ToWe project

Focus group

14th November 2016

**H:** *Just to get started would you kindly share with us what topics and intellectual outputs have you worked with to date? To give us a kind of summary and how you have provided, organised and implemented those topics before we move on.*

K: So at BCC we have done the environment audit, we did it at LS, our sites at LS and we did it at our site at MLH. So that was over the summer holidays. Since then there have been a lot of changes. We have our new site which is, we’re calling 67B. We need to do it there and I would link to do it at LS again because since then the whole of the outside area has been redone.

**H:** *Oh fabulous!*

K: Yes, which is really nice and it will make a big difference to some of the answers on that.

**H**: *Yes*

K: So I don’t think it was a waste of time cause we did make changes from what we found, but yeh I want to do it again and see what else it can help us with.

**H:** Did it have an impact when you did the LS outside area and then you’ve made changes, did that have an impact, thinking through what you’d read?

K: We, well I wasn’t particularly in control of what happened to the outside, to be fair but what now goes outside it will definitely impacted on that.

**H:** *Thank you. Sorry, my nose!*

K: That’s ok, and then we have also done meal times. We really enjoyed that. Again the same with J it will be different to Barcelona and Norway because in the Children’s Centres it is Snack Café, it’s not a sit down full meal time but there were definitely things that we implemented from that. Shall I talk about what that was?

**H:** *Yes, just go with that.*

K: Very quickly, so it was the furniture, that we used, I think I mentioned last time that we got the different sized chairs. And then we got new plates, and cups and cutlery which the children are really enjoying it and nothing has been broken.

Laughter

Oh that’s fantastic!

Absolutely

A: Did you get china?

K: We got melamine

**H:** *Very nice!*

K: Yeh!

**Y:** *Have parents commented on any of the changes?*

K: Yes, they have they really liked, they were surprised, at first and quite cautious, as you can imagine, but once we did it explain what we were doing, and why we were doing it and then they can see first-hand, those changes and the benefits of them and the fact that their children have absolutely the ability to do it. It’s good. I do spend a lot of my time, so we’ve got the knives that have got the serrated edge but the ones that definitely won’t cut them, they’re magical.

**H:** *Oh wow!*

K: So I spend a lot of my time with the knife kind of showing the parents on my skin, look it won’t cut them! I was saying the other day wasn’t I.

Laughter

A: Once you’d got the knives.

K: I’m going to cut myself, but no I hope not, it’s going very well. And currently we have just started out on the children’s voice.

Laughter

**Y:** *Let’s hope not!*

**H:** *That’s fantastic*

J: A very similar situation to K and T. So we’ve done or I’ve done the wellbeing audit but not the whole environment one yet. I’ve also done the meal time audit that was the first one we did. There were things on the meal time audit that we picked out as needing to be developed, but we’ve had, just, there haven’t been a manger for a while, so we haven’t had a team meeting where we can discuss what we need to actually buy in and for what money in the budget because there is going to be a restructure, there are things on the meal time audit that will have to be revisited, like you said. Having said that I think that our snack cafe was set up really well in the first place, cause we set up with the Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT), so although we do use plastic, which isn’t brilliant, but at least it means the children can be independent and like we spoke about before the meal time snack café has really been a plus to the children’s centre, the parents and children are really enjoying it.

J: We did focus on the furniture or at least consider changing, cause we only had one size table and chair so we have a chat, discussion with parents to find out if it was necessary, because we would have had to buy, we couldn’t find anybody who could loan or give us smaller sized table and chairs. So we discussed having discussed it with the parents that really it wasn’t necessary because it is only a snack café they are only siting there for a small length of time. If we did have different sized tables and chairs you don’t know if the right sized child is going to be sitting on the right sized table and chair and then it would mean also they would be at split level, where we have two table joined together. It kind of present’s different problems where you’ve got a ledge, in effect. So there are things on the meal time audit that we need to come back to.

J: Also in regards to the wellbeing audit in the setting, I’m really pleased to say like I was saying before I work with a really good team of crèche worker, so I can say hand on heart that in terms of children’s wellbeing their practice is really good and you know we all have high practice, which I can see in the activities because like with voices and expression as well about the role of the practitioner to, to, to like setting up the environment to enable the children to be able to access activities and the learning from the activities independently and without any hardship to them and then the direct …?… of the children and I can honestly say the team I work with like we were saying, I don’t know it would appear that it is innate in some people, so my job would be a lot different if I was working with a different team of people or there was at least one person that needed to be coached in this. The, with children’s voice and expressions and children’s overall wellbeing, so like yes, where thing on the audit we identified needed to be improved or could be improved, so for instance one of the things I, I did it was a focus on wellbeing for when I do a newsletter with the parents ,I thought, having read the wellbeing audit, it definitely kind of focuses attention especially families where English isn’t a first language or parents from abroad, where we can actually focus on, how we involve them more in the setting and how the setting reflects them better. So by getting them to bring in resources or sharing resources or even just giving us a wee bit more information or education on the type of activities or celebrations; that they would like us to celebrate rather than us picking off the calendar what we think we are going to celebrate.

J: So I thought about it in terms of how I structure a newsletter, which I do do but not regularly, I thought that really gave me some really good statements I could pick out and put onto the newsletter just to make parents, just to let parent know I do what their contributions and I do value what they have to say.

J: We also use the ITERS audit which really nicely complemented the wellbeing audit because there were things on there that, so they did complemented that way. What else..?

**H:** *That’s fine cause we’ll go over everything, yes I think what we will do is we’ll, we have more questions so, yeh I’m sure you’ll get the opportunity if you’re wondering, thinking oh what am I going to think of next, if that’s ok. Thank you.*

A: Can I say for Ha at N

**H*:*** *Yes, that’s ok.*

A: The thing management changes at N as there is interim management there at the moment. So Ha has not really focused on anything besides really embedding the mealtime which is what she was doing before. She herself, I feel, is confident with the materials. What did she tell me? In terms of looking at the other intellectual outputs there hasn’t been that focus that we talked about, so where new children have been starting into the setting they have been looking at the wellbeing audit, as part of the settling-in information, so having more of that, not going through all the questions in the audit which I think we need to picking out ones that we think are suitable and are not intrusive, but trying to let parents know when children do arrive, new to the setting, that their wellbeing, the child’s wellbeing is really important and just drawing attention to that initially. So the main focus for her, in that setting, is to make sure that mealtimes, the areas for development that they mentioned last time. Which was really to focus on things like the background noise because the children were already quite self-sufficient in terms of serving and the conversation, interaction between practitioners was quite good, I think, but the background noise because the children ate in the room and perhaps if you weren’t supporting lunch but you were going backwards and forwards, the focus around that was a particular element for them. So she had tried to keep that going, I think, and make sure that the other people in the team, that have been new, some have been bought over from another setting, are really, you know, aware of why they are focusing on children serving themselves and that kind of thing. …. But that has been all for her…?

**H:** *Thank you for that, cause that was to just summarise, cause of what we are going to do is go into a lot more depth now and I think that just to have that summary of what you have done is really, really important. It sounds really fantastic. Thank you. So if we look at question 2, which is the knowledge and experience so far, so shall we start with you, J, is that ok would you be happy to share? I don’t think I’ll read out the questions as you have got them*.

J: Errhum

**H:** *If you would be happy to talk to them that would be really lovely, thank you*.

J: So the previous work so in terms of the other intellectual outputs?

**H:** Yes, *the ones you have summarised*.

J: I think what I’ve really enjoyed is that it kind of reaffirms what I know and I could share it with other people and I could share it with the practitioners and I could share it with the parents. It also instilled that confidence that we are on the right track and what we are doing is really good and is up there with the best practice. So I am delighted about that, that you know if anyone does come in and maybe they can see that we are not doing something it could be better but at least I know yes things can be improved but I think there is a whole lot that we are doing that really good and I feel quite proud of that.

**H:** *Oh well done!*

J: So I do in terms of what is written in these documents, I can read through and I can see us and I can see our practice in there, and what the children’s centre stands for.

**H:** *Oh lovely!*

J: How’s your previous…. So again it is sharing with the team that I have got, so I have a really good team of crèche workers. I think we are seeing more of them now as we haven’t had a manager and we really need that back up and also they are really committed to H and I think they are really on-board as well as of what we do and the whole ethos not just at H but the whole ethos of children’s centres. So the previous work that I have done I have been able to share with them. So I’ve given N for instance who, she participates in the ‘Little Explorers’ session with me. I have given N a copy of the audit so that she can go home and have a look at it though I’ve scribbled all over it, just to ask for her input and this is where I can see us but if there is anything you would disagree with or anything you want to add she has got a copy of it.

J: In terms of critical incidents and turning points affecting knowledge and practice it’s not necessarily affecting the knowledge but more the practice in terms of us being, even just to say short staffed isn’t the right word, I think it is more like multi-tasking, we are everything to everybody in children’s centres. So it is not just that you can focus, I mean for instance when I do my ‘Little Explorers’ session on a Tuesday morning, I’m then straight away to a different session altogether on the Tuesday afternoon and then on a Wednesday morning I’m doing something completely different and Wednesday afternoon something completely different again, so it’s not like you have time to reflect on what you have just done with ‘Little Explorers’ until hopefully the Thursday. You know so I would say, yes, you know being short staffed is definitely, you know, critical in terms of how we are at the minute with the children’s centre but I think it would be lovely if you could have time for reflection after your session or at least shortly after the session because and also the time with the session person who has run the session with me because N also has to leave cause she has another session then to do in the afternoon so very quickly after the session, what went well what didn’t go so well any critical incidents within the session that she has noticed and wants to bring to my attention and I’m going to bring to her attention, and it is very quick like that, and we have great ideas about what we can do, children’s interests and needs and where we can take it, but it’s like having the time to actually follow through with that so we hold a lot on our head and a lot of it is when we come in and right we’ll get this out when we are setting up.

**Y:** *Do you right observations, I know you have shown us photo graphs today, which are excellent which are reflecting on what the children doing and learning? Do you have time then to make observations?*

J: Our observations are very quick. It has to be very quick.

**Y:** *Which methods work best for you?*

J: It’s more post-it notes or just you know or just for….

**Y:** *You do capture them?*

J: Yeh, we do capture them. So sometimes we might just capture the sentence, but I know the context so I write the context in afterwards. I write down hopefully what they said and the context afterwards or I might just write the art table or the sand tray.

Y: Just as a reminder.

J: Yes

A: Your learning journeys are very detailed aren’t they? Your assessment systems are very thorough. Can I just chip in there as the challenges as I was just saying before you arrived K that I think that sharing knowledge with people who are not of your team, day to day, is for me I think the challenge of centres as opposed to day nursery, but the fact – to go back to that strength of this – the fact you can say J that you have N and the other crèche workers on-board, it shows that even if you are just there setting up together and tidying away together and modelling and discussing children throughout the session although you can’t sit and then be together in the staffroom doing the setting, you still manage to convey the focus to them. I think that has come across, ‘cause I go around all the centres and I know that crèche workers are individuals and are shared and borrowed everywhere they can be very good practitioners but not necessarily buying to the focus; I think you have to quantify behind… I can pick up that you are working on the same shared focus of wellbeing and that N or R alongside you has got that.

J: I totally agree, ‘cause that is would be a totally different ‘kettle of fish’ if it was different, or even one different practitioner who did not get it, who did not buy into this or who just not recognise when they are overstepping a line that this is going to have an effect on either the child’s wellbeing or the parent’s wellbeing; I think I am so fortunate that the team I am with they have got that.

A: And We’ve got now as a focus, between now and Christmas what we really want to do is to try somehow to get the people that are not on site all the time together to have like team meetings so that they can actually say “on this day we did share that” so I know J is giving N’s things, but we need to say “we have all come together, all reflected on it” and even pinch someone’s idea will be umbrellas, ‘cause that’s a really nice idea, but have something visual for everyone to look at and then reflect on all the practice they have just been doing and appointing time in a meeting, ‘cause that is what’s been hard to capture.

J: I do get really good feedback as well from the crèche workers ‘cause they do come back and say “oh they don’t do that in X, they don’t do that in X” and this is the only phrase that you, and that is lovely and they want to make changes as well where they go.

*H: Oh, fantastic. So it’s already disseminating to other settings and we haven’t even got that far in the project, so that’s fantastic!*

J: And as well, like I said, they are just taking it on board, because I think that they know themselves, ‘cause they are good practitioners, they know what is the right way to go.

*Y: have they had a chance to look at any of the materials?*

J: Oh, N has and then I was trying to copy this today for… who it was… J, but than we had some problems with the photocopier; but yes, I am gonna give them all this because like I said they are lovely piece of writing.

*All nods*

J: Oh I can print it off, I was just trying to put it through the photocopier like that and the photocopier didn’t like it because of the leaflet.

*Y: So they are getting written information as well as your valuable knowledge sharing*

J: Yes. They haven’t got as much as I would like because we only did the wellbeing audit at the beginning of the summer or through the summer, so N got a copy of that and so did the manager and then N and I had hardly a chance to link up because she was needed in another children centre, but having read the “Voices” and this one “Children voice and expression” I can definitely see how that can be of a great benefit to the other practitioners.

*[She reads the question: Has the previous work had an extended impact on your setting beyond the group involved in the project?]* Definitely, ‘cause I would say it has an impact on all the stay and play and even the other sessions that we run such as the positive start parenting, because it is all wellbeing, parent wellbeing, child wellbeing and it is great that we were kind of able to link it to this and renew the emphasis on wellbeing; and again it is just recognising through the research that this is not something that is just individual to this project that we are working on. It is a big concern all over the world as well on wellbeing and on how it is impacting on families and on children and throughout their life and this comes back to wellbeing, particularly in the early years and…

… *[She read other question]* Again, I would definitely say the work so far has affected my understanding of disadvantaged toddlers and I would say that this kinda renewed my focus as well on researching not just wellbeing but resilience of toddlers, especially the disadvantaged ones, like how do they go on throughout their lives and I think there is a lot of work going on at the minute in this country and abroad – America in particular.

*All nods*

J: So, yeah; definitely I can see why we are doing this, why it is needed and the benefit to be had if we get this right, especially in children centres and nurseries.

*H: Fantastic, that is great to hear. Well done! Thank you very much.*

J: you are welcome

*H. It is so great to hear how it has had an impact on you. You are working with it and you are seeing changes. The fact that your crèche workers… it has made a difference and they are taking it with them, that’s what this is about, isn’t it? Raising awareness and…*

*Y: And the answers of some other questions, why do you do think why is it important, how is wellbeing now fitting in this kind of agenda, of children and their play and learning. It is great that you have really embraced the materials actually and you are sharing it. It sounds like you are sharing it really naturally.*

J: I share it as we work, as we are doing the washing up, you know.

*All laughs*

J: The washing up. It is just like that, to coin the phrase ‘on the hoof’. We do not really get time to sit down and discuss it, but… N was here last week so that was the first time we got to catch up – actually it’s two weeks we had together since September – and she had lingered behind afterward to sit aside and wanted to know where I am with things, so bless her, she was trying to get to her next setting and have a bit of time to spare when she gets there; instead she is hanging on just to find out from me, you know.

*Y: I think when you organise the meeting that will make them come together even better, you have more chances to discuss and reflect what has worked, what you can continue to…*

A: We are talking about getting the parental impact at home of snack-time before December, something else we want to do. Again N could be a key person to be getting that from individuals, so I think she should feel more involved, directly involved in doing something. She would say “Since we have done this snack-cafe they are allowing more independence”. She is involved. This has evolved, which it is how it should be, to me it is not an add-on part of practice; it is integral to everything, gradually doing more and more and giving the staff the occasion to do more and more.

*Y: It is great you got the opportunity to make change in your setting. We know that every setting and their practice vary, but sometime there is resistance. You got that time to do it…*

J: And also like a big part of that, the people I work with they get it, and R. my previous manager she got it, T the manager before her she got it as well, so this just makes it…

*All: inaudible*

*H: Thank you! K?*

K: It’s a hard act to follow!

*H: I am sure you are doing wonderfully*

K: At *[place, deleted]* it is slightly different, both T and I have been here and it is just the two of us who are running the sessions so when we are thinking about sharing the practice, the main people who we have shared it with are our volunteers. We have 3 key volunteers who work with us throughout the week, 4 technically: 2 of them in our “Stay and play”, 1 of them is in our “Baby stay and play” – that is slightly different – and then one of them is in our “Dad’s, messy play”, so that is just once a month but that is again with the toddlers; and I think quite similarly it is not an add-on, it is just something that we discuss quite naturally, we are fortunate in that not all the time but on Wednesday specifically we make sure we all sit down together and doing evaluation of the week sessions. At those meetings we also have our speech and language therapist, so we have got a plan for next week to sit down with everybody together and focus on it, because yes, we are talking about it naturally, but I feel we need to name it and label it a little bit just so that we can refocus. Going back to the question “Have there been any critical incidents or turning points affecting your knowledge of practice?”, I do not think it has been a critical point but I think it has given us time and focus ‘cause we thought “Right, we talked about wellbeing”, but with this ToWe project it like “We are doing it for this reason” and really focus on it, whereas before it could have been a passing comment “oh we really should do that” , whereas now it’s “let’s go ahead and do it, this is the purpose and this is what we can share”, so that’s quite nice.

*H: So it has given you that opportunity that you wouldn’t have used previously*

A: Exactly

A: And your manager has given you time, you have dedicated time; and I think the two of them are coming together… is that happening?

K: We have got a member of staff off at the moment and – we have found out recently – until at least Christmas; so yes, in theory we do have that time, although this week has already been taken away. So it is just gonna be one of those things, when we can all sit down and do it; and that thing with the new building, wonderful that we got it, but it means now we have another site to staff. We are now spread quite thinly across 3 - 4 different places and there is me, T and R – our manager. So yeah I am really looking forward to next Wednesday when we do all sit down together, even to include H our administrator because she has a bit of EY background as well, she changed career path but she is so wonderful when she welcomes the families in the centre. I think as well it can inspire her, ‘cause she is also fantastic at display so when she is thinking about her new displays to try and incorporate it into that.

*H: Well especially when she is there and she is welcoming people and she is dealing with things like “All about me” and “Personal information”, that is very important – isn’t it? – for the wellbeing of the parents and the children.*

A: And there is gonna be a big display board where they come in and it should be the first point of contact, so she can draw attention to that or if they are looking at it refer to it.

*H [Talking to K]: Sorry, I interrupted you*

K: And then something which I did do was go out to one of our local nurseries and it wasn’t adequate and OFSTED came and now it’s “requires improvement” so that is good and I add a little bit of input there, particularly abut children self-selection and the befits of that, role-modelling to the practitioners in the setting, we talked about wellbeing there so I think again quite similarly to *[place, deleted]* the information has been disseminated already slowly slowly, little bit at a time and quite naturally. I think sometimes that is just the way forward, isn’t it?

*H: Well it is relevant to the time other than being forced on somebody. For them it is of interest at the moment*.

K: And of course with the new building, I suppose this is quite a critical moment we had a completely blank canvas which we have slowly built up; since July when we got the keys we are still tweaking it and constantly thinking “Oh how can move that there! How can we get a little bit more children’s voices there? Is that appropriate in that area?” and a lot of it for me as well as the children wellbeing is about parents’ wellbeing and making it a comfortable space for them to be as well. I know you mentioned “Positive start” already so we recently run the course and there is an all week that is related to parents’ wellbeing in that.

*H: Oh fantastic*

K: So it is kind of tying in.

*H: It is interlinking*

A: We were saying, when we were asking people to think about times spent on things like relocation and doing your environment audit again, people were asking me “What is generic good practice and what is ToWe time?”, because if you are looking at your environment you are not gonna say “Right I am looking at self-selection, that is ToWe”, cause you are doing it, so it is a bit of, it is arbitrary in that sense, you are trying to call some time out but what I can say is - what you both said to me when I visited – is that you are thinking about what the audits told you and you are thinking about how we are going to convey to parents that when snack resources are set up they are there so that children can go and access themselves so you have got the ToWe understanding in your head. It is just quite hard to say all that in half an hour

J: because it is EYFS as well

A: It is PSED.

J: It is what we are supposed to be doing.

H: *That’s what we have tried to do, help you learn through what you are already doing*.

A: And we hope that when we are raising it with parents through displays and things like that, that we are saying you know now from the very good practice looking at the EYFS board and your learning journey, you should know about personal social emotional development; this is the particular focus on wellbeing so they do not see it as another new thing it is just PSED but in even more finesses.

*H: Yes, more detailed*

J: That is holistic. It should be in everything anyway, it should be there.

A: If your child isn’t happy, hasn’t a good sense of wellbeing …

J: That is the basic needs, isn’t it?

*H: And if they are not resilient…*

J: In terms of everything, yeah, their safety, their security, you know it’s from that then that you build up to the learning, but if you haven’t got that in the first place…

*H: Absolutely. So is there anything you would like to add before we move on to the next question?*

*[Silence]*

*H: Ok, so let’s have a look at challenges you have experienced so far. Who would like to kick off for that?*

K: I think I’ve just mentioned some of them.

*All laughs*

*H: Yes, with the move and the setting and the staffing…*

K: yes and I think the uncertainty of the restructure didn’t help obviously, but it is all settling down now. One of the other challenges that we found has been especially over summer the regularity of the children attending, because it is completely different to a day nursery where you know who you are gonna get everyday, whereas with us even if you have a set group they might not rock up for two weeks. You just never know. You can do a really intense bit of work with a parent and then not see them for four months and then you are left wondering “Right, was that me? Did I scare them away?” and 99% of the time no, of course not, it is just that they have got other commitments and there is nothing statutory about being at the children centre.

*H: So is that consistency for you isn’t really…*

K: Yeah, it is, which is sometime hard. The other thing was the funding. There is none. Recently we got an email that says “Even if you want to order a pack of paper you need to run that by management”. There’s no money. When we did the environment audit there were few things we thought “Oh, we’d love to buy that and really enhance that area”, so we just need to think a bit more creatively about how we can do that.

*Y: Is it similar for you J?*

J: I would say exactly the same as you’ve said, but I would also say that the big challenge is the children who have grown up, so we started off with toddlers and now they are three so that’s like “Oh I need a new bunch of toddlers”. They are moving on, they are not toddlers anymore, and they do not want to move on either they want to stay. We have got some little new toddlers coming to the group so the parents that we have been building this relationship with and who were totally on board with it now… they are three now, it is gone over that threshold. So it’s building a new relationship with new parents to our “little explorers”, who may not be that open in the first place and then if you gonna start talking about wellbeing they wonder why you are talking to them about wellbeing.

K: Yes, and what’s that got to do with the work first.

*H: Building those positive trusting relationships…*

J: It’ getting a little connection…

*H: Yeah, and starting afresh it is not easy; but that’s great, obviously you have done a good job and they have grown up… but they want to stay.*

J: and they want to stay… D did ask ‘do you think we can ask the older ones to move on?’

They are arranging their life around it. They want to keep their Tuesday free so that they can come.

*H: you should do a kind of… not toddlers but the next step up session forward, because all the work you have done with them is brilliant and the fact that they want to continue…*

A: That’s what we were saying bout staffing, that’s another challenge. We were just saying this last week that if that group was brilliant it would be really good to start the new group off and then have another group for them; and then it is looking at J. J the only person, so if we can use some of the money for crèche workers and use them creatively like that, that is what we need to think around. Cause the challenge generally, as you can see we have chosen the most positive settings and positive practitioners, but keeping people positive and focused when they had all the changes in different ways, relocations but everybody is going to do reorganisation, restructure and interviews looming and not being where they were and things like that. So some people may be they have seen their setting as if it might not even come true and have a job. And the summer and then families going and new families starting so I feel that we were really really positive last time and I am glad we are back on track now but there has been a period when we all felt the impetus was not carrying forward, this meal-time, snack-time was May, June, July and then relaunching it again has been a challenge, but I think we are really back on track. We have focused things we want to do before December and I put in that report challenges for you like conveying to parents the snack-time, if they were thinking, it was just additional language so you want to get that modelling to happen so they can take that practice back home, whereas with you, you said you have got different families – haven’t you? – In different challenges.

K: Yeah, yeah. We were talking about different kind of disadvantages.

*H: Yeah, ‘cause it’s an assumption, isn’t it there?*

K: Yeah. There are a couple of families who we are hoping to do the audit with and they may not necessarily come under the brackets of disadvantaged – well, I know they don’t. They are well families, they have jobs, they are secure, they are very confident, but then I met the little boy and he is 14 months and when he came into our toddler session for the first time he was completely overwhelmed by the amount of activities that were available and just by the fact that he was allowed to go and get stuck in himself and it was the first time he had picked up a pen or done any sort of painting. And then you think: there are children who we would deem disadvantaged and we might look very differently on those families and think “Oh, you have not provided them with the opportunities”, but neither have this very well-off family, so…

*H: So it is not an economic disadvantage, it is more of an environmental opportunities disadvantage.*

K: Exactly. I think the work that we can do with that family was of equal importance, because we are still providing that little boy with an opportunity that he wouldn’t otherwise have.

A: And convey that message to home that it has a longer lasting impact, ‘cause you are changing the mind-set of home hopefully in the longer time.

*H: And so with the home question for the IO3, we’ve got about the environment and books and toys and things like that, what you’ve got, the house itself, Is it damp and thing like that… you have got the other side as well, ‘cause what you were saying, that child does not have all this. I am making assumptions there, but from what you are telling me, he maybe does not have the same opportunities within the home setting.*

K: Even if his home is very lovely and nice and warm and clean and tidy.

*H: Yes, no damp and…*

A: Which will obviously in the longer term, if we were to track him forward, if we find out the implications with mum and the learning journey and all about this he is going to have, that their practice at home has changed. That would be really a massive impact.

K: Well they have started to come to “Dad’s messy play”, all the family is now on board.

*H: That’s fantastic*

K: Just a different perspective

*H: Absolutely. It is not always about economic wellbeing. There are other aspects.*

K: Sorry I went off track

*H: No no, it is still relevant! ‘Cause it is about where do we say… what is disadvantage? It is obviously disadvantaged to a certain extent: while his basic needs are met, his opportunities to learn and develop through activities are not. So you are absolutely right. Ok, so, shall we move on to your work in progress? Who wants to kick off, you happy?*

J: Yeah, work in progress... So I thought a big thing could be for me and N to get together and… having read this, we do a lot with our learning journeys for our little toddlers who come to our “Little explorers”, but the focus is on them as individuals and then of course to make a relationships, but we are not really capturing as much what the children are doing, there’s reciprocal play that is going on we are not probably… we are more focused on individuals so I think it could be nice to have a renewed focus on whenever the children do come together and to really see that as something special, which is what we are trying to capture with the photographs; so I thought in terms of… N and I what we can do to capture more of the peer-interactions and play, have photographs, filming, written observations… the reciprocal interactions with the children of our team, having read this, we consider they are trying to get in on the play and maybe we haven’t really picked up on that bit. Searching the photograph of E, two boys are playing at the model kitchen, she wants to get in at the play so her way to get in was she was bringing them water, so that they can tip it in; but she still was an outsider so it is like recognising their moments and I have noticed that before, when I looked through her little journey I can see she has done it in other areas of the setting as well, where children were playing a role-play and she might take them something to add to their role-play either in the kitchen or… she is really trying to get in so we really need to be trying to help her to get in and get that relationship, ‘cause she is making the effort but they are not picking up on it because they are toddlers and maybe we need to be a little bit more not like “Oh well, that was a lovely moment”, but actually trying to stay with it and develop it not just for E but for the other children so that they can actually somehow build that relationships; so she is trying to get in, you can see she is trying to get in, but we need to think how can we help her a bit more with that, cause I can see it. Once I’ve read that I thought “That’s E.? I haven’t actually stopped to try and help her”, cause she looks like she is confident in what she is doing but she obviously isn’t because she hasn’t got that level for it yet and that’s what she is looking for. So how we can do that? N and I… and then just the shared play with the children, just celebrating that, try to encourage that a little bit more, but it also means that we may be required more to help direct that or at least to be there just to make sure that resources are shared, relationships can be built and help peers to develop relationship with their peers, a little bit more skills or role modelling going on with negotiating – which is what they need – and just build enough social competence for the little toddlers that we have got.

I think that was amazing and I’ve written it down as the way forward for me and N, I know I have written it somewhere.

We talked about – and this is a spin-off from what you said but also what’s in here – we have the wow! board, but out board isn’t very wow! at all and it is because it does require us to write something, but I just think with the all ToWe thing it is definitely something that could be developed from ToWe instead of a wow moment, a ToWe moment; the world is your oyster… there is so much…

A: and have them to contribute as well, so it is not just about the practitioners that notice something and puts it up there, you want them to be adding to it all the time.

J: and also there are thing to look at routines in toddler’s play, I do not think we are very good at doing that. Looking out for the common routines, what is that the children do want to develop that maybe we are not helping them to develop? Like the two little boys with the brooms, they always go to the brooms but how do we try them to develop that, they are quite happy brushing sand and leaves, but maybe there is something else…

*H: what can you add for them to do…*

J: and they are always doing it! Things like that, it is just a little common routine but because it is so common we are not you know…

*H: valuing it, highlighting it?*

J: We are still valuing it. Maybe there is something more to it and we are just not getting this whatever else there is to it. We are not getting it.

*H: What is it about, why do they like to do that. Is it the security, or the learning, or the experience of been able to do a brush…’cause it’s a child size…*

J: Two little twins, to little boys and it’s their little thing, they just love it.

A: Again, can they do that at home? Do they do anything like that at home or..

*J:* maybe not

*[inaudible: all participants talking at the same time]*

J: It is just something that they always do! We always have to look for the brooms cause if they are not in the right place… where are the brooms? We need to find the brooms! Things like that.

*H. Yes, it is interesting. It says very much about how you are listening to the voices and expression of the children.*

J: Yeah. And then there is some little instance, they will lie down in the sand, one little boy in particular, he always lie down in the sand and again, just having read that it is almost like he is putting himself in the trucks, so for instance he is lying down in the sand with the truck and it is almost like he is putting himself in the truck and he cannot get any closer to that.

K: He is the driver of the truck!

J: you know like the children, their bodies, they explore the world with their body and their body is the world and this is… “mmm what is he doing?”, he cannot get his body physically emerge anymore into the scene than he does, he is on his belly, lying on the sand with the truck.

A: He is immersed in it.

*H: But what is great is that you facilitate and allow that, ‘cause there would be some settings that wouldn’t want the child lying fully, body in the sand, but you are facilitating and enabling him to continue with that play, which actually is very important. There would definitely be setting were like “Opps”!*

A: And how are the parents with that? Are they happy with that?

J: She is alright with that as well.

A: Cause again I see parents that say “sit up!” or “Don’t do that here!”, but it is good that he is getting what he needs, definitely.

*H: Oh, fantastic!*

J: Like I said there is a lot in this that I can pick on and say “That is our children, that is what they are doing”.

*H: And it is great that you are able to recognise that from reading the booklets. That is really helpful.*

J: But again, it’s celebrating them as little groups rather than just individuals so the way we track them at the minute is as little individuals and obviously we can see as a group how they have improved snack-time, how they improved song-time, how they improved listening, as a group. It would be nice to focus on them in those little times when they do come together or their paths cross in the roe play, just like how are those things developing, how we help them to develop or not.

A: That’s a very good point.

K: I think what we found. Tom and I we are talking about it the other day, it is we are giving ourselves more time to focus on the children. Again, because we are doing a hundred things at once, but it hasn’t really brought it back to “Right, let’s sit down” and just listen to them for a longer period of time and give them chance, give them space to just be in the setting and see how they use the space and again like J has just said to see how they interact with each other. I think what I found when I worked in children centres is that there is a lot of emphasis – which we encourage – on parent-child play and there are some parents that obviously need that encouragement, so to have a focus more on child interaction, peer-to-peer interaction, it is something that we would definitely like to do; we haven’t yet had the opportunity to film, ‘cause we haven’t had a working camera – but now we have – again that is down on our plans for next week it’s for Tom and I to film each other, so that we can look back on our own interactions and see what we can improve and what we can share; but then also to film the children and really notice how they are using the space and use that to then inform future planning and the set-up and the layout of the room and the space that we have got. So I think that the filming will be a big part of our work at the moment, although it quite nerve-wracking, isn’t it?

*H: It’s you and Tom, it’s a safe environment, you can work and share…*

A: I kinda put… just looking at everybody when you were doing the update report, just thinking where we need to go next and just looking at all of the IOs, I’ve sent this to people we had meetings and I’m going to kind of…., but basically everybody is pretty much working on the same thing but I think if we put it into an action plan with dates, ‘cause you have got dates with you, next week you have to discuss with J who is the acting manager based on another centre, but basically I have put the IO3 everybody using the wellbeing audit tool with particular toddlers and parents from now on in your cohort, J is still focusing on “Little explorers”, aren’t you?

J: nods

A: and “Toddlers stay and play” for Tom, but also, whereas Tom is focusing on the toddler “stay and play” which is set-up with this in mind, K is still the ToWe lading that generic “Stay and play” so we got it enough across all those activities and *[place, deleted]* I am going to be meeting there to see how we can link with another day nursery – which we need to talk you about – to make sure that practice is going on wider.

K: Sorry, but me and Tom is the other way around. So I am gonna focus on the “Toddler stay and play”.

A: Yeah.

K: And he is doing…

A: Yeah. It is still happening; and then as I said if all centres are going to do a team meeting to know what the toddlers’ wellbeing means to us and kind of draft an outline for that about how they might use those in 5 words, what does it mean, and then we can come back and reflect on it later; have some kind of ToWe launch with parents by Christmas using a display-board or putting it in a newsletter, but really letting parents know now what toddlers wellbeing is, so they got start to recognise it. *[Talking to K]* you had a lovely idea using the logo…

K: Using the logo that is on all the slides to put it on our learning prompts that are out in the session, so if there is anything for parents, a “How to” or “Why don’t you try”, but if there is a specific link to wellbeing within the activity, to put the logo on it and then to kind of direct them to the corresponding display board.

*H: Oh! Fantastic!*

A: It shall feel when it’s feeling the glup, that kind of think about their responses, “Do you allow your child time to explore and lie in the sand” or… “can they do this at home?” This kind of things. So just making it visible, ‘cause we have got the practice going on now but we want him to get it out there to staff, whether to your immediate team, which people don’t really have but the crèche workers or whoever and then to the parents, particularly of the identified children whether it is ‘Little Explorers’ of your or your specific children.

And then, although we are not going to do it this term, actually every centre has got like a vision day, when they come together once a year with the partners and we could be thinking before Christmas about the spring term vision day and make all the day or half the day around ToWe wellbeing, – ‘cause that would be health visitors, it is not gonna effect what they are doing – speech and language and then some key practitioners from lead settings, so that just fits in with the time table and community groups…

*H: I think what is lovely about the logo is people would say “Oh, what’s that?” and that gives you the opportunity, ‘cause again, who knows what it is? They don’t, it is brilliant.*

J: I thought part of this direct strategy could be linked to that, you can have this written in such a parent friendly way it doesn’t matter what activity is on it, you are giving parents advice on how they can support the play and it doesn’t matter what the play is, or how they can support the relationship.

A: and the same with the question for the IO4.

*H: Yes*

A: You know, when we are asking questions to ourselves you can ask them at the parents as well.

*All agree*

A: So it is actually using the materials then

*H: Which is what we want*

A: And we can talk about how we use the materials with more of reflection. And also I think the setting environment audit, you said when are you going to do yours again and… you are not doing your environment audit again or are you?

J: Well, it has been done but it does need to go back because things have left hanging where they have been identified.

*[Inaudible: all talking together]*

A: So the environment audit is still in mind.

*H: I think you do revisit this things, ‘cause things change as the children change, so therefore you do sometimes go back and have a look at things and also your views change, when you see children working with certain things you say “Oh, we could change that” and adapt that*

A: And informing the new 67B site having done the audit once it is really informing the 67B site and then everybody is focusing on filming the toddlers, looking at observations of toddler interactions and interactions of each other, we have got like a questionnaire as well

*H: Oh, fabulous!*

A: which again when I get around putting things on the web, which I keep saying I will. I have a dedicated two days next week!

*H: if it doesn’t get eaten away*

A: Things like this *[show a document]* that we can say what we are looking atwhen we are looking at our own interactions, but then using those video-footages to kind of share it to inform the staff meetings and then it’s getting people together, that is a challenge though, everybody has been tasked with “can you find a day or time, it might be twice, to meet with the crèche workers or the speech and language therapist” and try to use the supply cover, try to use the funding to release people. So it is working with manager so that we can say “You definitely have got the person”, so we can use that time.

And somehow, parent forum, every children centre has got parents forum which again is kind of slipped a little bit, but the parent forum is very much where you use the opportunity to say “This is the real focus of the centre at the minute” and to get key parents on board and they can talk to other parents, so to have it on the agenda, so even if only 3 or 4 people come to start with, it is down there, this is something the centre… then people say “What is that?” and start to see the logo, that is something we are talking about what is manageable and achievable.

And something else that is achievable, trying to get the impact of snack-café, cause this was while ago, we want to keep it on the agenda and we can say you can either have a piece of paper to give to people if they have comments as they go by, or you can do it as a questionnaire, or you can have your staff helping in the “stay and play”, “What are you doing at home now? Do you let them have a real cup and not a tippy-cup, do you let them use a knife and fork on their own?”… So yeah, really make sure that we can link the impact at home to what has been modelled. And again on the team meeting agenda have two those down there as evidence.

AND IO6 as well links very much to the environment audit but we are trying to make sure that we have got more settings that are reflective of cultures, ‘cause at the moment I think your new one isn’t really… Is it? You mentioned before you want to get parents to bring resources in. But again now holding it to the newsletter and the parent forum. And to make sure… I know when you did an audit once you had very, many bilingual books.

J: Yes but they disappeared, so we are trying to get… we know where to go if we want to get information and advice about dummies or waening or whatever, we can pull that information off in other languages, but I think we have got like, a little bit of, maybe one French book, something like that, but they have all gone so we are trying to work with our book start coordinator just to see if she can… cause we keep getting the book start packs, but could they please send us some books in dual languages, because it is a big need in our centre. So we are getting lots of book start resources, but not in any other languages. We really need the other languages as well as English. Of course we can drive people to the book start website, where they can listen to audio-stories but then you need to have a certain level of English to be able to navigate the website; so although it is there, it is not really accessible to a lot of our parents, so if we could just give them a book…

A: You know the top ten, although there are loads of different language spoken, but to say we know they come every Tuesday and their language is this so the book coordinator knows exactly which script you need. We have are not just ‘fishing in the dark’.

J: We can have a little library scheme going on for ESL parents, cause we have got two ESL classes on Wednesday and Thursday afternoon and their children are in the crèche; we could have a little library borrowing scheme going on.

A: When they are coming in in the foyer like they were the other day, they are all sitting there, it would be perfect time to pick a book and change it. It is good centre practice just thinking about it in these intellectual outputs and thinking “How can we really make the most of that?”

J: Making it accessible to people who really need it, ‘cause like always it is these people on the margins who will really need it, and they are coming in but they are just coming in and going out, they come in for the class and then they go out again and there’s very little English books and although they are very friendly and warm and bring food, but because of the language barrier and then there is lots who can help them but they are not accessing it, they access it in English.

K: I think the perception of those families sometime is “I am going there to learn English” and that’s it and it does take time to build up more than that, doesn’t it? Cause our ESL group is at one of the community centre down the road and it was very similar to that for a long time, but then it just took a couple of months to be like “Oh, we are cooking this next week for this special celebration, why don’t we bring it here and do it here?” so then they started a cooking group after the class and since than they have started a book club. Again, the idea is they are reading English books because their aim is to learn English, but just that sense of community and the friendships they have made has hugely…

*Y: How many are there?*

K: At the moment about eight of them. It has massively impacted their wellbeing, because they were all isolated and had no family in the area. They didn’t have any support network, but now they are ringing each other up all the time; they see each other nearly everyday, so… but it takes time, doesn’t it?

A: You were saying it about your group last week. They all sit there, they know each other before and they didn’t. It is so lovely that they can come with one thing in mind.

*Y: That’s a good sense of community there, a good example.*

K: I suppose you can say that about the children centre in general, that’s just not just for speakers of other languages, that could be for a mum who has just recently moved to the area and doesn’t have any friends, so they come to the centre and suddenly there is an all room full of people they have got lots in common with.

A: So yes, I think that is what the children centre are about.

*H: So is there anything else you would like to add about work in progress, or future work to do, or any comments you want to add, or questions and advice that maybe we can kind of help you with?*

J: Don’t think so.

K: I will look forward. I will let you know some dates.

*H: yes, lovely*

A: It would be really nice to have you come and see the building, see wat you think

*H: I would absolutely love to see what you are doing. It was lovely to visit J and see all the things that she is doing. It was a very good morning.*

J: It is just in its glory when the kiddies are there!

*H: Yeah*

A: But is good to see, you have your snack-café in action, you have your photos. I was saying sometime it is hard to capture it and I think part of the filming should be somebody else filming you doing snack café, ‘cause when it is all packed away and there might be some displays there, but to see it in action you really get the sense that it has been focus on it.

J: I did not bring any snack-café photo today, but I have just brought some pictures of our “little explorers” as they were coming together, just some really good example of play, because you came and there was no children there, just to see how they do link up and they have go that freedom, like I said all the practitioners are on board with children being able to move resources so it’s just this free-flow of resources, bringing the water from the water trade, the hay where the hay was and bring it all together and mixing it up. What was interesting about that was how the other children were trying to get on the play and just what this IO information says, the older children they lay down the rules about who is included and who is not included and this little one, he was saying “No!”, cause he was the oldest was saying who could join the group and who couldn’t join the group and then they had to interject and explain “Let the little in”, you know he just wanted to have a go and then there is when the other little one, E she came along and she wants to join in and she starts to bring gifts. She knows they want water so she starts bringing them water.

*H: That’s fantastic!*

J: So yeah, I have just brought them so you can see H how just it looks like and N, she is a volunteer and she was just doing jobs at stopping the squabble that was going on in the sand, they were fighting over everything that somebody else have and they want it; she just did a great job by getting herself in between the two children who were squabbling and she just kept the play going in a very nice, respectful way; no one’s play got interrupted, the play continued, but it continued a lot better than the way it was progressing.

*H: In a positive way, rather than that negative squabbling.*

J: you know. And again this two older toddlers, he has just turned three at the time, but again language is developing and they are able to have more talking games; they both have bikes, so they were planning what they were going to do with their bikes, Let’s go here!”, they were having a right laugh with this… I just brought it so that you can see what it was like. Again this was E. bringing gifts…

*Y: She is really trying hard, isn’t she?!?*

J: Yes, I know! She sees what is going on and she wants to get included and that is her way of getting in... She offers them something to get on it.

*H: But it is good that you have recognised that and you are now thinking “OK, how can I help her join in and actually get the gift there?” So that is not like “we take it and leave you” but how the other children can draw her in to that activity, it is great that you have recognised that.*

J: And this is lovely because, what it is significant about that is that a dad took the bucket of water away, so he very promptly went and got the bucket of water back... They were using that to paint and I do not know why the dad took it but these little ones, these two little twins they are very shy and they not normally link up with people but he obviously wanted the bucket of water enough to go up to this dad and get the bucket of water from him.

A: Is that his own dad?

J: No.

*[Inaudible: all laughing and talking at the same time]*

J: And then two other little toddlers playing football, it started off this little one kicking a ball and then the one in the red trousers joined in, but there was no communication between the two of them but they were just paying the same game. Again, a nice little example of how toddlers play and all of this around the little water tray are rose petals, none of them speaking to each other, they [were] just all looking at each other and just copying it.

*H: But that is communication. It is non-verbal communication. Which is when toddlers do not have the words…*

K: ‘cause still at some point they do have to either cooperate with each other or not.

J: They have all come together around this water tray with the rose petals, so socially they can’t help but not to see each other.

A: How great to share this with parents! Cause we can say “This is what we are doing. What do you think they are getting from this?”

*H: So that is great that you have got that already and now as you said the next step is for the videoing.*

Y: Do you know when you will start filming? Have you got your little project?

J: You never know what you are going to film, that’s the only thing and we have a camera in this centre – I haven’t tried it. It is in a box, so we need to have a go. I think the adults would feel a bit more embarrassed obviously.

*ALL: sure!*

*H: So anything you want to finally add before I switch this off?*

K: Do you know how everyone else is getting on? Have you heard?

*H: Yes, we had meetings in June and we have to report from everybody so A has done a report about what you have done and she is seeing what everybody else is doing. It is just amazing to see what you all are doing and how much you all have embraced it and worked with it and just how well it’s gone. You are all motivated, enthusiastic; we have actually written that in our interim report, really, how wonderful everybody has been in embracing this project and really taking it on board and working so well with it.*

K: When you can see the value of it, it is so much easier, isn’t it? You want to be involved in it.

A: and get it right. That is your task. It is not about and of EYFSP results, it is about getting them a good start and I think that ethos is already there, so this is a good tool to help.

*H: And I think everybody has shown passion. For Y and I, when we are reading the things that you are sending back and the other partners are sending back, makes us so excited about what you have done.*

*Y: [Inaudible] They are sharing it with the parents, they want to disseminate it wider within their settings. They have seen the benefits. Was it Norway? SK [name of setting] actually said, we did some work with the IO with three of our groups, we have got 14 units – they call them units – and we have decided although we are not even midway through the project that we are going to disseminate it across all the 14 units, because it’s worked so well and the toddlers are receptive to learning and we are understanding more how we can help them and support them in those key areas.*

*H: So it is just really great to read that all of you are having an impact.*

*Y: We haven’t seen anything going the other way, where people have said “It has taken a lot of time and we are not seeing much effort or change going on”. I think that’s the staff teams, if you have been in it form the beginning it really makes a difference; I suppose if you came in now you wouldn’t have the history with it so you kind of understood the essence.*

*H: the positive attitude that you all have got, you all have got this positive attitude. You have read the materials, you have taken on board what they have said, you have recognised your own practice, you recognise what needs to be improved and you have gone with it.*

J: And I think we are doing this ‘cause we want it. We asked to be part of it ‘cause we knew there is definitely something about this that intrinsically we want to know more about, we want to develop ourselves.

A: And although the reorganisation of the centre has been very tricky and hanging over and has happened and not yet completed, the good news is we can see the horizon now and from April we would have those new staff teams in place, so even if people are not physically working in specific centres, those teams would be coming together regularly and we now have lead practitioners and practitioners in different posts and they have different duties and responsibilities and sharing the ToWe work is going to be central to all of them. So it will be spread initially with the centres and then with the settings in those key localities, so we could see where this would have a wider impact and will be very very integrated into your practice.

H: Ok, that is fantastic. Let’s switch this off.