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# Recommendations

While it is not possible to remove all risk, it can be reduced by following the recommendations based on these three areas:


1. a safe physical environment when eating
2. first aid
3. providing appropriate food.

## 1 A safe physical environment when eating

Take the following actions to provide a safe physical environment for babies and children while they are eating:

 **Supervise** babies and children when they are eating.


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 Have an appropriate **ratio of adults to children** at mealtimes.

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 **Minimise distractions** and encourage children to focus on eating.


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 Ensure there is a **designated time** where children sit down to eat, rather than continuous grazing.


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 **Ask children not to talk** with their mouths full.

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 Have children **sit up straight** when they are eating. Sitting down and maintaining good posture are essential for safe eating and drinking. Do not allow walking, running or playing while children are eating.

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 **Place food directly in front of the child.** This helps to prevent them twisting around to the left or right, which can cause them to lose control of the food in their mouth.

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## 2 First aid

Some teachers and kaiako must know what to do if a baby or child is choking.

- ✓ Teachers and kaiako need to know **choking first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)**.
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For more information see the Well Child/Tamariki Ora Programme Practitioner Handbook available on the Ministry of Health website ([www.health.govt.nz](http://www.health.govt.nz)).

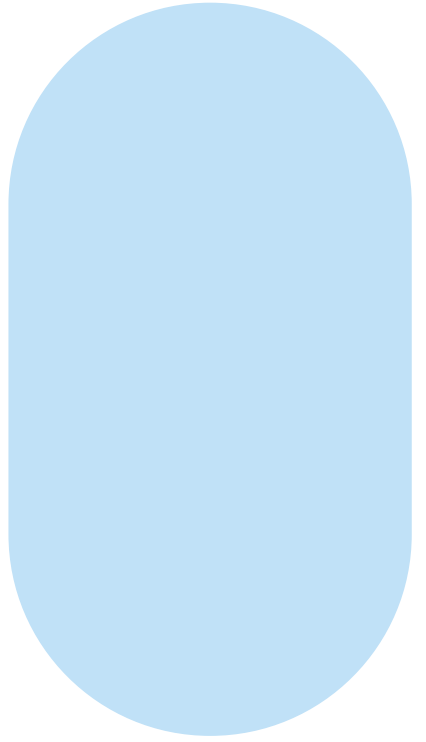
## 3 Providing appropriate food

Research shows that some food poses a greater risk of choking on. To reduce the risk, early learning services should remove high-risk foods and change the texture or size and shape of others.

### High-risk food to exclude

Exclude the following foods. They have the highest risk of choking on, and are either not practical to alter, have no or minimal nutritional value, or both:

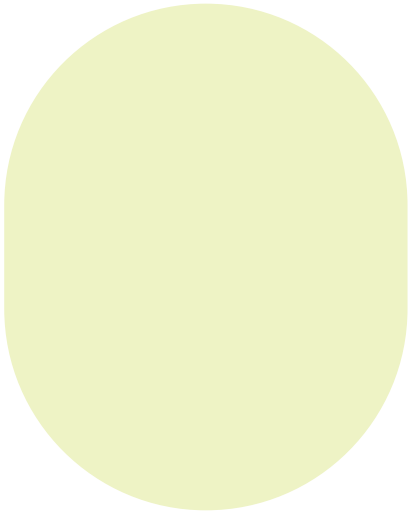
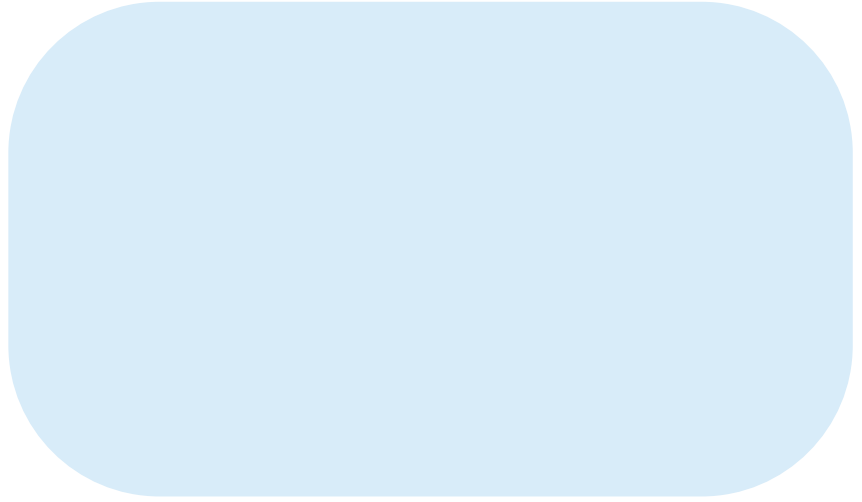
- ✗ whole nuts or pieces of nuts
  - ✗ large seeds, like pumpkin or sunflower seeds
  - ✗ hard or chewy sweets or lollies
  - ✗ crisps or chippies and corn chips
  - ✗ hard rice crackers
  - ✗ dried fruit
  - ✗ sausages, saveloys and cheerios
  - ✗ popcorn
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## Background information and references

The Ministry of Health's current advice on preventing choking in young children is available at [www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/food-activity-and-sleep/healthy-eating/food-related-choking-young-children](http://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/food-activity-and-sleep/healthy-eating/food-related-choking-young-children)

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Archanbault Nicole and Coceani Paskay Licia. 2019. Unsafe chewing: choking and other risks. *The ASHA Leader*, 1 November 2019.

Baig A, Thomas H, Britigan D et al. 2019. Food choking hazards in toddlers: An interventional study. *International journal of paediatrics, neonatology and primary care* . 1 (1): 11-16 doi:10.18689/ijpn-1000104.

Be Smart, Don't Choke. British Columbia Children's Hospital/University of British Columbia Initiative  
URL: <https://dontchoke.ubc.ca> (accessed 4 November 2020).

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