**March 2014**

In February we requested a visit from North Somerset Early Years Local Leader of Education for input on enhancing our provision for 2 year olds. The visit took place in March. Following on from recent training, we have been working on ways to incorporate the following

Recommendation: *‘The 2 yr olds should be separated from the older children at times throughout the session to allow them to become fully absorbed in an activity without the distraction of an older child’s different ways of playing. At 2, a child is beginning to organise categorise and arrange things in order and may like to spend a lot of time on this type of activity. They must be allowed uninterrupted time and space away from older children and without an adult disturbing their concentration’.*

Offering separate space and time to the younger children, and those of similar developmental levels has proved a challenge especially in wet weather due to the one room building layout. Options we have tried have included using transportable screens to create a separate area, but this has not removed distractions or lowered noise levels, and is therefore proving less than successful. In good weather having a group outside has worked well.

Suggestions made by our visitor from North Somerset are:

* A curtain across the room along one or both beams, which is higher and would remove visual distraction and reduce noise, or having group time at different times, i.e. whilst other children are having free play.

*Evaluation:* *We are trying to price this curtain material but it may mean applying for a grant to pay for it. In the meantime we will continue splitting the groups as we are.*

* Moving the outdoor temporary shelter nearer the building and adding removable sides to create an outdoor-indoor room. ( A permanent structure/extension to create a separate room would be costly but could perhaps be considered in the longer term)
* The additional staff member has been working as a buddy keyworker with the 2 year olds during small group time in the mornings, 4 mornings a week. This is working well, and we discussed considering if this could be extended to 5 mornings. The buddy key worker is provided with information about the children by their primary keyworker so that she is aware of where each child is developmentally and their next steps.

*Evaluation : Sessions have increased to 5 mornings now and this is proving very successful as the children are working in small groups in their stage of development.*

* The tuff spot outside – used for mixing wet/dry activities, is quite high for younger children, although sometimes placed on the floor. This may be better on an adjustable stand.

*Evaluation: This has been passed on to the Committee to see if we have funds available.*

* We are eager to have running water play, and we discussed how this could work. We would need a water pump for this and need to look at costs. *As above.*
* Children who need to sleep during the session have a mattress on the floor in the book corner. Children are directed away from this area which is not ideal. We do not use screens as they are a hazard if they are knocked. It was suggested that we use a voile drape that would be a visual indicator to other children, and create a sleeping space inside but would need to be suspended from the ceiling.

*Evaluation:* *We have purchased this drape; however the ceiling is so high we are trying to come up with a way to hang it that allows us to remove it easily when not in use.*

* We have plans to provide a more challenging outdoor environment. We will be provided with examples of outdoor environment that may help including mud kitchens.

*Evaluation:* *Thanks to a lot of wonderful donations from parents, we now have the mud kitchen in place. The children are using this daily and thoroughly enjoying it. They are very focussed on creating muddy milkshakes, pies and cakes. They love adding water and twigs. We plan to include a sink and need gravel and pebbles also. We are also planning celebrating International Mud Day in June with a mud pie competition!*

We have also been planning on creating a sensory herb garden. We have wind chimes in the garden but need some more visual sensory resources.

*Evaluation: We now have painted tyres with some herbs planted. Other visuals are on the action plan and resources need purchasing or donating.*

We wanted to limit the amount of waiting time the children have on the carpet. This can be quite drawn out in the winter when children come in from outside with wellies on etc. Some children could be waiting for the last children to join them for quite a long time. It is during this time that the children are unoccupied and likely to behave in ways we do not want. In order to shorten this waiting time we will now be:

* Bringing the children in from outside 10 minutes before we ring the bell for tidy up time.
* Once everyone is in and settled, the bell will ring to alert the children that it’s time to sit on the carpet. The adult planning the session, will talk to the children about what they have been doing etc while the other adults prepare the toy boxes for tidying.
* The adult will ask for volunteers to tidy certain activities, which we normally do. While the children are tidying they are supported by staff. The other staff member will remain in the carpet area to praise the children as they return to the carpet and engage them in songs and rhymes as they wait for the others.
* We will alter tidy up time now and then to make it more challenging and interesting. For example by providing the children with paper carry bags/ baskets/ buckets, to fill with toys and take to their containers.

*Evaluation: This is all working well. Waiting time is reduced considerably. The children enjoy joining in songs once they have finished and are waiting for the others, which is acting as an incentive for them to complete their task. We are in the process of collecting bags and carriers and are asking for parents to help with this.*

The outings and visits procedure was reviewed and agreed that a number of children require a safety harness if we aware to take them on a walk. We will add this question to parents during the induction. When a risk assessment is carried out for the trip/visit, children’s records need to be checked to see who needs a harness. *The induction pack has been updated to include this.*

We were visited by the Food Standards Agency who inspected the kitchen and procedure for preparing food and carrying out checks. They have given us a rating of 2 which means we have improvements to make. The improvements required are:

* Record details of what we do to make sure that food produced is safe to eat. We therefore must complete the ‘Safer Food, Better Business ‘in order to comply with this.

*Evaluation:* *‘Safer Food, Better Business’ has been completed. We will not be storing or re-heating cooked rice brought in for children’s lunches. Parents have been informed of this.*

* Have documented procedures and monitoring records for the purpose of reheating food. We need to use a probe thermometer for this and replace the microwave. We will be visited again in 3 months to ensure these requirements have been fulfilled.

*Evaluation:* *We have purchased a probe which is used to ensure food is heated to the recommended temperature. This is recorded. The microwave has been replaced.*

Medication: We now have an alarm which we will set when medication is due to be administered. Medication is now kept in the black cabinet in the main room or in the fridge.

Policy Reviews: Behaviour Policy – The name of the policy will be changed to ‘Achieving Positive Behaviour’. Kathy has recently attended training in behaviour management and provided us with feedback to include:

* ‘Superhero Play’; a number of children really enjoy this. They can however become overexcited which can lead to children getting hurt. It was suggested that during this play, adults become involved in their game, become one of the characters and this will provide opportunities to direct/suggest when the children need to be aware of others passing near for example, or other risks they need to be aware of. The children will respond better as it is suggested in a positive way during the game rather than being told to be careful by onlookers.

*Evaluation:* *This has worked really well and gives adults a real insight into how their play is organised, which is sometimes very complicated and well thought out.*

* Other information was based around tidy up time – see above.

**Training:** Health & Safety Manual Handling: attended by Daniela as part of her role of Health & Safety Practitioner.

Inclusion Cluster Meeting: attended by Daniela. Information and paperwork was given out regarding the Link Programme. The Link Programme provides funding to enable a child who needs additional support to attend addition visits to school, accompanied by their key person. This continues into the first term of school.

Domestic Abuse: The Impact on Children and the Role of the Early Years Setting: Attended by Lisa, Lead Safeguarding Practitioner & Vikki, Safeguarding Officer.

New INCCO Training (to support inclusion) attended by Kathy, Helen and Daniela. Kathy and Helen attended this training to learn more about completing individual play plans for children as this is part of their role as key workers. Daniela is a new INCCO (inclusion co-ordinator).

Child Protection Basic Awareness: Attended by Nisha as part of her induction and training as a new staff member.