

Creative Connections *fife* 2012

an early years gathering

EVALUATION REPORT



Wednesday 23 May 2012
9.30am – 3.40pm
The Byre Theatre, St Andrews



Purpose

Creative Connections Fife 2012 – an early years gathering took place on **Wednesday 23 May 2012** at **The Byre Theatre in St Andrews**. This engaging free seminar was developed to:

- explore good practice and creative approaches happening across Fife
- provide an update on the national context on Early Years developments
- offer a lively and interactive menu of creative play methods for Early Years participants
- highlight the importance of creativity in Early Years developments.

The seminar was hosted by Fife Council's Cultural Partnerships Team, in partnership with both Fife's Early Years Strategy Group and the Byre Theatre and was open to early years practitioners, other professionals with an interest in this field along with parents and early years children.

The day was live streamed across glow.



Professionals Programme

Participants were offered a varied early years programme for 2012, with guest speakers providing a variety of contexts from creative arts, academic research, national policy and local government perspectives.



The day got off to an engaging start with Keynote Speaker Dr Suzanne Zeedyk who currently holds the post of Honorary Senior Lecturer in the School of Psychology at the University of Dundee, where she has been based since 1993. In her presentation, Dr Zeedyk made reference to the film – The Connected Baby - which she made with Jonathan Roberts, focusing on the importance of the early years and the idea that babies really do enter the world already connected, already creative, already able to engage in emotional relationships with the other people in their world.

This was followed by a discussion on the importance of partnership working in providing high quality theatre and arts based experiences within early years settings with input provided by Jacqueline McKay, Chief Executive of The Byre Theatre, Maggie Singleton, Arts Development Officer – Glasgow Life and Virginia Radcliffe, Artist Director/Producer – Licketyspit



Catherine Hornby, Development Officer for Early Years with Education Scotland, then offered an overview of the national perspective on developments to support practitioners to implement educational policy into their practice. Catherine summarised the new Every Day's A Learning Day resource and spoke of its benefits to parents and carers. Full details can be found on www.educationscotland.gov.uk/earlyyears



Fife is very proactive in its approach to Early Years delivery and aims to engage with children and their families across a broad variety of settings. In this respect Fife has been promoting outdoor play in the Early Years settings and in particular with it's 'Forest Kindergarten' programme. Jane Mason, Early Years Coordinator and Mary Brownlee, Early Years Support Worker, Education Service, Fife Council delivered an engaging presentation which outlined this journey to date, highlighting the impact and benefits this outdoor experience is having on young children.

The quality of outdoor education is rich in Fife and offers many benefits. Cathy Bache, Lead Practitioner & Sharon Hedley, Parent, of the Secret Garden Outdoor Nursery came along to highlight some of these benefits by profiling the work they do, some of which was beautifully captured in the award-winning documentary 'Into the Middle of Nowhere' by Anna Ewert, which was recently screened at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival. This documentary highlights the uniqueness of childhood and the exploration of the human mind, showing how children create their own individually constructed worlds and can test out the boundaries of reality.



Further elaborating on this topic, Mairi Ferris, Team Manager, Fife Childcare & Early Years Service, highlighted the role of Fife Childcare & Early Years Services in supporting play development in Fife.

Finally, Ian McLaughlan, Chief Executive of the Scottish Pre-School Play Association, celebrated the role that parents have in community based settings for young children. He then went on to examine the potential that a National Parenting Strategy will have for Scotland's children





The day was rounded off by a Question and Answer Session with panel members Michelle Sweeney (Chair), Jacqueline McKay, Dr Suzanne Zeedyk and Ian McLaughlan and closed at 3.40pm.

Parents & Toddlers Programme

This year we introduced a parents and toddlers programme to Creative Connections, which ran in parallel to the professionals programme. This programme saw parents and toddlers from the Levenmouth Area of Fife attending the Byre Theatre to take part in a lively and interactive menu of creative play methods, aimed at highlighted the importance of creativity on early years development.

We were delighted to be joined by a group of 68 parents and toddlers (age 3-5) throughout the day from Fife Gingerbread's Teenage Parents Project and Woodlands Nursery Centre and Family Unit.



The parents and toddlers from Woodlands Nursery Centre and Family Unit programme were given an unforgettable participative theatre experience for early years children of 'LicketyLeap' by Licketyspit in The Studio. The LicketyLeap performance is a thoughtfully crafted piece of action learning in which the children develop new skills and learn through multiple intelligences, and have opportunities to test these out and reflect on them, so reinforcing the learning experience and building their confidence.

The parents and toddlers from Fife Gingerbread's Teenage Parents Project had the opportunity to experience Byre Teenies, an interactive storytelling session influenced with creative arts, drama and games, led by The Byre's very own Education Officer, Lauren Bianchi. This group also enjoyed sessions from Play@Home which aims to strengthen bonding and communication, improve parenting skills and introduce physically and mentally healthy attitudes, and Bookstart which aims to inspire a love of books in every child.



Feedback on the Early Years Gathering

A total of **190 participants** attended the day; **122 participants** attending the professionals programme and **68 participants** attending the parents and toddlers programme. 66% of evaluations from the professionals programme were completed using the Turning Point interactive evaluation system (graphical feedback is shown on Appendix 1).

Turning Point Results Summary from the Professional Programme

46% of you would be **very interested** and **29% interested** in finding out more about early & primary years expressive arts at the Byre Theatre.

79% of you would be **interested** in creative CPD opportunities linking to expressive arts for early years, led by the Byre Theatre's Education Officer and other arts education specialists within Fife.

56% of you would find it **very valuable** and **38% valuable** for Fife's Cultural Consortium to provide a more focussed early years network group to share national and local early years developments.

60% of you would like more information on creativity and play to support your work, with **31%** of you feeling that Fife already offers a sufficient level of information.

46% of you felt that you could use the resources on offer from Fife Play Resource.

17% of you are planning to hold an International Play Day event in August 2012, with another **46%** of you interested but requiring support.

100% of you valued the opportunity to attend this type of gathering event.

Feedback from the Parents and Toddlers Programme

Byre Teenies carried out reflective evaluations towards the end of the session with parents from Fife Gingerbread's Teenage Parents Project.

I am confident I can use drama and creative arts to play with my child

Session 1 – 100% of parents agreed

Session 2 – 50% of parents agreed, 50% of parents were in the middle

I feel I can take something away from this session to use in our creative play

Session 1 – 100% of parents agreed

Session 2 – 100% of parents agreed

I feel that my child got something from the session today

Session 1 – 100% of parents agreed

Session 2 – 100% of parents agreed

"He was crying right before it, but he was happy in this session." – Parent

"I'd use the different types of character and voices [in the future for creative play with my child]" – Parent

Next Steps

The day was successful in showcasing creative approaches and exploring how the use of such approaches can impact on early years development. Additionally an update on the national context on early years developments was provided by both Education Scotland and The Scottish Pre School Play Association.

The Early Years Approach in Fife is robust with a high degree of partnership working. This strong strategic framework is paying dividends as evidenced by the recent investment in the sector of £50,000 from Creative Scotland's Access and Participation Fund, with additional resources of £21,000 from the Byre Theatre and Fife Council's Cultural Partnerships Team. This fund will support a programme to deliver theatre and drama based adventures in learning for early years audiences in Fife. The programme will be led by the Byre Theatre in collaboration with Licketyspit Theatre Company, with the support and input of project partners – Fife Council's Libraries, Arts, Museums and Archives Service, Education Services (Health & Wellbeing and Early Years Teams) and Fife's Early Years Strategy Group.

Early Years Pilot Project

Coming soon ...

The Byre Theatre Education Team and Licketyspit Theatre Company will lead a CPD session on 30 August 2012, open to all nursery staff, Headteachers, Depute Headteachers and support staff interested in the Licketyleap and Byre Teenies projects. During this session there is an opportunity to learn more about the projects, ask questions and watch a short film of Licketyleap in action. Following this the company will deliver a drama based workshop with exercises and ideas that teachers can continue to use and develop in the nursery setting. For more information please contact ashley.foster@byretheatre.com www.byretheatre.com

Later in September Licketyspit Theatre Company will be touring their early years adventure Licketyleap to some of Fife's nurseries and will follow up this innovative immersive theatre experience with some equally interactive evaluation sessions.

There will also be 4 performances of Licketyleap open to the public as they will be performed at The Byre Theatre on 15th and 22nd September 2012. Details are on The Byre website www.byretheatre.com

Following the success of the Byre Teenies programme the Byre's drama artists will be jointly delivering CPD sessions with Licketyspit and bringing The Byre Teenies interactive drama experience to Fife nurseries.

In partnership with Fife's Childcare & Early Years Services, The Byre Theatre will be contacting Fife nurseries on their return to school to organise Byre Teeny Immersive drama workshops in schools throughout the next session. For more information please contact ashley.foster@byretheatre.com www.byretheatre.com



Fife's Cultural Consortium – Early Years Interest Group

As indicated at registration and in response to evaluation feedback from the event, delegates who attended the day have been added to the Cultural Consortium Early Years Interest Group. This group offers members opportunities to be part of a network of cultural interests, explore new cultural opportunities, share new and developing ideas, evidence strong partnership working and enhance knowledge of cultural activities.

If you know someone who would like to become a member:

Email cultural.partnerships@fife.gov.uk with 'Join Early Years Interest Group' in the header with name and contact details. Or you can go to www.fifedirect.org.uk/culture and register through the 'Cultural Strategy' pages. You will be able to receive regular updates through the Culture pages as well as through the Cultural Consortium E-network.

Fife's Creative Learning Network (FCLN)

Fife's Creative Learning Network (FCLN) was established in 2011 and has now grown from 12 members to over 30. The network exists to promote and champion creative learning across Fife and has recently received further funding from Education Scotland to develop the network further. Throughout the 2012-13 funding period Fife's Creative Learning Network will be raising the profile of creativity through the delivery of two key events and a series of CPD and creative learning opportunities. The focus of the network will be on creativity across the curriculum and engagement of schools in developing community and cultural partnerships.

The Network has gone from strength to strength with members ranging from cultural and creative sectors across Fife to primary and secondary school professionals. We now feel it timely to add an early years presence and would like to offer an invite to professionals from the early years sector to join this dynamic Network.

Benefits include:

- Membership of a network which raises the profile of and champions creativity across Fife, bringing education, community and creative practitioners together
- Funding support
- New networking and partnership opportunities
- Access to social networking and national creative learning resources:
 - Fife Creative Learning Network blog <http://glo.li/suTHQt>
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - Creativity Portal
- Access to new creative learning opportunities for children & young people
- Access to new CPD opportunities related to creativity and creative learning

If you are interested in being part of Fife's Creative Learning Network, please contact Heather Gibson on 01592 583255 or email heather.gibson@fife.gov.uk.

FCLN Resources

Further information and FCLN resources are available online.

FCLN Blog

<http://glo.li/suTHQt>



FCLN Glow Group

<http://glo.li/nwAJX7>



Follow us on Twitter @FifeCLN
and/or
Facebook
<http://on.fb.me/GZOGuD>

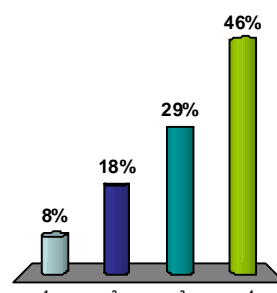
We would like to thank you for your support in attending our second Early Years Gathering event. We look forward to bringing you updates relating to the Early Years Pilot Project, Fife's Cultural Consortium - Early Years Interest Group and Fife's Creative Learning Network. Updates will be distributed through Fife's Cultural Consortium Network and uploaded to the Creative Learning Network Glow pages and we would welcome your subscription to both these communication channels to keep you abreast of developments.

www.fifedirect.org.uk/culture

A total of **190 participants** attended the day; **122 participants** attending the professionals programme and **68 participants** attending the parents and toddlers programme. 66% of evaluations from the professionals programme were completed using the Turning Point interactive evaluation system with the following feedback highlighted below:

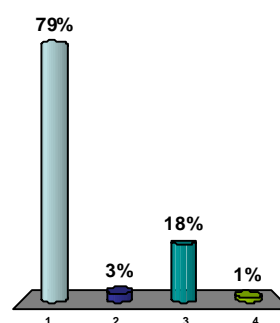
How interested would you be in finding out more about early & primary years expressive arts at the Byre theatre?

1. Not interested
2. Might be interested
3. Interested
4. Very interested



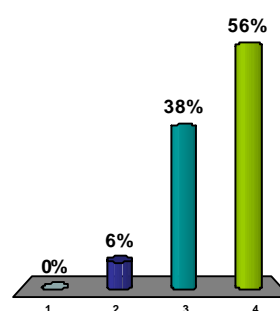
Would you be interested in CPD opportunities in arts for early years led by the Byre Theatre's Education Officer and other arts education specialists?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Maybe
4. Don't Know



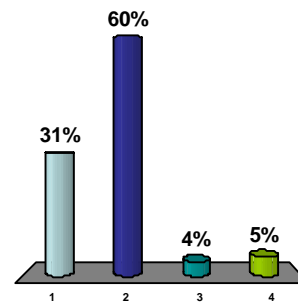
How much value would you find in Fife's Cultural Consortium providing a more focussed early years network group, to share national and local early years developments?

1. No value
2. Some value
3. Valuable
4. Very Valuable



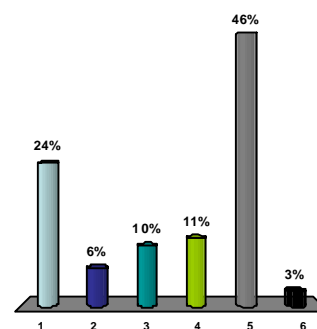
Do you feel you have access to a sufficient level of information on creativity and play to support your work?

1. Yes
2. Would like more
3. No
4. Not relevant to my setting



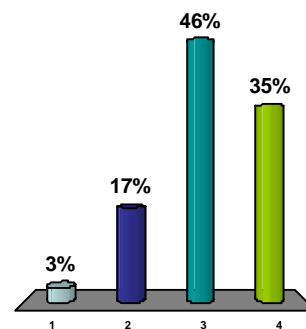
Which of the following would you be most likely to use from a Fife Play Resource?

1. Toys, games and equipment
2. Ideas/worksheets
3. Facilitated play sessions in your setting
4. Staff training
5. All of the above
6. None of the above



Will you hold an International Play Day event in August 2012?

1. Yes, planning it now
2. Yes, not started planning
3. Interested but need support
4. No, not relevant to my setting



How would you rate the value of this event to your work?

1. Very valuable
2. Quite valuable
3. Not that valuable
4. Not at all valuable

