**Firm Foundations 2 : Joining the Dots : Saturday 16th March 2019 : Bath**

Workshop One : Dr Lala Manners : ‘Bags of Fun’

* How does engaging with familiar and accessible hand apparatus extend learning possibilities across all developmental domains – and what are the advantages for young children in using ‘asensory’ or ‘vanilla’ materials?
* From movement to maths – language to literacy – the world of the humble paper bag will be explored and examined – opening up unexpected vistas that will illuminate and support essential skills for life and learning.

Context

The ‘moving and handling’ ELG (this may change in September 2019) suggests ‘a range of equipment and tools are manipulated appropriately and confidently.’ There is no stipulation as to precisely what equipment and tools should be included – or what ‘appropriately and confidently’ actually means in practice – we must decide for ourselves.

Apparatus in a *movement* context : how it differs from mainstream approaches

* Any apparatus should be cost-free (if possible) and available in all the environments children experience – so mainly familiar/easily accessible household items are used in practice
* No specific agenda is attached to any resource – the outcomes are always open-ended
* The contributions made by children as they engage with materials is valued – their ideas should not be compromised by predetermined adult expectations/agendas
* A wide and varied range of physical skills is practised. The focus is not only on small/manipulative skills that have obvious links to curricular learning – but engagement is extended to include gross-motor and loco-motor skills that relate to other physical disciplines and support overall health and wellbeing
* Apparatus is carefully chosen to illuminate and extend the understanding of concepts. These may be abstract eg. speed/time – social eg. sharing/turn-taking – emotional eg. persevering/supporting or mathematical eg. pattern/shape.
* Apparatus is not mixed. *One* type of material is chosen – either one piece for all to share eg. a big box – or many of the same – eg. paper bags/plastic bottle tops/socks.
* The adult role varies throughout. This may include direct instruction or demonstration – gentle support – or free play. Adults are capable of adapting/reacting according to children’s responses/reactions.

Paper bags

* Shape: Square/triangle/circle/ring/ball/rectangle/pencil/wand
* Pattern: scatter/line/group/circle/zig-zag: mirror/repeat
* Sound: scrunch/smooth/rustle/scratch/pat/rub/tap/wave/spin – rhythm-send/receive – silence/noise
* Maths: fractions/pattern/sequence/number bonds/conservation of number/volume/same/different/beginning/end/height/width/depth/precision/accuracy/estimating
* Language: prepositional :adjacent/near/far/next to/in between/parallel to/inside/outside/under/above/around/body parts
* Communication: waiting a turn/supporting/eye-contact/spatial awareness/sensitivity/decision-making/group work/teams
* Physical : Balance/co-ordination/agility/speed – foveal/peripheral vision – strength/speed/accuracy/manipulative skills/estimating/passing
* Gross motor/locomotor: walk/run/jump/stretch/throw/catch/kick
* Fine motor/manipulative: fold/roll/scrumple/pincer-grip/flick

For many of these activities – you can use the following – all good examples of ‘vanilla’ resources;

* Magazines/video boxes/socks/dish-cloths/plastic bottles-tops/small rulers
* Using materials that are usually taken for granted/binned/underused is very useful – minimises unnecessary financial outlay – supports concept of conservation
* Anchoring language in a relevant and meaningful context is particularly important for EAL/’new-to-English’ children
* Maximises possibilities for skill transfer – both in terms of language and physical skills – families can be proactively involved in children’s learning without fear of judgement or failure

THANK YOU