

Insight driving innovation and impact

# West Somerset Opportunity Area: Embedding and Sustaining Healthy Movers

August 2021

**Believing** in every child's future

# Contents

Background Context.....	1
West Somerset .....	1
Physical Literacy .....	1
Healthy Movers .....	1
Healthy Movers in West Somerset.....	1
Research Aims.....	2
Key Activities.....	2
Additional Activities.....	2
Intent .....	3
Embedding Healthy Movers .....	3
Cheeky Cherubs .....	3
Teddy Bears.....	4
Billy Young Stars.....	5
Longer term benefits of Healthy Movers.....	6
For Practitioners.....	6
For children .....	6
Sustainability of Healthy Movers .....	7
Overall Recommendations .....	8

# Background Context

## West Somerset

West Somerset is ranked the lowest area in the Government's Social Mobility Index, which measures the chances that a child from a disadvantaged background will do well at school and gain employment. Priority 1 for the West Somerset Opportunity Area is to ensure that every child has a great start in life.

## Physical Literacy

Evidence suggests that improving children's physical literacy is fundamental to improving their physical and emotional wellbeing<sup>1</sup>. This is crucial to ensuring every child meets a good standard of development before they enter primary school, and supports the priority 1 aim.

## Healthy Movers

The Youth Sport Trust (YST) is working in partnership with Somerset County Council to roll out Healthy Movers, a physical activity programme, to pre-schools and nurseries in West Somerset. Funded by the Department for Education's Opportunity Area, the aim is to support some of the UK's most disadvantaged children to improve their school readiness.

The YST deliver Healthy Movers working directly with practitioners, in pre-schools and nurseries, as well as parents. The Healthy Movers programme takes a holistic approach to child development, using social, thinking, creative and physical themes to give children the foundations and confidence they need for lifelong participation in physical activity. It is designed to support and develop two-to-five-year olds' physical literacy, as well as increase self-esteem and wellbeing, helping them to gain a better start in life.

## Healthy Movers in West Somerset

The original Healthy Movers project was delivered in 15 early years settings between October 2018 and March 2020. At the end of this project additional work was conducted during the academic year 2020-21 by the YST Research team to understand how settings had embedded and sustained Healthy Movers, especially during a pandemic.

In autumn 2020 YST reached out to the settings who had originally been involved with the Healthy Movers project. 12 of the settings reported that they had embedded Healthy Movers within their curriculum and sustained programme delivery post the end of the YST support.

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<sup>1</sup> The Best Start in Life – A manifesto for physical activity in the early years (2016)

## Research Aims

- To understand how settings have embedded and sustained Healthy Movers
- To develop Healthy Movers case studies focusing on sustainability
- To develop a set of top tips recommendations for practitioners delivering Healthy Movers focusing on sustaining delivery.

## Key Activities

The Healthy Movers tutor contacted each of the 12 settings who maintained engagement from the original project to see if they needed any additional support with their Healthy Movers programme. Three settings replied asking for different levels of help and guidance such as the Little Acorns setting who have had new staff and so asked for Healthy Movers training to upskill these colleagues to feel confident and competent to deliver Healthy Movers.

Early years practitioners were also asked whether they felt they had embedded Healthy Movers into their setting. Nine of the ten settings that responded to the initial communication, said they were continuing Healthy Movers and felt it was embedded into their setting. Three settings volunteered to participate in a follow up in-depth interview with the research team. Due to the timing of the research the other settings were unable to participate due to staff capacity, staff being on furlough or changes in staff.

This research report is informed by the in-depth telephone interviews, insights from the original research and discussions with the Healthy Movers tutor. The aim of the report is to support more settings in the future to embed and sustain the Healthy Movers programme.

## Additional Activities

The following activities were also conducted:

- The Healthy Movers tutor delivered training to a parent playgroup who meet where the Railway Children setting used to be (closed 2020).
- Two hours of virtual Healthy Movers training was also delivered to a childminder setting in West Somerset to help them use the programme with their children (June 2021)

## Intent

All settings participating in the original evaluation research reported in the final survey that they were likely to continue to deliver Healthy Movers in their setting.

Two key aspects of the Healthy Movers programme were identified as part of the original research, supporting it to be easily embedded into settings. These were:

- The flexible delivery approach
- The simple resources

## Embedding Healthy Movers

The following case study examples show how settings have embedded Healthy Movers into their curriculum. The case studies were developed through the in-depth telephone calls with practitioners. Please see the appendix for the full case studies.

### Cheeky Cherubs

One practitioner from Cheeky Cherubs attended the initial Healthy Movers training in 2018 and started to deliver the activities. Due to the large setting and number of practitioners, an additional six practitioners attended the refresher Healthy Movers training in January 2020. Healthy Movers at Cheeky Cherubs has gone from strength to strength under the leadership of two committed practitioners.

Healthy Movers takes place across all of the age groups in the setting. Not all children attend the setting every day and so they deliver Healthy Movers activities three to four times a week to make sure all the children have weekly access to the programme. Each age group room has a noticeboard displaying the activity card that they will be following over each 2 week period.

**‘Healthy Movers has evolved in our setting, we used to just do a card for 1 week but now we do it over a 2 week period and we see great progress in the second week’** *Healthy Mover Champion*

The key aspects that have helped Cheeky Cherubs to embed Healthy Movers have been having daily activity in every age group involving all the practitioners in the setting.

Practitioners use the Physical Literacy assessment documents when they introduce a new card to the children. This allows them to monitor the progression in agility, balance and coordination skills as well as progressions in motivation and confidence of each child. The Healthy Mover champion chooses an assessment criteria that the children will focus on. For example, when using the card ‘Hot Hot Treasure’ the children might be lifting and dropping the treasure, passing from hand to hand or moving the treasure around different body parts, taking in turns, and sharing. At the end of the two week cycle the practitioners can see the progress that has been made against the physical literacy assessment skills and highlight areas that might need more time.

## Teddy Bears

One practitioner from Teddy Bears attended the initial Healthy Movers training in 2018, becoming the setting's Healthy Movers champion. After the initial training, she cascaded the training to the pre-school manager and both these members of staff began to deliver Healthy Movers to all of the children in the setting. Both practitioners attended the regular network sessions as well as a refresher training.

Healthy Movers activities are delivered between 3 and 4 times a week, mainly in the afternoon. These sessions often use a story or theme to link to other areas of the Early Years framework such as children's communication and language as well as personal, social and emotional development. For example, the children are encouraged to share equipment with each other and to take in turns. Some of the activities are working with a partner which aids the children with their communication. The setting has a flexible approach to delivering Healthy Movers and staff will put on an extra session when the children request it.

**'One girl only does a Thursday and Friday with us and she asks for Healthy Movers as soon as she arrives!'** *Healthy Mover Champion*

**'It's such an easy programme to get involved with, we have some structured sessions written into the weekly plan but often do an extra 5 or 10 minutes here and there, we are so enthusiastic about it, it's really easy to get involved in'** *Healthy Mover Champion*

**'Healthy Movers is the best thing since sliced bread!'**  
*Healthy Mover Champion*

The setting now personalise the Healthy Movers programme to fit in with the learning outcomes for the day. For example, the Healthy Movers champion uses the 'Birds in Trees' card when they are looking at the different seasons and uses the 'Pop the Bubble' card when working on the 'P' sound. They also use the 'Hide and Seek' card as this encourages the children to learn to share the equipment throughout the activity.

**'The programme is so flexible; you can make it fit into whatever you want to do!'** *Reception teacher*

## Billy Young Stars

Two practitioners from Billy Young Stars attended the initial Healthy Movers training in 2018. Following this, they began to deliver Healthy Movers daily to all pre-school and toddler aged children in the setting. In 2019, two more practitioners attended the Healthy Mover Network and refresher Training. The initial Healthy Movers Champion has since moved on and so the setting was able to appoint a new Healthy Movers Champion who had attended the training. All practitioners support each other in the delivery of the sessions.

Healthy Movers takes place at 10.30am every day, straight after snack time. The pre-school group and toddler group still do Healthy Movers daily, while the older children in the babies' group also join in. Staff at Billy Young Stars say that this really helps with transition between the groups as all practitioners get involved.

A different card is chosen by the Healthy Movers Champion each week, focusing on a different physical literacy skill. The staff are very familiar with the cards and are now able to adapt them to suit different children's needs. Staff are able to differentiate and personalise the activities to engage children of all ages. For example, some children will be working on an object control activity at the same time as others working on how to improve their fine motor skills. The older children are aware of the expectations when doing Healthy Movers and are good role models for the younger ones.

Billy Young Stars have a Healthy Movers noticeboard where all staff and children can see the Healthy Movers card that they are working on for that week. The Physical Literacy assessment information is also displayed, which shows the progressions of agility, balance and coordination skills as well as progressions in motivation and confidence.

**'We initially wanted to take part in the Healthy Movers training to help with our routine in our setting'** *Healthy Mover Champion*

# Longer term benefits of Healthy Movers

## For Practitioners

Healthy Movers has helped to build the confidence of practitioners in early years settings to deliver physical activity sessions with their children. It has helped practitioners understand how to extend and develop the physical skills of the children. The physical literacy assessment statements break down these skills and movements to help support all children which is reflected in the progression through the Healthy Movers activities. For example, one of the Healthy Mover cards is 'Birds in Trees'. This card focuses on balance activities and the children act as birds flying around branches (chalk markings on the floor) and they balance on the branches. They will start by balancing on two feet with legs apart, then progress to two feet legs together and then onto one foot.

For the settings, Healthy Movers also helps with day to day routine as it is easily embedded as a regular activity across the curriculum. This routine is important for children in preparation for school.

The benefits practitioners experience, such as increased confidence and competence, have the potential to have a continued impact on all children in the setting in the future.

## For children

Key long term benefits for children identified through this research were

**Providing regular engagement with physical activity:** Practitioners acknowledged that Healthy Movers encouraged all children to have quality time being active. This was especially important in free flow settings where children may not choose to be active or outside otherwise.

**Supporting school readiness:** Observed benefits for the children included more turn taking, developed listening skills and understanding and following instructions, all of which are key to support children to be ready for school. Practitioners also reported seeing improvements in children's confidence and communication skills.

**'There is a significant difference in school readiness between those who have and haven't done Healthy Movers prior to reception class. Healthy Movers children are better at following instructions and sharing'** *Healthy Mover champion*

**'We have noticed a big difference in the hand eye coordination of the children but also in the ability for the children to listen and follow instructions'** *Healthy Mover Champion*

**Opportunity for early intervention:** Increasing practitioners understanding of the progression of movement skills has enabled them to carry out some early intervention support with children whose growth motor skills are below the expected level. Through Healthy Movers, practitioners are also able to identify children who



need more support with developing their fine motor skills. Healthy Movers has helped provide targeted support a to a range of children

**‘Some children who are our early 2-year-olds who are tip toe walkers, are not going to be picked up by physio, but we can incorporate into them moving in different ways’** *Healthy Mover Champion*

**‘The Physical Literacy assessments can highlight children with additional needs and we can support them with early intervention’** *Healthy Mover Champion*

## Sustainability of Healthy Movers

Practitioners felt that they have been able to maintain Healthy Movers in their settings due to the following factors.

- Regular sessions - Embedding the programme into daily practice has helped the practitioners to know and understand the resources, cards and activities well. Practitioners feel more confident to deliver the programme effectively. This has developed through a constant cycle of reflection and improvement which has helped the practitioners to know how to effectively deliver the sessions in their setting.
- Children’s awareness - Regular sessions have also meant that the children are aware of the expectations of Healthy Movers. They know the types of activities they will be doing and are confident to join in. In some settings children have started to ask for Healthy Movers which helps to remind the practitioners that it is time to be active.
- Parent’s awareness - Parents awareness of the Healthy Movers programme has also increased, especially for those settings that used it as part of the home learning activities during the COVID-19 restrictions. Linking the setting activities to the home activities has helped to sustain the parents interest.
- Refresher training - The refresher Healthy Mover training has helped the settings to maintain the momentum of the programme.

In the future settings were keen for more physical resources (e.g. home packs and stickers) to help them continue to maximise the parental engagement with the programme. In addition, one setting suggested it would be useful to have more examples of how settings have embedded Healthy Movers and how they have successfully engaged with parents.

## Overall Recommendations

Key recommendations emerged from the settings to embed and sustain the Healthy Movers programme.

**Have fun!** The biggest advice from practitioners delivering Healthy Movers is to have fun with the programme and enjoy the activities. If the children see the practitioner having fun they are more likely to engage.

**Keep it simple:** A key benefit of the Healthy Movers programme is its simplicity. Maintain this and it will be easier to embed into regular practice.

**Build it into your regular routine:** Deliver regularly at the same time each day and commit to always doing it. This will support Healthy Movers to automatically become part of the settings routine.

**Involve parents:** Build in opportunities for Stay and Play sessions where possible and maximise the use of existing systems for communicating with parents to promote the programme. For example, through social media or apps (e.g. Tapestry, Family app). Encourage parents to share photos of the activities they do with their children at home.

**Provide opportunities for staff to learn and develop:** Many settings experience regular turnover of staff. Continue to provide opportunities for Healthy Movers training, whether that is formally delivered by the YST or from observing and co-delivering with other staff in the setting.

**Have a Healthy Movers Champion:** It is effective to have one person in the setting who has the overall coordination and responsibility of the programme.

**Empower all staff to deliver:** Although a Healthy Movers Champion is key, it is also integral that the programme is embedded and delivered by the whole setting team. Develop the confidence of all individuals to take responsibility for delivering the programme.

**Build in routine assessments:** Use the Healthy Movers programme to identify children for targeted support as well as developing the physical literacy of all children in the setting.

# Appendix: Full Case Studies

# Sustaining and Embedding Healthy Movers

## Billy Young Stars Nursery, West Somerset



### Introduction

The Youth Sport Trust (YST) has been working in partnership with Somerset County Council to roll out Healthy Movers, a physical literacy intervention, to pre-schools and nurseries in West Somerset.

Funded by the Department for Education's Opportunity Area, the aim is to support some of the UK's most disadvantaged children to improve their school readiness and, in time, social mobility.

YST deliver Healthy Movers working directly with practitioners, in pre-schools and nurseries, as well as parents. The Healthy Movers programme takes a holistic approach to child development, using social, thinking, creative and physical themes to give children the foundations and confidence they need for lifelong participation in physical activity. It is designed to support two-to-five-year olds' physical literacy, self-esteem and wellbeing, helping them to gain a better start in life.



### Background

In 2018, Billy Young Stars Nursery in West Somerset was invited to be part of the West Somerset Healthy Movers project. Billy Young Stars is a day nursery and is based at Butlins Somerset World in Minehead. The nursery is a facility for the children of Butlins staff and is open daily, all year round. The nursery is split into three age groups: pre-school, toddlers and babies. The setting currently operates with six members of staff and Zoe is the manager at the setting, who has been in post since March 2020.

### Delivering and embedding Healthy Movers

Two practitioners from Billy Young Stars attended the initial Healthy Movers training in 2018. Following this, they began to deliver Healthy Movers daily to all pre-school and toddler aged children in the setting. In 2019, two more practitioners from Billy Young Stars attended the Healthy Mover Network and Refresher Training.

The initial Healthy Movers Champion has since moved on and so the setting was able to allocate a new Healthy Movers Champion amongst their trained staff. All practitioners support each other in the delivery of the sessions.

Healthy Movers takes place at 10.30am every day, straight after snack time. The pre-school group and toddler group still do Healthy Movers daily, while the older children in the babies' group also join in. Staff at Billy Young Stars say that this really helps with transition between the groups as all practitioners get involved.

A different card is chosen by the Healthy Movers Champions each week, focusing on a different physical literacy skill. The staff are very familiar with the cards and are now able to adapt them to suit different children's needs. Staff are able to differentiate and personalise the activities to engage children of all ages. For example, some children will be working on an object control activity at the same time as others working to improve their fine motor skills. The older children are aware of the expectations when doing Healthy Movers and are good role models for the younger children.

Billy Young Stars have a Healthy Movers noticeboard where all staff and children can see the Healthy Movers card that they are working on that week. The Physical Literacy assessment information is also displayed for all staff, which shows the progressions in stability, locomotion and object control as well as motivation and confidence.




We initially wanted to take part in the Healthy Movers training to help with our routine in our setting

HEALTHY MOVER CHAMPION

## Parental engagement in Healthy Movers

Practitioners at Billy Young Stars know their families very well as they all work on the site. Over the last 18 months 'Stay and Play' sessions, where parents and families to participate in Healthy Movers activities with their children, have been challenging to hold due to the COVID-19 restrictions. However, prior to the pandemic parents were regularly involved with the 'Stay and Play' club, organised by the Healthy Mover Champions, where up to 15 parents attended each session. Parents reported that they really enjoyed these as it gave them insight into Healthy Movers and loved being active with their children.

Communication with parents is usually through the setting's Facebook page, as well as informal catch ups at drop off and pick up time. Children talk about Healthy Movers to their parents and children practise their Healthy Movers at home. During the most recent lockdown the Healthy Movers Champions delivered weekly Healthy Movers Zoom sessions to families at home. Parents shared photos with the setting and, notably, three families reported that it helped to keep a structure for their children during lockdown.

 The children have come out of their shells and developed more confidence.

HEALTHY MOVER CHAMPION



## Longer term benefits

Healthy Movers has had many long-term benefits for all involved at Billy Young Stars. Practitioners say that it has improved their own confidence. Prior to Healthy Movers, some staff would shy away from delivering certain activities, but Healthy Movers has given them more confidence in leading physical activity sessions with the children and parents. This has led to them having more confidence delivering others areas of the curriculum.

"Through Healthy Movers the children have really come out of their shells and become more confident, so have the team!" Healthy Mover Champion

The practitioners have seen a big improvement in the children's' communication and confidence and they say that the children are all happy to have a go at new things now.

Since embedding Healthy Movers into their daily practice, the staff have noticed children are now following instructions better and their listening skills have also really improved. They have also seen improvements in the children taking turns.

## Future

Healthy Movers activities are now fully embedded into the daily routine at Billy Young Stars. In the future the Billy Young Stars Manager would like some whole staff training to ensure all colleagues are able to deliver Healthy Movers.

Top tips for embedding Healthy Movers from the Billy Young stars staff:

- Keep at it!
- Watch other practitioners deliver to improve your confidence
- Have fun and adapt the cards to suit the group
- Have a Healthy Movers notice board so all staff know the card and physical literacy skill that is the focus for each week



 The children can now share and take turns.

HEALTHY MOVER CHAMPION

# Sustaining and Embedding Healthy Movers, Cheeky Cherubs Nursery – West Somerset



## Introduction

The Youth Sport Trust (YST) has been working in partnership with Somerset County Council to roll out Healthy Movers, a physical literacy intervention, to pre-schools and nurseries in West Somerset.

Funded by the Department for Education's Opportunity Area, the aim is to support some of the UK's most disadvantaged children to improve their school readiness and, in time, social mobility.

YST deliver Healthy Movers working directly with practitioners, in pre-schools and nurseries, as well as parents. The Healthy Movers programme takes a holistic approach to child development, using social, thinking, creative and physical themes to give children the foundations and confidence they need for lifelong participation in physical activity. It is designed to support two-to-five-year olds' physical literacy, self-esteem and wellbeing, helping them to gain a better start in life.



## Background

In 2018, Cheeky Cherubs Nursery was invited to be part of the West Somerset Healthy Movers project. Cheeky Cherubs is a purpose-built day nursery, split into 3 age groups with fantastic indoor and outdoor space

The setting is very different from others in the area due to their large numbers of children and staff. They currently have 28 members of staff who work across a flexible day from 7.30am-6.00pm. They also run an apprenticeship programme working closely with the local FE College. The apprentices work within the setting and learn from all practitioners.

## Delivering and embedding Healthy Movers

One practitioner from Cheeky Cherubs attended the initial Healthy Movers training in 2018 and started to deliver the activities. Due to the large setting and number of practitioners, an additional six practitioners attended the refresher Healthy Movers training in January 2020. Healthy Movers at Cheeky Cherubs has gone from strength to strength under the leadership of two committed practitioners, Kayleigh and Miyah.

Healthy Movers takes place across all of the age groups in the setting. Not all children attend the setting every day and so Healthy Movers activities are delivered three to four times a week to make sure all children have weekly access to the programme. Each age group room has a noticeboard displaying the activity card that they will be following over each 2 week period.



Healthy Movers has evolved in our setting, we used to just do a card for 1 week but now we do it over a 2 week period and we see great progress in the second week

## HEALTHY MOVER CHAMPION

The main reason that Cheeky Cherubs has been able to embed Healthy Movers is by delivering it every day involving all the practitioners across all the age groups

Practitioners use the Physical Literacy assessment tool when they introduce a new card to the children. This tool is a document showing the progressions of stability, locomotion, object control, confidence and motivation. The Healthy Mover Champion chooses an assessment criteria that the children will focus on. For example, when using the card 'Hot Hot Treasure' the children might be lifting and dropping the treasure, passing from hand to hand or moving the treasure around different body parts, taking in turns, and sharing. At the end of the two week cycle the practitioners can see progress that has been made against the object control criteria and highlight areas that might need more time.

'All practitioners deliver Healthy Movers which has really helped to embed it' Healthy Mover Champion

## Parental Engagement with Healthy Movers

Miyah, one of the Healthy Movers Champions, shares each week's activity card with parents using the Family App. This enables parents to work on that card with their children at home. Parents are encouraged to share photos of the children doing Healthy Movers activities on the Family App. Around two thirds of parents regularly engage with this. Parental awareness of the programme is high, with children regularly talking about Healthy Movers with their families. Children are very aware of Healthy Mover time throughout the day.

Children talk about 'healthy Movers with their families and are very aware of Healthy Mover time throughout the day

HEALTHY MOVER CHAMPION

## Longer term benefits of using Healthy Movers

The Healthy Movers Champions, Kayleigh and Miyah, work closely with the Physical Literacy assessment statements and now have a clearer understanding of the progressions of movements. These statements break down the progressions of the physical literacy skills to help the practitioners assess the children's improvements linked to the Healthy Mover activities on the various cards. For example, one of the Healthy Mover cards is 'Birds in Trees'. This card focuses on balance activities and the children act as birds flying around branches (chalk markings on the floor) and they balance on the branches. They will start by balancing on two feet legs apart, then progress to two feet legs together and then onto one foot. These progressions are included on the assessment tool.

Importantly, having this increased understanding of the progression of physical literacy skills has enabled the setting to carry out some early intervention support with children whose gross motor skills are below the expected level. Through Healthy Movers, practitioners are also able to identify children who need help with developing their fine motor skills and so provide targeted support.

'Some children who are our early 2-year-olds who are tip toe walkers, not going to be picked up by physio, but we can incorporate into them moving in different ways' Healthy Mover Champion

The assessment statements are really good for targeted work

HEALTHY MOVER CHAMPION

'The Physical Literacy assessments can highlight children with additional needs and we can support them with early intervention' Healthy Mover Champion

Healthy Movers has helped the setting to create quality outdoor activities that engage all children in the setting, even those who previously would not have chosen to participate in outdoor activities.

Since embedding Healthy Movers into their daily practice the practitioners have also seen improvements in the children's listening skills and understanding. For example, the children are more confident and have improved their communication skills, which will help them as they transition into school.



## Future

The Healthy Movers activities are now fully embedded at Cheeky Cherubs. In the future the Healthy Movers Champions hope to maintain this by providing refresher training and create opportunities for colleagues to observe each other. The setting would also welcome additional bespoke training for practitioners within each of the three nursery age groups.

Top tips for embedding Healthy Movers from the Cheeky Cherubs practitioners:

- Having Healthy Movers as part of the daily routine
- Ensure all practitioners are aware of Healthy Movers and empower everyone to take responsibility for it
- Follow an activity card over a 2 week period
- Build in routine for assessments
- Don't over think it, just have fun with the activities



# Sustaining and Embedding Healthy Movers at Teddy Bears Nursery, West Somerset



## Introduction

The Youth Sport Trust (YST) has been working in partnership with Somerset County Council to roll out Healthy Movers, a physical literacy intervention, to pre-schools and nurseries in West Somerset.

Funded by the Department for Education's Opportunity Area, the aim is to support some of the UK's most disadvantaged children to improve their school readiness and, in time, social mobility.

YST deliver Healthy Movers working directly with practitioners, in pre-schools and nurseries, as well as parents. The Healthy Movers programme takes a holistic approach to child development, using social, thinking, creative and physical themes to give children the foundations and confidence they need for lifelong participation in physical activity. It is designed to support two-to-five-year olds' physical literacy, self-esteem and wellbeing, helping them to gain a better start in life.



## Background

In 2018 Teddy Bears Nursery was invited to be a part of the West Somerset Healthy Movers project. Teddy Bears Nursery is located in the village of Washford and is a feeder nursery for Old Cleeve C of E First School. The nursery has two staff members and runs a three-hour session ten times a week for up to 22 children aged 3-4 years old.

## Delivering and embedding Healthy Movers

One practitioner from Teddy Bears attended the initial Healthy Movers training in 2018, becoming the setting's Healthy Movers Champion. After this training the Healthy Mover Champion cascaded the information to the Pre-School Manager and then both members of staff began to deliver Healthy Movers to all the children in the setting. Over the course of the project, from 2018 to 2020, both members of staff attended the regular network sessions as well as a refresher training day.

Healthy Movers activities are delivered between 3 and 4 times a week, mainly in the afternoon. These sessions are often delivered using a story or theme to link to other areas of the Early Years framework such as children's communication and language skills and personal, social and emotional development. For example some of the activities, such as 'Hide and Seek' are focused on working with a partner so the children are encouraged to share equipment with each other which also helps to develop communication skills. The setting is flexible with its delivery of Healthy Movers which includes putting on an additional session if the children ask in the morning.



One girl only does a Thursday and Friday with us and she asks for Healthy Movers as soon as she arrives!

HEALTHY MOVER CHAMPION

'It's such an easy programme to get involved with, we have some structured sessions written into the weekly plan but often do an extra 5 or 10 minutes here and there, we are so enthusiastic about it, it's really easy to get involved in' Healthy Mover Champion

'Healthy Movers is the best thing since sliced bread!' Healthy Mover Champion

The setting now personalise the Healthy Movers programme to fit in with the learning outcomes for the day. For example, the Healthy Movers Champion uses the 'Birds in Trees' card when they are looking at the different seasons and uses the 'Pop the Bubble' card when working on the 'P' sound to support the children's speech and language skills.



## Improving communication and language skills

**Communication and language:** The practitioners have noticed that the listening skills have improved considerably and the children can now concentrate and follow instructions much better. For example, Healthy Movers has really helped when learning phonics in reception class as the 'Pop the Bubble' card encourages the 'P' sound and the 'Choo Choo' card encourages the 'Ch' sound.

Through Healthy Movers, the children have been taking on a wider vocabulary and using new words that have become embedded in daily practice. These words have been introduced through the cards such as 'slither', 'wiggle', 'balance', as well as shapes, colours and numbers. Repetition of this language through Healthy Movers has been beneficial.

'Healthy Movers is now firmly built into the daily routine at Teddy Bears and we notice a big difference in the hand eye coordination of the children but also in the ability for the children to listen and follow instructions' Healthy Mover Champion

'One child was particularly bright but struggled with sharing, Healthy Movers made such a difference' Healthy Mover Champion

## Benefits to the children during transition

**School Readiness:** Pre-school transition into Reception class has become much easier since the children have been regularly taking part in Healthy Movers activities. The initial Healthy Mover Champion has now moved into the reception class at Old Cleeve First School and says that she has observed a significant difference in the school readiness of the children who have participated in Healthy Movers in their Pre-Schools compared to those who have not.

Knowing they can sit and listen in reception class makes such a difference, attention span and listening skills have improved; some have really missed out by not doing Healthy Movers

HEALTHY MOVER CHAMPION

'There is a significant difference in school readiness between those who have and haven't done Healthy Movers prior to reception class. Healthy Movers children are better at following instructions and sharing' Healthy Mover Champion

'The programme is so flexible; you can make it fit into whatever you want to do!' Reception teacher



## Future

Healthy Movers will continue to be delivered between 3 and 4 times a week at Teddy Bears. The Reception teachers are also hoping to deliver Healthy Movers to their children on a weekly basis.

It is such a wonderful programme and the benefits are so huge, it's such an easy programme to follow

RECEPTION TEACHER



## YST RESEARCH

The Youth Sport Trust (YST) is a national children's charity passionate about creating a future where every child enjoys the life-changing benefits that come from play and sport. YST Research offers research, analysis, insight and evaluation services to organisations with an interest in the wider children and young people's sector. Our research expertise is focussed on improving the wellbeing of children and young people through sport and physical activity.

Our specialisms include:

- Education, PE and school sport
- Community sport / clubs
- Early years settings
- Life skills and employability
- Activism and volunteering
- Health (physical, social and emotional)

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