

## Hydration Fact Sheet

### The Facts About... Healthy hydration for children

#### Children and water

Only 2 types of drink are strongly recommended for children by health professionals: those are water and milk. For school age children, water is ideal as it is a great way to hydrate, is calorie-free, tooth-kind and can help avoid the huge cost to the NHS (£50 billion a year by 2050) of treating obesity in later life.

#### Dehydration

60% of children are thought to arrive at school in a dehydrated state<sup>1</sup>. Even a 1% drop in body mass due to hydration can impair physical and academic performance.

#### Why think drink?

Knowing when you are thirsty doesn't come naturally; children have to learn this behaviour. Children's higher total body water content and higher respiratory and metabolic rate makes them more vulnerable to the risk of dehydration, compared with adults. So children need to be 'taught' to drink frequently and healthily for optimum performance.

Research has shown that children drink more if they keep water on their desks. Healthy children should have 6-8 drinks a day (mostly water or milk) with the size of the drink depending on the age of the child.



#### Water in school is cooler from a cooler

Schools need to get the water message across that water is a 'cool' drink in every sense. Drinking more water, of whatever kind, benefits most people, but especially children. Add to this the convenience and good taste of bottled or mains-fed cooler water and you have a drink that goes straight to the top of the class. Serving water from a water cooler is a safe, convenient, inexpensive and an appealing way to deliver healthy hydration and start good habits early.

#### Which waters are suitable for children?

Whether you choose a bottled water cooler or a mains-fed water cooler for your school or home depends on a number of practical considerations. Where there is no convenient access to potable mains water, bottled water coolers are the perfect choice. If on the other hand you have a suitable location for a mains-fed unit, but limited storage space for bottles, then a plumbed in unit may be better suited.

#### About this Fact Sheet

This Fact Sheet has been produced by the British Water Cooler Association, the most respected trade body representing companies supplying bottled water and mains-fed coolers for over 20 years. BWCA Members are under an obligation to adhere to strict Codes of Practice and best conduct and are audited for compliance annually by 3rd party inspection organisations.

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