

Allowing children to take the lead

Case Study 6

Playdor Nursery School - Mrs Emma Barrow, BA (Hons), QTS EYPS (Proprietor)



A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE PLAYDOR

Playdor is a private, 36 place setting located on the outskirts of Chorley. It has been established for twenty six years.

It takes children from birth to four years old. Opening times are from 7:30am until 6:00pm, Monday to Friday.

A total of ten staff work at Playdor and all are qualified to a minimum of NVQ level two. The setting is run by the proprietor who is also a qualified teacher with EYPS.

The building is a converted residential bungalow with an extensive outdoor play area which is set in a residential area.



THE PROJECT: WHAT WERE THEY TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

- To develop an overarching understanding of the meaning of 'Child Initiated Play'.
- To identify the role which the adult plays in children's play and learning.
- To highlight any restrictions that the adult imposes to children's play.
- To reflect on the importance of effective observation and assessment of the children.

WHAT DID THEY DO?

- Questionnaires were given to each member of staff to gauge the initial understanding of the concept of 'child initiated play'.
- A meeting was held to discuss the findings from the questionnaire and to develop a unified definition of 'child initiated play'.
- A united approach was planned for the project. Formats were devised for observations and assessments.
- Each key worker identified sample children and began to conduct the research.
- Analysed the findings of the observations and assessments and reflected on the objectives.
- Planned for the 'next steps' and enhanced where necessary.
- Evaluated the impact that the interventions had on children's learning through the introduction of the enhancement.

In your own words describe what you believe to be child initiated play:		
Give one example or a child initiated activity or experience:		
Do you believe that children have the opportunities to self initiate at Playdor? Why?		
Can you please split the opportunities into a percentage of what you believe children access throughout a typical day at Playdor?		
Child Initiated	Child Initiated but Adult Intervened	Adult Initiated



Staff Questionnaire

WHAT HAPPENED?



- Staff reflected on their understanding of what 'child initiated play' actually was, and reached a shared understanding.
- They discovered that adults in the nursery setting sometimes do not give the children enough opportunities to initiate their own play, occasionally intervening too much and directing their learning unconsciously.
- That children may at times need to be observed rather than played with. Staff used this opportunity to re-think current practices and have adapted to accommodate the children's lead in play.
- The project reaffirmed that the children at nursery are happy and enthusiastic.
- The observations were a good working tool to allow staff to identify the length of time that the children sustained their own play. Staff believed at first that it was a lot longer than it actually was. This observation, before and after the project highlighted an increase in the time 'child initiated play' was sustained.

- Through the key worker observations and understanding of each child, enhancements were added and played an important role in sustaining their interest.
- Children actually felt confident to suggest other resources from different areas to compliment their play.
- Giving the children more time to themselves has had a positive impact on them; it appears to have increased their confidence and has enhanced their ability to become independent learners.



WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO NEXT?

- To continue observing and assessing the children's learning and to reflect on the impact our role has on it.
- To confirm that it is ok to 'stand back' and observe a child's play.
- Maintain continuous assessment of the environment and involve the children when we are doing this.
- Continue to look at each child individually and pay particular attention to their well-being and involvement levels.
- Give more opportunities during our peer observations to feedback to each other on adult intervention.

