



GO-WOMAN!
ALLIANCE CIC

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GOAL - Parent & Toddler Evaluation Report

December 2020

Introduction

Covid 19 has affected the whole world. Unlike adults, our children, and especially our very young children, the inability to have access to others and the outside world at such a critical stage in their development, could have a significant impact on their vision of the world and their sense of self.

In 2017, Go-Woman! Alliance lost a significant partner (Adderley Children's Centre - Family Support Team). Parent and Toddler coupled with crèche were pivotal as a vehicle of access/support for our adult services.

Go-Woman! Alliance have a commitment to lifelong learning and believe that the foundations of learning, just as early years practitioners believe, begin at conception. It was with these fundamental beliefs that Go-Woman! Alliance took their place in the community to bridge the gap for the threatened closure of trusted child and family services within Adderley Children's Centre, now known as Adderley Nursery School.

This saw Go-Woman! Alliance access funding for the continuation of provision for both crèche and Parent & Toddler sessions on Adderley Nursery

school site.

Go-Woman! Alliance's initial response to COVID 19 was to ensure that families, service user's and learners continued to receive external contact from trusted, familiar keyworker's via weekly welfare calls.

By April 2020, GOAL's successful face to face services were replicated via R.I.S.E. (Re-engage, Inform, Support & Empower) online virtual services coupled with the 'key element' of ongoing weekly welfare calls.

Through the weekly welfare calls, keyworkers reported that families shared the considerable additional stress that they were experiencing due to their children unable to access services/education. Virtual online Parent & Toddler was set up in May 2020, again coupled with the 'key element' of ongoing weekly welfare calls.

The sessions and follow up weekly welfare calls are facilitated by a qualified Early Years and experienced Family Support worker. Herself, a mom of two very young children who describes her feelings of low mood and her struggles through the initial isolation of COVID 19.



"I think the sessions were well needed especially as families were not able to get out. I've really struggled myself. Even though I know all the things and activities that I could do, I just felt so low and yet so anxious about the whole COVID situation. I just wasn't able to motivate myself."

"When I was asked if I could support the Parent & Toddler group, it so boosted my self-esteem and gave me the motivation to enjoy just playing and learning with my own children again."

"Children give you such joy and rewards. I'm so glad I was asked to get involved. It was my saviour!" Sania Anwar

Play

Grow

Prosper

Not only were the early years practitioners sceptical about the use of zoom to engage young children and therefore choosing not to 'think outside the box' but for many of the families who were desperate to get support for their children, lacked access to digital skills, creating additional barriers to engagement.

GOAL worked in partnership with number of funders who launched initiatives to bridge the gap created by the digital divide that exists in our communities.

GOAL team worked with these families to help them get online; to engage with Parent & Toddler sessions whilst supporting these individuals with their I.T. learning.

Those that did not qualify for any devices, accessed devices through GOAL's L.E.A.P project through which families were able to lend a device (like a library book) ensuring that no family was excluded, especially due to the digital poverty that exist amongst BAME communities.

We are grateful to all our supporters that helped to narrow the gap that exists in digital skills in our communities.



Hodge Hill
Neighbourhood Network
Scheme (NNS)



Play

Grow

Prosper

51 individuals engaged via virtual online Parent & Toddler / Social meet up / Trips to date



15 Mothers



5 Fathers



1 Grandmother



17 under 5s



9 older siblings



4 children from extended family

Session Structure

- Structure for the sessions enables both the parent and the child to follow a set routine, giving time to prepare resources.
- All resources are delivered by GOAL to ensure there is an equalizer amongst all the parents taking part in the sessions.
- Activities are chosen to support many aspects of child's development but most importantly for parent and child to have fun and enjoy some special time together.

Through the online sessions Go-Woman! Alliance have been privileged to have a unique opportunity to engage and observe our children and their families in their own environment in a non-threatening way.

The observations coupled with the building of strong trusting relationships between the keyworker, Parent and Child through the weekly welfare calls has highlighted the need for additional services for some children and their families.

Mother shared that it has been very nice to talk to someone about how upset she feels when she wants her child to talk more than anything.

Mother shared she finds it very easy to share her feelings with us and is not usually the type of person to share her feelings so easily.

GOAL believes that every child should be supported to ensure they have 'equality of opportunity' to enable the very best outcomes.



Case Study



Farida was amongst one of our initial recruits for the online Parent & Toddler sessions when the pandemic started. A learning pack was sent out to the family and they joined us regularly every week. During weekly welfare calls Farida shared her difficulties in engaging Minaz with the activity throughout the sessions as she cried through most of the session.

Facilitators also observed that Minaz spent much of her time standing on the sofa settee displaying a lack of eye contact, language and communication.

Additional one to one intervention sessions were arranged for the family in conjunction with Parent & Toddler session, social meet and greets and welfare calls to support Minaz's learning. Play opportunities through singing, reading, talking, mark-making and role play were personalised to Minaz's level of learning and her own unique interests.

During the first session Minaz showed no eye contact and mother spoke about much of her stimulation was derived from playing outdoors and watching T.V. By the end of the sessions Minaz was able to follow a whole story with her mother repeating many of the words and spent lots of time singing and expressive reading with her parents. Farida spoke about how the intervention in conjunction with the Parent & Toddler gave her much needed skills to be able to set out an activity at home to provide stimulation and play for Minaz rather than her struggling with unwanted behaviours as she spent much of her time outdoors or watching T.V.

During this time Minaz was seen by a speech and language therapist who pointed towards Autism as a possible diagnosis. Farida also shared how the welfare calls supported her emotional wellbeing as she was able to offload her feelings about Minaz's diagnosis in relation to her role as a young carer for her brother with Autism as she lost her mother when she was just nine years old. Minaz was signposted to her local nursery where she qualified for a two-year old nursery placement via the EEE funding. Minaz is now successfully enrolled in the nursery and will be supported with her learning needs as well as supported at home with their newly acquired skills by her first teachers - her mother and father.

"The sessions helped me so much and the staff were able to spot things that I was not able to see. I can join in with playing with her now using all the ideas and resources. I didn't know that I could do that first."

"I am happy that she is not screaming and crying for once because now she plays independently for a long time for instance a recent play activity with the flour because I have learnt about the sort of things I can do. When it used to rain, I thought that's it, it's going to be a bad day but now we can relax indoors because I have more ideas of what we can do."

"We play together more than we ever have. It doesn't matter if we do the same things over and over again because it makes her happy. I don't mind doing that now because it's good for her."

"I am not the type of person who easily shares her feelings with anyone, but I felt that in this instance I could. It's nice to talk to someone about how upset you feel when you want your child to talk to you more than anything. I can teach her a lot by playing with her."

Trips



Throughout our virtual Parent & Toddler sessions, we were amazed at our children and parent's ability to melt away the barriers of non-face to face communication that COVID 19 had forced.

Here within the sessions we observed the true magic of their invaluable, happy, sociable interactions and connections. Despite these crazy times our children and our parents were still able to develop, share and enjoy meaningful relationships, enabling reciprocal support for each and everyone's well-being.

Following the ease of "Lockdown" the fruits of these observations of family connections, grew an organic desire from our families to have an opportunity to meet up face to face in an open space, thus, 3 trips were planned.



Cannon Hill Park - 28th July 2020

The initial, excitable exchange of greetings for their very first face to face meetings of our Children and Parents is too difficult to capture via text!

We were amazed that such strong relationships had been developed solely over Zoom. Our 9 children were inseparable despite their age differences. Older children/siblings showing such care for our younger children whilst engaging in simple physical games from year's gone by.

Parents engaged in deep conversations with the exchanging of telephone numbers as we all sadly waved goodbye.

Sheldon Country Park-Sports Day - 18th August 2020

Day with prizes and certificates for all.

- Running Races
- Egg and Spoon Race
- Sack Race

Following their hard work, the children proudly received their prizes and certificates. Our children and their families sat and enjoyed a delicious picnic that was enjoyed by all.

Our older siblings were really sad to say goodbye and requested a social meet and greet during their October half term School holiday.



27 people attended the trip including 3 dads



28 people attended the trip including 14 children & 9 parents (3 dads)

Sheldon Country Park - Picnic: 8th October 2020

Our Children and Parents once again were delighted to meet up for the second time. We all had fun enjoying feeding the animals with one little girl who has limited language saying "Moo" to mum's delight, when observing the cows.

All our children enjoyed the animals and were very brave picking long grass and feeding it to the horses. Families shared stories of Pakistan. They told us they have animals roaming free around their properties and have daily access to them.

A well-earned sit down on the grass, followed by all our families eating 'alfresco style', as they savoured each other's delicious dishes which resulted in their sharing of recipes.

We finished our trip off with the children having ample time to burn off some energy in the play park, hopefully to the benefits of some rest for mums and dads on returning home.



31 people attended the social meet up (17 children, 12 parents (4 dads & 2 grandma's))

Virtual tuition sessions

With many families raising concerns around their children missing their education and after discussions in GOAL Staff Team meetings, it was unanimously agreed that GOAL would facilitate virtual on-line tuition sessions for our children aged between 5-11 years old.

In August 2020, 3 Sessions of virtual online tuition were set up to accommodate the growing requests and need to re-engage our children in group learning.

Parent & Toddler families with older siblings were delighted to re-engage their children in online virtual tuition sessions.

Parents and children alike welcomed the opportunity with the sessions being attended and received with great enthusiasm by both Parents and Children.

So what do our families say?

100% of Parents agreed the weekly welfare calls supported both themselves and their child/children

Yes, tTuition has allowed him to catch up on the learning that was missed during lockdown. This also gives opportunities for Parents to get involved and take part in their child's education at home.

100% of Parents felt that the resource folder helped their child at home.

The resources have been arranged in a very organised way and work does not get misplaced. Also, the folder makes it easier for my daughter to keep on tasks that are being set.

100% of Parents said they have noticed improvements in their child/children Literacy and Maths.

Yes, tuition has allowed him to catch up on the learning that was missed during lockdown. This also gives opportunities for Parents to get involved and take part in their child's education at home.

100% of Parents felt the tuition sessions had made a positive impact on their child's learning.

Yes it has made a positive impact because it encourages him to study at home and he is learning more than before. Tuition has allowed me to learn alongside my son and support him with the tasks at home.

The Learning!

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. A significant lesson / reminder from one of our parents!

'Where are you based? I have checked your website and I cannot find your names or anything about you on your website.'

Absolutely, whilst this parent was aware we were Go-Woman! Alliance, it is clearly essential that our families are able to access information of who we are, our background, training, skills, qualifications and experience of working with children and their families.

Thank you. We welcome all feedback. Website Updated!

"Feedback is a gift!"

Never as an Early Years Practitioner would I have believed that on-line virtual Parent & Toddler sessions would be able to take its place in the magical world of our children.

Obviously, and a big obviously, nothing can ever replace the value of face to face learning for both young and old. But somehow in these crazy, challenging times 'there has been', for both learners and practitioners alike, newly learnt skills and knowledge despite the disruption that the pandemic has presented.

A 4-year old informing me. "I have frozen, just wait while I reconnect".

A 7-year old whilst I was demonstrating on a craft session typing in the chat. "Can you show me how to do that again?" Which I myself struggle to do!

So what have we learnt as Practitioners?

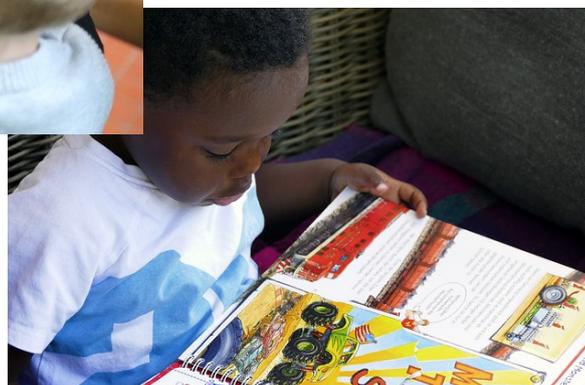
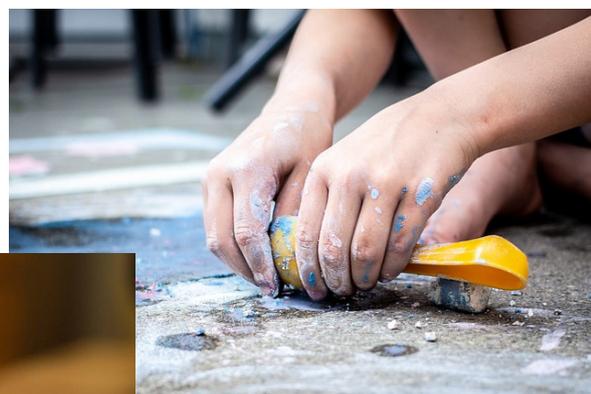
Virtual on-line delivery has allowed us the privilege to have insight into the family home. Virtual online delivery allows the facilitator to see many participants close up giving opportunities to check in with participant if a participant is showing signs of difficulties/uncomfortableness.

All our service users, children and their families receive a weekly welfare/follow up phone call. This we believe has built strong, trusting relationships which has accelerated learning for all.

e.g. Our Parent & Toddler facilitator provided the learning outcomes for children in the packs/cycles. During the phone calls she was able to discuss the setting up of the resources. Here the parents themselves are learning, gaining knowledge of how their children learn. This enables long-term home learning for the child, enhancing parents skills to support their children's on-going learning.

When returning to face to face, Parent & Toddler sessions, where possible, will continue with:

- Welfare/follow up calls
- Working in cycles: providing the pack to parents in preparation for the sessions, building on weekly learning for both **Parent and Child**.
- Interventions for child/family ensuring equality for all.
- Documenting in a shared way. Mirroring the good practice of local receiving Early Years Settings. (Families and Practitioners together celebrating learning) **Tapestry On-line Learning Journal** purchased by Go-Woman! Alliance October 2020



80% of our families felt that the follow up calls were supportive.

'The phone calls have made me happy as I can talk to someone about my children.'

'Happy because all my questions are answered about the technical support like when the link was sent out again and phone support to log on.'

80% of service users felt it was important for GOAL to continue to continue with their services.

'Mother shared she feels they should continue as nobody knows how long this will go on for so at least we have this support.'

'Yes, it is important to bring services into the home if we can't go out so we have something.'

60% when asked felt that the follow up calls had positively impacted on their emotional wellbeing.

'It's good because I can have a laugh and a joke with someone. I am normally very busy with children and the house and there is nobody to talk to during lockdown.'

'Yes because there is no other place to go, so it is nice that we have the zoom option. It is always nice to talk to someone so we can release our stress and hear a new voice.'

60% felt the sessions have a positive impact on the interactions between themselves and their children.

'we have been playing more with each other now because I have more ideas of how to play and all the things we need.'

80% felt confident when asked whether the resource pack helped them to think of new ways to play with their children.

'Mother shared that the pack has given her more ideas of things to do such as playdough. She shared she had never done this before with her other children. She can now see new ways of playing with her younger child.'

80% feel it is important for their child to socialise outside of the family home.

'Mother shared the trips are a great help so children have a good group of children and mothers around to support them or when things change back they will not get too upset.'

60% of parents feel that the sessions have a positive impact on their own emotional well-being.

'Mother shared how she feels her stress levels are more reduced and she feels happier to play with her children as they are responding to her better now that she has new ideas to play. She shared they now sing lots of songs together and her daughter will come up to her by herself and request that they sing together.'

80% of parents see enhancements in their child's development since joining GOAL Virtual on-line Parent and Toddler Sessions.

'Child now has more focus and will play with things for longer.'

'They know how to sit and focus on something now unlike before she felt they never used to play. They love painting mostly and they are always happy after the session.'

'Mother shared her child plays more and is shocked that she can play independently. She has much more eye contact with people now, especially the staff.'

Our war with COVID 19 will never be forgotten. It will sit in our children's history just as with our elders before us, both recapturing, recalling, and re-telling their stories of sadness and joy of their wars gone by.

What will also stand out in our children's history is what we do today, to lay firm foundations for a brighter and happier future, ensuring that we provide them with 'equality of opportunity' to enable the very best outcomes.



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