

HOPPER EVALUATION REPORT

DECEMBER 2018



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Contents

SUMMARY	3
Background	3
Purpose	3
Conclusions	3
Recommendations	4
INTRODUCTION	6
Background	6
Purpose	6
Style of working.....	6
CONCEPTUALISATION	7
Introduction	7
Explanation of logic models	8
Language	8
Logic model	8
BASELINE SURVEY OF EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONERS.....	10
Introduction	10
Previous engagement	10
SURVEYS OF ARTISTS	14
Lab.....	14
Darkroom	16
Adaptation process	17
PAPER SURVEY OF PARENTS	21
Introduction	21
Quality of experience.....	21
Background	23
PROJECT END SURVEY OF EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONERS.....	25
Introduction	25
The process	25
Quality of experience.....	27
Outcomes	28
Overall views.....	31
LEARNING	34
Learning workshop.....	34
Internal reflection	36
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	38
Conclusions	38
Recommendations	39
APPENDIX ONE: AUDIENCE DATA.....	40
Season One	40
Season Two	41
Season Three.....	42

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SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Hopper is a partnership between Take Art, China Plate and Surrey Arts. Hopper was a two year pilot Strategic Touring project that worked with early years (EY) setting such as nurseries, schools, and children's centres to bring high quality cross artform shows into their own setting or to local village halls/community centres. The project aimed at building the infrastructure for small scale touring of early years work in disadvantaged Somerset and Surrey areas, including supporting the development of artists. Settings were encouraged to invite family members, neighbouring EY settings and childminders. Settings were also encouraged to charge a small ticket price. Ultimately the setting made the final decision based on what they thought was right for their particular set of circumstances. As a result there were different promoter models.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the evaluation was to:

- Capture the learning from the pilot so that the partners can articulate a clear model of the project.
- Provide a structure and support with reflection on what has worked and what has not worked with each element of the project.
- Help generate and analyse qualitative and quantitative data that will provide appendices to reports to Arts Council England.

CONCLUSIONS

The Hopper partnership designed a holistic model that consisted of:

- Support to artists through Labs and Darkroom support.
- Support to EY settings through CPD and advice to encourage them to connect with, and bring children to, the theatres.
- Support to theatres through mentoring and help with marketing.

Baseline evaluation confirmed the need for Hopper. Two thirds of the EY practitioners said that they had not had an early years performance come to them in the last three years.

The Lab went well. Artists thought the lab was well organised, well suited to them, inspirational and practical, which helped them adapt their shows to different EY settings. Artists developed their practice in EY settings, which sometimes led to them getting additional bookings outside Hopper.

Success with the Darkroom was more mixed. The process was well organised and useful to the artists, and a unique introduction to the work for the EY practitioners who attended. However, two of the three pieces produced were installations, which are less appropriate for Hopper.

The shows in and promoted by EY settings went well. There were 70 shows, 2,963 participations by children, 1,009 participations by parents, 37 participations by venues, and 431 by EY staff. Some of these will have been repeat engagements but we have no data on this. This adds up to 4,403 individual participations, which exceeds the target of 3,500.

The product was carefully adapted to EY settings. The only occasional weakness was shows that needed slightly more adaption to suit the youngest age groups. Parents thought the shows were engaging, enjoyable, memorable and generally age appropriate. They rated the quality of the shows highly. EY practitioners rated the shows highly and judged them to make a good all round contribution to the children's learning. All EY practitioners said that Hopper was sufficiently child-focused.

It is possible to record the level of engagement through systematic observation of behaviour. The key is to have each observer focus on one child. The results indicate that each show has its own distinctive reaction from children.

Hopper built demand: 99% of parents said they would like their EY setting to host more live performances. All but one of the EY practitioners surveyed said that Hopper had increased their organisation's ability to book shows in EY settings. A promotional code on a Hopper produced leaflet for season 2 also demonstrated that parents booked an additional Hopper show independently following a theatre performance at 2 separate settings.

Relationships with venues were mixed. Some venues lacked the capacity to market Hopper's shows. However, lack of capacity meant that they also couldn't take up the support that Hopper had organised such as the CPD and mentoring.

Some of the assumptions in the logic model proved to be unfounded. None of the EY practitioners took their children to the theatre in the third season. This was in part because of the timing of the third season, early in the academic year; and in part because of low capacity at the EY settings, and the low income of parents. The partners observed that Hopper seemed to be reaching families that were unusually hard to reach, which was both evidence of the value of the programme and a confounding factor in its delivery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

More work is needed for Hopper to meet its objectives. Hopper should:

- Provide more information to EY settings to help them understand and promote the shows to parents.
- Be more selective in the venues it works with to ensure they have an ongoing commitment to EY work.
- Clarify the roles and expectations of the Darkroom, if it is continued, so that the work exemplifies good practice in adaptation to EY settings.
- Continue the support to EY settings to enable them to host and promote the work.

INTRODUCTION

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STYLE OF WORKING

The evaluation is a joint exercise. We have developed methods, with input from the partners, which will generally be applied by the venues and the local team, for us to analyse and write up. It is important that everyone understands the importance of obtaining high quality data from the evaluation. We take a focused approach, aimed at generating high quality data on a small number of key issues.

CONCEPTUALISATION

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation is composed of four interlinked strands:

- **Thinking.** Framing, focusing, conceptualising, interpreting, synthesising.
- **People.** Motivating, training, involving, reassuring, listening, informing, influencing.
- **Systems.** Planning, gathering data, entering data on a computer, analysing data, disseminating information.
- **Action.** Making recommendations, implementing recommendation.

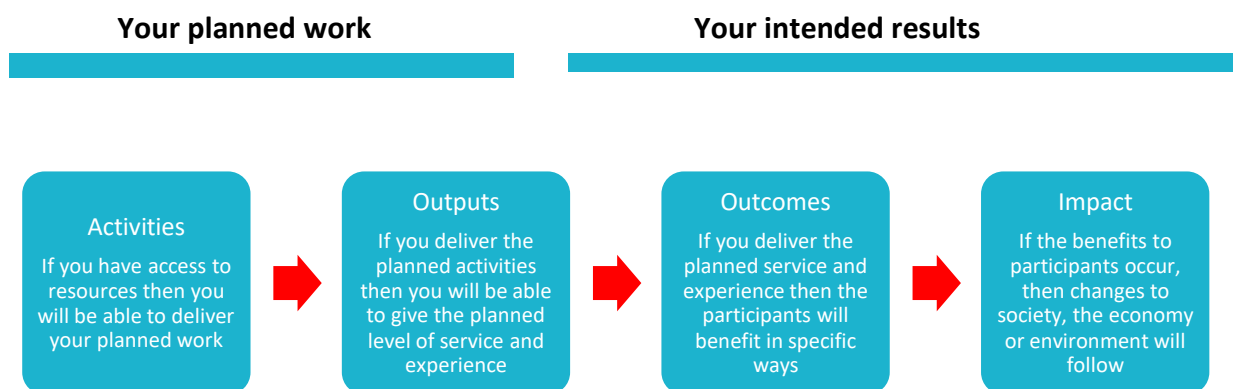
It is common for arts organisations and others to equate evaluation with Systems (methods) and not plan for the other crucial elements of the system.

Evaluative thinking has these benefits:

- **Ensuring a clear direction.** The process of creating a logic model helps to generate a group consensus about the precise intended outcomes.
- **Creating a lean evaluation system.** Being precise about intended outcomes and critical success factors helps evaluation to focus on key questions.
- **Bringing the different elements of the evaluation system together.** Articulating the theory of change helps test the implied connection between actions and expected outcomes, and results in a balanced evaluation system which covers both.
- **Testing the logic behind the project.** The logic model session helps check that the ideas behind the project are sound and it can identify potential hurdles in its delivery. Clear thinking strengthens not just the evaluation but also the implementation of a programme.
- **Ensuring expectations are realistic.** The logic model shows the chain of logic and therefore graphically illustrates the time lag between short terms outcomes, long term outcomes and impact.
- **Customising the evaluation.** The logic model helps ensure that the evaluation captures what is special about the organisation.
- **Summarising the project.** The logic model gives a concise description of the project in a form that shows its rationale.
- **Providing a structure to capture organisational learning.** Comparing what happens with what was expected or planned leads naturally to questions about organisational lessons.

EXPLANATION OF LOGIC MODELS

A logic model is a visual depiction of a programme or project. Logic models were originally developed and popularised by The Kellogg Foundation in the United States. By plotting the different stages in a programme – the actions and assumed consequences (outcomes) - logic models provide a simple but powerful way of interrogating the causality assumed by a programme. Logic models are read from left to right:



LANGUAGE

This is our definition of the terms used in a logic model:

- **Resources** are financial and non-financial inputs for a project.
- **Activities** are the actions taken by the project.
- **Outputs** are measures of effort to show that the project took place, and can be defined from the supply side (number of events), or the demand side (number of participants).
- **Outcomes** are changes in the attitudes, behaviour, skills, knowledge, motivation, feelings, or aspirations of participants; or the culture, structures, systems, or processes of organisations.
- **Impacts** are the direct and indirect effects for society, the economy and the environment.

LOGIC MODEL

This the logic model produced in a team meeting:

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	IMPACT
CPD for venues/settings and practitioners	Number of artist companies supported (target: 6+4)	Early years practitioners and venues/settings increase their interest in the arts and their confidence in partnering with arts organisations	Increased audience for arts in cold spots
Mentoring for venues	Number and type of venues/settings (target: 10)	Parents/guardians increase their interest in, and understanding of arts shows	Increased number of artists producing work suitable for early years in small scale settings
Development of the shows	Number of performances (target: 70)	Artists develop their interest in small scale touring, and increase their understanding of and capacity to deliver work for under 5s	Stronger creative practice in earlier years settings
Performances	Number of audience members (target 3,500, growing over time in the theatres)	Promoters increase their interest in and capacity to promote work for under 5s	
Labs and Darkrooms for artists	Number of workshops (target: 121)	The partnership develops and disseminates knowledge about early years shows in small scale settings and their development	
Dissemination	Toolkit		
<p>Assumptions:</p> <p>Taking work to early years' organisations will increase the ability to reach new audiences.</p> <p>Families' tastes will embrace diverse work.</p> <p>Early years settings will go into the theatres by the third season.</p>			

BASELINE SURVEY OF EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONERS

INTRODUCTION

We have 15 responses.

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT

Five respondents have had an early years performance come to them in the last three years.

FIGURE 1: IN THE LAST THREE YEARS, HAVE YOU/YOUR ORGANISATION HAD AN EARLY YEARS PERFORMANCE COME TO YOU/TAKE PLACE IN YOUR SPACE?

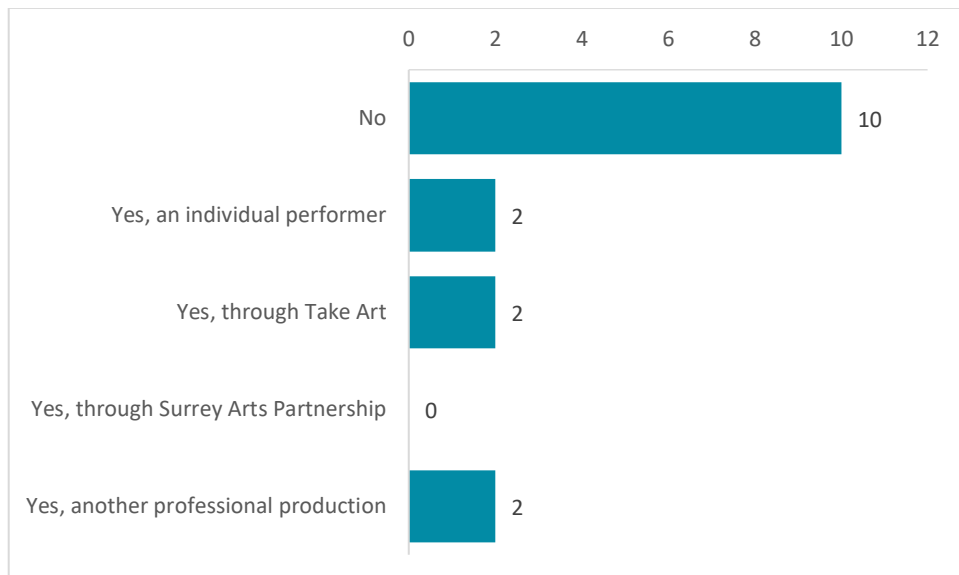
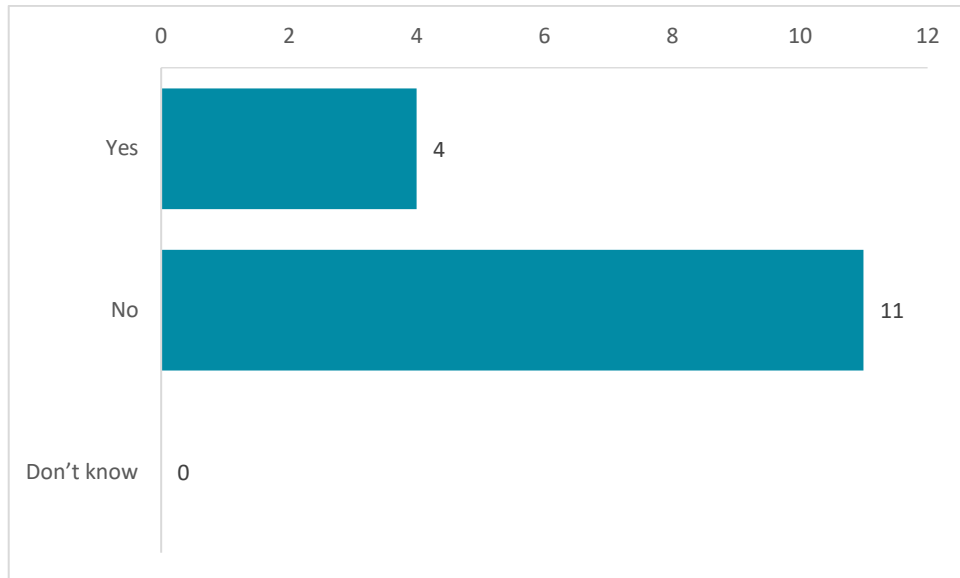


FIGURE 2: IN THE LAST THREE YEARS, HAVE YOU/YOUR ORGANISATION TAKEN A GROUP OF EARLY YEARS CHILDREN TO THE THEATRE?

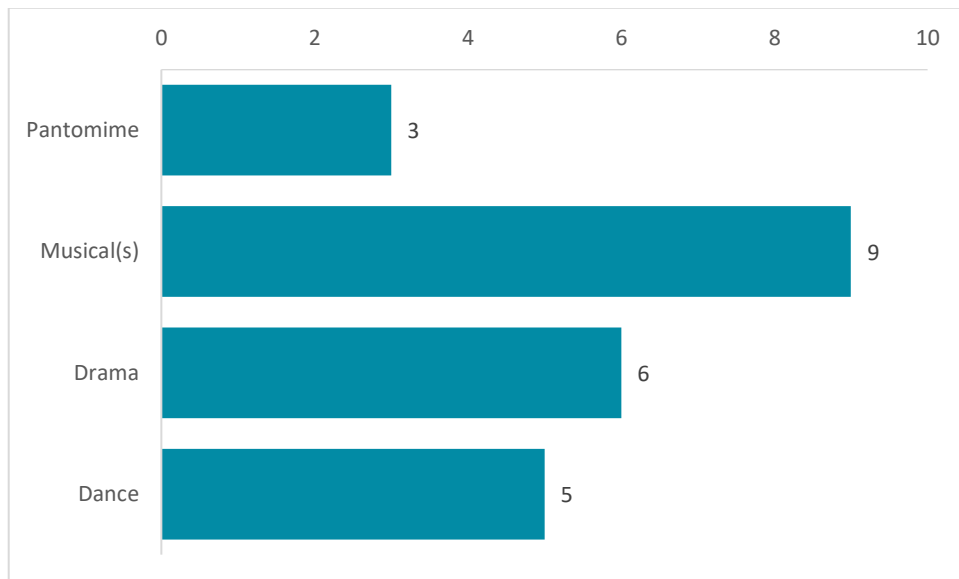


Four respondents have taken a group of early years children to the theatre.

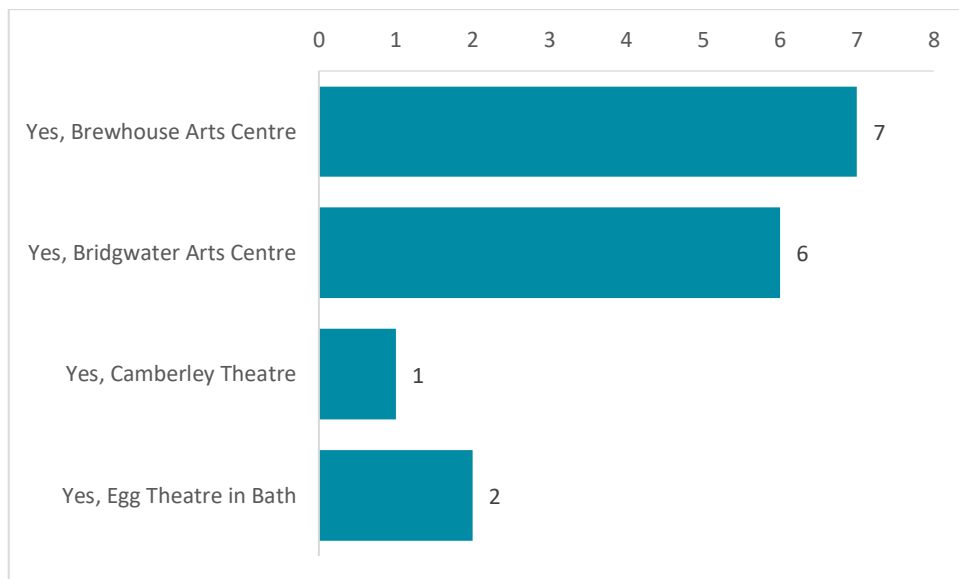
Outside of work, all but one of the respondents has been to the theatre in the last three years, to see musicals and pantomime but also dance and drama.

FIGURE 3: OUTSIDE OF WORK, HAVE YOU BEEN TO THE THEATRE IN THE LAST THREE YEARS?



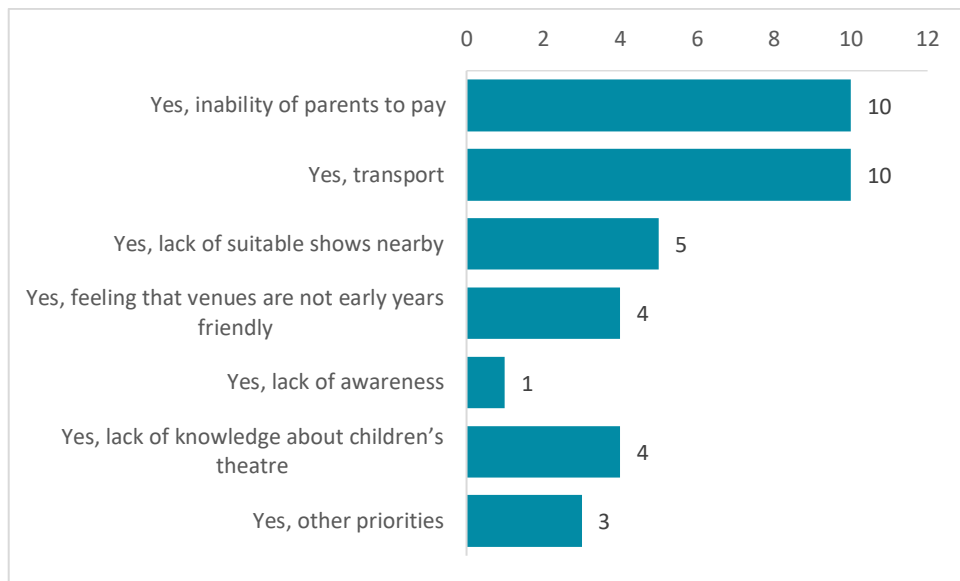
FIGURE 4: IF YES, WHAT DID YOU SEE?

Brewhouse and Bridgwater Arts Centre have some pattern of previous attendance.

FIGURE 5: OUTSIDE OF WORK, HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO THESE VENUES?

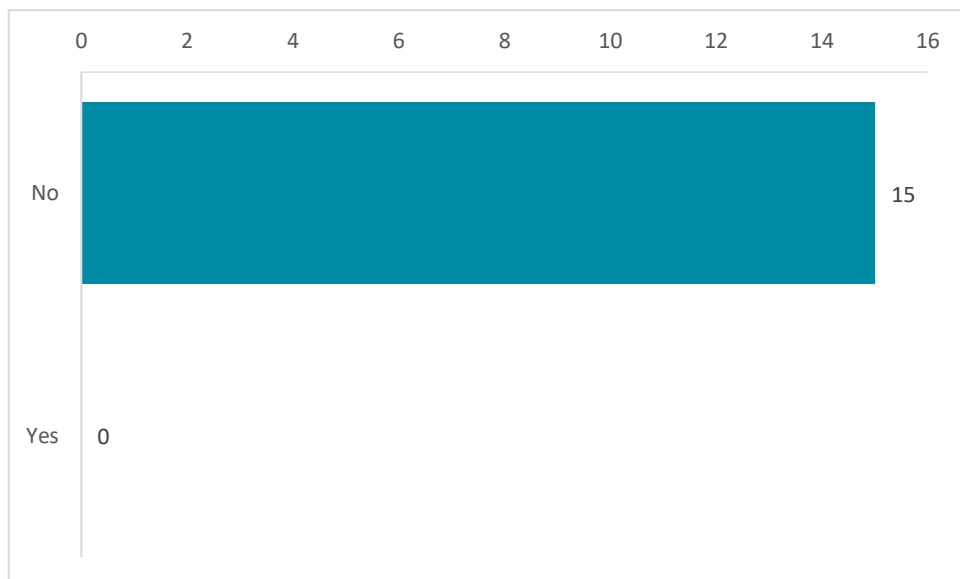
12 of the respondents mentioned barriers to taking early years children to the theatre, mainly inability of parents to pay and transport, but also lack of suitable shows nearby.

FIGURE 6: ARE THERE ANY BARRIERS TO YOUR ORGANISATION TAKING EARLY YEARS CHILDREN TO THE THEATRE?



Respondents had no concerns about Hopper.

FIGURE 7: DO YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS ABOUT HOPPER?



SURVEYS OF ARTISTS LAB

INTRODUCTION

We have five respondents.

PROCESS

All five said the Lab was well organised.

All five said the Lab suited their particular circumstances.

“It was great to meet such a diverse network of people, all involved with Hopper. It was very useful to be able to talk to people from all fields, to help get an idea of how we could adjust our show to suit the need of the early years environments.”

OVERALL VIEWS

Artists described the strengths of the Lab as:

- Bringing together people to develop conversation.
- Residential structure enabled people to talk outside programmed activity.
- Inspirational speakers and local expertise.
- Regional and national and international perspectives.
- Diversity of provocations.
- Quality of speakers.
- Venue.
- It was well organised, with a good selection of presentations, chats etc.

“There was a brilliant spread of people, from all areas of Hopper, meaning we had opinions and thoughts from all angles.”

- Coalface experience - what early years venues want/need from an artistic encounter

Artists described the main weakness of the Lab as lack of time:

“I would have liked more time to develop the artistic concepts working with children and carers. The exercise of working with fellow Hopper artists was useful making contact with the environment and highlighting the special considerations of working in a EY setting - but I would have also liked some focused time to discuss and develop Near & Far project ideas.”

"I am not sure we spent enough time as the six artists talking about the work but this may have been our own fault of not stepping forward to do that together."

"I think we missed out a little on delving deeper into each companies/ artists show. It perhaps would have been useful to bounce ideas around for each show, one by one. Of course we were able to chat to various people about it, but perhaps a specific session on this could be good for future labs."

"Felt like some discussions were only just beginning when we finished - but perhaps that is no bad thing!"

And premature discussion of one issue:

"Final session regarding marketing felt difficult for me as I haven't started making the show yet. It felt more useful for the children's centres and theatre venues to discuss with artists who already had their show."

Artists described the Lab as special/different from other developmental opportunities they have attended because of:

- The focus on early years.

"Time and discussion panels with early years specialists."

- The residential.

"The opportunity to spend time away together and have informal conversations."

"The fact that we were all staying at the same place for 3 days was very useful. It was easier to remove ourselves from outside distractions, and make the most of talking to the other artists/ partners/ early years leaders."

- The time for reflection.

"No immediate outcome - just being thoughtful and inspired at an early stage."

Artists were asked what, if anything, should be changed in Hopper. Consistent with the replies about weaknesses, comments were mainly about time:

"It was great - given time constraints - maybe more artistic and specific project development time would be helpful."

"A little bit of facilitated time talking about our process and how we can learn from each other- sometimes hard to do without structure."

"A session in which we explain our show in depth, and chat with the other artists about adaption ideas, could be very useful."

“Maybe more practical exploration / masterclass from an early years practitioner.”

“I have no suggestions for improvements. It really was great.”

DARKROOM

INTRODUCTION

We received three responses.

PROCESS

The three artists said the Darkroom was well organised.

The three artists said suited their particular circumstances.

OUTCOMES

The artists valued the time to develop their work.

“A new collaboration with artists I had not worked with before, sharing a concept and exploring how that could work. Exploring practicalities of concept and subsequent breaking that idea open theatrically.”

“The Darkroom was a brilliant opportunity to start researching a new project, in a way that I had not done before. It was brilliant to work so closely with adults and children each day which really informed our research. We also made a new connection with venues and EY settings.”

“The process was deeply informative for us providing confidence in this approach, which we took on to develop further over the later residencies.”

OVERALL VIEWS

The artists described the strengths of the process as:

- The time and space to develop their work with experts (including children), thinking around the Hopper programme structure.
- Building cross-sector relationships through project strands.
- Openness to different approaches to EY work towards developing a quality standard; flexibility given to individual Darkroom proposals.
- Support from the Take Art team when original plans were changed.
- Advice on an ACPG application.

“Time, space and a chance to work with children throughout the process.”

“An opportunity to research a new project, to take a chance in a well supported environment. It was brilliant to have the support of Surrey Arts, Take Art and China plate to facilitate partnerships with schools and Camberley Theatre.”

“Extensive support via space, resources and feedback from the EY setting.”

The weaknesses were:

- Poor communication from the venue.
- Capacity within the Hopper team.
- A desire for more connection with other Hopper strands and with academic research on EY childhood artistic practice.

“At the moment, I can't see any weaknesses in the Darkroom - any weaknesses were through my own process. Perhaps because of the holiday, the children we worked with were different from our target age group.”

“When we got to the venue, there seemed to have been a lot of confusion about timing and what we might need in terms of space and resources.”

The three artists described the process as special because of the depth of support.

“The amount of support from different organisations was brilliant. It was also fantastic to have the Lab at the beginning of the project to get to know the other artists. It would be lovely to connect with the other artists further - to see work developing.”

“We had the privilege of working with a high ratio of four experienced EY artists with the co-operation of the EY settings’ exceptional nursery staff and children within a practical, playful and improvisatory context.”

ADAPTATION PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

I interviewed the three artists.

THE ADAPTATION PROCESS

The artists made many changes during the adaptation process:

- The set. One artist changed the set into boxes to reduce the time for get in.
- The props. One artist changed a cloud prop into bubbles to be more portable. Another artist used carpets to transform the space.

- The characters. One artist changed the shape of a non human dance character – gave him a nose - so that the audience could more easily see which direction he was facing. They also increased the amount of movement the character showed, so that it didn't feel as if he came into and out of life.
- The actors. One artist changed the number of actors from four to three to give greater balance in terms of energy.
- Lighting. One artist toured with four lights rather than the 20 to 30 they used in the theatre.
- Script. One artist adapted the show for a younger audience by stripping back the language and changing participation from a word to a gesture.

“There was a physical softening of the acting. When 2 year olds are close to an adult body jumping around it can be quite threatening.”

- The length of the show.

“We took it down from 45 minutes to half an hour.”

Two artists said Hopper gave feedback on a rehearsal, which was very helpful. They also commented on marketing material and information packs for EY settings.

“The most helpful feedback wasn't about the show but about the stay and play session. We had done more of a creative drawing session, where we provided materials to draw rockets they had seen. Hopper suggested making it more physical as arts and crafts families could do themselves at home. Stay and play became very physical, taught the whole story in terms of actions and games.”

One artist said Hopper didn't give any help with adaptation.

“Hopper didn't really give us any help. We just did that part. The knowledge we were doing it for a real purpose gave an incentive to develop the work.”

LEARNING

Artists mentioned:

- Confirming beliefs about the standard of work that young children would appreciate.

“One of the things that has been great is that we believe in high quality art for young children, not necessarily narrative based. A lot of people said they didn't know what the show was about but still enjoyed it, which is a nice validation of our belief about sharing the artform, that you don't need to spoon feed children a narrative.”

“The main lesson is that it is completely possible artistically to keep the quality and sense of narrative and focus when moving from the theatre. You gain a raucous

element. If the story is strong enough. You don't need the safety theatre to make that work.”

- Realising the Hopper fee wasn't enough.

“Hoppers' £2000 wasn't enough to do the adaptation process. We put in ACE GfA money, £3400. This covered more shows than Hopper; if it was just for the Hopper shows it would be another £2000.”

“The language was confusing. When I applied I thought they were offering £2000, for 10 performances of the show. When the first bookings were confirmed Hopper was offering 5 venues and 2 shows. And the seasons made harder to keep everything together. We had to recast and re-rehearse. The model gives a sporadic tour, so the fee only covers the cost.”

- Needing more action ahead of time.

“Our two shows in venues were in real danger of being cancelled. The venues had the images a year before the show but a week before the show no tickets had been sold. The venue seemed to expect Hopper to recruit the audiences, which happened at the last moment. Both venues cancelled the afternoon show.”

ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT

The three artists said Hopper contributed to their artistic development. This was through:

- Getting more bookings than they expected.

“Overall we did 16 venues, 30 performances. Originally we thought it would be 12.”

- Reconnecting with the subject matter.

“My eyes were refreshed by the touring process. Performing the show in the community, where it should always be, in a place where people are talking about and affected by the subject constant. There is context.”

- Increase their interest in working in EY settings.

“We wouldn't have said we did performances in schools a year ago. The talk from other programmers talking about their favourite children shows was hugely inspirational. It encouraged me to be brave.”

“We would want to tour to EY settings again. We stayed in the houses of people who worked for Hopper. All the settings were really supportive, even though they had never had an early years show. The support from Hopper meant everything went smoothly.”

“The reaction from children was great. The children thought we were doing performing as a hobby. It was good to explain that this is a job, we make our own shows. They couldn't quite believe it.”

OTHER OUTCOMES

Other outcomes mentioned were:

- Showing how to develop relationships with audience members.

“I have worked with early years settings quite a lot. I still feel it would be nice to have more other lead in and lead out engagement rather than arriving and performing. Having something like Hopper is more likely to have an effect on the settings.”

“I would have suggested that we did a workshop in all of the school a week or two before to start to build a relationship. It felt as if we arrived and left.”

- Changing the EY space.

“I want EY settings to think about the aesthetics of their space more. Often it is very busy. A lot of things that are temporary, that become permanent, like a ball that is lost. I try and engage with all those things. So that it recreating the space, so of what we noticing. So that young people for, a moment, see themselves and their environment differently.”

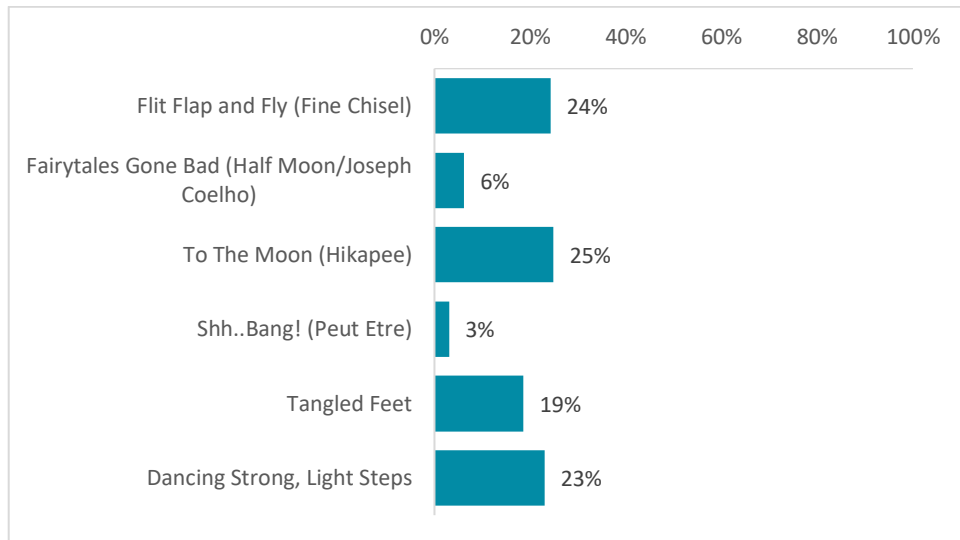
- Encouraging them to adopt a problem solving approach to school partnerships.

“It is very easy for a school to say no. There is lunch, uses of the space. Hopper has helped me to look at ways to say yes. Why don't we do an earlier get in?”

PAPER SURVEY OF PARENTS INTRODUCTION

We have 161 responses, 70 from Surrey and 91 from Somerset.

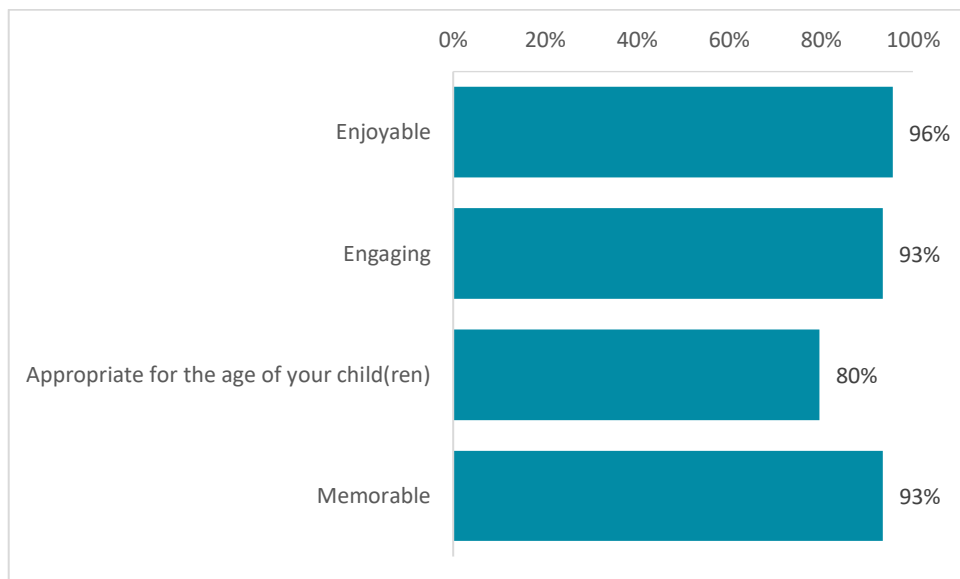
FIGURE 8: SHOW



QUALITY OF EXPERIENCE

More than 90% of parents said the show was engaging, enjoyable and memorable. 20% said it was mixed in terms of age appropriateness.

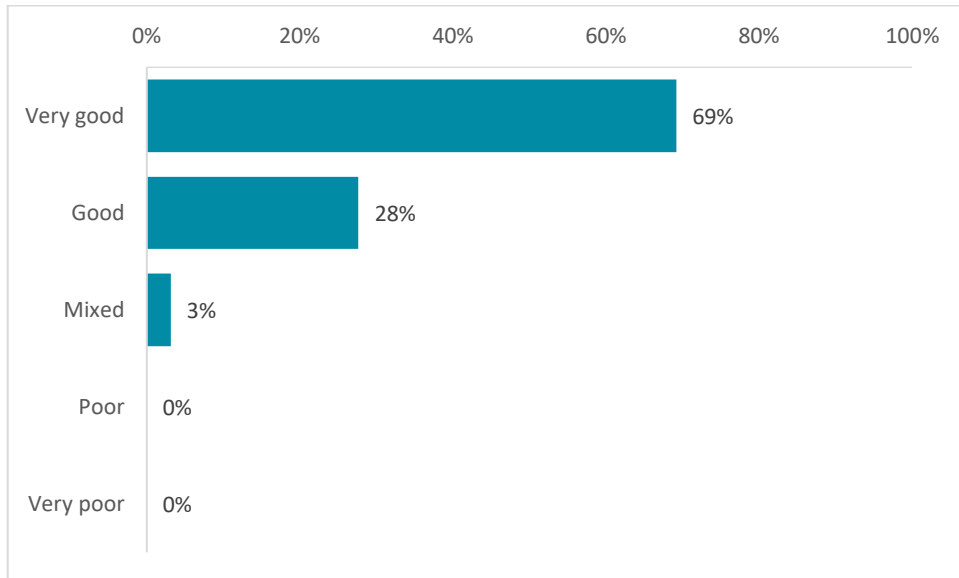
FIGURE 9: WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE SHOW? (AGGREGATION OF “YES, DEFINITELY’ AND “YES, PROBABLY RESPONSES)



97% of parents rated the show as good or very good. Comments were that the performers were talented, the lighting was striking, the use of props was

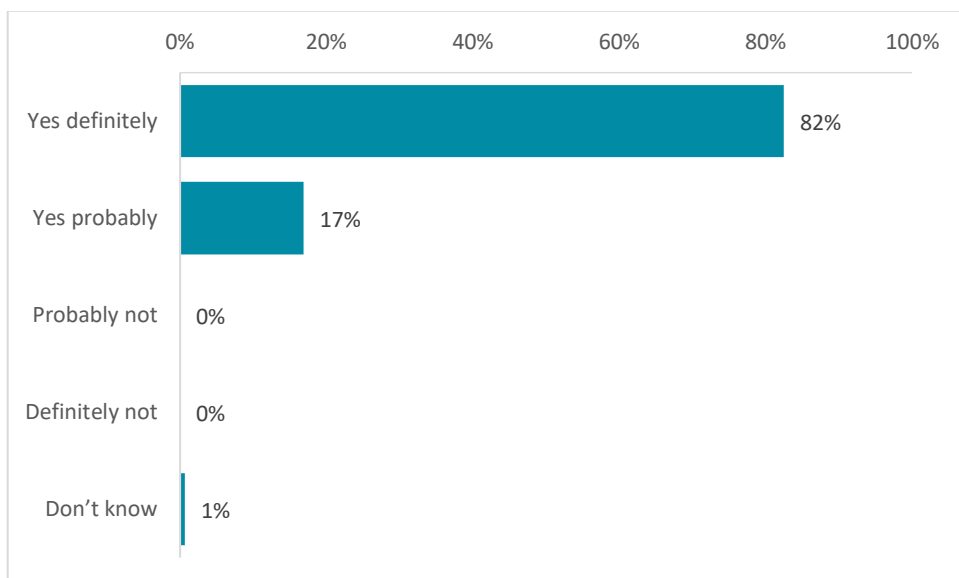
imaginative, the story was moving and encouraged empathy, the narrative was well paced, and the overall experience was enjoyable. The most common negative comments were that the show was too long and parts were scary for younger children.

FIGURE 10: HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE QUALITY OF THE SHOW?



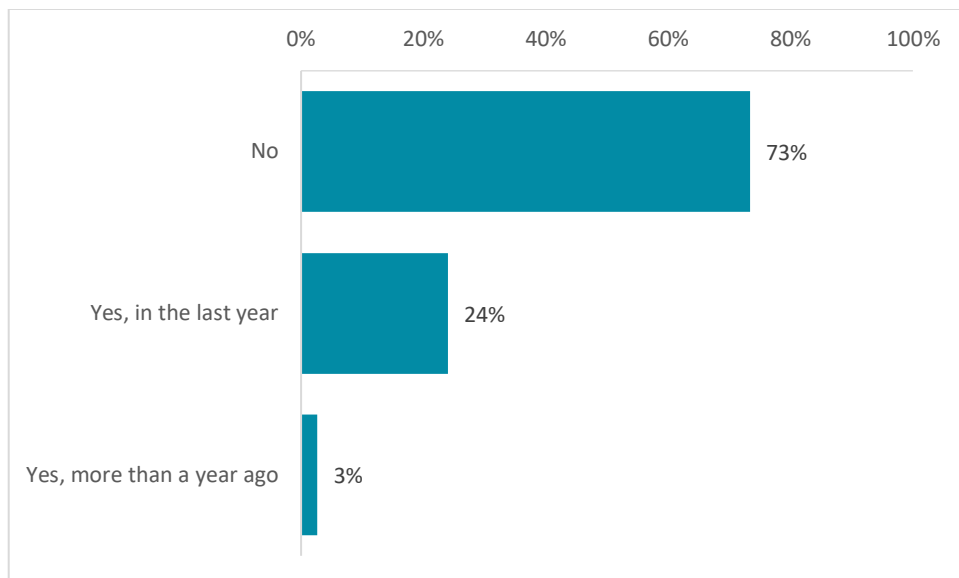
99% of parents said they would like their EY setting to host more live performances. The reasons given were around suitability as an introduction to theatre, enjoyment, learning through play, understanding narrative, and to give a contrast with the passivity of children watching television.

FIGURE 11: WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR EARLY YEARS SETTING TO HOST MORE LIVE PERFORMANCES?



76% of parents had not seen a show at this EY setting in the last year.

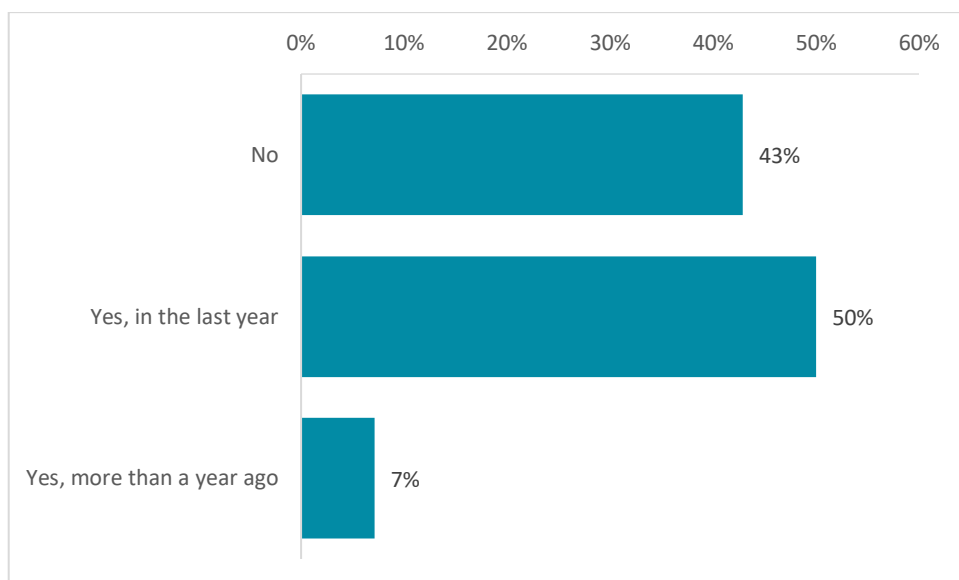
FIGURE 12: IN THE LAST THREE YEARS, HAVE YOU SEEN A SHOW AT THIS VENUE/EARLY YEARS SETTING?



BACKGROUND

50% parents haven't taken their children to the theatre in the last year.

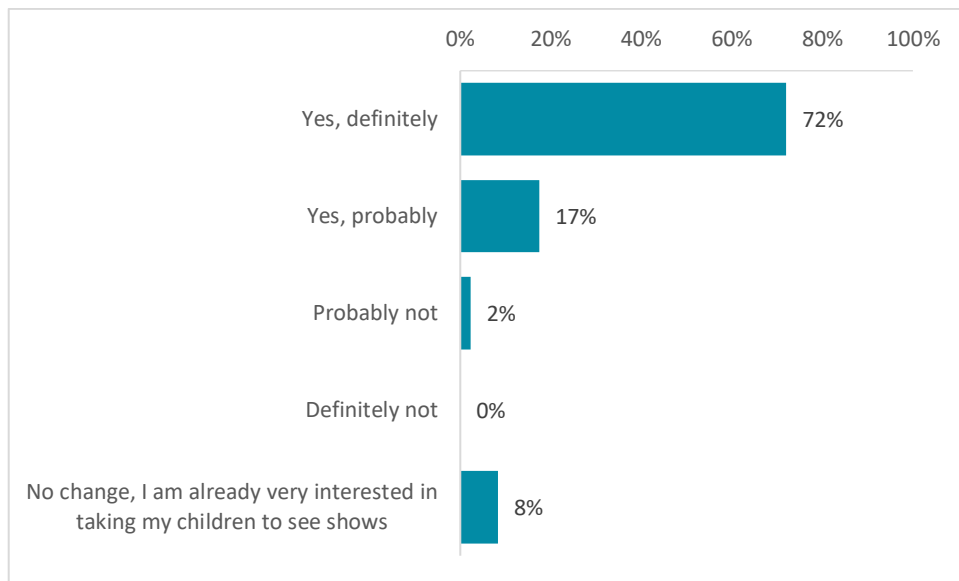
FIGURE 13: IN THE LAST THREE YEARS, HAVE YOU TAKEN YOUR CHILD(REN) TO THE THEATRE AT ALL?



Almost all parents who were not already interested in the theatre said that the show made them want to take their children to see more shows at the theatre.

"I'm already interested but did not know how my child would react so I didn't really want to make a huge effort or expense but after seeing this show I think I will try more theatre with him."

FIGURE 14: DID THE SHOW MAKE YOU WANT TO TAKE YOUR CHILD(REN) TO SEE MORE SHOWS AT A THEATRE?

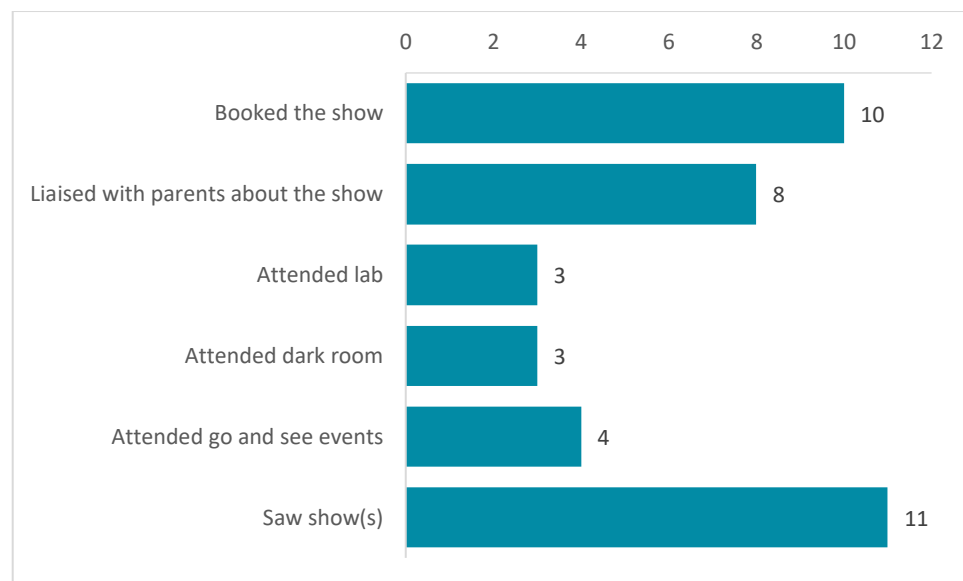


PROJECT END SURVEY OF EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONERS

INTRODUCTION

11 of the 15 EY practitioners replied. All respondents saw two or more shows. Three EY practitioners said they attended the Darkroom but Hopper thinks only one attended and that respondents were confusing the Lab and the Darkroom.

FIGURE 15: WHAT WAS YOUR ROLE IN HOPPER?



THE PROCESS

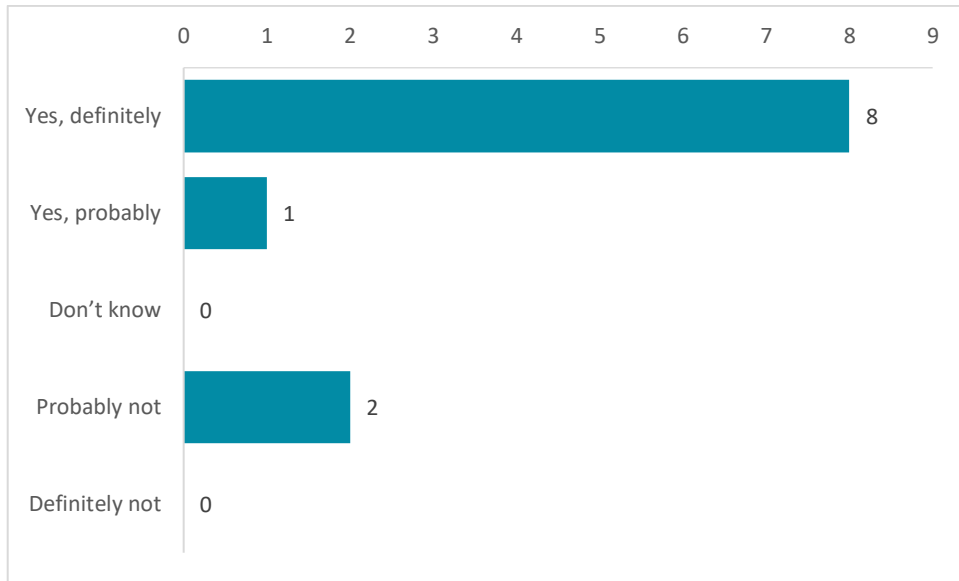
Three respondents attended the Darkroom and all three thought it was useful and inspiring. Two thought it was a good use of their time.

“I enjoyed the lab a great deal but it was a huge amount of time with travelling. It was good for personal CPD.”

Two respondents said they didn't have enough information from Hopper before the shows. They were both referring to aspects of publicity.

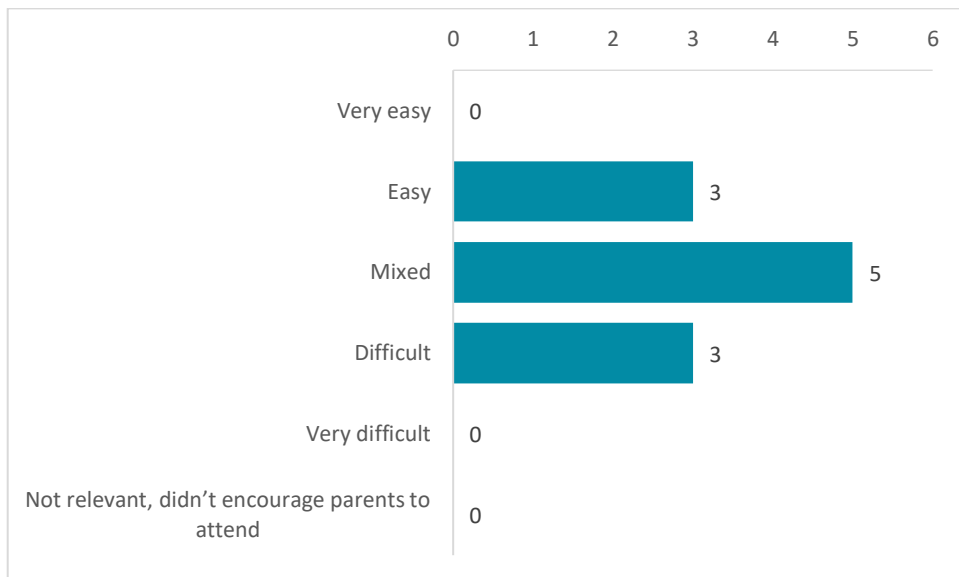
“Publicity was a bit rushed for the second show. Our children are all part time so needed leaflets a little before a fortnight of the show not the week before.”

FIGURE 16: DID YOU HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION FROM HOPPER BEFORE THE SHOWS?



Respondents said it was mixed (easy and difficult) to get parents to come to the shows.

FIGURE 17: WAS IT EASY OR DIFFICULT TO GET THE PARENTS TO COME TO THE SHOW(S)?



“It was very new and unknown to many of our families. Outside their comfort zone.”

“The concept was a difficult 'sell' to our customers, the idea was new, original date chosen for the show was not ideal (school time) and the flyers provided by the show were deemed 'too scary' by lots of parents.” Library promoter

QUALITY OF EXPERIENCE

Views of the shows were very positive.

FIGURE 18: WHAT DID YOU THINK ABOUT THE HOPPER SHOW(S)?

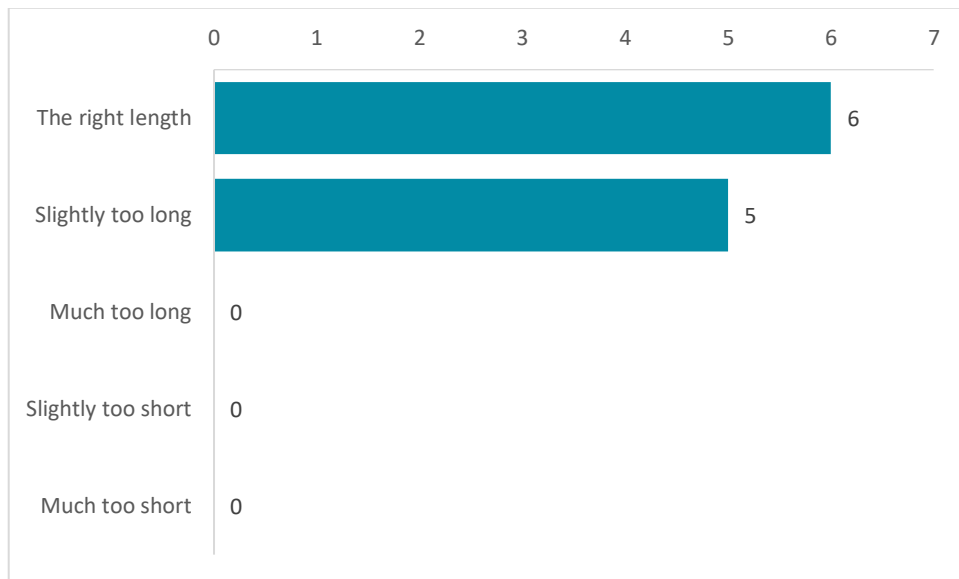


“It was a new concept to our organisation, I probably should have seen some live shows to appreciate better what we were hosting and would have helped me sell the show to our own staff and customers.”

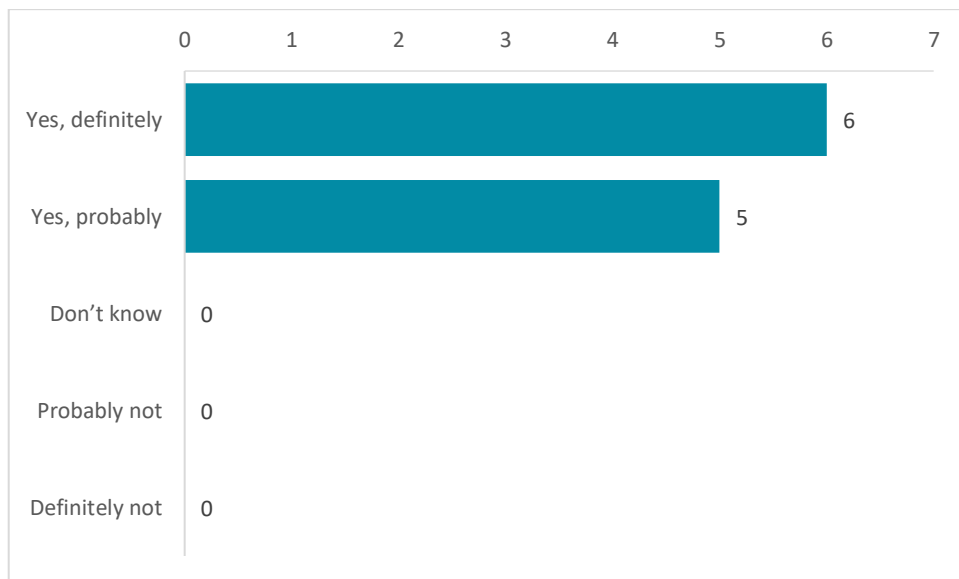
All respondents said the shows were either the right length or slightly too long.

“Many elements were appropriate for the age group but more of these elements needed to be included to ensure focus maintained and more engagement.”

“Each show had individuality and was engaging, inspiring and magical.”

FIGURE 19: WHAT DID YOU THINK ABOUT THE LENGTH OF THE SHOW(S)

All respondents said that Hopper was sufficiently child-focused.

FIGURE 20: OVERALL, HAS HOPPER BEEN SUFFICIENTLY CHILD FOCUSED?

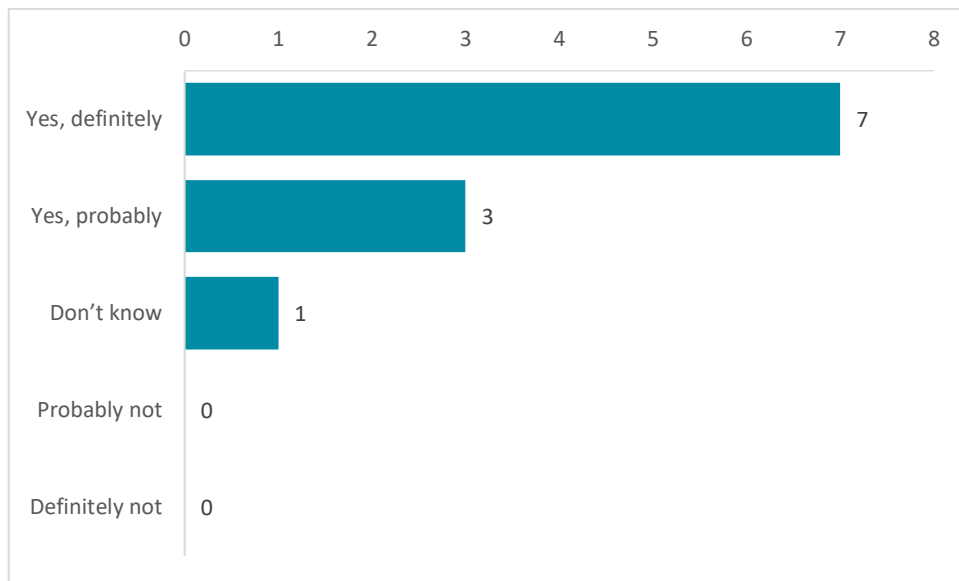
“Most children were mesmerised by the shows.”

“Definitely child-focused, but further development on targeting the age group is probably needed.”

OUTCOMES

All respondents who expressed a view said that Hopper was useful in building EYFS learning.

FIGURE 21: WAS HOPPER USEFUL IN BUILDING LEARNING IN LINE WITH LINKS TO THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS)?



“Every area of learning was supported.”

Respondents mentioned effects on the children in terms of enjoyment, language development and other learning.

“One child was so excited about every performance, He watched the first two with preschool but when he moved to another school mum discussed authorized absence to ensure he could see the last performance. The shows inspired role play and new language for this child thus underpinning his learning.”

“My group as whole enjoyed the shows. Its language and narrative fed into the children's child initiated learning. For example, I had children making their own little "To The Moon" books and creating their own tickets.”

“Children were mesmerised by the shows - the concentration and enjoyment was plain to see on their faces. The reaction of the parents on their children's enjoyment of both shows had a huge impact.”

“A child with delayed communication was transfixed during one performance and this was obvious by the facial expressions, body language, gestures and the absolute 'belly' laugh that kept on coming!”

Ten respondents said that Hopper had increased their organisation's ability to book shows in EY settings.

“It has, but the capacity to be able to do this is limited without someone who is able to focus on a project such as Hopper.”

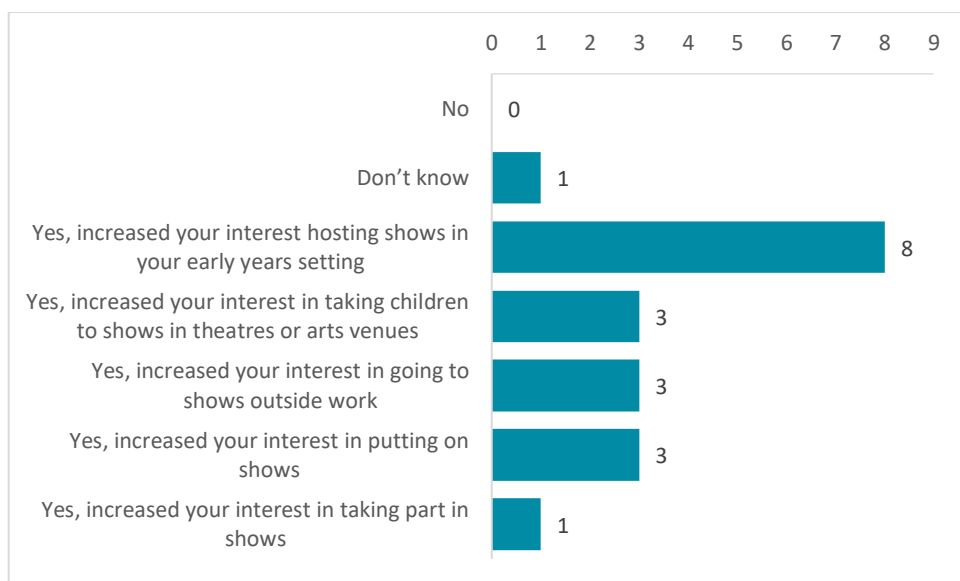
FIGURE 22: HAS HOPPER INCREASED YOUR/YOUR ORGANISATIONS ABILITY TO BOOK SHOWS IN YOUR EARLY YEARS SETTING? PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY



“The ability to book in the setting is no easier but that is purely due to the policies and procedures that organisation has to follow combined with the college's own procedures. The process of contacting, booking, talking, making judgements and promoting the shows are all easier as in my confidence has grown enormously.”

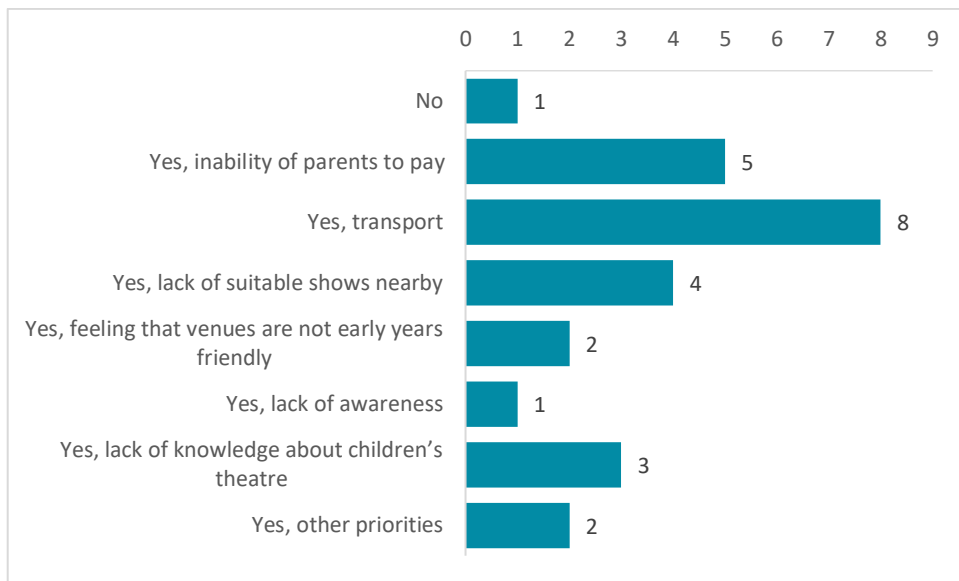
Ten of the 11 said that Hopper had increased their organisation’s interest in theatre. One didn't know.

FIGURE 23: HAS HOPPER INCREASED YOUR/YOUR ORGANISATION’S INTEREST IN THE THEATRE? PLEASE TICK ANY THAT APPLY



Ten of the respondents still identified barriers to taking EY children to the theatre, especially transport and cost.

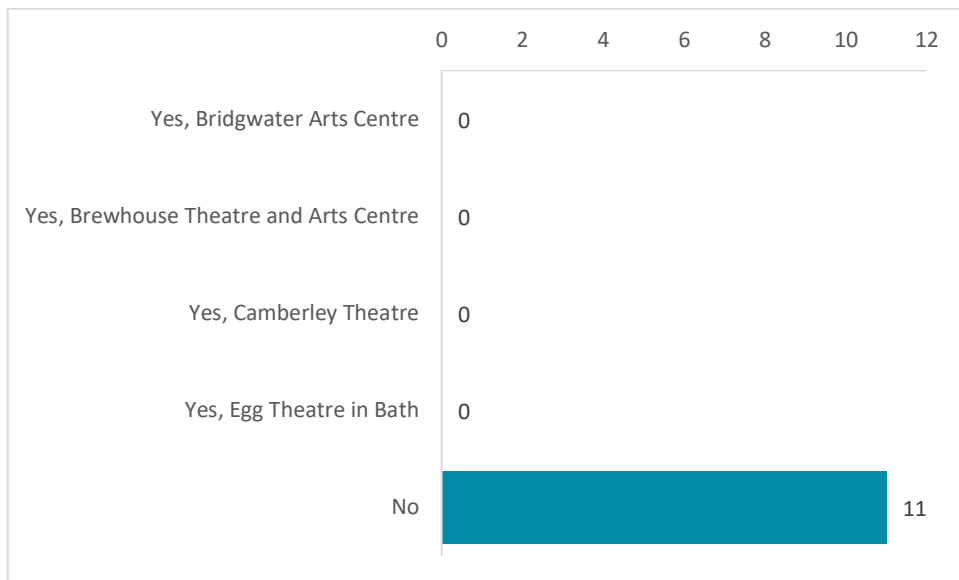
FIGURE 24: ARE THERE ANY BARRIERS TO YOUR ORGANISATION TAKING EARLY YEARS CHILDREN TO THE THEATRE?



None had yet taken children to a show in a theatre, although one respondent said they planned to.

“We have booked a whole school trip to the theatre next year.”

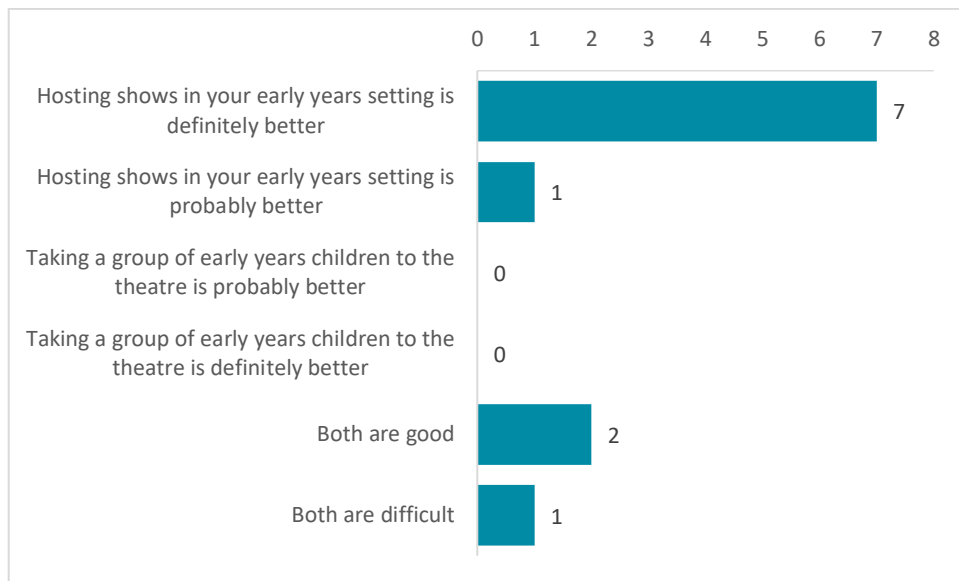
FIGURE 25: AS THE RESULT OF HOPPER, HAVE YOU TAKEN ANY CHILDREN TO A SHOW IN A THEATRE?



OVERALL VIEWS

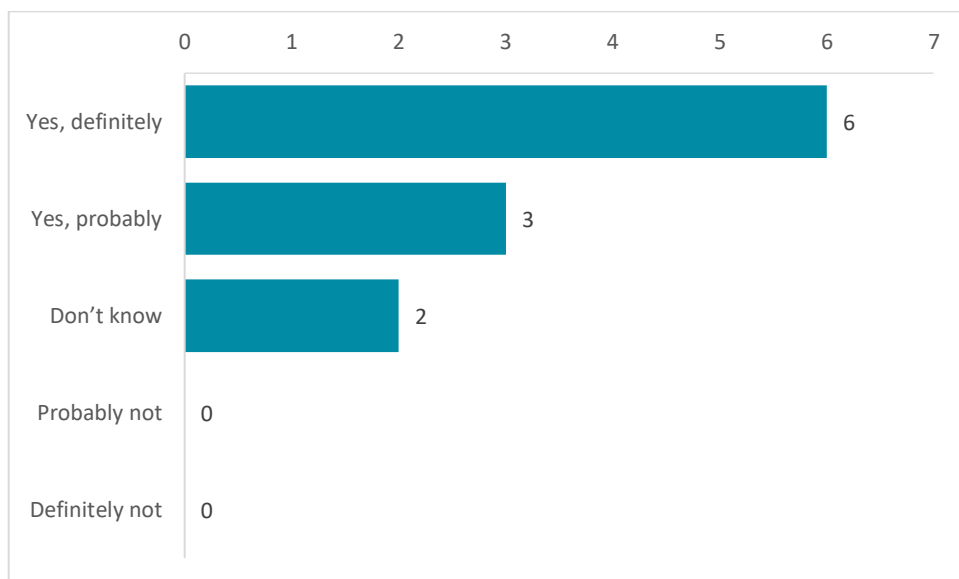
Eight respondents expressed a preference for shows in EY settings.

FIGURE 26: WHICH IS BETTER FOR YOU: HOSTING SHOWS IN YOUR EARLY YEARS SETTING OR TAKING A GROUP OF EARLY YEARS CHILDREN TO THE THEATRE?



No respondent said they didn't want to take part in future Hopper projects.

FIGURE 27: WOULD YOUR EARLY YEARS SETTING BE WILLING TO TAKE PART IN FUTURE HOPPER PROJECTS?



Overall, the strengths of Hopper were described as the concept, support from the team, quality of organisation, accessibility, the engagement of the children and families and the effect of a shared experience for the EY setting.

“Well organised, supportive, flexible, enabled schools nurseries to get together and share the Hopper experience.”

“It brought regular live performances to children throughout the year. Challenged very topical subjects. Brought artists and settings closer together with a better understanding of each other’s needs.”

“What a fantastic project. We love early years theatre and it meets so many elements of the EYFS. It was well thought out and organised and enabled children who might not otherwise get the opportunity to see an early years performance.”

“Hopper has been extremely inclusive to everyone. Often a library is told they will have a show or author visit and they just sell the tickets. Because of the inclusiveness the library took ownership of their shows and pride in helping and engaging with the different artists, Hopper people and the children and carers.”

“Shows that are targeted at under 5s are very rare. Accessibility was also key for our parents.”

The weaknesses were described as the time taken, difficulty selling the show to parents, and suitability for the young children.

“We need a member of staff to be out of class so that they can support the artists, and visiting audience to make sure everyone has a really positive experience and to support the school staff- especially administration with money and signing in.”

“The amount of time required to organise the shows was much more than I anticipated and if my role hadn't been in addition to the usual staffing, I'm not sure it would have been possible. The shows and sets are suitable for a location that can be used all day, but not always within the setting due to the needs of the childcare provider during their daily routines.”

“Actors went straight into character which made some younger children a little apprehensive straight away.”

“We needed clearer information about why theatre for early years was a good thing to have and more on what the children who attended a show got from it. This would have enabled us to sell the concept to our customers.”

LEARNING

LEARNING WORKSHOP

The key points are:

- The relationship between the coordinator and Surrey Arts was very positive. Objectives were clear. Communication was regular. Having a coordinator meant that any problems could be rapidly resolved. Having a local contact in Surrey meant that any questions e.g. about facilities on the ground could be rapidly addressed.
- Artists were very positive about the Labs. The assumption had been that artists who were already experienced in EY touring didn't need to attend, but they still needed to understand the limitations of working outside a theatre. Appropriate action would be to invite all artists to the Lab and consider extending the Lab by a day to give more time for peer support.
- The Darkroom didn't entirely work because two of the three pieces created were installations that would be difficult to tour. Also, Hopper didn't get applications from artists new to EY touring. There are two alternatives: to cut the Darkroom element; or to expand the budget to have a commission specially designed for the EY settings. An additional lesson is that partners need to be clear whose role it would be to prevent such a mismatch from happening in the future.
- The funding for adaptation costs was too low in some cases. One possibility would be to keep a central pot for adaptation into which artists had to bid rather than allocating £2k to each company.
- The relationships with EY settings were generally strong. There was definitely a step change in being a promoter. For example, some EY settings started by saying that the shows had to be free, but they changed their minds when they saw the quality of the productions and felt this should be communicated by a charge.
- There were cases where theatres and EY settings wanted to programme shows for times that Hopper knew wouldn't work. Appropriate action would be to include advice on programming in the programme toolkit, and possibly give Hopper stronger powers in the contract.
- The timetable meant that EY settings had to choose the shows early on rather than, say, choosing more risky shows later when their confidence developed. The impression to the team was that EY settings were choosing shows on the basis of their name or trailer. Appropriate action would be to follow RTDI by employing a filmmaker to produce trailers for all the shows especially for EY settings.

- Arrangements at EY settings varied widely. Some EY settings wanted to invite children and parents from other providers. Others saw other providers as competitors. Some EY gave the artists a strong welcome on the day. Others left the artists to liaise with the caretaker, while everyone else was busy. Appropriate action would be to retain the bespoke nature of the programme but also clarify what is expected of EY settings.
- The marketing needed to be produced earlier. EY settings say that parents are increasingly difficult to engage: indeed one of the benefits of Hopper is to help build these relationships. Appropriate action would be to give parents more information on the shows, drip fed over time, designed to suit people with low literacy, and to build profile e.g. in local newspapers.
- One of the shows in particular was difficult for parents to understand. Appropriate action is to add a criterion around likely appeal to parents in Hopper's criteria for selecting shows.
- EY settings are very positive about the shows and their benefit for all aspects of the children's learning. Appropriate action would be for one of the EY practitioners to produce an account explaining exactly how the show related to the learning framework for this age group.

"I love watching the children's faces. And they are still thinking about it later. They can't necessarily verbalise what they have seen. It just oozes through to you. And the innocence of their response. You just want to see how vital it is."

- The theatres varied widely in their structure and capacity. Although the theatres were initially positive about building new audiences through Hopper the reality was that they didn't always have the capacity or motivation to promote the shows in an effective or strategic way. Arts Council England suggested that theatres would provide a sustainable structure to maintain contact with the new audiences generated by Hopper but this did not seem likely. Appropriate action would be to clarify the roles and ensure the theatres have a strategy for Hopper, building on the existing toolkit that was developed. Another possibility would be to develop an offer especially designed to have libraries as the next stage venue, which might have the advantage of being able to host more shows.
- The team knew that theatres would need support, which was why a mentoring scheme was included in Hopper. These started well but contact was not maintained. This might have been because one of the mentors was located some way away; or because the terms of mentoring were not clear; or because theatres found the title mentoring off-putting. Appropriate action would be to rename the mentoring e.g. as consultancy and give more details on intended outcomes.

INTERNAL REFLECTION

This section analyses the observation forms and the journal kept by the project manager. It also includes lessons from other surveys.

The key lessons are:

- Organising transport to get parents to the show needs to be discussed early in the relationship. For example, EY settings could be told how other partners have raised support to cover transport costs, where these might prohibit attendance.
- EY practitioners need to be prepared to balance the dual roles of hosting shows and supporting children in their care. "Whilst many children enjoyed the shows, for some the experience of being in an unfamiliar space or seeing shows that involved unfamiliar adults was too much and so looked to their key worker/teacher for support." Parents who attend also need to be asked to take responsibility for their children's behaviour during the performance. This process is facilitated by sitting parents with their children and not separately (as some EY settings assumed).
- Evidence collected demonstrates it is possible for an EY setting show to lead to an independent theatre visit. More interventions, time and resources are needed for this to translate into a significant habit changing venture.
- Each setting brings its own challenges. Children's centres in Surrey are distracted by proposals for their 'recommissioning'. Libraries had noise from people in other sections of the library, and also Bluetooth interference.
- Shows need a person stationed near the stage to stop children wandering onto the stage. Where the stage isn't obvious, the edge can also be marked with tape.
- Shows programmed during holiday time tend to be easier to sell for library promoters. Shows during the autumn term tend to be affected by illness and were seen as too early in the academic term to accommodate properly by some EY settings.
- Artists need help in communicating their show in terms suitable for EY settings.
- As the programme develops the Hopper brand increased in potential value. Branding could be strengthened by having a banner explaining that the shows was brought to them through Hopper.
- Those organising the Lab or Darkroom need to ensure that the children involved are the same age as the intended audience by avoiding school holiday times.
- It is possible to record the level of engagement through systematic observation of behaviour. The key is to have each observer focus on one child. The results indicate that each show has its own distinctive reaction from children.
- Evaluation forms for parents need to be given out at the beginning of the show so that respondents have enough time to fill them in. Alternatively, the actors could run a short exercise (e.g. introduction to the next show) for five minutes at the end of the show while parents fill in the questionnaires. Other methods of

collecting feedback could be explored to accommodate lower levels of literacy skills.

“The benefits to a child in how they may express themselves both physically and in their language and communication skills can be seen in their responses to what they see and hear. Their understanding of the world is enhanced by how they have interpreted the show and sharing this with peers, friends and family is an important part of the project as a whole.”

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The Hopper partnership designed a holistic model that consisted of:

- Support to artists through Labs and Darkroom support.
- Support to EY settings through CPD and advice to encourage them to connect with, and bring children to, the theatres.
- Support to theatres through mentoring and help with marketing.

Baseline evaluation confirmed the need for Hopper. Two thirds of the EY practitioners said that they had not had an early years performance come to them in the last three years.

The Lab went well. Artists thought the lab was well organised, well suited to them, inspirational and practical, which helped them adapt their shows to different EY settings. Artists developed their practice in EY settings, which sometimes led to them getting additional bookings outside Hopper.

Success with the Darkroom was more mixed. The process was well organised and useful to the artists, and a unique introduction to the work for the EY practitioners who attended. However, two of the three pieces produced were installations, which are less appropriate for Hopper.

The shows in and promoted by EY settings went well. There were 70 shows, 2,963 participations by children, 1,009 participations by parents, 37 participations by venues, and 431 by EY staff. Some of these will have been repeat engagements but we have no data on this. This adds up to 4,403 individual participations, which exceeds the target of 3,500.

The product was carefully adapted to EY settings. The only occasional weakness was shows that needed slightly more adaption to suit the youngest age groups. Parents thought the shows were engaging, enjoyable, memorable and generally age appropriate. They rated the quality of the shows highly. EY practitioners rated the shows highly and judged them to make a good all round contribution to the children's learning. All EY practitioners said that Hopper was sufficiently child-focused.

It is possible to record the level of engagement through systematic observation of behaviour. The key is to have each observer focus on one child. The results indicate that each show has its own distinctive reaction from children.

Hopper built demand: 99% of parents said they would like their EY setting to host more live performances. All but one of the EY practitioners surveyed said that Hopper had increased their organisation's ability to book shows in EY settings. A promotional code on a Hopper produced leaflet for season 2 also demonstrated that

parents booked an additional Hopper show independently following a theatre performance at 2 separate settings.

Relationships with venues were mixed. Some venues lacked the capacity to market Hopper's shows. However, lack of capacity meant that they also couldn't take up the support that Hopper had organised such as the CPD and mentoring.

Some of the assumptions in the logic model proved to be unfounded. None of the EY practitioners took their children to the theatre in the third season. This was in part because of the timing of the third season, early in the academic year; and in part because of low capacity at the EY settings, and the low income of parents. The partners observed that Hopper seemed to be reaching families that were unusually hard to reach, which was both evidence of the value of the programme and a confounding factor in its delivery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

More work is needed for Hopper to meet its objectives. Hopper should:

- Provide more information to EY settings to help them understand and promote the shows to parents.
- Be more selective in the venues it works with to ensure they have an ongoing commitment to EY work.
- Clarify the roles and expectations of the Darkroom, if it is continued, so that the work exemplifies good practice in adaptation to EY settings.
- Continue the support to EY settings to enable them to host and promote the work.

APPENDIX ONE: AUDIENCE DATA

SEASON ONE

5 March – 18 March plus April dates due to Fairytales Gone Bad run being postponed due to illness.

Date	Venue	Settings Involved	Show and number of performances	Total children audience	Total parent audience	Total staff audience
5.3.18	Bridgwater and Taunton College	Bridgwater Child Care Centre and members of public	Flit, Flap and Fly (3 shows)	64	15	9
6.3.18	Taunton Nursery School	Taunton School Bishops Lydeard School	Flit, Flap and Fly (3 shows)	92	0	8
8.3.18	William Hall Stoke St Gregory	Willow set Pre School Stoke St Gregory School Yeovil child-minders	Flit, Flap and Fly (2 shows)	79	11	11
9.3.18	Minehead First School	Minehead First School Watery Lane Nursery Seashells Nursery King Edwards Nursery St Michael's C of E First School	To The Moon (2 shows)	122	14	24
10.3.18	Brock House Day Nursery Norton Fitzwarren	Brock House Day Nursery Plus members of the public	Flit, Flap and Fly (3 shows)	75	68	5
12.3.18	Knights Templar First School	Knights Templar Teddy Bears' Nursery Cheeky Cherubs Nursery Little Vikings Nursery	Need A Little Help (2 shows)	132	29	10
14.3.18	Middlezoy Village Hall	Carousel Nursery Members of Public Othey School Middlezoy School	Need A Little Help (2 Shows)	68	8	8
6.4.18	Redhill Library	Members of the public	Fairytales Gone Bad (1 show)	25	20	4
6.4.18	Merstham Library	Members of the public	Fairytales Gone Bad (1 show)	24	13	3
16.4.18	Wembdon St George C of E School Bridgwater	St George School Sunshine Pre-School, Bridgwater	Fairytales Gone Bad (2 shows)	105	5	15

26.4.18	Woking Library	Members of the public	Fairytales Gone Bad (1 show)	34	24	2
26.4.18	Woking Children's Centre	Children's Centre families Busy Bees Nursery Broadmere School nursery class	Fairytales Gone Bad (1 show)	45	6	12
Totals	12 venues	27 settings	23 shows	865 children	213 parents/carers	111 staff

SEASON TWO

Date	Venue and date	Settings involved	Show and number performances	Total children audience	Total parent audience	Total staff audience
11.06.18	Taunton School	Taunton Nursery and Reception Bishops Lydeard Primary School Tiny Feet Nursery, Taunton	The Feather Catcher (2 shows)	135	0	14
12.06.18	Minehead First School	Minehead First School Cheeky Cherubs Nursery Watery Lane Nursery Seashells Nursery King Edwards Nursery St Michael's C of E First School	The Feather Catcher (2 shows)	175	7	23
13.06.18	Middlezoy Village Hall	Carousel Nursery Members of Public Montessori House Nursery Othery School Middlezoy School	The Feather Catcher (2 shows)	71	11	20
16.06.18	The Brewhouse, Taunton	Members of public (free show)	To The Moon (2 shows)	140	171	3
18.06.18	William Hall, Stoke St Gregory	Willow Set Pre School North Curry Primary Little Acorns Toddler group Yeovil Childminders Members of public	To The Moon (2 shows)	90	24	9
19.06.18	Westfield Church Hall, Bridgwater	Westover Green Community School Members of public	To The Moon (2 shows)	69	6	13

		Local childminding groups Westfield Church Toddler group Montessori House Nursery Bridgwater and Taunton College Childcare Centre				
20.06.18	Nether Stowey School	Nether Stowey Primary School Stowey Bears Nursery	To The Moon (2 shows)	81	47	9
21.06.18	Red Oak Children's Centre, Redhill	Red Oak Children Centre Furzefield School Nursery Red Oak pre- school	Shh..Bang! (2 shows)	86	0	19
22.06.18	Knights Templar School, Watchet	Knights Templar Teddy Bears' Nursery Cheeky Cherubs Nursery Little Vikings Nursery	Shh..Bang! (2 shows)	173	20	24
22.06.18	St John's Primary School, Dorking	St John School nursery and reception Dorking Children's Centre	Shh..Bang! (2 shows)	80	15	15
23.06.18	Camberley Theatre	Members of public (free)	To The Moon (2 shows)	245	248	5
23.06.18	Brock House Day Nursery (Norton Fitzwarren)	Brock House Nursery Members of public	Shh..Bang! (1 show)	27	21	9
24.06.18	Bridgwater Arts Centre	Members of public	Shh..Bang! (1 show)	8	8	3
Totals	13 venues	34 different settings involved	24 shows	1380 children	578 parents	193 staff

SEASON THREE

Date	Venue and date	Settings involved	Show and number performances	Total children audience	Total parent audience	Total staff audience
02.10.18	Danesfield Middle School (on behalf St Peter's First School)	St Peter's First School Knights Templar First School Old Cleaves First School	Flit, Flap & Fly (3 shows)	87	7	11
03.10.18	Wembdon St George C of E School Bridgwater	St George School, Sunshine Pre- School, Bridgwater	Flit, Flap & Fly (3 shows)	78	6	11

04.10.18	The Brewhouse Theatre	St James Nursery (Taunton) Public	Flit, Flap & Fly (2 shows)	54	40	8
04.10.18	St Johns C of E School, Dorking	St John School nursery and reception Dorking Children's Centre	Light Steps (2 shows)	66	19	7
05.10.18	Woking Library (AM)	Members of public	Light Steps (1 show)	36	33	5
05.10.18	Parkview Community Centre	Woking Children's Centre families Busy Bees Nursery Broadmere School Reception Class	Light Steps (1 show)	35	10	6
09.10.18	Williams Hall Stoke St. Gregory	Willow set Pre School Stoke St Gregory School	Need A Little Help (2 shows)	57	13	12
09.10.18	Bridgwater Rugby Club	Bridgwater and Taunton College Childcare Centre Little Montessori House Childcare students (included in staff)	Light steps (2 shows)	56	12	24
10.10.18	Bridgwater Arts Centre	Little Montessori House Bishops Lydeard Childminders x 3 Public	Need A Little Help (1 show)	14	2	5
10.10.18	Taunton School	Taunton Nursery and Reception Tiny Feet Nursery, Taunton	Light Steps (2 shows)	83	0	16
11.10.18	Nether Stowey Village Hall	Nether Stowey School Stowey Bears Nursery Childminders	Need A Little Help (2 shows)	76	30	10
12.10.18	Camberley Theatre	Pine Ridge Children's Centre Members of public	Need A Little Help (1 show)	54	46	6
TOTALS	12 venues	22 different settings involved	22 shows	696 children	218 parents	121 staff