

Let's Play, GreaterSport

It's never too early to start an exercise habit. Active children are more likely to grow up into active adults. That's why GreaterSport (GS) support parents and carers to become more active with young children. GS, supported by Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA), submitted a successful application to Target: wellbeing, securing £99,703 in May 2013, to deliver a two year project 'Let's Play'.

Project description

Let's Play aims to increase awareness of the need for physical activity from an early age and increase uptake to create lifelong participation within local communities.

The project delivers sessions where parents of 0 – 3 year olds can bring their child(ren) to an early learning provision that is focused around physical activity, using a family-centered approach that has the potential to be a key building block in childhood development for vulnerable children. The project focused on communities with the lowest child development rating. These children are at greater risk of being assessed as not 'school ready' at age five, and therefore being on a poor life trajectory from the outset.

The purpose is to support parents to make informed future lifestyle choices for themselves and their young children. It's about empowering behaviour change to deliver a legacy of increased physical activity in every day family life. Greater social interaction with peers results in potential improved mental health for new parents, increasing motivation and reducing anxiety as a result.

Targets & Outcomes

All outcomes were achieved and surpassed with the main findings, from the 811 participants (target 600) on the project, being:

- Let's Play has enabled parents to make informed choices with 99% of respondents reporting new skills or knowledge gained.
- The social aspect of the sessions have proved particularly valuable to participants, with 96% of recipients developing new support networks and friendships.
- Focusing on the physical activity needs of young children can have a positive knock-on effect on parents and the wider family.

Overall project outcomes	Specific outcomes	KPI	Actual achieved	% of overall participants
Outcome 1 Physical activity – Children, adults and the wider community being more physically active and experiencing improved access to physical activities.	People feeling more confident to manage their everyday lives	360	786	97%
	People experiencing increased opportunities for social interaction	600	778	96%
	Participants and/or volunteers reporting the new skills or knowledge gained	360	802	99%
Outcome 2 Mental health – Children, adults and the wider community having improved mental well-being and greater social contact.	People reporting an increased awareness and understanding of the benefits of physical activity	600	754	93%
	People reporting increased levels of physical activity in daily life	600	689	85%
	People reporting reduced barriers to exercise or having taken up a new activity	360	616	76%

As well as these outcomes, the project delivered additional, unexpected outcomes highlighted in the [C4EO impact report](#), conducted by Salford University in partnership with GreaterSport and Target Wellbeing.

Further Impact Themes

Qualitative data was collected from parents at Let's Play sessions. Five broad themes emerged from an analysis of the feedback:

1) Impact on child development

"Thoroughly enjoyed the project - my son's social skills/interaction has grown enormously"

2) Learning about childhood development

"I've learnt how to encourage baby to develop with movement – use of music and songs – repetition"

3) Developing supportive networks

"Myself and my partner were very dubious about groups as during our drug rehab we had been forced to attend loads. Let's Play is different and has given us confidence to attend other groups. We now have a circle of friends with children which benefits us and our child"

"I thought my son was naughty and got stressed by his behaviour. My friend almost dragged me to Let's Play... I realised my son was fine and it was in fact me who needed a little bit of help. I approached my Doctor who diagnosed me with Post Natal Depression, it was such a relief"

4) Learning about physical activity

"[I've learnt] how physical activity aids brain development in babies and infants and safely encouraging physical development"

"I have learnt some new techniques in how to encourage my little one's walking and physical development, and how to make physical activities fun for both parent and child"

5) Wider physical activity benefits

There is evidence that the project has had a wider whole-family impact in terms of increasing regular exercise:

"It has made me think more about what physical activities that I do - also made me think about my diet as well"
 "We have increased our activity since coming to the group" "We have joined a family gym"

Economic Value

GreaterSport in partnership with New Economy have used the recommended Gross Value Added (GVA) formula and Cost benefit analysis tool to derive the following economic benefits of the programme:

Gross Value Added: £153,159

Cost Benefit Analysis (skills and employment):

	Number	Fiscal Benefit	Public Value benefit	Total
Jobs	7	£48,412	£72,173	£120,858
Training	132	£10,411	£55,543.20	£65,954
Skills	802	-	£76,190	£76,190
Total	-	58,823	£203,906	£262,729

Using the Sport England 'Moves' tool the following economic benefits were derived:

- £129,651 saved in NHS treatment costs.
- 30p financial return on every £1 investment
- £11.11 QALY return on every £1 investment

Sustainability

Since the programme finished in May 2015, GreaterSport continue to provide and develop an Under 5's physical activity offer for Greater Manchester. The Under 5's team have secured commissions from a range of partners. More importantly, through *Greater Manchester Moving; The Blueprint for Physical Activity and Sport*, which is referenced in the Greater Manchester devolution sustainability plan for Health and Social Care in Greater Manchester, there has been the opportunity to bring the importance of physical development and physical activity in the early years to the forefront.

Impact on School Readiness

GreaterSport commissioned, with support from Target Wellbeing, the University of Salford to undertake an additional independent research project to measure the impact of Let's Play Toddler®. This has produced vital evidence showing it has significant positive impact on a child's physical abilities, social skills and emotional resilience. These are key indicators of school readiness. This has, and will, aid long term sustainability of the Let's Play programme.

Appendix 1. Alicia and Bella's story shows the impact the programme has had on a parent in addition to the effect it has had on the young person.

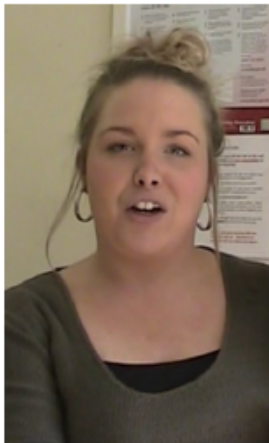
GreaterSport Case Studies



CHANGING LIVES

Let's Play Toddler®

"Bella had been so low in confidence, but being around other people at Let's Play, built her confidence loads, which made my life easier"



"Going on the two volunteer training sessions challenged me and got my brain working, I really enjoyed it".

Alicia and Bella

Alicia attended a ten week Let's Play Toddler® session, with her 18 month old daughter, Bella.

Alicia commented at the end of the programme that it had given her confidence to deal with different situations and helped her to socialise with other parents. This meant her and Bella were much more active as "I get up and out a lot more". She felt this had impacted on family life, saying everyone was much happier. "Bella had been so low in confidence, but being around other people at Let's Play, built her confidence loads, which made my life easier."

After the second session Alicia said " I would love to do your job". One of the GreaterSport Let's Play team said " You could, if you really want to" and went on to describe their own journey from volunteer to session leader.

GreaterSport staff on site continued the conversation the following week and broached the idea with the Children's Centre staff. This resulted in a meeting being arranged between Alicia and the volunteer coordinator.

GreaterSport Let's Play staff have kept in contact with Alicia. In May she completed her AQA volunteer training, had attended a number of training courses, including safeguarding which led to her volunteering with families and within a school environment.

Alicia was really pleased that GreaterSport who had helped her start her journey were keeping in contact with her saying "It was so nice for someone to have confidence in me, ringing me and meeting up with me made me realise I am important".

As of Dec 2015, Alicia described herself as settled and ready to enter the paid workforce, secure in the knowledge that Bella was confident and school ready. Alicia is hoping to attend a Physical Awareness Training course run by GreaterSport, I best watch out, "Think she wants my job". #WatchThisSpace



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