YOU SHOULDN’T PLAY WITH YOUR FOOD...

“DO YOU NEED A BIGGER GLASS?”
For the “Haus der kleinen Forscher” (Little Scientists’ House) Foundation, FACILITATION OF LEARNING means starting with WHAT INTERESTS CHILDREN, being open to “CRAZY” SUGGESTIONS, and using EVERYDAY SITUATIONS.

“Because I have time today, and my colleague is outdoors with the other children, I can allow Mia to use the crispbread as an occasion for inquiry. Let’s see what happens and whether she takes up my prompt.”
A CHALLENGING LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
For the “Haus der kleinen Forscher” Foundation, FACILITATION OF LEARNING means ALLOWING children to do things and SUPPORTING them so that they can master REAL CHALLENGES.

“I got the timber from the janitor. Now the children can try to raise the tree trunk. I want to leave them to their own devices at first; I will join in only if it gets dangerous. It would be a pity not to use such an opportunity, because it is just wonderful that the children can gather so many experiences here.”
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?
Anton: “The moon is shining even though it’s daytime!” Ms Heide: “Yes, that’s right! Now I notice it, too. I have no idea why that is.” Anton: “Can’t we wait until the sun and the moon are in the sky together? I’d like to get a photo of that.”

After this dialogue, the two of them observe the sky for days on end. But the sun and the moon are never side by side. Eventually, Anton and Ms Heide search for the reason on the Internet. They finally find information about the way the Earth was formed and they build models of the Earth’s core.
CHILDREN DOCUMENT THINGS
For the “Haus der kleinen Forscher” Foundation, FACILITATION OF LEARNING means making the CHILDREN’S PERSPECTIVE visible.

“I actually wanted to take the photos myself in order to have good pictures for a documentation for the parents. But then the children took the photos themselves, and now we’re jointly selecting the ones that we want to exhibit. I’m glad that I allowed that, because the things that the children photographed were very different from the things that I would have photographed. Now I see what was most important to them when they were exploring.”
WHAT GREAT IDEAS THE BOYS HAVE!
WHAT SHOULD I DO:
• SAY NOTHING, JUST LISTEN
• ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR QUESTION
• CONTRIBUTE MY IDEA/ASSUMPTION
• JOIN IN
“I was gone for just three minutes, and now the boys are focusing on a completely different point. I’ll hold back for a moment and observe them in order to find out what their intention is. Then I may give them another prompt.”
DISCUSSING
WHAT HAS BEEN EXPERIENCED
We were blowing up balloons earlier, and one of them burst.
I want to talk about that again with the children. I ask them what happened, and when Gesa cannot answer the question in words, I ask her to demonstrate it to me.
She slowly opens her hands, and using her hands, her arms, her whole upper body, and her eyes, she demonstrates how the balloon got bigger and bigger. Levin listens open-mouthed and imitates her movements.

“"We were blowing up balloons earlier, and one of them burst. I want to talk about that again with the children. I ask them what happened, and when Gesa cannot answer the question in words, I ask her to demonstrate it to me. She slowly opens her hands, and using her hands, her arms, her whole upper body, and her eyes, she demonstrates how the balloon got bigger and bigger. Levin listens open-mouthed and imitates her movements.""
BEING ENTHUSIASTIC ONESELF
“During inquiry activities I play the role of partner. I love to join in what the children want to do. Soap bubble are nothing new to me, of course, but I know what it means to the children to blow them again and again, to look at their colours and shapes, to observe them when they burst, and to feel the splashes on their arms.”
TAKING PART
“Oleg has been playing at the tap for quite a while. I am in two minds as to what to do: On the one hand, he’s wasting a lot of water. On the other hand, the experience that he is having is very important. So I hold a beaker under his. The wonderful side-effect is that we’re now experiencing it together.”

For the “Haus der kleinen Forscher” Foundation, FACILITATION OF LEARNING means TAKING THE CHILDREN SERIOUSLY and FACILITATING THEIR EXPERIENCES.
COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY
For the “Haus der kleinen Forscher” Foundation, FACILITATION OF LEARNING means being PART OF THE INQUIRY TEAM.

“I read that, in dropper bottles, the number of air bubbles that rises up corresponds to the number of drops that comes out of the bottle. I had never paid attention to that before. The next day, I told the children about it. And then we simply started investigating. I was so delighted that we could see it so clearly and that it really was the case.”
EXPLORATION COMES BEFORE INQUIRY
“Today it was too cold to go to the woods, where the children would have liked to play in the mud at the water hole. So now I’ve simply fetched lots of materials and water and I’m letting them “play in the mud“ indoors. I’m aware that they need plenty of time and space for sensory experiences. Only then can they come up with questions that they can investigate through inquiry.”

For the “Haus der kleinen Forscher” Foundation, FACILITATION OF LEARNING means facilitating FOUNDATIONAL EXPERIENCES.