

# ELAC 2015-16

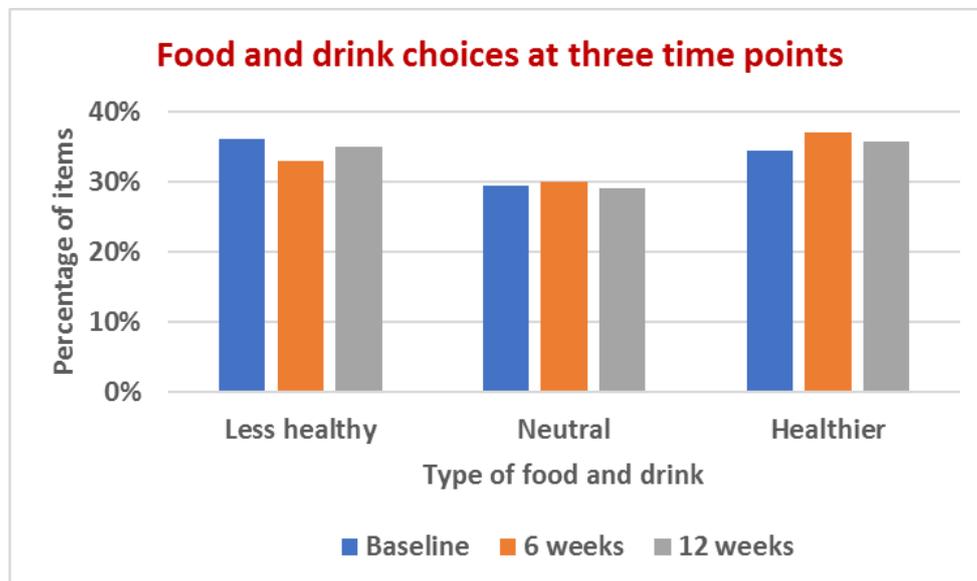
## *Findings*

### The impact of Eat Like a Champ on Year 5 pupil eating habits

Eat Like A Champ (ELAC) is a 6-week classroom intervention designed to help teachers deliver effective teaching about healthy eating to Year 5 pupils.

#### Main outcomes

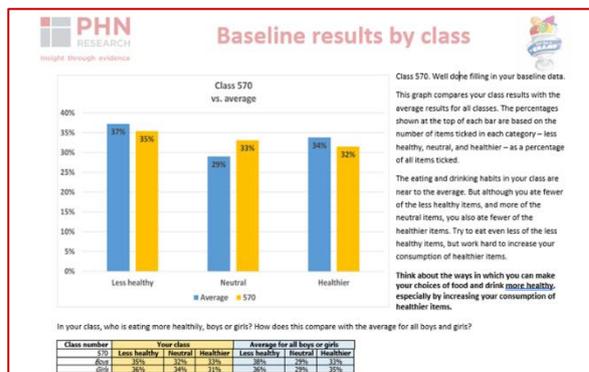
- Pupils age 9-10 showed significant improvements in eating habits 6 weeks after the implementation of Eat Like A Champ. Changes at 12 weeks were in the right direction but not statistically significant.
- 6 weeks after ELAC started, children ate 3.2% fewer “less healthy” items and 2.6% more “healthier” items – a net shift of 5.8% toward healthier eating.
  - Pupils ate more: healthier cereals, bread, etc. (up 8%); more lower fat meat and chicken, and more fish and vegetarian foods (up 11%); fruit, especially fresh fruit (up 9%); and healthier drinks (up 9%)
  - They ate fewer: take-aways (down 19%); spreads of all types (down 15%); biscuits, cakes, chocolate and sweets (down 9%); and sweet drinks (down 5%)
- These changes equate, for example, to one chocolate bar less per week, and around two portions more of fruit and vegetables. Although small, these changes are important to children’s nutritional health.
- Schools with greater numbers of pupils taking free school meals showed a bigger net shift toward healthier eating (7%) compared with schools with fewer pupils taking FSM (3%).
- At 12 weeks, reported diet showed 1.1% fewer “less healthy” items and 1.4% more of the “healthier” items – a net shift of 2.5% toward healthier eating.



- The assessment at 12 weeks was after the Easter Break, when more “less healthy” and fewer “healthier” foods may have been available.
- Some of the observed changes may have been due to social desirability bias, based on data collected in a group of 20 “control” classes who measured consumption on three occasions but did not implement the teaching sessions.

## Methods

- The evaluation was carried out in January-May 2016. Almost 2000 children in 71 classes in 37 state primary schools in Greater London took part in the study at baseline. At 6 weeks, 80% of classes provided data, but at 12 weeks, that had dropped to 51%.
- Pupils completed checklists in the classroom to show what food and drink they had had over two days (“today” and “yesterday”). They did this three times: before the classroom intervention, after 6 weeks, and again after 12 weeks.
- Class teachers entered the checklist data. They were given feedback at baseline comparing the eating habits of their class with national averages, and at 6 weeks to show how the class eating habits had changed.



## Conclusion

- Eat Like A Champ provides an effective, curriculum-based programme to improve children’s eating habits in the short to medium term. It also provides a good model for demonstrating genuine corporate social responsibility in aiming to improve population health by undertaking a robust, objective evaluation.
- A new evaluation is planned for 2017. Pupils will be asked enter data on-line rather than on paper. This will help to minimize errors in completing the checklist, and provide “real-time” feedback for teachers. We will learn more about how ELAC affects pupils’ eating habits and help us to improve its effectiveness.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the teachers and staff who gave up their time to come to training sessions and enter data, and the pupils who filled in the checklists.

Prepared by M Nelson, 15 February 2017