



**10 years of transforming obesity
prevention in the early years
What have we learned?**

Kim Roberts

Back in 2008 ...





Healthy Start, Brighter future

Parents want the best for their children

I really want to be a good dad but now she's a toddler there are lots of times when I just feel out of my depth when she says no and takes no notice

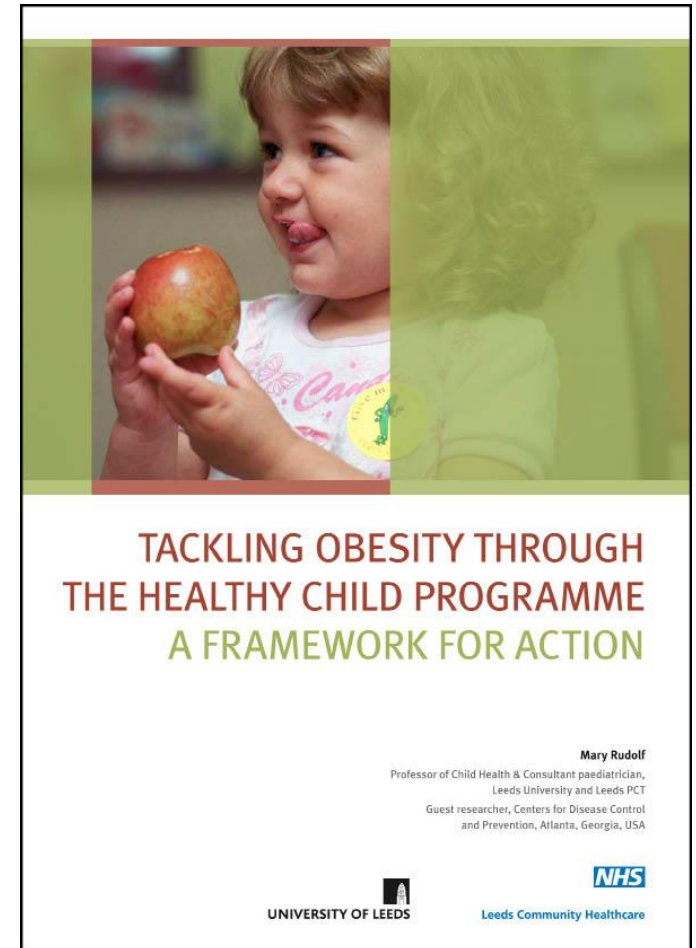
We were desperate, we knew we needed to change but didn't know how. It was affecting the kids



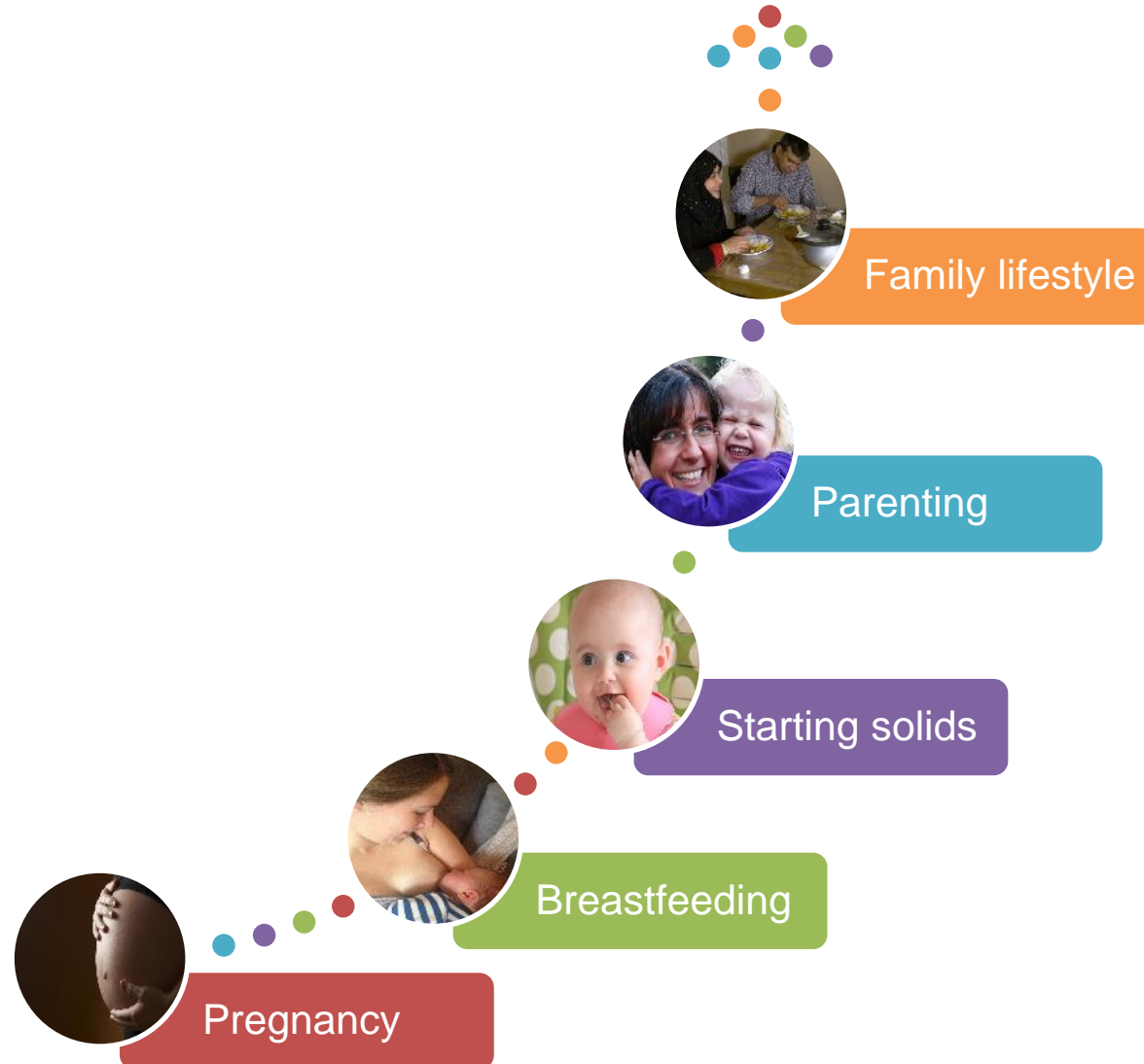
What do children need for a healthy start?

Messages from research

- Timely and sensitive support for their parents
- Confident and happy parents (most of the time)
- Loving secure relationships and positive attention
- Healthy habits right from the start of life
- A healthy family lifestyle:
 - Eating habits and mealtime routines
 - Eating well
 - Activity and sleep



The early years last a lifetime



Sensitive and timely support for parents

*I sit there giving her advice
and I know she's not going
to follow any of it ...*

Health visitor describing her work with
the mother of an obese 3 year old

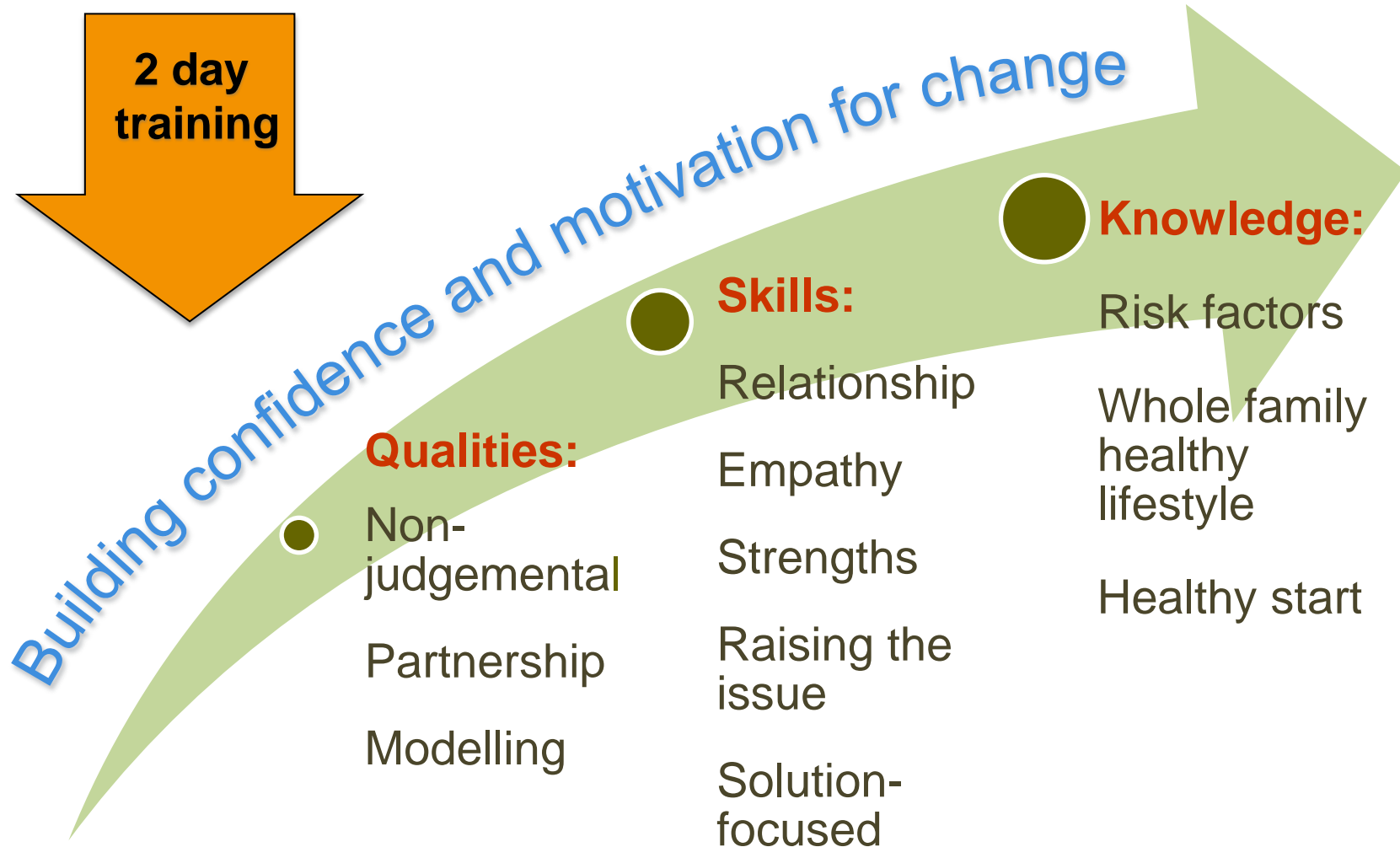
I've been through six other programmes before HENRY. This was the first time I felt like I was in control of what I wanted to change.

She was very talented in the way that she was not even vaguely judgmental. You didn't feel like she was coming to tell you how to do something. She was just helping and supporting.

What helps?



Building effectiveness as practitioners



Impact on practitioners

- 13,000 practitioners trained
- 70% still using the skills 4 years later

I've been on many training courses and felt I left with some more tricks in my backpack. But HENRY has changed me as a person. It's about being the approach, not doing it. I've thought about what it's like for parents in the last two days in a way I never have before.



Impact on families

- 91% of parents report a healthier family lifestyle

The HENRY programme has been just what I needed to make me stop and think.

I have changed my whole family's eating habits for healthier ones and we all feel better for it. We spend more time together and enjoy each other's company now.



Supporting parents' wellbeing

- 80% of parents report improved emotional wellbeing

HENRY helped me realise how important 'me-time' is. I found that by recharging my batteries, little things didn't get on top of me so I wasn't shouting at them as much.

My confidence has improved – I feel I am a better mother to my child and also a better partner. My relationship has improved.



Building networks of support

- 125% increase in parents who felt 'supported' often or very often

One of the things I enjoyed most about the HENRY programme was spending time with other parents. I found that talking about my experiences and hearing they had many of the same struggles really helped me feel better about the things I find difficult.



Models of volunteering

92 active volunteers:

- Breastfeeding peer supporters
- Parent champions
- Healthy start mentors
- Outreach volunteers

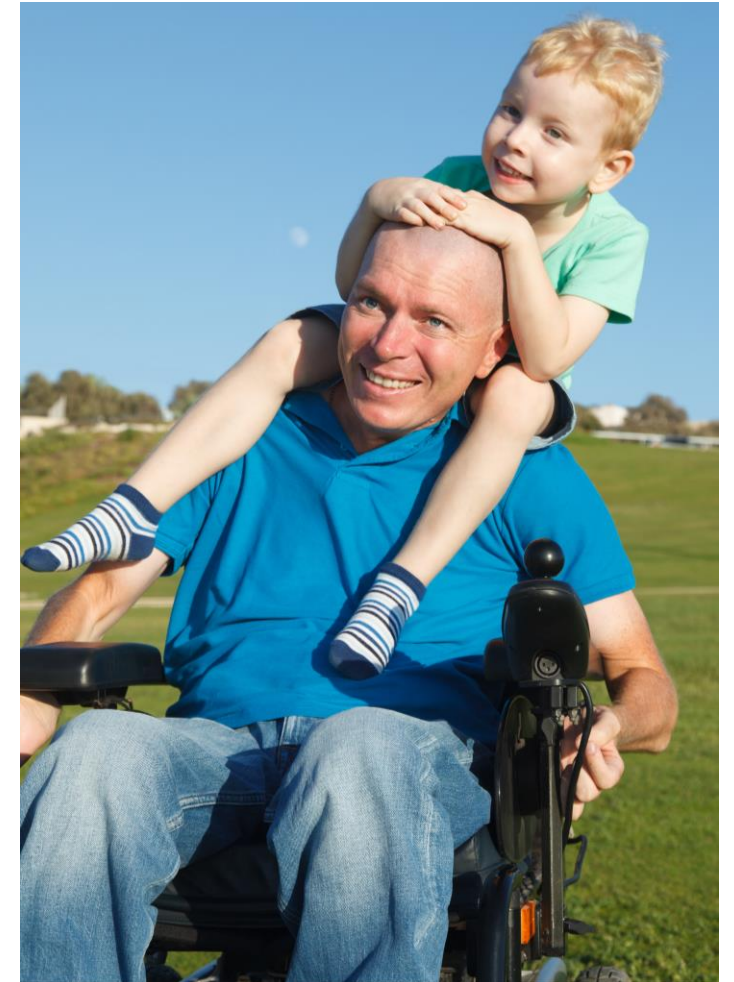


Parenting

- 84% of parents report improved confidence in setting and holding boundaries

Giving the kids some choice changed my outlook on parenting and I think about their point of view more often. Things quickly became calmer as a result

His behaviour has changed so much now I praise and encourage him



Early feeding

My wife and baby struggled with breastfeeding. On our first night at home (all of it!) - and the next day too - my wife was at the end of her tether and I wasn't far off either, our baby having stopped latching altogether



- **96% of parents report greater confidence to start solids**

My mum told me to start weaning at 4 months. My baby was 4½ months when I did the HENRY session and feeding wasn't going well – I'd bought jars of baby food but she just kept spitting it out. I realised she wasn't ready so decided to leave it for a few weeks until she shows the signs and I think she is ready to try again. And I realised how much cheaper it will be to prepare home cooked vegetables

Starting solids



Mealtime atmosphere

- 80% of parents report healthier mealtime behaviour
- 40% reduction in TV meals

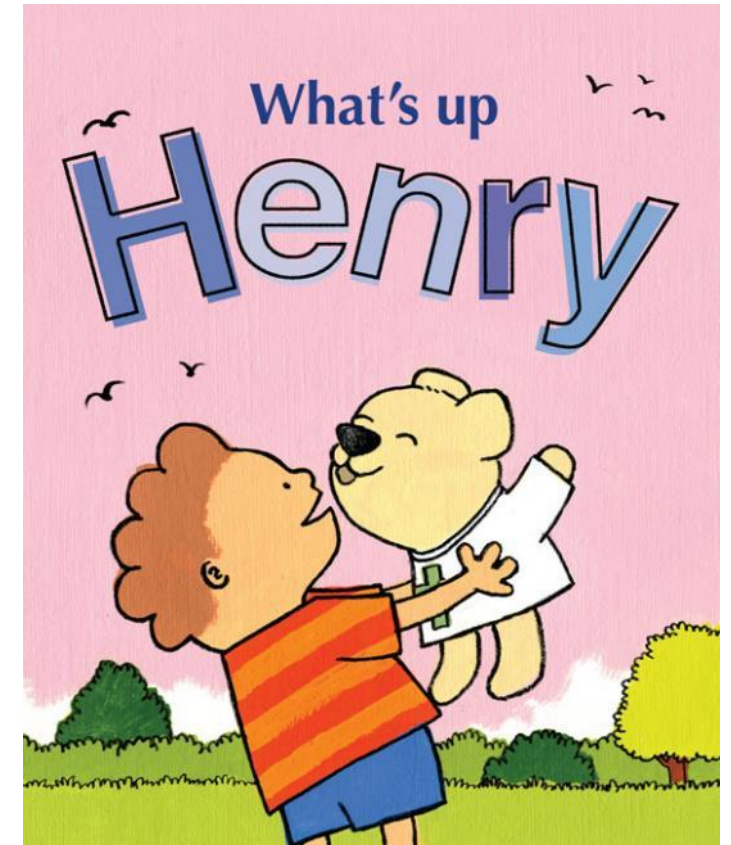
I eat with my son at mealtimes at the table instead of in front of the telly now

I realised if I want them to eat healthy food I need to eat them too. Who else are they going to copy?



Emotional dimension of food

- Bribes, rewards and comfort
- What messages do we communicate about food?
- Don't stop it, swap it – non-food praise, encouragement and comfort



Healthy nutrition

- 89% increase in number of children eating fruit and veg 5 times a day

That's why we all came on the HENRY programme. Knowing what's healthy and how much to give them is worrying, especially when they can't talk

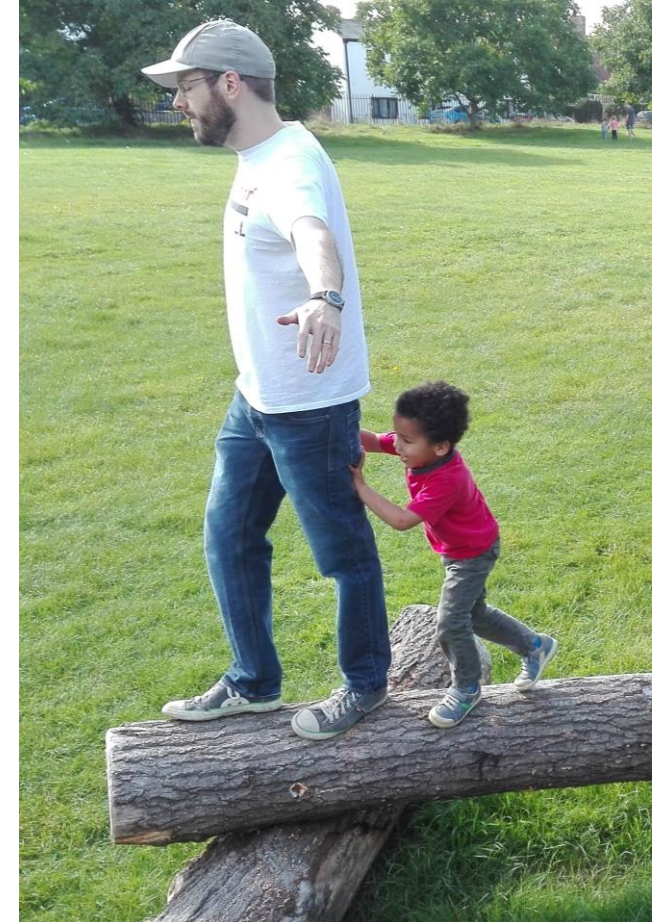
Now I don't put as much on his plate and I do feel happier about that. Because he's finishing it and sometimes having a little bit more, vegetables and stuff like that



Being active

- 36% of children spend more time being active
- 31% reduction in number of children watching more than 2 hours TV a day

I moved from Pakistan when I got married. When I had a baby I thought it was too cold to take him out so we just stayed in the flat for the first year



What parents say

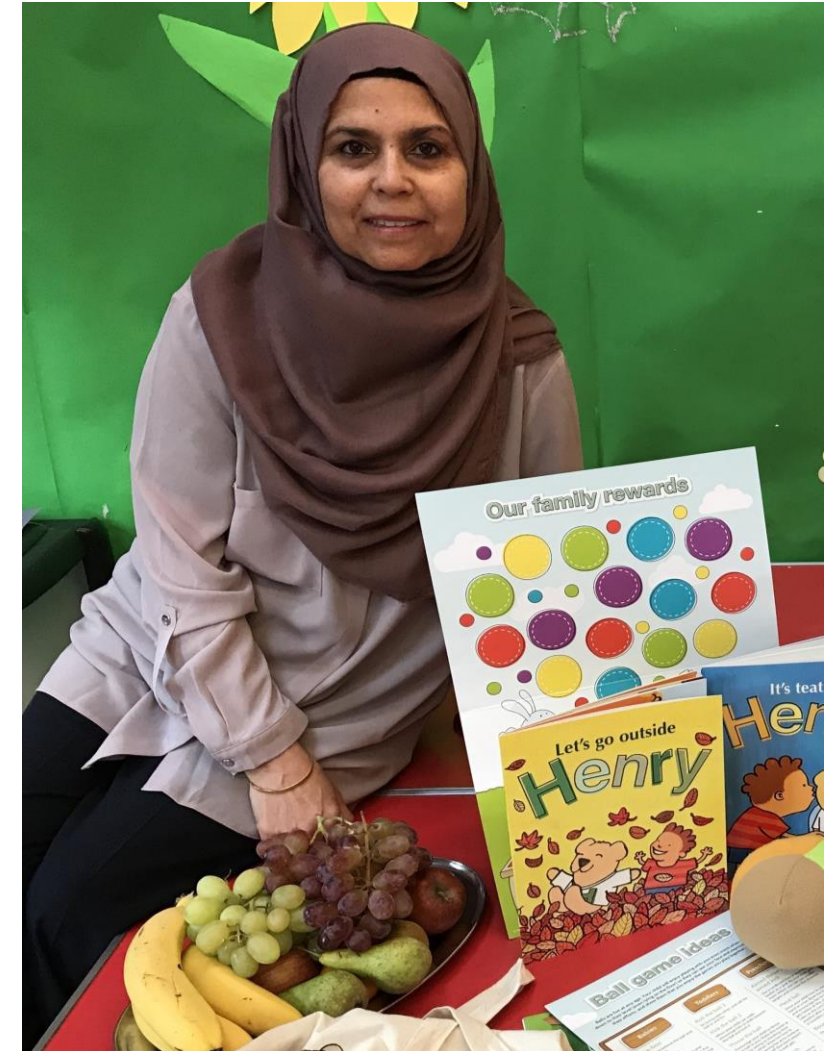
I've realised that being healthy is not just about food, but family life in general

*HENRY is nurturing not patronising.
It offers a supportive way of helping families create better environments for children to grow up in, so that everyone can be happier and healthier.*



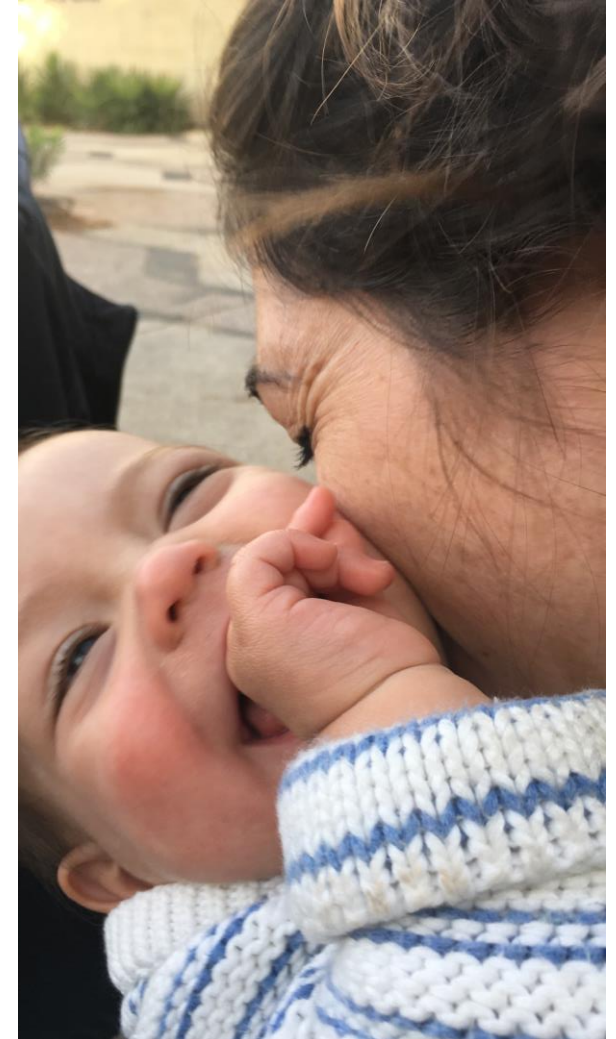
The view of a practitioner

I think HENRY is unique in its ability to empower parents to recognize their strengths and work collectively as a family towards a healthier lifestyle in a way that works for them. Parents gain confidence – they make small and then big changes with very significant impacts.



So what have we learned?

- ✓ Parents want to get their children off to a healthy start – our job is to provide the kind of support they need
- ✓ Training for health and early years practitioners with the skills and confidence to create the conditions for change
- ✓ Supporting parenting efficacy and wellbeing – because it's parents who get children off to a healthy start
- ✓ Early life is a crucial opportunity to make a difference to children's long-term outcomes
- ✓ Supporting the 'parent journey' from pregnancy to starting school
- ✓ Change is possible!



Contact us



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