



BABIES AND KNOWING

Main idea: Are people born knowing anything?

Stimulus

To engage young learners, you will need to get across the idea of knowing and/or learning before you can ask them to try and establish if babies have any knowledge. The clearest way I can think of doing this is using sentence starters and asking children to finish them

- ✓ I know...
- ✓ I have learned...

You may have to give a couple of examples to get things going and you might want to act out some of the things to get them engaged with their whole bodies. Try to record some of their ideas so you can use them later. Some questions here might help them to think around the subject, or you might want to skip to the main questions:

- ✓ Do doctors know anything? What do doctors learn?
- ✓ Have policemen learned anything? Do they know anything?
- ✓ Do dogs know anything? (This could be an interesting enquiry 'do all animals know things? do trees?'). Can dogs learn things?

Task questions (try to use examples from their earlier ideas)

- ✓ Did you learn to walk or did you just know?
- ✓ Did you learn to speak or did you just know?
- ✓ Did you learn to play or did you just know?
- ✓ Did you learn what colours are or did you just know?

If the children answer 'I learned to' you should follow up with 'can you tell us about it?' or 'Can you show us how you learned?' to try and elicit more detail about what they think learning is. If the children respond with 'I just know', you can ask 'did you always know? From when you were born?' to establish whether they think it is innate or not

Main Question (Which may not get to until the end of the session)

- ✓ Do babies learn everything or are there some things they know already?

Activity

2 white boards on the floor with phrases:

- ✓ Things we have always known
- ✓ Things we have to learn

Get children to give examples and point or stand at whiteboard they agree with. Get child to explain why talking (for example) is something you have to learn. Then ask for two comments from the other children.