

Rotherham Creative Learning

Winner of the Family Learning to Support Health and Wellbeing Award

Rotherham Creative Learning is an organisation that sits within Children and Young People's Services of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, and operates from its own dedicated building, the Rotherham Creative Learning Centre (CLC). The CLC team provides Family Learning and Adult Tailored Learning to children, families and residents, funded by the RNN Group (Rotherham North Nottinghamshire College).

The team develops learning opportunities to support their communities and meet local needs through a broad and varied learning offer, with a focus on creative health. The overall purpose of the work is to engage and support families who are considered harder to reach, exploring how community, cultural, and nature-based activities can improve health inequalities in the area.

Family Learning Health and Wellbeing: The Living Planet

Rotherham Creative Learning recognised that the UK was facing a crisis in health and social care, with health systems under huge pressure and more people living with long-term health conditions. Through their Creative Health commitment, the organisation developed creative family learning opportunities to support health, wellbeing and environmental appreciation.

The Living Planet project was made up of four individual learning sessions, identifying various dimensions of Health and Wellbeing. Each had a different learning focus, but all used nature and the outdoors to support emotional health, mental health, physical health, and social health. Many families had not visited their local parks before.





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The sessions generated curiosity and motivated families to continue their learning by exploring the outdoors.

- Rainforest Rangers – explored different ecosystems and discussed the importance of rainforests to the planet, creating terrariums using items typically found in rainforests.
- It's a Bug's Life – learnt about habitats by creating a Bug Hotel, using an array of natural resources. Families also participated in the Nature Detective's bug hunt and recorded their discoveries.
- Under The Sea - families made an ocean in a jar, replicating the three distinct layers of the ocean by using simple ingredients and objects like replica starfish, seahorses, shells and stones.
- Eco Warriors - discussed and explored the world of recyclables and non-recyclables, designing a wooden Junk Bot, using materials like wood, nuts, bolts and screws.

Impact and next steps

"Really enjoyed our bonding time together, being able to learn together and teach my son how to build a bug house."

Nearly a thousand children and adults benefitted from these sessions. The Living Planet project was effective in fostering a passion for learning amongst families, cultivating self-belief, compassion and care for one another and the environment. The small yet impactful family learning sessions helped families work together, communicate with confidence and improve all aspects of their health and wellbeing. The project has built the confidence of those parents who felt they were unable to support their children, as they were unable to recognise their own skills. It has given parents some confidence to go on and explore other learning.

School leaders reported that parents gave direct feedback to schools about the quality of the sessions and how it improved health and wellbeing and encouraged families to explore nature in their communities.

Using feedback from families, Rotherham Creative Learning have continued to develop the programme for many more children and adults to experience. Community partnerships have grown because of the success of the project and the organisations Rotherham Creative Learning collaborated with have asked to develop more creative health programmes.

The programme continues to grow and evolve, with exciting projects planned for summer 2025.