

## Information Sheet

### Inspire my Curiosity

#### Why is curiosity important?

When we are curious, we are eager to explore, discover and figure things out.

It is a child's internal desire to learn what motivates them to seek out new experiences, which leads to success in life. When children are curious, they are much more likely to stay engaged. Curiosity prepares the brain for learning, and education should encourage and nurture this. The aim is to create curiosity about the world, nurture communication and foster interaction through shared joyful times together and the development of shared attention.

Some children develop curiosity naturally and want to learn about the world around them, and others need support to do this. In your setting, these children may play repetitively with the same thing or in the same area, and are oblivious to what else is going on around them. These children may also be heavily focused on their own agenda and preferred resources, and not be interested in interacting with others; alternatively these children may flit from one activity to another, rarely settling to an activity for any period of time.

However, for children who haven't naturally developed curiosity, it is the adult's responsibility to provide ways to inspire their curiosity and to provide opportunities for curiosity to flourish. Without this, these children will miss out on learning new things. Gina Davies describes the '**Irresistible Invitation to Learning**' in her Curiosity Programme – but this will not happen without careful planning and the appropriate resources.

#### Why this can be tricky?

Social interaction can be tricky. When we try to engage with a child and don't get the response we expect, we as adults become hesitant and then naturally interact less with that child. When we don't get this expected response we can get into the habit of naming items, filling the silence with lots of words and/or asking lots of questions. As a practitioner, we need to change our approach in order for the children to develop curiosity, this can be done by reducing the amount of words being used, instead use simple comments and remember you don't have to fill the silence.

## How do we inspire curiosity?

We must always start with the child and what interests them. Practitioners must come alongside the child and show interest in what the child is doing by copying their play, sometimes this will need to be at a distance. For more information, refer to the STLS Leaflet - Establishing Joint Attention.

Once the child shows enjoyment and interest in sharing an experience with the adult, the adult can start planning ways to develop the child's curiosity.

One way that this can be done is to provide an item that will inspire the child's curiosity. However, remember that this item is a motivating item and must not be available at any other time.

The practitioner will present the motivating item in a container: this could be a box, a bag, or maybe wrapped or covered with material. The container must be inviting, so that the child will want to discover what is inside and therefore begin to develop curiosity.

The adult will model picking up the container and peeping inside in an exciting manner, to build the child's curiosity. However, remember there is no expectation for the child to participate and always go at the child's pace.

A few simple examples are:

- The child may enjoy sensory toys - the practitioner may add a vibrating toy to the container. Support the child to pull the cord to start it. For this example:



- The child may enjoy pouring - the practitioner may add uncooked rice to a container. You could also provide a metal tray for the child to drop the rice onto. For this example:



- The child may like loud sounds/making a noise - the practitioner could add metal spoons or bangles to a metal container and cover with an empty pillow case or scarf. For this example:



- The child may like sparkly items - the practitioner could add glitter to the container. For this example:



As the child develops their curiosity, the practitioner will gradually add different motivating items into different types of containers, some more challenging to open.

Choose containers that are different sizes, colours (including transparent), shapes, textures and opening styles, for example:



Remember, fabric can be used like a container and can be used to cover or wrap the motivator in.

Motivators are dependent on what the child is interested in. You may need to try several things before you can inspire the child's curiosity.

Here are some examples:

