

The Early Years Collaborative

in South Lanarkshire



South Lanarkshire
Partnership
Stronger together

Annual Report
2013-14



Introduction by Councillor Jackie Burns

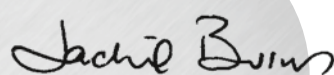


The Early Years Collaborative is now just over a year old. When it started a lot of us wondered if it was something new, and how it fit with other pieces of work we have done with our partners in the past. But a year on, we now see that the only thing that is new about the early years collaborative is that it gives us a new way of working on the priorities and goals that are at the forefront of our minds: it gives us a new way of getting it right for all South Lanarkshire's children, allowing us to build the evidence that our work is having a positive impact as we work.

We have now seen the first data and information coming back from staff who are working on doing things differently, using the Plan, Do, Study, Act approach which is part of improvement science. This has helped us to see that while using improvement science means we need to think about how we go about our improvement work, it is something that we can all do – it involves the kinds of information that practitioners deal with every day when they work with children and families and uses that information in new ways to help us see how we can work smarter to achieve better outcomes for everyone in our community.

We have made a good start, but we still have a long way to go on our improvement journey. Over the next year we want to increase the number of staff who feel confident to use the improvement science approach as part of their everyday work, improving little things effectively and making things better one small step at a time. We also want to make sure that the bigger improvement projects that we have started are supported and start to collect the information we need to show that working differently makes a difference. The results of all of this work will be posted on the web pages designed for the Early Years Collaborative in South Lanarkshire and will also be reported on through the regular newsletters which will be issued throughout the year.

We have made a good start to our own improvement journey and over the next year we want to make even more progress. I look forward to sharing that journey and that progress with you.

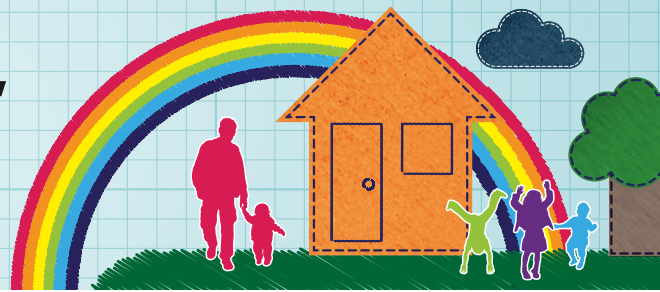


Jackie Burns

Councillor Jackie Burns



1. The Early Years Collaborative, a national programme with a local focus



The Early Years Collaborative is a national approach to raising quality in services with an early years focus. It is seen very much as part of the national work to ensure that Getting it Right for Every Child is well embedded across our partnerships and that we are working with parents and children to achieve the EYC aim:

To make Scotland the best possible place 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.

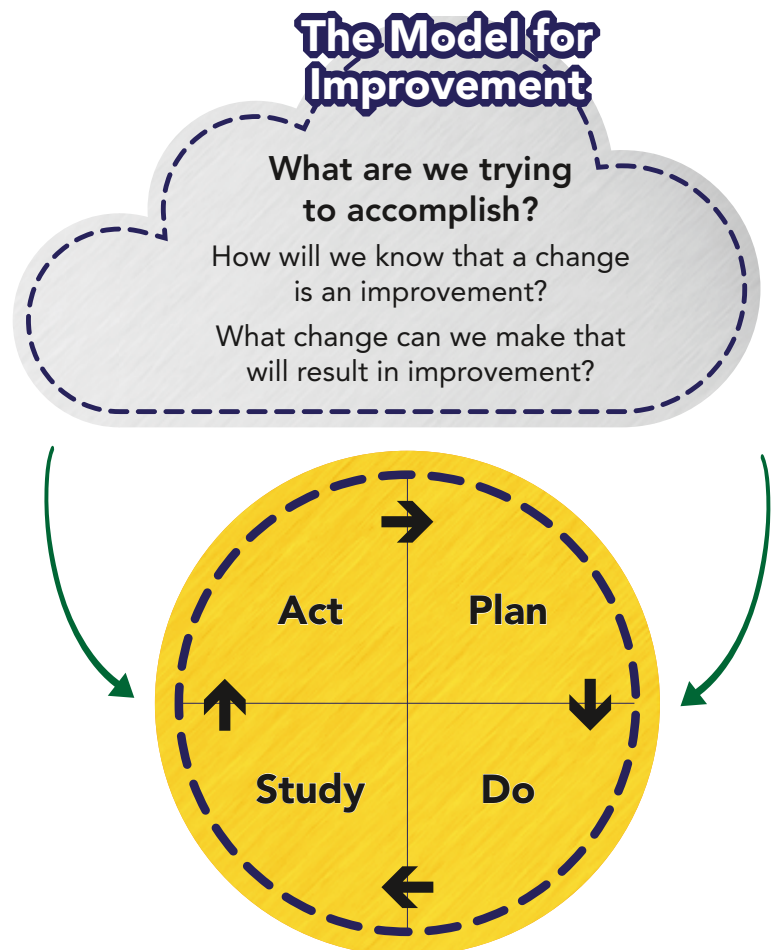
The EYC is based on a quality improvement method known as Improvement Science, or the Model for Improvement – an approach which is led by practitioners who work on improvements at very small levels as they develop evidence of what works. These ‘tests of change’ collect information that tells practitioners whether their activity is having the impact that they wanted. Small scale successes are then tried at larger levels, finally being embedded as standard practice once it is clear that the change has resulted in the desired improvement.

The national programme was launched in January 2013 in the first of a series of Learning Sessions, where practitioners from all over Scotland come together to learn more about the Model for Improvement and to share learning from tests of change in services both universal services, such as maternity services and educational establishments, to more targeted approaches such as social work or substance misuse services.

The model starts by asking us to think about three basic questions:

- What are we trying to accomplish?
- How will we know that change is an improvement?
- What change can we make that will result in an improvement?

Once we have the answers to these questions, we should scope out what it would look like to try out our change idea using a Plan, Do, Study, Act, or PDSA, cycle:



Over the last fifteen months and four national learning sessions we have learned to explore each of these stages in more detail. We started out by being very enthusiastic about finding 'things to test' – but many of these ideas were not grounded in a firm understanding of where they fit in the whole system, or bigger picture. We now know that before we start testing anything, we need to prepare for our improvement journey. This means:

- Knowing what your aim is
- Basing your idea for improvement on hard facts, not just a hunch – we are awash with data, don't be afraid to use it!
- Once you know what the facts tell you, decide if any of these can be used to measure your improvement
- Speak to people – people's experiences might give you extra information that can help to define your ideas for change and improvement
- Remember – not all change leads to improvement, but all improvement will come from a change. You must be clear how you will track whether your new way of working is making the impact you think it will make.
- Start small and carry out your first PDSA cycle – this will be one of many, so don't worry if things don't work out the way you think.

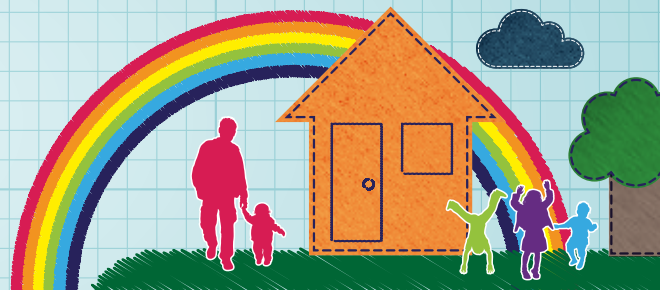
Learn all the time and build your learning into your new tests.

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.

The national programme has been learning too. One of the big changes that has happened for year two is the shift from a set of age related workstreams to Key Changes – or big ticket themes and headings that we should focus on if we want to make lasting and sustainable change. The age related workstreams now feed into the Key Changes as shown in the diagram below. In South Lanarkshire, we had already moved to a thematic approach before Key Changes were agreed, and we now channel both age related workstreams and Key Change headings through our priority themes.





- KC 1: Early intervention in maternity services
- KC 2: Attachment and child development beyond maternity services
- KC 3: Continuity of care in transitions between services
- KC 4: 27 - 30 month review
- KC 5: Developing parents' skills
- KC 6: Family engagement to support early learning
- KC 7: Income maximisation
- KC 8: Key changes for P1 - P4 TBA

South Lanarkshire Programme

Leadership group supported by Early Years Co-ordination Group

- Parenting Support and Attachment
- Substance misuse
- Developmental milestones
- Data and information

Pioneer Sites:
 Making Fathers Figure (KC5)
 Maximising Income for Pregnant Woman (KC7)

Pioneer Sites:
 15 - 18 month developmental check (KC4)



2. The EYC in South Lanarkshire: looking back over our first year

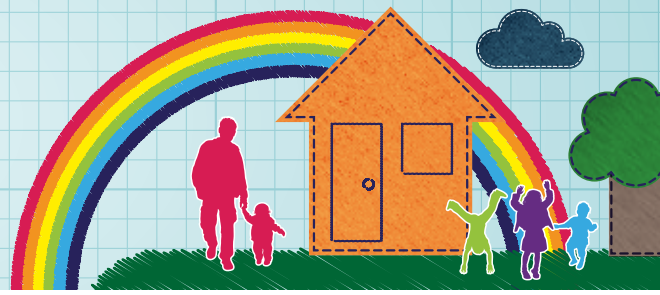
The Early Years Collaborative in South Lanarkshire was fortunate in that it built on firm foundations for good partnership working that had been established over a number of years. Lanarkshire had one of the more advanced partnerships for Getting it Right for Every Child, and the Integrated Children's Services arrangements for South Lanarkshire had been embedded into core practice for many years. In 2012 the new partnership plan for children's services – Getting it Right for South Lanarkshire's Children and Families 2012-18 – was launched. Its vision is to:

Ensure that children and young people live in a community where they feel safe, active, and healthy, achieving, included, nurtured, respected and responsible

The work of the Early Years Collaborative is very much part of this partnership approach. We see the EYC as a way of working on the priorities we have identified through our planning processes, using the improvement methodology to bring about the changes and improvements we want to make South Lanarkshire the best place for children and young people to grow up.

Over the last year we have spent time making sure that the EYC does not create a new layer of meetings and bureaucracy into our partnership arrangements. Instead we have concentrated on building the EYC into our existing partnership groups, amending membership and group remits if necessary to embed the improvement science approach as part of our approach to self evaluation, improvement and achieving our objectives for children and families. We have agreed three thematic workstreams, all of which will work with children from before birth to age 8 as per the national workstreams. These are supported by a group of data and information experts, and a leadership group made up of senior managers from across the partnership.





Our thematic workstreams are:

Group name

Parenting Support and Attachment

This group will look at:

- Understanding child development
- Fostering positive relationships between parents and children

Substance misuse

This group will look at:

- Neo-natal abstinence syndrome
- Substance misuse and parenting
- Issues related to pre-conception and contraception

Developmental Milestones

This group will look at:

- Processes to collect and report on Stretch Aims 3 and 5
- Training issues related to developmental milestones

Three larger pieces of work have been selected to be Pioneer Sites and these are explored in more detail in the next section. However, these are not the only tests of change using the improvement model and PDSA that are going on across our partner agencies. A selection of the work that our staff are doing to try out ideas that will improve outcomes for children and families are shown over the next few pages.



Improvement story:

Teeny Trackers - Early intervention to reduce unauthorised absence among P1 children

What are we trying to accomplish?

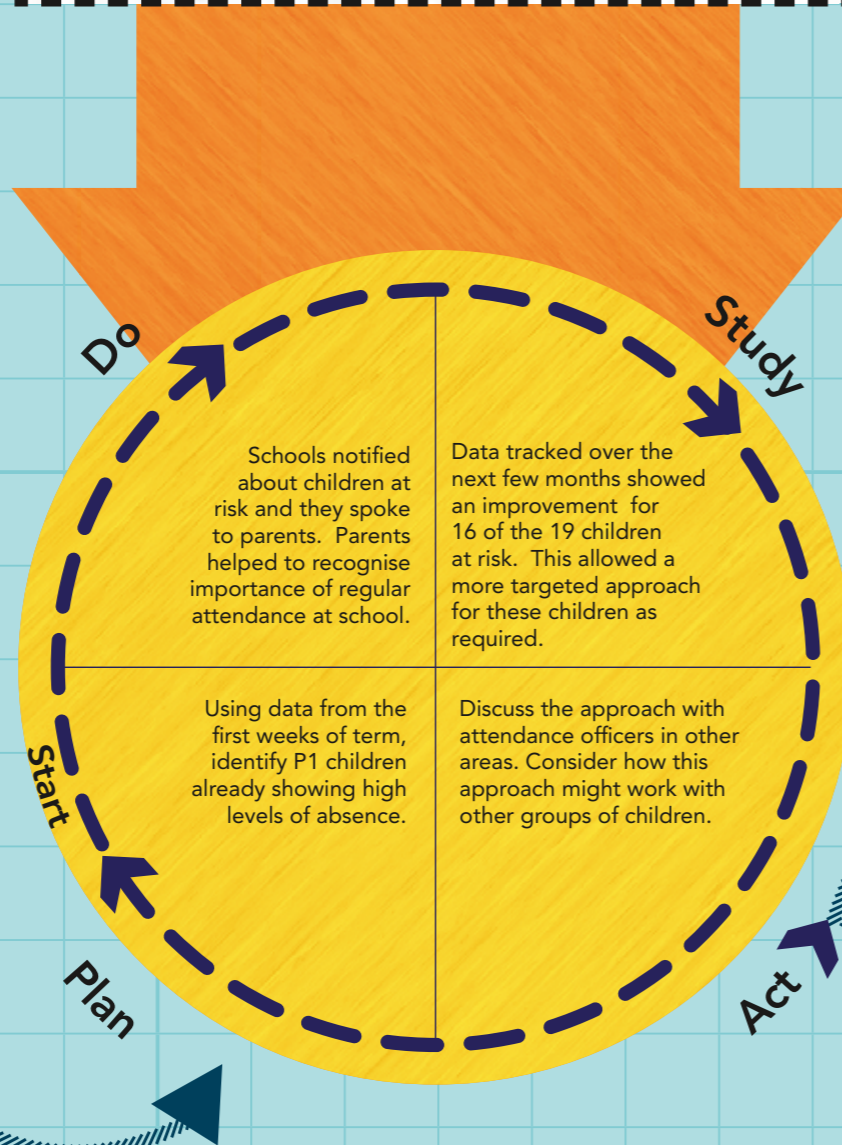
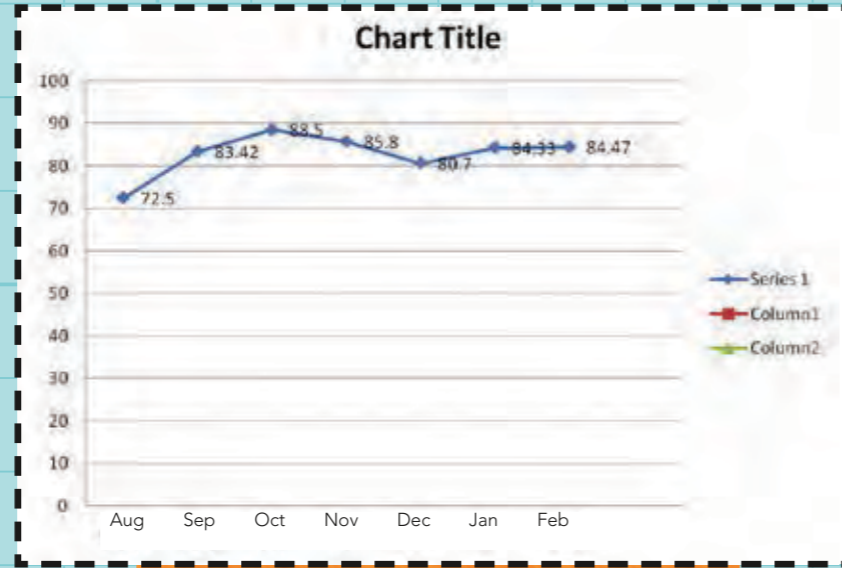
We know that regular attendance at school is important for children's learning outcomes. We also know that patterns of absence can be established very quickly once a child starts formal schooling. School attendance officers want to find ways of ensuring that children most at risk of non-attendance at school do not get into established patterns of absence.

How will we know if our change results in improvement?

We have information on non-attendance from the schools in the first few weeks of P1. This gives us a baseline which we want to see improve for all children.

What change can we make that will result in improvement?

Working with the schools to intervene early will stop these patterns and increase attendance.



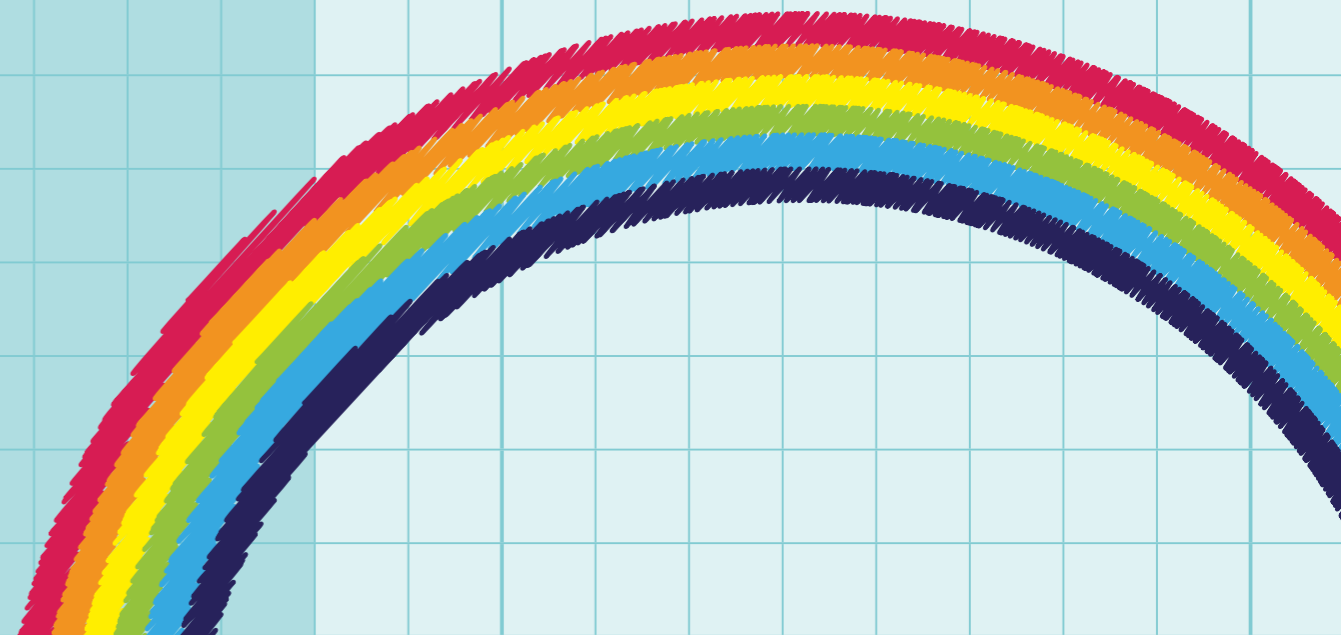
"We had never tracked the results of our work in this way before – it was great to see the impact of our work in such a simple way – it was really motivating to see we were making a difference!"

Questions for new test cycles

1. Will this approach work for pupils in S1 showing early patterns of absence?

Questions for new test cycles

2. Can we build on this information to support these children in P2?



Improvement story:

You and your child – improving our services by showing the impact of our work

“Using this improvement method meant a lot of work at the planning stage, but it really got us to think about our goals for each family we work with and how ‘You and your child’ helps families to achieve these goals.”

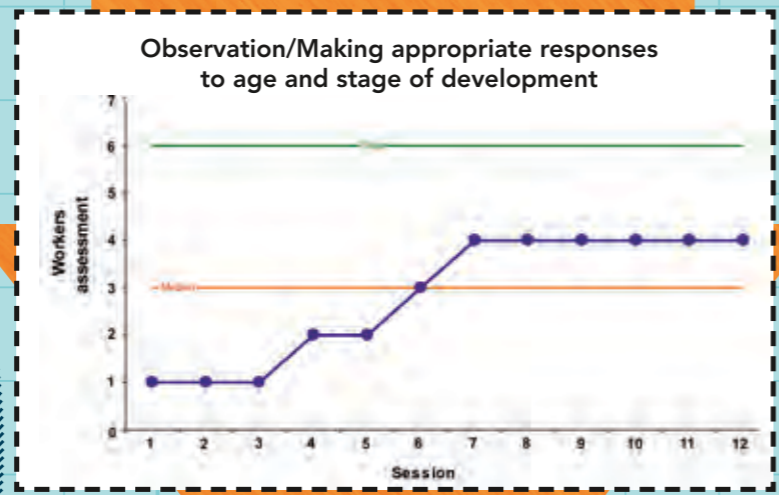
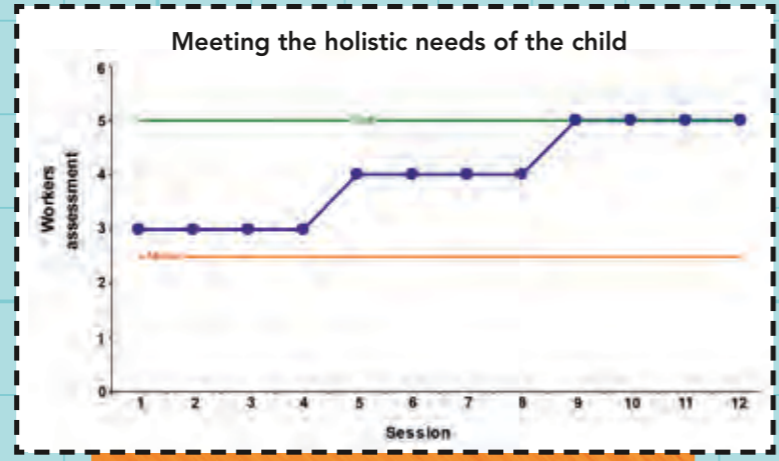
What are we trying to accomplish?

Parents and carers taking part in the You & Your Child programme have improved parenting skills and can demonstrate a positive impact on their children.
Do we have a reliable way of assessing the impact of our programme on participants?

How will we know if our change results in improvement?

Staff should see parents increase their knowledge over the 12 weeks of the course. We need a starting point and a way of measuring progress.

What change can we make that will result in improvement?



Questions for new test cycles

1. Will the assessment tool work again?
2. Will it work with all families?

Questions for new test cycles

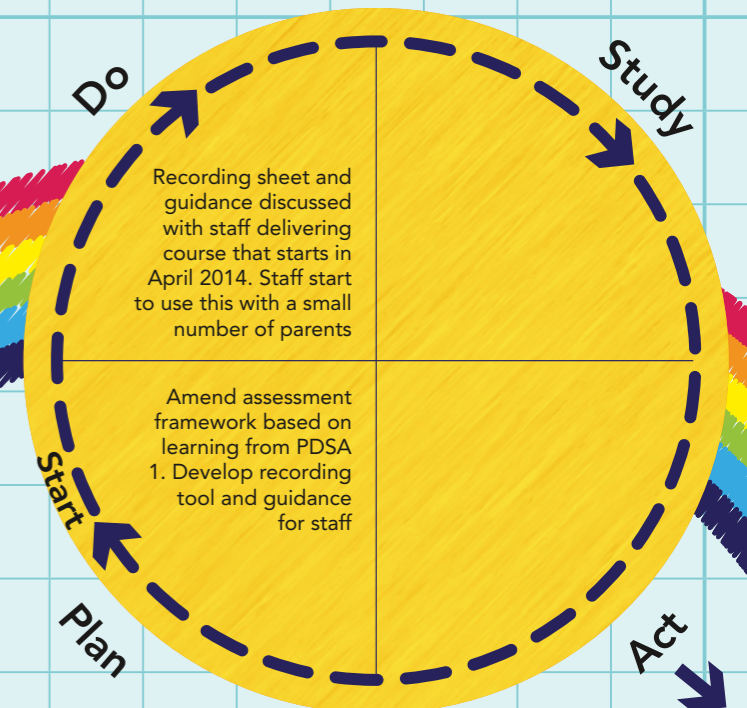
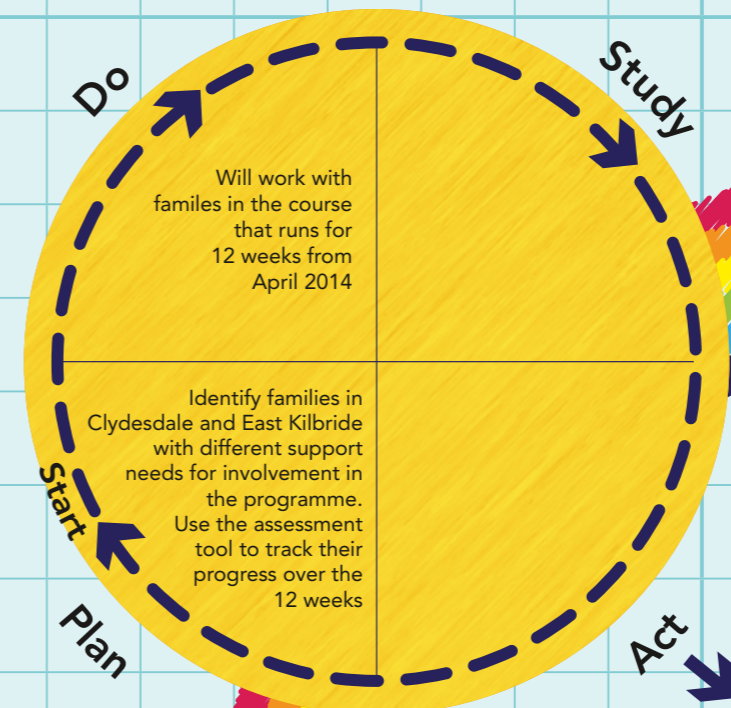
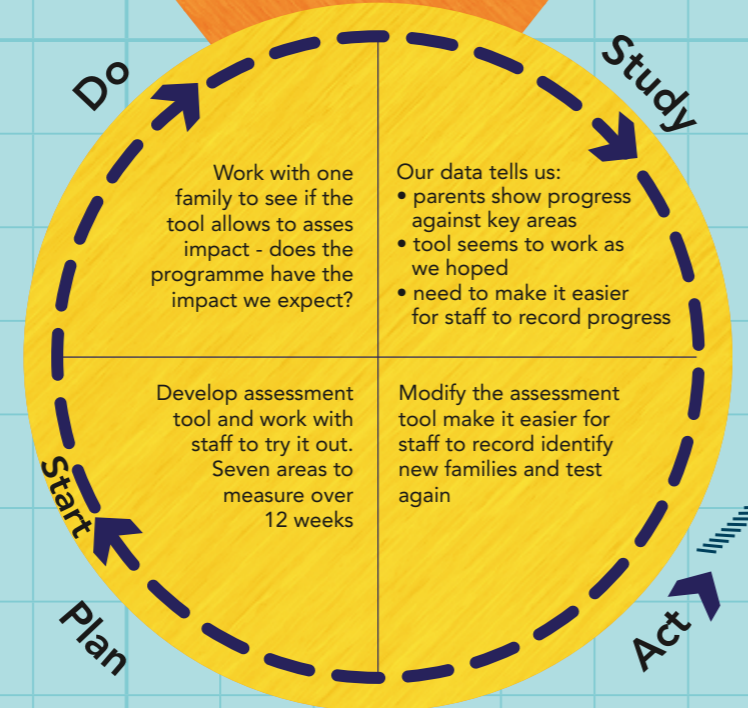
3. Will staff find it easier to record data on a special form?

What do we want to accomplish?

We want to see if the assessment works well with other families. Will it be a useful tool every time?

What do we want to accomplish?

We want to give staff an easy way of recording progress with parents during the 12 weeks course



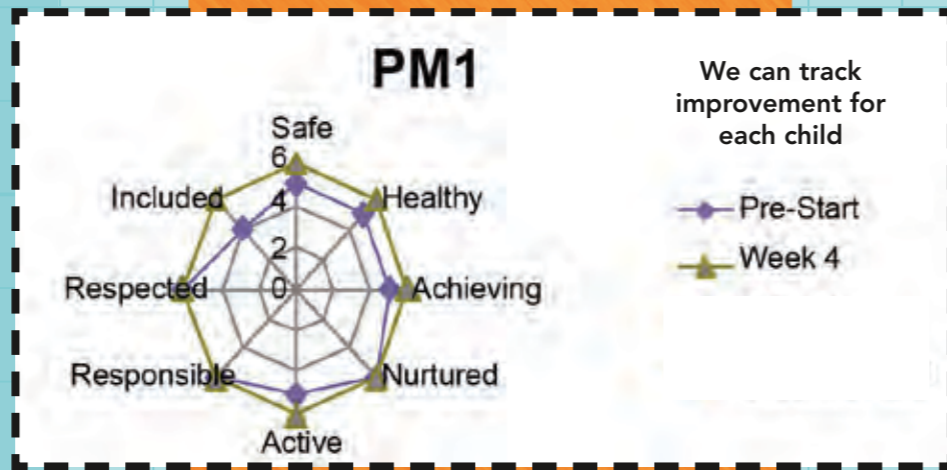
Improvement story:

Our Literacy Journeys – using the Well Being web to see how our work has a positive impact on our children

What are we trying to accomplish?

Nursery A and B are running a programme to encourage early literacy among our children. We know this helps their literacy – but we think it also has an impact on their overall well being.

We want to show that our work to promote literacy in children, also has a positive impact on their overall well being.

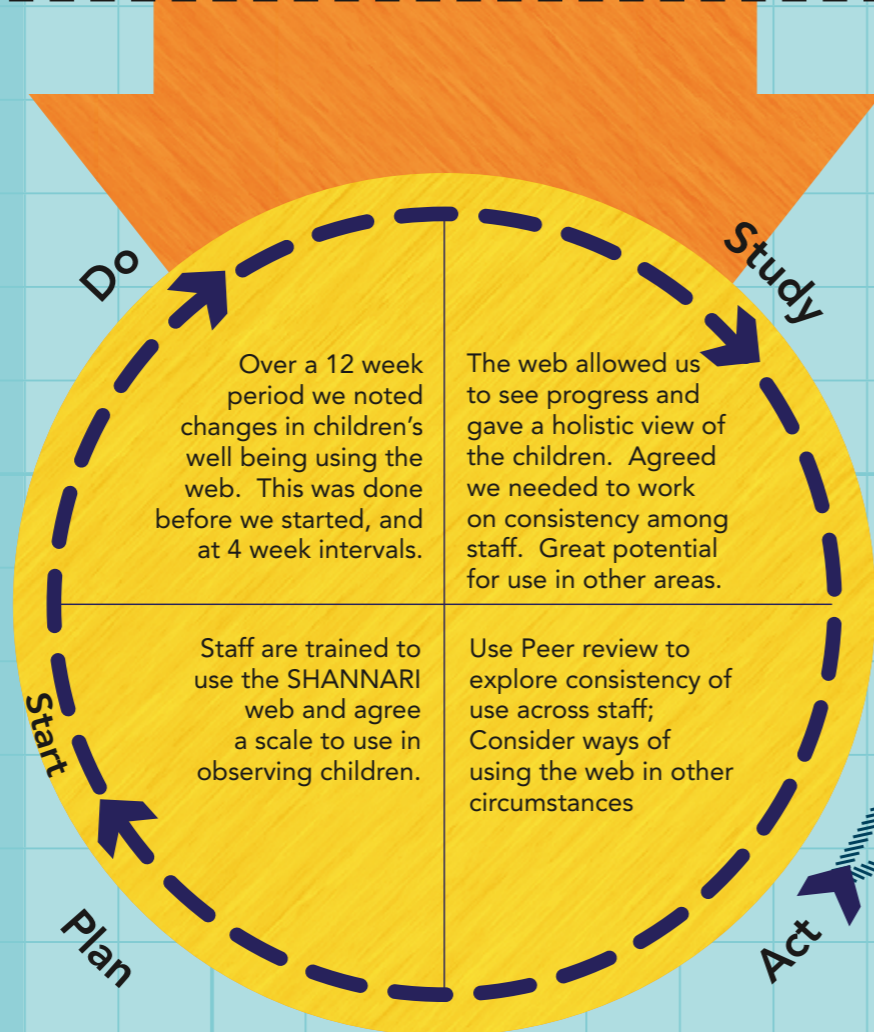


How will we know if our change results in improvement?

We will be able to monitor improvements in children's overall well being and see the added value of our intervention to improve literacy

What change can we make that will result in improvement?

We are going to try using the SHANARRI well being web.



"This approach helped us to think differently about the way we were working with the children. The web allows staff to see how children are progressing in a very immediate way and this is both powerful and inspiring."
Depute Head Teacher, Nursery A

Questions for new test cycles

1. Will peer review develop staff confidence and ensure a consistent approach across staff groups?

Questions for new test cycles

2. Could we use the web for other groups of children as part of our regular monitoring and observations?

SHANARRI – Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Achieving, Responsible, Respected and Included

3. Our Pioneer sites

Pioneer sites have been selected across Scotland to accelerate our learning focussed on Key Change areas – the national priorities. South Lanarkshire submitted three proposals for Pioneer sites, all of which were successful.

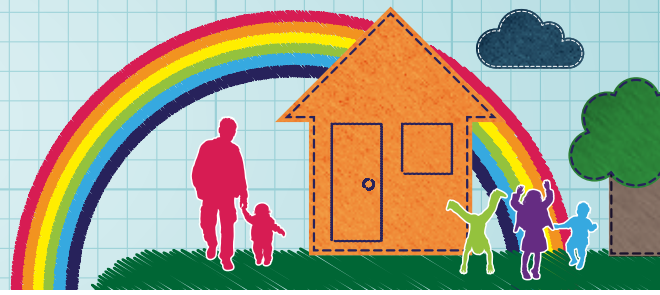
Our sites are:

15-18 month developmental review – led by the NHS, this site will explore the benefits of a developmental check for all children aged 15-18 months. This sits within national the national Key Change area of 27-30 month review, as the findings of the test will have a direct impact on the way in which we carry out the 27-30 month review at local level.

Making Fathers Figure – led by Community Learning and Development, this work aims to encourage more fathers to get involved in the children's earliest years, both by working with fathers and with services supporting parents through pregnancy, their child's first years and going to nursery. A multi-agency steering group involves staff from Education Resources, Social Work, the NHS and the voluntary sector. This sits under the Key Change area, Developing Parents' Skills

Maximising income for pregnant women – this work is led by the Tackling Poverty team and involves the Council's Money Matters Advice Service, Community midwifery services and staff from other parts of the NHS and Council. The main aim of this work is to ensure that pregnant women have every opportunity to access advice and information that will help them to maximise their incomes at a time of great change in their lives. This sits under the Key Change area, Maximising Income.





Improvement story:

Our work with fathers over the years suggests that services aimed at parents of very young children tend to be aimed at mothers rather than fathers. Making Fathers Figure aims to encourage dads to get involved in their child's earliest years, and to work with services to make sure that this becomes normal practice.

As part of this work Making Fathers Figure has consulted with dads in the Hamilton areas of South Lanarkshire to find out the kinds of things that they would like to see from services, and the information that they would find useful as they become dads, and start to form relationships with their children.

An event in Hillhouse Community Centre in November asked dads what they liked about being a dad, what services and supports they would like to see and how they see their role in their child's life. Dads and their children had a chance to try out some activities, play together and meet some local service providers.



Following this event, the Making Fathers Figure Steering Group which includes staff from Education Resources, Social Work, the NHS, parent and toddler groups and local dads agreed that they would work on three areas:

- Dads cards – information for dads on six different topics from 'First time dad' to 'Things to do for free' and 'Living apart from your child'.
- Encouraging dads to be more involved in activities in a local nursery
- Parenting groups aimed at dads

Over the coming year a number of tests of change will look at the impact of this work and see if it is having the desired effect of normalising dads' involvement in their children's earliest years.



Improvement story:

Income maximisation for pregnant women

What are we trying to accomplish?

Our aim is to increase the number of pregnant women on low incomes receiving money/benefits advice early in pregnancy.

The Tackling Poverty fund supports a Telephone Advice Line (TAL), operated by the Council's Money Matters Advice Service and aimed at pregnant women, or women who have just had a baby. There was concern that the level of referrals to this service from midwifery services was lower than expected. We agreed that we would look at ways to increase the level of referrals coming to the TAL from midwifery services as well as targeted services such as First Steps and Family Nurse Partnership.

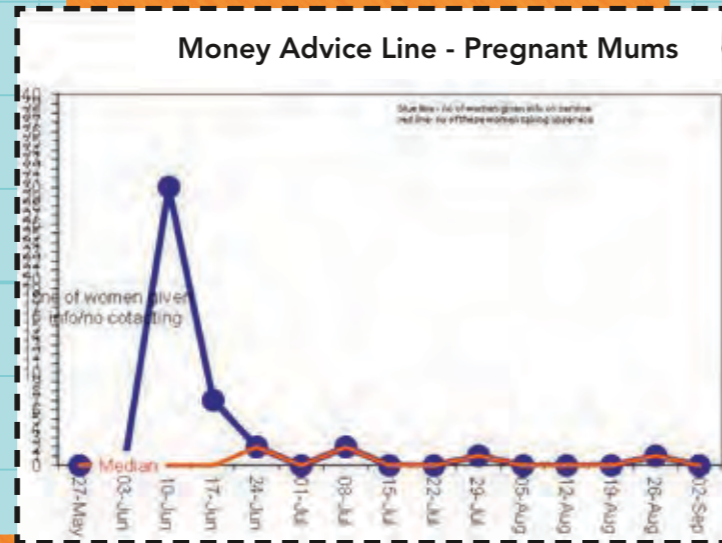
How will we know if our change is an improvement?

In April 2013 22% of the women referred to the TAL were referred from universal midwifery services. We will work to increase this to 40% by March 2015.

We have developed a plan that will track a number of measures that will help us see how we are improving referrals into the TAL. We will also report on how much benefit is awarded to women who have engaged with the service on average each month.

What change can we make that will result in improvement?

We are focussing our efforts on increasing referrals from universal midwifery services.

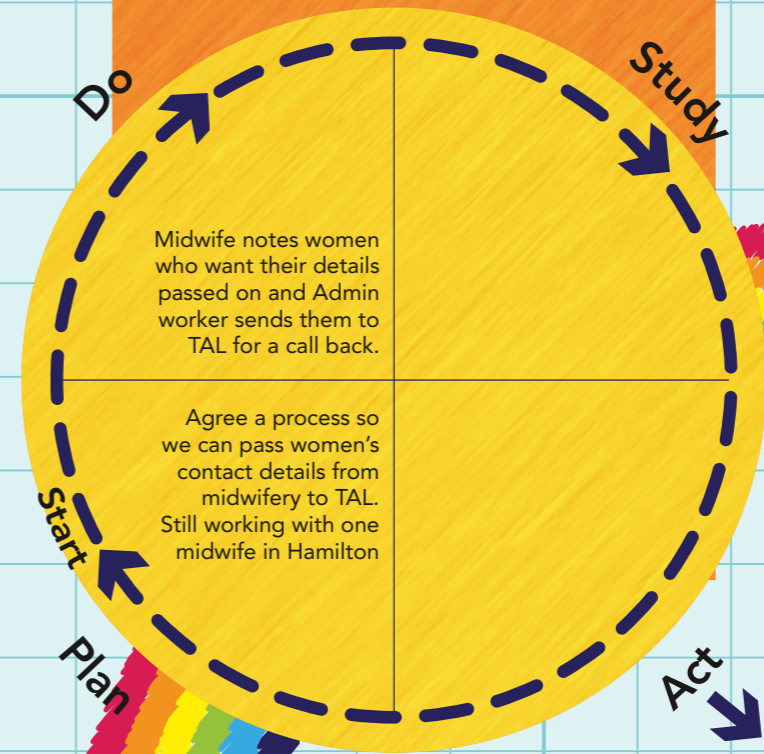
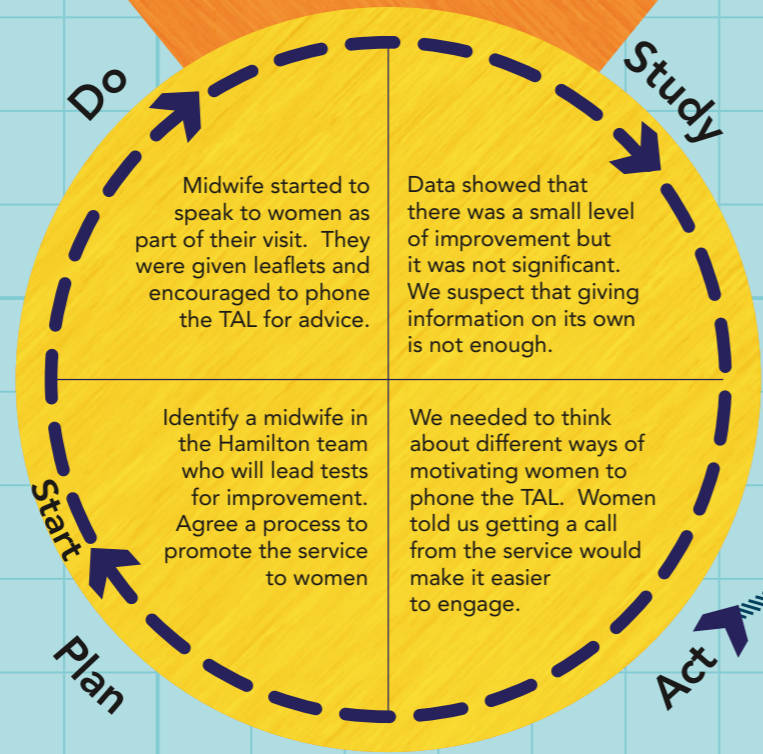
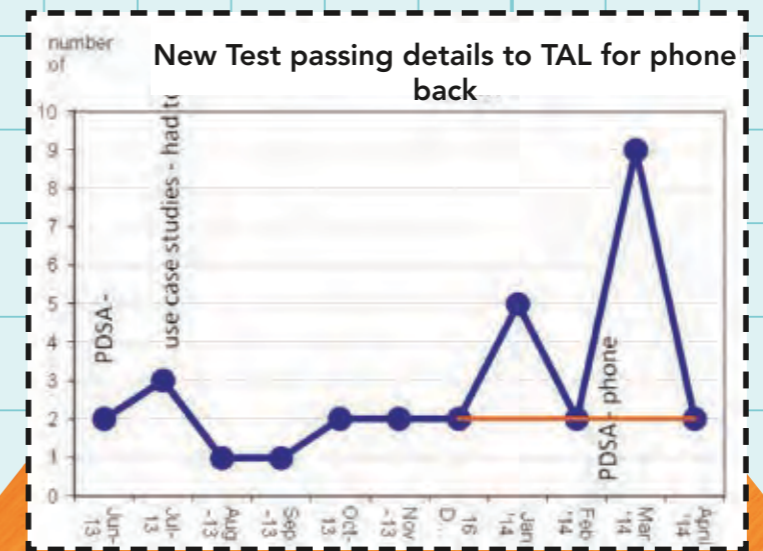


Questions for new test cycles

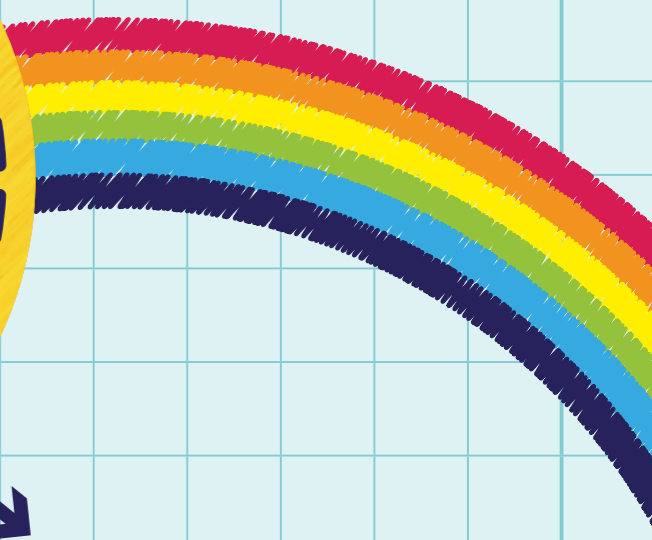
1. Would more women engage with the TAL if the service phoned them back?

Questions for new test cycles

2. What happens when more midwives start to use the new approach?



"The improvement model has allowed us to try things out and we can see if our ideas are working or not. This has allowed us to react quickly and base our decisions on facts generated by our activity."



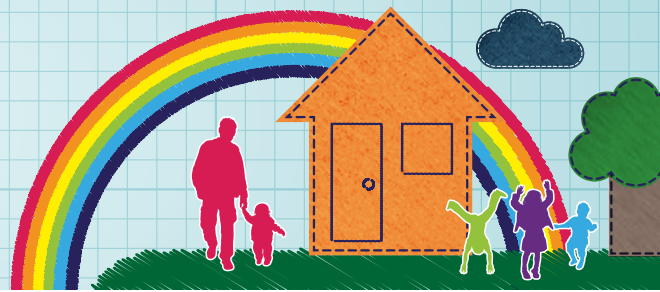
4. Priorities for 2014/15

During 2014/15 we will prioritise the following:

- Building capacity among staff at all levels to do their own tests of change using the Plan, Do, Study, Act cycles
- Ensure that all tests of change are collecting data and studying this on a regular basis
- Continue to embed the improvement science approach into core work around self evaluation and quality improvement planning
- Work with tests that started in year 1 of the EYC to see how we build on learning and apply this to larger scale changes in practice and procedure.



5. Getting involved



Anyone who works with children and families and has ideas for improvement can get involved in the Early Years Collaborative. It is not an exclusive club, and you don't need to go to lots of meetings to be a part of the approach.

The EYC is there to provide support and help in a number of different ways:

- Training sessions for staff to take their improvement ideas and turn them into tests of change using the PDSA approach
- Training sessions about collecting and understanding data
- Ongoing support for anyone carrying out tests of change using PDSA – you will never be on your own!
- Sharing learning from tests of change across South Lanarkshire and from other parts of Scotland
- Support to build improvement science into your existing self evaluation and improvement approach
- Dedicated web pages which have up to date information from PDSAs and improvement work across South Lanarkshire. Follow this link to the web pages: http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/improve/info/47/early_years_collaborative_eyc

Updates on PDSA activity will be made to the Early Years Forum in your locality and a number of staff in each locality are being trained in the improvement science approach to make sure that we can give everyone who wants to use the improvement science approach feels supported as they become familiar with this way of working.

If you think you would like to know more, please get in touch with the EYC Programme Manager, Michele Dowling, who will be able to give you more information and agree ways of helping you to move from an idea for improvement to testing that idea and seeing if it works the way you think it should. Contact details: michele.dowling@southlanarkshire.gcsx.gov.uk or phone on 01698 45 2238



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



Andrea Batchelor, (SLC),
Early Years Champion and
Chair Leadership group



Maria Reid, (NHSL),
Chair Early Years Co-ordination Group and
Lanarkshire Parenting Support Strategy Group



Val McIntyre, (SLC/ ICS),
Chair Substance Misuse Working Group
(Early Years)



Michele Dowling, (SLC/ EYC),
Chair Developmental Milestones Group
and Programme Manager



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