

Making It REAL

Good Afternoon Everyone

I hope you are all enjoying the half term break...

I have recently attended quite an extensive training programme.

This has been run from the National Children's Bureau and is all about

'Raising Early Achievement in Literacy' (REAL)

The aim of this course was to enable us as practitioners to use the **REAL** approach in early literacy work with our families, and put into place some practical projects involving some home visits and literacy events.

Parents are a child's first and most enduring educators. Parents and families are the most important people in children's lives.

They have the greatest influence over them, particularly in their Early Years.

What you as parents do at home with their very young children has a major impact on social, emotional and intellectual development.

There has been a study where it was established that

WHAT PARENTS DO IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHO PARENTS ARE

All parents can enhance their child's progress if they engage regularly in activities that encourage positive social development and thinking (Stretching the child's minds)

The activities that are seen to have the most impact are **reading and sharing books, going to the library, going on visits, playing with letters and numbers, singing songs and rhymes, drawing and painting and playing with friends.**

Children with strong early home learning environments are ahead in both social and cognitive development at the age of three.

So...with this in mind... this is how the programme works..

I am asking for 4 families that are willing for myself and Michelle to come and visit your child in their home environment.

This will involve us bringing an activity to your home, and 'playing' with you and your child for around no longer than 30 minutes.

The aim of this will be to develop confidence in communication with parents about literacy, and build knowledge of what benefits there are for children in the home learning environment.

We want to share with you some ideas on how to support your child's literacy at home, and give you some knowledge that maybe you haven't thought about.

We will leave you with some books to read and some ideas for activities in the home.

Can I please make it clear...this is certainly NOT myself and Michelle coming into your home and telling you that you are not 'doing things right' with your child.

This is just an opportunity for us to share ideas, and to extend the rich home environment a little further.

So.. if you would like to participate in this project, can you please register your interest on your tapestry account.

We are looking at maybe beginning this after the Easter holidays at a time during the day that suits yourselves.

We do hope that we get plenty interest and that this project can make a positive impact on your child's literacy skills for their future.

I have added a few pages for you to have a read through about how you can support your child at home.

I hope you find this information useful.

This will also be mentioned at parents evening, if you would like to discuss this then before you decide to sign up, both myself and Michelle will be around to chat to.

Environmental Print in Early Literacy

Environmental print surrounds young children – in the home, at nursery, on the streets and in the wider community.

The research shows that children notice and draw meaning from familiar environmental symbols and signs and from print in context.

Print awareness develops long before the children go to primary school.

Environmental print can include:

AT HOME: words, letters, and logos on clothes and labels, on bed covers, household appliances, TV, packets of food, toy boxes, advertising leaflets, digital technology, newspapers...

IN THE COMMUNITY: street signs, bus stops, trains and tram advertisements, shop signs and labels, car registrations plates, signs on the roads, café menus, carrier bags...

Children use the context of colour, shape, size and pictures to support their recognition.

For Example: they may recognise the Weetabix packet but not the word WEETABIX when it is taken out of context.

Noticing print encourages and stimulates early writing attempts

Children like to imitate what they see, to copy signs and to put up notices.

For Example, they can be encouraged to make a name plate for a bedroom, write a message, or make a registration plate for a model car.

Parents can help children by making their use of environmental print explicit –

“I’m looking here to read when the next bus is coming”

Oral Language in Early Literacy

Speaking is the foundation for written language and three aspects of oral language are particularly important for early literacy development.

Phonological Awareness

Storytelling

Talk about Literacy

Phonological Awareness

Written language represents the sounds of words used in speech.

Using written language requires knowledge of the sound structure of oral language.

For young children, the most useful knowledge of sound structure is **onset and rime**.

The beginning of the word is the onset and the end sound is the rime.

Awareness of onset and rime supports early reading. One way to develop this awareness is through learning nursery rhymes.

Children's knowledge of nursery rhymes before primary school is a good predictor of later success in reading.

Storytelling

Listening to stories read and told aloud helps familiarise children with story language and structure.

Engaging in storytelling increases conversations with adults and extends children's thinking and vocabulary.

Experience and knowledge are expanded, imaginative worlds are opened and children are encouraged to invent stories of their own.

Talk about Literacy

Children learn new words at a rapid rate.

Children can be introduced to language if parents around them use their language in a meaningful way. Talking about literacy can occur in everyday activities – for example – when shopping, baking, reading, gardening or sending a message by text.

Supporting language Development

BY TWO YEARS

Toddlers are into everything and will be exploring the world around them much more actively.

Their understanding of words and phrases grows really quickly during this time.

They often understand much more than they can say.

This can result in frustration when they don't get their message across.

By two years toddlers will usually:

- ❖ Use 50 or more single words like *'juice', 'car', 'biscuit'*
- ❖ Be starting to put short sentences together with two to three words, such as *"more juice"* or *"bye bye daddy"*
- ❖ Be asking a simple question such as *"what that?"* *"Who that?"*. They might do this quite a lot...!!
- ❖ Understand between 200 and 500 words
- ❖ Understand simple questions and instructions like *"where's baby"*, *"go and get your coat"* *"mummy's turn"*
- ❖ Enjoy pretend play with their toys, such as feeding dolly or pretending to drive a car, usually making noises and talking whilst playing
- ❖ Become very frustrated when they cannot get their message across. This is one reason for a toddler tantrum!!

How To Check It Out....Toddlers Are Amazing !!

Check out how your child can talk:

Make sure you have time every day when you can have a conversation

You should notice your toddler using more single words, putting two or maybe three together

Comment on what they are doing and then talk about it. This works better than asking questions

EG. Adult: *"Ahh you've got a baby"*

Toddler *"Shhh, baby sleeping"*

Or wait and respond to what they say.

Check Out How Your Child Can Listen:

Toddlers do not always do what we want them to do, but on a good day, you can note toddlers understanding

Do they understand simple questions?

EG when putting their toys away do they follow *"find me the bricks"*

If you are looking at picture books, can they point out familiar objects when you say?

EG *"Where is the dog?"* or *"What's that boy doing?"*

Can they play a simple game?

EG Place some toys on the floor with a big box to throw them all into.

Check Out How Your Child Can Take Part:

Watch how toddlers play and how they react to others.

Toddlers enjoy adults' company and they might even let you join in with their games.

Do they enjoy simple pretend games?

EG with cars and trains, shopping and cooking

Do they also enjoy shape sorting games or simple jigsaws

Toddlers are not great at being directed by adults but you can set up different activities. Try to follow their lead.

If you are worried that a child is not doing these things then please talk to our toddler staff to voice your concerns. We can make a referral to speech and language therapy if needed.

Some Lovely Things To Do To Encourage Toddler Talk:

Share books together, interactive books with flaps and different textures are great – one or two toddlers sharing a book with you is ideal.

Wait for toddlers to initiate talking – don't feel you have to fill the silences.

Repeat and expand on what the child says.

If a child says "car" you can say "Mummy's car" "Blue car" This is showing the toddler how words can be put together.

Playing with children, taking their lead and building their language and thinking helps them to learn and grow – young children really benefit from this approach.

Finger rhymes and action songs help toddlers with the rhythms of language and makes talking and listening fun.

Bilingualism

Parents should use their home language with their children

A strong first language helps children learn English as an additional language.

Children understand words and ideas in their first language such as numbers, patterns, colours and textures. They understand the concepts and can learn words that mean the same things in another language more easily.

Parents can talk in more extended and elaborate ways in their first or home language.

Parents need to talk to children in a language they speak well. This helps children learn new words and acquire a larger vocabulary and gain ideas and information about the world.

Children with a rich first language think in more depth and find it easier to learn English as an additional language.

Children often mix words from two languages

Parents might worry that children are confused if they are using words from both languages mixed together.

This isn't confusing, it is making use of what is known to communicate most effectively.

Social and Emotional Development

Maintaining a first language is important for self-esteem, identity, relationships with the family and the community and a sense of belonging.

Young children should be encouraged to feel proud of their family language.

Every child should feel that their home language is visible and respected in nursery.

Writing in Early Literacy

Babies and young children who are given opportunities and encouragement to experiment with sensory and tactile materials become confident mark makers.

At first babies take delight in the pure physical activity and gradually realise they can control the marks they make.

When babies and young children are given the chance to explore everyday objects, food, spilt liquids, mud, water, sand and so on – it also supports the development of their co-ordination, motor control and concentration, and promotes a positive attitude towards, and enjoyment of mark making.

Adults often call the earliest attempt at mark making and drawing 'scribble'

However, young children are very interested in their marks and the movements that makes them.

This exploration and movement lead to an expectancy of seeing certain shapes, circular motions, and lines and crosses.

Books in Early Literacy

A range of good quality books provides children with a strong foundation for reading and learning.

Attractive, enticing books (fiction and reference) encourage children to touch, turn the pages, look at pictures and join in.

Some of the elements to look for in 'good' books:

- ❖ Compelling illustrations
- ❖ Poetic and memorable text
- ❖ Absorbing storylines
- ❖ Positive images
- ❖ Repetitive refrains and rhyme
- ❖ Content that provokes feelings
- ❖ Text and image that extend knowledge
- ❖ Mult layered messages

Appealing books are read over and over again. Books like these help children develop into readers who enjoy books and are highly motivated to learn and read.

Sharing and talking about books support vocabulary and language and development, deepens thinking and extends knowledge.

Sharing and reading books also helps children to:

- ❖ Become familiar with book and story language
- ❖ Know how books and story structure work
- ❖ Anticipate rhyme
- ❖ Memorise and predict text – join in and 'play' at reading
- ❖ Notice and develop interest in the features of print
- ❖ Recognise familiar whole words and letters.

