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### **'Involve me and I will understand'; The reflections of the participants in a creative art project in a children's centre drop-in**

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#### **Abstract**

The intention of the research was to explore an artist-led creative project, in a parent and child group, in the setting of a Sure Start Children's Centre. This study is located within the field of the role of creativity in education and the model of creative learning as propounded by Loris Malaguzzi, and the municipal pre-schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. A Qualitative Paradigm was used, where the focus is on an artist, parents and their children. It is a case study which explores the narrative of their voices, views and opinions.

Informed consent and full participation was received from all adults, and special consideration was given to the child, ensuring respectful and fair interpretation of their photographic documentation which used as evidence of their 'voice'. The employment of a resident artist had raised parental awareness of the learning opportunities provided when the child participates in artist led activities, which support independence, imagination and creativity. The study provided evidence of the characteristics of employing an artist in an early years setting, which positively influenced the outcome for both the children and the adult participants.

**Keywords:** creativity, photographic, artists role, parental involvement, children's Centre.

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## INTRODUCTION

*Tell Me and I'll Forget  
Show Me and I may Remember  
Involve Me and I'll Understand  
(Chinese Proverb)*

In 2006 I went on a study tour to the Reggio Emilia Schools in Italy. It was a wonderful opportunity provided for me by the Local Authority in whose area I ran a neighbourhood nursery. It had a profound impact on the way I viewed 'the child', and I saw new possibilities for those children in my care which derived from my increased understanding of the role of creativity in young children's education, as I witnessed and learned from my week in Italy.

I had in the words of the above proverb been frequently 'told' about the schools in Reggio Emilia, by other early years practitioners who had attended the exhibition 'The Hundred Languages of Children'. This exhibition was created by Loris Malaguzzi, the first head of the municipal pre- schools of the city of Reggio Emilia in Northern Italy, and his colleagues who worked within the schools and infant- toddler centres. The exhibition had begun in Italy in 1980 and toured various venues around the world until 2004, first visiting the UK in 1997. I had been intrigued by what I had heard from my colleagues, but it meant little to me and I '**forgot**' about it as I continued to work in a variety of early years establishments.

After having visited and participated in the Reggio study tour I '**remembered**' everything, and with a growing sense of conviction that so much of what I heard there, and I witnessed being adopted by the Early Years Advisory Team in Wolverhampton and practiced in their maintained nursery schools was a positive model of analysis and learning for early years education. A culture of enquiry,

reflexivity, and enthusiasm within the Early Years cohort in the city was palpable as they sought to interpret and examine the principles, ideas and beliefs they had gained from their visits to Reggio Emilia.

In 2009 I was given the opportunity to ‘**understand**’, through my close involvement at work with a resident visual artist, and at last to engage with some of the processes, which had led to the underpinning philosophy of Loris Malaguzzi, the chief protagonist, founder and for many years Director of the Reggio Emilia Schools and his colleagues.

“ Our image of children no longer considers them as isolated and egocentric, does not see them only engaged in action with objects, does not emphasize only the cognitive aspects, does not belittle feelings of what is not logical and does not consider with ambiguity the role of the affective domain. Instead our image of the child is rich in potential, strong, powerful, competent and most of all, connected to adults and other children.” (Loris Malaguzzi, 1993 cited in Dahlberg et al. 2007)

A further opportunity to increase and share that understanding became possible when I decided to focus my research on the art project. This was supported by a resident creative artist, at a children’s centre drop-in session, where I could “ search for the truth” using a “qualitative perspective to keep a grip on subtleties” (Aubrey *et al* 2002 pg 99-100). The emphasis of the research would be seeking a greater understanding of the project as seen through the perceptions of those who were involved in it. I therefore decided to structure my research within the following statement,

**‘Involve me and I will Understand’; The Reflections of the Participants in a Creative Art Project in a Children’s Centre Drop-in.’**

The main aim of this research is to explore, to enquire and reflect upon the specific art project with the focus being on the significance of working with a particular artist in the context of a drop-in group, which is voluntarily accessed by parents with young children under the age of four. The primary focus for me was to investigate and make meaning from the project through the individual perceptions of the main protagonists, possibly to inform future practice and projects. This retrospective investigation was an attempt to learn from the experience.

The main participants in the project were the creative visual artist, the children, their parents and the children's centre staff and I therefore decided to frame my research questions as,

1. What is the perspective and view of the artist and his role within the project?
2. What is the perspective of the children, using photographic documentation of their involvement so as to enable interpretation of their views and give voice to them as key participants in the project?
3. What are the perspectives and views of the parents who participated alongside their children in the project?
4. What are the perspectives of the key children centre practitioners who worked with the artist recording and observing the process.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

The research is located within the field of early years education, with a particular emphasis on the importance of the role of creativity in education, and the model of

creative learning as propounded by Loris Malaguzzi, and the Municipal pre-schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy.

## **Creativity:**

**Creativity** - *'the ability to use the imagination to develop new and original ideas or things, especially in an artistic context.'* (Encarta World Dictionary)

The importance of the independent, imaginative and creative learner came to prominence with the studies of Vygotsky, Piaget and Bruner which form the basis of the Social Constructivist Model of Learning, whereby children are active participants in their learning experience and they learn as they experiment, enquire and show inquisitiveness, so constructing their learning often with the support/ scaffolding of an adult/ educator or another more able child.

In November 1989 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which had been drawn up over a period of ten years, and was ratified by the UK government in December 1999. The Convention was the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights for the child and includes the following article.

*State Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity  
(Article 31 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)*

In 2006 a conference was held in Lisbon by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) into the role of the arts in education and the 'UNESCO Road Map for Arts Education. Building Creative Capacities for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' (March 2006), was produced as a result.

*Humans all have creative potential. The arts provide an environment and practice where the learner is actively engaged in creative experiences, processes and development... introducing learners to artistic processes... cultivates in each individual a sense of creativity and initiative, a fertile imagination, emotional intelligence and a moral "compass", a capacity for critical reflection, a sense of autonomy, and a freedom of thought and action. Education in and through the arts also stimulates cognitive development and can make how and what learners learn more relevant to the needs of modern societies in which they live. (ibid p, 4)*

The role of creativity in the field of education has long reflected a tension between the need for a system, which promotes creative thinking and which leads to a more adaptable and innovative workforce, and art as a form of cultural enrichment and was 'a debate that began in English Education in 1944'( p, 7). In 1999 the National Advisory Committee for Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE 1999) In England published a seminal report 'All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education", under the chair of Sir Ken Robinson. The report supported a

*'democratic conception of creativity: one which recognises the potential for creative achievements in all fields of human activity; and the capacity for such achievements in the many and not the few'*

(NACCCE 1999 pg. 30)

It defined creativity as, 'Imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value' The report recommended a 'more developed provision for creative and cultural education' in early years with the emphasis on 'imaginative play and discovery learning' (ibid pg.88)

The importance of Creative Development has played a significant role in early years education during the last 100 years, and has been a fundamental part of many well known educational philosophies e.g. Froebel, Montessori, Steiner etc.

*'When considering young children, it is appropriate to adopt a broad, democratic definition of creativity. In this way, every child can be considered to have creative potential and to be capable of creative expression'* (Sharp, 2004, p.2)

Creativity and play within young children is inextricably linked. Environments provided within early years settings in the United Kingdom have traditionally promoted imaginative play through the provision of dedicated role play areas, and singing, story times, drama sessions etc to stimulate the child's imagination, with opportunities for daily creative arts and craft activities. Providing opportunities for creative experiences such as clay, painting, sticking, modelling etc. are core activities. These activities have often been seen as 'in preparation for' the more serious and important formal schooling which begins at approximately five years of age.

Craft (2001) introduced the concept of the Big C' creativity and Little c' creativity. Big C creativity is the creativity 'that is manifested through the language of the arts' (The National Strategies – Early Years 2010) and may also be seen as possessing an extraordinary ability or gift in an area such as drama, music, dance, painting etc. Little c' creativity refers to the 'resourcefulness' and 'imagination' (Craft 2002, p, 57 ) that is inherent in humanity and is manifest in most young children. She refers to it as a 'can do' approach to life 'which uses the process of thought to seek creative



solutions to circumstances, often achieving success by means of 'small steps' (*ibid*, p, 57-58) .Bruce (2004) defines creativity in early childhood as bringing 'into existence new ideas, original ways of doing things and new creations of all kinds'

Malaguzzi (1995) responded to a question concerning the conundrum of creative behaviour and creative production with ' we do not consider creativity as sacred, we do not consider it as extraordinary but rather as likely to emerge from daily experience' (Interviewed by Gandini in Edwards *et al*, p, 75 ). Jalongo (2003, p, 221) refers to all children possessing 'creative assets' which include a 'tolerance for ambiguity and a propensity for nonlinear thinking' (*ibid* )

In the AcE Programme, Bertram and Pascal (2010 p, 13) provide examples of the characteristics of creativity in a young child, i.e. 'curiosity and interest in their world, revelling especially in serendipity and originality...imaginative, spontaneous and innovative.' (*ibid* p.13))

### **The Role of Creativity in Early Years Curricula;**

In many countries art activities in the early childhood services are seen as a method to achieve a specific goal of learning. In September 2008 a new statutory framework, The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was introduced in England for children from birth to five years. The EYFS is made up of six areas of Learning and Development, which are all linked and underpinned by the principles of the EYFS.

One of the key areas is Creative Development, and it is a requirement of practitioners to ensure that,

*Children's creativity must be extended by the provision of support for their curiosity, exploration and play. They must be provided with opportunities to explore and share their thoughts, creativity, ideas and feelings, for example, through a variety of art, music, movement, dance, imaginative and role-play activities, mathematics, design and technology.*  
(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2008, p.15)

The EYFS states that Creative Development is made up of the following aspects:

- **Being Creative**
- **Responding to Experiences, Expressing and Communicating Ideas**
- **Exploring Media and Materials**
- **Developing Imagination and Imaginative Play**

The EYFS then focuses more closely on,

#### **What Creative Development means for children:**

- Creativity is about taking risks and making connections and is strongly linked to play.
- Creativity emerges as children become absorbed in action and explorations of their own ideas, expressing them through movement, making and transforming things using media and materials such as crayons, paints, scissors, words, sounds, movement, props and make-believe.
- Creativity involves children in initiating their own learning and making choices and decisions.
- Children's responses to what they see, hear and experience through their

senses are individual and the way they represent their experiences is unique and valuable.

- Being creative enables babies and children to explore many processes, media and materials and to make new things emerge as a result.

The EYFS suggests that in order to 'effectively implement the area of Creative Development' it would be beneficial if the practitioner provided 'opportunities for children to work alongside artists and other creative adults so that they see at first hand different ways of expressing and communicating ideas and different responses to media and materials.' (Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage, (May 2008), p.106)

## **The Philosophy and Theory of the Reggio Emilia Schools.**

The origins of the Reggio Emilia preschools in Italy began just after the end of the Second World War, when a group of women began to rebuild a school for their children from the rubble that remained after the fighting had ceased. From a very early stage Loris Malaguzzi was involved as a teacher. I was informed by one of the facilitators at The Reggio Study I attended in from the schools very beginning there was an attempt to provide an environment that would encourage the children to question and to seek answers for themselves, and not blindly to follow political dogma, as had happened when Italy succumbed to Fascism under the rule of Mussolini.

Loris Malaguzzi was the chief protagonist of the Reggio Emilia Approach and under his stewardship they investigated many international educational philosophies, including Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, Dewey etc. A significant aspect of their approach

is that every educator connected to the schools willingly participates in their professional development by engaging with others and sharing their own 'research' and this process of sharing information is distributed to parents and throughout the world by means of the pedagogical documentation, their exhibitions and the conferences they participate in, and the international study tours they organise every year in Reggio Emilia.

The main principles of the Reggio Approach include

- The provision of a suitable, aesthetic space (environment), which facilitates the child's learning.
- The importance of the development of respectful, mutual relationships between the child, the parent and the educator and ultimately reaching out to the community.
- Time is given to all children to enjoy, to experience, to discover and to return to their previous learning. They are allowed just to 'be children'
- Educators and children are considered to be researcher in their own right, Finally and most importantly for the purpose of this research project every school employs an *atelierista* (artist) and provides them an *atelier* (art studio) in which to carry out their research with the children.

### **The Role of Documentation in Children's Learning.**

Documentation of a child's learning in early years programmes has traditionally been represented by the process of observation, and usually a measure of assessment, including both formative and summative. The documentation as used in the Reggio Emilia Schools is a more complex process and they leave 'interpretable traces' (Rinaldi, quoted in Edwards *et al*, 1998, p. 120) of the children by means of 'written

notes, observation charts, diaries and other narrative forms, as well as audio tapes, photographs, slides and videotapes' (*ibid* , p, 120). Dahlberg refers to it as 'Pedagogical Documentation', which is more than just the observation of a child and more about,

trying to see and understand what is going on in the pedagogical work and what the child is capable of without any predetermined framework of expectations and norms (Dahlberg *et al*, 2003, p.145)

The systematic use of sequential photographs, videos etc recording the child's work as it progresses and their subsequent display with accompanying written account of observations, comments and interpretations by the teachers, parents and children was something uniquely developed by the Reggio Emilia educators, and is what they refer to as 'documentation'. This form of documentation is however more than just photographing and making beautiful displays of the children's learning, it is fundamental method used by them to support both the child and the practitioners learning and is a form of research in it's own right.

The documentation is also used as a means to develop the ability of practitioners, to encourage them to question and to seek to look beyond the learning that is immediately obvious through observation, to facilitate team discussion and analyses and open the discourse, allowing multiple interpretations and thereby build reflective practice in the setting. This reflection is very much part of the process, as is the subsequent development of relationships between the practitioners, the parents and the children all of whom are invited to participate in viewing the documentation and to reflect upon the process, and to engage in 'reciprocal learning' (Rinaldi, quoted in Edwards *et al*, 1998, p.122)

The pedagogical documentation is also used to raise the awareness of the child, and encourage them to engage in their own learning process. It is a chance to remember the experience, to perfect it by trying the process again, or to construct new experiences based on what has already been learnt.

### **Working with an artist in an Early Years Environment.**

Employing an artist as a permanent member of staff in early childhood settings appears to be something that is almost unique to the municipal pre-schools in Reggio Emilia. Although the schools are widely reported on there is no research into the efficacy of the approach, although their educators believe very strongly that they are practitioner researchers and involved in a continual process of research and evaluation. There are reports and evaluations of short term projects in the UK where artists have been employed for a limited period. 'Playful Beginnings: Creativity in the Early Years' ' Daring Discoveries: Arts Based Learning in the Early Years (Nutbrown, Jones *et al*, 2006), which are largely supportive of the importance of employing an artist to work alongside children

### **The role of a Sure Start Children's Centre in Promoting Learning and the Development of Children and Families Using the Centre and it's Services.**

Sure Start was established in England in 1997 in an attempt to address the inequalities facing many children and families who lived in areas of economic disadvantage, by providing a local centre which could be accessed by parents and children (under the age of four), which brought together a range of services providing

early education, childcare, health and family support. The aim was to improve the life chances of these children and 'in particular to close the gap between the outcome for the most disadvantaged children and others.' (Sure Start 2010)

Following The Childcare Act 2006 (UK) the local authorities had the responsibility 'to improve the well being of young children in their area and reduce inequalities between them' (Sure Start Children's Centres Statutory Guidance, 2010 p.6).

Children's Centre were considered as a 'key mechanism for improving outcomes for young children' (*ibid* p.6)

One of the key requirements of the Sure Start Children's Centre is to support the learning and development of both children and parents who participate in and use the services. This obligation is highlighted in the National Standards for Leaders of Sure Start Children's Centre's (DfES, 2007) where the leader of a Children's Centre,

*'...has responsibility for the quality of learning, teaching and achievement...leads a culture that encourages children, parents and staff to become enthusiastic, independent and successful life-long learners.'* (*ibid*, p.7)

The EYFS is used within all Children's Centres as a means of guidance in providing for and understanding the function of learning and development in the services it offers to children. It is used to inform the planning of activities, especially those provided within drop-in sessions, creche's etc. The following four principles of the EYFS are adhered to and put into practice where applicable,

- A Unique Child- every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

- Positive Relationships- children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or key person.
- Enabling Environments-the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.
- Learning and Development- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

(Practice Guidance for Early Years Foundation Stage, p, 05)



## CONTEXT

This study is a detailed account of a single unit comprising children, their parents, a resident visual artist, Children's Centre early years staff and a qualified nursery teacher. The context for this research is that it has taken place at a Children's Centre Drop-in, which occurs every Thursday morning in a local church hall.

The visual artist has been employed since 2009 within all the settings of the Children's Centre which include a maintained nursery school, an affiliated maintained nursery school, a day care nursery and extended services provision i.e. outreach support, drop-in sessions, counselling, job seeker support etc. The study took place within one of our parent and child drop-in sessions over the course of 18 months. The artist worked within the group initially for one session a week, which was reduced to fortnightly during the last year.

The extended services provision takes place in a variety of community venues within the designated Children's Centre Super Output Area (SOA), which comprises a large residential area of relative affluence with a high percentage of home ownership, with small significant patches in the bottom 10% index of deprivation.

*The Children's Centre is situated in the ... area of, a socially and economically disparate area with some pockets of serious economic deprivation, nearby to much more affluent areas. ...has some of the largest concentrations of social housing in the city. There are three separate estates... with a majority of social housing. There are a significant number of socially disadvantaged families on these estates with a higher concentration of single parent households than elsewhere in the city. Some of the ... super output areas are in the 10% most deprived in the country. Approximately 25-30% of our families have English as an additional language with some speaking no English at all. Our families have a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds.*

(S &H Children's Centre SEF (Self Evaluative Form)2010)

The drop-in session is held weekly between the hours of 9.00-12 Noon. It attracts a regular group of parents and children, many of whom have attended the session since their children were babies and for some that means they have been coming to the group for 2.5 years. The group has a mixed age range of children from very young babies to those who are ready to start school this September 2010. The families are of mixed ethnicity, with a large proportion of them having at least one parent employed or studying at the two universities in the town, or at one the three hospitals in the area, including one which is internationally renowned training hospital. Many of the children either speak English as a second language or have one parent for whom English is not their mother tongue. Very few of the families have a long association with the area, and the area has quite a transient population.

The drop-in has established a unique identity and is different from the other groups we run in the area. It has a unique sense of community and parents are very supportive of each other. New parents join weekly and are made to feel welcome by the group, as there is this sense that many of them have shared similar experiences of being new to the area or to the country, and not having extended families to call on close-by. Celebrating children's birthdays by bringing a cake to share with the whole group is now a regular occurrence and we have established a routine to make it a special occasion for the children. This has not evolved in any other group.

The choice to have the artist work in this particular setting was because the group was so well established, and it had the space to accommodate him working indoors on the floor, and it didn't restrict the work he wished to do with the children. The members of staff have also been more adventurous in what we provide for this

particular group in terms of activities, trying out new ideas etc, as the children and their parents are very receptive.

The use of an artist as an embedded practitioner within an early years setting has as its role model the Reggio Emilia Municipality Schools, where the artist, or '*atelierista*' is a fundamental part of their educational practice and philosophy. I have heard it referred to by an *atelierista* from one of the Reggio schools at conference in Tynemouth in January this year as 'possibly the most subversive thing we did'.

From his initial employment and to date the artist has been pivotal to the success of the art project. It was dependant upon his ability to understand his role, to develop it in accordance with the possible emergent ability and understanding of the children, to work with an exceptionally young age range of children and most importantly to develop his relationship with both the child and its parent.

From the start I viewed the opportunity of working with the artist as a 'project of possibilities' and was keen to make the most of it. I took a lead role in supporting the artist and that included arranging for him to accompany me to a conference facilitated by Sightlines Initiative in Tynemouth, which was focussed on the Reggio Approach, and had as its guest speakers a *pedagogista* and *atelierista* from one of the municipal schools in Reggio Emilia. We also attended an exhibition in Birmingham where he was able to meet and chat to two resident artists with the experience of working as resident artists in nursery schools and children's centres. We had regular discussions about his role, how to support the children, the use of documentation, the philosophies and theories of early years education, especially

Vygotsky and Malaguzzi. Books and articles were read and shared and we exchanged ideas, views and investigated new approaches together.

This research study was a wonderful opportunity for me because it allowed me to direct my attention on a project that I instinctively felt was positive, but now I was challenging my feelings by opening it further interpretation and scrutiny through,

*'the close up reality and 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of participants' lived experiences of, thoughts about and feelings for, a situation'*  
(Cohen, Manion *et al*, p, 182)

For six months I immersed myself in the understanding of others so that I too could understand, and respond to my research question, **'Involve me and I will Understand'; The Reflections of The Participants in a Creative Art Project in a Children's Centre Drop-in'**.

## **METHODOLOGY AND METHODS.**

My research adopts a Qualitative Paradigm as the focus is on making sense of a 'real world' situation (Robson, 2002; Yin, 2003), involving real people (artist, parents and their children) and their understanding/ perceptions. It is in essence a narrative of voices, views and opinions of the participants. As a researcher I was actively seeking their 'rich and personal data' (Cohen *et al*. 2001 pg. ) in order to look beyond what would appear readily apparent and to uncover 'significant features of the case and to interpret plausible interpretations of what is found' (Bassegy,2003 p.60). The research project is a 'descriptive' (Yin 2003, p.3) case study as it 'provides a unique example of real people in real situations' (Walker *et al*. 2001 p.181) 'and the "topic"

of working with a resident artist in a drop-in is “the subject of exploration” (Yin, 2003 p.23).

The embryo of this study was an earlier attempt to record the use of a visual artist within a children’s centre drop in and to share the documentation with the parents of the participating children. Initially the parents were given a folder, and a diary sheet with some sequential photographs of their children’s participation in the activities. There was space allowed for their comments, and they would retain the diaries as a memento of the project. It was also hoped that we would have a display of all the children’s work at the end of the artist residency, with copies of some of the diaries accompanying the children’s work. However what became clear from the initial project was that the parents loved the photographs and were immensely proud of their children. They enjoyed the discussion about their children that ensued from the photographs, but very few wrote anything down. So for this study I made a conscious decision to have a conversation with the parents when sharing the photographs.

‘Conversations are...a major element in any kind of ethnographic field research...and not only constitute an important source of data but might also be regarded as a method of research in their own right.’ (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995 p.163)

The project was a combination of many components and I gathered rich thick data (Geertz,1973) and knowledge from many sources including the people, the physical environment, discussions held before and after the activities, conferences attended, photographic documentation etc. It seemed to that it was essential to try and capture as many of these triggers as possible. How to approach the gathering of meaningful information from young children, their primary carers, from the artist whose training and experiences give him a unique perspective, a nursery teacher and a team of early years educators presented quite a challenge.

I used a variety of methods to collect my data including which I felt were largely determined by the differences in the participants' relationships to the project, the uniqueness in their narrative and ultimately when considering the children, their ability. The data would offer more than one perspective and utilize the differing fundamental strengths and knowledge that each of the core groups had prior to the art project e.g. the intimate and profound knowledge that a parent has about their child, and their child's personality, ability etc. The knowledge that the artist has gained through his personal and professional creative journey and the knowledge that the nursery teacher and early years educators have gained through working with a variety of children in different educational and child care establishments.

The methods I chose for the following participant groups were;

## **1. Children.**

The choice of using photographic documentation as a means of recording the children's participation is based upon the method used by the Reggio Emilia Schools. It is an aid to critical reflection of the process and assessment of the children, and therefore it was central to the whole project.

'Documentation offers the teacher a unique opportunity to listen again, see again and therefore revisit individually and with others the events and processes in which she or he was a co-protagonist, directly or indirectly. This revisiting with colleagues helps create common meanings and values.' ( Rinaldi quoted in Edwards *et al* 1998 p. 121-122)

I chose to use the digital camera rather than a video camera, mainly due to the fact that the very large church hall where the drop- in was held was completely

unsuitable to make auditory recordings. It had wooden floors, an extremely high vaulted roof with no ceilings, and the attendance figures at any group varied between 35 -55 children under the age of three and their parents. I had also had a very positive response in the previous project when I had made a slide show out of the digital photographs and projected them throughout the duration of a drop-in. The children were mesmerised and kept looking at the screen, and inviting each other and their parents to watch with them. Another advantage was that the showing of a significant number of sequential photographs in a slide meant that the engagement and intensity of the child's involvement was so clearly shown in their facial expressions and their body language. This also made it easier to make an assessment of what the youngest children, who had not yet acquired verbal skills, had gained from their participation in the art activities.

I was also reminded of the power of still photography from a well known sequence of photographs, known as "Laura's Story" taken in the early years of the Reggio Toddler schools of a toddler looking at photographs of a watch in a magazine, then listening to a real wrist watch and then putting her ear to the magazine (*ibid* p,116-117). This sequence of photographs needed no words as the imagery told the whole story and I felt confident that the still images I had of the children participating in the activities would tell their story.

However the use of photographs to assess the children's participation, whether it is the parents commenting on their involvement, or the staff rating their creativity, 'require a high degree of inference' (Lewis and Lindsay, 2000, p.193) and there is the danger of over estimating child's involvement and ability, as well as the potential to underestimate it. I therefore decided to present the photographs to the artist, the

parents and the children's centre staff to provide the necessary triangulation, an approach which involves the use of more than one participant, providing more than one perspective in an attempt to provide credibility to the research.

### **Characteristics of the sample group of children.**

However within that small sample group of available children one of the key characteristics was their choice to work with the artist on more than one occasion. This was true of five of the six children in the sample, with the exception of one child who attended once during a half -term holiday week, but was familiar with the artist having worked with him in the nursery school during the previous school-term.

There were characteristics of similarity within the sample group,

- Three of the children had parents with dual nationalities, and therefore had exposure to more than one language and as such were representative of the children who attended the drop-in.
- Three of the children had attended the drop-in since they were young babies and therefore were established members of the group.
- Three of the children had experience of attending nursery school

Figure 1. Age and Gender of Sample Group of Children.

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>
Child 1	Female	2.1
Child 2	Male	2.4
Child 3	Male	2.8
Child 4	Male	3.7
Child 5	Female	4
Child 6	Female	6



## **2. The Parents**

The parents participation was determined by their children's participation in the activities, I chose an unstructured interview process which is 'non standardized, open-ended and in-depth' (Robson, 2002, p, 278). My choice reflected the fact that I was looking for more of a conversation with them, with less direction from me, as on previous occasions when trialling the situation I found that too much intervention from me meant that there was a tendency for the respondent to withdraw into themselves. One respondent even said, "I suppose I didn't give the answers you were looking for." Their response would be very personal and I was seeking to really 'listen' and to 'hear' what they felt was significant or important to them as the parent of the child. There would be no right or wrong answers but personal perceptions so I decided on an informal, unstructured interview after I had shown them and their child the slide show of the child's participation in the activity.

## **3. The Artist**

I felt that the artist had a unique story to tell as this was the first long-term project he had been involved in with children of such a young age. He was able to embed himself in all 3 settings, the nursery school where children are unsupported by their parents for 2.5 hrs a day, in the day nursery where toddlers and babies are supported by their key person and are without the guidance of a parent for

substantial periods of the day, and in the drop-in sessions where the child is accompanied throughout by the parent. What was happening for him was so much greater than just working in a drop-in session, and the wider experiences would have a significant impact on how he developed his role in the drop-in sessions. I therefore asked him to keep a journal of his personal journey.

Continuous conversations between the artist and myself reflecting on his role, the work of the children, how to engage the parents, and the process, has been such a significant part of the project. I therefore chose also to have a semi-structured interview with him at the end of the project, 'where a schedule is prepared but is sufficiently open ended to ...enable new avenues to be included...'(Cohen, Manion *et al* . p.146).

#### **4. Early Years Educators/ Children's Centre Workers.**

The group of staff, were all qualified early years practitioners, and had work experience in a variety of early years establishments, and were able to offer a distinctive interpretation and perception of the project. They had been trained to observe children, make assessments based on those observations and had learnt how to look beyond the obvious and encapsulate some of the learning that may have occurred in the process.

Three staff members were chosen to participate in the study, of whom two were long serving members of staff one of whom had witnessed the art project from its inception, and the other one had been involved in both the day nursery art project and the children's centre, and finally one new staff member who had on occasions

worked alongside the artist and taken photographs for the documentation. The three included a male member of staff, and one with a Hungarian qualification in special educational needs (SEN). The remaining three staff members, all of whom were recent recruits included the two outreach workers and centre worker who had had little involvement with the project and therefore I decided to not to include them in the study.

I was also particularly keen to use the 'Indicator of Creativity' as developed by Bertram & Pascal (2010) as part of the AcE Assessment Scale, which is used by practitioners as a means of evaluating a child's 'Attitudes and Dispositions to Learn' within their 'Accounting Early for Life Long Learning Programme'. I therefore decided to use a questionnaire for the children's centre workers which included the Indicator of Creativity assessment scale (*ibid*, p, 16) and which also offered them an opportunity to comment on the more theoretical and philosophical aspects of the project. I developed a questionnaire, which included both rating scales and open-ended questions, which 'invite an honest, personal comment' and 'puts the ownership of the data much more firmly into the respondent's hands' (Cohen *et al*, 2001 p.255).

### **Ethical Considerations:**

Ethics in social science research has been defined by Cavan as,

a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others. Being ethical limits the choices we can make in the pursuit of truth. Ethics say that while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better, even if, in the extreme case, the respect of human nature leaves one ignorant of human nature.

(Quoted in Cohen, Manion *et al*, 2000 , p.57)

This research was based on seeking a greater understanding of a project that had people at the heart of it, the people who were 'the project'. The research was therefore conducted with consideration for the following Ethical Principles,

- The participants in the research will be given a clear explanation of the purpose and procedures of the research at the beginning of the project.
- Written Informed consent from the participants will be obtained.
- The participants will be made aware of their right to withdraw their involvement and their consent at any time.
- As a researcher I have obligations to be respectful of my participants and to accord them dignity throughout the process.
- Ensure that in the process of obtaining and reporting of the data that the participants will be protected from harm.
- The participants will be given feedback on the research, whether verbally by arrangement or a copy of the report.

The Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC) include the following in their Code of Ethics, 'Be collaborative and inclusive; Be empowering and developmental;' (2010) and I would like to think that I was able to adopt those qualities in all my dealings with the artist, the children, their parents and the children's centre staff.

The initial conversation of intent was also held with the children's centre staff and also with the artist. The artist, who was a key participant, was employed throughout the centre on a casual basis and his agreement to participate in the research could have been quite problematical for him. I needed to know initially that he didn't feel coerced into participation because of his employment and that the decision was of his own volition. He also needed to be assured that he was free to withdraw from the

research, being confident that his withdrawal would not affect our normal working relationship. I was able to offer that pledge and fortunately he remained a significant participant in the process.

### **Specific Ethical Considerations Concerning Children.**

At the heart of the research were the children who were key contributors to the project. Working with children as young as 2 years old, to the eldest child represented in this study being not quite five years old, presented me with the challenge of ensuring that the evidence collected and generated was respectful, honest and fair. How was I to give them a voice when for some children verbal language had not yet been acquired and for others it was limited due to their age, knowledge and their experience of life.

My initial priority was to seek the informed consent of the parents both for themselves and their child/ren to be included in the research project. This I did by talking my ideas for the research project through with them in the very early stages of my evolving thought process concerning the project, and received a verbal approval to be a part of it. At a later stage when I had a work plan I provided them with a letter informing them of my intentions and asked them to sign a declaration providing me with written consent. The letter made clear their right to withdraw at any time from the research.

The use of photographic and video documentation also raised issues for ethical consideration. Dahlberg refers to the 'ethics of an encounter' where "The art of listening and hearing what the **O**ther is saying and taking it seriously, is related to the

ethics of an encounter. So to is seeing...(Dahlberg, Moss *et al* 1999 pg.156). The use of the camera and the intense focus on the child meant that so much of themselves was revealed in the photographs. The camera doesn't lie and the intimacy revealed by the child meant, that it required that respect for the moment witnessed and recorded, was an absolute throughout the project. Also the dissemination of the documentation needed to be handled sensitively, truthfully and appropriately.

From previous work with pre-school children I have always felt that they had the right to an explanation as to why I was taking their photograph, and how I was going to use it and they were appreciative of being consulted. One of the ethical decisions I had to make in this project was concerning an older child of nearly 5 whose mother had given permission for photographs to be taken of her, but the child withdrew her consent by telling her mother privately that she felt shy and didn't like her photograph being taken. At that point we stopped taking photographs of her, however she was very proud of a clay sculpture of a duck that she had made by herself and asked us to photograph it, which I did, and printed them and gave them to her the next day.

### **The Ethics of Formulating a Questionnaire**

The layout of the questionnaires is very important, as is the sequence of questions and their content. Setting up the structure and deciding what types of questions to use, ranging from multiple choice through to open ended, rank ordering, rating scales etc. is very difficult as it will effect the quality of the data received and ultimately the validity of the research study. A questionnaire should be

‘...clear, unambiguous and uniformly workable...minimise potential errors from respondents...help in engaging their interest, encourage their co-operation, and eliciting answers as close as possible to the truth. (Davidson 1970, quoted in Cohen *et al* 2001, p.250)

The questionnaire itself is subjected to ethical considerations, which are referred to by Cohen *et al* (2001 p. 246) as issues of ‘methodological rigour and fairness’. I will need to ensure that the questionnaire will be fairly constructed, and that every effort has been made to ensure that the questions are unbiased, applicable, inoffensive and reliable.

The final ethical consideration is to ensure that the written report gives an accurate account, and honestly and truly reflects the information imparted in the questionnaires by the respondents.

### **Ethics of Conducting an interview.**

“it is crucial to keep uppermost in one’s mind the fact that the interview is a social, interpersonal encounter, not merely a data collection exercise.” (Cohen, Manion *et al* pg.279) and what was most important for me was to acknowledge and respect throughout the interview how a parent feels when you are looking in depth at their child and the emotional context in which their sharing of perceptions occurs. Dignity for the parent and sensitivity towards their feelings was essential and this was brought home to me when the interview with the parent of a child with a learning disability, who initially was overcome with happiness at seeing the level of involvement and positive engagement of her child as witnessed in the slide show, suddenly became distressed. At that point I switched off the Dictaphone, and the focus was no longer on the interview but supporting the parent.

## Role of Participant Researcher

A significant factor in the research was my role as participant researcher described by Robson (2002) as “someone who holds down a job in some particular area and is, at the same time, involved in carrying out systematic inquiry which is of relevance to their job” (*ibid* p. 534) He suggests that the disadvantages may include problems with time management, lack of expertise in designing and carrying out the research and possible difficulties with organisational relationships and personal prejudice

Time was a an issue especially for the parental interviews, and ideally I would have liked to interview them away from the drop-in, however that would have made extra demands on their family time. I therefore decided to do the interview within the sessions, but in a separate room, with the children present if they wished, or with the door ajar so that the children could easily access their parents. This was important as some of the parents had very young children who had not yet been separated from them for any length of time. I also saw the whole process as within the remit of engaging parents in their children’s ‘learning and development’, which is a requirement of Sure Start Children’s Centres (DfES, 2007).

The staff members, who are part of the team I am responsible for as an extended services co-ordinator, were an essential part of this project, and I truly valued and respected their contribution. Each one of them has a slightly different role within the children’s centre, and this gave them a distinctive point of view, which added credibility to my research. I was very clear at the outset that it was their ‘voice’ I wanted to hear and that there were no right or wrong answers and they too could withdraw the questionnaires that they had completed at any time.



Personal prejudice is something that every researcher grapples with and I was no exception, as I truly believed that the project of working with the artist had been of immense benefit to the participants and it meant that I had to be vigilant in the truth and honesty of my reporting of the research.

As a 'participant researcher' I also found it extremely challenging as I had often to make choices as to whether to restrict my decisions in order to set boundaries which would have made my research easier, or to follow the natural progression of the children, their interests and the guidance of the artist. An example of this is that very early on in the project a joint decision was made between the artist and myself, to restrict the fortnightly sessions to working solely with the medium of clay. This was in direct response to observations of a child repeating a technique that he had learnt from using the clay, whilst playing with dough, and it was felt that he could build upon and improve this new skill given the time. The artist had also noticed the tentative watching from the sidelines of a toddler, eager to see what was happening but not yet ready to participate. So for the rest of the research period the artist worked with the children using clay. This restricted the range of data I had initially planned for but it seemed to be the right decision for the children. It also meant that the work of the artist remained more true to the Reggio philosophy, where time is provided for the children to familiarise themselves with the materials, to explore and investigate and much importance is placed on long term projects, "allowing them to return to something over and over again in order to master it in their own way" (Tarini and White, in Edwards *et al*, p. 377)

## **Flexible Research Design**

From the outset I was aware that I needed a Flexible Research Design where “ the details of the design typically ‘emerge’ during data collection and analysis” (Robson pg.89) but didn’t really appreciate how ‘flexible’ my research process needed to be. One of the most difficult aspects of my research was the compilation of the data and just collecting the evidence was not straightforward. The very nature of a drop-in group is entirely based on individual choice. Parents choose to attend and their attendance is often determined by the arbitrariness of life for a family with babies and toddlers. Children became ill, one family suffered bereavement, another had a last minute holiday, family circumstances changed and for one reason or another they were no longer able to attend the group. On several occasions I was unable to follow through with the parents the documentation that I held, and appointments that I made were cancelled and further opportunities were not possible. I constantly had to change the group of children that I wished to use for my data to include those whose parents were able to commit to the informal conversation stage of the research. So whilst I may have some fantastic documentation on individual children, their engagement with the artist and their achievements, for the purpose of this research I have been unable to use the data. The reality of the circumstances within which I was trying to conduct my research meant that when it came to choosing which children and families to include in the data I used the ones who could commit to a longer time frame of involvement. My sampling therefore became more ‘convenience sampling’ where one selects the group from’ whoever happens to be available’ (Cohen, Manion *et al* pg.143). This however did not diminish the value of the children whose data is used in this research as their participation and their journey and experience of learning is of equal value to all those whose data was not able to be used.

The choice of the individual also dictated the children who participated in the creative work. It was entirely child initiated and they chose to take part in the activities. The individual child's journey was also entirely personal to them, with some children choosing to participate in the activities on every occasion and some only visiting once. One little boy aged 3, spent entire sessions of up to 2hrs with the artist, experimenting with the clay

### **Methods of Data Analysis.**

The data I gained from this study was mainly qualitative with some quantitative scales and therefore the methods of analysis I used reflected this.

### **Methods of Analysis Used for the Questionnaire.**

The questionnaire involves the use of two Likhart Scales, one to establish the methods used by the artist to engage the children and the second one to evaluate the creativity of the children whilst participating in the creative activities. I followed the process as discussed by Cohen *et al* (2001 p.265) which consisted of first checking the questionnaires to ensure that all the questions had been answered and to look for any inaccuracies which may have occurred during the completion of the questionnaire. I then used a simple score for all the closed questions, and I devised a coding frame 'generating a frequency tally of the range of responses...' (*ibid* p. 265)' for the open-ended questions.

## **Method of Analysis Used for the Interviews.**

For the interviews I used a cluster analysis where I first analysed the content looking for a pattern to emerge from the responses of the adults, and categorized them broadly into themes.

This involves organising, accounting for, making sense of the data in terms of the participant's definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities. (Cohen, Manion *et al*, p. 147)

## **Validity and Reliability.**

In order to establish the validity and reliability of my research I used the evaluative criteria of Guba and Lincoln (1985), which they developed as a means of 'establishing 'trustworthiness', and has four defined characteristics i.e. 'credibility, confirmability, transferability and dependability' (*ibid*, p, 129 quoted in Cohen, Manion *et al*, 2001).

- **Credibility**

I used multiple methods of data collection to provide the necessary 'triangulation', which is " a research approach employing more than one perspective, theory, participant, method or analysis" (Robson pg 553) in order to substantiate the validity of this enquiry.

- **Confirmability**

I sought to present the findings of this study through the 'voices' of the participants, including the use of photographic documentation to represent the 'voice' of the children.

- **Transferability**

I used 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) in the presentation of the data which I acquired from the research. Stake(1995) refers to the need to 'present a substantial body of uncontested description' (*Ibid*, p,110)

- **Dependability**

I conducted my research, and reported on the findings with honesty and integrity and am able to provide an audit trail.

## **Analysis and Findings.**

*If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of a least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, the excitement and mystery of the world we live in.*

(Rachel Carson)

This research study was in essence the experience of a diverse group of adults, as we accompanied a small sample of children on a journey of learning. The joy and the interest displayed by the participating children, as they played and experimented with clay was not in doubt, and the photographic documentation was an honest portrayal of them and their experience.

It also provided a unique opportunity for a handful of adults, within the hurly burly of a drop-in session to stop, look, listen and hopefully to learn from our children. There were distinct and personal voices of interpretation and these were founded on the relationship between the adults and the child, and could be described as

- Parent/child being the child's most significant and primary relationship to date

- Artist/child with the artist assuming the role of facilitator, supporter and teacher
- Children's centre worker/ child with the importance of the worker being that of an observer and another adult, known to the child from regular attendance at the drop-in.

For the purpose of this analysis I am initially going to discuss the child's involvement as interpreted by the participating adults. I will then consider the different groups of adults, namely the parents and the children's centre workers. I will identify the similarities of perception within each group, as well as highlight significant differences of opinion. The perceptions of the artist will be looked at in more detail because of the uniqueness of his role. Finally I will report on the common themes, which have emerged throughout the process.

### **The Artist's Perspective:**

The artist was encouraged to keep a journal of his experiences for the purpose of this research study. It is testimony to his very personal journey of discovery and learning and how he was able to apply his emerging understanding of the children, and his own role in supporting their development to enrich the whole process for them both.

He recorded early on in his journal that in his opinion the following five components were essential requirements and these beliefs underpinned his approach;

- To love the child, 'the well behaved, responsive, co-operative child' as well as the 'difficult child, or the quiet, retiring child or the disruptive child'

- To hear the child, 'his soul as well as his voice'
- To develop together, 'so that the child isn't the only person learning'
- To create a safe environment with the child
- To create trust with the child.

(Artist, Journal 2010, p, 18-19)

He defined the key moments of his own journey of learning during the last 18 months, as at the Tynemouth Conference which '*introduced me to many ways in which this creative development was being approached and observed*', the visit to Birmingham and meeting with the two artists in residence '*to see that it was possible without the idyll which was Reggio*', and finally the visit to the House of Objects at the Rising Sun Country Park in North Tyneside that was based on the Remida Centre in Reggio Emilia. He described it as '*an inspiration where the objects were displayed in sumptuous ways*'.

He found that that acquiring and learning about new terminology such as "The Contagion of Learning' (Malaguzzi), the 'Zone of Proximal Development' (Vygotsky), had a positive influence on him, and he was able to use them to explain his role during a presentation he gave to the nursery and day nursery staff in the Children's Centre.

He learnt to be respectful of children giving them time to '*look for their own answers, to make discoveries*' and not to answer '*before children can formulate the question*'.

He quotes an experience he had when supporting a young child in the day nursery to use a camera to photograph anything the child wished to. He noticed that the child

had his finger over the lens, and went to 'correct him' only to be informed by the child that he wanted to photograph his finger!

He became aware of the relationship a child enters into when working with materials, for example the clay and the 'benefits of working with fewer children for longer periods, and observing how progress develops ' *slowly, gently... applying each discovery to a next stage*'. His journal went on to explore his very personal beliefs, and key moments throughout his life and how they informed his current perceptions. At the end of the project I shared the slideshows with him, some of them which he had seen before and I asked him for his final impressions. He felt that it had been a privilege to work so closely with the children and he found watching the slideshows made him realize how important the experience was both for himself and the children. He felt that for him the most essential thing that he had learnt was " *it was less about what we were doing and more about the relationships we were building*". He found that it was very important to have the mothers there with the children, and although his relationship with them was slow at the beginning, he found that through this relationship he learnt more about the child and he learnt to respect the unique perspective of a parent. He saw them in a different light

He found that the sharing of information between him and myself was beneficial to him,

*...all that stuff you have given me on Reggio, Ken Robinson and all those kind of things, given every week to me, and I go away and look at it and that's really broadened my understanding of what's going on.*

When asked what he would do differently, with the benefit of hindsight he replied,



- *Probably would have started off the way I have done, the way I did even before I came into this project. I work myself and wait for the children to come to see me, to see more and then get them involved, rather than do anything on a formal basis.*
- *I would definitely document. I think that has been crucial and its something I have never been used to before.*
- *I would structure in some feedback from the documentation with the child, the parent and the artist together, otherwise you wonder what the documentation is for.*
- *More talking with the parents because it is how you change attitudes and once the parents realise what's going on that gets fed into the child's life at home, the extended family even.*

He found the fragmented pattern of work between the settings made it more difficult for him to build on the relationships he established with the children and also their newly acquired skills. He commented on how he lost momentum with one child in particular after an absence of four weeks. He said that in retrospect it may have been more beneficial for him to have worked in blocks of six months at each setting instead of '*18 months fragmentation*'.

### **The Child's Involvement:**

The child's involvement was reflected in the photographic documentation and was used as the springboard to encourage the adults to consider what had taken place and evaluate the project.

The children and the parents watched the slideshow of the photographs together, with the exception of one child who was at nursery school. Not all the children sat with their parents for the duration of the slideshow, but the parents were very interested and appeared to enjoy watching the sequence of photographs.

Parental comments passed on their child's involvement included

*I enjoy seeing the expressions on her face...really, really exploring the texture, the squiginess...makes you realise how much fascination there is...I can see her discovering it...makes me realise how much more familiar she is with it now.*

*He is starting to wanna do things his way...definitely has his own ideas now...attention span is definitely getting longer*

*Never seen her sit so long to do something..helped that she knew S through school...amazing isn't it...never seen her sit so long to do something...she has to like it to stay with it with her needs...cant get over it C*

*Quite intense about it, isn't he?...A is looking away where he is not. Very manly activity, it is what Daddy does*

*I love seeing him enjoy it. I love seeing him. He likes being creative.*

One of the lovely consequences of listening to the audio recordings was that I had switched them on at the beginning of the slideshow and the recorder had captured the response of the children as they either sat on their parents lap, or stood alongside them watching the photographs. The conversation that took place between parent and child was thick with a tangible emotion, and I was able to hear the child's pleasure and understand a little of what they had learnt owing to their verbal utterances. Even those children with very early language skills made noises of delight as they watched themselves and one little girl repeated 'again' many times during the slideshow. One of the older boys made appropriate cutting and squirting sounds as he watched himself use the knife and spray the clay. Although I had witnessed their responses by being present at the interview I hadn't appreciated the full power of listening to the human voice without any other distractions. It's ability to convey the truth of a situation was really astonishing.

Another aspect of the auditory tapes of the child and parent together was, that I became aware of the amazing ability that a parent has and is able to use to engage their children, and focus their attention on something of interest. The real relationship between the mother and child was easily translated on the tape and I found it immensely powerful. It highlighted for me in a meaningful way the necessity for engaging parents in their children's learning and substantiated the theories of parental engagement and family learning that I knew so well.

The staff were asked to focus more closely on the children's involvement and used a scale based on the domain, 'Indicator 2: Creativity' (Bertram and Pascal, 2010, p,16 ) to consider more closely the group of children's creative disposition as witnessed in the slide shows.

**Figure 2: Likhart Scale Showing ‘Staff Responses Evaluating Children’s Creativity using the Creative Indicators’**

The children appeared to;					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Interested in the activity and keen to explore and curious	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox" value="3"/>
2. Imaginative and had good ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox" value="1"/>	<input type="checkbox" value="2"/>
3. Spontaneous	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox" value="3"/>
4. Willing to try new things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox" value="1"/>	<input type="checkbox" value="2"/>
5. Pleased with him/herself and their achievement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox" value="3"/>
6. Showed self confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox" value="1"/>	<input type="checkbox" value="2"/>
7. Extended their own learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox" value="2"/>	<input type="checkbox" value="1"/>
8. Reflected on what they were doing and appeared willing to talk about it during the activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox" value="2"/>	<input type="checkbox" value="1"/>
Source : Bertram & Pascal 2010					

The results as indicated in Table 2, show that the staff felt that there was a high level of creativity experienced by the children during the activity. Had time allowed, it may have been more beneficial to look individually at each child and rate each child accordingly. However this research study had not been set up as an assessment of the child’s ability or involvement.

### **The Parent’s Perceptions:**

The project was for the most part considered by the interviewed parents as being a positive experience for them and their children. Comments on the benefits of having the artist work within the drop-in session included,

*I really felt positive when she first started the project. I think it is a really good thing that they get the experience of all these different mediums...because clay and all these professional artists materials are seldom made available to very young children... but they are able to do a lot of creative things with them even though they are really young. Which goes to show that you shouldn't restrict the materials children work with.*

*I do think, though, actually having a third person there, outside the mother and child group is potentially very good...third person there who guides both of you (mother and child) along.*

*He is an outsider coming in and doing it a different way*

The parents were very positive about the artist, his professional role and his personal qualities. They noted the difference that having an artist brought to the children,

*S was a professional artist and so his knowledge of all the professional materials is a bit more in depth...he has got a lot of things to contribute... more like a consultants role.*

*He's an artist. I think because we had S there, the artistic ideas and the way he wanted to do it... not interfering in the child's work, that's the most important thing and that's what he done. He carried on conversation throughout the activity and never put any pressure on ... lets do this, lets do it a different way. Yeh, I think S was the perfect person.*

*He is the professional artist and knows about his job, uses different materials and how to work with them..*

The parents acknowledged the importance of the relationship between their child and the artist, and some of the parents reflected on how they too had learnt from

watching him work with the children, and from advice that he had offered them, especially about allowing the children to experiment without adult influence.

*He is just absorbing, she is just absorbed by him...and the experience...look at her she is just fascinated by him, and I mean there is his enjoyment as well.*

*'very child led, never been in any way imposing, very encouraging.*

*Maybe it's just S's way with the children, maybe they get so engrossed*

*'Only man he threw his arms around'*

Parents were amazed at the length of time their children spent with the artist. The parent of a two and a half year old, who initially showed little interest in the artist, spent nearly an hour with him on the third occasion.

*He really does concentrate; he didn't even like getting messy six months ago. He concentrates for a lot longer... that S can give that one on one attention...made him sit and concentrate for that length of time.*

### **The Staff Perceptions:**

The perceptions of the three staff members were gained through the use of a questionnaire. Initially they were asked to complete two open questions with the intention of gaining an impression of their initial opinions of the art project.

The first was a general question about the project and its relevance to all the participants, the children, the parents, and including themselves.

- **Benefits to the children:**

There was a strong consensus of opinion that they believed that it was beneficial to the children. The words '*it was a good idea*', '*it was an opportunity*' and '*nice for the children*' were used.

- **Benefits to the Parents;**

Concerning the benefits to the parents the staff weren't initially convinced that the parents would see the value and were not sure how many parents would participate. Although one member felt that '*it may help the parents to do things together with their children*'.

- **Benefits to the Staff.**

The value of the experience for them ranged from it was '*a great experience for me*' to '*I thought it would be just another activity for us to look after.*'

The second question concerned how they initially perceived the artist, his role and his interaction/ involvement with the children and provided answers that were significantly different and therefore I will mention them individually.

One member of staff had worked with him previously at one of the other settings in the Children's centre and felt that he '*was perhaps not truly acknowledged there*' and therefore was unsure of how his role would work in the drop-in session when she first started working with him. The newest member of staff thought that he was great to work with and that the children enjoyed being with him. The third member of staff thought that he would introduce lots of ideas, bring tools along with him and the children would have something to take home.

On completion of the above two questions the staff members were then shown the same slideshows of all the children, that the parents had previously seen. They were

then asked to complete the questionnaire, which they did individually without any consultation between them.

They completed the 'Indicator of Creativity' and the results are shown in Figure 2 (p.47) and as discussed earlier in this chapter under the section of **Child Involvement** This scale was used as a means to increase their awareness of the child's involvement. They were then asked to comment on whether the slideshow had made any difference to their understanding of the children, and the way they learnt.

*'It did definitely. With the photos we have the chance to freeze the moment and have a look at their expressions, which tells a lot about their feelings. Also it helps us to understand and follow the whole process of their work.'*

*I have witnessed very high levels of concentration from very young children.*

*Yes, due to their facial expressions that are directed towards the artist.*

Their comments show that watching the slideshow, and looking more closely at the indicators of creativity encouraged them to be reflective. The 'focussing of teachers' attention on the intentions and understandings of the children'

(Katz, 1998, p.39) is a fundamental element of the Reggio Emilia philosophy.

The questionnaire then used another Likhart Scale, which asked them to look closely at the role and the characteristics that influenced the engagement and involvement of the artist.

**Figure 3: The Personal Views of Staff Concerning the Involvement And Engagement of the Artist.**



<b>Did the artist appear to;</b>					
	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1 Support the children's curiosity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Encourage their imagination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Provide opportunities for them to acquire new skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Give them time to explore things for themselves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Show evidence of actively listening as demonstrated by his use of body language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Establish a relationship with the children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Show empathy with the children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Show pleasure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

There was high level of agreement from all three staff members on the characteristics displayed by the artist in the slideshow, and which facilitated the children's learning.

The final three questions asked them to reconsider whether in light of the slideshow they had re-evaluated the benefits to the child, the parents and themselves.

- **Benefits to the Children:**

*The children have benefited with the self -confidence to try new things on their own.*

*The project has given the children an experience I'm sure they would not have had anywhere else.*

*Many of them tried out things that they didn't trust first or wasn't sure about. Through the artwork their confidence and independence grew. Also they experienced how important their feelings are. They payed attention and been engaged for unbelievable lengths of time.*

- **Benefits for the Parents.**

They felt that they had witnessed the parents benefiting from the project and the documentation, and offered the following opinions:

*They have been able to see their children achieve and enjoy some wonderful experiences.*

*...They have benefited from seeing their children learning and playing.*

*I think many of them could see their children focusing and paying attention to the activity more than any time before.*

The staff observed the willingness of the parents to involve themselves in the activity with their children.

*As many of them thought the children might need more help than with other activities, they more likely worked together with them than otherwise they would.*

*Several of those parents have also joined in themselves- doing things alongside each other- creating a lovely relaxed atmosphere at our groups and themselves learning new skills.*

- **Benefits felt by the Staff.**

One of the staff members who had often been involved in taking the photographs of the children responded with the following:

*Its been a great honour to be able to be a part of some really great and important moments of children's life...I got most of the time emotional to see the children's*

*honest, natural ways of discovering the world with fresh eyes and curiosity and I feel I know them better.*

The staff member who had expressed doubt at the beginning due to her previous experience of seeing the artist in a different setting found that the experience was more rewarding in the drop-in session.

*I have seen some lovely interactions between the artist, the children and their parents. My best bit has been observing the children revisit and recreate aspects from the project.*

The newest member of staff , whose previous work experience was in day care, was impressed at the ability of the artist to get the parents involved in the activity, and their desire to do the activity themselves, '*and together with their children*'.

In conclusion they were invited to make any further comments. Interestingly one of the staff members highlighted the importance of "*the role of questioning children and the value of staying quiet, and letting them be*" and commented on the effect that the parents irregular attendance had, making it difficult for the children to continue their learning experience . These were both issues, which had been raised by the artist earlier in this report.

## **Common Aspects that Emerged from the Research.**

### **1. Relationships.**

All adult participants commented at some stage about the importance of the relationships that had developed as a result of the project.

There was powerful evidence of the development of the relationship between the artist and the children. The documentation was testament to this and the fact that the children returned to the clay work time and again showed that they enjoyed working with him. They were thrilled to see him, and parents commented on the fact that the children often went straight over to join him soon after they had arrived. His enjoyment of the children of the children was also evident in the documentation, and a parent who has subsequently returned to America commented on the fact that her child and the artist faces were mirror images of each other as they worked together.

The parents were clear that their children benefited from working with the artist whether it was from the encouragement and support he gave them, or the fact that he was an 'outsider' possessing artistic qualities, a 'man' who responded differently to their child and who the boys especially identified with. A few of them were able to give examples of how they too had benefited from the relationship they had formed with the artist and they themselves reported back to him how their children were using the skills they had acquired with him at home, playing with the dough and even on the beach.

The artist reflected on how his initial relationship with the parents developed from an initial '*nodding acquaintance*' to one where he felt more comfortable talking with them about their child's participation, and also the pleasure he had gained from the positive feedback from some of the parents. The artist also spoke about the respectful relationship that had developed with the staff, and the unobtrusive way they had taken the photographs. He noted that even the staff who weren't involved in the activity remained quietly observant, and were keen to come after the activity had finished to share their observations with him.

The relationship between myself, as the facilitator of the project and the artist played a significant role, as we needed to establish common ground by using and acknowledging our professional heritage and building the relationship on our aspirations for the children. This was perhaps the most important relationship for me as it enabled me to develop the project because I had the confidence in him, and his ability and I was secure in the knowledge that he had embarked on a continuum of discovery and learning with me.

We were applying the process used by educators of Reggio Emilia to develop reciprocal relationships.

## **2. Dispositions**

In reflection, the project was characterized by the willingness of all the participants to engage with each other. The children were willing to participate in the activities with the artist, and they established a relationship where each was keen to learn from each other. The parents were willing to engage with their child and keen to find out more about what their child had learnt, and were willing to listen and learn from the artist. The artist was willing to embrace new ideas, and learn from the children's experiences, as well as learn about the significance of the parent/child relationship and thereby learn more about their children. The children's centre staff were prepared to challenge their own pre-conceptions regarding the role of a resident artist, and learn to look more closely at what was really taking place between the artist and the child.

What was significant to me was that each of them displayed a willingness to learn, to make the most of the situation and 'to have a go' and therefore could be described as displaying the characteristics of little 'c' creativity.

(Craft ,2002 )

### **3. Gender:**

Both parents and members of staff highlighted as of significant importance the fact that the artist was a man, in an almost exclusively female dominated environment.

*... is because he is a man, he doesn't get too involved, (women see it differently), he lets them get on with it... I like the fact that it is a man... we are surrounded by women here.*

**Parent**

*...he is kneeling like S, men kneel like that, his Dad kneels like that when he is working... he likes men... he's a man's man.*

**Parent**

*It was also a special thing for most of them to work with a male person, as they are surrounded with women most of the time.*

**Children's Centre Worker**

*I do feel that the Artist- as a male role model was a great influence on all the children (and their parents).*

**Children's Centre Worker**

## **REFLECTION ON THE METHODS AND THE OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY**

### **Criticism of the Research Study.**

## Planning

This piece of research highlighted to me the importance of the preparatory phase of any research. The concept of the project grew organically and the research evolved from the initial project. It meant that some of the initial collection of data, namely the documentation was quite random, and dependant on who was available to take the photographs and their ability to use the camera sensitively to capture the moment. In hindsight I would have done more preparation work with the children's centre staff about the role of documentation, and ideally would have designated one staff member to see a session through to the end, or even possibly one staff member to follow the whole project.

The organisation of the project was made more difficult by the setting being off site and something as simple as ensuring that we had the tools i.e. remembering to take the camera with us to the setting and making sure the battery was charged required planning.

I feel it would have been more effective if the slide shows could have been processed more quickly, and a time set aside sooner than was possible during this study, to share the evidence with the parents and the children. I think that that would have enriched the experience even more for the parents as they would have been more aware of progression of their children's learning.

I would have paid more attention to the physical environment and negotiated the possible use of a comfortable room when conducting the interview that was big enough to accommodate parents and children together, with space for the children to be independently occupied if needed. The environment for the interviews was less

than satisfactory due to its size, and the children wanted to move freely between the activities in the drop-in and reaffirm that their parent had not left them.

### **The Process of Interviewing**

The process of interviewing parents accompanied by their children was difficult and often it meant that I was unable to get direct answers to questions, and sometimes the interview came to a conclusion sooner than I would liked due to the need of the child taking rightful precedence over my research questions.

Stake (1995, p.66) refers to the 'artistry' of a good interview in which 'anticipating probes that evoke good responses is a special art.' (*ibid*, p.65) I was very aware during some of the interviews with the parents that I found it difficult to ask the questions that I needed the answers to. The interview process was made more difficult by my choice of an unstructured interview and therefore I didn't really have an advance strategy, to prevent the interview from wandering off the task. I realise that even with a semi-structured interview, where there is a framework there is nevertheless an 'art' to conducting a skilful interview.

I found it very difficult during the interviews with the parents to take a wholly objective stance and not slip into my work role, which is essentially to support and encourage the parents for whatever reason. I was very conscious when listening to the interviews again of how often I reverted to that role, and most especially when conducting the interview with the parent of a child with special needs.

### **Sample of Children**



One of the key limitations of the study was that in the end it only looked at the children who chose to participate in the activity. They were also the children who soon became engaged in what they were doing. This raised further questions which I was unable to answer in this project.

- What was it that lead certain children to want to participate and not others?
- Was it something unique to that child, or were there similarities between the children who participated?
- Did they attend the group more often, and have a greater understanding of what is possible?
- Did they feel more a sense of belonging and understand the group code of practice?

The motivation of the individual child would have provided a fascinating insight and rich data, but was so difficult to measure in this small scale study. The environment, the patterns of group attendance, the range of age, the language abilities of the children may all have had a significant impact on the participation of the children. The question remains as to 'Why did it work for some and not for others?'

The art project had taken place in approximately 30 drop-in sessions and in real terms, when compared to the Reggio Emilia Municipal schools which have been operative since 1963, our experience of working with an artist over the period of eighteen months, means that the art project was still in its infancy at the end of this study. I think I was quite ambitious about what I wanted to achieve from the short period of time that the artist was involved with the group, and the reality was that you can develop a project as fast as your circumstances allow. There is still so much we have yet to discover, and still so many lessons to be learnt.

## What was Effective in the Research Study

The project had established that the role of an artist within a children's centre drop-in was an effective way of meeting the Learning and Development requirement of the EYFS, in the area of their Creative Development, 'Children's creativity must be extended by the provision of support for their curiosity, exploration and play' ((Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2008, p.15). The opportunity provided for the children through the medium of working with clay met the following EYFS Early Learning Goals (*ibid*, p.16) 'Exploring Media and Materials' by working with clay and exploring its texture, creating new shapes and 'Developing Imagination and Imaginative Play' through the narrative they created whilst working alongside the visual artist.

We had also found an effective mechanism by using the documentation to involve the parents in their children's learning. This raised the awareness of the parents of their children's accomplishments and it supported their learning and developing together. The project had enabled the parents to work together with the artist, and to combine their knowledge to help the child develop creatively.

The project had established a culture of learning through reflection. Knowledge, which we had gained through participating in the process, had been shared between all the participants, including the children, and a desire to learn more about how we could improve on what we had learnt previously. This was common to all participants. The process of documentation, reflection, shared knowledge and frank discussion were components, which were influenced by our interest in the Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Years Education.

The chance for the children to develop their creative dispositions (Bertram and Pascal 2010) with the support of a resident artist, the opportunity for the parents to engage in their children's learning and the willingness of all participants to learn from their experiences meant that this art project would help to improve the outcomes for the children and also support '*children, parents and staff to become enthusiastic, independent and successful life-long learners.*' (Sure Start Children's Centres Statutory Guidance, 2010 p.6).

## **CONCLUSION**

### ***Involve Me and I'll Understand***

#### ***(Chinese Proverb)***

This research study reflected a personal desire of mine to develop my understanding and to provide an explanation for why I intuitively felt that we, the children's centre staff, the children and parents had been very fortunate to have a resident visual artist working with us in our drop-in session.

This study provided evidence of the characteristics of the art project which had influenced the outcome, and had led to the adult participants feeling that it had been a positive experience, and we had powerful photographic documentation demonstrating the engagement and pleasure of the children.

The range of evidence, which included the 'voice' of the adult participants, the journal of the artist and the photographs of the children, demonstrated that rewarding relationships were developed between all participants. The children were provided

with opportunities to develop new skills, and to work creatively with the medium of clay for a lengthy period of time. They were allowed to experiment alongside an interested, engaged adult who understood the pleasure they gained from the clay, and who respected their need for time, autonomy and who also willingly entered into their world of discovery and joy.

As an artist, as a parent and as a children's centre worker we now had that image of the child, referred to by Malaguzzi as being one who,

is rich in potential, strong, powerful, competent and most of all, connected to adults and other children." (Loris Malaguzzi, 1993 cited in Dahlberg et al. 2007)

The employment of an artist within the setting had raised the awareness of both the staff and the parents, of the significance of providing opportunities for young children to be creative. Creativity is a fundamental part of early years education, but just as important is the role of a creative educator, and in this project we were able to witness the powerful effect of the combination of the two.

Earlier on in the project whilst researching the dispositions which support creativity in a young child (Bertram and Pascal, 2010), I was reintroduced to the word 'Serendipity'. Looking up the definition I reflected on how aptly it described this project, '*the faculty of making happy and unexpected discoveries by accident*' (Oxford Dictionary). There were many serendipitous experiences throughout the project, and parents spoke of their amazement when their children recreated experiments they had had with the clay, using dough. The artist told of his joy as he worked alongside the children and saw them revisit what they had learnt the week before, and poignantly the moment the mother of a child with special educational needs saw the tranquillity of her child as she played with the clay.

Four of the children from this study continue to work closely with the artist and new children have joined and are now showing sustained interest in working with him. Further questioning could involve us in undertaking a further study of the child, and what it is that makes some children of three years and under be happy to spend between an hour, to as long as two and a half hours on a single activity. Do these children have an exceptional ability or is it that given the right environment and supported by the relationship of the right adult, whether it is the parent, early years educator or artist, most children are capable of achieving these levels of involvement. This small-scale study of a short-term project raised more questions worthy of answers, and a more substantial piece of research would have proved to be more insightful and offer more transferability and replication of experience.

*A belief in the child's right to creative thought and expression transforms the classroom. In the past, in the present, and in the future, our most enlightened visions of education will be connected by the common thread of imagination, creative thought, and enhanced opportunities for creative expression. As we look ahead, it will no doubt be possible to trace society's greatest innovations and achievements back to an abiding respect for creative thought processes during childhood. For when we value creative thinking and creative expression in our society, it becomes part of our social consciousness and social capital.*

(Jalongo, 2003, p.226)

The above quotation reflects my personal beliefs, and I hope that this research study has provided an example of how a drop-in session can be transformed through the employment and work of a resident visual artist, who has the ability to respect and value the imagination and creative expression of all children.

Clough and Nutbrown (pg. 4) refer to the "persuasive" nature of research and my wish for this study is, that it may persuade the reader of the value to the child, the

parents and early years educators of working alongside a creative artist in a children's centre. The journey of learning that was undertaken by all the participants provided us at the end of the study with a greater **understanding** of the process we had begun to help us achieve a positive outcome for our children and our parents.

## APPENDICES

### Staff Questionnaire

#### Section 1- Initial Response

To be completed before the slide show

##### Question 1

What were your initial feelings generally about the art project and its relevance to the group as a whole including the children, the parents and yourself as a member of staff?

##### Question 2

What was your initial perception of the role of the artist, his interaction and involvement with the children?

#### Section 2: Documentation: A visual record of the children's participation in the creative art activities.

Please read the following questions and indicate the response that best describes your opinion of the children as witnessed in the slide show and from your personal observations.

**The children appeared to;**

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither Agree Nor Disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. Interested in the activity and keen to explore and curious	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Imaginative and had good ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Spontaneous	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Willing to try new things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Pleased with him/herself and their achievement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Showed self confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Extended their own learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Reflected on what they were doing and appeared willing to talk about it during the activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Source : Pascal & Bertram 2010

### Question 2

Has the slide show made any difference to your understanding of the children and their way of learning?

Please explain the reason for your answer.

### Section 3: Role of the artist.

Please read the following statements and indicate the response that best describes your view of the involvement and engagement of the artist during the activities.

**Did the artist appear to;**



	1	2	3	4	5
1 Support the children's curiosity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Encourage their imagination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Provide opportunities for them to acquire new skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Give them time to explore things for themselves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Show evidence of actively listening as demonstrated by his use of body language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Establish a relationship with the children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Show empathy with the children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Show pleasure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Question 6**

How do you feel the children have benefited from participating in this art project?

**Question 7**

How do you feel the parents have benefited from participating in this art project?

**Question 8**

How do you feel have benefited from having participated in this project?

**Question 9**

Do you have any other comments you may wish to make about the project?

Name:.....

Current position:.....

Date of completion:.....

**Participant Consent Form****Researcher:** Janet Law**Address:** The Orchard, Wykham Lane, Bodicote. Oxon. OX16 9UPName: **Position in the Study.** (Please tick the appropriate box)

Child

Parent

Artist

CC Worker

I confirm that I have been made fully aware of the research study I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, without providing any reason for my decision. I agree to take part in the above study. I agree to the interview with myself being audio recorded. **Parental Consent:**I give consent for **my child** .....to take part in this study I understand that the participation of ..... in this study is subject to my consent and I am free to withdraw that consent at any time. I agree for the photographs of ..... to be used in the study. **Signature:****Date:****Name:**

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