

ToWe Project

Enhancing Opportunities for Toddlers' Wellbeing



Toddlers' Meal Times

Strategies

Setting Partner: Kew, Mortlake, Barnes and East Sheen Children's Centres - Achieving for Children

Dimension	What brought about the strategy	Implementation	Impact of Strategy
Meal Times Children's Centre Snack Cafe	<p>Reading the meal time manual</p> <p>Watching the videos in the training week</p> <p>Carrying out the audit from the manual</p> <p>We wanted to increase the children's independence and confidence at the snack café, and give suggestions to parents on ways they can help with this at home.</p>	<p>Large pictures were introduced to show the routine of the snack café, with the title 'I Can' at the top of each one, for example: I can choose my own plate I can wait for a place at the table I can choose what I want to eat I can cut my own fruit I can pour my own water</p> <p>These are all displayed at children's eye level.</p> <p>Child friendly knives were introduced to the snack café so that toddlers could independently cut up their fruit. Staff could immediately see the value in this, but we have to work with the parents on a weekly basis to reassure them that their children are safe. We talk about giving the children the 'right tools for the job' enabling them to succeed in their task and feel a sense of achievement.</p> <p>Staff cut back on asking as many questions during snack café, and focused more on giving children the opportunity to explore the food for themselves. It is tempting to talk about the qualities of the food during snack time, but we found that it's more important to be present and focused on the</p>	<p>Toddlers are able to see the pictures, and with support from parents and staff are able to follow the routine much more easily with the picture prompts.</p> <p>The pictures also act as a reminder to parents that the children can do these tasks themselves, and encourages them to support their children in the task, rather than doing it for them.</p> <p>Staff are spending more time explaining to parents about the benefits of letting the children have a go for themselves, and parents are becoming more comfortable in letting the children have a go with the safety knives.</p> <p>There has been an impact on wider practice, with staff giving children more independence in other areas too, including clearing up after themselves once they've finished their meal and at tidy up time.</p> <p>The menu board has been introduced, to show the children what snack is available that day. Using Velcro on the menu board means that the children can spend time exploring it, moving the pictures and asking questions if they want to.</p>



		situation rather than what colour the apple is – being more ‘mindful’	The transition between play and snack café is now much smoother and less chaotic, with practitioners and parents being more mindful of the way we talk about food.
		We introduced a menu board using mainly pictures so the children can see what snack is available that day. Snack Café Parent Survey – to gain written feedback	Parents filled in a snack cafe survey, which was developed by the children's centre and there was a lot of positive feedback about giving children more time and opportunity to cut the fruit themselves both when in the Children’s Centre, but also during meal times at home (results can be shown).

Setting Partner: Sandvedhaugen Barnehage – Sandnes Kommune

Dimension	What bought about the strategy	Implementation	Impact of Strategy
Meal times	<p>After reading the manual, being at Kingston for the training week, and watching the video from Barcelona about mealtimes, we decided to work to increase children`s possibility to be more independent during meals.</p> <p>This to make the children experience more participation and mastering and to maximize wellbeing</p>	<p>We`ve made «food stations» where children can get their own plates and cutlery and put it away after they`ve finished eating.</p> <p>In that way we see that the children can master it on their own. They also get to wash their own face and hands after a meal.</p> <p>It`s also well thought out where we place the children so they can sit with their friends</p> <p>During mealtimes we want children to be able to serve themselves. This is also to increase wellbeing</p>	<p>By having «food stations» we see that the children know where to find what they need and where to put it away afterwards. We see this as an opportunity to make the children independent and feel that they are contributing.</p> <p>The children express joy when they can do it themselves, and we can see that this gives the children the possibility to participate more. We mean that this increases wellbeing.</p> <p>They are also more attentive to each other, and want to help each other more</p> <p>They are more attentive to each other, and help each other. We`ve seen that they can do more than we`ve expected from them.</p> <p>There is a calmer atmosphere around the table and more room for the children to contribute. We now observe increased wellbeing both with the children and the staff.</p>

Setting Partner: Escola Bressol Mas Balmanya (SUARA)

Dimension	What brought about the strategy	Implementation	Impact of Strategy
Meal times	<p>After the entire team listened to the talk by Àngels Geis at Kingston, watched the video she gave us on mealtime and read the materials, the first thing we did was individually fill out the observation grid which we were given in the manual of good practices.</p> <p>We were surprised to see that we all had different opinions of what happened during mealtime, and that we all evaluated it differently. This is how we detected the need to record ourselves in order to analyse what our point of departure during mealtime was and be able to determine where we wanted to begin to make changes in order to improve wellbeing during this period in the day.</p>	<p>The entire team recorded and shared our point of departure, which served as the key to begin to improve mealtime, such an important time at a nurse school. So we managed to set a baseline from which many improvements came.</p>	<p>The families have noticed an improvement in the atmosphere at mealtime. When we told the families about this work we were doing with ToWe Project, we held a talk on the importance on mealtime at the request of the families. Many families were amazed at seeing the process we had set up and decided to make changes in their own mealtimes at home, and they have told us about these changes.</p> <p>By analysing the point of departure, the professionals have been able to establish our objectives for improvement and have begun to work on mealtime.</p> <p>The children have experienced changes that have enabled them to become more independent and have more power to take decisions at mealtime.</p>

Meal Times	After the point of departure explained above, we changed the layout of the tables and added an auxiliary table – where all the dirty materials were left – in order to enhance the children’s possibilities of being independent when serving themselves and clearing their dishes off the table.	The new layout allows the children to serve themselves better, choose how much they want without all having to eat at the same speed, and choose what they want from the optional dishes, such as salad. They are also allowed to clear their dishes when they finish and move freely around the room.	With the new layout, the professionals have been able to observe and discover the children’s capacities to choose what they want and how much they want, serve themselves, be responsible for their utensils, etc. We have really managed to place the children at the centre. With the new layout, the children can be much more independent, aware of their capacities and at the centre of mealtime.
------------	---	--	--