

Early Learning & Childcare Centre



Implementing Slow
Pedagogy in Marvellous
Mealtimes
through Froebelian
Principled Practice in
Under Three's.



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.

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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.

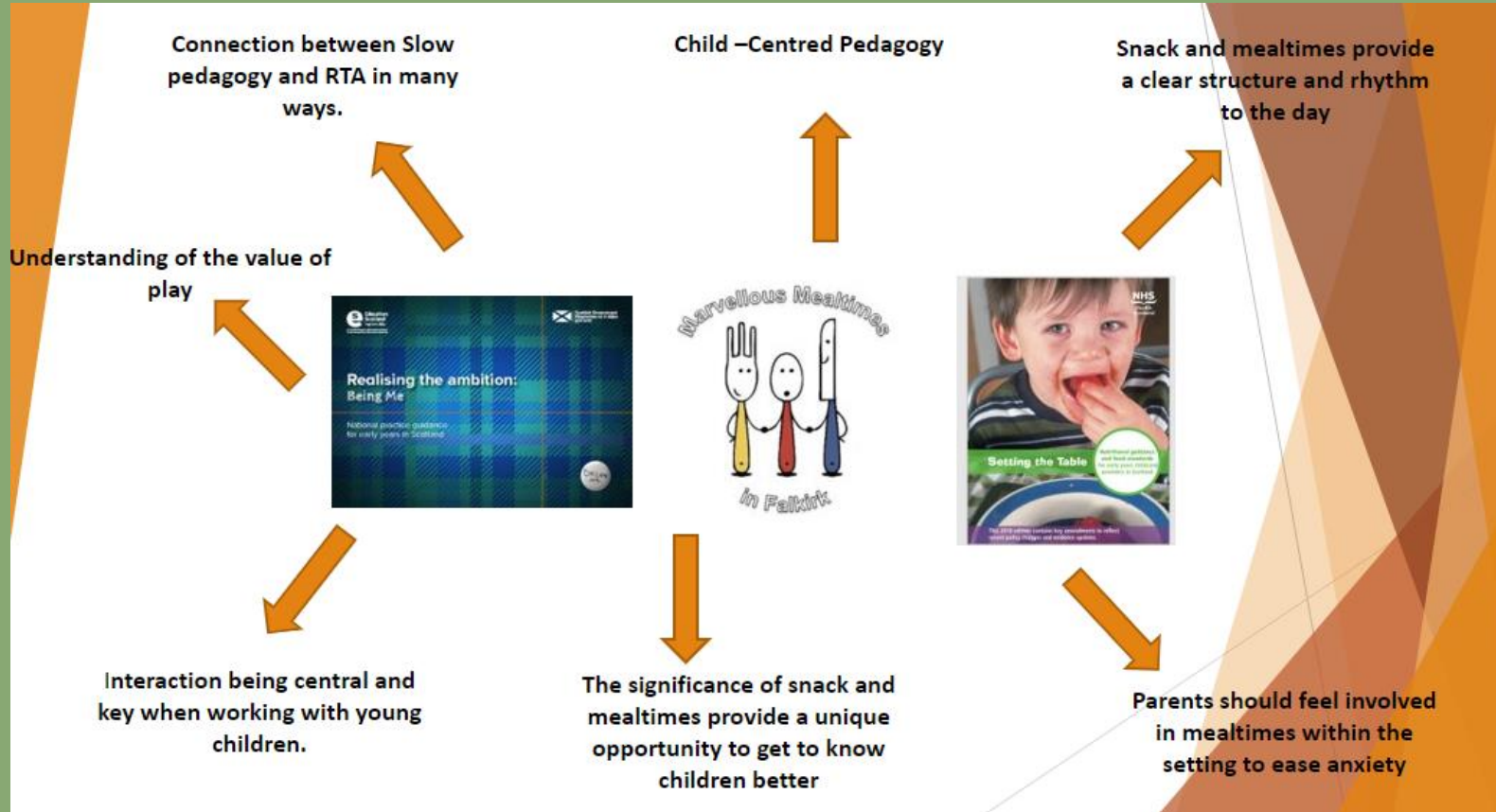
Engaging with nature

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'.





- This documents our journey at ELCC as we implement slow pedagogy through Marvellous Mealtimes using a Froebelian principled practice approach.
- We acknowledge clear links to local and national guidance in the process of developing a slow approach at mealtimes.

1. Question

[More Details](#)

● No knowledge at all	1
● Limited Knowledge	5
● High levels of knowledge	2



Key Question 1:

What is your understanding of the concept 'Slow Pedagogy' and mealtimes.

The data told us that:

22% of our practitioners felt they had high levels of knowledge.

56% of our practitioners had limited knowledge.

22% of our practitioners had no knowledge at all.

We gathered information about our current understanding of slow pedagogy and mealtimes using Microsoft forms, this was sent to all staff undertaking the project and we compiled the results.

The results helped to inform our next action which was to increase our knowledge and how this might transfer into our practice.

Staff teams were given the webinar link and a link to access a specific chapter of reading to promote a common understanding and build practitioners capacity of slow pedagogy and reflect on links to Froebel. We then used Microsoft forms to establish if there was a shift in understanding and to visit the four recurring questions throughout

1. What level is your knowledge prior to workshop 1 or from any reading or videos you have watched?

1 being, no knowledge and 5 very knowledgeable.

[More Details](#)

6

Responses

2.33

Average Number

2. What level is your knowledge after to workshop 1 or from any reading or videos you have watched?

1 being, no knowledge and 5 very knowledgeable.

[More Details](#)

6

Responses

3.83

Average Number

3. 1. What is your understanding of the concept 'slow pedagogy'? Please type your response below.

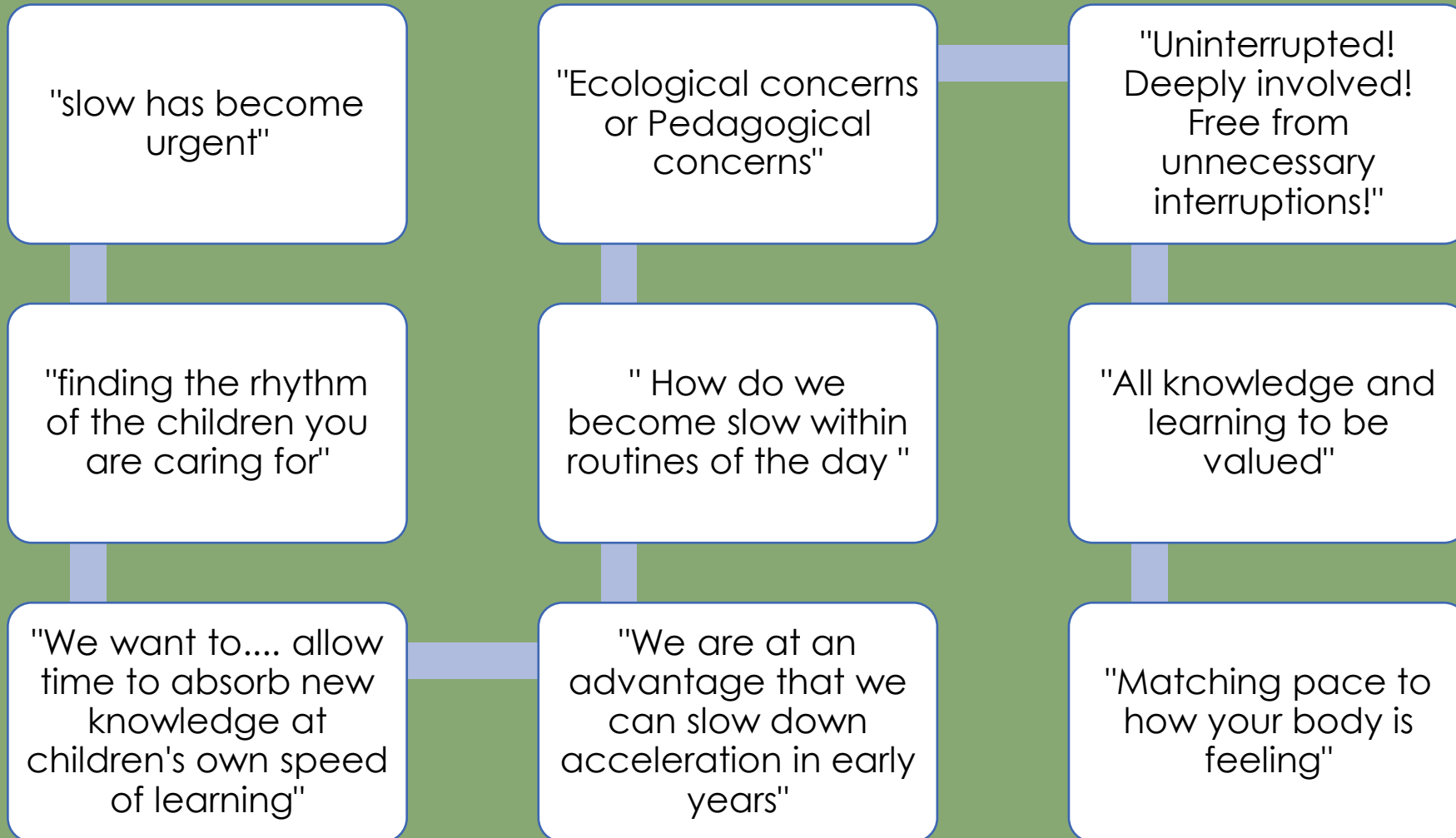
Thank you

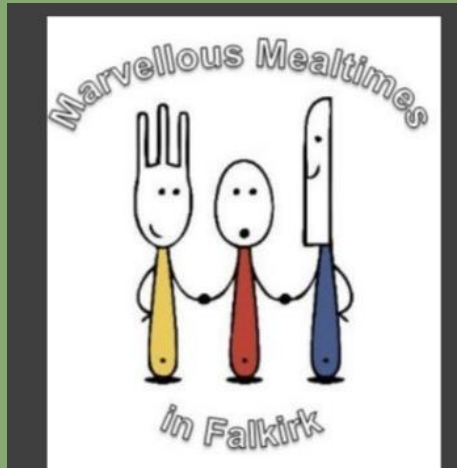
Reflective Practitioners

We reflected on our current practice and what this meant to the children and families in our setting



We watched the webinar "Slow knowledge and the unhurried child" These are our initial thoughts.....





Marvellous Mealtimes values and how they are reflected in our practice.

We looked at the Marvellous Mealtimes principles, identified any barriers to meeting these principles, the following points were brought up:

- "Too many visuals."
- "Food barriers- likes dry food." - 3 people highlighted this.
- "Wrong utensils."
- "Unable to sit to eat".
- "Dishes need done so snack is rushed"
- "Type of food". e.g., thin soup.
- "Lack of choice for dietary children or ASN children".
- "No physical space to set up self-serve".
- "Time restrictions"- 3 people highlight this.
- "Waking up from sleep, snack and then home".

We looked at The Marvellous Mealtimes values alongside the Froebelian Principles and identified where we could make improvements to our practice to ensure children were listened to and given autonomy over how they wanted to experience their mealtimes and what matters to them.

Promotes children's choice and voice.	Relaxed and unhurried atmosphere.	Role modelling
Homelike and Nurturing Environments	Positive social experiences for all.	Positive associations with food.
Cooking and Baking Experiences	Healthy snack and mealtimes.	Positive interactions

Marvellous Mealtimes Values

We are focusing on four key questions that will improve mealtimes for our children, give them more independence, freedom to decide how, where and when to spend their time and ensure our practice is reflected through using current research and to reflect our families using our services values and diversity.



We asked staff to be solution focused and to think about ways we could overcome any barriers to achieving our aim.

"encourage children to help get ready for lunch and snack"

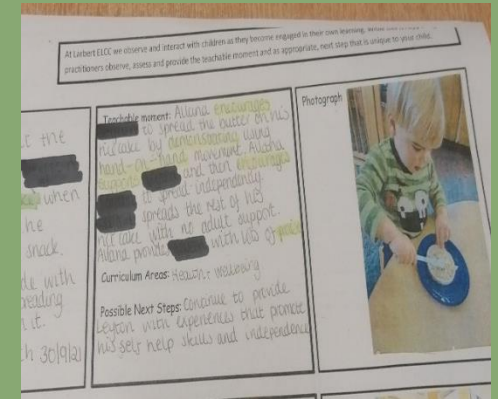
"staff to role model during mealtimes"

"make a list of resources we need"

"introduce food play experiences into the core provision to support children who have food related anxiety to promote positive relationships with food"

"think about ways we could support our families with mealtimes at home"

Added Value



There are many ways we have observed "Added Value". The main elements we have observed after implementing this approach has been through building our teams capacity to understand, implement and reflect on our understanding on why and how we are exploring a slow pedagogy approach during mealtimes. Through our observations and gathering rich observations, focusing on what children can do and recognising them for the individual wee people they are.

A recognised change to the team's mindset, instead of asking what if questions?

Asking the "Well what if it doesn't happen?"

Seeing the skills, the children are developing and really embedding Froebelian principles in having autonomous learners, knowledgeable nurturing educators, that our relationships matter and how our environments offer a playful approach to mealtimes.

Autonomous learners



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Autonomous Learners

- "We identify what children do."
- "Encourage children to be independent and praise them for their achievements."
- "We encourage children to make choices during snack/lunch."
- "Opportunity to self-serve and pour own drinks."
- "Use language to model, support or challenge during food times".
- Ask questions-I wonder? What would happen if?
- Self-regulation- of quantities- how hungry



Knowledgeable,
Nurturing
Educators



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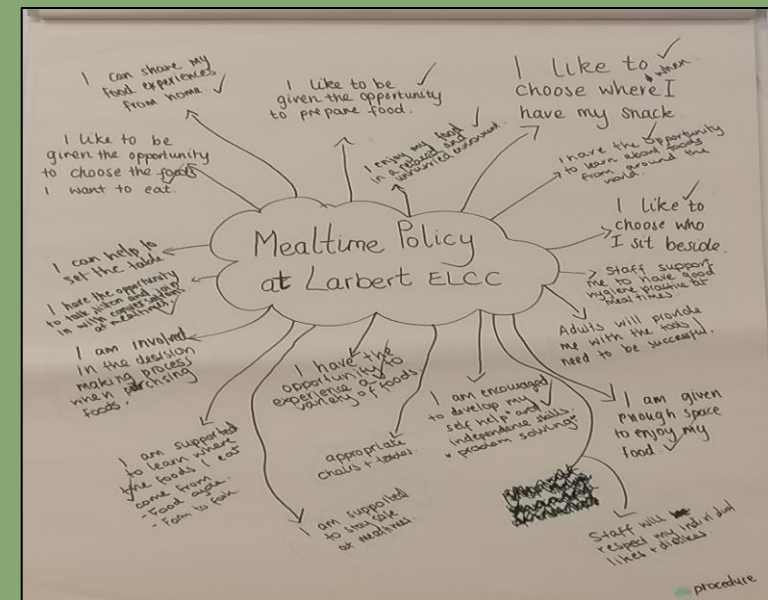


As well as attending webinars/undertaking professional reading and gathering observations. As a team we also unpicked this further.

One of the ways we used our learning was from devising with children and staff, our children's mealtime policy.

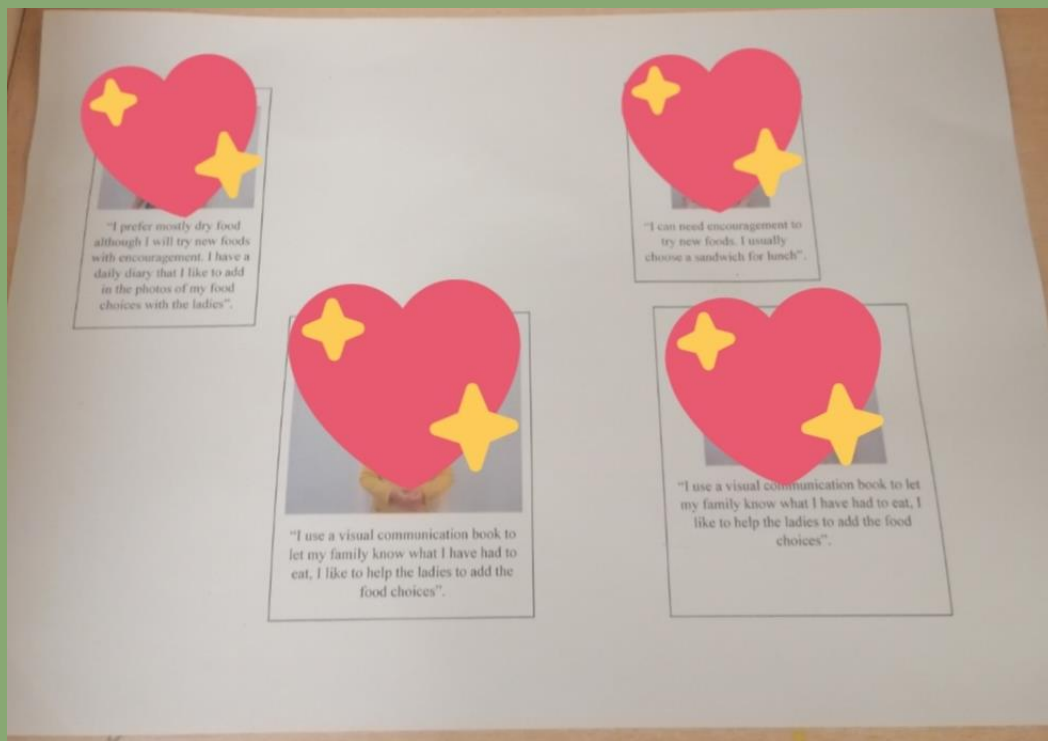
Knowledgeable and Nurturing Educators

- "Role model."
- "Reflecting on our practice."
- "Rich, real- life experiences around mealtimes."
- "Attending CPD."
- "Team discussions."
- "Evaluating the playrooms and if they meet the needs of the children."
- "Extending children's interest."



A delve into relationships , allows us to acknowledge how well the keyworker role plays in supporting the child's mealtimes- particularly individual preferences. Each playroom now has a "What Matters to Me" at mealtimes. This is a single sheet with known preferences on it. Staff thought about something that might support the child or lessen anxiety at mealtimes, anything that they felt was crucial for another adult to know, for example:

- L gets upset when her food touches or gets mixed together.
- M selects photos of meal choices with a member of staff and sticks these in a home link communication book.
- Z prefers to use the blue cup with the yellow handles to drink.



Creating a robust system
in practice that made what
matters to every child
through Marvellous
Mealtimes visible in
practice

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



Relationships Matter

We recognise and value all the relationships that children have, the many significant adults in a child's life are of central importance to them.

As practitioners we spend time getting to know families and what is important to them as a family. All children are invited to bring in a family photo which supports children to make a positive link between home and nursery.

The value of
Childhood in its
own Right



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The value of Childhood in its Own Right

We looked at what children can do and their readiness to try out new skills, some of the youngest children were seated in highchairs for meals, when they were given a choice of where to sit they instantly chose to join their peers at the table. The outcome from this change was happy, confident and independent children.



Unity and Connectedness



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Making the connection
between home and nursery
in an unhurried way.

Through role play
children make
sense of their world
by replaying their
own life
experiences, where
we advocate
children do this at
their own pace and
are not rushed into
learning new
skills until they
show a desire to do
so.



Connecting real life
experiences



Creativity and the
power of symbols

using objects to represent food

"Every successful individual knows that his or her achievement depends on a community of persons working together."

- Paul Ryan

Family and
Community

We continue to
share our journey
with our families
and community.

Throughout the project there has been very much a collaboration between children, staff, parents and our Pedagogue. The next two pages give a highlight of the ways we reached out to all stakeholders.

We have also been showing our progress of how we are implementing Slow Pedagogy with Froebelian principled practice on Twitter.....



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NEWSLETTER

Family Questionnaires And Discussions

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Engaging with nature

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

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Froebelian Principles

Mealtimes in the under-three's rooms were organised and efficiently planned but after reflecting on the experience staff identified there was little opportunity for children to choose how they enjoyed their mealtimes, they were served their meals without the opportunity to choose where to sit, make choices about the food they ate and there was scope for further interaction with each other.



We are focusing on four key questions that will improve mealtimes for our children, give them more independence, freedom to decide how, where and when to spend their time and ensure our practice is reflected through using current research.

These are the questions we have been analysing as a team:

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

ThingLink - Interactive Sharing Tool



We also have a Thing link which is a tool that allows us to share information in an interesting and informative way that is very user friendly for everyone. It has a range of media on it, such as videos, photographs as well as text.

For Further information or questions please contact:

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