

**"It's about accessing your own creativity in a way that invites somebody else to access theirs. There's as many ways of doing that as there are human beings."**

For the sixth episode of our podcast we sat down with theatre-maker, puppeteer and early years researcher Charlotte Allan, who spoke about child development, creating "wow" sensory moments and shared her top tips for how to upgrade your sock puppets!



The podcast episode mentioned in this worksheet is available here:

[www.starcatchers.org.uk/episode6](http://www.starcatchers.org.uk/episode6)

## CREATIVE WARM UP: FIND A FRIEND!

Look around the room wherever you are - your challenge is to find five "puppets" - they can be everyday objects you can add eyes to, soft toys you can manipulate, or anything malleable.

- Take each puppet on a "walk" round the room - explore how they move, and where they look
- Do they have a mouth? Find a way to move them that shows when they're speaking
- What does their voice sound like? Do they use words, noises, or do they whisper on your ear?
- Which "puppet" are you most drawn to?

Exploring and playing with these ideas yourself will give you a better idea of what kind of puppet YOU enjoy using before you start exploring the ideas with the see ones in your setting.

## POLICY INTO PRACTICE: SUSTAINED SHARED THINKING

**"The quality of adult-child interactions is key in developing effective practice. This includes how we: work together with children to solve problems, clarify concepts, develop thinking. This is known as sustained shared thinking."**

*(Realising the Ambition, page 82)*

Sustained Shared Thinking is often thought about as a verbal exchange, but the expressive arts open up opportunities to engage in these patterns of thinking together without relying upon verbal communication.

Take five minutes to play alongside a child without speaking:

- What other forms of communication did you use?
- How important was gaze, gesture, body language, actions and facial expression?
- How did it effect the way the wee one interacted with you?

Think about a time you were completely absorbed doing something with a child. It could be when you mirrored their actions, created or imagined something together or just had a really good chat.

- How did it make you both feel?
- What made it work?
- Was it about something that already excites you, or did you pick up on their passion?
- Did you find a way to go back into that shared space at a later time or was it a unique experience?

Think about when you have been excited about something, but the children you work with didn't engage.

- How did it make you feel?
- What did you learn from the experience?

It's important to remember it's okay to take creative risks, and an offer should be exactly that. Not getting it right the first time is all part of the creative process!

### DISCUSSION QUESTION

"Puppets are a safe way to explore quite difficult emotions. They allow children to revisit an scary idea until it becomes something they can play with."

Over the years practitioners who have attended Creative Skills sessions have shared examples of how puppets have enhanced their practice: spider puppets have reduced fear of creepy crawlies and encouraged gentleness, a puppet with an eye patch opened up conversations around a child's astigmatism.

Think about what you could explore through puppetry with the children you work with.

### MORE IDEAS / HOME LEARNING

**Starcatchers' Wee Inspirations idea cards are designed to be shared with families to strengthen the links between creativity within settings and at home**

#### INSPIRED BY THIS PODCAST

- [Sock Puppet Faces](#)
- [Sensory Wow!](#)
- [Toys are Puppets](#)
- [5 Ways with... Puppets](#)

#### MORE PUPPETRY IDEAS

- [Bunny Eye's View](#)
- [Eye Bombing](#)
- [Teddy Talk](#)
- [Squishy Feelings](#)

### LISTEN AGAIN

Revisit key parts of the podcast where Heather and Charlotte talk about:

- 03:40:** Sustained shared thinking
- 10:26:** Using puppets with wee ones
- 12:28:** Puppets and difficult emotions
- 22:10:** Sharing what you love
- 25:02:** Wow sensory experiences
- 31:24:** Creating awe and wonder
- 36:16:** How to make a sock puppet together

### MENTIONED IN THIS EPISODE

- "Sustained shared thinking": [Realising The Ambition](#) (pages 30 and 82)
- "What is Sustained Shared Thinking?" [Family](#)
- "Give children a sense of wonder": [Building the Ambition](#) (page 46)
- [Bunny's Eye View, Brian Hartley's idea on Creative Skills Online](#)
- [lpdip Theatre](#)

### GET IN TOUCH!

If you'd like Starcatchers to run a live online training session with your setting, get in touch:

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All our resources are free to access, and feedback is vital for us to keep doing what we do.

**Please fill in our short survey here:**

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CreativeSkillsOnline>