Reducing childhood obesity and promoting a culture of physical activity
Reducing the risk of abuse, bullying and anti-social behaviour
Improving the achievements of children in care, from ethnic minorities and young carers
Improving early diagnosis and family support for disabled and special needs children

Council leader Warren Bradley said:—
“Today’s kids are tomorrow’s adults and we must do all we can to give them the best possible start in order to prevent them facing health problems in later life. Overweight youngsters are more likely to be bullied and that can have a knock on effect on their confidence and potential to achieve at school. It is vital we break the couch potato habit and tackle the growing problem of child obesity by finding innovative ways of getting them off out of the house and taking part in physical activity. Our groundbreaking kids’ gyms and games consoles on fitness equipment are already enticing youngsters into our Lifestyles leisure centres, and we will build on our success in these areas. Teaching youngsters the importance of eating healthily and getting fit will help them develop habits that last a lifetime.”

Free Lifestyles facilities
As part of the plan to reduce obesity, from 1st May 2006, 60,000 youngsters are getting free use of the city’s Lifestyles facilities, including swimming and gym facilities after school, at weekends and during school holidays. The city is also pledging to create 50 new activity play areas in school, deliver healthier meals and work with food stores to help parents ensure their children eat healthily.

After school activity
The city council also wants to reduce youth nuisance by 30% through supporting the development of after school activity and providing diversionary activity at libraries and leisure centres. Improved family support and assessment procedures will bring the number of youngsters on the Child Protection Register down by 20%.

Bullying
The plan also proposes that the number of 11 to 15 year olds who are bullied is halved over the next 3 years through the training of anti-bullying mentors in schools, extra training for children’s services staff and maintaining the Bully Busters helpline.

This article is based on a press release and further updates from Paul Johnston, Broadcast News Officer, Liverpool City Council Newscentre.