



Towards Opportunities for Disadvantaged and
Diverse Learners on the Early childhood Road

Promoting the Wellbeing of Toddlers within Europe

Case Studies

- Compiled by:** Helen Sutherland and Jan Styman
Kingston University, England
- Contribution from:** Annelies Depuydt and Veerle Martens
University College Arteveldehogeschool, Belgium
- Julie David
Haute Ecole Libre Mosane and ENCBW, Belgium
- Ove Steiner Rasmussen
University College South Denmark, Denmark
- Helen Sutherland and Jan Styman
Kingston University, England
- Timo Meister and Alexandra Haeckel
University of Education Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany
- Monika Rothle, Elisabeth Ianke Morkeseth and Sigve Eldoy
University of Stavanger, Norway
- Isobel Piscalho, Helena Luis and Marta Calheiros
Instituto Politécnico de Santarém, Portugal
- Mona Vintila, Daliaha Istrat and Adiha Radu
West University of Timisoara, Romania
- Carme Flores
Universitat Ramon Lull, Spain

Introduction to the Case Studies

The TODDLER Project focuses on one of the EU Commission's priority themes for 2009-2010 identified in EURYDICE (2009), by supporting early years' practitioners, teachers and students in their understanding of how to promote development of toddlers (aged 18 to 36 months) from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds.

“The policy challenge, therefore, is to (re)build (current) systems of early childhood care and education that meet crucial design features as outlined above, that provide high quality care and education for all children, that are integrated, attractive and affordable to all families regardless social class or minority status, yet that is sensitive to differing educational needs and to compensate early educational disadvantages” (EURYDICE, 2009:39)

The aim of the TODDLER Project is to develop reflective practitioners who can promote and improve practice to provide effective early years care and education for diverse and disadvantaged toddlers in reaching their full potential.

The case studies have been compiled using experiences and expertise from each partner country exploring the different practices and strategies that promote wellbeing within their chosen setting.

Each partner has been asked to provide a case study of a chosen setting detailing the specifics of how that setting promotes wellbeing. This information has been compiled into a case study with story boards which can be used as teaching materials in conjunction with the PowerPoint.

The case studies consist of:

- Type of Setting / Status
- Description of Setting
- Demographics
 - Number of children
 - Age range of children
 - Ethnic mix of children
 - Ethnic mix of staff
 - Languages spoken by the children
 - Languages spoken by the staff
 - Number of children who attend with a disability
 - Ratio of adults to children
 - Qualifications of the staff
 - How is wellbeing identified, measured and monitored?
 - What assessment procedures are there for supporting children with Additional Needs?
- Story Boards

Copyright

© under licence to Kingston University 2012 (details available on request)

All rights reserved. Except as otherwise permitted under the Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 no part of this work may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form by any means without prior permission from the publisher.

Permission for the use of the photographs has been obtained from the families of the children in these case studies.

Permission has been given to use the children's photographs for the TODDLER Project training materials and website only. It is not permissible to use these photographs for any other purpose than the case studies.



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



Case Studies

England

Type of Setting / Status

Norbiton Children's Centre / Maintained Sector (Day Nursery - Private and Government Funded)

Description of Setting

Norbiton Children's Centre is part of the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames suite of eleven Children's Centres which provides a variety of services to the local community, including integrated care, education, health and wider children's services which respond to the local communities needs. Norbiton is the only centre which is classified as a thirty percent centre which means that the majority of users (70% and over) come from low income families with diverse needs.

The Children's Centre is based at a school which serves the local community within its area by providing education for children from three years to eleven years.

The Children's Centre provides a range of services for families with children aged from birth to five years, over the week there are sessions for families to attend which include:

- Stay and Play,
- Health team for baby weighing, post natal and ante natal care, Breast feeding support,
- Messy Play activities,
- Parenting Courses, Adult Education,
- All inclusive Saturday Play,
- Childminders Stay and Play,
- Job Centre advice,
- Housing advice,
- Baby group,
- Twins group,
- ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages),
- Cook and Eat,
- Money Matters budgeting course
- Community Midwife.

The Children's Centre also has a seventeen place day nursery that parents can access though fees charged for this unless parents are able to access free funding though the two year old entitlement programme. The day nursery offers early year's entitlement places to children, aged 3 and 4 years, enabling them to access 15 hours of free childcare and education for 38 weeks of the year. This has a link to the school nursery offering wrap-around care for those children who access the school for their early years education.

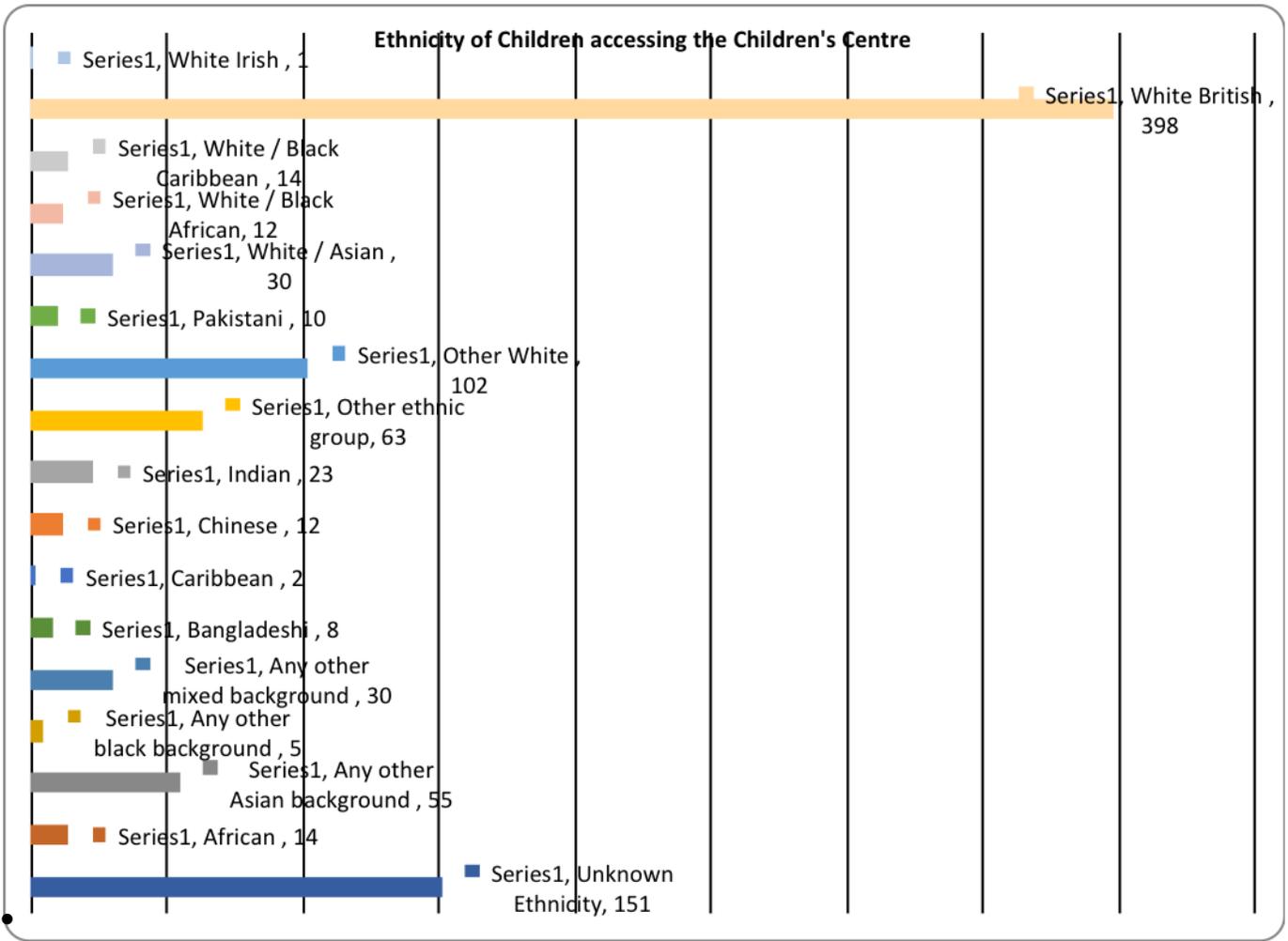
This entitlement has now been extended to include 2 year olds who meet the criteria under the Free Early Education and childcare for Two year olds (FEET) funding which the day nursery at the children’s centre now offers.

Demographics

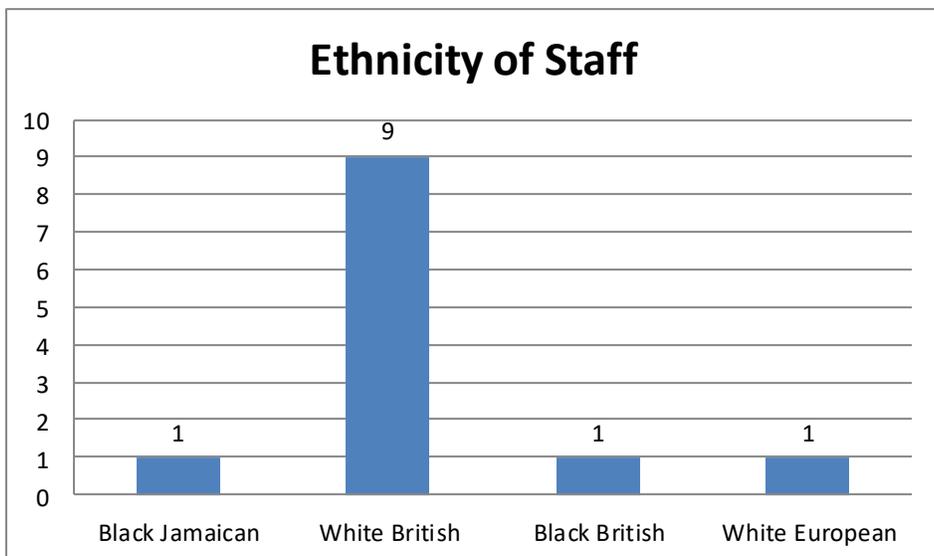
Number of children who attend the setting

113 (average over the week as this varies from day to day)

- Age range of the children **(0-5 years)**
- Ethnic mix of children



- Ethnic mix of staff



- Languages spoken by the children

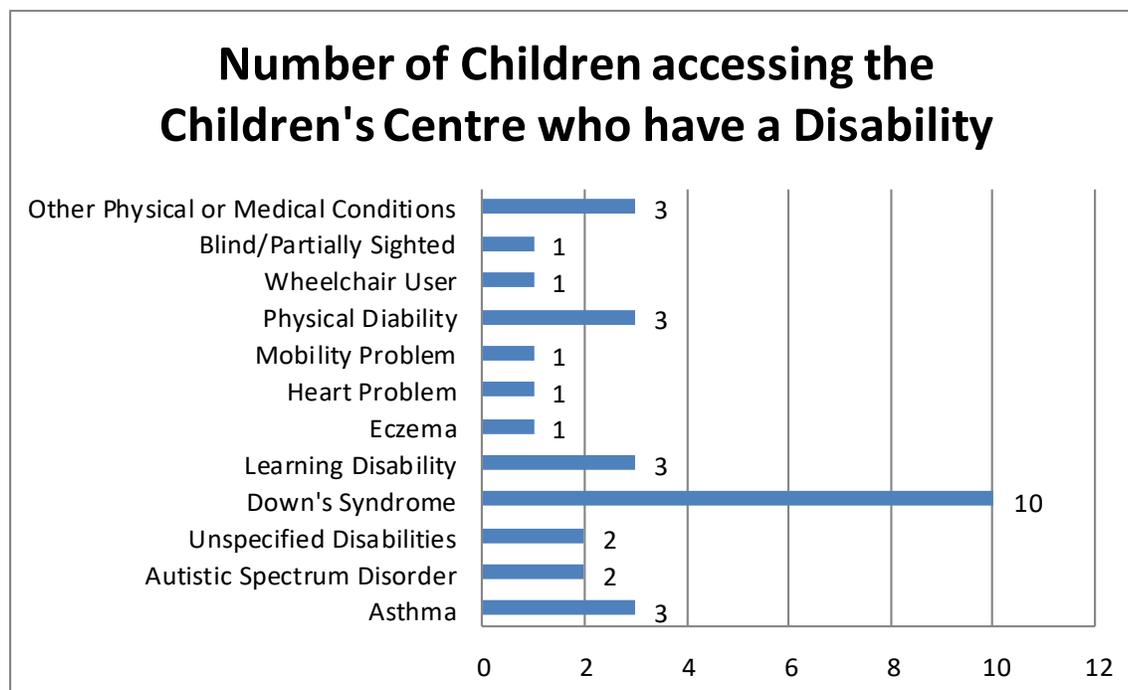
Arabic, Portuguese, Polish, Italian, Tamil, Chinese, German, Korean, Russian

47.5% of the children who attend have English as an Additional Language

- Languages spoken by the staff

Korean, Spanish, Portuguese and Albanian

- Number of children who attend with a disability



- Ratio of adults to children

Age Group	Ratio – Children : Adult
0 – 24 months	3:1
24 - 36 months	6:1
36 – 60 months	8:1

- Qualifications of the staff

Qualifications achieved by the early years practitioners within the Children’s Centre:	European Qualification Framework (EQF) level	Number of staff
PhD/EdD	EQF 8	0
MA / NPQICL	EQF 7	1
PGCE/EYPS//QTS	EQF 6	1
BA (Hons) in Early Years Teaching or Social Work	EQF 6	2
Foundation Degree in Early Years	EQF 5	1
NVQ level 3 in Childcare and Education or NNEB or Diploma in Education and Childcare	EQF 4	7
NVQ level 2 in Childcare and Education or Health and Social Care	EQF 3	3
Unqualified		0

Some staff members have more than one of the above qualifications and this is reflected in the table.

The Children’s Centre runs a day nursery and children that attend this day nursery are split into two groups:

- 0 – 24 months
- 24 – 48 months

They come together for different sessions.

The two age groups are then split into smaller groups with an Early Years practitioner leading the group. Within each group children are then allocated a Key Person who cares for all the children's individual needs. The number of children a Key Person has depends upon the age of the children within their group. The Key Person will liaise with the parent(s) regarding the child's progress and development while they are in the group.

The Children's Centre runs a number of sessions for parent(s) and carers to access:

- **Stay and Play** sessions are for children between 0 – 5 years. They have approximately 25 children attending at any one time.
- Target children have a Key Person who supports both the child and parent attending the **session. A Key Person will have up to 6 children who they will work with and these children are of mixed ages.**
- **Under 1's group** is a specific group run for parents and carers with children under the age of 12 months. 15 babies attend with their parents and 2 Early Years practitioners run the session.
- **Saturday Play** is run for children between the ages from birth to 10 years and provides a range of age appropriate activities for the children attending to access. Up to 40 children attend with their parent(s) / carer(s) and 4 members of staff run the session.

How is wellbeing identified, measured and monitored?

The Children's Centre staff observe children attending the centre using the Early Years Foundation Stage profile area Personal, Social and Emotional Development to identify a child's wellbeing. Each aspect of the area of development has Early Learning Goals.

Aspects for the area of Personal, Social and Emotional Development:

- Dispositions and attitude
- Self-confidence and self-esteem
- Making relationships
- Behaviour and self-control, Self-care
- Sense of community

Early Learning Goals are the goals that children are expected to achieve by the end of reception class. To reach each goal children move through a series of developmental stages that Early Years practitioners monitor and check through the use of observations.

The Children's Centre staff also observe children using the wellbeing and involvement indicators (Leuven scales) to measure a child's wellbeing and involvement within the setting but also to support parents in understanding their child's wellbeing.

What assessment procedures are there for supporting children with Additional Needs?

The Children's Centre supports children with additional needs in a number of different ways. They have specialist sessions, such as a session for children with Down's syndrome where targeted support can be provided for the children and their families with specialists attending providing specific support and advice.

The Children's Centre also has specialist staff, such as Portage workers who offer support and information to parents and professionals involved in working with young children with disabilities and special needs. It provides a step-by-step programme to assist the child with their learning and development.

The Children's Centre staff can also complete Common Assessment Framework (CAF) forms, for use across all children's services. The CAF form helps with the early identification of a child's additional needs and identifies the services and provision required to meet the child's identified needs.

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames has an information sharing hub called ASKK (Advancing Services for Kingston Kids) that offers support and information about different agencies and the range of resources that they have available to support families. The Children's Centre can support families in accessing this information and use ASKK to help support the children and families that attend the centre.

Story Board 1 How a toddler, Tom, is supported with the transition and settling-in process of attending a new setting

Context of the strategy The Children's Centre aims to make the transition for the child from home to the centre as smooth as possible, so they have a settling-in policy which introduces a Key Person to the family. Three settling in sessions are arranged for the week before the child's start date. This provides the family with the opportunity to become familiar with the setting and staff and for the parent(s) to gradually withdraw from their child. It also provides an opportunity for information to be gathered about the child's individual development and needs.

"A key person has special responsibilities for working with a small number of children, giving them the reassurance to feel safe and cared for, and building relationships with their parents. They will also talk to parents to make sure that the needs of the child are being met appropriately, and that records of development and progress is shared with parents and other professionals as necessary." (DCSF, 2008:15) With the current Statutory EYFS stating that "Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs (in accordance with paragraph 1.10), to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents." (DfE, 2014:21)

Tom is 18 months old and this is his second day at the Day Nursery at the Children's Centre. He has been allocated a Key Person; however, this person was changed, through his own choice, as he showed a preference for another early year's practitioner than the one who had been originally allocated to him.



On arrival children are given breakfast by their Key Person.



Tom's Key Person supports his transition into the setting by encouraging him to play and engage with her in the exploration of the range of resources. Tom's Key Person helps him to become familiar with the setting's environment and resources supporting his exploration so that he feels safe and confident. He maintains a close proximity to her.



After Tom has washed his hands, it is snack time, and his Key Person supports him with this new experience.



Tom explores the outdoor environment with the support of his Key Person. He uses her as a 'secure base' from which to explore, returning to her for support and reassurance when needed.



When Tom is tired and needs comfort he seeks this from her and she is his 'safe haven'.



Tom's Key Person supports him with the daily routines, such as, washing his hands before lunch and snack time.



Tom enjoys his lunch feeding himself.



Tom's Key Person engages with him in exploring the different materials in the treasure basket.



Tom's mother returns and he is reunited with her 'Proximity Maintenance' is demonstrated as he wants to be close to her.

Further description / explanation: Key Person is "The named member of staff with whom a child has more contact than other adults. This adult shows a special interest in the child through close personal interaction day-to-day. The key person can help the young child to deal with separation anxiety." (DCSF, 2008: 22) "Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents." (DfE, 2014:21) This approach is supported by the work of John Bowlby, James and Joyce Robertson and Mary Ainsworth. "Bowlby believed that there are four distinguishing characteristics of attachment:

1. **Proximity Maintenance** - The desire to be near the people we are attached to.
2. **Safe Haven** - Returning to the attachment figure for comfort and safety in the face of a fear or threat.
3. **Secure Base** - The attachment figure acts as a base of security from which the child can explore the surrounding environment.
4. **Separation Distress** - Anxiety that occurs in the absence of the attachment figure." (Cherry, 2012)

Context of the strategy

The First Steps programme was set up when Early Years practitioners observed that the parents attending the Stay and Play session were not really engaging or interacting with their children. First Steps is a six week programme for parents and carers to learn more about how young children learn and develop through their play. The session starts with input where handouts and pictures are used to introduce the concept. Then the session moves onto experiential learning where the parents and carers experience and explore the activities themselves with their children. The six week programme consists of: 1. What is Play? 2. Treasure Baskets, 3. Messy Play, 4. Books and Young Children, 5 and 6. Making it all happen.

The session starts with the Early Year's practitioners introducing the concept of messy play and how it can support their child's wellbeing referring to the Early Year's Foundation Stage – Personal, Social and Emotional Development and the SICS wellbeing scales.



Specific play activities are set up for the children and their parents to engage and interact with.



Children have the opportunity to explore the materials and activities.



Parents are encouraged to be involved with the activities and engage and interact with their children.

The Early Years practitioners and the parents have the opportunity to discuss and explore what they have observed during the session.

Further description / explanation:

The Early Year's practitioners link the session to the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2014) and the different areas within the framework, such as developing self-confidence, self-control, making relationships, level of involvement and approaching new experiences. Using the SICS wellbeing scales (Laevers F.) the Early Years practitioners support parents in interacting with their children and understanding what they are observing. Parents are encouraged to look for the WOW! moments that their children have and what their children have achieved through play and learning. These are all recorded in a Learning Journey Profile which the parents keep as a record of what they and their child have achieved.

Story Board 3 Sensory Play Activity that encourages toddlers' wellbeing through the exploration of a range of materials

Context of the strategy

Sensory Play is when a range of activities and experiences are provided that enable a toddler to explore using their five senses the feeling, texture, smell and in some cases taste of the resources and materials in a therapeutic way. The resources for this activity include: coloured pasta and spaghetti (cooked), pulses, corn flour mixed with water, icing sugar, flour, coloured rice, jelly, custard, cereal and Angel Delight (a fluffy whipped milk dessert). Toddlers use their senses and creativity to explore the materials and environment thereby building upon and developing their sense of self-esteem and confidence with the materials which provide an emotional release from tension, being failure proof and soothing.



The room is set up with a range of tactile and sensory materials for Sensory Play.



The toddlers and their parents are encouraged to explore the range of materials. Annie, who is 30 months, explores the materials and feels two of the different textures at the same time.



The early year's practitioner supports both the toddlers and their parents in using and exploring the materials showing and explaining how sensory play can support their toddler's learning and development.



Everybody helps with the clearing up!

Further description / explanation:

Sensory play involves the use of the five senses, touch, sight, smell, taste and hearing and enables toddlers to explore a sensory rich environment which can also be very therapeutic and kinaesthetic. Other sensory play experiences can include: a sensory garden, which uses various textured, coloured and smelling plants or a sensory soft play room, which uses various coloured lights, fragrances, and textured materials. Sensory activities stimulate the senses and support a child's all round development, such as fine and gross motor skills, manipulative skills, emotional development, social skills, knowledge of science, maths and creativity. These sensory play experiences link to Piaget's stages of sensori-motor development where babies and toddlers draw knowledge and understanding from physical actions through using their senses.

Context of the strategy

Jack is 20 months and he is very familiar and involved in the daily routine at the day nursery within the children’s centre. The setting has a clear routine for the toddlers however this is flexible and meets the needs of each individual toddler, for example, the toddlers all have different nap times. The toddlers arrive between 8:00 and 8:30 when they have breakfast. They then have a play time which is planned continuous provision for self selection ‘free-flow play’. In the morning the toddlers have a snack time around 10:00 or 10:30. They will wash their hands and nappies will be changed. The toddlers’ nappies are changed whenever needed. After snack time the children go outside to play until lunch is served at 12:00. After lunch, at around 13:00, some toddlers are collected by their family. Others like Jack might have a nap. New resources and activities are set up for the afternoon play time. The toddlers also go outside to play and have another snack time in the afternoon before being collected by their families. The toddlers’ Key Person will then give feedback to the family on their day.



On arrival the toddlers have their breakfast.



A range of resources and activities are set up in the room. The toddlers can choose what they would like to play with. This is called ‘free-flow play’ as they can go freely from one activity to another. Jack chooses to play with the farm animals on the table.



He lines them up around the edge of the table. When he runs out he gets some more and continues with this process. The early year’s practitioner who engages with him in this activity supports him by providing him with more animals. She carries out an observation of his play as he is demonstrating the ‘schema’ of positioning where objects are placed in a particular way. This pattern of behaviour provides “early year’s educators with insights into children’s thinking. Children use their repeated actions to ‘search for commonalities’.” (Arnold, 2005)

When it is snack time Jack helps to tidy up putting the animals away.



Jack washes his hands, as part of his daily routines, before snack and lunch time.



Jack helps with the daily routine by setting the table for the toddlers' snack time.



Jack helps himself to a variety of fruit, apple, pear, strawberries, grapes and pineapple. He returns for more fruit helping himself.



Jack washes his hands and gets ready for lunch. Jack feeds himself chicken, rice and sweet corn. When he is finished he is offered more and he carefully helps himself to more.



The toddlers go out into the garden twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. A range of outdoor resources are put out for the toddlers to access and Jack chooses the tricycle and pushes himself along with his feet.



After lunch, as part of Jack's routine, he has a sleep. This varies as each toddler has their own routine for sleep time. An early year's practitioner sets up the sleeping area and helps Jack get ready for his sleep staying with him until he falls asleep. When he wakes new resources and activities will have been put out for him to explore.



Further description / explanation: There are many different routines within a toddler's day, such as meal times, washing hands, nappy changing, sleep time, going outside or using different resources. Routines are regular repeated experiences that toddlers go through on a daily basis helping to provide a predictable and consistent structure to the day. This provides support and comfort to a toddler as they will know what to expect and can predict what will happen next giving them a sense of control and security. "Children benefit from a range of experiences, including those that are predictable, comforting and challenging... When children feel confident in the environment they are willing to try things out, knowing that effort is valued" DCSF, 2008b: PIP 2.4, 3.3)

Context of the strategy

The Children’s Centre finishes their ‘Stay and Play’ session with singing time. Singing time enables the children to make choices and decisions with the songs that they would like to sing. It provides them with the opportunity to “express themselves through physical action and sound. Explore by repeating patterns of play.” (DCSF, 2008:108) Toddlers at this age “begin to move to music, listen to or join in rhymes or songs.” (DCSF, 2008:113) Songs and rhymes are often an enjoyable social experience for toddlers where they learn about the skills of listening, recognising and repeating rhythm, rhyme and actions.



At the beginning of singing time, a parachute is put on the floor to form a circle for the children to sit on. The children then choose which songs they would like to sing.



For the song see the bunnies sleeping the children lie on the parachute pretending to be little bunnies sleeping.



See the Bunnies Sleeping

See the bunnies sleeping until it’s nearly noon.

Come and let us gently wake them with a merry tune.

Oh how still, are they ill?

Wake up! (Clap)

Hop little bunnies hop, hop, hop.

Hop little bunnies do not stop.

Hop little bunnies hop, hop, hop.



At wake up, the adults clap, and the children jump up and hop around the parachute pretending to be little bunnies. When the song finishes the children sit back down in a circle on the parachute.



The wheels on the bus

The wheels on the bus go round and round, round and round, round and round. The wheels on the bus go round and round all day long.

The wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish, swish, swish, swish, swish, swish. The wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish, all day long.

The bell on the bus goes ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding. The bell on the bus goes ding, ding, ding all day long.



Parachute games are also played with the children shaking it, running underneath it and standing on different colours of the parachute.

The adults and children make a mushroom with the parachute and all go underneath it for a song or story.



The adults and children make the actions for the song. They roll their hands for the wheels, waving their arms for the wipers and pretend to press a bell for the bell.



The good-bye song is sung at the end of the session when the children all wave good-bye to each other.

Good-bye Song

Say good-bye GOOD-BYE, say good-bye GOOD-BYE, say good-bye GOOD-BYE, say good-bye GOOD-BYE

Whisper good-bye good-bye, whisper good-bye good-bye, whisper good-bye good-bye, whisper good-bye good-bye

Shout good-bye, **GOOD-BYE**

Further description / explanation:

Toddlers learn from action songs and rhymes as actions are the easiest way for a toddler to join in. Songs and rhymes support the fundamentals of thinking with the rhythm, patterns and intonations of speech. The repetition of songs and rhymes provides predictability for toddlers, which is comforting and enables them to learn about the patterns of the songs and rhymes. This leads to them gaining confidence and then as they become more confident in their understanding of the patterns and structure of songs and rhymes they can change the words and create or invent their own songs and rhymes. Songs and rhymes are very important in the development of language and speech.

References

- Arnold C. (2005) 'Train of thought', *Nursery World*, 20 October 2005 [Online] Available at: <http://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/news/719740/Train-thought/?DCMP=ILC-SEARCH> (Accessed: 2nd February 2012)
- Cherry K. (2012) *Attachment Styles: John Bowlby – Attachment Theory*. Available at: <http://psychology.about.com/od/loveandattraction/ss/attachmentstyle.htm> (Accessed: 27th January 2012)
- Department for Education (2014) *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage - Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five*. Runcorn: Department for Education.
- Department for Education (2012) *Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This non-statutory guidance material supports practitioners in implementing the statutory requirements of the EYFS*. Runcorn: Department for Education
- Department for Children, Schools and Families. (2008) *Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage*. Nottingham: Department for Children, Schools and Families.
- Department for Children, Schools and Families. (2008b) *Principle in Practice (PIP) Cards for the Early Years Foundation Stage*. Nottingham: Department for Children, Schools and Families.
- Lindon J. (2000) 'Good habits - learning through routines', *Nursery World*, 08 June 2000, [Online] Available at: <http://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/news/722529/Good-habits---learning-routines/> (Accessed: 2nd February 2012)