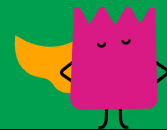


STARLIGHT

TRANSFORMING CHILDREN'S HEALTH THROUGH PLAY



VACCINE

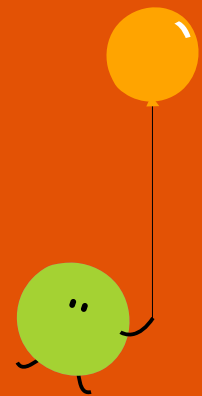
PROJECT



2024

February 2024

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SUMMARY

NHS North East London is a NHS England partner overseeing the COVID-19 vaccination programme, with a priority to co-design approaches to reducing health inequalities and increasing vaccination uptake amongst ethnic minority groups, faith groups and specific locations. During the 2023/24 Autumn/Winter campaign, NHS North East London built on the learning from a previous project with Starlight looking at a play-based approach to increase uptake. Starlight provided advice, training, and activities.

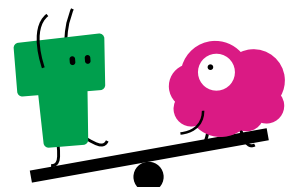
Using health playworkers, play resources, and environmental modification, community sites were transformed into playful places, taking on the feel of playgrounds.

BCYP, staff and volunteers reported positive experiences in this pilot.



KEY POINTS

- Small scale pilot across six sites in North East London
- Starlight webinar for health staff in advance
- Playworkers at six family vaccine days facilitating playful space and support for children to play/parents to relax
- Therapeutic play and distraction resources to support



RE-AIM MODEL

'BEFORE' RE-AIM MODEL: WHAT WE AIMED TO DO

REACH

Starlight aims to provide play and distraction resources to **eight vaccine sites across North East London**. We aim to distribute 1306 toys + approx. 3185 stickers reaching that number of children. We will also run **six play sessions** across six of these sites.



EFFECTIVENESS

We will measure:

- Health professional feedback on the impact of our services on vaccine delivery/uptake, children's engagement and interaction and their satisfaction with the services delivered.
- Children/parent feedback on their experience of receiving the vaccine, how they felt before, during and after, and the impact the services had in reducing anxiety, fear and distress associated with the vaccine.

ADOPTION

We will provide resources to all sites. We will also facilitate a webinar training session for health professionals and six play day sessions with children and young people.

IMPLEMENTATION

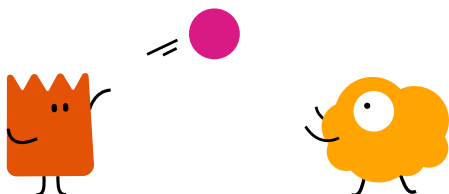
We have used the learning from our previous work in this area to develop and improve this programme of delivery by:

- Providing resources and guidance on how to use them
- Delivering training to health professionals
- Facilitating play sessions
- Monitoring and evaluating the implementation



MAINTENANCE

We will share learning and insights from this programme of work, proposals on how to scale and grow this work, and how it can be improved during and at the end of the project.



'AFTER' RE-AIM MODEL: WHAT WE DID AND THE OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

REACH

Starlight provided play and distraction resources to **eight vaccine sites across North East London**. We also ran **six play sessions** across six of these sites. These sites included:

- Community centres
- Medical practices
- Special education schools
- Family hubs

We estimate that we reached **over 2500* children and young people** through the resources sent to each site.

EFFECTIVENESS

We found that providing play sessions and resources before and after receiving a vaccine can reduce the proportion of children feeling negative emotions and increase the proportion feeling positive emotions. **70%** of the children we spoke to felt positive emotions (e.g. happy) before the vaccine); this increased to **95%** after the vaccine**.

Feedback from parents/carers, clinical and non-clinical on-site vaccine staff, and the Starlight team, indicated that parents also felt positive emotions (e.g. relief, relaxation) due to the play provision and that play was protected at the vaccine centres for the children involved.



ADOPTION

We facilitated a webinar training session with health professionals before the play sessions. However, at each play session, there was some lack of understanding from on-site staff of what Starlight's role was and the resources provided, so the effectiveness of this training was unclear. Greatest impact was seen when Starlight staff were present themselves.

At the play sessions, the on-site team were generally receptive to the power of play and understood the importance of introducing play into vaccine sites, getting involved in play themselves. At one site there was evidence of on-site staff continuing to play with children even when Starlight staff left.



IMPLEMENTATION

Learnings and recommendations for making improvements when delivering play sessions in vaccine sites in the future, are the following:

- Improved communication
- Range in child- and parent-friendly vaccine and play provision information
- Expansion to provide play at more vaccine sites
- Changes to maximise the impact of training and resources

MAINTENANCE

To incorporate playful approaches into commissioners' vaccination offer in the long-term, collaboration with partner charities and organisations who provide play resources is important. As such, the NEL ICB/Starlight partnership is continuing into March 2024 in order to support with boosting vaccine uptake and improving children and families' experiences of vaccinations.

*Calculated by multiplying the average number of items delivered to each site (316 items across the box and sticker sheets) by the number of sites reached (8). Actual figure = 2528

**Feedback from children and young people limited to on-site data collection due to no postcards/surveys returned to Starlight from sites



FEEDBACK FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES

A member of Starlight's Insights and Impact team spoke to 20 children and young people* who attended the vaccine sites and participated in the play sessions. They used emoji cards to tell us how they felt before, during and after the vaccine, and how play made an impact.

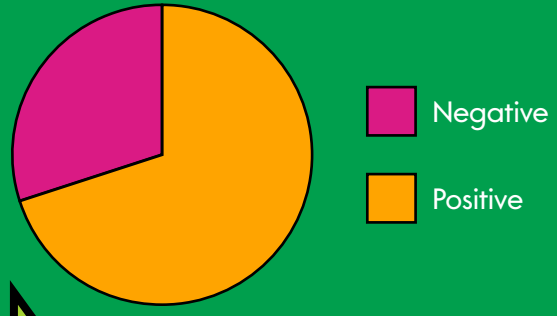
THE TYPES OF POSITIVE (TOP) AND NEGATIVE (BOTTOM) EMOTIONS FELT BY CHILDREN DURING THE VACCINE EXPERIENCE

Word cloud: Size of text denotes number of mentions
N = 20



The proportion of children and young people who felt positive emotions **increased from 70% before the vaccine, to 95% after the vaccine** (n=20). This indicates a positive impact from the play session.

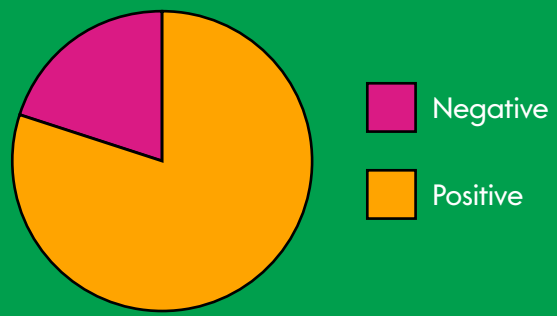
BEFORE



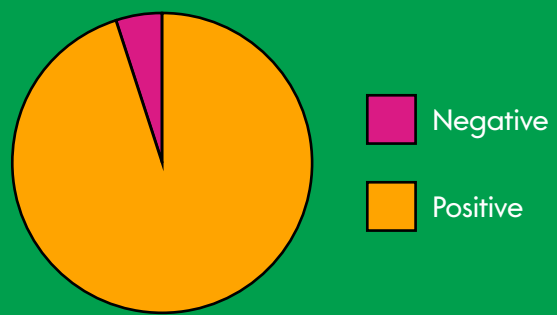
This high proportion at the 'Before' timepoint could refer to many children participating in the play session *before* their vaccine, which had a positive effect on their emotions.

For example, one child said they were 'nervous' coming in, but felt 'good' after playing (but before the vaccine).

DURING



AFTER



*For children and young people who had additional needs (e.g. at the special education school), their parents/carers responded on their behalf

CHILDREN WERE SUPPORTIVE WHEN GIVING ADVICE TO OTHERS



It will last for two seconds and it doesn't hurt



You get to play



It's okay, it doesn't hurt. It will be very quick



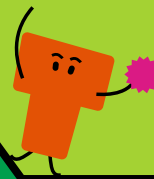
It's fine, doesn't hurt that much



At the end of the day, it's just a small spray in the nose



Get it done because it's better getting it done than not getting it done



Getting a toy felt like a reward

One child commented that the opportunity to play and receive toys was a reward for getting the vaccine. If more children knew about the play provision in advance, could this incentivise vaccine uptake?

OVERALL FEEDBACK*



THE PLAY SESSIONS PROTECTED PLAY FOR THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE RECEIVING A VACCINE

1 PLAY PROVISION WAS NEW, NOVEL AND VALUABLE

Parents/carers and on-site staff commented that play is not usually provided at vaccine centres, but when it is, they could see it brings real value.

Parents/carers recognised the contrast between the positive environment created by the play provision, compared to previous experiences where there was no play and where children had more negative experiences.



With previous environments, they were very clinical and with nothing to do, ... then that gives you space and time to reflect on what will happen and get bored, anxious and afraid

A parent at the special education school



She [a mum] said whenever they've attended vaccinations prior, it's never been like this, and instead, it's been crying children

A health play specialist at the community centre

2 ON-SITE STAFF WERE EMPOWERED TO PLAY WITH CHILDREN AND LEARN MORE ABOUT THE POWER OF PLAY



The Starlight team engaged on-site staff with play so that they felt more equipped and confident to play with children themselves.

At one site, there was evidence of play continuing when the Starlight team left the vaccine session, which tentatively suggests a longer-term impact.



I feel like people were asking a lot of questions about kind of who we were and what we were doing... People were very curious. That seemed like a very positive thing

Starlight team member at the special education school



There was a lot of playing going on as we left, it was all very like naturally happening as we left, you would barely notice when we when we went out the door because they were all busy doing their things

Starlight team member at the special education school

*This includes feedback we received from parents/carers, on-site vaccine staff and the Starlight team. On-site vaccine staff includes any NHS staff/volunteers who were working at vaccine sites, such as health play specialists, area clinical leads, vaccinators, site managers, and volunteers.

THE PLAY SESSIONS POSITIVELY IMPACTED THE EMOTIONS OF BOTH CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS/CARERS*



1 PLAY DISTRACTED CHILDREN FROM THE VACCINE AND REDUCED THEIR ANXIETY

Distraction was commonly reported as an effect of the play provision, encouraging children to focus on something else in a safe space.

Starlight and on-site staff commented on the change in children's behaviour, appearing less anxious after playing than how they seemed when they first entered the site.



I think you could see the change in there like body language and stuff like the child and her sibling when they came in, they seemed a little bit shy and a bit reserved, didn't they?...But as soon as they kind of took in the environment and the fact that it was brighter and it was toys and stuff, they were straight over [to play]

A Starlight team member at one of the medical practices



It felt safe. Like a very safe environment. He played with plastic toys which he enjoyed and loved doing

A parent at the special education school



This [play] would help relax and distract them [children]

Site manager at the special education school

2 PARENTS/CARERS FELT RELAXED, RELIEVED AND ENGAGED

Play appeared to make parents/carers feel relaxed. At the special education school, relief was also a common feeling; due to their additional needs, the play provision meant vaccines could be administered more smoothly for each young person.

On-site staff commented that the relaxed parents/carers were engaged with the vaccine process and believed this could positively impact on vaccine uptake.



Families seemed more relaxed, happy and engaged with the vaccine. They didn't seem to have much resistance nor issues in delivering the vaccine, which indicates that our approach [i.e., providing play] was having a positive impact...

On-site staff at the special education school



[A dad] observed that this seemed a great source of relief for parents which would otherwise find it hard to concentrate and do what they needed to do to get their child registered and vaccinated

A volunteer and parent at the special education school

*Using feedback from parents/carers, on-site vaccine staff and the Starlight team.

REFLECTION

WHAT WORKED WELL

Reflections from on-site vaccine staff and the Starlight team



1 VISIBILITY AND PRESENCE OF STARLIGHT

Starlight posters and toys were immediately visible and available to children and families as they walked in. This was welcoming, engaging and distracting.



It is the first thing they see, the bright colours and toys. Colours are so important and can transform the space into a friendly fun environment and what we have provided in BRILLIANT

Site manager at the special education school



When I went outside to bring people in and I opened the doors, immediately I could see them relax

A volunteer and parent at the special education school

2 DELIVERING IN NON-CLINICAL SITES

There were perceived benefits of delivering vaccines in the non-clinical community sites, with suggestions that this can increase uptake.



Having the vaccine delivered in a community setting such as schools, faith groups, libraries, etc., makes it less stressful, reduces hesitancy and also leads to a better uptake

Site manager at the special education school



Just more broadly for feedback for vaccine program, actually doing it in the community, a lot of people talk to about how comfortable they felt rather than going into a clinical setting.... But actually being the school made them feel a lot more safe

A Starlight team member at the special education school

3 DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY WITH RESOURCES

Play resources were seen to be appropriate and tailored to children’s needs. Starlight staff were able to flex and adapt to changing circumstances.



I was really happy to be able to engage her because she was visually impaired... And then it turns out it was one of her favourite things, which is a big win for me

A Starlight team member talking about singing with a child at the special education school



Early on we were told that we would mainly be working with teens, so we put out games... However, having loose parts and arts and crafts, we were able to appeal to an eclectic and diverse set of interests and preferences

A Starlight team member at the special education school

4 POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Starlight and on-site teams worked collaboratively together. On-site staff were receptive to the power of play and got involved in play themselves.



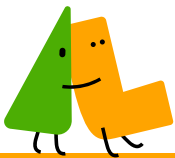
I thought the people that we were working with the vaccine team and the volunteers were fab... It was great to have so many volunteers around, so many hands on deck and that was really positive

A Starlight team member at the special education school



I thought the relationship with people in the room was good... and then having done the three hours together, obviously a stronger relationship at the end of the day

A Starlight team member at the community centre



WHAT TO IMPROVE

Reflections from on-site vaccine staff and the Starlight team

1 COMMUNICATION BETWEEN ON-SITE AND STARLIGHT STAFF

There were some instances of miscommunication about the space that the Starlight team could access to deliver the play session, and on-site staff not being aware that the Starlight team were attending on the day.

Recommendations

- Consider asking the on-site team to share a picture of the space ahead of time
- Ensure all parties are aware of Starlight's attendance
- Require the NHS team to provide Starlight with the contact details of the on-site team in the week before each session



2 CHILD- AND PARENT-FRIENDLY RESOURCES

Parents said they wanted to feel more prepared for the vaccine. They asked to have access to resources which could support them to talk to their child beforehand, to let them know what to expect. Such resources could also be used to tell children about the opportunity to play at the session, which could incentivise vaccine uptake.

Recommendations

- Develop and provide more child- and parent-friendly resources before the vaccine session, to educate both groups about the process and encourage them to come and play
- Consider expanding range of resources available to account for families' needs (e.g. communication cards, translated consent forms for EAL families)



It is important to prepare your child beforehand

A parent at the special education school



It would be great if we could provide content for parents or a link to our resource hub

A Starlight team member at the special education school



3 EXPAND PLAY PROVISION TO MORE VACCINATIONS

The benefits of Starlight's play sessions were evident enough for parents and on-site staff to ask for this provision to be expanded to future vaccine sessions.

Recommendations

- Consider widening play provision across the vaccination offer into more vaccine sessions, for other immunisations as well as COVID and flu



They do immunisations every month, it would be great to have things for children to play with when they have the broader immunisations too

Site manager at the special education school

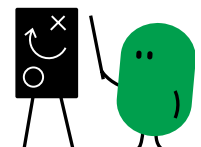


4 MAXIMISE THE IMPACT OF TRAINING AND RESOURCES

Some of the resources provided by Starlight (e.g. webinar training; postcard surveys; leaflets sent to each site) were not utilised enough to gain maximum impact.

Recommendations

- Consider the most appropriate webinar attendees to ensure the right people can benefit from the information that Starlight share
- Make clearer the purpose and benefit of vaccine staff asking families to complete postcard surveys to facilitate the evaluation





TRANSFORMING CHILDREN'S HEALTH THROUGH PLAY

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