

# The Early Years Collaborative

in South Lanarkshire

# Ringling the Changes

Annual Report  
2014-15



South Lanarkshire  
**Partnership**  
Stronger together





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# Introduction



The Early Years Collaborative (EYC) is all about change for improvement. It will come as no surprise then that there have been a lot of changes in the way that we work over the last year.

## Headline changes this year include:

- The national EYC team has developed so we now have support from a number of Improvement Advisors. A key part of their work is to help us share our work to date and to focus on the most effective changes which will help us to make Scotland the best possible place to grow up
- New key change areas of Play and Health and Well Being have extended the scope of the EYC
- Raising Attainment for All Collaborative will support schools and educational establishments to improve outcomes for children and young people from P5 to leaving school

## In our first annual report, we:

- Set out the background to the Early Years Collaborative
- Introduced the Model for Improvement
- Explained our proposals for putting the EYC into practice in South Lanarkshire and introduced you to the leads for our working groups
- Told some stories about improvement work going on across South Lanarkshire
- Set out our priorities for 2014/15 and
- Set out ways for you to get involved in the work being supported by the EYC

This, the second annual report, reflects on where we have come over the last year. We will celebrate some of the great learning coming from tests of change across South Lanarkshire. We will also look ahead to the third year of the EYC – how do we make the Model for Improvement a core part of our approach to improving our services?

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# Looking Back: our 27 month review

The Model for Improvement is all about learning and we have taken time this year to reflect back on everything we have learnt from both years one and two of the Early Years Collaborative.

Our key learning points are:

- Too many early pieces of work were not linked to strategic priorities for improvement. This meant that people sometimes struggled to do their improvement work as it was not a core part of their plans and priorities for the year.
- Too many pieces of early work were being driven by enthusiastic individuals trying to bring about changes on their own. This limited their ability to bring about lasting change and made their work seem like a short term project. It also meant that often they were carrying a very heavy workload as they were trying to do everything! This was not a sustainable way of working.
- People often dived straight into the Plan, Do, Study, Act cycle without first answering the three key questions that the Model for Improvement asks us to consider.
- Even when carrying out PDSAs, a lot of people were trying to do too much and were getting stuck in Do – and never moving on to the next stages of their learning and improvement.

## What have we done with this learning?

- 1 We went back to basics and reminded ourselves about all parts of the model for improvement

### Model for Improvement



The three questions help us to create the background for our improvement, identifying what we want to work on and why.

This can be supported by self evaluation activity, inspection reports, audits or other activity to help us to understand what we need to focus on to improve outcomes for children, families and staff.





## What have we done with this learning?

- 2 We held one to one meetings with all improvement projects as part of a year end review. These one to one meetings will continue to ensure that all project leads feel supported as they build their confidence in using the model for improvement.
- 3 We are reminding people that improvement is a team activity. At a training session in June 2015, for example, participants were invited to bring team members to the training so that they could work together on planning their improvement ideas.
- 4 We are preparing a training and development programme to build capacity and confidence in using the Model for Improvement among staff
- 5 We are ensuring that ideas for improvement sit in service plans or improvement plans and focus on identified priorities.

The **Model for Improvement** gives us a 'how to' or tool to understand our processes and systems, and focus our efforts to demonstrate that our changes are making improvements.

As such it is part of an overall approach to continuous improvement already established through self evaluation and self assessment processes across our organisations.

Process maps were a new tool that staff have been introduced to over the last year.

A **process map** is basically a step by step breakdown of a process which allows you to see how it flows, and whether it is working the way it should be.

A process map can be used to set out a process as it should be as well as the process as it *actually* is in practice.

*Using the process map has been really useful for us – it has allowed us to break down a complex process and see how we are doing at different stages. It took a bit of work but it was well worth it.*

Breaking the Cycle lead

*Understanding your process before you start allows you to focus your improvement efforts. Process mapping has been a really useful way of helping us to unpick our processes.*

Babysounds Lead

We have prepared a short guide to process mapping which is available from the programme manager on request.



# Celebrating our learning

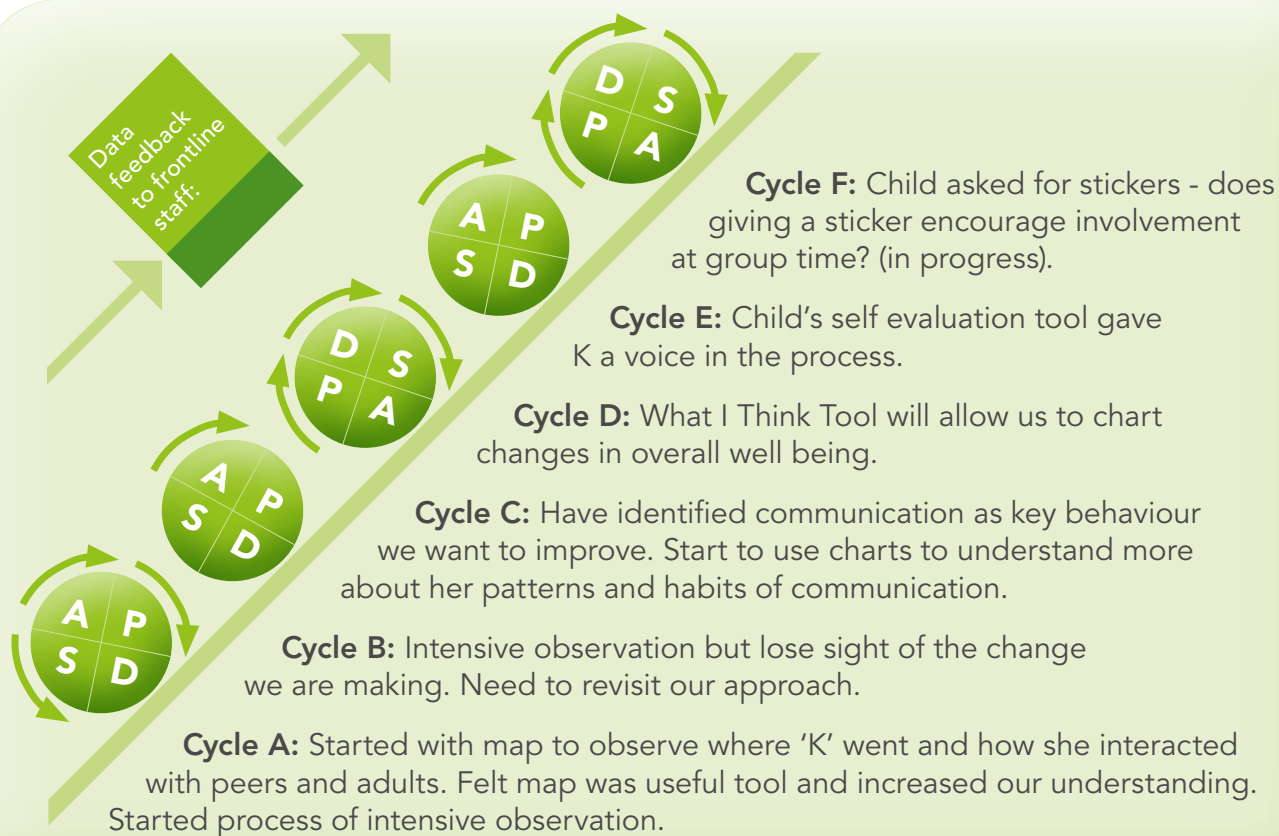
On the 31 March we held an event to celebrate the learning from practitioners who have been using the model for improvement to make changes for the better in their area of service.

A selection of projects produced detailed story boards on their activity and their learning.

## Woodlands Nursery Centre

We've been exploring new ways of observing and supporting children that we are concerned about. Using charts to track children's behaviour over time has meant our staff have a better understanding of the child's behaviour and how they respond to our interventions. The charts have also been a great way of engaging parents and other professionals in discussions about how we support the child.

Example of our progressive testing:





## Early identification of speech and language delay in early years settings

This work is a collaboration between Educational Psychology, NHS Lanarkshire Speech and Language Therapy and Early Years Education.

The focus has been on testing a tool which allows staff to identify children with speech and language delay, which then allows them to put interventions into place and track progress in the child's development over time. Testing has been going on in Westburn (Cambuslang) and Happy Feet (Larkhall) nurseries.

Moving into 2015-16 the focus of tests will move from the tool for identification to effective interventions as we aim to ensure that by 2017-18 at least 90% of children entering primary school have no concerns relating to their speech, language and communication.



## Breaking the Cycle

Breaking the Cycle is an intensive support programme run by a specialist team located within the Council's homelessness service. The service works with families to stabilise their tenancies and secure positive outcomes for the future for all family members.

In 2013 the service was reviewed and we have used the model for improvement to test our new processes and to make sure that our new service is as effective as it can be.

This is a new way of thinking, and there have been challenges, but we have stuck with it and the model has helped us to keep our improvement work on track.

### Key learning message:

Don't try to make your work fit the model for improvement – use the model as a tool to support you to get where you want to be.

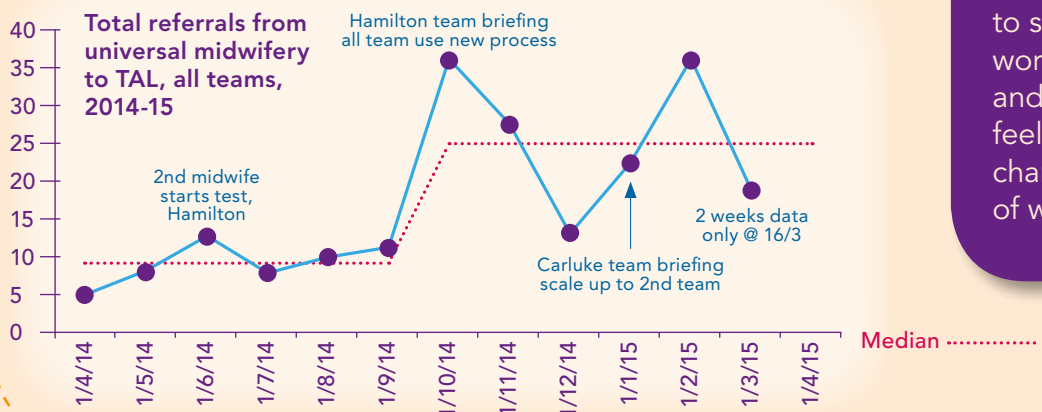


# Celebrating our learning

## Increasing referrals to the Money Matters telephone advice line (TAL)

This work, involving midwifery services, the Money Matters Advice Service and Regeneration services wanted to increase both the number of referrals to the TAL from ante-natal services, and the proportion of these referrals from midwifery. Over 2014 we tested a new process which saw midwifery referrals increase from 68 in 2013-14 to 246 in 2014-15.

We are now extending the new process across all four midwifery teams in South Lanarkshire, and looking at ways of improving access to other services supporting financial inclusion and support.



We got stuck doing the same thing for far too long before moving to involve more members of staff. Make sure the right people are kept up to date on discussions and plans for improvement work from the beginning. This will make it easier to spread new ways of working across teams and localities once you feel confident that your change is a better way of working.

## Bookbug and play@home

Bookbug, run by the Scottish Book Trust, is a national programme that aims to introduce young children to books and reading. Play@home is a national physical activity programme aimed at very young children. Both programmes gift every baby, toddler and preschooler with a set of age appropriate resources and there is an additional set of Bookbug resources for P1 children. Bookbug sessions are also held in libraries and community settings to help children and parents learn simple nursery rhymes and songs.

This work looked to make the impact of this more effective by improving the way in which health visitors gifted resources to parents. A key part of this work to date has been training for health visiting staff. We are now building on this to look at other ways of improving the way we encourage parents to use the resources and get involved in Bookbug activities in their communities.



Bookbug



# Splash!

## St Paul's Nursery Centre

Splash! is a family swim project aimed at children aged 2-4 years and their carers. It aims to build positive relationships between children and parents through swimming together. Over two blocks children move from swimming with their parents, to a group swimming lesson which their parents observe from the public gallery.

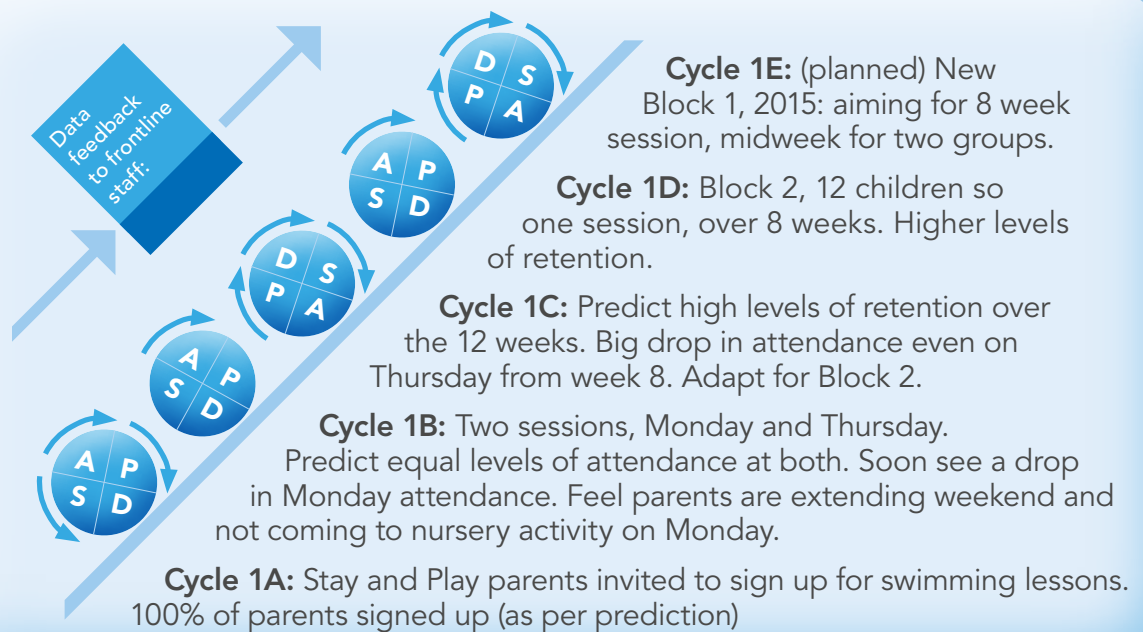
Feedback from children, parents and staff has been very positive – many parents are amazed at what their children can achieve, and staff have noticed improvements in the way children and their parents communicate and interact with each other as the project has gone on. It is now in its second year at the nursery and is also now being run by St Mary's Nursery, Lanark.

### Key learning message:

Keep on top of your data. Don't just collect it and let it pile up to be examined at the end of the programme. Build time to discuss the information you collect into your schedule every time you work with the group or children you are testing your idea with. This allows you to spread the work over time and means you can react and change things if they don't seem to be going to plan!



### Attendance at Swimming Lessons



We've also been able to share our work with people outside South Lanarkshire.



# Celebrating our learning

## Minister visits Parenting Programme at St Mary's Nursery, Lanark

You & Your Child is a South Lanarkshire parenting programme developed by Integrated Children's Services Family Support Staff and facilitated by staff from health, education and social work. The programme has been running for over three years and over the past year, we have been testing ideas for improvement in this programme, which has included delivering the programme in nursery settings, with support from nursery staff. The sixth cycle of testing delivery in nursery settings is now underway at St Mary's Nursery in Lanark.

On Friday 5th December 2014, Minister for Children and Young People and local MSP Aileen Campbell paid a visit to St Mary's to find out more about You & Your Child. She spent almost an hour with staff to hear about the programme, and specifically the improvement work and how this has made a difference to the way we now deliver the programme and to the way we can see the impact of the programme on children. She also spent an hour with parents. As well as taking part in the second half of the programme which was a practical session, she took the opportunity to speak to parents about their experiences in the programme and the difference it was making to their relationships with their children. Staff commented on how relaxed she was as she joined parents in puppet making – part of that week's topic focussing on play.

At the end of her visit, the Minister was presented with a copy of the You & Your Child Parents' Book and an overview of the improvement work carried out on the programme over the last year.

### Photos, left to right:

Minister Campbell and staff involved in You & Your Child at St Mary's Nursery Centre Lanark, December 2014.

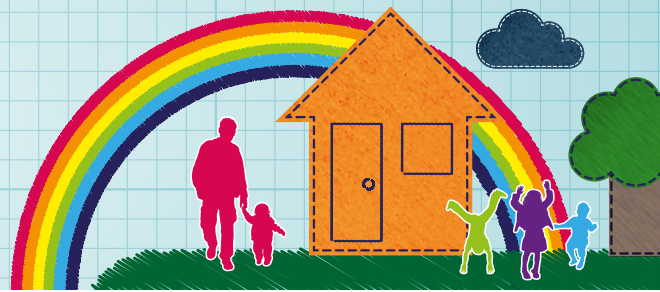
Minister Campbell joins parents in a craft activity as part of the You & Your Child session.

### Key learning message:

A PDSA is simple, and should be about 'what I do today'. At the beginning we waited for the 12 week parenting course to finish before looking at our data. Now we look at what we have learned after every session – this is done as part of our regular debrief so it isn't additional work. It has meant we have learned far more and have been able to make useful changes to our work as we go along.



# Looking Ahead: year three and beyond



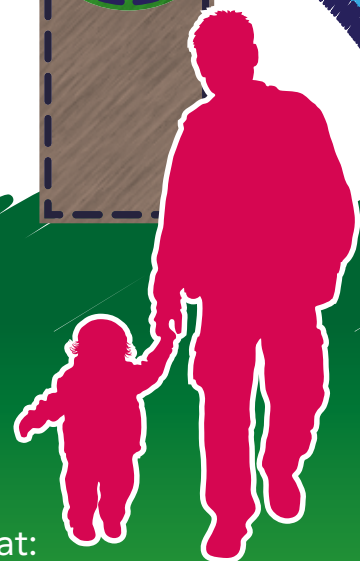
## Over the next year our priorities will be:

- Building capacity among our staff to use the Model for Improvement.
- Supporting services to build the model for improvement into core planning and activity
- Work with colleagues across our Children's Services Partnership to embed the model for improvement into our approach to continuous improvement.

## This means that we will:

- Work with staff who already have good experience of using the model to develop their skills and ensure we have improvement champions in services and localities to support improvement work
- Develop a programme of training to ensure that staff who want to use the model for improvement feel supported to use the model and can develop their skills as they are carrying out their activity

- Work closely with Health Promotion to support the delivery of their Service Plan 2015-16 which has built the model for improvement into their core service planning for the year
- Use the model for improvement to address improvement actions coming from the multi-agency inspection of Children's Services
- We will work closely with the Raising Attainment for All Collaborative, based in schools and supporting improvements for children and young people aged 9-18, to ensure that staff working in educational establishments are supported to use the model for improvement as part of their improvement planning processes.



## Getting in touch

Would you like to know more?

Get in touch with Michele Dowling, the EYC programme manager at:

[michele.dowling@southlanarkshire.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:michele.dowling@southlanarkshire.gcsx.gov.uk) or by phone 01698 452238.



If you need this information in another language or format,  
please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs.

Phone: 01698 453754

Email: [education@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:education@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

[www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk)