

Shared Voices Project



Somerset Local Authority 2009
Engaging Parents and Children in
EYFS Profile Assessment

Engaging parents and children in EYFS profile assessment

Who should use this guidance?

The guidance note is for local authority early years and assessment advisors, headteachers and all practitioners working with reception-age children.

The aim is to support practitioners in developing dialogue with parents and children, empowering them to engage actively in assessment. Having a forum for shared voices enables all contributors to participate on equal terms. This in turn ensures that scale point judgements are based on a holistic picture of a child, drawn from multiple perspectives.

Why involve parents' and children in assessment?

"Parents are children's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on children's development and learning."¹

A key finding from the Effective Provision of Pre-school Education project² was that good outcomes for children are linked to early years settings where there is strong parental involvement, where educational aims are shared with parents, formative feedback is provided to children and the child's progress is regularly discussed with parents.

Similarly, the EYFS profile handbook advises that, to obtain a complete picture of a child, the practitioner, parent and child should all contribute to the child's EYFS profile. This is based on the understanding that:

- school is only part of a child's life experience
- children learn outside the school setting and respond variably to different people, places and events
- parent's insights and wealth of knowledge about their children is an integral part to building the picture of their child's learning and development
- within a supportive and empowering environment children can be capable assessors of their own learning and development.

QCA/08/3906

To construct EYFS profile judgements that are a true reflection of a child's learning and development, the practitioner's, parents' and child's perspectives must be shared. Judgements made for an EYFS profile are incomplete without contributions from children and their families.

In order to achieve this, practitioners need to actively encourage the parent and the child to participate in the assessment process on an equal footing. To foster this process, practitioners need to:

- use a range of strategies to build meaningful relationships with children and families, built on mutual trust and respect
- establish a shared language through listening to and responding to the perspective of the child and their family
- actively seek parent's and children's views and ensure these observations form part of the assessment
- create appropriate spaces and set aside time for shared conversations with children and parents that will enable all parties to talk, be listened to, reflect and plan next steps together.

In order for parents and children to confidently contribute to assessment, practitioners need to start from the premise that all parents and children have contributions to make and want their views heard. If some appear disengaged, it is the responsibility of the practitioner to (sensitively) find out why, and to develop strategies to support them being more actively involved in the assessment process.

This guidance explores some of the ways to enable parents and children to contribute to the assessment process.

¹ The word parent or parents covers mothers, fathers, legal guardians and the primary carers of children in public care.

² The Early Years Foundation Stage: Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five (published 2007 by Department for Children Schools and Families)

³ A longitudinal study undertaken by the Institute of Education, University of London from 1997 to 2003

Shared Voices Starting point

“ Parents are children's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together the results have a positive impact on children's development and learning ”

Statutory framework for the Early Years foundation Stage, 2007

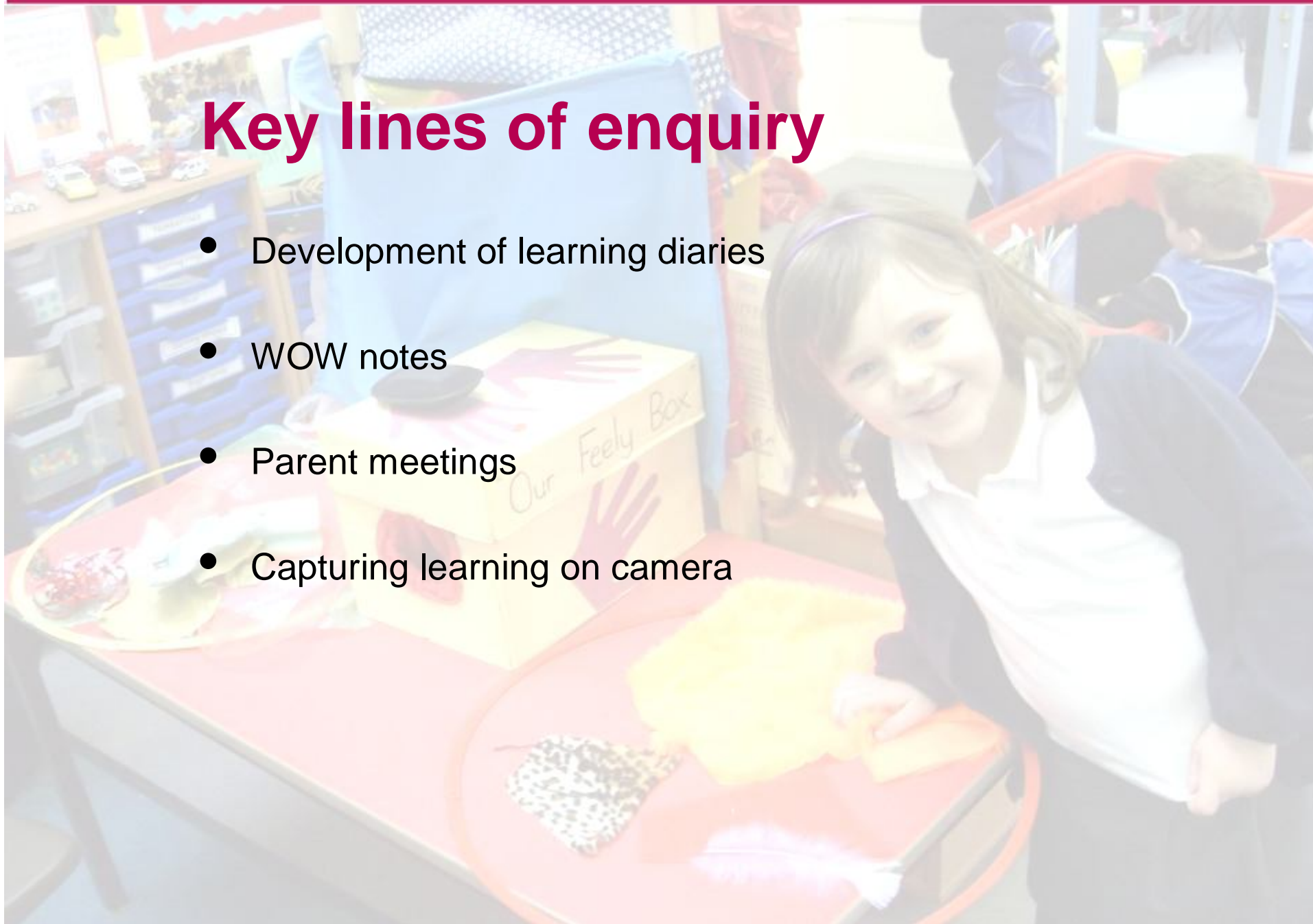
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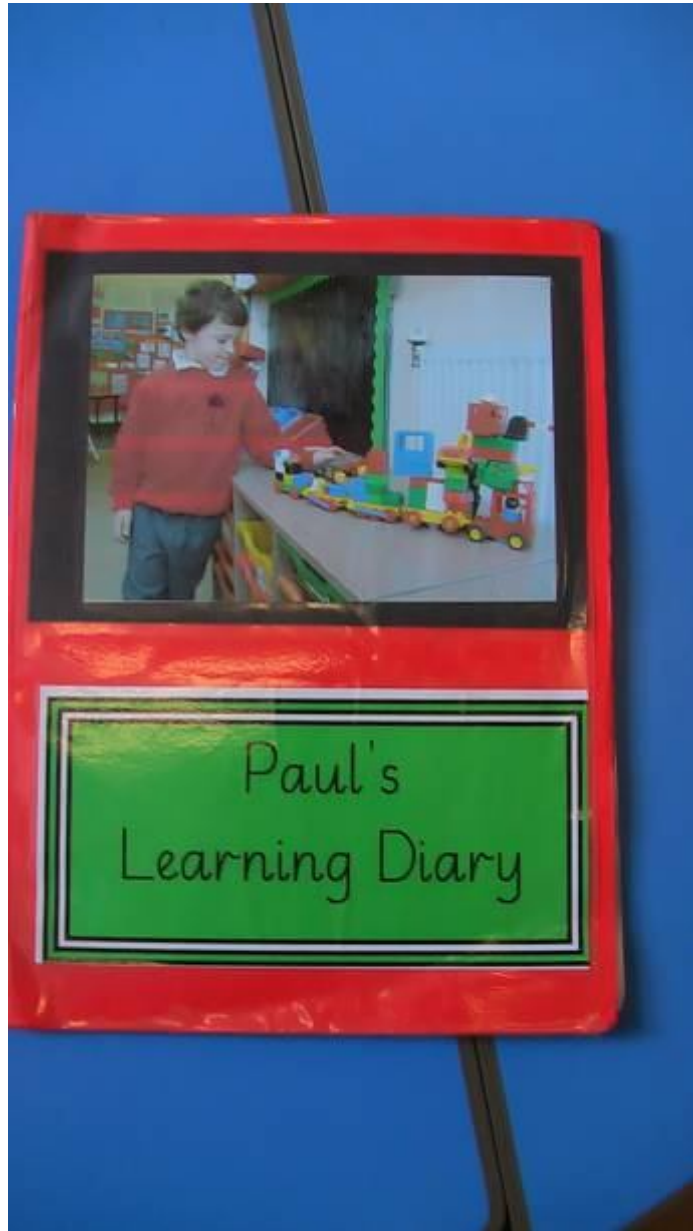
Shared Voices

- Two term project
- 6 schools and a Children's Centre
- Three meetings to share and discuss
- Funding from Standards grant. £2.500 per setting
- Documentation from the project published for all schools

Key lines of enquiry

- Development of learning diaries
- WOW notes
- Parent meetings
- Capturing learning on camera



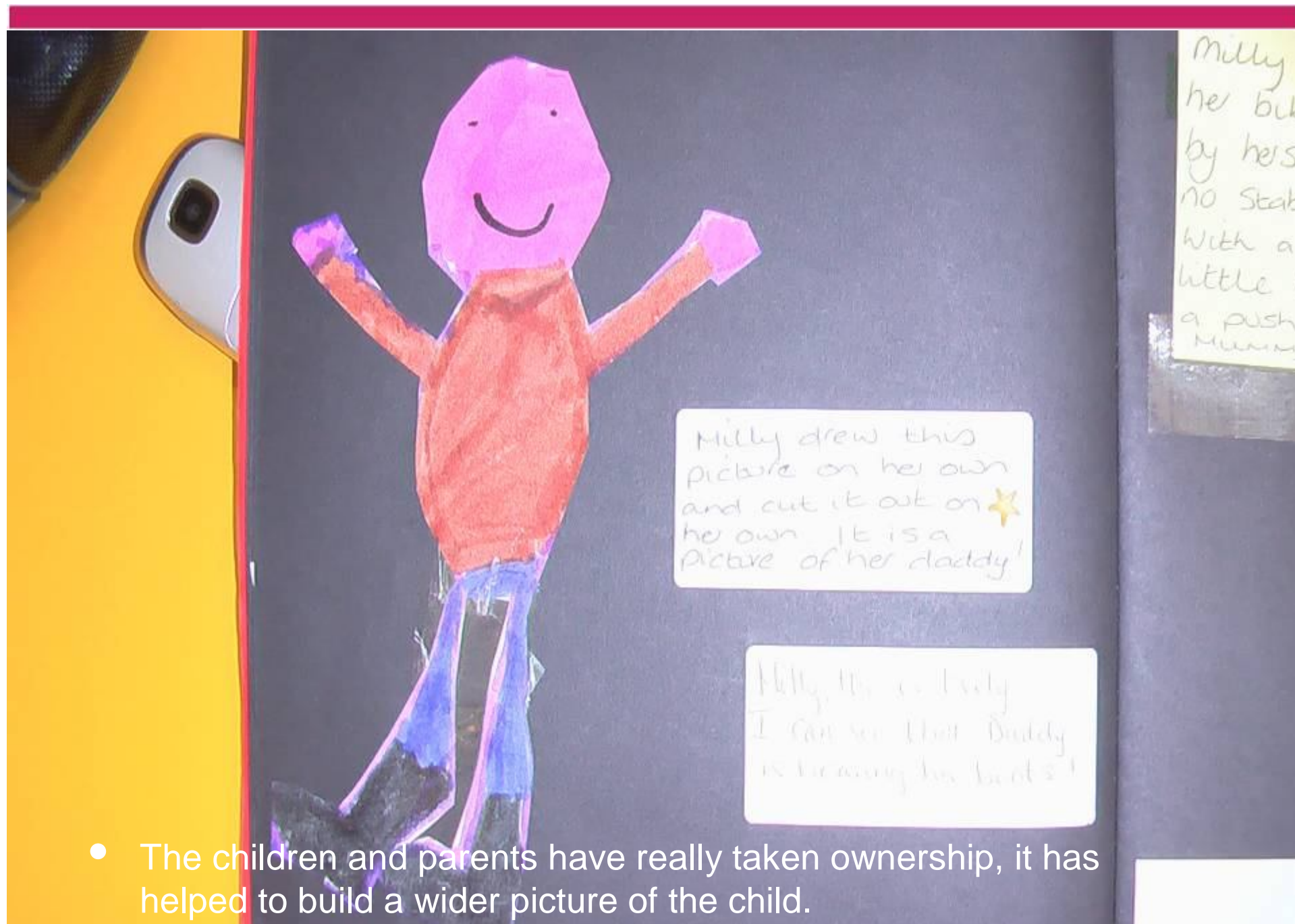


Learning diaries

- “Children chose what they want to put into their book, they include their own photo’s, there are comments from parents. They are encouraged to put anything from home”
- “I wanted the children to feel total ownership for their diary from the outset, these books belonged to the children and they were in charge”

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- The children and parents have really taken ownership, it has helped to build a wider picture of the child.



“ The children just love to show their scrapbooks. It is just one way of encouraging parent partnership but as a means of communication and mutual interest it is just invaluable. The children have real ownership of these books.”

Practitioner in West Somerset

WOW moments

WOW
Post Its
Please



Wow! Herbie
swam a mile
(5m) yesterday at
his swimming
lesson

Josh had the
stabilizers taken
off of his Bike on
Saturday and within
15 mins he was
able to ride his
bike properly

Joe went to
a dog show on
Sunday & got 2nd
for best child
handler



Using Talking Tins to record ideas

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Parent meetings



Case Study 4

Ilminster and The Levels Children's Centres Practitioner – Liz Maskew

What I did:

At the Levels Children's Centre we have purchased four Tuff cameras and one digital picture frame.

In order to encourage the development of shared knowledge and an understanding of children's development between practitioners and parents, across the Children's Centre we have begun to record what children do on camera.

The Tuff cameras will be used within the nursery by the children themselves, and in the various family groups within the Children's Centre.

This gave parents the opportunity to see on film and still picture what their children have been doing during their time at nursery that day.



Parents will also take the cameras home and video their children at home. This will give the practitioner a wider knowledge of the child in different situations and how they are in those situations.

A more informed knowledge of the child in different situations will assist the practitioner to make accurate judgements on the pathways booklet.

Benefits:

I have also decided to use the camera in order to raise the confidence of one little boy who is experiencing difficulty settling into nursery. This little boy's family are going through a family crisis at this time. Both he and his mother are experiencing emotional stress. By sending the Tuff cameras home, it is hoped that both the mother and the little boy will feel more part of our nursery. This will give the little boy something special to share with his peers, and help the parent feel more involved in the child's time both at nursery and home.

What happens next:



I have also approached the Children's Centre worker who is going to use the cameras in PEEP groups and childminder sessions. This will

allow us to share what is happening within the groups with the wider centre.

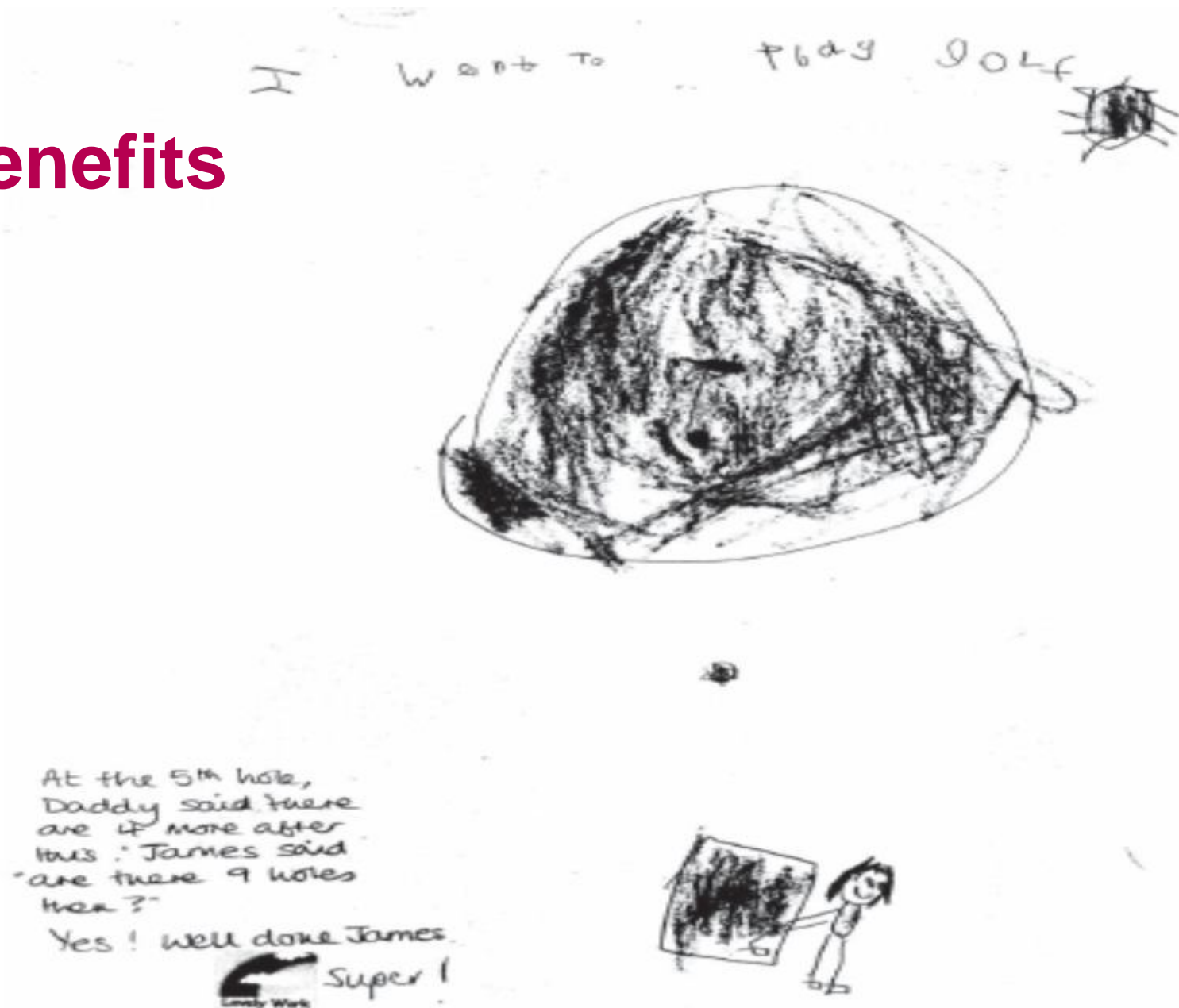
Eventually the childminders could use them at home to share with the parents and families they are working with.

Capturing learning on camera

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Benefits





- “There are many moments of ‘busyness’ that we as adults, miss. Through the shared voices project we encouraged the children to celebrate their own successes”

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