

Dear Teachers,

I hope you are all well and staying healthy and safe.

As you are probably already aware, the new health education curriculum as part of 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' became statutory from 2021, and was introduced previously in 2019. Within the health education element of the curriculum, there is a new focus on children's understanding and knowledge of fluid intake as part of a healthy diet. However, there is currently no guidance on how this advice should be implemented by practitioners. This is where I have a proposal for new research, to potentially help develop this area of the curriculum.

Following my completion in 2019 of my Master's study, in which I investigated 'Young Children's Understanding of Fluid Intake', I have gone on to publish several research papers. My work has also been a named area within a holistic approach to child health by the All Party Parliamentary Group for Fit and Healthy Childhood, in report number 17a (Emerging Dietary Patterns: Impact on Child Health). As I find this area so fascinating, I have decided to pursue my research further, this time with a focus on helping practitioners and teachers with educational resources such as a community and education hydration resource pack to aid in the teaching of health education.

I am currently undertaking a PhD at CCCU to develop and then evaluate the impact of such community and education hydration resources packs to aid teachers. This is where I would appreciate your help. I want these new resources to be developed from the ground up by myself in collaboration with experienced teachers practicing in early years and KS1 settings. Particularly as teachers are in the best position to deliver the activities to help the study measure the impact of the resources, and support others in teaching the topic of fluid intake within healthy diets.

With this objective in mind, I intend to gather the opinions from a selection of experienced EYFS teachers to gain a valid, credible and reliable foundation on which to build and adapt the resource packs. Including what teachers think should be incorporated in these packs and how they may be logistically delivered and implemented in schools. As such, I am contacting you to firstly establish if you would be interested in providing your opinions on the development of the packs to work in collaboration with me. Secondly, I would then be really keen for you to then trial the packs and educational resources within your class to help me evaluate the effectiveness of these teaching tools. I hope that not only you will be willing to share your expertise in the development of the resources but also how you and your pupils respond to the education hydration resources at a later stage, once they have been fully developed?

*The research timeline for your involvement would include:*

1. EYFS teacher opinion semi-structured interviews, sharing expertise and focus on what is needed to teach hydration and fluid intake to 4 and 5 year olds (*January - February 2022*)
2. Pilot study phase in one school (*June 2022*) – test all resources as one educational pack, ideally within one week as part of healthy schools week. This would include me checking the children’s knowledge and understanding prior to delivery of the educational packs, and then repeating the child face to face questionnaire after the delivery. This will also involve interviewing the teacher to gain evaluation of the full pack.
3. Full study in all schools where EYFS teachers initially participated in the semi-structured interviews, assuming they are still happy to take part. (*Academic year 2023 - The time for delivery of resources to be finalised with schools and myself*)

*(n.b. All dates are purely prospective and is just a timetable to work towards)*

Ethical clearance has been approved by Canterbury Christ Church University. So if your school is interested in partaking in this important research, please do not hesitate in contacting my university email address :)

All the best,

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