



WSOA Early Years: Priority 1 newsletter

Welcome to the 2019 Autumn Term, I hope you all enjoyed the summer and took advantage of the gorgeous weather.

It has been a busy summer with a variety of activities for parents and children offered within all areas of West Somerset. It would be great to have feedback from any of these activities, which we can use to support future projects. Feedback can be given at wsoap1@somerset.gov.uk.

I would like to thank everyone who is supporting Priority 1 and enabling our children to have positive learning experiences.

In partnership with early years providers, schools, voluntary organisations, trainers and partners, we are offering a lot of enhancement opportunities which support children and families.

Good Level of Development Data 2019, will be published in the Autumn Term 2019.

Take care

Nikki Difford

Project Co-ordinator (WSOA Opportunity area)

If you have any suggestions, contributions or articles that you would like to feature in the next newsletter, please send them to WSOAP1@Somerset.gov.uk



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Just to thank St Peters, Seashells/ King Edwards, Watery Lane and Cheeky Cherubs for their involvement in the *Tots Talking* pilot project over the last academic year.

Tots Talking is a new I CAN intervention that uses film and activities to develop how parents interact with their children. Working with Nikki Botting from City University the settings helped to gather evidence to evaluate its impact on children's language development. All settings delivered the 8-week group to parents of 2-year olds and organised for evaluation assistants from Plymouth University to carry out assessments with parents and their children at three time points. Findings should be available early next term but talking with practitioners and parents it seems that it has been a successful way to engage with parents and change the way they talk and play with their child.

Although the pilot has now finished, I'm still able to train and support any additional settings that would like to engage with parents through the programme. Contact me to find out more lwood@ican.org.uk 07912 848697/ 01749 678366



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- Liz Wood

Lead Speech and Language Advisor



Department
for Education

Hungry Little Minds

Hungry Little Minds is the new Department for Education campaign that encourages parents and carers to adopt positive activities and behaviours to boost children's communication, language and literacy development. The three-year campaign, which launched with social media and online adverts in July, aims to help parents understand that they have a massive impact on their child's learning. Reading, playing and chatting with them are simple things they can do to help them develop, even when they are too young to say much back. Parents can access tips and activities from <https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/> and also search for activities in their area using a new postcode finder service. Organisations are encouraged to support the campaign, share content on social media and link to the campaign website from their sites, making it easier for parents to get the latest advice.



EY Survey

If you have not already done so, please can you and any other practitioners that you know complete the following https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfONYL-ftU8zVeIvPUbC29bJw81ZpQi4d8Bc8XOz6210WSFsA/viewform?usp=sf_link

It is very important for members of the working group to hear from you as the professionals in West Somerset and learn how we can further shape the programme to help children and families in next academic year.



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Exmoor National Park's fun Project

The FUN project (Families United through Nature) is providing opportunities for families who need support, confidence building and ideas to get outdoors with their children to benefit from the health and wellbeing opportunities of the natural environment. Being outdoors is good for both physical and mental health, and the activities aim to promote and encourage family time and communication between parents and children as well as introduce children to the wonders and importance of our natural world.

Over the school summer holidays, FUN have organised and run 13 activity sessions (would have been 15 if they hadn't been rained off!) We've had over 50 individual families taking part in the summer programme with many coming to more than one activity session.

Comments from some of the days included:

"If there hadn't been free transport today we wouldn't have got out at all" -Mum of 4

"We really enjoyed meeting other parents and being somewhere we hadn't been to before, even though our child is too young to join in yet" -Parents of under 1 year old.

Feedback from some of the children taking part:

"I was worried before I came but I've had an amazing day and feel happy at the end of the day" -Aged 10

"I didn't expect anything fun to happen today but everything was exciting" -Age 12

What did you least enjoy about the day? "Going home"



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Flying handmade kites at Winsford Hill, Exmoor



Making the butterfly kites



Family picnic at 70th Anniversary of National Parks



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Activities with Partners - Exmoor National Park's FUN project partnered with Megan Lowe from Butterfly Conservation through two activity sessions. In Megan's words "I find it difficult to target and engage families outside of wider public events. Working with the FUN project is a great opportunity for me to reach out to new audiences and hopefully deliver good quality engagement that is pitched right for all. None of the families there last week had heard of Butterfly Conservation or the Big Butterfly Count before so it was great to have the chance to introduce our charity to them!"

The Big Picnic – 70th Anniversary Celebration of National Parks

A special 'Big Picnic' attended by VIP's was held at Simonsbath, in Exmoor National Park on Wednesday 17th July to celebrate 70 years since the 1949 Act of Parliament that gave rise to the UK's 15 National Parks. The Government Act was a landmark moment born out of a decades-long campaign that famously led to the mass trespass of the Peak District's Kinder Scout in 1932, amid years of protests and political lobbying by various pressure groups.

Exmoor National Park's FUN project hosted families from Homestart at the Big Picnic and provided transport for them to travel to Exford.



Family meeting Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall



Rounders on Minehead Beach



Making a Bug Hotel Pride!



Stone balancing at Watchet Beach on a wet day!



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Challenges to access family activities and being out and about in nature:

We are finding that as well as the issues of lack of public transport that we were aware of, there are numerous other reasons why families face challenges in accessing nature and taking part in group family activities. These can include social anxiety of parents and/or children; having children who display 'disruptive' behaviour – in some instances families have actually been banned from some family activities. Then there are the practical issues of not having wet weather clothing or suitable footwear and having to buy and prepare packed lunches – especially if people have a large family.

What FUN has been able to offer -

The FUN project has been able to provide a supportive and small group experience, that has suited children with a wide range of needs including autism, sensory processing disorders and ADHD. And after a welly and raincoat drop at local community pick up points, we've been able to give families free raincoats and wellies if needed. We've also been providing free picnic lunches through the FairShare scheme and with the support of Quantock Food Cupboard.

The FUN project staff and their volunteers have had a lot of 'FUN' with families so far this summer. Some great moments shared and experiences had!

- Lucy McQuillan, Families United through Nature Project Coordinator

Home-Start West Somerset @ Exmoor National Park 'The Big Picnic'

Wednesday 17th July, Home-Start West Somerset were invited to Exmoor National Park big picnic celebration event. 45 Home Start parents and children jumped on the bus and had a wonderful day out in Simonsbath by the river. The weather was fabulous and Home-Start families took part in all activities, had a glorious picnic and very excitingly got to meet Prince Charles and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall.

- Clare Pound, Manager/Senior Family Support
Co-ordinator of Home-start West Somerset



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Home-Start West Somerset
Family Tea Party and AGM on
Wednesday 25th September
1-3 pm meeting at The Avenue
Methodist Church, then Blenheim
Garden weather permitting



“Changing Lives”

We would like to invite you to help us celebrate this year's achievements,
everyone is welcome.

To include Pete the Poet, Story Telling and Face Painting

R.S.V.P. to admin@homestart-westsomerset.org.uk or 01643 707304

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AGENDA

1 – 1:30pm

Annual General Meeting (Home-Start staff, trustees and volunteers)
Story Time for Families
(all to meet at The Avenue Methodist Church)

1:30 – 3pm

Family Fun Time and refreshments with all the Home-Start team
(weather permitting in Blenheim Garden)

Healthy Movers report

The Healthy Movers project continues to progress in the Early Years settings, which has been showcased through the recent Interim report after research that included practitioner and parent surveys, that has been produced by the Youth Sport Trust. The report will have a public launch on 4 September that will include the full findings, case studies and a video.

Since October 2018 the early years settings were initially supported through a one-day training and have since had monthly visits from the YST Learning Academy tutors who provide ongoing mentoring and guidance to early years colleagues to develop their confidence and competence in delivering physical activity. This has been complimented with resources cards, equipment, a wall chart to showcase the work they are doing with Healthy Movers and a physical literacy assessment tool to help measure the progress of the children taking part. 15 early years settings have been engaged in 132 Healthy Movers sessions, with over 46 practitioners delivering Healthy Movers activities to over 431 children, which is an average of 29 children per setting.

The settings have engaged parents by inviting them to attend Stay and Play sessions, which offer an opportunity for them to participate in Healthy Movers activities with their children. . These have been set up and established through the support from the Learning Academy tutors. The children and parents received free Healthy Movers backpacks which include equipment and resource cards to ensure families can take their learnings home. The activities are designed to develop movement competence and confidence in a fun and engaging way. 36 Stay and Play sessions have been delivered with 135 different parents attending.



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Some of the findings from the report include:

- Across all children who had their physical literacy progress assessed, 88% improved their locomotion (1), 83% improved their locomotion (2), and 80% improved their object control.
- 92% of practitioners felt that Healthy Movers had a positive impact on the amount of time children spend being physically active at their setting
- 100% of practitioners felt that Healthy Movers had had a positive impact on children's attitude to learning at their setting and children's ability to follow instructions
- 100% of practitioners reported that Healthy Movers has helped them to feel more confident, competent and motivated in delivering physical development and physical activity for children aged 2 – 5 years old
- 95% of parents had been given ideas to help their child to be active and 90% of parents felt more confident in helping their child to be active.
- 95% of parents felt that Healthy Movers had helped their child to have better movement skills

"The children are now school ready and Healthy Movers has played a big part in this."
(Practitioner)

"I found the help from the YST Healthy Movers Staff invaluable. I have someone to bounce ideas off and someone who can give me constructive feedback."
(Pre-School Assistant)

"Healthy Movers has helped staff massively because it has given us ideas and inspiration for making physical activity fun, exciting and stimulating for the children. Healthy Movers provides such a variety of activities which is great because it actually caters for all of the children's interests and abilities."
(Practitioner)

"I have noticed improvements in his catching, throwing and coordination. He is more confident in this now."
(Parent)



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Dates for your diary

Early Years Conference

Friday 22 November 2019

Please save the date for the 2019 Early Years Conference which will be held in Taunton.

Who should attend?

- Early Years and Childcare Practitioners and Managers
- Reception Teachers and Teaching Assistants
- Professionals with an interest in early years

The theme will be the importance of speech, language and communication in the early years and our speakers will share research and best practice on this highly relevant topic. More information will follow including cost and how to book a place.

Childminder Conference

Theme: Communication and Language

Saturday 8th February 2020

Save the date advance notice!

Keynote speaker: Greg Bottrill, Early Years Consultant and Author

<http://www.canigoandplaynow.com/>

Greg is an experienced Early Years practitioner who is passionate about the role of true play. He is committed to enabling children to be at the centre of their own development and their learning.

Booking details will be announced here:

<https://www.facebook.com/SSEEarlyYearsImprovement/>



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