

## Food Fun

Following on from a discussion with your therapist about food fun here are some basic principles to follow when trying this at home:

- Try and create an environment where there is no pressure to eat the food, this may mean exploring the food away from the table.
- Encourage exploration as much as possible for example touching, smelling and making a game around the food
- Begin with choosing a food your child will eat and slowly progress onto foods with similar properties, (shape, colour, texture, brand, taste, smell)
- Work on one new food at a time
- Try to make it as motivating as possible by incorporating your child's favourite toy/game/colours/shapes etc.
- Role model yourself exploring food in various ways
- Use positive language at all times, describing its sight, smell, colour etc. You never know what language your child picks up on.
- Remember there are a lot of steps your child will take before eating a new food, this can take some time. Patience is key.
- Avoid suggesting that your child needs to wash or wipe their hands. If they become distressed provide tissues/wipes and encourage child to independently wipe their hands. Alternatively show them how to rub their hands together to make the mess go away. This will decrease the negative associations with mess on their hands.

### Example:

Child A will eat dry cheerios and likes to play with cars and animals.

In a food fun session you could consider using different cereals with or without milk. Drive cars through them and make them race amongst the cereal. Consider incorporating various utensils to help stir or pour the milk/cereals. Pretend its feeding time at the zoo and encourage child A to feed the animals with their hands or a spoon. Alternatively make the animals jump and splash in the milk. Demonstrate the ability to change the appearance of the cheerios by crushing them up. Consider role modelling eating the crushed cheerios whilst positively describing the taste and texture.

## Contact details

### Children's Therapy Services

Telephone number: 0300 019 2936

For further general health-related information, please ask the relevant department for an information prescription or contact:

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**If you wish to make any comments or to ask about any research evidence used to write this leaflet, please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0300 019 8499, write to the Patient Experience Team (address above) or email [patientexperienceteam@uhd.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperienceteam@uhd.nhs.uk)**

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