HEALTH PLAY
& Early Years' Experience

By Amanda Evans

When we are working with children within Health Play, we must be aware of how the slightest thing can be of support or detriment to a child's experience.

As seen in the previous article, the first 5 years of life are key regarding the patterns in movement and behaviour that are developed in that time.

Health Play provides the opportunity for children to be celebrated, allowing them to be witnessed and their actions validated.

There is space within each HP story for the children to experience situations in new ways, testing actions and reactions out for themselves. As there is always a clear beginning, middle and end to each story, there is also completion to the experience; a chance to mark and validate what they have achieved and experienced within that time; including the part they played in it.

Every child counts, and is included or at least has the option to feel part of something bigger. In classes that take place regularly it is joyful to see a child's confidence grow, and a growing sense of self development in body and mind.

The physical/remedial benefits, of course, are of equal importance to the HP process, but having this insight can only be of benefit to the student and teacher alike.

In this image you see that although the child in the background is choosing not to physically join in with the other children, he is still there, observing, and as I am facing his direction, I am able to visually acknowledge his presence without forcing him into the group.



The child on the cloth would only join in at very rare moments. In order for him to feel included rather than reprimanded for jumping on the cloth, we incorporated his actions within the game, making him a part of the story. The other children benefitted too as they supported him in his game.

