



Cocoon  
empowering our children

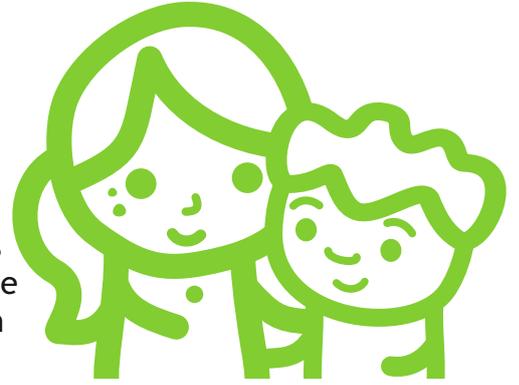
**Early Years  
Cocoon CIC  
Impact Report  
2021**

[www.earlyyearscocoon.co.uk](http://www.earlyyearscocoon.co.uk)



# About us

Early Years Cocoon CIC (EYC) is an organisation whose activities and services are aimed at benefiting and supporting the community and in particular families with young children in Barking and Dagenham.



We became a CIC in June 2020 and before this we were a community voluntary group, running most services on a voluntary basis. We are young but very passionate about what we do and determined to make a positive impact in society.

## Our objectives are

- Developing supportive services for families with young children
- Promoting positive parenting by focusing on the learning and development of the child
- Strengthening social, communication and artistic skills in young children and their parents
- Sharing creative and educational practice to ensure the well-being of children through a supportive family
- Creating multidisciplinary stimuli for children by engaging with other local community organisations and individuals

Our projects continue to be inspired by the needs and insights from our community. We gather this information in many ways such as conversations, notice boards, surveys, chats and our registration form. This community-led approach is at the heart of what we do as it helps us adapt and build upon the reality of those families. We find there is great impact to the way we run our services from listening to the voices of our families who do not always get the opportunity to express themselves.

We are supported by grants, donations and the incredible collaborations we've been establishing since we started.



**117k**  
(28 grants)

received in  
funding  
since 2019

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[www.earlyyearscocoon.co.uk](http://www.earlyyearscocoon.co.uk)

# Our community

Our families come from a diverse background with almost half identifying as an ethnic minority; some struggling with isolation, financial challenges, lack of confidence due to language barriers, and overwhelmed with parenting responsibilities. We are committed to supporting these families through community integration.

During the month of November 2021, we carried out a survey with the families registered in order to assess our impact and effectiveness this year. We found that:

- More than 75% of our registered families have been attending our sessions regularly
- Families stated their main motivation to join the sessions was: 90% developing social and communication skills; 78% meeting other parents to share experiences and 71% engaging in some learning opportunities
- More than 70% of our families think there are not enough services available or are unsure about how to access information
- 67% of families were able to attend our parenting workshops (covering a great variety of topics) and found them useful
- Families would like to access more workshops and opportunities around communication and language, behaviour, healthy lifestyles and toilet training
- 83% of families found our parenting booklet useful





# Cocoon family



# Our services

Our services focus on early intervention, aiming to provide young children with a better and healthier start in the borough. There is clearly a huge need for free or low-cost services for families, and from our own observations and research, there is a gap in the area. EYC aims to close this gap. All of our activities, events and projects are always bringing families together with great levels of participation and attendance.

115

playgroup sessions



6506

participants

online sessions in 5 months

38



19

outdoors sessions  
at local parks

56

cricket sessions delivered  
in collaboration with Essex Cricket

56

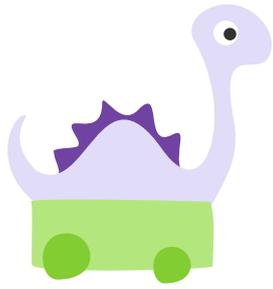


50

hours offering 1 to 1 educational

support to local families





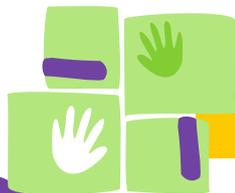
2000



toys donated by ELBA and distributed by us during Christmas



Development grant from National Lottery



4 playgroup sessions per week from May 2021

4

30

gift cards provided to parents from Christmas Cheer Fund



Parenting as a learning journey

2nd

edition of the parenting booklet produced

special events to celebrate Diversity

4

4 weeks summer holidays programme (HAF) for older kids in collaboration with other organisations

9



# Achievements

- Chosen as a case study by London Sports and their campaign #WeAreNotSpectators
- Voluntary Support Team started in some of our venues and support staff paid
- Executive Director nominated 'Volunteer of the Year' at Women's Empowerment event
- Awarded as a Recognised Project by London's Faith and Belief communities for our playgroup session which is run collaboration with Saint Martin's Church
- Cricket sessions offered at Barking Park in collaboration with Essex Cricket
- Collective parenting booklet co-created with parents and local organisations
- Parenting workshops delivered addressing dental health, bonding with your child, behaviour, mindful parenting, speech and language, mental health, creative writing, well being for parents, emotions and many others topics.
- Digital inclusion tackled with ELBA's donations of laptops and computers
- Henry programme online courses delivered in collaboration with the Healthy lifestyle team
- Joined 'Leaders in Partnership' ran by ELBA
- Website launched
- Green champions for local litter picking recruited for Earth day



# Testimonials

What our community says...



Lovely initiative with a hard working lead. Really a lifeline for so many parents and children. Keep up the excellent work! Thank you for your sacrifice to create an opportunity for parents and children to meet up. It's hard work to do it and would like to say thank and happy for the opportunity to be part of it.

A wonderful organisation providing many play groups throughout the week which we are incredibly grateful for! Thank you so much.



Love the group whatsapp very helpful to let us know what's going on in the village and the community.

I believe that is great what cocoon is trying to establish in the borough and should keep going, especially for new mums is a great opportunity to meet other new mums, share and learn and an appointment to look forward to week by week and get through the first year of a newborn.



My son and I really enjoy attending Cocoon play sessions, plenty of toys and resources to aid his development.

I like teachers, they are very friendly and supportive. Place is local and convenient for me. I really like the toys too.



Check out our Google reviews here <https://g.page/r/Cdfvclfg-4NLEAI/review>

enjoyable relaxed  
rewarding supportive  
fun enjoyable entertaining  
organised informative  
amazing friendly  
educational nice energetic

## Cocoon is\*...

\* Word cloud generated with participants input

warm exciting  
happy enthusiastic  
fantastic genuine good  
welcoming sociable  
creative engaging  
helpful interactive  
motivational

# Local partners' reviews

It has been a pleasure for Essex Cricket to have worked with Early Years Cocoon to support families with activities during a very traumatic time in their lives. Early Years Cocoon are nothing short of an inspirational partner, they have the local communities best needs in mind and go beyond the call of duty to find ways to cater those needs, the Barking Park family project for us at Essex Cricket is a huge highlight programme, showcasing the power of community engagement as well as the significant importance of physical activity.

Arfan Akram | East London Cricket Operations Manager  
**Essex Cricket**

I am connected into Early Years Cocoon within my role as Chair of BD\_Collective. Natalia Lema is an active member of the Early Help for families Network and her contribution is both practical and strategic. The work she is doing through Early Years Cocoon gives her incredible insight into the needs and opportunities of local families and she is able to bring that learning for the greater benefit of other social sector organisations.

Avril McIntyre MBE DL | Director, Community Resources  
**Lankelly Chase Foundation Associate**

In Barking and Dagenham we have extremely high levels of obesity in our reception aged children and in order to educate parents about being healthy right from the start we deliver a programme called HENRY. In 2021 we started to deliver this in partnership with Cocoon. This has proved to be very successful in reaching a number of new families. Cocoon have an established network of parents and because of these relationship having already been formed the parents were very willing to join an online group together. This resulted in excellent retention rates for the programme. Natalia attended the sessions and has since been fully trained to be a HENRY facilitator and will be delivering future groups with local authority staff.

Jacquie Hutchinson | Service Manager | Healthy Lifestyles/Social prescribing | **Universal Community Solutions**

Early Years Cocoon has been instrumental in connecting us with local families. Natalia has been great to work with - she is knowledgeable of the local landscape, supportive of our work and has provided us with opportunities to talk to parents about the new museum and their experiences. We are impressed with what Natalia has achieved over the last year and we look forward to working with her again.

Sharondeep Jawanda | Community Engagement Lead  
**East End Women's Museum**

Early Years Cocoon, a wonderful weekly session at Dagenham Library for the parents and carers in our community, to address the socialising for mum and child, to get out of the house and have quality time with each other and other parents and children is so important for the development of social skills at their own pace, building emotional confidence and encouraging physical activity, the importance of a child's imagination and creativity and learning through role-play.

Vince Thomas | Relationship Manager | **Universal Services Community Solutions**

BD Giving is a local funder that puts local people in charge of making decisions about our funding; Early Years Cocoon CIC's success in obtaining multiple grants from us should therefore be seen as a ringing endorsement from the community about the work that they do. Among residents, there is a clearly understood need in the borough for EY provision and they know that children deserve to have the best opportunities to support their development - EYC is a brilliant example of how these needs can be met in the borough. We've also been really grateful to Early Years Cocoon CIC for their contribution to our own learning, bringing a much needed perspective into conversations about how community engagement in the borough can be done in a sustainable and supportive way.

Cameron Bray | Learning & Participation Manager | **BD Giving**

I first learnt of the work of Early Years Cocoon, whilst delivering a Building Closer Communities project in Barking and Dagenham. The work of Cocoon struck me as unique and important as it builds community amongst parents with young children in spaces and in ways which are often overlooked and does an amazing job at reaching out to those who may be isolated or without a 'traditional' community. We at the Faith & Belief Forum were delighted to receive their nomination for the London Faith & Belief Community Awards and joyfully celebrated them as a Recognised Project at the 2021 awards.

Jessica Hazrati | Programmes Officer | **The Faith & Belief Forum**

We have worked closely with Natalia and Early Years Cocoon over the past year, and over this time have been extremely involved in the Barking Sports 4 Change programme in the borough. Natalia has taken an interest in finding ways to develop her delivery, leadership and community building skills from the community coordinator but also various trusted groups in the coalition that makes up Barking Sports 4 Change.

We have been particularly impressed by Natalia offering shared learning, and has taken the opportunity to work initially for a few months in 2020 with Essex Cricket in the Community to develop a medium term strategic collaboration that benefits beneficiaries of the organisation each week with physical activity sessions in local places.

Sam Sawhney | Community Coordinator | **Laureus Sport for Good**





**Funders, partners and families  
Thank you for your ongoing support!**



Check out our promotional video here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F16nYs7w-RA&t=33s>