



**Manual and materials on
Children's Voices and Expressions
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Toddlers' Voice and Expressions

Wellbeing Dimension 4

Interaction, Engagement and Play

Providing opportunities to toddlers to interact, cooperate and be involved with one another.

Through play encourage opportunities for toddler to express their feelings in a safe environment where they can develop strategies for coping with new and challenging situations.

Wellbeing, Dimension 5

What are the diverse modes of expressions that you have observed?

How can you enable and empower the voice of the toddlers?



Aims of the manual

The manual will

- offer EYP's theoretical knowledge about young children's specific mode of communicating and the child's right according to the *UN Convention of the Child's Right*.
- expand EYPs' consciousness of young children's diverse modes of expressions and how they can reflect on observation from their own setting.
- develop EYPs consciousness of the complex interactions among children and thereby improve their ability to support toddler's play.



Theoretical background and literature:

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Different views of young children

Toddlers' community in play

Supporting peer interactions in play



The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

All human beings – regardless of age, gender, race and ability – should be treated with respect and dignity on their own premises.

Article 12 The views of the child have to be given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child

Article 13 on the child's right to freedom of expression through any media of the child's choice.



This implies

A shift away from traditional beliefs that regard early childhood mainly as a period for the socialization of the immature human being towards mature adult status is required.

The Convention requires that children, including the very youngest children, be respected as person in their own right.



Are toddler's mature enough to have a voice?

- Young children are able to “make choices and communicate their feelings, ideas, and wishes in numerous ways, long before they are able to communicate through the conventions of spoken or written language”
- “Consequently, full implementation of Article 12 requires recognition of, and respect for, non-verbal forms of communication including play, body language, facial expressions, and drawing and painting, through which very young children demonstrate understanding, choices and preferences”.
- “To achieve the right of participation requires adults to adopt a *child-centered attitude, listening to young children and respecting their dignity* and their individual *points of view*. It also requires adults to *show patience and creativity by adapting* their expectations to a *young child interests, levels of understanding and **preferred ways of communicating***”.

Children's preferred mode of expression

Interviews with older preschool children in Norway:
What do you prefer to do in kindergarten?

“to play or to be with friends”

“I play to have fun and for the sake of playing”.

Therefore the main topic:

Play and playful interactions



Rethinking the role of the educator

“The UN convention not only changes the status of the children, but also the way we as educators think about ourselves.”

Mutual relationship: the child and the educator

Transactional model of child development

The child and the educator are shaped by one another.



Different views of young children

Swedish research:

Our view of children is about how we as adults *perceive, interact with and relate* to children

- Adults know best
- Children are irrational
- Children as human beings

What view of the child as a person is important to us?



Toddler's community in play

Jean Piaget:

Functional play with body and objects

Simple symbolic play from about 18 months

Parallel play

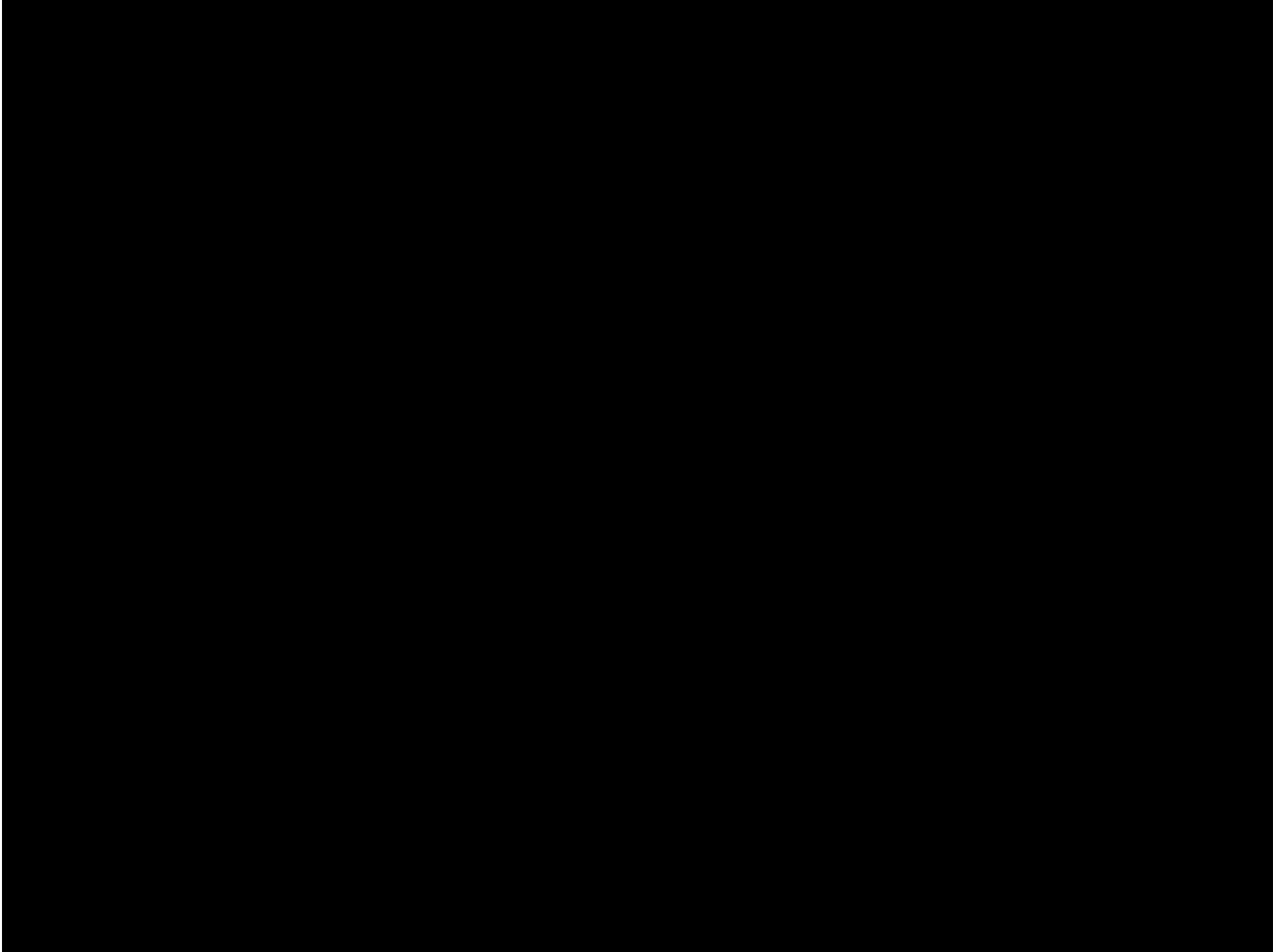
Recent research in toddler settings:

social interaction (taking turns, mutuality, cooperation)

Video: What is going on here?



Video



Maurice Merleau-Ponty

Phenomenology of perception

Descartes: Cogito, ergo sum (I think, thus I exist)

Merleau Ponty:

Human beings are **body subjects**

We **exist in** the world with our **body**

The body knows before we can express in words.

The body is the basis for toddler's understanding of him/herself, other people and the world they live in.

Totality of body and the expressions of the body.



Research; toddlers' interactions in play

Norwegian researcher Gunvor Løkken (2000)

The playful quality of the toddling style

playful mentality

here and there movements

slapstick like humour

glee concert/ group glee

repeated actions: play routines

Toddlers create their own peer community in play routines

The value of togetherness:

experience of the toddling Being of I, Thou and We.



Research on toddlers' interaction in play

- Toddlers' peer communications
- Toddler's negotiations
- Friendship among toddlers

Studies in Norwegian, Swedish and Icelandic toddler groups

Why are we presenting these descriptions of how toddlers communicate, interact and create play?

«You see what you know.»



Supporting peer interactions in play; Indirect and direct strategies

Direct strategies (Os, 2004)

- Directing attention to peers (“Spotlight”)
- Administrating turn-taking (“Chain”)
- Facilitating joint activities (“Catalyst”)
- Prolonging ongoing play (“Rubber band”)
- Explaining signals (“Interpreter”)
- Regulating behavior (“Regulator”)
- Playing with children (“Guide”)



Observe and reflect

- Which play routines do you have observed toddlers creating in your setting?
- Have you observed some of these different kinds of interaction amongst the children in your setting?
- How do different children negotiate during playtime?
- Are there established or developing friendships in your group of toddlers?



Setting partners' tasks

Read and discuss the reading material

- Use questions for discussion

Observe, reflect and act

- Use the tools to guide observations and to analyze the way your children interact and create meaning in play.
- Observe or write narratives (written episodes) as basis for reflection in your working team.
- Discuss your observations or narratives regularly in team meetings (put on the agenda for a certain amount of weeks)
- Consider adequate ways of supporting the children's play using direct and/or indirect strategies. Implement adequate strategies.



Maria José Riellab, Escola Bressol
publica Las Balmanyas:
A videoreport about our work





The Voice Of The Child:

Children's Voices and Expressions

Putting the recommendations into
Practice



**achieving
for children**

Background information

- Tom Maybey, Children's Centre Lead Practitioner in the North East Cluster (Richmond) for Achieving For Children.
- Been involved in ToWe project since March 2016.
- Implemented the recommendations in Children's Centre groups – where parents and carers stay with their children while they access our services like Stay and Play, singing sessions, information sessions and more.
- Attendance isn't mandatory – we never know exactly who is going to attend



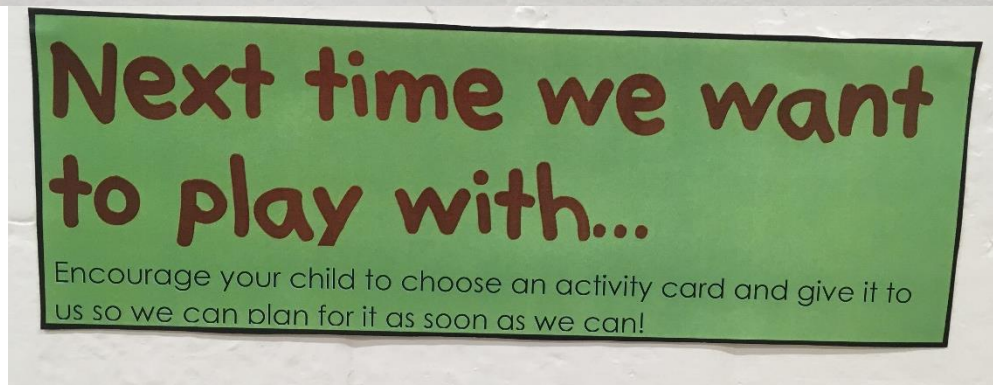
What we have done

- Observations on all children (Not a regular occurrence in children's centre activities)
And changed the observation format for tracked children.

Child's name:		Adult observing:		<u>Personal Social and Emotional Development</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Making Relationships <input type="checkbox"/> Self Confidence and Self Awareness <input type="checkbox"/> Managing Feelings and Behaviour <u>Physical Development</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Moving and Handling <input type="checkbox"/> Health and Self Care <u>Communication and Language</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Listening and Attention <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking <u>Literacy</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Writing <u>Mathematics</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Numbers <input type="checkbox"/> Shape, Space and Measure <u>Understanding the World</u> <input type="checkbox"/> People and Communities <input type="checkbox"/> The World <input type="checkbox"/> Technology <u>Expressive Arts and Design</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Exploring and Using Media and Materials <input type="checkbox"/> Being Imaginative
Date:	Session:	Photo: Yes/No		
Observation:				
Child initiated/Adult initiated		Wow moment: Yes/No		
Next steps:				

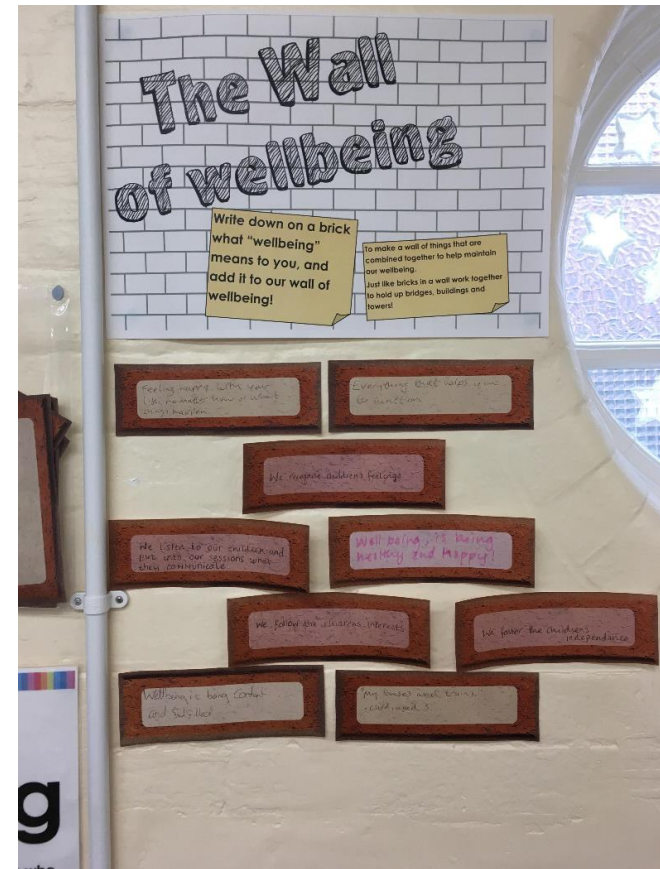
What we have done

- Activity choosing opportunities



What we have done

- 'Tuning in' parents and carers
- Using displays and posters to highlight the ToWe project



What we have done

- Activities inspired by children, and highlighting that in our planning document. Celebrating that with children and parents if possible.

Specific		they make.	and tape to make "clean" marks with.	tray	my fingers without getting messy!
	Mathematics (M)	Number - Recites some number names in sequence.	Singing a few counting songs during circle time – 12345, 5 Little Ducks, 5 Little Monkeys	Circle time	Count along on your fingers - slowly – so I can see and possibly join in with the counting.
		Shape, space and measure - Begins to use the language of size.	Real food that can be poured (rice, oats, pasta) and measured in a tray in the home corner using containers of various sizes and weighing scales (inspired by Alexi and Henry)	Tuff spot tray in home corner	Use words that describe size and volume when we're playing with this activity – words like big, small, empty, full.
Understanding	The world - Enjoys playing with small-world models such as a farm, a garage, or a train track.	Boats and people in the water tray – the boats can "rescue" any people from the sea (inspired by RNLI Day on 30th)	In water tray	Play with me and create role play scenarios using the boats and people.	



What we have done: the power of video

Inspired by a film shown from Norway, we filmed children at play and analysed the results, considering:

- How children responded to activities which we had set out inspired by them
- How they interacted with the environment - making their own choices (expressing their views – verbal or not)
- How they interacted with others – surprises?!
- Our roles!! Did we do what we thought we were doing?



What we have done

- Encouraged parents to share their children's feelings, opinions and words with us, have set up a board to record these.
- 'Tuning in' parents and carers
- Activities inspired by children
- Evaluation and planning - including 'in the moment' planning
- Still more to do!



Time for discussions!

What do you think?

Your comments and questions are welcome.....

