



With The Shake Of A Brolly Dance and Storytelling in Leeds Libraries

By Playbods - Kim Glassby and Bryony Pritchard



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL



Playbods Dance In Libraries Project 2012

This book celebrates a collection of shared stories, ideas and games between Playbods and families in Leeds Libraries during the Summer and Autumn of 2012.

This project was supported by Leeds Inspired, Leeds Libraries and Big Dance 2012.

Playbods artists are Kim Glassby and Bryony Pritchard.

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playbods@googlemail.com



This is a story about the adventures which families experienced in Leeds Libraries between July and September 2012 with us, Playbods.

This project was a collaboration between Playbods and Leeds Libraries which aimed to encourage young children, parents and grandparents to engage in and enjoy creative play and reading time together through movement, dance and visual arts.

We took residency within Leeds Libraries; Horsforth, Garforth, Armley and the Childrens' Mobile.

Ages of participants ranged from three weeks to eighty years old.

Within the children's areas of the libraries we reimagined the library environment; creating comfy reading dens and colourful spaces in which to play, explore and read.

The families who visited were invited to join in as much or as little as they liked.



Here are some things
which we shared from our
play box :

- Comfy cushions
- Big bright blankets
- Blow up balls
- Bags of pegs
- String and ribbons
- Pencils and pens
- Big rolls of paper
- Vibrant fabric of all sizes
- Buckets and trugs
- Inspiring books
- Floaty feathers
- Hula hoops
- Colourful umbrellas
- Shiny strips of paper





We encouraged stories to come to life by:

- Using simple objects such as feathers, shiny paper, bubbles and string to create sensation movement and characters.

- Creating textured 3D landscapes by placing cushions and blankets on the floor and pegging and draping fabrics from the walls and ceiling.

- Letting the children be the lead storytellers, giving them time to explore and repeat their sounds, movements and ideas.

- Using voices and bodies together in storytelling.

- Moving and travelling in different pathways around the library which engaged the body and imagination.



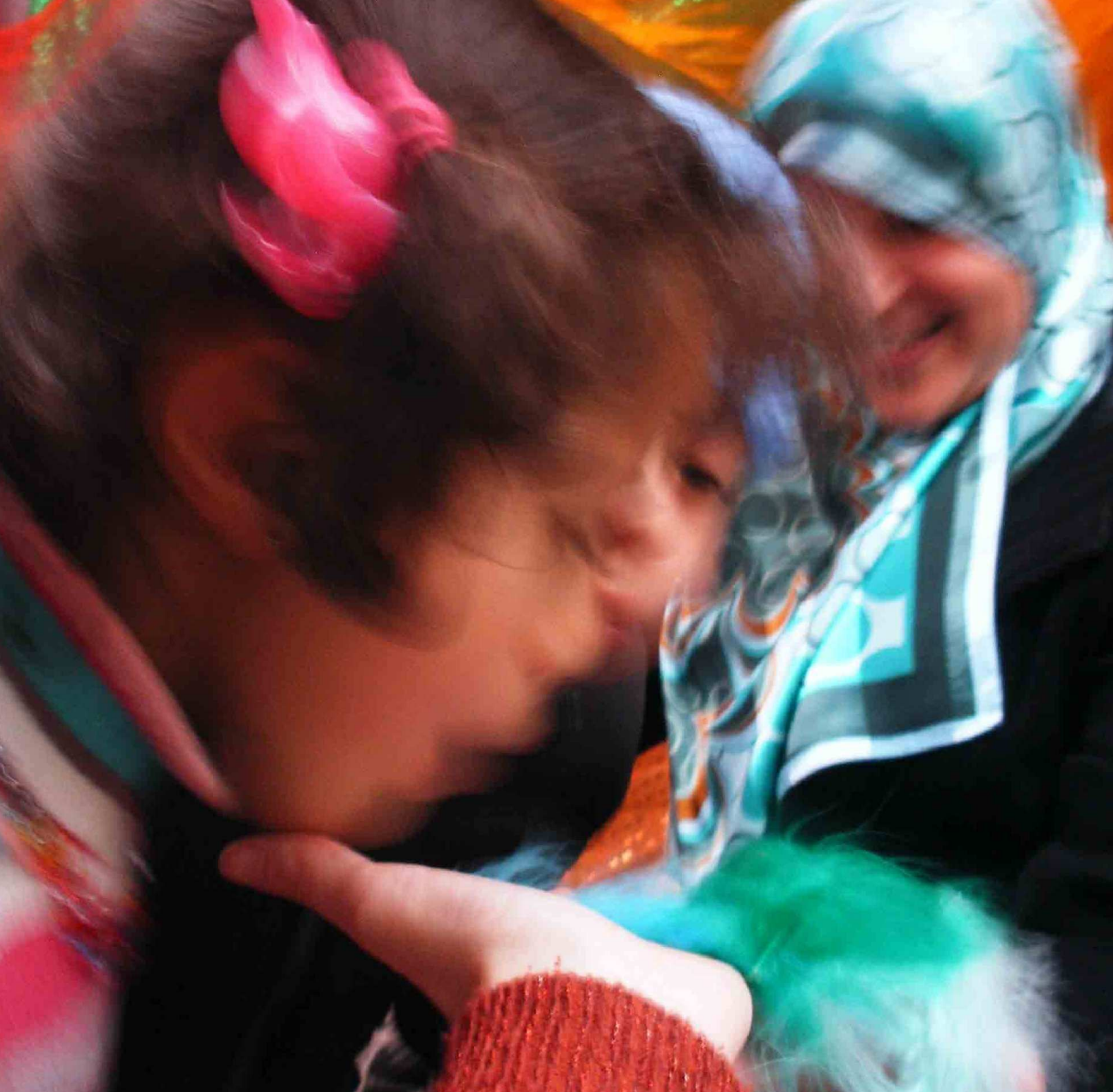
Can you travel without using your feet?



We handed our play box of bits over to the children and followed their ideas together. We witnessed clear themes emerging:

- The children utilising all that was there creatively: the whole space and *all* resources within.
- The children instinctively finding the most comfortable places and positions for reading.
- New stories emerging spontaneously from the open play, rather than the other way around.
- The children involving their *whole* bodies by climbing in and getting wrapped-up inside the props and fabrics.
- The children prioritising *both* reading and playing in their own time, at chosen intervals.





Storytelling Dens

We transformed the Childrens' Mobile Library into a storytelling den.

"What's in the box?" we asked.

The box may seem empty, however if you look closely there may be all sorts of things inside:

- An old pocket watch which tells the past and future.

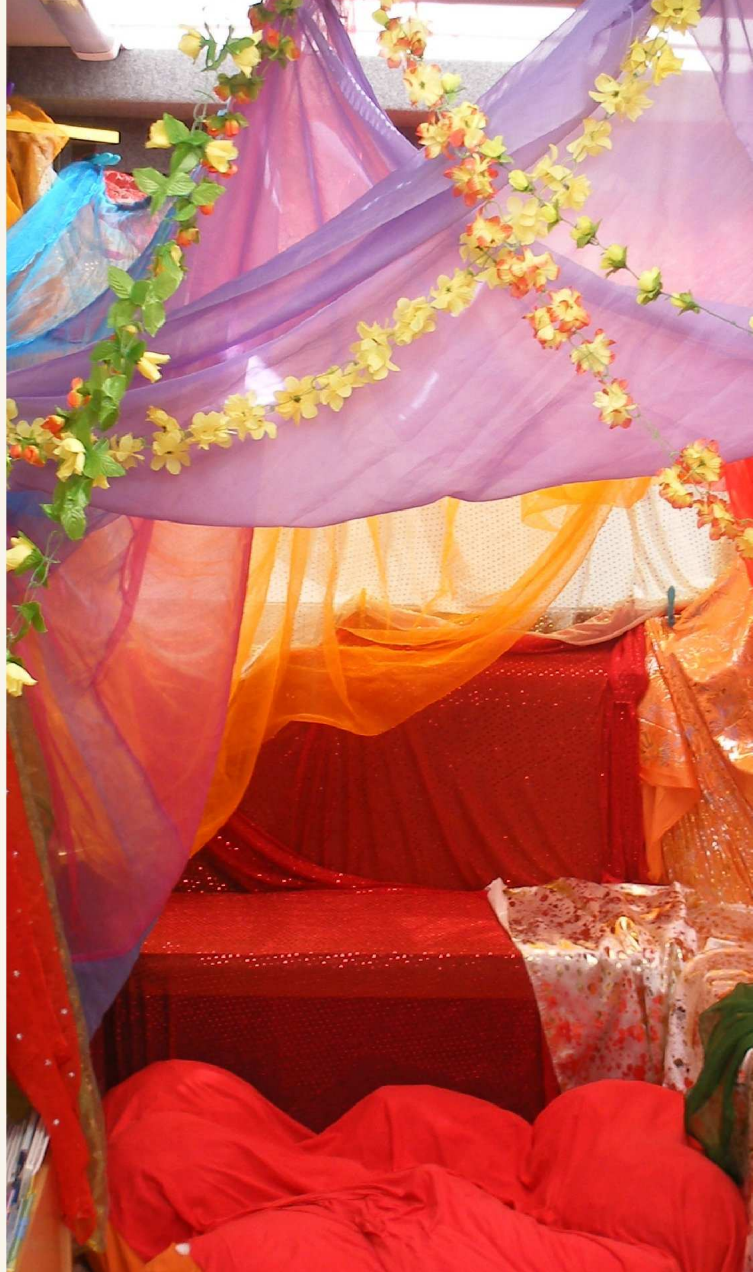
- A feather from the lost Peacock Queen.

- The smell of a tropical ocean.

- The sound of footsteps running in the snow.

Do you have a storytelling box?

Tell us what's inside!





Movement and Storytelling

At Garforth Library children with their grandparents created a giant spider web from bright thick wool. The lines stretched out between us criss-crossing, over lapping, bending and stretching.

Together we invented a storyscape of lines. We explored trapping and enveloping each other, moving within, above and around the wavy, winding web.

Members of the group ventured into the web, crawling, wriggling and stretching inside, delighted to get caught and then escape free again.





*Can you
make
triangles with
your body?*

*How about
circles?*

Spirals?

Twists?

*Can you do
this with a
friend?*





Sculpture and Storytelling

The story *Mrs Armitage on Wheels* by Quentin Blake offered great inspiration for some of the sessions. We love Mrs Armitage's inventiveness and chaotic ways of getting everything she needs onto her bike.

Families at Garforth and Armley were invited to create their own fantastical travel sculptures with very simple things such as hoops, wool, shiny paper and pieces of fabric. They then travelled inside the sculptures and went on adventures around the library.

"What this hoola hoop needs..." said a grandma and grandson *"Is a bit of fiery tinsel to turn into a rocket!"*





Mark Making and Storytelling

At Armley Library we climbed onto a large sheet of paper on the floor. With coloured pencils, we drew our different journeys and pathways across the page; wavy walking, zig-zags, stepping stones, crossing places, bridges and tunnels.

We travelled along the lines and invited our friends and families to travel with us.

A little boy aged two created a wonderful game of singing his lines as he drew them on the paper.

He found himself conducting us as we sang along with him.

"Squiggle, wiggle, zoom, ziggy zag, loopy loop!"





*Can you make bridges and tunnels with
your body?*

*Can somebody climb under and over
you?*



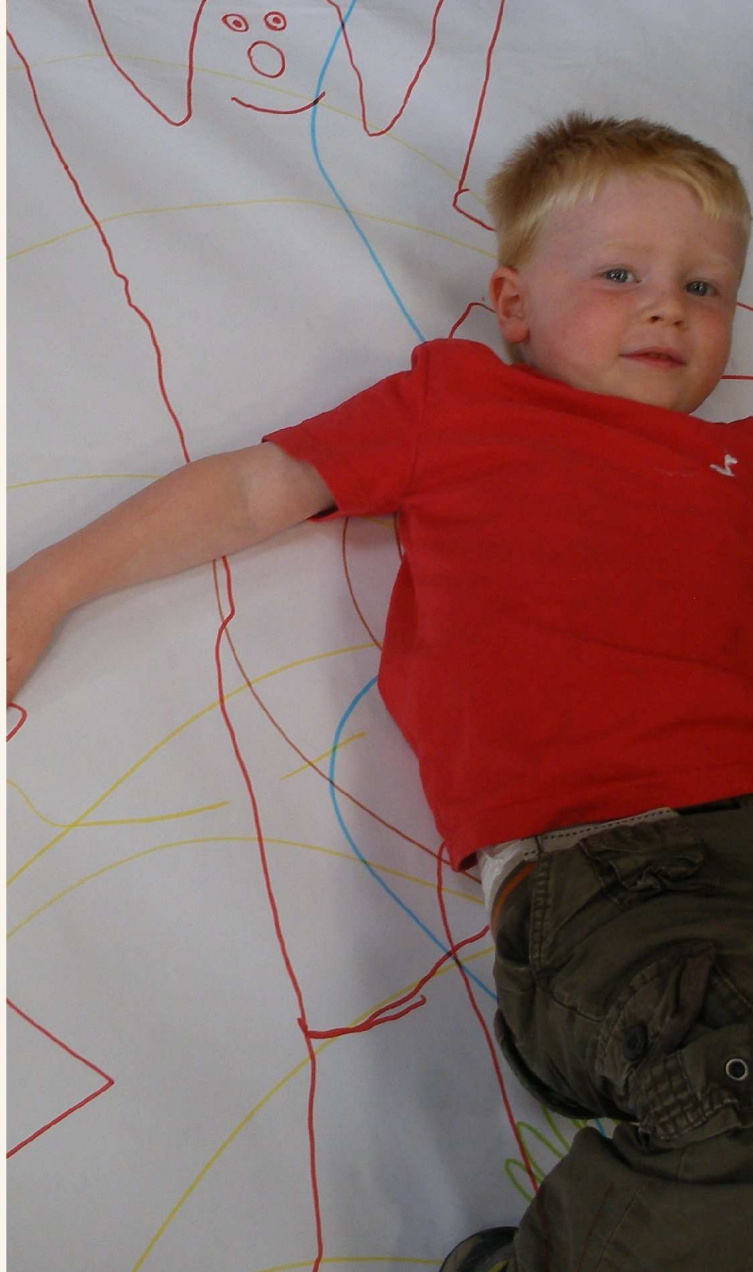
Body Drawings and Storytelling

We stretched out on a giant piece of paper and drew around our bodies creating layered outlines in which unique places, creatures and characters appeared.

At Horsforth Library one little girl's body drawings transformed into a castle, a pirate ship, a blue-bearded pirate and a princess. Her story grew as she described who her characters were and their adventures. The story of *The Lost Pirate Princess* was born.

What characters and places can you see in your body drawings?

Can you describe them?





Sensation and Storytelling

At Horsforth Library, three sisters, aged three, eight and twelve with their grandma instinctively found the most comfortable spot for their own storytime; close together.

They chose the book *Animal Boogie Woogie* and the older sister became the exquisite storyteller, whilst the youngest sister supported with lyrical embellishments:

"Tickle, tickle, bird" she sang as she shook and blew a feather around them, tickling their faces.



We hope the images and words in this book inspire you to bring your own stories to life in your local library or at home.



