



East Belfast
SureStart

Annual Report

2023-2024

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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 as an organisation 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 cannot 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. I am extremely proud of everything the team has achieved, and the continued positive feedback from our inspecting bodies on the quality of our premises, staff and service.

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.

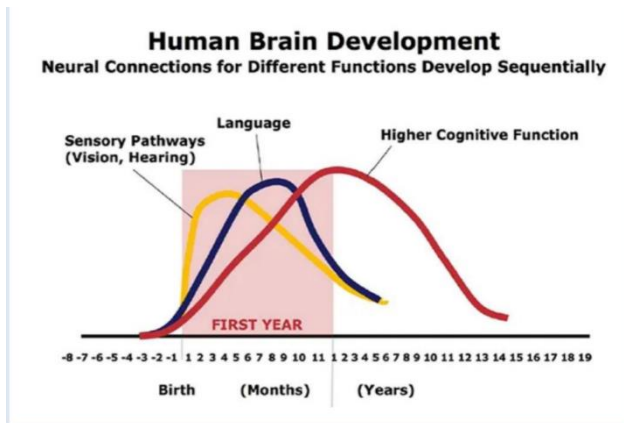
We hope you enjoy the content of the report and are encouraged by it.

Bridgeen McCormick

Chairperson

Project Co-Ordinator Report

Research into infant brain development and the importance of the significant adult in a child's life has been prolific over the last decade. We now understand the first 1001 days of a child's life are critical for this development and therefore on the trajectory of the quality of outcomes for the child going forward. This graph from Harvard Centre on the Developing Child, based on research done by Nelson, C.A in 2000 shows how the neural connections for vision, hearing and language and higher cognitive function all peak in the first year.



In East Belfast Sure Start our collective passion is to see babies thrive and grow into confident and happy toddlers. This passion underpins everything that we do in our service delivery as you will discover as you read on.

The evidence of outcomes is clear straight from the voice of the parents who experience our service and also from the children's confidence and communication and playskills increasing. This can only be achieved by the highly

dedicated, creative and compassionate staff team made up of 38 talented individuals. Every staff member has this passion from our early years team to our family support team and our admin team. The effects of Covid on recruitment into an Early Years career can still be felt and this has often put an extra burden on the team. We are careful as an organisation to recognise this and provide good terms and conditions for staff and create a nurturing atmosphere where staff wellbeing is taken seriously.

We have experienced a continuing rise in developmental differences and neurodiversity both with children and families which call for an increasingly bespoke service with higher ratios and at times this is difficult to achieve.

We continue to deliver the Little Learners Programme, programme for children aged 2-3 with additional needs. We are now in Year 2 of with a pilot with colleagues from Solas, Kids Together and Glenbrook Sure Start and SLC and OT's from Belfast Trust Child Development Clinic. We continue to be impressed with the outcomes for the children and the obvious beneficial effect of organisations working together around a specific theme.

We continue to partner with Short Strand Community Forum, Bloomfield Community Association, Ballybeen Women's Centre and Tullycarnet Community Support Services to help us deliver our services within the heart of communities.

We are continually grateful to many organisations that support us on an ongoing basis most particularly:-

Save the Children NI for enabling us to deliver Building Block grants to families in need on a quarterly basis.

EBCDA, who supported our parents with health and wellbeing health and advice.

East Belfast Food Network, who help to support our families in need with food parcels and most particularly The Larder who has partnered with us to deliver Weaning Programmes to families.

BookTrust NI, who supported us with book packs throughout the year to be enable us engage families with a love of reading from an early age.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, with support from Hagan Homes helped us deliver monthly books to an incredible 220 families per month.

Belfast City Council, for funding us to deliver a Foods Around the World Programme.

Connswater Home,s for funding us to deliver some postnatal physical activity classes to Mums.

Mountpottinger Church of Ireland, for allowing us use of their halls for delivery of antenatal classes and providing support in terms of clothes and knitted items to our mums to be and babies.

Westbourne Presbyterian Church, for supplying a continual supply of baby blankets that are made with love and delivered with care to our precious mums to be.

Christian Fellowship Church Belfast for being a huge support to us at Christmas time with toys for our families and at other times when we have needed it the most.

We could not do this work without you all and you also should be proud to read the outcomes in this report.

We have worked in partnership with Eastside Learning, Eastside Partnership and Save the Children to continue develop the Eastside Early Learning Community in East Belfast, our shared framework visible in the table. We are just part of a growing network of community and statutory and voluntary agencies impassioned by Early Years Outcomes. We are delighted to be involved in this venture and are committed to playing our part particularly in supporting the 'Attuned and Attentive relationship' domain.

We continue to engage with our service users on social media with our face book page follows doubling in size over the year and we use this and Instagram to promote our universal messages.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work of the board who work tirelessly to support us to thrive!

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
Louise McCullough	Independent Parents Representative
Barbara Wallace	Independent Member
Gillian Hamilton	Eastside Learning, Eastside Partnership
Nagesh Nagi	Independent Parents Representative
Samuel Robinson	Megain Memorial Church of the Nazarene

Three Consultant Observers advise and support the board Kathy Watters Belfast City Council, Josephine Gibson Health Visitor Lead, Norma Sinclair Early Years Team – BHSCT

Registration 2023-2024	Cumulative Total	Percentage Uptake	Cumulative Percentage
Number of <u>Children</u> registered	1371	% uptake of Children (NI Average 51%)	54%
Number of <u>Mothers</u> registered	1245	% uptake of Mothers (NI Average 53%)	65%
Number of <u>Fathers</u> registered	379	% uptake of Fathers (NI Average 26%)	25%
Number of <u>Families</u> registered	1266	% uptake of Families (NI Average 63%)	65%
Antenatal	93	% uptake of Antenatal	96%

Staff Team

37 staff covering administration functions, Family Support, Nurture and Early Years

East Belfast Population Statistics

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

Ballymacarrett, Woodstock, Island, The Mount, Bloomfield SOA 1 and SOA 3, Tullycarnet, Cregagh, Ballybeen Estate

Registration Statistics

Registrations	<i>22/23</i>	<i>23/24</i>
New children	510	367
New mums	374	291
New dads	144	85
Pregnant mums	80	86
Families	382	301

586 Referrals of which 263 were antenatal

66% Referrals transferred to Registrations

Engagement Statistics

	2022	2023	2024	NI Average
Children	57%	61%	54%	56%
Mothers	62%	59%	65%	59%
Fathers	25%	25%	25%	37%
Families	66%	62%	65%	62%
Antenatal	94%	82%	96%	85%

Home Visits

Activity	One To One Type	Number
Additional Needs	Home Visits to support Additional Needs Groups plus any initial visits from referrals	106
Antenatal Support	Bloomfield SOA 3 Antenatal Support Home Visit.	3
Antenatal Support	Antenatal Home Visit	74
Breastfeeding Support	Breastfeeding Support Home Visit	10
Developmental Programme 2-3 YO	Home visit- Templemore 1	43
Developmental Programme 2-3 YO	Home visit- Templemore 2	53
Developmental Programme 2-3 YO	Home visit- Ballyoran	50
Developmental Programme 2-3 YO	Home Visit - Carew	40
Ethnic monitoring	Home visits for ethnic minority parents from Bloomfield SOA 3	2
Ethnic monitoring	Home Visits delivered to Ethnic Minority Families	80
Family Support	Ballybean Outreach - Home Visits	71
Family Support	Home Visits for Bloomfield SOA 3 families	35
Family Support	Home Visits by Family Support Team	401
Initial Visit	Bloomfield SOA 3 Initial Visit for families.	7
Initial Visit	Initial Home Visits by Support Team	78
Play Programmes	First Steps - Home Visits for Child Development Programmes.	13
Play Programmes	Home Visit Little Explorers Carew 2	12
Play Programmes	Short Strand Home Visits for Child Development Programme.	21
Postnatal	Bloomfield SOA 3 Postnatal Support Home Visit.	0
Postnatal	Postnatal Home visit	97
Speech and Language	Bloomfield SOA 3 Home visits to promote SLC.	0
Speech and Language	Home Visits to support Speech and Language Development	68

Signposting

Sign Posting Type	Unique Clients	Total Offered
Addiction Services	0	0
Audiology	0	0
Autism Services	29	36
Benefits Advice	35	64
Breastfeeding Support	10	11
Charitable Aid	145	259
Child Development Clinics	24	24
Citizens Advice Bureau	0	0
Community Paediatrician	0	0
Community Services	180	327
Counselling	3	3
Dentist	19	19
Disability	4	4
Early Years	78	83
Education Services	143	318
Ethnic Minorities	91	251
Family Support Hubs	16	16
Financial Advice	77	104
Fire Service	2	2
Food Banks	85	160
Ginger Bread	0	0
GP	93	137
Health Visitor	74	96
Home Safety	4	4
Homestart	4	4
Housing Executive	18	21
Legal Advice	1	1
Local Housing	17	18
Mental Health (Parent / Child)	14	19
Midwife/Antenatal (HSCT)	33	44
NICMA	0	0
Occupational Therapy (HSCT)	10	12
Physiotherapist	1	1
Smoking Cessation	0	0
Social Services	24	33
Speech & Language (HSCT)	70	164
Training for Education	5	21
Voluntary Organisation	6	8
Woman Aid	7	10

Resources Given

Resource Type	Quantity Given
Programme for 2 Year Old	3655
Antenatal	4581
Baby	2395
Books	121
Breastfeeding	4453
Family Support	23,324
Dental	23
First Aid	10
Health Promotion	2113
Information	110
Home Safety	15256
New Registration	298
Parenting	1314
Play	16671
Postnatal	5350
Smoking	8
Speech and Language	888
Toys	83
Transition	21

Early Learning Team

- 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 • 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

Transition Reports x 56

Early Years practitioners across the programme for 2- 3 year olds/ Little Explorers will provide a communication passport that will be sent to the nursery/ pre school that the child has been allocated a place for the following academic year. These passports are completed with all those involved in the child's sure start journey including the parent. This year we had 10+ preschools that received the passports.

Stay and Plays x 49

Stay and play workshops are held once per month and part of the child's journey within the programme for 2- 3 year olds.

Induction workshop x 5**Wellcomm screening for programme for 2-3 Year Old children**

WellComm is a Speech and Language Toolkit for Screening and Intervention in the Early Years and plays a role in identifying children with potential language difficulties and offers a range of customised intervention activities to help support all children's language development.

Child Development Sessions (CDS)

The child development sessions are for children and families that have been identified by our Family Team/ Peri Natal Team as benefiting from early years support and a whole family approach.

Children will receive 2 sessions per week at 2 hours per session and a parent and child together session once per month.

- *56 transitions sent – 100% target achieved. These provide the children with a seamless transition between sure start and their pre-school nursery places.*

- 98% target achieved

- 100% target achieved

- 100% target achieved. Bi lingual screen also carried out.

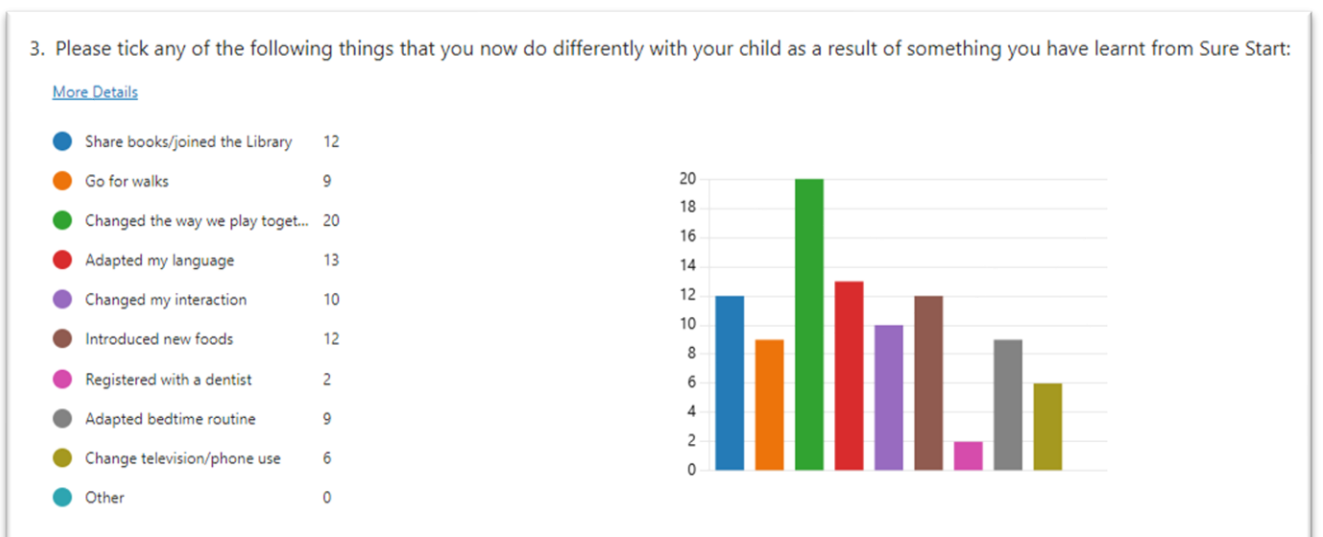
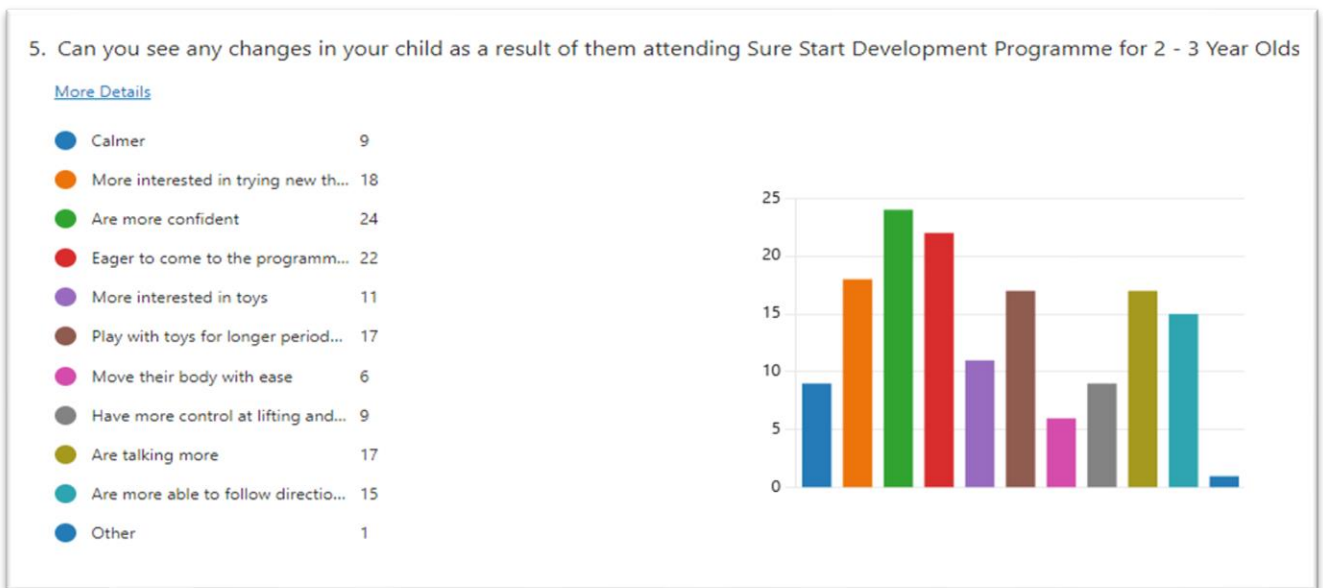
- 100% Target achieved

<p>Ballyoran CDS</p> <p>24 children x 76 sessions</p> <p>Parent and Child Together x 10 sessions</p> <p>Carew CDS</p> <p>173 sessions x 12 children</p> <p>Away 2 Play Templemore CDS</p> <p>131 sessions</p> <p>33 children</p> <p>Play Away CDS</p> <p>252 sessions</p> <p>58 children.</p> <p>Parent and Child Together</p> <p>7 x 41 adults/ 47 children</p> <p>Crèches for Parenting Courses/Programmes</p> <p>These creches are to allow parents to access Peer Support/ Parenting Groups e.g. Incredible Years</p> <p>56 x 22 children</p> <p>Summer Transition Programmes</p> <p>35 sessions x 55 children</p> <p>Summer Scheme</p> <p>Trips to Streamvale Farm, Newcastle, Bangor and Carnfunnock were arranged by the Early Years Team over the summer period. Families availing of services over the summer period were invited.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% Target achieved • 100% Target achieved • 78% target achieved • 100%Target achieved • 100% of children achieved 92% sessions achieved • 100% Target achieved • 100% Target achieved • 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
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How Well Did We Do?

Developmental Programme for 2-3 Year Old Specialist Visits.

Once again, the Programme for 2 -3 Year Old Specialist has utilised our programmes to share good practice with other Sure Start settings. We have had site visits and worked with the specialist to gather feedback from parents on the benefits of the programme for the Department of Education. Examples of the responses from parents can be found below.



Transition Process

‘When transitions in the early years are managed sensitively it lays the foundations for positive feelings towards the many other transitions children will face through life.’

East Belfast Sure Start have continued to develop their work in this area in partnership with the local nursery and pre -school settings. A new communication passport was developed with a shared aim of all those involved to enable children to settle and thrive through developing a sense of wellbeing and belonging within their new setting. This has been shared throughout the East Belfast Early Years Network with the hope that there will be continuity for the children, parents and staff.

Staff Training

Given that a child's experiences in their first years have such an enduring impact on later outcomes, it's crucial to ensure that the early years practitioners in early years settings have access to effective professional development that leads to sustained improvements to practice. The early years team continue to build on this underpinning knowledge that is essential to help us understand children, be able to meet their needs and support them and their parents on their developmental journey.

The Training Included:

- Developmental Programme for 2-3 year old training for new assistants
- Solihull
- Breastfeeding/ Responsive Feeding Refresher
- Sound Training
- Neurodivergent Affirming Practice
- Keyhole Early Intervention
- EDI training
- Food Hygiene/ Health and Safety/ Fire Safety
- Inhouse training with Additional Needs Support Worker and Speech and Language Therapists
- Motivational Interviewing
- Communication Training

Is Anyone Better Off? - Parental Feedback

Successful relationships become partnerships when there is two-way communication, and parents and practitioners really listen to each other and value each other's views. This will achieve the best outcomes for each child. Working together in partnership can have long-lasting and beneficial effects and East Belfast Sure Start staff and services ensure that we implement this holistic approach in everything that we offer to our families. Part of this is ensuring that as an organisation we take the time to gather feedback and listen to those voices that

3. Do you think attending Sure Start has helped improve your child's development?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

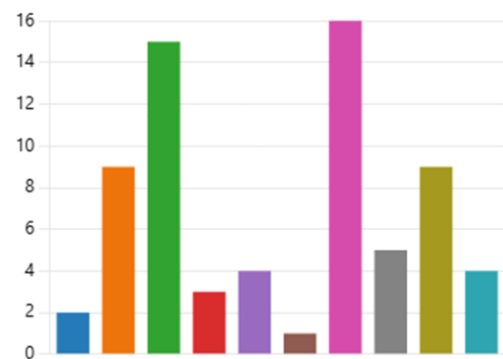
● Strongly Agree	64
● Agree	4
● Neither Agree nor Disagree	0
● Disagree	1
● Strongly disagree	0



4. Can you see any changes in your child as a result of them attending sure start services? (you can tick more than one)

[More Details](#)

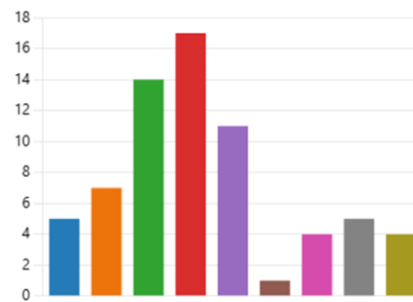
● Calmer	2
● More interested in trying new th...	9
● More confident	15
● More interested in playing	3
● Plays for longer times/ more foc...	4
● More confident physically eg. w...	1
● Communicating more e.g. more...	16
● More able to follow direction/ r...	5
● More sociable	9
● Other	4



5. Please tick any of the following that you now do differently with your child as a result of something you have learnt from sure start. (you can tick more than one)

[More Details](#)

● Share books	5
● Go for more walks	7
● Change the way we play together	14
● Change how I interact with my c...	17
● Introduce new foods	11
● Registered with dentist	1
● Changed routines e.g bedtime	4
● Changed use of screen time eg ...	5
● Other	4



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

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Strongly Agree	54
● Agree	12
● Neither Agree nor Disagree	3
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



9. Did you find the staff approachable and helpful?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Strongly agree	65
● Agree	3
● Neither Agree nor Disagree	0
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



PARENTS RESPONSES

I feel I have benefitted loads as being a young single mum I found it hard trying to teach my child things, my child's moods were awful and she had a lack of confidence. Now she is brilliant, loves to play with other kids and it has benefitted our relationship so much.

I have benefited by watching my son become more independent and routine is a lot better

I have had so much help and support from every staff member when I've had any worries about my daughter

I feel the the programme has boosted my morale as it gives a routine to the week and watching Kai develop so quickly has been fantastic. It has also encouraged us to stick to a morning and bedtime routine which I think is positive for everyone.

Fantastic team have given me great advice and support helping me get my child referred to other services too.

It helped me physically and emotionally getting out of the house and bringing my son down. Getting to speak to the staff they are so friendly and my son has come on a lot since he started I really enjoyed the stay and plays as you got to see what the kids are like in the room and how they play together

I WAS ABLE TO CHAT TO THE GIRLS AT SURESTART IF I HAD ANY QUERIES NOTHING WAS TOO MUCH TROUBLE AND ALWAYS WILLING TO HELP. INTERACTING WITH OTHER PARENTS HAS BEEN GREAT WE STAY IN TOUCH AND HAVE PLAY DATES IT'S GREAT FOR ME AND MY SON HAVING NEW FRIENDS.

I FEEL ABSOLUTELY AMAZED AND NEVER BEEN MORE APPRECIATIVE FOR THE THINGS AND SERVICES SURE START HAS OFFERED ME AND MY DAUGHTER AND SHE HAS NEVER THRIVED SO MUCH ... KEEP UP THE AMAZING WORK

THE GIRLS HAVE BEEN A GREAT SUPPORT TO ME ASWELL AS MY CHILD. IV STRUGGLED WITH ANXIETY AND WORRIED SICK ABOUT MY SON AS HE WAS SLOWER WITH A LOW TONE AND THE SUPPORT AND REASSURANCE THE GIRLS HA E GIVEN ME HAS BEEN AMAZING. LIKE A WE FAMILY.

PARENTS VOICES.

The most amazing bunch of staff who go above and beyond for not just every child but for the parents aswell. Worth their weight in gold.

It has been a pleasure sending my son to surestart the girls are truly fantastic at what they do they are so friendly and pleasant and brilliant with the kids. My son adored them and has come on brilliant from he started im so glad he got the chance to go and is more than ready for nursery now.

These girls are like second mums to our children and can't thank them enough for all their love and support.

I would recommend this programme to anyone , the staff are amazing and the stay and play sessions have been so informative for me . My son communicates so much better and loves to read books now and play more than he did , I have seen his imaginative play develop and his speech develop so quickly and it is all down to being socialised with other children and the hard work from the staff at sure start whilst them also helping me learn new things too

The girls have been amazing even with the staffing issues they have hated letting the kids down on days they have had to close

Thank you so much for being sp patient and lovely to her. Words aren't enough to express my appreciation for all the hard work and and care you have put in.

These teachers are like angels. Not only just helped my child but also helped me alot. Thank you sure start.

We have had the best 4 years with you and are so sad to leave. My kiddies wouldn't never have come on as far as they have.

Lana Molloy
Early Years Lead

Family Support Team

Parent and Family Lead: Lisa Flynn

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>
Home Visits Target - 500 visits for 120 families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80.2% target achieved
Family Support 1:1 – significant conversations Target - 350 for 80 adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% target achieved
Ethnic Minority home visits Target 80 visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% target achieved
Ethnic minority family needing interpreting service. Target 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 families received interpreter services for their home visits
Ethnic Minority 1:1 contact in centre Target 6 Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% target achieved
Initial Visits Target 130 visits	<p>60% target achieved</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> <p>Other training includes:-</p>

	<p>Emerging Leaders</p> <p>Solihull Approach Training</p> <p>Food Hygiene</p> <p>Neurodiversity Training</p> <p>Baby Swim</p> <p>SLT refresher</p> <p>BFI Refreshers</p> <p>Solihull Refresher</p> <p>Infant Mental Health</p> <p>Community Dialog</p>
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Is Anyone Better Off?

The Voice of Parents

I have struggled to get myself back out there since covid. I worked and was a happy go lucky person. I wasn't working and I struggled with the not going to work and then with trying to get back out in the big bad world and not punishing myself. Sure Start has been with me all the way. I had visits when I couldn't find the strength to come outside. I was encouraged not forced to join in groups. I was encouraged to go for walks and just enjoy being with my child. I work again. Just 16 hours but I'm getting there. Thank you for giving me the confidence and the kick in the butt I needed!

I have had some difficulties with eating, and I knew this myself. I confided to the girls when I was in a parenting programme as I could see options they were giving us to eat and what parents were bringing themselves. My difficulty was putting weight on. The girls stayed behind and advised me to see my GP for a general health check which I did and that was all I needed to get motivated. I noticed ideas of what one of the other mums was doing and I was happy to speak to her myself and we now share recipes and go to the gym together. I think i was worried I was ill, but just turned out I was too busy to remember to eat with 3 young children. I am much happier. So, as well as helping my child, Sure Start helped me!

It's a place to go! That sounds like not much, but when you get to learn about you and your child, learn about health and development, information sessions, budgeting it's a lot more. Its warmth, its chatting, its being allowed to be me. Its friendly, its caring and that is a hug to me without the physical touch. Thats just how I feel about Sure Start. I just wish it went beyond 4. Thanks to every person in there. 😊

Peer Support & Cook It! - Paula Montgomery Mindfulness Mondays – Laura Dan	
How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
Peer Support – 1 session per week for 10 mums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 Mums used this service throughout the year • 100% target achieved
Cook IT! Session for Finvoy Young Mums Group 6 mums x 4 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% achieved
Henry Programme (Programme facilitated by health visitors) 8 week programme for 10 mums	9 parents (Only 10 childcare spaces available and 1 parent had 2 children) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% achieved
Mindfulness Mondays 10 sessions for 9 mums	9 Families x 10 sessions including Take 5 with EBCDA. Craft sessions, Wellness – Sleep, breathing & Anxieties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% achieved
Feel Good with Food Cooking Programme - Importance of fresh food at a budget. Including a cookery demonstration and facts around diet and produce 4 sessions for 15 families	15 Families – Zoom video over 3 weeks with a face-to-face cooking & tasting session on the 4 th week. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% achieved

Peer Support

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 a child development session. These courses cover topics identified by the parents themselves. Some fun activities, coffee and chat are also part of the service after completing a programme or information sessions.

Peer Support Monthly Activities

April 23	Self Care
May 23	Sensory Play & Types of Play Sessions
June 23	Benefits advice & Sensory Play
Sept 23	Cook It

Oct 23	Encanto Music Sessions
Nov 23	Belfast City Council – Recycling, Cookery, Safety & Environment
Dec 23	Christmas Crafting and Visit to Christmas Market
Jan 24	Princes Trust
Feb 24	Princes Trust
March 24	Consumer Council & Easter Crafting

Is Anyone Better Off?

I started the group quite anxiously as I hadn't been to a group without my child to hold me up. I'm a young mum and it was scary for me. This group has improved my confidence and with speaking to others. Paula makes everyone feel involved and comfortable. Nothing is a bother.

This is the best group I have been to. Honestly. The information we receive, the learning we get, not just from the people who come in, but also from Paula. She really gets to know us and knows what we need as individuals. I struggle with learning, and she helps me in a way that does not belittle me or even in a way that no one else would notice. (My friend helped me put my feelings into words).

Parent and Toddler Groups Courtney, Laura, Sadie, Paula	
How Much Did We Do? Weekly sessions excluding the summer Carew P&T Short Strand Lagan Village BT3 Group Walkway Cregagh Pilot sessions	How Well Did We Do It? Target 40 families 48 families participated. 25 families 28 families participated. 25 families 27 families participated. 15 families 19 families participated. 25 families 31 families participated. 6 families 7 families participated.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% achieved against targets <p>Parents 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.</p> <p>Parents and Tots provide great transitions for our parents who have been with us from Baby Club and Baby Café or who are new to Sure Start. It gives us a lovely way of getting to know the family and being able to spot any areas where more assistance may be needed.</p>
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Is Anyone Better Off?

My son gets to do things I wouldn't really do at home, messy play, painting etc. The outside space at Carew is safe and they can use up energy. I don't have outside space. Laura is welcoming, friendly and provides great advice.

It's our second season on BT3 group and it is great our kids loved and enjoyed. Sadie is a very nice, kind and caring person, she helps us without hesitation, she takes great care of the children, and we leave her with a smile, not only that, but she also helps our family with all our needs that we are unsure of what to do. It's not someone like her you meet all the time in your life, it's when you're lucky. Thanks to Sadie ♥ ♥ ♥

I really enjoyed Sure Start parent and toddler group, and so did my son. It is a laid-back atmosphere in a great location and the setup was well suited to children's age. It's better than some of the church ones. We really enjoyed getting outside to play and songs at the end of group. Staff are very supportive and welcoming. I always enjoyed chatting with them for advice. They are very caring and attentive. My child also got into the programme for 2.

**Baby Café
Vicky Ferguson**

This group transitions the parents and babies who have attended our Baby Club for 0-6 months.

<p>How much did we do?</p> <p>Tuesday Baby Café and Friday Baby Café. Target: 50 Adults Weekly Sessions</p>	<p>How well did we do it?</p> <p>63 Mums attended throughout the year</p> <p>The Baby Café invites parents with babies aged 6-12 months to enjoy play in a safe, appropriate environment with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
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**Weaning Programme
(supported by the Larder Food Bank)**

<p>How much did we do?</p> <p>5 Week Programme 10 participants</p>	<p>How well did we do it?</p> <p>100% achieved</p> <p>Vicky arranged for a 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</p>
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	<p>delivered them to the parents along with a blender, bowls, and spoons.</p> <p>Vicky then uploaded a recipe and video each week on a WhatsApp group and was available to answer any queries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 1 – Blueberry & banana porridge • Week 2 – Avocado dessert • Week 3 – Cheesy pea pasta • Week 4 – Eggs muffins and toasted fingers.
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Is Anyone Better Off?

I was very unsure where to start. I liked that we could share with each other and ask questions in the group. I felt there was always someone there to chat with.

The gifts were so helpful and appreciated.

It gave me confidence to move to the next step.

Thanks to Vicky and Sure Start who have been on hand every step of the way.

It encouraged me to research other recipes.

<p>Quiet Hour Courtney</p> <p>Quiet Hour Parent and Toddler Group for anxious parents/children who had not been going to groups since Covid and for anxieties in general.</p>	
<p>How much did we do?</p> <p>Weekly group for 13 weeks for 4 families</p>	<p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% target achieved <p>11 families attended</p>

Is Anyone Better Off?

The group was amazing for myself. Being a smaller group it was the first group I actually attended with my daughter due to really bad anxiety. It also led to my daughter starting to play independently and she's started in the 2 year old program. Courtney is amazing not only with my daughter but also when I just needed a chat.

I just wanted to say a huge thank you to Courtney for all she has done for our family. She was so welcoming and approachable, and I had the pleasure of going to one of the Friday morning sessions and she answered all my concerns and questions I had. My husband went to every Friday group with our daughter, and she absolutely adored her time there. We noticed that the special attention she got on these days really helped with her confidence and bring on her development. From the bottom of our hearts a huge thank you to Courtney for helping us with our little learner's form and everything she has done for us. An invaluable group and a gorgeous location.

<i>Incredible Years (Parenting Programme)</i>	
<i>Courtney and Lisa</i>	
The Incredible Years (IY) Toddler programme is for parents (typically living in disadvantaged communities) with a child between the ages of two and three.	
14 weekly sessions	<i>7 families started the programme, 5 parents achieved the 11/13 attendance to pass this intensive 14-week course.</i> Parents learn strategies for responding sensitively to their child and discouraging unwanted behaviour. Two facilitators lead parents in weekly two-hour group discussions of mediated video vignettes, problem-solving exercises and structured practise activities addressing parents' personal goals.

Is Anyone Better Off?

Incredible Years-Parent Program satisfaction questionnaire

Overall Program Evaluation

What part of the program was most helpful to you?

The open group discussion helped me pinpoint what is and isn't "normal" for toddler behaviour.
The teachers were brilliant and open to any questions.
The group discussion with peers and group leaders.
Discussions around the techniques and how best to tweak them to suit my family.
Descriptive commenting. Specific praise. Ignoring certain behaviours.
Praise and encouragement.

What did you like most about the program?

The sense of not being alone with my child's poor behaviour.
Making friends and helping my daughter make friends.
I feel more confident in my parenting and by applying the techniques has led to my family being much happier.
Learning new stuff and techniques to help parenting my child.
Learning different ways to play.

What did you like least about the program?

Having to speak.
The practices were slightly embarrassing.
Sometimes it felt a bit rushed to get through all the content.
Too many people talking over each other at the first session.
Videos being a bit outdated
Nothing

How could the program have been improved to help you more?

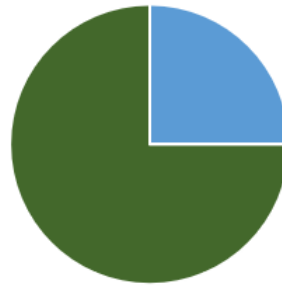
Updated videos.
Update the videos.
Slightly longer to allow more discussion/time for all the content.
The videos also need to be updated to reflect modern times/parenting.
I can't think of anything as the programme was amazing and I really enjoyed talking with other parents. I'm really going to miss the group.
Up to date videos

Content



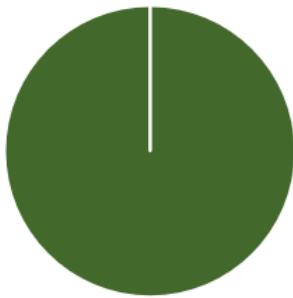
■ Not helpful ■ Neutral ■ Helpful ■ Very Helpful

Video Examples



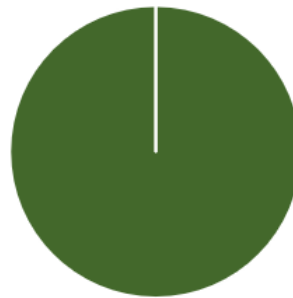
■ Not helpful ■ Neutral ■ Helpful ■ Very Helpful

Teaching and Leadership skills



■ Not helpful ■ Neutral ■ Helpful ■ Very Helpful

Group Discussion and Interaction



■ Not helpful ■ Neutral ■ Helpful ■ Very Helpful

Practices



■ Not helpful ■ Neutral ■ Helpful ■ Very Helpful

Additional Comments

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

These programmes were designed to share our Message of the Month each month in an interactive way with parents and children. Messages which promote play, emotional regulation and speech and language.

Month	Description	0-1 yrs children attending	1-2 yrs children attending
April	Movement is good for my body and my brain	13	0
May	I'm a happy baby when you...	12	6
June	Your love and patience make change easier for me	12	7
September	Sharing Books helps my brain to grow	0	8
October	My brain needs different sorts of play to help it grow	7	8
November	Screen Time – Use it Wisely	9	10
December	My smile is special, let's keep it that way	4	5
January	Healthy foods build a healthy brain	5	7
February	Words build my brain	2	7
March	Encouraging positive behaviour	5	9

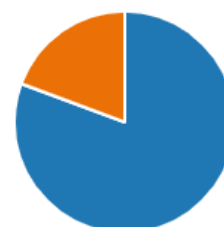
Is Anyone Better Off?

5. What is your opinion of the staff, setting, the quality and the range of resources available during the programme?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

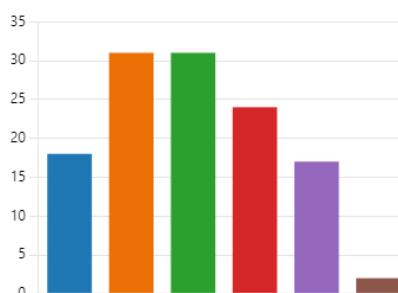
● Excellent	25
● good	6
● Fair	0
● Poor	0
● Other	0



6. How do you feel as a parent/carer that you have benefitted from attending the message of the month programme? (More than one option can be selected)

[More Details](#)

● Confidence	18
● Knowledge on Child Developme...	31
● Ideas for activities/ play	31
● Friendship/ peer relationships	24
● Signposting for support/ advice	17
● Other	2



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

[More Details](#)

● Emotionally e.g. increased confi...	28
● Speech, Language and Commu...	22
● Socially - relationships with oth...	29
● Play skills	31
● Other	4



Summer Programmes

- Toddler Day 14 Families
- Family day 18 Families
- Cinema day 18 families
- 2 x Joe Jingles sessions supported by Eastside Learning 22 Families
- 4 Summer play days in Sure Start Garden attendances please
- The Ark farm - BT3 Group 7 families
- Trip to Streamvale Farm – Baby Café 10 families.

Parents Voice

It's not just about the trips. It's the consistency of my child seeing the staff, they have built relationships and to continue this in the summer, is not something other places do.

We meet other parents and other cultures. We get to places we maybe can't afford or would have to give up to pay for. Our children get to do things in the summer where some other groups close.

There is always something we can go to in the summer with Sure Start if we choose to. They don't make it awkward if you cannot make it but turn up the next time. They just make us comfortable; they recognise when we just can't make it on the day for all different reasons! (Mental Health and melt downs in my case)

Dads Work Lisa Flynn supported by Early Years staff	
How Much Did We Do? Saturday Morning Sessions 1:1 work with dads 12 sessions to 3 families	How Well Did We Do It? Target 10 sessions to 15 families Achieved 10 sessions to 20 families 16 sessions to 4 families

Is Anyone Better Off?

How Do you Benefit?

It's the one time a month where it's just me and my child.

I learn the culture of other fathers.

I think I get more fun from the crafts than my child lol.

My life has honestly changed. I continue to get stronger and more confident.

Sure Start has helped me so much. In this new country, my husband works lot of time. I am on my own with my kid for long days. I have always been used to my family so felt very alone. I have made friends so much. I struggle at first and I tell Lisa & Courtney. They slow down and repeat for me and tell me to tell others if I not know what they say. i do this ever since. Now lots of my community ask me questions how to join and what it like, I help them and pass them to Sure Start.

How Does your Child Benefit?

Let's me do more with her especially stories.

Great room with different home things to play with. Garden is also his favourite place!

My child recognises the staff and is very much more settled, they play with the staff while I talk get to other men for a little time.

I am quite ill. Sure Start come to my home when my wife pregnant. They help me get items for my empty apartment. They help me meet other people to help my family. They help me to get forms filled and tell me about translator that others

get to help me with forms and gp. My son now little older and goes to Sadie group on Wednesdays. We like this group as no church building involved. Miss Lisa and midwife were also very good. I go to office a lot, people there very nice to me and always help if Miss Lisa not there. Miss Lisa also teach me that people here different to my home and I be less forceful. My housing support worker say Sure Start not just for children and we be lucky to have them. She right.

Lisa Flynn – Family Support Lead

Additional Needs Support Report

How Much Did We Do?	How Well Did We Do It?
<p>Little Learners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Groups - Monday and Tuesday afternoon (6 children) and Wednesday and Thursday afternoon (6 children) • Induction Workshop <p>Parent And Child Together Sessions Monthly Stay and Play sessions, Graduations in June</p> <p>Attention Builders Little Learners</p> <p>Play and Discover Term Time Programme Focused Parent and Child Together programme</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> <p>Home Visits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 91% target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% target delivered • 100% target delivered <p>3 programmes planned and 6 delivered due to demand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target over achieved • Planned to support 10 parents, supported 33 • Delivered 28 sessions • Target over achieved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target over achieved • Planned 60 delivered 106 Home Visits

- Breastfeeding
- Inhouse training with Additional Needs Support Worker and Speech and Language Therapists
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Neurodiversity affirming practice
- Curiosity Programme – Attention Autism
- Social Media
- Understanding Neurodiversity and reframing Autism: Invoking a paradigm shift in the Autism narrative
- Born at the right time - bridging the gap – listening to and working with families
- Supporting Neurodiversity facilitated by Early Years Organisation
- Supporting children’s emotions facilitated by Early Years Organisation
- Training facilitated by the SEN Early Years Inclusion Service
- Supporting Neurodiverse children, young people and their families facilitated by Thrive NI and Department of Health and Department of Education

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. 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 Learners

Our **Little Learners** Programme is part of the Belfast Wide Early Years Project and provides support to 12 children with developmental, communication, social, play and sensory differences. We currently work in partnership with the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Child Development Speech and Language Service and Occupational Therapy team.

To support children to flourish, our Little Learners programme celebrates the uniqueness of each child and nurtures their development. Our environments are warm and supportive where children feel safe to explore, be themselves, respond to their innate drive to be curious and develop their own sense of identity. These spaces are carefully created and are low arousal, with calming, neutral colours, soft lighting and soft cosy furnishings with resources include natural materials,

real items, loose parts - encouraging curiosity and stimulation of the senses. We provide sensory resources to meet children's sensory needs and support regulation.

We recognise that parents have expertise and we work closely with them – exploring and exchanging ideas to support children's development at home and in our setting. Monthly stay and play sessions have been a really valuable way to connect with parents and for staff to share what they do in the sessions with the children, showing resources used and modelling interaction strategies. Parent workshops have also been an integral part of the programme with parents getting information, advice and space to connect with each other through peer support.



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 nurture 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.

Nurturing environments

Sensory play is an important element of our practice within each programme. The sensory room on Albertbridge Road continues to create a calming sensory experience for the children and families.



Sensory Play Workshops

The Additional Needs Support Worker has provided sensory play workshops for the Baby Club, Breast Start, the 6-12 months baby groups and community partners. 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.

We Have Supported Parents

The Additional Needs Support Worker has supported families in many different ways, including home visits, 1:1 sessions, telephone support and attending meetings or appointments with families. Practical support has included modelling strategies and providing activities and tools to support children's 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 applications, making requests for statutory assessments for Special Educational Needs, completing paperwork for the Education Authority and 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 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.

The Parents Support Group has brought parents together for peer support and to learn information and ways to support children. This year we had sessions with our link Health visitor to give advice around toilet training, eating, sleep and regulation. We had SENAC (Special



Educational Needs Advice Centre) facilitate a session on statutory assessment of special educational needs and the statementing process. We had sessions on nursery applications and transitions to nursery. Elaine McGreevy, Speech and Language Therapist, Access Communication Limited, facilitated an excellent parent workshop called

“Helping Autistic Children Flourish”. We also had sessions around wellbeing and self-care which gave the parents time out for themselves and to relax.

We are innovative

The Additional Needs Support Worker has been working collaboratively with Tessa An, a sound therapist over the past 2 years. Tessa has facilitated sessions for our Little Learners programme and parent and baby groups and we now have a number of staff trained by Tessa in Level 1 Sound for Wellbeing training which have given them skills and knowledge to explore sound with Sure Start families. This is a very exciting element to our practice here at East Belfast Sure Start and we are delighted to keep growing this partnership and for our families and staff to benefit from therapeutic sound experiences.

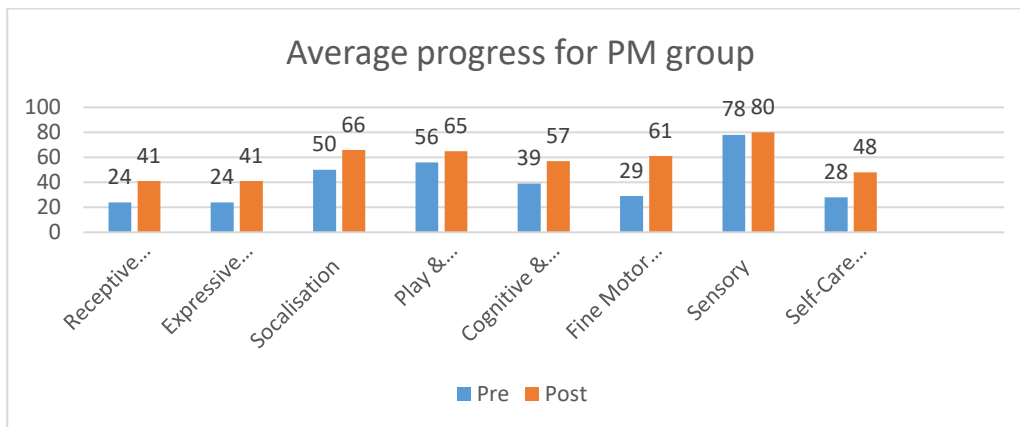
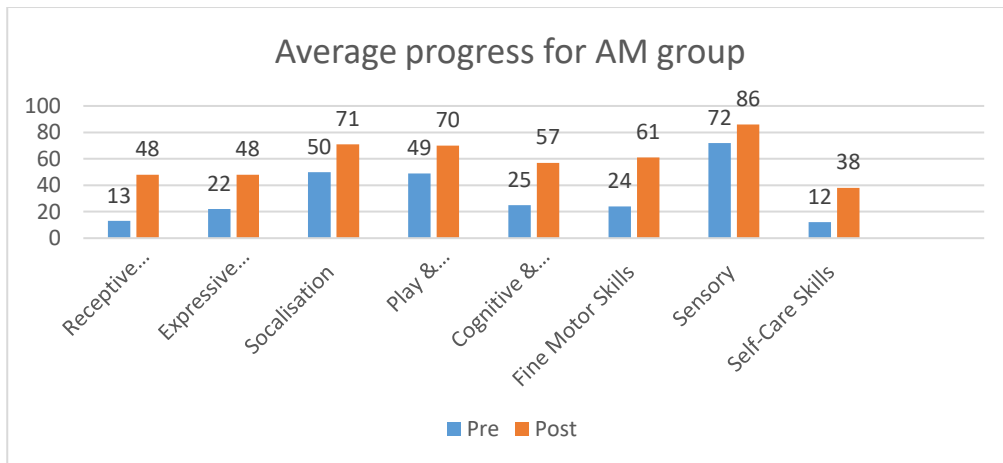
We have also developed a strong working relationship with Bridget Tiernan from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Emotional Health and Wellbeing Team. Bridget and Ashlea facilitated a four-week Little Hearts Minds and Bodies programme for families in May. This programme explored ways to support parent/carer wellbeing, building family relationships and connections, play, supporting sensory needs, emotional regulation and neurodiversity. There was much interest in this programme and the families that participated really enjoyed it. We plan to run more in the future so more families can avail of this support. We also plan to have training for the family support team facilitated by the Emotional Health and Wellbeing team on topics such as sleep, feeding and toileting, so that knowledge and strategies can be learnt to share with our families and support them with these important issues. We look forward to this continued partnership.

We strive to constantly keep up to date with developments in the field of neurodiversity and ensure our practice and the terminology we use is reflective of these changes. We are passionate about creating neurodiversity affirming environments. The Additional Needs Support Worker’s title will change to Nurture Lead. The Parents Support Group will be called Parent Nurture Space. We are also developing a lending library which will have resources that parents can borrow to use at home and staff may also borrow specific equipment to use with families. Sensory resources and various pieces of equipment can be very expensive and this library will give families a chance to try before they might buy any products and to explore what kind of resources and play experiences their child likes.

Is Anyone Better Off as a Result?

- Children have received support during their time in Sure Start. Some have been referred to specialist services, some have had CDC or Autism Assessments and a number have had a statutory assessment of special educational needs leading to statements and support in their preschool setting or a place in a specialist setting.
- Staff and parents have worked in partnership. Parents have been nurtured and supported in ways to support their children’s individual needs and development.

Little Learners programme has nurtured the children’s development - these are graphs showing the children’s development from October to May.



Parents views on the difference Little Learners made to their child’s development

“more social”, “plays at times with other children”, “understanding taking turns”, “learning visuals”

“more social, they want to interact more with their peers and other adults. More confidence to look for other adults for help”

“learning to babble, working on being with others and new environments, learning to take staff by the hand. Being able to be somewhere without me is brilliant”

“his play has really developed”

“he is saying more words and can drink from a cup”

The benefits to parents and children

“better understanding of my child’s needs”

“the programme has been an amazing journey for both my kids”

“I’m using sign and doing more sensory play at home”

Comments on Little Learners staff

“they give me new ideas and different ways to help and encourage”

“thank you to the staff, they’ve been amazing with my daughter”

“100 thank yous for being an amazing group of people who genuinely cared for our children”

“staff are so kind and supportive”

Comments about 1:1 Additional Needs Support

“Ashlea has made such a change to my life. She’s made it so much easier to get through the year. There’s been a lot of things going on for me – housing issues, getting S support after getting turned down for EA referrals, deaths in the family, my mental health – if I need her she’s there. I can’t believe the difference she has made in my life”

“Ashlea has been a great support – every hurdle that has been in the way she’s helped me to leap over it. I have been sent information from parent workshops if I haven’t been able to go. I can’t even begin to explain the support Sure Start has given me”

“thank you so much I feel a big weight off my shoulders”

Comments about Parent Support Group sessions

“I came out with a lot of information from them. I found them very helpful”

“Going to meetings fortnightly has helped me understand more about E’s additional needs. I attended a meeting specifically for children who have autism and I learnt a lot about the different

types of communication our kids do such as grabbing an adult's hand to help them. Before I didn't understand that this was a form of communication"

"I had no idea about any of the things you had to do and apply for when your child has difficulties like statements. I found the workshops about this very useful.

"I found it beneficial meeting other parents with the same family situations"

"I've learnt a lot more sign language, I've been able to listen to other parents too that's helped me. It's also nice knowing that there are other parents like myself going through this stage also has helped to reassure me I'm not alone"

Comments about sensory play workshops

"she loves getting messy"

"he's more confident to explore the jelly this time"

"I'll try these ideas at home"

Ashlea Berryman

Additional Needs Support Worker

Breathing and movement for pregnancy and birth helps and promotes a healthier pregnancy and leads to a less painful birth.

Target

- 3 groups
- 12 unique mums



Antenatal Educational Workshops

These groups sessions were offered at various times to try and suit the needs of working families during the antenatal period. The groups were less well attended during the group we facilitated in the afternoons. We have found that the families who attend these groups have better engagement and attend postnatal services.

September 2023

Ballybeen x 2 sessions

2pm-330pm

November 2023

Carew x 2 sessions 7-830pm

January 2023

4 x sessions Mt Pottinger Church

10-1130am

Target

- 3 groups
- 15 unique mum

One woman commented that she “ felt more relaxed after the class and it improves my sleep”

Another woman commented” the birth walks I learned during the classes really helped me during the birth, I was able to stay at home for longer”

- 3 groups achieved
- 26 attendees

Target exceeded

1 Mum was supported before birth to breastfeed

<p>Breastfeeding Support for Antenatal Mums.</p> <p>The engagement with registered EBSS mums and families for breastfeeding support can be face to face in their homes or at breaststart group. The information is educational as well as practical with the aim of improving health through the benefits that breastfeeding babies brings to society as a whole.</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>Staff Training Undertaken</p> <p>Midwives Training</p> <p>Tiny Life Conference. 20/10/22 BFI Online Conference Training Nov 2022 Enjoy Your Baby Training 15/02/23 Perinatal Yoga Diploma Nov 2022 Connecting Through Song reflective workshop 8/2/23 Brief But Vivid 13/02/23 Child Protection Training 05/04/23 Foundation in sound therapy for wellbeing Jul 2023 Postnatal Yoga Certificate September 2023 Foundation for speech and language communication and sensory toolkits August 2023 Unicef BFI conference Harrogate Nov 2023 Sollihul refresher training Nov 2023 Neurodiversity training E McGuire March 2024</p> <p>Training Completed by Jen Norton.</p> <p>Revalidation obtained with NMC as Paediatric Nurse</p> <p>TinyLife conference/Info on Prematurity 20/10/22 10-4.30p.m. Home safety (5hrs) 25/10/22</p>
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	<p>BFI training (2hrs) 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>2/2.24 Solihull Sleepfulness 1.5hrs online 11/6/24 Speaking up for baby 2hrs online</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>
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Is Anyone Better Off?

Antenatal Yoga Survey

Everyone who completed evaluations found the antenatal yoga extremely worthwhile. They loved the breathing and relaxation exercises.

One woman commented:

"I was able to stay at home for longer during my labour thanks to the yoga walks I learned these helped me with pain relief"

Antenatal Workshops Evaluation

*One ethnic minority woman who had recently moved to EBSS area said about the antenatal workshop "Thanks for the wonderful sessions, i did enjoy and it helped me open up"
This lady brought her husband to some of the sessions.*

Another mother commented that she felt more able to ask questions of the health professionals looking after her during this pregnancy. She was comparing how she felt before after the group.

Postnatal Support

What Did We Do?	How Well Did We Do?
<p>Postnatal Home Visits</p> <p>These visits provide support to families from birth until six months. Our role ensures that we work to offer to statutory organisations providing another source of support. Our aim is to encourage engagement within the many postnatal services and signpost to the family support team if more support is required.</p> <p>Target</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70 visits • 50 unique mums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 97 visits achieved • 77 mums visits <p>Target Exceeded</p> <p>Parents receive a baby resource and information and often receive knitted items donated by community groups</p>
<p>Postnatal 1:1's telephone support</p> <p>Target</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 250 phone calls • 100 unique mums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 189 phone calls achieved • 121 mums visits <p>75% target achieved</p>
<p>Breastfeeding Support</p> <p>Home visits for breastfeeding support</p> <p>Target</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 visits • 6 unique mums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 visits achieved • 8 mums visits <p>Target achieved</p>
<p>Meaningful Conversations/Phone Calls For breastfeeding support or any other postnatal concern. Signposted when necessary.</p> <p>Target</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 conversations achieved • 15 mums received a phone call <p>Target achieved</p>

- 10 conversations
- 15 unique mums

Breastfeeding Online Support

This online service supports families with peer support connection. Many women share information on this group including ways to connect outside of EBSS services. They also support each other with practical measures. The messages are read by the midwife and if appropriate individual answers are offered on a one-to-one basis but also responsively to the whole group.

Target

- 65 mums to be reached with online support

Breastfeeding Group (BreastStart)

A drop-in group that is open to registered and out of area mothers who are breastfeeding or expressing breastmilk.

The group is very well attended and has various health awareness topics covered from within the service, including S&L and the Nurturing service. Health promotion services including health screening PHA WRA and EBDCA regularly attend group. We have had a sensory sound bath for mums and babies and Employers for childcare and BCC for home safety.

- 131 mums received online support

Target overachieved

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

- 53 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.

10 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 experience, this group supports families, and older children are welcomed offering a whole family experience.



The group hosts guests from outside the organisation covering a range of information ranging from: weaning, home safety, healthy relationships, financial support, health promotion. The speech and language team and additional needs team that compliment learning within the group offer regular contributions.

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. **Several of the group trained as Peer Support Breastfeeding Workers this year.**

What women said about the group

"I've made friends for life"

"Breast Start helped me become a confident mother"

"The group offers a variety of informative sessions in a professional, supportive, friendly and relaxed atmosphere"

Delivered Weekly by AN/PN Support

- 74 mums attended

**Connecting through song and early speech and language development.
Championing responsive parenting, bonding and attachment.
Peer support.**

**Baby Club
0 - 6 Months**

Target:

- 60 mums and Babies
- Weekly sessions



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. We have also had the WRDA rep come and speak about breast and cervical health screening awareness. There is also regular input from the speech and language team and the Nurture Lead

Target achieved

Postnatal Pelvic Health physiotherapist programme x 2 sessions

Input from NHS Physiotherapist who shared exercises with ladies. Joint sessions with 6-12 month baby group gave an opportunity to gather together and receive specific advice to support personal pelvic health

One parent commented, “these sessions gave me hints and tips to look after myself postnatally. I felt able to ask the facilitator lots of questions”

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.

Baby Club sees intentional song & Rhyme involvement in weekly groups and encouraging parents to make up songs and have a go.

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.

Baby Massage

sessions resumed April 2022
Delivered by Midwife/Antenatal Postnatal team and Claire from Happy Hatchlings.

Target

- 28 mums and babies

1 group delivered

- 25 mums and babies



Baby Yoga

Target

- 24 mums and babies

Pramtastics

Victoria Park facilitated by postnatal fitness instructor
4 x sessions June 2023

<p>Postnatal exercise sessions facilitated by outside postnatal fitness instructor/Nikki Cousins Funded by Connswater housing Feb 2024 x 4 sessions</p> <p>Other Pop up Events organised by AN/PN TEAM</p> <p>AWARE Mental health awareness March 2024 1 x session Connswater housing</p> <p>Stormont Hotel Baby Day June 2023 EBSS STALL</p> <p>STORMONT BUILDINGS BREASTIVAL JULY 2023</p> <p>Breastival 5 August 2023 Ulster museum</p> <p>Eastside Arts festival CS LEWIS SQ Aug 2023</p> <p>Carew summer Scheme Baby day July 2023</p> <p>Weaning programme Tullycarnet</p> <p>Department of Health visit to EBSS to facilitate Professor Mary Renfrew's enquiry into maternity services in N.I</p>	<p>4 Mums received a bespoke workshop on mental health</p> <p>23 adults with babies attend this event</p> <p>Parents supported with practical needs:-</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Bookstart book packages were distributed to many new postnatal mothers at home visits</p> <p>Staff Training – see antenatal information</p> <p>Staff provided mothers with containment and reciprocity whilst offering postnatal support.</p>
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<p>Seven of our mothers and their babies attended an event hosted by our team to hear directly from women how they felt about their care during pregnancy, birth and postnatal. Stories were shared and the women spoke highly of the services received through EBSS.</p>	<p>Mothers informed of local support services/groups, telephone helplines and reputable on-line services. We gather case studies to evidence the outcomes for families.</p> <p>User feedback from audits, written evaluations, conversations and attendances to inform future practice.</p>
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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.

Responsive feeding leading to increased bonding and attachment between mothers and babies. Results from UNICEF BFI yearly audits provides evidence.

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.

Case Studies by Antenatal/Postnatal Team

Case study 1

We first had contact with this Polish lady early during her pregnancy, from the outset it was clear that she was very keen to engage with our services. We will call her Annie for this case study. Mum was isolated and felt house bound for reasons that threatened her personal safety, she felt that finding a safe place within the EBSS community felt like a home for her.

Annie attended all we offered during her antenatal period, including pregnancy yoga, antenatal workshops, the breastfeeding group, and walks in the park. The midwife was able to offer Mum one-to-one care in early labour for support and encouragement. Mum had a normal birth and felt that the antenatal preparation through the workshops and pregnancy yoga prepared her to birth naturally and afterwards talked positively about her birthing experience.

There was a home visit arranged alongside her husband to answer his questions and support him with preparing for fatherhood. Our service signposted her to local charities to help with the cost of welcoming a new baby.

During the first six weeks in the postnatal period, our ANPN team had weekly contact, and she attributed her successful breastfeeding to the encouragement and support of our team. She said that building a relationship of trust helped her feel confident in her decisions. Mum exclusively breastfeeds her baby and continues to attend Breaststart and any other postnatal services we offered, including baby massage, weaning advice, home safety, mum, and baby yoga. She has made many friends within the group and contributes within the group settings. Mum was able to speak with Professor Mary Renfrew at EBSS as part of a focus group to evaluate Maternity services in Northern Ireland and spoke very highly about how EBSS has supported her on her journey through an isolating time at an especially important juncture in her life.

Here are some of Mum's reflections about EBSS ANPN services.

"Breaststart group helped me overcome my baby blues"

"The most important part of the groups for me is that I am not alone here when I feel overwhelmed, and I can ask for advice anytime"

Services accessed by family:

EBSS Midwife availability phone/home visits

Antenatal/postnatal team availability phone/home visits

Online WhatsApp groups.

Antenatal workshops

Pregnancy yoga

Baby group 0-6 months and 6-12 months.

Walks and events in the park over summer months.

Baby massage.

Breast Start group.

Signed up to Imagination library

Aware mental Health Day.

Christine McFarlane – Community Midwife

Jenny Norton – Antenatal/Postnatal Support

Speech, Language and Communication (SLC) Support



2023-2024

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 a job share between SureStart SLTs Rebecca Carey (x3 days) and Michelle Maguire (x2 days). An additional 3.75hrs per week has also been delivered by Michelle Maguire.

SLC Outcomes- April 23 – March 24

How much did we do?

Home visits:

68 visits to support SLC skills in the home environment

SLC support in Developmental P42-3Yos (including Little Explorers):

Centre-based visits providing parents with advice around child's SLC – 20 visits for 14 individual children

How well did we do it?

85% achieved- The SLT doesn't complete all necessary home visits and will often support the family support worker who is most proximal to the family to incorporate SLC support into their home visits. The number of family seeking home support across the board has reduced this year.

80% achieved (no of visits)

93% achieved (no of unique families)

The new database has changed how things are recorded and now only records SLT activity against the parent. The SLT will often visit settings and provide staff with advice around a communication friendly environment and supporting children's SLC needs. This is no longer recorded on the database and would have historically been recorded under this target. Setting visits where the parents aren't present and are primarily to support the staff are a large part of the SLT role.

<p>Telephone based support for parents for 22 families</p> <p>X10 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>55 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>22 visits to provide SLC support to staff for children attending child development programmes, including community partner groups</p> <p>27 contacts with parents to provide SLC support to parents for children attending child development programmes, including community partner groups</p> <p>72 children supported with their transition to nursery school</p>	<p>Target achieved</p> <p>Target achieved (workshops offered and delivered) 54% attendance – you would rarely expect full attendance for various reasons. We provide digital resources to try and reach the parents who do not attend.</p> <p>48 families received Chat with me book series The children attending Little explorers did not receive these resources- their support was more tailored to their developmental needs.</p> <p>SLT supported staff with transition reports and ensures children who require additional support are signposted to appropriate services in addition to the 'Chat with me about preschool' sessions for parents</p> <p>87% 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</p> <p>55% achieved The change of database has affected this target too- see centre-based visits above. The SLT role often involves supporting staff in the settings and this does not always involve the parents being present. This work is now not recorded against this target.</p> <p>Target achieved</p> <p>All families with children moving on to nursery school and attending community partner groups or child development sessions received 'Chat</p>
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<p>X 13 Educational workshops for parents delivered in child development sessions, including Little Explorers group and community partner groups</p> <p>X5 visits to Surestart led parent and toddler/stay and play group to raise SLC awareness</p> <p>SLC support in Antenatal/baby services:</p> <p>1 antenatal evening</p> <p>X8 educational workshops delivered in Baby club/café and Breast feeding support group with</p> <p>X1 visit to Tullcarnet baby club in collaboration with Barnardos</p> <p>SLC support in Additional needs groups:</p> <p>SLT facilitated the play and discover groups alongside the Nurture Lead (previously known as additional needs support worker) or Little Learners supervisor</p> <p>571 Collaborative conversations</p> <p>Signposting:</p> <p>17 Speech and language referrals</p> <p>8 Child development clinic referrals</p> <p>8 Autism Assessment services</p> <p>6 Occupational therapist referrals</p>	<p>with me about preschool’ book and were offered educational workshop on this topic.</p> <p>Target achieved 74 attendances</p> <p>Within these visits we have conversations with parents giving universal SLC information which aren’t recorded on the database</p> <p>8 parents attending</p> <p>Target achieved 56 attendances</p> <p>23 families- 4 in Surestart area</p> <p>426 with Surestart staff 79 with parents 66 with others This is a 17% increase from last year</p> <p>Surestart staff and parents continue to contact the SLT to discuss ideas and ask for advice regarding the 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>There is a 70% decrease in SLT referrals this year. This could be due to a combination of factors such as a reduced number of home visits carried out by the whole service, health visitors referring and/or the SLT waiting</p>
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<p>3 Educational Psychology referrals</p> <p>Staff Training: Hanan Learning Language and Loving it Intensive interaction Chatting time training (community settings in ELC) Summer Refresher training (all SS staff) Jabadao (movement based training to support children’s regulation for all SS staff)</p>	<p>list has been shorter therefore families may have felt less rushed to ‘get on the waiting list’ early and progress was monitored during their time in programmes instead.</p> <p>Number trained: 9 3 7 30 30</p>
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Is anyone better off as a result?

Supporting staff/ training:

“It’s good to watch the videos back to improve on positioning to include all children doing the activity”

“They are more interested and the length of play is extended”

“Just how early children can respond to an adults interactions and how this has such a profound affect on brain development and overall development of a child”

“Children learn at different levels of play/development so ensure you adapt your approach to the certain child”

Supporting parents:

“I am able to understand how my child interacts now”

“My child has thrived in Surestart with social skills, language and regulating”

“I have been able to learn how to communicate effectively with my child and different ways of playing”

"Every child communicates in their own way, there is no right way or wrong way however there are lots of support there to help you to access and facilitate your child's way of communicating."

"Learned some really interesting information about communicating before birth- now I do tummy tap back and forth to introduce two-way communication and my husband is talking to bump every evening!"

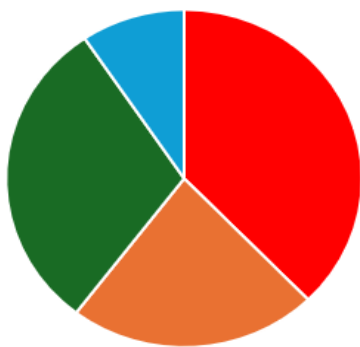
75% of parents attending Sure Start groups report that they have made changes to support their child's SLC development e.g. share more books, play more, chat and sing more.

92% of parents of children attending early years sessions/DP42Yos report that they have made changes to support their child's SLC development .

97% of parents said their child is more ready for preschool as a result of Sure Start support.

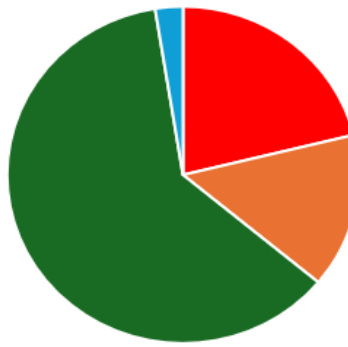
SLC screening of the children attending the DP42-3YOs and Little Explorers at the beginning and end of the year showed the following results:

Wellcomm Autumn 2023



■ Red ■ Amber ■ Green ■ Not screened

Wellcomm Summer 2024

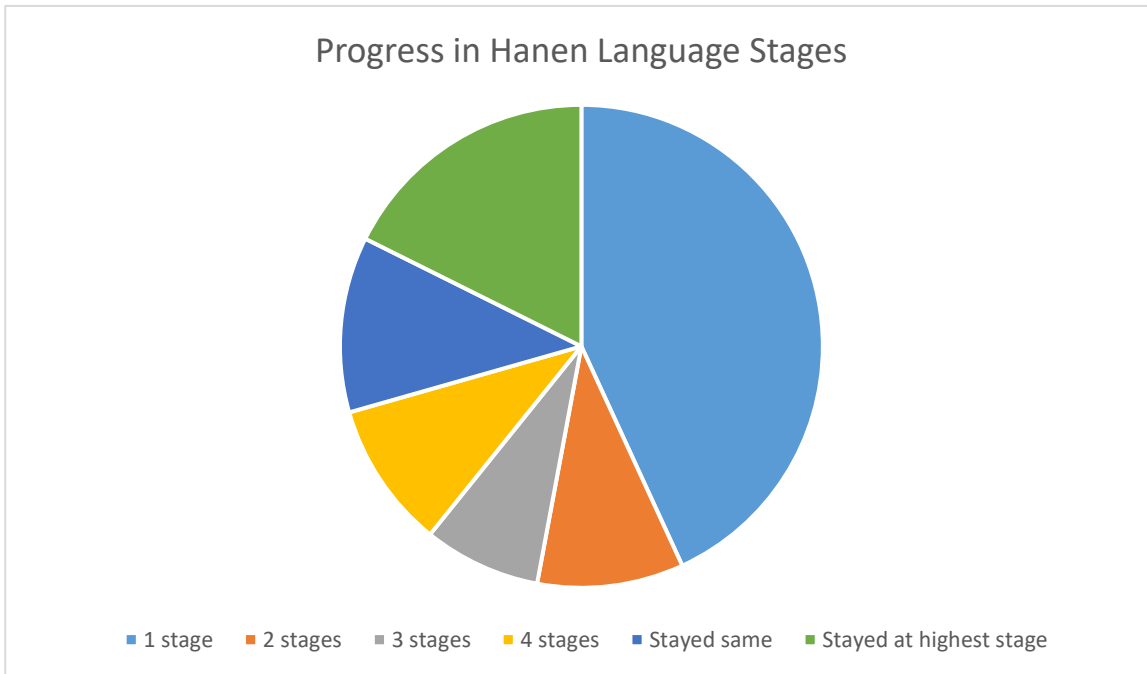


■ Red ■ Amber ■ Green ■ Not screened

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. Positive outcomes could be seen in Summer 2024, 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:

60% bilingual children showed progress in at least one area of development including attention, play and expressive language. 60% of the children screened attended Little Explorers and had higher support needs.

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).



88% of children made or maintained progress in their expressive language skills

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 of this include:

- **Social media messaging**
- **Message of the month**
- **Connecting through song**
- **Chatting time initiative:**
 - 'Chatting time training' provided to ELC groups this year
 - 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.
- **Emer Maguire Chatting time bitesize:** This is series of 6 short videos available on YouTube. They were developed in partnership with a local comedian (former SLT and science communicator) and communicate universal messaging around early brain development through our smile, talk, laugh and sing messaging. These videos were launched via a very successful and fun filled morning in the Network Centre and the videos are now being used across all the Surestarts in NI with the aim of increasing parental knowledge about the things they can do to support their child's infant mental health and SLC.
- **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
- **Connect with me:** Following the success of the 'Chat with me' books a gap was acknowledged in our resources for families with children ages 0-18 months. This year the process was started to develop a baby book – another tool to help parents connect with their babies and support their brain development. This was a collaborative project with staff with SLC and antenatal expertise.
- **ELC Story telling sessions:** The SLTs worked with the Eastside Early Learning Community to promote storytelling in community. The SLTs supported the messaging given out verbally and via leaflet at the events and provided the settings with a video which reinforced the strategies given. A storyteller visited local Parents and Tots groups to read with the children and SLTs joined 4 of these sessions to promote the key messaging. Additional family support staff attended the other sessions with the story teller and were supported by SLTs to deliver the key messages



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.)

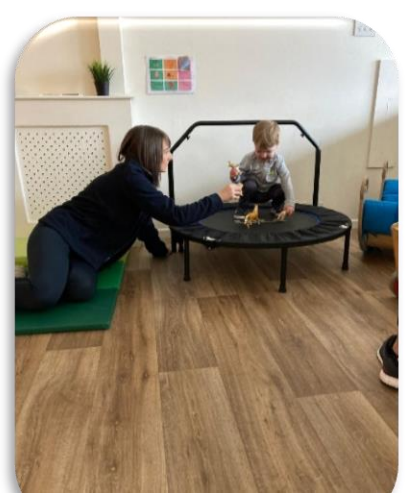
Work with the family support team: The family support team play huge role in supporting children's SLC skills in the home environment and in their groups. SLT continues to be available to discuss cases and provide advice as required. Family support have been included in the training outlined in the targets section, continuing to increase their knowledge and skills in supporting children's regulation and SLC.

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 most of the SLT's work focuses on capacity building. However, when it is appropriate SLT provides advice and support to parents via phone calls and face to face 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 42 referrals to Specialist services. The SLT maintains strong links with health visitors and speech and language therapy teams, often providing relevant information to support their referrals to services.

Play and discover: This group provides support to children and their parents who require high levels of support particularly around their communication. It 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 to develop the 'Connect with me' book and programme. Start to use 'Connect with me' within Surestart service delivery. Consider how we can widen the reach of the resource by showcasing 'Connect with me' to stakeholders.**
- ❖ With continued staff turnover it feels important to spend lots of time in the settings focusing on capacity building through modelling and real time discussion as well as delivering more Hanen (Learning Language and Loving it).

**Rebecca Carey and Michelle Maguire
Sure Start Speech and Language Therapist**

Community Partner Reports

First Steps Child Development Programme Report

Five children were able to avail of a Sure Start child development place in 23/24

We had our stay and play session in January and the children enjoyed showing their parents around our playroom and showing them all their favourite areas to play at and their wee friends. We then had our playgroup photographer visit us at playgroup. We put together a little pretend photobooth in our play room with little props, cameras and frames to get the children familiar and prepared for the photographer visiting so that they were worried or anxious about this occasion. They had great fun having pretend play, they interacted with each other and giggled and chatted away so when the time arrived, they were ready to go with their best smiles! Some children had their siblings come get photos with them also.

We then had our Stay and Play Parent and child speech and language session in February. Plenty of vital info and tips given to the children.

In March Stay and Play our parents/carers came into play with their child. Great feedback on how their child is enjoying their time at first steps.

There was lots of Easter arts and craft decorating in our playroom and easter crafts and activities had as well as all the children have a little easter party on last day before they finish and an easter treat to take home.

By April we could really see the children's confidence grow and in their Stay and Play session we could see them sharing with their parent all their art work on our walls and their favourite things to do.

In May we started our spring crafts and themes.

During the time we had the children we conducted 2 Home Visits.

In the last home visits in May the Parents informed us how they couldn't wait for their teachers to come to their house. One child waited patiently at their window waiting on us arriving which we found so lovely! We got to chat about how they have progressed throughout their time with us at First Steps and shared the children's strengths and areas where the parents could work with their child over the summer. Parents were just generally nervous about their transition to preschool the coming September and were able to reassure them that we will have our transitioning chats in playgroup at circle time and also have our transitioning visit with the SLT from sure start who gave great tips and pointers to us.

We had sensory visit from Ashlea from SureStart. Ashlea arrived with a wonderful selection of sensory items both DIY and great textures etc. The children really got involved as well as their parents and got messy with the shaving foams and spaghetti etc. Each parent was given little sheet for each family to take home with ideas and tips on how to make the sensory items at home.

We had a visit in June from John and Geroge from Belfast City Council which was a Recycling Workshop. The children really got involved asking plenty of questions and answering! They loved the puppet rat!

Our final Stay and Play took place In June. The Sure Start SLT delivered a transitions workshop.

At the end of term we had a bouncy castle day

We finished up with our end of year party and graduation from play group. We had photo opportunities with a little graduation cloak and cap which was a real hit! This was a great time to chat and mingle with their parent and the children! They were all given a little gift from us and their end of year reports! Some parents said they had a cry at how well their child had progressed and thanked us it was very rewarding to hear all the positive feedback from parent and all the thank you cards and gifts.

Each child that received a Sure Start place progressed so very well and were more than ready for their next stage in life preschool!

Getting the best possible outcome from each individual child and building good positive relationships is our goal.

Nicole Mckibbin

First Steps Playgroup Tullycarnet

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 12 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 2023 | Registration forms completed.
Home visits – met children and provided information to parents on Child Development Programme. Date of induction morning, and children all received a book and symbol of the letter of first name and where to hang coats/bag when they start. |
| August 2023 | Some home visits completed. Induction morning – parents/children invited along to have play/fun in playroom setting. Met all the staff, received booklet on child development programme, uniform available to purchase and any questions answered. Children got a treat bag. |
| September 2023 | New children starting, settling in period. Healthy eating programme, getting to know children. |
| October 2023 | Halloween Party Playgroup very well attended with children/parents. Parents came along to a workshop where they made Halloween cupcakes and sweet trees and children's iced biscuits and made party bags. Then into party with their children. |
| November 2023 | Parenting programme – Cook It in centre. |
| December 2023 | Parenting programme – Drug & Alcohol Awareness.
Paren & Child Together – parents made sock snowmen with their child.
Parent & Child Together – Xmas party, children dressed up, Christmas songs, Santa where each child got a present and party to finish off. |
| January 2024 | Queens Student Placement – Dental Health Programme.
Children received toothbrush/paste and parent's booklet on healthy dental health. |
| February 2024 | Home visits – update on child's progress. |

Parenting programme – valentine craft.
Self-Care – EBCDA Marianne.

- March 2024** World Book Day. Children dressed up in their favourite costume.
Parents invited along for Storytime. Children all received a book/treat bag.
Easter Hat making parents and children.
Easter party for parents and children with Jo Jingles music, dance & songs.
- April 2024** Parenting Training – Yoga taster session.
Interest forms for new starts given out for new starts for September.
- May 2024** Part 1 of inspection – 2-hour phone call
Part 2 of inspection – went very well.
Parent & Child together – dough making/handprints.
- June 2024** Beginners forms for new starts in September completed with parents.
Transition update with Mrs Donnelly of St. Matthew’s Nursery.
Transition forms completed with parents.
Graduation held for Class of 2024.
Inspection report arrived on last day – excellent report.

Parent & Toddler Group

Short Strand Parent & Toddler group runs in partnership with Sure Start. Was well attended in 2023/24. Meet every Thursday morning with a great group of parents, mostly women and a few men. We have great support from Sadie (Family Support) Sure Start.

Throughout the year we have helped some families with equipment, pram, cot, bedding, clothes and toys for their children.

We had an Easter Party and an end of year trip to Ark Farm which was a great day even though it rained, and lunch was provided.

We were able to signpost a family for the guidance she required for her child, this is a great service and much needed in the community for children, parents and families which we can acquire when necessary.

Our parents also participated in: Women’s health day, St. Patrick’s Day events, dental health hygiene programme, Chat programme, fun days in community centre.

Agnes McGinley

Short Strand Community Association

Bloomfield Community Association Report

Project Outcomes	
<p>How much did we do?</p> <p>✓ Provide 1:1 support for at least 8 children with additional needs on an ongoing basis</p> <p>Sessions</p> <p>Target</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 250 Individual Supports • 20 Unique Children <p>✓ Child Development Sessions x 4 mornings per week during term time</p> <p>Target</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 Unique Children <p>✓ Induction Workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 workshop • 8 children <p>✓ Transitions Workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 workshop • 12 children 	<p>How Well Did We Do It?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 238 Achieved • 41 Unique Children <p>95% target achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 Unique Children <p>Target achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 workshop • 6 children attended <p>Target achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 workshop • 11 children attended <p>Target achieved</p>

<p>✓ Provide 2 programmes per year for parents e.g. Solihull and Wellbeing/Advice</p> <p>Target</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 families <p>✓ Provide 60 Home Visits to 20 families</p> <p>✓ Provide 20 1:1 telephone support sessions to 10 families mornings per week</p> <p>✓ Provide 20 Parent and Child together sessions to 20 families ages 0-4 years</p> <p>✓ Family Days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 days • 30 families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 families attended <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 450 Achieved • 15 Unique Adults <p>67% achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 calls • 8 adults <p>90% achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 Session delivered • 30 families attended <p>Target achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 days delivered • 40 families attended
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How well do we do it?

We continue to provide a vital service for families in the Bloomfield area. We have supported families with many issues e.g. financial difficulties, support including form filling, SEN needs, medical needs, mental health, help with gas and electric, referral to food banks and general support and signposting. I feel that at times my role can offer the tiniest bit of support that can really help families. Within my work in Bloomfield Playgroup I work closely with parents and staff to ensure guidance and support on areas such as behaviour, speech development and toilet training. I have supported quite a few families who are new to Northern Ireland to help with their child/children's enrolled in nurseries or schools. Families are very thankful for the support and guidance.

Jack as an Early Years practitioner continues to work in the Playgroup delivering high quality child development using his training in Solihull, Hanen & Foundations training. This has allowed him to make a significant difference to each child taking onboard their individual learning styles and adapting our play environment to meet and address those needs to ensure continual growth and development.

Nichola has continued with my "Getting to Know You" programme in the Bloomfield area and have regular families that attend alongside new families. I delivered sensory play sessions, songs and rhyme sessions, physical play sessions and general play time and story sessions. Doing these sessions I have seen families improve their relationship with their children and have help to demonstrate how to use different techniques on how to deal with different situations. One Parent Commented:



'I never thought I would make such good friends attending this group! I have made friends for life we all have things in common'

I ran an Art therapy class for parents, this ran for 6 weeks with both mummy's and daddy's attending. Some of these parents struggle to interact with other adults but by the third session I could see a difference and all parents were laughing and joking.



Recent Events

There is so many events ran at different times of the year that some families can just not afford especially if they have more than one child. We recognised this at Bloomfield and want to help families make memories with their children.

With this in mind, we ran a Pumpkin patch and a drive-in cinema – all free of charge. Over 100 families attended. It was a great turn out and a huge success even though it was a wet day! Families were so grateful for this opportunity.

Last Christmas I was able to take all the families on a Christmas experience to The Ark Farm. Again, most of these families couldn't have afforded to do this. To see the parents and children's faces was just amazing & it made me feel so happy I could offer them this experience.

We had family fun days and events on throughout the year which all families came to.

Again, this Summer we have been able to continue with family trips and its great to see the parents interacting with their child and other parents. We 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. I make sure myself and all staff do regular training so we can give each child the best start in our playgroup. We have all recently done Hanen & Foundation Stage training and we have all learnt a lot from this. 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 the 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.

I have run Solihull parenting programme which the parents all found interesting and learnt from it. Before running this course with parents, I build up a relationship with them first as I find it helps to get them to come along to the course and also for them to be open and honest and get the most out of the course.

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, East Belfast baby bank, Uniform Recycle Scheme, basically anything that will help & support Families. 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. Parents have commented how useful this information is.

One of the Projects we have supported.



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 access 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 on a Quarterly Report through the appropriate systems that are in place



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?

We are incredibly fortunate to have had the opportunity to complete another year of Family Support Work for East Belfast Sure Start, here at Ballybeen Women's Centre. Once again we have met and worked alongside amazing parents, children, and their extended families.

The year began with Amy Wightman transitioning from the role of Family Support Worker to Early Years Manager for Ballybeen Women's Centre. After a few rounds of unsuccessful recruitment, we welcomed Michelle Gilmore to the position in March 2024. Michelle has spent the last 6 months settling into the role, meeting families, establishing connections and making links with outside agencies. We are excited to see what 2024-2025 has in store.

As with years past we have seen a wide range of support increase with 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 we carried on our partnership with Dundonald Food Bank and have linked in when required with Dundonald Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul and Kiltonga Christian Centre. We also established a working partnership with East Belfast Baby Bank where not only could we donate items but we were able to refer to also.

To further support families, we signposted regularly to information sessions and training through the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Ballybeen Women's Centre, East Belfast Sure Start, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Ballybeen Improvement Group.

Aside from support with financial issues, we have also provided information on Mental Health and Positive Wellbeing.

Home Visiting has taken a dip this year with many new families preferring to come to the centre to complete registration rather than the support worker coming to them. When meeting with families we do share information on what we can offer within the home, and they are encouraged to reach out at any time if they wish to take this up. We have also noted a reduction in referrals from the Health Visiting team for new registrants. Many new registered families have come via NIMATS and from the women's centre. While families may not want to engage with home visits, they are still availing of information being shared via WhatsApp and email and with signposting and occasional check-ins.

This year we have continued to work very closely with Social Services to support some of our families, this work and support will continue into the next year. 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.

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 ensure early signposting to new baby programmes here at Ballybeen Women's Centre. Many expectant parents have expressed their worry regarding the cost of new baby items and other 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.

We were delighted to be able to run 'Chatter Box' this year at Ballybeen Women's Centre. Working in partnership with EBSS we were able to identify children who may require extra support and who did not secure a place within a Programme for 2-year-olds. Speech, Language and Communication along with concerns of delayed development were the concerns most raised by parents of these children. We worked closely with BWC childcare staff and the SENCO to establish a play programme for these children while they attended the centre. Each child was able to avail of 2x afternoons per week. In partnership with EBSS Speech and Language we provided a play space which promoted language, social and peer interaction. We 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.

We continue to work in partnership with the childcare staff at Ballybeen Women's Centre to provide 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. In some cases, this paved the way for conversations between the SENCO of BWC and parents regarding identification of developmental delays and help with follow on referrals where appropriate.

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

- Essential Skills – Numeracy, Literacy and ICT

- Classroom Assistant Academy
- Discover You
- Human Rights Workshops
- Maternal Advocacy Support Programme (MAS)
- Goals
- Anxiety Management
- Employers for Childcare Workshop
- Introduction into Childcare
- Cost of Living Workshop
- Time 4 You
- Image Confident
- Women's Breaking Barriers
- Mental Health First Aid
- Women's Health

Additionally, we were 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 October 2024 and in early 2025.

We are delighted to announce that due to success of our working partnership with the Health and Wellbeing and Peer Education team here at Ballybeen Women's Centre we are beginning a new round of the Maternal Advocacy Support Programme for Young Mums aged 16-24.

Key Achievements

We would also like to take a moment to pass on congratulations to two of our Sure Start parents who have come through programmes here at Ballybeen Women's Centre and who are both helping to facilitate the Maternal Advocacy Support Programme and have also begun their journey in Counselling Level 2.

Congratulations also to another Sure Start parent who completed her Classroom Assistant Academy position and is now employed in the local primary school!

Amy Wightman
Early Years Manager

Michelle Gilmore
Family Support



*A selection of our wonderful Sure Start and MAS parents
Maggie Waugh, Hazel Wilson, Jenna Peacock, Rachel Mahood,
Nicole Bell, Karen Browning alongside
Tanya Hughes, Director of Ballybeen Women's Centre and
Gillian McCarrol, Health and Wellbeing Co-Ordinator*



*Snapshot of some of the Sure Start registered children exploring play at
Ballybeen Women's Centre*

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