

INTRODUCTION

TOOLBOX

A tool for family
participation in early childhood
education services

Dear reader,

this Toolbox aims to promote learning, discussion and the testing of participation practices in the field of early childhood education services, especially by families and the community.

The instrument stems primarily from work developed by a group of educators and teachers with the support of researchers and policy makers, in the context of the Erasmus+ strategic partnerships project EQuaP (Enhancing Quality in early childhood education and care through Participation). These stakeholders observed, discussed and tested a number of participation models, developing a format that makes them accessible to the greatest number of colleagues possible and transferable across different educational settings and schools.

Would you like to build a stronger partnership with parents?

Are you, or your educational team, interested in feasible and realistic ways for co-educating children, doing, thinking and deciding together with families?

The different aspects described in this introduction, might be useful for learning about and using the Toolbox in a flexible way, based on individual priorities, interests and needs.



SHORT PRESENTATION OF THE EQUAP TOOLBOX

The tool presented in this document is the main product of the EQUaP project (Enhancing Quality in early childhood education and care through Participation), a three-year Erasmus+ strategic partnership project (2014-17) which involved educators and teachers of pre-schools for children 0-3 and 3-6, public and non-public service providers, researchers, and policy makers belonging to 11 partners from 7 European countries (IT, SE, PT, SI, BE, LV, GR).

The overall objective of the project was to help and improve the quality of early childhood education and care services by promoting participatory practices that make parents, or other family members that accompany their children in the education services, become co-authors, alongside teachers and operators, of a project about children's education.

This means turning family participation into an element for the development of quality childhood care services, without excluding the involvement and resources offered by the children, operators and the community as key elements of the overall system.

Specific aims of the project:

- 1 identify, test and integrate innovative methods and participation practices, particularly in contexts of diversity (socio-economic and cultural diversity, minorities, etc.);
- 2 improve teachers' skills regarding strategies and approaches for parental involvement, learning from the experiences of colleagues from other European countries;
- 3 improve integration and interaction between the various elements of the system (children, professionals, researchers, families and communities);
- 4 address the issue of participation in the system of early childhood education and care as a process, which is becoming more effective through the adoption of specific quality indicators.

The project has involved in transnational activities about 140 participants, representing three key target groups of professionals:

- pre-school educators, teachers and managers;
- representatives of local authorities;
- University researchers and trainers.

The three main areas of activity were:

- 1 research related to participation in the education and child care system;

- 2 identification and exchange of best practices in participation; and the activity of job shadowing held by preschool and kindergarten educators and teachers to develop the conditions for cross-experimentation and adoption of participation practices within the partnership.

- 3 development of quality indicators suitable for participation as a process.



THE PURPOSE OF THE TOOL AND ITS POSSIBLE USES

This Toolbox intends to help keep the debate alive on processes, projects and participatory practices related to quality in the ECEC system. In the Toolbox you will not find replicable ready-made recipes, one-suits-all solutions, or a collection of participation best practices, but occasions to learn about experiences and participatory practices that can activate and support the work of educational groups with families and communities.

In fact, the tool can be used in several ways depending on experiences and contexts. However, we indicate three possible uses:

- Firstly, the tool can be used to learn one or more of the fifteen practices described and to test it/them in your context; by adapting it/them through designing, re-contextualizing, monitoring and evaluating;
- Secondly, the tool can suggest a specific "format" - articulated in the steps listed in the participation practices below - through which designing, analysing, building, redesigning and evaluating old and new participation practices in in your specific working context.
- Thirdly, the tool can be used as an opportunity for reflection, discussion, and debate on participation issues both within a given ECEC service workgroup service and/or among services, families, policy makers and community members.

Regardless of the use of this toolbox, attention should be paid to the questions that accompany the descriptions of the Practices: they can suggest reflection and comparison processes on your own as well as on others' choices when planning educational practices about participation. The EQUAP toolbox also opens up space for reflection within the educational teams on what is feasible and under what condition, by overcoming the resistance that often curbs processes of change and the renewal of ways of doing and promoting education and participation in ECEC services. In this sense, the Toolbox can be considered a training tool useful to raise questions to the educational teams on how participation can be understood, contextualized and put into practice. In general, the Toolbox adopts the idea that participation is translated into different levels (organisational, managerial, educational, pedagogical and political) and in relation to different actors: children; their parents and other family members who deal with their care and education daily; all the professionals involved in the services (educators, pedagogical coordinators, assistants, pedagogues,

managers and officers...). To sum up, a large social network made up of all the actors that share the territory. Other educational services for children, other types of services, from all neighbourhoods and the whole community (OECD, 2012).

In particular, the Toolbox is founded on an approach to participation that considers families and ECEC services as allies and co-authors of a common educational project for the child, within which they think, decide, plan and act together. Their active and dynamic collaboration is essential not only for the children's growth and learning but especially for a process of democratic participation within the community, in which everyone can actively contribute with their resources to the free and responsible co-construction of an educational project for children that is of political, social, pedagogical and cultural interest.



ANALYSIS OF PRACTICE EXPERIMENTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS' FEEDBACK PROCESS

The practices included in this Toolbox are the result of a *job shadowing* process: an in-service training method based on observation, which consists of following a colleague during his/her work (like a shadow). The method is also used in the professional development of teachers and practitioners. These activities were a fundamental phase of the whole project.

The *Job shadowing* activities involved a total of 45 educators and teachers from 11 services in 5 partner countries. The *job shadowing* process has been divided into two main phases:

- *Hosting* foreign guests;
- *Visiting* pre-school services abroad.

During the hosting phase, each participating country receives a delegation of colleagues from other countries in the partnership and hosts them in the local services whose participation practice had previously been presented.

The visit to services abroad has been divided into three moments:

- 1 Preparation, during which operators (of each country that takes part in the job shadowing activities) defined - initially at an international meeting and subsequently in their services - the objectives and a detailed plan for the visit. At this stage, operators alongside university researchers co-constructed the tools to support the job shadowing process.

2 Development, which consisted of pairs of colleagues from the same service traveling abroad to visit the services of the partners that they have previously hosted in their own country. During their stay abroad, educators and teachers critically observed and analyzed the participatory practices adopted locally, paying particular attention to their contextualization, design, implementation and evaluation within the institutional, political and educational system in which they were designed and developed. These practices were identified and considered by the individuals involved as relevant and innovative from an educational perspective, deserving to be tested in their context of origin and transferred. Throughout the observation phase, educators used an observation sheet and wrote a daily report on the activities carried out.

3 Self-evaluation of the job shadowing process was undertaken by the educators and teachers, using a specific qualitative tool.

The stages above were followed by the adaptation and testing of the family participation practices observed abroad which were considered innovative and worthy of being transferred and adapted.

Overall, 25 Participation practices were observed and tested, 15 of those practices were selected as the most significant by the interdisciplinary and international project coordination group and included in this Toolbox.

It is worth noting that the 15 practices presented here could legitimately appear already familiar or, at first sight, less significant if adopted in certain contexts and certain perspectives (pedagogical, social and cultural). It should be taken into consideration that the concept of an interesting and innovative participation practice from an educational point of view does not have to be understood in absolute terms. It should be done in relation to the knowledge and experiences shared by the groups of educators who have experienced the job shadowing activity; the know-how of other ECEC services in Europe; the specificity of their social, educational and cultural context, and of their culture of participation.

This means that a significant portion of the added value offered by the toolbox lies in the processes that led to the identification, design and contextualization of such

practices, as well as in the educational and training processes that such practices may trigger in new contexts where they might be implemented.

The experimentation phase was monitored and evaluated by the teams of researchers, within each partner country, gathering data through: semi-structured questionnaires to educators and parents, observation, analysis of documents developed by educational teams and focus groups.

During the project's final phase, the Toolbox and its contents were analysed by different stakeholders identified locally and nationally by each partner.

Numerous opportunities aimed at deepening stakeholders knowledge and analysis of the Toolbox have been created in the various countries, through presentations in plenary sessions, sessions in individual ECEC services, and discussions between small groups of ECEC professionals.

These meetings, albeit organized and conducted differently in the project's partner countries, had the common goal of gathering feedback on the Toolbox from its potential readers and users.

The result of this analysis and evaluation process was the overall collection of feedback, comments and suggestions made by stakeholders on a first draft of the toolbox and the modification of some parts of its aspects.

Altogether, the Toolbox has received very positive feedback, in particular for its inspirational power for ECEC services working groups services in terms of:

- Reflection, comparison, self-training on their ideas and practices about family participation.
- Analysis and review of their participation practices and, more generally, their approach to the design of educational practices in services.
- Experimenting with new family participation practices through motivation to look for viable ways of work contextualized and tailored to their needs, resources and educational goals.

This process has led to a revised version of the toolbox which got enriched by the substantial number of suggestions and inputs that make it relevant, operational and explorable in the daily activities of ECEC services throughout Europe.

The Equap Coordination Team



Enhancing **QUA**lity in early childhood
education and care through **P**articipation

TOOLBOX

A participation tool
for the family and family
services system

INSTRUCTIONS



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GUIDANCE NOTES

Contents description

This document presents a description of the two main contents of the Toolbox (Focus Areas and Participation sheets) and offers tips on how to read and interpret them.

Origin, purpose and characteristics of the four Focus Areas

The Focus Areas are thematic and conceptual areas which, grouped together, form a specific articulation of the concept of **participation**. Each of the four focuses on a specific element of interest in the concept of participation which makes them intrinsically linked, consistent between themselves and, at times, overlapping.

The four Focus Areas have been developed in the framework of the EQUAP project and aim to offer a close representation of the realities of participation in childcare services.

The specific articulation of such concept in four Focus Areas may not be valid for all settings. However, this is the specific articulation of the concept of participation that the EQUAP project has been conceived on. Furthermore, these four Focus Areas are what has led the work (obser-



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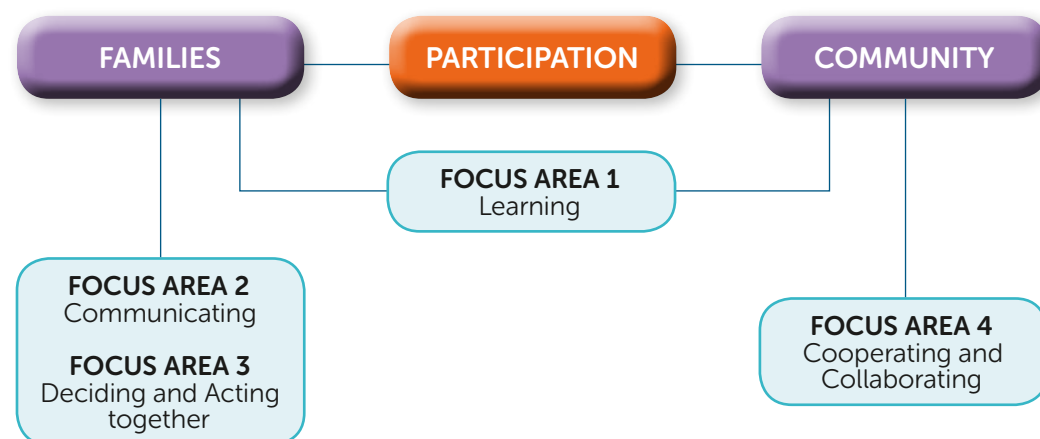


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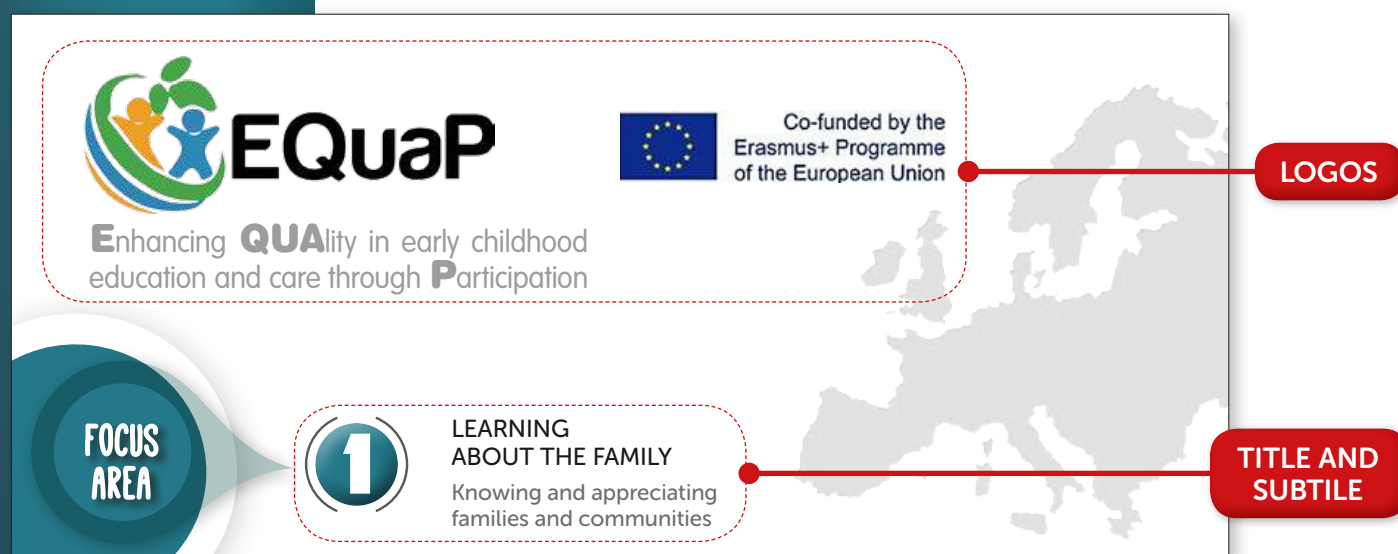
PAULA FRASSINETTI

vation and experimentation) of educators and teachers throughout the job shadowing process illustrated in the Toolbox introduction.
The articulation of the concept of participation in four Focus Areas has been identified, circumscribed, negotiated and shared by the project partners who have co-constructed the Toolbox, and it is presented below:



The concept of participation has been split into two dimensions:
1 the participation of **families** (in the activities of the educational service);
2 the participation of the **communities** (in the activities of the educational service).

The concept of **family participation** has in turn been articulated across three Focus areas) expressed by a **title** and a **subtitle**:

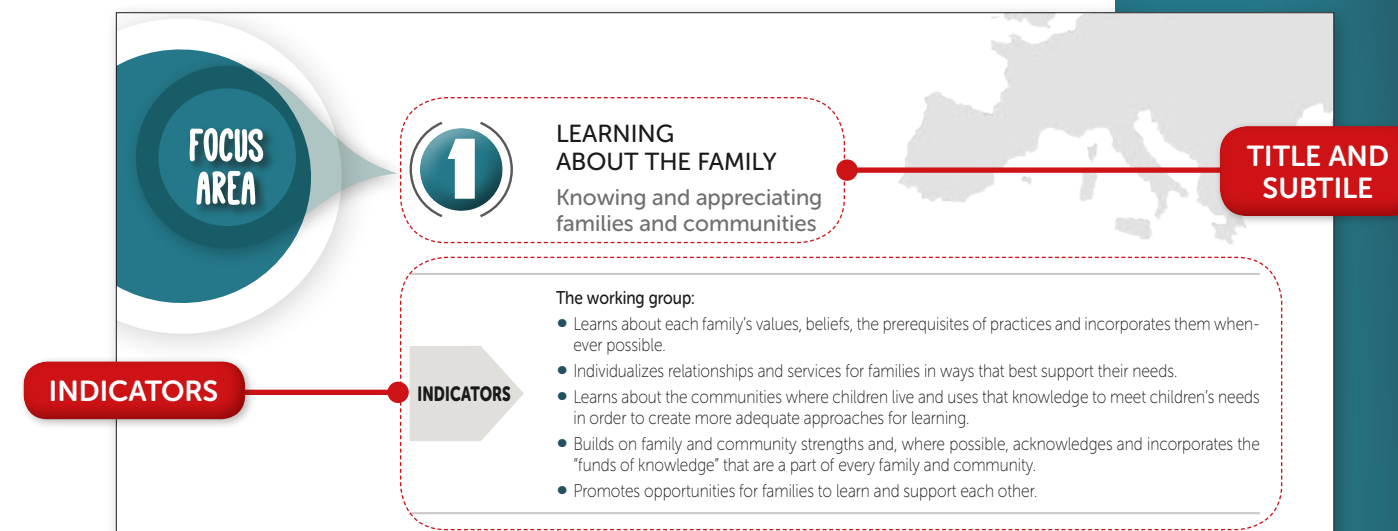


- Learning about the family - *Knowing and appreciating families and communities*
- Communicating with the family - *Sensitive, respectful, and reciprocal communication with families*
- Deciding and acting together with the family - *Partnership and sharing of decision-making responsibilities.*

The concept of **community participation** has, been articulated/ across two Focus areas:

- Learning about the family - *Knowing and appreciating families and communities*
- Cooperating and collaborating with the community - *Sharing educational responsibility with the community.*

Focus area 1 - Knowledge is shared through both family and community participation.
Each Focus area was, in turn, articulated into a series of **Indicators**.



These indicators have been conceived as concrete activities carried out by the working groups.

This means that the indicators are considered operational examples of the concept that gives the name to each Focus Area and this concept is expressed by the title and subtitle. In addition, each of the four Focus Areas is briefly described and presents a bibliography on the theme, which is inevitably short and restricted to the essential.

Finally, each Focus Area sheet lists a few examples of participation practices - included those tested by the EQUAP and related to the sheet's specific Focus Area.

These examples are listed in tables, where with 'source' describing where the specific participation practice has been observed/learned, and later tested or adapted.

PRACTICES

Each Practice sheet is divided into three parts:

- 1 A cover (front page) featuring an "overview" of the practice: it includes source (service in which the practice has been observed and service in which it has been tested), focus area, estimated time for implementation, main target group(s)
- 2 A description of the practice: which includes a loop chart, describing the phases included in the implementation process; a text listing seven key aspects of the practice.
- 3 Development Potential (final page): two sets of questions that are intended to promote reflection among ECEC staff on how to improve their service and the practice.





PRACTICE DESCRIPTION SECTIONS

General Objectives

Indication of the general objectives pursued by developing this Practice

PRACTICE DESCRIPTION

SUGGESTED STEPS TO ORGANIZING THE ACTIVITY

1 General goals of the activity

To promote knowledge and mutual trust between parents and educators in informal, serene and relaxed situations. Allow parents to acquire greater knowledge about different aspects of the nursery, with particular focus on its staff, other parents, activities that take place there and other educational opportunities connected to the services. Promote meetings and interactions between all toddlers' parents (not just those within each single section) to allow, comparisons between education and parenting experiences; as well as the creation/strengthening of a network of friends and opportunities for mutual support. For some parents, these may become important reference points in overcoming situations of isolation or deficient social integration.

2 Description of the activity

The activity consists of inviting parents (and other family members) to

visit the service (nursery school or preschool), and have breakfast with the children and other parents in a dedicated space, set up outside of the single sections. This breakfast is prepared by the service's kitchen. After entrusting the child to the teacher working in the section, parents find an informal situation, specifically arranged to give them the opportunity to talk to each other and with the service's operators, have a hot drink and taste the food prepared by the school's kitchen. The activity offers an opportunity to extend the children's reception process, eliminating the hurry to leave, at least on the specific day it takes place. Reception time is enriched by the possibility of acquiring

Parents arriving at the breakfast



further knowledge and engaging in conversation. It offers a tranquil moment and each individual steps for the time he/she likes or is able to afford. Breakfast with the Parents may be offered in one of the following formats:

7 Monitor and evaluate the practice with colleagues

6 Tidy-up

5 Breakfast with parents at children's arrival time

a Breakfast can take place within a single section, with the presence of two teachers and the children. It is an opportunity for parents and children to share a moment, which offers the following possibilities:

- It offers the opportunity for parents and other family members to observe their child's behavior in the school setting, the

1 Contextual adaptation and planning of the activity by the service's staff

4 Set up (day before and same day, before session)

relationships between children and between educators and children (how their child behaves at the nursery school and how teachers relate to him/her and the other children);

- It allows educators to observe the dynamics between parents and children and between different sets of parents.

b Breakfast can also be offered to all sections

2 Inform parents about the meeting through a variety of channels

3 Prepare all that is needed (day before)

together in a communal area. This way, it provides a moment that is open to the parents of all sections, enabling an extended socialization opportunity for families and service operators.

Remarks (issues to be aware of when implementing the activity)

This activity requires good organization within the working group.

The morning the activity is scheduled for, at least two teachers must be present during reception time (normally between 7.30 to 9 a.m.). This way, one of the teachers can take care of the children while the other dedicates time to the group of parents taking part in the breakfast. If the breakfast is organized for children and parents together, the children's presence needs to be taken into account when the area is prepared. Special attention ought to be given to disseminating the initiative, which should be publicized well in advance.

Role of the teacher

During this activity the teachers do not speak about individual children. They encourage communication between parents, balancing the moments when they remain in the background with those

when they intervene more directly, stimulating the conversation about educational topics in an informal way.

Role of the family

Parents have the opportunity to observe the space, materials, documentation, relationships etc. They can ask questions to the teachers, exchange and share opinions and experiences, get to know and talk with other parents and speak to the nursery school cook about food-related issues.

Added value for the child and the family

Through this practice, parents have the opportunity to get closer to nursery school's life and to people who work there, feel part of the services in a more tangible way and reduce the feeling that the services are something formal and distant. These practices also help to create and / or consolidate confidence in the services and in the people working there.

Role of the family

Description of the role played by the family and the Practice actions in which it engages

Added Value for the child and the family

Illustration of some strengths and benefits that can be identified for both children and the family through the implementation of the Practice

Description of activity

Description of the practice's main phases and actions

Remarks

A list of aspects which are useful to know about the Practice

Teacher's Role

Describes the role played by individual teachers / educators and / or the educational group in delivering the Practice

DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Materials to be used

Description of the materials that should be prepared to implement the Practice



It can foster a feeling of tranquility in entrusting one's children to the service, with positive effects on the children themselves. These moments give parents the opportunity to get to know and trust each other.

Materials to be used

Information about the activity is communicated and reminded verbally. Teachers need to pay particular attention to families who have difficulty understanding the language.

Guiding questions to reflect on the general improvement of the service

- Did the practice meet the needs from which it originated?
- In what way did the activity improve parent's participation?
- To what extent did the activity improve our professional development as a team?
- How did the activity affect the development of a relationship of trust with the parents?

GUIDING QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PRACTICE

- How many parents attended?
- How did parents react to the activity?
- What were the topics of their conversations? What were their questions?
- Did the parents verbally communicate their opinions about the breakfast?
- Did parents interact with their children with other children (if present) during the breakfast?
- Did the teachers facilitate the involvement of parents and the relationship between them?
- Did the teachers interact with all the parents of all involved sections? Or did they favour communication with some of them?

Questions for reflection and practice improvement

Suggestion of questions to guide teachers and educators within the working group to reflect in order to evaluate the Practice adopted - identifying strengths, weaknesses and aspects that may contribute to further improvement and re-design of the Practice

Questions for reflection on general service improvement

Suggestion of questions to guide teachers and educators within the working group to reflect in order to evaluate the Practice adopted - identifying broader implications, for example on their own professional development or on strengthening the participation dimension of their ECEC educational project

**FOCUS
AREA****1****LEARNING
ABOUT THE FAMILY**Knowing and appreciating
families and communities**INDICATORS****The working group:**

- Learns about each family's values, beliefs, the prerequisites of practices and incorporates them whenever possible.
- Individualizes relationships and services for families in ways that best support their needs.
- Learns about the communities where children live and uses that knowledge to meet children's needs in order to create more adequate approaches for learning.
- Builds on family and community strengths and, where possible, acknowledges and incorporates the "funds of knowledge" that are a part of every family and community.
- Promotes opportunities for families to learn and support each other.

The family is the key partner of all educational services with which educators are called to collaborate and act in synergy. This viewpoint refers to "The ecology of Human Development" by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979), is a widespread perspective that focuses on the relationship between human development and the context in which it occurs.

This theory emphasises that the process of interaction between two elements occurs during a long period of time and includes immediate surroundings, cultural patterns and bodies of knowledge.

Each growing individual is located at the centre of a **multitude of relationships**, which influence him/her and in turn are influenced by him/her.

What becomes relevant in this theory, in terms of impact on development, are not only the individual situations experienced by the child in its various environments of life, from those closest to those more distant from its direct presence, but also the interconnections between these environments.

The more the family and services are interconnected, the more the child's experiences will be consistent and positive in terms of development outcomes.

A close **interaction between services and families**, as well as ensuring continuity of the child's experiences, stimulates joint growth in terms of **awareness and educational intentionality**.

The first fundamental step for building this essential interconnection between is mutual knowledge, in other words the ability to welcome, accept, and appreciate **diversity as a resource** for all.

Educational and care services therefore plan different forms of relationships and meetings with families, aimed at fostering the exchange of information, dialogue, comparison, sharing of ideas, sharing of the educational project and involvement in the life of the services through reciprocity and inclusion of all the differences. It is important that the services adopt a plurality of languages and are careful to calibrate, as much as possible, the type of **approach according to the specific traits of each family**.

Welcoming families, recognizing them in **their different identities**, enabling them to collaborate on projects and initiatives, giving them the possibility to contribute in the planning and implementation of activities and events, and being really **open to include them**, allows those who work in the services to discover different aspects of the parents. This in turn **promotes parenting skills**, active citizenship and **builds new, unexpected and richer results**.

At the same time it allows families to feel valued, active and co-protagonists in the educational path taken by their children. Not just the parents group but the **entire community** in which the service is placed

is to be understood as an element with which **close ties** and **interconnections** are being woven.

This is a valuable resource for the design and development of **educational planning** and for the **growing together of children, parents and teachers**.

For this reason, the service providers need to show parents the educational opportunities and services available.

For this purpose, what is needed is professional competence that is aware of its own limits and knows where to turn with different types of problems.

To promote the development of parenting skills, services should increase the opportunities for discussions on educational practices in various areas, between parents and professionals, between parents and external experts and among parents.

Educational and care services should promote the dissemination of information related to services for families in the area, and in general take action to overcome social and psychological isolation that many families experience in the context of contemporary social history.

Families play an important role in educating and supporting their children. The quality of parenting is the most important factor in preparing children for a safe, healthy and productive future.

Educational and care services, should however, directly plan cultural and / or aggregation initiatives and promote those organized by other institutions in the area, collaborating in networks that have dual objectives.

These are: **to support and develop families' skills and resources; and to encourage** the construction of informal mutual support networks.

The above leads to **positive relationships between educational institutions, families, and communities** and provides families with services and support, which **increases parents' awareness and involvement** while **creating a tight network within the community**.

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Luciano E., Participation: an essential value. Principle 4. A Children in Europe Policy paper - Young children and their services: developing a European approach, 2016.

Examples of practices related to these Focus Area and identified or tested in the framework of the EQUAP project are:

TITLE OF THE PRACTICE	TESTED	SOURCE
Breakfast with parents	Forlì Municipality (IT)	Elmer (BE)
Our little blanket for all	Vrtec (SI)	Elmer (BE)
Hand in hand	Vrtec (SI)	Elmer (BE)
Bank hours	Colegio do Sardo (PT)	Forlì Municipality (IT)
Parents share their emotions about the first weeks in the baby-group	Elmer (BE)	Forlì Municipality (IT)
Creative workshop	Municipality of Linköping (SE)	Vrtec (SI)
Parents' council	Municipality of Linköping (SE)	Liepāja (LV)
The mediator character spends week-ends in families	Forlì Municipality (IT)	Colegio do Sardo (PT)
Spring Festival	Municipality of Linköping (SE)	Vrtec (SI)

**FOCUS
AREA****2****COMMUNICATING WITH THE FAMILY**Sensitive, respectful
and reciprocal communication
with families**INDICATORS****The working group:**

- Engages in continuous, interactive communication with parents/families to share information about the child's experiences, health and needs.
- Takes time to listen to the family carefully and without judgement.
- Uses various ways to communicate with families that include their language and communication preferences.
- Maintains confidentiality on all information about the child and its family.
- Manages difference of opinion and supplies information to the family, enabling parents to support the achievements leading to positive outcomes for the child.

The family's need to be fully involved in all aspects of their child's education and care is undeniable, as stated in the European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2016). In order to achieve this goal, it is crucial to create the conditions for a friendly environment, marked by trust and openness between the family and the child's educators and in this way guarantee effective partnership and communication. "Parenting the teachers" and "teaching the parents" (Silva, 2003) is the result obtained through cooperation and close communication between families and educators. Parents and families are the child's first educators. They know their child best. By establishing and nurturing genuine communication with the families, we can all gain advantages. The main factor for successful communication is without doubt mutual trust. When working side-by-side with families, educators should engage in a **thorough communication with them so as to share information about their children's experiences, health and needs, contributing to joint interventions that support the children's overall development, while respecting their uniqueness.** Educators face many challenges in their daily relationship with families. In these relationships different cultures coexist as do different types of family structures. The communication that the services have to establish with the parents/families also requires time and affective availability on behalf of all educators: they have to be able to **listen to the concerns, desires and expectations of each parent and each family.**

Time is a very important factor in the communication with parents. The time when children arrive to the nursery school/pre-school in the morning and leave in the afternoon is intended solely for the exchange of basic information about the child. The educator must know how to listen and also understand the parents' desire for a more comprehensive discussion and recognise when to dedicate more time to them. A parent should then have the opportunity to talk to the educator who will be able to attend to their wishes, doubts, problems....

This communication method, at the basis of the school-family relationship, highlights the importance of the intellectual, technical, relational and moral dimension in the profile of a childhood educator. The intellectual and technical dimensions refer to the fact that the educator needs to be a connoisseur and specialist in knowledge issues, the relational dimension is linked to the educator as agent for human development (Formosinho, 2001) and the moral dimension is related to interactions with others, namely, families: how we treat them, how we listen to them and the respect and attention we give them (Neves, 2015). So, briefly, it is the educator's responsibility to attentively and actively listen to parents and families. The educator has of course to **refrain from value judgments or criticism in order to establish an interaction in which both parties are understood as educational partners.**

For an effective communication that is open to cultural diversity, family resources and availability, the **possibility of using a vari-**

ety of ways to communicate can be very useful. The communication channels adopted and made available by professionals of the early childhood services can be digital, written notes or formal or informal face-to-face meetings. The different channels can be used jointly and should be chosen according to the families' preferences and the content of the information to be communicated.

The communication strategies adopted should ensure that all of the information is received by all families especially those who, for example, have a different first language. It is therefore important that early childhood educators promote regular communication about the progress, interests, needs and daily experiences of children by selecting means which enable the interaction with families to be carried out easily and in a timely and effective manner. The educators have to understand that this interaction should be a dialogic and bilateral process in which educators and families together share and discuss information concerning the children (cf. Fevorini & Lomônaco II, 2009). Engaging families in educational contexts implies the use of means that allow both parties to understand each other, since communication is the tool that enables the school-family relationship (Bhering & Siraj-Blatchford, 1999; Bhering & De Nez, 2002).

Maintaining confidentiality on all information about the child and its family is extremely important for the quality of the relationship between the families and the professionals. At the basis of this principle we find ethical reasons, respect for individual

privacy, and reasons linked to the importance of fostering a relationship of trust that facilitates and promotes the exchange of information, which is relevant for the achievement of the aims of the activities carried out with the children.

The educator must constantly keep in mind that he or she works with very vulnerable people. On the one hand we have the children and on the other hand their families. The educator is often seen as a person they can trust and open up to, because they know that the information shared will not be misused and the educator will try to help them. According to the educator's competences, he or she will attempt to direct parents to the appropriate services, which will help solve possible problems.

The sharing of information on children and families, which is sometimes useful among education professionals, must have received the consent of the family and should always aim to bring benefits to the children. A communication culture, based on the establishment of an effective trust partnership between families and education professionals, facilitates transitions and educational continuity between contexts and thus generates benefits for the children (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2016).

The diversity of opinions and perspectives between the families, the school and the professionals connected to the education of the child (psychologists, nutritionists...) must be regarded as the great potential that allows the construction of a safe and shared educational space within the community. The exchange, discussion, and often comparison

of opinions are an integral part of building an educational community that feels really alive. On the other hand, imposing a strong opinion, for example that of a professional, on other opinions (of families...), is a practice that is still very common in the school environment but that gradually but steadily should be eradicated.

Educators are often mediators between parents who have different views and aspirations in the education of their children. While communicating, it is important that people respect each other and that each participant has the opportunity to freely express his or her opinions. Furthermore, the educator should set a good example through his or her conduct and actions.

The role of the school (and the educator) should therefore consist in welcoming all opinions and allowing them to be discussed in order to **"adapt" the school system to the needs of the children.** In other words, the educational community must rebuild itself and adapt to the diversities it consists of. The school/educator should act as an open platform, capable of receiving opinions, perspectives and experiences from different parties and in different forms, and thereafter including them in the work in a way that leads to changes and benefits for the children. Thus, the children, that are the essence of the educational process, benefit from the new management of the school and its development into a safe and inclusive educational system which is constructed in a free, democratic and shared way, through transparent and open communication.

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Examples of practices related to these Focus Area and identified or tested in the framework of the EQUAP project are:

TITLE OF THE PRACTICE	TESTED	SOURCE
Breakfast with parents	Forlì Municipality (IT)	Elmer (BE)
Participation Committee	Forlì Municipality (IT)	Elmer (BE)
Bank hours	Colegio do Sardo (PT)	Forlì Municipality (IT)
School market	Colegio do Sardo (PT)	Vrtec (SI)
Parents share their emotions about the first weeks in the baby-group	Elmer (BE)	Forlì Municipality (IT)
Creative workshop	Municipality fo Linköping (SE)	Vrtec (SI)
Parents council	Municipality fo Linköping (SE)	Liepaja (LV)
The mediator character spends week-ends in families	Forlì Municipality (IT)	Colegio do Sardo (PT)
Spring Festival	Municipality fo Linköping (SE)	Vrtec (SI)

FOCUS AREA



DECIDING AND ACTING TOGETHER WITH THE FAMILY

Partnership and sharing
decision-making responsibilities

INDICATORS

The working group:

- Promotes activities in the services that families are invited to participate in.
- Ensures each family's rights and responsibilities to be involved in the decision-making process.
- Takes the final decision about the child's development, learning, wellbeing and services offered together with the family.
- Incorporates and respects families' specific goals, needs and cultural practices. Upon mutual agreement it modifies routines in order to enhance continuity between the home and other settings.
- Strengthens and reinforces parenting practices while offering evidence-based parenting education and support when necessary.
- Promotes the involvement and engagement of parents and other family members in the child's care and learning.

Talking about parents participating (more) in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), means talking about a whole range of events, **activities and decision-making processes in which parents are involved**, in one way or another.

It's not always a one-off activity with a clear beginning and/or end but rather a process, designed and shaped together by ECEC services and parents. The process aims at building and strengthening the partnerships necessary for the education of young children while sharing the decision making power.

The main interest and responsibility of both parents and educators is **the children's wellbeing**, their opportunity to develop, learn and engage in meaningful relationships and be taken care of.

To achieve this common goal it is essential that parents and professionals work together.

(By "parents" we mean mothers and fathers, legal guardians and of course other family members that can play an important role in a child's life. Where young children are concerned, it is equally important to involve fathers as well as mothers.

Working together with parents and considering them partners in the decision-making process can be a win-win situation.

- Getting parents involved in different ways helps to build bonds between the child's home life setting and the ECEC services. This can contribute to the child's wellbeing, improve its sense of belonging and make him or her feel safe.

- Parents can get familiar with the ECEC setting and express their opinion on how their children are being cared for or supported while growing up. They can also feel they receive support from the professionals.

- Professionals can learn a lot about the children they work with every day from the parents. They can learn what the children's home life is like and what the parents consider important in raising their children.

The more we cooperate the more mutual trust and growing commitment we will achieve which can only influence the ECEC work in a positive way.

Acting together and sharing the decision-making responsibility are interlinked. 'Acting together' is about how the ECEC service can be better aligned with the children's life at home by working and communicating with the parents. This kind of improved continuity is important for children. To feel safe and comfortable, they shouldn't experience big gaps between

their life at home, in childcare or in preschool. **The roles of parents and professionals are important in the process of sharing expertise, feelings and convictions about raising children.**

Some of the "acting together" initiatives are formal, others informal. Some deal with children individually, others with the more structural way of working. Some are direct, others indirect. The work carried out is a pedagogical partnership not a struggle about who has the power.

The challenge is to design and implement participation models and methods, and to keep questioning these together: do they match the expectations of the involved parties? Do they work and change things for the better? Do parents and professionals feel comfortable with these models and methods? Do different talents and competences get addressed and used?

There are no perfect models, and different types of activities and events can be meaningful in different ways. For example, organising a party to which parents and family members are invited can be a very nice way to spend time and have fun together, even when parents were not involved in the decision-making process.

There are, however, more formal settings in which parents are officially involved in the

decision-making, as in parent councils or if parents are members of the Board of Directors of the organisation.

Both examples can lead to positive results and increase parents' involvement, but they can also be set up in a more symbolic way and have no good results whatsoever. The positive outcome of an activity depends on the development, the design, the perception of parents as educators, the attitude and the actual will to see parent's involvement as something positive.

Some issues are relevant and have to be taken into account when acting together and sharing the decision-making responsibilities:

- Being authentic and respectful. For example, don't ask for parents' opinions if you won't take them into account or if you don't explain to them why some of their suggestions or ideas are impossible.
- Invite parents to get engaged in issues that they are interested in or activities to which they can offer added value to. E.g. some parents like to work on practical

things, like refurbishing a building, others will be more likely to engage in council meetings. Different levels of involvement and different methods should be used in different contexts.

This way, all parents can get involved in one way or another and no one will feel excluded.

- Be willing to really engage in dialogue, look for ways to solve possible conflicts in a positive way, work towards solutions that are agreed upon by all parties involved.
 - Be open and transparent about how your institution is being managed, what the pedagogical project is, why certain choices have been made.
 - Make parents feel welcome and show them that you care about their feelings, routines, culture, etc. If they do not really feel that, there is very little chance that they will get involved.
 - Parent participation is not an ad hoc activity. It must be embedded in an open and participatory climate within the institution and among the professionals.
- During the Equap project, partners have

learned from each other thanks to the exchange of experiences and very concrete initiatives focusing on parents' involvement. They have exchanged practices on different 'joint actions' and introduced some of these practices in their own work contexts.

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Examples of practices related to these Focus Area and identified or tested in the framework of the EQUAP project are:

TITLE OF THE PRACTICE	EXPERIMENTED IN	SOURCE
Participation Committee	Forlì Municipality (IT)	Elmer (BE)
Our little blanket for all	Vrtec (SI)	Elmer (BE)
Creative workshop	Municipality of Linköping (SE)	Vrtec (SI)
Parents' council	Municipality of Linköping (SE)	Liepāja (LV)
Garden project: design, carry out and maintain the outdoor space	Elmer (BE)	Colegio do Sardo (PT); Vrtec (SI)
Meeting at the end of the school year	Vrtec (SI)	Elmer (BE)
Spring Festival	Municipality of Linköping (SE)	Vrtec (SI)
Sowing	Colegio do Sardo (PT)	Vrtec (SI)

FOCUS AREA

4

COOPERATING AND COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Sharing educational responsibilities
with the community

INDICATORS

The working group:

- Ensures seamless transitions when cooperating with different services to support families.
- Actively engages local communities to promote children's and families' rights through community outreach and advocacy activities.
- Creates opportunities for community members to be involved and participate in early childhood services' activities.
- Recognises that young children are part of the communities that play a vital role in their early childhood experiences.

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is an important and vital part of the whole education system but can also be recognized as a key element in the process of life-long learning (Pramling Samuelsson & Sheridan, 2006). Strengthening the ECEC role in the community with the help of different cooperative and collaborative partnerships can be seen as something **positive, both for children and parents but also for the society as a whole**. According to Bronfenbrenner's theory of "The ecology of human development", the process of development is shaped by the **interaction** between the individual and the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

For families the ECEC services often plays a central role in their daily life.

The activities that are described in the toolbox aim to connect the family, the ECEC and different services in society. One example of this connection is inviting a variety of different professions into the preschool-services.

Getting involved and gaining knowledge about the ECEC services is important,

both for the ECEC as an educational practice and for strengthening the social structure of a local community.

Several of the examples in the toolbox highlight the opportunities of meetings between young and old.

They can also create a **feeling of belonging** that is shared by people from the same local community.

Furthermore, children and their parents can create connections with the world outside the nursery school and preschool services.

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, children are seen as full citizens with civil rights, which means that they should be able to make themselves heard on all issues that affect them (UNICEF, 2016).

In order to be able to exercise influence it is important that young children get familiar with the society that surrounds them.

To enable this, children and their families need to learn about the community and how to have access to different resources. They also need to learn that children are

recognized by the community as important citizens.

The community also has to **encourage children to be a part of the initiatives and decision-making activities in their area**, for examples, in connection to the creation of outdoor playgrounds.

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Examples of practices related to these Focus Area and identified or tested in the framework of the EQUaP project are:

TITLE OF THE PRACTICE	TESTED	SOURCE
Participation Committee	Forlì Municipality (IT)	Elmer (BE)
Hand in hand	Vrtec (SI)	Elmer (BE)
Intergenerational exchange in the neighbourhood	Elmer (BE)	Vrtec (SI)
Garden project: design, carry out and maintain the outdoor space	Elmer (BE)	Colegio do Sardao (PT); Vrtec (SI)
Spring Festival	Municipality of Linköping (SE)	Vrtec (SI)
Sowing	Colegio do Sardao (PT)	Vrtec (SI)



EQuaP

Enhancing **Q**UAlity in early childhood education and care through **P**articipation



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PRACTICE

Breakfast with parents

OVERVIEW

Source: Elmer (BE)

Adapted and tested by Nido Piccolo Blu (Forlì Municipality - IT)



FOCUS
AREAS

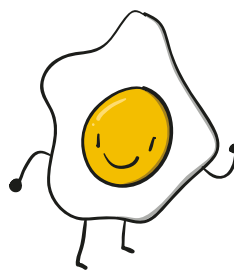
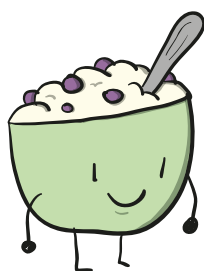
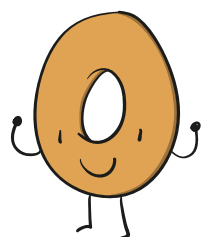
- Learning about the family
- Communicating with the family

APPROX. TIME
NEEDED TO CARRY OUT
THE ACTIVITY

- 21 hours, in 90 minutes sessions

MAIN TARGET
GROUP

- Activity can be proposed to nursery or preschool levels. It can involve just parents or parents and children



1 General goals of the activity

To promote knowledge and mutual trust between parents and educators in informal, serene and relaxed situations. Allow parents to acquire greater knowledge about different aspects of the nursery, with particular focus on its staff, other parents, activities that take place there and other educational opportunities connected to the services. Promote meetings and interactions between all toddlers' parents (not just those within each single section) to allow, comparisons between education and parenting experiences; as well as the creation/strengthening of a network of friends and opportunities for mutual support. For some parents, these may become important reference points in overcoming situations of isolation or deficient social integration.

2 Description of the activity

The activity consists of inviting parents (and other family members) to

visit the service (nursery school or preschool), and have breakfast with the children and other parents in a dedicated space, set up outside of the single sections. This breakfast is prepared by the service's kitchen. After entrusting the child to the teacher working in the section, parents find an informal situation, specifically arranged to give them the opportunity to talk to each other and with the service's operators, have a hot drink and taste the food prepared by the school's kitchen. The activity offers an opportunity to extend the children's reception process, eliminating the hurry to leave, at least on the specific day it takes place. Reception time is enriched by the possibility of acquiring

further knowledge and engaging in conversation. It offers a tranquil moment and each individual stops for the time he/she likes or is able to afford.

Breakfast with the Parents may be offered in one of the following formats:

7
Monitor and evaluate the practice with colleagues

6
Tidy-up

5
Breakfast with parents at children's arrival time

a Breakfast can take place within a single section, with the presence of two teachers and the children. It is an opportunity for parents and children to share a moment, which offers the following possibilities:

- It offers the opportunity for parents and other family members to observe their child's behavior in the school setting, the

Parents arriving at the breakfast



ORGANIZING THE ACTIVITY

1

Contextual adaptation and planning of the activity by the service's staff

2

Inform parents about the meeting through a variety of channels

3

Prepare all that is needed (day before)

4

Set up (day before and same day, before session)

relationships between children and between educators and children (how their child behaves at the nursery school and how teachers relate to him/her and the other children);

- It allows educators to observe the dynamics between parents and children and between different sets of parents.

b Breakfast can also be offered to all sections

together in a communal area. This way, it provides a moment that is open to the parents of all sections, enabling an extended socialization opportunity for families and service operators.



Remarks
(issues to be aware of when implementing the activity)

This activity requires good organization within the working group.

The morning the activity is scheduled for, at least two teachers must be present during reception time (normally between 7.30 to 9 a.m.). This way, one of the teachers can take care of the children while the other dedicates time to the group of parents taking part in the breakfast. If the breakfast is organized for children and parents together, the children's presence needs to be taken into account when the area is prepared. Special attention ought to be given to disseminating the initiative, which should be publicized well in advance.



Role of the teacher

During this activity the teachers do not speak about individual children. They encourage communication between parents, balancing the moments when they remain in the background with those

when they intervene more directly, stimulating the conversation about educational topics in an informal way.



Role of the family

Parents have the opportunity to observe the space, materials, documentation, relationships etc. They can ask questions to the teachers, exchange and share opinions and experiences, get to know and talk with other parents and speak to the nursery school cook about food-related issues.



Added value for the child and the family

Through this practice, parents have the opportunity to get closer to nursery school's life and to people who work there, feel part of the services in a more tangible way and reduce the feeling that the services are something formal and distant. These practices also help to create and / or consolidate confidence in the services and in the people working there.



During breakfast...



... parents talk to each other and with teachers



It can foster a feeling of tranquility in entrusting one's children to the service, with positive effects on the children themselves. These moments give parents the opportunity to get to know and trust each other.

Materials to be used

Information about the activity is communicated and reminded verbally. Teachers need to pay particular attention to families who have difficulty understanding the language.

Guiding questions to reflect on the general improvement of the service

- Did the practice meet the needs from which it originated?
- In what way did the activity improve parent's participation?
- To what extent did the activity improve our professional development as a team?
- How did the activity affect the development of a relationship of trust with the parents?

GUIDING QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PRACTICE

- How many parents attended?
- How did parents react to the activity?
- What were the topics of their conversations? What were their questions?
- Did the parents verbally communicate their opinions about the breakfast?
- Did parents interact with their children with other children (if present) during the breakfast?
- Did the teachers facilitate the involvement of parents and the relationship between them?
- Did the teachers interact with all the parents of all involved sections? Or did they favour communication with some of them?





Enhancing **QUALITY** in early childhood education and care through **P**articipation



Co-funded by the
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PRACTICE

Participation Committee

OVERVIEW

Source: Elmer (BE)
Adapted and tested by Family Center Forlì Municipality (IT)



FOCUS AREAS

- Deciding and acting together with the family
- Cooperating and collaborating with the community

APPROX. TIME NEEDED TO CARRY OUT THE ACTIVITY

- 4-6 meetings during the year of two/three hours each

MAIN TARGET GROUP

- This project involves only adults



1 General goals of the activity

Involvement of parents, teachers, operators and pedagogical coordinators of ECEC services in the design and programming of the Family Centre activities:

- Gather information about needs, questions, requests, beliefs and proposals of families and children from 0 to 10 years living in the area.
- Promote the involvement of parents and educational staff in the decision-making process. Parents are no longer just seen as people who use the services but they become an important part of the project.
- Plan and promote activities according to parents' needs.

2 Description of the activity

The activity is divided into three different work phases:

- 1 Establishment of the **Participation Committee** and identification of its components.

- 2 Start of the activities of the Committee, which has the role of programming and designing the Family Centre activities.

- 3 Assessment and verification of the program developed by the Committee and offered to families.

- 4 Committee members internal assessment of the working group process.

The **Participation Committee** is currently composed as follows:

- 4/5 parents who have participated in different projects of the Family Centre (Stork Groups, meetings, workshops and parents and children activities, self-help groups, etc.) are selected on a voluntary basis and without representative status;
 - 2/3 parents who do not attend the Family Centre but have children in nursery school, preschool or primary school (one of them is also a member of a parents association and participates as representative of the community);
 - 4 teachers from nursery school and preschool;
 - 2 pedagogical coordinators of ECEC services;
 - 2/3 educators/ professionals representing the different areas related to the Family Centre.
- Parents are informed of the possibility to take part in the Committee and receive information from the Family Centre operators and the teachers of the nursery services. All parents can choose to be part of the Committee, as long as they consider it

useful and interesting. The Committee has an “open” structure; it is always open to new members.

Parents who are part of the Committee have joined voluntarily and they do not participate as representatives of a specific group or educational service. Their opinion is listened to as parents with children of different ages (from infants to 10 years old).



ORGANIZING THE ACTIVITY

1

Contextual adaptation and planning of the activity by the service's staff

2

Presentation of the project to managers and politicians

3

Identification of committee members

4

Constitution and settlement of the Participation Committee



Remarks
(issues to be aware of when implementing the activity)

It is important to immediately inform parents about possibilities

and limits. The Family Centre is part of the Municipality of Forlì and is therefore also subject to the constraints and guidelines issued by the local administration. Once embarked on the road of participatory planning the operators must be willing to listen to parents' opinions both during the planning and evaluation phase.

and acknowledge doubts, questions, proposals, requests etc. Teachers and Family Centre operators are also responsible for securing that the institutional constraints within which the Committee operates are respected.

5 Role of the family

Parents who are part of the Committee are active parties in this way of planning. They are stakeholders of the activities and services offered by the Family Centre and they get to know and meet other parents with which they can discuss doubts, needs and difficulties.



4 Role of the teacher

Teachers and Family Centre operators take part in the Committee, contributing with their specific points of view. They are privileged observers of children and of families' needs. They observe the relationships

The Committee meets 4/6 times a year. It plans and programs activities that are organized by the Family Centre for parents and children, and for parents only. The parents that are Committee members make proposals, compare their opinions with operators and teachers and together evaluate the proposals made to the families at local level.



Parents discuss to design SOS Parents program

6 Added value for the child and the family

The Committee aims at offering activities and services that are more in line with the needs of its end-users but does also provide an opportunity to enhance knowledge about ECEC and to develop new proposals for children's education and quality of life.

7 Materials to be used

The meetings are convened by email and we use a meeting room inside the Family Centre with chairs arranged in a circle.



Parents discuss and plan

8 Guiding questions to reflect on the general improvement of the service

- Did the practice meet the needs from which it originated?
 - In what way did the activity improve the participation of the parents?
 - To what extent did the activity improve our professional development as a team?
- How did the activity affect the development of the relationship of trust with the parents?



GUIDING QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PRACTICE

- How did parents react to the invitation to the Participation Committee?
- Did parents, teachers and professionals participate in the planned meetings?
- Were the participants active during the meetings? Did parents actively propose issues and problems or did they only discuss topics proposed by professionals?
- During the evaluation did the participants confirm that they felt involved and listened to during the designing phase?
- How did parents react to the institutional constraints?



EQuaP

Enhancing **Q**UaLity in early childhood education and care through **P**articipation



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PRACTICE

Intergenerational exchange in the neighbourhood

Source: Vrtec (SI)
Adapted and tested by Elmer (BE)

OVERVIEW



*Young children
and elderly share
moments of fun*

FOCUS
AREAS

- Cooperating and collaborating with the community

APPROX. TIME
NEEDED TO CARRY OUT
THE ACTIVITY

- 2 hours

MAIN TARGET
GROUP

- Children, elderly people, teachers, parents



The elderly look out for the children to visit and play together



1 General goals of the activity

To strengthen the social structure of a neighbourhood, town, city for young and old. To create an opportunity of conversation and encounter between young and old. To bring together groups of people who share the same neighbourhood. To be part of activities that can be fun both for young children and for the elderly.

2 Description of the activity

First of all it is important to get to know the different services in the

neighbourhood. Once contact has been made with (e.g.) a service for the elderly it is possible to plan the exchange activities. Every 2 weeks the toddlers go to the home for elderly people and carry out motor or psychomotor activities together with the elderly. The children gather around 9.30am and walk or use a stroller to get to the activity. For every 2 children there is one adult. Parents are also invited to join the activity. Upon arrival, the children and the elderly meet in the psychomotor room. Both the entertainers / therapists of the elderly

and the teachers are present and one of them organizes the activities. After an hour the children go back to the nursery school.

First contact between children and elderly



7

Evaluate the activity

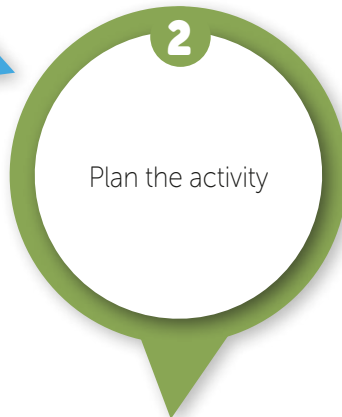
6


Visit the home and carry out the motor activities

5

Bring material for motor activity

ORGANIZING THE ACTIVITY



 **Remarks**
(issues to be aware of when implementing the activity)

A home for elderly people is often very eager to have some entertainment for the residents.

It can be an opportunity for children and elderly to do activities together. The elderly could also come and visit the daycare center. The residents are counting the days till the children get back.

With nice weather, the activity can be organized in the outdoor space of the service. This kind of cooperation can also be organized with an organisation for people with disabilities.



Motricity for both children and elderly



4 Role of the teacher

The teacher takes active part in the activity. He or she joins the children on the walk to the home for elderly people and organizes the motor activities for the children and the elderly.

5 Role of the family

Parents are asked to actively participate in the activity with their children. The more adults there are to guide the children, the more children are able to participate.

6 Added value for the child and the family

Children and their parents make connections with the world outside of the nursery school. The world of elderly people becomes more familiar.

7 Materials to be used

For the walk to the elderly home, a trolley can be very useful. In case of rain, waterproof



Playing together, everyone with their own possibilities

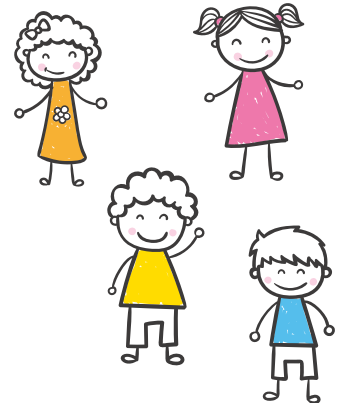
outdoor clothes are necessary. Depending on what activities are planned, specific materials will be needed, e.g. hoops, recycled materials, music, etc.

8 Dissemination and involvement of the community, if relevant

By documenting this activity other partners can join the exchange. A nearby school for youngsters with learning problems can (e.g.) help to organize the walk between the nursery school and the home for elderly people.

9 Guiding questions to reflect on the general improvement of the service

- In what way did the activity improve the participation of the parents?
- To what extent did the activity improve our professional development as a team?
- How did the activity affect the development of the relationship of trust with the parents?



GUIDING QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PRACTICE

- Did the activity meet the goals?
- How did the parents and other participants react to the activity?
- Can the activity be repeated in the future? What adaptations should be made?





Enhancing **Q**Uality in early childhood education and care through **P**articipation



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PRACTICE

Parents share their emotions
about the first weeks in the baby-group



OVERVIEW

Source: Family Center Forli Municipality (IT)
Adapted and tested by Elmer (BE)



*Parents share their
feelings during the first
weeks in the daycare*

FOCUS AREAS

- Learning about the family
- Communicating with the family

APPROX. TIME NEEDED TO CARRY OUT THE ACTIVITY

- Preparation: few weeks; activity: 3 hours

MAIN TARGET GROUP

- Parents of children who start in the daycare





1 General goals of the activity (Why should I use this activity?)

The goals of this activity are to give parents the opportunity to share their emotions about the first weeks their baby stayed in the nursery school. That way they understand that other parents have similar feelings and emotions and feel supported. During this exchange they also get to know more about the nursery school.

the group why he or she felt personally connected to this word during the child's first weeks in the nursery school. This leads to an active exchange between the parents. After this discussion, the film clips of every baby are shown and the parents can feel as a fly on the wall seeing how their baby is doing in the nursery school. The "parent café" ends with a drink and a snack together with the children.



2 Description of the activity

During the weeks before the "parent café", movies are made of every baby in the group, showing the daily life in the nursery school.

The parents are actively invited to come to the "parent café", which is organized at the end of a day and starts at about 5 pm. Using keywords in different languages, each parent is asked to pick a keyword and tell

Using key-words in different languages



7

Evaluate the activity: see questions below

6

Carry out parent café, from 5 pm to 7 pm

5

Set up: blanket, keywords in different languages

ORGANIZING THE ACTIVITY

1
Plan the activity



2
Actively involve the parents

Remarks
(issues to be aware of when implementing the activity)

It is very important for the teachers to be present in order to ensure that parents know how crucial their role in nursery school is, for both the parents and their babies. During the activity, it can be positive to organize "babysitting" for the babies, so the parents are

really at ease to share their emotions. For parents speaking only a foreign language it is important to invite an interpreter, being another parent, a coworker or someone else. Be aware that a film clip of every child has to be prepared. This activity can be organized for every age between 0 and 6 years, whenever children start in a new group.

3
Prepare film clips of every baby



4
Actively invite the parents

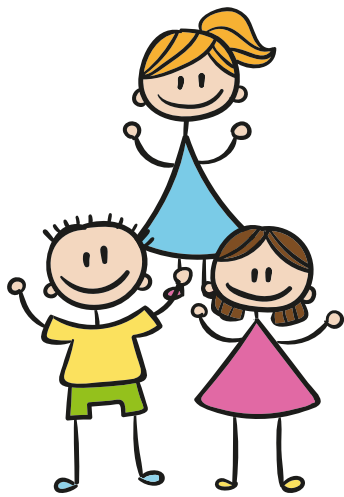
4 Role of the teacher

After having prepared the activity, one of the teachers should act as a facilitator, taking care of the process. The teacher has a background role. At times he/she can add his/her own experiences with the baby. This supports the idea of co-educating the children.

5 Role of the family

In this activity parents are the actors. They open up, express their feelings and share them with other parents. Often those





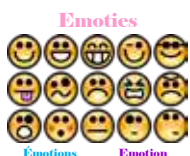
feelings are common.
This makes parents feel understood and supported and improves interaction.

6 Added value for the child and the family

Parents feel more involved in the daily life of the baby. They can see and better understand how a day in the nursery school really unfolds. It gives a feeling of confidence and trust. This also influences the wellbeing of the baby.

7 Materials to be used

- Invitation letter.
- Keywords in different languages.
- Film clips of every child in the group.
- Babysitting.
- Drinks and snacks.



Also fathers feel very involved in the activity



8 Guiding questions to reflect on the general improvement of the service

- In what way did the activity improve the participation of the parents?
- To what extent did the activity improve our professional development as a team?
- How did the activity affect the development of the relationship of trust with the parents?



Ervaring

Expérience
Experience

GUIDING QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PRACTICE

- Did the practice meet the goals?
- How did parents react to the activity?
- Can the activity be repeated in the future? What adaptations should be made?





Enhancing **QUALITY** in early childhood education and care through **P**articipation



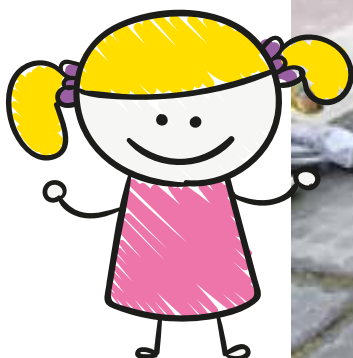
Co-funded by the
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PRACTICE

Bank hours

OVERVIEW

Source: Forlì Municipality (IT)
Adapted and tested by Colegio do Sardao (PT)



FOCUS
AREAS

- Cooperative and collaborative partnerships with the community

APPROX. TIME
NEEDED TO CARRY OUT
THE ACTIVITY

- Approximately 1 hour, in the afternoon

MAIN TARGET
GROUP

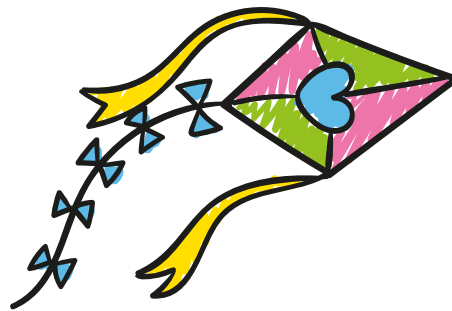
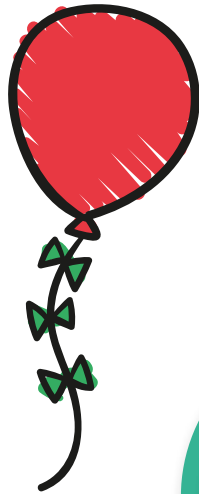
- This activity is offered to parents of preschool children (3, 4, 5 years old)

1 General goals of the activity (Why should I use this activity?)

Invite parents to spend time with their children and friends in the preschool setting, in order to get to know each others.

- Promote activities in the services where families are invited to participate.
- Incorporate and respect the specific objectives, needs and cultural practices of the families. By mutual agreement modify routines in order to allow continuity between school and family settings.
- Ensure each family's right to be involved in the decision-making process concerning the services provided for their children's development, leaning and welfare.
- Strengthen and enhance parenting practices, providing support and parental education when necessary.
- Promote the involvement and dedication of parents

- and other family members in the care and education of children.
- Create opportunities for community members to get involved and participate in early childhood education center activities.
- Recognize that the function of all the activities created through this practice is to foster the children's wellbeing at school.



6

Evaluation of activity

5

The parent led activity should be conducted between 4:45 pm and 5:45 pm

4

On the day, parents should arrive earlier in order to make the arrangements needed (i.e. space and materials)

ORGANIZING THE ACTIVITY

1

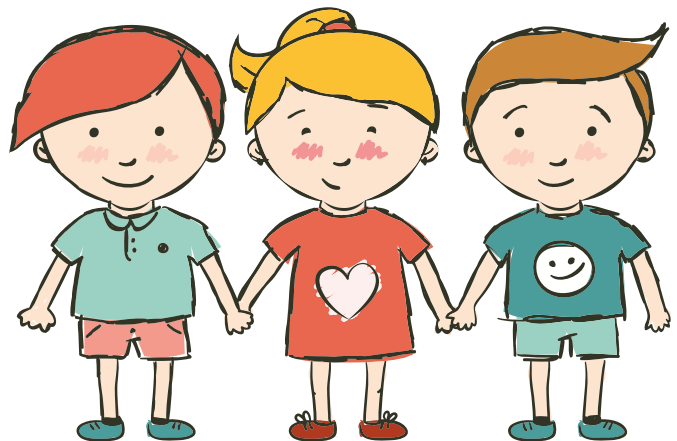
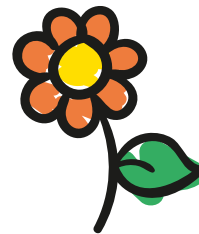
Plan different activities together with the teachers

2

Propose some activities through informal contacts with parents via email or personally

3

Parents should choose the day on which they intend to carry out the activity they have proposed



2 Description of the activity

Parents are invited to organize a brief activity. The activity always depends on what parents want to do with children at school.

It's not a Board or a teacher's decision.

Parents are entitled to choose and decide.

As such, they can simply pick a story, an interactive whiteboard activity, an Art activity, or whatever they want to present to children at school.

During these days different teachers will be present at school.

Parents can sign up and suggest the activity they would like to carry out, according to the days their child's teacher is at the school.

5 Remarks (issues to be aware of when implementing the activity)

- The need to provide/promote moments that allow families to prepare/organize the activities.
- Allow families to take the final decision on the organization of the activities.

- Allow all children to have an active/participatory role alongside the parents and families.
- The time of the activity may not be the most appropriate for the parents.

5 Role of the family

Parents have the opportunity to meet and socialize/interact with their children's friends. Constant integration and interaction between the family and the school.

4 Role of the teacher

- Motivator.
- Collaborator.
- Constantly interact with all families.
- Promote relationship opportunities between families.

6 Added value for the child and the family

- Gives parents the opportunity to get to know each other.
- Provides parents with moments when



they can guide/direct activities in their children's school.

- Families start to feel that they can have an important role in school life.

7 Materials to be used

- Written information.
- The spaces available in school: as the library, the video room or the garden.
- Books.
- Interactive Whiteboard.
- Sports equipment.
- Drawing and painting materials.
- Human resources.

8 Guiding questions to reflect on the general improvement of the service

- Did the practice meet the needs from which it originated?
- In what way did the activity improve the participation of the parents?
- To what extent did the activity improve our professional development as a team?
- How did the activity affect the development of the relationship of trust with the parents?



GUIDING QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PRACTICE

- How did parents react to the activity?
- What was the topic of their conversation?
- Did parents verbally communicate their satisfaction?
- How important is it for parents to know that they can choose an activity to be carried out at school and that they can even have the role of a teacher.





Enhancing **QUALITY** in early childhood education and care through **P**articipation



Co-funded by the
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PRACTICE

School market

OVERVIEW

Source: Vrtec (SI)
Adapted and tested by Colegio do Sardao (PT)



FOCUS AREAS

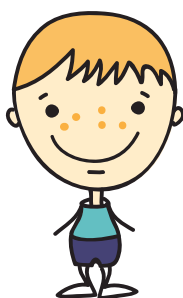
- Cooperating and collaborating with the community

APPROX. TIME NEEDED TO CARRY OUT THE ACTIVITY

- 2 to 4 hours
- Approximately one morning per month, starting in October, from 7.30 am to 9 am, at the time of reception of the children into the service

MAIN TARGET GROUP

- The activity is offered to parents of children of all sections of the nursery school (it can also be proposed to the preschool)



1 General goals of the activity (Why should I use this activity?)

- Promote activities in the services where families are invited to participate.
- Strengthen and enhance parenting practices, providing support and parental education when necessary.
- Modify routines to enhance the continuity of connection between school and family settings.
- Create opportunities for community members to get involved and participate more

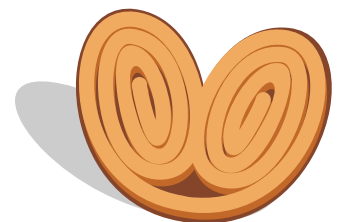
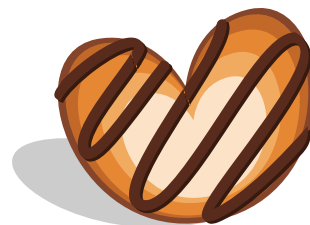
5
From 3.00 pm to 5.30 pm the fair is led by the parents

actively in early childhood education centers activities.

- Promote opportunities for families to get to know and support each other.
- Allow families to take the final decision on the organization of the activity.

6
Evaluation of activity

4
Saturday morning, from 10.00 am to 12.00 pm, parents set up the tents



2 Description of the activity

Bake cookies and traditional recipes and plant small flowers and herbs with the children and their families in the classroom. Collect organic products from our vegetable garden that was started together with parents and children. Along with parents

collected second hand toys and dolls, clothes and books to be sold at the market. Together with the teachers and assistants, parents from all sections organize the structure of their respective market stall. During the activity, parents are present throughout the market,

ORGANIZING THE ACTIVITY

1

Plan the activity with all the teachers

2

Propose the activity to the parents through a joint meeting with the school board, teaching staff and the parents.

3

Throughout the week before the Fair parents are invited to the different classrooms to prepare cakes and jams to be sold at the Fair



selling all the products produced and harvested over the month of April.

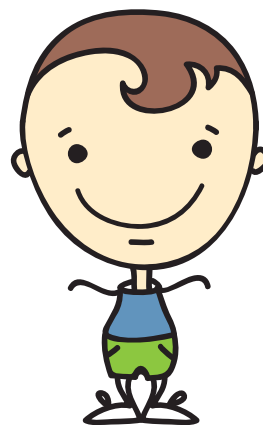
Remarks (issues to be aware of when implementing the activity)

- An example from Slovenia, showed that it is possible to observe the families' decision-making ways and strategies in the preparation / organization of an activity.

- Allow families to take the final decision on the organization of the activity.
- Allow all children to have an active role together with their parents and family.

Role of the teacher

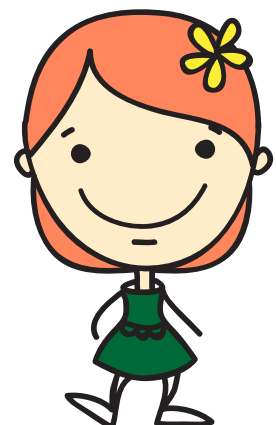
- Motivator.
- Collaborator.
- Constantly interact with all families.
- Promote relationship opportunities between families.



Role of the family

Parents are the organizers and the leaders. Along with the the Board and teachers they choose and decide what, how, when and where to sell.

- Encourage communication between parents, balancing the moments during which it is appropriate to remain in the background with those in which to intervene more directly and in an informal way stimulate the conversation about educational topics.





Constant integration and interaction between the family and the school.

- Food and drinks.
- Farm animals.

6 Added value for the child and the family

Gives parents the opportunity to get closer to nursery/preschool life and get to know the people working there. Gives parents the opportunity to get to know each other.

7 Materials to be used

- School spaces.
- Tents.
- Posters.
- Photos.

8 Guiding questions to reflect on the general improvement of the service

- Did the practice meet the needs from which it originated?
- In what way did the activity improve the participation of the parents?
- To what extent did the activity improve our professional development as a team?
- How did the activity affect the development of the relationship of trust with the parents?



GUIDING QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PRACTICE

- How did the parents react to the activity?
- What was the topic of their conversation?
- Did parents verbally communicate their satisfaction?
- Did they like the food and beverages?





EQuaP

Enhancing **QUALITY** in early childhood education and care through **P**articipation



Co-funded by the
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PRACTICE

Our little blanket for all

OVERVIEW

Source: Elmer (BE)

Adapted and tested by Vrtec (SI) Otona Župančiča, Slovenska Bistrica



*Every parent
has prepared
something special*

FOCUS AREAS

- Learning about the family
- Deciding and acting together with the family

APPROX. TIME NEEDED TO CARRY OUT THE ACTIVITY

- Two meetings: time needed for the first meeting is 20 min. The second – a workshop of 60-90 min

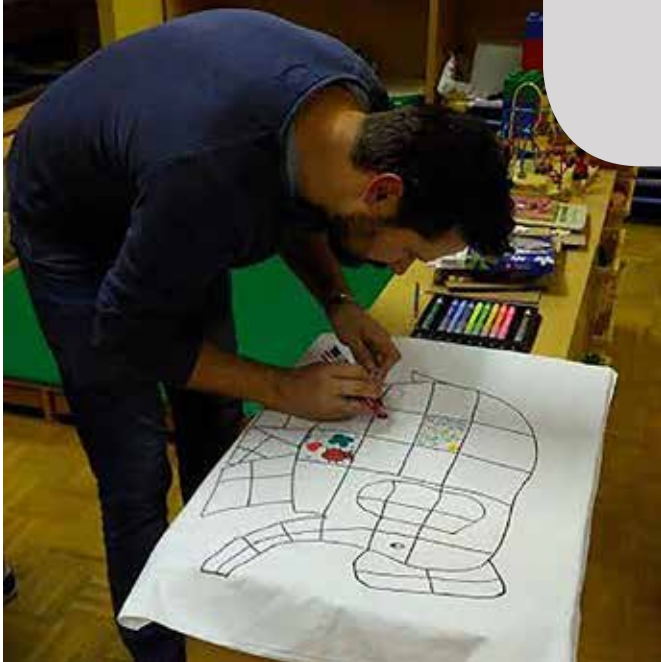
MAIN TARGET GROUP

- The activity is offered to parents of children aged 1 to 3 (it can be adapted to older children)



*Children looking
for their toy*





Elmer becoming colorful

1 General goals of the activity (Why should I use this activity?)

- Create partnerships with parents and carers.
- Stronger family involvement in nursery school activities.
- Promote activities and invite families to participate.
- Promote opportunities for families to get to know and support each other.
- Children are part of the community and have a key role in it.
- The Blanket will bring parents and children together and connect them to the nursery school.

2 Description of the activity

At a meeting with parents, in September, we made a presentation of the project "Our little blanket for all".

It was a great idea that we learned about from

Elmer. It's an opportunity to create a connection with the parents and the children of the group right at the beginning of the year. Parents can talk to each other and with the teacher of the group. This form of working together, creates opportunities for parents and children to share moments in a different way than we are used to.

Parents were asked for ideas on how to create a blanket and came up with a lot of suggestions. In the middle of the blanket we put Elmer, the elephant. Around it, parents drew some pictures, stitched on soft toy's, attached something that belonged to their baby (finger puppets, paper goods, etc.). Whatever they chose. This activity is enhanced by the fact that this blanket will not only remain in our group at school, but will be brought home by the children. Parents will have a diary where to write what their

children do with the blanket at home in their environment. On Mondays, the teacher reads what's in the 'blanket diary' to the children; or it gets explained by the child who had the blanket at home. Each weekend the blanket stays with a different family and during the week the children play with it and "cuddle" it in the nursery school.

1 Select goals - why you want to do the activity. Plan which tasks have to be carried out by whom. (Presentation of the

activities, when, making invitations, information for parents, preparing materials, setting up...). Write a plan.

2 At the beginning of the school year - prepare the presentation of the activity for the parents. This meeting can be carried out in conjunction with any other general meeting. Give the invitation to the parents and family one week before the workshop.

3 Remind parents of the workshop the day before it takes place. Check the materials needed.

SUGGESTED STEPS TO

6

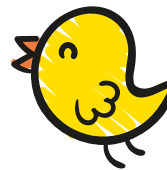
Evaluation from opinions and suggestions

5

Workshop from 4.30 pm to 6 pm (1,5 h). Take photos

4

Set up prepare the materials



ORGANIZING THE ACTIVITY

1

The staff plans the activity (when, who, how, materials needed...)

2

Communicate the activity to parents with flyers or at the beginning of the school year...

3

Remind parents of workshop



4 Role of the teacher

- Encourage communication between parents.
- Stimulate conversations about educational topics, in an informal way.
- Invite parents to participate in activities.
- Encourage warm and safe environment for the workshop.
- Cooperation with parents during the activity.
- Integrate parents' ideas.

The educator:

- is a motivator;
- is a colleague;
- permanently communicates with all families;
- promotes relationship opportunities between families.

5 Role of the family

Parents are actively involved, they participate and are interested in ensuring that their child feels good in the group. They have the opportunity to ask questions about their child. They can bring materials to the workshop.

In the nursery school we organized a variety of social, creative workshops for parents and their children to help them socialize, entertain and relax. It is important that the parents create something together with their children and participate in activities.

6 Added value for the child and the family

The aim of this cooperation is to join the nursery school and the family in order to establish pleasant relationships and trust. It's also an opportunity for the parents to get to know each other.

The parents are willing to cooperate and to propose their ideas. We also want parents to experience the nursery school as an environment in which they have the opportunity to engage in activities and the children's everyday life. We are all looking forward to working together, enjoying the activities and acquiring new skills and knowledge. The children have the opportunity to get to know the importance of cooperation with their parents. The interaction with the family is important and the goal is to enrich

Remarks (issues to be aware of when implementing the activity)

4 Prepare the space (music, snacks, tea, coffee), and materials. Workshop from 16.30 to 18.00 (1 to 1,5h).

5 Take photos, get feedback from parents: did they like it? What would they like in the future/ for next meeting? They can write it down anonymously and place it in the suggestions box.

6 Evaluation of the parents' opinions and suggestions. How do we feel after the workshop?

- It is worth thinking about potential problems. For example some parents may have difficulties participating in this activity if it takes place during working hours and some parents work in the afternoon. Others are separated and cannot agree on how to divide the afternoon activities between them, etc.
- Promote the exchange of moments with families, to establish a relationship/connection between all members.



Let's play together

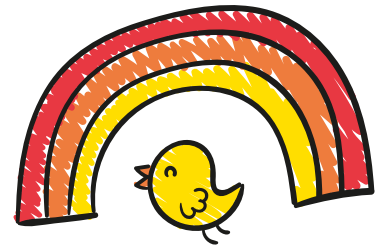
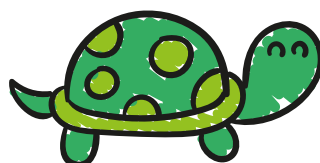
children's experiences and perception of their own creativity as their preparation for life. Take note that children have the right to be as they are and by establishing solid ties with their family, they will grow into fulfilled human beings.

7 Materials to be used

- Invitations.
- Properly prepared space.
- Soft cotton.
- Markers for textiles.
- Colored patches of fabric.
- Threads and needles.
- Soft baby toys (finger puppets, etc.).

8 Guiding questions to reflect on the general improvement of the service

- Did the practice meet the needs from which it originated?
- In what way did the activity improve the participation of the parents?
- To what extent did the activity improve our professional development as a team?
- How did the activity affect the development of the relationship of trust with the parents?



The best sleep is with this blanket

GUIDING QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PRACTICE

- How did parents react to the activity?
- What was the topic of their conversation?
- Did parents verbally communicate their satisfaction?
- Did they bring some materials/toys from their child?
- Did they fill in the opinions and suggestions list?





Enhancing **QUALITY** in early childhood education and care through **P**articipation



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PRACTICE

Hand in hand

OVERVIEW

Source: Elmer (BE)
Adapted and tested by Vrtec (SI) Otona Župančiča



FOCUS AREAS

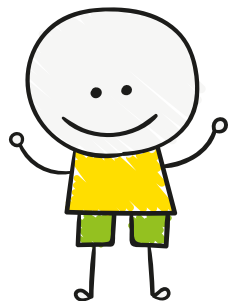
- Cooperating and collaborating with the community

APPROX. TIME NEEDED TO CARRY OUT THE ACTIVITY

- 2 hours or more (30 min for preparation and 2 hours or more for the meeting)

MAIN TARGET GROUP

- The activity is suitable for children aged 3 to 6 (it can be adapted for other age groups)



*First visit with surprise
- friendship bracelets*

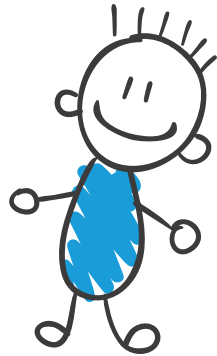


1 General goals of the activity (Why should I use this activity?)

- Create partnerships with the community.
- Stronger involvement of school children in preschool activities.
- Gather and develop children's social, organizational and communication skills.
- Involve parents in activities.
- Enhance acceptance and respect for diversity.
- Raise awareness of safety in transport.

2 Description of the activity

In September on the first meeting some parents in our group came up with a proposal: that we could cooperate with children from primary schools. In my group we have two girls whose mother works as a teacher at the school in Slovenska Bistrica and offered to help. We agreed on a year-round cooperation with children in the 5th grade of a primary school. At the end of September we planned and went on a hike with the children



of the primary school. Parents were informed of the activities through bulletin boards and email. We prepared invitations; when, where to, how long will the hike take and so on of a primary school's "(Parents can join when possible).

The first visit started with a surprise, the older children from school gave "friendship bracelets" they had made themselves to every preschool child.

Happiness could be seen on both sides.

For the next meeting, we prepared a "traffic park" (including road signs and traffic lights) and the preschool and primary

school children went together (two by two – hand in hand) through this traffic park and learned what the signs mean, where one has to wait, how to properly

Take photos, ask children how they liked it, what they would like in the future / next meeting... They can suggest new games, activities...

Evaluation of the opinions and suggestions given by the children and the primary school teachers. Assessment of our work and how we feel after the workshop

Prepare the traffic park. Visit from primary school 9.30 to 13.00. (2 to 3,5h)

How we have to cross the road



ORGANIZING THE ACTIVITY

1

Organisation of work between preschool teacher and primary school teacher. Planning together. Decide who should carry out the different tasks... Write the plan...(When, what, who, how...)

2

One week before inform the parents about the visit and the hike. Ask them to check the bulleting board

3

The day before remind the parents of the hike (appropriate shoes for hiking in the green). Check the materials needed for the traffic park. Arrange meals "to go" in the kitchen



- Give the invitation to the children, parents and teacher one week before the meeting.
- Remind parents of the meeting the day before it takes place. Check the materials needed.
- Prepare the space, playground (music, snacks, tee, coffee) and materials.
- Take photos, ask children and parents about their opinion. What do they would like in the future/ for next meeting?
- Evaluation of the opinions and suggestions of and for our work.

had time, came and cooperated. We can ask parents for new ideas for next meetings. What would they like to do together, when etc. We collected ideas and made plans for future.

It is important to:

- organize which tasks have to be carried out by whom. (Presentation of the meeting, when, making invitations, information for parents, preparing materials, setting up...).
- Write a plan.



Remarks

(issues to be aware of when implementing the activity)

For successful cooperation we need:

- Successful communication and organization between educators and teachers.



cross the street, etc. The next activity was a hike. Children from primary school were the preschool children's companions. They took them by the hand and carefully instructed them on the proper way of crossing the road, walking along the pavement and, of course, genuine friendships began to emerge during this journey. On the lawn in front of the forest, we made a big circle, learned a new game together and sang songs about friendship. Some of the older

children asked if we could join them in class? We all laughed, but we got the idea for our next gathering. This is just another evidence of the fact that learning can be (even more) enjoyable, successful and interesting if it's done from child to child. After completing the activity, we prepared some pictures of the meeting and wrote comments. The parents and their children looked at the pictures together and continued discussing the activities at home. Parents were invited every time. Those who

Children singing a song together





All participants enjoyed the meeting

- Ready-made devices.
- To motivate children to this form of cooperation: the educator and the teacher must be willing to participate and have a genuine commitment to companionship, understanding and cooperation, while seeking new challenges and approaches. They must be open to the exchange of experiences, skills and pleasant coexistence and the promotion of friendship between different generations.

4 Role of the teacher

- Encourage children (bracelets, traffic park) to provide the song, and care for their safety and wellbeing.
- Team work (in this case the parent of a child in the group).
- Prepare children for this kind of activity.
- Prepare devices.
- Report the date of activities to parents.

5 Role of the family

The role of the family is to encourage their children to such a way of socializing and check that they wear right sports clothing and footwear for the planned activity. After the activity they should meet together with the children, look at the pictures and discuss new activities at home.

6 Added value for the child and the family

We believe that the greatest added value for the child and his or her family is that the children vividly explain the activities they have experienced with the

primary school children to their parents. Parents love to look at photos and see their child, ask how he/she was, what he/she was doing and we think that with this event the participation of all parents, children and teachers has greater depth. We can plan the next event together with all parents.

7 Materials to be used

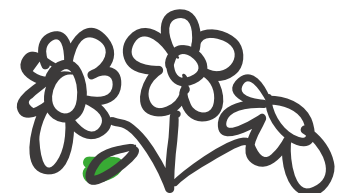
- Invitations.
- Properly prepared space.
- Friendship bracelets (any material, das mass, wooden beads, colored circles, straws, salt dough...) or some

other materials needed, to create a small gift for new friends.

- Traffic signs and traffic lights (for the traffic park).
- Different games for children.
- Songs.

8 Guiding questions to reflect on the general improvement of the service

- Did the practice meet the needs from which it originated?
- In what way did the activity improve the participation of the community?
- To what extent did the activity improve our professional development as a team?
- How did the activity affect the development of the relationship of trust with the parents / community?



GUIDING QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PRACTICE

- How did the children react to the activity / visit / hike?
- What was the topic of their conversations?
- What was the feedback from the primary school teacher?
- Was the time of the visit well chosen?
- How can we include parents?





EQuaP

Enhancing **QUALITY** in early childhood education and care through **P**articipation



Co-funded by the
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PRACTICE

Creative workshop

Source: Vrtec (SI) Slovenska Bistrica-Slovenia
Adapted and tested by Konstruktörsgatans preschool,
Municipality of Linköping (SE)

OVERVIEW



FOCUS
AREAS

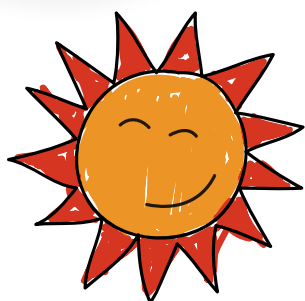
- Learning about the family
- Communicating with the family

APPROX. TIME NEEDED
TO CARRY OUT
THE ACTIVITY

- Approximately 4-5 hours/workshop

MAIN TARGET
GROUP

- This is an activity for all the families in the preschool





SUGGESTED STEPS TO

1 General goals of the activity (Why should I use this activity?)

- Create conditions for the family to understand the pedagogical work in preschool and the opportunities these activities provide to learn and develop.
- Give the pedagogues and family the opportunity to get to know each other.

2 Description of the activity

The families were invited to a workshop where each section at the preschool had planned an activity for the families to do together. One of the sections baked gingerbread together and three of the sections had planned an activity where the families got to create something together, for example a painting.

The teachers planned the activity and prepared an invitation to the families. The families didn't have to sign up for this activity. The workshops took place in the afternoon when

the parents (by parents we mean legal guardians) came to pick up their children in the preschool. It was the families' decision if they wanted to join and for how long they wanted to participate in the workshop.

The teachers and the children organized the activity together in one of the rooms in the section.

In each section there was a table with materials they could use.

One of the teachers working at that time had the responsibility to take care of the activity and socialize with the family. The day the activity was to be held the teachers reminded the parents about the workshop and when they arrived to pick up their children they were invited to the workshop. Some of the families stayed and some of them couldn't stay for different reasons.

During the activity the teacher and the families had the opportunity to talk about different things. The teacher had the possibility to talk about

the pedagogical work in the preschool and what we achieve through these types of activities with children.

This was also a great opportunity for the families to meet and get to know each other. These kind of activities can be done either in the morning or in the afternoon, depending on the preschool's and parents' availability. At the end of the workshop we did an evaluation together with the families.

7

Tidy up
(Teachers)

6

Evaluate the workshops together
(Teachers and guardians)

5

Time for workshop.
Approximately
4-5 hours
(Teachers and families)

Questions to be asked:

- What went well?
- What can be improved?
- What kind of workshops would you like us to do together?

5 Remarks (issues to be aware of when implementing the activity)

It is important to get the pedagogues interested in cooperating with the families and participating

ORGANIZING THE ACTIVITY

1

Determine the date and time for the workshop (Teachers)

2

Make an invitation to the parents (Teachers)

3

Prepare materials for the activity (Teachers)

4

Set up (Headteacher and teachers)



4 Role of the teacher

- Plan and prepare the activity.
- Hand out an invitation to the families.
- Explain to the family members why we do activities like this.
- Be present and supportive during the activity.
- The pedagogues discuss preschool work and goals with the family. This is an opportunity to show the parents that we work with language, mathematics and explain other goals in our curriculum.
- You need to work in an active way to inspire the families to attend these kinds of activities.

in these kind of activities. The teachers also have to see the benefits and have interest in cooperating with the families. Another issue is to get the parents to participate and have the interest to join these kind of activities. To give the families greater opportunities to join the workshops we



offer these once every month. Sometimes in the morning and sometimes in the afternoon.

Language barrier: Some parents have difficulties to communicate and understand the language.



- Evaluate the activity together with the families.
- Document the activity for everyone.

5 Role of the family

- To participate.
- Show interest in their child's daily life in preschool.
- Get to know other families in our preschool.
- Provide their own suggestions for workshops, once they get used to this kind of activities.

6 Added value for the child and the family

- We can socialize with the families and get to know each other in more informal contexts.
- The parents get an insight into the preschool's work and knowledge of how to be involved in the preschool activities and their child's daily life.

7 Materials to be used

Gingerbread baking: dough, cookie cutter, rolling pin, oven, flour.

Example of materials for a creative activity: Canvas plate, different kind of paint colors, different kinds of brushes, apron.



8 Guiding questions to reflect on the general improvement of the service

- Did the practice meet the needs from which it originated?
- In what way did the activity improve the participation of the parents?
- To what extent did the activity improve our professional development as a team?
- How did the activity affect the development of the relationship of trust with the parents?



GUIDING QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PRACTICE

Questions for evaluation together with the families:

- What went well?
- What can be improved?
- What kind of workshops would you like us to do together?

Questions for the teachers:

- How do we get parents to want to participate in these kind of activities?
- How do we get the pedagogues to be inspiring and interested in the family and the activity?
- What kind of activities are successful for the child, the parents and the preschool?





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Enhancing **QUALITY** in early childhood education and care through **P**articipation



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PRACTICE

Parents' council

Source: Liepaja (LV)
Adapted and tested by Konstruktörsgatans preschool,
Municipality of Linköping (SE)

OVERVIEW



FOCUS AREAS

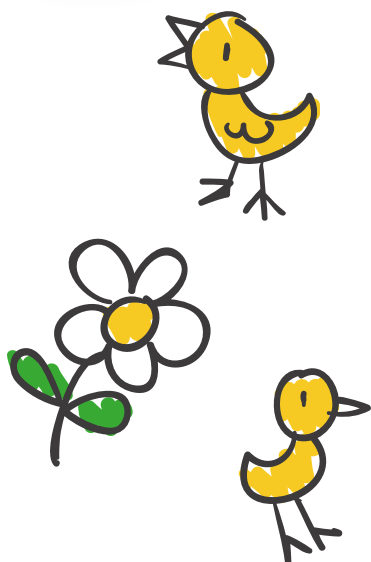
- Communicating with the family
- Deciding and acting together with the family

APPROX. TIME NEEDED TO CARRY OUT THE ACTIVITY

- A meeting will last for approximately one and a half hour and there will be one or two meetings every semester

MAIN TARGET GROUP

- This is an activity for every parent in the preschool



1 General goals of the activity (Why should I use this activity?)

The council is supposed to be a place for development, where the preschool and parents (by 'parents' we mean to a child's legal guardian) cooperate for higher quality in the preschool.

It will also strengthen the preschool and the parents in their roles. The council will also give the families opportunities to participate and have a say in the daily work in the preschool. This is specified in the Swedish curriculum for the pre-schools (Lpfö98):

Teachers in pre-schools are responsible for ensuring that parents receive opportunities to participate and exercise influence on how the objectives can be achieved through pedagogical planning" - "The working group must take into account the point of views of parents when planning and implementing the activities."

(Curriculum for the Preschool Lpfö 98 Revised 2010)

2 Description of the activity

Through this council the families will get an opportunity to participate and influence the preschool's work. The Council will meet once or twice every semester. Every preschool section



has one teacher who represents the Council. The headteacher of the preschool, teachers and parents are invited to participate in the Council. Every parent is invited. It is necessary to assess if someone needs help with the language as it is the preschool's responsibility to make sure that there is an interpreter at the meeting if needed.

It is the headteacher's responsibility to prepare an agenda for the meeting together with the teachers.

The parents can contact the headteacher or talk to the teachers if they have anything they want to discuss or if they have any questions before the meeting.

We also prepared a letter-box in the hall for the families. This gives the families the opportunity to add questions, opinions and thoughts by writing them on a note and put it in the letter-box.

In this way they can be anonymous. The invitation will be sent to



the parents three weeks before the meeting.

It is the headteacher's responsibility to prepare the invitation and also present the agenda.

The invitation will also contain the purpose, goals and guidelines for the meeting.

Let the parents sign up if they wish to attend the meeting so you know how to prepare. The headteacher will chair the meeting and her/she will also ensure that everyone gets to participate in the discussions. Make sure to choose a secretary for the meeting.

The Council is a great opportunity for the parents to have a say and to get new information about the work carried out in the preschool. It's also a good place to organize timetables for upcoming activities together with the families so that they too can participate in those decisions.

The preschool will offer fruit and coffee during the meeting.

ORGANIZING THE ACTIVITY

1

Determine the date and time for the meeting. Arrange settings for a letter-box (Headteacher and teachers)

2

Make an agenda and invitation to the parents (Headteacher and teachers)

3

The parents have a chance to contact the headteacher and the teachers for questions

4

The parents sign up for the meeting



Remarks

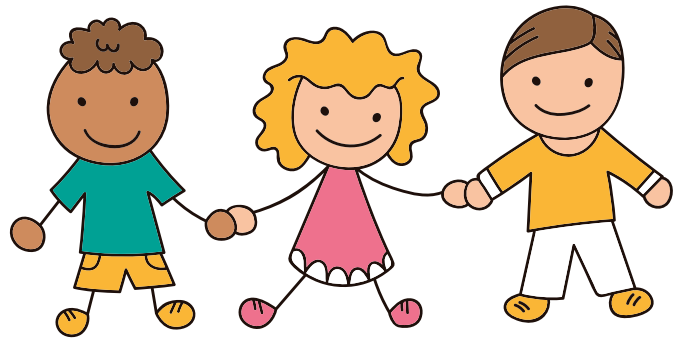
(issues to be aware of when implementing the activity)

This activity requires good organization in the working group. The headteacher needs to have good communication with the teachers who represent the different sections. It is also important to determine time and date long before the actual meeting.

Explain to the parents the importance of their attendance.

We have found two situations that can be a reason why parents can't attend the meeting. One of them is the problem of leaving their children at home alone. Some parents don't have baby-sitters that can watch their children.

A solution to this is that the preschool offers to take care of the children during the meeting. Another situation is the language barrier, that's why it's important to



find out who will need an interpreter to provide support during the meeting.

4 Role of the teacher

- Participate in the preparation and planning of the Council together with the preschool headteacher.
- Be active in the Council.
- Have a clear purpose with the Council.
- Have a clear agenda.
- Explain to parents about their opportunities to influence the preschool through the parent's council.
- Make sure there is an interpreter for those who need it.

5 Role of the family

- Participate.
- Take an active part in the preschool's daily work and exercise influence.

- Discuss their thoughts and opinions.
- Get information about upcoming situations that can be of interest to the parents and that can affect the children.

6 Added value for the child and the family

- The parents get the opportunity to participate and have influence, and in that way they are able to influence their children's everyday life in preschool.
- The parents have the possibility to make decisions.



7 Materials to be used

- Clear agenda.
- Computer and projector.
- Paper and pencils for taking notes.
- Coffee and fruit.

8 Guiding questions to reflect on the general improvement of the service

- Did the practice meet the needs from which it originated?

- In what way did the activity improve the participation of the parents?
- To what extent did the activity improve our professional development as a team?

- How did the activity affect the development of the relationship of trust with the parents?



GUIDING QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PRACTICE

- How do we get the parents interested?
- How do we get the teachers interested?
- Can we organize the meetings in another way or time to get more parents to participate in the meetings?





Enhancing **QUALITY** in early childhood education and care through **P**articipation



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PRACTICE

Spring Festival

Source: Vrtec (SI)

Adapted and tested by Konstruktörsгатans preschool, Municipality of Linköping (SE)

OVERVIEW



FOCUS AREAS

- Learning about the family
- Communication
- Doing together / Decision-making
- Cooperative and collaborative partnerships with the community

APPROX. TIME NEEDED TO CARRY OUT THE ACTIVITY

- 2 hours

MAIN TARGET GROUP

- Activity suitable for children aged 1-5





1 General goals of the activity (Why should I use this activity?)

- An opportunity to socialize and do things together with the families.
- Get to know the families and the families gets to know each other.

2 Description of the activity

The pedagogues invite the families to a spring festival where socialize in the preschool yard. The families are asked if they want to help the preschool with some of the activities during the gathering. This is done during a meeting with the families 2 months before the spring festival. Some organized activities are held in the preschool yard by the pedagogues and the families..

Example of activities that can be offered: barbeque, blow bubbles, throw balls in a bucket, quiz and fishpond. The pedagogues and the children have created a song booklet to be used together with a troubadour. Everyone engages in a singalong activity. The invitations were handed out to the families 3 weeks before the spring festival. The invitation asks families if and how many are attending and what they would like to eat and drink. The pedagogues share responsibilities to prepare the spring festival. All make sure that everything is prepared before the festival starts. When the families arrive at the festival they are given the booklet for the singalong. During the festival the families and the

7
Materials depend on the activities. For the barbeque - practical tools, don't forget our different cultures when it comes to food, snacks and what to drink

6
Get to know each other. A positive mix of cultures. Children can show their preschool to their family and relatives

pedagogues mingle and engage in the different activities. In the end of the festival the children are offered a balloon.

3 Remarks (issues to be aware of when implementing the activity)

- Festival preparation requires considerable effort from the pedagogue. The pedagogues need to see the meaning and the benefits with activities like this.

8
Guiding questions to reflect on the general improvement of the service

5
To participate in the Spring festival. Be a part of the planning. Contribute with activities, food and material

- Get the parents to participate and have the interest to join activities like this.
- Language barrier, some parents have difficulties to communicate and understand the language.

ORGANIZING THE ACTIVITY

1

The pedagogues invite the families to a spring festival and inform them about the possibility to take part in the planning

2

The families are asked if they want to help the preschool with some of the activities during the gathering. This is done during a meeting with the families 2 months before the spring festival

3

Needs a lot of preparation by the pedagogues. The pedagogues need close cooperation to fulfill activities like this.
- Get the parents to participate
- Language barrier

4

Communication between the pedagogues and the families.
An expressive and clear invitation to the families.
Strong support during the activity



5 Role of the family

- To participate.
 - If they want they can help to prepare the activity and bring something to the festival.
- It is up to the families how they want to contribute. For example some of the families have brought material and clothes and baked a cake from their home country and culture.

festival. For example: bubbles, sing booklet, balls, buckets, quiz.

- Material for the barbeque: different kinds of sausages, hot dog buns, ketchup, mustard.
- Different kinds of beverage like: coffee, tea, lemonade.

8 Guiding questions to reflect on the general improvement of the service

Evaluating the practice both with colleagues and families.

Questions for evaluation together with the families:

- What went well?
- What can be improved?

Questions for the teachers:

- How do we get the parents more involved in the planning and

4 Role of the teacher

- Communication between the pedagogues is an important factor in the success of this activity.
- Plan and prepare the activity.
- Hand out the invitation.

- Create a song booklet together with the children.
- Explain to parents why we do activities like this and what role they can have during the activity.
- Be present and supportive during the activity.

6 Added value for the child and the family

We socialize, have fun together and get to know each other.

7 Materials to be used

- Materials depend on the kind of activities that are offered during the

implementation of the spring festival?

- What kind of activities were successful for the children, the parents and the preschool?
- How many families attended?

- How did the families react to the activities?
- Did the families interact with children and other families?
- Were the different languages/cultures barriers?



GUIDING QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PRACTICE

Questions for evaluation together with the families:

- What went well?
- What can be improved?

Questions for the teachers:

- How do we get the parents more involved in the planning and implementation of the spring festival?
- What kind of activities are successful for the child, the parents and the preschool?





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PRACTICE

Garden project: design, carry out and maintain the outdoor space

Source: Colegio do Sardao (PT); Vrtec (SI)
Adapted and tested in Elmer (BE)

OVERVIEW



*Discussing the ideas
of the larger group
of parents*

*Post-its with input
from the parents*



FOCUS AREAS

- Doing together/
Decision-making
- Cooperative and
collaborative
partnerships with
the community

APPROX. TIME NEEDED TO CARRY OUT THE ACTIVITY

- 6 months to 1 year

MAIN TARGET GROUP

- Parents, children,
coworkers,
community

Task force explores the outdoor space, to discover the possibilities



1 General goals of the activity (Why should I use this activity?)

To have the parents involved in the daily life of the daycare service by thinking, planning and carrying out a project in the outdoor space.
To strengthen the social cohesion of a neighbourhood.
To create a outdoor space for the children and a meeting place for the parents and the neighbourhood.

2 Description of the activity

All the parents are informed about the intention to work in the outdoor space. A parents' and coworkers' task force is formed through a call. The task force takes the time to investigate the space and the possibilities. During a group activity with all parents, such as a summer-party, the whole group of parents can be

7

Use the outdoor space to gather the parents and work on social cohesion

6

Get to play in the outdoor space as often as possible

5

Carry out the changes

The first meeting of the task force on Saturday morning



asked for suggestions, ideas and priorities. Based on this ideas, the task force makes drafts and plans, looks for resources and partners. Once the garden is created, parents can divide the tasks of maintaining the outdoor space: watering the herb garden in summer, feeding the animals, pruning the trees in the winter...

ORGANIZING THE ACTIVITY

1

Informing
all parents about
the new project

2

Start a task
force of parents
and coworkers,
who plan and carry
out the project

3

Involve the wider
group of parents
by regularly asking
for ideas

4

Look for
opportunities
to finance
the project

Don't hesitate to involve the parents in the real work, with boots and spade.

4 Role of the teacher

The teacher can take part in the process, or even be its driving force.

The teacher's involvement is important in ensuring that the mission and vision of the daycare service are reflected in the plans.

5 Role of the family

The families can also be the driving force, depending on the situation.

Each parent can bring along his own skills



Remarks

(issues to be aware of when implementing the activity)

A diverse group of parents, with different skills and talents, enhances the possibilities and the solutions proposed and later carried out. It will often be necessary for one or two members of the staff to guide the process.

Fun in the garden



*A simple tire can mean
a lot of play fun*

and talents, and get involved in either the planning phase, the actual carrying out of the plans, or the maintenance of the outdoor space.

6 Added value for the child and the family

The daycare service's outdoor space enhances opportunities for playing, discovering, connecting and meeting up.



7 Materials to be used

Plans of the outdoor space.
Depending on its nature, the project might need extra resources to carry out heavy work, or the helping hands of families and local partners to do small jobs.

8 Dissemination and involvement of the community, if relevant

Partners can be sought locally, eg. a vocational school who helps to make wooden or metal materials in the garden or a training project in joinery for adults.

9 Guiding questions to reflect on the general improvement of the service

- In what way the activity improved the participation of the parents?
- To what extent the activity improved

our professional development as a team?

- In what way the activity had an effect on the development of a trusting relationship with the parents?

GUIDING QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PRACTICE

- Did the activity meet its goals?
- How have the parents and other participants reacted on the activity?
- Can the activity be repeated in the future? What adaptations are feasible?





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PRACTICE

Meeting at the end of the school year

OVERVIEW

Source: Elmer (BE)

Adapted and tested by Vrtec (SI) Otona Župančiča, Slovenska Bistrica



*We will have
fun together*

FOCUS AREAS

- Doing together / Decision-making

APPROX. TIME NEEDED TO CARRY OUT THE ACTIVITY

- 3 hours, (preparing, doing activities together)

MAIN TARGET GROUP

- Activity suitable for children aged 1 to 6 activity place to be adapted



Nature is a special place

1 General goals of the activity (Why should I use this activity?)

The active involvement of parents in the life of the kindergarten and the promotion of cooperation between these and the kindergarten.

- Facilitate a relaxed, informal gathering at the end of the school year.
- Promotion of activities in nature.
- Enable learning and integration among the parent's group.



Relaxed chat on the way

7

Evaluation together with parents and your own after the meeting

6

Meeting 2-3 hours at the agreed time

5

Prepare the place, arrange the materials (safety, variety of possibilities offered by the surroundings)

2 Description of the activity

Our kindergarten usually has a meeting with the parents at the end of the year. This year we invited parents to prepare and organize a “final meeting”. First, we have asked whether they wished to join. All accepted, so we’ve divided the tasks. Parents took over the organizational part and we took care of the substantive part-time activities for

ORGANIZING THE ACTIVITY

1

Organize a meeting,
to present the activity
to parents

2

Decide together:
set the date; split tasks,
who can do what and
who is willing to take on
which organization aspects
(parents can form
small groups)

3

Write a list,
to avoid confusion.
Offer some help
if needed

4

Send the invitations
(e-mails, invite parents
when you see them,
written invitation
on a board,
text message...)



Remarks

(issues to be aware
of when implementing
the activity)

- Find an exciting location in the natural surroundings, where the meeting can take place.
- Ask parents if they agree with meetings in such format.
- Invite parents to participate according to their abilities.
- Learn what strengths parents have.

Boc dragon. In the end,
the children found a real
Mayan treasure in the
woods. The trail lasted
about 1 hour. During
this time, some parents

children. Parents have connected and organized themselves. They took care of the invitations, space, transport, food and beverages. The meeting was carried out at a well known nearby hill called Boc 20km away from our kindergarten. On Boč, we all gathered to read the story/legend of a dragon who lived in the Boc mountain for centuries. After that we went on a hunt for hidden treasures and found footprints and a



*Happy faces telling
more than words*



Where is the treasure?



Deserved rest at the end

4 Role of the teacher

- Prepare activities for children at the meeting location, depending on the characteristics of the environment (safety, variety of possibilities offered by the surroundings).
- Educators arrive about an hour before the official start of the meeting and place symbols on forest paths, indicating a variety of tasks which children have to find and then solve with their parents. Forest path safety also needs to be checked.
- Prepare tasks such as: puzzles, identifying trees, motor activities, picking forest materials, singing songs, asking questions about how to behave in a forest or similar environment.
- Remind parents to contact each other and make arrangements regarding transport, as some might not have their own.
- Bring supplies that might be needed (e.g. balls, blankets, paper, pens...).

5 Role of the family

- Give permission
- Assist within their capabilities.
- Parents get to know each other, establish contact and organize themselves to give assistance.
- All family can attend the event.

6 Added value for the child and the family

- Spending free time together in nature.
- Understanding hiking as a form of active leisure.
- Getting to know the local area and attractions.
- Getting to know each others' families, socializing among themselves and with other families in a relaxed way.

- Gaining a sense of importance and equality- because everyone has the opportunity to participate according to their abilities.

- First aid kit.
- Paper (in our case for postcards, where children draw their impressions of the trip).
- Felt-tip pens.
- Balls.

7 Materials to be used

- Thumbnails and other task materials for the 'treasure' hike.
- Food and drink.
- "Hidden Treasure" (surprises for the children).
- The Legend of the Dragon Boc story, to be read before going on the hike.

8 Guiding questions to reflect on the general improvement of the service

- Have all the families attended? If not, why?
- Make sure that everyone is informed about the event.
- Participants' feedback - impressions, statements...



We will do this again

GUIDING QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PRACTICE

- Make notes about what did not go well.
- Have parents engaged in conversation with each other? On what topic?
- Have any of the parents felt "left out"? Why?





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PRACTICE

The mediator character spends week-ends with families

OVERVIEW

Source: Colegio do Sardao (PT)
Tested and implemented in ECEC services Forlì Municipality (IT)

FOCUS AREAS

- Learning about the family
- Communication

APPROX. TIME NEEDED TO CARRY OUT THE ACTIVITY

- The activity requires very little preparation time, which falls within the limits applicable to ordinary educational programs.

MAIN TARGET GROUP

- 18 to 36 months old children and their families.



The mediator character is taken home

1 General goals of the activity

- To make parents more aware of the intentions underlying the strategy of using the “mediator character” practiced by the nursery school.
- To share with parents some play experiences that children carry out in the pre-schools they attend, and re-think and enrich these through their contribution.
- To encourage exchange between nursery schools with the aim of strengthening mutual knowledge, developing trust and building a shared educational culture.

2 Description of the activity

Specifically in the nursery school context, educators adopt this tools to promote communication between children and adults, encourage the child’s regular and active participation in activities and routines, stimulate individual and group memory of the experience

and develop a sense of belonging.

Last but not least, the practice fosters a form of mediated learning, without the direct intervention of an adult. The “mediator character” is one of these tools.

It can take the form of a puppet representing a book character or any other fantasy character, which could even be developed through observing a group of children.

The character - whose voice is provided by the educators - can be used to introduce and accompany the didactic activities

offered to children in the nursery, creating a shared narrative throughout the different moments of the day. It can be used as an announcer for the

7

Evaluate the results of the practice with colleagues

6

After the weekend with the family, acknowledge the value of the experience, ask children and parents to talk about it, making it a topic of the morning conversation with the children

5

Start the activity

Manuel takes the character with him to bed



ORGANIZING THE ACTIVITY

1

Present the activity at a meeting with parents and discuss the meaning and potential impact of the practice in the family context.

2

Create a diary with possible dates for the mediator character to be taken home and place on the parents' board.

3

Provide materials (short instructions, feedback sheet, etc.)

4

Build an album to collect the photographs and texts commenting the experience.



The character goes on holiday with Elisa at her grandparents'



The character goes on holiday with Elisa at her grandparents'

children taking part in different activities; an organizer, for example identifying the child whose task is to choose which song to sing; or as a facilitator in the division of children into subgroups for the different types of activities taking place on a given day. The character becomes a daily companion, the protagonist of a shared and continually enriching narrative construction, for the specific group of children

experiencing each day with it. In this sense, it can be understood as an “organizing” tool, as it helps to organize the moments and situations of play; A “mediating” tool in the relationship between educators and children; A “narrative” tool, which embodies the meanings that the group attaches to it, a set of shared references that contribute to building a common sense of belonging, consolidating group

identity and promoting communication. Use of the mediator is also suggested at home with the family, as described below. After evaluating the possible impact on the family environment, families are invited to book the mediator to be taken home over the weekend. This can be done by subscribing a list of possible dates provided by the educators. Families are asked to keep it for the weekend, leaving the child free to

use it if he/she wants, documenting any play experiences with photographs and short written text. The character is brought back on Monday morning. The images and the collected texts are then placed on a special album shown to the children who are invited to re-enact the experience. During the children's morning group meeting, the teacher asks the child who took the character home to tell what they did together.

3 Remarks (issues to be aware of when implementing the activity)

The practice requires the use of a mediator character intended to be used as an organizing tool for the group.

The potential effects of the character in the family/home context should be evaluated, especially if it can be perceived as an 'invader' by the child or its siblings. During the morning meeting with the group of children, attention should be paid to the possibility of families not agreeing to participate in the practice.

4 Role of the teacher

The teachers are responsible for:

- introducing the use of the character as an organizing tool;
- proposing to the families to take the character home if and when they wish (on the weekend);
- preparing a special board through which the initiative is correctly managed so that everyone can enjoy;
- listening to the child's story and facilitating its sharing with the peers after the weekend spent with the character.

5 Role of the family

Families have the task of 'playing the game', hosting the puppet and documenting the experience.

6 Added value for the child and the family

The two settings - home and nursery - getting closer through a single object, collecting stories and experiences in both contexts.

The experience enhances mutual knowledge, consolidates relationships and trust.

7 Materials to be used

A mediator character, such as a puppet, and an album in which to collect the photographs brought by the parents.

8 Guiding questions to reflect on the general improvement of the service

- Has the practice met the needs from which it originated?
- How did the activity improve parents' participation?
- To what extent has the activity improved our professional development as individual educators and as a group?
- How has the activity affected the relationship of trust with parents?

Another child takes the character to the seaside



GUIDING QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PRACTICE

- Was the presentation of the initiative to the parents effective?
- How many parents attended?
- How did parents react to the activity?
- Did parents document their experience with photos and / or written comments,?
- If yes, what kind of situations have been documented and what comments have emerged, both in writing and informally (eg, have they expressed particular, unexpected comments? Requests for reproducing the activity in a different way)
- If not, why?
- Did the educators facilitate the involvement of all parents? How?
- How did children react to the initiative?
- Based on what emerged from the analysis, what opportunities for further development does the teachers' group envisage for the practice?





Enhancing **QUALITY** in early childhood education and care through **P**articipation



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

PRACTICE

Sowing

OVERVIEW

Source: Vrtec (SI)
Adapted and tested by Colegio do Sardao (PT)



FOCUS AREAS

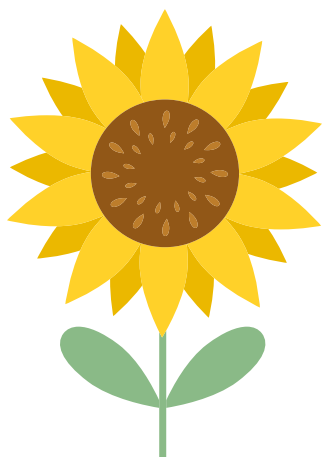
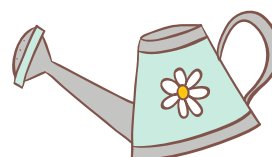
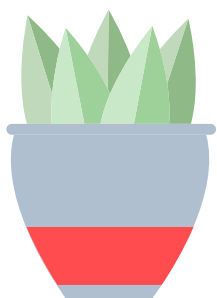
- Doing together / Decision-making
- Cooperative and collaborative partnerships with the community

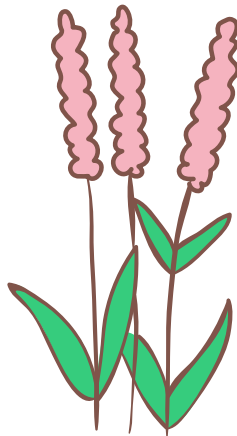
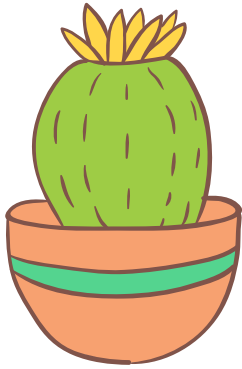
APPROX. TIME NEEDED TO CARRY OUT THE ACTIVITY

- 30 to 45 minutes

MAIN TARGET GROUP

- 3, 4, 5-year-old children and their parents





1 General goals of the activity (Why should I use this activity?)

- Create partnerships between the school and parents.
- Strengthen the family involvement in school activities.
- Promote activities in the institution where families are invited to participate.
- Promote the involvement and dedication of parents and other family members in the care and learning of children.
- Promote opportunities for families to learn and support each other.
- Create opportunities for community members to get involved and participate in early childhood education centers activities.
- Promote activities where the respect for Nature is implicit.
- Recognize that children are part of the of the community and that the community plays a key role in their early life experiences.

2 Description of the activity

- 1 Ask each child to bring a clay vase from home.
- 2 Students with teachers paint their vase in the classroom on the first day of the third term.
- 3 A few days later, parents are invited to their



5

Invite the parents to plant the seeds and label the vases alongside the children.

6

Take the vase home, and make sure it is well maintained

4

Paint the vases



ORGANIZING THE ACTIVITY

1

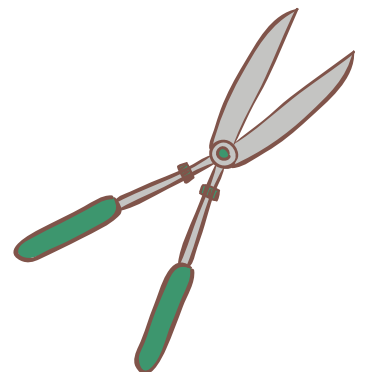
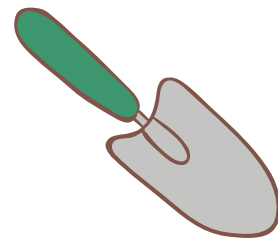
Reinforce the importance of taking good care of Mother Earth to the children

2

Send an email to the parents asking them to buy a clay vase

3

The school buys seeds to be planted



child's classroom, where each family plants/sows a plant of their choice (flowers or herbs) in its own vase.

4 Each vase is identified by a label.

5 Each child is responsible for the maintenance of his/her vase with the support of their respective teacher, and at the end of the school year, that vase is taken home.

outdoors, for example in the school garden if there is one.

It is worth mentioning that it may be difficult for parents to participate, since the activity is conducted during working hours.

Role of the teacher

- Invite and encourage them to participate in the activity.
- To promote a warm and inviting environment.
- Collaborate with parents during activities.

- Advise and help children maintaining the vases.

Role of the family

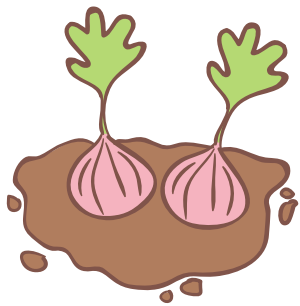
The parents should participate actively and maintain interest in

the development of the activity.

Educators and students are responsible for vase decoration and choice of the plant type.

Remarks (issues to be aware of when implementing the activity)

Instead of using a vase, the activity can be done



6 Added value for the child and the family

- Cultural, environmental, artistic awareness.

7 Materials to be used

- Clay vases, soil, various seeds, wood, cardboard, paint or pens and glue.

8 Guiding questions to reflect on the general improvement of the service

- Are parents available to take part in so many activities?



GUIDING QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PRACTICE

- How will the parents react to the activity?
- Are parents aware of the importance of maintaining "a small garden" at home?

