

Children who're provided with a poor diet can suffer many consequences, it's important that children are provided with a healthy and nutritious diet, it's the responsibility of the adults in the child's life to ensure the child is receiving the correct diet for their needs. A poor diet can have a number of effects on a child in both the short and long term. Children whose diet's consist of lots of fats and sugars will most likely suffer with drastic energy changes as the food they're consuming releases all of its energy quickly with very little nutritional value, resulting in short periods of hyperactivity followed by periods of very low energy. These children will be a lot less willing to participate in activities, in turn stunting the child's holistic development. A combination of poor diet and little exercise can also result in obesity and, subsequently, a number of health problems. Increased body weight puts stress on the bones and joints, when this happens at a young age, the child's body is unable to develop correctly, decreasing mobility and affecting physical development. Eating too many foods high in fats can result in high cholesterol, putting stress on the heart. A healthy diet creates a healthy mind and well-being, therefore children with poor diets may also suffer low moods and low self-esteem and self-confidence, in turn hindering social and emotional development. A study conducted by researchers at Bristol University looked into the effects of a poor diet on a child's IQ in which

"The researchers found that eating a diet high in sugar, fats and processed food at the age of three was associated with a lower IQ at eight-and-a-half years old." (Epidemiol Community Health (2011) Child Diet 'Linked to IQ')

Children from families living in poverty or without the means to provide healthy food will suffer consequences to their health; similarly, if parents are unaware of what their child's nutritional needs are or how to eat healthily they may be affecting their child's development or even putting them in danger of health problems, parents should set an example to children being a positive role model. Families who follow religions with specific food rules, e.g. not eating pork or beef, or those who have other dietary requirements, such as vegetarianism or allergies should find alternatives to these foods that provide the same nutritional benefits, this is also important when planning the provision of these children as the food currently being served may not be adequate. Sweets, chocolate and junk food are cheap, easily accessible, and very appealing to children, adults must ration the portions of these foods children consume, teaching them that they're ok for a treat but are bad to be eaten all the time, though this can be hard as they're advertised heavily in the media. Children should be shown that healthy food can be fun and important, otherwise children will make bad decisions when they're old enough to choose what to feed themselves. Children will inevitably get ill, however some of these illnesses may have a worse effect on a child's diet than others, long-term illnesses such as diabetes can affect a child's diet, these children should be given regular meals which include some carbohydrates in order for them to stay healthy. Some illnesses such as sick bugs are more common and also affect the child's health, the illness may lower their appetite or mean that they can't eat at all, they will also most likely be losing a lot of fluid so it's important that they get a lot to drink and anything they do eat it full of the nutrients their body needs to fight off the illness.

One of the main legal guidelines concerning healthy and safe eating is The Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 2005 which sets out basic guidance for all institutions providing food. It explains that in order to supply food in a hygienic way the practitioner must maintain high standards of personal hygiene, this includes washing hands regularly, especially when entering and leaving the food preparation area, and when handling certain foods, e.g. raw and cooked meats. The practitioner's hair must be tied up, nails kept short and free from varnish. Some food handlers may require specific training; this must be up to date with certificates readily available to be presented to relevant authorities. The regulations also state that practitioners and settings must identify food safety hazards and ensure safety controls are in place, maintained and reviewed. Anyone preparing food must be aware of crucial steps in the safe preparation of food, for example- ensuring