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Supporting language development: Childminder EY298403

URN: EY298403

Local authority: Torquay

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Brief description

On a freezing winter's morning, the childminder works with one child aged three with additional educational needs to develop her speech through investigating together what happens when water freezes and thaws. The work is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage and takes place initially outdoors. A few months later the child's progress is reviewed through an indoor activity using the same theme.

Overview – the childminder's message



Childminder

'Although graded as an [outstanding childminder](#), I was a bit surprised when notified that Ofsted was coming to seek my views about the [Early Years Foundation Stage](#). I had not realised that Ofsted survey inspections included childminders. I was glad to have the opportunity to discuss the Early Years Foundation Stage and to show how I deliver it at home in a natural way and support children including some with special needs. I hope you enjoy reading about what we get up to!'

The good practice in detail

On the morning of the initial Ofsted inspection visit, only one child had arrived at the childminder's house due to bad, icy weather. The child had additional educational needs, including some speech difficulties. The childminder used the time to focus on developing the child's language for thinking by helping her to investigate what happens when water freezes and thaws. They went into the garden together to look at the water table that was set up the night before and had frozen with toys in it. There was a lot of discussion about the ice and the toys and how to get them out. The child was confident, interested and inquisitive in her approach. She touched, commented and jumped up and down with excitement. They decided to bend the tray and watched the ice split. The little girl then agreed to bring some ice inside to see what would happen to it in the warm. She placed it on a plate and carefully carried it inside, confident that the adults would be interested in 'her experiment'. The childminder was careful to leave time and space for the child to think and respond. This was very successful as the child went over and back to look at the ice with a frozen bug in it as it melted. She was able to observe and talk about it at her own pace.



Child experimenting with ice

Later, during the summer months, the childminder developed an indoor approach to ice play with the same child. She filled various containers with water, a few drops of food colouring and some glitter before freezing them. The child was delighted as the shapes began to dissolve and said 'it's gone' very clearly of her own accord. She focused on the glitter as it came free from the ice and was interested in the patterns it formed in the bottom of the bowl. She then withdrew her hand from the warm water looking at the last fragment of ice.



Child playing with residue glitter from melted ice

The child's language for thinking had clearly developed as well as her clarity of speech and her overall ability to explain what she was doing/or wanted to do. She offered to [write](#) about what she had seen for the childminder and used words such as 'dripping', 'slippery', 'blue', 'glitter', 'hard', and 'heavy'. This is a real success story and means that the child is well prepared for the next stage of her education. The childminder's assessment can be viewed [here](#).

Are you thinking of putting these ideas into practice; or already doing something similar that could help other providers; or just interested? We'd welcome your views and ideas. Get in touch [here](#).

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