

Growing up in Morecambe 2008

Professional Development





Publisher: Big Wide Talk Children's Project

2 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 1JP

T: 01223 364727 F: 01223 309306

W: www.bigwidetalk.org

Registered Company: 5086481

Registered Charity: 1107018

Growing up in Morecambe

Lancashire County Council and Big Wide Talk are undertaking a joint project as follows:

Aims

- To engage parents and practitioners in a shared process of discussion and reflection about what children as individuals and as groups actually do and say and what services and methods best serve their needs.
- To provide a focus for self-evaluation and shared reflection among the professional community.
- To demonstrate children's creativity and learning in open-ended contexts that reveal sometimes hidden aspects of their attributes which can then be mapped against required learning goals.
- To create an archive of qualitative research information that will document children's lives in Morecambe at this point in time.

Anticipated Outcomes

- That a more detailed, personalised focus on each child's creativity and learning will have been achieved.
- That parents within those groups known as 'hard to reach' will have been drawn into real partnership with schools and related services.
- That children living and growing up in Morecambe will have been given a voice in the formulation of the services they need.

- That a comprehensive contribution to strategic commissioning will have been achieved via the systematic collection of shared parental and practitioner views.
- That parental involvement as a driver for service improvement will have been made a real force in Morecambe.
- That schools and children's services providers generally will have explored the possibilities of partnership between themselves and with local communities.
- That parents and practitioners together will have begun to articulate locally specific solutions to children and young people's needs and those of the households where they are nurtured.

Professional Development

Big Wide Talk works to augment professional standards in education and children's services generally using participative action research as a tool with parents and practitioners. Reflective practice sits at the heart of this approach and will be much in evidence throughout this project, 'Growing up in Morecambe'. We are therefore eager to take maximum benefit from the work by arranging 'professional development' days.

Dates and times will be set to accommodate local practitioners from the continuum of services and schools provided for children and young people across Morecambe.

Film of the children's experience shows that when children are given open-ended contexts they react to the stimuli provided in a multitude of behaviours, demonstrating their own particular way of seeing and engaging with the world. Analysis of the footage from differing adult perspectives then constructs a rich and sometimes startling picture of what children can do when they are outside essential classroom discipline. The method enables the inclusion

of children experiencing a very broad range of disability and contributes to diagnostic and evaluative processes. Each child's activity can easily be mapped against formal learning goals. It is therefore easily possible to find new ways of addressing learning needs and devising innovative approaches to these sometimes unusual needs. Reflective practice at this level is always enlivening and restorative, freeing practitioners to think outside the box and then to relate their thinking to formal frameworks.

Each day will comprise group sessions reflecting on edited film footage of the event and the emerging research stories co-authored by parents and practitioners. Reflective groups will share their thinking with other groups to gain the widest possible range of understanding. Finally, all participants will be invited to identify specific conclusions related to needs and best practice in Morecambe and the surrounding area. We will work to contribute to the outcomes set out above. This work will then serve as an agenda for further development and research.

The first day will take place at The Lighthouse Centre, 1 Townley Street, Morecambe LA4 5JQ on 22nd May 2008, 09:30 - 15:30.

Please call Dangira at our Cambridge office, on 01223 364727 to book a place.

