# West Somerset Healthy Movers: Final Evaluation Report

### Introduction

The West Somerset Opportunity Area has received funding through the Department for Education, with Somerset County Council commissioning the Youth Sport Trust (YST) to deliver Healthy Movers alongside Futures for Somerset. Healthy Movers aims to increase children's selfesteem and wellbeing, and develop their physical literacy skills, which all help children gain a better start to their life. The project is being delivered in 15 early years settings across West Somerset. The project ran from October 2018 to March 2020. The following report presents the executive summary of the final findings from YST Research evaluation of the project.

## Research Approach

• Practitioners were surveyed at four time points: at the start of the project, at the end of the training, at the interim stage of the project and at the end of the project.

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- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) data and Physical Literacy Progress Assessment data for a cohort of children involved in Healthy Movers at the start, interim and final stages of the project.
- Five case studies produced, based on observations of Healthy Movers sessions, interviews with practitioners and intercept interviews with parents.
- Interviews with four key stakeholders

## Key Findings

#### Project Activities



210 visits to settings by YST Healthy Movers staff



Stay and Play sessions

Between October 2018 and March 2020



620 home packs for children sent out



Settings adopted a flexible approach to delivering Healthy Movers activities



Parents were most likely to find out about Healthy Movers by talking to the staff at each setting





early years settings have been engaged in Healthy Movers



56 practitioners delivering Healthy Movers activities



home packs sent out to settings to send to families



parents have attended Healthy Movers Stay and Play sessions.







#### Supporting Children's Physical Literacy

The impact of Healthy Movers on children's physical literacy was assessed using the Physical Literacy Assessment tool, practitioner consultations and surveys and parental consultation and surveys. Children were divided into two cohorts depending on their age, the younger cohort included children aged 22-36 months and the older cohort included children 37-48 months.



of children in the younger cohort demonstrated improved motivation



of children in the younger cohort demonstrated improved stability and object control



The older cohort saw their biggest improvements in their motivation (1 and 2) and confidence



of practitioners felt that Healthy Movers had had a positive impact on children's physical literacy



of practitioners felt that Healthy Movers had had a positive impact on the amount of time children spend being physically active at their setting



Overall, Healthy Movers increased children's enjoyment of being physically active



of parents reported their child likes being active more



of parents reported their child has better movement skills



of parents reported their child is more active





#### Supporting Children's Wider Development

The impact of Healthy Movers on children's wider development was assessed using the Early Learning Goals data, practitioner consultations and surveys and parental consultation and surveys.



The younger cohort saw the greatest improvements in <u>Managing Relationships</u> <u>and Speaking</u> goals



Of the matched cohort for younger children, 18 of the 26 children demonstrated improvements in <u>Speaking</u>

The older cohort saw the greatest increase for <u>Understanding</u>

100% of practitioners felt that Healthy Movers had had a positive impact on children's ability to follow instructions, and with their relationships with staff and other children in the setting

Over two thirds of parents (68%) felt that Healthy Movers had had a positive impact on their child's speaking skills





#### Practitioners



#### Parents



"Healthy Movers has helped staff massively because it has given us ideas and inspiration for making physical activity fun, exciting and stimulating for the children. Healthy Movers provides such a variety of activities which is great because it actually caters for all of the children's interests and abilities."

Practitioner

"Parents confidence to come and join in with their children has really improved"

YST staff

#### Views of Healthy Movers



of practitioners rated Healthy Movers positively



The YST Healthy Movers staff were rated very highly, along with the resource cards and the home packs

Feedback suggests there is scope to improve the wall chart and physical literacy assessment tool "Healthy Movers has attracted attention and made people think differently...the outcomes go much further than we ever expected"

> Julia Ridge, West Somerset Opportunity Area Lead

### What worked well...



2. Continual and personalised support from YSTstaff



#### 1.Flexibility of the Healthy Movers programme

3. Opportunities to share practice

## Even better if...





ambassador role

1.Increased flexibility in the YST staff visit schedule



3. Opportunity for digital resources



### Conclusions

This research has demonstrated that Healthy Movers has been successfully adopted by many settings in West Somerset and has had a positive impact on the type and level of physical activity that is delivered for children. Children have demonstrated improvements in their physical literacy and wider development, which in turn will improve their school readiness and future life chances.

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As a result of Healthy Movers, practitioners are reporting feeling more confident, competent and motivated in delivering physical development and physical activity for children aged 2–4 years old, with Healthy Movers inspiring them to make changes to how they deliver physical activity in their setting.

Healthy Movers flexible delivery and simple resources has enabled it to be easily embedded into settings daily practice, which has helped to make it sustainable, with all settings reporting that they were likely to continue delivering Healthy Movers.

The key success factors of Healthy Movers have been the YST Healthy Movers staff, who have provided ongoing mentoring to the settings, plus the flexibility of the resources and activities, which have been simple and inclusive. A unique and valued aspect of the project has also been the opportunity to engage parents in the activities.