

Insight driving innovation and impact

Healthy Movers Cornwall Case Study: Flying Start Nurseries

Increasing knowledge and understanding of physical literacy.

June 2022

Introduction

Flying Start is a network of four nurseries based in Cornwall and Devon. Flying Start Redruth caters for around 40 children and Flying Start Cornwall College caters for almost 100 children.

Flying Start Redruth and Cornwall College joined the Healthy Movers programme in 2021. Healthy Movers is delivered by the Youth Sport Trust (YST), in partnership with Active Cornwall and Public Health Cornwall. The programme is designed to support two to five year olds' physical literacy, self-esteem and wellbeing, helping them gain a better start in life.

Background



Both nurseries are located in areas of high deprivation¹ and Flying Start Redruth has a high number of children with Special Educational Needs (SEND).

Flying Start nurseries offer children daily access to the outdoors and promote lively, energetic play. However, practitioners highlighted that since Covid-19, children's movement and overall health, particularly in terms of healthy eating, has declined. Their personal, social and emotional development has also suffered as a result of Covid-19 lockdowns, with many children struggling to share and play together with others.

The practitioners hoped that Healthy Movers would help to improve children's physical literacy, along with their personal, social and emotional development. They also hope that Healthy Movers can help to strengthen links with parents.

“Parents at our setting are generally poor at engaging with us and this has been exaggerated more over the lock-down, I think that Healthy Movers will really help to create stronger family links.”

(SHANI COXWELL, PRACTITIONER AT FLYING START CORNWALL COLLEGE)

Activities

The Manager at Flying Start Redruth and two practitioners from Flying Start Cornwall College attended the Healthy Movers training. In addition, they were given resource cards, a wall chart, back packs for the children to take home, and had regular support visits from YST's Healthy Movers tutor.

“I loved the practical side of the training.”

(SHANI COXWELL, PRACTITIONER AT FLYING START CORNWALL COLLEGE)

At the start of the programme, the two nurseries worked together and benefited from being able to share ideas, and solutions to any challenges they faced. The staff that attended the training course have also passed their knowledge onto other members of staff at the nurseries, and they

¹ Flying Start Cornwall College has an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score of 1 and Flying Start Redruth has a score of 2.

emphasised that the wall chart and resource cards make it very easy for other members of staff to deliver Healthy Movers activities.

“Everyone can do it. It’s so easy so the whole team can take it on.”

(JENNA WILCE, MANAGER AT FLYING START REDRUTH)

Both nurseries have focused their Healthy Movers activities on children in their pre-school rooms, with Flying Start Cornwall College focusing particularly on the children that will be starting school later in the year. All children at Flying Start Redruth are taking part in Healthy Movers activities and approximately two thirds of children at Flying Start Cornwall College are taking part in Healthy Movers activities.

Integrating Healthy Movers into universal provision

Flying Start Redruth has integrated Healthy Movers activities into their universal provision and encourages children to take part in the activities indoors and outdoors. The Manager highlighted that Healthy Movers is very adaptable so can easily link with other activities so they seek to integrate it into their Early Years Framework, whilst also building on children’s interests.

The setting, which grows its own vegetables and encourages the children prepare their own meals, has incorporated ‘Munch Crunch’ and ‘Yum Yum’ Healthy Movers activities into this every day. As examples, they have been moving carrots around their bodies before they make their soup and they have been moving as trains, in line with the ‘Choo Choo’ Healthy Movers activities, to wash their hands.

“We are blending Healthy Movers throughout the day as we feel that this is best for our children and will have the biggest impact.

(JENNA WILCE, MANAGER AT FLYING START REDRUTH)

Dedicating regular time to Healthy Movers activities

Alternatively, Flying Start Cornwall College delivers Healthy Movers activities every day after lunch.

“After lunch, their energy seems to sky-rocket so Healthy Movers helps to focus them and calm them down.”

(SHANI COXWELL, PRACTITIONER AT FLYING START CORNWALL COLLEGE)

Engaging parents through Healthy Movers



Flying Start Cornwall College has also engaged parents in Healthy Movers activities. The Nursery advertised a stay and play session for parents and their children on a poster outside the nursery. Nine parents attended the session where they had the opportunity to take part in Healthy Movers activities with their children. The practitioner gave parents a greater understanding of Healthy Movers; she used the equipment in the Healthy Movers back-packs, such as the scarves and bean bags, for the activities so the parents could see how they could use these at home themselves; and she used the activities to highlight how

physical literacy can support the wider development of children, for example tracking objects with their eyes will support their reading, and balancing on one foot will support their core for key physical movements and for sitting.

“I love these ideas and they will be really easy to do at home.”

(PARENT)

The children are taking the back-packs home with them now and they have been very well received by the children. The Nursery is encouraging parents to share photos of the children doing Healthy Movers at home. They are also incentivising parents with a prize for the best photo. The session received positive feedback and the nursery hopes to run another session in the future.

“I love it when mummy plays with me.”

(CHILD)

Benefits

Increasing knowledge and understanding among practitioners



The staff at the nursery highlighted that Healthy Movers had improved their knowledge and understanding of holistic development and physical literacy.

The Manager of Flying Start Redruth explained that although she already understood how activities can support wider development, Healthy Movers encouraged her to communicate this more effectively to the children and the parents.

The practitioner at Flying Start Cornwall College also emphasized that she had learnt about how movement is broken down into smaller components. She gave the example of children learning to skip and how she now has a greater understanding that children need to learn the basic foundations of hopping and jumping before they can learn to skip.

“It has given me confidence for next time.”

(SHANI COXWELL, PRACTITIONER AT FLYING START CORNWALL COLLEGE)

Enhancing children’s physical literacy



If a child is struggling with certain movement patterns, the Healthy Movers physical literacy statements help the staff to identify and understand children’s individual gaps in physical development, and therefore how they can be effectively supported to strengthen these areas. Healthy Movers has also increased the children’s confidence and, as a result, they are more likely to choose to do physical activities during free play.

Supporting children's engagement at nursery



Healthy Movers helps to engage all children in activities, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). As an example, during the 'Choo Choo' activity, the practitioner could see that even the quieter children were taking part at the back, behind the more confident children. They highlighted that often one child would start to take part in the activities and then others would want to join in too. One child who has special educational needs would never join in with group activities but Healthy Movers can be adapted so that the child can join in alongside the other children. He is now much more confident to try new activities and shows resilience in trying the activities alongside the other children.

Supporting children's social development



Healthy Movers has encouraged children to co-operate and work together. As an example, at the start, one child only liked one colour of scarf and did not want to share it with others. Healthy Movers has helped her to learn to share, trust others, and understand rules and boundaries. She now shares the scarf with other children and is more willing to play with other children.

“Healthy Movers keeps bringing people together – parents and children.”

(SHANI COXWELL, PRACTITIONER AT FLYING START CORNWALL COLLEGE)

Future

The Nurseries plan to continue delivering Healthy Movers. They are hoping to engage more children in the activities and encourage more staff to deliver the activities. Flying Start Cornwall College also plans to deliver another Healthy Movers stay and play session for parents.

“It's a journey and that's where the ongoing support helps.”

(FLO HOLMES, HEALTHY MOVERS TUTOR AT YST)

Top Tips

- ✓ Try delivering Healthy Movers in different ways and at different times of day to find something that works for the setting and the children.
- ✓ Demonstrate the Healthy Movers activities to parents to build their understanding and confidence to deliver the activities at home.
- ✓ Ensure other members of staff can deliver Healthy Movers to maintain momentum if trained staff are not available – use the resource cards and wall chart to support this.
- ✓ Maximise opportunities for synergy where Healthy Movers can support other activities.



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