Assessing the short-term outcomes of a community-based intervention for overweight and obese children: the MEND 5-7 programme

Given the growing prevalence of childhood obesity, research is increasingly focused on developing weight treatments and management programmes. One finding that has been found is that there “may be an effectiveness gradient with regards to the impact of child obesity treatment with age.” This means that the “earlier treatments are associated with better outcomes following programmes that are less intensive.” The aim of this study was “to report outcomes from the UK service level delivery of the Mind, Exercise, Nutrition, Do it (MEND) programme 5-7, a multicomponent, community-based healthy lifestyle intervention designed for overweight and obese children aged 5-7 years and their families.”

MEND 5-7 was based around two key principles: health-related behaviour change and behavioural parent training programmes. The programme consists of “10 weekly group-based sessions delivered by two trained leaders and one optional assistant.” Each session is subsequently divided into four components: (i) ‘Power Time’, (ii) ‘Healthy Families’, (iii) ‘Active Play’ and (iv) ‘Parent/carer Workshop.’ A total of 440 children participated in MEND 5-7 programme across 37 different UK locations. Overall, the study highlighted positive changes for children’s weight status, diet and activity levels and emotional well-being.