

Story home visits

Teachers and nursery nurses at **Maples Children's Centre, London Borough of Ealing** have noticed the impact of home visits on relationships with both children and parents.

Children remember and talk about a home visit long after the event and parents seem more able to approach staff with questions and comments.

Additional home visits are now made with a story bag containing a picture book and 3D props. These visits are particularly useful in building relationships with families who may need a little more support to feel confident in accessing other services in the nursery.

A key worker walks with a child to their home, listening to the child talking about what they notice along the route and helping to take digital photos.

A child's chosen story is shared in the home with parents and sometimes siblings.

This is an opportunity to talk about the type of books to borrow from nursery and the most effective style of sharing. It's also a chance to hear what parents have to say; to learn what they are already doing at home and what books the child has already.

Parents who speak a language other than English at home are supported with dual-language texts and given encouragement to speak and read in a child's first language.



Digital photographs are taken of the journey and the home visit. Parents and children can take their own images. These are used to make a picture storybook of the event with captions which the child illustrates, adds writing to and takes home.

“I remember to stop and let her finish the words I think she knows now. I know you told me that when you came.”



Julia and her key worker walked to her home for a story home visit. She chose *Owl Babies* and a *Spot* story to take with her. Her family language is Polish and, although settled and happy to be at nursery, she was very quiet in school. The home visit was arranged at a time when both her father and mother could be there. They shared stories together, along with her younger sister.

Digital photographs were taken and made into a simple ring bound book. Her mother sat with her at home, recalling the pictures. She wrote captions in Polish which were then translated into English, creating their own dual-language book. Julia also put some of her own writing into the book. The visit had an immediate impact on Julia's confidence to talk in school.

The storybook and props are left at home for a week and the family are encouraged to continue borrowing more material from a well-stocked lending library, which is available every day.

As well as modelling book sharing and giving the chance to encourage parents to build this into a regular daily activity for children, the visit gives an opportunity to discuss many issues and for families to talk about their own concerns, in a calmer and more relaxed atmosphere.

Parents often enjoy sharing a little of their family history, home languages, photographs and food. Issues around housing, health and family learning needs also arise and support can be offered through connections with other services.

Parents can be encouraged and feel more confident about joining in other workshops, visits and events running in the nursery.

*See Home Visits.



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