

Healthy Happy Bairns

A report on the work of the Midlothian Equally
Well Readiness to Learn test site 2010 – 2012.



Midlothian Equally Well Readiness to Learn test site

The Midlothian Equally Well Readiness to Learn test site was established late in 2009, as a development of the initial test site in East Lothian with a focus on early years. The rationale behind the Midlothian test site was to focus activities and learning around improving readiness to learn, to contribute to breaking the cycle of poorer than average health outcomes (in Midlothian) in the target communities: Gorebridge, Mayfield and Woodburn.

Its aims were:

- › to develop sustainable improvements in early years' services by involving local people in shaping services that improve health and wellbeing
- › to build understanding and support joint working between agencies and community organisations on health inequality
- › to support innovative approaches to improving readiness for learning.

Readiness to learn

When a baby is born, her brain is not fully developed. It grows in weight and complexity to become 90% developed by the time she is five. So those first years are vitally important. Baby's relationships with parents and care givers; the sights, sounds, smells, and feelings she experiences; how secure she feels – all these have a profound impact on the way her brain develops. And this, in turn, affects how she learns, thinks, and behaves as a child – and as an adult.

Readiness for learning can be defined as those attributes that contribute to the child's ability to make the best use of formal or taught learning strategies. It can be thought of in the five domains as follows:

- › physical well-being and motor development
- › emotional health and a positive approach to new experiences
- › social knowledge and competence
- › language skills
- › general knowledge and cognitive skills

The following are summaries of work taken forward by Midlothian service champions.

For a fuller description of the work taken forward as part of the Midlothian Equally well test site see the evaluation report at <http://edubuzz.org/equallywell/>



Baby T.R.A.P.P

Together Reaching at Positive Parenting



Kate Downey
Midlothian Service Champion

Kate's role

Co-ordinator of Midlothian Sure Start, Family Reachout (Family support of Pre-birth – three).

Kate's experience of being a Service Champion

Midlothian Equally Well Group
Attending Active Learning Set

What you did and who you worked with

We started up a young mums to be – ante natal group, which the parents called Baby T.R.A.P.P. This was for young mums to be and their families. Sessions included attachment, parenting, the value of storytelling and rhymes, first aid, breast feeding and healthy eating, question time with midwife, jewellery making and pamper sessions. Additional support was provided by Midlothian Surestart where it was felt to be necessary including intervention when signs of ante natal depressions were beginning to emerge. The response from the girls and their families has helped. The first group's babies have all been born and we are now working with a second group.

Impact - what it achieved

Ante natal group to prepare parents to support children and become positive parents which in turn improves their readiness to learn.

We provide Peep Two group. This encourages parents/ carers to support their literacy and numeracy.



Evaluation - what people have said - children, families, other staff

'Baby Trapp is a credit to every family and we are thankful for all help and support'

'Baby Trapp is a lovely place to come for first time mums. The help, support and all members of staff are great I have learned a lot since coming.'

The Future

The ante natal group are continuing. We are going to introduce "Mellow Bumps" a teenage parenting programme to the group.

Peep groups are continuing on a rolling programme.

Midlothian Sure Start
A quality support service
to families with very young
children in Midlothian



Support from the Start - the East and Midlothian Equally Well test site

Play in the Park

Midlothian



Mary Blair & the Play in the Park team

This is some of the multi-disciplinary team who delivered the Play in the Park projects: Children and Families Communities and Support services, The Voluntary Sector, Lothian and Borders Police and NHS Lothian.

My Role

I am a Community Learning and Development Worker. This means that I work with young people, adults and community groups across Midlothian. This has given me the opportunity to make the links that have been so important in promoting the Equally Well agenda.

My experience of being a champion

Being a champion has given me the chance to meet and spend time with practitioners from other fields. This has added to my knowledge as well as helped me become more effective in my job by building stronger partnerships for future work.



What you did and who you worked with?

Play in the Park is a project for local families, which is planned, organised, coordinated and delivered using a multi-agency approach. Local families, with children under the age of 12 who are identified as being most vulnerable, are referred to the project, which has an emphasis on participation and community. The project aim is to bring families together to play, have fun and learn new skills.

A total of 12 sessions were held over July and August, 4 in each area. 34 families attended over the whole project 16 families in Woodburn - 10 families in Mayfield - 8 in Penicuik Overall 91 Children and 37 parents took part.

Impact - what it achieved?

- ▶ The choice of activities meant that the children were never just sitting around
- ▶ There was a real mix of children and adults with a variety of abilities and they all joined in together and supported each other
- ▶ Massive benefits in relation to communication with people in the communities
- ▶ Increases the chances of building relationships with parents and young people alike
- ▶ Children and families had the opportunity to see that some of the (statutory) agencies were not scary people
- ▶ Meeting other workers and making contact with other groups was invaluable

Evaluation - what people have said - children, families, other staff

It's an excellent idea, loved the enthusiasm and learned new things"

"It was good for my child, who because of her disability gets into trouble a lot. It was good for her to be in an environment that was more understanding of her difficulties."

"I put on a brave face - broke ice for myself and opened lots of doors"

It was good to be able to participate in a project that was free, and that provided a wide range of activities

The Future

We ran another session in the October break and are now planning one for the February Break.

Music and Me



Chris Saddler

Education Support
Officer



Background

'Music and Me' is a new resource for Nursery staff that explores effective ways of using music to develop a wide range of emotional literacy and pre reading skills. It was piloted and developed as part of the Equally Well test site.

The programme takes an intuitive approach to music making and is designed to include everyone, regardless of their level of musical ability.

Impact - what it achieved

We have trained a number of staff from 22 nursery classes and Partnership Centres. This includes 2 nursery schools with apx 120 pupils in each and a total of 1000 plus pupils potentially involved.

The programme was so popular we offered as an additional CPD session to all LA nursery settings & partner centres. Delegates were charged a fee to cover David's time.

A follow up project aims to consolidate the roll-out of the programme with group music sessions in nurseries led by the author of the resource, musician and composer David Trouton.

Possible reprint of resource for further training

Evaluation - what people have said - children, families, other staff

Feedback from staff has been very positive and all see the resource as highly accessible and relevant for use with young children.



Nursery children from Wallyford at the launch of the new 'Music and Me' resource

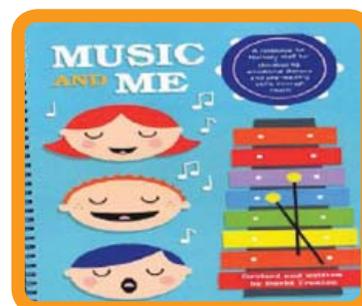
A follow up project aims to consolidate the roll-out of the programme with group music sessions in nurseries led by the author of the resource, musician & composer David Trouton.

The future

A bid was made through creative Scotland funding and each Nursery will receive 2x1/2 day visits:

In visit 1 DT will work through the activities with groups of nursery children and with the help of nursery staff, illustrating the use of the resource material and developing confidence in staff to enable them to deliver lessons themselves.

In visit 2 DT will observe staff using the Music and Me material & offering support and advice on its use. Hope to capture participation by children staff and possibly parents and produce example of good practice. This resource certainly supports from the start, core curriculum of Literacy Numeracy and Health & Well being. Also creativity, musicality cognitive development, expressive arts and social studies.



Improving the health of the next generation

Raising awareness of breastfeeding in schools

Steering Group

Joanna Taylor, Head Teacher, Whitecraig Primary School, East Lothian

Lesley Walker, Senior Health Promotion Specialist, NHS Lothian

Carolyn Worlock, Infant Feeding Advisor and Service Champion, NHS Lothian

Nicky Neighbour, Antenatal Practitioner and Community Champion, NCT

Lisa Hobson, Health Co-ordinator, Gorebridge Primary School

Your Experience of being a Service Champion

“The best bit about being a Service Champion is definitely the partnership working – it’s been really positive and great to work with so many other people”

“I have enjoyed meeting other Champions and looking for opportunities to work with them to provide an improved service”

Project Aims

Breastfeeding as a choice for feeding babies to six months has very clear health benefits for both mother and child. However, there is a clear difference between communities in East Lothian and Midlothian in breastfeeding rates. There are undoubtedly many reasons for this – but a part of the explanation is cultural. The aim of this project was to raise awareness of breastfeeding as a healthy option through classroom delivery of Curriculum for Excellence Health & Wellbeing, and to begin to ‘normalise’ breastfeeding in areas with lower rates of breastfeeding.

What You Did and Who You Worked With

- › Set up a steering group to develop a resource for primary schools which would enable teachers to integrate breastfeeding into the curriculum, from nursery to primary seven.
- › Researched what resources were already available, and colleagues in Fife shared a resource they had developed. This gave us a good head start.
- › Created a 45 page Teachers’ Guide, linked to Curriculum for Excellence and including suggested activities for teachers, and a ‘story sack’ for use in nurseries containing toys and books to support parents in beginning to talk about breastfeeding
- › Created a resource box, supporting CD-Rom and ½ day training programme with input from a range of specialists
- › Gathered information on knowledge, awareness and attitudes from school staff
- › Delivered training to staff at two pilot schools, Gorebridge Primary in Midlothian and Whitecraig Primary in East Lothian
 - › Introduced parents to the programme at parents’ evenings at both schools
 - › Developed links with Community Learning and Development to explore the possibilities for further work with parents and families



Parents Evening at Whitecraig Primary



Impact—What it Achieved

- › Received positive feedback for the Teachers’ Guide and resource box
- › Increased awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding to mother, baby and society, and of attitudes and barriers to breastfeeding within society
- › Increased knowledge of how breastfeeding works and confidence in ability to deliver classroom resources
- › Initiated a dialogue within two pilot school communities about breastfeeding, and supported staff to deliver sessions in the classroom
- › Raised awareness of the Breastfeeding Friendly Premises initiative

Evaluation—What People Have Said—Children, Families, Other Staff

Evaluation of this project is ongoing. Staff members from both pilot schools have completed the Iowa Infant Feeding Attitude Scale and it is intended that they complete this again once the programme has been delivered in class. This will potentially give a measure of changing attitudes. Evaluations of the training sessions have been positive, and parental support for the project has been very evident from informal chats and interest levels at parents’ evenings. The Teachers’ Guide includes a worksheet which will gather information from children at all stages on their learning, attitudes and enjoyment.

“Furthered my own understanding of choices available and myths”
“Very informative....the teachers guide and exploring resources was most useful”

“I feel more confident that the level I would teach this at is okay”

The Future

- › Offer nurseries and other early years settings the ‘story sack’ resource and training
- › Roll out the programme to all East Lothian and Midlothian primary schools, beginning with those in Support form the Start target areas
- › Further develop work with parents
- › Complete evaluation and share the learning

Robert Scott

Mayfield & Easthouses Development Trust

Robert Scott

Your Role

I manage Mayfield and Easthouses Development Trust. We run a number of Community projects within Mayfield, including co-ordinating the PEEP group in Partnership with Midlothian Sure Start and Homelink Teachers.



Your Experience of being a Service Champion

I have had a great experience as a champion and the support I got from the other champions through working together was the best thing. We achieved more together than we would have done on our own.

What You Did and Who You Worked With

We created a PEEP group in Mayfield in partnership with Midlothian Sure Start and Midlothian's Homelink Teachers. The PEEP group was for children from babies through to 2 year olds and gave them a flying start to life, through giving them the best start to education.

Impact—What it Achieved

The PEEP group helped children develop through stories, play and song. Parents also found they developed too, by learning how to play and sing with their children in new ways.

“We achieved more together than we would have done on our own”

Evaluation—What People Have Said—Children, Families, Other Staff

Parents said:

“It’s great to see how far my daughter has come on in these first few months”

“I thought I would be able to sing to my baby when he was born, but I had forgotten the words of the songs my mum had sang to me, it was great to learn new songs to sing.”



The Future

The future is bright in Mayfield, with 3 established PEEP groups, helping babies move on to the ones and then on to the twos group. Parents can really see the difference PEEP has made in their children's development, which is great.

These groups are well and truly on the map, making a big difference to the lives of the children and their parents.



Tricia Di Duca

Nature Nurture Lawfield



Tricia Di Duca

Your Role

Organisation of equipment and co-teaching. Liaison with parents/carers.



Your Experience of being a Service Champion

It has been particularly satisfying to be part of this ongoing project and to acknowledge and witness the amazing amount of learning and development gains by the children over the four week blocks.

This project definitely helps build the four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence of successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

What You Did and Who You Worked With

Support from the Start funding facilitated the following:

- › Training in Nature Nurture for Nursery teacher
- › Teacher cover for 1 day per week
- › The purchase of waterproof jackets, trousers and wellington boots which has enabled us to take 20 children each week to our base camp
- › We designed the project to offer each pre-school child and each P1 child to attend 4 sessions and to run the programme throughout the first two terms
- › Parents/carers were invited to attend

“It has been particularly satisfying to be part of this ongoing project”

Impact-What it Achieved

The main aims are as follows:

- › To present maths and literacy in a real life context
- › Active learning and enhanced fine and gross motor skills
- › Knowledge of local environment
- › Children learn about risk taking
- › Imaginative play opportunities
- › Children learn to appreciate nature
- › Children develop independence skills and responsibility
- › Development of positive relationships
- › Offering direct experience of differing weather conditions and seasonal change
- › Opportunities to be creative
- › Development of sensory experiences

Evaluation-What People Have Said-Children, Families, Other Staff

Weekly evaluations are being collected and recorded and many of the above aims have been achieved. We will be writing up a full report at the end of the project, which will include evaluations from children and parents and carers.

The Future

It is hoped to continue to offer this programme to all pre-school children and P1 children throughout each school session.



Tricia Di Duca

Storysack Mayfield/Lawfield



Tricia Di Duca

Your Role

The co-ordination and management of each stage of the process from planning to implementation.



Your Experience of being a Service Champion

It has been enormously satisfying to have been given the opportunity to develop and successfully complete this project in the time scale of three months. The impact of Storysacks has been well documented over the years and I very much look forward to the children enjoying these beautiful resources for some time to come, hopefully contributing positively to the development and outcome of a love of reading.

What You Did and Who You Worked With

A Storysack is full of stimulating resources which capture a child's interest by bringing books to life and provides parents and carers with resources which help them to enjoy reading with their child at home. We concentrated on two main themes: Health and Wellbeing and Storysacks which evolved from children's interest in Nursery topics.

Generally, a Storysack contains:

- › A good quality fiction book
- › A non-fiction book related to the theme of the sack
- › Soft toy main characters or artefacts
- › Props relating to the main theme of the story
- › A parent prompt card with suggested ideas for parent/child interactive reading
- › A language or maths game/activity linked to the theme
- › A poem, song or action rhyme
- › A contents list



There was good and effective partnership working with staff from Mayfield Nursery School, and Lawfield Nursery Class, Home Link teacher and parents and carers resulting in the successful completion of sixty Storysacks. The project involved planning the themes, and contents, resourcing, implementation and the successful launch of the Storysacks.

Impact—What it Achieved

Storysacks aim to promote:

- › A positive attitude to reading
- › A love of books talking and listening opportunities
- › Communication skills
- › Phonological awareness through the provision of the poetry, rhyme card
- › Problem solving skills, mathematical concepts and social skills through the provision of games, puzzles, etc

Healthy Storysacks aim to:

- › Develop knowledge, understanding and attitudes towards physical, emotional, and social well being
- › Promote positive aspects of healthy living
- › Encourage participation in activities related to health promotion
- › To adopt a healthy lifestyle

Evaluation—What People Have Said—Children, Families, Other Staff

“We love Storysack day!”

“I can't wait to open the Storysack and find out all the great things inside”

“I never knew my child could sit still for so long playing and listening to the story”

“I love the Pirate Storysack”

“Please, please remember my favourite one is The Gruffalo!”

“Thanks for giving us the chance to enjoy the Storysacks, they are just fab!”

The Future

- › To continue to run and enable parents to continue to run, and replenish the Storysack lending library
- › To further develop Storysacks on themes relevant to Curriculum for Excellence outcomes
- › To continue to evaluate the Storysacks
- › To fundraise to replace lost or damaged resources

Tricia Di Duca

PEEP Project Mayfield



Tricia Di Duca

Your Role

Participation at the planning stage, co-facilitating the Baby Group, and attending regular meetings to share ideas, resources and to plan further development and provision of Peep in the area.



Your Experience of being a Service Champion

Being a Champion on the Support from the Start project greatly enabled the success of the Peep provision in the test site area. The opportunities to network with colleagues and given the time to do so has been of enormous benefit to us all. The partnerships formed through this process will be long lasting and we all look forward to the continued success of Peep in the Mayfield and Easthouses Community.

What You Did and Who You Worked With

The successful provision of a Peep programme for Babies, one year old and two year old children in Mayfield and Easthouses Community, giving support to parents and carers to provide their children with the best start to learning through sharing songs, stories, discussions and play opportunities. Additionally, a Peep group for transition to Primary School was established and was very successful in engaging both children and parents. Further information, including evaluation of the programme, can be found at www.peep.org.uk



Effective partnership and collaboration was established with Mayfield and Easthouses Development Trust (MAEDT), Midlothian Surestart, Home Link teacher, Nurseries, Peep co-ordinator and Peep leaders.

Impact—What it Achieved

- › Success in setting up the three groups in the area,
- › Increasing numbers attending each group
- › Access to high quality resources and delivery of the programme
- › Sharing of expertise and experience
- › Sound planning for each group

Evaluation—What People Have Said—Children, Families, Other Staff

“It is great to meet other Mums and to see my child interacting with other kids.”

“My child loves the music, rhythm and singing. He is more confident around strangers”

“We love to sing at home now and it never fails to bring a smile to my baby’s face”

“The Peep group has made a huge difference in the way that we spend time together at home and has made me more aware of my baby’s development.”

“It has been great for my child to spend time with other babies her age and for me to learn new songs. “

The Future

- › Termly meetings of all partners to plan and evaluate the programme
- › Continued sharing of resources and ideas
- › To continue to develop links with pre-school provision in the area
- › To continue to develop links
- › Invite further input from Health and Educational professionals
- › Continue to evaluate at the end of each term to inform future planning
- › Joint Peep celebration at the end of the school year

Tricia Di Duca

Transition Project Lawfield



Tricia Di Duca

Your Role

Liaison with staff, planning, management, recording and evaluation of both successful events.



Your Experience of being a Service Champion

All in Lawfield were very grateful for the funding to be able to offer further opportunities to enhance, improve and add to our transition procedures and policy. It was very satisfying to be able to manage these very successful and enjoyable events.

What You Did and Who You Worked With

All at Lawfield PS recognise the fundamental importance of achieving a successful transition from Nursery into Primary school and are aware of the impact a change in physical environment and changes of staff can have on learning. Lawfield PS had a well defined transition policy in place which aimed to ensure that the children have a seamless and happy transition from Nursery to Primary school, that there was continuity in learning, that the children had opportunities to become familiar with the P1 environment and that we created opportunities to build and enhance home school links and our partnership with parents and carers. Each of the initiatives has been designed to contribute to the development of the CfE capacities of successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

Nursery staff, P1 staff, school management team and the Home Link teacher worked together to further develop the Transition process by planning two additional elements:

Healthy Breakfast for all P1 and preschool children and parents/carers

This initiative was designed to improve readiness for learning particularly in the domains of physical well being and social competence. We chose to invite the

children to a breakfast at 9.00 am which will fulfil the need to familiarise the children with the dining hall environment, dining hall staff etc within a more social and relaxed context than the very busy lunch time.

Celebration of Learning Event: Joint trip to East Links Farm for all Nursery and P1 children

It was hoped that this initiative would improve readiness for learning particularly in the domains of physical well being, social competence and emotional maturity

Impact—What it Achieved

- › Enhanced home/school links
- › Increased opportunities for buddies to meet
- › Share healthy recipes
- › The provision of role modelling opportunities
- › Familiarity of the dining hall environment for the pre-school children
- › Increased children's confidence to use the Breakfast Club

Evaluation—What People Have Said—Children, Families, Other Staff

“It was great for my son to know where he was going to have his lunch”

“This was a great experience for my child and will not be so daunting on the first day he has to have a school dinner”

“I thought everything was a great idea and definitely helped my child to be not so fearful about starting school!”

“Excellent, marvellous day out and a great end to my child's year at Nursery! He was also able to meet other P1 children and start other positive relationships”

“These were great opportunities for Nursery and P1 children to get together”

The Future

We have plans to:

- › Continue to develop transition policy and events
- › Involve parents/carers, staff, children in the organisation of transition events
- › Further develop opportunities to integrate Nursery and P1 children
- › Fundraise to subsidise these events
- › Share our policy and procedures



Baby Rolling On



Yvonne Hall

Centre Co-ordinator of Midlothian Sure Start (Hand in Hand). Within my role as Service Champion, I along with my team support families who have had a new baby to be empowered and build resilience.



Impact & Achievements

An awareness of early reading and interaction allows babies to become more socially aware. Through treasure baskets a sense of sensory awareness becomes richer and opens up a new world to explore.

What We Did and Who We Worked With

After the retirement of medical staff within our local medical centre we worked closely with the health visitors to continue delivering baby massage sessions. We felt that this was a need within our community and wanted to bridge the gap. We approached new parents and felt that they needed more so we developed the “Babies Rolling On” programme to meet these increasing needs.

We deliver small informal factual sessions to new parents on baby brain development, first aid, treasure baskets and weaning and baby massage and rhyme time.

By doing this we enhance parental confidence and self esteem which in turn promotes good attachment with baby through positive touch and praise.



Evaluation—What People Have Said—Children, Families, Other Staff.

“The information about weaning, brain development and first aid was all new to me. In fact the whole course has given me so much confidence in all the topics covered”.

“This course has been great – there really isn’t anything else in the local area. Good to learn about baby development – importance of play – treasure basket, reading etc. Weaning session good to as I don’t get advice from anywhere else other than friends”.

“The importance of developing my baby through stimulation, play and interactions as a result of brain development session. This was supplemented over the weeks with extra information and practical examples”.

“ I have learnt how to play with my child in a way that will stimulate him mentally”.

“I have learnt so much it is difficult to share just one thing. The baby massage was fabulous and gave me confidence handling my new baby. It was also the first time I went out and met new mum’s on my own. A big milestone. The first aid was interesting and so important to know”.

“ The treasure basket idea is fab and I know that you do not need to buy expensive toys for baby, a few clothes pegs and tea strainer will do the job just as well”.

“The most important thing that I felt I learnt was the course on the first aid and the purpose of the treasure basket and what to put in it”.

“ I suppose the most valuable was the baby first aid, it was so good to learn the key steps should our baby get into difficulty”.

The Future

Requests have been noted for development of a resource library for parents to access books for further information on their babies’ development or weaning. This is currently being looked at.

We plan to continue the course as it is at present however, through communications with parents who have successfully gone through the programme, the length of the course will be extended to include child development and or incredible years to continue with the theme of positive parenting from the start. We are also in talks about extending the information to include colic.



Burst N Books



Champions Name

Isobel Allen - Mayfield Library Manager

Background To Project

The aim of the project was to support and enthuse male readers (targeting boys aged between 6-8 years old whose reading ages were below their chronological age) by producing kit bags (based on the idea of storiesacks) available for lending from the library. The boys were to be actively involved in all aspects of the development of the project. The development fund enabled this project to go ahead and we are very grateful for this as we thought it was a pipe-dream

Action Plan and Partners

- ▶ 8 boys selected from Primary 3 & 4 at Mayfield Library to be involved in the steering group
- ▶ parents from the school were invited to join the steering group
- ▶ the group met for regular sessions at the library over a 3 month period. Over that time we had lots of activities, discussion and outcomes
- ▶ the group decided on a total of 20 topics for the bags and the type of bag to be used ranging from Trick Tricks to Silly Science
- ▶ the brand name "burst n books" was decided and the illustration for the logo was designed and sent to a local company for printing
- ▶ books, DVDs and games were chosen from the internet and including a visit to Toys R Us for the 20 kitbags
- ▶ the children and parents had great fun making up the kitbags
- ▶ we had a very successful launch at Mayfield Primary on Friday 4th May at their assembly
- ▶ we had the help, commitment and masses of enthusiasm from the boys, parents Leigh and Mary, teachers from Mayfield Primary School, Fiona Maher (Arts & Creativity Team Manager), Stephanie Heasman (Malani), Rachel Dryburgh (Schools Librarian), Ed Jupp (Library Assistant) and the staff at Mayfield Library



Impact & Achievements

Through a small scale project the impact has been far reaching, affecting pupils, staff and parents, as well as the local community. Pupils involved directly the production of the kitbags used a range of essential skills e.g. teamwork, cooperation/collaboration, listening and talking, decision making, designing, using IT, managing finances during the process which in turn increased general confidence levels and self esteem. The boys involved have shown great pride in their achievements of producing the kitbags. Staff and teachers involved have also gained in confidence, as this was a unique experience working with parents and community members and other partners. Boys and teachers at the other local schools have been made aware of the kitbags and are now borrowing the bags and during

June and July 80 bags have been borrowed. This was a great achievement for all involved and we are all so proud to have been part of this project which is now an integrated service at the library.

Evaluation

We asked the boys in the steering group what their thoughts were on coming to the library for the project:

"We made up names for the kitbags. I liked having an important job"

"We get to do fun things with books that we like!"

"I like doing extra work in the library. It is good fun!"

"I like coming to the library to do a special job"

Every time a kitbag is issued the child or the parent completes an evaluation form and from there we are able to get some comments which included:

Boys returning the Kitbags:

Burst N Books: Food Glorious Food "The information book helped my mum to cook food and I played the game with my brother. I really enjoyed it and I'm taking out another bag!"

Burst N Books: WWE "It takes a lot of hard work to be a wrestler - the DVD was awesome"

Burst N Books: TerribleT-Rex "the book was very interesting it told me stories about dinosaurs ages ago - my best burst n book so far"

Burst N Books; Not Bored Games "loved the game and the book think its great idea"

Burst N Books: Mental Maths "the game I liked the most - good for helping with adding numbers"

Burst N Books: Deadly 60 "everything was awesome, so every time I bring one back I will get another!"

Other comments from parents, children and staff include:

"As a parent the kitbags are amazing and the topics are so relevant and up to date that boys will want to take them home. Great incentive to get boys reading"

"Definitely encouraging boys to read and they are very excited about taking out the kitbags, normally they would go straight to the computer. Burst N Books are offering boys' material which interests them and engaging in conversations about what they have just read is fantastic" library staff

The Future

To continue to promote bags and ensure they are used to full capacity. Secure further funding to roll out programme with another set of 20 bags and/or across the library service as a whole. Pupils from the pilot could help coach new teams of "Burst N Books" producers, and perhaps involve girls with the benefits of refreshing and extending current bags. Monitor progress of pupil reading ages in the short, medium and long term to assess impact on their attainment in this area. Promote achievements of the project in Midlothian in the educational media. Hopefully the children will continue to enjoy using the "Burst N Books" and contribute to their literacy skills and love of reading. A huge thanks to everyone involved for all their wonderful contribution - wouldn't have succeeded without you!



Using 'Loose materials' for Play and Learning



Kate Downey

My role as Centre Co-ordinator was to facilitate the opportunity for staff at Family Reachout to take part in Loose Materials Training provided by Grounds for Learning and support staff to implement what they had learnt from the training.



The aim of this was to enhance learning opportunities and experiences for the children in our care using the garden. The staff at our sister centre Stepping Forward joined us on the training. This has been a unique opportunity to build on skills and learn new ideas on how we encourage our children to learn and have fun outdoors.

Family Reachout and Stepping Forward are both Midlothian Sure Start Centres whose aim is to provide a quality service for families with young children.

What we Did & What it Achieved

Here are some of the things they have been doing:

Stepping Forward

“By placing pipes and tubes in our large sand pit we have created the opportunity for self-led learning where the children learn social skills for example sharing, team building and problem solving.”

“The staff and the children have also been making a bug hotel, where the children will be able to observe mini beasts with their giant magnifying glasses. We have planted two different apple trees; this means that we can now pick fruit from three apple trees and a plum tree. We are now looking to develop a grassed tunnel (like telly tubbies) having just taken delivery from local roads dept. some large piping and tunnels”

Family Reachout

After completing the Loose Materials Training, staff began to gather a mixture of pipes, branches, sleepers, ropes, stones, buckets, cable reels, tyres and a whole lot more. The garden has been transformed and sometimes looks like a building site, but the play has been amazing. Like the staff at Stepping Forward we are out in all weathers

enjoying the outdoors. For example, the children have been working out how to build bridges and cross them safely with the logs. They have hunted for the stones with trowels, they have used stones with letters painted on to find the initial letter of their name. They have problem solved in how to build and balance pipes to make a water way. Their readiness for learning is being stretched in new ways and the bikes are no longer dominant. It has been noticed by staff that the children are actually using their imagination a lot more and are starting to use new language.

Evaluation—What People Have Said—Children, Families, Other Staff.

“Whoa!”

“The garden looks like a great place to learn.”

“It is really encouraging to see how enthusiastic the staff are in the garden and this clearly is expressed in the children’s play and their freedom to explore and learn in new ways.”

“Our garden is like a canvas .”

“This is just brilliant.”

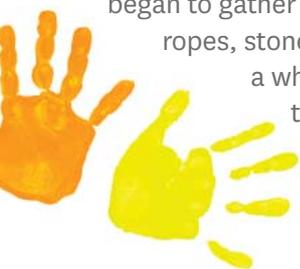
“The children are always asking to be out in the garden now.”

Stepping Forward say “The training has meant that we are better equipped for helping children to learn more about nature and how to play with natural things using small ‘loose materials’ for example, wooden coins, pipes, tubes, drain pipe etc. By using ‘loose materials’ we are creating a stimulating environment where children are given the opportunity to explore many

The Future

At Stepping Forward’s garden is well established and they will continue to implement the Loose Materials style of play in their garden.

Here at Family Reachout I am in the process of having a garden designer look at our property. The plans will hopefully include lots of ideas from the Loose Materials training and inspiration from the children like mud kitchen, stepping stones, fire pit, and lots more. Our raised beds for vegetables and sensory plants will have a dual purpose of being wide enough to sit on or drive a car round the edge as well as planting. Babies sit comfortably in tires with a nice cosy blanket so they can be included with everyone. We are hoping that our garden will continue to be central to the learning and development of our children.



Play a Long Maths Project:

Mayfield Nursery School, Stobhill Primary School and Lawfield Primary.

Tricia Di Duca

Your Role

My role has been the co-ordination and management of each stage of the process from planning to implementation.



My Experience of being a Service Champion

Once again, I have been very grateful to have been a Service Champion and having been given further opportunities through Support from the Start to develop and implement another project designed to enhance children's readiness to learn. I look forward to the successful completion of this project in the coming term.

Project Outline

Play a long Maths is a programme which serves to further develop strong partnership between parents/carers and Nursery staff with the aim of encouraging them to play and engage in maths based games at home with their children. This project would provide parents/carers and staff of all three schools the opportunity to set up a Maths Games borrowing library which would provide:

- › High quality maths games/resources.
- › A parent prompt card which outlines how to use the resource and provides "chat a long" prompts for the adult to use while playing the game. The language prompts greatly help to develop maths concepts, mathematical language and understanding in the child. Each Parent Prompt card is linked to CfE outcomes.
- › There is an ongoing evaluation of the programme by staff, parents/carers and children.
- › A feedback session would be planned for each week where parent/carers meet with Nursery staff to further discuss their experiences and plan next steps in learning.

Impact

Aims for the parent/carer

- › To continue to encourage parents/carers in role as prime educators of their children

- › To develop and increased awareness of maths and mathematical language
- › To highlight the importance of language in developing mathematical concepts
- › To identify further activities in the home which promote the skills of sorting grouping, comparisons, matching, etc
- › To further establish a partnership in learning between parents, children and Nursery staff
- › For parents/ carers and children to have fun together

Aims for the child

- › To build up child's mathematical vocabulary
- › To build up mathematical concepts by providing experiences of the language of sorting, grouping and relationships
- › To strengthen home/school links which will benefit the whole child
- › To have fun playing games with parents/carers
- › To raise attainment in mathematics on entry to Primary education
- › Increase in social skills through playing games together at home
- › Enhanced emotional maturity
- › Increased social competence

Evaluation

To date: We have had an Inservice session with involved staff which showed that participants are keen to undertake this project and the project will commence in the School Session 2012-2013.

The Future

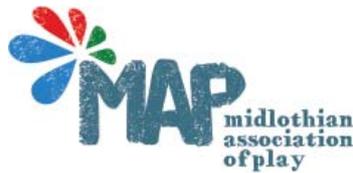
- › To work with parents/cares to choose resources, plan and launch the project
- › To liaise and consult with each school management, staff and parents
- › To establish a successful Play a Long Maths borrowing Library
- › To continue to develop the project
- › To evaluate and monitor children's progress
- › To report and share findings
- › To fundraise to ensure sustainability

Community playworkers Pilot project



Project information

Midlothian Association of Play (MAP) is a charity that works to ensure children can enjoy more and better play opportunities in their communities.



Find out more at www.map-midlothian.org.uk

MAP is running a small pilot community playworkers project in 2012, which will entail six or seven outdoor play sessions in each of three areas – Woodburn, Mayfield and Gorebridge. The pilot will also involve engagement with children, families, the wider community and other agencies/organisations. The aim is to learn what works and what doesn't and evaluate some of the benefits of the project. This will help to later seek funding for a larger project.



The project will use the 'play rangers' model of delivery, which is fairly common in the rest of the UK and increasingly so in Scotland (for example see this Scottish Government news announcement - www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2012/01/play18012012)

The project model involves playworkers facilitating play sessions entirely outdoors in public community spaces, to support children to 'play out'. The purpose of this type of project model is to enable children's right to play (article 31, UNCRC) and to support children's health, wellbeing and development and their friendship networks. It provides appealing

alternatives to sedentary pursuits at home and supports children to utilise public space. It can alleviate concerns that parents may have about children playing out on their own. Or, where children are already out using public space it can provide enriching new experiences and adult role models. Days and times that playworkers are available to support play are advertised to the community.

The 'play rangers' project model is open access provision. Whether or not a child is able to attend unsupervised or whether a parent/carer attends with them is between the parent/carer and child to decide. Children are free to come and go and are not registered. Parents may bring young children if they wish, though the service in general is aimed at children age 5-12.

The sessions will be free play focused, with play resources that support all types of play experiences (e.g. sensory, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional). The sessions will promote play with nature and the elements and promote healthy outdoor free play experiences such as den making and games.

MAP is delighted to have the opportunity to try this out in Midlothian. The sessions will run from after the Easter holidays through to November this year (with a break over summer). Exact sites and days and times are to be confirmed and are subject to ongoing community consultation (though we expect Friday afternoons and weekends to be popular options). There will be opportunities for other organisations and agencies to feed in their views.

If you would like to find out more / be kept in touch with news / feel you could support the project in some way / would like to contribute your insights, MAP would love to hear

from you. Please contact Susan McIntyre on 01875 823 846 or at susan@map-midlothian.org.uk



Start Write



Zoe Orr

Primary Teacher,
Stobhill Primary, Gorebridge



Background to the project

- › Each Ante-Pre School, Pre-School and Primary 1 pupil received a StartWrite pack which contains resources and activities to support emergent writing.
- › Packs contain starter proformas to encourage parent/child interaction e.g. shopping list, cards, & support ideas.
- › Pre-School/P1 pack I contain examples of letter formation.
- › Formal launch of pack with parents then monthly opportunities for new ideas, updates of resources, informal discussion about pack additions as well as fun events such as a Big Scribble.

By starting this programme in the Ante-Preschool age range, children were given the opportunity to experience access to quality resources to be used at home with parent/carer. Support sessions for Ante-Pre to P1 are age appropriate and progressive. There will be ongoing opportunities for parental involvements in Primary 1 i.e. mind mapping, writing sessions, and story line projects.

What we did and who we worked with

The initial project launch in September 2011 was attended by around 20 families. We (Head Teacher, Maureen McDonald and Support for Learning Teacher, Ruth Lang) followed this up with two further afternoon sessions, which were both well attended. We then contacted each individual family who had not attended in order to make sure that all children had an opportunity to access the packs. I arranged to meet with these parents after school so that we could talk about the packs and make clear the purpose of them. By March, all nursery pupils and most Primary 1 pupils had their packs at home.

Impact - what it achieved

The project helped to

- › Support emergent mark making/writing
- › Support and empower parents/carers in facilitating and valuing emergent writing
- › Support and encourage interaction between children and parents/carers
- › Ensure equalities in providing resources to enable all nursery/P1 pupils to access quality activities
- › Support transition between home/nursery/school over a two year programme

Evaluation - what people have said - children, families, other staff

We arranged a follow up session to get some feedback from parents/carers about the packs.

“Kasey-Ray enjoyed the pack. She loved the white board and paper.”

“Great idea! Kids love the packs.”

“He likes them because he can grip the thick pencils properly.”

Suggstions for other resources:

“More activities would be good.”

At the follow up session we spoke about different activities they could do at home, looking at making books. We modelled this using card, which we cut to different sizes, and then using thin paper and an elastic band to hold it together. We had a variety of colours of card, elastic bands and paper for parents to take to make these at home. We also replenished any resources that needed replaced or had been misplaced. We spoke about making cards for different occasions (Easter, Mothers Day, Birthdays) and gave card home to make with their children.



The Future

Packs created for the new intake of nursery pupils (2012/13). Launch date for these is timetabled for October 2012.



Nature Play and Nurture

Nursery children learning outdoors & in woodland.

Chris Saddler

Education Support
Officer



Background

Nature Play and Nurture is a training programme developed to encourage staff to take children into woodland settings and develop skills for life-long learning. It is targeted at primarily pre-school children and follows the ethos of Forest School. It is invaluable in encouraging children to engage with nature and use natural and found materials to explore, problem solve, create, work together, design and make. It also involves children in assessing risk, setting boundaries, planning and recording learning, among many other things.

Impact - what it achieved

Three training sessions took place attended by Local Authority staff and Partnership Centres. At least 8 of our Partnership Centre Staff are trained and regularly take children into woodland supported by our centrally based teachers. Many other delegates are bringing elements of the training into the outdoor and indoor learning experiences within their centres. This is enhancing teaching and learning for many staff (40). Over 500 children so far have been involved in sessions delivered by staff who have had this training.

Evaluation - what people have said - children, families, other staff

In the more recent training events some experiences have been brought into the nursery outdoor settings to make a more natural teaching and learning environment for those who cannot access woodland. It has been good to see this evolve and how one setting can influence the other, moving the learning experiences from place to place.

An Education Scotland Inspector commented favourably on one centre's use of planning floor books in the woodland with children when they were brought back to the nursery.

This programme follows the way young children learn, through experiences, following schema and dispositions. We have noted it engages children who would not otherwise find a voice or way of communicating. It values the potential of young children and fits well with Curriculum for Excellence. It offers Success from the Start for children as responsible citizens, successful learners, effective contributors, confident individuals.

The future

We are sharing best practice through presentations from participants at our network meetings, such as Partnership Managers and Nursery Head Teachers, Early Level Staff.

In conjunction with FEI our principle teacher has added to tools and other resources such as risk assessments. We hope to hold a support meeting for everyone involved in woodland kindergarten to sustain practice in our Pre-school Centres. We hope we can find a way to train the remaining staff who wish to take part in this well planned and valuable training, led by experienced, excellent staff.



Support from the Start - the East and Midlothian Equally Well test site

Nursery Rhyme Sacks

Gorebridge Primary

Lisa Wilson

Gorebridge Primary,
Gorebridge

Background to the project

The proposal came about as Nursery staff were keen to offer a home-school link programme with parents of ante pre school pupils following the success of story sacks for pre school pupils. Staff became concerned when many of the children in nursery were not familiar with rhymes and so were not taking part in nursery rhyme singing sessions.

Following further investigation it was discovered that P1 PIPS assessment results showed that rhyme was an area that pupils had difficulty with. As rhyme is an important building block for later language development we decided this was an area that would be best addressed.

The Nursery staff along with parental involvement would develop the sacks and evaluate and assess them regularly. Parents would take charge of the running of the lending library and upkeep of the sacks.

What we did and who we worked with

Our proposal was successful and Equally well agreed to fund the Nursery Rhyme Sack project.

The following steps were taken to develop the project.

- › Nursery staff and I got together to source resources, including sacks, nursery rhyme resources and storage for sacks.
- › the nursery team produced parent prompt cards to include in each of the sacks.
- › on arrival of the resources, nursery staff along with parents assembled the sacks.
- › a lending library was set up, led by 2 of the parents.



- › the Nursery held a launch where all pupils were encouraged to dress as a character from a nursery rhyme and all activities that day were based on popular nursery rhymes. Parents were invited and snacks and drinks were available. The day was a huge success and most parents attended. The Advertiser newspaper were invited to take photos and an article appeared in the newspaper the following week.

Impact - what it achieved

Although we are still at the early stages of this project feedback from parents has been very positive. Staff at the Nursery have offered sessions for parents to attend to give guidance about how best to use the Nursery Rhyme sack with their children.

The Nursery staff themselves are delighted at the progress of language development in the pupils already with many pupils now taking part in nursery rhyme singing sessions and showing a good understanding of rhyme and rhythm.

Parent involvement in the upkeep of the sacks has been overwhelming and parents have taken complete ownership of the distribution and upkeep of the sacks.

The Future

The Nursery staff will distribute evaluation forms for parents to complete in December to get feedback on the sacks. From this feedback necessary changes will be made and evaluation forms will be distributed again at the end of term 3.



Acknowledgements

Nominated Service Champions

Mary Blair, Community Development
Patricia DiDuca, Home Link Teacher
Kate Downey, Family Reachout Centre Head
Jacky Gillan, Early Years Co-ordinator, Midlothian Council
Yvonne Hall, Helping Hands Centre Co-ordinator
Chris Henderson, Parenting & Family Support Co-ordinator Midlothian Surestart
Isobel Allan Principal librarian, Mayfield Library
Heather McKie, Home Link Befriending Service
Leonee Moorhead, Barnados' You First Project
Chris Saddler, Early Years Education Officer, Midlothian Council
Robert Scott, Manager Mayfield & Easthouses Development Trust
Gillian Tennant, Lothian & Borders Police
Derek Welsh, Community Regeneration Officer Midlothian Council
Lisa Wilson, Class Teacher, Gorebridge Primary
Carolyn Worlock, Infant Feeding Advisor, Mid & East Lothian CHP
Zoe Orr, Class Teacher, Stobhill Primary

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Mairi McMillan, Community Nursing Manager, Midlothian CHP
Anne Rooney, Planning Manager, Midlothian Council Children's Services
Mairi Simpson, Health Promotion Service Manager
Steven Wray, Public Health Practitioner
Michele McCoy, Specialist in Public Health



Healthy Happy Bairns

A report on the work of the Midlothian Equally
Well Readiness to Learn test site 2010 – 2012.

For more information contact Steven Wray
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Tel. 07872 420488

Or visit programme blog at
<http://edubuzz.org/equallywell/>

To be kept up-to-date like our Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/SupportfromtheStart>