

# Improving nutrition in primary school- aged children

Produced by: Barnet Children & Young People's  
(CYP) Public Health team



# Learning Objectives

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- To understand the current nutrition-related issues that children of primary school age are facing
- Have a basic understanding of the nutritional needs of primary school-aged children
- To be confident in teaching dietary recommendations based on the Eatwell Guide
- To be knowledgeable of the best fluids for children and promote this
- To have good awareness of effective teaching strategies to improve nutritional status in primary school-aged children
- To be able to effectively signpost nutrition services & resources to support children and families



# Primary school-aged children

- Age range: 5-11 years
- Covers two phases: early (5-7) & middle (8-11) childhood
- Observe significant changes in physical and social development
  - Physical growth tends to be slower and less obvious in this age group. Growth can sometimes come in large spurts
  - Generally, a greater push for independence is experienced

**Improving nutrition in primary school-aged children will support growth, physical & mental wellness, the prevention of chronic diseases, academic performance & support a healthy weight**



**~10% of  
reception age  
children (age 4-5)  
are obese**

**20% of  
11- year  
olds are  
obese**

**In England 1 in 3  
children leaving  
primary school  
are overweight  
or living with  
obesity**



Average 4-10  
year old  
consumes **60g**  
of sugar a day



50% of parents  
say they have  
given up trying  
to get their kids  
to eat 5-a-day

80% of children  
don't eat  
enough fruit &  
vegetables

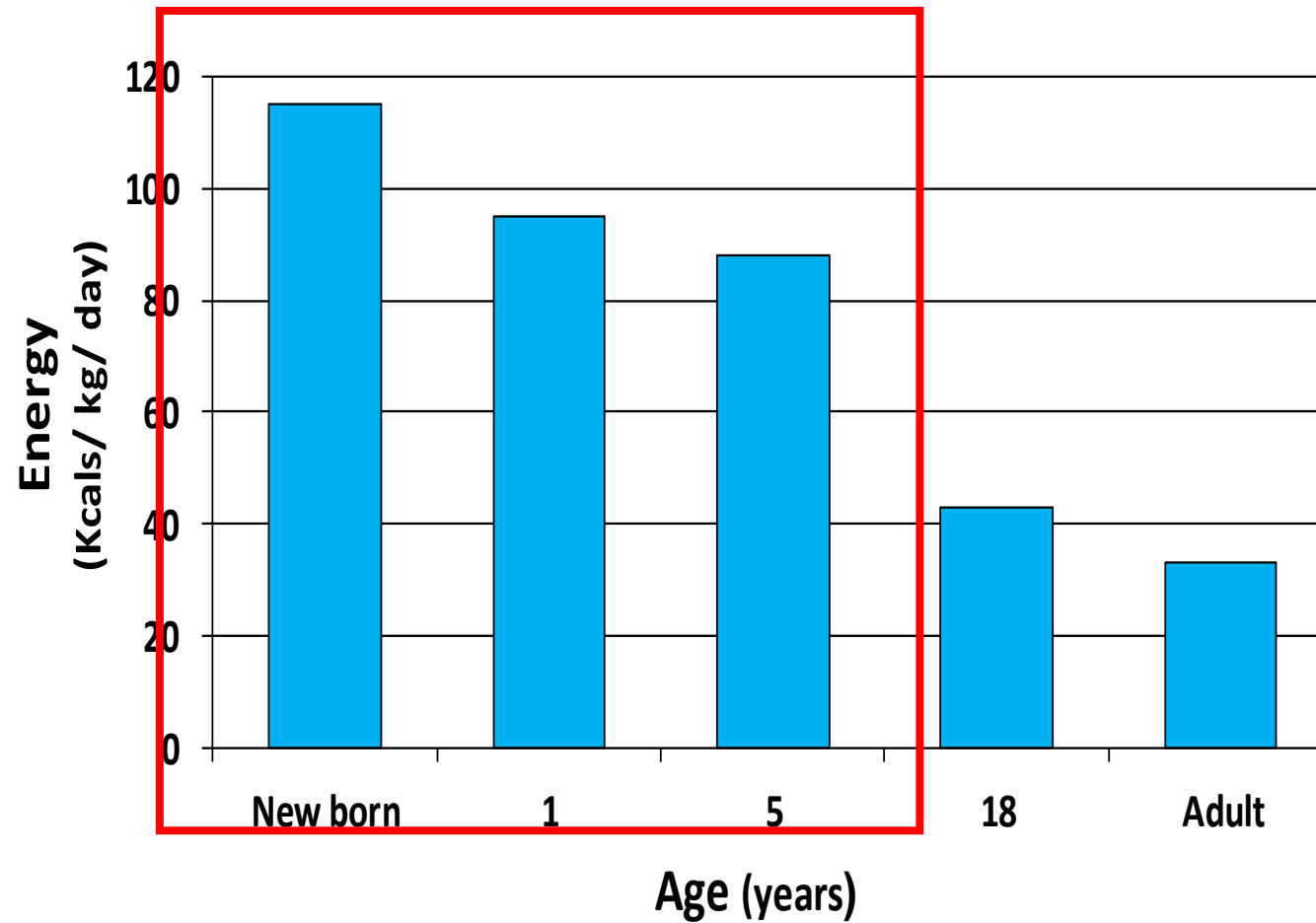


A photograph of three children sitting together, focused on playing a game on a tablet. The child in the center is wearing glasses and holding the tablet. The child on the left is also looking at the screen. The child on the right is partially visible, also looking towards the tablet. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting.

Children are  
bombarded with  
unhealthy food  
and drink  
advertising



# Energy needs of children





# Eatwell Guide

Check the label on packaged foods

Each serving (150g) contains

Energy	Fat	Saturated	Sugars	Salt
1300kJ 260kcal	3.0g LOW	1.3g LOW	3.4g HIGH	0.5g MED
13%	4%	7%	38%	15%

of an adult's reference intake  
Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/ 167kcal

Choose foods lower in fat, salt and sugars

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.

Eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day



Eat less often and in small amounts

Choose wholegrain or higher fibre versions with less added fat, salt and sugar



6-8 a day

Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.  
Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.

Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins  
Eat more beans and pulses, 2 portions of sustainably sourced fish per week, one of which is oily. Eat less red and processed meat



Dairy and alternatives  
Choose lower fat and lower sugar options



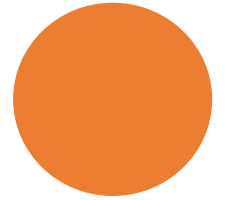
Choose unsaturated oils and use in small amounts

Per day 2000kcal 2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS

Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh Government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland. © Crown copyright 2018

# Fluids

- **Regularly**- still water, unsweetened Milk (most children can have skimmed or semi-skimmed) or fortified plant-based milks such as oat milk.
- **Occasionally**- heavily diluted juice or no-added sugar squash.
- **Avoid**- sugary drinks like sports, fizzy and energy drinks. Also, avoid diet drinks.

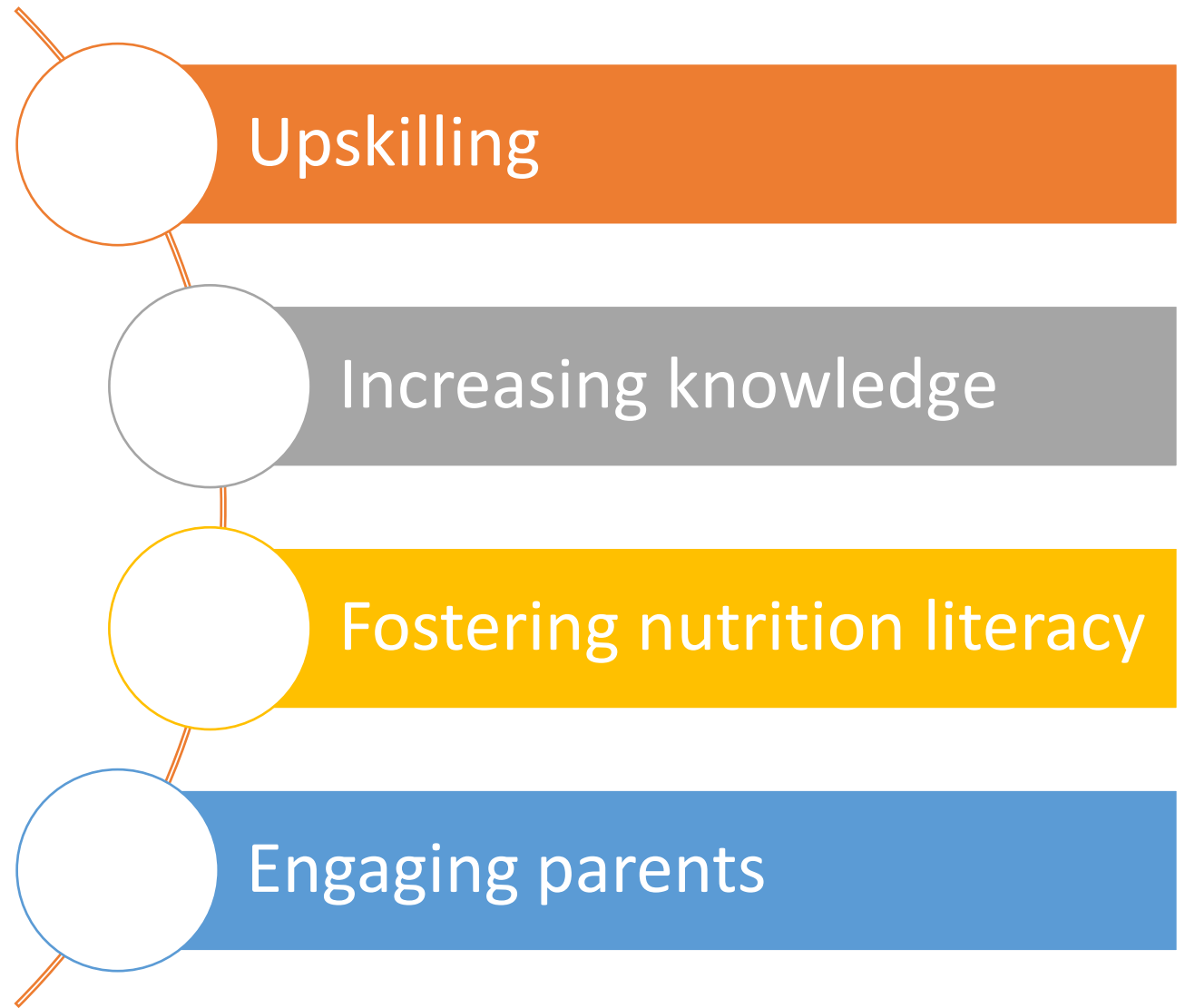




# Effective Teaching Strategies



# Areas of focus



# Fostering Nutrition Literacy

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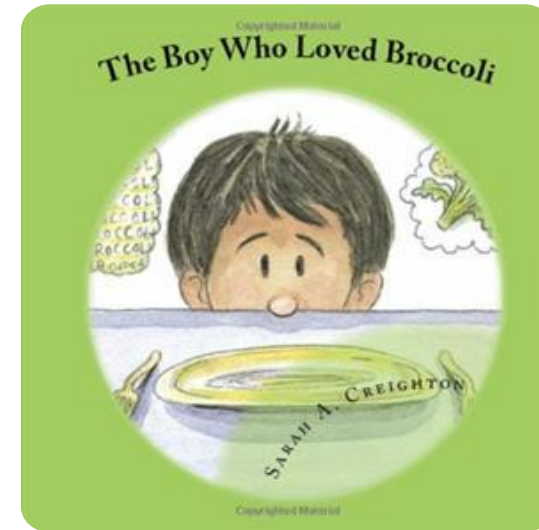


- Nutrition literacy refers to an individual:
  - Understanding the importance of good nutrition in maintaining health.
  - Having a good understanding of food and nutrition to improve their ability to make informed decisions concerning which foods, and in what quantities, are required to maintain health. This also includes an awareness of which foods to avoid and why.
  - Having the ability to adhere to healthy eating principles in different food environments
  - Possessing lifelong skills and competencies necessary to maintain nutritional health.
    - Examples of skills includes basic literacy and numeracy skills to read nutritional information such as ingredients & food labels; cooking and food growing skills.
- Achieving “Nutrition Literacy” takes time and practice!









# Increasing Knowledge

- Use of literature
- Games-based approaches
- Arts & crafts
- Web-based approaches
  
- Reinforcement of nutrition messages is important



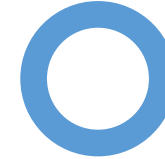
Food Bingo Cards

 apple	 cheese	 cake	 sandwich
 french fries	 onion	 pizza	 chicken
 jam	 steak	 fish	 milk
 cookies	 egg	 potato	 bread



# Upskilling

- Food Growing
  - Indoor or outdoor growing
  - [WWF Growing Food at School Guide](#)
- Cooking
  - Recipes- Change 4 life , Food a fact of life, CBBC dish up
  - Cooking demos
- Reading Food labels
  - Traffic light food labelling
  - Cut out different food labels & discuss
  - NHS Food Scanner app



Each serving (150g) contains

Energy	Fat	Saturates	Sugars	Salt
16kJ kcal	<b>3.0g</b> LOW	<b>1.3g</b> LOW	<b>34g</b> HIGH	<b>0.9g</b> MED
4%	4%	7%	38%	15%

of an adult's reference intake values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/



# Engaging parents

- Providing parents with nutrition information as well as the child
- Preparing a low time-intensive nutrition-related homework or activity that both the parent & child can do together
- Asking for parent volunteers for food growing or cooking demos, a trip to the shop or farm
- Refer parents to further support:
  - [Xplore weight management service for children aged 4-13 yrs. of age](#)
  - [Barnet Integrated Care Services](#)
  - [Keeping Well & Active- Barnet Council website](#)
  - [0-19 Early help service cooking tutorials](#)
  - [Healthy eating and recipe books at Barnet libraries](#)
  - [British Nutrition Foundation](#)





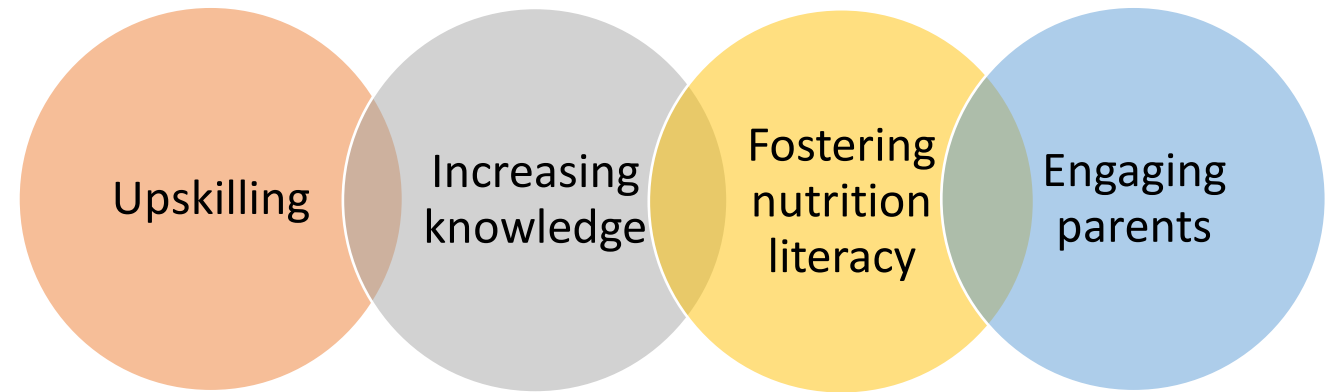
# Resources

- [Healthy Schools London](#)
- [PHE Healthy Eating School zone](#)
- [Food a fact of life](#)
- [PHSE association](#)
- [Barnet council website: Keeping Well and Active](#)
- [Sugar Smart Barnet](#)



# Summary

**Improving nutrition in primary school-aged children will support growth, physical & mental wellness, the prevention of chronic diseases, academic performance & support a healthy weight**



**Make full use of the national & local resources available to educate primary school-aged children on food & nutrition!**

