

“Because we are coming here, it’s making my life easier”
Children’s views on what difference holiday clubs make to
them

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What is a Holiday Club?

- Various models but generally focus on food and/or activities
- StreetGames Fit & Fed- aim to provide meals and activities to children in low income areas during the school holidays



Holiday Challenges: Food Insecurity



- When finances are stretched, food is often sacrificed (Defeyter et al., 2015)
- Free school meals safety net
- What happens during the holidays?

Holiday Challenges: Inactivity

- Children's physical activity engagement lower during the holidays (Beedie et al., 2016)
- Parents struggle to find affordable activities for children to take part in (ComRes, 2016; Gill & Wellington, 2003)



Current Research Question & Rationale

- What difference do holiday clubs running the Fit and Fed model make to the children who attend them?
- Children's views are important in issues that affect them (UN Convention of the Rights of Children)
- Views of children experiencing high levels of deprivation are underrepresented in policy and practice (Ridge, 2006)



Participants

- 19 males; 25 females aged 5-16 years (mean: 9 years)
- 7 holiday clubs providing food and activities to children for 3-6 weeks
- Holiday clubs based in North East England; Scotland; East Midlands; East Yorkshire; Merseyside



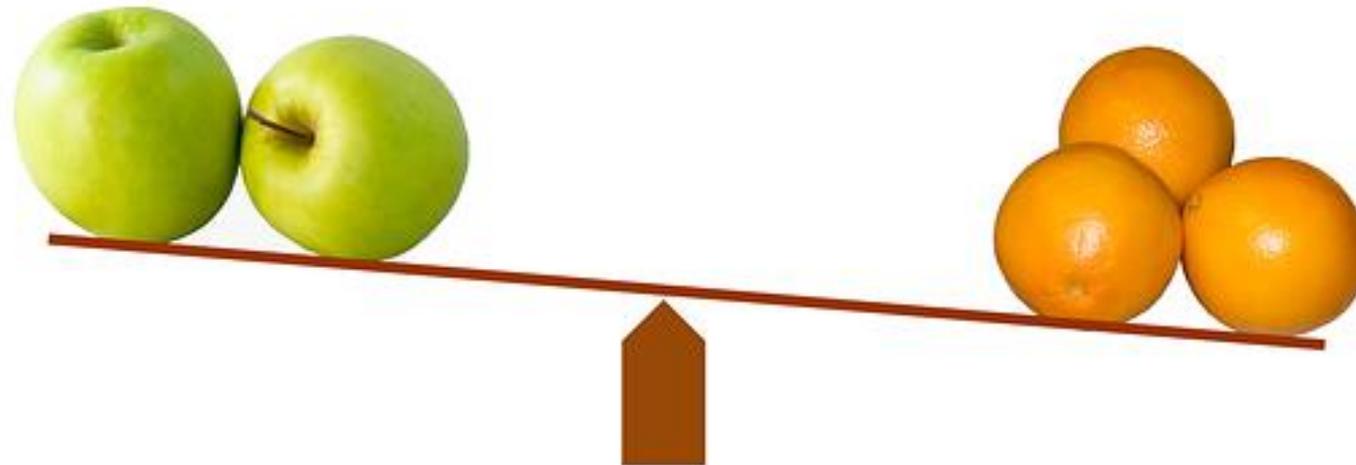
Procedure



- Focus groups on holiday club premises
- Facilitated by research assistant
- Audio recorded and transcribed
- Analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

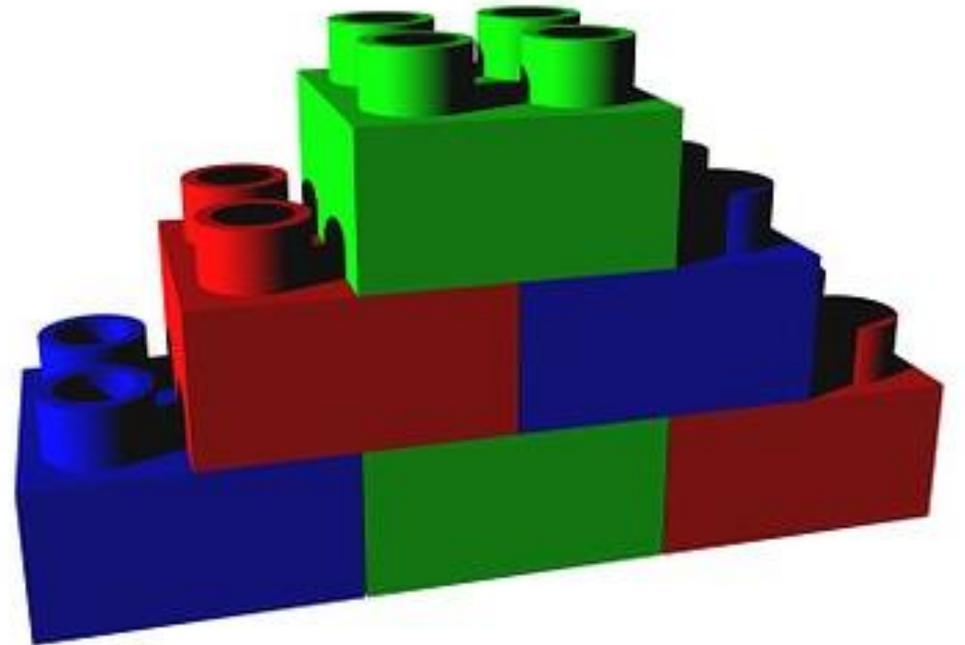
Theme 1: Food Provision

- Wide variety of foods and drinks- hot and cold options
- Chance to try new foods
- Some foods of lower nutritional value- similar to home



Theme 2: Activities and Routine

- Regular place to attend
- Chance to try new activities and learn new skills
- More likely to be inactive without holiday clubs



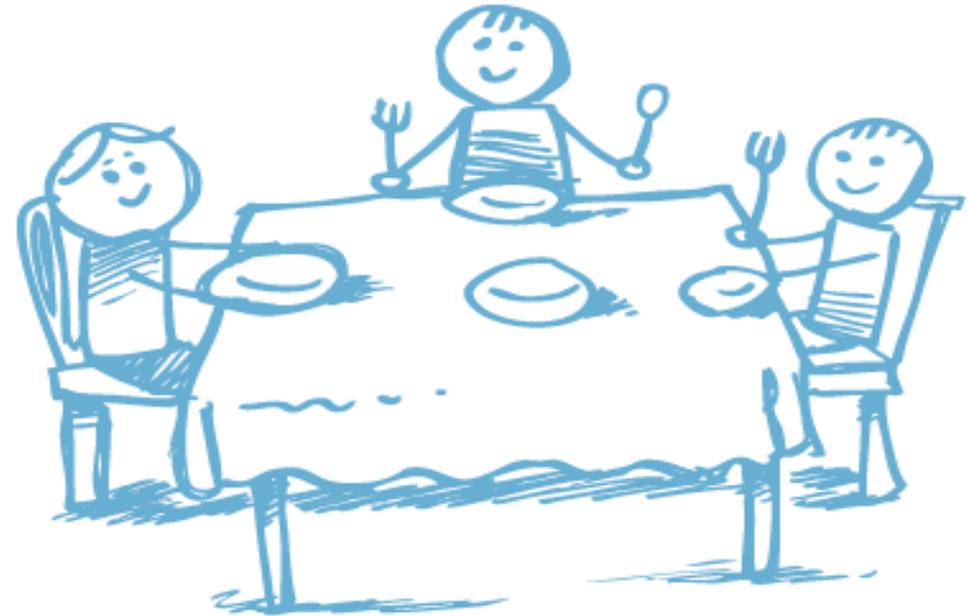
Theme 3: Valuable Social Time

“Because we are coming here and it’s making my life easier because I don’t have to spend time with myself at home, I like to be here” (Quote from Child)



Discussion

- Bridge the gap between term time and holidays
- Food insecure does not always mean hungry (USDA, 2017)
- Opportunities for repeated taste exposure (Lakkakula et al., 2010)



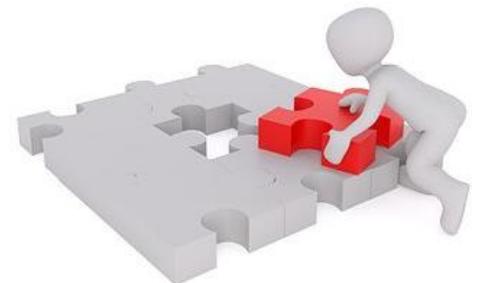
Discussion

- Decline in physical activity during the holidays (Beedie et al., 2016)
- Many children fail to meet 60 active minutes recommendation (Chief Medical Officers, 2011; National Statistics, 2017)
- Holiday club activities might help children to be more active



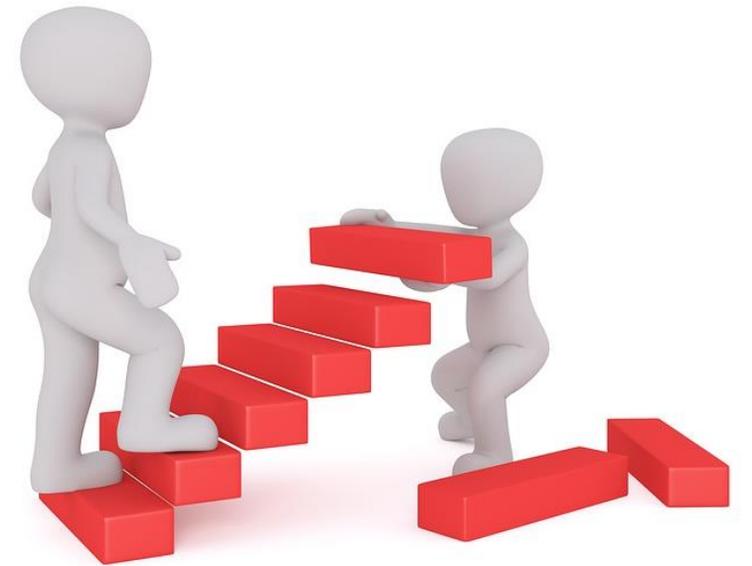
Conclusions

- Holiday clubs provide a range of benefits which extend beyond the provision of food alone
- Access to activities and social opportunities are important to children too
- Supports previous findings showing that the benefits of holiday clubs are multidimensional (Defeyter et al., 2015; Graham et al., 2016)



Looking Ahead

- Tackle food insecurity as a whole- not just hunger
- Chance to promote positive eating habits
- What difference do activities make?
- More research



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