

“Rhythm & Rhyme”

Derbyshire County Council First Steps Programme



Phase 1 Evaluation Report

**Liz Harris
December 2004**



“The skills they have learnt, will shape the way they work with families in future...”

- Sarah Watson,
Books for Babies Project Librarian and
Rhythm and Rhyme Co-ordinator.

“I now regularly use songs and rhymes as part of my storytime activities... I deliberately make it a much greater part of the session.”

- Sophie Beardmore, Children’s Librarian

“Absolutely fantastic – the impact on Josh has been excellent!”
– a parent

“She loves it. In the first week she wasn’t interacting much but she’s singing at home for the whole week”
– a parent



“I found it extremely valuable to be able to watch other workshop leaders working with this age group.”

- Laura Zobel, trainee

“Rhythm & Rhyme” First Steps Programme: Derbyshire County Council

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1. Introduction & Background

1.1 What is Rhythm and Rhyme?

Rhythm and Rhyme is a project designed to introduce children under the age of 5 to the joys of music-making, whilst at the same time developing their skills and abilities through musical activity.

However, it is more than simply a programme of musical activity for pre-school children.

Rhythm and Rhyme intends to have a much deeper and more lasting effect on the community. It is designed to develop and instil a culture of music-making into the way the community interacts with its young people from the earliest possible age. It seeks to create an environment where music is regularly used in the development of key skills in babies and toddlers and to equip those who can influence that development with the confidence to use music in their everyday activity with children. It is designed to leave a lasting legacy.

Music and its value as a tool for the development of babies and toddlers is a highly topical research subject. This First Steps Rhythm and Rhyme project provides interesting action research into this area of work.

1.2 The Project Partners

The Rhythm and Rhyme project in Derbyshire, was a consortium project between Derbyshire County Council, Cultural and Community Services and Early Years & Childcare Partnership Departments, Sure Start and the Firebird Trust. Rhythm and Rhyme was funded by Youth Music through its Partnership Programme (First Steps), SureStart, Derbyshire County Council and the Early Years & Childcare Partnership.

The Firebird Trust was invited to manage the artistic programme. Founded on the principle of inspiring and empowering people through involvement in making music, the Firebird Trust has built an excellent reputation as the region's leading developmental music agency. Firebird was felt to be ideally placed to develop and deliver this complex partnership project.

The programme was co-ordinated on behalf of the consortium by Cultural and Community Services' Books for Babies Project Librarian, Sarah Watson. Sarah worked closely with the Firebird Trust, planning the operational aspects of the programme and ensuring that everything fell into place on the ground.

The Firebird Trust contracted Liz Harris, an independent arts consultant, to act as external evaluator and assess the impact and performance of the project against the aims set out in the project application.

1.3 The Project

1.3.1 The aims

The overarching aim of Rhythm & Rhyme is to introduce children aged 0-5yrs in Derbyshire to the pleasures of music-making, at the same time ensuring they reap the benefits musical activities can bring for their development.

Devised in partnership with the Library service, a particular focus is the use of musical activities to promote and improve language skills.

The programme also aims to leave a lasting legacy by

- building the confidence of parents and carers and encouraging them to use music with their children.
- developing the confidence and abilities of childcare professionals, such as Sure Start Librarians, to use music in their work with young children.
- providing an opportunity for a young musician as part of their continuing professional development (CPD).

1.3.2 The Programme

Designed to operate in two phases, Phase 1 of the project began in February and ended in November 2004. It revolved around the development of an “infrastructure” in the community and would focus on the transfer of skills from professional musicians, highly experienced in working with young children, to parents/carers and childcare professionals who would have the opportunity to use music in their engagement with young children.

This would be achieved through a programme designed to deliver the following:

- **Musical activities for children aged 0-5 and their parents/carers**
- **Training for childcare professionals to use music in their work**
- **Intensive training for Sure Start Librarians to equip them to lead Rhythm and Rhyme sessions themselves**
- **Mentoring for a “trainee” musician to develop workshop skills**

- **New musical resources to be made available in the County through the purchase of eighteen Melody Monkey's Marvellous Music Boxes and people with the skills to use them and the widespread availability of Rhythm and Rhyme CD's.**

The musical activities would consist of series of musical workshops that would introduce the children and their parents/carers to a range of musical activity including songs, rhymes, musical games, playing musical instruments and movement to develop their skills and abilities.

The Firebird Trust would engage professional musicians experienced in working with under fives to lead workshop series in each of the eight districts of Derbyshire. Each series would consist of nine music workshops, eight of which would be for the children and their parents/carers together, the ninth would be a training session just for the parents/carers to learn how to continue to use what they had learnt in the workshops. Where possible the events would take place in the local library.

Prior to the start of the workshop series, four training days would be held. Led by the musicians, these would be aimed at developing the musical skills of a range of different professionals who work with pre-school children in the eight Derbyshire districts.

Among the participants in the training days would be seven Sure Start Librarians who would then promote and attend the children's workshop series taking place in their respective district. Working alongside the professional musician and seeing them deliver musical activities for the children, would form part of their more intensive training, helping them build their confidence to use music in their own Sure Start sessions.

In line with the Youth Music funding requirement, an opportunity to join the programme would be offered to a young emerging musician to be "mentored" by the professional musicians and develop their skills as workshop leaders as part of their Continuing Professional Development. Ideally the "trainee" musician would already be part of the local community, thus providing for the continuity of the activity.

Phase 2 of the project commences in January 2005 and will see the programme being rolled out into the wider community by those who have developed their skills during Phase 1.

1.2.3 Critical Success Factors

The programme described above was designed to achieve the desired outcome of leaving a lasting legacy in the community, through a cascading effect of passing on skills and developing confidence. Critical to this would be the roles of some of the key players: the professional musicians, the Sure Start librarians and those tasked with managing the delivery of the project, namely the Firebird Trust and the Books for Babies project librarian.

The professional musicians delivering the workshops and training would be pivotal to achieving the desired impact within the community. The musician has a complex role to fulfil: whilst delivering activities for the children and seeking to build the confidence of parents and carers to continue that activity, the musician is also required to train other childcare professionals to use music in their work. It would be crucial for the success of the programme and its sustainability for the musician(s) selected to have the skills to fulfil this demanding role.

The Sure Start librarians would be responsible for ensuring that the programme was as successful as possible in their district and would involve marketing Rhythm and Rhyme to local families, encouraging attendance and ensuring that the venue was prepared and any necessary equipment was made available. In addition, they would need to work alongside the musician with a view to learning some of the skills required to use music in their own future activities. Considerable enthusiasm and commitment would be a requisite from the librarians to undertake this self-development role effectively.

The key role of the managing agency, the Firebird Trust is to ensure the quality of the delivery of the programme, both artistically through the recruitment of the professional musicians and their training plans and logistically by liaising with the local Books for Babies librarian with responsibility for the project to ensure that all preparations are in place locally.

1.4 The Evaluation

This report evaluates Phase 1 of the programme against its projected aims and objectives. It seeks to identify any unanticipated outcomes and successes and provides recommendations for any adjustments or further planning required for Phase 2 and the future uses of the project model.

Since the project was designed to have far-reaching benefits for all those involved, not simply the children who participated in the workshops, the evaluation, therefore, views the project from the perspective of all involved whether directly or indirectly: the children, the parents/carers, childcare professionals, professional musicians and trainee musicians. It also evaluates

the project in terms of the desired outcomes for the managers/organisers (Firebird Trust and Books for Babies), the Consortium and Youth Music, the funders.

The original funding application identified a number of quantitative targets the project should meet. Statistical data has been collected during the course of the project by means of registers and records kept by the Books for Babies Librarian and Sure Start team. The evaluation of the extent to which the project has achieved these targets has been reliant on the data collected and provided to the evaluator. Where possible, outcomes have been assessed against baseline data, either established through the course of the evaluation or taken from official sources.

In addition, a wide range of methods have been used for collecting qualitative evidence with which to evaluate the achievements of the project and make recommendations for the future of the project. These have included:

- Questionnaires (completed by training session participants, parents/carers, trainee musicians)
- One-to-one feedback sessions.
- Observation of one of the training sessions
- Observation of one workshop by each musician
- Written logs kept by the trainee musicians
- Anecdotal evidence gathered in various situations.
- Informal and formal verbal feedback from meetings with musicians, parents, carers, participants and Early Years professionals attending sessions.
- A group discussion with the Sure Start librarians as part of their team meeting.
- Comments collected from librarians.
- Photographs

1.5 Acknowledgements

The help of all those who have contributed towards collecting the data and information to complete this evaluation has been much appreciated.

In particular, I would like to thank Sarah Watson, Books for Babies Librarian, who not only masterminded all the complex logistical arrangements of organising so many workshops in different locations around a very large County, but also kept me regularly updated throughout the 9 months of phase 1 and collected all the data and questionnaires that she could from each series of workshops.

I am also grateful to the musicians Chris, Hugh, Sally and Sue, who made me welcome at (and join in with!) their workshop sessions and took time to feedback

to me afterwards, and to the trainee musicians, particularly Laura who shared the log she kept to record her experiences on the programme.

The Sure Start team made me very welcome at their feedback meeting in October 2004 and provided a steady flow of feedback and photographs via Sarah Watson, during the course of the project. I am also grateful to Ann Wright, Assistant Head of Arts, Derbyshire County Council, for providing background to information to the application and economic data.

Last, but not least, a big thank you to Sibyl Burgess, Director of the Firebird Trust for being regularly available for updates, advice and discussions about the programme.

I was extremely impressed by the enthusiastic and professional way in which all involved embraced the project and am confident their commitment contributed much to its success.

2. Rhythm & Rhyme Phase 1 - Evaluation

2.1 What happened in Phase 1?

2.1.1 The Programme Delivery

The Firebird Trust engaged professional musicians Chris Foster, Sally Goldsmith, Sue Hollingworth and Hugh Nankivell to deliver the workshop programme. All four musicians have extensive experience of working with and delivering music workshops for young children.

Firebird Trust also selected two musicians from Opus (a Derby-based music organisation) to take part in the project as musician “trainees”. Firebird felt that both would benefit, so it was decided appropriate to “jobshare” the opportunity, thus disseminating the skills more widely and colleagues Laura Zobel and Nick Cutts took part in phase 1 of the programme as “trainees”. Firebird designed a training programme specifically for them.

Prior to the start of the workshop series, four training days for childcare professionals were held in February and March 2004. Two of the four professional musicians jointly ran the training days at each of the four locations: Buxton, Chesterfield and Ilkeston libraries and at Swadlincote the training was held at the Old Post Centre, Newhall.

Following the training days, the programme of workshops commenced. Workshops took place in Alfreton, Buxton (Fairfield), Chesterfield, Holmewood, Ilkeston (Kirk Hallam), Shirebrook, Swadlincote (Woodville) and Wirksworth. Each musician was allocated to two locations and Sarah Watson (Books for Babies) masterminded a complex schedule ensuring all the musicians were in the right place at the right time.

Seven of the eight districts have a Sure Start Librarian who worked closely with the project throughout, taking responsibility for the workshops in their own Sure Start district. The eighth district, Wirksworth, is in the Derbyshire Dales where there is not a Sure Start presence. Nevertheless, it was agreed that all eight Derbyshire districts should experience Rhythm and Rhyme, so a workshop series was scheduled to take place in the local library. Sophie Beardmore, Derbyshire Dales Services to Young People Librarian, offered to look after the workshops here in a voluntary capacity and brought her child along to sessions.

The Sure Start librarians used a wide range of methods for marketing Rhythm and Rhyme, and parents confirmed they had heard about the project through leaflets/posters (e.g. at clinics, library notice boards etc.), other activities they take part in (e.g. toddler groups, nursery school etc.) and word of mouth. The latter included recommendations from friends as well as other professionals, such as the Sure Start librarians and nurses at the clinic.

2.2 Achievement of the Project Aims: Summary of Key Findings

The following, in the form of hard facts and statistics, summarises the key achievements in relation to the aims in the project plan.

Project Aim: To provide opportunities for pre-school children and their parents to participate in musical activity.

- A total of 66 music workshops for the under 5's were held during phase 1 of the project in different locations throughout Derbyshire (Target for phases 1 & 2 = 160 activities – a greater number of workshops are planned for Phase 2).

Project Aim: To introduce children to the joy of making music

- 139 different children aged 0-5 years attended Rhythm and Rhyme workshops in phase 1 of the programme. (Target for phases 1 & 2 = 350 participants – with a greater number of workshops planned for Phase 2 and more experience of recruiting to the programme, the target should be achieved)

Project Aim: To reach children who do not currently have access to music-making

- At least 75% of those who participated in the workshops were not involved in any music-making prior to this programme.

Project Aim: Parents/carers who have learned to use music when playing with children

- 98% of parents/carers who attended, said they are now using the musical activities in the home.

Project Aim: 120 childcare professionals trained in using musical activities with under 5's

- 118 childcare professionals attended the one-day training course and 100% said they could see ways they could use what they learned.

Project Aim: 7 Sure Start librarians intensively trained in using musical activities with under 5's.

- 7 Sure Start librarians worked alongside the professional musicians during phase 1 of the programme and are going on to start delivering activities following some further training in phase 2.

Project Aim: One trainee musician “mentored” in running musical workshops for under 5's

- Two musicians from Derbyshire “jobshared” the trainee programme and both will be running workshops in phase 2.

Project Aim: New resources available for delivering music activities for the under 5's in Derbyshire.

- Melody Monkey's Marvellous Music Box is now available for use for Rhythm and Rhyme and other music activities in all 8 Derbyshire districts.
- CD's of workshop material have been provided to all participants, both children and their parents and carers, as well as childcare professionals who took part in the training.

2.3 The Participants (the children and their parents/carers)

2.3.1 Participant Profiles

In addition to the key aims listed in section 2.2 above, the project sought to achieve certain attendance targets and to work with specific sectors of the Derbyshire communities.

2.3.1.1 Attendance frequency

The project aimed to achieve an attendance of between 10-20 children in each workshop for 8 sessions and the ninth session for parents/carers to give them support and training to continue their activities with their children.

The average attendance at each workshop was 11 children. However, the averages for each area varied significantly from a weekly average of 19 at Buxton, to 5 at Swadlincote and Shirebrook. Also, very different experiences were noted concerning regularity of attendance by the same child/children, depending on the location. These differences can be attributed to a range of factors that are further explored in section 2.9. The full breakdown of attendances can be seen in appendix 1.

As the programme developed the planned 9th session was recognised to be difficult to deliver. Parents and carers had come to be with their children and separating them would prove problematic, both for childcare reasons (many came with young babies) and because they came to be together. Different venues adapted this session to suit their group. Some simply continued with the workshop format. Others ran instrument-making sessions that the children could also join in with.

2.3.1.2 Gender of participants

Of the 139 different children who attended the workshops, 59 were boys and 80 were girls.

The total targets for Phases 1 & 2 combined were 150 boys and 200 girls. This falls somewhat short of 50% of the total target figures, but should be made up in Phase 2, as there will be a greater number of workshops.

2.3.1.3 Ages

Rhythm & Rhyme was designed for children aged up to 5 years. A full breakdown of attendance by age was not available for evaluation. However, it was reported anecdotally by the Sure Start librarians that most children were in the age range 6 months to 3 years.

(In Chesterfield, for example, of 17 booked families, 2 children were under 6 months, 5 were aged 6 months to 1 year, 4 aged 1-2 years and 6 aged 2-3 yrs. No children over 3 years attended).

2.3.1.4 Ethnicity

The programme aims to attract 5 participants from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds over Phases 1 & 2 combined. Two children who attended workshops in Phase 1 were identified to be from different cultural backgrounds, representing 2.8% of the total attendance of 139 children. In the combined Sure Start areas in which the programme took place the percentage of the population from black and ethnic minority groups is 1.3%. In Derbyshire as a whole it is 1.5% (2001 Census).

2.3.1.5 Participants from areas of deprivation

The workshops were offered to participants free of charge. It was recognised that many of the participants and their families would be in financial need because the workshops were being held in some of the most deprived areas of Derbyshire.

The Sure Start librarians had some difficulty identifying whether participants came from the top 50 areas of deprivation in the County. It was possible to identify whether the participants came from the Sure Start area, but this does not give an accurate result. However, of the eight locations where the workshops took place, three (Bolsover-Shirebrook, NE Derbyshire-Holmewood and Chesterfield-St.Leonards) are in the top 50 Derbyshire wards in the Index of Multiple Deprivation for 2004. The remaining five are in the top half of the table, which makes it safe to assume that a high proportion of the participants that came from the three districts in the top 50 wards could be counted. (An estimated figure of 33 participants has been given). The target for Phases 1 & 2 combined is 100 participants.

2.3.1.6 Single parent families

It was found to be difficult to identify whether participants were from single parent families. The Sure Start librarians did not feel they could ask directly, resulting in only four single parent families being recorded in the statistics gathered for this evaluation. The aim was to attract 100 single parent families over the course of phases 1 & 2. It is now thought to have been an unrealistic target. However, since six of the eight Sure Start districts are listed in the 2001 Census as having above the national average of 6.4% of all households being lone parent households (Alfreton 8.2%, Buxton 9.6%, Bolsover 7.1% Chesterfield 7.8%, Kirk Hallam 10.8% and Woodville 8.0%) it is probably reasonable to assume that there would have been a fair proportion of single parent families amongst the participants.

2.3.1.7 Children with special needs

The programme also set out to work with a target of 20 children with special needs over phases 1 & 2. Since special needs are not usually formally identified until children start school, the Sure Start librarians had difficulty in gathering relevant data for this target. However, two children were identified as having special needs.

2.3.2 The Experience for Participants (Children and Parents/Carers)

Whilst the previous section on attendance profiles provides a quantitative assessment of the extent to which the project achieved its aims in terms of statistical targets, this section seeks to provide an assessment of the quality of experience for participants.

At the end of the workshop series, parents/carers were asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire. A total of 47 questionnaires were collected. It is not possible to give the exact percentage of participants this represents, because some of the parents/carers brought more than one child. It is estimated that the responses represent over 50% of the participants.

The following summary of responses provides a strong indication of how much the programme has been valued in the community:

Firstly, to provide a basis against which to test whether their expectations had been met, participants were asked what they hope to gain by attending the workshops:

Q. What did you hope to gain by attending Rhythm & Rhyme?

The following were the main reasons given for going to the workshops:

- For fun with music
- For ideas and inspiration
- A new experience
- Enjoyment and friendship
- For child to develop an awareness and appreciation of music
- To encourage the child's natural rhythm and confidence.
- To learn new songs/rhymes and play musical instruments
- For ideas to share with children at home
- To mix with other parents and children
- For child to develop social skills
- For "an enjoyable experience we could share"

Q. Have the sessions met your expectations?

When asked whether the sessions had met their expectations 46 (98%) answered "fully", 1 answered "partly" (2%).

Comments included:

"It has been excellent!"

"...the fun of a play session with the structure of music"

"Daisy has really developed her singing and dancing."

"Absolutely fantastic – (the) impact on Josh has been excellent!"

"I've learnt a lot of new songs in a non-threatening environment"

"Finlay thoroughly enjoys the sessions, which you can tell by the facial expressions"

“Archie really benefited and relaxed in the sessions. He is always singing songs at home.”

“They (the sessions) helped the children make choices.”

“Both babies started clapping and waving while attending”

“Evie has gained invaluable confidence being with other children”

“(“My child is) more aware of musical terms”

Q. Have you used the activities at home?

When asked whether they had used what they had learnt at home 46 (98%) answered YES. (The 47th person failed to tick a box)

The ways in which activities had been used at home included,

- singing the songs and doing the actions,
- tapping rhythms/drumming and
- trying to make instruments

Jungle Samba was the most frequently mentioned song.

One of the most positive outcomes was the fact that participating in the workshops was opening up ways in which different members of the family could engage and the younger child could take things home to the rest of the family:

He has been “singing the songs to his brother and daddy,
so we can all join in.”

“Jacob makes up his own versions of songs and
Oscar loves to dance while you sing”

“She talks about coming. She sings at home –
and now my older kids sing the songs too –
Jungle Samba and Lemon Tree –
they are all singing in the bath.
She is very keen to come.”

Q. Have you heard or learnt new songs?

Almost everyone said YES: most or all of the songs were new to them.

Q. How did you rate the musicians?

44 (94%) rated the musicians as “excellent”,
2 (4%) rated the musicians as “good” (1 failed to reply).

Comments were made about musicians' abilities to bring everyone into the group and their individual enthusiasm.

Q. What did you particularly enjoy?

The responses were wide-ranging and the comments speak for themselves:

(the sessions were) fun, interactive, lots of participation
different musical instruments & songs
new songs
use of puppets
children having instruments
the opportunity to try lots of instruments
when the (trainee) musicians attended
the musical instruments (violin/oboe/bassoon)
"never heard a bassoon played before"
the turn-taking and seeing the children grow in confidence
no pressure on kids to participate, only encouragement
leaders obviously enjoying it
all the children wanted to take part
just right length of time
convenient location
all of it/everything (said many times!)

Q. Is there anything you would change?

36 (77%) said there was nothing they would change, or implied so by not commenting.

11 (23%) made suggestions for some changes (grouped below):

- **Regarding accommodation:** There were several comments about the size of room. There were particular problems at one venue where the room was very stuffy and it was suggested air-conditioning would have helped. Other comments were about the room being too small where groups were larger.
- **The activities:** One person commented that a new song every two weeks would have helped. One parent would have liked to learn simpler dances and one suggested starting with simpler songs.
- **The timetabling:** There were a couple of comments about activities that had to be re-scheduled, with the added recognition that it "couldn't be helped". One parent mentioned starting half an hour later would have helped. One felt that sessions in the morning were better, in the afternoon the children were too sleepy.

- **With reference to Wirksworth:** (The only location that does not have a dedicated Sure Start Librarian). “It worked well, but could do with a Sure Start visit”. This was further picked up in Sally Goldsmith’s comments. Sally was the musician at Wirksworth and whilst the session was well organised by a volunteer, Sally was concerned the legacy would not be left in the way it was at venues with a Sure Start librarian attached.
- **Regarding the length of session:** There were three comments about this “not long enough, once they got started”, “just right”, “sessions could have been longer”, ironically some of the librarians felt an hour session to be too long and 45 minutes would have been preferable. Perhaps this is for local determination and dependent on time of day, workshop leader and other factors.
- **Regarding the end of Phase 1:** There was general disappointment that the sessions had come to an end. “It should be on-going”. “Pity they aren’t continuing.”

Q. Would you like to make any other comments about the programme?

Comments included:

- great opportunity
- really good idea
- very friendly, easy going people
- good fun
- very “child-friendly”
- excellent

Q. Have you or your children participated in any other musical activity?

This question was asked to gauge the level of musical experience of the participant families.

21% said that they participated in other musical activity and 26% said that their children did.

However, most referred to other organised sessions such as “wiggle and jiggle”, the toy library, “tumbletots” and “bounce and rhyme”, or informal singing and dancing at home.

Only two parents/carers said they played guitar at home, one said they played orchestral instruments and one had been in a choir many years previously.

This indicates that musical influences on the participating children and parents/carers have been very limited prior to this programme.

2.4 General Training for Childcare Professionals

Phase 1 of the programme commenced with four training days in different locations around the County to provide general training for childcare professionals to use music in their work.

The training days took place in February and March 2004. Three of the professional musicians were involved in running the training days and two of the three jointly ran each day, working in pairs. Training days were held at the following four locations: Buxton, Chesterfield and Ilkeston libraries and at Swadlincote the training was held in the Old Post Centre, Newhall.

A total of 118 childcare professionals attended across the four events, including Sure Start & children's librarians, speech therapists, playschool leaders, early years community workers, teachers, classroom assistants, playgroup supervisors, nursery nurses/managers, family support workers and family visitors.

Feedback was obtained through questionnaires distributed and completed at the end of each training day. A total of 94 questionnaires were returned, so the following represents the opinions of 80% of those attending.

Q. Why did you attend this training event?

The most frequent response to this question was "for work" and/or its relevance to their job.

Other reasons included:

- For ideas of ways to extend learning through music and songs
- To improve skills
- To learn to use music in storytime
- To learn to deliver Rhythm and Rhyme sessions
- To help support a toy library and to feedback to colleagues
- For ideas for making music and instrument work more enjoyable
- To prevent instrument work becoming a "free for all"
- To expand knowledge to implement best practice in classroom
- Learn to use Melody Monkey's Marvellous Music Box
- To learn skills to transfer into families (family support worker)

Q. What did you expect from the day?

The following were listed as expectations:

- New, practical, inexpensive, adaptable, enjoyable ideas for activities & resources
- Clearer idea of how Rhythm & Rhyme can be used with parents and children

Strategies for working with the “musically challenged”
Hands on workshops
How to use songs and rhymes in storytime sessions
Fun, creativity, confidence-building
Songs, rhymes, advice
A few said “Wasn’t sure what to expect”
Ideas on how to draw children and parents into sessions
To utilise resources better and make them available to parents/carers

Q. Did the event meet your expectations?

79 (84%) said the event fully met their expectations.

15 (16%) said the day partly met their expectations.

Comments about expectations included:

Far better than expected
It was fun and inspiring
It helped me lose my inhibitions
Felt slightly swamped by so many new ideas
Can’t wait to use the songs! Especially Ooh Bamba (Jungle Samba)
for our Caribbean Fun Day tomorrow!
Very useful and easy to put into practice
Facilitators were excellent and engaged the group

Q. Can you see ways to use what you have learnt?

100% said “yes”, they could.

The following examples were given:

To improve listening and attention skills
To include puppets, games, songs and musical instruments in storytimes
Techniques to use as “icebreakers” with older children
The simple songs and games
For storytelling and special activities
Day enabled me to be more confident in storytelling sessions in library
Working with pre-school children in Sure Start area library
Using different music, not just rhymes, with young children
Would include rhymes such as “five little monkeys” into my maths input

Q. What was the most useful?

When asked to name the most useful things they had gained from the training day, the following were cited:

“The whole ethos of the day – challenging and energising”
New rhymes/songs to try out
The “three voices” approach: singing, talking, whispering voice
Incorporating music into stories
Use of different styles of music for different purposes

Learning things you could use straightaway, without immediate resources.
 Use of musical instruments – “Less nervous about it now”
 Participating helps empathise with the children/consider how they feel and learn.
 Confidence building
 Ideas to raise self-esteem
 Making up songs
 Singing games & action songs
 Learning to use puppets and props
 Adapting songs and involving children in different ways
 “Bringing together” song for settling children down for stories
 Ways to make the children feel comfortable whilst learning new activity
 The ideas of how to adapt approaches to children with less ability (either physically, memory or language)
 Musical instruments – that it’s ok to let children experiment

Q. What was the least useful?

Most respondents said “nothing” or left this question blank.

- One respondent thought songwriting not to be very useful.
- Three respondents made reference to the unsuitability of some of the songs, games and techniques for such young children, although one recognised that “...even that (the material aimed at older children) could be adapted to use with younger ones”

Q. Please rate the skills of the trainer

75 (80% of respondents) said the trainer was “excellent”.

19 (20%) said “good”.

None said “average” or “poor”

Q. Please rate the training day overall

70 (74%) said the day was “excellent”,

21 (22%) said “good”

3 (4%) “average”.

None said Poor.

Comments included:

“enjoyable, inspirational, FUN”
 “informative and fun!”
 “useful, a good day”
 “Thank you...”
 “I would recommend this course to others”
 “I have learnt more about music today, than I ever have before”
 “The whole day was brilliant!!!”
 “The trainers themselves were so enthusiastic, we couldn’t help enjoying it!”
 “Thank you for the new ideas and making me feel at ease”
 “Please can we have more!”
 “Inspirational!”

Q. Is there anything else you would like to say about the day's activities?

Other feedback and suggestions for future courses included:

Concerning resources:

- Handout with key points to consolidate material covered
- Sheet to remember songs would have been useful
- Ideas for tapes to use with children
- More details of resources available
- More examples of stories that lend themselves to addition of music
- Tape/CD/video/book with songs/tunes would be useful – difficult to remember everything

Workshop techniques:

- More tips on how to introduce instruments, keep group focussed and keep control
- Clarity about parameters for using materials in different authorities, and avoid building expectations and disappointing people
- Would have enjoyed using more instruments
- Would have liked to explore Melody Monkey's Marvellous Music Box more
- Would prefer to see trainers working with children of the age-group and learn skills for coping with the pitfalls.

Practical arrangements

- Shorter lunch break – more time for training
- Day was too long - could target information at different provision and age-groups
- Afternoon session could have been longer – a bit rushed
- Groups were too big and there was not enough time

For follow-up

- A very informative session – I would gladly attend more if available
- Would like another training day – share ideas about how we have put it into practice.

Overall, the feedback from those who attended the training days provides evidence of some very successful and useful training events for childcare professionals. In addition, there was some constructive comment and useful

suggestions for further development of this type of training, whether in phase 2 or future Rhythm and Rhyme programmes.

2.5 Intensive Training for Sure Start Librarians and the benefits for the Derbyshire Library Service

This section evaluates the experiences of the Sure Start Librarians and the benefits their involvement and the project brought to the Derbyshire library service.

Most of the evidence was gathered at a focus group session during one of the Sure Start team meetings led by Annie Overall, the Derbyshire County Council Service Manager, Young People and Policy Development. The meeting was attended by the seven Sure Start librarians Sarah Phillips, Anne Gilman, Jan Nicholson, Ackvinder Bains, Gwenda Culkin, Nicola Rushton and Diane Payne, and by Sarah Watson (Books for Babies). The session was facilitated by Liz Harris (independent evaluator for the project).

As explained in the project description, the eight workshop series' in Phase 1 of Rhythm & Rhyme were programmed to take place one in each of the eight districts of Derbyshire. Seven of the eight districts have Sure Start areas and the local Sure Start librarians were given responsibility for the workshop series taking place in their district.

Most were held in library venues and the Sure Start librarian promoted the activities and encouraged parents and carers to bring their children along. The Sure Start librarian attended the one day training session, and then the idea was for the librarian to work intensively with the musician, thus gaining additional training in how to lead Rhythm & Rhyme workshops.

From the perspective of the Libraries and Heritage Service, the Rhythm & Rhyme project was designed to address some of the current challenges the service is facing. The success of the project in delivering them was discussed at the team meeting with the following observations:

Library Service Aim: To develop further activities with the 0-5's in particular musical activities, to aid with their development of literacy, communication, language and numeracy skills.

All the librarians agreed that Rhythm and Rhyme was an effective new activity for developing the literacy, communication, language and numeracy skills of under 5's. They felt the sessions had proved extremely successful and popular and were creating an impact and demand in the community for similar models in other libraries, schools, nurseries. Other Sure Start workers were

asking for sessions in their area. Many were surprised that very young babies and children had responded so well.

Library Service Aim: To increase the numbers of parents/carers and young children using the service.

Although statistical data was not kept that identified whether the project increased the numbers of parents/carers and young children using the library service, the Sure Start librarians felt it had encouraged more regular usage, rather than increased numbers. They felt that most of the parents/carers who brought children to Rhythm and Rhyme were already users of the library service, participating in the sessions made them attend the library more frequently and borrow more books. A few new joiners had been identified (three had joined at Fairfield).

On a broader perspective, it was also felt the project sent out positive messages to the community about using libraries: "It is ok for children to be noisy in a library"; "It is possible to use music with stories and books"...

Library Service Aim: To develop the role of the new Sure Start librarians

It was agreed that Rhythm and Rhyme had helped develop the role of the Sure Start librarians. At the start of the project, the librarians were all quite new in post, with most of them joining in October 2003. This was felt to present both advantages and disadvantages.

When the programme started the new librarians did not have a wealth of local knowledge on which to draw, when planning the project. This made recruiting participants more difficult in some cases, and librarians could not be sure, for example, that sessions would not clash with other activities.

On the other hand, running the Rhythm & Rhyme project, enabled them to get actively involved in the community very quickly. They had a reason to go out and develop their presence.

There were a number of localised problems encountered when planning the projects, these are dealt with in section 2.9. However, dealing with these issues helped the librarians gather local intelligence that can be used when designing future activities and it was recognised the programme needed to be adapted to circumstances and needs.

Library Service Aim: To develop stronger partnerships with other providers serving this group of the population, particularly with Early Years and Sure Start

Stronger partnerships were felt to be emerging with health visitors, speech therapists and various nursery school providers as a result of Rhythm and Rhyme. In two cases speech therapists regularly attended the sessions and

the librarians were aware of health visitors encouraging parents to bring the children along. Some of these had also attended the general training days at the beginning.

The librarians were also asked to comment on the key aims of the project for the participants:

Project Aim: To introduce children to the joys of music-making

The librarians remarked on the excitement and fascination of the children when the musicians used instruments and puppets. This applied to all the musicians, although they used them in different ways. Chris's box of instruments was popular with the children and Sue's singing voice was effective. Sally used puppets and brought out instruments at the end and Hugh and Chris both used guitars. The visits from Nick and Laura, the trainee workshop leaders, who brought orchestral instruments were felt to have made a very positive contribution to sessions.

Project Aim: To develop parents/carers who have learned to use music when playing with children

The librarians gave anecdotal evidence of ways in which the parents were gaining confidence to join in with the activities and the children were taking what they had learnt home. This reinforced the feedback of the parents and carers themselves outlined in section 2.3.2.

One of the key aims of the project for service providers included leaving a legacy in the form of trained Sure Start Librarians to continue the programme.

Project Aim: 7 Sure Start librarians intensively trained to deliver Rhythm and Rhyme Workshops.

The Sure Start librarians gave mixed responses when asked whether they now felt confident to lead Rhythm and Rhyme workshops themselves. Some were already leading workshops, others felt somewhat unready.

One of the main concerns for the librarians was based on the quality of delivery by the professional musicians and the impact of the instruments played by them.

Most of the Sure Start librarians do not play musical instruments or sing and they felt that it would be difficult to replicate the experience for the children of hearing/seeing the instruments, in later sessions when the musicians would not be present.

However, there was evidence at the focus group meeting that these concerns are being tackled as a group. The Sure Start team members are exploring ways of supporting each other to continue to use music in sessions by:

- "buddying" up and delivering sessions together to build confidence

- inviting guests to sessions who play instruments (parents etc.)
- finding enough funding to bring in the “trainee” workshop leaders

It was also recognised that when the programme is rolled out to new locations in Phase 2 of the project, the Sure Start librarians will not be compared with the musicians, as the participants will not have experienced the musicians’ workshops.

After the focus group session Sarah Watson emailed the Sure Start and all children’s librarians asking them whether they have been using anything they learnt from the musicians in the workshops. The following responses demonstrate a higher level of confidence in practice than the response in the Sure Start focus group meeting:

I now regularly use songs and rhymes as part of my storytime activities. Although I have always used songs even when I was working in South Derbyshire I deliberately make it a much greater part of the session. I use some of the songs that Sally did at Wirksworth. I use the instruments regularly (on a weekly basis at Matlock) in quite a free and unstructured way. It has changed the way I do my sessions in quite subtle ways. I use a hello song where possible and more interaction with props. It has definitely had a huge effect on me.

Thanks
 Sophie
 Children's Librarian/Derbyshire Dales (Wirksworth)

Although we don’t run any R+R sessions in libraries at the moment we are doing them out in the community. Shorter courses of 2 - 5 weeks in different surestart areas. I have also incorporated elements of R+R into library sessions I have done since the summer.

We have had a lot of demand from Alfreton parents to continue the R+R sessions but have not been able to satisfy the demand. Our priority has been instead to roll it out to the other 3 Surestart areas.

The R+R project has been very successful and elements of it now seem to permeate most things I do! I also know the speech and language assistant who did the training too has found it very useful and beneficial. Parents and children still remember and still sing some of the songs even though our course finished 4 months ago.

Jan
 Sure Start Librarian/Amber Valley East

We do not have rhyme activities running at present, however, I will be starting a 'Bounce and Rhyme' group in January 2005. This will run for an hour on the second Tuesday of every month from 10-11am. It is aimed at babies/toddlers up to 2 years old and will include rhymes, singing and musical activity.

This group is being set up in response to queries from parents about rhyme activities in the local area and a demand for this type of activity identified as part of the Rhythm and Rhyme project. I was aware of a demand before Rhythm and Rhyme, but didn't feel that I had the skills or confidence required to deliver this type of activity and as a result of the project feel more able to go ahead with a running a group. I will definitely be using ideas from Rhythm and Rhyme, including songs by Sally and Hugh, melody monkey's music box and exploring different sounds.

Regards, Ackvinder
Surestart Librarian/Chesterfield

Dear Sarah

Have used some of the songs and rhymes from the session extensively in talks to Baby groups at clinics, staff Storytelling training and also in various Storytime sessions. I am planning to start some Baby Rhyme times some time next year as the enthusiasm from the Parents and carers during the talks has been very promising.

I thought the training was excellent

Cheers

Angela

Children's Librarian/High Peak

Have done one session at New Mills Library and one at Fairfield Toddler Group as a result of the R & R training. Catherine Bolton has done one session today at Fairfield Toddler Group, but called it Wriggle and Rhyme - this was a result of her attending the R & R training last February at Buxton Library.

I hope to do sessions within Fairfield and also at New Mills Library during 2005 (Catherine will help with the ones at New Mills as she plays the guitar). These will be a shortened version - probably half an hour - adapted more to rhymes as I do not play the guitar. Due to only working one day a week within SureStart, I will not be able to do them on a weekly basis, but more as an occasional event.

The extra session with Hugh last week went really well at Fairfield. Is there any chance of further sessions at Fairfield with Hugh as part of Rhythm and Rhyme Phase 2, please?

Many thanks

Gwenda

Sure Start Librarian/Fairfield

Starting Rhythm and Rhyme every Friday morning till Christmas at least. May re-name depending on what parents think. Following on as first course finished, so - yes, resulting from training.

Diane

Sure Start Librarian/ East Bolsover

Baby Rhyme time monthly. Use songs and rhymes in storytimes. Started before the R&R project. Have since had special sessions using the instruments at some storytimes. (Not every week as we felt it would use the novelty value). Ones I've helped with at Holmewood have been great.

Jenny

Children's Librarian/North East Derbyshire

To conclude the benefits from the point of view of the library service, as Sarah Watson, Books for Babies Librarian stressed in her feedback, the programme has helped create a positive identity for the library service and the Sure Start Partnership. Sarah felt that it has enhanced the library's image where many people do not always understand what the librarians and Sure Start do.

2.6 Continuing Professional Development for Trainee Musicians

To ensure the legacy of the project continues and in line with Youth Music guidelines, the programme was designed to develop new professional musicians with the skills to deliver Rhythm and Rhyme workshops. The aim was to identify a musician that was already linked to the Derbyshire community, so that the skills would not be removed from the area by the trainee.

Fortunately the Firebird Trust managed to recruit “jobshare” trainees, two local musicians from Derby, who were keen to participate and develop their skills: Laura Zobel and Nick Cutts.

The training programme devised by Firebird Trust can be seen in Appendix 1. Laura and Nick shadowed different musicians and were asked to keep a log of their experience as part of their development. On occasions the trainees had opportunities to lead workshops; one such opportunity coming unexpectedly when one of the workshop leaders was unable to attend.

The programme aimed to help the trainees learn how to structure sessions for groups of young children, with techniques and activities for different situations and ranges of behaviours. When asked in a questionnaire the extent to which this was achieved, the average response was that this had been almost fully achieved.

The trainees also completed a questionnaire at the end of the programme. The following response was received when asked whether the aim of spreading best practice and developing emerging musicians to run workshops was achieved:

I certainly encountered a wide range of workshop leading activities and styles in my observation as a trainee. I found it extremely valuable to be able to watch other workshop leaders working with this age group. It was particularly useful to be able to vary my own experience of it from sitting out to take notes and at other times, lead activities and participate fully. One of the most important lessons was watching the relationship develop between the leader and the parents of the children and realising the supreme importance of this. I have certainly come away from phase one with a wide range of ideas and activities in mind. The quality of the workshop leading was somewhat variable, but this added to the learning experience for me. There were

certainly plenty of examples of good practice and overall I felt that the programme had a positive experience on everyone involved.

*Laura Zobel,
Trainee Musician*

The trainee feedback on the workshop sessions, served to reinforce the complexity of the role the professional musicians in delivering the Rhythm and Rhyme workshops in Phase 1. They recognised that professional musicians need to have the ability both to retain the attention of the children and provide the different levels of training required for the successful transfer of skills within the programme. The trainees' observations on the skills of the musicians recruited by the Firebird Trust, reinforced the importance of using highly experienced workshop leaders and the overall contribution they made to the success of this project.

It was evident from the feedback of the Sure Start librarians, that the presence of the trainee musicians, both in phase 1 of the programme and their availability for phase 2 is reassuring, as they no longer have access to the professional musicians used for Phase 1. Some are planning to book Nick or Laura for forthcoming activities.

2.7 Structure and Management of the Rhythm & Rhyme Project

2.7.1 The Logistics

Those involved with the programme have all commented on efficient organisation of Phase 1 of the project. Logistically it was extremely complex, with so many different sessions at different venues, led by different musicians. Yet, as a result of careful planning and meticulous attention to detail on the part of Sibyl Burgess of the Firebird Trust and Sarah Watson from Books for Babies, everything seemed to run smoothly where practical arrangements and communication were concerned.

The four musicians and trainees all rated the support of the Firebird Trust and the Library Service as good or excellent, commenting on how well everything was organised, given the complexities.

2.7.2 Planning the project

The project was not only complicated logistically, but also in terms of its aims. In order to achieve the desired legacy, the project was designed to work at a

number of different levels: to provide musical experiences for under 5s, to teach parents and carers to use music, to train a broad range of childcare professionals to use music in their activities (in particular, intensive training for seven Sure Start Librarians), as well as to provide continuing professional development for a trainee musician (which became two trainee musicians).

From the evidence and feedback provided earlier in the report, the project undoubtedly achieved all the above aims. As with any project, though, there is the power of hindsight and some feedback from the musicians and trainee musicians, in particular, provides some food for thought for further development of the project.

A planning day for the musicians was held prior to the project and this was felt to have been a critical part of the process. When asked whether the programme achieved its aims, one of the musicians felt that more clarification was needed at the planning stage about whether the workshops were aimed at providing activities for children, for parents or for librarians to take things away from. He recognised that in theory it was all three, but felt it to be quite demanding for a workshop leader to be operating at all three levels. The musician felt the expectations of this complex role could have been clarified more at the outset. There was also some surprise expressed at the young age of the participants (i.e. that most were under three years and many were babies).

Whilst the organisers of the planning day felt that that the ages of the target audience had been conveyed and the roles had been discussed, in retrospect they now feel that these issues may have become slightly submerged in the general activities of the day and in future would require more focus.

One of the four musicians was unable to attend the initial planning session and it became clear in the feedback that, as a result, the aims and objectives did not fully permeate that particular workshop leader's work. Both he and the Sure Start librarians in the locations where he was based, were not fully aware of the musician's training role. More could have been made of the opportunities, had this been clarified.

With regard to the four large-scale training events at the beginning of the project, it is evident that some of the participants were not sure what to expect and in some cases the musicians were slightly stretched by the need to find material for such young babies and toddlers. Both would have benefited by a little more information at the outset about their audiences and those attending.

In most cases the musician only met the Sure Start librarian properly (excluding their presence at the large training event) at the first workshop at their venue. It may have been helpful if the musicians and Sure Start librarians had also met prior to the commencement of the workshop series. Some form of learning programme could have been devised, in the way it was for the "trainees" and the

musician could have helped the librarian develop their strengths and weaknesses, possibly even supporting them to lead on a few of the activities.

With hindsight it is evident that all participants would have benefited from more clarity at the beginning about their roles and the project aims and objectives. This is already being fed into phase 2 of the project and a planning meeting and training session is being held in January 2004. All the Sure Start librarians will be present, together with the musicians and trainees. This should serve to pick up on the weaknesses mentioned above.

The examples have highlighted the importance of detailed planning and in particular, of involving and communicating with people at all levels of the food chain from the beginning.

2.7.3 Resources

As part of the cascading effect of the project and its legacy, two key resources were planned for the programme: a CD for the participants and the wider distribution of the Melody Monkey's Marvellous Music Box.

2.7.3.1 CD for participants

As part of the project plan all children who participated in the workshop were to receive a CD at the end of the series to help them continue their musical play. CD's of a previous "First Steps" project were distributed and comments were received that they were enjoyable. However, feedback from parents, librarians and one of the musicians confirmed that these would have been more useful if the actual songs/activities used in the workshops had been recorded to help continuity. As a suggestion, this could be built into the design of a future project or Phase 2, subject to budget.

2.7.3.2 Melody Monkey's Marvellous Music Box

The Melody Monkey's Marvellous Music Box is a portable set of colourful percussion instruments and puppets designed for use with young children. The project has purchased 18 boxes to use in different Derbyshire Districts and the training aimed to cover use of these boxes.

Feedback on the boxes and adequacy of the training has been mixed. The main explanation is that the Box was designed by one of the four workshop musicians. The musician concerned used it regularly and to good effect, both in the larger training session and in the workshop series, thus passing on skills and tips for the librarians. The other three musicians used it less, due to lack of familiarity with it. This could have been alleviated through more training on using it at different stages in the programme, possibly commencing with a training day involving the other three musicians and the Sure Start librarians at the very beginning.

Other general feedback on the Melody Monkey's Marvellous Music Box from the librarians included:

- There were not enough instruments for bigger groups and on occasions two boxes were put together.
- Some instruments were not "child-friendly" for the very young children
- One musician used his own box, which was felt to be more interesting because it contained more robust instruments.

One of the trainees commented that:

"Parents were not really introduced to the variety of things in the box, the box was used as a tool by the some of the workshop leaders, but parents may have got the impression it was just for the 'professionals' to use and not something they could use themselves. Particularly the stories were not introduced."

Perhaps some extended use of the Melody Monkey's Music Box could be built into Phase 2.

2.9 Different Experiences at Different Venues

So far the evaluation report has focussed on the project as a whole and the combined experiences and results.

It is worthwhile briefly considering some of the factors that contributed to the different outcomes at different venues. This is particularly useful for future phases of this project and for replicating the Rhythm and Rhyme model elsewhere.

The feedback from all involved demonstrates a variety of experiences and outcomes. With four different musicians working in with different participants in different locations, no amount of planning and preparation would create completely uniform experiences and to all intents and purposes such a project with rigid parameters would be undesirable. (The musicians' statements in Appendix 2 demonstrate the musician's own plans and interpretation of the brief).

An evaluation of the different experiences at different locations has shown that it was important for the musicians and project to have the freedom to adapt the programme where necessary to meet local requirements. Evidence gathered from the different workshop series has shown that, on the whole this was done with considerable success and the project aims were still achieved.

However, some conclusions for future planning can be drawn by briefly considering some of the key examples of different circumstances:

- **Recruiting participants.**

In some areas there were ready made networks to tap into at the libraries or in the community, or families were used to similar provision. In other areas this was not the case and with the Sure Start librarians being new in post recruitment proved slightly more difficult. A particular concern in some areas was recruiting Sure Start residents.

However, the librarians proved very resourceful. One leafleted all Sure Start residents door-to-door. Another phoned around childminders and so on. In Buxton, where the distance of the venue from the residential area proved a problem, the librarian arranged transport so participants could attend.

The workshops that probably struggled the most to achieve target participants were the two that commenced first. There was not such a long lead-in time to promote the events, at one the Sure Start librarian was new and part-time and the musician had not been present at the initial planning session. This resulted in neither the librarian, nor the musician being quite so versed in the structure and aims of the programme, as those working in other locations. In addition, these workshops were in some of the most underprivileged areas of the region and one of the venues was a church-hall, which did not provide the same comfort-factor as the library settings.

Perhaps the most successful venues in terms of numbers were those where the library was well established, the Sure Start librarian was full-time and the musician had been central to the planning.

Nevertheless, the aim of the programme is not purely to work where the conditions are easy, and there was no circumstance where the feedback from a particular venue did not justify the project taking place. Indeed, the success achieved under more difficult circumstances can be equally or more valuable.

- **Regularity of attendance/Clashes with other events**

In some districts participants attended week after week, in others there was a more frequent turnover of participants. A variety of reasons were identified, from the structure of the workshops to the venue, (location, comfort, etc.), the time of day and the range of other activities on offer in the local area for parents/carers to choose from.

- **Different “accompanying adults”**

The adults that accompanied the children to workshops could affect the dynamics of the session. In most cases children were brought to workshops by their parents (invariably mums). However, at Buxton a nursery came for the first few weeks and brought different children each week with nursery nurses, which was making continuity difficult fo

for the musician. In Swadlincote the group mainly consisted of childminders bringing the children they were caring for that day.

- **Different approaches to delivering the workshop**

Understandably, the different musicians had different skills and techniques. This contributed to the breadth and quality of the overall programme. However, some Sure Start librarians felt they would have liked more uniformity of experience, or at least to have experienced the approaches of the different musicians and had a chance to learn from each of them. (Although the logistical complications and implications for continuity were recognised).

An example of this was the Melody Monkey's Marvellous Music Box, already covered in section 2.7.3.

- **Different levels of previous exposure to music.**

From the responses to the participant and musician feedback questionnaires it was possible to identify some distinctions between districts where previous exposure to musical influences were concerned. It was noticeable, for example, that in Wirksworth, where there is a strong creative community (Wirksworth is known for the high number of artists living there and the annual month-long festival is well-known regionally), parents and carers were much more explicit about the musical and educational impact they anticipated for their children, by bringing them to Rhythm and Rhyme. In districts where regular creative experiences are less available, the responses revolved more frequently around the opportunity afforded to socialise, learn songs, and have fun, when asked about their expectations of the workshops. This required the musician to be flexible and adapt to local circumstances and collective experience.

- **Presence of a local Sure Start librarian**

Only seven of the eight districts where the workshop series' were held had a Sure Start librarian based there to co-ordinate the programme, recruit participants and build their own confidence to use music in future activities. The district that did not have a Sure Start librarian was Wirksworth. A local children's librarian volunteered to open the library and came along with her children in her own time, but Sally Goldsmith, the musician who worked in Wirksworth, expressed concern about how the work would continue and a legacy be left. However, in this case there is already evidence that the Wirksworth Children's librarian is building what she has learnt into her work (see Sophie's quote and those of other children's librarians in section 2.5)

The main conclusions to be drawn from the analysis of different local circumstances are:

- Local intelligence is an important factor when planning the project, in particular the programme and timetable.
- The programme needs to be well-planned but flexible enough to be adapted to suit local needs.
- Clarity of the intended project outcomes are required at all level of the “food chain”, thus the programme can be adapted to the local environment, without losing sight of the aims and objectives.
- As long a lead-in time as possible is required for marketing the events.
- If the programme is built into an existing “infrastructure”, such as the Sure Start network, it is more likely the legacy will be left and the experience can be built upon.
- Where there is not a Sure Start librarian, it is necessary for someone else locally to feel “ownership” and have the opportunity to take the experience forward in their work, such as a local children’s librarian.

3. Conclusions

Phase 1 of the Derbyshire Rhythm & Rhyme project has undoubtedly achieved its key aim of having an impact on the community it sought to affect.

There were no circumstances encountered during the course of the evaluation where the experience of participating in Rhythm & Rhyme did not have a positive impact on the participant. This includes participating children and their parents/carers, the childcare professionals attending the main training, the Sure Start librarians undergoing intensive training, the trainee musicians and the musicians delivering the workshops themselves.

It became clear through the evaluation that there have been a number of contributory factors that have combined to achieve such a successful phase 1 of the project, namely the quality and calibre of the professional musicians, the wealth of experience the Firebird Trust was able to bring into the recruitment and planning of the programme and the meticulous, local support of Sarah Watson from Books for Babies.

The aim to leave a legacy within the community at a range of different levels has undoubtedly been achieved. There is evidence that demand for further opportunities of this kind has been created (many other Sure Start areas, libraries and parents/carers are asking for Rhythm and Rhyme) and a pool of professionals capable of delivering such activities is emerging and growing in the county.

With regard to statistical targets the project plan gave combined targets for phases 1 & 2, so it is not possible at this stage to say that the project has not achieved certain targets. However, in many cases 50% of the target has not yet been achieved and some thought should be given for phase 2 as to whether it is possible to achieve the desired target, or whether some have been unrealistic.

Phase 2 is about to commence and is designed to build upon the experiences of Phase 1. Before the programme is rolled out, a further training day with the musicians and Sure Start librarians has been planned.

Throughout the evaluation process, it is fair to say there been no criticism of any of the key elements of the programme. The process of reflecting on experiences has brought forward a number of suggestions, both for the future development of this project, and for the Rhythm and Rhyme model if it is replicated in other areas.

4. Recommendations

It is evident from the evaluation in section 2, that Phase 1 of the project has been highly successful in meeting its overall aims and objectives and has made a significant and lasting difference to the communities it has sought to affect.

The following recommendations serve as suggestions for any future delivery of the Rhythm and Rhyme model and for Phase 2 of this project.

- **Further communication of project aims, roles and responsibilities to all concerned.**

Planning meetings were held prior to this project, but evidence has shown that there can almost never be too much preparation/planning, especially with such a complex project.

In any future Rhythm and Rhyme project, it is recommended that all musicians involved in the delivery of workshops should take part in the preparation day and their training role should be fully clarified (i.e. that the musicians are not simply providing activity for the children, but also training the parents/carers and Sure Start librarians how to continue the activity).

- **Further sharing of local information**

Local information could be more effectively conveyed to the musicians, prior to them starting the workshop series. Some musicians did not initially anticipate working with such young babies/toddlers and this required the gathering of more material.

- **A more structured approach to training the Sure Start librarians**

In order to ensure the Sure Start librarians gain full benefit from working alongside the professional musicians, they could be involved in a planning day prior to the start of the programme, at which the musicians are also present and the aims and roles are explored. This would also afford an opportunity to assess any anticipated local anomalies that may need to be addressed. One musician would have liked more clarity about what opportunities there were for the Sure Start librarians to use what they were learning in the future, in order to tailor more activities towards their needs.

The musicians and Sure Start librarian could also prepare a training plan that would identify any skills they already have or areas they would like to develop. Opportunities could then be built into the programme for the librarian to have a more “hands on” role and try out some techniques with the musician there as a “professional friend”. It was suggested that by about session 5 & 6 they could have been planning the sessions together with the musician gradually shifting into a support role.

A more structured and comprehensive training day has now been built into the commencement of Phase 2 (in January 2005)

- **More training on the Melody Monkey's Marvellous Music Box**

These are now an invaluable asset for continuing the legacy of the project in the community. Further training and support could be given to those who are likely to be able to use the boxes purchased for the library service. Perhaps this could be built into Phase 2.

- **A tailor-made CD of the actual workshop programme**

Many parents and the librarians said they would have liked something to take away so they could remember the songs to repeat with the children. A CD recorded at a previous Rhythm and Rhyme was distributed to all participants and whilst it was fun and enjoyable, it was felt by many not to have enough relevance for them. It would be helpful if the CD had captured exactly the same material as the musicians were using in the workshops, so that children and parents could have gone straight home and used them.

- **Quantitative targets**

A review of the targets for phase 2 is recommended, in particular in the light of the concerns of the Sure Start librarians that some data is unrealistic to collect and where phase 1 has achieved less than 50% of the projected targets. It may be possible to agree more realistic targets in some cases, or to identify new and more appropriate ones now more is known about the reality of delivering Rhythm and Rhyme.

5. Appendices

5.1 Appendix 1: Trainees' Job Description

THE FIREBIRD TRUST
Rhythm and Rhyme
First Steps programme : Derbyshire County Council

Trainees' Job Description

The post of trainee was built into the successful application to Youth Music for this First Steps programme. In order to spread best practice as widely as possible, the contract will be job-shared between two artists who work for the same organisation. Nick Cutts and Lorna Zobel are young musicians who work for the Derbyshire-based music organisation Opus. They are both instrumentalists and will have the opportunity to use their instrumental skills as part of this programme. Observation and critical reflection will be at the heart of this training programme.

Workplan

The trainees will be attached to Phase 1 of the Rhythm and Rhyme First Steps programme in three areas:

a) Training sessions for librarians

Nick Cutts will observe and work with Sally Goldsmith and Sue Hollingworth at Ilkeston Library on February 16th

Laura Zobel will observe and work with Hugh Nankivell and Sue Hollingworth at Swadlincote on March 29

b) Workshop sessions

Nick Cutts

12 May - Workshop 1 - Wirksworth/Alfreton - Sally

18 May - Workshop 2 - Ilkeston/Swadlincote - Chris (with Laura)

26 May - Workshop 3 - Wirksworth/Alfreton - Sally

16 June - Workshop 4 - Wirksworth/Alfreton - Sally

7 July - Workshop 5 - Wirksworth/Alfreton - Sally (with Laura)

14 July - Workshop 6 - Wirksworth/Alfreton - Sally

15 September - Workshop 7 - Holmewood/Shirebrook - Sue

22 September - Workshop 8 - Buxton/Chesterfield - Hugh (with Laura)

13 October - Workshop 9 - Holmewood/Shirebrook - Sue (with Laura)

Laura Zobel

29 March - Training Day - Swadlincote

20 April - Workshop 1 - Ilkeston/Swadlincote - Chris

4 May - Workshop 2 - Ilkeston/Swadlincote - Chris

18 May - Workshop 3 - Ilkeston/Swadlincote - Chris (with Nick)

8 June - Workshop 4 - Ilkeston/Swadlincote - Chris

15 June - Workshop 5 - Ilkeston/Swadlincote - Chris

7 July - Workshop 6 - Wirksworth/Alfreton - Sally (with Nick)

22 September - Workshop 7 - Buxton/Chesterfield - Hugh (with Nick)

29 September - Workshop 8 - Buxton/Chesterfield - Hugh

13 October - Workshop 9 - Holmewood/Shirebrook - Sue (with Nick)

c) Evaluation

The trainees will take part in the monitoring and evaluation of Phase 1 of Rhythm and Rhyme by

- keeping a personal learning log/reflective notes
- completing questionnaires as requested by the evaluator
- taking part in interviews as requested by the evaluator

Through a process of observation, note-taking, personal reflection and discussions the following skills will be developed:

- learn how to begin and end a session
- encourage a creative interaction between small children and their parents
- learn age appropriate techniques
- use age appropriate language/voice
- discover ways of managing a group of young children
- managing a range of behaviours from high spirits to shyness
- managing short concentration spans
- learn how to manage the integration of music and movement with small children
- learn how to use the Melody Monkey Music Box
- observe and put into practice a range of clapping, action songs and finger movement
- observe and put into practice singing, devising songs and playing instruments
- be exposed to a wide range of material for music-making with young children; selecting and using material of appropriate quality

Trainee support

- Trainees will receive a copy of the programme's artistic plan, with an indication of how each artist will approach his/her workshop sessions

- Artists and trainees will have a discussion at the end of each session which will be an opportunity for the trainees to highlight any aspect of the session on which they need clarification
- The Director of the Firebird Trust will keep in regular contact with the trainees to ensure that their training needs are being met in a stimulating and creative way
- The Director of the Firebird Trust will attend regular sessions, commencing with the training sessions for librarians, to ensure that the trainee workshop leaders are adequately supported on a personal level and to monitor progress

Child protection

Both trainees have Enhanced Disclosure; they will be given a copy of the Firebird Trust's Child and Worker Protection Policy.

Appendix 2: ARTISTIC PLAN: Musicians' statements

**FIREBIRD TRUST
RHYTHM and RHYME
Derbyshire County Council's First Steps programme
funded by Youth Music**

ARTISTIC PLAN: Musicians' statements

Sally Goldsmith

For Sally's training sessions on 16th and 27th February, she would like to:

- look at how to manage and structure a session - beginnings, endings, timings, variety, making sure you keep focus, manage instruments and props etc.
- looking at songs as "frameworks" within which things happen - saying hello, naming, choosing, drama, actions, games, using puppets etc
- looking at how these can encourage self esteem and social skills – turn-taking, listening, respect for others, celebrating the individual, play, imagination
- making up our own "framework" songs for different situations and themes

In her sessions with children and parents Sally will use a variety of such songs which include opportunities to "put yourself into the song." She would hope to encourage staff and parents to make up or adapt their own songs.

Hugh Nankivell

Hugh's plan is to do a set of games and songs that already exist, but also to mix this up with creating new things (songs, pieces, musically interpreting shapes/pictures) etc. The set of things that Hugh will do will include

- copying games, like 'Crocodile snap', 'switch', 'Echo-man'
- games and songs with names
- rhyming games
- body songs 'Tony Chestnut', 'Che che kule'
- lullabies 'Little Fishes'

Hugh will bring along some of the percussion that he uses (probably enough for about ten people) and also guitar and accordion.

Chris Foster

Chris will be basing his work round the music box he has built. It incorporates tubular bells, a giant xylophone, a stringed zither-type instrument, a giant thumb piano, whistle,

claves, saucepan lids, castanets, bubble wrap and any other suitable material that comes to hand. 'When the children are left to their own devices, just playing with the building blocks of music, with active but subtle interventions, some very interesting things happen'. Chris is a painter as well as a musician and has been trying to find a musical equivalent of the playgroup painting process that leads to all those pictures on parents' fridge doors.

Sessions will include:

- singing together (some well-known rhymes and songs as well as learning some new ones)
- action songs and rhythm games for children and grown-ups and exploring the world of sounds
- using the Box of Sounds, children will be able to explore all kinds of sounds – blowing, bashing, plucking, tapping and scraping, using all sorts of materials to make their own music

Sue Hollingworth

The basis for much of Sue's work is going to the Melody Monkey Box which she helped to design and which is proving to be so popular with library staff. Sue will

- explore ways of using the box by doing practically some of the songs and activities which are in it
- exploring why puppets are so useful as a teaching aid
- look at ways of singing with young children and help them to find their singing voice and identify different voices (whispering, speaking, singing etc)
- help children find the pulse in a song, move to it (faster/slower etc)
- explore why songs can help language development

Sue has a fund of knowledge and information about different resources which are available for work with young children and will bring this knowledge to the sessions. She particularly wants to look at Songs and Rhymes for Early Years (*Lucinda Geoghan* pub. National Youth Choir of Scotland) and one for babies (same author/publisher) called Songs and Rhymes for Tiny Tots. Both have CDs attached and will be a useful resource for Derbyshire libraries to have. Sue will be introducing these during her sessions.

**Evaluation report by
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