

change4life local supporter's guide



Helping you to help families make
changes for a healthier future

introducing this guide

Welcome to the Change4Life local supporter's guide. It contains everything you need to know to help families to eat well, move more and live longer using Change4Life.

The information in this guide will also help you to brief colleagues and team members, so that they can also get involved.

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what is change4life?

Change4Life is a nationwide movement that is supported by partners from every sector of society and backed by a major communications campaign. It aims to help us all, but especially our kids, eat better, move more and live longer.

Change4Life is just getting started, but it will soon reach across our society. People will be talking about it at the school gates and the shops, on TV and on the internet. And we want you to be among the first to hear about it, so that you can spread the word.

Why do we need Change4Life?

Quite simply, because modern life makes it hard to eat healthy food and get enough exercise. As a result, we can end up with too much fat in our bodies.

This fat can lead to preventable illnesses such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and cancer. So the habits children get into when they are young can lead/increase the risk to health problems when they're adults.

The problem is that research also shows that many parents are unaware of the risks to their children. They tend to underestimate the amount that they and their children eat and overestimate the amount of activity the family does.

So how serious a problem is this?

According to the government's Foresight report, if we carry on as we are, 9 out of 10 of our kids will grow up to have dangerous amounts of fat in their bodies. Yet only about one in ten parents recognise that their child is overweight or obese. It's no wonder the situation has been described as a 'time-bomb'.



how will change4life work?

Change4Life is designed to help families make changes to their lifestyle by guiding them through three stages.

Stage 1: Reframing the issue

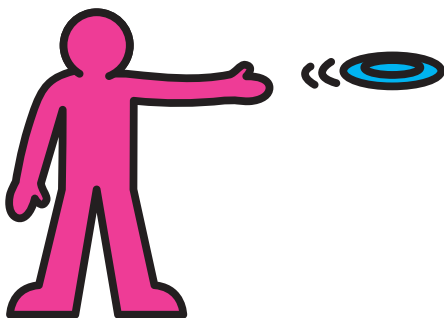


Because many parents don't understand the link between fat in the body (caused by too much unhealthy food and low levels of activity) and serious diseases they can be resistant to changing their habits. They also tend to hear words like 'overweight' and 'obese' applied to their kids and think that they are being accused of being bad parents.

To combat this, a major Change4Life advertising campaign launched in January 2009. It uses messaging that 'reframes the issue' in order to help parents respond more positively. The campaign talks about 'fat in the body' rather than 'fat bodies' and makes clear the link between fat and illness. It also pins the blame on modern life, which affects all of us, rather than pointing the finger at parents.

Stage 2: Personalising the issue

Once parents recognise that fat in the body is an issue that could affect their family's health, we need to help them understand the importance of their family's diet and levels of physical activity. A special Change4Life survey called 'How are the kids?' is designed to get parents thinking about their family's behaviours around diet and activity.



Stage 3: Rooting specific behaviours

Next, the campaign will provide parents with practical tips to make the changes that are necessary to give their family a healthier future. It won't tell them what to do – it will provide them with lots of tips and ideas based around 8 desired 'behaviours', so that parents can choose the ways that will work best for their family. You will find more information about the behaviours in this guide.

what can you do?

To be successful, Change4Life will need everyone who cares about our nation's children to join in.

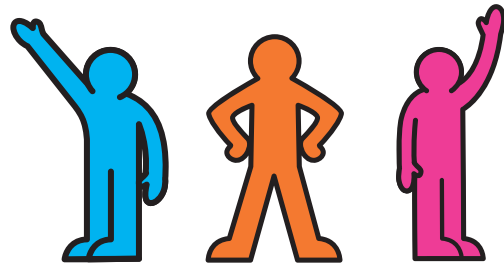
We need to help families to change their lifestyles, and that's a big challenge. But we know it can be achieved if they get help and support from lots of different trusted sources and see people around them doing the same things. After all, a few years ago recycling was something only really environmentally conscious people did, and now it's a national habit.

Big national organisations are already getting involved with Change4Life, including government agencies, the NHS, charities and the media, and they're being joined by lots of commercial brands.

But to be successful, Change4Life needs to grow from the heart of the community. That's why we need local supporters – individuals like you – who can support the campaign at a grassroots level.

Maybe you are:

- an individual volunteer
- a community group or club
- a healthcare professional
- a local authority or school
- a local business, or a local branch of a national organisation or commercial brand
- an 'ordinary' mum or dad who helps out with activities such as sponsored walks.



Whether you're a professional or a volunteer, if you support families on a local community basis you can play a major role in Change4Life.



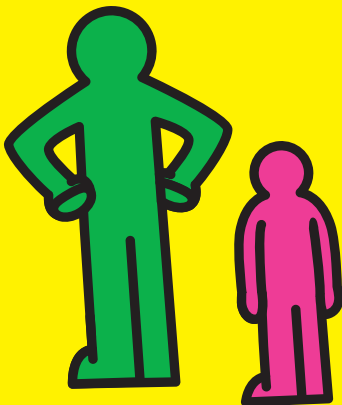
how to talk about change4life

Change4Life is based on extensive research. This tells us that there are some things we can say and do that will help motivate parents to make changes to their family's lifestyle, and other things that may make them reject our message.

This is such an important issue, we can't afford to get things wrong and alienate parents. So the more we understand about how parents feel about diet and activity, the challenges they face and the barriers they need to overcome, the more likely we are to persuade them to change.

Here's what we found out from the research. Following this guidance when talking to families will help you and your colleagues get the best results from Change4Life.

1. Parents aren't motivated by the word 'obesity'



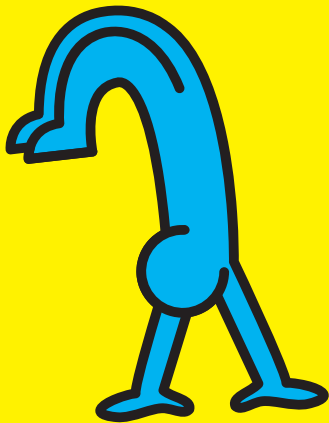
- Many parents associate obesity with the extreme cases they see in the media (such as '14-stone 9 year olds'), not with 'normal' kids like their own.
- They see the word 'obese' as an insult, not a medical term. They tell us they wouldn't use the word themselves and don't let their children use it about others.
- To many parents, obesity is about the way you look. They don't connect it with the increased risk of serious illness.
- That is why we talk about fat in the body rather than a fat body.

2. But parents are motivated by future dangers to their kids

- Everyone knows that the diseases we're talking about – heart disease, cancer and type 2 diabetes – are bad news. No parents would wish them on their kids.
- Once parents understand that high levels of fat stored in the body can lead to these serious diseases, they're much more willing to consider doing something about it.



3. Parents often don't recognise their unhealthy habits



- It goes without saying that most parents love their children and wouldn't knowingly do anything to harm them.
- But family habits, which parents might not realise are unhealthy, may be putting their children at risk. Parents tend to underestimate the amount their families eat and overestimate the amount of physical activity they do.
- It's easy for parents to prioritise their children's immediate happiness over their long-term health (such as giving in to demands for snacks).
- Unhealthy habits in childhood can lay the foundations for health problems in adulthood.

4. No one likes to be thought of as a bad parent

- Change4Life does not blame parents for the amount of fat in their children's bodies. But it explains that, with modern life being the way it is, it's all too easy to make unhealthy choices.
- It's not about 'good' or 'bad' parents, it's up to all parents to take responsibility for their family's lifestyle and habits.
- The campaign will be helpful, not critical, and you need to be too.



5. Parents are fed up with being told what to do



- Parents know their kids better than anyone else. They also face lots of challenges. So being told how to do the job doesn't go down well.
- But we do need parents to understand where changes are necessary, and why.
- To do this, we will provide lots of ideas and suggestions, so that parents can choose what will work best for their family.

6. Parents on tight budgets often think that healthy living takes too much time or money

- Some of the families who are most at risk will be on tight budgets.
- They may feel that healthy living is for mums who have plenty of money and don't have to work, and not for them.
- We need to let them know that Change4Life isn't about expensive foods or gyms – many of the Change4Life ideas and suggestions are cheap and easy for anyone to do.



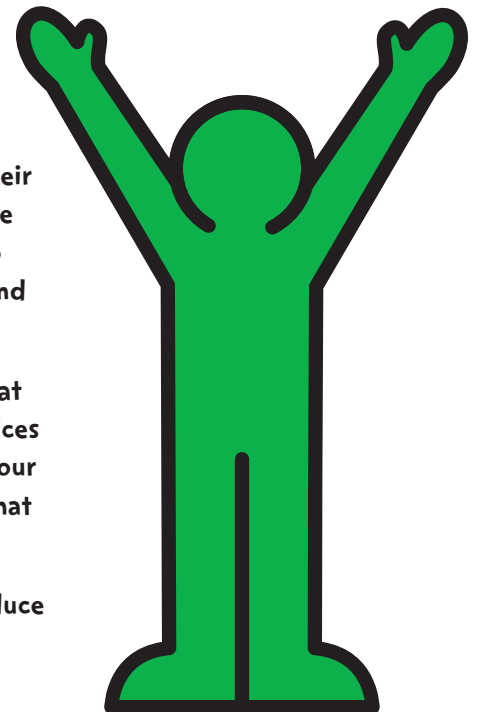
If you want to read more about the research, [you can download Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: Consumer Insight Summary](#) from the 'partner tools' area of the [change4life](#) website ('partners & supporters').

helping parents change their behaviours

People generally don't like change. But if parents are going to prevent their children from growing up with an increased risk of serious illness, they are going to need to make changes. We need to make this absolutely clear to parents. But at the same time, we need to keep the changes we recommend flexible and accessible.

This section contains a series of healthy behaviours for 5–11 year olds that Change4Life recommends parents adopt. They involve simple swaps, choices and alternatives to make changing their habits easier for families. With your support and encouragement, parents will be able to identify the things that their family can do to eat well, move more and live longer.

There are also ideas for you and your colleagues that will help you introduce each behaviour to the families you work with.



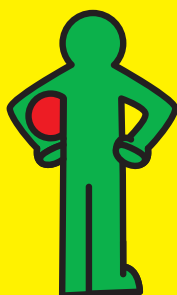
1 sugar swaps

Objective: Helping parents to reduce their children's consumption of sugar

Why is this change important?

Parents are usually aware that eating and drinking sugary things can damage teeth. But they're often not aware of the link between excess sugar and an increased risk of diseases like heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

How do we explain this to parents?



We're calling this behaviour:

sugar swaps – simple ways to help kids eat less sugar

We wouldn't let our kids eat sugar straight from the sugar bowl. But we tend not to think about the sugar hiding in the other things they eat and drink.

Excess sugar can mean excess energy, which in turn can lead to stored fat in the body and diseases like diabetes and heart disease.

Sugar swaps are a simple way to swap food and drink that has added sugar for stuff that has no added sugar.

For example, did you know that more than a quarter of the added sugar in kids' diets comes from sugary drinks? So swapping to water, milk (ideally semi-skimmed, but remember children under 2 need full-fat milk), sugar-free drinks, sugar-free squash or unsweetened fruit juice can really make a difference.

Read more **sugar swap tips for parents** at www.nhs.uk/change4life





me size meals

Objective: Helping parents to serve appropriate portion sizes

Why is this change important?

Many parents give their children the same size portion as they give themselves. But when we eat more than we need, the extra food turns into stored fat.



How do we explain this to parents?

We're calling this behaviour:

me size meals – making sure that kids eat the right-sized portions for their age

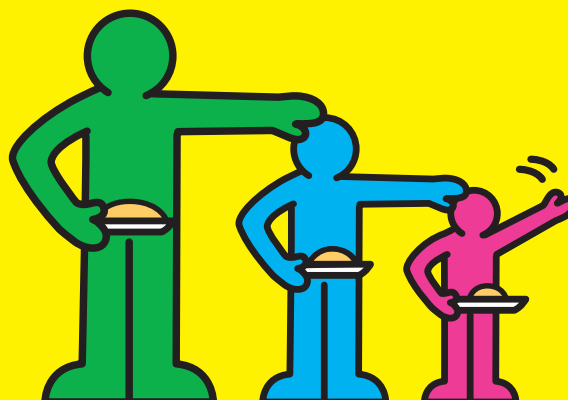
Kids seem to grow up so quickly these days. They often like to be treated like grown ups before they've really grown up.

This can also be true when it comes to meal times, when kids often end up with the same amount of food on their plates as grown ups.

But when they eat more than their bodies need, it converts to stored fat in their bodies. That's why making a conscious effort to serve them 'kid-sized' portions is so important. It's common sense really.

That way, you might even begin to see clean plates coming back, and if they really are still hungry, it's OK to give them some seconds.

Read more **me size meal tips for parents** at www.nhs.uk/change4life



3 meal time

Objective: Helping parents to make sure that their kids eat 3 meals a day

Why is this change important?

Giving kids 3 balanced meals every day helps to make sure that they get all the nutrients they need. But the pressures of modern life mean that many families are rushing and eating on the go.

How do we explain this to parents?

We're calling this behaviour:

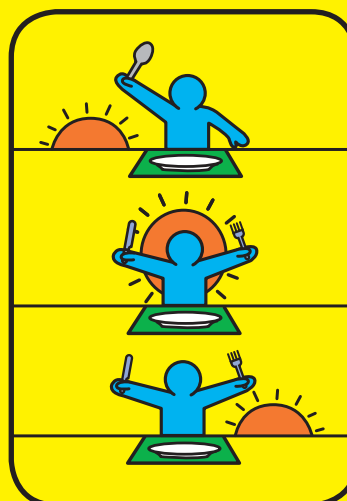
meal time – making time for 3 regular meals: breakfast, lunch and dinner

We all seem to be busy these days, and in our hectic modern lives we often don't make time for meals.

Rushing, making do and eating on the go all lead to healthier eating habits like snacking, eating fast food, TV meals, fussy eating and so on. Skipping meals is also bad for children, as they may miss out on essential nutrients.

That's why making time for regular meals is important. It's up to you how you do this to fit with your family and lifestyle, but sticking to regular meal times really helps.

Read more **meal time tips for parents** at www.nhs.uk/change4life



4 snack check

Objective: Helping parents to reduce their kids' consumption of unhealthy snacks

Why is this change important?

Many snacks contain high levels of fat, sugar or salt. What's more, kids who fill up on snacks are less likely to eat their meals.

How do we explain this to parents?

We're calling this behaviour:

snack check – simple ways to reduce unhealthy snacking

Most people snack more than they realise. Many snacks are high in sugar, fat, calories, salt and all the things we shouldn't eat too much of.

There are no hard and fast rules on exactly how many snacks are too many, but many families find that setting a limit on snacks and treats is a great way of keeping a lid on their kids' snacking.

Read more **snack check tips for parents** at www.nhs.uk/change4life

Snacks							
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Me							
Jane							
Jim							
John							



5 5 a day

Objective: Helping parents to increase their kids' consumption of fruit and veg

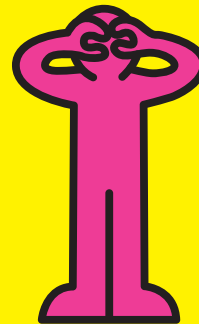
Why is this change important?

Everyone knows that fruit and veg are good for kids. But many parents think they've got to get their kids to eat mountains of fresh veg, which can seem like an impossible task. Because they don't know that there are lots of other options, their kids are missing out on vital vitamins and minerals.

How do we explain this to parents?

We're calling this behaviour:

5 a day – smart ways to get even the pickiest kids eating more fruit and veg



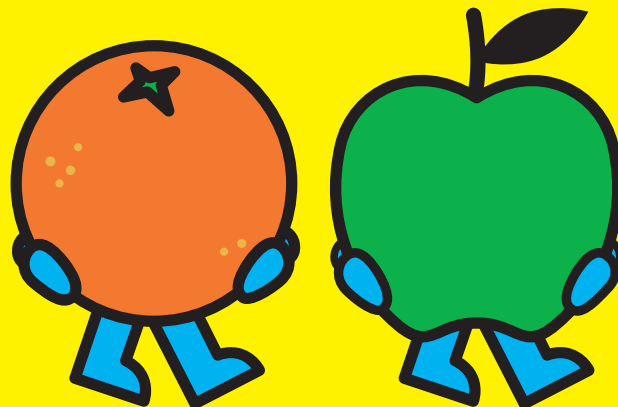
Eating more fruit and veg is important for us all – they're packed with essential vitamins, minerals and fibre, which may help reduce the risk of diseases like cancer and heart disease.

If your children aren't keen on eating fresh fruit and veg, don't give up – there are lots of other ways they can get those important nutrients.

For example, did you know that canned, frozen and dried fruit and veg and 100% juice all count towards 5 a day? Buying canned and frozen fruit and veg can really help you to keep the cost down.

All school dinners include at least 2 portions of fruit or veg, so that's another way of getting them towards their 5 a day.

Read more **5 a day** tips for parents at www.nhs.uk/change4life



6 cut back fat

Objective: Helping parents to reduce their kids' consumption of foods high in fat

Why is this change important?

Cutting back on fat reduces the risk of heart disease, as most of us know. But when it comes to understanding which foods contain high levels of fat, many parents lack knowledge, which means they may be risking their children's health.

How do we explain this to parents?

We're calling this behaviour:

cut back fat – easy ways to lower the fat in your family's diet

We all know that too much fat is bad for us. But we don't always know where it's lurking. It seems to be in so many of the things we like, and it can be difficult to know how to cut down.

Fortunately there are plenty of simple ways to go easy on the fat – straightforward things like comparing food labels, swapping certain foods for others and changing the way we prepare and cook food.

For example, did you know that grilled fish fingers have much less fat than fried fish fingers? Or that trimming the fat off bacon can reduce its fat by about a half?

Read more **cut back fat tips for parents** at www.nhs.uk/change4life



7 60 active minutes

Objective: Helping parents to ensure that their kids do an hour of physical activity every day

Why is this change important?

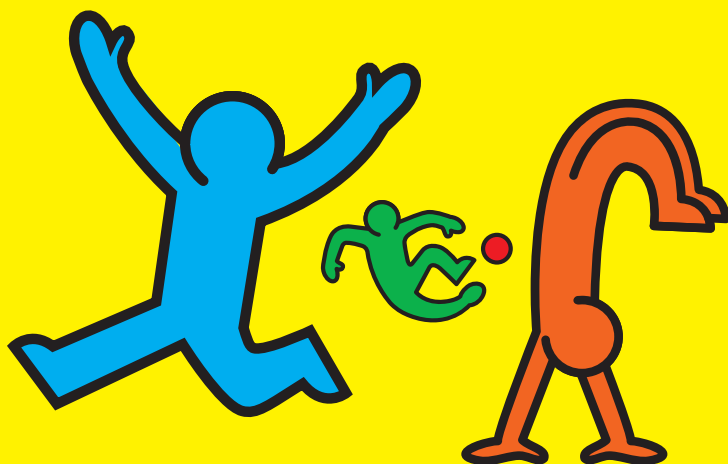
It's easy for parents to overestimate how much physical activity their kids are doing. Kids actually spend a lot of the day at school sitting, so it's important that they are active after school. If not, they risk converting energy into excess fat in their bodies.

How do we explain this to parents?

We're calling this behaviour:

60 active minutes – keeping your kids active, healthy and happy

Active kids are happy kids – they like to be up and about, running around and having fun. The trouble is, in this modern world they've got other things to do and plenty of reasons not to go outside and play or run around.



In fact, kids need to do at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day that gets their hearts beating faster than usual. They don't need to do it all in one go, but they do need to do it every day, in order to burn off energy and avoid building up fat in the body that can lead to cancer, type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Even at school they are sitting for much of the day, so getting the right amount of after-school activity is important. And don't forget their 60 active minutes at the weekend too!

Read more **60 active minutes tips for parents** at www.nhs.uk/change4life

8 up & about

Objective: Helping parents to stop their kids 'vegging out' too much

Why is this change important?

We all need to move about to burn off energy and kids are no exception. Being active also helps with kids' healthy growth and development.

How do we explain this to parents?

We're calling this behaviour:

up & about – how to limit 'vegging out' and make sure that your kids are active

Modern life has made things much more comfortable for us – so comfortable, in fact, that most of us spend too long sitting down doing nothing much at all!

Of course it's important to relax, but there's a difference between chilling out and vegging out. The fact is that kids who are inactive don't burn off enough energy and store up fat in their body.

The solution is simple – get up! Simply being up and about burns energy and helps to fend off diseases like type 2 diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

Something as obvious as getting your kids up off the sofa will help. Encourage them to turn off the TV or computer games and do something more active.

Some families find that setting a daily limit for sitting still (e.g. '2 hours max') is a good way to keep their kids active.

Read more **up & about** tips for **parents** at www.nhs.uk/change4life



things to remember as a change4life local supporter

Change4Life is setting out to tackle a serious health issue, so it makes sense that, as a local supporter, we ask that you follow certain guidelines.

The Department of Health has provided Change4Life branding tools and toolkits to enable local supporters to create their own Change4Life marketing materials and/or run their own activities. If you want to use these, you must agree to be bound by our campaign terms.

You can view the [full campaign terms for local supporters](#) on the partner tools area of our website.

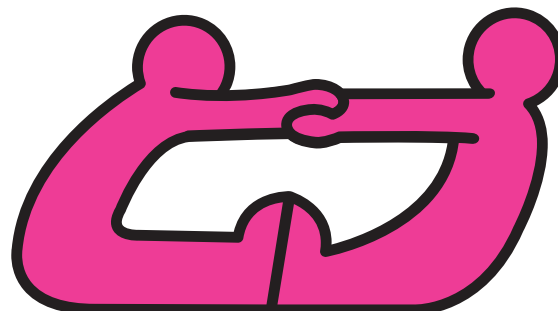
Supporting both diet and activity messages

An important part of the campaign terms is about promoting both diet and physical activity messages.

A key insight from the research behind Change4Life is that parents are prone to 'trading off' less healthy behaviour in one area with better behaviour in another. For example, if they feel that their kids are doing lots of activity, they may ignore the fact that they are eating too many snacks, on the grounds that 'they'll burn off the energy anyway'.

Evidence suggests that the best way to prevent rising levels of fat in the body is by being vigilant about both diet and physical activity levels. So it's important that, as a supporter, you encourage behaviour changes in both. Don't worry if your usual work or activities focus on one area and you don't feel confident talking to parents about the other. You don't need to become an expert in a new subject – all we ask is that you tell families that both diet and activity levels are important and show them where they can find out more.

The next section contains ideas for how you can support Change4Life through the work you already do.



supporting change4life through your work

How you get involved with Change4Life is up to you. It will depend on things like how and where you work with families and what types of activities are particularly suited to your role.

Here are 5 suggestions to give you some ideas.

1. Chat to families about Change4Life

One of the most important things you can do to support the campaign is also one of the easiest. Simply telling families that you're supporting the campaign and directing them to more information (for example by giving them our website address – www.nhs.uk/change4life, or the phone number for parents and carers – **0300 123 4567**) is a great way to help.

2. Put up a Change4Life display

If you've got access to a noticeboard, a waiting room or a spare bit of wall, why not give families some Change4Life materials to read? You can **download posters and leaflets** providing information and tips from the partner tools area of the Change4Life website ('partners & supporters'). Alternatively, you can **order a Change4Life supporter's toolkit**, which includes printed copies, by calling **0300 123 3434***.

Local supporter tip: If you're already helping families to get active, for example by running a sports club, you could use your display to help them choose a healthier snack. Download a poster now from the partner tools area on the Change4Life website ('partners & supporters').

3. Use the Change4Life logo

Do you create leaflets, posters or newsletters keeping families informed about healthy eating and being active? Or do you have a website or send emails out? If so, you may be able to include our logo on your materials to let parents know that you're supporting Change4Life. **Register online as a local supporter** now to get access to logos and advice on when you can use them, or call the local supporter helpline on **0300 123 3434***.

4. Provide Change4Life information in your communications

Along with our downloadable logos, there are short pieces of Change4Life text available. They'll explain what the campaign is all about and how to find out more, and they're ideal for dropping into your newsletter, email or website update.

Local supporter tip: If you normally talk to families about diet, don't forget to remind them to get active too! You can find information and tips on our website.

5. Hold a Change4Life event

Informal get-togethers such as coffee mornings are a great way to introduce Change4Life. You could either talk to parents about a couple of the campaign behaviours in one go, or cover one per session if it's a regular event. Don't forget to check out the tips on our website first.

Local supporter tip: Why not print off copies of the Change4Life kids' activities sheet before your event? Parents will find it easier to listen if their kids are happily occupied. You'll find the activities sheet in the partner tools area of our website ('partners & supporters').

resources available to help you

Become a local supporter of Change4Life and you'll get access to all sorts of exciting and useful materials to help you spread the word to the families you work with. Here are some of the things you might find useful.

Local supporter Change4Life toolkit

Along with this guide, you'll find lots of other useful Change4Life materials to download on the partner tools area of our website (printed packs are also available). Posters, leaflets and activity sheets for kids are available, all specially designed to make it easy for local supporters to pass on Change4Life information.

Activity toolkits

We want to make it as easy as possible for supporters to help parents to adopt healthier behaviours, some of which may appear rather challenging to families. To help make the behaviours as fun as possible, a range of additional toolkits is being created to help you plan and run activities to promote specific changes; for example Cook4Life, Walk4Life, Breakfast4Life. **Look out for these toolkits** if you have an area of particular interest and are thinking of organising an event; they will soon be available in the partner tools area of our website.



Logos, images and other assets

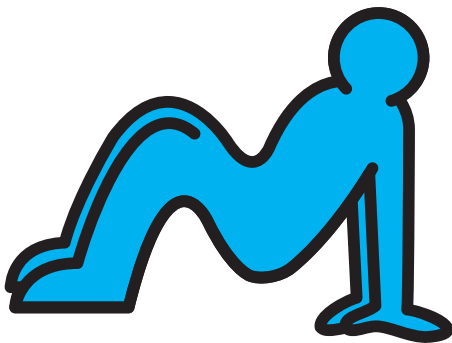
We'll make it easy for you to badge your communications to show that you're supporting Change4Life. Everything you'll need is available to download from our website but you will need to **register as a local supporter** to access them.

Answers to your questions

Need an answer? The first place to look is the **FAQs** on the 'partners & supporters' area of our website. If you can't find your question or you'd prefer to speak to a member of the Change4Life team by phone, you can call our local supporter helpline on **0300 123 3434***.

don't forget the change4life consumer website

The consumer section of the website is full of information and tips for families, so it's well worth checking out. Here are some features you might find useful.



Information on the 8 Change4Life behaviours...

Read more about the healthy behaviours that families need to adopt and why they're so important.

...and ideas for how to adopt them

Helpful tips and ideas that enable parents to pick the best strategies to suit their own family.

Healthy living suggestions

Handy interactive tools to give parents ideas and tips to help them and their family towards a happier, healthier future.

Local activity listings

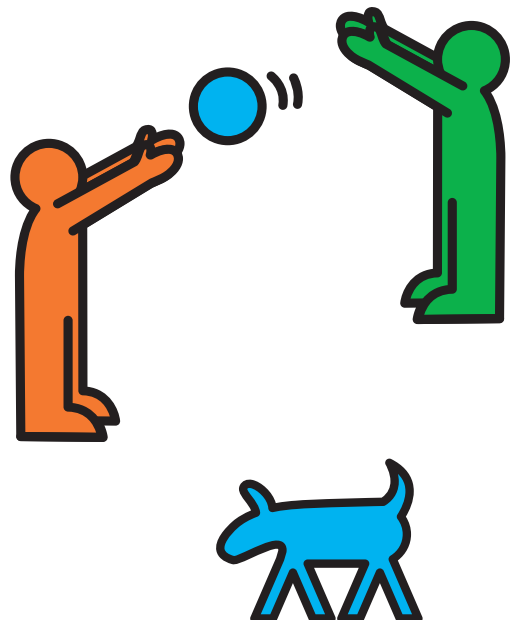
A searchable database showing what's happening in local areas to help families eat well and move more.

The 'How are the kids?' survey

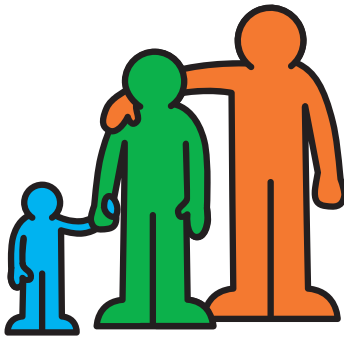
Parents can complete the survey online as well as on paper, and less confident parents may welcome your help in this (survey available from 31 January 2009).

Action packs for families

Families who sign up to Change4Life online will be sent a great pack to help them get started. It's full of information, ideas and top tips from other parents, plus puzzles, activities, stickers and other fun stuff.



how to get publicity for your activities



If you're organising a Change4Life event, media coverage can help get the local community behind it. Publicising your activity through local print and broadcast media will get people interested and encourage them to get involved.

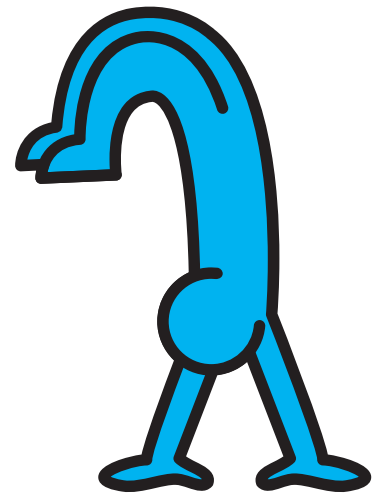
The following tips will help you make your story stand out for press, radio or local television.

- What is exciting about your event, and how will it help local people change their lifestyles?
- How can people get involved – do you need them to contact you beforehand or can they just turn up?
- Is it a photo opportunity rather than a story?

Writing a news release

- Keep it short.
- Use clear, everyday language.
- Cover who, what, when, where and why in the first couple of paragraphs.
- Include basic information (date, telephone number, etc.).
- Keep a copy of the news release as well as a record of when and where you sent it.
- Target your release. For example, if there is a great photo opportunity, tell the local paper or television station, who will want something visual.
- Send the release 7–10 days before your event or launch and follow up with a call to the journalist 1–2 days before to see if they are interested or need any more information.
- Make sure you take digital photos on the day.

Local journalists get hundreds of press releases, so it is important that you call local press or radio contacts a few days before your event or photo opportunity.



Calling a journalist



- Ask for the news desk or a named journalist.
- Make sure that it's a good time to talk (remember that they have deadlines).
- Have the press release in front of you.
- Have some basic facts about Change4Life to hand, such as why families need to make changes and what the risks of not changing are.

contact us

The 'partners & supporters' area of the website has information, ideas and resources for local supporters, including:

- case studies
- partner tools
- FAQs
- useful links.



Go to www.nhs.uk/change4life and click on 'partners & supporters'

By **registering as a local supporter** you will receive regular updates about the campaign and new resources that become available. Registering also gives you access to Change4Life logos and images for use in your own materials.

If you are not online, you can also register via the Change4Life local supporter helpline on  0300 123 3434*

*Calls to 03 numbers should cost no more than 01 or 02 UK-wide calls, and may be part of inclusive minutes subject to your provider and your call package. Our offices are open 9am to 8pm every day