

FFWPU UK: Member's Spotlight - Stay and Play - A Space for Families to Belong

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Member's Spotlight - Stay and Play: A Space for Families to Belong

'Stay and Play' began with a simple idea from members Keishin Hoshiko, Ruth Johnson, and Miho Fortune: to create the kind of welcoming space for families that they themselves had appreciated as parents. After regularly attending local stay and play groups run by churches in their area, they saw firsthand how valuable these

spaces could be, not just for children to play, but for parents and carers to find friendship, support, and community.

Inspired by that experience, they began wondering how they could offer something similar through the Peace Embassy. They wanted it to be a place open to everyone in the local area, where families could feel comfortable, connected, and cared for.

The project officially began taking shape after September last year, with much of early 2025 spent gathering toys, furniture, and supplies. Many of the toys were sourced secondhand, and the team worked hard to transform the space into somewhere children could freely explore and enjoy. Today, the room is filled with themed play areas, including cars, puzzles, a kitchen corner, dolls, mega blocks, ride-on toys, costumes, and even a baby corner with a small slide and seesaw.

Now running every Friday during term time, Stay and Play follows a gentle rhythm of free play, snack time, story time, and singing. Each week, around 10 - 18 children attend alongside parents, grandparents, and childminders from the local community.

What has made the initiative especially meaningful for the team has been the relationships formed along the way. Familiar faces have become regulars, and many guests have naturally started helping tidy up at the end of sessions. Some who first visited through Stay and Play have since attended other activities at the Peace Embassy and shared that they feel a genuine sense of belonging there.

The team also recently invited families from Stay and Play to their Easter event in Chislehurst. Although the distance made it difficult for many to attend, it reflected the heart behind the initiative: creating opportunities for people to feel included not only in weekly activities, but in the wider community as well.

What started as a small idea between friends has grown into something deeply appreciated by local families. A warm and joyful space where children can play, parents can connect, and community can grow naturally.

River South Church



For Children aged 0-4
and their Parents/Carers

Peace Embassy, Haslemere Hall
Fridays (Term Time) 10:00am - 11:30am

Free Group - all welcome!

Come and join us for a relaxed, fun morning designed
for little ones and their parents/carers

No need to book -Just turn up!

Free Play with Toys
Simple Craft
Story Time
Nursery Rhymes
Snacks Provided

