



Observing Faith

The practitioner said: "Faith is four years old. We first observed Faith when she was at the creative table and she was drawing lots of circles with the crayons, but what we observed was that she didn't just do a single circle, it was many circular movements that made up one circle and she covered the piece of paper with these different coloured circles."



"Faith has been observed at other times playing and showing an interest in circles, wheels on a toy car and investigating the compass and using her fingers to follow the outline of an object. It opens up discussion about what other things go round and are circular in shape. Faith enjoyed going off and finding objects that took her interest, she came back with a puzzle clock, car and compass. She enjoyed moving the hands round the clock and making the dial move on the compass."



Here she was observed making circular movements in coloured sand. First with a ball of play-dough, then with her hands and finally walking round and round the tray pushing the tile.



Jean's Story

Jean, mother of two year old twins, attended Learning Links, a Parents as Partners in Early Learning (PPEL) Project at Millmead Children's Centre in Margate, where parents explored and identified their children's high well-being and deep involvement in activities linked to their children's schema. Both twins had a dominant schema - Joshua-James was fascinated with enclosure and enveloping and Shannon was busy exploring heaping and scattering. Jean was extremely relieved to discover that her children's behaviour, that often appeared odd and, at times, extremely frustrating, was actually deep level learning.

Shannon loved to empty box after box of toys into a pile on the floor for what seemed to be no purpose other than to make, what Mum thought was, a mess, which she inevitably ended up clearing away as Shannon was not interested in playing with the toys or helping put them back in the boxes.



"It has been really useful finding out about schema because I now know my daughter doesn't tip everything out for no reason. I'm less stressed with her so she is freer to be herself."

Discovering that Shannon was actually exploring and making discoveries and theories about how materials react to being moved, helped Jean to relax and accept Shannon's behaviour. Shannon's disposition to learning, involving the repeated heaping and scattering of objects, meant she was discovering about spatial awareness, volume, weight, displacement, sensory stimulation as well as having lots of fun.

When carrying out a sticking activity, Jean observed that Shannon liked to 'heap and scatter' lots of cuttings onto her paper.



Jean soon realised that Shannon's fascination with scattering was being displayed in other ways with other materials. Shannon loved splashing the water in the bath creating an array of scattering droplets.