



# Every Child a Talker

**Give your book corner a makeover!**

## **1. Some basic questions**

Many early years settings are either squeezed for space, or are 'packaway' settings where everything has to be set up and packed away after each session. But whether you have acres of space, or very little, here are some basic questions to think about before you start making any changes to your book area. By asking yourselves these key questions, you will probably begin to point yourselves in the right direction for making changes.

### **Do all the adults in your setting like books?**

This may seem like a silly question, but we can't assume that all adults think books are great. Some practitioners may not be confident readers. Are all staff confident about sharing books with children? Might they feel silly about making funny voices and noises? There is a real knack to sharing books with children, and it starts with adults enjoying books themselves.

### **How much time do adults spend in the book corner?**

What do they do there? Do only certain adults go there? Do you plan for adults to be there?

### **How much time do children spend in the book corner?**

Are there any children who never go into the book corner?

### **What do they do with their time?**

Talk to each other? Look at books alone? Share books? Get involved with play that doesn't involve books?

**Do the books match the needs and interests of the children?**

Are there any books that relate to the children's home lives; e.g. that are about children's TV characters, or about dogs, cats, horses, and family life? Are the books right for the children's age group or development; e.g. colour photo board books for the very young?

**What books do children like? What do they want to look at on their own or share with adults?**

Do the children mainly look at storybooks, or rhyme books or information books?

**What is the absolute favourite children's book for adults?**

**What is the absolute favourite book among the children?**

**Do children have a choice about the type of books they can look at?**

**Are the books the right *quality* (hard cover/soft cover, large/small/ pop-up/noisy)?**

**What condition are the books in?**

**What *quantity* of books is there?**

Too many? Too few?

**Are there a variety of books?**

Mainly storybooks and rhyme books? Very few information books?

**How are the books displayed?**

All stuck in a rack? Some books on display individually on top of surfaces?

**How are the books stored?**

All stuck in a rack? In a box? Crates? How easy is it for children to tidy up?

**What furniture is in the book corner? How is it used?**

Chairs? Cushions? Large cuddly toys? How clean are they? What do the children do with them?

**What is on the floor?**

Rug? Bare carpet? How clean is it?

**Are there any displays? Do children look at them?**

These questions, and the answers you give, will help you to decide what to do to improve your area. But here's a very big provocative question... do you need a book corner at all?



**Michael Jones**

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