Knowing Myself

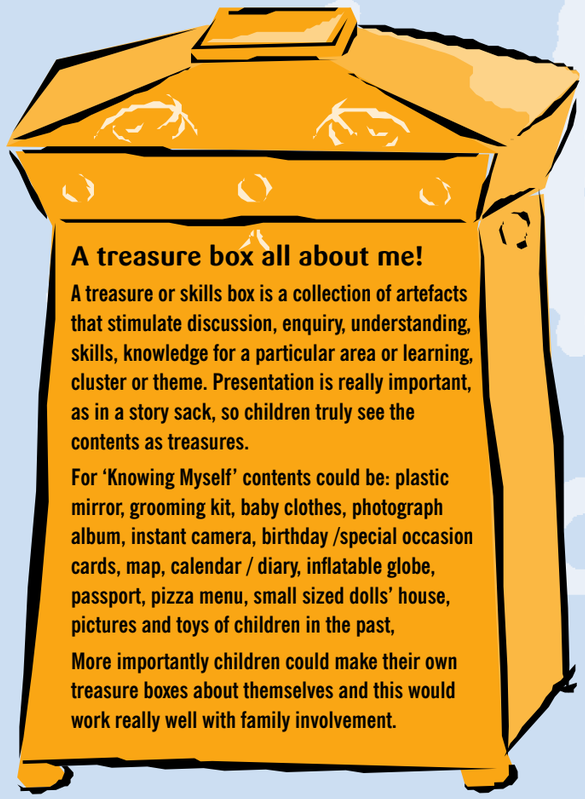
> *"Social competence seems to emerge from positive experiences in close relationships".*
>
> *(Jacqueline Harding)* 11

Trail Blazing

When we're outside we sometimes get a group of children and an adult to set a trail for the rest of us to follow. They use secret signals made with chalk, sticks, stones, flags, arrows or items for the rest to collect. Sometimes they make representations of the trail, either drawn or from materials found outside.

Text Alert

Sometimes we will send texts or emails with children to their parents, especially if they are in need of contact on a particular day. It stimulates all sorts of discussion about communication, where Mummy, Daddy or carer might be or what they're doing and how email or texting works. Obviously you have to warn parents first but it really builds self-esteem and links to what is happening elsewhere during the session.



A treasure box all about me!

A treasure or skills box is a collection of artefacts that stimulate discussion, enquiry, understanding, skills, knowledge for a particular area or learning, cluster or theme. Presentation is really important, as in a story sack, so children truly see the contents as treasures.

For 'Knowing Myself' contents could be: plastic mirror, grooming kit, baby clothes, photograph album, instant camera, birthday /special occasion cards, map, calendar / diary, inflatable globe, passport, pizza menu, small sized dolls' house, pictures and toys of children in the past,

More importantly children could make their own treasure boxes about themselves and this would work really well with family involvement.

Modelling our Setting

Due to some structural work we had to reorganise the setting. To make sure children were included we asked them their ideas about where things should go and how it would all work. We also got a long banana box and some packaging, fabric, wooden bricks, natural materials etc... and asked them to make a model of how the new space would look. They really worked well, making sure that the snack bar was near the toilets so hands could be washed easily and that there was a way to get outside. It really showed their understanding of their environment.

> *"What a child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself tomorrow".*
>
> *(Vygotsky)* 2

Playing at Play

We created a model of our setting in the outside area. Duplo was useful to set this up. Children played with the model discussing their own ideas for change with adult support and acting out their ideas and opinions through play. This was discussed further when we used their ideas in real life, but the small world play was great for formulating thoughts.

> *"People are the most important part of a child's education".*
>
> *(Jacqueline Harding)* 11

Leicestershire County Council

Role Play Ideas:

- Doctors'/Health centre/Hospital
- Opticians'
- Dentists'
- Baby Clinic
- Hairdressers'
- Toyshop
- Museum
- Travel agents'
- Clothes shop
- Different planet
- Sleep-over party
- When Mummy/Daddy was little
- When Grandma/Grandad was little
- Holiday destinations (tents, caravan, beach etc...)
- Different environments (jungle, beach, underground etc...)
- Trailer (Traveller Service, Beaumanor)

Resource links:

Anti-bias Handbook, Foundation Stage, Advice and Inspection, Leicestershire Education Authority. (Can be downloaded from website www.leics.gov.uk/lgfl)

Multicultural, RE & Curriculum Resource Centre, tel: 01509-621579 Email: BLofthouse@leics.gov.uk

Toy libraries: contact: Children's Information Service, tel: 0116 265 6545 Email: childcare@leics.gov.uk

Traveller Education service, tel: 01509 890543, Email: mhutchinson@leics.gov.uk

Leicestershire Museum service, tel: 0116 267 1377, Email museums@leics.gov.uk.

For information about *Early Years activities* at Leicestershire museums: Charnwood Museum, Donington-le-Heath, Harborough Museum, Melton Carnegie Museum, Snibston Discovery Park.

> *"All the learning goals can be achieved outside while the children's health and well being are also being boosted."*
>
> *(Marjorie Ouvry)* 8

Washing Day

We had a washing day and hung the clothes to dry outside. The clothing ranged from newborn to adult, we encouraged the children to hang the washing in chronological order. Not only did the clothing change through the ages, but the size (especially when wet) really impacted on the children.

Blindfold Trail

A great way to build trust is to work in pairs. One is blindfolded and the other leads them around a trail. We love doing this outside although inside is interesting as they talk about quite different things and navigate the space in a new way.

Day Time

New children starting with us often spend a long time asking "When is Mummy coming?" We wanted to help them understand the structure of the session. We took photographs of different times of the day and of different activities. We made a frieze that was long enough to set up photographs in the sequence of the day. Everyday we set up the photo chart so children know what is happening. As part of the session finishes, cards are removed. This is really good for developing a sense of time, place, and language for thinking but also for building self-confidence..

Family Trees

Our children collected twigs and branches on one of our regular walks. We then lashed and stuck some together and found a way to anchor them in a base to make a family tree. Children brought in photos or drew pictures to represent family members. We have also done this activity as a class where children have hung significant objects on the tree as well as photos/pictures e.g. baby socks, Grandad's scarf, Mums old handbag etc...

Sketching

Drawing outside is a valuable way to help children observe their surroundings. We got groups to make sketches just using soft pencils of adjoining views. It was really powerful when we put them together as a huge jigsaw, giving us plenty of opportunity to observe not only how children could work together but also their knowledge of and vocabulary for their environment.

Pyjama Party

To help children understand order, sequence, day, night and time passing we had a pyjama party. Children came in their pyjamas (as did we) and then we ran the whole session in reverse! Having a photo-chart of the day was really helpful for some of the little ones. They did get the idea of appropriate order, sequence and cause and effect of events. We're now planning a back-to-front day!

Taste Tally

We wanted our children to be able to understand the opinions of others and respect their choices. Whenever we do a taste test, or take any sort of poll, like favourite character in a story etc..., we always ask children to sign up their preference. This gives us a wealth of information to discuss. Not only the numbers involved but why we have preferences and how this can be managed; e.g. a group painting of a favourite character. However a democratic approach still means disappointment for some!

Birthday Blues

We read *'The Birthday Party'* (by Helen Oxenbury) in a small group. On clip boards, children had to draw the expression of characters. Afterwards we discussed the drawings they'd made and their reasons for chosing that expression as the story progressed.

> *"A lengthy childhood keeps thinking flexible, and helps intelligence to grow"*
>
> *(Tina Bruce)* 1

Happy Holidays

Understanding a child's perception of their world can be difficult. Giving choices of malleables; sand, stones, pasta, soil, flour, water and small world equipment, we asked them to create their perfect holiday. Lots of opportunity for talk about their experiences of other places was a real insight into how they perceive holidays.

Window for Change

We keep a camera next to a window which the children can look out of. At times we have printed their photographs and put them next to the window and the children spend ages comparing the changing view and 'spotting the difference' between seasons.