

Theory of Change

When local agencies collaborate to co-design and promote 50 Things to Do Before You're Five



and families are supported to engage in local, low-cost early learning experiences,



then children will develop stronger language, social, and cognitive skills,



leading to improved school readiness, family wellbeing, and reduced inequalities across communities.



Core Outcome

For every child to reach their important health, learning, and wellbeing milestones through a play-filled childhood.

Inputs / Enablers

- Local partnership of early years providers, health, education, care, culture, and community sectors.
- Accessible mobile app, localised printed resources.
- Data and insight on local needs: EYFS profiles, health data, IMD.
- Community champions and family engagement officers.
- Co-design with families to ensure cultural and local relevance.
- Families engage in local low-cost early learning experiences.
- Support from national 50 Things to Do team for co-construction and cross sector engagement.
- Peer support from other 50 Things regional teams

Short-Term Impacts

- **Increased Awareness** Parents and carers become more aware of the importance of early learning through everyday experiences.
- **Enhanced Collaboration** Stronger partnerships across early years, health, family hubs, libraries, museums, voluntary sector, and local authority teams.
- **Improved Access** Families have access to free, simple, local activities that promote speech, play, and bonding.
- **Capacity Building** Practitioners adopt shared messaging and approaches to supporting early learning.
- **Community Ownership** Local communities begin to co-create and promote activities, making them relevant to local places and cultures.

Medium-Term Impacts

- **Improved Home Learning Environments** Parents regularly engage in high-quality interactions and activities with their children.
- **Reduced Inequalities** Children in disadvantaged areas participate in more enriching local experiences.
- **Sustained Multi-Agency Coordination** Local systems work cohesively around families, reducing duplication and improving signposting.
- **Strengthened Community Identity** Families identify with local places and networks, increasing belonging and social capital
- **Improved Outcomes** Progress seen in early learning and health

Long-Term Impacts

- **Children Ready to Learn and Thrive** Improved school readiness and early learning outcomes at age 5.
- **Healthier, More Connected Families** Stronger parent-child relationships, improved wellbeing, and engagement in community life.
- **Resilient Local Systems** Place-based partnerships sustain and evolve early years initiatives beyond project funding.
- **Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage** Intergenerational improvement in outcomes through early intervention and place-based collaboration.

Underlying Assumptions

- Parents are their child's first and most important educators.
- Simple, fun, local experiences can have a profound developmental impact.
- Collaboration across sectors leads to more coherent, effective family support.
- Place-based design builds trust, accessibility, and sustainability.
- Digital engagement complements, but does not replace, face-to-face relationships.