



**Ba Futuru nia Manual Trainamentu
kona ba Edukasaun Infantil**



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OSAKA GAS

Early Childhood Training Manual for Educators

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Introduction to the Training Manual

This curriculum is aimed at the years prior to children attending formal schooling, which generally starts at the age of six depending on the individual situation of each child.

The purpose of this document is to help Timorese educators make informed decisions about curriculum content and pedagogical approaches in Early Childhood Education.

The guidelines are based on theory and research about how children develop and learn; they reflect the growing consensus among early childhood professional organizations that a greater emphasis needs to be placed on young children's learning abilities, acquisition of basic skills, child-centered approaches and participation in meaningful and relevant learning experiences. Thus, this manual combines theory with practical examples of participatory and child-centered approaches to learning and education with a special focus on the particular context of Timor-Leste. Additionally, it provides educators with possibilities to reflect on their own working styles and perspectives while further developing their teaching skills and capacities.

This manual focuses on the specific needs, capacities and vulnerabilities of the children the educators are working with. The intent is to ensure that all children have the opportunity to fully develop their capacities. Due to age differences and previous experiences, however, children will have different levels and areas of knowledge. Children's current strengths and skills should serve as the starting point for new experiences and instruction, rather than become a limitation to learning.

If there is not enough time to work through every step, please feel free to cut out some activities or adapt them according to the possible time frame, needs and interests of the participants. Suggestions and feedback on the manual are welcome!

Written and published by: NGO Ba Futuru

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Edition 1 published in 2012

Getting Ready

Preparation for training:

Before starting training with this manual it is important to be prepared. Not only does each child vary in its needs and interests, but the educators that you will be working with also vary. Find out as much as possible about the needs and interests of the specific training participants before the training begins, either through casual conversation or through the Preschool Teacher Needs Assessment in the Appendices of this manual. Take some time to talk to the teachers and ask them the questions in the Evaluation Form.

Based on the information you receive, review the contents of this manual and choose or adapt the sections according to your training participants' needs. For example, you can use the Introductory Session with one or two Key Lessons and the Closing Session. Depending on the available time you can use all exercises and games or just select some. Also, in the manual you will find a lot of suggestions for rituals and feedback-rounds. Choose only one ritual per training and do not do a feedback-round after every session, but instead after every day or after the whole training.

If you are provided with the option of visiting and observing the preschools your participants work in either as part of your preparations or as some sort of mentoring following the trainings, please keep in mind that some teachers might feel uncomfortable being observed in their daily work. Therefore it is important to present yourself as their partner. Emphasize that you are there to support their work rather than to control or judge them. Additionally, it is suggested to reflect together on what happens during your time in the preschool. This does not only increase trust, but also provides you with the possibility to ask questions and gain more insights on the perspectives and working styles teachers currently use, before you begin the training with them.

About facilitating:

As a facilitator you have a unique and important role within the group you are working with. However, you are not the person in charge, a lecturer or the unquestionable expert. In fact, it is the participants who work with children on an everyday basis and who have a great amount of knowledge, expertise and insights on the challenges children face in Timor-Leste. It is your job to create an environment where your knowledge and the knowledge of the early childhood educators can be combined in order to introduce or strengthen child-centered and participatory teaching approaches and to reinforce the use of positive discipline.

Keep in mind that people do not only learn with their mind or intellect, but also through their actions, their feelings and personal reflections. As a facilitator you should choose teaching methods, which holistically include the participants and create a space that is based on mutual respect, curiosity and ownership. The participants should be the protagonists of this space while you are an attentive, supportive and encouraging partner in learning. Be aware that people learn a lot by observing others – you do not only teach by presenting information from this manual but also by example with your own appearance, manner and body language!

Checklist for facilitators:

Be prepared

- Approach participants thoughtfully and find out about their learning aims regarding the training. Review the material to be covered and prepare a flexible agenda
- Prepare the material you need for your training in advance and arrive early so you have time to collect your thoughts, prepare the meeting space and welcome the participants.

Be a partner

- Reduce hierarchical approaches, and instead adopt inclusive, participatory and democratic principles. Be careful that both the content and learning process reflect open-mindedness and mutual respect.
- For example, do not use highly complex or scientific language, avoid simple answers to complex questions, do not hesitate to acknowledge you don't know everything and listen to what the participants have to say (including their body language).
- Do not stand in front of the participants, but create a circle, sit on a chair or on the ground and talk to them at the same eye level.

Be aware

- Be sensitive to the feelings of individuals, to body language and to group dynamics. Make sure everyone feels appreciated and equal in the group and be flexible and creative according to the participants' needs and wants. Challenge them, but do not overwhelm them.
- Be aware of your own position in the group. Be clear about your role, your goals and responsibilities as a facilitator while keeping in mind that nobody is perfect or needs to be so – not even you as a facilitator.

Pre-training individual exercise:

Before you start the training, think about what is important for you as a facilitator, what you would like to teach and learn in each training. After every day, review your notes and think about what was good, what was challenging or even dissatisfying. Also, you can ask assistants to do a shared review and provide feedback. Try to include your findings in the next training session.

Notes on this manual:

Facilitator's Input: denotes the key messages and information that should be conveyed to the participants in each section. Facilitators can present this information in the way they think will be most effective – as a short lecture, incorporating activities and discussion, with notes on a flipchart, or additional handouts. Try not to just read the information from the manual, but rather prepare earlier and make it engaging for participants.

Handouts: are included on separate pages so they can be easily photocopied to hand out to participants.

Questions: that are centered on the page in italics are questions to ask the participants to help them reflect on stories and activities and prompt their thinking about the training modules.

Starting and Closing Rituals: have been included at the beginning and end of each session and lesson. However, it is important to include one at the start and end of each training day. So, depending on the schedule you follow for each training, the rituals can be moved around to ensure that you use one to open and close each training day.

➔: this symbol denotes tips and suggestions for facilitators that don't need to be shared with participants, but might help you in your facilitation.

● : this symbol denotes further tips and insights to be shared with childhood educators and training participants

TRAINING MODULES

Introductory Session

Content and learning goals:

- Getting to know each other; establishing relationships, mutual trust and respect
- Information regarding the overall project, this training and goals to achieve
- Development of ground rules
- Identification of challenges faced by, and possibilities open to, educators and children

Approximate time: 2.5 hours

Material: flipchart and markers, handouts

1. Welcome and introduction

Welcome the participants and introduce yourself, (or another organization the training is affiliated with or supported by) and the project. Hand out one manual per participant, and ask everyone to write their name on or personalize their manual.

2. Name game - Icebreaker

Often it is awkward to come together with new people and difficult to share personal feelings or concerns. However, there are various techniques that support people in establishing relationships and mutual trust. They should be based on enabling people to get to know each other; they should be fun and joyful; and should reduce participants' fear of making mistakes, making fools out of themselves or saying something stupid.

Here are two suggested icebreaker activities. According to your time frame, you can use both or choose one.

- **People 2 People**

Everyone walks around in the room. When you clap, you give a certain order, which needs to be done until you clap again (for example: "Shake hands", "Introduce yourself", "say "Hello" in different languages you are able to speak", "knees to knees" (meaning touch someone else's knees with yours), "ears to elbows" (meaning touch someone else's elbow with one of your ears", "come together with people who have birthday in the same month" and so forth)

- **Creative introduction round**

Stand in a circle. Each person says their name and shows a certain movement, which is characteristic of themselves. The next person repeats the names and movements of the people who have already had their turn and adds their own name and movement.

3. Pre-Evaluation

Distribute the pre-evaluation forms you find in the appendices to the participants, explain it briefly to the participants and provide them with 10-15 minutes to answer the questions.

4. Development of ground rules

Come up with some ground rules together. Not only does this create a sense of belonging, but also establishes a dynamic of ownership and mutual respect. Such rules can include turning off your cell phone, behaving respectfully, listening to each other and never suppressing laughter (unless at someone else's expense).

5. Detailed information regarding the project and the day's training

Be aware that most participants do not have a clear impression of what they will learn or experience while attending the training. Therefore, it is important to provide them with a quick overview and explain the structure of the training to support their understanding and orientation throughout the day (this can be done with an explanation only or a poster which can be put up somewhere in the room with the schedule).

Explain the ideas, goals and the process of the project. Add that you understand that implementing the knowledge they'll receive might be challenging – especially in the beginning. Here it is important to emphasize that no one is perfect and can implement everything immediately. Emphasize that this is a transformative process of integrating the learning content in one's work – a process that includes a lot of smaller, yet important, steps. Additionally emphasize that the educator, and the children and families they are working with, will benefit from it very much in the long term, since it will enable the educator to create a closer match between children and curricula, and it increases the children's motivation and participation in learning.

This training will help educators to:

- Create a clean, safe and user-friendly place for early childhood care and development activities.
- Provide age-appropriate education-based stimulation for children under six years of age.
- Make use of existing resources within the community.
- Reflect on and transform their own perspectives towards children and early childhood education in order to create or strengthen valuable, sustainable and local-based knowledge, which is able to combine current research on children's development and early childhood education with knowledge regarding specific Timorese challenges or issues the children and their educators face on a daily basis.

6. Discussion

Provide people with time and space to share their thoughts and feelings throughout the training and to make sure everyone is being heard and respected.

Be sensitive and aware: how do people feel about their attendance? What concerns do they have? What would they like to learn?

As the facilitator, respond to people's concerns and ideas, and where possible, link them to the training material and reinforce the ground rules that will create a safe and supportive environment.

7. Facilitator's Input

Often preschools are the first institution children are brought to and the first place they receive education outside of families. They are not only a safe place where they can be brought while the parents are at work, but they are also a place for meeting and playing with other children, developing their competencies and personalities. Here, daily routines and rituals are very important for children to provide them with a sense of orientation and ownership. However, preschools are not intended to just be 'normal school but for young children' - they are more flexible, inclusive, creative and adaptable to children's needs and wants. Especially in the past few decades, awareness regarding these needs and wants has significantly increased and with this, a variety of educational approaches and methods have been developed. Yet, while we always can learn from each other, it is important to take into account that every country, culture and even region has a specific historical, economical and cultural background – factors which will also inform our work as educators.

In order to develop and grow, a child needs:

- Reliable attention, affection and love
- Child-adequate nutrition
- Diverse stimulation for development

Consequently, with your work it is important to:

- Put children and their well-being at the center of your educational approach
- Be a caring and supportive (learning?) partner of the child
- Show children respect and love, so they are able to develop trust and confidence in themselves and others
- Show reliability and receptiveness to their concerns, and take their concerns seriously
- Provide children with appropriate physical contact and closeness
- Encourage interaction with other children

8. Group Exercise

Divide participants in two groups. One group receives the handout about Reggio Emilia, the other one about Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Ask the groups to read their handout and answer the following questions together.

The pedagogical concept of Reggio Emilia

After the Second World War in 1945 the people in a small Italian village called Reggio Emilia found a left-over weapon. They took it apart and sold the pieces. Afterwards the people came together to discuss what they wanted to do with the money they had gained. There was an intense discussion, but in the end the women were able to enforce their idea: they wanted to build a preschool – but not a preschool as it was known before! They wanted a preschool that drew lessons from the former war, a preschool that would be able to educate a new generation to live in peace and democracy, so that war could never ever happen again.

With this in mind, the people started asking themselves:

How do we want to raise our children, especially after the war?

Their answers were varied but yet also very simple: they wanted peace, democracy, appreciation of life and joy in their preschools and society as a whole.

When a teacher from a nearby city heard about the village's attempt to create a new preschool, he was fascinated by the idea that people without any education as teachers could come up with something like this. So he took his bicycle and rode to visit them. The teacher stayed for a very long time and supported the people in their work. Together they developed an educational approach, which included the preschool in the daily life of the village. All the villagers felt responsible for it, they came into the preschool to teach the children their own competencies (for example as a farmer or baker), even more, the villagers asked the children for their opinion and even support when they wanted to construct or create something in the village. With this, not only was the future generation educated in peace and democracy, but all citizens of the village benefited from and learned about the ideals of peace and democracy in- and outside of preschools.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Paulo Freire was a Brazilian educator in the 1970s. Brazil then was a very hierarchical and oppressive society, especially for land-less farmers and the indigenous population of Brazil. But when Freire was working with these poor and less-educated people, he became aware that they had a great amount of knowledge and experience – for example in the areas of farming or fishing. And though Freire initially was there to teach them how to read and write, he started to understand that the people he worked with had taught him just as much as he has taught them.

As a consequence, he started to formulate the Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Within this method of education, the most important principle to understand is that educators can also be learners and learners can also be educators. Additionally, he found that it was easier to learn and to teach if the style of teaching is based on action and reflection. The things people learned and remembered were things which they could use in their daily life and it was easier for them to understand when they did not solely have to listen, but when they could do something, experience it themselves, learn themselves and then come together to analyze and reflect on their own actions and experiences.

With this method, Freire also aimed to empower and even ‘liberate’ poor people in order to create an equal and just society. All their life they were told they were worth nothing, they wouldn’t know anything and couldn’t do anything. But this was wrong! Freire himself experienced that they knew a lot, that they were able to do a lot and therefore it was important to him to show them the value of their work and experience, to show them that they weren’t worthless or powerless, but rather an important and valuable part of society. And as such a part, they could also do something to transform the society according to their dreams and ideals.

When both groups have read over the examples, ask them to discuss the following questions:

In which context did the educational approaches of Reggio Emilia or Pedagogy of the Oppressed develop?

In what ways are they similar or different to the context of Timor-Leste?

What can you learn from these approaches for your work?

Also ask participants to reflect on their own experiences:

What are the strengths of your own preschool?

What are challenges in your own work?

What prevents children from attending preschool in your community?

How can your local community be more involved in the preschool?

What have the children in your preschool taught you?

How can lessons that will help children build peace in Timor-Leste be integrated into your school?

Which kind of preschool education do we intend and hope to provide in Timor-Leste?

9. Group Presentations

Ask the participants to present the key points from their handouts and discussions within 5-10 minutes. Then start a group discussion. Ask participants to share their experiences, assumptions and reflections regarding these stories and then try to answer the following questions:

What kind of society do we want to develop and live in?

How do we want to raise and treat our children?

How can our behavior toward the children impact the behavior of the children?

How do children learn? How do you remember learning as a child?

What values do we intend to instill in the children we work with, and what teaching methodologies do we use to do this?

What do we want to learn from this training?

Try to identify the most important principles or answers everyone can agree upon and note them down on posters. Afterwards put them up in the room. They shall accompany you during the following sessions.

10. Feedback Round: The Present

Stand in a circle. As a facilitator, start acting as if you've got an imaginary present. Explore it with your hands and have a look inside. Express what you have learned, liked and experienced during this session as you explore the present (expressing these things through the present). Then put your present on the imagined shelf behind you, in your bag or pockets and create a new imaginary present where you say what strengths and skills you have which you can share with the other participants throughout the coming days of training. Afterwards give this present to someone else in the group, who goes on to do the same.

11. Closing Ritual: Hand Squeeze

Stand together in a circle and hold hands with the people next to you. Close your eyes. Explain that participants are not to squeeze anyone's hand until their hand is squeezed. The facilitator squeezes the hand the neighbor on their right-hand side. This participant squeezes the hand of the neighbor on their right-hand side, and so forth until the hand squeeze comes back to the facilitator.

Key Lesson I: Key Learning Areas and Competencies

Content and learning goals:

- Identifying key competencies of children
- Identifying key learning areas in early childhood education
- Practicing adequate planning approaches

Approximate time: 2.5-3 hours

Material: handouts, material for the exercises you want to present and practice

1. Welcome and Overview over this lesson's content

2. Starting Ritual: The Special Circle

Ask everyone to cross their arms over their chests and hold their neighbors' hands. Then everyone tries to sit down and stand up together without letting go of anyone's hand.

3. Exercise: Brainstorm

Write the following questions on the board and ask participants to brainstorm:

What are the key areas children should learn?

→ *Subjects, or areas of knowledge. For example: language, maths, science, arts*

What are key competencies children should acquire?

→ *Skills and types of abilities. For example: physical, social, emotional, cognitive, lingual*

Also discuss questions like:

Why are these areas important for children to learn?

Which of the identified areas and competencies are already taught in preschools, and which are neglected?

How do the different competencies relate to one another (eg. How does the social and emotional affect the linguistic?)

What topics or sections are included in each area?

What are the skills that children should learn in these learning areas?

What is a game/activity/project is related to each area?

4. Facilitator's Input: Key Learning Areas

Research confirms the value of early education for young children. Preschool programs that support effective teaching practices have shown to lead to important growth in children's intellectual and social development, which is critical to their future academic success. Quality programs that provide

challenging but achievable curriculum engage children in thinking and reasoning, challenge them and help them to acquire important skills and concepts.

Preschool is not just about knowledge acquisition but also:

- Physical development (dexterity, hand eye coordination)
- Social development (empathy, solidarity, conflict resolution)
- Emotional development (self confidence, resilience)

Consequently, quality instruction occurs in environments that are rich in language, encourage children's thinking and nurture children's explorations and ideas.

This manual presents a variety of key learning areas in preschool, which also match with the enclosed planning formulas. Reviewing these areas and especially the examples given, you'll notice that they are strongly interrelated and often train several competencies at once.

- ➔ Keep it simple! Children need time, space, attentiveness and repetition in order to acquire skills and knowledge. You don't need to plan complex activities in all nine key areas throughout every week or month! Instead, choose a few action points each week that you think appropriate for the children you work with, based on past experience and observation.
- ➔ Depending on your time-frame, the size of the group and the number of facilitators, you can use various approaches to talk about the key learning areas. You do not necessarily have to do it in a lecture-style, but can practice some examples or create stations for every key learning area, which the participants then can visit and learn about.

#1: Creation and development of group dynamics and relations

Being an educator often means being a 'manager' of a group of often more than 20 children. With your personality and teaching style you have a major influence on the atmosphere within this group of children. Research has proven that teachers who are very calm and patient strengthen a relaxed, inclusive, creative and playful atmosphere, while teachers with controlling and disciplinary approaches foster non-creativity and insecurity amongst children. Additionally, especially regarding conflict resolution and the search for solutions, one can see that children integrate the knowledge and skills they acquire through their observation of adults into their own behavior. Therefore educators are important role models who can stimulate peaceful conflict resolution and solidarity amongst children! This means you are a vital factor in forming and developing positive group dynamics and relations between children. You not only strengthen these positive bonds by being a role model, but also with special games and attention you give to the need of children.

Example Preschool Activities:

Circle of trust

Form circles of six to eight children and place one child in the center of the circle. All the children rub their hands to make them warm and then put them on the upper body of the child in the middle. This child closes his/her eyes and holds their body very tight like a piece of wood. Then he/she lets him/herself 'fall'. The children in the circle take care of the child in the center, they catch him/her and pass him/her around. Be careful: touch each other gently!

- Be patient! This can be a wonderful, but challenging exercise! Sometimes it works perfectly and the children love it, but sometimes it is very difficult for children to trust others and it may take a lot of practice before they can play the game properly.

Natural Mandala

Mandala is a Sanskrit word for 'circle'. Mandalas are used to focus attention and calm down. There are a lot of models available for painting and drawing mandalas, but you can use different kinds of materials to build one yourself, as well. Usually, a mandala consists of a circle with different symbols or patterns integrated.

Collecting and building something together is a valuable learning experience to work well in a group – especially if the end product is beautiful and admired. It does not only strengthen the child's positive self-image, but also strengthens the position of the child in the group.

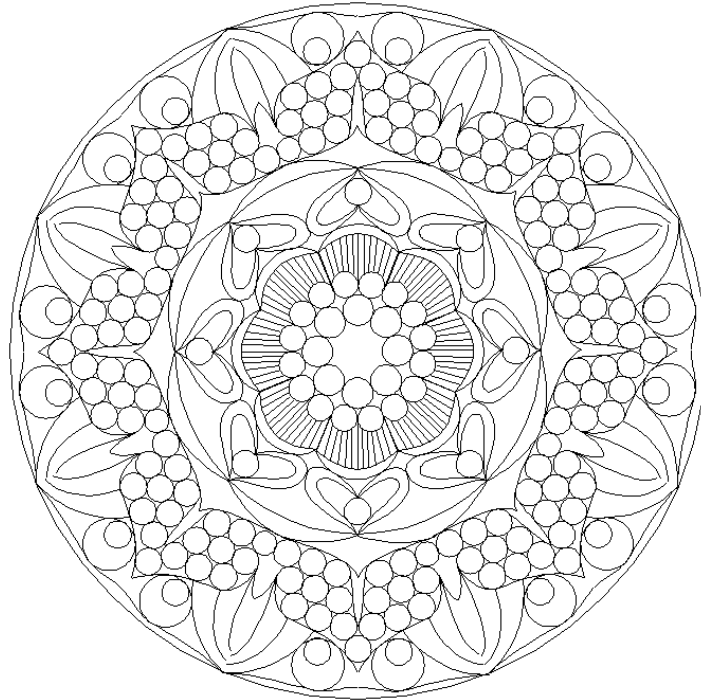


Figure 1: This is an example of a traditional mandala. It is a good coloring-in activity.

Go for a group walk and collect things you find in the natural environment, for example stones, sand, feathers and leaves. Come back together and sit in a large circle. Put something special like a candle or a flower in the middle of the circle and then ask each child to put one piece of the collected materials in the circle. After every child has done that, let the children create a *mandala* together.



Figure 2: An example of a natural mandala, which was created by preschool-aged children in Austria

- You can leave the mandala for a few days so everyone gets to see and admire it. Encourage the children to show it to their parents. After a few days, deconstruct the mandala and offer to the children to make a new one.

#2: Senses

Too often we forget to value and stimulate our senses, but they are an essential part of our human existence. When was the last time you consciously have felt rain on your skin? When have you walked barefoot and consciously felt the ground beneath your feet?

Including and stimulating different senses in your daily work helps to sensitize children not only in regard to their body, but also their emotions and thoughts. Using not only one's intellectual capacity for learning or doing something, but involving different senses, makes the experience more memorable within the brain and enhances the learning experience.

Conflict-affected children are particularly desensitized or disconnected to their senses. If you make an effort to re-connect them to their senses, you'll quickly see and experience the benefits – children grow calmer and more self-aware, and consequently show less problematic behavior and treat other children and creatures with more tenderness.

Example Preschool Activities:

Memory of noises

Collect little things like stones, little pieces of wood or shells that make noise when you shake them in a bottle or can. Fill two bottles or cans that you can't see through with each type of material. Mix up the bottles or cans. Can you find the two that belong together?

- Instead of filling a second box or can, you can draw or photograph the material. Is the child able to combine the picture with the right noise?
- By asking the child to describe what she/he hears, you also challenge the child's linguistic capacities.



Figure 3: Are these the same noises?

Walking blind

Group the children in pairs. One of the children is blindfolded and the other is the guide, and they should hold hands. Then the pairs go for a walk with the guide leading the blind partner through the room, garden or even village. When we close our eyes, we experience a heightened sense of hearing, smelling and feeling, because our brain relies on our non-seeing senses to provide all the information about our surroundings. Whenever the children find something that might be interesting, the guide should stop and let the blind partner touch, feel and explore it with his/her hands. Wait a little bit and then walk further. After a while, swap roles.

- This exercise not only strengthens the sense of touch, but also the relationship between the children. While the blind partner has to trust the other child, the guide feels responsible for the blind child and is supposed to take care of him/her.

#3: Health and Nutrition

Health

Children's experiences with their health and discovery of ways to improve it, contributes to and enhances their desire and ability to make wise decisions for healthy living in the future. Here, the preschool presents a perfect setting where the children are able to establish everyday routines and procedures to remain safe and avoid injury, to experience and attain basic concepts, attitudes and skills about nutrition, safety, hygiene and physical activities that contribute to their well-being. Additionally, by learning to take care of themselves, they also learn to take care of others. In particular, education regarding hygiene, sanitation and the prevention of illness is hoped to have a trickle-down effect into the children's homes and families. Use your relationships with the parents to foster the children's health and development in the family. For example, you can play a vital role in encouraging parents to take their children to the local clinic or doctor when they are clearly unwell.

Example Preschool Activities:

The baby doll is sick

Play with the children in the doll-area or create a little theatre where you perform with them. Draw your ideas from the following story: the baby-doll is very sick. It cries all night long and shows various symptoms. Describe the symptoms (depending on the illness you want to educate the children about). Then ask the children: What can we do? How can we help the baby to recover? Which kind of medicine does the baby need? Where is the closest available doctor or clinic?

In case of injury: what do you have to do if you get injured? Shall we clean the baby's wound? With what can we clean it? And so forth...

→ Include children in this play by appointing parents and grandparents, doctors, nurses or even traditional healers and explore the role these people can play.

Wash Your Hands

Here is an example song you can sing to educate the children about one basic hygiene skill - washing their hands:

Wash your Hands (to the melody of 'Row, Row, Row your Boat')

*Wash, wash, wash your hands
play our handy game
rub and scrub, rub and scrub and rub.
Germs go down the drain. HEY!
Wash, wash, wash your hands,
play our handy game
rub and scrub, rub and scrub and rub.
Dirt goes down the drain. HEY!*

Nutrition

Have a look at the Nutrition Pyramid and the Rainbow of Fruits and Vegetables on the following pages. Every kind of food is made up of different substances, such as vitamins, minerals or proteins. The body needs all of them for our body and mind to develop and grow, but in different amounts. Therefore it is important not only to eat different kinds of food, but also to be aware of how much one should eat or not eat of each type of food.

Nutrition is a very important topic in Timor-Leste: the 2010 Demographic and Health Survey in Timor-Leste shows that 44,7% of children under the age of five are underweight, 17% are chronically underweight and 58% of children are stunted, from which they don't recover. Children need nutrition for the healthy development of their body, mind and also for their long-term well-being. If children do not get enough food or not enough variety, their immune systems will suffer and they'll be more vulnerable to diseases and infections like measles or diarrhea. Additionally they will experience long-term consequences of impaired development, including poor cognitive functioning and stunted physical growth.

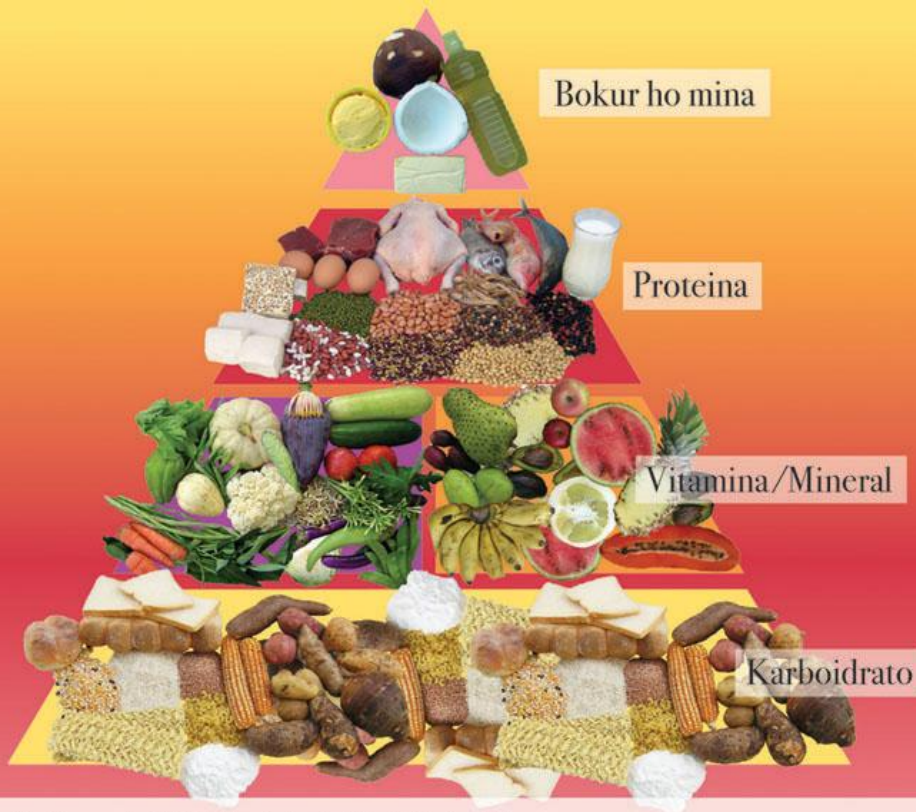
Even though access to nutritious food is often difficult for Timorese families, as a preschool teacher you can support the children's well-being by educating parents and children about healthy nutrition. The preschool is the perfect place to establish daily routines and eating habits, which help children to attain basic ideas, attitudes and skills about nutrition. Additionally, you are able to observe and monitor each child's development and well-being very closely.

Key indicators of malnutrition include:

- Distended or swollen belly / abdomen
- Stunted physical growth
- Listlessness and apathy
- Gross water retention
- Loss of hair
- Dry and yellow-ish skin and flaky scalp
- Dry, cracked and sometimes white skin in the corners of the mouth
- White spots on toenails and fingernails

These symptoms may indicate malnutrition, but it is important to always seek qualified medical advice before administering any treatment, as certain symptoms can indicate a range of illnesses.

piramida aihan



Piramida aihan nee ajuda ita hili aihan oi-oin nebe'e foo diak ba ita nia isin.

Figure 4: this nutrition pyramid was developed by the Timorese NGO Hiam and uses local food, as you can see (from www.hiamhealth.org)

Information on the Rainbow of Fruits and Vegetables:

We can use the color of food to identify the nutrition that they provide. Since different colors provide different forms of nutrition, it is important to eat lots of different colors every day – just like a rainbow.

Green fruits and vegetables are good to maintain healthy vision and strong teeth. Additionally, they help reduce risk of cancer. Examples of green foods include: leafy greens, lettuce, green cabbage, cassava leaves, and cucumber.

White foods reduce the risk of cancer and heart disease and may help in keeping cholesterol levels low. Examples include: bananas, ginger, mushrooms, onions, garlic and potatoes.

Orange and yellow foods contains high levels of Vitamin C. Orange fruits and vegetables help strengthen the immune system, prevent heart disease and improve visual functions of the body. Examples are oranges, lemon, pineapples, papayas, mangoes, yellow peppers, pumpkin, corn, sweet potatoes and carrots.

Blue or purple foods help maintain the health of the urinary tracts and are good for the kidneys. They also prevent forms of cancer, support a healthy memory and prevent early aging. Examples are passion fruit, purple sweet potato and eggplants.

Red foods have similar nutrition to blue ones: they support a healthy memory, improve urinary tract health and prevent certain cancers. Examples of red foods are watermelon, grapefruit (jambua), red onions, red potatoes, red cabbage, red peppers or tomatoes.

How many colors can you eat in one day?



Figure 5: Example of a rainbow of fruits and vegetables.

Example Preschool Activities:

The food experience

Think together with the children about ways they and their families are able to acquire knowledge about healthy nutrition and how to provide healthy nutrition in your preschool. Examples would be: Fruit-Friday (see in Key Lesson II), a vegetable-garden in your playground, harvesting festivals, cooking classes for parents, a parents-teacher-conference about this topic, or posters of the Nutrition Pyramid or the Rainbow of Fruits and Vegetables. Explore nutrition by talking with the children about healthy and unhealthy foods. You can use various activities and information, i.e. books, pictures or create a rainbow of fruits and vegetables together (look for more information in Key Lesson VII). Ask questions like: *“what do you eat everyday?”*, *“what is your favorite food?”* and *“which kind of food don’t you like?”*.

Even though it might be difficult, try to instill a sense of healthy nutrition. This can be done by asking questions like: *“how does this kind of food make your stomach feel?”*, *“what happens if you eat a lot of that food?”* and *“do you feel stronger if you eat this instead of that?”*.

Try to make a Fruit Friday. Depending on your resources, this can be a special single event or become a regular part of your week. Every Friday you can ask the children to bring one piece of fruit and make a healthy snack out of it. Alternatively, purchase fruits with the preschool’s budget if there is one. Try to make this very special, for example by cutting crocodiles out of bananas, preparing a pretty dinner table, blindfolding children’s eyes and letting them guess what they are eating or using a funny chant before eating, for example:



Figure 6: Fruit Friday at the Ba Futuru Peace Center

Are you hungry?

Are you hungry?

Yes, I am!

Yes, I am!

Let’s have lunch!

Let’s have lunch!

Or:

*Two little eyes to look around
two little ears to hear each sound
one little nose to smell what’s sweet
one little mouth that likes to eat.
Enjoy your lunch!*

#5: Global Learning

Global Learning is a relatively new educational approach. It acknowledges the unique challenges and possibilities that the process of globalization presents and educates children not only in issue-related topics, such as development, sustainability or diversity, but also trains competencies such as solidarity, open-mindedness, mutual respect and empathy. Additionally it strengthens problem solving competencies, creativity, autonomy, participation, democracy, assertiveness, confidence and individual and collective empowerment.

Taking into account the importance of linking learning content with children's direct surroundings, Global Learning combines global and local issues and fosters curiosity and open-mindedness towards other people, countries or cultures, while it also draws up on issues of sustainable livelihood and democratic principles.

Example Preschool Activities:

Global learning is also about recognising and creating awareness and human rights, including children's rights. You can use the following song to address the issue of children's rights in your preschool.

Hau iha Direitu

Hau iha direitu atu eskola
Hau iha direitu atu halimar
Hau iha direitu atu hetan domin
Husi familia hoe ma seluk

Hau iha direitu atu iha naran
Hau iha direitu ba nasionalidade
Hau iha direitu atu moris dame
Iha familia no fatin seluk

*Reff: Tan ne'e hau nudar labarik Timor
La'o tuir dalan los dalan verdade
A vansa humanidade ba future
Ami kontente ba direitu ne'e*

*La iha haksolok hau sei la kontente
Laiha domin hau sai ai tahan maran
La moris buras hanesan ai tahan matak
Hau nia moris folin laek*

Hau iha direitu atu hetan ai-han
Hau iha direitu atu hetan saúde diak
Hau iha direitu sai matenek bo'ot
Tan ne'e mak hau estuda maka'as

Obrigasaun atu respeita ema seluk
Dame, domin, liberdadte mak hau nia mehi
Obrigasaun atu haksolok ema seluk
Haksolok ba moris ne'e

People across the earth

Copy the enclosed pictures and provide it to the children to color them in. While coloring, you can speak about the different ways people look and dress around the world (for example they use thick coats in colder areas or sunhats in hot areas). Additionally you can talk about the different parts of the body: "Now I'm coloring the face. We have two eyes, two ears, but only one nose and one mouth...". You can also provide the children with maps and find out where the children of the pictures live. Prepare an 'empty world' and include every continent on your map. Color each figure in and glue it to the place the figure belongs to. Use the colored pictures to decorate your room.



Figure 7: People from different countries and cultures around the world wear different clothes that are appropriate for their culture and climate. Try colouring in these pictures with the children at your preschool!

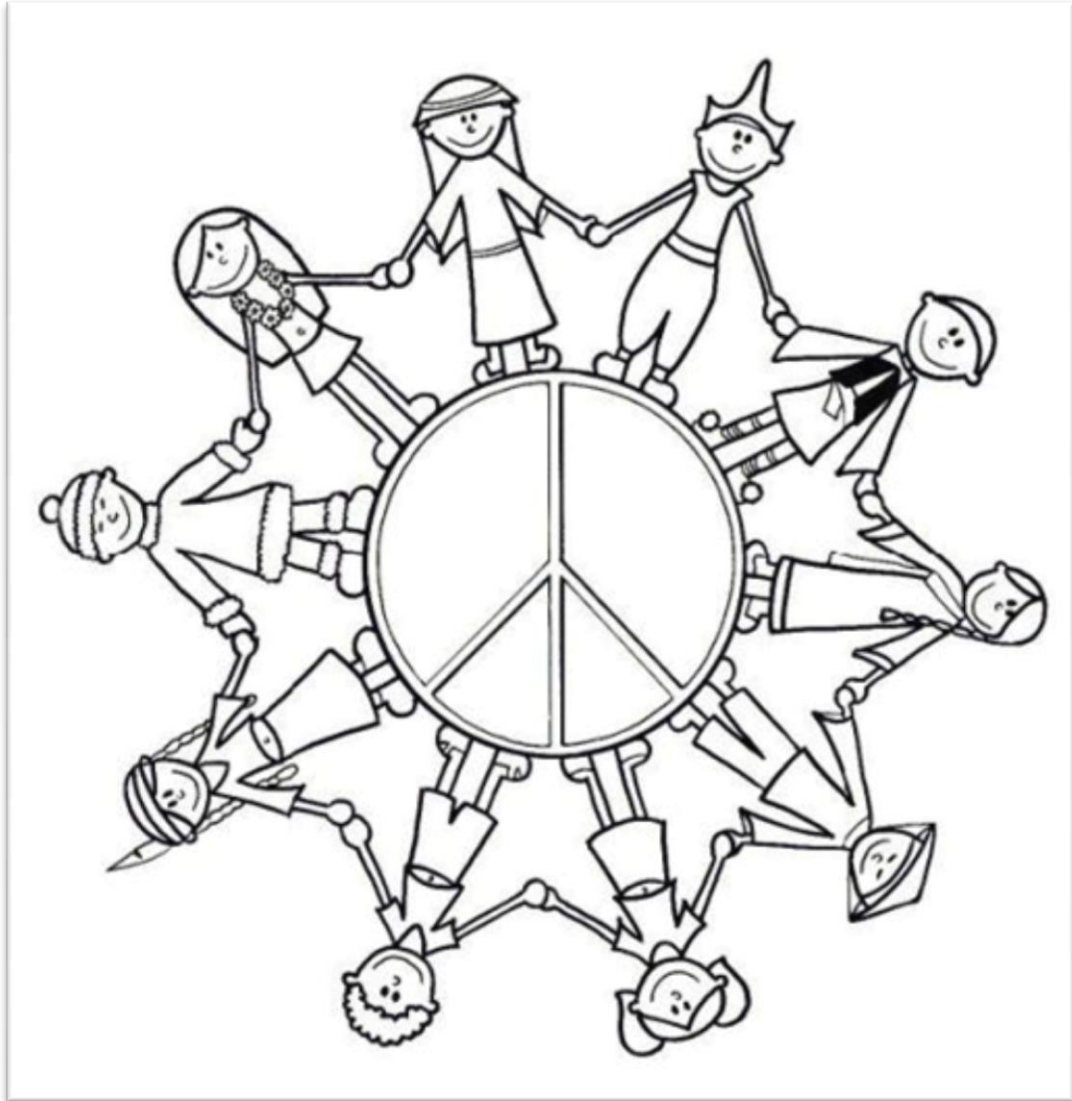


Figure 8: You can colour in this mandala of children from around the world.

#6: Mathematics, Science and Technology

Today's educational approaches often view children like little scientists. They acknowledge that children are curious and have an exploratory urge. It is the teacher's role to strengthen and support such urges yet not overwhelm children with highly scientific and complex theories, but rather draw on the direct surroundings and competencies of the children.

Also mathematics learning builds on children's natural curiosity and enthusiasm, and challenges children to explore ideas about patterns and relationships, order and predictability, logic and meaning. Other relevant mathematical ideas include the concepts of number patterns, measurement, shape, space and classification.

Examples Preschool Activities:

The Travelling Bird

Use transparent paper and cut out the shape of a bird. Stick it on a window in the preschool and let the children experience the journey the shadow of the bird takes across the floor throughout the day. Why is the shadow moving? Explain to the children that the sun is wandering across the sky and therefore touches the window from different angles at different times of the day. This is what makes the bird wander across the preschool.

- You can even use this example to talk about different seasons and the rotation of the earth.

Filling game

Prepare a tray with different-sized bowls or glasses on it and a spoon. Fill the biggest container with raw rice. Now the children can use the spoon or spoons to fill the different containers. How many containers are they able to fill? How much rice fits in each container? Which container is the heaviest?

Basic math

Children in pre-school do not have to learn the full alphabet or develop a variety of complex math skills. However, it is often fun for them when they are able to do some basic counting and math. You can strengthen their skills while playing – for example prepare a shopping scene, where one child is the shop-keeper, who can sell vegetables, fruits and other products, while the other children go shopping, and practice their addition skills when adding up the prices of their purchases. Also, you can use finger-plays and easy songs for introducing them to basic math. It is even more fun when you (and the children might as well), paint little

faces on every one of your fingers. Feel free to be creative: let them wear glasses, ties or even hats! Of course, it depends on the fingerplay, where you



Figure 9: Children will have great fun to learn counting with their little finger-friends

may not only be able to use faces, but even paint little stars or fishes.

Here are some examples, but feel free to create your own little stories and poems according to what you want to teach the children:

*I can count. Want to see? Here's my fingers, 1,2,3.
4 and 5, this hand is done. Now I'll count the other one!
6, 7, 8 and 9. Just one more, I'm doing fine
The last little finger is number ten. Now I'll count them all again:
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10!*

→ Use one hand to point to each finger on the other hand as you count. Make sure you count fingers on both hands to get to ten (don't repeat the same hand).

Four little stars

Four little stars
winking at me
One shot off,
then there were three!

Three little stars,
with nothing to do.
One shot off,
then there were two!

Two little stars,
afraid of the sun.
One shot off,
then there was one!

One little star,
alone is no fun.
It shot off,
then there was none!

#7: Environmental Experience, Ecology and Sustainability

As human-beings we are not disconnected from our direct surrounding and earth in general. Children especially are deeply rooted in this connection and are curious and careful observers of the world around them. Providing the children with environmental experience to strengthen this connection in turn strengthens sustainability and value for life and nature in our future generations and also enriches children's well-being.

Example Preschool Activities:

Flowerpots

Prepare three flowerpots and put seeds in everyone of them (you can do this with the children or before the activity). Then ask: what do the seeds need to grow? (Answer: light and water). Put two pots in a spot in your preschool that receives lots of natural light, and the other one in a cupboard or very dark spot. Only water one of the pots in the light and the one in the darker spot. Now observe what happens over the coming days!

- When talking about the flowerpots, you can raise the children's awareness about the need to be careful with our environment. As they will see while observing the flowerpots, plants and animals often need our help to be able to grow and develop. In exchange for our caring, they not only provide us with companionship, but also with food or clothing.
- Use seeds of plants you can harvest later. This will not only provide the children with the feeling of being able to create and take care of something, but will also strengthen their understanding of natural systems and that living things being connected and dependent on each other.

Recycled Art

Recycling, disposal and waste separation are topics for Timor-Leste yet to come. Even though the garbage- and recycling-system has to be further developed, you can help to raise awareness of not throwing garbage on the ground – unless it is natural, since it can hurt plants and animals. With such activities you can be a pioneer and sensitize the future generations to these important global issues! Collect plastic bags or bottles. You can do this in the school, ask the families of the children to do so or go for a walk and collect waste together. Make sure you clean everything before usage and take out possible sharp edges or other harmful things. Then put the waste items together with things you usually have in your preschool's art space, like glue, colored paper or paint. Create statues, wind chimes or similar things out of the former waste. Creativity knows no bounds!



Figure 10: Use plastic, stripes old clothes or other things you can find to create your own toys!

#8: Language

In no other time of our life we are so determined and receptive to learn languages, than in our early childhood. With Timor-Leste being a multi-lingual country, this competency is extremely important. International research shows that students learn best when their mother tongue is being used in the preschool, it provides the foundation for literacy and numeracy development and the acquisition of learning skills and a love of learning. The integration of the use of mother tongues directly impacts upon the accessibility, relevance and quality of learning. This is particularly relevant to the development of literacy and numeracy, and as a bridge towards learning the two official languages of Tetum and Portuguese. These findings have also been adopted by the Timorese government in the National Education Strategic Plan, because it recognized that in most rural areas children do not even speak Tetum or Portuguese when they start their education. In this situation they will struggle to learn if they are being taught in a language they do not understand. It is upon you to implement it.

- ➔ Facilitators might want to use another language when talking about the former section in order to strengthen their point. They can use for example English and then repeat it in Tetum, so the participants understand the difficulties of learning and understanding in another language.

Since there are many different languages and dialects in Timor-Leste and since Tetum and Portuguese are being used later on in school, it is suggested to make the children familiar with some words and phrases in Tetum and Portuguese. However, be aware that foreign languages can only be spoken and understood as well as the child speaks and understand his or her native language. Therefore it is extremely important to provide child with a positive attitude towards their native language, and to provide lots of learning opportunities to develop their abilities. Only if such spaces are given will the acquisition of other languages make sense and be sustainable. Same goes for a native language, which will be easier learnt as well, if the child is able to connect positive emotions and experiences with it.

The issue of language includes competencies in talking, listening, formal speaking, writing and reading simple words like names or 'mummy' and 'daddy', grammar, body language and phonological awareness (ie. the brain's organization of sounds in language). You can use little children's books, poems, rhymes, songs and nametags, but actually every word you speak with the child is a good start. Children who show mispronunciation or little grammar skill benefit a lot from time talking face-to-face with others. Educators can listen to the child's sentence and repeat it back to them in the correct way. Be careful not to make the child feel like you are making fun of him/her, but integrate such repetition in your talk. For example: the child says: "Yesterday my sister and I WAS at the beach!"-"Oh, you and your sister WERE at the beach yesterday! How lovely!"

Example Preschool Activities:

Animal-Sounds-Memory

Prepare a box with pictures of various animals, like pigs, dogs or roosters and put a tinfoil or scarf over the box. Come together in a circle. Choose one child to pull out a card with an animal on it but not show anyone else what is on the card. The child makes the noise that the animal on the card makes. The other children have to guess which kind of animal the child is pretending to be.

- This simple game not only broadens or strengthens vocabulary of the children, but also practices motor skills of mouth, lips and tongue. Of course, not only can you use animals, but any vocabularies you would like to practice.

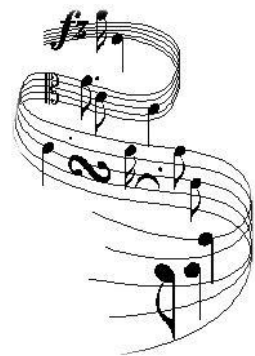
Introducing different languages

When you are in the morning circle and welcome the children - you can use different languages and gestures to do so. For example say "hello" and wave to each other (like they do in England), or say "Grüezi" and kiss each other's cheeks for three times (Swiss German) or "Sawadi Kah" and bow (Thai). If possible, obtain a map to have a look where these languages are spoken.

- ➔ Create a little game out of it. Let the children run and use a drum to provide them with some sort of rhythm. When you stop, say the words and the children will welcome everyone in this language. If the children already know the words, name the language only (eg. "Tetun!" – "Bondía!").
- ➔ This little song is also a nice way of introducing new languages in a cheerful way and introducing the children to the preschool at the start of the year.

„Hau naran Agus. O naran se'e?" (point at you)

„My name is Agus, and what's your name?" (point at your right neighbor)



#9: Motor Skills

Obtaining full control over one's body parts is one of the challenges as a child. The better the children learn to use and control their body parts, and the more exercise they have in refining their coordination, persistence and power, the better they will be able to use these competencies in their adult life.

The preschool environment challenges the children's motor skills on an everyday basis, whether it be pouring water into a cup, cutting out a paper sign, playing in the playground or dancing. However, you can plan special games or exercises to enhance these skills, as well as integrate such learning experience in your everyday life.

Example Preschool Activities:

The Traveling Dot – a cutting experience

Provide every child with a little booklet and several small pieces of colored paper. Write the following story into the booklet and use one sentence per page. Then encourage the children to cut out little boxes, triangles and the various landscapes described in the story and glue them together into the booklet.

The Traveling Dot

This is Little Dot.

It lives together with lots of other little dots and is very happy.

One day, a little box comes around. Little Dot is very surprised!

"I have never seen such a thing like you before! What are you?", it asks.

"I am Little Box", the little box answers in a soft voice. "Where I come from, everyone looks like me".

Our little dot gets very curious and so the little box invites it to come with him to Corner Land. The dot rolls and the box jumps and during their travel, they explore lot of different countries...

First they pass by Triangle Nation...

...then they wander through a beautiful land with soft hills and no edges at all.

Afterwards they visit Ziggy-Zaggy Village...

...and then, right before the sunset, they arrive at Corner Land.

In Corner Land, everyone looks like our little box. And all the little boxes are very surprised to see our little dot. "We have never seen such a thing like you before! What are you?", they ask.

"I am Little Dot", the little dot answers and smiles.

Motion-Building Sites

Motion-Building Sites differ from usual playgrounds, because the material used is more flexible and often based on natural resources. Especially in the beginning, children should be accompanied by adults to prevent accidents. However, give the children space and time to explore the material and ways of usages.

For Motion-Building Sites, you can use and adapt already existing playgrounds. Make sure you create possibilities for children to use different muscles and courses of motions. Examples would be:

- A **barefoot path**, where you put little boxes one after another and fill them with different material, like little stones and bigger stones, sand, soil or wood. Then ask the child to close her eyes, take her hand and walk the child through. Does she know which kind of ground she is touching right now?
- A **feeling-box**, where you take a huge and stable box the child is able to sit in. Now put different materials in the box, like sand, stones, nutshells, shells or chestnuts. You'll be surprised how much time children like to spend in such boxes and with how many ideas for games they come up!
- A **tent**: a tent will not only keep the child from getting sunburned, but also provides them with possibilities of relaxation or various games. You can create the tent with the child by using a big blanket, coloring it together and using sticks to establish it, but you can also use wood and bind it together.
- Various possibilities of balancing: use different kind and shapes of wood or stones and create **balancing paths** out of it that the children have to try to stay on without stepping off.



Figure 11: Example of a barefoot path

#10: Creativity and Fantasy

Are creativity and fantasy learn-able and teach-able? In fact, you don't have to teach them, because those competencies are an inherent part of our human existence. Unfortunately, often our abilities to be creative and visionary are mainstreamed and somewhat lost through our schooling systems. However, more and more researchers and educators are becoming aware of the importance of such abilities and the support caregivers can provide in order to foster their development and growth. Children benefit a lot from such efforts in terms of acquiring various forms of expressing oneself, creative problem-solving competencies, social and cognitive stimulation and strengthening of self-confidence.

Example Preschool Activities:

Clashing pictures

Prepare paper in different shapes and paint (if you don't have paper and paint then go to the next activity). Fold the paper in the middle so there is a crease down the center of the page. Paint on one side of the crease and leave the other free. Then fold the paper together again, making sure the paint gets on the free side. Now open it: what do you see?



Figure 12: this clashing pictures shall provide you with an idea of how such pictures might look like. However, every picture will be unique!

- Though this exercise seems very simple, there are a lot of things children can learn from it. For example: about the interaction and of different colors (eg. Blue + yellow = green); about shapes and symmetry. While you can let the children explore in the beginning, you then can show them naturally symmetrical figures, like hearts, leaves or butterflies, created by painting one side only.

Water paintings

Painting with water is a fun activity – especially if it is hot outside. You do not actually need paint; you can just use water as your paint! Provide the children with different-sized bottles they can use as watering cans. Then go outside and let the children paint the ground with water. Large-scale paintings are especially good for strengthening hand-eye coordination and the brain's capacity to think in different shapes and sizes.

5. Feedback Round and Closing

What have you learned today?

Are there any questions left?

What did you like/dislike about today's activities?

Do you have any suggestions for the coming days?

Afterwards, hand out a copy of the following poem to every participant:

The Hundred Languages of Children

The child
is made of one hundred.
The child has
a hundred languages
a hundred hands
a hundred thoughts
a hundred ways of thinking
of playing, of speaking.
A hundred always a hundred
ways of listening
of marveling, of loving
a hundred joys
for singing and understanding
a hundred worlds
to discover
a hundred worlds
to invent
a hundred worlds
to dream.
The child has
a hundred languages
(and a hundred hundred hundred more)
but they steal ninety-nine.
The school and the culture
spate the head from the body.

They tell the child:
to think without hands
to do without head
to listen and not to speak
to understand without joy
to love and to marvel
only at Easter and at Christmas.
They tell the child:
to discover the world already there
and of the hundred
they steal ninety-nine.
they tell the child:
That work and play
reality and fantasy
science and imagination
sky and earth
reason and dream
are things
that do not belong together:

And thus they tell the child
that the hundred is not there
The child says:
No way. The hundred is there.

(Loris Malaguzzi, 1985)

6. Closing Ritual: The Special Circle

Ask everyone to cross their arms over their chests and hold their neighbors' hands. Then everyone tries to sit down and stand up together without letting go of anyone's hand.

Key Lesson II: Techniques of Planning and Reflection

Content and learning goals:

- Getting to know different techniques of planning and reflecting
- Adopting child-centered strategies of planning and reflecting
- Practicing adequate planning and reflecting approaches

Approximate time: 2 hours

Material: smileys, copies of formulas, material for the exercises you want to present and practice

1. Welcome and Overview over this lesson's content

2. Starting Ritual: Mood-circle

Prepare some smileys that display different kinds of moods. You can draw them on a big poster, use one sheet per smiley or even handicraft them.

Ask the participants to make a circle and put the smileys in the middle. Now ask every participant to choose one smiley (they can either take it or just think about a certain one) according to their today's feeling. Now make a mood-round, where everyone who wants is encouraged to talk about his or her mood today. If necessary, ask questions like: How are you feeling today? Would you like to share your feelings? How are you feeling in regard to the upcoming lesson?



Figure 13: Use these smileys or create some yourself!

3. Facilitator's Input II: Planning and reflecting

Planning and Reflection are an inherent part of working as an educator. Plans can be made for single activities, daily, weekly or monthly routines, special long-term projects or yearly cycles that incorporate annual events and celebrations that are important to the local community. Especially if you start working as an educator, you will benefit from planning single activities and then move on to longer-term plans, since they will provide you with the opportunity to think about your goals and all the steps involved in carrying out your activities. Nevertheless, long-term plans are important in order to develop a coherent teaching strategy, which includes strategic repetition (and therefore reinforcement) of already acquired knowledge and skills. This means planning has to be focused on the child's development, the child's interests, needs and wants, as well as his or her surroundings.

This Manual will provide you with planning-techniques based on single activities, monthly plans and project plans, but you are highly encouraged to use or adapt your own planning formulas, too!

Activity planning itself is an ongoing process combining forward planning, pedagogical approaches, observation and analysis, and new planning based on reflection on past successes and failures. It is important to:

- Think about selecting relevant materials and ways to introduce them
- Think about content
- Think about time-frames
- Leave space for creativity and not overwhelm children with constant structured activities
- Provide natural materials and things you can easily find in daily life
- Plan with the surroundings and experiences of children in mind

Educational goals:

It is widely acknowledged that early education should provide children with the competencies to gradually become more independent, based on the development and growth of their personality and a sense of social connectedness and responsibility. In preschool, children should acquire:

- Self-confidence and independence
- Curiosity and a sense of joy in life
- Communication skills
- Skills of expression
- Basic knowledge about the world and nature

While planning, put a special emphasis on the goals you want to achieve with your activities. Do not find goals for the activities you plan to do, but rather formulate your goals first and then find adequate activities to realize them!

Materials:

In order to support children's independence and reflect their diverse interests and impulses, thinking about the usage and choice of materials is a basic component in planning.

- Do not only use ready-made materials, but also materials from daily life and nature, which can be used in flexible and various forms, for example cardboard and plastic packaging, leaves and twigs.
- Integrate the interests, needs and wants of children
- Think about hygiene and safety of the materials you choose

Voluntary Participation:

Children themselves are interested in exploring and have a natural zest for action. Often they are happy and excited to 'help' adults with basic tasks like setting the table or watering plants and just need the invitation to do so. Cheerful children will practice these basic competencies and become more and more skillful at them. Such behavior reflects the child's urges to learn and create something, as well as their natural curiosity and interest in their surroundings. The curiosity and interest that is in every child will help you to implement all of these activities with the children!

Reflection

It is important to point out that reflection is an inherent part of the planning process. Reflection on prior activities and what you can learn from your prior experience can be just as helpful as observing the children throughout their daily activities. Additionally, thinking about what took place when you tried to implement an activity after the fact can provide a useful distance that might help you to understand what happened or view it from a different perspective.

Pedagogical acting + observation and analysis + reflection = Further Planning

- ➔ Use the planning formulas in the appendix and talk the participants through a sample, or create a sample together.
- ➔ Usually it is suggested for educators to either develop or find one's own formulas, based on personal preferences, but often educators face special requirements from donors, institutions or national agencies. Please find out about such preferences and requirements and try to integrate such in the sessions! Emphasize to participants that these formulas are just examples, and that they should tailor the formulas they use to their own particular requirements and situation.

4. Group Exercise: Planning

After looking at the planning formulas together, divide the participants into three groups. One group will plan one activity, another group will plan a month, and the final group will plan a whole project. Afterwards the groups will present their plans to each other.

- ➔ If there is time and if it is possible, you can ask some groups to carry out some of their planned activities with the group. Afterwards, encourage participants to share their feelings and thoughts.
- ➔ Please use the following questions as guidance for discussing the group presentations:

Does this plan meet its objectives?

Are there any ways it could be more effective?

Is the plan suited to the timeframe (activity, month, project)?

What are the key learning goals and how are they addressed?

Does your plan leave enough space to react flexible upon the children's needs and interests?

5. Closing Ritual and Reflection: Mood-Circle

Bring the smileys back to the center of the circle and ask the participants, which smiley they'd choose now. Did they choose another one? What changed their feelings? Why are they feeling different/the same now? How did they feel about today's lesson?

Key-Lesson III: Child-Centered Approaches

Content and learning goals:

- Creating awareness of the importance and benefits of child-centered approaches
- Introducing and practicing methods of understanding, observing and supporting children's competencies and development

Approximate time: 3 hours

Material: posters and markers, handouts, planning- and observation formulas

- 1. Welcome and Overview of this lesson's content**
- 2. Starting Ritual: Close your eyes, shake your hands**

Participants stand in a circle and close their eyes. The Facilitator starts by giving their hand to the neighbor on their left. They shake hands, and then the neighbor gives their hand to the neighbor on *their* left, and so forth.

Introductory Story

Read out the following story in the group and then continue with the activities and questions that follow. While reading, think about how this story relates to child-centered approaches in teaching.

About trees and humans

Once upon a time, there was a gardener. He took his wife outside into their garden and together they planted a tree. It didn't take long before the seed started growing. One could already see a little bit of green coming out from the ground. The tree, which was not yet a fully-developed tree, felt the sun's warmth for the first time in its life. It was happy and grateful to be on Earth and reached out to the sun. "Look!", the gardener said "Isn't our little tree wonderful?!" His wife agreed: "Yes", she said, "it's lovely!"

The tree grew higher and higher. Every day it came closer to the sun. It felt wind and rain and enjoyed being strongly grounded by its roots. Often the gardener and his wife came by. They watered the tree and admired its beauty. The tree felt very happy. In the gardener and his wife the tree had someone who loved and cared about it, who protected it and made sure it never felt lonely. And so the tree grew and grew while feeling the sun, wind and rain, while being loved and loving in return.

One day the tree realized it was especially nice if it grew more into the left direction, because the sun was stronger there. So it started growing to the left. "Look!", the gardener said to his wife, "our tree is growing lopsided! Since when are trees allowed to do that?! I, as a gardener, cannot let this happen! Never!" Thus, the wife walked away to get the loppers.

"Oh", the tree cried! The people who it loved, who had always protected and cared about it, which it had trusted, they took away the branches which came closest to the sun. It didn't understand how they could do this, but of course our little tree couldn't talk and couldn't ask them. Yet, they still told it they loved it, but that it couldn't grow lopsided, because a real tree wouldn't do that. And so, it didn't grow lopsided anymore and stopped reaching out to the sun.

"Oh, isn't it adorable?!", the gardener said to his wife and slowly the tree started to understand. When it grew the way it wanted to, that made it feel good and experience joy and satisfaction, it wasn't considered a good tree. It was only considered a good tree if it did what it was supposed to do. And because it loved the gardener and his wife, from now on it was cautious not to grow lopsided again, but to grow straight.

"Look at that!", the gardener said and shook his head, "our tree is growing incredibly fast! Is a real tree allowed to do that?!" "No, of course not", the wife replied "Trees should grow slowly and peacefully. Even our neighbor says, trees should grow slowly and moderately. Their tree is doing so, too." The gardener agreed and so the couple got the loppers again and cut the tree's tallest branches off.

This time, the tree cried for a very long time. Why did they cut off his branches? And why didn't they like them? But the gardener only said: "Look, my wife, what a wonderful tree we have. We can be very proud!" And his wife agreed, like always.

But now the tree became stubborn. "Fine", it thought, "if I can't grow high, I will grow wide". All it wanted to was to grow and develop, to feel sun, wind and rain, to feel joy and to share joy. So it knew it was right to keep growing.

"It's unbelievable!", the gardener shouted, outraged. "Look, our tree is growing wide! It even looks as if it's enjoying it! Pah, not in my garden!" And so the wife got the loppers again and the gardener started cutting.

This time, the tree did not cry. It didn't have any tears left. It just stopped growing and stopped enjoying life. However, the gardener and the wife seemed to like it again. Even though it wasn't happy anymore, at least it was loved. That's what the tree thought.

Many years later a little girl walked by with her father. The tree was fully grown by then and the gardener and his wife were very proud. It had become a real and nice tree. As they walked by, the little girl stopped: "Daddy, look! Don't you think this tree appears to be sad?". "I don't know", the father replied, "when I was little, just like you are now, I could see if trees were sad or happy, just like you do now. But I can't tell anymore."

"The tree looks very, very sad", the girl said and looked sympathetically at the tree. "I'm sure no one really loves it. I think it wanted to grow in a very different way, but it wasn't allowed to. And therefore it is so sad now". "Maybe", the father answered thoughtfully, "but who can really grow the way he or she wants to?"

"Why not?!", the girl asked, surprised, "I think if someone really loved the tree and cared about it, they would let it grow just the way the tree wanted to, wouldn't they? I mean, it doesn't harm anyone!"

The father looked at his child. Slowly he said: "You know, no one is allowed to grow exactly the way he or she wants. If one person was able to grow exactly the way he or she wanted to, all the others would wonder why they couldn't do the same."

"But Daddy, I don't understand!"

"Of course you don't", the father replied. "You, too, might not have grown the way you wanted to all the time. You were not allowed to". "But why not?!", the girl shouted, outraged, "you and Mummy, you love me, don't you?!"

The father looked at this child for a while. "Yes", he agreed, "we love you, of course".

They passed by the tree and the little girl thought about the tree and the conversation for a long time. The tree had been listening to them and it, too, thought about their conversation for a very long time. It was looking in their direction for a very long time. Then the tree understood and it started to cry without restraint.

(Story by Heinz Körner)

3. Facilitator's Input I: About trees and humans

How can you as educators behave in order to not be like those who cut the children's branches?

How can you support children to become the wonderful trees they want to, and can, be?

How can you support them in reaching out towards the sun?

One way is to use a child-centered approach in our teaching. Child-centered means that it is not the teacher or the curriculum which is the most important thing in the preschool, but the children themselves. It means to believe in the children's ability to communicate their needs and wants, to make choices, think, experience, explore, ask and search for answers. This makes children not only receivers of our education, but enables and empowers them to be active participants in their education and development, whether it be social, emotional, intellectual, physical or linguistic development.



Figure 14: Be sensible and thoughtful to the children's needs. Observe what they like to do and play and link it with your teaching-goals.

It is very important to reinforce self-esteem, self-confidence, empowerment and the development of a positive and realistic self-concept.

Adopting a child-centered approach also challenges the teacher. Because every child is different and unique, this means you have to be very sensitive and respectful while teaching and take into account age, gender, culture, temperament and learning style. As a teacher, you can foster inclusion by giving full value to everyone's different qualities and competencies. With this, peace, empowerment and development can be strengthened and facilitated. Rather than applying your own ideas, interests and concepts, pay attention to those of the children. Even though it might be easier and faster for the teacher to teach children what he already knows, the learning impact is much greater if the child is able to acquire the knowledge by him or herself. This means, the teacher isn't a teacher anymore, but acts as a partner of the child in exploring together.

4. Exercise: Self reflection

The participants can either read the following checklist themselves at home or use a few minutes to do it in the group.

Personal Checklist:

Do I agree or disagree with each of these statements?

Do I act according to each of these principles or not in my work?

On responsibilities (the 'head' element):

- I, as a teacher, am responsible for guiding a process of awareness, empowerment and development.
- Self-reflection as a learning tool helps me to fully develop my skills.
- I stimulate children's thinking without any interference of my personal prejudices, irrational loyalties, traumas, hang-ups, fears or irritations.
- I facilitate the development of a positive self-concept amongst children, about their competencies, challenges, needs and opportunities. In doing this, I observe carefully and allow for everyone to express themselves individually.

On care (the 'hands' element):

- I assume an inquisitive position.
- I am not suggestive in any sense, because I believe this would pre-empt the children and take away their chance of putting forward their own thought, expression or idea.
- I am flexible and spontaneous, but also well-prepared.

On safety (the 'heart' element):

- I do not make use of physical punishment.
 - I do not believe in negative or punitive disciplinary approaches.
 - I take children's answers and participation seriously at all times, even if I don't agree.
 - I acknowledge that children have their own truth and reality and appreciate that without prejudice, but value it according to its own merits.
- ➔ Give time for participants to share their feelings and thoughts on the checklist. It might be a good idea to discuss and share in pairs first and then open up to the whole group.

5. Energizer: African Drum

Stand in a circle. One person starts by standing in front of the person next to them, and teaching her a simple (clapped) rhythm. As soon as she is able to do it, the 'teaching participant' moves on to the next person. After he has taught three people, another participant enters the circle and teaches another rhythm to another three people. This goes on until everyone has been a teacher at least once.

6. Facilitator's Input II: Observation

Even though people around the world can learn a lot from each other and take on new ideas, it is similarly important to be attentive to one's direct surroundings. Children don't grow up in a vacuum, but rather in a family, community, culture and nation. Any activities and projects should therefore be planned according to the specific context of the children you are working with. At the end of this manual you will find different formulas for observation. Do not choose only one; instead, try to use a variety of them, as they each give you different perspectives and ideas. These formulas won't only help you in formulating general strategies, but can also support examination of a specific topic – for example if you feel that a child shows a lack of physical or mental development, or if you experience a sudden change of behavior in a child.

Guiding principles for observation

- Appearance
 - What's the height and weight of the child?
 - Is the child able to use clear facial expression to show his/her feelings? How clear are they?
 - Which kind of body sensation and control over the body has the child? Is the child able to control its salivation?
 - Does the child has or need glasses? How is his/her eye sight?
 - How would you describe the child's general level of clothing, hygiene and sanitation?
- Motor skills
 - How would you describe the child's movements? (e.g. Slow, insecure movement, strong and powerful, very controlled, bustling, clumsy...)
 - Is the child able to walk without any external help?
 - Does the child show a strikingly urge to move? Does the child have good hand-eye coordination?
 - Is the child playing with either both hands or one hand only?
 - Does the child have a good pinch grip?
- Emotional competencies
 - In what kind of mood is the child generally? Can you observe any rapid changes or document some long-term changes?
 - Is the child anxious when meeting strangers?
 - Do you regard the child as self-confident? In which situations can you observe that? Do you regard the child as insecure? What makes you believe that?
 - When meeting strangers, is the child shy or outgoing?
 - Does the child acknowledge caregivers?
 - Is the child's behavior towards strangers and well-known people similar or different?
- Social competencies
 - How does the child approach others?
 - Does the child act sociably and take initiative, or are they passive or isolated?
 - Is the child passive and observant, or interested and curious?
 - Which position does the child take in the group? (leader, follower, etc)
- Behavior while playing
 - Which kind of material prefers the child to play with?

- Is the child playing always on his or her own, or do they always have company?
- How does the child treat materials and toys?
- Is the child independent?
- How does the child react towards praise or criticism?
- Is the child displaying an obsessive sense of order?
- Usage of material
 - Does the child have preferred materials?
 - Is the child using adequate material for different games?
 - Does the child know how to use the material?
 - Is the child able to explore the material in a creative way?
- Lingual capacities
 - Does the child feel comfortable speaking in a group or with grown ups?
 - Does the child like tell stories or are they very shy?
 - Does the child have a wide or limited vocabulary?
 - Is the child able to distinguish between different similar sounds?
 - Does the child have a clear voice and is audible when they speak?
 - Is the child able to recount stories they have heard and relay experiences?
 - Is the child inhibited or eloquent?
 - Does the child understand verbal assignments?
 - Does the child respond to his or her name?
 - Does the child know the names of his or her caregivers?

Additional Topics for observation of children with so-called ‘problematic behavior’:

- Which kind of problems or challenges appear within the group?
 - Which challenges and problems appear?
 - How do the challenges express themselves?
 - How did the situation emerge?
 - Which kind of reactions do other children show?
 - Which kind of reactions do the child’s parents show?
 - Which kind of reactions do the child’s educators show?
- Specific observation of a child
 - Take your time and give affection!
 - Note down situations, where the child shows problems or faces challenges
 - When and where do such challenges appear?
 - How do they emerge?
 - Who is part of the conflict?

➔ Talk the participants through the two formulas provided in this manual. It might be helpful to ask participants to fill out a formula based on their memory of a particular child – this will help identify any areas or questions of the formulas that are not well-understood.

➔ Child observation is designed to help the educators monitor the child’s behavior and development. Based on your observations, you are encouraged to create activities which support the child’s development and competencies. Additionally, it can be helpful to use the notes when talking with the parents or other care-takers (e.g. if the child shows problematic behavior or lack of development).

7. Exercise: Observation

Ask the participants to go outside, have a look around and then sit down and document what they experience within the next five minutes. They should use one of the formulas in the back and be careful to only describe what they observe without interpreting, explaining or judging it, thereby separating their descriptions from their interpretations and judgments.

When they come back to the group, participants can reflect upon their experience in pairs and then in the whole group. Ask which difficulties they experienced, which information they have gained and what they have learned about observation through this exercise.

8. Energizer: Catching Fingers

Stand in a circle and hold hands with your neighbors. Each person puts their right forefinger inside their neighbor's left open hand. Everyone keeps his or her left hand open. The facilitator stands in the middle. As soon as she claps, the participants try to catch their neighbor's finger with their left hand, while also trying to rub their belly with their right hand.

9. Exercise: Planning based on observation

Divide the participants equally into five groups and hand out one of the following observations to each group:

• In my observations I realized that children are often fighting with each other. Their conflicts turn violent almost immediately. Therefore, I want to put a special focus on the creation of positive group dynamics and relations amongst the children, while also providing them with peaceful strategies of conflict resolution.

• In my observations I realized that the children enjoy exploring their surroundings whenever we are outside. Whether it is observing little insects, acquiring knowledge regarding the trees and plants in our garden or talking with passers-by, they are highly interested in what is going on around them. I want to use this exploratory urge to teach them about nature and the value of life.

• In my observations I realized that some of the children have difficulties and backlashes in using their native language and acquiring the necessary skills for starting school. Therefore I want to design a special project according to their needs to promote their lingual capacities.

• In my observations I realized that the children greatly enjoy painting and using creative arts for self-expression. However, lots of material is being wasted or broken, because they have difficulties in using it properly. Therefore I want to do an activity that teaches the children how to use painting material (paint and brushes) in various ways and with care and respect, without telling them what to paint.

• In my observations I realized that the children have little knowledge regarding hygiene and health, including nutrition. Therefore I want to put this topic at the center of my activities for the upcoming month and also include information and activities for or with parents and other possible caregivers.

The examples of observations you were provided with gives you insights into what children want and need in their development and growth. Now it is your turn to include your observations in your planning activities. For the first time, use the appropriate formula and design a project, activity or monthly strategy using the observations you received in the handout. Later, you will be able to use your own observations from your work to plan activities in this way. Afterwards, share your ideas with the whole group.

- ➔ You might want to copy the different plans for all participants, so they can use them as models in their preschools
- ➔ If there is time and if it is possible you can ask some groups to realize some of their planned activities within the group. Afterwards, share your feelings and thoughts, taking care to be respectful and to value everyone's contributions!

10. Feedback Round

What have you learned today?

Are there any questions left?

What did you like/dislike about today's activities?

Do you have any suggestions for the coming days?

11. Closing Ritual: Close your eyes, shake your hands

Participants stand in a circle and close their eyes. The Facilitator starts by giving their hand to the neighbor on their left. They shake hands, and then the neighbor gives their hand to the neighbor on *their* left, and so forth.

Key Lesson IV: Participatory Strategies in Early Childhood Education

Content and learning goals:

- Provide information about, and practical experience of, participatory strategies and their underlying principles
- Develop an awareness of participatory strategies as a way to strengthen peace and democracy in your preschool and more broadly in the community

Approximate time: 3 hours

Material: posters and markers, handouts, planning formulas, music

1. Welcome and Overview of this lesson's content

2. Starting Ritual: Shaking

In order to wake up your mind and body, shake your toes, then your feet, legs, hands, shoulders, head and hair. Then massage your ears and your face and with your tongue, massage the inner space of your mouth and your lips.

3. Exercise: Columbian Hypnosis

Divide in pairs. One person raises their hand. Their partner's nose is 'magnetic' to the hand and has to follow, no matter what. As a leader, be careful - you are responsible for your partner's well-being! Change after five minutes and then discuss the experience in pairs and then in the whole group. How did you feel? Was it easier to follow or to take the lead? What was challenging or uncomfortable?

- ➔ Use the group discussion to open the topic of participation. As the participants experienced, there are difficulties and advantages in being both a leader and a follower. Sometimes it is very difficult to follow another person, yet being the leader can also feel like a lot of pressure and responsibility. What are some of the other dynamics, advantages and disadvantages the participants experienced in the different roles in this activity?

4. Facilitator's Input

Participation is an important democratic principle and essential part of being human. This does not only apply to adults or grown citizens of a country, but also to children attending school. In preschool, participation should focus not on political education, but rather on the following attitudes and competencies:

- Taking and sharing responsibilities
- Developing opinions and interests and representing them (and being able to bear the fact that they cannot always be realized or acted upon).
- Resolving conflicts peacefully and constructively
- Listening carefully and respectfully to others
- Engaging in a critical yet open-minded way with their surroundings
- Creating empathy and solidarity with their peers

Such attitudes and competencies, however, can rarely be directly taught, but instead are acquired through modeling and practical application. This is why possibilities for participation on a daily basis are important for strengthening peace and democracy, for fostering maturity, judgment, decisiveness, flexibility and empowerment. For an educator this means to be willing to share responsibilities and decision-making power with the children. It does not mean to leave the pedagogical responsibility with the children, but rather to create open, empowering and



Figure 15: You will be surprised by the reliability and autonomy children will develop in an enabling environment!

inclusive structures and spaces for learning. Children should actively participate in projects and activities, but also be included in making decisions about daily routines and educational approaches.

5 Principles of Participation

- **Participation requires adults to accompany children.**

Participation does not mean leaving children alone with responsibilities and decision-making. In fact, participation is a process, which needs the practice, experience and active support of the educators. Children need role models, information, alternative experiences and modes for acting, as well as spaces for negotiation.

- **Participation requires interaction based on equality and partnership.**

This means teacher and child being engaged in a dialogue, where both can be teachers and learners. The educator has to acknowledge the expertise the child has about their own living environment, their emotions and perspectives towards themselves, others and the world. This means, as an educator you have to be open-minded and interested in what children have to say. Regarding the process of participation, the educator is responsible for supporting the development of peaceful and constructive conflict resolution and negotiation of interests.

- **Participation cannot happen without any consequences or rewards.**

If children participate in something, there should be a real chance that their ideas and wants can be realized within a certain amount of time. Therefore, it is very important to think about the spaces and questions, where children can actually co-decide, and build these into the learning environment.

- **Participation should be based on the children's living environment.**

If children are to participate, the topics and contents of their learning have to have an impact on, or connection to, their real life. This can be direct or indirect. If topics are abstract, it is important to carefully prepare lessons and activities to make the topics comprehensible and relatable for the children.

5. Energizer: Dancing blind

Divide into pairs. One partner closes their eyes while music is being played. The partners hold at least one of each other's hand and start to dance just the way they feel up to. However, the "seeing partner" has to watch out, so the blind partner doesn't hurt him- or herself. When the facilitator claps his or her hands, the roles are switched and the other person closes their eyes for the dancing.

6. Facilitator's Input II:

There are different levels and forms of participation:

Non-Formal:

Participation can be based on a certain project with a clear time-frame and topic. The impulse for this topic can come from the children themselves or from the educator. Examples include the preparation for an excursion, redecoration of a room or exploration of a certain topic of interest to the children.

Formal:

You can use 'morning circles' where everyone is able to express their wants or problems, or share experiences. This is a great way to find out what the children are really interested in and to formulate your projects and activities according to that. For group mediation or decision-making, you can use a variety of methods, from simple feedback or discussion rounds, to 'children parliaments' or 'children conferences' where you ask children to discuss the matter and then take a vote (for example by raising hands or putting stones in a bowl). If there appears to be a major conflict, create your own 'Nahe biti bo'ots': talk about the problem, try to find solutions and to reconcile with each other.

- ➔ Children parliaments: A children parliament takes the child serious as expert of his or her own life. Additionally it provides children with possibilities such as acquiring competencies in peaceful and democratic conflict resolutions, promoting one's interests or creating solidarity. Within a children parliament, children for example can come together and discuss the matter of interest. Afterwards they take a vote by raising hands or putting stones in a bowl. Another form of children parliament is to vote for a child-president, who acts like the leader of the discussion and provides different parties (or chosen representatives) with the possibilities to present their interests and arguments. Afterwards, the children will again be asked to take a vote.
- ➔ Children Conference: A children conference is similar to a children's parliament. But instead of urgent matters or matters of conflicts, here basic rules, but also possible contents for projects or today's activities will be discussed. Every child should be able to make him- or herself heard. You can use for example a "speaking ball" or "speaking wand" which is given to the child that has something to say. After he or she is done and someone else wants to add something, the ball or wand or whatsoever will be handed over. The children conference can also use voting for finalizing the discussion and implementing solutions, but does not necessarily include voting. It can be more used as a way of providing children with orientation of what is happening and integrating their own thoughts and wishes.
- ➔ Nahe biti bo'ot: A Nahe biti bo'ot is a Timorese concept of Public Hearings for resolving matters of dispute or reconcile conflicting parties. Here, one child (or the educator) acts as a

leader and invites the parties to sit on a bamboo mat and present their issues and main arguments, while all the other children are invited to take a seat around the mat and listen. Afterwards, all the children try to find a possible and satisfying solution together. The Nahe biti bo'ot can be closed with a certain ritual or a meal, everyone shares to celebrate the effective reconciliation.

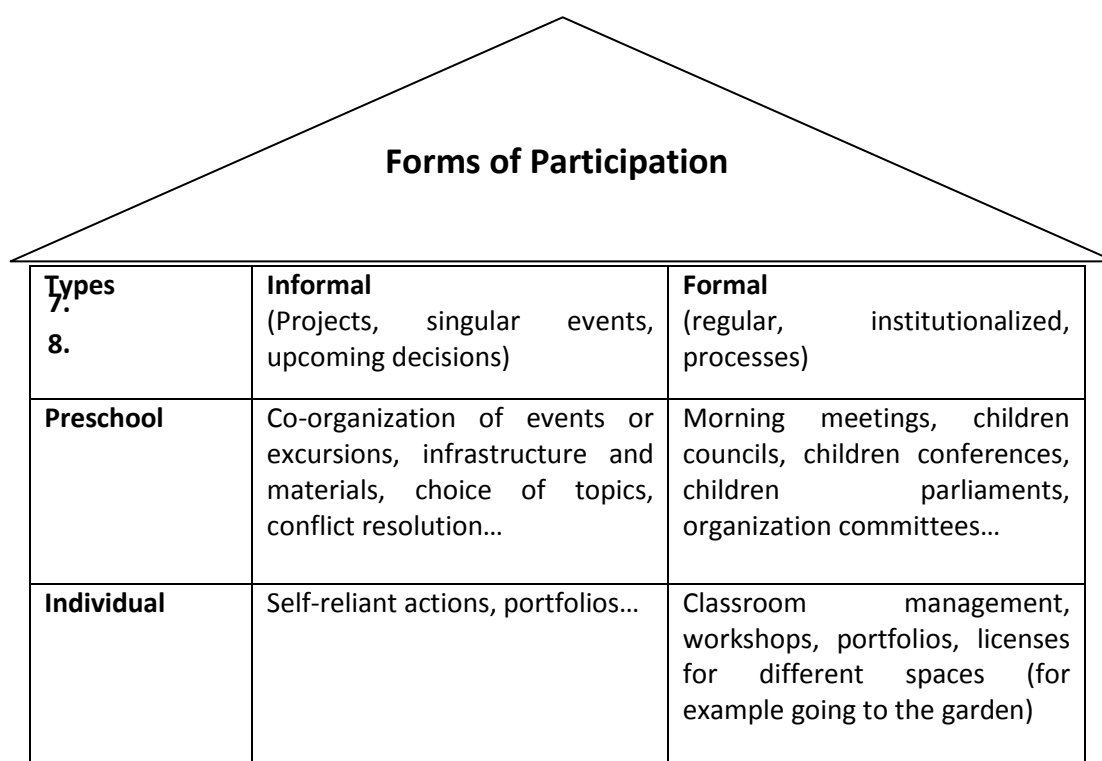


Figure 16: This house shows different forms of participation (copied from Stauffer, 2011)

6. Exercise

Divide the participants into three groups. Each group receives one of the following handouts covering a specific topic regarding participation. Read them, then discuss the questions and reflect upon your own teaching-styles in light of this new information. Then create a 5-minute presentation for the other groups regarding the topic. Afterwards, come up with an activity, a project or process that strengthens and practices participation in preschools. Use the planning formulas in the Appendix as practiced in prior sessions.

Participation needs to be part of the relation between adults and children in the preschool

Children only climb a tree as high as they know they are safe and capable of climbing. They might ask you to stand by and watch you and sometimes they might even hurt themselves a little. But trust them and observe them. If provided with a safe and open-minded space, they will become competent actors of their own development and experts on their living surroundings. From very early in their lives they start to explore themselves, others and the world around them. Participation also means acknowledging that fact and taking children seriously. Regard them as equal partners in their education with their own perspectives, needs, wants and interests. Don't leave them all by themselves, but rather enable them with spaces and capabilities to do something on their own, to raise questions and look for possible solutions to challenges and problems. This includes asking supportive questions and listening carefully to their responses.

This is challenging! We are used to thinking and deciding for them, but next time, imagine how you would behave, which kind of advice you would give to your best friend and try to enact the same principles with the children.

Questions for personal reflection and discussion:

- Are you interested and curious in what children have to offer and contribute? Do you listen to them and take them seriously?
- Do you listen to the children empathetically? Do you listen to them in a careful and respectful manner? Do you listen to them even if the boundaries between reality and fantasy seem to get blurred?
- Are you patient enough not to provide children with answers or judgments? Are you able to provide certain knowledge or expertise to help them reach decisions, without giving your own solutions? Are you able to acknowledge and display that even you don't know everything?

Participation can be strengthened with the infra- and -structure of the preschool

Participation often appears to be quite simple and small in scale. It can be reflected in the infrastructure of the preschool (for example if not every part of the room is directly observable for the educator, such as a second floor, or if materials are easily accessible to children without help from an adult), in rules as well as in educational concepts and teaching strategies. Of course, children need to learn how to handle different materials in order to keep themselves and others safe, but they also need to be provided with time and space to explore and to handle things in different, creative and alternative ways. For example, take your time to introduce the child to a new material or tool, provide them with the space to explore and as soon as you are sure there aren't any risks, offer the material to them without your direct presence.

Questions for personal reflection and discussion:

- Are the children free to choose what they would like to do at appropriate times?
- Are games, toys and materials accessible to the children?
- Are the children allowed and able to use any spaces and materials without adults and even to change them? Which ones can't they use without adults, and why?
- Are there any spaces where children can be and play without being observed by adults?
- Are the ground rules developed and adapted collaboratively between educators and children?
- Are the children involved in any decisions concerning the infrastructure, for example: reconstruction of the playground, renovation of rooms, purchasing of material, etc?

Participation should be included in the daily routine of the preschool

Participation should become an automatic principle in your daily work. In order to make it so, every member of the teaching team has to agree to and be a part of this process. There are various ways to involve children in the daily routine. For example you can use 'morning meetings', 'children conferences' or 'children parliaments', but also include them in housekeeping or gardening activities.

Questions for personal reflection and discussion:

- In what can children participate and co-decide in the preschool?
- In what should they not participate and why?
- How can you react to their decisions?
- How can you implement participation in your daily routine?

12. Presentation and Discussion

Before the group presentations on these handouts, read the following story together in the group:

The Elephant and the Blind Men

Once upon a time, an elephant came to a small town in India. People had read about and heard of elephants but no one in the town had ever seen one in real life. Thus, a huge crowd gathered around the elephant, and it was an occasion for great fun, especially for the children. Five blind men also lived in that town, and consequently, they also heard about the elephant. They were eager to find out about the elephant.

Then, someone suggested that the blind men could go and feel the elephant with their hands. They could then get an idea of what an elephant 'looked' like. The five blind men went to the center of the town where all the people made room for them to touch the elephant.

Later on, they sat down and began to discuss their experiences. One blind man, who had touched the trunk of the elephant, said that the elephant must be like a thick tree branch. Another who touched the tail said the elephant probably looked like a snake or rope. The third man, who touched the leg, said the shape of the elephant must be like a pillar. The fourth man, who touched the ear, said that the elephant must be like a huge fan; while the fifth, who touched the side, said it must be like a wall.

They sat for hours and argued, each one sure that his view alone was correct. Obviously, they were all correct from their own perspective, but no one was quite willing to listen to the others. Finally, they decided to go to the wise man of the village and ask him who was correct. The wise man said, "Each one of you is correct; and each one of you is wrong. Because each one of you had only touched one part of the elephant's body. Thus you only have a partial view of the animal. If you put your partial views together, you will get an idea of what an elephant really looks like."

(Traditional Indian Story)

With the following presentations, everyone in the group contributes one piece to the picture of the elephant. We cannot be sure that we now see the elephant as a whole, but with keeping this in mind, we can actively search for more pieces of the elephant in our daily work – and maybe your children will provide you with more pieces, as well!

13. Feedback Round: Throwing the ball

When asking for feedback, imagine a ball in your hand. Start with reflecting upon the process during this session and then throw the ball to someone else to share their reflections. Each person passes the imaginary ball to another participants once they have shared their own reflection.

14. Closing Ritual: Shaking

In order to wake up your mind and body, shake your toes, then your feet, legs, hands, shoulders, head and hair. Then massage your ears and your face and with your tongue, massage the inner space of your mouth and your lips.

Key Lesson V: Working with Parents and Communities

Content and learning goals:

- Provide information about how to strengthen relationships with parents in order to establish mutual trust and respect between children’s various care-takers
- Provide information about how to strengthen visibility and respect for early childhood education within the community, thereby encouraging local parents to send their children to preschool.

Approximate time: 2 hours

Material: posters and markers for the brainstorming, handouts, planning formulas, paper, glue and paint for invitations and poster

1. Welcome and Overview of this lesson’s content

2. Starting Ritual: Good Morning!

The participants walk around the room. When the facilitator claps, she calls out a language and the participants try to shake hands with as many other participants as possible, greeting each other in that language. Eg. “Tetum” – participants will say “Bondia”. When the facilitator claps for the second time, the participants continue to walk around the room, until the facilitators claps and calls out another language, e.g. “English” – participants will say “Good Morning”.

- ➔ Write the languages and sayings on a board to make it easier for participants to use the right language.
- ➔ Examples: Tetum (Bondia), English (Good Morning), Indonesian (Selamat pagi), German (Guten Morgen), Swedish (God Morgon), French (Bonjour), Chinese (Jo san)

3. Brainstorm:

Ask the participants to think about the moments of interaction they have with the parents and communities they are working with. Are these intended situations or unplanned and accidental? Do they interact on a daily basis? Are there any special interactions, such as community ceremonies or special events where families and communities are invited to the preschool?

4. Facilitator's Input:

Your relationship with parents and caregivers, as well as your reputation and position in the community, are an important part of your work. Close relationships with parents of the children at your preschool can help to reinforce the preschool's educational approach and support children's welfare and development in the home, as well as embed the preschool's place in community life. Try to develop a close relationship with parents based on mutual trust and respect, because such a partnership will be especially fruitful and supportive for children's development. In order to establish such a relationship, you need to be open-minded, patient, respectful, tolerant, sensitive, ready for contact and dialogue.

Some strategies you can use to build your relationship with parents include:

- Show the parents that you care about them and their children and use short daily talks to communicate with parents when they drop off or pick up their children (e.g. tell them about something the child has accomplished today or a special competence the child shows)
- Use monthly letters or notice boards, or other means of communication that are targeted to the parents in your community, to keep the parents updated about what's going on in the preschool. Talk with the parents in your community to establish what type of communication works best for them.
- Encourage parent-teacher conferences (e.g. one at the beginning of the year to introduce the parents to the preschool, its working style and learning abilities) or workshops/lectures on a special topic related to children's well being.

In any cases of emergency or crisis, such positive relationships will help you to support the families and ensure the children's well-being; it will present you as their partner and not as an external interference or threat. Additionally, such close interaction will also help you to understand the child's living situation and consequent behavior, while it will keep you on track with any changes and transitions in the child's life.

However, be aware that not all parents are able to read or write, and some don't share the same language. Therefore it might be useful to use drawings or comics instead, talk the people through the letter or explain the letter to the children, so they can show it to their parents (for example if you have learned a song together, tell the children this would be the song and then they can sing it to their parents). Make use of other relatives or neighbors who can read written materials to illiterate parents.

Regarding your visibility and role in the community, you can also use info-boards at the entrance of the preschool that are visible to all who pass by. It is strongly suggested that you play an active role in community life by participating at festivals or inviting villagers to the preschool's celebrations. This will not only provide you with a possibility to advocate for children's needs and rights, but will also boost preschool enrolments due to the impression of the preschool as a valuable and desirable learning experience for children.

Different forms of interaction

Interaction on a daily basis:

Make use of the time when parents drop off and pick up their children. Say “Hello” and ask them how they and the kids are. Show an interest in the child’s and family’s life. For example, share an observation about their child or recent development with the parents, show them a painting the child has done or bring up topics you may have discussed together earlier. This will show parents that you really care about their children and families, and in any cases of emergency or crisis with the children, the parents might remember your thoughtfulness and come to you for help. Keep in mind that all parents are different. Some might be very eager to establish close relationships with you, while others might be more private. Give the parents space and respect their preferences.

Additionally, the time of dropping off and picking up the children can also be used by the parents to spend some time in the preschool and observe the children and educator. This can be especially valuable in the child’s first weeks at preschool. This might also lead to discussions about educational approaches and the preschool’s working style, where you again can present yourself as a competent partner and provide the parents with important knowledge regarding childcare.

Strengthening parental-teacher-relations:

Often, preschools are the first institutions children attend. Therefore, in the beginning it is helpful to provide parents with a sense of orientation throughout the preschool year. Invite the parents to a Parents-Teacher-Conference and introduce them to basic rules and functions of the preschool (including the staff, routines, working methods and annual celebrations and events). At the end of the year, you may repeat the Conference and share information and examples of the children’s activities and creations throughout the year. If you can, invite the parents to share a meal together – this will provide you with a great opportunity to bond with parents directly, while it also stimulates contact between parents.

In order to establish direct contact and relationships with every parent, you can also draw on direct meetings once or twice a year. Here you can talk about each child’s development, competencies, strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, such meetings can be helpful, when any difficulties or even conflicts arise. Make sure the parents know about the topic of the meeting beforehand to avoid any anxiety. You might find the observation formulas in the earlier key lesson helpful, to prepare for such meetings, as they can provide specific examples and insights about each child. Approach the parents with care: present yourself as a partner in raising and educating their child, rather than an interrogator or even threat to their parenthood and family. Welcome them, thank them for coming, use positive and reinforcing language, open the discussion with something positive about the child and then ask the parents to describe their child.

You can use this in a general meeting to gain more information on the child, but also use the parents’ description as an entry point to start a discussion on a certain topic, such as a recent change of behaviour or the child’s slow development. Be careful with your body language and physical contact. Do what you feel is appropriate and respectful.

Topic-based interaction:

If you would like to introduce parents to a certain topic, such as positive discipline, child development, participatory education, or fears of children, there are many ways of doing this. For example:

- start weekly or monthly cooking classes, or create a vegetable garden within the preschool's grounds to share information about healthy eating and nutrition
- run a workshop on First Aid for children to support their health and safety.
- hold classes on specific handicraft techniques, where parents create games and toys for their children and where you teach them about ways of positive and supportive interaction and discipline.

You can also include the children by inviting the parents to a fun morning or afternoon of playing together at the playground. Here, you can act as a role model teaching the parents about educational methods by displaying such.

Incorporate local parents' skills and knowledge into your curriculum activities. Maybe a father would like to come by and tell the children about his activities as a bee-keeper or help remodel the playground? Maybe a mother would like to come by and show the children how to wave a tiao or cook a traditional meal?

Keep in mind that parents have to work and often have many children. Therefore, it might be difficult for them to attend all activities you offer them. Do not overwhelm them with too many events, but rather try to motivate and support them to be involved in the preschool.

Celebrations and Events:

Every year there are a variety of celebrations and events you can use to promote your preschool and/or certain topics, such as child protection or child rights. Use days such as the International Day for Children's Rights (20 November) or International Girl's Day (14 November) to promote positive messages. This can happen be done in a very simple way, such as displaying a relevant poster or picture on your information board or by creating a letter for the parents with information. However, you can also use such days for special events, e.g. by creating a theatre-performance with the children or organizing a soccer game, child-parent olympiad or a hiking trip. Here, you will not only have time to talk about the reason for the event and spread the message, but also embrace the beauty of childhood and raising children.

Participation in community celebrations or annual traditions and rituals:

Christmas, Easter and national events such as the Tour de Timor or the National Independence Day are an ideal opportunity to present the preschool as an important and valuable part of community life. You can participate in such events by preparing a song, creating a picture or just walking with the procession in any celebrations. For example:

Encourage the parents to participate in the organization of any special events! This will strengthen relationships, and share the workload.

5. Exercise:

Ask participants to imagine they are planning a large celebration with the children and their families to celebrate the end of the preschool year. Split up into three groups and prepare the following tasks:

Group 1:

Prepare an activity plan of what you are going to do with the children and their families. Include at least one song or dance, a game or set of challenges that the parents and children have to accomplish together, and a good closing for the event.

Group 2:

Prepare personal invitations for the parents. Make sure they understand about the time and place and that there will be various activities for their family. Consider the fact that some parents might not be able to read. Seek different ways of conveying the information to them.

Group 3:

Create a poster to remind the parents about the celebration. Consider the same points as Group 2.

6. Facilitator's Input II: The child's first weeks at preschool

The first weeks of the preschool year and/or each child's first weeks at preschool are an especially challenging time for children, parents and educators. This time is essential for making the child feel comfortable and happy in the preschool, while it also provides you with lots of opportunities to get to know the child, its family and living situation. The following handout will provide you with some ideas on how to ensure enrolment at preschool, and also how their first weeks at preschool can run smoothly.

The first steps of preschool-entrance

1. Before entering preschool:

- Invite families with children in the appropriate age group to come to your preschool to have a look around.
- Invite all the new enrolled children and their parents to an orientation session. Give them a little tour and provide the children with possibilities to connect and play with each other. You can use this time to chat a little with the parents, but overall, give them an insight into your working style and why preschool enrolment is important for their children's development. Also use this opportunity to set a time for a direct meeting with each child's parents.
- At the direct meeting, try to get a detailed insight into the child's current state of development, but also ask about their favorite games and foods. This information might

be helpful if the child experiences any difficulties in the first weeks of preschool. Use this time to provide the parents with further details on the preschool's working style and be open to any questions or concerns they might have. If possible, meet with both – father and mother. This will not only ensure that both have the same amount of information, but also contribute to strengthen both parents' inclusion in care giving. Additionally, talk the parents through the next weeks, when children will enter preschool. Make sure they know about their special duties and responsibilities during this time.

2. The first days of preschool:

- Ask one carer/guardian of each new child to stay at the preschool. Give the child and their carer a warm welcome on their first day and walk both of them around. The child is welcome to play either with their carer or other children. However, the first days are usually very exhausting for the child, because of all the new children they meet. Therefore, the child should spend 30-60 min. only in the preschool each day.
- After three days ask the parents to say "Goodbye" to their child and stay for five minutes outside the preschool. Then they can come back and greet the child. Make sure everyone behaves naturally. Some children will experience a sense of grief and pain from this separation, while others will be able to deal with it or even ignore their carers' absence.
- Depending on the child's reactions, try to prolong the parent's absence within the next few days. However, only prolong it for five minutes more, and give children and parents time to deal with the new situation. In the beginning, ask the parents to wait right outside the preschool. Later on, they are free to go and do other tasks, but it is very important that they are back on time to collect their child!

3. The first weeks of preschool:

- After one or two weeks, the child should be able to stay on its own at preschool. However, some children will struggle more with this than others. Make sure you are able to build a trusting and close relationship with the child and its parents. Also, be very open to, and respectful of, any concerns of the parents, but also tell them how the child managed in their absence.
- The first weeks of preschool are also essential for making the child familiar with the basic rules you apply in the preschool.
- Try to have another direct meeting with parents within the first few weeks: tell them how their child is dealing with the new situation and any developments the child has shown. Additionally, use the time to ask any questions or discuss any topics you might feel concerned about and provide parents with the opportunity to do this also.

4. After half a year:

- After half a year of preschool, some children might display a sudden negative change in attitude and behavior. While most children do not show any particular forms of change, others might refuse to attend preschool or be unusually naughty and test your limits. Make sure you react in a firm yet warm manner to such tests.

7. Feedback Round

What have you learned today?

Are there any questions left?

Do you have any suggestions for the coming days?

8. Closing Ritual: Saying Goodbye

Repeat the Starting Ritual, but have the participants say “Goodbye” instead of “Good Morning”.

- ➔ Write the languages and sayings on a board to make it easier for participants to use the right language.
- ➔ Examples would be: Tetum (Adeus), English (Good Bye), Indonesian (Selamat jalan), German (Auf Wiedersehen), Swedish (Hej då), French (Au revoir), Chinese (Jo gin)

Key Lesson VI: Children Affected by Conflict and Violence

Content and learning goals:

- Strengthening understanding and awareness about children with so-called ‘problematic behavior’
- Identifying actions educators can take to deal with problematic behavior
- Identifying factors of resilience and coping strategies for educators who deal with problematic behavior

Approximate time: 3 hours

Material: figurines showing different kinds of emotions (figurines are ideal, but you can also use pictures or smileys), handout

1. Welcome and Overview of this lesson’s content

2. Starting Ritual: The Mongolian Yurt

The participants stand in a circle and hold each other’s hands. Everyone counts “1-2-1-2” around the circle until everyone has a number. 1s lean back in the circle, while 2s lean forwards. The challenge is to keep holding each other’s hands, so that no one falls out of the circle, or the circle breaks.

3. Facilitator’s Input I

Everyone of us is aware of our country’s history and the challenges it poses for us and our children. Integrating knowledge regarding trauma pedagogy into the work of educators provides us with an understanding of children’s emotions, thoughts, capabilities and vulnerabilities, whilst enabling the children to express themselves in a safe environment, which supports their development.

Children affected by conflict and violence can be subject to trauma and psychological problems in two ways: they can experience it directly themselves, or indirectly through their parents and families passing their own trauma onto their children.

Children

Being affected by trauma means that we experience something – short- or long-term – which is so overwhelming for us, that we are not able to deal with it, to talk about it or to overcome it by ourselves. In fact, often our brain is not able to save the traumatic experience like it usually saves memories, but rather cases of extreme traumatization can result in *fragmented memory*, whereby the brain splinters one memory into several pieces which it stores separately, so the child doesn’t have one complete memory of the experience which it can deal with healthily. It is exactly this system of saving memories that doesn’t allow the child to talk about its experience or even to explain it to himself/herself. For example, a child may have a negative emotional reaction to the smell of coffee, the sight of a particular shirt, the memory of a certain house or garden, without understanding why: these may all be elements of the total memory of an abusive or traumatic experience, but if the child has fragmented memory, they won’t understand where their reactions are coming from.

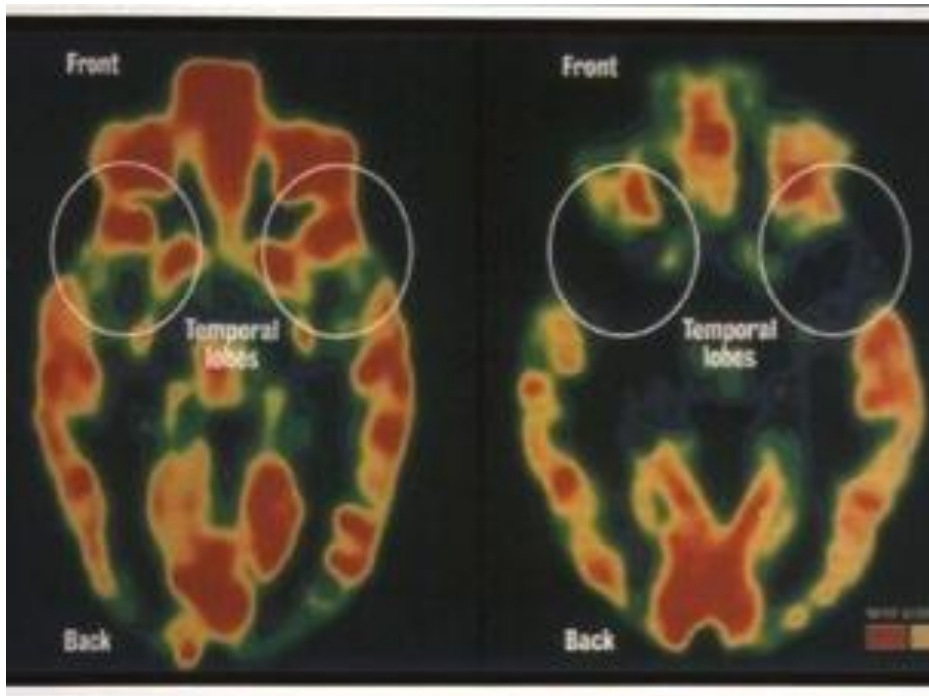


Figure 17: This picture displays how the brain is damaged, when children face traumatic abuse. The brain on the left has experienced healthy development; the brain on the right has suffered from abuse. As you can see, the brain is less active and some parts have even shut down. Thus, the brain is not able to connect all the different parts in order to save a complete memory, but it also loses its cognitive and emotional capacities.

Additionally, brains of children are very young and work fast. They save memories much better than adult brains and it is easier to recall them. This means, for example, if a so-called ‘trigger’ appears, like a certain noise or smell, the memory that is linked to that trigger comes back to the consciousness of the child. The child cannot differentiate between the present situation and the past memory, and thus the child experiences the trauma again.

If children are traumatized, they often show a sudden change of behavior. From one day to the next they are suddenly more aggressive, alert or choose to isolate themselves. Also, they can show a huge setback in their development – for example, they talk less, their social competency declines or they are suddenly not able to listen.

Observable situations can be as follows:

- All of a sudden, a child starts screaming and kicking seemingly without any reason. After she has been calmed down, she cannot explain what just happened and promises it will never happen again. But then it does happen again and again. Here the child is experiencing something which triggers a past memory or emotion and, as a reaction, the brain is being shut down and only the basic instincts fight-or-flight can be used, out of the child’s conscious control.
- Imagine a situation where you raise your arms in order to hug a child. But the child gets very anxious; he jumps back, tries to escape the situation or to defend himself. This often is a sign that someone is hitting the child regularly and severely, to the point of the child feeling significant fear and pain. Here, if you are angry with them and rebuke them, he will often react in a fearless manner, challenging you to hit him and claiming he is not scared of being hit.

- Imagine a child who always has to be in control, bossing around other children and even refusing to accept the authority of their teacher. Children need a leader or authority figure to secure their survival and to feel protected. Children who experience instability, insecurity and deprivation of needs often take over the role as leader in the absence of a strong parent or carer who has to take care for everyone else and themselves.

Use these examples to ask educators for examples from their own experience. Encourage people to not only explain them and discuss possible ways of response, but also to practice such responses with role-plays.

What can we do?

Working with traumatized children is often challenging and frustrating. Unfortunately, you will not be able to 'heal' the child's wounds and she/he won't recover with a simple hug. But the preschool environment itself offers a lot of possibilities that can help the child to regain some stability and recover:

- With its daily routines, certain rituals and the permanent presence of a care-giver, the child will begin to appreciate the stability and structure of the preschool. These simple things are some of the most important principles in assisting children with trauma.
- Even though it might take a while, the child will be able to experience being a child, instead of a boss (as a boss, they are on the defensive and constantly trying to protect themselves). This change can happen when the educator is able to convince the child that he/she is the boss, instead of the child, and that he/she is responsible for and capable of protecting the child's well-being and survival. Then the child can relax and play in a care-free way like a child should.
- Especially for children who are deprived of positive physical contact, physical care and attention is extremely important. In the beginning this might be very difficult; the child will try to escape and might even feel pain. This is because, for children whose skin has not been sensitized to regular touch, any contact will be felt intensely, which can in fact be painful at first. Be very careful: use things that have a very light touch like a feather or scarf to pat the child gently. Later you can use massages or games that stimulate the child's senses.
- Enable the child to develop a positive self-image. Often children feel guilty, dirty or less worthy because of their traumatic past experiences and unconsciously look for caregiver's affirmation of their negative self-image. Try to strengthen the positive self-image with compliments, encouragement and special care or attention (for example reading a book together or resting together).
- Especially when the child shows a great amount of aggression or is not able to control himself/herself, a simple touch can help the child to come back to the actual situation. Touch his arm, let him sit down on a chair (which includes physically taking him out of the situation), hug the child and wait until the child seems to be able to recognize his surroundings again. Then try to calm the child down with soothing words, body language and physical contact.
- Some children might have a lot of anger inside of them. Acknowledge the anger and make sure they can act it out in a safe manner for them and others – for example use a boxing bag as an 'angry bag' and place it somewhere in the garden.
- Be observant and attentive to children's needs! Keep in mind that they usually do not try to deliberately provoke or annoy you; rather, their behavior displays self-defense / protective mechanisms they have acquired to deal with difficult situations.
- When people are traumatized, their body, mind and emotions are not connected anymore the way they are supposed to be. Exercises like dancing, playing theatre, music or painting can help to establish and strengthen these connections again.

4. Exercise: The Moccasins

*“Do not judge another person unless you have walked half a moon [for two weeks] in his or her moccasins [shoes]”
(Native American proverb)*

Ask the participants for an example of trauma-induced situations or choose one point from the handout above. Then ask for a volunteer to come to the front of the group and choose one of the pictures displaying various emotions. Ask the volunteer to name three emotions he/she might feel if they were the child in the picture. Ask him/her to put them in the middle of the circle and to name the emotion – for example ‘aggression’, ‘insecurity’ or ‘power’. Then ask him/her to stand behind every statue and play the child’s role and act out this emotion. Ask him/her to explain the emotion – how it feels in the body, what other words you can use to describe it - and if needed, ask questions for clarification. Afterwards ask the volunteer to walk in front of the statues or pictures, have a look at them and reflect upon this exercise. Also invite participants to ask questions or share feelings.

This practice shall provide the participants with the opportunity to get a closer insight and understanding of what traumatized children feel when they face a trauma-induced episode. Often, educators do not realize that children face a variety of complex emotions they try to handle within this situation and their individual response and tend to think, children would not respect the educators, their rules or act in a reckless manner. With an understanding of the child’s individual story combined with knowledge regarding symptoms of trauma, it usually is easier for educators, to respond adequately in such situations, rather than making it worse by getting angry or frustrated.

Wiping it off

After a long or challenging day, after difficult exercises or situations, this is a little exercise which can help to de-stress and relax again:

Take a deep breath. When you breathe out with your mouth, ‘wipe off’ the difficulty and emotions of your body with your hands.

5. Energizer: An empty chair on my right

The participants sit on chairs in a circle with one extra, empty chair. The participant on the right side of the empty chair puts his or her hand on the chair and says: “I’ve got an empty chair on my right, I would like [name of another participant] to sit next to me”. The called participant has to get up as fast as he or she can and sit on the empty chair. But the participants sitting next to the one being called try to get a hold of him or her, so he or she can’t get away. If they manage to touch him or her, the called participant has to stay on their chair, if they don’t, the called participant can move to the empty chair, creating a new empty chair in their old place. Then it continues, with the participant on the right side of the empty chair saying: “I’ve got an empty chair...”

6. Facilitator's Input II: Parents

If parents face psychological problems, it has deep effects on the parent-child relationship, which significantly impacts the child's development. Children need care and attention from their care-givers; they need stability and a feeling of security. If parents are depressed, manic or anxious, they are not able to fulfill these needs of their children, but rather are emotionally and/or physically absent, or overwhelm their children by passing on their emotional 'baggage'. Children interpret such behavior as rejection; they feel less loved, less worthy and less competent. Children who feel this way also often display problematic behavior in school. Parents who show symptoms of anxiety disorder often try to control their children, overprotect them or use their children to calm themselves down. These children often internalize their parents' fears and can manifest significant separation anxiety when they are about to attend preschool.

Often parents are not aware of their own problems or don't dare to talk about them with anyone – and certainly do not explain themselves to their children. Children on the other hand feel guilty when they want to talk with someone about problems at home: they sense that this is a taboo topic and become even more isolated. In some instances, children have to take over domestic work and look after younger siblings – doing little work and spending a lot of time with siblings is not necessarily a sign of parents with psychological troubles, yet, a sudden increase of such work or an overburden of children can be signs, indeed. More observable signs of this in preschool are: tiredness, problems of concentration, controlling and bossy behavior, introverted behavior (not wanting to play with peers), sudden anxiety or aggressive behavior, and also a sudden rise in the amount of time children spend in the preschool, or conversely, rare and irregular attendance.

What can we do?

While preschools are a place to identify children who are experiencing problems at home, they are also in themselves great sources of comfort, stability and security. Your role as an early childhood educator is a key part of providing these essential things for children. However, working with children means also working with their parents and care-givers. As an educator you usually are attentive to children's behavior. If you observe a sudden change of behavior or even a difficult situation incident with the parents, do not ignore it! Often, parents in these situations are emotionally overwhelmed and feel helpless and ashamed. Show that you care about them and their children, that they can trust you and that you want to support them. This can start with a simple question of "How are you?" when they bring their children to class. This may help them open up to you and eventually invite you to speak with them directly about the problem. If you choose to speak with them about a problem you've observed with them or their child, it is important to use positive language that show you support them so that you can then work together to support the child. Tell them what their child likes to do at preschool or what their child is good at. Show them a painting or something the child has made and then begin with a phrase like: "I've noticed that your child's behavior has changed in some way recently. Sometimes he/she seems.... Have you noticed this too?". Depending on the relationship and trust the parents have with you, you can also ask them if they themselves are alright or if something distressing or problematic has happened recently. Then try to identify ways to support them – for example, offer that the children can stay longer in the preschool, if possible, or think together about what other supports might be available to the parents (often a grandmother or other relative).

7. Exercise

Ask for three volunteers. One person will act as the educator, one pretends to be the father and one pretends to be the mother. Now practice performing a 'direct talk' about the child and its change of behavior you've been experiencing.

Afterwards reflect with the group. Which question did the participants find helpful? How did the actors feel? What should be changed?

Helpful phrases and questions:

"I've noticed that your child's behavior has changed in some way recently. Sometimes he/she seems anxious / upset / distracted / angry. Have you noticed this too?"

"When working with your child, I could see that she reacts [describe the reaction] to a certain [describe the stimulus]. Have you experienced that, too?"

"I am concerned about [name of child]"

"I have observed ..."

"Have you had a similar experience?"

"Do you understand why the child reacts like that / displays this change of behavior?"

"Can you think of any reason to explain the child's behavior?"

"Have there been any changes in their behaviour at home?"

"Have there been any changes within your family lately?"

- ➔ If useful, try it again with other participants acting in the three roles so more people get some practice at doing this.

8. Facilitator's Input III: Coping Strategies

Working with traumatized children is not easy and therefore we have to implement in our own lives what we also try to teach the children: take care of yourself and others!

Keep in mind:

- It is easier to handle such children and experiences if you are able to acquire knowledge about it and open your mind to different perspectives and approaches to it. Read about it, talk to colleagues and try to attend more training courses.
- There are a variety of exercises that help to release stress, to keep your boundaries or create safe distance to protect your own wellbeing. Be aware that this is not something bad, weak or mean to do, but that it helps you doing a good job and stay healthy yourself! For example

you can use breathing techniques, develop little rituals when coming home to disconnect from work-time, or write a diary.

- As an educator you need to compensate for the imbalance you experience throughout your day. Think about ways you can create balance and relaxation in your own life. This can be a little walk, a talk with friends or a cup of coffee.
- Working in a team can be a great source for empowerment, joy and reflection. Try to work together in a way that is based on mutual trust and respect, where everyone can count on each other, ask for advice or just talk about what has happened. Additionally, try to act in a consistent manner, so children do not get confused.

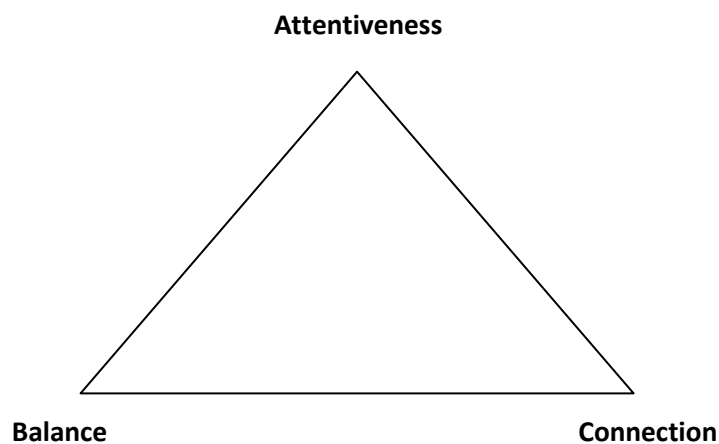


Figure 18: the ABC-triangle helps you remember important coping-strategies

A for Attentiveness: pay attention to and take care of yourself, your needs, resources and limitations. Think about yourself. What makes you angry? How can you release pain? How do you experience and sort out inner conflicts or conflicts with someone else?

B for Balance: Balance your work with your free time and quiet time. Try to do diverse activities.

C for Connection: Human beings need intimacy and contact with others, nature and life. Create such connections with your family, friends, colleagues, your surroundings and your own body.

9. Discussion, Reflection and Closure

Provide participants with time for discussion, reflection and closure at the end of the day. Ask them what they learned today, what they can use in their work and if there are any questions.

Be sensitive and aware, that these are difficult and challenging topics and try to help the participants to ease possible stress or pain they experience in discussing them. You can do this with a simple exercise before the closing ritual:

Black Box

Stand in a circle and close your eyes. Think about something that was very difficult for you today. It can be a memory, a feeling, something you have learned, whatever you like. Then imagine a black box and imagine putting the difficult thing inside the box. Carry the imaginary box to the center of the circle and leave it there.

10. Closing Ritual: The Mongolian Yurt

The participants stand in a circle and hold each other's hands. Each person takes their turn to count "1-2-1-2" around the circle until everyone has a number. 1s lean back in the circle, while 2s lean forwards. The challenge is to keep holding each other's hands, so that no one falls back or forth out of the circle, or the circle breaks.

Closing: Being a Visionary Educator

Content and learning goals:

- Reflection on one's own teaching behavior
- Reflection on one's own perspectives towards children and education
- Identifying good teaching skills and principles of education

Approximate time: 2.5 hours

Material: poster, markers

1. Welcoming and Overview of this lesson's content

2. Starting Ritual: The Wave

Sit together in a circle. Clap a regular rhythm on the floor, on the desk or on your legs. Get faster and louder until you explode, or until the 'wave' of sound breaks.

3. Exercise

Put a large picture or drawing of a strong, grounded tree in the middle of the circle.

Explain that, as human-beings, we are just like this beautiful tree. We start as a little seed, but throughout our lives, we can become a giant tree. We, too, have roots that ground us, connect us to our environment and keep us alive. We, too, have a trunk, which defines our main appearance and keeps every part of us together as a whole. And we, too, have branches that can grow in any direction, to any height and length we want. We can reach out to the sun and we can feel the wind and rain on our leaves. Sometimes a heavy storm comes and challenges our roots, sometimes it even takes some of our leaves away, but after every storm the sun comes back with its warm and soft rays.

As an educator, think about the following questions:

What are your roots? What grounds you?

What is your main body? What defines you?

How do your branches look like? What do you want to reach and touch with them?

Provide the participants with time to write down their thoughts on the different parts of the tree. Afterwards, discuss.

4. Letter to yourself

Write a letter to yourself (you can paint or draw something if you prefer). Include what you have learned during this training and what you would like to implement in your work. Reflect upon what is important to you as an educator and what you want to teach to future generations.

Keep the letter and whenever you are worried about your performance, your actions, when you feel anxious or when you have time to reflect, read the letter to remind yourself of everything that is important to you. You do not have to share your letter or picture with anyone else, unless you want to.

- ➔ Provide participants with the opportunity to write a letter, draw or paint a picture, write a song or any other ideas they come up with. The most important thing is to encourage the creation of a vision of how they want to be as an educator.

5. Development of a vision for your preschool

Based on the letter you just wrote, reflect on the things you have learned, experienced and thought about throughout the training; try to come up with a vision for your preschool (work with your colleagues from your preschool or on your own, in case you're the only one attending the training).

Think about the following questions:

What are the most important principles of your work in early childhood education?

What are your aims in regard to the education of the children you are working with?

What are your wider aims regarding contributing to society?

What is your personal and institutional commitment?

You can use phrases like:

"We believe that..."

"We aim to provide..."

"We aim to encourage..."

"We aim to support..."

"We are committed to providing..."

"To ensure provision of quality children's services, our staff will..."

This vision will guide you through your work. You can frame it and put it up on the wall of your preschool, put it on the information-board or copy it for parents who come to enrol their children.

To ensure the quality of the preschool, also think about what measures you can put in place to make it as safe and healthy an environment for children as possible. See the Safety Guidelines for Early Childhood Centers in the Appendix for a sample checklist.

6. Feedback Round

Take the poster from the beginning of the training and together review its questions.

Why do we want and need preschools in Timor-Leste?

Which kind of society do we want to raise and live in?

How do we want to raise and treat our children?

How do you answer them now?

What have you learned throughout the training?

Are there any questions left?

Afterwards distribute the post-evaluation formulas and ask the participants to answer them within 15-30 minutes.

7. Handover of Certificates

8. Closing Ritual: The Wave

Sit together in a circle. Clap a regular rhythm on the floor, on the desk or on your legs. Get faster and louder until you explode, or until the 'wave' of sound breaks.

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Appendices

Preschool Teacher Needs Assessment Evaluation

Organization:

Name of Preschool:

Number of groups in the preschool:

Number of teachers and assistants per group:

Children per group:

Age range of children in preschool:

Native languages of children:

Number of children with disabilities or special needs (and type of disabilities and special needs):

Regional, cultural, religious and family background of children:

Years of experience of training attendees:

Received education of training attendees:

Weekly working hours per staff member - total:

Working hours with children:

Working hours not with children (eg. for preparation, administration):

Daily preschool opening hours:

Holiday dates:

Planning and Programming:

I feel capable of planning activities to meet the physical, emotional, intellectual and social needs of children.

Yes No

I feel capable of planning weekly and monthly schedules and activities, based on the children's needs, interests and wants that I observe.

Yes No

I feel capable of implementing my planned activities.

Yes No

I maintain current, accurate and confidential files on the children's development.

Yes No

I observe and make note of children's development.

Yes No

Working Methods

I provide various experiences and activities to meet different needs, wants and interests of the children.

Yes No

Children are the central focus of my planning and programming efforts.

Yes No

I promote activities that build children's competencies.

Yes No

I provide spaces and times for participation of the children.

Yes No

I provide comfort to the children when they are hurt or upset.

Yes No

I implement positive, non-violent discipline when required.

Yes No

I use communication which is clearly understandable for the children.

Yes No

I ensure children know about ground rules and appropriate usage of preschool materials.

- Yes No

Health, Hygiene and Safety

I provide the children with nutritious snacks and lunches.

- Yes No

I am familiar with emergency procedures.

- Yes No

I ensure the materials and facility are clean and well maintained.

- Yes No

I ensure the materials and facility are safe at all times.

- Yes No

I ensure children are supervised at all times.

- Yes No

Working with parents and communities

I keep parents informed of program expectations and activities.

- Yes No

I discuss children's development with parents.

- Yes No

I discuss challenges and possible conflicts with parents.

- Yes No

I discuss strategies to deal with any upcoming challenges with parents.

- Yes No

I discuss potential learning or development difficulties with parents.

- Yes No

The preschool participates in community life, activities and events.

- Yes No

I promote early childhood education in the community.

- Yes No

Open Questions

In which areas would you like to develop your skills?

Which aspects of your work in preschools are you concerned about?

Which aspects would you like to change?

Pre-Training Evaluation

Code: _____

Gender: Male Female

Age: _____

Role: Preschool Teacher Preschool Assistant Preschool Volunteer

The following questions will help Ba Futuru understand about your experience and perspectives on early childhood education. Please respond to each question by choosing “yes” or “no” and explain, if possible. If you don’t understand a question, please ask the facilitator to explain. If you don’t know about a particular topic yet, don’t worry, because you’ll learn about it later in the training.

1. Have you heard about Key Learning Areas for preschool-aged children yet?

Yes No

If yes, please name three Key Learning Areas:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

2. One example for a Key Learning Area would be ‘Language’. Please describe a brief activity that could be used to promote this Key Learning Area.

3. Have you used formulas and methods to plan and reflect on your daily activities in the preschool?

Yes No

If yes, please describe briefly:

4. Can you provide three reasons for using methods of planning and reflecting?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

5. How do you usually teach the children? Please provide three brief examples:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

6. Have you heard about or used ‘child-centered approaches’ in your preschool?

Yes No

If yes, please give three reasons for using 'child-centered approaches':

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

7. Please give three examples of how children can participate in preschool:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

8. Which competencies can children acquire by participating in the daily life of preschool? Please give three examples:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

9. Please give three examples of how you can provide information about the preschool to the parents and community?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

10. Is your preschool part of the community life?

- Yes No

If yes, please describe briefly the relationship between your preschool and the community.

11. Do you know of any children in your preschool affected by violence and trauma?

- Yes No

If yes, how did you find out?

12. How can you help children affected by conflict, violence and trauma in your preschool?

13. Can you briefly explain what 'malnutrition' means?

14. How can you support the prevention of diseases and infections in your preschool? Please give three examples!

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Post-Training Evaluation

Code: _____

Gender: Male Female

Age: _____

Role: Preschool Teacher Preschool Assistant Preschool Volunteer

Key Lessons:

1. Please give three examples of Key Learning Areas for preschool-aged children?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. One example for a Key Learning Area would be 'Language'. Please describe a brief activity how to promote this Key Learning Area.

3. Can you provide three reasons for using methods of planning and reflecting?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
4. Please give three reasons for using child-centered approaches in your preschool?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
5. Please give three examples of how children can participate in preschool:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
6. Which competencies can children acquire with participating in the daily life of preschool? Please give three examples:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

7. Please give three examples of how you can provide information about the preschool to the parents:
- a.
 - b.
 - c.

8. Please give three examples of ways you could strengthen the relationship between your preschool and the community:
- a.
 - b.
 - c.

9. How can you help children affected by conflict, violence and trauma in your preschool?

10. Can you briefly explain what “malnutrition” means?

11. What are three physical signs of malnutrition in children?

- a.
- b.
- c.

12. How can you support the prevention of diseases and infections in your preschool? Please give three examples!

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
-

Please share your comments and opinions about this training, including whether you found it useful for your work, what you have learnt, and what you plan to use in your work as an early childhood educator:

Worksheets for Planning and Reflection

Planning an activity:

Educator:

Place of Work:

Date:

Planning

Activity:

Learning Goals: -

-

-

Organisation: Group form:

Age:

Time frame:

Space:

Material:

Realization:

a. Introductory Phase:

Preparation Activities:

Motivation:

Transition:

b. Implementation Phase:

Closing Activity:

Educator:

Place of Work:

Date:

Activity

Reflection

Observation of children

How did the children react to the activity?

How was their participation encouraged?

Which kind of competencies could the children strengthen?

How did the children react to the challenges?

Analysis of Methods

Preparation of Material

Usage of Material

Aspects of Planning/Future Ideas

Leadership and educational behavior

How did you feel about the activity?

How did you react to the challenges as they came up?

What would you like to change?

What would you like to strengthen?

Additional Comments

Monthly Planning:

Educator:

Place of Work:

Monthly Planning and Reflection

Time frame:

Key Learning Area	Activities	Reasons for Focus Point	Reflection
Creation and development of group-dynamics and – relations			
Senses			
Health, Safety and Development			
Parents and Community Relations			
Global Learning			
Math, Science and Technology			
Natural Experiences, Ecology and Sustainability			
Language			
Fine- and Gross motor skills			
Creativity and Fantasy			

Further Possibilities for Reflection on monthly activities:

Reflection

Observation of children

How did the children react to the project?

How was their participation encouraged?

Which kind of competencies could the children strengthen?

How did the children react to the challenges?

Analysis of Methods

Preparation of Material

Usage of Material

Aspects of Planning/Future Ideas

How was the project developed?

In which steps were the children involved?

Leadership and educational behavior

How did you feel about the activity?

How did you react to the challenges?

What would you like to change?

What would you like to strengthen?

Additional Comments

Project-based Planning:

Educator:

Place of work:

Project-Planning

Name of Project:

Project Description:

Key Learning Goals: -

-

-

Key Competencies: -

-

-

Organisation: Group form:

Age:

Time frame:

Space:

Material:

External support:

Realization:

a. Introductory Phase:

Preparation Activities:

Motivation:

b. Processing Phase:

Closure

Educator:

Place of work:

Date:

Activity

Reflection

Observation of children

How did the children react to the project?

How was their participation encouraged?

Which kind of competencies could the children strengthen?

How did the children react to the challenges?

Analysis of Methods

Preparation of Material

Usage of Material

Aspects of Planning/Future Ideas

How was the project developed?

In which steps were the children involved?

Leadership and educational behavior

How did you feel about the activity?

How did you react to the challenges?

What would you like to change?

What would you like to strengthen?

Additional Comments

Worksheets for Observation

Observation in educational relevant situations:

Educator

Topic

Place of work:

Date/Time Frame

Minutes	Behavior of child
From...to...	
From...to...	
From...to....	

Free Observation:

Educator:

Topic

Place of Work:

Date/Time Frame

Description of observed situation	Personal comments	Related theory
Caution: stay objective!	Subjectively thought and felt	Possible frames of actions

Safety Guidelines for Early Childhood Centres

- **Hire enough qualified staff:** Ideally, make sure you have enough employees to supervise all of the children in your preschool. As far as possible, hire qualified early childhood educators and provide opportunities for your staff to attend different kinds of trainings – including First Aid.
- **Check the play area regularly:** Materials and equipment should be clean and sanitized at the end of every day. Make sure there are no broken or sharp pieces, which can be dangerous. Clean up spills as soon as they happen and keep toys that aren't being played with in storage. Sharp objects, like scissors and drawing pins should be stored in a container with a lid. Discuss the potential dangers of such equipment with children and supervise their use at least at the beginning of the year and until you are sure the children know how to use it. Place resources that children use regularly, such as books or games, at the children's eye level to prevent any potential accidents from reaching up or items falling from above.
- **Organize the preschool's rooms:** Provide children with a safe environment that also stimulates children mentally and promotes learning. Make children feel safe and welcome in the preschool, for example include bright and attractive areas with soft play areas, samples of students' work to encourage pride and confidence. Ensure, that there are clear pathways for walking around desks and the rest of the area is free of clutter and hazards. Even though you create areas where children can be by themselves, make sure these areas are easily accessible for staff in cases of emergency. Also think about certain rules and competencies children might have to acquire before being allowed to access such areas on their own.
- **Adhere to food safety guidelines:** Make sure the children get healthy and nutritious food while at preschool, without any toxic or damaging ingredients.
- **Keep chemicals locked away from children:** all cleaners, insecticides, first aid solutions, medications and other toxic substances should be kept in a high and locked cabinet where the children cannot reach them.
- **Safeguard the outdoor play area:** Make sure the height of swings, slides and other equipment is at safe distance from the ground and check the equipment regularly to make sure it is working properly and in good condition. Keep the playground clean – no bottles, cigarettes or other garbage, which could potentially harm the children and no plants with toxic fruits or leaves! Encircle the playground with a tall safety fence, where possible.
- **Have emergency plans in place:** Conduct fire and natural disaster drills on a regular basis to ensure that everyone at the preschool is familiar with the proper procedures for handling emergency situations. Make sure there is a First Aid Kit in every room of the preschool, which is only accessible for grown-ups, and make sure the staff know how to use it.
- **Create rules:** establish a set of rules in collaboration with the children and make sure they understand and follow them. For example, create rules to prevent running inside and about where to throw away trash. Create rules fostering respect and good behavior in the preschool, including no hitting or lying. Be consistent about such rules and make sure all staff and children are aware of them and there are consistent consequences when the rules are being broken. This will help children to strengthen their understanding, feel safer and more trusting.



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