

# EVALUATION REPORT

## PEDESTRIAN'S LITTLE MUSIC STARS

For:  pedestrian

By: Laura Callaghan Grooms & Russ Callaghan Grooms of

Hand on Heart Arts Ltd

Date: May 2015 - January 2016



## HAND ON HEART ARTS LTD - EVALUATION REPORT, LITTLE MUSIC STARS

1. Summary	3
2. General methodology	4
3. Key Project Outputs	6
4. Locality Profile	8
5. Interim Findings	12
6. Project outcomes compared to project aims	15
8. Conclusion	27
With thanks to	28
APPENDIX 1	29



LOTTERY FUNDED



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



# 1. SUMMARY

## Introduction

Little Music Stars is a Youth Music funded programme partnering Pedestrian with Children's Centres in the Wellingborough area of Northamptonshire, creating digital music making opportunities for very young vulnerable children and their parents. The programme is supported by Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Trust, alongside Wellingborough Rotary Club.

The overall aim of Pedestrian's Little Music Stars project is to improve the social and emotional development of very young vulnerable children through shared digital music making experiences with young parents; enabling better engagement with and contribution to their child's development and learning.

The delivery of this project focuses on Wellingborough, in Northamptonshire. The National Campaign to End Child Poverty highlights three local geographical areas, with over 1 in 5 children below the poverty line; Wellingborough is one. Data from the Northamptonshire County Council Education Authority states that 45% of children in Wellingborough attend a school in the top quartile of deprivation.

Pedestrian consulted with Action for Children who manage the local Children's Centres, and have opted to focus the Little Music Stars activity around Oakway Children's Centre and the Hemmingwell Estate.

## Project Aims

The project aims to:

- Improve the quality and standards of music delivery for children and young people
- Embed learning and effective practice in host and partner organisations and share practice beyond the project
- Improve the quality and accessibility of digital music making activities for vulnerable young children
- Heighten the awareness and benefits of participation in digital music making activity for vulnerable young children and their families with wider Children's Centres and commissioners of activity
- Use music making as an engagement tool for improving social and emotional development of vulnerable young children, particularly their ability to manage feelings, personal behaviours, and build relationships

## Overview of findings

Pedestrian's Little Music Stars programme evidences a lot of strong practice in Early Years music education and explores a lot of exciting new territory in the area of Early Years and digital music engagement. Pedestrian has achieved many of its intended outcomes through the delivery of this programme in Wellingborough, and is on a continued journey to further embed learning across a wider network. The parental testimonial below highlights the relationship between a mother and daughter through Little Music Stars and gives a snapshot of the impact of the programme:

*"When I first started attending the group my daughter was still very young and not very mobile. She sat in one place and I handed her various objects to play with. As we attended more sessions she seemed to be comfortable with the environment and would make it obvious what she was interested in. As her mobility improved she started making her own way to the objects she wanted to play with and also became more vocal in her appreciation. When she liked the sounds, she would bounce up and down and grin from ear to ear. I also think the sessions did help our relationship. I suffered from post-natal depression for many months and found it difficult to bond with my daughter. I think the sessions were really nice as it was a small and very friendly group. I liked the 'hello' song as it gave lots of opportunity to smile at your own child and make movements as well as introducing the rest of the group (in lots of parent/toddler groups no one knows the other participants names). The sessions were very varied with free play giving lots of time to interact with your own child and the stories and songs where the group worked together. I was more relaxed as my daughter was obviously having a good time... It was so incredibly varied for a relatively short session - songs/stories/craft/freeplay/structured play/standard instruments/DIY instruments/items from home/the ipad... I haven't been to any*

---

*other groups offering such a variety... It was great fun to see everyday objects used or turned into instruments as well as making interesting structures with metal tape and crocodile clips and carrots among other things."* **Parent**

## 2. GENERAL METHODOLOGY

This evaluation report was written by Hand on Heart Arts Ltd on behalf of Pedestrian, following a mixed methodology approach of face-to-face consultation, desk based research, surveys, Children Centre data, and observations. The report was written by working alongside Pedestrian from May 2015 to December 2015. A final phase is planned for January to March 2016. The mixed methodology included:

- Face to face and phone consultation
- Research
- Surveys
- Children Centre data
- Observations (all Observation Notes can be found in Appendix 1)

### Research

Hand on Heart Arts also undertook relevant research that assisted with contextualising the programme, evaluation, and future development / recommendations. In the following areas:

- Local data
- Early Years
- Early Years & Music Making
- Early Years & Digital technology

### Impact Surveys and Qualitative Questionnaires

Music Leaders and Carers were asked to fill in an Impact Survey for each participating child before starting the programme and at the end of the programme.

Music Leaders and Carers were also be asked to write (or verbalise) a Qualitative Questionnaire, to reflect on the programme in general, as well as being given the option to feedback informal testimonials of their Little Music Stars experience. This was completed mid-way through the programme and at the end of the programme. An overview of the surveys, qualitative questionnaires and other forms used can be found below. These surveys were designed in line with Youth Music's Quality Framework.

#### IMPACT SURVEY:

Carer (Pre programme)

Carer (Post programme)

Music Leader (Pre programme - after first session - and Post Programme)

#### ETHICAL EVALUATION & PHOTOGRAPHY/FILM CONSENT

Carer / Music Leader / Children's Centre staff

#### CHILDREN'S CENTRE DATA

Pre programme

Post programme

#### QUALITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRES

Carer (Mid programme)

Carer (Post programme)

Music Leader (Mid programme)

Music Leader (Post programme)



## Parent / Carer and Music Leader Surveys

Combined with qualitative feedback from parents / carers and Music Leaders, and observations, to assess outcomes of the programme we asked carers to feedback (as a survey or phone call) on their child's development in the areas of:

- Language and Early Literacy Skills
- Music Skills
- Maths Skills
- Social Skills and Emotional Development
- Family Involvement

Carers were asked to rate the progress of their child in the above areas\*, using the following rating scale:

- 1 - Not Yet - The child has not yet successfully performed the skill
- 2 - Rarely - The child is beginning to perform limited aspects of the skill independently
- 3 - Sometimes - The child can perform some aspects of the skill, but has not yet mastered it
- 4 - Yes - The child demonstrates mastery of the skill

(\*based on the Kindermusik International Assessment monitoring forms)

Carers were asked to fill in a survey at the beginning of their involvement in Little Music Stars sessions, and at the end of the programme. In total, 25 carers filled out surveys (at the beginning of sessions, end of sessions, or both). Of these 25, 4 carers filled in two forms: one at the beginning and one at the end of the programme.

## Observations

A range of Pedestrian Little Music Stars activities have been observed by Russ Callaghan Grooms and Laura Callaghan Grooms of Hand on Heart Arts Ltd and Bob Christer of Pedestrian. A representative sample of Pedestrian Little Music Stars activities included observations at:

Oakway Children's Centre  
Oakway Infant School  
Off Oakway  
Wellingborough  
NN8 4SD

Croyland Nursery School and Children's Centre  
Croyland Road  
Wellingborough  
Northants  
NN8 2AX

## Data Collection from Children's Centres

Data from every Children's Centre involved in this programme was requested in advance of the programme starting, and at the end of the programme. Returned data has been used in the report where appropriate. Pedestrian and Children's Centres tracked this information such as weekly attendances at each Children's Centre (carer and child information) and fed back to Hand on Heart Arts Ltd.

*NB: Throughout this report where children and their parent / carer are referred to by name, names will be changed to protect identities (other than in circumstances where appropriate permissions have been sought).*

*We have required carers and leaders to give photography and ethical evaluation consent at the beginning of the evaluation process.*

---

### 3. KEY PROJECT OUTPUTS

- ▶ The programme took place in the Wellingborough area of Northamptonshire.
- ▶ The programme was delivered in 4 Children's Centres in this area, and reached 27 children, plus their parents. The aim of the programme was to reach 30 children, plus their parents / carers.
- ▶ The project ran from May 2015 to December 2015, with core delivery taking place in July to December 2015.



▶ The delivery phase of the project will be followed by an 'Advocate and Connect' phase, to disseminate evaluation findings (from January 2016).

▶ The following Children's Centres hosted Little Music Stars sessions as a part of this programme:

- Oakway Children's Centre
- Croyland Nursery School and Children's Centre
- Penrith Drive Children's Centre
- Hope Centre

▶ REACH FIGURES - Oakway Children's Centre - 15 attendees

▶ REACH FIGURES - Croyland Nursery School and Children's Centre - 8 attendees

▶ REACH FIGURES - Penrith Drive Children's Centre - 11 attendees

▶ REACH FIGURES - Hope Centre - 4 attendees

▶ REACH FIGURES - 3 families attended two Centres. 2 families attended three Centres.

▶ The programme reached 25 children from

Wellingborough, one from Earls Barton and one from Mawsley.

▶ The ethnicity of the parents / carers and children involved was as follows:

- White British - 16 parents, 14 children
  - Other White background - 2 parents, 2 children
  - White and Black African - 1 child
  - White and Asian - 1 parent, 2 children
  - Other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background - 1 parent, 1 child
  - Other ethnic group - 1 parent, 1 child
-

- ▶ The age range of parents / carers was from 17 - 36 years old: 10 parents were aged 30 - 36, 9 parents were aged 20 - 29, and 1 parent was below 20 years old
- ▶ The age range of children was from 1 month to 5 years old: 10 children were aged 0 - 1 years, 7 children were aged 1 - 2 years, 6 children were aged 2 - 3 years and 4 children were aged 3 - 5 years old.
- ▶ 6 parents brought 2 children to sessions (siblings), the rest of the parents brought just one child
- ▶ All but two of the parents / carers were female



## 4. LOCALITY PROFILE

The Little Music Stars programme was set up in Children's Centres in areas of highest need in Northampton, as determined by Pedestrian through consultation with partners. The key factor of this need, include areas of income deprivation, high levels of English as an Additional Language (EAL), and Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEN/D). In terms of targeting delivery, Pedestrian has shown that aiming its programme at the area of Wellingborough in Northamptonshire has ensured the greatest potential to reach those are vulnerable or living in challenging circumstances.

### Locality information

Northamptonshire resides in the East Midlands of the United Kingdom, which has a number of concentrated urban populations and large rural areas. The ancient market town (and borough) of Wellingborough in Northamptonshire (in which all of the Little Music Stars activity took place) was granted its market charter in 1201 and the town was noted for its wells and it is believed that Charles I and Queen Henrietta Maria came to Wellingborough to take the waters<sup>1</sup>. Wellingborough is situated 11 miles from the county town of Northampton.

The Partnership has identified four Priorities for 2013-2015 and this plan sets out how we will contribute to achieving improved outcomes in each of these areas.

1. All children grow up in a safe environment.
2. All children and young people achieve their best in education, are ready for work and have skills for life.
3. All children grow up healthy, and have improved life chances.
4. Children who are looked after achieve at least as good outcomes as those who are not.

### Northamptonshire Specific Data & Reports

- Around 3% of children and young people have been identified as "children in need" (includes those who face complex family difficulties, are in need of protection or have disabilities) and with domestic violence as one of the most common presenting factors in all ages.<sup>2</sup>
- Although there is a smaller proportion of children in poverty compared to the national average, there are areas of the county that have a noticeably higher proportion of children in poverty around the urban centres of Northampton, Wellingborough, Kettering, Corby, Rushden, Irthlingborough and Daventry.<sup>3</sup>
- Approximately 1 in 6 children in the county live in poverty and there are increasing numbers of children needing to come into local authority care.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.touruk.co.uk/northamptonshire/wellingborough.htm> - Accessed 7.7.2015

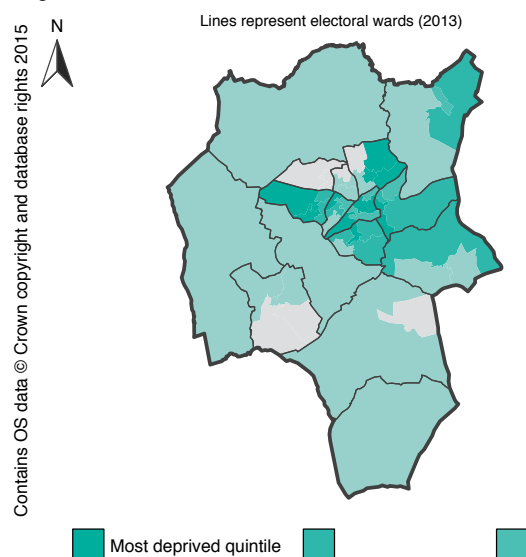
<sup>2</sup> Northamptonshire Children and Young People's Plan Final Version 2013-2015 - Accessed 7.7.2015

<sup>3</sup> "The State of Our Region 2012", The Mighty Creatives, April 2012: Accessed 7.7.2015 <http://www.themightycreatives.com/uploads/pages-attachments/65/20130219214146-FM%20The%20State%20of%20our%20Region%20Report%202012.pdf>

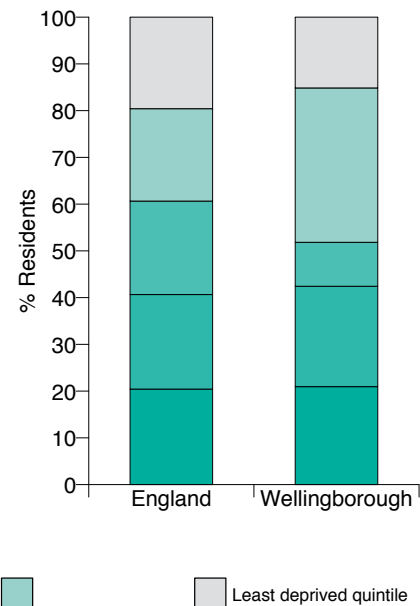
<sup>4</sup> Northamptonshire Children and Young People's Plan Final Version 2013-2015 - Accessed 7.7.2015

- 10% of the children and young people population come from a black and minority ethnic background<sup>5</sup>
- The county has one of the fastest growing populations in the country. With approximately 10,000 more people, (including 1,000 children and young people), living in Northamptonshire each year.<sup>6</sup>
- “Compared to regional and national figures we have more young people who are admitted to hospital for mental health problems and self harming than other areas and this is an area of increasing concern. The emotional and mental health of children significantly impacts on all aspects of their life and it can be influenced from birth. Research shows that babies who receive affection and nurturing from their parents have the best chance of healthy development and that a child's relationship with a consistent, caring adult in the early years is associated later in life with better academic grades, healthier behaviours, more positive peer interactions, and an increased ability to cope with stress.”<sup>7</sup>

The map shows differences in deprivation in this area based on national comparisons, using quintiles (fifths) of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010, shown by lower super output area. The darkest coloured areas are some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in England.



This chart shows the percentage of the population who live in areas at each level of deprivation.



- ‘Our initial focus will be on increasing and improving the timeliness and the quality of Early Help in each priority area. Evidence shows us that what a child experiences during the early years lays the foundation for the whole of their life and this makes a compelling case for prioritising investment in this area and we shall be mindful of this in our planning and investment. The outcomes for children who are looked after are

<sup>5</sup> “The State of Our Region 2012”, The Mighty Creatives, April 2012: Accessed 7.7.2015 <http://www.themightycreatives.com/uploads/pages-attachments/65/20130219214146-FM%20The%20State%20of%20our%20Region%20Report%202012.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> “The State of Our Region 2012”, The Mighty Creatives, April 2012: Accessed 7.7.2015 <http://www.themightycreatives.com/uploads/pages-attachments/65/20130219214146-FM%20The%20State%20of%20our%20Region%20Report%202012.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Northamptonshire Children and Young People's Plan Final Version 2013-2015 - Accessed 7.7.2015

also of particular concern and in the outcomes set out below we have reflected our ambition to improve outcomes for this vulnerable group by listing them separately.’<sup>8</sup>

- See 2013-2015 Northamptonshire Children & Young People’s Partnership plan priorities diagram (below)<sup>9</sup>

### Wellingborough Specific Data & Reports<sup>10</sup>:

- Deprivation is higher than the UK average and about 19.8% (3,100) children live in poverty.
- There are inequalities within Wellingborough by gender, level of deprivation and ethnicity. For example, women in the least deprived areas of Wellingborough can expect to live over 8 years longer than women in the most deprived areas.
- Child health - Levels of GCSE attainment, breastfeeding and smoking at time of delivery are worse than the England average. Children’s health in Wellingborough appears generally worse than the England average. Levels of smoking in pregnancy, breast feeding initiation, physically active children and teenage pregnancy appear worse than the average for England.
- Adult health - Estimated levels of adult excess weight are worse than the England average. The rate of long term unemployment is worse than average. The rate of violent crime is better than average.
- Local priorities - Local priorities include promoting breastfeeding, reducing childhood obesity, and reducing hospital admissions for injuries in children. The Northamptonshire Local Area Agreement has prioritised tackling physical activity, road injuries and deaths, child obesity, substance misuse, teenage pregnancy, smoking, and all age, all cause mortality.
- Of the 33,152 total housing stock in 2010, 5964 (18%) is counted as ‘Social Housing’. However, if Intermediate and Shared Ownership are taken away from this, the number of socially rented falls to 5754 or 17.4%.

### Wellingborough by Ward Analysis:

*The Index of Multiple Deprivation combines a number of indicators, chosen to cover a range of economic, social and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for each small area in England. This allows each area to be ranked relative to one another according to their level of deprivation. The Indices of Deprivation have been produced at Lower Super Output Area level, of which there are 32,482 in the country. The area with a rank of 1 is the most deprived and 32,482 the least deprived.*<sup>11</sup>

Little Music Stars sessions were hosted in four Children’s Centres in the following wards (see over page).

---

<sup>8</sup> Northamptonshire Children and Young People’s Plan Final Version 2013-2015 - Accessed 7.7.2015

<sup>9</sup> Northamptonshire Children and Young People’s Plan Final Version 2013-2015 - Accessed 7.7.2015

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.wellingborough.gov.uk/downloads/file/4906/statistics\\_demographics\\_for\\_the\\_borough\\_of\\_wellingborough](http://www.wellingborough.gov.uk/downloads/file/4906/statistics_demographics_for_the_borough_of_wellingborough) (2010/11) - accessed 7.7.2015

<sup>11</sup> <http://maps.northamptonshire.gov.uk> - Accessed 7.7.2015

---



Oakway Children's Centre, NN8 4SD - Hemmingwell Ward

Index of Multiple Deprivation

Index (2010): 39.18  
 Rank (out of 32482) (2010): 4814  
 Index (2007): 36.54  
 Rank (out of 32482) (2007): 5737  
 Index (2004): 35.76  
 Rank (out of 32482) (2004): 5939

ACORN (Demographic Classification)

Category: Comfortably Off  
 Group: Secure Families  
 Type: Established home owning workers

Penrith Drive Children's Centre, NN8 3XL - Queensway Ward

Index of Multiple Deprivation

Index (2010): 28.53  
 Rank (out of 32482) (2010): 8890  
 Index (2007): 24.87  
 Rank (out of 32482) (2007): 10680  
 Index (2004): 24.97  
 Rank (out of 32482) (2004): 10614

ACORN (Demographic Classification)

Category: Hard-Pressed  
 Group: Struggling Families  
 Type: Families and single parents, semis and terraces

Croyland Nursery School and Children's Centre, NN8 2AX - Swanspool Ward

Index of Multiple Deprivation

Index (2010): 20.78  
 Rank (out of 32482) (2010): 13413  
 Index (2007): 18.58  
 Rank (out of 32482) (2007): 15041  
 Index (2004): 17.14  
 Rank (out of 32482) (2004): 16157

ACORN (Demographic Classification)

Category: Hard-Pressed  
 Group: Burdened Singles  
 Type: Single elderly people, council flats

Hope Centre, NN8 4TU - Hemmingwell Ward

Index of Multiple Deprivation

Index (2010): 39.18  
 Rank (out of 32482) (2010): 4814  
 Index (2007): 36.54  
 Rank (out of 32482) (2007): 5737  
 Index (2004): 35.76  
 Rank (out of 32482) (2004): 5939

ACORN (Demographic Classification)

Category: Hard-Pressed  
 Group: Burdened Singles  
 Type: Families and single parents, council flats



## 5. INTERIM FINDINGS

As part of the evaluation process, Hand on Heart Arts submitted an interim report to Pedestrian midway through project delivery which reflected on the strengths and areas of best practices, as well as noting those areas which needed development.

### Interim Report - Strengths & Areas of Best Practice

The Little Music Stars programme strengths (at point of interim report) can be summarised against the intended outcomes of the project and as the following key headlines:

#### Activity:

- ☒ Exploratory play and learning through free and spontaneous play
- ☒ Good use of playful, multi-sensory experiences
- ☒ Accessible and safe spaces for learning and creating
- ☒ Range of digital and stimulating analogue instruments on offer
- ☒ Parents given the opportunity to lead and influence content of the session
- ☒ All participants included throughout sessions

#### Progression:

- ☒ Clear lesson planning with intended learning outcomes for most sessions observed
- ☒ Positive relationship building with parents
- ☒ Good opportunities for children/babies to socialise
- ☒ Lessons are musically (and digitally/creatively) progressive, referencing and building on prior learning from past sessions
- ☒ Accessibility to digital technologies by parents
- ☒ Most sessions have clear musical and social outcomes

*"This is more  
interactive and  
structured than Stay  
and Play; it's really  
good" PARENT*

*"I do love these  
sessions"  
PARENT*



## For Development

The Little Music Stars programme also had some key areas for development (at point of interim report):

### Activity:

- ☐ Recommendation made: Activities need to be communicated clearly throughout the session, primarily musically led rather than verbally or technology led

**Action taken: Session plans developed to include clear use of songs to signal session structure.**

- ☐ Recommendation made: To be more targeted toward families from the local area and estate, and the target demographic of the project

**Action taken: Lessons log updated with recommendations for future marketing to include closer working with local agencies alongside use of networks (such as MumsNet) and social media.**

- ☐ Recommendation made: Meet the needs of all participants through differentiated activities for different age ranges - age determines the level of engagement with some of the technology on offer

**Action taken: Session plans and activity tailored to ensure differentiation of age ranges and ability are taken into consideration.**

### Progression:

- ☐ Recommendation made: Practitioners to share learning with others to build communities of practice that encourage others to improve their practice, specifically in early years digital music making

**Action taken: Recommendation added to lessons log to inform future activity in this area.**

- ☐ Recommendation made: Music Technology - Through continued experimentation and exploration, digital music making needs refining to sustain thinking across the Music Leader team and to share learning with parents

**Action taken: Music Leaders further developed and refined planning around use of digital technology, including plans to ease the use of digital technology outside of sessions for parents.**

- ☐ Recommendation made: Music Technology - Parents to be more supported in involvement in their child's digital music learning beyond direct contact sessions

**Action taken: Music leaders developing information packs for parents around a range of digital technologies and how they can be used in the home alongside more traditional early year activities.**

- ☐ Recommendation made: Music Technology - encourage collaboration to enhance social interactions through technology / Apps

**Action taken: Music leaders developed session planning to include more collaborative uses of digital technology including 'Pass the ipad' activity.**

### Early years practitioners:

- ☐ Recommendation made: To be open to continuing professional development opportunities to improve practice and learn new skills specifically in the area of early years development and emotional milestones of 0-5 year olds
-

***Action taken: Music leaders undertook specific CPD around the Early Years Framework, directly applying their learning at the session planning stages.***

- ☐ Recommendation made: To be open to CPD opportunities to observe and shadow other early years music specialists

***Action taken: Music leaders and Project Manager explored opportunities for shadowing of other Early Years music delivery.***

---

## 6. PROJECT OUTCOMES COMPARED TO PROJECT AIMS

The Little Music Stars programme achieved many of its intended goals. Under each proposed project aim, we have addressed the extent to which it has been achieved, including recommendations for future work and developments.

**AIM 1: Improve the quality and standards of music delivery for children and young people**

**AIM 2: Embed learning and effective practice in host and partner organisations and share practice beyond the project**

**AIM 3: Improve the quality and accessibility of digital music making activities for vulnerable young children**

**AIM 4: Heighten the awareness and benefits of participation in digital music making activity for vulnerable young children and their families with wider Children's Centres and commissioners of activity**

**AIM 5: Use music making as an engagement tool for improving social and emotional development of vulnerable young children, particularly their ability to manage feelings, personal behaviours, and build relationships**



For the purposes of this evaluation, we have focused on Aims 1, 3 and 5. Aims 2 and 4 will be addressed through Pedestrian's 'Advocate and Connect' phase of this project, during which this project evaluation report and other evidence will be utilised to advocate for the project to commissioners and funders by disseminating the information across existing networks and platforms.

---

## **AIM 1: IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF MUSIC DELIVERY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **STATUS: ACHIEVED**

Little Music Stars has contributed significantly toward raising the quality and standards of music delivery for babies, children and their families in the Northampton area of Wellingborough. In the first instance, parental feedback suggests that no other similar activity exists for them to participate in, with some carers driving from outside of Wellingborough to access the programme.

In summary, Little Music Stars has improved the quality and standards of music delivery for babies, children and their carers, by

- (1) providing a firm framework within which to work, which is in line with the statutory Early Years framework,
- (2) by imaginatively planning and delivering sessions which are multi-sensory, integrated creative experiences,
- (3) by offering Continued Professional Development as a part of the programme,
- (4) by involving parents and carers in the development and content of sessions, and
- (5) by responding positively and productively to external recommendations.

### **AIM 1 Best Practice:**

#### **A solid framework**

Observations of the Little Music Stars programme, together with survey data, show that Little Music Stars sessions upheld the core guiding quality principles of practices in early years settings. Within the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, the overarching principles are as follows:

- 1) *to keep children safe and promote their welfare.*
- 2) *every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;*
- 3) *children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;*
- 4) *children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and*
- 5) *children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.*

Little Music Stars addressed the overarching principles above in the ways noted below (as observed and evidenced through survey data). Each point below is numbered in relation to the principles listed above:

- 1) *Positive communication & liaison between music leaders and parents / carers to ensure safe working environment. Environments were accessible and inclusive. Music Leaders are experienced and educated within different areas of music / early years provision.*
-

- 2) *Music leaders demonstrated a knowledge of and sensitivity to participants abilities, expectations, and personalities, leading to a positive musical learning environment all babies and children. The sessions had clear intended social and musical outcomes through which to foster resilience and confidence of participants.*
- 3) *Little Music Stars sessions were structured and imaginatively planned to allow successful group work and individual working in a musical and creative setting*
- 4) *Digital music technology in combination with traditional musical instruments, storytelling, songs and rhymes, were utilised as enablers for musical and social engagement for vulnerable families*
- 5) *All participants were included throughout the sessions and musical learning was suitably differentiated for the babies and toddlers at most points*



### **AIM 1 Best Practice:**

#### **Free, Messy, Exploratory, Multi-sensory Play: High-quality planning and delivery**

*"in Swahili one word - 'ngomo' - is used to cover three aspects of music, that is, song, dance and play. Observations of any young children will reveal these same activities coming together – movement, dance, song, and drama – in their play. Rarely do they use just one of these modes. Indeed music-making is most successful when children have flexible integrated creative experiences (Lonie 2010)."*<sup>12</sup>

Each Little Music Stars session immersed children, babies, parents, carers and Leaders into a multi-sensory environment, which offered free play, singing, dancing, movement, playing of traditional musical instruments (such as drums and shakers), playing of digital musical instruments (such as through Apps on an iPad, or through the Ototo), rhymes, storytelling, and tactile props. In this environment, there was a good balance of adult-led learning, collaborative engagement as a whole group, as well as time for supervised, unstructured play and individual exploration. This approach has ensured that participating babies and children can begin to learn how to work collaboratively, to share, to respond to the behaviour of their peers, to engage in areas that interest them the most, and to promote their creativity and imagination.

<sup>12</sup> <http://tactyc.org.uk/pdfs/Reflection-Fawcett.pdf> Accessed 31.7.2015

## AIM 1 Best Practice:

### Training and Continued Professional Development (CPD)

A key part of the programme was the accompanying training programme for Music Leaders. There were some skills gaps evident at the very beginning of the Little Music Stars programme (some Music Leaders lacked specific knowledge of Early Years settings and some within digital technology, for example): Pedestrian built in tailored training delivery around the needs of the Music Leaders which has certainly gone some way to narrowing the skills deficit gap, as is evident in improvements made in delivery to date. One Music Leader, for example, stated that she received “Training on using iPads, Apps, digital technology, using Ototo”. Planning a bespoke Music Leader training programme for Little Music Stars will ensure that it continues to flourish, develop and grow, and retain a high quality standard of music delivery.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

- Future CPD should contain Early Years training and Music & Sound in Early Years settings, in order to build and develop practitioners’ confidence in the area of Early Years music making

## AIM 1 Best Practice:

### Parental Involvement

*“Parents are children’s first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child’s development and learning.” Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage (Copyright © QCA 2000)”<sup>13</sup>*

As noted in our Interim Report, a key strength of the Little Music Stars programme is its involvement of parents / carers: they are given the opportunity to lead and influence content of the session. Whilst more could be done to encourage parents / carers to take the musical and digital learning home (for instance, developing a “toolkit” to include a list of free online resources such as Apps, songs, and other ideas for games and activities), when in the sessions themselves parents / carers are encouraged to come up with song ideas, to sing along with their children, and to actively participate in the session, led supportively by the Music Leaders continual encouragement. One Music Leader states that “Many parents who were quite reserved at first now seem more confident both with the activities and with chatting with other parents. Some parents do seem more involved and are inclined now to engage with their activities with their children rather than sitting a little bit away from them.” And when asked if the way in which parents interact with their children changed, one Music Leader responded that some parents are “much more hands on, using apps together and performing the actions to songs and rhymes.”

Impact surveys from Music Leaders and parents / carers indicate that the parents are very involved in their child’s development outside of Little Music Stars sessions. Parents told us that “Everyday we learn ABCs, counting and listening to Mozart, plus different rhymes”, and that they are involved in their child’s learning through “Singing and signing”, “Learning through play, library”, “Children’s centres, playing at home, rhyme time at library” and “James and I attend weekly rhyme time, sing lots, enjoy making lots of noise and lots of outings”. These findings show that parents attending sessions are very engaged with their child’s play and learning, and attend other complementary music, rhyme and singing based sessions too.

---

<sup>13</sup> Reflect and review: the arts and creativity in early years - Arts Council England - [http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/documents/publications/reflectandreview\\_php688OSj.pdf](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/documents/publications/reflectandreview_php688OSj.pdf) Accessed 31.7.2015



RECOMMENDATION:

- Consider commissioning or developing a set of take-home (either physical or online) resources or toolkit for parents to continue learning and engaging at home. This will boost development in between direct Little Music Stars sessions

**AIM 1 Best Practice:****Music Skill Development**

Parents / carers and Music Leaders were asked to fill in a pre-programme and post-programme survey which gathered data and information on child development in the following skill areas:

- Language and Early Literacy Skills
- Music Skills
- Maths Skills
- Social Skills & Emotional Development
- Family Involvement

In the area of 'Music Skills' Music Leaders were asked to rate whether the baby or child...

- Actively participates in making music (vocally or with instruments)
- Shows the ability to respond to musical beat and/or match it
- Responds physically or verbally to musical changes (e.g. tempo - fast / slow)

In each and every category, the Music Leaders noted a marked improvement for 100% of the babies and children evaluated. This clearly evidences that Little Music Stars has contributed toward the early musical development of young children and babies. To add to this, when asked to comment on their child's overall development after the completion of the programme, some parents noted that they saw general improvements in the music skills of their child and that "In general she is enjoying music more" [Parent]. One parent also told us that their "Son has started to clap on cue which he didn't do previously" [Parent].

### **AIM 3: IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF DIGITAL MUSIC MAKING ACTIVITIES FOR VULNERABLE YOUNG CHILDREN**

**STATUS: ACHIEVED****AIM 3 Best Practice:****Bridging the gap between 'digital native' and 'digital immigrant'**

*"I've yet to have a student tell me they can't use technology in class because they haven't had professional development on it."*<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Sean Junkins, <http://ictevangelist.com/its-not-the-kids-its-the-adults-working-with-technology-in-the-classroom/>

---

*“As we become increasingly more reliant and absorbed in technology, it is no surprise that today’s children have become avid users as well. Laptops are being developed for children as young as five. Smart phones are now in the hands of children as young as ten. The Kaiser Family Foundation found in their 2010 survey on Media use in 8-18 year olds that this group spends an average of ten hours and forty-five minutes per day exposed to media.”<sup>15</sup>*

Those generally born after 1980 are referred to as ‘digital natives’ and those born prior to this are considered ‘digital immigrants’ [Prensky] in his 2001 article entitled Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants). The power to shape the world through digital interactions is and will become more essential for future generations.

The digital divide [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital\\_divide](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_divide) has been directly linked to income and social mobility as well as learning. ‘Without these abilities, they risk being unable to manage their health, trapped in a cycle of long-term unemployment, or left to social exclusion and loneliness.’<sup>16</sup>

Parents who accessed the Little Music Stars sessions seemed well aware of the need to introduce their children to technology as quickly as possible, but also admit that their own digital learning is important. The format of the sessions allowed children and parents to learn about technology in a safe environment, to be able to ask questions and explore with their children, gaining confidence in using apps and technology in the home. Whilst all parents interviewed used technology at home in the shape of tablets, smartphones, smart TV’s and laptops, many had not considered the potential to engage creatively and musically with their children. During interviews with the parents, the digital element featured heavily in their responses:

- Q: What are the two things that you will keep in this programme? A: ‘Definitely the iPads and the digital element. The more they do in the early days on technology, the better they will be at it later on’ [Parent]
- ‘My daughter loved the app and iPad. Really interesting’ [Parent]
- “Over the sessions, parents have become less wary of digital technology and with more access have told us that they have started using it more at home using Android / iPad Apps etc” [Music Leader]

#### RECOMMENDATION:

The majority of applied technology we observed originated from specialist music sessions usually offered to teenagers, where iPads are being used to great effect in music making. A number of parents raised the issue of not being able to afford or access Apple or Android technology; we feel that it is vital that the digital explorations continue at home and become an integrated part of both the child and parents digital experience. We recommend continuing to build parental confidence as well as child’s development with technology by encouraging parents to explore uses of existing home technology. By directing parents towards digital resources accessible through existing home technology such as online games and apps and actively allow parents to bring technology into the sessions, children and



<sup>15</sup> Determining the Effects of Technology on Children - Kristina E. Hatch, 2011 <http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1212&context=srhonorsprog> Accessed 31.7.2015

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/jul/08/digital-exclusion-not-insurmountable-problem-public-sector> Accessed 4.01.2016



parents will start to take ownership over their own digital journey. We also recommend looking at other Android 'child-friendly' tablets such as <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Fire-Edition-Display-Wi-Fi-Kid-Proof/dp/B00V9852B4> and musical 'toys' available from specialist shops such as the Early Learning Centre as these may provide just a much stimulation at this stage at a vastly reduced cost.

### AIM 3 Best Practice:

#### An integrated approach; embedding technology within a solid foundation of traditional practice

**'It's good to have children interested in music at a young age. Technology is innovative and in line with what children want these days, even though it might give their grandparents a headache!' [Parent]**

"Children today can use technology as a supplement with traditional education, not as a replacement. The proper mix of these two elements can give children all the benefits of a modern education without requiring much training for children. When using modern technology, children pick it up at amazing speeds." <sup>17</sup>

At the start of the project, our observations led us to conclude that the technological skills were being adapted from those used with much older children and teenagers and that the apps being used weren't always working for the age range. Often, initial ideas and technology are researched and tested away from the target audience so this wasn't of huge concern. As the sessions developed, the music leaders found ways to incorporate age appropriate technology with traditional elements of Early Years sessions, giving the technology greater context within songs, stories and movement. Without this context, the sometimes random elements of music making on iPads would have been in danger of being cast adrift into the abstract, something that would not have been understood by a large majority of the targeted age ranges.

By embedding the technology alongside pots and pans, coloured fabric and transitional songs, the technology ceased to be a stand-alone element of the programme but became, as with social culture, one element of interaction inside many others. The music leaders were able to establish relationships with parents and children through traditional methods first before introducing the technology half way through the session. This enabled a structure to be established through song, movement and story-telling before moving onto joint method delivery and later into 'free play' sections of the sessions.

Parents commented on the inclusion of digital technology in Little Music Stars sessions:

- *'Keep the iPads! (kids loved them)'* [Parent]
- *'iPads are very good. She can touch them and make different sounds. Mum has a phone at home and has downloaded an app but daughter doesn't touch it as meaningfully as iPad because of the size'* [Parent]

---

<sup>17</sup> <http://earlyarts.co.uk/transforming-teaching-and-learning-with-music-technology/> Technology and Digital Media in the Early Years: Tools for Teaching and Learning - Chip Donohue

- *'Children think about using instruments and apps in different ways which helps the imagination'* [Parent]
- *We are all in the same position so it is nice to try something new and meet new people* [Parent]

Parents also commented that they benefited from the integrated nature and the structure of sessions:

- *"I like the structure: Intro, hello and goodbye songs, story time, tablet time and free play. The children knew what to expect each time."* [Parent]

#### RECOMMENDATION:

- Whilst the programme is fundamentally about technology within Early Years sessions, allowing technology to strengthen already existing effective methods of engagement leads to more robust results. Technology does have the power to lead, and as the child develops this is something that will become evident but we recommend at this level that the technology be seamlessly integrated into the sessions so that it takes equal importance alongside music, singing, movement, rhymes and storytelling.

### **AIM 3 Best Practice:**

#### **Thoughtful Digital**

Carlyn Joy Bracken explored technology in the early years in her publication<sup>18</sup>, and an overview of Bracken's findings can be found below, together with reflections on Little Music Stars around her findings.

*1. School and classroom set up are important*

*2. When integrating technology, educators should ensure that their chosen technology use aligns with their pedagogical beliefs*

*3. Technology can be a social tool*

*4. All apps are not created equal*

*Bracken, 2015*

#### 'School and classroom set up are important'

1. The rooms used were chosen because of their locations and links to Children's Centres in the target areas, however in some cases, the rooms weren't felt to be ideal by the parents and featured in elements that they would change about the sessions:
- "Room size was quite small depending on the numbers but I understand that pre-booking takes away the drop-in element" [Parent]
  - "Small room at Oakway" [Parent]

---

<sup>18</sup> 'Using Technology as a Social Tool in Preschool: Matching Philosophy With Application' Carlyn Joy Bracken ([http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/vop/VOP\\_Summer\\_2015\\_technology.pdf](http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/vop/VOP_Summer_2015_technology.pdf) Accessed 31.7.2015)

---

Travel also became an issue for some parents, as did the perceived lack of advertising to local communities:

- “For me the place as it was, was too far to walk for us” [Parent]
- “Wasn’t until I put kids in for nursery that I found out about it. Some parents don’t go out so will find it hard to find out about stuff. Facebook group could be good.” [Parent]

## 2. When integrating technology, educators should ensure that their chosen technology use aligns with their pedagogical beliefs

In terms of a pedagogical approach, both music leaders were very clear as to the role of the sessions and their individual areas of expertise. Both music leaders focused equally on the parents as well as the children, knowing that it would be the parents who would take forward the digital element in the home.

- ‘They [parents] are generally much more confident is using the i-pad apps, suggesting songs and asking questions related to music’ [Music Leader]
- ‘For some [parents, they are], much more hands on, using apps together and performing the actions to songs and rhymes together’ [Music Leader]

## 3. Technology can be a social tool

Many parents praised the sessions for being something different; a place for their children to socialise and do something else in the week. Parents also felt supported and enjoyed seeing each other each week.

- “Yes, I think its nice to have time with them rather than just being in the house. Nice to have a variety in the week too from going to the park or the museum. The music session is quite refreshing” [Parent]
- “Yes. It is good to meet new people and the music element really attracts the children/ engages them” [Parent]
- “We have had many positive comments on how welcoming parents/carers have found the sessions” [Music Leader]

## 4. All apps are not created equal

The use of apps was praised by parents and every parent unequivocally agreed that the iPads were a huge part of why they attended. There were some issues with the iPads that perhaps had not presented themselves during the research and planning phase; children were prone to switching off the iPad apps by hitting the home button and some apps would play abstractly for 20 minutes or more, causing a disconnect with the sound and the activity, but these were reflected on and dealt with as the programme developed. New apps were also researched along the way as knowledge of the target group developed.

---

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- It is clear that a great deal of time and effort was invested into looking at iPad apps, the musical activities and the building of new song structures with the Ototo in order to introduce an interactive digital element into the sessions. To this end, the technology served its purpose to introduce digital music making to a wider audience; however, in future sessions we would have liked to have seen a wider consideration of the term 'digital', rather than just limiting the digital element to technologies such as iPads and Ototo which already feature prominently in youth music making sessions.
  - There are a wide number of manufacturers (the already mentioned Kindle for Kids and so on) where a huge amount of research and development has gone into their product launch and these 'kid' friendly tablets could have broken down financial barriers to engagement. There are also many simple toys available that use digital technology to appeal to pre-school learners.
  - Extending the Ototo theme, there are also other touch board products such as Raspberry PI and Arduino which could have been explored to provide bespoke solutions. Simple circuit boards wired so that lights come on or sounds are played when buttons are pressed could have appealed to parents wanting to teach their children about technology in the home. Digital technology extends far beyond a screen and an app, as the Ototo demonstrates so we would recommend a regular 're-defining' of the term and a review of emerging technologies. Kickstarter sites such as <https://www.indiegogo.com/partners/GoCrowdfundBritain> can provide inspiration and ideas for buying into new technologies that may not been seen on the High Street, and whilst this may impact on the accessibility of specific technologies for parents, it can be used as a practical way to keep music leaders inspired as to the capabilities of digital technology.
  - According to the 'Emotional Milestones in the Early Years' from birth - 5 years by Northamptonshire Children and Young People's Partnership flyer (found at a Oakway Children's Centre), "Young children [aged 3 to 5] are literal and magical in their thinking. They believe that wishes do come true so it is important to use words carefully when speaking about important things". This thinking extends to the literal belief in the power of the Ototo; while it is endearing to see a toddler or child pressing a banana and wishing it to make a noise at home, it is worth being clear about the understanding behind this for the child - it could potentially be confusing and therefore upsetting and destabilising for the child, and this needs due consideration.
  - The 'Emotional Milestones in the Early Years' from birth - 5 years by Northamptonshire Children and Young People's Partnership flyer informs local parents that Older Babies (aged 7 to 18th months) "gain pleasure from exploring their immediate world around them by touching, holding and putting things in their mouth": it is crucial to oversee cables and safe usage of equipment. We observed many occasions where this did happen.
-

## **AIM 5: USE MUSIC MAKING AS AN ENGAGEMENT TOOL FOR IMPROVING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF VULNERABLE YOUNG CHILDREN, PARTICULARLY THEIR ABILITY TO MANAGE FEELINGS, PERSONAL BEHAVIOURS, AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS**

**STATUS: ACHIEVED**

### **AIM 5 Best Practice:**

#### **Social Skills and Emotional Development**

Parents / carers and Music Leaders were asked to fill in a pre-programme and post-programme survey which gathered data and information on child development in the area of 'Social Skills & Emotional Development'.

Parents / carers were asked to rate whether the baby or child...

- a) Shows self control (e.g. can stop when asked to)
- b) Successfully takes part in group activity
- c) Responds appropriately to the behaviour of others in the group
- d) Adjusts well to new activities or new people

In each category, the parents / carers noted an improvement in social skills and emotional development for 50% of the babies and children evaluated. The remaining 50% of children and babies evaluated remained the same.

When asked to comment about their child's social skills and emotional development, most parents / carers didn't necessarily recognise the broad category of 'social / emotional development'; they acknowledged that the sessions did contribute toward general confidence, responsiveness, and general social engagement of their baby or child.

For example, when asked "Have you noticed any changes in your child's development (e.g. behaviour, physical movement, speech & language, social skills, emotional skills?)" one parent commented that "She has definitely had a confident boost, from timid and shy, to being the star of the show. She likes to do little shows for family and likes to be the teacher and leader and is involved in a ballet group and has joined a new panto." Another parent commented "Not specifically. He's changing all the time anyway. My son has just turned one and has taken an interest in shaking and banging pots and pans."

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- We recommend that Pedestrian continues to track social and emotional developments of participants as longer-term data here would be more conclusive and useful to evidence improvements

### **AIM 5 Best Practice:**

#### **General Improvements of Young Children and Babies**

"Why is music in the early years seen to be so important? A great deal of research has been carried out with regards to musical activity and the brain and it is now evident that music-making, singing and dancing aids the general development and well-being of our very young. Regular musical activity both child-led and adult-led can help support children's acquisition of language and communication. It can aid their personal and social development, their physical agility, well-being, imagination and creativity. Musical activities may also help

---

towards an understanding of maths, allow us to make sense of our world and possibly aid literacy skills.”<sup>19</sup>  
Linda Bance

Parents / carers and Music Leaders were asked to fill in a pre-programme and post-programme survey which gathered data and information on child development in the following skill areas:

- Language and Early Literacy Skills
- Music Skills
- Maths Skills
- Social Skills & Emotional Development
- Family Involvement

Across all of the skill areas, parents / carers noted an improvement in 75% of participating babies and children. The Music Leaders noted an improvement of 90% of participating babies and children, with 10% of the other children staying the same. None of the Music Leaders and parents / carers noted regression in the babies and children.

Music Leaders and parents / carers indicated overall improvements by the majority of babies and children in the areas of language development, early literacy, music skills, maths skills, social skills, emotional development and family involvement.

---

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.sound-connections.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Music-in-the-Early-Years-Who-What-Why.pdf> Accessed 31.7.2015

---

## 8. CONCLUSION

The history of the music industry is inevitably also the story of the development of technology. From the player piano to the vinyl disc, from reel-to-reel tape to the cassette, from the CD to the digital download, these formats and devices changed not only the way music was consumed, but the very way artists created it. **Edgar Bronfman, Jr.**

Throughout the observations and evaluation, it has been clear that engagement in technology from an early age through the Little Stars Music project has been prized by parents and children alike. We consider that all of the direct delivery aims of the programme have been achieved and that the session content has developed significantly since its inception. Music Leaders report feeling much more confident in engaging with a mixture of technology and traditional methods of music making. Parents have reported increased engagement with technology at home and have been inspired to return to the sessions by the exclusive draw of the technology. All parents, when asked to describe the project in three words give positive feedback to the nature of the project and the technology:



Parents described their children's enjoyment at returning to the sessions, suggesting that sessions "help engage her with music. She always laughs and smiles and seems to be enjoying it. We take songs and techniques and use them at home" and that children have "made new friends and [are] happy and confident."

Overall, parents felt that advertising and additional outreach could have been improved; this would have positively impacted attendance numbers and engagement with local families. The nature of hard to reach and vulnerable communities is that they are less likely to look for opportunities and to seek out creative ways of child development so additional efforts must be made to approach families in a way that they will find accessible.

There is no doubt of the value and potential of Little Stars Music Programme, both musically and socially, therefore with greater support to recruit and engage families, the programme could go on to be of significant benefit to vulnerable communities. In bridging the digital divide that is facing those most in need of connecting with technology-based learning, communication and sharing, communities could improve the quality and standards of music delivery for children and young people, improve the quality and accessibility of digital music making activities for vulnerable young children and use music making as an engagement tool for improving social and emotional development of vulnerable young children, particularly their ability to manage feelings, personal behaviours, and build relationships.

## WITH THANKS TO

### **Hand on Heart Arts would like to thank....**

The parents, carers, babies and toddlers of Northampton that contributed to our consultation

Pedestrian

Bob Christer

---



# APPENDIX 1

## **LITTLE MUSIC STARS - Overview of observation on 4th August 2015**

**Date: 4th August 2015**

**Venue: Croyland Children's Centre, Wellingborough, Northampton**

**Times: 10 - 11.30am**

**Observers: LCG / RCG**

**No in group: 2 female parents; 2 male toddlers; 1 female baby; 1 female Family Support Worker; 1 female Children's Centre worker**

**Music Leaders: Dean & Lindsey**

Strengths:

- Exploratory play and learning through free and spontaneous play
- Positive relationship building with parents, toward viewing parents as partners in learning
- Range of digital and stimulating analogue instruments
- Both families enjoyed the sessions and stayed throughout
- Intuitive responses by toddlers to the iPad Apps
- Positivity and friendliness of Music Leaders
- Accessible and safe space
- Very supportive and engaged Children's Centre staff
- Children were allowed to engage on their own terms
- Good opportunity for children to socialise (we were told by children that their children are quite isolated at home without other children of the same age)
- We were told by parents that their children don't have access to technology at home, so being able to access technology was seen as an incentive of joining these sessions by both parents and Family Support Workers

For development:

Technology:

- Home button and menu bars on iPads can be locked to prevent child from closing down apps when they are trying to use it (to avoid frustrated disengagement when the App stops)
  - Music Leaders highlighted to parents that the Apps were 'free' but parents reported that they are unable to afford Apple hardware - consider use of Android technology (parents we spoke to had Android phones which could be used to take the music making home with them, which would be free to them and would assist musical development in between sessions)
  - Consider use of smaller localised speaker set ups, as children were confused about where the sound was coming from (studio speaker set-up on a table), and therefore confused about whether it was them controlling the sound or not
  - Keys - if using two apps together, consider matching the tonality to reduce musical dissonances
  - Pulse - Apps were largely randomly generated synth sounds with no discernible pitch, rhythm or pulse. One child in particular wanted to move to the sound, but no pulse was detectable unless the Music Leader generated it.
  - Children lacked any knowledge of how to stop sound generation of Apps, so did not appear to be in control of their sound environment
  - Music Leader allowed App to run for 20 minutes (without stopping) long after the child had musically disengaged. When the Music Leader changed the App, the child re-engaged within a couple of minutes.
  - Clearly, extensive thought and research has gone into which Apps to use, but very little recognisable planning appears to have gone into how to apply those Apps in a structured and musical way with tangible learning outcomes
  - There is a potential for individual iPads to make for quite an isolating social experience for individual children - and only one child can use the iPad at any time (which was fine as there were only two toddlers, but this could become problematic if there were more children)
  - Set up time - allow for more time to set everything up, before the start time of the session. Set-up only seemed to be completed by 10.20am (whereas a parent was waiting from 9.40am)
-

- Ipad - the visual feedback can be interfered with by glare / reflection from windows and overhead lights - consider lowering blinds / drawing curtains / dimming lights where possible to exploit full sensory feedback of technology

#### Music Making:

- Music Leaders reported very little or no specialist training in the field of early years music-making
- Minimal use of group musical repertoire - only two songs were sung in the whole session, with minimal inclusion of music / movement / narrative / storytelling
- Whilst relationship building between Music Leader and parents is to be applauded and is critical to confidence building for family engagement in sessions, this appeared to dominate the session over musical interactions and content - consider specific parts of the session for chatting, refreshments, form-filling, etc
- Scheme of work / Lesson Plans - Music Leaders reported that a plan was in place but it wasn't clear as an observer what this was and how it was working toward the programme objectives: a Lesson Plan and scheme of work for the programme could clarify learning for child and parent, and to make the assessment of impact more robust
- Structure - there were no discernible start or end points in the session, making it unclear to parents / children about when / how they were meant to be engaging at any given time (e.g. no clear musical or verbal cues to indicate different structural moments in the session, and when going to different activities or interactions)

#### Advertising:

- Doesn't indicate that the sessions are free
  - Use of language ('create your own beats, produce your own tracks') suggests a much older / teen target audience
  - Little indication as to how / why the sessions are important to early years development and therefore appealing to parents
-

## **LITTLE MUSIC STARS - Overview of observation on 8th September 2015**

**Date: 8th September 2015**

**Venue: Oakway Children's Centre, Wellingborough, Northampton**

**Times: 10 - 11.00am**

**Observers: LCG / RCG**

**No in group: 3 female parents; 2 male toddlers; 1 female baby**

**Music Leaders: Gra & Lindsey**

Strengths:

- Clear start and finish of activities during at least the first half of the session
- Consistent theme throughout the session
- Meet & Greet - Started with a hello song to help initiate the beginning of the session, with British Sign Language (BSL)
- Strong session plan, with the following component parts:
  - Overall theme
  - Intended learning outcomes
  - Resources needed
  - Activity with targeted learning outcomes
- Recognisable songs around a theme of 'The Sea' e.g. 'Once I caught a fish alive' / 'Row your boat' / 'five little speckled frogs' and storytelling of the books around the theme; 'Secret Seahorse' and 'Smiley Shark'
- Creative matching of musical material with resources and stories (e.g. bottles of water - tactile objects)
- Integration of 'favourite songs' as requested of the parents
- The technology was introduced mid way through the session once relationships had been established
- Lots of stimulating musical instruments around for toddlers and baby to explore
- Good use of multi-sensory experiences (in storytelling, for example, where shimmering, shiny cloth is used for the mermaids hair put on each participants' head, initiated by the music leader)
- Introduction to numeracy, through storytelling 'Secret Seahorse' and 'Five little speckled frogs'
- Tech-based progress shown in the session, as Gra noticed that the iPad work wasn't engaging enough, and decided to change to a rhythmic App instead and then Lindsey suggested a singing based motif around the App
- 'Pass The iPad' song - using an App on the iPad to make music together as a group (song pre-written by music leaders for this structural moment in the session) to the lyrics 'Pass the iPad, along, we will add to our song'
- Baby disco at the end of the session was created by the 'Pass the iPad' song
- Vast improvements from the previous session observed in August by HoHA
- Some positive testimonials from parents at the end of the session: "This is more interactive and structured than Stay and Play; it's really good" & "I do love these sessions"

For development:

Music Making:

- Encourage parents to on occasion engage babies/toddlers on their laps, with co-movement experienced between parent and child simultaneously
  - The broad age range of participants needs further thought as development levels are vastly different
  - Encourage some songs standing, some sitting, some moving - it's a long time to just sit on the floor for parent, for child and for music leaders!
  - Music first: there is currently lots of talking and explanation given to the parents, but try to direct most communication to the children and the parents will pick it up quickly - address children musically for a quicker, more effective response that creates more session flow and achieves intended outcomes more fully
  - Consider leaving more time at the end for the 'goodbye' song
-

### Technology:

- Consider using an App to create and trigger sound-effects that back up the story-telling
- Use of backing tracks from iPads for certain songs? - make use of Spotify in offline mode and share the playlist as a free online resource to parents
- The iPad work needs as much direction, structure and integration as the story-based work and singing (e.g. it's unclear when iPad session begins for which child, and when that interaction ends)
- A parent noted to the music leaders that the Apps used in the session aren't all available on Android, but are all available on Apple - for engaged parents, this could be a barrier to at-home learning
- 'Play together, please' says the parent.... the toddler didn't want to use the iPad with the baby, as the iPad is really a one-person interface and doesn't really support sharing
- Be very careful of how long the App is automatically running for as this creates an abstract soundscape that is easy to 'tune out' of if the child does not feel he/she is controlling the sounds
- 'Pass the iPad' song - is there something else that the other children can be playing at the same time, so that they don't get bored? Or a pulse set that they join in with? Or continue to sing the tune of 'Pass the iPad along' tune in 'la's' and 'ahs' throughout?
- Be careful with cables in mouths [whilst no mains powered cables were observed in mouths, we would advise leaders to avoid cables in mouths as best practice]
- Complications with Apps that need tweaking and adjusting by tutor, often with the tutor leaning over the child to interrupt 'Let me just {press that button}'
- Can home button on iPad be disabled to stop child switching off app?
- Use of launchpad app and associated sounds felt too 'teen' and completely changed the sound ecology of the session. Be aware of the effect of strong bass sounds and drum sounds on delicate ears

### Other:

- HoHA observers (and other future non-participating observers) could be introduced to the parents and children, so that they are all comfortable with us being there and know why we are observing
  - Consider filling in forms after or before the session, rather than during the music making or direct contact with toddlers as potentially interrupts the otherwise positive flow of the session
  - Different advertising, marketing and engagement with CC demographic: overhearing a discussion at the end of the session, it seems that parents are finding it difficult to find out about the sessions. One suggestion was putting the sessions on NetMums.
  - All three mothers reported coming a distance from the centre to engage with sessions, rather than being mums who lived in local proximity to the session. How does this impact on engagement with targeted areas of deprivation?
-

## **LITTLE MUSIC STARS - Overview of observation on 29th September 2015**

**Date: 29th September 2015**

**Venue: Oakway Children's Centre, Wellingborough, Northampton**

**Times: 10 - 11.00am**

**Observers: LCG**

**No in group: 3 female parents/carers (grandparent and 2 mothers); 2 female babies, 1 male toddler**

**Music Leaders: Gra & Lindsey**

Strengths:

- The theme of 'Space' was clear and strong in all of the activities, musical exercises and storytelling, and structurally held the session together well. The Music Leaders had clearly enjoyed putting the plan together for this session, which came out in the activities
- A 'noisy' version of 'Twinkle Twinkle' was encouraged by Lindsey as there was a lot of noise to work with in the room: each child was given something to hit which created a strong rhythmic exercise, engaging participants with key musical characteristics, such as pulse, dynamics, and musical structures / form
- Wind the Bobbin Up was sung quietly - very good use of loud and quiet when put together with the 'noisy' version of Twinkle Twinkle - good exploration of musical dynamics
- The session had clear musical and social outcomes
- All participants were included throughout the session
- Musical learning was suitably differentiated for the babies and the toddler
- Music Leaders demonstrated a knowledge of and sensitivity to participants abilities, expectations, and personalities
- Pass the iPad - Music Leaders accommodated and provided support for participants' creative responses. In particular, in digital musical improvisation
- 'Favourite songs' - parents were encouraged to sing their babies' favourite song, which gave parents the opportunity to lead and influence content of the session
- The lesson is musically (and digitally / creatively) progressive, referencing and building on prior learning from past sessions

For development:

Music Making:

- Words should support musical learning rather than drive it - try to use the singing voice and physical movement to help babies/toddlers/carers to internalise and understand activities
- Form filling - consider filling these in after the session, otherwise it disrupts the flow of the session
- The 'free play' was quite long in the context of the rest of the session, and at least one of the babies was beginning to get a little 'clingy' with parent and potentially a little bit bored. It was positive that it encouraged parent / child interactions, but perhaps consider having two short free play moments rather than one long one

Technology:

- In an informal chat with a mother about Apps she said that 'It's easy to get overwhelmed by the amount of Apps that are out there for children. If you google 'Apps for babies' then there are loads and it's difficult to decide which ones are good. You only want a few on your phone'. Consider providing carers with a list of preferred Apps with specific outcomes (both Android and Apple Apps)
- Can home button on iPad be disabled to stop child switching off app?

Other:

- Nan and baby (1 year old) came from 23 miles away and were not from Wellingborough
- Consider starting the sessions a little later, as it is difficult for Music Leaders to get through morning traffic in the surrounding areas and get to Northampton for 10am

Other observations:

- Tendency for babies around the age of one to want to put the iPad in their mouth!
  - The toddler grabbed the bluetooth speaker, and was told 'no, not that one' but it's difficult to explain to the toddler why he can use one digital "box" and not another for music making
  - A Polish mother from Wellingborough attended for the first time, and found out about the session by the leaflet
  - If more children were in attendance, it could become difficult to accommodate 2 year olds and 1 year olds in the same session as they need differentiated learning outcomes and interactions. E.g. the 2 year old is mobile!
-

## **LITTLE MUSIC STARS - Overview of observation on 24th November 2015**

**Date: 24th November 2015**

**Venue: Oakway Children's Centre, Wellingborough, Northampton**

**Times: 10.30 - 11.30am**

**Observers: LCG**

**No in group: 2 female parents/carers (and 2 mothers); 1 female toddler, 1 male toddler**

**Music Leaders: Gra & Lindsey**

### **Strengths:**

- The "Jungle" theme was established and maintained from the very beginning of the session - as parents and toddlers entered the room, there were toys, decoration and equipment to indicate the theme visually immediately, even before any music making or storytelling had begun
- Very engaging storytelling based on repeating jungle animal noises and repeated physical actions, which the parents were encouraged to do with their children
- Use of sensory fabric as the floor of the jungle, with 'walking fingers' - use of a rhyme, repeating the jungle animal sounds from the previous story in a new setting (word rhyme with nice use of repetition)
- Positive integration of percussion instruments (such as shakers)
- Good exploration of musical concepts, such as 'loud' vs 'quiet' and 'fast' vs 'slow'
- "Pass the iPad along" song and "Twinkle Twinkle Music Stars" song - sessions now have a connected consistency and framework, so the parents and children are becoming familiar with repertoire and expected activities
- Thoughtful and imaginative session planning: using the OTOTO as an 'ensemble jungle' with conductive strips on jungle branches and leaves, which tied neatly in with the theme
- Lindsey consistently references the theme in engaging, exciting and narrative based ways - e.g activities such as the "Walk through the jungle", and a "Tropical Storm" to end the session

### **For development:**

#### **General:**

- A lot of time passed with form filling - perhaps more could be made of the contact time, or a 'break time' could be signalled by the music leaders to make it clear what's happening to parents and children
- Having spoken to music leaders, it seems that the participation levels in groups are quite variable (reports are that around 7 parents have attended with their children at other sessions - this would have an impact on the venue, as the room will only really accommodate a small group). Each session observed by HoHA has only had 2-3 children present.

#### **Technology:**

- Parent comment about the OTOTO conductive leaf strips: "He doesn't associate that [points to leaf] with that [points to speaker], whereas with the iPad, he was looking at the speaker". Toddlers and babies don't cognitively appear to associate that they are triggering the sound via the OTOTO. One possible way forward is to perhaps consider a new and more definite sound setting such as samples of animal/jungle noises, which is very distinct from the 'Loopesque' App which is being played in the background to make it clearer when a new sound is triggered
  - Toddlers seem to associate the iPad with sound triggering through the amp, and are using it like any other musical instrument offered to them, which is very positive (e.g. Parent comment about iPad sound: "Where's that sound coming from?" and the toddler pointed to the big speaker at the end of the room). However, compared to other storytelling, song-based, or rhyme based activities, the iPad activity seems quite long and extended - consider doing shorter bursts of work using the iPad with the same kinds of narrative-based structures as the other activities, in order to retain interest and engagement of toddlers and babies
  - OTOTO Jungle leaves - whilst having an OTOTO in the session is potentially very exciting, it could be used within a context of a song, rhyme, or story, so that it is contextualised for the babies and toddlers. Currently it is a stand-alone activity, and it seems that the toddlers and babies are unclear what to do with it. Perhaps they need to be given 'permission' to trigger off the sounds within the framework of a game, song, story or activity that they take turns with (as in the 'Pass the iPad along' song).
-

## **LITTLE MUSIC STARS - Overview of observation on 8th December 2015**

*[Notes by Bob Christer (Pedestrian)]*

**Date: 24th November 2015**

**Venue: Oakway Children's Centre, Wellingborough, Northampton**

**Times: 10.30 - 11.30am**

**Observer: Bob Christer**

**No in group: 5 parents/guardians and 5 young people in attendance**

**Music Leaders: Gra & Lindsey**

Session focussed around the story 'Wobbly Pig' with activities linked to the narrative.

### **Session highlights:**

- Taking on board parent suggestions for nursery rhyme to be sung alongside a 'tower' building exercise. Adults were encouraged to build small towers from building blocks allowing children to knock them down, a parent suggested singing 'London Bridge is Falling Down' which was incorporated into the activity.
- OTOTO utilised as 'foil' puddles to step in
- Rain created from cut up foil blankets was a clear 'active' activity enjoyed by parents and children alike

### **Things to consider:**

- OTOTO can be a little unreliable with bigger pieces of 'foil' maybe needs more time to test before sessions to ensure each puddle will 'fire' when stepped in.
- OTOTO is beginning to be explored a little more by those who have attended a lot of sessions, looking to nibble on crocodile clips and grab the OTOTO itself. May need to be encased in something in future activity to reduce the likelihood of this happening. Encasing the crocodile clips in hosepipe is a great example, perhaps need to consider how we can do this on the OTOTO itself.

### **Conversations with staff afterwards:**

- Space at Oakway works perfectly for sessions
- 7 parents and young people would be the maximum to accommodate
- More choice of apps are needed for the iPad to keep variety across sessions
- A link between the digital and analogue instruments could be beneficial, e.g. a child's step on piano mat
- Utilising android hardware in sessions would be beneficial
- A music tree of dangling interactive objects would provide lots of exploratory opportunities for parents and their children
- Increased focus on marketing to local parents is needed
- Tech has been used in a way that thinks about the people in the session first, and the tech secondarily.

### **Highlights:**

- A parent engaging with the Launchpad app on iPad, went from little engagement to actively engaging others in how to use the app. Links with increasing the digital literacy of parents as much as developing the children's skills.
  - Seeing specific young people develop in terms of their ability with the tech over the course of the sessions
  - Mixing iPad and analogue instruments, how young people have approached them in the same way
-



hand  heart  
on Arts



PIONEERING  
POTENTIAL