

Sainsbury's MEND Programme

Programme information sheet

WHAT IS IT?

MEND (Mind, Exercise, Nutrition and Do It!) is a targeted intervention programme for overweight 7-13 year olds that supports them and their families to make life changes that will impact on their health and well-being. The overall aim of MEND is to help reduce childhood obesity in the UK with a target of supporting 5000 families over three years.

What does the programme involve?

Each 10-week MEND programme comprises two two-hour sessions per week. Each session consists of one-hour's work on nutrition and self-esteem building and one hour of exercise. Children on the programme must be accompanied by a parent or carer for the theory sessions so they are supported at home and the impact is extended across the whole family.



What support is given?

The Sainsbury's Community Food and Health Advisors take on the role of local programme managers. This includes liaison with MEND, recruiting the appropriate children, measuring the children (except for the 'fitness test'), running the theory sessions and liaising with the parents.

The Youth Sport Trust provides national MEND Sainsbury's TOP Activity deliverer and local tutor training for the exercise trainer (one day), a set of Sainsbury's TOP Activity resources for the sports college or school sport partnership and, following the programme, 10 sets of Sainsbury's TOP Activity resources for local feeder and partner primary schools that wish to run an ongoing Sainsbury's TOP Activity club.



How is the programme managed?

Sainsbury's MEND programmes are managed locally by a Sainsbury's Community Food and Health Advisor who delivers the theory sessions. The exercise element is delivered by a member of the sports college or school sport partnership staff, using Sainsbury's TOP Activity resources.

On average, each programme works with 12 children and 12 parents/carers.

Following one term of successful delivery, sports colleges/school sport partnerships are given a further 10 sets of Sainsbury's TOP Activity resources to distribute to 10 of their partner or feeder primary schools. The sports college/school sport partnership MEND exercise trainer is given local tutor training in order to cascade that training to local deliverers within those 10 primary schools.



Sainsbury's also fund a termly grant towards the cost of deploying the exercise trainer and paying for venue costs.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

“ Yesterday I put on my trackies and they felt really baggy! I've now got new friends and feel much happier than I used to! ”

Sainsbury's MEND participant

From January 2007 to summer term 2008, 790 young people plus their families have taken part in the Sainsbury's MEND programme; representing 36 sports colleges and school sport partnerships.

Results from the summer 2008 MEND programmes taking place in 30 sports colleges and school sport partnerships built on the success of previous terms programmes and demonstrate the impact involvement has had on the health and behaviour of the young people taking part:

- BMI has reduced by an average of 1.0 BMI units.
- Waist circumference has reduced by an average of 1.5 inches per child reducing the level of abdominal fat.
- Sedentary activity has decreased by an average of one hour per day per child.

- Physical activity has increased by an average of 4.3 hours per week per child.
- The participating children are more self-confident.
- Parents assess that their children have fewer overall “difficulties” as a result of the programme.
- Teachers have reported improvements in behaviour and concentration.
- Children and their parents are eating a healthier and more balanced diet.



An evaluation study undertaken in 2007 also provided evidence of the impact the programme has had. Teachers questioned identified that:

“ At the secondary school age the inability to play sport at a level they could participate equally in with their friends/ classmates meant that they rarely took part in school sport. However, at MEND they were able to play on a socially competitive level with other young people who were at a similar ability level to them. ”

Teacher at a Sainsbury's MEND school

“ I think other girls my age should join MEND because they get to do lots of different games and get helped to get better at sport. Why would you prefer wasting time in front of a computer when you could go to MEND which is fun and free?! ”

Sainsbury's MEND participant

Positive changes in participants had taken place, for example, one school commented on how their participating pupils had shown increased social confidence and ability. Some of their pupils have gone on to join after school and community clubs.

“ There has been a positive change in all aspects of the MEND participants' behaviour in school. ”

Educational Psychologist



The same study has also show parents enthusiasm for the programme.

“ They love the activity best. My son wanted a chance to change and this has changed his thinking about being active. I can't stop him running around now. ”

Parent of a Sainsbury's MEND participant

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Young people taking part in the programme were equally enthusiastic.

“ At school we have a fun club called MEND, which educates us on healthier lifestyles. Firstly, our PE teacher takes the children into the hall and we do fun exercise. I like it when we play 'Grab It!' I'm much faster at running now, so when I play tag with my friends, I'm not always on because they can't always catch me! ”

Sainsbury's MEND participant

Sports colleges and school sport partnerships are currently invited onto the Sainsbury's MEND programme on the basis of their proximity to a Sainsbury's Community Food and Health Advisor and/or inclusion of health and obesity targets within their Evaluation and Priorities Document (EPD), sports college priorities or local area agreement.

If sports colleges or school sport partnerships would like to find out more or become involved please contact Alison Goodall at alison.goodall@youthsporttrust.org.

Case studies on the MEND programme can be found in the School Sport Xchange Plus case study directory by entering MEND into the search box. The School Sport Xchange can be accessed through www.youthsporttrust.org

