

ELC Centre Part of the Froebel Trust Funded Project 2021-2022

‘Implementing Slow
Pedagogy through
Marvellous Mealtimes
underpinned by
Froebelian Principled
Practice’.



Early Learning and Childcare Centre



‘Implementing Slow Pedagogy through Marvellous Mealtimes underpinned by Froebelian Principled Practice’.



Who's involved:

Donna Green: Falkirk Council Froebelian Pedagogue: Supportive role and overall Froebel funded Project Lead.

Alison Clark: Researcher: Advisory role, delivering workshops and a keynote speaker at the Falkirk Froebel Festival.

Gemma Paterson: Falkirk Council Lead Pedagogue: Marvellous Mealtimes- Advisory supportive role.

Project setting: Early Learning and Childcare Centre.

Tracey Sharples: Senior Early Years Officer and Senior lead on settings project.

Marvellous Meals was identified as an element that slow pedagogy could be applied to. This linked to our Improvement Plan with Marvellous Mealtimes being identified as a key priority within our ELC Centre Improvement Plan 2021-2022. This also supports our Visions, Values and Aims to engage learning through nurturing respect, uniqueness and a sense of belonging for children and families.

Our ELC Centre staff will examine the following questions in relation to Marvellous Mealtimes to support change ideas within this project which will come from the reflections of the questions and practice.

1. What is your understanding of the concept 'slow pedagogy'?
2. From your understanding, what would 'slow pedagogy' practice within Marvellous Mealtimes look like in our setting.
3. In what ways do children in our setting have the freedom to decide how, where and when to spend their time during mealtimes?
4. From observing and reflecting on your practice, underpinned by Froebelian principles, in what way does this connect to slow pedagogy?

Our ELC Centre's rationale for exploring a slow pedagogical approach within our Mealtimes...

Reflecting on children's mealtimes experiences it was acknowledged that they were rushed and children had very little independence, involvement, or choice within their mealtime experiences. Mealtimes was identified as an element that slow pedagogy could be explored to improve mealtime experiences for all our children.

Froebel advocates 'children need to be given choices, allowed to make mistake and offered sensitive help as and when it is needed with practitioners who support children to learn in their own individual way' (earlyeducation.org.uk 2022).



Mealtimes in Pre Summer 2021



Very limited food choice for children (sandwich or one hot option)

Mostly finger foods on menu limit children's experiences to use cutlery.

Mealtimes were very rushed, noisy and viewed by adults as very task based.

Children sat for snack and lunch with no adult present to role model, support and engage with them.



Children were served their lunch by staff or ELCA's.

No larder set up for children to have experience of baking or cooking meals to support inclusion for children during mealtimes.

Children ate lunch altogether indoors at an allocated time and sat for a set period of time.

Our ELC Centre's slow pedagogy journey took off with...

...an Inservice training day in August 2021 where the Glendevon team had the opportunity to watch a Slow Pedagogy webinar with speaker Alison Clark and read a linked book chapter. This supported us to build capacity and a common understanding within our team of what our vision of slow pedagogy may look like. Furthermore this gave us an opportunity to reflect on the connections a slow approach has with the ideas of Friedrich Froebel.



Froebel Trust Conference: Webinar 2021: Growing through play (06.03.2021)
Slow Knowledge and the Unhurried Child: Time for Slow Pedagogies in Early Childhood Education. Speaker:
Alison Clark (University of South East Norway)
<https://www.froebel.org.uk/training-and-resources/webinars-and-short-films>
Chapter 9 'Towards a listening ECEC system' pp.134-150 in *Transforming Early Childhood in England*, edited
by Claire Cameron and Peter Moss. <https://www.uclpress.co.uk/products/128464>

Our ELC Centre created a shared vision of slow pedagogy within our setting and community ...

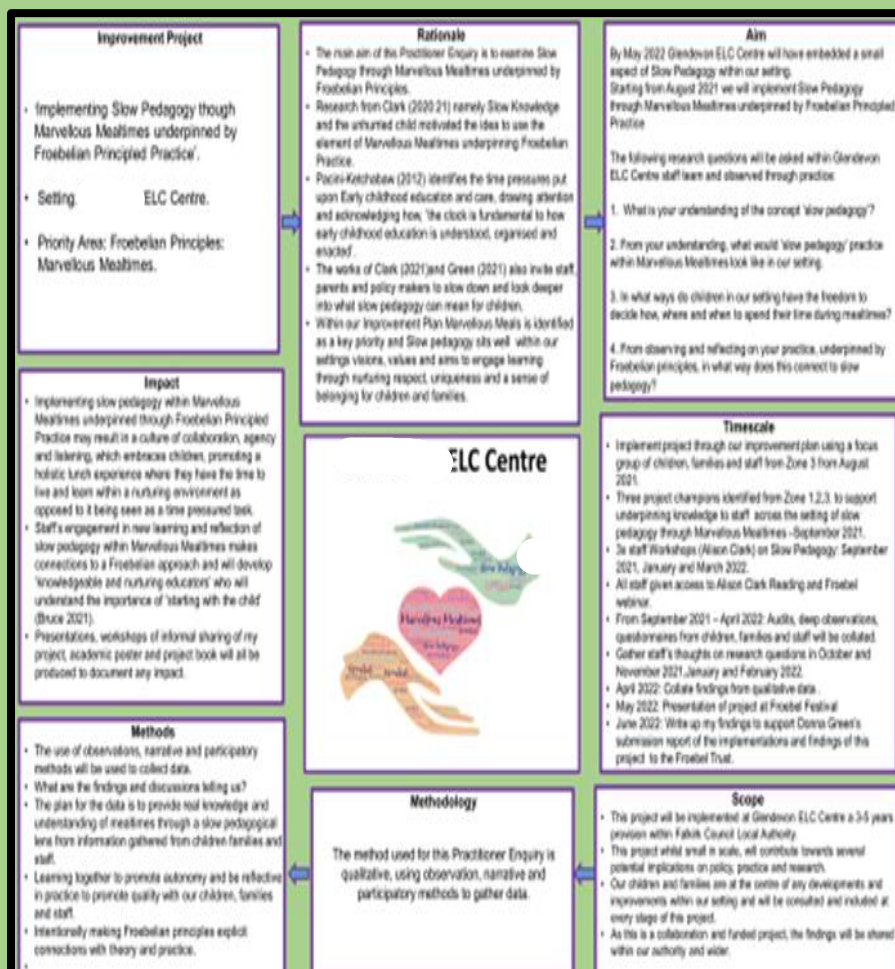
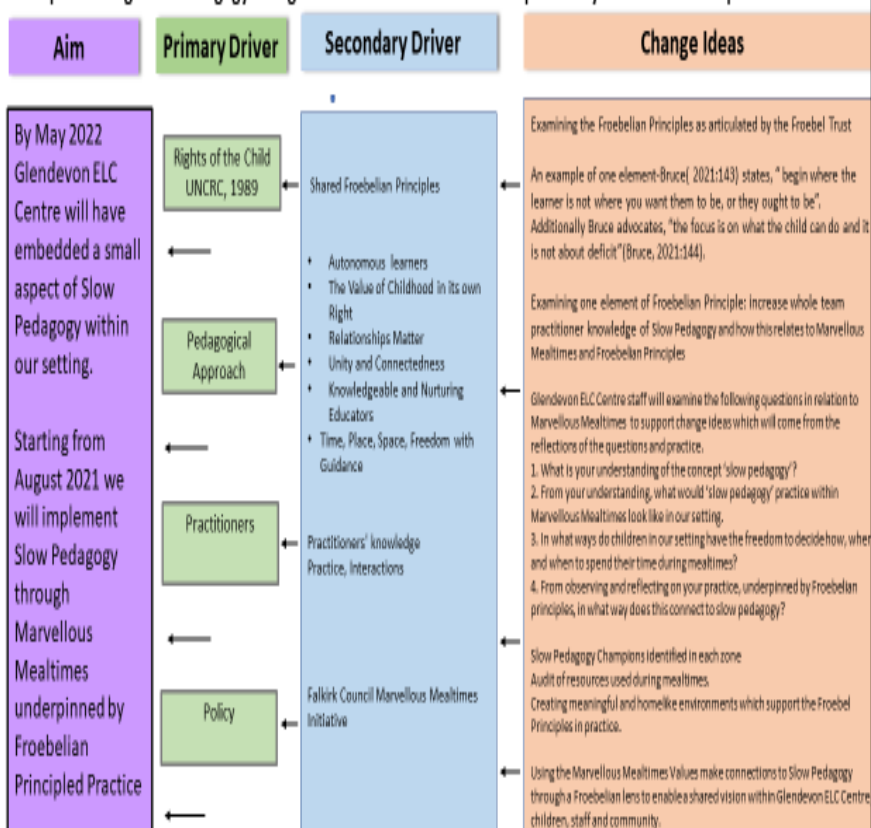
Our slow pedagogy vision

Our ELC Centre vision for children is to foster their learning and development in a holistic way. To shift away from fast Knowledge with quantitative results to one that is value driven and gives children time, place and space allowing them to make connections, reflect on their own thoughts and ideas and focus on the here and now. Thoughtful and attentive practitioners will support slow, deep and mindful learning experiences that move toward investigation, conversations and encouragement of children's autonomy. Emphasis is placed on children and communities collaboration that will support creativity, self knowledge and critical thinking.



To support the implementation of the project a driver diagram and rationale were created. They were displayed to clearly communicate the projects goals and provide a measurement framework for monitoring the progress of the project.

Implementing Slow Pedagogy through Marvellous Mealtimes underpinned by Froebelian Principled Practice



We reached out to our families to connect with them about mealtimes at home and nursery and used this to inform the next steps of our project.

You Told Us

The kitchen is a popular place for mealtimes at home, but more informal areas are also used such as the living room, eating outside and picnics.

Our children like to bake and cook at home.

Some children help at mealtimes by setting out mats, cutlery and plates/bowls.

At home...

56% of children use a mix of crockery and plastic.
33% of children use plastic, cups, plates and cutlery
11% of children use crockery and metal cutlery

At home parents felt...

45% of children ate meals independently
45% of children are mostly independent but require some help.
10% were not independent and required a lot of help

It is important for our children... To have a positive lunch experience where they can socialise with their friends and be happy. To be offered a variety of healthy foods and understand what healthy eating is. To be encouraged to try new foods

We don't have any information on our children's eating experiences or what is on the menu which makes it hard for us to talk about it with our children at home.

We Listened



At Glendevon ELC Centre we provide a nurturing and homelike environment where lunches are eaten at our round table indoors. We also offer opportunities for snack to be eaten outdoor when the weather permits.

We value and promote cooking and baking experiences for our children. The children and staff make playdough daily and aim to cook and bake at least twice a week.

During lunches we encourage children's social and independence skills. Children collect their own plate, cup and cutlery, serve their own food and pour their own drinks. Our children also help to wash through their dirty dishes.

At lunches and snacks children use crockery, cutlery, and glass tumblers. This develops life skills and builds on children's self-confidence. Our children learn to handle the fragile items carefully and enjoy the responsibility of using everyday dishes just like grownups.

Lunch is seen as a positive social experience within a relaxed and unhurried atmosphere. To develop independence in eating our children decide what they want to eat and how long they want to sit at the lunch table for. Staff role model table manners and through interactions promote positive relationships with food.

Our open lunch is 11.45am-1.15pm and children choose for themselves when they are ready to eat. Our cosily set out table and chairs offer children the opportunity to sit with their friends in a relaxed environment. A staff member joins children at lunch modelling positive table manners and through discussions with children encourage them to try new foods and develop positive eating habits.

An overview of the current weekly menu will be collated and displayed at each Zones entrances to allow families to see what is available to children at lunch. If families would like to know what their child has eaten for lunch, please let staff know and this will be noted and passed on when your child is picked up.

Reflecting on families feedback identified our parents wanted more information about Marvellous Mealtimes and what their children were having for lunch. To support this a mealtime leaflet and menus were produced and SWAY created and posted on Twitter.



Our Marvellous Mealtimes spaces ensure children feel **safe, nurtured and confident** while experiencing snack and mealtimes. We promote **homelike and cosy spaces** which encourages children's **choice and independence**. It is important to **take the time to support** and allow our children to make their own eating decisions, giving them control and ownership as this promotes **self regulation and confidence**.

We want our spaces to be familiar for children, so we may ask you to provide us with family photo's that we can display in and around our ELC, including our eating spaces.

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We have an open lunch running from 11.45am - 1.15pm as it is important for our children to have the **time to choose** when to come for lunch, who to have lunch with, and the opportunity to develop **relationships** with others and grow their own **social skills**. Familiar adults will also sit with children over lunch; **role modelling, talking and building relationships**.

We promote relaxed, unhurried and **calm interactions** over snack and mealtimes. This allows children **the space and time** they may need to **choose** their foods and eat at their **own pace**.

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Marvellous Mealtimes is Falkirk's approach to **relaxing and unhurried** snack and mealtimes for our children while they are in ELC. It is important for our children to have **ownership and choice** over what foods we provide for snacks and mealtimes. Children are encourage to be **involved in choosing** fruit and vegetables to buy for our nursery larder.

Cooking and baking are a huge part of the approach as children develop a variety of life skills such as: **Trying** new foods and textures. Developing **independence skills**. Making **choices** about what to eat and drink to keep healthy.

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<https://sway.office.com/jRDtaSaWfVYU0lo6?ref=email&lo c=play>



Monday
Vegetable sausage
Salmon fish fingers & potato cubes
or
Chicken filled finger roll
Fresh fruit & Yoghurt



Tuesday
Hot cheese panini
or
Ham sandwich
Cherry tomatoes
Melon wedge or bite size sweet tray bake



Wednesday
Vegetable nuggets & salad
or
Chicken or cheese sandwich
Melon wedge & mini muffin

**Glendevon ELC
Centre
Week 1**



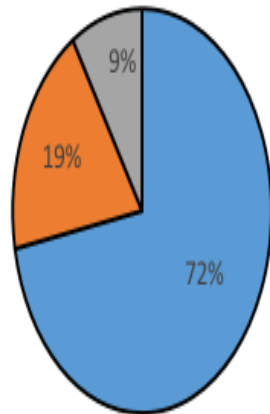
Thursday
Hot tomato pasta pot with garlic bread
or
Cheese sandwich
Fresh fruit & yoghurt

Friday
Beef burger or vegetable burger in a bun
or
Tuna roll
Fresh fruit with sweet tray bake option

A small amount of quantitative data was gathered from children about what types of tables they preferred to eat at with the round table being the most popular.



Shape preference of mealtime table
out of a focus group of 32 nursery
children



- Circular mealtime table with chairs
- Rectangles mealtime table with benches
- No preference

After a 6-week trial period of using circle tables with chairs and rectangle tables with benches a focus group of 32 children were asked which table shape they preferred for eating snack and lunch at:

72% of nursery focus children identified that they liked the circle table. Most children commented that they were happy because they could see all their friends at lunch and easily sit with their friends.

19% of children preferred the rectangle mealtime table as they preferred sitting at the benches.

9% of children did not show any preference for what table they ate at during mealtimes in nursery.

It was noted that the circular table had less spills from food and drinks as children were encouraged to pass food and jugs of milk and water to their friends which also nurtured their communication, connectedness and self-help and social skills. A noted improvement in behavioural problems was also noted. A comment recorded was "I can always see all of my friends and I like this".

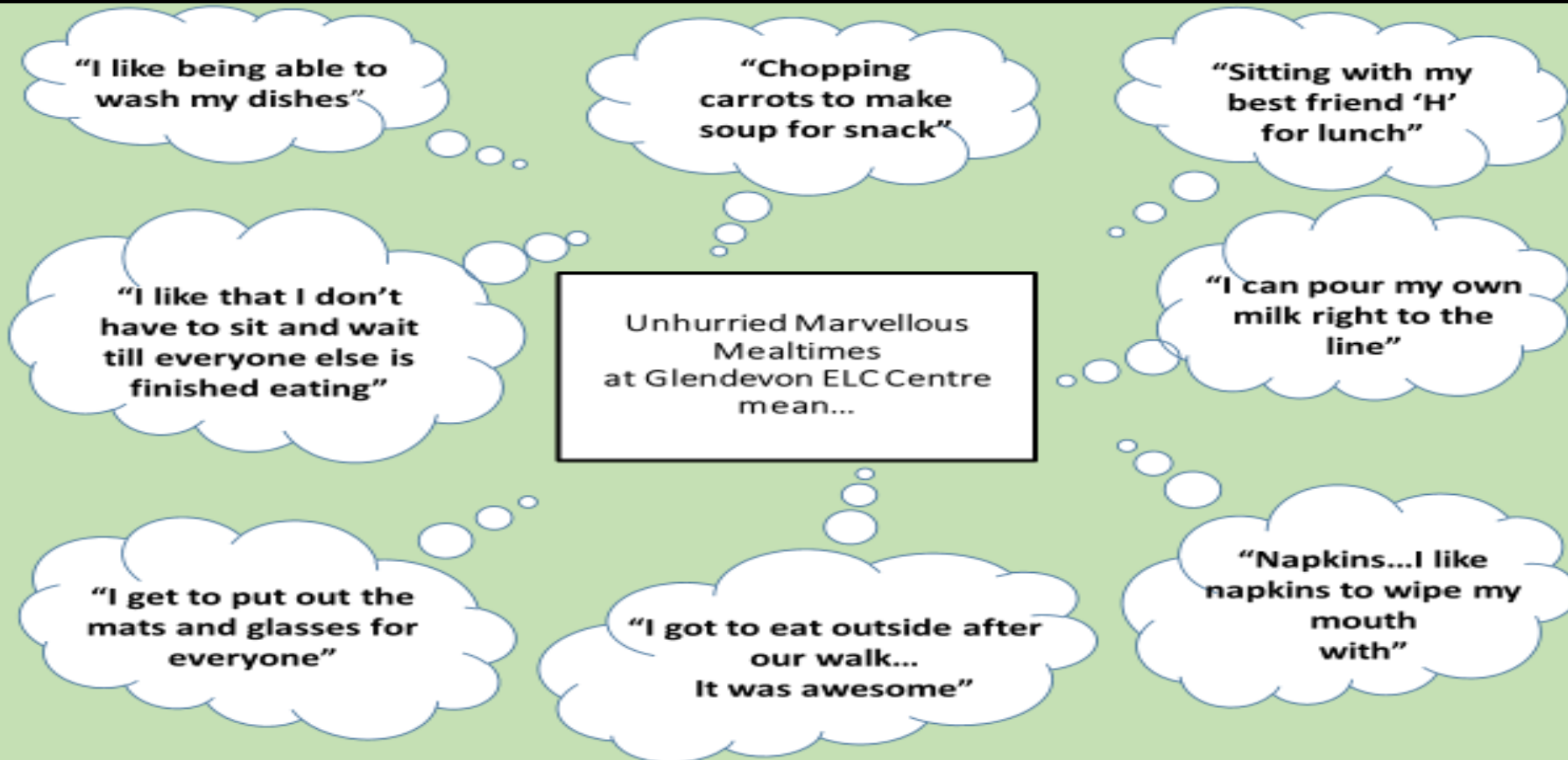
Children who enjoyed the rectangle table identified they liked the benches as they could sit close to friends and a comment recorded said "I like to swing my legs".

Some children showed no preference of their table choice and would sit at either circle or rectangle option for mealtimes.

"I like this table, I can
see all my friends and I
like that".



Reflective discussions with children around what was important to them at mealtimes was collated through the use of a mind map. The information gathered supported the idea that a slow pedagogy approach encourages children's autonomy and connects with Froebelian principles.



"Children learn best by doing things for themselves and from becoming more aware of their own learning. Froebelian educators respect children for who they are and value them for their efforts. Helping children to reflect is a key feature of a Froebelian education".(Froebel Trust, date unknown)

To document our project's progress a working wall was created within the entrance to the nursery. This was important to ensure project visibility throughout our ELC Centre journey, giving everyone a clear perspective of what we were trying to achieve.

Glendevon ELC Centre

Our children are curious, creative learners who learn best through experiences, play, talk and self-reflection.



As much as we create, children also create. They learn by doing. They learn by playing. They learn by talking. They learn by reflecting. Our children are learning to be curious, creative learners who learn best through experiences, play, talk and self-reflection.

Slow Pedagogy

Slow is a positive social experience within a relaxed and unhurried atmosphere. To develop independence in eating we ensure that what they want to eat and how long they want to sit at the table is their choice. Staff role model table manners and through observation promote positive relationships with food.



Glendevon ELC Centre

At Glendevon ELC Centre we children experience a range of experiences that are designed to support their learning and development. We have a range of experiences that are designed to support their learning and development. We have a range of experiences that are designed to support their learning and development.



Our children thrive when they are emotionally secure and in close relationships with others, including family and our wider community.



During lunch we encourage children's social and independence skills. Children learn to sit at the table and are encouraged to put their food on the plate and wash through their dirty dishes until they have to go.

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Practitioners reflections from Alison Clark's workshop Slow Pedagogy and the Unhurried Child in March 2022...

An insightful training where I took the time to re-evaluate how rushed our mealtimes were and look at ways to slow it down. So for me slow means taking the time to get to know children better and the opportunity to discuss with them foods, where they come from and how things grow. Hopefully in our new building we can really focus on growing our own foods. Children should have the opportunity to revisit the same environment often but in more depth and look at things from different angles. Freedom for children to engage and absorb knowledge at their own speed of learning. Listening to children is key!

The workshop was very interesting and highlighted the need for children to take learning at their own pace with thoughtful practitioners who will facilitate this. A big impact for me was seeing mealtimes as valuable learning opportunities and how we can have a big impact on instilling in children positive relationships with foods.

I'm so excited to be a part of this project and see where slow pedagogy within Marvellous Mealtimes takes our children, staff and setting. My thoughts from the work shop have made me think about slowing down things and taking pleasure in our mealtimes. I can see how important it is for it to be an enjoyable, social and relaxed experience for all children and staff.



As we explored slow pedagogy within our Marvellous Mealtimes we began to make connections with Froebelian principles.

The rich interactions and observations gathered from children during mealtimes were reflected upon and 'Living Stories' created and share with our children and parents.



Froebelian principles

Unity and connectedness

Everything in the universe is connected. The more one is aware of this unity, the deeper the understanding of oneself, others, nature and the wider world. Children are whole beings whose thoughts, feelings and actions are interrelated. Young children learn in a holistic way and learning should never be compartmentalised for everything links.



Autonomous learners

Each child is unique and what children can do rather than what they cannot, is the starting point for a child's learning. Children learn best by doing things for themselves and from becoming more aware of their own learning. Froebelian educators respect children for who they are and value them for their efforts. Helping children to reflect is a key feature of a Froebelian education.

The value of childhood in its own right

Childhood is not merely a preparation for the next stage in learning. Learning begins at birth and continues throughout life.

Relationships matter

The relationships of every child with themselves, their parents, carers, family and wider community are valued. Relationships are of central importance in a child's life.

froebel.org.uk

Creativity and the power of symbols

Creativity is about children representing their own ideas in their own way, supported by a nurturing environment and people. As children begin to use and make symbols they express their inner thoughts and ideas and make meaning. Over time, literal reflections of everyday life, community and culture become more abstract and nuanced.

The central importance of play

Play is part of being human and helps children to relate their inner worlds of feelings, ideas and lived experiences taking them to new levels of thinking, feeling, imagining and creating and is a resource for the future. Children have ownership of their play. Froebelian education values the contribution of adults offering 'freedom with guidance' to enrich play as a learning context.

Engaging with nature

Experience and understanding of nature and our place in it, is an essential aspect of Froebelian practice. Through real life experiences, children learn about the interrelationship of all living things. This helps them to think about the bigger questions of the environment, sustainability and climate change.

Knowledgeable, nurturing educators

Early childhood educators who engage in their own learning and believe in principled and reflective practice are a key aspect of a Froebelian approach. Froebelian educators facilitate and guide, rather than instruct. They provide rich real life experiences and observe children carefully, supporting and extending their interests through 'freedom with guidance'.



Unity and Connectedness



E and J set setting the table for lunch. These routines encourage children's autonomy and help them to create a relationship with their social environment.



‘Learning, Froebel argued, should be connected to children’s own lives and experienced as a meaningful whole so that children can connect new ideas to what they already know. Start where the child is’. (Helen Tovey 2017)



Autonomous Learners



‘The importance of direct experience and the way it makes possible the development of real learning cannot be over-emphasized’ (Bruce 2004: 126)





“I love breakfast at my nursery, pouring my own water and I get to sit with my friend”
(R)



“Snack and mealtimes provide clear structure and rhythm to the day”.
Realising the Ambition:
Being Me (2020)



Creativity and the power of symbols



A visual menu has been created for children to identify and recognise what is for lunch.

‘A new world of ideas and objects opens before him. For one begins to understand that which one strives to represent’. (Froebel iLilley 1967:87)



Children choose what fruit and veg they want to buy in for our larder thought the use of visuals, supporting their autonomy.



The Central Importance of Play



J-“I’m making a raspberry they have lots of little circles on them”



T made soup for his friends, “ I’ve turned the cooker on to number five so watch its hot”



“Play helps children to relate their inner worlds of feelings, ideas and lived experiences taking them to new levels of thinking, feeling, imagining and creating”.
(Froebel Trust, date unknown)



“Engaging with Nature”



The child who has cared for another living thing.... is more easily led to care for [their] own life' (Froebel in Lilley 1967: 128)

E-“That’s my Granny’s plants, I wanted to grow carrots and green beans”.



Knowledgeable and nurturing educators



Staff have taken forward a slow pedagogy approach through in-service training and looked at ways to develop a slow approach to Marvellous Mealtimes. At mealtimes staff sit calmly and have lunch with children engaging them in conversation, role modelling and supporting healthy eating habits for children.

‘Many aspects of Froebelian theory can be closely linked with the practice of cooking, giving it an important role to play in supporting learning and teaching’
(McCormick 2012: 153)



“We made soup, I used a knife to chop the carrots, leeks and potatoes. We put it in a big pot and cooked it for a long time. I did try it but I’m not very sure I liked it.” (T)

“To learn a thing in life and through doing is much more developing, cultivating and strengthening than to learn it merely through the verbal communication of ideas”. (Friedrich Froebel 1885.2)



“Mmmm this onion smells spicy” (H)

“Being Slow means that you control the rhythms of your own life. You decide how fast you have to go in any given context. If today I want to go fast, I go fast; if tomorrow I want to go slow, I go slow. What we are fighting for is the right to determine our own tempos”.

Petrini, C (2001)



‘Learning, Froebel argued, should be connected to children’s own lives and experienced as a meaningful whole so that children can connect new ideas to what they already know. Start where the child is’ (Helen Tovey 2017).

A- “ I love washing my dishes I don’t get to do this at home”.



Our children put their waste food in the bin, wash their dishes and put them on the drying rack.



As our project progress we reflected on question 2 and below is the key findings identified from this data...

There is a choice of food available that supports inclusion with children having the opportunity to put together their own shopping list and plan their own menu's. All children are involved, having voice and are listened to during mealtimes through the use of visuals and Makaton.

Empowering children to have responsibility to set the table and make certain their voices are heard, listened to and acted upon to ensure mealtimes are meaningful to them.

It is important too really see the individuality and uniqueness of all or children and ensure this is reflected I our mealtimes routines. Seeing each child and letting them develop at their own pace whilst paying attention to their needs and ensuring equity.

Its important to develop positive attitudes to foods and mealtimes are important times to do this through meaningful conversations, effective role modelling and engagement at mealtimes.

From your understanding, what would 'slow pedagogy' practice within Marvellous Mealtimes look like at our ELC Centre?

An environment that gives children time and space to relax within unhurried mealtimes and allows for meaningful conversations to happen between children and staff.

Mealtimes are warm, nurturing and calm where the ambience of soft music playing in the background allows children to feel safe and nurtured supporting their wellbeing to flourish.

Listening to children and giving them ownership of what they want to bake or make encouraging children to try new things to eat.

Children's autonomy is encouraged through being able to choose when to come for mealtimes, how long they stay and with whom they sit next to. They have real ownership over what they want to eat.

Question 3 was also sent out to staff and the data recorded below...

Within our open lunches children have the choice and freedom when to come for lunch and control over what they want to eat and control to decide where they want to sit and leave.

Children's voices are heard as they decide what they choose to eat and personal power is encouraged as they decide what to make to supplement the nursery menu.

In what ways do children in our setting have the freedom to decide how, where and when to spend their time during mealtimes?

Children are free to make decisions over the time they spend at mealtimes and to engage in meaningful conversation with staff and their friends.

Reflections on question 4...

Connections to children's participation rights and autonomy within a slow pedagogy and Froebelian principled practice can clearly be seen.

All children learn in different ways and at different times. Acknowledging this through a slow pedagogy allows us to provide a rich environment for all our children to thrive in.

Slow pedagogy directly impacts on children's play through a focus on time, place and space where children can connect with their world around them and in a way that is relevant to them.

Slow pedagogy and Froebelian principles advocate for our children to experience their environment and learning at their own pace with sensitive scaffolding from others when required.

From observing and reflecting on your Froebelian principled practice, in what way does this connect to slow pedagogy?

The relationship between practitioners, children and their peers is of extreme importance, giving them voice and choice and the feeling of being truly valued for who they are.

Within both practices we acknowledge and value cooking and mealtimes as worthy experiences where children can gain rich learning and develop self regulation and life skills.

Slow pedagogy advocates 'stretch time' making possible the opportunity to nurture and encourage children's creativity, allowing them to make connections with their inner world and the outer world of their ideas and experiences.

Throughout this project there has been many opportunities to gather deep, meaningful observations that have highlighted the effectiveness of being slow. I wanted to share two 'lived stories' where slow pedagogy has positively impacted on children's mealtime experiences.

What does Marvellous Mealtimes mean to me?

Dear H,

It has been truly wonderful to see you blossom and grow at nursery this year. I remembered when you first arrived full of energy and fun. Mealtimes were at times challenging for you but now I see a **calm boy** who is **independent** at coming to mealtimes, **choosing where to sit** and is always **ready to help his friends** whether that be passing them some sandwiches or helping to tidy up.

Through **our time spent together** we have developed a **strong relationship** and you have grown into a **independent boy**. I know your favourite thing is to help set up lunch and you are always there ready with clean hands, your apron on and your infectious smile. You are able to **confidently choose** what you want to eat and are so **good at using the tongs** to do so. When you are finished you carefully collect your dishes and follow the washing routines. You even kindly remind your friends to do the same.

Your **love of cooking and baking is evident** and you are always the first there to make playdough, soup or **choose** what baking we will do for that day. I see such **focus** where you **lead the experience and show others what to do**.

I think my favourite moment will always be the joy I heard in your voice as you **independently** poured your milk without spilling it and shouted to me "look I did it, just to the line and no more". It has been a privilege to have been part of your Marvellous Mealtime Journey and I look forward to watching you develop and shine on your return to nursery.

Love Tracey x



Autonomous learner: H chooses where to sit and is an independent boy at mealtimes. He has the capability to effectively using the tongs to self-select what he wants to eat and choose what to drink. Harris has the choice and right to cook and bake within our setting.

The value of childhood in its own right : Together we celebrate and give recognition of what Harris can do now as he makes his own independent choices at mealtimes and valuing his opinion in matters that are important to him.

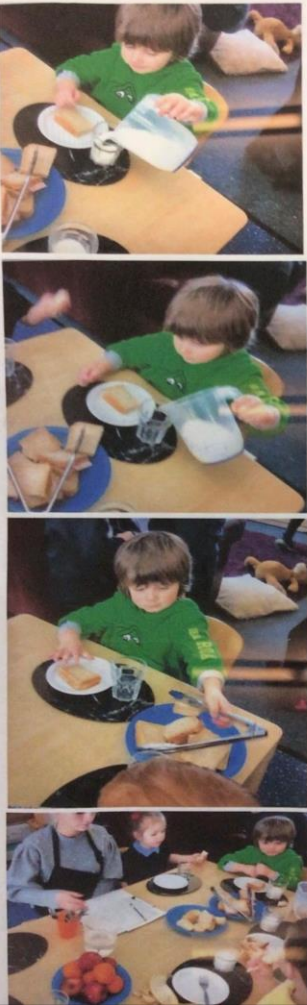
Relationships matter: H is always ready to help his friends at mealtimes. Taking time to interact with H has built a trusting and strong relationship with a significant adult and enabled me to attune to the things H loves to do such as setting the table

Knowledgeable, nurturing educators: Identifying H's favourite moments through listening, engaging and building trusting relationships where he is valued in his own right. The little steps H has made along the process of mealtimes is acknowledge, valued and respecting for where he is now and what he has achieved.

Links to slow pedagogy: Meaningful time spent together, engaging with children's individual rhythms with a focus on the 'present' child rather than the future child.

Enablement of children's capacity and potential recognised where they are given space and time to think and make sense of their world and experiences within it.

Reflections on children's 'Lived Stories' continued...



What does marvellous mealtimes mean to me?

Dear C

I've enjoyed watching you grow in confidence each day.

I remember when you first started at nursery and you would come and sit at the table at meal times but didn't want to eat anything. Through you getting to know the ladies and your friends better and as the weeks have gone by you are now often one of the first people to sit down at meal times.

After some support you have now mastered the art of using the tongs on your own which was a bit tricky at first and I remember how pleased you were when you managed it for the first time on your own "yeah, I can do it". You can now pour your own drinks without any help and if one of your friends needs anything passed to them you're always willing to do so. You're able to follow the routines at meal times and always clear away your dishes when you are finished.

It's great to see you trying new foods and I can recall you telling me "I like it" when you tried the tomato pasta for the first time. Mum and Dad couldn't believe it when I told them and they were so happy to hear how you were getting on at meal times.

I'm so proud when I watch you engage with your friends at meal times and making independent choices, you've come such a long way in a short space of time and I'm looking forward to watching you develop further throughout your nursery journey.

Love Mairi

Autonomous Learners

C is independent and able to pour his own drinks. He can effectively pick up his sandwiches with his tongs and decides by himself what and how much he is going to eat.

Knowledgeably and nurturing educators

Through modelling good eating habits and taking the time to encourage C to try new foods he enjoyed his tomato pasta and shared his good news with his family.

Relationships Matter

C is always willing to help his friends by passing food plates and drink jugs. Taking time to sit with C at mealtimes has built a trusting relationship and he now feels comfortable to independently come for lunch and snacks.

Audit of Mealtimes Resources



Some food tongs were available but not enough to ensure all serving dishes had them. It was observed that some of the tongs were easy for children to use but others were stiff and caused difficulty for children's small hands to use effectively.



There is a mix of cutlery available for children to use. This includes a variety of sizes of metal forks, knives and a few teaspoons. There was also plastic spoons. It was observed that children did not have consistent utensils to use and as the teaspoons were small children displayed difficulty in effectively eating some foods with them.



A variety of jugs in different sizes and material were available for the children's milk and water. Observation identified that the weight of the glass jugs and the large size of jugs impacted on children's ability to independently pour their on drinks.

A variety of small dinner plates, bowls and glass tumblers were available for children to self select from at mealtimes.

To support a slow pedagogy it is important to ensure the mealtime resources enable and encourage children's independence and autonomy:



The importance of the right resources for eating, drinking and preparing foods is important and can have a massive impact on the way children develop their self-feeding skills and encourages their autonomy.

We need to ensure we provide utensils that have an ideal weight, thickness and texture of handles to ensure they were appropriate for children to easily use and handle effectively.

Bowls and plates should have a small raised edge for children to be able to scoop their food against and give them more control.

Adding place mats helps to prevented the plate or bowl from sliding around as children eat and ownership of mealtimes as they set them out for friends.

Small glass jugs were added which were light and easy for children to independently pour their own drinks.

Reflecting on our slow journey so far and where it can take us.....



Things we do well:

Our open lunches encourages children's autonomy where they are supported to self serve their choice of foods and pour their own drinks. Children's confidence and self help skills have grown as they help to set the table with placemats, cutlery and a glass.

We are mindful of seeing what a child can do and starting from there. We have different lunch sittings so children are not rushed to come for lunch and are able to choose who they sit with and for how long. Staff reflect that mealtimes are now calmer and more meaningful.

Children are involved in baking and cooking experiences a few times during the week. Staff sit and have lunch with the children, role modelling manners and engage in meaningful conversation to develop positive eating habits for our children.

Lunch menu displayed at entrances and put onto twitter weekly to keep parents informed of what children are having for lunches.

Future possibilities:

More ownership for children when putting together the shopping list for larder items and cooking /baking experiences. Look to identify gaps in our current menu where the larder produce could support a more enjoyable mealtimes that all children could enjoy.

To support sustainability look to grow our own fruit and vegetables, cascading slow pedagogy to the outdoors.

Make connections with children's home environments through adding photos of mealtimes from their own homes.

Create a food policy that involves children and enable staff, children and parents/carers to understand their commitment to ensuring our mealtimes are truly Marvellous.

To extend our larder money look to community initiatives: Local food banks that may donate out of date foods such as flour, corn flour etc for playdough. Contact local supermarkets with regards to food parcels.

Where we
were...



Where we are
now...



Exploring a slow pedagogy where the focus is on time, pace and rhythm has created many rich mealtime observations and conversations with children. Together we used this information to create our 'What Matters to me' food policy.

Glendevon ELC Centre
What Matters to Me?
Food Policy

I have the freedom to choose how long I sit at the table for mealtimes and don't have to sit and wait till everyone else is finished eating

I have the freedom to choose how long I sit at the table for mealtimes and don't have to sit and wait till everyone else is finished eating

I enjoy using the tongs to get my own sandwiches.

I like to have napkins...I like napkins to wipe my mouth with.

I am able to take part in our daily mealtimes routines of putting out placemats, cutlery and glasses for my friends and me.

Article 12:
All children have the right to give their opinion and, and for adults to listen and take it seriously

It is important that I am given time to try new foods.

I can always have something to eat when I am hungry.

I can pour my own milk or water can pour my own milk or water into my glass.



"Snack and mealtimes provide clear structure and rhythm to the day".
Realising the Ambition:
Being Me (2020)



Policy and documents influences...

Froebelian Principles

Realising the Ambition: Being Me

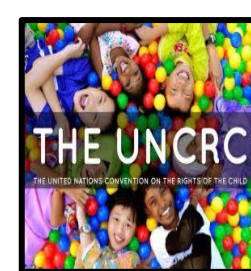
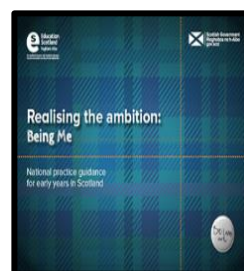
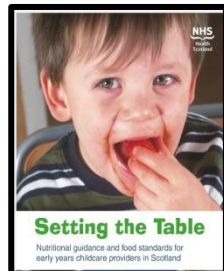
The United Nations Convention the Rights of The Child (1989)

Getting it right for every Child (GIRFEC)

Marvellous Mealtimes initiative

Health and Social Care Standards

Setting the Table



On our journey we reflected and identified some barriers to implementing a Slow pedagogy underpinned by Froebelian Principles within our ELC Centre



Implementing a slow pedagogy requires a clear and shared vision for our nursery from all staff, children and families.

Staffing levels and space can implicate on Slow pedagogy within mealtimes.

Limited resources/ equipment and tools will impact on effectively on implementing a slow pedagogy within Marvellous Mealtimes.

Bringing staff on board with a new initiative.

Reflections Past, Present...What does slow pedagogy mean for our ELC Centre?



- Rethinking Clock time...?
- Increase and transfer of Knowledge for staff.
- 'Stretched' time as opposed to 'filling' time.
- Living and using Froebelian Principles in Practice.

'Implementing Slow Pedagogy through Marvellous Mealtimes underpinned by Froebelian Principled Practice'.

Moving forward...Where does slow pedagogy take our ELC Centre next?



- Sustainability within our new nursery building.
- Continue our collective evolving learning of slow pedagogy...revisit?
- Looking outwards, where can the concept of slow go next?
- Developing further our Froebelian Principled Practice.

‘Implementing Slow Pedagogy through Marvellous Mealtimes underpinned by Froebelian Principled Practice’.

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