

The EMPOWER Project - targeting children at risk of obesity

Sue Hanson

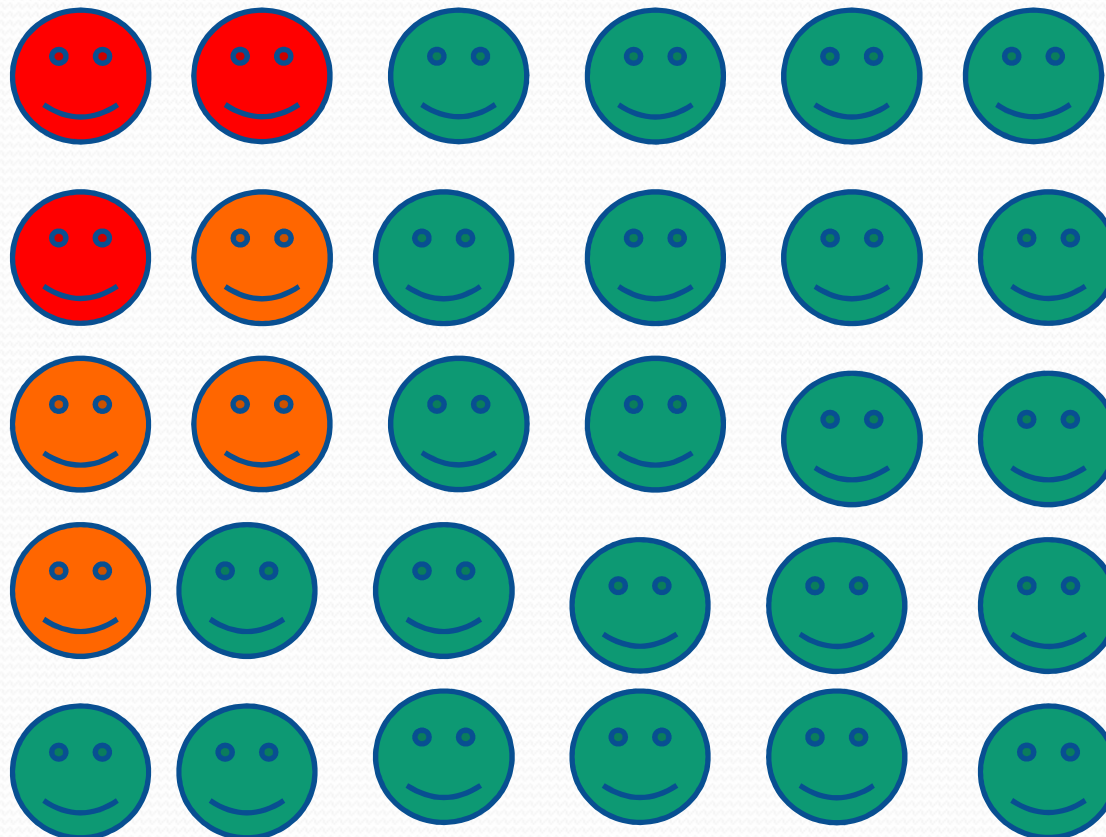




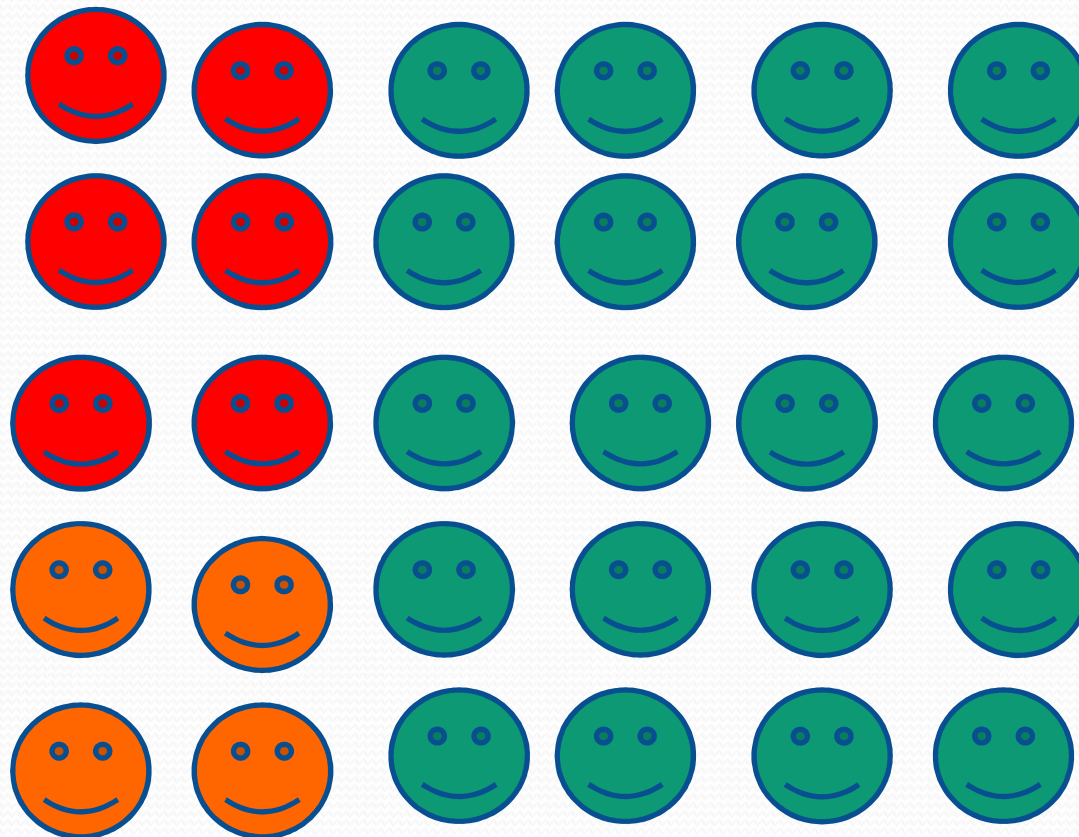
Objectives of this session

- To explore some of the learning from the EMPOWER project and how we can apply this to everyday practice
- To consider how we can work together to be more effective in reducing obesity in the under fives

Reception children 13.3 % overweight
9.8 % obese



Year 6 children 14.6% overweight
18.7% obese



What is EMPOWER?

A research project to evaluate an intervention targeting children, under 2 years, at risk of obesity

Pilot study 2007/2008. Feasibility study 2008 /2010

Funded by the Department of Health



Heart of
Birmingham PCT

Leeds **NHS**
Primary Care Trust



What is the EMPOWER intervention?

- Based on The Family Partnership Approach
- Strengths based, solution focused
- 8 home visits to family in first 16 months of life – on top of generic HV service
- Promotion of breastfeeding, healthy diet, responsive feeding, positive parenting, emotional well being, everyday activity.
- Focus on family lifestyle as well as child focus

Evidence base for EMPOWER

- Strongest single risk factor for childhood obesity - parental obesity
- High birth weight links with high maternal BMI and later obesity
- Links between parenting styles and feeding practices associated with childhood obesity
- Positive outcomes of Family Partnership Approach in previous studies

Pilot study –who was involved?

- Children 6-18 mths already overweight and/or children of obese mothers
- Referred by HVs and paediatricians
- Focus on the child – but most mothers also very overweight
- 3-4 home visits to pilot approach and outcome measures (eg questionnaires, structured interviews)

The Feasibility Study

Families recruited ante nately

Mothers with a BMI >35

Families randomised to control or intervention groups

Intervention took place from birth to 18 months

The outcome of the feasibility study will inform as to whether a Randomised Control Trial is a realistic possibility

Outcome measures included ...

- Parental lifestyle questionnaires
- In depth interviews at the end of the intervention
- Growth data of child and parents
- Health visitor observations

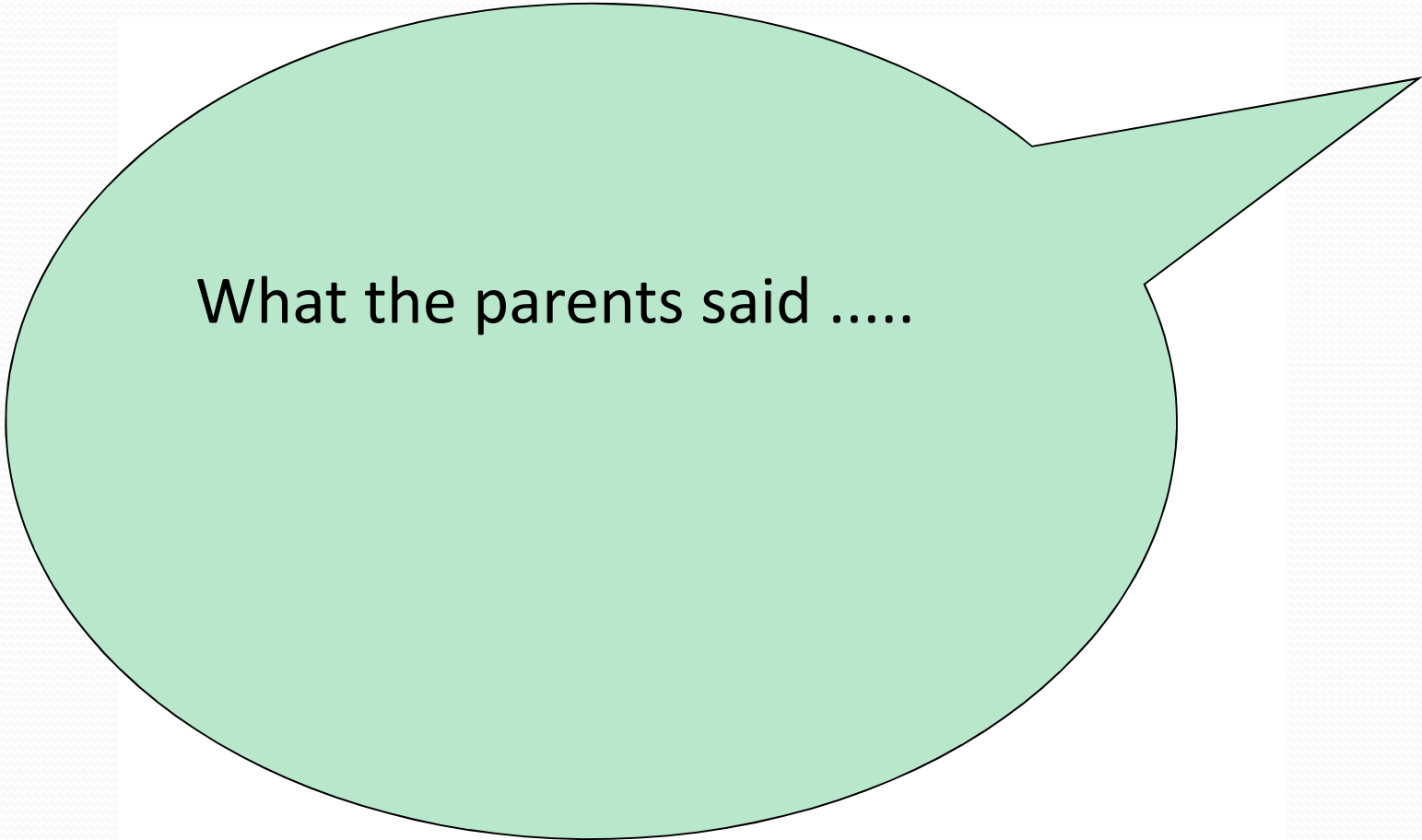
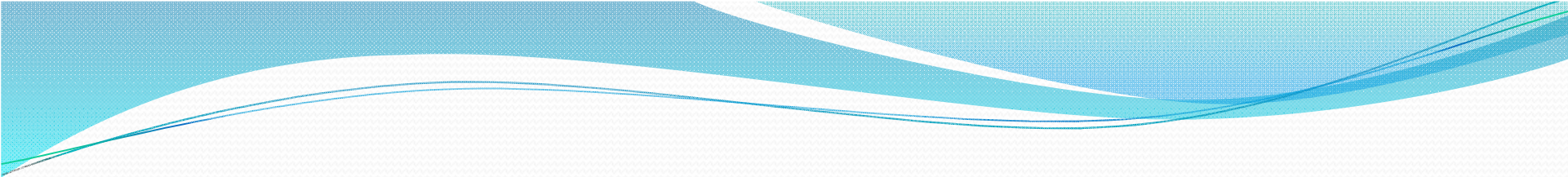
Feasibility study also included

- Analysis of video recordings of feeding practices

Outcomes of the EMPOWER pilot study

- Parents were very positive about the EMPOWER approach
- Some families made significant lifestyle changes
- Emotional effects of obesity more important to parents than long term medical issues
- Some health professionals lacked confidence in working with issues around obesity





What the parents said



Outcomes of the EMPOWER feasibility study (Leeds)

- Good retention rate of families recruited to the project
- Results still being analysed
- Mothers appeared appreciative of the support
- Some mothers took a long time to recover from the birth
- Most mothers did not make personal lifestyle changes in the first year but were more focused on their child's needs



Reflections of the
health visitor



Where do we go from here?



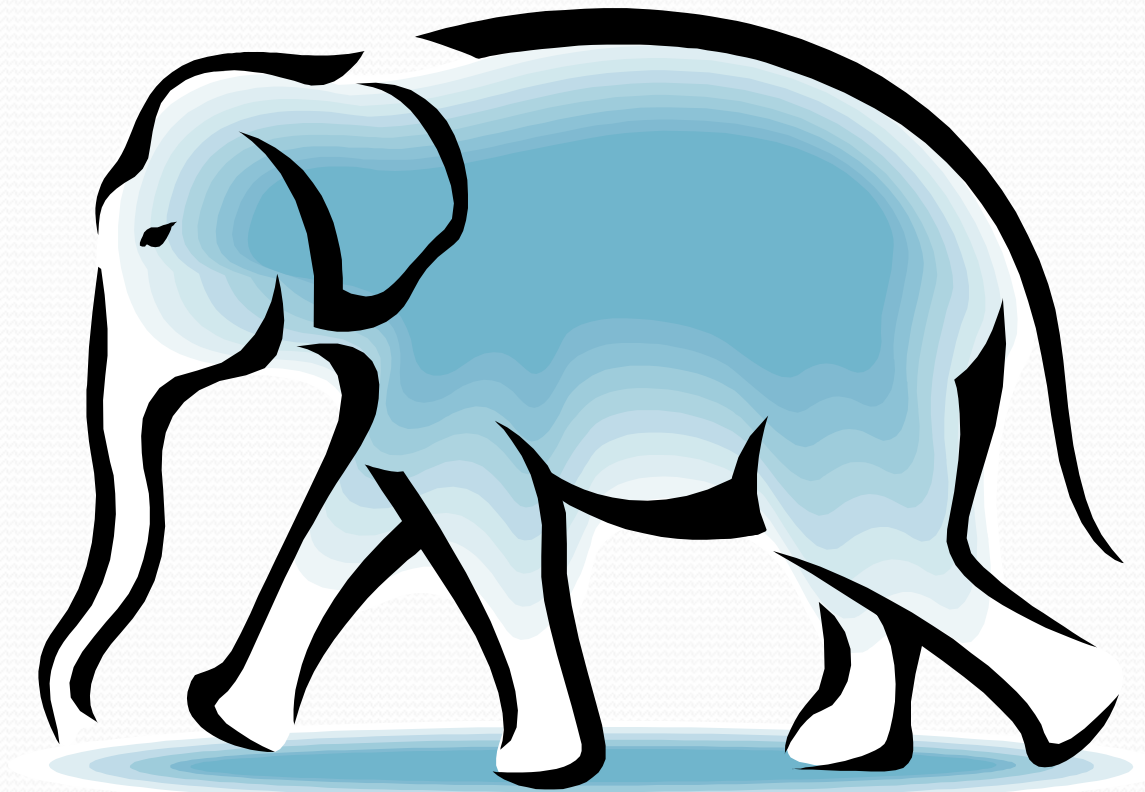
Challenges

- Early identification of children at risk
- How to raise the issue
- Assessing readiness to change
- Minimising advice giving – partnership working
- Differing perceptions of ‘overweight’
- Professional support and confidence
- Addressing the ‘how’ as well as the ‘what’



Where are the children?

Acknowledging the 'elephant in the room'



Working in partnership



Giving enough time



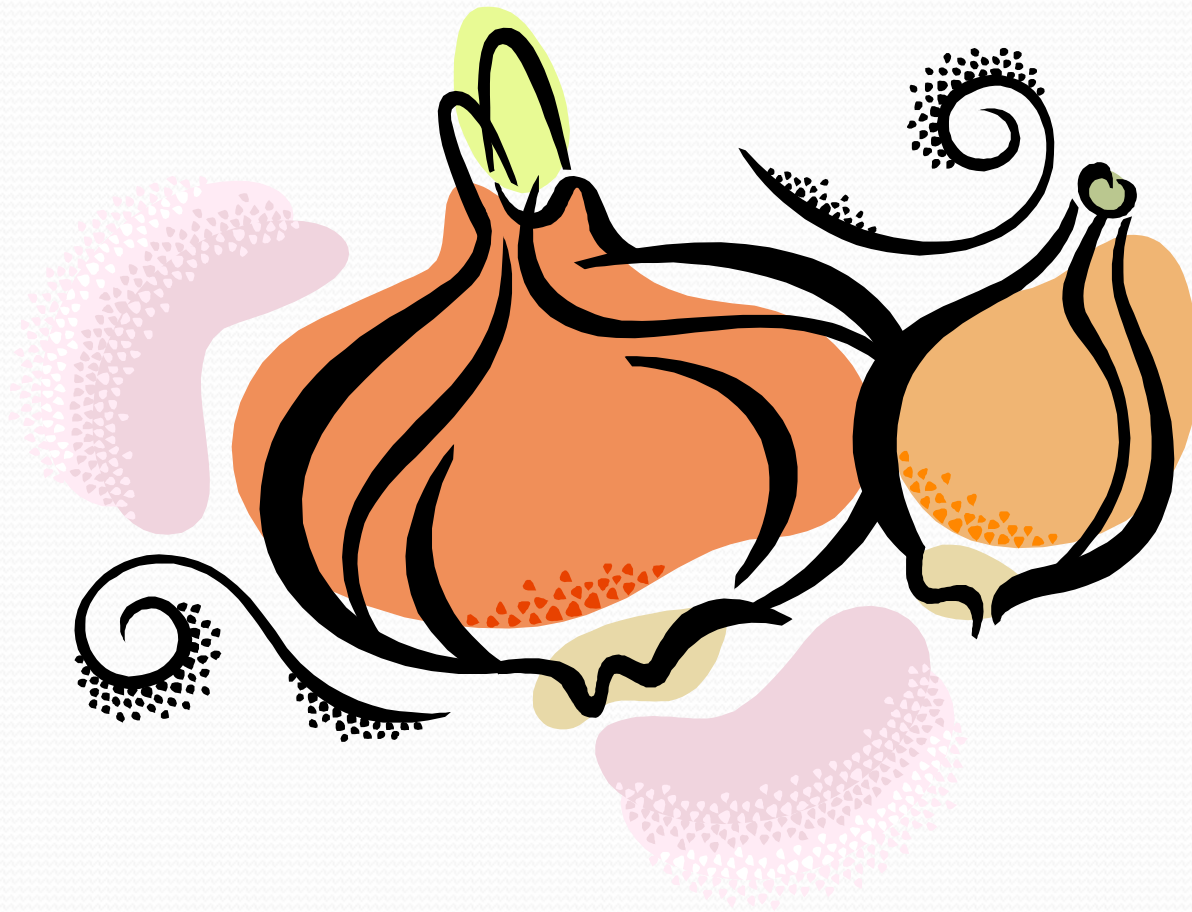
Whose agenda is it?



Observation and listening skills



Peeling back the layers



Building on strengths

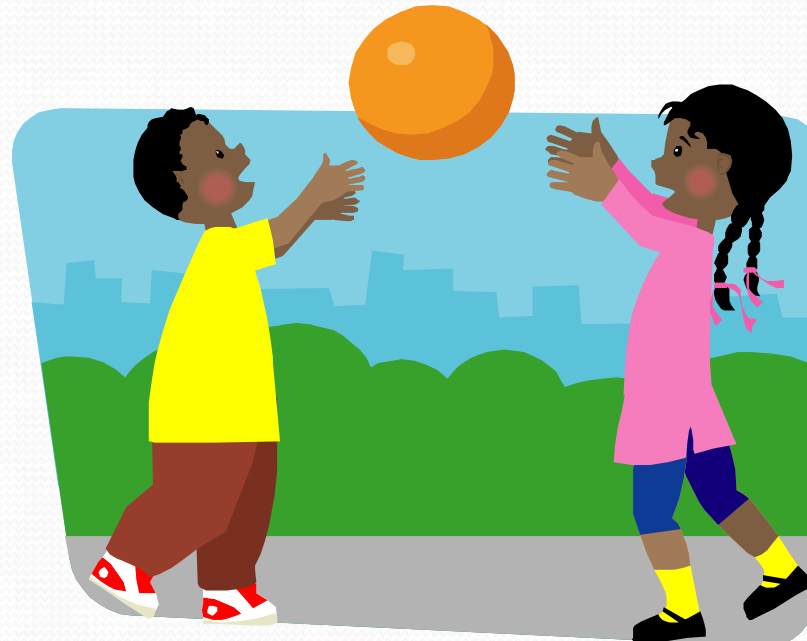


Identifying the positives and
the next step forward





Its not just about food and activity



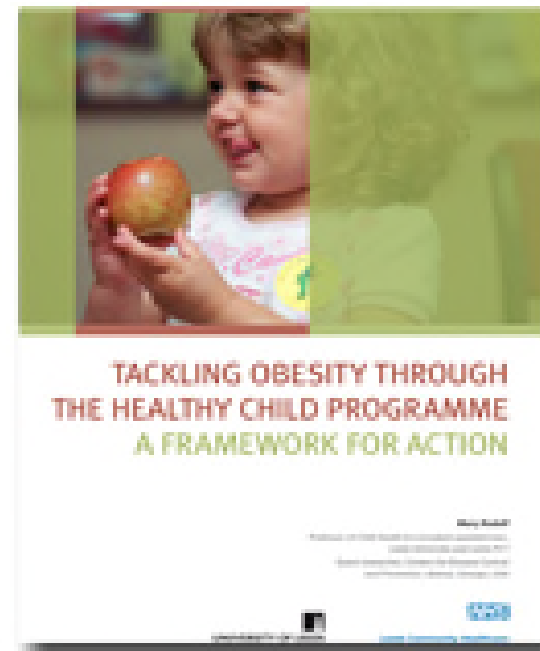


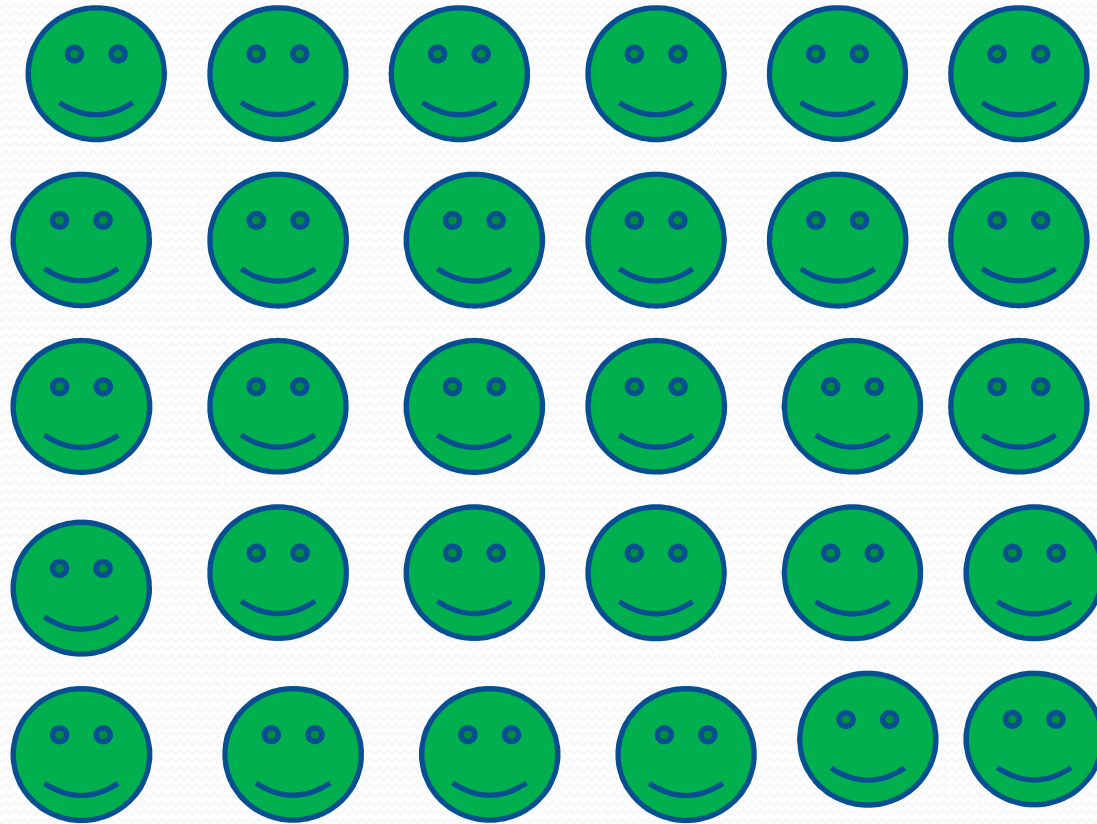
Some things to think about


- How confident would you feel in raising the issue with parents about an overweight child?
- Do you know what services are available locally for very overweight children?
- Do you know where you can personally get further help and information
- Do you have a local childhood obesity strategy?

Further information

- National Obesity Observatory (NOO)
- National Child Measurement Programme
- Child Growth Foundation
- Infant and Toddler Forum
- 'HENRY'







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