

The Importance of Interactive Displays in Early Years

Benefits:

They allow children to learn from first-hand experience

They stimulate curiosity and imagination

They can be jointly initiated by teacher/parent/child

They encourage ownership of the learning environment

They can provide a starting point for a curriculum aspect

They show value in children's efforts

They encourage thinking, experimenting, investigating and problem solving

They encourage discussion and sharing of ideas

They provide opportunities for parental involvement and help parents understand the curriculum

They help sustain children's interest

They can be good fun

Organising the Learning Environment

Children respond positively to displays that stimulate curiosity and imagination encouraging them to:

Stop/look/touch/smell/hear/talk/question/explore/think

Children need to be able to 'visit' and spend time with interactive displays to see, listen and touch becoming closely involved with their learning environment.

Adults also need to visit to extend children's development further.

Displays that encourage TALK

1. Yes/No questions on a question table
2. Questions to answer on displays (e.g. feely bags or boxes – what's inside?)
3. Questionnaires
4. Displays of artefacts that encourage talk and shared ideas

Displays that encourage WRITING

1. Writing labels for items on display
2. Making a special card to describe an item
3. Write a letter concerning an item

Displays that encourage READING

1. Use of books, posters and signs
2. Questions on a question table
3. Sound displays
4. Mystery box with questions inside

Collections

These provide opportunities

To compare/sort/classify/experiment with/problem solve.

(Examples: things that roll, bend, bounce, stretch, rotate, move, are transparent, are made of wood, metal etc.)

Natural objects: shells, stones, pebbles, seeds leaves, dried flowers, feathers, cones, nuts etc.

Made objects: balls, spoons, wheels, mirrors, lights, candles, vehicles, toys, plates, kitchen utensils, hats, shoes, etc.

Other resources to consider: photographs, artefacts, books, music and sounds, work of artists.

You need to provide display boxes and posters with a need for card and writing materials with possible use of mirrors and magnifying lenses.

Use lamination and Velcro and don't forget to use technology (ICT)

Central rule: keep displays fresh, updated and well-maintained.