



## Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

### Ear 4 U – NCH Family Mediation and Children’s Support Services

I met with children, young people and workers who are part of Ear 4 U, on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2008 to talk about the activity of the group over the last year. Gaby, Charna and Natalie have all been part of Ear 4 U for a long time and at this meeting they were joined by Emily, Catherine and Jordan. Heather Wilson still takes a lead role in facilitating the group but is also supported by Allison and Angela.

**Evidence of dialogue and change** is provided by the group activities and some resources and materials that have been produced as a result.

#### ❖ **Diamond Ranking**

Last February the group got together and talked about what they would like to do over the next year. As there are lots of children and young people, there are obviously lots of ideas, that’s why they use diamond ranking system, choosing their favourites and making a list.

#### ❖ **Influencing Event**

This was a huge Children’s Fund event celebrating the achievements of all the children’s fund projects. Ear 4 U - NCH Family Mediation and Children’s Support Services displayed all their materials. Gaby told me “**we took our display, we had everything that we had made, even a picture that I made years ago, and it had been made into a big poster.**” The young people joined in the fun, were entertained and had their faces painted and henna on their hands.

#### ❖ **Visit to Kids Kabin**

The group applied for some funding from a national pot of NCH money. The money was available to groups to consider what participation is, and what it meant to them. Ear 4 U was successful in its bid and used the money to employ an artist to work with them. The young people worked hard and all their pictures have been made into posters and are being used nationally.

#### ❖ **Re-design of the evaluation forms**

The session in May was to look at the existing evaluation forms currently used by the service. The idea was to make them more children and young people friendly; an evaluation form for children and another for young people. The end result – please see attached.

#### ❖ **Canvas Painting**

A fun session painting on canvas, once they were dry the children were able to take their pictures home.

#### ❖ **Frankie and Benny’s**

The group received an added bonus last year. Frankie and Benny’s invited all children and young people from NCH projects for a Christmas Party. The Ear 4 U group enjoyed a free meal, “**we got balloons**”, said Natalie and “**we all got a £10 voucher and it was fun**”, Gaby told me.

#### ❖ **New materials, bookmark and posters**

Over the last couple of months the group have worked on resources for other children and young people whose parents are going through a divorce or separation.

Please see a copy of all the bookmarks attached. These resources will be put into schools, libraries and all places where children and young people might pick them up. They are brilliant, well done!

Following on from this, I met the NCH Ear 4 U group in April. At this session the children and young people created marzipan fruits and little boxes to put them in. The first part of the session was quite challenging for the group, as they thought about what it means to be affected by change. The Ear 4 U group came up with some very good ideas which will be used to create new literature to help other children and young people who are hurting in their lives. The group thought about everything they had suggested and had the idea that it might be a good idea to have a memory box to hold special memories and special things in so when circumstances did change they would have special things to remind them of things that make them happy. The group asked if they could make these at the next session.

When I visited the NCH - Ear 4 U group this is what they had to say about the work they have completed over the last year and how they have enjoyed it:-

Gaby **“We have made book marks and posters, mine had an angel and devil on it.” “You know we do get to do what we want to do and I enjoy it, if you think I was year 3 when I started coming now I am in year 7.”**

Catherine and Emily were at the Ear 4 U group for the first time and both the girls enjoyed it.

Nicola and Charna told me that they started coming just over a year ago. **“We have done lots of arts and crafts; we helped to make the bookmarks and the posters.”** Charna said **“if we want anything, we just tell them.”** The girls also told me that they went to Frankie and Benny’s and enjoyed their meal, **“got balloons and vouchers.”**

Natalie and Chama told me about their thoughts on the leaflets and literature they help to produce. Natalie said **“I think it will help other children to understand that they aren’t thee only ones and the leaflets will help them to understand”** Chama said, **“I think it will give them support.”**

Catherine told me that she **“liked making the boxes.”** Both Catherine and Emily enjoyed the games. Like Catherine and Emily, Jordan was visiting the group for the first time. Jordan told me **“I think I will come back.”** Jordan had a great idea of creating a “monopoly” board to help children to deal with family break ups and changes. He is looking forward to exploring this idea further.

Natalie and Chama added this at the end  
**“We would like more time”**  
**“To play more games”**  
**“Different food”**

All of the Ear 4 U group enjoy coming to the group and all of the children and young people have something valuable to say because they all have their own individual experience to draw on. By meeting as a group NCH - Ear 4 U provide a great resource for the NCH Family Mediation Service as they help create literature which helps children and young people suffering from separation and divorce.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of May I met with the group to read through my report. At this session the children and young people made their memory boxes. Everyone had fun creating their special memories out of playdoh. I shared my report with some of the children and young people who have been involved in the project for a while and they all agreed that it was fine. Therefore on behalf of all the children and young people I met with - Gaby, Emma, Joe, Kieran, Ethan, Chama, Natalie, Emily, Catherine, Georgia, Matthew, Ben and Jordan I would definitely like to recommend that Ear 4 U – NCH Family Mediation and Children’s Support Services should remain Investing in Children members.

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