



The Yard Dundee Summer Sessions

Summer at The Yard Dundee

Summer can be a tricky time for families with ASN children as accessible services for disabled children throughout the school holidays are rare.

This summer, The Yard Dundee hosted 6 weeks worth of summer sessions in Dundee, providing family sessions for children and young people with ASN and their families throughout the school holidays.

With food donated by Dundee Bairns, we were also able to provide snacks and a lunch to the disabled children and young people, as well as their families, throughout each session.

Funding from Nourish the Nation went towards covering staff costs to

6

weeks of summer sessions at The Yard Dundee

20

family play sessions held during the grant period

429

disabled children, young people, and their families impacted by the award

support the most children possible at our busiest time of the year, as well as additional food costs to add on to the Dundee Bairns food packages.

This grant has been fully spent as of August 2024.

Service Users

Over 20 sessions within the 6 weeks of programme delivery, we supported 429 disabled children and young people, as well as their families.

The age of children and young people supported through this project ranged from 0 to 18.

The split by gender was almost even, with 58% of service users being male and 42% being female. This figure represents the disabled children who are members, and not the wider families.



Impact and Outcomes

At each session, children and young people at The Yard were offered a lunch as well as snacks throughout the day. The approximate cost for each meal per child was £2.50.

In the food packages donated in collaboration with Dundee Bairns we provided the children and young people with sandwiches, wraps, salads, bread sticks, crackers and cheese, and yogurt.

With this grant, we were able to offer a wider variety of snacks by providing fresh fruit and vegetables everyday. The playteam integrated the fruit with activities to help introduce the children to different tastes and textures. Some examples of this include making fruit kebabs (pictured above) or squeezing fresh orange juice (see below). Through messy and sensory play done in a familiar space, children were then encouraged to learn new skills and try new tastes and textures. Any food leftover at the end of sessions we encouraged families to bring home.

To promote these sessions we used our social media platforms with updated schedules, and we contacted local schools prior to the holidays to distribute flyers about our summer sessions.

The funding from Nourish the Nation allowed us to have an additional staff member on hand at each session to support the families. This in turn allowed us to offer summer provision to additional organisations and groups such as Parent to Parent, In together, Kinship group, and Rowantree holiday club. This means we were able to make a wider impact in the Dundee community and reach new groups in need of summer provision.

This summer we were able to support more families than we have done in previous years. In addition, we introduced a food larder and a clothing bank for the families in attendance. This was excellent for learning how we can address the needs of our community not just through our summer sessions, but year-round, as having an accessible community space can make a big difference.

We are committed to providing fun and adventure play to disabled children and young people and their families. For this project, we aimed to deliver on the outcomes of reducing food poverty and promote well-being through play. Overall feedback has been positive with families happy about the lunches and the option to take snacks home, the variety of activities each day, and the staff. There were no memorable challenges as we have delivered summer sessions since 2016 and are improving each year, and funding allowed for full staffing at each session to meet the growing demand.





James' Story

9-year-old James has autism and lives in Dundee with his parents Caroline and Peter.

Raising a child with autism can come with its challenges, and prior to finding The Yard they found it difficult to find places they could go as a family where James could play freely and without judgment from others.

James first visited The Yard with his school. Throughout the week, pupils can take a valuable break from sitting still in class and get to play freely in an inclusive and sensory-friendly space while at The Yard. He now goes to weekend Family Sessions with his parents and this summer attended sessions at The Yard throughout his school holiday.

This means that James could keep up with his routine of going to The Yard multiple times a week, whether or not school is on.

"I just love that James can go there and be himself. He can have a runabout and do whatever he does, and nobody bats an eyelid," Caroline says. "It's great knowing that every week, there's a safe space James can go."

Caroline finds meeting other families with shared experiences gives her and Peter more support and an opportunity to breathe. With the addition of lunches and snacks provided through the summer James is able to play all day at The Yard without having to go home for food in the middle of the day, making it easier for the whole family,

Thanks to your support, The Yard has provided a safe haven for children like James this summer. We couldn't do it without you!