

early years guide

for Local Supporters

How to help toddlers
and pre-school
children get the
best start in life



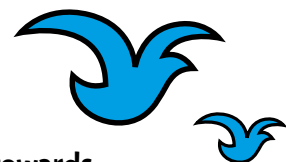
Created in partnership with



department for
children, schools and families



introducing this guide



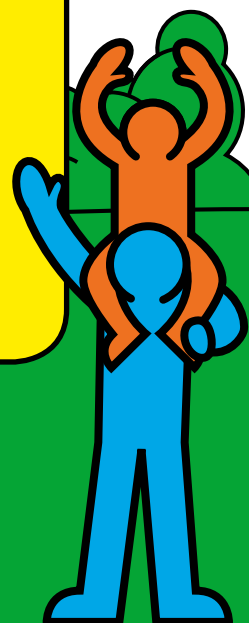
Welcome to the Change4Life Early Years Local Supporter's guide, specifically geared towards those working with toddlers and pre-school children. It varies slightly from previous Change4life materials you may have seen or received, which are aimed at 5-11 year olds.

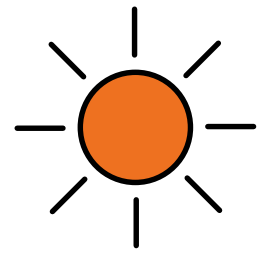
This guide contains only the 6 behaviour changes that are relevant for 1-4 year olds and full guidance on how to help parents and carers of children this age to eat well, move more and look forward to a longer life. This information will also help you brief colleagues and team members, so that they can get involved too.

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what is change4life?

Change4Life is the biggest ever movement against obesity anywhere in the world. It aims to help us all, but especially our children, to eat well, move more and live longer, and is backed by a major communications campaign.

Change4Life is spreading fast and is reaching across every part of our society. People are already talking about it at the school gates and the shops, on TV and the internet, and we'd like you to be part of it so you can spread the word too.

Why do we need Change4Life?

It's really important that young children get the best start in life. Eating a variety of healthy foods gives them the vital nutrients they need to grow and develop, and keeping active ensures that they use up the energy they're putting into their bodies.

Change4Life is all about making small changes to our lifestyles for a healthier future. But with toddlers and pre-school children we have an opportunity to establish healthy habits right from the start, meaning they benefit now and we have less work to do in helping them unlearn bad habits later.

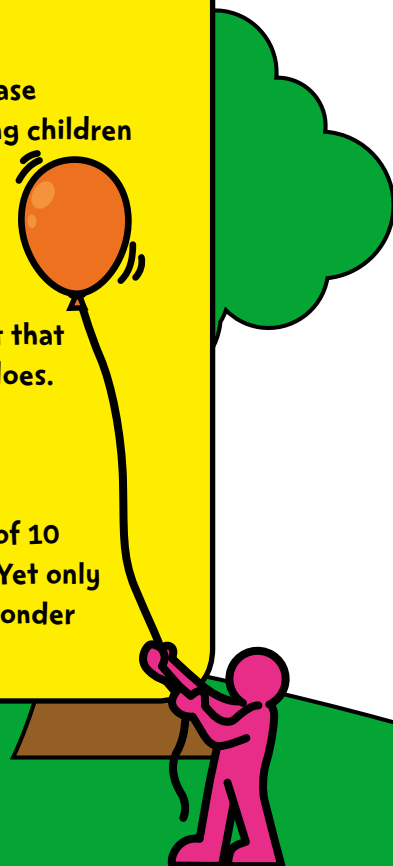
Unhealthy habits, however, are all too easy to pick up because modern life makes it hard to eat healthy food and get enough exercise. As a result, we can all end up with too much fat in our bodies. In fact, even people who look healthy on the outside can have high levels of fat on the inside.

This fat can lead to life-threatening illnesses such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. But along with watching the fat, it's also important that young children get enough nutrients and energy in their diets to help them grow strong and avoid developing these diseases when they're adults.

The challenge is that research shows many parents are unaware of the risks unhealthy habits pose to their children. They tend to underestimate the amount that they and their children eat and overestimate the amount of activity the family does.

So how serious a problem is this?

According to the government's Foresight report, if we carry on as we are, 9 out of 10 of today's children risk growing up with dangerous levels of fat in their bodies. Yet only about 1 in 10 parents recognise that their child is overweight or obese. It's no wonder the situation has been described as a 'time-bomb'.



we've made a great start

Change4Life has really taken off! This is, in large part, thanks to the Local Supporters (who include healthcare professionals, teachers, community and charity workers and local government staff) who have really got stuck in and instigated some brilliant events and ideas to get the community eating better and moving more.

One of the most important things you can do is register as a Local Supporter. This means we'll be able to communicate with you directly and keep you up to date with any new Change4Life developments and ideas that could work well for your area.

Please register at: www.nhs.uk/change4life – click on 'partners and supporters'.

How can you help?

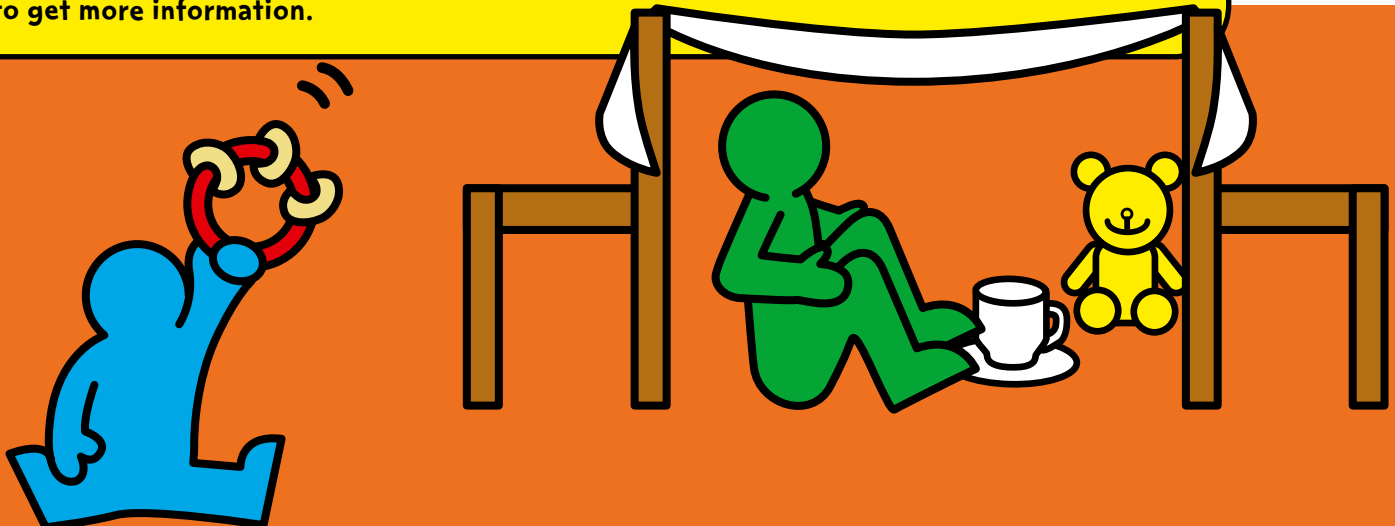
Your links with your local community put you in a valuable position to keep people informed about Change4Life – so please get involved if you can.

This part of the campaign is focusing on early years - toddlers to pre-school children aged between 1 and 4 years of age - because good habits picked up now can reap great rewards later. If a child becomes used to eating regular meals, only having nutritious snacks between meals and enjoys being active, they have a greater chance of becoming a healthy youngster, and enjoying a longer, healthier life.

This is a big challenge. But we know it can be achieved if families get help and support from lots of trusted sources and see people around them doing the same things.

This toolkit is aimed at professionals or volunteers working with toddlers and pre-school children. If you work with children aged between 5 and 11, you can download the Change4Life Local Supporter's guide at www.nhs.uk/change4life ('partners & supporters' area) to give you specific help with this age group.

Likewise, if you work with pregnant women and their families or parents of babies, then Start4Life, which will be available later in the year, will help you talk to their parents about breastfeeding, weaning and active play. See the back page of this guide for details of how to get more information.



how to talk about change4life

Change4Life is based on extensive research. This tells us there are some things we can say and do that will help motivate parents to make changes to their family's lifestyle, and other things that could make them reject our message.

This is such an important issue. So the more we understand how parents feel about healthy eating and activity, the challenges they face and the barriers they need to overcome, the more likely we are to persuade them to change.

Here's what we found out from the research. Following this guidance when talking to families will help you and your colleagues get the best results from Change4Life.

1. Parents aren't motivated by the word 'obesity'

- Many parents associate obesity with the extreme cases they see in the media (such as '14-stone nine year olds'), and not with 'normal' children like their own
- They see the word 'obese' as an insult, not a medical term. They tell us they wouldn't use the word themselves and don't let their children use it about others
- To many parents, obesity is about the way you look. They don't connect it with the increased risk of serious illness
- That is why we talk about fat in the body rather than a fat body

2. But parents are motivated by future dangers to their children

- Everyone knows that the diseases we're talking about – heart disease, cancer and type 2 diabetes – are bad news. No parent would wish them on their children
- Once parents understand that high levels of fat stored in the body can lead to these serious diseases, they're much more willing to consider doing something about it

3. Parents often don't recognise their own unhealthy habits

- It goes without saying that most parents love their children and wouldn't knowingly do anything to harm them
- But family habits, which parents might not realise are unhealthy, may be putting their children at risk. Parents tend to underestimate the amount their families eat and overestimate the amount of physical activity they do
- It's easy for parents to prioritise their children's immediate happiness over their long-term health (such as giving in to demands for unhealthy snacks)
- Unhealthy habits in childhood can lay the foundation for health problems in adulthood



How to talk about Change4Life (continued)

4. No one likes to be thought of as a bad parent

- Change4Life does not blame parents for the amount of fat in their children's bodies. But it explains that, with modern life being the way it is, it's all too easy to make unhealthy choices
- It's not about 'good' or 'bad' parents, it's up to all parents to take responsibility for their family's lifestyle and habits. If they make healthy changes themselves, their children are more likely to copy them and do the same
- The campaign aims to be helpful, not critical

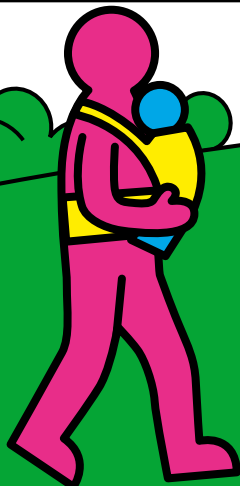
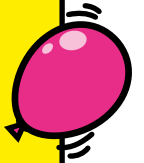
5. Parents are fed up with being told what to do

- Parents know their children better than anyone else. They also face lots of challenges. So being told how to do the job doesn't go down well
- But we do need parents to understand where changes are necessary, and why
- To do this, we will provide lots of simple ideas and suggestions so that parents can choose what will work best for their family

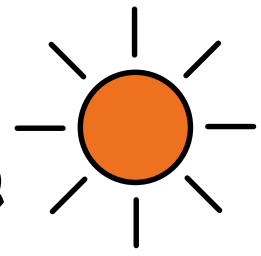
6. Parents on tight budgets often think that healthy living takes too much time or money

- Some of the families who are most at risk will be on tight budgets
- They may feel that healthy living is for parents and carers who have plenty of money and is not for them
- We need to let them know that Change4Life isn't about expensive foods or gyms – many of the ideas and suggestions are cheap and easy for anyone to do, like buying in-season foods and buying tinned and frozen veg

If you want to read more about the research, you can download Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: Consumer Insight Summary at www.nhs.uk/change4life ('partners & supporters' area).



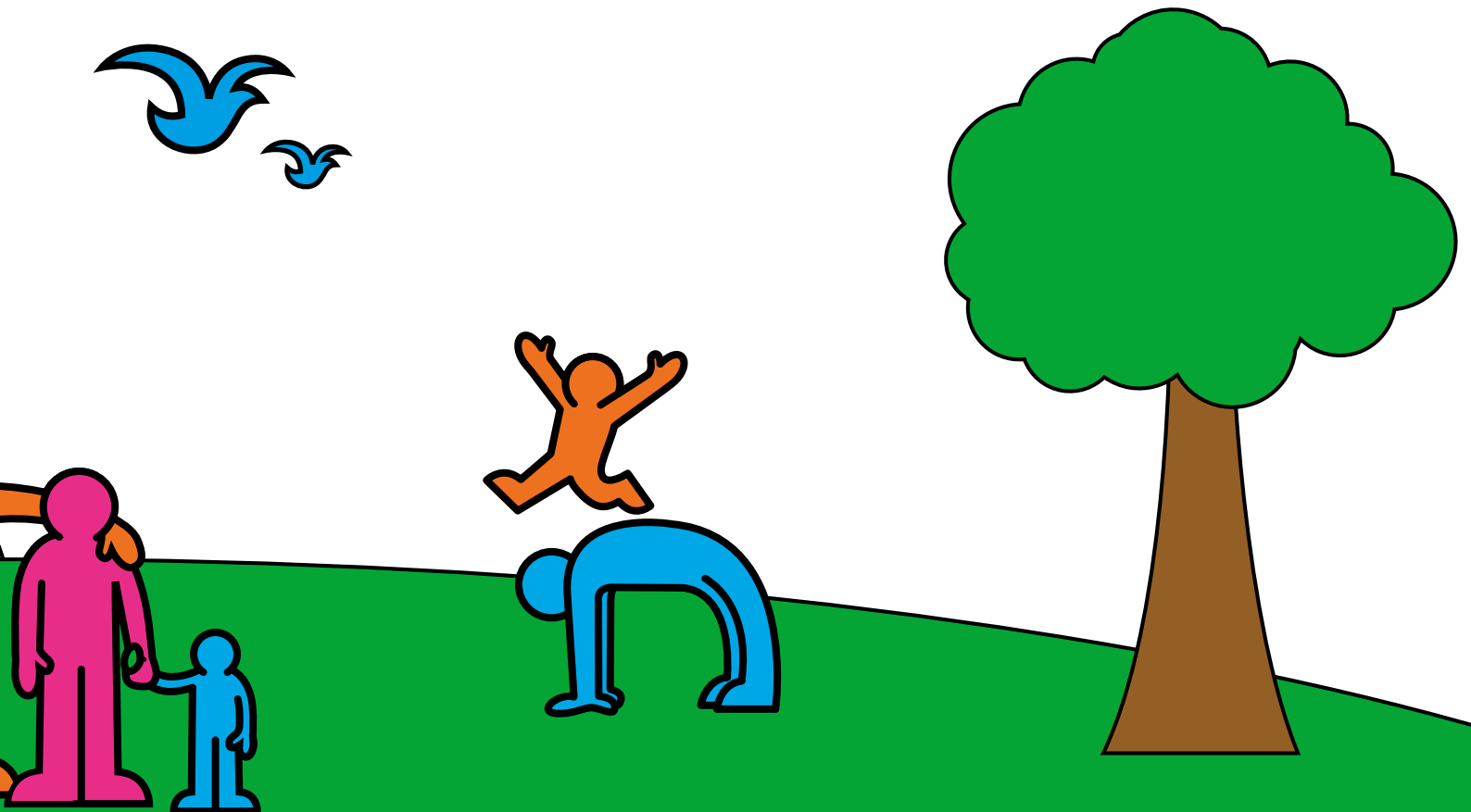
helping parents change their behaviours



People generally don't like change. But if parents are going to prevent their young children from growing up with an increased risk of serious illness, they are going to need to make changes. We aim to make this clear to parents, but at the same time, we need to keep the changes we recommend flexible and accessible.

This section contains a series of healthy behaviours for this age group that Change4Life recommends parents adopt. They involve simple swaps, ideas and alternatives to make getting off to a healthy start easier for families. With your support and encouragement, parents will be able to identify the things that their family can do to eat well, move more and live longer.

There are also ideas for you and your colleagues that will help you introduce each behaviour to the families you work with. They are suitable for all ages, but as we are talking to parents of 1 – 4 year olds in this instance there are only 6 behaviours rather than the 8 behaviours Change4Life usually talks about. To find out about the other 2 behaviours please refer back to the Change4Life website.



sugar swaps

Objective: Helping parents reduce their childrens consumption of added sugars



Why is this change important?

Parents are usually aware that eating and drinking sugary things can damage teeth. But they're often not aware of the link between excess sugar and increased levels of fat in the body, which can lead to serious illness.

How do we explain this to parents?

We're calling this behaviour:

sugar swaps Simple ways to help children eat less added sugars.

We wouldn't let our children eat sugar straight from the sugar bowl. But we tend not to think about the added sugar hiding in the things they eat and drink.

From a very young age children can be exposed to excess sugar. This can mean excess energy, which in turn can lead to stored fat in the body.

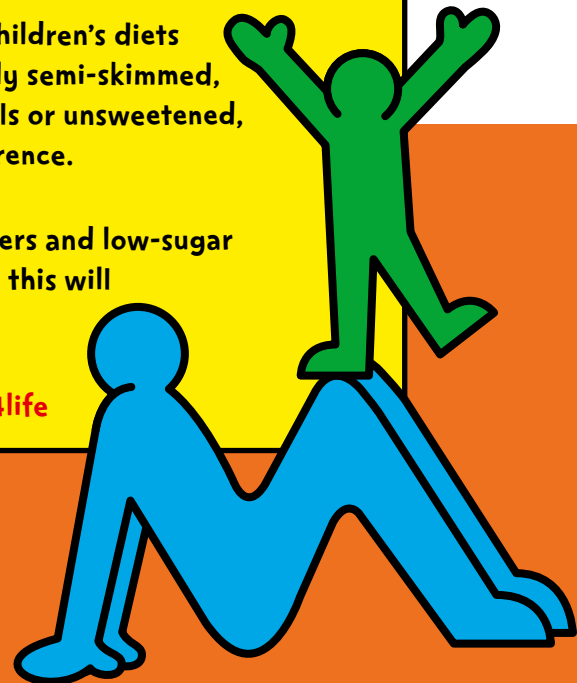
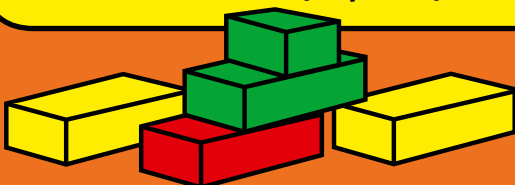
Sugar swaps are a simple way to swap food and drink that has added sugars for things that are lower in sugar or have only natural sugar like fruit.

Young children need foods that are packed with nutrients, whether they're having a snack or a main meal. Sugary foods and drinks can fill young children up leaving them with a decreased appetite. Naturally sweet foods like fruit such as melon and banana are much healthier alternatives to biscuits and chocolate.

Did you know that more than a quarter of the added sugar in children's diets comes from sugary drinks? So swapping to water or milk (ideally semi-skimmed, **but remember children under 2 need full-fat milk**) between meals or unsweetened, watered-down 100% fruit juice with meals really makes a difference.

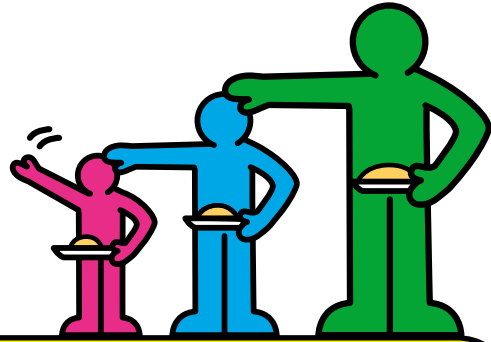
It's also not recommended that children have artificial sweeteners and low-sugar versions of sweet foods and drinks designed for adults because this will encourage children to develop a sweet tooth.

Read more sugar swap tips for parents at www.nhs.uk/change4life



me size meals

Objective: Helping parents to serve appropriate portion sizes



Why is this change important?

Many parents give their children the same size portion as they give themselves. But when we eat more than we need, the extra food turns into stored fat.

How do we explain this to parents?

We're calling this behaviour:

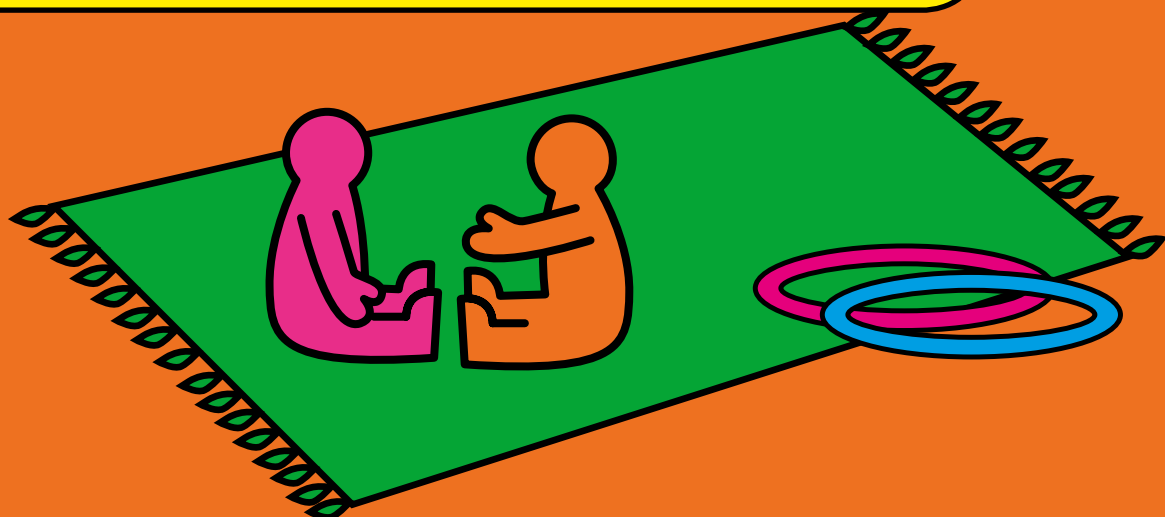
me size meals Making sure children eat the right size portions for their age.

Toddlers and children have smaller stomachs so it is important they eat smaller amounts of food regularly. However, they often end up with very large portions of food on their plates and when they do eat more than their small bodies need it converts to stored fat in their bodies. And asking children to finish their meals can also make them dislike those foods and stop enjoying mealtimes.

That's why making a conscious effort to serve them 'child-size' meals is so important. That way you might even begin to see clean bowls and plates coming back, and if they really do want more, it's OK to give them some seconds.

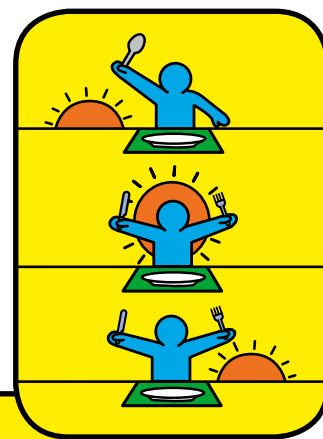
Because their stomachs are smaller, we need to watch packaging sizes too. Many pre-packed products are made for adults, so take a small amount out for your child or get children to share.

You can find out what types and proportions of foods we need for a healthy and well-balanced diet by visiting www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/eatwellplate and looking at the eatwell plate. The eatwell plate applies to everyone over the age of two years. You can also read more 'me size' meal tips for parents at www.nhs.uk/change4life



meal time

Objective: Helping parents get their children to eat regular meals every day



Why is this change important?

Giving children regular, healthy meals every day helps to make sure they get all the energy and nutrients they need. But the pressures of modern life mean that many families are rushing meals and eating on the go.

How do we explain this to parents?

We're calling this behaviour:

meal time Making time for regular meals.

We all seem to be busy these days, and in our hectic modern lives we often don't make time for regular, balanced meals.

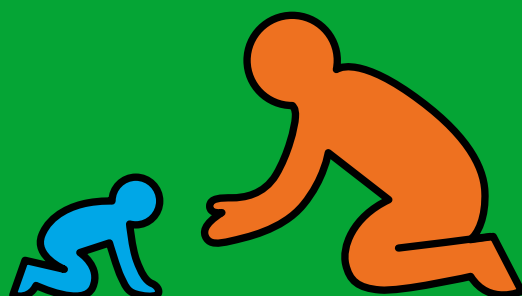
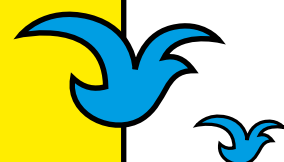
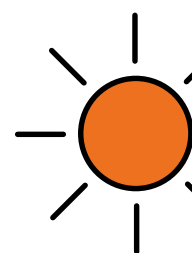
Rushing, making do and eating on the go all lead to unhealthy eating habits like eating fast food and snacking on foods high in fat and sugar. Skipping meals is particularly bad for young children as they can miss out on essential nutrients and energy they need to grow and develop well.

Like adults, young children need to eat regular meals and snacks throughout the day. Around three child size healthy meals and two to three small snacks is recommended. It's also good for this age group to take part in family mealtimes, and learn more about healthy food by watching others.

Every child is different, so it's up to parents how they fit regular meals into their family's lifestyle.

It's also important to remember that they shouldn't have any sugar or salt added to their food in cooking or at the table.

Read more meal time tips for parents at www.nhs.uk/change4life



snack check

Snacks							
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Me							
Jane							
Jim							
John							



Objective: Helping parents encourage healthy snacking in their children

Why is this change important?

Many snacks contain high levels of fat, added sugar or salt, so it's important that young children eat healthy snacks and get into good habits now. What's more, young children who fill up on unhealthy snacks are less likely to eat their meals.

How do we explain this to parents?

We're calling this behaviour:

snack check Simple ways to eat regular, healthier snacks.

Toddlers and pre-school children do need healthy snacks between meals to keep them going throughout the day and keep them topped up with nutrients. If they're not given unhealthy snacks in the first place, they'll be much less likely to want them as they're growing up. So giving them healthier options now will really give them a head start for a healthy future.

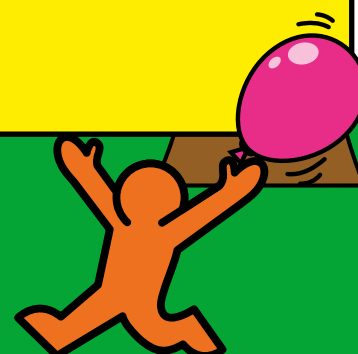
How much they have for each snack depends on how old the child is, their appetite and how much they eat for their main meals. Drinking lots of fluids, especially water, is also important to keep them healthy and hydrated.

Important: You can move children on to semi-skimmed milk as their main drink from the age of 2 if they are eating well at mealtimes (under 5s shouldn't drink skimmed milk).

However, toddlers and pre-school children should stay away from low-calorie food or snacks designed for adults. And they shouldn't cut back on full-fat dairy products – except for milk where over 2s can switch to semi-skimmed – as these are full of the nutrients they need to grow and develop properly.

Parents should remember that dried fruit is not recommended as a snack as it's naturally very high in sugar which could damage teeth. And, small children shouldn't eat nuts because of the risk of choking.

Read more snack check tips for parents at www.nhs.uk/change4life



5 a day

Objective: Helping parents get their children to eat more fruit and veg



Why is this change important?

Everyone knows that fruit and veg are good for children. But many parents think they've got to get their children eating mountains of fresh veg, which seems like an impossible task. Because they don't know that there are lots of other options, their children are missing out on vital nutrients.

How do we explain this to parents?

We're calling this behaviour:

5 A DAY Smart ways to get even the pickiest children eating more fruit and veg.

Eating more fruit and veg is important for us all – they're packed with essential vitamins, minerals and fibre, which may help reduce the risk of illnesses in later life.

Even very young children can have their recommended five portions of fruit and veg every day (a portion is about the size of their fist). But it's also important to give them a variety of flavours and tastes so they get used to different fruit and veg. And if they do become picky, don't give up – there are lots of other ways they can get those important nutrients.

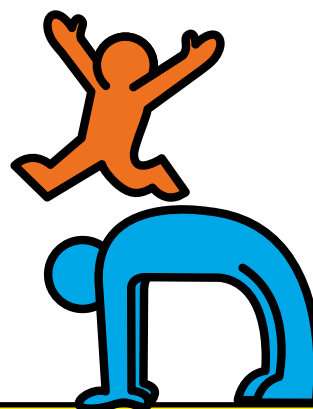
For example, did you know that canned and frozen fruit and veg count towards 5 A DAY? If you do buy tinned fruit and veg make sure you buy fruit in juice not sugary syrup and veg in water not brine. They can really help keep the cost down too. You can add them to meals, whizz them up for a fruity drink or serve them sliced with yoghurt dip.

Parents can help their children by cutting up fruit and veg into easy-to-hold, bite-sized pieces to avoid choking but young children should never be left alone when they're eating.

Read more 5 A DAY tips for parents at www.nhs.uk/change4life and at www.5aday.nhs.uk



up & about



Objective: Helping parents to get their children on the move

Why is this change important?

It's really important for children to take part in active play - toddlers and pre-school children need lots of time and space to burn off energy, learn skills, use their imagination and develop healthy, strong bodies.

How do we explain this to parents?

We're calling this behaviour:

up & about Easy ways to get children up and about, burning off energy and having fun.

Active children are happy children - burning off energy and working up healthy appetites.

But sometimes they need a bit of encouragement from adults when it comes to playtime. It's easier than you might think to help children run, jump, balance, crawl, walk, skip and hop. There's no need for expensive games and toys, or even good weather. It's amazing what fun children can have when playing indoors, with everyday household things.

Active play doesn't have to mean organised exercise - a run around in the park or a walk to the shops instead of taking the bus or car all help. Actually, lots of opportunities for short bursts of activity and energetic games throughout the day are best for children of this age.

Remember, rain need never stop play. In fact, the home is a great place for games and parents should give children as much help to use their imaginations to play. Make a den by throwing a blanket over a table or make an obstacle course out of cushions for them in the living room. This helps children be active, explore and develop safely. Sometimes it pays to allow a little mess to keep the children stimulated with a good game.

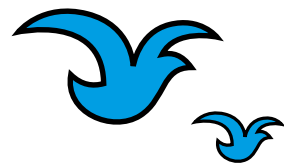
And if it's sunny out, you don't have to have a garden or lots of space to have fun outdoors. In the city there are usually play areas, parks, city farms or even areas of rough ground that are a short walk or cycle ride away. Out of town, try the local fields, woodlands and beaches where children can run around and let off steam for free.

Of course, rest and relaxation are important. But, as a rule, try and limit 'sitting' time in front of the TV, or in their pram, buggy or car seat to as little as possible. Remember, the more children play, the more likely they are to have a good night's sleep - which is good news for everyone.

Find out more about active play by visiting the Play4Life section of www.nhs.uk/change4life. For ideas on play geared towards disabled children visit www.cafamily.org.uk.



things to remember as a change4life local supporter



Change4Life is setting out to tackle a serious health issue so it makes sense that, as a Local Supporter, you follow certain guidelines.

The Department of Health has provided Change4Life branding tools (logos, images, fonts) and toolkits to enable Local Supporters to create their own Change4Life marketing materials and/or run their own activities. If you want to use these, you must agree to be bound by our campaign terms. You can view the full campaign terms for Local Supporters in the 'partner tools' area of our website.

Supporting both healthy eating and active play messages

An important part of the campaign terms is about promoting **both healthy eating and active play messages**. A key insight from the research behind Change4Life is that parents are prone to 'trading off' less healthy behaviour in one area with better behaviour in another. For example, if they feel their children are doing lots of activity, they may ignore the fact that they are eating unhealthy snacks on the grounds that 'they'll burn off the energy anyway'.

Evidence suggests that the best way to prevent rising levels of fat in the body is by having a healthy diet and doing regular physical activity. So it's important that, as a supporter, you encourage behaviour changes in both. Don't worry if your usual work or activities focus on one area and you don't feel confident talking to parents about the other. You don't need to become an expert in a new subject – all we ask is that you tell families that both healthy eating and activity levels are important and show them where they can find out more.

If you'd like more information on helping children eat healthily and keep active, here are some other useful websites:

Change4Life
www.nhs.uk/change4life

Anaphylaxis Campaign
www.anaphylaxis.org.uk

British Heart Foundation
www.bhf.org.uk

British Nutrition Foundation
www.nutrition.org.uk

British Dietetic Association
www.bda.uk.com

Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
www.cieh.org.uk

Department for Children, Schools and Families
www.dcsf.gov.uk
www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

Caroline Walker Trust
www.cwt.org.uk

Food Standards Agency
www.food.gov.uk
www.eatwell.gov.uk

Grub4Life
www.grub4life.org.uk

National Childminding Association
www.ncma.org.uk

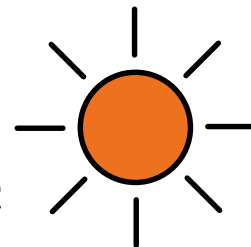
OFSTED
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Pre-school Learning Alliance
www.pre-school.org.uk

Sure Start
www.surestart.gov.uk



supporting change4life through your work



How you get involved with Change4Life is totally up to you – it will depend on things like how and where you work with families, and what sort of activities are particularly suited to your role.

Here are a few suggestions to give you some ideas.

1. Chat to families about Change4Life

Tell families that you're supporting the campaign and give them our website address – www.nhs.uk/change4life or the phone number for parents and carers – **0300 123 4567***.

2. Put up a Change4Life display

Display our posters and leaflets providing information and tips.

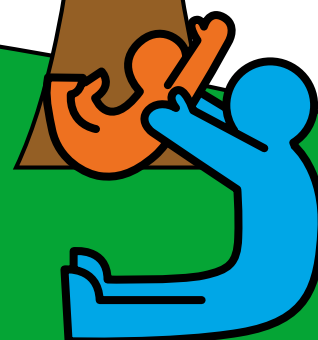
Local Supporter tip: if you're already helping families get active, e.g. by running a soft play area, you could use your display to help them choose a healthier snack. Download a poster now from www.nhs.uk/change4life ('partners & supporters' area).

3. Toolkits

As a Local Supporter, you'll also be able to download some useful toolkits from the Partners and Supporters area of the Change4Life website. We want to make it as easy as possible for supporters to help parents to adopt healthier habits, some of which may appear rather challenging to families. So to help make them as fun as possible, a range of additional toolkits are available to help you plan and run activities to promote specific changes, including Walk4Life, Swim4Life and Play4Life.

4. Use the Change4Life branding & information in your communications

Once you register as a Local Supporter you'll be able to access our logo, characters, font, images and 7 sub brands – like Play4Life and Breakfast4Life. Using the brand on your local materials about health and fitness can help increase awareness, impact and boost your own message. There is also text available to help explain what the campaign is all about.



5. Provide Change4Life information in your communications

Change4Life text is available for you to help explain what the campaign is all about and how to find out more. It's ideal for dropping into your newsletter or email to parents, or putting on your website. The text can be found as part of the Change4Life Local Supporter toolkit in the partner and supporters area.

6. Hold a Change4Life event

Informal get-togethers with parents are a great way to introduce Change4Life. You could either talk to parents about a couple of the lifestyle 'changes' in one go, or cover one per session if it's a regular event.

Local Supporter tip: Why not print off copies of the Change4Life children's colouring sheet before your event? Parents will find it easier to listen if their children are happily occupied. You'll find the activity sheet in the Change4Life Local Supporters Guide toolkit in the partner tools area of our website ('partners & supporters' area).

7. Don't forget the Change4Life website

The website is full of information and easy, simple tips and ideas on healthy eating and physical activity, so it's well worth checking out.

8. How to get publicity for your activities

The main Change4life Local Supporters Guide offers you suggestions and advice on how you can publicise your Change4life event. So, for tips on things like how to get people interested in your activity and encourage them to get involved refer to your Local Supporters Guide or visit www.nhs.uk/change4life.

More information

The 'partners & supporters' area of the website has information, ideas and resources for Local Supporters, including

- case studies
- FAQs
- Start4Life for pregnant mums and parents with babies. Coming soon!
- toolkits
- useful links
- reference materials

Go to www.nhs.uk/change4life 'partners & supporters' area.

Register

Register now as a Local Supporter and you'll receive regular updates about the campaign and new resources that become available. You'll also get access to Change4Life logos and images for use in your own materials. Plus, you'll be making a difference to children in your community.

Register today at www.nhs.uk/change4life

If you don't have access to a computer, you can also register via the Change4Life Local Supporter helpline on **0300 123 3434***

