

# **Importance of healthy food in combating childhood obesity**

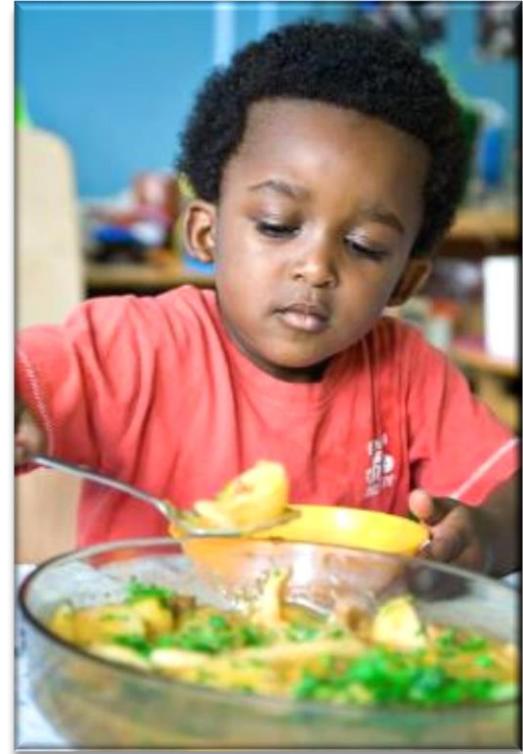


**Yorkshire and Humber Childhood Obesity Action Plan Workshop  
York, 14 March 2018**

Dr Patricia Mucavele, former Head of Nutrition Children's Food Trust

# Today's presentation

- What are children eating?
- Impact of diet on health
- Why invest in nutrition – how will it improve outcomes
- Priorities for improving nutrition – key interventions during the life course
- Helping children eat better in childcare, schools, at home, and in the wider community - maximising opportunities and assets



## Our role – we all have a duty of care

- Our joint mission is to get **every child eating well**, wherever they are eating
- Spreading the **skills, knowledge and confidence** to eat a healthy diet
- **Helping everyone** who provides food for children to do a great job
- **Encouraging industry** to help children and their families make better food choices



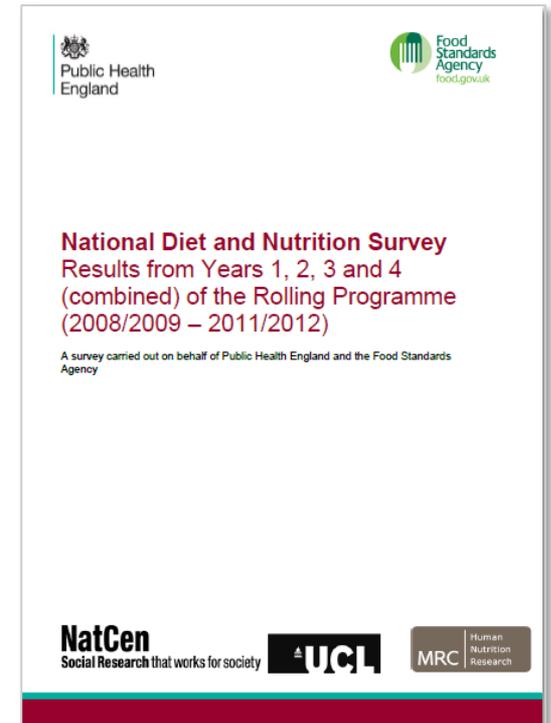
We all have a **duty of care**

# What are children eating?

**National diet and nutrition survey** suggests that children's diets are:

- ↑ too high in sugar, saturated fat and salt
- ↓ too low fruit and vegetables
- ↓ too little oily fish
- ↓ low intakes of fibre
- ↓ intakes of certain vitamins and minerals are often too low (e.g. vitamin A, iron, calcium, zinc) – particularly in secondary school-aged girls.

**Source:** Public Health England and Food Standards Agency (2016)



**PHE & FSA (2016)**

# What can this diet lead to?

The health and nutrition consequences of these eating patterns are:

- more than a fifth of children are either **overweight** or **obese** by the time they join reception class, increasing to a third in Year 6
- **type II diabetes** appearing
- **poor dental health**
- young children and teenaged girls particularly at risk of **iron deficiency**

➤ Address health inequalities – obesity affects children from all backgrounds, but it is the poorest children who are disproportionately more likely to be obese.



RCPCH (2017)



RCPCH (2018)



National Statistics (2017)

# Why invest in nutrition?

Because when..

Girls & women are well-nourished and have healthy newborn babies

Children receive proper nutrition and develop strong bodies & minds

Communities & nations are productive & stable

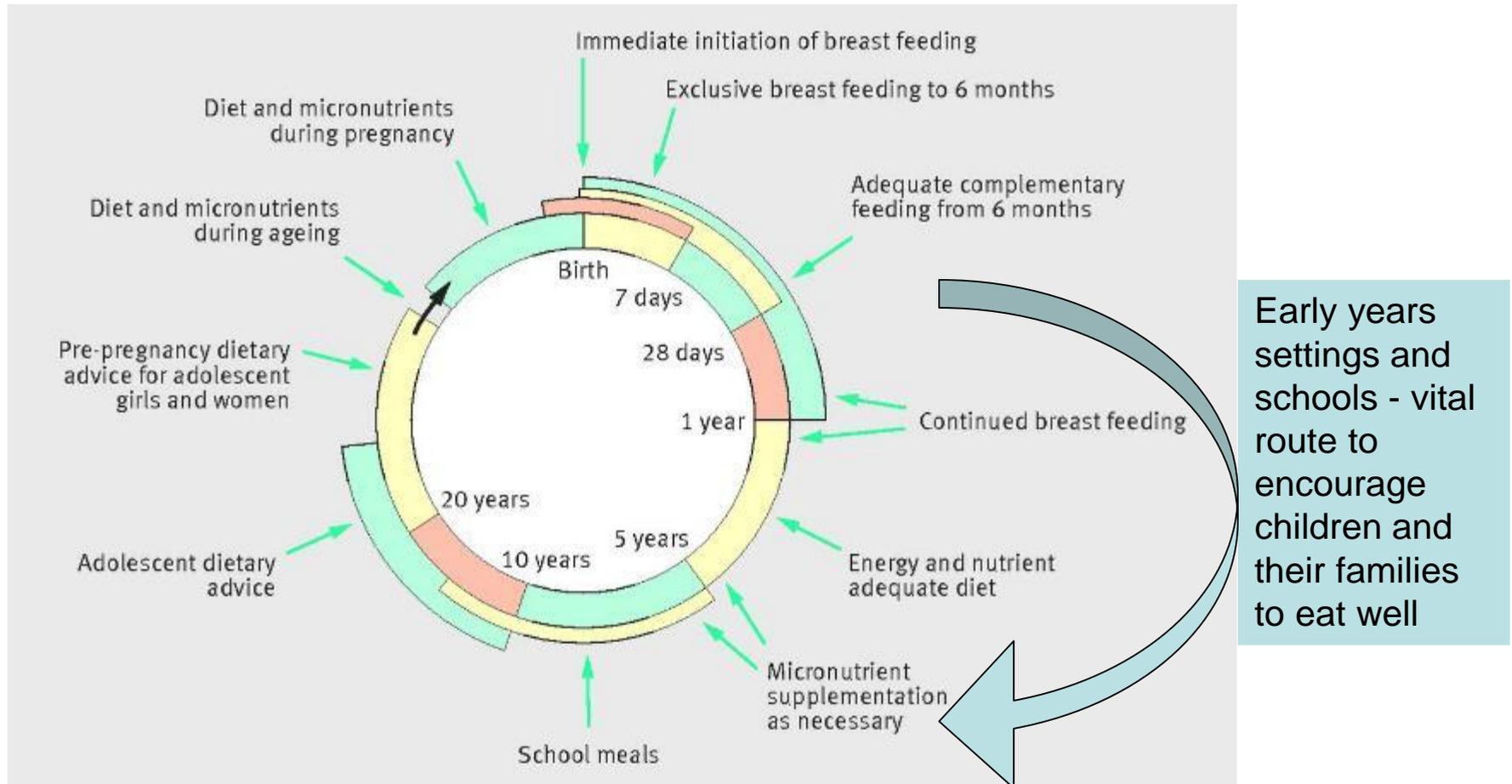
The world is a safer, more resilient & stronger place

Adolescents learn better & achieve higher grades in school

Families & communities emerge out of poverty

Young adults are better able to obtain work & earn more

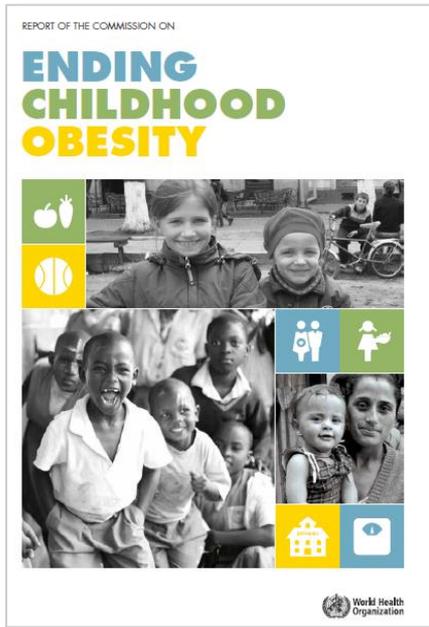
# Priorities for improving nutrition



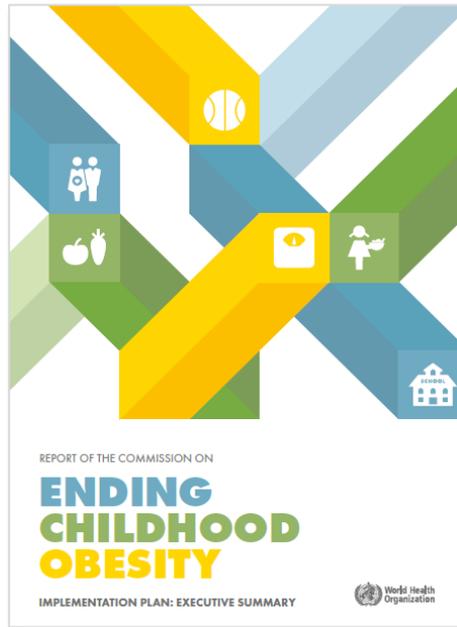
Source: Francesco Branca et al. BMJ 2015

Range of interventions at different stages of the life course

# World Health Organisation - six areas of action to combat obesity



WHO (2016)



WHO (2017)

1. Promote intake of healthy foods
2. Promote physical activity
3. Preconception and pregnancy care
4. Early childhood diet and physical activity
5. Health, nutrition and physical activity for school-aged children
6. Weight management

**No single intervention** to counter the obesogenic environment we need **multisectoral action**. Interventions can be **integrated** into existing **national plans, policies and programmes**.

# **Helping children eat better in childcare**

# Children's Food Trust - recommendations

## The Trust's recommendations:

- **Guidance:** encourage childcare providers to use evidence-based, age appropriate nutrition guidance
- **Training:** encourage local authorities to increase access to accredited training
- **Resources:** ensure nurseries, pre-schools, children's centres and childminders delivering free childcare schemes have the resources and support they need to provide good food.

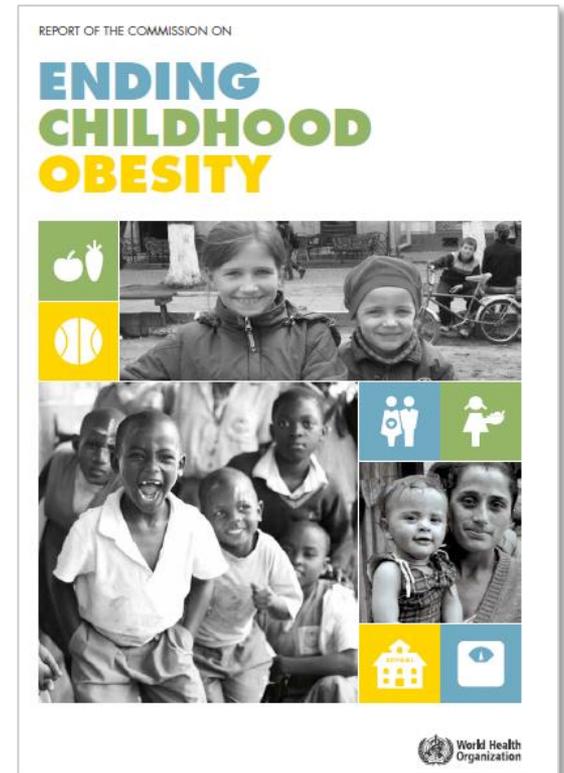


Children's Food Trust (2015)

➤ **Early years settings** - vital route to encourage young children and their families to eat well, so it's important to equip the whole childcare workforce to make every contact count

# World Health Organisation – recommended actions for improving diet in early childhood

- Provide **guidance** and **support** to caregivers on **appropriate nutrition, diet and portion size** for this age group
  - encourage the consumption of a **wide variety of healthy foods**
  - **avoid specific categories of foods** (e.g. sugar-sweetened milks and fruit juices or energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods) to help prevent of excess weight
- Ensure **only healthy foods, beverages and snacks** are served in formal child care settings or institutions.
- Ensure **food education** and **understanding** are incorporated into the curriculum in **formal childcare settings** or institutions.



WHO (2016)

➤ Provide guidance on and support for healthy diet, sleep and physical activity in early childhood to ensure children grow appropriately and develop healthy habits

# Childhood Obesity - A Plan for Action

## Supporting early years setting

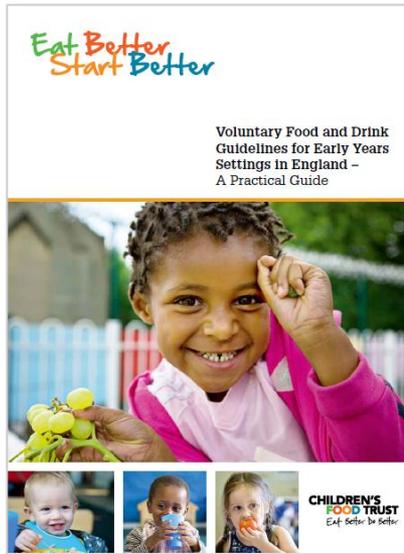
**Aim:** to significantly reduce England's rate of childhood obesity within the next 10 years.

- **Early years:**
  - Crucial time for children's development.
  - One in five: overweight or obese
  - One in ten: 2-4 olds years meets the UK Chief Medical Officers' physical activity guidelines.
- **Plan of action:**
  - **Update the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (EYFS)** to make specific reference to the UK Chief Medical Officers' guidelines for physical activity in the early years (including active play).
  - Public Health England: commissioned the Trust to **develop revised menus for early years settings.**
  - **Campaign** to raise awareness of these guidelines amongst both early years practitioners and parents.

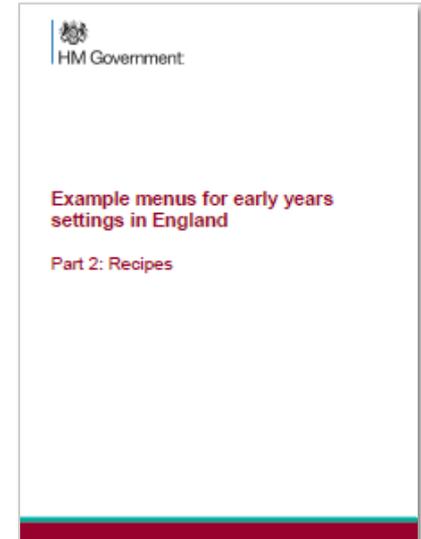
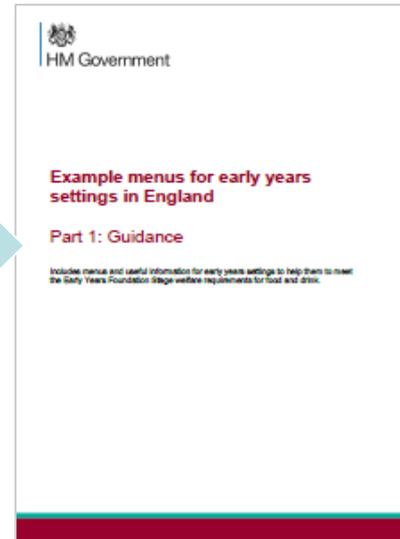
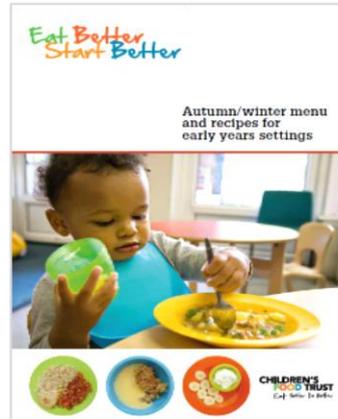


HM Government (2016)

# Example menus for early years settings in England



Children's Food Trust  
(2012)



HM Government (2017)

Revised menus for early years setting in England reflect recent changes to government dietary recommendations and help promote appropriate amounts and types of food for young children. Available at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/example-menus-for-early-years-settings-in-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/example-menus-for-early-years-settings-in-england)

# **Helping children eat better in schools**

# Use schools

- Powerful influence on children's eating habits
- Children eat at least one meal per day in school
- Contribute to educating and developing healthy eating habits in children
- Children influence the environment and behaviour of adults



**Enabling environment**  
***“Schools influence the lives of most children in all countries”***  
**(WHO, 2004)**

Promising associations between diet and academic attainment plus **wider benefits** – improved attendance, punctuality, and opportunities to engage with families

# Helping children eat better at school

## The Trust's recommendations:

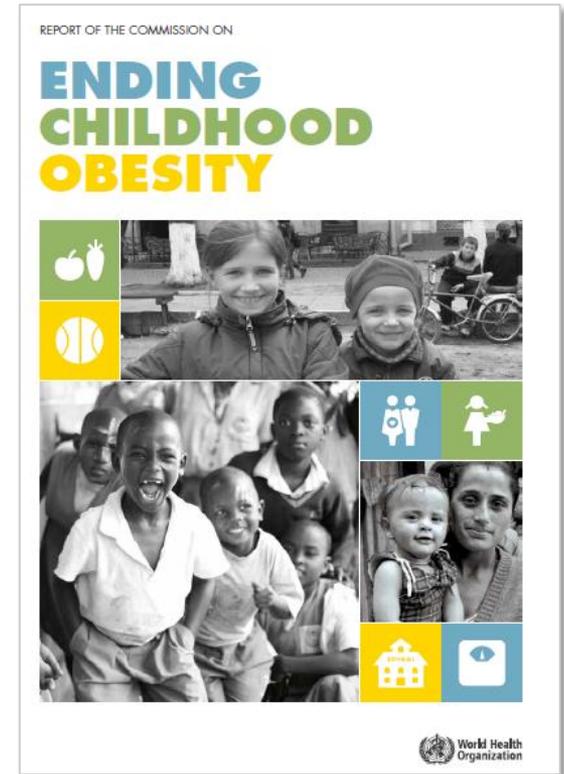
- **Level playing field for school food:** require that all schools, without exception, meet national standards for school food
- **Packed lunches** we need all schools to have packed lunch policy
- **Continue investment:** give schools the time, incentive, finance and support to continue improving school meals
- **Incentives:** celebrating schools and caterers providing excellent food



Support the national school food standards and great school food

# World Health Organisation – recommended actions to promote healthy school environments

- ✓ **Establish standards** for meals provided in schools, or foods and beverages sold in schools that meet healthy nutrition guidelines
- **Eliminate** the provision or sale of unhealthy foods, such as sugar-sweetened beverages and energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods, in **the school environment**
- ✓ Ensure access to **water** in schools and sports facilities
- **Require inclusion of nutrition and health education** within the core curriculum of schools.
- Improve the **nutrition literacy and skills of parents** and carers.
- Make **food preparation classes available** to children, their parents and carers.
- Include **quality physical education** in the school curriculum and provide adequate and appropriate staffing and facilities to support this.



WHO (2016)

Implement comprehensive programmes that promote healthy school environments, health and nutrition literacy and physical activity among school-age children and adolescents

# Childhood Obesity - A Plan for Action

## Continuing to make school food healthier

What's in the childhood obesity action plan?

- **Updating national school food standards** in line with Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition advice
- **Ofsted thematic review** on obesity, healthy eating and physical activity in schools
- **Healthy rating scheme** for primary schools
- Revenue from Soft Drinks Industry Levy channelled into **breakfast clubs**

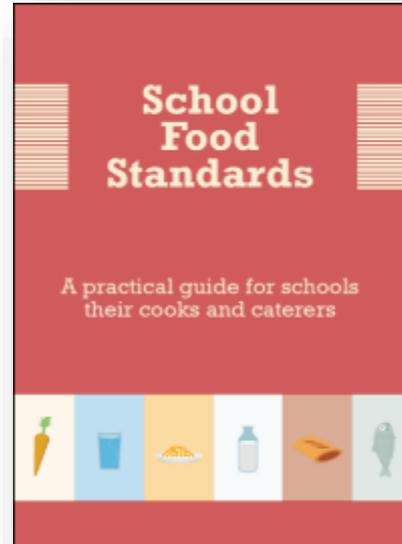


HM Government (2016)

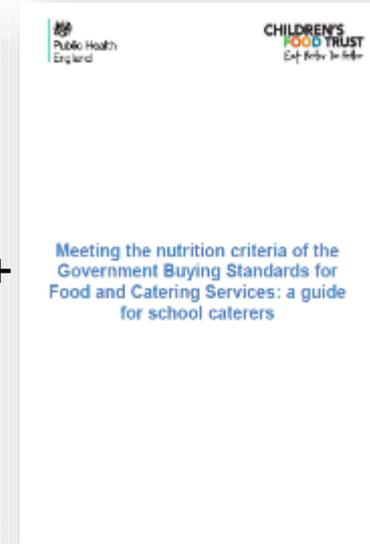
# School Food Regulations



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Meeting the new standards for school food

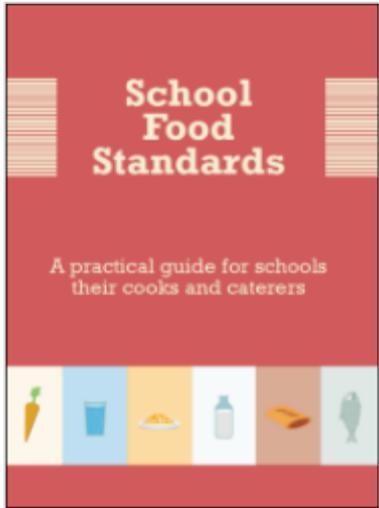
Using top tips and portion size guidance in the practical guide

Government buying standards mandatory nutrition criteria

Meeting pupils' nutritional requirements

**Variety is key** – whether it is different fruits, vegetables, grains, pulses or types of meat and fish

# Resources - to help schools implement the school food regulations



**The Independent SCHOOL FOOD PLAN**

*Creating a Culture and Ethos of Healthy Eating*

Identify your **Outcomes, Successes, Frameworks** and **Challenges** in your school development, behaviour and culture, as part of making the regulations happen. Identify what you are doing to make sure you are meeting the requirements for the plan. Think about the role of the 'School Food Plan' and 'School Food Standards' in your school's development.

**Key Questions**

- What steps have you taken to ensure there is a whole school approach to school food?
- What is your school's vision for school food?
- What is your school's strategy for school food?
- How do you ensure the school's approach is consistent across all staff?
- How do you ensure the school's approach is consistent across all year groups?
- How do you ensure the school's approach is consistent across all subjects?
- How do you ensure the school's approach is consistent across all activities?
- How do you ensure the school's approach is consistent across all events?
- How do you ensure the school's approach is consistent across all communications?
- How do you ensure the school's approach is consistent across all partnerships?
- How do you ensure the school's approach is consistent across all stakeholders?
- How do you ensure the school's approach is consistent across all resources?
- How do you ensure the school's approach is consistent across all time?
- How do you ensure the school's approach is consistent across all space?
- How do you ensure the school's approach is consistent across all people?
- How do you ensure the school's approach is consistent across all things?

**Other response**

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**CHILDREN'S FOOD TRUST**  
Eat Better Do Better

## Mid-morning break recipes and tips

**Recipes for success**  
Tried and tested, nutritionally analysed recipes to help you offer a popular menu and tips to meet the national standards for school food

Let's get cooking

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Eat Better Do Better

Updated July 2015  
**A list and definition of drinks permitted in schools in England**  
Interpreting Statutory Instrument 2014 No. 1803 The Regulations for the School Food Regulations 2014 which came into force on 1 January 2015 [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/416021\\_of.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/416021_of.pdf)

Plain drinks											
Drink category	Description	Portion size	Volume (ml)	Calories (kcal)	Added/extra ingredients (sugar, salt, fat, etc.)	Artificial sweeteners	Artificial colours	Artificial flavours	Artificial preservatives	Sugars or honey (added for the purpose of sweetening)	Fortificants (added for the purpose of fortification)
Water (still or carbonated)		No restriction	100% water	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Low fat milk (or lactose intolerant)	Milk with a fat content of not more than 1.2% (unsweetened/unsweetened)	No restriction	100% milk	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Plain (unsweetened/unsweetened) orange, apple or red drink	Plain (unsweetened/unsweetened) orange, apple or red drink sweetened with ascorbic acid	No restriction	No restriction	No	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes <sup>2</sup>	No	No	Yes <sup>2</sup>	No	Yes (ascorbic acid)
Plain (unsweetened/unsweetened) milk or yoghurt drink	Plain (unsweetened/unsweetened) milk or yoghurt drink	No restriction	100% yoghurt	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

<sup>1</sup> At 200 mg/l, 100% Fruit, England The Statutory Instrument (SI) 2014 No. 1803 [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/416021\\_of.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/416021_of.pdf)  
<sup>2</sup> The types of drinks to which a 'permitted' label must be applied to categories 1-7 including those related to and young children and table water category 10 Annex 2 (Regulation 2014 No. 1803) and to food additives where specified either in permitted or prohibited.

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**LACA**  
Local Area Co-ordinating Agency

### Example one-week, autumn-winter primary school lunch menu

September 2015

**UIFSM**  
United, Inspired, Fit, Strong, Motivated

**CHILDREN'S FOOD TRUST**  
Eat Better Do Better

### Checklist to evaluate food provision against food-based standards for the school food other than lunches, from January 2015

Food group	Are the following food items available/available for sale?	Standard met (Yes/No)		
		None	Mostly	Mostly
<b>Chicken food</b>	Hot or cold (not fried) chicken (not fried) served cold	☐	☐	☐
	There is a menu of hot ready-to-eat chicken meals	☐	☐	☐
	Hot or cold ready-to-eat chicken (not fried) served cold	☐	☐	☐
	Ready-to-eat chicken (not fried) served cold	☐	☐	☐
<b>Beef and lamb</b>	Hot or cold (not fried) beef or lamb (not fried) served cold	☐	☐	☐
	There is a menu of hot ready-to-eat beef or lamb meals	☐	☐	☐
	Hot or cold ready-to-eat beef or lamb (not fried) served cold	☐	☐	☐
	Ready-to-eat beef or lamb (not fried) served cold	☐	☐	☐
<b>Pork and mince</b>	Hot or cold (not fried) pork or mince (not fried) served cold	☐	☐	☐
	There is a menu of hot ready-to-eat pork or mince meals	☐	☐	☐
	Hot or cold ready-to-eat pork or mince (not fried) served cold	☐	☐	☐
	Ready-to-eat pork or mince (not fried) served cold	☐	☐	☐
<b>Vegetarian, fish, eggs, pasta, rice, other</b>	Hot or cold (not fried) vegetarian, fish, eggs, pasta, rice, other (not fried) served cold	☐	☐	☐
	There is a menu of hot ready-to-eat vegetarian, fish, eggs, pasta, rice, other meals	☐	☐	☐
	Hot or cold ready-to-eat vegetarian, fish, eggs, pasta, rice, other (not fried) served cold	☐	☐	☐
	Ready-to-eat vegetarian, fish, eggs, pasta, rice, other (not fried) served cold	☐	☐	☐
<b>Other</b>	Hot or cold (not fried) other (not fried) served cold	☐	☐	☐
	There is a menu of hot ready-to-eat other meals	☐	☐	☐
	Hot or cold ready-to-eat other (not fried) served cold	☐	☐	☐
	Ready-to-eat other (not fried) served cold	☐	☐	☐

**Recipes for success**  
Tried and tested, nutritionally analysed recipes to help you offer a popular menu and tips to meet the national standards for school food

Let's get cooking

**CHILDREN'S FOOD TRUST**  
Eat Better Do Better

## After school club recipes and tips

**Recipes for success**  
Tried and tested, nutritionally analysed recipes to help you offer a popular menu and tips to meet the national standards for school food

Let's get cooking

### How to limit sugars and increase fibre: A guide for schools and school caterers in England

**Introduction**  
In July 2015, new recommendations for sugars and fibre intakes were published for adults and children in the UK. This guide outlines these recommendations, the reasons for them, and how you can limit sugars and increase fibre in food and drinks you provide for children.

**Recommendations for sugars**  
Most children in the UK eat too much sugar. Eating foods high in sugar too often can mean having too many calories, which can lead to weight gain and obesity, and increased risk of health conditions like type two diabetes. Eating sugary food and drinks too often can also cause tooth decay.

The new dietary recommendations for sugars include:  
 - reducing the amount of free sugars (added sugars) we eat, so they make up no more than 5% of our daily energy (calorie) intake,  
 - minimising consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages.

Free sugars include any sugars added to food and drinks, or found in sugar, honey, syrups and fruit juice, but not the sugars found in fresh fruit, vegetables or milk.

How these recommendations translate into maximum sugars intakes for children and adults is shown in the table below

New free sugars recommendations for children and adults		
Age	Recommended maximum free sugars intake g/day	Equivalent number of sugar cubes (4g/cube)
4-6 years	No more than 19g/day	5 cubes
7-10 years	No more than 24g/day	6 cubes
Children over 11 years and adults	No more than 30g/day	7 cubes

Source: Public Health England (2015), Why NHS?

This equates to 6.5g free sugars (just over 1.5 cubes of sugar) for a primary school lunch and 9g free sugars (just over 2 cubes of sugar) for a secondary school lunch.

**Tips for reducing the free sugars content of school food**  
The standards for school food help to limit the amount of free sugars in school food, by prohibiting confectionery such as cereal bars, sugary drinks, and snacks with added sugar, limiting cakes and biscuits to lunches, limiting the portion size of fruit juice and combination drinks, and restricting the amount of sugar added to combination drinks. The tips on page 2 help further reduce the amount of free sugars in food and drink provided.

# Practical steps to meet 5% free sugars

- **Procurement:** ask suppliers, read food labels
- **Menu planning:** create meals deals
- **Portion sizes:** consult guidance
- **Cook from scratch (*where possible*):** avoid ready made sauces/marinades
- **Modify recipes:** try halving sugar in recipes, use fruit to sweeten dishes
- **Desserts:** vary options across the week, replace cakes and biscuits, always offer fresh fruit, include portion of fruit in meal deals
- **Drinks:** promote tap water and plain milk

## How to limit sugars and increase fibre:

*A guide for schools and school caterers in England*

### Introduction

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### Recommendations for sugars

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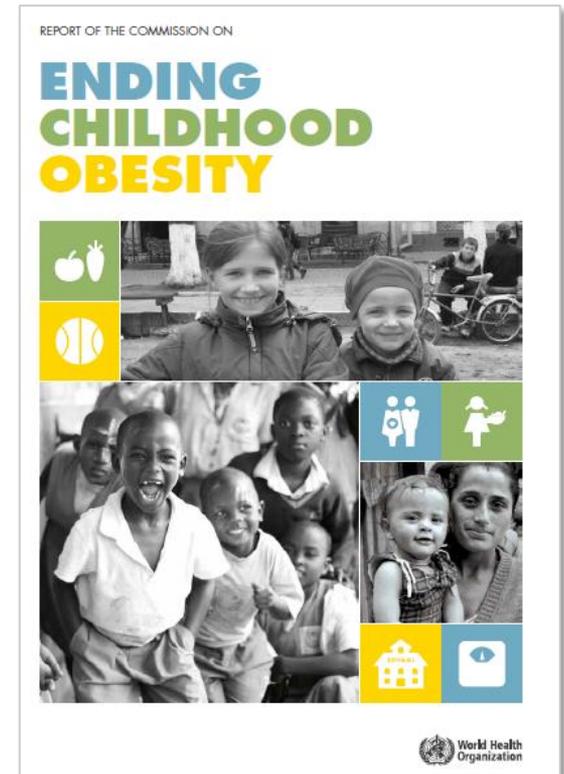
Children's Food Trust (2015)

Download from Children's Food Trust website [www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/](http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/)

# **Helping children eat better out of home**

# World Health Organisation – recommended actions to promote intake of healthy foods

- Ensure that **appropriate and context-specific nutrition information and guidelines** are developed and disseminated in a simple, understandable and accessible manner
- Implement an effective **tax on sugar-sweetened beverages**
- Implement the **set of recommendations on marketing of foods** and reduce children's exposure to marketing of unhealthy foods
- **Require settings** such as schools, childcare settings, children's sport facilities and events to **create healthy food environments**
- **Increase access to healthy foods** in disadvantage communities.



WHO (2016)

Implement comprehensive programmes that promote the intake of healthy foods and reduce the intake of unhealthy foods and sugar sweetened beverages

# Childhood Obesity - A Plan for Action

## Promoting intake of healthy foods

What's in the childhood obesity action plan?

- Introducing a **soft drinks industry levy**
- **Taking out 20% of sugar** in products
- **Making healthy options** available in the **public sector**
- **Clearer food labelling**



HM Government (2016)

# Strategies for Encouraging Healthier Out of Home Food Provision

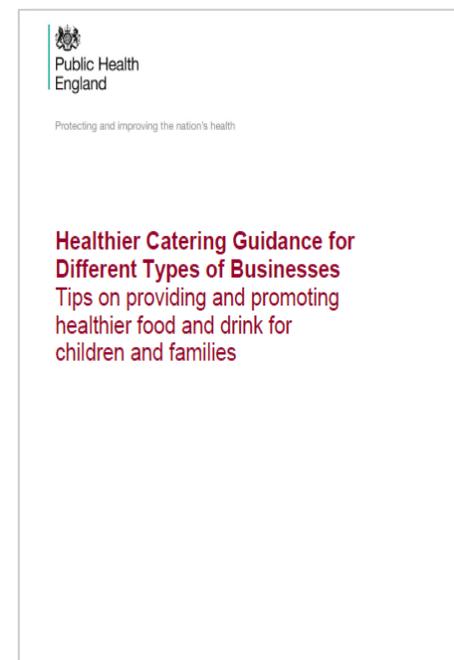
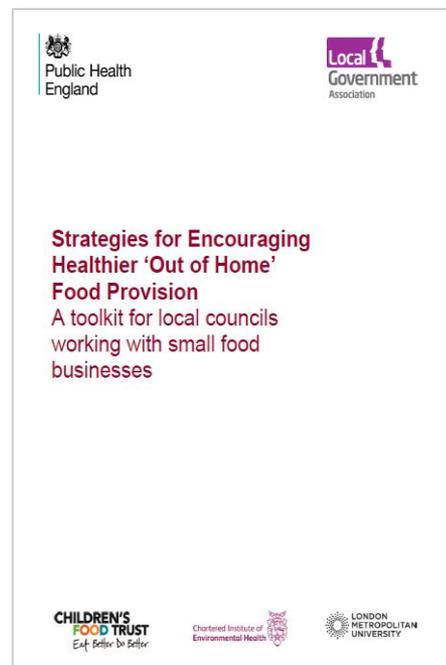
## A toolkit for local councils working with small food businesses

### Focus

Interventions with small local food businesses frequented by children and families

### Designed to help local authorities and their partners:

- Understand the links between the food and drink environment and consumption patterns
- Identify where interventions are required
- Develop a strategy
- Select suitable interventions



PHE (2017)

Toolkit helps local authorities and businesses to provide and promote healthier options for food eaten away from home. Download at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/encouraging-healthier-out-of-home-food-provision>

# The Road map

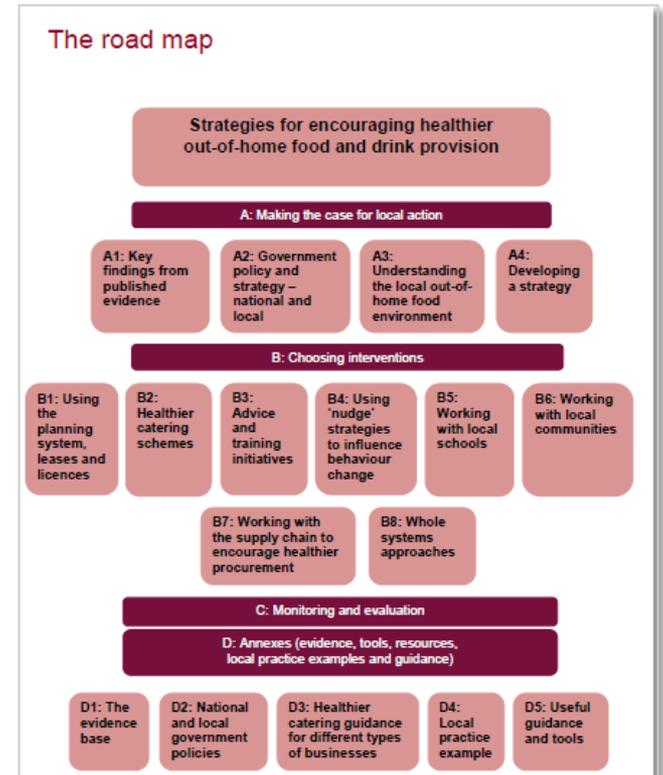
A. Making the case for local action

B. Choosing interventions

1. Using the planning system, leases and licences
2. Healthier catering schemes
3. Advice and training initiatives
4. Using 'nudge' strategies to influence behaviour change
5. Working with local schools
6. Working with local communities
7. Working with the supply chain to encourage healthier procurement
8. Whole systems approaches

C. Monitoring and evaluation

D. Annexes (evidence, tools, resources, local practice examples and guidance) including Healthier catering guidance for different types of businesses.



PHE (2017)

Making healthy food the easiest choice and the social norm

# Key elements for successful implementation

## - maximising opportunities and assets

- **Leadership and joint action:** all departments to work in close collaboration, to develop a shared vision, commitment and an integrated whole systems approach to food and nutrition.
- **Advocacy:** engaging members of the community and providing a platform for action can create demand for healthy products and to not market unhealthy foods and beverages to children.
- **Knowledge base:** access and use of evidence-based age appropriate nutrition information and interventions.
- **Capacity building:** increasing the competence and confidence of the whole childcare workforce via accredited face to face or online training, peer to peer mentoring and networking – to help make every opportunity count.
- **Monitoring and accountability:** measure the outcomes and impact to track progress in the development, implementation and effectiveness of interventions.

**Thank you – any questions?**