

# BUILDING THE WORKFORCE CAPACITY TO ADDRESS HEALTHY WEIGHT FROM CONCEPTION TO RECEPTION

Vida Cunningham- Public Health Specialist and Bimpe Oki- Public Health Consultant  
Public Health Department, Lambeth Council - [publichealth@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:publichealth@lambeth.gov.uk)



## INTRODUCTION

Lambeth is an inner city London borough with high levels of deprivation and child obesity. Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP) is a ten years programme working in the most deprived wards of Lambeth. One of its key outcomes is for children to be of a healthy weight from birth to four years of age. In order to achieve this outcome, a system-wide evidence-based intervention is in place for early years children around food, physical activity and weight issues. One of the components of this intervention is a bespoke capacity building programme to help the multi-agency workforce to confidently address child obesity in their practice. It consists of training workshops and access to a locally developed resource pack for health and non-health professionals working with young children and families

## AIM

The training aimed to develop the capacity of front line staff in promoting healthy food, diet, nutrients, physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight for early years as well as supporting families to embed this approach in their daily work from conception to reception.

## METHODS

### Training and resource development

- Reviewed the literature on the most up to date evidence around healthy food, diet, nutrients, physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight for pregnancy and early years
- Developed a bespoke Lambeth training curriculum to meet learning outcomes.
- Created a local resource pack highlighting key messages

### Training delivery

- The training was promoted to different staff groups that work with pregnant women and children (0 – 4 years old)
- One day training was provided that consisted of relevant knowledge and information, motivational interviewing and role play to build staff capacity to promote healthy food, diet, nutrients, physical activity to maintain a healthy weight for early years and supporting families to embed this approach through the life course.
- Feedback and evaluation were conducted at the end of the training session and resource pack distributed

## SUPPORTING RESOURCE FOR THE TRAINING



## SUMMARY / CONCLUSION

It was evident that there is a knowledge and confidence gap in ante-natal and early year practitioners relating to food, diet, physical activity and weight. For these practitioners additional training has been beneficial in enhancing their confidence and ability to provide consistent relevant evidence based advice.



## RESULTS

Attendees included midwives, health visitors, breastfeeding peer supporters, children centre staff, early year's practitioners and nutritionists. At the end of the workshop, participants were asked to rate a series of statements that aimed to gauge if participants had:

- Improved their knowledge and understanding of food, diet, nutrition, healthy weight and physical activity for pregnancy and early years
- Improved confidence following the workshop to give advice to parents/carers whose children were experiencing difficulties or challenges on issues relating to healthy weight
- A better understanding of the causes of unhealthy weight and actions to support parents/carers

The results from the evaluation showed that:

- 100% of attendees felt the trainers were effective in delivering the information, engaging the group and addressing questions from participants.
- 80% of participants felt more confident to raise the issue of diet, nutrition and physical activity and weight of children with parents/carers.
- 100% increased their knowledge and confidence to
  - o Measure and interpret BMI and growth charts
  - o Give advice in pregnancy,
  - o Understand diet, nutrition and physical activity
  - o 'Raise the issue' of unhealthy weight with families and carers.

Participants felt that the most useful aspects of the training were:

- Body Mass Index (BMI) interpretation and definition
- Safe exercise in pregnancy
- Localised information around Lambeth family's understanding of diet and nutrition
- Role playing and 'raising the issue' through effective communication
- Portion control

Qualitative feedback from participants show that participants valued both the format and content covered by the training.

With thanks to the LEAP Team for their support and for funding the training and resources.

'Great training, really enjoyed'

'Great day of training'

'The training was fantastic'

'BMI chart really useful for my practice'