

Egg timer and rambling

Mikkel, who has been diagnosed with ADHD, is talking to his well-being advisor, Allan, and his mother and father after a conflict regarding homework. Mikkel has been asked to think about, whether he thinks his parents would like to help him use a time out to think about the best solution when they have a conflict.

Mikkel looks first at his father, then at his mother – yes, they will help. The agreement is noted on the iPad, and then Allan wants to hear how Mikkel is getting along at school. Mikkel had a complicated start; it is difficult for him to stay concentrated and he easily loses his temper – this causes problems at educational as well as at social level.

During the breaks the other children become disappointed when he suddenly turns angry or tired and withdraws from a game, which has taken them a long time to arrange. And his teacher Kirsten becomes frustrated when Mikkel either makes noise and disturbs or chooses to leave the classroom to go to the toilet without coming back – and then she will have to go and search for him.

Together with some other adults, Allan has set up some initiatives to curb the problems: When relating to the other children in class there are some he should not play with during the breaks because they always end up in a conflict. The class-mates have been informed about Mikkel's situation and it has been agreed that it is better to arrange games in which more class-mates participate, so that the game will not be completely spoiled if Mikkel withdraws. Mikkel's rambling has almost stopped due to something as simple as an egg timer. When Mikkel goes to the toilet or when the class starts after a break, Kirsten will start the egg timer. If Mikkel does not enter the class at the agreed time, he will sit in the class-room for some extra minutes after the lesson has finished, and this "threat" has been sufficient to motivate him to join the class. An extra teacher has been arranged to support and sit close to Mikkel during the lessons to help him keep focus.

It all helps, although Mikkel still struggles from time to time to grasp the point of going to school when he could stay out and climb trees.

- What did you write about Kirsten in your book, Allan asks
- That she is a grumpy old lady
- Is it good to be tough sometimes, Mikkel?
- Well.
- Can it be necessary to be tough sometimes, Mikkel?
- Well.
- Is your mother never tough?

Mikkel nods his head and looks at his mother. They have eye contact. She looks smilingly at him.

- Yes a bit – but you can be tough in the good and in the grumpy way. The grumpy way is when they shout at me
- Fortunately that doesn't happen often, Mikkel, his father intervenes
- No, not any longer
- Allan leans halfway over the table, supports his head on his hands and looks Mikkel into the eyes

- It could also be, Mikkell, when you tried to do the things at school that you are told....
- ... that Kirsten might become a happy, old lady, Michael interrupts
- Old and old, Mikkell mumbles, but he nods when his father suggests that he tries
- I'm so glad to hear, Michael exclaims
- Because when you feel fine at school, we are happy, too

The meeting is about to finish. A quiet conversation with Dad, Mom and Mikkell has brought the most important challenges right now in focus – and together with Allan they have found new ways in their struggle for Mikkell 's inclusion and for making him stay on the good school track.

Allan Skovgaard is well-being advisor at the school and works intensively to create the best conditions so that all children can thrive and develop. When needed he also visits the families as a sparring partner on the many complicated questions. He visits more than 20 families every second week.