

Intergenerational Opportunities

Supporting an intergenerational project

3VA and
chances4change
GUIDE

“Magical”

“The intergenerational project between Cranbrook and West Rise Junior School was very powerful and has had a far reaching impact on both the young people and the older generation. The stories told, the skills transferred and the greater understanding between each age group was truly magical”

Mike Fairclough
Headteacher
West Rise
Junior School

Introduction

This guide has been devised to reflect experience gained from working on two intergenerational pilot projects in Eastbourne, first with The Causeway School and Cranbrook Extra Care Home, and subsequently with West Rise Primary School and Cranbrook Extra Care Home. The projects were supported by the Chances 4 Change programme, delivered in Eastbourne by 3VA.

The guide is written from the perspective of developing, coordinating and supporting the project. This role can be fulfilled by staff from either of the partners (school and/or a care home) or by an external project such as our own. The focus of our work was on the resources that exist within a community such as organisations and people who are open to sharing their skills and experience. This fits with the asset based approach Chances4Change subscribes to.





Finding project partners

The first key ingredient is to find engaged and committed partners. A primary or secondary school and a care home in the same geographical area makes an ideal pairing. Be mindful about the ages of the young people and what can be expected. For example, a cohort of secondary school students from year group 8 or 9 have settled into school life but are pre-GCSE. Year 6 Primary School children have more time in the summer term once they have completed SATs – usually from June onwards.



Initiating discussions

Talk to local groups, organisations and public figures, to see if they want to be involved. They may also have links to partners who would like to take part in the project.



Arrange initial meetings with each partner organisation to discuss how the project could work. Ask each partner to explain how they think each of these points should be approached and what they would like to get from the project. *See the next page for our checklist.*

TOP TIP:

It is essential to meet with the head teacher of the school and the manager of the Care Home before any other steps are taken; they have specialist knowledge about their institutions and will need to give their permission that the project can take place. They can advise on the scale and scope of the project and will know the ideal number of participants to take part.

TOP TIP: Ensure that both organisations, staff, residents and students have input into the planning and content of the project from the outset.



Checklist



- Agree upon a venue** We found that the lounge of the care home was the favoured venue, it was accessible, a familiar and safe space and, as the older people did not have to travel, a large number were able to participate.
- Project design** How can the project be designed to benefit everyone taking part?
- Project type** Discuss the types of projects that would be engaging to both generations. What kind of activity, skills or conversations could you all share, what would they like to learn about? Can there be an exchange of ideas, with old and young learning from one another?
- Time frame** for the project - how many sessions?
- Time slot** Book a regular weekly time slot that works within the school timetable and doesn't clash with pre-booked activities.
- Participants** Decide how many people are going to take part. We found a group of 8 to 12 children was the ideal number. Between 12 and 25 older people took part in one or both pilots.
- Time of year** Could the project take place outdoors or indoors?
- Flexibility** Is there scope for flexibility within the activities if the project needs to change course e.g. bad weather etc.
- Outcomes** Decide if there should be an end goal to work towards; we found that this can help keep participants motivated and can be visual and memorable, such as a slide show, a display, or scrap book
- Celebrate** An end of project celebration can be a good way to bring the project to a close.

Topic ideas



- Histories and Memoirs project, this can be general or given a focused theme
- Gardening/growing project, visual and hands on. particularly good in summer months
- Learning about new games or technology
- Sharing skills, knitting, sewing, growing flowers or vegetables
- Singing and performing
- Outdoor games such as badminton, skittles, hula hoops, Boules
- Seasonal activities e.g. Easter, Christmas, Halloween
- Arts and Crafts
- A combination– which can give scope to engage more people with different interests, health issues and abilities e.g. some people may be unable to garden but would like to knit or talk about their childhood.



TOP TIP: Before and during the project, take notes at all meetings. Make a list of action points that need to be done, by whom and when. Circulate the notes and actions to key partners and the members of staff who will be representing their organisation. Good, clear communication keeps everyone informed about what needs to happen before the project begins, and while it's running.

Preparation

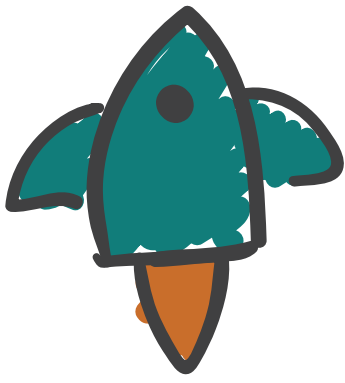
- Continue to support students and residents to think about what they would like to get out of the project and listen to their ideas. We found the themes for a histories and memoirs project became more focused when common interests emerged; designing a sensory garden brought participants outside to make creative pebble decorations and play badminton and skittles.
- Support the residents to write to local businesses and ask for donations for the project. Vouchers can be used to buy refreshments or equipment needed. Some businesses are very generous and supportive of community projects.
- Discuss how the children will get to the venue/ care home; a member of staff must accompany the children and be with them at all times; if needed make sure the mini-bus is free, and is booked with a driver for the duration of the project. NB: If accessible taxis are required – we discovered they are generally pre-booked daily for the school run and also over the Christmas period for outings.
- Send permission slips to parents (usually actioned by the school).
- Prepare a risk assessment for the visits in partnership with the venue.
- Make sure full and appropriate insurance is in place, contact an insurance broker if you are not sure.
- Organise help for residents to get to the lounge / garden if they have mobility problems.



Safeguarding

- Any volunteers taking part should be DBS checked.
- Check that permission has been given for young people to be photographed.
- Check with older people that they are happy to be photographed.
- Have safeguarding policy and processes in place (on this project the older people did not have to be DBS checked as sessions were held in a group).
- Make sure young people are supported and supervised by a member of staff at all time.





“Joy”

“The garden games and painting messages onto pebbles with the children brought me such joy”

“It was so much fun”

“I enjoyed the children being here very much” Cranbrook Residents

Beginning the project and providing support

- Help young people to take a lead by preparing questions to ask, e.g. for a History or Memories project, help students to design a questionnaire and provide notebooks.
- The first time all participants meet is a useful time to make introductions. Have a tour of the venue, share and develop ideas on activities and topics.
- Ideas may continue to progress, such as plans for a sensory garden; adults and children can work together to design, decorate and choose plants.
- Be flexible and allow topics to change and evolve as the conversation takes place
- Allow space for talking and spending time together, common interests may emerge, some people will naturally find they ‘get on’ and some small groupings can emerge.
- Be on hand to facilitate conversations - the young people might need help keeping conversations on topic.
- Enlist some help – volunteers or staff who can take care of refreshments and circulate to help where needed.
- Plan an end of activity celebration for all involved - this will be an opportunity for everyone to see the scrapbook, photo exhibition, PowerPoint and say thank you to one another. Snacks and drinks are ideally provided at this event.



TOP TIP: An invitation written by the children to the older people asking to meet them in the lounge or garden for tea and cake is a good way to start the project in a relaxed environment. Help will be needed to create, copy and deliver this.

TOP TIP: Have a digital camera, or iPad available to record the project. Coordinator or Staff member to keep the camera or to download onto a memory stick the contents of the session immediately at the end of the session and put somewhere for safe keeping.

TOP TIP: The production of an end of project scrapbook is an excellent memento of the experience; this can include photographs from the sessions of the activities as well as photographs of artefacts and write ups of stories that were shared.

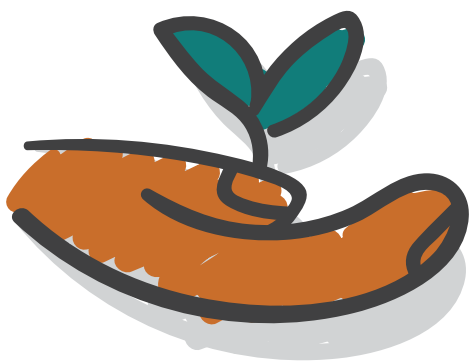


Sustainability

Regroup after the project to talk about what went well and what could have been improved, how could the project go forwards and what could happen next. Reflect on the feedback from

both students and residents. What benefits did they get from the project and how can these be replicated in the future? Can the connections and friendships continue?

- Is there a potential for an intergenerational after school club?
- Are there links and activities that can be continued to be shared?
- Invitations to future events, school productions, fetes and quizzes/games afternoons.
- Share your findings, what you have found out, with others.
- Publicise in local newsletters and encourage others to try similar projects in their neighbourhoods or parishes.
- Think about applying for funding.



“Refreshed”

“We loved listening to life stories. Going to Cranbrook made us feel refreshed and helped us forget our problems. We hope the residents found it fun having us around because we loved it” Causeway School Student

TOP TIP:

It is possible to plan for a yearly exchange for the next cohort of year 6 children to visit the care home for another intergenerational project, after SATs have ended the following year. The link between the school and care home becomes solid and connections, across generations, organisations and the community are deepened.



“Beneficial”

“We learnt to knit, do a rubics cube, painted messages on to pebbles, planted a sensory garden, performed a show, made wind chimes and had our own sports day, all in 5 visits. I can’t express how beneficial it was to everyone involved”

Kryssy Hamilton, Teacher, West Rise Juniors

Outcomes & evaluation

- Sharing time, skills, experience and knowledge.
- A decrease in loneliness and isolation by feeling part of a wider community.
- Increased physical and social activity by having access to engaging activities and discussions.
- Feeling safer in the local community by challenging negative stereotypes.
- Community cohesion, increasing empathy and understanding.



Photographs and recordings are great ways of illustrating the impact of intergenerational work. We also used the ‘mood wheel’ to compare how people were feeling before and after sessions. This is a great way to measure the effect of the project on people’s wellbeing. To download the ‘mood wheel’ visit 3VA website or contact us.

“Happiness”

“The intergenerational project provided such a positive impact in terms of wellbeing for the residents. Being around children brought them a sense of excitement and happiness. One resident found this exceptional as his grandson has grown up and he misses the times they used to play games together”

Tracey Wood, Extra Care Scheme Manager, Saxon Weald.

MORE INFO

For more information about the projects or to order more copies of this guide please contact

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