



A REGISTERED CHARITY, Charity Number 1207892
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Persona Dolls



Here are Polly, Zack and Arjun, our Persona Dolls, who come to Pre-School on Fridays for storytelling sessions. These stories have a special purpose and are used to provoke discussion about important issues surrounding equality, such as racism, sexism and disability. The dolls “talk” to the children about things that have happened to them and about their thoughts and feelings and the children ask the dolls questions and tell them about their own experiences. This takes place by enacting the doll whispering in the ear of the practitioner, who then tells the children what the doll has said.

We introduce the dolls to the children in small groups, telling them things about the doll, such as their age and family background, and then in subsequent weeks we introduce a different scenario to each small group in turn, asking the children to talk about what they think about it and suggest strategies to help the doll.

Scenarios include:

- Some of the children at his Pre-School were laughing at Zack for wearing glasses
- Some boys told Arjun that he couldn't play with the dolls at Pre-School because boys don't play with dolls
- Polly's friend told her that because they both wanted to be the 'mum', she wouldn't be her friend any more
- One of the children at Pre-School wouldn't hold Polly's hand because her skin was a different colour

We find that these sessions can have a really positive impact on children, helping them to:

- develop empathy
- understand the ways they are similar and different to others
- listen to each other's views
- think about their own identity
- learn more about inequalities
- challenge stereotypical thinking and discrimination
- develop critical thinking skills