

## **SISS Autism Team Fact sheet.**

### **Reluctance to Eat / Drink – suggestions for support.**

#### **Drinking.**

- Give your child Ice lollies to get liquid intake up.
- Make your own ice lollies – children can add fruits / flavours as they wish!
- Make your smoothies with a mixture of fruits – use either milk, fruit juice or water as the liquid base to add fruit to.
- 'Mixology' sessions – mocktail making sessions! Use special cocktail glasses – you can buy fabulous plastic picnic glasses now!
- Let the child choose a special cup / mug / bottle to drink out of.
- Eat foods that are high in water content – watermelon is a really good example. Can you persuade your child to eat soups?
- Model regular drinking – can each family member have a bottle that they take with them on each trip to the park for example?
- Have jugs / bottles of water in handy places around the home so that they become a normal sight and not something to be feared.
- Adults 'wonder out loud' and talk about feeling a little thirsty so you are going to have a drink of water. Talk about how much better you feel.
- Let the children experiment with different flavourings – can you try adding different fresh fruits to water?
- Try warm drinks – warm squash for example.

#### **Food.**

- Look at the Autism West Midlands advice sheet – Food and Diet, access via the link below:  
Autism West Midlands  
<https://www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk/online-resources/information-resources/>
- Make your own version of your family's favourite take away foods.
- Senses worksheet – what can I see smell, taste, hear etc. The child completes this with a parent – rewards for touching, smelling, even licking new foods!
- Children to choose the food from the supermarket - either in person or online.
- Let the child get involved making the food – it can be as messy as you like!
- All eat together, modelling trying new things – its ok not to like something but the important thing is to try .... It may just be touching or smelling it at first. Reward each attempt with a high motivator for the child.
- Have a picnic in the garden / a carpet picnic in the living room. Lay out a blanket and have a range of 'finger foods' for the child to graze on.

## Supporting Eating and Drinking

### Useful Links:

- Young Minds:

[https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/eating-problems/?gclid=EAlalQobChMIutOmn5v86AIVCLLtCh04tQ0nEAYAYAAEglQf\\_D\\_BwE](https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/eating-problems/?gclid=EAlalQobChMIutOmn5v86AIVCLLtCh04tQ0nEAYAYAAEglQf_D_BwE)

- National Autistic Society

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/health/eating.aspx>

<https://community.autism.org.uk/f/health-and-wellbeing/4223/daughter-won-t-drink-fluids>

- Book Trust – list of stories / books to encourage eating

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/booklists/f/fruit-and-vegetables/>

- CBeebies

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/joinin/how-to-handle-fussy-eating>

- The Food Teacher – article about supporting reluctant eaters in school.

<https://www.thefoodteacher.co.uk/how-to-support-the-reluctant-eater/>

- Super Nanny – drinking

<https://www.supernanny.co.uk/Advice/-/Food-and-Nutrition/-/4-to-13-years/How-can-I-get-my-kids-into-the-H2O-habit~-Ask-Dr-Sears.aspx>

- NHS – dehydration advice

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dehydration/>