



Talking Tables at Granby Nurseries - Wickersley.

Setting description:

Granby House Nursery is a private day nursery; registered to provide childcare and education for children aged birth – five years old. The setting is open Monday to Friday; from 8am until 6pm, all year round, excluding Bank holidays. The building is split into three rooms: Willow room (birth – up to 18 months); Pear room (from 12-28 months); Cherry room (From 2 -5 years).

Why get involved:

The Talking Table workshop was introduced to us initially by the nursery owner and promoted by the setting Manager; who enabled both of us to attend the sessions. In recent years we have noticed and experienced an increase in the need for interventions to develop Speech & Language skills and have had to refer an increasing number of children to the Speech & Language Services. We were enthusiastic to take part as it sounded like an exciting new approach and we always welcome working with other professionals from different disciplines.

How the training has impacted on us and our setting as a whole?

Attending the training has been beneficial for us both; on an individual and professional level. The knowledge that we have gained has strengthened and built upon our existing knowledge. The Talking Table programme has enabled us to re-evaluate / assess the setting's approach to communication and Language and re-ignite the passion and awareness to develop individual children's communication skills.

In learning or re-visiting different communication strategies; such as OWLING, the Four S's and the six ways to extend a topic, it has had a beneficial effect on practice throughout the setting as these strategies have been distributed throughout the team.

The Talking Table training has been a positive learning curve for us, as we were able to use videos and watch ourselves back, reflecting on our communication with the children.

Getting started:

To begin with, we evaluated the children in the setting to see who the Talking Table activity would benefit the most. We had one child that qualified for the Early Years Pupil Premium, who also was identified as being at risk of delay through Every Child a Talker assessment tool, another two children that we identified to build on their confidence in speaking in a familiar group, and another three that we were keen to develop their ability to wait and listen to other children.

The children were involved in finding a suitable doll to use within the Talking Table activities who they decided to name William. William went off on various adventures and returned to nursery to tell the children all about it. At first, we were unsure what topics to use, so we discussed this with our peers to draw on experiences that the children had recently been exposed to. This ensured that the topics discussed would be relevant to the children and we would not be asking them to talk about something unfamiliar.

One of the challenges we had was the space we would use for the Talking Table sessions, as it needed a quiet space to enable the children to concentrate and participate fully. This was very hard to find in our setting! Another challenge was finding the resources needed to support the topic being discussed and keeping them together for quick access.

Our Talking Table sessions:

The children engaged well in the Talking Table sessions; however we found that the session was too long for some children as they did not have the listening capacity to sustain the whole session. This meant that the story telling aspect at the end was picked up the following session. After discussing this with Rebecca (Speech Therapist), we learned that the story telling section was not the main focus of the session, and what was vital to success was getting the children to use and experiment with their vocabulary, learning new words and sounds, and building confidence to speak in a group.

The journey of the individual / group:

Some of the children were very quiet when we first started the sessions. These children were overshadowed by the more confident speakers in the group. With support from staff to encourage the confident speakers to listen and let the others have their turn, the quiet children have grown in confidence and have begun to communicate about what they have seen in the bag. The group of children are now very excited when they see William and his adventure bag, and make their way to the table to start the session.



The impact of using Talking Tables:

- Building confidence with children that are not confident to speak, either individually or in the focus group.
- Encouraging the confident speakers to listen to their peers.
- Children have an increased vocabulary.