

ERIQ FLLN: Family Language Case study

Case study title:

Putting Learning into Practice: family activity at Pizza Express

Pilot LA/provider:

Surrey County Council

Contact name and job title:

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Introduction:

This is an account of an enrichment activity that was arranged for a group of learners to take part in a cookery demonstration at a local Pizza Express. The group meet once a week for two hours at a children's centre as part of a family language programme. Although the children are generally only involved through home activities, the outing took place over half term so that the children could be involved.

The aim of the 20-hour course is to develop language skills to produce a book of favourite recipes written by the learners and shared with their children. On completion, this will be presented to some parents at one or two schools in the local area to promote community cohesion.

Description/outline of activity, process, etc.:

The visit and demonstration at the Pizza Express were arranged in order to introduce the learners to foods from a different culture. It also gave them the chance to enjoy eating out with other adults and children, experience a new activity to stimulate language and to practise the social skills involved in a family meal out in England.

The manager of the restaurant made sure that the afternoon went to plan and both he and the chef made the learners feel welcome and included. The adults and children made pizzas together. These were then cooked and the correct pizza returned to its owner. The children all enjoyed the pizzas, as did the adults, and a few took some of their pizza home for the rest of the family. The learners chatted with each other and their children, using first language and English.

All members of the group are Muslim and we had spent some time in class discussing

mealtimes and conventions when eating. It is normal, but not set in stone, to eat in silence. Eating out together at Pizza Express offered a new way of interacting. We had to be sensitive to Muslim dress code but, after initial hesitation by some, all the learners were happy to remove their coats whilst preparing pizzas and wear the offered hats and aprons.

Impact:

The involvement and enjoyment of both parents and children were evident throughout the demonstration and meal. Adults and children interacted with each other and were sensitive to other customers in the restaurant. They all had a new experience that included them in the wider community and gave them a reason for talking, discussing and sharing experiences and ideas.

They were also able to sit and socialise whilst enjoying a meal. The children clearly enjoyed taking part in the pizza-making part of the afternoon and were proud of their finished pizzas.

The tutor commented:

'I think the main importance [of the visit out] is the chance it gives the learners to interact away from the formality of the classroom. Conversation becomes more sociable and less activity led. If we had had this activity at the end of the course I think the members of the group would have mixed more readily. It also takes the learners out of their comfort zone and into situations they possibly would not arrange for themselves.'

Key factors for success:

- The welcoming and inclusive attitude of the restaurant manager and chef.
- The positive engagement of all learners with restaurant staff and other members of the class.
- The willingness of the adult learners to agree to and take part in this activity.
- Prior preparation through class discussion about cultural eating conventions.

Any developments since the activity described or plans for future:

Arrangements are in place for the group to meet at one or two primary schools in the near future. They will present the recipe book to a small group of parents who have children in the schools.

Quotes from parents or practitioners:

'My son liked going to Pizza Express very much. He wanted to eat it all. He was happy – he liked to help me making pizza.'

'I will take my whole family back to Pizza Express.'