



Nutrition Justice Policy, Parents and Child 'Fatness'

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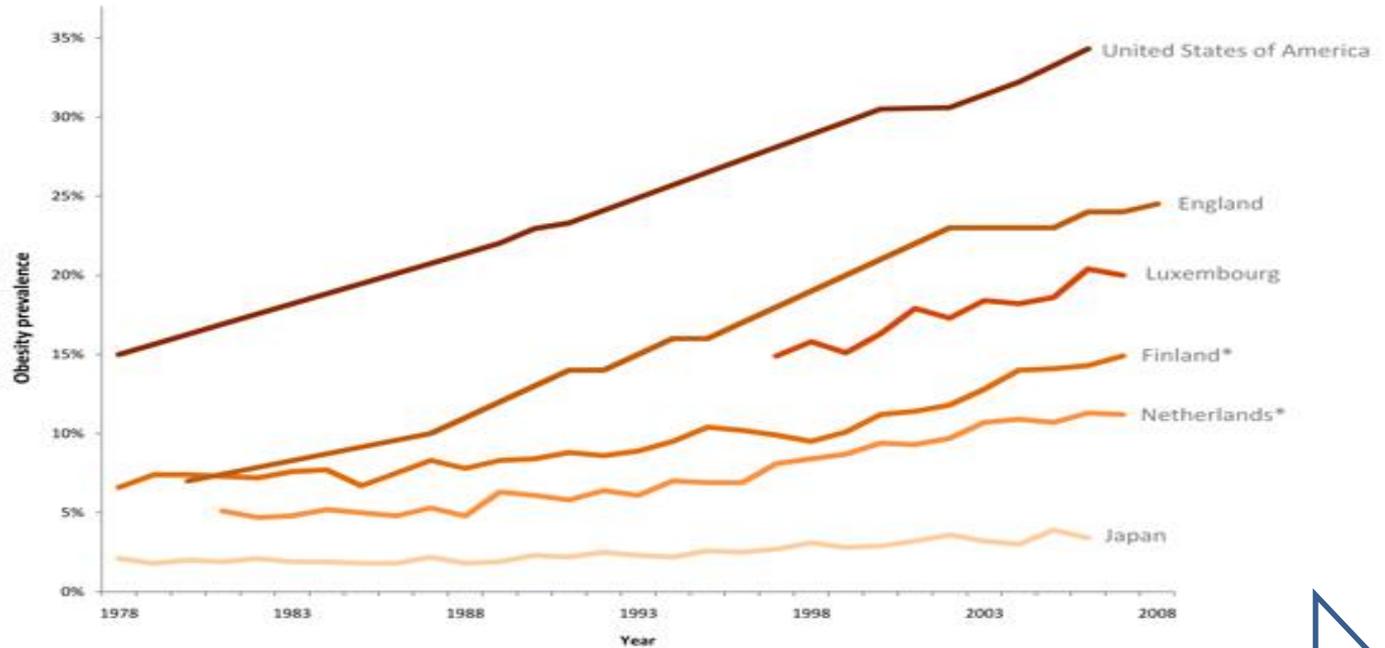
Registered Dietitian

Child Weight Management

Today's presentation

- Nutrition justice in relation to child obesity in the context of neo liberal capitalism
- Research design
- Findings: parents and policy process disconnects
 - Structural constraints: working conditions and foodscapes
 - Policy processes hinder parenting capacities
 - Parents support grassroots involvement in policymaking
 - Democratic constraints: democracy deficits
- Conclusions
 - New policy direction– ethic of care

Child obesity and neoliberalism



1950s/1960s

Productionist food system

Mass production

Cheap calories

1970s/1980s

Rise of neoliberalism

Market fundamentalism

Collectivism to individualism

Food consumer sovereignty

Big Food

1990s

Food & public health policy

Behavioural science

Responsibility individual not structural

2000s

Policy cacophony

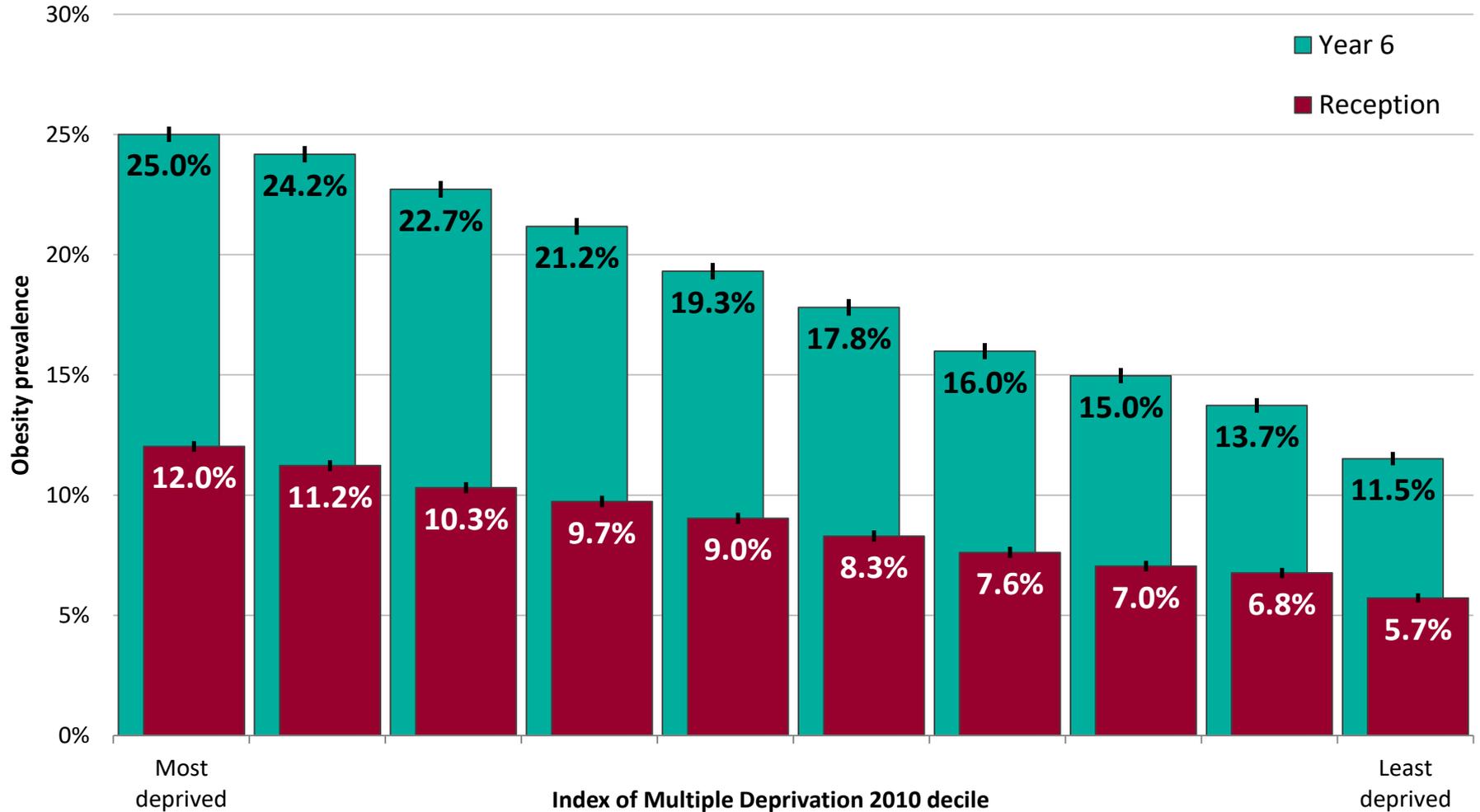
Food industry in public health

Parental deficit & blame

Nutrition injustice: social gradient

Obesity prevalence by deprivation decile

National Child Measurement Programme 2014/15



Child obesity: BMI \geq 95th centile of the UK90 growth reference

Research design

Critical policy analysis

- Theoretical framework: Foucault, Bourdieu, Marx
- Conceptual tool based on two policy triangles: Food (Lang 2005) Health (Walt, 1994) and WPR (Bacchi, 2009)
- Document analysis of food-related obesity policy
- 31 semi-structured interviews: policymakers, implementers and parent-recipients of policy
- Purposive sampling : 15 parents predominantly 'working class' with children aged 2 – 15 years categorised as obese by BMI
- Based in setting of the local state, an inner London borough – interface with everyday life
- Thematic analysis

Aim

- Explore disconnects between state and working class parents of children with obesity
- Explore the relevance of social class
- Inform policy and practice
- Move forward parents' influence on food policy

Research focus

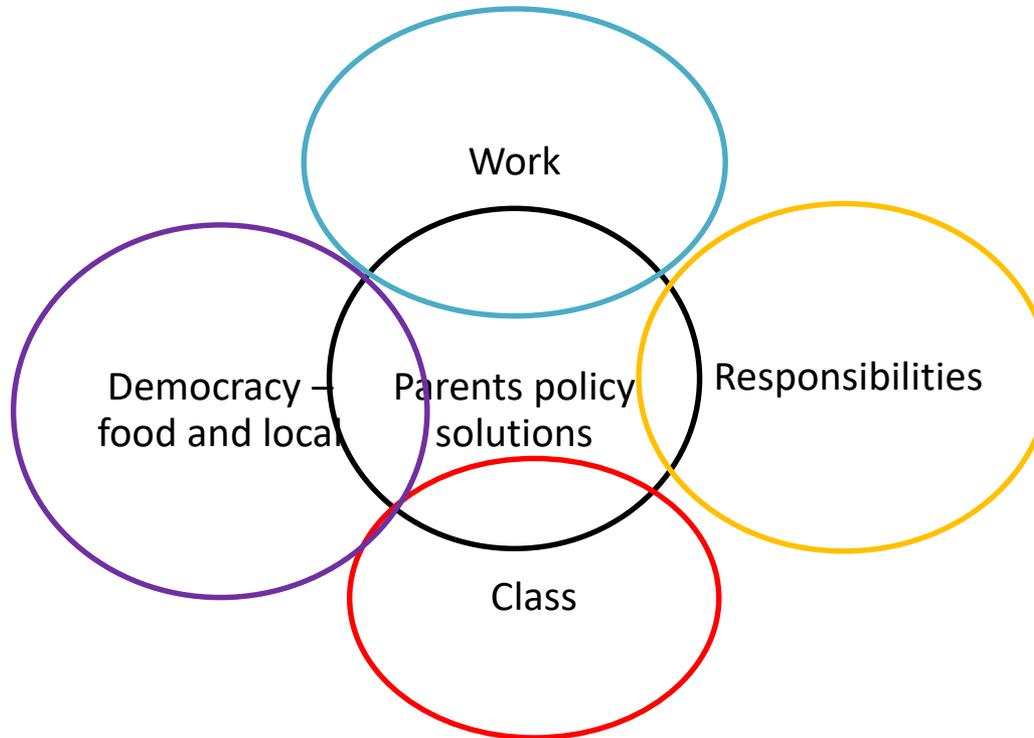
As critical policy analysis a core focus was democracy

And, child health as indicator of 'human flourishing'



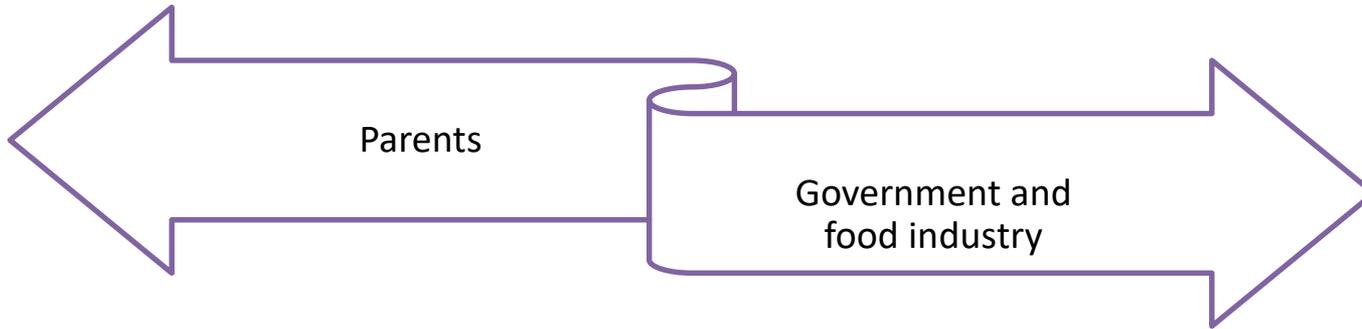
Acanthosis nigricans symbolic
of potential physical and
psychosocial effects of
obesity in children

Thematic analysis – domains



Parents policy solutions emerged within four thematic domains

Parents' realities of life versus government policy



Long working hours, precarity and low pay, and unhealthy foodscapes versus parental deficit and food illiteracy

Ultimate personal responsibility versus irresponsibility of food industry

Grassroots, community involvement versus democracy deficits

Policy process

Manipulative, coercive interest versus enabling and supportive

Material conditions - work/family life

Disconnect: state and parents

Liz (bus driver)

...so you don't get family time most weekends nowadays. So the emphasis on family mealtimes has disappeared and fast food shops are making a killing, because you know [the children] can feed themselves because not everyone as got the time to feed their kids.

*Yeh, we try to do when we go to **classes at the centre**. We try to teach them **about healthy eating** and one of the favourite things is fruit kebabs and vegetable kebabs. Put peppers mushrooms on the kebab and kids love that **but it's us doing it, who are volunteers**.*

*Parents used to be able to do things with their kids because they had **the time to do it**. Whereas nowadays they haven't and I think that's the biggest problem is just haven't got time anymore because **too busy working**, yeh*

Material conditions - foodscapes

Disconnect: responsibilities - local state and parents

Fixed in place at the bottom of the social gradient.



Leyla (childminder)

*it's keeping the adults on their liquor, the kids on the sweets and then the take-aways for dinner... **It's what we're seeing everyday so all we think about is sweets and drinks...** It's like the betting shops. We've got so many betting shops... a lot more people are doing it... it's not good.*



Oppressive foodscapes

Disconnect: discrimination

Maya (café worker)

*they **dump those kind of things in our area because they see it as deprived and they think the people who live there don't matter***

Yvonne (foster carer)

We don't cost anything, when they bury us

Maya

exactly, flippin cheek

Affluent foodscapes

Disconnect: discrimination

In contrast, affluent area



Felecia (playground supervisor)

*Now that looks pretty. It looks like something that would be more healthy....it looks like a little health food shop... **it's not life threatening***



Responsibilities

Disconnect: state, parents, food industry

Parents took 'ultimate responsibility'

Bedria (childminder)

*Economy and the government everything just linked together....**It's one big chain just goes around and we're just in the middle** and we're the one who just picks up!...It can be parents first because it's us who's responsible for what goes into my child's mouth...*



Policy processes

Hindering parents: hegemony and governmentality

Andrea (administrator)

*I think we are **getting the message** but they still don't seem to be doing anything about it....you're still **allowing** all these products to be sold because you want the revenue from them.*

- Injustice of profit before child health - ***Its all about money***
- Cynicism and distrust - comparisons made with tobacco control – ***'take years'***



Grassroots, community involvement

Disconnect: democracy deficits

Parents argued they should be involved in food policy making and gave examples:

- Community level forums at schools, children centres and local meetings
- Parents suggested power of community

Maya (café worker)

***We as people...as a community...need to take ownership of it as well
...letting people know so it's about building a community and going back to
grass roots, there's no other way...I think we should start a food revolution***

Policymakers described:

- 'Democracy deficit' – lack of access to policymaking processes
- Audits - through which parents inform policy – governmentality?



Parents' food policy solutions

Disconnect: state, food industry and parents

Parents put forward range of food policy and interconnected solutions - all contrasted with existing policy

- Work and welfare
- Food industry and government
- Community and local state: collaboration and democracy



Conclusions

- Disconnects run throughout policy framework that hinder parents
- Integrated policies across food, public health, employment and welfare (and others) that promote rights, nutritional equality and justice
- Emancipatory - non oppressive, non-stigmatising – policies, that is unifying, promotes genuine democracy with policy practised from grassroots/communities/families
- Ways forward: tackle material conditions; universal income, wealth distribution, and a political ethic of care embedded in food and health policy

Thank you for listening and any questions?

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Diego Rivera Triumph of the Revolution - Distribution of Food



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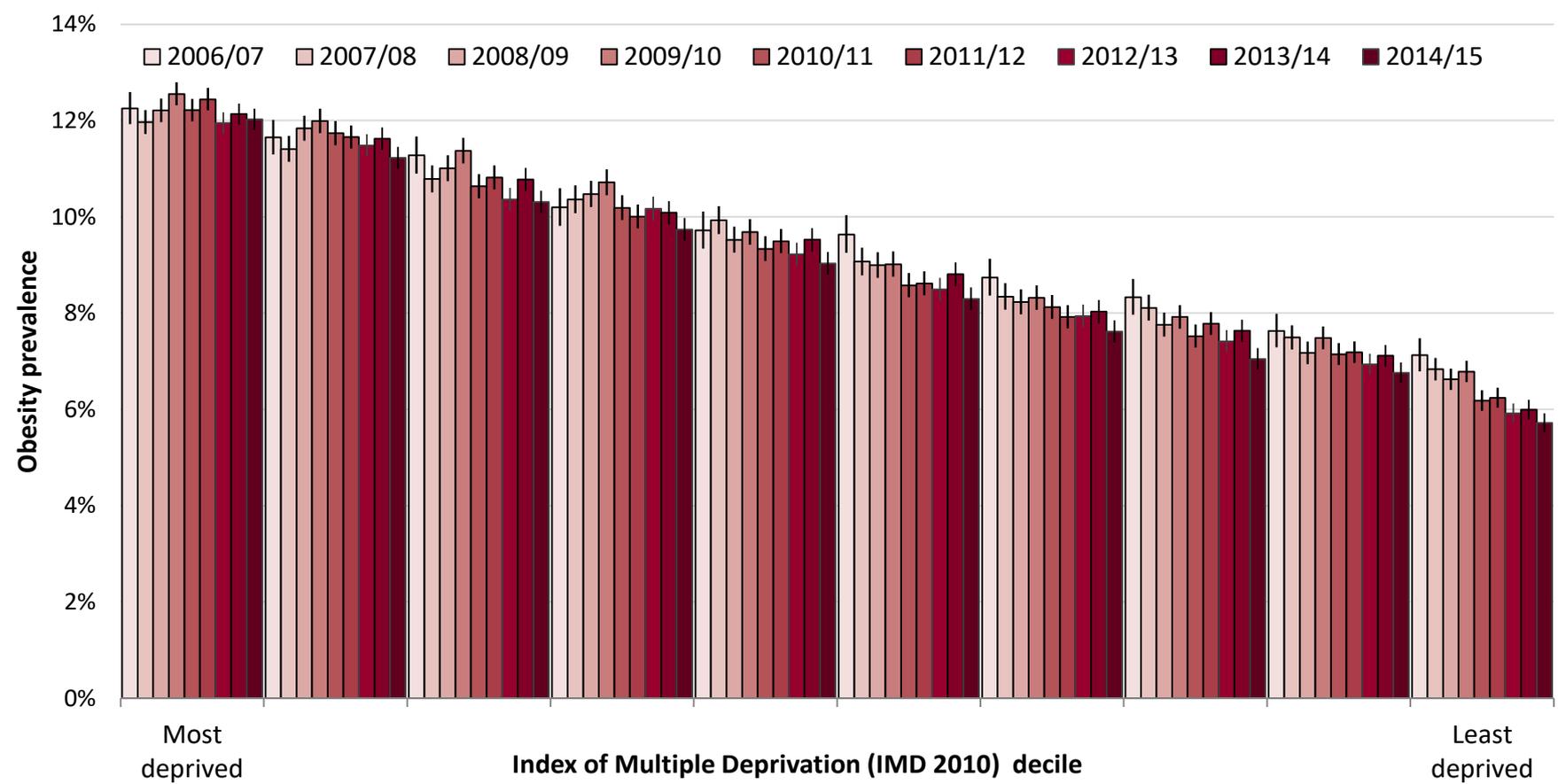
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Additional slides

Obesity prevalence by deprivation decile and year of measurement

National Child Measurement Programme 2006/07 to 2014/15

Children in Reception (aged 4-5 years)



Parent Sample

Age	Gender	Ethnic group	Post code	Occup	Edu.	Household type	State bens	Housing tenure	Assigned* social class
23 to 54	13 – F 2 - M	1 Russian/Azerb. 3 Black African 2 Turkish Cypriot 2 White English 1 Black British 1 White/ Black Caribbean 1 Pakistani/Arab 2 Black Caribbean 1 Asian/Caribbn 1 other	All in lowest 2 deciles of MSOA 2 on deciles 5/6	Child - care workers Adult - care workers Bus drivers Admin. Nurse Teacher	13 – second. level 2 -degree level	7 one family lone parent 7 one family couple 1 not say	9 Yes	12 social 3 home owners 1 not say	13 working class 2 middle class

* Defining social class using Clement, W and Myles, J. 1997



NCMP

Parent vs parent

Leyla (childminder)

*...obviously when you get the **letter** of your child's measurements...you assume it's the **parents fault** straight way. If you heard your child's obese or whatever, parents are going to talk, people are going to talk and assume that the **parents are obese** as well. Or you know, **neglecting the child, don't care, just feed it to shut it up.***

Liz (bus driver)

....it's the parents. It's the other parents.

Policy, hegemony and governmentality

Discursive chain (Sum, 2012)

'Nine out of 10 of our kids today could grow up with dangerous amounts of fat in their bodies. This can cause life-threatening diseases like cancer, type 2 diabetes and heart disease'



Killing your child



**Samina,
mum of 2**

'They do say it's like a disease...that's why I find it scary... like I think I want my children to be healthier just because I know it's dangerous for their health. It's a health risk'



'if trends continue as forecast, by 2050 only one in ten of the adult population will be a healthy weight.'



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Parent food policy solutions

Work and welfare

- Reduce working hours and raise incomes
- Food vouchers with benefits
- Non-taxable food vouchers additional to wages
- Right for parents to raise children optimally

Food industry and government

- Regulate advertising
- Healthy snacks aisles in supermarkets, clear labelling, healthy ingredients, quality foods
- Mandatory 'responsibility' deals
- Not increase taxes/costs of unhealthy foods - reduce cost of healthy foods

Community and local state

- Universal provision of fresh cooked free school dinners
- Community development approach including social nutrition e.g. Sure Start and schools nutrition
- Food and nutrition on school curriculum
- Democratic planning system
- Remove most fast food outlets.
- Redesign high streets – affordable butchers, bakers, grocers with foods fresh from farm