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**Increasing communication between  
early years practitioners and families**

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# Outline of the presentation

- Context – Hertfordshire, Waltham Cross
- 0-7 Years Partnership pilot
- Children's Spaces – Buggy Buddies
- Project development
- Learning identified
- Next steps...



# Hertfordshire

- **1.1M** population
- **Affluent** county, LSOA of disadvantage
- Two tier authority – **10 district councils**
- **82 Children's Centres**
- 475 PVI providers receiving **free place funding**
- **1800 childminders**
- **502 schools**
- **15 Nursery Schools**
- **64,000 under 5 yr olds**



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# Waltham Cross

- Next to London Borough of Enfield
- Just under **14,000** population
- **16% BME** families (Herts 11%)
- Unemployment just under 6% (Herts 2.9%)
- **7<sup>th</sup> most deprived area in Herts**
- 29% community live in flats
- 25% without a car



# 0-7 Years Partnership pilot

Due to end March 2011: ends today

Aim of the initiative:

- The Children's Plan
- Action research projects
- To improve transitions, coherence across 0-7 yr old services, quality



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# 0-7 Years Partnership pilot

- Outcomes driven
- Research questions to investigate
- Monitored and measured
- Supported by TfC
- £1M for Hertfordshire to develop 5 models by March 2011



# Children's Spaces

- Children's voices – concern about their environment, alleys/service roads
- Healthy weight programme
- Healthy lifestyle
- Parent:child communication
- Attendance, time-keeping issues
- Engaging parents in their children's development and learning



# Baseline views

## Families

- Walk to school/Children's Centre, drive to shops, doctors
- No go areas
- Feels unsafe – underpass, traffic
- Litter, dogs mess, overhanging trees



## Practitioners

'I drive in and drive out'

Adults talk to each other, not the children

Often late, in buggies, dummies/bottles

# Children's Spaces

Purpose:

*Developing safe routes and improving the environment in order to ensure spaces and journeys are safe learning environments for children and families*

# Children's Spaces

## Key activities:

- Partnership Working
- Consultation
- Learning resources
- Match funding
- Route planning

*"I would like to see flowers  
not rubbish on the floor"  
"You can cut yourself on  
broken glass"  
"Yuk"*

*"I like plants but not  
actually stinging  
nettles"*

# Consultation

- Photos and visual walks
- Parent questionnaires
- Child and adult discussions

## Findings

- Zebra crossings with crossing patrol
- Clear up litter
- More play areas
- Clear up dog's mess
- More fun for children

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# Buggy Buddies

- Bugs & activities – to take home
- Naming competition
- EYFS links
- Partnership working:  
Children's Centres  
Parents  
PVI Settings  
Childminders



# Buggy Buddies



- Stickers, activity cards, poster, ink stampers, card log, reward passport, certificates....
- Learning aims – practitioner and family activity cards



# Improving the routes

- Use Buggy Buddy colours
- Planters with wildlife planting
- Replace broken fencing
- Railing to define pedestrian path
- Bird feeders
- Painted footprints
- Child height signs
- Rubbish bins



# Increasing communication

## Families

“I think they are going to change it and make it nice”

Talking to children about environment

Sharing stories about the Buggy Buddies

Alleys cleared and kept clear



## Practitioners

Understanding the challenges for the community

Better communication with families informally and formally

Buggy Buddies providing home:setting link

# Learning from the projects

## Challenges...

- Cross border/multi-agency project
- Joining up funding streams (revenue, capital)
- The time it takes!

## Good practice...

- Power of children's voices
- Engaging the wider community
- Keep it relevant

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## Next steps...

### **Routes to early years services**

- Bishop's Stortford project
- Evaluation of the impact
- Model to use in other areas

### **Buggy Buddies**

- Launched to Children's Centre
- School Travel Team - early years travel plans, Buggy Buddies website with resources, seasonal activities



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