We are working with people from the communities who are keen to support children and their families to achieve better outcomes in terms of communication, language and literacy development. If you haven’t met with us yet but you would like to, please do let us know.

We are keen to support local people to build on their own capacity to meet the needs of those living in their communities. Therefore, funding has been made available for local early years providers and community groups from each of the reach areas to set up activities which meet one of our aims.

The key aims of Talking Together are to:

1. Improve parental awareness, knowledge and confidence of their role as primary educator in supporting their child’s communication, language and literacy development, in order to improve in the home learning environment (children aged 0-5).

2. Increase the awareness, knowledge and confidence of the Early Years workforce in identifying and supporting communication, language and literacy development of children.

3. To increase the awareness, knowledge and confidence of local community and county-wide organisations and Partners (e.g. speech and language therapy, health visitors, GPs, housing officers, midwives, children’s centre staff, library staff, Job Centre Plus and voluntary sector organisations) in identifying and supporting children, parents/carers and wider community members, with communication, language and literacy needs.

The following projects have received Talking Together in Cambridgeshire grant funding awards in 2019-2020:

**Creative Families – Talking & Eating Together: The Fitzwilliam Museum**

The Fitzwilliam Museum will work in collaboration with North Cambridge Child & Family Centre (CFC) to introduce ten families with children aged 0-5 to the Feast & Fast exhibition. An initial session at the CFC will be followed by three sessions at the Fitzwilliam Museum where staff will aim to bring together art, food & language to create a rich environment in which to nourish young children & those who care for them. Discussions around contemporary issues relating to food, will run alongside creative activities including stories, sensory-play & art. Those involved will also have an opportunity to share the experience together informally over food in the museum café. The social element of the project will further support adult-child interactions, help build relationships between those taking part & offer a signposting service to other initiatives if relevant.

**Groundwork East: Wellies in the Woods**
Groundwork East will be working in partnership with Ormiston Chatteris Child & Family Centre to deliver an eight-session active-development programme for 10-12 families of children aged under 5. The project team will showcase a range of activities which families can complete together in outdoor spaces including talking walks, den-building, scavenger hunts as well as arts & crafts. Throughout the programme the project team will share information with parents about how they can develop their interactions and conversations with children by incorporating Talking Tennis strategies.

Kettle's Yard: Talking Pages

Kettle’s Yard will be working in partnership with the Red Hen project along with the Church of the Good Shepherd to deliver a series of eight art-based workshops for ten families of children aged 18 months-4 years. A lead artist will take materials to each session to create sensory environments which families will be encouraged to play in, explore, talk about and reflect on through words, sounds and pictures. Over the course of the project, families will develop stories of their own which will be brought together to create a board book that they can then share with friends and family at a book launch to be held at Kettle’s Yard. Throughout families will be given books and other resources to take home in-between sessions to look at and read. Time will be given over at the start and end of each activity for families to relax and chat; and refreshments will be provided too.

North Cambridge Community Partnership (NCCP): Play and Borrow – Talking Together at Little Rainbows Toy Library

NCCP is going to run toy library sessions for families of children aged 0-5 years on a weekly basis from Nun’s Way Pavilion in NE Cambridge City. The toy library will hold a stock of developmentally appropriate toys and books which families can share in the setting and then later at home. The sessions will be themed around the books and will include opportunities for families to share the stories with each other as well as the associated toys. There will also be opportunities for parents and children to talk and sing together, and to try some craft activities too. Refreshments will be provided at each of the sessions.

Story Bags: Tracy Loughlin, Childminder Champion for Wisbech

Tracy will work in partnership with Michaela Ellis, Childminder Champion for Huntingdon, to develop a set of ten story bags to support children’s communication, language & literacy development in the home environment. The story bags will be available for their childminding parents to use as well as other local childminders & their families. Each bag will contain a popular children’s story-book such as Dear Zoo or Zog, as well as associated props, a story bottle & pebble sets. The additional resources will be used to build on children’s interests & will also support adult-child interactions around books.

Successful bids in 2018-19

The following projects received Talking Together in Cambridgeshire grant funding awards in 2018-19:
Helping Adults Learn to Read: Read Easy Cambridge

Read Easy will recruit & train 24 volunteer coaches from across NE Cambridge City to support adults from our project reach area who want to learn to read on a one to one basis. The Read Easy team will also visit each new Reading Pair once a month & hold a get together for volunteer coaches four times a year.

Talking Together: The Kings Hedges Family Support Project (KHFSP), Playlanders Playgroup & The Meadows Children & Family Wing

KHFSP will be collaborating with Playlanders Playgroup & The Meadows Children & Family Wing to develop a series of borrowing boxes containing story sacks, puppets, story cards & books. The boxes will be managed by parent volunteers and shared with families attending groups run by the project team in NE Cambridge City. Storytelling workshops for staff & parents will also be provided so that methods of reading & talking about stories with children can be modelled, embedding knowledge about how to support children’s early communication & language skills.

The Travelling Book Nook: Huntingdon Community Action Projects

Huntingdon Community Action Projects will visit five established voluntary community groups based in Huntingdon on a weekly basis to provide relaxed & fun picture book-based activities for parents & young children. The project aims to develop parents’ knowledge of, & enthusiasm for picture books; developing a deeper understanding of how these can be shared with children using the principles of serve & return. Once established, the team intends to work in partnership with Hinchingbrooke Park to run two story sessions from the park.

Early Years Treasure Chest: Ramsey Rural Museum

Ramsey Rural Museum will create a Treasure Chest loan box specifically aimed at children aged 0-5. The box will contain artefacts from across the museum & a set of tools for children to investigate the novel objects at close quarters. The objects will be specifically chosen for children to handle & examine with a magnifying glass, shine a torch on it, etc. The box will be taken into early years settings & childminders across March, Chatteris & Huntingdon. Museum staff will also provide each setting visited with a photo storybook to keep, share & talk about together.

Literacy Treasures: Parson Drove Pre-school

Parson Drove Pre-school will collaborate with Murrow Pre-school, Stepping Stones Pre-school, Elm School Nursery and Ladybird Day Nursery to raise awareness of the importance of good quality interactions with children. This work will involve staff development in terms of training in the delivery of Helicopter Stories as well as attending the ICAN Early Talk Boost course. Gorefield Pre-school & Wisbech St Mary Pre-school will also access the training & the resources. Settings will encourage local communities to get involved with communication & literacy development through their Peeping Pebbles project & will also offer literacy-based workshops for families that attend the settings. Additionally, the settings involved intend to replenish their Chattersacks & Babblesacks for families to use.

Creative Families: Talking Together at Wisbech Museum in partnership with the Fitzwilliam Museum

The Fitzwilliam Museum will collaborate with Wisbech and Fenland Museum, and Wisbech South Child and Family Centre (CFC) to support 10 families with children aged 0-5 to be part of the project. An initial session at the CFC will be followed by three sessions at Wisbech Museum where families will be introduced to objects in the museum collection through stories, play activities, art and music. All participants will have an opportunity to share the experience together, talk about something new and be inspired to try some of the activities at home or in other places in the community that will bring benefits in terms of the children’s communication and cultural development.
**Bottle Books: Murrow Pre-school**

The Murrow Pre-school team will create six bottle books which are bottles that contain props from a story. The bottles will be used to introduce books to 2 year olds in small group sessions to help gain their attention and develop their listening skills. The bottles will be used to inspire children to talk and be interested in stories, while older children will have the opportunity to retell stories in their own words or make up stories with the aid of a bottle book. The setting will also offer a workshop for parents on how to make the bottle books. Additional sets of bottle books will be provided to the local book café and four other local preschools.

**Lost Words and Found Connections: Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination**

Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination will work alongside educators and practitioners to provide a series of six half-day workshops for reception-aged children at Mayfield Primary School and younger children at Roundabout Pre-school in NE Cambridge City. At the workshops, the project team will share creative activities which connect young children and their educators with the nature on their doorsteps. The children, educators and artists from the project team will have opportunities to share their discoveries at a celebratory community event. Throughout, the project will explore themes of talking, listening, making and creating together, and will support educators and families to learn more about language and literacy development through play and experimentation.

**Creative Families: Talking Together at the Fitzwilliam Museum**

The Fitzwilliam Museum will collaborate with the North Cambridge Child and Family Centre (CFC) to support 10 families with children aged 0-5 to be part of the project. An initial session at the CFC will be followed by three sessions at the Fitzwilliam Museum where families will be introduced to objects in the museum collection through stories, play activities, art and music. All participants will have an opportunity to share the experience together, talk about something new and be inspired to try some of the activities at home or in other places in the community that will bring benefits in terms of the children’s communication and cultural development.

**Wild Literacy: Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT)**

The project will encourage children to explore their local environment and use this to formulate an understanding of the wider world, and to develop the supporting language to talk about it. PECT will provide a range of practical resources and ideas to be used by Early Years practitioners and childminders in a natural environment. PECT will also train Early Years practitioners and childminders from across March, Chatteris, Wisbech, Huntingdon and NE Cambridge City in the use of the resources at a half-day workshop to be held in each of the project areas.

**Enjoy & Achieve: Home-start Cambridgeshire**

The funding award for Home-start’s project work in Huntingdon will provide funding to train & support up to 10 Home-start volunteers. The team will then provide language & literacy support to 5 families through one-to-one support & at least an additional 10 through group sessions delivered in conjunction with local partners.

The funding award for Home-start’s project work in March & Chatteris will provide funding to train 5 Home-start volunteers. The team will then provide language & literacy support to 5 families through one-to-one support & at least an additional 5 through group sessions delivered in conjunction with local partners.

The funding award for Home-start’s project work in Wisbech will provide funding to train 5 Home-start volunteers. The team will then provide language & literacy support to 5 families through one-to-one support & 10 through their established weekly group.

The Home-start team will also hold briefing sessions for Health Visitors, schools & early year’s practitioners on the aims of the programme & the referral process.
Talking Together! Partnership Project: The Church of the Good Shepherd in partnership with Kettle’s Yard, & supported by The Red Hen Project

An eight month ‘Talking Together’ programme specifically aimed at providing a range of interactive and imaginative activities, ideas, resources and encouragement to families accessing free school meals in NE Cambridge City. After each session families will be provided with a Talking take-away pack which includes an activity or challenge which they can complete at home. The project will lead to an exhibition of celebration to be held at Kettle’s Yard where families will have an opportunity to talk to each other about their creations.

We are very excited about working with each of these projects in communities across our reach area. If you’d like to get involved with any of the projects mentioned above, please let us know.

GDPR Statement

Under section 10 of the Children Act 2004 the County Council has a responsibility to promote inter-agency cooperation to improve the welfare of children. One way we do this is to co-ordinate community based projects such as the Community Literacy Project. As you are a partner in this project, we are keeping your contact details so that we can let you know about the progress of the project.

We will not share your details with anyone outside the project group. If at any time you no longer wish to be part of, or hear about the project please let us know and we will remove you from the project communication list. If you wish to read the Council’s Privacy Notice, it can be viewed here: cambridgeshire.gov.uk/privacy-statement/privacy-notice (https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/privacy-statement/privacy-notice/)

Contact

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