

**‘Creating a Space for our Youngest
Children: The Under Threes at
Nursery.’**

Abstract

Creating a Space for our Youngest Children: The Under Threes at Nursery' is a qualitative inductive piece of action research that focuses on the use of space within a specific setting. Data was gathered through questionnaires, observations and informal interviews. Findings showed that practitioners were dissatisfied with the service they provide, parents are uncertain as to what a day at nursery involves, the space we have requires re-organisation and division, that parents and practitioners share a common goal and there needs to be a shift in emphasis from the provision of activities to the creation of rich play opportunities. Conclusions to this project suggest that changes in practice, open dialogue with parents plus practitioners and the creation of an action plan will go some way towards providing a well used, aesthetically pleasing space that is to the benefit of all who use it.

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Introduction

This research project came about due to some major physical changes within a nursery building. The space reserved for the use of children between the ages of zero and three years of age changed from two rooms into one large open plan area through the removal of an internal wall. The creation of this bright and airy room used by all children has allowed for greater flexibility and fluidity of movement: children can move at their own rate of progression and staff react as needed introducing a wide range of interaction. Despite these benefits the new floor plan has caused difficulties to both practitioners and children. Providing resources, planning activities, furnishing and organising the layout of the room is a hard task with such a wide age range. Parents have also expressed concern at having this range of ages playing together in one area and some children have been struggling emotionally with the change in routine and company.

The actual research took place between February and April 2010 and used a variety of questionnaires, interviews and observations to gather data that would answer the five key questions suggested in the research proposal.

The findings have highlighted a number of issues within the nursery as well as partially answering the original research questions. Generally speaking it has been discovered that; Parents are a lot happier and more content with the service provided than staff are with the service they provide; Parents are uncertain as to what actually happens within nursery during the day; That both parents and staff have the same goal and understanding as to what a space should provide; That the space we have needs reorganisation and division and lastly we need to change emphasis from providing activities to providing play opportunities.

Project Process

This project has been the first research experience for the writer, as a result there have been a few hiccups. Firstly the project has been an example of Action Research; hence it has been implemented by a working lead practitioner within an environment requiring change [Robert-Holmes,

2005:45]. This threw up some immediate practical difficulties. As a lead practitioner within an environment people have expectations as to what you do on a daily basis [Smith, 1997], research is not necessarily part of these expectations. Therefore at times it has been very difficult to 'step off the floor' and carry out research. The children in the nursery and the staff that care for them have priority, so although the research is to their benefit sometimes the job does take over and it has to be put aside.

Combined with this, the leadership style adopted by the researcher has been proven to not be to the advantage of academic work. As a participative leader [Wright 1996: 36-7 (in Doyle and Smith, n/d)] there is a high level of involvement in all areas of practice. All staff contribute to decision-making and there is plenty of open discussion. This works for the running of the room in that it keeps everyone motivated and involved, however assuming a different leadership style, for example stepping back and letting staff work more independently, may have freed up more time for research,

Ethically the project has followed the plan as discussed in the proposal, consent and information letters to gatekeepers (see Appendix 1) parents, carers and staff (See Appendix 2) were sent and positive responses were received from all. It was decided that while Article Twelve of The United Nations Convention on The Rights Of the Child stresses that all children have the right to be involved and to have an opinion about anything that happens to them [Unicef, n/d], the children in this project were too young to give their consent, hence the letter to parents and carers.

One other issue that did raise its head throughout the project was that of time management. An action plan was drawn up, but it has not been strictly adhered to. Data took longer than expected to gather and analyse, nevertheless knowing that the final project would enhance the practice of all staff and improve the space used by children within the nursery kept motivation high throughout the project.

Research Design

Creating a Space for Our Youngest Children: the Under Threes at Nursery, was designed as qualitative and inductive project, it was concerned with the gathering of words and stories [Bell, 2005; 22]. This project did not come into existence to prove a hypothesis; when started the findings were very much uncertain and data was being gathered on an idea rather than an established set of facts [James, 2007]. The project was also classed as Action Research as it was carried out by a lead practitioner in the setting and it focused on an area within the nursery that needed improvement [Roberts-Holmes, 2005:45].

It was the right way to design this project; it was not a focus with a right or wrong answer, or indeed an answer that can be proved through the use of figures. However there are limitations. As said it was Action Research and the researcher was already an integral part of the environment, therefore it is hard to tell if the research has been carried out objectively or whether already existing biases have slipped through [Roberts-Holmes, 2005; 92]. Also as a qualitative and inductive piece of work the project has focused on gathering information round ideas [James, 2007] and making individual voices important, but does this mean there is now too much data to analyse? That there are too many answers and not enough direction or clarity? This possibly is the case, still it is a point to learn from and take to future projects.

Finally the project seems to have no real stopping point, other than imposed deadlines, it could continue indefinitely. This again is another problem with a qualitative inductive design, there is no sudden "yes this is the answer", it is hard to know when the project is complete as there are so many avenues that could be explored and expanded on. On the other hand that is what makes the process so interesting, all sorts of discoveries are made.

Methods Used

Data was collected through questionnaires, informal interviews and observations.

The setting uses annual questionnaires as an evaluative tool. It seemed sensible to make use of this and add research related questions to the form (see Appendix 3). Due to time constraints the actual questionnaires had to go out prior to all the pilots returning, however despite clumsiness in wording the questions have yielded valuable data. The thought and effort put into answering the questions by parents was impressive and incredibly helpful.

The questionnaires provided a good base for interviews. Parents, carers and staff had an opportunity to think and consider the topic prior to the actual interview and the researcher had a base on which to build questions. The interviews were informal and semi-structured [Robert-Holmes, 2005; 110], so as to make the most of the good relationships already in place. It was felt this was the most productive way of getting useful and valid responses while keeping the interviewees at ease. However while interviews have been productive and informative it would have been more even more useful to stick more closely to the original research questions when conducting them. It was felt that questions were not precise enough and that other issues cropped up in discussion distracted the interviewer. Some of the other issues were very interesting, but sadly not relevant to this particular project.

Carrying out observations has been the hardest part of the project, in that it has been very difficult to get them done. It has been virtually impossible to get off the floor and be an objective bystander [Bell, 2005; 187] for any longer than a few minutes. As discussed earlier this has much to do with a participative leadership style. The plan originally had been to start with general observations looking at the flow of movement created by children and staff within the room before then moving onto very much more focused observations [Roberts-Holmes, 2005; 98], regarding reactions to resources and perhaps to further changes in layout. In reality this did not go quite as planned, the original and general observations gathered a huge volume of information, despite difficulties in implementation.

Due to the volume of information it was decided to stick to the general observations rather than risk being inundated further with data. This was possibly the wrong thing to do, although it made sense at the time. The more

specific data gathered from more detailed observations may have been useful.

Data Analysis Framework

Several methods of data analysis were used to pull the data together and make sense of it. The data from observations was analysed the ongoing process of Noticing, Collecting and Thinking. Observations were conducted, examined and then further observations took place to collect more data on noticed points of interest [Seidel, 1998].

The questionnaires and interviews have been coded and categorised, The original research questions were used as the first categories, then data within these categories was further coded into categories as suggested by the data itself. [Foss and Waters, n/d] It was not a particularly straightforward task and there had to be a degree of flexibility with the information, categories within categories were developed where necessary as data was re-checked and refined [Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg and Coleman, 2000].

Throughout the whole coding process the bias and assumptions that come from knowing the environment had to be put to one side [Foss and Waters n/d]. This was difficult, especially when dealing with data from interviews, where the interviewees were well known to the interviewer. It was hard to make the decision to disregard some data as it was very interesting, but not relevant to this project [Ibid].

Presentation of Data

Data has been presented within the framework of the five questions posed in the research proposal.

1) How can a space be designed to take into consideration different styles and stages of learning?

Designing learning space, particularly one that accommodates children between birth and three years requires a great deal of consideration. The researcher has interpreted the data collected in answering this question,

therefore it can be found in Figure 7 within the discussion section of the project.

2) What is important to parents and carers in the design and layout of a room at nursery?

The data that corresponds with this question, not only answers the question directly, but also looks at how parents and carers view the new space that has been developed and what they feel could be done to improve it. Data has been quoted directly from source.

Figure 1: What is important to parents and carers in the design and layout of a room at nursery.

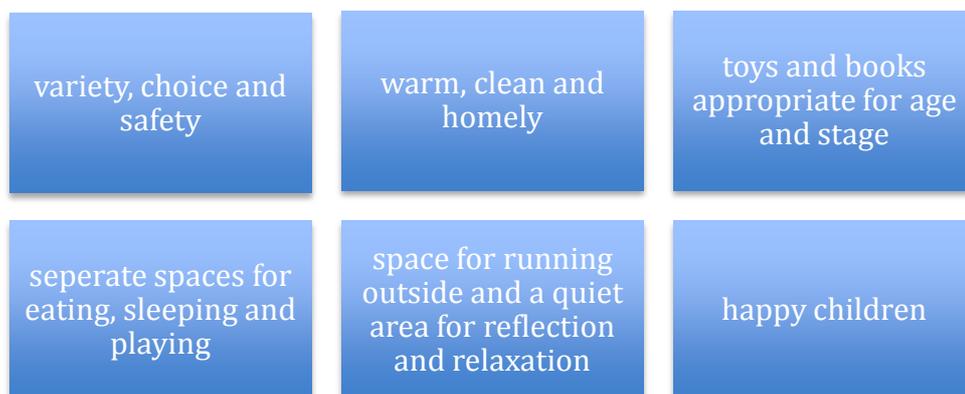


Figure 2: Impressions of the new room:

What parents and carers like:	What parents and carers do not like or are not sure about:	What parents and carers feel would improve the new space:
Light	Noise	Quiet areas for naps – better behind doors for noise levels and darkness
Space	Messy	Be nice to shut off the baby area – with curtains perhaps
Lots of toys – messy – but this is good / normal	A lot of crossing over in the use of areas, the eating area is used as a play area and the sleep area doubles	Interactive glass so I can see how my child interacts with other children without being

	as a play area for babies	seen myself
Opportunity to move throughout the area easily so child gets to know all staff and other children	The lack of a kitchen in the baby room as a member of staff always has to leave to organise lunches and snacks.	More dividers for more defined play areas
Size increase	Trip hazards	An enclosed corner or area where children can go and hide for quiet time if they want to be on their own
More sociable	Lack of consultation regarding the change in layout	A split between the peaceful area and the active messy area
Interaction between children of different ages	Recent high staff turnover – in the year our child has attended nursery only one staff member is the same.	Bean bags for children and staff
Potential for ease of transition between rooms		Areas for the older children to play without squashing the little babies.
Ability for staff to observe and oversee more than one room at the same time		Staff in uniform with name badges so they stand out and can be easily identified
Children can choose where they want to go		

3) How do practitioners currently use the space within their setting?

Parents and carers were unsure how to answer this question, ‘difficult to say as only there for drop-off and pick-up’ It was suggested that ‘parents evenings are good as it is time set aside to find out what you do and how children are when there are no other demands on staff. ‘

Figure 3: Conclusions from observations, questionnaires and interviews



4) What is important to practitioners in terms of room design and layout?

The data collected here demonstrates what practitioners would like to see addressed or changed rather than simply answering the question. The staff who participated in interviews were very concerned they were not providing a high enough standard of care.

Figure 4: Practitioner concerns and desires: (Data is quoted directly from source)

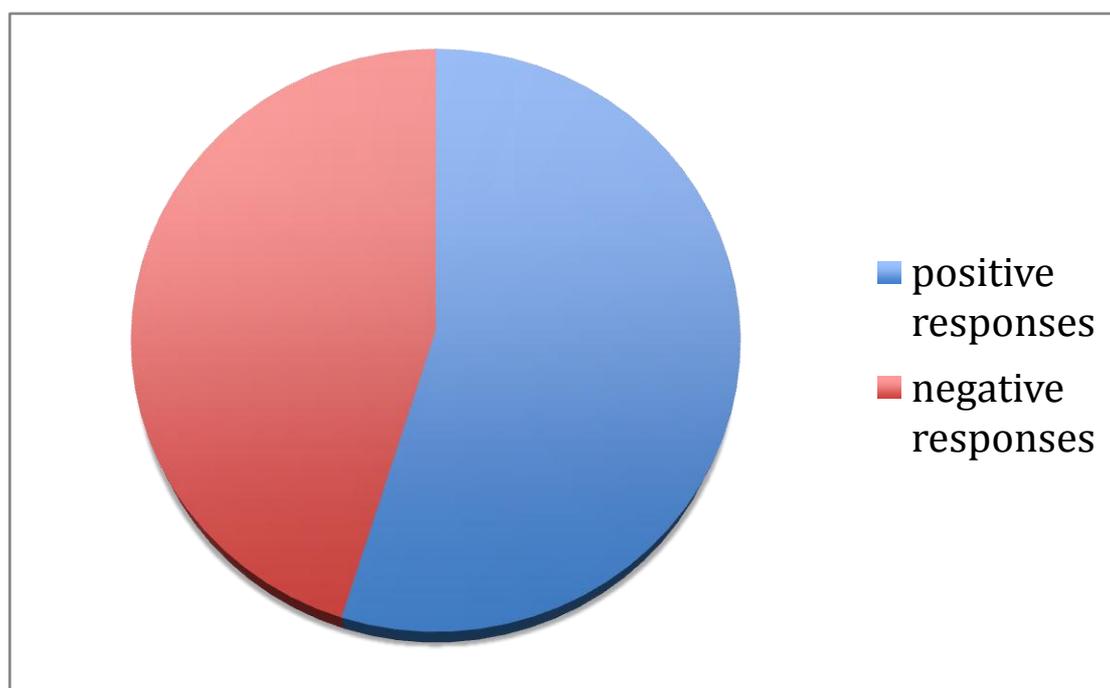
Staff	Resources / physical aspects of room	Quality of care
Have concerns about high staff turnover and its resulting lack of consistency for children and remaining staff	A more homely room with lamps rather than strip lights, rugs and 'proper' art on the walls	Feel that changing, sleeping, feeding requires all the hands we have, not enough time or staff left over to promote development and educational needs
Only 3 full time staff with 3 part time, not much lee-way for sickness and holidays	Better storage options, cupboards are horrible and a hazard to fingers, new shelves so children have access and can see resources	We are asked to do a lot in a day – feel we merely skim the surface and do not do anything properly

Need to have a full time manager or a full time deputy as well as part time manager	Building work to be completed – not all skirting board attached and doors not fitted properly	Can't have certain activities out due to younger children, therefore older children missing out on important developmental opportunities
Would like more support from higher up the team	Central divider to be lowered so children and staff can see across the room	
Would like a cleaner to come when nursery is shut so that children have benefit of whole nursery session and the cleaning is done to a higher standard.	Curtains to separate the baby area from the rest of the room	
At least 3 members of staff on floor with older children at all times	Adult furniture for feeding babies, talking to parents and snuggling in	
	Repainted rooms – yellow is dull and clashes with blue carpet	
	New furniture and room dividers	
	The babies have a space to call their own, older children don't due to the need for a passageway	
	Table and chairs too big for younger children	
	Carrying hot food across the room to the baby room is a health and safety hazard, the baby room area needs its own kitchen	
	New resources: we have lots of tracks, trains, cars and small world, but would like jigsaws, a dolls house, buggies, bottles, bibs, nappies, clothes for baby dolls	
	A cosy, quiet area separated from the	

	bustle of the main room	
	Re-think of sleep area – it takes play space away from the babies.	
	Eating and messy area are one, can't leave activities undisturbed, constantly clearing up to eat or from eating	

5) Does having such a broad age range within one space work within this setting?

Figure 5: Positive and negative responses to the question.



From the interview and questionnaire responses, 55% of the respondents were positive in answering this question, 45% negative. Examples of opinions both can be found below and are quoted directly from source.

Figure 6: Positive and negative responses to the question, Does having such a broad age range within one space work within this setting?

Positive:	Negative
Good opportunity to allow child to mix with all ages and to learn to be careful around smaller children	Worried about child feeling scared of / threatened by bigger children

Ability for children to move onto appropriate activities when they are ready rather than when their actual age determines	Concerned about young toddlers playing for too long with older children, feel the younger ones still need more one on one and physical contact, and they are still unable to communicate their needs effectively.
Makes the transition for younger children much easier	Younger children in the room prevent older children from doing some activities and focusing
Opportunities for children to engage / learn from older children, most local schools have composite classes due to low numbers, this is good preparation	Moving from 0-3 room to pre-school becomes first actual transition and can be quite traumatic for children especially as the level of expectation is much higher
Children can learn and learn to teach things	Too noisy for the babies, especially at sleep times.

Discussion

The data collected through the project demonstrated that the thoughts of parents and practitioners link strongly with current theory in regard to the design of physical learning environment for different styles and stages of development. Figure 7 gives an overview of such thoughts and illustrates a high level of awareness from parents and practitioners on the needs of young children and the potential for improvements in the use of the space within the setting.

Figure 7: Design suggestions for play area

Design Suggestion	Reason for Suggestion
Boundaries and dividers between different play areas	Boundaries give a sense of safety and increase involvement in play [Community Playthings, n/d; 8]. Having boundaries allows children to play undisturbed [Spaces, n/d; 7], plus there is a greater opportunity for them to focus and 'wallow' [Bruce, 2004; 162] in play. Dividers allow the development of paths through a play area, paths that will guide children to somewhere that is interesting to them [Spaces, n/d; 7].
An area of open space plus plenty of objects that look, feel, smell, and sound interesting	Children around the age of two need to 'explore and discover for themselves the way objects behave in space as they manipulate them' [Goldschmeid and Jackson, 2004; 129]. Children need the space to transport,

	stack, sort, post, explore and mix various objects
Quiet areas away from the main body of the room	Children need time to themselves away from the constant noise and bustle of a busy room, time to be calm and replenish lost energy [Community Playthings, n/d; 8].
Adult and child sized furniture	Adult sized furniture makes a space more welcoming to parents and carers; it encourages them to stay and talk thus building bonds with staff. Adult sized furniture is also essential for the health of staff, particularly when feeding babies or having that all important snuggle [Goldschmeid and Jackson, 2004; 27]. Furniture used by children needs to be sized for them, chairs with sides are good for support and being able to place feet on the ground gives an added sense of security [Community Playthings, n/d; 10].
Display area for children's work and a safe place for work in progress	Having space to display their own work gives children a sense of ownership and belonging [Lackney, 2006]. It is also important to have continuity in learning and be able to pick up a creation where it left off the previous day rather than having to clean everything away at the end of the day [Learning and Teaching Scotland, 1999; 27].
Clear, attractive, accessible storage for resources	Storage that looks good and is practical, safe, clearly marked and accessible to children [Community Playthings, n/d; 8] promotes play and allows children to follow their own interests and develop independence.
A routine that allows sufficient time for play to develop	Play can take time to develop, thus constant interruptions can cause children to become un-focused and hyperactive [Bruce, 2004; 154].
Access to the outdoors and resources to stimulate gross motor skills and encourage mobility while encouraging an interest in the natural world that surrounds us.	Outdoor space is essential to learning, children learn through movement [Community Playthings, n/d; 4] and need to be able to run, jump, climb, hop, skip, balance, kick balls, walk, push and pull objects, and crawl through tunnels in order to develop motor skills. While some of this can be done indoors being outside connects us to the wider environment [Learning and Teaching Scotland, 1999; 12]. Digging in the mud, watching the birds and insects, investigating plants and finding stones are all experiences to enjoy and promote a healthy

	curiosity in what is around us [Bruce, 1996; 54].
An aesthetically pleasing environment	As people, how we feel about something is largely connected to the environment that surrounds it [Goldschmeid and Jackson, 2004: 22]. Therefore an environment that pleases the eye and gives a sense of space, light and happiness is of ultimate importance so we need to pay attention to the colours, light, textures smells and sounds within our setting. [Community Playthings, n/d; 4]
Safe places for young babies.	Younger babies need a cosy, intimate environment with enough safe space to practice movement, and enough quiet for ponder objects without disturbance [Goldschmeid and Jackson; 2004; 29].
Suitable resources for all types of play – be it dressing up clothes, musical instruments small world toys, craft materials, sensory objects, books, blocks and jigsaws to name but a few.	To extend and enrich all opportunities for play so that children can develop, learn, gain confidence and make sense of the world [Bruce, 2004; 154].

As far as practice is concerned the most important discovery has been that all practitioners share a sense of dissatisfaction with the service they provide. Various reasons were given for this; the appearance of the physical environment, the number of staff available, the age range within the area and the number of additional tasks to be done.

There was a request to re-paint the room so as to emphasise the light and space that is now available, and to make sure all the building work is properly finished off. Staff found it disconcerting when they knocked over skirting boards propped up against the wall and struggled to open or close doors. Staff would also like to see a range of lamps, rather than strip lights and have adult furniture to assist them in their work. It has been said that how we feel about job is largely due to surrounding environment, and a few changes to give aesthetically pleasing surroundings would be highly beneficial [Goldschmeid and Jackson, 2004: 22].

It appeared that staff were feeling over-whelmed by the number of tasks they were expected to do as well as caring for young children. Preparing meals

and cleaning frequently left children to direct their own play rather than having enriched experiences with involved adults [Bruce, 1996; 22].

The wide range of ages within the space is something that staff have been struggling with. While the open plan environment is closer to that of family life with all ages playing together, it is decidedly harder to manage [Goldschmeid and Jackson, 2004: 24]. The different ages have different needs, both in terms of resources available and in adult interaction. The young babies need plenty of physical contact, plus space and peace to explore surrounding objects and experiment with early movement [Davenport, 2001: 133]. On the other hand slightly older children are at a stage where they need plenty of space to move themselves plus a great number of objects around in an energetic manner [Community Playthings, n/d; 4]. Beyond that children need a whole range of exciting and stimulating resources as they enter the world of words, symbols and imaginary play [Davenport, 2001; 134].

Recent reading of theory has illuminated a further concern in current practice. As stated earlier practitioners within the setting have been concerned that the care they deliver is not to a high enough standard, in particular that 'development and educational needs' [Figure 5], are not being sufficiently met. The work of Tina Bruce suggests that rather than setting up activities and opportunities for organised learning, practitioners should focus on resourcing and organising an environment that is full of opportunities for rich, undisturbed play [Bruce, 2004; 156]. As practitioners this means following the ideas suggested by the children and promoting experimentation and enjoyment rather than being concerned about end products. This attitude is also found in the work of Goldschmeid, she believes that children learn naturally and we should not be so concerned with set curriculums and objectives, after all trying to teach learning removes a certain amount of fun and spontaneity [Goldschmeid and Jackson; 2004; 1].

Changing practice to deal with these suggestions will take much thought, and a meeting with all staff is being planned. The organisation of staff throughout the room will be under scrutiny, as will the resources available. With such a

wide range of age playing in one area, all resources need to be safe for all ages, something that does slightly restrict what can be made available.

A parents evening is also under consideration as the research highlighted that parents were very unsure as to what actually happened throughout the day at nursery. Despite the uncertainty as to what a day at nursery involves parents were very aware of what would benefit the space in which their children play. Mention has been made of the urgent requirement of 'more dividers for more defined play areas' [Figure 3] and an 'enclosed corner or area for children to go and hide for quiet time if they want to be on their own'. [Ibid] These are issues that will again be addressed through staff meetings and will influence the plans for this year's budget.

The data illustrated many positive ways in which the space within the nursery was used. It was found that staff made excellent use of the outdoor area and indeed on some days spent more time out than in. It was also noticed that staff were extremely flexible to the needs of the room and the children, and that everyone helped where required, even if it was out with their official designation. However observations indoors highlighted that often only half the available space was in use. Further observations investigated this point and it was realised that the wall that bisects the area was too high for children or adults working at child level to see over, hence when there were only two staff members on the floor one area was shut off so that one member of staff could see all children, when the other staff member was cleaning or carrying out essential physical care. Again this is an issue of staff organisation and perhaps further renovations could lower this internal barrier.

Another point shown up by observations and concerning the use of space and staff within the area was the chaos within the room at a certain period in the afternoon. The disorder in the room was caused by having to share playing space with eating space, therefore we need to find a way in which space can be used for more than one function yet still work practically [Goldschmeid and Jackson, 2004; 22].

In conclusion the collected data has shown we have some way to go before the space works efficiently, however parents and practitioners are working

towards the same goal. With a bit of patience and plenty of hard work this room can be a success and become an environment full of happy children and staff.

Personal Learning and Development

The whole project has been a huge learning curve. It was the first time the researcher had ever engaged in form of research and so much has been gained from it.

Writing the proposal, researching the relevant literature, speaking to parents, and practitioners and carrying out the research has given the researcher much more confidence. It has been reassuring to discover that there is academic reasoning behind already held beliefs and that all involved in the nursery have the same goal: to make nursery warm, cosy home like and full of exciting opportunities to play, develop and reflect.

Obviously much has been learned about how to conduct research, but most importantly is the realisation that research can be relevant to a specific work place, and even a small project like this can bring noticeable results. Following the completion of this piece of work there are plans for various staff and parent meetings. The research has shown we need to demonstrate more clearly to parents how nursery works, and as staff we want an action plan drawn up so we can implement changes suggested in this project.

Practice has already become much more reflective, but over the next few months it is hoped that as a team we will change the emphasis from carrying out activities within the room to that of providing the resources and the space for children to 'wallow' [Bruce, 2004; 162] in rich play.

Conclusion

To conclude, the completion of this project has been a valuable learning experience. Research into the use of space within a particular setting has thrown up various points for consideration and will influence practice in the months and years to come. The findings link closely with current theory and

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parents and practitioners are united in their goal to provide the best environment for children to grow.

Designing the project as a qualitative and interpretive piece of work closely linked to action research was a success despite a few limitations and the project followed relevant ethical guidelines.

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Appendix 1:

09/02/2010

Dear ***** and *****,

As part of my continuing professional development I am undertaking a B.A. in Childhood Practice through the University of the Highland and Islands. A section of this course involves proposing and then managing an area of research.

The title of the research project is 'Creating a Space for our Youngest Children: The Under Threes at Nursery.' The project was inspired by the recent changes in layout within the nursery and intends to address the following questions:

- How can a space be designed to take into consideration different styles and stages of learning?
- What is important to parents and carers in the design and layout of a room at nursery?
- How do practitioners currently use the space within their setting?
- What is important to practitioners in terms of room design and layout?
- Does having such a broad age range within one space work within this setting?

While we have discussed the project within staff meetings and on the floor I wish to formally ask for your consent to carry out the project within the nursery. I have emailed a copy of the full proposal to you and would ask for you to approach me with any questions or concerns. I can be contacted either at work or through email: 07011804@uhi.ac.uk.

As stated within the proposal the setting will remain un-named and no indication will be given as to its whereabouts. All observation and informal interviews will also be conducted anonymously and neither staff, children nor parents will be identified by name or title. The completed project will also be made available for reading, both to yourselves and all those that participate in it.

While completing this project will be of benefit both to my own practice and to the nursery I will endeavour to complete it with minimal disruption to all.

Thank you very much,

Helen Jones

Appendix 2:

09/02/2010

Dear Staff, Parents, Carers and Children,

As part of my continuing professional development I am undertaking a B.A. in Childhood Practice through the University of the Highland and Islands. A section of this course involves proposing and then managing an area of research.

The title of the research project is 'Creating a Space for our Youngest Children: The Under Threes at Nursery.' The project was inspired by the recent changes in layout within the nursery and intends to address the following questions:

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- What is important to practitioners in terms of room design and layout?
- Does having such a broad age range within one space work within this setting?

In order to discuss and answer the above questions it is essential to carry out observations within the room at nursery. These observations will be strictly anonymous, no children or staff will be named within either the observations themselves or the actual project. Any references to people will be as Child A or Adult B. The setting will also remain unnamed and no information will be given as to where it is.

The observations themselves will be concentrating on the flow of movement within the room, how the space is used and the reactions of staff and children to the use and positioning of resources. Some observations will also consider different styles of learning and stages of development, however this will not involve focussing on individual abilities or performances. The information gained from these observations in conjunction with current theory will help us organise our space and resources to the greatest benefit of the children within our care.

As the children within the chosen research area are too young to give consent themselves, I ask you as parents and carers to give the necessary permission for these observations to be carried out. I also ask all staff within the workplace to consent to their involvement. If, for any reason you wish to disengage from the research process at any time simply let me know. The observations will all have been completed by the end of March 2010 and all information relating to said observations will be stored securely at my home.

Helen Jones 07011804

Data itself will be recorded in written form and used to answer the questions outlined above. For any further information please come and speak to me or email me at 07011804@uhi.ac.uk. If you would like to see the complete proposal email me at the above address or for those without email access I will make a hard copy available for reading within nursery. The completed project will also be made available for reading in the same way.

Thank you very much,

Helen Jones

Please complete the form below:

I give permission for my child or myself (Please add name)
.....to be involved in the observations
needed for this project up to the end of March 2010.

I understand the following points:

- I can withdraw this consent at any time without the need for explanation.
- All data recorded will be stored securely at the home of the researcher, and used only for the project 'Creating a Space for our Youngest Children: The Under Threes at Nursery.'
- I can ask as many questions as I need.
- I will have access to both the proposal and the completed project.
- Tutors within the University of the Highlands and Islands, the nursery manager, the nursery owner and all other participants will also have access to these documents.
- All observations will be anonymous

Signed:
Date.....

Appendix 3:

The following questions relate primarily to the room used by children under three and form part of an assessment for a B.A. In Childhood Practice, I welcome any feed back at all and will happily answer any questions or concerns. Please speak to me at work or email me at 07011804@uhi.ac.uk for further information.

Helen Jones.

1) The area set aside for the under threes in this nursery has recently become open plan, what do you like about this?

2) As you enter this space what do first notice/ think / feel?

3) Do you feel the staff within the room make good use of all the resources and space available?

Yes

No

Any comments?

4) The children within this area can play with a wide range of children at different stages and ages of development – what do you feel about this? Why?

5) If you were to organise the layout of this room in nursery, what factors would you consider? What would be important to you?

6) Is there anything you would like us to change?

Helen Jones 07011804