Working Together to Improve Literacy Outcomes

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Aim: By June 2019 90% of pre-school aged children in an identified nursery class will achieve *secure skills in phonological awareness and fine motor skills.
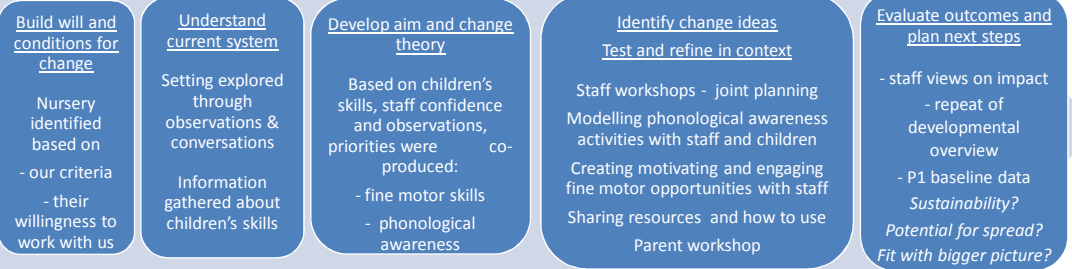
Vision: To work collaboratively with an early years community to improve literacy readiness in a group of pre-school aged children.

The **Language meets Literacy practicum** is part of the Children and Young Persons Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC).

Multidisciplinary teams from health and education have worked together to support the emergent language and literacy skills of pre-school children, including those growing up in social disadvantage.

The practicum embodies current Scottish Government and health policy and provides opportunities to explore innovative and effective service delivery to support the health and wellbeing needs of all children.

Lothian project timeline

Build will and conditions for change
Nursery identified based on
- our criteria
- their willingness to work with us

Understand current system
Setting explored through observations & conversations
Information gathered about children's skills

Develop aim and change theory
Based on children's skills, staff confidence and observations, priorities were co-produced:
- fine motor skills
- phonological awareness

Identify change ideas
Test and refine in context
Staff workshops - joint planning
Modelling phonological awareness activities with staff and children
Creating motivating and engaging fine motor opportunities with staff
Sharing resources and how to use
Parent workshop

Evaluate outcomes and plan next steps
- staff views on impact
- repeat of developmental overview
- P1 baseline data
Sustainability?
Potential for spread?
Fit with bigger picture?

Method

Collaborative planning

We identified a nursery passionate and committed to improving outcomes for children and used QI methodology to get to know the setting, coproduce change ideas and try out ideas using small tests of change.

Nursery staff engaged actively with this process, as you can see!

Achievements

- Staff report they are more aware of progress and increased engagement of individual children.
- Nursery staff have an increased awareness of how to support phonological and fine motor skills.
- Staff feel their confidence has increased.
- Staff are offering children more opportunities to try pre-literacy and fine motor activities embedded within child-led play.
- Nursery staff have used and plan to continue using the screening tool.

Results

Staff used developmental overview before and after the project, results were as follows:
- 83% of children showed improvement in the number of secure coordination skills. Average improvement was 22%.
- 84% of children showed improvement in the number of secure phonological awareness (PA) skills. Average improvement was 32%.

P1 teachers report the following improvements at the beginning of P1:
- The 15 children who received input had average PA scores 3.4 points higher than the 2018 cohort on the school's baseline assessment (29.9 compared to 26.5).
- The 2019 P1 children's baseline scores for PA were higher than the 2018 cohort with children on average showing competence in 6.2 out of 13 PA skills compared with 4.5 out of 13 in 2018.
- Children are able to use scissors more effectively than the 2018 cohort.

Process Change

Edinburgh CYPIC Language meets Literacy Project @ L Nursery
Vision: To work collaboratively with an early years community to improve literacy readiness in a group of pre-school aged children

AIM
By June 2019 90% of pre-school aged children in an identified early years community will achieve secure skills in the areas of phonological awareness and fine motor skills

		Actions
Parental engagement	Enhance understanding of strategies and resources to support their child	Develop clear and agreed communication stratgies with parents e.g home literacy, e-journals
	Actively involve parents in identifying and self-managing their child's literacy development	Engage / coach parents through 'stay and read'/Increased use of learning journal
Nursery staff knowledge and confidence	Further embed learning from key strategies and training in the nursery environment	Co-produce targeted work addressing areas identified by the nursery
	Increase awareness of resources to support different aspects of early literacy skills	Support nursery staff to delivery activities through modeling
	Increase confidence and skill to support pre-literacy foundation skills	Create activity packs to support different aspects of pre-literacy linked to regular small group reading
Children motivated and engaged	Clearly identify areas of development	Literacy activities linked with the child's interests.
	Access to developmentally relevant and motivating activities which support literacy	
The home and nursery environment	Clearly identify areas of development	Increase opportunity for mark making and phonological awareness in different environments
	Encourage an environment that provides opportunities to promote literacy skills	Identify other nursery contexts were activities can be effectively embedded
	Relevant resources to support different aspects of early literacy skills	

Key Learning

✓ It's essential to understand the context, existing demands and pressures.

✓ Time spent building relationships and understanding the system has resulted in a more effective collaboration.

✓ Don't make assumptions about what people know or understand.

✓ By coproducing and trying change ideas with the nursery staff, change is more likely to be implemented and sustained over time.

✓ Quality collaboration, over an extended period, with education and health staff as equal partners has added value to our universal offering.

✓ We all benefited from being part of a supportive and motivated team.

✓ For collaboration to work, all partners need to be open to change and motivated to make it happen.

✓ Despite trying out various different process measures, consistent data collection in a busy nursery setting was really challenging.
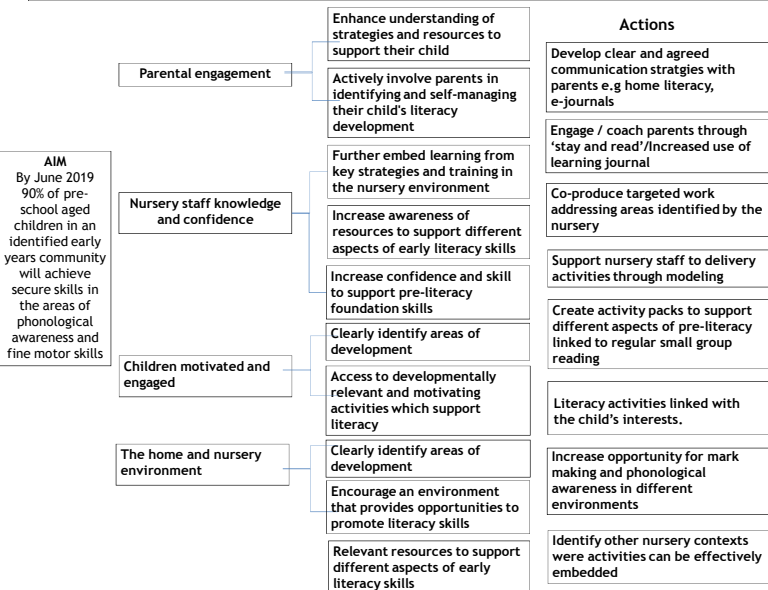
Next Steps

✓ Ensure staff confidence with phonological awareness and fine motor skills is sustained.
✓ Feedback results to Council Early Years Team.
✓ School will continue to track the progress of the children during P1.
✓ Consider scale and spread to other Early Years Settings.

Key Reference Materials