Reviewer's report

Title: A feasibility cluster randomised controlled trial of a preschool obesity prevention intervention: ToyBox-Scotland.

Version: 0 Date: 05 Sep 2019

Reviewer: Peter Craig

Reviewer's report:

1. The m/s is a thorough and systematic report of a well-designed feasibility trial. To fully comply with the journal's guidance, the report should follow the CONSORT extension for pilot and feasibility studies, rather than the main CONSORT checklist.
2. The study identifies significant problems with recruitment, at both cluster (preschool) and individual (children and their parent/carer) level, with implementation fidelity, particularly for the home component, and with compliance with three of the four outcome measures. These findings are at odds with the optimistic conclusion that the study has demonstrated that an effectiveness trial would be feasible in Scotland. The feasibility study has done a good job of identifying the difficulty of engaging the target population, but there remains considerable uncertainty about whether the problems identified can be solved in the context of Scottish preschools. Rather than modifying the protocol and proceeding to an effectiveness study, a more logical conclusion might be that substantial further development work is needed to make the intervention appealing to preschools, young children and their parents, and to achieve an adequate level of fidelity in delivering the intervention and compliance with the outcome measures. Given the mixed efficacy signals about preschool interventions for preventing obesity provided by the most recent Cochrane review, it is all the more important that further tests of effectiveness are focused on interventions that can achieve and sustain high levels of engagement from schools, children and parents/carers, can be delivered with fidelity, and whose effects can be measured comprehensively.

Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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