EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF WORKSHOPS FOR PARENTS

A HANDBOOK FOR KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

RAABE
Společně pro kvalitní vzdělávání

DECODE

**Funded by
the European Union**

DECODE

PROJECT COORDINATOR

RAABE
*Společně pro kvalitní
vzdělávání*

PROJECT PARTNERS

Effective implementation of workshops for parents

A handbook
for kindergarten teachers

Authors of the project

DEveloping the Cognitive Potential
of Preschoolers from Disadvantaged Backgrounds (DECODE)

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1. Introduction

1.1 About the project

The DECODE project (full name "DEveloping the Cognitive Potential of Preschoolers from Disadvantaged Back-grounds") is an international Erasmus+ project (Erasmus+ programme, KA220-SCH, Cooperative Partnership, project registration number: 2022-1-CZ01-KA220-SCH-000086145).

The project is coordinated by the publishing house Dr. Josef Raabe and involves three European countries: Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, and a total of eight project partners.[1]

The aim of the project was to contribute to quality preschool education by introducing a comprehensive approach to promoting children's cognitive development. The project focussed on supporting all preschool children, em-phasising those at risk of delayed cognitive development. The aim was to create freely available resources and online tools to support preschool children's cognitive development. The project equipped preschool teachers with comprehensive methodological support, developed collaboration between kindergartens and families and pro-vided parents with a digital repository full of activities to do at home. The kindergartens worked with families to promote children's cognitive development and strengthen their key competences, thus preventing learning dis-advantages and low levels of basic skills.

One of the first outputs of the project is a methodology for teachers entitled **Promoting Cognitive Development in Early Childhood Education: A Handbook for Early Childhood Education Teachers**[2]. The methodology is pri-marily intended for kindergarten teachers and aims to support the readiness of kindergarten teachers to apply optimal pedagogical strategies for a balanced socio-emotional and cognitive development of children (not only) from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. This is achieved through a theoretical expert text and 96 engaging learning activities for working with children.

Follow-up project outputs focus on improving the competencies of teachers and parents of preschool children and strengthening the cooperation between kindergartens and parents. Parents are addressed through the hand-book entitled **Stimulating a Child's Mind: A Guide for Parents**[3] and in particular by **the DIGI HOME DECODE – a digital repository for activities at home** with 320 immersive activities. Project outputs support the development of early childhood educators' knowledge and skills through a freely available online course. Collaboration between kindergarten and family was supported through the delivery of seminars and workshops for parents and the cre-ation of the handbook **_Effective Implementation of Workshops for Parents: A Handbook for Kindergarten Teach-ers_**, which has now been published.

All project outputs are open and can be downloaded free of charge from the website of the DECODE project website (https://decode.raabe.cz/homeen/)

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[1] Listing of all project partners: https://decode.raabe.cz/partners/

[2] Download here: https://decode.raabe.cz/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/ENG_DECODE_Handbook_for_teachers.pdf

[3] Download here: https://decode.raabe.cz/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/ENG_DECODE_Manual-for-parents.pdf

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1.2 Purpose of the handbook

The handbook is intended to provide[4] kindergarten teachers with guidelines and strategies ("instructions, tips and ideas") on how to organise successful[5] workshops and seminars for parents. The aim of the workshop is to motivate and encourage parents of preschool children to take an active role in their children's education and to create a learning environment at home.

This handbook provides teachers with a clear guide on how to effectively organise, promote and successfully run workshops for parents of preschool children.

DECODE[6] WORKSHOPS:

Specific objective:
To strengthen cooperation between kindergartens and parents to create a stimulating and safe home environment and prevent educational disadvantage and low basic skills due to deficits in cognitive development at the early childhood education and care level.[7]

Contribution to the general objectives of the project:
It equips kindergarten teachers with relevant knowledge, guidelines and strategies to work with parents on children's cognitive development.

Quantitative indicator:
Develop detailed guidelines for kindergarten teachers to conduct workshops for parents to engage in their children's cognitive development. Delivery of four parent workshops with two leaders and one evaluator for 60 participating parents (at least 15 parents in each project kindergarten).

Qualitative indicator:
Satisfaction of participants who attended the workshops (feedback from the workshops).

1.3 Definition and importance of workshops for parents

DEFINITION

Parenting workshops are structured, interactive educational events designed to provide parents with the knowledge and tools they need to support their children's education and development. These workshops include a variety of activities, discussions, presentations and hands-on demonstrations that enable parents to better understand and apply parenting methods and techniques at home.

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[4] In this handbook, we use the term teacher to refer to both the teacher and the kindergarten teacher.

[5] A workshop (intended as a seminar) is an interactive learning session that provides participants with practical skills and knowledge through presentations, activities, discussions and demonstrations. We will continue to use the word workshop.

[6] Link to the DECODE project: https://decode.raabe.cz/homeen/

[7] Promoting co-operation between kindergartens and parents to prevent learning deficits and low proficiency in basic skills due to deficits in cognitive development at ECEC level.

tip If parents don't know what active learning looks like in the kindergarten playroom, they may think their children are "just playing" all day. Since today's education is very different from what adults likely remember from their schooling, regular parent workshops help ensure everyone is on the same side and give families a glimpse into the playroom and curriculum. Plus, preschool parent workshops provide an opportunity to show parents how they can support and expand learning at home.[8]

? **What is the importance of the workshops for parents? What are the benefits of parental involvement in children's kindergarten/school life and why is it important to involve parents in the educational process?**

Increase parental involvement: Workshops help parents to better understand the educational processes and methods used in kindergarten, which increases their involvement in their children's education. Active parental involvement is vital to children's educational success and overall development.

Supporting education at home: The workshops provide parents with practical tools and techniques that they can use at home to support their children's education. These include activities to promote cognitive development, language development, fine motor skills or emotional coping skills.

Building a community: The workshops allow parents to meet, share experiences, and support each other, building a stronger community of parents that can be a source of support and inspiration.

Improving communication between school and parents: Regular workshops and meetings improve communication between teachers and parents, leading to a better understanding of children's needs and more effective co-operation in education.[9]

Supporting parenting skills: Workshops help parents develop the skills necessary for effective parenting, such as stress management, communicating with children, setting boundaries and emotional support.[10]

Prevention and problem-solving: Workshops can provide parents with strategies to prevent and solve common behavioural problems in children, such as aggression, inappropriate behaviour or difficulties with transitions between activities.

To summarise, parent workshops are one of the tools to support the active involvement of parents in their children's educational process, improve communication between school and family, and provide parents with the practical skills and knowledge they need to support their children's development.

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[8] Source: https://www.weareteachers.com/preschool-parent-workshop-ideas/

[9] Source: https://preschool.org/preschool-parent-communication/

[10] Source: https://www.exchangefamilycenter.org/parents-caregivers/parenting-workshops

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2. Planning and preparing the workshop

2.1 Identifying the needs of parents

Identifying the needs of parents of preschool children is vital to developing effective workshops and other support programmes.

The following are selected steps and methods to identifying these needs: Questionnaires and surveys, one-on-one interviews, face-to-face meetings, group discussions, feedback from workshops, online communities, research and studies.

By using a combination of these methods, teachers can gain a comprehensive picture of the needs of parents of preschool children and better tailor the workshops to their expectations and requirements.

DECODE[11] WORKSHOPS:

Identifying the needs of parents of preschool children involved in the DECODE project:
The DECODE project focuses on developing the cognitive potential of preschool children, especially disadvantaged children. It supports education through innovative learning resources for the home environment.

The identification of the needs of parents of preschool children participating in the DECODE project covers the following areas:

Supporting cognitive development. Parents need the knowledge and resources to support the development of their children's perception, attention, memory, thinking, language and speech at home so that they can effectively build on their children's learning activities in kindergarten.

Supporting the child in the home environment. Provides recommendations and suggestions for preparing a supportive home environment to stimulate thinking, promote health and nutrition, and build a positive relationship with learning and the joy of discovery. To help parents motivate their child to participate in activities.

Parents' communication with teachers. Parents want effective feedback and consultation with teachers about their children's progress and the opportunity to ask questions about the project's methods and objectives.

Access to methodological and digital tools. Parents need access to digital materials and a parent handbook that they can use to work on their children's skills outside of school.

2.2 Selecting the topics and defining the objectives of the workshop

The topics of the workshops are based on identifying the needs of parents of preschool children.

Parents of preschool children are usually concerned about several key areas that affect their children and family life. These areas of interest help parents better understand and support their children in all aspects of their development while improving their parenting skills and well-being.

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[11] Link to the DECODE project: https://decode.raabe.cz/homeen/

tip Parents are particularly interested in practical methods to promote their children's linguistic, cognitive, social and physical development. They want to understand their child's emotions and the development of their emotional intelligence. They are also looking for advice on effective parenting, especially setting boundaries and resolving conflicts. At home, they are interested in encouraging learning through books, games and educational activities. They also value a balance between work and family, insights into parenting methods and the child's progress, and the opportunity to share their experiences at meetings with teachers and other parents.

DECODE[12] WORKSHOPS:

Objective of the workshop:
To provide parents with recommendations and practices on how to support their child's development at home, developed in two project outputs: 1. **Stimulating a Child's Mind: A Guide for Parents** and 2. To show the functioning and benefits of **a digital repository called DIGI HOME DECODE** for home activities.[13]

To support families' involvement in the child's cognitive development process in the home environment. Thanks to the project outputs, they can make suggestions for activities they can do with their children to promote their cognitive development. The focus is on intellectual development, encompassing several areas (perception, attention, memory, thinking, language and speech). Focus on recommendations that parents can use to support their child in the home environment.

Strengthen co-operation and communication between the kindergarten and the family, as well as strengthen meetings.

Encourage parents to support children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

2.3 Selecting the dates and venue

When choosing the dates for a workshop, it is important to consider several key factors in order to make the workshop as effective and accessible as possible for the participants.

Below are the most important aspects to consider:

1. **Target group**

   Demographics: Participants' age, occupation and family commitments can influence their availability. For example, parents of young children may prefer workshops outside working hours or at weekends.

2. **Availability of space**

   Availability of premises: Make sure that the date you choose is compatible with the availability of the venue where the workshop is to take place.

   Transport links: The date should allow participants easy access to the venue.

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[12] Link to the DECODE project: https://decode.raabe.cz/homeen/
[13] Link to digital repository: https://sk.izzi.digital/#/

3. **Time preferences of the participants**

    Length of the workshop: Consider the length of the workshop and its difficulty level. Shorter workshops may be better suited to evenings or weekends, while longer workshops are better spread over several days.

    Time blocks: Consider when participants are most available and focused. The morning or early evening may be the best time for many.

4. **Calendar factors**

    Seasonal influences: Consider the time of year and possible seasonal activities or holidays that may affect attendance. For example, summer or winter holidays may affect availability.

    Competition with other events: Make sure that the workshop date does not clash with other important events that could affect attendance (e.g. local festivals, school holidays).

5. **Preliminary survey**

    Questionnaires and surveys: Consider identifying the preferences of potential participants in advance through questionnaires or surveys.

    Consultation of main participants: If you have several participants, you can ask them in advance about suitable dates.

6. **Flexibility and variability**

    Multiple dates: If possible, offer several dates for the same workshop so that participants can choose the one that is most convenient for them.

    Adaptability: Be prepared for flexibility and the possibility of adapting the dates to the current situation and the needs of the participants.

7. **Marketing and advertising**

    Sufficient time for advertising: Choose the date well in advance so that there is enough time to effectively advertise the workshop and register participants.

tip Following these recommendations, you can ensure that the workshop dates are optimally tailored the needs of your participants and increase their participation and satisfaction.

The venue for a parent workshop should fulfil several important criteria to ensure it is comfortable, functional and encourages participant interaction.

Here are the most important points to consider:

1. **Sufficient space**

    Size of the room: The room should be large enough to accommodate all participants and provide enough space for movement and interaction. It should allow for a variety of furniture arrangements to suit the needs of the workshop (e.g. round arragement, U- or T-shaped tables, etc.).

    Capacity: Make sure the room's capacity matches the expected number of participants without overcrowding.

2. Comfort

Seating: Comfortable chairs and tables that can be easy moved and adapted to the room layout.

Air conditioning and ventilation: Good ventilation and temperature control are needed to ensure a comfortable environment for all participants.

3. Technical equipment

Audiovisual equipment: Projector, screen, speakers, microphones and possibly interactive whiteboards. Make sure all equipment is working before the workshop.

Internet connection: Reliable Wi-Fi connection for the needs of the trainer/leader's and participants', if applicable.

4. Layout and decoration

Flexible layout: The possibility to easily change the arrangement of the furniture according to the needs of the different activities (group work, individual activities, discussions).

Decoration: A pleasant and neutral environment that is not too distracting. You can include some motivational posters or relevant visual materials related to the workshop's theme.

5. Additional services

Coffee and refreshments: Provide refreshments and coffee breaks so participants can recharge their batteries and have informal discussions.

Sanitary facilities: A sufficient number of clean and easily accessible toilets.

6. Safety and barrier-free access

Emergency exits and first aid: Clearly labelled emergency exits and access to basic first aid. Facilities should be accessible to all, including people with disabilities.

Fire safety: Ensure that working fire alarms and fire extinguishers are installed in the premises.

7. Storage rooms

Storage of materials: Sufficient space for the storage of materials and equipment needed for the workshop, including space for participants' personal belongings.

tip These aspects will help to create an environment that promotes effective learning and interaction among the participants of the parent workshop.

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Date and location of the workshop:
The target group of the DECODE project are parents of preschool children. At least 15 people from the parent community of each project kindergarten take part in a workshop. The dates of the workshops are specified in the project application and the venue is determined by the kindergartens themselves. For more information see Appandix 6.2.

2.4 Preparing materials and resources

A successful workshop requires careful preparation of materials and resources. Below you will find steps to help you prepare:

Presentation

Slides: Create a PowerPoint presentation or other visual aid to support your interpretation. The presentation should include key points, pictures, diagrams and videos.

tip

Visualisation: Use charts, tables and infographics for better visual clarity and readability.
Materials for the participants
Handouts: Prepare printed or electronic handouts that summarise the key points of the workshop and include examples and exercises for home use.
Worksheets: Include interactive elements such as exercises, discussion questions or practical tasks that participants can try out during the workshop and at home.
Resources for reading: Provide a list of recommended reading and other resources (websites, books, articles) for participants to study further.

DECODE WORKSHOPS:

Preparation of workshop materials and resources:
The DECODE project has two specific project outputs for parents. A handbook for parents called **Stimulating a Childs Mind: A Guide for Parents** [15] and a **digital repository for activities at home** called **DIGI HOME DECODE** .[16]

These project outputs will help to achieve the aim of the workshop: To motivate and support parents of preschool children to actively participate in their children's education and create a learning environment at home.

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[14] Link to the DECODE project: https://decode.raabe.cz/

[15] Link to the DECODE project: https://decode.raabe.cz/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/ENG_DECODE_Manual-for-parents.pdf

[16] Link to the DIGI HOME DECODE: https://sk.izzi.digital/#/

2.5 Budget and funding

The cost of running a face-to-face workshop can depend on many factors, such as the venue, the duration, the number of participants and the specific requirements of the workshop.

Here are the main cost points to be considered:

1. **Venue hire**

   The price depends on the location and size: Room hire can range from several tens to a hundred or more euros per hour, depending on the location (e.g. city centre vs. outskirts) and size of the room.

2. **Technical equipment**

   Audiovisual equipment: Hiring a projector, screen, speakers and microphones can cost several tens to a hundred or more euros per day.

   Wi-Fi connection: If not included in the hire price, additional costs may be incurred for a stable internet connection.

3. **Materials for participants**

   Printing and copying costs: The cost of printing worksheets, presentations and other materials may amount to a several tens of cents to more than euro per page.

   Writing materials: Pens, notepads or other writing materials for the participants.

4. **Refreshments**

   Drinks and food: Coffee, tea, water, snacks (sandwiches, fruit, pastries). The price can range from a few euros to several tens of euros per person, depending on the offer.

   Catering: If you use external catering, the price may increase significantly.

5. **Fees for lecturers**

   Fees for lecturers: The fee for a lecturer can range from several tens to several hundreds euros per hour, depending on the lecturer's experience and expertise.

6. **Marketing and advertising**

   Advertising: Cost for advertising the workshop, including online advertising, printed materials (flyers, posters) and social media.

   Registration and participant administration: Fees for the use of online registration systems and administration costs.

7. **Administrative and operating costs**

   Organisational team: Costs for the work of the administrative and organisational team, if necessary.

   Transport and logistics: Costs for the transport of materials, equipment and personnel to the workshop venue.

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Example of a cost calculation for a one-day workshop for 15 people with two lecturers:

1. Room hire: 200 EUR
2. Technical equipment: 100 EUR
3. Materials for participants: 100 EUR
4. Refreshments: 150 EUR (10 EUR per person)
5. Fee for the lecturers: 200 EUR + 200 EUR
6. Marketing and advertising: 250 EUR
7. Administration costs: 100 EUR
Total cost: 1300 EUR

tip This amount is an estimate. Actual costs may vary depending on the specific conditions and requirements of the workshop. It is always a good idea to draw up a detailed budget and consider all possible costs before organising a workshop.

2.6 Registering participants

1. Online forms: Create clear online forms for quick and easy check-in.
2. Automated confirmations: Set up automatic confirmation emails upon receipt of an enrolment to inform parents that the enrolment has been accepted.
3. Centralised management system: Use application management tools to keep all information in one place.
4. Regular communication: Send regular emails with information about enrollment status, payments and the event programme.
5. Online payment options: Make it easy for parents to pay for events online.
6. Answering questions: Provide a clear point of contact (email, phone) for any questions parents may have.
7. Data protection: Comply with GDPR regulations and ensure secure data storage and processing.

2.7 Ways of advertising the workshop

1. Information brochures and posters: Put up posters with the date, location and programme of the workshop on the premises of the kindergarten and on notice boards in nearby public buildings (e.g. municipal office, library).

2. Newsletters and emails: Send parents an email invitation and regular reminders, or include them in the school newsletter.

3. Social media: Create an event or post on the school website (Facebook, Instagram) so parents can share the workshop with other families.

4. Kindergarten website: Place a banner or link with information about the workshop on the main page of the kindergarten website.

5. Parent app communication: If your school uses a school app or other communication platform, provide information and registration forms here.

6. Invitations and flyers for children's lockers: Give parents printed invitations to receive with children's belongings.

7. Personal invitation when picking up children: Teachers can personally invite parents when they pick up their children and remind them of the benefits of attending.

8. Engage the local community: Reach out to the local media, such as a local magazine, newsletter, or town website, to cover the workshop.

9. Partners: Share the information with partners that can help promote the event to parents.

10. Invitation with benefits: Include an overview of the workshop topics in the invitation and explain the specific benefits of attending for parents and children.

tip Use the individual channels depending on where the parents are most active and add examples of benefits or workshops topics to motivate them. Sufficient time for advertising: Chose the dates well in advance so that there is enough time to advertise the workshop effectively and register participants.

2.8 Tips and advice for the workshop leader

A workshop leader/trainer is an expert who leads a training session to impart specific knowledge and skills to participants.

The most important qualities and skills of a trainer include: Professionalism, communication skills, teaching skills, empathy and patience, organisational skills, adaptability and flexibility, motivational skills and technical skills.

This combination of skills and attributes enables trainers to lead workshops effectively and contribute to the successful learning process of the participants.

tip Tips and advice for the workshop leader/instructor

BEFORE THE WORKSHOP

1. Thorough preparation: Plan the structure of the workshop, set clear objectives and prepare the necessary materials. Make sure you have all the resources and tools you will need.

2. If possible, find out about the participants in advance: Their level of knowledge, their expectations and the goals they want to achieve.

3. Technical preparation: Test all technical equipment such as projectors, microphones and internet connection. Prepare contingency/backup plans in case of technical problems.

DURING THE WORKSHOP

4. Interactive learning: Engage participants through questions, discussions, group activities and practical exercises. Interactive methods help to maintain attention and retain the material better.

5. Use visual aids such as presentations, pictures, diagrams and videos to make important points easier to understand and remember.

6. Time management: Make sure you have enough time for the most important points and that there is room for questions and discussion.

7. Flexibility: Be prepared to adapt to the needs and reactions of the participants. If you find that a part of the workshop is not effective, do not be afraid to modify it or change the plan.

8. Provide feedback.

AFTER THE WORKSHOP

9. Obtain feedback: Ask participants for feedback after the workshop. This will help you improve future workshops and better understand participants' needs.

10. Follow-up support: Offer participants the opportunity for further counselling or the provision of additional materials to help them apply the knowledge and skills learned in practise.

11. Reflection and self-assessment: Conduct a self-reflection and evaluate what was done well and what could be improved. This will help you to continuously improve as a trainer.

Good advice at the end

Use humour: Jokes and light humour can help to lighten the atmosphere and make the workshop more enjoyable.

Use real-life examples: Real-life examples and scenarios help participants to better understand the theory and its application.

Build trust: Show interest in participants , opinions and experiences to build their confidence in you as a trainer.

DECODE[17] WORKSHOPS:

Workshop lecturers:
As part of the DECODE project, two lecturers two teachers are needed to lead the workshop. The teachers will share the leadership of the workshop. For example, one of them will cover the theoretical part about children's cognitive development and the other one will show examples from the digital repository of activities in home practice - DIGI DECODE HOME.

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[17] Link to the DECODE project: https://decode.raabe.cz/

3. Structure of the DECODE sample workshop for parents

Examples of workshop titles for the parenting public:

1. HOW CAN YOU PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SENSES, LANGUAGE AND THINKING IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN AND NOT MISS OUT?

2. HOW TO ENCOURAGE AND NOT MISS OUT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF SENSES, ATTENTION, MEMORY, THINKING, LANGUAGE AND SPEECH IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN?

3. HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT AND NOT MISS OUT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PRESCHOOL CHILD FOR ENTRY INTO THE 1ST GRADE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL?

Total duration of the workshop: 4 hours (half day)

Structure and schedule of the demonstration workshop:

3.1 Introductory part (15–20 minutes)

a. Welcome of the participants and introduction of the lecturers and organisers (kindergartens).
b. Presentation of the aim and agenda of the workshop.
c. Brief introduction of the participants to each other (e.g. short introduction or icebreaker).

3.2 AREAS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT – theoretical part (30–45 minutes)

a. Presentation on areas of child development (source: Chapter 1 from the **Stimulating a Child's Mind: A Guide for Parents**[18]).
b. Areas: Perception, attention, memory, thinking, language and speech, motor and graphomotor skills, socialisation
c. Practical examples (DECODE videos can be used for demonstration).
d. Opportunity to ask questions.

3.3 HOW PARENTS CAN SUPPORT THE CHILD AT HOME – practical part (45–60 minutes)

a. Presentation on how you can support your child at home (source: Chapter 2 from the **Stimulating a Childs Mind: A Guide for Parents**[19])
b. Involve parents in modelling situations.
c. Discussion and exchange of experiences among the participants about selected stimuli that we can prepare in the home environment for the development of preschool children.

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[18] Link to the DECODE project: https://decode.raabe.cz/
[19] Link to the DECODE project: https://decode.raabe.cz/

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3.4   Pause (15 minutes)

a. Opportunity for relaxation and informal discussion between parents and teachers.
b. Refreshments (coffee, tea, snacks).

3.5   DIGI HOME DECODE – digital filing system for activities at home (30–45 minutes)

a. Presentation of digital repository for home activities that parents can use at home.
b. At which URL can parents find the repository[20].
c. Structure of the repository and examples of home activities (indoor and outdoor).
d. Inspiration from teachers on best practises and real-life examples (DECODE videos can be used).

3.6   Discussion and questions (20–30 minutes)

a. Space for parents to ask questions about the activities discussed.
b. Exchange of experiences, ideas and tips between parents.

3.7   Feedback (10 minutes)

a. Short questionnaire (online, paper) to evaluate the workshop evaluation (see Appendix 6.1.)
b. Space for verbal feedback - what the parents liked, what they would improve.
c. The feedback collected is used to modify and improve future workshops.

3.8   Final part (10 minutes)

a. Summarising the main points of the workshop.
b. Thank you for your participation and information about further training opportunities or planned events.
c. Farewell to the workshop participants.

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[20] Link on the DIGITAL RAABE website: https://sk.izzi.digital/#/

4. Implementation and examples of DECODE workshop invitations

5. Conclusion

To summarise, this handbook is an important step towards improving cooperation between kindergartens and families in the area of supporting the cognitive development of preschool children. The workshops organised with the help of the handbook provide parents with valuable information and practical tips on actively contributing to their children's development. The handbook emphasises not only the cognitive but also the socio-emotional development of children and encourages parents to create a stimulating and safe learning environment at home. These activities strengthen the communication bridge between teachers and parents, leading to deeper understanding and effective joint efforts to provide quality preschool education. We hope this handbook will become a useful tool for teachers and parents and that together we can help lay a solid foundation for children's future educational success.

6. Appendices

6.1 Appendix – Satisfaction questionnaire for parents

Satisfaction questionnaire for parents

The aim of the anonymous questionnaire is to obtain feedback in order to improve future workshops.

1. **How would you rate the overall structure and organisation of the workshop?**

    (1 = very dissatisfied, 5 = very satisfied)

    1 2 3 4 5

    Comment (optional):

    _____

    _____

2. **To what extent did you find the theoretical part on child development useful and understandable?**

    (1 = not useful at all, 5 = very useful)

    1 2 3 4 5

    Comment (optional):

    _____

    _____

3. **How would you rate the practical part aimed at supporting the child in the home environment?**

    (1 = very unsatisfactory, 5 = very satisfactory)

    1 2 3 4 5

    Comment (optional):

    _____

    _____

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4. **Did you find the information about the DIGI DECODE HOME digital repository and the available activities useful?**

(1 = not at all, 5 = very useful)

1 2 3 4 5

Comment (optional):

_____

_____

5. **Would you recommend this workshop to other parents?**

(1 = definitely not, 5 = definitely yes)

1 2 3 4 5

Comment (optional):

Comment (optional):

_____

_____

6. **What did you like best about the workshop? (optional)**

Comment (optional):

_____

_____

7. **What would you suggest for improvement? (optional)**

Comment (optional):

_____

_____

Thank you for your feedback!

6.2 Evaluation and reports from the DECODE workshop

REPORT ON THE DECODE WORKSHOP FOR PARENTS

TITLE AND CHOICE OF TOPIC: How to stimulate the development of senses, language and thinking without missing out and leaving something out?
Karmen Meško, Maja Geršak Banović
Vrtec Ivana Glinška Maribor

DATE AND PLACE OF EVENT 12 February 2025 at 16.30, Gledališka 6, 2000 Maribor.

ADVERTISING METHODS

• Facebook page of the kindergarten
  https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1142565064539969&set=a.496274559169026
  https://www.facebook.com/VrtecIvanaGlinskaMaribor/videos/1303174064324110

• Kindergarten website
  https://vrtec-ivanaglinska.si/projekt-decode/

• Parents are informed via the eAssistant portal, on the notice boards of each department, invitations and registration forms are also handed out by the teachers to the parent contact person at the parent-teacher meeting.

THE LAYOUT OF THE SPACE

The workshop was held at the kindergarten's headquarters, in a multi-purpose room, as we were able to meet all the criteria based on the number of registrations. When organising workshops for parents, special attention was paid to the layout of the space to ensure a pleasant and effective learning environment. The space was adapted to the number of participants, the nature of the activities and the needs of the practitioners.

Seating arrangements were organised to allow good visibility and audibility of all participants. For the interactive parts of the workshop, we used a table arrangement (8 people at one table), which encouraged collaboration and sharing of experiences. The two lecturers had ample space for presentations, the use of visual aids and practical exercises.

In addition to the main room, we also provided corners for refreshments, photo opportunities and individual discussions where parents could discuss specific issues in small groups or individually.

The flexibility of the space allowed us to change the layout as needed, creating an optimal environment for parents to actively participate and deliver quality workshops.

https://www.facebook.com/VrtecIvanaGlinskaMaribor/posts/pfbid02Bbvu3rV14qpn3ZhBdu1ywP8BiZDaYWs QhxSNAvCbhUfKrwvWunmBghMZ62QC3272l

FOOD AND DRINKS

https://www.facebook.com/VrtecIvanaGlinskaMaribor/posts/pfbid02dE4WFkv8KcSGHVy86mNZyCQkk3iYz3v CC1zELub15i922gikK1igufjWHqxG58FQl

The food and drinks was prepared by the chefs from the Ivan Glinšek Kindergarten Maribor.

The participants were offered coffee, juice and water, canapés, croissants and fruit.

Refreshments were available throughout the workshops, and a food feast was served during the break and at the end of the meeting.

PHOTO AND CAMERA, MATERIAL FOR PARTICIPANTS

Promotional material and a decorative board were provided by the participants, which contributed to the visual decoration of the room and the pleasant atmosphere. In addition, we had a professional photographer and videographer, Mr Stanko Sel, who documented the workshops and provided high-quality visual material.

Participants received a handbook – PARENTS GUIDE and access to the DIGI HOME website, a notepad and a pen. They were also provided with access to the Educators' Guide website and invited to network and spread the project.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WORKSHOPS

YouTube page of the kindergarten and facebook page

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CoKGUd8x8fo&ab_channel=VrtecIvanaGlin%C5%A1kaMaribor

• https://www.facebook.com/VrtecIvanaGlinskaMaribor/posts/pfbid02sAepYJyTyDvkE1bXUMa4oHmQvoSo-SkTFqrxmvFQPBKgSjMjycJdSv4wp8vyo6T9il

Workshop evaluation report

Location: Ivan Glinšek Kindergarten Maribor
Date: Wednesday, 12 February 2025
Beginning of the workshop: 16.30
Lecturers: Karmen Meško and Maja Geršak

On Wednesday, 12 February 2025, I took part in a workshop for parents of preschool children at the Ivan Glinšek kindergarten in Maribor as an expert assessor. The workshop was led by experienced KIGA teachers Karmen Meško and Maja Geršak, who presented the DECODE project, its importance, theoretical background and practical examples of activities to promote children's cognitive development. The workshop was organised at a high professional level. The structure of the event was well thought out and allowed for a meaningful transition between theoretical and practical content. The two presenters ensured a dynamic course with an appropriate pace of presentation. The welcoming speech by the head of the kindergarten contributed to the professional character of the event and emphasised the importance of involving parents in the educational process.

In the introductory section, the two practitioners professionally and clearly explained the importance of the DECODE project and its successes. They presented the key areas of children's cognitive development. The theoretical part was clearly structured, supported by visual aids and was accessible to all attendees. The practical part of the workshop was very interactive. Parents were divided into groups to try out games and activities that stimulate children's cognitive development. They actively participated, reported their results and shared their experiences. Particular attention was paid to the DigiHome database, which offers a wide range of activities for use in the home environment. The parents showed great interest in this database and asked specific questions about its use. With excellent explanations and examples, the trainers enabled the parents to immediately put the knowledge they had acquired into practise. The exchange between the theoretical and practical parts was fluent and meaningful.

The workshop included many interactive elements (active involvement of parents in the groups, liaising with participants through questions, discussions, flexibility of practitioners, practical tools and materials) which helped to keep parents motivated and engaged. The workshop took place in a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere. The energy and open approach of the two teachers created a space for constructive discussions. The parents were motivated and persistent, which shows their high level of engagement and interest in the topic. A banquet was organised during the break, which further contributed to a relaxed and cohesive atmosphere and allowed for an informal professional exchange between the parents. At the end of the workshop, the parents expressed extremely positive impressions. They emphasised the following aspects: the usefulness of the information and ideas conveyed, the usefulness of the practical exercises for work at home, the clarity and comprehensibility of the presentations, the interactivity of the workshop and the dynamics of the group work, the professionalism and accessibility of the practitioners. Some parents expressed a desire for more workshops of this kind in the future and for further instructions on how to apply the methods presented at home.

The workshop was a great success. It achieved its goal and provided parents with both theoretical knowledge and concrete tools for working with children. The professionalism and approach of the two participants created an event that was both informative and inspiring. Based on the evaluation, I can confirm that workshops of this type are extremely valuable for parents as they give them a better understanding of their child's developmental needs and equip them with practical knowledge to support their child's development in the home environment. I recommend that similar training sessions continue to be organised as they make a positive contribution to linking kindergarten and parents and improving the parenting process.

Evaluator: dr. Bojan Kovačič

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