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ENGLISH TRANSLATION

VISUALIZING BEST PRACTICE IN THE EDUCATION AND CARE OF CHILDREN AGED 0 - 3 YEARS

Working material for basic and advanced training,
team meetings & parent-teacher conferences



KARL-FRANZENS-UNIVERSITÄT GRAZ
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Catherine Walter-Laager, Eva Pölzl-Stefanec, Christina Gimplinger, Lea Mittischek

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	6
Introduction.....	8
Structure of this booklet.....	10
Overview of best-practice criteria.....	12
Overview of videos.....	13
Enabling participation	14
Experiencing relationships	16
Communicating in a stimulating way	18
Offering and allowing sensory experiences	20
Introducing rules and adhering to them	22
Being present	24
Interpreting signals.....	26
Providing stimuli.....	28
Considering individual needs	30
Supporting the regulation of emotions.....	32
Supervising conflicts.....	34
Bibliography.....	36

Acknowledgements

When I first immersed myself in elementary education about 25 years ago, the majority of children in Switzerland and Austria attended kindergarten (age 3-6 years), but only a few were in daycare (age 0-3 years). This has changed over the last few decades. Today, many families send their children aged 0-3 years to daycare. Consequently, it has become the norm for children to attend daycare prior to the age of 3 years.

In order for the next generation to benefit from this social change, early childhood educators need to carefully organize day-to-day life in early childhood institutions and use their professionalism to provide a stable, loving and stimulating environment for children.

To support the invaluable field work of our colleagues, the team at the Department of Elementary Education of the University of Graz gathered published and scientifically profound knowledge and illustrated it with comprehensive videos, all of which were commented on by experts. This project was made possible only through the support of many people. Therefore, I would like to express my gratitude to



- all the children and their families who have allowed us to film at the early childhood institutions. I would also like to thank all the early childhood educators and organizations for their trust and for presenting their expertise to colleagues.
- all experts who generously contributed their in-depth knowledge to this project. In particular, I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to Susanne Fischer. She accompanied me through all of the project's phases by sharing her expertise and network.
- the state of Styria as well as the city of Zurich for placing their trust in us. The highly professional work of our film crew was made possible through their financial support of this project. I would also like to thank the two cameramen.

The present best practice guidelines focus on the quality of education, care and upbringing of children aged 0-3 years at early childhood institutions in German-speaking Switzerland and Austria. They may be used to provide training and continuing education for early childhood educators, as well as to reflect about the work of one's own daycare or kindergarten team.

We hope you enjoy working with these guidelines and that you find them encouraging and inspiring.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Walter-Laager". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Catherine Walter-Laager, Ph.D.

Head of Department of Elementary Education, University of Graz

Project Management

Catherine Walter-Laager, Ph.D., is an education researcher, continuing education trainer, kindergarten teacher and trainer of kindergarten teachers. She is the head of the department of Elementary Education at the University of Graz and CEO of PädQUIS, a research and development institute based in Berlin. Her work focuses on the quality of early childhood institutions and kindergartens as well as on the processes of teaching and learning regarding early childhood education.



Christina Gimplinger, MA.,

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Project Team

Eva Pölzl-Stefanec, Ph.D., is a kindergarten teacher as well as a teacher in after-school centers, and she has several years of working experience. She studied social pedagogy and specialized in elementary education. In her dissertation, she wrote about "Requirements for the Training of Kindergarten Teachers Working at Early Childhood Institutions." Her research interests include the professionalization of teachers with a focus on elementary education, education and care of children aged 0-3 years, and quality development at early childhood institutions.



Lea Mittischek, MA.,

is a certified social education worker and teacher in after-school centers. She studied social education specializing in elementary education. She worked as a university assistant in the department of Elementary Education at the University of Graz for three years. Currently, she is part of the project staff. Her research interests include quality development in child care institutions, peer interactions, and interactions between teachers and children at early childhood institutions.



Introduction



A Basic Understanding of High Quality in the Education and Care of Children

Due to socio-political changes, the need for early childhood institutions for children in their first years of life is growing (OECD, 2016). It is the responsibility of early childhood educators to support the children in their physical and psychological development. Studies have shown that a professional and, above all, a pedagogical setting of high quality can contribute to improved equal opportunities (Walter-Laager & Meier Magistretti, 2016; Viernickel & Fuchs-Rechlin, 2016).

"Educational quality in a kindergarten (or other educational environments such as family, early childhood institutions, etc.) is given when the respective pedagogical orientations, structures and processes actively foster the physical, emotional, social and intellectual well-being, development and education of children, in the present as well as in the future, and support families in caring for their children and in educating them" (Tietze, 2008, p. 17).

Studies have shown that the quality of the educational support and social aspects of the interaction between early childhood educators and children play a key role in creating an environment for children that supports their development (Pianta, 2017).

Professional and, therefore, developmentally-stimulating and health-promoting education for children in the first three years of life must be organized so that it corresponds children's respective stages of development.

The bases for positive interactions, especially during the first years of life, are viable and positive social relationships, which develop during the first weeks of attending early childhood institutions. These weeks are conceptually planned (Viernickel, 2009). The relationships are deepened throughout the entire time spent at the early childhood institutions (Walter-Laager, Pfiffner & Fasseing Heim 2017).

In addition to providing an environment in which bonding is fostered (e.g., attention, safety and stress reduction), early childhood educators need to support children in exploring their environment and assist them in coping with the daily routine at early childhood institutions (Wadepohl & Mackowiak 2016). Any stimulus initiated by the early childhood educator should always be within the proximate stage of development (von der Beek, 2010; Becker-Stoll, Niesel & Wertfein, 2015).

These aspirations are decisive for the procedure in this best practice study "Visualizing Best Practices in the Education and Care of Children Aged 0 – 3 Years". The project focuses on good interactions in the education, care and education of infants and little children (ages 0-3) in early childhood institutions in Austria and German-speaking Switzerland.

The present best-practice criteria for the quality of interactions in early childhood institutions for children aged 0-3 years are based on research literature as well as on quality criteria for education and care of children aged 0-2 years in German-speaking regions. The criterion "taking diversity into account" will not be discussed separately (e.g., considering the linguistic, cultural and individual diversity of children in educational situations). This criterion is expressed by considering the heterogeneous and domestic needs of children. However, early childhood educators working in early childhood education should always have a pedagogical and professional approach regarding diversity.

Diversity manifests itself in a variety of dimensions such as gender, culture, age, milieu, disability/ability, sexual orientation, language or religion. It should be noted that "children always belong to several different groups at the same time" (Prengel, 2014, p. 43). Early childhood institutions are melting pots that reflect socio-economic, cultural and socio-political heterogeneity. On a daily basis, early childhood educators and children experience different perspectives, values and patterns of interpretation (Oberhuemer, 2012). To deal with these differences professionally, strategies and respectful discourse are required.

Denying the existence of differences, as well as overemphasizing them, should be avoided. If differences are denied, children perceive differences, but they are not supported in verbalizing them. At the same time, children learn that any deviation from the norm is not acceptable. Similarly, overemphasizing differences is not professional as this could result in segregation. Strategies for dealing with heterogeneity must include both aspects, namely the appreciation of diversity and the perception and dismantling of prejudices and barriers (Wagner, 2014). The resource-based approach and the diversity-sensitive perception of children are important bases for children to be individually formed and to contribute to their development of social tolerance and appreciation (Warnecke, 2012).

The selected approach has been used to identify criteria that are based on scientific findings and that contribute significantly to a high level of quality of interaction.

The eleven best-practice criteria presented here show that a high quality relationship is required for children to feel comfortable and to be able to explore their environment. Also needed is a high quality of stimulation which supports children in their development.

Structure of this booklet

This booklet and the videos (<https://krippenqualitaet.uni-graz.at>) connect the theory with the implementation of the criteria in everyday life. The first part of the project is composed of the best practice criteria and brief descriptions. Each criterion is described in the booklet and highlighted in grey. Next, based on the latest theoretical principles and research, a short text of theory is presented. For the second part of the best practice study, everyday life was filmed in selected early childhood institutions. From this video footage, relevant film sequences were selected. In the third part of this project, the selected film sequences were commented upon by six elementary education experts from heterogeneous disciplines:

Lieselotte Ahnert, Ph.D.

is an internationally renowned psychologist. She has conducted research on children's development in early childhood institutions by tackling numerous research projects from a developmental psychology perspective. She has been working as professor of developmental psychology at the University of Vienna since October 2008. Her work focuses on developmental psychology, bonding and care in early childhood institutions.



Susanna Fischer

trained as a social worker and has many years of experience working with infants. She conducts PEKiP courses at the Fachhochschule Viventa Zürich, is a counselor for families and childcare facilities, and regularly offers coaching and continuing education courses for education professionals. She also focuses on infantile colic consultation and sleep and education counseling.



Dorothee Gutknecht, Ph.D.

is a certified curative and special education teacher, speech therapist and nutrition therapist. She is professor at the Evangelische Hochschule Freiburg and focuses on elementary education, inclusion and language. She has authored numerous publications and has many years of working experience in the field of elementary education and early therapy. In 2012, she founded the network Quality in Early Childhood Institutions and Childcare Facilities Freiburg Southwest. This network connects approximately 500 early childhood educators working in the fields of pedagogy, therapy, science and art.



Regula Keller

is a trained educator and head of the Department of Childcare of the City of Zurich. She is responsible for the management of all childcare facilities in Zurich and overviews all operations. She also offers continuing education for education professionals working in childcare facilities.



Irmgard Kober-Murg

is a trained kindergarten teacher and teacher in after-school centers and has over 25 years of working experience in managing kindergartens. She works as a supervisor in the field of early childhood education. In addition, she is a pedagogical expert for elementary education centers run by the state of Styria. She has authored several textbooks. Her work focuses on the design of educational processes in early childhood institutions.



Meaningful practical advice is added to the theoretical input. Each criterion contains suggestions for workshop activities. These suggestions give teams the chance to discuss the information and theoretical inputs interactively and to reflect on a meta level. It should be noted that the discussion and implementation of the eleven criteria for best practice in the education and care of children require respectful communication within the team of early childhood educators.

With the help of these documents...

... instructors working in training and continuing education are able to discuss pedagogical aspects of everyday life.

... anyone who is interested (e.g., parents) is able to gain insight into pedagogical aspects of everyday life. That way, they get an idea of how early childhood educators support children in their educational processes.

... teams of early childhood educators are able to discuss the challenges of educating and caring for children under the age of 2 years, adopt methodological approaches and reflect upon their own work.

ENABLING PARTICIPATION

Early childhood educators develop adequate frameworks and create situations in which children are able to participate.

EXPERIENCING RELATIONSHIPS

Early childhood educators organize the daily routine at early childhood institutions so that children are able to experience relationships.

COMMUNICATING IN A STIMULATING WAY

Early childhood educators always communicate verbally while interacting with children (e.g., while completing chores or during playtime).

OFFERING AND ALLOWING SENSORY EXPERIENCES

Early childhood educators create situations in which children are able to experience their senses. They assist them in experiencing these situations by offering guidance.

GOOD-PRACTICE CRITERIA



Visualizing Best Practices in the Education and Care of Children Aged 0 – 3 Years

INTRODUCING RULES AND ADHERING TO THEM

In cooperation with the children and the team, early childhood educators adhere to rules.

BEING PRESENT

During the entire time of their shift, early childhood educators are present emotionally and physically. Moreover, they value all children.

INTERPRETING SIGNALS

Early childhood educators actively observe the children and, depending on the context, try to interpret the children's reactions and respond adequately.

PROVIDING STIMULI

Early childhood educators actively observe how children play and provide stimuli to enhance the play process.

CONSIDERING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

Early childhood educators structure the daily routine in a variable way in order to adapt it to children's individual needs whenever it is necessary and possible to do so.

SUPPORTING THE REGULATION OF EMOTIONS

Early childhood educators help children to regulate negative emotions by removing children from stressful situations, by enabling physical contact and by providing opportunities to relax.

SUPERVISING CONFLICTS

Early childhood educators view disputes among children as meaningful interactions and support them in such a way that tension is defused for everyone involved.

ENABLING PARTICIPATION

- 1 Designing the Process of Food Preparation In a Participatory Way
- 2 Designing 2 Micro Transitions in a Participatory Way

EXPERIENCING RELATIONSHIPS

- 3 Welcoming a Child and Experiencing a Relationship
- 4 Fostering a Relationship by Putting on Lotion

COMMUNICATING IN A STIMULATING WAY

- 5 Verbally Supporting Games
- 6 Stimulating Communication by Looking at a Book
- 7 Stimulating Communication While Looking at Picture Books with the Youngest Children

OFFERING AND ALLOWING SENSORY EXPERIENCES

- 8 Sensory Experience: Eating Porridge
- 9 Sensory Experience: Washing Feet

GOOD-PRACTICE VIDEOS



Visualizing Best Practices in the Education and Care of Children Aged 0 – 3 Years

INTRODUCING RULES AND ADHERING TO THEM

- 10 Eating Apples and Adhering to Rules

BEING PRESENT

- 11 Providing a Secure Basis
- 12 Supporting a Game with Step Ladders
- 13 Supporting a Group of Children in Playing with Tires

INTERPRETING SIGNALS

- 14 Responding to Signs of Tiredness
- 15 Supporting Children in Sending Signals

PROVIDING STIMULI

- 16 Supporting the Exploration of Cans as Game Material
- 17 Providing Stimuli Through Playing Material
- 18 Giving stimuli for Movement by Preparing the Environment
- 19 Providing Stimuli for Playing
- 20 Providing Stimuli during play with the Youngest Children

CONSIDERING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

- 21 Considering Individual Needs During Daily Routines
- 22 Creating Mealtimes Individually

SUPPORTING THE REGULATION OF EMOTIONS

- 23 Regulating Emotions during a dispute about a Toy Car
- 24 Regulating Emotions during a dispute with an early childhood educator

SUPERVISING CONFLICTS

- 25 Supervising a Dispute about a Stroller
- 26 Preventing Conflicts by Deliberately Supporting Games

27 additional material: Organizing Mealtime

Early childhood educators develop adequate frameworks and create situations in which children are able to participate.

DESCRIPTION

Participation and involvement are skills that children must acquire and apply. Early childhood educators listen to children, observe their activities and support them in independently mastering everyday life. At the same time, older children are encouraged to be role models to younger children. Even very young children are enabled to set the table by themselves, freely choose their toys and know how to put them away. It is perfectly fine if children partially complete a task, like putting only plates on the table or leaving toys scattered around. Depending on the situation, early childhood educators complete the task or support the children in completing it.

To allow children to participate, early childhood educators should explain their actions, decisions and activities to the children in a transparent way. Children need to be actively involved in everyday activities. Throughout most of the day, children are able to play independently.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child defined the right to participation: "Every child has the right to adequate participation and consideration of their opinion concerning any aspect of the life of the child, their age and development" (BGBl. I, 2011, p. 2). Therefore, participation is a legal obligation which is already part of the daily routine in early childhood institutions (Rehmann, 2016). Participation means involving children on a daily basis in decision-making processes as well as in the creation of pedagogical activities. It is based on five principles: the principle of information, the principle of transparency, the principle of voluntariness, the principle of reliability, and the principle of individual support. In this way, participation can strengthen the relationship between children and adults (Lutz, 2016).

In general, early childhood educators determine the amount of participation in early childhood institutions. They decide if, and at what point, they take any ideas and interests of the children into account and, subsequently, integrate them into their pedagogical activities on a daily basis (Hansen, Knauer & Sturzenhecker, 2011).

It should be noted that participation is not tied to a certain age. However, some aspects should be considered when working with children aged 0-2 years. For example, early childhood educators observe children's body language, including facial expressions and gestures. They listen to what the children want to say and how they describe their activities. If needed, they step in and help. However, they trust the children so that they are able to act autonomously and independently (Priebe, 2012). Also, they openly talk about events or express expectations (Rehmann, 2016).

The involvement of children also plays an important role when it comes to bodily care. Based on a respectful and attentive pedagogical approach, participation in these situations requires the active involvement of children (Rehmann, 2016).

SPECIFIC PRACTICAL INFORMATION

All rooms and toys are arranged in a way so children are able to freely access them at any given time. Symbols or pictures are used for organizational purposes, such as group policies, arrangement systems or meal plans.

Throughout the day, early childhood educators make sure to involve children as much as possible. Children are actively involved in coping with transitions as well as in everyday activities such as the preparation of meals. In this regard, it is important to reflect on the general set-up and staff schedule (e.g., determining a supervisor for a specific time period).

WORKSHOP based on the video **"Designing 2 Micro Transitions in a Participatory Way"**

Target group	Early childhood educators
Duration	Approx. 45-60 minutes
Required material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ booklet "Visualizing Best Practices in the Education and Care of Children Aged 0 – 3 Years" ▪ Computer with video function, or TV ▪ Approx. 5 index cards per person ▪ Pens ▪ Tape ▪ Camera or smartphone
Brief description	<p>The whole team watches the first 55 seconds of the video "Designing 2 Micro Transitions in a Participatory Way" without listening to the commentaries of the experts.</p> <p>Then, each team member takes an index card and writes down a daily activity in which the children in their own group participate or do not participate. Please write only one example on each index card.</p> <p>Next, one person collects the index cards and discards those with the same example. All cards describing situations in which participation was made possible are displayed on a wall. All the remaining cards are shuffled.</p> <p>Each team member draws a card, reads out the example and then discusses with the team how more participation of children in said situation could be enabled. Afterwards, all cards that were discussed by the team will be displayed (e.g., in the conference room).</p> <p>Prior to the next team meeting, all team members brainstorm how to improve the participation of the children in their groups. The process of implementing ideas will be documented by photos which will be displayed in the conference room.</p>

TO CONCLUDE

Watch the video "Designing 2 Micro Transitions in a Participatory Way" and listen to the experts' commentaries.

Early childhood educators organize the daily routine at early childhood institutions so that children are able to experience relationships.

DESCRIPTION

Early childhood educators make sure to build relationships with all children. Moreover, they facilitate interactions between children in various social settings (e.g., age-homogeneous, small or big groups and subgroups).

The duration of group activities is limited and activities in peer groups are voluntary. In other words, children choose whether or not to participate in activities and decide how long they actually do so. While organizing activities for big or small groups, it is particularly important to ensure a variety of relaxing activities as well as physical exercise (e.g., going for walks, reading books, activities in the sports hall, etc.).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Children depend on social relationships. They need a social network that offers them attention and appreciation. Furthermore, they need primary and secondary caregivers who support them in developing and maintaining social skills (Pfiffner & Walter-Laager, 2017).

For children, relationships are vital. Children under the age of 3 years especially depend on their caregivers, and are attached to people who are present in their lives (Largo, 2017). The sensitive interaction of primary and secondary caregivers with the children triggers positive effects in many areas of development (Walter-Laager & Meier Magistretti, 2016). However, children within the same age group at a similar socio-moral and cognitive level of development become more interested in each other during the second half of their first year of life. The importance of these interactions increases over time (Viernickel, 2009). Infants show a specific behavior towards other infants. They smile at each other, utter sounds, touch each other, exchange toys and imitate each other.

The complexity of peer interactions increases over time. During the second year of life, children might be able to cooperate and solve each other's problems under certain circumstances (Viernickel, 2009).

Also, functional and parallel play are becoming increasingly interesting for children at that age. These types of play are used to get a feel for different situations and to learn more about different objects. They are suitable for experiencing peer interactions through the interplay of giving and taking (Kobelt Neuhaus, 2010).

During the first two years of life, verbal communication plays a subordinate role. Children under the age of 3 years communicate using facial expressions and gestures. In doing so, imitation and impersonation become increasingly important (Viernickel, 2009; Ahnert, 2015). Pretend games are often characterized by nonverbal communication between peers and support the development of early symbolic interactions. At around 30 months, children are able to play games together (Kobelt Neuhaus, 2010). Oftentimes, two equivalent roles are developed in everyday play or hierarchical roles in fantasy play (Fried, 2004).

In this context, the early childhood institutions play an important role. If children "get together among relatively stable groups, they create an independent culture with their own system, methods of negotiation and rules" (Viernickel, 2009, p. 67). Children are able to establish stable friendships once they are 12 months old. Research shows that maintaining friendships significantly contributes to the development of social skills (summarizing Pfiffner & Walter-Laager, 2017). It is the duty of early childhood educators to create a framework for social interaction among peers (Völkl, 2010) and to deal with conflicts so that children are able to continue playing together (Walter-Laager & Plautz, 2017).

WORKSHOP based on the videos**"3 Welcoming a Child and Experiencing a Relationship" and
"4 Fostering a Relationship by Putting on Lotion"****Target group** Early childhood educators**Duration** Approx. 45-60 minutes**Required material**

- Booklet „Visualizing Best Practices in the Education and Care of Children Aged 0 – 3 Years“
- Computer with video function, or TV
- Smartphone or video camera

Brief description Videotape your colleagues during the arrival of the children at the early childhood institutions, while they greet the children and the parents, and while they help the children transition into their daily routine.

To prepare for your team meeting, read about the theoretical background of "Experiencing Relationships" provided in this booklet.

Present your videos in a team of two or three. Make sure to give each other positive and appreciative feedback and tell your colleagues what aspects of their work you liked in particular.

Considering the literature mentioned above, gather insights and discuss them with your team.

TO CONCLUDE

Watch the videos "3 Welcoming a Child and Experiencing a Relationship" and "4 Fostering a Relationship by Putting on Lotion."

Early childhood educators verbalize their actions and the shared play experience with the children and offer the children as rich a vocabulary as possible (e.g., while completing chores or during playtime).

DESCRIPTION

Especially younger children have a more pronounced understanding of language and less distinct ability to speak. Early childhood educators support children in their activities by describing the children's actions. They engage in reciprocal communication with the children by noticing their nonverbal clues, by giving them time to express themselves nonverbally, and by responding to their expressions. They do not correct anything the children say. Instead, they repeat what was said in a grammatically correct way and complete sentences and statements. Furthermore, early childhood educators use their voices in different ways (e.g., volume, voice level, pace) and play with the language (e.g., rhymes).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

It is not necessary to teach a language to children aged 0-3 years. They are already capable of producing and analyzing language sequences. Embedded in social relationships and sensory experiences, they acquire language skills almost automatically (Largo, 2017). The process of learning a language is closely linked to sensory, motor, emotional and social development processes: children learn through experience. This is how they get to know their environment. They can also become acquainted with their environment through language. Their level of language skill depends on the quality of language they are exposed to (1616 Jampert & Jens, 2010; List, 2009). In particular, everyday occurrences (e.g., routine activities, bodily care, daily activities or playtime) are good opportunities to respond to children's communication on an individual level (Zumwald & Schönfelder, 2015).

Researchers distinguish between factual and interactional contexts (Gasteiger-Klicpera, 2010). The factual context deals with the pattern and structure of language regarding the situation resulting from direct action (Zumwald & Schönfelder, 2015). During the first years of life, facial expressions, gestures, voice and

melody of the person communicating with the child are of particular importance. These aspects, as well as body language and voice used by early childhood educators, are discussed within the interactional context. Based on that, early childhood educators show children respect and interest (Remsperger, 2011; Gasteiger-Klicpera, 2010). It is characteristic of the first years of life that passive understanding precedes active speech (Haug-Schnabel & Bensel, 2017). In early childhood institutions, vocabulary is expanded by "offering language" (different words, prepositions, articles, vocabulary in one or more languages, etc.), "acquiring language" (visualizing language using objects, clearly defining the characteristics of objects, facial expressions, gestures, etc.), and "strengthening language" (repeating words, connecting new words with known words, linking words to the environment of children, etc.) (Itel & Haid, 2015).

It is not sufficient to just let children tell stories or point at pictures and acknowledge their actions. Extensive language interactions offer the possibility of sustained shared thinking and, consequently, a mutual development of language and ideas. Thereby, early childhood educators verbalize the actions of the children, address any upcoming topics, make observations for children and provide opportunities for communication (Vogt & Zumwald, 2015). It is particularly important that early childhood educators and children are all fully present when they communicate with each other. Also, pauses should be included in the dialogue. First, such pauses offer children a chance to respond. Secondly, they allow early childhood educators to pay attention to children's signals (Gutknecht, 2015a).

In this context, some well-established strategies to enhance language are "self-talking" or "parallel talking" (Lütje-Klose, 2009). "Self-talking" refers to the verbalization of one's actions. By contrast, "parallel talking" refers the verbalization of children's feelings, needs or intentions (e.g., when looking at a book) (Gasteiger-Klicpera, 2010). Questions to enhance language skills include interrogatives such as "how" and "why" (Schönfelder, 2015). Finally, another strategy to stimulate communication is to repeat sentences in a grammatically correct way (Zumwald & Schönfelder, 2015).

WORKSHOP based on the video**"6 Stimulating Communication by Looking at a Book"**

Target group	Early childhood educators
Duration	Approx. 45-60 minutes
Required material	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Booklet "Visualizing Best Practices in the Education and Care of Children Aged 0 – 3 Years"▪ Computer with video function, or TV▪ Smartphone or video camera
Brief description	<p>The whole team gathers ideas and strategies for maintaining long conversations with children who do not yet communicate verbally or have limited verbal abilities.</p> <p>Next, watch the video "6 Stimulating Communication by Looking at a Book" and listen to the expert commentary.</p> <p>With your colleagues, discuss some strategies you are not yet familiar with and which you would like to test within the next two weeks.</p>

AFTER 2 WEEKS

Start the next team meeting by sharing how the children reacted to these new strategies.

Early childhood educators create situations in which children are able to experience with their senses. They assist them in experiencing these situations by offering guidance.

DESCRIPTION

Literally speaking, children want to grasp their environment. Ideally, they extend their knowledge about their environment by using their tactile, olfactory and gustatory senses. Therefore, children aged 0-3 years need countless opportunities to explore their environment. Early childhood educators allow children to examine their environment. They remain in the background (unless children involve them) and allow them to experiment with objects, even if they use them in an uncommon way. Therefore, one of the most important principles is that early childhood educators give children sufficient time.

Children should have all the time in the world when exploring their environment. Furthermore, it is important to prepare the environment. This allows children to gain various sensory experiences and perform various actions when dealing with different objects and situations. It is important to consider the structure of the outdoor as well as the indoor space.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Regardless of age, experiences are always associated with various perceptions and impressions. All experiences made in specific situations are meaningful and, consequently, relevant (Dietrich, Krinninger & Schubert, 2012). Children gather knowledge based on experiences by extensively using their senses in everyday life. They understand how things work, in what context they are used, what they are made of and what they are used for. In their minds, children create a sensory perception of reality. They use this perception for thinking before they are able to talk. These experiences go through transformations until children are able to grasp them symbolically and are able to think about them linguistically (Zimmer, 2011).

Schaefer says, "Those who deprive small children of gaining aesthetic experiences rob them of a basic understanding of their environment" (Schäfer, 2011, p. 145). The term "aesthetics" derives from Greek (aisthesis or aisthanomai); its original meaning is sensory perception, to perceive, to notice, but also to become aware and to become capable of judgment (Mollenhauer, 2004). Thus, aesthetics in this context does not refer to beauty, harmony or perfection, but rather to a multi-dimensional, possibly conflicting or contradictory, unfinished emotional, rational and sensory kind of perception and form (Bree, 2007).

Children perceive their environment, as well as themselves, individually and very differently (Viernickel, 2004). "The cognitive development of the child is based on an interplay of innate learning mechanisms and environmental stimuli, and depends on whether and to what extent the environment allows a child to pursue his urge to continually develop new learning stimuli and experiences" (Fried, 2008, p. 7). When looking at the variety of concepts regarding materials and interior design of early childhood institutions, it becomes apparent that developmental psychological insights have been implemented in the daily work of education professionals. In this context, the spatial experience and the use of materials are considered to be of great importance (Schneider & Wüstenberg, 2010).

SPECIFIC PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Early childhood educators do not prohibit sensory explorations, such as playing with porridge at lunch. Since the tactile sense is one of the preliminary stages of abstract and complex understanding of complex contexts, children are offered a variety of materials. These materials can include clay, sand and water, or materials used in everyday life, such as unused brushes, clothespins, kitchenware (e.g., whisks, strainers, different types of pots, etc.) or natural materials (e.g., corks, slices of logs, cones, etc.). It is particularly important for small children to be exposed to a great variety of sensory experiences, including different textures, different surfaces and different states of matter.

WORKSHOP based on the video "9 Sensory Experience: Washing Feet"

Target group Early childhood educators

Duration Approx. 45-60 minutes

Required material

- Booklet „Visualizing Best Practices in the Education and Care of Children Aged 0 -3 Years“
- Computer with video function, or TV

Brief description

First, read the corresponding text from the booklet.

Next, watch the video "Sensory Experience: Washing Feet." Make sure to turn off the sound and the expert commentary.

Now, several colleagues from the team state what they would say in said situation. What does the early childhood professional say? What do the two children say?

Two other colleagues take over the role of the experts and comment on the video.

TO CONCLUDE

With your team, watch the video "9 Sensory Experience: Washing Feet."
Turn on the expert commentary.

In cooperation with the children and the team, early childhood educators adhere to rules.

DESCRIPTION

First and foremost, rules are established to protect the children and to reduce the risk of injury. These rules do not limit the children in pursuing extensive motor activities, continuously exploring their environment, and joyfully experimenting. There should only be a few clear rules that must be adhered to at all times. These should be explained frequently and in a simple manner. Of particular importance is the regular demonstration of the use and handling of materials and tools, accompanied by verbal explanations. It is also important to introduce ritualizing strategies that offer children assurance in emotionally challenging situations. During conflict situations, it is crucial to talk to each other openly when contradictory demands or concerns arise. For example, rituals could be introduced for use during children's arrival at early childhood institutions in the morning or for any conflict situation that may occur during the course of the children's time in the early childhood institution.

Every now and then, rules need to be evaluated to see whether or not they support the work of early childhood educators (Fasseing Heim, 2017). For example, when working with very young children, it should be clarified whether rules like "Do not play with food" or "We do not eat with our fingers. Please use the spoon instead" are conducive to child development or if they limit sensory experiences.

When working with children aged 0-3 years, there should be as few rules as possible. For example, the rule "We pay attention to each other" can be applied in many different situations. In addition, children need sufficient time to practice established rules. If necessary, a rule should be communicated verbally. Finally, it is important to explain to the children why a particular rule exists.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The team determines rules together. These are unalterable. They affect standards of hygiene in early childhood institutions and guarantee the safety of the children (Debatin, 2016). At the same time, it should be ensured that these rules are transparent for new team members, interns or any external personnel. It is important that all children and adults adhere to these rules. If there is a rule violation, the entire team has to agree on consequences which, however, should not result in any devaluation of the person concerned (Höhme-Serke & Beyersdorff, 2011).

Rules regarding the use of space and materials, or conflicts arising during playtime, may be discussed with older children. In this case, it makes sense to work with symbols and images (e.g., red stop signs) (Debatin, 2016).

This is not possible with younger children, however. For these children, the adults are responsible for creating and fostering a regulated coexistence within the group. In this way, an environment of trust and safety can be built in which everyone can reach their full potential (Fassing Heim, 2017).

WORKSHOP based on the video "10 Eating Apples and Adhering to Rules"

Target group Early childhood educators

Duration Approx. 45-60 minutes

Required material

- Booklet „Visualizing Best Practices in the Education and Care of Children Aged 0 – 3 Years“
- Computer with video function, or TV
- Paper
- Tape
- Red and green stickers

Brief description

Write down as many existing rules as you can think of. Use one piece of paper per rule.

With your team, put the rules on a wall. Eliminate any rules that were written down more than once.

Hand out 3 red and 3 green stickers to each team member. Then, each team member places their stickers next to the rules by following these criteria: Put red stickers next to rules that should be scrapped. Put green stickers next to rules you consider important.

Discuss the results with your team. Let each team member comment on the outcome.

Read the corresponding text from the booklet.

Next, discuss five rules that received the most red and green stickers. Which of these rules should your team keep? Are there any rules that can be discarded?

TEAM RESULT

On a poster, write down the most important rules and put the poster on a wall where everyone can see it, including substitute teachers and interns.

During the entire time of their shift, early childhood educators are present emotionally and physically. Moreover, they value all children.

DESCRIPTION

Early childhood educators stay in close proximity to the children in their care, and signal through their body language that they are open to taking part in conversations or joining in a game. In their roles as early childhood educators, they are always authentic and pay a lot of attention to the children. They do not express any contradictory messages in their verbal and nonverbal communication.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

When working with children aged 0-6 years, relationships and their structures are the core of any educational work. In particular, pedagogically professional activities are of fundamental importance (Röhrig, 2015).

It is essential that early childhood educators maintain a positive attitude. In addition to their own attitude towards the education and care of the children, early childhood educators need to take into consideration pluralistic family structures and the needs of the families of the children they are working with. These considerations need to be discussed with the team (van Dieken, 2008). This means that everyday life at early childhood institutions should be structured in such a way that the early childhood educators would be open to enrolling their own children in these centers. Furthermore, the team needs to ensure that the structure established within the early childhood institution is supportive of all children.

For children to learn in early childhood institutions, they need to experience sensitive and positive interactions between early childhood educators and among their peers (Haug-Schnabel & Bensele, 2010). Consequently, early childhood educators have to be able to perceive, understand and interpret children's expressions. This is only possible if they are fully present and observant.

In combination with the relationship-supportive behavior described before, children perceive early childhood educators to be a secure base (also known as "secure havens"). This helps children balance their emotions and return to exploring the environment after having experienced stressful phases (Ahnert & Spangler, 2014). Children

are more likely to try something new if they know that early childhood educators support them by functioning as a secure base (Dietrich, 2013).

In young children, attachment is closely linked with exploring their environment. In this context, early childhood educators take an active role when children explore their environment. On the one hand, they offer children security. On the other hand, they minimize the retreat of children that is likely to occur when difficulties arise (Ahnert & Spangler 2014).

Considering this, it should be obvious that early childhood educators need to be present and appreciative of the children during the entirety of their time in the early childhood institution setting. Appreciation signifies affection in the sense of "loving and emotionally warm communication" (Ahnert, 2007, p. 33), as well as paying attention to the children's activities and showing interest in them. Early childhood educators show attention and interest through body language, facial expressions, active listening and by taking the children's concerns seriously and responding to them (Wadepohl, 2017). If early childhood educators are eagerly involved in activities themselves, children are then able to participate at any time. Also, early childhood educators should be willing and able to interrupt their own activities in order to pay attention to the children.

WORKSHOP based on the video
"11 Providing a Secure Basis"

Target group	Early childhood educators
Duration	Approx. 45-60 minutes
Required material	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Booklet "Visualizing Best Practices in the Education and Care of Children Aged 0 – 3 Years"▪ Computer with video function, or TV
Brief description	<p>Turn off the expert commentary and watch the video.</p> <p>Imagine a scenario in which a parent observes a colleague of yours and criticizes them for just sitting on the floor and apparently not doing anything.</p> <p>How would you explain to the parent what your colleague is doing by sitting on the floor in front of the stepladder?</p>

TO CONCLUDE

Turn on the expert commentary and, with your team, watch the video "11 Providing a Secure Basis."

Early childhood educators actively observe the children and, depending on the context, try to interpret the children's reactions and respond adequately.

DESCRIPTION

Early childhood educators interpret children's reactions while keeping the specific situation in mind. Also, they evaluate the children's interests and needs and react sensitively. They give children sufficient time to react in order to create a reciprocal interaction.

Any pedagogical action is based on the children's needs and interests as well as on well-reflected observations and records.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Based on an attentive attitude (see previous criterion), it is important for early childhood educators to reflect on their intuitive and pedagogical behavior and act accordingly. This means they need to have an in-depth knowledge of the age group of children with whom they are interacting. This forms the basis for the structure of the interaction processes and for reflection. Furthermore, early childhood educators working with children aged 0-3 years, especially with those who are not yet talking, must be able to interpret children's physical and emotional expressions. They also need to be able to figure out how to respond adequately. Ways of responding can be nonverbal communication (encouraging looks, physical contact, etc.) or verbal communication (calm and precise talking) (Gutknecht, 2015a).

During the first few months of life, the behavioral repertoire of infants is still quite limited. It is particularly difficult to respond adequately to social signals such as sounds, smiles, screaming or weeping because these signals can have many different meanings (Ahnert & Gappa, 2008). "To be attuned to these different meanings and to be responsive to

them is a great challenge for early childhood educators, requiring a lot of knowledge and skills" (Gutknecht, 2015a). Sensitive behavior manifests itself in the fact that the signals of the child are recognized as well as adequately interpreted and promptly and sensitively responded to (Gutknecht, 2015a). For example, children show the importance of a concern by referring to a particular object or need over and over again while seeking the attention of the early childhood educators, or by seeking eye contact or physical contact to find comfort when feeling doubtful. Facial expressions, gestures and postures can be used to detect how much children are interested in an activity (Remsperger, 2011). When children are interested in something, they show clear signs, such as being completely concentrated on one game or paying absolute attention to one activity. Important indicators of this are high levels of commitment and concentration (Remsperger, 2011).

SPECIFIC PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Early childhood educators interact with children nonverbally and verbally. They wait for the children's reactions and, once they have noticed the children's signals, they react to these as soon as possible. For example, if a baby signals through crying and retreating that it is tired, early childhood educators create a quiet environment for the baby in which the baby is able to relax. If a child seeks contact with its caregivers through gestures and facial expressions, early childhood educators actively react to these signals. They verbalize their actions by using complete sentences. Also, they adapt the level of language to the child's developmental level.

On the one hand, the implementation of this criterion requires the ability to interpret signals and, on the other hand, to adequately respond to the signals based on in-depth specialist knowledge. The latter often requires a flexible restructuring of the planned daily routine.

WORKSHOP based on the videos "14 Responding to Signs of Tiredness" and "15 Supporting Children in Sending Signals"

Target group Early childhood educators

Duration Approx. 45-60 minutes

Required material

- Booklet „Visualizing Best Practices in the Education and Care of Children Aged 0 – 3 Years“
- Computer with video function, or TV

Brief description Interpreting feelings

Each team member writes down an emotion on a card. Shuffle the cards. In teams of two, one person draws a card and instructs the other in detail what facial expressions to make.

Now the other team members should discern what kind of emotion the person is trying to show (e.g., sadness – “Please make a ‘sad mouth.’ Close your eyes and pretend you are crying.”)

Discuss with your team if there are any children in your group whose signals are very difficult to interpret.

TO CONCLUDE

Watch the videos together. Make sure to turn on the expert commentary.

Early childhood educators actively observe how children play and provide stimuli to enhance the play process.

DESCRIPTION

Early childhood educators provide stimuli while supporting the children's play or while participating in it. They observe the children's play and then act in coordination with the children's activities. They engage in the children's play whenever the children ask them to participate (e.g., a child wants to give them a toy or reaches out for them) or when the children repeat short games over a long period of time. Early childhood educators engage in the children's game, suggest new ideas, and support the children in coming up with their own ideas by making guesses or offering new materials. Alternatively, they provide stimuli by playing games by themselves and by inviting the children to participate if they show any interest.

Early childhood educators respect the way the children are playing and do not interrupt them. Also, they do not force the children to participate in any games. The selection of new stimuli (new materials, themes or activities) is based on their observations of the children and enables further development.

THEORETICAL INPUT

The perceptions and observations of early childhood educators (see previous criteria) form the basis for creating stimuli for children, especially in early childhood institutions. Since human perception is always selective and error-prone (Walter-Laager, Pfiffner, Bruns & Schwarz, 2014; Daum, 2010), it is important to interpret it carefully and to always see one's own stimulus as an action that needs to be tested. Therefore, early childhood educators are encouraged to further develop children's ideas creatively and enable children to focus on their specific interests by offering them additional materials. When children set goals for themselves, early childhood educators are encouraged to contribute new ideas so that children are able to successfully overcome new challenges and thus reach the next phase of development (Becker-Stoll, Niesel & Wertfein, 2015).

The structure of daily routines should be organized to stimulate children in their development and to improve their competences. Also, there should be enough time and opportunity to individually support each child. Providing stimuli should be done in such a way that children experience themselves as being capable and competent. To succeed, they need adults who trust them. This means that children need to be supported in their independence and autonomy, but they also need to be able to try out new experiences that they initially find challenging. In this context, early childhood educators consider themselves as supporters of development.

Interpretation of observations and developmental psychological know-how form the bases for deciding which spatial, social and material stimuli for children are adequate and available. In other words, early childhood educators are researchers: They ask themselves whether and how the interests of children vary and how they can adequately respond to them, either on a personal or on a material level (Viernickel & Völkl, 2013).

SPECIFIC PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Early childhood educators provide stimuli by asking specific and open questions, like "How does it feel when I touch your arm with a feather?" Alternatively, they create stimuli by verbalizing their own experiences. For example, they might say "This apple is crisp, juicy and sweet. Would you like to try a piece?" The children are free to answer the question or to react to this stimulus. Here, early childhood educators use their own ideas, thoughts and emotions and verbalize them (e.g., "I get the feeling that you do not want to try the apple").

WORKSHOP based on the video "17 Providing Stimuli Through Playing Material"

Target group	Early childhood educators
Duration	Approx. 45-60 minutes
Required material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Booklet „Visualizing Best Practices in the Education and Care of Children Aged 0 – 3 Years“ ▪ Computer with video function, or TV
Brief description	<p>First, the team watches the video and discusses the set of impulses of the early childhood educators: Which of the 10 elementary play actions (Bostelmann, 2013) become visible?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Hiding objects, covering up objects</i> 2. <i>Investigating how objects fall</i> 3. <i>Examining the sound of objects</i> 4. <i>Getting behind surfaces</i> 5. <i>Transporting objects</i> 6. <i>Connecting objects</i> 7. <i>Organizing objects</i> 8. <i>Changing the perspective</i> 9. <i>Enclosing areas, creating places</i> 10. <i>Experimenting with balance</i> <p>Then, the team determines what ideas they want to implement in their groups. Over the course of the next month, early childhood educators try them out using low-cost and non-valuable materials and objects.</p>

FOUR WEEKS LATER

Early childhood educators keep taking photos of the implementation of their ideas. They print the photos in a bigger size and display them, laminated, for the children. This way, children are able to review their experiences together with the early childhood educators or their parents and learn to talk about them.

Early childhood educators structure the daily routine in a variable way in order to adapt it to children's individual needs whenever it is necessary and possible to do so.

DESCRIPTION

Based on their observations of the children, early childhood educators interpret children's reactions and adapt the daily routine's structure to their respective needs. This requires good planning with methodical flexibility so that the children are able to eat and sleep whenever they need to and have space and time to use the bathroom when needed.

For this purpose, early childhood educators offer the children well-structured indoor and outdoor spaces where they are able to move around freely. This enables children to individually choose their games, pursue their own interests or fulfill their own needs. In particular, early childhood educators should ensure that shielded and cozy areas are part of children's early childhood institutions spaces.

THEORETICAL INPUT

For the healthy development of children, it is critical to address their basic needs individually. This is especially important when it comes to physical contact, food, sleep or downtime, and changing their diapers on time. In addition, children need the opportunity to move freely and in a variety of ways (Largo, 2017). At times, it requires creativity and pedagogical talent to implement all this in daily routines.

Regarding the basic needs of rest and sleep, the following applies: The younger the child, the shorter the duration of sleep it needs and the more frequently sleep periods need to occur. Even during the day, children do get tired and need to rest or even take a short nap. However, every child is different in this regard. During the first months of life, children turn into short sleepers or long sleepers. Pauen (2011) emphasizes that until the beginning of kindergarten (age 3 years), most children manage to sleep only once during the day (around lunchtime). Conversely, it can be concluded that it is perfectly normal for children aged 0-3 years to sleep more than once during the day. Regarding the structure of daily routines, this means that the need for sleep differs. That is, the optimal

time for the afternoon nap depends on the developmental level of each child and its inner rhythm (Kramer 2015, Pauen, 2011; Largo 2017).

The same applies to the diet: Babies and small children eat more frequently and eat smaller amounts than older children and adults. Nevertheless, infants and very small children have the ability to control their food intake themselves. This requires early childhood educators to recognize when a child is hungry or no longer hungry, and to respond to that adequately. It is important that early childhood educators pay attention to the child's ability to self-regulate. Children know when they are hungry and decide if they want eat, and, if they do eat, what exactly and how much (Bosche & von Atens-Kahlenberg, 2009).

Regarding the need for diaper changes, it is important to know that children who wear diapers and are, for example, absorbed in a game, do not always tell their caregivers that they need a new diaper (Pauen, 2011). However, to prevent skin irritation, caregivers need to change children's diapers regularly and based on their individual needs. Therefore, changing diapers at pre-determined times should be avoided.

In addition to having their basic needs met, very young children need adequate space and enough time to move around (van Dieken, 2015; Lübke & Vagedes, 2013).

The daily routine at early childhood institutions needs to be structured so that all the children's basic needs can be met. Thus, if staff size allows it, early childhood educators could organize two parallel structures of their daily routine (or other alternatives) in order to meet individual children's needs (Haug-Schnabel & Bense, 2006), or to address any of the children's interests. Furthermore, routines and rituals help young children to find a rhythm (Bostelmann & Engelbrecht, 2016). In order to adapt the daily routine individually and variably to children's needs, early childhood educators should have the basic ability to deal with the uncertain and unpredictable situations of everyday life, rather than acting in a standardized way.

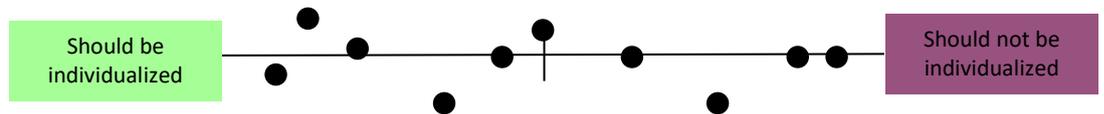
**WORKSHOP based on the video
'21 Considering Individual Needs During Daily Routines'**

Target group Early childhood educators

Duration Approx. 45-60 minutes

- Required material**
- Booklet „Visualizing Best Practices in the Education and Care of Children Aged 0 – 3 Years“
 - Computer with video function, or TV

Brief description Pro-and-con discussion as opinion line: Form a line, depending on whether you think the daily routine of the children attending your early childhood institution should be completely individualized or not.



The team leader selects several colleagues who can explain the reasons for their choice. When the discussion reaches a certain a group dynamic, everyone can freely participate. The goal is to convince as many people as possible from the other group to join their own group (i.e., to get the others to change their opinion).

Watch the video 'Considering Individual Needs During Daily Routines' with the expert commentary.

Discuss case studies from your own early childhood institution, focusing on individual needs and solutions for optimizing the organizational aspects.

PRIOR TO THE NEXT MEETING

All team members read the chapter of the booklet and try out new ideas to optimize the daily routine. At the next meeting, team members share their success stories about implementing changes.

Early childhood educators help children to regulate negative emotions by removing children from stressful situations, by providing closeness and opportunities to relieve stress.

DESCRIPTION

Early childhood educators help children to deal with negative emotions by helping them to withdraw from stressful situations, by offering them objects for suckling or cuddling, by providing physical contact and, at the same time, by verbalizing the children's feelings. They do not leave the children by themselves after conflicts and they support them in dealing with existing frustration or distress and, if necessary, help them find new activities.

By verbalizing their feelings, early childhood educators make it clear that they recognize and understand the children's feelings (e.g., "I can tell that you are very angry about it"). This is particularly important for children who are not yet expressing themselves linguistically. In this case, early childhood educators also provide adequate vocabulary, which children can themselves use at a later time. Early childhood educators observe the situation and the objective of an action as well as the feelings of the people involved in a differentiated way. However, they do not act in a judgmental manner. They describe these aspects and support the children in perceiving others' perspectives and distinguishing these from their own.

THEORETICAL INPUT

Regulating emotions is a strategy that steers the emotional state, through some kind of input, in a different direction (Kullik & Petermann, 2012). The regulation of one's own feelings and emotions is an important step in development. Children develop strategies for regulating emotions early on (Pfeffer, 2017). Strategies for regulating emotions are, for example: interactive regulation strategies (contact with caregivers or peers); controlling the attention (interest is diverted from the source of agitation or

switched to another stimulus); self-calming strategies (suckling, thumb-sucking, rocking, various rituals, etc.); withdrawal (crawling or running away); or manipulating the emotion-triggering situation (through playing) (Pfeffer, 2017).

Adults can support the regulation of emotions by applying tactile and kinesthetic calming strategies, such as lifting, rocking, hugging or touching the child, as well as by using verbal calming strategies or suggesting games (Kullik & Petermann, 2012). Children depend on adults to help co-regulate their emotions during the first years of life. During this phase, children have little control over their impulses and do not yet have the ability to regulate their emotions themselves (Gutknecht, 2015b). At the age of two, many children are starting to develop emotional self-regulation. As they get older, they acquire the ability to inhibit reaction and are able to transform situations to their own benefit (Kullik & Petermann, 2012).

Regulating emotions together may lead to an increased fine-tuning of the interaction between children and their caregivers. During the first years of life, this state of mind is called the "phenomenon of social reassurance." This occurs when young children orient themselves in unsafe situations by actively seeking eye contact with their caregivers and by imitating their behavior. The requirements for this are the recognition of their caregivers' facial expressions of emotions and the connection of an emotional expression to certain objects or events (Petermann & Wiedebusch, 2016).

The early ability to regulate emotion can be seen as an indication of resilience (Petermann & Wiedebusch, 2016). Additionally, studies show that infants with a highly developed positive emotionality are more likely to show more sociable and fearless behavior during their first years of life (Petermann & Wiedebusch, 2016). It is the task of early childhood educators to support children in regulating their emotions. This implies that children who are experiencing a difficult situation need to be comforted and supported. Their fears need to be taken seriously and early childhood educators need to be available to serve as safe bases (Remsperger, 2011).

**WORKSHOP based on the video
'23 Regulating Emotions During a Dispute About a Toy Car'**

Target group	Team of early childhood educators
Duration of exercise	Approx. 45-60 minutes
Required material	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Booklet „Visualizing Best Practices in the Education and Care of Children Aged 0 – 3 Years“▪ TV or computer with video function
Brief description	<p>Watch the video without turning on the expert commentary.</p> <p>Which strategies for regulating emotions are visible in the video? Make a list of them and explain to your colleagues how you spotted them.</p>

TO CONCLUDE

Watch the video "23 Regulating Emotions During a Dispute About a Toy Car" and turn on the expert commentary.

Early childhood educators view disputes among children as meaningful interactions and support them in a way that tension is defused for everyone payinvolved.

DESCRIPTION

In early childhood institutions, children have a lot of time to play together. Early childhood educators pay attention to interactions between children, especially when conflicts arise. In those situations, they suggest alternatives and support the children in regulating their emotions without devaluing anyone's feelings. They immediately stop any violence among children and communicate in coherent sentences how they would like them to behave. They always communicate with the children at eye level and do not give instructions from afar. Depending on the situation and the level of development, satisfying solutions are found together so that everyone can find their way back into a game or an activity.

It is necessary to be patient, to observe and to allow mistakes. Early childhood educators acknowledge their own emotions as well as those of the children, and are able to talk about the children's emotions.

THEORETICAL INPUT

Disputes and conflicts are essential to any coexistence. When it comes to daily routines at early childhood institutions, this coexistence does not mean avoiding conflicts. Rather, it means dealing with conflicts professionally. Children attending early childhood institutions are not yet fully able to solve conflicts with other children in a peaceful way. Typical arguments for this age group (0-3 years) are, for example, arguments about objects, toys or ideas for games (Schneider & Wüstenberg, 2014). Also, conflict situations may arise when children get in each other's way, do not share the same goal, and exclude each other from games. A third reason for conflict can be seen in physical and verbal aggression (e.g., if a child pushes away or bites another child) (Walter-Laager & Plautz, 2017). In conflict situations, very young children are quickly overwhelmed and stressed. Thus, they need the help of early childhood educators to regulate conflicts (Gutknecht, Kramer & Daldrop, 2017). The reason for children being overwhelmed is that they are not yet advanced enough in their

language development and social-emotional competence. There is also a link between these two development areas (Haug-Schnabel & Bensel, 2017; Gutknecht, 2015b).

Early childhood educators create transparency by talking about conflict situations and the different perspectives of all the children involved. Furthermore, children deepen their knowledge of vocabulary used to describe emotions (Gutknecht, Kramer & Daldrop, 2017).

Handling conflict situations responsively can be implemented in four steps. First, the dispute must be stopped. The early childhood educator creates distance between the children involved. It is important to speak to the children using short sentences (e.g., "No," "Stop," "Quit it"). Next, the early childhood educator turns to the children that were beaten, kicked or bitten. They are immediately treated "medically" and comforted. In this situation, it is particularly important that the early childhood educator pays attention to their own emotions and do not pass on any possible anger or aggression to the children. Then, the early childhood educator should turn to all the children involved, communicate her/his feelings verbally, describe the situation objectively and formulate goals. Lastly, the early childhood educator needs to decide whether the children should continue playing together or if new framework conditions are needed (e.g., providing a quiet and safe environment or other strategies for self-regulation, such as offering a pacifier or a stuffed animal/cuddle blanket) (Gutknecht, 2015).

In this context, it can be important at times to grant children break or a short time-out so they are able to stabilize themselves emotionally. This also means that early childhood educators still support children after the conflict is resolved. They help them transition into pursuing activities until they are focusing on an activity again. Only then is the task of the early childhood educators completed (Dietrich, 2013; Dittrich, Dörfler & Schneider 2001; Walter-Laager & Plautz, 2017).

WORKSHOP based on the video "25 Supervising a Dispute about a Stroller"

Target group	Early childhood educators
Duration	Approx. 45-60 minutes
Required material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Booklet „Visualizing Best Practices in the Education and Care of Children Aged 0 – 3 Years“ ▪ TV or computer with video function
Brief description	<p>Watch the video "25 Supervising a Dispute about a Stroller" without expert commentary.</p> <p>Part of your team closely observes the boy in the video.</p> <p>Part of your team closely observes the girl in the video.</p> <p>Part of your team closely observes the early childhood educator in the video.</p> <p>After having watched the video, describe your emotions. Describe the strategies that the early childhood educator uses to resolve the conflict.</p>

TO CONCLUDE

With your team, watch the video "25 Supervising a Dispute about a Stroller" and listen to the expert commentary.

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