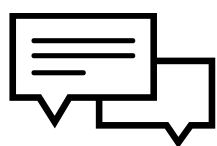


HANDBOOK

FOR TEACHERS AND CHILD
CARE PROFESSIONALS
TEACHING IN
MULTICLTLURAL
CLASSROOMS



MUTUAL

2016-1-SE01-
KA201-022109



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PROJECT: MULTILINGUAL AND MULTICULTURAL LEARNING IN EARLY YEARS - MUTUAL

COORDINATOR: Centrum för flexibelt lärande (CFL), Hälsinglands, Sweden

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is one of the main products of the Erasmus plus MULTILINGUAL AND MULTICULTURAL LEARNING IN EARLY YEARS - **MUTUAL** project and is aimed at presenting models and approaches to the integration and inclusion of children with refugee/migrant background in the early years. It provides valuable evidence of the forms the inclusive approaches can take and the ways in which they can work. It is based on extensive practice in four countries: UK, Sweden, Greece and Czech. It addresses a range of important issues, including migration and identity, language and belonging, social and emotional competence of young children, the role of early years teacher and that training available, and the power enabling environment with visual, auditory and kinaesthetic opportunities to learn. The practices have also been successful in developing improved models of collaboration between the different actors, including parents, nurseries, educational authorities, child care professionals, teachers and sometimes policy makers. The key element of the success of the initiative has been that local solutions have been developed in order to ensure sustainability of the initiative in each of the participating countries as well as wider.

During our work we have been opening many doors, and broadening the horizons and creating cooperation in the areas which are less likely to experience change, for example:

- Instead of the usual further measures for integration of children from migrant background the project has been developing solutions which involve and benefit all of the children in early years.
- The project was also reaching outside the usual methods information giving to parents from migrant communities. It has instead been focused on interactions between migrant and native communities and has been developing the models of parental where the parents are partners in the learning process. The parents were invited to teach in the classes, to read books in different languages, to join cooking classes and participate in different events.

and last but not least

- The project was focusing on the area of preschool education which is organised very differently across Europe and is less likely to be the subject of joint European projects.

The partnership was characterised by a variety of actors from four different European countries and more than 15 different linguistic environments, whose nature and the field of activities have provided



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the professional coverage of the issues addressed. Each of the partner of the consortium has formed a unique methods of introducing Mutual which can serve as a reference to potential other interested early years teachers/child care professionals and community groups in the countries of the consortium as well as broader.

The handbook is structured into two parts:

1. This catalogue of knowledge have a framework function to syllabi, modules, subjects for practical training which was developed in partner countries and puts goals, competencies and contents in the “Catalogue” form. It is divided into four main subject areas: migration and identity, social and emotional skills and competences, language and identity section and parental engagement. It serves as a basis for the country specific training programs. It is expected that schools prepares a plan of implementation of contents or achieving of competences and implementations of goals within shape of implementing curriculum/training programme according to their own needs and autonomy.
2. Country specific approaches: This part presents the case studies of implementation of MUTUAL into the early years classrooms. It is also accompanied with the appendix of gestures which can be used with children in early years classrooms.

The activities in our project were developed following the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. The partners were seeking to promote and value the children’s’ first languages, their home culture and build networks between home, nurseries and local communities. We hope that our project will influence the attitudes of teachers, parents and children beyond our project and will inspire the teachers of other nurseries and colleges to continue the work started under this project.



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Catalogue of Skills and Knowledge: Key skills and knowledge necessary for the education of children from diverse cultural or linguistic background in early years



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1. Initial research and findings-needs assessment

This catalogue of knowledge and skills represents the second output of the Erasmus+ Project: MUTUAL-multicultural/multilingual learning in early years (2016-2019). The project comprised five partner organizations from Greece, Czech Republic, Sweden, United Kingdom and Slovenia. The project aimed to develop and disseminate a comprehensive response to the integration and inclusion of children from migrant backgrounds in early years education and to improve the quality of the practices in early education as well as the attainment levels of children in preschools.

We produced a visibility study on Migrant/Foreign-Born Pre-school Children in Greece, Czech Republic, Sweden and the United Kingdom which introduced current trends in migration in the partner countries. It focused primarily on the situation of children from different cultures or linguistic backgrounds. Additionally, qualitative research was then carried out to help identify the problems faced by childcare professionals and to reveal the methods the education practitioners in partner countries are using to support migrant children and parents. More information: <http://mutual.erasmus-projects.eu/>

Within the qualitative research, interviews were conducted with staff in five to seven in pre-school facilities in each country. Questions were focused on the basic methods which nurseries use with children in general, and specifically with children with different mother tongues and cultural backgrounds. They also identified the obstacles and difficulties faced by teachers and what could help to integrate these children and parents into society more fluently. Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) settings, which were examined by the research, vary in the proportion of children with different first languages. The lowest average share was identified in the Czech Republic (13%), followed by Great Britain with a share sometimes as high as 26%, Sweden at most, with share of 64%. These numbers are significant within our research but do not have any representative value at a national level. However on the basis of these, we can see that there are fewer foreigners living in the Czech Republic than in the other partner countries involved, which is also reflected in pre-school education. However, this does not signify the absence of challenges in the Czech pre-schools. On the contrary, the comparatively evident lack of experience in work with this group of children was observed among Czech pedagogical personnel.

The qualitative research has allowed an insight into the routine practices of preschools highlighting the fundamental challenges faced by employees in these institutions. Some of the identified issues are of institutional character and therefore more difficult to make improvements. Other frequent challenges were embedded within language barriers both in communication with children and with their parents. At the same time, in terms of communication with parents, there was evidence of misunderstandings



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caused by cultural differences. This includes different views on child upbringing and education, and a different understanding of the role of preschool education and teachers in it. Language barriers sometimes cause social and emotional problems for children and parents from different cultural environments. Early years teachers report that children often experience stressful situations, feelings of uncertainty and anxiety, which could be expressed with aggression towards teachers and other children. The language barrier is also the cause of the difficulty of diagnosing special educational needs. In these cases, it would be useful to have bilingual early years teachers which is not always possible because of the great variety of languages spoken in kindergartens.

Another research topic has been the training programmes of early years teachers and how they reflect the current needs of the children in early years education. It was recognized that the education courses for early childhood professionals should have elements in both content and delivery that address diversity of cultures. Pre-service training where student teachers are placed in multicultural classrooms are especially effective in getting future teachers to re-examine their existing beliefs and preconceptions. For example, the students from Slovenia which have received practical training in the UK have expressed the positive benefits of teaching in diverse settings. Service-learning has the potential of empowering teacher candidates to confront difficult issues of societal inequalities based on lack of social capital the migrant communities might be facing. Courses need to recognize and reflect the differing beliefs about childhood held by different cultures. Within relevant courses, particular emphasis should be given to understanding how children develop language skills, and teachers should be provided practical experience in teaching a second language. Besides pre-service training, continuing education on multicultural issues should be made readily available for all staff working with young children. Service staff should be supported to engage in professional development which enables them to examine their own values and assumptions in relation to race, culture, class and the impact these may have on their practice. Once again, this provision will differ depending on the situation of early childhood education in that country. Additionally the commitment to staff's continuing professional development will also be dependent on the settings' own philosophy and belief in critical pedagogy and reflective practice which underlies the perspective of diversity.



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2. Supporting multicultural and multilingual learning in early years classroom

The catalogue of knowledge and skills describes possible solutions to the above-mentioned challenges and serves as the basis for the country specific training programmes developed within the MUTUAL project. It contains a synthesis of the latest specialized literature, which includes titles in the official languages of partner countries. The second part of the catalogue deals with the key conditions and skills necessary for the education of children from diverse cultural or linguistic background as identified by project partners.

Each Partner has elaborated a specific skill which in their opinion is the key in multicultural learning in early years. This led to creating a list of 4 transversal competences. Following a desk research partners have further elaborated a particular skills and links to syllabi, modules, subjects and practical training which was developed in partner countries. It puts goals, competencies and contents in the “Catalogue” form. The list of contents is however not exclusive. It is expected that schools prepare a plan of implementation of contents or achieving of competences and implementations of goals within the shape of implementing the curriculum/training programme according to their own needs and requirements. The values of multiculturalism in early years should be organically integrated into the whole curriculum rather than being taught as a stand alone subject.

The aims and objectives:

- To construct a knowledgeable, confident self-identity of the early years children
- To develop an understanding of cultural and intercultural concepts and perspectives including insights into cultural theories relating to child and family development
- To develop sensitivity and understanding of the social and emotional needs of children in culturally and linguistically diverse early years classrooms,
- To develop sensitivity for the understanding of sign supported and visual communication with children in early years multilingual and multicultural classrooms



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- To develop an understanding of how to provide an enabling environment to support the child's development and learning in multicultural and multilingual classrooms
- To deepen the knowledge of the factors of positive engagement with parents and cooperation between the kindergarten and family.
- To deepen the knowledge of the relevant networks and engage how to engage with them



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SKILLS

The student:

- is able to understand what multiculturalism and multilingualism implies and why it matters in education.
- Is able to understand the importance of respect for diversity and encouraging children to be proud of their language and culture.
- Is aware of and is able to use different practical approaches for children to express themselves in multilingual environment and use different strategies to encourage exploring learning through play
- Is able to recognize and act upon the social and emotional problems the children might have and is able to encourage the positive behaviour of children in multilingual classrooms
- is able to involve the parents in the child's learning.



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Migration and identity

The students raise awareness about multiculturalism in early years and the impact on shaping children's identities

Knowledge	Application of Knowledge	Attitude (Views, beliefs, values)
Understands how the attitudes to multiculturalism are linked to changing times and factors such as migration, economic and stability.	Describes key stages of how policies about multiculturalism and education have developed and changed in Europe.	Is able to examine his/her own values and attitudes towards multilingualism and multiculturalism. He or she is aware of one's own culture, attitudes and values, and how they influence practice. He or she is also comfortable with differences in the way the children interact and learn.
Reflection, awareness and celebration of your own cultural background and cultural traditions	He/she is able to map the benefits and intercultural advantages of the children in his/her care, is able to implement engagement initiatives in the early years classroom.	Has awareness of children's and families needs regardless of their home culture, race or language.



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Understands the context of the wide varieties of backgrounds and situations of children in their care, and is aware of and recognizes challenges that families and children in early years may experience, including stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination.	Is able to ensure an empathic approach and can also help to mitigate potential bias and stereotyping on the basis of ethnicity, religion, family background and language protected from any form of prejudice or discrimination. He/she is also able to encourage all children to express their diversity in a welcoming environment.	Has the ability to critically reflect attitudes towards migration in everyday practice and is able to address them.
Understands the needs of young migrants from a wide range of backgrounds of the children in preschool classroom	Is able to recognize and address the key emotional and social needs of refugees/immigrant children in a range of early years situations	Has positive attitudes towards migration and the needs of the children and their families.



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Language and Communication

Generally, early years settings use the national language (usually the majority language) as the medium of instruction. However multiculturalism and the recognition of the role of language in learning makes it necessary for a diversity of language, literacies and communication styles to be recognized, valued and used within all early childhood services. The provision for children to learn the majority language whilst maintaining their first language should be supported and encouraged. Research has shown that there can only be advantages to the child besides as well as protecting and respecting the home language. For example, since the 1960s, research has shown that multiple language skills do not confuse the mind or hinder educational development. The main issue and challenge for the provision of bilingual education is one of human resources. Not many countries have the personnel who themselves are bilingual or multilingual, and specifically in the target languages. By gathering information from families about the different social contexts in which the home language is used, practitioners can gain a better appreciation of children's experiences with their home language. The information collected about children's use of language can be integrated across different curriculum areas and implemented in daily experiences. The availability of staff who are competent in supporting children's language learning, both the majority and home languages is an important factor within education. Early years teachers and child care workers can acquire basic knowledge of linguistic development of children and can also use nonverbal communication in multicultural/multilingual early years classrooms. Instead of the periodic introduction of a given number of language learning activities in a second or third language by a teacher whose purpose is to teach that language, the better option is to gradually introduce other languages during all the activities that constitute the daily life of the learning environment. In this way, the overall aim becomes that of promoting the development of personal multilingualism in children who become used to operating within a multilingual environment. Sign supported language learning and visual communication can support this process.

Knowledge	Application of knowledge	Attitude (Views, beliefs, values)
Understands the ways children acquire languages and is familiar with the phases of language acquisition of children who speak more than one language.	Uses the skills for supporting children who do not speak the language of instruction as their mother tongue.	He or she has a positive attitude towards language learning.



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Understands the different methods of communication and how to support children who do not speak the language of instruction in the early years setting.	Is able to use different approaches (using visual and kinesthetic clues) to encourage children in communicating beyond the use of spoken language eg signing and the use of symbolic communication.	The students shows Interest in learning new ways of communication.
Understands the importance and characteristics of the simultaneous use of symbolic communication and speech when communicating with children using the method of signing/gesturing key words. Is aware of how this method helps language and speech development of all children Understand the difference between key signing and the use of sign language. Knows 200 to 300 gestures/ clues and is able to apply them in practice	Is able to apply the method of key signing with children in multilingual early years classrooms. Is able to help the children to communicate better with the use key signs. Is able to help children to express their needs and wants with the method of key signs.	Positive attitude and respect for the use of sign supported communication.
Knows how to set up an enabling language stimulating environment for children in early years	Is able to use the relevant visual and kinesthetic resources to help children to thrive in a multilingual environment.	Positive attitude which involves also an awareness of the integrity of children's perception and expression.



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Social and emotional competences

Research in education has shown that the development of social and emotional skills of preschool children is a key to achieving academic success in school. Moreover, teachers trained in evidence-based methods to support social and emotional competence of children in early years can make a substantial difference in a child's future development. Therefore it is important that teachers in pre-schools are equipped with strategies and activities targeting the positive social and emotional growth of children. The strategies described below are based on the evidence-based methods developed, tested and implemented by Prof. Webster-Stratton as an integral part of the Incredible Years teacher classroom management programme. (www.incredibleyears.com)

Activity	Application of activity	Attitude (Views, beliefs, values)
Showing children love and care: building positive and close relationships with children.	The activity comprises many small steps including making close friendships between teachers and children. For example: greeting children by name, getting to know their parents and siblings, asking about their interests and hobbies, playing with the children, letting them to lead games, talking about difficulties and worries they have.	Getting to know children and parents provide a basis for supporting the social and emotional competences of children. Children then feel welcome and important, which supports their self-confidence and independence.



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Supporting the feeling of safety in preschool: structuring the classroom environment, establishing day routine, teaching children how to understand and respect the rules.	Children discuss the rules in small groups and they set simple rules for classroom behaviour with the teacher's help. These rules are formulated in a positive way (instead of "no running in the classroom" you can ask children to "use your walking feet"). This discussion should also include the question of how the children understand certain behaviour in the way they did, and also what are the consequences for breaking the set rules.	Children learn what is the role of rules in school, why they are important and explain the application of rules in different situations. Moreover, children learn how to talk about the rules with other children and teachers, and how to set the group rules.
Encouraging and praising children.	Looking for the occasions when it is possible to praise the child. The praising should be concrete and constructive. Not only the outcome should be praised but also the process. Praising social and friendly behaviour (sharing, waiting for a turn, helping, showing empathy, playing together, making greetings)	Positive feedback from specific activities of the child strengthens self-confidence and the ability to cope with obstacles, failures and breakdowns. Praising children with behavioural difficulties is especially effective in achieving change.



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Teaching children to understand their own feelings: supporting self-control and dealing with aggression.	Learning to distinguish different emotions by showing and naming face images depicting these emotions. Showing the situations that lead to these emotions by puppets. Reading fairy tales and discussing with children the different emotions that the characters express during the story and the strategies to cope with negative feelings and emotions.	Children should learn how to name their feelings and emotions and identify different coping strategies. This will enable them to recognize and deal with their own emotions as well as the emotions of others.
Coping with resistance/ Time Outs	Reminding children of the negative consequences of disobedience or persistence in breaking the rules. This method should be used when strategies of praising and encouraging do not work. A Time Out is used for repeated aggressive and abusive behaviour. A Time Out place (chair, corner, mat) should be located in the classroom, so that the teacher can observe (non participatory) the child's behaviour during the Time Out. The Time Out should be a quiet place without anything or anybody to distract the child's attention (no toys or games) and should last no more than five minutes. Returning from the Time Out should be accompanied by praising at the earliest opportunity.	Children learn, that persistent disobedience, breaking the rules and aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated and will be dealt with.



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Establishing good relationships and partnership with parents and guardians	The mutual exchange of information between parents\guardians and the teacher is important. The teacher should inform the parents about the child's behaviour in class. In case of problems the teacher should support parents and guardians and suggest possible solutions in partnership with them.	Establishing and maintaining good relationships with parents and guardians is a crucial part of the overall preschool experience for children, making it an important priority for teachers.
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Methods and communication strategies with parents

One major obstacle facing preschool teachers in a multicultural school is communication with the parents of their enrolled children. There are areas where it is crucial for information to be received and understood, such as rules about illnesses, opening hours and parent-teacher events, etcetera. Teachers can use Ipads to document the learning progress of the children in pictures as well as writing, to include parents who are less than fluent in the language of instruction and teachers sometimes use interpreters. The staff can produce leaflets with crucial information in many different languages. With the help of native speakers of different languages they can also create QR codes attached to the information leaflets so that for example preliterate parents can scan the code and listen to a recorded voice reading the information on the leaflet. If the parents understand the rules and regulations of the school, they will be more likely to have a positive experience when meeting preschool staff and other parents and feel included in their children's education.

Another issue is getting the parents to attend teacher-parent conferences. The problem can stem from the parents lack confidence in terms of language and also in meeting the teachers. One of the solutions in the project was that the teachers renamed the conferences, calling them "spring party" or "summer party", and invited the parents to bring food and drink. The project showed that this changed the attendance drastically and the staff could communicate the information as needed. They created a welcoming atmosphere and a place where the parents felt relaxed and also had a chance to share food and drink from their own culture.

Knowledge	Application of knowledge	Attitude
Understands the role of parents in the education of the child.	Can present to the parents the advantages of being involved in a child's education and present them with ways of supporting their child in education Can present to the parents their role in the process of supporting the child's development positive attitude to education, careful observation of the child at home and monitoring his/her progress.	Awareness of the importance of a shared responsibility by the parents and the kindergarten for the children's welfare, learning and progress.



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Understands and respects the parents' right to be informed about the child.	Regularly exchange information with the parents about their child's progress inform them about the child's response about the child's progress in learning receives information about their child's progress at home exchanges information on the parents' own experience in sign communication with their children;	Respect of the differences and is able to work with parents from different cultural backgrounds.
Knows about how important it is to establish good communication with parents and is able to use different communication channels to do so.	The students are able to apply different methods of communication with parents, and are using IT and non verbal communication clues to enhance communication.	Respect and responsibility towards children and their parents.



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Report on the application of the Mutual project in 5 early years settings in Yorkshire region, UK



hello/اب حرم

The case studies were prepared based on the questionnaires and observations undertaken by the trainers in 7 different nurseries in the Yorkshire region. The aim of the questionnaires was to map the experiences and best practices of children in the culturally and linguistically diverse nursery classrooms after the application of the techniques and methods introduced to the child care professionals at the training within the MUTUAL project. The report is therefore prepared as an outcome of Erasmus plus project MUTUAL 2016-1-SE01-KA201-02210.

There were a total of 7 childcare settings whose staff received the Mutual Training in 2017. There has been varied success in the settings, implementing the techniques while working with children and parents. Trainers witnessed the use of different methods with the children in several settings 8 months after the delivery of the training.

All settings who responded to 4th review after training, towards the end of the project

reported that they were able to utilise the techniques learnt during training.



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For the purpose of this report we are using the examples from 5 nurseries where the techniques were used most successfully.

Ducklings Nursery

Description of the setting

Ducklings at St Margaret's is a voluntary, non-profit making, committee-run pre-school. It operates from a purpose-built property within St Margaret's Primary School in Horsforth, near Leeds. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The pre-school serves the immediate locality and also the surrounding areas. Children are cared for in one main indoor room and have access to an enclosed outdoor play area and sensory garden. There are currently 95 children on roll in the early years age range. 11 of them are from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery also supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The pre-school receives support from the local authority and has successfully achieved the Leeds Quality Assurance Framework Award. The Ducklings nursery sent 4 out of 11 child care professionals to the Mutual training event.

Activities in the project

The methods were used in the setting on a daily basis. All of the child care professionals who attended the training started to use sign supported language immediately. They used up to 100 signs and have incorporated them in teaching in all 7 learning areas. For example: in the morning when the children arrived at the nursery they were greeted by good morning with the sign as well as spoken word. It was explained to them what was going to happen in the day through the signs, visual clues and words. On every occasion the childcare professionals are now using signs and words: for example: where the children are going out, when they are preparing for lunchtime, when they go to the toilet.

Signing is then further supported through specifically targeted learning experiences. This means that children can consolidate and deepen their knowledge and understanding. For example, childcare professionals take turns in delivering circle time where they deliver an exciting, challenging and highly stimulating sessions with the children covering particular topic. Children are animated as they engage in music, signing and social interaction as part of the sessions.



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The use of visual materials

They have used the visual materials distributed to them at the training and these now form an integral part of the learning in Ducklings.

Impact on children

The usage of sign supported language has improved the quality of teaching for all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and it is in the opinion of the staff that sits important to promote the learning gained from these new methods of learning and teaching. It has supported all children in their personal, social and emotional development. Children were supported to practice their communication and negotiation skills through using the signs, they were also further supported to use their independence in all aspects of their learning, particularly when problem-solving as they can communicate and express themselves better. It is assessed that their needs can be met sooner as they give the practitioners more clues about what they need, wish and want.



hug/قن ع

Partnership with parents

The partnership with parents is at the core of the practice at Ducklings. Most of the parents regularly participate in activities. The aim of the involvement of parents in Mutual project was to increase the achievements of children in the area of language and literacy, in particular with children who do not speak English as their first language. This was done through purposeful engagement of parents and through offering them the knowledge and skills to support their children better. Parents were fully involved in developing the plans made for their children and in sharing all the achievements made. The parents had daily contacts with staff and have contributed to the planning by adding experiences from home to the parents sharing board. The main activity was the development of story books with signs for children



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to take home. They also had the microphone each.

The parents were first introduced to the story books library through a leaflet and e mail with an invitation to an evening session with a early years teacher and speech and language therapist. They were then taught how to use the story bags and the signs. The children were then taking bags at home on a regular basis. The parents were doing activities together with children, they were doing observations and making their own assessments. They have also recorded some of the activities. They very much enjoyed the activities and would like to carry on doing them. The thing is that so far there are 10 story books prepared and the nursery would like to have more of them. They would also like to have more funds for frequent involvement of language therapist. In addition they would also like to send all of the staff on the training in the future. It has been agreed with Language in your Hands that the second training will be launched in October, 2019.

Materials used

The parents and staff have used the basic signs brochure, which was printed through budget of the project, the bags with the props, books and microphones.

Domi Domingo Nursery

Domi Domingo Day Nursery was registered in 2014. The nursery employs 24 members of childcare staff. Of these, 10 hold early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including three with qualified teacher status. The nursery is open Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It currently has 120 children on register. 64% of whom do not speak English as their first language or are living in families where there is more than one spoken language.

Activities in the project

Three of the staff took part in the training. The aim of this project in the setting was to help with the language development of the children in their care. Initially they were modelling clear words through repetition and rephrasing of what the children were saying, they now started to purposefully use a lot of reference materials, with visual clues, signs, with greater emphasis on sensory development. For example, the introduction of many different shimmering fabrics, malleable materials, light sources and mirrors to explore and build children's tactile and sensory awareness. The activities are performed



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through the whole day, on the inside and outside areas. The nursery has also adopted a special sensory space.

Impact on children

The staff describe impact on children as very good. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, show an interest in stories and they are beginning to recognise that print has meaning regardless of their linguistic skills. Children are motivated and keen to play and explore with their friends.

Partnership with parents

The nursery has developed its own programme for parents based on the input from the training. They have decided to invite parents to come to nursery once a week to read to the children in their native language. The activity lasts 30 minutes and is usually held before the children are collected from nursery. 6 parents participate in this activity.

The activity was discussed with the parents and the letter was sent home to invite the parents to participate. The nursery has then agreed the time with the parents when the reading takes place. The parents were then invited to come to the nursery to read to the children. The books could be selected by the parents they can however also be recommended by the teachers. The reading is a part of so called circle time and can involve also rhyming, playing, talking and singing. The activities can be supported by child care professionals. They have prepared the reading library for the parents to take books home. These are the most common children's books in English, some of them are also translated in different languages. In addition to this activity the nursery also decided to have a weekly Spanish sessions. This is because they find it useful to have an additional language that all the children are learning. All the parents were invited to take part in the activities.

Materials needed

Books in different languages. Leaflets for parents.



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Cliffe house nursery

Cliff House Day Nursery Trinity was registered in 2003 and is situated in Horsforth, Leeds. The nursery employs 27 members of childcare staff. The staff holds appropriate qualifications with three staff with qualified teacher status. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery currently has 125 children on role. 12% are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Two staff from the nursery took part in the training. They have used the methods in different rooms in the nursery.

Activities in the project

During the 8 months of the implementation period of the project the child care practitioners aimed at improving the communication skills of children. They have planned and carried out the following activities: general sign supported conversation with children speaking English as an additional language, they used signing with simple action rhymes and songs (an example is provided below) on every occasion, they are also using signing when teaching manners, story time and during all snacks.

The child care professionals expressed that they find signing very useful. They would like to send other practitioners to the course in the future.

Impact on children

Positive impacts were reported and described as 'universal' with all children picking up the signs and joining in, especially when used with songs. They were also observed using them on a one-to-one basis and in small groups. It helped younger children with English as a second language to communicate, aiding speech development. It also helped the children to feel involved, settled and happy. Although it was reported by the setting that the techniques were used with ALL children and were inclusive.

Partnership with parents

The setting provided parents with themed brochure with pictures and graphics (example provided below), not only were these displayed but 2 of the settings also made displays showing signs and children signing for parents to see (see next page).

It was reported that settings were keeping the parents informed of what they are doing with the children and were able to share techniques with parents through displaying posters, wall displays and

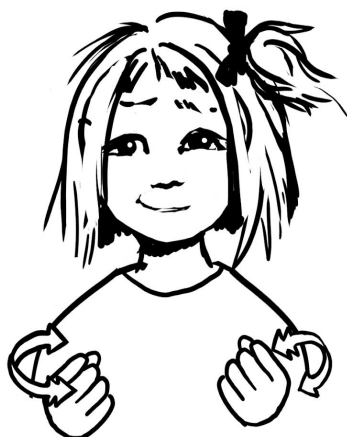


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photographs of the children on the walls. Also uploading observations, photographs and videos on children's learning journals. Signs were used during performances for parents and particularly shared with parents of children with SEN/EAL.

Prospect House nursery



bus/فاح

The nursery employs 31 members of childcare staff. Of these, 26 hold early years qualifications at level 2 and above. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery supports children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

Activities in the project

Three practitioners were at the training. One of them was special needs coordinator. They have decided to use the sign supported method as a positive reinforcement in communicating with children, and as a support in turn taking skills, listening, engagement and joining in throughout the day. They were also using it in 1-2-1's with children who do not speak English as their first language as well as with children with additional

needs. They also used music time with focused groups.

In addition to using signing they also decided to run baking sessions with children where they would bake food from different countries. One practitioner was leading this session. The activities involved in planning what they will bake, buying the ingredients, cooking and baking. They took place once every two weeks. The idea was to involve children in activities where they can learn skills like measuring, recognizing different shapes and colours in a way that everyone can join in and enjoy.



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Impact on children

All children, including children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in their learning and development. Children have a sense of belonging and feel self-assured. Their own work and photographs were displayed around the nursery, which helps them to feel emotionally secure. Children enjoy choosing their own resources and leading their own play. Children become motivated and independent learners and gain a range of key skills to help prepare them for school.

Partnership with parents

The nursery has taken two steps to encourage the involvement of parents. They have invited them to share the learning with children at home and to record their achievements which were then added to the child's journey.

The nursery also decided to engage with parents through cooking activities. One member of the staff was particularly keen on cooking and baking with children. They started to provide baking bags for the children to take home and to cook with parents. In addition they provided the common cooking afternoons for the parents, staff and children to enjoy together.

Materials needed

The baking bags, online learning journal for children, the signing flashcards.

Little star day nursery Ossett

The nursery operates from a converted building in Ossett. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6pm for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 79 children on roll, the majority of whom come from the local area. The nursery caters for children who are in receipt of nursery education funding. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs 17 qualified staff to work directly with the children. The deputy manager took part in the Mutual training and has introduced it to other staff.

Activities in the project

The nursery is committed that the children learn about the wider world and know more about other cultures. They have sessions where they are looking at how people live in other countries and look at



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some of the customs and activities. For example, children find out about India and taste different foods. Older children watch a video clip of a snake charmer in India, and make puppets which they then use in a show, moving them in time to different instruments. They use signing during circle time, while singing and reading stories, they also use it in one to one sessions with children who need additional support.

Impact on children

The staff report that they have found sound several benefits when implementing signs into the setting. Firstly it helps children with English as an additional language or a special education need to communicate as they are able to show practitioners or peers what they are wanting and aids their speech and development. They have also found that signing promotes inclusion of all children develops their attention when delivering it and helps to build relationships as it makes all children equal in their communication skills'.

Partnership with parents

Parents are encouraged to take an active part in their children's learning through successful strategies. For example, links between the setting and home are forged through parents writing 'wow moments' to show how well their child has done something. This impacts positively on children's self-esteem as these are discussed in group times and practitioners use the information to build upon children's interests at home. Partnerships with other professionals support children's progress and enhance opportunities for development of their language skills.

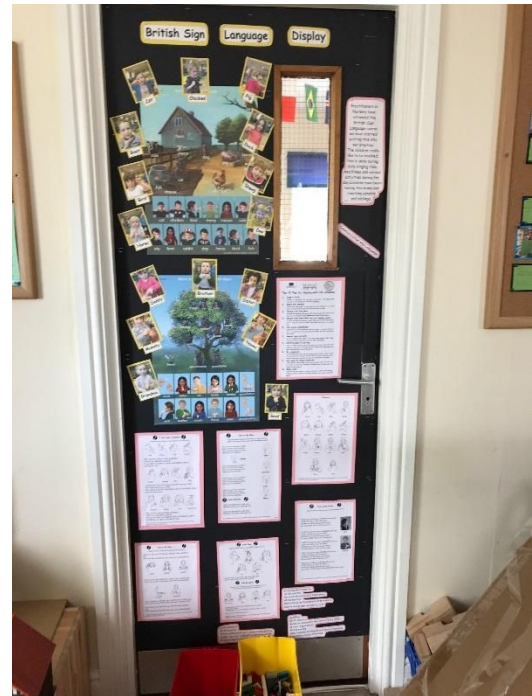
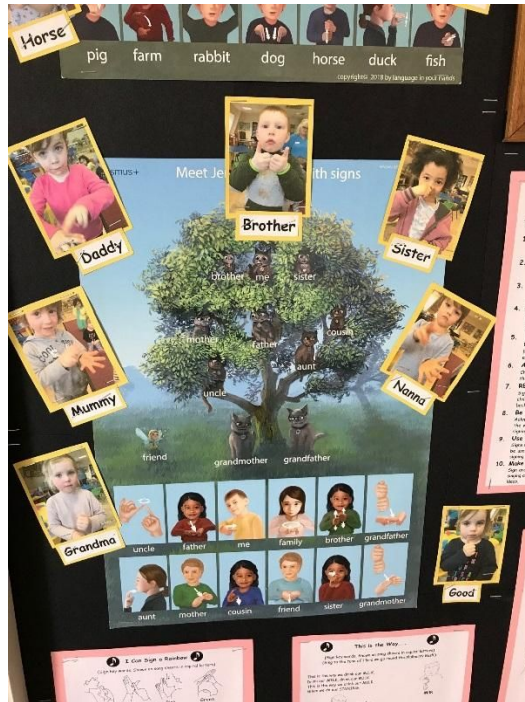
Materials needed

Posters and flash cards materials to be used in the nursery and with parents.



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The graphics are a part of materials produced for parents within the Mutual project by a designer Vid Polak.



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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS



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During the last 3 years four organizations from 5 different European countries have been involved in the Erasmus plus project MUTUAL: Multicultural and multilingual learning in early years. The aim of the project was to develop and test a more comprehensive approach to the inclusion of children from refugee/migrant backgrounds in the early year education and also to improve the quality of the practices in early education as well as attainment of vulnerable children in preschool. These are both priorities under EC document: Early Childhood and Care).

The reason and the need for the project came from the fact that we are all working with increased number of children who were born abroad or who have both parents born in another country and we are determined to do more to meet their needs.

In past generations, migrant children were integrated in the kindergarten and early years classrooms together with native speaking children without any additional support. This was based on the belief that children have no difficulty picking up the language of instruction and cultural clues and do not need special help overcoming language barriers. They were equally discouraged to use their mother tongue in preschool as it was believed this would have an impact on learning the language of instruction. These practices were initially brought into question in late 1990s.

It is now recognized that in the first years, the change of environment present a difficult challenge for the family as well as the children and whether the children and their families find themselves in an accepting environment has a great effect on their emotional and later academic welfare. Addressing the cultural as well as language barriers is now recognized as crucial in this process (Teaching Young Children a Second Language: Gordon. 2007). It is now equally recognized that the children who do not speak the language of instruction as their first language need up to five years to reach the level of proficiency which does not affect their learning (Gordon, 2007).

Child care professionals, kindergarten teachers, childminders and other carers are often among the first people from the new cultural and educational environment that the young migrant families build relationships.

However the challenges early years teachers as well as other child care professionals face are sometimes overwhelming. Examples from the partner country show the following pictures: in childcare in Soderhamn (areas of (areas of Lillberget, Kilsmyra and Ljusnevägen) the children come from as many as 25 different linguistic and cultural environments. The situation is similar in Bradford and in some parts of Leeds, UK, with up to 30 different languages in kindergarten. In Czech Republic they are facing the increased population from Poland and Ukraine and in Greece the immigrant population in some areas now equals the local population.

Over the last three years we have therefore been developing the grounds to share, disseminate and further develop the approach of multicultural/multilingual education in early years. We have developed tools, materials and trainings to equip early years practitioners, child care professionals,



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preschool teachers, child minders, special needs workers, volunteers, with the skills of how to encourage the pluricultural/plurilingual education through early years education and care. Essential in this process was the close cooperation and involvement with parents, local communities as well as policy makers. The results are available at our web page: <http://mutual.erasmus-projects.eu/>

The project has also gathered some important considerations from early years teachers which were collected through our research and evaluation work.

It is believed that the biggest challenges faced by the pre-school teachers working with migrant/foreign-born children could be reduced by the:

- The training of pre-school teachers and other staff in multicultural education should be integrated into the curriculum of preservice education as well as available (without additional expenses) in the form of inservice training. The training should cover the skills of how to help children to acquire social and emotional competences in diverse classrooms, including the topics of identity. It should also introduce the skills of how to use the key words signing method to overcome language barriers and the skills of how to involve migrant parents in the life of the kindergarten. These training materials are collected in the curriculum framework prepared by the project partners.
- Additional staffing and educational resources should be provided to kindergartens with high number of migrant children. This lower adult- child ratio would allow staff to be able to assess the needs of the children better.
- Stronger cooperation with local actors (NGOs, governmental agencies, social and health services) to better meet the needs of the children and their families.
- Stronger ties between the migrant and local communities: activities for parents and children, meeting, workshops, where parents and children from both communities mingle together.
- Support to pre-school staff: providing interpreters, teaching assistants, volunteers from the migrant communities when needed.
- Exchange of experiences among pre-school teachers in work with migrant/foreign born children and parents.

We would like to make you aware that the project has developed the Training program MUTUAL, which will continue to be available in partner organizations after the project.

The training will also be offered for early years teachers and child care professionals from other European countries via KA1 teacher training scheme.



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Project partners



Centrum för flexibelt lärande (CFL), Hälsinglands
utbildningsförbund, Sweden
<http://www.hufb.se>



Tiny Signers, UK
<http://www.tinysigners.co.uk/>



Schola Empirica, Czech Republic
<http://scholaempirica.org/>



PIA d.o.o. Velenje, Slovenia
<https://www.pia.si/>



University of Thessaly, Greece
<http://uth.gr/en/index.php>



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Appendix

First Signs to Help Language Learning in Multilingual Early Years Settings



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all gone



angry



apple



baby



ball



banana



be careful



bed



big



bird



book



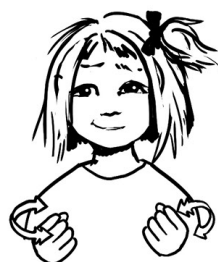
bored



boy



brother



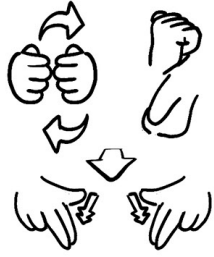
bus



car



cat



change nappy



chicken



clean



coat



cold



cow



dad



dance



danger



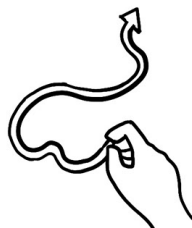
day



dirty



dog



drawing



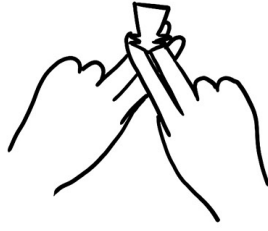
drink



duck



eat



father



finish



fish



flower



friend



frog



fun



gentle



get dressed



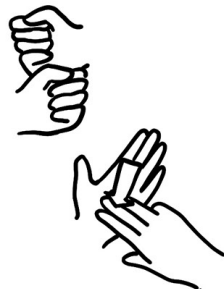
girl



goodbye



grandfather



grandmother



happy



hat



hello



help



horse



hot



house



hug



hungry



ill



laugh



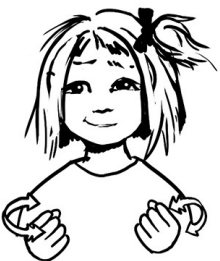
listen



loud



milk



bus/قل فاح



mom



more



mouse



music



nice



night



pain



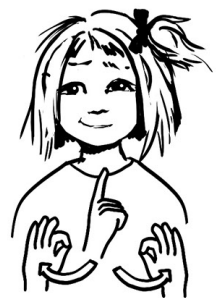
pig



play



please



quiet



rabbit



read



run



sad



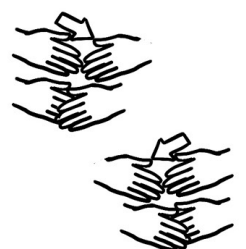
scared



see



share



shoes



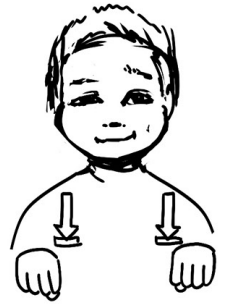
signing



sing



sister



sit down



skirt



sleep



small



smile



speak



stand



stop



sun



teddybear



thank you



tidy



tired



toilet



toys



train



tree



trousers



walk



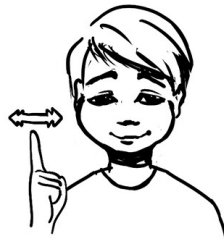
wash



water



welcome



what



where



who



work

