**November 2013**

Zoolab Visit: Most of the children really enjoyed the visit from Zoolab and loved being able to touch them at look at them closely. However all staff agreed that the presenter was not as entertaining as last time, and that he had pitched it at a level slightly too high for the children which resulted in a number of them losing interest. Last time Zoolab visited, the children were so involved and really enjoyed it and therefore we will be booking them again in the Spring when we can focus on the life cycles of the creatures, but we will request a more interactive visit.

Supporting Emotions: We now have a Persona Doll in the setting. She is a life sized doll dressed for school and will be used to support the children in situations they are trying to deal with. Persona dolls are treated as members of the setting and have to be introduced to the children as a visitor, with a name and a background. The doll joins the children for circle time and staff are able to talk about her issues with the children. This then helps the children talk about their experiences and to think about, name and recognise feelings and emotions. The doll may have difficulty getting used to a new baby in the family for example, or may have a new house and miss her old house. She may have been bitten by another child or feel sad for any reason. Persona dolls are an effective method of helping to address and resolve emotional conflicts with children.

*Evaluation: Our persona doll is called Isadora. She is a traveller child with a large family. She has a plaster on her finger at the moment because another child bit her. The children have enjoyed getting to know her. They have made comments about how much they like her hair and her shoes. Isadora will visit us whenever a child needs her.*

Induction Review: New parents have been given a questionnaire to provide us with feedback so that we can improve the induction process. A question has been added to it asking parents if they would have preferred a home visit as part of the process.

*Only 4 questionnaires have been returned. One area that was highlighted was reviewing children’s settling in progress and sharing this with parents. As part of our induction pack we do have a section which must be completed after 4 weeks and signed by parents. The new learning diaries also have a settling in page which is completed by the key worker who adds comments on how well the child has settled for up to 6 weeks. There was no helpful feedback from parents about whether or not they would have preferred a home visit – all parents ticked ‘don’t know’ for this. Perhaps a more purposeful questionnaire would be better which would provide parents with information regarding the benefits to home visiting.*

Home Visits: We were provided with some useful information from Sunbeams Nursery who already carry out home visits. At Sunbeams, the Leader and the key worker carry out the visits. The Leader is responsible for completing the paperwork with the parents. In the relaxed home environment they are able to get a truer picture of what the children can do than they would in the unfamiliar environment of the setting.

*Evaluation: We agreed that if we were to start offering home visits the key person and the back up key person would be the most appropriate people to attend. This would help parents understand their roles more clearly and enable the backup person to get to know the child as much as the key person. We also agreed that visits would be offered during our normal working hours and therefore cover would be needed at the setting. We also discussed that parents would need a second induction in order to be shown around, meet other staff/committee etc. Therefore the only paperwork to be completed on the visit would be concerning the child’s interests and establishing starting points. We are awaiting further information from North Somerset regarding this.*

Group time review: A further review has been necessary as although splitting the large group into two groups in terms of age/stage, it is not working so well when one group is taken to the end of the room as there is not enough space for them to move around. The younger children need to move around and to be able to dip in and out of the adult led activity. Therefore unless it is raining heavily they should go outside. The same planned activities can take place outside for example showing and sharing what they have brought in from home, singing songs with actions, using the ball run, taking part in a story with puppets or listening to music etc. But they will have the space to be actively involved instead of having to sit still. They will be able to leave the activity and come back to it if they wish.

*Evaluation: It is sometimes difficult to get the timing right for finishing the split activities. Therefore the orange 10 minute timers will be used for both groups so that there is no problem with waiting for the other group to finish. The two groups are then brought back together.*

Washing: At the moment staff take the washing home on a rota basis. We have space for a washing machine which could replace the broken unused dishwasher. There is always a great deal of washing which includes kitchen cloths, aprons and role play costumes. The Committee have been asked if we can have a washing machine and we have also provided them with a list of resources we need for the children which include : Role play equipment, hoops, individual chalk boards and erasers, aprons for water play and painting.

North Somerset ‘Support Review Form’ Self Assessment – completed. This is a tool used for the team to assess the quality of provision provided. It is sent to North Somerset for them to establish the level of support they need to provide; this helps them determine the types of training they will be providing.

Training: Early Years Foundation Stage Inclusion Cluster Meeting; this is a meeting to discuss the Link Programme which is a funded programme enabling staff to apply for a child to have extra support during the transition to school if the child’s needs meet the criteria.

Supporting 2 year olds and Schemas- Kathy, Pat and Kirsty have attended part one of this 2 part course. There is a lot of feedback which will be given at a meeting specifically for this area.