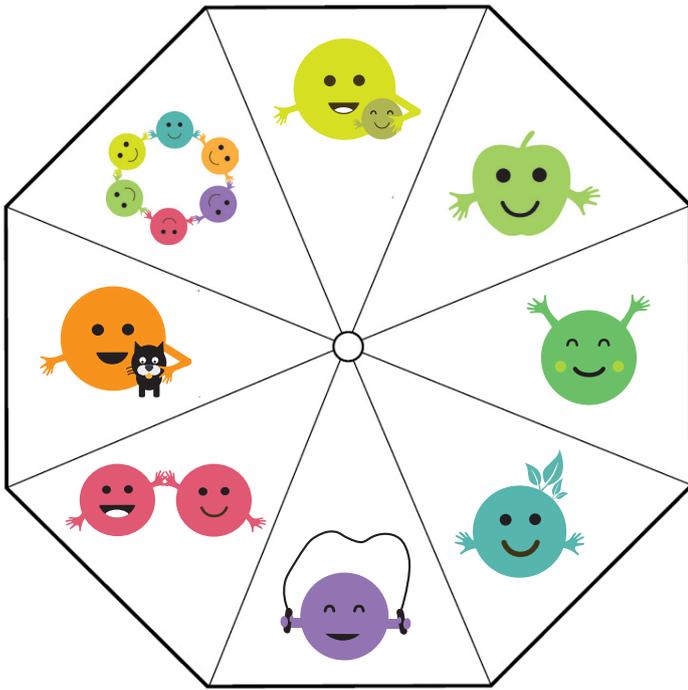




Our Creative Journey

Expressive arts within early learning and childcare and other children's services

Wellbeing spinner



The attached Wellbeing Indicator Spinner has been included as an activity that practitioners can use. Cut out the SHANARRI octagon and punch a pencil through the middle, this can then be used as a spinner. When one of the eight edges of the spinner lands on a surface, the relevant practice questions should be discussed.

SAFE

- Are the resources easily accessible for the children/ young people? How do you make sure?
- Do your concerns about children's safety restrict their freedom to create and play?
- How do you overcome your own anxieties and those of parents regarding children's safety?

HEALTHY

- How do you cater for the range of health needs to ensure barriers to engagement don't appear?
- What can you do to enable young children to develop independence?
- How do you support the development of curiosity in children?

ACHIEVING

- How do you ensure observations capture what is relevant, meaningful and promotes the next steps in learning?
- Is praise meaningful/valid?
- What opportunities do you have to develop your creative practice?

NURTURED

- Should we praise or encourage? How are they different, or are they?

Wellbeing indicator icons:

Safe



Healthy



Achieving



Nurtured



Active



Respected



Responsible

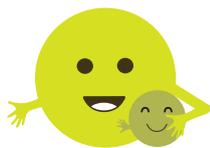


Included



Wellbeing indicator icons:

Safe



Healthy



Achieving



Nurtured



Active



Respected



Responsible



Included



- How do you acknowledge and discuss diversity through expressive arts?
- How do you support individual expression of an idea within a respectful context?

ACTIVE

- How do you ensure opportunities are embedded for children to participate in creative experiences?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses in offering more active approaches to the expressive arts?
- How can children's experiences outside your setting contribute to creative experiences within your setting?

RESPECTED

- How do you ensure you engage with children in a way that meets their needs?
- Can you give an example of how you involve children in supporting the development of their ideas?
- How do you balance the wishes and rights of both parents and children?

RESPONSIBLE

- How do you ensure children are able to achieve what they want to achieve?
- Should there be rules when developing creativity within expressive arts?
- How do you ensure you don't pass on any insecurities to children about creative expression?

INCLUDED

- Give an example when you actively listened and responded to a child's doubts about their creative process?
- Give an example of when your creative ideas were listened to and acted upon. How did this make you feel?
- In what ways does the environment support or inhibit children being engaged in the creative process?



Foreword



Seeing children and young people play creatively inspires us all. It has been a real pleasure reading *Our Creative Journey* and writing this foreword – one of my most enjoyable responsibilities as Chief Executive. I would like to thank all the people who have worked with us to create this resource and in particular the children, young people, parents and practitioners who have contributed so positively. The experiences that are captured here are inspiring and I hope this will be a valuable resource for everyone involved with children and young people whatever their role.

Reading the resource and absorbing the creative activities described, I was struck by how *Our Creative Journey* supports the strategic objectives of the Care Inspectorate. These aim to give public assurance and build confidence that social care and social work in Scotland is rights-based and world class, through robust and independent scrutiny and improvement processes. My view is that this resource makes a significant contribution to Scotland's early learning and childcare. Following *My World Outdoors*, it is part of a suite of resources that the Care Inspectorate is developing to promote innovation and improvement. By highlighting good practice, we want to be a positive catalyst for change and improve the impact that all early learning and childcare services have on outcomes for children. Resources such as this draw on the evidence from regulation to share good practice and contribute to local and national policy.

We also want to support people's understanding of high quality, safe and compassionate care by promoting the standards and quality of service they should expect and help make sure their voices are heard. *Our Creative Journey* gets alongside the lived experience of children and illustrates the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators in a practical and helpful way. Rather than just sharing good practice in our own words, we are involving practitioners, children and parents to tell their own stories. This approach is aligned with Scotland's new Health and Social Care Standards, which set out what human rights and wellbeing look like from the perspective of an individual experiencing care and support.

With these practice resources, we are developing a different collaborative model, style and tone. We are increasingly reaching out to collaborate with external partners and I welcome the fact that organisations from all sectors involved in early learning and childcare have co-produced this resource with us.

Karen Reid

Karen Reid
Chief Executive, Care Inspectorate

My Journey: an inspector's personal story



My earliest memories of my own creative journey started with family and friends. I had a very happy childhood and I remember having time for stories, whether reading them or listening to them, and having time to dream. When I was a young child, we lived in an inner city area, which I remember as a grey concrete space. We had a small yard where we created dens with the sheets on the washing line. I always thought I couldn't be seen but had forgotten that my feet were still visible. I had a small gang of friends who gathered whenever we could to set off on our adventures and we created toys and games together, using whatever we could find. We turned roller skates and books into skateboards and had the run of the neighbourhood. My mother had a washing tub, which became a magic cauldron for spells and occasionally soup. We made up plays, songs and stories and raided cupboards for clothes and shoes to dress up in. My mother had a dress that looked like Snow White's and I always wanted to borrow that. My dad had a collection of tobacco tins, which were full of bits and pieces such as old keys and buttons, which we loved to use for our stories.

When I was nine, we moved to a more rural area and there my love of words and music continued to develop. I was introduced to the violin and this opened up another world of expression for me. I continued to enjoy the camaraderie of orchestras and participated in a variety of different groups, including the band for the local operatic society where I developed a liking for the works of Gilbert and Sullivan. I think the most impressive venue I performed in was St Giles' Cathedral with the school orchestra and choir. As a teenager, music was something which I began to enjoy by myself as well and my family were always able to judge my stress levels during exam times from the pieces I chose to practise.

Adults have always played a crucial part in my creative journey. My parents introduced me to stories and music, making sure that the resources were there so that we could follow through our ideas. My violin teacher became a friend and a mentor. Not all experiences were positive though. I don't express myself through drawing as the result of an enthusiastic art teacher who took a pencil to a drawing I was proud of and transformed it into his own drawing. To this day, I will always tell you that I can't draw. I always loved writing and enjoyed creating stories and poetry. Writing about other people's experiences is something I still enjoy doing.

I still have my violin and play regularly. It's been some time since I played as part of a group but I still find it a relaxing thing to do. Although, I'm not sure what the other residents of my house think. I've always enjoyed dancing and moving to music. We will never take part in Strictly Come Dancing but my husband and I do enjoy going to dance classes together.

Allison Tyson

Senior Inspector, Care Inspectorate

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1. Introduction

Creative play helps children flourish as confident, resilient and happy individuals and it is vital for child development. Creativity is a key ingredient for children to learn how to follow their curiosity, solve problems and make sense of the world. Given the diverse nature of creativity and the different ways that children can be creative in early learning and childcare (ELC) settings, we decided to focus this resource on one aspect relating to expressive arts. Future resources on creativity may focus on creative approaches to other aspects of ELC. By producing a resource featuring good and innovative practice examples, we can share and celebrate some of the wonderful experiences we are seeing and hearing about when we visit services all over the country. These examples include art, drama, pretend play, music and song, model making, loose-parts play, storytelling and dance. This resource is intended to reflect and encourage the exciting blossoming of expressive arts that we are seeing across services for children.

Just taking part in expressive arts can be transformative – the end product is not the goal. The approach and attitude with which services embrace expressive arts is as important as the particular chosen activity. Being prepared to explore and experiment, and make mistakes along the way, is an integral part of creativity. And maybe the process of taking detours or getting lost can result in the most inspiring effective journeys.

As with our previous resources, My World Outdoors and My Childminding Experience, Our Creative Journey is based on the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators. Demonstrating how experiences of expressive arts contributes to children being safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included is aligned with the way we now regulate ELC services, putting children's outcomes at the forefront of our assessments.

Our Creative Journey is aimed at promoting good practice in all types of ELC settings, to help all services aspire to be the best they can be and have the greatest impact on children's lives. We have developed this resource on a collaborative basis with partner organisations, who worked with practitioners to tell their own stories involving children and parents.

We feature practice examples from across the full range of ELC service types, including childminders, playgroups and out of school care as well as private and local authority nurseries. This means that ELC provided by the private, voluntary and statutory sectors is equally represented. We have tried to reflect the wide age range of children experiencing ELC, from babies through to secondary school age children, and the different needs and backgrounds of children. We have chosen examples from rural as well as urban settings and from deprived as well as affluent communities. Similarly, we have tried to include a wide range of examples and not just services that are most commonly used by children in our communities and not just to showcase a few high-profile services achieving outstanding grades.

As well as inspecting registered services, we scrutinise local authorities and community planning partnerships. We have therefore included examples from provision that is not registered by the Care Inspectorate, such as a social work funded service in Aberdeenshire providing support for children and young people looked after by the local authority, The Young People's Organising and Campaigning Group and the Children's Rights Service. Widening the practice examples beyond registered services reflects the Care Inspectorate's wider duty to provide scrutiny of social work services and services for children in local areas, as well as continue to regulate individual services. This also reflects the broad scope of Scotland's new integrated Health and Social Care Standards, which cover the full spectrum of care beyond just regulated services. We refer to them throughout this document as the Standards.

In a number of cases, we have changed people's names to protect their privacy.

Who is this for?

We want practitioners to experiment and have fun in playing with expressive arts. As adults, many of us carry the belief that we are not creative simply because we did not excel at art or music while we were in school. Phrases such as "I'm not artistic", "I can't draw" and "I'm tone deaf" are labels we frequently attach to ourselves. Showing children that adults are all capable of creativity and actively countering the often deep-seated view that only some people are born as naturally gifted creative types sends a lifelong message. Sometimes we need to overcome our own fears and barriers as practitioners in order to empower children.

Our approach and attitude to creativity as practitioners and role models is important. Knowing when to lead or guide an activity and when to step back and let children develop an experience themselves is a professional skill at the heart of pedagogical practice. Becoming attuned to the children we are working with allows us to support creative experiences in ways that enable them to get on and construct their own worlds.

Sometimes we all need to return to first principles and remind ourselves how children learn by developing confidence, curiosity and imagination from an early age. We know in theory that playing creatively improves a child's chances of achieving academically and believing in themselves. Creativity is identified as a key ingredient of high quality experiences for all adults and children.

"I can choose to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational, social, creative, physical and learning activities every day, both indoors and outdoors."

(Statement 1.25 from the new Health and Social Care Standards)

This resource is aimed at affirming this above statement from the new Standards in practice. It's easy to forget how children's early experiences impact on later outcomes, such as experiencing music and song leads to improved language and literacy.

Giving children the physical and psychological space in which creativity can flourish is a straightforward idea but deceptively difficult to sustain. It involves striking a balance between being too proactive and leading children's creative activities with being too hands off and letting the children get on with it entirely on their own. It is a natural tendency for us as adults to fill a child's day with busy timetables and playrooms cluttered with prescriptive activities. One of the striking differences we have noted when visiting ELC services in Scandinavia is the relative lack of clutter and the general atmosphere of calm that has been created over time.

As well as the everyday examples from practitioners, which best encapsulate the creative spirit in this resource, we have included examples of services bringing in resident artists and specialist external organisations to develop expressive arts with children. These examples show how specialist input can act as a catalyst for a service to sustain ongoing expressive arts activity.

We hope that this resource makes a positive contribution to the ELC sector as a whole and is taken up by educational establishments and training providers as a helpful tool.

Our Creative Journey may also be of interest to parents/carers and anyone looking after or working with children or young people, including statutory social work and education, voluntary sector support services and activity-based provision. Meaningful and high quality experiences in expressive arts can help looked after children and young people develop resilience in challenging situations and improve negotiating skills. They can support healing for those who have been traumatised, boost self-esteem and provide a chance for fun. Statement 1.29 from the new Standards is relevant to this aspect of creative expression: "I am supported to be emotionally resilient, have a strong sense of my own identity and wellbeing, and address any experiences of trauma and neglect."

Our Creative Journey online

This resource is published as a printable document, but is also maintained as a live resource on The Hub. This means that services can continue to provide practice examples for us to share on an ongoing basis. It also means we can host videos and live links to other resources.

If you would like to submit a practice example, please visit www.hub.careinspectorate.com/submit-your-story/ and click on submit your story.



Main Stage.

Fire and Music

YOGA

Camp-site

Face Painting

2. Looking through the GIRFEC Wellbeing Indicators lens



2.1 Safe

Care and Learning Alliance (CALA) has been involved with Syrian refugee families since September 2016. Its role has been delivering childcare sessions to children aged under three years while their parents receive English lessons. As a parent and toddler group, this service is not registered with the Care Inspectorate.

Syrian refugee support work in Alness

Jayne Watt, Parent Toddler Coordinator, tells their story.

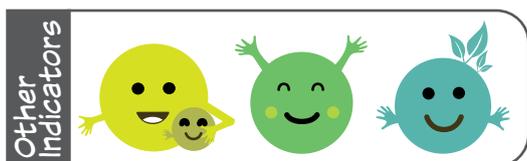
“This piece of work has been rewarding and challenging at the same time. At first the children did not want to leave their parents. We had to spend the two hours just cuddling them and reassuring them that everything was OK. Now they all come straight to us with big smiles ready to learn and play. These four children will be fluent in English by the time they go to school and their parents are so grateful for this opportunity of uninterrupted learning. Providing a wide variety of creative play opportunities has really supported us to build confidence in the children and form attachments with them.

“As the children have grown in confidence, they are happy to stay with us, creating and investigating with the homemade playdough, investigating treasure baskets etc. The parents sometimes have their English lessons in the same room as us and it is nice for them to see their children at play, learning new words and skills. The parents have once or twice stopped their lesson to listen to their children singing or because they hear them laughing when we are playing peek-a-boo.

“The children love song time. At the beginning, they didn’t know any songs or rhymes in English but now they can participate fully with Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, doing the actions and humming the tune. They always say ‘again’ when we do Ring a Ring a Roses. Wheels on the Bus is a favourite for them, which has them all smiling and rocking back and forth. They really enjoy using the Bookbug puppets. They like to pick up books and take them to us to look at with them, especially the ones with ‘lift the flaps’ and the ones that make different noises when you push the buttons.

“We provide as many opportunities as possible to enjoy wide open spaces where they can creatively express themselves to music and explore using their bodies in different ways. They enjoy playing on the seesaw, exploring and investigating pasta, oats or coloured rice that we offer in big tubs. They also enjoy getting into the tubs to play!

“Creative play and imaginative arts experiences have played a central role in the work we have been doing here in supporting the children to develop confidence, form attachments and all-round learning and development. It has been especially important for the children who may have had limited opportunity to play or have fun to have play experiences and get the message that there’s more than one way to do something. This allows the children to experience success and most of all have fun.”



Ashgrove Children’s Centre is a local authority service in Aberdeen. It is registered to provide full- and part-time care for 52 children not yet attending primary school as well as eight school-aged children during term time and 12 school-aged children during holiday periods. Ashgrove Children’s Centre was inspected on 2 March 2016 and received grades of ‘good’ for care and support, environment, management and leadership, and staffing. The inspection report states: “We saw some really nice examples of outdoor play, including good use of natural resources. We saw children exploring cause and effect with ice, exploring the different creatures that lived in the garden areas, writing and drawing with chalk and playing in the mud kitchen. The children enjoyed showing us the snails in the play area that they watched through magnifying glasses, how the mud kitchen worked and all about the planters and what they grew. The children directed their own play. Staff were confident in knowing when to support children and when to stand back and let them make their own experiences.”

Nickum

Ashgrove Children’s Centre hosted Starcatchers’ project Nickum, where artists worked with babies up to age two and their families to explore and develop music and drama ideas together.

Carol Main, Development Officer, supported the artists and the families through the project and gives a reflective account of her involvement.

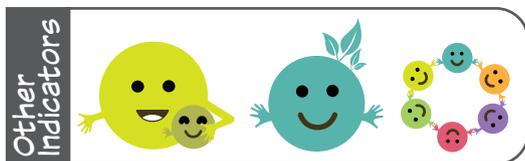
“Working with Starcatchers completely revolutionised my practice, it changed the way I thought about and interacted with babies. Before working with the artists, I was never very confident working with babies. I wasn’t sure the best way to engage them or what they were really getting out of experiences. Watching the babies with the artists, you could really see the way small changes in music or introducing new textures or materials could transform them – you’d see them light up, watch intently or reach for something. Even very young babies were engaging.

"I've carried that approach into my own practice. Once you see that spark and see them engaging then you can work with it and introduce new ideas, and be shaped by the feedback they give you. It's been absolutely amazing."

Jane* started attending Ashgrove Children's Centre with her baby son Kyle*, who was in care. Two years on, Jane and Kyle still attend lots of different sessions at Ashgrove and are integrated well into the community. She describes her experience.

"I started attending Starcatchers when I was going through a very difficult period in my life. At the start, I only attended as part of my contact visits to see my son more but we both thoroughly enjoyed ourselves there. My son was so relaxed and his first and second tooth came through during this time, he also let me leave the room without getting upset which was a big thing. He also sat for the first time unaided during these sessions which is something he shouldn't have been able to do. The class was so relaxed and let you experience the world from your baby's point of view. I was gutted the day I could no longer attend. It is an amazing experience for both parents and babies. Starcatchers helped me develop an amazing bond with my son and I am so grateful for that."

*Names changed for anonymity.



Key learning prompts

- How can creative activities help children feel safe, confident and secure?
- If you are working with children with English as an additional language, there might be particular expressive arts activities that develop language and communication skills.
- Working with children in the same space as their parents/carers can benefit some children and lead to different ways of working.
- Different kinds of expressive arts activities work really well with babies and help develop attachment.
- Are there ways that your anxieties or those of parents about children's safety unnecessarily restrict their freedom to create and play?
- What training might you or your team need to embrace creativity safely?

Find out more

Family Songs in The Froebelian Tradition (2012) M Barker. In: **Early Childhood Practice: Froebel Today** T Bruce

Cultivating Creativity for Babies, Toddlers and Young Children (2012) T Bruce.

Froebel's Mother Songs Today (2012) M Ouvry. In: **Early Childhood Practice: Froebel Today** T Bruce.







2.2 Healthy

Aberlour children's charity is working in partnership with Highland Council in Inverness, Fort William and Tain to provide houses for looked after children and services for vulnerable families. The Care Inspectorate registered Aberlour Sycamore Services to provide Orinsay House, Lochan Cottage and Morangie House on 30 March 2017, so this has not yet been inspected.

Film-making

The film-maker Garry Fraser was commissioned to make a short documentary film with the children. The eight-minute film was premiered at the formal launch of Aberlour's Highland houses in September. Each of the charity's three houses in the Highlands is home to around five children. The charity has also launched an 'edge of care' service in the Highlands, supporting vulnerable families and helping to prevent their children from being removed.

Garry Fraser spent his childhood in 36 care institutions followed by a decade of drug addiction. In his Bafta award-winning autobiographical documentary, *Everybody's Child*, he says: "I wasn't born into this world, I was thrown into it. With an alcoholic dad and a mum that just didn't know how to love."

Picking up a camera changed things for Garry and his films have won acclaim since he took a HND film-making course at Edinburgh College 10 years ago. He started capturing life on Edinburgh's Muirhouse estate and his films caught the attention of author Irvine Welsh whose support helped land Garry a job as second unit director on the film *Trainspotting 2*.

Garry's understanding of the emotions felt by looked after children and his film-making skills made him a perfect partner for Aberlour and the children who would be moving into the houses in the Highlands.

He is passionate about the importance of organisations such as Aberlour. He says: "Their houses are not like the places where I grew up. They are a family and it feels like a family. That was not my experience. Then, care was institutionalised and there was a lack of compassion, a lack of empathy. It was called care but there was a lack of care. The care system is different now but the feelings of the children remain the same. They are uncertain, worried, and anxious about their future. A lot of children will secretly blame themselves for what has happened. They'll never show it but they feel it. There are a lot of issues there and there needs to be a long-term care plan. It's not just about making sure they get through their childhood, it's about making sure they are supported into adulthood. It's that transition that is crucial. It's no use looking after a child for eight years if it's all thrown away when they go to college and start sinking."

Garry reflects on his experiences of being looked after in his childhood and inspiring creativity and passion in this group of children: "Seeing things through that wee bit of glass turned my life upside down. It altered my perspective. It made me feel detached, that I didn't have to get involved in every single thing that was going on around me. You empathise with whoever is in front of your camera and imagine yourself there. It makes you think about yourself at a distance, how you look, how you behave and how other people see you. I loved everything about it, the process of making films. It changed me and it changed my life."

He knows what it can be like for looked after children to endure unwanted visitors. "If I had arrived with all my gear and big ideas when I was in care, I'd tell myself to beat it," he admits. "I am very conscious of that but I can only be honest, ask them honest questions and present their answers honestly. I have the best intentions but so what? My intentions aren't important. What's important is that the kids come away with something of value, whether it's technical knowledge or a sense of creativity or a new confidence.

"I hope this film can achieve lots of things but letting the kids understand their own abilities and creativity is one of the most important."

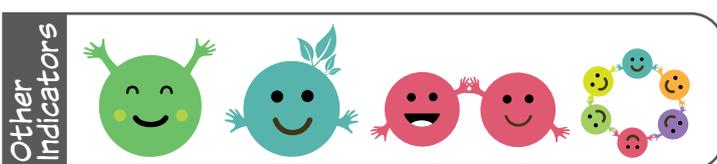


"They will get used to being around a camera and understand how it is just a tool for their creativity. When they are relaxed around the equipment, when the equipment isn't a barrier, the filming will become more authentic."

The importance of mental health and understanding their lives, as well as dispelling myths about looked after children and young people, is explained by Garry: "I hope the film can help the children understand not only where they are now but, more importantly, where they can go, that there is all this potential to move on from the here and now, that this is only the start. I want to make their film, a film that's positive and uplifting and authentic. It should be a film that dispels some of the stereotypes, helps people understand these kids a little better and help them understand themselves and what they can achieve a little better."

One of the young people involved says the film is a chance to learn about film-making and tell their stories: "Garry told us that this wasn't his film but ours and he wants us to think about what we want it to be. He says films work best when they have got something to say and are honest so that is what we are going to do. It has made me think about things in my life and how I can put those things into words and pictures."

Aberlour Chief Executive SallyAnn Kelly hopes the film will help the children find their feet in their new homes and neighbourhoods: "These are houses at the heart of their communities and the children are connected, at the heart of things. We hope they enjoy making the film but also that their new neighbours get the chance to see what terrific children have moved in and the value they can bring to their community."



Red Squirrel Nursery is located in Dundee and is registered to provide a children's daycare service for up to 71 children aged under 12 years. It was inspected on 20 January 2017 and received grades of 'very good' for care and support, and staffing. The inspection report notes how the nursery engaged the children in all aspects of forest school sessions and that staff linked children's developing interests between the outdoor and indoor learning environments.

Expressive arts outdoors

Carole Japp-Aitken, manager, tells their story.

"We are strong advocates of the benefit of outdoor play and learning. Anything you can do inside can also be taken out into nature. We feel the natural environment offers a unique limitless supply of resources to promote creativity, investigation, imagination and problem-solving.

"Our children are very interested in construction and creatively utilise the natural environment and resources on offer to build as far as their imagination will take them. Our forest has housed pirate ships, volcanoes, aeroplanes, fairy villages and even space camps."



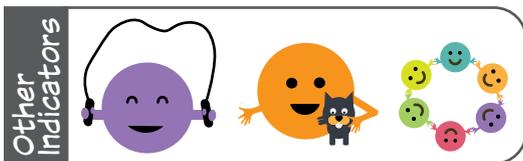
“Our children are also keen artists, using the natural environment and resources to create their own artwork – using sticks and twigs as utensils and trees, stones and logs as their canvases. The outdoor environment turns into an art gallery with painted stones strewed around the forest and decorated logs and sticks hanging from trees. The children have even chosen to make ‘swing pictures’ by painting on paper while swinging back and forward on one of the tyre swings. After using the forest school camp for our nativity setting, the children said that they were very keen that the stage area was kept intact.

“Children are encouraged to explore and express a healthy range of emotions on their ‘outdoor stage’ where they can role play, act out stories and experiences as well as express themselves creatively. They have also shown a continuing interest in music, making songs and sounds using their own natural instruments. Through this creative play, our children have developed confidence and resilience along with the skills needed to communicate their feelings not only to practitioners and carers but with their peers to self-regulate, overcoming conflict without adult intervention.

“We regularly use storytelling both from familiar and favourite books as well as working together to create our own stories to promote children to think and reflect on their own beliefs, develop their understanding about the world and explore their own emotions as well as empathising with others. Our children absorb these stories and use these as a basis for their own role play, re-enacting these stories over and over again.”

Andrea Fernades, parent:

“At bedtime now my daughter asks to hear ‘stories coming not from books but from our head’ because staff tell stories that are not in the books, which is amazing! Fantastic! Now, both dad and myself have to invent a story for her and this has been an excellent exercise for us.”



Rothiemay Playgroup is located 35 miles east of Elgin in Moray and is registered to provide for 12 children at any one time aged from three years to not yet attending primary school. The group is committee-run and staff are managed by CALA. Rothiemay Playgroup was inspected on 28 April 2015 and received grades of 'very good' for care and support, environment, staffing, and management and leadership. The inspection report noted that children's physical wellbeing was being actively promoted and that children used their imagination in the mud kitchen, fetching water to water their vegetable seeds, clambering and climbing on the wooden pirate ship and using their balance/coordination through the tyre and wooden plank adventure course.

Outdoor music

Jackie Steward, CALA Practice Manager, tells their story.

"We have consistently been focusing on the development of our outdoor area. We are keen to ensure that we utilise and create learning experiences for our children that encourage their natural curiosity and creativity, using as many natural resources as possible in innovative ways.

"We had an empty space by our fence so we worked with the children and parents to identify what we might do with the space. An outdoor music area was decided. We noted the children's suggestions of shakers and drums and collected resources to use.

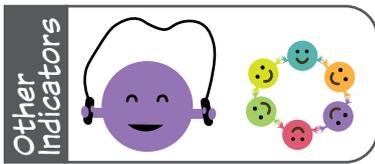
"We had an old metal bookrack which we attached to the fence and then used recycled and unused items to create a unique learning space. Old pots and pans, tubs/buckets, a metal grill and bottles filled with rice, pasta, stones etc. are attached to the book rack and fence and we have old spoons and some rhythm sticks, which the children can use to make their music.

"The outdoor music area gives the children the chance to create music in a large open space where they can make as much noise as they would like. It has encouraged children who are less likely to make music indoors and gives everyone the chance to explore different sounds and tempos.



“The children now access the music corner regularly, both individually and as groups, and sing lots of well-known songs as well as making up their own songs. It encourages literacy and numeracy and we often hear the children counting in before they start: ‘one, two, three go!’.

“Along with all the outdoor areas we monitor the music area regularly to see if the children are still motivated and inspired by it. We constantly make changes to it, for example adding things in or only putting out resources that make certain noises or are the same shape. Any changes that are made are noted in our self-evaluation folder and reviewed so see if they’ve worked or not.”



Key learning prompts

- How do you spend creative time outdoors?
- To what extent do you have enough opportunities to participate in creative activities?
- Planning to involve children from the outset and work with them as equal partners to develop their own ideas often results in rich creative experiences for everyone.
- With the children you work with, how could you support them to use video and film-making in creative ways?
- The natural environment can offer a versatile canvas, stage or setting for children to develop expressive arts and build confidence in their own creativity. How can you promote this with the children you work with?
- Art, construction and music activities can all be taken outside and flourish in different ways from this. What other expressive arts could you take outside?

Find out more

Child’s Play Music (www.childsplaymusic.com.au) has a range of online videos promoting children playing music.

The Sky is the Limit; Outdoor Learning in Early Years Core Pack and 10 supplementary leaflets (2014) Early Education

Sounds Like Playing (2004) Ouvry, M.

A Child’s Work: The Importance of Fantasy Play (2004) Paley, V. G.

Supporting Musical Development in the Early Years (2003) L Pound and C C Harrison.





2.3 Achieving

Melanie Davies provides a childminding service from her home in Perth. She is registered to provide full- and part-time care to a maximum of seven children under 16. Melanie was inspected on 15 December 2016 and received grades of 'excellent' for care and support, and 'very good' for environment as well as management and leadership. The inspection report notes that children were enjoying a great variety of play opportunities which were supporting them to explore, be creative and learn independent skills. The children's personal plans showed how they were achieved in line with the wellbeing indicators and how activities were planned to support further progress.

My family

Melanie discusses the children's experiences.

"As the girls I look after were coming back time and again to a family game in role play they called Mummies and Sisters, I printed off booklets and over a number of weeks we talked about each member of their families – what made them special, what they liked to do with them and we looked at photos they brought in. In the booklets, the girls drew and decorated figures for mum, dad, sister, dog etc.

"Lots of laughter came out of the booklets. The girls reflected on their family members' eyes colours, hair etc. Bald parents suddenly had full heads of long hair and mummy's had purple and pink hairstyles. Eyes were red, pink and purple, very creative. I asked: 'What's special about daddy?' and got answers such as: 'He makes me sausages and chicken nuggets for tea.' The books went home at the end to share with their families.

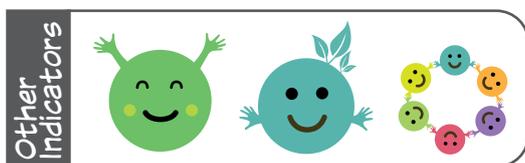
"A further extension of the booklets and sharing feelings was a Hello Kitty book called My Mummy. This was chosen with the girls at the local central library. Reading the book prompted more stories such as 'I love doing baking with my mummy' or 'my doggy likes to chase sticks and his name is' etc. We read this book at the girls request a lot. They often read it to me.

"The girls liked decorating pictures and using glitter and nice colours. They liked talking about 'huggles and kisses' (with mummy and daddy) and really enjoyed telling their friends about the special people in their lives.

"Parents provided very positive feedback. They told me about the conversations they had enjoyed looking at the booklets together. The girls were very proud of the artwork they made and clearly

enjoyed the warm responses from their families. They looked at the booklets together and the girls felt motivated and good about themselves.

“Further play involved making dens in the front room into houses. The girls kitted these out and ‘tried on’ different family roles as grandma, sister or daddy, even the family pet. One three-year-old told us about imaginary brothers and a sister she has. This helped develop verbal skills, sharing ideas, expressing imaginative narrative and forming friendship bonds. It was evident that what children valued most was spending time with parents and the physical warmth and constant love their parents provided.”



Evie Primary School Nursery, Orphir Community School and Stenness Community School Nursery are local authority services in Orkney.

Evie Primary School Nursery is registered to provide care for 20 children aged from two years to those not yet attending primary school. It was inspected on 25 August 2015 and received grades of ‘very good’ for care and support, environment and staffing, and ‘good’ for management and leadership. The inspection report noted that the service reflects children’s interests when planning activities and places a strong emphasis on the involvement of parents and children. Children’s ideas were the basis for daily planning and any longer term themes were developed in response to children’s interests which had been observed by staff.

Orphir Community School and Stenness Community School Nursery are registered to provide care for 15 children aged from three years to those not yet attending primary school. Orphir Community School was inspected on 23 February 2016 and received a grade of ‘very good’ for staffing, and grades of ‘good’ for care and support, environment, and management and leadership. The inspection report noted that families felt included and respected and the nursery children were an integral part of the life of the school. Children’s ideas were respected and formed the basis for the planning of nursery activities and were responsible for leading the play for much of the session.

Stenness Community School Nursery was inspected on 24 February 2016 and received grades of 'very good' for care and support, environment, staffing, and management and leadership. The inspection report found that the nursery was performing very well in ensuring that children were nurtured and achieving. There was a warm supportive approach by staff to ensure children were happy and settled. Children's ideas were respected and their interests formed the basis for planning within the nursery. Staff used mind mapping, talking tubs and a thinking tree to plan and record children's ideas.

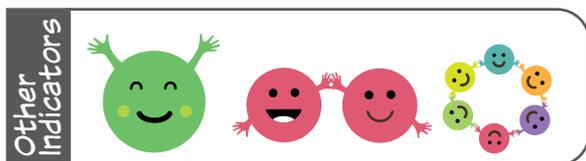
Loose Parts and The Pier Arts Centre

Victoria Fairnie, Teacher, Early Years Team, tells their story.

"In the early years team we are interested in promoting the use of loose parts as a sustainable means of enriching the environment to promote creativity. When we realised that the author of the Theory of Loose Parts, Simon Nicholson, has work exhibited in The Pier Arts Centre, Stromness, this led us to a productive collaboration. The Pier Arts Centre was keen to explore how the children would respond to artwork in the permanent collection and the children wanted to find out about what modern art is.

"Evie, Orophir and Stenness nurseries took part in the project based on Beautiful Stuff, a Reggio Emilia-inspired idea using Loose Parts to explore and encourage mathematical and artistic development. The children collected free and found 'beautiful stuff' from home and brought it into nursery where they sorted, matched, counted, measured and recorded information, according to their own criteria. The Pier Arts Centre asked the children to select materials by colour and texture, fundamental considerations for any artist.

"After sorting it into individual colours and two contrasting textures – shiny and dull/rough, the 'beautiful stuff' was taken to the gallery where the children worked collaboratively to make sculptures inspired by the artwork on display. The children's own work, entitled Inspired by..., is now exhibited in the windows of the gallery."



Hawthorn Children and Families Centre is a local authority service in Dalkeith. It is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 48 children aged from birth to eight years and to provide an outreach service to families in their own home. Hawthorn Children and Families Centre was inspected on 20 March 2017 and received a grade of 'excellent' for care and support, and 'very good' for staffing. The inspection report notes that children received excellent support for their health and wellbeing needs, and were happy and confident in their environment.

Storytelling

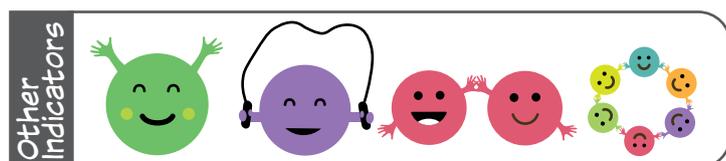
Cherie Morgan, Strategy and Development, Play Scotland, explains how staff used creativity to support a child.

"Sian* is nearly two years old. She loves running around, and never wants to stay still to listen to stories. Following the practical training at the Creative Skills Programme with Starcatchers, the staff at her nursery took a new, interactive approach to storytelling. They introduced exaggerated facial expressions, different voices for different characters and props that Sian and her friends could play with and act out the different parts the story.

"The staff repeated the story every day, and Sian and the other boys and girls started developing their imaginative play, using props and bits of the story in different scenarios."

"By bringing the story to life and finding ways to include Sian in the telling it really captured her imagination. Sian now loves stories and enjoys listening and taking part in the storytelling."

*Name changed for anonymity.



Hillend Children's Centre is a local authority service in Greenock. Hillend Children's Centre is registered to provide full- and part-time care for 50 children aged from 0 up to those not yet attending primary school. Hillend Children's Centre is a fully integrated pre-five centre with children who have a wide range of additional and complex needs. It was inspected on 20 April 2017 and received a grade of 'very good' for care and support, and 'good' for environment. The inspection report highlights that staff knew the children and their families very well, and how a sensitive approach to transitions ensured positive experiences for children, staff and management.

Moving matters

Lesley O'Hagan, manager, discusses the creative journey for staff, children and parents who took part in Starcatchers' Creative Skills Programme.

"We decided to explore the idea of an arts and drama programme that we could introduce and take forward to enhance development and learning for children and staff. Foremost in our mind was to create an experience that all of our children could participate in so their needs were being met."

Aileen Findlater, Early Years Education and Childcare Officer, tells Max's story.

"Max is four years old and has difficulties with his mobility, affecting all four limbs, and has poor head control. We realised we would have to put together an individualised programme to suit his needs. I worked closely with Skye Reynolds, Starcatchers resident artist, to develop a programme that would be suitable for Max. I recognised that for Max to have the best possible outcome and experience we would use our multi-sensory dream room, which is quieter and has fewer distractions than the playroom. By looking closely and imaginatively at our surroundings we hoped this would increase Max's confidence and trust, thus inspiring him to achieve further goals in his development. Resources we used were light-weight scarves, ribbons, balls and motivators. The idea behind creative meaningful play is to allow children to explore all concepts, social rules and information without them realising this in the first instance.

"As we progressed, I realised how much more we could incorporate some of the senses. Max was indicating his pleasure and enjoyment by using facial gestures, smiles, sounds and giggles. By adding a song such as I am Standing Very tall, Skye and I enabled Max to stand tall, clap his hands and have a beneficial experience as part of his learning and development. Skye also had time on a one-to-one basis with Max in which she used her body to guide him to push himself and her techniques helped to improve his posture. By adapting the programme for Max's needs it helped him to develop confidence and explore resources for use in creative movement.

"My inspiration was seeing the joy, contentment and the sense of achievement with high-fives from Max. This led me to take this programme further and enabled me to deliver my experience and

knowledge to others. The next step was to involve the parents who were invited to observe and join in. This was very successful and the parents realised they could further develop Max's movements even more.

"On reflection, my aims were to take on board good practice and share my knowledge and keep up the programme by ensuring this was part of my weekly planning.

"I learned not to be afraid to try new techniques. I became more confident in supporting children with complex needs. I acknowledged alternative ways of using basic exercises as a starting point for expressing creative movement. I can make split-second decisions and adapt the activity using my own initiative."

Max's gran:

"Max loved working with Skye. He was smiling and making lots of noise. It was lovely seeing Max at nursery with his friends."

Marai Kennedy, Early Years Education and Childcare Officer, tells Tiree's* story.

"Starcatchers worked within the Snowdrops room, which is a room for children with communication and language difficulties.

"When Skye first came into the room she initially took time to observe children at play. She then put on some soft and relaxing music and started to move herself around the room, covering all areas of the playroom. At this time the room consisted of three children all with a diagnosis of autism and were on a ratio of one adult to every child. Two of the children continued to play on their own while one of the children, Tiree, stopped what she was doing and looked directly at Skye. The child appeared to show curiosity by watching Skye move around the room. Skye moved slowly and rhythmically



towards Tiree who continued to watch. She proceeded to put her body over the top of Tiree and then under her and Tiree watched. Skye then placed her hands on Tiree's back and lifted her upwards. Tiree smiled. Skye then moved her around in various positions while moving around the room and Tiree smiled and giggled as she was moved around. This session lasted around five minutes.

"Skye visited our room every week and after her second visit when she entered the room Tiree went straight to her. These sessions lasted between 10 and 15 minutes each time and Tiree appeared to really enjoy this, giving excellent eye contact, smiling and laughing.

"One of the sessions was filmed and I passed this to Tiree's mum who found this very emotional and inspiring. Mum met with Skye who gave her ideas for music and movement that would allow mum to have a similar experience.

"Throughout our sessions Tiree's keyworker and other staff within the playroom observed Skye and had meetings with her to see how we could take this dance/drama forward within the room. A short dance was incorporated into the daily routine for all children at the beginning of the day. By observing and having discussions with Skye, it also provided the staff in the room the confidence to try more dance and drama through the curriculum for the children."

Tiree's mum:

"I was overwhelmed when I saw the video of my daughter with Skye. I have never seen her interact with such pleasure and enjoyment, which was evident in her smile, eye contact and body language."

Creative workshop

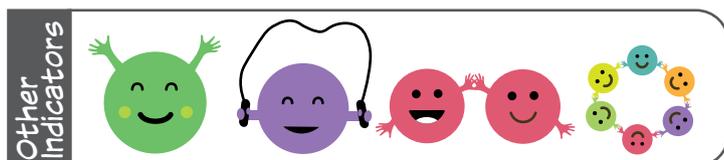
Lesley O'Hagan, Manager, tells this story.

"Throughout the year we have four curriculum workshops to share learning and teaching with parents. To celebrate our work with Starcatchers we planned and implemented a creative day held at the nursery. Parents were invited to participate and encouraged to work with their children in different ways.

"Staff along with artists Skye and Andy demonstrated a range of ways for parents to be more creative with their children. Initially parents were apprehensive and not confident in performing in front of other adults, however as these ideas were implemented by staff and the artists, parents became more enthusiastic about learning more ways to be creative with their children. Providing these opportunities encourages confidence, self-esteem, social development and risk-taking among others. Parents felt the day was enjoyable and offered them ideas for play at home.

“This was a success because of the commitment by staff including managers and because we had a clear vision of what we wanted to achieve through creating a driver diagram and continuous self-evaluation to reflect on what was going well and what we needed to develop further.”

*Name changed.



Innerwick Primary School Nursery is a local authority service in Dunbar. It is registered to provide a service to 20 children aged from three to those not yet attending primary school. At the time of the November 2016 inspection, the nursery offered a morning session five days per week during term time. Innerwick Primary School Nursery was inspected on 30 November 2016 and received ‘very good’ for care and support and ‘excellent’ for management and leadership. The inspection report notes that children were encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour, to resolve conflicts themselves and given opportunities to develop the interpersonal skills needed to develop confident individuals.

Creative skills in practice: a creative process

Practitioner Sarah Laing attended Starcatchers’ Creative Skills training during 2014–2015. She took much of what she learned back to the children she worked with at Innerwick Primary School Nursery. Sarah introduced a puppet called Stripy to the children and led sessions which still continue to empower children to think and move creatively.

Sarah discusses the Creative Skills experience and the huge impact on children.

“Each week I shared with the children new skills I had acquired when attending the Creative Skills training. Together we developed new ways of being creative using our bodies, voices and imagination.

“I found the training transformational, positively impacting on my practice. Inspired, I created Stripy the puppet, made simply from a recycled egg box and a stripy glove. His role was to support the children during ‘Stripy Time’ sessions. The children’s enthusiasm and engagement during these sessions was evident.

“Here are the thoughts I shared on Starcatchers’ website: I witness daily the benefits of creativity for young children. The manner in which our nursery children sing, dance and move with a puppet called Stripy would convince anyone. Their smiles, growing confidence and ability to sustain high-level engagement throughout each session are all the evidence I need.



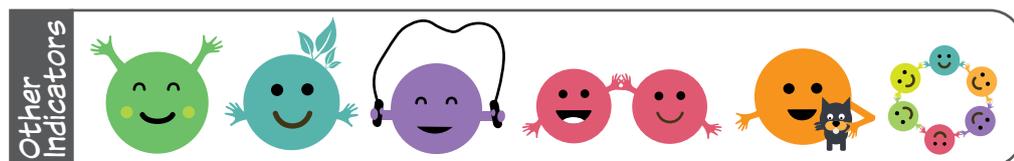
“An opportunity to have a Creative Skills artist visit our nursery led to a period of intense creativity. The children decided to plan a party for Stripy’s fourth birthday and invited Hazel Darwin-Edwards, the puppeteer artist involved in delivering some of the training sessions, as their special party guest. The children became very involved in the planning of this exciting event. They were very enthusiastic when developing their ideas, which included wearing stripy clothing, decorating the nursery in stripes, making puppet friends for Stripy to play with and sharing our creative skills with Hazel and parents. Even in these early stages of planning it became apparent that children were developing high levels of wellbeing, an ability to maintain engagement throughout a process, improved concentration skills and new ways of expressing themselves creatively.

“The much anticipated party started with Hazel spending time with Stripy, the children and their puppets. After enjoying a stripy snack we settled down to a ‘Stripy Time’ session with Hazel. This was an opportunity to share some of our new creative skills, as well as for Hazel to share her expertise with us. Stripy’s party ended with the children displaying their creative skills and those learned alongside Hazel to family members.

“Afterwards I considered the impact on the children, realising there were two children in particular who benefitted from the whole experience. One child, with language delay, came alive during each creative session when she found she could easily join in, be part of something and express herself in her own way that was meaningful to her. It was obvious these experiences were empowering, providing her with a real voice, which in turn developed her self-belief and sense of wellbeing.

“Another child who tended to be quiet and reserved at times embraced the whole learning experience. He engaged fully in creating puppets and became an expert, making very elaborate designs which were much admired by his peers and nursery staff. His mother shared with us that he also made puppets at home, kept them safely in a special shoe box and used them to play creatively with his siblings. She was delighted with how he had grown in self-confidence and creative ability.

“It was very evident too that all children had developed knowledge, skills and learning dispositions during the planning for the party and ‘Stripy Time’ experiences and these were not purely skills usually associated with creativity. Their learning spread across developmental domains and covered the whole curriculum.”



Hazel Moffat provides a childminding service from her home in Perth. She is registered to provide full- and part-time care to a maximum of six children under 16 years. Hazel was inspected on 5 August 2014 and received grades of 'excellent' for care and support, and management and leadership, and 'very good' for environment. The inspection report noted that the child using the service during that inspection had a warm and trusting relationship with Hazel and responded very well to her.

We're going on a bear hunt

Hazel discusses two-year-old Maggie's experience.

"The idea for the story happened from a 'seed' moment when the child found a bear in the wild animal box. To engage Maggie with her input and help with the next steps identified in her review with parents, we looked at the pop-up story called We're Going on a Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen, which has interactive tabs to help characters move.

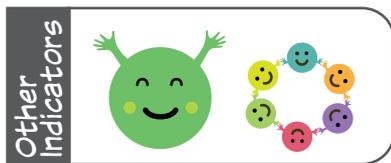
"We then found lots of different bears and different textures and had their ideas included in how to retell the story on tuff tray. We discussed what materials could be used to re-enact the story. After nap time, we snuggled on the couch and watched the cartoon version of Bear Hunt and discussed and joined in with the song. We poured and squeezed out paints and then mixed them to make the colour brown and made bears. We have made dark dens and used torches to read the story 'in a cave'. We have been on several bear hunts up hills and woodland parks to re-enact the story. We even went to Camperdown Park to see real bears!

"In Maggie's review plan the next steps were to help develop interest in stories and language and to encourage the child to sit longer for story time. This has been successfully achieved and she now takes part enthusiastically at story time. Her attention span is much longer and she can now sit through long stories and asks 'again please'.



“This story sack was shared at home and her parent commentated: ‘Maggie loved sharing the story with us at home and we know the story now. We now sing Bear Hunt going home in the car every night.’

“We often re-visit the story and months later Maggie still remembers the good time she had and recalls ‘it was a scary big bear’ and ‘he did rahhhhh!’ We have done similar things with other stories since.”



Monkey Puzzle Glasgow is an out of school care service in Glasgow. It is registered to provide full- and part-time care for 119 children aged up to 16. A nursery as well as out of school care and holiday club are provided. Monkey Puzzle Glasgow was inspected on 14 April 2017 and received grades of ‘very good’ for care and support and ‘good’ for management and leadership. The inspection report noted that staff felt encouraged to lead initiatives such as Eco schools project, sensory play, home link, cooking, music and dance.

Music in out of school care

Senior practitioner Paddy Mahoney is a keen musician with training in sound recording. He tells their story.

“The out of school care club is based within its own space in the building, which includes a music room with recording equipment and a variety of acoustic and digital instruments including guitars, banjo, keyboards and drum kits.



"As a starter session, children are introduced to rhythm and beats. This allows them to gain confidence when expressing themselves through music. As they grow in confidence, staff encourage them to share their ideas and concepts of the types of music they would like to explore. Some children wish to learn to play an instrument and staff help them to learn bass guitar chords and melody."

"Other children love to sing and perform. We host karaoke sessions each month, which give children the opportunity to perform and share their talents with their friends. We hosted Gorbals Has Talent in October 2016 and had a guest judge from Heart Radio along with three parents judging our talent show. The children had a fantastic time celebrating and showcasing their talents. Having staff who have additional skills, which they can use to enhance the children's learning opportunities has been very beneficial.



"We have a group of children who are currently using the mixing equipment to create short loops which over time will be built up to make a full song. We visited a professional music studio and recorded a few tracks, which the children enjoyed making. They picked the songs Let it Go and My Fight Song to record. The children can now say they have made a music CD. We will be looking to host another talent show in October and create our first full original song by December 2017.

"Over the past decade, the Gorbals has seen an increasing number of refugee and asylum-seeking families moving into the area. A number of children attending the out of school care have English as a second language and through the creative opportunities offered the staff have seen their English literacy and communication skills develop.

"Children are allowed to access the music room freely and have a go, which leads to impromptu singing, music and dance shows. The workers will sometimes provide more structured musical opportunities and the children have made and recorded their own songs."

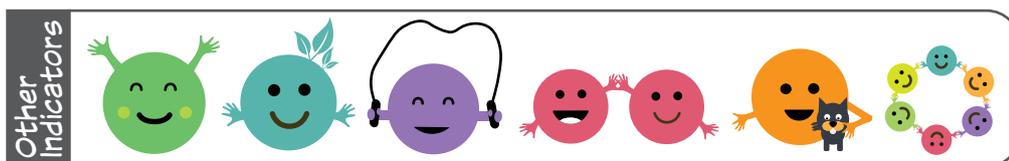
Quotes from the children:

Karis: "I love songs and dancing with my friends. The recording studio was so cool and we all got a CD of our song."

Kai: "The drums are great. I can now drum a beat for a whole song."

Henry: "I love going and sitting at the drums, just having fun."

Hector: "I sang on the Elf Buster song and shouted: 'Everyone loves Lorraine'."



Out of school care story club

Practitioner Susan Kirkwood has training in performance and community arts and is a keen writer who runs various writing groups. She describes the story club.

Aim 1 – Find the Joy

The most important thing about story club is that it's fun. By helping our writers to find the joy in writing, we can help them build on their skills and abilities, hopefully making writing and reading something that they enjoy and choose to do outwith school and homework.

Our story club meets on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. It is a drop-in activity, so children can come and go as they like. Some will spend all their time in the club, while others will write for a few minutes before going elsewhere to play. Each child can work at their own speed.

The children have created a cover to go over the drum kit during our meeting times and a rota for when the drums can be used, and when story club is in session.

The children had a meeting to decide on what kind of stories they would like to explore. They selected a different topic for each month and we made a list for the full year which can be found on the music room window.

We talk a lot about 'story sparks'. This refers to the moment a story idea begins to form in your head. For each different topic, there are interesting images and writing prompts available for the children to use. They are stuck to the window with blue tack so the children can remove them and move them around as they like to see what ideas they can create.

It's important that when a story sparks we get the idea recorded as quickly as we can, as sometimes they don't stick around for too long. We have lots of options available for this. There are different worksheets in our blue folder that have planning pages for different stages. As well as story pages, some are laid out in a comic book style and others have a space for pictures and text. The children can record their idea in whichever way they prefer.



We use the top drawer of the desk as a 'work in progress' box. Once the first draft is ready, each story gets a new polly pocket in 'our stories and poems' ring binder on the windowsill. We use this to record and track all of our changes and edits as the story develops.

Aim 2 – Fight the Fear

As with almost any creative art, the fear of failure can be a huge barrier for many people. The fear that their story or idea won't come out the way they want, or that people will judge them badly for their art, can be enough to stop them trying in the first place. So, our story club has come up with some things to help us fight this fear and create great stories.

Mistakes are good and our first drafts are not supposed to be perfect. I talk to the writers, sometimes as a group and sometimes one-to-one, about the importance of making mistakes and knowing that no writer ever has made a perfect first draft. I've found the children to be very good at helping each other with this by often coming up with new ideas to help each other create even better stories.

Story Club Rules

Our writers have created a list of rules to help. The rule poster can be found on the wall and includes rules such as:

- no one is allowed to read your story without your permission
- you don't have to share your story until you are ready
- you can't steal other people's story ideas.

We have a story club spelling book that can be used by everyone. It's available on the desk and any word that is requested can be added, either by a member of staff or by the children themselves. I've found the children to be very supportive of each other in this and they enjoy being able to help their friends by adding new words.

Aim 3 – Understand the Publishing Journey

It's important that our writers understand how much work goes into the creation of a book. In order to help them learn about this first-hand, the children have been working towards the publication of their own work.



Above our main work station is a poster depicting the four stages of the publishing journey. As each new story is created, a ticket is added to the poster. As the writer moves through the process of first drafts, editing, polishing, etc. they will move their ticket along the poster.

In order to explain what the process of creating our book will involve, we have made a calendar stating each of the important dates and the deadline for each activity. The children cross off each day as we move through the month. All of the jobs that are done by the children are in orange, and the jobs that were done by me are in grey.

Aim 4 – Supporting Skill Development

The children have access to a PC, which is used for typing our first drafts. The children can sign up for a computer slot. Each slot lasts 20 minutes. The children develop typing and basic computer skills.

I've found that the children have become very interested in exploring fonts and colours that they can use for their stories. They are encouraged to experiment with all these different effects and enjoy creating some very bright stories.

We encourage our writers to build on their vocabulary using our 'wise word' wall. Each post-it note contains an interesting word along with its definition. If the children can use one of these words in the correct context in their story they earn their team a wise word point.

In developing literacy, we encourage our writers to work at their own speed and level with support from me and other staff. I've also found that the older children enjoy helping the younger ones.

For the children who are still learning, I will act as a scribe for their story idea, and then help them to copy out what I have written into their own page, at their own speed.

Even if a writer only manages 100 words, they are now 100 words better at writing than they were before.

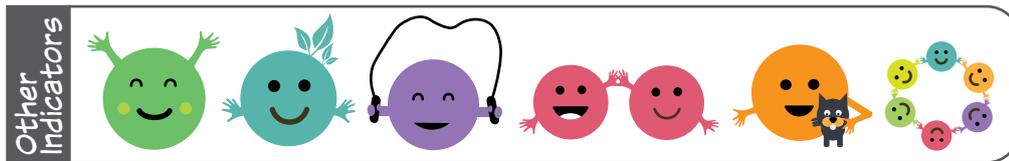
Even in just the few short months, I've noticed an improvement in writing skills of our regular members. Most of them are writing with much more confidence than they were at the beginning.

Here are some examples of this development:

Julia is now asking to write regularly, and is picking up on dotting her 'i's and crossing her 't's. She asks me to write out the sentence first and then copies it onto her page. Her words are becoming more legible and easier to read, and she is remembering how to spell a few of the smaller words on her own.

Oiwia has shown a great dedication to completing her story on time for the deadline. Her typing skills have improved and I've noticed that the speed she is typing at has become faster.

Mrudul has shown that his understanding of storytelling structure has improved and with each new story he's created he's adding slightly more detail to his characters. The storyline of his creations are becoming more structured, involving a conflict and a sensible resolution.



Key learning prompts

- To what extent is there a focus on the process rather than the product during any creative activity?
- Using props and drama can aid storytelling and developing much loved narratives. Similarly, some story apps such as pictello are now available that can help children develop their own storytelling process. How could you enhance the storytelling experience in your setting?
- Physical movement can play a particular role in helping children to achieve. In what ways could you use physical movement creatively with individual children and groups of children you work with?
- Using puppets is an art in itself, which can be effective and powerful in unlocking creative expression. What could puppets bring to your work with children?
- Music can be used creatively to help children develop and achieve. Do you have parents and other volunteers who are musicians and how could you bring in musicians to work creatively with children?
- What cues do you look for which indicate a child needs support from an adult to extend their creativity and play repertoire?
- What are you doing to promote open-ended outcomes in your setting to ensure creativity is developed?

Find out more

Talk for Writing in the Early Years (2016) P Corbett.

Dyslexia – in tune but out of time, *The Psychologist*, (2013) U Goswami.

Loose Parts Play – A toolkit by Theresa Casey and Juliet Robertson (2016) Inspiring Scotland and Scottish Government.

The Boy Who Would be a Helicopter: Uses of Storytelling in the Classroom (1990) VG Paley.

Sylvia Troon (www.sylviatroon.co.uk) specialises in working with puppets. Tales toolkit (www.talestoolkit.com) provides an accessible online resource for involving children in storytelling.



2.4 Nurtured

Amber Kindergarten is located on the Camphill Rudolph Steiner School's Murtle Campus to the west of Aberdeen and is registered for a maximum of 31 children from 12 months to seven years. It was inspected on 3 March 2017 and received 'excellent' for the environment, 'very good' for care and support, and 'good' for staffing. The inspection report noted that the children were happy, independent and confident, and supported to be healthy and active, as well as achieving their potential.

Creativity in Amber Kindergarten

Lead practitioner Claudia Gallizio tells their story.

"In Amber Kindergarten the children are offered many opportunities to develop and nourish their creativity. There are regular weekly activities such as baking, gardening, drawing/painting and a Forest School day spent outdoor in the small forest on the estate.

"We involve the children in planning by asking them what they would like to bake and we write the food order with them. In this way, we can also address their awareness about where the food comes from and what is available in the season. Similarly, we ask for their ideas about how to make our playground beautiful and which flowers they want to grow. In the forest, the charcoal obtained by making a fire is then used to draw.

"We believe that by offering the children the opportunity of choosing within a structured situation we can help their creativity to develop in a healthy and meaningful way.

"It was interesting to observe this principle in practice when we had a 'creative painting' session. The children worked in pairs and shared a sheet of paper, three primary colours and water jugs. They each had brushes, straws and pipettes to apply the colours on the wet paper. By starting the lesson in an orderly way and explaining how the straws and the pipettes could be used the children were encouraged to paint with care.

"Once they started to paint the mood became quiet and still. Gradually the children started to make comments on the different hues of colours that were appearing on their papers, they started to experiment with the different tools they had and their excitement



grew. The sense of wonder and pleasure they experienced was real and deep. They were proud of what they had created.

“One day we did a special kind of drawing-collage, an idea we found in a book by Bruno Munari, an Italian scholar whose ideas have influenced the approach to creativity and art through play in the early years. The children had different kinds of coloured paper available on the table. An adult showed them that by tearing one bit of paper you could then look at what its shape looked like. A long strip of yellow crepe became a worm and a landscape was created around it using different textured paper. The children had great fun in finding hidden shapes in the randomly torn paper and started to tell each other stories about their creations.

“Another way we encourage creativity is by ‘cooking a story’. We sit in a circle and we have a special beautiful spoon, in turn we put ‘an ingredient’ in the spoon and we drop it in the centre of the circle – our imaginary ‘story pot’. The spoon is passed from child to child and once it comes back to the adult a number of ‘ingredients’ have been named and the story is ready to be told. The adult weaves into the story all the ingredients given and involves the children with questions and actions related to the stories. Older children, aged five or six, enjoy cooking stories without any adult support.

“It is a great pleasure and a privilege to nourish and support the development of the children’s creativity. It reminds the adults about the great joy of discovery and the satisfaction derived by the act of creating. The more we can offer children a variety of opportunities to be creative the more we nourish their confidence and resilience.”

Creativity in Mica Garden (part of Camphill School’s Murtle Campus)

Lead practitioner Emma Christie tells their story.

“Nature is the most creative teacher we have. By ensuring our children have an ample amount of quality time to play in the forest and in our ‘wild’ garden, we encourage the growth of our children’s creative spirits. Outside, they are happier, able to problem-solve better, more imaginative and focused. In fact the possibilities are limitless. Science and nature walk hand in hand when reinforcing all positives of being outside.

“So time in nature is a big contributor to our children’s creative development, but the magic lies in the small stuff. We believe children need to connect deeply with their natural surroundings, which nourishes their creativity. We continually model a love, appreciation, hard work and care for nature.

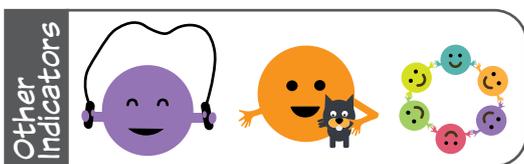
Our work is purposeful and always to the benefit of our local environment.

“Our outside area has a majority of natural, open-ended resources to support the children’s work and play. A stick can lead any child into a world of imagination and with each stone, a new discovery. We support our children by being led by their interests and taking time to appreciate their tiny moments of

wonder. We try our best not to interrupt these moments with our own learning agendas such as asking: 'How many spots do you think that ladybird has?'. We practice being engulfed in a moment and appreciating nature's treasures for what they are. Looking closely in detail at a tiny flower has a huge creative impact on our children. We also sprinkle our environment with touches of 'fairy dust' or set up small surprises to promote a sense of magical enticement.

"Another important aspect to developing creativity in our Kindergarten is by encouraging risk-taking in play. Our children have recently taken an interest in climbing trees, which we support to optimise the feelings of being challenged and of success. Risky play boosts self-esteem and the taking part ensures an active engagement with nature.

"We also stretch the opportunities to experience new creative endeavours using an abundance of natural materials. We regularly take on weaving, sewing, felting and clay modelling projects, which always reflect our current season and mood. We find if the children can connect with the colours, with the sensation of materials, with the rhythm of making simple repeated patterns then they have a better, more valuable, creative experience. By planting these little creative seeds we can enjoy watching our children grow, stretch and reach for the sky."



Family First (Housing Support Service) is operated by CALA and is available in Sutherland, Skye and Lochalsh. The service is delivered by coordinators and a team of volunteers and is registered to provide support to parents or carers with children living in the wider community.

Family First was inspected on 28 August 2015 and received grades of 'excellent' for care and support, staffing, and management and leadership. The inspection report noted that all families who experienced the service were very happy with the care and support being provided, and were very much involved in the delivery of the service.

Creative play and imaginative arts

Family First (Housing Support Service) staff, toddler group facilitators and Gaelic language development workers discuss creativity in the settings.

"Family First staff work in partnership with CALA's toddler group facilitators and Gaelic language development workers to ensure vulnerable families are integrated and established in their communities. Often due to the rurality of some parts of the Highlands, families can become isolated and staff play a vital role in ensuring inclusion. The service aims to value the uniqueness of each individual family and to help to build on their capacity to become independent and confident contributors to their local community.

"Creative play and imaginative arts experiences play a central role in toddlers' learning and development. We support young children and parents to explore through a variety of art, craft, sensory and messy play alongside songs, rhymes and movement to music. Creating art is a fine way for toddlers to make choices and solve problems. Every step involves making a decision: what colour to use, how to make a line, what size to make something. Staff support parents to develop their understanding of the value of this play and have a plethora of play ideas that parents can recreate at home in a small-scale inexpensive way.

"For toddlers, creative play is about the process of creating. There's no right and wrong in how toddlers create and respond to art. Through free-flowing creative play, toddlers can explore the world in their own way, which is important for learning and development."

Moira Lane, Family Support Coordinator at Kyleakin Family First Group in Skye, and Shirley Taylor, Area Family Support Coordinator, discuss the environment.

"You've got great space and you can spread out. It's a really good area and it means for parents who haven't got so much room at home they can let children get messy and try different things. For

parents at home you can always do it on a much smaller scale in your kitchen sink or a basin in the bath. It's so simple, and rice and pasta could keep children busy for an hour or so."

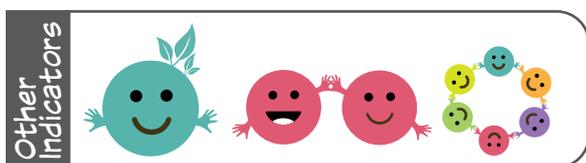
Parent Rachael Sheard explains the benefits of creative play for her child at the group.

"We're in a small community where there aren't any children of her age. So we drive about 45 minutes to get here. She talks about the group through the week and asks: 'Can we go down to Kyleakin Playgroup?' It's a great opportunity for her play with other kids and see them doing different things that she might not see them doing at home and to participate in a bit of group play. She doesn't really get this opportunity through the week, unless her siblings are home from school and even then she would not get it in the same way as they are quite a bit older than her. It's a fantastic thing for me because I don't have to have a big mess at home.

"There's a lot of stuff at the group such as foam and things like that. It gives her a great chance to explore new materials and make up little games, where they are being birds in the nest and burying and looking for worms in the nest worms are spaghetti. We wouldn't have played that at home today. I would probably have done some chores and she would have had to occupy herself with her toys."

CALA and Bòrd na Gàidhlig are working in partnership with Highland Council, developing a vibrant Gaelic 0-3 early years sector across the Highlands. Four part-time Gaelic development workers support and promote Gaelic language learning and usage among the youngest children and their parents through quality play experiences at Gaelic toddler groups.

Research shows the link between language and expressive arts and play is particularly strong. Gaelic development workers encourage a range of play experiences including creative and expressive which supports the development of children's Gaelic language."



Hawthorn Children and Families Centre is a local authority service in Dalkeith. It is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 48 children aged from birth to eight years and to provide an outreach service to families in their own home. Hawthorn Children and Families Centre was inspected on 20 March 2017 and received a grade of 'excellent' for care and support, and 'very good' for staffing. The inspection report notes that children received excellent support for their health and wellbeing needs, and were happy and confident in their environment.

Painting

Cherie Morgan, Strategy and Development, Play Scotland, explains how practitioner Alison Hutchison has used creativity to support a family.

"Jaime* is five years old and finds it difficult to sit still and focus on anything. Jaime is on the child protection register. She and her mum are being supported at home with visits from the local children and families centre to help with bonding and attachment.

"When Jaime was asked what she'd like to do during Alison's next visit, she asked to do some painting. Jaime's mum was nervous about the mess, but Alison helped them set up in the kitchen where it would be easy to clean up. Sitting side by side, Jaime's mum painted pictures while Jaime became completely absorbed in mixing the paints into different colours.

"Without any pressure to create an end product, painting together gave Jaime and her mum a calm, positive experience where Jaime could make decisions, take the lead and share her thoughts and feelings. Since Jaime and her mum have started exploring shared creative experiences there have been huge improvements in Jaime's ability to concentrate and her bond with her mum is strengthening."

*Name changed for anonymity.

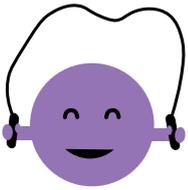
Key learning prompts

- Creative activities can help children express their feelings and develop their self-esteem and sense of achievement in unique ways. How could you apply this in your work with children?
- Everyday creative activities such as painting and storytelling can get a new lease of life by introducing different props and tools. What props and tools could you add to your routine creative activities?
- Supporting children to use open-ended materials and loose parts to develop their imaginative and spontaneous play can help nurture individual children and the group of children to which they belong. How can you promote open-ended and loose parts play?
- How do you use expressive arts to promote a nurturing ethos within your service?
- Can you remember who or what inspired you to be creative as a child?

Find out more

Education Scotland's National Improvement Hub – Creativity: see the section Developing nurturing relationships in Early Years in Dundee featuring the Nurturing Nature project at Longhaugh Nursery in Dundee.

Expressive Arts and Design in the Early Years: Supporting Young Children's Creativity through Art, Design, Music, Dance and Imaginative Play (2017) A McTavish.



2.5 Active

Caroline Coll provides a childminding service from her home in a village setting in Fife. She is registered to provide full- and part-time care to a maximum of 10 children under 16 years when working with an assistant. Caroline was inspected on 12 February 2016 and received 'very good' grades across care and support, environment, staffing, and management and leadership. The inspection report noted the various activities children experienced, including using the garden, going out in the community, planning and taking part in a game in the woods and walks in the local area.

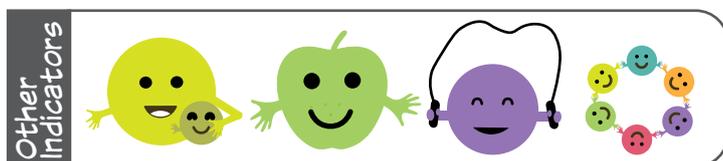
Creative ways to calm and focus

Caroline Coll took part in Starcatchers' Creative Skills Programme. She describes how this has impacted on her service.

"A lot of the ideas I've taken from the training I don't think of as expressive arts, they've just become a part of our day."

"After school the children have a lot of energy to burn off. I'm working with some boys who have ADHD and other additional needs and I needed to find a way to help them burn that energy without being disruptive. We started using bits of creative movement that can be used in fairly small spaces, such as leaning into each other back to back to help each other stand up and walking up the wall to make tunnels for others to crawl through. It's helped the boys to integrate with the rest of the group. They're more focused and I don't need to exclude anyone from the group for being disruptive. We also sing together, starting loud and using lots of energy and gradually bringing down the volume to calm the group down before we move on to something else.

"We've used ideas outdoors too. One day the group were carrying on so I lay down and said: 'Look, in the clouds I can see a hippo, what can you see?' They all lay down and watched the clouds, pointing out different shapes they could see. I was just winging it, but the stories started to develop and we spent ages like that."



Reay Under 5's Playgroup in Caithness provides sessional day care for up to 20 children from age three to those not yet attending primary school during term time only. They are committee-run and staff are managed by CALA. The group operates out of a well-used village hall which as a result sees the staff setting up from scratch each day and storing everything away again at the end of the session. Reay Under 5's Playgroup was inspected on 16 June 2017 and received grades of 'very good' for care and support, and environment. The inspection report noted that the service encouraged children to develop a healthy lifestyle, with play and planting activities outdoors.

Painting to Music

Sadie Kevill, CALA Childhood Practice Manager, tells their story.

"We were looking at ways to engage children more with expressive arts. We gave the children the opportunity to paint to the medium of music. We provided different sized paint brushes and other tools to mark make with and secured large pieces of wallpaper, initially along the garden fence. Then we played different types of music while the children painted. To begin with we played either just fast or slow music and from this we observed that most children moved their bodies instinctively to the music while painting at the same time. We saw that their finished painting mirrored the music that was playing. If it was fast music, the paintings were busy with lots of colours and blobs of paint. When the music was slower, more wiggles and curves were seen in the paintings.

"We are now consistently extending this experience for the children. We encourage the children to identify the type of music they want to paint to such as classical music, rock, Scottish etc. Through use of probing questioning such as what they liked/disliked, how did the music make them feel, the children are beginning to verbalise how a piece of music makes them feel. Some will even choose music to match their feelings. We have also noticed more children choosing and participating in arts and crafts now who were perhaps hesitant before.

"We create and express ourselves freely to music now in a variety of ways. For example, we dance with ribbons or hoops and paint inside and outdoors, individually or as part of a larger group, and sometimes even all of us together.

"Practitioners identified that the children were able to engage with the painting while listening to the music and expressing their creativity through their bodies and their minds on their pictures."

Some reflections from staff:

Yvonne Morris, Senior Early Years Practitioner:

"This activity has encouraged lots of communication and language. The children have become more aware of how the music makes them feel. They've explored different ways of how they can move their body to the music in long strokes and short strokes. It's different sometimes whether you do it inside or outside. It puts a different aspect on it as well."

Rachael Wakefield, Assistant Early Years Practitioner:

"It's opened up discussions about how it makes them feel. I've also noticed that the less creatively minded children have grown in confidence throughout the activity."

Key learning prompts

- Expressive arts, including dance, drama and music, can be used to make active and outdoor play more engaging and fulfilling for children. How could the children you work with blend expressive arts and physical play to enrich their experience of being active?
- What opportunities are there to participate in expressive activities in open spaces?
- Have you ever considered large scale expressive arts activities, with open opportunities for children to participate according to their wishes?
- How can you support greater physical activity through expressive arts, apart from drama or dance?

Find out more

Movement and Dance in Early Childhood (2003) M Davies.

FLOCK
#17





2.6 Respected

Fortrose Pre-school is a committee-led group 15 miles north of Inverness, offering flexible early learning and childcare to a maximum of 27 children aged from three years to those not yet attending primary school. CALA manages the group on behalf of the committee. Fortrose Pre-school was inspected in November 2014 and received grades of 'very good' for care and support, environment, staffing, and management and leadership. The inspection report noted that the staff had created an open and accessible service which encouraged children and parents to take an active and involved role in how the service was managed and delivered.

Christmas nativity

Catriena Forsyth, Senior Early Years Practitioner, tells their story.

"Fortrose has a strong focus on encouraging children's creativity, providing a variety of opportunities and experiences through art, dance, music, role play, design and technology and drama. The practitioners nurture children's individual creativity by building on existing skills to create, think critically, share and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop their own strategies for doing things. An example of this was the Christmas Nativity production.

"In December 2015, the home corner had been rearranged to look like a stable but the children were concerned it had no roof. After discussion, they decided they would have to make one and set about looking at various things they could use. Practitioners supplied some large cardboard tubes and boxes and supported the children with their ideas for the roof, measuring and testing which bits would work and how they would fit it all together. Once they were confident the fit was correct, they then set about decorating it with glue, paint and straw.



"A year later, some children remembered they had made a roof for the stable and set about making it again as a backdrop for the nativity play they were putting on for their parents. During preparation for the nativity play, some children began to make up their own version, clearly inspired by their recent learning around aeroplanes. The children had recently visited the local aviation centre and had created an airport in the home corner, complete with a plane wall with port holes etc. and a scanner. Staff observed children landing their pretend plane in Bethlehem. So, this was incorporated into their nativity play.

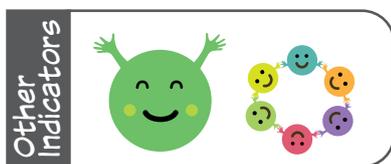
"Practitioners also supported children to choose their own roles in the nativity play. Some wanted to be their favourite super hero while others just wanted to be themselves. All this supported the children to feel very confident, take ownership and lead the performance for their family and friends.

"One of the strengths in the staff team is that they encourage the children to try out their ideas and provide them with the materials they need for what they want to achieve. The children are encouraged to develop their own story-making skills and to enjoy performing to one another and to their parents."

Comments from parents:

"They incorporated the topic on airports. So they made an airplane flying into Bethlehem and the kids loved it. It's maybe unconventional but I thought it was great that they incorporated it. My son came home and he was so excited about the fact that there was going to be this aeroplane and they'd made it. He made his own crown, he was a king, which he decorated. He was still wearing it around the house after Christmas."

"Our son was a pilot because they let all the children do exactly what they wanted to do. And he thought it was just absolutely great."



Sheephouse Nursery is located in Fauldhouse and is registered to provide a children's daycare service for up to 43 children aged under 12 years. It was inspected on 2 August 2017 and received grades of 'very good' for care and support, and management and leadership. The inspection report noted that children were confident, happy and secure, and felt welcome, safe and had lots of fun when they attended.

Flock in the Park

Team leader Rebecca Brown tells their story.

"Flock in the Park was created by asking the holiday club what they wanted to do for the last week of the holidays. The children responded with ideas such as a party, balloons, dancing and having fun.

"These ideas grew into an outdoor festival and the children went on to work really hard researching festivals and they loved the idea of having a campsite and a main stage where they were able to pretend to be music stars. They all worked really hard and everyone was able to contribute with planning the event from what food they would have to the layout of the festival.

"The whole process was very child-led. Through the different processes it was great to observe the children develop new skills and gain in confidence. They were also able to form new friendships along the way. On the day, the children had such a great time and it was so good to see all the children and adults coming together and sharing a great experience."

The children's voice:

"I liked to pretend to camp in the tent." - Casey (4)

"We researched about different festivals and we picked something out of each festival that we wanted for Flock in the Park." – Frank (10)



"I liked that all of the nursery could join in, even the little ones." – Zoe (8)

"I liked playing in the tent." – Adam (5)

"It was our day to choose what we wanted to do." – Aaron (7)

"I got glow in the dark face paints." – John James (5)

"It was really good putting all our plans into action." – Frank (10)

"It was good that all the children and staff got to enjoy the day." – Finlay (7)

"I got to be Batman." – Duke (4)

"No matter what age, everyone wanted to be involved and took part." – Finlay (7)

"I liked playing with my friends." – Hamish (5)

"Me and Hamish played pirates out of the balloon models we made." – Stella (7)

"We enjoyed making the menus." – Abbie T (7)

"The hotdogs were my favourite food." – Aaron (7)

"I liked choosing my own food. We all voted and chose the foods" – Finlay (7)

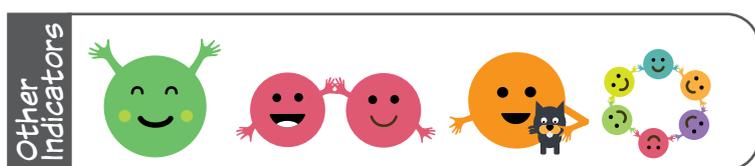
"At Flock in the Park, I enjoyed wearing bandanas and making things out of balloons." – Frank (10)

"We got to sing and dance to different songs and we made a playlist for all the ones we wanted to sing and dance to." – Zoe (8)

"I liked to sing and be a pop star." – Casey (4)

"I liked it because it was so much fun and we got to do different activities." – Zoe (8)

"I want to do the same thing next year." – Casey (4)



St Mary's Episcopal Nursery is located in St Mary's Episcopal Primary School in Dunblane and registered to provide daycare for up to 20 children from three years to those not yet attending primary school. It was inspected on 14 March 2017 and received grades of 'very good' for care and support, and environment. The inspection report noted that children experienced being cared for in a warm, caring, safe, nurturing and respectful environment, and that the service promoted children's health and wellbeing extremely well.

The Gruffalo

Alyson Pearson, Senior Early Years Educator, reflects on The Gruffalo show produced by the nursery.

"We visit St Mary's church hall on a Friday morning to participate in hall time – physical activities, sport and movement. We have also visited the hall to view performances put on by the primary school children.

"On a visit to the hall in November 2016, Jack noticed that the stage curtains were open and he asked: 'I've not been on the stage, can we go on the stage and see what it was like?' Naturally the best way to experience being on the stage is by taking part in a show and so this was a catalyst for performing the show on the stage instead of in the nursery classroom.

"Visiting St Mary's church hall for activities has, at times, caused a young child to be anxious and educators provide support to ensure that all children feel safe and secure on visiting this area. Alex has, at times, been lacking in confidence and anxious on visiting St Mary's church hall to take part in activities there. Educators have supported him during visits by ensuring that there are activities that will appeal to him and encourage him to participate.

"When the children started to prepare for The Gruffalo Show, we felt that it was important for Alex to be included but we wanted to ensure that it was appropriate involvement for him and not put any pressure on Alex to take part. Much to our delight and that of his parents, Alex decided that he wanted to be in the show as the part of the spider.

"We discussed what his costume would look like and what his part would be. Alex took part in rehearsals and learned the lyrics. At the performance, he walked around the stage and held up a sign welcoming people to the show. It was quite a transformation and showed how much the participation increased his confidence and enabled him to try something new in front of an audience.

"There was a huge amount of parental support and help for the project, with some parents helping with costumes, face painting and designing the flyers for the show."

Children's comments:

"I like the microphones because they make your voice loud." - Elodie

"I like me coming on stage as the Gruffalo." - Oliver

"[I like] singing the songs. My favourite is Find the Gruffalo." - Anna

"[I like] being the mouse - squeak! And excited about dad seeing it." - Frieda

"I'm excited for the show as I've never been in a show." - Elodie

"[I'm excited about] a yummy snack - a party!" - Jack McF



"I'm going to like wearing my costume." - Lovis

"I like the show. I like my costume."
- Eva

"I'm excited about performing." -
Oliver

Parents' comments:

"You were all beyond amazing! Well done all – such hard work by all. Room on the Broom next year? ☺" – Mrs K

"What a fabulous show – it brought a tear to my eye! You have all worked so hard – thank you! ☆"
– Mrs E

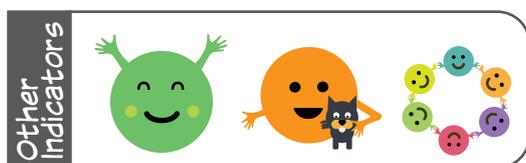
"The show was a fantastic achievement and a great confidence builder for my little boy. Thank you for all your hard work!" – Mrs N

"A wonderful performance by all! Well done to all. Thanks for all your hard work nursery team!" – Mrs M

"The hard work was reflected in the children's performance. A great memory for the children." – A's Granny

"Great show. Well done."- Mr B

"Such a magical show! A great experience for the children and very special for parents. Thank you for all the hard work that must have gone into it." – Mrs K



The Young People's Organising and Campaigning Group

The Young People's Organising and Campaigning Group is a group of young people aged 12 and over based in Aberdeenshire who are currently living in foster care, kinship care and residential care or have moved on from care. It is supported by Children's Rights Officers from Aberdeenshire Social Work Department and Who Cares? Scotland. As a support group, it is not registered with the Care Inspectorate.

A creative message

Following meeting with the group of young people, Mary Morris, Care Inspectorate Team Manager, wrote a review of the film and the performances.

"The group has produced three films capturing the experiences of looked after children and highlighting what could be done to make a positive difference to their lives. These films were creative journeys, combining wisdom, life experience and passion to produce such impressive results.

"In the film Don't Judge We're No Different to You, the song Not Your Right is played at the beginning. This song is by Jasmine, who is a member of the group and a musician. Her lyrics are pictured below.

"The group has produced a film which explores some of the issues and specific challenges looked after young people can experience in school. It focuses on two scenarios when a girl who is looked after in foster care experiences bullying. Bullying is an issue that affects many young people and the group wanted to raise awareness and understanding of the particular issues looked after children can face.

Not Your Right
You, Me, we're face to face
But we don't see eye to eye
You're too busy
Trying to keep up reputations
While we're just trying to go with
the flow
Only thing different we get no mummy's
kisses, no daddy's smile
Just because I'm in care
Doesn't give you the right
To push me around
Just because I'm in care
Doesn't give you the right
To push me around
Jasmine, 15



"The group wanted to challenge some of the negative stereotypes such as looked after young people can often be seen as trouble rather than troubled."

"Most young people live with their parents and siblings and have a degree of continuity while they are at school. For many looked after young people their experiences are different. They may have to move, sometimes many times. They may be worried about their parents, miss their siblings and at times feel under a lot of additional pressure and stress. The film explores these issues in an engaging and considered way. It challenges the viewer to think: what if that were me?"

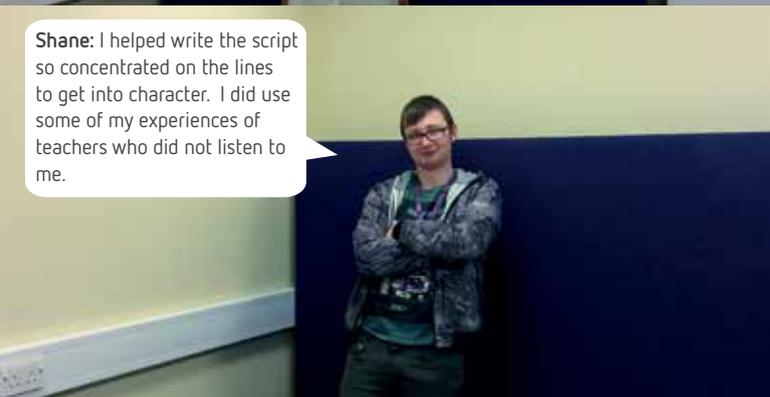
"In the film the character Mary, played by Jenna, is new to the school and has not yet had a chance to establish friendships. By a few words and gestures Mary conveys the complex emotions around her family situation: being let down, not seeing her family when she was looking forward to this and worrying about her siblings. Using drama in this way combined with the skilful and moving performances give a very real and affecting glimpse of these issues, arguably much more than the written word.

"Two different responses to the bullying scenario are portrayed. One shows a headteacher who instantly blames Mary. He does not take time to listen to her account of what has happened and what is going on for her, both in school and outside. He compounds the unfairness and hurt of the bullying by punishing her. The film shows that she has been penalised twice because the timing of the detention now means she won't see her brother.

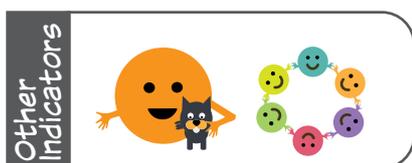
"The same scenario is played out again with a sympathetic headteacher, played by Lauren. In this scenario the headteacher takes the time to listen, helping Mary sort things out with the other young people and urging them to show some compassion and understanding.

"The two scenarios show the difference that supportive school staff can make, the power they have and how they can help looked after young people make positive choices. It also shows that looked after young people are the same as anyone else, treat them with respect and dignity and they will respond well.

“The group understood that opening up discussion about looked after young people can be potentially difficult. Using their dramatic talents and storytelling abilities means they can harness their creativity to have the right sort of impact. They want their messages about looked after young people to be heard and responded to so that there is a better understanding and more support.”



The group is supported by Kate and Laura, children’s rights officers from Aberdeenshire Children’s Rights Service, and by Lynn, an advocate from Who Cares? Scotland. This was Laura’s first time working with the group. She describes her experience as a “total privilege and incredibly inspiring”. Kate has been involved in all three films. She describes the young people in the group as “very brave, so willing to share their experiences and take risks”.



Fiona, one of the young people in the group, drew this to illustrate some of her thoughts on being involved in this work.



Key learning prompts

- Role play and drama can be transformative in helping children build respect for themselves and each other. How could role play and drama be developed in your setting?
- Children's ownership of the creative process and the extent of their involvement in putting together an event, performance or production can be the key to success. How can you step back while at the same time actively support children to take control of the creative process?
- How can you use expressive arts as a means of consulting children?
- What can you do to encourage a parent to support their child to take part in a specific expressive arts activity?
- To what extent is diversity recognised/explored/celebrated during expressive and creative activities?

Find out more

Woodwork in the early years (2015) P Moorhouse.

Gifts And Occupations: Froebel's (Wooden Block Play) and Occupations (Construction And Workshop Experiences) Today J Whinnett. In: **Early Childhood Practice: Froebel Today** (2012) T Bruce.

Under the Same Sky – A Toolkit of Creative Activities for Children to Explore Their Everyday Environments. Available on the children's parliament website: www.childrensparliament.org.uk





2.7 Responsible

Channelkirk Primary School Nursery is a small primary school and ELC centre in Oxton. The school has two composite classes, P1-5 and P6-7, and the ELC can accommodate 20 children aged from three to those not yet attending primary school. Channelkirk Primary School Nursery was inspected on 21 January 2015 and received grades of 'very good' for care and support, environment, staffing, and management and leadership. The inspection report noted that it provided very good opportunities for children and their families to influence the care and support the children receive, the environments the children use, the work of the staff and management and leadership. It also noted that children were confident, independent and expressed their opinions and ideas well.

Playdough station

Hilary Broatch, Headteacher, and Linda Gillie, Senior Nursery Nurse in the ELC, offer their perspective on their creative play experience.

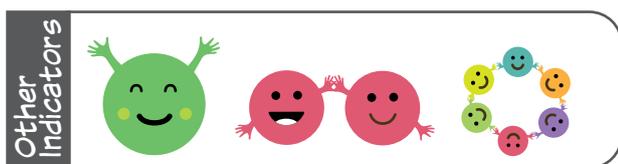
"Our playdough station has been a project designed to facilitate more creative opportunities for learning where the children can direct their own learning and develop their independence. Through observation of this area within the playroom, we have evidence of children having free expression of creative ideas, opportunities to use open minds, have autonomy over their learning and decision making, opportunities to solve problems and show resilience.

"The autonomy the children have had within this area has allowed our learners to develop a sense of mastery and achievement with less direction from adults. This project has had wider impact throughout the school as it allowed for transition opportunities with P7 buddies. Our ELC learners also taught older pupils how to use the playdough station so they could make playdough objects linked to



their science work. Staff have used this project to look more closely at their interactions within the activity, for instance when to intervene (or not), when to be attentive and how to plan more responsively to learners' needs and interests.

"Children were encouraged to develop and plan their own ideas through the 'Planning Tree' process. This process enabled children to create a 'Great Idea' and plan how they would accomplish this. In doing so, children were confidently able to verbalise their thoughts with the knowledge that staff would support them through the process. This improved relationships between staff and learners as children know that staff will facilitate their curiosity and interest. Staff were able to evidence learning through individual Learning Journals, Floorbooks, on the wall planning, on-going observations and through resources at the activity itself. Parents have also commented on how the learning has transferred to home. The playdough station has stimulated conversations about mixing colours, measuring, adjusting and adapting recipes, transferring skills for baking and cooking as well as talking about how much they have enjoyed their 'playing' in the setting and how to be resilient when things go wrong."



First Adventures Nursery – Turret Towers is located in Linlithgow and registered to provide care to a maximum of 59 children up to five years old with a maximum of 18 children under the age of two. It was inspected on 16 March 2016 and received grades of 'excellent' for care and support, environment, staffing, and management and leadership. The inspection report noted the child-centred approach to how staff gathered and used information about children, involved children in the planning process and how achievements of children, staff and parents were celebrated.

Active Angus at the North Pole

Evelyn Boyd, Nursery Teacher, reflects on the adventures of their nursery bear Active Angus.

"Active Angus is our travelling bear who goes for adventures with the children. Unfortunately he was left on a bus and lost. The staff decided to create a story to engage the children's curiosity and imagination. We sent a letter from Angus to say he had been called to the North Pole to help Santa. A magic bell had fallen off his sleigh and he thought it may have landed somewhere near the nursery. The children were very excited to receive the letter and immediately wanted to go and search outside for the bell. Staff had previously hidden the bell in our wild wood area. The children found the bell

high in a tree and had to problem-solve to reach the bell. They were then involved in a discussion as to how we could get the bell back to Santa.

"The children had a number of suggestions and decided we should hang it on the Christmas tree in our playroom. The next morning, staff came in early to leave Santa's footprints leading to the tree. We then got a letter from Santa thanking the children for all their help.

"The children were still keen to keep in touch with Angus and wrote a letter with a member of staff to ask when he was coming back. The staff bought a replacement teddy and sent a letter from Angus to say Santa had asked him to stay at the North Pole to help and he would send his cousin to spend time with the children. We arranged for our manager to buzz the door and bring our new visitor to the playroom. The children were very excited and wanted to send a photograph to Angus to show him they were looking after his cousin, Sam.

"The children then began to take Sam on adventures. This was a fantastic experience for them. They were very excited and motivated by the context and extended their language and literacy skills in the process. When visitors came to the playroom they were very keen to retell the whole story using very good vocabulary to express their ideas. They had a real understanding of writing for a purpose and were very motivated to engage in mark making. When discussing their ideas it was very rewarding to see them listen to their peers and discuss their own ideas and memories of the whole experience.

"Using the planning wall, we shared this whole adventure with parents who gave very positive feedback saying that their children were talking about the whole story at home."

Children's voices:

"We should go and look for the bell now." "I've found it!"



"It's up very high."

"Could we use a stick to get it down?"

"How can we send it to Santa?"

"I want to send a letter to Angus to come back."

"I can make a stamp."

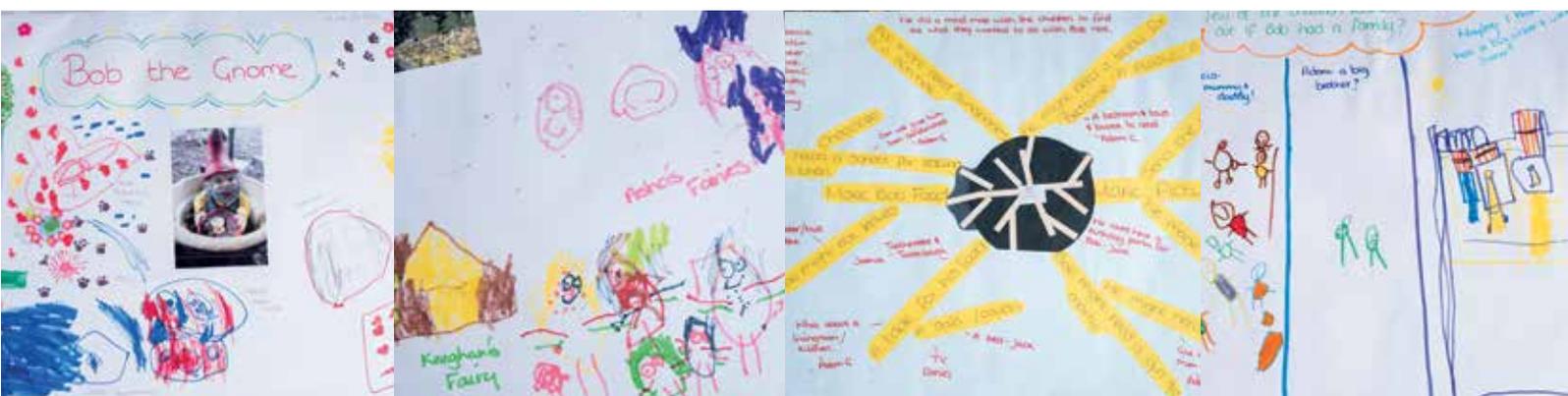
Bob the Gnome

Evelyn Boyd, Nursery Teacher, reflects on an activity involving a gnome which stimulated the children's imagination and their sense of responsibility.

"The children found a gnome in the Wild Woods. They decided to name him Bob and were concerned that it was raining and he was getting wet. Through quality interaction with the staff, the children decided to build a den for Bob.

"The children self-selected resources and engaged in problem solving with their peers to create a den for Bob. Over the next few days they visited Bob and then decided that they wanted to make decorations for his den.

"Staff engaged in conversation with the children to help them express their ideas and then provided a variety of craft materials for the children to explore and create their decorations. During the course of play they found fairies in the wood and began to create stories about Bob and the fairies being friends.



"The staff engaged in mind mapping exercises to allow the children to revisit their ideas and decide where the children's interests lay to plan the next steps. The children were keen to write to Bob. Staff facilitated this by providing a range of interesting mark making materials. The staff and children delivered the letters to Bob in his den. Later staff delivered a response from Bob thanking the children for all their letters and explaining the adventures that took place in the wood after dark.

"A few days later the children discovered that the wind and rain had pulled Bob's den down. There was a discussion with staff on what was the best course of action. Children engaged in cooperative problem solving to rebuild the den and remove the rain and leaves from the roof. The children revisited their ideas in the floor book, sharing their ideas and mark making to represent their thoughts.

"Some of the children then became interested in Bob's family – this took off through the personal experience of one child who had just become a big brother. These ideas were recorded in the floor book. The interest came to a natural conclusion when the children began to leave the nursery to move on to school."

Children's voices:

"This will help the roof."

"We could it look pretty."

"We could hang things up."

"We can give him sandwiches."

"A bedroom and toys and books to read."

"Thank you for being a gnome and I hope you have a good time with your fairy visitors."

"There's water."

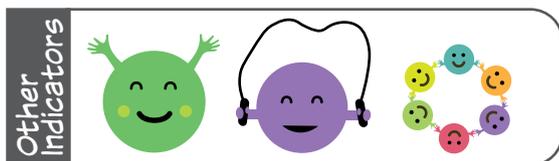
"We need to take it off."

"We need a big stick to fix it."

"I think Bob has a big sister and a wee sister."

"A big brother."

"I think he has five cousins."



LASCCA (Langside After School Care Club Association) is a voluntary organisation located in Glasgow. LASCCA is registered to provide care for 92 children over two sites. It operates both term-time and holiday-time. It was inspected on 10 December 2014 and received grades of 'very good' for care and support, and 'good' for environment, and management and leadership. The inspection report found that a major strength of the service was the positive relationships children had developed with staff and their peers, and the service used a variety of communication systems to engage children and parents in assessing the quality of provision.

Creative consultation with children

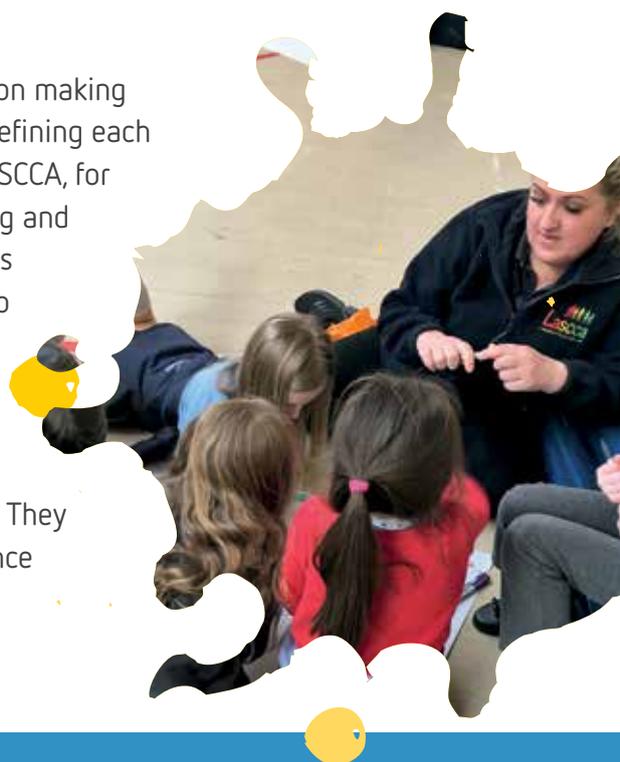
Sheena McGinnis, Manager, discusses how children were consulted using expressive arts and drama to demonstrate what the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators meant to them.

"An initial discussion directed by staff with the children about GIRFEC led to a creative, dance and drama production instigated and directed by the children.

"Through consultation, the children's ideas grew. Staff made sure they had the appropriate knowledge and understanding of the children's ideas in order to seek out the required resources and fully support the children in their aims. As the children were directing the journey of travel, this was a process that was constantly updated. Requirements such as space and materials evolved and changed over time and ideas could grow or dissolve at any point depending on the children's needs. So staff needed to be responsive to ensure the final success and outcomes.

"In the weeks prior to the display, children and staff collaborated on making wall displays focusing on the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators by defining each of the indicators and how these words applied to their time at LASCCA, for example their experience of health activities to promote nurturing and health awareness. The children led storytelling, discussions, sports activities and play as parts of the process. It was the children who came up with the activities and ideas.

"In terms of resources, these included purchasing 7ft long sheets of white corrugated card, a range of coloured water-based paint pens and bamboo canes for the children to create placards. They then decided to use the placards to create and choreograph a dance display incorporating the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.



"LASCAA operates from two sites, one in the school and one in a neighbouring church hall for the older children. The older children suggested inviting the younger children over to the church hall so that they could perform for them and show how they had interpreted SHANARRI. Each of the children performing chose and defined their own word, and expressed verbally what they thought it meant to them. The performance took the form of drama and dance, and this allowed the children to fully express themselves.

"Taking part in this performance had a really positive impact on the children's mental health, critical thinking and wellbeing. The children were very upbeat, happy and exhilarated. The children's individual confidence was improved as was their self-esteem and sense of personal self-worth.

"Performing in front of an audience gave the children a goal and they received positive feedback from their peers. This series of activities enabled self-expression, increased intellectual ability and participation. We have found the group performance to be a positive tool to release tensions and stress from everyday worries and stress. It enabled the children to focus and it enhanced communication, decision-making and self-help skills."

"The art sessions were very relaxed and therapeutic which helped the children connect with each other, and most importantly, all the children who participated had great fun."

Here are some of the children's comments:

"It was about looking after other people. I never knew that it was quite interesting to look at it that way." – Sonny.

"Thinking of being kind because that's important." – Lily.

"I really liked doing the dance, my favourite part was being on the stage and all the other children watching us." – Cara.

"I loved making the big HEALTH sign for the wall." – Florrie.

"My favourite was making the SHANARRI wheels out of origami, it was quite hard to do." – Lian.

"It was fun and cool learning about SHANARRI. I really liked using the giant paint pens on the white card." – Mia.

"I liked the health spa, sometimes you were a receptionist or a dentist giving advice about teeth." – Ruby.

"It was good doing artwork on the floor." – Caitlin.

"It was good all the children coming to watch us on the stage, at first I was nervous but then it was great." – Kate.

"The signs and paintings were cool. The performance was fantastic. I learned a lot too but mostly it was real good fun." – Archie.

"It was awesome." – Molly.

"This was epic we got to tell everyone what we thought." – Mia.

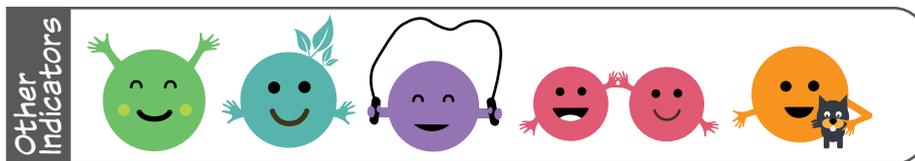
"I understand more about nurture. The story about the wolves living in a pack, that's a good metaphor." – Hamish.

"I liked going downstairs and dancing." – Neve.

"I have only been coming for a year and this was such great fun." – Lewis.

"I liked us racing in a team with the post-it notes." – Joe.

"We made up our own dances and speeches about SHANARRI." – Daisy.



Key learning prompts

- There are lots of techniques, such as a planning tree and a floorbook, which can be used to promote children generating their own ideas and taking responsibility for the creative process. What techniques do you currently use and how could they be improved?
- Familiar routine activities, such as playdough and Christmas festivities, can be enhanced by children being encouraged to innovate. What routine activities could benefit from being refreshed in your setting?
- How do you ensure children have responsibility and space to direct their own creative journey?

Find out more

Storyline Scotland (www.storyline-scotland.com) produces resources to help create stories with children.



Bella

Michaela

Thea



2.8 Included

Interactive storytelling with under 5s

Caroline Coll took part in Starcatchers' Creative Skills Programme and describes how this has impacted on her service.

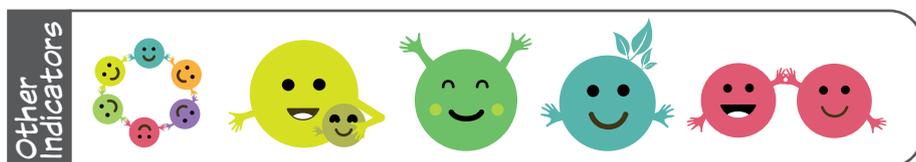
"A lot of the ideas I've taken from the training I don't think of as expressive arts, they've just become a part of our day.

"One of the things I've changed is story time. Before, when I tried to share a story with the children, they would squabble over who could see the book. I've started improvising stories using different props and costumes in the playroom. Sometimes they're based on a book, but often the stories are inspired by objects the children find. Some days we choose a theme, such as red, and everyone has to find something red and use those objects as we build the story together.

"One story started with me saying there was a big chocolate factory under the trampoline outside. The children carried it on to say someone had stolen all the chocolate and eaten it. The children all wanted to hide, so we made a den and they had their snack in there. Children take the lead sometimes, for example on one occasion a person was only allowed to talk and tell the story if they wore a mask, I had one too. One day the children told me the story by drawing pictures with paper on the fence.

"Stephen* is two years old and does not speak, which makes it difficult to play with other children when he's with us. By changing the way we share stories, Stephen has started joining in enthusiastically. It gives him opportunities to express himself, shape the story and play with the other children. Stephen's confidence in interacting with other children has improved and he can communicate his ideas with the group as an equal."

* Name changed for anonymity.



Diane Connolly provides a childminding service from her own home in Fife. She is registered to provide full- and part-time care to a maximum of eight children under 16. Diane was inspected on 30 January 2017 and received grades of 'very good' for care and support, environment, staffing, and management and leadership. The inspection report noted that adult/child interaction was extremely positive and she displayed a calm, caring manner which helped children feel safe, respected and included.

The Christmas Shed

Diane discusses the children's creative experiences.

"The children were excited and animated about the school Christmas play and reflected on previous nativities we had performed for the parents. They decided they wanted to do it again but this time set in modern times. I asked Daisy, aged 10, if she would like to write the base of the play as I'm aware that she enjoys writing short stories and I knew she would like the responsibility.

"We then had a wee brainstorming chat and wrote down all the children's ideas and jokes. Daisy then wrote the base script. There were multiple roles. All the children were included and listened to. They planned, designed and made props, bringing things from home. A week before the play, we then added in a new child, Lillie, who was going to be starting with us, so the children all rejigged their roles to include her.

"On the day of our party, we invited the parents along for a cuppa and a mince pie and to watch the play. I was so proud of the way the children all worked together and helped each other. It was a great way to round up for the Christmas break. We have discussed doing it again, so it may become part of our annual Christmas planning or maybe there will be different plays at other times in the year."

Quotes from the cast of the The Christmas Shed

The News Reporter sets the story: Joseph is at work as a joiner. Mary is home decorating the winter tree.

Jack (8): "I liked being the News Reporter. I got to hold the microphone. My mum came and she enjoyed it."



Poppy (7): "It made me feel like a superstar! I was Mary and I was wearing a blue, flowery dress."

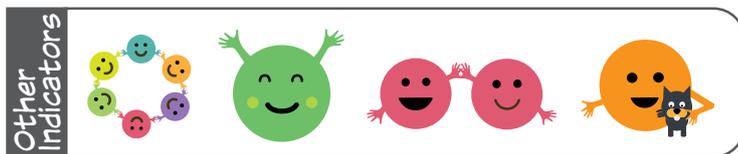
Josh (6): "I was Joseph and I wore builder things. I loved it, my dad came and he loved it."

Lillie (9): "I was the planning councillor and I liked it because I got to play in the nativity. My favourite line was: 'Well it looks like the hotel manager is using the shed as an extension, WITHOUT PLANNING PERMISSION!'"

Liam (8): "I enjoyed it and so did my dad. I was the hotel manager, the environment councillor and the store assistant. I was the environment councillor but also the hotel manager who broke the rules."

Daisy (10): "I was very happy when I was asked to write the nativity and I already had a few ideas. We got to work and added modern day technology. So Mary and Joseph drove to Bethlehem. Mary used Apple Pay to buy herself a Fitbit and Joseph an Apple Watch. I also did a lot of the directing behind the scenes. I had a lot of fun writing it and I think it would be fun to do it again."

Serah (mum to Daisy and Poppy): "Was fab Di... loved as much... if not more than the kids! Thank you"



Key learning prompts

- Participating in expressive arts and contributing to a creative group activity can help individual children feel more included and a group gel. How could you promote this within your setting?
- How could you use expressive arts to help children and families who are disadvantaged and excluded from mainstream society be more included?
- Think of a creative experience: how can you adapt this to ensure that each child participating (regardless of ability or skills) experiences challenge and opportunity?

Find out more

I Made A Unicorn: Open-ended Play with Blocks and Simple Materials (2014) Community Playthings.





3. The theory

Scotland's Creative Learning Plan defines creativity across all curriculum areas as:

"The capacity to generate ideas; things that have value to the individual. Looking at things with a fresh eye; examining problems with an open mind; making connections; learning from mistakes and using the imagination to explore new possibilities."

Expressive arts activity can be an ideal space for learners to develop the four core creativity skills: curiosity, open-mindedness, imagination, and problem solving. As identified by Education Scotland these skills contribute to the development of learners who are confident and ambitious with high levels of self-esteem. They are motivated to explore, challenge assumptions and take ownership of their own learning and thinking. "They are imaginative, open-minded, confident risk-takers, and appreciate issues from different perspectives. They can ask questions, make connections across disciplines, envisage what might be possible and not possible, explore ideas, identify problems and seek and justify solutions."

The importance of creativity is integral to Scotland's Play Strategy. Related to the Play Strategy is an examination of the qualifications for those working in ELC, Play Strategy For Scotland: Learning About Play - Investigating Play Through Relevant Qualifications In Scotland. It recommends: "While there are some specialist units on creativity, there should be more about creativity and creative play techniques, embedded across all qualifications."

Complementing the Curriculum for Excellence and as part of the funded ELC expansion, the Scottish Government issued national practice guidance called Building the Ambition. This promotes the role of creative play for child development at all ages and stages. Promoting curiosity, enquiry and creativity is identified as one of the essential aspects that drive early learning. It states: "Creativity sits alongside inquiry and problem solving. Being creative is not just about painting and model making or making music, although these are highly important for children, but also includes reasoning out, testing and solving problems, putting things together and taking them apart and figuring out how

things work. Early mathematics and numeracy are closely interlinked with inquiry and creativity and is best achieved in practical meaningful contexts for children where they make sense of the world about them.”

In focusing on what babies need, Building the Ambition highlights the importance of encouraging “regular opportunities to listen to and join in with music, songs, dance and being moved about”. For toddlers, the guidance highlights the need to:

- promote fun with words, songs and rhymes in a small group
- encourage an interest in early writing skills and opportunities to mark-make in real-life contexts with clear mark-making tools, paint, pens and brushes
- encourage the child to express their feelings through music and dance
- encourage creativity through making models, learning to stick using paper, textiles, boxes, tubes, trying out glue, sticky tape, fasteners etc., free painting and using clay
- an environment that provides resources for pretend play, allows exploration of paint, sand and water.... objects to take apart and put together.

Building the Ambition confirms that pre-school children need adults who “help children express ideas by singing, making music and role play”.

Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that “every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts”. Scotland’s new Standards are based on human rights and the wellbeing of all people experiencing care.

Rather than listing technical inputs expected of providers, our new Standards try to describe what a high quality experience looks like for someone experiencing any type of care and support. Creativity is identified as a key ingredient of high quality experiences for all adults and children:

“I can choose to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational, social, creative, physical and learning activities every day, both indoors and outdoors.”

(Statement 1.25)

Creativity is described in the glossary as “includes artistic activities, such as arts, crafts, music, drama and dance”.

For children the following Standards then set down further expectations for creative expression:

“As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling.” (Statement 1.30)

“As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely-chosen extended play, including using open-ended and natural materials.” (Statement 1.31)

“As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment.” (Statement 1.32)

“As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity.” (Statement 2.27)

The greatest impact of creative play can be in deprived areas, which fits in with the Scottish Government’s overall drive to reduce inequality and the impact of deprivation. Overcoming inequality is also embedded in Raising Attainment for All and the new Standards:

“The organisations that support and care for me help tackle health and social inequalities.” (Statement 4.2)

Research carried out by the Cultural Learning Alliance in 2017 evidenced the following:

- children taking part in arts activities during their early years are ahead in reading and maths at age nine
- learning through arts and culture develops skills and behaviour that lead children to do better in school
- students from low income families that take part in arts activities are three times more likely to get a degree.



4. Find out more

Developing Learning in Early Childhood (2004) T Bruce.

The Care Inspectorate's **My World Outdoors**, **Arts in Care** and **My Childminding Experience** are all available on <http://hub.careinspectorate.com>

Creative Scotland's **What is Creativity? Scotland's Creative Learning Plan 2013** is available on www.creativescotland.com

Creative Star Learning (www.creativestarlearning.co.uk) is based in Scotland and provides a range of support, training, advice and resources promoting outdoor play and creativity for early learning and childcare practitioners.

The Creativity Portal is a one stop shop for educators across Scotland www.creativityportal.org.uk

The Cultural Learning Alliance (www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk) is a collective voice working to ensure that all children and young people have meaningful access to culture.

Education Scotland's **National Improvement Hub** – features many creativity resources. See Creative Learning Networks, **Creativity Across Learning 3-18 curriculum review** (impact report), and **Curriculum for Excellence**

Jupiter Artland (www.jupiterartland.org) runs expressive arts activities for groups of children.

Licketyspit (www.licketyspit.com)

See The Adventures of LicketyLeap report.

"Licketyspit is a specialist early years theatre company based in Scotland, creating innovative and engaging theatre and drama-led work for and with children, their families and communities."

Project Ability (www.project-ability.co.uk)

"Project Ability is a Glasgow-based visual arts organisation with an international reputation for excellence. We create opportunities for people with disabilities and people with mental health issues, aged 5 years to 80 plus, to express themselves and achieve artistic excellence."

Rowanbank Environmental Arts and Education (www.rowanbank.org.uk)

"Rowanbank has a reputation for energy, creativity and expertise. We have extensive experience and an excellent track record of producing fun, interactive and educational workshops and events, using theatre, circus, story-telling, music, art and innovative games to inform and inspire people, whoever they are and whatever they do."

Scotland's Play Strategy and Play Strategy For Scotland: Learning About Play - Investigating Play Through Relevant Qualifications In Scotland are available on Play Scotland's website www.playscotland.org

The Scottish Government's **Building the Ambition** and **Raising Attainment For All** are available on www.gov.scot

Scottish Storytelling Centre and Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland (TRACS) (www.tracscotland.org)
"Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland is a new organisation set up in 2012 to represent Traditional Arts in Scotland. It's a new collaboration between three representative Forums: the Traditional Music Forum, the Scottish Storytelling Forum and the newly formed Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland."

Starcatchers (www.starcatchers.org.uk)

"Starcatchers offers creative skills training delivered by expressive arts specialists, and has online resources including printables and links relevant research and examples of best practice."

5. Working group partners



Association of Heads and Depute Heads Scotland (AHDS):

Susan Stewart, Headteacher

www.ahds.org.uk

“AHDS (Association of Headteachers and Deputes in Scotland) was established in 1975 as a professional association dedicated to supporting and representing Head Teachers. We now support, represent and provide training for the Heads, Deputes and Principal Teachers in primary, nursery and ASN schools.”



Care and Learning Alliance (CALA):

Corrina Shearer, Training Officer

www.careandlearningalliance.co.uk

“We offer a one-door approach to a broad range of Childhood Practice and Family Support services. We are the largest childcare and family membership organisation offering universal services in the Highland and Moray areas. We also have members in other parts of Scotland.”



Children 1st:

Chris Lewis, Assistant Director, Children and Family Services (North)

www.children1st.org.uk

“Children 1st is Scotland’s National Children’s Charity. We began in 1884 and for many years were known as the RSSPCC (Royal Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children). We became Children 1st in 1995. We did this to say that children are at the heart of everything we do. We help Scotland’s families to put children first, with practical advice and with support in difficult times. And when the worst happens, we support survivors of abuse, neglect, and other traumatic events in childhood to recover.”



Creative Scotland:

Sarah McAdam, Creative Learning Officer

www.creativescotland.com

ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

“Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits here.”



Early Years Scotland:

Audrey Anderson, Service Manager

www.earlyyearsScotland.org

“Early Years Scotland is committed to providing the very best start in life for every child in Scotland. We are the leading national third sector organisation for children pre-birth to five. Early Years Scotland’s remit is broad, but with a strong focus on the professionals and families who care for the youngest members of our community.”



Education Scotland:

Stephen Bullock, Creativity Development Officer

www.education.gov.scot

“Education Scotland is the national body in Scotland for supporting quality and improvement in learning and teaching.”



National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA):

Craig Orr, Early Learning and Childcare Advisor – Scotland

www.ndna.org.uk

“National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) began as a group of nurseries who came together to share good practice and ideas. Our aim is, and will always be, to make sure children get the best possible start in life. By empowering childcare settings to run high quality, sustainable businesses, we know children will benefit from the best care and learning, helping them to reach their potential.”



Play Scotland:

Cherie Morgan, Strategy and Development

www.playscotland.org

“Play Scotland works to promote the importance of play for all children and young people, and campaigns to create increased play opportunities in the community.”



Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA):

Anne Condie, Head of Childminding Services

www.childminding.org

“The Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) is the only organisation dedicated to supporting childminders in Scotland. Our aim is to promote childminding as a quality childcare service. We do this in part by helping SCMA childminders to be the best they can be.”



Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN):

Andrew Shoolbread, Policy and Research Manager

www.soscn.org

“The Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN) is a Scottish registered charity, established in 1991 and is the national infrastructure umbrella organisation providing support, mentoring, training, information and resources to the over 1,000 school-aged childcare services in Scotland, which provide childcare, play and learning to over 45,000 children.”



Starcatchers:

Heather Armstrong, Creative Skills Manager

www.starcatchers.org.uk

“Starcatchers is Scotland’s national arts and early years organisation specialising in creating performances and exploring creative activity for babies, toddlers and young children aged 0-5 and the adults who care for them.”



Stirling Council:

Carolyn Love, Education Development Officer (Early Years and Early Intervention)

www.stirling.gov.uk

“Stirling Council is committed to working in partnership with our communities to deliver the best possible services for all who live and work in the Stirling area. We have a clear focus on achieving the highest standards in our schools and nurseries so that the children, young people and citizens of Stirling benefit from first-class services.”



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