

## Tips and advice

### Establishing the meaning of health, eating and body movement in Shape Up

- **Start with where pupils are**

Involve children and young people early on the planning of Shape Up activities. Start with a brainstorming session with children about their opinions, views, ideas and understanding of the concepts of health, food, and body movement. Some of the possible questions could include: What does health, food, and physical activity mean to them? What is does being healthy mean to them? If it is important, why is it important? Where can they get healthy food? Where can they move freely and safely? What are the barriers to healthy eating or shaping up? Then follow the selection-investigation-vision-action-change-reflection scheme to plan and carry out further project work.

- **Focus the dialogue with pupils on action and change**

The dialogue with pupils should involve reflections about action to bring about positive changes with regard to some aspects of health, food and body movement in the classroom, at school, in the local community, and in health-related policies on local or national levels. The pupils' ideas about which actions should be taken should have a crucial role, as well as their visions concerning the future classroom, school, community, etc., with respect to a balanced diet and healthy weight.

- **Ensure results and use barriers as a learning experience**

Children and young people can become unmotivated if they do not see any effects or consequences of their involvement. Make sure children's ideas are developed and integrated into the project planning. Always give young people feedback about whether and how their work will be used in the project. Collaboration between the school and local community is crucial in this respect. If there are obstacles, discuss them with the children. Working with barriers and understanding how real life works is a valuable learning experience for children.

- **Use a variety of expression methods**

Use diverse modes and methods of expression: visual, verbal, play, body movement, etc. Examples include: drawing and writing; discussion in small groups; observation; child conferencing; photo-taking; guided tours; mapping the area; theatrical representations; timelines; body maps; modelling (see the Toolbox section within the Shape Up portal for inspiration).

- **Involve everyone: different children respond to different approaches**

Use primarily visual, play and body movement methods to involve younger children, and verbal and written methods with older children and adolescents. Consider a variety of methods to involve children of different sexes, abilities, ages, learning styles, school achievements, social skills, and socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

- **Engage in dialogue**

Starting from where children are does not mean that adults cannot honestly express their opinions and confront or challenge children's views; the adult (e.g. Shape Up teacher, facilitator, coordinator, or parent) is a responsible partner in the educational dialogue with children and young people.