Prompts for reflection: Lunch

Anne Stonehouse: Hello, I'm Anne Stonehouse. Daily living experiences, that is, routines, have a prominent place in a curriculum for very young children. When educators treat these experiences as learning opportunities, they are both enjoyable and significant parts of children's daily experience. As you view this vignette that shows children and an educator having lunch, consider eating experiences in your program and how they compare with this one. How does Mel's knowledge of each child contribute to the quality of the experience? What are her intentions or purposes? That is, what does she hope children are learning?

Mel: Lunch is here.

Mel: Shall I put it there?

Mel: Yeah, you can put it here. Van, can you go and wash your hands first?

Mel: Hold on, Eva was coming down then and I think it would be nice to wait for her. Do you want a bowl or a plate?

Mel: You are so specific with what bowl you would like. Well why don't you serve yourself some potato and you can dip your beans into your potato?

Child: No.

Mel: Would you like potato?

Child: No.

Mel: It's okay just to say, 'No, thanks, Mel.' Did you get yourself some spoons?

Mel: And I think we're one spoon out, Cecilia.

Mel: I know, we're one spoon out., it's empty, we're going to get another.

Mel: Would you like to serve yourself some fish? Coming. How about, it's coming, Cecilia is just going to get it from the kitchen. Can I give anybody some carrots? There it is, you wouldn't miss out. Would you like some beans and carrots?

Child: No.

Mel: No, would you like some carrots? Some carrots? Would you like carrot?

Child: No.

Mel: I'll put it to the side, just in case.

Mel: Mash potato?

Child: Yes.

Mel: Would you like some fish? Do you want to get it yourself? Do you want to get it with the spoon? This big spoon. You get it from the big spoon. What else? Mashed potato?

Mel: Do you want to get the big spoon? Put it in? You might need to give it a bit of a … yep. Perfect.

Child: Oh no.

Mel: Oh no.

Child: Oh no.

Mel: Oh dear. And would you like some fish? And you know what, guys? I think I'm going to need some too. And I think I'm going to have some beans.

Mel: I'm going to have some beans and I'm going to have some carrot. Who had some carrot? Did you have carrot? And I'm going to have just a little bit of mashed potato. Van, are you okay on your chair there? Do you need me to help you untuck it for you, or? Because your bottom doesn't seem to be able to sit down. You're sitting down? Oh, excellent. Now you can eat your food.

Mel: That's the funny bone.

Mel: Is it yummy, Cameron? Should we put our Greek music on for lunch? Grecia?

Child: Wiggles!

Mel: Oh, that's for after, but I might put Grecia on, yeah? Is that all right, to have that in the background? Oh, sorry. It's our usual lunch music.

Mel: Did you want to get everybody else their drink too, Van? Do you want to see if they want one? Oopsie daisy. Chair's in the way. Oh, thank you.

Child: Thank you.

Mel: Thanks, Van. I think actually Dot asked for hers too. Oh, thank you. Just let me know when I can tuck myself back in and eat. Can I eat now? Yep. I'm ready, okay.

Mel: Yeah. Cameron, did you want water too?

Mel: It's warm Cam, eat. Eat, Cam. Right, there we go.

Mel: Is that you've got to say? What did you have for dinner last night? Do you remember?

Child: Chips.

Mel: Did you have chips? What did you have? Did you have anything else with your chips?

Child: Yeah.

Mel: What did you have?

Child: [inaudible]

Mel: What did you have?

Child: [inaudible]

Mel: Hmmm … I'm not quite understanding what that food is. Was it yum? I think it's cooling down now too, Van. Can I help you with your chair, Van? Because you look so uncomfortable. Ah, there you go. What are you after?

Child: Uh-oh.

Mel: I know I did an 'uh-oh'. I dropped it on the floor.

Child: On the floor.

Mel: Oopsie daisies.

Child: Oops daisy.

Mel: Would you like some more, Eva?

Mel: Would you like some more? Oh, whoops. You've still got some in your bowl. That's your drink. Do you want anything else? Would you like some beans and carrots? Yes?

Mel: Van, are you still eating? Can you turn around this way? Because it makes me think you're finished when you do that. This must be really yummy then. All right, I think you've got a lot of carrots on your plate now. Van, have you forgotten some beans? Would you like some?

Child: More, more

Mel: Do you want beans?

Child: More, more, more.

Mel: Are you going to use your spoon to eat with, Van?

Child: More, more

Mel: You are? Because that will make me think that you're still wanting to eat.

Mel: Do you still want to have lunch? You still hungry? Well then use your spoon in your bowl and then I know you're still hungry, because you're making me think you're still playing. Take some beans. Good job, Cam. You didn't even need to ask me. You could just get it yourself.

Child: Quack Quack.

Mel: The tongs are a Quack Quack.

Mel: Are you using your spoon to eat with, Van? If you want to play, you can play. You can leave the table and play, but the spoon's for eating. Thanks. Gosh, the carrots are popular. Why don't you eat that and then you can grab some more carrots after? Are you going to get yourself a big one this time? A big spoonful? Now you can put that in, look. Because you're pretty much the only one eating it. You got a big one this time. You're pretty much the only one who's eating it.

Mel: You've got lots of fish in there, look at all your fish. You don't need any more from the plate. You've got so much to eat already. And you too! Look at your big piece of fish. Let's eat up what we've got first and then you can have more.

Mel: Do you know what? Sometimes, Cameron, you can get more food with your spoon than you can with your hand. Put your spoon in and you'll get a bigger mouthful. See? Look at that. That's huge. Maybe too big.

Child: Maybe too big.

Mel: Okay, so we can do this, yeah, we can take a little bit off and then you eat it. That's much easier than using your fingers.

Mel: And then you've got to close your mouth and it leaves all the food in your mouth.

Mel: Are you finished? Is that all you wanted to eat?

Mel: Here's the scrap bowl. Is that all you wanted to eat? Really? Yeah, sure. That's your spoon. You need to scrape your bowl first. Have you finished?

Mel: Can I help you here? Gosh, you're very thorough. Very thorough. Okay, Van, someone else is coming to wash their dishes. Can you put yours upside down to drain now? Are you ready to put your bowl upside down? Clear it from the water and you pop it upside down. There you go. Someone else is coming to wash their dishes now.

Mel: Got your spoon? Here, sweetie. And your face, don't forget your face. All over your face. Have a look in the mirror. Can you see some on your lips?

Mel: And your chin? And your eyes? Did you find a spoon in there? Spoon? And here's a cloth for your face, sweetheart, that's for the bowls, there's your cloth for your face. Have a look in the mirror, because you've got lots of fish on you. Oh sorry, Van. Sorry. There's lots of fish on your face. Have a look in there. Look. Look in there. Have a look at your face. There, there. If you keep that on for today, you're going to be quite smelly. Fish gets quite smelly. There's a bit more on your cheek. Look in the mirror. Can I help you to get it all off? And your hands. Okay, in the laundry basket, Dot. Thank you.