

Environmental Education in Kindergarten PPI Iassy

Teachers Group:

Badi Cristina, Beraru Georgeta, Lungu Lenus, Enache Firuta, Popescu Magda

The youngest children have to study the problems of the environment and the kindergarten is the place where it is efficiently done during our special activities. In this way, we thought children of four-seven years old the basic rules of behavior, which represent the educational foundation of the citizen preoccupied of his environment. So, the kindergarten has an important role in the creation of a society, which cares of its environment. The EE project we initiated is a form of non-disciplinary education that uses interdisciplinary onsets. These are centered on environment and its problems (pollution, global heating, etc.) and they imply more levels of action: cognition, behaviorism and participation. EE for this age is achieved through the emphasis of the feelings and attitudes, because the little children are very sensitive. They are at the beginning of their effort of learning different aspects of the environment: structure and function. Our example is very important at this age. This is why we have to prove that we care about everything that happens around us. At the same time the children are very wishful to participate to different actions of arranging the place they live in. They love to take care of plants and animals around them, to clean the park they play in. The achievement of these activities is also possible because of our direct implication, as teachers, through the power of our words and encouragements. In this way, it is formed a behavior that proves the children's wish of not hurting the place they live in.



EE helps the child to find out more information about nature, to form a proper behavior for his survival and of the other creatures on Earth, to take attitude in front of the problems of the nature, to find solutions to these problems, to attention the others upon their behavior in the nature. Through the activities that the children do, they are supported to reach a high level of conscience and attention towards the environment and its problems, to use their qualities in different situations, to understand the way in which the environment functions and how its problems appear. The children get a set of values, manifest their concern for nature. They prove motivation and wish to participate to different activities that want to improve the situation of the environment.

The successes we obtained during some environment projects do not mean that the problems of the nature have been solved. This is why we always had next to us parents, the nongovernmental organization ADISE, teachers of biology, geography etc. So, if the aids of protecting the environment will be reached to all the global levels, the children of this generation will be the real beneficiaries of everybody's concern on environment. In our kindergarten, the preoccupations regarding the protection of the environment have

been applied through our participation to many local, national and international projects, e.g.: “Eco-Kindergarten”, “The Nature and its Friends”, “Clean up the World”(Australia), “The Little Ecologists”(Life Link). Our slogan is: *“The nature has to be respected and not dominated. It forms a huge unit and not an infinity! Each element in it has an important role and the man is obliged to integrate himself to the entire in an harmonious way”*. It seems difficult for a child to understand that the keeping of this unity conditions the maintaining of life on Earth. This is why we started to form to our children the good habit to keep clean the classroom, their home, to not step on the grass and don the flowers. We also made activities of arranging the gardens of our kindergarten, or town, of planting trees, etc.

In order to keep the children in touch with the nature, we achieved all the daily activities in an interdisciplinary way. An interesting activity is “The Water Circle in Nature” realized during the “World Water Day”. The children learned that the pure water can be found in a small quantity on the Earth and this is why we should save it up. We also observed the influence that the water has on all the livings.



“The World of the Ones That Cannot Talk” is a project (based on the homonymous book) that presents the qualities of the plants and animals, ones role in the others life, their behavior, their environment and the help they need from us.

Another interesting activity was our trip named *“Iasi – my Beautiful Clean Town”*. Its aim was to know the flora and the fauna of our town. During the observation we made in this trip, we presented to the children the danger of extinction – because of the pollution – of some species of plants and other livings. We also counted some rules for the protection of the nature.

“SOS – the Sweepings Suffocate the Earth” was a practical activity of cleaning the parks of Iasi. The children heaped up the wrappers, papers and dump goods left by people. We put it into the sack, in special places. We also took care the trees, taking away the broken branches, etc. In the same time they learned not to tear the plants, to kill the insects or to scare the birds or other animals. Then, the children draw posters in which they asked everybody not to suffocate the Earth with sweepings. During our walks into the parks, the children gathered pine cones, acorns and chestnuts. We used them and some other materials we found in the parks in order to make toys and costumes. At the end of these activities we organized expositions with the posters and the products we made and with CDs of presentation of our activities. These can be guide materials for our future projects colleagues.

Another project is *“SOS – The Earth”*. Because of our wish to save the Earth, to stop the heating of our planet, we created this project. We all are very disturbed about the velocity

of degradation of the Earth because of the people's unconcern activities. All community has to find and apply solutions in order to stop this continuous degradation of the environment which affects the entire society. For this we considered a good idea to create this project of taking care and protection of the nature. An efficient way of solving some of the planet's problems was, and it still is, the involvement of the children, of their parents and of the other members of the community (NGO, ADISE-volunteers, teachers etc) in activities of protecting the environment. Through this project we wanted to form attitudes and abilities more instructive than informative:

- to form and develop the ecological conscience and the ecological behavior;
- to create partnerships between teachers, children, parents and community;
- to imply, in an active way, the participants in the activities of taking care and protection of the nature;
- to understand correctly the environment-man relation and the interdependence between the quality of life and the quality of nature.

We used different materials: field craft for our practical activities, seeds, seedlings and saplings, sweepings and other recyclable materials to build shelters for birds, flowerpots etc. The topics of our activities were: the development of the ecological conscience of all the participants, the reinforcement of the relation kindergarten-family-community, the attainment of the ecological habits of restoring the man-nature equilibrium. Some of the activities we made are: the discovering of the beauty around us, the satisfaction of curiosity "Curiosities of the Nature" ("*What does it happen during the winter under the snow?*"), discussions about "How does the nature's friend look?" (ecological behavior – watching ecological films: "This is good, this is not good!"). Together, we proved to the others the way "We Love And Protect the Nature" planting trees into the garden of our kindergarten and parks. We showed the value of



the protection of the nature for all of us, old and young. We participated with drawings and slogans to a march organized by all the kindergartens in the town in the Earth's Day. Because of our activities we sensitized the community which, through its representatives, gave us saplings and seedlings and supported us in various activities in the town.

In the projects, "Into the Wonderful World of the Forest" and "The Ecologists in the Holiday", we organized trips together with parents, volunteers of NGO and ADISE. In this way we contributed to the cleaning -we gathered papers and sackings and put them into personalized boxes- the forests we walked through: "*codrii Pascanilor*", "*Bucium*", "*Cetatuia*". We visited nature reserves and we found out new things about pollution and its effects upon nature, about the heating of the Earth and how can we to contribute to decreasing it through our actions. Children discover every day a world of beauty that needs to be protected for a better life. The grown-ups begin to care about children's actions.

The Teachers group, Iassy, 10 August 2007.