

Second SensoryPlus Awareness Day - Sheffield

## An outstanding success.....

In a bid to help new and established early years practitioners further understand the power and application of the multi-sensory approach, SensoryPlus hosted the second of their rolling programme of Sensory Awareness Days.

Capturing all that is worthy in the field of Multi-Sensory equipment, environments and practice is a difficult task. Thanks to an array of exceptional and engaging guest speakers and an enthused audience the second Sensory Awareness Day arguably surpassed the impact of the opening day held in Wigan.

Opened by David Payne, SensoryPlus Product Manager, the Awareness Days are deliberately designed to avoid overt product demonstrations and keep to the ethos of information and learning; *"The thrill of these days is knowing delegates leave enhanced and enriched by the experience not whether they've responded positively to the new products on display. Having known some of the speakers a number of years I was always confident the response would be good and the demand for places on both days has outstripped expectations"*.

Richard Hirstwood, an independent sensory trainer and a renowned authority around the world, provides a contagious level of energy and enthusiasm and more than two decades of experience in the Multi-Sensory field. His open session, a maelstrom of sounds, lights, imagination and inspirational anecdotes, often leaves the audience breathless. Beneath the humour and enjoyment though, lurk serious messages and they ensure every delegate is both invigorated and brimming with new ideas. Following Richard is an onerous task, but his unique taster session entitled 'An Introduction to Multi-Sensory' provides the perfect starter.

Adding the expertise of Judy Denziloe, a leading trainer on Sensory and learning through play proved popular as the delegates clearly gleaned a lot of practical tips and advice on best practice from her session. Both Richard and Judy, particularly Judy are devotees of the cheap and cheerful approach to Multi-Sensory equipment and as a result delegates left with an extensive wish list to be sourced at Ikea! For David Payne, accepting the role of these budget items within Sensory provision is a positive reality rather than an unfortunate diversion. *"Too often I've demonstrated*

*equipment or witnessed rooms in use where the perceived value of equipment creates caution amongst users. Alongside those who lack the confidence or budget to invest in dedicated environments or larger scale equipment, using 'make shift' budget items to experiment is a terrific starting point and the perfect bridge to a partnership with SensoryPlus. Not forgetting the value of keeping sessions in existing environments fresh with these low-cost, temporary introductions".*

Suzanne Little completed the day's presentations, calling on her vast body of experience at the SCOPE residential school at Meldreth Manor. Using case history to illuminate and illustrate the exemplary work she's been undertaking for almost fifteen years at Meldreth, Suzanne truly connected with the audience and helped convey with video footage the power of a multi-sensory approach in empowering individuals to change and control their environment. Suzanne commented:

"I work with children with complex needs and multi sensory impairments. In my case study presentations, the children highlight the real benefits of individual assessment and the use of multi sensory approaches to support their communication of likes, dislikes and choices. These choices were made through their responses to appropriate use of sensory stimuli based on individual need and the use of multi sensory environments to support their sensory development. If a child has not had the opportunity to develop their sensory awareness through a sensory impairment, then the case studies illustrate how with the use of appropriate multi sensory stimulation, new doors can open to learning and interaction with others."

With two of these days successfully complete, SensoryPlus plan to extend their programme in 2007 to reach more of the UK. For full details of the day's agenda, and the schedule for 2007 please contact Freephone 0800 212709 or email [davidpayne@sensoryplus.co.uk](mailto:davidpayne@sensoryplus.co.uk).