

Case Study: Engaging EAL Parents.

Setting: Alexandra Nursery School

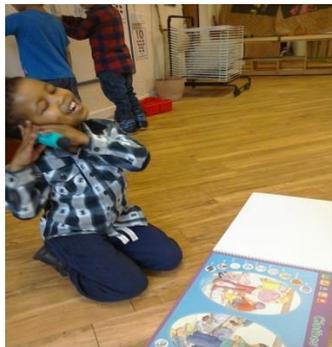
Project Lead: Carolyn Barton

Context of the setting

- We offer places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds, both funded and Day Care.
- Our ethos encourages children to be independent through the way we provide enabling environments.
- We plan teaching points based on children's next steps, interests and stages of learning. We also have group 'Together Time' sessions focusing on the children's language skills.
- We try to find out a lot about the child and family and their uniqueness including mum's birth, what the child was like as a baby, what their likes and dislikes are and what makes mum or dad feel proud of them. This is the parental voice on our baseline assessments.
- Within my current group alone, I have 26 out of 34 children who have English as an additional language. The languages include Somali, Swahili, Urdu, Gujrati, Kurdish, Hungarian, Italian and Pashto, among others.
- A number of staff at Alexandra speak different languages and are able to interpret for parents and children.

Changes we made to the project – The Impact

- Initially, we used the dual language books within group sessions.
- However, we found the best use of resources were on a one to one basis where the children were able to explore the resources independently.
- This little Somalian boy showed a greater level of attention and focus than was normal for him in listening to this story in Somali.



- Using the NASSEA assessment scale, this child progressed from 'Step One' in Speaking, PSE and Early Literacy Skills at the start of the project to 'Step Two' in all areas and 'Step Three' for Listening and Understanding by the end of the project.

- We had new Hungarian children, who were very upset.
- I sat with the children with the pen and phrase sheet and just used the pen to read phrases such as “Mummy is coming,” and “Would you like to read a book?”
- The children settled down much quicker than on previous sessions, where we had been without the resource which gave reassurances in Hungarian to them.



- We decided that the pen could be used to also engage the parents of these vulnerable children by asking them to come in and read or sing songs or nursery rhymes in their own language; recording them using Penpal. The impact on PSE and involvement levels was immediate.
- The Somalian boy mentioned previously said to me “You are so funny!” and was delighted with the fact we were singing ‘Heads, shoulder, knees and toes’ in Somali.
- The Hungarian children made at least one, and more usually two and even three sub levels of progress in Personal, Social and Emotional Development and in Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking, using Development Matters level descriptors from the start to the end of the project, which we track for individual children.
- We also created a cosy area using the strategies from ‘communication friendly spaces’, with boxes, baskets and fabric to create an exploratory area to sit and encouraged the children to use the I Pads within these areas. This was very successful in promoting engagement and observing the children’s skills in

technology. The environment set-up was really important in getting the most out of these resources.



Implications of the project

- Following the project outcomes, we decided as a school to purchase the recordable pen and stickers and some I Pads to continue the work we started in the following ways;
- One to one support for individual children, using the pen to support PSE, wellbeing and involvement through home language songs, stories and phrases.
- Developing parental involvement with school through asking parents to record nursery rhymes in their home language again very good for supporting PSE, wellbeing and involvement levels to enable children to access the rest of the curriculum once they are settled.
- Creating cosy spaces to use technology such as the I Pads, in order to support levels of concentration and focus.
- Using the 'tabletop translator' app on the I Pads to communicate with parents on their child's progress in languages such as Hungarian and Polish, where there was not an available staff interpreter.
- The resources also helped us to work in creative ways to support Pupil Premium children who needed additional support with their skills in PSE and Communication.