

The **co-operative** loan fund borrower case study.

Sparks Co-operative Ltd:

Providing quality care for local children

Sparks Co-operative Ltd is a Bristol-based enterprise that provides a variety of child-centred services to meet the needs of local families and their children.

Its services, aimed at children aged between 4 - 14 years, include a variety of play and daycare services such as a term-time after school club, a breakfast club, and a full-day playscheme during the school holidays.

The co-operative aims to provide a safe, stimulating but homely environment for the children, within a multi-cultural setting. Its activities include art and crafts, cooking, playing indoors and outdoors, developing co-operative play skills and group work. It also holds one-off events such as musical workshops, seasonal celebrations and parties.

The enterprise was developed from Sefton Park After School Cub, an out-of-school club that had been run since 1989 by a voluntary parent management committee. In 2004, with assistance from Avon Co-operative Development Agency, it made the transition to become the first employee co-op to offer childcare in Bristol and it secured funding to enable it to expand its services to offer its breakfast and holiday club. Following a process of

transferring its assets and re-registering with Ofsted, the co-op officially began trading in 2005.

Since then the co-operative has gone from strength to strength and it is now run by three directors who employ a team of playworkers. It offers up to 30 places for its after school club and 24 for its breakfast and holiday club. It also received recognition in 2005 when it was presented with the award for 'Co-operative of the Year' from BRAVE Enterprise Agency.

In 2006, The Co-operative Loan Fund was pleased to be able to provide financial support to the co-op which has enabled it to continue its service delivery.

Contact Sparks Co-operative Ltd on 0117 907 6442, email carole@ctheyer3.wanadoo.co.uk or visit www.sparks-inc.org

For more information about The Co-operative Loan Fund please contact the fund managers, Co-operative & Community Finance, on 0117 916 6750, email info@co-opandcommunityfinance.coop or visit www.co-operativeloanfund.co.uk

