

Primary age children rely most on foodbanks during summer holiday months



New data published today by anti-poverty charity The Trussell Trust reveals that last summer 74% of children who received support from foodbanks in its network were 0-11 years old.

Accord has been responding to these physical and emotional challenges by offering dynamic programmes of holiday learning, food and play for families who need it most, with its trailblazing Holiday Kitchen programme for the last five years.

Holiday Kitchen works closely with families of pre- and primary school children across the UK to help to reduce the strain faced by many families during the summer school holidays by offering free meals and educational family fun.Â

This summer, Holiday Kitchen has 17 programmes running across Birmingham and the greater region.Â The bulk of the programmes will be run from Birmingham childrenâs centres where provision focuses on under 5s, however Holiday Kitchen will be involving their siblings and parents/carers in communal food and holiday activities too.

Dr Caroline Wolhuter, Head of Social Inclusion at Accord, said:

âLong summer holidays are a challenging and expensive time for families from all backgrounds but they are particularly stressful for more vulnerable families when the free school meals and social support provided by schools and nurseries are unavailable.â

She added:

âOur focus remains on learning, food and play for families when they need it most. Holiday Kitchen offers good holiday nutrition, active learning activities and family support to strengthen wellbeing and relationships.Â The benefits to children are enormous and, as reflected in recent evaluation, include making friends, spending more time with family and learning to prepare, simple yet cost effective meals.â

Drawing on existing research by other bodies, Jane OâConnor, Holiday Kitchen lead researcher at Birmingham City University, concurred:

“Good nutrition and social interaction for younger children during school holidays is critical to school readiness. For pre-school age children in disadvantaged families the issue of food insecurity is particularly concerning as research indicates that it can adversely impact physical and brain development, cognitive and social functioning, parental well-being and, paradoxically, is also associated with childhood obesity”

Birmingham City University’s evaluation reports on Holiday Kitchen, published last Spring, based on feedback from children, parents, staff and volunteers, conclude that Holiday Kitchen is highly effective in meeting the needs of both low-income and vulnerable children and families during holiday periods.

For more information about Holiday Kitchen and to download the evaluation reports,

<http://accordgroup.org.uk/about/projects-and-partnerships>
