Eat Better, Start Better Programme Outline

The new ‘Voluntary Food and Drink Guidelines for Early Years Settings in England’, developed by the Children’s Food Trust (formerly School Food Trust) and endorsed by the Government and the early years sector is at the heart of the Eat Better, Start Better training programme.

What is the Eat Better, Start Better programme? It is an integrated package that includes two training courses, supporting resources and evaluation:

**Course 1: ‘Voluntary Food and Drink Guidelines for Early Years Settings in England’** - for early years and health professionals in local authorities and primary care trusts who are responsible for supporting early years settings to implement the EYFS welfare requirements. This one-day course focusing on the Voluntary Food and Drink Guidelines for Early Years Settings in England, accommodates 20 professionals. It uses a train-the-trainer model and covers:

- The rationale and background to the voluntary food and drink guidelines
- How to interpret and implement the voluntary food and drink guidelines
- Supporting settings to meet the food and drink guidelines using practical tools
- Evaluating settings’ approach to nutrition and food provision against the voluntary food and drink guideline using a new toolkit that we have developed for LAs/PCTs. This toolkit helps LAs/PCTs to measure the impact of the guidelines, training and support tools and demonstrate how the programme meets targets for early year intervention to improve the diets of young children and to prevent obesity.

**Courses 2a and 2b: ‘Healthy Food and Cooking for Families’** - for early years practitioners to help them understand the guidelines and train them in how to run healthy cooking sessions with families. Course 2a is a two-day course and Course 2b is a one day follow-up course. Each course accommodates 20 early years practitioners and includes:

- Applying and using the food and drink guidelines and resources in early years settings
- Understanding how to encourage healthy eating, improve awareness of food safety and hygiene and preparing a range of healthy, nutritious low-cost family meals
- Understanding how to adapt recipes to make them healthier and suitable for young children

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1 Voluntary Food and Drink Guidelines for Early Years Settings in England - A Practical Guide. The School Food Trust. [www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/eatbetterstartbetter](http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/eatbetterstartbetter)
2 Nutritional guidelines for children aged one to five [http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/a0068102/early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/a0068102/early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs)
Managing cooking groups - understanding how to plan and shop, use the ready-made cooking session plans for cooking with families and running community food events.

**Practical support tools:** Each early years/health professional and each setting receive a hard copy of the new 'Voluntary Food and Drink Guidelines for Early Years Settings in England' and a package of practical support tools including menus, recipes, guidance on portion sizes, a menu checklist and the code of practice for food and drink provision for early years settings. A range of other supporting resources including an audit tool is also available as part of the training package for delegates.

**Evaluation component:** Evaluation is an integral component of the Eat Better, Start Better programme and there are several different options available. The Trust offers an evaluation service that includes data collation, analysis and a final report which can be used by the authority as evidence of the impact of Eat Better, Start Better for the Health and Wellbeing Boards.

Local authorities commissioning the Eat Better, Start Better programme receive support for a year which includes advice from nutritionists and food trainers as needed, and access to online resources (including recipes, activity ideas and guidance documents for running cooking sessions).

The Eat Better, Start Better programme is designed to complement local authority activities to support families in the foundation years with healthy food choices and cooking skills particularly focusing on less engaged families with young children. An integral part of the programme is monitoring the impact of the cooking sessions on family food habits.