

Family maths games library

At **South Acton Children's Centre, London Borough of Ealing**, the maths games library is open once a week. It contains games, toys and equipment for children and parents to explore colour, shape, sorting, number, pattern and measuring.

Most game bags are built around story or information books that relate to the concept.

All parents have an induction session where the importance of taking a relaxed attitude and enjoying the time with their child is emphasised. They are encouraged to follow their child's interests and allow the child to lead the play. Some parents are involved in helping to maintain and lend out the games.

Each bag has a laminated card with content details and ideas of how to play with the equipment. One parent is now helping to translate the instruction cards into Somali.

Key workers follow children's development and make recommendations for which games to borrow next.

Parents are asked for their comments on the games and their child's response. These can be written down, but exchanging observations verbally, when the game is returned, works best.

Parents are also invited to attend a series of workshops on how to develop their child's thinking and interest, but using the library is not dependent upon this. All children are enrolled and take-up is monitored very closely, so that families that have not borrowed are encouraged to do so.

A curriculum booklet, *How to help your children with maths*, has been published to accompany the library. This has been translated into the two most common community languages.

“I would never have thought of using bath time to teach him in this way. I learned a lot about shapes from the book myself.”



Titch

This bag contains the picture storybook Titch; an expandable tape measure; and a set of playing cards based on the characters and objects, graded in size, in the book. An instruction card suggests ways to share the story, play sorting and matching games with the character cards, and look for objects around the house to sort into size. Open-ended play with the tape measure is suggested.

Ten in the Bed

The picture storybook, Ten in a bed, is provided along with suggestions for singing and acting out the rhyme with fingers or soft toys on a bed. Cards with numbers and signs on them are also enclosed to encourage numeral recognition.

My Mum and Dad Make me Laugh

This storybook is used as a starting point for observations and discussion about patterns and colours. The bag contains patterned animals that match the story, pattern cards and a packet of crayons and drawing pad.

The investment in resources and staff time (one member of staff is allocated to the library each week) produces a clearly marked and positive outcome.

“ I am more patient when I play with her. I follow the instructions on the card that breaks the games down into steps, so I don't rush her now. ”



Standards on entry to the school are low but a substantial majority of children are 'on course to attain the early learning goals by the end of Reception. The achievement is due to the good teaching and to the excellent link with parents to support learning at home, particularly through the maths games library. (Ofsted, July 2004)

