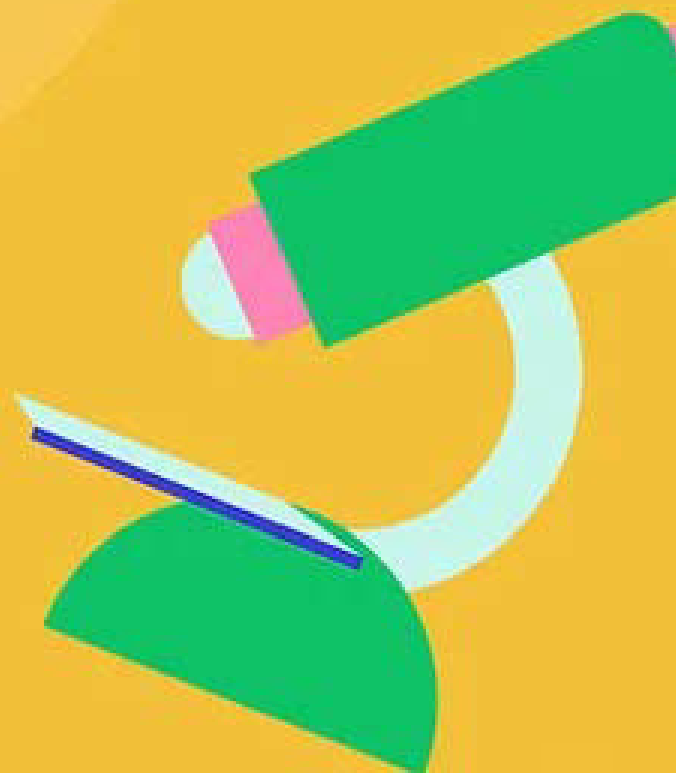


# PATHWAYS FOR EDUCATORS AND PARENTS

Compendium of Learning Activities



# PATHWAYS FOR EDUCATORS AND PARENTS:

## Compendium of learning activities

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### Version 2

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## I. Introduction

PATHWAYS FOR EDUCATORS AND PARENTS: Compendium of learning activities, version 2 is one of the results of the two-year Erasmus+ PATHWAYS project that brings together six diverse partners from Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Serbia and Portugal with the aim of contributing children's holistic development. The vision of the PATHWAYS project is that of acknowledging the uniqueness of each child with his/her own needs and diversity, who acts as an active member of the community. To achieve this, it is crucial that ECEC service provision is of high quality and works together with the main stakeholders involved in children education and development.

PATHWAYS is in line with the *Recommendation on High-Quality Early Childhood and Care Systems* (2019), which envisions children at the centre of ECEC practices and are viewed as different from each other, bringing unique characteristics and strengths that should be valued and taken into consideration by ECEC settings. Moreover, the pandemic called for a different understanding and approach to developing high-quality ECEC services, and a greater awareness of the key principles underpinned by the European policy framework in education and specifically on the high quality of ECEC services. The key message is that "ECEC services can complement the family and offer support as well as additional opportunities to parents and children" (Key Principles, 2014).

The multi-stakeholders approach is also one of the core values that brought the project partners together. In fact, the partnership includes two complementary ECEC services, one dedicated to children from 0 to 3 years of age (Cooperativa SEM – IT) and the second from 3 to 6 years (Grădinița cu PP "Scufița Roșie" – RO); a VET and AL training provider (FORMA.Azione – IT), a trade union (Lithuanian Education and Science Trade Union – LT), an NGO (Pomoc Deci – RS) and a university (Univeristy of Coimbra – PT). The partnership is committed focus on improving ECEC professional's competences in their relation and cooperation with parents, together with improving the quality provision by creating more inclusive, digital and green environments.

The first step of the project was bringing together the ECEC professionals from the partner countries to attend a transnational training (held in Perugia in June 2023) to have a greater understanding of the topics and to share their experience and challenges with regard to the involvement of parents. Following this fruitful experience and inspired by the potential the PATHWAYS project can bring in their local context and beyond, ECEC professionals organised in national teams agreed on elaborating proposals of activities involving parents on 4 main topics: inclusiveness, digital environments, green environment and cooperation between ECEC professionals and parents. The number of activities has increased compared to the minimum requested, that was one activity per topic, as ECEC professionals were eager to explore and understand the impact they had on various target groups.

Therefore, the first version of the Compendium of learning activities is the result of a co-designing effort involving ECEC professionals from six service providers from four partner countries: Italy, Romania, Lithuania and Serbia. The aim was to propose activities which are easy to be put into practice, flexible to suit well various European contexts and avoid working on those that cannot be implemented. In this way, partners would guarantee their transnational and innovative features.

The content was elaborated according to a uniform scheme, so each activity included objectives, a brief description of the activity, materials, timing of implementation, tags (if the activity could be connected to other sections), and if the activity had foreseen the participation of children or parents only. The draft content was useful to understand if ECEC professionals were proposing similar activities and in this case to group them together. The content was afterwards adjusted by the other project partners, to ensure that the description had a neutral form and greater uniformity. For the first version, the ECEC professionals proposed a total of 7 activities included in the chapter dedicated to Inclusiveness, 9 for Digital Environments, 13 for Green Environments and 11 for Cooperation with Parents. The activities proposed in the Compendium were to be experimented by ECEC settings during the scholastic year 2023-2024.

The second version of the Compendium includes lessons learned after the implementation of the activities. The first hand information was gathered by the University of Coimbra and it is synthetised at the end of each described activity. It is worth mentioning that not all activities included in the first version were piloted, nevertheless, partners agreed to preserve the activities as they might be of inspiration for both ECEC professionals and parents who want to get involved in new activities. All the data collected during and after the piloting activity was analysed and included in the Report A 4.3 - *Assessment of Pathways Compendium of Learning Activities to Promote Cooperation with Parents and Inclusive, Green and Digital Environments in ECEC Services*.



## II. INCLUSIVENESS

### 1. Olympics of Tolerance

**Objectives:**

- To ensure inclusive participation in sports activities, enabling children of all abilities to compete and collaborate equally.
- To enhance community engagement and tolerance through organised sports, promoting a supportive and inclusive environment.

**Description of Activity:**

The "Olympics of Tolerance" is an event designed to foster community spirit and promote diversity within the local community. Organised jointly by the kindergarten and the Day Center for Children and Parents, this event invites families to participate in various playful and inclusive sporting challenges. Activities planned include sack races, relay races, obstacle courses, and a unique competition where participants drink juice without using their hands.

Parents and children, together with children and young people with additional needs who attend the Day Centre, are encouraged to form mini teams. This setup promotes teamwork and allows participants of all ages and abilities to engage actively. The event serves as a platform for families to socialise, exchange experiences, and support one another in a festive atmosphere. The highlight of the day includes a "dance of tolerance," symbolising unity and acceptance among all participants. The initiative allows families to come together for fun and games to increase tolerance and understanding within the community.

**Materials:** props for training grounds and means for carrying out activities

**Time:** preparation 2 months, activity 2 days

**Tags:** #cooperation with families

**Participants:** parents, children

### 2. Kindergarten Transition Model

**Objectives:**

- To facilitate active involvement of families in the kindergarten transition process, enhancing partnership and mutual trust.
- To ensure continuity in learning by recognising and integrating children's prior experiences as they move from nursery to kindergarten.

**Description of Activity:**

"Dečja radost" preschool has implemented a transition model to support children moving from nursery to kindergarten, emphasising strong relationships between children, families, and educators.



This model includes collaboration among nursery educators, preschool teachers, professional support teams, and families, focusing on children with developmental needs.

The transition process involves detailed assessments of each child's needs, parent-teacher meetings, and nursery visits to familiarise younger children with the kindergarten environment. Parents are also invited to participate in group activities during the adaptation period, helping to create a supportive and nurturing environment. This model aligns with the inclusive ethos of Serbia's preschool education framework, supporting the well-being of all children through tailored activities and community engagement.

**Materials:** hammers, stickers, markers, laptop

**Time:** 6 months

**Participants:** parents, children

**Lessons learned:** The children of the daycare group got to know the new space where they will stay next year, as well as the kindergarten. Parents of the nursery school children met the future kindergarten teachers and observed their work and organisation of activities. The kindergarten teachers established cooperation with the children of the daycare group as well as their parents, which is important for the continuation of cooperation for the following 4 years. The children had the opportunity for horizontal learning, gaining new experiences and creating a positive atmosphere. The activity registered a positive interaction among all participants and the work group, which supported children's transition between education levels. Among the challenges, teachers indicated that additional time needs to be allocated and to rethink the cooperation model between children of different education levels in an effort to keep them motivated during the activities.

### **3. Inclusion - participation of musically gifted children**

**Objective:**

- To foster the well-being of every child by nurturing their joy of discovery, creation, and expression through music in a stimulating environment.

**Description of Activity:**

Recognising and nurturing musically gifted children begins in kindergarten, where it is crucial to balance their giftedness with their personal development. Children are integrated into their peer community, building trust and relationships within a supportive network of peers, teachers, and parents. This holistic approach aims to develop well-rounded individuals who find their voice through music.

To facilitate this, the kindergarten provides a rich learning environment structured to inspire and spark creativity. The activities are designed to engage children in exploration, learning, and collaboration. Children are encouraged to engage in research, express themselves, and participate creatively in music, fulfilling their need for creative output. Towards the end of the activity, children, alongside their parents will take part in various music workshops focused on rhythm creation, dance,





movement, and drama activities with the aim to enhance their skills and extend these musical activities to their home environment, fostering continuous learning and engagement.

**Materials:** Orff's instruments (rhythmic and melodic), materials for sound research (objects made of different materials), props (scarves, sticks, tapes...), hammers, photographs

**Time:** 7 months

**Participants:** parents, children

**Lessons learned:** The games proposed during the activity were created to ensure that gifted children can express their potential in a safe environment, in a group of their peers, to strengthen their self-confidence, teamwork, and social skills in addition to musical skills. Children were the ones choosing the games to illustrate and play together with parents. The positive aspect highlighted by teachers was the commitment shown by both children and parents. The children took the activity very seriously, they were dedicated to following the rules of the games but also to improvise. Parents were initially surprised by the different approach to the creative workshops, but they happily interacted with their children.

#### 4. The Special Guest

**Objectives:**

- To educate parents about disabilities and neurodivergencies encountered in preschool-aged children, such as ADHD, Down syndrome, and autism.
- To introduce effective methods for engaging and supporting children with additional needs.
- To promote the integration of children with special educational needs (SEN) into mainstream educational settings.

**Description of Activity:**

The activity involves organising informational meetings between parents and experts at the ECEC setting. These sessions aim to educate parents about the various developmental disabilities and conditions that can appear at this age, their symptoms, and effective strategies for working with affected children. The focus will be on those disabilities currently present within the kindergarten to ensure the discussions are directly relevant and helpful. By doing so, the meetings seek to enhance parental understanding and empathy towards these children, thereby fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment within the school community.

**Materials:** laptop, video projector, materials informative about certain deficiencies/disorders.

**Time:** 1 meeting (1.5h/2h)

**Tags:** #cooperation with parents

**Participants:** parents only

**Lessons learned:** The activity has involved parents and other members of NGOs, as well as experts working with people with additional needs. Children showed interest through a big number of questions addressed to the expert. Among the difficulties encountered was matching the time of the



activity with parents' schedule, agreeing that in the future, similar activities should be organised in the morning. In terms of changes, teachers revealed an easier integration of children with additional needs in the group, while for parents they observed that they were more prone to accepting children's differences.

## **5. We Celebrate the International Day of Tolerance**

### **Objectives:**

- To familiarise children with the concept of tolerance and cultural diversity, developing their understanding of what it means to be tolerant.
- To foster respect for others through inclusive and collaborative educational activities involving parents and educators.

### **Description of Activity:**

The activity is scheduled for November 16, 2023, in celebration of the International Day of Tolerance. This day will feature a series of educator-selected activities aimed at promoting tolerance and respect among preschoolers. Parents will collaborate with educators to engage the children in various activities throughout the day. These could include reading culturally enlightening stories, creating drawings, collages, or paintings, participating in role-playing games, and contributing to collective artworks. The day's events may also include practical activities, exhibitions, and skits, all themed around tolerance. This celebration is intended to involve all teachers, preschoolers, and their parents, making it a comprehensive community event at the kindergarten.

**Materials:** Posters, various materials according to chosen activity

**Time:** 1 day (November 16, 2023)

**Tags:** #cooperation with parents

**Participants:** parents, children

**Lessons learned:** A mother read a story to children about tolerance. She talked with children about this topic and encouraged the children to represent the story they heard by drawing. The children and the parent were glad to attend the activity which allowed them to have a better understanding about the concept of tolerance and to show more empathy among them.

## **6. We are celebrating the International Autism Awareness Day**

### **Objectives:**

- To enhance understanding of autism, including its characteristics and the special needs of individuals with autism.
- To facilitate the discovery and development of potential in children with autism and other developmental disorders through supportive and inclusive educational practices.

### **Description of Activity:**

The activity is scheduled for April 2, 2024, in observance of International Autism Awareness Day. On this day, educators at the kindergarten will organise various events and activities involving children



and their parents to educate and raise awareness about autism. These activities are designed to be educational and can include making collages and posters, engaging in practical activities, creating paintings, performing dramatisations, playing themed games, and reading stories that reflect the day's theme. The aim is to involve parents actively and to ensure that the activities highlight the importance of understanding and supporting individuals with autism. Additionally, special education and medical specialists may be invited to participate, offering their expertise and further enriching the day's educational impact. This initiative seeks to foster a more inclusive environment and educate the community about engaging respectfully and effectively with those affected by autism and other developmental challenges.

**Materials:** Posters, various materials according to chosen activity

**Time:** 1 day (April 2, 2024)

**Tags:** #cooperation with parents

**Participants:** parents, children

**Lessons learned:** During the implementation of the activity, the teachers encountered some difficulties and challenges, such as to ensure effective and adapted communication for all children to understand the topic. Nevertheless, the activity was held in an atmosphere full of joy and excitement. Similar activities are considered to produce positive changes by raising awareness of the importance to support children with autism or different additional needs to reach their full potential.

## 7. Beyond us, not behind the wall

### **Objectives:**

- To educate and promote awareness about autism spectrum disorders, helping children and adults understand the nature of autism and how to be supportive.
- To foster empathy, creativity, and inclusion among children by engaging them in activities that symbolise unity and acceptance.

### **Description of Activity:**

In recognition of World Autism Awareness Day, children, teachers, and assistants at the kindergarten participated in a meaningful activity by creating badges adorned with puzzle pieces. This design choice reflects the idea that while we are all different pieces of a puzzle, together we form a complete and harmonious picture, emphasizing friendliness, respect, and coexistence. During the activity, children also distributed badges and leaflets that contained insights from parents raising children with autism spectrum disorders. These were given to their own parents, kindergarten staff, specialists, and parents from other groups, spreading a message of proximity and inclusion. The activity highlighted that children with autism are a part of our community, not apart from it, reinforcing a safe, understanding, and inclusive environment where all children feel valued and supported.

**Materials:** paper, ink

**Time:** 1 month



**Tags:** #cooperation with parents

**Participants:** parents, children

**Lessons learned:** Children gained more knowledge and showed greater empathy.



### III. DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS

#### 1. Growing Up in the Digital World

**Objective:**

- To enhance parental skills and knowledge in using digital devices for educational purposes, ensuring mindful and effective use.

**Description of Activity:**

Acknowledging the significant role digital devices play in contemporary childhood, the workshop aims to guide parents on the effective educational use of these technologies. The workshop is organised in the study room, while the session includes discussions and demonstrations using a projector to introduce parents to various platforms, programmes, and applications that host educational games. These games are designed to develop strategic thinking, logical reasoning, and creativity. By providing parents with the knowledge and tools to select beneficial digital content, the workshop aims to promote a balanced approach to technology, maximising its developmental benefits while minimizing potential drawbacks.

**Materials:** : laptop, projector, study room

**Time:** 1 hour workshop

**Participants:** parents only

#### 2. The Word of an Expert

**Objective:**

- To educate parents on selecting appropriate digital content for their children and on measures to protect them against online risks.

**Description of Activity:**

The workshop is designed to raise parents' awareness about the crucial role of choosing age-appropriate digital content and its impact on their children. During the workshop, experts will use a presentation to explain the PEGI rating system, which serves as a guide to ensuring a safe internet environment for families. Additionally, parents will be informed about how to report inappropriate content, either through a dedicated website or by calling the hotline number: 19833. The session will also cover steps parents can take to protect their children from Internet predators and prevent exposure to electronic violence. This comprehensive workshop aims to empower parents with the knowledge and tools necessary to safeguard their children in the digital world, promoting a safer and more informed Internet usage.

**Materials:** study room, projector, laptop, canvas

**Time:** 1-2 hours workshops for a period of 2 months

**Participants:** parents only



### 3. Padlet in Kindergarten

**Objective:**

- To enhance family engagement and trust by incorporating the "Padlet" platform into daily activities, allowing for real-time collaboration, communication, and monitoring of children's progress.

**Description of Activity:**

In today's digital age, effective use of digital technologies is crucial for educators. To improve communication and collaboration with families, the kindergarten plans to introduce the "Padlet" platform into daily operations. This tool will serve multiple purposes: it allows children and parents to actively participate in daily activities, propose ideas, and exchange knowledge. Through Padlet, families can monitor children's achievements, engage creatively, and communicate effortlessly with each other. They can also provide solutions to issues, stay updated on current events, and collect useful information for educational purposes. This platform is especially beneficial for children who are absent and for their parents, as it enables them to stay connected and participate in the kindergarten's community remotely. Overall, Padlet will help all parents stay informed about their children's learning progress and actively contribute to the educational experience.

**Materials:** laptops, phones, tablets

**Time:** 7 months

**Participants:** parents only

**Lessons learned:**

As digital diaries with photos and comments, the platform provides the opportunity for children, parents and experts to join and participate in activities with their suggestions and ideas at any moment. The activity contributed to greater involvement and interest in everyday life and activities in the kindergarten. Also, everyone gained in understanding and accepting the importance of adequate and purposeful use of digital technologies in the life and learning of children. The children were introduced to new technology, which they will be able to use later in life, but also as an excellent method for learning, connecting and improving digital skills. The activity proved to be positive as it allowed greater connection and exchange of information among participants, in addition to an improved cooperation with parents and children. The challenging aspect was at first for teacher as they needed to dedicate time to master the platform. From one group that piloted the activity, the challenge was to actively involve more parents so teachers instructed children to remind and ask parents to take part in it.

### 4. Jigsaw Planet

**Objectives:**

- To engage children and parents in the collaborative creation of interactive puzzles using the "Jigsawplanet" platform.



- To encourage the practice and sharing of these puzzles within their personal networks to enhance digital literacy and creativity.

**Description of Activity:**

The activity begins with an initial meeting where parents are introduced to the "Jigsawplanet" platform. During this session, the steps for creating digital puzzles are explained. Parents are then encouraged to create their own account on the platform and design a puzzle that reflects a personal or family interest. These puzzles are subsequently shared with a dedicated WhatsApp group for others to solve, fostering a community of problem-solving and creativity.

A second meeting involves both parents and children, where parents guide their children through the puzzle creation process, explaining the steps and assisting as needed. Once created, these puzzles are distributed among the class group through the same WhatsApp group, allowing all participants—children and parents alike—to solve each other's puzzles. This activity not only enhances digital skills but also strengthens community bonds and encourages sharing and collaboration across families.

**Materials:** Laptop, proiettore, telefoni, tablet

**Time:** 2 meetings (2 h/meeting)

**Participants:** parents, children

**Lessons learned:** The activity involved parents and children from different groups which strengthen even more the collaboration between parents and children. Both sides showed enthusiasm. In terms of challenges, considering the large number of parents attending the activity, not all of them were able to access the platform, or the platform was blocked. As a solution, we waited for the majority to complete, after which those who failed the first time also tried.

Suggestion: Do the activity in small groups. These puzzles can be created on different themes, in various moments and share with cousins, friends, grandparents, etc.

## 5. Explore.org

**Objectives:**

- To enable children to watch their favorite animals in real-time using live-streaming technology.
- To allow children to observe and learn about the natural habitats of these animals.

**Description of Activity:**

As an engaging part of the thematic project "Big and Small Animals," parents and children are invited to participate in a dramatisation of the story "Brown Bear" by Vladimir Colin. Following this interactive storytelling session, educators unveil a special surprise: an introduction to the "explore.org" platform. This online resource features live camera feeds capturing various animals in their natural environments.

After the platform demonstration, parents and children are invited to watch a polar bear live in its natural habitat, bringing the earlier story to life and providing a real-world connection to the animals





discussed. Educators encourage parents to continue using the platform at home, allowing children to explore and observe other animals featured on the site. This activity not only enriches children's understanding of animal behavior and environments but also promotes the use of digital tools for educational purposes.

**Materials:** costumes, projector, laptop

**Time:** 2 hours

**Participants:** parents, children

**Lessons learned:** Parents learned about platforms used by the kindergarten and it was important to know they can access it even from home.

Within the thematic project "Life on Earth", the sub-theme: "Journey to the Poles", a mother was invited to participate in an activity with preschoolers. The activity consists in the dramatisation of the story "The Brown Bear, by Vladimir Colin", and after the completion for this, we have prepared a surprise for the children and the parent. After the presentation of the platform, the parent together with the children watch the polar bear in its living environment, through the live cameras provided by the platform. Watching the polar bear live on the explore.org app is an amazing experience! You can follow the polar bear in its natural habitat, see how it moves, how it interacts with its environment and learn more about its behavior. It's a wonderful way to connect with nature and gain a better understanding of wildlife. It's like being there, in the middle of nature, without having to travel there.

During the thematic project, parents are asked to facilitate the use of the platform for their children at home to view other proposed animals.

## 6. Wordwall

### **Objectives:**

- To collaboratively create a digital version of the "Mime" game using the "WORDWALL" platform.
- To engage parents and children in practicing the game together, enhancing family bonding and extending play to friends and relatives.

### **Description of Activity:**

The activity starts with an initial meeting where parents are introduced to the "WORDWALL" platform, a versatile online tool for creating interactive and printable games. Parents learn how to navigate the platform and the specific steps required to create games.

In a follow-up session, parents and children come together to design a variety of games on the "WORDWALL" platform. During this meeting, parents guide their children through the process of game creation, ensuring they understand each step and encouraging their creativity. Once the games are completed, they are uploaded to a class group for everyone to access and play.

The games are then played in parent-child teams, fostering a fun and interactive environment.

Parents are also encouraged to continue these activities at home, involving other family members to





enrich their family time with engaging and educational games created by their children. This activity helps strengthening family bonds and enhancing the children's skills in using digital tools for learning and play.

**Materials:** projector, laptop, phones, tablets

**Time:** 2 hours

**Participants:** parents, children

**Lessons learned:** The activity involved one mother and children were excited about their interaction, in addition to providing good answers using nice phrases, thus contributing to laying good foundations for acquiring literacy skills.

## 7. Social Media at Distance

### **Objectives:**

- To strengthen the parent-child relationship by enhancing interaction and communication through shared educational activities.
- To introduce children to the digital world in an educational manner, providing a platform for learning and expression.

### **Description of Activity:**

The activity involves creating a dedicated social media page for the parents of kindergarten children. This page serves as a dynamic hub where educators can post updates, photos, and videos of the daily activities happening within the kindergarten. Simultaneously, it allows parents to actively participate by uploading their own content, such as videos, photos, and documents of related educational activities conducted at home. This interactive exchange not only keeps parents informed about their child's day-to-day learning but also encourages them to extend these activities at home, fostering a continuous educational environment. Additionally, this platform helps children become familiar with digital tools under the guidance of their parents, promoting safe and responsible use of technology.

**Materials:** computer, tablet, camera

**Time:** 7 months

**Partecipanti:** parents, children

## 8. Social to Shorten Distances

### **Objective:**

- To enhance family involvement in nursery activities through the use of a digital platform, thereby strengthening the connection between families and the nursery environment.

**Description of Activity:**

Using the digital platform Canva, educators at the nursery upload videos of daily routines and activities, providing families with a visual insight into what their children experience during their time at the nursery. This approach allows parents to see firsthand the educational and developmental activities their children participate in. In turn, parents are encouraged to upload videos and photos of their children's activities at home. This reciprocal exchange of information via Canva helps bridge the physical distance between the nursery and families, fostering a stronger bond and enhancing interaction among families. This digital collaboration not only keeps parents informed but also actively engages them in the nursery community, promoting a seamless integration of nursery and home environments.

**Materials:** PC, tablet, digital platform and activity material

**Time:** 6 months

**Participants:** parents, children

**Lessons learned:** Families reported that they felt even more involved in their child's life at nursery, whereas the bond between families improved as well as the bond between families and the ECEC setting. A significant challenge was to involve families and make them understand the importance of educational activities and experiences. It was not easy for families to deal with digital environments, perhaps before tackling the activity it would be useful to do parent training on digital environments.

## 9. Digital Education with Parents

**Objectives:**

- To foster enhanced communication and reflection within families, using the "Reflektus" app to facilitate regular discussions about personal experiences, feelings, and lessons learned.
- To support children's emotional and social development by encouraging self-awareness and reflection on their actions and their impact on others.

**Description of Activity:**

The "Reflektus" app provides families with weekly reflective questions or assignments, prompting discussions that explore personal experiences, emotions, and interactions from the past week. These reflections help both children and parents to critically assess and understand their behaviors, fostering a deeper connection and awareness within the family. This regular practice of sharing and reflecting not only strengthens family bonds but also enhances the emotional and social development of children by teaching them valuable lessons about self-awareness, empathy, and communication. Additionally, by engaging in this reflective process, families can identify areas for improvement and celebrate successes, which contributes to a nurturing home environment. Over time, these activities promote resilience, helping children handle challenges more effectively and interact more positively with others. The ultimate goal is to cultivate a family culture where open communication and mutual understanding are the norms, contributing to healthier relationships and personal growth for all members.



**Materials:** PC

**Time:** 6 months

**Participants:** parents, children

**Lessons learned:** The piloting of activity included:

1. Individualisation: the teacher aimed to take into account the needs and abilities of each child, as it can be more difficult to provide personal attention in a virtual environment. She use individualized assignments and try to provide opportunities for all children to join in and participate, regardless of their skill level or needs.
2. Involvement: the teacher aimed to create interesting and engaging activities so that every child feels like they are sharing and participating successfully. These can be various interactive activities, quizzes or discussions in which all children can actively participate.
3. Pluralism: the teacher encouraged diversity and diversity of experience by presenting a variety of topics and perspectives, thereby fostering an understanding of diverse cultural and social contexts. She also included a variety of media formats and shades of worldview so that children have a variety of learning opportunities.
4. Reflection: After each activity, the teacher discussed with children their insights, what did they learn and think creatively about what they are doing and how activities could be improved in the future, to encourage reflection and continuous improvement.

Among the lessons learned, the teacher noted the following benefits for parents:

- Understanding child development: Parents can gain insights and information about how children learn and develop through various activities and activities.
- Encouraging cooperation with teachers: Parents can be encouraged to participate more actively and cooperate with teachers in order to promote the child's development.

Among the challenges indicated it is worth mentioning:

1. Lack of resources: Insufficient financial or material resources can limit the possibilities to properly implement activities. To deal with this, you can:
  - Search for external funding sources such as grants, sponsors or government funds.
  - Find alternative ways to obtain the necessary resources, for example, in cooperation with local communities or business enterprises.
  - Creatively use existing resources and find ways to use them optimally.
2. Lack of time: Limited time can be a challenge, especially when designing and implementing complex activities. To deal with this, you can:
  - Plan activities more effectively and set clear goals and deadlines.
  - Delegate tasks and get help from other school staff or parents.
  - Identify and eliminate unnecessary or useless activities to free up more time for important and effective activities.



## IV. GREEN ENVIRONMENTS

### 1. Make It Green and Precious

**Objectives:**

- To raise awareness of children and parents, and the wider local community, about the importance of rendering the environment greener and to learn how to preserve it.
- To increase the active involvement of parents in the process of planting and taking care of plants, thus increasing the number of tree seedlings and vegetation of the ECEC settings' premises.

**Description of Activity:**

ECEC settings with their surrounding courtyards offer great opportunities for children to learn more about the environment. Courtyards can be transformed in gardens or orchards where children can be involved and observe the whole process of plants' growth, from seeding until blossom. In addition, these activities lead to an increased number of tree seedlings and vegetation, thus creating green and healthy environments.

ECEC settings can establish connections with plant nurseries which often donate plants and vegetation. Another option for obtaining the seedlings and greeneries may be provided through different activities such sales exhibitions or bazaars. ECEC professionals can organise visits with children to the flower and plant nurseries to allow them to gain knowledge about the world of plants and their importance, as well as about the necessary care. The following step is to involve parents by organising specific days when to plant trees and plants together with children. Throughout the 7 months, ECEC professionals will organise meetings involving parents and children to observe the growth and evolution of the trees and plants, and discuss about the importance of preserving the plant world.

**Materials:** seedlings, planting tools

**Time:** 7 months between October and April

**Participants:** parents, children

### 2. Work Hard, Plant a Garden

**Objectives:**

- To foster collaboration among parents, extended family, and the local community using available resources to build trust and mutual understanding.
- To enhance the exchange of experiences between adults and children, emphasizing the significance of cultivating and caring for organic plants.

**Description of Activity:**

Children visited an agricultural farm located near their kindergarten, in an excursion organized by their teachers alongside the mother of one of the students, whose family owns the farm. Upon arrival, the children were warmly welcomed by the girl's grandfather who showed them around the estate, including the garden, fields, and greenhouse. He gifted each child seedlings of various vegetables and fruits. Motivated by this visit, upon returning to the kindergarten, there was a collective desire to start a garden in the kindergarten yard. This led to the planting of the seedlings they brought back. A small garden was thus established, which the children now diligently tend to daily, engaging in activities like watering and weeding..

**Materials:** fruit and vegetable seedlings, planting tools

**Time:** 8 months between October and May

**Participants:** parents, children

### 3. Let's Clean the Palce We Love

**Objectives:**

- To raise awareness of preserving our immediate surroundings as a fundamental step towards global environment conservation.

**Description of Activity:**

The activity focuses on creating meaningful learning opportunities that emphasize the importance of environmental protection among both children and parents. Initiatives will begin with the tidying and organising of local kindergartens and beloved playgrounds, extending to favorite city spots like the Public Garden, City Promenade, and parks. These activities will allow children to investigate local flora and fauna, as well as soil and water characteristics. Parental involvement will be encouraged through the use of the Padlet platform for sharing ideas, comments, and suggestions.

The kindergarten will commemorate significant ecological dates including Earth Day (April 22), Healthy Cities Day (May 20), Parks' Day (May 24), World Environment Day (June 5), World Wind Day (June 16), and Sun Day (June 21). Additionally, a partnership with the local "Greenery" company will aim to render community spaces more friendly and cozy by planting various seedlings, with activities designed to include both children and parents.

**Materials:** magnifying glasses, digital microscope, pipettes, jars, recycling material, horticulture accessories, unstructured material

**Time:** 6 months

**Participants:** parents, children

**Lessons learned:**

*Earth Day:* By celebrating Earth Day, the children became interested in learning more about how the planet also has its birthday? We watched educational films about the origin of the planet, read encyclopedias (which children brought from home), painted the planet with various art techniques,



made a model of the "Happy Planet" from an old globe, talked about conservation of nature, drew on the topic of a polluted and non-polluted city. They got acquainted with the consequences of the pollution of the Earth. Moreover, learning about the importance of preserving the forest, the children started with a "big cleanup" of the area where they stay every day, and we learned from the parents that they also initiate the tidying up of the yard at home.

*Healthy City Day:* Children helped in cutting, preparing materials, gluing and making group work, making their own bees, cutting collage paper, making a beehive, and decorating. Not all parents joined in bringing the necessary material for the activities. The challenges are that even a child with disabilities successfully participated in our joint activities

#### **4. Mind Up and Feel the Nature**

##### **Objectives:**

- To foster a deep understanding of the interdependence between humans and nature.
- To encourage children and parents to actively participate in preserving and studying the diverse ecosystems of Maljen Mountain.

##### **Description of Activity:**

Organised by the "Dečja radost" preschool, a series of activities are designed for both children and parents to emphasize the importance of nature conservation. For many years, the preschool has hosted seven-day camps for preschool-aged children at Divčibare on Maljen Mountain. During these camps, children engage in a variety of workshops focused on music, physical education, English language, and ecology. These sessions provide children with the opportunity to connect with nature through diverse learning situations. They will use their senses to interact with the environment, identifying specific plant cultures and animal species. This hands-on experience aims to raise awareness of the importance of preserving wildlife. Additionally, through various creative workshops using natural materials, children will stay physically active and express themselves in a creative way. They will also explore and expand their knowledge about different physical and natural phenomena. Prior to the camp, parents will participate in preparatory activities, such as studying different bird species and creating posters, which will lead up to their involvement in preparing an exhibition and a final event that showcases all the project's activities.

**Materials:** magnifying glasses, digital cameras, digital microscopes, clay, papers, art supplies, unstructured materials

**Time:** 5 months

**Participants:** parents, children

**Lessons learned:** The most positive aspects are the amount of positive energy that was felt in the process, the willingness to participate and the openness of the participants, the satisfaction of the children that was expressed. Teachers reported that for children it was a new experiences and knowledge, they obtained a greater degree of independence, opportunity for socialisation, sharing of



experience, greater focus on relationships, spreading multiculturalism, getting to know and using a non-native/English language, raising awareness about the preservation of their environment, getting to know the plant and animal world and the role of man in impact on the living world. As for parents, the activity represented a new way of involvement and cooperation, they became active partners in the learning process of the kindergarten, in addition to sharing experience. The challenges are the materials used in the activity and sometimes the weather conditions, considering that many of the activities were carried outdoors.

## **5. "Nature Watches" – Weekend explorers**

### **Objectives:**

- To gain greater understanding and appreciation of nature on behalf of children and families.
- To foster a commitment to protecting and conserving natural resources and the environmental health.

### **Description of Activity:**

Children and their parents spend weekends engaging directly with nature, where they observe and participate in activities, collecting various forms of natural information through photos, drawings, and plant samples. On the following Monday, the children bring their experiences to the classroom to share with their peers. They present their collected items and discuss their observations, integrating everything into an ongoing ECO project. This collaborative activity, enriching both children and parents, is adaptable to any season depending on parental availability.

**Materials:** phones, paper, coloured pencils, different plants, pictures

**Time:** 2 days

**Participants:** parents, children

**Lessons learned:** This activity was organised and led by some parents of the group and members of the community. The children became aware of the importance of the environment on animals. The cleaner and more organised the surrounding environment, the healthier and more productive the animals will be. The positive aspect was that children observed the nature up close. They were in the middle of the action. They enjoyed everything they discovered.

## **6. The Personalised Flower Pot**

### **Objectives:**

- To develop a positive attitude towards environmental care among children and their families.
- To engage children and parents in hands-on activities that promote understanding and care of plants.



**Description of Activity:**

The activity is part of the thematic project "Hardworking and generous autumn," involving both parents and children. Initially, parents and children collect 5-liter bottles which are then cut in half to use the base as a pot. During a visit to the flower market with their teachers, the children observe autumn flowers, noting their colors and learning about their care, culminating in the purchase of a chrysanthemum for each child. Back at the kindergarten, parents assist the children in converting the bottle bases into decorative flower pots. They fill these with soil and plant the chrysanthemums. The activity includes a discussion on how to care for the flowers, with children taking responsibility for the care of their own plants. The activity concludes with the children presenting poems and songs they have learned as part of the project.

**Materials:** 5 litre bottles, soil, flowers, shovels, glue, moving eyes, markers

**Time:** 3 days

**Participants:** parents, children

**Study case:**

The activity can be carried out in the season of autumn (chrysanthemums), winter (Christmas flowers), spring (tulips/daffodils). In autumn, the bottles can be replaced with pumpkins.

## 7. Let's Protect the Nature!

**Objectives:**

- To promote environmental awareness and care by teaching children and their families the importance of cleanliness and selective waste collection.
- To foster creativity through the reuse of recyclable materials in making toys and games.

**Description of Activity:**

The activity kicks off with a storytelling session using "Let's Protect the Nature," which emphasizes the significance of reducing and properly sorting waste. After the story, children and their parents engage in a hands-on exercise of collecting and sorting waste in the kindergarten yard using designated recycling bins (yellow, green, blue). The creative highlight of the activity involves children and their parents crafting toys or games from the recyclable materials collected. The event concludes with the distribution of diplomas, encouraging all participants to apply these environmentally friendly practices in their daily lives, whether at home or in public spaces like parks

**Materials:** projector, laptop, the story, waste containers (yellow, blue, green), recyclable materials, glue, diplomas

**Time:** 3 hours

**Participants:** parents, children

**Lessons learned:** It is an activity in which parents actively participate in carrying out the activity by being with the child, learning to spend quality time together. Learning from a young age about





collective selection makes us more responsible towards the environment we live in, learning to protect nature and at the same time protect ourselves as individuals. One group reports that that activity was organised in the classroom, which was too small to welcome all participants properly-

## 8. Winter Garden with Families

### Objectives:

- To enhance cognitive, perceptual, and emotional development of children through regular outdoor activities, fostering a love for nature and ecological awareness.

### Description of Activity:

Staff from the kindergarten will organise monthly meetings with families, which will increase to weekly gatherings during the warmer months. During these meetings, children and parents will collaboratively plant various crops and care for their growth. The activity will encompass a range of outdoor tasks such as tending to the garden, setting up outdoor spaces, and eventually harvesting the produce. These hands-on experiences are designed to connect children with the natural world and instill in them a sense of responsibility and appreciation for the environment. Additionally, these activities will provide opportunities for physical activity and teamwork, enhancing social skills and physical health. Parents and teachers will also discuss environmental topics and share gardening tips, further enriching the learning experience. The initiative aims to build a community spirit and encourage ongoing environmental responsibility among families.

**Materials:** gloves, hoe, spade, potting soil, rake, various seedlings, various flowers

**Time:** 7 hours

**Participants:** parents, children

**Lessons learned:** The activity was not implemented as described as only one experience was carried out in one day in which the garden was created involving the nursery staff, the boys and girls and the grandfathers and grandmothers instead of the parents. As a suggestion for the future, the activity could be done for two days or in two groups at different times given the high number of grandparents. In terms of challenges, the preparation of the land and finding the right tools was an issue, in addition to the weather factor.

## 9. Us and the Nature

### Objectives:

- To teach children about the growth and development of plants, helping them understand how plants evolve from seeds, what they need to thrive, and how to care for them responsibly.
- To engage children in hands-on agricultural activities, fostering an appreciation for nature and teaching them about the source of food and the importance of plants in our lives.

**Description of Activity:**

At the kindergarten, teachers and children participate in plant growing activities by planting plants in pots and sowing seeds. The process begins with selecting the types of plants to grow, which could be flowers, vegetables, or grasses. Next, the children prepare pots by adding soil and cleaning them if necessary. They then sow seeds or plant seedlings, learning how to handle them gently to enhance growth. Following planting, the children are taught how to water and care for the plants properly, ensuring they stay healthy through regular watering and soil maintenance. As the plants grow, both children and educators observe their development, noting changes in the plants' leaves, stems, and reactions to environmental factors. This activity is aimed at imparting knowledge about plant care and their ecological benefits as well as encouraging creativity, responsibility, and fostering connection to nature, making it a comprehensive educational experience for the children.

**Materials:** seeds, seedlings, pots, soil, planting tools

**Time:** 7 hours

**Participants:** parents, children

**Lessons learned:** The parents took care of all the necessary facilities and participated in plant maintenance. The kindergarten community helped plant the plants in the outdoor spaces. Teachers reported a great benefit for children: they got acquainted with various plants, participated in the creation and maintenance of the garden, research, etc. For the kindergarten, the activity was beneficial to render the surrounding more friendly and appealing.

## 10. Dad Hunter Tells Us How to Protect Nature

**Objectives:**

- To cultivate a deep respect and understanding among children about the importance of protecting the nature, learning from their father's stories and examples about responsible resource usage, species diversity, and environmental health.
- To introduce children to the ethical and sustainable practices of hunting, emphasizing how these activities contribute to ecosystem maintenance and the importance of living in harmony with nature.

**Description of Activity:**

In this educational session, a father who is a hunter creates an engaging and interactive environment to teach children about nature conservation. Through storytelling, he shares his experiences from hunting, focusing on sustainable practices and how hunters help maintain the balance of nature and population control. This activity not only provides knowledge about the hunter's role in ecosystem conservation but also serves as a platform for developing children's sense of responsibility, empathy, and understanding of their impact on the world. Parents play a supportive role, encouraging their children to advocate for and uphold principles of environmental protection.

**Materials:** hunting trophies

**Time:** 1 day

**Participants:** parents, children



## 11. Dad Tells Us how to Survive in Nature and Not to Hurt It

### Objectives:

- To educate children on safe and responsible behavior in nature, including learning from a father's practical safety advice on handling fire and dangerous objects.
- To increase children's understanding of natural processes and survival skills through a father's stories, covering navigation, identification of natural elements, and finding essentials like water or shelter.

### Description of Activity:

This interactive session teaches kindergarten students essential outdoor skills and environmental respect. It starts with the father sharing safety tips about managing fire and handling dangerous objects, followed by lessons on navigating nature, recognising safe and hazardous plants, fungi, and animals, and methods for finding water and secure shelters. The father also emphasizes the ecological impact of human actions and the importance of preserving nature's balance, including responsible practices like not harming flora unnecessarily and respecting wildlife. The activity not only imparts practical skills but also fosters a sense of responsibility and respect for the environment among the children.

**Materials:** soldier's vest, helmet, backpack

**Time:** 1 day

**Participants:** parents, children

## 12. Kindergarten Trip to Kazlı Rūda State Forest Enterprise

### Objectives:

- To provide children with an immersive experience in a forest environment, enhancing their understanding of diverse flora and fauna, and the principles of sustainable forest management.
- To educate children on safe and responsible behaviors in natural settings, including navigating various terrains and interacting with wildlife responsibly.

### Description of Activity:

Children embark on an educational trip to a forest enterprise, where they directly engage with the natural environment. This hands-on experience allows them to explore a variety of trees, plants, and animal habitats, fostering a deeper understanding of forest ecosystems. During the visit, children learn essential safety rules for dealing with animals, crossing bodies of water, and respecting the forest. The excursion is designed not only to educate about environmental protection and resource management but also to encourage safe conduct in nature. The children's learning is complemented by physical activities and interactions, enhancing both their knowledge and appreciation of nature.

**Materials:** -

**Time:** 1 month



**Participants:** parents, children

**Lessons learned:** The children were very happy with the train journey which allowed them to strengthen communication with each other as well as among parents.

### **13. Small Steps to the World of Eco**

**Objectives:**

- To educate children on environmental awareness, emphasizing the significance of each species and the importance of responsible, eco-friendly behavior.
- To teach children about recycling and waste management, fostering cooperation and understanding of sustainable practices.

**Description of Activity:**

The nursery-kindergarten "Rūta" has launched the "Small Steps to the World of Eco" project, which includes various educational activities to immerse children, their parents, and the school community in eco-friendly practices. The project consists of themed stops on a journey through different aspects of environmental awareness.

At the first stop, themed "Clean Nature and the Environment," children participate in educational outings like the "Outdoor Lab" and the "Small Animal Laboratory," where they explore local flora and fauna. These excursions are designed to inspire curiosity about natural habitats and teach children how to observe and appreciate the environment carefully.

The second stop focuses on "Ecology at Home" with activities centered around waste sorting. The entire kindergarten community takes part in the "Help the Earth Breathe Easier" campaign, where children learn how to manage waste on their playgrounds, including selecting and sorting broken toys. This stop aims to demonstrate practical ways children can contribute to environmental protection in their daily lives, teaching them how to recycle and the importance of reducing waste.

Throughout the project, children are encouraged to share their experiences and learnings, enhancing their understanding of environmental issues and promoting a lasting interest in sustainability.

**Materials:** shovels, rakes, garbage bags

**Time:** 1 month

**Participants:** parents, children



## V. COOPERATION WITH PARENTS/ FAMILIES/ CAREGIVERS

### 1. Let's See, Listen to Each Other and Network

#### Objectives:

- To establish a supportive network among local institutions that cater to children with developmental disabilities and children from marginalized groups.
- To enhance the active participation and empowerment of families with children who have developmental disabilities, improving overall family functioning.

#### Description of Activity:

The initiative involves fostering deeper collaboration between the preschool and the Day Centre for Children and Parents, focusing on designing tailored support for children with developmental disabilities. This collaboration includes transferring children of pre-school age who attend the kindergarten to the Day Centre for specialised treatments by speech therapists, speech pathologists, and physiotherapists. Through regular meetings among professionals working with these children, enhanced information sharing about the children's functioning, their needs, and their parents' needs is achieved, providing insights into areas requiring attention. This setup aims to foster professional networking and enhance the educational competencies of parents. The activity consolidates various types of support for families within the local community through joint meetings, mutual exchanges, organised training sessions, forums, institutional visits, and open house events at various institutions.

**Materials:** resources of the two institutions

**Time** meetings and seminars organised throughout 8 months

**Tag:** #inclusivensess

**Participants:** parents, children

### 2. Parent to Parent

#### Objective:

- To enhance mutual communication among parents about the importance of safe Internet practices and the role of sharing experiences and advice in raising awareness and ensuring children's safety online.

#### Description of Activity:

A workshop will be held in the study room focused on exchanging experiences and advice among parents regarding Internet safety for children. The session will include discussions on educational game content and strategies for safe online communication. A key part of the workshop will be the presentation of resources such as the film "Protection of children from unwanted content and Internet predators," which aims to educate parents on the dangers of the Internet and ways to protect their children. Through active dialogue, parents will increase their understanding of online



risks and learn from others' experiences, empowering them to implement these practices at home. The workshop encourages a community approach where parents support each other in fostering a safer online environment for their children.

**Materials:** study room, papers, pencils, laptop

**Time:** 1 hour workshop during 6 months

**Tag:** #digital

**Participants:** parents only

### 3. Together for a Better Education!

**Objectives:**

- To enhance the outdoor space of the kindergarten to facilitate high-quality outdoor activities.
- To actively involve parents in the improvement and decoration of the kindergarten's external areas.

**Description of Activity:**

Parents and teaching staff collaborate to refurbish the outdoor yard of the kindergarten, forming teams to tackle different sections of the yard. This cooperative effort focuses on creating specialised areas within the kindergarten yard to support various activities aimed at stimulating both mental and emotional relaxation, as well as intellectual engagement for the children. The areas proposed for realisation include a Learning Area for educational activities, a Relaxation Area for downtime, and a Calming Area for emotional regulation. This project will improve the physical environment and encourages the establishment of a strong community connection between parents and teaching staff, directly benefiting the children's learning and play experiences.

**Materials:** palettes, materials from nature, paints, brushes of various colours, chairs, tables, tires, pieces of wood of various sizes, etc.

**Time:** 1 week

**Tags:** #green

**Participants:** parents only

**Lessons learned:** Special spaces were created in the kindergarten yard to facilitate the organisation of outdoor activities that will relax the children mentally and emotionally, preparing them for intellectual activities or to relax after effort. The activity was attended only by parents, caregivers and teaching staff. The most rewarding aspect was to experience the joy on the children's faces when they first saw the courtyard. Teachers pointed out that the procurement of some of the necessary materials was a challenge.

### 4. Read Me a Story!

**Objectives:**

- To foster active parental involvement in the kindergarten's reading programme.



- To enhance children's language skills, vocabulary, and imagination.

**Description of Activity:**

The activity involves parents participating directly in the kindergarten's reading sessions over an extended period, depending on the number of parents involved. All parents are initially invited to a meeting where the reading activity is introduced and explained. It is agreed that each week, on a pre-established day such as every Wednesday, a different parent will visit the kindergarten to read a story to the preschoolers. A schedule is created and distributed to parents to inform each parent of their specific day to read. During their designated session, the parent brings a book to the kindergarten and reads to the children, after which the book is added to the group's library. This continuous cycle of reading not only enriches the children's learning experience but also strengthens the bond between families and the kindergarten.

**Materials:** story books

**Time:** depending on the number of parents involved. (1 parent - 30 minutes)

**Participants:** parents, children

**Lessons learned:** For one group, the teacher highlighted that children were very excited about the presence of their parents in the kindergarten, their involvement in reading activities, as parents are aware of the importance of reading at an early age. The teacher created a parents' planner for reading the stories. Parents brought a book to the kindergarten and read the story to the children, and the brought book remained in the kindergarten library, which contributed to strengthening the ties between kindergarten and family.

Another teacher reported that a parent brought a book of a story which helped children acquire a better understanding of the concepts of courage and generosity. This contributed to vocabulary enrichment, imagination and creativity enhancement. In this way, parents gain more awareness of the work done by teachers.

In another case, after a mother read the story, parents, children and teachers played the game "The bear is sleeping". Also, the children together with the teacher imitated the gestures found in the story. In addition to the parents, a speech therapist also participated in the activity and observed the way the children speak, pronounce certain sounds. As a challenge, it is worth mentioning that Not all parents are willing to get involved in kindergarten activities. Some parents are a bit nervous at the idea of reading in front of the children in the group. As a solution to this challenge, the teacher told the parents to discuss what/how they should read.

## 5. The Pickle Jar

**Objectives:**

- To cultivate habits of order, freedom, and diversity, as well as to regulate emotional behaviors in outdoor settings through engaging, hands-on activities.
- To foster collaboration between parents and children, enhancing their team-working skills and their ability to follow instructions through a shared culinary project.



**Description of Activity:**

As part of the thematic project "Hardworking and fruitful autumn," an engaging outdoor activity titled "The Pickle Jar" is held in the Relaxation, Peace, and Learning Garden area. During this event, parents join their children to collaboratively prepare pickles following a specific recipe. The process begins with a presentation of the activity theme and discussion of the pickle recipe to be used. All necessary ingredients are provided on-site. Parents and children work together to sort the vegetables, place them in jars, and meticulously follow the steps of the chosen recipe. This activity not only teaches children and parents how to work together effectively but also enhances the children's understanding of following directions and working methodically, all within a fun and relaxed outdoor setting.

**Materials:** jars, autumn vegetables, lids, various dishes for washing/preparing vegetables, ingredients for brining, etc.

**Time:** 2 hours

**Participants:** parents, children

**Study case:** The activity can also be done in the summer by making compote of summer fruits (cherries, sour cherries, apricots) together with the parents. The activity will be called: Jar of compote.

## 6. Parental Educator for a Day

**Objective:**

- To increase the involvement of parents in the daily routines and activities of the kindergarten, thereby strengthening the relationship between educators and parents and enhancing the continuity between family and kindergarten environments.

**Description of Activity:**

In this activity, parents are given a unique opportunity to directly engage with the kindergarten routine by leading an activity of their own choosing. The process begins with a detailed discussion between the parent and an educator, where they collaboratively explore various activity options that align with the educational goals of the kindergarten and reflect the parent's interests and skills. Following this consultation, the parent prepares and conducts the selected activity with the kindergarten children. This could range from a craft project or a music session to a science experiment or a storytelling time. This approach not only enriches the children's learning experiences with diverse perspectives and talents but also fosters a stronger bond between the kindergarten and the families it serves, creating a more integrated and supportive community environment.

**Materials:** the materials will be chosen by the parent proposing the activity

**Time:** 2 hours

**Participants:** parents, children





**Lessons learned:** The direct involvement of parents in the life of the nursery with an open-mindedness aimed at understanding their children. The biggest difficulty was the moment when parents have to leave the premises. Another teacher pointed out that some children expressed fear and sadness for the lack of interest behalf of some children and the consequent difficult management of the group. In another case, children expressed surprise when they realised that parents acted as educators.

## 7. 2nd October – The Role of Grandparents

### **Objective:**

- To actively involve grandparents in the lives of their grandchildren at the kindergarten, thereby providing children with emotional stability and enhancing their self-esteem through the presence of family members.

### **Description of Activity:**

On October 2nd, Italy celebrates Grandparents' Day which becomes an occasion for kindergartens to plan a special event to encourage the involvement of grandparents. Each grandparent is invited to the kindergarten with all necessary items to enjoy a picnic with their grandchildren and other children from the kindergarten. The day begins with the ECEC staff performing a song dedicated to grandparents, setting a festive and appreciative tone. Following the musical tribute, a series of activities and games are organised where grandparents and children can interact and bond. Notably, grandparents are encouraged to share and lead games that they enjoyed in their own childhoods. This event fosters intergenerational bonding and enriches the children's understanding and appreciation of their grandparents' experiences and traditions.

**Materials:** blanket and picnic hamper

**Time:** 2 hours

**Tags:** #green

**Participants:** grandparents, children

## 8. Halloween Workshop

### **Objective:**

- To foster a sense of community and strengthen relationships between ECEC staff, families, and children through inclusive, collaborative activities at the kindergarten.

### **Description of Activity:**

During a festive Halloween-themed event at the kindergarten, families, children, and ECEC staff come together to engage in a collaborative cooking project. The activity involves making Halloween-themed cookie dough, where everyone participates in the mixing, rolling, and cutting of the dough into festive shapes. After baking the cookies, the group enjoys eating them together, creating a warm, communal atmosphere. This activity stimulates creative expression and strengthens the bonds



among families and staff, fostering a cohesive community spirit. The success of this event may encourage participants to engage in more collaborative experiences at the kindergartner in the future.

**Materials:** dough cutter moulds of various kinds., sprinkles, coloured sprinkles, chocolate chips for decoration

**Time:** 3 hours

**Participants:** parents, children

## 9. Christmas Workshop

### **Objective:**

- To enhance parent involvement in kindergarten activities, fostering stronger connections between ECEC staff and families, and encouraging interaction among families.

### **Description of Activity:**

In an effort to promote sustainability and creativity, ECEC professionals aim to organise a special activity where parents are invited to create Christmas presents for their children using recycled and simple materials. The activity is designed to show the potential of these materials to become meaningful gifts with a little creativity and effort. As part of the Christmas celebration, these handmade gifts are to be delivered to the children by Santa Claus, adding a magical touch to the experience. This activity fosters a sense of community and collaboration among the families while highlighted the value of sustainable practices in everyday life.

**Materials:** cardboard and cardboards, plastic cans, thread, elastic bands, metal caps of various sizes, Lego sticks, pasta, cereals and dried legumes, bottles, tempera, glue, glitter

**Time:** 3 hours

**Participants:** parents, children

**Lessons learned:** The reaction from parents was one of astonishment and delight; many expressed surprise at how effectively simple, repurposed materials could be transformed into beautiful and heartfelt presents.

*One teacher referred: I used green elements with the children to create works to furnish the nursery room, the Christmas tree that we placed at the entrance to the nursery. And some of these elements (leaves, branches, pine cones) were collected directly by the children in the garden outside the nursery. At the beginning it was difficult for us educators to think about what to create with the few green materials available, because today we are not used to working with these elements; however, thanks to their inventiveness, the children assembled many objects and created unique decorations. In the future, not only theoretical but also practical courses could be held to raise awareness and help educators carry out activities with children that involve the greater use of green materials. More information should be given and parents should be educated from the beginning of the year.*



## 10. Carnival Workshop

### Objective:

- To enhance parent involvement in kindergarten activities, fostering stronger connections between ECEC staff and families, and encouraging interaction among families.

### Description of Activity:

In a creative endeavor to strengthen community ties within the day-care, parents are invited to participate in preparing for a children's play by helping to create sets and backdrops. Using simple materials, parents collaborate in the design and construction of theatrical elements required for the production. This activity contributes to showcase their creativity and increase their engagement within the kindergarten community, enhancing their relationships with both the staff and other families.

**Materials:** cartone e cartoncini, barattoli di plastica, filo, elastici, tappi di metallo di varie dimensioni, bastoncini Lego, pasta, cereali e legumi secchi, bottiglie, tempere, colla, glitter

**Time:** 3 hours

**Participants:** parents, children

**Lessons learned:** Throughout the process of building and rehearsing for the performance, parents expressed astonishment and delight at their ability to transform basic supplies into impressive, functional stage decorations. We proposed that parents stage a small theatrical performance for their children. We also asked them to create the scenography and costumes together, therefore, the project culminated in a successful performance, with parents acting in the play, further strengthening the sense of community and shared achievement. Among the challenges, teachers mentioned the organisation of the roles, choosing a language suitable for children and captivating scenography but all this was facilitated by the availability of the parents who got involved. In some cases, teachers had to deal with parents' shyness to perform in front of the children

## 11. My Mother Reads a Children's Book About the Sun and the Moon

### Objectives:

- To educate children about the essential functions of the Sun and Moon and their impact on Earth, fostering an understanding of celestial phenomena and their regular patterns.
- To stimulate children's interest in science, particularly in astronomy and natural phenomena, through interactive learning and creative activities.

### Description of Activity:

In this interactive and educational activity, children explore the roles and significance of the Sun and Moon in sustaining life on Earth. The session begins with a reading from a book that explains how the Sun provides light and warmth necessary for life, and how the moon influences ocean tides and



the day-night cycle. This sets the stage for observing and understanding the celestial bodies and their effects on nature, such as sunlight's role in plant growth and the moon's impact on ocean waves.

Following the discussion, children are encouraged to create their own space-themed drawings or patterns, allowing them to express what they've learned creatively. This aims to enhance their understanding and to boost their creativity and imagination. The activity aims to deepen children's knowledge of astronomy while also promoting their emotional development and communication skills, making it a comprehensive learning experience that connects them more deeply with the cosmos and natural world.

**Materials:** book

**Time:** 3 hours

**Tag:** #green

**Participants:** parents, children