



## Safeguarding children

### 1.25.2 Health and wellbeing: Advice to parents

A healthy lifestyle is crucial to the development of the under 5s. Children need to eat well and engage in physical activity, both at nursery and at home.

What follows is an extract from 'Childhood Obesity: A plan for Action', the Government's 10-year plan published in August 2016. You'll already be following much of the advice it contains, (we certainly are here at nursery), but it's worthy of repetition as the points made are the cornerstones of a healthy lifestyle.

#### Healthy eating

Children who eat a healthy balanced diet tend to be ill less often, have more energy and a better attention span. Here's what you can do at home to encourage healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime

- Plan healthy, balanced, nutritious menus
- Get your children involved in the planning by explaining to them why some choices are healthier than others
- Help children to understand where their food comes from
- Plant and grow vegetables
- Plan food tasting activities
- Sit with children at mealtimes and eat the same healthy food.

#### Did you know?

More money is spent each year on the treatment of obesity and diabetes than on the police, fire service and judicial system combined?

#### Physical exercise

Pre-school children who can walk unaided should be physically active for at least 3 hours throughout the day (DoH, 2011). Physical activity has numerous health benefits for children including:

- Muscle and bone strength
- Control and co-ordination of movement
- Maintenance of a healthy weight



- Health and fitness
- Improved quality of sleep
- Improved cognitive development.

Babies who are not yet mobile should have plenty of opportunity to stretch and move their limbs and whole bodies in order to develop muscle strength and coordination. Support babies to be physically active by:

- Giving plenty of opportunity for 'tummy time'
- Encouraging them to reach out towards and grab objects that capture their attention
- Reducing the time spent in bouncers, walking aids, highchairs, buggies etc. which can restrict movement.

Toddlers and young children love being active! Support their enjoyment of physical activity by:

- Providing daily opportunities and activities which use all the major muscle groups e.g. arms, legs, trunk for climbing, balancing, crawling, obstacle courses etc.
- Encouraging energetic games such as running and chasing, skipping, riding a bike etc.
- Planning outings in the local community e.g. walking to the local shops, the park etc.
- Organising team games or games with rules
- Allowing children as much space and freedom as possible to move their bodies in different ways through free, unstructured and imaginative play
- Carefully monitoring screen time e.g. the time children have access to the computer, tablets and other technology.

Children should spend as much time outdoors as possible, and not just in the warmer summer months. Ensure children still have the same opportunities to be outdoors in the fresh air and be active even in the cooler autumn months and in winter. Ensure children have appropriate clothing to be outside in all weathers. Remember, there's no such thing as bad weather, just inappropriate clothing!

Provide stimulating activities and experiences for children to stay active throughout the year, including:

- Be a good role model Kicking, throwing and catching leaves
- Running with a kite
- Spinning and twirling with ribbons and scarves in the wind
- Jumping and splashing in puddles and paddling pools
- Splodging in mud
- Going on nature treasure hunts
- Catching rain in a bucket (sadly, an all year round activity)
- Building a shelter

- Jumping and catching snowflakes.

And finally, make sure you are a role model to your children by keeping fit and healthy yourself.

**For more on healthy lifestyles, visit the following sites**

- Childhood Obesity: A Plan for Action (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childhood-obesity-a-plan-for-action>)
- UK Physical Activity Guidelines (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-physical-activity-guidelines>)
- Children’s Food Trust (<http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/>)
- Healthy Start Scheme (<https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>)

**This policy was updated and reviewed in:**

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