



The film **Childcare Stories** as a discussion tool

Suggestions for use in a discussion with parents

Some examples:

- Parent groups of an INLOOP team (Dutch acronym meaning Integrated Accessible Parenting Support teams)
- Parent groups where parents share similar experiences (e.g. deprived families, a child with a handicap, newcomers, motherhood or fatherhood)
- Newcomers with children who get professional guidance while following an education programme, language courses or while looking for a job
- Unemployed people with children who get professional guidance while following an education programme, language courses or while looking for a job

Possible applications

Some groups are underrepresented in childcare. This is for example the case with deprived or allochthonous families. This partly has to do with barriers in childcare, e.g. waiting lists, working parents and fulltime childcare getting the best offers, cultural accessibility. On the other hand many parents are not very familiar with childcare. That's why it is useful to discuss the matter with them. During the discussion you can use this DVD. It's a useful tool in the following approaches:

- **Showing what childcare means to parents and their children**

The combination of work and family life is not the only good reason to make use of early childhood provisions. There are many more. It is a way for children and parents to meet other parents and children. It is where they learn to play and live together and discover new ways of playing. Childcare is moreover a good lead to the first days at school. For





parents childcare provides time to take part in a course, or just to be relaxed for a while. Above all, childcare may prove to be a parents' partner in the early childhood education.

- **Informing parents about childcare and the possible barriers in the use of childcare**

Parents in deprived situations do not always have sufficient information about how childcare Works. This may be a huge barrier. It is therefore important that they receive correct information about the initiative. Most parents suppose that all childcare is expensive. There is also a certain fear of 'leaving a child behind'. This should also be considered by the employees of the early childhood provision.

- **Discussing what parents are expecting or may expect from childcare**

If you want to introduce deprived groups to childcare, it is essential that you talk about their expectations. Due to a limited availability, parents have little choice in early childhood provisions. Those present in the film are not always the best reflection of reality. But still it is important for parents to know what good childcare is about. They should always express their expectations to the employees. As a person in charge, you may even assist in this matter.



How do you start working with this film?

Before the film

Before you start looking at the film, it is best to be informed about former experiences with childcare and how this has influenced the parents' vision. Some parents may have experience. But those who have not, can certainly express ideas on the matter. It's best to collect this information before watching the film.

Possible questions:

- Who makes use of childcare or has done so before?
- What form of childcare was it: a childminder or childcare centre? Why did you make use of it? How often did your child go there?
- What were your experiences with childcare? Positive and negative?
- How did your friends and relatives react? Did they give any positive/negative when you sent your child to childcare?
- Who has never used childcare before? What is your opinion about it?
- Why would or wouldn't you use childcare? Is it there for you only, or for others as well?

Tip

If you are working with newcomers, ask them about their native country. Who takes care of children if both parents are out to work?

Looking at the film

It is best to look at the whole film. If you'd lack the time to do this, you may choose to select chapters 1 (introduction), 2 and 4. Chapter 2 and 4 consists of parents' testimonies. Chapter 3 talks about the employees in early childhood provisions.

Tip

If your time is limited, you may want to work with some extras. These are 11 separate interviews with parents from the movie. Select the interview that fits the discussion with the parents best.

After the film

After having watched the film you start the discussion by referring to your own practices and approach to childcare.

Possible questions:

- What are your first reactions after having seen this movie?
- Do you recognize the parents' stories or not? Which element was not familiar?
- Did the parents' testimonies contain surprising or new elements?
- What role does childcare play in the parents' lives? (being able to work, take courses, having some time on your own, meeting new people, getting support in early childhood education)





- What is the role of childcare in your life? What role should it fulfil?
- What do the parents really appreciate in the movie? What do they expect of childcare?
- What do you expect of good childcare?

Discuss the barriers

If you take the reactions to the film and the parents into account, you may want to discuss the existing barriers further. This can be done while using the DVD. The extras consist of 11 separate interviews with parents from the film.

Informing

Do you feel that parents are not too familiar with childcare? Then you should start by giving correction information. Talk about the costs, the different forms of childcare, the subscription policies, the way childcare works...

Is childcare my concern?

Parents who do not work on a regular basis often think they are not entitled to childcare. Discuss this issue and try to find out why they are thinking this. Using Tatiana's testimony is an interesting way to change minds:

Tatiana:

Tatiana is a political refugee and cannot find a job. Still her son goes to a childcare centre weekly for a couple of hours. This enables her to study Dutch and meet other people. For Tatiana it's a way of creating chances for a better life.

Increase trust in childcare

Many parents fear 'leaving their child behind'. You should try and capture those signals and explain to them that they are quite normal. Together with parents you can look for a way to increase their trust in childcare, e.g. by offering a nice introduction to the guides in the centre, proposing them to give a phone call during their first days of their son's/daughter's stay, encouraging them to ask questions and to tell the guides they experience difficulties in leaving their child behind,...



The following extras may be a good lead.

- Ayda:
Her son has to go to an early childhood provision because she is taking courses to increase her 'possibilities' on the job market. Ayda confirms that she experiences problems with leaving her son behind. She drops by at the childcare centre on daily basis to comfort herself, and asks the several questions to the guides in childcare.
- Samira:
Samira says the first days were the hardest. She had been breastfeeding her son for 2 years on end. The step towards childcare was huge for her.
- Lisete:
It took a very long time before Lisete finally found an early childhood provision. The choice remains difficult though she has made up her mind. She finds the hugs and the warm welcome from the guides very comforting.
- Nico:
The first day was tough for Nico, but even tougher for his wife. They think the attitude of the team in the childcare centre is very reassuring.

Discussing parents' expectations

The film and extras contain testimonies from different parents. They tell what they really expect of childcare. The following themes are strongly present in their stories:

- First introduction to childcare
- flexibility
- childcare as a partner in early childhood education
- qualifications and attitude of those in charge
- father participation

The extras are there to further focus on and discuss the expectations of the parent(s).

First introduction to childcare

These extras are good leads:

- Antero: the introduction to the first childcare centre didn't work out well for Antero. That's why he decided not to take his daughter there.
- Melanie: Melanie explains why she chose this childcare centre. The way in which she was welcomed was very important to her.

Possible questions:

- What does make you feel 'welcome' as a parent?
- What is reassuring to you?

Flexibility

These extras are good leads:

- Lisete: Lisete needed two kinds of flexible childcare. She needed a place for her daughter quickly. Above that her daughter had to be taken care of as her working required.
- Melanie: Melanie works two days a week on a part time basis. That's why she was looking for a childcare centre that stayed open long enough.





- Samira and Mohammed: Life isn't always easy for Samira and Mohammed. Samira sometimes falls ill and has to be taken to hospital. It's important to them that their child is taken care of by a childminder.

Possible questions:

- What kind of flexibility do you need to organise your life?
- What kind of flexibility should childcare offer you?

Partner in early childhood education

These extras are good leads:

- Fatma: Fatma says that childcare has a major educational importance. She prefers childcare to her own family because the family is less strict and structured. Moreover she thinks it's important that her son learns to speak Dutch. By going to childcare, he'll easily get started at school later as well.
- Ertan and Nürtin: Ertan and Nürtin say that childcare was a well-considered choice. Childcare plays an important role in the education of their son. They expect it to teach him structure and rules and certain values.
- Stefan: Stefan has just become a father for the first time. He says that childcare is a major support in the education of his child. Seeing the guides and his son at the childcare is very instructive to him. He appreciates the fact that he can ask questions when parent meetings are held.
- Antero: Antero also finds support in the education of his daughter. He and his wife have learnt how to approach things differently, e.g. eating with children.
- Lisete: Lisete is an unmarried mother. Childcare is very important to her. It's like a father: the second person who shares the responsibility of educating.

Possible questions:

- What do you think is important in the education your child receives in childcare? What would you like the team to teach him/her?
- In what way can childcare support the education of your child?

Qualifications and attitude of the team

These extras are good leads:

- Ronny: Ronny thinks it's important that the guides at the childcare centre not only take care of the little ones, but also spend time and interact with them. This has to give him a good feeling. Moreover he wants the team to be interested in the parents' principles and in the education his child receives at home. He thinks exchanging mutual information is very crucial.
- Nico: Nico attaches a lot of importance to the composition of the team. In his childcare centre there is a mixture of qualified and non-qualified staff. They both receive intensive training.
- Stefan: Stefan thinks that there should be professional guiding in childcare as well as a feeling of human warmth.

Possible questions:

- What does 'good guiding' mean to you?
- What makes you (dis)trust the guides in childcare?

Father participation





These extras are good leads:

- Antero: Antero is the proud father of Tanja. Antero and his wife went looking for good quality childcare for their daughter. The gaming afternoon for fathers in childcare was a very precious event to Antero.
- Ronny: Ronny is Zoë's father. Childcare makes him feel strongly committed to parenthood. At the start both Antero and his partner went to childcare with Zoë. They got to know the staff and explained to them how Zoë was raised at home.
- Stefan: Stefan is Matz's father. He feels very involved in childcare. The guides constantly inform him if his son is doing well or not. As a father he also gets enormous support for the education of his son.

Possible questions:

- In what way would you like to be involved in childcare?
- Do you like to get information? How?
- Do you want to be able to discuss childcare with the guides? How? What would you like to discuss with them?
- Do you want to take part in activities? What activities?
- Would you like to meet other parents? How?
- Would you like to help fixing things or assisting to parties in childcare?