

Family Learning Case Study – Cadder Primary School

ESOL & Play 26.04.23-07.06.23

Aim of programme: To support EAL staff in facilitating the ESOL & Play Programme.

Setting the Scene

Prior to Covid, EAL families came to workshops in the school. A homework club had been set up to improve EAL family engagement, integration and language capacity. Unfortunately, families did not get the opportunity to take part in family learning activities. Relationships with families had been previously built over a number of years and there was persistence from the school in forming relationships ie family check-ins during Covid, an application for funding to support EAL families to keep warm during the winter period, ongoing discussions with families regarding ESOL class availability and access, and developing relationships with the school children. The school's Family Support Worker also assisted in identifying which families needed support and was key in building trust with families.

Of the 200 school roll, 69% of learners reside in SIMD deciles 1-4, 27% of learnings are EAL, 20 different first languages are spoken, growing numbers of isolated EAL families, no EAL representatives on Parent Council. Cadder PS aimed to respond to an identified need for ESOL (all level) classes when parents with small children found it difficult to access ESOL locally.

Process

Cadder PS worked in partnership with Glasgow Life's Family Learning Team to pilot the ESOL and Play course in response to community need. The aim was to engage EAL parents in the life of the school, build community and encourage play based learning. The course was planned for eight weeks and aimed at parents with low level English skills. JC (EAL teacher) drafted invitation letters to targeted parents with children in P1-P4 and placed in school bags. The letter was recorded for a parent with low level literacy. Reminder invitation texts were sent to parents before the course started.

Inputs

- EAL Teacher - Parental engagement time; teaching time, monitoring & evaluation
- EAL LOLs - Creche support
- FLO – preparation time; teaching time, monitoring & evaluation
- Funding – play resources, arts & crafts materials, refreshments
- Take home resources
- Venue with room to host creche and course activities
- Knowledge of family backgrounds to enhance participation

Six sessions were delivered. The room was unavailable one week and the final week culminated in a visit to Badenheath Farm and Palacerigg Country Park.

Achievements/Results

Nine families engaged in the course. The language abilities were mixed. Participation from some parents was erratic due to other commitments. Overall, the parental engagement with the school was increased. All parents stated that they enjoyed the activities and enjoyed playing with their children. The level of parental engagement in the activities increased weekly. Parents supported one another with the language and instructions for the games and activities. Parents and children learned

together and ASN children were engaged in the learning and activities. New language was learned for some of the parents. Helping the children learn helped the parents learn and vice versa. Play was used as a learning tool and play pedagogy was shared. Parents saw their children playing new games, engaging with friends, got to know who their children's friends were, met new parents and formed part of the school community. Parents came into the school, appeared more comfortable with one another and acknowledged one another at the school gates. Children stated that they enjoyed all the games and activities and having their parents attend the sessions. The expressed feelings of well-being when playing with their parent. On reflecting on the language, games and activities that had taken place, all children highlighted their favourite games and activities and enjoyed remembering what they had done and learned. Both parents and children learned new songs and requested for some to be sung again. Support was given to the whole family. As parents came into the school, staff were able to liaise with them more and discuss their children's needs. Overall, diversity was addressed.

In terms of progression one parent is looking to volunteer in the school, another is interested in getting involved in setting up a stall in the school, one is looking to take the course forward in her place of work, one is moving house and preparing to settle her family for starting another school, one wants to continue learning English and another has confirmation of a place to learner English at college in September.

The trip was attended by five families who participated in the course. The trip also provided an opportunity for the school to invite other EAL families and a further seven families engaged, further building the EAL community.

Impact Statements

'Are we at the cinema?' (Child, first session parachute game)

'When my mum came to school she was speaking the words that we were all learning and we practised at home with dad.' (Child)

'I have loved learning with my mum. She came to play with me and we all had fun at school.' (Child)

'I like it best when we played the games and my mum was running with me. It was so fun and I felt happy that my mum was playing.' (Child)

'You are doing a great job. The children are loving playing and we are learning some new language. Every week we are doing different activities. It's great.' (Parent)

'I am shy. We don't play like this in our culture but I am enjoying trying to join in with the games.' (Parent - translated).

'Yes, this is good for me. I am learning English and playing games with my child.' (Parent)

'I spoke to all the mums. I knew a few already. I made a new friend from Ukraine. She was new to the area and her English level was low. I gave her my mobile number.' (Parent)

'I am new to Glasgow. I go to ESOL class in the south of the city. This helps me with vocabulary. My son is learning too. I am meeting other parents.' (Parent)

'My son and daughter are enjoying playing. I am enjoying playing with my son. He likes drawing and doesn't always speak but he is joining in with the games'. (Parent)

'My wife looks forward to this every week. She talks about it at home. (Parent – translated)

'Im sorry I can't come to the last session. I have an exam. I have really enjoyed this. I liked joining in with the games and being with my son in school. It is good for everybody.' (Parent)

'There was an empty hall on Wednesdays and then it was filled with people'. (Head Teacher).

One parent spoke on video and expressed how she has bonded more with her child.

My favourite thing on the trip was the sand, the big slide, the high chute, the hidden playground (Children).

Reflections

Creche – this is required to support parents to attend and allow them to participate in language learning and play with their children who attend school.

Staff – define roles ie an EAL teacher would support the language and a classroom assistant would support the play element and any other staff would be given a defined role.

Structure - establish planning meetings, be aware of the school community and children's needs/levels that will be engaged, liaise with HT for support and time tabling, invite parents into the school before the course starts (one off event with families ie cooking and then parents only), 30 minutes of learning English with parents only and 30 mins play for families, test parents' English level or rely on the school to provide levels, run course February-April, include signposting elements, extend course activities for multi levels, develop evaluation element around session concept, course could be utilised to support P1 transitions.

Next Steps - FLO to support the school establishing a Family Learning calendar and evaluation process with potential of parental consultation for next steps for parents, parents supported to become Parent Council members, celebration of language/diversity/culture.

