

# What Universal Infant Free School Meals means for your child

## A healthy, nutritious free school meal for every infant school aged child.

Infant children in schools across England are about to discover that there is such a thing as a free lunch. September sees the start of Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM), the government's program that entitles every infant school aged child to a free school lunch.

So if your child is in reception, year 1 or 2 in September there will be no more paying for their school meals or worrying about what to put in their pack up. All children in these age groups will receive a nutritious meal every lunch time.

The Children's Food Trust fully supports UIFSM. It's great news for children and families and the health benefits of giving our children a nutritious lunch every day are clear. We know that when children eat better they do better. A nutritious school lunch is a big step towards making sure children grow up fit and healthy and achieve their full potential at school.

Many schools have been working hard since March 2014 to get ready for the increased number of children having school meals and you've probably got lots of questions about why this is being introduced and what it means for your and your family.

Firstly families will save both money, approximately £400 a year, and time without the cost of school meals or making expensive packed lunches.

Secondly the two course menu must meet the government's school food standards and so healthy meals and snacks such as low fat milk, fruit and vegetables will be available every day.

And last but not least it's been shown when children eat a healthy, nutritious lunch their concentration and learning is better in the afternoon. It also has the added benefit of teaching children more about social interaction and encouraging them to try new and exciting foods.

For those parents who have children with specific food allergies, intolerances or cultural needs there might be some concern. However don't worry this initiative is for ALL children so simply contact your child's school to make them aware of your child's needs and discuss how your child can enjoy free school meals along with all their class mates.

All you have to do is make sure your child is signed up. Many schools will have already sent a form home with children last term. If you haven't had one don't worry simply call the school at the beginning of next term to make sure your child is registered.

By signing your child up for Universal Infant Free School Meals you're ensuring they receive a healthy, nutritious meal every day.