

Baby Paul shows that baby boys can excel in their learning

Proud mother Laura, who had been attending Baby Sensory classes with her son Paul for over 9 months, was rewarded for her weekly visits by an extraordinary demonstration of just how Paul had developed.

Every week the Baby Sensory session starts with the "Say Hello" song during which the Class Leader shows a series of 7 pictures to illustrate things that are mentioned in the song. The parents and babies are also shown the signs associated with each picture and many babies learn the associated signs before they reach 1 year old. The pictures used in this song are the sun, moon, corn, stars, rain, flowers and friends.

During the song the babies often pick up and look at individual sign cards which are therefore often spread around by the end of the class. On this particular



week, Laura stayed behind for a few minutes after the class to talk to Baby Sensory class leader Sarah Arbon. Whilst they were talking, Paul who was then aged 13 months toddled around the class, and picked up a signing card. Laura and Sarah were very pleased with Paul for his help but not prepared for what happened next.

Laura continues the story "Paul handed a signing card of the sun to Sarah and went off to find another. He continued to hand them to Sarah one at a time, the next two being the moon and the corn. I suddenly realised that he was handing them over in the sequence they are used each week in the song. He continued to hand all seven over in precisely the sequence they are used in each week. Sarah and I discussed this for a few minutes and Sarah said that she would mention it to Baby Sensory founder Dr Lin Day."

The statistical chances of the seven cards being presented in the correct order are more than 5000 : 1 so it is very unlikely that this was a mere co-incidence. Thus it can be concluded that Paul actually remembered the sequence. When asked to comment on Paul's exploits, Baby Sensory founder Dr Lin Day explains "Memory is a complex business, which depends on three different types of learning based on object

recognition, recall in which stored information has to be accessed and 'procedural' memory, which builds up as a result of being able to take an active role in events.

Studies show that at thirteen months of age, babies can remember a sequence involving four separate actions if encouraged to take an active role in them. For example, if shown how to put four picture cards in the correct order, the baby can reproduce the sequence, even if some of the props have changed."

In this example Paul had remembered not just 4 but a sequence of 7 separate activities thus giving ample reason for his mum and dad to be really proud of their little boy.

Dr Lin Day continues "the Baby Sensory signing activity involves the presentation of seven picture cards in a logical order. The event is a weekly one. The fact that the thirteen month old baby organised seven cards in a logical sequence when these were presented in random order, was an important development. It showed that a whole range of complex and interrelated brain and body processes were used based on memory and previous experience. It also illustrated the extraordinary capabilities of babies given the optimal conditions for learning."

Earlier research conducted by Baby Sensory with a group of 130 babies who attended regular Baby Sensory session illustrated the 92% of the Baby Sensory group were able to complete more of the tasks set for them than the recognised norm. These tests also confirmed the stereotypes that even at age 1 girls are more advanced with language skills whereas boys were more advanced with the physical tests. Both sexes performed equally well in the thinking tests.