

Interest Link Roxburgh
Science Project Report
August/September 2019



Report due
October 2019
Don't forget!

Contents

Introduction

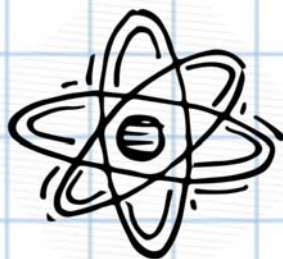
Who was involved?

Explosive Experiments

Colourful Experiments

Messy Experiments

Conclusion



Introduction

Interest Link Roxburgh Children's Group meets every second Monday in Hawick. The aim of the group is to work with children and young people with learning disabilities and support them to:

- Make more friends
- Feel happier
- Feel more confident
- Have better self-esteem
- Have better social skills

This is achieved through running a variety of activities with service users and peer mentors (young people of a similar age, who do not have a learning disability).

From August to September 2019, these activities were science based. The group met for sessions at Wild Woods campsite in Ruberslaw, where they were able to do messy experiments outside for easy clean up and in a large enough space for everyone to get involved.

Rebecca Duffell, Assistant Branch Coordinator, October 2019



Who was involved?

Service users:

- Kacey
- Paula
- Blair
- Liam
- Matthew
- Gemma
- Katie

Peer Mentors:

- Millie
- Josh
- Max
- Emily
- Katie S
- Kitty

Volunteers:

- Alison
- Lynn

Sessional Workers:

- Sarah

Staff:

- Rebecca
- Val

Lewis, who is a peer mentor with the teenage group, joined us for one session too

Explosive Experiments



Monday 26th August 2019

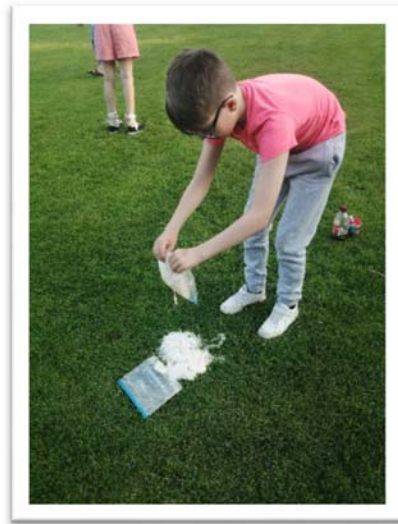
We arrived at Wild Woods at 6 o'clock sharp for our first session of the new academic year. Everyone was very excited to see each other again after the summer holidays and find out what people had been up to. Wild Woods was busy with lots of English families (who are still on their school holidays) camping, cooking and playing on the site.

The two experiments we did tonight involved vinegar and bicarbonate of soda. When you mix the two together, they create a lot of (bad smelling) gas and foam up. Firstly we mixed the vinegar with lots of glitter in small cups, then added a generous spoonful of bicarbonate of soda to create glitter volcanoes.



Our second experiment was a bit trickier... We had to spoon bicarbonate of soda into a piece of thin tissue and wrap it to create a 'Bicarb

Bomb'. We dropped the 'Bicarb Bomb' into a zip-lock bag half filled with vinegar, then zipped the bag closed quickly and stepped away from it. The gas let off from the reaction filled the bag, eventually exploding it in order to escape.



Because it was such a lovely night, we spent some time in between doing to two experiments on the big lawn at Wild Woods playing tag, having a water pistol fight and eating cheese and crackers for snack. Katie doesn't like getting wet and everyone else was very respectful of this, making sure not to shoot the water pistols near her, which was lovely to see.

Gemma and Blair were both a little loud at times and struggled with taking turns during group conversations, but this was partly due to the excitement of the first session back, as both of them were showing much better social skills towards the end of last term. Liam seems more confident since starting at the High School this term, and didn't get huffy or upset once during the session, despite some things not going his way or being to his liking. Matthew can sometimes get overexcited about being out at Wild Woods and consequently misbehave, but his behaviour was excellent tonight and he worked really well with Liam during the experiments. All in all, a fantastic first session back!

Colourful Experiments



Monday 9th September 2019

There were three experiments to do at tonight's session but because the weather was lovely again, some of us chose to only do two experiments and then spend more time playing outside in the sunshine.

The first experiment was making shaving foam 'clouds' using glasses of water topped with shaving foam. When food colouring is dropped onto the shaving foam, it 'rains' into the glass at the bottom. It was tricky to add the food colouring a drop at a time and some people ended up pouring it in by accident which meant all the 'rain' ended up rushing into the water in one big splash!

Next we made lava lamps using water, oil, food colouring and salt. Matthew really enjoyed this experiment and he and Sarah managed to keep their lava lamp working for the longest. This experiment wasn't as fiddly so everyone was able to make their lava lamp work properly.



At this point, some people chose to play outside. Paula really enjoyed playing with the bubble gun and others played tag on the big lawn at the campsite. The campsite was a lot quieter tonight with only one family camping.



The final experiment was creating underwater 'fireworks' using salt, water and food colouring. Matthew and Sarah were able to get the experiment to work but for everyone else their work ended up turning into another lava lamp! Fortunately the lava lamps were fun to watch so no-one minded too much.

Blair was keen to help tidy and wash up, so he, Max and Rebecca cleaned and tidied the building whilst everyone else went outside to play. Blair behaved very well with something to focus on and he was really helpful in getting everything washed up.

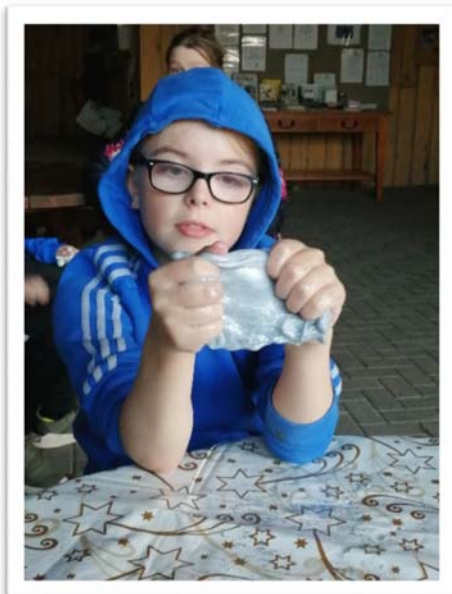
Messy Experiments



Monday 30th September 2019

Our final week at Wild Woods involved experiments that make a mess. We were short of peer mentors tonight which left Matthew without a partner, but he helped Rebecca to set up and explain the experiments, which he did really well. First, we dropped Mentos into diet coke to watch it explode. We used cans of coke because we weren't able to find bottles, and this wasn't as dramatic as it could have been but we still enjoyed watching the coke fizz up.

Next we made glittery slime out of glue, glitter, bicarbonate of soda and contact lens solution. The measurements were hard to get exactly the same for everyone so some people ended up with very slimy wet slime and others had firmer slime which was easier to play with. Everyone ended up covered in glitter, Josh even had some in his hair by the end of the night.



Liam and Paula loved playing with the slime, but Katie, Josh and Sarah didn't like the way it felt. Blair and Gemma enjoyed the slime but lost interest quickly. Once everyone had got most of the slime off themselves, we went to play on the lawn for the last time this year. Matthew impressed everyone with his cricket skills, Blair and Rebecca played with a Frisbee, Millie and Katie had fun throwing a ball to each other and Paula loved playing with the bubble gun again. All in all, it was a lovely final session. We'll miss being at Wild Woods but as the weather turns colder it will be good to get back to Burnfoot Hub again.



Conclusion

In relation to Interest Link aims, this project helped service users to:

- Make more friends
 - ✓ Gemma and Katie, the newest group members, are continuing to make firm friends in the group. Katie tends to gravitate towards Paula as they are in the same class at school so already know each other outside of the group. Gemma loves to play with Blair and Matthew but these are both pairings which can end up being a bit boisterous and noisy, so we are continuing to work with all three of them to enjoy being with their friends in a way that isn't disruptive to others.

- Feel happier
 - ✓ Liam has made real progress in the time he has been attending the Children's Group and he seems to feel happier in himself. He used to get upset quite easily and cried a lot, but he didn't cry once during this project, despite there being a few situations which I feel would have made him upset in the past. It's been wonderful to see him so happy and engaged recently.

- Feel more confident
 - ✓ It was lovely to see how confident Matthew was helping to run a session. He had a lovely way of explaining the experiments to the others and didn't seem to be at all shy about standing up with me to help lead the activities.

- Have better self-esteem
 - ✓ Liam's self-esteem is improving more and more. If something goes wrong or doesn't go his way now he is able to deal with it without blaming himself for whatever has gone wrong. In the

past, he has called himself stupid or been very upset when he hasn't been able to do something well, but I haven't noticed him speak negatively about himself once during this project.

- Have better social skills
 - ✓ Blair's social skills are continuing to improve. He can still find it difficult to wait his turn to speak in a group and sometimes says or does inappropriate things, but this is happening far less often now than it used to. Towards the end of last term Blair started asking to take a walk or sit somewhere quietly for five minutes when things were overwhelming for him during the session. It's great to see that he is still using this coping mechanism by either asking to go for a walk or asking to help tidy up rather than play with the others to have a wee break when he needs one.
 - ✓ Matthew and Blair have a tricky relationship sometimes, with Blair wanting to talk to or play with Matthew a lot during sessions, and Matthew often not wanting to. In the past, Matthew could be quite rude to Blair when this happened but he is beginning to speak more nicely to Blair or simply walk away when he is finding it difficult to be friends with him. We are encouraging this by praising Matthew for being mature and being nice to Blair even when he'd rather not be.