

Local visits  
with parents

At **Maples Children's Centre, London Borough of Ealing**, children are taken out on local visits in very small groups. Parents are invited and encouraged to accompany their children.

The visits are related to curriculum planning and usually stem from the children's interests and needs.

The visit might, for example, involve a short train or bus ride, a walk to the shops, the café, the park, market or local garage. Others might be organised to spot shapes, numbers or print in the local environment.

As well as parents being given the chance to talk to staff and each other and to form relationships, they also gain insights into just how much children learn from everyday routines and visits.

Parents are encouraged to help their child observe the environment; talk about what the children notice; and give their child time to stop, watch and reflect.

Digital photos are taken on local visits. The images are taken by teachers, parents and by the children themselves.



“We gone choo train. Me I got ticket. This is mummy. I look on park. I caught the bike.”

Digital photography has an immediate impact. Children can look at the photos in the camera; they can be loaded on to the computer as soon as the group returns to school and shown as a slide show.

Children can watch together, remember, recall and retell while events are still fresh in their minds. Parents can be included in this process and enjoy learning how to use the equipment.

At Maples, photos are often displayed in the entrance hall the next day on an interactive whiteboard, so that parents can view and discuss them with their children as they enter the nursery. This encourages more parents to make time to accompany their own child on future visits out.

Photos can also be put into documents on the computer, with children and parents writing text to describe their experiences. Children and parents can, in this way, make simple displays or books together.

This type of work can be expanded through the loan of digital cameras to parents so that they can take images of their children at home, and be encouraged to use their own local trips to enhance learning. They can record their outings and share their child's interests and experiences with staff in the nursery.

“I find that going out and about with parents helps me to understand a little more about their lives too.”



Four children went to Richmond on the train. It was felt the outing would help two of the children settle more happily and foster friendships. Two fathers and a mother were able to come and a teacher took another child. A younger sister came along too.

The parents were not very familiar with Richmond and enjoyed walking along the main street. The group visited the bookshop where parents and children helped to select a few new titles for the school library. After a run on the green, there was a stop in the café for refreshments, then a ride back on the train.



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