

Technical report – The Kid’s Food Guarantee

The Kid’s Food Guarantee is a set of actions which the Food Foundation think supermarkets should have in place as a minimum in order to effectively tackle rising levels of food insecurity. These are actions that citizens have told us they are eager to see, and which align with existing areas of focus for food retailers.

In the coming months we will spot-check each of the guarantee areas to see where the best offers are for families and share the findings. The intention is that the findings can be used by consumers, supporting them to access healthy and affordable diets and helping them to navigate the cost of living crisis.

To evaluate progress against each guarantee area will use a mix of qualitative and quantitative tracking of progress depending on what is most appropriate for each guarantee area.

We also intend to highlight examples of best practice, both on our Kids Food Guarantee dashboard and as part of our forthcoming 2023 *State of the Food Industry* report.

Kids Food Categories

Yogurt

For this Guarantee area we worked with Questionmark Foundation, an international non-profit think tank, to look at available yogurts and their price and nutritional information as available online for five of the major UK retailers: Aldi, ASDA, Morrison’s, Sainsbury’s and Tesco. Data was collected for the period 18th to 24th April 2023, and the search will be run on a monthly basis for the next three months to continually assess progress.

We looked at yogurt pots containing roughly a single portion; all yogurts with a packaged portion size of 200g or less. Packaged single portion pots were selected to provide a more realistic reflection of how citizens shop and snack (i.e. you can’t buy 100g of yogurt, you buy the pot). Larger pots also come with a higher upfront cost. We looked at single portion pots sold separately and as part of a multipack.

We included both plain and flavoured yogurts, with and without children's figures on the packaging, and both animal-based and plant-based products.

Specifically excluded were cheesecake desserts and yogurt drinks (e.g. in pouches).

To assess the nutrition profile of the yogurts in scope we looked at the sugar content of yogurt per 100g. The Nutrition Profiling Model (NPM), takes a broader range of nutrients into account in order to calculate a score, and marks down products that are high in fat. Given that fat is a key nutrient for young children and that many dairy products are naturally high in fat we focused on the sugar content.

We used the upper limit of total daily (free) sugar intake recommended for children as our guide for assessing sugar levels. For children aged 7-10 this is 24g, equivalent to 6 cubes of sugar. For children aged 4-6 it is 19g, equivalent to 5 cubes of sugar.

The UK [government recommends](#) that free sugars – sugars added to food or drinks, and sugars found naturally in honey, syrups, and unsweetened fruit and vegetable juices, smoothies and purées – should not make up more than 5% of the energy (calories) you get from food and drink each day.

This means:

- Adults should have no more than 30g of free sugars a day, (roughly equivalent to 7 sugar cubes).
- Children aged 7 to 10 should have no more than 24g of free sugars a day (6 sugar cubes).
- Children aged 4 to 6 should have no more than 19g of free sugars a day (5 sugar cubes).
- There's no guideline limit for children under the age of 4, but it's recommended they avoid sugar-sweetened drinks and food with sugar added to it.

4g of sugar is equivalent to a teaspoon or cube of sugar, with the first [3.8g of sugar](#) (roughly 1 cube) contained in each yogurt derived from naturally occurring milk sugars found in dairy products.

Although sugar in whole fruit is not considered a health risk, the process of pureeing releases the sugars from their cells. These 'free sugars' are more harmful than in the whole fruit form and can contribute to tooth decay. Fruit purees or fruit juice from concentrate when added to yogurt are therefore considered to be added, or free sugars.

Data were exported into an excel spreadsheet and analysed on the basis of total sugar content and price per single portion pot. Where yogurts were on offer, the promotional price was taken as the price.

Our method was as follows: To find the cheapest yogurts, we ranked single packaged yoghurt pots by price and by retailer, and then selected the cheapest product for each retailer.

To find the lowest sugar options available for <£1, we ranked single yogurt pots by sugar content (low to high) and by retailer, and then selected the first product which was <£1.

To find the highest sugar options available for <£1, we ranked single packaged yogurt by sugar content (high to low) and by retailer and selected the first product which was <£1.

Cereals

To monitor this Guarantee area we worked with [Questionmark Foundation](#), an international non-profit think tank, to look at available cereals, their price, and nutritional information for the largest five major UK retailers: Aldi, ASDA, Morrisons, Sainsbury's and Tesco. Data was collected for the period 18th to 24th April 2023.

We looked at all dry, 'ready to eat' cereals available across the retailers. We excluded cereals that require heating in acknowledgement of the barriers to food preparation that low income families can face, such as fuel poverty and accessing kitchen appliances ([ref](#)).

We used broad inclusion criteria to accurately reflect the range of cereals available in retailers. We included both those with and without children's figures on the packaging. We excluded cereal sold in single serve pots as these mostly required heating or are typically targeted towards adult commuters. Our final sample included 830 cereals in total, and 476 cereals when duplicate brands (i.e. the same product) sold across multiple retailers were removed. We excluded 14 cereals sold in boxes over 1kg in size as these come with a higher upfront cost to consumers.

We assessed price and nutrition per 100g given the wide variety of box sizes available when buying cereal, but a portion size of cereal for children is likely to be less than this. The majority of cereal

products use 30g as a recommended serving size for adults, but there is [disagreement](#) as to how realistic this is of typical serving sizes and children may be eating a wide range of portion sizes. The British Nutrition Foundation suggest 3-6 tbsps of cereal as an appropriate [portion size](#) for children aged 1-4 years old, which roughly equates to 45-90g.

We used the Government's Nutrition Profiling Model to assess the healthiness of cereals. Using this criteria foods scoring 4 or more points are classified as high in sugar, salt and/or fat (HFSS). For all products, the NPM score (Department of Health 2011) was computed based on nutrients and, if needed, category averages (fruits, nuts, vegetables and pulses, as well as fibres).

As many cereals are high in sugar we also looked at the sugar content per 100g. We used the upper limit of total daily (free) sugar intake recommended for children as our guide for assessing sugar levels. For children aged 7-10 this is 24g, equivalent to 6 cubes of sugar. For children aged 4-6 it is 19g, equivalent to 5 cubes of sugar.

The UK [government recommends](#) that free sugars – sugars added to food or drinks, and sugars found naturally in honey, syrups, and unsweetened fruit and vegetable juices, smoothies and purées – should not make up more than 5% of the energy (calories) you get from food and drink each day.

This means:

- Adults should have no more than 30g of free sugars a day, (roughly equivalent to 7 sugar cubes).
- Children aged 7 to 10 should have no more than 24g of free sugars a day (6 sugar cubes).
- Children aged 4 to 6 should have no more than 19g of free sugars a day (5 sugar cubes).
- There's no guideline limit for children under the age of 4, but it's recommended they avoid sugar-sweetened drinks and food with sugar added to it.

To look at whether cereals could be categorized as marketed towards children or not, we defined these as products with images on the packaging that are designed to appeal to children (e.g. animals, cartoon characters, UFOs and fireworks).

Staples Guarantee

First infant milk formula

We selected the six most widely available first infant formula milk products sold in the UK. Manufacturers for each are listed in brackets. These are; Aptamil 1 First Infant Milk From Birth (Danone), Cow & Gate 1 First Milk Powder (Danone), HiPP Organic Infant Milk (HiPP), Kendamil First Infant Milk Stage 1 (Kendal Nutricare), Mamia First Infant Milk (Aldi), and SMA Little Steps First Milk 1 From Birth (Nestle). We then found the price of these brands as listed online at each of the nine major UK retailers: Aldi, Asda, Co-op, Iceland, Morrisons, Ocado, Sainsbury's, Tesco, and Waitrose.

We excluded pharmacies, such as Boots and Superdrug, from our search as the Kids Food Guarantee is focussed on retailers and manufacturers. The majority of retailers store three or more of the above-mentioned brands. Aldi is the exception with its own-brand Mamia First Infant Milk formula, and does not store any other branded products that we could find. As powdered infant formula is the cheapest

format available and is the most widely used (as opposed to liquid ready-to-feed infant formula and formula tablets), we focus on this in this analysis in line with First Steps Nutrition's [analysis](#) of formula. This is first stage infant formula made with cows' milk, and we excluded hungry baby, anti-reflux, lactose free or comfort milks. More expensive goat milks are also excluded.

Kendamil first infant milk is sold in both 800g and 900g tins across different retailers. We therefore included Kendamil in our pricing analysis per 100g of formula but excluded the product from our price analysis per unit/tin.

The data was collected on 5th June 2023, and the search will run on a monthly basis for the next 3 months as we continually assess the price and availability of first infant milk formula. Data was exported into an excel spreadsheet and was analysed based on the price/weight of the product and retailer. We separately looked at both price/100g and the unit price of a tin of formula. The price of the larger tins (typically containing 800-900g of formula) provides a more realistic reflection of shopping behaviour, as consumers do not buy formula in 100g portions. In the tables, we have highlighted the cheapest options available in green and the highest prices in orange.

This report will be updated as progress against each Guarantee area is assessed.