

**50**  
things to do **before you're**  
**five**™



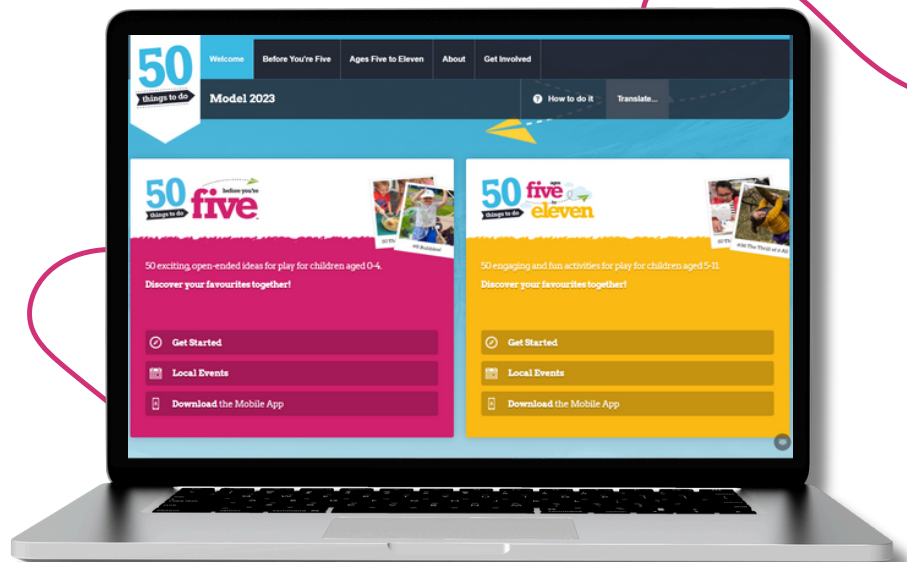
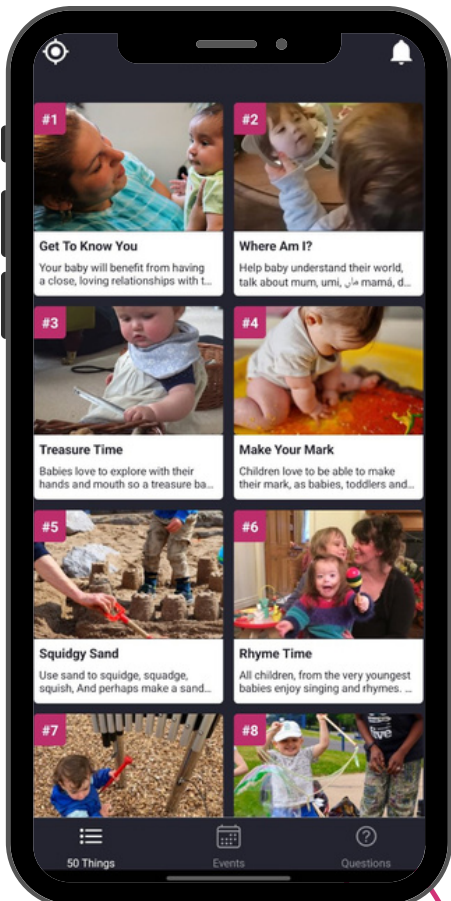
## Case for Support

**50 Things to Do Before You're Five** is an exciting initiative full of ideas and activities for parents and families with young children.

**50 Things** is a suite of **localised**:

- Apps
- Websites
- Promotional materials

Our project offers a wide range of activities from **outdoor discoveries** in the woods, to **exploring how sound changes** in different places, to **sharing stories** and **water play!**





# Why did we create 50 Things?

**The first five years of a child's life are critical.** It is at that time that the foundations for learning, health and wellbeing are laid for adulthood, leading to health and economic benefits to the whole of society.

We built **50 Things to Do** because we are passionate about reducing inequalities and increasing life chances. As experts in the early years, we know the value of high-quality experiences, building early relationships and parental involvement.

Through place-based, playful experiences, **50 Things to Do** helps young children to have the best start in life. It inspires families to make their homes a great place for their children to learn and thrive.



"Children best succeed when their childhood is full of positive experiences."

**Paul Lindley**

*Raising the Nation*

We know that when parents confidently play with their children, there will be a positive impact on:

- ✓ Family health and wellbeing
- ✓ Children's achievements in the long-term

## 50 Things in Numbers

**24**

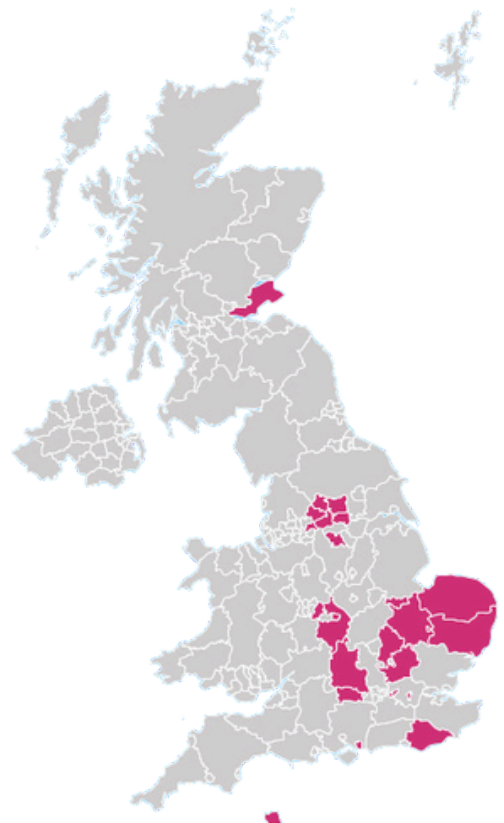
local offers across the British Isles. These are **highlighted** on the map.

**84,400**

downloads on unique devices since 2018.

**13%**

of the UK's under-five population reached.



# The Problem

Across the UK, young children's **health is getting worse**. Children today spend **less time playing outdoors** than any other generation. More children are also arriving at school **not prepared for formal education**. We know that children who are 'school-ready' tend to stay ahead, whilst those that are behind their peers struggle to catch up.

According to the Nuffield Trust, "One serious effect of the nationwide lockdowns was the negative impact on children and young people's **speech, language and communication**. Putting children at risk of a range of negative outcomes related to their education, social interactions and behaviour". **Low-income families face further disadvantages** which negatively affect their children's education and health.

## How bad is the problem?

**More than 20% of children** under five are now **obese**.

**33% of children** do not play outside after school, at all.

Children born into the **poorest 20% of families** in the UK are **13 times more likely** to experience **poor health and educational outcomes** by the age of 17.



**Families have a significant influence on their child's development** and subsequently, their academic success, which directly influences the child's life chances. Research consistently demonstrates this pivotal role of interactions between parent and child, yet, **many families feel judged** by professionals and services, and lack the self-esteem and confidence to engage in developmental activities with their children.

A report published in 2020 by The Royal Foundation highlighted that 7 out of every 10 parents feel judged by others. Among these parents, almost half felt this negatively impacts their mental health.



# Why use 50 Things?

50 Things to Do is based on such a **simple idea**. Fun, low or no-cost experiences for the **whole family**, indoors and outdoors, are great ways to support children's development. 50 Things to Do is a perfect resource for families, a **free bucket list of 'fun stuff'**, involving an app, website, and social media campaign.

## Promoting Effective Practice

The activities support all aspects of child development, especially:

Physical Development

Mental Health

Cognitive Development

Social Development

Speech and Language Development

The activities are also developed to promote what the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) calls the *characteristics of effective learning* for young children, which are:

- **Playing and Exploring:** children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- **Active Learning:** children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically:** children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

## Encouraging Playful Shared Experiences

Parents are their child's 'first teacher'. Our initiative is underpinned by evidence-informed impactful pedagogies and parenting approaches, but **what parents really need to know** is that it is full of fun stuff to do with their children! Our focus on families having fun together is a deliberate approach, promoting an inclusive, non-judgmental way for parents to engage fully with their children.

Even just a few minutes a day of playing together:

- creates **relaxing and enjoyable** times for children and adults, impacting positively on the whole family's mental health.
- provides the **ideal bonding opportunity**, which helps to secure relationships.

'It's exhausting to be a parent in any circumstance, but it's much more exhausting to be a parent when you don't have the resources that other families have.'

**Lew-William**

# Why is a local offer important?

Children grow up in a locality and are **part of a community**. Localising 50 Things to Do **celebrates the diversity** of individual communities across the country. We acknowledge the need for an offer that **represents and connects with local people**. We passionately believe that it is important that families see themselves and the places they know within their local offer, because it:

- encourages children and families to **explore their own local landscapes**, communities and cultural venues alongside the local history that defines the places they live.
- provides children with **a sense of place** and a greater connection to communities around them.
- **signposts families** to local events.

“Individuals often respond best to messages about behaviour from those within their local community.”

**Science and Technology Select Committee**

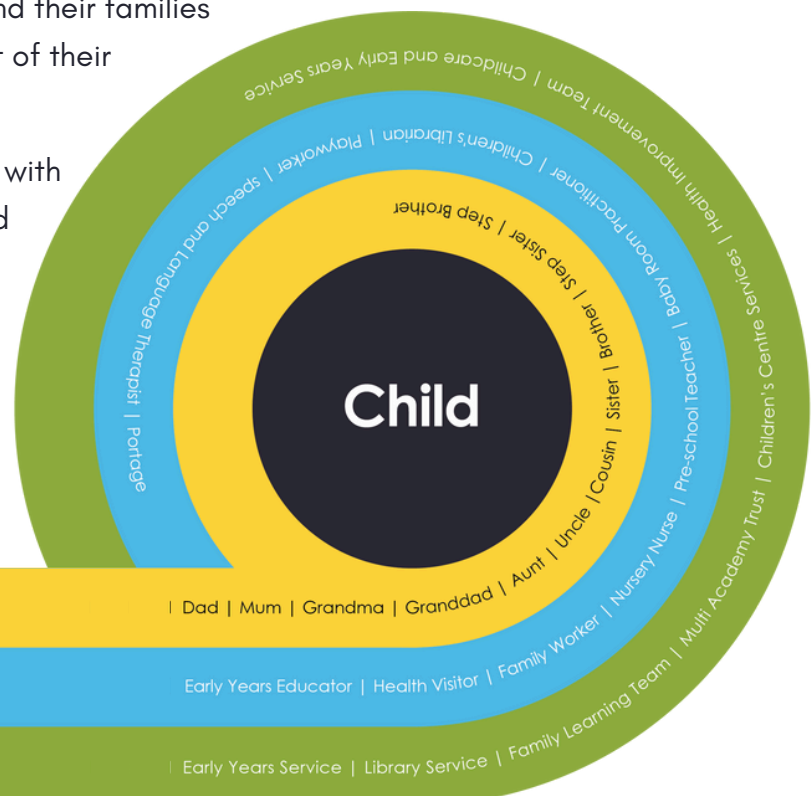
“50 Things to Do provides a consistent message for our local partners, frontline practitioners and parents, and ties the different strands together to positively impact on outcomes for children.”

**50 Things to Do, Wakefield.**

## Encouraging an Integrated Approach

We recognise that children’s development is not exclusively dependent on the input of parents, or their early years setting/school. We encourage the engagement of local museums, libraries, community hubs, faith groups and local businesses with 50 Things to Do activities. This provides children and their families with more opportunities to be part of their local community.

We also **encourage connections** with health, social care, early years and other agencies who work with families. We help individual agencies to achieve their targets whilst recognising a shared purpose: **improved life chances for all children.**



**Family**

| Dad | Mum | Grandma | Granddad | Aunt | Uncle | Cousin | Sister | Brother | Step Sister | Step Brother

**Practitioners**

Early Years Educator | Health Visitor | Family Worker | Nursery Nurse | Pre-school Teacher | Children's Centre Services

**Commissioning Partners**

Early Years Service | Library Service | Family Learning Team | Multi-Academy Trust | Health Improvement Team | Baby Room Practitioner | Children's Librarian | Playworker | Speech and Language Therapist | Portage | Childcare and Early Years Service



# Our Impact

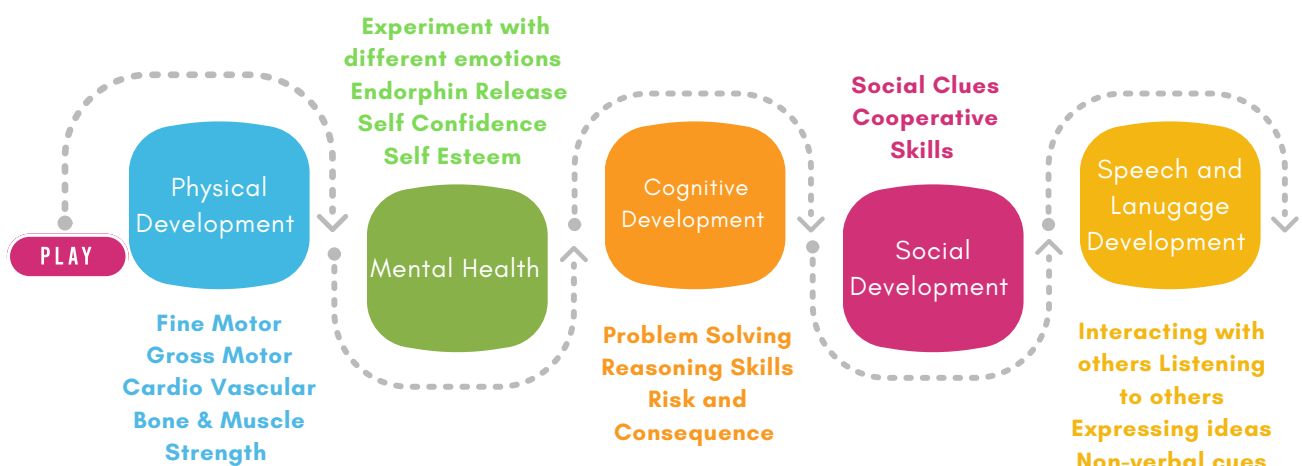
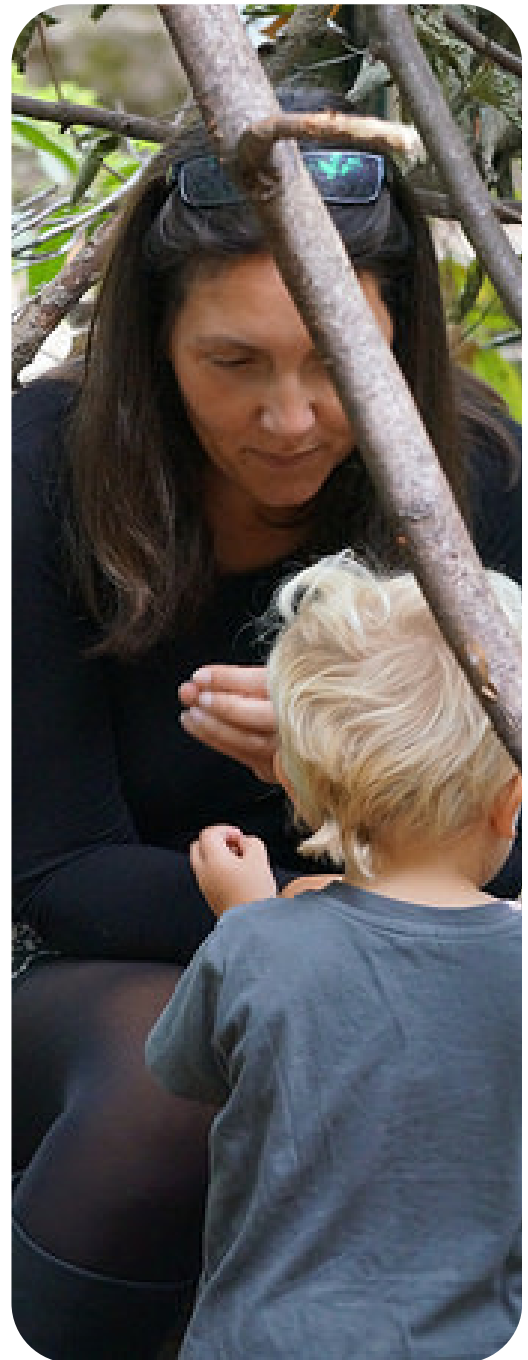
Across the UK, we are **helping families to make their home a great place to play and learn**, supporting children’s development and contributing to improved life chances. We know that playing, especially outside, **positively impacts health** later in life and children’s brain development.

We are helping families **establish active lifestyles** through taking part in outdoor activities and connecting with nature. This improves mental wellbeing, coronary and respiratory health, and also **lowers obesity**.

By encouraging families to play together, we are having a **positive impact on the whole family’s mental wellbeing**, reducing stress and boredom, while **promoting feelings of joy and happiness**.

By encouraging positive interactions and improved communication, we are helping families bond. We are also **improving parents’ confidence** in supporting the development of children’s language, literacy and communication skills. We know that this **positively impacts academic achievement** in primary and secondary school ages.

We are passionate about promoting **play** because it is **essential in our lives**. It underpins all development and learning for young children.



## Physical Development

## Mental Health

"Time spent outdoors, in nature, increases life expectancy, improves well-being, reduces symptoms of depression and increases a child's ability to function in school."

**Open University's OPENspace Research Centre.**

**75%**

of parents said that, since using the **50 Things to Do Before You're 5** app, their child has gone outside to play more often.



## Parental Confidence

When parents feel competent in their parenting role they are more likely to be engaged in their learning and development. "An individual's belief in their ability to be successful in the role of parenting (i.e., confidence) is an essential component of the quality and sustainability of parenting behaviours." **Belsky J, Jaffee SR (2006) The Multiple Determinants of Parenting**

'It's exhausting to be a parent in any circumstance, but it's much more exhausting to be a parent when you don't have the resources that other families have.'" **Lew-William.**

**67%**

of parents said that, since using the **50 Things to Do Before You're 5** app they feel more confident to try new things with their children.



## Social Development

“Part of how kids learn how to get along with others is by spending time with people, making friends, and also by being with people they wouldn't necessarily choose to be around. It's with practise that children and adults get better at doing all of those things. So we are definitely seeing signs of developmental lag in some children's social skills.”

**UNICEF (2022) Managing the long-term effects of the pandemic on your child's mental health.**

**70%**

of parents said that, since using **50 Things to Do Before You're 5**, their child has had more opportunities to socialise within their local community.



## Speech and Language Development

The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the outcomes gap, and set back children's learning and development - particularly in language and maths - and hit those from disadvantaged backgrounds hardest.

**DfE (c2022) COVID-19 Recovery Package, DfE Factsheet.**

One serious effect of the nationwide lockdowns was the negative impact on children and young people's speech, language and communication.

**Nuffield Trust (2022) The impact of Covid-19 on health care for children and young people in England.**

**63%**

of parents said that, since using **50 Things to Do Before You're 5**, they communicate more purposefully with their child whilst they are playing.

**86%**

of parents said that the **50 Things to Do** activities provide different opportunities to communicate with their child.

# Your support

Your support of **50 Things to Do** could make a big difference. By helping us you will us give the capacity to improve outcomes for thousands more children and their families across the UK.

Financial support will enable us to:

- ✓ develop and grow the project nationally
- ✓ reach new local areas
- ✓ reach new audiences

If you are able to help, or want to know more, please contact our director, Christian Bunting, via email or telephone.

✉ [christian.bunting@stedmundsbradford.org.uk](mailto:christian.bunting@stedmundsbradford.org.uk)

☎ 01274 543282



**Dr William Bird**, GP and founder of Intelligent Health, recently told us that **“As a GP, I can't make a child healthy, like you can, I can treat disease, give vaccinations, but I can't set a child's brain, body and immunity in a resilient way, for the rest of their life. That's what 50 Things to Do can do.”**



Find out more...



Read more about it in our **Impact Report**.




 [www.50thingstodo.org/aboutus/impactreport](http://www.50thingstodo.org/aboutus/impactreport)







[www.50thingstodo.org](http://www.50thingstodo.org)

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