

Oxfordshire Creativity Project

WEAVE Training 2010

Linking Creativity, Communication and Learning

In the summer Oxfordshire Local Authority offered the opportunity for 5 schools and settings to reap the benefits of attending a 3 session training course

What were the aims of the training sessions?

- To develop awareness of creativity as an essential foundation for early learning • To raise the confidence of education professionals to deliver innovative and inspirational creative experiences with and for young children
- To foster a sense of inquiry, exploration and enjoyment through active engagement in the creative process
- To raise literacy standards by providing rich and challenging speaking and listening opportunities for young children
- To improve outcomes for children by offering experiences which raise self esteem and influence their learning potential

What difference has it made for Oxfordshire children?

Following the training participants recorded how the creative experience has impacted on their work with children in their settings

Taking part in the Oxfordshire Creativity Project at Weave last term brought lots of excitement to almost everybody! Staff were challenged to have fresh ideas on how to inspire children to explore, imagine and communicate; children enjoyed new possibilities for free and imaginative play. The training unlocked our own imagination and helped us to prepare the materials and learning environments in a way that will stimulate children's senses, curiosity and imagination.

We have learned that open ended activities which give potential for investigation and exploration are advantageous in many ways: they stimulate creativity, not only children's but also adult's, and they can meet the requirements of all areas of children's learning and contribute to children's holistic development.

Ljiljana Rajnovic Child Carer Stephen Freeman School and Children Centre

I was not sure exactly what to expect when we first arrived at the WEAVE Centre. The entrance immediately set the scene and has eye catching displays and ideas. We were encouraged to explore a room full of quality recycled resources. Imaginations ran wild - old netting became seaweed, plastic lids became Frisbees and stories and scenes emerged... This is precisely what WEAVE training

endeavours to do - to explore creativity linked to the EYES using peoples 'old junk' and produce environments that are certainly something far from your average role play area or art project. The training emphasises that the majority of resources we need to provide quality play experiences are actually 'every day' and by using quality recycled materials we are able to expand learning for children in exciting and innovative ways

Post WEAVE at our Children's Centre a small unused area in our entrance became a sensory and explorative place for children to investigate. Before WEAVE training I had hopes that this area would become filled with exciting and expensive static equipment like bubble tubes and squashy cushions - how I had changed my mind! The area became all of these things and more but for much less cost and also an area that could be constantly rotated with different themes of colour. Parents of babies took initiative to place their babies in different positions to touch the objects, one mum recognising it as a perfect opportunity for some tummy time on the soft textures and another placing her little one on her side to explore shredded cardboard. Parents of older children have made a stop in the sensory area part of their visits and it is wonderful to see a once unused area transformed into an area of fun and learning thanks to WEAVE.

Amy Spicer Senior Practitioner New Marston Children's Centre Queensway Primary School

"This is the best day I've ever had at school?"

The pleasing response to activities stimulated by the WEAVE project that we took part in last term. The ideas and materials from WEAVE were used in our Foundation Stage class as part of this project. The children benefited from the inspiration provided as we adapted our practice to include more time for children to develop their creative ideas. Both inside and outside the children cooperated to produce a castle and beanstalk for role play, dens for quiet times and minibeasts. WEAVE has encouraged us to have a more reflective approach when considering engaging environments.

'Attending the course has given more renewed enthusiasm that I have taken into the classroom making activities more creative, interesting and fun'

Liz Riches (Foundation Stage teacher Queensway School, Banbury) Final Reflections