

ARGONAUTA'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN

2024











ECO-WEDNESDAY

2024

WORD FROM THE AUTHOR

With a group of twenty children aged 5 to 7, our aim was to introduce preschoolers to environmental themes over the course of 10 sessions during which we explored a plethora of subjects affecting the daily lives of children in relation to ecology and environmental protection.

As a graduate with a master's degree in teaching in France, this environmentally-focused teaching experience was a first for me. Addressing concepts like the carbon footprint with such young children, whose learning is still very concrete, seemed challenging. At this age, they are transitioning from self-centered thinking to an awareness of their environment. Environmental education at this stage is crucial for raising awareness on ecological issues from an early age and forming responsible, environmentally-conscious citizens. This early approach fosters a lasting ecological awareness and shapes planet-friendly behaviors throughout their lives.

It is essential to educate children from a young age about these environmental issues that will shape their future. This is why we decided to create this booklet summarizing these workshops, so that it can be used by other teachers, NGOs, and and anyone who wants to contribute to environmental awareness. Sharing our experiences and resources is fundamental to making these topics more accessible to everyone.

I hope this manual will be useful to you and inspire other educational initiatives in favor of our planet.

Juliette Dutemple, ESC volunteer

ECO-WEDNESDAY

2024

WHAT PURPOSE ?

This non-formal education manual is designed to raise awareness among children aged 5 to 7 about environmental protection.

The main objectives of this manual are as follows: to introduce children to the fundamental concepts of the environment, such as biodiversity, pollution, conservation of natural resources, and recycling, to familiarize them with these issues from an early age; to encourage children to adopt environmentally friendly behaviors, such as waste reducing plastic use, and preserving resources; to help children understand the importance of protecting our planet by showing them how their actions can have a positive or negative impact on the environment; to motivate children to actively participate in environmental initiatives at their level, such as participating in school or neighborhood cleanup projects, planting trees, or conserving water and energy at home; to foster cooperation and teamwork through activities and group projects, teaching them to work together to achieve common goals related to environmental protection; to stimulate children's curiosity and sense of wonder for nature by making them discover the diversity of the living world and the ecosystems around them; and to introduce simple and age-appropriate scientific concepts, such as the water cycle, the food chain, and the role of insects in the ecosystem, to lay the foundations for a deeper understanding in the future.

By achieving these objectives, this manual aims to instill in children the values and knowledge necessary to become responsible and engaged citizens in protecting the environment.

ECO-WEDNESDAYS

2024

CONTEXT AND CONTENT

As a European Solidarity Corps long-term volunteer at Argonauta, my daily routine was filled with various tasks. One of the most significant was conducting 10 workshops focused on environmental protection with a kindergarten class in Betina. Our aim was to introduce concepts of environmental protection and ecological awareness. We covered a wide range of topics, including the importance of biodiversity, plastic pollution in the oceans, the significance of wetlands, carbon footprint, the world of insects, the impact of our consumption patterns through fashion and diet, as well as issues related to water, forests, and waste.

Our intention was to plant a seed of environmental consciousness in these young minds. In this booklet, you will find detailed lesson plans and accompanying materials for 10 workshops, designed to be implemented with children aged 5 to 8. The manual includes activities and exercises tailored to be accessible and engaging for young children, while instilling essential values and knowledge to help them become responsible and environmentally-conscious citizens.

FOR WHO?

This manual is aimed at anyone looking to implement awareness bringing workshops within a non-formal education framework. Therefore, it is intended for teachers, NGOs, associations, parents, leisure centers, and professionals working in classrooms. We invite you to draw inspiration from our workshops, as sharing our educational resources will help us gather significant materials to foster an awakened society conscious of environmental issues.

ECO-WEDNESDAY

DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES

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INTRODUCTION TO BIODIVERSITY

Introducing children to biodiversity is essential to awaken their environmental by relying their known awareness on environment. By understanding the diversity of life on Earth, they develop a deep respect for all living things. This early awareness encourages them to adopt environmentally friendly habits throughout their lives. By understanding the links different kinds of between species and ecosystems, they are better equipped to understand environmental issues and act to Thus, an introduction resolve them. to biodiversity serves as a solid foundation for holistic environmental education.



SKILLS:

- Motor skills
- Communication
- Problem solving

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Differentiate between the living and the non-living
- Understanding the notion of biodiversity (living and diverse world)
- Understanding the link between human species and nature

COMPETENCES:

- Recognize living and non-living elements in a collection of images
- Utilize knowledge and the concepts learned during the session to draw living beings (animals, plants, insects)
- Coordinate your gestures and movements according to instructions

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Tables in 4 islands of 5 students
- 3 sets of labels
- Colored pencils
- Erasers
- Pencil sharpeners
- 20 drawing sheets
- A title sheet "Biodiversity" to post it
- Scotch tape to stick their drawings
- Phone with music
- Playlist

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

Presentation of the theme (5')

Activity 1: A collection of objects (15')

Activity 2: Imaginative drawing of biodiversity (20')

Activity 3: Dancing biodiversity (13')

Conclusion and picture! (7')



TIPS FOR THE FACILITATOR

To carry out the activities successfully, make sure you have all the necessary equipment and a secure space. Clearly explain the objectives at each stage and the importance of each activity in their learning. Plan the time so that children don't feel rushed but have enough time for each step.

ACTIVITY 1: COLLECTION OF OBJECTS

Children are grouped into five teams and are given a set of paper images representing living (animals, plants, etc.) and non-living (various plastic objects, pebbles, etc.) elements. Firstly, without any constraints or information about these images, children must classify these images into different general categories. Then, each group is asked to explain their ranking. Children are encouraged to think about the notion of "non-living" by asking them the question: "How do we recognize a living being?" After this discussion, a summary is made and a definition of a living being is proposed: "A living being needs to feed in order to live and grow, it is born and it dies, it can reproduce. »

Secondly, children are invited to sort again between what is alive and what is not. They are encouraged to think about the diversity of elements in the category of living things by describing these elements. To conclude the workshop, the notion of biodiversity is introduced to summarize the discussion.





ACTIVITY 2: IMAGINATIVE DRAWING OF BIODIVERSITY

The objective of this activity is to create "the biodiversity wall". To do this, choose an empty wall where the title "Biodiversity" has previously been displayed. At the end of the session, the children's imaginative drawings will be displayed. Each child is given a sheet to color. They must color the already drawn part which will serve as inspiration - this will allow a drawing at the end of the session for those who need more time to create - and draw other living elements on the other half blank of the sheet.

The objective is to show that the living world is diverse. Consequently, the instructions are to draw elements of different shapes, sizes and colors, from nature, using their knowledge and drawing inspiration from the images from the first activity.





ACTIVITY 3: DANCING BIODIVERSITY

Children go to a space dedicated to physical activity. The aim of this activity is to put into practice the notions previously acquired by embodying biodiversity through dance and mime, in order to understand them in more depth. By launching the playlist, children dance freely to the music. When the music stops, an element of their drawings is evoked, inspiring them to bring biodiversity to life miming that element.

CONCLUSION

To conclude the session, ask the children to recall the definition of biodiversity and give examples of elements that constitute it. Then, take a group photo in front of the Biodiversity Wall while shouting together "BIODIVERSITY"! This will wrap up the session memorably and reinforce the students' commitment to the topic.

PLASTIC IN THE OCEAN

Educating young children about the problem of plastic in the oceans is essential to making them aware of the devastating impact of plastic life. This pollution on marine promotes sustainable behavior changes, encouraging the of plastic use, recycling reduction participation in beach cleaning initiatives for addition, this early awareness strengthens their sense of personal efficacy and encourages them to protect marine biodiversity. This early awareness allows them to become active advocates for the preservation of the marine biodiversity for future and generations. Finally, this promotes the formation of a conscious and committed generation, ready to preserve our planet for generations to come.

SKILLS:

- Communication and social skills
- Problem solving
- Critical thinking

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Realize that there is more plastic than fish in the ocean
- Become aware of the threat that plastic poses to fish
- Become aware of the disintegration time of waste
- Discover solutions to save the ocean

COMPETENCES:

- Collaborate in groups to share ideas and achieve common goals
- Analyze information, evaluate actions, and find solutions to challenges
- Think critically about environmental issues and understand the impact of waste on marine ecosystems

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- The ocean box
- Tags: fish, sand, water, waste, etc. (activity 1)
- Various waste (or images of waste) (activity 2)
- Signs with numbers (activity 2)
- Elements of good/bad actions: images stuck on cardboard (activity 3)
- 2 fishing rods: images on cardboard (activity 3)
- Game board to project (activity 3)
- 2 pawns: seahorse and sunfish (activity 3)
- List of points (activity 3)
- "Fish rescuer" medals

LESSON STRUCTURE

Presentation of the theme (3')

Activity 1: What is found in the ocean? (12')

Activity 2: The Auction of Decay (15')

Activity 3: "Save the Fish!" (23')

Conclusion and picture! (7')

PLASTIC IN THE OCEAN

TIPS FOR THE FACILITATOR

For a successful session on waste and plastic in the ocean, carefully prepare the resources, encourage children interaction, create a non-judgmental space, and conclude with reflections and concrete actions to promote environmental awareness and children engagement.

ACTIVITY 1: WHAT IS FOUND IN THE OCEAN?

The objective of this activity is to explore the contents of the ocean by engaging children in interactive reflection. To begin, children are encouraged to express their hypotheses about what they think can be found in the ocean. In a circle, an open discussion is fostered without judgment or grading of responses. Following this, hypotheses are verified by simulating a "fishing" activity in the ocean using an ocean box filled with various objects or images. Each child, taking turns, reaches into the box, silently selects an item, names it, and then returns to their place. After this phase, children are invited to carefully observe their findings and categorize them. Categories identified by the children are written on labels and placed on the ground. Children are encouraged to place their different The items the categories. results often disproportionate amount of waste compared to fish. Children are then encouraged to reflect on the consequences of this situation on marine life. To conclude, the facilitator explains that fish ingest plastic, posing a threat to their survival and marine biodiversity. The slow decomposition of plastic, juxtaposed with the constant flow of waste, is emphasized, highlighting the urgency of changing our habits to prevent our oceans from becoming mere plastic dumps.



ACTIVITY 2: THE AUCTION OF DECAY

This workshop aims to raise awareness among students that waste, especially plastic, decomposes very slowly, posing a long-term problem for oceans. Children are divided into small groups and are presented with several numbered signs in front of them, representing years rather than euros as in an auction. The facilitator presents several pieces of waste, such as a plastic bottle, and children must collaborate in groups to choose the sign corresponding to the number of years needed for the decomposition of this waste. The group closest to the correct number wins the item. At the end, the group that has won the most items wins the "auction". It is emphasized that plastic takes much longer to degrade than cardboard or organic waste. By linking this with waste in the oceans, it is concluded that the problem of plastic in the oceans cannot be solved without human intervention.





ACTIVITY 3: "SAVE THE FISH!"

This activity involves preparing an "ocean box" with labels representing "good actions" and "bad actions" to save marine life, along with a projected game board with two tokens. Children, divided into two groups representing seahorses and moonfish, take turns using a fishing rod to catch two items from the box, name them, and then choose an action together to save the fish and earn points. The outcomes determine whether the tokens advance or retreat on the rescue scale displayed on the screen. The first team to reach "saved" wins the game.

CONCLUSION

To conclude the session, ask the children about the positive actions they can take to save the fish and those to avoid. This approach will make their power of action more concrete. As a reward for their commitment to fish rescue, give them a "Fish Rescuer" medal. Capture this moment by taking a group photo with their medals.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WETLANDS

Educating young children about the richness of wetlands is crucial for raising awareness of the importance of these unique ecosystems. Wetlands host exceptional biodiversity, providing essential habitats for many species. They also play a vital role in water filtration and flood prevention. By understanding these functions, children develop a respect for and a desire to protect these valuable environments. This early education fosters a future generation committed to conservation and ecological sustainability.

SKILLS:

- Logical reasoning
- Fine motors skills
- Physical coordination

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Explore the concept of wetlands, understand their significance in nature, and learn ways to protect them
- Introduce the notion of ecosystems and grasp the fundamentals through the study of wetlands
- Gain an understanding of the origami process and master the steps required for its creation

COMPETENCES:

- Observation and analysis to point the difference of two pictures
- Mastering the reading of origami instructions and being able to translate them into hands-on practice
- Coordinate movements while adhering to constraints, aiming to go as fast as possible

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Sheets for the spot the difference game
- Ready-made frog origami
- Green sheets for origami
- Instructions sheets for origami
- Glue
- Pens
- Two seashells for the relay
- Equipment for the race zone: tape, rocks, waves, pond, duck, jumping frog, frog

LESSON STRUCTURE

Introduction: what is a wetland?

Activity 1: Zoom on the pond

Activity 2: Let's create our jumping frog

Activity 3: The frogs race in the swamp

Conclusion

TIPS FOR THE FACILITATOR

To ensure a successful session, it's essential to prepare the materials and activity space in advance. It's advisable to master origami beforehand to know each step, present the children with a finished frog, and pique their interest. The various stages of the race should be demonstrated by an adult, and repeated as necessary, to ensure that the children clearly understand each step.

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS A WETLAND?

Start the session by asking the children, "What is a wetland?"

Definition:

Wetlands include marshes, lakes, ponds, bogs, wet meadows, lagoons, and mangroves. These are ecosystems rich in biodiversity where water is the primary factor influencing the environment, flora, and fauna. They act like sponges, absorbing large amounts of precipitation and storing water, which prevents flooding over larger areas. Wetlands and natural forests play a crucial role in maintaining reserves of clean, fresh water. They are essential for populations, other ecosystems, and our climate, due to their roles in water regulation, flood control, and water purification.

ACTIVITY 1: ZOOM ON THE POND

The pond is a concept often familiar to children and interesting to explore as it harbors various species. For this activity, use a spot-the-difference game: a sheet shows two pond images, one original and the other with missing elements. Children must circle the differences. Then ask them, "What can be found in a pond?" Fish, ducks, insects, plants, frogs, birds... Explain that an ecosystem is where many different species live together.

The goal is to highlight the importance of biodiversity and emphasize the need to protect wetlands, threatened by climate change. Ask children if they know wetlands and have visited any. Provide local examples to encourage visits and explain how they can help: creating ponds, installing water points to attract wildlife, and getting involved with local associations.

ACTIVITY 2: LET'S CREATE OUR JUMPING FROG

This origami workshop aims to diversify activities by offering a playful approach that stimulates children's reasoning, coordination, and fine motor skills. Make sure to have several adults available to assist children who may encounter difficulties. Give each child a sheet of paper with instructions for making the frog and some glue. Also, provide markers for drawing the frog's eyes and mouth. Explain to them that this frog will be used for the next activity, which will be a race.





ACTIVITY 3: THE FROGS RACE IN THE SWAMP

The race is fun and dynamic. The different race zones should be prepared before the session (see race organization sheet): the first for frog jumps, the second for hopping from rock to rock without touching the water, the third for moving like a duck while avoiding puddles, and the fourth for a straight line moving like a frog. Use adhesive tape to mark the zones and place an origami frog, a duck picture, and another frog picture to remind children what to do at each stage. The children are divided into two teams and organize a relay. The first team to finish wins.



CONCLUSION

To conclude, ask what types of wetlands there are and how we can help them. Remind them of local wetlands and invite them to visit them with their families, suggesting this to their parents. Finally, take a nice group photo with the frogs!

CARBON FOOTPRINT

Teaching young children about carbon footprint sensitizes them to the impact of their actions on the environment, encourages them to adopt sustainable behaviors, empowers them to reduce their carbon footprint, prepares them to make informed decisions for the future, and contributes to creating a society more conscious and committed to preserving the planet.



CARBON FOOTPRINT

SKILLS:

- Focus and concentration
- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Collaboration

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Discover and understand what the carbon footprint is
- Identification of environmental impacts
- Development of ecological behavior

COMPETENCES:

- Understanding of basic concepts related to carbon footprints, such as greenhouse gases and pollution
- Skill in identifying polluting actions and proposing eco-friendly alternatives
- Ability to make informed choices to reduce their carbon footprint, applying knowledge from the workshop

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Slideshow to introduce concepts
- Maze game sheets
- Red and green questions
- 4 posters with a footprint
- Red and green paint
- Wooden cotton swab or paintbrushes (optional)
- Playlist

LESSON STRUCTURE

Introduction: What is the carbon footprint?

Activity 1: The labyrinths

Activity 2: What is the carbon footprint of the class?

Conclusion

CARBON FOOTPRINT

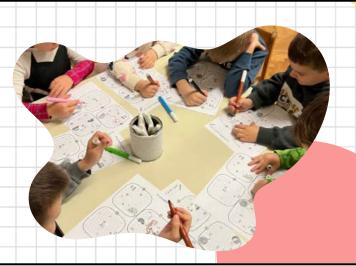
TIPS FOR THE FACILITATOR

Prepare concrete and visual examples to explain the often abstract concepts of carbon footprint and environmental impact to young children. Encourage their active participation by asking questions and fostering discussions related to their daily lives, so they can better understand these concepts.

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS THE CARBON FOOTPRINT?

Begin the session by asking the children what a carbon footprint is, encouraging discussion. Then, use a slideshow projected on the board to provide elements to help them understand this concept. This slideshow can include air pollution, greenhouse gases, CO2, and climate change, showing that these result from human activities such as agriculture, factories, and transportation. Show that there are different options, with some activities being less polluting than others. For example, driving alone produces more pollution than taking a bus with multiple passengers, while walking or biking produces none at all. Demonstrate that we have choices in our daily actions and the power to make a difference. Provide them with a definition of a carbon footprint. Conclude the slideshow with a quiz presenting two actions, prompting them to choose the one with the least environmental impact, to ensure their understanding of the concept.





ACTIVITY 1: THE LABYRINTHS

This activity aims to reinforce the concept of a carbon footprint in a fun way through a maze game. The children receive a sheet with four mazes to solve, each illustrating different daily actions and their impact on the environment. Before starting, ask the children to name the actions depicted and consider their environmental impact. Engage in a discussion about these actions to deepen their understanding.

ACTIVITY 2: WHAT IS THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF THE CLASS?

This workshop aims to help children concretely understand the concept of a carbon footprint by measuring their own. The group is divided into four teams. Each team receives a blank sheet with the outline of a footprint, as well as green and red paint. The facilitator states green and red affirmations, projected on the board for clarity. Children who answer yes to green questions add a green dot to the poster, while those who answer yes to red questions add a red dot. At the end of the game, compare the posters: the team with the most green dots on their footprint has the lowest carbon footprint and wins.



CONCLUSION

To conclude this session, ask the children how they can act to reduce their carbon footprint. Emphasize that they have real power through their daily choices and that they can genuinely impact the future of the environment. Take a group photo with the posters showing their carbon footprints.

THE FASCINATING WORLD OF INSECTS

Educating young children about insects is essential to raise their awareness of biodiversity and make them understand the importance of insects in ecosystems (pollination, decomposition, etc.). This develops their curiosity and basic science skills. Additionally, it reduces fears and prejudices towards these creatures and encourages a positive attitude. Finally, it promotes long-term environmental protection.

SKILLS:

- Observation, identification and reactivity
- Fine motors skills
- Creativity and artistic expression

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Become aware of the importance of insects in ecosystems
- Ecological responsibility: first approach to the impact of pesticides and pollution on insects and, by extension, on ecosystems and food crops
- Practical knowledge about insect habitats

COMPETENCES:

- Basic understanding of insect biology, habitats, and roles in the environment through observation and analysis
- Practical skills in constructing insect hotels using natural and recycled materials
- Improving body expression through dance and mime, imitating insect movements for coordination and confidence

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Pictures of "extraodinary" insects
- Lotto grids
- Pieces
- 20 cans
- Small pieces of wood, rolled cardboard, pine cone
- Yellow, red, black paint
- 20 pairs of wings (cut from a plastic water bottle)
- Glue
- Paint brushes
- Pliers for cutting pieces of wood
- Playlist

LESSON STRUCTURE

Introduction: Let's explore the fascinating world of insects

Activity 1: The insect lottery

Activity 2: Let's create insect hotels

Activity 3: Let's dance insects!

Conclusion

TIPS FOR THE FACILITATOR

To successfully conduct the proposed activities, ensure thorough preparation with all necessary materials. Clearly explain the objectives to the children and encourage their active participation at each step. Be flexible to adapt activities according to children's needs and provide individualized support if necessary. Finally, assess children's understanding and offer constructive feedback at the end of each activity.

INTRODUCTION: LET'S EXPLORE THE FASCINATING WORLD OF INSECTS

The session begins with a slideshow projected to introduce the world of insects, observable all around us with a magnifying glass or a microscope. A wide diversity of insects is presented, explaining their crucial role: pollination, decomposition of waste, soil maintenance, plant protection, and their participation in the food chain. It is highlighted that almost half of insects are threatened with extinction due to pesticides and pollution, which would seriously affect food crops. Emphasize that to protect them, it's necessary to preserve their habitats, eliminate insecticides, diversify crops and respect insects. Link to the next activity, indicating that insect hotels will then be created, and photos of exotic insects are shown to explore biodiversity.





ACTIVITY 1: THE INSECT LOTTERY

This activity involves playing insect bingo with the bugs that inhabit our gardens. Each child receives a bingo card with different insects in the squares, and each table gets some markers. The facilitator randomly calls out the insects, noting them down. The children place a marker on the corresponding insect on their card. The first one to complete their card shouts "bingo." The facilitator checks the card against their notes. The game can be replayed several times by swapping the cards among the children.

ACTIVITY 2: LET'S CREATE INSECT HOTELS

This workshop requires preparing the space before the session. The children, divided into small groups, will sit at tables where tin cans, pieces of wood, straw, pine cones, cardboard, etc., have been previously collected and arranged.

The activity is presented to the children by explaining that the garden insects will be protected by offering them cozy homes. Tin cans will be used and filled with materials appreciated by the insects to create insect hotels. These will be placed in the gardens to provide a refuge for the insects. It is helpful to show a pre-made insect hotel as a model.

The first step is to fill the tin cans with the materials on the table. Next, the cans can be painted, possibly decorated like flying insects, with ladybug or bee patterns. In this case, wings previously cut from plastic bottles are glued by the facilitator, and a string can be attached to hang the insect hotels in the trees.



ACTIVITY 3: LET'S DANCE INSECTS!

The children head to a space dedicated to physical activity. The aim of this activity is to embody the biodiversity of insects through dance and mime to gain a deeper understanding of them. As the playlist starts, children dance freely to the music. When the music stops, an insect is mentioned, and they must mimic it. It's possible to show an image of the insect to help them associate the name with the species.

CONCLUSION

To conclude the session, emphasize the importance of insect hotels. Ask the children to list the contributions insects make to life on Earth, highlighting their indispensability. It can also be beneficial to revisit images of beautiful, extraordinary, and exotic insects to evoke admiration for their beauty rather than fear.

ECO-RESPONSIBLE FASHION

It is crucial to educate young children about the effects of fast fashion to raise their awareness of the environmental impact of this industry, which significantly contributes to pollution and resource wastage. By showing them alternatives such as second-hand shopping and upcycling, we teach them more sustainable and responsible practices. This helps them develop an ecological consciousness and value recycling and reusing clothes. Furthermore, they learn to appreciate quality and durability rather than quantity and fleeting trends. Ultimately, this knowledge encourages them to become informed and environmentally respectful consumers.

SKILLS:

- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- Motor coordination

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Understand the environmental implications of the fashion industry
- Learn practical skills to transform an old item of clothing into a new item
- Develop ecological sensitivity and responsible consumption behaviors

COMPETENCES:

- Develop fine motor skills through a manual activity (cutting, tying)
- Think about consumption alternatives to reduce the impact of fashion on the environment
- Work as a team in physical activity to avoid being touched by the "trash" and achieve the common goal

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Slideshow introduction
- 20 old and large t-shirts
- 20 scissors
- 20 pencils
- Tape
- Clothes
- Trash sign
- Collective Wardrobe sign
- 2 bins

LESSON STRUCTURE

Introduction: what are the effects of fashion on the environment?

Activity 1: Upcycling

Activity 2 : The Collective Wardrobe and the Threat of the Garbage

Bin

Conclusion

TIPS FOR THE FACILITATOR

To ensure the success of this session, the facilitator should thoroughly prepare the room and provide clear, age-appropriate instructions. Using attractive visuals and concrete examples will maintain the children's interest. Encouraging active participation and valuing each contribution will strengthen their engagement.

INTRODUCTION: WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF FASHION ON THE ENVIRONMENT?

Begin by introducing the theme of fashion and its impacts on the environment. Use a slideshow to illustrate the concepts discussed, making the subject more tangible for the children.

Ask the children if they know where their clothes are made and take a moment to look at the labels together. Explain that most clothes come from China and show on a map where this country is located. Invite the group to think about the distance traveled by the clothes and ask them how they think these clothes make their way to Croatia. Discuss the means of transportation used, such as airplanes and ships, and the high number of trips required, which results in significant pollution.

Explain simply that the production techniques of fast fashion are harmful to the environment because they consume a lot of water and use many chemicals, polluting rivers and emitting CO2 into the air.

Mention the 4 million tons of clothes thrown away each year and prompt the children to reflect on the absurdity of this pollution ending up in the trash. Then, ask how we can dress without polluting and let the children open the discussion.

Conclude by offering solutions: buying fewer clothes, prioritizing those made locally, purchasing second-hand clothes, making their own clothes, or practicing upcycling. Explain what upcycling is and announce the next activity: transforming old t-shirts into tote bags.





ACTIVITY 1: UPCYCLING

For this activity, it's necessary to prepare a sufficient number of old t-shirts, preferably in larger sizes, corresponding to the number of children. It's advisable to inform parents a few weeks in advance so they can prepare for the session. The facilitator should also have an old t-shirt to demonstrate the steps along with the children. Additionally, having a finished model is useful to stimulate the interest and motivation of the children. Explain to the children that they will be transforming a t-shirt into a bag, convenient for shopping, sports, library visits, etc.

Each child receives a t-shirt, a pair of scissors, and a marker. Prepare the cutting process by marking dashes on the areas to be cut: the sleeves, the collar, and the bottom of the t-shirt. Then, cut along the marked lines. Tie the bottom of the bag securely. Refer to the explanatory sheet provided in the appendix to guide you.



ACTIVITY 2: THE COLLECTIVE WARDROBE AND THE THREAT OF THE GARBAGE BIN

In this physical activity, children move around in a room that has been previously set up with three distinct zones: the house with clothes, the garbage, and the collective wardrobe. Clothes can be real items or cardboard tags. Each zone is clearly marked with written signs and drawings for better understanding by the children. A large bin is placed in the garbage zone, while another is located in the collective wardrobe zone.

The story told to the children is as follows: they have lots of clothes they no longer wear and don't know what to do with them, knowing they risk being thrown away. The school then organizes a collective wardrobe where children can bring clothes they no longer wear so that other children can take them and wear them again.

The goal of the game is for the children to move from the house to the collective wardrobe without being touched by those playing the role of the garbage. When a child is touched, their garment is thrown into the garbage bin. Students can make round trips to bring as many clothes as possible to the collective wardrobe. At the end of the activity, the clothes in the garbage bin and those in the collective wardrobe are counted, with the goal being for the collective wardrobe to have more clothes. This activity can be repeated several times to reinforce the concepts discussed.



CONCLUSION

To conclude the session, ask the children what they learned from the activity and what ways they can dress without polluting the planet. Take a group photo with the bags to capture the moment and reinforce their commitment. Congratulate them on their participation and encourage them to share these practices with their family and friends.

LOCAL AND SEASONAL FOOD

It is particularly important to educate young children about the beneficial effects of local and seasonal food on biodiversity and the planet because eating habits are formed early in life. By instilling these values at a young age, they develop a lasting environmental consciousness that will influence their future choices. Additionally, children have the persuade their families, which can amplify the positive impact of these practices. By learning the importance of supporting local producers and preserving ecosystems, they become agents of change from an early age.

LOCAL AND SEASONAL FOOD

SKILLS:

- Observation and logical reasoning
- Collaboration
- Creativity

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Understand that our food choices have an impact on the environment
- Identify the main means of transportation used to get food to stores
- Learn basic gardening and pot decorating skills, understanding how to grow herbs and participating in simple art activities

COMPETENCES:

- Improve their hand-eye coordination and control of fine movements by handling gardening tools and performing artistic activities
- Learn to work as a team by sharing tasks and cooperating with other children
- Express their creativity through artistic activities such as painting and decorating pots, developing their imagination and aesthetic sense

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Large scale world map
- Food labels
- Transport labels
- Egg box
- Shovels or spoons
- Water bottles with holed cap for watering
- Potting soil
- Seeds
- Paint
- Stencils
- Paint brushes
- Cans with holes in the bottom

LESSON STRUCTURE

Introduction: Do our food choices affect the environment?

Activity 1: Where does the food come from?

Activity 2: Let's grow our aromatical plants

Conclusion

TIPS FOR THE FACILITATOR

To conduct this session successfully, meticulously prepare the necessary materials in different zones and ask open-ended questions to encourage children's participation. During the gardening and decoration activities, provide clear instructions while fostering creativity and collaboration among children. Remain available to assist and guide children as needed. At the end of the session, recap the main points discussed and encourage the group to continue their commitment to sustainable eating habits.

INTRODUCTION: DO OUR FOOD CHOICES AFFECT THE ENVIRONMENT?

Start the session by asking a question about the children's daily lives: "What did you have for breakfast this morning?" Take note of the foods and ask them if they know where they are grown. Let the discussion open naturally. Then, inquire about the impact of our diet on the environment, linking it to the previous session to show that the further food travels, the more it contributes to pollution. Explain also that meat production is particularly polluting due to its greenhouse gas emissions.

Next, ask if they are familiar with specific dietary regimes or different eating habits. Briefly explain what it means to be vegetarian or vegan. Emphasize that there are many dietary regimes and that each person has their own preferences.

Finally, address the topic of the impact of our dietary choices on the environment. Emphasize that our decisions can truly make a difference. Conclude by highlighting that our diet can be a way to positively contribute to environmental preservation.



ACTIVITY 1: WHERE DOES THE FOOD COME FROM?

The aim of this activity is to raise awareness among children about the origin of fruits and vegetables sold in their local supermarket. Firstly, the facilitator must note the origins of the fruits and vegetables sold there. The session takes place around a large world map where the origins of the foods are indicated by colored dots, with a house in Croatia to locate where the children are.

Standing in a circle around the map, the children take turns picking a label representing a food item and a color. They must then locate on the map the origin of that food item and choose a label representing the corresponding mode of transportation to bring it back home: by foot, by bike, by car, by truck, by plane, or by boat.

Once all the food items are placed on the map with their mode of transportation, a discussion opens up about the importance of favoring local products to preserve the environment, as well as the benefits of consuming seasonal fruits and vegetables to reduce environmental impact and avoid importing out-of-season products.



ACTIVITY 2: LET'S GROW OUR AROMATIC PLANTS

For the continuation of the session, divide the children into two groups. One group starts with a gardening workshop, while the other begins with pot decoration. The groups exchange midway through the session. If there is insufficient supervision, conduct the gardening workshop with the entire class before moving on to the pot decoration.

The objective of the gardening workshop is to demonstrate that the least polluting way to eat is by growing one's own food, promoting local and seasonal eating. Provide a variety of seeds suitable for the season. Each child receives an empty egg carton labeled with their name and a spoon. They fill the small holes with potting soil, place seeds in them, and lightly water them. The facilitator will oversee the growth of the seedlings.

The preparation of the pots involves accommodating the aromatic herbs. Each child receives a tin can previously pierced at the bottom. The painting workshop allows children to unleash their artistic creativity by decorating the pots as they wish, possibly using stencils. The pots will then be left to dry in a designated area.



CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of the session, a photo is taken together with the egg cartons. The importance of knowing the origin of our food and its impact on the planet is emphasized. The various dietary regimes and their ecological implications are recalled. By choosing local foods and adopting sustainable eating habits, it is emphasized that everyone can contribute to preserving our environment.

PRESERVING WATER THROUGH ART

It is essential to educate young children about water conservation to instill responsible habits from an early age. By teaching them the value of water, we empower them to become stewards of this vital resource for future generations. Educating children about water preservation helps them understand the environmental and social implications of water scarcity. Ultimately, fostering a sense of responsibility towards water conservation in children contributes to building a sustainable and water-conscious society.



PRESERVING WATER THROUGH ART

SKILLS:

- Collaboration and teamwork
- Creativity
- Communication

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Understanding the importance of water and conservation methods
- Development of artistic expression and environmental awareness
- Learn how to educate others by creating an exhibition

COMPETENCES:

- Raising awareness of water conservation by analyzing the consumption of daily actions and thinking about alternatives
- Artistic expression using different mediums and techniques to express an idea and convey a message
- Writing and structuring ideas for informative and engaging content

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Introduction slide
- Images + posters for the water sorting game
- Posters or drawings on the theme of water and water saving for inspiration
- Sheets of paper for creating artwork
- Painting equipment (paints, brushes, water cups, paper towels)
- Whiteboard for adult dictation + pen

LESSON STRUCTURE

Introduction: how to raise awareness about water conservation?

Activity 1: Water sorting game

Activity 2: Artistic painting

Activity 3: Description of the exhibition

Conclusion

PRESERVING WATER THROUGH ART

TIPS FOR THE FACILITATOR

To conduct a session on water conservation for young children, it's essential to be interactive and keep them engaged. Use concrete examples and visual aids to illustrate the importance of water preservation in a playful manner. Encourage children's participation by asking open-ended questions and integrating elements of play. Connect with their daily lives by emphasizing the impact of their actions on water conservation at home.

INTRODUCTION: HOW TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT WATER CONSERVATION?

To introduce this session, it is recommended to use a visual aid such as a slideshow or a board to illustrate the concepts to be discussed. Announce the theme of the activity by explaining that you will be creating an exhibition together on the importance of water and ways to conserve this resource. Use simple language and concrete examples to facilitate the children's understanding of the concept of water conservation. The aim of this session is to show students that they can raise awareness among their peers about environmental protection by sharing their knowledge, whether by creating posters, changing their habits, distributing leaflets, or organizing artistic exhibitions.

Next, initiate a discussion on the importance of water, emphasizing its various uses and vital role for life on Earth. Encourage children to share their experiences and knowledge on the subject. Project images illustrating different water uses across various environments, and then briefly discuss with the children methods for conserving water in everyday life for each example.

Finally, ask the children how not having access to clean drinking water could impact their daily lives. The objective is to demonstrate that water is essential for life, necessary for drinking, washing, and growing food, thus highlighting the crucial importance of protecting it for the well-being of all.





ACTIVITY 1: WATER SORTING GAME

The children are divided into small groups. Each group has a set of images representing different daily life activities, along with a large sheet with a two-column table to sort the images. These columns are respectively titled "Uses a lot of water" and "Uses less water", with simple pictograms to help children identify the categories (such as a small water drop and a large water drop).

The children gather in groups around the "sorting posters". Explain the rules of the water sorting game, indicating to the children that they must sort the images based on the amount of water used for each activity. Once all the images have been sorted, review each category with the children. Ask them to explain their choices and pose questions to prompt them to think about ways to save water in activities that use a lot of it.

For activities that use a lot of water, you can use images depicting actions such as taking a bath, watering a garden with a hose, filling a swimming pool, washing a car with a hose, or brushing teeth while letting the faucet run. For activities that do not use much water, you can use images representing actions like taking a shower, watering a garden with a watering can, brushing teeth with a glass of water, using a dishwasher, or watering plants with rainwater.

ACTIVITY 2: ARTISTIC PAINTING

Each child has a sheet of paper, paint, brushes, a little water, and a cloth. To stimulate the children's inspiration, you can show them some examples of World Water Day posters.

Explain to them that they will now create their own artworks on the theme of water and water conservation. Encourage them to use their imagination and express their ideas through their art by inviting them to explore different artistic techniques, mix colors, and experiment with shapes and textures. Emphasize that there is no wrong way to create art, but the essential thing is to unleash their imagination. Remind them that this is an exhibition aimed at raising awareness among viewers about the need to preserve water as a precious resource.

ACTIVITY 3: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXHIBITION

This guided activity aims to develop the description of the exhibition. Explain to the students the importance of having an explanatory text to understand the purpose of the exhibition, particularly why water is crucial and how everyone can contribute to its preservation. Encourage them to share what they have learned about water and water conservation, and take note of their ideas for the description. Discuss together the title of the exhibition. By encouraging them to share their knowledge and ideas, you actively involve them in the creation process, giving them a sense of ownership and pride. Once drafted, read the description aloud to ensure it accurately reflects the students' knowledge and ideas, then ask them to validate it.



CONCLUSION

To conclude this session, express your gratitude to the children for their participation and contributions. Congratulate them on their creative work and their understanding of the importance of water. Announce the date and location of the exhibition, and invite them and their loved ones to come visit it.

SAVE OUR FORESTS

It is essential to educate young children about the vital roles of forests and their preservation because they are the future guardians of our environment. By understanding the importance of forests from a young age, children develop a deep connection with nature and learn to respect it. Their education on the ecological functions of forests, such as climate regulation, biodiversity conservation and air and water purification, makes them aware of the impact of their actions on the environment. By raising awareness of the issues of deforestation, climate change and biodiversity loss, we prepare them to become agents of change for a sustainable future. Through education about forests, young children are inspired to protect these precious ecosystems and adopt environmentally friendly behaviors throughout their lives.

THE ROLE OF FORESTS

SKILLS:

- Observation and identification
- Critical thinking
- Creativity

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Become aware of the vital roles played by forests in biodiversity conservation, climate regulation and resource provision
- Understand the impact of human consumption on forests and the importance of sustainable practices
- develop an appreciation of forest biodiversity and the interdependence of species

COMPETENCES:

- Development of forest-related culture and environmental concepts, including conservation, biodiversity and sustainability.
- Through mask making, they will improve their artistic skills and express their understanding of forest animals in creative ways.
- Group discussions and activities promote teamwork, communication and sharing of ideas among children, strengthening collaboration skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Images representing the forest
- Various everyday objects
- Mask pattern
- Color pencil
- Various materials: stickers, feathers, tissue paper, etc.
- Glue
- Scissors
- String
- Forest guardian certificate

LESSON STRUCTURE

Activity 1: Find the treasure

Activity 2: What comes from forests?

Activity 3 : Let's create forest animal masks

Conclusion

TIPS FOR THE FACILITATOR

To successfully conduct the proposed activities, ensure thorough preparation with all necessary materials. Clearly explain the objectives to the children and encourage their active participation at each step. Be flexible to adapt activities according to children's needs and provide individualized support if necessary. Finally, assess children's understanding and offer constructive feedback at the end of each activity.

ACTIVITY 1: FIND THE TREASURE

Hide various images symbolizing the issues and roles of forests in the room. Divide the children into two groups. Each team must find as many images as possible; when a child finds an image, they bring it to the facilitator who records the points. Once all the images are found, gather the children to reflect on the ideas and representations they convey to better understand the role of forests. The messages of the images are as follows: forests preserve biodiversity by sheltering numerous animals and plants; they host a wide diversity of tree species; they absorb rainwater and regulate water flows to prevent floods and recharge groundwater; they absorb CO2 and release oxygen, earning them the title of the planet's lungs; they protect soils from erosion through their roots; they provide various natural resources; they balance the climate by regulating temperatures, wind, and precipitation; they offer spaces for physical activity and well-being; they have cultural and symbolic significance, representing spiritual and historical values; they serve as natural barriers against storms, floods, and landslides; they act as natural filters, purifying and regulating the quality of water in watersheds, which is essential for human health and aquatic ecosystems. However, forests are directly threatened by deforestation and climate change, which promote droughts and wildfires. The goal is to raise awareness of everything forests bring to life, their importance for our well-being, and the need to respect, protect, and limit their overexploitation by reducing deforestation.





ACTIVITY 2: WHAT COMES FROM THE FOREST?

Announce the theme of the activity by explaining that you will reflect together on the importance of forests. Discuss everyday items that come from the forest, such as a pencil, a blank sheet of paper, a small wooden table, a locker furniture, a colored pencil, and a paper cup. Compare them with objects that do not come from the forest, such as a glass water bottle, a plastic pen, and a plastic chair. Emphasize that many everyday objects come from the forest and that anything made of wood comes from a tree. Raise awareness that the creation of these objects requires significant exploitation of forests and the felling of many trees. Encourage children to think about their consumption of new items, to know their origin, and to check if their production respects the environment, notably through several labels guaranteeing forest conservation.

ACTIVITY 3: LET'S CREATE FOREST ANIMAL MASKS

Discuss the importance of animals in the forest and the essential role that each living being plays in the forest ecosystem. Explain how animals contribute to seed dispersal, plant pollination, and maintaining the balance of insect and small animal populations. The objective of this activity is to raise children's awareness of biodiversity by creating masks to embody different forest animals. Prepare several mask templates representing a variety of animals such as birds, mammals, reptiles, and insects so that children can choose their favorite. Each child receives a mask, colored pencils to decorate it according to their imagination, and scissors to cut it out. In addition to the masks, provide extra materials such as feathers, pieces of wood or cardboard, and tissue paper to add textures and details. While the children work, discuss the characteristics and role of each represented animal. The facilitator is responsible for adding a string to each mask so that it can be easily worn. At the end of the activity, organize a small parade where each child presents their animal. This activity helps reinforce understanding of biodiversity and the importance of each species in maintaining ecological balance.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the workshop, the children gather in a circle to present their masks and share what they have learned about each animal and its role in the forest ecosystem. Then, a group discussion is held to exchange ideas and reinforce the importance of biodiversity and forest protection. A group photo is taken with the children wearing their masks. The children receive "Forest Guardian" diplomas to celebrate their commitment and learning.

WASTE AND SELECTIVE SORTING

It is crucial to teach children about selective sorting and the issues surrounding waste from a young age to foster early environmental awareness. By understanding the importance of waste sorting, children are better equipped to contribute to pollution reduction and the preservation of natural resources. Learning to sort waste provides them with practical skills while developing a sense of responsibility towards their environment. This early awareness also promotes eco-responsible behaviors that will last throughout their lives.

SKILLS:

- Observation and identification
- Teamwork and cooperation
- · Critical thinking and reasoning

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Understanding waste and its impact
- Mastery of selective sorting
- Commitment to eco-friendly practices

COMPETENCES:

- Ability to sort waste by identifying materials and placing them in appropriate bins
- Environmental awareness related to waste management and pollution
- Collaboration and communication by working as a team, sharing ideas and actively participating in discussions on environmental topics

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- 22 images of various waste (x4)
- 4 containers: cardboard, glass, plastic, organic
- Sheet to record points
- Nominal diplomas
- Tree to fill in with children's words (to evaluate the sequence)

LESSON STRUCTURE

Introduction: Waste, what's that?

Activity 1: Waste families and selective sorting

Activity 2: The great game of waste sorting

Conclusion

WASTE AND SELECTIVE SORTING

TIPS FOR THE FACILITATOR

To ensure the success of this session, make sure the space is well organized and safe for physical activities. Clearly explain the rules of the game to the children, possibly demonstrating to ensure better understanding. Encourage the participation of all children and provide individual support as needed. Finally, take the time to facilitate a debriefing session to discuss the learning outcomes and skills acquired, and mark this moment by awarding them a participation certificate to congratulate and thank them.

INTRODUCTION: WASTE, WHAT'S THAT?

To start the session, ask the children what a waste is. The goal is to reach a precise definition: waste is an object that we no longer use and throw away. Initiate a discussion about the different places where we dispose of waste (bins at home, at school, on the street, on the beach; recycling centers; battery recycling bins at the supermarket, etc.). Ask the children to give examples of waste. Then, show them various waste items (or pictures of waste) and have the group name them, asking what material each waste item is made of. Make sure to choose a variety of materials.





ACTIVITY 1: WASTE FAMILIES AND SELECTIVE SORTING

The children are divided into groups. They receive a set of images depicting various types of waste and are asked to sort these waste items by their material. Once all the images have been sorted, review each category with the children. Ask them to explain their choices and name the different families of waste based on the materials. Discuss their sorting process and introduce the concept of selective sorting. Ask if they know the purpose of selective sorting. Explain that it allows for recycling and reusing materials, thereby reducing pollution. We produce a lot of waste that takes a long time to disappear, and in the meantime, it accumulates, is burned, ends up in landfills or in the oceans and streets, and harms animals and ecosystems. Sorting waste helps prevent it from ending up in the ocean or on the streets.

ACTIVITY 2: THE GREAT GAME OF WASTE SORTING

For this activity, children move to a physical activity room where the play area has been previously prepared. Place the bins in the center: a plastic bin, a cardboard/paper bin, a glass bin, and a compost bin. The children are divided into four teams, positioned in four lines perpendicular to the bins: Line A, Line B, Line C, and Line D. Each child is numbered according to their position in the line, with the first children being number 1, the second ones number 2, and so on. Each child receives a card with a type of waste and the letter of their team (A, B, C, D). When the facilitator calls a number, for example, 3, all number threes must run to complete a full lap of the room, return to their line, pass under the legs of their teammates, and then place the waste card in the corresponding bin. Children who correctly place the waste in the appropriate bin earn a point for their team. The points are then tallied. Once everyone has had their turn, the game ends, and the points are counted.





CONCLUSION

To conclude this session, ask the children to recall the importance of selective sorting. Thank and congratulate them for their participation and commitment during the workshops. Ask the children to share one or two words about their experience during the activities, which you will note for evaluation purposes. To solidify their commitment and your congratulations, to underline their change of status, they have become environmental saviors. Distribute diplomas named "Environmental Savior" and take a collective photo with the diplomas.

2024

APPENDIX

Scan this QR code to access a PDF containing all the necessary documents to successfully conduct the sessions. You will find presentation slides, worksheets, additional resources, and any other materials required for each session.



Scan to access the appendix.

2024

SPECIAL THANKS

I would like to express my gratitude to Romina, also a volunteer at Argonauta, and Lucija, my mentor and colleague, for their invaluable assistance in setting up the workshops. I also want to thank the entire team at Argonauta for providing me with the opportunity to participate in this meaningful project. A big thank you to Betina's kindergarten for their participation in this program, and especially to the students for their dedication and infectious energy. Finally, a heartfelt thank you to the teachers for their support and enthusiasm throughout this project.

2024

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2024

ABOUT ARGONAUTA

ARGONAUTA, founded in 2005, is a non-governmental, non-partisan, and non-profit organization. Today, it operates both locally and regionally, aiming to support the sustainable progress of the community. This is achieved through the conservation and promotion of heritage, the encouragement of civic engagement (particularly among the youth), fostering collaboration across various sectors, and fostering the growth of social entrepreneurship.

To know more about Argonauta's activities, check our web page, the Facebook page and Instagram profile;



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Udruga Argonauta

2024

ABOUT WIN PROJECT AND EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

Argonauta is a partner of the European Solidarity Corps (ESC). In this capacity, they host volunteers for one year as part of the ESC activity "Volunteering in Murter - WIN." This aims promote environmental to awareness. community development, and solidarity by enabling ESC volunteer activities on the island of Murter. The ESC WIN activity comprises high-quality community solidarity tasks, created based on a thorough study of the needs and opportunities for volunteering within the local community. These tasks address local societal challenges while enhancing the personal skills of volunteers, the social impact of the involved organizations, and the overall wellbeing of the Murter community.

The European Solidarity Corps (ESC) is a European Union program aimed at strengthening solidarity in various fields, disadvantaged people, such helping providing as humanitarian aid. and committing to health and environmental causes both within the EU and beyond.











