



Lickety Spit



The Adventures of Lickety Leap

Transforming lives –
the possibilities
of theatre

by Virginia Radcliffe

'Let's do it
again!... We'll do
the same as we
did to get up the
mountain, through
the bog, Oogly
Boogly Lady and
Fishy Lady -
Come on!
Let's do it all
over again!'

3 year old, LicketyLeap

Contents

Follow us on our journey!
– Margaret and Margaret



Chapter One

About Us **2**

Chapter Two

LicketyLeap **4**

Chapter Three

Evaluation **8**

Chapter Four

The Impact **12**

Chapter Five

Looking Ahead **22**

About us

"I've seen many of your shows with children over the last ten years. You've always been about engagement. My 15 year old still talks about Magic Spaghetti eight years after seeing it!"

Teacher, Glasgow

Licketyspit Early Years Theatre Company

Firing children's imaginations!

Licketyspit was founded in 2004. It grew out of the Wee Stories Early Years Project (2001-2003), which was the first dedicated early years theatre project in Scotland, led by director, Virginia Radcliffe. In 2004, Radcliffe established Licketyspit, to continue with this work, where she remains Artistic Director/CEO based at North Edinburgh Arts in Muirhouse.

Licketyspit is a specialist early years theatre company which develops work through practical artistic research, consultation and developmental practice with children. Licketyspit builds its theatre around children; through talking and playing, sharing ideas, trying out stories, characters, songs, rhymes, games, sometimes with props, costumes and pieces of cloth, often also through children's drawing – a good way to start a conversation. This child-focused approach with attention to what children think, how children play and what interests them, often the big important things we all care about – love, friendship, play, overcoming fear, adventure and discovery – has led the company to create challenging and rich early years theatre experiences which push the boundaries of what is often perceived to be age appropriate.

This has resulted in a body of work that engages and powerfully resonates with early years children, families and teachers and places early years children at the centre of their community. It raises awareness of how well they can participate beyond their peer group, and highlights how capable, thoughtful, expressive, empathetic and clever early years children can be. This is where early years arts can start to impact on culture. Many of Licketyspit's performances have also become the focal point of community events and cross-arts/children's services activities.

"Your theatre has become part of our children's lives"

Mother, Glasgow

The company works across Scotland from its base at North Edinburgh Arts and has a repertoire of highly successful original theatre shows which appeal to multi-generational family and schools audiences. These tour to theatres, community venues, schools and nurseries.

Would you like to go there?



Productions include: Molly Whuppie, Hare & Tortoise, Quangle Wangle, Wee Witches, Magic Spaghetti, Green Whale, Heelie-go-Leerie, A Piece of Cake and most recently, LicketyLeap.

A theatre experience is powerful and stimulating for an early years child. Licketyspit shows are easily remembered, replayed and reinvented by children. They absorb them into their independent play with their families and at nursery. The company has been successful at long-term engagement with children and families across Scotland, creating a legacy of shared experience through stories, songs, play and ideas. Licketyspit productions offer interactive programmes, teaching and play resources, continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers, books and audio CDs.

LicketyLeap

I'm Margaret...



...and I'm Margaret!



"There is no doubt in my mind
that we have children in our
nursery whose lives were
changed by doing LicketyLeap."

Nursery Teacher, Glasgow

Where children can leap in themselves

All LicketySpit shows engage directly with audiences. The company quickly established a large loyal following across Scotland. This has become a source of regular feedback about the impact of our shows on children and their families. In developmental workshops, it became clear that what children wanted to do most was to play with us and to go on imaginary journeys – but everyone spoke at once, many important ideas and contributions were being missed. LicketyLeap is a response to this. We had been taking our plays to children. Now we set out to bring children into one of our plays, to create a piece of totally interactive theatre for early years children.

“To some extent the trajectory of the company’s work has been based on a conversation between me and our audience of children, together with their teachers, parents, carers, aunts, uncles, grannies, grandfathers and the managers of theatres, community centres and village halls all over Scotland, and of course my colleaguesIt is easy to forget that you can sit down with most three year olds and have a conversation pretty much like you would with anyone. It is easy to underestimate children...”

Virginia Radcliffe, Artistic Director/CEO LicketySpit

LicketyLeap was created in consultation with children. As it evolved, it became clear that it was having a remarkable impact. An elective mute suddenly spoke. Teachers remarked constantly about their surprise at the way normally shy children became so actively involved. Furthermore, children’s behaviour following LicketyLeap was often different. Behaviourally-challenged children were fully engaged and concentrated beautifully for two hours.

LicketyLeap was first developed with support from the Brunton Theatre, East Lothian, Glasgow Life and with support from a Creative Scotland New Work Award in 2008/09. Together with these partners, the company subsequently commissioned *Leaping into Ourselves: A study into the layers of engagement made by early years children through LicketySpit’s immersive theatre project*, which was led by Applied Theatre academic and practitioner, Stephanie Knight. This took place in collaboration with six nurseries in East Lothian and Drumchapel, Glasgow in collaboration with East Lothian’s Brunton Theatre and Glasgow Life and was published in May 2011 by Glasgow Life.

This was the first detailed study of its kind into the impact on early years children of a piece of participative theatre. Writer/Director Virginia Radcliffe was asked to explore what she saw as the artistic and pedagogical intentions and impact of each moment of the play. Through observations and consultations with children, parents and carers, teachers and child development workers, arts and education specialists and academics, Knight evaluated 25 layers of engagement and concluded:

“The LicketyLeap performance is a thoughtfully crafted piece of action learning in which the children develop new skills and learn through multiple intelligences, and have opportunities to test these out and reflect on them, so reinforcing the learning experience and building their confidence.

It has a secure, tight structure in which children can participate and contribute to enrich and develop the story using any of the dimensions and intelligences that they choose. It is more than an interactive piece of theatre as it has a structure that includes all the elements of thoughtful Applied Theatre practices in terms of its educational intentions and the implementation of these.

...The framework is also an opportunity for the participating children to explore informal, direct relationships with the actors. They participate alongside their teachers, carers and support workers. LicketyLeap has a pedagogical and artistic framework. It awakens and evokes the participants’ intelligences and abilities within a very short space of time. For children involved who have additional and higher support needs, the intensity and contrast of such an experience against a background of little previous exposure to even audience-based theatre, can be a revelation and an experience they seek actively, so as to reinforce their self knowledge and achievements.”

© Knight, S. 2011. *Leaping into Ourselves: A study into the layers of engagement made by early years children through LicketySpit’s immersive theatre project*, LicketyLeap. (Glasgow: Glasgow Life), pp. 56-58.

The next leap for LicketyLeap

The *Leaping into Ourselves* report was a seminal moment for Licketyspit and placed the company in a unique position. For the first time the company was able to substantiate the impact we believed this work was having. We could explain exactly what we were doing and why and what it meant for participating children.

In September 2011, Licketyspit was selected by Inspiring Scotland as a recipient of the new *Early Years Early Action Fund* on behalf of the Scottish Government, to deliver LicketyLeap to three to five year olds and their families and teachers in areas of multiple deprivation in Edinburgh, Glasgow and East Lothian. Licketyspit was the first Scottish theatre company to receive Government funding to deliver early intervention in this way. This marked an exciting development in recognition of the power of the arts to nurture early years children and their families.

By July 2013, the LicketyLeap programme will have been delivered to approximately 1500 children and approximately 1400 parents/carers in four areas of Scotland (Fife also entered the programme in 2012).

The participative play, LicketyLeap, is a powerful 90-minute experience for groups of ten three to five year olds and two nursery staff. It is now at the centre of a six-part early intervention programme which engages with nursery staff, parents, carers and families. LicketyLeap is delivered in nurseries, schools, early years centres, family centres and theatres. The LicketyLeap programme represents a highly original and successful programme of work. It is gaining increasing recognition across children's services and in local and national Government as an effective method of delivering the GIRFEC objectives (Getting it Right for Every Child).

The LicketyLeap programme is delivered strategically in key identified areas of need. A high proportion of children in these areas have been identified by statutory services as having substantial difficulties engaging successfully with education. LicketyLeap is delivered to whole nurseries. The nursery and its families have a shared experience, which they can continue to explore, discuss and play together. The project is delivered with a meticulous support system, developing strong relationships with partner organisations and sustaining ongoing resources for teachers and families.

A six-stage Early Intervention Programme:

(1) 'Local Launch' –

An introduction to LicketyLeap:

Cluster nurseries and local children's services are invited to a presentation and seminar about the programme.

(2) Teacher/Nursery CPD:

An introduction to the LicketyLeap approach, methodology, practice, the teachers' role within it and how best to extend its impact. Session includes drama workshop.

(3) Delivery Session One (Performance):

Two specialist Actor Pedagogues deliver the participative theatre performance, 'LicketyLeap', with a group of up to ten children aged three to five years and two nursery staff. This is followed by a snack, a conversation with the children and a reflective drawing session and culminates with the LicketyLeap Gallery, where the children present and talk about their pictures and their experience of LicketyLeap. This session is filmed by a Videographer and a DVD is given to the nursery as a resource. Letters home and memory aids foster continued reflection and parental engagement in each child's experience.

(4) Delivery Session Two

(Follow Up – 1-4 weeks later):

The same Actor Pedagogues return to deliver a follow-up session with the children to build on their LicketyLeap experience and reinforce their learning. The first half of the session includes: a drama session with warm up games and exercises; a 'conversation' where the children talk about LicketyLeap; a child-led re-enactment of the LicketyLeap story using only a large cloth and a few key props. Parents and carers are then invited to join the group. They and the children watch excerpts of the film of the children doing LicketyLeap. This is an important and much anticipated shared experience. The children then perform key excerpts of LicketyLeap for the parents and carers using the cloth. The children then return to the nursery leaving the parents, carers and a teacher to watch the remainder of the film. The Actor Pedagogues then lead a Parent Seminar about the value of the project as a family resource and in relation to child development. This develops into a discussion where parents and carers can express their thoughts, share any feedback they may have from

their children and ask questions. This provides an opportunity to engage with parents about ways they might continue with the LicketyLeap experience at home and why this kind of play can be so beneficial to children. Parents sign up to the **LicketyLeap Family Network**.

(5) Nursery Tea:

This is a debriefing session with cluster nursery staff once the evaluation has been completed and may involve practical work. This session is an opportunity for the company and the nursery staff who have participated in LicketyLeap to reflect on the experience, discuss the impact the project

has had on the children and on them as education professionals, as well as providing an opportunity to share ideas, practice and developments across nurseries. This includes discussions about how LicketyLeap provides creative opportunities for activities in the nurseries. The teachers sign up to the **LicketyLeap Imaginative Play Network**.

(6) LicketyLeap Family Network and LicketyLeap Imaginative Play Network

facilitate continuing engagement between LicketyLeap and the LicketyLeap families and nurseries. These can be a route to resources, ideas, support and fun.



The story

The work begins with play and with conversation.

Ten children arrive and sit on a mat in front of a curtain. We tell them we've called this show 'LicketyLeap' because we would like them to 'leap' into the story and be in it with us. They all agree.

The Actor Pedagogues find a series of pictures of two people called 'Margaret'. The children notice that one of the Margarets looks sad or worried and that the other one looks happy. They speculate about why this might be. Each Actor finds she has an affinity with one of the Margarets. Suddenly they have an idea. They disappear behind the curtain and then reappear in their red berets as the two Margarets!

The Margarets discover a series of postcards in a book, which again they discuss and consider together with the children – pictures of a bog, the sea, a cave and finally a picture of a spectacular mountain. Bold Margaret is filled with longing to go to all these places but Worried Margaret is appalled! She couldn't go to the bog because she might get stuck! The sea would be too wet! The cave too dark – there might even be a bear! But she really likes the picture of the mountain.

She thinks that if she could climb the mountain she would find her 'Heart's Desire'. Bold Margaret is enthralled. 'What's a Heart's Desire?' she asks. Worried Margaret doesn't know. She thinks it is something that would make her very happy – but she is too worried to go. The children encourage her. At last Worried Margaret and the children step through the curtain and into the world of the play!

The children and the two Margarets journey through the bog, over the sea, into the cave and up the mountain to find their Heart's Desires. They meet a series of characters along the way: the Oogly Boogly Lady, the Fishy Lady, a Bear and a Bird. During the journey Worried Margaret's fears are realised but they can be overcome. For her part, Bold Margaret discovers that things are not always as simple as they appear.

"I loved that adventure...
Can we do it again?"

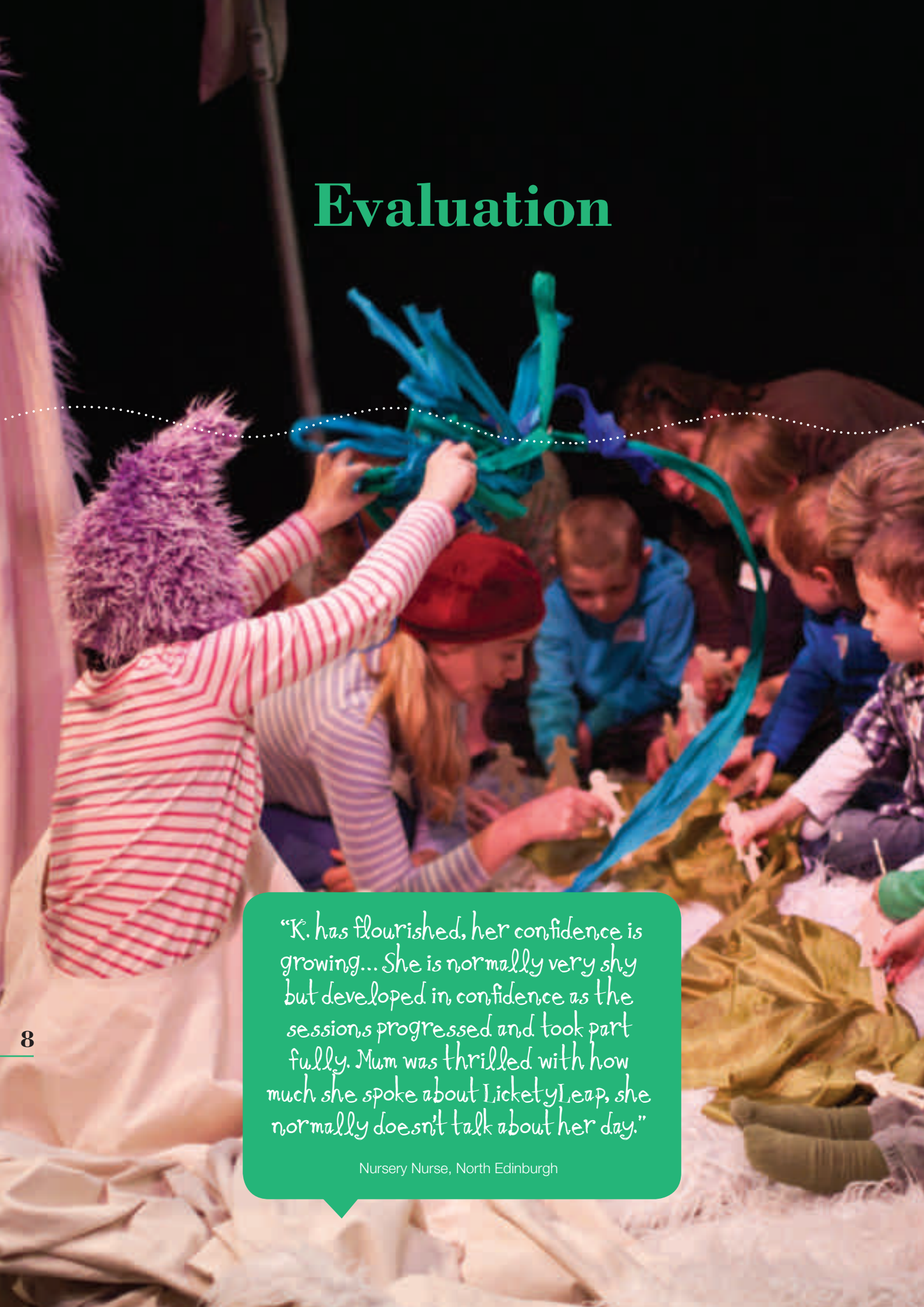
Child

Essentially LicketyLeap is 'playing with a blanket' as children have done for generations. But because fifteen people do it, there is a very large 'blanket', which is suspended from a scaffold frame to create the different environments. Because LicketyLeap is a theatre company, this blanket has secrets and surprises!

Let's go!



Evaluation



"K. has flourished, her confidence is growing... She is normally very shy but developed in confidence as the sessions progressed and took part fully. Mum was thrilled with how much she spoke about LicketyLeap, she normally doesn't talk about her day."

Nursery Nurse, North Edinburgh

LicketyLeap Current Statistics

October 2011 to March 2013

LicketyLeap has currently been delivered to 25 nurseries in multiply deprived areas of North Edinburgh, East Lothian, Glasgow and Fife. Funding has now been extended until July 2013.

To date:

- **1210** children participated in the LicketyLeap programme in nurseries.
- **85** children and their parents and carers attended LicketyLeap public performances in Edinburgh and Fife.
- **164** nursery staff participated in the LicketyLeap programme
- **1063** parents/carers attended a LicketyLeap session in nurseries (74% of children represented).
- **745** parent/carer contact details were captured.
- **434** children were sampled for evaluation, with **329** evaluations completed and returned so far (January 2012 – March 2013). A further 55 out of 72 children were evaluated using a separate evaluation system (October – December 2011).

Meet the Oogly Boogly Lady in the bog



The LicketyLeap programme was delivered to the following 25 nurseries, schools and centres:

North Edinburgh

- Craigroyston Primary School (Nursery and P1)
- Ferryhill Primary School (Nursery)
- Forthview Primary School (Nursery)
- Granton Primary School (Nursery)
- North Edinburgh Childcare
- Pirniehall Primary School (Nursery and P1)
- St David's RC Primary School (Nursery)

East Lothian

- First Step Community Project (Nursery)
- Levenhall Nursery School
- Musselburgh Burgh Primary School (Nursery)
- Prestonpans Infant School (Nursery)
- Wallyford Primary School (Nursery)
- Whitecraig Primary School (Nursery)

Glasgow

- Annette Street Primary School (P1 and P2)
- Chesters Nursery School
- Drumchapel Early Years Centre
- Drumchapel Family Learning Centre
- Fasque Family Centre
- Kelso Nursery School
- Knightswood Early Years Centre
- Pikeman Nursery School and Family Learning Centre

Fife

- Cairneyhill Primary School (Nursery and P1)
- Fair Isle Nursery School
- Kennoway Primary and Community School (Nursery)
- Kings Road Primary School (Nursery)

There have also been public performances of LicketyLeap at the Byre Theatre, St Andrews and North Edinburgh Arts, Muirhouse.

"This process seemed to promote better thinking and problem solving skills in J."

Nursery Teacher, North Edinburgh

Evaluation of LicketyLeap

Teacher evaluation has been carried out between October 2011 and March 2013. To date, 1210 children have engaged with the LicketyLeap programme in nurseries, together with 164 Teachers, Nursery Nurses, Early Years Practitioners, Child Development Team Leaders/Officers and parent helpers.

LicketyLeap has achieved remarkably high levels of active parental interest, with 1063 parents,

carers and extended family members attending a LicketyLeap Follow Up session in nurseries. Overall, 74% of participating children have been represented by at least one adult. In total, 745 parent and carer contact details have been captured which establishes a unique dialogue between the company and the families through which it is hoped they can access further resources to enrich their family life.

Methodology

Compatible with the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and Curriculum for Excellence outcomes, robust qualitative and quantitative evaluation on every LicketyLeap delivery is carried out by teachers and nursery staff on a representative sample of four in ten children from each participating group. Children are sampled for evaluation by teachers (two most in need, one least in need and one enthusiastic participant per group).

Four key outcomes are measured:

- **Confidence**
- **Social skills**
- **Problem solving ability**
- **Emotional literacy and resilience**

Teachers/nursery staff complete a questionnaire over three stages (commonly over a 4–6 week period):

1. Before LicketyLeap
2. After LicketyLeap Performance, Session One (based on observations of child during the participative performance)
3. At least one week after LicketyLeap Follow Up, Session Two

- Children are evaluated against twelve different indicators in relation to four main objectives (three indicators per objective), on a labelled five-point scale.
- Qualitative data is captured on the questionnaire in the form of the teacher/nursery staff's interpretation and observations of the impact of LicketyLeap on each child.
- Range parameters are applied to quantitative data to contextualise movement in child's score as 'marked improvement', 'improvement', 'no change', 'decline' or 'marked decline' for each objective.
- Semi-structured group interviews are conducted with participating teachers following LicketyLeap delivery to gather further qualitative data.
- The LicketyLeap team additionally gathers observational notes and comments made by the children, nursery staff and parents/carers, during the LicketyLeap performance and follow up sessions. The team also completes an evaluation / reflective journal of each session.
- Thematic analysis on qualitative data is currently ongoing.
- Parent/carers survey following LicketyLeap is currently in development.
- Of the current evaluation method, 434 evaluations were requested, with 329 evaluations completed and returned between January 2012 – March 2013.



A gift from the Oogly Boogly Lady



Results

The LicketyLeap programme has demonstrated a positive impact on a range of key outcomes relating to health, wellbeing and development.

The results presented here focus on 329 children sampled for evaluation between January 2012 to March 2013 using the current evaluation method.

Following LicketyLeap delivery, results to date show:



• **Increased confidence:** 178 out of 255* children (70%) demonstrated increased confidence, of which 86 children (34%) showed a marked improvement.

• **Improved social skills:** 157 out of 255* children (62%) showed improved social skills, of which 69 children (27%) demonstrated a marked improvement.

• **Increased ability to problem solve:** 188 out of 286* children (66%) demonstrated an increased ability to problem solve, of which 57 children (20%) showed a marked improvement.

• **Increased resilience and emotional literacy:** 173 out of 287* children (60%) showed increased resilience and emotional literacy of which 35 children (12%) demonstrated a marked improvement.

Conclusions

LicketyLeap has been shown to have a positive impact on participating children across all four outcomes. Results indicate a 60% to 70% improvement in their confidence, social skills, problem solving ability and emotional literacy and resilience.

These findings support the value of an arts/drama-based intervention as an effective approach to early intervention in improving learning outcomes, achievement, attainment, wellbeing and life chances of vulnerable early years children.

The LicketyLeap programme has been equally effective in a range of contexts: urban, rural, multiply deprived and with families with a range of vulnerabilities.

Clearly there is scope to extend the programme to other areas of Scotland and to further develop arts/drama-based interventions such as LicketyLeap, as part of an integrated approach to more effective early intervention with vulnerable children and families.

LicketyLeap has strong links with national priorities such as early intervention and early years health, wellbeing and brain development.

There is potential to build on the existing legacy of the programme in the four areas where multiple nurseries have already engaged with the project.

Already developing practice in teaching, the programme has the potential to bring another dimension to approaches across other children's services. Further research into the longer-term impact of LicketyLeap is in progress.

"After the sessions he mixed more with other children... He has continued to role play Margaret and Margaret initiating play with other children. He has also spoken quite a lot about the experience. This child is on the Autistic Spectrum."

Child Development Officer, Glasgow

"E. can usually find situations difficult emotionally and will cry/refuse to co-operate with others. E. was much more resilient than usual – she didn't give up or cry. This was a very positive experience for E. She responded in an emotionally resilient way and seemed to empathise with and go on Worried Margaret's journey with her. The experience was fantastic in terms of supporting emotional resilience."

Nursery Teacher, North Edinburgh

*Variation in total number of children due to exclusion of data from analysis of objective if child scored highly at baseline (score of 14 or 15) or if child was absent / not scored for Follow Up session by Teacher.



The Impact



"I'm a Bold Margaret!"

Child

How and Why it Works

LicketyLeap is unlike any other provision for children and their families and is highly complementary to the aims and objectives of multiple children's services including health and education. This project challenges common perceptions of what early years children are capable of. Moreover, the LicketyLeap programme is demonstrating the remarkable impact theatre and the arts can have in supporting children's development.

LicketyLeap gives children a unique immersive play experience. It is a short but extremely powerful and unforgettable intervention for each child, which can have a profound impact on the way that they see themselves and on how they are seen by their significant others – their peers, their teachers and crucially, their families. It offers children an inspiring, nurturing experience where even the most vulnerable achieve a satisfying level of engagement and personal success. For some children this can result in a momentous shift in their ability to engage with others and express their feelings and ideas.

LicketyLeap is based on a respect and understanding of early years children. The Actor Pedagogues are highly trained and skilled at engaging and enabling each child. The children are enabled to develop an understanding of the concept and feel safe. It is highly inclusive,

nurturing and empowering. The children relax in the knowledge they will each be seen and heard, increasing their capacity to listen and engage. Actors, like children, are experts at play and this affinity is key to the profound impact of this work.

"I think the depth of learning and how engaged they are in it is of the same quality as you get in child's initiated play."

Nursery Teacher, North Edinburgh

The LicketyLeap Actor Pedagogues are trained to approach the children in a very equal way. A core principle of this work is the concept that early years children are frequently underestimated and therefore under-challenged. If a child is expected to be able to speak out, engage, contribute ideas, thoughts and feelings and problem solve and are approached by an adult on this basis with great confidence and warmth, the likelihood is that they will increasingly be able to develop in this way. Conversely, if a vulnerable, inhibited or wary child is approached cautiously and tentatively they are

Meeting the Fishy Lady



likely to continue to see themselves as vulnerable and inhibited and be reluctant to respond.

The Actor Pedagogues meet the children in the performance space as equals. Never before will these children have experienced immersion in an imaginary world with real Actors. They find it compelling and ultimately impossible to resist.

Much work with this age group is child-led. LicketyLeap is a child-centred, adult-led experience, which exploits the vital connection between Actors and children: their shared expertise in play and imagination. Through the two children's LicketyLeap sessions at the centre of this intervention programme, the Actor Pedagogues work in a context and manner that liberates children to discover and to share a more confident and able self. Once this has happened there is no going back. Many disadvantaged children have been liberated by this experience, enabled to discover and to share their fuller selves – to literally 'Leap' into themselves within LicketyLeap.

Confidence and Self-esteem

It is our belief that confidence increases because the LicketyLeap experience is safe and highly democratic. The children are able to relax and experience it with no anxiety about being seen and heard. LicketyLeap is a nurturing experience. It unfolds gradually so that the children understand the conceit: theatre is a story, actors play 'characters', this is a story you can 'be in' if you want to. The children are respected and invited to play. They are made to feel wanted and appreciated throughout the experience by the two characters Margaret and Margaret. More than this, they are constantly made to feel valued and encouraged. Within this imaginary world the children have a chance to lose their inhibitions and to try out a different and more confident self. So far this has been supported by reports about continuing confidence in group nursery play.

The LicketyLeap Actor Pedagogues are adept at enabling each child to actively engage with the experience. They communicate absolute confidence in each child and demonstrate genuine interest in them as individuals.

- The Actor Pedagogues are neither adults nor children but 'Margarets'. This gives them freedom to challenge and actively engage with the children in a very equal way. This is compelling and exciting for the children and ultimately irresistible.
- The Actor Pedagogues communicate implicit respect and appreciation for the children.
- They are very interested in what the children think.
- They do not comment on them.
- They expect them to be wonderful but they are clearly inspired and excited by their contributions.
- They are very considerate and kind.
- The children feel secure.
- The children feel a great sense of achievement through the LicketyLeap experience.
- Their achievements are witnessed by their peers, their teachers and their families.

Once a 'shy' child has shown their contemporaries that they can be funny and clever and join in, they are expected to continue to be this way after LicketyLeap.

"Since LicketyLeap, L.'s confidence has grown in speaking out and trying new things."

Nursery Nurse, North Edinburgh

"C. is so timid and shy in the playroom and has to be encouraged to join in with everyday activities. When the story started it was fantastic to watch how quickly she joined in and how little adult support she required."

Child Development Officer, Glasgow

"Staff were surprised by R.'s participation. At nursery he is very reserved and takes a while to try something new, if at all. It was nice to see this child being happy in a new and very different situation. His participation has helped him in nursery to try new activities with less reservation."

Nursery Nurse, North Edinburgh



A voyage over the sea



Social skills

“Like lots of children in the nursery, J. has played with a wider number of children since the first LicketyLeap session.”

Nursery Teacher, North Edinburgh

“This child used the props provided back at nursery – the Margaret hats, the Oogly Boogly Lady’s hat, props and the blanket, over and over again with friends who had attended the other sessions.”

Nursery Nurse, East Lothian

“Q. now actively participates in group activities in the nursery. He has shown more confidence and has a wider group of friends that he interacts with during nursery.”

Nursery Teacher, Fife

LicketyLeap is intrinsically democratic, a shared experience in which all the children participate as equals. The Actor Pedagogues, together with the nursery staff, establish from the beginning that every child will be given the space, encouragement and support they need to contribute to the conversation and to participate fully in the experience of LicketyLeap.

Once the children understand this, any anxiety about being ‘missed’ or ‘left out’ is removed so they can relax and enjoy listening to each other. This means they can appreciate each other’s thoughts, feelings and ideas. This is genuinely a group experience and this is reflected in the children’s play in the nursery following LicketyLeap, which is invariably more inclusive.

Up to a maximum of ten children participate in LicketyLeap because this has proved the maximum number children of this age have patience to listen to, while the momentum of the drama is maintained.

The vast majority of children experience a high level of satisfaction and success, both individually and collectively. They are left with a 90-minute repertoire of story and experience that they have a strong emotional attachment to and great enthusiasm to revisit, for which they need each other. As LicketyLeap has been able to work with whole nurseries, teachers have regularly reported a change in social dynamics in the nursery following LicketyLeap. Children are playing in larger groups. Similarly, the more vulnerable children who have historically found it hard to integrate are part of the story and are expected to remain so.

During the Follow Up session, the Actor Pedagogues facilitate a discussion among the children about what they remember about LicketyLeap. Few three or four year olds could sit and describe this 90-minute experience alone but ten can and as they do, they share and develop their language and communication skills. They are learning the art of conversation, of speaking, listening, reflecting, and responding. The group experience is further embedded through the child-led re-creation of LicketyLeap using the cloth, which ignites a way of playing which they can continue to explore together at nursery and at home.



Problem solving

Improvements in problem solving ability is indicative of the nature of the LicketyLeap sessions and the way they provide opportunities for all the children in the group to offer their ideas and solutions in a given situation.

For example, Worried Margaret has various worries and requires support, reassurance and encouragement to overcome her concerns. The children are eager to assist her. Moreover, because she is worried the children are less likely to worry themselves and this releases them to address the issues at hand.

Margaret and Margaret expect the children to have good ideas and to enter into discussions with them about what is happening. There is a constant inclusive dialogue, so all the children are encouraged to actively engage physically, emotionally and mentally with this experience.

Essential to the LicketyLeap story is the idea that problems can be overcome. The children experience this at many points in the story and there are increasing opportunities for them to offer real ideas that can be rewarded by real responses.

"Since LicketyLeap, K. is more willing to offer solutions to problems without worrying about being wrong."

Nursery Teacher, Fife

"D. is now more confident about taking on new challenges and problem solving. D. will talk through a problem solving activity to find a solution."

Child Development Team Leader, Glasgow

"M.'s confidence in problem solving has grown."

Nursery Teacher, North Edinburgh

Resting at the foot of the mountain,



Emotional Literacy and Resilience

"E. was able to express in great detail what made Margaret and Margaret happy or sad. She was able to link this understanding to her older brother and herself – how they feel in different situations."

Child Development Team Leader, Glasgow

"It has helped with the understanding of emotions. We hear more now, 'you're making me cross, you're making me sad'... There's a boy in our nursery and I say to him, 'have you got your green moany pants on or a Happy Margaret hat on?' and he'll check and see what he's wearing and tell me what he's going to be today... For him it works – for his emotions it's been really good."

Nursery Nurse, North Edinburgh

"K. has English as a second language and had problems parting from Mum. We did not think he would leave the nursery room. He was able to join in enthusiastically. We have seen him smiling more since the first visit. He has not cried."

Nursery Teacher, East Lothian

"There was a four year old, 'Lee' with behavioural difficulties. The teachers said 'he can't concentrate for two minutes never mind 90 minutes...there's no way he'll be able to manage to do LicketyLeap.' The company persuaded them to let him try. He did the whole thing beautifully. When the bear was scared, 'Lee' ran forward by himself to comfort the bear, reaching up his arms and planting a kiss on his cheek. On the boat he had a moment of anarchy, he wanted to sit on the fire 'It's not a real fire!' he said crossly. But afterwards when the children were sharing their pictures a little girl had drawn a golden fish she had imagined in the rockpool on the beach. 'Yes yes! I saw it. The golden fish!' shouted 'Lee' excitedly pointing back towards the performance area – 'It's over there!' When the Actor Pedagogues left he turned to them and said 'thanks for the fun time'. The teachers said this was '100% improvement in his behaviour'. At the beginning of session two, which he again completed with avid focus 'Lee' sat down beside one of the Actors in the circle 'I love you!' he said."

Virginia Radcliffe, Artistic Director/CEO, Licketyspit

Anecdotal evidence from nursery staff suggests that improvements in emotional literacy and resilience is representative of the significant impact the project has on children's ability to communicate their own emotions, empathise with others and understand the needs and concerns of the two Margarets.

Worried Margaret embodies the children's worries. This liberates them to see things from someone else's perspective, even to offer solutions and support and to an extent, her presence liberates them to be brave. For many children taking this role is a first and a significant experience. They are empowered to find they can be the strong one, they can help someone else and it makes them feel good about themselves. Worried Margaret is supported to overcome her fears and discovers that she can also be bold. Bold Margaret has a fright and for the first time appreciates how it feels to be worried.

"Don't be scared Margaret –
be brave!"

Child

"Well done Margaret –
you're a winner!"

Child

Licketyspit have had reports from nurseries about improved dialogue about feelings among children who have taken part in LicketyLeap. In addition, teachers have reported instances of children being kind to one another. It is very clear that the children feel loved and appreciated by Margaret and Margaret and that they love and appreciate them. They form relationships with these characters which make them feel very positive about themselves which in turn helps them to engage with others in an emotionally literate way. If they have played the 'strong' person supporting Worried Margaret this can be a discovery that builds their emotional resilience.

Nurturing Hope and Aspiration

Theatre is essentially a generous act by one group of people for another which is reciprocated. LicketyLeap takes place among a small group of people which enables them to really see and hear and appreciate one another as individuals, throughout a rich and challenging series of

"I found my heart's desire
and now I am happy again!"

Child, Glasgow

experiences. It is a symbolic journey, arguably it represents a rite of passage – through the bog, over the sea, into the cave and up the mountain to find our 'Heart's Desire'. However, is it really any different from a real journey up a mountain where numerous obstacles are overcome? The Oogly Boogly Lady shows the children it will all be alright, that they are expected to succeed. They will overcome all obstacles in order to reach the top of the mountain and find their Heart's Desires. LicketyLeap fosters in these children a sense of their capacity to follow their own destiny. It infuses them with the belief that anything is possible, that they are entitled to nurture a Heart's Desire which could be anything!

Children's Heart's Desires

"My heart's desire is...
to bake – to bake cakes!"

"I asked the children, if they could be anything in the world for one day what would they want to be? Somebody said they wanted to be a Happy Margaret. Somebody wanted to be a coconut."

Nursery Nurse, North Edinburgh

"Love my mum and being in
my mum's heart"

"My heart's desire is to...
go on a camel's back with you!"

"I want to go to all the
countries in the world!"

"When your heart is broken,
little pieces build it up again
and it floats out of your body
and over the bog and the cave
and the mountain and it gets
made into a design!"



Language Development

“S. surprised us by being able to verbalise his thoughts about LicketyLeap. He has speech and language difficulties but was so inspired by the drama he was keen to talk about it... His use of language has improved significantly since LicketyLeap.”

Nursery Nurse, East Lothian

Licketyspit productions are full of words because the company is particularly excited by children's responses to language, character and story; by their capacity to navigate their way through a play at their own level; by their ability to remember in fine detail; by the way they clearly continue to unravel their experience and develop their understanding of what they have heard and seen, long after the performance; by the way it helps develop their language, self expression and ability to communicate, to share and to play; by the way children are inspired by being challenged. LicketyLeap is no different, but there is also much more space to allow children to contribute and to respond. It is also, of course, much more than verbal communication alone – children can engage with the project in many different ways, on many different levels making it ideal for children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) or additional support needs. It is a rich, multi-sensory experience with continuous use of

soundscapes and music, highly visual and tactile – there are things to touch, wear, pull out, there are boggy blooms to smell, bears to pat, silk waves to swim in and underneath!

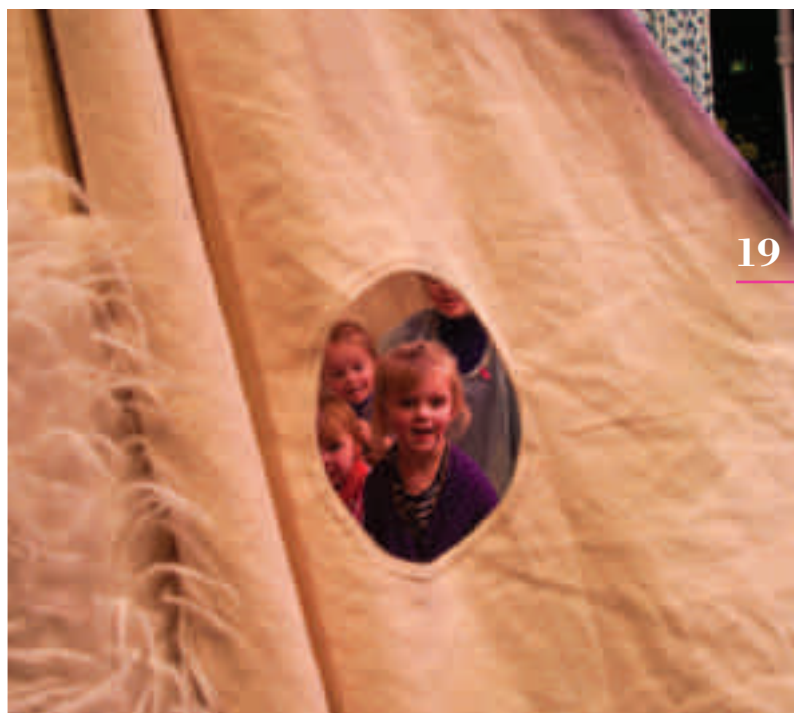
Language development is crucial to cognitive, emotional and social development. A theatre performance full of words is a dynamic, uplifting social experience and can potentially give a fundamental boost to a child's development.

“We went back to a school where we had done LicketyLeap as part of the pilot two years later. They told us about ‘John’. ‘John’ had had speech and language difficulties which made him frustrated and consequently cross and sometimes aggressive. ‘John’ loved the Oogly Boogly Lady and after doing LicketyLeap he found that he could impersonate her in games to delight the other children. This had raised his self-esteem and helped him develop friendships. It had relieved his frustration and helped his language development. Two years later he was still playing at being ‘Oogly Boogly!’. The Oogly Boogly Lady speaks made-up language because I felt at that moment in LicketyLeap when the children have first entered the stage, language would be too much. But I hadn't appreciated how relevant made-up language was for children with speech and language difficulties, as well as for children with English as an additional language. Again, the process had allowed the children to introduce an element they needed.”

Virginia Radcliffe, Artistic Director/CEO, Licketyspit



Into the cave to meet a Bear!



Nursery Staff

LicketySpit offers practical teacher CPD and debrief sessions. Although the benefit of imaginative play in nurseries is understood, LicketySpit has discovered many teachers lack confidence in actively engaging with it. For inhibited children, adult-led creative play can be significant in enabling them to develop the confidence to engage with others. LicketyLeap facilitates and empowers teachers and nursery staff to use drama and creative play. The programme has also assisted nursery staff in trying out and developing alternative ways of communicating or engaging with certain children, for example use of puppets, use of the character 'Worried Margaret' to explain emotions, use of 'nonsense' language to assist with language development (the LicketyLeap characters of the Oogly Boogly Lady and the Fishy Lady have been significant here) to help actively engage and include children with English as an Additional Language, or children with significant speech and language difficulties.

"It's given me the confidence to do it... I can stand there and feel like a creative being."

Newly Qualified Teacher, North Edinburgh

"Since LicketyLeap, we have used more puppets and role play with D. and it is bringing him out of his shell."

P1 Teacher, North Edinburgh

"We use Worried Margaret as a way of explaining things."

Nursery Teacher, East Lothian

Flying high on the back of a Bird



Parents and Carers

"What I am stunned about is that all of the children have representation. You know, we put on all sorts of things for parents to come to and they don't all come. And here you are... This is fabulous!"

Head Teacher, East Lothian

"N. has played the whole journey again at home, the postcard really helped him to remember it. I had been making fish fingers for three days and I didn't know why!... You can see their personalities, he was so brave going up to that bear, my heart was breaking!"

Mother, Glasgow

"He talked about going up the mountain...I says to him, 'Was you oot the nursery cause I didnae sign any consent forms!'"

Mother, North Edinburgh

"C. hasn't stopped talking about it for the past three weeks...every morning he was asking 'are they coming back today?' and telling me about playing in the sea and the bear."

Mother, Glasgow

"He was talking about mountains, sea, mud, but telling you in a rush, I didn't know what he was talking about."

Father, North Edinburgh

"I think O. got a lot out of it. He told me all about it. He told me the whole story. He was trying to get his brother to play too. He is normally quite quiet so it is nice to see him doing this."

Mother, Glasgow

"I didn't think she had the concentration to sit still and listen. I'm really impressed."

Mother, Edinburgh

For parents and carers, LicketyLeap models and nurtures an approach to engaging with vulnerable children which frequently demonstrates to nursery staff and families that the children are more able to be active, communicative and participative people than they had realised.

High parent and carer attendance reflects the children's enthusiasm. LicketyLeap's success at engaging with parents and carers is rare and beneficial to nurseries and local community services in areas of deprivation where parents can be reluctant to engage with children's professionals. Many of these parents and carers are described as 'hard to reach'. LicketyLeap builds trust with families and can disseminate positive information and ideas in line with local and national policies and agencies in a light touch way. LicketyLeap is a theatre company – not health professionals or education professionals. This allows us to 'sneak under the wire' somewhat. We can discuss brain development and the benefits of a project like LicketyLeap without making the parents and carers feel threatened.

"He's normally so quiet and he doesn't want to join in so it was really lovely to see him like that."

Mother, North Edinburgh

The children share their experience with their families through talking, the film and live performance. This further raises self-esteem and confidence. The film gives the parents a unique opportunity to see their children being independent within a group. The enjoyment and success they witness inspires them and makes them proud. The children enjoy the admiration of parents. The seminar lets parents share their reflections and discover the wider implications of LicketyLeap for child development and how they can support it. They sign up to the LicketyLeap Families Network. This establishes a unique dialogue between the company and the families through which they can access further resources to enrich their family life.

Looking ahead

“Children are still (six months later) being Margaret and Margaret. They even made a television/theatre using an old box to act out the story. GREAT!”

Child Development Team Leader, Glasgow

Waving to Margaret and Margaret



Looking ahead

The Future

"We are still getting 'Margaret and Margaret' play in the nursery. Last Friday, two of the children were painting at the easel wearing the hats and painting in character as the two different Margarets – fascinating! The project has left a lasting impression on the children."

Nursery Teacher, North Edinburgh

"The children were mesmerised by the show...talking about it on the way back to nursery and on their return to nursery. They thought it was 'funny' and kept repeating the phrase 'Quangle Wangle!'"

Nursery Teacher, North Edinburgh

In 2011, LicketySpit became Theatre Company in Residence at North Edinburgh Arts, a community arts centre in Muirhouse, North Edinburgh, with support from a Creative Scotland Public Engagement award. This is where the LicketySpit office and ensemble are based and where the company rehearses and pilots its work.

In December 2012, the Residency was launched with LicketySpit's popular production of The Christmas Quangle Wangle, based on the poetry of Edward Lear. Five hundred free tickets were

distributed to children, families and nursery staff who had participated in LicketyLeap. It is planned that the company will continue to produce a series of its popular early years Christmas shows at North Edinburgh Arts as community events, working in partnership with colleagues to generate cross-arts activities and community experiences inspired by the productions.

"It's the same as LicketyLeap isn't it? It's the same thing! It's all about the imagination."

Mother, Edinburgh

LicketySpit has seven highly successful early years touring theatre shows and is poised to restart its regular touring to venues and audiences across Scotland in tandem with LicketyLeap delivery.

The Residency is an opportunity to pilot extended cross-art form outreach workshops and events at North Edinburgh Arts to extend the enjoyment and benefits of the LicketyLeap experience. Visual Artist, Alice Betts has just begun work

Receiving a postcard



with Pirniehall and Craigroyston nurseries in this way. LicketySpit plans to work with visual artists, dance, music and drama specialists on the principle that LicketyLeap opens a door for children and their families from which other adventures can begin.

"It's fantastic! Drama is just so good for them – it really brings them out of themselves."

Mother, East Lothian



The Future

*"It'd be great if you could come more often.
H. loved it. I want her to do more."*

Mother, East Lothian

LicketyLeap has a newly-developed interactive website with resources for teachers, children and families which includes 'Margaret and Margaret Karaoke', stories, pictures and ideas for activities and play. This is designed to be a portal, together with the LicketyLeap Imaginative Play Network and the LicketyLeap Family Network, to further family and nursery engagement in exciting free activities.

*It's just fantastic. She's told everyone
about it. Her aunts, her uncles, her cousins,
her grandparents. Every day she's asked
'Can I do LicketyLeap today?'... She has
absolutely loved it and got so much out of it."*

Mother, North Edinburgh

Margaret and Margaret button badges for children and big stickers are available to put in Libraries and Museums who are working in partnership with Licketyspit to take advantage of the LicketyLeap connection.

Libraries local to LicketyLeap deliveries have big cloths, red berets, books and resources about the world of LicketyLeap at the ready for families.

Museums will have easily personalised letters from Margaret and Margaret to give to arriving children, with exploration and activity trails and cheery chat to make them feel welcome and 'at home'.

Licketyspit nursery and primary staff CPD in the use of drama and creative play with early years children is expected to continue to develop and expand.

The ever-increasing team of skilled and dedicated Actor Pedagogues is already helping to develop a repertoire of drama-based participative resources for working with early years children and is at the forefront of this pioneering work.

Ultimately it is hoped that 'LicketyLeap Hubs' can be established around Scotland with teams of trained Actor Pedagogues at the centre of a network of artists working in partnership, using the LicketyLeap approach and methodology, across children's services in education, health and social work in the interests of early years children.



Drawing our hearts' desires



Licketyspit Early Years Theatre Company

Core Staff

Virginia Radcliffe
(Artistic Director/
Chief Executive)

Beth Harvey
(Project Manager/
Associate Director)

Rachel Ostridge
(Office & Finance
Administrator)

Board of Directors

Wendy Sheehan
(Chair)

Johnny Austin

Shahida Imani

Sara Macaulay

Trish McGuinness

Lorna Saunders

Liz Smith

Associate Artists/ Practitioners

Johnny Austin
(Actor/Writer)

Alice Betts
(Visual Artist, Residency)

Timothy Brinkhurst
(Composer/Musical
Director)

Maureen Carr (Actor)

Hannah Donaldson
(Actor/Director)

Martin Duffield
(Associate)

Vivien Grahame (Actor)

Sarah Gudgeon (Actor)

Sean Hay (Actor)

Catherine Lindow
(Designer/Illustrator)

Kally Lloyd-Jones
(Choreographer)

Ali Maclaurin
(Designer/Teacher)

Kevin McCallum
(Production Manager)

Amy McCallum
(Development)

Mary Macmaster
(Musician)

Gavin Marwick
(Musician)

Ashley Smith (Actor)

Matthew Zajac
(Director/Actor/Writer)

LicketyLeap Steering Group

Graham Mackenzie
(Chair)

Graeme King

Christine Mackay

Ali Maclaurin

Lea Mann

Val Munro

Mary Preston

Maggie Singleton

Maggie Simpson

Sara Watkin

Steven Wray

Original LicketyLeap Creative Team

Virginia Radcliffe
(Director/Writer/Actor
Pedagogue)

Ali Maclaurin (Designer)

Rosalind Sydney
(Actor Pedagogue)

Vivien Grahame
(Actor Pedagogue)

Timothy Brinkhurst
(Composer/Musical
Director)

Actor Pedagogues

Deborah Arnott

Maureen Carr

Hannah Donaldson
(& LicketyLeap Director)

Mary Gapinski

Vivien Grahame

Sarah Gudgeon

Molly Innes

Belle Jones

Itxaso Moreno

Rebecca Phipps

Rosalind Sydney

Ashley Smith

Kirsty Stuart
(& LicketyLeap Director)

Stage Manager

School Liaisons

Sian Hickson

Jennifer Kempton

Clare McNeill

Carrie Taylor

Videographers

Joe Carter

Jonathan Ley

Photographers

Borja Prada Garcia

Laurence Winram

Graphic Design and Website

Lauren Agnew
(Website)

Lily Mclvor (Website,
branding and report)

Finance

Fiona Dick

Communications

Jo Lennie

Acknowledgements and Special Thanks

Special thanks to Stephanie Knight (Applied Theatre Academic and Practitioner), Maggie Singleton (Arts Producer, Glasgow Life) and Lesley Smith (Principal Arts Officer, East Lothian) for championing the development of this project and to Steven Wray (Lead Officer, Support from the Start East Lothian) for his advice and support.

LicketyLeap evaluation developed with support from Mark Bitel (Evaluation Consultant, Partners in Evaluation Scotland), Neil Blake (Performance Advisor, Inspiring Scotland), Graeme King (Area Principal Psychologist, NHS Lothian) and Graham Mackenzie (Consultant in Public Health, NHS Lothian).

Licketyspit Early Years Theatre Company would also like to thank Kate Wimpres (Director) and all the staff at North Edinburgh Arts, Inspiring Scotland and of course all the children, staff, parents, carers and families who have supported and participated in the LicketyLeap programme!

First published April 2013

Printed in Edinburgh, United Kingdom by Allander

Copyright © Virginia Radcliffe 2008-2013

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any other information storage and retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the author.

Permission and copies can be obtained by contacting
info@licketyspit.com

Publication design by Lily Mclvor / www.lilymclvor.com

LicketyLeap illustrations by Virginia Radcliffe and Lily Mclvor

Photographs by Borja Prada Garcia / contact@borjaprada.co.uk

All photographs © Licketyspit 2008-2013 – with kind permission from the children, parents, carers and staff from the featured nurseries and schools and photographer Borja Prada Garcia.

LicketyLeap® © Virginia Radcliffe 2008-2013

All rights reserved. No part of the contents of the LicketyLeap® programme which includes the concept, design, text and workshop format may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any other information storage and retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from Virginia Radcliffe.

Licketyspit® is trade mark registered. UK Trade Mark
Registration Number UK00002646584

LicketyLeap® is trade mark registered. UK Trade Mark
Registration Number UK00002646823



"I liked all of it. Every bit!"

3 year old

LicketyLeap Early Intervention Programme October 2011 – June 2013

Delivered in Glasgow, Edinburgh, East Lothian
and Fife in areas of multiple deprivation

1500 early years children

200 nursery staff

74% of parents and carers participate

60% – 70% of children improve their:

Confidence

Social Skills

Problem Solving Ability

Emotional Literacy and Resilience



Where children can leap in themselves!

North Edinburgh Arts
15a Pennywell Court
Edinburgh EH4 4TZ

T 0131 332 2096/0410
M 07970 749 138
E info@licketyspit.com

www.licketyspit.com



Licketyspit Theatre Company



@LicketyTweet

