Beach Schools Trip Case Study

Child A

Focus: Social Skills, communication/speech

Week 1

Beginning of session: Child A held back from the group when exploring the splash zone. Showed little involvement, and was passive within the group. Very little interaction was observed, none was self initiated.

Creature game: Child A began to interact more, laughing a little when playing the game, although not contributing when deciding as a group which creature to choose.

Inventing own group games: Child A held back initially as more confident children took control to suggest game ideas. However, after an adult intervened in the group to enable idea sharing Child A shared an idea for a throwing target game "Rocks on wall (groyne) to knock off". The rest of the group liked and chose to use their idea and Child A was observed to then be actively taking part, smiling and giving instructions to the other members of their group. Another group member explained their group game while Child A showed how to play it.

Child A demonstrated more involvement in the activities as the session progressed; they initiated communication/interactions with their group when designing the game, and became active in

gathering resources needed. Lots of smiles were to be seen, indicating an increase in self confidence and enjoyment in the group activity, although they did not want to explain the game themselves.
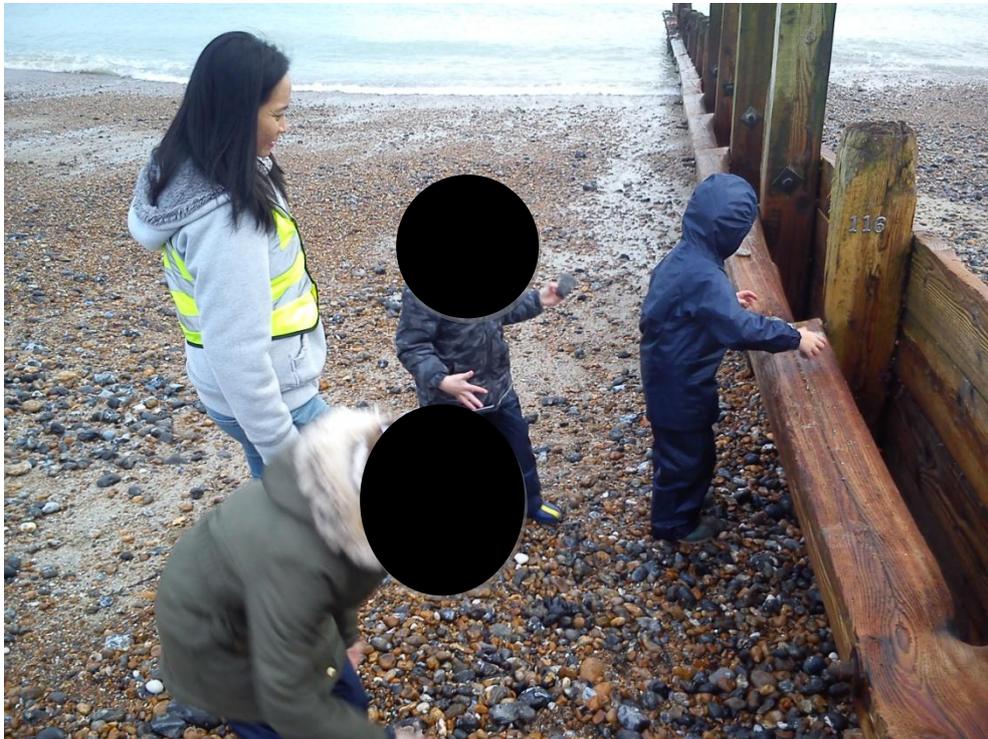
Week 2

Exploring the rock pools at low tide

Child A worked well from the outset of the session with a group of peers to explore the rock pools at low tide. They became increasingly confident during the session; verbally drawing attention to the objects they discovered.

They took a photograph of Sugar Kelp for their 'What am I?' activity and verbally communicated adjective clues for their kelp inside the Bothy with their group 'hard, soft, sandy, wet, slippery, black/brown.' The descriptions were used to create a card for the interactive beach schools display!

Creature Game

Creature game: Playing a familiar game Child A began to interact immediately, coming forward to join a team and quickly moving to decide creatures with their team mates. They were observed to be smiling and laughing whilst joining in.

More initiated communication and enthusiasm to take part was observed during this second session.

Explore Mid Tide Zone for Natural Objects

Child A immediately went to their group's adult and led the group to the mid tide zone. They were observed to point towards the ground and turn to talk to another child. They appeared focussed on their explorations becoming particularly enthused when spotting the mussels in the groyne....coming to 'get' me so I could see the discovery with excited gestures and chatter.

Capture the Ocean

Child A worked with a group to choose small non living natural objects form the beach for their jar. They were asked to think about why each thing was important to the beach before including it.

WOW! Moment: When each group shared their 'Ocean' Child A was able to stand in front of all the adults and children to talk about their favourite thing and why they thought it was important.

'This is a stone, it is smooth and pretty.'

Q: Why do you think is it important to the beach?

'It looks nice and for animals to hide under.'

Hot Chocolate and Reflection

Child A sat drinking hot chocolate looking at the sea. When asked what their favourite part of the beach trips had been they replied, 'Playing games,' and 'doing things with friends.'

In conclusion Child A's confidence and interactions were observed to increase over the three weeks, from standing back (1st week) to taking the lead to explore and sharing their thoughts (3rd week). This demonstrates the social/communication value of participating in trips to the beach for the child and the importance of 'free' unaided independent time to explore in order to build relationships with others and develop self confidence. D Bearham Beach School Practitioner