

Meeting needs, making changes, improving outcomes.

Doodle Den: A Community Led Literacy Initiative

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Overview

- Childhood Development Initiative (CDI)
- Doodle Den
- Parental engagement
- Community links
- Evaluation
- Conclusions



Childhood Development Initiative

- ▶ Funded by Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Atlantic Philanthropies
- ▶ Community involvement central to CDI's work
- ▶ Extensive research carried out with local community to identify necessary services
- ▶ *'How are our Kids?'* published in 2004 highlighting key concerns within the community and service needs (CDI, 2004)
- ▶ Local community identified a need for literacy programme



Literacy Interventions and Success Criteria

- ▶ Concentrated interventions more likely to be successful
- ▶ Increased 'time on task' during literacy instruction associated with positive literacy outcomes
- ▶ Explicit teaching of literacy skills
- ▶ Use of a variety of instructional methods
- ▶ Enriching language environment
- ▶ Different activities are utilised to develop children's oral language, comprehension, reading and writing skills



What is Doodle Den?

- ▶ An after-school literacy programme aimed at Senior Infant classes
- ▶ A curriculum that incorporates literacy activities through a variety of media



Programme Objectives

Moderate
improvements
in children's
literacy

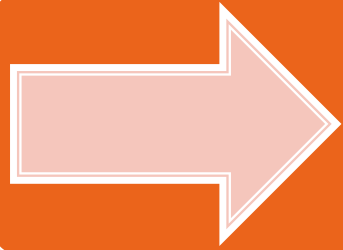
Improvements
in children's
regular school
attendance

Increased
family use of
library services

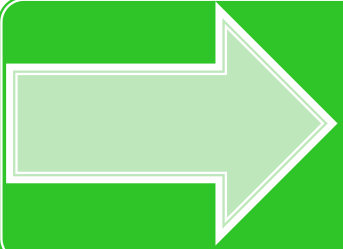
Enhanced
relationships
between the
child and their
family and
peers

Improvements
in the
children's
broader
engagement in
learning
outside the
school

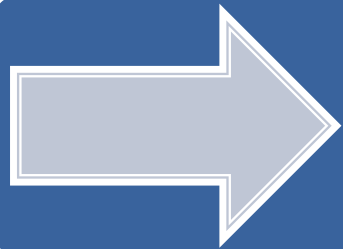
Programme components



Child Component



Parent Component



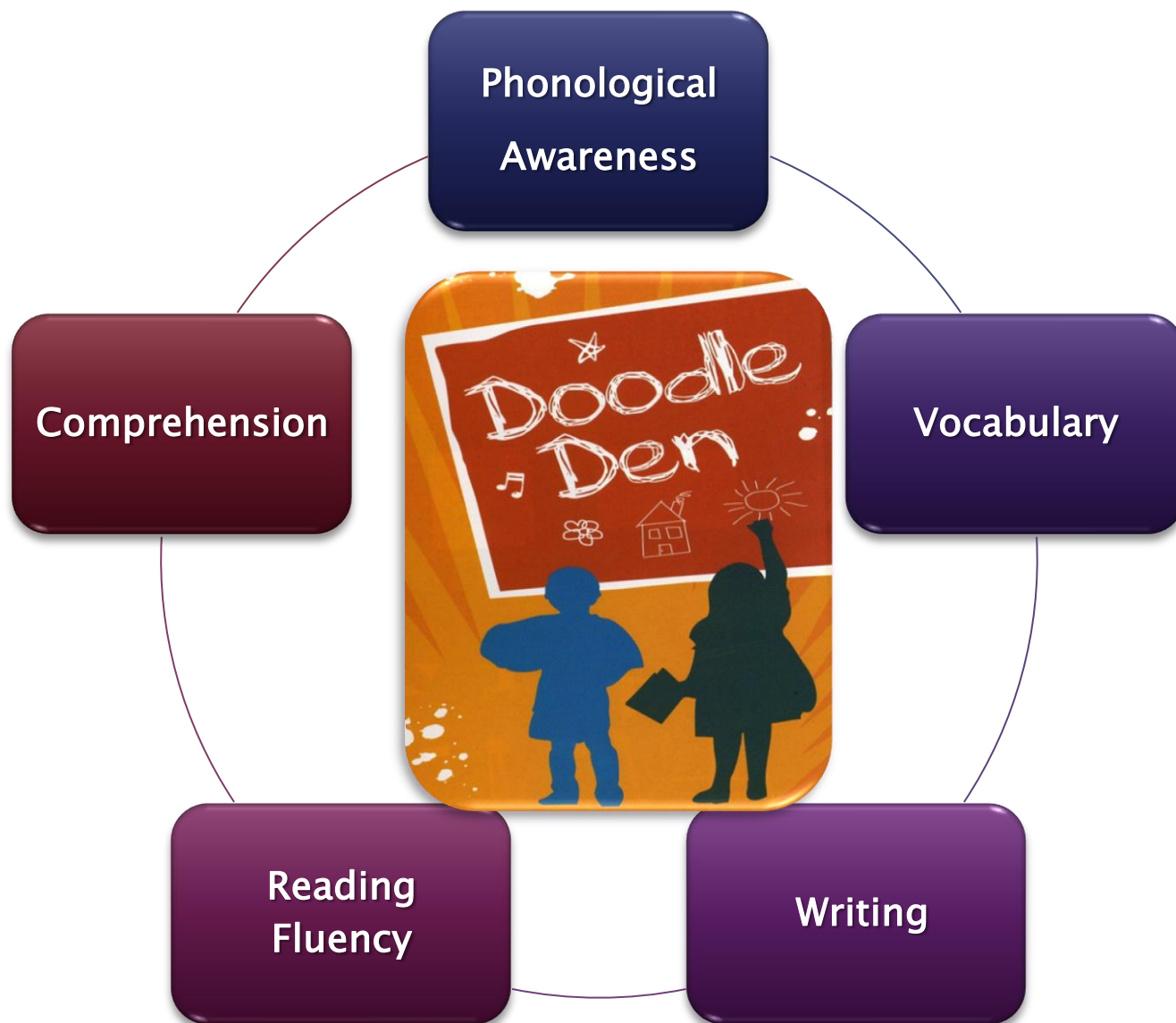
Child and Parent Component

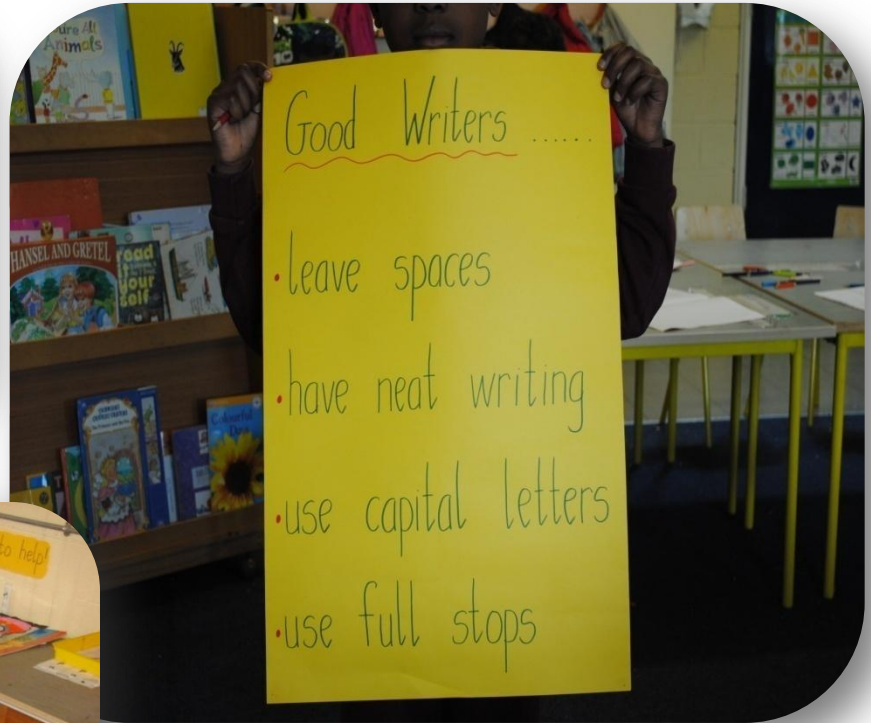
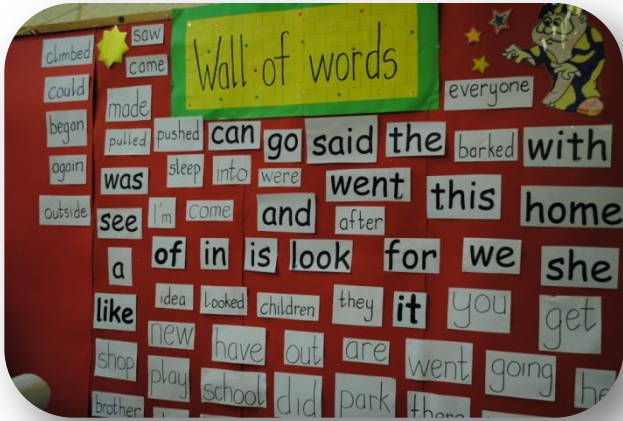
Doodle Den Sessions

- ▶ 15 children in each group
- ▶ Two facilitators:
 - One primary teacher
 - One youth/child or social care worker
- ▶ Key Literacy components
- ▶ Drama. P.E, Art, Music

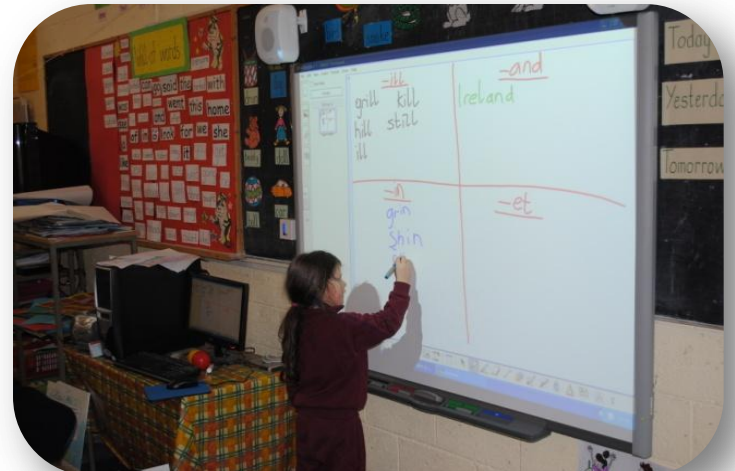


Key Literacy Elements





Meeting needs, making changes, improving outcomes.



Parental Involvement: What the research says

- ▶ Children's attitude towards and proficiency in literacy is strongly associated to parental attitudes and behaviours (Eivers, Shiels, Perkins & Cosgrave, 2005)
- ▶ Parental aspirations for their children and their beliefs about the responsibility to educate their children associated significantly with literacy skills (Hung, 2003)
- ▶ Parents attitudes to school and education shape children's views (Hung, 2003)



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Parental Involvement

- ▶ Reading session
- ▶ Writing session
- ▶ Story sack session
- ▶ Family Library Session



Community Links

- ▶ Library Sessions
- ▶ Collaboration with schools
- ▶ Training
- ▶ Community based events and publicity



Evaluation process

- ▶ An independent evaluation carried out by a team from The Centre for Effective Education in Queen's University, Belfast
- ▶ The evaluation was carried out over a three year period from 2008–2011



Methodology

▶ Randomised Control Trial:

- 210 children referred to the programme each year and randomly assigned to either the control or intervention group (i.e. 105 in each group annually). In total over 600 participants

▶ Process Evaluation:

- Quantitative data; Interviews with children, parents, teachers, school principals, facilitators, children's librarian and CDI staff

Biggart, A., Kerr, K., O'Hare, L. and Connolly, P. (2011) *Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Childhood Development Initiative's Doodle Den Literacy Programme*. Dublin: Childhood Development Initiative (CDI).



Main Outcomes

- Children who attended Doodle Den had a 7 percentile point gain in their overall literacy ability

- Word Recognition (7 percentile point gain)
- Sentence Structure (12 percentile point gain)
- Child's Word Choice (10 percentile point gain)


- Combined with Teacher's ratings, this increased to a 11 percentile point gain

- Teacher's reports indicate a 7 point percentile reduction in negative behaviours (ADHD related Behaviours)


As reported by Biggart et al (2011).




Secondary Outcomes




- Parent's report increase in child's reading at home (10 percentile point)



- Increase in family library activity (15 percentile point)



- Improved school attendance



- Parental reported child literacy activity

As reported by Biggart et al (2011).

Process Evaluation– Parents' Views

- ▶ Positive about library sessions
- ▶ Feeling informed about what their child was doing
- ▶ Good relationships with everyone involved

As reported by Biggart et al (2011).



Interview with Children, Parents and Facilitators

- ▶ *Clip from Drive Time, RTE Radio 1 June 2012*



Next Steps

- ▶ Launch of Evaluation Report
- ▶ Dissemination of the learning:
 - Roundtable discussions
 - Seminars
 - Policy papers
 - Family day
- ▶ Delivery in Tallaght West and Limerick City through the School Completion Programme (SCP)
- ▶ Replication of delivery and capacity for supports in areas with identified need



Conclusion

- ▶ Community consultation to assess service level need – important starting point
- ▶ Concentrated interventions that use variety of teaching methods most successful
- ▶ Parental engagement crucial
- ▶ Feedback loops
- ▶ Important to maintain ongoing community links

