



Child Centred Diversity in Quality Early Childhood Education and Care



The following example is drawn from observations undertaken in the Child Centred Diversity in Quality Early Childhood Education and Care (Campbell-Barr et al., 2018). The examples are not representative, but offer the opportunity to explore child-centredness in relation to the daily practices observed in ECEC settings internationally. Each example is presented and then discussed in relation to the three concepts of child-centredness: romantic, developmental and democratic.

While we present each concept in its own block, readers are reminded to remember (and reflect on) the overlapping nature of the three concepts.

Questions are then asked in relation to the related indicator.

Assembly – Spaghetti and Meatballs		
<p>Overview:</p> <p>It is mealtime. An Educator named Sandra is in charge of six toddlers. The toddlers sit at a table waiting and Sandra starts serving the spaghetti first and then the meatballs. The children are sitting at a crescent-shaped table, they all face the educator, who is standing in the middle of the table. The proximity between the toddlers allows them to interact with each other, to touch each other, to offer food to others, or to get food from other dishes. The children have forks that they may or may not use, according to their wishes. Nonverbal language plays a very important role in communicating in the social interactions encouraged at mealtime and at this school in general. We observe how the children explore the food as well as eat it.</p> <p>The children eat freely with their hands; the educator establishes no limits. Only the youngest one, A, is helped with her food by the educator. The rest of the children are left to their free will. J. points at the meatballs to the educator. Sandra responds by serving him a meatball, but she does not speak. In the meantime, she asks another child if he wants more and gives him half a meatball. Then she shows them the spaghetti dish again and asks them if they want more. A child brings the fork closer to the dish, indicating in this way that he wants more. The educator smiles and gestures indicating how much some of them like the food.</p> <p>M says he doesn't want more by turning his plate upside down. The educator takes the plate, but does not remove it, although she acknowledges, "You do not want more". The child uses the plate to put the spaghetti around it back on the plate. Sandra begins to look and see who does not want more and states the names of those who do not.</p>		
Analysis		
<p>Romantic:</p> <p>The educator follows the children's leads, listen to both their verbal and non-verbal responses to the mealtime.</p>	<p>Developmental:</p> <p>The children's bodily interactions with the meal supports their explorations of it.</p>	<p>Democratic:</p> <p>Children's autonomy during eating activities is encouraged at this school.</p>

Questions:

How are the children making sense of the world through their interactions with the mealtime – are the interactions only with the food?

Reference

CAMPBELL-BARR, V., GEORGESON, J., ADAMS, H. & SHORT, E. 2018. Child-Centredness in Practice Report on Output 2. Plymouth: Plymouth University. Available at:
[IO2 Observation Framework for Child Centred Practice Project.pdf \(plymouth.ac.uk\)](https://plymouth.ac.uk/IO2_Observation_Framework_for_Child_Centred_Practice_Project.pdf)