EVALUATION REPORT ON
SURE START
SWIMMING SESSIONS

Questionnaire and Report devised and compiled
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2. Executive Summary

This report has been designed and compiled by Hayley Leppington as part of her Community Parent placement.

94 different families accessed the swimming sessions.

The Tuesday evening session was the most popular and gave an opportunity for working mums and dads to take their child/children to the swim sessions.

Several of the parents commented that they preferred evening sessions, due to having more than one child and needing the support of another adult.

15 parents would continue to use the water babies swim sessions, even though there were several negative comments referring to the facilities and pool temperature at Leisure World.

The method of distributing swim vouchers was useful as the vouchers held information useful for evaluation.
3. Background

The idea of the swim sessions came about to promote safety in the water, something which was important to our local Sure Start as we live on the coast.
It was also brought up as a good idea to link in well with the Beach Hut Management programme. With the Sure Start team at full capacity, the sessions also provided the opportunity to add a different group without affecting staffing levels.
The water babies swim sessions were initially set up on a trial basis, after three months.
Questionnaires were sent out to every Sure Start member.

The following information has been collated from the 27 questionnaires, which were returned.

Parents were asked the following questions:

- Have you attended any of the water babies swim sessions at Leisure World set up by Sure Start?
- Did you and your child/children enjoy these sessions?
- Were the days and times convenient?
- Were the staff at Leisure World polite and helpful?
- Were the facilities clean?
- Were the toys in the pool age-appropriate for your child/children?
- Did you receive your free swim pack?
- Did you use the items given in the swim pack?
- Would you continue to use the water babies swim sessions?
Parents were also invited to comment on:

- Reasons for not attending the swim sessions
- Preferred days/times for swim sessions

A lot of parents wrote their own comments on the back of the questionnaires, which I have included in this report.
4. Findings

4.1 Results of Questionnaires

1. Have you attended any of the Water Babies sessions at Leisure World set up by Sure Start?
   YES 13  NO 14

2. Did you and your child/children enjoy the sessions?
   YES 11  NO 5

3. Were the days and times convenient?
   YES 14  NO 4

4. Were the staff at Leisure World polite and helpful?
   YES 14  NO 2

5. Were the facilities clean?
   Yes 12  NO 4

6. Was the pool temperature cold/warm/just right?
   COLD 12  SOM TIMES COLD 2  WARM 0  JUST RIGHT 2

7. Were the toys in the swimming pool age appropriate for your child/children?
   YES 13  NO 1  NOT ENOUGH TOYS 1
8. Did you receive your free swim pack?
   YES 13  NO 3

9. If yes did you use the items given?
   YES 10  NO 3

10. Would you continue to use the Sure Start swim sessions at Leisure World
    YES 15  NO 1
4.2 Breakdown of Attendance

141 families attended the swim sessions (1 family=1 parent plus 1 child)

- Tuesday 1-2pm  22
- Tuesday 2-3pm  23
- Tuesday 6-7pm  51
- Thursday 1-2pm  22
- Thursday 2-3pm  23

Tuesday 1-2pm was attended by 14 different families (15%) with 5 dads

Tuesday 2-3pm was attended by 20 different families (21%) with 4 dads

Tuesday 6-7pm was attended by 25 different families (27%) with 11 dads

Thursday 1-2pm was attended by 15 different families (16%) with 2 dads

Thursday 2-3pm was attended by 20 different families (21%) with 1 dad

Total families 94                        Total dads 23
4.3 Which session was the best attended?

The Tuesday evening session was by far the most popular, it was the only evening session and attracted more fathers than the daytime sessions. The law states that every child under the age of 4 years must be accompanied on a one-to-one basis by an adult. Many of the Sure Start members have more than one child and could only attend the evening session when working dads are able to attend. It also offered an opportunity for working mothers to take their child/children swimming.

How many parents attending Water Babies had a Leisure World saver card?
Of the 141 families that attended the swim sessions (1 parent + 1 child)
• 50 families had a Leisure World saver card.
• 63 paid 50p fee
• 28 of the vouchers were unmarked (by L World staff)

4.4 Was it the same Parents attending each week?

94 different families attended the sessions. Many of these families attended on one occasion only but some families went several times and one family accessed the Tuesday evening session for the full 8 week period.
4.5 Reasons for not attending Water Babies Swim Sessions

My son isn’t allowed to swim after his operation until possibly August at the earliest
Baby no 3 is due 10\textsuperscript{th} June and I would love to attend if still available

I went on the time given but got told the baby pool was closed
Would go again if they were to carry on.

I haven’t been able to get help with having 22 month old twins

Time not convenient

Was not aware of the water babies sessions

Don’t know about them, please send me some information

I have 2 children (2 & 1yrs) and no babysitter - too much to take them both swimming at the same time

Never heard of it.(not sure what age could join?)

We’ve got twins so would have to come with my husband but imagined these sessions would be full.

Not able to make the times due to work
Not able to take 2 under 4s into the pool alone.

It put me off going, having to book each time you went, I felt pressure to go once you had booked. As it was, my child had a cold the first time I booked, so he could not go. But I thought it was just as well as the weather was cold anyway and I would be walking back. I can see the reasoning for booking, so everyone who wants to go gets the opportunity to go. Initially I don’t think there was any talk of booking.

They are too early for my partner to take her and too late for me to go after getting tea done and walking down.

Because I’ve got 3 children I was a bit worried I wouldn’t be able to watch them all. They go from 3 yrs, 2 yrs and 4 months.
4.6 Preferred Times

Day time sessions

- Morning session - 9.30ish
- 12.00-1.00pm, 3.30 -5.00pm
- Morning 9.30am

Evening/Weekend sessions

- Monday or Friday evenings 6.30-7.30pm
- Weekends or early evening (due to children/childcare arrangements)
- For my partner - 7.30pm or 8pm
- More evening sessions (I have 2 children and need my partner’s help)
- Monday evening 6.30pm
4.7 Comments from Questionnaires

Reported in the local press - that under 4s must be supervised on a one-to-one adult basis. This will mean that until my younger child is 4 years old I will not be able to take both of my children swimming at the same time. An after-school session arranged by Sure Start, with perhaps more staff available for us would enable us to go swimming together. There must be many mums with 2 or more children under 4 who will be affected by this new rule. They (ERYC) also say that an adult will only be allowed to look after 2 children aged between 4 and 7yrs. Can Sure Start help?

The arm bands were aged for 3 years and over - my boys are only 14 months!

During our visit parents were leaving 3 & 4 year olds unattended in the baby pool and swimming in the main pool. One child stood on the steps and peed into the pool unnoticed by both his mother and the lifeguard. There were no changing mats/tables available, when a member of staff was asked - he said they were being prepared. By then the session had been running for nearly an hour.

I am a twin mum (with a double pushchair) and found the staff extremely helpful regarding access etc. but the pool was always really cold. This discouraged us from staying long as my babies were shivering. Also the changing rooms/showers were usually dirty i.e. rubbish on the floor, pools of cold dirty water.

As a working mum I attended all of the Tuesday evening sessions and found it convenient.
Comments made by parent

Found staff unhelpful when asked about baby changing facilities and had to ask someone to bring changing table upstairs.

Mother & Baby room closed. Had to change in toilets whilst friend watched baby. Could not go alone as nowhere safe for baby and cannot take pushchair to changing rooms.

Lifeguards inattentive. On several occasions older kids messing and splashing around (aged 10+) Staff didn't notice or ask them to be careful - had to ask them myself. Thought session was for under 4s.

Showers disgusting, holes in ceiling. Felt very unsafe walking down slope. Changed baby upstairs.

On the whole I enjoyed swimming with my baby although I expected better facilities and maybe someone from Sure Start on hand to help. Fortunately as I went with friends, we managed between us, but would have been unable to manage had I been alone.

Facilities very poor, but good location. I want to go regularly and Leisure World seems to be the only option.

Can Sure Start suggest another location?
4.8 Feedback from the Baseline Survey (April 2003)

Swimming Pool

This service attracted by far the greatest number of comments (32) indicating very strong feelings among the parents of young children. In general it was felt that the pool was prohibitively expensive.

There were numerous complaints about the quality of the water (cold, dirty) and the changing facilities (small family rooms, broken lockers, unprotected sockets)

One parent commented, “my son only wanted to stay in the pool for five minutes as he was frozen, his lips went blue and he was shivering, so we soon left and have never been a second time.”

There were said to be few activities for young children, and long waiting lists for lessons.

Staff were described as unhelpful, and the main pool was felt to be too busy for young children - however the learner pool had been out of order for months.

Some parents were voting with their feet and choosing to travel instead to Skipsea to use the pool at Far Grange Park.
5. Conclusions & Recommendations

Most of the people that I have spoken to have expressed an interest in Sure Start Water Babies swimming sessions, but were unable to attend as the times and days provided were unsuitable for themselves.

The Tuesday evening sessions were the most popular with a total attendance of 36.2% of the total number.

Tuesday evening was also the most popular time that fathers attended with a staggering number of 21 dads. This is probably due to most fathers working during the day, so being unable to attend daytime sessions unless they are not at work for any particular reason. This may also account for working mums as well.

The best way to increase the numbers of people attending the session is to include another evening swim session and reduce the daytime sessions. This could be done by reducing the frequency of the sessions on the Tuesdays and Thursdays from two daytime sessions to one.

The result of the reduced daily session would boost the daytime attendances for each individual session, with a better interaction between the children attending.
6. APPENDICES

- Attendance Breakdown - numbers and percentage
- Sample Questionnaire

**Graphs**

- Dad’s accessing Swimming Sessions
- Times that families accessed Sessions
- Different families accessing sessions
- Total swim sessions attended

N.B. Appendices can be obtained from Sure Start Bridlington South
Tel 01262 409496