

## 2. How would you have described Emma's reading ability prior to 'A Busy Day'?

Ah I would it have described it as being practically non existent to be honest, I really would have, I didn't really know, whether or not she could read! On television a programme would come on and say the likes of the tweenies would come on, ah.. I think she associated seeing the words the 'tweenies' with that programme, she put them together, so it the word came up of the TV screen 'tweenies' I don't know if she was reading the word the 'tweenies' or not but I was wanting to believe she was reading 'tweenies' ah...little things like that ah... then after seeing her on the DVD I was impressed that she was actually associating, because it was all about associating words at that time, its gradually progressed to the fact that she does read words, without associating them to a visual, ya know ah, a couple of weeks ago we were out in the car and I pulled up to the shops, and it was quite simple, it was a 'stop and shop' that's what its called, and it has a big sign outside it, now she doesn't have an association with those words visually, to anything that was in that environment, but she read those words off the shop sign, she read it 'are you going into the stop and shop', I was ya know amazed, ya know little things like that ya know, take me back, take my breath away! Ya know there wasn't, there wasn't, there wasn't any visual association, there wasn't a picture, there wasn't a picture of a shop, saying 'stop and shop' and to me that was Emma reading, completely spontaneous, she wasn't prompted to do it.

Ah I spend quite a lot of time on the computer in the house, she has come in and looked at the computer screen and I have had a file open saying 'my music' and ah, she has come in and looked at the screen and said oh 'my music' now she doesn't have any other way of reading those words, there was nothing, she was actually reading that!

## Probe: How many words, would Emma have known, understood and read out of context before 'A Busy Day'?

Am...oh I would say, in my own personal opinion, this time last year, Emma didn't really know any words, maybe in relation to associating words, but not reading the word alone and knowing what it meant. Even though she could associate some words to the likes of TV programmes, I never seen that as reading, if I took and wrote down on a piece of paper, 'the tweenies' in my own hand writing, I wouldn't have been confident that she would have read

that as 'the tweenies' because of the graphics of the way it is portrayed on the TV screen, yes she could read it, but if I transferred to this to my own handwriting, I wouldn't have expected her to read it. But now, it doesn't really matter what the font is like, am.. she will read the word, I think because she has a fantastic memory for things, it gets stored in her memory bank, all the words she sees, all the sort of learning she does in school, it gets stored in her memory bank now and she is able to process that!

### 3. What was your reaction when you were told that Emma was taking part in a new reading pilot scheme?

Ah,...it was wait and see, was sort of my reaction, wait and see, ah...ya know, I think I said it earlier, anything that is going to give her a chance, I am quite prepared for her to do!

### 4. What were your expectations?

I didn't have any, I didn't have any, I ... expectations no!...hopes yes! Ah..

#### Probe: What were your hopes?

My hopes were she would do the things that she is doing now; my hopes were that she would see something and just read it! Ya know I am not the most literate person myself and that is through laziness really, ah.. but she... can read, ya might have to coax it out of her, so ya might, if she wants to read, she will read it, so she will.

Other times she will get frustrated reading especially if she doesn't know a word that she should know, but that's probably normal, but I think the reading from watching the DVD, seeing her on it and seeing how the structure works with her in the class, seeing how, you built the structure up and how she interacted with it, doing 'A Busy Day' thing, seeing that has instilled more confidence in me for her, in a year, it seems to be all of Emma's skills that are developing, like I say, her social skill, her communication, her interaction, all seem to be coming on stream, a lot quicker than I had possibly anticipated, a lot quicker than I had thought it would happen, especially when compared to how she was last year and the year before, the progression comes in leaps and bounds!

#### Probe: What factors have contributed to Emma's progression?

Do ya know what... I would say its an overall I would say that the structure of how 'A Busy Day' works definitely added, her school environment, her teacher, her mums patience with her, me not really putting pressure on goals and targets for her, ya know Emma won't get disappointed if she doesn't reach goal, because she doesn't know the targets that are set for her, so I never set targets for her, because I don't want to be disappointed, you know Emma I couldn't be disappointed about anything about her! What I can be..is delighted for her!

#### 5. just moving on now, what should a good reading scheme do?

Ah....it should do, a good reading scheme for Emma, should do what it is do for Emma at the minute!

#### Probe: and what is that?

Ah.. expanding her ability, so it is, it is expanding her ability and it is doing what we hope for. I wouldn't know the difference between one scheme and another, or how many schemes there are, but something seems to have worked for Emma, something seems to have worked for Emma, ah.. I'll put in context again of being an overall things, ah.. The teaching schemes, the way they are presented the teaching staff, Rosemary, it all just seems to work!, it works!

#### 6. What did you like about 'A Busy Day'?

Pause.. it worked!! (Laughs!), it just seems to have worked, it has brought Emma out of her shell, in that way, it just seemed to be, from seeing her in the presentation DVD, there was a change, there was a definite change, maybe I should say definitive change, ah...Emma's word association, Emma's reading, Emma's using that reading, again I will use the example of the television.. ah..she gets the sky remote and she presses select and she will look at the line up of programmes that are coming on, it may show you the 'tweenies' and then show you the next programme that is coming on, say the 'teletubbies', what she will do, is she will flick through the days TV on the information board at the bottom, to see if the programme that she wants to be on is on and how many programmes she has to get through, now to me that is her really reading, she is reading of that to find out when her programme

is coming on, I am not saying she knows the time, because I don't think she does, but she is actually reading the words that are there, to find out information and to ensure that she gets what she wants, so I know that she is reading and finding certain things to get the information.

I would never have thought that she would be able to associate words on the TV, on the computer, or at the shop, or a piece of paper, I would never have had Emma associating them with information and now it is information to her, rather that is all rose tinted for me, she is taking up information and she uses it to her advantage!

#### 8. Would you like 'A Busy Day' to be made available to parents?

Am... if it was available, my wife would be very happy about it, me myself, like I say... ah.. I would think if it is available to parents, it think parents would love it, parents would like it. The sort of parent that sits down, ya know, I would describe them as 'parenting teacher' who ya know sit down with their children and do all, that, like my wife Brenda, she will sit down and do all that, am... I think it would be good to have a home pack

Interviewer: yes there will be a pack, with a book and a CD Rom

A CD Rom would be very good, my own personal reasoning for that would be, for the likes of Emma , she can't take the sheets of paper that are there and she can't for want of a better word, vandalise them, she can't take a marker and draw all over a page, ya know so for the like of a CD Rom, means that it is always going to constant quality, and also with children with learning disabilities, the likes of Emma, Emma doesn't know she is doing this, but Emma seems to destroy everything, every book she gets, she rips pages out of it, but I think that is all part of her motor skills as well, she doesn't have great motor skills. Having said that, her writing is coming on really well, there again, that is in the context of Emma, her writing has come along brilliant.

Like for Emma, something like 'A Busy Day' and its CD Rom, that has interactive games, things to do, I think that would be great for a lot of children, let alone my Emma. We got the CD of Dr Seuss, but the interaction is unbelievable, the different things that pop up and happen, just don't happen in a book, like Emma would be upstairs on her own on the

computer and we hear a thud and we go upstairs Emma has actually fallen out of the chair, with laughter. Now actually that is another thing, because things have come on, cause her reading has come on, her reading has started, her wit has come on as well, her comprehension of fun, her mischievous stuff, more than anything, the mischievous fun, is just brilliant.. ya know we are calling her Mrs Paisley now, because no matter what you say to her she says ' NEVER', I can't figure out were she has got that from, her mum knows, is is from some programme, ya know she has picked it up, but it is the way she says it, like she knows, that she is winding you up by saying it! (laughs)

#### 9. Has Emma received any additional support at home, to aid the workings of 'A Busy Day'?

Ah.... Yes well, whatever homework's are sent home, we try and do it with her, ah.. but supporting reading, she gets brilliant support from her mum, her mums sister Stella and her mums sister Kathy, they would be the key people that interact with her quite a lot on them grounds. She goes to the after school clubs were they have books, she will mostly play, but she also has books to read and when I pick her up, she is usually looking at something. Now the last night I picked her up, what was it, Monday night, ah.. and her aunt Stella is a volunteer in it, which means, her mum or myself don't have to stay with her, which is great, cause Brenda is on her counselling course and I have an hour an a half til myself in the house, to watch what I want to watch!

But this night, the principal or youth club, came out when I was collecting her and his actual words to me were, 'I'm so delighted in the change in that wee girl in the past year' ya know, that's what he said, he is so happy to see the changes in her, so much ah.. socially she is so much better, she just, she just seems to be lot happier doing things, she does things now, because she does them, whereas before, there didn't seem to be an belief that she would ever join in or do as she is told, and is she always going to need 1:1 contact, all that is changing, it is still there, but everyday, every week there is a change, I don't know whether I would call it an advancement, but there is a change and it is for the better! As I say, I don't put expectations on her, ah... I don't be disappointed...ah well I do be disappointed, no point saying

that, I do be disappointed, because there are things and days when you say I wish she wasn't like this, ah but, I don't wish for Emma to be any different from the way she is, ya know she is the child that I have and she is the child that me and her mother love, she is Emma, that is the only way of putting it, she is Emma, and what she is, is what I am happy to have, I am happy for her to be what she is, how she is and I am also happy to see things change in her, though I am not even sure I want things to change I her, well.... I suppose I do, ya want things to change, but the way she is, I am very happy with!

At the minute her potential is looking limited but unlimited as well, ya know, her potential has taking such a massive leap forward, that her potential has the ability to be even greater, all in the context of Emma, I don't put it in the context, it never enters my head, the so called mainstream school, whereby I would like her to go to that school, or I would like her to be in that situation, cause that situation might not be right for Emma as I want a situation that is going to be right for Emma, not a situation that is looked upon as the stereotypical that a person should go and progress and what they should achieve, that doesn't matter to me at all, what matters to me is what is right and what helps Emma through her life and I can't be happier than what I am at the minute over that!