

Stimulation personalised take home boxes



Engaging vulnerable families requires a sensitive, respectful and targeted approach based on a holistic knowledge of each unique child.

Practitioners at Bagworth Pre-School Playgroup have been personalising take home boxes to suit each unique child.

Tracey talks us through the key approaches which made the project so successful...

Case study

I liked the idea of personalising take home boxes to suit the individual needs and interests of children. As a team, we produced some targeted resources designed to be used with specific children and their families for particular periods of time, connected with their individual learning and development needs.

These are different to chatterboxes and not designed to be sent home with all children in the way that generic resources like story sacks might be used. This made children and their families feel special and valued because the contents were designed especially for them around their unique needs and interests.

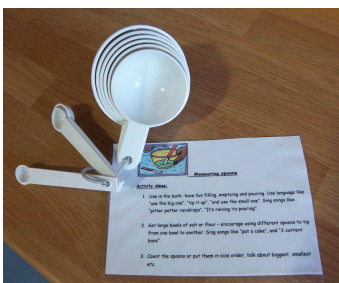
I worked closely with a vulnerable family where I had observed that the child was showing signs of generalised developmental delay across all areas of learning. I put together a small drawstring bag with a set of measuring scoops. The child enjoyed playing with these measuring scoops in the water. This supported his transporting schema as well as meeting his interests and needs – he was drawn to water play! Transferring water from one scoop to another, with the tipping and pouring actions helped to develop his hand eye coordination and motor control.

I also prepared a skull and crossbones pencil case filled with keys for another child who was interested in pirates, and had a fascination with Dad's keys! This was used alongside the book 'You Choose' by Nick Sharratt to support his speech and language development. The child has a speech and language referral and has recently had a new baby at home. Practitioners noticed a change in his behaviour, which when discussed with Mum, mirrored his behaviour at home. This has really supported him at a difficult time and given Mum a positive focus for their special time together.

Working with these families has already had a huge positive impact on children's wellbeing and involvement and the self esteem and confidence of their parents.

It has also positively impacted their learning and development, for example I noticed that whilst engaged with these activities, one child's language has started to develop – he has been babbling, for example joining in with the odd word when I start to sing one of the rhymes given to mum.

We are motivated and inspired to try out new ideas for different resources with other families! One child who struggles with counting has noticed the moon, rockets and stars on one page of 'You Choose'... our minds are full of 'space rock' and 'aliens'!!!



relationships

attachment

interactions

Key Person role

Key persons must be very familiar with each family and aware of their vulnerabilities. This means they understand how best to liaise with each individual family and which approach may suit their needs best.

Investing time in establishing and building excellent relationships with parents and their families will provide a solid base to build on and enable this to be successful.



Resource considerations...

- In order to give parents confidence, resources should be inexpensive and boxes should contain mostly things parents may already have at home.
- The role of the setting would be sharing ideas with parents about how to use what they have in order to facilitate good at home learning and support their child's identified developmental needs.
- For vulnerable families, it may be a good idea to include any resources they might need – for example the ingredients for making play dough. Parents would be likely to accept these as they are offered sensitively from the base of an already established solid relationship.

Reflecting on practice:

Do your key persons know your families well enough?

Do parents feel comfortable to approach their key person?

Is there space and time to facilitate these vital conversations?

Remember – parents **singing songs and rhymes** with their child is one of the key activities to stretch a child's mind. Not all parents are familiar with traditional rhymes, and may not know the words or actions. Can you add some simple songs to a take home box to enhance the contents and support vulnerable parents?

Remember... research suggests that practitioners should share with parents the importance of the following:

Listening, responding and vocalising / talking – from birth onwards.

Using and developing a strong first language whilst acquiring a second (includes visual languages such as British Sign Language (BSL)).

Following a child's interests, encouraging deep involvement.

activities
stimulation

experiences opportunities



How do you share these key messages with parents?

