



Creating our  
Memory book



Baby and Me



The Story of Me and  
You



My baby and Me -  
Share English Together



# The Project

- ▶ Targeted at parents who cannot access language learning due to childcare barriers
- ▶ English Language learning through creating a memory book/box
- ▶ Classes were held with parents in very close proximity to the children
- ▶ Book/Box is a keepsake which describes their journey into society from their country of origin.
- ▶ Book/box contains memories that the child will appreciate as they get older
- ▶ Encouraged integration for new and isolated parents by building successful peer groups
- ▶ Improve confidence and self esteem by accessing support networks; public service and progression opportunities



# The Participants

- ▶ Participants were mothers with babies/children ranging from 3 months to 2 years old. The project also supported expectant mothers
- ▶ They were recruited from the local Children's Centres, schools, Refugee Action and referrals from Midwifery and Health Visitor services by Kingston
- ▶ Westminster worked with women who were referred due to concerns over their mental wellbeing, feelings of isolation and low English levels.
- ▶ Croydon worked with the initial accommodation centre, Croydon Health Service, Migrant help and local libraries to work with pregnant asylum-seeking women and those with new born babies.
- ▶ Sutton worked with Children's Centres, referrals from Public Health and Royal Marsden Community Services.
- ▶ Total participation was 56 adults with their children
- ▶ Participants were from a diverse background, mainly those who cannot access adult education budget due to eligibility e.g. those from Jordan, Sri Lanka, Chinese, Filipino, Korea etc.

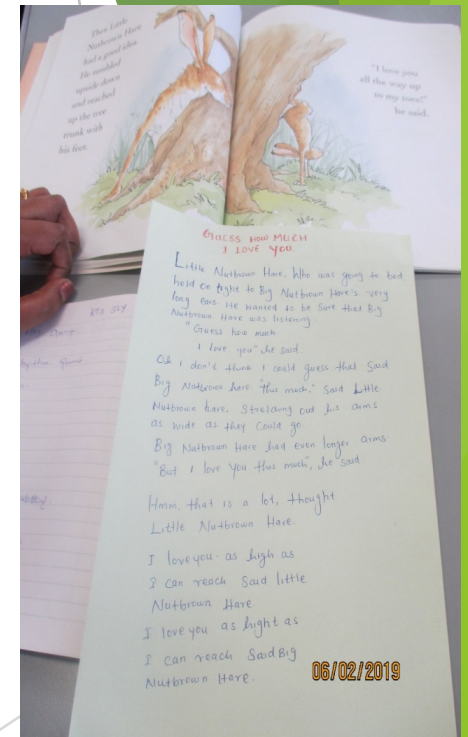


## The Positives...

- ▶ Excellent **bonding and group interaction**, with increased confidence and improved English through sharing their culture with fellow learners
- ▶ Visible difference in **confidence** and learners' sense of belonging & improved relationships between mother and child
- ▶ Proactive and bespoke signposting to facilitate transition to new area
- ▶ The mothers were **highly motivated** by the creative activities. These also proved to be **therapeutic and calming**. They became totally absorbed in the task and relaxed as a result.
- ▶ Greater confidence in the use of English, with vocabulary and language development specific to their own interests and hobbies
- ▶ Learners developed additional skills, such as employability skills in creating a brief / instructions for a project and when evaluating the effectiveness of the course.
- ▶ Increased **community cohesion** as participants explored each other's cultures and difference to living in the UK.
- ▶ Engagement in other activities like rhyme time at libraries and progression to other courses
- ▶ The course became a good environment to **share challenges in parenting** and in adapting to life in the UK, with peer-to-peer advice and support

# Project challenges... and future learning

- ▶ Recruitment (except Croydon) was difficult.
- ▶ Funding ceased by the time courses started to build up through reputation and 'word of mouth'
- ▶ The role of experienced, qualified crèche workers is crucial to the success of the project. Community volunteers and additional staff are required as project was resource intensive.
- ▶ Project was aimed at pre-school children, but parents of school age children continue to struggle within the community to engage in local activities and feel isolated despite their child going to school.
- ▶ The course needs to build in a settling in period for young children as the initial weeks were disruptive for the mother and child.
- ▶ Project success is dependent on partnership working with other agencies so that the most vulnerable parents are referred and signposted to the course.
- ▶ Flexibility of tutors very important with regard to course content; activities offered etc.



## Participant feedback...

- ▶ *I have made something for my son, that when he looks at it, he will know I made it.*
- ▶ *I am thinking about my life and I will learn more English. When my son goes to school here I will understand more*
- ▶ *I will show the memory book to my children and share the memories with them. I can pass the book to them when they are older.*
- ▶ *I now know more services about Sutton College and libraries. It is so useful for me. The teacher helped me with my English.*
- ▶ *'I read it (the book) every night this week' (parents engaging at home in activity from classroom)*
- ▶ Link to YouTube: <https://youtu.be/1Jh8uIKThW4>