

SHORT BREAKS FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council (RCBC) and Sport Works identified an opportunity to facilitate the physical, cognitive and emotional development of local disabled children. Our programme utilises physical activity and sport to provide developmental opportunities for disabled children and, consequently, “short breaks” for parents and carers.

Research highlights that children who have well developed physical proficiencies are more likely to develop the confidence and self-esteem required to take part in physical activity and sport. These children are also more likely to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle, thereby improving health and reducing the risk of obesity.

Disabled children are more prone to avoid sports than non disabled children and thus present an increased risk of developing obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes. Perhaps the greatest risk, however, is not having the opportunity to reap the benefits that regular physical exercise can provide, such as improved aerobic function, a chance to develop fine and gross motor skills and self-confidence.

KEY OUTCOMES

- To enhance the emotional wellness of children engaged with the programme.
- To support the wider family unit and reduce the incidence of ‘crisis’ and anxiety levels between family members
- To enhance on task attention, improve behaviour and raise the level of correct responding outcomes for children engaged in the programme.
- To improve the physical fitness of children engaged with the programme.
- To facilitate group based interaction & develop communicatory skills
- To provide an external stimulus which provides an enjoyable, engaging programme of activity which supports additional intervention programmes.

EVIDENCE OF OUTCOMES DURING 2014/15

- 100% of children found the programme to be ‘highly enjoyable’
- 81% of children found the programme to be ‘highly challenging’
- 100% of children found staff to be helpful and supportive
- 72% of children regarded ‘playing new sports’ and ‘learning new skills’ as the ‘best part of the programme’

- 100% of parents/carers regard the programme to be 'effective in enthusing their child in physical activity'
- 83% of parents/carers regarded 'improved health' and an opportunity for 'a rest or time to spend with other children' to be the greatest programme benefit
- 100% of parents/carers wish the programme to continue throughout 2015

IMPACT

From A Parent: "As a parent of a 13 yr old son with complex needs I find the service you provide invaluable for the following reasons:

Value-for-money – the timing of the sessions give me a chance to re-charge my batteries and spend time with other family members, including my other son, all at a price we are comfortable with.

Peace of mind that my son is in a safe environment with staff who, in particular, understand autism and the unique aspects of each child and that one size does not fit all. I get the chance to meet up with other mums/dads/carers of the children attending the play scheme in the cafe in the same venue which is very nice.

For my son - An opportunity to try new activities at his own pace. He has made great progress since beginning Sport Works when attending. This provides a rare opportunity for him to meet up with friends - who, as the staff do, understand him and accept him for who he is".

From A Child: *"I love the sessions...playing sports and swimming each week gives me a chance to let off steam and make friends. I also enjoy time away from my mum and dad!"*