

'The Story Safari'

Working Together to promote Early Literacy Skills



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A multi-agency group of professionals, from Health and Education formed as part of the Scottish Government's Language meets Literacy Practicum. Our small scale project: **'The Story Safari'** has been developed to address areas of need in children's development, as indicated by the 27-30 month child health review¹. A 5 week programme, focusing on reading and motor skills, has been developed around the book 'Dear Zoo', supporting nursery staff to target specific foundation areas of development. The programme actively involves carers in the activities to promote the impact that these can have on a child's development of early literacy and motor skills.

Aim: By December 2019 targeted children will measurably improve language, literacy and motor skills, through participation in specific, accessible activities in collaboration with parents and nursery staff.

Method

The professional knowledge and expertise within our own multi-disciplinary team informed the initial content of the Story Safari Program. We then collaborated with 4 different nurseries, to incorporate their expertise and knowledge, and test the program. This has enabled us to gather rich qualitative, and some quantitative data as to the content and delivery of the program. Our next cycle of testing will apply more robust quantitative measures, to test the impact on the children themselves.

Process Change

Our project has had to evolve significantly as a result of the learning gained throughout. Improvement methodology has guided us to address the elephant in the room; our initial aim was unlikely to ever give us meaningful quantitative data as to the value of the Story Safari. Quality Improvement (QI) tools helped to identify our shared aim, which was to make a measurable impact on children. Revisiting our driver diagram and reframing our aim around the children has moved us forward in a positive direction. A Tracker Tool has been developed and trialed, and we are confident this will provide clear evidence of the impact on children.



Driver Diagram

Achievements

- Quality of program; feedback from staff and parents/carers indicates it is well received. Program resources are well prepared and packaged.
- Sustainability; 4 nurseries have collaborated with us, supported by a skilled early years worker. However, nurseries are confident to now take the program forward alone. Nurseries have also liaised independently to share best practice with The Story Safari.
- Measures; we have made significant progress and have developed a Tracker Tool to collect/collate quantitative measure of impact.

Key Learning Points

- Relationships and collaboration continue to be vital but take time, mutual understanding, and trust.
- The use of Improvement Methodology has kept us right. Constantly asking "How will we know a change is an improvement?" has enabled us to maintain focus on our shared aim.
- Being critical of data is important. All our data has provided learning, but not all measures have been necessary long term e.g. staff confidence.

References

¹ Scottish Government. The Scottish Child Health Programme. Guidance on the 27-30 month Child Health review.



Results

Data gathered so far has shown:

- Program is well received by staff, parents and carers (see comments)
 - Staff confident to deliver the program once familiar with content (chart 1)
- We have now commenced data gathering using our Tracker Tool and expect initial results by the end of 2019.

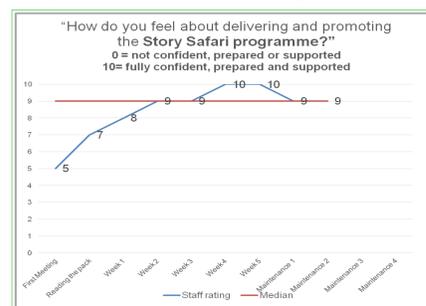


Chart 1: Staff Self-Rating Used prior to, during and after the 5 week programme.

Comments from parents/carers and staff at end of program

- I enjoyed using imagination and having fun!
- I enjoyed seeing her participate with other children, and the time to have a tea with other parents is really appreciated!
- It has given us a better understanding of how to base activities around story books then deliver to parents
- My child has really enjoyed having mummy at nursery every week and has loved the activities

Conclusions

Our team has developed and tested a program to promote early literacy skills, which is both accessible and well received by nursery staff and parents/carers. Applying QI methods has helped us refine our focus and measures, but has also highlighted the need for collaboration; something that takes considerable time. The expected data from our Tracker Tool will not only provide information on children's skills, but also the next steps for each child; whether they need to progress to further specialist support, or if their needs have been met.

Scale / Spread

- Story Safari journey and resource pack to be shared at Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative (TRIC) with the potential for 'Story Safari' to be available as a tool for nurseries in the region.
- Additional packs to be printed and bound pending discussion/approval and funding. These will be stored at a central location to allow easy access for nurseries, and/or made available electronically.
- Data Collection Form has been prepared, enabling data to be gathered & collated distally, which will facilitate ongoing data gathering of the value and impact of the project over time.
- Nurseries have shared their experiences and learning with each other informally to date. Network of best practice between ECP's could be utilised to share information more formally.