



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

Promoting the Wellbeing of Toddlers within Europe

Case Studies

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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

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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.



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Case Studies

Denmark

The crèche in this case study is situated in the western rural area of Denmark. The municipality has 39,464 inhabitants.

The crèche is open on a daily basis for 36 children in the age range from 6 month to 3 year of age. A study has shown that 12 of these children are living in a family that is bilingual. This means that the following ethnic cultures are represented in these families: Bosnia, Ireland, Austria, Germany, Thailand, Kenya, Congo and Eritrea. The social-economic background is very different. Some of the children come from socially disadvantaged families. Nursery nurses, social workers, doctors and family counsellors have referred the child and the family to the crèche.

The approach to parental cooperation is proactive. Guidance and support for bringing up the children is the focus. The Act of Day-care is the formal background. They have a broad group of collaborative partners such as nurses, social workers, family counsellors, kindergartens and the local community administration.

The crèche has 12 employees between 38 and 63 years of age. Some of them have over 30 years of experience working with toddlers.

The crèche emphasises recognition and the principles of Marte Meo. Theoretically they are inspired by Daniel Stern and Susan Hart. Baby-signing is used in the daily practice. The staff's cooperation is based on the 11 Principles of the Healthy Workplace, and 6 basic rights and constructive conflict resolutions, for example, same age or mixed age groups.

Story Board 1

How a toddler is supported with the transition and settling-in process of attending a new setting.

Context of the strategy – “Karla’s first visit to the Crèche”

The crèche have a settling-in policy which introduces a key person to the child and the family. The week before starting the child and the family is encouraged to visit the crèche making the transition from home to the day-care centre as smooth as possible. If it is possible they are able to establish a new daily routine before the child starts.



Karla is a one-year-old girl. This is her first visit to the crèche. Karla is on a safe base, located on her mother’s lap. A little older girl shows social competence. She is showing a jigsaw puzzle to Karla and her mother, trying to establish a relationship with Karla.



Karla is feeling safe and is now exploring the floor. The nursery teacher, Karla’s key person, is sitting on the yellow cushion, looking at Karla. The nursery teacher clearly shows Karla that she is present, but it is too early to have physical contact. The key person is smiling encouraging Karla to continue to explore the floor and the situation.



Karla turns around. She is increasing the distance from her mother. The key person (look at her shoe) is following her movements. Another child is right behind Karla.



Karla is having a little break. She is looking at her mother and the photographer, who is the headmaster of the crèche. Children from the nursery group are getting closer to Karla.



Karla is relaxed. She is observing. Karla observes the activities going on around her. An increasing number of children are getting closer to Karla.



Karla is moving back to her mother. Mother is smiling and observing. Another girl from the nursery group is participating in the event.

In the story-board Fairytales and Storytelling you will find Karla is included in a group of children.

Story Board 3

The Pool

Context of the strategy

In a corner of the parking area, a pool has generated after heavy rainy weather early in the morning. It gives the day a new possibility: Play in the Pool. The planned schedule for the day is cancelled for a moment.



In no time all children and adults are dressed in rain clothes and rubber



Toddlers invade the pool. Each of them clearly shows the joy for water.



A boy needs guidance to overcome his experience



The pool is a place of excitement and joy. After 20 minutes they return to their groups, changing clothes, diapers and getting ready for lunch.



Story Board 4

Lunchtime

Context of the strategy

One of the crèche policies is to use organic food and milk. Every day a warm meal is served. The institution has a professional chef who is responsible for making the food.



Here is one of the novices. She is still using her hand when she eats. But look at her left hand. She has grabbed a spoon. One of the pedagogical principles is imitation. The novices imitate the older children. After a few weeks of training the novices are no more novices, and are now using spoon and cup.



While the children eat there is quiet talk between the children and the adults. They emphasise contemplations as one of their pedagogical principles.

As a ritual the lunch-time starts and ends with a song.

Story Board 5

Fairytales and Storytelling

Context of the strategy

It is time for storytelling and rhymes and jingles. It is an active way of teaching language and movement by using play. The youngest children are based close to the two pre-school teachers.



Karla is looking at the face of the pre-school teacher. She is trying to learn.



Face to face communication. The boys are more focused on the photographer. Are they showing technical awareness?



The child who needs special care is based on the lap of the preschool teacher.



The pre-school teacher is now introducing some animals. She is going to tell a fairytale, and use some elements from the field of drama.



The tempo is slow. Every child should have the opportunity to communicate. The adult makes it possible for the child to contribute to the act of storytelling by saying words or showing signs.



The session ends with a well-known song. The day is deliberately full of rhyme and rituals. It supports the child with a well-known and safe base. Every day something new is added to daily routines and the use of language.

