

Building a healthy future this spring

An information leaflet from the
Wolverhampton 0-19 Service, January 2025

Using visual timetables

A visual timetable is an interactive resource made of symbols or photographs that help children understand the order of the day and predict what will happen next. Visual timetables can be used for children with additional needs or anxiety to understand and manage with their routines, to communicate, encourage independence and support decision making.

Here are some examples that you can trial at home:

breakfast



brush teeth



homework



toilet



dinner



get up



Nurturing healthy eating habits in children with SEND

Ensuring a balanced diet is vital for every child's growth and development. For children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), establishing healthy eating habits can present unique challenges. However, with thoughtful strategies and a supportive environment, parents can foster positive relationships with food for their children.

Understanding nutritional needs

Children over the age of five should follow a healthy diet suitable for the whole family. The essential nutrients they need are found in these four groups, which should be offered daily:



1. **Starchy carbohydrates:** These provide energy and include foods like bread, potatoes, pasta, rice, breakfast cereals, and grains such as couscous and quinoa. For children over five, wholegrain varieties are healthier and more filling.



2. **Fruits and vegetables:** Aim for five portions daily. They supply vitamins that help prevent illnesses and contain fibre for good bowel health. Fresh, frozen, tinned (in their own juice), or dried options are all beneficial. Fresh fruit juice counts as one portion per day but should be given alongside meals.



3. **Proteins:** Essential for growth and repair, sources include meat, fish, eggs, beans, and pulses. Incorporate a variety of protein-rich foods to meet dietary needs.



4. **Dairy and alternatives:** Important for bone health, options include milk, cheese, yogurt, and fortified plant-based alternatives. These provide calcium and other vital nutrients.

Addressing feeding challenges

Children with SEND may experience feeding difficulties, such as sensory sensitivities or restrictive eating patterns. It's important to approach these challenges with patience and creativity:

- involve your child: Encourage participation in shopping and meal preparation. Allowing them to choose foods and assist in cooking can increase their interest in trying new items.
- Create a positive mealtime environment: Maintain a calm and enjoyable atmosphere during meals. Avoid pressuring your child to eat, as this can create negative associations with food.
- Introduce new foods gradually: Present new foods alongside familiar favourites. It may take multiple exposures before a child accepts a new food, so persistence is key.

Encouraging physical activity

Alongside a balanced diet, regular physical activity is crucial for maintaining a healthy weight and overall well-being. Engage your child in enjoyable activities that suit their abilities, such as walking, swimming, or adapted sports. Incorporating physical activity into daily routines can enhance appetite and improve mood.

Find out more: [Physical activity guidelines for children and young people - NHS](#)

By implementing these approaches, parents can support their children with SEND in developing healthy eating habits that contribute to their growth, development, and overall quality of life.



For children aged 5-11

Healthy Hydration

About
6-8
drinks
a day

This guide is intended to help parents, teachers and carers choose a balance of drinks for children aged 5-11 years.

Water

Drink plenty



Is a good choice throughout the day because it hydrates without providing extra energy (calories/kilojoules) or harming teeth.

Milk

Have regularly



Is a useful source of nutrients, especially protein, B vitamins, iodine and calcium. Most children can have lower-fat milks such as skimmed, 1% or semi-skimmed. Unsweetened, calcium-fortified dairy alternatives can also be included. Milky drinks containing added sugars such as milkshakes, hot chocolate and malted drinks should be limited.

Fruit and vegetable juices and smoothies

Can have once a day



Can provide some vitamins and minerals. However, they also contain sugars and can be acidic which is harmful to teeth so it's recommended to limit them to one small glass (150ml) a day and keep them to mealtimes. 150ml counts as a maximum 1 portion of your 5 A DAY. They can be diluted with water to reduce the acidity and sugars content.

Sugar-free drinks

Occasionally



Hydrate without adding extra sugars but it's a good idea for most drinks to be milk or water. Fizzy drinks may contain acids that can be harmful to teeth. Be aware that some of these drinks contain caffeine.

Tea and coffee

Occasionally
(and in small amounts
if caffeinated)



Caffeine is naturally present in tea and coffee. Small amounts are harmless but high intakes should be avoided, especially for young children. It's best for children to drink decaffeinated tea and coffee with reduced-fat milks and no added sugars.

Sugary drinks

Avoid



Are best avoided as they provide sugars, but few other nutrients. Fizzy drinks may contain acids that can also be harmful to teeth and some soft drinks contain caffeine.

Sports and energy drinks

Not suitable
for children



Can be high in sugars and energy drinks may contain high levels of caffeine or other stimulants. These drinks are not suitable for young children.

The amount of fluid a child needs depends on many factors but generally they should aim to drink about 6-8 glasses of fluid a day, using smaller glasses (150-200ml) for younger children.

This is based on recommendations on fluid intakes for children from the European Food Safety Authority.

Clubs and activities



'giving a voice to parents & carers of children with additional needs'

Voice4Parents represents the views and voices of Parents and Carers of Children and Young People in Wolverhampton with SEND

Find out more: 🗨 [Voice4Parents | SEND | Wolverhampton, UK](#)



Adventure Street are a fully inclusive centre designed for children from walking age up to around 7, with disabled access to the centre and toilet areas.

*There is no upper age limit for these sessions but please be aware that some of the props are smaller in size, such as costumes.

Find out more Adventure Street: 🗨 <https://adventure-street.co.uk/sen-play-sessions/>



Registered Charity No. 1169333

Providing accessible activities for young people with complex disabilities and their families to enjoy together

Find out more: 🗨 [Give Us A Break](#)



Include Me TOO is a national charity supporting disabled children, young people and their families from diverse range of backgrounds.

Include Me TOO supports and promotes social justice, equality and rights for all disabled children and young people. They provide a range of support including peer support, befriending services, activities and holiday clubs for disabled children, outreach and information and advice to families.

Find out more: 🗨 <https://includemetoo.org.uk/>

If you would like to discuss your child's health with a school nurse, please contact our 0-19 Single Point of Access (SPoA) Hub on 01902 441057.

We would love to hear your thoughts on topics you'd like to be included in future bulletins.

Please email rwh-tr.0-19marketing@nhs.net

