

# Baby Food and Drink - UK - 2023

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## This report looks at the following areas:

- The effects of the cost-of-living crisis on value and volume sales of manufactured baby food products and formula milk.
- Factors considered important by parents when buying baby/toddler meals and snacks.
- Parents' motivations for giving their children homemade food, such as getting used to homemade meals, and how makers of ready-made products can respond to these.
- Trends in launch activity in baby food, milk and drinks, and opportunities for further innovation.
- Parents' attitudes and behaviours relating to baby food and drink, including interest in recipes and perceptions of snacks from baby/toddler food brands.

Providing recipes on their websites or social media platforms can pay dividends for baby food brands; 74% of parents of 0-4s who buy baby food/milk/drinks are more likely to choose a brand that offers recipes for homemade meals/snacks than one that does not. Weekly meal plans and prompts in-store are among the means that brands can use to raise the profile both of their recipes and their ready-made products and drive purchase.

The cost-of-living crisis eroded volume sales of baby food, drink and milk in 2022, favouring scratch-cooking and longer breastfeeding. This is expected to continue in 2023. Rising prices have kept value sales in growth despite the weak volumes. Shoppers switching to own-label will continue to support volume sales of baby food to some extent, although putting downward pressure on value sales growth.

The decline in birth rates seen over 2016-21 is likely to continue in the coming years as wage growth lags inflation over 2023-24 and with the long-term decline in younger adults. This will impede category volume sales growth.



"Ongoing pressure on household incomes over 2023-24 will continue to erode volume sales of manufactured baby food by favouring scratch cooking."  
- Alice Baker, Senior Food & Drink Research Analyst, April 2023

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Brands must therefore continue in their efforts to retain users by launching products aimed at older children.

Sustainable packaging holds promise as a means for baby food and milk brands to earn parents' goodwill and drive purchase. Sustainable packaging is seen as essential or preferred when buying baby food by 63% of parents of 0-4s. Meanwhile, sustainable packaging would prompt 61% of baby milk buyers to buy one formula milk over another.

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