

Akureyri – Iceland:

Investing in the Future – Equal Opportunities for Learning

Iðavöllur preschool

Investing in the Future – Equal Opportunities for Learning is a collaborative project that aims to strengthen cooperation between homes and schools, promote inclusive early childhood education, and support literacy development. The project is carried out in collaboration between Iðavöllur Preschool and the Akureyri Public Library and is supported by the Centre for School Development at the University of Akureyri.

Iðavöllur Preschool is a UNICEF Rights Respecting School and has worked systematically to implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in its educational practice, with a particular emphasis on children's rights to education, culture, expression, and active participation. According to the Convention, all children have the right to develop their abilities, express themselves, and participate in their communities without discrimination. By ensuring access to books and a rich, literacy-promoting environment that reflects the diverse backgrounds of children, these rights are upheld in everyday preschool practice. Iðavöllur also works with slow pedagogy as means to calm and supportive school environment.

The project is also grounded in pedagogical approaches that strengthen children's independence and active participation, giving them opportunities to influence their own literacy learning. This includes, among other things, allowing children to choose literature that appeals to them and to connect it to their own experiences at home and in school.

The project responds to an urgent challenge within the Icelandic education system: ensuring early literacy support for all children, regardless of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

The objectives of the project are to promote literacy among preschool-aged children through the purposeful use of children's literature and structured visits to the library; to create a calm and supportive learning environment that provides children with time, space, and depth for reading and learning; to strengthen fine motor skills as a foundation for writing and literacy; to connect and reinforce relationships between homes and schools through work with children's literature; to promote multicultural practices by ensuring children's access to books in multiple languages and respect for diverse cultural backgrounds; to implement teaching methods based on ISAT (Intervention and Support for All) in connection with literacy work in order to meet children's diverse needs; and to ensure that children's rights are respected and supported in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Quality Storytime with children

Krógaból preschool

In the Preschool Krógaból we methodically work with phonological awareness through what we call „Quality Storytimes“. The teacher invites a small group of children to have a Quality Storytime through reading, play and discussions. These sessions aim to promote, strengthen, and train children’s overall language skills, with an emphasis on vocabulary and comprehension, fostering increased language stimulation in the preschool. In most cases, this is achieved through book reading.

The teacher takes 4–6 children into a designated space where they share a Quality Storytime together, focusing on participation, joy, and meaningful interaction. The material used is chosen to capture the interest of both the children and the teacher and/or to connect with the department’s ongoing work.

The book that is being studied and discussed each time is examined thoroughly, but always in a way that suits the children’s age and maturity. The book cover is carefully studied and consideration is given to whether it provides clues about the content. We think about who the author and illustrator are, and whether the story is new or old. Certain words from the book are selected, discussed, and explained; the subject matter of the story is talked about, and the children are asked questions related to it. The pace at which the book is covered is up to each individual teacher. It is recommended to go through it slowly and preferably to work with the same material in various ways over the course of a week, which is the period each teacher supervises these Quality Storytime sessions. The children are encouraged to participate and have the freedom to express themselves; since the group is small, there is enough space for everyone to do so. With increased participation from the children, it is likely that the sessions will change significantly from the original plan and may vary between groups

Gæðastundir í Heilsuleikskólanum Krógabóli

Í Krógabóli er unnið markvisst á öllum deildum með stundir sem við köllum Gæðastundir. Stundirnar fara fram í litlum hópum þar sem kennari og börn eiga saman gæðastund við lestur, leik og samræður. Stundirnar felast í að efla, styrkja og þjálfra alhliða færni barna í málrækt með áherslu á orðaforða og málskilning sem stuðla að aukinni málörvun í leikskólanum. Í langflestum tilfellum er þetta gert með bóklestri.

Kennari fer með 4–6 börn í afmarkað rými og eiga þar saman gæðastund þar sem áhersla er lögð á þátttöku barnanna, gleði og gæði. Unnið er með efni sem vekur áhuga barna og kennara og/eða tengist vinnu deildarinnar.

Bókin sem er til umfjöllunar hverju sinni er krufin til mergjar en þó á þann hátt að henti aldri barnanna. Bókarkápan er skoðuð vandlega og spáð í hvort hún gefi okkur vísbendingar um innihaldið. Við spáum í hver sé höfundur bókarinnar og myndanna, hvort sagan sé ný eða gömul. Þá eru ákveðin orð í sögunni tekin fyrir, rædd og útskýrð, efni sögunnar rætt og börnin spurð spurninga úr því. Hversu hratt er farið yfir bókina er í höndum hvers og eins kennara. Mælt er með að gera það hægt og helst vinna með sama efnið á margvíslegan hátt í eina viku, sem er sá tími sem hver kennari hefur umsjón með gæðastundum. Börnin eru hvött til þátttöku og hafa frelsi til þess að tjá sig, þar sem hópurinn er ekki stór er nægt rými fyrir alla til þess. Með aukinni þátttöku barnanna eru miklar líkur á að stundirnar taki miklum breytingum frá því sem fyrst var lagt upp með og geta orðið breytilegar milli hópa.