



Safer Eating in Early Years Settings

Practitioner Resource Pack

February 2024



Trusted content written by



Kent Safeguarding Children
multi-agency partnership

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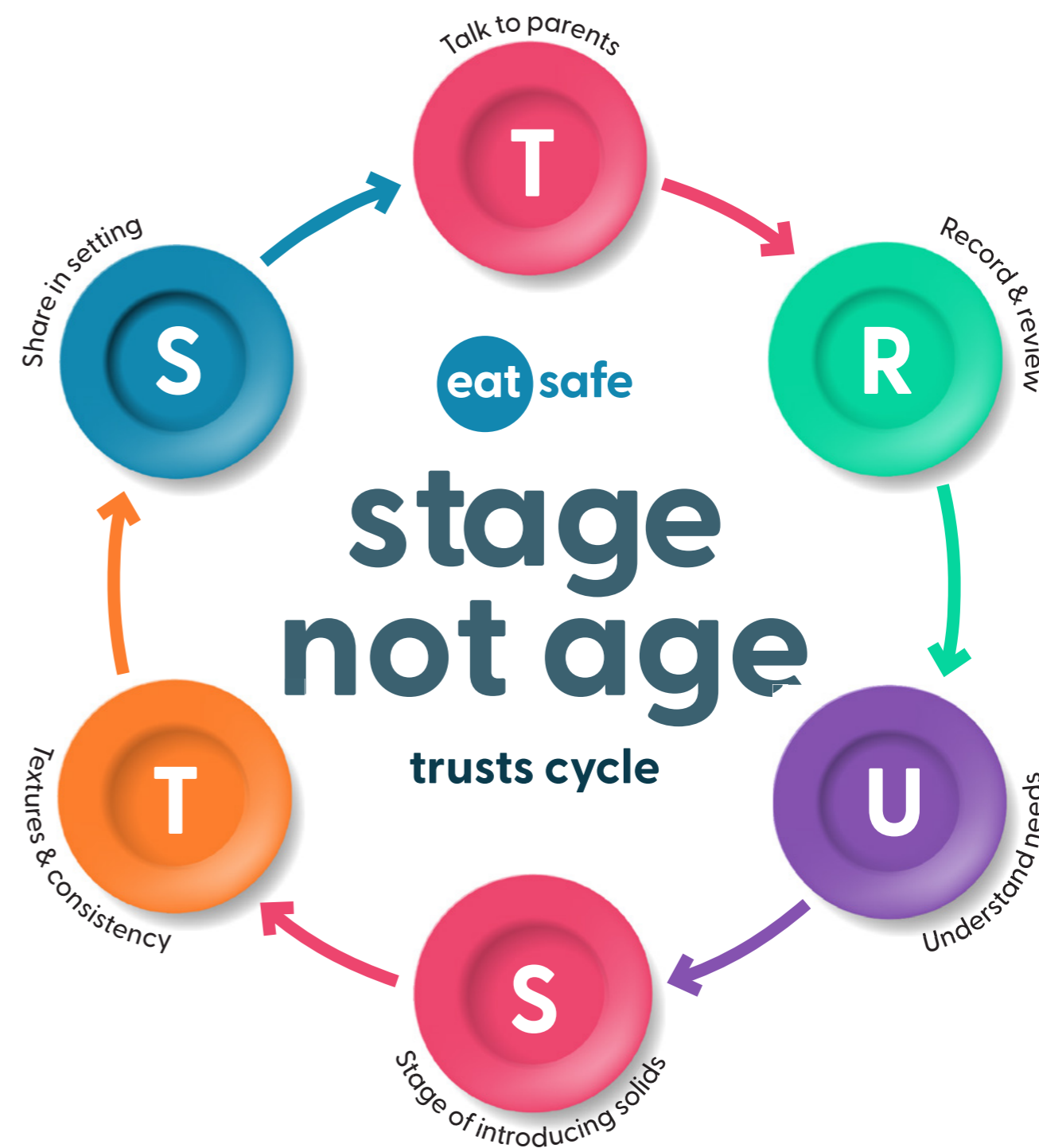
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It is important to clearly and regularly discuss, and record, appropriate foods and progression of the introduction of solids for young children, with parents.



TRUSTS Cycle

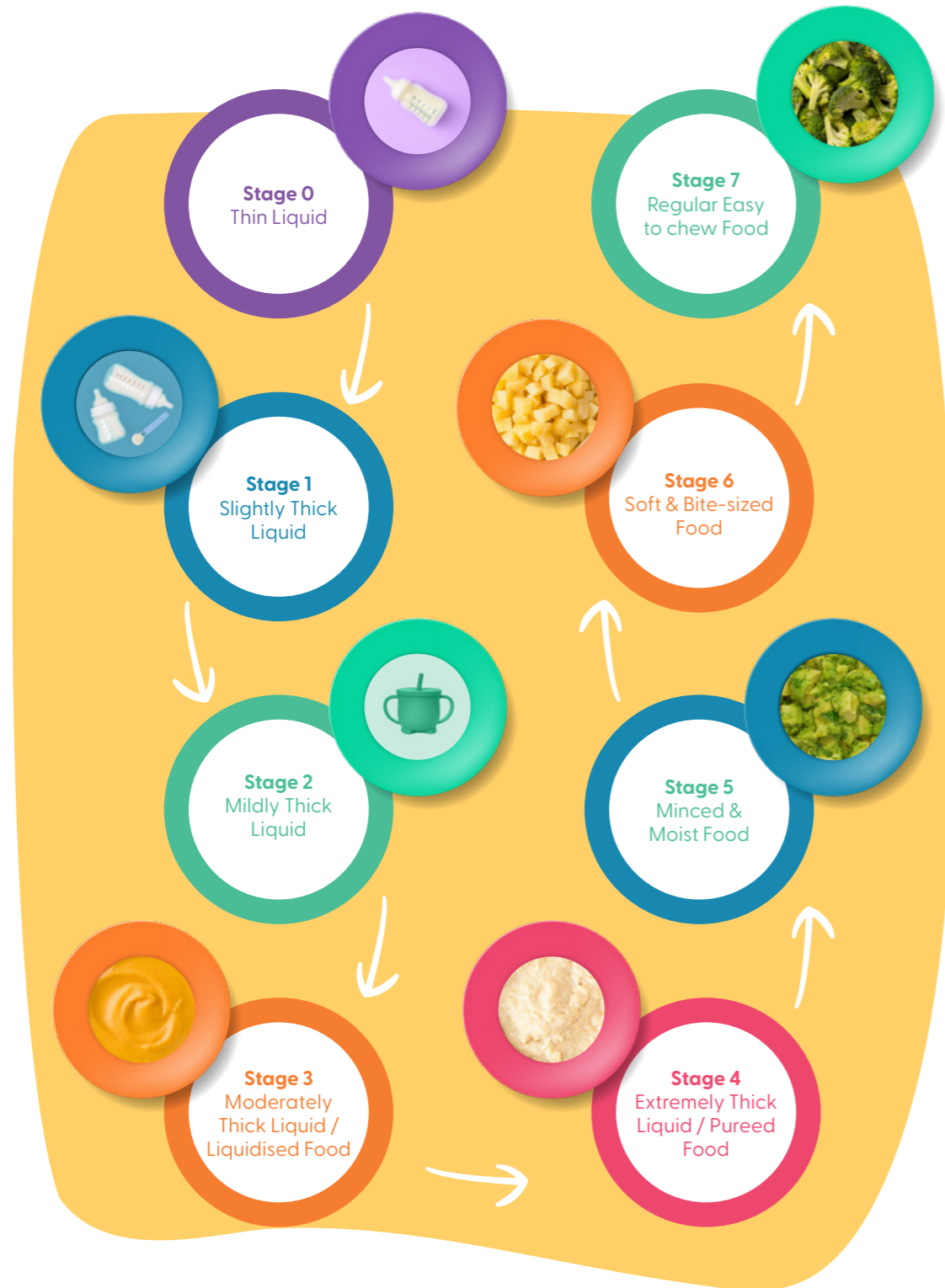


For more information, visit our website

[Find out more >](#)

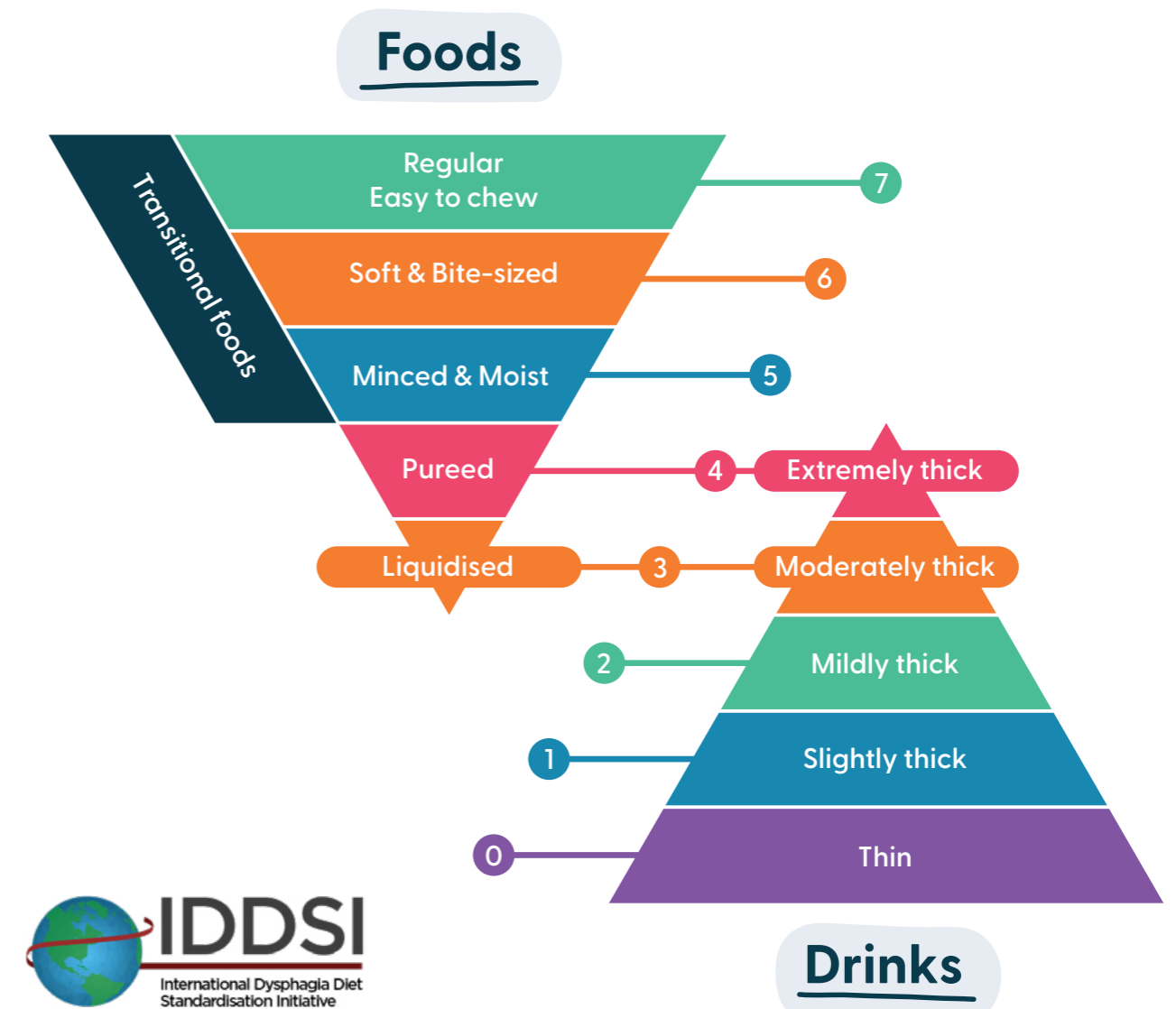
Understanding the child

2.1 Visual food texture guide



2.2 IDDSI Framework

The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative has developed the IDDSI Framework which provides a **common terminology to describe food textures**. Whilst it was developed to use with people with dysphagia (swallowing difficulties – see section 2.3) but may be useful to reference for shared understanding of food texture.

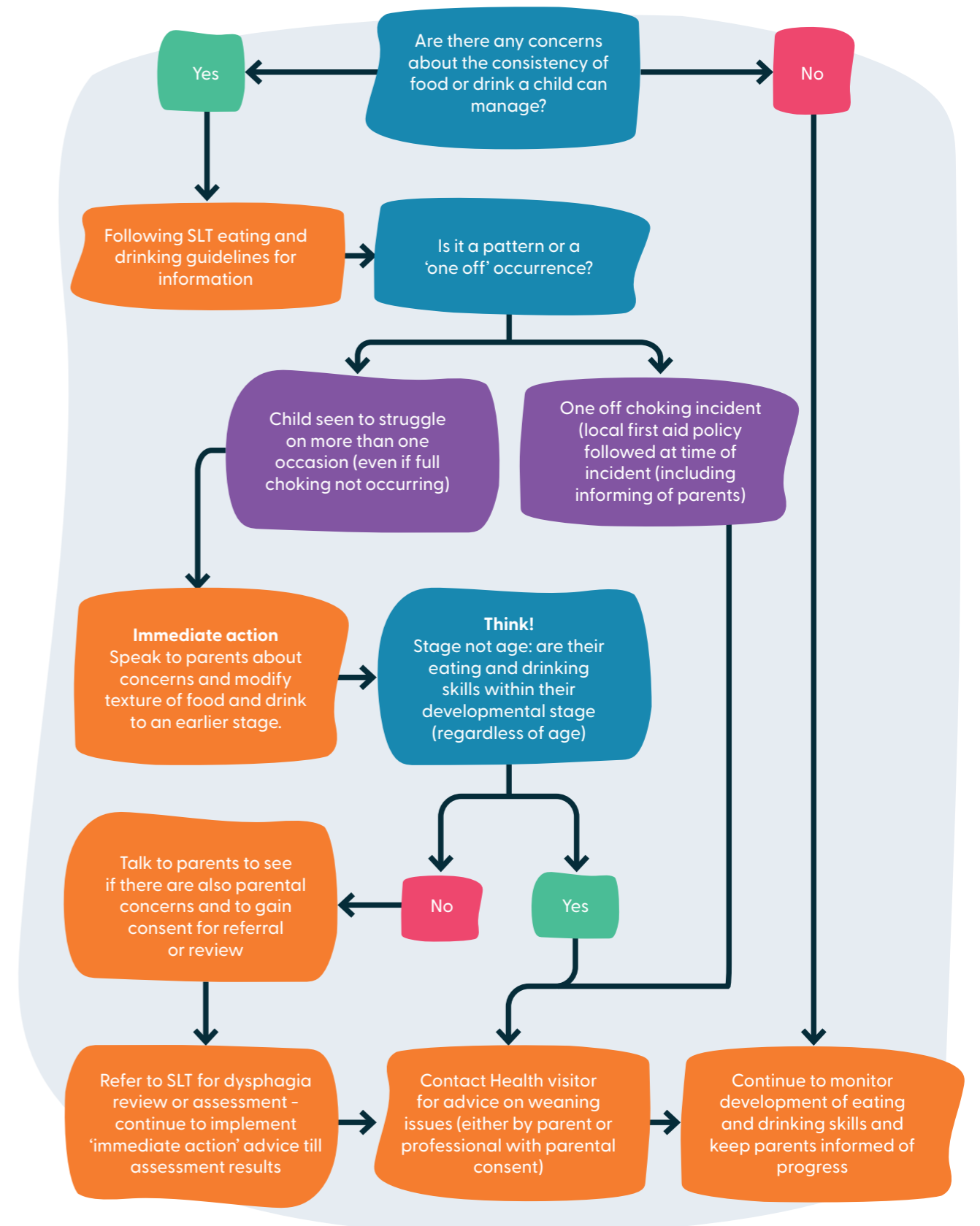


2.3 Guidance on children with swallowing issues

Dysphagia describes **eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties in babies, children, and young people**. It often occurs with **other health conditions** such as being born prematurely, having cardiac, respiratory, ENT, neurological, gastro-enterology problems or renal difficulties. Further information can be found on the [KCHFT website](#). The flow chart on the following page shows how support can be given for children with dysphagia.



Feeding concerns and the role of the Dysphagia Speech and Language Team (SLT)



Organisation Culture

3.1 Preparing food safely for young children

[Department for Education](#) provides guidance on food safety for young children for early years providers. It includes the hints and tips below:

- ⊘ Do not offer raisins as a snack to children under 12 months – although these can be chopped up as part of a meal
- ⊘ Sausages should be **avoided due to their high salt content**, but if offered to children these should be cut into thin strips rather than chunks and remove the skins
- ⊘ Do not give whole nuts to children under five years old
- ⊘ Do not give whole seeds to children under five years old
- ⊘ Do not give popcorn as a snack
- ⊘ Do not give children marshmallows or jelly cubes from a packet either to eat or as part of messy play activities as they can get stuck in the throat
- ⊘ Do not give children hard sweets.
- ✓ Remove any stone and pips from fruit before serving
- ✓ Cut small round foods, like grapes, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, lengthways and **into quarters**
- ✓ Cut large fruits like melon, and hard fruit or vegetables like raw apple and carrot **into slides** instead of small chunks
- ✓ Soften hard fruit and vegetable (such as carrot and apple) and **remove the skins** when first given to babies from around 6 months
- ✓ Remove bones from meat or fish
- ✓ Cut cheese into strips rather than chunks

3.2 Example kitchen crib sheet template

| Child | Dietary needs | Texture | Meal / snack | How & who texture | Notes |
|---------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------------|---|
| e.g. Alex Smith | Nut Allergy | Mashed - Stage 5 | Shepherd's Pie | Kitchen to mash | |
| e.g. Charlie Thomas | Vegetarian | Puree - Stage 4 | Veggie Casserole | Dining supervisor to blend | Has had throat infection making swallowing harder |
| | | | | | |
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A printable version of this crib sheet is available from the KSCMP website

3.3 Paediatric first aid

Department for Education [guidance on early years qualifications and ratios](#) provides information about paediatric first aid qualification requirements.

Paediatric first aid qualifications and training can be accessed from a wide range of providers, including:



[British Red Cross >](#)



[St John's Ambulance >](#)

Early Start Nutrition also have a video on preparing food safely for young children.

[Watch now >](#)

Safeguarding Mealtimes

4.1 Choking hazards

For babies and young children, food can be a choking hazard, especially when they do not chew their food well or they try to swallow it whole.



Choking can happen with any foods, but 'firm foods', bones and small round foods that can easily get stuck in the throat present a higher risk. Therefore, care givers should follow these five essential steps:

- 1 Make sure food is **suitably prepared and served** for babies and children under 5 years old. For suitable foods see here. Introduce babies to solid foods from around 6 months of age.
- 2 **Think about size, shape and texture of food.** Cut food into narrow batons, avoid round shapes and firm foods. Firm fruit & vegetables can be softened by cooking.
- 3 Ensure that babies and young children are **alert and seated safely upright** in a highchair or appropriately sized low chair whilst eating.
- 4 **Babies and young children should be supervised at all times** while eating. You will be able to identify the early signs of choking and prevent harm.
- 5 **Encourage babies and young children to chew food well.** Teach children how to chew and swallow food properly, and ensure they take their time during meals. This will reduce their risk of choking.

Care givers and parents should be familiar with how to respond to a choking incident in line with guidance on first aid for children:

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

[How to resuscitate a child >](#)

The Food Standards Agency also has produced a table of advice on key food for care givers who are involved with preparing and serving food for babies and young children under five.

[Find out more >](#)

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) has produced a guide on avoiding choking hazards.

[Find out more >](#)

4.2 Recognising and responding to choking

[Mini First Aid](#) have a useful guide highlighting the difference between gagging and choking.

Gagging Vs Choking

Make sure you know the difference

| Gagging | Choking |
|--|---|
| Red in the face Making noise Gagging / coughing | Pale face Blueish lips Silent |
| Give them a chance to work it out! | Give emergency first aid without delay! |
| | |
| If they are LOUD and RED let them go ahead | If they are SILENT and BLUE they need help from you |

Babycentre have produced a video on the difference between gagging and choking, as well as a video on what to do if a child is choking.

[Watch now \(Differences\) >](#)

[Watch now \(Choking Actions\) >](#)

Safeguarding Mealtimes 4.2 Recognising and responding to choking

The [NHS website](#) provides advice on how to stop a child from choking, which includes the below tips on helping a choking child:

- 1 If you can see the object, **try to remove it. Don't poke blindly or repeatedly with your fingers.** You could make things worse by pushing the object further in and making it harder to remove.
- 2 If the child is coughing loudly, **encourage them to carry on coughing** to bring up what they're choking on and **don't leave them.**
- 3 If the child's coughing isn't effective (it's silent or they can't breathe properly), **shout for help immediately and decide whether they're still conscious.**
- 4 If the child is still conscious, but they're either not coughing or their coughing isn't effective, **use back blows.**

Back blows for babies under 1 year:

- 1 Sit down and **lay the baby face down along your thigh or forearm**, supporting their back and head with your hand.
- 2 Give up to **5 sharp back blows** with the **heel of 1 hand in the middle of the back** between the shoulder blades.

Back blows for children over 1 year:

- 1 **Lay a small child face down on your lap** as you would a baby.
- 2 If this isn't possible, support the child in a forward-leaning position and give **5 back blows from behind.**

If back blows don't relieve the choking and the baby or child is still conscious, give chest thrusts to infants under 1 year or abdominal thrusts to children over 1 year.

Chest thrusts for children under 1 year:

- 1 Lay the baby **face up along the length of your thighs.**
- 2 Find the **breastbone** and place **2 fingers** in the middle.
- 3 Give **5 sharp chest thrusts (pushes)**, compressing the chest **by about a third.**

Abdominal thrusts for children over 1 year:

- 1 Stand or **kneel behind the child.** Place your arms **under the child's arms** and around their upper abdomen.
- 2 **Clench your fist** and place it **between the navel and ribs.**
- 3 **Grasp this hand with your other hand** and **pull sharply inwards and upwards.**
- 4 Repeat up to **5 times.**

Make sure you don't apply pressure to the lower ribcage, as this may cause damage.

Following chest or abdominal thrusts, reassess the child as follows:

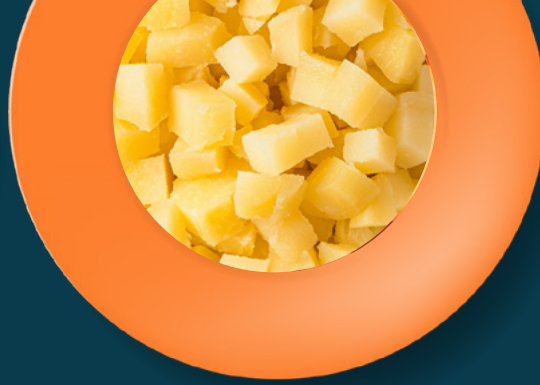
- If the object still isn't dislodged and the child is still conscious, **continue the sequence of back blows and either chest or abdominal thrusts.**
- Call out or send for help, if you're still on your own.
- **Don't leave the child.**

Call 999 if the blockage doesn't come out after trying back blows and either chest or abdominal thrusts. **Keep trying this cycle until help arrives.**

Even if the object has come out, **get medical help.** Part of the object might have been left behind, or the child might have been hurt by the procedure.

⚠️ Unconscious child with choking:

- 1 If a choking child is, or becomes, unconscious, **put them on a firm, flat surface and shout for help.**
- 2 **Call 999**, putting the phone on speakerphone so your **hands are free.**
- 3 **Don't leave the child at any stage.**
- 4 **Open the child's mouth.** If the **object's clearly visible** and you can grasp it easily, **remove it.**
- 5 Start CPR.



eat safe

www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/eatsafe

In memory of
Oliver Steeper

