

## Exploring the Wider World Project

*Making the most of what is on your doorstep*

A community action area project in Stoke-on-Trent

Newsletter issue 1 – May 2019

### Welcome

Welcome to our first project newsletter – and thank you for taking part. Currently we have 49 settings who have opted to be involved in the project this term: feel free to encourage those settings who have yet to come on board to do so.

If you have any queries or feedback, you can contact the project lead, Caroline Eaton, by email at [caroline@early-education.org.uk](mailto:caroline@early-education.org.uk)

### Where we are now

We held three introductory sessions in March to explore the barriers that settings were facing to using their local environment and strategies that could be trialed to overcome them. We looked at what constituted a trip out, including the places that settings already visited and that places that you might like to visit. We will be collating this list of possible strategies for our project website shortly.

Settings used this opportunity to think about a particular focus that they could use to explore these challenges in the first instance, to enable them to explore the wider world within their practice, and the following were seen as being important:

- making the most of what the locality has to offer
- making more frequent trips
- overcoming barriers to making trips
- making the most of the opportunities the trip affords
- building on the experiences once the children are back in the setting
- sharing the learning behind the trips with families
- investigating occupations in the locality
- making the most of natural spaces and animals
- deepening staff confidence to take the children on trips
- visiting local places of worship.



We have then developed a menu of possible foci for settings to choose from to be used as a framework to explore these issues. It will be enhanced as the project grows, and we would welcome further suggestions to supplement this list. It was at these meetings that settings suggested that they would like to have more opportunities to network with other settings who were concentrating on similar challenges, and we will look to facilitate this.

We want to make sure that we work on this project together and that it grows out of your identified needs so that we all learn together. You should have all heard from the Associate who will be supporting you and who will guide you through the next steps in the project.

## **Some reminders about the project**

It is important to us that this project is bespoke in nature: it will consist of a range of support to enable you to develop your practice in connection with the Understanding the World Area of Learning. It will pay particular attention to the strands People and Community and the World, to further embed these in your practice.

The aim of the project is to enhance the confidence of settings to use their local environments as exciting and stimulating learning opportunities for the children. Many of you already use the environment from time to time and it would be great to get a higher percentage to use it more frequently to promote learning opportunities that are based in localities your children come from. This will help to develop the child's sense of belonging to a place and pride in that place. Developing this sense of place can have a hugely beneficial impact on self-esteem.

Some of you will be in a position to venture further afield, thereby widening your children's experiences differently to the immediate environment.

It is essential that whatever strategies or trips that take place are sustainable over the long term and can continue beyond the life of the supported project. There will be materials made available to you that can be accessed via the Early Education website and will be continuously updated over the life of the project.

## Practice to share – Case Study

Field House Daycare Nursery have shared information about their trips to The West End Village, a care home for the elderly. The Nursery have been visiting the home for about 12 months now on a regular basis, with groups of 8 children going for up to 2 hours at a time. The staff at both establishments have held discussions to collaborate and decide on experiences that will be offered. Children and older adults have enjoyed opportunities to talk with each other, sing songs, share stories, complete origami creations, paint, knit, find out about each other lives, play skittles, make paper-airplanes, plant seeds, and take part in parachute games, to name a few. The nursery now has space kept for them in the home's green house so that more planting can be carried out together. Some of these seeds will also make it to the setting's allotment.

Some comments from children made about their time spent at The West End Village include:

- *"The best thing I love about the West End village is playing games. I love playing skittles because we line them up and roll the ball and I like to win!"*
- *"I loved singing Farmers in the den, I'd never sang that song before, but that's because I went to the trip on a Thursday with my Nana and I don't normally go into nursery on a Thursday do I?"*
- *"I like reading stories best"*
- *"I like my friend John. That's because he's my best friend and he makes me feel happy. He makes me happy because he helps me to make paper airplanes that fly up into the clouds"*

These comments echo many of the findings research has discovered. These types of experiences enable the different generations to be able to relate better to each other, it boosts the children's confidence as they have access to somebody with lots of time, they are enabled to develop positive relationships with adults outside the family and this can impact on family gatherings where younger members are more relaxed with the older generation, young children experience aging in a positive and non-judgemental light, children's language improves, they get to find out how the world has changed, and what types of occupations the older adults were involved with. If the children have grandparents who are not local, it gives regular opportunities to the children to be around the older generation and for them to have to think about the needs of others as highlighted by the following comment:

*"We can't go to the West End Village when we are poorly because the men and women have thin skin and they might get the germs"*

It is interesting to note that for one child the walk to the home was as important or if not more than the time there: *"The house is fixed now (this is a house we walk past that had a house fire and has been renovated) and the fire checkers on the ceiling wake us up when there's a fire"*

Here are some links to research and to some articles should you wish to think about developing similar experiences for your children:

- <https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/nursery-world/news/1160195/intergenerational-care-bringing-old-and-young-together>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/jan/05/children-elderly-intergenerational-care-advantages>
- <https://www.ageukmobility.co.uk/mobility-news/article/intergenerational-care>
- <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/type/The-Next-Generation/>

## Overcoming barriers

I was talking with a setting from Bristol last week who regularly take their children on trips both locally and further afield. They go to the beach every week from March through to October as well as using what is on their doorstep, and shared some 'pearls' of how they manage to achieve this.

They have identified 'magic numbers' in their setting: this means that when the magic number is achieved they can go on a spontaneous trip. They already have the parental permissions in place, the staff ratios both in the setting and for the outing are all in place, the grab bag is packed with first aid kit, mobile phone with necessary numbers, changes of clothes and nappies if necessary etc, and off they go! It is useful to have identified this point so that trips can be made as often as possible.

Children benefit hugely from exploring and getting to know even better the environments within which they are growing up. They have also started to really make use of the surrounding streets for their younger children. After all, young children find such pleasure in just watching the world go by, investigating stones, leaves etc that they find or posting letters in a letter box.

Do feel free to share your 'pearls', I really look forward to hearing them.

## Exploring the Wider World training

There will be training offered on the 6th June at 6.30pm – 8.30pm at Units 1 to 3, POTBANK, Spode Creative Village, Elenora St, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 1QE. The focus will be 'Unpicking the strands', to delve deeper into the strands of People and Community and the World from the Understanding the World Area of Learning. This will be an opportunity to share your current practice and to gain some ideas of how you can further develop it as well as moderate how you make your assessments. It will be a practical and interactive session. All staff members are invited. To book your place contact Caroline on [caroline@early-education.org.uk](mailto:caroline@early-education.org.uk)

More details of other general training you can attend will be shared soon. We hope that you will take advantage of these exciting opportunities.

## Finally

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. If there are any subjects you would like covering do let me know and remember to share your 'pearls' via [caroline@early-education.org.uk](mailto:caroline@early-education.org.uk)

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