

Yarrow Valley Nursery - Brenda Foster, Manager of Yarrow Valley Nursery

AIM

At the beginning of this project Brenda felt that child initiated play was going well within the nursery. Continuous provision was well established, staff fully trained, and resources were constantly updated. The staff did feel however that they would like to do more to help parents realise the value of their children's play. They wanted to involve parents in the process of gathering information about their children and were then hoping to use this knowledge to support children's play within the setting.

ACTION

Learning stories were already part of normal observations and these were shared with parents. As a result, parents were familiar with the format of the learning stories. Four parents were asked to try to capture their own stories at home. They were given a camera and instructions and asked to ensure that they followed their child's own choice of play rather than set anything up for them. They were encouraged to write down what happened and what the children said.

Information and photographs the parents sent in were gathered and presented in the same format as their own learning stories and linked to the curriculum. As with nursery versions, staff then talked about the child's learning and interests at weekly staff meetings and considered next steps and implications for nursery.

They then followed up the children's interests. For example Lucy had shown a keen interest in babies/dollies in her story. They organised a visit by a mother and her baby whom she bathed in the setting. The role play area was also set up with a baby bath and changing mat for all the children to use.

IMPACT

Parents were asked if they noticed anything as a result of what we had done together. It emerged from Lucy's mum that she had enhanced her ability to interact with younger children. Mum was really pleased to report that she had noticed a dramatic change in the way Lucy dealt with other children now. Staff felt that the play and discussions following the visit from our baby had helped Lucy consider the needs of younger children and she had become much more considerate and sensitive to others.

As a result of the involvement of Lucy's mum, staff were able to home in on another area of her interest and provide an excellent learning opportunity for her at nursery. The provision made for Lucy also benefited other children within the setting who thoroughly enjoyed the role play and baby visit.

NEXT STEPS

"We feel that our 'home' learning stories have been a great success, and we will now roll out the pilot to all parents. We hope that each child will have at least 1 home learning story captured within the year they spend with us. We will continue to involve all staff in meetings to discuss the child's learning from the stories and use this to plan for future learning opportunities."

(Brenda Foster)

Lucy's home learning story

Lucy was playing at home and mummy took some photographs

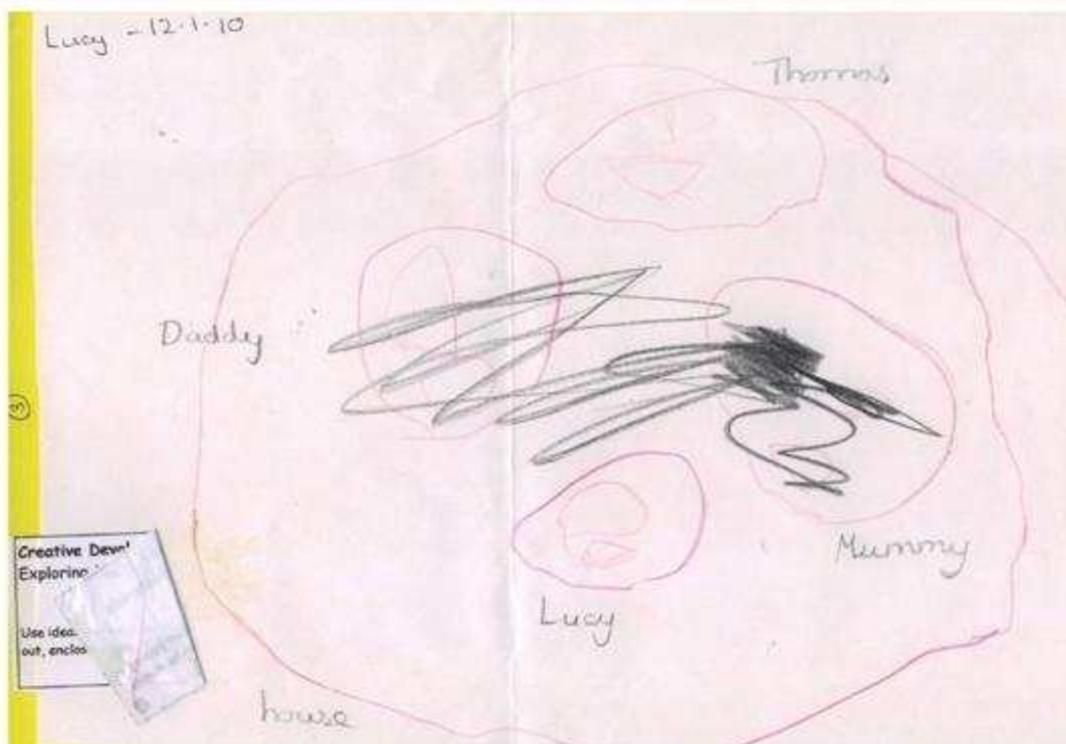


Lucy - 12.1.10 PHOTOGRAPHS

Pictures 1-3 - Lucy enjoyed sticking things together and telling me what to hold for her whilst she stuck eyes and ears on!

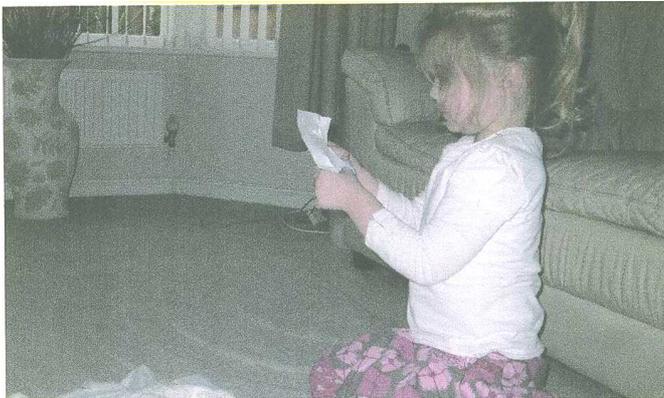


Pictures 4-6 - Lucy drew a picture with four circles on and said each one was Lucy, Thomas, Mummy and Daddy. She then drew a large circle around the four 'people' and said 'This is the house they live in'.



Pictures 7-8 - Lucy spent 10 minutes sharpening pencil crayons. I had to show her how to turn the pencils the correct way in the sharpener (as she is left handed). Lucy used words such as 'blunt' and 'sharp'.

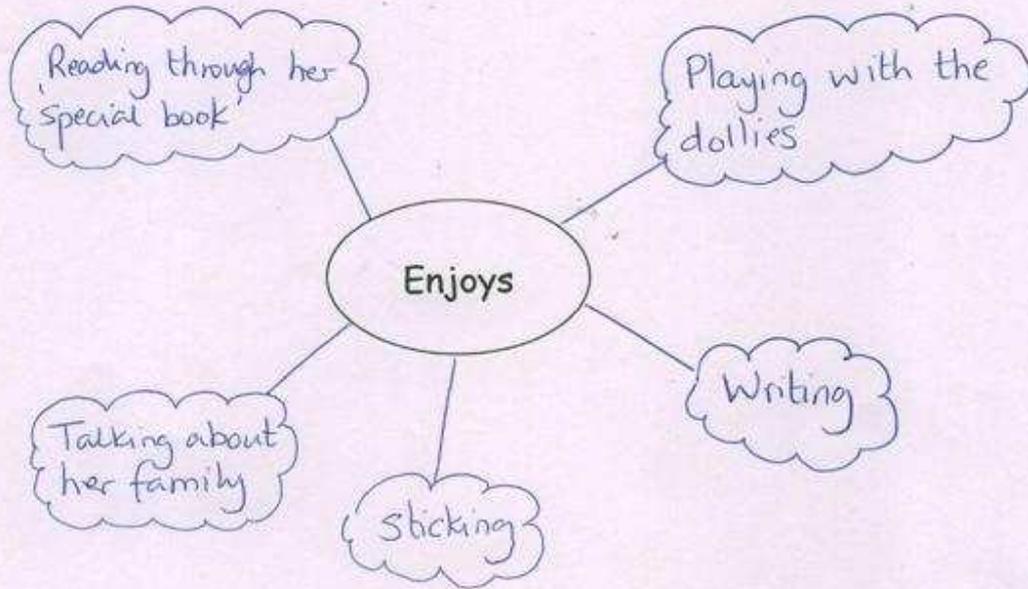
Picture 9 (approximately) - Lucy really enjoyed ripping and cutting paper into smaller and smaller pieces.



Last pictures - Lucy played being 'mummy' to her babies. I think my babies are crying because it's raining. Lucy said, as she put the rain cover on the pram. 'They are cold' she said. 'Ssh be quiet because my babies are sleeping' Lucy said.

Spring

Sharing... Lucy's... home... Learning Journey



Date of completion: 21.1.10

Key person: Brenda Foster

Key person comments:

Lucy enjoys lots of mark-making activities at home. She writes, cuts out and enjoys sticking and drawing. She also loves playing with dollies and talking about babies.

Next Steps at Nursery

- Set up baby bed / baby bath area
- Provide changing mat / nappies / towels / clothes
- Invite a mum and her baby to nursery for bathtime!

Parents Comments:

Lucy has continued to show a real interest in babies and looking after them. My friend Suzanne has recently had a baby girl and Lucy has met them both. Now Lucy says she is Suzanne and uses her dollies to pretend they are her babies. She pushes them in prams, feeds them, dresses them and really cares about them. The experience at nursery, and then at home, has helped her to develop an interest in babies and a real caring for living things.