

Sharing  
observations:  
Treasureboxes®

At **York Rise Nursery, London Borough of Camden**, treasure boxes have been used to share learning aims and observations with parents.

The nursery chose the theme of light to explore with the children. Practitioners developed four 'take home' boxes, which were plastic tool boxes from a hardware store, so that children could borrow a selection of equipment for use at home. Children, parents and key workers chose from a range of items already used in nursery, such as a light box, torches, coloured transparent paper and reflective materials.

Children in each key worker group took turns to take a box home and keep it for four days. A card was enclosed, with a list of ideas on how to use the equipment and possible questions to consider together.

Disposable cameras and pads of sticky notes were also provided in the boxes so that parents, if they wished, could record what children said and did with the equipment.

These photos and observations were brought into nursery to share with key workers. Parents had a variety of ways of communicating – some wrote observations, some took photos, while others preferred just to talk about what had happened.

Additional boxes have now been made for children to borrow – for the themes of sewing at home, and exploring animals and dinosaurs.

There are many benefits to be gained from this approach – for parent, child and practitioner. Children consolidate and extend their learning through repeating, at home, the actions and vocabulary they explored at nursery.

Children who usually have no 'product' to take home can feel proud of their boxes and develop confidence and self-esteem as they explain to parents what they know and can do.



It helps parents appreciate the advantage and value of hands-on play experiences – learning from real, first-hand activity, thinking and talking through the process with others.

Parents are encouraged to observe their children when they are interested and involved in an activity, to share what they notice with key workers, who can then include these observations and photographs in children's portfolios or records of achievement.

Sharing what we know about children helps build a real picture of a child's achievements. It's a task for parent and key worker to perform together.

This shared knowledge helps forward planning. Planning can be based on answers to: What has a child shown particular interest in? What would be a good activity, story, song or visit to follow up on his or her individual interests? Parents can also be supported in providing suitable activities at home to extend the learning.

This work can be extended if digital cameras are made available for parents to borrow and use at home to record observations, visits and special events.

The nursery also held a session for parents showing a video of their own children playing in the setting. This helped develop shared understandings. Parents learned how planning takes place and the importance of learning through play. Practitioners also gained confidence in their own ability to explain their methods to parents.



“ She liked mixing colours using the light box and cellophane. It was really exciting to see the changes so quickly. ”



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