

Top Tips for Signposting

... to local Healthy Families Programmes



What is a Healthy Families Programme?

The *Healthy Families* programme – sometimes known as ‘HENRY’ – is running locally:

- It is a free 8-9 session, evidence-based programme which supports families with children (aged 0-5) to give them a great start in life and develop a healthier lifestyle for the whole family
- It supports physical and emotional wellbeing, and covers nutrition, physical activity, portion sizes, screen time, looking after yourself, exploring feelings, and managing challenging behaviour
- It is delivered in a group setting, or sometimes 1-to-1 in a family’s home. This varies by area. Parents need to participate in a minimum of 5 sessions to complete a programme
- Parents are supported to set realistic goals for change at their pace, based on their knowledge of their own family and circumstances. These could relate to being more active, eating more healthily, or putting in place good routines or parenting strategies
- Parents tell us they enjoy the relaxed, informal and supportive atmosphere and the opportunity to share experiences and ideas with other parents. Parents’ ideas are valued and integral to the programme. They are supported to choose which ideas or changes will work best for them
- Each parent receives a free set of helpful family resources – a course book which includes recipe and activity ideas; children’s story books and soft ball, charts, and more
- The programme is holistic – covering all aspects of family life with young children
- Solution-focused – it doesn’t dwell on problems, but looks at solutions that will work

What a Healthy Families Programme is not:

Sometimes there can be misconceptions of the programme. Here are some common ones: It is not:

- ‘Like school’ – Facilitators don’t tell parents what to do. Each family is unique and is supported to identify and achieve goals that will work for them. Within that support facilitators provide information on e.g. whole-family nutrition; they introduce ideas, strategies, resources and tips
- Judgemental – each family has strengths and we work with them to build on these
- A weight management programme – no one is weighed or measured, we don’t talk about calories or diets, or ‘bad’ foods. The programme engages parents positively in thinking about how they can achieve a healthier lifestyle through change that can be sustained in the long term
- Focused just on children – the programme supports the whole family to make changes. It helps parents understand the value of modelling choices and behaviours for their children

Who might benefit?

Anyone who has a baby or young child aged 0 to 5. Every family will benefit in some way. But any of the following types of comments from parents are indicators that they could particularly benefit:

- “My child won’t go to bed”
- “I struggle to get my children to get dressed/brush their teeth/get ready for school on time”
- “Mealtimes are a battle”
- “I don’t know how to deal with temper tantrums”
- “We eat a lot of takeaways/ready meals” or “We eat the same things all the time”
- “My child’s a fussy eater/not eating enough”
- “My child is wearing the next sized clothes”
- “I’m struggling to cope” or “I’m feeling overwhelmed/not enjoying being a parent”
- “I’m confused by all the information out there for parents”
- “I’d like us to spend more time together as a family”

How can parents access HENRY programmes locally?

- Contact your local HENRY Coordinator www.henry.org.uk/whatson

If you have any queries contact HENRY on 01865 302973

HENRY Parent Toolkit

Each family joining a *Healthy Families* programme receives a free set of helpful family resources. This includes a course book with recipe and activity ideas; children's story books and soft ball, helpful charts, a food activity diary, and more.



Outcomes – how do we know whether the Healthy Families programme is effective?

HENRY's *Healthy Families* programme has the strongest evidence-base of any nationally available early years healthy lifestyle programme in the UK. More than 13,000 parents have joined the programme and 8 published academic papers now attest to HENRY's effectiveness in achieving positive changes for both parents and children.

In 2019 the Early Intervention Foundation included *Healthy Families* in its prestigious 'Guidebook' to evidence-based interventions.

Evidence shows the programme achieves positive outcomes including:

- increased fruit and vegetables consumption
- decreased consumption of energy-dense food
- decreased consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks
- decreased frequency of TV meals
- increased frequency of meals eaten together as a family
- increased family physical activity levels
- increased parental emotional wellbeing – including increased happiness and decreased stress
- increased parenting self-efficacy
- more age-appropriate portion sizes
- healthier meals and snacks
- increased consumption of water

For full details of HENRY's evidence-base please visit www.henry.org.uk/evidence-base