**Parent/family session – Guidance sheet**

**1. What is a balanced diet?**

Getting enough nutrients from our foods to help us maintain good health, help with muscle repair/growth, strong bones and teeth, and energy supply

For this, we are advised to eat a certain amount of food from different food groups (to be covered in a little while).

Key messages to be aware of:

- 5-a-day (eat 5 portions of different fruit and vegetables per day, a portion is about one handful)

- Max. 6g salt (1tsp) per day for adults, less for children

- Maintaining energy balance: what goes in needs to be used, otherwise energy/calories are stored as extra body fat

**2. Eat Well Plate**

*See separate game activity ideas sheet as well as Eat Well Plate information sheet*

Introduce the plate by explaining the food groups and what they are needed for. Distinguish between different amounts needed from each food group.

Discuss which choices within food groups are better than others and why (e.g. wholemeal better than white, plain yoghurt better than flavoured yoghurt, lean mince better than sausages, etc.)

Simple game: use food props from sorting basket to place into appropriate section of the mat, or hand out food cards to everyone to place on the appropriate section of the mat. This can be done individually, or as a group game (scoring points for a prize maybe?)

**3. How can we grow our own?**

Use the seasonality calendar for information on seasonal fruit and vegetables. Discuss what can be grown

- at home on the window sill (e.g. herbs, tomatoes, chillies)

- in a grow bag/container on the balcony (e.g. tomatoes, salad, beans, courgettes, potatoes, strawberries)

- in the garden (e.g. carrots, leeks, potatoes, apples, plums,

- on an allotment (most things that grow in this climate!)

Discuss if anyone has grown their own fruit and vegetables.

**Activity suggestions:**

**4a. Sugar game**

Get the participants to guess what food/drinks item is high or low in sugar, get them to match the boxes with sugar cubes to the food/drinks item.

Let them check if they were correct by looking at the labels and let them put the correct box to the food/drinks item. Use guidance on food labelling for information, make sure that in this game you use the ‘per pack/bottle’ information or work out how much sugar the whole packet/bottle contains.

Discuss effects of sugar (see fact sheet).

**4b. Healthy and unhealthy choices**

Use the baskets/boxes to sort the replica food items and food packets into healthy and unhealthy choices. Ask why they made a particular choice, and also whether a healthy food is always healthy (e.g. if you only ate that particular food, would that be a healthy choice? Can you eat something from the unhealthy box sometimes? Make them aware that a food isn’t necessarily healthy or unhealthy, but that it is the overall balance that matters.)

Talk a little about what nutrients are (use the Vitamin and minerals and Fat/salt/sugar fact sheets for information)

**4c. Crazy scales**

To see how much fat would be consumed over a year if a particular food was eaten daily.

Put the food item on one side of the scale and pile on the ‘lard blocks’ until the balance is reached. Check bottom of food item to see how much fat in grams/kilograms it is.

**4d. Make a quick dish from the seasonal calendar selection or a smoothie**

* E.g. a courgette salad (you will need the ingredients plus a grater, a bowl and somesmall plates and spoons/forks to serve); a strawberry smoothie (2 ripe bananas, around 300g strawberries, apple juice to make the consistency you like, a small amount of honey, blend it all together; you will need small cups. Add some natural yoghurt or replace the banana with a very ripe mango from the market if you like!)
* You can, of course, always have a look for another recipe, including seasonal food if possible!

**5. Healthy eating on a budget**

Use the separate information sheet for guidance.

Talk about useful ways of saving money, what would work well, what have participants tried, what are their concerns.

***Have a fun session!***

Please see the ‘Links to online resources’ document for more information and fantastic resources to download and order.