





Methodological recommendations

Parents education in pre-school institutions



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En el presente trabajo se recogen las aportaciones de dos intensos años de aprendizaje e intercambio realizados por profesionales de la educación procedentes de ocho diferentes países europeos. Desde entidades e instituciones de diversa índole (guarderías, colegios, entidades sin ánimo de lucro, asociaciones de padres y madres, centros de formación permanente del profesorado,…) se intentaron detectar las necesidades de las familias ante el ilusionante pero siempre complejo proceso de crianza de sus hijos y contribuir, desde un punto de vista profesional, a convertir a los centros educativos en lugares de encuentro y colaboración.

Pretendimos abordar una temática que creímos central para que la formación del alumnado mejorase a través de la implicación de las familias en tareas educativas compartidas con el profesorado. A pesar de los diferentes contextos educativos y sociales habíamos detectado la misma problemática

- En el día a día de las escuelas infantiles surgen muchas veces desencuentros entre profesorado y familias que obstaculizan el proceso de aprendizaje.
- Los canales de comunicación entre ellos resultan muy a menudo insuficientes.
- Las familias en riesgo de exclusión o con hijos con NEAE suelen participar menos con las instituciones educativas.
- La formación inicial del profesorado apenas toca el tema de trabajo y relación con las familias.
- Poca participación en general de las familias (nula participación de los hombres).
- Escasa presencia de las familias en las aulas (trabajo curricular).

Nuestra premisa de partida fue que a través de la colaboración familia-escuela se favorecía la inclusión de todo el alumnado. La razón que apoyaba esta hipótesis era básicamente que tanto las familias como los centros educativos eran instituciones en constante cambio por lo que muchas veces el trabajo conjunto se hacía difícil.

Situándonos en una postura realista, es preciso reconocer que si bien en el tramo de la Educación Infantil especialmente, son muchos los profesionales que vienen tejiendo redes a la colaboración con las familias, se tenía claro que el modelo de colaboración a seguir habría de ser uno en el que la participación fuese plena, en el que las familias fuesen llamadas a compartir decisiones y responsabilidades con los educadores, actuando de manera cooperativa en la solución de los problemas en un plano de igualdad.

Por ello esperamos que este abanico de buenas prácticas ayude a continuar en un camino en el que los grandes beneficiados son los niños y niñas.

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Introduction

These methodological recommendations are the result of international project *"Parents education in pre-school institutions: spreading European experience"*. The project was implemented in 2005-2007 under support of EU Socrates Grundtvig programme.





Project partners shared, examined and generalised experience of different European countries on parents education in pre-school institutions. The project combined knowledge and skills of institutions of formal and non-formal education: kindergartens, non-governmental organisations, research and training institutions. Partners of the project analysed European perspectives of kindergarten - family relations and prepared methodical recommendations how to develop meaningful, closer and effective links between home and kindergarten.

Aims and objectives of the project *"Parents education in pre-school institutions: spreading European experience"*:



- share, examine and generalise experience of different European countries on parents education in pre-school institutions;
- merge experience of kindergartens, non-governmental organisations, research and training institutions;
- learn best practices;
- analyse European perspectives of kindergarten - family relations, developing meaningful, closer and effective links between home and kindergarten;
- encourage and educate parents to be included into all levels of education in kindergarten, including governance;
- promote quality and innovations of parents education;
- empower mothers and fathers;
- involve hard-to-reach parents;

- analyse dealing with pressure groups;
- assist parents in preparing children for school;
- promote equal opportunities, encouraging both fathers and mothers to participate actively;





- combat social exclusion, including disabled parents, families from marginal groups and parents of disabled children;
- strengthen links between the new and old EU members;
- promote use of information and communication technologies in European kindergartens.

Partners of the project

Associazione Genitori A.Ge."Silvium"
Gravina in Puglia, Italy

Centro de Formación y Recursos de A Coruña
A Coruña, Spain

Chasten Obrazovarelen Complex 'Svetlina'
Sofia, Bulgaria

IV CIRCOLO "T.Fiore" Gravina
Gravina, Italy

Honningsvåg Barnehage
Honningsvåg, Norway

Langley First School
Whitley Bay, UK

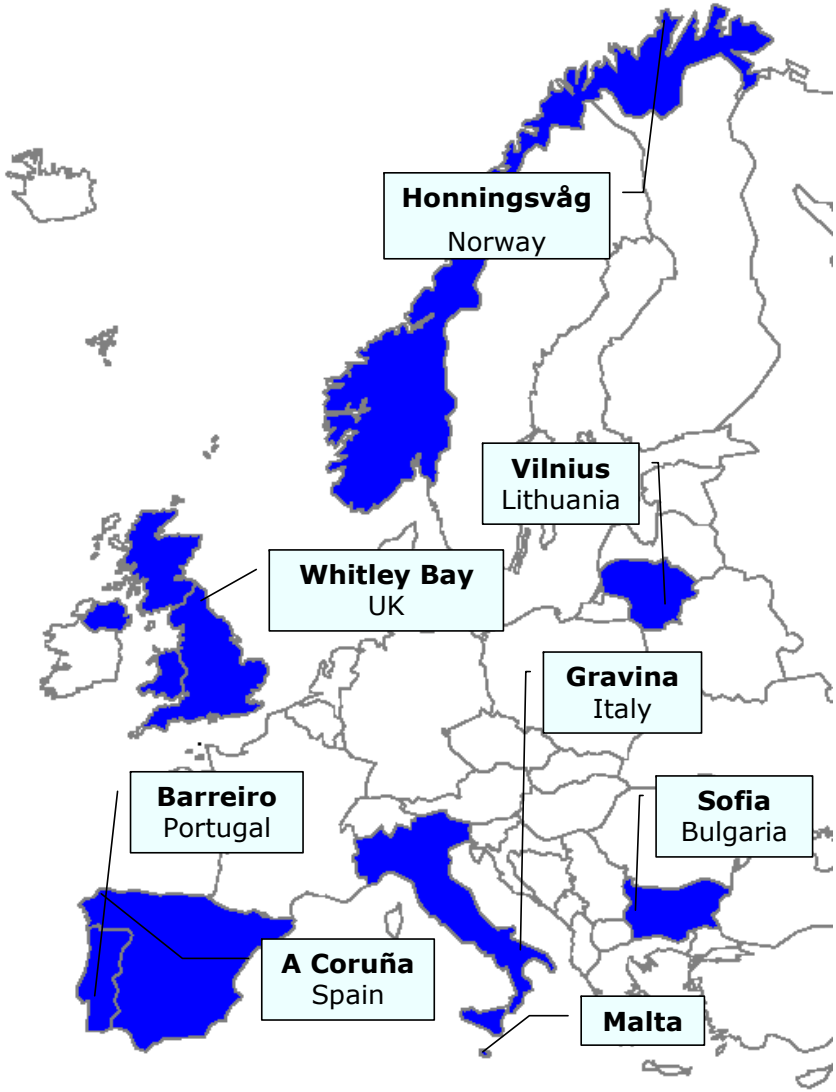
Oficina de histórias - Cooperativa de solidariedade social, Crl
Barreiro, Portugal

Pažangos centras
Elektrėnai, Lithuania

San Andrea Early School
Malta

Vilnius "Vandenis" kindergarten
Vilnius, Lithuania

Partnership map







Socrates
Grundtvig

About Socrates

Socrates is the Community action programme in the field of education. The Socrates programme promotes co-operation under eight Actions: Comenius, Erasmus, Grundtvig, Lingua, Minerva, Observation and innovation in education systems and policies, Accompanying measures.

Grundtvig seeks to enhance the quality, European dimension, availability and accessibility of lifelong learning through adult education in the broadest sense, to promote improved educational opportunities for those leaving school without basic qualifications, and to encourage innovation through alternative learning pathways. In addition to learning within the formal educational system, this also includes learning that takes place on a non-formal, informal or autonomous basis.

The citizenship trough the education

Prepared according to experience of
Associazione Genitori A.Ge."Silvium" (Gravina in Puglia, Italy)

Problems solved



This project was born within the European year for the education to the citizenship in an active and joint way. In the schools, in particular, it is strong the need to make aware the students of every kind and level of school about the knowledge of what it is to be a citizen in the European, national and local contest. Not only students, but also their parents must be evolved to face these arguments.

Aim

The aim of this project is the envolvement of the schools institutions so that they.Can make aware the parents about the values of a democratic coexistence among the citizens.Every parent must be helped by institutions and by the society in general to guide his own children dong the cood of democracy and of the active and joint citizenship.The school must be interested to increase the parents cultural level in order to have more motivated and responsabilized interlocutors, in particular for (thats) common educational task that is to follow children ant teenagers to words a more personal autonomy.

The first aspect is that if the parents' educational style becomes better, consequently children learning and the scholastic success improve. The second aspect is that (if) the relation ships between school and family become more fluent and fluid mature the advantage that the school will receive in the developing of its education and formative objectives will be more evident.



The second objective is to give then to the parents the tools to be better and more efficient interlocutors of the scholastic institution. If they will be put in the condition to do it. It is urgent fit (suitable) support to the family and to the so called "parenthood".

Description of the activity

Methodology

Parents will learn through film, documentaries, the use of glossy papers overhead projector and schemes. Guided by experts, there will be dibates, discussions, exchange of ideas as method of the groug learn of. There will be role plays in the case of conflicts inside the family a final dibate.

There will be groug works about the themes poposed during the lessons (meetings) and/or about proposals mead by tha groups of parents.

Receivers

This course addressed to the parents of children and teenagers that attend to Fiore school in Gravina.

Time

This course will last 20 hours there will be 10 meeting of 2 hours each (lessons) in the afternoon ,one day a week.

Professional resources

N.1 Pedagogist

N.1. Expert forming process

N.1. Expert in scholastic legislation



Logistic instrumental (auxiliary) resources

A large room

Photocopier

Felt jens

Folders and pens and papers for the participants

N.1. Ream

Overhead projector + glossy papers + felt jens

Video record

Contents

1. Relationship between school-parents
2. Scolastic legislation
3. The solidarity as development of the citizenship in the family, in the society in the country in Europe
4. The dynamics of ecological communication
5. Viewing and comment about the file "the keys the house"



Teaching parents English language

Prepared according to experience of
Associazione Genitori A.Ge."Silvium" (Gravina in Puglia, Italy)

Problems solved



A lot of children's parent's of the kindergarten don't participate actively to the schoollife, or because they have short of time to devote to school or because they have little interest to participate, to activities proposed them by the school institution.

Aim

- To encourage parents to collaborate and participate to school life.
- To spend a larger part of the parent's free time with their children.
- To teach to parents the basic English language.

Description of the activity

Time

The course is addressed to 20 parents if the school T. Fiore. It will be divided in 10 lessons of two hours each, from January to May 2007.

Methodology:



Teacher will use a communicative and interactive approach. Games, songs, nursery, rhymes will be used. The children of the parents involved in the project will attend the last two lessons with their parents to give them the opportunity to put in practice what learnt during the course.

Professional resources:

The lessons will be held by members of the A.Ge. who are in possession of the linguistic competences.

Teachers: Rosaria Dibattista and Luigina Franco

Resources:

Cds, audiocassettes, copies, coloured pencils, sheets, wallchart.

Consequences

- Parents use the linguistic competence acquired during the English course.
- Parents will develop a strange, sense of belonging to the school.

In-service teacher training about family-school relationships in a Coruña

Prepared according to experience of
Centro de Formación y Recursos de A Coruña (A Coruña, Spain)

Problems solved

- Initial teacher training in Galicia poorly explains the topic on family-school links.
- There are a lot of misunderstandings between teachers and parents.
- The communication among families and the school, sometimes, is not going properly.

Aim

- To improve the teacher training about the relationship between teachers and parents.
- To make teachers become aware about the "ins" of working collaborately with families, and the profit of this situation for the entire development of the pupils.
- To give information about models, frameworks and good practices about family-school relationship.
- To promote good school practices where the collaboration among parents and teachers is essential

Description of the activity

1.- Teachers Workshops:

We, as part of the model of Inservice Teacher Training supported by the Autonmus Goverment (Xunta de Galicia), are offering a type of workshop called "grupos de trabajo". Here, a group of teachers reflecting about his own work, try to realised themselves about some aspects of his work they can do better, and collaboratelly, look for solutions.

With these activities we are trying:

- fostering work as a team.
- update scientific and pedagogical contents.
- reflect about teaching and learning.
- spread good practices.
- produce materials for teaching.

In these groups are involved 5 to 12 teachers, from the same school or from different schools. It is possible to get some advice from "experts" (lectures). During the two years of the Project (2005/2006 and 2006/2007), in our organization we were working with 187 "grupos de trabajo" and more than 1000 teachers from kindergarten to upper secondary school.

As part as our participation in this European Program, we had try to stress the cooperation among families and schools in the groups working with kindergarten teachers. Particularly, in groups working about reading, writing, math and philosophy skills in kindergartens, we gave then some lectures about the participation of the families in working by projects. Here we present some of them in academic year 2005/2006:

- "Educational community participation in the making of school documents". 6 hrs.; 12 kindergarten & primary school teachers.

- "Teaching mathematics at kindergarten"; 9 hrs.; 25 kindergarten & primary school teachers.
- "Working projects in mathematics teaching in kindergartens"; 3 hrs.; 24 kindergarten & primary school teachers.
- "Involving families in working projects"; 3 hrs.; 16 kindergarten & primary school teachers.
- "Times, spaces & family in the Reggio Emilia experience". 3 hrs. 10 kindergarten & primary school teachers.
- "The expositive text for working with the little children". 2 hrs.; 12 kindergarten & primary school teachers.
- "Participation of families in workshops". 3 hrs. 10 kindergarten & primary school teachers.
- "Working expositive texts in kindergarten & primary schools". 3 hrs. 14 kindergarten & primary school teachers.
- "Child development and nursing guidelines". 5 hrs.; 80 teachers from Preescolar na Casa.

And in academic year 2006/2007:

- "Teaching mathematics at kindergarten"; 9 hrs.; 35 kindergarten & primary school teachers.
- "Participation of families in workshops". 6 hrs. 10 kindergarten & primary school teachers.
- "Philosophy for children"; 9 hrs.; 15 kindergarten & primary school teachers.
- "Teaching in kindergarten with ITC"; 12 hrs.; 12 kindergarten teachers.

- "Involving parents in teaching Galician language in kindergarten"; 12 hrs.; 12 kindergarten teachers.
- "Involving families in working projects"; 3 hrs.; 16 kindergarten & primary school teachers.

Apart from this, we want to present a "workshop" which main aim was working the relationship family-school in the kindergarten. Its called "Educación infantil familiar en la zona Norte de A Coruña" and they are 10 teachers, working in what we call "Preescolar na Casa". They are trying during the two years of the Project:

- Engage families about the whole development of children.
- Infants can grow up with autonomy and control.
- Develop child as a secure person with a positive self confidence.
- To be able to establish cooperative relationships on their educational and familiar environment.
- To start to understand how does their social natural and physical environment works for them to be able to express their knowledge.
- Be able to start their first steps valuating ethically and morally their behaviours.

This group of teachers were working on:

- The family's role on teaching.
- The partnership among teachers and families.
- The kind of meetings with families (one to one, several families,…)
- The influence of media (press, TV, radio, library…)

As methodological principles we find:



- The early years in life are decisive.
- Families are essential in the teaching process.
- Mother and father can be educators and they are indispensable.
- Culture and knowledge are essential.

The way they where working tends to be:

- Definition of the topics during the meetings with families.
- Bibliographic research.
- Research on the www.
- Elaboration of material for the families.
- Presentation of this material, and the methodology for show this contents.

2.- Teachers Seminary:

Similar to working groups but only 3 to 6 teachers and no external teaching. During the Grundtvig Project, CFR of A Coruña has promoted 43 "Seminarios permanentes" (2005/2006) and 45 (2006/2007) with about 440 teachers involved.

About this topic we promote 2 "Teachers Seminary" in some schools of Coristanco (A Coruña) during 2005/2006. It is the union of 8 1-unit schools with children from kindergarten to 1st cycle of primary school (3-8 years old) and with 10 teachers working about:

- "Arriba o telón" ("Up courtain"). Preparing & presenting a theatre play (Little Red Riding Hood) with collaboration from families. The aims were:

  - Theatre as an educative tool.
  - Making a theatrical script adapted for the age and the interest of pupils.
  - Using music to stress the meaning of scenes.
  - Promote using ICT for the staging.
  - Using recycled materials for scenography & wardrobe.
  - Making posters to promote participation of families.
  - Spreading popular culture.

- "A educación medioambiental nas escolas unitarias" ("Environmental education in 1-unit schools"). They intend that children were able to recognize the most common medicinal herbs and they learn to give value to their environment. Working with families they planted in each school garden various vegetable species and made a record about their properties.

During the academic year 2006/2007 we promoted the following teacher seminaries related to the Grundtvig Project:

- "Let's take care about our environment" Portofaro School (Cambre-A Coruña).

- "Theatre in our school" Rosalía de Castro School (A Coruña).

- "An experience of cooperative learning" Secondary School Neira Vilas (Oleiros-A Coruña).

3.- Training course:

We designed a teachers training course called: "As relacións familia-escola na Educación Infantil" ("Relationships between familias-school in kindergartens") the main items were:

Assistants: Kindergarten teachers

Number: no limit

Duration: 10 hrs.

Dates: 13, 14 and 20 of March 2006

Aims:

- Help the communication between families and kindergarten teachers.
- Show knowledge and new links skills families and teachers.
- Improve skills to join strong vincles between home-school.

Contents:

- Relationships between family-school on kindergarten.
- Main experiences on relationships between family-school on kindergarten.
- Models and scopes about relationships between family-school on kindergarten: information to the families, meetings and assemblies, schools of parents, online information,...

Lectures:

- Lois Ferradás Blanco, Prf. in Faculty os Sciences of Education (A Coruña University). "Models and scopes about relationships between family-school on kindergarten".
- Celia Armesto Rodríguez, Kindergarten teacher and Psicologist on "Preeschool at home": "Counseling meetings like a new bond family-school".
- Bárbara García Zas, Head of Andaina School (A Coruña): "Implication of the families in the work of our school".

The training sessions were very applauded by the 40 kindergarten teachers involved, who said they were going to apply the knowledge on their schools.

Hence to the success of this course we went on a new one on the second year deeping on the aims that we had started the year before. The lectures were:

- Javier F. Rouco (Teacher's advisor) "European models of relationships between school and families". 3 hours.
- Carmen Morán (Prf. in Faculty of Sciences of Education at Santiago University) "Time for relationships". 3 hours.
- Teresa Domínguez (Prf. in Faculty os Sciences of Education at Vigo University) "Families and Teachers working together on the classrooms". 6 hours.
- Brainstorming between teachers and parents. 3 hours.
- Ramón Flecha (Prf. in Faculty os Sciences of Education at Barcelona University) "Learning communities: the future of education". 3 hours.

The other Galician Teacher's training and resources centres followed us on the design of new activities on their areas.

4.- Spreading the project:

In order to promote the spreading of our Grundtvig project among Galician teachers we have involved them on two different meetings where they have showed their project:



- I Educational experiences communication meeting: (A Coruña, 6-8th. June 2006) "Comunicación de experiencias educativas". It took place on our Training Service place. There were about 100 teachers from different education levels. Explaining our project, Miriam Sedes López exposed the lecture called: "Working with families on Preschool at Home".
- V Preschool Meeting: (Santiago, 2-3 June 2006) "V Encuentros de Educación Infantil". It is an annual meeting that joins more than 500 galician kindergarten teachers. We developed a workshop led by Ermitas López (Preschool at Home): "Relationships between families and school".

Besides of that, the teacher's advisers involved in this Grundtvig Project were taken to explain our experience all around the Galician geography:

- Teacher's Meeting in Sanxenxo (Pontevedra) organised by the University and "Preschool at Home" Foundation. 250 kindergarten & primary school teachers.
- Training Course in Pontevedra; 25 kindergarten & primary school teachers.
- Workshop in Vilagarcía (Pontevedra); 12 kindergarten & primary school teachers.
- Workshop in Meis (Pontevedra); 9 kindergarten teachers.
- Training Course in Ferrol (A Coruña); 15 kindergarten & primary school teachers.
- Improvement Plan in Gondomar (Pontevedra); 12 kindergarten & primary school teachers.
- Training Course in Lugo; 25 kindergarten & primary school teachers.
- Training Course in A Pobra (A Coruña); 25 kindergarten teachers.

Consequences

Teachers in these formative activities achieved:

- To know models & experiences of family-school collaboration.
- Developing strategies for increase the participation of families in school education.

- Trying projects about family participation in different roles in school life.
- Making the CFR (Training & Resources Centre) as a referent of in-service training.
- Spread between colleagues the developed experiences.

In all the activities that took place on the CFR A Coruña was made a quality systematic evaluation about the training results, complimented by the teachers after the training; the results of this evaluation say that aims, the theme, the teachers and the materials obtained were qualified as superb.

We have become a Galician reference on this theme, as we have managed to implicate a huge amount of teachers on these activities and improve the relationships with the families. On the following draw you can see the figures related to the teachers on the A Coruña area involved in our Grundtvig Project.

	Training courses and meetings	Teachers seminaries	Workshops	Training projects
2005/2006	40	10	120	25
2006/2007	22	14	83	35
TOTAL	62	24	203	60

Besides of that, we have dedicated the last number of our Educational Magazine to the Project.

The artistic parents

Prepared according to experience of
IV CIRCOLO "T.Fiore" Gravina (Gravina, Italy)


Grundtvig 2 Project

Grundtvig

Parents education in pre-school institutions: spreadingEuropean experience

Very interesting project from Gravina - Italy

The main aim of the project is to share, examine and generalise experience of different European countries on education in pre-institutions. The

formal and non-formal education: kindergartens, non-governmental organisations, research and training institutions.

Partners of the project will analyse European perspectives of kindergarten - family relations. The project will

(encouraging both fathers and mothers to participate actively) and combat social exclusion (including disabled parents, families from marginal groups and parents of disabled children).For most people there is an initial reaction of disbelief

IV CIRCOLO "T.Fiore" Gravina has two school complexes of Primary school and four school complexes of pre-primary school. One school complex of Primary and two school complexes of pre-primary are in suburban area, where live lower middle-class person and lower class too. In some family are problems: unemployment, emigration, micro-crime, prostitution. Some pupils live in institution of under ages and are protected by juvenile court. There are children of immigrants too.
Through the co-ordinate action of the various institutions children acquire the values, that they use in daily behaviour. For this reason our school actives plans in net with schools, institutions and associations in order to offer to the parents opportunity of associate-cultural increase.

The school, moreover, organizes for the parents courses and conventions on particular topics.

Numerous are also the activities promoted from the school in which the parents are protagonists:

organization of extensions, solidarity sale, travels of instruction, participation to competitions (with folkloristic group and the stable chorus of the school). The school has opened a library for families in order to allow to the parents "to search" and to study with and for the own sons.

In the kindergartens and in Primary school we conduct laboratory activities . They are carried out when teachers are all present, in this way every teacher has a small group of pupils.

At the beginning of school year, every teaching group introduces its plan of flexibility and say which are the projects that they want to activate. Teachers specifies the activities, the objectives to catch up, how to check them and the assessment.

So, when this project started we have asked through an inquiry to the parents if they would like to get involved in activities of the school and which kinds of activities they prefer. Therefore in accordance with the answers in questionnaire, around 85 % gave positives answers, with preference towards the artistic activities , the recovery of local traditions . Parents asked a course of Street Education, too.

Problems solved

- Parents don't participate to the scholastic life, because they have short time even if they want to be involved, in their spare time.
- Parents want to recover old tales, traditions and recipes to introduce them to kindergarten children , to young parents with the participation of the older parents.

- Parents want to know how to watch and to comprise the messages of a film with their children.
- Parents, above all mothers, want to know how to use new decorative techniques (découpage, frottage, patchtwork...)
- Parents would like to help their sons in the activities of art , image and acting animation.
- Parents of disabled children are embarrassed to stay with others parents.

Aim

- To stimulate in the various parents creativity shapes in order to develop the fantasy and to introduce them to the "magical world" of own children.
- To encourage the curiosity of children and parents towards old tales, recipes and to approach them to the old traditions, in occasion of festivities.
- To search and to read old tales to the children, in the linguistic laboratory with parents help.
- To keep TRADITIONS and CULTURE alive.
- To create scripts from the tales or from the films that children, parents and teachers have seen together(to play then with puppets show or a final acting animation.
- To approach the adults artistic and decorative techniques (découpage, frottage, patchtwork, painting,stencil, ...).
- To refine to the hands ability of adults and children, learning decoration , recovery and restoration techniques.

- To develop the sense of beauty and the harmony of the shapes with various kinds of painting.
- To urge the collaboration of parent-children, co-operation towards the common realization of products .
- To include parents of disabled children and integrate them with the others parents.

Description of the activity

IV Circolo "T.Fiore" has offered , in two years of project, two kinds of activities:

1) Courses for Parents, in order to acquire the necessary competences,

2) Activities with parents, pupils and teacher in the laboratories of school and activities that parents and children do at home, to consolidate what they have learned at school.

Courses for Parents:

- Course of Decoupage.
- Course of Painting Art.
- Course of Cooking.
- Course of Acting animation.
- Cineforum Activities: watching a movie with parents, recognize the main characters and understand the message of film.
- Course of Creative activities.
- Course of Street Education,

Course of Decoupage:









The experts



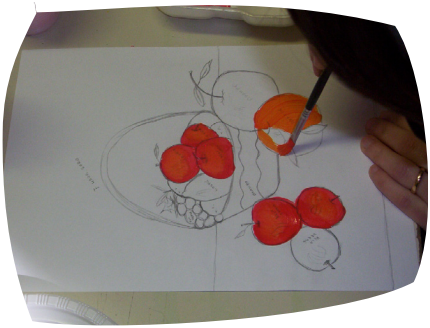
Mothers at work!

Course of Painting Art











Course of Cooking, (Homemade Pasta)



Mothers, grandmothers, Albanian and Morocco mothers… …everyone wants to learn how to make homemade pasta!



From Grandmothers we learn how to make homemade Pasta

Course of Cooking, (Traditional Cakes and biscuits for Christmas)



Preparation



Final product

Course of Acting animation: "U Natoil du casalon"





Parents protagonist of a comedy in Gravina's dialect.

Cineforum Activities: Kiriku' and Karaba' and King Leon



Parents are preparing the "King Leon" scene



Parents are watching films

Course of Creative activities.





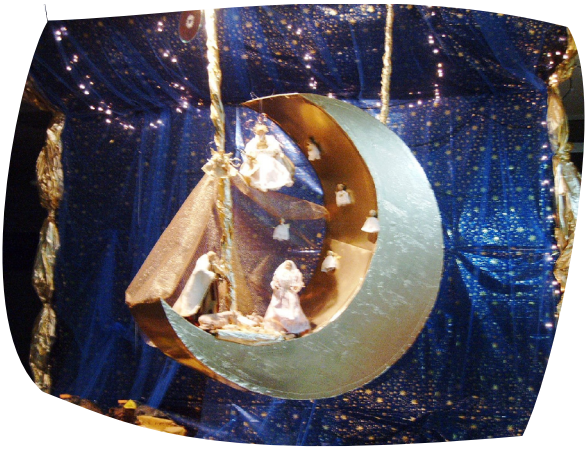
Personages for Christmas manger











Christmas manger developed by teachers , parents and pupils.

Course of Street Education







Parents, experts and municipal policemen, during the lessons.

Our school has continued with the project activities. Some groups have pulled the sums of the work done, others, instead, have undertaken new experiences. Parents have perfected the learned techniques of découpage and painting, have enriched works with other creative techniques (patchwork, stencil, creative cooking and traditional cooking…..). Moreover, parents put in practice what they learned during the attending of courses and then they have worked with their children at home and in the laboratories of school , for organize events for festivities (Christmas, Carnival, Easter….), so at the beginning of school year , teachers had to provide for a strategic plan for connecting homework and schoolwork, so that parents did works and games with their children through practical approach.

Activities with parents, pupils and teacher in the laboratories of school and parents + children at home :

- Decoupage,
- Painting Art,
- Cooking, (Homemade Pasta, Traditional Cakes and biscuits for Christmas)
- Acting animation(*"U Natoil du casalon")*
- Cineforum Activities: watching a movie with parents, recognize the main characters and understand the message of film.
- Other Creative activities (A Bag For Life, The Stocking Of Epiphany Feast, Construction of a puppets theatre and Restoration of puppets and masks , construction of the personages of the Christmas manger)
- Street Education,

Decoupage:





Painting Art:









Cooking:

Homemade Pasta,Traditional Cakes and biscuits for Christmas













Acting animation: "U Natoil du casalon"



Cineforum Activities: Kiriku' and Karaba' and King Leon





Other Creative activities (Construction of a puppets theatre and Restoration of puppets and masks)









Street Education







With Parents and municipal Policemen we learn how to be good pedestrians

Solidarity markets

Some of these experiences have been connected to solidarity manifestations. So we have organized solidarity's markets in the school and in the main public square of Gravina.
The profit of products' sales have been given for charity in Anaola and for distance's adoptions .


















Scuola dell'Infanzia "Gianni Gori"




catino della Solidarietà
pro - Angola
TALE: UN PONTE CHE UNISCE ANCORA

Final product

All the activities and the final products are collected in two DVD.

Dissemination:

Realization of a Convention about :

- The value of Family
- The role of parents in the education of children
- Friendship as a value,
- The example of parents remains in the memory, guides and influences life of children







Next publication of an article on local press and on local website. We disseminated first results of Grundtvig 2 project on School-web site.

Next publication on new web site of school

www.scuolainfiore.gravinainpuglia.scuolaeservizi.it.

Participation in the Regional Fair of Saint George.

The wonderful works have been exposed in various extensions . The most important is the regional Fair of Saint George. In this occasion the school received a stand where parents have showed all the works realized for Grundtvig project .

During the exposure, parent and school have received many gratifications and admiration from a lot of people and some mothers has received orders of plates , pictures, other works , so they think to put on a laboratory!





Gravina's traditional customs for wedding




GRUNDTVIG 1 Project
Parents education in pre-school institutions: spreading European experience
Formazione dei genitori nelle istituzioni prescolastiche e sociali:esperienza europea di diffusione




In Fiore
In Fiore

Consequences

All the activities, are monitored and documented, have been very successful.

Parents have participated with great interest .

All the experiences has been positive under the aspects of :

Socialization :

- among the mothers there was a friendly climate , collaboration and mutual aid,
- better relationships between parents and children, favouring the mutual confidence, esteem and affection,
- the possibility to know and to be confronted with other parents,
- to experience new shapes of collaboration between school and family,
- more participation in every scholastic activity.

Integration:

- mothers from Morocco and Albania has participated to learn our recipes and showing their traditional recipes at school.
- More integration of children and parents of disabled children.
- To offer, in particular way to the mothers housewives, the opportunity "To exit from domestic walls "

- The possibility to make of the acquired competences one possible source of gain.

Cultural increase:

- Mothers have enriched their lexicon, they have learned new things, they have uncovered the origin of manual activities.
- More sensibility towards the problems experienced by own children, in family and at school.

Collaboration with teachers:

- It has been created perfect understanding between teachers and parents for giving more formative opportunity to the children/pupils.
- More availability in the dialogue and the comparison (with teacher, with the other parents)

Involving bi-lingual parents or parents with different mother-tongue

Prepared according to experience of
Honningsvåg Barnehage (Honningsvåg, Norway)

The Norwegian approach had the following title in their application for Grundtvig 2:

"Participate in development of methodical recommendations on parent's education in pre-school institutions, with special concern to involving parents into activities of kindergarten, educating parents to help children to develop language skills".

We started out with having meetings with head of kindergartens, headmasters, head of the department for education and the parent's board in the kindergarten. We wanted to present our project and to discuss where we needed more knowledge. We agreed that in the area of parents and children being bi-lingual or even tri-lingual, there was a need for more knowledge and education.

Our community is small, but at the time we started our project we had children from15 different nationalities present in our kindergartens. Pre-school teachers had experienced difficulties with communication both with parents and children from other countries and other cultures. It became clear that the kindergartens did not look upon the new citizens as a resource but more as a problem because of this.

We had as our goal to include, involve and respect parents and children from other countries and cultures.

The kindergartens had previously started a project together with the local health department, where a book with typically Norwegian songs for children had been translated into 15 different languages. This was a result of what they had experienced in the kindergartens.

Finally we came to the conclusion that our project-title would be:

"Participate in development of methodical recommendations on parent's education in pre-school institutions, with special concern involving bi-lingual parents or parents with another mother-tongue than Norwegian into activities of the kindergarten, educating parents to help children to develop language skills".

How should we go on? We had discussions between us and we soon agreed about what to do.

1. Find literature about the subject, both national and international literature.
2. Invite bi-lingual parents or parents with another mother-tongue than Norwegian to a meeting in the kindergarten. This is a very important bit of the project, because without parents we do not have anything to work with.
3. Present the project to the parents and invite them to suggest things to do. It is important to listen and to take the parents seriously. We will also talk about the importance of a mother-tongue language for a child and use the literature we have found to support our theories.
4. Present to the parents what we have in mind.
5. Have meetings with the staff in the kindergarten to introduce and give further information about our meeting with the parents. Motivate the staff and pre-school

teachers to see the importance of a mother-tongue language and to work with it in each department.

Parents	Children	Kindergarten	
Fill in a hand-out with words/pictures in their mother-tongue language. (See photo!)	Have their own cork-board with the flag, pictures and words/numbers from their country in the kindergarten. (see photo!)	Organise an international day once a year.	This is all about including and involving parents. Both to make children and parents proud of their country, language and culture.
Invite parents to celebrate important days/traditions from their country, for example the Jewish New Year, in the kindergarten		Invite parents to learn typically Norwegian recipes and they can teach Norwegian parents "foreign" recipes.	This is to show the parents respect for their culture and to learn something from other cultures. At the same time as we can teach them something from the Norwegian culture.

Teach their children songs, rhymes etc. in their mother-tongue language.		Work with vocabulary and phonetic awareness so they can be well prepared for school.	It is very important for a child to have and to know their mother-tongue language. They use their first language to understand a second language.
Use the book with songs translated into different languages.		Use the book with songs translated into different languages.	The staff will learn and have more understanding for the parents and children. They will communicate better and see parents and children as a resource for the kindergarten.

What have the staff in the kindergarten experienced?

We have not given parents a questionnaire to evaluate the project so far. Parents have given the staff positive oral comments about the cork boards and the handouts. The staff have better communication and have more to talk about with the parents from other countries.

Some of the children have shown a bigger interest in learning a second language. One mother said that her child is much more interested in learning her language after the kindergarten started this project. Another mother said that her child taught her a lot of Norwegian words when they worked with the hand-out.



The children contribute with songs, stories and exact knowledge from their country, they can show pictures, the flag etc. The other children get curious and ask questions and they also reflect about Norway and the place they live.

Some parents have celebrated special days and have made food from their country in the kindergarten.

The kindergarten has started on a process and they find it interesting and exciting and they have a lot of ideas on how to go on.

The project has got positive response from the National Agency in Bergen for the work we have done.

LITERATURE:

1. " Tidlig språkstimulering og livslang læring en kunnskapsoversikt."

Vibeke Grøver Aukrust has written a report for the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, she represents The Pedagogical Science Institute at Oslo University. It is written in 2005 and it is a report where she has collected theories in the field of international science about early language stimuli and lifelong learning.

2. Drammen Kommune "Veileder Tospråklig opplæring i barnehagen".

"Bi-lingual education in the kindergarten".

A very informative and practical book on how to work systematically with bi-lingual children and parents.

www.drammen.kommune.no

3."Snakkepakken året rundt" written by Lena Malinovsky Finnanger

A very informative and practical book which the staff in a kindergarten can use as a tool the whole year to strengthen children's language whatever first language.

www.snakkepakken.no

4."Rammeplanen for barnehagens innhold og oppgaver, pluss temaheftet om språklig og kulturelt mangfold".

"The curriculum for Norwegian Kindergartens and the theme booklet about language and cultural richness".

www.odin.no

Reviewing and reorganising the Home / School Foundation Stage Information Packs

Prepared according to experience of
Langley First School (Whitley Bay, UK)

Problems solved



- We felt that some parents were not using the information packs
- Previously we had not asked for feedback from Parents as to how useful they had found these Information Packs
- Parents who had previously used the packs felt that some information was lacking
- Our school is now a resourced provision for children with special needs and our information pack does not pr ovide relevant information
- We felt there was a lack of materials for parents to share with their child at home

- We were not utilising the North Tyneside's learning Portal or the Internet, so that parents and children could access information

Aim



- Evaluate previous Foundation Stage information packs with all Foundation staff
- To include relevant information on inclusive education
- Involve the parents in revising the Information Packs



- Use the Internet to provide information to parents and children
- Involve parents in child's learning
- Provide materials for the child in preparation for starting nursery and reception

Description of the activity

Early Years team evaluated existing materials

Questionnaire devised and sent to present Foundation Stage Parents:



1. Did you find the Nursery / Reception pack's useful? Yes/No
2. Did you find the evening meeting useful? Yes/No
3. Would it have been useful to have the pack's' before the evening meeting? Yes/No
4. What extra information would have been useful?
5. What information was in it that you never used?
6. Would you have liked it on-line? Yes/No
7. Should the pack include something for the child? E.G. a picture of the teacher, the classroom or the school. Yes/No
8. Would you like a small booklet to complete about your child giving us details and a photograph?
9. Did you get enough visits to nursery / reception before starting?

10. What else could we do to make your child's move into Nursery / Reception as easy as possible for the child?

Analyse the data

Alter & reorganise information packs

Make a book for the parents to share with their child, reinforcing social skills, early literacy and early numeracy

School Web site to be used for parent and child, and to include photographs of staff.

Consequences

Analyse and respond to questionnaires returned from parents

Nursery – 32 replies	Reception – 13 replies
1. All yes	1. All yes
2. Yes, except for 2 who began mid year	2. All yes
3. 7 – no, 2 N/A & 21 yes mostly for reference, query raised as to distribution & cost	3. 12 – yes & 1 no
4. Guide to nursery day, photos of staff, plan of topics and sandshoes	4. In formation about After School Club, classroom routines, tour of school and 10 needed no more information
5. All information used by parents	5. All information used by parents
6. 24 would like on –line, 8 not	6. 10 would like on-line, 3 not
7. Majority would like photos of staff	7. Majority would like photos of staff
8. 10 – no & 22 - yes	8. 5 – no, 7 – yes & 1 non-committal
9. All yes	9. 9 had enough visits, 3 not

	enough and 1 no answer
10. Suggestions were named photos of staff on board, perhaps visit from local playgroup & using North Tyneside's portal	10. 1 suggestion was school map on-line involving a game for child to play with parents, 12 no ideas

All staff have been fully involved in producing the new booklets

Information in the packs re-inclusive education

Booklets included that parents can use with their child to help their early education





A section of the packs aimed specifically for the child in the form of a booklet

Use of the Portal and Internet to share information about the foundation stage

Ecology and Traditional Patrimony through Experiential education

Prepared according to experience of Oficina de histórias – Cooperativa de solidariedade social (Barreiro, Portugal)

Problems solved

The Kindergarten (Jardim da Criança) is a small school (with about 45 children) and is located in the periphery of Lisbon in a high populated zone with big buildings and little green space.

In 80% of the parents, both the elements of the couple work outside of house.

Great part of them works 20 kilometres away from home. In such a way, during the days of week, they have much little free and available time to participate in activities with the kindergarten.

Thus, a time lack exists, therefore in accordance with the express answers in questionnaire, face to the question if the parents would like to get involved in activities of the school, 95% gave positives answers.

The first question was to find a time space to develop the activities, allowed by the spare time of the parents, and that was the weekends, saturdays and sundays. The activities would have to be appellative and joyful in order to mobilize the biggest number of parents. The second question was to find the work subjects that promoted the nip of relations between the parents and the kindergarten.

In such a way, two areas of interest were found (through an inquiry to the parents) - The Natural Patrimony and Traditional Games (Portuguese and African). As the parents revealed great interest in getting formation on the subject Child Development it was designed a 12 hours formation about it.

Aim

- To promote the contact and the relationship between the parents;
- To promote significant experiences that remains into the future;
- To acquire abilities and values through direct experiences;
- To provide and increase the pleasure and the taste for the Nature;
- To encourage exploration and the respect for the environment;
- To stimulate the cooperation and the discovery of knowing through the simple things;
- To know the space/region where we are inserted;
- To know and to practise traditional games of different cultures;
- To create and to fortify relationship between parents and Kindergarten staff

Description of the activity

- Outdoor activities (interpretative promenades) in Mata da Machada (protected natural area), Natural Park of the Arrábida (natural Park where is located the most significant

ancient mediterranean forest in Portugal) and Natural Reserve of the Estuary of the Tejo River (one of the more important wet areas of the Europe);

- Portuguese and African traditional games;
- Poster edition about the project;
- Course on Child Development;
- Functional English for parents and staff

The recommendations, were discussed by the group and the result, not yet the final, because it's on going a training course for parents.

We can recommend that at the beginning of each year, the kindergarten promotes a week of basic "fun" activities. These activities, mainly in the outdoor, are initially set up for the group of parents and staff to enable them to get to know each other.

A multi activity programme provides the opportunity for the parents and staff group to engage in activities at a low skill level, enabling them all to visibly achieve and have fun from the outset.

Fun and success are crucial in establishing a viable and effective group.

So, the motivation for the parents to get involved in the kindergarten activities is the first step.

The handbook for parents provides some useful information about the learning materials that the children learn in school, and in our case it supplies the guide lines for a training course about child development.

Consequences

- Greater involvement in school activities (suggesting, planning and developing);
- Extending the curriculum through learning in the outdoors;
- To foster their support, was designed a Handbook for Parents to help them to connect, through the children, to the learning material they will cover the school year;
- To increase positive cooperation between parents and kindergarten.

Parental Inclusion Activities @ San Andrea Early School

Prepared according to experience of
San Andrea Early School (Malta)

Parental Involvement at San Andrea School



A School of the Parents' Foundation for Education, San Andrea School was set up by parents for their children. It is the ultimate example of parental involvement in education where parents are the governors, the investors, the idealists whose vision led to a new age of investment in children's education.

However, parental involvement does not rest with the limited number of parents who form the Board of Governors, or members of other committees that support the school in its endeavour to provide the best education for its students. Rather, the School's philosophy is founded on the fact that each parent is a partner in education. Parents are their children's first teachers -- and they are life-long teachers. Classroom

teachers only have a particular child for a year, usually no longer than that. They are a brief light in each child's life and, as such, a brief light in his or her parents' lives. If, as educationalists, we are to reach our goal of producing successful students, we must emphasise the importance of collaborating with the people ultimately responsible for the children in our care.

Communication is the key to successful home-school links. San Andrea School encourages open communication channels with parents. Parents and teachers are encouraged to communicate with each other, not only as the bearers of bad news, such as, when the child is ill behaved or slacking in work, but also when the child is achieving the desired level of education or according to his/her ability. In this respect, parents are similarly encouraged to communicate their concerns in order to address each individual's areas for improvement.



The School does not limit parents' visits to the normal bi-annual parents' days. Familiarisation visits, curriculum meetings, meetings that cater for specific individual needs, are regularly set up to keep parents informed of the educational process that their children are going through. Apart from these formal meetings, the School also organizes specific activities such as field days and parenting-skills courses in the evening to ensure that working parents actively participate in their children's

education. An interactive open day, drama evenings, music and literary nights are planned in advance so as to facilitate parent' attendance.

Courses for parents are also organised by the school to keep them updated with the latest methodologies in teaching. Such courses seek to ensure that parents and teachers work in harmony to ensure that the teaching and learning process conforms with the latest needs of our ever evolving society. Parents are also invited on school outings, particularly for the younger age group; and are encouraged to assist with administrative tasks such as photocopying, binding, books purchases and so on. San Andrea School is also proud to employ a number of teachers who are also parents of children attending the school.

Research shows that the more active forms of parent involvement produce greater achievement benefits than the more passive ones. It also shows that the earlier in a child's educational process parent involvement begins, the more powerful the effects will be. Educators frequently point out the critical role of the home and family environment in determining children's school success, and it appears that the earlier this influence is "harnessed," the greater the likelihood of higher student achievement.

The School Consultative Council

The functions of the School Consultative Council are:-

(a) To provide a forum for the teachers and the parents to identify and discuss any matters - whether educational, administrative or otherwise - which are relevant to the day

to day running of the School and the quality of education provided to the pupils across all the sectors at the School;



(b) To make recommendations to the Heads of School and/or the School Board for the continuous improvement of the educational standards at the School and for the benefit of the pupils, parents, teachers and staff at the School;

(c) To encourage and create opportunities for parent and teacher participation in School activities and extra-curricular events;

(d) To develop, with the help of relevant teaching staff, activities which are educational for parents and teachers;

The School Consultative Council is composed of not less than five (5) and not more than ten (10) members as follows:-

a) Two parents elected from amongst the parents whose children are in Early School; two parents from amongst the parents whose children are in Middle School; and three parents elected from amongst the parents whose children are in Senior School;

b) Three (3) teachers, one from each of Early School, Middle School and Senior School, elected from the teachers of the particular Sectors by the same teachers.

Elections for the constitution of the School Consultative Council are held every two years, and parents and teachers are eligible for re-election. A Chairperson is elected by and from within the School Consultative Council from amongst its members for a period of twelve months.

All meetings of the School Consultative Council are open to School Board members.

A meeting between delegations from the School Consultative Council and the School Board are held as often as possible.

San Andrea School's Management set-up

A School of the Parents' Foundation for Education, San Andrea School was set up by parents for their children. It is the ultimate example of parental involvement in education where parents are the governors, the investors, the idealists whose vision led to a new age of investment in children's education.

Parents at San Andrea School are involved in:

- **Board of Governors**

  The Board of Governors oversees the overall management, administration and co-ordination of the School. It is also responsible for the administration of all funds and assets. The Board works directly with the Heads of School and monitors and evaluates whether the School is developing in line with the aims, ideals and policies of the Foundation.

- **The School Consultative Council**

- **The Fundraising Committee (FRC)**

The FRC is made up of a number of volunteer parents who together with the Heads of School discuss the needs for additional resources to embellish the school and its services. They organise activities for children, parents and guests in other to raise funds. These include Carnival Parties, Hot Dog Day, Milkshake Day, Fun Days and other similar activities.



All other parents in the school are encouraged to participate in the various activities organised by the school. Furthermore the School upholds an open-door policy for communication. This ensures that all parents feel that they are heard and values stakeholders.

School Procedure for Familiarisation Days with Parents

These familiarization days are organized towards the end of the scholastic year in May/June for the School's new pre-school age intake for the following scholastic year that starts in October.

Parents and children are invited by letter to visit the School. It will be their first introduction as to how the playrooms function on a day-to-day basis.

The children with their parents move from one playroom to the other, watching what is going on and also taking part in the different activities, if they wish. At play-break they can go out into the playground with all the children.

This visit normally lasts for about 90 minutes. At the end of this visit we hold a question/answer session where parents can voice any questions, queries or concerns they may have and get these answered. We remind the parents that they will be receiving the School Welcome Pack during September and give them the start dates of school for the coming scholastic year. We also give out information about the settling-in days, which are very important and take place at the beginning of the scholastic year in late September/October.

As a School we find that organizing and running these familiarization days helps us to introduce the concept of parental involvement and working in partnership at a very early stage.

School Procedure for Settling-In Days with Parents

These settling days are organized, at the beginning of the scholastic year, for all the School's pre-school age groups, namely:

- Pre-Nursery (2 year olds)
- Nursery (3 year olds)
- Grade One (4 year olds)

The School advises parents through our Welcome Pack about the dates for settling in their children into the various year groups.

The start date for each of the year groups is staggered so that we do not have all our pre-school children starting school at the same time.

Grade One



Children starting in Grade One are invited with their parents to attend 2 days of settling in at school the week before they actually start with us. Normally on a Thursday and Friday. During these days the children and parents get to know the class teacher and start to make new friends. They will also become familiar with class routines and realize the expectations of this year group. The parents are free to play with their children within the classrooms and the outdoor play areas. A Child Profile is completed by the parents which gives the teachers information about the children, their abilities and their needs

The parents are given an assurance that if the children are unhappy when they attend school alone we will contact them and they can come and spend more time with their child. This happens on very rare occasions. Many of our children in Grade One have already completed a year at San Andrea in the Nursery and are therefore very familiar with the school and what is expected of them.

Nursery

Three days of settling-in are organized for our three year olds and their parents. These usually take place on a Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. We have two nursery classes with a Nursery Teacher and a Nursery Assistant in each class. The procedure is as follows:

- Half the class i.e. 10 children attend with parents on Day 1
- Other half of class 10 children attend with parents on Day 2
- The whole class 20 children attend with parents on Day 3

In this way the teacher is able to get to know the children and their parents better and is able to give each family the necessary time to feel secure and 'happy' within our school environment.

Parents will complete a child profile to give the school information about their children that will help us in the settling process. Hopefully making the transition from home to school that much smoother. Parents will again take a full part in the activities going on in both the classrooms and the outdoor play area. On the third settling day the children are left for a short while with the staff and the parents have a meeting together with the Head of School of between 15/20 minutes. Parents then return to the classrooms. In this way the children begin to realize that their parents will leave but that will also return to pick them up and take them home.

Parents are given an assurance that should their children have difficulties in settling within the Nursery we will contact them and they can spend more time in class with them.

The School is very firm in its belief that parental involvement of this nature encourages partnership between the home and the school that will greatly benefit both the children and their families.



Pre-Nursery

Settling times for the children in our two-year old provision is very much a question of considering both the needs of the parents and those of the children. The school organizes three settling days just as in the Nursery setting, but these children are much younger and may take a little longer before they feel secure enough to let their parents leave them.

The Pre-Nursery staff are very conscious that parents may be apprehensive about leaving their very young children so it is important that a common bond of trust is established.

The playroom caters for a maximum of 16 children. This smaller number of children allows the staff to develop strong bonds with the children quite quickly. Again the school assures parents that should their children not settle and remain unhappy we will contact with them immediately.

Many parents are using this provision because they are returning to some form of work. It is therefore very important that parental involvement with the school gives them 'peace of mind'.

Literacy sessions for Grade 1 parents

The M-POWER (Multisensory Programme on Writing and Reading) is now in its fifth year at San Andrea School.

During curriculum meetings, parents are given a brief outline of the changes brought about by the programme in the teaching of English Literacy. However, so as to reinforce the bond between school and home, the idea of carrying out training sessions for parents came about.

Keeping in mind that the children first meet the programme in Grade 1, an invitation for these sessions goes out to all grade 1 parents. We also include parents of those Grade 2 children who are new to the school.

Parents are divided into two groups, as we want each parent to have a hands-on experience of what their child is actually doing at school. Each group has two training sessions, ensuring that parents could come back with any queries. During the sessions materials usually used by the children in the class are also used (e.g. alphabet chart, plastic letters, picture cards.) The parents are able to follow a lesson on each of the literacy concepts covered in grade 1. This is in turn followed by the parents themselves trying out the various tasks.

As a result of these literacy sessions, parents are enabled to help their children at home in the correct way.

This demonstrates another success at San Andrea School - the school and parents at home joining forces for the good of the child.

Parental Involvement in Playrooms



Early childhood is a time of life during which significant transformations take place. The newborn infant, equipped with basic reflexes, develops into an active, curious child capable of walking, talking, and pretending. Vocabulary increases rapidly. The playroom is the right environment where the children can interact with adults and peers, thus forming their first relationships.

Both participation in preschool-based activities and regular communication between parents and teachers are related to young children's outcomes. The frequency of parent-teacher contact and involvement at the early childhood education site is also associated with preschool performance.

Parental Involvement embraces a range of interactions between the parents, the child and the playroom staff.

- Providing children with security and intellectual stimulation and helping them to develop confidence, social skills and aspirations for school and future life.

- Contact with the school to share information about the playroom's rules and procedures, activities, etc…
- Meeting teachers at the playroom to discuss issues and concerns.
- Attending school activities such as open days, trips, outings and concerts.
- Working in the playroom to support teachers when required.
- Engaging in support networks with other parents.
- Promptly responding to requests made by playroom teachers.



The type of involvement that seems to have the greatest effect is communication between the parents and playroom teachers. This process must be given absolute priority. Moreover parental presence in the first days at school may model for the child the importance of schooling.

Parental involvement and interest in the children's learning is now widely recognized as having a significant impact on the extent to which children realize their full potential. As a result, working with parents has become a necessary and important part of a teacher's role. This change in role perception means that everyone working with the children needs to take relationships with parents seriously.

"Each child is as unique as their fingerprint. Parents' individual role is perceived as a constant and powerful influence on the development of their child, with the home and the school seen as mutually dependent learning contexts' (Fingerprints Nursery, 2003).

We recognize parents as our most valuable resources in the early education of children. The playroom environment is where the process starts and therefore this phase is of paramount importance. Parental input, involvement and participation in the playroom's programme are welcomed and encouraged.

Parents' Days - Home-School Communication - Open Door Policy



The link between home and school is an important aspect of the educational ethos at San Andrea School. We believe that parents are stakeholders in their children's education and therefore have every right to information about their children's progress. This is not limited to the official days in the scholastic year that are set on the school calendar as Parents' Days.

At the beginning of each scholastic year, a Curriculum Meeting is held for the parents of each grade. During this meeting, scheduled in the evening to make it more possible for the

parents to attend, an overview of the syllabus to be covered is given; school policies are highlighted; parents meet their child's teacher and visit the classroom. This informative meeting is aimed at giving the parents a peace of mind by knowing their child's environment, areas of learning to be covered and also the friends they will be meeting.

Parents' Days have their importance in the school year. The first one is set after the first six weeks of school. This gives enough time for the teacher to acquaint herself / himself with each child in class and hence be in a position to discuss the child's needs with the parents / guardians. The latter would also have enough feedback from the work given to the child and his / her ability to cope with the content to further the discussion with the class teacher.

The second Parents' Day is planned after the Mid-Yearly Assessments, that is, early March. By this time, the teachers are well aware of the children's abilities, motivational level, areas for improvement, and more, to be able to discuss their needs with their respective parents. The whole objective behind Parents' Days is to meet and celebrate the children's achievements and highlight areas for improvement so that both teachers and parents can target their support towards each child's specific needs.

Besides these official meetings, parents are encouraged to visit the school and fix an appointment with the teacher if and when the need arises. The school upholds open channels of communication and it is clearly stated that both parents and teachers are free to communicate with each other when a need is felt. Most often it is the school that calls parents even for menial matters such as long absences due to sickness, missed homework, continued misbehaviour or distractions and any other

matter that might be a cause for concern. Parents are likewise encouraged to phone in and communicate any apprehensions or clarifications that they may need. Meetings are set when a conference is essential to discuss at length the child's educational needs.

As most parents, particularly those of the younger age group, accompany their children to school, it is not unusual for parents and teachers to discuss any matter arising ad hoc. Teachers at San Andrea School are very open and willing to help out anytime. It is our prerogative to work with the parents for the child's academic and social advancement.

San Andrea School – Curriculum Meetings



At the beginning of each new school year, before the term actually starts for the children, the School organizes Curriculum Meetings with parents. A separate meeting is organized for each year group and these take place in the early evening, so that parents can attend.

The attendance at these meetings is very good and feedback from parents about their effectiveness is very positive.

The meetings are led by the Senior Management Team who gives information about the curriculum for the forthcoming year. This includes the various subject areas together with school policies and practices. The parents are free to ask questions, raise issues etc. At the end of this time, normally about 1 hour, the parents are invited to the classrooms to talk with their child's class teacher.

In this way a link is created between the families and the School even before the children start school themselves. The discussion between the teacher and parents lasts approximately 30-45 minutes. During this time the teacher will explain her way of working and any expectations she may have. In turn the parents can ask any further questions or raise other issues that they feel are important to them.

These meetings are very important. They help us to demonstrate and reinforce our belief in working in partnership with parents. Communication plays a vital role in education and through these Curriculum Meetings we are demonstrating our belief in two-way communication in order to strengthen the links between Home and School.

Interactive Open Day

Our National Minimum Curriculum states that children learn best when they experience the learning hands-on. Our School has built its teaching on the thematic approach since its inception and has always believed that children are innate learners. They are creative and need only to be directed into learning.

San Andrea School celebrates children's creativity throughout the scholastic year as every child's work is displayed. However,

the main celebration comes towards the end of the second term when we organise an Interactive Open Day. We call it 'interactive' because it is not simply an exhibition of works but a hands-on experience for parents and visitors. Our children are the protagonists. They direct the visitors, explain their project, ask the parents to join in the activities prepared and give directions. This day involves all our students in the Early and Middle Years – from the Pre-Nursery Playroom right up to Grade 7. Our youngest pupils simply show off the crafts their wonderful little hands and minds have created, whereas are eldest will demonstrate their talents in drama, poetry, modelling crafts, displays and more.



The build up to this day is a hectic time of the year because the children are involved in every aspect of the work involved. They research facts; they draw; compose poetry and stories, sing and act, make up costumes and prepare models. Most of all they learn. The learning is intergrated between the subjects and centre around the main theme chosen. They apply their language learning, their mathematical knowledge and their scientific analysis to the situation presented. Above all they are creative and motivated into learning more. The ultimate objective is to train our children to become life-long learners.

School Outings

The School organises a number of educational outings throughout the scholastic year to enhance the children's learning by giving them a hands-on and experience.

Children are taken to different locations across the island, such as, museums, cultural centres, farms, gardens and even on picnics and fieldwork. The children are also taken to parks and activity centres to emphasise their physical development. These activities enhance the children's creative and social skills.

In order to ensure the children's safety, a number of parents are invited to join the children on outings. This involvement is not only intended to help out in supervision but to give parents and children a time to enjoy learning together.

Parental involvement during outings adds to the whole educational experience of all involved.

The Video Library – A Parent-School-Child Partnership

Children in the Early Years benefit from a DVD and Video Library run exclusively by parent volunteers.

This initiative provides the children with different learning opportunities, mainly:

- Freedom of choice
- Practical use of numeracy
- Memory skills
- Responsibility



Parents running the Video Library on behalf of the School have full responsibility for the purchase of suitable films. The objective is to provide both entertaining and educational material. This activity is carried out on a weekly basis, every Tuesday, during term time. It is a self-funding initiative. Any profits made are channelled back into the Video Library to purchase new DVDs and Videos.

The parent volunteers enjoy being part of the School's life and look forward to the contact with the children every Tuesday.

San Andrea Early School Physical Education …

…an inclusive approach!

Physical Education is an informal method of teaching and learning that offers opportunities for children, no matter their intellectual and physical abilities, to learn about and appreciate their environment and acquire skills to enjoy a lifetime of creative, productive and health-filled living.

At San Andrea Early School, the PE Curriculum functions to implement this principal concept. As the PE teacher, my role is to provide a creative educational approach that encourages the

children to be motivated during their regular lessons whilst teaching them to acquire the basic skills such as locomotor and psychomotor development.

The PE programme also validates the importance of inclusion, social learning and health education, in that it instills in the children a meaningful sense of interaction, tolerance and security. They are given space to find expression for both their physical and mental energy.

The ultimate aim of this developmental programme is to exhibit the children's achievements in the Annual Field Day which is, in itself, a fulfilling event both for the children and their parents as well as the school staff. Field Day is awaited with great anticipation and preparations start months before.

All necessary resources (PE equipment) for the new games are requisitioned and purchased. Games are practiced and learned by the pupils during the PE lessons.

Once the general plan and theme has been decided, a staff meeting is held and final changes take place. Once the programme of events is approved, jobs are distributed to various teachers and parent helpers who willingly take them up. The event would never be manageable without all these valuable helpers.

An introductory mini-festival is organized with the four early school grades. Each grade performs a dance display. All pupils participate. Holistic/inclusive education is part of our PE curriculum and we believe in co-operation vs competition.

When the big day arrives, the pupils do not come to school in the morning but come in the afternoon to enjoy the event. On the other hand, preparations start very early in the morning. These

include the laying out of a mountain of equipment for the games and embellishing the grounds for the occasion. Animation plays a big part in Field day and we make sure that the grounds are full of colours, balloons and signs.



After the games of field day are over the parents are invited to participate in a game with the teachers.

The whole event motivates our pupils, teachers and parents to follow and enjoy this Field day programme. A medal at the end is given to all pupils. All pupils are winners.

Throughout the scholastic year the children are additionally taught to value and respect the outdoors as they familiarise themselves with nature during several country walks organized in the neighbouring valley.

The PE lesson is the time of day that the children look forward to, for the framework of the lessons is furnished with musical, colourful and adventurous experiences. Physical education works to enrich, revitalise and complement all content areas of the school curriculum by means of firsthand observation and direct experience in open spaces and out-of doors.

First Holy Communion Celebration

This celebration is an annual event for San Andrea Early Years that is very much anticipated and enjoyed by both the children and their families.

A special Mass is organized in the evening where families, children and teachers come together to celebrate this special sacrament. The children wear their Holy Communion outfits and bring with them a special gift to be given to children who are less fortunate than them. The children animate Mass through special prayers, songs and playing of instruments.



Later on in the evening after the Mass, a party is organized. This is a good time for parents to chat together over some food and drink and for the children to play. It is a religious and social event that is enjoyed by everyone.

Health and Safety Activities

San Andrea School has always placed considerable emphasis on Health and Safety. As part of the Personal, Social and Health Development Programme in Early and Middle Years, for scholastic year 2005-2006, the month of January, was characterised by a series of events featuring "***Safety***".

Events included:

- Talks for parents and pupils in Early and Middle School delivered by police inspectors on traffic safety and abuse.



- Members of the Civil Protection and the Police Force held a series of activities to create awareness and teach our pupils to adopt safety measures. These sessions were held in the car park and included training pupils in using traffic lights and obeying traffic signs; familiarising pupils with fire fighting and police vehicles. In order to participate fully in the activities, the children brought their bicycles, scooters, skateboards and roller blades and enjoyed going round the car park practising road safety. A number of pupils were given the opportunity to take a ride in a fire engine or a police car. The children also enjoyed a fingerprinting event held by the Forensic department of the police department. The concluding event was an abseiling show by members of the civil protection which pupils and staff thoroughly enjoyed.

- The Dog Section of the Civil Protection Department came to the school and gave a demonstration to all the Early and Middle School pupils on the use of dogs for fire and rescue. Members of the Police Dog Section also delivered a presentation on the use of dogs in the case of crime. We also hosted the Mounted Section of the Police Force who gave a

show to the pupils in the San Andrea schoolyard and a talk about the use of horses in the Police Force. Some children were fortunate enough to take a ride on one of the police horses.

- Grade 2 and Grade 7 students visited the Xemxija Fire Station and the Dog Section of the Police Force.
- The School, in collaboration with the Malta Red Cross, provided our Grade 2 and Grade students with first-hand experience on the safety procedures to be taken when an accident occurs. The children learnt the emergency number and the details that need to be given when calling an ambulance. They observed the ambulance crew at work and were offered the opportunity to take a close look inside the ambulance parked within the school grounds.



Mrs Marcette Cassar, a parent, prepared a set of cards illustrating common accidents and the first steps that need to be taken as first aid. Each child received a card whilst another set of cards, with more detailed information, were distributed to parents to store together with their First Aid box at home.

As the event was dedicated towards the importance of First Aid, parents and students were informed of the vital work carried

out by nurses, doctors and ambulance crew. At the end the event, representatives of the Malta Red Cross and San Andrea School parents and teachers were satisfied that the children learnt not only how to handle a situation after an accident, but were made more aware of the importance of First Aid in their daily lives.

Participation in public festivities, organized by other institutions

Prepared according to experience of
Vilnius "Vandenis" kindergarten (Vilnius, Lithuania)

Problems solved



- Parents don't communicate with their children a lot.
- Parents from economically disadvantaged families and handicapped parents don't participate in activities of kindergarten and in public activities.
- Parents don't keep contacts with each other.

Aim

- Encourage parents to spend more time with children.
- To propose interesting leisure activities, to teach interesting ways to play with children
- To encourage parents to spend more time with children in public

- To make friendly contacts among parents, letting them to communicate further.
- To include parents from marginal groups and handicapped parents.

Description of the activity

Kindergarten children together with their parents and teachers participate in public festivities, organised by other organisations. For example, in Vilnius kindergartens participate in festivities ("Let's live in a healthy city", "World heart day", "For healthy and safe city"), organised by Vilnius City Municipality.

The festivities take place in an open space of a City, for example, bigger parks or squares, capable to accommodate a large number of people. It is the best if those open spaces are accessible for handicapped people and have convenient access by public transportation to ensure that economically disadvantaged people can also participate. Participation in the festivity is free of charge for citizens; all expenses are covered by Municipality and other sponsors (different foundations, private companies etc.)

The festivities take place one day and involve many different kind of events in one place: concerts, music competitions, presentations of some kind of sports (for example, rhythmic gymnastics), road safety competitions, sport competitions (bicycles, roller-skates, running, mini football, different kind of competitions for handicapped people).

Children from kindergarten play active role in the festivities. If a concert is organised, children can give small presentation (one song or dance). For sporting activities, different kind of competitions are organised: games with bicycles, road safety

competitions, obstacle courses and similar, depending on possibilities of the place and organisers.

Parents are actively involved in organisation of the activities. They help kindergarten teachers to prepare for competitions and organise them. Teachers explain them how to carry out such games, how to organise active leisure together with children in other circumstances. Handicapped parents are also included into the organization according to their possibilities, they get an opportunity to start relationship with other parents.

Consequences

- Parents get informed about interesting ways to spend leisure with their children
- Kindergarten teachers and parents get an opportunity to communicate in informal environment, to chare more information about children development.
- Parents from economically disadvantaged families and handicapped parents are included into activities of kindergarten, they get more information, make contacts with other parents.



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Parents education
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