



Innovation Grant Final Report Form

- Name: Rachel Tonkin
- Organisation: Family Lives
- Project title: Singing with mother
- Project start date: 1 November 2017
- Project end date: 31 January 2019
- Grant reference number: **IN-59-2017**

1) **Overview.** Please provide a brief overview of your project, including the original project objectives, outcomes and outputs.

Development of short, accessible videos to promote 'mother songs' which will help parents learn and understand the benefits of music and songs to help bond with their baby or toddler, create intimacy between them and aid the development of the baby's brain and language development. The project draws on the Froebelian principle of focussing on development in the early years and the benefits of parents singing with their child to improve relationships within families and intercultural understanding. The videos will feature real parents (both men and women) singing with their baby or toddler, using gestures and actions to help viewers learn how to sing interactive songs with their child. Most current videos available are cartoon based and do not actively show or encourage the interaction between parent (adult) and child.

- To create a suite of accessible resources (up to 20 short videos) which parents/carers can use with their baby to aid brain development, language development and the adult-child relationship.
- To encourage more parents/adults to sing with their baby.
- To reach families who may not otherwise have access to music/singing classes due to prohibitive costs, rurality, cultural resistance or access issues by providing the resources in a highly accessible digital format.
- To reach families from different cultures in the UK and promote intercultural awareness by including songs/music from the predominant cultures in the UK.

2) **External context.** Please summarise any major changes which have affected your progress towards your outcomes.

Froebel training – there were significant delays in undertaking the training needed for us to begin this project due to difficulties with availability of the trainers and also us. This has meant that the whole project has been behind.

Recruiting families – we found it harder than expected to find families who were happy to be filmed, having to use different connections. However, we were eventually able to start filming and have good results with a good mix of mums, dads and grandmother from different backgrounds and cultures.

Languages – it was not possible to find parents who spoke the languages initially identified without using actors. However, the videos will have subtitles in the 6 selected languages which are the most commonly spoken in the UK after English. Delivery of the subtitles is slightly behind due to earlier delays but will be added to the videos shortly.

3) **The Grant.** Please provide a summary assessing the progress of your project overall, including any key successes or challenges. If you encountered any challenges, how serious were these and how did you overcome them?

Overall, we are very pleased with the final content of this project, despite the initial delays. Ensuring we fully understood the Froebelian principles meant we could truly convey these in the videos and help parents understand the benefits of singing with their child. As the delays were significant, we agreed with the trust to extend our project by three months.

We have produced very accessible and culturally diverse videos which although deliberately short, impart key messages and tips about the benefits of singing. Initial feedback has been very good, from parents and organisations, including from Froebel trainers.

We have included a range of songs which align with the principles that songs should teach children about the world around them and reflect knowledge, life and beauty. Songs on the videos include traditional nursery rhymes such as Old MacDonald and Incy Wincy Spider as well as a French nursery rhyme, a traditional Ghanaian song which a grandmother sings with her grandson and also some made-up songs to demonstrate that parents don't need to know the songs but can make up their own.

The full list of videos is:

1. Old MacDonald
2. Incy Wincey Spider
3. Pat a Cake
4. If you're happy and you know it
5. Row your Boat
6. Here we go round the mulberry bush
7. Head, shoulders, knees and toes
8. Wheels on the bus
9. Ghanaian song
10. Animals (this is a made-up song)
11. Ainsy, font, font, font (French nursery rhyme)
12. Intro video (this covers the overall principles about singing with your child)

<https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/early-years-development/singing-with-your-baby/>

4) **Outcomes.** Please report your progress against each of your outcomes. Please include any outputs where relevant and any key milestones met.

We have produced 12 videos overall. After selecting songs which most align with Froebelian principles and then checking for copyright issues, we had a reduced number of songs to work with from our initial proposal. The videos include messages around the benefits of singing to aid the child's emotional and physical development as well as the benefits to their language and mathematical skills, and demonstrate to viewers how actions help, how to support your young child with these and the wider benefits of singing together.

The videos feature real parents and their child talking about why they enjoy singing together and the benefits for them and their child. The videos feature both mums and dads, and one grandmother from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds.

We have been promoting the videos and new early years section on our website through our monthly newsletter, social media and direct contact with a range of over 30 organisations and bloggers with an interest in this area, including Home Start, Netmums, and the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

Since the videos have been uploaded there have been 815 page views on the web pages in the section with just under 300 total views of the videos. We expect the numbers to steadily increase as we continue to share them via social media and with other organisations. The webpages will also gain SEO reputation and so become findable via search engines in due course.

We are also expecting views on the videos to increase as we are doing a feature for a blogger in the next week or so. We have developed a partnership with a dads' parenting site in the UK who has done a feature for us too: <https://www.daddilife.com/dads-and-kids-reap-the-rewards-of-singing/>. We will also be writing up a feature for <https://www.mybaba.com/>

We have also updated our [play pages](#) in the Early Years section to incorporate Froebelian Principles and our hits in the last 12 months are over 23,000.

Reach through our mini social media campaign using the hashtag, #letssingtogether:

- Estimated reach to over 59,000 accounts
- Over 357,000 impressions
- 22 contributors

5) Lessons learned. What has worked particularly well, and what has not worked as well as you had planned? Do you have any plans to build on this learning in future?

- Finding parents was harder than expected so we would employ a different approach in future.
- Filming took longer than planned due to the age of the children and the unpredictability that comes with this, we would schedule in more filming sessions in future.
- Contacting other organisations about the videos has worked very well with several blogs and features in the pipeline. It is a topic that has really resonated with them, especially with the NSPCC's new 'Look, Say, Sing, Play' campaign which also features Family Lives as a source of support for families.

6) Governance. Have there been any changes in relation to this grant or to your organisation? Please detail any organisational or financial developments that have affected this Froebel Trust funded project (i.e. project management, budget and financial controls, etc).

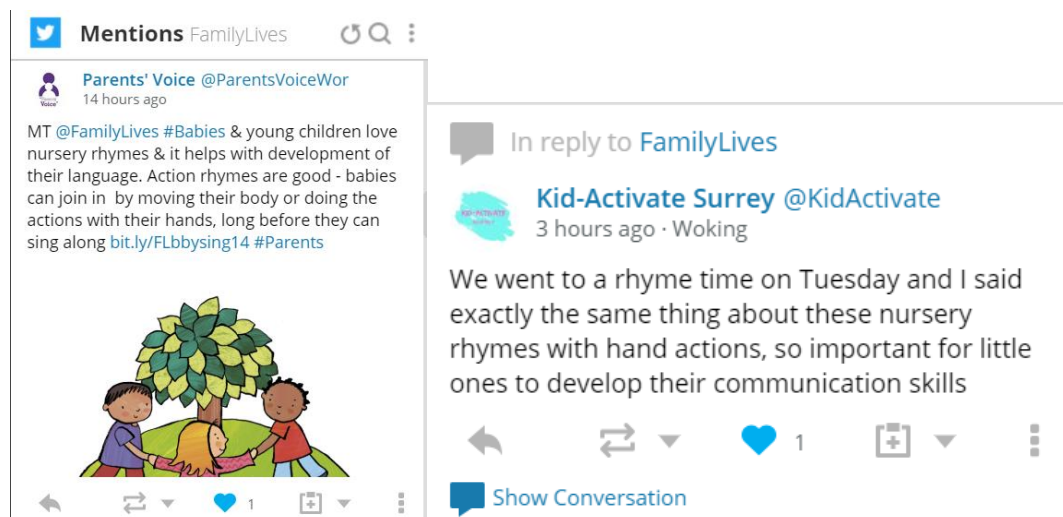
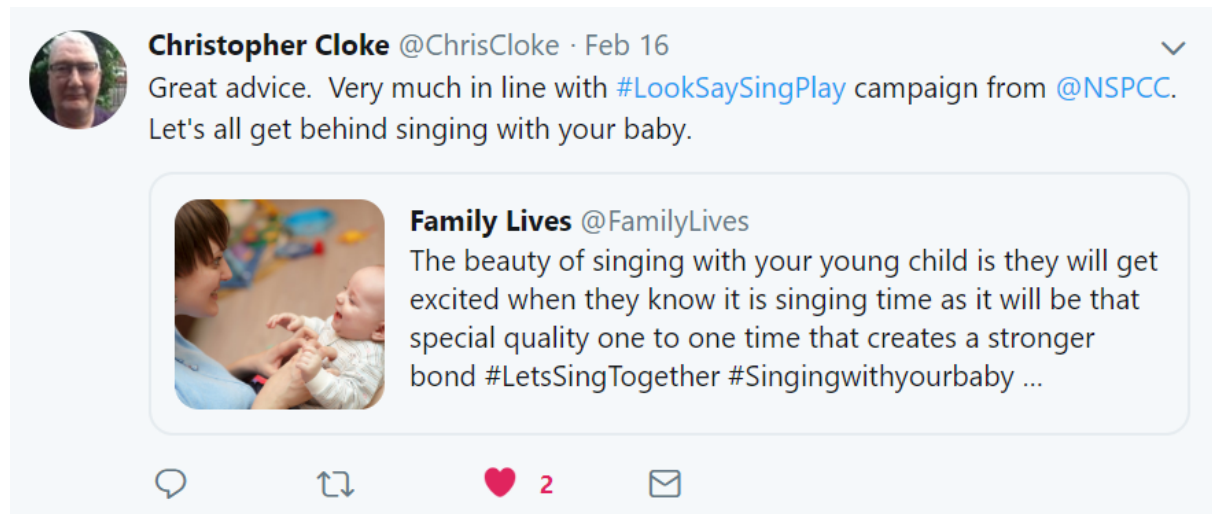
Due to the senior communications role leaving at end December 2017, more hours were covered by the Director of Policy.

7) Other funding. Have any other funding bodies supported this project? If yes, please provide details.

Not applicable.

8) External communications and website. Please provide us with a case study which highlights the difference your work has made, and include quotes/photos if possible.

Feedback from Froebel Trainer: "I have just looked at the first one so far, it's lovely and very Froebelian. I love the way that you have worked with the parents, sharing so much information with them about the importance of singing with their babies. Also empowering!"



9) Other matters. Are there any other matters that you would like to mention, whether positive or negative?

We have very much enjoyed producing these videos as the Froebelian principles align closely with our approach and particularly the work we are doing to support the home-learning environment through our roll-out of the Parent Child Home Programme in the UK.

Given our reach with parents (2.5million visitors to our website, and around 30,000 helpline callers) we think we are well placed to help raise awareness of the principles. We would very much like to continue to do this among parents and other organisations, such as producing accessible information about the play schemas, or through launching a larger awareness campaign to get people singing with their child. We would be very keen to meet with the Trust and discuss possible collaborations for the future.