



CoCreate:
Working together,
investing in early
years innovation

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Welcome



At Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP) we support children aged 0-3 and their families to achieve good outcomes and live happy and healthy lives in supportive communities. Funded by The National Lottery Community Fund as part of their A Better Start programme, we aim to improve the life chances of babies and very young children by changing the way services are commissioned and delivered, involving parents as equal partners.

LEAP works closely with parents and our voluntary and community sector partners. This spirit of collaboration in working to meet the needs of local families led to the innovative CoCreate approach.

CoCreate funding this year has supported new initiatives which meet the needs of specific groups. Young children with special education needs have participated in the 'Choose what we do club' and in new sensory stories and creative arts sessions. Early Years practitioners got tailored advice about child-led play for children with autism and ADHD. Stay and Play sessions were run for Dads with their children. Football sessions were provided for toddlers in the Eritrean community, and mothers from the Somali community were offered tailored fitness sessions with 'coffee and chat'. New 'Seedlings' sessions offered outdoor nature play; and some amazing creative workshops culminated in a communal carnival parade. My deepest thanks go to all those involved in this amazing work.

I'm delighted that this CoCreate approach will be sustained through the exciting new 'First 5 Lambeth' consortium which brings together the diversity and expertise of local community organisations to nurture children in the early years.

Laura McFarlane, Director, LEAP



CoCreate Fund

CoCreate supports organisations and groups to work with Lambeth families with young children. It supports them to design, develop and test initiatives which aim to make a positive and lasting change to young children's lives.

LEAP believes in the power of investing in the early years and the dramatic changes it can have on every part of life. The CoCreate fund is open to organisations who already work with children aged 0-3 or would like to do so.

CoCreate supports initiatives which are aligned with our values:

Child-focused

Directly benefitting children aged 0-3, or indirectly benefitting them by enabling their families and communities to thrive.

Community-led

Working collaboratively with the families using your services, or Lambeth local community members

Mutually beneficial

Providing mutual benefit for the organisation/group as well as service users or community members.

Impact and sustainability

Making an impact, continuing after funding and contributing to improved learning.



The 2022/23 funding was split into two streams:



Amber Fund, £2000

A small pot of money to enable delivery of light-touch initiatives along with a 'snap-shot' evaluation.

Turquoise Fund, £10,000

A larger pot of money to enable delivery of in-depth initiatives with a commitment to gathering advanced evaluation and learning.



Want to learn more about CoCreate funding?

Email: Davina Belcher on dbelcher@ncb.org.uk

Neurodiversity Learning CIC: Sensory stories and creativity

Neurodiversity Learning is a social enterprise which provides services for young people with special educational needs, such as Autism. They design and deliver creative visual art sessions to support young children to increase their social skills and reduce their anxiety levels.

With their CoCreate funding, they designed pilot sessions aimed at families who have parents and/or children with additional needs. These sessions used taste, touch, smell, sounds and sights to bring stories and children's art to life. Lunch was provided to give time for children and parents to connect and chat.



Contact Navedia Young at info@neurodiversitylearning.co.uk

Eritrean Saho Cultural Association: Football for toddlers



Eritrean Saho Cultural Association (ESCA) is a community centre hub for local events and activities. When it was recently renovated by Lambeth Council, the community was involved in designing how to best use the space for local young families.

With their CoCreate funding, they now run 'Football for toddlers' on Saturday mornings and have invested in coaching training for one of their young people so these sessions can continue.

Contact Mohamed Abdella at info@sahouk.co.uk



Loughborough Junction Action Group: Seedlings



The Loughborough Junction Action Group (LJAG) is a group of volunteers whose vision is to make Loughborough Junction a great place to live and work.

With their CoCreate funding, they ran six trial sessions called 'Seedlings' at Loughborough Farm, in partnership with The Platform Cafe. Connection with nature, wellbeing, physical activity, and healthy outdoor play were at the heart of these sessions for parents, babies, and toddlers. They hope the farm can become an accredited 'Natural Thinkers' setting in the coming year.

Contact Charlotte O'Connor at platformcafe.lj@gmail.com

All Aboard Club: Tailored support offer

The All Aboard Club is run by staff and volunteers with lived experience of autism and ADHD. They provide child-led play sessions for children with Autism and ADHD where they can share their special interest in trains and develop ways to play together.

With their CoCreate funding, they offered free tailored support and advice to Lambeth Early Years practitioners and local community organisations on how to improve their activities and services to make them more inclusive and attract more families.



Contact Richard Semmens at info@allaboardclub.com

Unity Matters CIC: Dads AIM (and other Influential Males) Stay & Play

"Taking time to play 1:1 with my 3-year-old here at Dad's group has made me do this more at home, setting aside 30 minutes here and there, switching off my phone and trying not to do 3 things at once."

Unity Matters Dad

Unity Matters is a small community led organisation offering opportunities to support parents and bring families together.

With their CoCreate funding they developed a programme to empower fathers in Lambeth to come together, support each



other, and engage in activities to support the Home Learning Environment (HLE).

This included a weekly Saturday 'Stay and Play' session for dads and other influential males with their little ones at Brockwell One o'clock club.

At this session, dads came together to have fun exploring new ways to play and learn with their little ones, as well as share local events and ideas for low cost/no cost activities.

They also ran a dad's forum to ensure fathers are being listened to.

Contact Angela Russell at unitymatterscic@gmail.com



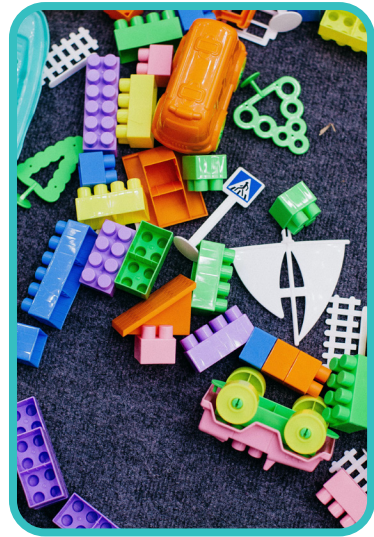
East Africa Association: Somali Mums and little ones

“This type of group is much needed in my community as many of the refugee Somali women we work with are lone parents. This makes them more vulnerable to isolation and mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, having a knock-on effect on their children.”

Hussein, Founder of EAA

The East Africa Association (EAA) supports Somali families – particularly lone parents and those from disadvantaged backgrounds experiencing economic poverty, isolation and mental health issues – to connect to wider services on offer and reach their full potential.

Their projects help improve community cohesion and build confidence. Their football-focused programme for children and young people shows that embedding sports and fitness at an early stage can encourage life-long healthy lifestyle choices.



With their CoCreate funding they have piloted a stay and play initiative at a local Children's Centre to engage marginalised mothers with little ones from the Somali community with local services that are on offer.

They are also running a full timetable of activities for very young children throughout the summer holidays. This will run alongside their popular Holiday Activities and Food programme for older children and will include sports, creative sessions and 'taster' visits to the local Children's Centres.

Contact Hussein Hussein at coachboqol@gmail.com



Sunshine International Arts: Carnival Heritage Workshop



"At Sunshine International Arts we have always been passionate about carnival and culture.

Getting involved and working with LEAP CoCreate was an exciting and inspiring opportunity for S.i.A. to start this work with the very youngest in the community."

Ray, Artistic Director, S.i.A

Sunshine International Arts (S.i.A) is an artistic, educational and carnival production company, who are committed to inspiring the next generation through the art of carnival and traditional folklore in keeping with their motto "Think Local".

They run community outreach projects and workshops for school children and adults, including arts, crafts and culture workshops, creative dance and holistic health workshops.

With their CoCreate funding they run creative workshops for families with toddlers and older siblings - culminating in a communal carnival parade. The focus is on culture and folklore. Workshops include storytelling, arts and craft, music makers and movement.

They worked with new local community partners to provide these opportunities, creating community pride rooted in an understanding of heritage and diversity.

Contact Ray Mahabir at info@sunshinearts.co.uk



Whippersnappers: 'Choose what you do' club and Parent Research

"It has been one of our lifelines. A space where my son can be himself, I feel relaxed and happy and there is no judgement, a space to be heard and to listen."

Whippersnappers Parent

Whippersnappers provides a diverse cultural platform from which children and adults of all ages, needs and backgrounds can express and educate themselves through music, theatre, and the arts. They used their CoCreate funding to further develop and embed the 'Choose what we do club' which was piloted through Amber CoCreate funding last year.

The club is for pre-school children with SEND, children who are displaying early signs of additional needs (but are undiagnosed), and their family members. Parents/ carers with neurotypical children can support the group by volunteering or offering



a skills share.

The project was funded in partnership with Lambeth ELEVATE Neighbourhood SEND project and offered families a wide choice of activities across the borough. Families also joined in a co-produced research project to explore new ideas and information about children's cognitive patterns and behavioural triggers, the challenges experienced, and the collaborative solutions needed.

This opened up discussions around how the creative arts can be used to support the wellbeing of young children with disabilities and their families. A giant patch work, a short film, and a written research report were produced.

Contact Caroline at Cburghard@whippersnappers.org



Consortium rationale

One of the standout benefits of the CoCreate programme has been the emphasis on collaboration and partnership as tools for improving ways of working, broadening reach, and increasing access to support, learning and shared expertise.

CoCreate partners say:

"I've benefitted from meeting like-minded people, connecting, networking and working together to clarify everyone's individual possible strengths and weaknesses and how to find solutions".

"Most valuable part has been partnering with other organisations who can be referral partners."

"We have the opportunity to explore how we can work together to find sustainable solutions and funding."

"I've worked in isolation for many years and this network has made me feel more supported and energised than I have for years."

To sustain and develop the innovative work supported by the CoCreate fund, we are launching a new early-years focused consortium, **First 5 Lambeth**.

First 5 Lambeth will provide a structure for Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations in Lambeth to work collaboratively to provide high quality activities, services, and support for families in the early years; as well as share skills and strengths, develop business and funding opportunities and manage grants and contracts that are won collectively.



First 5 Lambeth vision & values



Vision

Giving every baby, young child and their families in Lambeth a better start by bringing together the diversity and expertise of local community organisations to strengthen and broaden the opportunities on offer.

Values:

Creating connections:

Developing opportunities for families to make peer support networks and connecting families to the wider services available to them.

Parents as experts:

Working co-creatively with local parents to design, develop, deliver and continually improve our activities, services and support.

Access for everyone:

Ensuring our activities, services and support are inclusive, in particular for those communities which are often marginalised.

Responsive to local need:

Adapting what we do in order to respond to local needs and opportunities as they arise.

Influencing systems change:

Sharing what we learn to influence positive change for both families in the early years as well as the VCS organisations that support them.



First 5 Lambeth Members



Partner with First 5 Lambeth

First 5 Lambeth is rooted in its commitment to collaborative working not just with core consortium members but with the wider Lambeth community.

We are a small part in all of the amazing work that is happening to nurture families in the early years in Lambeth and we value any opportunities there might be to partner with you in the future.

Partner with First 5 Lambeth in one of the following ways:

- **Support us** through funding/commissioning our development or delivery
- **Offer space** for us to deliver activities, services and support to families
- **Join with us** on future funding applications
- **Share your expertise** and experience to help shape our work
- **Collaborate** on the development and delivery of activities, services and support
- **Signpost** families to our offer
- **Promote our work** to those in your networks
- **Express your interest** in joining as a core member in the future

Find out more about **First 5 Lambeth** and get involved, get in touch by emailing **Davina Belcher** dbelcher@ncb.org.uk



