

# Development and evaluation of an intervention for the prevention of childhood obesity in a multiethnic population: the Born in Bradford applied research programme

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## Plain English summary

### **The Born in Bradford applied research programme**

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## Plain English summary

There is a gap in the research evidence on effective interventions to prevent and treat obesity, particularly in early childhood and for those of South Asian origin.

The ethnic diversity of the Born in Bradford (BiB) cohort means that we were able to compare:

- birthweights and growth patterns of children of different ethnicities
- what young children eat
- what adult expectations there are around eating
- the way that adults interact with children at mealtimes.

We found ethnic differences in breastfeeding, infant diet, sleeping patterns and types of physical and sedentary activities that children engaged in:

- South Asian children were lighter at birth than white British children but gained weight and length quicker in infancy.
- South Asian and white British children were of similar weight at age 2 years but South Asian children were taller on average than white British children.
- White British mothers breastfed for less time and weaned earlier than South Asian mothers.
- South Asian mothers were less physically active and had higher rates of gestational diabetes.
- South Asian families ate more fresh fruit and vegetables and drank more sugary drinks in the home than white British families and white British infants ate more processed meats.
- Infants were more likely to be overweight/obese at 3 years if the mother was obese and also if the mother smoked during pregnancy.
- Obese mothers were most likely to use positive comments during feeding but were less likely to set limits or boundaries on what children ate.

We have used the collected evidence to develop an intervention programme that acknowledges the diversity of needs among British families and is aimed at parents whatever their ethnic or cultural background. This Healthy and Active Parenting Programme for early Years (HAPPY) has been tested in a pilot study with encouraging results.



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