



our impact and journey



2019 - 21



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foreword

Dr Julian Grenier

Headteacher of Sheringham Nursery School and Children's Centre, National Leader of Education and Director of East London Research School.



What makes the biggest difference to a child's learning in the early years – and beyond? It's a question we should ask ourselves all the time, because it produces a complex answer.

We know how important the Home Learning Environment is. It's what parents do, rather than how affluent or well qualified they are, that makes a difference.

But this raises a big question. How can we best support home learning? The truth is, we don't exactly know. Faced with uncertainty in education, we can do nothing. Or we can use the best information we have and look for impact in small-scale evaluations.

That's how Boromi came to support our work at Sheringham Nursery School during the lockdowns over the last two years.

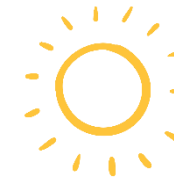
We started by learning more about the families we work with. There were two big challenges. Firstly, families needed help in understanding what sort of home play and learning would make a difference to their children. Secondly, many families didn't have much at home for children to play with.

So, when we shared the lovely Keepmi boxes with families, we held WhatsApp video calls with parents. We filmed children in nursery playing with the materials. We shared those films and talked with parents about how they could further support their child's learning at home.

When all the children came back into nursery, we carried out a small-scale study. We compared the development of children who were at home, with those who continued in nursery. We found that children at home made just as much progress in their communication. That was the main focus of our support. In other areas, we could see where that group of children still needed more support.

This was a simple, quick and dirty evaluation. But it told us something important. We could build on our relationships with families, using ICT and sharing materials from Boromi. We could make a difference.

I'm eternally grateful to Evie and to Boromi for working with us and making that difference. I am also delighted to provide the introduction to this report about Boromi's valuable work.



our vision and mission

we believe in a world where every child has a fair start in life. That's why our mission is to empower every family to play, talk and learn together at home - where it matters most.



we exist because we know that...



1.

85% of a child's brain is developed by the age of five, laying the building blocks for their future.



2.

a child's **parents** and their **home environment** over this time have the greatest impact upon their long-term life outcomes all the way to age 18... over and above any other factor.



3.

1 in 2 children experiencing factors such as challenging home environments, fewer opportunities to develop language skills and a lack of shared play and positive interactions are reaching the age of five without the foundations they need to thrive and meet their potential.



...by empowering parents to nurture the learning that's happening at home, we're able to have the greatest impact upon long-term child outcomes, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

2019-2021 on a page

2020 wasn't the year any of us were expecting, but because of this we believe it's more important than ever to celebrate, share and shout about what we've still managed to achieve with your help. Here's a few highlights that we're pretty proud of from the past two years:



We kicked off September 2019 with our biggest school cohort yet (p4)



Launched an external impact and evaluation project in partnership with Doncaster Research School and SHINE Trust (p4)



Launched our new, direct-to-parent programme, Keepmi, in response to Covid-19 closures (p7)



Started the #DailyPlay in March 2020 and continued for 26 weeks, until schools were open to all (p10)



Family reach increased from 2019 to 2021 by

600%+

6000+

Keepmi boxes posted since lockdown first began

200,000

#dailyplay emails sent since March 2020

what we did:

2019 saw our Play Libraries kick off the year with our biggest cohort yet; growing across the West and East Midlands, North West, Yorkshire and the East of England whilst expanding into the South West for the first time. With our Play Libraries reaching families from Cumbria to Norfolk and Bristol!



We also launched our first ever external Impact and Evaluation project in partnership with Doncaster Research School with nine classes across Doncaster, thanks to funding from SHINE Trust.



SHINE is thrilled to support Boromi's impact and evaluation project. We believe Boromi is a fantastic resource; perfect for supporting families to connect whilst learning through play. Its simplicity and accessibility mean it reaches those children who need it the most. This project will help develop our understanding of how we can meaningfully support children and their families learning at home.

- Eleanor Heathcote, SHINE Trust

the impact:



Data shared by Doncaster Research School showed that, as a result of engaging with our Boromi Play Libraries...

100%

All teachers reported that parents have increased 'understanding of the value of play and that talking to their children helps them to learn.'

100%

'All schools reported that Boromi has given parents practical ideas about how to play and talk with their child.'

100%

'All teachers reported that there had been an increase in pupils talking about the activities they had been undertaking at home.'



Launch of evaluation project with teachers in Doncaster

A few other soundbites...



'All schools are extremely positive about the accessibility of the project for parents (as a physical, offline product).'



'Harder to reach parents appear to be engaging well... because of the practical, easy to use nature of the resources.'



'80% of schools celebrated that there had been a significant increase in the comments and photos that are being put online or sent into school'



'More parents and caregivers value play as an important part of their child's learning.'



'60% of schools believe that parents are more likely to engage with Boromi compared to online programmes/tools as activities are hands-on and about adult-child interactions. In addition, not all parents have internet access.'

school case study

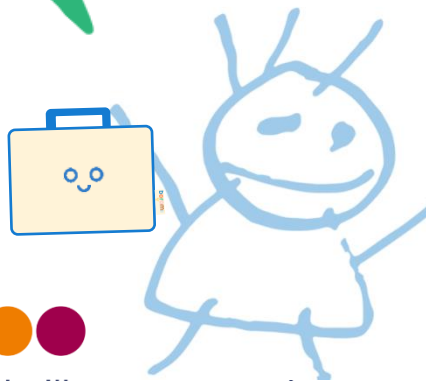


Tell me about how you've found using Boromi this term...

'They've been really good to have. As we don't have certain toys at home... And it helps with ideas, I can get a blank mind when it comes to thinking of things to do, I'm not very creative. I don't have those ideas.

We definitely play more... It gives us more of a reason to do something together.'

What did you do with the bag?... 'I like the den bag one. We put up a tent. We used the pegs, my Mummy helped me. Mummy clicked them on.'



When I borrow a bag I feel... 'happy because I get to play funny games with my mum. It's fun to play with my mum. I like the cooking. It's very fun to pretend to make stuff.'



Heather,
Reception parent



We were looking for a resource which would support positive play between adults and their children at home that wasn't screen related at all.

Our challenge is that some of our children arrive with significantly lower starting points than they should (18 months behind developmentally).

We wanted to develop communication and language through play and when I saw the resources inside, I immediately started playing with my colleague next to me.

They're tactile and real, they're in front of you. I thought, this is something that's easily transferrable into the world of helping parents to do that.



We know that when parents take the bags, they are playing together with the resources in them, and that they report enjoying playing together.

We can see that families are enjoying them and they're providing a rich, happy family engagement.

James Colvin,
Deputy Headteacher



Windmill L.E.A.D. Academy
A L.E.A.D. Academy



‘We have a handful of children that have persistently not engaged in home learning and online learning.

For this group, the **Keepmi boxes have been the gateway...** They’ve now activated their Tapestry account and have started attending our online lessons too!

I think it’s just helped to make it all a bit less scary.’

*Dr Polly Crowther,
Oasis Academy Skinner Street*



However, as schools were partially closed in March 2020, our Play Libraries were unable to reach families when they were needed more than ever.

Within three weeks, we pivoted our in-school model to launch a new, direct to parent programme, ‘Keepmi’.



what we did:

- Created a series of six Keepmi boxes, with each box sharing a week’s worth of play whilst also equipping families with a comprehensive range of essential and reusable learning materials
- Posted over 6000 boxes to family homes since June 2020
- Donated 1575 boxes free of charge to identified priority families across Leicestershire*
- Collaborated with the Foundation Years Trust to provide 958 Keepmi boxes for families in the Wirral

the impact



100% of families strongly agreed/ agreed that because of their Keepmi box(es), they have been able to better support their child’s learning at home during the pandemic



100% of families strongly agreed/ agreed that Keepmi boxes gave them new ideas of how they can support their child’s learning at home



100% of families strongly agreed/ agreed that they have already – or are likely to – repeat an activity again with their child that they learned from a Keepmi box



80% of parents shared that they always played with their child when playing with their Keepmi box

Data combined from a) 60 phone interviews b) an optional user survey with 43 respondents and c) 18 completed school questionnaires



Children in the Wirral receiving their Keepmi boxes from FYT at St Paul's



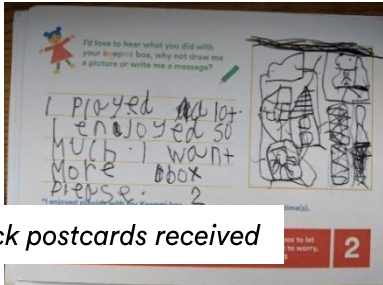
Hear what some of our families had to say



'It is a good idea because that's how we spent quality time together with my son.'
- Keepmi parent



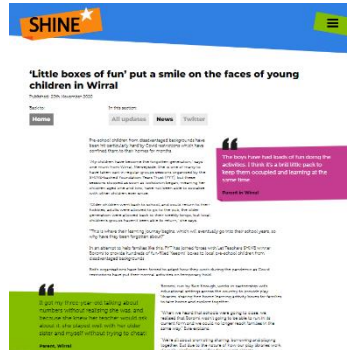
'In lockdown when we received the boxes I actually realised how much it is important to sit down with my child and spend time with her, Boromi did a great job here.'
- Keepmi parent



100's of family feedback postcards received



Parent stay and play sessions at Morningside Children's Centre



SHINE's blog about our collaboration with FYT

'It is very engaging, the activity looks like a normal play but it makes a huge impact and difference, it is very creative. We don't need to buy any stuff to play the activity during lockdown as everything comes in the box and is delivered at your doorstep. Helped me have new ideas.'
- Keepmi parent



“

‘It has been my one go-to. It has been helpful because it has been so direct and consistent.’

Jenny, parent

‘The best thing... is not needing loads of resources. Really helpful for our parents who do not have access to loads of resources.’

Lynsey, SLT

”

#dailyplay

boromi
 Wednesday 13th January
 Challenge! How tall can you build your tower of shoes?

For today's #dailyplay, you will need:

- 1. A few pairs of shoes
- 2. Tape measure or ruler

Time to play!

- Gather up your shoes
- Using your shoes in any way that you like, build them up on top of each other as high as you can without them falling over
- Once you've made it as tall as you can, use your tape measure to measure the height...
- ...Did you beat our attempt of 68cm?

Let's talk!

Q1 How tall do you think we will be able to build our tower?
 Q2 Which shoes should we use at the bottom of the tower? Why?
 Q3 Could we use this shoe in a different way?

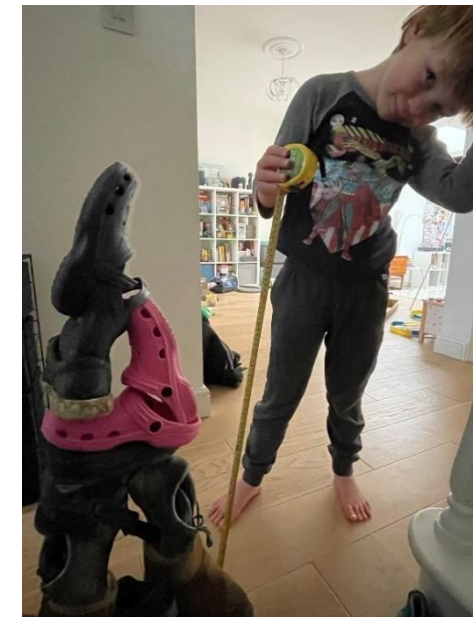
Some fun words to try and use!

High	Tall
Higher	Widely
Highest	Balance

Problem-solving
 Open ended challenges such as this are a great opportunity for us to problem solve. Try to use new shoe solutions and methods to see what works!

Investigate, measure, imagine, create @boromiHQ

All Boromi... acts as a network of play therapists in a mission to empower families to connect, talk and play together at home. Over the coming weeks, we'll bring you our top tips and resources all under #dailyplay.



A new, bigger HQ!

In autumn 2019 we moved into new premises. Over the past two years, we've quadrupled the size of our premises and also our team!



other stuff that we're pretty proud of



Winning the 2020 Fair Education Alliance Scaling Award

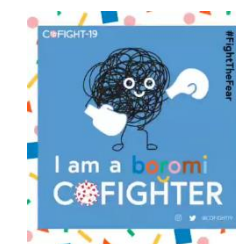
In July 2020 we proudly won the Scaling Award with the Fair Education Alliance, to help us to scale our impact over the next two years.



Addressing the attainment gap early on is critical and that is exactly what Boromi does. Through their innovative Play Libraries, Boromi equip parents with the skills and resources to support the crucial development of their child. Having supported Boromi through our Innovation Award and now Scaling Award, we're delighted to see them not only scale to support even more families who need their support but scaling geographically to more areas of greatest need. It's also great to see the positive impact that this work has on pupils and families, especially the findings that the programme is engaging harder to reach families due to the accessibility of the resources.

- Siwan Davies, Director of Scaling Impact

In May 2020 Boromi was announced as 'One to Watch' within NatWest's SE100 Awards.



Collaborated with 'CoFight' to be a part of their national, 19-day campaign in March 2020.



Thank you to those organisations who have financially supported us over the past two years without whom, many of the achievements shared within this report wouldn't have been possible.

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white tank top and a black and white checkered skirt, is sitting on the grass. She is smiling and holding a white speech bubble that says "hello!". In front of her are several play bags of different colors (blue, yellow, red) and a cardboard box. The background is a lush green garden with trees and bushes.

a heartfelt thank you from our CEO

Looking back on the last two years, I feel an enormous sense of gratitude and pride. As a young organisation, we had just kicked-off our second annual programme when Spring 2020 changed the long-term landscape for us all.

With Play Libraries that are built upon a platform of in-person borrowing and designed to get physically into family homes, the prospect of surviving, let alone overcoming this sudden and overwhelming global pandemic was extremely daunting.

However, one thing became evident very fast. It had never been more important, or more urgent to support parents to nurture their child's home learning environment.

This critical need gave me the drive to continue in the face of adversity - and the resilience to find a way to adapt and make it work.

Fast forward 18 months, and it's hard to imagine Boromi without its little sister Keepmi or the #dailyplay, and I am truly humbled that we have been able to make a difference for 1000's of families over this difficult and unpredictable time.

Looking ahead to next academic year, I am beyond excited to be finally able to relaunch our Boromi Play Libraries to work alongside our Covid response programmes, and to begin this new chapter.

None of what we have achieved would have been possible without our amazing community, phenomenal schools and the countless organisations and individuals who have supported us over this challenging and turbulent time. Because of you, we've not only survived but we've emerged a stronger, more resilient, and more impactful organisation. Thinking back to an Evie in March 2020, I would never have dared to even dream I'd be able to write that sentence.




Thank you.

Here's to another year of play!

what's next... and how you can help

We're incredibly proud of how we have adapted over the past two years and the impact this has had upon thousands of families across the UK. Looking ahead to next year, we're excited to be...

Building

-  Re-opening our Play Libraries in September 2021 to new primary schools
-  Relaunching our impact and evaluation project in September 2021, thanks to continued funding from SHINE Trust
-  Working in collaboration with ImpactEd to review our Theory of Change and evaluation framework
-  Compiling and launching our first organisational three-year strategy
-  Continuing our support as part of the Fair Education Alliance's Scaling Award

-  Piloting our first **community-based** Play Libraries within library settings across Leicestershire for children aged 2-5 years
-  Launching our first translated Play Libraries within Wales
-  Designing and sharing new Play Library content for 3-5 year olds



Help us to reach every family in need of our support.
Spread the word about what we do and share with your networks.

We are largely supported by grants and donations.
We'd love to hear from donors or grant providers who might want to support our mission.

You can help us make a difference



Empowering every parent to nurture their child's early development through powerful, purposeful play and talk, together at home.

hello@boromi.co.uk