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ICEC (Helsinki), Universidad Camilo José Cela (Madrid), Pikler-Ház (Budapest)

Supporting Children's Social-Emotional Competence: The Settling In Process in an International Setting

Handbook for Early Years Professionals

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SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE: THE SETTLING IN PROCESS IN AN INTERNATIONAL SETTING

HANDBOOK FOR EARLY YEARS PROFESSIONALS

"As a team, we will:

Communicate openly and honestly in order to build on one another's ideas.
Respect each other's differences, but keep the goal clear (for the children).
Encourage and motivate each other to enjoy the process through humour and
positivity.
Use flexibility and critical thinking to collaborate on shared goals."

Berlin, November, 2017

Group production by:

Berlin Cosmopolitan School Kindergarten & Preschool (Berlin), ICEC (Helsinki),
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LEGEND

Information:

Additional explanations and theory.

Practical Tips:

Tips for daily routines and situations in kindergarten.

Case Studies:

Further questions to consider and discuss.

Related Material:

The members of this research team have created materials to supplement the tips given in this handbook for educators to use with children or for supporting the parents during the settling in process.

AUTHORS' NOTE

In this book, we use the term “family” for all kinds of structures where adults take emotional, financial and legal care children. We use the term “parent” to describe the most significant adult taking care of the child/children, who has an emotional bond with them. We use the word “educator” to describe the person working with a group of children in an institutionalised setting. We use the word “kindergarten” to describe this institutionalised setting for early years education. When referring to the general “child,” we use the plural pronoun “they,” in order to remain gender neutral. We recognize gender, culture and identity as a spectrum and intend for everyone to be represented in this text.

A NOTE FOR TRANSLATORS

The authors request that the careful choice of terminology, gender neutrality and representations of all genders and cultures will be respected in all future translations of this text.

PREFACE

The purpose of this handbook is for educators to learn more about social-emotional competence and the settling in process in an international setting. The focus is on children entering into an unfamiliar setting and how to support them and their families during this phase. Project team members work daily with children from 11 months to seven years old. The research team is working towards providing educators with tools and tips to support and foster young children's wellbeing.

Through the creation of this handbook, we intend to support and inspire educators as they work to ensure that children's needs are fulfilled during this sensitive period and that the best possible settling in process for incoming children and their families is possible, regardless of their cultural, social and emotional background.

This handbook focuses on:

- Intercultural parent-educator partnerships.
 - The role of diversity and inclusion in the settling in process.
- The theories and tips in this handbook are based on the experiences of the research team as well as collected knowledge from all partner institutions. This research guides educators with theory, reflective questions and case studies. The case studies included exemplify how this theory can be used in practice. These are not exhaustive, but are used to give real-life examples that may be encountered. Best practice and practical tips are included to apply to all children.
- This handbook intends to aid educators in their lifelong learning process and to promote best practice in working with young children and their families during the settling in process.
- The theoretical framework of our research.
 - Settling in children with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LOVE AND AFFECTION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

We, as educators, have committed to taking an empathetic, child-centred and affectionate approach to teaching and caretaking in early childhood education. Not only does this continue to be essential for strengthening our bonds with the children we work with, but we are also convinced that emotional care, love, affection and empathy are vital to a child's development and a fundamental aspect in the kindergarten as well as in the home. In recent years, the growing research in the fields of neuroscience, psychology, psychoanalysis and biochemistry with regards to emotional life are converging to offer a deeper understanding of emotion that supports our experiences and beliefs as educators. In Sue Gerhardt's, *Why Love Matters*, she references neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, and writes that "the rational part of the brain does not work on its own, but only at the same time as the basic regulatory and emotional parts of the brain" (Gerhardt, 2015). Feelings and emotions play a tremendous role in raising healthy and stable children: they are an undeniable aspect of

human life, parenting and teaching. Through our work in early childhood education, we are dedicated to nurturing the feelings and emotions of children and hope to offer them a view of the world that is shaped by respect, empathy, love and affection. Therefore, all aspects of this handbook stand on the fundamental ideas of a respectful, empathetic and affectionate way of interacting with one another.

INTRODUCTION TO SETTLING IN

The settling in process refers to a child's transition into an early childcare centre. It is a unique time in a child's life, which can have a significant impact on their development. During this process, the child will meet new people, hear new languages and be introduced to a new daily structure, all while learning to separate from their parents for potentially the first time. This type of change can be overwhelming for both children and their parents and is one of the key reasons why a gentle settling in is essential.

Ultimately, the goal of the process is for the child to become familiar with their new educators, get to know other children and discover spaces and

play materials (Graf & Seide, 2018). Parents and educators must work together during this process, which requires developing trust on both sides. It is essential for educators to begin an open dialogue with families beforehand and to maintain transparency throughout the settling in process so that they may be aware of the needs of both the parents and the child and can work to meet them.

DIFFERENT SETTLING IN MODELS

The settling in process is handled differently in each kindergarten. Across Europe, there are various methods, and in Germany alone, there are different concepts that can be used for orientation. Practical experience shows that different models of settling in can work. Nevertheless, there are certain aspects that characterise a successful settling in. The researchers in this study chose to take aspects from these models as well as best practice concepts discussed throughout various workshops and trainings to find what yielded the best results for children and their families.

Regardless of which model is chosen, the most important thing is that the

team communicates and discusses the details and aspects of how the settling in and entire year following will proceed. Values, pedagogical beliefs and methods of working with young children are all topics that need to be discussed before the children and families are met. This will ensure that everyone is on the same page. A smooth transition for educators will help children feel more comfortable (Braukhane & Knobloch, 2011).

BERLIN COSMOPOLITAN SCHOOL SETTLING IN MODEL

The Berlin Cosmopolitan School kindergarten offers care for children aged 11 months to seven years old, separated into groups by age. Children aged one through three are cared for by three early childhood educators and children aged four through seven have two early childhood educators. The majority of settling ins take place with a full group of the youngest children, however, a handful of children settle into each age group yearly. The current settling in process at Berlin Cosmopolitan School (BCS) has been updated to reflect the research and experiences of its educators.

At BCS, the educators use a variety of settling in schedules when settling in a full group of children into kindergarten. For all variations, one parent is expected to accompany the child from the first day until separation is possible and remains the settling in parent for the duration of the settling in process. However, the children are not paired with one educator as the school believes it is important for the children to choose whom they feel most comfortable with. This also allows the educators to make clear to families and children that all teachers are available for each child to connect with.

One preferred settling in schedule at BCS starts the first day with two to three small groups of children, each coming for short intervals at different times in the morning. The following three to four days, as the children gradually spend more time in the classroom, educators work together with the parent to assess when and if the child is ready to separate from their settling in parent. When separation occurs, the parent will take a brief departure and then quickly return to pick up their child. By the fifth day, separation should have occurred for a brief amount of time for all the children and the groups are combined to spend

an hour to an hour and a half together in the classroom. Every day from then on, the children spend longer and longer in kindergarten, with educators and parents gauging when each individual child is ready to stay for lunch, rest time, etc. Educators could also potentially have all children beginning at one time, starting with 45 minutes to an hour, and then increasing the length of time at the kindergarten each day.

ICEC SETTLING IN MODEL

The settling in process at ICEC in Helsinki offers an example of how the settling in process begins before the first day of attending kindergarten, and how it is essential to understand that every child and family are unique and have different needs and requirements. Another important aspect to consider is that in Finland, not all parents are given time away from work to settle their children into kindergarten and must take the time from their holidays. Therefore, the settling in process begins with initial questions regarding the family, which include the family language, the parents' work schedules and parent availability.

When applying for a place at the ICEC, families are advised to visit first for an

initial look around to see the space and meet the educators. The parents are encouraged to bring their children along so they can share this experience. They are then given a “Welcome to Kindergarten” booklet that they can fill in before the first day of attending kindergarten. This booklet has information pertaining to the kindergarten as well as a questionnaire inquiring information about the child. This includes questions about what the child likes to do, what they like or don't like to eat, comfort toys, etc. There is also space for the child to draw a picture with their parents to show their educator.

At the ICEC, the educators advise the parent to stay with the child, however, it does not mean they must stay the whole time, but for an agreed amount of time before leaving with the child. The parents can also interact and play with the other children in the group or take part in the activities while encouraging their child to join in. Gradually, separation begins to occur, and the families will then lengthen the periods of separation time until the child is happy to stay alone for the whole session. Communication with the parents continues and if the educators feel the child is having difficulties settling in, alternatives are then discussed.

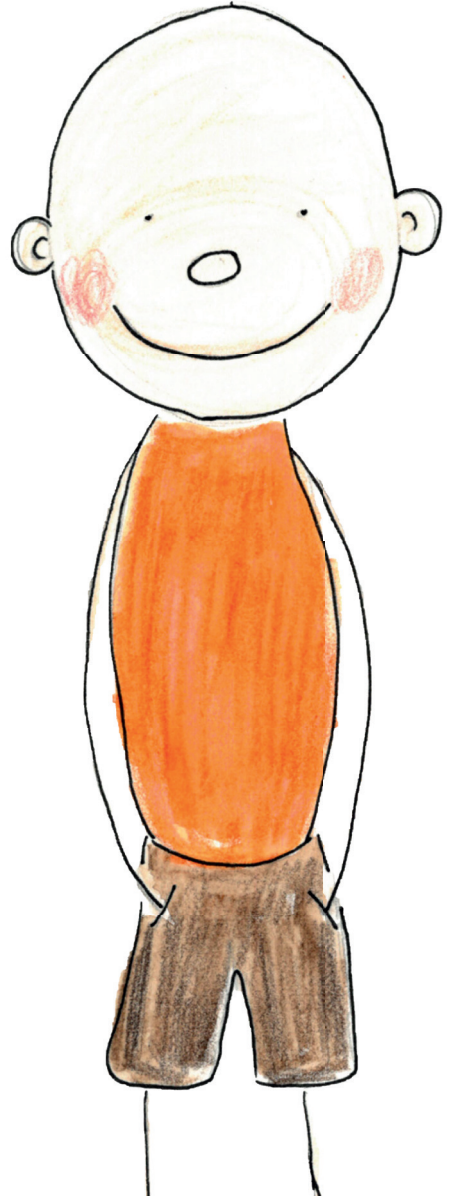
PIKLER DAYCARE CENTER-BUDAPEST SETTLING IN MODEL

At the Pikler Daycare Center in Budapest, one group is composed of 12 mixed age children (between 5-36 months) and is led by three early childhood educators. Every year, six to seven new children are welcomed into each group. The Pikler Daycare Center follows the ‘primary caregiver’ method, where one educator is assigned to every child. This plays a significant role during the settling in period as the child is cared for almost exclusively by their assigned primary caregiver. This primary caregiver develops a closer relationship with the child first and is the one the child turns to first in difficult situations.

Settling in at the Pikler Daycare Center is a gradual process that spreads over two weeks and is done with an accompanying parent. The educators take into consideration the amount of new information the children can handle and gradually introduce them to life in the day-care centre, making sure they are thoroughly prepared for the care situations, which are introduced at a slow pace as well. This allows for a balanced and transparent settling

in experience where educators actively help the child get acquainted with their new environment and develop relationships with both the space and the people. The settling in starts on the first day of the week so that the children can have the recurring experience of coming into the day-care for a full five-day week. During this period, the parent may enter the classroom and spend a longer period in the group.

In the first few days, the children spend a short time (60-90 minutes) in the day-care and gradually stay for longer. By days three through eight, separation will occur, and the primary caregiver takes over caring for the child, with the parent leaving the room for short periods of time. By the end of the two weeks, the child stays for the whole day, saying goodbye to their families at drop-off in the morning. The general plan for the settling in process is revised and adjusted each year, based on written observations, videos taken during settling in and the experience they share with each other.



CHAPTER 1

RESILIENCE, PROSILIENCE AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

In order to help children successfully settle into an international or multi-lingual environment, it is important to first understand the variables that can influence the process and then identify those which contribute to the most positive outcomes. The following section will touch upon the theory and philosophies of Reggio Emilia and the teachings of Jesper Juul, which reflect this research team's belief in the importance of promoting the competence of young children. We discuss resilience and explore how certain risk and protective factors may affect a child's development and we consider the relatively new concept of "prosilience" and how it can potentially serve as a protective factor during the settling in process. Following the articles outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Vygotsky's theory on guided participation, we encourage the reader to view the settling in experience through a child-centred lens.

Following the theory, educators will find practical information and tips on how to apply these concepts by supporting children's participation, acknowledging the educator as facilitator, encouraging social emotional competence, fostering positive relationships and utilising the classroom as a third teacher. At the end of the section, the reader will find a case study outlining a potential classroom scenario and thoughts on how the previously discussed concepts can be used to support the child.

THE COMPETENT CHILD

The Reggio Emilia approach considers the concept of "the competent child" to be one of the most important aspects of education; to see the image of the child both as competent and also as a being with rights (Bredenkamp, 1993).

The competent child is one who is capable, not only in their own eyes, but in the eyes of those around them (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 2012) (Juul J. , 2012). In addition to providing children with a sense of well-being and allowing them to search for meaning in their environment, it is the role of the educators and the families to support the development of competency in young children (Bredenkamp, 1993) (Månsson, 2008).

The competent child is not pushed to be competent, but rather provided an environment and encouragement that sets them up to succeed and therefore see themselves as such. When a child is seen as competent, they can contribute to the environment around them and how they participate in it, building not only self-esteem, but also self-awareness, as well as an interest in their own motivations (Staley, 1998). Self-efficacy (believing that one is capable of performing an action) is one of several dimensions of social-emotional competence (Policy, 2018).

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

The idea of developing a child's self-efficacy and building resilience directly connects to promoting social-emo-

tional competence (Bar-On, Maree, & Elias, 2007) (Yendork & Somhlaba, 2015). Competence is the ability to do something successfully. It is considered to be an important aspect in the process of understanding in young children. Based on a child's past experiences, personality and so forth, a child's competence can inform their ability to make decisions and participate in activities, etc. (Diesfield, 2015).

Social-emotional competence is the ability to interact positively with others, regulate emotions and behaviour, solve problems and communicate effectively (Innis, 2018). Recent findings show a strong link between social-emotional competence and cognitive development, language acquisition, mental health and general academic success (Housman, 2017).

THE CONCEPT OF RESILIENCE: POTENTIAL RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

It is important to understand that although children are competent, both stabilising and destabilising factors can affect their development and in turn, their resilience (Shonkoff & Meisels, 2011). The concept of resilience summarises these risk and protective factors.

RISK FACTORS MAY INCLUDE:

Birth complications, unsafe bonding behaviour, separation or divorce of parents, frequent relocation or the loss of a family member.

Risk factors do have the potential to be hazardous, especially when there are a variety of factors present in a child's life at one particular time or over a sustained period of time. However, it is important to note that they do not necessarily have to be detrimental to development, especially when identified early and addressed appropriately.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS MAY INCLUDE:

A stable emotional bond or relationship, an emotionally positive, supportive and structured educational environment, role models for constructive coping behaviour under stress, the child's temperament, the promotion of trust, autonomy and responsibility and an appreciative atmosphere characterised by warmth, respect and acceptance.

Protective factors are defined as characteristics of the child, family and wider environment that reduce the ne-

gative effect of adversity on the child's development (Masten & Reed, 2002).

Protective factors and risk factors have the potential to change over time (Böhm & Hehlmann, 2000). Stress factors can contribute to risks when entering a new early learning environment. Stress can come from new surroundings, meeting new people, not being able to anticipate the day's events, taking on new responsibilities and whether or not they speak the languages of others in their classroom.

An educator must focus on promoting competence and reducing vulnerability and risk (Masten & Powell, 2003). The optimism exhibited by a positive relationship with an educator helps to promote self-worth and to develop a child's self-esteem, self-efficacy, autonomy and positive thinking, all which contribute to a child's resiliency (Bernard, 1995) (Kidder, 1990).

THE ROLE OF PROSILIENCE IN THE SETTLING IN PROCESS

The researchers on this team perceive the term prosilience to be a link between social-emotional competence and resilience (Hoopes, 2017). Through proactive approaches on the

part of the educators and families, prosilience can promote the child's innate ability to be resilient.

Prosilience refers to what an individual can do to successfully adapt to life's tasks in the face of social disadvantage or other highly adverse conditions, or to bounce back from a negative or possibly traumatic experience with competent functioning (Hoopes, 2017). Prosilience, as we understand it in regards to young children, is not a trait, but rather a process activated to manage life circumstances and foster competence in young children.

We believe that recognising risk and protective factors and using the environment to build on a child's competence and ability to participate can help to foster prosilience for the settling in pro-

cess. In this sense, the educator's role is to facilitate participation, supporting children's social-emotional competence.

PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

Participation is one of the guiding principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Nations, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989).

"Education should give children the opportunity to develop their talents and abilities to their full potential, to gain confidence and self-esteem, to use their initiative and creativity, to gain life skills and take informed decisions and to understand and experience pluralism, tolerance and democratic coexistence" (Unicef, 2018).

How Prosilience Relates to Resilience and Social-Emotional Competence

Resilient individuals are not resilient on their own. Likewise, in order to develop prosilience, the adults in a child's life are needed to help them build up their competence, self-esteem and the ability to participate. The idea of prosilience focuses on resources and competencies, combined with the power of positive thinking.

Article 12 of the UNCRC states that the child who is capable of forming his or her own views has the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting them. Educators and families should then take into consideration these views, “giving due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child” (Nations, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989).

Vygotsky theorised that through guided participation, a child will learn by doing, receiving help as needed. When a child learns activities with an educator's support, they then can eventually scaffold away from it. Educators should also provide examples for the family as to how this can be done at home and then observe how the child's social and emotional skills may grow when provided with more of these opportunities (Berk, 1995).

EDUCATOR AS THE FACILITATOR

The role of the early years educator as the facilitator is to provide a safe environment for children to learn and develop competency. It is important for children to be independently driven to learn, but this can be fostered through an educator's facilitation.

For example, daily routines and structures common in educational settings provide opportunities for young children to anticipate events in which they know they can participate (e.g. morning circle, snack/lunch time, getting dressed/undressed).

During the settling in process, educators can foster the prosilience of a child through encouraging active participation in their new environment.

Daily Schedule Cards

A series of daily schedule cards is provided as a material. Each card has an illustration of a different part of the day which can be edited to add additional parts of the day that occur in the educator's own institution. The drawings can be changed to personal photos for children three and under, which has been found to be more beneficial for younger children settling in.

Participation in Daily Routines

- Ages 1-2: Out of two to three choices, children can choose what materials they want to explore. Educators can model how to tidy up after play time, encouraging children to try to put away one or two items. Children can start to learn how to pull off their shoes and socks, this can take place by peer modelling as well as demonstrating. Facilitated by the educator, children can hand out bottles to their peers for drinking or napkins for eating, etc.
- Ages 2-3: Children can be shown through routine how to put away their own plates and bowls after mealtimes. Children can start to take off their own coats, pants and shoes and be encouraged to put them on with support. Through modelling and routine, children can put away large items throughout the classroom, participating in tidying up. Children can also take responsibility in the classroom through a job chart that changes daily.
- Ages 3-4: Children can participate in creating rules for their classroom by discussing with their educators about how to treat their room, their classmates, etc. and then making a verbal or written (thumbprints, a small mark) agreements to use these rules. They can choose to take on jobs in the classroom; taking turns watering plants, cleaning tables, etc. They can independently put on and take off their articles of clothing.
- Ages 4-5: Children can choose independently what they want to be doing in an open playtime. Children can express their ideas for how they want to learn and what works and doesn't work as they explore different concepts in play (Graf & Seide, 2018).

Observe the children and give them support and encouragement in their areas of interest. With children under two, this can be through making verbal observations, being present and providing them with materials that are age appropriate. It is important to take notice of what they do and do not engage with and change the room/materials accordingly. For children two years old and above, asking them what they want to do, and where they want to play and what materials they want to be in those areas helps them to feel connected to their classroom and in control of their learning environment. Facilitating play, discovery and independence involves giving the children opportunities and letting them participate willingly, using their abilities rather than forcing too many roles and responsibilities on them. In acting as a facilitator, it is important to make children aware of the options available to them and allow children to choose which they want to engage with. This can be done through setting up provocations, arranging choice time (free play) and modelling activities to the children.

Promoting Competencies

- Knowing what is happening as well as knowing what their options are provides a sense of reassurance. For example, “I would like to wash the spaghetti sauce off your face now. Here is a towel, would you like to do it yourself?”
- Involve children in tasks and responsibilities. Children age one to two can also be included in their own diaper changing and feeding situations. This shows a respect and understanding of their competence.

FOSTERING A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

When beginning to settle children in, keep in mind the importance of fostering an environment in which children feel comfortable expressing emotions. This can be done by modelling empathy and acts of kindness as well as offering both verbal and nonverbal

ways of expressing feelings. For children above the age of two, delving further into emotions in books and in situations that occur in the classroom is essential, especially when children are joining a new class and first learning to put words to their emotions. Children ages two and below can also learn about emotions through reading stories and modelling with stuffed animals and puppet shows. Educators can address the emotions they observe through actively working with the child.

FOSTERING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Part of building a community involves allotting time for the children to learn about each other as members of this community. Fostering these relationships can involve a variety of activities. Singing inclusive songs or playing games can help children understand the concept of a community

and more specifically, who is included in theirs. Pictures of children playing together and separately throughout the classroom can help to build a sense of both identity and community. Reinforce positive social interactions such as greeting one another, sharing and taking turns through rituals such as circle time. There are a variety of ways to create these positive interactions.

PROMOTING PARTICIPATION USING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Another aspect that guides a child's participation is the room itself. Using the space and the furniture within it, educators can reflect age appropriate play areas and provocations. In the beginning of settling in, visual aesthetics should be used to increase the feeling of comfort in the room, keeping in mind the needs of the children and the values of the kindergarten.

Promoting Positive Relationships

- **Building community:** Encourage children ages two and above to help one another. One-on-one or small group time can help children feel more situated and relate better to each other.
- **Problem solving:** Create opportunities for children to strengthen problem solving, both on their own and with peers. The BCS problem solving model for children three and above includes a problem solving area in every classroom. This area is modelled to the children as a space where they can go when they have a problem with one another, or perhaps even with an educator. In the problem solving area, children can learn that they are able to reach an agreement without an educator dictating the solution. With children ages 3 and above, educators may be needed to facilitate.
- **Working through moments of frustration:** With children under three, modelling and helping with interactions that could cause frustration will benefit the children. Model observational language such as, “I see you both want to climb up the slide, but now you are pushing each other. Is there room for both of you? It looks like perhaps it might help if you go one at a time.”

Creating a Welcoming Environment

- Furniture should include size appropriate tables and chairs for the children.
- Materials should be presented at eye level of the children in order to invite and engage them.
- A range of materials and toys allowing for independent play should be available.
- An inviting “Cuddle Corner” with soft cushions and blankets makes for a nice space for children to take a break when needed.
- The room should be arranged to allow for both large and small group activities.
- The classroom library should display books about starting kindergarten, moving to a new house or country, identifying emotions, and should always include books representing different cultures and families (Please reference the ‘Further Reading’ section for some ideas for your classroom!).
- Photos of the children’s families should be displayed in a designated area of the room or within a photo album easily accessible to the children.

Case Study: Max

Max's family consists of his mother, father and twin baby siblings. The family has recently relocated to Germany from Israel. Max is completely bilingual in German and in Hebrew.

In Israel, Max had a live-in nanny for the last 22 months. Max's father moved to Germany before the rest of the family and his mother and the children have recently joined him. The container with the family belongings has not yet arrived.

In the first few months, Max's parents both worked while the family was living in an interim house. The family has had limited access to age appropriate

toys. Max first spent six weeks at home with his mother and the twin babies because a kindergarten placement was not yet available.

Now that Max has entered his new kindergarten, his educators have observed difficulty in his ability to initiate independent play, share and take turns. He often engages in play fighting and is one of the most physical children in the group. He often pretends to use a mobile device and avoids any cuddles or gentle physical contact with educators or other children.



Age: ● 22 months

Home languages: ● Hebrew
● German

Additional language: ● -

Discussion Questions:

How can Max's educators be sure that his feelings and opinions are taken into consideration?

What are the potential risk factors for Max as he is settling in?

What are the potential resources to support Max in strengthening his social-emotional competence?

What immediate steps can his educators take to help Max foster positive relationships?

How can his educators work with Max and his family to help him express his aggression or frustration in a healthy and safe way?

What kind of support could be given to his family?

HOW TO ASSESS AND HELP MAX

Max is only 22 months old and is struggling in his new environment. He shows competence through his actions and it is clear there is something he is trying to communicate which is not being understood by those around him. This could be making it difficult for him to feel confident in his new classroom. In Max's home life, things may have felt very uncertain over the past few months and he may now need

extra support and encouragement to feel secure once again. It is now the educator's role to guide Max and his family through a positive settling in process to help provide stability in this next phase of their lives.

In working with Max's family, his educators should invite them to talk about the family's transition into this new country and offer support if possible/wanted. The educators can share what they are observing in terms of Max's settling in and what

they are doing in the classroom to help Max with his transition. Creating this relationship with the parents and opening the dialogue will help to build a bridge between home and kindergarten and better support Max in both environments.

While it is important for Max to start learning how to express his wants and needs, he most likely will not be able to express them verbally at his age. His educators can use books, role-play with the other educators in the classroom, or have puppet shows to demonstrate and talk about different types of emotions and to model what Max could do with his feelings. This can help him to learn that there is a way to express how he feels and what he needs and that he can feel comfortable doing so. With children under two, naming emotions and pointing out facial expressions is very important. Children then can begin to make up their own non-verbal ways to express feelings such as through hand signs (a thumbs up for happy, thumbs down for sad are easy ones to start with).

It is important to consider how Max plays independently as well as with the other children, or if he plays at all. Most young children benefit from small group play where they can experience turn taking, sharing and

positive play scenarios. During small group play, Max can see the positive ways to interact with peers and receive positive reinforcement for such actions. Max could use his own problem solving tools, such as finding a peaceful place to take a break or a song/rhyme or movement activity that helps him to regroup and come back to the situation more openly. The educators could create a social story with pictures of Max that they can look at and point to the images of him so that he feels that he is being seen. Through their understanding of age and personality, the educators must create situations for Max where he is encouraged to know he is competent and capable and to feel confident to grow and participate in a place where he feels safe.

CHAPTER 2

SETTLING IN CHILDREN FROM VARIOUS CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC BACKGROUNDS

In a multicultural and multilingual kindergarten, children and their families are in close contact with various cultures, value systems, languages and parenting styles. This unique environment offers families and educators opportunities to learn from and celebrate similarities and differences. As educators, it is our responsibility to be aware of how these differences could affect the ways in which children experience the settling in process and their time in the kindergarten. In this section we highlight areas of cultural differences that have been relevant in our kindergartens and offer suggestions to ensure that these differences are indeed celebrated to strengthen the social-emotional competence of every child.

CLIMATE

Depending on the climate a child is used to, they may react differently to the weather in their new environment and may need help learning about unfamiliar clothing.

LANGUAGE

The settling in model in regard to language has been widely discussed amongst the participants of this research project. While some teams prefer to assign their new children to an educator based on language, it is important to keep in mind that the children will be the ones who choose who they are comfortable with, as will the parents in the beginning of the year. Families who are familiar with the majority language of the region may initially feel more accepted by educators who speak and understand the same. However, the goal is to make sure that the child and the parents eventually feel comfortable with the entire educational team.

For more on language, please reference our “Supporting Children’s Language Awareness and Cultural Identity” handbook.

Clothing

- Have displays made by the children and/or with pictures of the children depicting weather and clothing in the changing areas.
- Plan activities in circle time such as “pair up the rain boots,” where children mix all of their boots together and then find the matches. It can also help to pass the clothing items around and discuss how they are worn and their purpose. Don't forget to mention how they can be fun also (splashing in puddles)!
- Make sure to discuss the different names for different items of clothing, “I call these ‘rain boots’, Sarah calls them ‘wellies’ - Dominik what do you call them at home?”
- Provide all weather clothing in the dressing up area.
- Provide games and books that talk about weather and clothing in the classroom. Book ideas can include following children books: *Froggy Gets Dressed* (Jonathan London, 1994) and *The Snowy Day* (Ezra Jack Keats, 1996). Please reference more suggested books for your classroom library listed within the “For Children” section of this handbook.

GENDER

Prior to settling into a new kindergarten, it is possible that some children may have never been cared for by a male educator. These children may hesitate or refuse to accept the help of a male educator. Some families may find it distressing that a male educator will provide care situations such as

diaper changes for their children. Educators should show understanding of parents concerns while still promoting the belief that people of all gender identities can be caregivers.

Culture can also affect the way children are expected to behave and play based on their gender. It can be confusing for parents that all children are expected

and invited to participate in all activities. Educators can acknowledge parents' feelings on the matter and explain why it is important for all children to be able to express themselves freely.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Children who are used to being surrounded by people with similar appearances to their own will naturally be curious when met with someone with physical traits that differ from

theirs. At first, this can even be overwhelming for a child. Family values and views can affect a child's way of seeing and reacting to differences as well. Educators should always observe how children are reacting to their new environment and can hypothesise reasons behind these reactions. Section 5 of this handbook provides tips specifically on approaching diversity with children as well as on how to discuss a diversity sensitive classroom approach with families.

Celebrating Differences

- Use children's observations of themselves and one another to discuss similarities and differences (hair and eye colour, skin colour and language, etc.).
- With children three and above, passing around a small mirror and encouraging children to describe themselves is a valuable and fun activity.
- It has been found that using picture books with live characters, such as animals, helps children to make real-world connections (Strouse, Nyhout, & Ganea, 2018). Read stories and talk about the differences in the human characters as well as the animals to help demonstrate understanding of diversity. Educators can ask, "Do you have ears like this bear? Or stripes like this tiger?" to help children recognise the many differences that everyone has.
- Encouraging children to discuss their culture and explore aspects of their background, as well as inviting their families to come in and share, can help children see and understand that people are different.

FOOD AND EATING HABITS

Certain foods and eating habits differ between cultures. In some cultures, it is common for an adult to feed children up to the age of three years or older, whereas in others, the independence of a child is supported by letting them eat by themselves from the age of 10 months on. It is important for educators to have this information when starting the settling in process.

Most kindergartens will have specific breakfast, lunch and snack times. For some children who are used to a

more flexible eating schedule or mealtime routine, this can be very confusing. The kindergarten structure might initially feel restricting for the child. The concept of sharing food also might take some children more time to get used to, especially if they are not familiar with the concept of eating together in a larger group. The goal is for children to begin eating in the classroom in whichever way they are comfortable with, and to then encourage them to participate in the modelled classroom routines.

Transitioning to Another Diet

- The nutrition concept can be explained prior to or in the early stages of the settling in process.
- Menus should be on display in the kindergarten, so everyone knows what the meal plan is for the week and parents can discuss it with their children at home.
- Educators should make sure to inquire about any allergies or dietary restrictions of each child before their first day.

SMELL AND TASTE

Children rely on their senses to explore and experience the world. Some children may have a preference of smells and tastes that differ from those experienced in kindergarten (Sullivan, Wilson, Ravel, & Mouly, 2015). Being surrounded by new smells when starting kindergarten intensifies the overall experience. Children may feel disoriented without the presence of certain smells they are

used to associating with situations at home.

NOISE LEVEL

A child who is used to a quieter home atmosphere may be surprised by the noise level at the kindergarten, especially at the beginning of the settling in process. This can be another one of the many factors which should be considered when thinking of a child's ability to adapt their new environment.

Acclimating the Senses

- Parents can be asked to take their child's comfort item home regularly to wash so that it may retain a specific comforting smell (e.g. a small blanket, stuffed toy, shirt, etc.).
- Educators can incorporate soothing essential oils such as lavender into daily rituals and can also suggest that parents use them at home to create consistencies.
- By creating both calm and quiet situations as well as letting the volume rise during play allows educators to observe a child's reaction to varying noise levels.

KINDERGARTEN COMMUNITY

In kindergarten, children explore group dynamics, competition and

compromise, and in doing so discover different social roles. Group play may be difficult at first for children who are not used to taking turns with toys or having to share their space

with other children. This is quite common and while it may initially create confusion or stress, with the support

and understanding of their educators, children will eventually acclimate to this part of the process as well.

Transitioning to a Group Setting

- A project on “Me, Myself and I,” or something similar, can help children introduce themselves to the rest of their peers and allow educators to observe the group dynamics.
- Books on sharing, caring and other social skills can be kept in the classroom library.
- Singing about one another as a group can be a way to introduce everyone who is present and celebrate being all together.
- Taking pictures of the children individually and as a group and displaying them in the classroom helps the children to see themselves as a community.
- Mealtimes at the table together can also help to create a feeling of community.
- With children two and a half and above, talking about their likes and dislikes can allow them to share parts of their individual personalities.
- Older children can help to guide projects on themselves as individuals and about their class as a whole. This can then extend outwards to the kindergarten community by means of family shares and show and tells, partnerships with other classes, cross-group playdates, joining one another for mealtimes, etc.

DAILY ROUTINES AT KINDERGARTEN

The structure of daily life can be different between countries and cultures. Unrealistic expectations on the child to quickly adapt to and follow a new

daily routine may cause a regression in skills or behaviour. Children need the adults in their life to be patient with them throughout this transition.

Preparing for Transitions

- Have a daily schedule for the parents and the teaching team that covers the basic routines planned for your group. This should include: kindergarten start and morning greeting (circle, assembly), breakfast, lunch, outdoor play, relaxation time and pick up.
- Have a picture trail on the wall that displays with drawings or photos of the children what their daily schedule looks like. Go through this once a day with all children and more frequently with those who find transitions difficult.
- Educators can also carry this schedule around with them during the day in a small picture design on a key ring to use individually with the children who need more one-on-one attention.
- Give children a few minutes warning before a transition to give them time to adapt. Visuals such as sand timers are very helpful in allowing the child to prepare for the next transition. Older children can participate by choosing the amount of time and flipping over the timer themselves when possible.

SLEEPING HABITS

Prior to entering kindergarten, many children have been brought to sleep primarily by their parents. Although every child has a different need for sleep and for aids in falling asleep, cultural differences can also exist that may affect the child's sleeping habits once they enter the kindergarten. Educators should work to understand the reasons for these differences and find ways to approach them with parents. If a child feels comfortable at home and in the kindergarten, different rituals can succeed in both places. A child

can distinguish between these two environments and adapt within them. They will acclimate to new rituals and circumstances in the kindergarten as well as maintain the old habits at home (Graf & Seide, 2019).

It is the role of the educator to provide the child a safe and comfortable environment in order to support children in feeling secure in their rest time. During rest time in particular, children benefit from and often need additional physical and emotional support.

Sleeping at Kindergarten

- Having a consistent nap time routine can help a child feel more relaxed. A stuffed animal or blanket from home or familiar music can help a child to more comfortably rest and fall asleep in their new environment. This can be suggested to parents during the settling in process.
- Visual aids such as a “rest time routine chart” which include pictures of what will happen during rest time can be helpful for all children.
- Children from age two and a half or older can be more actively involved in the process, helping to set up their beds themselves, bringing their rest time items to their beds and lying down independently.

Case Study: Rufus

Rufus is in the process of settling into kindergarten and may stay for his first sleep time in his new group tomorrow.

Rufus' dad is worried because Rufus has always only fallen asleep either in his parents' arms or in the stroller.

He knows that Rufus will have a bed in the kindergarten and will sleep in a room with many children together. Rufus' father is worried that he will not be able to fall asleep unless he is being rocked, or that no one will be able to be close to him if/when Rufus needs physical contact.

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Age: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 months |
| Home language: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finnish |
| Additional language: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • - |



Discussion Questions:

How can the educators take into consideration the individual life habits of Rufus' family?

To what extent should they accommodate Rufus' family's life habits in the kindergarten?

How could Rufus' educators reassure his father?

What could be the educators' plans to help Rufus if he does struggle with falling asleep?

HOW TO ASSESS AND HELP RUFUS

Rufus' experience having only previously fallen asleep in the arms of his parents or while being walked in a stroller is not uncommon. The educators already have good information to help and speak with Rufus' parents. They know how he sleeps at home and are aware of his dad's concerns. The best would be to plan a talk in which they assure him that although it might take longer, he will eventually become comfortable sleeping in the kindergarten and suggest that he provide a transitional object from home for Rufus to sleep with.

Educators should explain everything they will do to help Rufus feel comfortable, such as including him in the routine and providing him with transitional tools so that he knows what is happening (such as turning the lights low, turning on music or singing a song to signal it is rest time). They

can talk about the different ways they comfort children when they are in rest time and how they take into account the way the child rests at home when figuring out how to best bring them to sleep in the kindergarten. They should also mention that while the ultimate goal is for Rufus to fall sleep, they must first allow him to get comfortable in his new environment and if that means that he doesn't sleep for the first few days or weeks, that this is also okay, so long as they are building trust in the meantime.

In the beginning, they may need to hold Rufus to help him fall asleep and then phase him into being gently rocked on his bed until he can eventually fall asleep or rest quietly on his own.

As long as the educators are clear with the family about the process and are committed to supporting Rufus to feel confident throughout it, he should eventually be able to rest during nap-time.

Case Study: Dominik

Dominik, age 3, has just started at a new English-speaking kindergarten. This is his first time away from home and his mother seems to be very protective of him. He also has some particular dietary preferences (only eating pasta and chicken nuggets), which has led his mother to worry that he might be hungry during the day. Dominik's mother speaks Hungarian with him while his father speaks French. The family language

is English, but Dominik's most fluent language is Hungarian, and he currently seems to be reluctant to use English with his educators or the other children. During the settling in process, Dominik stayed very close to his mother, hiding his face if approached by other children. For the first week, his mother stayed with Dominik for approximately 3 hours a day, always taking him home before lunch.

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Age: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 years 2 months |
| Home languages: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hungarian • French |
| Additional language: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English |



Discussion Questions:

How can the educators help Dominik and his mother to feel more comfortable?

How should the question of diet be approached (or should it be and if so, when exactly)?

How could Dominik be encouraged to join in with the children and educators?

HOW TO ASSESS AND HELP DOMINIK

Dominik is entering a new environment where he may not be used to the food, the toys and may not feel comfortable with the language. This can cause Dominik to be wary of separating from his parents, especially if they are nervous as well. Dominik may be picking up on his mother's anxiety which could be making it even harder for him to feel comfortable.

The educators should have a meeting as soon as possible with Dominik's parents to find out how they are feeling and to decide what steps are necessary for helping him settle in. Through reaching out, they are opening the door to trust. Dominik's educators can ask the parents what might be helpful to include in the environment. In general, it would probably be useful to debrief them on how the settling in works. Perhaps it is very different from what they are used to and requires additional explanation, including how the initial separation can go. Parents should understand the importance of listening to the educators when they feel it is time to separate. They can also talk about best ways for the mom to say goodbye to Dominik. It also needs to be made clear that it will be difficult for Dominik to form a relationship with the educators if his mom

keeps him on her lap. In this meeting, it is good to ask questions but also to listen and acknowledge the parents and their feelings. A material that would be great to suggest for Dominik's family would be the parent/child cookbook (see Material List).

Dominik's educators should plan how to build trust with Dominik as well. Perhaps he needs to have moments with an educator in the cosy corner or wants to be by himself there. Dominik may not know what to do in the room because he is not comfortable yet. His educators can model play for him until he begins to do so on his own. Small group play may help to initially ease this transition and encourage him to interact more with his new peers. One educator may take a larger group outside and leave Dominik and the other educator with just 2 or 3 children to play in a more monitored environment.

It can also help Dominik to be able to predict his day and feel more comfortable with separating because he knows what will be happening next. This can be done with picture schedules or even a personalised picture book/schedule for Dominik displaying the parts of his day. Once he feels orientated and comfortable, it will be easier for him to take ownership and participate in the classroom with his educators and peers.

CHAPTER 3

INTERCULTURAL PARENT-EDUCATOR PARTNERSHIPS

From our experiences, we know that forming positive relationships with all parents regardless of their expectations, goals and prior experiences is essential in offering a secure and comfortable environment for the child. In a multicultural and multilingual kindergarten, relationships between educators and parents are often also intercultural partnerships that are indispensable for the exchange of cultural knowledge and information about the child. Educators have the privileged opportunity to expand their cultural awareness and help create a space for families to feel encouraged and safe to share from their respective cultures. In this section, we offer insight on how educators can be facilitators to ensure that these relationships are built on a foundation of mutual respect. Additionally, we introduce various sensitive topics that educators may encounter in their intercultural partnerships with parents.

EDUCATORS AS FACILITATORS FOR PARENT-KINDERGARTEN PARTNERSHIPS

Although similarities exist between families from the same cultural background, such as holidays that are celebrated or cultural dishes that are enjoyed, each family is unique in how their culture is experienced and lived. Educators should not make assumptions, but instead position themselves in the role of facilitator in welcoming an open exchange of cultural knowledge specific to each of the families. Inviting the parents to share aspects of their family culture or welcoming their insight on observed behaviours in the kindergarten can be starting points for a respectful intercultural partnership.

INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Educators should be aware that only 10% of a culture, also called “surface

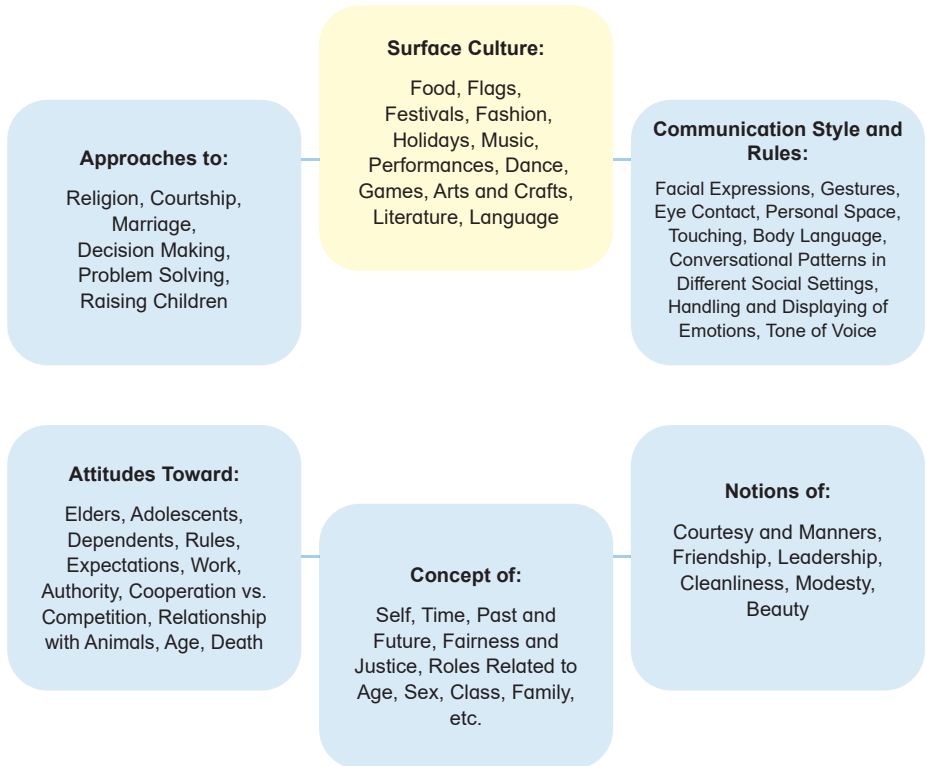


Chart: Adapted from Hall's Concept of the Cultural Iceberg (Hall, 1976).

culture," is visible in our daily intercultural interactions (Hall, 1976). When assuming the position of a facilitator in the intercultural partnerships with parents, educators are responsible for exerci-

ing sensitivity in looking beyond this 10% by asking questions and clarifying information with families to ensure that children and their families are given space and a voice in the community.

PREPARING PARENTS FOR SETTLING IN

During the settling in process, children need support from both educators and parents in building a bridge between the home and kindergarten. Many parents may be feeling excited, worried, insecure and/or anxious as they are giving their child over to new hands for the first time. If parents are reluctant

to leave during separation, due to uncertainties and a lack of trust, the child may internalise this insecurity. Educators should give parents the chance to settle in as well, encouraging them to come with questions and concerns and to approach the settling in with positivity and optimism. Resources such as the corresponding handbook for families can be used to support parents in the settling in process.

Celebrating Differences and Forming Intercultural Parent-Educator Partnerships

- Seek advice from colleagues and leadership who have more knowledge of the various cultural backgrounds.
- Explain to families what is involved in the kindergarten's curriculum and what specific goals the group has.
- Respectfully ask questions to clarify any cultural confusion one might have (e.g. "We have read that Shaan does not eat red meat. Are there any other cultural aspects that would be important for us to know?").
- Invite families to share their culture, make open calls during holidays and emphasise that all families are welcome and encouraged to share aspects of their home life, particularly cultural celebrations.
- Emphasise to other parents of the group the importance of welcoming new families.

APPROACHING SENSITIVE TOPICS

Educators should consider a range of questions when approaching sensitive topics with parents and families. Some things to consider may include how strong the relationship is, if there is a language barrier, or if differing cultural norms exist. However, regardless

of these factors, approaching each situation with an open mind and mutual respect of equal dignity is the way to ensure constructive dialogue. As open communication is key to a positive partnership, allow these dialogues to be opportunities to discover similarities and differences, helping to reflect upon behavioural patterns and reactions among all parties (Rosenberg, 2003).

Practise Active Listening

Active listening is a technique used to better understand what people are trying to say. It involves observations to obtain information, listening to understand and to learn how to help the speaker (Weger, Bell, Ninei, & Robinson, 2014).

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

In some cultures, spanking, smacking or hitting a child with a utensil are still acceptable forms of behaviour management. All European countries have now banned this in educational settings and more and more countries around the world are working to ban it completely. Educators may encounter parents who use this sort of punish-

ment at home or who suggest educators should use it with their child. It is important for all parties to be informed of the laws regarding corporal punishment in the country of their institution. If informed that a parent is using corporal punishment at home, first try to provide other options to the parent. If this does not have positive results, bringing this case to the heads of the kindergarten would be the appropriate next step.

DIET AND OVERALL HEALTH EDUCATIONAL ROLE

When educators notice a child is outside of a healthy weight range, has persistent illness, severe dental issues or is extremely lethargic, it is important to learn the cause(s) of this. Encourage the family to become an active participant in the child's overall health. Literature provided by local health advisories, discussions about healthy food options and lifestyle choices are important ways to prevent long-term health problems.

Child Protection Law

Educators should make it a priority to inform themselves of the child protection laws of the country where they work and whether or not their kindergarten adheres to specific child protection policies.

Parents may have personal differences with the educator or perceive the early childhood profession as lacking expertise. This can lead to conflicts and may even cause the parents to treat the educators poorly. It is important to report any altercations, threats or concerns to a member of management to ensure this is dealt with appropriately.

CURRICULUM AND EXPECTATIONS

Parents should always have access to the curriculum, guidelines and pedagogy of the kindergarten. The job of the educator is to have a strong understanding of these topics and to be available to support parents in understanding the benefits of the curriculum that has been put in place. Communication regarding the chosen curriculum and documentation of the learning process should be provided to the parents.

FAMILY DYNAMICS

In a truly open and trusting relationship between educators and families, it is possible that educators could be approached by families regarding personal home dynamics which may affect the child, but do not necessarily need to be shared with the educators. When personal information is shared, it is important that the educators listen non-judgmentally and thank the families for sharing. If it sounds like the parents are appropriately thinking of their child, then nothing more needs

to be said. However, if they ask for advice on any aspects of their family dynamics, it is important only to impart information that regards specifically to the child's settling in, their abilities to adapt and to understand their potentially changing situation.

De-escalation Policy

Educators should familiarise themselves with the de-escalation policy in the kindergarten in order to be better prepared should conflicts arise. This can apply not only to parent-educator relations but conflicts between colleagues and conflicts with the children as well.



Case Study: John

John works with four year old children from many different backgrounds. He tries to be inclusive of every family's cultural heritage and ensures that each child has a flag representing their culture or cultures in the classroom. One day, a parent from an Iraqi family came to John and was upset that their flag was not included. John informed the family that he does in fact have an Iraqi flag in the classroom. However, the parent explained that they are unhappy about this because despite their Iraqi nationalities, they identify as Kurdish. John apologised and assured them that he would put the Kurdish flag in the classroom.

HOW COULD JOHN HAVE DONE THINGS DIFFERENTLY?

John could have used the meetings and conversations prior to settling in to ask all families to send in a picture of their flag. John could also ask the families to come into the classroom and share a bit about their culture. Another way he could have avoided this situation is to have created an assignment for the children to do with their parents where they draw or create the flag of their culture that then would be displayed in the classroom. These concepts can be used in other situations depending

on the age of the child. Participation in creating a flag is generally for children four and older. However, children from two and above can still play a role in learning about their culture through songs, books and games.

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Age: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 38 years |
| Home language: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• English |
| Additional languages: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• German• French |

Discussion Questions:

How could John have prevented this situation from occurring?

What questions could John ask families when they join his class to better understand their cultural background?

What are some other ways John could help the families feel their cultures are represented in the kindergarten environment?

CHAPTER 4

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AND THEIR ROLE IN THE SETTLING IN PROCESS

In our role as educators, we help shape the reality and perspective of the world around the children we work with. This can be through the books we introduce into the classroom, the questions we pose and the information we choose to share and discuss. As educators committed to celebrating diversity and inclusion, we believe that it is also our responsibility to create space and give a voice to individuals and families that have been largely unrepresented. In this section, we hope to create that space, and open up a dialogue on how diversity, not only of culture and language, but also of gender identity, special needs and family structure can be embraced and celebrated.

This section provides three topics as well as a case study pertaining to each, which will be used as examples to guide the discussion on diversity and inclusion, and how these topics apply to the settling in process.

This section will discuss:

- What it means to truly see and understand children.
- Creating an inclusive classroom during settling in and beyond.
- Respecting diverse family structures within the kindergarten community.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SEEING AND UNDERSTANDING ALL CHILDREN

All children are unique in the ways they feel, relate, express and develop. When educators create an environment where their children's preferences, personalities and perceptions are embraced and celebrated, the children in turn truly feel seen and heard. Creating this atmosphere during the settling in process can not only help

to validate a child's feelings, but can help the child feel more at ease in this new situation.

When educators and parents strive to see a child for who they are, it can reduce frustration which could later grow into anxious, nervous or aggressive feelings (Blakemore, 2005). Children are in the process of trying to make sense of the world and ensuring that they feel understood empowers them to feel confident exploring it (Bandura, 1997). When educators strive to find ways to work together with parents to identify what a child is telling us they need, we hopefully create an environment where they feel comfortable, respected and free to be whoever they want to be.

HOW EDUCATORS DEMONSTRATE UNDERSTANDING

The settling in process is a time to build relationships with children as individuals. 'Seeing' a child allows educators to respond to their needs, and every time an educator successfully reacts to these needs, desires and emotions, they are demonstrating an understanding of the child as an individual (Juul, 2012).

For example, when a child is looking toward the direction of an object, the educator can follow the line of sight of the child and observe, "I see you looking in this direction, do you want your bottle?" Although it may seem like a small gesture, this type of consideration and communication during daily routines shows the child that you see them and want to understand their needs.

Children may use a variety of methods to express themselves. It is the role of the educator to hypothesise and figure out what the function of the behaviour is and how to best demonstrate their understanding of it (Kremenitzer & Miller, 2008). For example, if a child continues to get up during circle time, an educator may consider: Are they experiencing discomfort? Is the group setting too overwhelming for them in this moment? Are they not feeling challenged enough?

The way that educators respond and express themselves through both verbal and non-verbal communication gives feedback and shows the child that they are seen. When a child is approached with this type of communication and transparency, it can help them feel safe in their new classroom.

INCLUSION IN A KINDERGARTEN COMMUNITY

According to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), all children have the right to social participation. Inclusion aims to enable all people, with or without disabilities, regardless of their cultural background or language, religious beliefs, gender identity or sexuality to participate in society and to ensure fair educational opportunities (Nations, 2006) (Nations, 1989).

Inclusion in any kindergarten should be diversity sensitive, which means that everyone involved in the education, training and care of children will review and ensure that all processes and structures are created to allow every child, including those with additional needs, to participate.

The strengths and interests of all children should be recognised (Allen & Cowdery, 2005). All children should have access to the learning experiences available in a kindergarten setting as they can set a precedent for growth and development outside of the classroom. However, for a kindergarten to be able to include children with all types of needs, it must have the resources to do so.

Additionally, in an international setting, children in need of linguistic resources should have those available to them. For more information on how educators can support children's language development, see our other handbook "Supporting Children's Language Awareness and Cultural Identity."

COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

In a society where competition is often used to determine those who are the most capable, impairments and special abilities are often perceived as disadvantages. What society views as 'normal' is a cultural production, and through inclusion, educators can model for their group that everyone is welcome, seen and understood (Davis, 2010). They can show that everyone brings something unique to the table, and that everyone works to support one another as a community of learners. If educators aim to have an inclusive mindset and act accordingly, the children will follow their lead.

In settling in a group of children, educators will observe many different learning styles and capabilities even within a similar age range. During the settling in process, it will be the task of the educators to not only treat each child's needs with equal care, but also

to demonstrate to the whole group that all their needs are important. The coexistence of all children and their individual needs creates a rich environment enabling all to see themselves as competent and capable. The fact that everyone is treated with equal dignity may help adults and children alike to better embrace differences and to discover individuality (Allen & Cowdery, 2005).

INCLUDING ALL TYPES OF FAMILIES

It is important that early years programs create an environment during their settling in where all types of families can be welcomed. Research proves that when early childhood educators respect the diversity of families and communities, they can foster children's motivation to learn and reinforce their sense of themselves as competent learners (Brooker & Woodhead, 2008). Early childhood education provides the ideal setting for chil-

dren to learn about different identities and cultures while forming friendships with people from a wide range of backgrounds and family structures. By promoting the understanding of diversity, parents and educators can assist children in creating a welcoming atmosphere that supports the settling in process (Crouch S., Waters, McNair, Power, & Davis, 2014).

Families come in all shapes and sizes, including but not limited to, families that have parents identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, etc. (LGBTI+) (Hočevár, 2014). Other types of families include patchwork families, single parent families, three generation families and more (Sharma, 2013). All families need support from educators within a kindergarten setting. By teaching children the importance of treating others equally and celebrating different families and cultures, parents and educators have a significant impact on how children's attitudes develop.

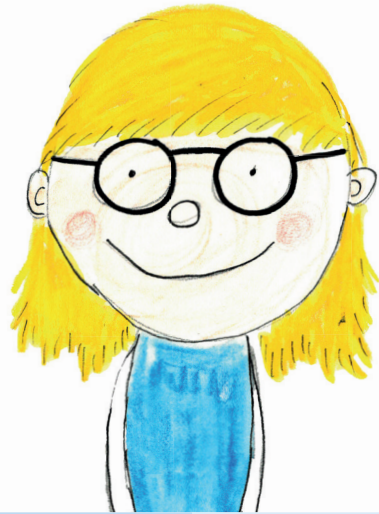
Showing Understanding Through Our Actions

- Actions speak louder than words: Be present and show children you are listening by not looking at or focusing on other activities while addressing or being addressed by them.

- **Model personal language:** Let children know your feelings. This models how they can express their own. If, for example, there is something going on that doesn't allow your full attention to be on the child, tell them, "I see you really want to tell me something, and I want to hear it. Right now, I have to finish talking to Sarah's mom and then I will be ready to listen to what you want to say."
- **Ask questions and communicate:** A child will feel respected and seen if they are being told exactly what is happening. For example, "I want to change your diaper now... I am going to carry you to the changing table."

Case Study: Rita

Rita is an only child and has recently settled into a bilingual German-English kindergarten. Rita's parents speak Greek with Rita and can communicate with the teachers in English. Since entering kindergarten, Rita has stopped speaking Greek at home and is speaking English with friends. Rita was born biologically female and at age three began to refer to himself as a boy and now fully identifies as male. Although Rita's parents are very loving, their approach to gender is traditional. Educators have overheard them telling Rita to "behave like a girl" and encouraging him to engage in activities that are typically believed to be more feminine.



| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Age: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 years 2 months |
| Home language: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greek |
| Additional language: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• English |

Discussion Questions:

How should educators address the topic of pronouns with Rita and his classmates?

How can educators support Rita while still showing respect to Rita's parents?

What communication barriers might educators face when discussing Rita's gender identity with the parents?

How can the educators help Rita feel seen during the settling in process? What tools do they have available to them?

HOW TO ASSESS AND HELP RITA

In addition to entering a new classroom with a new language, Rita is learning about himself and experiencing a change in his family dynamic. For Rita's educators to build a solid relationship with him, they need to find a way to ensure that he feels seen and understood. Educators should begin with an initial meeting that opens the lines of communication with both Rita and his parents.

Based on what the educators have overheard, it may be necessary to have a meeting with Rita's parents to discuss his gender identity and their feelings about it. It is important not to make assumptions during this conversation and

instead simply listen and offer ideas if they seem open to them. Educators can share examples of what they do in the classroom to support Rita.

Educators should observe if Rita feels comfortable in the classroom with both educators and peers. Educators should treat Rita like any other child, keeping an eye out for changes in behaviour and language. It is important to be present, listen and show that they are open to anything Rita wants to share with them.

Books can be a powerful tool to help children feel like a part of their kindergarten community, especially during the settling in process. It is a good idea to have books that counter gender ste-

reotypes in the classroom library and to use them to guide discussions on this topic. However, educators should be very careful to not make examples of children or single them out. It is best to use books that have a great message and to tailor them to a conversation that could be relevant to Rita, or any child's situation. For example, the book *The Paper Bag Princess*, can be used to demonstrate that how a person looks on the outside doesn't necessarily reflect how they feel on the inside. These types of conversations should be happening in all classrooms with children three and above, but can be particularly useful to help Rita's educators be sure that they are. Educators should be conscious of how they use gendered terms in the classroom in general, such as calling children 'miss' or 'mister', as this can lead to all children not feeling seen or understood for who they are outside of their gender.

Rita's educators can use their classroom as an opportunity to provide a positive and safe space for Rita to be himself. They should also be encouraging all the children in their group to be empathetic and understanding of one another and their differences. For example, if another child were to ask Rita why he is wearing a dress, the educator can ask the class, "Is it okay to wear a dress if you are a boy? What about if you are a girl? I think anyone can wear anything they want. What

about you?" If the educators model acceptance and openness to the entire classroom, it can help Rita feel more at home and more seen by the educators.



Case Study: Anahera

Anahera is two and a half years old and has recently moved with her parents, Kai and Ria, from New Zealand to Europe. She will soon be starting in an English-speaking kindergarten. The languages spoken within the family are English and Maori. Anahera is diagnosed with Down Syndrome and receives several weekly services such as speech therapy and physiotherapy, which are carried out in English. However, thus far, she only speaks about twenty words of the language. There is also an English-speaking specialist helping Anahera's parents in supporting her, using early intervention to realise her full potential in life.

Discussion Questions:

What extra steps in communicating with Kai and Ria should the educators take before the start of Anahera's settling in?

What steps can the educators take to include Anahera in her kindergarten community?

How can Anahera's educators make sure that all children in the class feel equally supported?

Age:

- 2 years 4 months

Home languages:

- English
- Maori

Additional language:

- -

that their children will receive less attention if educators shift their focus to Anahera. Communicating the values of inclusion and diversity to all families in the class will help them feel supported and encourage them to work together as a community.

Depending on the needs of the child, the educators must communicate with the family to know what to prepare in the classroom. In Anahera's case, or for any child with a diagnosis, discussing her needs and developmental goals with the family will help the educators and parents support her development. It is important to ask the parents questions about her previous experiences, what she struggles with, what goals are being worked on in her therapies and so forth during this meeting.

Anahera's family may be concerned about how she will be treated by the other children or how other parents

HOW TO ASSESS AND HELP ANAHERA

Before Anahera's settling in, she was the primary focus of her parents' attention and had one-on-one meetings with therapists. Now she must adjust to being one of many children being cared for by her educators. This is not just an adjustment for Anahera, but for the adults in the community as well. Her parents may not be able to communicate their worries, fears and thoughts in the language of the country they have moved to, and the other parents in the group may worry

may look at her. It will be important for the educators to assure them that at Anahera's age, children are generally accepting of all other children and that they will be modelling diversity-sensitive support daily (Allen & Cowdery, 2005). The educators could offer her parents the chance to inform the others of Anahera's diagnosis if they would like, perhaps at a parents' evening, but should not push the issue.

In order to develop tools to support Anahera inside the classroom, educators should be working together with other professionals caring for Anahera. It is important to discuss concerns or disagreements when children are not present, in a calm and open environment so that understandings can be reached to better enhance Anahera's experience and learning.

Anahera will experience many of the same developmental stages as other children. She may be slightly cognitively delayed which may affect her language and could also affect her awareness of danger. Additionally, she may not show as much interest in collaborative play as other children her

age. Educators should keep all of this in mind when helping her settle into her new environment. They need to know that she is capable, but that she may require extra support in these areas.

In order to help Anahera feel included, not only during the settling in period but throughout the school year, educators need to keep her individual needs in mind while still treating her as they would all of the other children in the classroom. If children notice Anahera getting additional support, educators can reflect together with them on times that they themselves were in need of extra help.

Case Study: Raffa

Raffa is a very active 3 year old girl who started at her previous kindergarten when she was 20 months old. Her two dads are very eager to do everything in her best interest. One dad speaks German and the other speaks French as a home language. They speak German with each other and as a family. Raffa spent the first 14 months of her life in a shelter in a Chinese speaking country before being adopted by her parents. Raffa has experienced other children asking about her mother. At times she shows very extreme emotions which can take her up to half a day to redirect.

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| Age: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 years 6 months |
| Home languages: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• German• French |
| Additional language: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chinese |



Discussion Questions:

What steps should the educators take in communicating with Raffa's parents before she begins at her new kindergarten?

What might Raffa's risk factors and resources be in her environment?

What steps can educators take to support Raffa's emotional needs?

HOW TO ASSESS AND HELP RAFFA

It is the role of the educator to make Raffa's settling in at this new kindergarten feel warm and welcoming for both her and her parents. The educators should approach the parents the way they would any others, asking relevant questions to Raffa's settling in.

As mentioned in the case study, Raffa has high emotions. The educators should help her process her emotions by identifying and naming them. They can help her to find useful self-regulatory tools such as taking breaks in a cosy place or deep breathing. Raffa and her classmates are at an age where experiences have a significant impact in laying the foundations for learning, behaviour, values and health (Australian Human Rights, 2019).

Educators can also read books that are relevant but not so specific that it singles Raffa out, such as *Little Pink Pup*, by Johanna Kerby. This story addresses differences being embraced by others in a very child friendly way.

If a child makes an observation about Raffa's family, it is important for the educator to know how to respond. If a situation arises that makes Raffa feel hurt, educators can problem solve with the children to identify the source of conflict. It is important to sensitively challenge assumptions and stereotypes and encourage self-reflection for all children to deal with these issues when they arise (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2012).

How to Support All Families and Their Children in the Kindergarten Community

- Using inclusive language in messaging (think “parents and carers” instead of “mum and dad”) can go a long way in supporting all different types of families.
- Don’t avoid or ignore complicated questions or comments. You can share some of your own experiences to help families engage with the issues.
- Create a “Family Wall” that celebrates diversity where children can share pictures of their families.
- Have photos or books of regular everyday activities with different types of families and people represented. Please reference the further reading section for children for classroom library ideas.
- If you feel that a child may need extra support during settling in, speak with the family about how you can support them.
- Encourage families to challenge discrimination when they see it. Reinforce the themes of equality, inclusion and respect. All children have an equal right to play, learn, make friends and grow.
- Children learn most from words and actions, so it’s important to lead by example.

CHAPTER 5

BEST PRACTICE

This handbook has discussed many different theories and practical tips relevant to settling children into international settings. This section will aim to summarise this information and to highlight what the authors believe to be general best practice.

WORKING AS A TEAM OF EDUCATORS

The education team must have time to communicate with one another before they meet families and more time to discuss their dynamic as a team before settling in the children. If a group of educators are not on the same page as to what the settling in process should entail or how to form relationships with children and parents, it will make functioning as a team very difficult. Educators must take time to sit together and discuss their own pedagogies, the language they prefer to

use with children, their approaches to discipline, how they handle moments of frustration and their strengths and goals. They should take time to plan their settling in schedule and discuss how to best implement it so that everyone is seen as an equal and treated as such.

Team Questionnaire

It is important to present a united and equal front to the families so that they know that they can discuss their child with any member of the education team. One material provided is a team questionnaire for the education team to go through and answer before they have contact with the children.

Setting Up a Diverse Group Atmosphere

- Have books in your classroom library which show a wide range of children and families from diverse backgrounds. See list at the end of this handbook for suggestions.
- Use puppets, story sacks, puzzles, games and colouring sheets depicting diverse topics.
- Have dolls available with all skin and hair colours, genders and with various types of clothing.
- Some kindergartens use a world map indicating where each child is from to help welcome families entering the classroom for the first time. This can show that the educators have taken the time to learn where they are from and can be used to start a conversation with children and/or parents about their background.

ROOM DESIGN

It is important to ensure that the classroom feels like a welcoming and safe place for new children settling in. Storage spaces (drawers, lockers, etc.) should be assigned in advance for each child with their name and photo (eye level for the child if possible). This will allow them to better orientate themselves and gain a sense of belonging.

PREPARATIONS

Collect information from families to have an overview of new settling in children (age, gender, nationality, languages). Contact the families in advance. Greet them via e-mail, make first phone calls and invite parents to an introductory parent evening to clarify initial questions, address concerns and discuss organisational matters.

Ask families to send pictures of their child, both individually and with their families in advance to help create a welcoming classroom environment. Provide information about the kindergarten to the families to discuss at home together (daily routines, special programmes, lunch menu, etc.).

Encourage parents to read children's books about starting kindergarten, create rituals together with their children, collect everything the child needs for the kindergarten and give the child support with a familiar item from home.

Parent Questionnaire and Checklist

The way parents are communicated with before and during settling in can make or break the process for their child. Support, communication and cooperation is needed from families for the settling in to be successful. See the Parent Questionnaire and Checklist provided in materials for an example of helpful tools to use during this part of the process.

This Is Me Book

Send home the suggested "This is Me Book" for the parents to make for their child to have with them in their classroom. All of these resources will reassure the parents that your main goal is to help them and their children feel comfortable.

Parent-Child Cookbook

The parent-child cookbook is a helpful tool that can be formatted for each kindergarten individually with specific foods that are served. This can help to better orientate the child during the first days of eating lunch with their new group.

PERSONAL MEETING WITH FAMILY / HOME VISITS

It has been found through this project that it is best practice for the parents and child to have one-on-one contact with the education team, ideally before the child enters the classroom. This 20-30 minute period allows for the parents to ask all of their questions and voice their concerns in a safe space for the educators to answer. This also allows the educators to spend some time with the child, getting to know them before they come to kindergarten. Educators can get information such as when the child naps, if they are still breastfeeding, if the child is toilet trained, etc. There are a few different ways to facilitate this initial contact with the families that are discussed in the practical tip box.

BEGINNING OF SETTLING IN

Explain the Settling In Model Clearly

Whichever model your team uses, be sure to clearly explain the basics to the parents. Emphasise that the parents are to sit to the side and not play with their child during these settling in

days, as it is important for the educators to be able to form relationships with the child during this time. Inform them of how they will be asked to step outside of the room when the time is right and how to best say goodbye to their child, etc.

Organise Settling In Time

Some teams start with one child per educator at a time, scheduling them at different times throughout the day. Others organise their settling in by having half a group of children in the morning, half coming an hour later and then bringing them all together after day three.

There are benefits to both approaches, but the most important aspect of each is for the children and parents to understand the process and feel supported throughout it.

Verbal and Non-verbal Communication with Parents

The parent doing the settling in should be asked to sit on one side of the room, visible to the child, but not interfering.

It may be difficult for some parents to follow this advice at first, but it is important to inform them that this is the best way to help their child settle in. The child should learn that it is a place where they will play with other children and their educators without their parents, and the parents should send the message, "I am here, you can play."

SEPARATIONS

If a separation occurs by the third day, it should only be brief (10-15 minutes) and then parents should return to pick their child up and immediately leave

for the day. After the third day, separations should increase to be longer and longer each day. Inform them that upon their return, it is important to simply pick up their child and say good-bye. It is not helpful for the child during the settling in to get used to playing with their parent in the room once they have been picked up as this may confuse the child about the role of parents in the classroom.

LUNCH AND NAP TIME

Eating and sleeping as a group may be something that a child is comple-

Initial Contact with Families

- Home visits were newly implemented through this study and were conducted between one month and a few days before the children settled in. We found that this allowed the children and families more security in having met two to three members of their new educators' team in their familiar home environment.
- The classroom or other neutral locations are also possible spaces to hold this initial meeting. It is important to keep in mind that there is a relationship being formed during this time. It should not feel like an interview, but rather be structured in a way that encourages relaxed conversation. We recommend sitting on the floor together, in cosy chairs or on a couch near a rug with a couple of toys to allow the child to feel comfortable as well.

tely unfamiliar with upon entering kindergarten. When the time comes for children to stay for these parts of the day, educators should instruct parents to discuss the plan with their child beforehand to avoid surprises. Looking over the menu for lunchtime and providing a cuddly toy or blanket for nap are just some of the ways to comfort a child during these transitions.

EARLY AND LATE CARE

At some kindergartens, additional care is provided outside of the normal daily hours. In some cultures, it is quite normal for a child to spend the whole day apart from their parents, especially when both parents are working. However, during the settling in process, educators should request that parents keep their child's day short and sweet in order to give the child time to adjust to their new environment and routine.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF AND ONE ANOTHER DURING SETTLING IN

Remaining calm is essential for a successful settling in. The same applies here for both the educators and the

parents. Children are sensitive to the mood in their environment; they notice when a parent is worried or afraid. They can also sense when their educator is stressed or insecure. Breathe in, stay hydrated and take breaks as possible when needed.

The settling in process can be hard work. Remember that it is okay to ask for help from colleagues when feeling overwhelmed. As a team, educators are there to support not only the children, but also one another. When everyone feels supported, they will be able to provide a more secure environment for the children.



CONCLUSION

The goal of this handbook is to give the reader a chance to reflect and build upon their knowledge as educators. The topics discussed in this book are complex and there is no universal answer for every situation, but the tools provided here will help guide the reader to find their own personal best practice and feel confident settling in all children and their families.

Contextual changes such as urbanisation, external migration, socially defined gender roles and environmental issues influence the way young children grow and develop. If a child could be at risk of harm during a transition period, our hope is that the content within this handbook can help educators feel better prepared to provide support.

The informed professional educator understands that a child and their family make choices during the process of transitioning into a new environment. Keeping in mind the challenges families may be facing, it is the educators' role to provide each fami-

ly with appropriate, healthy options and help them make and accept their choices.

Early intervention in an intercultural settling in period helps to prevent potential risk factors. Educators, families and institutions aim to focus on building essential skills, starting in early childhood education. A well-prepared team of educators and well-informed families help to create the best possible scenario for settling in all children within a multilingual setting.

Children need healthy environments in which to grow, develop, play and learn. Their environments are complex and changing, as referenced within the many different case studies provided. It is paramount that the safety, wellbeing and best interests of a child are the top priority of both the educators and the parents.

This handbook is an educator's toolbox for fostering confident, independent and resilient children.

MATERIAL LIST: EDUCATORS AND PARENTS AS PARTNERS

In addition to these handbooks, the research team has provided a series of materials to help educators as well as families as they embark on the settling in process. One intention of the materials for educators is to bring more attention to the care and the effort educators must put into this process. From the connection and communication between the teaching team and attention to each child's needs, to the way educators and parents communicate, it is important to highlight how these tools can go a long way.

The second intention of these materials is to help educators and families work together from the beginning to strengthen the home/school connection. The members of this project believe that parents are the experts of their children at home and educators are the experts of children in the classroom, and that it is important that we work together to learn and grow from one another. Without this connection, a positive settling in process cannot occur. In this section, you will find a list of the materials we

have included along with a description of what each material entails.

MATERIALS FOR EDUCATORS FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN

CASE STUDIES

The team has included case studies from this handbook as well as additional case studies to help educators consider different situations and how to best approach them.

The provoking questions included should help the educators think deeper about the case studies. These are useful in a professional development setting for groups of teachers to sit together and learn from each other about different ways they could help in these situations.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EDUCATORS

This questionnaire provides a set of questions for educators on a new team to reflect on their own intentions as a team and what they see their roles to be, as well as how they overcome stressful situations. The questionnaire includes follow-up questions for the end of the year for educators to reflect

and think about what they have learned and how they have worked together. If the educators have worked together previously, there is a different reflection questionnaire for them to go through as these topics continue to be relevant. Communication is key, and learning about each other's practices and pedagogy is the best way to get on the same page as a team.

DAY STRUCTURE STORY CARDS

This material is a set of simple schedule cards with words and corresponding illustrations of each part of the day. There is space on the other side for educators to edit and type in their own labels and include real life images of their classroom. These cards help children familiarise themselves with their new schedule in order to understand and predict what comes next in the day.

MATERIALS FOR EDUCATOR / PARENT PARTNERSHIP

CLASS GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

When a family starts to prepare for the settling in process, there is a lot to think about. This team has prepared a list that educators can edit to tailor for

their families with information about what is needed in the children's cubbies/lockers, where strollers can be parked, the best mode of communication with the educators, as well as how to celebrate birthdays. All this information in one place can help educators guide a conversation in a meeting as well as help families feel more prepared for this new adventure.

HOME VISIT DETAILS

Our team strongly recommends home visits or one-on-one visit with the educators and the family before or directly after the first day of settling in.

These materials provide a description of what that meeting can look like, what types of questions could be asked, how to strategise, communicate with families and schedule home visits. It also provides questions to reflect upon after the visit. This type of meeting is a great way to strengthen the partnership with families as well as a way to build trust before the children enter kindergarten.

THIS IS ME BOOK

This material helps families feel connected to the kindergarten and helps children feel connected to their home.

It is a series of questions per age group that educators send home in the form of a book to the families prior to the start of the year.

WELCOME BOOK

The Welcome Book is a sample material to be edited and changed by the educators. This material is a book addressed to the child, welcoming them to the group.

It includes images of the classroom, the educators as well as the children and walks the child through their day. This book is to be sent home for the child to read and look at in the beginning phase of settling in and will help the families feel connected as well as excited about coming to kindergarten.

PARENT AND CHILD MATERIALS

PARENT / CHILD RECIPE SAMPLE

This material is an example of what educators could do to help families feel more comfortable with the food served in their new kindergarten. It provides a sample recipe, written in a

child-friendly way, with pictures, large font and simple instructions, so that families can cook at home with their child in anticipation of what may be served at the kindergarten.

SPOTIFY PLAYLISTS

This material focuses on the auditory connection children can make with music between home and school. There are a variety of pre-made playlists provided as an example of how music from different cultural celebrations can be played both at home and school to reinforce this home/school connection as well as the importance of celebrating all cultures.

COLOURFUL FRIENDS

This material explores language connections through drawings and colours and is recommended for children three and above. These pictures can be given to families to help children learn simple words, such as colours and how to say hello in the language of their new kindergarten.

GLOSSARY

Definitions to apply in a kindergarten context:

ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening is a two-way communication process where both participants of a conversation feel understood. It shows empathy and allows the listener to interpret and evaluate what they hear. It is a technique and an attitude that fosters positive communication skills (Active Listening and i-messages, N.D.) (Jalongo, 1995).

BILINGUAL / BILINGUALISM

Bilingualism is the ability to use two languages equally. These languages can be acquired simultaneously, learning two languages at the same time from birth, or by successively learning the second language after the first language has already been established (Ianco -Worrell, 1972) (Lexico, 2019)

BONDING

According to the Oxford dictionary definition (n.d.) "Bonding is the esta-

ishment of a relationship or link with someone based on shared feelings, interests, or experiences (Bonding)." In this text, researchers used concepts applied by Emmi Pikler and write about bonding keeping the theories of John Bowlby in mind (Tardos, 2007) (Bowlby, 1969).

COMPETENCE

Competence, according to the New Oxford Dictionary of English definition (n.d.), "is the ability to do something successfully or efficiently (Competence)." In the early childhood context, researchers refer to the concept of The Competent Child as referred to in Reggio Emilia (Edwards, et al., 2012), as well as Jesper Juul's explanations of competent children (Juul, 2011).

DIVERSITY SENSITIVE EDUCATION

In this handbook, this term refers to diverse approaches of addressing the different living conditions and group affiliations as well as the different abilities, talents or disabilities of a child and provides the basis of a bias-aware pedagogy.

Specialists in kindergartens should note the diversity and heterogeneity of the children sensitively and design their pedagogical work around their respective needs.

Basic dimensions of diversity in a kindergarten could include:

- gender,
- culture/ethnicity,
- additional educational needs,
- and the socioeconomic situation of children and their families.

Diversity-conscious education aims to counteract the exclusion and stigmatisation of people on the basis of prejudices and biases. Respect, empathy, tolerance, acceptance and appreciation towards other people and cultures should be promoted (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2009).

GENDER / GENDER ROLES

Traditionally, gender is the division of people into two categories: 'men' and 'women.' Gender roles are learned

behaviours by a person as appropriate to their gender, determined by the prevailing cultural norms (Eicher & Roach-Higgins, 1992). In these handbooks, the authors approach the topic of gender norms when referring to all types of children and families in the attempt to stray away from gender norms and focus on people as individuals.

INTERCULTURALISM

Interculturalism refers to when people from different cultural backgrounds mutually share concepts and accept what the others consider to be culturally 'normal'. This exchange of ideas creates a respect for these other cultures and fosters the forming of strong relationships (Hujala, Turja, Gaspar, Veisson, & Waniganayake, 2009).

MULTICULTURALISM

Multiculturalism refers to the social structures of an organisation or society, where different cultures co-exist. The authors of this handbook consider teaching and understanding multiculturalism as a value as it helps children to have a better understand-

ding and knowledge of their own culture as well as helping them to be respectfully informed of other cultures (Blum, 1992).

MULTILINGUALISM

Multilingualism is the ability to use more than two languages equally. These languages can be acquired simultaneously, learning multiple languages at the same time from birth, or by successively learning languages after the first language has already been established (De Bot, Lowie, & Verspoor, 2007)

PARENT-EDUCATOR PARTNERSHIP

An educational partnership is the shared responsibility and cooperation of parents and educators in relation to the education of a child based on dialogue and communication. Developmental and educational goals are shared, discussed and agreed upon for the benefit of the child. Parents and educators educate children together by providing them with developmental and learning aids for a variety of situations (Christenson & Cleary, 1990). Educational goals, topics and

interests of the child are exchanged and deepened.

PROSILIENCE

Prosilience is the ability to successfully adapt to life's tasks in the face of adverse conditions or to "bounce back" from negative experiences (Hoopes, 2017).

ROLE MODEL

A role model is someone who sets a good example for others. Children look to their family members as examples to follow. In the context of this handbook, the authors refer to role models as educators, parents or someone who can demonstrate positive ways for children to interact with and understand their environments.

SELF-AWARENESS

Self-awareness is the awareness of one's own body and feelings which develops out of experiences (Staley, 1998).

SELF-EFFICACY

Self-efficacy is the conviction that a person can master difficult tasks or life pro-

blems on the basis of one's own competencies. A child with high self-efficacy is confident that they can accomplish their desires. Since this ability is best developed through experience, it is important that the level of difficulty of the task is individually tailored to each child (Policy, 2018) (Bar-on & Elias, 2007).

SELF-REGULATION

Self-regulation is the ability to manage disruptive emotions, behaviours and impulses. This is achieved through introspection, self-assessment and metacognition (the awareness and understanding of one's own thought process) (Housman, 2017). This means that the child consciously perceives the different aspects of his or her behaviour, then successfully evaluates and executes the steps needed to redirect their emotions in order to achieve a more positive outcome. Age appropriate emotional self-regulation is often a core competence a child has to learn (in kindergarten).

SENSITIVITY

The concept of 'sensitivity' was developed by Mary Ainsworth as part of her research on the quality of mo-

ther-baby bonding. Through a sensitive approach, based on an accepting and appreciative attitude, educators support the children's education and development processes. The educators perceive the interests, needs and signals of the children, observe them and/or ask questions to create an overall atmosphere in which the children feel comfortable, accepted and safe. The pedagogical experts are also aware that general conditions (structures of everyday life, the colleague's absence, etc.) can influence sensitivity (Pederson, Bailey, Tarabulsky, Benito, & Moran, 2014).

TRANSITION

Transitions are a critical life event that can have a positive or negative effect on the development of a child (Hedegaard & Fleer, 2019). If adaptation to the new situation is not successful, stress can arise. How children manage a transition depends, among other things, on their psychological resilience. Examples of significant transitions for children are; transition to the kindergarten, primary school and secondary school, transition into adolescence, the separation or divorce of parents, the birth of a sibling as well as moving to a new home.

TRUST

Trust, or basic trust is understood in psychology as the inner emotional security that a child develops in the first months of their life. This basic trust arises from positive life experiences, exemplifying a secure arrangement in the world, and security that their personal needs will be met. Primary trust can develop when the parent continuously and consistently looks after a child, and lovingly supports their development (Erikson, 1963).

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Children need healthy environments in which to grow, develop, play and learn. Their environments are complex and ever-changing.

The adult can be a role model, providing children with appropriate, healthy options and behaviour in all aspects of life.

This way, educators and families are helping children develop into confident, independent people who have a strong sense of self-efficacy, empathy and are internationally minded.

