



BUSS[®]: An Overview of Research and Resources

How do we know BUSS[®] works?

It's important to us and for the children and families who access the service to know that what we are doing works or makes a difference. Building an evidence base is a key part of all the work we do. All BUSS[®] clinical work uses before and after measures to see how things have changed. These include the BUSS[®] screening tool, Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires, Kidscreen Health Questionnaire, Goal Based Outcomes, and children's human figure drawings.

We are keen to develop research around BUSS[®] and we have been very fortunate to have, in addition to the pre and post measures, several qualitative evaluations of the BUSS[®] programme done in collaboration with the University of Leeds, University of Huddersfield, and University of Hull. It is our intention to publish these, either together or individually but for now here is a summary of the evaluations.



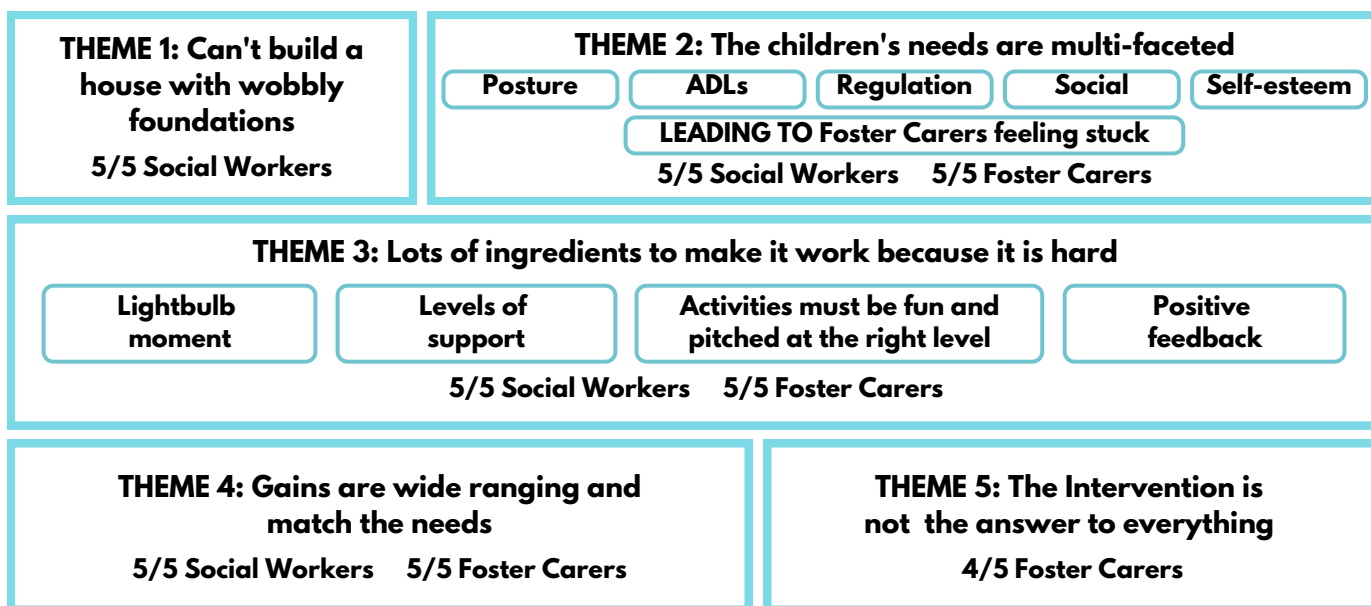


1) WORK WITH INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN / YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FOSTER CARERS

KATHERINE GRINDHEIM (2018/2019)

Kat used a qualitative methodology to explore the participants' experiences of the BUSS® programme. Face to face interviews with 5 foster carers and 5 social workers working in the Therapeutic Social Work team in Leeds were completed. The key themes that emerged from the data were:

- 1 You can't build a house on wobbly foundations – BUSS® was like the missing piece of the jigsaw, the chance to go back and fill in the gaps giving a firm base for future psychological work.
- 2 These children's needs are multi-faceted – this was a recurring theme amongst foster carers, who could see that the child's physical difficulties (e.g. not being able to stand without support) made activities of daily living (ADLs) like sitting at the table, using cutlery, drinking from a bottle, or making and keeping friends, all lead to a sense of hopelessness. They felt that the very practical emphasis of BUSS® gave them hope and a place to start.
- 3 Lots of ingredients make it work – this really reflected the hard work that this intervention involves for foster carers, i.e. the repetition, making it fun, and also for social workers; the idea that it looks simple but actually it's quite complicated.
- 4 Gains are wide ranging and match the needs – improvements mapped onto the multifaceted needs described earlier – bodily awareness and regulation, self-esteem and friendships.
- 5 It's not the answer to everything – the needs of the children are complex and while for some children, BUSS® was enough for them to make good progress, for others it was helpful to consider a psychological intervention following this.



2) INTERVIEWS WITH FOSTER CARERS POST BUSS® INTERVENTION HARRIET HASLAM (2020)

4 foster carers who had completed the BUSS® intervention with the children they were caring for were interviewed. Participation in BUSS® enabled the carers to better understand the impact of trauma on sensory motor development. It also improved their ability to understand their child more on a physical and emotional level, leading to more attuned caregiving. A key component in this was the carer's role as the main agent of change in the intervention, which strengthened the carer-child relationship and increased the foster carers' feelings of self-esteem, because they could see tangible changes and link these to the work that they'd been doing. This validates the importance of the movement, relationship, and playfulness element of the model that is encouraged during the programme.



3) INTERVIEWS WITH ADOPTIVE PARENTS POST BUSS® INTERVENTION CHLOE ROBINSON (2021)

10 adoptive families who had been through the BUSS® programme participated in this study. The results fell into 4 key themes:

- 1 Cognitive abilities:** 80% of the parents described a marked increase in their child's memory and attention. Parents felt that by building underdeveloped systems, children developed their skills and capacity to engage with cognitive tasks.
- 2 Emotional, social, and behavioural development:** Parents felt that improved bodily regulation led to increased emotional regulation. Parents talked about their child's increased self-esteem and confidence, some suggesting this was because the child was able to attend to the whole picture.
- 3 Language and expressive skills:** 50% of parents reported improvements in their child's language and expressive skills. All parents reported improvements in their child's flexibility of thought and imagination, an area that many parents had felt their child really struggled with.
- 4 Understanding of development:** 90% of parents reported a greater level of understanding of their child's development.



4) BUSS® AS AN EARLY YEARS GROUPWORK PROGRAMME FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN AND THEIR FOSTER CARERS

NATALIE JONES (2021)

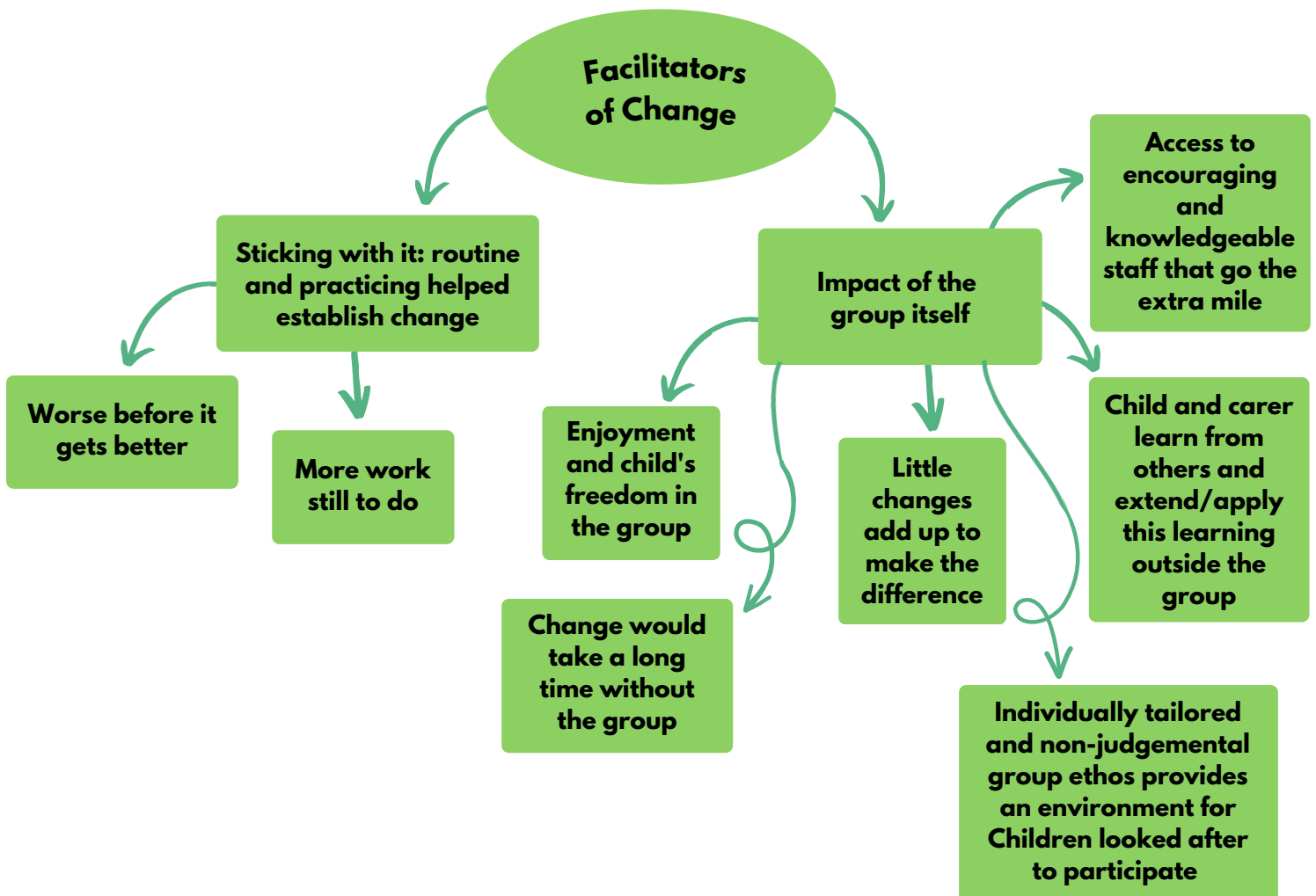
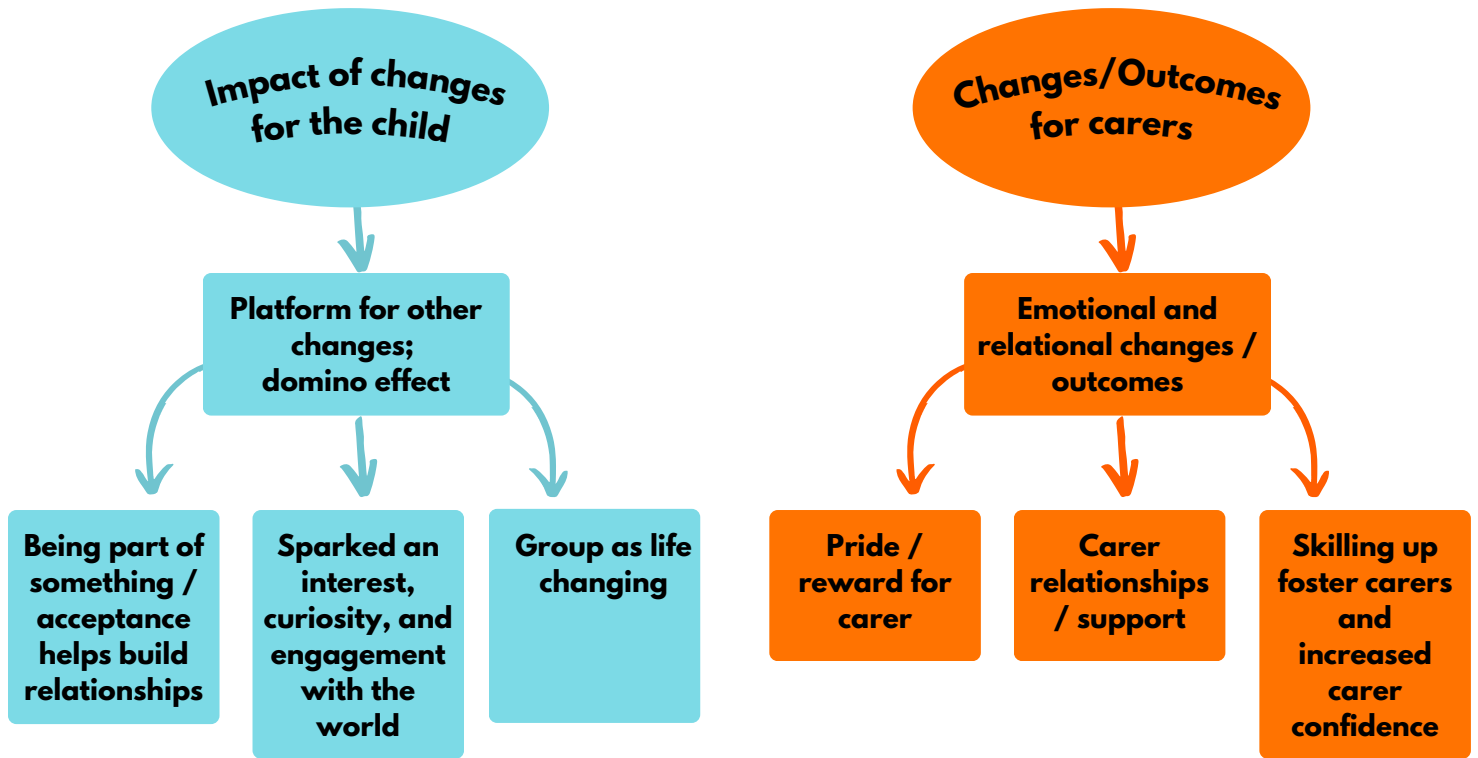
8 foster carers who were carers for children aged between 3 and 5 years old who had participated in the BUSS® Early Years Groupwork Programme for Preschool children were interviewed. Findings fell into 3 themes:

- 1 Changes for the child – a range of social (being part of something, being able to build relationships, increasing curiosity about the world), relational (greater enjoyment and participation in family life, confidence, self-belief, nurturing, regulating) and physical (filling in gaps, strengthening body, catching up with peers).
- 2 Changes for carer – the recurring theme here was pride, that it had been a rewarding experience for carers who really valued the support of other foster carers and the specialist support of BUSS®. Carers talked openly about their scepticism about the programme when it was presented to them and said that they wouldn't have believed the kinds of changes were possible if they hadn't seen it with their own eyes.
- 3 Characteristics of the group (Facilitators of Change) – carers' experiences were positive, feeling that the group was run according to the individual needs of the children. They felt it was a unique programme, where staff go the extra mile to support them and the children. Carers also valued the fact that the group ran every week, and the routine and structure of the group was the same each week.

Carers also wanted to know more and wanted to be able to carry on the work at home in a way that was tailored to their individual child. A recommendation and resulting change in our service delivery is that we now write bespoke programmes for carers and children to carry on at home after the groups end.



Thematic map of themes and sub-themes from Foster Carers' interviews



5) BUSS® AS AN EARLY YEARS GROUPWORK PROGRAMME FOR NEWLY ADOPTED PRESCHOOL CHILDREN AND THEIR NEW ADOPTIVE PARENTS

DANIELLE SMITH (2022)

This study used a qualitative design involving semi-structured interviews with 7 adoptive parents who had attended the Early Years BUSS® group-work programme. Questions focused on parents' experiences of the group, changes in their child / children's sensorimotor systems, and the role of the BUSS® groups in early adoption family life.

The results showed that adopted children attending the BUSS® group experienced significant improvements in their sensorimotor systems and social and emotional development, had a mostly positive experience of the group, and felt the group was beneficial in early adoption family life.

Parents described several benefits of the BUSS® group for themselves, their children, and for their relationship with their children.

4 parents described that the group had helped develop their relationships with their children as it provided dedicated family time together each week, and opportunities for bonding and strengthening attachments.

Parents described how the group had been very validating for them in confirming their observations of their child/children's sensorimotor difficulties, and how they had benefitted from the acceptance and understanding of other adoptive parents in the group.

Valuable suggestions were also offered by participants on how to improve the group. These included providing brief explanations at the start of each activity to remind parents which areas / systems the activity is targeting, and providing explanations of how activities could be done at home.



**DOMAIN 1:
Parents' experiences of the group**

**The
Facilitators**

**The activities
and nature
of the group**

**Other aspects
of the
intervention**

Challenges

**Awareness
of the model**

**DOMAIN 2:
Impact of the group in early adoption family life**

**Benefits for
parents**

**Benefits for
children**

**Relationship
building**

**DOMAIN 3:
Outcomes of the intervention**

**Improvements in
sensorimotor
systems**

**Improvements in
social and
emotional skills**

**Impact of life
circumstances**

**Need for
ongoing support**

**DOMAIN 4:
Improving the intervention**

Communication

**Personalised
approach**

**Explanations
about activities**

**Additional groups
for school aged
children**

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Robinson, C. (2021) University of Hull doctoral thesis: ‘Learning from adoptive families: What are their experiences of children’s development and the support they receive?’

Smith, D. (2022) University of Leeds, Service Evaluation Project: ‘BUSS® as an Early Years Groupwork Programme for newly adopted Preschool children and their new Adoptive Parents.’

For more information on research, Sarah Lloyd's publications, and other resources, visit our website:

<https://www.bussmodel.org/resources-and-research/>

