What were we trying to accomplish?

We aimed to increase the level of parental engagement in learning within one Early Level Class - consisting of 24 Early Learning and Childcare children and 16 P1 children. Prior to the beginning of the project, the team had no processes in place for engaging parents.

Our aim: By the end of May 2016, 60% of children in Tarbert's Early Level Class will have at least one example of parental engagement in their learning every week.
Who was involved?

- Local Authority
- Early Level Team
- Subject Matter Experts
- Parental Engagement Project
- Scottish Improvement Leader (ScIL)
- Children
- Parents

Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative
What did we plan to do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Primary Drivers</th>
<th>Secondary Drivers</th>
<th>Theory of activities that can be tested to deliver improvement PDSA change ideas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What, how much, by when?</td>
<td>Family confidence to engage in children's learning</td>
<td>Parent and family voice</td>
<td>Carry out consultation with families to identify needs and present level of engagement - baseline.</td>
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<tr>
<td>By the end of May 2016, 60% of children in Tarbert’s Early Level Class will have at least one example of parental engagement in their learning every week</td>
<td>Asset Building – what is working well already?</td>
<td>Provide opportunities for parents to show and use skills with their children.</td>
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<td>Operational definition: to define 'parental engagement' within their child’s ELC, there should be evidence of two examples of engagement within the month of May 2016 using ANY of the examples listed below:</td>
<td>Literacy/ language barriers</td>
<td>Address issues where English is additional language (speak on a one-to-one basis/ translate Developmental Milestones)</td>
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<td>Involvement of fathers in family routines/ supporting learning</td>
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<td>Inclusion - Working parents and fathers</td>
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<td>Supportive community and learning environment</td>
<td>Ethos</td>
<td>Parent helpers/ stay and play sessions. Floorbook planning</td>
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<td>Multi- agency working</td>
<td>Participate in Bookbug sessions, visit local library, lead play sessions at crèche using Play at Home pack. Build links with Health Workers.</td>
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<td>Community learning culture</td>
<td>Use range of communication methods (hand out email addresses, text for Learning Journey reminder, create Facebook page that makes links to other agencies)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Increase nursery attendance (3 year olds)</td>
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<td>Early Level Team’s confidence in and understanding of parental engagement</td>
<td>Common language and system - eg. Developmental milestones/ Wellbeing indicators</td>
<td>Consistent messages from all practitioners – shared understanding between home and ELCC</td>
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<td>Professional learning culture</td>
<td>Increase staff access to professional development resources</td>
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<td>Self Evaluation</td>
<td>Model for improvement training/ moderation of Learning Journeys</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Staff training and development</td>
<td>Create parental engagement wall as a team.</td>
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It was vital that we engaged the Early Level Class Team in this improvement project from the outset and to develop ownership. Together we established ground rules, along with a clear system for communication. In order to measure improvement we first established a baseline of engagement through consulting parents. We then gathered data for 4 weeks to analyse the frequency and types of engagement. In order to target the most popular types of engagement, we entered our data into a Pareto Chart. This helped inform our driver diagram and measurement plan. From there we could identify potential PDSAs to bring about improvement.
Engaging parents became the key priority within the Early Level Class. In order to link the learning between class and home, children’s Personal Learning Plans were sent home every week and data was gathered around the % of PLPs returned each week. Opportunities for parental engagement were also increased and the frequency of engagement was monitored for each parent. Weekly staff meetings allowed the team to study tests and to identify new theories to test for increased engagement. There was also a focus on building relationships with parents through one to one meetings, emails, tests and even phone calls, depending on the needs and wishes of the parent.

I now know that my child learns through playing and having fun.

The 'Learning Journey' not only tells me what my child is learning, but why.

The 'Learning Journey' gives me ideas to help with my child’s learning at the weekend.
Insights

Relationships are key and you need to be mindful of them.

Build an ethos of trust and respect with your team and the people involved in your improvement project.

Make sure you have developed a communication strategy with your team - who, what, where, when.

The whole team should be engaged in developing your driver diagram and measurement plan.

The 'study' part of the PDSA cycle is vital - it informs your next steps.

When things go wrong, don't give up - learn from them and move on.

Every day is a learning day - you just have to look for the learning!
The team has not only significantly improved their levels of parental engagement, they have built strong, supportive and mutually respectful relationships with their parents, which is leading to a positive impact on their children’s learning and development. They have also grown as a team – cementing relationships, respecting each other’s strengths and supporting one another when they needed it. Each team member has grown as a leader of their own learning, champions of family engagement and quality improvement.

Kirsten the class teacher shares the team’s improvement journey at an authority conference - showing how she and her team used the Model for Improvement.
Impact

Practitioners have noticed a significant improvement in the quality of engagements – parents are more aware of their child’s learning and are linking learning with ELC and home through activities and opportunities in day to day life. Practitioners feel more confident in engaging parents.

I am now seeing all of my key parents engaging through learning journeys, emails, show and tell. This has taken a lot of effort to get up and running but certainly pays dividends when it works.'
Light bulb moments

• One size does not fit all! Every parent is different

• One-one sessions with parents helped to identify how barriers could be overcome and helped to build relationships

• Suspend judgement

• Never assume - always check!
What are our next steps?

The team in Tarbert Early Level Class will go on to spread their learning across their 3-18 campus- improving parental engagement and spreading their knowledge of the Model for Improvement as they go - a fantastic outcome for this project!

The Argyll and Bute Early Years Service will take the learning from the Parental Engagement Project and share it with Early Level colleagues across Argyll and Bute

Our own Scottish Improvement Leaders will continue to support and challenge teams in leading their own improvement projects, as well as increase knowledge and understanding of improvement methodology.

[https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ab/sali/](https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ab/sali/)

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