



Every Child a Talker

Supporting wellbeing: 'Things I like boxes', to encourage settling in and language development

Many children need support to settle and relax in a new setting. Making links between home and school is often a crucial element in this process. Sometimes anxiety about separating from parents can be transferred onto separating from a particular member of staff. For example it is not uncommon for young children to become distressed if a particular member of staff leaves the room, and only seem to relax when they return.

One way to help children is to make a 'Things I like box'.

This is a small shoebox, decorated by children and parents/staff, and covered with sticky-backed plastic. The decorations could be photos of the child/adult, drawings or stickers. Inside the box you put a few objects from home that you like, or might want to talk about. (If it's something very precious to you, then put in a photo of it! Objects, however, are much more interesting for children.)

To introduce the idea, ask the staff to take a small shoebox, decorate it with photographs of themselves, and put something inside that they like. Chocolate seems to be very popular! If you don't mind for just once breaking your code on healthy eating, you could remove the wrapping from a bar of chocolate and wrap up a piece of wood. (Remember to cover the 'chocolate bar' with sticky-backed plastic, as it is likely to get handled a lot.) Some adults put in objects that they know the children will like, like a small soft 'Buzz Lightyear' toy. Show these to the children, and this will stimulate them to make one at home with their parents.

You can use the boxes in all sorts of different ways: as something to chat about individually or in a group; to help children settle in the setting; or to show a child when he becomes distressed when a member of staff goes for lunch, for example.

The boxes generate a huge amount of interest, stimulate language development, and can be an important part of the process of settling into your setting.

A 'Things I like box' for Louise, St. Mary's Primary, Tilbury, Thurrock (made at home with her parents)



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(If you have any interesting ideas, or have tried this idea, please contact Michael on jonmic57@yahoo.co.uk)