



Yesterday afternoon the children had been working on creating puppet shows. The children tried this again today with Julia and Carla setting up the space. They created the performance area behind the rocking board and set up many chairs with numbers on them for the audience. Mia and Solomon soon joined with Mia dressing up and dancing to the music from the keyboard and Solomon using the puppets.

With many people behind the rocking board, the performance space often tipped over, so Catherine offered the children the possibility to work with the shadow screen and created a shadow puppet show.



Initially the children experimented with the puppets, working out how close they needed to be in order for the audience to see them. 'You have to stand right up to it', noted Julia and she held hers on the side so she could see it and test it out. Carla held the princess puppet up to the screen. As she was on the other side, she asked Julia 'Kannst du die Prinzessin sehen?' 'Ja..but go close', said Julia.



Mia held up some of the puppets, testing them out. I turned off the lights so that the puppets became more visible through the screen and asked the children why this was... 'When it's on, you can't see the shadow', said Mia. We spoke about how the light source was now coming



from the windows. (many children kept pointing up and insisting that it was coming from the ceiling). Solomon wanted to test this out further by turning the lights on and off. 'Leave the lights off', said Julia wanting to continue with the show. 'Can you see the mermaid?' asked Julia. Finn was playing with the hairdressing materials and jumped up to join in.. 'This can be the crocodile...Schnipp, schnapp!', he said using the hair straightener. He then took a puppet and similar to Julia stood at the side to work out how best to use it. 'Can you see a mouse? Can you see it's tail?' he asked. 'Hier ist die Meerjungfrau', said Carla holding it up. 'I got Mr Broccoli!', said Julia.





Ray and Matteo, who had been providing the 'show' with music at the keyboard. Now joined in as well and Tristan modelled how they should hold the puppet, holding the one he was using up close to the screen. 'Use the dragon', said Matteo... 'And then the dragon came...see the dragon', said Matteo now trying to add some sort of story-line to the children's play.

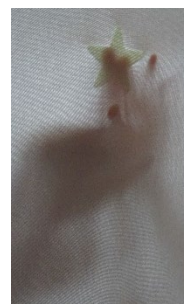
Ray spent the time experimenting with the shadow. 'It's a scary butterfly!', he said and laughed loudly.

Julia also now tried to start a story. 'Once upon a time there was a princess', she started. An audience started to gather, but again the children's play ruined to further experimentation with the shadows. The lights suddenly went on.. 'Leave them off!', exclaimed Julia.

Rather than starting and stopping various stories Catherine encouraged the children to perform some songs they know and she modelled using her hands to sing a well known song about fish (One, two, three, four, five).

Lara then took over and wanted to sing this song for audience.' You want me to help you?' asked Julia and they both used their fingers through the screen to present the song.

'I want to do that', said Carla and again Julia offered her assistance. Sophie was encouraged to have a turn as well and Catherine pointed out a different song would be good... She chose 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star'. 'Wait, I know where a star is', said Julia and she went to the science trolley in search of one. Carla also later sang the song together again with Julia this time singing 'Funkel, funkel, kleiner Stern'.



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Silke then remembered some shadow puppets she had which accompany a German traditional tale titled 'Der dicke, fette Pannekuchen'. She held up 'Der Wolf' for the children to see. They joined her behind the screen holding up some of the other characters and she told the story, encouraging them to use the various puppets as part of the show.

After some discussion about using the puppets and looking after them, the children again experimented with them. Ray was particularly interested in the 'funnyman' and encouraged to say 'Pfannkuchen' (pancake), as part of his play.

The opportunity to use the shadow screen within the children's puppet show performances not only encouraged them to develop their performances and use of stories and song, but also to further understand properties of light. A lot of the children's work focussed on experimenting with the puppets and the position and direction of the light.

As can be seen here, they spent a lot of the time working out how best to present the puppets using the screen, so that the audience could see them. Discussions about properties of light were had as Catherine asked questions about the direction of the light and why it worked well when the artificial lights were off. Silke introduced the shadow puppets, which worked better visually, as well as offering a German traditional tale. Modelling the story also encouraged the children to join in and retell the events using the puppets offered. We will continue to use the shadow puppets and encourage children to create their own as part of our explorations of shadow and light.





Yesterday Gudrun placed a photo of lots of fruit and vegetables on the easel. She then covered the picture with a clear sheet of plastic and placed a piece of white paper behind it. Sienna and Julia noticed the easel first and used the permanent marker to copy some of the fruit.



'I like the blueberries,' explained Julia whilst drawing small circles on the sheet. 'Ich mag auch Blaubeeren. Ganz besonders die ganz Dunkelblauen.' Gudrun added. Tristan and Lara then joined in. They especially liked to use the coloured markers.



Jack then noticed that other items were hidden in the picture, such as a spider, a necklace, a half eaten apple. The spider was copied many times by the children.



Someone said that they wanted to add a muffin. A discussion erupted about healthy food and Julia, Lara and Jack pointed to all the healthy foods in the photo. 'That's just sometimes food.' Leonardo explained. The discussion moved on to big and small food items and Sienna and Julia added two larger oranges. Mia A. asked: 'Do you have to do everything?' 'No. That's too much. Look, there are sooo many things.' Julia answered. Frieda then checked the drawings and discovered that no one had drawn a pineapple. 'I am drawing a pineapple.' she announced.



When the other children had lost interest, Frieda and F. returned. Both lifted the plastic sheet up many times to discover that the spare sheet of white paper remained empty. Gudrun placed some smaller pieces of plastic sheet on the craft table and the children used these to draw their own designs.



Today a new sheet was placed over the photo and white paper. Julia was keen to draw more items on it and Louis contributed as well.

Experimenting with different materials challenges the children and encourages to build on their creativity, collaboration and problem solving skills. This particular activity also inspired a discussion about food and which foods are good for us.

EYLF Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

A sense of security and sound wellbeing gives children the confidence to experiment and explore and to try out new ideas, thus developing their competence and becoming active and involved participants in learning. Children are more likely to be confident and involved learners when their family and community experiences and understandings are recognised and included in the early childhood setting. This assists them to make connections and to make sense of new experiences.

Children use processes such as exploration, collaboration and problem solving across all aspects of curriculum. Developing dispositions such as curiosity, persistence and creativity enables children to participate in and gain from learning. Effective learners are also able to transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another and to locate and use resources for learning.

In a supportive active learning environment, children who are confident and involved learners are increasingly able to take responsibility for their own learning, personal regulation and contribution to the social environment. Connections and continuity between learning experiences in different settings make learning more meaningful and increase children's feelings of belonging.

Children develop understandings of themselves and their world through active, hands-on investigation. A supportive active learning environment encourages children's engagement in learning which can be recognised as deep concentration and complete focus on what captures their interests. Children bring their being to their learning. They have many ways of seeing the world, different processes of learning and their own preferred learning styles.

Active involvement in learning builds children's understandings of concepts and the creative thinking and inquiry processes that are necessary for lifelong learning. They can challenge and extend their own thinking, and that of others, and create new knowledge in collaborative interactions and negotiations. Children's active involvement changes what they know, can do, value and transforms their learning. Educators' knowledge of individual children is crucial to providing an environment and experiences that will optimise children's learning.