



East Belfast
SureStart

Annual Report

2022 - 2023

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Chairperson Report

I am pleased to report that East Belfast Sure Start, has had another successful year, continuing to deliver quality and timely interventions for families in East Belfast. This report demonstrates how we continue to deliver Sure Start policy outcomes of improving language skills, early identification of developmental delay, improved access to services and enhanced parenting skills. This work can not be done in isolation, requiring a holistic approach. On behalf of the Board, I would like to take the opportunity to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to all the external agencies and stakeholders that continue to work in collaboration with our staff team to ensure we can deliver as full a service as possible.

Whilst we have delivered many positive outcomes, there have been challenging moments for the organisation. We have had to navigate around the uncertainty of budget and allocation of funding. Although this has been very challenging for staff and stakeholders, it was particularly pleasing to see the voice of service users come to the forefront of this. Passionately telling their stories and importance of the Sure Start services #surestartworks.

At a recent parental survey of all Sure Starts, feedback was very positive regarding the impact of Sure Start with 89% of parents rating Sure Start as excellent, and as having had a positive impact on them and their family. These comments wouldn't be possible without the dedication of staff in the delivery of services. I am proud of everything that the team achieves, and we continue to get positive feedback from our inspecting bodies on the quality of our premises and our staff.

I am delighted with what we have achieved this year, and I would like to thank fellow board members for their commitment to Sure Start. We have 'full' meetings, with contributions offered on all agenda items. This level of interest is central to our success as a board. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Department of Education and SPPG for their ongoing and continued support of this vital programme.

I wish to finish by relaying the well-known African proverb – “It takes a village to raise a child”, we very much look forward to collaborative community working, to make this a reality and to continue with this necessary service that has such a positive impact on so many families.

We hope you enjoy the content of the report and are encouraged by it.

Bridgeen McCormick

Chairperson

Project Co-Ordinator Report

The statistics and the narrative that fill the pages of this report clearly evidence that early intervention in children's lives produce outcomes. This is only achieved with the dedication and professionalism of the staff that work within East Belfast Sure Start. Each year when I gather the reports together I never cease to be amazed by how much a difference they are making here in our community.

The Covid epidemic continues to leave it's mark on our service delivery. Recruitment particularly continues to be a challenge with low numbers of applicants to fill posts particularly Early Years Practitioner. We have also at times experience high levels of sickness as a result of low immunity amongst children and staff. As a service we continue to see a growing number of children with challenges especially in relations to their speech and communication and sensory issues. Whilst the early identification is at the heart of what we do in Sure Start and something that we do extremely well it is at times difficult to place children in settings which are suitable to their needs and the higher their needs the higher the ratios of staff are needed to ensure that the children get good outcomes from attending our Developmental Programme for 2 Year Olds and Child Development Sessions.

Our Little Learners Programme, our programme for children aged 2-3 with additional needs entered a pilot with Solas, Kids Together and Glenbrook Sure Start to evaluate the outcomes for the children working in partnership with the child development clinic, SLC's and OT's. This has proved a very productive pilot and it has been helpful to grow and learn alongside other professionals trying to achieve the very best outcomes for children with a wide range of needs.

Our Service Level agreement with Bloomfield Association entered it's 2nd year of delivery through the funding of an expansion area of Bloomfield SOA 3. This has alongside our other community partners like Short Strand Community Forum and Ballybeen's Women's Centre and Tullycarnet Family Services embedded our service within communities providing families with a transition of connection once they leave Sure Start to go to Nursery School.

We continue to have very strong partnerships and networks in our area particularly in the Early Years Network which allows us to have mutually supportive relationships with Nursery Schools that our children progress to ensuring smooth transitions and services that value the needs of the children.

We have been delighted to have been fully involved in the formation of an Early Learning Community in East Belfast. This has allowed a process of early years practitioners and commissioners being involved in a process of identifying the change we want to see for our children in East Belfast and making plans to ensure that outcomes are met. Sure Start are central to the delivery of these plans in our geographical area and are particular pleased to be leading on the 'Attuned and Attentive relationship' action plan. We are delighted that the Wonder Words piece of work has been so strongly embedded in this community work and that we have been able with the support of Belfast Trust SLC Sure Start Lead been able to share the Chat with Me resources with our partners ensuring that the universal aspect of Sure Start remains strong.

We have a good following on social media, our face book page has over 2000 followers and we use this and Instagram to promote our message of the month alongside being able to model the behaviours that favour connection between a parent and a child.

The organisation went through a period of restructure in the organisation from February 2023 to October 2023. The aim of this was to align our early year services with our family support services. We began to see the benefits of this in the remaining part of 2022/23. The board took the bold decision to increase staff's wages with no increase in funding by not replacing three empty posts. This has boosted staff's motivation and allowed them to feel more valued for the work that they do.

I have always had the most supportive board and I continue to enjoy working alongside them to see our SureStart thrive.

With thanks

Tracey Ripley McElvogue

East Belfast Sure Start Board of Directors

Management Committee Members/role	Agency/Representative
Bernie McConnell	Short Strand Community Forum Community
Eithne Daly	Independent (retired Nursery School Principal)
Claire Humphrey	Barnardo's Voluntary
Eelco Westerhuis Treasurer	Home Start Voluntary
Bridgeen McCormick Chairperson	Connswater Housing Association Private Sector
Hilary McEvoy Vice Chairperson	Independent (retired from Education Authority)
Ann Martin	Tullycarnet Community Support Services Community
Tanya Hughes	Ballybeen Women's centre Community
Maire Hendron	Independent – Resigned Sept 22 (retired Nursery School Teacher)
Louise McCullough	Independent Parents Representative
Barbara Wallace	Eastside Learning, Eastside Partnership Community

Three Consultant Observers advise and support the board from Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and Belfast City Council.

Staff Team

In April 22 the staff team consisted of 43 staff. During the year the board made the decision to undertake a restructuring exercise leading to the appointment of a Deputy Project Manager alongside other posts. Towards the end of the year Feb 23, in the middle of a recruitment crisis nationally, the board took the decision to increase salaries which meant not replacing 3 empty staff posts. By March 23 the staff team consisted of 37 staff with some staff taking on extra hours.

East Belfast Population Statistics

We operate in nine local areas determined by being in the top 25% areas of deprivation.

Ballymacarrett Ward

Woodstock Ward

Island Ward

The Mount Ward

Bloomfield Ward SOA 1 and SOA 3

Tullycarnet Ward

Cregagh Ward

Ballybeen Estate

Registration 2022-2023	Cumulative Total	Percentage Uptake	Cumulative Percentage
Number of <u>Children</u> registered	1330	% uptake of Children (NI Average 51%)	61%
Number of <u>Mothers</u> registered	1423	% uptake of Mothers (NI Average 53%)	59%
Number of <u>Fathers</u> registered	402	% uptake of Fathers (NI Average 26%)	25%
Number of <u>Families</u> registered	1448	% uptake of Families (NI Average 63%)	62%
Antenatal	137	% uptake of Antenatal	82%

	2022	2023	NI Average
Children	57%	61%	56%
Mothers	62%	59%	59%
Fathers	25%	25%	37%
Families	66%	62%	62%
Antenatal	94%	82%	85%

676 Referrals of which **268** Antenatal

87% Referrals transferred to Registrations

Registrations 2022/23

New Children	510
New Mothers	374
New Dads	144
Pregnant Mums	80

Home Visits

One To One Type	With Access
Home Visits to support Additional Needs Groups	92
Bloomfield SOA 3 Antenatal Support Home Visit.	2
Antenatal Home Visit	53
Breastfeeding Support Home Visit	3
Home visit- Templemore 1	45
Home visit- Templemore 2	36
Home visit- Ballyoran	54
Home visit- Nettlefield	50
Home Visit - Carew	12
Home visits for ethnic minority parents from Bloomfield SOA 3	0
Home Visits delivered to Ethnic Minority Families	71
Ballybean Outreach - Home Visits	91
Home Visits for Bloomfield SOA 3 families	49
Home Visits by Family Support Team	752
Home Visits by Home Start Volunteer	157
Home Visits by Home Start Coordinator	71
Bloomfield SOA 3 Initial Visit for families.	19
Initial Home Visits by Family Support Team	116
Butterflies Home Visits for Child Development Programmes.	46

Short Strand Home Visits for Child Development Programme.	28
First Steps - Home Visits for Child Development Programmes.	29
Postnatal Home visit	56
Bloomfield SOA 3 Postnatal Support Home Visit.	1
Bloomfield SOA 3 Home visits to promote SLC.	1
Home Visits to support Speech and Language Development	81

Signposting

Sign Posting Type	Total Offered
Benefits Advice	32
Breastfeeding Support	1056
Charitable Aid	56
Citizens Advice Bureau	18
Community Services	143
Education Services	32
Financial Advice	5
Health Visitor	2
Mental Health (Parent / Child)	4
Midwife/Antenatal (HSCT)	140
Speech & Language (HSCT)	59

Resources Given

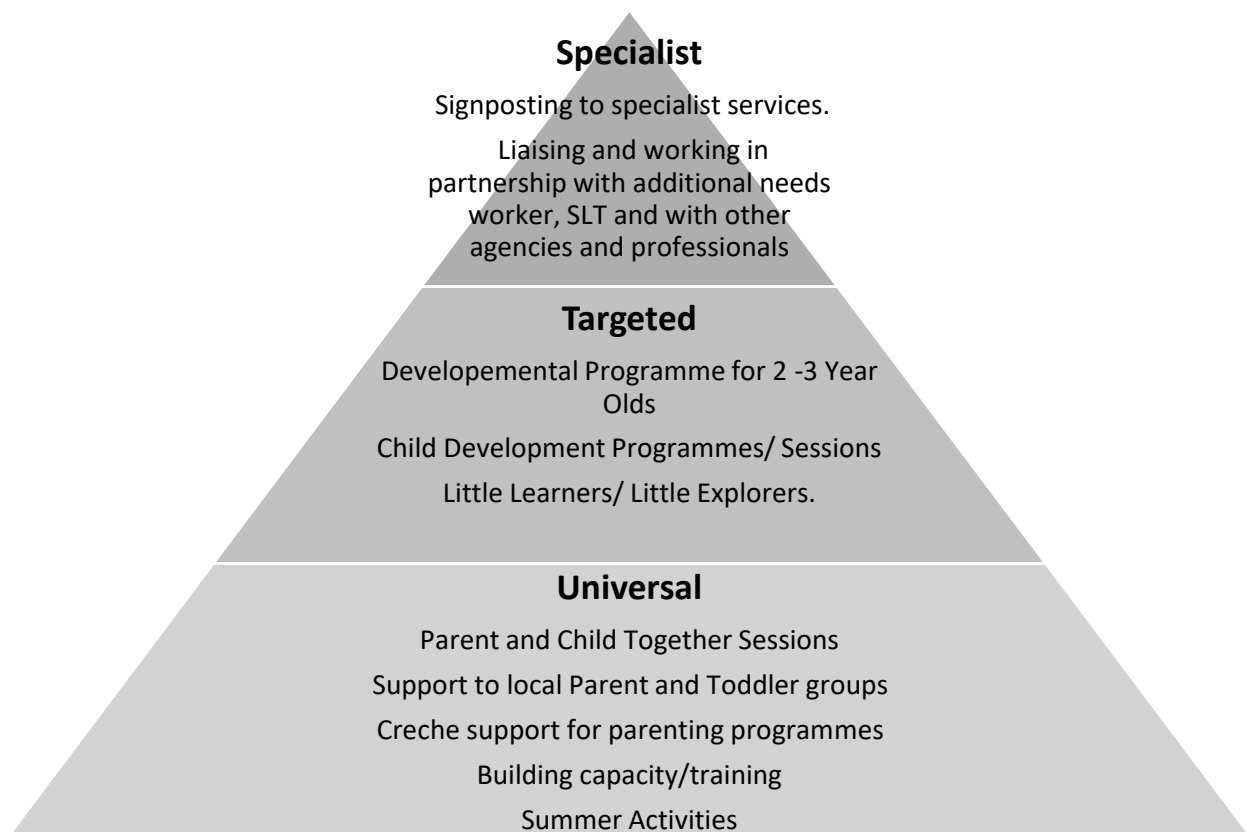
Resource Type	Total Offered
2 Year Old Programme	81
Antenatal	2110
Baby	136
Books	102
Book Start	84
Breastfeeding	1352
Dental	8
Family Support	61
Health Promotion	2269
Home Safety	2
Information	2330
New Registration	123
Parenting	821
Play	389
Postnatal	1472
Smoking	103
Speech and Language	1481
Transition	123

Early Learning Report

East Belfast Sure Start Early Years Teams

- 1 x Early Years Lead
- 1 x Early Years Centre Supervisor
- 4 x Developmental Programme for 2-3 Year Old Supervisors
- 8 x Developmental Programme for 2 Year Olds Assistants
- 1 x Little Learners Supervisor
- 2 x Little Learners Assistants
- 1 x Programme for 2 – Little Explorers Supervisor
- 1 x Programme for 2 – Little Explorers Assistant
- 4 x Early Years Workers

Key Areas of Focus for Early Learning Team





Location	Services
Ballyoran (Ballybeen Housing Estate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental Programme for 2 Year Olds (a.m.) • Child Development session (Wednesday and Thursday p.m.)
East Belfast Network Centre- Room 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental Programme for 2 Year Olds (a.m.)
East Belfast Network Centre – Room 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental Programme for 2 Year Olds (a.m.) • Child development session (Mon/ Tuesday p.m. and Wednesday/ Thursday p.m.)
Early Years Centre – Play Away	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Development Sessions • Parent and Child Together • Crèche for parenting programmes.
Early Years Centre – Crawl 2 Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bumps to Babies Café x 2 • Child Development Sessions • Crèche for parenting programmes
Carew Centre Room 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme for 2 year olds (a.m.) • Parent and Toddler Group
Carew Centre Room 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Explorers programme • Child Development Sessions (Monday / Tuesday p.m.)
126 Albertbridge Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Learners am/ p.m. • Play and Discover sessions

Early Years Outcomes

How Much Did We Do?	How Well Did We Do It?
<p>Developmental Programme for 2-3 Year Olds:</p> <p>Ballyoran Programme x 135 sessions x 12 children</p> <p>Nettlefield Programme x 128 sessions x 12 children</p> <p>Templemore 1 Programme x 122 sessions x 12 children</p> <p>Templemore 2 Programme x 109 sessions x 12 children</p> <p>Home Visits Programme for 2 Year Old 192 Home Visits carried out by Programme Staff</p> <p>Transition Reports x 48</p> <p>Stay and Plays x 40</p> <p>Induction workshop x 4</p> <p>Carew Child Development Programme 128 sessions x 12 children</p> <p>Stay and Play x 10 delivered</p> <p>48 x Home Visits</p> <p>Transition Reports x 12</p> <p>Induction Workshop x 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% sessions delivered (closures due to staff shortage) • 48 children registered – 100% target • 100% target achieved. Key workers of each child carried out four home visits per year to provide home/ setting continuity. • 48 transitions sent – 100% target achieved. These provide the children with a seamless transition between sure start and their pre-school nursery place. These high quality transitions recognise the importance of feeling “known”. Key to a high-quality experience for all children in the early years is ensuring continuity between home, key people and all the settings that make up children’s individual learning journeys. • 100% target achieved • 100% target achieved • 92% sessions achieved x 12 children • 100% Target achieved • 100% Target achieved • 100% Target achieved

Child Development Sessions (CDS)	
<p>Ballyoran CDS 151 sessions x 26 children</p> <p>Parent and Child Together x 8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100%Target achieved
<p>Carew CDS 146 sessions x 24 children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of children achieved 92% sessions achieved
<p>Away 2 Play Templemore CDS 138 sessions x 34 children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% Target achieved
<p>Play Away CDS 337 sessions delivered x 61 children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% Target achieved
<p>Parent and Child Together 10 x 28 children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% Target achieved
<p>Crèches for Parenting Courses/Programmes 38 sessions x 22 children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crèches provided for two in house parenting groups. • 50% target achieved
<p>Summer Transition Programmes 35 sessions x 36 children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to staffing issues the summer transition programmes were cut to 2 per week per programme. These sessions keep the Programme for 2 Years Old children in sessions throughout the summer to improve transitions to Nursery settings

How Well Did We Do?

External Evaluation

Developmental Programme for 2-3 Year Old Specialist Visits.

The Programme for 2-3 Year-old Specialist has invited several of the other sure start projects to visit our settings and observe both the environments and the good practice of the early year's practitioners. Termly reports for each settings have all been very positive regarding the practice and experience provided for the children and their families.

Practitioners are sitting on the ground or in chairs so that they are in easy eye contact of the children playing and exploring. They join in and play with the children, many children are at communicator, first word user level and so the practitioners are adding key words to their play. When you chat to the team they know exactly where the children are developmentally and know what the next step in learning for them should be. The practitioners also know the challenges for the families at bringing the children to the programme and have a good relationship with them. A few of the children also have family support as an additional support.



Example of Programme for 2 Specialist Report

Staff Training

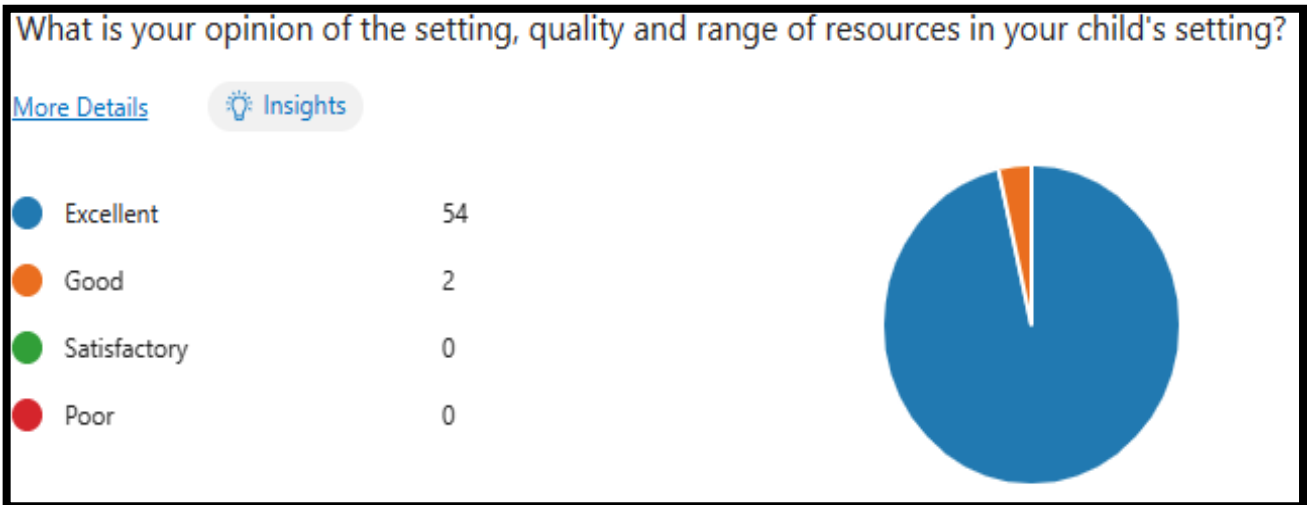
The early years team continue to be upskilled in their practise. Our dedicated staff team are always keen to learn of ways to engage and support the children in their care.

The Training Included:

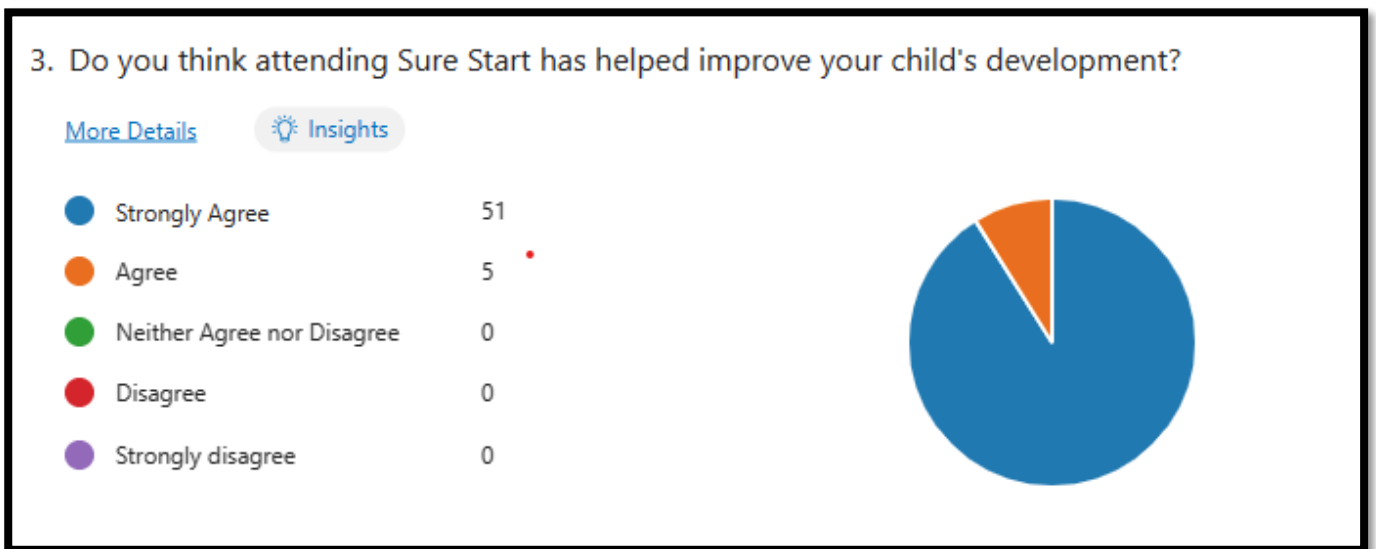
- Developmental Programme for 2-3 year old training for new assistants
- QCF Level 5 – Early Years Supervisor
- Natural Thinkers Training - A programme that supports practitioners in connecting children with nature
- Anytime is Chatting Time
- Breastfeeding/ Responsive Feeding Refresher
- Connecting through Song
- Health and Safety/ Fire Safety
- Solihull Training
- Motivational Interviewing
- Brief but Vivid
- Intensive Interaction

- Jabadao – 4 core body senses

Quality of Environment



Is Anyone Better Off?



What areas in particular do you feel your child has made the most progress in? e.g. Speech, language and communication, social skills, emotional skills etc. or what do you see as the main benefits?



Do you think that your child is more ready to attend nursery/pre-school setting after attending our services?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

Strongly Agree	40
Agree	14
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0



How do you feel you as a parent/carer have benefitted from your child attending the programme?

It has made me understand my child needs

The programme has helped immensely for me as a parent in understanding my child's need. This programme is excellent for both parents and children.

Time around other parents and people going through similar milestones like teething etc.

Help with routine, emotional support, play and activities ideas

I feel great about the child development sessions as well as all the parental programmes and information session they have held for us it has been very useful we as a family would be lost without sure start

Gained more confidence and strategies

I feel a lot more settled knowing that my son is reaching his milestones with the help of sure start, as it was a big worry for me before

Lots of information and follow up help

In every way. Our family has benefited from the practical support from Sure Start

I have been able to help my child grow and develop with the advice from the staff and have received invaluable support.

Lana Molloy
Early Years Lead

Family Support Report

The Team

Parent and Family Lead: Lisa Flynn (In post from October 2022)

Family Support Workers:

Vicky Ferguson, Paula Montgomery, Sadie Harper, Courtney Moss and Laura Dan

Family Support Outcomes Home visiting	
<u>How much did we do?</u>	<u>How well did we do?</u>
<p>Home Visits Target - 500 visits for 120 families</p> <p>Family Support 1-1 – significant conversations Target - 500 for 80 adults</p> <p>Ethnic Minority home visits Target 80 families</p> <p>Ethnic minority family needing interpreting service. Target 6</p> <p>Initial Visits Target 130 visits</p> <p>Our team of Family Support have healthy and strong working relationships with local health visitors to ensure maximum support for their families.</p> <p>The team link in constantly with the community around them including professionals to enable resources to be given and signposting to happen.</p> <p>All of our staff team are trained in child protection and pediatric first aid. All of our family support team are trained in Unicef BFI to understand the importance of responsive feeding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 761 completed for 158 families. • Target overachieved • 86% target achieved. • 89% achieved. <p>7 families received interpreter services for their home visits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 89% achieved. <p>This year the team have undergone training such as...</p> <p>Motivational Interviewing Solihull Approach Training Food Hygiene and Fire Safety Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training Connecting Through Song BFI Refreshers</p>

Is Anyone Better Off?

The Voice of Parents

- *Thank you so much for listening, I feel so much more positive when I talk things through with you. This benefits my child so much that I have been able to have this time talking to you. I feel better for the week.*
- *Because you made me get off my butt and go for a walk that day, have continued to walk and now attending the gym. I honestly would still be sitting in the house in the depths of my mental health. You made me see what I could do to get my mind motivated by simply getting out in the fresh air. Thanks Paula!*
- *Sadie help me so much. She help me from bad husband. She help me with food, she help me with visa, she help me with children, she help me with home, she help me with fire and boiler, she help me when sick, she help me all time. She help me when services from social do not. I am Sadie in my heart.*

How often did you/do you receive a home visit from Sure Start?

[More Details](#)

Weekly	5
Fortnightly	4
Monthly	0
As Needed	4
Other	1



In what way do the Sure Start home visits benefit you? (you can tick more than one option)

[More Details](#)

Emotionally/Listening/Mental H...	13
Advice/Information on Child De...	14
Signposting: Advice on Financial...	6
Other	0



In what way do the Sure Start home visits benefit your child/children? (you can tick more than one option)

[More Details](#)

Speech and Language/Commun...	14
Routines: Sleeping/Feeding/Beh...	7
Play and development	12
Emotionally - Confidence/ self e...	13
Other	0



Family Support Outcomes

Peer Support/Young mums
Paula Montgomery

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
Peer Support – One session per week for 10 mums	100% delivered.
Young Mums	Due to low attendance at both Peer Support the decision was taken to merge this with the Peer Support and use the other session for further training for Mums. We facilitated the health visiting team to deliver the Henry Programme, a health programme tackling nutrition and healthy lifestyle for families for 8 weeks.

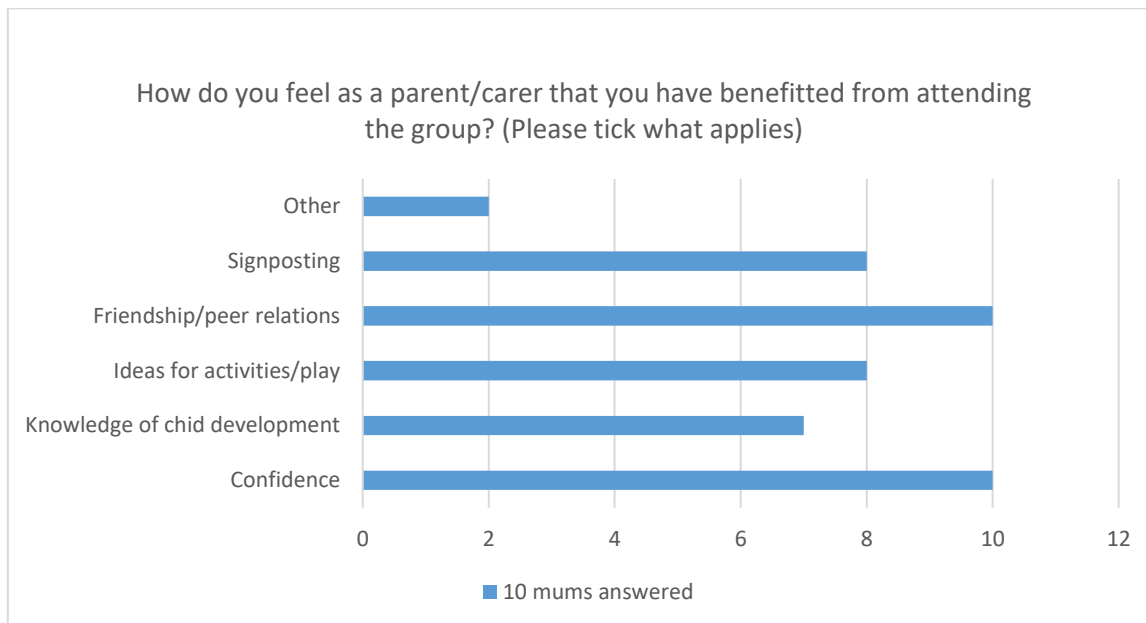
Mothers or female carers of a child meet, discuss issues of common interest, information on child development, health, and education. A range of training courses and personal development opportunities are arranged, and the children are with the Early Years Team in crèche. These courses cover topics identified by the parents themselves. Some fun activities, coffee and chat are also part of the service.

Peer Support Monthly Activities

April 22	Princes Trust
May 22	Managing Stress
June 22	Benefits advice & Sensory Play
Sept 22	Take 5
Oct 22	Coffee and Chat & some Arty Crafts.
Nov 22	Cooking Programme
Dec 22	Christmas Crafting and Visit to Christmas Market
Jan 23	Action Mental health
Feb 23	Mindfulness Awareness
March 23	Games, Card-Making, Coffee & Chat.

Is Anyone Better Off?

What Did the Parents Say?



Family Support Outcomes

Mums & Toddlers & BT3 group

Courtney, Lisa, Sadie, Paula

How Much Did We Do?

Carew P&T target - 25 families
 Short Strand target – 16 families
 Lagan Village target – 16 families
 BT3 Group target – 15 families
 Cregagh target – 6 families

How Well Did We Do It?

36 families participated.
 29 families participated.
 22 families participated.
 24 families participated.
 9 families participated.

Mums and Tots provide a warm and welcoming space for parents to meet each other and for their children to socialize with other children. Our well trained staff provide curious and welcoming play spaces and provide times where they can model what play looks like.

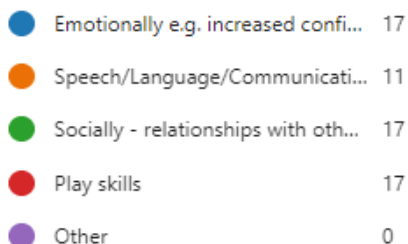
Mums and Tots provide great transitions for our parents who have been with us from Baby Club and Baby Café or are new to Sure Start. It gives us a great way of getting to know them and being able to spot any areas where specialist support may be needed.

Is Anyone Better Off?

What did Mums say?

How do you feel your child has benefitted from attending the group?

[More Details](#)



Family Support Outcomes Baby Café Vicky Ferguson	
How much did we do? Target – to deliver to 12 Mums	How well did we do it? 35 Mums attended throughout the year This group transitions the parents and babies who have attended our Baby Club for 0-6 months.

The Baby Café invites parents with babies aged 6-12 months to enjoy play in a safe, appropriate environment with:

- Support from other mums/parents
- Rhythm & Rhyme
- Age-appropriate toys
- Health Promotion, benefits advice, weaning information.
- Speech & language, child development, additional needs information, sensory room/play sessions
- Visits from pharmacy, dietician and benefits advice

We started a 2nd baby café on Tuesdays due to demand in February 2023

Weaning Programme (supported by the Larder Food Bank)

12 Participants over 5 weeks. We arranged for the dietician to come along to chat to the parents about weaning and to give the relevant educational information. The larder produced the ingredients and Vicky delivered them to the parents along with a blender, bowls, and spoons.

Vicky then uploaded a recipe and video each week on a WhatsApp group and was available to answer any queries.

- Week 1 – Blueberry & banana porridge
- Week 2 – Avocado dessert
- Week 3 – Cheesy pea pasta
- Week 4 – Eggs and mushrooms cups and toasted fingers.

Is Anyone Better Off?

I have been scared to try solids etc, but this gave me the confidence to start.

Thanks for the equipment, I honestly wouldn't have afforded the blender and I will use it so much.

I have learned so much from this and will continue to try other foods.

Thank you Sure Start. Not only for the food, equipment, and recipes, but for the contact with others. Sometimes when it's just you and the baby you miss adult conversations!

Cooking Around the World (supported by Belfast City Council)



Cooking around the world was designed by Tracey & Lisa in 2021 during COVID times, to get more families to converse with others online in a closed Facebook page. Belfast City Council were impressed by the first year and offered support to deliver it to EBSS families. 17 Participants took part over 4 weeks. The families watched a video on a closed Facebook page each Thursday. The ingredients and a piece of equipment were delivered each week prior to the video. There was a final event in week 5 where everyone came together for breakfast and to design a recipe book. Attendance: 15 of the 17 came along.

Four weeks of recipes from around the world given by the participants.

- Week 1 - Starter from China – Chicken noodle soup, or Chinese noodle soup for veggie/vegan.
- Week 2 - Mains from Morocco – Moroccan sausage stew, meat or vegan sausages.
- Week - 3 Dessert from Philippines – Buttery coconut bars – veggie/vegan coconut macaroons.
- Week 4 – Try something different from India – Paneer Korma Curry

Is Anyone Better Off?

What Did Parents Say?

Such a benefit for my family, loved all the different food that we have not used before, I got lots of info on Indian food from a few of the mums, tried dates and paneer for the first time.

Very good programme, learning to cook food from other cultures, thank you for letting me take part in the programme in Sure Start.

Since birthing my son, I have not made very much from scratch cooking. I have really enjoyed this, and it's given me the incentive to continue.

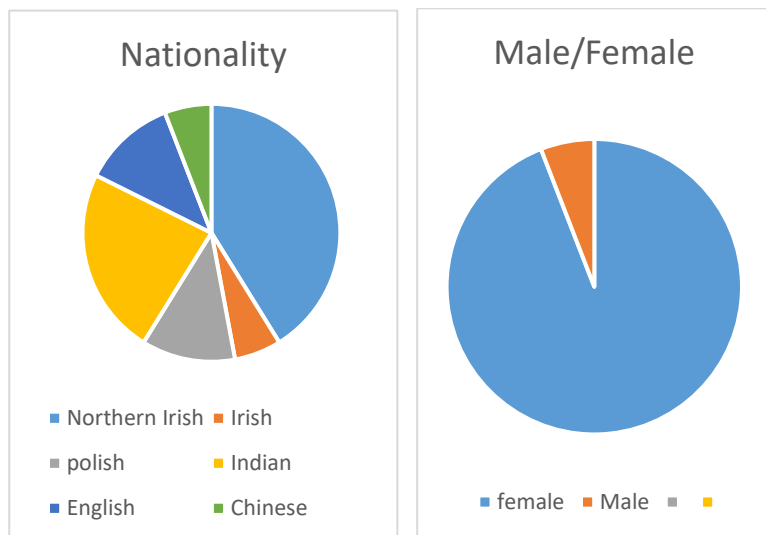
I might know some other cultures and their food but never had the opportunity to cook like this.

Due to home circumstances, I had not been able to cook for a while. This project came at the right time as I just moved into a long-awaited home. We had fun cooking as a family and I also got to meet lovely people. Also, the food was a meal we didn't have to pay for.

The food and the equipment came at such a good time as everyone is struggling at the moment. Lisa was great answering questions and being there if we needed her.

Fresh food was amazing!

It reminded me to let children help and we are making more food as a family. Even the husband is joining in.



Family Support Outcomes
 Play & Discover Mums and Tots
 Courtney

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
<p>Courtney facilitated a follow-on programme for Play and Discover, a programme to support their children's speech and language. Parents were able to put into practice what they learnt, with Courtney's guidance.</p>	<p>12 sessions with 4 children</p> <p>This is another transition programme, which supports parents moving from one service into another service</p>

Is Anyone Better Off?

What did Parents Say?

You
 Hi everyone,
 Thanks so much for a great year at parents and tots. It was so lovely getting to know you all....

Hi Courtney I will be leaving now [redacted] has a we place in templemore. Can't thank u enough for everything we loved coming 2 ur we group on a Thur we [redacted] loved it and has came on so well because of it we will miss u! ❤️ xx 10:04

[redacted] will be leaving aswell as she got a wee space in Carew, thank you for your sessions they were great she always had a ball it was lovely to meet yous x 10:05

Thank you so much Courtney for everything! [redacted] had an absolute ball with you and met some lovely wee friends 😊 hopefully see you around sometime 🤍 x 10:06

Thank you Courtney for all your help and encouragement with [redacted] at his time in sure start. We both really enjoyed attending the class on a Thursday morning. [redacted] is off to mencap in September. We will miss you and all his little friends ❤️🧡💚💙 10:18

Parent and Child Together Workshops 0-1 & 1-2 (Message of the Month)

Month	Description	0-1 yrs children attending	1-2 yrs children attending
April	Movement is good for my body and my brain	0	7
May	I'm a happy baby when you...	5	8
June	Your love and patience make change easier for me	0	8
September	Sharing Books helps my brain to grow	13	3
October	My brain needs different sorts of play to help it grow	16	5
November	Screen Time – Use it Wisely	8	17
December	My smile is special, let's keep it that way	10	7
January	Healthy foods build a healthy brain	7	10
February	Words build my brain	7	12
March	Encouraging positive behaviour	13	8

These programmes were designed to share the Message of the Month each month. Messages which promote play, emotional regulation and speech and language.

Is Anyone Better Off?

What Did the Parents Say?

How do you feel as a parent/carer that you have benefitted from attending the rolling programmes? (More than one option can be selected)

[More Details](#)

● Confidence	9
● Knowledge on Child Developme...	8
● Ideas for activities/ play	10
● Friendship/ peer relationships	7
● Signposting for support/ advice	4



How do you feel your child has benefitted from attending the programmes? (more than one option can be selected)

[More Details](#)

● Emotionally e.g. increased confi...	6
● Speech, Language and Commu...	9
● Socially - relationships with oth...	10
● Play skills	9



Summer Programmes

Four Wednesdays in Carew Family Centre.

- Baby Day ran by antenatal team.
- Toddler Day
- Family day
- Family day

Trip to the Sea-park x 5 families – Family support BT3 Group

Trip to Castle Espie – Baby Café x 12 adults, 12 children.

Walks and play in the park, walks around titanic, garden days and more with family support workers.



Is Anyone Better Off?

Summer Programme Feedback

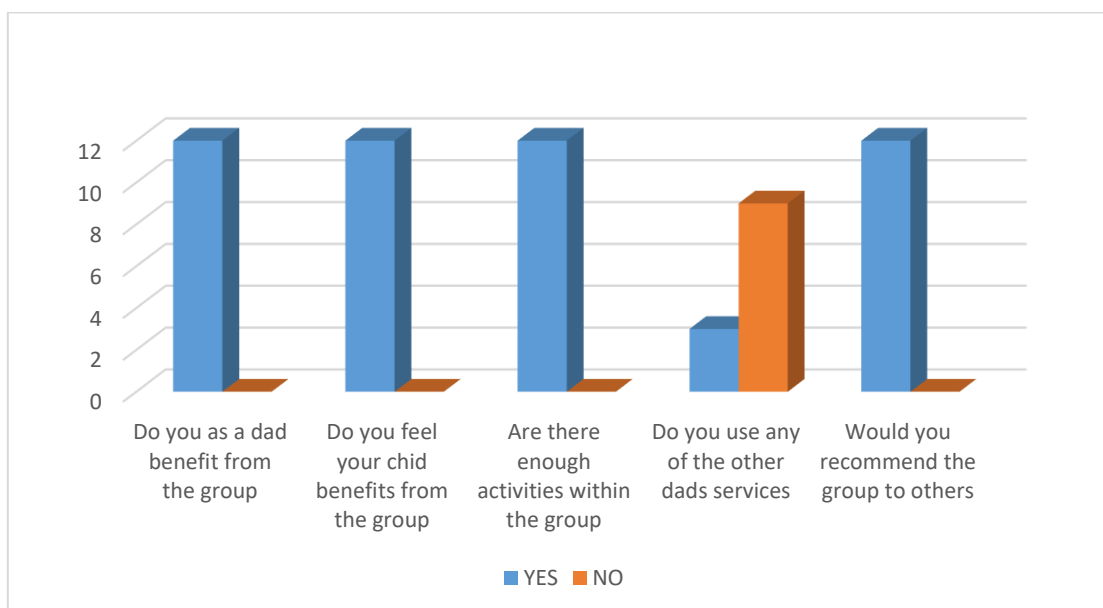
I have always felt guilty that my children's friends tell them stories where they have been in the summer. Because Sure Start had some family trips and days which included older children, my children this year have stories too!

My children were having fun and I had time with other adults.

Having some fun activities really take the pressure off, both money and thinking what to do that will be fun.



Family Support Outcomes Dads Work	
How Much Did We Do?	How Well Did We Do It?
Target – 10 sessions to 8 families	15 sessions to 19 families
1:1 work with dads 12 sessions to 3 families	16 sessions to 4 families



How Do you Benefit?

It's time I have with my child as I work all week, long hours.

No one is looking over me, sometimes I feel like I'm being watched and not doing things properly. It's me time with my child.

I have learnt that my child is learning not just playing. In my culture it looks like the children are just playing, but I now know what the play means.

To be honest it saves me a little money as I see my child on Saturdays, and I don't have to pay money out for so much fun.

How Does your Child Benefit?

Not so clingy with mum, enjoys time with me.

Lovely environment, to play in for all weathers. More choice of toys, lovely garden.

We learn together English and culture.

Knowing my child knows I was with them, and we did fun stuff together.



What Our Parents Think About the Work Our Family Support Team Does

Thank you for all the support from Vicky. All our time in group you have been there for us. You've been so helpful to me; this service is so vital.

East Belfast Sure Start have helped me so much. I was an addict, living on the streets in my past and had my children adopted. I made changes in my life and found a new partner. When my son was born social services were heavily involved. Now just under 2 years later with the support of

sure start I have no SS involvement and I go to as much as possible within Sure Start. It is my lifeline.

You have been a god send, everything you have done for us was precious. Thank you so much for always making us feel welcome. We will miss our Fridays.

Lisa Flynn – Family Support Lead

Additional Needs Support Report

How Much Did We Do?	How Well Did We Do It?
<p>Little Learners</p> <p>April 2022-August 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Groups - Monday and Tuesday afternoon (6 children) and Wednesday and Thursday afternoon (6 children) <p>September 2022-March 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Groups Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday morning – 6 children Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday afternoon – 6 children <p>Parent And Child Together Sessions Aug 2022 – 2023 Graduations From September 2022 - Monthly Stay and Play sessions, Graduation in June and 2 Stay and Play sessions over summer</p> <p>Little Explorers April 2022 - August 2022 3 sessions a week for 7 children</p> <p>Attention Builders Little Learners</p> <p>Little Explorers 11 sessions delivered April - August 2022</p> <p>Play and Discover</p> <p>Parents' Support Group Introductory workshop Make and take workshop SENAC workshop -wellbeing workshops -workshops on feeding, sleeping and toilet training facilitated by student health visitors and Contact – for families with disabled children -supporting transitions workshop</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 194 sessions • 88% of target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 sessions • 100% target delivered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41 sessions • 80% target delivered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% target delivered <p>2 programmes 5 weeks Sept and Jan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned to support 10 parents, supported 24 • Delivered 22 sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% target achieved

<p>Home Visits</p> <p>1:1 Support Sessions with Parents</p> <p>Sensory play workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postnatal sensory play workshops for Baby Club, Breast Start group and 6-12 months group • Rolling programmes focusing on sensory play in December and March • 1 x sensory play workshop for First Steps Stay and Play • 1 x sensory play workshop for Short Strand Child Development Programme • 1 x sensory play workshop for Short Strand Parent and Toddler <p>Internal Support Visits To Children In Our Settings Target 60 visits to 30 children</p> <p>Outreach support visits to our partner settings – Ballybeen Women’s Centre, Short Strand and First Steps.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned to support 30 children and 30 adults, supported 49. • Planned 60 home visits, delivered 92 • Planned to complete 100 sessions, delivered 120 • Planned to support 45 adults, supported 52 • 13 sessions delivered • 70 children and adults supported • Delivered 46 visits to 30 children
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How Well Did We Do It?

We work alongside professionals to provide holistic help

We work closely with professionals involved with children, including Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Physiotherapists, Health Visitors, Social Workers, Educational Psychologists and the Special Education Needs Early Years Inclusion Service team. The Additional Needs Support Worker also links in with Solas, Mencap and Little Learners programmes in other Sure Starts to share strategies and approaches.

Highly Trained Staff – Including Completed Courses

- Sound for Wellbeing
- Motivational Interviewing
- Solihull Approach

Supported Individual Needs

We have supported children with developmental differences, sensory differences, social and communication needs, attention differences, play skills, emotional and behavioural needs, English as an additional language and medical conditions, such as heart conditions, cerebral palsy, seizures and allergies.

The Additional Needs Support Worker has worked closely with the staff in various programmes and roles in East Belfast Sure Start, giving advice and support to ensure that we are providing the appropriate resources and implementing strategies that will support the children.

Little Explorers

Little Explorers ran until August 2022. This group supported 7 children and nurtured their social skills, play, communication and attention. It did not continue in September 2022 as we took on additional sessions for Little Learners and increased our Play and Discover sessions to support the families through Stay and Play sessions.

Little Learners

Little Learners has provided a high level of support to 12 children and their families, supporting children with developmental, communication, social, play and sensory differences.

Little Learners programmes have been part of the Belfast Wide Early Years pilot project alongside Glenbrook Sure Start, Solas and Kids Together. We have received funding from the Department for Education and had evaluation work highlighting the impact and good outcomes of the programme. We have benefited from partnership with the Child Development Speech and Language Therapy team and Occupational Therapy team. This project has helped our children to receive support for their needs and statutory assessment through the Education Authority for their special educational needs. The allied health professionals have provided regular support visits to the group, observed and assessed the children, worked with the parents and supported the staff with training and advice.

Little Learners provides a communication rich play environment with highly skilled staff. Using elements of the TEACCH approach, visual aids, physical structure and other strategies, children are encouraged in their development, communication and interaction, confidence and independence of daily routines. We work closely with the parents to ensure that they feel empowered and equipped to nurture their child's development at home.

Monthly stay and play sessions have been a really valuable way to connect with parents and provide opportunities for staff to share what they do in the sessions with the children, show them resources used and model interaction strategies.

Parent workshops have also been an integral part of the programme, giving parents information, advice and a chance to connect with each other through peer support.

The morning group benefited from music therapy sessions and the afternoon group received sound therapy sessions. Through these experiences the children have developed their attention, self-regulation and social communication skills.

The music therapist developed some lovely back and forth communication through music with some of the children. In the Sound Therapy sessions some of the children really connected with the instruments and they became quite calm and relaxed. For example, one child loved the bells and the vibration of the rain stick; whilst another the noise and movement of the giant gong.



Play and Discover

The Play and Discover programme provides 5 weekly play sessions for parents and their children where the children have significant social communication needs. The programme aims to develop parent confidence in supporting their child's communication development and to develop parent skills using adult-child interaction strategies. Each week there is a 'top tip' such as 'follow your child's lead' that is a focus point for conversations and coaching in the sessions. There are also links to pre-recorded videos sent out to parents each week before the session which link in with the

weekly 'top tip'. The programme allows for detailed and child-focused conversations with practical modelling from those running the sessions. Quite often, especially when children have more severe social communication needs the strategies which are most effective in supporting their child are those which can be difficult to convey over the phone. These sessions provide a unique environment for the children and their parents to get practical examples of how to support engagement and the strategies to use with their children.

Our Rich Learning Environments

Our additional needs room follows the Curiosity Approach, creating a low-arousal, calming and nurturing environment with natural materials, real items, loose parts, items to stimulate interest and exploration. The room layout has been carefully thought about and there is structure to create play areas to help focus and guide the children's play and attention.



Sensory play is an important element of our practice. The sensory room on Albertbridge Road has been updated and redeveloped during this period and it creates a mesmerising calming sensory experience for the children and families. The room is used by our services as well as other early years providers.



In addition, each programme has an area in the room with various resources to support the children's development and sensory needs, including bubble tubes, fibre optics, colour changing and light up toys and resources to explore.



The outdoor space on the Albertbridge Road continues to be developed and some new additions have been added over this period, including a swing, boat and various interesting plants.

The children have really benefited from the outdoor play opportunities, helping them to calm and regulate themselves, experience different sensations and textures and develop their gross motor skills and spatial awareness.



Sensory Play Workshops

The Additional Needs Support Worker has provided baby sensory play workshops for the Baby Club, Breast Start and the 6-12 months baby group. Parents have been given ideas that they can try at home to give their babies' sensory play experiences, helping support their child's brain development, senses, curiosity and strengthen the bond between parent and child.

The Additional Needs Support Worker has also facilitated sensory play rolling programmes in December and March for children under 1 years and their parents. Each week focused on a different sense and there were lots of interesting materials for the babies and parents to explore.



We Have Supported Parents

The Additional Needs Support Worker has supported families in many different ways. Examples include modelling strategies and providing activities and tools to support children's communication and areas of development and giving guidance on issues, such as behaviour, sleep, toilet training. Nurturing parents through the journey of understanding their child's additional needs and supporting them with any onward referrals to specialist services is an important aspect of the role of the Additional Needs Support Worker. Parents have been assisted with nursery application, making requests for statutory assessments for Special Educational Needs and completing forms for DLA applications. Parents have also been given support for financial needs, including support with Christmas food and toy hampers, referrals to St Vincent de Paul, support through the Scaffolding Project for help with gas and electric top-ups and applications to the Family Fund for equipment, resources and house alterations. The Additional Needs Support Worker has supported some parents with mental health and anxiety by offering emotional support, sharing self-care tips and signposting to specialist services.

Is Anyone Better Off as a Result?

Children and families have received specialist support and early intervention to help nurture children's individual needs and help children reach their potential.

This has resulted in the children across our various programmes in East Belfast Sure Start have made some lovely progress during the year.

Some Examples:

Communication - being able to request “more” by vocal sounds or gestures, using choice boards to request food or play items

Attention – being able to sit for increasing numbers of motivating objects during our Attention Builders bucket time sessions

Social skills – showing more interest in peers, initiating interactions with an adult, tolerating sitting beside peers for snack and group activities

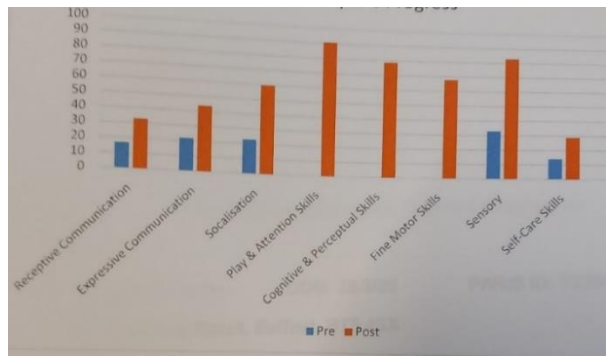
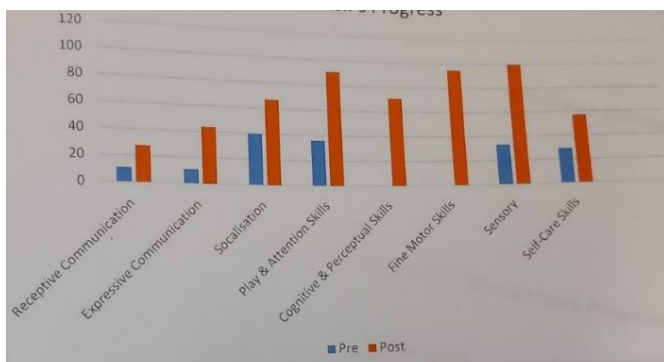
Self-care skills – learning to drink from an open cup, holding a spoon, self feeding

Completing structured tasks at the workstation - developing their cognitive, listening and concentration skills along with fine motor and hand-eye co-ordination skills

In Addition:

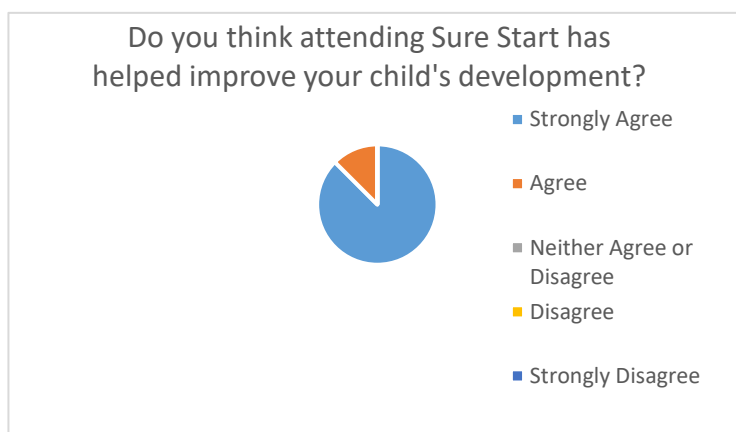
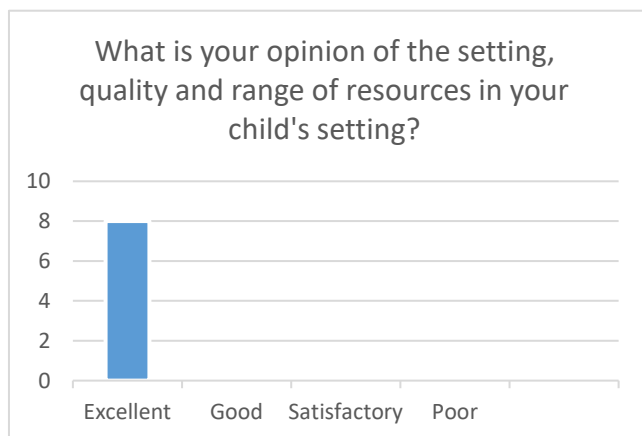
- Children have been referred to services, some have had ASD assessments and a number have had a statutory assessment of special educational needs. One child from Little Learners will be going to a special school, one child will be going to a unit within a mainstream nursery school, three will be going to mainstream and seven will be going to Solas Sunflowers bespoke specialist 3-4 year old programme.
- Some of our children in our 1-2 year old programmes will be moving on to Mencap to receive support for their additional needs.
- Staff and parents have worked in partnership. Parents have been empowered and encouraged in their parenting and how to support their children’s individual needs and development.
- The nurturing environment of Little Learners has provided an excellent foundation for the children and helped their development. The partnership with the BHSCT Child Development Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy teams has been fantastic. Here are a few graphs charting the children’s progress from October to May.

Feedback From The Little Learners Programme



The improvement in H is amazing...He hasn't had to wait for support; I believe this Programme has made such a difference for H...I've not had to see H sitting on a waiting list, making so many phone calls as it is so horrible having to sit and watch while your child struggles. The support and input from everyone on this Programme, the health professionals and the SureStart team. coming with so many different areas of expertise has been fantastic

Some responses from our East Belfast Early Years Survey 2022/23



How do you feel you as a parent/carer have benefitted from your child attending the programme?

I feel great about little learners as well as all the parental programmes and information session they have held for us it has been very useful we as a family would be lost without sure start

I've been able to help my child grow and develop with the advice from the staff and have received invaluable support

Lots of information and follow up help

It's made me understand my child needs more

What areas in particular do you feel your child has made the most progress in?



Quote From a Parent During a Phone Call to Ashlea

Thank you, you have supported me mentally when at my lowest and I wanted to cry, you were the only person I could talk to and you listened to me

Some Responses from the Play and Discover Evaluations:

Since attending the group, is there anything else that is different about the way you interact with your child?

*I talk more to my child about what they are interested in at that moment;
I join in with my child's interests*

"I give my child time to take their turn in the interaction; I join in with my child's interests; I wait and see what my child is interested in; I talk more to my child about what they are interested in at that moment

What is different about the way you are interacting with your child now?

Waiting to see if he will respond

I am more interactive with him

I let my daughter make more independent decisions during play time

What have you noticed about how your child responds when you interact in this way?

She gives me more eye contact and wants

to involve me more when she is playing

If you had to tell another parent one things you learnt from the group, what would it be?

That if it doesn't work first time don't give up

I have learnt how to encourage my son to interact

Be patient with your child and help them find ways to communicate with you

Feedback From The Sensory Play Workshops And Programmes

Helen (not her real name) described how she loves the sensory workshops as she gets to see the kinds of things her baby enjoys and can then provide those type of play experiences at home – e.g. musical toys, shiny materials to explore, water play and crushed up cereal.

Great! Kids loved getting messy. Shaving foam was a big hit for the boys

S enjoyed the spaghetti. Very good

Brilliant. E loved it

R loved the stay and play, plenty to do

Speech, Language and Communication (SLC) Report



2022-2023

The Speech, Language and Communication model for Sure Start continues to be Universal, Targeted and Specialist intervention. The support provided to East Belfast Sure Start over this academic year is evidenced throughout this report.

The SLT post is now a job share between Rebecca Carey (x3 days) and Michelle Maguire (x2 days).

There has also been additional funding for 0.5 of a day due to project expansion which Michelle has been covering. Michelle was on maternity leave for the majority of the April 2022-23 year. We have received some support from Anne McKee (SLT lead) while Michelle was on Maternity leave but have not had a full time equivalent for most of the year.

SLC Outcomes- April 2022 – March 2023

How Much Did We Do?	How Well Did We Do It?
<p>Home Visits: 82 visits to support SLC skills in the home environment</p> <p>SLC Support in Developmental Programme for Two Year Olds (DP42YO)</p> <p>Centre-based visits providing parents with advice around child's SLC – 19 visits for 14 individual children</p> <p>Telephone based support for parents for 16 families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target achieved • 95% achieved (no. of visits) • Target achieved (no. of unique families) • Target achieved

<p>x8 educational workshops: x2 SLC workshops for parents in each programme at the beginning and end of year to provide information around 'Chat with me' and 'Chat with me about preschool'</p> <p>All families received x3 Chat with me books- in September, the Christmas book and the moving to Preschool book.</p> <p>48 children supported with their transition to nursery/preschool</p> <p>All children attending the DP42YO are screened at the beginning and end of the year to help identify children who need support and measure progress. Most children are screened using the Wellcomm and children who use English as an additional language are screened using the Bilingual language profile</p> <p>SLC support in Child development sessions/Early years/community partner groups:</p> <p>63 visits to provide SLC support to staff for children attending child development programmes, including community partner groups</p> <p>33 contacts with parents to provide SLC support to parents for children attending child development programmes, including community partner groups</p> <p>100 children supported with their transition to nursery school</p> <p>X 9 Educational workshops for parents delivered in child development sessions and community partner groups with 43 parents attending</p> <p>Wellcomm screening in Butterflies group and community partners</p>	<p>Target achieved (workshops offered and delivered) 47% attendance – you would rarely expect full attendance for various reasons however this has decreased further since Covid.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 48 families received Chat with me book series <p>SLT supported staff with transition reports and ensured children who required additional support were signposted to appropriate services in addition to the 'Chat with me about preschool' sessions for parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 81% children screened using the Wellcomm. Those not screened had either left the programme or EAL children and were therefore screened using the Bilingual language profile <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target achieved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target achieved <p>All families received 'Chat with me about preschool' book and were offered educational workshop on this topic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target achieved • 100% of children were screened in Butterflies • 1 child screened in Ballybeen • 7 children screened in Bloomfield playgroup
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<p>x1 rolling programme for 1-2 year olds</p> <p>SLC support in Antenatal/baby services:</p> <p>1 antenatal evening</p> <p>X2 rolling programmes for under 1s (song and rhyme and words build my brain)</p> <p>X10 educational workshops delivered in Baby club/café and Breast feeding support group</p> <p>SLC support in Additional needs groups: X 2 play and discover programmes delivered</p> <p>487 Collaborative conversations with parents, staff and other professionals</p> <p>Signposting:</p> <p>Referrals made by SLT 22 Speech and language referrals (22% increase) 4 Child development clinic referrals 2 Autism Assessment services 9 Occupational therapist referrals (89% increase) 16 primary care (GP/health visiting) 10 Educational Psychology referrals (900% increase)</p> <p>Some services have an open referral system therefore family support and early years staff are able to make referrals independently following advice sought from SLT. 37 additional SLT referrals made by other Surestart staff</p> <p>Staff Training: Hanen Learning Language and Loving it Intensive interaction Wellcomm Screening tool training Chatting Time training for early years practitioners Supporting Reluctant communicators Introduction to 'Chat with me about preschool'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 families attended • Targets achieved • 12 parents attended • 14 families attended • 61 families attended • 11 families attended <p>Surestart staff and parents continue to contact the SLT to discuss ideas and ask for advice regarding children's development. This happens regularly and often does not require a SLC visit where we meet the child. We also have collaborative conversations with health visitors and SLTs to discuss the child's care.</p> <p>Children are signposted to other services in a timely manner when additional support is required.</p> <p>59 children referred for SLT</p> <p>Number trained: 6 6 1 21 14 22</p>
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Is Anyone Better off as a Result

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Despite reduced SLT time during maternity leave and increased developmental needs of the children (as evidenced by the increase in signposting), families were still signposted to appropriate services. We continued to build capacity within the Surestart team to ensure families and children's SLC needs were supported, through a combination of staff training and regular liaison with staff regarding children's needs.

Some evaluations:

Staff Training:

94% said they felt confident or very confident in supporting parents to interact with their child

69% of staff reported they were supporting parents and children in a different way since attending the training

I am more confident to ask parents to notice how their children are communicating with them. I also don't feel as bad to ask a parent to wait for some time especially when turn taking and copying what their child is doing.

It reminded me also to look out for even the smallest detail especially around communication. I also copy sounds more and wait for my turn and not to rush in with something to fill a gap

SLC support in Early Years:

R.....'s speech and response skills have drastically improved throughout the year. She loves going in to Sure Start for her morning, and was very comfortable going into open day at nursery. Her improvement in these areas is down to the hard work and dedication

I've been able to help my child grow and develop with the advice from the staff and have received invaluable support

SLC Educational Workshops:

79% of parents report they interact differently with their child since the workshop e.g.

"I feel more confident and I have learnt a routine of wee songs and rhymes that my baby really enjoys"

"singing songs more, using ideas for playing together"

"more songs and sitting up playing together"

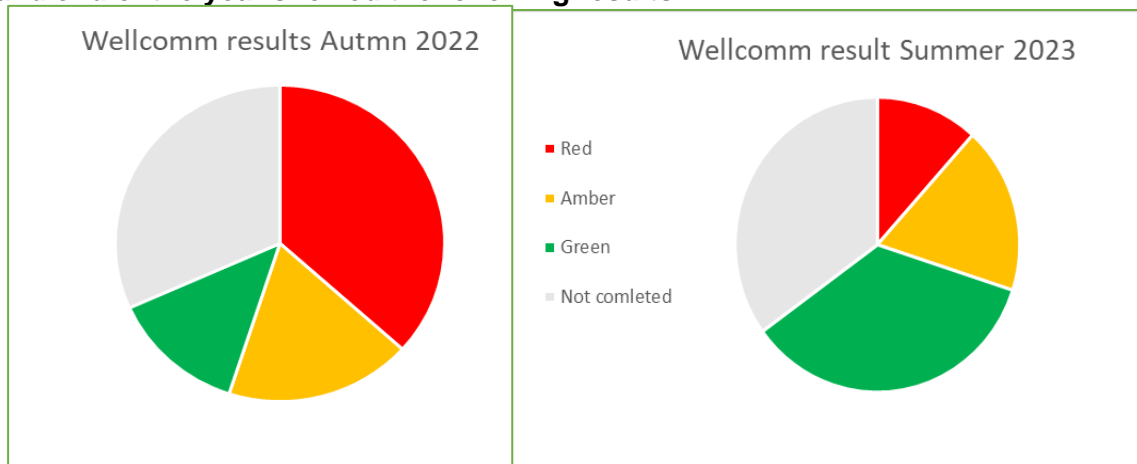
Chat with Me Books

98% of parents say they share books with their child more often since receiving the “Chat with me” book and information.

100% of parents say they chat more with their child during book sharing

98% of parents said the “Chat with me” book gave them ideas of activities they can do with their child

SLC screening of the children attending the DP42-3YOs and Carew at the beginning and end of the year showed the following results:

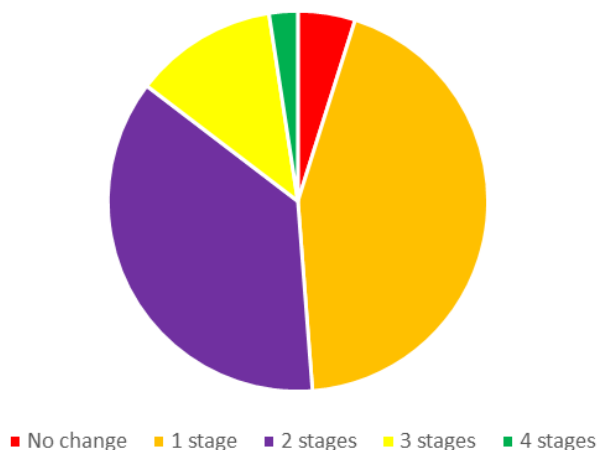


The wellcomm provides scores using a traffic light system, where ‘Red’ indicates a high level of SLC need, ‘amber’ indicates moderate SLC needs and ‘green’ suggests the child’s SLC is typically developing. Improvements could be seen in Summer 2022, with more children scoring green and a decrease in the number of children scoring red. All children requiring additional support were signposted to appropriate services. The children who weren’t screened had either left the setting or their progress was monitored using the Bilingual screening tool:

100% bilingual children showed progress in at least one area of development including attention, play and expressive language. 83% of children progressed in their expressive language

There are various factors that can affect the child’s score in the Wellcomm such as their attention and listening skills and their communication style, and so we also use the Hanen Language Stages as a way of measuring the children’s progress. Hanen Language Stages help to map the stage of language development a child is at based on practitioner observations. These stages identify the very early stages of communication (e.g. not sending intentional messages to others), to the later stages (where children can hold a conversation with others).

Progress in Hanen Language Stages



96% of children progressed by at least 1 stage and some progressed by as many as 4 stages. For those who did not progress there was onward referral/support given as required.

Universal Support

#yourwordsworkwonders #anytimeischattingtime

SLC messaging is weaved through all aspects of Surestart service delivery. The SLT team has continued to upskill staff through training, modelling in practice and discussions.

Examples Include:

- **Social Media Messaging**
- **Message of the Month**
- **Connecting Through Song**

Staff have attended workshops on how to include more singing in their practice and encourage parents to sing more with their children. There has been a noticeable change in groups, with very intentional use of songs to promote parent-child interactions.

- **Chatting Time Initiative:**

'Chatting time training' continues to be rolled to all staff.

Chatting Time messages are communicated through programmes, groups, rolling programmes, home visiting and on social media platforms.

The Chat with me book series is given to families alongside educational workshops For All Children In Their Pre-Preschool Year.

- **Play Days and Fairs:** SLT often contributes to community events where she shares SLC messaging through resources and in conversations with parents at the events.



Targeted Support



Programme Delivery: SLT supported the delivery of various programmes alongside other Surestart staff, including antenatal and baby groups and play and discover programmes. The aim of joint delivery with the antenatal, family support and early years teams is to build capacity within the teams and continue to model and weave messaging regarding brain development and supporting communication development into the delivery of all programmes.

Work with Early Years Staff: In addition to staff training, SLT continued to support the Early years team on a needs led basis, providing advice and support regarding whole groups (e.g. ways to adapt the environment) and individual children (e.g. specific ways to support each child's SLC needs). This support was offered to our partners in Ballybeen, Bloomfield, First Steps and Short Strand as well as our Surestart groups. All children attending the DP42-3YOs and Carew are screened at the beginning and end of the year, using either the Wellcomm and Hanen language stages or the Bilingual screening tool. This is a helpful process to identify children's needs, and monitor progress. The SLT oversees this and supports staff on goal setting and planning (results detailed above.)

Work with the Family Support Team: The family support workers play such a huge role in supporting parents to support their child's SLC skills in the home environment. SLT continues to be available to discuss a child's development and provide advice as required. Joint visits are often carried out and the family support team use a suite of SLC resources and programmes to support their work e.g. Building Blocks programme, Anytime is Chatting Time videos.



Work with Parents: We recognise that the person who has a strong relationship with the family is the person best placed to support our parents, which is why majority of the SLTs work focuses on capacity building. However when it is appropriate, the SLT provides advice and support to parents via phone calls and face to face meetings/home visits. They have also been supported through the SLT led programmes and educational workshops.

Specialist Support

The capacity building model helps to ensure early identification and appropriate signposting of children. This year we made 84 referrals to Specialist services. The SLT maintains strong links with health visitors and speech and language therapy teams, to discuss children's SLC needs.

Play and Discover: This group provides support to children and their parents who require high levels of support particularly around their communication. It has been delivered on a termly basis and has provided invaluable support to families, ensuring they have been referred to the correct

services and/or offering advice and support to families whilst on long waiting lists. Further details of this programme can be found in the Additional Needs section of the report.



Hopes and Priorities for Next Year Include:

- ❖ Continue the roll out of 'Chatting time' initiative throughout Surestart and the wider community.
- ❖ With some staff turnover recently it feels important to spend lots of time in the settings focusing on capacity building through modelling and real time discussion and embedding existing SLC resources/tools to support their work
- ❖ We would love to spend more time in parent and toddler groups, getting out in the community more and meeting more parents who could benefit from our message.

Rebecca Carey and Michelle Maguire
East Belfast Sure Start Speech and Language Therapists


Antenatal and Postnatal Report

EBSS antenatal/ postnatal team has supported families, by home visiting, telephone and text messaging, WhatsApp groups and online support.

We have a host of weekly face to face groups offering safe spaces for community connection and information sharing. These groups are offered to antenatal and postnatal families and up to babies aged six months.

Antenatal

What Did We Do?	How Well Did We Do It?
<p>Antenatal Home visits to pregnant mothers for registration and advice</p>	<p>Target</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 visits • 53 achieved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 unique mums • 46 mums were visited <p>Target exceeded</p> <p>Each newly registered pregnant mum receives a welcome gift bag containing goodies and information on all our services. Antenatal Support Packages are available for mums who need extra support.in pregnancy.</p>
<p>Significant Antenatal Conversations in pregnancy.</p>	<p>Target</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 conversations • 80 achieved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45 unique mums • 60 mums had conversations <p>Target exceeded</p>
<p>Antenatal Online Support Group</p>	<p>Target</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200 Mums • 226 Mums were on the group during the year <p>Pregnancy and Beyond group provides ongoing health promotion information and focuses on responsive parenting, support with and improving mental health. There is access to Solihull approach online programme in our place Understanding your child.</p>

<p>Antenatal Yoga Groups</p> <p>Antenatal Educational Workshops</p> <p>Ante/Postnatal Drop-in Antenatal Art workshop Led by Nicola Stormont Baby Fair</p> <p>Breastfeeding Support for Antenatal Mums</p>	<p>Extra information about nutrition, exercising, smoking cessation, and Mental Health in Pregnancy.</p> <p>Message of the month is delivered</p> <p>Changing Time is Chatting Time video as part of the programme.</p> <p>Offer of personal phone calls and messaging are also available.</p> <p>Delivered by Midwife x 2 11 sessions 12 mums benefited</p> <p>9 sessions delivered 27 mums and dads benefited</p>  <p>8 Mums supported before birth to breastfeed</p>
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<p>How Well Did We Do It?</p> <p>The Antenatal/Postnatal (AN/PN) team felt better prepared for engaging with parents and more confident when delivering programme with parents.</p> <p>The midwife and the antenatal/postnatal support worker are registered with NMC and as part of this keep up with their CPD. Alongside this both staff members attend conferences and training to keep their skill current.</p>	<p>Is Anyone Better Off?</p> <p>Antenatal Yoga Survey</p> <p>100% participants felt more connected to the community and were made to feel very welcome.</p> <p>One woman commented: <i>Thanks to you I had a natural birth and it was amazing</i></p>
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<p>Staff Training Undertaken</p> <p>Midwives Training</p> <p>Tiny Life Conference. 20/10/22 BFI Online Conference Training 23/24 Nov 2022 Enjoy Your Baby Training 15/02/23 Perinatal Yoga Diploma Nov 2022 Connecting Through Song. Brief But Vivid 13/02/23 Child Protection Training 05/04/23 Postnatal Yoga Certificate September 2023</p> <p>Training Completed by Jen Norton.</p> <p>TinyLife conference/Info on Prematurity 20/10/22 10-4.30p.m. Home safety (5hrs) 25/10/22 BFI training (2hts) 2/11/22 Connecting through song (2.5hrs) 3/11/22 Cultural diversity training (2hrs) 12/1/23 Solihull parents' facilitators course (6.75hrs) 7/2/23 Connecting through Song reflective workshop (1.5hrs) 8/2/23 Enjoy your baby course (6.5) 15/2/23 Brief but vivid "Helping parents tell their story" (2hrs) 13/2/23</p> <p>East Belfast Sure Start (EBSS) staff update training maintained via online Dorset Health Care Breastfeeding course to comply with UNICEF BFI Standards.</p> <p>Postnatal</p> <p>What Did We Do?</p> <p>Postnatal Home Visits</p>	<p>Antenatal Workshops Evaluation</p> <p><i>It was such a helpful meeting and the whole team seem so lovely.</i></p> <p><i>It was a great experience with detailed explanation and amazing atmosphere</i></p> <p>How Well Did We Do?</p> <p>Target</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 visits • 56 visits achieved • 30 unique mums • 50 mums visits
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Breastfeeding Support

Home visits for breastfeeding support

Meaningful Conversations/Phone Calls

For breastfeeding support or any other postnatal concern. Signposted when necessary.

Breastfeeding Online Support

Breastfeeding Group (BreastStart)



Target Exceeded

Parents receive a baby resource and information and often receive knitted items donated by community groups

Target

- 10 visits
- 3 visits achieved
- 6 unique mums
- 2 mums visits

Target

- 20 conversations
- 15 conversations achieved
- 16 unique mums
- 12 mums received a phone call

Target 65 mums to be reached with online support

113 mums actually received online support

A poll asked if the WhatsApp group was useful. All respondents agreed, yes it was useful for information and connection. A range of information is posted to inform the group.

There is access for immediate support via other users as well as the midwife.

Delivered weekly

- Target 40 mums
- 52 mums attended throughout the year

BreastStart promotes and informs healthy starts and relationship building between baby and parents.

Promotes peer support and friendship forming outside group. A swim group has formed from this, and the groups meet outside of BreastStart, it is an inclusive group.

Breastfeeding audits for BFI ensure that meeting the UNICEF standards for the promotion of responsive feeding.

20 parents and 10 staff were audited.



Training by Midwife on BFI for staff completed.

Antenatal invitation to come along to group.
From birth to the end of breastfeeding.
The group has guests from outside the organisation covering a range of information from weaning, home safety, healthy relationships, financial support. SLT and additional needs team compliment learning within the group.

Breastfeeding mothers supported to maximize breastfeeding by:
one to one support at groups,
staff listening to mothers' experiences and concerns,
observations of feeding,
demonstrations of practical skills using appropriate props, videos and literature.

Mothers referred to Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) specialist breastfeeding support when appropriate as an extra support via online access..

Delivered Weekly
Target: 40 mums and Babies
Delivered: 47 mums and 49 babies attended this group

Baby Club – 0 - 6 Months



**Connecting through song and early speech and language development.
Soft and sensory play.
Championing responsive parenting.
Peer support.**

The baby club continues to be a positive space where parents with their babies 0-6 months can find a relaxing environment to meet other families, share experiences and be together.

The baby club has seen regular speakers come into the group from EBCDA, Employers for Childcare, Belfast City Council & the Hospital Trust, Paediatric Dietician.

At the heart of baby club is the intentional inclusion of song and rhyme and stories and the importance of connecting with baby through these mediums.

<p>Baby Massage sessions resumed April 2022 Delivered by Midwife, Antenatal Postnatal support worker and Claire from Happy Hatchlings.</p> <p>Baby Yoga</p> <p>Pramtastics</p>	<p>This has seen intentional song & Rhyme involvement in weekly groups and encouraging parents to make up songs and have a go.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 groups delivered • Target 36 mums and babies • Delivered: 42 mums and babies benefitted <p>Regular baby massage courses have been organised for families throughout the year. These continue to be popular with parents and babies who enjoy learning massage techniques in a relaxed environment. Many of the techniques are taught through singing and so again the importance of connecting with baby through this medium is reiterated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 baby yoga groups of 5 sessions. • Target 48 mums • Delivered 27 mums <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 week programme • Target 6 mums • 10 mums attended <p>Delivered by Happy Hatchlings from June 2022</p> <p>Outdoor exercise programme Victoria park</p>
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How Well Did We Do?

Parents supported with practical needs:-

Families were allocated Tesco Token and Electricity vouchers and Save The Children Grants where there was family need.

Families were referred to local foodbanks or/and given food parcels when in need.

Bookstart book packages were distributed to many new postnatal mothers at home visits

Staff Training – see antenatal information

Staff provided mothers with containment and reciprocity whilst offering postnatal support.

Mothers informed of local support services/groups, telephone helplines and reputable on-line services.

We gather case studies to evidence the outcomes for families.

User feedback from audits, written evaluations, conversations and attendances to inform future practice.

Is Anyone Better Off?

Breastfeeding Support Group

One mother described the group as *“like gold dust”*

Another mother described the breastfeeding group as somewhere *“my baby loves it here, she feels so comfortable and at ease”*

Another commented that she found the group useful because *“there are so many different health topics covered”*

Another mother said

Baby massage supports infant parent connection and can have physical benefits for baby.

One parent commented *“The classes were very helpful in making me feel relaxed and in turn the baby relaxed too”*.

Another said, *“It helped me bond with baby better and helped my confidence as I was able to meet other mums”*.

Baby Club

One parent commented *Baby club is so easy to come along to, even when I have a difficult night up with my baby I find my mood is better when I get out to see other families”*

Another said *“I find myself singing the hello song that is sung ever week at group and my baby loves it”*

Baby Yoga can support baby parent connection and bring comfort, relief and learning to baby.

One parent commented *“I found that the baby yoga was very calming for my baby”*

Another comment was that *“the baby yoga class has offered a lovely opportunity to connect with him”*

Containment and Reciprocity is witnessed by staff between parents and babies, during group sessions and home visits.

<p>Baby Club (continued)</p>	<p>Responsive feeding leading to increased bonding and attachment between mothers and babies. Results from UNICEF BFI yearly audits provides evidence.</p> <p>All our services provide connection between mums who are often isolated. Many mums comment on the benefit of that and interaction on the Breastfeeding online group makes this evident. There is also evidence that the mums connect outside the group socially meaning that they building their own networks of support.</p>
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Case Study by Antenatal and Postnatal Team

The family registered antenatally, expecting their first child. The family had moved to Northern Ireland.

Mum's partner worked away from home considerably and during this antenatal period, Mum often expressed feelings of loneliness when attending antenatal face to face groups with midwife and team. Mum had no family close by to rely on for additional support and had not found a significant friendship group to wrap around her for company and support.

During the antenatal period Mum was registered with East Belfast Sure Start (EBSS) and was immediately linked in with the EBSS midwife and Antenatal/Postnatal team. Mum connected-in with face-to-face antenatal opportunities to meet the midwife and have access to advice and support as she needed it.

Mum accessed the Antenatal Yoga programme delivered by the EBSS midwife, during these sessions there was opportunity to talk with other families, share experiences and build community. These sessions were a valuable space in the week to access professional healthcare support and make new friendships.

Once baby was born, Mum's relationship broke down and she found herself further isolated. Mum reached out to the Antenatal/Postnatal team again as she brought baby along to the first baby groups, including the Breastfeeding Group, Mum and Baby Yoga.

Mum disclosed that she was feeling very isolated and down. The SureStart midwife took time to meet with Mum outside of group and offer her one to one support.

With encouragement from the antenatal/postnatal team the woman started to come regularly to SureStart groups.

She attended the Breastfeeding Group where she found a community that could support her breastfeeding journey. Both online and face to face groups offered a wraparound support, where queries could be appropriately addressed and answered by a supportive group of women led by the EBSS midwife and AN/PN team.

Mum also enjoyed Mum and Baby Yoga in the first 6 months, which again afforded her an opportunity to meet a different group of woman and time to chat through the challenges of early parenting.

The Family also enjoyed coming to Baby Massage and had opportunities to marry song and rhyme into techniques to soothe baby and promote maternal/baby bond.

The family have been linked in with the Imagination Library scheme to receive a childrens' book regularly for a number of years.

After 6 months of engagement with EBSS, Juliet now independently comes along to groups. She is confidently interacting with other parents and babies and actively encourages and supports other parents as they voice challenges with parenting and other issues.

Services accessed:

EBSS Midwife availability phone/home visits

Antenatal/postnatal team availability phone/home visits

Antenatal yoga

Online antenatal/postnatal WhatsApp groups

Online WhatsApp group

Baby 0–6-month face to face group

Breastfeeding face to face group

Baby massage

Postnatal mum & baby yoga

Signed up to Imagination library.

Christine McFarlane – Community Midwife

Jenny Norton – Antenatal and Postnatal Worker

First Steps Child Development Programme Report

First steps Child Development Programme began a new term in September 2022 and catered for 12 children from Tullycarnet Ward based in Grace Baptist Church in Tullycarnet Monday to Thursday 2.30 hour per session for the Surestart children.

The children are phased into the setting according to their birthdays as the children must be 2yrs and 10 months at the beginning of their start enrolment period, the child initially stays for an hour to see how they cope away from parents and this time is extended over a few days until the children are happy staying the full time.

During their time in the child development programme the children are provided with activities to have fun while also stimulating the children to think for themselves and encourage them to engage with others socially and teach them how to share.

Many of these children would have had development issues due to their lack of interactions with children and other family as they were not able to mix with others of a similar age during Covid pandemic. This inadvertently caused a higher than usual separation anxiety within the setting.

Home visits were carried out to listen to the mother and observe the child in their home environment. The home visits continue throughout the year as the visits allow staff to give feedback to the parents/carers as to how their children have settled in and allows them the opportunity to discuss any aspect their child's development.

During the experience the children are encourage as independent as possible with their personal hygiene, snack time etc. Staff keep the parent/carer informed of their child's development and encourage them to interact with the staff and let us know if anything has been bothering the child such a passing of a pet or separations at home as an example. This information helps us to understand the child emotions and work with the child parent/carer to ease the issue.

During their time in the setting we interchange activities such as a hospital theme, hairdressers, outer space adventure shop. All backed up with storytelling around these themes and dressing up clothes and play equipment to match the theme. These sessions allow the child to use their imagination and create stories to act out with their friends in the setting.

A number of boys decided they were looking after the baby in the home corner whilst mummy was out shopping. One child wanted to be baby but a mischievous one. They fed him with the dolls bottle set him down to sleep however the baby was naughty and decided he was crawling around on the floor as he was not going to sleep. The boys were corralling him back to his bed whilst their

backs were turned he did it again. It was amusing to observe just their reactions and facial expressions to the problem, a puzzled look came to mind when one boy just didn't understand why he would not stay in his bed. "The joys of parenting "

Once per year their preschool photos are taken and we prepared the children for this event by playing a photographer. A photo booth is set up and the child can pick props like sunglasses fancy hats handbags dressing up outfit. The children take turns at being the pretend photographer and getting their photo taken fun is had by all.

Other activities available to the children are craft session, drawing / colouring in pages and puzzles to coincide with the themes, Holiday events also take place with session set up for events such as such as Halloween Christmas and Easter themes that run through the year.

At Christmas the parents were invited at the end of the term to see their children perform songs that they had been taught in previous weeks, this also gave staff the opportunity to thank the parents for allowing us to be part of the children's learning. These occasion allow the children hours of practice allowing the children through fun children improve their memory, speech and language skills.

The sessions also provides water and sand play daily. Other activities involve a range of tabletop and floor such as cars trucks garages airport planes pirate ships, play dough and small world figures to help improve fine motor skills puzzles beading to thread on laces Lego and much more While outside we would use hoops and balls, bikes and mini cars encouraging gross motor skills too.

There have 3 children who are nonverbal, and parents were very concerned when their child started playgroup if they would manage on a daily basis we as staff have noticed how these children have progressed in finding ways to communicate with us and also trying to talk and say a few words which is has been very encouraging and welcomed by parent/carers and staff alike.

Feedback from parents is also very positive and they have both seen and told staff how much their child has benefited from being with in our setting. We have one child that is hoping to return for a second year as her mother sees how happy she is within the setting and how much progress she has made this year this child would be facilitated by the First Steps section.

As we follow the sure start 2 year old programme we hold sessions known as a "stay and play "once a month were parents can come to the setting and play with their child and see what they enjoy on a daily basis, again we have had very positive feedback with this.

On these occasions staff and parents are able to build up a rapport much more easily and it provides an opportunity for everyone to speak informally if they are concerned about their child in anyway. We also provide a parenting programme in which parents can gain information and be sign posted to the right professional if they have concerns about their child's development.

Visits From Professionals to The Setting Were:

A speech and language therapist which has been beneficial to those parents of the, children with limited speech they also provided books throughout the year called read with me.

A therapist dealing with sensory play provided parents with ways in which to help their child at home, this was welcomed by the parent/carers.

A welfare worker/benefit adviser to inform and assist parent/carers to apply for relevant finances to aid their family's budget in these difficult times due to cost of living rises.

A paramedic that gave a talk and demonstration to the parents should a situation of choking and other minor medical issues arise in the home and how to deal with these.

The parents were delighted with these visits and again gave positive feedback. Staff have been delighted to see both mums, dads and carers attend these Stay and Play sessions and Parenting Programmes.

We had one last visit from Speech and Language June and this session was aimed at children transitioning to nursery in September and how parents can help prepare their children for this new experience.

We also had a visit from local community police where they brought a police car to show the children and by doing this we are showing children not to be afraid and that they there to help us within our community. The children were able to speak to the constables and sit in the car for a short time taking turns with their preschool friends.

The last home visit took place in June allowing us the opportunity to speak to the parents ensuring they had a chance to give us feedback about their child's experience in playgroup. Many sent WhatsApp texts expressing their gratitude for the children time at the programme and how their children enjoyed it.

Our last parenting programme took place on the 22nd of June and a speech and language therapist came to the setting and held an informal chat with the parents regarding their children transitioning to nursery

The parents really appreciated this visit from the therapist, they received a book to read with their children and they felt this helped them gain some insight into this transition.

Since the children have started in September both parents and staff have watched the children grow in confidence gaining new skills and becoming more independent and ready for the next stage in their educational journey and to be able to be part of this we as playgroup assistants count this a privilege and wish them all the very best for the future.

Anne Martin – First Steps Child Development Programme

Home-Start South and East Belfast Report

What Did We Do?	How Much Did We Do?
Support for families	Target 15 Achieved 17
Visits by Coord	Target 30 Achieved 71
Visits by FS worker/Volunteer	Target 270 Achieved 157
Telephone support	Target 50 Achieved 40

Home-Start South and East Belfast has continued to work and support families with young children with the Sure Start area. With the changes in the economy and the continued increases affecting the cost of living we have noticed a shift in family needs where many are indicating that basic essentials such as heat and light are no longer to be taken for granted and that their budgeting has become very tight and in many cases they are dependent on food banks and charities.

This is universal and while we are geared towards emotional and practical support we cannot ignore the needs of families and working were possible in partnership with other agencies including Sure Start we have made applications for families to receive both goods and vouchers towards household expenses.

While our main aim is still to provide volunteers to support families through home visiting we also note that post covid some families are more keen to have supports over telephone or zoom which they experienced during Covid. And as we go forwards we will explore how we can facilitate both kinds of support.

Over the period 22/23 we worked with 15 families directly within the Sure Start area providing a mix off regular home visiting, supporting through vouchers, whitegoods and foodbanks, and some being visited and telephone supported alternately.

Throughout the year Sure Start has assisted and supported some of our families through obtaining white goods which was highly appreciated by all who benefitted.

Our Children's Charity Shop has continued to operate on the Albert Bridge Road and has been able to provide affordable clothing and toys for younger children. The shop resources have also been used to provide clothes etc to referred families who were in need. One way of reaching out into the wider community.

Eelco Weisterhous – Coordinator Home Start

Short Strand Child Development Programme Report

Short Strand Community Development Programme is housed in Short Strand Community Centre. We work in partnership with East Belfast Sure start to provide 16 places for children aged over 2 years and 10 months. Attendance is excellent and the programme provides quality early years play provision and training for early year's students.

We have three core workers consisting of a leader and two assistants and the group is also supported by trainees, volunteers and bank staff. We operate a key worker system and our priority during the settling in period is the emotional wellbeing of the children. We have a strong, supportive relationship with parents and promote parental involvement from the beginning by creating a warm, friendly, environment and inviting parents to attend Stay and Plays sessions during the year and training.

Events

We had several events that took place over the year:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| June/July 2022 | Registration forms completed.
Home visits – met children and provided information to parents on Playgroup etc. |
| August 2022 | Play Development Programme induction morning.
Parents and children invited along to have fun in playroom. Met staff and got booklet on Development Programme. Uniform available to purchase.
Questions and answers. Children got treat bag. |
| Sept- Nov 2022 | Children settling in period.
Healthy Eating. |
| October 2022 | Halloween Party Playgroup very well attended with children/parents.
Stay & Play Parents came along to a workshop where they made Halloween cupcakes and sweet trees and children's iced biscuits and gave out party bags. |
| November 2022 | Inspection, excellent report.
Sure Start welcome pack with children. |
| December 2022 | Christmas party with Santa in attendance. Nativity play.
Play & stay parents made sock snowmen with heir child. |

- January 2023** Queens Student Placement – Dental Health Programme.
- February 2023** Home visits – update on child’s progress.
 11th - Play & Stay, sensory morning with Ashley (Sure Start).
 21st – Lynn from Trust give a Dental health talk, Story/puppets etc.
 Each child given toothbrush and toothpaste pack for setting and home.
- March 2023** 1st – Parent workshop supported by playboard, based on children’s mental health through play.
 2nd – World Book Day. Children dressed up in their favourite costume. Parents invited along for Storytime. Children all received a book/treat bag.
 7th – photographer visited. Took photos of children in their uniforms.
- April 2023** Stay & Play - Easter Hats Crafts with Parent/Children.
 Easter Hat Parade this was an excellent morning everyone had a great time.
 Parents workshop – Communicating with your child, supported by Parenting NI.
- May 2023** Stay & Plays parents making dough taking home ingredients to make at home with their child.
 2 mornings when parents came along and stayed to play with their children, Hand painting with parents.
 Parenting workshop – Managing your child’s emotions. Supported by parenting NI.
- June 2023** Visit to Ark Farm for children and parents
 Transitions - End of year visit to St Matthew’s Nursery, Parents involved.
 Graduation – Children’s ‘diplomas’ were presented by the Lord Mayor, Ryan Murphy and Councillor Padraig Donnelly – very well attended.
 Home visits done.

Home Visits

Home Visits where done throughout the year. Parents welcomed the support and guidance.

Parenting Training

Well attended throughout the year. Facilitated by Playboard and Parenting NI. Certificate presented at graduation.

Parent & Toddler Group

Short Stand Parent and Toddler Group also run in partnership with Sure start was well attended during 2022-2023 meeting every Thursday morning. We also had the support of Sadie (Family Support) from Sure Start. We also help provide a parent with a much-needed pram, kind donation from another parent. On 4th April we held an Easter party and ended the year with a trip to Funky Monkeys – fun had by all.

We worked alongside Michelle, Speech and Language Therapist from Sure Start with three of our families who met for six weeks in the Butterfly room, Albertbride Road. In doing so this has helped parents/children. These children have now been signposted to the help needed. This is a great service for the children/parents which we can acquire when necessary.

The group also participated in:

Women's Health Day Event

St Patricks Day community event by working on banners and community party.

Dental Hygiene Programme.

Community 2 x fun days in park.

Agnes McGinley

Sure Start Child Development Leader

Staff Training

Anne Hughes halfway through Level 5 Early years.

Bloomfield Community Association Report

Project Outcomes	
What Did We Do?	How Well Did We Do It?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide 1:1 support for at least 8 children with additional needs on an ongoing basis Sessions Child Development Sessions x 4 mornings per week (target introduced in Dec 22) ✓ Provide 2 programmes per year for parents e.g. Solihull and Wellbeing/Advice ✓ Provide 60 Home Visits to 20 families ✓ Provide 20 1:1 telephone support sessions to 20 families ✓ Provide 20 Parent and Child together sessions to families ages 0-4 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendances 250 • Achieved 350 • Unique Children 16 (over 2 intakes) • Achieved 31 Sessions 12 Achieved 12 Unique Children 7 Unique Children 12 • Sessions 12 • Achieved 6 • Unique Adults 20 • Unique Adults 3 • Visits 60 • Achieved 68 • Unique Adult 20 • Achieved 31 • Calls 20 • Achieved 5 • Unique Children 10 • Achieved 5 • Sessions 20 • Achieved 20 • Unique Children 15 • Unique Children 36

Is Anyone Better Off as a Result?

Family Support continues to be a vital service for families in the Bloomfield area. I began this role in July 2021 and during this time, I have supported families with many issues eg- financial difficulties support including form filling, SEN needs, medical needs, mental health, help with gas and electric, referral to the Lader and general support and signposting. I am finding that a lot of families need overall support and guidance on everyday life. I feel by having me offering the tiniest bit of support can really help families. I work closely with parents and staff to ensure guidance and support on areas such as behaviour, speech development and toilet training is being carried out across home life and within play programmes. I have supported quite a few families who are new to Northern Ireland to help get their children enrolled in nurseries or schools. Families are very thankful for the support and guidance.

I ran a "Getting to know you" programme in the Bloomfield area and it has been great seeing parents becoming more confident and making relationships with each other within the group. I delivered sensory play sessions, songs and rhyme sessions and general play time and story sessions. This programme has helped families improve their relationship with their children and have learnt how to use different techniques on dealing with situations.

I ran a Solihull programme for parents and they all really enjoyed it and didn't want it to end. The parents enjoyed getting together and realising they weren't the only parent with problems or concerns about parenting or the child.

One Parent Commented:

' I now have a better understanding of my child's developmental stages and emotions and how much of an impact my emotions can have on my kids. This group has given me invaluable tips that I wish I had been armed with as a new Parent to my now 10 year old. The information we have been given has been so much more beneficial to me than any new Parenting class ever was. It has opened my eyes to a new style of Parenting that is so different to how I was Parented and will help me build stronger relationships with better communication skills with my whole Family and help me teach my children how to better understand and process their own feelings & emotions'

I have been able to continue with family trips and its great to see the parents interacting with their child and other parents. I have been able to offer these families to join our Bloomfield Family Programme which took place during summer. The parents were so grateful and thankful that they had the opportunity to take their children out to places they wouldn't have been able to take them themselves due to money issues or no transport or not having confidence to go alone with their child. Many ethnic minority Families attended and it was great to see them gain confidence and find their feet in a social setting.

Outcome 1- To Support the Inclusion of Children with Additional Needs In Bloomfield Community Association.

At Bloomfield playgroup I support many children with additional needs. I have supported children with developmental delays, social and communication difficulties, limited attention and emotional and behavioural needs. I do this by doing 1:1 with the child playing simple games, short stories etc. or by simply doing an activity that interests the child and gets them engaging with me. I have given support to ESOL children and their families. I do this by using visual aids with the child and having familiar things from their home/ country in the playgroup. I also used the Mantralingua PENpal to reassure children with familiar words and phrases in their own language.

Some children with additional needs find it harder with toilet training so I support the family to try and achieve this. On some occasions parents aren't aware of the child having additional needs and I help the whole family on this journey.

Outcome 2 - To Support Parents and Carers in their Role as Educators by Providing Parenting Programmes, Training and Education Opportunities.

When meeting with new families and carrying out Home Visits I aim to build a trusting relationship with each family and encouraged them to talk to me about any concerns or worries they may have. Through regular contact with a family, I hope that Parents will become more open and honest with me and accepting of advice given to them. I have built up some good relationships with Families and they regularly come to programmes and to any trips I offer. They sometimes just need a chat to ask a few questions and I'm happy they feel they can come to me.

I offer advice to help support Language Development to Parents for their children along with helpful interactive songs, stories, and games. Parents have expressed how they find

this to be useful in the home. I signpost to internal services through Sure Start to help me with speech and language.

Family Support Plans are made in partnership with the Parents so they understand the vital contribution they make to their children's development, care and wellbeing. I ensure I allow the parents to make their own suggestions on play opportunities, asking their opinions on favourite toys, cartoons characters and praising them for the ideas being put forward.

Outcome 3- To Signpost Families to Specialist Services as Appropriate.

We continue to offer support to all families through sign posting to local food banks, Scaffolding project and Uniform Recycle Scheme. Other signposting and referrals have been made to St. Vincent de Paul, and Family Support Hub. I also share Facebook pages to Parents about tips and ideas on different play activities and offering advice on weaning etc. any local events that are happening I share this with families.

Outcome 4- To Liaise with Additional Needs Support Worker, Midwife and SLT at EBSS to Ensure Holistic Service.

When I do initial home visits, I assess what the family needs and do an in-house referral if needed. The speech and language therapist comes into Bloomfield playgroup to offer advice and support with any child I have concerns about. I make parents aware of this service and if they have concerns, they can speak to the therapist if needed. I refer families to the midwife if they need advice or want to join the breast-feeding support groups.

Outcome 5- To Report on Outcomes Achieved to EBBSS on a Quarterly Basis.

I report all outcomes to East Belfast Sure Start.

Ballybeen Womens Centre Report

Project Outcomes	
What did we do?	How well did we do it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide 1:1 support for approx. 15 children with complex needs on an ongoing basis Sessions ✓ Provide Chatter Box Programme x 2 ✓ Provide 12 sessions of programmes that support parents in the community ✓ Provide 60 Home Visits to 20 families ✓ Provide 120 1:1 support sessions to 40 families ✓ Wellcom Assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendances 160 • Achieved 150 • Unique Children 15 • Achieved 31 • 2 Sessions Weekly • Achieved • Unique Children 15 • Achieved 16 • Sessions 12 • Achieved 19 • Unique Adults 16 • Achieved 24 • Sessions 60 • Achieved 91 • Unique Children 20 • Achieved 37 • Contacts 120 • Achieved 115 • Unique Children 15 • Achieved 37 • Monitor 8 children x 2 per year in Autumn and May

Is Anyone Better Off as a Result?

I am delighted to have had the opportunity to complete another year in my role of Family Support Worker for East Belfast Sure Start, here at Ballybeen Women's Centre. I have been very fortunate to have met and worked with amazing parents, children, and their extended families.

As with previous years I have seen a great increase in families seeking support and advice with financial issues, food and baby bank requests, mental health support and signposting to relevant Health Professionals and agencies for medical and additional needs. This year I was incredibly fortunate to not only carry on the established link with Dundonald Food Bank, I was also able to link in with Lisburn Food Bank and their Social Supermarket. This was a valuable opportunity for many families who not only gained support with weekly, basic shopping but with benefit, debt and budgeting support also. In regard to financial support I have also been able to refer families to Family Support Hub for Tesco, Asda shopping vouchers.

To further support for families, I attended information sessions and training through the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust in regarding to cooking with a slow cooker, bulk cooking and cooking on a budget. This information was then passed onto families via leaflets, WhatsApp and email. Another information session which proved to be useful was a session held by National Energy Action (NEA NI). From this I was able to pass on practical information on energy use, how to save and which companies offered best rates.

Aside from financial support, I also provided information on Mental Health, Wellbeing, Looking after Yourself and numerous signposting to family events that could be attended for free.

Home Visiting with families have been going well, with some set up with weekly visits. These visits have had a focus on play development, speech and language support and general support for parents in the home. Many parents do still avail of information being shared via WhatsApp and email and with signposting and occasional check ins.

I have continued working alongside very closely this year with Social Services with some of my families and the end results I am pleased to say have been positive. One on one parenting programmes continue here at Ballybeen Women's Centre, which provide a space and time to develop and nurture parent/child play skills, communication and language development and a better understanding of child development and meeting milestones. Alongside this we have worked together with other agencies such as Kiltonga Christian Centre and St. Vincent de Paul in acquiring household goods for the families.

NIMATS referrals have paved the way to make connections with expecting parents from an early stage. This has been successful in then signposting onto the Midwife team at EBSS for support and advice and to also signpost early for new baby programmes here at Ballybeen Women's Centre. Many expectant parents this past year has expressed their worry on the expense on new baby items and the essentials they may need. Once again, I have been fortunate in establishing links with various charities who I can make referrals to in order to gain these much-needed items.

Speech, Language and Communication along with concerns of delayed development were the concerns most raised by parents. A small selection of children who fell into these categories were offered a space at 'Chatter Box' one afternoon per week. The purpose of this programme is to provide a play space environment for peer interaction, displaying of good language skills and a working partnership with EBSS Speech and Language Team. I based play opportunities around Sure Starts message of the month and regularly gave parents tips and ideas on different areas of development. These areas ranged from toileting, behaviour, routines, and communication. These parents joined a WhatsApp Group, and this was used to share information passed on from Rebecca and Michelle for Tiny Happy People, Chat with me videos and other relevant signposting.

I continue to work in partnership with the childcare staff at Ballybeen Women's Centre in providing support for children registered with Sure Start. Support has been provided in the form of one-on-one settling in, play, speech and language, toileting, and behaviour. Alongside home visits with these children and seeing them in their play sessions, good relationships were formed. In some cases, this paved the way and allowed for conversations with the SENCO of BWC and parents in identifying any developmental delays and then for any referrals to be made.

In partnership with the Training and Education Co-Ordinator and the Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator here at Ballybeen Women's Centre I have continued to signpost parents to educational and training opportunities. With the added availability in creche for children, these were a success. These programmes included:

- Open University Access Programme
- The 'MAS' Project (The Maternal Advocacy Support Group)
- Baby Massage
- Baby Movers
- Essential Skills – Numeracy, Literacy and ICT
- Classroom Assistant Academy
- SENAC (Special Educational Needs Advice Centre)
- Monthly Benefit Advice Sessions

- First Aid Defibrillator Training
- Developing Women in the Community
- Facials, Gel Nails and Reflexology
- Heal your life
- Driving Theory
- Creative Connections
- Level 1 Childcare
- Knitting and Crocheting

Alongside these I was extremely fortunate to be able to host the wonderful Health Visiting Team in the delivery of the HENRY Programme. This was hugely successful and due to take place once again in September 2023.

Amy Wightman

Family Support

Many Families Benefited from Support from the Social Supermarket Scheme via Lisburn Foodbank



Children Enjoying their Sessions at Chatter Box



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