



# PLAYFUL TRANSITIONS

AUGUST 2020

Gloucestershire County Council's Early Help Team commissioned Play Gloucestershire to provide seven Play Nurture days for young people in transition from primary school year 6 to secondary school year 7. Primary and secondary schools and the Early Help team identified children who it was felt needed some extra support to make a successful transition. This transition has been made especially challenging due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with school closure and lockdown adversely affecting children's health and wellbeing.



**PLAYFUL PARTNER SCHOOLS:**  
Deer Park, Cirencester  
Cleeve School, Bishops Cleeve  
Forest High, Cinderford

Dean Academy, Lydney  
Gloucester Academy, Gloucester  
Archway School, Stroud  
Pittville School, Cheltenham

## PROJECT AIMS

- To help young people to meet and make friends.
- To spend time together on their new school campus.
- To build confidence and to have fun together.

7 PLAYFUL  
TRANSITIONS  
SESSIONS  
54 YOUNG  
PEOPLE TOOK  
PART

“For me, the Play Nurture allowed fluidity so different friendships could form based on the activities the children chose and encouraged them to problem solve. It did help mixing it up with some group games so that those children who struggled in group situations had the opportunity to be part of the wider group. They did appear more comfortable to join the group due to having the nurture element first.”

Cheryl Rodham: Early Help Co-ordinator - Tewkesbury Locality



Basing our play activities on the young people's new secondary school campus worked really well. Perhaps without even realising it, they were starting to become familiar with their surroundings and explore their new school. By providing child centred and child-led free play, the participants were able to be in control of what they did and who they did it with. For some, this meant time on their own before gradually integrating into the wider group, sometimes with the support of the Play Rangers, Early Help team or school staff.



# PLAY NURTURE

There is increasing recognition that a combination of child centred and child-led play with nurturing interactions in the natural environment can help children to build their resilience, cope with adversity and support wellbeing. Playing outdoors in all weathers builds resilience in children, and many have both benefited and enjoyed the chance to do this over a summer of extreme weather – hot, thunder storms and torrential rain. The outdoor play provided has clearly had a positive effect on both mind and body, and contributed to a sense of wellbeing for those taking part. For some children it had created a desire for more outdoor play.

**“I just want to say this is a really good idea. We get to know each other by playing so when we start school we already have friends!”**

**Alison age 11**

**Working in a multi-disciplinary team meant that a diverse group of professionals joined forces to support these children. Young people have already started to develop a positive relationship with the adults that can help them successfully transition into secondary school.**

**“It was lovely to work with you and a majority of the children chose your session as their favourite in our evaluation, which I think speaks volumes in itself. I already think the play approach is fabulous but it was lovely to see it in practice with older children, as it is always something you associate with younger children. I firmly believe that playing is a conduit to much greater things.”**

**Samantha James, Early Help Coordinator, Families First Forest of Dean**



**At close of play during each day, we asked everyone to think of one word that summed up their day. It was clear from the answers that almost all the participants enjoyed their experiences with us a lot. Here are the young people's words:**



**You could see the children having fun and friendships forming. It also gave school staff the opportunity to see where some of the children would struggle with but also highlighted their strengths. Thanks again for your putting on the sessions for the children. I feel like the children and the school have gained some very positive experiences, which I hope will support the children with their transition.”**

**Cheryl Rodham: Early Help Co-ordinator - Tewkesbury Locality**

With special thanks to



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