Reviewer’s report

Title: What strategies perceive parents as effective or ineffective in promoting a healthy diet, physical activity, and less sitting in children: findings from focus groups with parents

Version: 1 Date: 29 July 2013

Reviewer: Tom Baranowski

Reviewer’s report:

This manuscript reports on focus group discussions with parents of elementary school students in regard to parenting of child energy balance related behaviors.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. There are several reports of qualitative research in regard to parenting re. children’s diet, PA & screen media use (GF Bentley et al. BMC Pedi 2012, 12:180), and several reviews have appeared of parenting in regard to these same child behaviors (e.g. Hingle et al. Prev Med 2010, 51:103-11; TM O’Connor et al. AJPM 2009, 37:141-9; Sleddens et al. Obes Rev 2012, 13:1015-33; SM Gerards et al. Intl J Pedi Obes 2011, 6:e28-45; Sleddens et al. IJPO 2011, 6:e12-27), but are not cited in this manuscript. The authors need to better summarize what is already known, and show how their research is innovative, i.e. expands what is already known.

2. The manuscript is rather long for n=21. The Results should be presented more synoptically, emphasizing issues not previously found in the literature.

3. The same is true of the Discussion.

Minor Essential Revisions

4. The current literature on parenting in regard to diet, PA and screen media use distinguishes between parenting style and parenting practices. The topics in this manuscript appear to be parenting practices. To be consistent with the current literature, the authors should switch terms from strategies to practices.

5. I suggest a title revision: What practices parents perceive as….: parent focus groups

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:

no competing interests.