Monday 10th july

Final Focus Group

Kat, Janette, Tom, Allie

Q: The first question is working with the materials, what topics have you worked with since the last focus group and how is that been going for you?

T: Since my last focus group – I wasn’t able to come to the last one – we have gone through quite a change about the structure of working, we have changed the staff structure. We are down two members of staff and so at the moment it has been quite hectic at work. We have tried to keep the groups and everything running. We haven’t been focusing specifically on ToWe itself and looking at [???] area, but it has been ingrained into the practice, we have taken on the roles working in a new centre; over the past couple of months everyone has been doing bits here and there in the centre, changing it to our way of working, to our spin on things which is now very ToWe informed. We have had some comments from parents about how they have enjoyed the new sessions that we are running there. It is not over at [location] but a comment was left at one of our sites in [Location] from a parent saying how much they enjoyed the – and I quote – “pedagogical aspects of our sessions”.

Very nice, that is really really positive

T: It was anonymous but they also talked about how the learning is obvious and how the benefits are obvious, so the little snippets of ToWe information that I put on the walls, the learning prompts, the planning sheets, they see them and it is working, it going in and it is working without one barely talks about it and says I notices this. We are due to be doing our terminal evaluation soon so we can put some ToWe related questions into it about wellbeing and things that they might have tried at home so we can hopefully get back some actual hard figures.

That is really really positive!

T: I loved reading and seeing that comment, especially using such little words like “pedagogical” and seeing how they actually recognize what we are doing has been more than just a playgroup.

K: And that it must have been a parent with a knowkedge of education to write that.

T: I assume so, yes.

That is really taking it forward, so if you reflect on back to what the situation was a couple of years ago with parents, it sounds as if there is more understanding.

T: Yes, I think so and I get a lot of parents taking away our materials for doing things at home so – if they follow them, they can be taking them home and use it like newspaper, wrap paper– if they follow them we know that this parents are now doing high quality beneficial activities with their children and these are activities about getting children to make play-do with them, so they are involving themselves in things like that. Some of the comments we get back are “Oh, we made play-do together; we did this, we did that, we play with it every day”. These are things that are child-led, because they saw their children play with the play-do and “Let’s do this at home”, they took the leaflet and they feedback “Actually we did it, it was great, they are loving it”.

Q: And then resource while, have you created resources, have you bought any resources, have you brought any resources in?

T. We bought some more baby sensory resources and much more outdoor resources, because now we have got the garden outside, so the children are really enjoying that and we are giving them the choice to go outside always, whatever the weather, they are not always gonna do it, but they have the choice there so it’s very much ToWe infucenced, especially by the Norwegian school of thought about going aoutside whatever the weather. They can do it in Norway and they have a fantastic early years system, than we can bring a little bit of Norway into [location].

Q: You certainly can and it sounds like you have. Is there anything you want to…

A: I just want to say that – ‘cause what Tom is talking about is really good early years practices, isn’t it? – we want parents to be seeing the value of learning and I think if they are now seeing the connection between learning and a child wellbeing, a child has to be happy, have confidence, a strong wellbeing to learn, that’s for me where we are making the biggest difference. Because we have always given out leaflets and things like that, but what is making them think differently about their child, what is making them try the things that we have suggested through the years. In terms of what I have been working on there have been changes in [location] day nursery, ‘cause we had J. leave, so my focus this term has been supporting the new deputy manager there to really come up to speed with ToWe and get really behind it. She has not had the benefit of the week training or even meeting everybody at [EYAT?] , but she is really keen to read it and she took half a day to read it in her own time and she is very very motivated, really gets behind it and she has basically started from scratch with [location] in terms of doing the meal-time audit and the environment audit. The other thing I have been working on is updating the EY team about the work that we have been doing and again there is an EY service meeting coming up later this week where I will share again the benefits of job-shadowing experiences, ‘cause I think we have all said that we have come out of that, it was such a valuable part of this and then forward planning for the conference in autumn.

Q: What about you? Just a quick update, how has it been going?

K: Like T. said there has been a restructure, so my focus has been over in [location], which was the centre that our team acquired. I started there, so we have been looking at meals, we have been doing an environment audit; although over there are a lot of toys, they are not necessarily the most appropriate for the sessions that we are running and there has been really positive feedback. We had the parents forum, there have been really positive feedback about the sessions and the changes. They say it is so obvious the changes in the sessions and the quality of the sessions that they are seeing…

Q: Is the forum new or have you been running those in the past?

K: We ran them in the past, but at that centre they were run by the old team.

Q: OK

K: So since the Easter holidays, since we started working there, that was the first one that I did in June, which was obviously really lovely to hear that. Also at the parent forum in [location], which have been ongoing by us over the last couple of years, there were some feedbacks about how parents, there is a group of parents who said they have really taken it onboard, kinda giving their children the choice to do things themselves and letting their children take time to do things themselves, simple things, so learning how to tie the shoelaces at least trying to let them do those things themselves rather than rushing them out of the door. That was really nice. And another thing they mentioned, they go outside a lot more now because they acknowledged that they children really like spending time outdoor, they are doing that in the sessions, but as well as doing it at the centre they are going out to the woods and spending time.

Q Thank you, that is really helpful.

J: Since the last meeting that we had we had a restructure, but I think I have been really lucky in terms of the creche support, the crèche workers have been on ToWe since January and thankfully that team has stayed in different capacities, but they still come in and out of [location] and J in particular and R as well, so because they have embrace ToWe form the beginning they still come and “That is what we could do. I was thinking about that” in terms of making parents’ voices or children’s voices more visible, or even in terms of making the learning more visible, how we can pick something every month and make a display of it. F. just captured the child play in the setting, so for example what we have right now on the wall is a little boy playing in the mud kitchen but then he extended that to feeding the pigs, his mum said he’s gone to the farm and seen the pigs being fed, so we just captured that photograph, what the child said, what the mum said, few macaton signs to highlight the learning that was going on in that activity and it was just to highlight that all thing that was going on in the children centre. Also what we found is because of all the intellectual outputs that we have been working through, you have all these different spin-off that has come from everything that we have done that we need to go back and revisit and pull a light, because the work keep us going. So F. is doing the mealtime audit and asking questions and finding out about the fussy eater and there is still much that we can do with parents about the fussy eaters and how we can bring health into and help support with that. And also we have just collected information on the parents and the children’s voices which we have displayed. There is so much we can do just going back to that, what actually did they say they want us to improve? What actually did they say they want us to keep? So how can we really make this better, or how can we improve that and if can’t improve it what can we offer in alternative. It just giving us so much, it is like a Goliath thing, it is expanding.

Q: Lots of ideas. The wellbeing has been understood and sounds like it has been embedded into the curriculum.

J: It was always there. I think, I feel really priviledged that I have this other team of people…

[all talking at the same time]

A: It is just giving people that feel that when they are coming to the setting they are expected to look around and see celebration of what children said and comments asking them for their views, so it just normal, natural, expected practice now.

J: And it is not that it is just meaningful to me. It is meaningful to them as well.

Q: Which is good. How do you think ToWe has improved your knowledge and experience? Having used the ToWe materials, do you think you are now a different person as a result of it? If you could summarise how it has changed you…

T: It made me more aware of the thigs that we already do and how they benefit wellbeing. I know it is a little bit of a [?get up?] kind of thing, but it is all like “ok, we do that, we do that, we do that” and there is bits that we do without thinking and there is bits that we do occasionally but it is about putting it all together and treating young children with the respect that they deserve. It is about not doing things for them, it is about not wrapping them in cotton walls, it is about letting them have a go, letting them make mistakes, challenging society views about how a young child should be and their own one’s desires and respecting them and giving them a voice. It has taken a lot of little bits of knowledge and practice and put them in use and make them not new to me, but re-evaluate the way we do things and make things better, improve the quality of what we do.

Q: What about sharing it with others. What has it been like for you?

T. It is something that is hopefully going to happen more now that we have more members of staff who can free us up. We can actually go to other places and speak to other people. We have got a monthly job group meeting for the people in my role and J’s role and similar. We meet up once a month, led up by Allie and we are gonna be embedding and sharing the information…

Q: You’ll be getting a lot of it out locally to your own staff…

T: Yes, across the two boroughs. And then we have the new people starting, indoctrinating them into it.

[laughter]

T:And then sort of bring it to them and when I do have time to visit other centres, go over there so we can share best practice, I can steal ideas that other centres may have and use them for ToWe purposes.

Q: A., is there anything you want to comment on about your knowledge or experience with other staff?

A: for me, it is highlighting again that – I know this is all about reflection – but for me it is about saying how valuable it is for practitioners to have that time to reflect, ‘cause especially at time of change, when everyone is so busy, it is about remembering that word “reflection” in the title of the project, which was hard to think initially. If we go back one year it was hard for some people: “how long do people need with this? When it is going to end?”, whereas now, as T. said, it is about everybody reflecting on what is good practice – ‘cause I think we always had good practice – but how can that practice be strengthen and highlighting the fact that it is about the child, how does the child feel about being here, that’s what OFSTED says “ what it is like to be a child here?”, we know it is in the terminology, but when we are really thinking about our practice and re-evaluating our sessions, we are not thinking “how good did the session go, how did people used the resources over there”, we are actually thinking more deeply about particular individual children and what their needs are, not just if they are enjoying something, where is that child now, what his needs are wherever he is at and sharing it with parents.

Q: K., would you say K you are more reflective now in how you approach the experience for the children and planning for them?

K: Definitely. And I think the job shadowing really also helped with that…

Q: How was that?

K: It was fantastic, it was so invaluable and I think

Q: where did you go?

K: I went to Norway. The best time ever. The job shadowing in Norway was the last one, so I think the people who were organizing it had more opportunities, they saw how the job shadowing worked here and in Spain and then by Norway they were like “Right, that’s how to do it”. So we had such a good balance of observing and being in the classroom and then time to reflect as a group and then some self-reflection time as well. I have tried to give myself time in my week to do some self-reflection, but I think we would probably all agree that there is not a lot of time.

Q: How they are reflecting, were there any tips or strategies that they were using about reflection?

K: They were doing it as a team, they work very closely as a team anyway over there. I feel we are a close team, but because we are stretched across different buildings on a day to day basis, that makes it trickier, but we get the time on Thursday afternoon. There were things I thought I had already implemented like giving children more times to do things for themselves and I went over there and I am like “No, I am not even close”. Do you want an example?

Q: Yes, please.

K: So, one example which I did share when I was there as well. There was a young girl, she was 2 and she was trying to climb on a swing, into the swing. I was watching and leaving her to it. Watching, watching, watching, watching what she could do and I thought “I do not think she is going to actually be able to achieve this. I will help, so she feels empowered” and then one of their practitioners said “No, wait! She can do it”, It took her another minute but she got in that swing on her own. That was a real light bulb moment for me. And I brought that back and shared it with some of the parents as well, because they are probably in the situation like the one I was in. Even though they are learning to wait, you really really need to give it time; like I said, when you are in a rush, it is not easy to do that.

Q: You can miss opportunities, Can’t you?

K: Yes and I think to be able to give parents that space within the centre, so even if they are not doing at home all the time, they have the time and the space to do it at the children centre.

Q: would you change anything as a result of having that lightbulb moment?

K:I just wait a little bit more and encourage them, because we have been treating the parents as our extra practitioners within the project, so trying to share the information with the parents and if they go forward to quickly intervene or “Oh, if you could just wait a few more seconds and see what happens”.

A: It is really effective modelling, isn’t it?

J: I would say, what T. said at the beginning about respect, also respect for other practitioners, just you know, we are all on this journey and we all have got different experiences, different training and what not that we bring to it, so it’s just add respect for everything that has gone and has brought other practitioners to where they are today as well and how carefully we have to proceed with this; but you know so much respect, especially following the job shadowing.

Q: Where did you go?

J: I went to Barcelona. It is just the enormity of they have already done and the journey, you know there are still things that they want to improve or expand or do. We are all in this together and it is not easy for anybody.

Q: Did you have the same enlightment moment, when you felt “this could work back in our setting “ or “I did not know that you could do things this way”?

J: It is not really I lightbulb. It has more to do with the peer relationships, child with child, I am far more conscious now of trying to help children link up – not pairing them together – and also help the parents as well to support their children to make friends in the setting. We used to always get asked that question – we still do – how they do not really mix, how do they not really play together; it’s alright, at their age they just play alongside. I have seen good enough just to say that, to be helping the parents and giving them the tools or strategies we got from ToWe that “this is how you can help your children”, just by saying “Oh, look what Ally is doing, Ally is making a play-do”. Just pointing them up, so that they know the child and what he is doing and this is her name. just doing it for the parents, modelling, but also doing this for the children and try to get them together like that. Not just me scaffold the learning, but trying to encourage them to scaffold each other.

A: And again, something I can share from Barcelona – ‘cause I was there for just 2 days – and I know we have always promoted it but seeing it in real life is something you can really share with the practitioners at the conference, it was the way at lunchtime in one of the nurseries the children did everything. I know over here we have to say “Here are some plates, here are some cups, distribute them, give them out”, but there they did everything, from opening swing-doors, to carrying tables through and at one point I was thinking “Do I need to intervene? Do I need to be ready?” I wasn’t going to jump to it but I was being ready and again there was a [???] when the practitioners just leave them and the children carried a table through, negotiated around things to do everything to set the environment up and I thought that was really impressive. So again just some real life examples that we can share later, I think it is invaluable. And linked to that the wait time. There was one little boy, the children were going for nap time and he was sit at the table having his lunch and somebody walked in could think “was he been made to stay there to finish or has he chosen”. I wasn’t quite sure and we had a conversation and he chose to. But again here it might be “C’mon, we all need to go to nap now, so let’s just finish”. He was really lovely real life home from home examples which I think we can share regardless of your setting or the way it is laid out.

Q: Have you shared what you did? T., you didn’t go, but they came over. How was that for you?

T: they asked a lot of questions. It was a bit of an ego boost when they said “This is fantastic, we are going to try to do this. I really liked that” and hearing it from people who are not familiar with the ways we do things in the children centre, it makes things nice.

Q: Where you proud?

T: Yes! Very much so! And the all project… we wouldn’t have had an opportunity like that without this, so it has been valuable for that as well. From a personal level of boosting my confidence in what I do it has been really handy. And hearing the feedback from K, J, A, R, when they did go to Norway and to Barcelona and putting a little bit of practice here and there from that as well, so it has been working both ways, it has been a true international thing, so it has been really handy, really lovely.

Q: Have there been any particular critical incident that has been a turning point for you, where you felt “now I know why ToWe was invented”?

T: It has already been said but giving them time, giving them respect and letting them trying things themselves. It is one of the characteristics of effective learning, letting children to have a go and them being willing to have a go, but it is not something that you always think about. We tend to focus on the learning outcomes and the ages and stages and thigs like that. So to think more about how this benefits them emotionally and for their wellbeing – wellbeingly [all laughs]

Q: So you are talking more about the process?

T: Exactly, that is what I was thinking about. We as adults, regardless of our level of knowledge and our understanding of child development, we often focus more on the goal rather than the learning process. All that a child wants to do, getting in a swing, a child wants to play with that thing, a child wants to stick that to that and so we think “We can give them a hand with that” rather than “maybe they can learn something by having a go themselves, maybe they can feel good about themselves while actually finally succeeding in doing it”. So rather than us stepping in after waiting 2 seconds, 5 seconds, 10 seconds, letting them just take a step back and if there is not any immediate risk to them or other letting them do things. And passing on this message to parents and to other practitioners. And how if they have tried and tried again this really benefits their own sense of achievement if they actually finally manage to do it. Or if they don’t do it, what they actually achieve from that, they might find they enjoy something in a completely different way.

A: The reason I had a big grim on my face was because the real message – our message about children centres and stay and play such as in particular where parents learn with their children– is that the focus should always be about selling the characteristics of effective learning. How children learn? We obviously do plan it within EYFS and we all know the prime areas and helping children getting a good level of attainment it is really crucial, but the biggest message we can give to parents is to understand those areas, the characteristics of effective learning, ‘cause they would be much more likely to allow their children to develop that way at home, to expect that when they go to nurseries, to expect that when they go to school as well, so it is really lovely to hear that that is exactly what is happening. It gives us more ammunitions to sell that message further.

Q: Is there anything in particular, any critical incidents that you want to talk about linked to any of the outputs that changed the way you do things?

A: Somebody did say about videoing, when you actually videoed something you saw, the play between two children that you wouldn’t have thought… thinking back, if we did have more time, more bodies, if you could factor that in more, it would be brilliant and sharing that. Sometimes parents, we talk about how we support parents knowledge of children’s learning and in an ideal world I think having some shared video footage – obviously with parents’ permission – but doing some analysis and sharing with parents would be fantastic.

Q: … understanding something that we normally only reflect through words.

J: the one other thing is, I think ToWe has given practitioners the confidence about wellbeing, regardless of what the learning outcome is there must be wellbeing in there [???] even that needs to be valued. Also, there are some people working in EY that aren’t getting the wellbeing, so hopefully through ToWe [all talking at the same time] every practitioner is a good practitioner because we are really supporting wellbeing and this needs to be celebrated.

Q: You are doing it within your roles. How this is going to be passed across to other settings and individuals?

J: To give you an example, there was a student in our setting and she wasn’t that great academically, so I was told, she was falling behind in her writing. With the children she was amazing and I think that really needed recognising.

A: I have seen the reverse as well!

J: I don’t think she was getting that affirmation from her college at her college and assessor that she was brilliant, but she is, ‘cause even when the ToWe vistirs came from Norway they said “Oh, have you shared the ToWe strategies with her, ‘cause [all talking togerther]” and I thought “That needs to be said more than the marking and let me see what you have written” because…

A: It is about those interactions, isn’t it?

J: And the interactions are so important, because academically you can be brilliant but if you do not connect with the children at the time they need you to connect with them…

K: It is true. That is what we were saying the other day – wasn’t it? – about sometimes, when we are so busy, we might not necessarily have the time to put the learning prompt on the wall or to arrange an activity in a certain way, but when the children arrive and you are still having those one to one meaningful interaction with them, than actually you can get the point across to them and through modelling to the parents as well, you might not necessarily need that learning prompt anymore.

Q: It is a guide, a loose framework. Just moving on, which material have you been using more recently and which output?

T: Unfortunately not many.

Q: Not many.

T: Because of the nature of the work at the moment. My folder is at one site and I am not always at that site, so…

Q: OK

T: I have the electronic ones, but I have no chance to turn my computer on. The ones I enjoyed the most and the ones I tried to bring out the most are about toddler voices and early language.

Q: Do you referred to those and used those?

T: Yes, yes. Not as much as I would like to.

Q: Is it something you are willing to try to improve?

T: Yes, try to change. Especially when introducing the project to a new member of staff, giving them an opportunity to through it, that would be quite, that would be nice to have a look at it again.

Q: It is almost like role reversed, you are kind of leading on it. What about you? Have you looked at the materials recently or around any of the outputs? Does this guide you along a bit more?

K: Obviously I would love to, but at the moment same as Tom. It’s time pressure. I think it would be really nice for us to go through it and explain it and…

Q: To share it. It is kind of the next step. Is it the same for you as well?

J: Yes. What we have already started and we are still building on it, improve it is. We still get wow moments, we are still sharing it with the parents what is brilliant about wow moments, we are still putting visual table together, we are still labellling [all talking at the same time].

A: And we will be sharing with the other centre practitioners in the coming months.

Q: Have you planned that?

A: That is around August, because again it has come at a time when, the reorganisation of the centres started in April, we are one week behind with our programme so around August we are sharing. And then with the settings we are planning what are we gonna be doing next time.

J: We are all gonna be doing an audit as well.

Q: So, work in progress, number 3, before we go to number 3, is there anything that you have not done yet that you wish you have had time to do?

A: I think everything we want to spend more time on really. Videoing, we did not get as much as we have probably thought at the beginning of that, because of time changes as staff changes and things like that.

[All agree]

A: But we recognize its value and we would like to do more.

Q: Doing more with the parents, getting their feedback?

A: Oh yes, I think highlighting it to parents has been really good.

Q: What is the parents’ interaction like at your centre?

J: I would say most parents do. Today we were giving our evaluation form because we have come to the end of the term. I think all of the parents, 98% of them they have competed their evaluation, I think only 2 have taken it home, but it might have been because English as an additional language might have been a bit of a barrier. But yes, parents do want to, if we are asking them “Are we making improvements, you like stay and play? You need to tell us if you like it. We do not know if you like it”.

K: We used to get a lot of people just saying “We really love stay and play” and “That is great to hear, but is there anything else you think that we could do better?” and I think that the parents, especially in [location] got better at making their opinion clear.

T: Constructive criticism.

K: Yes. Definitely.

T: Even if it is just them suggesting “It is really good, but you can try this”.

A: Also saying in particular why is good, ‘cause saying it is good it is not sufficient, it is what makes it good, so that is why the comment about the pedagogy is good, but other people might say “my son just love it because I know he can experience things that he likes to do” which can be messy play or…

T:Yes, they evaluated that and said it was quite good.

K: Have we talked about at any point the feedback from the snack café? The questionnaires…

T: Yes I wrote a little bit about it, I believe quite a long time ago. Is my memory deceiving me?

A: Yes you shared it with us

Q: Yes, that was really insightful.

A: I think the job shadowing we haven’t really reflected on.

Q: So which output are you currently working on at the moment? Is there a specific one that you are focusing on? Back when we had the training there was the idea that you could do it one at a time, you might want to overlap a few, did you work in that order or have you just gone in and out?

T: I used it more as a tool rather than a programme to go through: Oh I want to work on this so you skip to that bit, oh I want to work on that bit you skip to that bit. The environment audit , the mealtime audit, those I returned to several times.

Q: So the audits were useful for you?

T: Very much so.

Q: Yourselves?

J: Definitely we would be revisiting the audit, especially when we start to work in different environments, different resources, things need to be set up, getting them more enabling for the children and the parents, so if they expect snack café to be a certain way in one place and it is good and it works than hopefully we can replicate that somewhere else.

Q: Will you have new parents starting in September?

T: We have new parents all the time.

Q: Ok, so there is not like a big intake.

T: there is a drop-off, because at the end of the summer holidays a lot of the older children would be going to nursery and reception and whatever more frequenty, but the trickle in of new families is an ongoing constant thing and then sometimes there will be loads, like if an NCT group discover us or sometimes would be just a few or if there is a large event or something happening there will be more turning up. It is not consistent, it just happens.

K: Part of my role as an outreach worker is to find where the families are who are not accessing the centre and to then take a session closer to them, so it might be that I go to a different building, find a church, find a school.

Q: So you can adjust the material to each session that you are running.

K Yes, exactly.

A: That’s a big change for us at the moment. When you say what are we working on, it is not so much taking one intellectual output, is taking all the knowledge form the ToWe project and thinking whether you have acquired new sites or you are outreaching more to find the new site, outreaching to them, that the consistency of approach and practice, that is the real test for everybody at the moment, that we get that set up and then embedded before we even start working with our other practitioners, which is the plan for the autumn, is to make sure that across all the centre sites…

Q: We are going to move straight in to the area of your future plans, following on from all the focus groups that we had, where are you going with it now?

A: We know we have the funding and the expectations from the project to train 50 practitioners. We are all really committed to the idea that, as much as this research has been really really valuable for us, we know that research is most important if it is shared more widely. So we definitely want to make sure that we upscale all the settings across [company name] whether there is a high number of children [?that are funded to 15?].

Q: How many settings are there? Are these highlighted settings?

A: Yes and we have so many across [location] that take to your funded children , but some that always have high numbers.

Q. How will it roll out in those settings? Is it something that you are thinking of?

A: We are organizing the conference hopefully in November. We have put the program forward, we are just discussing it actually. We want to make sure that we invite more than the 50 that the money is for, we want to retain some budget because we really want to train as many people as possible and we planned an initial draft plan that will make sure that all the people that attend, attend a workshop on each of the intellectual outputs and have a speech at the beginning, so we really set the scene and the background. We want to get some people high up in the borrow to really give weight to this and value it. And then we want to have a time at the end where practitioners can go away with some kind of action plan and we are also looking at using the budget to bring people together regularly.

Q: As a network?

A: Yes, as a network, because I think – as we were saying earlier – it is not [???] just train on and go away. The all point is, this is very intricate and it is all about reflection, so we need to have those moments built in where practitioners could come back together and really think “How have we made a difference to the toddlers’ wellbeing?”, rather than just go away thinking “That was a pleasant informative conference “. We want it to reflect change in the settings. How do we know this is going to happen?

Q: You know the material would become available for other practitioners. They may call on you for guidance and advice cause you have been part of the book, you have been part of the all project. Is there any way that your role will change to kind of support that?

A: That is where we are thinking coming together regularly to do that. This is very early stages in terms of what we can do next. To me, rather and having a conference and then people going off, we have to – a little like the [???] project or when two years funding first came out – you need to bring people back together regularly. It has been hard enough for us to do this because of the way we work, we are not day nurseries, it has been very difficult with the staffing and the changes, but I honestly think everyone here is behind it and has learnt so much from it, so it is how can we best get the messages across, which is challenging.

J: and I think this could where the critical incident lays, because it is not that we have finished our project and we are going to back off. It is not that at all, it is like ToWe wellbeing [inaudible: all talking at the same time].

Q: You never knows with funding availability there is chance to work with Norway and Spain possibly again in the future. We do not know, so we can wait and see. Are there other final comments that you really want to get off your chest? What has it been like for you? How do you see it in the future?

J: I think it is amazing and I think if we can keep good practitioners in their role and empower them with that belief that they are doing a good job for the children and the parents and we keep practitioners like that, that is what I would like to see in the future.

Q: It is actually very inspiring. When we hear your examples and your practice and how you developed it and how you are doing a lot of it already, you are really enhancing it and the reflection bringing out more kinds of understandings, that is inspiring to hear and that is what you are saying, the messages to go out there.

J: And giving them the tools.

A: And I think it is about practitioners reflecting and as J said, I really agree with that completely, but I think particularly in centres – because we did question why are we doing this – in centres it is much harder than having a team manager in a day nursery, having a team meeting, let’s have an update on ToWe. It has been really tricky for people to manage and to keep coming together often. But the way it can be used to support parental understanding, we all say “Children learn best when they are happy”, you see it on every school plaque, every little newsletter, but I think this is giving us a way of helping parents understand that, whether it is time to wait and not jumping, whether it is about saying to the parents “It is ok to feel frustrated, ‘cause we are frustrate when kids do that a lot of times, but this is the key way children learn”, it is just another way to help parents understand how children learn and the ways they learn. For that reason alone I think it is really important.

Q: Anything else before we close the meeting?

T: Yes. As a practitioner and a parent with a toddler, I would ask him “Do you want some help?” and letting him say yes or no, letting him try more things by himself, letting him do more stuff at home.

K: You have had great feedback from him, havent’t you?

T: I have had great feedback, yes. I’ll ask him to do a report later. If he is struggling with something I would ask him “Do you want some help?” and he’ll go “no” and try to do that himself and then succeeding and it might ask me and other times it will do it himself and be incredibly pleased.

Q: You are getting the parent in that scenario, but you are getting the parents’ perspective first hand.

T: Yes, which is quite nice to see actually working up close.

Q: This is the final group. We will definitely be keeping in touch with you. If you think of anything else that you feel we could drop into the research, cause we will be looking at writing this up, examples, changes to you as practitioners…

K: It has also given me the opportunity, through the shadowing, I know R. was on TV in Spain and myself and one of the Spanish team wrote a piece for one of the biggest newspapers in Norway

Q: Fantastic!

K: I need to finish my article for a journal that is going to be published in France, there has been a lot of opportunities.

Q: These are all ways you can share it without having to physically move, doing some writing, anything that can get the message across to other practitioners, you have got the practitioners’ journals and the more scholarly ones, which I think are the ones we are trying to aim for as well, because academics want to know more about it as well as practitioners. But at the moment I think it is for practitioners you want to get the word out.

[All agree]

Q: Thank you so much!