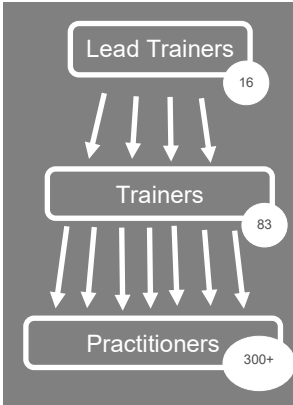


Merry Kidz Nursery, Manchester

PD Train the Trainer has influenced physical development practice within a PVI setting in Manchester.



Overview

Improving PD outcomes is a key priority in the Greater Manchester (GM) School Readiness programme.

PD Train the Trainer was developed in Stockport, to upskill Early Years practitioners with a better overall understanding of PD, why interventions are in place, provide a consistent message and identify how they can support at the earliest opportunity to reduce delayed development and referrals to specialist teams.

The training is delivered in a cascade model to reach as many people as possible and has been rolled out in Stockport, Manchester and Salford. Currently there are 16 Lead Trainers, 83 Trainers and over 300 practitioners trained.

Approach

Gill Blackwell, Early Years Quality Assurance Manager (Manchester City Council) led the involvement of colleagues in Manchester to become involved within the programme. Initially inviting a group of 4 health leads including a Health Visitor, Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist and an outreach worker to attend the Lead Trainer Training in September 2023. Following on from this Gill then facilitated the training to be delivered by the health leads, to a group of 30 cross sector professionals working within the Early Years, who consisted of Children's Centre Managers, Nursery Managers, Headteachers, College Tutors.

Embracing the training

Stephanie Quinn, Manager of Merry Kidz nursery in Manchester, was one of the attendees and was keen to deliver the training to the practitioners within her setting. Stephanie said,

"The course was invaluable and provided the practitioners with simple yet effective ideas"

From the training they started to look at ways to make their **environment** even more **enabling for babies to thrive** by creating opportunities within a bigger safer space, void of distractions. Simply put "a good size safe space" From this they then started to look at which physical activities will provide targeted support and **develop children's skills** that had been identified as requiring improvement, which included; balance, co-ordination, expression, building fine and gross motor skills and independence.



Overcoming challenges

One of the challenges that the practitioners had identified in the children, was that they tended to struggle with attachment. Practitioners found children to be clingy and as a result often carried children for large amounts of time, meaning, **babies are not given enough opportunity to engage in meaningful free activities such as tummy time** etc which has an important role to play as part of their development process. In addition, the usage of bouncers, baby highchair and cot for the purpose of keeping a baby safe at home whilst tasks are being achieved

Putting theory into practice

They have also set up obstacle courses, not only outside but inside as well, The nursery have created a physical room with soft flooring specifically for children to access these obstacle courses safely whilst assuming different styles like crawling, rolling etc as the express themselves.

Learning

Merry Kids have taken away a lot of learning from the training:

- We've learnt that babies engaging in **rolling supports their trunk stability** and vestibular development.
- The **importance of children spending time outside of bouncers and walkers**, which is important for proprioception to show the connection of their body to their feet.
- Activities can lead to children **achieving early milestones** such as good hand control and the development of hand/eye coordination.
- It **doesn't need to cost anything**, everyday materials and objects can be used.

Merry Kidz Top Tip:

"Share the success of activities with parents and the benefits that playing with obstacle courses, crawling and balancing activities can have on School Readiness"

Impact

- Babies became **more settled, happier and confident** over time as they explored body parts through rolling and stretching their muscles through different positions.
- They can **sit up for longer** whilst sat at the table.
- Children are becoming **more confident in moving freely** in a range of ways.
- We have noticed a quick turnaround in how long it takes for **children to settle in**.