

Finland - report on our “ENVIRONMENT” discussions and activities

The word “ENVIRONMENT” has been introduced over a period of time -during our circle time, and during our outdoor activities, in the group of 3-6 year old pupils.. Many of them were part of our previous project taking photos of our surroundings. We could build up on their previous understanding of what “Our World Is Full of...”

The following are some of the ways we integrated the CLIL project topic to our curriculum

1. Questioning and expressing what comes to their mind - answers: houses, trees, animals, rain, apples, mushrooms – things that we see around us – at home, kindergarten, town, forest.

The word “ENVIRONMENT” has been used again and again by the staff to help them develop their thinking skills. We talked about how our surroundings can be affected by humans, by the way people ARE and what they DO. The children categorized objects in their classroom into: natural (found in the nature) and human made. They also had a worksheet and circled their answers.

The interesting part of the discussion was finding an answer to the question: are children part of human made or natural environment – the children claimed that they are “human made”

Then their drawings based on the discussion are collected to be displayed and used to continue our discussions later during the year.



2. During one session the word “ENVIRONMENT” found its connection to our human world and how we create/affect our environment.

The aim was to reinforce our August character education theme (based on “Rainbow Fish”) We have made the Kindergarten behaviour policy display in the form a fish - its scales tell about the rules and character traits we value.

As a result the word “ENVIRONMENT” has found its place on our fish – we want to be kind to natural world and respectful to the things made by others (adults and children).

This theme will be reinforced and extended during the whole year. This is because the children need lessons helping develop their understanding in a concrete context (of their immediate environment of a dining room, playground, field trip). Their ability to internalize the concept over time will be the foundation of their attitude towards environment in the future.



3. Once a week we try to take a walk in our neighbourhood. The children find things, explore the surroundings, play. They also want to bring things back to the Kindergarten to extend their play or learning. After each trip the children are asked to draw what we have seen: berries, mushrooms, apple tree, all kinds of trees, rivers, holes in the ground, or under the trees where animals can hibernate during winter, houses where people live...

Based on the trips and our findings we had the following activities: apple theme (counting, alphabet, painting and stamping with apples) mushroom theme (arts/crafts, picking, cutting, frying and tasting), seasonal changes (songs, leaves, what falls from the trees and what we can do with it, hibernating – arts/crafts as well as everyday interactions with the children, reading stories related to the things about related to what we talk about or learn).



4. The parents have been asked to cooperate as English is a second (learnt in the Kindergarten) language for our pupils. Some children have made a drawing of what they see from the window of their house – they talked about their environment with their parents in their mother tongue. One

interesting drawing had a sauna in their back yard – around sauna are birch trees and a deer family. All the drawings show our closeness to the natural environment.



What the children want to learn about the environment of the partner schools/countries

1. What is your favourite food?
2. What flowers you find around? Do you have a lot of flowers?
3. Any snow in winter?
4. Do you swim a lot in summer time (not in the swimming pool – ours is closed in summer time)
5. Can you find any water snakes in your water?
6. Can you find mushrooms (like chantarelles) around the corner of your school?