















# Middlesbrough Incremental School Readiness Model

DELIVERING DIFFERENTLY IN NEIGHBOURHOODS

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# Introduction



There are many definitions of school readiness, and the term itself can be widely interpreted within different early year's services. The ultimate measure of school readiness is often so far away in terms of timescales from intervention to school readiness assessment, that it is difficult to measure the direct impact and therefore create accountability.

In line with the vision from the 1001 Critical Days Manifesto document (2014) it can be demonstrated that the earlier parents access services is vitally important to the development of children, therefore ultimately impacting on school readiness. School readiness does not happen in isolation, it starts at pre-conception and continues on throughout early infancy with internal and external influences. Government initiatives such as Pregnancy, Birth and Beyond (2011) which is being delivered health visitor teams in Middlesbrough aims to improve the outcomes for babies and parents through a refreshed approach to ante natal education.

The engagement of parents at this crucial time before their baby is born sets the scene for them to value engagement with community based learning which in turn will have a positive impact on their child's school readiness.

There are many elements to school readiness, each integral to its success. The Delivering Differently Project sought to address each factor and resulted in several work streams – School readiness pathway, nursery ready visioning session, Children's Centre Development, extending the achieving 2 year offer, and development of a Middlesbrough parenting approach.



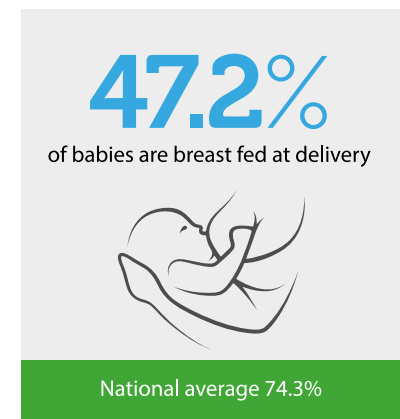
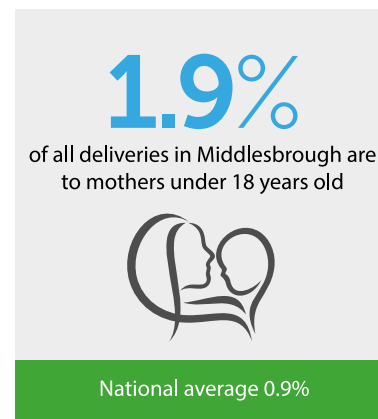
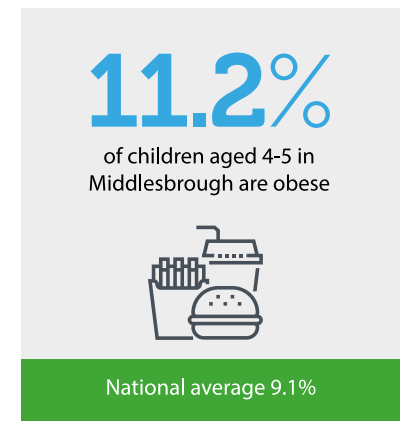


# Background

School readiness is currently measured using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) which indicates those children achieving a good level of development across the prime areas at the end of reception year. Data from 2015 showed that only 57.4% of children in Middlesbrough achieved this, compared to the Regional figure of 63.1% and National figure of 66.3%. Although this was a significant increase from the previous year, children in Middlesbrough are still making significantly less progress than that of the National population.

The health and wellbeing of children in Middlesbrough is generally worse than the England average Public Health England (2015). It is recognised, that although Early Years services are working very hard, the collective effort is not having the impact required. Smith (2013) reports, 'by as young as 4 years old, there is already an attainment gap of a fifth between disadvantaged children and their more affluent peers'.

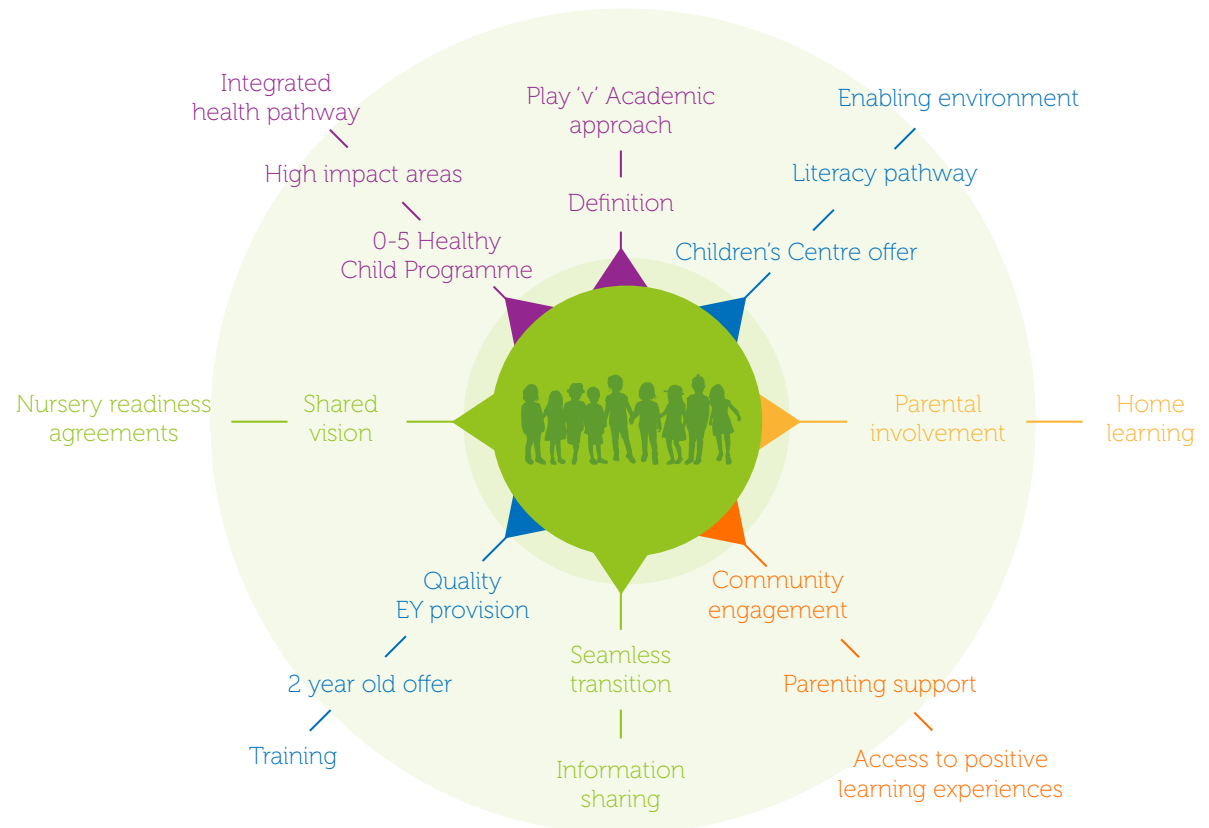
Areas of good practice exist across the town however this is not consistent, with services often working independently of each with other no clear shared vision.



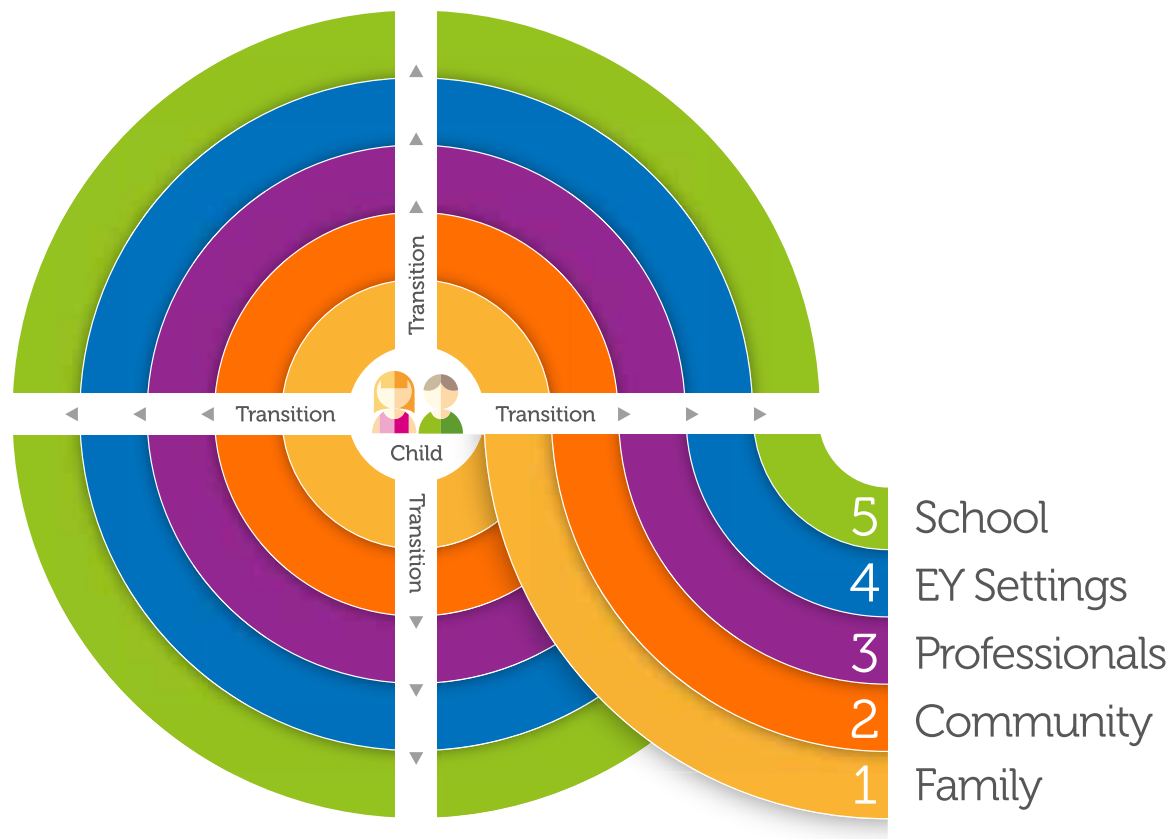
# Middlesbrough's approach to school readiness

In September 2015 we set about exploring the key elements of school readiness; existing pathways and frameworks were reviewed and gaps identified. Initial discussions between services identified the lack of an overarching framework from which to ensure opportunities for effective communication and integrated working.

The diagram demonstrates the many elements involved in Middlesbrough's approach to school readiness and the wider influences that will impact on a child being ready for school. The development of the shared pathway provides the overarching framework that underpins the school readiness model.



# Influences on School Readiness



- 5 School
- 4 EY Settings
- 3 Professionals
- 2 Community
- 1 Family

## Family

// Preparing for nursery and school is so important, Children not only need to know how to do things such as go to the toilet independently and put their coat and shoes on but they also need to know what will happen at school in terms of routines. For example helping them to understand you [parent] will take them and come back for them so they feel safe and don't get distressed //

**Paula Brown** - Parent

## Professionals

// Primarily school readiness should be the parent/ carer's responsibility but everyone who is involved in the care of the child has a role to play. As a health visitor I have to ensure the child is developmentally ready for nursery and offer support and guidance to the parent if they are not, along with making referrals to appropriate services as needed //

**Karen Dickens** - Health visitor

It is well documented that there are many influences on school readiness. These are all interlinked and start in the antenatal period. Supporting a child to be ready for school is a journey that involves a wide range of people within a child's life, all with differing levels of responsibility offering a range of different opportunities.



## Early Years Settings

// Early Years settings support children's concentration and self-help skills. The provision of quiet spaces within the environment allows us to give children 'time out' of quite often busy family life to learn and grow. Our flexible approach to access supports both the parent and the child with separation which is a key part of the transition to school process //

**Claire Smith** – Nursery

## Community

// As an Early Words Together Volunteer I help parents on a peer level, to understand the importance of play and how it is part of early learning which has a huge influence on their children being ready for school. Sharing my experiences and using the training I have been given I can explain things in a non-judgmental way such as how letting children use scissors helps to develop early writing skills. These are simple messages that as a parent you don't automatically know //

**Claire Linton** – Early Words Together Volunteer

## School

// As a school nursery we create the opportunities for children to:

- Separate from parents in a secure and safe environment
  - Socialise with other children and begin to make new friends
  - Build trusting relationships with new adults
  - Develop speaking and listening skills including opportunities to follow simple instructions
- Enjoy taking turns and learning to work together to investigate and make sense of the world around them
- Have early fun experiences solving problems and mark making.

In addition to this we develop positive partnerships with parents that enable us to encourage families to play with, talk to, read to, sing with their children from an early age as well as supporting them to take their children to visit new places. As a school nursery attached to a children's centre we are in an ideal situation to sign post families to activities and services to further support school readiness. //

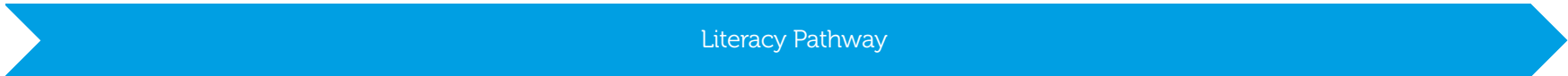
**Kay Lawler** – Early Years Foundation Stage Leader





# School Readiness Pathway

		Assessments					
		Ante - Natal Health Visitor (H-V)	New Birth Visit 10 - 14 days (H-V)	6 - 8 week Review (H-V)	3 - 4 Month Contact Health Visiting Team	Under 1 Year Review Health Visiting Team	
Interventions	Universal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pregnancy, Birth &amp; Beyond from 20 weeks.</li> <li>Registration to Children's Centre</li> <li>Healthy start (if not done)</li> <li>Baby Express (magazine) BB App</li> <li>Baby Buddy App</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete pink slips.</li> <li>Immunisation consent</li> <li>Children Centre info/clinics</li> <li>Consider Neonatal Behaviour Observation (NBO) Neonatal Behavioural Assessment Scale (NBAS)</li> <li>Breastfeeding /feeding support</li> <li>Baby Express (magazine) BB App</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baby Express (magazine) BB App</li> <li>Children Centre info/healthy child clinics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to weaning in clinic/ Children's Centre</li> <li>Promote baby play sessions</li> <li>Baby Express (magazine) BB App</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer if needed to Early Help Hub</li> <li>Physiotherapy drop in, GP,</li> <li>Baby play (non-walkers)</li> <li>Stay and play (walkers)</li> <li>Safety education</li> <li>Registration at dentist</li> </ul>	
	Targeted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Referral to mental health services as per health antenatal pathway</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NBO/NBAS</li> <li>Baby massage</li> <li>Peer support (breast feeding)</li> <li>MMH</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to Magical Moments (CC intervention) via Early Help Hub</li> <li>Neonatal behaviour observation (NBO)</li> <li>Neonatal behavioural assessment scale (NBAS)</li> <li>MMH</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to Baby Bop (CC intervention) via Early Help Hub</li> <li>Referral to Maternal Mental Health Services if needed</li> <li>Baby Sparc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review any actions from development review</li> </ul>	
Point of Contact		Ante - Natal Health Visitor (H-V)	New Birth Visit 10 - 14 days (H-V)	6 - 8 week Review (H-V)	3 - 4 Month Contact Health Visiting Team	Under 1 Year Review Health Visiting Team	





It is understood that health has an integral statutory role with supporting children and families. Developing a model in line with the Healthy Child Programme will set out key contact, assessment and intervention points that can be used as measures of school readiness at the earliest opportunity.



Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eligibility for 2 year entitlement</li> <li>Work ready skills of parents</li> <li>Aware of 3yr Nursery Education Grant (NEG)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Health/development as per ASQ3</li> <li>Health promotion as per Healthy Child Programme</li> <li>Review uptake of A2YO place</li> <li>Promote positive strategies around behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health and development review for targeted children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Checklist based on nursery readiness agreements</li> <li>Data shared with Local Authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health review as per healthy child programme</li> <li>Handover from health visitor to school nurse</li> </ul>	
	Point of Contact	18-24 month (Children's Centre)	24-27 month review ASQ Health Visiting Team	3 year health review Health Visiting Team	On entry to nursery baseline 3 year	EYFS Assessment 4 year
Interventions	Universal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support &amp; encourage take-up of A2YO place</li> <li>Promote dental health, healthy diet &amp; weight</li> <li>Check registration at Children's Centre &amp; dentist</li> <li>Discourage use of dummies/bottles</li> <li>Promote/signpost to family learning &amp; parenting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate referrals as needed re health depending on score of ASQ e.g. SALT, Cleveland Unit</li> <li>Appropriate health/development referrals as needed depending on score of ASQ</li> <li>Liaise with nursery provider</li> <li>Signpost to family learning/parenting programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information, advice &amp; guidance (IAG)</li> <li>Signposting to family learning/parenting programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific intervention as per school offer</li> </ul>	
	Targeted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A2YO/IAG transition</li> <li>Refer to Early Help Hub (family support, parenting 1:1)</li> <li>Information, advice, guidance around Achieving 2 year old offer (A2YO)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to Bookstart Story Corner via Early Help Hub</li> <li>Early Help Hub (family support, parenting 1:1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health &amp; development of child review (ASQ)</li> <li>Early Help Hub (family support, parenting 1:1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early Help Hub (family support, parenting 1:1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early Help Hub (family support, parenting 1:1)</li> </ul>



# Nursery Readiness Visioning Session



Middlesbrough's Definition:

**“We believe in Middlesbrough that nursery ready children are curious, confident and co-operative. Supported by family, professionals and community these children are able to flourish and reach their optimal potential”.**

Representatives from across the Early Years Services including health visiting, schools, private voluntary & independent settings (PVI's), Children's Centres, public health, childminders and parents were invited to take part in consultation which would ultimately lead to a shared vision and understanding of School Readiness in Middlesbrough, from which joint systems and processes could be developed.

Several exercises were undertaken to create a shared understanding of nursery readiness including roles and responsibilities. From this a definition was created which led to the development of an earlier measure and nursery readiness agreements.

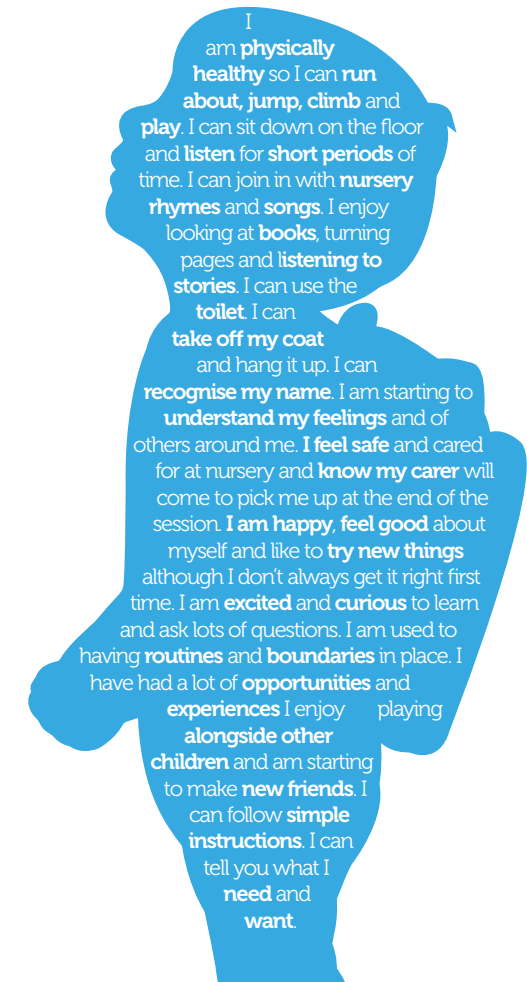
It is recognised that not all parents are the main carers of children. Throughout this report the word 'carer' is used and refers to any main caregiver of the child at any given time.



# Look at me I'm 3 and ready to start nursery



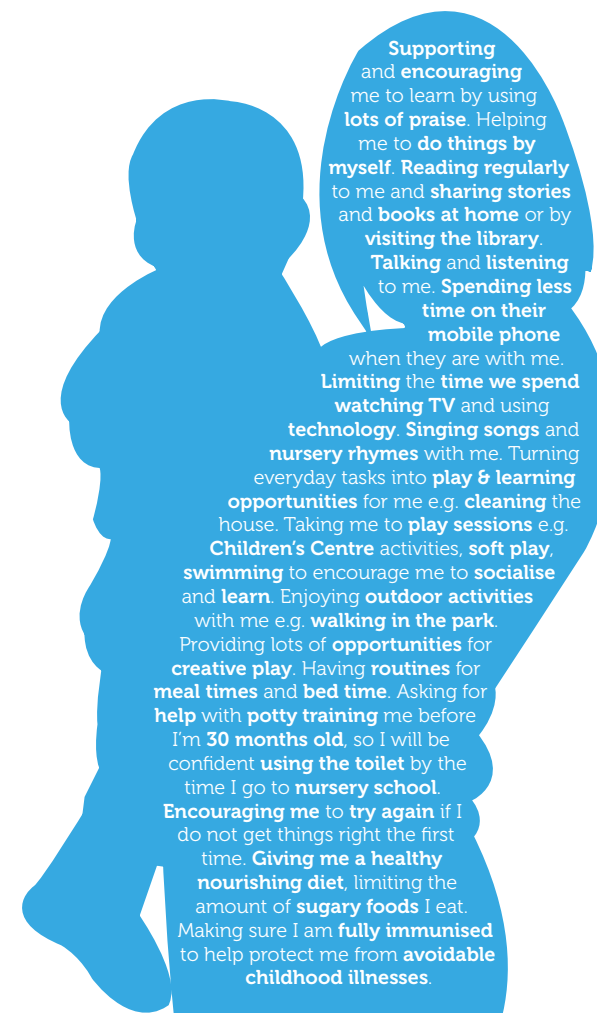
- I am physically healthy so I can run about, jump, climb and play.
- I can sit down on the floor and listen for short periods of time.
- I can join in with nursery rhymes and songs.
- I enjoy looking at books, turning pages and listening to stories.
- I can use the toilet.
- I can take off my coat and hang it up.
- I can recognise my name.
- I am starting to understand my feelings and of others around me.
- I feel safe and cared for at nursery and know my carer will come to pick me up at the end of the session.
- I am happy, feel good about myself and like to try new things although I don't always get it right first time.
- I am excited and curious to learn and ask lots of questions.
- I am used to having routines and boundaries in place.
- I have had a lot of opportunities and experiences.
- I enjoy playing alongside other children and I'm starting to make new friends.
- I can follow simple instructions.
- I can tell you what I need and want.



# My carer can help me to be ready for nursery by



- Supporting and encouraging me to learn by using lots of praise.
- Helping me to do things by myself.
- Reading regularly to me and sharing stories and books at home or by visiting the library.
- Talking and listening to me.
- Spending less time on their mobile phone when they are with me.
- Limiting the time we spend watching TV and using technology.
- Singing songs and nursery rhymes with me.
- Turning everyday tasks into play & learning opportunities for me e.g. cleaning the house.
- Taking me to play sessions e.g. Children's Centre activities, soft play, swimming to encourage me to socialise and learn.
- Enjoying outdoor activities with me e.g. walking in the park
- Providing lots of opportunities for creative play.
- Having routines for meal times and bed time.
- Asking for help with potty training me before I'm 30 months old, so I will be confident using the toilet by the time I go to nursery school.
- Encouraging me to try again if I do not get things right the first time.
- Giving me a healthy nourishing diet, limiting the amount of sugary foods I eat.
- Making sure I am fully immunised to help protect me from avoidable childhood illnesses.

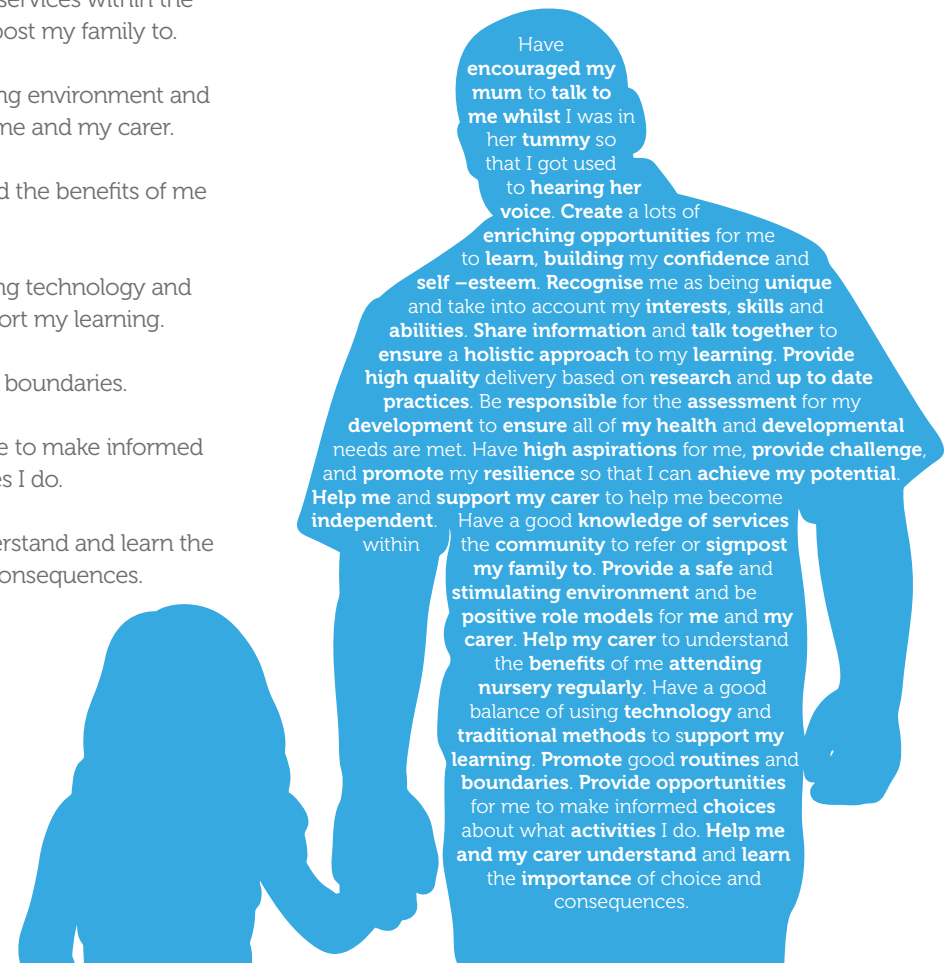


# People who support me and my carers should



- Have encouraged my mum to talk to me whilst I was in her tummy so that I got used to hearing her voice.
- Create a lots of enriching opportunities for me to learn, building my confidence and self –esteem.
- Recognise me as being unique and take into account my interests, skills and abilities.
- Share information and talk together to ensure a holistic approach to my learning.
- Provide high quality delivery based on research and up to date practices.
- Be responsible for the assessment for my development to ensure all of my health and developmental needs are met.
- Have high aspirations for me, provide challenge, and promote my resilience so that I can achieve my potential.
- Help me and support my carer to help me become independent.

- Have a good knowledge of services within the community to refer or signpost my family to.
- Provide a safe and stimulating environment and be positive role models for me and my carer.
- Help my carer to understand the benefits of me attending nursery regularly.
- Have a good balance of using technology and traditional methods to support my learning.
- Promote good routines and boundaries.
- Provide opportunities for me to make informed choices about what activities I do.
- Help me and my carer understand and learn the importance of choice and consequences.



# Services that work with me and my family should



- Have an Information Sharing Policy in place.
- Have respect and trust for each other as well as for me and my family.
- Recognise the importance of each other's roles.
- Be honest and open with my carers about my needs.
- Have agreed shared goals, expectations and aspirations for me and my family.
- Streamline assessments for the benefit of me and my family.
- Try to have shared systems and processes.
- Should be aware of my named health visitor.
- Have a central point of contact for communication.
- Recognise that everyone has a role in helping me become ready for nursery.
- Keep me and my needs at the centre of their focus and keep my carers fully informed of any concerns around my development as well as sharing my achievements.
- Have the opportunity to make professional challenge in relation to my care and needs.
- Help me and my carer to feel that staff are working together in my best interest.



# Children's Centre Development



Children's Centres are at the heart of providing support for families with children under 5 years old and as such have a huge role to play in school readiness. Originally set up to be unique to every community there is now a need for consistency and a generic offer across the town to ensure equality in access to services.

Centres are being 'branded' so that parents are very clear on what support they can access and a Middlesbrough wide 'offer' has been developed. Targeted interventions support the School readiness pathway and are planned using shared assessment tools such as the Ages and Stages questionnaires (ASQ's). A clear literacy pathway is embedded throughout both universal and targeted offers.

Centres have clear target groups which identify those families who are most likely to be in need of support. This enables staff to pro-actively engage with these families to assess the need for help at the earliest

opportunity. Family case work is also offered via the Early Help Hub to prevent families from needing to access level 4 services and to support those families who leave level 4 services, ensuring they have support to access community level services.

Children Centre delivery models are being explored with one centre positioned on a school site being integrated in to the management and leadership of the school.

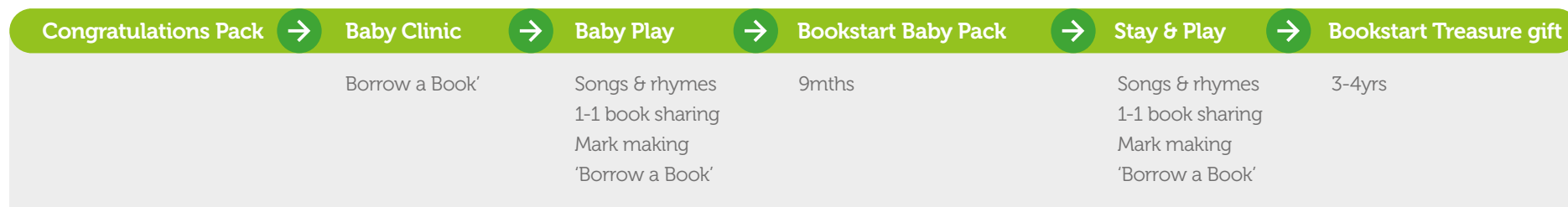
This flagship model will offer fully integrated provision for babies and children 0-11years old and their families, incorporating the children's centre, 2 year provision as well as primary education. This will allow identification at the earliest opportunity enabling appropriate support to be offered to secure improved outcomes for children. This model will also allow more robust tracking and monitoring to measure progress, identify gaps and support transition.



# Literacy Pathway



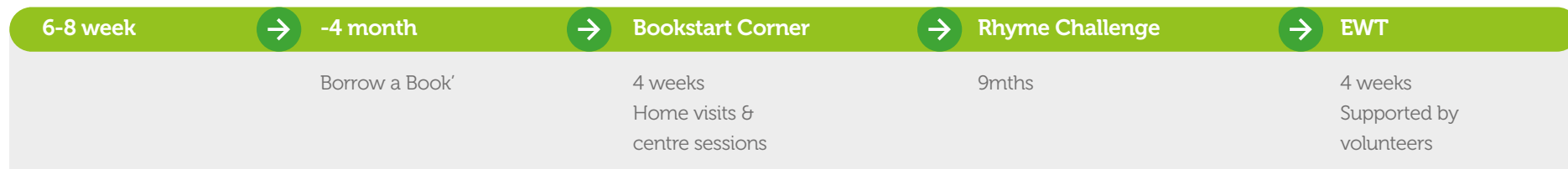
## Universal



First Library card Library incentive scheme →

## Targeted

← A2Y0 target group →



Early language and literacy (reading and writing) development begins in the first three years of life and is closely linked to a child's earliest experiences with books and stories. [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org). Having the literacy pathway at the heart of activities delivered within children's centre means that these opportunities will be offered at every contact.



# Middlesbrough Parenting Approach



Even though school readiness can be influenced by a number of environmental, social and economic factors, the largest contributor to school readiness is parenting.

The majority of parents have aspirations for their child and want to give them the best start in life. Having responsibility for nurturing a child to become independent and fulfil their potential can be a daunting but life changing experience for the child, parents and carers.

The parenting approach in Middlesbrough sets out to provide supportive and effective communities and services with a well trained workforce enabling parents to feel confident and capable in their role.

The 1001 days, cross party manifesto (2004) states that 'the early years of life are a crucial period of change: alongside adolescents this is a key moment for brain development, therefore positive nurturing parenting supports the hard wiring of babies brains impacting on later life outcomes.



# Outcomes, Successes and Lessons Learnt



One of the critical factors is the willingness and commitment to share information to address the issue of school readiness. Historically data sharing between agencies has been challenging due to individual governance procedures. This project has led to an increased awareness of each other's data sharing restrictions and the reasons behind this, how and why data is collected and what is used for. By closer, more open, partnership working we have been able to explore ways of overcoming barriers to maximise data sharing.

The development of data processes is maximising potential to track and evidence impact of additional interventions, this along with an agreement for a measurable 'on entry to nursery' baseline will provide an earlier indicator of school readiness.

The successful use of existing frameworks and resources to ensure sustainability going forward and maintain a common multi agency approach.

Through exploring definitions of nursery and school readiness it has become clear that we need to think in terms of services being ready for the children rather than the children being ready for the settings. Key to this is developing effective transition points within a child's life. Currently work is being developed around transition from Primary to Secondary school in Middlesbrough and this needs to be mirrored in the early years.

Parenting and the provision of opportunities for children is a key influence on school readiness. The development of a Parenting Approach for Middlesbrough will ensure parents are informed, empowered and supported to make the right choices for their child.



# School Readiness - Resources used



A Chance to Change Delivering effective parenting programmes to change lives. Elena Rosa Brown, Lorraine Khan & Michael Parsonage. Centre for Mental Health, 15/10/12.

Communication Friendly Spaces Approach  
[www.elizabethjarmantraining.co.uk](http://www.elizabethjarmantraining.co.uk)

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[www.chimat.org.uk](http://www.chimat.org.uk)

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Improving Outcomes for Two Year Olds. Harrow Council London.

The Healthy Child Programme: Pregnancy and the first five years, Department of Health 2009

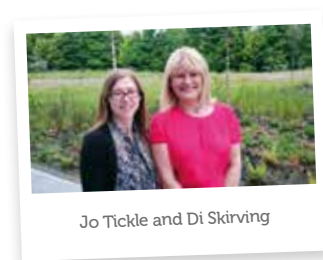
The 1001 Critical days. The Importance of the Conception to Age Two period. A Cross-Party Manifesto: Andrea Leadsom MP. Paul Burstow MP. Caroline Lucas MP.

The Link between speech, language and communication needs and social disadvantage. All Party Parliamentary Group on Speech and Language Difficulties. February 2013.

Tuning in to Two Year Olds. Improving Outcomes for Two Year Olds. Harrow Council London.

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[www.ncb.org.uk/areas-of-activity/early-childhood](http://www.ncb.org.uk/areas-of-activity/early-childhood)



Jo Tickle and Di Skirving

This project was funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government through the Delivering Differently in Neighbourhoods Project. The project was led by Jo Tickle, Senior Practitioner, Stronger Families and Di Skirving, Clinical Lead for Health Visiting. Both practitioners have worked in Middlesbrough for over twenty years and are passionate about making a difference for the children and families in Middlesbrough.