FOCUS GROUP 3 SUMMARY

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| Theme | Kat | Janette | Tom | Allie |
| The learning environment; Work setting changes; restructure impact | Following relocation, an environment audit supported continuity in ToWe planned activities.  The new centre environment according to staff’s way of working. | Restructure in the crèche. Sharing information on the walls has supported parent’s to comment and highlight benefits, e.g. planning sheets | Staff structure change, reduced to 2 staff and working in a new centre. However wellbeing and activities engrained in practice. | The focus has been to support new staff and keep the team informed on ToWe progress. |
| Voice of parents and child impact on families | >Parents have enjoyed the ‘pedagogical aspects of the sessions’ at the new centre.  >The parent forum has provided parents a voice, with recognition of the importance of giving their children the choice to do things themselves. | It has promoted children’s independence as parents encourage them to make choices and do not rush them, e.g.: to tie their own shoelaces.  We have just collected information about the parents and the children’s voices which we have displayed. There is so much information that helps staff to go back to this data and question what the children and parents want us to improve. | Parents request ToWe activities to take home and  These are things that are child-led, because they saw their children play with the play-do and “Let’s do this at home”, | Parents are seeing the value of learning and making the connections between learning and a child’s wellbeing. |
| Influences on practice from international partners | Example from Norway given to illustrate influence on practice: a 2 year old was trying to climb into a swing. K was watching and leaving her to it. Watching, watching, watching what she could do, I thought “I do not think she is going to actually be able to achieve this. I will help, so she feels empowered” and then one of their practitioners said “No, wait! She can do it”, It took her another minute but she got in that swing on her own.  That was a real light bulb moment for me. And I brought that back and shared it with some of the parents as well, because they are probably in the situation like the one I was in. - you really need to give it time | Job shadowing was a valuable part of the learning experience. Different approaches were adopted following visit to Spain. Meal times | We wait a little bit more and encourage children, trying not to rush them. We have been treating the parents as our extra practitioners within the project, so trying to share the information with the parents and if they go forward too quickly we intervene.  We are recognising that a child wants to play and if they succeed it is a sense of achievement, rather than stepping in to “give them a hand” rather than having a go themselves. We are passing on this message to parents and to other practitioners. | >The mealtime and the environment audit have been useful reflective tools. >The project has been shared with the EY team at AFC and will support forward planning for the autumn conference.  > The message about children centres and stay and play sessions is working to support parents to learn with their children. It is about recognizing how children learn. |
| Reflective Practitioner | The importance of remembering the word reflection and how we can strengthen our practice. The job shadowing helped with this and was invaluable. | It has been a privilege learning and reflecting with the partners.  Working through the intellectual outputs we can go back and revisit using the materials.  Example: If we do the mealtime audit we can work with parents to talk about the fussy eaters supporting healthy eating. | The partners asked a lot of questions which helped us to reflect too and also praised our practice. For example: “This is fantastic, we are going to try to do this.  We give ourselves time in the week do some self-reflection. | It is valuable for practitioners to have time to reflect particularly at times of change, when everyone is busy. It is about the child and remembering how it feels to be a child in the setting, like Ofsted |
| Job shadowing – benefits and learning together | I went to Norway, they got it right: there was a good balance of observing and being in the classroom and then time to reflect as a group with some self-reflection time as well.  I reflect on a Thursday afternoon | I went to Barcelona. It is about respect for other practitioners during the job shadowing. We are all on this journey and we all have got different experiences, different training. Learning from each other and as practitioners we have to carefully proceed | The complete project has been valuable. T recognized that it has been a truly international experience learning from each other and the partners |  |
| Job shadowing toddler’s learning | In Norway they worked well as a team, very closely. We are a close team, but can be stretched across different buildings on a day to day basis.  I learnt about giving children more times to do things for themselves. | Peer relationships, child with child. I am more conscious now of trying to help children link up and also help the parents as well to support their children to make friends in the setting. ToWe has helped us to help parents, modelling the observing and not just us scaffolding the learning, but trying to encourage children to scaffold each other. | Learning about giving toddlers’ time, giving them respect and letting them try things themselves. It is one of the characteristics of effective learning, letting children have a go. T recognized that practitioners tend to focus on the learning outcomes and the ages and stages, now thinking more about how this benefits them emotionally and for their wellbeing |  |
| Critical incidents that impacted on future planning/experiences | Interactions are so important, because the children need you to connect with them.  One to one meaningful interactions with children can be modelled to parents. | ToWe has given practitioners the confidence about wellbeing, regardless of what the learning outcome is there must be wellbeing in there.  Recognition that staff really do get that wellbeing is key and that the ToWe strategies support this. | Introducing the project to a new member of staff, gives them an opportunity to learn. Staff can revisit and look at aspects of the project again, leading change around the outputs and materials discussed. | By videoing and observing the play between two children is a good tool that can be used for reflection and sharing with staff and parents. Play and learning can be analysed. |
| Future planning | Parents opinions are asked. It is great when parents say ‘We really love stay and play”. Parents are getting more involved with decision making. | Still sharing ToWe ideas and strategies with the parents, talking about wow moments, putting a visual table together, reflecting. | It is not about finishing the project and backing off. It is about wellbeing and providing this as part of the plans now and in the future. | It is not so much taking one intellectual output at a time, the plan is taking all the knowledge from the ToWe project and looking at the consistency of approach and practice.  The real is to get that embedded before working with other practitioners.  Plan is to make sure that all the centres embed ToWe in their work |
| Implications/final thoughts | It has given me the opportunity, through the shadowing write a piece for one of the biggest newspapers in Norway | ToWe has been amazing. The aim is to keep good practitioners in their role and empower them with that belief that they are doing a good job for the children and the parents | There has been great feedback from parents and children have gained more independence with the mealtimes and using cutlery.  Parents can be involved in the scenarios and we get their perspectives first hand. | It is about practitioners reflecting. In centres this is much harder than having a team manager in a day nursery.  It is about managing to come together often. ToWe can be used to support parent’s understanding and we all say that “Children learn best when they are happy”  It is another way to help parents understand how children learn and the ways they learn |

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**Short Summary**

The learning environment; Work setting changes; restructure impact:

* Environment developed and changed to support continuity of ToWe
  + Sharing of information to parents and staff
  + ToWe engrained into practice

Voice of parents and child impact on families:

* Display of the information about the parents and children’s voices
* Parental voice recognised
  + Listening to what they want improved
  + Request for ToWe to take home
  + Parents recognising the value of learning and connections between learning and wellbeing
* Children’s’ voice and choices important and recognised:
  + Promoting independence
  + Child-led

Influences on practice from international partners:

* Value of Job Shadowing as a learning experience
  + Examples of practice having an impact on the practitioners – standing back and enabling children to preserver and achieve
* Sharing information with parents about the ToWe project
  + Intervening with parents to encourage children’s independence
  + Recognising how children learn
* Meal time audit usefulness of reflective tools
* Sharing project to support Achieving for Children’s forward planning

Reflective Practitioner:

* Job Shadowing invaluable
  + Reflecting
  + Strengthening practice
* Partners asking questions supported reflection
* Time to reflect
  + Child at the centre
* Privilege to learn and reflect with partners
  + Intellectual outputs revisiting and using materials
  + Working with parents to support them (healthy eating)

Job shadowing – benefits and learning together:

* Good balance of observing practice and time to reflect
* Respect for other practitioners whose experiences are different
* Learning from each other
* **Complete project has been invaluable**
* Truly international experience learning from each other and partners

Job shadowing toddler’s learning:

* Norway’s team work
  + working very closely as a team
  + across different buildings
* giving children more time to achieve before intervening
  + giving them respect and letting them try
  + Linking to Early Years Foundation Stage Framework – Characteristics of Effective Learning
    - Practitioners often focused on learning outcomes and ages and stages
* Now thinking of benefits of children emotionally and their wellbeing

Critical incidents that impacted on future planning/experiences:

* Importance of interactions between you and the children
  + Meaningful 1-1 interactions
  + Modelling to parents
* ToWe project
  + Confidence about wellbeing regardless of learning outcomes
  + Recognition that staff understand wellbeing is key
  + ToWe strategies support understanding and staff do get this is key
  + New staff opportunities to learn about wellbeing
  + Revisit aspects again
  + Leading change around the IOs
  + Discussing materials
  + Videoing and observing play
    - Good tool for reflection and sharing with staff and parents
    - Play and learning analysed

Future planning:

* Parents opinions asked for:
  + Really love ‘Stay and Play’
  + Parents getting involved in decision making
* Sharing ToWe ideas and strategies
  + With parents
  + Talking about Wow moments
  + Visual timetable together
  + Reflecting
* Wellbeing part of plans now and in the future. (not just finishing the project)
  + Embedded into working with other practitioners
  + Planning that all centres embed ToWe in their work
  + Planning incorporates all the IOs and knowledge form the ToWe Project
    - Consistency of approach and practice

Implications/final thoughts:

* Opportunities through Job Shadowing
  + Article in Norwegian newspaper
* ToWe Project amazing
* Practitioners reflecting
  + Coming together
* Great feedback form parents
  + Children gaining more independence
  + Parents involved
* Keep good practitioners in their role
  + Empower them with that belief of doing and good job for parents and children
* ToWe used to support parental understanding
  + How children learn
  + Ways they learn