



Generations
Working
Together



PLAY AND STORYTELLING

CONNECTING GENERATIONS THE INTERGENERATIONAL WAY

Supporting practitioners to develop intergenerational relationships through the rich golden strands of play and storytelling.



“ We are all born connected and we remain connected to kith and kin through storytelling, watching, modelling, copying and practicing through our play, sharing who we are and what we think and feel. This never ends throughout life - they are the golden strands that make sense of our world, our relationships and our experiences.”



PLAY AND STORYTELLING

CONNECTING GENERATIONS THE INTERGENERATIONAL WAY

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Grateful thanks to the organisations for their enthusiasm and contributions along with permission to use photographs in the development of this toolkit.

Craigie House Care Home
Shortlees Primary School
The Citadel Youth Centre
First Step Community Project
Newton House & Mearns Lunch Club
MACS out of School Care
Crosslet Care Home
Braehead Primary School & ELCC
Westfield Care Home

Jaybees Childcare
Pear Tree Nursery
Haddington Care Home
Scottish Book Trust
East Lothian Library Service
Orchard Forest School
Torbay Childminders & Over 50s group
Apples and Honey, Nightingale
Nightingale House

Connecting Generations at Community School of Auchterarder
The Scottish Government
Newbyes Nursery and Newbyres Care Home
Care Inspectorate
St. Joseph's Secondary School
Shortlees Early Childhood Centre
Riccarton Nursery
Citadel Youth Centre
Young People at the Heart (Black Isle)



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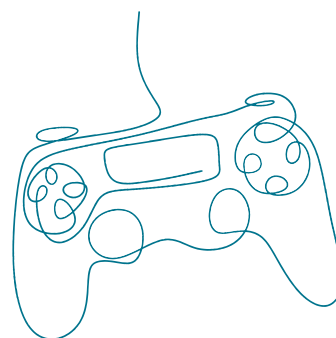
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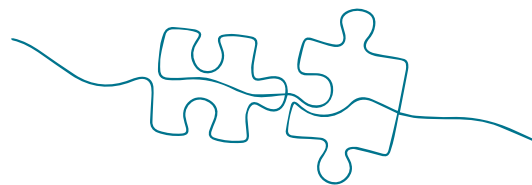




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FOREWORD

by the Minister for Equalities and Older People



Christina McKelvie, MSP

Minister for Older People and Equalities,
Scottish Government

Older people have told us they want action to ensure they have access to activity that brings different generations together as well as opportunities to remain actively engaged with, and involved in, their communities.

This Toolkit is a wonderful idea to support intergenerational development, confidence in practitioners and inspire best practice, as play and storytelling are intrinsic to personal and community development. These are the natural ways we interconnect, share, and learn about each other, so I support the view of play and storytelling as the golden threads which bring different generations together to share old and new skills, encourage understanding and appreciation of each other and enrich relationships.

I look forward to seeing this excellent resource being used throughout Scotland.

Christina McKelvie



OUR BACK STORY

Generations Working Together (GWT) is the nationally recognised centre of excellence supporting the development and integration of intergenerational work across Scotland. GWT is calling for the country to become an intergenerational nation to support the wellbeing of individuals and society as a whole. GWT links with key organisations, both in the UK and internationally, to share research and examples of intergenerational approaches whilst raising the profile of the extensive benefits.

Play Scotland is the national organisation supporting Children's Right to Play and providing expertise, education and information, in understanding and promoting the benefits and need for play in the life of every child. Play Scotland links with Play England, Play Wales and Play Northern Ireland to raise the profile of play, develop and share excellent resources and support the embedding of play in our communities, schools and organisations.

Both organisations offer free memberships and resources and have established local, national and international networks which support champions to advocate and share information, insight and resources to wider communities.

GWT and Play Scotland understand that play and story are intrinsically connected; one supports the other and both support the individual, recognising that play and storytelling are a natural but key part of life, lasting 'from cradle to grave' with limitless opportunities to develop, as both cover every aspect of life. We tell stories through play, just as we use all facets of play and playing to practice and experiment with all that we see, hear and experience.

GWT and Play Scotland created a new partnership during the Summer of Play 2021 which was supported and funded by the Scottish Government. Our project, 'Get into Summer' looked to pilot intergenerational play and storytelling involving children's settings and care homes.

Our shared aim was to help connect and reconnect young children and older adults, meaningfully in creative and enjoyable ways through sharing the 'magic' of play and stories together. The goal was to reduce the magnified feelings of isolation and separation experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic. The legacy from this pilot project and wider experiences supported the development of an online event held in October 2021 and the toolkit which looks to support understanding of how to develop a project or work with the versatile mediums of play and story, but also to build confidence within practitioners to enjoy connecting different generations using these **Golden Threads**.

We hope you find it useful and enjoyable!

Jenny, Loreen & Lorraine

'Play and story are the golden threads that run through the entire lifespan, from pre-birth to earning our wings.'

OUR PURPOSE

Our purpose is to share the use of play and storytelling as a means of powerfully connecting and building intergenerational relationships, recognising play and story as the golden threads which run through entire lifespans.



Young and old enjoy each other's company and feel the benefits of sharing activities, chatting together and spending time together in ways which are part of our human make up. Play and storytelling are central to this 'human make up'.

Playing together offers safe and inclusive opportunities to develop understanding, knowledge and skills, with shared enjoyment. It fosters a sense of wellbeing and is available to all. We believe that:

- we can build positive experiences through being innovative and creative, because play is flexible and highly adaptable;
- story helps to strengthen our understanding of each other, our world and build strong connections across the generations in a way that is accessible for all;
- our children and young people through to the oldest and most vulnerable in our society are positively impacted by play and story connecting them in ways which are rich and diverse – everyone deserves, needs and fun and has the right to positive experiences;
- our pilot intergenerational project could help build further understanding, encouragement and practical approaches to meaningful activities for young children and older people, therefore inspiring more intergenerational connections, even within a pandemic. Through the pilot project we could explore and support development of remote connections as well as face-to-face through universal and key mediums of play and story. We could add to the learning through reaching out to other organisations and creating a toolkit to share the learning.

INTERGENERATIONAL STEPS

How to get started and key resources to help you proceed with confidence

What is intergenerational learning?

Intergenerational learning is the way that people of all ages can learn together and from each other. It is an important part of Lifelong Learning, where the generations work together to gain skills, values, and knowledge. Beyond the transfer of knowledge, it fosters reciprocal learning relationships between different generations and helps develop social capital and social cohesion in our ageing societies.

Intergenerational practice aims to bring people from different generations together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities promoting greater generational consciousness, understanding and respect between generations by challenging ageism and stereotypes, contributing to building more cohesive communities.

A project is not simply intergenerational because a group of children and older people are brought together. It is intergenerational, however, if the facilitation of relationships between these generations is a key ingredient in the planning and setting of the outcomes for the project. The generations need to connect and become interwoven with each other, developing friendships or any other type of relationship (such as playmates, care, mentoring, and so on).

All these things should be considered when planning an intergenerational project or programme.

Why do we need an intergenerational approach to play?

Children's play changes when it is offered in an intergenerational context. Research shows that children display higher levels of language and problem-solving skills when they have lots of contact with adults. Intergenerational play also shifts play from being a competitive activity to a more playful one. (Source: [maketime2play](#))

According to the National Institute for Play (NIP) play is, 'the gateway to vitality for adults, it generates optimism, seeks out novelty, makes perseverance fun and leads to mastery. Additionally, it gives the immune system a bounce, fosters empathy and promotes a sense of belonging and community. Each of these by products are indices of personal health, and their shortage predicts impending health problems and personal fragility. It also enhances relationships. ***Intergenerational play benefits us all.***



Pathway to developing an intergenerational partnership:

1. Find someone in your community that has the same vision as you and arrange your first meeting. Invite everyone that will be involved, whether it is getting permission to use a venue, management to talk about risk assessment and processes, activity leads and those who will potentially be delivering the sessions, funders etc.
2. Consult with everyone in your community who may have a potential interest in developing, supporting, or participating in your intergenerational project and get their feedback about your initial idea. Good intergenerational practice responds to a need in the community rather than one group being 'done to' by another and should be inclusive of all groups in society. Generations should participate as equals rather than passive observers.
3. Hold regular meetings with partners as you map out what your project will look like. Have conversations about who will do what, where and when will the sessions happen, who is going to pay, what resources (furniture and specific activity supplies) will be needed, how many staff will support the sessions, which generational groups you would like to work with and so on.
4. Working in partnership, set out the aims, objectives, and outcomes that you are looking for. This may need to include additional objectives from your funding body if you are in receipt of funding. Put everything in writing so that there are clear expectations and responsibilities; this will prevent any potential misunderstandings.
5. With the shape of your project decided, approach the groups that you would like to work with and meet with them and their parents/families to share what you would like to do. Discuss potential challenges and what you plans are to reduce or overcome them. Ask for their feedback and thoughts.
6. As part of your planning and preparation, appropriate policies and procedures should be drawn up, not only to safeguard potentially vulnerable groups but also to share information, aims and outcomes with participants and partners. Ensure you cover important guidelines such as confidentiality, hygiene, well-being, and behaviour.
7. Prior to the intergenerational project starting, sessions should be held initially as single aged groups so that participants can be supported to think about and challenge ageism, misconceptions, and stereotypes.
8. Once these initial sessions are completed the groups can then meet. Thought will have to be given to the sessions themselves i.e., timing, frequency, group size (an equal number of each group works best), the age and abilities of participants and what level the activity will be pitched at.
9. Plan activities that will work well for both groups and enable everyone to be successful; this will depend on the abilities within each group and their interests. Talk to people and find out what they are interested in and remember that activities should be fun and enjoyable. Aim for a range of activities that are not all table or craft based – not everyone likes to sit and make things! Successful activities can also include cooking, treasure hunts, community gardening, choirs, drama, music, physical exercise, reminiscence and sensory – the list is endless.

10. The important thing to remember with intergenerational learning is that whilst we want the group activity to be successful, it is a means to an end. The purpose behind bringing generations together is to **support people to build relationships and learn from each other in a mutually beneficial way**, so that they learn together. This may be the learning of new skills or the retention of existing skills. The process is more important than the outcome and the focus for the group should be the relational aspect not a finished product.
11. Activity sessions will need someone to facilitate them along with additional staff to support the activity process itself. The role of the activity lead is to encourage conversation and support the participants in finding out about each other, pointing out similarities and differences between people with the aim of enabling everyone to engage together, developing co-operative and meaningful friendships.
12. Intergenerational learning is a multi-layered approach and is more than simply bringing people of different ages together. Effective planning, monitoring and evaluation should be discussed during the initial development stage and should involve the partners, stakeholders and participants; monitoring and evaluation should involve everyone. Without monitoring and evaluation, it may be hard to shape and develop the project to achieve the outcomes that are hoped for. People often feel daunted by the idea of evaluation, yet it can often be very simple to embed, playful in nature and easy to carry out; be creative!
13. Raising knowledge and confidence around what intergenerational work actually is and what constitutes best practice with all involved including partners, staff, volunteers, participants and their family members is equally as important. Getting everyone on board will help support the project to grow in strength building sustainability and delivering more lasting impact for all involved.



Generations Working Together offer a number of free online modules including '[Measuring the Impact of Intergenerational projects](#)' which can help with this process.

SAFE PRACTICE GUIDE

‘Don’t Leave Home Without’

Some aspects of intergenerational work are interchangeable and may be engaged with in different ways, at different times, however, these are the FUNdamentals and should be adhered to. This section was initially devised for ‘Play is OUR way’ pilot pairings as a ‘Good Practice Document’ however, reviews gathered resulted in an updated version which included the recommendation that you ‘don’t leave home without it’.

A Guide to Safe Practice for Intergenerational Play and Storytelling.

This guide can be viewed as a set of prompts rather than a definitive list – as each organisation will have a policy / procedure for managing risk, Covid-19 or other health-related issues and for outings and outdoor activities. Not all of these will have a particular focus on intergenerational activities and meetings of course and probably none would have been written (in-house) around intergenerational connections during a pandemic. However, this is not a barrier, as prompts or suggestions to be considered at this stage can continue to be relevant and build on your existing good practice.

The Generations Working Together ‘[Intergenerational Guide in Early Learning and Childcare](#)’ is a wonderful place to start, as this was written for bringing young children and older adults together.

Also highly recommended is GWT’s FREE [e-learning course](#), ‘Planning your intergenerational project’ which is packed full of advice, ideas and best practice. This, and further e-courses, can be accessed via the GWT website.

KEY POINTS

Space Sharing. When considering sharing a space it is good to organise an initial visit, ideally with members of staff from each setting who will know their cohorts well, assessing the space together and consider how the space can work best for all.

Space and environment can be a challenge indoors and outdoors, so it is worth careful thought around the grouping and proximity as well as size and suitability of furniture (sturdy/ stable, moveable, appropriate size) yet also ensure that hearing is not unduly impaired and eye contact is still possible. These are all things to think through and experiment with, to find best options both at beginning and throughout.

If outdoors, normal procedures and risk balance assessments apply to moving from indoors to the outdoors area for setting – or a walk / travel to new open destination, so this can be interwoven into planning and co-ordinating times for a joint session. How best can [preparation](#) for the visit support the activities / interactions?

TOP TIP

This could even be done by one member of staff doing a live Facetime / WhatsApp call etc with the other staff member. A virtual tour (filming the space) could also be done with older and younger participants, to gather their thoughts re what could work best.

To get you started - some questions to consider for your project:

- Will the space be accessed by both older and young participants at the same time?
- Could the space also be accessed separately so participating organisations in project could use the space at different times, with filming and photographs or live connections also used to link and develop interactions?
- Can the space be overlooked / seen from windows (of the setting) for friends to engage / see even if they cannot be in the space itself?
- Is there / could there be access to a suitable toilet area if required by visiting group?
- Is the area conducive to play and sharing stories? What adaptations could improve this?

PLANNING FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITY EXEMPLAR:

- Who will be designated person to look over and check the area pre-and post-visit – with safety for all an ongoing consideration and suitability for the groups involved. Consider environment and determine if there is suitable shelter? Is extra seating required? What adjustments are required to ensure comfort and accessibility alongside fun and set activity.
- Can you access hand sanitiser or running water if in a public or private area?
- Do you have access or suitable disposal route/receptacle for used tissues etc.
- What preparation for the two groups can you do BEFORE they meet in person or online? You could use an icebreaker such as getting to know me and you.
- Where can participants of different abilities / physical health comfortably sit?
- How long is the session overall, remember to allow for getting to and from location and then plan what kind of activities could be offered to the participants?
- What loose parts are available to support the play and the interactions? What particular 'props and provocations' would be helpful and aide the interactions / shared experiences?
- Would the space need to be cleared and reset for each visit or left in place? If something does need stored where could this be and who could access them prior to session? Could this be a participant, or two, who may take or share responsibility for set up? (Asset-based approach).
- Where and how can messages be left for each other at different times? e.g. a board to chalk on or Perspex/glass and window paints or perhaps a child-friendly letter box where pictures and messages could be posted when out and about with family, on way to school or nursery walks etc.
- Determine who the first aiders will be for each group. Clarify responsibilities in line with policy and procedures for each group / setting.

Perfection will not be possible but do monitor and consider how the interactions are facilitated and how they evolve as part of an ongoing project. ***You probably will want to adapt and make some changes as you progress.***

What other protocols are required by the organisation staff regarding the setting for visits? Ensure both settings know these. During the pandemic these may have included masks, forehead thermometers and numbers permitted in area or route to designated play zone, but what other things could be required, e.g. – fire register, first aider, consent forms?

Ensure families are updated and that all measures are taken around **permissions, GDPR and best practice** if meeting online*, including taking photographs or videos / recordings.

Staff ratios need to be a part of planning the space also, so consider how the practitioners can engage and support, without overpowering the space, but still ensure all health and safety requirements are met. The focus is on the relationships of the children / young people and older participants throughout, though all should experience interactions.

Our recommendation would be to **start small** and **build** on successes as more opportunities become possible. Consider sustainability and remember that the relationships are the core of the experience for it to be meaningful, the activity is simply a tool to bring people together. The objective is not to have all or most of the children / young people and older adults involved right away. Small groups also give great options for adapting to suit different personalities, abilities and interests.

TOP TIP

Think about who (in your group) may most benefit from the connection between generations, rather than who is easiest to take to the other setting – then the advantage of starting with smaller numbers becomes a real asset to help establish relationships as more time and more support is available to meet needs. This could mean a 1:1 session to start with.

Volunteers and Disclosure. Volunteers are a wonderful asset in intergenerational work. Perhaps you could have some volunteer support, especially for outdoors connections. Family or interested individual, perhaps someone interested in career change or on maternity leave or a previous parent – whatever your options available are, the best chance of success is through adopting best practice. Also consider student placements; students could help support the time required for planning and gain experience through being involved in the sessions.

For regular volunteers, best practice also recommends a **PVG check**. This can be done free of charge for volunteers normally, so check how best to do this before starting, more can be found out from Volunteer Scotland. A volunteer could support in many ways, including:

- chatting with younger and older participants to encourage their ideas and views to come forward outside of the sessions
- help with planning for sessions and sourcing / sharing resources needed, remotely or in person

* There are many opportunities; for clarity and support in navigating more distant connections. You may find our recent **guide**: 'Connecting Generations Online. Safely' useful and/or 'Staying connected whilst staying apart' which you can find **here** or within the RESOURCES section of GWT's website.

- help with the more formal aspects of the evaluation – supporting child / young person and / or older participants to complete the form / questions which help improve, change or continue the way your project is delivered currently.
- help and support developing virtual channels for shared sessions (help remotely), support the work of staff to create ‘floorbooks’ etc and even support other volunteers.

TOP TIP

Looking for inspiration for sharing of outdoor space in playful way?

The City of Play’s playground project team worked creatively to design and build attractive, mobile planters, sandpits / play zones and seating to be used outdoors, but open space could be regained by pushing each section to walls / perimeter of building. Both adults and children could come together share the space; the background sections could be painted by different age groups or blackboard paint used, to make a chalking / message area if wanted and seating areas could even be developed as storage benches.

Attitude to outdoors and space can vary with the seasons and weather, but the joy of coming together and experiencing nature remain important regardless, so don’t be put off unnecessarily by the weather. Time outdoors and in nature is good for all of us – so perhaps some of the play and storytelling could be linked to growing plants or crops, thinking about playing outdoors as children (for older participants) and why ‘rain doesn’t stop play’ in general. Consider, what would be useful to help support more time outdoors?

‘We need to grow children – they need fresh air, space, time, each other, and adults who are interested in them; with all of those things, the rest comes quite naturally.’

OUR STORIES....

My (great) Granda - he was a postie and walked or cycled miles and miles every day. He loved it and was very fit and able. If he wasn’t on his rounds, or sorting and collecting mail at the Post Office, he was gardening. Either his own (vegetables and yummy strawberries) or helping his friends or other villagers. When all that was done, or on darker days, he would be tinkering and fixing things for folks. When he came to visit – he played with us, he loved to play. He came outside; sitting and just gazing through windows would never have been enough for him at all! Best of all, when we visited him, he would take us out to his garden and we would explore, play hide and seek or help with whatever was ready for picking or planting. He never went into a care home, but if he had, he would have needed all these things available to him as much as possible, his days full of connection to all that brightened his thoughts, kept him active and happy. He had so much to share with everyone. He told us to make sure there was always a garden near at hand and bairns a-plenty’ as his gift was to grow bonny and wonderful things. We all really need to keep the connections to both Kith and Kin – and to nature too.

PLAYFUL ICEBREAKERS

Icebreaker - an action or object that serves to relieve inhibitions or tension between people.

Q What purpose does an ice breaker serve when it is used in the context of intergenerational work?

A It is important to remember that friendships between different generations do not just necessarily happen of their own accord. Preparing the two groups to meet each other beforehand and then using ice breakers when they meet helps the group to bond by learning about each other, breaking down barriers and helping people to feel comfortable in each other's company.

Here are some examples given by students taking part in GWT's International Diploma in Intergenerational Learning to consider:

'Playful Storytelling' with a focus of remembering left and right.

Everyone sits in a circle and the facilitator starts the story through a narrative such as ...

As I was slowly walking down to the store today, I walked down the road and I passed the park on my left on the way. Turning right along the canal I realized my mistake; I had left my purse at home, so I had to turn round again. When I opened the door there it was on the table on my right. I put it in my bag. Here I go again walking down the road, I passed the park again on my left and then a bit further on was the shop. I needed to buy sausages and some hair gel.

Each person then continues in this way creating a new bit of the story adding in as many left and right as they want and each time holding up the appropriate hand, which people copy. The existing story told by previous people doesn't have to be remembered, but it's really good fun if the last person can bring it back to the original story to conclude it.

This can be adapted to a more physical activity in a similar way as pass the parcel, with one small item wrapped up for each participant. The activity starts with everyone holding a parcel and a prepared story is read out. Every time the story says left or right the actual parcel then gets passed according to the direction. At the end of the story everyone should be holding a parcel which they can then open and shared with the group.

'What am I?' encourages people to share information playfully.

Everyone sits in a circle and, with a theme in mind, the facilitator explains that they have to describe themselves as an object. This could be describing themselves as cars - old and battered / young and sporty or chocolate / sweets for example do they see themselves as Turkish delight- hard on the outside but sweet & soft in the middle.

The facilitator gives an example and then everyone takes turns going around the circle.



‘Two Truths and a Lie,’ will help people to get to know one another.

The facilitator tells everyone to share three facts about each other to the group and one must be untrue. Then, after they have introduced themselves the rest of the group can vote on which of the three things that the person has shared is the lie. Participants are often astonished by the things that people share, and the facilitator can use the information to then point out commonalities and differences within the group.

‘Desert Island’ encourages conversation and discussion using a narrative approach’.

Everyone sits in a circle and the facilitator explains that everyone is trapped on a desert island, and they can only take three things with them (food & water is already on the island). Going around the circle each person then shares the three things they would take and explains why they made that decision. The facilitator then points out how people’s objects are similar or link to others, pointing out how collectively they make life on the island richer for everyone.

A similar activity with a slightly different twist is asking everyone to share one skill that they are good at and one thing that they feel they are bad at. The facilitator then points out how each person will enrich life on the island and how they can learn from another person to improve their skills.

‘Tell me about...’ encourages fun and humour, through story telling.

Prior to this activity you will need to gather a selection of objects as strange and as random as possible e.g., a carrot, a teaspoon, a walking stick etc. Everyone then sits in a circle and the facilitator gives each person an object and explains that collectively they are going to tell one story, but they must include their object in their sentence and give it a name, the more extraordinary the better. The facilitator then brings the story together at the end. For example, *‘I went to work and as I was riding my bike the chain came off but luckily, I had my (name of object) which (describe what it does) and I popped the tyre back on....’* The next person then continues *‘once I got to work’* and so on, around the circle.

More ideas?

Think about other games like **‘Guess Who’** and adapt to your group. A lovely game to do as an icebreaker when getting to know names, but also can be done as a fun session a few weeks / months in, to see how well people are getting to know each other. Photos of each person taking part can be popped on to the back or on a headband of someone else in the group **without** them seeing it or simply held up by the guesser facing the others in the group. The guesser asks questions that receive a YES or a NO answer and tries to work who they might be from the intergenerational group.

Talking about books that have meaning to the person can be a great ice breaker activity for an intergenerational group. The group would need to be told beforehand to bring their favourite book with them. Such a simple activity but one that can be personal and meaningful. This could also be done with magazines / comics / tv programmes (write out name or print picture of it).

Sit everyone in a circle and the facilitator starts by holding their book up, reading the title and explaining why the book is special to them. Everyone then has a turn. It can help to ask for volunteers so that no one is sat quietly dreading their turn and hopefully the more reticent participants will then gain confidence listening to others. The facilitator can then make links between people’s choices pointing out commonalities which will help the participants get to know each other. For example, *‘I can see that Serena likes books about adventure, like Mohammad’*.

A **picture pack of cards** for SNAP / PAIRS / HAPPY FAMILIES could be used for teaming people up and bringing the age groups together – and so they ‘find their matching pair,’ or family, and then lead into another icebreaker that works better with pairs or groups of 4.

We would also recommend the Kinections resources available through the GWT website – these can be adapted to fit both younger and older participants in your group (just credit the original sources). See more in our ‘Goodie Bag’ section of this toolkit.

GOODIE BAG FOR GROUPS

FULL OF 'THE BESTEST TOP TIPS'

The Play is OUR way core resources will get you off to the best start. Available to download (free) from Generations Working Together and Play Scotland websites.

- Play Types Toolkit
- Risk Management
- Supporting Loose Parts Play in Schools
- Play Well Pack
- Play Well Outdoors Pack
- Pick a Picture
- Pick and Mix
- Connecting Safely Online
- Intergenerational Guide in Early Learning & Childcare
- GWT e-learning modules
- Play and Storytelling Intergenerational Booklist
- Kinnections Resources from My Home Life Scotland



Key Aspects of Intergenerational Play and Storytelling to consider

Culture	Confidence building	Challenge
History / Folklore	Problem solving / Higher thinking	Empathy / understanding
Experimentation	Creation	Dexterity
Exploration	Friendship	Curiosity
Drama / showcasing	Courage	Stamina
Fun	Body confidence	Connection
Communication	Love in action	Cognitive skills
Belonging	Social cohesion	Resilience

TOP TIP

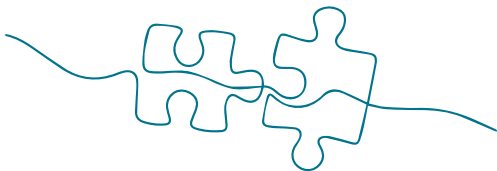
Be aware of these. All are supported and developed when using play and / or storytelling intergenerationally which can be useful for funding applications, planning, monitoring and evaluation.

WHERE DO WE PLAY? WHEN DO WE SHARE?



'Play can and does happen anywhere and everywhere. Cages - like fenced playparks - are not required, just engage with the environment and each other for the best things to happen.'

TOGETHER

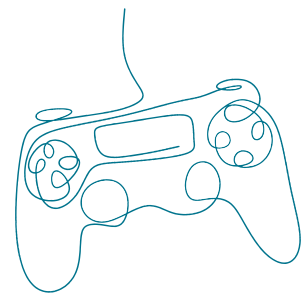


Stories; long or short,
Can *all* be told
Between the young
And the old

Curled up in a lap,
Bouncing on a knee,
Ready for a nap,
Hanging from a tree.

Sailing on a ship,
Walking down a path,
Rolling down a dip
Or splashing in the bath.

You can tell it in a *whisper*
You can *dance* it on a *stage*
You can *sing* it from the *rooftops*
Or *write* it on a *page*.



RIGHTS RESPECTING APPROACH

Through play and story, children and adults of all ages and circumstances can express themselves, share thoughts and experiences and find ways to participate in their lives and their communities – whether the place they live, spend time, study and learn, relax or take part in activities or their wider community.

Through being seen and heard, there is the means to ‘work things out’ and have an equal ‘playing field’ so individuals and groups can collaborate, plan, design and meet challenges, have fun and be empowered to share their views and needs.

Play and story are the natural ways we connect to ourselves, each other and our communities. Having a sense of belonging encourages each one of us to participate, contribute and have our contributions valued and embraced.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ([UNCRC](#)) highlight Article 31 for understanding play as a [right for children](#), however, if we think about play and story as human drivers to learning and self-expression amongst many others, we can see that our human rights across the [ages](#) are also benefitted through play and storytelling, no matter which words may become the ones we commonly use.

Story covers imagination, opens a window into the lives of others, reflects our culture out into the world around us, shares our customs, thoughts and experiences. As we share and tell our stories, we share who we are, our history both personal and local, what we know, what we need and what we desire or imagine.

Through play and storytelling, we learn about others – their personalities, experiences, knowledge and circumstances along with their needs, desires and skills. We build our connections, and we create bridges and pathways between our lives. Through play and story and relationships supported through them, we learn how to understand our emotions and thoughts, our reactions and being seen and heard throughout our lives helps us build and sustain our resilience.



SHARING STORIES

CASE STUDIES FROM 'PLAY IS OUR WAY' AND OTHER PROJECTS



We Can Still BEE Together

A joint project between Apples and Honey Nightingale and Nightingale House, developed during the pandemic.

Aims

We wanted to create a way for the children and residents to interact through COVID19, as we were not able to come together in the same room.

Activities

The project began in the summer when 2 beehives arrived at Nightingale House (NH) Care Home in the grounds of which Apples and Honey Nightingale nursery is situated.

(Part 1) The children decorated one beehive and the residents decorated the other.

The children dressed up as bees and performed a 'Bees and Knees' show for their grandfriends, outside on the lawn.

John, a beekeeper from the local Bee Society came into the grounds wearing his bee suit and taught the children and the residents about bees and how to extract the honey, which was enjoyed on the Jewish festival of Rosh Hashanah, to wish everyone a sweet New Year.

John trained up Phil the NH gardener on how to look after the bees and Phil, in turn, taught the children and residents how to extract the honey from the honeycombs.

The residents gave the children a mini jar of honey and the children reciprocated with a small jar of crab apple jelly they had made from the apples they had picked in the garden.

(Part 2) When lockdown returned and we could no longer meet socially distanced in the big hall, we continued to meet up, separated by glass doors.

Emily, a community artist created a weekly programme of intergenerational activities; coiling clay hives, creating pencil tile honeycombs, making beeswax candles from honeycomb wax. The residents made the video (link below) to teach the children how to make the hand-by-hand menorahs that they then lit at Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of lights and finally they held a quiz, with the residents testing how much the children remembered of all they had learnt.

Benefits of using play and story telling

Despite not being able to meet in the same room, we managed to meet up safely almost every day and the Bees and Honey project culminated in the video (link below) which I have permission to share with you.

This project has taught us how much more adventurous and creative we can be together, and it's been great to build more extensive relationships with outside organisations and the wider community.

Future of the project

When life returns to normal, we'll sell the honey in the care home shop and the funds raised will help us to develop our beekeeping. We have many plans and have already planted 'honey planters', in parallel via zoom, that have been placed near the hives to provide sweet nectar for our bees. I think we can fly with this project!

[Hannukah Project.mp4](#)

'All humans thrive within an emotionally safe environment, full of opportunities for play, risk and challenge.'



Let's Get Together

Haddington Care Home and Pear Tree Nursery (Meadowpark)

We decided to try an intergenerational approach, through play and storytelling to develop relationships, share experiences and gain insight into the lives of the care home residents and the children.

Numbers varied but we normally had around **12** children and **12** residents, ranging in ages between **2-5 yrs. to 70+**.

Aims

Let's Get Together was aimed to bring older and younger members of the community together, to share stories past and present and get to know each other.

For older people, we anticipated that it would be good for the mental health and wellbeing, supporting reminiscence and sharing of memories with interested young partners and associated teams of carers.

In addition to this, an aim was for these activities to support the organisation's ethos - that the care home is the residents' home - and their choices are key, with an overarching aim for all to live 'as normally as possible'.

For children, we believed that they would enjoy the developing relationships, and be supported through any anxiety or fear in meeting with the residents or being in different setting, build their confidence and improve their communication skills.

Using a storytelling and play approach, participants could come together, enjoy the experiences, learn from each other, have fun and break down barriers in the community.

Additionally, as the care home was a new setting, it was also felt that this engagement would help to establish the care home within the local community.

Activities

The relationship first began in 2018 when Pear Tree Nursery staff approached the new care home, inspired by intergenerational work they had heard of, and the work shared through Generations Working Together and Support from the Start in East Lothian.

During this project, children from Pear Tree and residents had two opportunities each week to meet, for a variety of activities which include songs, nursery rhymes, stories, baking, games, growing vegetables / gardening and eating snack together with participants enjoying both 1-1 interactions and group activities. Staff from both groups helped to facilitate this, exploring and introducing ideas through play and communication through the interactions.

With permissions granted, pictures were taken to record interactions and activities. Risk Balance assessments were carried out and recorded. Relevant reminiscence objects were gathered, posters for the activities were created and other shared communication have been captured and can be shared for this toolkit. A shared Christmas Fair and Easter Fair were organised for the intergenerational group and other resources have been gathered such as books for artwork, games to share and music.

During lockdown, Pear Tree Nursery also took part in an online Bookbug session with another care home and an East Lothian librarian. This was enjoyed hugely by the care home residents but was limited in impact for the children due to size of screen for them to react with and session would have been better to be shorter when delivered online for the first time.

Evaluation

The reactions and enthusiasm of both children and care home residents, for the engagements, were noted and used to evaluate the intergenerational connections and activities.

Benefits of using play and story telling

Through our evaluation we found that engaging playfully through storytelling resulted in 'good motivation', laughter, fun, memories shared and good recall.

Older participants anticipated the sessions and looked forward to being with the children.

Children grew in confidence, showed respect for their grandfriends and also gained insights into the past through the first-hand memories shared with them.

Community benefits included positive engagement through open door policy, welcoming approach, breaking down of barriers and so community connections strengthened. This also supported the care home and nursery to feel part of their community.

National Objectives

In terms of National Objectives, emphasis was given to the development of choice, respect, dignity, community cohesion and thinking about the actions which could be taken to support the environment.

Future

Going forward we would like to continue to develop the relationships, commit more time to engagements and time to the intergenerational projects. Haddington Care Home would also like to engage with other schools and focus activities around drama and music as well as increase engagement with, and within, the local community to broaden intergenerational work.

As a result of the projects planning is in place for engagement with local secondary school and care home to develop a project around drama and arts. Other local community activities are also being planned such as walks around the local town and by riverside which flows by the care home.



Stepping Together

First Step Community Project, Musselburgh

'Wherever there are beginners and experts, old and young, there is some kind of learning going on, some kind of teaching. We are all pupils and we are all teachers' **Gilbert Highet**

By working in partnership with Ageing Well East Lothian and Child Health we agreed to run a series of sessions bringing both generations together; early years (Big Bears) and the elderly (Gran's Group). We engaged between 3-11 children from the pre-school group of the nursery and 5-8 members of their Grans' Group.

Aims

The overarching aim of this was to increase physical and social wellbeing for both generations through fun and engaging monthly sessions bringing both groups together but we also identified other outcomes pertaining to this group, that we wanted to encompass.

- Older adults will have increased confidence to participate in new activities
- Participants will gain an increased understanding of each other
- Participants will have increased levels of physical activity age groups
- Participants will have increased social connections through group engagement

Activities

We planned a timetable of activities over a period of 6 months. One important point that we considered while planning this project was that 'Intergenerational projects facilitate the creation of relationships through interaction, however they cannot guarantee that relationships will be built because the latter depends mostly on the people involved (not just on the project itself)' (Generations Working Together, 2019)

Evaluation

Evaluation was carried out through observations, canvassing opinion from the parents / carers of the children, listening to the children and adults, a focus group with the grans and noting comments from the children during and outwith the sessions. Support for evaluation came from 3rd partner- Ageing Well East Lothian.

Benefits of using play and storytelling

Intergenerational projects can bridge the gap and bring adults and children together for a common purpose. This can give them the opportunity to develop new relationships and mutual interaction.

People are living longer and within our community some are isolated from family members due to family breakdown, relocation or family make up.

The caring and respect and enjoyment shown between both groups was noted with connection and interest extending between the monthly sessions and after the celebration event at the end of the pilot. The aims, addressing physical exercise and separation of the generations were met and superseded.

National Outcomes

Our project links with the Scottish Governments aims to create a healthier Scotland by helping people improve their health, especially in disadvantaged communities. The key national outcomes outlined by the Government which are pertaining to Intergenerational Work include:

- We live longer, healthier lives.
- Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it.
- We have improved the life chances of children, young people and families at risk.
- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish Society.

One important key benefit of Intergenerational work and something that we wanted to achieve and capture, is outlined in the paper '[Intergenerational approaches to improving health and wellbeing](#)' it states that 'it can promote positive behaviours by sharing skills and creating safe environments for activities and exchanging life skills and experiences' (Generations Working Together 2014)

Future

Lessons learnt will help to inform further action, which has been suspended due to Covid-19 pandemic. First Step Community Project is keen to explore opportunities to connect with a local care home and expand intergenerational work further after such a positive and meaningful experience with both children and grans expressing very positive comments.



Growing Together Naturally

Childminders & Grandfriends Forest School, Torbay

This project was funded by Connecting Actively to Nature and Orchard Forest School

Particularly during the last couple of years, with the pandemic, we learnt very quickly that our over 50's group had been expressing how much that they were missing the physical contact with their younger family members due to the lack of contact and ability to travel up and down the country to visit, so we decided to pilot an intergenerational approach.

We engaged Orchard Forest School over **50s** volunteers and Torbay Registered Childminders and their early years children. Overall, we had **10** 'Over 50s', **4** registered childminders, and **18** early years children. Ages ranged from **0 to 4** and **50-76** years old.

All Torbay Childminders were invited by email to be involved, we then had to choose randomly (in a hat!) because we had too many interested parties!

Aims

The project aimed to bring generations together, to share old and new skills in an outdoor environment, promoting play and storytelling.

For senior participants:

- To help prevent the feeling of isolation.
- To be able to share old fashioned skills
- To be able to share stories from their own childhoods
- To feel regenerated by having early year children around them
- To feel part of something special and to feel a sense of worth

For younger people:

- To share their stories and news
- To share new skills with the older generation
- To learn a range of new skills and vocabulary from the older generation
- To give children the opportunity to make new friends of a different generation, to show them that older people are fun to be around.

Finally, in using a story telling and play approach the project aimed to bring generations together informally, through play, which promoted language and communication skills for both ends of the scale.

Activities

We held a pilot session where we invited our local Childminders to come to our site whilst our over 50s group were present.

One photo shared with our local Childminding Development Worker Lorraine George, in our Local Authority sparked an idea for a longer-term project over 12 weeks, for our over 50s and Childminders with their early years children to come together on a weekly basis, to play and learn from each other, sharing stories & old and new skills with each other.

We spoke to both communities of our over 50s group and the Childminders, who both agreed they felt this would be beneficial to all concerned.

We planned the activities based on suggestions from the over 50s. They included:

- **Growing:** growing wildflowers, herbs & insect friendly plants to help support the orchard eco system. Part of Torbay's pollination project.
- **Scarecrows:** To create scarecrows out of recycled materials to support the growing of the plants planted.
- **Journey Sticks:** To encourage children to collect nature and treasures from around the orchard and tie onto sticks, to create a journey story telling stick to take home and share with their families.
- **Flower Pressing:** To share an old tradition and skill of pressing flora found within the orchard, to extend this and create cards or pictures.
- **Bark rubbing:** using crayons, paper and bark found within the orchard to explore a traditional pastime of bark rubbing.
- **Creating a see saw:** Using logs found on the land to create a natural seesaw for all to play on within the orchard.

- **Feeding the birds** in the orchard.
- **Natural Art:** To explore art through nature.
- **Wood weaving:** To share this historical skill of weaving using branches and twigs to make fencing & boundaries.
- **Scavenger hunts:** This included finding nature and hiding things around the orchard for the children to go and find.
- **Singing around the campfire with hot drinks!** Sharing stories & traditional nursery rhymes from our past.
- **Using hammer and nails together,** exploring the Japanese art form Happa-zone.
- **Digging, watering and exploring mud together in the mud kitchen.**
- **Balancing** – using logs and natural resources to explore balance.
- **Marshmallow toasting:** Who doesn't like this traditional activity to aid story telling around the fire?

We run this project on a weekly basis, every Wednesday from 9.30am-1pm. 'Over 50s' arrived at 9.30am to plan and prepare for the children to arrive at 10am. Once the children had left at 12noon the 'over 50s' sat around the fire over lunch to reflect and share stories and laughter about the day's events.

We spread the above activities out across the 12 weeks, with the 'over 50s' taking on the lead with each activity. We found that even the over 50s who tried to get on with their own jobs, ended up with the children watching or helping them, passing tools, experiencing safe tool use etc.

Sessions were facilitated by the Forest School Lead and then the 'over 50s' took on their own little projects or activities within the sessions to facilitate to the Childminders and children

Evaluation

We used evaluation forms and recorded verbal comments as well. We also noted our own observations.

Benefits of this approach:

- The impact of this was astonishing!
- We observed our Over 50s 'come to life', they somehow got their spark back when they were around the early year's children.
- We observed children naturally warming to certain Over 50s and become inquisitive to what they were doing.
- We also observed lots of smiles and gentle gestures from both sides, it was truly heart-warming.

Other benefits included:

- Over 50s learning about the children's own family members, sharing unintentional stories.
- Over 50s feeling that someone cared and that someone had been thinking of them during the week.

- Children telling Over 50s what they'd been up to with their own family members or childminders,
- Eased the feeling of isolation for Over 50s
- Gave some Over 50s a purpose to get through the week, with some reflecting that they looked forward to Wednesdays to see the children.

What were the outcomes/benefits for the younger people?

- Learnt new skills
- Learned to work at a less rushed pace
- Made new friendships and relationships
- Consistency of group/elders
- Playing safely in the outdoor environment

What were the outcomes/benefits for the community?

- Brought generations together
- A safe place to go to meet and make new friends of different generations

National Objectives:

- This project contributed to the healthier, stronger and greener objectives.

Future of the project:

- We hope to offer the project to more childminders. We also hope to create cohort of childminders across a year, impacting on more Early Years children
- We want to enable children to create more of their own play and for Over 50s to join in rather than the Over 50s feeling they had to facilitate more structured play
- We still encourage grandparents to attend groups with their children on a weekly basis.
- We are planning a future Intergenerational project linked to music
- We will be inviting our Mini Explorers (toddlers) to bring their Grandparents to their groups during Intergenerational week in April 2022.





Old's Cool – Citadel Youth Centre

Although not a dedicated storytelling and play-based project, Old's Cool is an intergenerational programme which frequently draws on both storytelling and play to bring both young and older participants together.

Since 2015 we have frequently utilised the power of storytelling when using reminiscence work, for example through exploring our local Leith community. This learning has also been captured in various media chosen by the young people. The young people have also facilitated sessions with the older people, capturing each generation's experience. Importantly, by taking this intergenerational approach there has been a knowledge exchange between the generations. By using play-based activities we have also enabled both generations to connect in a safe and welcoming environment. This has aided emotional and social development, creativity, and communication skills, while enabling intergenerational connections to flourish.

Throughout the project we engaged **76** local young people (S1-S6) and **22** older people aged **65** and over, from Leith, Edinburgh. Ages ranged from **(12-17)** for the young people and **(65-88)** for the older people.

Aims

The project aimed to train and support young people to facilitate intergenerational activities with older people and to present them in a medium of their choice. We aided this process by drawing on storytelling and play activities, often in collaboration with our arts and media partners (see section D for example activities). We also wanted to improve relations between members of different generations in the local community.

We aimed to provide an opportunity for older people to spend positive time with young people, something many of them did not have the opportunity to do. For our Younger people we wanted them to gain lots of confidence and greatly improve their communication skills.

Activities

Young people were recruited through our positive relationship with a local high school and by establishing a referral process which worked directly with school guidance staff. We also recruited young people through Citadel youth services, including our New Spin Intergenerational Café which we deliver in partnership with the Pilmeny Development Project. Older people were recruited by working directly with local projects working with older people and through New Spin.

Throughout the duration of our project, we ran both schools and community-based Old's Cool groups. Each Old's Cool group ran between 10-12 weekly sessions and was overseen by youth work staff who supported the young people to facilitate intergenerational activities to the older participants. Each Old's Cool group also had an overall theme and ended with the young people presenting their work in a medium of their choice.

For example, one group worked with staff from *Archaeology Scotland* to explore Leith's archaeological past, culminating in the creation of a custom set of Citadel 'Leith' Top Trumps cards. As part of this group, storytelling and play was utilised throughout, with the young people learning about the various archaeological time periods through a mixture of creative art play, local site surveys and the use of old maps. Our older people during these sessions contributed fascinating historical stories of Leith, which combined with the experiences of the young people, allowed us to create a truly intergenerational Top Trumps game.

While working with our partner Dynamic Earth on two S1 groups which explored Climate Change and Deep Seas as their themes, we further used both storytelling and play to provide positive intergenerational experiences. Dynamic Earth acted as an ideal partner during Covid19 due to its spacious education area and fun and engaging play activities. These included a mixture of arts-based climate change and deep-sea tasks, as well as more active team-based activities that included both the young and older participants. Splitting both generations into smaller groups to discuss the vital topic of climate change, was provided an excellent way to share their views and increase intergenerational learning.

'The thing is we may be older, but we naturally do a lot of things that helps the planet. We would never waste food for example, and I'm always conscious about leaving lights on.'
(Older Person)

'We hear so much about climate change, but I hadn't thought about what older people thought. It's really cool they think like us!'
(Young Person)

Evaluation

We used a wide range of monitoring and evaluative methods; our young people were asked to complete self-evaluations to measure their confidence and distance travelled. Our referral forms also contained questions that we asked teaching staff to further evidence distance

travelled in relation to confidence/communication skills. At the end of each session, we also used a wide range of evaluative activities to capture feedback from both the young and older people, on how they felt each session went.

Benefits of play and storytelling

By using storytelling and play elements in our delivery we achieved lots of positive outcomes for both generations. Members of the community also gained the opportunity to see examples of the media projects we created alongside the older people, both in person and over social media.

Young people gained many benefits including: emotional and social development, improved creativity, enhanced cognitive and communication skills and increased physical activity.

For the older participants, in addition to gaining the same benefits as our young people, they were also granted the opportunity to spend positive time with the other generation. This was something many of them did not have the opportunity to do. Due to the challenges of Covid19, at various points this may have taken place online over Zoom, through a hybrid approach (young and older people meeting in person separately and then connecting online or in person). Regardless of the delivery approach however, we were able to successfully challenge social isolation. As a result, many of our older people also gained improved confidence as well as increased knowledge of digital technologies.

'It's a lot of fun, I love it. I get to spend time with my mates and learn about other people.'
(Young Person)

'It made me speak out more and gain confidence, along with other skills like communicating with the older people and appreciating them opening up to us.'
(Young Person)

'I enjoyed being with the younger ones.'
(Older Person)

Thanks to the success of Old's Cool in 2021 we delivered the Citadel Love Stories Intergenerational Creative Storytelling Project, which in 2022 was awarded a Generations Working Together Excellence Award for Social Justice and Dignity. (Award Film)

National Objectives

HEALTHIER – helping people to sustain and improve their health, especially in disadvantaged communities, ensuring better, local, and faster access to health care.

SAFER and STRONGER – Helping local communities to flourish, becoming stronger, safer places to live, and offering improved opportunities and a better quality of life.

SMARTER – Expanding opportunities to succeed from nurture through to lifelong learning and ensuring higher and more widely shared achievements.

Scottish NPF Outcomes

Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors, and responsible citizens: To enable children, young people and (subsequently) adults to thrive from an early age and make a positive contribution in the 21st century.

We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.

Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and can access appropriate support when they need it.

We live longer, healthier lives: Securing longer healthier lives for the people of Scotland will always be a top priority for governments and individuals alike. There are significant challenges which can only be addressed by everyone in Scotland working together to pursue this goal, through improving lifestyles and life circumstances, and a shared ownership of an effective NHS.

Future

The learning from using a mix of digital and hybrid approaches to delivering intergenerational practice is also something we will utilise moving forward. Rather than see these approaches as challenges, we welcome them as a valid way of enabling more generations to connect and for older people to improve their understanding of digital technologies.

This [Old's Cool Digital Intergenerational Practice toolkit](#) can be found in resources section of the GWT website.

You may also find [Silver Stories](#) intergenerational project inspiring, based on improving reading and literacy skills in children, through building intergenerational friendships.

Play ideas are also plentiful through East Lothian Play Association website.

[ELPA](#) have created "Spark the Play" resources and "Me and You" book among others to enjoy.

This Old's Cool Digital Intergenerational Practice toolkit

'When children tell their stories, they have opportunities to feel heard.'

Fiona Holiday: from Play is the Way Little Book of Quotes, Bryony Date.



Toy Time

Shortlees Primary School and Craigie House, Kilmarnock

Through a 'toys' topic, the children were exploring how they play today, and we also discussed how people played in the past. Rather than simply tell the children what toys were like in the past we thought it would be more engaging and beneficial for both parties for this to have a real-life context.

We thought it would be the perfect opportunity to give both the children and our 'grandfriends' a much-needed interaction which connected to the children's learning. This was a project that had equal benefits to both parties and came at exactly the right time.

We connected **21** care home residents, **24** primary school children, **1** teacher and **1** student teacher with participants ranging in age from **5 to 80** years.

Aims

The project aimed to give the children a real-life context for their learning whilst engaging with our community partners at a time of need. We wanted our grandfriends to feel a sense of purpose and give them the ability to support the children's learning and take ownership of a learning experience in their local community. For the children, the project aimed to broaden their knowledge of past experiences and allow them to compare toys from the past with toys today.

For senior participants: We wanted our grandfriends to have a platform to share their wealth of knowledge and expertise with their local primary school that many of them would have attended themselves. We also wanted to provide them with an opportunity for social interaction when this was extremely limited and hoped that it would boost their morale and mental wellbeing.

For younger people: We wanted to bring the topic to life for them using real life people, real experiences and real-life toys as opposed to showing them this via the internet. Due to COVID regulations and not being able to gain access to the same resources we usually would we had to provide an alternative way of teaching this topic and our grandfriends provided the perfect opportunity to lead our learning.

Due to the hugely beneficial outcomes of play-based learning and the research that also shows the benefits of this for older people, we thought that a storytelling and play approach would be the best option to connect both generations in a meaningful way.

Activities

We started off by contacting a local care home that we already had a partnership with and gave a brief rundown of how we envisaged the project developing.

Letter writing: In school the project started off by letting the children take control of their own learning and prepare their own letter to be sent to the care home, detailing what they would like to find out and learn. The children also wanted to let our grandfriends see their favourite toys, so the children drew pictures of their favourite toys and we sent them along with our letter. There was then huge excitement when our grandfriends replied to our letter and the children were sent a letter with lots of information about the type of toys the ladies

and gentlemen played with and what their favourites were. They also told us about outdoor games they played and the clubs we went to and asked the children lots of questions. Our grandfriends also sent us a picture of a gird and clique which sparked a lot of curiosity amongst the children so we extended their learning by listening to their pupil voice and did some research on what a gird and clique was and how you would use it.

We then wrote to our grandfriends again to give the children the opportunity to share with them the types of clubs they attended, as this was something our grandfriends were keen to learn about.

Singing: As part of our toys topic, we had been learning a song and the children were very keen to share this with their grandfriends. We sent an audio of this recording to our grandfriends, and this allowed them to learn our song too. The children were delighted that they were able to repay the favour of teaching their grandfriends something after learning so much from them.

We also wrote to our grandfriends again to give the children the opportunity to share with them the types of clubs they attended as this was something our grandfriends were keen to learn about.

Remote friendship: Due to pandemic restrictions, participants were not able to meet in person so the exchanges took place virtually for the duration of the projects. Virtual correspondence was exchanged fortnightly between the two groups. Participants set each other challenges and worked on these individually during the project. The sessions were supported by Fiona Brown (activity coordinator, care home), Abbie Cardie (class teacher) and Laura Sommerville (student teacher).



Evaluation

We spoke with the children and our grandfriends and asked for some feedback about the project, which was all very positive and encouraging. We used this evaluation to shape the future of the project.

The benefits of play & storytelling

Through our evaluation we found that using play and storytelling allowed both generations to access the project effectively despite a differing age range.

Our grandfriends were able to revisit their youth and tap into a range of fond memories and share these positive experiences with the children to allow them a real-life rich context for learning. They did this through reminiscence group sessions to collect stories and information. Due to the community not being able to visit or have a lot of contact with our grandfriends at this time the children were able to in some way fill the gap.

The children gained an awareness of their grandfriends' situation and brought their learning to life by creating so much excitement in their inter disciplinary topic.

National objectives

The project contributed to the National Improvement Framework and in particular driver five. This details the need for quality partnerships to take place and support children and young people with their needs. In this case the children's need was information for their interdisciplinary topic and as previously mentioned as a result of the lack of resources available due to the COVID 19 pandemic our partnership with the care home was a fantastic resource for us.

Future of the project

We have continued this partnership through the school year and are now able to visit outdoor regularly to continue to maintain and strengthen relationships. And even better we have managed to recruit another class to join in, so our grandfriends have doubled their friends!

OUR GOLDEN STRANDS.

PLAY AND STORYTELLING ACROSS THE GENERATIONS.

How partner organisations connected during 'Play is OUR way!' pilot. Excerpt from Play is OUR way report to Scottish Government 2021

Further intergenerational case studies can be accessed on the GWT website (membership is free to everyone living in Scotland and students worldwide).

You can share your own [Case Study Template for play and storytelling](#) and send this to a team member.



OUR KIT BAG

Fill your kitbag with favourite resources recommended by our contributors and colleagues.

Pack with:

Early Years: bubbles (strong solution), bean bags, stretchy lycra material, small lightweight props to match songs, rhymes, stories. A song bag, a digital camera, magnifying glasses and torch (suitable for young hands and older arthritic ones), (chunky and standard-sized) chalk, inflatable ball, biodegradable balloons (if they pop, please remove all parts and dispose responsibly), paper, play dough and (chunky / standard-sized) colouring pencils, popular & familiar songs / music which can be played during session. If possible, you may also like to bring some scrunchy / squeezable items, wooden pegs or spoons and felt pens to make puppets, but these could also be used to be 'drumsticks', 'magic wands' and such like, books with pages and text suitable for the older and younger participants. Remember Loose Parts (natural or manufactured) are highly adaptable play materials. Take Care to avoid potential choking hazards and general safety considerations.

For older children / young people. Consider books, newspapers, magazines, cards, art, drawing materials, notebooks and pens, digital devices for recording or photographing, short plays, board games, puzzles, balls, jigsaws, crafts, play dough or modelling clay, musical instruments, songs, musical playlists, Lego, Meccano or similar, indoor ten pin bowling, quizzes, puzzles to share together as staples to encourage participation in engaging activities to help establish play and story.

How to tell a story the playful way.

Make it **sensory** based wherever and whenever possible. Have **fun** with it - **know** the story really well. Use facial expressions, body language, movement, different voices (tones / accents) to develop the characters- act out the parts. Enjoy humour. 'Whispers' to 'shouts' can be used, make sure you look at the listeners and encourage their participation. Use **props** and/or **puppets**. Make it **interesting** and **relevant** to the setting/environment. **Link** the age groups as much as possible.

Media can be worth exploring; can anything else support the story and help develop it further?

Intergenerational / supportive booklist & supporting weblinks

Developing a resource to support intergenerational projects and work has been a part of this project. The listing includes books and stories introducing new understanding, often related to ageing and life experiences, as well as sharing adventures and experiences across the generations. The stories offer a range of experiences to collaborate in, extending through to articles or books to support the practitioner. **Please do let us know** of other books and resources which may support intergenerational relationships and learning, as we will continue to grow this resource together.

This resource can be found on the GWT website [here](#).



GLOSSARY AND REFERENCES

Icebreaker: An action or object that serves to relieve inhibitions or tension between people.

Loose Parts: According to the Theory of Loose Parts- Loose parts are ‘variables’ such as materials and shapes; smells and other physical phenomena, such as electricity, magnetism and gravity; media such as gases and fluids; sounds, music, motion; chemical interactions, cooking and fire; and other humans, and animals, plants, words, concepts and ideas. With all these things all children love to play, experiment, discover and invent and have fun. Loose parts can be natural or manufactured but have a magic ingredient of imagination. For more information about Loose Parts see [guide](#).

National Improvement Framework (Educational Attainment): The [national improvement framework and improvement plan](#) for Scottish education is designed to help deliver the twin aims of excellence and equity in education.

This document serves as the single, definitive plan for securing educational improvement identifying six key drivers of improvement: school leadership, teacher professionalism, parental engagement, assessment of children’s progress, school improvement and performance information.

National Performance Framework: maps out the outcomes desired for Scotland and how well we are achieving these collectively, measured through the National Indicators. All policy, such as equalities, education, care, economy, human rights, environment and wellbeing maps into this framework.

Social Capital: the networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively.

Social Cohesion: Social cohesion refers to the extent of connectedness and solidarity among groups in society. It identifies two main dimensions: the sense of belonging of a community and the relationships among members within the community itself.

UNCRC: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - is an important agreement by countries who have promised to protect children’s rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child explains who children are, all their rights, and the responsibilities of governments. All the rights are connected, they are all equally important and they cannot be taken away from children. These are considered Minimum Standards to be upheld and work is in progress in Scotland for these to be ratified into Scottish Law. Children’s rights are recognised as being as necessary as those for adults. A great booklet on the rights of the child, to use with children and adults has been created by The Children’s Parliament and can be found here. [Wee Book of Promises](#).

Read more about Human Rights with relevance to older persons and the care sector [here](#).

‘Learning, thought, creativity and intelligence are not processes of the brain alone, but of the whole body.’

Carla Hannaford, Play is the Way, Little Book of Quotes, Bryony Date.

‘We don’t stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.’

George Bernard Shaw

‘When you see children or young people and older people come together, playing together and sharing their stories and ideas together, it is just magical.’

‘Play is OUR way’, Pilot contributor.

‘Play is an intrinsic part of being human.’

Michael Rosen





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www.generationsworkingtogether.org

Play Scotland

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This toolkit is available in other formats and contributes to a suite of
'intergenerational Play and Storytelling' resources.

