Early Years Twilight Seminar

14 August 2019 video transcript

Video 2: Inskolning

SUSANNE GARVIS: One of the most important parts of a child's day is actually the first step into the preschool with their parents, and in Sweden this is called the concept of inskolning, which is a transition into the preschool. Why it is given so much attention is that it's the transfer of attachment from the parent to the preschool teacher and it – they have to get it right. It has to be successful. So the inskolning period will actually be over a period of two weeks or more. Some children will need longer. And the idea is on the first day the preschool teacher will meet with the child and the parent and they will discuss the child's interests, the child's routines, and they will then create a plan for the induction or the inskolning.

Over the next period of time, different children from the preschool group will be introduced to the child. The child will also be introduced to the different spaces, and then after the first three days the child will start to spend an hour at the preschool and then build on that with routines. The idea of inskolning as well is not to overwhelm the child. So what that means is that routines never occur one after the other on the same day. Rather, one routine is introduced to the child at a time on one day. So, the child may come in and learn the routine of getting dressed to go outside. The next day the child will come in and they will have a routine of the fruit break. And then it builds up until the child has learnt all of the routines and transitions over that day, and this approach as well allows the parent to see what is going on.

So the parent will come and spend time and then as the child becomes more familiar and more attached to the educator, the parent will then remove themselves. With a typical day, Swedish preschools provide food for the children. There is no cost to parents. So it starts with breakfast at – and again that can be flexible. So there is breakfast and the children can come and eat that whenever they would like.

Swedish preschools have to work with parents so that means that they open depending on the parents' schedules, and that can change all the time. Likewise with closing time. That can change depending on the parents' work schedules or study schedules. But usually it will start with breakfast, and then there will be play. The morning will usually start as well with circle time. So very similar to the Australian context. And in circle time it's about working out which children are there, learning what the routine and program is for the day. Perhaps some songs, perhaps there is a little bit of digital technology that's in that circle time, and then that is followed by a fruit break. There then might be some type of activity or outdoor time. In Sweden as well, the children are encouraged to be outside as much as possible, and there's a number of studies that show that fresh air and the natural environment is the best thing for children's health, especially in the prevention of illness. And in the Nordic countries there is a saying: there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing. So when you see it is raining or snowing or it could be negative 20, the children will still be outside playing because it's beneficial for them. So, after there could be an activity or outdoor – outdoor time.

There would then be preparation for lunch. And the lunch is very important for the children 'cause it's a time of learning and it's a time when the family or the preschool comes together and sits around together, discussing issues, discussing things that have happened but also learning how to be independent with food. So some children will set the table. Other children may read books, and the idea is that there is a relaxed period before the lunch actually comes in.

The children will have a hot meal for lunch every day. So it could be things such as lamb cutlets with vegetables – it has to meet EU nutrition requirements – and the children are taught to serve themselves over time and then also what to do with the meal once it's finished. So it's teaching these independent skills as well. And the teacher will use meal time as an important part of conversation. Oral language development is a strong feature of the Swedish curriculum, and the educators and the team will look at every opportunity, especially in routines and transitions, of how can they work with children's oral language. And lunchtime has been identified as one of the important times. There's a lot of conversations going on. So what it may look like is there may be three or four tables set up with four children at each table with a teacher there, and the teacher is having very in-depth conversations with the children. After lunch it is usually rest time. So the younger children will sleep, the older children may just have quiet time, and then it is play again followed by a food break in the afternoon and then parents will pick up their children usually anywhere between three onwards.