

Overview of food provision in nurseries and schools across Europe

Countries	Type of service	Structural factors				Nutritional standards			Educational factors				Parental involvement		
		Are meals generally provided?	What % of children present at lunchtime have meals?	Are meals normally prepared on the premises or external?	If on premises, do kitchen staff require training?	Do meals have to meet nutritional standards?	Are different diets catered for?	Which agency sets standards?	How much time is set aside for eating at lunch?	Do staff usually eat with the children?	Are children allowed in kitchen or involved in preparing food?	Does the curriculum include food education?	Are parents consulted about the menu?	Do parents pay for meals? How much per day?	Are meals free/reduced for lower income families?
Austria	other	④	50% plus	external	n/a	yes	yes	health	30-60 mins	yes	no/no	yes	no	€2.50 to €5.50	yes
Belgium	schools	②	no info	external	n/a	no info	no	n/a	30 mins	no	no/no	yes	no	yes	no
	● Flemish	other	④	100%	external	n/a	yes	yes	child welfare (a)	as needed	no	yes	yes	included in fees	lower fees
● French	schools	③	c.25%	both	no	no (b)	sometimes	n/a	varies (20-90 mins)	no	no/no (c)	no (d)	no	€2 to €3.50	no
	other	④	100%	both (e)	no	no (b)	yes for health; other varies	n/a	as needed	no	no (c)	no	no	included in fees	lower fees
Denmark	schools (a)	①	Few	premises	yes (a)	no info	no info	no info	30-45 mins	no	no info	yes	yes	yes	no info
	other (a)	② under 3 ① 3 to 5	50% under 3 2% 3 to 5	premises	yes (a)	yes (a)	yes	agriculture and food	30-45 mins	yes	yes/yes	yes	yes	no – under threes yes – three to fives	yes for three to fives
France	schools	③	100%	mostly external	yes	yes	mostly, not all for health	agriculture	60 mins	no	no/no	no	no	c. €4	sometimes, half price
	other	③	100%	mostly external	yes	yes	mostly, not all for health	agriculture	varies	sometimes	occasionally	no curriculum	no	included in fees	lower fees
Italy	schools	④	100%	premises	yes	yes + taste	yes	health	60 mins	yes	not always/yes	yes	yes	c. €5	yes
	other	④	100%	premises	yes	yes + taste	yes	health	30 mins	yes	yes/yes	yes	yes	included in fees	lower fees
Spain	other (a)	④	c.60%	both	yes (b)	no	yes for health; other varies	n/a	no info (c)	no (but sit with children)	yes/sometimes	no (d)	no	varies	yes
Sweden	schools	④	100%	both	no	no (a)	yes	(a)	40 mins	sometimes	yes/no	yes	no	no	n/a
	other	④	100%	both	no	no (a)	yes	(a)	40 mins	yes	yes/no	no	no	no	n/a
Switzerland (French)	other	④	100%	both	yes	no (a)	yes	n/a	at least 60 mins	yes	no/sometimes	yes	no	included in fees	lower fees
United Kingdom	schools	④ (a)	43% (b)	both	no	yes	yes	education	varies	no info	no	yes	no	varies – average €2.43	yes
	● England	other	no info	no info	no info	no	no info	n/a	no info	no info	no info	no info	no info	no info	no info
● Scotland	schools	④	49% (b)	both	yes (c)	yes	yes	education, health + other agencies	45-60 mins (d)	sometimes	no	yes	no	varies from €1.50 to €2.55	yes
	other	no info	no info	no info	no info	no (e)	yes	n/a	no info	yes	varies (f)	no info	no info	no info	no info

Key:

Schools refers to primary schools except Italy, which is 3-6 years and England and Sweden, which include secondary schools

Other refers to kindergartens, nurseries, and other non-school settings

n/a not applicable

④ all provide meals

③ most provide meals

② some provide meals, less than half

① only a few provide meals, under ten per cent

Notes:

Belgium: (a) Kind & Gezin (Child and Family services); (b) nutrition recommendations only; (c) except for specific cooking sessions – ‘atelier cuisine’, usually in nursery class section; (d) not explicitly in curriculum, but food and food production are regularly included; (e) usually on premises in publicly-funded nurseries, more mixed in private nurseries.

Denmark: (a) the decision on whether to provide meals or not in schools or other institutions is a local decision; there is no national information.

Spain: (a) ‘other’ refers to centres for children aged 0-3 years, even though these are usually referred to as ‘schools’; (b) training mostly in hygiene; (c) in centres for children from 0-3 or 0-6, children have always stayed for lunch and food has been considered an important part of education; in schools, including classes for 3-6 year olds, providing lunch has mostly been a recent development, before which children were expected to have lunch at home

Sweden: (a) The National Food Administration in Sweden drafts nutritional guidelines, which local authorities normally follow; however, they are not required to do so.

Switzerland: (a) Nutrition recommendations only.

United Kingdom: (a) some schools only provide cold food, eg sandwiches; (b) 3 and 4-year-olds mostly attend school part-time and do not stay for lunch; (c) basic food hygiene for all staff, qualifications for managers; (d) many reports suggest children often in practice take less than 20 minutes; (e) national guidance to be introduced during 2006; (f) less likely today because of greater regulation.

TARGET 33:

Food preparation facilities should be available on the premises and nutritional and culturally appropriate food should be provided.

Quality targets in services for young children, (EC Childcare Network, 1996)

The full list of 40 targets can be found in Issue 7 of Children in Europe, www.childreninScotland.org.uk/cie