



LIFESTART FOUNDATION



The logo consists of several overlapping squares in yellow, red, and blue, with a vertical black line passing through them.

Lifestart Mission

***Educating and
empowering parents of
children from Birth to
the age of Five so that
these children
reach their full potential***





Principles and Values

- The first five years of a child's life are the most important in terms of physical, social, emotional, creative and intellectual development
- It is in early life that children acquire the competence and coping skills that affect their life trajectories
- The foundations for learning are constructed in the first months and years of life
- Parents are their child's first teachers
- The majority of children's development and learning takes place in the home
- Supportive and preventive intervention is most effective in early life
- Good parenting can reduce the adverse effects of material disadvantage and economic hardship and can promote resilience in children and families



Lifestart - an effective Approach to Family Involvement in Education

- Based in the home
- Works directly with parents
- Promotes learning within the family
- Provides practical information
- Supports practical activities
- Increases knowledge of child development and how children learn
- Enhances parenting skills



What is Lifestart?

- Lifestart is a parent-directed and child-centred **learning curriculum** which provides an in-depth month by month view of child development, starting from birth and covering all areas of development and learning :
 - **Physical**
 - **Intellectual**
 - **Emotional**
 - **Social**
 - **Creative**
- Lifestart affirms and supports parents in their role as the **primary educators** of their children



What Lifestart Provides

- Trained Family Visitors who visit parents in their own home each month to explain and discuss their child's development
- Regular developmental checklists which help parents to assess their child's development
- A library of age appropriate books and toys which parents can use to develop parent/child interaction and to encourage language and intellectual development
- Art materials and other resources that allow for creativity and the development of fine motor skills
- Family Fun Days and Play Days
- Accredited and non-accredited parent education programmes
- Signposting to other services and support providers



Benefits of this approach

- Parents learn about child development and how best to support learning in their child
- Parents are involved in their child's learning at a practical level
- Basic learning and social skills are developed
- Children are ready for school
- Learning embedded in the family



Future Developments

- Pilot project
- In partnership with Good Shepherd Nursery School, Poleglass and Edenderry Nursery School, Shankill, Belfast
- Addressing the issue of school readiness



The Pilot Project

- Lifestart Family Visitor based in each school
- Working directly with parents in the school catchment area
- Providing
 - The Lifestart 'Growing Child' programme
 - The Lifestart 'At Home in School' programme
 - The Lifestart Parenting programme (OCN accredited)
 - The Lifestart Play Days programme



Figures

- Growing Child – parents of 60 children per month – 720 contacts per annum
- At Home in School delivered in the year prior to nursery school entry
- Parenting programme – 3 units - 10 parents per year
- Play Days – 10 families per year



Lifestart Costings

Urban Setting

- 75 children – 900 contacts per annum
- Cost per contact = £35
- 2008-2009 = £31,500

Rural Setting

- 60 children – 720 contacts per annum
- Cost per contact = £43.50
- 2008-2009 = £31,120



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How is Lifestart an effective Approach to Family Involvement in Education?

- To increase parents' knowledge, understanding and skills in child development
- To empower parents to enable children to reach their full potential
- To enhance parents confidence, sense of well-being and self-esteem
- To enable parents to be more sensitive and responsive to their children's needs
- To enable parents to have better and more stable relationships with their child
- To enable parents to identify and address developmental delays
- To facilitate where necessary early intervention by signposting to other services