Food Safety Guidance

Please find relevant guidance below from the DFE website regarding Food Safety: -

Children can choke on any food. To minimise the risk of choking:

- remove any stones 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 slices instead of small chunks
- do not offer raisins as a snack to children under 12 months (they can be chopped up as part of a meal)
- soften hard fruit and vegetables (like raw apple and carrot) and remove the skins when first given to babies from around 6 months
- cut sausages into thin strips rather than chunks and remove the skins (sausages should be avoided due to their high salt content)
- remove bones from meat or fish
- do not give whole nuts or whole seeds to children under five years old
- cut cheese into strips rather than chunks
- consider wholemeal or toasted bread as white bread can form a doughy ball in the throat, and cut all types of bread into strips for very young children
- do not give children 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

Drinks

Provide only fresh tap water and plain milk for children to drink. Fruit juice, smoothies, squash, fizzy drinks and flavoured milk, even when diluted, contain lots of sugar and can cause tooth decay. Diet or reduced-sugar drinks are not recommended for babies and toddlers either. These drinks can fill older children up so they're not hungry for healthier food.

Unsweetened, calcium-fortified plant-based drinks (such as soya, oat and almond drinks) can be given from 12 months as part of a healthy balanced diet.

Do not give children under 5 rice drinks because of the level of arsenic they contain.

Children under the age of 5 should not be given:

- whole nuts and peanuts as they pose a choking risk (children can be given crushed or ground nuts and smooth peanut butter from around 6 months old)
- raw eggs, runny boiled eggs or foods containing partially cooked eggs like uncooked cake mixture
- foods high in salt such as sausages, bacon, crackers, crisps, ready meals and takeaways
- sugar, either in sugary snacks or added to food
- foods high in saturated fat such as biscuits, crisps and cakes
- fresh pate (meat, fish or vegetable-based) to reduce the risk of food poisoning
- unpasteurised milk, milk drinks and cheese, mould-ripened cheeses and soft blue-veined cheese, to reduce the risk of food poisoning
- shark, swordfish and marlin, as the levels of mercury in these fish can affect a child's developing nervous system
- raw shellfish, to reduce the risk of food poisoning - make sure any shellfish is thoroughly cooked.
- raw jelly cubes, as these are a choking hazard
- slush ice drinks, sometimes known as slushies, as they may contain too much glycerol

There are more available resources online at
https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/food-safety