



# Let's Connect: Improving the Developmental Outcomes of 2 Year Olds Through Enhanced Play and Interactions

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*Our vision is for Fife to be a place where every child flourishes in their early years.  
To help us realise this ambition, Let's Connect will be available to every 2 year old who needs it.  
To ensure equitable access, Let's Connect will be delivered within education, health visiting and 3rd sector organisations.*

## Rationale

Research tells us that children's early experiences, especially in the first few years of life, help their brains develop – physically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially.

Parental responsiveness supports secure attachment which is the foundation for life long mental and physical wellbeing.

Information sharing alone is not enough to support a change in behaviour. Modelling and coaching is essential to give families a safe space to actively develop and embed these skills.

## Methodology

Let's Connect (LC) provides an innovative framework for practitioners to support parents/carers. A comprehensive manual with training resources supports practitioners to directly model and coach parents/carers to use the strategies during play sessions and to embed these at home.

### Steps taken:

- Systematic use of QI to guide early testing of strategies and development of a suite of measures
- Impact case studies outlining positive outcomes for children and families
- Development of manual through iterative testing with education colleagues
- Scottish Government Whole Family Wellbeing Funding secured for spread across Fife
- Logic model to support quality planning, control and assurance
- Spread plan implemented across Fife with strategic support from managers within Education, 3rd Sector and Health
- Development of 2 virtual networks for education practitioners and senior leadership teams
- Ongoing planning for long-term sustainability.

### Let's Connect (LC) Logic Model April 2025


Situation	Resources	Activities	Outcomes						
<p>Public Health Scotland data evidences an increasing number of children presenting with developmental concerns at their 27-30 month check and the proportion of children with a concern is 2.7 times higher in the most deprived areas.</p> <p>Many parents don't recognise the importance of play and early communication to support their child's development.</p> <p>Within early years practice, the use of modelling &amp; coaching with parents/carers is not used consistently.</p>	<p>Capacity of settings</p> <p>Staff enthusiasm and will to lead change</p> <p>LC manual with professional learning resources &amp; data collection tools</p> <p>QA Networks for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Practitioners</li><li>Education Senior Leadership Teams</li></ul> <p>Core Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>0.2 OT</li><li>0.2 SLT</li><li>1.0 FTE EYO</li></ul> <p>Extended Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Education</li><li>Health</li><li>3rd Sector</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Professional learning/development</li><li>Robust peer observation and feedback using LC observation summary with staff consistently scoring above 35/40</li><li>Coaching support from LC team to practitioners</li><li>Quality control to ensure key components are thoroughly adhered to</li><li>LC strategies and vocabulary are being used by all staff.</li></ul> <p>Practitioners are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>at child's level</li><li>pausing for child to respond &amp; following child's lead</li><li>using language appropriate for child &amp; adding and repeating appropriate vocabulary</li><li>creating appropriate play environments supporting joint attention.</li></ul> <p>Rolling program of LC</p> <p>Ongoing data collection to guide sessions and measure outcomes</p>	<table><thead><tr><th>SHORT</th><th>MEDIUM</th><th>LONG</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td><p><b>Whilst participating in LC, children will display:</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>more functional communication i.e. initiating more interactions and responding more easily</li><li>an increase in sustained attention in child directed play</li><li>increased time in child and adult joint play</li><li>less distressed behaviours</li><li>less time needed to settle after distressed behaviours.</li></ul><p><b>Whilst participating in LC with nursery staff, parents/carers will:</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>be able to discuss their use of strategies</li><li>display increasing use of strategies during play sessions and in everyday interactions</li><li>report increased confidence in playing and interacting with their child</li><li>report more joint play is taking place at home.</li></ul></td><td><p><b>6 months after LC has finished children will display:</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>improvements in overall development as shown by developmental milestones</li><li>increased participation in more to and fro interactions (in nursery)</li><li>sustained engagement in purposeful play (in nursery).</li></ul><p><b>6 months after LC has finished parents/carers will:</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>report continued confidence when playing and interacting with their child</li><li>display active use of LC strategies.</li></ul></td><td><p>Up to 30 months (in alignment with Scottish Governments Children &amp; 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## In Practice



### Let's Connect Parent/Carer Information Leaflet

An enjoyable approach where we work together to support your child's play and communication

- Supporting children to play is one of the best things we can do for their development
  - Playing with your child can have a positive impact on their learning, communication and how they form relationships when they are older
- 
- During Let's Connect, I will share with you some simple ideas about how to support your child during play and everyday activities
  - Together we will think about how these ideas can be used at home to support their development

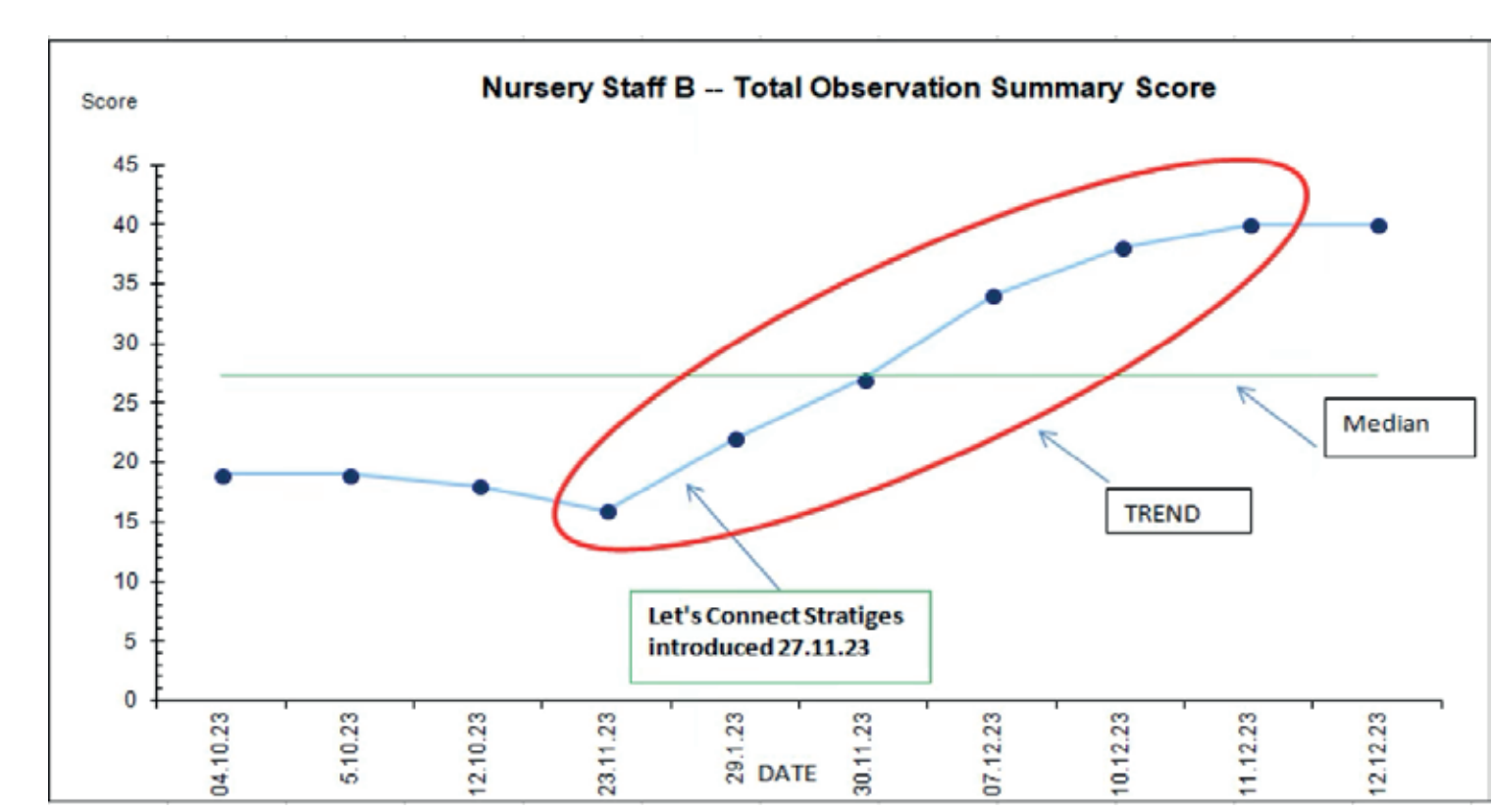
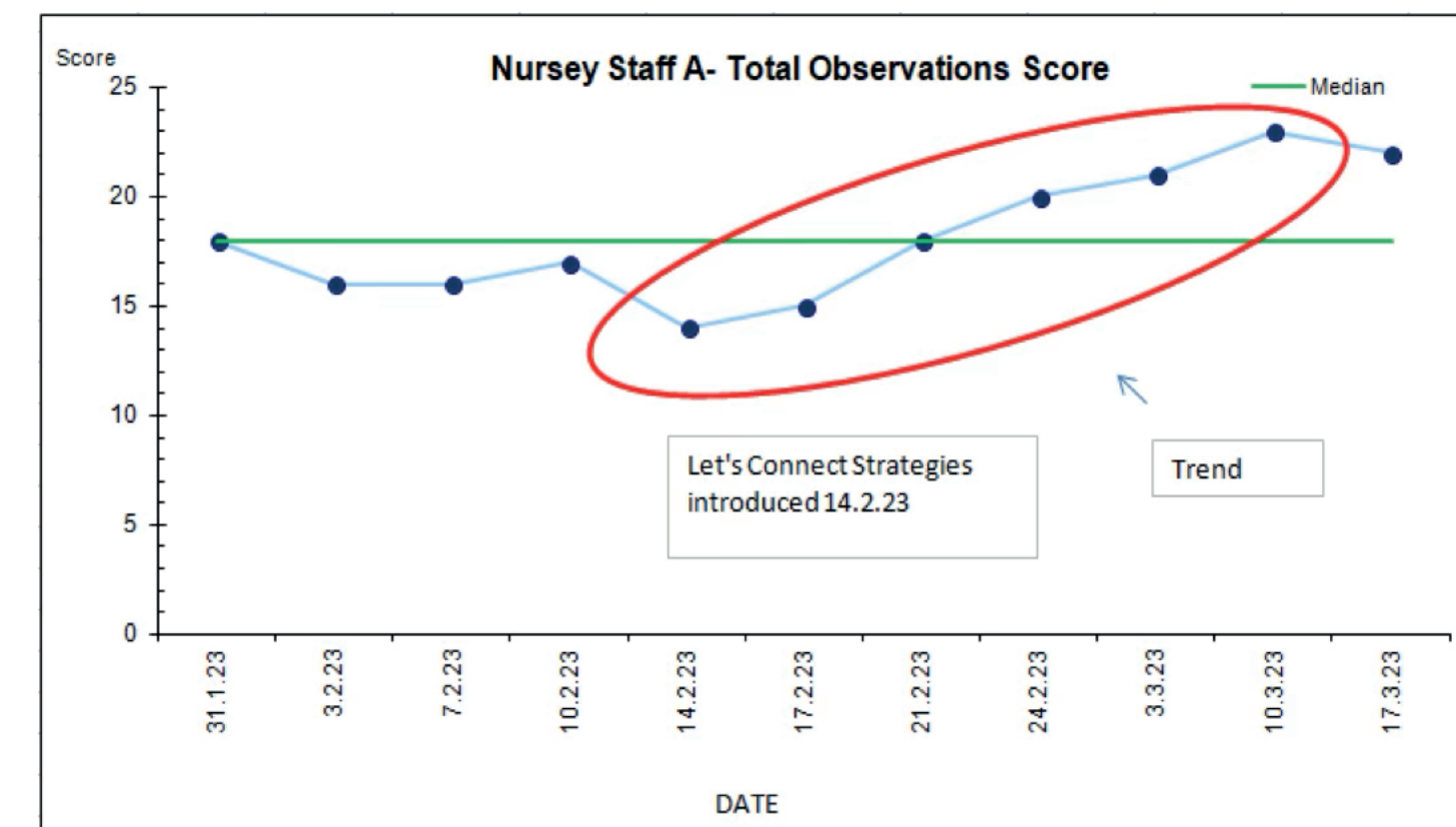
- We will:**
- think about how your child likes to play and what they like to play with
  - talk about all the positive things you are already doing to support them at home
  - think about some simple strategies to support them- I will also demonstrate these to you during play sessions with your child
  - agree some dates for more play sessions so we can practice these strategies together
  - think about how you can continue this at home
  - work together to support your child's development
- 

Let's Connect strategies to use in daily activities and play:



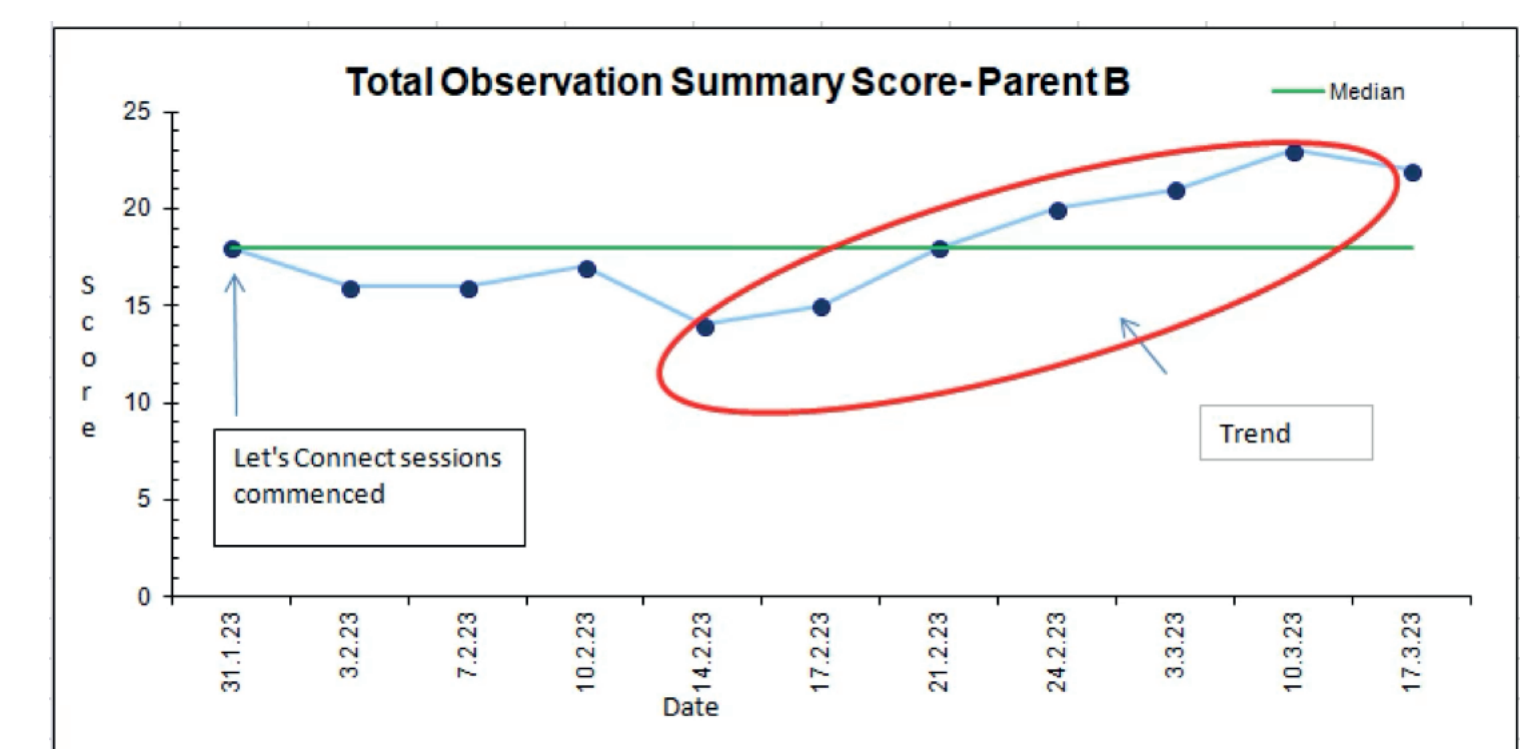
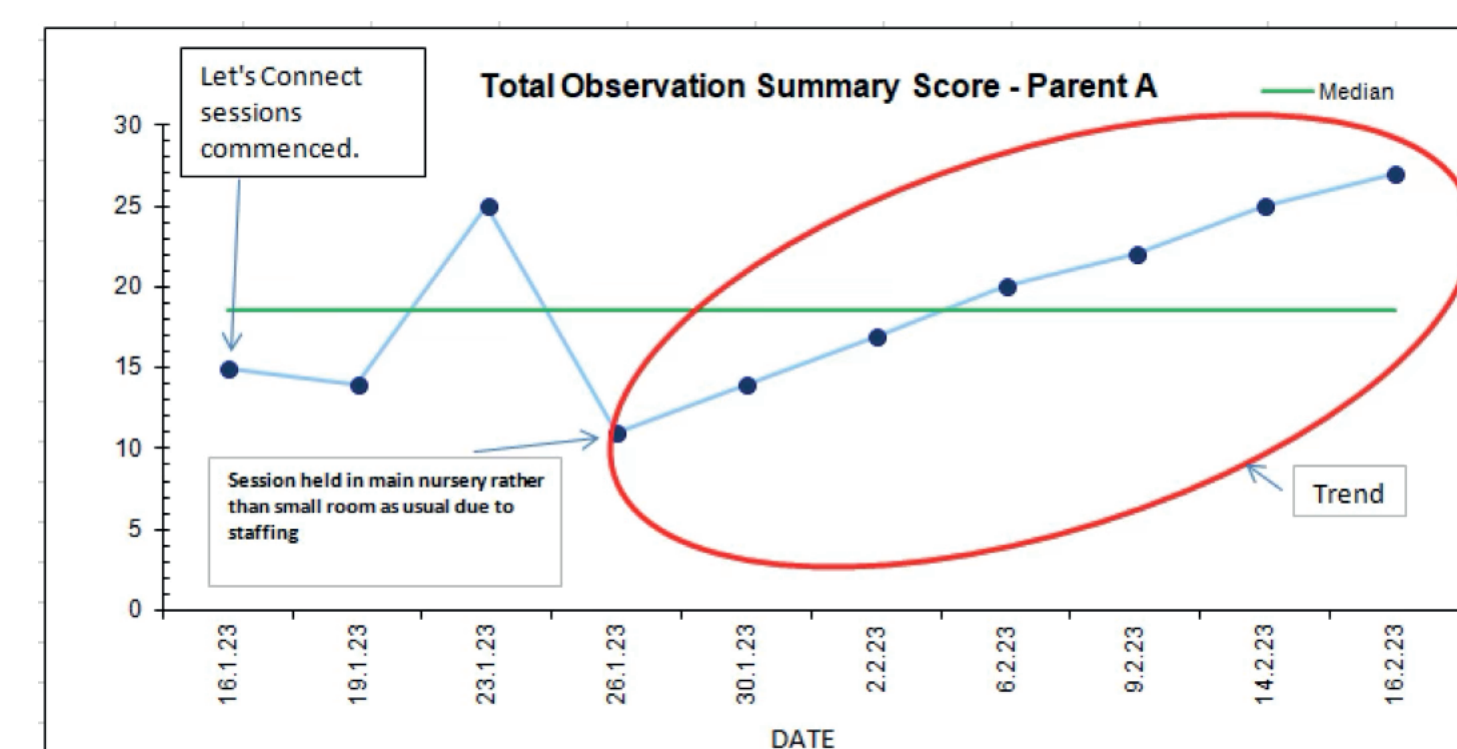
## Practitioner Data

During the testing/implementation phase, early years practitioners need to be able to demonstrate increased use of the 4 strategies within their own practice. Consistent use of these within the setting is crucial for confidence and skill prior to coaching families.

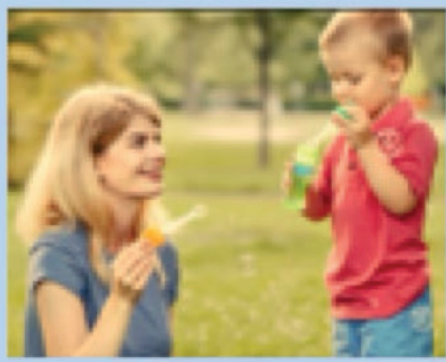





## Parent/Carer Data

During the testing phase Parent/Carers were quickly able to introduce the 4 key strategies into play and interaction during modelling and coaching sessions.



## Outcomes for Practitioners and Families

Outcome Quotes from Practitioners	Outcome Quotes from Parents/Carers	Outcomes Observed for Children
 <b>'LC provides rich professional development'</b> <b>'LC has supported practitioners skills in modelling and coaching parents/carers'</b> <b>'LC helps to enhanced our relationships with parent/carer'</b> <b>'I can see the positive impact on the parent / child relationship'</b> <b>'It has been really special participating with the family on LC'</b> <b>'I feel my relationship with the Mum has improved'</b> <b>'Mum will now play with J in the nursery which she didn't do before'</b> <b>'We can see play is now embedded in the child's life'</b> <b>'Mum is now more aware of her impact on play and changes how she engages with B'</b>	 <b>'My child wants to play with me more'</b> <b>'My child's concentration has improved'</b> <b>'My child's language has improved'</b> <b>'My bond has improved with my child'</b> <b>'I like that we ( EYO and Parent) have connected more too'</b> <b>'I have got the Bookbug app and bring song into the house'</b> <b>'I have enjoyed it and I can see a difference in my child'</b> <b>'LC would be good for other families'</b> <b>'There is now fun in the house'</b> <b>'My child can now be understood by all of the family'</b> <b>'Keeping our language simple has</b>	 <b>Case study observations and practitioners reports indicate improved child development within areas such as:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>attention and listening</li><li>self regulation</li><li>communication and language</li><li>interaction with adults &amp; peers</li><li>play</li></ul>  <b>Quotes:</b> <b>'Improved listening and attention- stays longer in activities'</b> <b>'Improved regulations of emotions- calmer and happier'</b> <b>'Beginning to use single words and gestures to communicate'</b>

## Conclusion and Next Steps

Let's Connect outcome data shows that the developmental outcomes of 2 year olds can be enhanced when skilled practitioners use modelling and coaching of the 4 strategies to support parents/carers to play and interact with their children.

LC is now being embedded in 65% of 2 year old nurseries in Fife and we are on track to reach 100%. Training has been provided to two 3rd sector organisations and Health Visiting is also ready to adopt this approach. Let's Connect has been developed in Fife, the accessibility and content of the manual make it a scalable resource that could be implemented in other regions.

