

Top Tips

Adapting *Healthy Families: Right from the Start* Programmes for Families with Babies/Toddlers



With the extension of government funding for 2 and 3yr olds, and the reduction both in numbers of children's centres and funding for crèches, it is becoming increasingly common for HENRY programmes to be delivered to parents and carers with babies or children under 2 years old, sometimes with babies in the room due to limited crèche availability.

With this in mind it may be necessary to use our experience, knowledge of the parents and carers and children and our professional judgement to make adaptations to the topic emphasis and activities/family games in some sessions. This will ensure each session is relevant and developmentally appropriate for the families attending. Due to HENRY's evidence-based approach and content however, **it is important not to completely omit any part of the programme.**

The tables below are not a comprehensive guide, but may give some ideas and guidance for Facilitators and help ensure delivery of sessions stays consistent and true to the original aims of the programme and HENRY approach.

Programme content:

Session	Topic	Possible adaptations
1	Let's get started	A general introductory session which is applicable to all
2	Balancing acts Family rewards	Think about the family meals/snacks parents and carers could give their children when they are ready. Discuss parents' and carers' own meals and which would be suitable for sharing with their children (no added salt/sugar etc). See pages 29, 83 and 85 of the Healthy Families book for information Introduce solids through babies trying small amounts of suitable family meals Select very simple, visual tokens for collective reward tokens (use ideas from the 'Top Tips for Rewards') or recognise that collective rewards may be a strategy to bear in mind for the future, when the children are older. Foundations for using collective rewards can be laid early by regularly using genuine praise to respond to helpful behaviour, cooperation or kindness. This can be verbal: 'yay!', 'hooray!', 'well done!' or visual: smile, clap, thumbs up etc. Tone of voice and facial expressions/body language can be 'read', even by very young children

3	Parenting styles, descriptive guidance and praise, limits and guidelines	<p>Parenting styles: new parents and carers may wish to reflect more on their own childhood and how they felt as a child, as well as the kind of parent/carer they would like to be</p> <p>Guidance and praise/limits and guidelines: keep these brief and stick to 2 good examples for each on the flip charts. Limits and guidelines may need to be introduced/reinforced using tone of voice, facial expressions etc more than verbal instruction</p>
4	Feeding responsively/happy healthy mealtimes, healthy feeding from birth and follow their lead	These topics on pages 57-61 and the accompanying 'responsive feeding' demonstration are particularly relevant to parents and carers with young children and babies
5	Guided choices	Younger children may need parents and carers to demonstrate the two choices visually to them e.g. pointing to the two things, or holding one hand out containing one of the choices, then the other hand with the other choice
6	Food and activity diary	<p>It may be reassuring for parents and carers to use these to share experiences about their baby's food refusals/amounts eaten</p> <p>It may be useful to spend slightly longer on 'Introducing solid foods' (pages 84-86 of the Healthy Families book), as 'More about portion sizes' and 'How many portions' (pages 90-91 of the Healthy Families book) refer only to children aged 1yr+. This 'Introducing solid foods' section gives useful reminders of how to recognise hunger and fullness cues too (see also page 58 of the Healthy Families book)</p>
7	Iceberg	Parents and carers could think about themselves, partners, friends or their parents and carers, rather than their child when applying the ideas on the iceberg - no need to name or identify a person, just share thoughts. It may be helpful to support parents and carers to identify how we 'listen' to babies, e.g. tune in/identify what may be going on for them underneath their crying/tantrums and recognise that these behaviours reflect a need
8	The way forward	Help parents and carers identify which ideas from the programme can be used now and which are useful tools to store in their 'toolkit' for the future

Family Games:

Session	Current family game	Possible alternative for under-2yr olds
1	Blowing bubbles	Adults to blow the bubbles instead of children
2	Parachute playtime	Babies could lie under parachute or crawl over it, or sit on parent's lap whilst they lift and lower parachute
3	Row your boat	Babies could sit on parents and carers' outstretched legs facing them and holding hands, or be rocked in arms to the song or to 'Rock-a-bye Baby' instead
4	Obstacle course	Adaptations on page 136 of the Healthy Families book or instead sing 'The Grand Old Duke of York' whilst lifting babies up and down along with the words of the song
5	Ball games	Adaptations on page 133 of the Healthy Families book
6	Treasure hunt	Adaptations on page 139 of the Healthy Families book
7	Weave a pattern	Fine for babies with adult supervision
8	Bounce the balloons	Use as is, or use soft balls in case babies are frightened by any balloons that pop!

Activities in the Healthy Families book pages 133 – 140 are all adapted for children under 12 months