

Intergenerational Connections 1

Busy Bees and Abbotsford Care Home have worked together for many years to create an age inclusive group where children and older adults can make social connections to enhance their wellbeing and self-confidence (incorporating Curriculum for Excellence and SHANARRI).

Busy Bees offer a friendly and professional childcare services for children aged 6 weeks to 5 years old. Established in 1994, the Busy Bees team ensure that the children in their care are the top priority every day, just as the team at Abbotsford recognise that their residents are the top priority every day. Both groups recognized that coming together to participate in joint activities would provide an enriching experience for everyone – children, residents, staff and parents/relatives. The possibilities are boundless!

Our Busy Bee friends have been visiting since 2001, and in the last couple of years it's become a weekly event. Participants include seven children between the age of three to five and around seven to ten of our residents. Since the group started, the children, their teachers/carers and our residents have created special bonds, which are evident in the smiles and laughter from both parties.

Abbotsford's own staff have children and grandchildren who have been part of this journey and they share fond memories of visiting the home. These relationships were not built overnight, but through consistency in the sessions which allowed everyone to get to know each other over a period of time. Each session follows a theme such as gardening, families and friendships, seasons, and singing songs and storytelling, followed by an activity such as board games, jigsaws and parachute games, make the sessions fun and engaging.



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Celebrating cultural events together to promote diversity, inclusion and understanding among the children and our residents helps them develop a sense of respect and appreciation for different cultures and traditions, it also offers the opportunity for everyone to learn history, geography and social studies.

A staff member said: *“My grandson was in the Nativity play and it was lovely to see how he interacted with everyone, and the joy the children brought to the residents”*.

Lucy’s mum told us that *“Lucy loved going to Abbotsford and telling me all about what she got to do there. This is a really valuable experience for the children, getting to interact with older people”*.



On 23rd June, 2025, we celebrated the Busy Bees graduation, where the children end their chapter at the Nursery and move on to primary school, but this story doesn’t end here - Abbotsford also has close links to the local primary schools (Caledonia and Stanley Primary schools) we continue to foster these relationships.

We have regular visits from the local college students who are doing courses in hair and beauty, they come in to provide wonderful pamper sessions for our residents, who love the special time together for a good old natter and reminiscences – some of the students used to visit Abbotsford when they were at the primary schools .

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Freya a Busy Bee pupil said, *"I liked it when we were getting to read a book with Marion"*



Freya's mum commented, *"Freya has really enjoyed her visits to Abbotsford and talks about the ladies and gentlemen she has met and what she has done"*.



Heather, a Busy Bees staff member said, *"This has been an incredible experience for all involved. Such a great way to bring generations together to form positive relationships. An amazing learning opportunity for our early years class and you can really see the importance of these visits for the residents"*. Heather herself hopes to further her relationship with the residents who do not have many visitors by writing them letters and popping in with her own daughter for a visit.

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To understand the benefits that intergenerational connections brings to both parties Carol-Ann and her sister Jillian (owners of Busy Bees nursery), say:

“ Personally, Jillian and I have a very strong connection with the staff and residents of Abbotsford as we have been part of their family for so many years now. We have been working in partnership for 20+ years and we would be lost without our visits.

When we visit and we see a friend (resident) who may be feeling sad/low..., the children walk in and their mood lifts almost instantly. The glow on the faces are priceless and the fun begins.

When the children get to know the residents through our weekly visits the bonds that are made are unbreakable. When we draw up in our ‘Bee Bus’, the children are so excited to get into see which friends they will be spending time with today.

The intergenerational learning where the children and friends (residents) learn from each other is an important part of lifelong learning, where the generations work together to gain skills, values and knowledge providing opportunities for unrelated people of different generations to interact with each other.

Through our connections with the residents of Abbotsford we feel:-

This helps reduce ageism and stereotyping between generations

Improves relationships between early years and the older generation

Brings joy and happiness to all involved.....Residents, Children, Nursery staff and Care home staff.

We all love our visits/work with Abbotsford staff and residents and hope it continues for many more years”.