

## Listening to children and parents

This Curriculum Support complements Playnotes *Observation and Assessment* July 2008.

### Listening to children . . .



How do the children at your setting feel about their outdoor space? Which is their favourite area? Which piece of equipment do they like the most? Which activities are they really keen on? Listening to the children at your setting will provide unexpected insight into their capabilities, interests and priorities. At the same time, through being listened to, children begin to learn essential skills, such as listening to others, debating, negotiating and compromising. They also discover whether others consider their voice and opinions worthwhile. Here is an activity that can help encourage feedback from the children in your setting.

#### What you need

Three buckets or pots; happy, sad and neutral faces (as shown) to decorate buckets or pots with (you could use terracotta flower pots and chalk to make the faces); a collection of tokens such as buttons, counters or sticks.

#### Warm-up

This activity is a good warm-up to use before moving on to *Happy tokens* (right).

- 1 Prepare your question about your outdoor setting – ‘How much do you like . . . the pond/den building/the seating area etc . . . ?’
- 2 Take the children to the area/activity you are talking about.
- 3 Tell the children that when you ask your question you want them to respond with a cheer and/or clapping. The louder the noise the more positive the response. For negatives they could boo instead! You could also ask them to crouch low for a negative response or stand tall with their arms in the air for a positive response.
- 4 Ask one of the children to help you judge the level of noise for each question (‘loud’, ‘quiet’). If you are using the standing tall, crouching down method then you can count the numbers crouching, standing and reaching tall and/or take photos of each response.



#### Activity: Happy tokens

Each child has a chance to vote on whether they feel happy, sad or neutral about an area, activity or piece of equipment.

- 1 Prepare a question about your outdoor setting – ‘How much do you like . . . the pond/den building/the seating area etc . . . ?’
- 2 Give each child a token to vote with.
- 3 Decorate three buckets or pots with a happy, sad or neutral face.
- 4 Put the pots in the area you want the children to think about. You could do more than one area by setting up a number of pots.
- 5 Discuss the question with the children – explain what you are trying to find out.
- 6 Ask the children to vote by placing the token in the pot which matches their feelings.
- 7 Count the votes in each pot.
- 8 Present the results in the form of a graph.

### . . . and listening to parents

A child’s development doesn’t stop when they leave the setting. Children can develop new skills and abilities over the period of a weekend or during a holiday. Asking parents and carers to help keep you informed about their child’s development will help you stay in touch and use the information provided in your practice.

One way to do this is to give parents and carers a copy of this chart (see over) to help them provide detail on their child’s activities not just at home but also when out and about – on trips to the park, forest or beach, for example. Relevant information can be easily recorded in the form of a quick note and/or photographs too.

# What has your child done today?

We have been observing the children outdoors in our setting to help inform our planning so that it revolves around their interests and abilities. It will help us a lot if you can record the

activities your child has enjoyed at home or while out and about this weekend/holiday. We have suggested a few ideas you can try. Please feel free to add your own. Then ask your child to choose a happy, neutral or sad face so we can see what they did and didn't enjoy.



<p><b>We went to the park and my child . . .</b> (please record what your child did, ie played with a ball, played on the climbing frame etc)</p>			
<p><b>We went for a walk and my child . . .</b> (please record what your child did, ie collected pebbles/leaves/played hide and seek etc)</p>			
<p><b>We played in the garden and my child . . .</b> (please record what your child did, ie looked for minibeasts/helped plant flowers/enjoyed water play/went on a treasure hunt etc)</p>			
<p><b>We went swimming and my child . . .</b> (please record what your child did, ie paddled at the side/enjoyed splashing/floated with a buoyancy aid)</p>			
<p><b>We went to the beach and my child . . .</b> (please record what your child did, ie paddled/built sandcastles/ threw pebbles etc)</p>			
<p><b>We went to the forest and my child . . .</b> (please record what your child did, ie swung on a tree/stroked a pony/made a bark rubbing etc)</p>			
<p><b>We went to the . . . and my child . . .</b></p>			