

Cardiff Deaf Creative Hands:

Building bridges, removing barriers

We first met with Family Sign, a volunteer run Cardiff-based, Facebook networking group in the autumn 2016 issue. Family sign was set up to support the needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families.

Since then the group have been lobbying Welsh Government, and making headlines to give families with Deaf children a platform by which they can voice their concerns.

In this issue, we hear from Siobhan Darian on how Family Sign and Cardiff Deaf Centre have worked together to launch Cardiff Deaf Creative Hands (CDCH).



At the time of going to press we learnt that CDCH have been successful in securing funding to offer some FREE BSL Sessions and Play Education Training.

The details are yet to be finalised but if you are interested in taking part in all or any of this training please email: cardiffdeafcreativehands@gmail.com to confirm your interest ASAP.

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“On Saturday, 18 February 2017 at 12.30pm. Cardiff Deaf Creative Hands (CDCH) was officially opened. Professor Sally Holland the Children’s Commissioner for Wales & Councillor Georgina Phillips, Deputy Lord Mayor of Cardiff, came to meet the families. They both recognise the importance of the group as being the social model for families with Deaf children.

“Being a mum of a Deaf child, and speaking to other mums and importantly to Deaf teenagers, a bridge between the hearing and Deaf community is desperately needed. A child that is left without cultural roots based on language acquisition can feel isolated, not belonging to any community - we want to present our children with language, love, culture, strength and a knowledge that they can be anything they want to be, being deaf is not a barrier to achievement with the right support.

“CDCH is a support group that aims to offer play activities through British Sign Language (BSL), informal family sign sessions helping families to communicate together with their child plus much more. We are starting small but the vision for this innovative community programme is endless. It even includes job creation and workplace support for Deaf adults.

“Since its launch CDCH is growing from strength to strength and has already become well-established as the ‘place-to-be’ for Deaf children and their families to make friends and learn about the Deaf community and BSL.

“As proud members of Wales PPA, we have been able to work closely with the Engagement Team. Caroline and Sarah (Engagement Workers) have been on this journey with us and have grown to understand the importance of communication through BSL. We hope that with the right funding we can develop the Learning through Play programme through BSL and give families a chance to learn practical skills that can help them in everyday situations.



“Our hopes for the future of CDCH is that families will be able to learn BSL in a fun environment so that through role play they can learn the techniques to support their child with the gift of language.”

A full update on Family Sign's campaign trail can be viewed at: www.walesppa.org/news

Sensory Play with an animal theme

It was not only dignitaries that were invited to the Cardiff Deaf Creative Hands launch event. Siobhan had also invited Animal Zone UK to come along with a range of their exotic animals to meet the children. Wales PPA's Engagement team were asked to provide play activities on an animal theme that would enhance the children's and their parents' sensory experience. Sarah Wiggin, Wales PPA's Engagement Worker briefly explains the importance of sensory play and provides a couple of examples that can be easily embedded into your provision.

“The aim was to focus on the process of play rather than the end products. Encouraging each child to be able to take the lead and explore the play opportunities and communication possibilities in a way that suited them and their families. We decided that a range of sensory play opportunities would offer the children and their families differing levels of control over contact and mess.”

Easy Textures Porridge oat play

You will need:

- **A large tub** (we used a tub designed for soaking oven shelves in from Lakeland plastics)
- **A bag of porridge oats** (can substitute with gluten free oats for children with coeliac disease)
- **Spider and snake shapes** cut out of cardboard
- **Sparkly sweet wrappers** cut into confetti
- **Recycled clean yoghurt pots** of various sizes for filling and emptying
- **A cardboard ramp** for pouring porridge oats down



Some scary visitors...



Difficult Textures

Chocolate cake mix play

You will need:

- **A small box** with shallow sides
- **A ready prepared chocolate cake mix** or a mix of flour, hot chocolate powder and sugar (can substitute with gluten free flour if needed)
- **A little bit of water** to make the cake mix muddy in places
- **A variety** of herbs
- **Stones**
- **A selection** of plastic animals

We also offered families an invitation to make Playdough animals (googly eyes, pipe cleaners, straws, cake cases cut into wing shapes, glittery paper) and had a water tray filled with cornflour gloop.



The aim was to focus on the process of play rather than the end products.

Suprises all around!

