

Grow Your Own Veg kits OBA

March 2022

Health and Wellbeing Service

Physical Activity

Regular physical activity benefits physical and mental health. Achieving higher levels of physical activity in the early years helps maintain higher levels later in childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Ensuring that all children are as active as possible is important for current and future population health. However, many children do not achieve the minimum recommended level of physical activity.

Doing physical activity outside has additional advantages. When children and young people play outdoors, they have fun and benefit from freedom to make noise and let off steam, connection with nature and increased Vitamin D uptake. When children are used to playing outdoors, they are more likely to try new activities, engage with others, solve problems, explore the natural environment, make friends and show resilience.

Nutrition

What children eat and drink during their early years can affect their health for many years to come. General eating habits are formed in the first few years of life, so it is important that children eat nutritious food. Children need a healthy balanced diet containing foods from each food group so they get a wide range of nutrients to help them stay healthy including five portions of various fruit and vegetables a day as this will make sure they get the full range of vitamins and minerals.

However, most people including children and young people do not consume 5 or more portions of fruit and vegetables per day.

Background

Northern Area Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) Locality Planning Groups (LPGs) carried out a needs survey with children/young people and parents (CYP) in 2020. Physical activity and health was identified as a top need by children/young people (CYP) and parents.

During action planning the group decided to focus on encouraging children and young people to get physically active outside and nutrition.

A sub group was set up to develop actions. One of the actions the sub group decided on was working with NHSCT and Groundworks NI to obtain Grow Your Own Veg kits including everything a child/young people would need to grow vegetables. A recipe book was included to help the children use the vegetables they grew. Included in the packs were also flower seeds and links to local council growing initiatives to build on this project and encourage the children and young people to continue to garden and gain the benefits of being active long term along with trying new vegetables.

CYPSP Outcomes

This aligned with CYPSP Outcomes, in particular:

- Children and young people are physically and mentally healthy
- Enjoyment of play and leisure
- Children and young people learn and achieve
- Children and young people experience economic and environmental wellbeing

How much did we do?

250 Grow Your Own Veg kits were distributed to 9 organisations working with children and young people across the Antrim Ballymena area which included organisations working with:

- Pre-school children
- CYP accessing counselling
- CYP attending a youth club in a deprived area
- Children part of traveller families
- Children looked after by childminders
- CYP of families not in employment
- CYP outside mainstream education
- Children in deprived communities
- CYP with disabilities

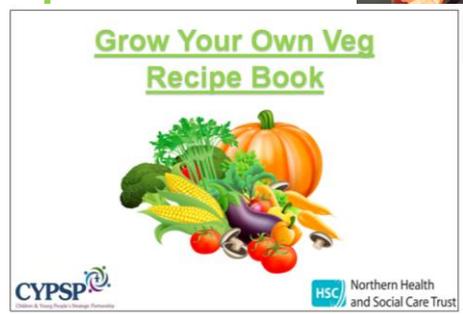


The Grow Your Own Veg boxes included everything a child or young person needed to grow and use the vegetables:

- 3 types of seed
 - Compost
 - Instructions
 - Plant labels
 - A pencil
 - Pots
 - A canvas bag
- Gardening gloves
 - Recipe book
- Details of local growing initiatives

Also

- Flower seeds



Recipes

- Potato salad
- Vegetable curry
- Vegetable soup
- Leek and potato soup
- Vegetable cakes
- Cottage pie
- Carrot cake
- My recipe

Vegetable Soup	
Serves 8	How to make it: 1. Wash, peel and chop your vegetables into small pieces 2. Put the vegetables into a large saucepan 3. Dissolve the two stock cubes in the boiling water and pour over the vegetables 4. Cook at a high heat for 20-30 minutes until vegetables cooked 5. When finished, season with salt and pepper and add any other flavourings that you like
Equipment	Here's an idea: Serve with wheaten bread
Ingredients	
Preparation time: 15-20 minutes	
Cooking time: 30 minutes	

Is anyone better off?

Organisation feedback

- Found them useful
- Felt everything they needed was in pack
- Hope encourage young people to experiment with food
- Young person spent time with family
- Child was excited and enjoyed planting the veg and talking about them
- Organisation wanted more kits



Parents/Grandparents felt:

- They saved money
- Gave them family time
- Gave kids break from digital screens
- Kids enjoyed planting them
- Children were planning how to use them
- Allowed children to relax
- Something exciting to do with them in the fresh air
- Felt there was a feel good factor



Children/young people feedback:

- Were active outside
- Fun to plant the vegetables
- Gave them something to focus on
- Enjoyed taking care of them
- Looking forward to eating what they grow



Is anyone better off?

“I know for me, the lettuce leaves specifically, will be a definite money saver, I always buy lettuce and use not even a third of it before it needs binned. So being able to pick a few leaves at a time will be fab. My daughter is also obsessed with flowers and can't wait for them to grow, she had a blast (a very messy blast) planting them” **Parent**

“The pack has given us some much needed family time, with a break away from screens”
Parent

“My boys found this a really enjoyable experience and were fascinated with the idea of growing their own vegetables to each. My eldest son has been having some difficulty in school in relation to bullying and this really allowed him to feel present, enjoy the experience and relax. As well as this, it has allowed us as family to sit together and complete activities that are free and easy without the pressure of having to do something at weekends.”

Parent

“I found them useful, everything required for planting the seeds was included in the pack including children's sized garden gloves which was great as my young person has ASD and has sensory issues so these were great to have within the pack. We used them to plant the vegetable seeds which I am hoping will encourage my young person to experiment with food as he is the one growing them himself. This allowed my young person to spend some time with family as usually due to his ASD he not does socialise much and this gave him some excitement and he enjoyed planting these and talking about what vegetables they were going to grow in to.”

CYPSP LPG organisation

“It has given me something to focus on and I am enjoying taking care of them as they begin to grow”
Child

“My daughter loved planting them and is already planning how she is going to use the carrots!”
Parent

“They were fun to make and hopefully they grow so we can see what they look like”
Child