

# Experts on the Ground 2010 After School Clubs Evaluation

## Background

Creative Junction in partnership with Sure Start developed “Experts on the ground”, a professional learning programme for those who work with young people.

Slough Sure Start Service identified a need to develop the confidence of play workers in after school settings to deliver creative opportunities to a wide range of children. These opportunities extended the creative practice currently seen in the settings. Sure Start’s ‘On the ground’ play workers worked in partnership with creative practitioners to develop new ideas and models of working within their settings and to share learning with others. The programme also looked at developing the play worker’s confidence and inspire them to deliver more creative arts opportunities for children in the after school clubs.



## Aims

- To **build and develop partnerships** that encourage exploration, discovery and creativity and deepen passion for learning.
- To **develop innovative activities** that widen choice for play workers.
- To allow practitioners to **reflect** on and discuss their learning.
- To develop and support a **cohort of creative professionals** that can understand and engage play workers.
- To promote the **continuous professional development** of play workers.
- To explore different methods of **recording the progress and achievement** of play workers undertaking continuous professional development.
- To **develop a framework** for the play workers to continue to provide creative opportunities once the project has finished.

## Process

The model worked in this way:

- One day training preparation** for all participants: after school play workers and artists, covering: partnership building, introduction to reflective practice, evaluation and dissemination tools (virtual scrapbook); co-planning the project
- Half day project planning** for each artist in the assigned setting.
- Co-delivering the project**: ‘On the ground’ practitioners and creative partners working together during 5 weekly sessions to deliver the project in the after school club, with planning and reflection time built in after each session.
- \* **One day reflection**: shared reflection and evaluation with all the centres, showing the visual scrapbooks; presentations to managers/leaders and wider audience.



## Partners and Enquiry Questions

3 after school clubs were selected by Sure Start:

- **Ryvers After School club**, who partnered up with Video/Photography practitioner Adrian Spencer. Their enquiry question was: **“How can digital technology help empower both children and staff at our school?”**
- **Kidz Enterprise** (based at Cippenham Junior School), who partnered up with theatre practitioner Dawn Fleming. Their enquiry question was: **“Can the sharing of theatre tools with the playcentre staff and young people help all involved to be more confident and integrated, with an increased sense of imaginative ownership of the space?”**
- **Our Lady of Peace Infant School**, partnered up with music practitioner Rob Harris. Their enquiry question was: **How will music impact on confidence of staff and students?**

The centres suggested the art form they would like to work on. Creative Junction led the recruitment process, in which Sure Start was involved.

The project engaged a total of 16 members of staff and 105 children.



## What did we learn?

### *Centre staff learning*

- This project enabled centre staff to **come out of the comfort shell and try different things, using more creative games.**
- It's important **not having expectations of children and value the journey, not the final outcome.**
- It taught the centre staff technology (IT), theatre and music skills.
- It's very important to **listen to the children.**
- **Staff feel more confident** about leading activities.
- It's **essential to plan the project as a team**, involving the centre staff and the creative practitioner.
- It has been very **useful for staff team building.**
- It has allowed us to **use our imagination with un-usual resources**, such as cardboard boxes!



## *Creative Practitioner learning*

- It's extremely important to do as much **co-planning** with the centre staff as possible before the project delivery starts with the children.
- Before the creative practitioner and staff start delivering sessions with children, it would be great to have a half day **inset / CPD session** where staff get to work and learn only with the practitioner (not with children).
- It's essential to get a better understanding of the **culture of each after school club**, how the space works, what the constraints are, before the project delivery starts.(E.g. parents picking up kids at different times, snack/ dinner times)
- The after school clubs are not school!** There is a need for freedom to choose what children want to do.
- How to engage children from different ages** (4 till 11 years old). Games as a mixed group helped in some cases with positive outcomes.
- Boys/ girls energy.** At this time in the afternoon, children (especially boys) need physical activities where they can move, kick things, etc, so movement is very important.
- Centre staff have got lots of jobs** to do in and out of the after school club. Is this project perceived as a benefit or as additional work?



## *Children's learning*

- This project helped them to **interact, support and listen** to each other.
- Children have found **ways of expressing themselves**.
- All children involved have learnt in a **creative way**:
  - Video**. They created and recorded an “R factor” talent contest.
  - Theatre**. They created and acted in their very “own world”.
  - Music**. They wrote a song and learnt rhythms by clapping beats with animal names. They made their own musical instruments.
- Children have **increased their confidence** to speak out and socialise with other children. They have also improved their behaviour.

## *Project leader learning*

- Timing of the training session**. The 1st training session should be ½ day followed by a visit to an introductory visit to the centre.
- There should be a **CPD session for centre staff only** (without children) before the project commences with the children and another one at the end of the project (as suggested by participants)
- 10 weekly sessions with the children over 3 months would be the ideal length** for the project.
- Media consent forms** to be a requisite for the project to start.
- The 3 deep conversations should be planned into the workshops** and the centres will know about it from the start.
- Timing of the final evaluation session**. The final evaluation session should be ½ day followed by a visit to the centre where staff will lead the final session observed by the creative practitioner, who will give them feedback.
- There should be a **clear plan of how the project will continue** after the sessions with the creative practitioner finish.



## Challenges

- **The responsibilities between staff and creative practitioners** were not very clear. They should be included in the partnership planning form. (E.g. Who's doing what, who's working in partnership with the practitioner before, during and after the sessions).
- It's been suggested to have the following **CPD and planning sessions** (in this order)
  - One ½ day training session for all the settings.
  - ½ day inset / CPD session for staff in each setting to spend with the creative practitioner, followed by a ½ day planning session for staff and practitioner to plan the project and the sessions before the project delivery with children starts.
  - A ½ day CPD session after the project delivery with children has finished.
- **The project was very short**, 5 sessions don't allow for much. 10 sessions would have been much better. . It feels as if the project is at midpoint instead of end point. Centres needed more time for staff and practitioners to plan together and for staff to deliver the project
- **Be realistic about timings** to make sure staff members can be working in partnership with the practitioners.
- **Make sure there are enough members of staff looking after other children** who are not taking part in the project, so that staff can work in partnership with the artist.
- **The creative practitioner would like more information about the after school club from the beginning.** E.g. on the training day, provide a picture of the centre, timetable and schedule of staff, so that the practitioner understands how the centre works.
- **Deciding if working with the full group or part of it.**
- Centre constraints to bear in mind: space (all children working in the same space?), parents (are they picking up children at different times?), Who is this project for? If it's for the staff members, there should be more CPD activities with staff outside the club



## Centre future plans

What will the centre staff do after this project that they didn't do before? (At April 2010)

*Our Lady of Peace School – Artist: Rob Harris. Art form: Music*

- Leading clapping games, conducting with instruments.
- Lead the song they have created.
- Melissa, Shanel and Mrs Kemp are ready to lead activities.
- The music activity could happen once per week.

*Kidz Enterprise (based at Cippenham Junior School) – Artist: Dawn Fleming. Art form: Theatre*

- Group games: E.g. Cat and mouse, What are you doing? What is this? Circle “same things”, Who is leading?, Out and in, Coded gestures “woof woof”, Warm up bodies, wrists, “hum”.
- Making things. E.g. Clothes, puppets.
- Pat and Nat are the staff members most prone to be leading activities.
- Create, invent a world, a story. Do it more often, with a story or theme connected to something they are already doing, or it could be connected to themes of school study.



## Centre future plans

What will the centre staff do after this project that they didn't do before? (At April 2010)

*Ryvers School – Artist: Adrian Spencer. Art form: Video/ Photography*

- We will continue working with all the children in making short animation films as well as using the comic life programme.
- We will encourage and support all children to make more comics.
- Take photographs and edit them.
- Upload videos to a website.
- Planning to design a Comic Life newsletter which will be given to parents/carers to help to promote Ryvers' Rascals Breakfast and After school club. This will show parents what activities etc are available.
- We will be setting out one day a week for all children to try filming /animation/ Comic creation teach each other. This will show they can all work together even without the practitioner visiting!
- We will be buying a few more video cameras and still cameras.



If you are interested in running Experts on the Ground in your setting please contact Gloria Garcia – [gloria.garcia@creativejunction.org.uk](mailto:gloria.garcia@creativejunction.org.uk) 01753 470324