An innovative approach to complementary foods (weaning) and early eating habits.

HP-04
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Background
In Scotland more than half of infants are introduced to complementary foods before the recommended age of 6 months.
General trends show that socio-economic status with deprivation has a strong predictive effect on weaning before the recommended time.
Evidence shows that the first 1000 days of life is a crucial window of opportunity to establish good eating habits and reduce the risk of chronic conditions such as: diabetes, cardio vascular disease, obesity and some cancers.

Methods
Messy Munchers was developed using PDSA improvement methodology.
• A needs assessment in partnership with key services, agencies and parents identified current needs and gaps in service, networking with other NHS boards also informed the process.
• This was piloted with parents/carers in November 2015.
• Messy Munchers was rolled out across Ayrshire and Arran.
• Initial evaluation completed after 6 months – no changes required.
• Impact evaluation was undertaken.

Evidence shows that universal measures don’t always reduce inequalities.

We worked in partnership with health visiting colleagues to develop a relaxed group session called Messy Munchers. This session is delivered in communities across Ayrshire to parents and carers in priority areas of social deprivation. This compliments the weaning advice given by Health Visitors at 4 months.

What people said

I really enjoyed it...I now feel excited instead of anxious about weaning. I can’t wait for the messy fun we will have introducing food while improving our own diet. Thank you!

I wish it had been around 2 years ago when I weaned my now 2 year old....I learned new things during the session and feel much more confident weaning my new baby...Thank you and please carry on this session!

In all honesty it was the best session ever. I am a first time mum and was totally terrified about the weaning process. My Daughter turned six months yesterday and tried her first food (broccoli). Had I not gone to the session I know I wouldn’t have had the same level of confidence that I did.

Aim
Enhancing support to parents to recognise baby’s readiness to wean and empower them to make appropriate food choices.

Objectives
• Parents will have confidence in their ability to recognise the developmental signs as a readiness to wean.
• Parents will be able to identify appropriate first foods.
• Make an informed choice on the use of commercials baby foods.
• More aware of the benefits of home prepared foods to become accustomed to family foods.

Outcomes of Impact Evaluation

Conclusion
The Messy Muncher session has had a positive impact on the weaning experience with participants stating that they have increased confidence in when the time is right to wean and what foods to use.

Next steps

Work in partnership to build capacity
Develop weaning recipe book
Health visiting impact survey on Messy Munchers
Continue session across A&A

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