

Stockton Family Outreach and Volunteering Service

Families, Food and Fun Impact Report

6 Weeks of Summer!

Family Action Head Office 24 Angel Gate, City Road, London, EC1V 2PT
T: 020 7254 6251 info@family-action.org.uk www.family-action.org.uk

Registered as a Charity in England & Wales no: 264713. Registered as a Charity in the Isle of Man no: 1206.
Registered Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales: 01068186.

Patron: Her Majesty the Queen. Chair: Mary Fulton. Chief Executive: David Holmes CBE.

Vice Patrons: Christine Davies CBE. Dr Andrew McCulloch. Dame Denise Platt DBE. Katie Vanneck-Smith. Professor Harriet Ward CBE.

Contents	2
Background	3
Families, Food and Fun Impact Report	4
Feedback	8
Case Study 1	10
Case Study 2	11
Case Study 3	12

Background

'Up to an estimated three million children risk being hungry in the school holidays. This group comprises over a million children growing up in poverty who receive free school meals during term time, as well as an estimated two million who are disqualified from free school meals because their parents work.'

(Hungry Holidays, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Hunger (APPG), April 2017)

Stockton Family Outreach and Volunteering Service has participated in Holiday Hunger programmes from October 2018. The service received funding from Public Health Stockton and ran these family coordinated sessions across 2018 in October half-term, the Christmas Holidays, February half-term and May half-term. These sessions were targeted at primary aged children and their families at risk from food insecurity and social isolation. In June 2019 Family Action received further funding from Catalyst and Public Health Stockton to run further focused work around Holiday Hunger and were able to offer and participate in the 6 weeks of summer initiative.

Report in Context: Families, Food and Fun!

For families across Stockton-On-Tees on a low income or those who are vulnerable can find holiday times especially difficult. Families can experience nutritional, social and financial pressures due to the absence of Free School Meals, lack of regular social interaction and opportunities for play.

Family Action have over the '6 weeks of summer' initiative successfully planned and delivered 12 Families, Food and Fun sessions over 4 different Stockton Borough Council Family Hubs located in Billingham, Stockton central, Thornaby and Roseworth.

The sessions were free and welcomed children as well as their parents / carers. Families, Food and Fun is targeted at primary school children and their families, however older and younger siblings were able also attend. Families at risk of or experiencing food poverty were encouraged to attend sessions, in addition to those at risk of or experiencing social isolation.

We supported families by providing meals and opportunities to build family relationships through eating, learning and playing together. As well as taking part in a wide range of fun activities and enjoying quality time together, families also learnt about nutrition, budgeting and keeping fit and healthy. The activities families engaged in were games, crafts, music, dance, nature scavenger hunts, outside play and free play with board games and arts and crafts. Families were also involved in preparing their own food such as making own sandwiches, fruit salad, fruit, kebabs, pasta salad and decorating biscuits – to share with others.

Sessions were inclusive and we welcomed children with special educational needs and disabilities as well as adults facing a wide range of challenges, such as social isolation and mental health.

Family Action are passionate about ensuring co-production is at the centre of all we do and are delighted to offer some of the feedback we have received from children and families which has been positive. Children's feedback highlights that they have enjoyed the different activities (e.g. arts and crafts, games, making their own healthy lunches, and various workshops).

What have we learnt from Parents/carers?

Parents/carers have said that the session have helped them to:

- Worry less about money;
- Eat healthy food (e.g. more fruit and vegetables);
- They can have fun together as a family; be more active;
- Trying new activities and food was exciting;
- It helped improve their wellbeing,
- It helped get out of the house with their children and socialise with other families.
- Staff have also learnt and observed the individual benefits for some families, such as being more willing to try new, healthy foods and becoming more confident in speaking with other families.

So far, our Families, Food and Fun sessions have addressed issues of hunger, poor social inclusion, family nutrition and wellbeing, and financial strain by providing in each session:

- A free healthy breakfast, meeting School Food Standards
- A free healthy two-course lunchtime meal and snacks, meeting School Food Standards
- Free healthy drinks
- Free donated food items to take home after the session
- Support from experienced and supportive staff, including signposting to local support services
- A money-focused activity to help families with budgeting
- A fun physical activity to promote physical and mental wellbeing
- A wide range of fun and engaging activities for families to do together to promote family bonding
- A food related activity to develop knowledge and skills around healthy eating
- Opportunity During for families to eat breakfast, lunch and healthy snacks.

At each of our venues we provided extra activities for families to help to address learning loss and provide further enrichment. These were a science workshop from Supernova Science, animal workshop from Animal Story and circus skills from Circurama.

We received weekly food donations from Warburton's and purchased some food at very low cost from FareShare North East, a charity which distributes surplus or near date food from suppliers and supermarket. There was lots of food at the end of the sessions for families to take home which they really appreciated.

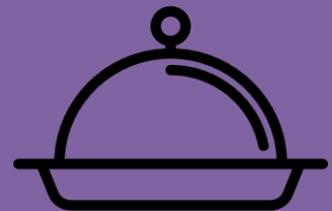
Family Action's Families, Food and Fun sessions have fed over

100 parents/carers and children.



70% of attending families were entitled to free school meals

210 Healthy lunches provided





Building
stronger
families

100%

of families said they would recommend Families, Food and Fun sessions to their friends.

The sessions helped families to:

Have fun together

Worry less about money

Try new things

Eat healthy food

Improve their well-being

Get out of the house with their children

Socialise with other families



Feedback at a glance:

- *'Very good few days which we have enjoyed'*
- *'Friendly and welcoming'*
- *'Fun, friendly and accommodating.'*
- *'Really enjoy coming'*
- *'What would make it even better? If it happens more often.'*
- *'More time for the family'*
- *'Been very good. Would like to see more like this for older children.'*
- *'Free activities to fill our days.'*
- *'Lovely day out. Thank you.'*



Children & Young People Feedback:

- *'You get to play lots of games and have fun. Also the food is good.'*
- *'I like that we do different types of activities.'*
- *'The people are kind and helpful. Food was yummy. I like all of it.'*
- *'I liked the fun and games. I also liked the food you gave us. It was lovely.'*
- *'The thing I like most is the games that we play.'*
- *'I love it.'*



Families, Food and Fun Case Study 1

Andrea (pseudonym) came along to Holiday Hub with her two children. Andrea is not in paid employment because of mental health issues. She had been looking for suitable, free activities to do with her children over the summer as she was worried about her children being bored and she did not have much money. In addition, her mental health sometimes made it difficult.

She said she liked her children to be busy, but that it was difficult finding things they could do together because of the age gap. Her eldest child enjoyed arts and crafts and loved science so they especially enjoyed the science workshop.

Andrea said the Families, Food and Fun programme helped her family:

- have fun together
- be more active
- try out new activities
- visit new places
- eat healthy food
- try new things
- meet new people
- learn new skills

Andrea also said that the sessions had given her motivation and encouraged her to go out during the holidays as she had been finding this difficult. When asked what would make the sessions better she said, 'if it was on for the rest of the holidays even without the free food.'

Her children said that they had enjoyed the sessions as they, 'get to play lots of games and have fun. Also the food is good'. Her other child said, 'the people are kind and helpful the food was yummy I like all of it

(This information is for monitoring purposes; please do not share, as it is confidential.)

Families, Food and Fun Case Study 2

Abir (pseudonym) attended the Families, Food and Fun sessions with her two children. Abir is a full-time mum and her children are entitled to free school meals. She had been looking for activities over the summer, as she likes to give her children many different experiences and had noticed that there were not very many that were free. Abir said she and her family had really enjoyed coming to the Families, Food and Fun sessions.

Abir said the Families, Food and Fun programme helped her family:

- have fun together
- be more active
- try out new activities
- eat healthy food
- meet new people

Abir said they had particularly enjoyed 'trying out pasta, *working together and spending quality time together*' they had really enjoyed making their own food, playing games and seeing the animals. She said her children would not eat pasta but they had really enjoyed it at the Families, Food and Fun sessions, which she was pleased about. She said that she would definitely make it again. Abir said how much they enjoyed the sessions and all of the activities. She also said that she and her family had felt very welcomed by staff, *'can't fault anything – Julie is amazing and staff'*.

As a Muslim, Abir and her family only eat Halal meat but were happy to eat vegetarian food. We purchased some Halal chicken for the family to accommodate their dietary requirements. Abir was grateful and surprised and said, *'Thank you for your kindness and catering and acknowledging dietary customs (Halal). You are all stars!'* She also said, *'we have really enjoyed the sessions something different every time'*.

Abir is that keen to attend she is wondering if Family Action will be coming back to deliver more in the October half term!

(This information is for monitoring purposes; please do not share as it is confidential.)

Families, Food and Fun Case Study 3

Kelly (pseudonym) attended the Families, Food and Fun sessions with her two children. Kelly and her younger child were quite quiet to begin with but her other child was very chatty and wanted to get involved and help staff during the sessions. Kelly encouraged her older child to join in with the games and activities but struggled to join in herself because of her younger child who was quite shy. We chatted to Kelly and her children and made her feel welcome and involved.

Kelly said the Families, Food and Fun programme helped her family:

- have fun together
- try out new activities
- eat healthy food
- meet new people

Kelly said she had particularly enjoyed, 'spending time together, and interacting with each other in a different, structured environment. This can be hard due to mental health'.

Kelly said her younger child was a fussy eater and did not eat much at home which caused her to worry. Kelly had been pleased because she said her child had eaten everything at the Families, Food and Fun sessions. She said she thought it was because he had made all of the food himself so had chosen what to put in it. Kelly said she was going to do this more at home and that hopefully he would eat more.

Kelly reports that coming to Families, Food and Fun had really helped her children, 'they have enjoyed making their own food and playing games with other children. This can normally prove hard for a mum who gets tired easily'.

As the week went on Kelly and her youngest child interacted more with staff and other families. The staff played games with and chatted to Kelly's children. Kelly said, 'Facilitators were really good with the children, encouraged everyone to join in and share ideas. It has been useful to participate together. Well done for all of the hard work and effort. We have had a lovely time ...thank you very much!'

(This information is for monitoring purposes; please do not share as it is confidential.)

For further information on the Stockton Families, Food and Fun [6 weeks of Summer!] 2019 please email: Stockton@family-action.org.uk or call on: 01423 557 701