

# News release

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## **Fruity Fridays on the Menu for Children**

Sunderland children have been learning about their five a day and how to stay healthy as the city's Children's Centres launched their special Fruity Friday event.

Fruity Friday saw children from across Sunderland enjoy fruit-themed arts and crafts, food preparation sessions, fresh fruit tasters and design a plate to teach them about the different fruits and vegetables available and why they are a good source of nutrients and vitamins.

The interactive health event aimed to raise the awareness of childhood healthy eating, while making the children more familiar with the five different food groups and encouraging them to choose a healthier way of life.

Sunderland mum, Katie Taylor said: "The Fruity Friday event was really informative and my daughter, Lowri really seemed to enjoy learning about all the different foods and where they come from. It can be difficult sometimes to get Lowri to eat all her fruit and vegetables but by getting her more involved with food it will hopefully help. We've learnt some really useful things during the event which will definitely help at mealtimes."

Gillian Patterson, Team Manager for Extended Services Area Co-ordination and Locality Children's Centres at Sunderland City Council, said: "It is extremely important that children eat a healthy and balanced diet to ensure that they receive the appropriate nutrients to help aid their growth.

"As any parent knows, it can be very difficult to get your child to choose fruit as their first choice for a snack. Through events like Fruity Friday, Sunderland Children's Centres are aiming to assist parents in introducing fruit to young children in a fun and positive way so they become more inclined to reach for the fruit bowl instead of the sweet drawer," Gillian added.

Alongside promoting healthy eating during the event Sunderland Children's Centres were also aiming to help more families learn about good oral health and to teach children how to care for their teeth.

To support Fruity Friday, Sunderland Children's Centres are spreading the word of healthy eating throughout the city, including during the centres' regular activities and services like Baby Massage, Baby Days and Young Parents' Groups.

Fruity Friday was organised by Sunderland Children's Centres with the support of Early Days at Ryhope Daycare Nursery and Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust and forms part of the Children's Centres' strategy to help reduce childhood obesity rates across Sunderland.

Through this strategy the city's Children's Centres are working in partnership with Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust to help raise the awareness of how a child's diet and exercise levels can help give them the best start in life while aiding their healthy growth and development.

Early Days at Ryhope Daycare Nursery is now part of the HENRY (Health Exercise Nutrition for the Really Young) project, a new initiative that is designed to tackle early childhood obesity and is funded by the Department of Health and the Department for Children, Schools and Families. The nursery offers daily healthy snacks and promotes snack time as a social occasion where all children sit together with their Key Worker and are encouraged to eat regular healthy snacks.