Finding and Listening to Children’s Voices

The following questions can be used as a reflective tool to consider children’s thoughts and feelings about your program, as well as to consider how their voices are invited and heard.

Being able to reflect deeply on the below questions will require:

1. Active listening (listening to children’s words, non-verbal actions, drawings, constructions, etc.)
2. Careful and consistent observations (of the children, program, environment, etc.)
3. Documenting observations (through photos, video, written notes, etc.)

These questions, as they pertain to your program, could be reflected on:

1. Individually
2. As a teaching team
3. In a staff meeting

Questions for reflection:

- How do the children use the materials in the program?
- What materials do children frequently gravitate to? What materials aren’t used very often? Why might this be?
- What is the quality of relationships like between the children? Between the children and teachers? Between the children and parents? What evidence backs this up?
- What was the last thing that a child did and/or said that made me curious or inspired me?
- How do children respond during group gathering times? During transitions? During outdoor play?
- Are there any questions that children frequently ask, or statements they frequently make? What might this tell me about their thoughts or feelings?
- Have I invited the children’s participation in the layout/design of the classroom environment? In the daily routine/schedule? If so, how? If not, what hinders me from doing so?
- Do I involve the children in decision making, problem solving, and idea sharing in the program? If so, how? If not, what hinders me from doing so?

Thanks to Milton Community Resource Centre for developing this tool for the Asset-Building Toolkit, July 2013. For more questions about this tool, contact Victoria Armstrong, Early Learning Facilitator at (905) 876-1244 ext. 243 or victoriaa@mcrc.on.ca