One in four children across the island of Ireland now carrying excess weight. As part of the response in 2013 safefood, the Health Service Executive, Healthy Ireland and the Public Health Agency launched a strategic, integrated public health campaign to raise awareness of the issue among parents, and to support positive changes and choices within families.

**Campaign Objectives**

- To communicate practical solutions that parents can adopt in order to tackle the everyday habits that are associated with excess weight in childhood.
- To maintain awareness among parents of the health challenges posed by excess weight in childhood, the negative impact this can have on the quality of life, and the importance of tackling this for the long-term.

**Target Audience**

- **Primary** – Parents and guardians of children aged between 2 to 12
- **Secondary** – Family and friends and key influencers

**Campaign messages**

The campaign focused on six core actions for parents to take on in their family:

- Portion size
- Being active
- Less screentime
- Treat foods
- More sleep
- Less sugary drinks

**Key findings from pre-campaign and post-campaign evaluation**

- **18%** Almost one in five claimed they have thought about changes to reduce their child’s portion. There was an increase in attempts by parents to reduce portion sizes. An increase from 12% in 2013 to 18% in 2014.
- **3 in 10** 3 in 10 also claimed to have stopped pressuring their child to eat everything that they are served.
- **6 in 10** 6 in 10 parents who have tried to reduce portion size say that efforts have been successful.
- **40%** The consumption of fizzy drinks once a day or more than once a day has dropped from 45% in 2013 to 40% in 2014.
- **36%** The research indicated a significant increase in the consumption of water from 26% in 2013 to 36% in 2014.

**RESULTS**

- **65%** There was a significant increase in children getting an hour exercise a day from 59% in 2013 to 65% in 2014.
- **8 out of 10** Attempts at increasing exercise have been successful with 8 out of 10 parents agreeing that their efforts have worked.
- **27%** There has been a positive directional movement in parents claiming to give their child a food treat at least once a day. This has reduced since the launch of the campaign from 33% in 2013 to 27% in 2014.
- **Similar to the benchmark survey GP and health professionals continue to play a role in helping parents feel more comfortable in talking to their child.**

**CONCLUSION**

The Let’s Take on Childhood Obesity campaign has been strongly recognised and successful to date in changing parent’s reported knowledge, attitudes and behaviours.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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