

Rotherham Early Years Pupil Premium Project
Developing Parental Partnership to Support Learning and Development

Engaging parents in early activities for reading and writing at East Dene Primary School

Susan McMichael is a Nursery Nurse and Anna Wheeler a Level 3 Teaching Assistant at East Dene Primary School in Rotherham. They have been looking at ways to use their EYPP funding to support children's early reading and writing development in partnership with their parents.

Introduction

Early talk, reading and writing skills in a child's development are vital. Children need first hand experiences which engage them, enabling them to use all their senses, exploring possibilities and make decisions through their play. These experiences build children's confidence and interests which means they will be eager to talk about their experiences. In other words 'If I have done it I can tell you about it'.

Language rich experiences, where parents and children are encouraged to question and evaluate what they are doing, support the child's skills to explain their feelings, thoughts and findings. Building an 'I can' culture where children's every action and verbal voices are valued and listened to. A child who is confident to verbalise their thoughts, pick up a book and tell their own story will engage in finding out independently, making them competent, independent learners. A child who is confident and eager to speak about their experiences will then transfer this into their writing. For this reason we looked at the ways we could work together with parents and engage them in activities that would support their child in exciting and stimulating ways.

This is what we planned to do....

We decided to run 2 sessions for parents based on their children's interests. We did this through sessions on **Making and exploring glitter dough** and **Different ways of early mark making**.

We wanted the sessions to be welcoming and fun but at the same time make parents aware of the importance of their children's language acquisition. Our aim was to promote communication and language between parents and their children through fun, interactive learning activities. We introduced each session with a short explanation; then moved around the group modelling open ended questioning and interaction with the children; informally chatting to the parents about the reasons behind the activities we were doing and the benefits to their child's education. After each session the children were given a gift pack of glitter dough ingredients, an early mark making gift set and a book with a reading buddy gift so that they could continue their fun learning activities at home with their families.

Making glitter dough!



"It feels cold and sticky."



"The play-dough has gone all sloppy now that we have added the water!"



Glitter play-dough gift pack

The pack included 3 different play-dough recipes, salt, flour, food colouring, glitter and a storage jar to keep the play-dough in once it was made

Interactive early mark making activities for parents to share with their children



"Look at the patterns I've made in the foam! It feels soft."



"I can do big circles in the air."



Mark making gift pack

The pack included a light sabre, paint, a decorating paint brush, big chalks, shaving foam, a dry wipe board and pen and examples of children's early mark making

What went well ...

- Our parents really enjoyed the sessions and commented that they did not realise how much fun their child's learning was.
- They were delighted with their gift packs and repeated the activities at home with their child and their siblings.
- The children enjoyed spending time at school with their parents sharing activities.
- Parents began to use more language when interacting with their children. They began to ask open ended questions and more importantly allowed their child the time to express their own ideas and adding to them rather than taking control and speaking for their children.

What we would do differently next time ...

- Change the day from Monday to a mid-week session to allow us to remind parents the day before as they may have forgotten over the weekend.
- Bake buns with the children for their parents prior to the session. The children will then have something to remind them about the session and they will remember to remind their parents to come.