



CASE STUDY: Little Bears Forest School, Portsmouth

Boogie Mites School Ready Programme

Informed by neuro-musical evidence, harnessing the brain boosting power of music and movement in early years. The project launched Autumn 2022

Project Aim

The aim of the Boogie Mites training and resources package is to equip the team with the knowledge, confidence and resources to embed music making as part of everyday activities inside and outside, strengthening children's school readiness skills.

Children's school ready skills:

- Listening and attention
- Speech and language
- Self-regulation
- Group skills
- Fine and gross motor skills
- Pre-literacy (phonics) foundation
- Maths foundations

There is also the aim to support educator development and wellbeing, parent involvement in setting activities and home learning.

There are 4 phases to the project:

- Training
- Implementation
- Maintaining high quality provision
- Impact evaluation

Training

Boogie Mites Trainer, Michelle Sandford, delivered onsite 3 hour Saturday training for Little Bears Forest School in Portsmouth in the Autumn of 2022.

Feedback from Nursery Manager, Megan Smith: "A great way to boost our staff's confidence in leading music activities for children, as well as a fantastic team-building opportunity. Thoroughly enjoyable and inspirational."

The team had access to the newly available online training course and song videos.



Implementation

When making our Boogie Mites instruments, we asked parents for donations of the items we needed (formula tins, boxes, cardboard tubes etc) and set aside a day to organise them, make the tapping sticks, decorate the drums and bag everything up. I [Megan] then also put together a folder with printed versions of the PDF documents on the Customer hub that staff could have access to quickly. This included the song sheets, information pages and recommendations for how to structure the 30-45 minute session.

To ensure all the children were having access, we created a 'rota' where 2 members of staff could lead a music session with a small number of children (around 10) on an allocated time and day of the week. Then during the session we might sing songs whenever the opportunity arose (at snack time, for example). We start each day saying hello to everyone and warming up using the song clap, clap, clap.

The online resources were used to ensure everyone understood how to teach the songs, and staff still use these now to get new ideas or reflect on how they have done something. It is very useful to have the videos of how to deliver the song, and to also watch it being done in a setting too.

Feedback on the online training course submitted in October 2022:

- "Very engaging and inspirational"*
- "Well presented theory segments"*
- "Easy to use and a steady pace"*
- "Very good addition to our daily routine"*
- "Listening and attention improved, engagement was great"*
- "I really enjoyed this course and feel inspired to share this with our parents and children!"*

Maintaining High Quality

Boogiemites is part of our everyday practice at preschool. The staff and children are always humming songs, and we often spontaneously sing a verse when the opportunity arises! At staff meetings we regularly review or reflect on what we are doing and will refresh as needed. We do regular peer observations and choose to do this with Boogie Mites sessions every now and then, too.

Feedback on the online training course submitted by 2 practitioners (Katy Seaman and Jane Robinson) in June 2024:

<i>The benefits of Boogie Mites are clear to see and it's great fun.</i>	<i>There has been a very positive response from all of the children and staff. There is a song to suit every child.</i>	<i>We use Boogie Mites daily with different groups of children, indoors and out.</i>	<i>This is a wonderful course which will give you the skills and resources to easily provide engaging, fun and educational musical experiences for your children.</i>
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<p><i>It's a great way to engage the children in music and it helps to develop their speech</i></p>	<p><i>The children look forward to their weekly Boogie Mites sessions. They have their favourite songs and will often request certain songs. Five little fish a their all time favourite tune.</i></p>	<p><i>To keep the children interested, I would take the Boogie mites session outside and use natural resources.</i></p>	<p><i>Boogie Mites sessions are great way to help with school readiness . Smaller children sing before they can talk. And we have seen non verbal children engage in the rhythm and showing great enjoyment.</i></p>
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Impact Evaluation

Children appear to develop a sense of rhythm and can be visibly seen to be tapping their foot along to music (in general, not just Boogie Mites) because they have an awareness of a beat thanks to Boogie mites. We have recognised children of all abilities succeeding during a music session, by their own standards. A non-verbal child may not be able to sing, but they enjoy shaking a shaker and copying the actions of the rain falling down. EAL children can respond to actions and pick up simple words, due to the repetition and familiarity of the songs. The children have grown in confidence and have good self esteem whilst taking part .

Staff are highly engaged and motivated, because they are taking part in something fun. The course allows them to feel secure in what they are teaching/leading and why. They know how to deliver a song, and how to reflect on the impact, and have flexibility to engage the children in innovative ways. Staff are relaxed because children are involved and appear to be enjoying themselves.

Future Plans

Parents have come into our setting for stay and play sessions, and they have taken part in a music session with their child. Sometimes they may seem shy or self-conscious but they clearly enjoy being with their children and learning the songs their children know. As with children, parents know that they can participate or observe and still be included.

I [Megan] have looked into the licensee option to offer this to parents and children, but need a little more consideration for now. We would like to potentially add in more songs by extending to a new programme (at the moment we do school ready). We have also considered a SEND parent course.

