

When home life and school life intertwine



The experience the author shares with us is a beautiful example of how relationships and ties between the school and the family intertwine, revealing how children experience feelings and take things in.

Children play the way they live, and they learn to live through play

José Martí

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We all know that play is a part of everyday life for children, and that nursery school cannot be dissociated from play. If we understand play as a spontaneous activity that satisfies an inner need, we will be able to see that each child directs his play depending on his interests and a specific reality at one given moment.

Everyday moments provide a natural opportunity for us to observe children's personalities, their countless ways of being and expressing emotions, feelings, frustrations ... or the way they gradually take in the new things that become part of their lives. We know how important it is for children to have enough time and emotional peace to assimilate small things and novelties.

How space and materials are organised every day, enables adults to take a watchful, tuned in attitude and respectful at the same time; this is how they will be able to establish a strong connection with every child and support them in fulfilling their own needs. Adults must be capable of reflecting on the rationale behind every game to get to know each child more closely.

Everyday nursery school life is full of small events and stories; situations filled with emotional and affective components that can easily go unnoticed if we, the adults, fail to make a conscious effort to see them. This is why we believe that it is extremely important to respect children's paces and time. Children's time should be peaceful, quiet and clock-free. It should be a time when relationships and learning emerge from everyday situations. Everyday situations often provide first-hand experiences as children observe and draw from their close surroundings.

From the home to the school and vice versa, countless ways of doing things go back and forth. If we look at them closely, they reveal behavioural aspects of children that help us understand them a little better every day. In addition, the interaction with families at the start and the end of the school day facilitates the creation of an emotional bond and enables an exchange of the children's feelings and perceptions. Knowing what happens at school is very important for families, just as it is important for educators to know what happens at home.

When two-year-old Naia started nursery school, her family told us that at home she almost always played with dolls.

The older children's classroom in our school has a



play area for reality representation and reproduction with everything we believe that may be useful to this end: dolls with cradles, hygiene supplies such as nappies, baby wipes, moisturising cream, and including "medicine" in case they feel unwell.

We all know that children project in minute detail the reality they experience in everyday life, and that they don't need to be taught. They mimic models and learn from what they see. As Mother Theresa said: "Don't worry if your children don't listen to you, they watch you all day long".

As her family explained, Naia plays with dolls a lot. Her play probably is a reflection of her family's life and its new circumstances, as her baby brother was born recently.

To her, changing nappies, giving a massage or breast-feeding the baby belong to her everyday experience. She executes the routines she sees at home in minute detail. She mimics her mum's and dad's gestures, actions and words. Changing her doll's nappies requires setting up the right space and equipment she needs. Each gesture is made with extreme care in slow, precise movements as though she were caring for a real infant. She puts words to her gestures and talks her doll through what she does. She cradles her, strokes her and breastfeeds her, holds her in her arms wrapped in a blanket and kisses her forehead.

Meanwhile, the teacher observes these situations and, if she deems it necessary, she might put words to it to support the new context's learning process every day, spontaneously. She will be able to perceive every child's feelings when presented with new situations and changes that may have arisen in the family's setting.

At home, Naia's mother tells us that she has taken up a new role with her dolls. She now puts them to bed or sits in an armchair to keep them company. She sings to them and tells them stories.

A daily life full of emotions will never be repetitive or monotonous. It provides a wealth of experiences to share with children and understand them, but above all, it provides a way of understanding the school and education.

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