

‘Look at me, Mum, I can do it!’

**Skipko
Our Space
A family learning project**

**Achievements, outcomes and success
factors**

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1. Introduction to SKIPPKO and 'Our Space'

Skipkko is a Leeds based arts charity which aims to transform lives and empower people through innovative creative arts projects. They bring people together in workshops and other events to work with facilitators to create pieces of group art. This process enables participants to increase their confidence, skills and sense of self worth, develop relationships and learn from each other. Over the last 23 years Skipkko has achieved positive results with people with few qualifications and little or no positive experience of learning.

In 2009, Skipkko obtained funding for 'Our Space' from the Family Learning Programme of the Big Lottery Fund. This project worked with parents and children, using creative activities to develop skills, confidence and relationships.

This report summarises the overall achievements of the project and illustrates some of the outcomes and wider benefits through case studies and quotations from families and schools. It also identifies critical factors that contributed to the success of the project.

The research used the following sources of information:

- Big Lottery Fund application form and year - end report
- Internal evaluation materials (participation data, family scrapbooks, session plans, evaluation forms, observation logs)
- Interviews with teaching and support staff and Extended Schools officers in six of the twenty schools that participated
- Informal conversations with participating families in three schools
- Participation in family learning activity sessions
- Individual interviews and group evaluation with Skipkko staff

NB. Throughout this report, personal names have been changed or abbreviated to maintain the anonymity of the families.

2. Needs and Outcomes

Skipkko researched the need for 'Our Space' project through discussion with parents and children and consultation with a wide range of organisations that work with families. A number of issues were identified that have an impact on family relationships and attitudes to learning.

Parents and carers	Children
Negative learning experiences and poor perceptions of education	Low parental support and lack of positive attachment
Low expectations and aspirations	Low confidence
Low confidence and self esteem	Behaviour issues
Poor literacy and numeracy skills	Family break up
English as an additional language	Low attainment and attendance
Poor parenting skills	Lack of play with parents
Worklessness	Need for positive role models
Instability in home life	
Mental health issues	

Five outcomes for the project were agreed with the Big Lottery Fund:

- Outcome 1. 80 families will be more interested and involved in learning through having positive experiences of shared learning
- Outcome 2. 80 families will have improved communication skills including listening, talking and writing skills
- Outcome 3. 80 families will have improved relationships through positive shared experiences and team working
- Outcome 4. 250 participants will have increased confidence and self esteem
- Outcome 5. 100 parents will learn new skills that will enable them to support their children and their children's learning

3. The Skippko approach

All the teachers and support workers that were contacted for this report commented on the high quality of the activities and the skills of the facilitators. Parents and children said that they enjoyed the activities and this is evident from the scrapbooks, photographs and observations.

3.1. Activity programme

Consultation suggested that families were unlikely to commit to a long programme of activities so several short interventions were offered:

- Our Taster – single activity session to introduce the project
- Zones - 5 week block based on Food, My People or My World
- Our Club – 3 week block of simple activities with a resource pack
- Trips – including visits to Leeds City Museum, Leeds Art Gallery and Roundhay Park

In practice, delivery was more flexible than this, particularly in Year 2. Parents, schools and facilitators all wanted longer involvement. In particular 'Our Club' was too short for effective engagement. The zone sessions were extended to 8/9 weeks and all the participants were given a resource pack. All the tasters led onto further activities and several schools did more than one block of activities. The basic model for delivery was one adult with one primary school child. Facilitators worked in pairs with groups of 4 - 8 families. The sessions took place during the school day and the children were taken out of their regular class. A crèche was provided for pre-school children in the family so that parents could give all their attention to one child.

All the participating families were invited on the trips and celebration events and encouraged to bring other family members. They played games and worked together on creative projects based on the location, for example building dens at Roundhay Park. Travel costs were paid and refreshments were provided.

3.2. Working methods

The facilitators prepared a plan which outlined activities, resources and learning outcomes for each session. They used many techniques, including painting, drawing, modelling, photography, wax resist, sewing, printing, cake decorating, paper making, collage and making musical instruments, masks, puppets and costumes. Families were introduced to exciting new materials, oil pastels, acrylics, inks, sequins, glitter, felt, foam, model eyes and good quality fabric and paper. They were also shown the potential of everyday materials such as pasta and vegetables for making pictures, prints and models. Activities built on skills learnt in the previous week, for example making costumes and collages using paper they had made or decorated. Finally, sessions were broken up with games, dancing, storytelling and refreshments.

A key element of the Skippko approach is to involve the families in making decisions about what they do. This develops communication skills, relationships and confidence, as well as creativity. They are encouraged to experiment with colour, texture and design and use their imaginations. As the programmes developed some parents and children contributed ideas for activities for the whole group, for example making and playing a giant game of snakes and ladders, creating a map of the world and organising an end of term party with food.

The facilitators learnt from their early experiences of the project and made some changes to the activities. Initially they tried to do too much in one session. They recognised that many of the children had a short concentration span and activities had to be simple. Changes included:

- Less focus on a big group piece, letting families work on smaller things to put into a larger one
- Not putting materials out until needed, e.g. scissors
- Doing some physical activities when attention was beginning to wander in the second half of the session

Within the overall approach, the facilitators devised activities that would enable families to progress towards specific project outcomes through a series of milestones. One of the head teachers who contributed to this report praised the flexibility and range of clever ideas which *'the facilitators make look effortless.'*

Outcome 1. Families will be more interested and involved in learning through having positive experiences of shared learning

Milestones

- Families will engage in shared learning over a number of weeks
- Families will use a family scrapbook to devise their own learning plans and track progress
- Information about other learning opportunities will be provided for participants e.g. through libraries, museums or local activities
- Parents will undertake or have signed up for further learning opportunities and/or volunteer opportunities

Facilitators and schools identified barriers which affected recruitment, attendance and progression onto further activities, these included:

- Fear that children would misbehave in front of others
- Anxiety that they would not be able to do the activities
- Demands of other children and family members
- Chaotic lifestyles and poor health

The first step for Skippko was to persuade parents to attend the first session and then stay on. School staff all identified factors which they believe contributed to the success of the programme. One family support worker told me that her parents were wary at first, but once they realised that they didn't need to be artistic they soon *'got stuck in'*. For her, it was important that the activities were very relaxed, and everyone could get messy. Children were allowed *'free rein to touch and feel'*, something that is not always possible with thirty children in a classroom.

Another support worker said that the arts and crafts were *'fun, not too full on, very hands on.'* Two head teachers said that parents participated because the activities were unthreatening. They did not require literacy or numeracy skills and were not expected to learn something technical or academic. One head teacher chose Skippko because parents and children worked together throughout, unlike some other family learning approaches where they worked separately. This was important as she knew that some parents would be frightened to be on their own in school without their children.

Once families were engaged and enjoying themselves, the concept of learning together was introduced explicitly with a simple learning plan in the family scrapbooks. The trips to Roundhay Park, Leeds City Museum and Leeds Art Gallery gave participants further opportunities to involve more family members and visit places that they had not been to before.

Information on learning opportunities was provided at one of the Town Hall events. Learning Partnerships, Leeds College of Art and Neighbourhood Learning had stalls with leaflets and staff who talked to parents. Skippko also relied on the school support workers to tell parents about other activities and encourage them to take part. This is an area of the programme that Skippko will strengthen in the future.

Outcome 2. Families will have improved communication skills including listening, talking and writing skills

Milestones

- Families will talk and listen to each other and express their ideas and thoughts to each other
- Families will embed literacy skills into group work and scrapbooks

The development of communication skills is a core element of the Skippko programme as these skills are an important step to achieving all the other outcomes. The facilitators used lots of different triggers to

encourage interaction and develop language skills. The themes of 'Food', 'My People' and 'My World' gave the participants a familiar starting point to talk about personal experiences and interests. For example, some groups celebrated their own families by naming and decorating paper chains and pipe cleaner models of people who were important to them. Others made tree shapes using hand shapes and vegetable prints, then added names to make a family tree.

Simple activities were used to encourage parents and children to talk to each other and exchange ideas, for example printing tee shirts. In another popular activity, one partner closed their eyes and drew a doodle, which the other partner then made into a picture of an animal.

Role play and acting were popular with some groups. The Head at St Nicholas's Primary told me that he had walked through the hall one day and seen one dad, dressed in a paper tabard and helmet that he had made with his son, acting out a sword fight. Another group performed their puppet play for the children in the nursery class and 25 families went to a performance by the Tell Tale Hearts theatre company.

Literacy skills were built into the family scrapbooks through planning and evaluation exercises, writing postcards to each other and putting captions and speech bubbles on photographs and art work (see section 3.3) This was challenging for some of the families who had low literacy levels or English as an additional language and a few gave their ideas to the facilitators to write down.

Some families wrote stories, plays and fact sheets for the models and puppets that they had made. Facilitators used a form of 'consequences' to create stories with each person adding a word or phrase in turn. They encouraged families to be imaginative, for example choosing unusual names and places to visit for their characters.

Outcome 3. Families will have improved relationships through positive shared experiences and team working

Milestones

- Families will enjoy the learning experience together
- Families will work as a team
- Families will engage in group work
- Families will explore boundaries and ideas together

Activities were devised that would encourage parents and children to work co-operatively, for example, painting portraits, making costumes and drawing round each other's hands to make the wings of a bird. Activities were phased with individual and paired work, often leading to a large scale group project, for example making a picture of 'My journey to school.' Games and dancing were introduced to give a different approach to group work. In one session, participants made balls from newspaper and played racing games with them. Parachute games were also popular. Finally, the trips gave families opportunities to work with new people in a larger group. At Roundhay Park, families made dens from canes and fabric and decorated a picnic blanket. The group that visited Leeds City Museum made a large 3D cardboard peacock. The tail was made from paper plates, which each family had decorated using ideas generated by the museum displays. In this way, the development of skills such as planning and team work was built into the programme.

All the facilitators commented that some parents in each group found it difficult to praise or encourage their child, possibly because they had had little experience of this in their own lives. Others wanted to do their own work and did not allow their child to contribute in case they spoil the results. A few parents and children were reluctant to get involved in some of the activities because they were anxious about 'making a mess.' The facilitators used several techniques to overcome these attitudes.

Facilitators took photographs which they used to suggest to parents that they could work more closely with their child. In some cases they were very directive and gave the children their own scrapbook page to work on. Other techniques such as swopping seats and separate tables were used to encourage joint work and to make sure the child could do their own pieces. The facilitators modelled sharing in their own behaviour and gave a lot of praise and encouragement to the families.

Some activities like painting with hands and feet required a lot of space and were intentionally messy. Facilitators demonstrated how to protect furniture and clothes, use equipment such as paint rollers effectively and tidy up. Sometimes, the children were put in control, for example drawing round their parent's body shapes and turning the results into costumes. One facilitator tied paint brushes onto long sticks and asked families to work in pairs to draw pictures on the floor. Both members held the stick but the child was the one who gave the directions. This role reversal was used to show parents and children that they could relate to each other in different ways. The facilitators made a point of showing that it did not matter if children went over the lines and the results were not perfect.

Facilitators demonstrated patience and other strategies for dealing with unhelpful behaviour e.g. telling a child who would not participate that he could choose the next activity if he finished the main task. They also introduced techniques such as drawing with two hands, which uses both sides of the brain and is believed to have a calming effect.

Outcome 4. Participants have increased confidence and self esteem

Milestones

- Families will recognise their progress and demonstrate pride in their achievements
- Families will articulate that they are feeling more confident

Throughout the sessions, participants were encouraged to show their work to each other and give praise and feedback. The facilitators wrote comments in the scrapbooks and took lots of photographs. These are a lasting record of achievements to reinforce the feelings of confidence, pride and ownership that develop during the programme. Some head teachers strengthened the feelings of pride and achievement by displaying art work in school, awarding certificates, visiting the activity sessions and watching play performances.

One head teacher praised the way that facilitators offered ideas and guidance but did not instruct or judge. They asked for opinions and encouraged families to develop their own ideas, stressing '*there is no right or wrong way.*' '*It is a very nurturing process with constant encouragement and lots of patience and praise.*' (Support worker)

Outcome 5. Parents will learn new skills that will enable them to support their children and their children's learning

Milestones

- Parents will learn new skills to use with their children at home
- Parents will learn more about how to support their child's learning

Each family was given instruction sheets and activity packs with craft materials to help them to use their newly acquired creative skills at home. They also had lots of ideas about creating art work with materials which could be found at home. In addition to creative skills, parents had more strategies for communicating with their children and managing challenging behaviour.

Explicitly, each block of activities included a short session on the benefits of creative activities, praise, talking and listening in developing children's skills, imagination and self-esteem.

3.3. Scrapbooks

Parents and children made a scrapbook together with photographs, quotations and samples of their work. This is a fundamental part of the Skippko process. Time was set aside in each session to add material and the finished product was taken home to keep. Families use their scrapbooks to:

- Record an individual learning plan
- Demonstrate their achievements
- Reflect on experiences together
- Recognise and value their own progress
- Articulate their feelings e.g. pride and confidence
- Plan what to do after the project

Scrapbooks are also used by the project manager to promote and explain the project to schools and by school support staff to encourage parents to participate.

The scrapbooks are a creative activity in their own right and a lasting record of a positive and enjoyable experience. One mother told me that *'Milly keeps her scrapbook in the sitting room and shows it to everyone who comes'*. One of the children was very pleased that there were extra blank pages in their scrapbook because it meant that, *'the fun doesn't have to stop!'*

One facilitator described how families were anxious to get their books back when she borrowed them to show to managers. School staff also identified the scrapbooks, as an important component of the Skippko programme. One said *'It is a unique memento.'*

3.4. Case study

This case study from one school demonstrates how the Skipkko approach works to develop both creative and interpersonal skills.

Seacroft Grange

The first block of 'Our Space' used the 'Food' theme. The families first made name badges in the shape of fruit, this had the added benefit of helping them to get to know each other. They went on to make potato heads and print faces using fruit and vegetables. Drawing with both hands at the same time was used to design a vehicle for the potato heads. This technique uses both sides of the brain and is believed to have a calming effect. More new techniques and materials were then introduced through making mosaic pictures from foam and picture frames from salt dough. Parents and children had to listen and talk to each other and make decisions about their designs.

The second block of 'Our Space' had the theme of My People/My World. The group worked together to create a large picture of the 'Walk to School.' First of all, they learnt how to make paper using lots of different materials and experimenting with colours and textures including threads, sequins and tissue paper. Each family were given a homework pack with papermaking instructions and materials. All the families then got involved in planning the group picture on large pieces of newsprint. Next, they drew their own shapes for people, trees, cars and buildings which were transferred onto plastic canvas and mounted onto watercolour paper. The final step was to decorate the shapes with the paper they had made and add extra art work to finish it off. This project developed communication, team work and negotiation skills.

The final art piece was displayed in school, reinforcing the feelings of pride and achievement.

4. Engagement with schools and families

'Our Space' targeted families in East and South East Leeds, areas of the city with some of the most disadvantaged wards and Super Output Areas, locally and nationally. Skipkko used a variety of methods to engage with schools. Some programmes were set up directly with head teachers. Others were initiated by members of the Extended Services support team, funded by national government through Education Leeds.

4.1. Recruitment and selection of families

Each school did their own recruitment of families. Four of the schools that were interviewed for this report targeted specific families and two sent out invitations to all Foundation and Key Stage 1 parents. School support workers used their own knowledge of families and talked to SENCO's, class teachers and staff responsible for child protection and attendance. The factors that influenced selection, included:

- Children with attendance or attainment issues
- Children not bringing homework in
- Child protection issues
- Quiet or shy children who were not contributing in class
- Parents who were not involved with the school at all
- Parents who did not know what to do to support their children
- Parents with limited literacy and numeracy skills
- Parents who found it difficult to manage challenging behaviour
- Parents who needed more time with a one child because they had family demands (e.g. autistic sibling, sick husband, in laws)
- Parents who did not play or communicate well with their children
- Single parents who were isolated or depressed
- English as an additional language at home
- New parents who did not know anyone in the area

4.2. Role of school support worker and other staff

Each school was asked to designate a contact for the 'Our Space' project. Teaching assistants, family support workers and Extended Schools development workers all took on this role. The main role of the contact was to recruit families and keep them engaged through regular reminders and practical support. They used their knowledge of the families to help spot issues with literacy and alert the facilitators to family concerns that they needed to be aware of. They participated in the craft activities and supported the facilitators in modelling positive behaviour e.g. sharing and praising. Finally they smoothed the way in school, dealing with health and safety issues, making drinks and bringing children from their classes. Their practical involvement helped to demonstrate to parents that this was a joint activity between the school and Skipkko.

In the first year of the project, commitment from the schools and support workers was variable. Facilitators cited a number of practical issues that affected the smooth running of the sessions:

- Lack of enthusiasm and continuity from support worker
- School did not integrate the Skipkko programme into their work
- Children attending without parents
- Children slow to arrive from class
- Sessions were shortened or cancelled because other school events were arranged at the same time
- Crèche in the same room or close by was a distraction

In the second year, participating schools were asked to fill in an application form which explained the project's aims and set out clearly what was expected from the school. The project manager said that this seemed to have reduced the number of problems.

5. Evaluation systems

Skipkko used a variety of methods to capture the views of families, facilitators and schools. The weekly session plans included reflections on how well the activities worked. Facilitators also kept a weekly log with observations about each family. At the end of each block they did an overall evaluation with a SWOT analysis and lessons learnt. This information was used to make changes to the activities and feed back learning to the whole team. Families tracked their own progress through their scrapbooks. Finally, school workers commented on the progress and achievements of parents and children during and after the project.

6. Project management

All the schools and facilitators praised the high quality of the management and communication provided by the core team at Skipkko.

6.1. Recruitment and training

A team of ten freelance workers was recruited specifically for 'Our Space'. Facilitation skills and experience of working sensitively and inclusively with very vulnerable families were as important as artistic and creative skills. The team had some facilitators who already worked for Skipkko and some who were new to the organisation. The selection process included practical exercises, running a creative session and questions about facilitation. Some facilitators had experience in relevant fields such as mental health and/or had worked in schools before.

The facilitators appreciated that they were given time for training and detailed planning before work with families began. The whole team met several times to ensure that they were well prepared. They had training on child protection and spent time discussing family learning. This enabled them to develop a common understanding and approach, share ideas and try out creative activities.

6.2. Support and communication

Skipkko held regular meetings for facilitators to share their experiences. They all found this very helpful. One facilitator commented that Skipkko was well organised and always had good materials. Another liked the clear structure and ground rules, which set out the learning outcomes. The facilitators were paid for preparation time, which made them feel *'genuinely valued'* and *'inspired freelance generosity.'*

'Support from Skipkko works well, I feel really privileged and get a bit confused now when I don't get as much support from other organisations.'

The project manager acted as a bridge with the school and was very good at building relationships. Several facilitators said that she protected them from awkward situations, e.g. making decisions about continuation sessions. One facilitator commented that she was able to *'smooth things over'* and follow up practical issues with schools. School staff praised the skills, flexibility and personal attributes of all the Skipkko staff.

'The workers always 'muck in' to move tables and do anything else that is needed to get the room ready.'

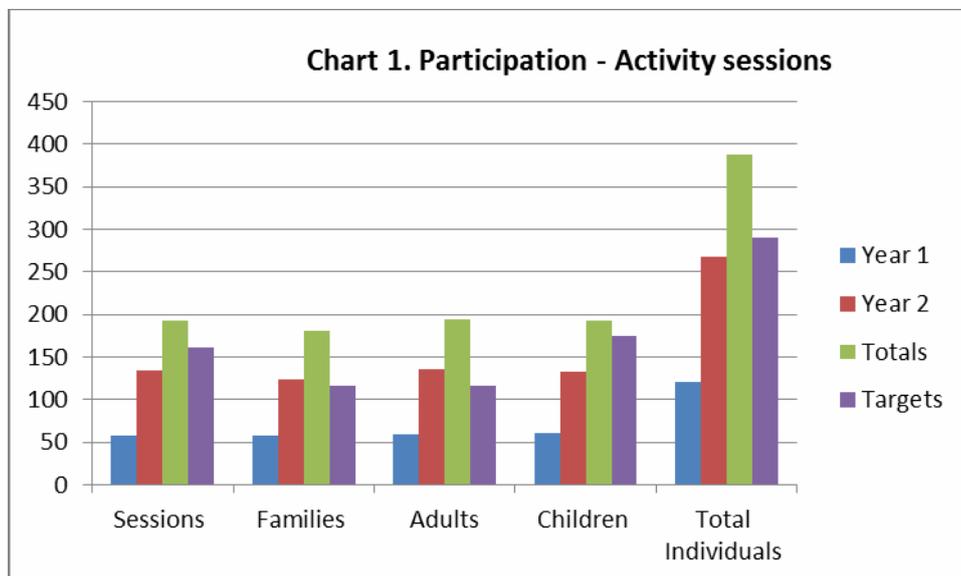
'The Arts workers are fabulous people. They give parents confidence and parents see them as friends.' (Deputy Head)

'Cath is brilliant; she is very patient and has worked out how best to contact me.'

7. Achievement – Participation

'Our Space' exceeded its targets for participation. Over the two years the Skippko team delivered 192 activity sessions which were attended by 181 families (194 adults and 193 children.) More mums than dads took part and about 10 families brought more than one child or shared the sessions with mum and dad attending on alternate weeks. A few children attended the sessions with another significant adult in their lives, including step parents, grandparents, an aunt and a sister. Over a third (37%) of the 387 participants were from BME communities.

	Year 1	Year 2	Totals	Targets
Sessions	58	134	192	161
Families	57	124	181	116
Adults	59	135	194	116
Children	61	132	193	174
Totals	120	267	387	290



Over the two years of the project, twenty different schools participated. Two schools held joint sessions in a local church hall, where the children were taken by minibus. Several schools had more than one block of activities. Five did two sets of themed zones with the same

families and five did a second set with different families. Two schools ended their programmes early because of low attendance.

The trips were popular. Overall, 161 families attended nine events and brought 226 additional family members (46 adults and 180 children) Members of 107 different families participated in at least one event and several families attended more than once.

	Families	Adults	Children	Extra Adults	Extra Children
Art Gallery Year 1	10	9	9	7	15
Museum Year 1	16	16	16	9	29
Town Hall Year 2	31	30	33	5	23
Roundhay Park	11	12	11	5	23
Town Hall	20	21	20	4	25
Museum	10	10	9	3	13
Tell Tale Heart	25	25	25	0	0
Town Hall – Final	38	37	37	13	52
Totals	161	160	160	46	180

NB. There was also a trip to the Winter Grotto, no attendance list available

8. Achievement - Outcomes

What the children said:

'Look at me, mum, I can do it!'

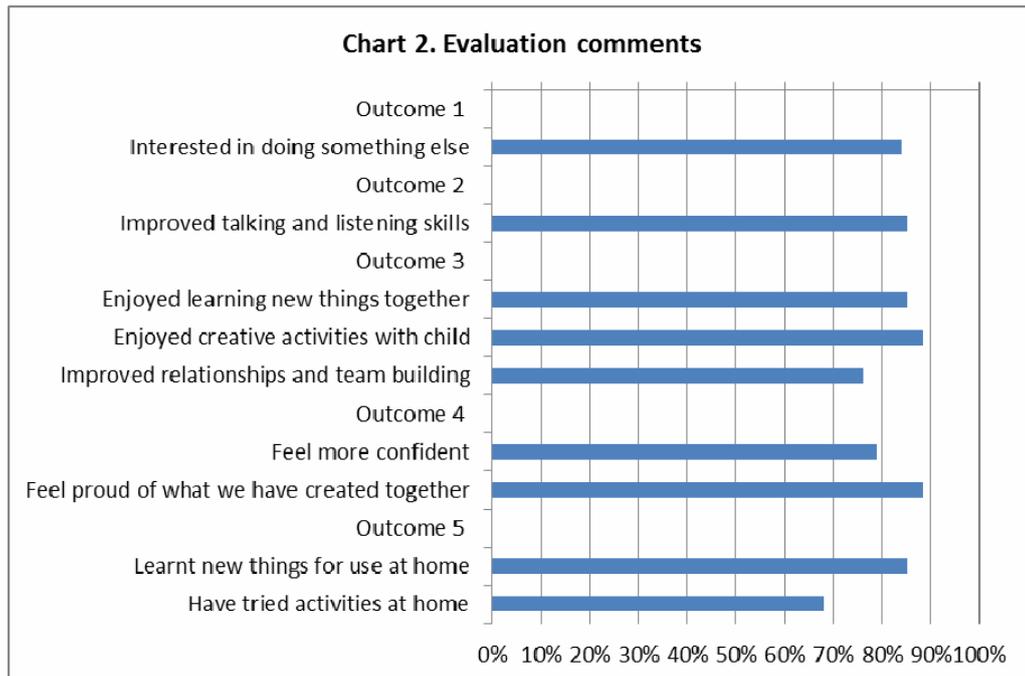
'Me and my mum are working together right now'

What the parents said:

'We thought the project was ace'

'I enjoyed everything and liked that we were involved in decisions'

Each family evaluated their experiences at the end of the programme. There were 122 completed forms and Chart 2 shows the collated responses to the standard questions that were asked. These show that the project was very successful in meeting its outcomes.



During the research for this report I asked 13 parents in 3 schools why they had participated in 'Our Space' and what they would say to encourage other parents to attend. Common themes were:

- I can have 1:1 time with my child, something I don't get at home
- Its free
- I like to see my children enjoying themselves
- All the family can go on trips

It was difficult to get the parents to talk about benefits for themselves, with some encouragement they mentioned:

- Learning things to do at home
- Meeting other parents and talking in the playground
- Discovering my own creativity

The Skippko facilitators and school support workers added an additional perspective on change and the achievement of outcomes. They all observed increased confidence and changed dynamics between parent and child as they learnt to work together co-operatively.

8.1. Specific outcomes

Conversations with parents, interviews with school staff and facilitators, evaluation forms and scrapbooks all gave vivid personal examples of learning and change that show just what the outcomes meant to individual families. A full list of comments, arranged by outcome can be found in Appendix 1.

Outcome 1. 80 families will be more interested and involved in learning through having positive experiences of shared learning

All the families (181) participated in creative activities over several weeks and produced a scrapbook together. About a third of the parents have taken up learning or volunteering roles in school or elsewhere.

Schools stressed the importance of regular attendance as an indicator of engagement. One Head commented that the fact that parents turned up every week could not be overestimated. The SENCO in this school said that she had *'never seen parents so engaged and committed.'*

Another teacher said *'We selected families with a number of issues going on. Life at home is chaotic, social services have been involved with four of the families and it is a big achievement that they attended and were able to put time aside.'*

There is some evidence that the project had an impact on children's behaviour and interest in learning. One parent told me that her son was *'better in school and more keen to be going to school.'* Several schools noticed improvements in attendance: *'E. is a poor attender. Attendance has improved since the group and mum's contact with school has improved.'* They also commented that children had become more creative and interested in doing craft activities at home (page 37.)

In some cases parent's involvement in their children's learning increased. They helped with homework and used some of the methods

they learnt through their Skippko Scrapbooks to help with learning logs. Staff reported that children were doing more homework; returning more book bags and bringing in things that they had made at home.

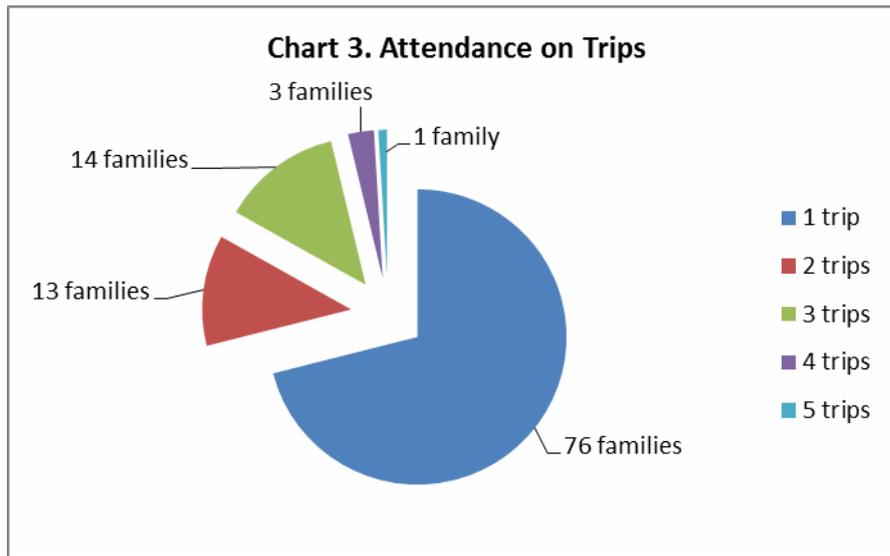
'the children have benefited because their parents had been involved in the group and are more likely to help with homework and reading together.' (reception teacher)

All the schools that I contacted told me that the Skippko interventions had helped to strengthen links between home and school and build relationships with parents that they did not usually see. *'The school was amazed that L. had attended. She has had children in the school for years, but this is the first time she has attended any in-school activities.'*

'...great opportunity for parents of new international arrivals to come into school to work alongside their children, to become more familiar with the English education system, to discuss their child's progress in an informal setting and to be introduced to adult learning opportunities.'

One teaching assistant felt that she was now seen to be more approachable and parents came and found her in school. Parents talk more to class teachers. One Deputy Head told me that before the Skippko sessions parents didn't speak to her at all, now they call her by name and laugh and joke with her. Teachers thought that children liked seeing their parents in school, talking to staff and this had helped to change their own attitudes to school and learning.

One of the milestones for this outcome was that parents would go onto other learning or volunteering opportunities. One head teacher valued the trips for *'widening horizons and showing possibilities outside school'* He said that families *'see that even very young children can get a lot out of such places.'* Altogether, 107 (60%) of the 181 families that participated in 'Our Space' went on at least one of the trips. Of these, 30 families participated in two or more activities. Chart 3 shows how many trips each family attended.



At the end of their course 84% of parents said that they planned to undertake further learning. They mentioned doing more art at home, helping with homework, literacy, numeracy, cooking and 'Mad Science':

'I would like to do more activities with my son like this one'

'I would like to do literacy and numeracy to help my child to improve his writing, speaking and counting'

In Year 2 forms were sent to all the schools to find out what had happened after 'Our Space' ended. These show that 65 of the 194 parents (33.5%) who took part did at least one further activity, including,

- Activities run by the school, e.g. art club, Story Sacks, English as a second language, cookery, supporting your child's literacy (41)
- External courses, e.g. STEPS (Steps to Excellence for Personal Progress) childcare, training for the NHS and becoming a teaching assistant (6)
- Volunteering within school and helping with trips and events (13)
- Formal role within the school as a member of parents committee, school governor or parent ambassador (11)
- Two parents won learner awards and one became chair of the parents committee

School support workers are continuing to encourage families to access other activities. This case study illustrates a range of follow up activities within one school which targeted vulnerable families.

Holy Family

The school had 1 block of 'Our Space.' They then set up an after school art club for parents and children. Three of the five 'Skippko' families attend the art club. These families also had some individual outcomes.

Family A – This family has an older boy who had just gone to High Schools and needs a lot of attention. Mum has mental health issues, and the younger child was losing attainment in school. Mum was able to give her more attention during the Skippko sessions and they worked well together. The child is now back up to her ability level. Mum volunteers in school and attends a cookery course, encouraging other mums to attend and supporting them there.

Family B – The son has very challenging behaviour and the family only speak Russian at home. During the Skippko sessions mum and son got more practice in speaking in English together. The facilitators took a lead in challenging his behaviour, e.g. offering him a free choice of activity if he finished the main task. Mum took these ideas away with her and said that. *'I have noticed that my relationship with my son became closer'*. She also uses the ideas and techniques that she learnt from Skippko with the Russian community group that she runs

Family C – These parents did not come into school at all and the son needed more support. Dad and son attended the Skippko sessions. Since the sessions ended they have made a made a costume for world book day and won. Dad has also contributed to school inspiration days, using his art skills and attends celebrations. Mum and son attend art class after school and mum and dad are realising how they can share responsibility for supporting their son.

Outcome 2. 80 families will have improved communication skills including listening, talking and writing skills

Overall, 85% of the parents said that their talking and listening skills had improved:

*'I want to learn techniques for communicating better with my son. It can take me 20 minutes to ask him to do something and he still doesn't understand so I shout. I saw him working with you for 2 hours and no one had to shout at him, I want to learn patience'.....and at the end.....
'I feel I have benefited by learning how to be patient.'*

Parents also described changes in their children, who were listening more and talking to other family members:

*'My child has benefited by talking about it to his family after the session.'
'Going out to different places like Roundhay Park, I've noticed behaviour change, T. listened much better.'
'C. has become more open, using English and talking to people.'*

One of the facilitators described the impact of the Tell Tale Hearts theatre performance on some of the audience. One very quiet child came back and animatedly told her the whole story. The folk tales featured a castle in Poland which one mother had visited. The play triggered memories of her own heritage and she brought in photographs to show everyone.

Schools also observed changes in parents and children:

*'I found the parents learnt to listen to their child's ideas better as the weeks went on.'
'Children are less shy, will engage in conversations spontaneously.'
'J. is usually a quiet member of class and in group situations and by the end he was vocally participating in the group.'*

Outcome 3. 80 families will have improved relationships through positive shared experiences and team working

It is clear that the Skippko programme was a positive experience for the families that participated; 88.5 % of parents said that they had enjoyed doing creative activities with their children and 85% said that they had enjoyed learning new things together. This is reinforced by the photographs and observations. There were lots of enthusiastic comments about having fun together, the value of one to one time and being creative (pages 40 - 43) These comments are typical of many:

'The fun I am having whilst doing this is priceless.'

'Spending one to one time is fantastic – we don't get too much of this at home.'

'Hi Papa, I've enjoyed being with you because you can make cool pictures and help me and give me ideas.'

'To H., I really love spending time with you. I really enjoy doing art and messy things. I hope we have many more happy times like this, love mummy.'

Parents also described changes in their relationship with their child, including better team work and a more relaxed approach to 'making a mess' (pages 39, 40 and 44)

'Me and L. do get along a lot more at home which is good. I didn't think L. would work with me so I'm very happy how it has helped. I think L. has really opened up to me a lot more.'

'L. has benefited a lot, we now work together and take each other's ideas and work together to make our own.'

'I have achieved to not want it all my way and to sometimes let your child take control and that things don't have to look perfect as long as the child has taken part and enjoyed themselves.'

'Learning how to do things with others and to take turns instead of having it all his way.'

'D. benefited by enjoying time with me and knowing what I can do and capable of.'

'Letting J. be creative at home, making a mess! and feeling relaxed about doing this.'

The facilitators were pleased that one child *'is not afraid to get messy now. She did not want to use her hands and feet to paint but once she tried it, she loved it!'* They saw many changes in parents, who,

- shifted from doing all the work themselves to sharing more with their child and encouraging them to contribute
- became more comfortable with each other and the tutors
- were more assertive in managing their children's behaviour
- picked up ideas from each other about parenting

Outcome 4. 250 participants will have increased confidence and self esteem

In their evaluations, 79% of parents said that they felt more confident and 88.5% said that they felt proud of what they had created together:

'I feel proud of myself and L. for making everything we did.'

They described changes in their own and their children's behaviour including making more friends:

'My child feels more confident taking part in art activities, because he always thought he couldn't do it.'

'It really has helped H. come out of his shell, he's very clingy normally, but the whole group has given him a lot of confidence.'

'I've learnt to be more creative and to experiment.'

'I have benefited to be part of learning with E. and actually coming to a group and not being so shy myself.'

'It was good experience to share with other mums. I recognise other mums now and talk to them on the road.'

The facilitators said that they had seen:

- increased confidence, for example two women who were in tears at the start because they were so anxious, gradually relaxed and did some lovely work with their children and other families
- increased assertiveness in contributing ideas for joint work group
- willingness to 'have a go' at new things
- parents encouraging each other to go to other activities
- families working together on trips

School staff gave more examples of changes in confidence and relationships:

'(Child) has gained confidence, she is talking and mixing with her classmates and asking questions.'

'(Mum) has built a better relationship with school and has worked towards her fear of getting out of the house and mixing with strangers.'

'The parents have built relationships with each other and shared ideas. They have found out more about what is going on in school and in their local area because of this. We see a difference in the playground; parents talk to each other more and encourage others to do activities'

Five parents from Ryecroft and Cobden schools developed the confidence to become parent ambassadors. At Ryecroft, three of them took part in one block of activities and then took on the role of supporting other parents in a second block. The facilitators commented that they were excellent role models.

Outcome 5. 100 parents will learn new skills that will enable them to support their children and their children's learning

'The ideas on the course were really good and gave me lots of ideas to do at home.'

At the end of the course, 83 families (68%) said that they had already tried some of the activities at home. A typical comment was,

'I have benefited by feeling relaxed and getting E. involved with activities.'

Several parents commented that the course had helped them to find or develop their own creativity,

'It's improved my creative side; we make lots more things together.'

Most of the parents that I spoke to were continuing to do creative things at home although one or two still found it difficult to make time. One mum with a baby and two other children, said *'At home I say, give me five minutes and then I don't go back.'*

'We didn't make things at home together before this. I'm very bad at crafts, I was encouraged to try new things and I am pleased that I learnt to sew. I was able to admit to my children that I couldn't do things. I learnt what my kids want from me' (time and support) and think that I am managing them better.'

Several families also mentioned that parents and children were sharing their new skills with other family members:

'We have done lots of the activities at home and J. has been learning all this to his brothers and sister.'

8.2. Family Case Studies

This project has achieved some spectacular results, with shy and isolated parents now taking college courses and contributing to school life as a governor. However it is important to be realistic about what a short term intervention like this can expect to achieve. Families do not all change to the same extent. Facilitators made the point that progress is not steady or consistent. Some families worked well one week together but not the next. There were fluctuations in behaviour and relationships, often triggered by external events or health problems.

Some parents are not able to go on to other activities, but they still get considerable benefit from participation. For some families, one to one time with a child, free from other distractions, over several weeks, is enough to improve confidence, develop some skills and strengthen relationships.

The following case studies illustrate the range and variety of achievement.

Ranjit and Zulfiquar

Ranjit has English as an additional language. During 11 sessions of 'Our Space' the facilitators saw her becoming much more assertive with the other mums. At first she was very quiet, then slowly started to make suggestions and show her work within the group. Her relationship with her son also changed. At the start of the sessions, she tended to stand back and let Zulfiquar do the work; gradually she became more involved in making things and having fun with her son. The facilitators felt that she was very timid and 'ruled' by the little boy. They made a point of praising mum to encourage the son to value her contribution. Ranjit now wants to go to English language courses so that she can help her children more with their school work. The Extended Schools Coordinator is supporting her to do this.

Sharon and Milly

Sharon has limited literacy skills and a lot of family demands on her time, including caring for a disabled partner. Mother and daughter attended 11 weeks of 'Our Space' and 3 weeks of 'Our Club.' Sharon really liked getting out of the house and having some '*me time.*' The facilitators observed that in week 1, she found it hard to let Milly do things for herself. With their encouragement she gradually let Milly do more so that by week 9 they could say '*Sharon and Milly worked together really well, cheerful, engaged and communicating. They are going from strength to strength and Sharon is confident and positive.*'

Sharon took Milly on three of the trips but has not yet gone on to do any other formal activities. However she said that she had made friends in the playground and loved doing things with her daughter at home. Milly wanted to do more work at home and enjoyed taking things home to show her dad. The school said that it was a very great achievement that Sharon wanted to keep coming and rang up the school to make sure she didn't miss 'Our Club' when it was set up

Julie and Jodie. Julie didn't go out much or mix with other parents. Mother and daughter attended 11 weeks of 'Our Space' and 3 weeks of 'Our Club.' They worked well together throughout the sessions and Jodie visited Leeds City Museum for the first time on a Skippko trip. Julie and the school commented that she had gained enormously in confidence and her relationships with other people. The family support worker encouraged her to attend Story Sacks in school, and become a school governor. Julie has now started a teaching assistant course with a placement in the school one day a week.

Anne and Max. Anne was identified by the Extended Schools co-ordinator as needing help to support her son who was very quiet and anxious. They attended 11 weeks of 'Our Space.' The facilitators observed that Anne sometimes struggled to keep Max involved. Occasionally she was less attentive to his behaviour and let him 'drift off' but she usually tried really hard and developed a bargaining technique to encourage him to join in.

Max was very anxious about getting things wrong. He was easily upset, for example when having to be first in line in an A-Z game or getting different paint colours mixed up. He liked pretend play such as preparing and serving food. During the second block of 'Our Space' the facilitators were able to incorporate this into the activities through making masks and acting out stories.

Anne told me how much she loved doing things together and watching Max enjoy the activities. She said that he was much more confident, *'he is coming out of himself and doesn't need extra work at school any more. He used to be shy and wouldn't ask for help, but now he will and is joining in more. He is doing more things at home, he likes to play out but if it raining he will sit down and make things.'*

Anne did not identify any benefits for herself in her evaluation or conversation with me; her comments were all about the changes for her son. The facilitators recognised that she was very imaginative and asked her to devise a list of activities for the group to do, based on snakes and ladders. She was very proud to see her ideas being used and this gave her more self confidence. Since 'Our Space' ended Anne has been recruited as a parent ambassador. She attended residential training at Northern College and is now helping to set up groups and support other parents. She has also done a STEPS course and is going to attend another family learning course set up by the school, 'Supporting your child's literacy.'

Sue and James. Sue is James's step mother and has two younger children of her own. James has very challenging behaviour; he is constantly 'on the go' and demands attention at home. Sue was keen to become a better parent, but did not know what to do. She told me that the head teacher had seen how depressed and low she was and encouraged her to attend 'Our Space.' She cried at the first session, because she was so nervous. This changed over the programme and she now feels that she is not as dependent on other people and can do more for herself. She will stand up for herself and doesn't get as bothered about comments that other people make. Sue described considerable changes in her relationships with her children, *'Since coming here I've had more connection with James, we turn the television off and interact more with the kids. The kids see a difference in me. I'm calmer, not as stressed, don't shout at them.'*

Sue felt that James was quietening down and concentrating with more focus. She said *'the school needs to know about his good behaviour here because all I get is bad feedback about him from them.'*

The facilitators observed that Sue was becoming more assertive with her son although she was sometimes quite controlling and did not let him work with her. Before the sessions began she did not know anyone and benefited very much from working with other parents, in particular Anne. These two families worked well together and met up outside school. The two boys were a good influence on each other as James became quieter and Max more outgoing.

Sue also did a STEPS course and became a parent ambassador. She is working with Anne to set up and support other sources and activities and is also much more aware of what to do with her own younger children.

8.3. Wider benefits

The project has had a lot of additional benefits beyond the agreed family learning outcomes. The Skippko programme has been a catalyst for increased engagement with parents and the development of other family learning activities within the participating schools.

Several of the schools who were contacted for this evaluation participated in the Skippko programme because wanted to increase parental involvement with the school. One aims to eventually set up a PTA and another wanted to make early links with families (including new international arrivals) with English as an additional language. One Extended Schools Development Officer was keen to encourage creative development and raise attainment in arts and crafts. She also recognised the role of creativity in developing key skills and improving literacy. Finally, several of the schools saw the opportunity to respond to specific requests from parents for creative activities.

The support workers learnt new skills and creative techniques which they could use themselves, with parents and children. They also appreciated the opportunity to build relationships with parents, and get to know them *'in a fun way'* One support worker said that *'It showed parents with a negative view of schools that we can provide 'fun' activities for them to be involved in.'*

St Nicholas's Primary School has built up a group of parents that they can ask to do things in school. There were three dads in the group of four families for 'Our Space' who they can now approach to provide male support for trips. One dad was interviewed for the Stephen Lawrence Award; the kind of activity that the head teacher said parents who were new to the school would not normally be involved in. The head described a *'ripple effect'* where the 'Skippko parents' were becoming part of a bigger picture, getting messages out into the

community and correcting false impressions about what goes on in school.

In several schools 'Our Space' has triggered other activities. At Seacroft Grange, *'The Skippko programme has been the catalyst for a massive leap forward in the school.'* The original Skippko group has been expanded and now meets regularly on a Tuesday morning as a social meeting. One mum values this time so much that she takes Tuesday morning off work so that she can still attend. A second group has been started to meet demand. There were no dads in the original group but there are now 2 or 3 enthusiastic men attending the Tuesday group.

The school has found other external activities to bring into the school, including Story Sacks, run by Learning Partnerships where parents make games and puppets related to books. Some parents now want to go onto to get a qualification so arrangements have been made for a 'Mad Science' programme next year which does offers this.

Two of the schools that were contacted have kept creative activities going in the school. Holy Family set up an after school Art club for parents and children. This is run by the Family Support Worker with money from Extended Schools for resources. The club is currently attended by 3 'Our Space' families plus 12 others. They made large mosaic panels to display on the playground walls. Cobden organised more arts and crafts activities in after school and holiday clubs. They are also exploring more after school activities to be delivered by a rota of school staff.

9. Success criteria

The design and delivery of the Skippko programme is central to achieving the project outcomes and reducing barriers to engagement and participation. The main factors are:

- Facilitators are skilled and sensitive to the needs of participants
- Activities are relaxed, flexible and non-threatening
- Activities are explicitly planned to develop communication and team work as well as creative skills
- Parents and children work together throughout the programme
- Families are involved in making decisions about activities
- It is easy to participate with crèche facilities and travel expenses
- Good quality materials, that parents would not have at home
- Personal scrapbooks and other art work to take home
- Use of photographs to capture experiences
- Trips to bring in other family members and widen horizons
- Effective staff selection training and support
- Excellent project management and communication

The project manager, facilitators and school staff are all very clear that the school support worker is a key factor in the success of 'Our Space' within a school. This needs to be a person who knows the families well and participates fully in the activities. They can use their personal relationships to recruit parents, encourage regular attendance through reminders and organise follow up activities. Other school related success factors are:

- School/Extended services has clear aims for what it wants to achieve from the partnership with Skippko e.g. catalyst for parental activities, art work as vehicle for literacy and numeracy
- Parents who can benefit are targeted
- Head/Deputy Head are committed and interested in the project

Appendix A Quotations from families and school staff

These comments are from the family scrapbooks, postcards and evaluation forms

General Overview

We thought the project was ace.

I benefited from making friends, confidence, trying new things, sharing, giving ideas/opinions

Learning to share, learning to listen, having fun together

I enjoyed everything and liked that we were involved in decisions.

I enjoyed spending quality time with A., sharing, listening to each other, thinking together

Bringing back my youth, ha ha, I enjoyed having time and making time

Outcome 1. Families will be more interested and involved in learning through having positive experiences of shared learning

Children

My child has enjoyed it, she's disappointed we're leaving, she's done very well and wanted to do homework

J. did well to concentrate for so long

My son became more creative and wants to try new things

My child has benefited by being more creative

I think that my child has become more creative

He has been more interested in doing more craft work at home

He has enjoyed the crafts and he is more willing to try the activities at home

Parents – Helping with homework

I would like to do more helping with homework, anything that would be helpful with my child learning

I'd like to do more helping with kids homework

I would like to helping with kids homework

I would like to do literacy and numeracy skills better to help with child's home work

I would like to do literacy and numeracy to help my child to improve his writing, speaking and counting

Milestone - Parents will undertake or have signed up for further learning opportunities and/or volunteer opportunities

Parents – Other activities

I would like to do more activities with my son like this one

I'd like to do more artwork at home.

I would like to do more activities with J. at home

I would love to try more courses working with and without A.

I would like to become a volunteer in school

I am interested in doing more courses at school. I have already done 'mad science' and 'rest and relaxation'

Outcome 2. Families will have improved communication skills including listening, talking and writing skills

Children

C. has benefited by listening and doing things together

My child has learnt to listen to instructions and do what was asked

He has learnt to listen better

He really enjoyed making all the clay people and told all the family about it at home

My child has benefited by talking about it to his family after the session has finished

Going out to different places like Roundhay Park, I've noticed behaviour change, T. listened much better

C. has become more open, using English and talking to people

Parents

I have benefited by talking to people and sharing ideas

Mam, we are doing really well sharing and caring, thinking

I want to learn techniques for communicating better with my son. At home I have to be the parent. It can take me 20 minutes to ask him to do something and he still doesn't understand so I shout. I saw him working with you for 2 hours and no one had to shout at him, I want to learn patience. I feel I have benefited by learning how to be patient.

Outcome 3. Families will have improved relationships through positive shared experiences and team working

Me and my mum are working together right now

I have noticed that my relationship with my son became closer

I think M. has benefited by taking part in the project by learning new things, spending time with his parents because at home we don't always have time to do painting, drawing or have fun together. This was a good opportunity to stay close together

I believe that he (son) truly appreciated doing these activities with me and from the challenge of really having to focus on things and carry out with it which usually can be a bit daunting for him

Me and L. do get along a lot more at home which is good also he gets very excited leading up to the class. I didn't think L. would work with me so I'm very happy how it has helped. I think L. has really opened up to me a lot more

Me and my son have a better bond now because at home his sisters take up a lot of time so to have time with B. was nice

I feel that me and my son have worked better together. I think that his behaviour is a lot better

We have benefited by having quality time together and improved relationship between us both

It got me and K. a bit more closer. Got K. to come out of his self with me

I have bonded with S., as we don't really do things like this at home

I have benefited from sharing things with my child

It has improved as we haven't done anything together for a while at school

Milestone - Families will enjoy the learning experience together – Fun

I am feeling fab.

The fun I am having while doing this is priceless

Spending time together made me feel giggly!

They (children) enjoyed the group and could not wait for Friday

I am feeling happy to play with you dad.

I've enjoyed all of it. Loved doing things with T.

To mum, love from M. I had fun doing everything

K. playing hide and seek with you in the forest was fantastic. Let's do it again sometime, love mummy

C., I have had loads of fun spending time with you in school

I had fun with my mum!

A., I've had lots of fun making today, lots of love mummy."

E., I loved playing snakes and ladders with you, love you loads, mummyboo!

It has been fab spending time and doing things with E...

B., hope you had a lovely day with mummy. I really enjoyed it a lot love mummy

To mam, thank you for coming to the art group. I hope you liked it

Mum, I like making with you mum

D., I really enjoyed our time at art love mum

Our first day was really fantastic and we had a really nice day

Mummy we've had lots of fun. I am feeling... good and happy

Look at our fish, see how it swims, it's ready for story time

Milestone - Families will enjoy the learning experience together –One to one time

S. has benefited by having more one to one time with me and I enjoyed my one on one time with S.

I've benefited by being able to spend quality one on one with my child through school time

I think M. benefited from having one to one time with me away from house and other distractions. M. also enjoyed being able to get hands on and make things

J. has benefited from having one to one time with me with not a lot of restrictions i.e. making a mess!

C. has been able to spend more one on one time with me which has improved our relationship

Mommy has loved spending one on one time with her little man and seeing the big smile on your face when you walk in and see me

Spending one to one time is fantastic – we don't get too much of this at home

It is nice having one to one time with my child and learning new things to do at home.

She has enjoyed all the things we have been working on, I think she's enjoyed the fact that it's only a small group and also the one to one time she's had with me.

The fact that it was a small group and the time me and K. have been able to spend together

Spending time together on our own, she feels special as mum comes into school for her

He wants to do more things with me which is just me and him and no one else

Spending quality time with me and learning to make different things, she loved all of the course.

I think that she has enjoyed the fact that it has been just me and her doing something together because at home there's other sisters and a brother

We enjoyed spending time together

I'd like to say.....Thank you for letting me spend time with my mum.

I have achieved being able to spend quality time with S.

I've enjoyed the extra time with my son R. at these sessions, it's been good for both of us

M. I have really enjoyed spending time with you on our own, it's been fun

M., I really enjoyed doing 'our space' with you and spending time together, I love you lots and lots always and forever, mummy

To K., I have loved spending time with you making things with food was very good love mum

I enjoyed spending time with S.

To B., I have really enjoyed our quality time together, lots of love mummy

Spending time together today was fun, liked the balloon game best

Milestone - Families will enjoy the learning experience together – Being creative

I feel I have achieved to learn new things together, enjoying time out for myself and creative activities with my child

Hi Papa, I've enjoyed being with you because you can make cool pictures and help me and give me ideas.

To H., I really love spending time with you. I really enjoy doing art and messy things. I hope we have many more happy times like this, love mummy

To mummy, we had a messy time, good time and happy time

Mum, I like sticking with you love J.

Thank you R. for a lovely time. It's been really nice making things

To my gorgeous son, loved our painting together, our time, love always mummy

To mum I love the puppet show we made

I like making stuff with my mom

Today I enjoyed arts and crafts with you E.

I really enjoyed making things with my son

I had fun making our scrapbook

I like painting pictures with my mum. I like to create big picture with my mum

We painted bananas it was a new discovery for me and my daughter. I enjoyed it a lot we had a lot of fun

I've tried something new, by making picture frames with paint

She enjoyed it and learnt so much things that she has never done and she is trying some of the creative things

J., I really enjoyed seeing you using your fantastic imagination

Learnt to be creative and make mess but at the same time have fun

I love anything that has a creative element as the kids love it and it keeps them involved

D., I have enjoyed doing creative things with you love mummy

To be more creative and work together

E., I have enjoyed the time we spent together being creative, love you, mum

We had fun drawing and cutting we also made Chinese lanterns

We used chopsticks for the first time, we found it easy and enjoyable

Me and B. really enjoyed playing with the chopsticks and playing with the food

Today I enjoyed making fish. It was really good to work together

B. loved me drawing around his hands

Milestone. Families will work as a team and engage in group work

I think we really improved the awareness of us as a team and of the potential of things that we could do together.

I am very happy and we all enjoy ourselves and worked in team too

Learning to work as a group and with your child

We liked working together and meeting other people

Enjoyed working as part of a team. He enjoyed quality time with mum

L. has benefited a lot we now work together and take each other's ideas and work together to make our own

I have benefited from meeting people and spend time with kids and adults and getting messy

Spending quality time with me and taking part in things (group activity)

I've enjoyed working in a group

Milestone. Families will explore boundaries and ideas together

I have achieved to not want it all my way and to sometimes let your child take control and that things don't have to look perfect as long as the child has taken part and enjoyed themselves

Learning how to do things with others, to take turns instead of having it all his way

D. has benefited by enjoying time with me and knowing what I can do and capable of

We loved making a mess

More at ease when making a mess

Letting J. be creative at home, making a mess! feeling relaxed about doing this

I am more relaxed when letting my child do cooking with me

Outcome 4. Participants have increased confidence and self esteem

Children

Look at me mum, I can do it.

My child has gained more confidence in a team group

It really has helped H. come out of his shell, he's very clingy normally, but the whole group has given him a lot of confidence.

He is really enjoying it and he is more confident

It's given my child more confidence, as he was lacking in it!

My daughter has made friends

C. has become more confident by mixing with other children from other schools and is always suggesting things to make from anything usable

A. is not shy in school anymore since he has been coming

He has gained a lot of confidence

E. has come out of herself more, more confident

He has come out of his shell; he will take part in group activities

My child feels more confident taking part in art activities, because he always thought he couldn't do it

Parents

I have achieved confidence and patience.

It has helped me feel more confident

I've learnt to be more creative and to experiment

I have gained more confidence in working with my child and watching other children work and progress

I have benefited with confidence, self esteem and bonding with C.

I have benefited to be part of learning with E. and actually coming to a group and not being so shy myself

Meeting people and making friends

I got to know other parents, so have made new friends, helped me get out socialising

To meet people was another benefit

It got me out of the house. I've made friends in the playground

I have benefited by joining the group and making new friends

Benefited from mixing and talking to other people

I have benefited with social skills and overcoming shyness with new people

Milestone. Families will recognise their progress and demonstrate pride in their achievements

I think you did really well at making our front cover I am so proud of myself and my son

I have achieved an end result of the weeks of hard work, me and my son have created in the folder

I feel proud of myself and L. for making everything we did

L. worked really hard, so pleased with the outcome

I'd like to say.....Well done E. I had a fun time

I have achieved everything I do, really thank you for letting me join

Outcome 5. Parents will learn new skills that will enable them to support their children and their children's learning

We are working much better at home together, thinking up other ways to be messy and make things

At home we do crafts a lot more than we used to.

I've tried painting with J. at home

I have learnt new methods to keep D. busy

I have benefited by feeling relaxed and getting E. involved with activities

I have done collages at home with my son

Learning new skills and putting them into practise at home with T.

It's improved my creative side we make lots more things together

I have learnt lots of different ideas I can do at home

I have learnt things to do with my son and spent quality creative time with my son

We will do more craft things at home

Being more creative and gaining more ideas of things to try at home with my other children

Now I have more ideas to do at home

Better art ideas

I keep a bin at home where I store all my art and craft stuff

Loved the bag of goodies at the end of the course

New ideas for things to do at home with the children

We will be doing more activities during the holidays

I have learnt activities to do with M. and A. and spending quality time together

The ideas on the course were really good and gave me lots of ideas to do at home

Given me ideas of things to do at home with the children

I have discovered my creative side

Enjoyed doing more art at home with more ideas and patience

Other family members

We could try this at home with daddy and my baby sister

T. is now practising some of the activities at home e.g. making the space ship with dad

We have done lots of the activities at home and Joshua has been learning all this to his brothers and sister

Me and W. will be making a drum in the holiday with his little brother

He repeated all outside games at home with his father

E. has shared ideas with her sister at home

I enjoyed talking to other parents and the things I have learnt I can go home and enjoy doing these with my other children

Comments from School support workers

Overview

All the children that attended absolutely loved it

One of the grandparents has rung the school to say how much she enjoyed the session

Outcomes – General

It has built confidence, team work, trying new things, feeling good about results achieved and a great sense of pride.

They got to spend some really quality time together, having fun and producing something they will always be able to keep and look back on fondly

Outcome 1. Increased involvement in child's learning

Parents more involved in school activities during and after the school day

An awareness of the benefits to their child's development

L. rarely comes into school and does not attend parents evening – she attended every session and enjoyed it

Great opportunity for parents of new international arrivals to come into school to work alongside their children, to become more familiar with the English education system, to discuss their child's progress in an informal setting and to be introduced to adult learning opportunities

Outcome 1. Increased interest in own learning - Follow up activities

Three of the group members have progressed onto a 'Story Sacks' course with another provider, something they would not have done without the Skipkko project

One of our parents has become a school governor, which is as a direct result of taking part in the Skipkko project

Some parents have shown an interest in a healthy cooking course that is soon to be running in school

Parents want to continue the different types of classes

Several parents commented that they have made friendships and have swapped contact details regarding future school projects and courses.

P. was surprised how much she enjoyed the 'art' side of things and is now going onto do two other family learning groups in the summer term

Many of the parents requested more of the same sort of art and craft based learning experiences with their children. We have applied through family passport funding to run a similar kind of group with the inclusion of cooking and visits out

Outcomes 2 and 3. Improved communication and relationships

They have benefited by building a good relationship with their child by spending time one to one

All the parents have commented that the project has made them aware of the benefits of spending time one to one with their children

Parents have benefited from one to one time with their child and have gained confidence and inspiration to try things at home

I think it has improved parent/child relationships and had a positive impact on behaviour

Improved speaking and listening, Improved interaction between parents and children as the sessions progressed

Parent and child have engaged around an art activity who wouldn't engage with this parent as much at home

I found parents learnt to listen to their child's ideas better as the weeks went on

In some cases parents have realised the children are more creative when left to explore textures and ideas than they thought

Changes in children

V. learned to listen more to her mum and really enjoyed working in a group and gained confidence

S. learning to share and listen

Improved communication skills

Children are less shy, will engage in conversations spontaneously

M. was able to use his imagination more as the weeks progressed. This was a big achievement

J. is usually a quiet member of class and in group situations and by the end he was vocally participating in the group

P. learnt to listen more to his mum and take more adult direction. His attention span got bigger as the weeks went on too

All the children developed their creativity and ability to focus, work together and work on their own, to feel part of something that had a really positive impact on them

J. is much more confident within the group and willing to share ideas

Children much better at working with others, more awareness and consideration of others

Outcome 4. – Increased confidence

Some parents were very cautious and as the sessions progressed they became more involved and shared ideas

Most mums have shown more confidence in helping their children

S. (Mum) has never attended a group before, she has gained confidence and self esteem

Parents are socialising in the playground now

The parents have built relationships with each other and shared ideas. They found out more about what is going on in school and in their local area because of this

G. (Child) has gained confidence she is talking and mixing with her classmates and asking questions

All the children are more self-confident and take pride in the tasks they complete

Outcome 5. Parents have learned new skills to support their children's learning

Parents are able to identify the items/resources that a child needs at home to be able to make an activity up from something

Parents have identified opportunities to promote children's play at home

They have also learnt that you do not have to be artistic to have a go and it does not cost the earth to buy resources

Wider benefits for schools

Can't thank you and the team enough - you and your team provided us with the 'in' we needed with parents and so much has come about because of it

It has built good relationships with children, parents and other group members

I have been able to build relationships with parents that I did not know. Able to discuss problems that occur easier

Encouraged active participation in school by parents

I have built good relationships with families involved and can take the art ideas away with me to work with groups myself.

Lots of ideas for the classroom and to pass on to other parents

I will definitely be using some of the ideas for art activities in other settings

Some of the ideas used may be included in my future practice