

Playing the game with families

Facilitator notes

The Foodtalk Game can be used as a simple and engaging health promotion activity with parents within an early years setting. Opportunities such as a breastfeeding cafe, stay and play or parents evening might provide ad-hoc opportunities to work with families to promote healthy eating habits for their children and encourage behaviour change. Alternatively the game could be used in a more structured way over a number of weeks with a different topic covered each week to provide more in-depth knowledge and greater understanding of the topics.

Either way, you can tailor the game to meet the needs of your families by selecting the relevant topic or question cards, for example, if fussy eating is a concern. By completing the action plan first, this will help you focus on the practicalities of running the game at your setting.

You can measure changes in behaviour and attitude before and after playing the game using the downloadable questionnaire. We'd recommend that you establish and review goals with families on a weekly basis if using it as a health promotion intervention.

Aim:

To create an opportunity for healthy conversations and learning around nutrition and physical activity for 1-5 year olds and address any concerns in a non-judgemental way.

Learning outcomes:

- Increased knowledge amongst families
- Increased confidence to make changes in behaviour at home
- Improved relationship between EYP and families

How to play the game with families

Considerations for facilitators:

- Ensure that you have played the game yourself as part of a team and have a good grasp of the 'how to play' guide.
- Complete an action plan to help tailor the game to the needs of your families. Consider size of the group, language barriers, nutritional needs e.g. vitamin D or oral health etc and how long you have to play the game. Consider whether you could enhance the game with additional cooking or physical activities and games.
- Once you have decided on the format of your intervention, ensure you print off the evaluation questionnaire and goal setting sheets from the website's on-line resources section.
- Screen the questions to ensure they meet the needs of your parents and that you feel comfortable that the answers meet your needs to facilitate the group. It is better to omit a card that may bring up further discussion which may take you away from your own knowledge comfort zone. Don't forget the online resources that you can read on each topic to help support your own learning on the subject.

- If you feel you are getting out of your depth or are unable to answer a question posed to you, this is a good opportunity to signpost the family to other services e.g. community dietitian/ health visitor for further information. Alternatively, you could find out and get back to the family later.
- Before you start, ensure that you have everything ready: question cards, timer, board and team pieces (if playing with the board) evaluation and goal setting sheets. Introduce the game as an opportunity to find out more about nutrition and physical activity for the under 5's. Explain that you are not a dietitian, and that if you are unable to answer any questions that might arise from the discussions you will seek advice from an external source. Use the timer to keep the game on track, but do not feel that you must go through all the questions you have selected. It is better to ensure that everyone has had an opportunity to contribute to the discussions and understands the answers, rather than racing through each question.
- Don't forget to complete your Ofsted self assessment template and give out certificates at the end.