

The Early Years Collaborative in South Lanarkshire



Welcome to the first newsletter for the Early Years Collaborative in South Lanarkshire. In this edition, we set out the what, who and how of the EYC. Some of you may know some, or all of this; for others it will help to jog your memory; and others of you, this may be new. Regardless of how much you know about the EYC, we hope that by the end of this newsletter, you will feel a bit more comfortable about the concept, the language that goes with it, and how it fits with other approaches such as Getting it Right for Every Child, Best Possible Start and the Early Years Framework.

The agreed national ambition for the Early Years Collaborative is:

To make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up in by improving outcomes, and reducing inequalities for all babies, children, mothers, fathers and families across Scotland to ensure that all children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed

The Early Years Collaborative has defined a number of workstreams – three of these are age related, there is one related to leadership and these are all supported by a data and planning workstream. The South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) has nominated a Champion, a key task for whom is that our work is promoted and supported at the most senior levels in the organisations that belong to the CPP. These include the Council, NHS Lanarkshire, Police Scotland, the voluntary sector, and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport.

The Government has set out three ‘stretch aims’ – these are ambitious targets that we must work towards over the coming years; they will challenge us and in order to impact on these targets we will need to make changes to the way we work. Each stretch aim is associated with an age related workstream – but there is scope to work across workstreams to make lasting impacts on some of the targets.

Workstream 1 Conception – 1 year	Workstream 2 1 year - 30 months	Workstream 3 30 months - start of primary school
To ensure that women experience positive pregnancies which results in the birth of more healthy babies as evidenced by a reduction of 15% in the rates of stillbirths (from 4.9 per 1,000 births in 2010 to 4.3 per 1,000 births in 2015) and infant mortality (from 3.7 per 1,000 live births in 2010 to 3.1 per 1,000 live births in 2015)	To ensure that 85% of all children within each Community Planning Partnership have reached all of the expected developmental milestones at the time of the child’s 27-30 month health review by end 2016.	To ensure that 90% of all children within each Community Planning Partnership have reached all of the expected developmental milestones at the time the child start primary school by end 2017.

Q&A – what’s it all about?



We’ve had Getting it Right for Every Child and the Early Years Framework – now the Collaborative comes along. We’ve just started to get comfortable with GIRFEC – why start something new?

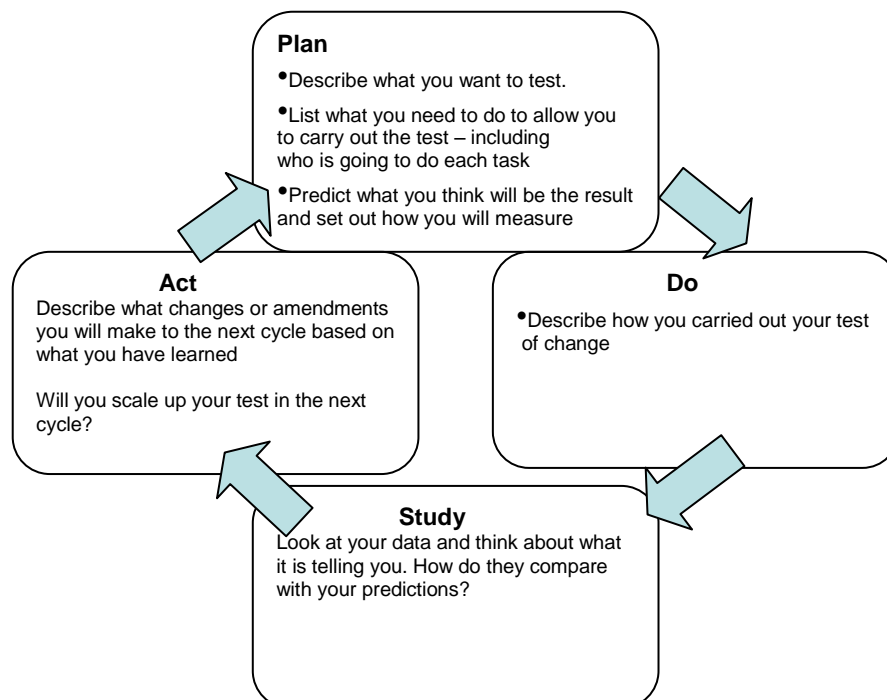
The Early Years Collaborative isn’t something new in the sense of a new initiative or policy. It is a way of working that focuses on quality improvement and it will support the implementation of Getting it Right for Every Child and achieving the transformational change that was set out in the Early Years Framework. In this sense, the Collaborative is a way of refocusing work that is already going on and accelerating the pace of change across partner agencies.

We are still very much focussed on working together to embed GIRFEC principles in our work and to ensure that that children will be Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included.

PDSA – something to do with sick animals right?

PDSA in the world of the Early Years Collaborative is the short hand that people use to describe a process of quality improvement. In short, it gives you a framework to think about how to ‘fix’ something that you feel could work better than it does.

PDSA stands for Plan – Study – Do – Act. You may already do something similar to this – it isn’t anything particularly new as far as the world of quality improvement goes. It does, however, challenge us to think about making changes and measuring the impact of those changes in a way that might be new to some of us. It also asks us to start small and test things before deciding to do things at a larger scale – this is also probably a new way of thinking for a lot of us.



The Early Years Collaborative is all about making changes to bring about improvement. In this it is worth remembering that:

Not all change results in improvement, but improvement is not possible without change.

I'm busy – why should I bother with this?

This approach is about helping you to do your work better – it should not be an 'add on' or 'something we do for the government'. It will give you a formal approach to thinking about solving every day problems – and sharing the learning that you have gleaned from this process with others. If it is successful for you, it might be that others could also benefit from similar changes. This is the point where you think about 'scaling up' your improvement – or extending the change you have made on a small scale, and carrying it out on a larger scale.

When thinking about how to use this approach, think about simple, everyday challenges that you feel could be better.

Keep it simple – and keep it real for you.

The Early Years Collaborative encourages a learning approach at all levels of the organisation. As part of this, it recognises that often the people who have the best sense of how to improve practice are front line practitioners. As part of the learning approach, practitioners are supported to make small changes to test whether these bring about improvements in the overall outcomes for children and families. Above all, it gives staff permission to try out new ways of working which might challenge existing practice, and gives them a way of gathering evidence to show that it actually makes a difference.

What happens if I make a change, test it, and it doesn't work – it will all be a waste of time!

The first thing to remember is that even if something doesn't work – it isn't failure. Every test of change is a chance to learn, and that learning is applied the next time you set out on a test of change. Sharing this learning with others may also mean that they don't spend time on things that are not likely to work and can concentrate on different approaches.

Before you start your test of change, you should predict how your change will impact on what you are doing. During your test of change, you gather information to see if your prediction is correct. You do this over a period of time which you have defined at the outset to see if there are any patterns in the information or data. Don't just look at snap shots in isolation – there may be natural variations that even out over time.

If your results are not what you expected, think about why this is.

- Maybe you asked the wrong question
- Maybe the data you really wanted was unavailable so you settled for something else which wasn't as effective.
- Maybe your assumptions were wrong – and you have had to rethink your assumptions. It may be that your results point to positive impacts that you did not predict – that might be the focus for your next cycle of change.

Remember – you may need to carry out several PDSA cycles to get from your starting point to where you want to be at the end of your improvement journey. The important thing is that you keep learning and bring this learning into each successive improvement cycle.

Give me an example of a test of change using PDSA – what does it look like in real life?

Improving attendance at the 27-30 month check

The 27-30 month check for all children was introduced in Lanarkshire in June 2013. Where children did not attend for their appointment, a second appointment was allocated. Staff were concerned that many of those who had received a second appointment also failed to attend. One member of a Public Health Nursing Team located in the Bellshill locality thought that if parents were phoned prior to the second appointment, it might increase the number who kept their appointments. She set out to test this change using the PDSA cycle.

Plan	The Plan was to call the parent/ carer a few days before the 2 nd appointment to discuss whether they intended to attend and to explain the assessment. Recognised that this would be a time consuming process for the PHN. Success would be measured by the % clients, who had been successfully contacted, who attended the 2 nd appointment following a 1 st Did Not Attend (DNA).
Do	Needed to get phone numbers for 4 clients who had not attended the 1 st appointment – this was over 3 separate clinics This was more difficult than predicted due to different record systems. All numbers obtained via GPs. PHN phoned all four client numbers. All successfully contacted, though one more difficult to reach than others. All clients said that they would attend.
Study	All four clients attended with their children for their 2 nd appointment. This was a time consuming process for a clinician but it did result in 100% attendance. All the parents who attended found it to be a valuable experience.
Act	Scale up from one team member to all team members. Plan to extend this process to cover all those who do not attend the first appointment. All PHNs in this one team will be involved. Contact will be made by a support worker, rather than the PHNs. PHNs will report attendance after each clinic to the Support Worker to monitor any increase in attendance. Will investigate using administrative support to reduce the additional work for clinical support staff. Second PDSA cycle to test this success across the team – if successful a third cycle will be carried out, scaled up to a larger area within the Bellshill locality.

Who's who in the Early Years Collaborative, South Lanarkshire?

Over the next few months we will introduce you to workstream leads and people who are carrying out tests of change across a range of services.

This time we are introducing the Early Years Champion for the South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership and the EYC Programme manager.

Andrea Batchelor, (left) Head of Inclusion and Early Years Champion, South Lanarkshire Council
Michele Dowling, Early Years Collaborative Manager, South Lanarkshire Council



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