

Sharing music with parents



The inspiration for a project at **Southmead Children's Centre in Bristol** came from some staff members who had attended a training session with Ros Bayley.*

They learned more about how rhythm and beat can enhance children's development and learning. New raps and rhymes were introduced

into the nursery more regularly and staff observed the positive impact this had on the children. Children enjoyed the sessions and their listening and concentration skills improved.

The setting decided to expand this work and run some music sessions with children and their parents. The intention is to support parents' understanding of the link between language acquisition, music and singing and to recognise the diversity within the Children's Centre community by including a range of international instruments and music.

The project also aims to enable the exploration of music in both the nursery and home environments, and to support community cohesion. Sharing musical experiences from a range of cultures helps practitioners and parents to learn together, share each other's traditions and form stronger links between the home and the centre.

Several musical instrument sets and music recordings from around the world were purchased. In addition, the centre felt it important to show parents that children can keep a beat and make music with common household items. So, some brightly coloured buckets, bowls and stainless steel kitchen implements were also gathered to encourage the exploration of sound.

In partnership with Bristol Arts and Music Service the centre hired an experienced Peruvian percussionist to visit the centre and lead interactive music sessions with parents and children. He is now leading music sessions over a period of 10 weeks at a variety of existing groups.



These include the centre drop-in, which is particularly popular with families new to the area and reflects the diversity of families in Southmead; the PEEP** group which focuses on parent-child interaction and early language development; and the childminders' support group which brings childminders and their children into a group setting and offers opportunities for networking and professional development. The reach of the project is also being extended through sessions provided at the nursery and reception classes in three local primary schools.

The music project will conclude with a large musical celebration. The intention is to invite families to an event where music-making workshops will be held, and families will be able to join in the singing and rhythm and beat activities, encompassing music from around the world. A professional musician will also attend this event, provided by Youth Music.*** All children over the age of two will be given a Music Start pack to encourage more music in the home.

The project will then be extended through a home loan service at the Children's Centre. Parents will be encouraged to take instruments, CDs and song books home to continue singing, dancing and learning with their children and extended families.

***Ros Bayley** can be contacted at: www.educationalpublications.com
training@lawrenceeducational.com

** **PEEP** (Peers Early Education Partnership) provides training for practitioners who wish to develop their work with parents and become more familiar with the PEEP approach. Material is available for five age levels: babies, ones, twos, threes and fours. More information is available at: www.peep.org.uk

*****Youth Music** is a charity that works to support music-making and training.
Contact them at: One America Street, London, SE1 0NE. Tel: 020 7902 1060. Fax: 020 7902 1061.
info@youthmusic.org.uk

Music Start packs are funded by Youth Music (see above) and are aimed at the parents of children aged two to five. Each pack contains a selection of small hand-held musical instruments, a CD of songs and instrumental music with suggestions to get parents doing some very simple activities with their children.

