|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Fieldnote Note | 19 | Date | 13/7/21 |
| Locations | Bungalow 3, Campus, Local outing | Weather | Warm and sunny |
| Child interactions | Red, [one of the children], James, Simone, and Eva | Staff Interactions | Cheryl, Laney, Mave, Sue, Florence, Monty, Philippa and Karly |
| Times | 10.30 – 4pm | Total Time in field | 5.5 hours |

Arrived on campus today and headed straight for Bungalow 3 where Red (who was acting like a dog), [one of the children] and James were in the lounge with Sue, Laney and Cheryl. There were managers having a meeting in the staff room so I just took a seat in the lounge in the corner. A film was going on and it was [one of the children]’s choice. Simone was over in Bungalow 2 and I got the impression that there had been a difficult morning and so she had a change of scenery to try and help her to ‘move on’ from where she had been this morning. This is a term I’ve heard a few times whereby staff think about changing a situation in order to help one of the children to shift their mood/behaviour that day, recognising that this can be difficult for them if they remain in the same socioenvironmental circumstances in which the mood/behaviour emerged.

There was a slight underlying tenseness in the mood overall this morning and it seemed to move back and forward between relatively chilled and relaxed and then a bit tense over the course of the first hour-hour and 30 minutes that I was there. It seemed Red in particular was struggling – hmm, I’m using the language of staff here – he was going between acting like a dog, giving a bit of cheek to staff, then being really sweet and being calmed/acquiesced via physical contact typically from Cheryl but also, to an extent at least, from [one of the children] at times. Mave seemed particularly aggrieved at his ‘cheek’ although I was unable to determine if this was more directed at her than at other staff. He was supposed to be going out to a skate park with Cheryl although they were worried that he wouldn’t manage this - staff are trying to assess whether sending Cheryl out with him alone is feasible if it looks like he ‘won’t manage’ – in which case his behaviour may become unpredictable and difficult for Cheryl to manage on her own to keep him safe. Plans are continuously being adjusted here with ongoing assessment to try and determine as far as possible whether planned activities can go ahead.

Lunch was a bit of a free for all today with each of us having something different and many of us making our own. After lunch, the plan was for Mave and Karly to take Simone, James and Eva to a local beauty spot at a river about a mile or so away. During the preparations, many of the staff and children were outside of the bungalows on the benches and James was captured and slathered in sun cream by Florence seemingly to his equal despair and delight. Simone refused to have any sun cream put on her face and after storming off and being calmed by Philippa and then agreeing to a compromise (she would wear a skip hat there and back to help protect her face from the sun), she then became really angry with staff and eventually they decided she couldn’t go on the short trip and [one of the children] was swapped in so that the staff/child ratio on campus would still work.

The gang agreed to me going with them and we had a nice walk of about 30-40 minutes to what turned out to be a lovely spot indeed. A dammed piece of river provided a shallow pool for the three children to play in and for me to paddle in at the sides having wisely worn my shorts today. Over the next couple hours, the children played in and out of the water. Eva often seemed keen on doing her own thing and put a bit of distance between herself and us during the journey there and during the time we were there. Karly went and spent some time with her where she was at times over the course of the time. Largely the children seemed happy to play and then to come back to the towels for drinks of juice and snacks. James demanded that I bring my swimming shorts next time as he was keen for me to get properly in and swim with him although largely seemed content for his play to be witnessed and recognised.

It was a lovely time and chatting with Karly and Mave; at one-point Mave said she enjoyed this and remarked that she was getting paid to do it. Karly mentioned that her husband had commented to her that it ‘wasn’t’ work’ and that she had responded by saying how care has to be provided and it’s not all trips, there’s other things that are more difficult. I reflected that I did see this as care – to care about children and to care that they enjoy themselves and play, and have the safety and security provided to allow them to do this.

More sun cream was applied over the course of the afternoon and then, eventually, we agreed to head back. The walk back involved more bickering than was evident during the time that we were there, similarly the walk there. I mentioned that transitions seem to stimulate something in the children and Karly agreed giving examples of other children struggling with changes. Each of us picked a track to be played on Karly’s phone during the walk back. I had been carrying James’ towel and [one of the children]’s sandals on the way back and handed them back to them as we re-entered campus as it made sense for me just to get my car, which was near the entrance rather than going up. James and [one of the children] requested hugs on my departure and Eva shouted goodbye from up ahead having again put a bit of distance between herself and the rest of the group.

[picture saved separately]