



Re- Evaluation for Investing in Children membership:

Seaham Family Centre

For the purpose of this re-evaluation for Investing In Children membership I had the pleasure of meeting Jordan, Andrew, Maria, Coral, Rebecca and Nathan.

Seaham Family Centre continues to provide many activities for children on two evenings a week. These activities consist of a mixture of formal group work session and informal sessions where most children just play with toys and games.

The family centre continues to provide a comprehensive service for children aged 5-11 with a mixture of activities that are structured to meet the Every Child Matters framework. Most of the activities are generally developed through the interests of the children who access the family centre.

The staff team remains the same as last year and they have continued to be pro-active in encouraging the children to make choices and decisions for themselves and where possible changes take place through the direction of both children and staff. They have continued to develop these positive relationships which encourage conversation, which have led to some changes in the project, since the previous evaluation.

This report will highlight some of these positive outcomes and identify changes that have taken place since the previous evaluation for Investing In Children membership.

Opportunities for Dialogue and change.

Circle Time

Circle time offers some young people the opportunity to talk about what they think about the sessions they attended.

Andrew explained, **"We plan what we want to do with staff"**, he also went on to tell me that **"We get to choose what activities we would like to do"**.

Trips

Children continue to decide where they want to go to. Nathan told me, **"I wanted to go to the fire station and went in the summer and also wanted to meet the police"** Over the last year children have asked to go to the Fire Station, McDonalds, Centre For Life museum and a local farm and this has happened.

Family Fun Day

This day was established as the centre staff felt it would be a good idea to plan a day where children from the Wednesday and Thursday groups and their families could come together and enjoy a day of activities and find out more about what happens at the centre. Children were encouraged to have input into developing the day and came up with ideas about what they wanted to do. It was also a chance for children and their families to come together and evaluate what they think about their time at Seaham Family Centre, and also to generate ideas about what children and young people want to do at the centre.

Wishing Well

This idea was developed by the staff as a means for the children to say what they would like to see happen at the centre. It was used at the Family Open Day which was held on the 26th October 2006. Children drew on paper stars and placed them in the wooden wishing well.

Coral told me what she has asked for, **"I asked for Bratz Dolls in the wishing well"**. Coral added, **"We still do not have them"**. However, more dolls were bought for the centre.

The staff are trying to respond to all the ideas which have come directly from these children and are in the process of seeking funding from Barclays Bank. It will be interesting to discover if the centre is successful with the funding application and to see how children who access the centre are involved in any developments when coming to re-evaluate next year.

Highlighted below are some other ideas that the children came up with.

- **For everyone to be peaceful and happy – Amelia (young person)**
- **More big dolls and pushchairs – Amelia (young person)**
- **Somewhere to sit alone – Courtney (young person)**
- **A quiet reading corner – Chloe (young person)**
- **For lots of fun things at Easter – Amelia (young person)**
- **Paint a bus track on the ground outside – Jordan (young person)**
- **Some Soft Play – Amelia (young person)**
- **Some slides and swings – Courtney (young person)**
- **More games for outside – Lewis (service users younger brother)**

This method of discovering the views of children who access the centre is a positive approach to take by the staff at the centre, and has led to changes in the centre based on what the young people have said. What would be interesting to discover is how this method can be explored further over the next year to increase the involvement of children in decision making and even more changes could be made through this method.

Highlighted below are the changes that have been made since the Family Fun Day

- **Provided a quiet corner**

- Somewhere to sit alone
- Trips to Mc Donald's
- Lots of fun things at Christmas
- Nice colours in all the rooms. (This has been organised for the downstairs messy room and play room but not yet implemented)

Silent Reading Corner

This change came about as a direct result of a young person asking for this. Rebecca told me about Chloe's idea when I visited in February to meet with the children who access the Seaham Family Centre.

Rebecca explained, "**Chloe asked for somewhere she could read and be quiet**". This has now been introduced in one of the children's rooms in the Centre and is a positive step taken by the staff to make changes to the environment based on the important contribution Chloe made. This highlights what can be achieved by allowing children at Seaham Centre to develop the service delivery.

Most children who access the centre wanted to play with toys and have fun at the session they attended. It seems the children I met do get listened to and have a chance to say what they think about their time at the centre. It will be interesting to discover over the next year how the staff can build on such ideas as the Wishing Well to engage with children. For these reasons I would like to recommend that Seaham Family continue to be an Investing In children Member

This report was read and agreed by the following young people who attended Seaham Family Centre;- Coral , Marie , Rebecca , Bethany , Marie , Nathan , Andrew and Chloe.

Rob Johnson
Investing in Children Project Worker
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