

Working Together to... Improve Outcomes in Literacy

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Aim: By June 2018, a fit-for-purpose* illustration tool has been created that effectively identifies children (attending early learning and childcare) experiencing a literacy gap at an early stage, and prioritises parental engagement to take action to close the gap.

- 90% of those using the tool report it is fit-for-purpose
- Results show impact of parental engagement on literacy development

* Fit for purpose: easy to use, agreed content. Supports planning and evaluation, including targeting. Supports parents' understanding of early literacy and learning aims, tracks children's progress, identifies parental engagement good practice.

Method

With a clear understanding of the national evidence around the positive impact of parental engagement in children's literacy development, the Early Years Team in East Dunbartonshire identified that more data, and evidence, was required to provide local insight into the literacy achievement gap and obtain useful, practical knowledge of interventions that are most effective to close the gap. The method for this improvement project was therefore to design a tool to capture this information, and pilot it in a centre located in an area of multiple deprivation.

Process Change

Working collaboratively with Early Years stakeholders to create a shared vision, an illustration was drafted, based on selected early level benchmarks deemed most relevant to the skills and knowledge covered in early learning and childcare. PDSA methodology was utilised to review, redevelop and finalise the content. The illustration was tested through consultation with stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds (including QIOs, Psychological Services, Family Learning Worker, parents and children) to inform (1) content - e.g. actual literacy skills; (2) design - e.g. rating scale or separate paragraphs; and presentation - e.g. ease of use, in tables, logos etc.

Achievements

Tool is effective in:

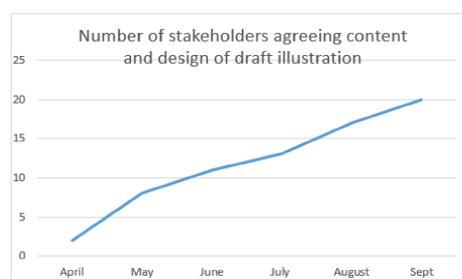
- * Identifying target families
- * Creating a shared language with stakeholders
- * Supporting planning and evaluation of interventions
- * Identifying the impact on children's literacy achievement
- * Identifying areas of good practice

Key Learning Points

- (1) Testing shows that the tool effectively identifies children and families requiring support. However, further work is required to explore the best ways to encourage these target families to be actively involved in parental engagement interventions (a new improvement project).
- (2) Feedback from Centre Management stated that although one practitioner championed the tool, it was essential that all practitioners had a knowledge and sense of ownership of the project for future effectiveness.
- (3) It became apparent that this tool provided rich data that can inform the child's transition to Primary 1.
- (4) The data can be used year-on-year to start to examine and compare the effectiveness of parental engagement interventions on closing the literacy gap.

Results and Conclusions

The aim of the project was met, with almost all practitioners reporting that the tool was fit-for-purpose. Pre and post data demonstrated the positive impact of parental engagement interventions on children's early literacy achievements.



It is straightforward to use, I can see how it will be useful to review learning and help future planning by identifying needs.

(Early Years staff member)

Month	Activity
April/ May	SFW and SO participation in early CYPIC practicum – benchmark review/ research/ initial development of plan and draft
May/ June	Meeting to establish team - plan and set out aims, create a shared vision, PDSA process - involvement of wider Early Years Central Team including Quality Improvement
June/ July	Consultation and PDSA process with Psychological Service, Nursery Management, Early Level Support Teachers
August	Family Learning Programme aims review and trial planning using draft
September	Parent Event Consultation 1 to 1 discussions

That's amazing! I never thought of it like that.

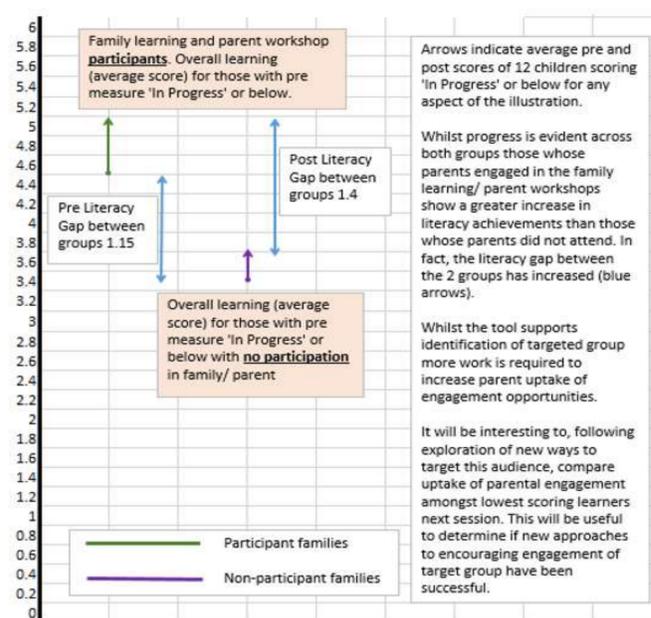
(Parent on learning about links between schemas, mark making and writing / drawing)

The illustration helped us to identify the right children and families to work with – and gauge the impact of bespoke parental engagement activities on children's literacy skills.

(Project Lead)

Using the pre measure to identify children experiencing a literacy gap (who would form the target group).

	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Child A	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Child B	1	5	1	5	1	5	1	5
Child C	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5
Child D	5	6	5	6	5	6	5	6
Child E	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Child F	1	5	1	5	1	5	1	5
Child G	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5
Child H	5	6	5	6	5	6	5	6



The illustration is really useful to help plan sessions to ensure both parents' and children's experiences are meaningful to literacy development. It is also a useful way to promote session aims to parents and raise awareness of what they can do to support learning at home.

(Family Learning Worker)

Scale / Spread

- * Tested in one early learning and childcare centre in 2017/18 - scale up to 3 in 2018/19 and continue to scale to all centres over next 3 years.
- * Potential to test out in primary 1 classes.
- * Potential to add in 'gender' and 'SIMD' in order to collect further rich data to inform improvements.