



Integrating Ethnic Minorities – A buddy system approach to breaking down language barriers

Overview of the project

Hull High Fliers and West Hull Gymnastics club deliver pre-school gymnastics and trampoline classes in a leisure centre in West Hull. The local area is multi-cultural and more recently a large Polish community has developed in the area. The coaches at the club identified that their pre-school classes could be used as a way to help integrate people in the community but that language may be a barrier and may have been preventing some people from participating in the class. The coaches decided to look for a way to address this to ensure their classes were inclusive to all.

Project Objectives

- To make new mums at the sessions feel welcome
- Make classes more accessible to the local community
- To increase participation- with a focus on participants and parents with English as an additional language (EAL)
- To add value to the sessions
- Participant and parent retention

Summary of Success

- Better integration on multi-cultural community.
- 4 additional participants with EAL
- Retention of participants

Description of what happened/how the project was delivered

To make the experience of attending a new class less daunting to new parents the clubs recruited experienced parents who were confident and approachable to become buddies. As part of this system a parent whose first language is Polish was recruited to be buddies to parents who have EAL. The buddies assisted the new parents during their first few sessions, assisting the coaches with the do's and don'ts and general class structure. The buddy system resulted in parents being more confident to attend classes and more specifically bridged the language barrier with new parents whose first language is not English.



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Impact/Outcomes

- 4 additional participant's with EAL
- Better integration into the club for both parent and child
- Participant and parent retention in the classes

Why did the project work? – Key success factors?

- A clear need was identified before the project commenced
- Parents who were experienced and approachable were recruited as buddies
- The parent who has EAL is part of the large multi-cultural community so can signpost potential participants to the sessions

Key Partners

- Hull High Flyers
- West Hull Gymnastics
- Sure Start

What is your advice to other clubs/organisations wishing to run a similar project? *What are the key things that other clubs can implement to achieve success? & from your experience, what should be avoided?*

Make sure you recruit the right people to be buddies.

Future Developments

The club has identified new partners it wishes to link with to further enhance its links with the multi-cultural community. These include children's centres, community centres and schools and also larger organisations including the Goodwin Trust who are a key partner in the Centre and West of the City.

Contact Details:

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