

DEMENTIA FOR ALL



THE BIG AND
THE SMALL

GUIDANCE FOR TEACHERS

RELATING TO THE MATERIAL
NURSERY SCHOOL - 3RD GRADE

PREPARATION

Nursery school - 3rd grade is a big jump. As the teacher, it is therefore a good idea if you arrange the material a little, choosing what you think suits best the level of the individual class. The material has been devised so that it is easy to arrange and use the parts of the material that suits the time available, and which is relevant for what you have decided to focus on.

Look through the material and find inspiration in the extra material (there is a link at the end of this guide), and find out how you will put together the lesson.

If required, you can contact your local municipality's dementia coordinator (search on Google for them) and ask them if they will teach the lesson with you. You can also contact the Alzheimer's Association. Perhaps they can help you by sending a dementia coach to the class. Some schools also visit nursing homes where they sing songs with the residents or bake cakes with the residents. Use your creativity to put together the correct lesson for your class.

When there is a couple of days to go before the lesson about dementia, it may be beneficial to ask the class:

- Do any of you know what dementia is?
- Do any of you know someone who has dementia?

(Perhaps there are some children in the class who have a loved one who has dementia. To ensure that these children and young people get the best possible support, you can take a closer look at the article included with this material.)

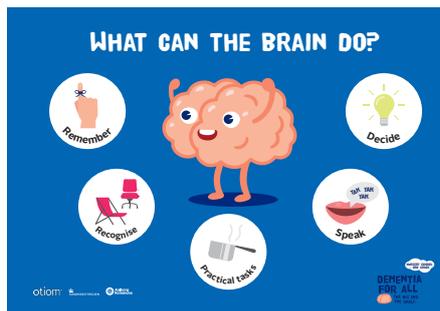
During the testing of the learning material, there were typically children in the 1st - 3rd grade age group who knew someone who had dementia – for example, a grandparent, great-grandparent, neighbour, or knew that the prince consort, Prince Henrik of Denmark, had been diagnosed with dementia.

THE ACTUAL LESSON

Start of the lesson

- Do any of you know what dementia is?
- Do any of you know someone who has dementia?
- How can you see or tell if someone has dementia?
- Can you tell someone has dementia by looking at them? No. Dementia is an illness that affects the brain.

WHAT CAN THE BRAIN DO?



When you are born, your brain cannot do very much. It is like a blank canvas, and it can only tell us that we are hungry, cold, tired, etc. When this happens we cry until a grown up finds out why we are crying. Small babies cannot ride a bike, play chess or any of the other things that we do. We learn how to do all of those things during our childhood.

Our brain is finished growing and learning when we are about 20 years old.

Let us take a look at what the brain can do:



Remember

Our brains function as a kind of little treasure chest, where we keep the things we experience and learn every day. It is filled with lots and lots of tiny compartments, and all of the things that we experience and learn are sorted and put in their proper compartments, all depending on what they are. When we have to remember something, we open our treasure chest and find the things we need, the things we remember from before. And we get better and better at doing this. But at some point the treasure chest is so full of things that we cannot close and lock it, and the brain begins to sort through the contents of the treasure chest. What will I keep and what will I throw away? The most important things are kept in another, much larger treasure chest, where all of our memories are. This is called long-term memory.



Recognise

From when we are a baby, our brains learn to recognise things and what they should be used for. When we see a chair for the first time, we have to be shown what it is used for. Later on, we come across another kind of chair and find out that it is also for sitting on, even though it does not look like the first chair we used. So as time passes, we know what almost everything is used for just by looking at it. We recognise things because we have used them before.



Practical tasks

Can you tie your shoelaces? Some of you can do this. How you do things is also something your brain helps you with. We practice in putting on our clothes, and eating food using a fork and knife or chopsticks. We learn how to spread butter on our bread and to do many other things. In the morning, when you get up and get your toothbrush and brush your teeth, it is your brain that has learned to do this. It is something you practice and get better at. Are there other things that you are practicing at doing right now? For example, using a skateboard or roller skates or ice skates? The more times you do something, the better your brain gets and the better you get at doing



Speak

Babies cannot speak. This is also something your brains learn to do. Are there some of you who have a baby brother or sister who has not yet learned to speak properly? How do they speak? Perhaps your baby brother says "marel" instead of "mackerel"? For example, try to say this quickly: "How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood". You need to be good at words to say it. You need to practice. Many toddlers spend a lot of time pointing and asking: "What's that?" They are practising at talking and saying the words.



Decide

The last part of our brains to finish developing is the part that helps us to make decisions. In other words, the part that helps us to think carefully about something before we do it. But it also helps us to concentrate a great deal. Your brains are not actually very good at those things yet and this is quite normal. In fact, it is not until you are about 18 years old before you can use that part of your brain really well. Right now, you are practicing. For example, you practice at not fighting when you and a friend have a fall out. How many times in a week do you think there is a little fight at school? And how many times in a week do you think there is a fight in the staff room? Yes, you learn that you must not fight when you get angry but remember instead to think again, and to talk things over rather than fight. You learn that it is sensible to eat vegetables and not sweets just before dinner and other boring things like that. But you also find it hard concentrating for long periods of time, so it is often a good idea that you do not just sit and listen all the time, but instead you also make things now and then.

**Give the children tasks 1 and 2 here.
(Cut-and-paste task and the maze task)**



If you have more time, tell the children this story:

Print out task 1 on A3 paper and cut out the small symbols and have some Pritt Multi Tack ready.

Now tell the children this:



You are sitting on the couch and you hear a bell ringing. Place the ear on the brain (and do the same with the other symbols as the story progresses).



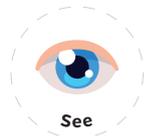
Your ear now asks your brain: "Do you recognise that sound?"
"Yes," says your brain. "It is a bell!"



"Have you heard that kind of bell before?" your brain asks your memory.
"Yes. It sounds like the ice cream van's bell."



"Get up and go over to the window," your brain says to your body.



"What can you see?" your brain asks your eyes.
A blue van with pictures on the van.



"It's the ice cream van!" says your memory.



"Oh great! Oh yummy!" says the part of your brain that makes emotions.
"Get out there fast!" says the feeling. NOW!



"No. Wait!! Think it over before you decide to run outside," says the part of your brain that makes decisions.

(Ask the children what they may need to think about or what they need to do before they run outside: Do you have enough money? What does mum say? Do you have clothes on? Is there cheaper ice cream in the local shop?)

So, something as simple as the ice cream van driving down your street means the whole of your brain has to work. Imagine how easily things could go wrong if some parts of your brain could not work properly.

IF THE BRAIN HAS DEMENTIA

If the brain has dementia it means it becomes sick and starts to not work as well as it used to. Now you know how the brain works when it is well. So it is easier to understand why things can get really difficult when the brain starts to go wrong.

During these slides you can ask the children what they think happens when you are not able to remember, recognise things, speak, etc.



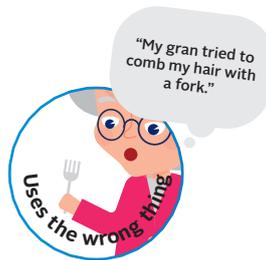
Slide 2 - Remembering

You forget where you put things, things you agreed to do with other people, what you had for dinner, etc.



Slide 5 - Practical things

Puts clothes on wrong



Slide 3 - Recognising things

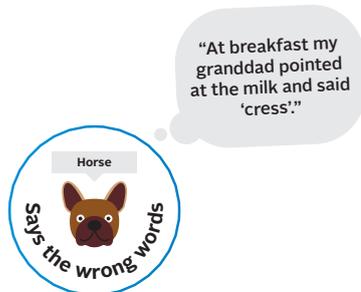
Uses the wrong thing



Slide 6 - Becomes still

The confusion that dementia causes in your head means that you often become really tired and just need to sit still for a little while and give your mind a rest. Just like when you come home from school after a long day. It is nice being able to just sit down and relax and do nothing. You can almost be in your own world and not hear what your parents are saying to you.

Ask the children: Have you ever been so tired that you just could not do anything at all?



Slide 4- Speech

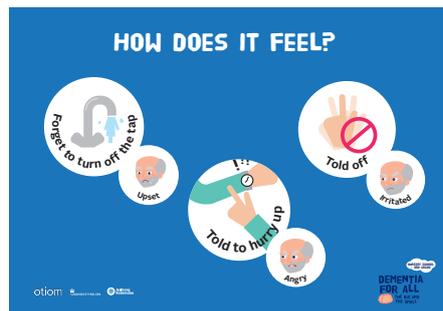
Says the wrong words



Slide 7 - Deciding things - is that a good idea?

Starts to sing out loud when happy without thinking about what other people think about you.

HOW IT FEELS



How do you feel when your mum or dad wants you to hurry up? Do you get mad or upset?

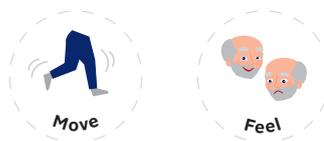
Talk with the children about how they would prefer it if other people did something else instead of keep correcting their mistakes, hurrying them up all the time, saying that they are doing something wrong, have forgotten something.... and so on.

So how do you think people with dementia feel?

WHAT CAN GRANDMOTHER STILL DO?



Do you remember the big treasure chest with all the memories? It still works when you have dementia. There are also other parts of the brain that work well: You can feel and move.



This means that there are still many things that you can do together with other people, to have fun together - and live life with dementia.

Talk with the children about what they usually do with their grandparents and great-grandparents. Children and their grandparents can continue to do many of the things they normally do together. Children cannot play difficult card games like bridge and people who have dementia can struggle with those kinds of card games too, but they can perhaps still play Go Fish or Ludo with their grandchild.

Talk with the children about whether they have heard any funny stories from when their grandparents were young and about things that are in the pictures. If you need some inspiration:

The picture of the cigarette case for example: When our great-grandfathers were young, they were typically given a cigarette case as a confirmation present, because now they were grown up and should smoke like all the other grown-ups.

Or what about dough ball makers or a sock repair kits? What happens today if you get a hole in your sock? When you make soup, do you make dough balls for the soup or do you buy them frozen in a bag?



Exercise sheet 3 and 4 are used here.

Task 1 sheet, guidance:

- 1: Milk bottle
- 2: Curling tongs
- 3: Sock repair kit
- 4: Trouser clip for riding a bicycle
- 5: Piggy bank
- 6: Cigarette case
- 7: Dough ball maker
- 8: Traditional herb chopper

TAKE CARE OF YOUR BRAIN



You can do many things to take care of your brain:

1. Eat healthy foods, so the brain gets energy to grow.
2. Exercise so the brain gets lots of oxygen to think with.
3. Sleep well, so the brain gets the peace and quiet it needs to sort all of the things that are placed inside the treasure chest during the day.
4. Keep using your brain, just like the way you exercise to get bigger muscles. Learn something new every day.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?



If you do not know someone who has dementia, you might see someone in town who has dementia. Sometimes people with dementia can find it really difficult finding their way around. They are not very good at recognising the streets they need to walk along to get home. If you see a person who looks like they are lost, tell your parents. Perhaps you heard on the radio that someone is lost. Remember to pay attention to where you saw the person and what the person was wearing. You can then tell the people who are looking for the person – and make it easier for them to find the missing person.

OTHER MATERIAL

“Anton og lakridsmysteriet” (Anton and the liquorice mystery)

- An app

Anton and the liquorice mystery is a great wee story about Anton and his grandfather who has dementia. You focus on the great experiences they have together. It is good to use to start the lesson in the nursery school and 1st grade classes. Ideally, you should supplement it with individual slides from the teaching material here on the webpage and in some of the task sheets.

<http://huusmann.com/projekter/antonoglakridsmysteriet/>

“Alva og demenstågerne” (Alva and Dementia Fogginess)

- book for children aged 5-9 years old. Caretoons.

From the website about the material:

“Alva og demenstågerne” (Alva and Dementia Fogginess) is financed by the Danish Health Authority as part of its funding for “Local and national activities that shall support a dementia-friendly society”. The book has been devised for families with children aged 5-9 years old and is an easy-to-read introduction to a difficult illness. Using interactive tasks created for children and inspiration for dementia-friendly activities, the book takes the reader by the hand and encourages reflection and dialogue among family members. The book is based on interviews with people with dementia and their loved ones, with professional input from Liselund, a dementia centre in Viborg Municipality and the Danish Dementia Research Centre.

<http://www.caretoons.dk/alva-demenstaagen-sundhedsstyrelsen/>

“Kaffe, kanin, vintergæk, væk” (Coffee, rabbit, snowdrops, gone)

- A children's book written by Betina Birkkjær and illustrated by Anna Margrethe Kjærgaard. Publisher: Jensen & Dalgaard.

An excellent book with lovey illustrations about a girl and her grandparents. The girl's grandfather develops dementia and his memory and vocabulary begin to disappear. The book is about how the girl and the grandfather have good experiences despite dementia. The last two pages of the book are for adult readers, about ways to work with dementia and memories.

“En usynlig hund” (An invisible dog)

- A children's book written by Birgitte Bregndal. Publisher: Gyldendal. The book is from Gyldendal's children's reading series, book 7, readability index 15.

The books is about a boy who goes on a walk with an invisible dog, because the lady he meets has dementia and believes she still has her dog. A great story to talk about.

“Mormors taske” (Grandmother's bag)

- A children's book written by Claus Nivaa and illustrated by Martin Bowyer. Publisher: Alba.

An attractive and imaginative book about a girl and her grandmother who has dementia. Together they look at the things inside the grandmother's bag, sharing memories and grow closer through funny stories that they make up together.

“Glemmer du ...” (Do you forget)

- A children's book written by Mette Vedsø and Kamila Slocinska. Publisher: Høst og Søn.

Susi's grandmother has dementia and Susi thinks it makes things difficult. Luckily, Susi manages to find a way where she can fool around and laugh with her grandmother, despite the illness.

“Når du kender én, der er demensramt” (When you know someone who has dementia)

- An article about dementia written for children:

The article is aimed at children aged 5-10 years, but ideally, it should be read with an adult, so both child and adult can talk together as they read the article.

<http://www.videnscenterfordemens.dk/viden-om-demens/bibliotek/bibliotek/biblioteksamlet/faglitteratur/demenspjece-for-boern-naar-du-kender-en-som-er-demensramt/>