



## TOOL E9 The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP)

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<b>For:</b>	Healthcare professionals who may be involved in the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP)
<b>About:</b>	This tool briefly outlines the purpose of the NCMP and includes FAQs from parents about the NCMP.
<b>Purpose:</b>	To give healthcare professionals background information on the NCMP and to provide answers to questions that may be raised by parents of children involved in the NCMP.
<b>Use:</b>	To be used if parents have a query about the NCMP.
<b>Resource:</b>	Information – guidance and resources – on the NCMP can be found at <a href="http://www.dh.gov.uk/healthyliving">www.dh.gov.uk/healthyliving</a>

### Purpose of the NCMP

The NCMP is one part of the programme of work to implement the *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives* strategy, and is overseen by the Cross-Government Obesity Unit (Department of Health and the Department for Children, Schools and Families). Every year children in Reception Year and Year 6 are weighed and measured during the school year as part of this programme. The primary purpose of the NCMP is to:

- help local areas to understand the prevalence of child obesity in their area, and help inform local planning and delivery of services for children
- gather population-level surveillance data to allow analysis of trends in growth patterns and obesity, and
- enable PCTs and local authorities to use the data from the NCMP to set local goals as part of the NHS Operating Framework vital signs and their LAA National Indicator Set, agree them with strategic health authorities and government offices, and then monitor performance.

The programme also increases public and professional understanding of weight issues in children, and engages parents and families in healthy lifestyles and weight issues, through the provision (whether routinely or by request) of the results and additional information to parents.

### FAQs from parents

#### Q: Why is my child being weighed and measured?

A: The NHS wants to know how healthy children in England are. Recording the heights and weights of children in Reception and Year 6 helps them to work this out, so that they can decide what more they need to do to help children be healthier and live healthier lives.

#### Q: Will my child's height or weight be shown to other people?

A: No. Only the person weighing your child will see their height or weight. They will write it down secretly and it will be kept confidential. Nobody will be shown your child's weight, except you. Your primary care trust could automatically contact you about your child's weight, but if you do not hear from them, you can ask your primary care trust for the results.

**Q: Will my child's friends know what my child's height and weight are?**

A: No, your child's friends and classmates will not be told and will not see what your child weighs or how tall they are.

**Q: Will my child have to take their clothes off?**

A: No. Your child will remain fully clothed at all times, but they will be asked to take off their shoes. If your child is wearing heavy outdoor clothing, such as a coat or a thick jumper, they will be asked to take this off too.

**Q: Will other people see my child being weighed and measured?**

A: Your child will be weighed and measured away from other people. When it is your child's turn, they will be called into the room or the screened-off area. The only people in this area will be your child and the person weighing them, although they can take a friend in with them if they prefer.

**Q: What happens during the process?**

A: Your child will be called into the private area where the weighing and measuring will take place. The person will measure your child's height using a special height measure (like a big ruler). They will also record their weight by asking them to stand on a set of scales. They will then write your child's height and weight down and keep it confidential. That is all there is to it.

**Q: What happens after my child has been weighed?**

A: After all the children in the class have been weighed, the person running the exercise will take all the results back to the primary care trust. They will then input the results onto a computer and send the results off to a place (the NHS Information Centre) where people collect the heights and weights of all the children in the country who have been weighed. Your child's name won't be sent, so no-one will be able to find their results from this. This will happen for each school in England. The NHS will then look at all the measurements, so they can plan how to help children be healthier.

**Q: How can I find out the results?**

A: Your PCT could automatically contact you about your child's weight, but if they do not, you will be able to find out your child's results by contacting them yourself. The leaflet you are given will also explain more about the weighing and measuring process, and will provide you with some simple tips on how the whole family can get active and eat healthy meals.

**Q: Will my child have to go on a special diet or exercise programme after the weigh-in?**

A: All children should be encouraged to eat healthy food and be physically active. Remember, only you will know the results. If the results suggest that your child's weight is possibly unhealthy, you and your child may choose to make some changes as a family – such as eating more healthily and being more physically active. But the school will not be putting your child on a 'diet' or make your child change the way they eat.

**Q: Is there someone my child can talk to if they are worried about their weight?**

A: Yes. Your child can talk to their school nurse or the person who is weighing them. They can talk to them about their concerns and can suggest where they can go for further help, if it is needed. You will be able to get a copy of a leaflet which includes some simple tips on how to be healthier.

**Note:** More guidance will be produced on routinely feeding back NCMP data to parents, and dealing with follow-up requests, in late 2008.