 

Embedding Family Learning Case Study

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| **Name of establishment** | Pollok Children’s Centre |
| **Case Study Written By**  *Name and Job Title* | Claire Bradley, Family Learning Officer  Anne McNair, Team Leader, Pollok Children’s Centre |
| **Date Completed** | March 2025 |
| **Setting the Scene**  *Brief description of your establishment* | |
| Pollok Children’s Centre is a Glasgow City Council service providing care and education for up to 72 children from six weeks to pre-primary school children in the southwest of Glasgow. We are based in the high-deprivation area of Pollok and our children are sitting at 1 and 2 SIMD rating.  The nursery is open from 8.00a.m. to 6.00p.m. We are open 50 weeks of the year. We are closed for all Scottish Public holidays and in between Christmas and New Year. There are 5 Inservice days to support staff development. We offer morning, afternoon sessions and full days extended hours.  Pollok children’s centre provides a service for children between the ages of 0-5 years. We accommodate 72 children at each daily session and children attend either on a part time or extended day basis.  Our Aim of Pollok Children’s Centre is to provide:   * Play is for play it’s so much fun * O is for openminded resources to investigate and explore * L is for Learning to last a lifetime * O is for opportunities to grow, develop and achieve * K is for kindness we show to each other * C is for connections with children and Communities * C is for creative, confident children   We use the Curriculum for excellence guidelines – **Early Level outcomes and experiences** when working with children 3-5 years and our own establishment planning pack when planning for the children’s learning and involvement.  For children under three we use **Pre-Birth to Three**: **Positive outcomes for Scotland’s Children and Families** (Scottish Government) and Glasgow City Council planning guidelines.  The Education Scotland document **Realising the Ambition, Being Me,** is also used to support provision for all children and families.  In order to ensure we are delivering high quality learning experiences we also use a document called **How Good** **is Our Early Learning and Childcare?** Which helps us to self-evaluate and monitor the impact on children’slearning.Throughout Pollok Children’s Centre there are displays of children’s learning and the curriculum in action. We deliver the curriculum through play and active learning using children’s own experiences and interests as our starting point.  The learning experiences offered to children promote curiosity, investigation and discovery skills. Babies to 5-year-olds are given opportunities to explore and problem solve in an environment that provides open ended resources to encourage these skills to development.  We recognise that parents/carers are the prime educators of the child and provide for continuity of learning experiences between the home, the community and other establishments, therefore, it is important we work together to ensure that their children have the best early years’ experience. | |
| **Action/Approach Taken**  *Detail the actions taken in order to develop and embed family learning into your establishment. What was done and how? What staff and partners were involved? What were the costs and timescales?* | |
| A family learning lead within the centre (Anne McNair) attended some CPD webinars provided by Glasgow’s Improvement Challenge Family Learning Team to find out more about parental engagement and family learning. Subsequently, Anne made contact with her local family learning officer to further discuss taking forward parental engagement and family learning interventions with the families using the centre’s service.  Discussion with the family learning officer and staff within the centre led to the first steps to parental engagement being coffee mornings open to all parents. Anne was able to use 3 different communication ways to engage parents, such as posters and flyers but it was the face to face at the nursery door that gave Anne the chance to really talk to parents about how much the nursery wanted them to come in and take part in the nursery community and learn about the learning and teaching approaches to support their children. Anne was also able to notice from the face-to-face chats that not all parents were comfortable with written word, and chatting was a much better way to build interest in participating in nursery life.  From the chats and feedback from parents, Anne and some parents produced a mind-map which demonstrated that parents who had responded would be interested in participating in activities within the nursery setting. The initial activities that were set up included Stay and Play sessions, a lending library, word book day celebration and care home visits to the residential care home next door were some of the first activities to be rolled out. Parents also wanted a children’s learning journal as an alternative to See-Saw. | |
| **Developments:**  *What new projects or initiative did you establish from initially engaging with parents?* | |
| From the information gleaned from parents and staff the following family learning initiatives have been offered to and enjoyed by families:   * Successful funding applications * Stay and Play * Initial inter-generational visits to the neighbouring residential care home * Lending library and world book day celebration * Oral health information session * Cooking class with SWAMP (South West Arts and Music Programme) a voluntary sector partner organisation working in the local area, providing multiple services to local families * Gardening group within the grounds of the centre * Information sessions for parents from the Single Support team including advice and information on benefits, finances, energy costs and managing on a budget * Funding secured to buy-in family cooking equipment * Tesco funding to buy-in non-perishable items required for on-site family cooking sessions * Family Play with Glasgow Life * Everywhere Bear Transition to P1 * Funding to buy waterproof clothing for children to use the nursery’s outdoor space | |
| **Obstacles and Issues** *What obstacles or difficulties, if any, did you have to overcome?* | |
| Despite a great deal of positive communication in different formats and chatting to parents at the nursery drop-off and pick-up times, many parents continue not to participate in the family learning activities on offer. One way the nursery would like to overcome this is to embed a “whole nursery approach” ensuring that all staff are clear on family learning priorities, know that it is important to understand each of their families’ contexts and possible barriers to engagement, and to know and be fully aware of the impacts and outcomes of home-nursery partnerships, and that those partnerships are key to ensuring better outcomes for children. It is also hoped that parents who have participated in family learning programmes and activities might act as a conduit and become advocates for the nursery going forward with new parents engaging as time goes on. | |
| **Results and Impact** *Outline the results of the actions taken. What impact and positive changes occurred (include impacts on parents, children and staff), were there any unforeseen benefits?* | |
| **Tea and Chat Sessions:** Parents started to feel comfortable coming into the nursery and started to chat about things they would like to see happening in the nursery. Parents started to take ownership of making changes, which started a parent-led gardening group.  **Stay and Play:** Was offered out to families and are ongoing. There is an AM and PM session on two different days to accommodate times and days that suit parents. Families work with the key worker and follow their child in their learning and development activities around the nursery, supporting parents to become well versed in early learning approaches to literacy and numeracy learning that are supporting their child’s development.  **World Book Day:** The literacy champion within the nursery linked with Waterstone’s Book Store at Silverburn where parents were able to exchange their World Book Day £1 tokens within the store to buy a book to take home. Parents and then grandparents were invited in to share a story with the children. This was a short 20-minute session that made it very accessible for families to commit to taking part as many families often say they don’t have time or have other commitments at home or in the community. Due to the cost of the school day, world book day was left open for parents and grandparents to bring something from home that was linked to the story book. This approach was used as not all parents are able financially to buy dressing-up costumes. Some families brought in soft toys and super-hero figures already at home. The children loved having their families in the nursery and reading their favourite stories there and at home. During the same week all children had an opportunity to take part in a Bookbug session with the nursery’s literacy champion.  **Cooking at SWAMP (south west arts and music project):** NHS Five-to-Thrive linked in with Anne at the nursery and offered training for staff to deliver cooking classes. Parents were also offered the opportunity to take part in some cooking and food demonstration classes based in SWAMP. 4 parents took up the opportunity and went along to SWAMP for 4 weeks. Parents loved making soup, pasta Bolognese, vegetarian pasta and a korma curry. This supported parents to think more about cooking from scratch, following a recipe, keeping to a budget and using fresh and nutritious vegetables in their home cooking.  A room with a door and lights  AI-generated content may be incorrect.**Family Support and Information Sessions (oral health and family finances)** NHS professionals have been invited into the nursery to meet with parents. Parents learned the importance of healthy teeth and gums, how to brush properly, how fluoride varnish helps children’s teeth and how to make sure you have registered with a A group of people sitting in a circle  AI-generated content may be incorrect.dentist. Parents met 1:1 with NHS financial support and information services and learned about benefits they could claim, different thresholds to getting benefits and how to get help with issues with energy costs and were able to chat through any financial difficulties in confidence and be referred on to other agencies where appropriate.  **CPD for Staff:** Staff at the nursery have attended the Family Learning Team Webinars on “Principles, Practices and Engagement in Family Learning” and “Planning, Evidencing and Evaluating Family Learning”….the family learning lead said “staff confidence has grown and knowledge and awareness of the importance of parental engagement and family learning has helped staff to understand why parents and other family members can play a crucial role in the day to day life of the nursery”. The family learning lead also regularly attends the Early Years Family Learning Action Group (a network for practitioners supported and facilitated by Glasgow’s Improvement Challenge Family Learning Team) to maintain and grow her knowledge around best practice, networking and opportunities and resources for programmes. She also continues to have regular contact with her family learning officer for direct support as appropriate.  **Cooking Class:** After the SWAMP cooking class, funding was obtained from Sanctuary Housing and cookers, tables and cooking utensils were purchased for the sole use of parents in the nursery. So far parents have made soup, pasts dishes, curries and banana bread. The cooking class is ongoing and are now an embedded part of the family learning calendar.  **Gardening Group:**  Parents and grandparents have been tidying up and clearing the garden space the nursery has with a view to using the space for children to have fun and enjoy outdoor learning. The Scottish weather has been a consideration and parents were worried about their children going out in the cold and rain. However, funding from SWAMP will now provide waterproof clothing for the children in the nursery to start to get outside and play in the nursery’s outdoor garden, despite the weather, especially as the parents and grandparents are continuing to work hard to make the space even more pleasant and safe for the children to use – “There is a growing body of research that shows that young children’s access to nature and outdoor play is positively associated with improved self-esteem, physical health, development of language skills and disposition to learning” (Davy, 2009).  **Family Play:** Through linking in with the family learning officer, parents are now enjoying Wee Play sessions on a Tuesday morning. The sessions support families to play and have fun together and helps children to learn some early physical literacy such as standing on one leg, throwing and catching a ball, following instructions, taking part in team games and using fine motor skills. The facilitators from Glasgow Life Early Years Children and Families team are also introducing STEAM activities such as “voice activated noise vibrations making pipe cleaners move on clingfilm!!” and “magic water tattoos”. The children and their families love to take part in the singing too and children love to be asked what their favourite song is and sing along with their adult. | |
| **Next Steps** *Briefly describe the future of the project or related initiatives. For example, how you intend to maintain the momentum of the action you have taken so far, how you will monitor the success of your actions, or how you intend to build on/create new initiatives.* | |
| **Everywhere Bear:** In April – June 2025 the family learning officer will link in with the nursery family learning lead to roll out Everywhere Bear which is the evidence-based family transitions to primary one programme. Each family who has a pre-schooler starting primary one in August 2025 will receive the Everywhere Bear book and will take part in the nursery in activities that are linked to the story of the Everywhere Bear. Parents will be given resources and activities to take home to support children’s “top up” learning in the home environment, helping their children to become more school-ready.  **Inter-generational Visits:**  There is a residential care home next door to the nursery and links are being made for children and their families to start to visit the home. The hoped for outcomes are that children develop positive relationships that support language development and confidence and gain a sense of social responsibility along with an understanding of the difference between the generations.  **Glasgow University “Yes to Veg! “ Project:** “Yes to Veg!” is a project created by [Nourish Scotland](https://nourishscotland.org/) which uses a food systems approach to facilitate access to vegetables in nursery age children funded by the University of Glasgow in collaboration with Nourish Scotland and NHS Health Improvement [Thrive Under 5 project](https://www.nhsggc.scot/your-health/public-health-nutrition/thrive-under-5/) in Glasgow. The nursery is keen to take part in this project as they continue to want to provide a range of health and wellbeing opportunities for their families that will link in with the family gardening group which has longer-term aims of growing their own vegetables and using the food for the ongoing cooking classes. | |
| **Impact Statements:** | |
| **Impact Statements from Parents Attending the Cooking Class:**   * I never cooked from scratch but I’m doing it all the time now, buying veg and making the recipes * Love the smell of soup in my house * I took back home what I learned in the cooking class, I never cooked from scratch. It’s so easy, it’s good for you, you can freeze it * Recipes were simple, not too many ingredients * We made banana bread and spaghetti Bolognese * We got to know each other and felt comfortable with each other, we didn’t really mix before * My confidence has got better, everything has changed for me, I didn’t come into the nursery before, now I really enjoy it   A group of women in a kitchenTwo women standing next to each other  A couple of women in a kitchen  **Impact Statements from Staff:**   * I have had so much information and good ideas from our family learning officer…….everyone should get in touch as a first step to find out more about family learning. I feel more confident to engage parents. People would be surprised by how much they can take family learning forward with some initial support and information | |