

Closing the gap: The FED Foundation

The Feeding Trust is closing this gap by launching a new **Foundation for Children's Feeding, Education & Development (the FED Foundation)** this October. It will build national capability through four connected pillars:

Education & Training

Supporting schools, early years settings and healthcare professionals to deliver developmentally informed, neuro-affirming food education, enabling children to build feeding skills through meaningful participation.

Equity & Access

Building a digital community and signposting to Experts at Hand, so schools, families and health professionals can access evidence-based support.

Advocacy & Awareness

Changing public understanding and policy to recognise feeding development as essential to food access, so SEND children are not left out.

Research & Evidence

Leading on research that advances understanding of feeding development, food education and participation, generating evidence that informs practice, influences policy and improves outcomes for children and families.

Our ambition:

A UK where feeding development is recognised as fundamental to every child's health, learning and participation, ensuring that every child can benefit from the food, education and opportunities around them.

We would welcome the opportunity to work with you to embed feeding development within SEND reform, the implementation of the School Food Standards, and early years and prevention policy.

**Helping children get the fuel they
need to grow, learn and participate.**

www.fed-foundation.org



The food is improving. But many children still can't eat it.

The gap the current reforms don't address:

SEND reform and the updated School Food Standards are rightly focused on improving the quality and availability of food in schools. But for many children, particularly those with SEND or medical needs, the barrier is not what is on the plate. It is whether they have the feeding skills, confidence and support to learn to eat it safely.

Many children are present in school but unable to participate fully in mealtimes. Learning to eat is a developmental milestone, yet feeding development is rarely recognised, assessed or planned for within education. As a result, many children are unable to benefit from the nutritious food already available to them.

1 in 5

More than 1 in 5 pupils (1.86m) in England have identified SEND

4 in 5

children with developmental disabilities experience feeding difficulties.

1 in 5

1 in 5 of these children have a nutritional deficiency

**Food may be available.
But not every child can benefit from it.**

Why this matters now

Policy is currently focused on SEND reform and inclusion in mainstream schools, on raising school food standards, and on earlier identification and intervention. Feeding development connects all three. Better food provision on its own will not help a child who cannot yet eat it.

Who we are

The Feeding Trust (transitioning to the Children's F.E.D. Foundation in 2026) began in 2019 working directly with children, families and schools on feeding difficulties. Over time, a clear pattern emerged: feeding development consistently falls between health, education and food systems, leaving a critical gap in recognition, support and policy. This October, we are formally launching the Foundation to build the shared understanding, practical tools and policy recognition needed to close that gap.

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