

## “The Quality of Parent-Child Interactions and the implications for Educational Experiences in a Stay-and-Play population”

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We investigated the role of the quality of parent–child [dyads] interactions in the child’s educational experience within two Stay-and-Play locations of Sure Start Cardiff, using a multi-informant / multi-method research design. Video observations of an unstructured Playdough™ task to facilitate naturalistic observation from both settings were analysed by means of the Moss *et al.*(2004) mother-child interaction rating scale and another two ratings per participating dyad were obtained from play staff for general validation purposes. Video recordings in one of the sites allowed detailed analysis of components relevant to language development. A number of components were indicative of how mothers and children interacted and had implications for the quality of parent-child interactions such as communication, coordination, emotional expression and responsivity.

Within one group, we identified 2 dyads with very low quality overall interactions and there were 3 main areas of concerns with interactions for staff to target generally with this group:

- Coordination ( interaction does not flow / not coherent )
- Partner roles ( roles reversed - lack of boundaries )
- Tension ( tense / anxious feeling between parent & child )

Within the second group, we identified another 2 dyads with very low quality overall interactions and 1 main area of concerns with interactions to target the group generally:

- Mood ( generally negative towards each other )

The analysis of language components revealed variations in the amount of praise given, the number of questions asked and the length of utterances. These factors were shown to be implicated in the child’s responses to instructions and involvement with the task. A number of factors guiding effective practice were suggested.