



CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS AS A MEASURE OF CHANGE



Rs first drawing

In the summer of 2002 the Stammer Trust funded my visit to the 6th Oxford Dysfluency Conference. There were many interesting presentations – some very academic and some more “hands on” practical ideas.

One of these was the use of children's drawings. When Chris Charles ran the children's groups she and I would always get the children to draw their stammer – and this has been an interesting and sometimes humbling experience as the children expressed on paper in a very graphic way how they felt about their stammers.

At the conference a paper was presented showing children's pictures at the beginning of therapy and at the end. I decided that on our follow up group day, which was 3 months after the Easter group that we would get the children to draw again – and David Ward and I found quite dramatic results.

R aged 10 said of his first drawing....

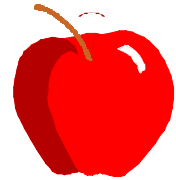
“There is an angry sun because the stammer is the sun but the sun is me. I'm not very happy because that's me - the stammer makes me unhappy”.

R said of his final drawing; -

“I'm Ok now with my friends – I feel quite confident about my stammer it is better than it was but sometimes it comes through – at certain times when I'm talking to someone I don't know – like when I'm asking for a book at the library. The stammer stars help me when I'm in a situation when I know I'm going to stammer and then I can use them”.



Rs second drawing



CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS AS A MEASURE OF CHANGE.....CONTINUED



A's first Drawing

These drawings are from A aged 8:
.— A said of the first drawings; -

“This is the stammer here and I’m trying to bomb it - I’m inside the stammer and this is me too”.

A said of his second drawing; -

“This is the stammer – like when you block this is me – my hair – this is a hockey stick there’s clouds – lighting and rain coming down on the stammer. Its going to make him all wet so if he goes in my mouth again he won’t make me stutter.

Here’s the sun

*“I will burn you, don’t come back”
(He’s saying that to the stammer.)*

So here we are seeing quite pleasing changes in the drawings and in what the children are saying.

Not all the 2nd pictures were positive. One boy who we and his parents felt had made very good progress and had become much more fluent drew a picture showing a stammer which was “never going to go away”

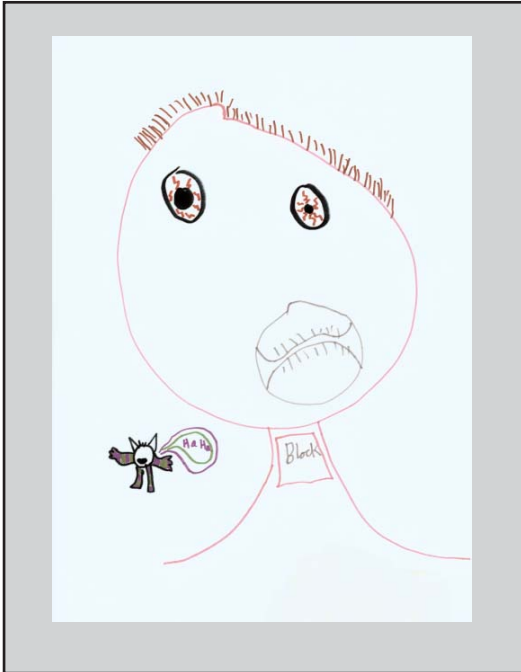
Through this picture we were able to work with him and his parents to improve his self-perception and to become more realistic about the good fluency he had achieved.



A's Second drawing



CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS AS A MEASURE OF CHANGE.....CONTINUED



The final picture is by F. F said of his first picture;

“ This is what happens when the stammer comes- I get a block in my throat and my lips go all tight too – this is the stammer laughing at me.”

Of his second picture he said; -

This is me - I feel OK now because I don't stammer- or if I do bump sometimes my friend Ben reminds me and then I'm smooth again”.

From this I hope you will agree with me that drawings is a valuable way to release feelings and to show change – and when change is not always positive to be able to act on the evidence we have to provide the right therapy for each individual.

Polly Mitchell.
Senior Specialist Speech &
Language Therapist Apple House



Please send Contrubutions to

Robert Williams.