to one side.
8.	Use the same pan to make the sauce. Add the remaining olive oil and sauté the shallots for 2 minutes.
9.	Add the cherry tomatoes and sauté until the tomatoes start to break down. Season with ground black pepper (optional).
10.	Add the red peppers, olives and basil.
11.	Transfer the sauce to an ovenproof casserole dish and place the butternut squash on top of the sauce. Place into a pre-heated oven and cook at 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4 for 30 minutes until the butternut squash is tender and roasted.
12.	Mix the baked tofu (35g per child) through the roasted vegetable mix (or leave separate) and serve with the couscous.



**Thursday:** Bean and mushroom stroganoff with potatoes

**Preparation time:** 15 minutes

**Cooking time:** 20 minutes

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 179g - includes 1 scoop (60g) of mash potatoes

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Onion	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Garlic	1 clove	2 cloves	4 cloves
Button mushrooms	14	28	56
Gherkin	15g	30g	60g
Fresh parsley	2 - 3 sprigs	4 - 6 sprigs	1 bunch
Vegetable oil	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons
Frozen peas	50g	100g	200g
Paprika	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons
Wholemeal flour	2 level tablespoons	4 level tablespoons	8 level tablespoons
Tomato purée	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons	8 tablespoons
Tinned cannellini beans (no added sugar or salt, drained)	1 x 400g tin	2 x 400g tins	4 x 400g tins
Natural yoghurt	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons	8 tablespoons
Potatoes	310g	620g	1.24kg
Full-fat milk	20ml	40ml	60ml

**Method:**

1. Chop the onion, garlic, mushrooms and gherkin. Roughly chop the parsley.
2. Heat oil in a pan. Add the onions and garlic, cook for 3 - 4 minutes until soft.
3. Add the mushrooms and peas and cook for 2 - 3 minutes.
4. Add paprika, flour and tomato purée, coating all the vegetables and cook for 2 minutes.
5. Then add the beans, gherkins and yoghurt and combine well to make the sauce. Simmer for 5 minutes.
6. Stir in the chopped parsley before serving.

**Boiled mashed potatoes:**

7. Peel potatoes and chop into 2cm cubes.
8. Boil in water for 15 minutes or until soft.
9. Drain the potatoes and then mash with the milk until a smooth consistency.

**Friday:** Vegetarian meatballs with spaghetti

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Cooking time:** 20 minutes

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 180g vegetarian meatballs (3 x 25g meatballs per child) plus tomato sauce and serving of spaghetti

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Mince meat alternative	250g	500g	1kg
Onion	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Garlic	1 clove	2 cloves	4 cloves
Vegetable oil	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons
Tomato purée	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons
Tinned tomatoes	1x 400g tin	2x 400g tins	4x 400g tins
White breadcrumbs	50g	100g	200g
Egg	1 medium	2 medium	4 medium
Dried oregano	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons
Dried basil	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons
Spaghetti pasta	90g	180g	360g





**Method:**

1.	Pre-heat oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4.
2.	Finely chop the onion and garlic.
3.	Heat half the oil in a pan and add half the onions. Cook for 5 minutes or until soft.
4.	Add a little water and tomato puree to the pan and cook for a few minute and then leave to cool.
5.	Mix together the mince meat alternative, breadcrumbs, egg, oregano and cooked onions. Mould into even sized balls and place on a baking tray.
6.	Place the meatballs into the oven and cook for approximately 15 minutes, until piping hot throughout. Or can fry in a non-stick pan turning regularly.
7.	Meanwhile, heat the oil in a pan and add the remaining onions and garlic. Cook for 5 minutes or until soft.
8.	Add the tinned tomatoes and basil. Bring to the boil and simmer for 15 minutes until the sauce thickens slightly.
9.	Stir the cooked meatballs into the tomato sauce.
10.	Serve with cooked spaghetti as per instruction on pack. Do not add salt.



# Standard and vegetarian light meal recipes

## Pitta pockets with egg mayonnaise

**Preparation time:** 15 minutes

**Cooking time:** 10 minutes

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** Half pitta with 55g serving of egg mixture per child

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Eggs	5 medium	10 medium	20 medium
Mayonnaise	1 level tablespoon	2 level tablespoons	4 level tablespoons
Natural yoghurt	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons
Pitta bread (wholemeal or white)	2 ½ pittas	5 pittas	10 pittas

### Method:

1.	Hard boil the eggs and leave to cool.
2.	Peel eggs and mash with the mayonnaise and yoghurt.
3.	Warm the pitta bread, slice open and fill with the egg mayonnaise.
4.	Serve with side of mixed vegetable sticks. (See recipe in section: Additional recipes for snacks and accompaniments).



## Mixed bean tagine

**Preparation time:** 10 minutes

**Cooking time:** 25 minutes

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 140g (excluding rice)

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Onions	½ small	1 small	1 medium
Red pepper	¼ medium	½ medium	1 medium
Green pepper	¼ medium	½ medium	1 medium
Vegetable oil	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons
Tinned mixed beans (no added salt or sugar)	1x 400g tin	2x 400g tins	4x 400g tins
Dried apricots	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons
Sultanas	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons
Tinned chopped tomatoes	½ x 400g tin	1 x 400g tin	2 x 400g tin
Mixed spice	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons
White rice	75g	150g	300g

### Method:

1. Prepare the vegetables as follows: Peel, wash and roughly chop the onions. Remove stalks and seeds from the peppers, wash and roughly chop.
2. Heat the vegetable oil in a pan and add the onion and peppers and cook for 5 minutes.
3. Add the mixed beans, dried apricots, sultanas, tinned chopped tomatoes and mixed spice. Bring to the boil and simmer for 20 minutes or until the vegetables are soft.
4. Serve with boiled rice (1 serving = 30 - 40g). Cook the rice according to the instructions on the packet. Do not add salt.





## Baked beans on toast

**Preparation time:** 10 minutes

**Cooking time:** 10 minutes

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** Half to one slice of bread and 40g of beans per child

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Wholegrain bread	5 slices	10 slices	20 slices
Vegetable oil based spread (optional)	Half pat per child	Half pat per child	Half pat per child
Cherry tomatoes	15	30	60
Tinned baked beans	½ x 420g tin	1x 420g tin	2x 420g tins

### Method:

1.	Cut the cherry tomatoes into quarters.
2.	Heat the baked beans according to the instructions on the tin.
3.	Toast bread and lightly spread with vegetable based spreading fat (optional).
4.	Serve with half to one slice of bread cut into soldiers with approximately 1 tablespoon of baked beans per child and 3 - 4 cherry tomatoes cut into quarters.



## Grilled cheese toastie

**Preparation time:** 10 minutes

**Cooking time:** 10 minutes

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 100g (1 slice of bread, 40g tomatoes, 25g cheese)

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Tomatoes	2 ½ medium	5 medium	10 medium
Low-fat cheddar cheese	125g	200g	400g
Wholegrain bread	5 slices	10 slices	20 slices

### Method:

1. Pre-heat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7.
2. Place some cheese onto the bread.
3. Close the sandwich and place them on the baking tray and put it into the oven.
4. Bake for 10 minutes, flipping the sandwiches half way through cooking.
5. Cut in half and let cool slightly.
6. Serve with sliced tomatoes on the side.



## Lentil soup

**Preparation time:** 10 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 minutes

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 170g including small roll

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Onions	¼ medium	½ medium	1 medium
Carrots	1 medium	2 medium	4 medium
Mixed herbs	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons
Ground ginger	¼ teaspoon/pinch	½ teaspoon	¾ teaspoon
Red lentils	75g	150g	300g
Vegetable stock (reduced or zero salt)	¼ cube	½ cube	1 cube
Water, boiled	475ml	950ml	1.9L

### Method:

1.	Peel and chop the onions.
2.	Wash, peel and chop the carrots.
3.	Place the onions in a saucepan with a little water and cook gently for about 5 minutes or until soft.
4.	Add the chopped carrots.
5.	Add the mixed herbs and a pinch of ground ginger.
6.	Remove from the heat and stir in the lentils, mixing well.
7.	Return to the heat, add the vegetable stock and simmer for 25 - 30 minutes.
8.	Once cooked, liquidise the mixture with a hand blender or liquidiser.
9.	Return the blended soup to the saucepan and reheat without boiling.
10.	Serve with a small wholegrain roll.



## Pitta with falafel

**Preparation time:** 15 minutes

**Cooking time:** 5 minutes

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 120g (includes half a pitta pocket, 60g falafel, 20g hummus)

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Tinned chickpeas (drained)	1x 400g tin	2x 400g tins	3x 400g tins
Lemon juice	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons
Tahini	40g	80g	160g
Garlic puree	5g	10g	20g
Paprika	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons
Vegetable oil	3 teaspoons	6 teaspoons	12 teaspoons
Small wholemeal pitta breads	2 ½	5	10
Hummus	100g	200g	400g
Cherry tomatoes or mixed vegetable sticks	13	26	52

### Method:

1.	To make the falafel, place the chickpeas, lemon juice, tahini, garlic puree and paprika in a blender and blend until smooth.
2.	Divide the mixture into small balls and flatten slightly.
3.	Heat the oil in a pan and cook the falafels for 2 - 3 minutes on each side until golden.
4.	Warm the pitta breads according to the manufacturer's instructions.
5.	Slice and open the pitta bread, spread with hummus and add the falafel. Serve with 3 - 4 cherry tomatoes per serving cut in to quarters or a serving of mixed vegetable sticks e.g variety of carrot, cucumber and/or mixed pepper sticks. Prepare vegetable sticks as per recipes in section: Additional recipes for snacks and accompaniments.

Note: As an alternative method, the falafels can be baked in the oven which may be more practical for a larger scale setting. Cooking with an air-fryer is also an option. If oven baking heat oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas Mark 6 and line baking sheets with baking parchment. Flatten each falafel ball into a disc shape and arrange on the baking sheets, then brush the tops lightly with vegetable oil. Bake for 20 minutes until golden and crisp, turning halfway through cooking.



## Mexican bean wrap

**Preparation time:** 15 minutes

**Cooking time:** None

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 100g (30g wrap, 70g filling)

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Tinned mixed beans (no added sugar or salt, drained)	1 x 400g tin	2 x 400g tins	4 x 400g tins
Cheddar cheese	80g	160g	320g
White tortilla wraps	3	5	10
Lettuce	25g	50g	100g
Cucumber	50g	100g	200g
Red pepper	¼ medium	½ medium	1 medium

### Method:

1. Mash the beans with a fork.
2. Grate the cheese and finely chop the lettuce.
3. Divide the beans between the wraps and top with some cheese.
4. Roll up, slice in half and serve with 20g of red pepper and cucumber sticks.



## Vegetable omelette

**Preparation time:** 15 minutes

**Cooking time:** 10 - 15 minutes

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 153g serving of omelette

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Spring onion/scallion	2	4	8
Red pepper	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Button mushrooms	3	6	12
Eggs	5 medium	10 medium	20 medium
Cheddar cheese	50g	100g	200g
Spinach	80g	160g	320g
Tomato, chopped	1 medium	2 medium	4 medium
Black pepper	To season	To season	To season

### Method:

1.	On a non-stick pan add a teaspoon of vegetable oil or cooking spray and heat over a medium heat.
2.	Add the scallion, pepper and mushrooms and cook for 5 minutes until the vegetables begin to soften.
3.	Crack the eggs in a bowl and combine with the grated cheese, spinach, tomato and a little black pepper to taste.
4.	When the vegetables in the pan are ready, add to the egg mixture, mix well and return to the pan.
5.	Cook the omelette for 2 - 3 minutes, until the edges cook and come away from the edge of the pan, the mixture should be firm.
6.	To finish the omelette, either finish under the grill for another minute, or flip in the pan and leave to cook for the same amount of time.
7.	Serve with a half to 1 slice of bread or toast per child.

## Zingy turkey and mixed salad wrap

**Preparation time:** 15 minutes

**Cooking time:** None

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 130g including wrap (31g)

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Cooked turkey	150g	300g	600g
Spinach leaves	80g	160g	320g
Cucumber	100g	200g	400g
Carrot	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Natural yoghurt	2 ½ tablespoons	5 tablespoons	10 tablespoons
Olive oil	3 teaspoons	6 teaspoons	12 teaspoons
Dijon mustard	2 teaspoon	4 teaspoons	8 teaspoons
Lemon juice	⅓ tablespoon	⅔ tablespoon	1 ⅓ tablespoon
Black pepper	¼ teaspoon	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon
Small wraps (brown/white)	5	10	20

### Method:

1.	Mustard yoghurt dressing: In a bowl, place the yoghurt, olive oil, Dijon mustard, lemon juice and pepper. Whisk everything together until well incorporated. Taste and adjust seasoning as necessary.
2.	Finely shred the spinach and slice the cucumber.
3.	Grate the carrot.
4.	Shred the cooked turkey.
5.	In a bowl, mix together the mustard yoghurt dressing and the shredded turkey slices.
6.	On each wrap, place a handful of the shredded spinach, cucumber and grated carrot.
7.	Place a 30g serving of turkey mix on the wrap.
8.	Roll up the tortilla wrap and cut in to halves and serve.

## Pitta pizza

**Preparation time:** 15 minutes

**Cooking time:** 5 minutes

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 160g includes pitta ~ 57g

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Pitta pockets	5	10	20
Passata (pureed sieved tomatoes)	250ml	500ml	1L
Grated mozzarella cheese	75g	150g	300g
Green pepper	1/3 medium	2/3 medium	1 1/3 medium
Sweetcorn (drained)	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons	8 tablespoons
Tinned pineapple in natural juice (no added sugar)	35g	70g	140g
Onion	1/2 small	1 small	2 small
Cooked chicken, chopped	150g	300g	600g

### Method:

1.	Pre-heat the grill.
2.	Wash the pepper, remove the stalk and seeds then dice. Finely slice the onion.
3.	Spread the passatta on the pitta right to the edge.
4.	Arrange the chopped chicken, sweetcorn, pepper, onion and pineapple on each wrap. Ensure 30g of chicken and 40g vegetables spread on pitta. Then add the grated cheese on top.
5.	Grill the pitta pizza for 5 - 7 minutes until golden brown and bubbling.
6.	Cut in triangle slices, let cool slightly and serve.

Note: other protein options for this recipe include toppings could include tinned tuna or turkey.



# Morning snacks

## Week 1

<b>Monday:</b> Wholegrain bagel with smooth peanut/nut butter or hummus	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Wholegrain bagel	½
Smooth peanut/nut butter or hummus	12g peanut/nut butter or 35g hummus

<b>Tuesday:</b> Smooth peanut/nut butter or hummus with unsalted crackers	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Smooth peanut/nut butter or hummus	12g peanut/nut butter or 35g hummus
Unsalted crackers	2

<b>Wednesday:</b> Yoghurt dip with mixed vegetable sticks served with a glass of milk	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical Portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Pitta pocket (wholemeal or white)	Half pitta or 1 small pitta
Tzatziki	50g
Pepper sticks	40g
Milk	200ml

<b>Thursday:</b> Beanie dip with breadsticks	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Beanie dip	40g
Unsalted breadstick	1

<b>Friday:</b> Wholegrain bagel with smooth peanut/nut butter or hummus	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Wholegrain bagel	½
Smooth peanut/nut butter or hummus	12g peanut/nut butter or 35g hummus

## Week 2

<b>Monday: Peanut/nut butter or hummus and breadsticks</b>	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Smooth peanut/nut butter or hummus	12g peanut/nut butter or 35g hummus
Unsalted breadstick	1

<b>Tuesday: Wholemeal toast and smooth peanut/nut butter or hummus</b>	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Wholemeal toast (cut into soldiers)	½ to 1 slice
Smooth peanut/nut butter or hummus	12g peanut/nut butter or 35g hummus

<b>Monday: Apple slices and glass of milk</b>	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Apple slices	40g
Milk	200ml

<b>Wednesday: Rice cake with apple slices</b>	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Rice cake	1
Apple slices	40g

<b>Thursday: Wholemeal scone and fruit</b>	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Wholemeal scone	30g (½ scone)
Vegetable oil spread	¼ teaspoon
Orange segments	½ orange

<b>Friday: Unsalted crackers with smooth peanut/nut butter or hummus</b>	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Unsalted crackers	2
Smooth peanut/nut butter or hummus	12g peanut/nut butter or 35g hummus



# Afternoon snacks

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## Week 1

<b>Monday: Apple slices and glass of milk</b>	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Apple slices	40g
Milk	200ml

<b>Tuesday: Fromage frais and fruit</b>	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Natural fromage frais	2x 47g pots
Pear (cut into slices)	40g

<b>Wednesday: Natural yoghurt with fruit</b>	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Mandarin orange	$\frac{2}{3}$ small
Natural yoghurt	125g

<b>Thursday: Natural yoghurt and fruit</b>	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Natural yoghurt	125g
Tinned pears in natural juice (sliced)	40g

<b>Friday: Cheese and grapes</b>	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Grapes (cut into quarters)	6
Cheddar cheese	25 - 30g

## Week 2

<b>Monday: Tinned fruit in natural juice and natural yoghurt</b>	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Tinned peaches in own juices (sliced)	40g (drained weight)
Natural yoghurt	125g

<b>Tuesday: Rice pudding with mixed berries</b>	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Rice pudding made with 200ml milk	110g
Frozen mixed berries (heated)	40g

<b>Wednesday: Pear and natural yoghurt</b>	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Pear (cut into slices)	40g
Natural yoghurt	125g

<b>Thursday: Fruit salad and glass of milk</b>	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Fruit salad - mixed variety of chopped fruit e.g. apples, banana, orange, grapes (seedless and cut into quarters)	40g
Milk	200ml

<b>Friday: Grapes and cheese</b>	
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Typical Portion size for 1 - 4 year olds</b>
Grapes (cut into quarters)	6
Cheddar cheese slices	25 - 30g

# Additional snacks and accompaniments recipes

## Mixed vegetable sticks

**Preparation time:** 10 - 15 minutes

**Cooking time:** 8 minutes

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 40g serving per child

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Cucumber	¼ medium	½ medium	1 medium
Carrot	1 small	2 small	4 small
Peppers (red, yellow, orange)	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium

### Method:

1.	Carrots: Wash and peel the carrots and cut into sticks. Lightly steam or boil in small amount of water until softened. Cool quickly in colander held under a cold running tap.
2.	Mixed peppers: Wash, de-seed and slice the pepper into strips/sticks.
3.	Cucumber: Wash and cut cucumber into sticks (about 7 cm in length), option of with or without skin.
4.	Serve selection on a plate.

## Yoghurt dip (Tzatziki)

**Preparation time:** 5 minutes

**Cooking time:** None

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:**

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Fresh mint	4 - 6 sprigs	8 - 12 sprigs	1 small bunch
Cucumber	¼ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Natural yoghurt	5 level tablespoons	10 level tablespoons	20 level tablespoons
Lemon juice	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons	8 teaspoons

### Method:

1.	Finely dice the mint and cucumber.
2.	Combine with the yoghurt, and lemon juice.
3.	Serve with mixed vegetable sticks.

## Beanie dip

**Preparation time:** 10 minutes

**Cooking time:** None

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 40g

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Garlic	½ to 1 clove	1 - 2 cloves	2 - 3 cloves
Fresh mint	2 - 3 sprigs	4 - 6 sprigs	1 small bunch
Tinned butter beans (no added sugar or salt, drained)	1 x 400g tin	2 x 400g tin	4 x 400g tin
Olive oil	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons

### Method:

1.	Crush the garlic (the amount of garlic can be adjusted for child's preference) and roughly chop the mint.
2.	Warm the butter beans in a pan with the olive oil.
3.	Add the crushed garlic and mint to the beans. Simmer for 5 - 10 minutes until the beans are tender.
4.	Put in a blender, blend until smooth.
5.	Serve with unsalted breadsticks or unsalted crackers.

## Hummus

**Preparation time:** 5 minutes

**Cooking time:** None

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 20g

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Tinned chickpeas (no added sugar or salt, drained)	½ x 400g tin	1x 400g tin	2x 400g tins
Lemon juice	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons	2⅔ tablespoons
Garlic	1 clove	2 cloves	3 cloves
Ground cumin	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons
Water	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons	8 tablespoons
Olive oil	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons

### Method:

1.	Put all the ingredients into a blender or food processor and blend to form a smooth paste.
2.	Cover and keep in the fridge until needed.
3.	Serve with vegetable sticks, unsalted crackers or breadsticks.

## Rice pudding

**Preparation time:** 10 minutes

**Cooking time:** up to 2 hours

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 60g (excluding stewed berries)

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
pudding rice	50g	100g	200g
Caster sugar	15g	30g	60g
Milk	500ml	1 litre	2 litres
Frozen berries	150g	300g	600g

### Method:

1.	Pre-heat the oven to 160°C/325°F/Gas Mark 3 and grease an ovenproof dish.
2.	Wash the rice in a sieve and put it in the dish with the sugar.
3.	Heat the milk in a pan and pour over the rice and sugar.
4.	Bake in the oven for 1 ½ - 2 hours until the rice is tender. Cover with foil if the pudding starts to burn.
5.	To prepare frozen berries for serving with rice pudding, heat berries in a pot until reaches boiling for 1 minute, then let cool before serving.
6.	Rice pudding can be served warm, or prepared in advance and served cold. For a quicker option, the rice pudding can be cooked in a pan on the hob instead of being oven baked (refer to manufacturers instructions for cooking options).



# No or minimal cooking light meal and snacks

Minimal cooking facilities may only be available for pre-schools and early learning facilities that provide half day or short duration day care. Here are some additional low or minimal cook light meals suggestions that only require microwave or toaster to prepare.

<b>Scrambled egg with chopped tomatoes and grated cheese on toast</b>			
<b>Preparation time:</b> 10 minutes			
<b>Cooking time:</b> 5 - 10 minutes			
<b>Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:</b> 50g serving of eggs and 20g of tomatoes			
<b>Ingredients</b>	<b>Serves 5</b>	<b>Serves 10</b>	<b>Serves 20</b>
Eggs	5 medium	10 medium	20 medium
Milk	75ml	150ml	300ml
Oil for greasing dish			
Cheddar cheese	50g	100g	200g
Brown bread (high fibre)	5 slices	10 slices	20 slices
Cherry tomatoes	20	40	80

<b>Method:</b>	
1.	Wipe dish to be used lightly with oil.
2.	Crack the eggs in to the dish.
3.	Add the milk and whisk lightly.
4.	Microwave on high for one minute on 800W and then fork the eggs, if they are done enough then stop cooking. If not give them further 30 second bursts, forking between each cooking time until they are ready. Fork through at the end to break them up.
5.	Toast the bread and serve 50g of scrambled eggs per slice. Sprinkle some grated cheese on top and serve with 3 - 4 cherry tomatoes chopped into quarters on the plate.



## Chicken pesto pitta pockets

**Preparation time:** 10 – 15 minutes

**Cooking time:** None

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 130g (including a half a pitta)

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Cooked chicken breast	150g	300g	600g
Low-fat sour cream	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons	8 tablespoons
Pesto	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons	8 tablespoons
Mild cheese e.g edam	75g	150g	300g
Red pepper	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Lettuce	120g	320g	640g

### Method:

1. Shred or dice cooked chicken breasts.
2. Dice red pepper and finely slice/shred the lettuce.
3. Mix the sour cream and pesto in a bowl, then add the shredded chicken, mixing to coat the chicken.
4. Toast the pittas, cut in half and open.
5. To assemble, in each half pitta, place a slice of edam cheese, a tablespoon of lettuce and some red pepper slices. Spoon in 30g of the chicken pesto mix. Can serve in 1 full pitta for older children.



## Greek couscous salad

**Preparation time:** 10 minutes

**Cooking time:** None

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 120g

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Couscous	100g	200g	400g
Water	200ml	400ml	800ml
Tinned chickpeas (drained)	1x 400g tin	2x 400g tins	4x 400g tins
Cucumber	50g	100g	200g
Cherry tomatoes	7	14	28
Red pepper	¼ medium	½ medium	1 medium
Red onion	¼ medium	½ medium	1 medium
Feta cheese	100g	200g	400g
Olive oil	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons
Lemon juice	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons
Dried oregano	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons
Dried basil	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons

### Method:

1. Put the couscous into a large bowl and pour over the water. Cover, then leave for 10 minutes until fluffy and all the water has been absorbed.
2. Slice the red onion, dice the pepper and the cucumber, chop the cherry tomatoes into quarters and add to the cooked couscous.
3. Add the lemon juice, olive oil, dried herbs and crumble the feta in, mix through and serve.



## Black bean and corn salad with wholemeal pitta or flatbread

**Preparation time:** 10 minutes

**Cooking time:** None

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 100g (excluding pitta)

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Black beans (drained)	1x 400g tin	2x 400g tins	4x 400g tins
Tinned sweetcorn in water	100g	200g	400g
Red pepper	½ medium	1 medium	2 medium
Tomatoes	1	2	4
Spring onions	1	2	4
Fresh coriander	10g	20g	40g
Lime juice	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoon	4 tablespoon
Garlic (optional)	1 clove	2 cloves	4 cloves
Olive oil	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons	8 tablespoons
Black pepper	To taste	To taste	To taste
Pitta pockets	2 ½	5	10

### Method:

1. Place olive oil, lime juice, minced garlic, and ground black pepper to taste in a jar. Close the lid tightly and shake the jar until the dressing is well combined.
2. In a salad bowl, combine black beans, sweetcorn, red pepper, tomatoes, spring onions and coriander.
3. Shake dressing again, pour over salad and toss to coat.
4. Toast pitta pockets, let cool slightly, cut in half and fill with salad mix. Alternatively can serve salad in a bowl with pitta pocket strips on the side.



### Mixed salad with beetroot

**Preparation time:** 15 minutes

**Cooking time:** None

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 70g (excluding pitta pocket/bread)

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Lettuce	40g	60g	120g
Cucumber	30g	60g	120g
Celery	1 stick	2 sticks	4 sticks
Beetroot, cooked and vacuum packed (no added sugar or salt)	100g	200g	400g
Cooked chicken breast	150g	300g	600g

### Method:

1.	Dice the cucumber and beetroot. Finely slice the celery. Roughly chop the lettuce and mix.
2.	Shred the cooked chicken. The protein source can be varied e.g. 30g tinned tuna in spring water, or 30g of cooked turkey or 40g of tinned chickpeas or mixed salad beans.
3.	On a plate serve the 30g of shredded chicken and mixed beetroot salad, with a half slice of bread, bread roll or half a pitta.

### Salmon, crème fraiche and cucumber

**Preparation time:** 10 minutes

**Cooking time:** None

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 50g sandwich filling mix per child

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Tinned salmon in spring water (boneless and skinless, drained)	150g	300g	600g
Crème Fraiche (low-fat)	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons	8 tablespoons
Cucumber	50g	100g	200g
Lemon juice	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons

### Method:

1.	Place the tinned salmon in a bowl and add in the lemon juice and crème fraiche.
2.	Finely chop the cucumber and add to the salmon mixture .
3.	Take a scoop of filling and spread on evenly on a slice of bread and fold over and cut to make a sandwich or fill half a warmed pitta pocket or a small wrap and serve.



## Curry chicken salad

**Preparation time:** 10 minutes

**Cooking time:** None

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 60g of chicken curry filling per child

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Natural yoghurt	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons	8 tablespoons
Curry powder	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons	3 - 4 teaspoons
Mango chutney	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons
Lemon zest	½ lemon zest	1 lemon zest	1 ½ lemon zest
Lemon juice	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons	8 teaspoons
Cooked chicken fillets	150g	300g	600g
Red onion	½ small	1 small	2 small
Courgette	100g	200g	400g
Coriander	2 - 3 sprigs	4 - 6 sprigs	7 - 9 sprigs

### Method:

1.	Mix together the yoghurt, curry powder, mango chutney and lemon zest and juice in a bowl.
2.	Chop or shred the chicken fillets then add to the curry mix.
3.	Dice the onions, courgette and most of the coriander and add to the curry mix, mix through until evenly coated.
4.	On a slice of bread place a serving of the chicken curry salad mix, close over and serve. Can also serve with a small wrap or pitta pocket and half portion (20g) of mixed vegetable sticks.



## Beetroot dip

**Preparation time:** 10 minutes

**Cooking time:** None

**Typical portion size for 1 - 4 year olds:** 50g

Ingredients	Serves 5	Serves 10	Serves 20
Beetroot, cooked and vacuum packed (no added sugar or salt)	130g	260g	520g
Cumin	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons
Fresh mint	2 - 3 sprigs	4 - 6 sprigs	8 - 12 sprigs
Lemon juice	1 teaspoon	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons
Low-fat crème Fraiche	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons	8 tablespoons
Natural yoghurt	2 teaspoons	4 teaspoons	8 teaspoons

## Method

1.	In a bowl, mix the cumin, mint, lemon juice, crème fraiche and natural yoghurt together.
2.	Blend the beetroot and mix with the crème fraiche mixture before serving.
3.	Serve as a snack with a serving of unsalted bread sticks or pitta bread sliced into soldier strips.





# Guide to menu planning

This menu plan can be used as a guide. The following steps to guide menu planning have been developed based on the Scientific Recommendations for Food - Based Dietary Guidelines for 1 to 5 Year - Olds in Ireland (FSAI, 2020), the Healthy Eating Guidelines for 1 to 4 year olds and Food Pyramid (Department of Health, 2020) and the Nutrition Standards for Early Learning and Care Services (DCEDIY, 2023). These can be used to support the development of menu plans for your service.

Steps to planning your menu plan	
1.	<p>Plan menus for all the meals and snacks you provide for children.</p> <p>A wide variety of foods should be included in order to increase acceptability of, and familiarisation with, foods that are part of a lifelong healthy diet. Planning will help you to check that food and drink provision across the day is balanced and includes variety, and also helps planning for shopping and food preparation.</p>
2.	<p>Plan menus lasting at least one week.</p> <p>In practice, a menu that covers between one and four weeks will give children lots of variety. Try to make sure that children who attend your setting on the same day each week are not always provided with the same meal.</p>
3.	<p>Plan each meal and snack to meet the Early Years Nutrition Standards.</p> <p>This means that children attending your setting for sessional care or who move between different settings will still meet their nutritional requirements overall.</p>
4.	<p>Plan menus to include a variety of foods, tastes, textures and colours.</p> <p>This will give children the opportunity to try a wide range of foods, and make meals and snacks colourful and appetising.</p>
5.	<p>Make sure you cater for the cultural and dietary needs of all the children in your care. You can also plan your menus to enable children to experience food from different cultures.</p>
6.	<p>Introduce new menu cycles at least twice a year, if possible. This will incorporate seasonality and give children the chance to try different foods.</p>
7.	<p>Share menus for meals and snacks with parents.</p> <p>This can help parents to balance meals and snacks with the food they provide at home. For example, if children are having a light meal at teatime and you expect them to eat again at home, make sure that parents are aware of this.</p>
8.	<p>Some adjustments to the menu plan may be required where parents/caregivers have identified their child as having feeding difficulties, malnutrition or is at risk of developing overweight or obesity.</p>

## **General food safety**

Food should be stored, prepared and presented in a safe and hygienic environment. This is especially important when providing food for young children, as they may have a low resistance to food poisoning. It is also important that children are taught basic hygiene themselves, such as not eating food that has fallen on the floor, and washing their hands with soap and warm water before eating meals or snacks and after going to the toilet or handling animals. Please refer to the helpful resources section for the most up to date food safety guidelines.

## **Managing allergies and intolerances**

Early years settings and their caterers should work closely with families to support children with allergies or intolerances. As part of the TUSLA regulatory framework, settings are required to obtain information about children's special dietary requirements – including food allergies and intolerances – before they attend, record it in an individual care plan and act on the information provided about children's dietary needs. It is important that requests for special diets are handled sensitively and appropriately, and this can be included as part of a policy, describing how these are managed, and the procedure that is followed. Please refer to the documents and websites included in the 'Helpful Resources' section for further information.

## **Cultural and religious needs in relation to food provision**

Settings must ensure that they make appropriate provision for parental preferences including cultural and religious food sensitivities, for example the provision of halal and kosher food as appropriate. A general guide to food choices for specific religious groups is available in the Nutrition Standards for Early Learning and Care Services.



# Approach to development of this menu plan for early learning and care services

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Children in the one to four years age group are at an important stage of development and are progressing from a predominantly milk based diet to a more balanced and varied diet that supports optimum growth and development. To help children develop patterns of healthy eating from an early age, it is important that the food and eating patterns to which children are exposed, both at home and outside the home, are those which promote positive attitudes and enjoyment of good food.

It is important that the food and drink provided for children aged one to four years is balanced across each day and that children eat regularly, with breakfast, lunch, tea, and two or three snacks provided daily, either within an early years setting or at home. This also helps to ensure that the needs of children who move between different settings and home are met.

It is also a time where their increasing wish is to make their own decisions about what they eat, and this can be challenging. It is well known that dietary habits, which can last for a lifetime, are formed during this critical phase. This age group have very high nutritional requirements relative to their size, so there is a real need to focus on the quality of food rather than quantity.

The principles that underpinned the development of the menu plan are summarised as follows:

- Designed to meet the Early Learning and Care Services' Nutrition Standards and Food Based Dietary Guidelines.
- Assumption that tooth - friendly drinks are offered regularly (milk or water only).
- Food is prepared in a clean and safe way.
- Healthy cooking methods are used e.g. small amounts of oil, no added salt or sugar.
- Acknowledgement of the constraints of food budgets, staff resourcing and food preparation facilities available.
- Specific dietary requirements of children should be accommodated, for example for health reasons or due to religious or cultural preferences. Refer to the early years nutrition standards for guidance.
- Acknowledgement that food is a wonderful source of learning for children.
- The use of different colours, tastes and textures makes mealtimes exciting for children. It also allows for a variety of food-related activities to be introduced.
- The menu plan reflects a variety of foods, herbs and spices from a range of cultures and cuisines.
- Promotion of the links between food and health at an early age.

**If adapting this menu plan or developing new menu plans for your service please refer to the *Early Learning and Care Services Nutrition Standards for full guidance.***

In developing the menu plan it is assumed that the child will only be present for some meals and snacks and will have at least one meal or snack in their own home over the course of a day. Attendance can vary from sessional, to half day or full day and children can also attend both the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme and other childcare services across the day in the one setting.

According to the Annual Early Years Sector profile 2020 - 21, 4,527 services were contracted to provide at least one of the four DCEDIY funding programmes (Pobal, 2022). An estimated 89% of settings offer sessional services (usually morning) while 34% of these offer full day care services which are already required by legislation to offer at least one substantial hot meal (DCEDIY (previously known as Department of Children and Youth Affairs), 2020).

At the time of development of the menu plan, pilot testing was being undertaken in pre-school services for a hot meal initiative. This enabled an opportunity to engage with sites to review and gather feedback on the meal plans, recipes and preparation methods.



## Food based dietary targets

All recipes are suitable for children from one to four years. The portion sizes in this menu plan are based on 'The Children's Food Pyramid Guidelines' published in 2020. The recipes have been developed based on a 3 year old child to account for the higher energy and nutrient needs in this age group and also reflect the average age of children who are enrolled in childcare services in Ireland (Pobal, 2022, page 63).

The aim of this menu plan is to achieve the lower end of the daily target range for each food group for 3 - 4 year olds. For the milk, Natural yoghurt and cheese group two servings per day was the target to account for the fact that children should have at least one serving of this food group at home. However there is flexibility of choice for children to consume milk or water with each meal. The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) (2020) recommends that a daily intake of 550ml of milk, or equivalent amounts of yoghurt or cheese, should be provided daily to children (where 200ml of milk is equivalent to 150ml of yoghurt or 25g of cheese). The target food groups for the menu plan is as follows:

### Healthy eating food group targets and menu plan targets

Food Groups	Daily Servings for 3-4 year olds from HE guidelines	Targets for Menu Plan
Cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice	4 - 6	4 - 5
Vegetables, salad and fruit	4 - 5	4
Milk, natural yoghurt and cheese	3	2
Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts	3 - 4	3

The menus include two weeks of recipes for breakfasts, hot meals, light/cold meals and snacks for a standard and vegetarian menu plan. These are displayed in weekly menus to illustrate how the recipes can be used to provide varied food. The recipes can also be used individually, or incorporated into menu plans developed locally by early years facilities. However, all menu plans should be reviewed to ensure they remain varied and meet the standards as outlined in the 'Nutrition Standards for Early Learning and Care Services.'



# Helpful resources

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**Food waste:** Tips on minimising food waste: [www.stopfoodwaste.ie](http://www.stopfoodwaste.ie)

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**Sustainability and seasonal fruit and vegetables:** A calendar of seasonal fruit and vegetables is available from Bord Bia: [www.bordbia.ie/globalassets/bordbia2020/food-and-living/best-in-season-2020/pdf/best-in-season-pdf.pdf](http://www.bordbia.ie/globalassets/bordbia2020/food-and-living/best-in-season-2020/pdf/best-in-season-pdf.pdf)

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**Food budgeting:** [www.safefood.net/how-to/eat-well-budget?gad=1&gclid=EAIaIQobChMlIuiR8-uyggMVVOTtCh1\\_CAAkEAAYASAAEgIn\\_\\_D\\_BwE](http://www.safefood.net/how-to/eat-well-budget?gad=1&gclid=EAIaIQobChMlIuiR8-uyggMVVOTtCh1_CAAkEAAYASAAEgIn__D_BwE)

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**Food Safety:** Food preparation and provision:  
[www.fsai.ie/enforcement-and-legislation/legislation/food-legislation/food-hygiene](http://www.fsai.ie/enforcement-and-legislation/legislation/food-legislation/food-hygiene)  
[www.safefood.net/food-safety](http://www.safefood.net/food-safety)

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**Food choking risks in children:**  
[www2.hse.ie/babies-children/child-safety/choking-strangulation-suffocation/food-choking-risks/](http://www2.hse.ie/babies-children/child-safety/choking-strangulation-suffocation/food-choking-risks/)

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**My Child resources for 0 to 2 years:**  
[www2.hse.ie/babies-children/pregnancy-child-books/](http://www2.hse.ie/babies-children/pregnancy-child-books/)

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**My Child.ie resources for 2 to 5 years:** [www2.hse.ie/babies-children/pregnancy-child-books/](http://www2.hse.ie/babies-children/pregnancy-child-books/)

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**Food additives:** [www.fsai.ie/enforcement-and-legislation/legislation/food-legislation/food-additives](http://www.fsai.ie/enforcement-and-legislation/legislation/food-legislation/food-additives)

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**Food allergens:** [www.safefood.net/allergens](http://www.safefood.net/allergens)  
[www.fsai.ie/business-advice/starting-a-food-business/allergens](http://www.fsai.ie/business-advice/starting-a-food-business/allergens)  
[www.ifan.ie/](http://www.ifan.ie/)

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**Food labelling:** [www.fsai.ie/consumer-advice/food-labelling](http://www.fsai.ie/consumer-advice/food-labelling)  
[www.safefood.net/start/healthy-eating/read-food-labels](http://www.safefood.net/start/healthy-eating/read-food-labels)

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**Quality and Regulatory Framework Full Day Care Service and Part-time Day Care Service:**  
[www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/early-years-providers/early-years-provider-resources/early-years-quality-and-regulatory-framework/](http://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/early-years-providers/early-years-provider-resources/early-years-quality-and-regulatory-framework/)

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**Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) (2023), Nutrition Standards for Early Learning and Care Services.**

Available at: [www.gov.ie/en/publication/4b9dd-nutrition-standards-for-early-learning-and-care-services/](http://www.gov.ie/en/publication/4b9dd-nutrition-standards-for-early-learning-and-care-services/)



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Department of Health (2020) Healthy eating for 1 to 4 year olds.

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Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/825252b4-3ec6-11e8-b5fe-01aa75ed71a1>

Irish Universities Nutrition Alliance (IUNA) (2012) National Pre - School Nutrition Survey Summary Report.

Available at: [www.iuna.net/surveyreports](http://www.iuna.net/surveyreports)

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The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) (2020) Scientific Recommendations for Food - Based Dietary Guidelines for 1 to 5 Year - Olds in Ireland. Available at:

[www.fsai.ie/publications/scientific-recommendations-for-food-based-dietary](http://www.fsai.ie/publications/scientific-recommendations-for-food-based-dietary)



# Appendices

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## Nutrient analysis

Nutrient analysis was conducted on the menu plans to ensure alignment with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) 2020 Scientific Recommendations for Food - Based Dietary Guidelines for 1 to 5 Year - Olds in Ireland. The nutrient analysis was conducted using Nutritics Software.

### Energy

Average daily energy (kcal) provided across the two standard and two vegetarian weekly menu plans was 899 - 947kcal. This represents 79 - 83% of 1136kcal which is the average daily energy intake target for 3 year olds (FSAI, 2020). This accounts for the assumption that the child will at least have one meal or snack at home to achieve total daily energy intake requirements.

### Fat and saturated fat

Average percentage (%) daily energy from fat is 30 - 33%. This is just below the recommended intake of 35 - 40% for 1 to 3 year olds and just within the upper limit of 35% for 4 year olds (FSAI 2020). Average saturated fat intake is 13% (range 9 - 18%) across all four weekly meal plans. FSAI (2020) scientific recommendations recommend that daily intake of saturated fat is as low as possible in a nutritionally adequate diet. No upper limit is available.

### Carbohydrate

Average percentage (%) daily energy intake from carbohydrate ranges between 43 - 47% across all four weekly meal plans. The reference intake (FSAI,2020) is 45 - 60 % energy. No added sugars are used as an ingredient in the recipes within the meal plans. Therefore, 'free' or 'added' sugar content has not been calculated. The percentage of total sugars, which includes natural sugars from milk and fruit, ranges from 16 - 18.6%.

### Protein

Average daily protein (g) provided across the two standard and two vegetarian weekly menu plans is 39.3 – 47.9g. This represents 18 - 21% of daily energy intake. The RDA for protein for 3 years olds is 9 - 18g per day. The nutrition standards recommend that a protein is included in the hot meal and the light/cold meals daily and can also be included as part of snacks.

Lyons et al. (2022) conducted meal plan modelling within energy requirement ranges aligned with the WHO growth standards for children aged 1 - 5 years. This was to address any nutrient shortfalls and formed the basis of the food based dietary guidelines. The results reported a predicted daily intake of 3.9 (3.6 - 4.5) grams per kilogram body weight. The average weight of a 3 year old child is 12.6 kg (Great Ormond Street, NHS), giving a range of 45.4 – 56.7g per day which falls within the average daily intake in the menu plans. The range proposed by IOM is 5–20 % daily energy for children aged 1–3 years (IOM, 2005). (Food and Nutrition Board Institute of Medicine (2005) Dietary Reference Intakes for Energy, Carbohydrate, Fiber, Fat, Fatty Acids, Cholesterol, Protein, and Amino Acids (Macronutrients). Washington, DC: National Academies Press).

## Fibre

Average fibre intakes across the four weekly menu plans is 13 - 16g /day. The FSAI (2020) scientific recommendations use the American Health Foundation recommendation, which is a dietary fibre intake equivalent to age + 5 g/day. For 3 year olds this is equivalent to 8g of fibre. Findings from the Irish National Pre - School Nutrition Survey (2010 - 2011) reported an average intake of 11.7 (+/- 1.1)g per day (IUNA, 2011). The menu plans are designed according to the early years standards which state 'Each child should get a 50:50 mixture of wholemeal/wholegrain varieties of cereals, breads, pasta and rice throughout the day to ensure they get the right amount of fibre from foods.'

## Calcium

Average daily calcium (mg) intakes across the four weekly menu plans ranges from 790 – 872mg. For 1 to 3 year olds, the average requirement (AR) is 390mg/day and the recommended dietary (RDA) is 450mg/day. For 4 – 6 years olds the AR is 680mg and RDA is 800mg/day (FSAI, 2020). The menu plan includes a portion of dairy at all breakfast meals, and a dairy serving as part of at least one snack per day usually in the afternoon to ensure that children who attend only the afternoon session receive at least one dairy serving. The remaining calcium comes from ingredients used as part of main meals or snacks. On some days, main meals had a larger dairy component as it provided the protein serving for the meal.

## Iron

Average daily iron (mg) intakes across the four weekly menu plans ranges from 7.0 - 7.7mg. The recommended average requirement is 5mg per day and recommended dietary allowance is 7mg per day for children 1 to 3 year and 4 - 6 years. The menu plans were designed based on the early years standards, to include iron fortified breakfast cereals and the inclusion of iron rich foods based on the food based dietary guidelines.

## Salt

Average weekly salt intakes across the four weekly menu plans ranges from 1.7 – 2.3g per day. There is no added salt used in the recipes. This level of salt intake is within the recommended maximum levels for average daily salt intake of 2.75 g salt (1.1 g sodium) per day for children aged 1–3 years, and 3.25g (1.3 g sodium) per day for children aged 4–6 years (EFSA, 2013).

## Nutrient analysis summary

Nutrient	Weekly average provided:	Scientific Recommendation for nutrient target
<b>Energy</b>	Week 1 standard = 922 (± 95) kcal Week 1 vegetarian = 899 (± 119)kcal Week 2 standard = 947 (± 85) kcal Week 2 vegetarian = 910 (± 95) kcal	Average energy kcal/day Average Requirement (AR) (FSAI, 2020) (total for 0.4th–99.6th %ile): 1136kcal (1005–1293) kcal
<b>Fat</b>	Week 1 standard = 32 (± 4.1) % Week 1 vegetarian = 30 (± 4.9) % Week 2 standard = 33 (± 1.8) % Week 2 vegetarian = 32 (± 2.3) %	Total fat (% energy) (FSAI, 2020) 35–40

Nutrient	Weekly average provided:	Scientific Recommendation for nutrient target
<b>Saturated Fat</b>	Week 1 standard = 13.5 (± 4.9) % Week 1 vegetarian = 13.0 (± 4.5) % Week 2 standard = 12.9 (± 2.5) % Week 2 vegetarian = 12.4 (± 2.5) %	Low as possible in nutritionally adequate diet, (FSAI, 2020)
<b>Carbohydrates</b>	Week 1 standard = 45.5 (± 5.1) % Week 1 vegetarian = 47 (± 6.9) % Week 2 standard = 42.8 (± 2.8) % Week 2 vegetarian = 45.6 (± 1.8) %	Carbohydrates (% energy) RI, FSAI (2020) 45–60%
<b>Protein</b>	Week 1 standard = 44.8 (± 5.6) g/day Week 1 vegetarian = 39.3 (± 6.2) g/day Week 2 standard = 47.9 (± 3.4) g/day Week 2 vegetarian = 41.7 (± 4.0) g/day	Protein g/day (FSAI, 2020) g/kg body weight = 0.9 g/KgBW (total g for 0.4th–99.6th %ile) RDA = 9 - 18g
<b>Fibre</b>	Week 1 standard = 13 (± 3) g/day Week 1 vegetarian = 15 (± 2) g/day Week 2 standard = 13 (± 4) g/day Week 2 vegetarian = 15 (± 4) g/day	Daily Fibre g/day (FSAI, 2020) age + 5 g
<b>Calcium</b>	Week 1 standard = 841 (± 346) mg/day Week 1 vegetarian = 790 (± 280) mg/day Week 2 standard = 852 (± 312) mg/day Week 2 vegetarian = 872 (± 311) mg/day	Calcium mg/day (FSAI, 2020) 1 - 3 years: Average requirement (AR)= 390mg. Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) = 450mg 4 - 6 years: Average requirement (AR) = 680mg. Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) = 800mg
<b>Iron</b>	Week 1 standard = 7.0 (± 1.3) mg/day Week 1 vegetarian = 7.2 (± 1.5) mg/day Week 2 standard = 7.3 (± 1.3) mg/day Week 2 vegetarian = 7.7 (± 1.2) mg/day	Iron mg/day (FSAI, 2020) 1 - 3 years: Average requirement (AR) = 5mg Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) = 7mg 4 - 6 years: Average requirement (AR) 5mg Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) 7mg
<b>Salt</b>	Week 1 standard = 1.7 (± 0.3) g/day Week 1 vegetarian = 1.8 (± 0.3) mg/day Week 2 standard = 1.8 (± 0.4) mg/day Week 2 vegetarian = 2.3 (± 0.9) mg/day	Salt (Sodium) g/day (EFSA 2013) 1 - 3 years: 2.75 g salt (1.1 g sodium)/ day 4 - 6 years: 3.25g (1.3 g sodium)/day



An Roinn Leanáí, Comhionannais,  
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