



Case Study

Talking Tables Project

Who we are:

Pollywiggle Day Nursery Eastwood was established in 2013 and is situated on Fitzwilliam Road Eastwood. Our staff team is comprised of five fully trained members of staff with a minimum level 3 qualification, and three apprentice members of staff. We also have a cook who prepares fresh halal and vegetarian meals daily.

The nursery is divided into three separate units. Our baby room caters for children aged 0 – 2 years, toddler room caters for children aged 2 – 3 years, and our pre-school room caters for children aged 3 – 5 years.

Why are we involved in the project?

Our nursery is situated in a deprived area and we see high numbers of children attending who are experiencing a communication difficulty. We wanted to be involved with the project to learn new techniques to use alongside our existing strategies to help support children and families and to improve outcomes for children. We also hoped it would be an enjoyable experience for children and staff.

Getting Started

We were invited to take part in the project in May 2015. The training was spread out over 7 months, beginning with a full days training where we learned more about strategies to support interaction and learning styles. We also shared video clips of practitioners interacting with children during free play experiences so we could share good practice and discuss areas for improvement.

The speech and language therapist visited us in nursery and demonstrated a Talking Table session for us. We then began to implement our own Talking Table sessions in nursery. We gathered our resources for our first topic. We chose our children based on a number of factors. We included a child who communicated on a one to one basis but was reluctant to speak in groups, a child who had recently started nursery who we felt would benefit from the opportunity to make new friends and gain confidence in the setting, a child who rarely spoke at all, and a child who was quite confident to speak, in the hope that this would encourage the other children to participate.

Our Talking Table sessions

Our first topic was going to the seaside. The children were very eager to have their turn taking something out of the bag. The children were a little reluctant at first, but this may have been because we were doing something new, and we had taken them out of their usual environment to do the activity. Some of the children were mark making throughout the whole session. Lauren made notes throughout so she could help the children to recap the story at the end. The children were more confident during the second session as they had experienced it before, and with each session we noticed an increase in the children's communication. The children began extending their ideas, and Lauren would follow the children's interests. She was using new strategies learned such as OWLing- observe, wait, listen, the four s's – say less, stress, go slow, show, and extending the children's existing vocabulary. Lauren was also modelling good use of language throughout, for example, if a child said "I caught it, Lauren would reply, using the correct language, "Oh, you caught it!"

The children's journey

All of the children who took part really enjoy the sessions and it had a positive impact on their confidence, turn taking skills, and listening and attention skills. The children also developed their imaginative play skills, creating some fun stories to go with the props.

The impact of the Talking Table

This project has had a massive impact not only on our children but on my staff by increasing their confidence, teaching them how to apply the HANEN language strategies, and how to extend topics with children. The children who have been taking part in our groups have had a positive experience, which has been evidenced through their learning journeys.

