

Better Start Bradford Innovation Hub

End of contract report – Pre-schoolers in the Playground

This is a report provided by the Better Start Bradford Innovation Hub (BSBIH) for the Better Start Bradford (BSB) and the Pre-schoolers in the Playground project teams.

The document provides an overview of the project performance and findings from the implementation evaluation including an interpretation of these findings by the BSBIH. The design of this evaluation is described in more detail in the Evaluation Plan Summary, which was approved by key stakeholders from the BSBIH and BSB.

Authors: Sara Ahern, Kathryn Willan, Nimarta Dharni, Maria Bryant, Josie Dickerson, and the Better Start Bradford Innovation Hub

Version 1.0 06.09.19

Approved by:

Role	Name	Date
BSBIH Programme Manager	Josie Dickerson	06.09.19
BSBIH Nutrition and Obesity Lead	Maria Bryant	06.09.19
BSBIH Fidelity and Implementation Lead	Maria Bryant	06.09.19
BSB Implementation Manager	Jill Duffy	05.09.19

Project overview

Pre-schoolers in the Playground (PiP) is a 10 week programme of facilitated active play sessions delivered in primary school playgrounds. Its aim is to increase preschool children's habitual physical activity levels by providing parents with the necessary skills and confidence to facilitate their child's outdoor active play. PiP was adapted specifically for implementation with Better Start Bradford families and has been the subject of a one-year pilot in three primary schools. This report summarises the findings of the pilot, using data provided by schools for the delivery period June 2018 to July 2019, supplemented by surveys completed by project coordinators and facilitators at the end of delivery.

Data quality

Project data was submitted for 7 of the 12 planned courses. Nearly half of expected enrolment data was missing, and some of what was submitted was incomplete. 25% of delivery data was missing, and some of what was submitted was incomplete. **This means that the findings presented here do not offer a full picture of project delivery and should be interpreted with caution.**

Project performance and key findings

Recruitment: No. of children enrolled. Based on available data, the project recruited 88% of the target placing it in **AMBER**. Recruitment appeared to reduce term on term as the pool of eligible parents at the school was exhausted. Recruitment of families from outside of the school was very low.

Implementation: No. of sessions delivered. Based on available data, fewer project sessions were delivered than anticipated (47% of target), placing the project in **RED**. This was largely due to low levels of participant attendance towards the end of courses, and low levels of recruitment in the last term of the school year.

Completion: No. of children attending at least 10 sessions across a minimum of 6 weeks. Based on available data, 26% of families completed a course placing the project in **RED**.

Comments and recommendations

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>The issues identified with delivery and project data may suggest that the current model needs to be adapted and options for a sustainable model should be considered.</p> <p>1</p> | <p>Additional strategies to attract families who are not already engaged with schools may help to maintain pools of potential participants and boost recruitment.</p> <p>2</p> | <p>Limited delivery data and variance in fidelity to the delivery model make it difficult to draw conclusions about the suitability of the projects current form.</p> <p>3</p> |
|--|---|---|

Pre-schoolers in the Playground: Project Performance

Recruitment: Overview of missing data and adjusted targets

	1	2	3	All schools
Spring/ Summer 18	<p>Anticipated no. of courses= 1</p> <p>Anticipated no. enrolled children= 12</p> <p>Data available</p> <p>Actual no. enrolled = 16</p>	<p>Anticipated no. of courses= 1</p> <p>Anticipated no. enrolled children= 12</p> <p>Data available</p> <p>Actual no. enrolled = 8</p>	<p>Anticipated no. of courses= 1</p> <p>Anticipated no. enrolled children= 12</p> <p>Data available</p> <p>Actual no. enrolled = 5</p>	<p>Anticipated no. of courses = 3</p> <p>No missing data</p> <p>Recruitment target = 36</p> <p>No. recorded as enrolled = 29 (81%)</p>
Autumn/Winter 18	<p>Anticipated no. of courses= 1</p> <p>Anticipated no. enrolled children= 12</p> <p>Data available</p> <p>Actual no. enrolled = 15</p>	<p>Anticipated no. of courses= 1</p> <p>Anticipated no. enrolled children= 12</p> <p>Data available</p> <p>Actual no. enrolled = 15</p>	<p>Anticipated no. of courses= 1</p> <p>Anticipated no. enrolled children= 12</p> <p>No data submitted</p>	<p>Anticipated no. of courses= 3</p> <p>Missing data = 33%</p> <p>Adjusted target = 24</p> <p>No. recorded as enrolled = 30 (125%)</p>
Winter/Spring 19	<p>Anticipated no. of courses= 1</p> <p>Anticipated no. enrolled children= 12</p> <p>Data available</p> <p>Actual no. enrolled = 11</p>	<p>Anticipated no. of courses= 1</p> <p>Anticipated no. enrolled children= 12</p> <p>No data submitted</p>	<p>Anticipated no. of courses= 1</p> <p>Anticipated no. enrolled children= 12</p> <p>No data submitted</p>	<p>Anticipated no. of courses= 3</p> <p>Missing data = 67%</p> <p>Adjusted target = 12</p> <p>No. recorded as enrolled = 11 (92%)</p>
Spring/ Summer 19	<p>Anticipated no. of courses= 1</p> <p>Anticipated no. enrolled children= 12</p> <p>Data available</p> <p>Actual no. enrolled = 4</p>	<p>Anticipated no. of courses= 1</p> <p>Anticipated no. enrolled children= 12</p> <p>Course cancelled, no data submitted</p>	<p>Anticipated no. of courses= 1</p> <p>Anticipated no. enrolled children= 12</p> <p>Course cancelled, no data submitted</p>	<p>Anticipated no. of courses= 3</p> <p>Missing data = 67%</p> <p>Adjusted target = 12</p> <p>No. recorded as enrolled = 4 (33%)</p>

Total anticipated no. of courses= 12, Recruitment target = 144

Missing data = 42%, Overall adjusted recruitment target = 84

No. of children recorded as enrolled across all courses = 74 (88% of adjusted target placing the project in **AMBER**)

No. of unique child beneficiaries enrolled = 67

Pre-schoolers in the Playground: Project Performance

Recruitment

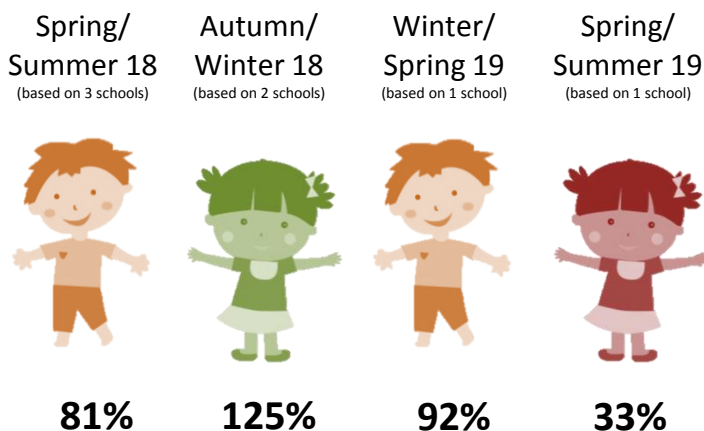
How were families recruited?

Recruitment focused on children already engaged with the schools, particularly those at nursery. Strategies included speaking to parents outside nursery and in the playground, advertising via the school website and social media, and placing posters up around school. Some efforts were made to engage families from outside of the school including putting up posters and leaving leaflets in community settings. Difficulties in recruiting from outside school and a focus on nursery children led to a decreasing 'pool of parents' over time. As this became more apparent one school made contact with a local health visiting team to promote to programme but did not get a positive response.

Were enough families recruited?

Recruitment was defined as the number of children enrolled on the project. As shown in the overview (page 3), enrolment data was available for 7 courses. Presented is the performance against the adjusted targets.

The project did not recruit to target with the exception of Autumn/Winter 2018 when the target was exceeded. Overall the project is in **AMBER**. However, these findings should be interpreted with caution given the proportion of missing data.



Who were the families that were recruited?

Enrolment data was available for 67 unique child beneficiaries.

Caregivers enrolling their families onto the project were overwhelmingly female, and predominantly mums (78%), although 23 families enrolled a second caregiver with most of these being dads.

Of the enrolled children, 52% were female. Age data was available for 52 children and is presented opposite. Only 1 child was recorded as neither being enrolled at the nursery or having a sibling or cousin at the school.

Age	No. of children
<2 years	8 (15%)
2-3 years	10 (19%)
3-4 years	20 (39%)
4	14 (27%)

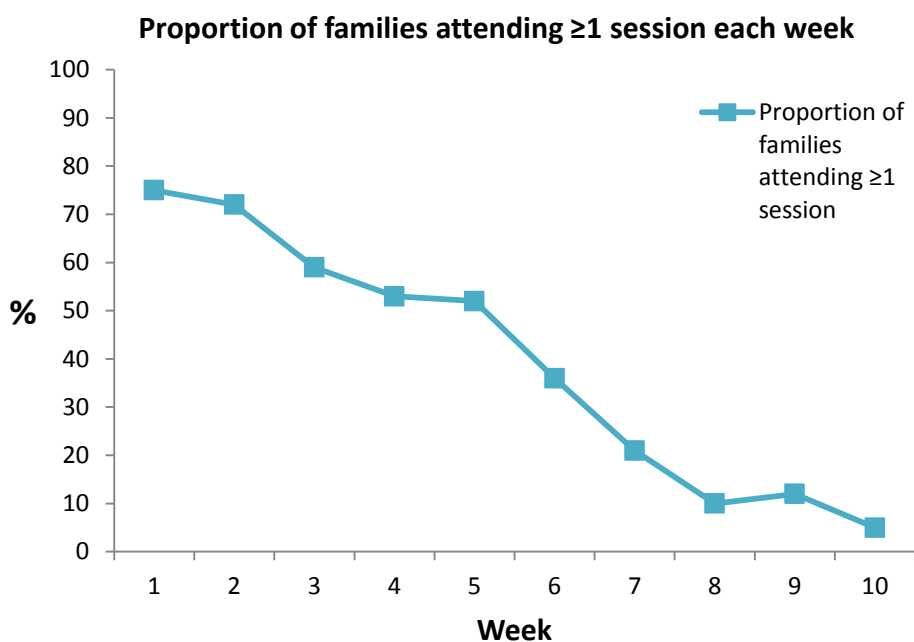
Pre-schoolers in the Playground: Project Performance

Participation

How often did families take part?

Based on available data, 61 of the 67 enrolled children (91%) went on to take part in at least 1 PiP session and so could be categorised as participants.

On average, participating children attended 11 sessions over the 10 week course, but this varied from family to family and by week of the course. Attendance decreased over time, with fewer families attending at least one session per week.



Did families complete the course?

	n	%
Participants	61	91
Participants attending ≥10 sessions	31	51
Participants with opportunity to complete a course	43	71
Completers	11	26
Data available for 7/10 courses delivered across 3 schools		

Completion of PiP was defined as attending at least 10 sessions over a minimum of 6 weeks.

Because three of the courses were shorter than 6 weeks, not all participating children had the opportunity to complete a course. Based on the available data, 43 (71%) did.

11 of these 43 children completed the course suggesting a completion rate of 26% placing the project in **RED**.

Pre-schoolers in the Playground: Project Performance

Implementation: Overview of missing data and adjusted targets

	1	2	3	All schools
Spring/ Summer 18	Anticipated no. of courses= 1 Anticipated no. of sessions = 25 Data available Actual no. sessions delivered= 23	Anticipated no. of courses= 1 Anticipated no. of sessions = 20 Data available Actual no. sessions delivered= 17	Anticipated no. of courses= 1 Anticipated no. of sessions = 20 Data available Actual no. sessions delivered= 20	Anticipated no. of courses= 3 Anticipated no. of sessions = 65 No missing data Target = 65 Recorded = 60 (92%)
Autumn/Winter 18	Anticipated no. of courses= 1 Anticipated no. of sessions = 50 Data available Actual no. sessions delivered= 40 (80%)	Anticipated no. of courses= 1 Anticipated no. of sessions = 50 Data available Actual no. sessions delivered= 31 (62%)	Anticipated no. of courses= 1 Anticipated no. of sessions = 50 No data submitted	Anticipated no. of courses= 3 Anticipated no. of sessions = 150 Missing data = 33% Adjusted target = 100 Recorded = 71 (71%)
Winter/Spring 19	Anticipated no. of courses= 1 Anticipated no. of sessions = 50 Data available Actual no. sessions delivered= 29 (58%)	Anticipated no. of courses= 1 Anticipated no. of sessions = 50 No data submitted	Anticipated no. of courses= 1 Anticipated no. of sessions = 50 No data submitted	Anticipated no. of courses= 3 Anticipated no. of sessions = 150 Missing data = 67% Adjusted target = 50 Recorded = 29 (58%)
Spring/ Summer 19	Anticipated no. of courses= 1 Anticipated no. of sessions = 50 Data available Actual no. sessions delivered= 11 (22%)	Anticipated no. of courses= 1 Anticipated no. of sessions = 50 Course cancelled Actual no. sessions delivered= 0	Anticipated no. of courses= 1 Anticipated no. of sessions = 50 Course cancelled Actual no. sessions delivered= 0	Anticipated no. of courses= 3 Anticipated no. of sessions = 150 No missing data Target = 150 Recorded = 11 (7%)

Total anticipated no. of courses= 12, Total anticipated no. of sessions = 515

Missing data = 25%,

Overall adjusted delivery target = 365

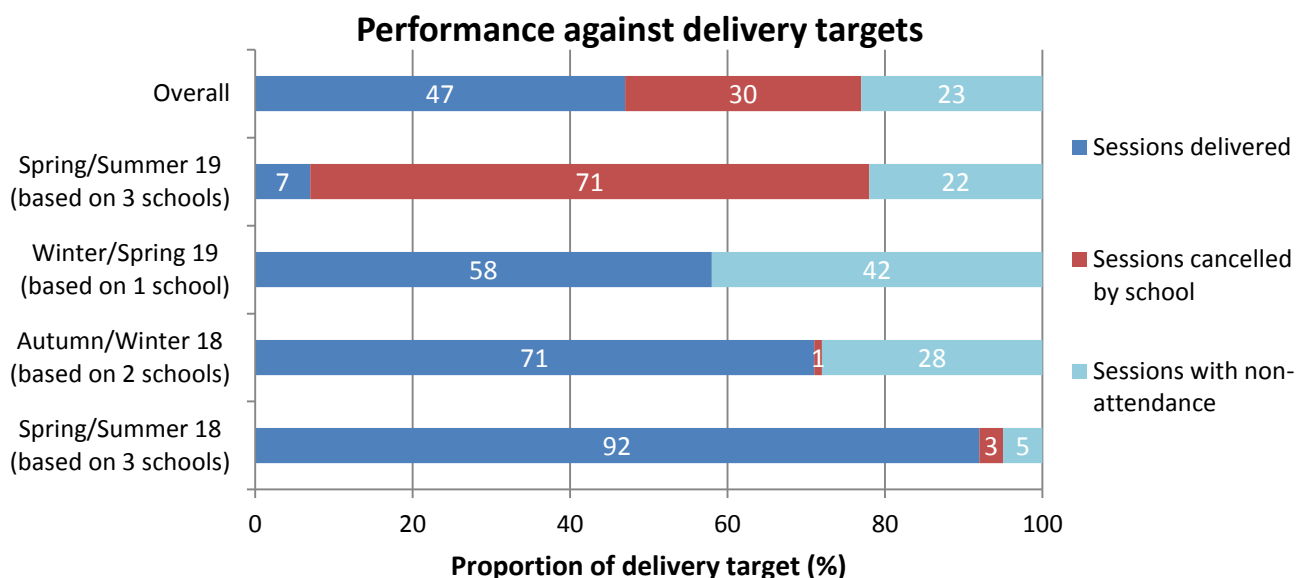
No. of sessions recorded as being delivered= 171 (47% of adjusted target placing the project in **RED**)

Pre-schoolers in the Playground: Project Performance

Implementation:

Was the project implemented as planned?

As shown in the overview (page 6), delivery data was not available from all schools for all of the delivered courses. For this reason, targets have been adjusted to reflect the number of schools who returned data each term. Overall, the project delivered 47% of anticipated sessions placing the project in **RED**.



The graph above shows the project's performance with regards to the number of PiP sessions delivered as a proportion of each term's adjusted anticipated delivery figures. It also shows the proportion of the anticipated sessions that were cancelled by the school, or were not run because participants did not attend.

What barriers were there to delivery?

Difficulty recruiting and retaining families on courses made delivery difficult. Relying on a pool of families engaged with the school meant that over the course of the school year that pool was exhausted as families had already participated. This led to the cancellation of whole courses when schools failed to recruit at the end of the school year. Similarly, declining attendance over the 10 weeks meant an increasing number of fully unattended sessions which were therefore cancelled, which was the main reason that sessions were not run. Other than these cancelled courses, school cancellation of sessions was relatively uncommon (3%). The most reported reasons were nursery/ school trips, lack of available staff, and bank holidays.

Facilitators felt that low numbers of families attending sessions could be off putting for the few families attending and lead attendance to decline further. Patterns in the attendance data seem to support this idea. Courses starting off with fewer enrollees and lower group numbers seemed to decline faster.

Pre-schoolers in the Playground: Project Performance

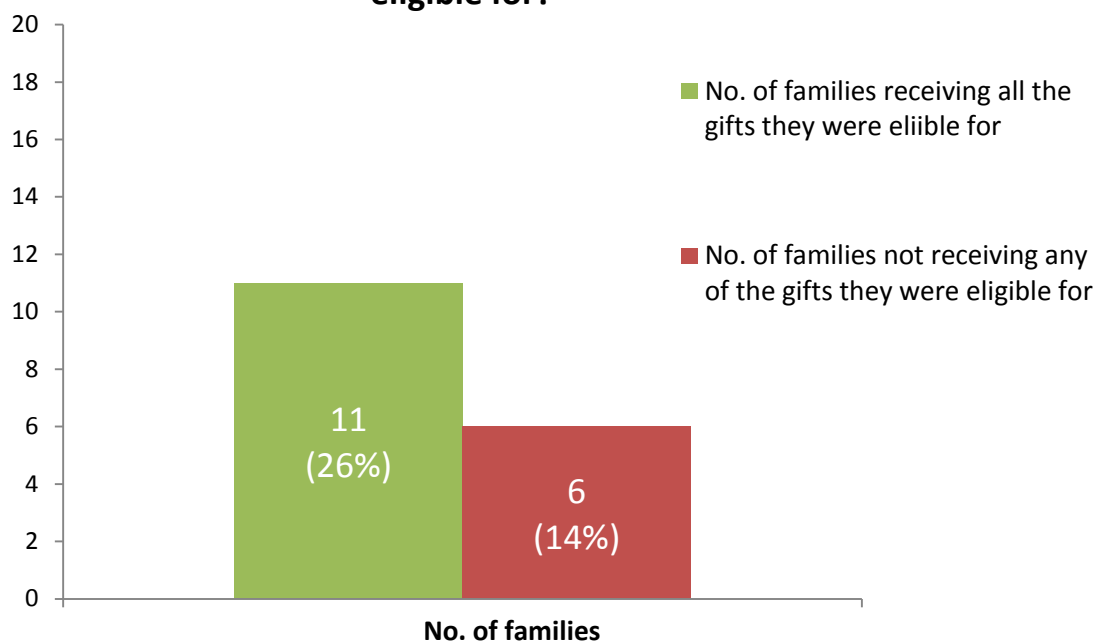
Implementation:

Was the project implemented as planned?

A key component of the PiP project is providing families with a free gift each week that relates to the activities that are modelled during that weeks sessions. The aim is that families will continue to use the gift to support activity at home.

Schools were asked to record whether families received the gift each week that they attended. Data relating to the weekly gift was only available for 43 participating children.

How many families received all the gifts they were eligible for?



To be eligible to receive the weekly gift children needed to attend one session that week. Just over a quarter of children received all of the gifts they were eligible for. Of the remaining children around a third received less than half of the gifts they were eligible for. 14% of children did not receive any of the gifts they were eligible for.

The low levels of reported gift receipt may be related to one school team reporting that the gifts were being distributed on specific days of the week rather than on the first session a family attends that week. Facilitators reported that this strategy had been employed in order to encourage families to attend all sessions. However, this does not appear to have been successful.

Pre-schoolers in the Playground: Project Performance

Feedback from schools

What were the schools experiences of delivering the project?

Open response surveys were completed by 4 PiP coordinators and facilitators at participating schools at the end of the final term. Some illustrative quotes of key themes are given below. Overall, delivery teams felt that their schools were supportive of the delivery of PiP. Teams had a good understanding of the aims of the project and felt there were clear benefits for participating families. However, there were a number of challenges to delivery particularly around the recruitment and retention of families. Low levels of attendance was demoralising for facilitators. Schools have offered some suggestions for changes that might support the successful delivery of the project.

What benefits did schools see for families?

"Parents gain new play ideas, increased confidence to try new things with their children, health benefits for the whole family."

"We feel that parents also picked up on the positive praise that we as facilitators modelled."

"I enjoy seeing families being successful and working together"

What challenges did schools see for families?

"Some families can be put off as the provision is outdoors particularly in wet weather."

"The amount of weeks involved. Ten was far too many."

"The timing of the sessions... children had had a full morning in Nursery. The children were tired and hungry and most were due for their afternoon nap."

What challenges did schools face?

"Once we had exhausted all our prospective families and changed times to accommodate nursery children we then were unable to get anymore families."

"I have found it very hard to find families and when I have its hard to get them to join or stay for the sessions."

"I have found the data inputting time consuming."

What changes might support delivery?

"...it would be better if the programme ran in the Autumn and summer terms... once a week on the same day for 6 weeks"

"3 (sessions) per week rather than 5. A broader range of activities to deliver..."

"Cutting the program down to maximum six weeks."

"Adding some more games to help keep children engaged..."