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# TOOLKIT

## SCHOOL WELL-BEEING 4 ALL

(curriculum support)



Erasmus + Cooperation Partnership 2023-2025  
2023-1-RO01-KA220-SCH-000151520



**Coordinated by  
Maria Ramona Vesa**

# **TOOLKIT**

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**Erasmus + Cooperation Partnership (2023 – 2025)**

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## PREFACE

*This toolkit is the result of the Erasmus+ **School Well-Being 4 All** project, carried out in partnership by six special or inclusive schools/institutions from Romania, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Turkey and Cyprus. The initiative started from a common belief: the well-being of students and teachers is the foundation of quality education and the premise of a truly inclusive climate in school.*

*This volume brings together methods, tools and practices developed and tested by partner schools, with the aim of supporting children with special educational needs, as well as the teachers who accompany them in the learning process. The materials presented offer concrete examples of activities, approaches and strategies through which a positive school climate can be built, in which each student feels accepted, valued and motivated to reach their potential and teachers are supported in developing stress management skills in the workplace.*

*The toolkit is not only a collection of methods, but also a testimony of intercultural collaboration. The diversity of experiences brought by the partners has enriched the perspective on how schools can become friendly, safe and open spaces for all. In its pages, readers will find both the rigor of pedagogical tools and the inspiration of ideas aimed at transforming the classroom into a place of joy and authentic learning.*

*We want this book to become a real support for teachers, counselors and all those concerned with educational inclusion, but also a source of inspiration for future initiatives dedicated to well-being in school. Because only through collaboration, respect and care can we build a school in which well-being is a right for all, not an exception.*

*We therefore hope that these pages will become a useful guide and a starting point for new initiatives, which will bring well-being to the center of school life – for all children and for the teachers who accompany them on their path to knowledge and development.*

Maria Ramona Vesa  
project coordinator  
Centrul Școlar de Educație Incluzivă Cristal Oradea, Romania





*As a university professor at the University of Oradea, I had the privilege of closely following the Erasmus+ European partnership School Well-Being 4 All, which brought together special and inclusive schools and institutions from Romania, Spain, Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, and Portugal. United by a shared mission, these partners worked to build an educational climate where every child and every teacher feels valued, respected, and supported.*

*This toolkit is the result of an intense and inspiring collaboration, grounded in the exchange of experiences, best practices, and innovative methods for promoting well-being in schools. It places a special focus on children with special educational needs (SEN) and the dedicated teachers who guide them in their learning journey.*

*Our students from the Faculty of Social and Humanistic Sciences at the University of Oradea were enthusiastically involved as volunteers in several project activities organized by Centrul Școlar de Educație Incluzivă Cristal Oradea, the coordinating school from Romania. Through Orff method sessions, Ebru painting workshops, ARAASAC/TEACCH trainings, and sensory storytelling, they had the opportunity to experience first-hand what it means to create a truly inclusive and supportive school environment. This experience was deeply formative in their development as future SEN educators.*

*This internationally developed toolkit confirms that inclusive education is not just a European ideal - it is a living reality, built day by day through commitment, collaboration, and openness to diversity. I warmly congratulate the coordinator and all project partners for their dedication and meaningful contributions.*

University Professor phd. habil. Karla Melinda Barth  
University of Oradea, Romania



**SCHOOL WELL-BEING 4 ALL** toolkit is the final product of the Erasmus+ project with the same name and presents a range variety of methods and practices aimed at improving well- being of students with special needs and staff working with them in special or inclusive schools/institutions. The project is coordinated by the team of CSEI "Cristal " Oradea, Romania

*The overall objective of the project aims to promote well-being and inclusion by developing practical and socio-emotional skills in both students with various types of disabilities, as well as teaching and administrative staff.*

*The target groups for which the methods and practices presented in this toolkit are proposed is varied and include:*

- students with different types of disabilities, such as autism spectrum disorders (ASD), intellectual disabilities (e.g. Down syndrome, developmental delays), physical disabilities, learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, ADHD), and emotional or behavioral disorders
- teaching staff and non-teaching staff within educational institutions. (special or inclusive schools)

The toolkit created by teachers from the project partner countries (Romania, Cyprus, Turkey, Greece, Portugal and Spain) details numerous practical programs aimed at creating well-being in school, programs structured in distinct areas, among which the following stand out:

### **1. ARTISTIC AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES**

- **Mosaic 4 all:** Highlights the valuable role of the arts in mental health. Creating mosaics can improve well-being, fostering social interaction, emotional expression, and developing a sense of community.
- **Jewellery creation for teachers and SEN students:** Jewellery creation, carried out within occupational therapy, improves fine motor skills, creativity and collaboration between students and teachers.
- **Photography 4 all:** Using photography as a means of expression for SEN students supports emotional development, creativity, and contributes to building relationships based on trust.
- **Marble art / Pentatonic music / Karaoke / Orff:** the implementation of Ebru therapy (Marble Art), pentatonic music, karaoke programs and the Orff technique belong to the artistic and creative field.

### **2. THERAPEUTIC AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT METHODS**

- **BIM method (Body in Music):** A body and music-based method developed by Patrick Meuldijk that uses specific props and movement choreographies to provide basal stimulation. The objectives of this method include establishing contact, interaction, body awareness, and relaxation for SEN students.
- **Kadans** - is a dance therapy method developed by Katrien Bruer, inspired by the Theory of Five Rhythms that focuses on the development of body schema, motor coordination, personal autonomy and offers the pleasure of dancing.
- **Snoezelen rooms:** Multi-sensory rooms are specially designed to create a calming and stimulating environment, tailored to the needs of each student. The activities organized in the multi-sensory rooms promote physical and emotional relaxation, reduce anxiety and support sensory integration.
- **TEACCH method and ARASAAC approach.** The TEACCH method is focused on structured and visual teaching, used especially for children with ASD. It uses the ARASAAC pictographic system to facilitate augmentative and alternative communication and cognitive access.
- **Strategies for language development using online applications and games** represent a modern and effective method of improving language skills through the use of online gaming applications. This approach is designed to be interactive, dynamic and adapted to the specific needs of students, especially those with special educational needs .

Digital tools provide interactive and dynamic environments where students can practice vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and comprehension skills in real time. Unlike traditional methods, language games provide immediate feedback, repetition and contextual learning, helping to consolidate knowledge, maintain student motivation and allow differentiated learning, adapting to various levels of proficiency and learning abilities.

### **3. ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND MOVEMENT**

- **Morning exercise with piano:** A daily program of light physical exercises, accompanied by classical piano music, designed to activate the body and mind before lessons begin, improving coordination, balance and mood.
- **Boccia:** A strategic sport, adapted for people with severe physical disabilities. Encourages inclusion, development of motor skills and strategic thinking.
- **Beach games for well-being:** Adapted beach sports activities (e.g. Beach Bowls, Beach Football) to promote physical health, the development of motor skills and social inclusion.
- **Sensory swimming:** A method that stimulates simultaneous all senses and muscular/skeletal system in aquatic environment, having both physio-therapeutical goals (e.g. increasing muscle tone) and psychomotor goals (e.g. relaxation, vestibular stimulation).
- **Yoga for students with behavioral problems:** Practices that help improve the power of concentration, the memory development, reduction of anxiety and stress.
- **Pilates:** Exercises adapted that focus on correcting stance and reinforcements of core muscles, helping to improve behavior and emotional balance.
- **Trampoline workouts:** workouts for teachers - help relieve stress, reduce anxiety, and increase overall well-being by releasing endorphins and serotonin.
- **Dance sessions :** dancing improves emotional well-being, social connection and a sense of personal fulfillment, being a valuable tool for mental health

### **4. LIFE SKILLS AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION**

- **Cooking 4 all:** Cooking lessons in special/inclusive schools that help students develop essential life skills for independence, including applying math and reading concepts (through recipes).
- **Occupational therapy:** Occupational therapy focuses on developing functional, cognitive, emotional, and social skills, preparing students for active and independent living, including through the Individual Transition Program (ITP) for adult life.
- **Volunteering actions 4 all:** Volunteering projects that offer SEN students the opportunity to be seen for their abilities, helping to increase their self-esteem, promote inclusion and reduce isolation.
- **Therapeutic contact with nature :** Operating a greenhouse as an innovative practice, providing emotional balance, improving mood, and developing professional skills related to agriculture.

### **5. TEACHERS WELL-BEING**

- **Coping with burnout:** Addressing burnout syndrome in educators working with children with special needs and beyond, a condition characterized by physical,

emotional, and mental exhaustion. The toolkit offers individual preventive measures (stress management, work-life balance) and organizational measures (reduction of workload, recognition).

- **The UBUNTU philosophy:** Applying the African philosophy that emphasizes interconnectedness and mutual respect. It provides teachers with a framework for personal reflection, developing resilience, and cultivating empathy, helping to manage stress and isolation.
- **Team building events for teachers:** Organizing bonding events and team building activities for teachers to increase well-being, to promote work in team and reduce stress.
- **Experiential workshop:** Practical workshops for teachers to connect theory with practice and develop skills and practical strategies in an active and reflexive way.
- **End of school year festival** it is a holiday for school community and families, , collecting together students, their families and school staff on a joint celebration full of joy and energy. The event is designed to strengthen the school community and celebrate academic and social achievements made during a school year.

In conclusion, this toolkit represents a comprehensive guide that offers a variety of inclusive and adapted methods to support the holistic development (physical, cognitive, emotional and social) of students with disabilities and to improve the working environment and well-being of school staff.

Special education school inspector, Elena Maria Erdeli  
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# ROMANIA

# KADANS - DANCE AS THERAPY

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Kadans is a therapeutic dance method developed by Katrien Bruer, a dance therapist from Belgium. The term 'Kadance' is a portmanteau of her first name and the word 'dance.' This method is grounded in Bruer's experience working with individuals of various ages who have special needs. It draws inspiration from the structure and foundational concepts of the Theory of Five Rhythms and incorporates elements from Primitive Expressions.

In Kadans, Katrien Bruer adapted Gabriëlle Roth's 'The 5 Rhythms' theory and practice for children and adults with severe multiple disabilities. She also incorporated elements from Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) by Rudolph von Laban and Basal Stimulation by Andreas Fröhlich. The method utilizes recognizable metaphors, daily life imagery, and simple, repetitive movement patterns. This approach enables participants with special needs to expand their movement repertoire according to their individual abilities and to express themselves authentically. Kadans aims to balance support and autonomy, providing opportunities for participants to connect with themselves and others. In practice, this method elicits unique therapeutic effects for each individual.

## TARGET GROUP

The method is addressed for children and adults with Down Syndrome, sensory impairments, autism spectrum disorder, mental disabilities and neuromotor disabilities.

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

Kadans aims to support the development of body awareness, spatial orientation, motor coordination, imitation, personal autonomy, and sensory integration, while also providing the enjoyment of dancing and moving to music. The group setting fosters stronger relationships, reduces self-aggressive behaviors, and enhances self-esteem through experiences of success. By focusing on social skills, Kadance encourages social integration, allowing participants to interact confidently with peers and find joy in each session.

## HOW WE DO IT

The sessions are carefully structured and repeated ten times to provide a secure and predictable environment that enhances learning. In a supportive group setting, each child participates at their own pace and ability level, either independently or with the assistance of a "shadow" who provides personalized guidance and translates movements. This is particularly beneficial for children with neuromotor disabilities, where tactile and kinesthetic experiences are highly valuable. Each session begins with a rhythmic welcome song and ends with a consistent goodbye ritual. The heart of the session involves exploring five distinct rhythms, each linked to a specific energy level, emotion, and element of nature, creating a rich sensory experience.

**Flow** - This flowing rhythm draws us into the present, where we experience a profound sense of calm through deliberate, graceful movements. Each movement connects seamlessly,



creating a harmonious flow reminiscent of Tai Chi. We visualize circular patterns, like an infinity symbol, or the gentle sway of a tree in the wind, or the soaring of an eagle. This rhythm evokes feminine energy, fostering creativity and a sense of being grounded. The music is melodious and harmonious, deepening the sensory experience. *Music examples: Liu Yifei: Disney's Mulan Reflection, Anastasia Disney Movie: Once Upon a December*

**Staccato** - The staccato rhythm pulses with raw energy and power, bringing forth sharp, defined movements with clear beginnings and ends. This distinct structure allows us to channel our power and even anger into a focused expression. Picture the strong beat of a heart, the driving force of drums, or the fiery passion of flamenco. This rhythm resonates with masculine energy, grounding us firmly in the present. The music is a powerful surge of beats, a binary march that commands attention. *Music examples: Michael Jackson: Black or White, Queen: We Will Rock You*

**Chaos** - The Chaos rhythm offers a safe space to experiment with letting go and releasing negative emotions. It can be compared to the powerful eruption of a volcano or the energy of boiling water. When working with children with disabilities, it's important to provide a sense of security and a clear path back to the present. For instance, after a period of free movement, we return to a circle. This rhythm incorporates both feminine and masculine energies. The music is exciting, building in tempo to create a dynamic climax. *Music examples: Bubamara: Black cat, white cat, Amadeus: Arizona*

**Lyrics** - The Lyrics' rhythm celebrates the happiness of life, mirroring the renewal of spring. Movements are fun, cheerful, and playful, encouraging open expression. The group setting is essential, offering a safe space to connect with others. The music is bright and joyful, promoting a positive mood, such as salsa or Brazilian beats. *Music examples: Shakira: La la la (Brazil 2014), Alvaro Soler: Sofia*

**Stillness** - The Stillness rhythm provides an opportunity to relax the body and quiet the mind, evoking a feeling of arriving home and finding rest. The music is soft and gentle, typically relaxing in style. During this rhythm, children are supported in being passive, and massage may be used to help them relax their bodies to the calming music.

Kadans incorporates simple, familiar movements from our daily routines, such as the falling of rain, the chopping of vegetables, or the motion of riding a bike. Each rhythm combines two or three of these movements. Vocal cues enhance and energize the movements, especially in the staccato and lyrical rhythms. The voice also aids in expressing emotions, encouraging release and freedom in the lyrics or chaos rhythms.



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# **SENSORY SWIMMING - A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE FOR BODY AND MIND**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

*“The child with multiple sensory impairments does not benefit from interacting with the environment as easily as the non-disabled child. His space is limited by the reach of his hands. Motivation for exploration is minimal, and his success is almost non-existent. The crucial role of external stimuli in motor development and in establishing the basis for conceptual development is limited by the access pathways (tactile-kinaesthetic, olfactory, gustatory) as well as by existing deformities.” (Gerard Swan, 2005)*

*What is sensory swimming?*

- a form of water therapy
- combines gentle movement with sensory stimuli
- creates a safe space for exploration and relaxation

*Who is it recommended for?*

- children with special needs (and not only)
- adults seeking active relaxation
- people in physical or emotional recovery

*Key elements of sensory swimming*

- slow, controlled movements
- toys and floating objects with different textures
- interactive games in the water
- soothing music or ambient sounds (optional)

*Why should you choose sensory swimming?*

- holistic therapy: body – mind – emotions
- creates positive connections and interactions
- transforms time spent in the water into a therapeutic experience

The sensory swimming program is held twice a month in our school, at a private swimming pool in the city. The University of Oradea is a partner in this project, providing volunteers (students), who support the children in performing the movements in the water and follow the instructions of the project coordinator.

## **TARGET GROUP**

Preschoolers and primary school students of C.Ș.E.I. Cristal Oradea with various types of disabilities:

- cerebral palsy;
- deaf-blindness;
- multiple sensory disabilities;
- visual disabilities;
- other disabilities.

## **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

*Physiotherapeutical objectives:*

- increasing muscle tone in children with muscle hypotonia;
- decreasing muscle spasticity in hypertonic children;
- performing an active movement with resistance due to the mechanical factor;
- increasing the amplitude of movement;
- improving postural tone;
- improving circulation.

*Psychomotor objectives:*

- relaxation;
- experiencing new vestibular sensations / vestibular stimulation,
- acquiring new experiences in experiencing the body in an unfamiliar environment;
- becoming aware of / experiencing certain movements in water, an environment in which any movement, even small, can be better perceived due to the "resistance" of the environment, stimulating and encouraging movement initiatives;
- exploring space, providing new experiences;
- experiencing body movement in an environment with reduced gravitational force.

*Objectives of sensory stimulation:*

- creating experiences in which the entire surface of the body can function as a perceptive organ of somatic stimuli;
- basal somatic stimulation;
- stimulation basal vestibular, stimulation of proprioceptive experiences;
- stimulation of sensory openness through new, but fundamental, perceptions and sensations, at the same time.

*Emotional objectives:*

- stimulation of sensory openness through new, but fundamental, perceptions and sensations, at the same time;
- developing self-confidence;
- creation of a state of well-being;
- understanding, encouragement, affection;
- creation or strengthening of emotional bonds child-intervenor;
- establishment of social relationships. Children will learn from each other through observation and imitation, while enjoying the company of other children, thus developing their emotional intelligence.

## HOW WE DO IT

**Initial evaluation** of the child's interaction with the proposed program (assessing how the child reacts to water and the intervenor).

**Table 1**

| Recording chart of the stages of the child's interaction with the sensory swimming program |                       |                     |         |          |       |          |                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------|----------|-------|----------|------------------|
| Resists interaction                                                                        | Tolerates interaction | Passive cooperation | Accepts | Responds | Leads | Imitates | Shows initiative |

✓

**Observations:** C.D. tolerates interaction with the water, with the equipment, and even with the intervenor.

– He/she becomes easily spastic upon contact with water and the intervenor, but does not maintain or repeat this reaction. If the intervenor forced the introduction of a new activity at this moment, the relationship could deteriorate and the child's responses would consist only of negative reactions, which would require a long time to remedy. It is evident that the main objective will be to create an emotional bond between the two so that the child gains trust in the adult, and only then can new activities be introduced.

**Program implementation** (twice a month sessions, at a private pool, with the support of volunteers and specialized coordination).



**Final evaluation** of the child's interaction with the proposed program (observing progress in interaction, initiative, and enjoyment of participation).

**Table 2**

| Recording chart of the stages of the child's interaction with the sensory swimming program |                       |                     |         |          |       |          |                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------|----------|-------|----------|------------------|
| Resists interaction                                                                        | Tolerates interaction | Passive cooperation | Accepts | Responds | Leads | Imitates | Shows initiative |

✓

---

**Observations:** C.D. has full confidence in the intervenor and enjoys interacting with him. In turn, the intervenor has developed a very good connection with the child. These aspects have been noted both by the teachers who have known the child for many years, and by the mother, who was present at all swimming sessions by the pool.

The implementation of the sensory swimming program has demonstrated the effectiveness of this form of therapy in supporting children with disabilities. Following regular participation, visible progress was observed in children's acceptance and enjoyment of interaction with water, as well as in the consolidation of their trust-based relationship with the intervenor. While at first some children showed reluctance to contact with water, by the end they began to cooperate, respond positively to activities, and even show initiative in exploring the aquatic environment.

In addition to sensory and motor benefits, the program contributed to building a strong emotional bond between child and adult, an aspect noted both by teachers and by parents. Furthermore, the involvement of student volunteers facilitated not only practical support in carrying out the sessions but also their professional training in working with children with special educational needs.

Sensory swimming proves to be a holistic intervention with a positive impact on children's motor, sensory, and emotional development, with remarkable results in terms of well-being. It represents a model of good practice that deserves to be continued and extended.

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# **YOGA FOR STUDENTS WITH BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Yoga is a set of practices that connect the body, breath and mind. It includes movements of the body and its segments, breathing movements related to them and their awareness, with the ultimate goal of a general state of well-being.

The benefits of Yoga for children are:

- improves concentration power;
- develops memory;
- improves self-esteem;
- has a positive influence on school performance and classroom behavior;
- reduces anxiety and stress;
- is a means of relaxation;
- provides flexibility to the body.

The "*Yoga for children*" program takes place in our institution. By means of it, we follow the development of some activities that create a state of well-being, relaxation, decreasing irritability as well as increasing the ability of children's power of concentration.

We also aim to inform other teachers in school about the benefits of using Yoga exercises as a method of improving children's well-being and familiarizing them with this technique.

## **TARGET GROUP**

Students with behavioral disorders.

## **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

- perception of one's own body position;
- breathing control;
- increasing the ability to concentrate;
- improving flexibility;
- general relaxation.

## **HOW WE DO IT**

The program activities were organised individually or in small groups, with the students from CSEI Cristal Oradea, on an appropriate musical background. The activities were designed and supported by the physiotherapist and a special needs teacher. He chose the activities and set the objectives according to the individual characteristics of the students.

In the first part of the activity, simple warm-up exercises were performed from proximal to distal, after that the students were then familiarized with simple Yoga postures: standing, ventral decubitus, supine, sitting. Simple yoga positions include Mountain Pose (Tadasana) for standing, Easy Pose (Sukhasana) for sitting, Child's Pose (Balasana) for resting, and Downward-Facing Dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana) which is a foundational pose. Other basic

options are Chair Pose (Utkatasana) and Cobra Pose (Bhujangasana), with Savasana Pose being a great way to finish.

Besides learning the postures, breathing exercises were done, emphasizing the awareness of inhalation and exhalation. After familiarizing the students with the postures, they moved on to correlate them with breathing.

At the end of the activities, the children lying on their backs with their eyes closed were instructed to feel their body parts.



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# METHODS AND TECHNIQUES FOR INDUCING WELL-BEING WITHIN THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

## GENERAL INFORMATION

It often happens that we teachers feel overwhelmed by the multitude of tasks we have to deal with in a day. From the management of the class of students, to the documents we have to deal with on a daily basis, from the thorough preparation of the lessons, to the creative and interactive teaching methods that we use on a daily basis. Thus, we happen to have days when we simply feel that it is too much or too hard.

So, teachers' well-being has received much attention over the past decades and it's refers to healthy and successful functioning of teachers at work. In fact, while physical, psychological, and mental health refers more to the lack of impairment, well-being refers more to the ability of teachers to develop a positive though dynamic equilibrium between teachers' resources and their challenges/demands.(environmental, social, individual, physical, mental, psychological).

What can we do to improve well-being? What could be the optimal methods of achieving it? We cannot say for sure, but we can resort to various strategies or methods such as meetings to increase the cohesion of the group of teachers in which to use a series of games, organizing creative workshops on various topics or even relaxation sessions.

*Energizers/warm-ups, icebreakers and problem solving games* - these types of games provide a friendly framework to associate personal goals that motivate the individual, oriented towards results and usually individual advantages with the creation of a true team spirit, concerned with the performance and success of the group. They aim at collaboration/cooperation and aim to increase the degree of individual participation, form the ability to solve problems collectively and can serve to improve team spirit, abolish barriers and psychological stereotypes, increase self-confidence, the physical and mental condition of participants, increasing solidarity and responsibility.

We use the *energizers* for a variety of different reasons, including helping people to get to know each other, increasing energy or enthusiasm levels, encouraging team building or making people think about a specific issue. Games that help people to get to know each other and to relax are called *ice breakers*. Other games can be used to help people think through issues and can help to address problems that people may encounter when they are working together.

A *creative workshop* is an analogue, digital or mixed form of an event in which a small group of people works together for a limited, compact period within the framework of a joint idea generation process. Workshops are a great possibility to support “creative thinking, discussion, debate, information sharing, problem solving and decision making” (5). More importantly, they also offer a space to satisfy employees’ socio-emotional requirements, which in turn leads to more productive outcomes (5). In other words, if the people participating experience this collaboration as positive, they are more creative and motivated to participate in idea generation. These findings, however, only apply if the workshop is constructed well. If not, a poor workshop design “can result in negative employee dispositions that lower employee perceptions of their work and well-being as well as negatively impacting organizations bottom line”.

For a group to achieve maximum performance and productivity, each person needs to pay close attention to individual well-being. The alert rhythm imposed by working with children places great demands on the body. This request keeps teachers in a more or less perceptible state of overuse, state of excessive muscular tension, nervous consumption above the normal biological state, which leads to the maintenance of an inadequate mental and motor tension, for combating this way of feeling and inducing the "good" one relaxation techniques are a real help.

Progressive muscle relaxation (Jacobson) is a special technique for monitoring and controlling the tension installed in the muscles of the body. This practice involves contracting certain groups of muscles and their subsequent relaxation, in order to become aware of the amount of tension to which the muscle tissues are subjected. Finally, a state of generalized muscle relaxation is achieved, inducing so much good.

## TARGET GROUP

Teachers and school staff.

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

- improving cooperation, mutual respect, dialogue, appreciation;
- increasing group cohesion, performance;
- increasing the quality of educational acts;
- detachments from daily life routines.

## HOW WE DO IT

- Ice breaker and energizer games;
- Creative workshop activity – for example: „Let's create the ideal school”
- Quick relaxation techniques - *Progressive muscle relaxation through Jacobson technique etc.*





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We also learned and implementing new methods from our partners... 😊

*Implementing ARASAAC in our school... after LTTA in **Spain***



*Implementing PILATES in our school... after LTTA in **Spain***





*Implementing BIM in our school... after LTТА in **Cyprus***



*Implementing SOUND SENSORY STORIES in our school... after LTТА in **Cyprus***





Implementing *COPING WITH BURNOUT* in our school... after LTTA in *Greece*



Implementing *KARAOKE* in our school... after LTTA in *Greece*





*Implementing MORNING EXERCISE WITH PIANO in our school... after LTTA in Greece*



*Implementing THERAP. CONTACT WITH NATURE in our school... after LTTA in Greece*





Implementing EBRU in our school... after LTTA in *Türkiye*



Implementing ORFF in our school... after LTTA in *Türkiye*





Implementing EMOTION AWARENESS in our school... after LTTA in *Türkiye*



Implementing CHI KUNG in our school... after LTTA in *Portugal*



*Implementing SNOEZELEN in our school... after LTTA in **Portugal***







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LARNACA  
AGIOS SPYRIDONAS  
SPECIAL SCHOOL



# CYPRUS

## MOSAIC 4 ALL



### GENERAL INFORMATION

The arts valuable role in mental health is being recognized. Engaging in the art classes seems to be growing in popularity as a way to improve personal wellbeing. Participating in the art classes like creating a mosaic can enable students with or without disabilities to deal with a wide range of mental health conditions and psychological distress. The best part is that it helps the beneficiaries to improve their mental health through creativity.

More and more people now appreciate that arts and culture can play a valuable role in helping them . As we've noted, engaging in arts, social activities and interaction within our communities can help with major challenges, such as ageing and loneliness. It can help to boost confidence and make us feel more engaged and resilient. Besides these benefits, art engagement also alleviates anxiety, depression and stress.

### TARGET GROUP

Students with different types of disabilities, teachers and school staff.

### MAIN OBJECTIVE

Mosaic technique can significantly enhance well-being of students in special or inclusive schools by fostering:

- social interaction and community building;
- emotional expression and well-being;
- design skills;
- mosaic making, fixing and installation skills;
- understanding how to price their own work;
- understanding how to operate and behave in a working art studio ;
- experience team work ;
- patience and delayed gratification;
- understanding and insight into their own power to create;
- enhanced feeling of well-being;
- sense of community among students and teachers.

Here is a step-by-step guide in using mosaic technique in special/inclusive schools :

Materials needed:

1. Mosaic tiles – these can be glass, ceramic, stone, or even broken pottery.
2. Base – a sturdy surface like wood, glass, or a ceramic tile to place the mosaic on.
3. Adhesive – thinset mortar, mastic, or glue, depending on the materials you're using.
4. Grout – to fill in the spaces between the tiles once they're glued down.
5. Tile cutter or nippers – to cut tiles into smaller pieces, if necessary.
6. Trowel or spatula – to apply adhesive.
7. Sponge and water – for cleaning and smoothing grout.
8. Protective gloves and safety goggles – for safety, especially when cutting tiles.
9. Pencil – to mark your design on the surface.

Step-by-step guide:

1. Prepare the surface:
  - Start by cleaning the surface you'll be working on, whether it's wood, glass, or another material. Make sure it's smooth and free of dust, dirt, or oil.
  - If using wood or another porous surface, consider applying a layer of primer or sealer to prevent moisture damage.
2. Plan your design:
  - Sketch your mosaic design on paper. If you're making an abstract design or pattern, you can start directly on your surface.
  - Use a pencil to lightly draw your design on the surface. You can also use graph paper to plan it out in smaller sections.
3. Cut tiles (if needed):
  - If you want smaller pieces or specific shapes, use a tile cutter or nippers to cut the tiles into the desired size and shape. Always wear protective gloves and goggles while cutting to ensure safety.
4. Apply adhesive:
  - Apply a thin, even layer of adhesive to a small section of the surface using a brush or spatula. Don't cover the entire area at once, as the adhesive can dry too fast.
  - If you're using thinset mortar, use a notched trowel to create grooves that help hold the tiles in place.
5. Place the tiles:
  - Start placing the tiles on the adhesive, following your design. Press them firmly into place. If your design involves a lot of small pieces, you can work on small sections at a time.
  - Leave small gaps (called grout lines) between the tiles. These can be consistent (use spacers) or irregular for a more natural look.
  - Continue until your design is fully covered. Work in sections so the adhesive doesn't dry out too fast.
6. Let the adhesive dry:



- Allow the adhesive to dry for at least 24 hours (check the instructions on the adhesive container for exact drying time). Avoid moving the tiles during this time to ensure they set properly.
7. Grouting:
    - Once the adhesive is dry, mix the grout according to the manufacturer's instructions.
    - Spread the grout over the tiles using a rubber float or spatula. Work it into the gaps between the tiles.
    - Wipe away excess grout with the float and smooth the grout lines as you go.
  8. Clean the tiles:
    - After the grout has set for about 15-30 minutes, use a damp sponge to clean off any remaining grout from the surface of the tiles.
    - Be careful not to disturb the grout between the tiles.
    - Let the grout cure for about 24 hours.
  9. Final touches:
    - Once the grout has fully cured, clean the tiles again with a dry cloth or sponge to remove any grout haze.
    - You may want to apply a grout sealer to protect the grout from stains or moisture.
  10. Enjoy your mosaic:
    - Your mosaic is now ready to be displayed or used! Whether it's a decorative piece, a table top, or part of a wall, enjoy the colourful design you've created.



# **COOKING 4 ALL - DEVELOPING SELF-ESTEEM IN CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS THROUGH COOKING LESSONS**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Cooking lessons in special/inclusive schools are very important because they teach students much more than just making food. They help students build life skills that make them more independent.

## **TARGET GROUP**

Usually includes students with different types of disabilities from the age of 8 to 21. For example:

- students with intellectual disabilities; (e.g. Down syndrome, developmental delays)
- students with autism spectrum disorder;
- students with physical disabilities; (who may need adapted tools)
- students with sensory processing challenges;
- students with learning disabilities; (e.g., dyslexia, adhd)
- students with emotional or behavioral disorders.



## **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

- Life skills: students learn how to prepare meals, follow steps, and take care of themselves in daily life.
- Math and reading: cooking uses real-world math (like measuring) and reading (like following a recipe).
- Fine motor skills: stirring, chopping (with adapted tools), and measuring improve hand strength and coordination.
- Confidence and independence: when students cook, they feel proud and capable, which builds self-esteem.
- Social skills: cooking together teaches teamwork, communication, and patience.
- Healthy eating: students learn about nutrition and healthy food choices, which supports better health.
- Sensory experiences: cooking can be a fun sensory activity—feeling textures, smelling spices, tasting new foods.

## **HOW WE DO IT**

Preparing for cooking lessons in special schools requires thoughtful planning to accommodate diverse learning needs. At Agios Spyridonas Special School, three occupational therapists organize these lessons. The lesson primarily focuses on cooking. The lessons are scheduled once a week on the same day and take place in the school's kitchen. Each lesson involves a group of 6-8 children, and the duration is approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes (2 lesson periods). Preparation begins in the week prior, when the responsible therapist creates a list of the ingredients needed for the lesson.

The occupational therapists follow key steps when preparing the lesson:

1. Understand student needs
  - Assess students' abilities, learning styles, and challenges (e.g., sensory sensitivities, motor skills, cognitive abilities).
  - Collaborate with therapists (occupational, speech, behavioral) for adaptations.
2. Adapt curriculum & teaching methods
  - Simplify concepts: use step-by-step instructions, visuals, and hands-on activities.
  - Modify tools: use adaptive kitchen utensils (e.g., easy-grip peelers, talking timers).
  - Incorporate life skills: focus on practical tasks like cooking, budgeting, hygiene, and laundry.
  - Use repetition & routine: reinforce learning through structured schedules.
3. Create an inclusive learning environment
  - Design a safe, accessible kitchen setup.
  - Provide clear labels, visual schedules, and tactile markers.
  - Use assistive technology (e.g., picture communication apps, talking recipe books).
4. Plan engaging activities
  - Cooking: Simple, healthy recipes with step-by-step visuals.
5. Assess progress & celebrate success
  - Use alternative assessments like observation, portfolios, or video logs.
  - Give positive reinforcement and adapt lessons based on progress.

Cooking lessons in special education should focus on practical life skills, adapted teaching methods, and independence-building activities. By using hands-on experiences, visual aids, and assistive technology, educators can make learning both meaningful and engaging.



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## **B.I.M METHOD (Body in Music)**

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The BIM (Body in Music) method was created and developed by Patrick Meuldijk, a music teacher from Netherlands with experience in special needs education. BIM method is a body related method using music.

The basic principle of BIM method is that during the musical activities, the participant experiences music on their body. Using a specific prop/material (ball, gloves, svarves et.c) a “choreography” of movements is performed which follows the musical elements of the specific piece of music.

BIM method is based theoretically on the “Basic stimulation” or “Basale stimulation” developed by the German special educator Andreas Frohlich. By having a “basic stimulation” approach, a sense of security is created for the participants. According to “basale stimulation”, the therapist/educator gives emphasis on his approach, observing carefully the child’s breathing, the facial expression, their movements and adjust their approach accordingly. Making contact in a sensitive way, gives the other person a sense of being accepted.

In addition, BIM is based in Timmers – Huigens’ theory of experience - based framing. The emphasis of BIM method is on the physical part of experience - based framing. The sensory stimuli of the BIM activities are perceived, registered and stored. The repetition of BIM activity a number of times, makes the musical experience recognised and the relationships established. BIM is designed for people with multiple or profound disabilities, but it works also very well with people in the Autism Spectrum disorder enhancing their overall wellbeing.

The BIM method consists of 30 different activities. Each activity uses a specific piece of music together with a specific prop material (ball, scarve, sensory gloves et.c) and a route across the body with specific movements according to the music. It is important to note, that in order to use BIM method, one has to be trained in the method. Trainings are carried out by the founder of the method, Patrick Meuldijk. For more information visit [www.bimwerkwijze.info](http://www.bimwerkwijze.info).



### **TARGET GROUP**

Students with different types of difficulties benefit from BIM, in group or individual setting. At Special School Agios Spiridonas, BIM is used for children with cerebral palsy, autism spectrum disorder and multiple disabilities.

### **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

The general goals of BIM method are:

- making contact;
- interaction;
- communication;
- body awareness;



- relaxation;
- alertness;
- taking initiative;
- reduction of sensory integration difficulties;
- wellbeing.

## HOW WE DO IT

At the beginning of the school year students are assessed, and BIM group or individual sessions are arranged on the weekly school curriculum by the Music therapy Department. BIM is done on a weekly basis at the same time and day, once or twice a week according to the child's needs. In group setting, BIM is carried out in collaboration with therapists from different disciplines and the special educator of the classroom in order to have one adult for each child.

The participants seat comfortably in a circle and everyone has a fixed place with adequate space around them. We make sure that all the participants are seated comfortably, and all the child's basic needs are met (food, toilet). In case of students on wheelchairs, it is better to remove the tables. BIM activities can last from 20 – 40 minutes.

BIM group sessions are carried out in the classrooms and individual sessions in the music therapy room.

Good quality speakers are necessary for the music listening. Also, BIM props are organised separately in boxes (scarves, balls, gloves et.c).

Foster a calm atmosphere, where students feel safe. Let everyone explore the material/prop used before the activity. Perform the BIM activity in a calm manner so that the participants have a positive physical experience. Pay attention to the student's response and adjust accordingly.



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# BEACH GAMES TO CREATE WELL-BEING FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

## GENERAL INFORMATION

By choosing beach sports activities, you can create an inclusive, enjoyable, and engaging beach day for children of all abilities.

## TARGET GROUP

Students with different kind of disabilities

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

- physical health;
- motor skills development;
- social inclusion;
- overall well-being.



## HOW WE DO IT

When considering beach games and sea activities for children with special needs and disabilities, it's important to choose activities that are adaptable to different abilities, ensuring fun, safety, and inclusion.

Here are some ideas for both beach games and sea activities that can be enjoyed by children with various needs:

- Supervision and safety: always ensure that children are closely supervised, especially when in or near water. Adaptations like life vests or floatation devices should be used as needed.
- Modified equipment: use larger or softer balls, adaptive beach toys, and other equipment designed to be accessible and safe for children with special needs.
- Sensory considerations: be mindful of sensory sensitivities to textures (sand, water, etc.) and sounds (waves, wind, etc.). Allow breaks for children to manage sensory overload.
- Clear instructions and visual cues: use visual cues or simple instructions for children who may benefit from non-verbal communication methods.
- Collaborative games: encouraging teamwork helps build social skills and friendships, making it more fun and supportive for children with disabilities.

Research highlights the significant benefits of incorporating various sports, including floorball, beach soccer, beach badminton, and beach bowls, into physical education programs for children with special needs.

Types of beach sports, needs and rulers:

### 1. Beach Bowls

Beach bowls can be a fun and engaging activity for physical education (PE) classes! It's a great way to combine teamwork, skill development, and some friendly competition, while also being active in an outdoor setting (ideal if you have access to a beach or sand court).

Here's how you could incorporate beach bowls into your PE curriculum:

What you need:

- Beach bowls (or similar balls): soft, lightweight balls that can be used in a sand setting. These can be purchased or adapted from regular PE balls, as long as they're appropriate for throwing or rolling on sand.
- Sand or grassy area (preferably soft ground for easier movement). If you're on the beach, that's ideal!
- Markers for boundaries: cones, flags, or any marker to define the play area.

Basic rules:

- Objective: the goal of beach bowls is to land the balls closest to a target ball, often called the "jack" (similar to bocce or lawn bowling). The team whose balls are closest at the end of a round scores points.
- Team play: divide students into teams (2-4 per team). Each team gets a set number of balls, and they take turns rolling or throwing their balls towards the jack. The team with the closest balls wins the round.
- Turn order: teams take turns rolling their beach balls, and after all have been rolled, the closest ball to the jack scores the most points.
- Scoring: a point is awarded for each ball that is closer to the jack than the opposing team's closest ball. You could also have a point system that rewards more precise throws (e.g., 3 points for a ball touching the jack, 1 point for being closest).

Variations to make it more fun:

- Obstacle challenges: add obstacles like cones, or have students perform a physical challenge (jump, squat, etc.) before they roll their ball.
- Time trials: set a time limit for each round or match to keep the pace fast and fun.
- Relay format: have each team member run to a different station (e.g., run, jump, roll the ball) before it's their turn to roll, making it more physically active.



## 2. Beach Football – beach soccer

Beach football (also known as beach soccer) in special physical education can be an excellent activity to promote physical, social, and cognitive development for students with disabilities. It offers a range of benefits for children and individuals with special needs.

How to adapt beach football for special physical education:

- Modified rules: adjust the length of the game, the size of the team, or the size of the ball to meet the students' abilities. For example, you could use a larger or softer ball for students with visual or tactile impairments.
- Reduce the length of matches to ensure that students don't get too tired.



- Assistance: provide assistance where necessary, such as using a buddy system to help guide students with mobility challenges or additional support for those with intellectual disabilities.
- Safety: ensure that students are protected from injury. The sandy surface is less harsh than a traditional football field, but you should still pay attention to any environmental risks, such as the heat of the sand or excessive sun exposure.
- Communication support: use visual aids, signs, or other communication devices to help students understand the game rules. For students with hearing impairments, consider using visual signals or hand gestures to communicate during play.
- Incorporating beach football into special physical education can make physical activity fun and engaging while fostering physical, emotional, and social growth for students with disabilities.

### **3. Badminton**

Badminton can be a great addition to physical education programs for students with special needs. It offers numerous benefits, including improving coordination, motor skills, and social interaction. Badminton can be adapted and integrated into special physical education.

### **4. Floorball**

Floorball in special physical education is a fantastic way to promote physical activity, teamwork, and social inclusion for students with disabilities or special needs. It is a fast-paced, non-contact sport that can be easily adapted to suit various physical and cognitive abilities.

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# SOUND SENSORY STORIES

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Sound Sensory Stories are an interactive storytelling approach that combines auditory elements with sensory experiences to engage participants on multiple levels.

These involve the auditory and sensory enhancement of a story, such as a fairy tale, an improvised narrative, or an adventure. Alongside the storytelling, we create sounds that bring the story to life (e.g., the hero's footsteps, flowing water, wind, etc.), while incorporating sensory experiences that help children fully engage with the story using all their senses (sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell).

Through the Sound Sensory Stories, students are encouraged to respond using their voice, body, musical instruments, or materials available in the surrounding space, expressing their creativity, imagination, and emotions while developing important skills. Sound Sensory Stories are a fun, engaging way to support children with disabilities because they encourage inclusive learning through multisensory participation.



## TARGET GROUP

- students with different types of disabilities;
- students with sensory processing challenges;
- students who find it difficult to access spoken language;
- students who find it challenging to sit and focus during class story time sessions.

## HOW WE DO IT?

How Sound Sensory Stories work?

- Sound Sensory Stories work best with a small group of five to six children with three adults. One adult leads the activity by narrating/singing the story, the second adult provides the sensory experiences, and the third adult sits with the children to model good listening and attention whilst helping and encouraging them to explore the sensory experiences on offer.
- Sound Sensory Stories are most effective in a quiet space free from distractions (this can be inside or outside the classroom). This setting enhances concentration and makes the sensory elements more noticeable leading to a deeper connection with the story.



What is the process of Sound Sensory Stories?

- Storytelling: a story (e.g., a fairy tale, adventure, or improvised narrative) is told aloud or sung as a simple melody by an adult (music therapist or special education teacher).

- Sound creation: sounds are created in real-time to match different parts of the story (e.g., footsteps, wind, water flowing, animal noises). The first time, an adult takes the lead in guiding and creating the sounds, setting the example and the framework for the story. Then, when the story is repeated, the children take on active roles assuming characters and creating the sound to enrich the drama and bring the narrative to life.
- Sensory engagement: children interact with sensory experiences (sight, touch, smell, taste, sound).
- Active participation: children assume characters and contribute to the sensory experience. Children participate actively by making sounds, moving their bodies, and using musical instruments or sensory objects as guided by the adult.
- Repetition: the same Sound Sensory Story is told multiple times. Repetition is crucial for young learners to absorb and learn from the experience.

#### How do I write a Sound Sensory Story?

1. *Choose a story.* Begin by selecting a story, book, or a theme that you and your audience will enjoy or that fits into your curriculum topic. Remember that you don't necessarily need a book to tell a story. It could be an original tale or a well-known classic.
2. *Summarize the story.* Summarize the story into short sentences. Aim for about 10 sentences to cover the entire narrative. Keep it concise and straightforward.
3. *Identify keywords.* Think about roughly 10 keywords from the story. These keywords are essential for conveying the plot and capturing the essence of the tale. They often include who, what, where, and action words. You are looking for language-rich, meaningful words.
4. *Find props.* Look around your home or classroom for props that can bring the story and senses to life. These props should represent the keywords you've chosen. Be creative! Props can range from everyday objects to simple materials. Consider using items like scarves, textured fabrics, or even kitchen ingredients (e.g., coffee grains for "mucky dirt").
5. *Create sensory experiences.* Think about how key events in the story can be turned into a sensory experience: something that the children can watch, touch, smell, taste, hear or experience through movement.

Example: "We're going on a bear hunt" story - The family walks through a swirl in whirling snowstorm. Make this into a sensory experience for the children by squirting Crazy Foam into their hands and then demonstrating how they can create snow by clapping their hands together. This engages several senses: smell - the scent of the Crazy Foam, touch - the feel of the Crazy Foam, sight - watching the Crazy Foam create a snow effect when it is squashed.

6. *Incorporate sound experiences.* Use sounds, musical instruments, songs, or clapping to enhance the sensory experience. Encourage your students to participate by making their own sounds. Remember that not everything has to be literal. For example, rain could be represented by the sound of fingers tapping on a table, or by the sound of feet tapping on the floor. For students who have no movement or speech, you can use communication devices where



pressing a button will produce a sound effect (e.g., a BigMac communication device with cow sound effects). These devices allow students to communicate and participate in the activity in a way that meets their needs.

7. *Feel free to adapt and personalize your sound sensory stories based on your audience and available resources.*

Why is a Sound Sensory Story a learning experience?

Sensory stimulation is an important part of a child's development as it helps develop the neural pathways to our brain. As more neural pathways are formed and become connected, the understanding of ourselves and our environment increases.

For example, developing the visual and tactile senses will help develop visual- motor coordination (the interaction of information from the eyes with body movements during an activity). This enables us to do things like brush our teeth, get dressed, write, ride a bike and catch a ball.

Benefits of Sound Sensory Stories:

- Enhance listening and auditory discrimination skill;
- Improve sensory processing and integration;
- Support language development and communication;
- Encourage creativity, role-playing, and emotional expression;
- Develop social skills, empathy, and turn-taking;
- Familiarizing children with musical instruments and sensory stimuli.

The design and implementation of the Sound Sensory Stories program require collaboration between the Music Therapist, Special Education Teacher, and Occupational Therapist. Coordination among all three professionals is essential to ensure that the program is complete, effective, and tailored to the individual needs of the students.



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# INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN VOLUNTEERING ACTIONS– „BECAUSE I CARE I ACT”



## GENERAL INFORMATION

*Because I care, I act* is a volunteering project that provides SEN students an opportunity to be seen for their abilities, not just their challenges. This can be incredibly empowering, contributing to their overall well-being and quality of life.

## TARGET GROUP

Students with different types of disabilities, teachers and school staff

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

- building social connections and reducing isolation;
- boosting self-esteem and confidence;
- fostering a sense of purpose;
- improving mental and emotional health;
- learning new skills and building independence;
- promoting inclusion and reducing stigma;
- enhancing academic and career outcomes;
- creating a sense of control ;
- incorporating physical activity. (when applicable)

## HOW WE DO IT

How to choose the appropriate volunteering action?

Choosing a volunteering action for SEN students requires careful consideration of their specific needs, interests, and abilities. Here are the key steps to help guide this process:

1. Assess the needs of the students with disabilities.

- identify disabilities
- consider accessibility

2. Understand the interests and skills of the students.

- explore interests
- assess strengths
- provide choices

3. Research potential volunteer opportunities.

- inclusive organizations
- flexible opportunities
- community and social impact

4. Consult with specialists and support staff.

- Engage support staff
- Adapt volunteer roles

5. Ensure safety and comfort.

- Safety considerations
- Training for volunteers and staff

6. Select meaningful and purposeful activities.

- Engagement & purpose
- Promote social interaction

7. Evaluate and monitor progress.

8. Celebrate achievements and contributions.

By following these steps, you ensure that the volunteering actions chosen for students with disabilities are not only accessible but also empowering, enjoyable, and impactful.

Volunteering for students with disabilities offers much more than just the opportunity to help others; it serves as a tool for:

- personal growth
- emotional development
- fostering connections

Most importantly, volunteering provides SEN students an opportunity to be seen for their abilities, not just their challenges. Below, are some references on volunteering actions related to students with disabilities and their well-being, focusing on topics like inclusion, support, and well-being.



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## BONDING EVENTS 4 TEACHERS

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Organizing team building events for teachers is a great way to enhance their well-being, promote teamwork, and reduce stress. Bonding events can significantly enhance the well-being and leading to more harmonious and productive relationships. A memorable bonding event can be organized for stronger relationships among teachers and school staff and fosters a positive school culture. Overall, bonding events play a crucial role in creating a collaborative and supportive environment for teachers, which in turn positively impacts their effectiveness and wellbeing as educators. Bonding events, play a crucial role in enhancing well-being and fostering interpersonal connections.



### TARGET GROUP

Teachers and school staff in special/inclusive schools.

### MAIN OBJECTIVES

- Fostering relationships: create opportunities for individuals to connect on a personal level, encouraging trust and collaboration;
- Building team cohesion: enhance teamwork by promoting a sense of belonging and unity among participants, leading to improved interpersonal dynamics;
- Improving communication: encourage open dialogue and active listening, which can help eliminate misunderstandings and foster positive interactions;
- Promoting mental health: offer a break from regular routines, reducing stress and providing a space for relaxation and enjoyment, which contribute to emotional well-being;
- Enhancing productivity: by building stronger relationships and improving morale, bonding events can lead to increased motivation and productivity in professional settings;
- Creating positive memories: foster shared experiences that can lead to long-lasting positive memories, strengthening bonds and enhancing group identity;
- Improved retention: when teachers feel connected to their peers, they are more likely to stay at their institutions. Strong relationships can reduce feelings of isolation and burnout;
- Cultural cohesion: team-building events help create a unified school culture. They can align teachers around shared goals and values, ultimately benefiting students;
- Conflict resolution: building trust through bonding can make it easier for educators to address conflicts or concerns in a constructive manner;



- Support system: these events create a support network where teachers can turn to each other for advice, encouragement, and assistance, particularly in challenging times.

## **HOW WE DO IT**

Here's a structured plan to help you organize a successful event:

### *1. Define objectives*

Purpose: identify the goals of the bonding event. Is it for team building, stress relief, or simply to foster better relationships

Outcomes: determine what you hope to achieve, such as improved collaboration or stronger friendships

### *2. Set a budget*

Outline costs: consider venue hire, food and drinks, activities, materials, and any other expenses.

Funding sources: identify sources of funding, such as school budgets, community grants, or fundraising efforts.

### *3. Choose a date and time*

Select a date: choose a date that is convenient for most staff members.

Time of day: Decide whether the event will take place during school hours, after school, or on a weekend.

### *4. Venue selection*

Decide if the event will take place at school or a nearby location.

Capacity : choose a space that can comfortably accommodate all participants.

Accessibility: ensure the venue is accessible for all staff members.

### *5. Food and drinks*

Catering: decide whether to cater, provide snacks, or have a potluck where everyone brings a dish.

Dietary restrictions: make sure to account for any dietary restrictions among staff members.

### *6. Promote the event*

Invitations: send out formal invitations or announcements via email, staff meetings, or posters in common areas. Encourage participation

### *7. Execute the event*

Delegate responsibilities: Assign roles to help with setup, registration, facilitation of activities, and cleanup.

Keep things on track: Have a schedule or timing for activities to ensure the event flows smoothly.

### *8. Follow Up*

Feedback: gather feedback from participants to evaluate the success of the event and get suggestions for future events.

Thank you notes: send thank-you notes to all participants, organizers, and anyone who contributed to the event's success.

### *9. Evaluate and reflect*

What worked: assess what went well during the event.

Areas for improvement: identify areas for growth to make future events even better.



### References:

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# EXPERIENTIAL WORKSHOPS FOR TEACHERS

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The purpose of an experiential workshop is to actively engage participants in hands-on, real-life learning experiences. Experiential learning empowers participants not just to learn about something - but to experience, feel, and practice it.

## TARGET GROUP

Teachers in special/inclusive schools.

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

Through reflection, discussion, and interactive activities, participants are encouraged to:

- connect theory with practice;
- explore their own behaviors, thoughts, and attitudes;
- develop practical skills and strategies;
- build empathy and collaborative understanding;
- foster personal and professional growth in a meaningful way.

## HOW WE DO IT?

Steps to organise an experiential workshop for teachers :

- Create a safe space for your colleagues to express thoughts, feelings, and challenges.
- Address sensitive topics (e.g., bullying, inclusion, communication) in a more engaging, reflective way.
- Promote active learning, where participants learn by doing, not just listening.
- Encourage team-building and trust within the group.
- Develop soft skills such as empathy, collaboration, and emotional intelligence.
- Inspire change, as participants connect emotionally and practically with the topic.
- By using experiential methods, a teacher becomes not just a transmitter of knowledge, but a facilitator of deep and meaningful connection.

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We also learned and implemented new methods from our partners... 😊

Implementing MARBLE ART in our school... after LTTA in *Türkiye*



Implementing ORFF/PENTATONIC MUSIC in our school after LTTA in *Türkiye*





*Implementing PHOTOGRAPHY in our school... after LTTA in Greece*



*Implementing KARAOKE in our school... after LTTA in Greece*



*Implementing BOCCIA in our school... after LTТА in **Portugal***



*Implementing SNOEZELEN in our school... after LTТА in **Portugal***





*Implementing ARASAAC in our school... after LTTA in **Spain***



*Implementing GROUP GAMES in our school... after LTTA in **Spain***



*Implementing SENSORY SWEMMING in our school... after LTTA in **Romania***



*Implementing YOGA in our school... after LTTA in **Romania***







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ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ & ΚΑΤΑΡΤΙΣΗΣ

ΕΝΙΑΙΟ ΕΙΔΙΚΟ ΕΠΑΓΓΕΛΜΑΤΙΚΟ  
ΓΥΜΝΑΣΙΟ - ΛΥΚΕΙΟ

**ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥΠΟΛΗΣ**

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# FOLKLORE DANCE FOR S.E.N. STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The value of traditional dances for mental well-being is multifaceted and recognized across many different social and cultural traditions. Dance enhances emotional well-being, social connection, and a sense of personal fulfillment, making it a valuable tool for mental health.

It is present in most, if not all, cultures, shaping unique local dance codes of communication. Thus, each country has its own folk tradition, which it preserves and disseminates in various ways, depending on the prevailing circumstances.

## TARGET GROUP

Students (with independent walking ability and moderate neuromuscular control of the body) and teachers (those who are willing and available).

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

Traditional dances are an important cultural element that expresses the history, values, and customs of a community. Beyond preserving tradition, dances contribute to well-being in various ways:

- *Physical well-being:* dance is an excellent form of exercise that strengthens the body, improves cardiovascular health, and enhances flexibility.
- *Emotional health:* through music and movement, dances foster emotional connection with oneself and others, offering emotional release, stress reduction, and increased self-confidence. Additionally, traditional dances, as an activity requiring discipline, practice, and focus, help develop individual resilience.
- *Social connection:* traditional dances are often performed in groups or circles, reinforcing a sense of community and social solidarity. This social dimension of dance positively impacts mental health, as people feel supported, part of something larger, and strengthen their social relationships.
- *Spiritual well-being:* participating in traditional dances can have a spiritual dimension, connecting individuals with their roots and cultural heritage. Overall, participating in traditional dances can enhance well-being by combining physical exercise, mental and social health, and a sense of cultural identity.

## HOW WE DO IT

The traditional dance activity began 15 years ago at our school and continues uninterrupted to this day, with a frequency of one hour per week (for students). Approximately 15 SEN students participate, under the supervision of the physical education teacher. Teachers with a free teaching hour are welcome to attend the lesson. The program includes not only traditional dances from Thrace but also from all over Greece.

Below is a detailed guide for organizing a successful folk dance class.

- Setting date and time -the lesson time is specific and fixed. It has been posted on the school's bulletin board, with Tuesday designated as the group's meeting day, specifically during the 3rd teaching hour.
- Location of the lesson - the lesson takes place in a space equipped with mirrors for enhanced movement feedback. The ideal location would be an indoor gymnasium, free of noise and distractions.
- Required equipment - any audio playback device.
- The selection of traditional songs - suggestions are made not only by students but also by teachers. However, the final decision is made by the instructor, based on the students' benefit and capabilities.

The events that our SEN students participate with dance performances: various school celebrations (national holidays, Christmas and Easter customs, school parties for relaxation), International people with disabilities day and visits to schools within the framework of inclusive education.

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# PHOTOGRAPHY 4 ALL: A MEANS OF EXPRESSION FOR TEACHERS AND SEN STUDENTS

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The integration of photography in special education schools goes beyond being a mere creative activity. It serves as a powerful mechanism to support the emotional, social, and creative development of students. This practice provides a structured framework to nurture imagination, foster interpersonal relationships, and encourage students to express themselves uniquely. Furthermore, photography plays a crucial role in enhancing students' well-being and active participation, particularly for those with special educational needs. Through this process, educators can leverage photography as a tool to build confidence, promote collaboration, and develop understanding in a supportive and inclusive environment.

## TARGET GROUP

Students with different types of disabilities, teachers and school staff in special/inclusive schools.

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of integrating photography in special education schools revolve around its potential to enhance various aspects of students' development.

These objectives can be categorized as follows:

- *Enhancing creativity and self-expression*
  - Photography inspires students to express themselves creatively, boosting their self-esteem and emotional well-being.
  - Through photography, students document their learning experiences, fostering a sense of accomplishment and ownership over their work.
- *Building trusting relationships*
  - Photography-centered activities contribute to a positive classroom atmosphere, fostering trust between students and teachers.
  - Displaying photographs of classroom activities helps create a sense of community and belonging, essential for emotional health.
- *Supporting emotional and social development*

Schools play a vital role in promoting socio-emotional development, and photography serves as a tool to facilitate discussions about feelings and experiences. By integrating photography into the curriculum, educators can address diverse student needs, particularly for those with special educational needs, enhancing overall well-being.

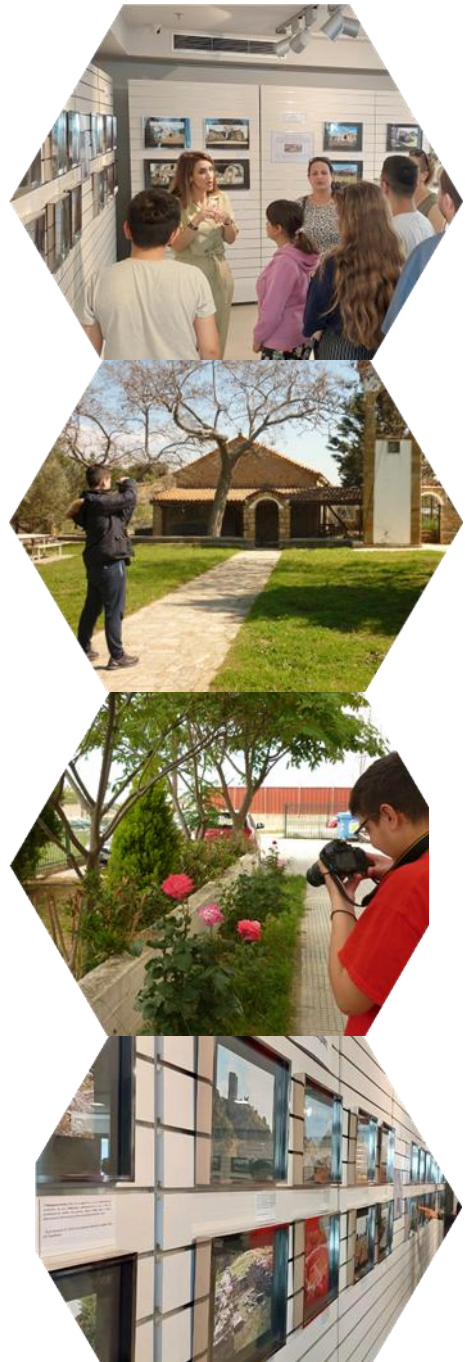
## HOW WE DO IT

For the successful implementation of the photography program, we follow an organized and well-designed process that helps us evolve step by step and achieve our goals. Below are the key steps we follow:

- *Learning the basic photography techniques.* First, we learn the fundamentals of photography. Through practical exercises, we practice these techniques and learn how to apply them correctly to create stunning photographs.
- *Choosing the theme for the year.* At the beginning of the year, we select the central theme that we will explore through photography. This theme could be nature, archaeological monuments, images from the streets of our city, buildings, and many other topics. This theme will guide all of our creations throughout the year.
- *Meeting with professional photographers.* Students have the opportunity to meet professional photographers and observe their work. These meetings provide valuable insights into the art of photography, allowing students to ask questions and receive useful advice for their development.
- *Group work and collaboration.* Throughout the program, students work in groups, exchanging ideas and collaborating to create unique photographs. Through this process, they understand the importance of teamwork and collaboration.
- *Safe internet navigation.* We teach students how to search for photographs and information online safely. We guide them on how to use data and images responsibly and with respect.
- *Organization and presentation of a photography exhibition.* At the end of the year, students participate in creating a photography exhibition. They choose the theme, create posters, and coordinate the process of setting up the exhibition to present their work to others.

The photography exhibition provides a unique opportunity for students to showcase their work to the people in their community. Interacting with the audience, exchanging views, and receiving positive feedback from visitors boosts their self-esteem and confidence in their abilities.

The photography program at our school is not just a creative activity but a powerful tool for enhancing the well-being of students, particularly those with special educational needs. Through the art of photography, our students have the opportunity to develop their emotional and social skills, express themselves in new ways, and feel a sense of belonging within a supportive and inclusive community.





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# JEWELLERY CREATION FOR TEACHERS AND SEN STUDENTS

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The creation of jewellery can significantly enhance well-being in special education schools by fostering creativity, social interaction, and emotional expression among students and teachers. This activity aligns with the broader educational goal of promoting mental health and well-being, as highlighted by various studies.

Through jewellery-making, students have the opportunity to engage in hands-on and creative tasks that cater to diverse learning styles and abilities. Teachers can design structured lessons around jewellery-making, breaking the process into simple and manageable steps, thereby facilitating participation for students with special educational needs (SEN).

Jewellery-making offers a wide range of benefits not only for students but also for teachers, fostering creativity and well-being in the educational environment. These advantages extend beyond personal growth, influencing both the individual and the collective school community. Below are some key positive aspects of incorporating jewellery-making into education:

- Exploring jewellery creation in education;
- Enhancing creativity;
- Developing fine motor skills;
- Promoting problem-solving;
- Encouraging collaboration;
- Cultivation of pre-vocational skills;
- Integrating with other subjects;
- Building confidence;
- Fostering mindfulness;

These elements contribute to a well-rounded educational experience that supports both personal and academic growth.

## TARGET GROUP

Students with different types of disabilities, teachers and school staff



## HOW WE DO IT

Jewellery creation takes place at school as part of occupational therapy, with the goal of enhancing the motor, sensory, and cognitive skills of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). The school's occupational therapist organizes and guides the activity, adjusting the exercises and materials to meet each student's needs. Teachers from other specialties participate and collaborate to provide comprehensive support for the students and promote social interaction. At the same time, their participation benefits their own wellbeing, as it offers opportunities for relaxation, creative expression, and strengthening teamwork, which contributes to their personal wellbeing and professional satisfaction.

For the successful implementation of the activity, it is important to follow an organized process with careful preparation and monitoring. Below are the key steps that need to be followed for its effective execution:

*Identify objectives.* Start by determining the educational goals for incorporating jewellery-making. This could include enhancing creativity, developing fine motor skills, or promoting teamwork among students.

*Select materials.* Gather a variety of materials suitable for jewellery-making, such as beads, wires, strings, and tools. Ensure that the materials are safe and appropriate for the age group of the students.

*Plan the lesson.* Design lesson plans that outline the steps of the jewelry-making process. Include instructions on techniques, safety measures, and the use of tools. This structured approach helps students understand what is expected of them.

*Introduce the techniques.* Teach students basic jewellery-making techniques, such as stringing beads, wire wrapping, and using clasps. Demonstrating these skills can help students feel more confident in their abilities.

*Encourage creativity.* Allow students to express their creativity by designing their own pieces. Encourage them to think about colour combinations, patterns, and styles that reflect their personal tastes.

*Facilitate collaboration.* Organize group projects where students can work together to create a larger piece of jewellery or a collection. This promotes teamwork and communication skills, enhancing the learning experience.



*Reflect and share.* After completing their projects, have students present their jewellery to the class. This reflection allows them to share their creative process and receive feedback, emphasizing on their accomplishments.

*Integrate into the curriculum.* Connect jewellery-making to other subjects, such as art history or mathematics (e.g., measuring lengths for stringing). This interdisciplinary approach enriches the educational experience and makes learning more engaging.

At the end of the school year, we proudly showcase our students' creations to the public. This exhibition is more than just a display; it is a celebration of their hard work, creativity, and dedication throughout the year. Each piece tells a unique story, reflecting the students' growth, imagination, and the skills they have developed. The event offers an opportunity for the community to admire their accomplishments, while also inspiring others with the talent and potential of our young artists. It is truly a moment of pride and joy for everyone involved.

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# **COPING WITH BURNOUT: RECONNECTING WITH SELF AND WELLNESS**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Burnout syndrome is a psychological condition characterized by physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged and excessive stress in the workplace. It is often associated with professionals in high-responsibility and high-interaction fields, such as education, healthcare, social work, and other caregiving roles.

The term "burnout" was introduced in 1974 by psychologist Herbert Freudenberger, who described it as a phenomenon affecting healthcare professionals due to emotional exhaustion. (Freudenberger, 1974)

In 1981, researchers Christina Maslach and Susan Jackson developed the theoretical framework for understanding burnout and created the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), a tool that defines burnout through three key dimensions:

1. Emotional exhaustion: feeling drained of energy and unable to meet work demands.
2. Depersonalization: developing a negative and detached attitude toward the people one interacts with at work.
3. Reduced personal accomplishment: feeling ineffective and unproductive in one's professional role (Maslach & Jackson, 1981)

In 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) included burnout in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) as an occupational phenomenon, emphasizing its connection to workplace stress (WHO, 2020)

Symptoms of burnout can be categorized into physical, psychological, and behavioral:

### *Physical symptoms:*

- Chronic fatigue;
- Sleep disturbances;
- Frequent headaches or muscle pain;
- Weakened immune system.

### *Psychological symptoms:*

- Feelings of frustration and helplessness;
- Persistent pessimism;
- Reduced self-esteem;
- Frequent outbursts of anger or sadness.

### *Behavioral symptoms:*

- Withdrawal from professional and social activities;
- Low productivity;
- Increased use of substances like alcohol or caffeine;
- Absenteeism from work.

Educators are particularly susceptible to burnout due to the nature of their work. Key risk factors include:

1. Psychological demands:

- Emotional investment in students' education
  - Constant pressure for academic performance
2. Organizational factors:
    - Excessive administrative workload
    - Lack of support from administration or colleagues
    - Overcrowded classrooms and resource shortages (Antoniou et al., 2013)
  3. Conflictual relationships:
    - Managing challenging students or parents
    - Lack of recognition for their contributions

The prevalence of burnout among educators varies depending on the country, the educational system, and working conditions. In Greece, studies indicate that educators experience moderate levels of burnout compared to other countries. Specifically, research has shown that Greek teachers display lower levels of burnout when compared to international data (Educircle, 2017). Internationally, burnout rates among teachers differ significantly. In Italy, research identified that 19.7% of teachers exhibit symptoms of burnout (Andreou et al., 2019). In Australia, studies have revealed increased stress levels among educators, which often lead to burnout (Andreou et al., 2019).

Several factors influence burnout rates, including age, years of experience, and working conditions. For example, younger teachers aged 20-30 years are more likely to experience burnout compared to their older colleagues.

## **TARGET GROUP**

Educators in special/inclusive schools because are particularly susceptible to burnout due to the nature of their work.

## **HOW WE DO IT**

Preventing burnout requires individual, collective, and organizational interventions.

### *Individual measures:*

- Stress management: techniques such as meditation, yoga, and breathing exercise.
- Work-life balance: setting boundaries between professional and personal life.
- Skill development: time management and prioritization.

### *Collective measures:*

- Professional counseling: implementing psychological support programs.
- Peer support: strengthening collaboration and mutual assistance in the workplace.

### *Organizational measures:*

- Reducing excessive workload.
- Providing adequate resources and tools.
- Recognition and rewards: establishing programs to acknowledge educators' efforts.
- Leadership training: raising awareness and training administrators to support staff.

Burnout syndrome is a complex condition that requires a comprehensive approach to address it appropriately. Particularly in education, promoting teachers mental health is essential for fostering a sustainable and productive educational system.

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# MORNING EXERCISE WITH PIANO FOR SEN STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The morning exercise program started approximately 20 years ago at our school and was an idea inspired and implemented by the school's music teacher at the time, with the assistance of the Physical Education teachers. The selection of music pieces was exclusively curated by the music teacher and consists of excerpts of classical music accompanied on the piano.

The main goal of the program is to prepare and activate not only the body but also the mind before the start of the school lessons, as it was observed that students were often sluggish and sleepy in the morning

## TARGET GROUP

All students (even students in wheelchairs can participate in a modified program) as well as the teachers.

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

Exercise accompanied by piano music offers a unique combination of benefits for both the body and the mind. The melody and rhythm of the piano can significantly enhance the exercise experience. Here are some of the benefits of exercise with piano music:

- *Waking up the body and preparing for school lessons.* Light physical activities in the morning improve blood circulation, helping students focus and prepare for school lessons.
- *Improvement of physical condition and mobility.* Morning exercises enhance strength, flexibility, and endurance, benefiting students with disabilities by improving motor skills and daily functioning.
- *Improvement of coordination and balance.* The rhythm of piano music helps students synchronize their movements, improving coordination, balance, and fluidity, especially during precise exercises.
- *Increased energy and good mood.* Exercise releases endorphins, boosting mood and energy. Calming piano music reduces stress and anxiety, enhancing relaxation and well-being.
- *Enhancement of self-esteem and confidence.* Physical activity improves body image and self-esteem, particularly for students with disabilities, fostering a sense of achievement.
- *Socialization and teamwork.* Morning exercises promote interaction, helping students develop social skills and teamwork through group activities.
- *Improvement of focus and cognitive clarity.* Regular exercise enhances focus and memory, while piano music aids concentration, improving cognitive functions and school performance.
- *Support for cardiovascular health.* Exercise strengthens cardiovascular health, benefiting all students, especially those with mobility or health issues, and improving sleep quality.



- *Pain and discomfort relief.* Piano music helps alleviate pain, especially for those with chronic conditions or disabilities, creating calm and reducing discomfort during exercise.
- *Increased motivation and commitment.* Piano music boosts engagement and motivation in exercise by providing rhythm and purpose, fostering a connection to physical activity.
- *Establishment of positive habits.* Morning exercise helps establish lifelong habits of physical activity for students with disabilities, promoting long-term health.
- *Improved sleep quality.* Regular morning exercise improves sleep quality, benefiting both physical and mental well-being, particularly for individuals with disabilities.

## HOW WE DO IT

Types of exercises: simple, functional mobility exercises for body movement, breathing, balance, strength, and flexibility are used in this program, accompanied on the piano, every day with a total duration of 11 minutes.

### Key points:

- For the program to be effective, a consistent routine must be followed. This routine involves not only the music and the exercise regimen, which should remain the same in every session, but also clear starting positions for each exercise, points of initiation, movement direction, and other specifics. For instance, it is helpful to provide landmarks; when everyone needs to move to the right, and some children might get confused, the instructor could say, "Everyone starts together towards the window" or "towards the kitchen."
- Sufficient time should be given between exercises for the instructor to explain the activity and for participants to assume their starting positions.
- Additionally, the instructor should count the timing of each exercise out loud so that everyone can stay synchronized. Participants are frequently encouraged to follow the rhythm of the music.
- The volume of the music should be appropriate, ensuring that students sensitive to sound are positioned further from the speaker.
- Teachers actively participate in the morning exercise program, either by supporting weaker students or serving as role models, promoting engagement and well-being.



- The intervention was considered highly successful and was embraced by the entire school community, becoming part of the daily schedule, as it significantly improved the aforementioned parameters.

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# **KARAOKE 4 ALL: A MEANS OF EXPRESSION AND COMMUNICATION FOR TEACHERS AND SEN STUDENTS**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Karaoke is a popular form of entertainment that involves singing along to recorded music using a microphone. Originating in Japan in the 1970s, the term "karaoke" is derived from the Japanese words "kara" (empty) and "oke" (orchestra), meaning "empty orchestra." This form of entertainment allows individuals to sing along to instrumental versions of songs. Traditional karaoke setups typically include a microphone, a sound system, and a screen displaying the lyrics of the songs. However, modern karaoke can also be enjoyed through apps and online platforms, which provide access to a vast library of songs.

Karaoke is widely enjoyed in social settings such as bars, clubs, and private parties. It encourages participation and interaction among friends and family, making it a fun group activity. The wide variety of music genres offered, including pop, rock, country, and R&B, allows participants to choose songs that suit their tastes and vocal abilities. Karaoke has become a global phenomenon, with adaptations in many countries and is often associated with fun and entertainment. It has even led to the creation of karaoke competitions and events.

## **TARGET GROUP**

Students with different types of disabilities, teachers and school staff.

## **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

Karaoke can significantly enhance well-being in special education schools by fostering:

- Social interaction and community building;
- Emotional expression and well-being;
- Sense of community among students and teachers.

This practice aligns with the growing emphasis on social and emotional learning (SEL) and can be integrated into educational frameworks to promote a positive school environment. However, while karaoke presents numerous benefits, it is essential to consider that not all students may feel comfortable participating in such activities. Therefore, alternative methods of engagement should also be explored to ensure inclusivity and cater to diverse preferences within the school community.

## **HOW WE DO IT**

The organization of the karaoke event at ENEEGYL Alexandroupolis significantly contributes to the well-being of students with special educational needs (SEN). It promotes social interaction, emotional expression, and a sense of belonging, which are key elements of well-being. Additionally, it provides teachers with the opportunity to interact with students in a relaxed and enjoyable environment, strengthening positive relationships and reducing stress. This collaborative experience supports the overall emotional and social health of both students and teachers, creating a more inclusive and supportive school community.

Here is a detailed guide for organizing a successful event:

**Setting date and time.** Choose a date and time. The frequency of karaoke events in a special education school can vary depending on the school's schedule and available resources. Ideally, these events could be organized monthly to keep students engaged and provide regular opportunities for social interaction. It's important to consider the specific needs and preferences of the students to ensure that the events are enjoyable and accessible for everyone. Collaborating with teachers and staff is key to determining the best times and formats for these events, ensuring they align with the overall goals of promoting well-being and social skills development.

**Venue reservation.** Secure an appropriate space within the school, such as an auditorium, gymnasium, or a large classroom. Ensure the space can accommodate the expected number of participants and has the necessary infrastructure.

**Equipment procurement.** Arrange for karaoke equipment, such as a computer, microphones, speakers, and a projector or screen to display the lyrics.

**Informing students.** Encourage students to suggest songs they would like to perform. Make sure the song list is appropriate for the school environment.

**Event promotion.** Create posters and announcements to promote the karaoke event. Highlight the fun aspects and encourage students to participate, whether as performers or as an audience. Additionally, allow for spontaneous participation on the day of the event.

**Audience participation.** Encourage audience involvement by allowing them to clap for performers, vote for favorite performances, or even participate in group singing. This creates a lively and enjoyable atmosphere.

**Competitive elements.** To make the event more exciting, consider offering small awards for categories such as "Best Performance," "Most Creative," or "Audience Favorite." This can motivate students to give their best effort.

**Supportive environment.** Foster a positive and supportive atmosphere where students feel comfortable performing. Remind everyone that the goal is fun and enjoyment of the experience, regardless of vocal





abilities. Creating duets between students or between students and teachers can help students who feel hesitant.

**Final organization.** On the day of the event, ensure that all the equipment works properly. Prepare a schedule of performances and assign someone to oversee the flow of the event, such as introducing the performers and managing the timing.

The preparation process for the event should take into account the needs of all participants and ensure that the experience aligns with the overall school environment. Proper organization and appropriate adaptation of the space and equipment ensure that everyone, whether students or teachers, feels comfortable and relaxed during the event. Creating a space where there are no conflicts or stress is also essential for well-being, as it can reduce tension and negative effects that may arise from poorly organized or unsupported activities.

Continuous collaboration with teachers and staff during the preparation and execution of the event is crucial for the well-being of the participants, as it helps in better understanding the needs of the students and in creating an environment where everyone feels that their participation is valued.

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# THERAPEUTIC CONTACT WITH NATURE AND WELL-BEING. THE USE OF GREENHOUSE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION .

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Therapeutic contact with nature is a powerful tool for promoting well-being, particularly for students with disabilities and their educators. At our school, the operation of a greenhouse has been integrated as an innovative practice that not only contributes to emotional balance and improved mood but also offers unique opportunities for the development of professional skills. The greenhouse serves as a space for experiential learning, where students actively participate in all phases of cultivation. Through this experience, they acquire knowledge and skills related to agriculture, environmental awareness, and professional competence. Simultaneously, their participation fosters emotional and social well-being, enhancing their sense of achievement and self-confidence.

## TARGET GROUP

Students with different types of disabilities, teachers and school staff in special/inclusive schools.

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

- *Therapeutic contact with nature.* Through plant care activities, students experience the serenity and positive impact of the natural environment.
- *Promotion of well-being.* Interaction with nature and participation in hands-on activities reduce stress, improve mood, and enhance overall well-being.
- *Building self-confidence.* The process of planting, nurturing, and harvesting plants creates a sense of accomplishment and boosts self-esteem.
- *Social integration.* Activities encourage collaboration and interaction between peers and educators.

## Benefits for students and teachers

For students:

- *Development of professional skills.* Participation in greenhouse activities provides students with practical skills and work experience, enhancing their career prospects.



- *Personal growth.* Through the cultivation process, students build self-esteem and self-confidence.
- *Mental well-being.* Contact with nature and involvement in creative activities reduce stress and improve mood.
- *Social integration.* Group activities encourage collaboration and interaction with peers and educators.
- *Physical development.* Participation in physical activities improves mobility and coordination.

For teachers:

- *Enhanced well-being.* Participation in greenhouse activities offers educators moments of relaxation, contact with nature, and opportunities for personal well-being. The well-being workshops organized in the greenhouse help reduce stress and improve their physical and mental health.
- *Enrichment of teaching experience.* By using innovative practices, educators enrich their teaching approaches and enhance their creativity.
- *Strengthened relationships with students.* Shared activities foster connection and collaboration, improving the educational process and the overall school climate.

## HOW WE DO IT

- *Plant cultivation.* Students engage in planting, transplanting, caring for, and harvesting plants, developing practical skills.
- *Production.* Items such as herbs, vegetables, and flowers are created, which can be showcased at school events or markets.
- *Experiential learning workshops.* Activities such as crafting pots, using tools, and managing crops enhance experiential learning.
- *Well-being workshops.* The greenhouse space and its surrounding natural environment are used for well-being workshops tailored to both students and educators. Activities include relaxing exercises, breathing techniques, meditation, and nature-based therapies, promoting physical and mental health for all participants.

The greenhouse program encourages the therapeutic contact with nature, the development of professional skills, and the promotion of well-being. Through this practice,



students gain experiences that boost their self-confidence, expand their skills, and promote their well-being. At the same time, the program offers educators a framework for creativity, collaboration, and well-being.

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We also learned and implemented new methods from our partners ... 😊

Implementing *BEACH GAMES* in our school... after LTTA in *Cyprus*



Implementing *COOKING* in our school... after LTTA in *Cyprus*





*Implementing CHI KUNG in our school... after LTTA in **Portugal***



*Implementing UBUNTU in our school... after LTTA in **Portugal***





*Implementing YOGA for STUDENTS in our school... after LTTA in **Romania***



*Implementing YOGA for TEACHERS in our school... after LTTA in **Romania***





*Implementing ARASAAC in our school... after LTTA in **Spain***



*Implementing PILATES in our school... after LTTA in **Spain***





Implementing MARBLE ART in our school... after LTTA in *Türkiye*



Implementing ORFF in our school... after LTTA in *Türkiye*





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**PORTUGAL**



# **BOCCIA: AN INCLUSIVE AND ADAPTED PRACTICE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Boccia is an inclusive, strategic sport that was originally designed for individuals with severe physical disabilities. Today, it is widely recognized as a valuable educational and therapeutic tool, especially for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Played indoors using soft leather balls, the aim of the game is to throw or roll balls as close as possible to a white target ball, known as the "jack." Boccia is fully adaptable, allowing students of all physical and cognitive abilities to participate equally, whether individually or in teams.

One of the main benefits of Boccia is its ability to promote inclusion and social interaction. It offers a supportive environment where students with diverse needs can engage in a shared activity, helping to reduce feelings of isolation and build friendships. Participation in Boccia also encourages the development of essential motor skills, such as coordination, balance, and controlled movement.

Cognitively, Boccia helps students improve focus, problem-solving, and strategic thinking as they plan their throws and respond to the moves of their opponents. Emotionally, it fosters confidence and self-esteem by providing achievable challenges and opportunities for success. The sense of accomplishment that comes from scoring points or improving performance can be especially empowering for students who may struggle in traditional academic settings.

In summary, Boccia is more than just a game—it is a powerful educational resource that promotes physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development in students with SEN. By integrating Boccia into the school environment, educators can provide meaningful opportunities for growth, inclusion, and personal achievement.

## **TARGET GROUP**

Students with intellectual disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), physical disabilities with Learning Disabilities and students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

## **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

- *Promote inclusion and participation.* Encourage active involvement and social integration among students with SEN through a fully inclusive sport.
- *Enhance motor skills and coordination.* Support the development of fine and gross motor skills, balance, and hand-eye coordination.
- *Foster communication and teamwork.* Improve interpersonal skills by encouraging verbal and non-verbal communication in a team setting.
- *Boost self-esteem and confidence.* Provide opportunities for personal achievement and recognition, fostering a sense of competence and pride.
- *Develop strategic thinking and focus.* Stimulate cognitive skills through planning, decision-making, and maintaining concentration during play.

- *Encourage emotional regulation.* Help young people manage emotions such as frustration or excitement in a safe and supportive environment.
- *Promote physical and mental well-being.* Offer physical activity adapted to individual abilities, contributing to overall health and mental wellness.
- *Support goal setting and personal growth.* Motivate students to set personal targets and track progress, encouraging continuous development

## HOW WE DO IT

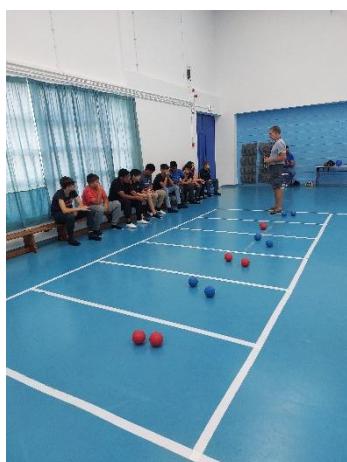
Every week, a group of young students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) takes part in Boccia lessons as part of their adapted physical education program. These sessions have become a highly anticipated and meaningful part of their school routine, offering both enjoyment and valuable learning experiences in a fully inclusive setting.

Each lesson is carefully structured to meet the diverse needs and abilities of the students. The sessions begin with a warm-up activity that includes stretching and light movement, helping students prepare physically and mentally. The rules of Boccia are explained clearly at the start of each lesson, using visuals, demonstrations, and simplified language to ensure full understanding. Whether playing individually or in teams, students are encouraged to develop their own strategies, communicate with peers, and take turns respectfully.

These weekly Boccia lessons offer far more than just physical activity. They help improve fine and gross motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and concentration. The activity also promotes important social and emotional skills, including teamwork, self-confidence, patience, and emotional regulation.

One of the most powerful aspects of the weekly sessions is the sense of inclusion and achievement that students experience. Every success, whether small or large, is celebrated. Teachers and helpers provide continuous encouragement, creating a safe and positive environment where each student feels valued.

Over time, many students have shown noticeable progress, not only in their physical coordination but also in their confidence, independence, and social interactions. For some, Boccia has even become a source of pride and motivation in other areas of their school life. In summary, the weekly Boccia lessons offer a structured, inclusive, and enjoyable way for SEN students to grow physically, socially, and emotionally—while having fun and being part of a supportive team.



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# **SNOEZELEN ROOMS: AN INCLUSIVE SENSORY EXPERIENCE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Snoezelen rooms are specially designed multi-sensory environments that aim to support the development and well-being of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). These rooms combine elements such as light, sound, texture, and aroma to create a calming and stimulating atmosphere, tailored to the needs of each student.

One of the main benefits of Snoezelen rooms is their ability to promote relaxation and reduce anxiety. For students who struggle with over-stimulation or sensory processing difficulties, these environments provide a safe space where they can feel calm and secure. The sensory elements can be individually adjusted to suit each student's preferences and needs, encouraging self-regulation and emotional balance.

In addition, Snoezelen rooms support cognitive and motor development. Activities involving lights, sounds, and interactive tools help improve concentration, coordination, and communication skills. These rooms are often used in therapeutic and educational contexts to enhance learning through play and sensory exploration.

For students with autism, ADHD, intellectual disabilities, or physical impairments, Snoezelen rooms can significantly improve their quality of life in the school environment. They foster inclusion by offering personalized support that respects each student's pace and potential. For Special Education teachers, integrating a Snoezelen room into their teaching environment can enhance the overall educational experience for students with special needs.

The regular use of Snoezelen rooms with students who have Special Educational Needs (SEN) has proven to be highly beneficial in both educational and therapeutic contexts. These multi-sensory environments are designed to provide a calm, safe, and stimulating space where students can explore and develop at their own pace.

In conclusion, Snoezelen rooms are powerful tools in special education. They not only provide sensory support but also promote autonomy, engagement, and well-being for students with SEN, making learning more accessible and meaningful.

## **TARGET GROUP**

All students of different classes, including students with different disabilities. Students with intellectual disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), physical disabilities with learning disabilities and students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

## **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

- Promote physical and emotional relaxation, reducing anxiety and stress in students with Special Educational Needs (SEN);
- Stimulate the senses in a safe and controlled environment, supporting sensory integration and perception of surroundings;
- Improve concentration and attention span, enhancing the ability to focus on tasks both in and out of the classroom;



- Develop autonomy and emotional self-regulation, by offering sensory experiences that help students understand and manage their emotions;
- Encourage verbal and non-verbal communication, through interaction with lights, sounds, textures, and movement;
- Boost self-esteem and overall well-being, by providing enjoyable and positive experiences without academic pressure;
- Support cognitive and motor development, through multi-sensory activities that engage the body and mind;
- Foster a sense of security and inclusion, by creating a welcoming space that respects each student's individual needs and pace.

## HOW WE DO IT

Every week, students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) participate in a structured 45-minute session in the Snoezelen room. The session is designed to promote relaxation, sensory stimulation and personal development in a calm and supportive environment. At the beginning of the session, students are welcomed into the room with soft background music and dim lighting to create a soothing atmosphere. They are encouraged to remove their shoes and settle in, helping them feel comfortable and relaxed.

The session typically starts with a relaxation phase, where students lie or sit quietly while listening to calming music and watching the changing colors of the bubble tube or fiber optic lights. This phase helps to reduce anxiety and prepare students for focused activities. Next, the interactive phase begins. Depending on the needs and goals of each student, different sensory activities are introduced. These may include:

- *tactile exploration*: feeling different textures, sand, water beads, or soft materials;
- *visual stimulation*: using light projectors, color-changing panels, or mirror balls;
- *listening activities*: listening to nature sounds, playing soft percussion instruments;
- *movement and balance*: walking on textured paths, gentle rocking on a sensory swing, or using a beanbag for deep pressure.

Students are given time to explore at their own pace, either individually or in small groups, with the support of a teacher or therapist who gently guides their interaction and communication.

The session ends with a calming phase, where the lights are dimmed again and students take a few minutes to relax, reflect, or talk about how they feel, if they are able to.

These weekly sessions provide consistency and routine, which are crucial for many SEN students. Over time, regular exposure to this environment supports improvements in emotional regulation, communication, sensory processing, and overall well-being. In short, Snoezelen rooms are powerful tools that support the holistic development of students with SEN, offering personalized and meaningful experiences that go beyond traditional teaching methods.



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# STRATEGIES FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT USING ONLINE GAME APPLICATIONS

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Using online game applications to develop language competencies has become an increasingly effective and engaging method in modern education. These digital tools offer interactive and dynamic environments where students can practice vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and comprehension skills in real time. Unlike traditional methods, language games often provide immediate feedback, repetition, and contextual learning, which helps to reinforce knowledge and maintain student motivation. Games also allow differentiated learning, adapting to various proficiency levels and learning abilities.

Moreover, online language games encourage communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving—key skills in language development. Many of these applications include storytelling, dialogues, and multiplayer options that promote collaborative learning and real-world language use. By combining entertainment with educational content, online game applications make language learning more accessible and enjoyable, especially for younger learners or students with special educational needs who benefit from visual and interactive approaches. Language is an essential tool for the cognitive and social development of individuals, and its learning involves skills such as reading, writing, comprehension, and oral expression. Educational games are an effective way to promote these skills in a fun and interactive way. Tools like *Word Wall*, *Português para Crianças* and *Fun Easy Learning*, play an important role in this process, offering activities that stimulate critical thinking, vocabulary expansion, and mastery of linguistic structures.



***Word Wall*** is a platform that allows the creation of personalized games to teach vocabulary, spelling, and grammar. With its variety of interactive activities, students can practice words and expressions, developing fluency in the language and reinforcing learning in a playful way



***Português para Crianças*** is an educational app specifically designed to help children learn Portuguese in a fun and engaging way. Through interactive games, the app teaches vocabulary, phrases, and grammar, promoting gradual and effective learning. The app includes various activities that encourage practice in reading, writing, and oral comprehension, in a dynamic and accessible way.



***Fun Easy Learning*** is a platform with a variety of educational games aimed at teaching children language skills, including vocabulary, pronunciation, and basic grammar. Through

fun and engaging activities, it helps children develop both their written and spoken language abilities.

## **TARGET GROUP**

All students of different classes, including students with different disabilities. Students with intellectual disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), physical disabilities with learning disabilities and students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

## **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

- Support vocabulary development through simple, visual, and repetitive game-based activities tailored to individual learning needs;
- Reinforce understanding of basic grammar structures using accessible and interactive games with clear instructions and visual cues;
- Enhance listening and reading comprehension through multi-sensory content that supports different learning styles (e.g., audio, images, animations);
- Promote verbal expression and pronunciation in a non-threatening environment where students can practice at their own pace;
- Increase motivation and engagement by using playful and personalized digital tools that reduce anxiety and encourage participation;
- Adapt learning to individual needs and abilities, offering games with flexible levels of difficulty and customizable settings;
- Develop cognitive and communication skills through structured tasks that promote sequencing, memory, and language use in context;
- Encourage social interaction and cooperation using collaborative games that foster communication, turn-taking, and shared experiences in a supportive setting.

## **HOW WE DO IT**

Our students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) participate often in a structured language lesson using digital tools to support their learning. The class is designed to be multi-sensory, interactive, and adapted to the individual needs and abilities of each student. Three main applications are used: *Wordwall*, *Português para Crianças*, and *Fun Easy Learning*.

The lesson usually begins with a warm-up activity on *Wordwall*, using simple matching games, word searches, or picture-word associations. These games are projected or used on tablets and help reinforce vocabulary in a visual and playful way. Students are guided in small groups or individually, depending on their learning profile.

Next, the students use *Português para Crianças*, an app focused on basic language skills through songs, videos, and simple quizzes. This phase emphasizes listening and repetition, supporting speech development and comprehension in a fun and rhythmic context. Students are encouraged to repeat words, sing along, and respond to basic instructions, which helps improve their verbal communication.

To close the session, students engage with *Fun Easy Learning*, where they explore categorized vocabulary with images and audio. The app is particularly effective for visual and auditory learners, and it allows each student to work at their own pace. Teachers may set simple



tasks, like identifying colors, animals, or objects, using the interactive flashcards and games available on the platform.

Throughout the session, the focus remains on positive reinforcement, sensory support, and personalized interaction, ensuring that each student is actively involved and able to succeed according to their abilities. These regular lessons not only develop language competencies but also build confidence, autonomy, and joy in learning.



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## **OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY**

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Occupational therapy (OT) in schools plays a critical role in supporting students aged 6 to 18 in developing the functional, cognitive, emotional, and social skills needed to fully participate in academic life and beyond. More than just helping students succeed in the classroom, school-based OT focuses on preparing them for active, independent living, by teaching practical life skills and promoting autonomy in everyday tasks.

Occupational therapists work with students to strengthen abilities such as motor coordination, sensory regulation, attention, planning and organization, and social interaction. These core skills support school participation but also lay the foundation for everyday independence. Whether it's managing personal hygiene, navigating social situations, or following daily routines, OT helps students build the confidence and capability needed to handle life's demands.

A significant component of OT in education is the training in activities of daily living (ADLs). This includes helping students learn and practice essential tasks such as dressing and undressing, putting on and taking off shoes, using the bathroom independently, eating with utensils, and navigating stairs or hallways safely. These basic self-care skills are crucial for developing a sense of autonomy and are often taught using step-by-step instruction, repetition, visual aids, and sensory supports.

In addition to ADLs, occupational therapists prepare students for a more active life by fostering executive functioning skills like planning, time management, and decision-making. These are critical for older students as they begin to take on more responsibility both inside and outside school. Some therapy sessions may include role-playing real-world scenarios—such as preparing a simple meal, packing a school bag, organizing a schedule, or even learning how to use public transportation—depending on the student's age and level of independence. Occupational therapists also collaborate with teachers, families, and school staff to adapt materials, create structured routines, and provide tools that help students succeed across environments. This collaboration ensures that the learning is consistent and relevant to each student's daily context. Importantly, OT encourages the development of social and emotional life skills—such as understanding boundaries, expressing needs, resolving conflicts, and working cooperatively with others. These competencies are essential for active participation in school, home, and community life.

In essence, school-based occupational therapy is not just about helping students "cope" in school—it's about empowering them to live actively, independently, and meaningfully in all areas of life. By nurturing these life skills from an early age, occupational therapists support students in becoming confident, capable individuals ready to face the demands of everyday living.

### **TARGET GROUP**

Occupational therapy supports individuals who face challenges in daily activities. For children and teens aged 3 to 18, this includes those with developmental disorders (like Autism and

ADHD), physical disabilities (e.g., cerebral palsy), learning disabilities (such as dyslexia), sensory processing issues, and emotional or behavioral difficulties. Therapy helps them improve motor skills, focus, social interactions, and self-regulation, enabling greater autonomy in school and everyday life.

## **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

- Promote the development of self-care skills, such as dressing, hygiene and feeding, to increase student independence in daily routines.
- Enhance fine and gross motor coordination, enabling students to perform functional tasks necessary for school and everyday life (e.g., using zippers, climbing stairs, carrying a school bag).
- Develop executive functioning abilities, including planning, organizing, and time management, to support autonomy in academic and real-life contexts.
- Improve sensory processing and regulation, helping students manage stimuli and remain calm, focused, and ready to learn or engage in everyday tasks.
- Foster communication and social interaction skills, essential for building relationships and participating effectively in group activities and the community.
- Encourage problem-solving and decision-making skills, empowering students to make safe and appropriate choices in daily situations.
- Support the transition to adulthood by teaching practical life skills such as meal preparation, money management, and using public transport (adapted to each student's level)
- Promote inclusive participation in school and community activities, ensuring that SEN students can engage meaningfully and confidently in all areas of life.

## **HOW WE DO IT**

When students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) reach the age of 15, they begin a *Transition Program to Active Adult Life*(PIT). This program is designed to prepare them for future independence and includes training in practical life skills and work-related competencies. The focus is on helping each student develop the abilities they will need in everyday situations and in a future workplace. Activities may include learning how to manage time, follow routines, interact appropriately with others, and carry out simple job-related tasks. The goal is to promote autonomy, responsibility, and confidence, so that each student can achieve a meaningful and productive life after school.

The Individual Transition Program(PIT) for Active Life is a tailored, coordinated approach designed to support students with disabilities in transitioning from school to adult life, promoting independence and inclusion in all aspects of life. The PIT includes a range of activities, such as workplace training, where students gain hands-on experience in real job settings. This helps them develop essential vocational skills. The program also emphasizes the development of independent living skills, including managing daily tasks like cooking, budgeting, and personal care, which are crucial for living autonomously.

An important aspect of the PIT is community participation, which encourages students to engage in social and recreational activities.t Each student's transition plan is based on their

unique needs, preferences, and interests. This personalized approach ensures that students are actively involved in shaping their future.

The main goal of the PIT is to promote self-determination, enabling students to make choices about their future. By fostering inclusion in all areas of adult life, the PIT aims to help students become active, engaged members of society. With support from a team of professionals, students are guided through the transition process, ensuring they have the necessary resources to succeed in their personal, social, and professional lives.



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# THE UBUNTU PHILOSOPHY AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE WELL-BEING IN SCHOOL

## GENERAL INFORMATION

UBUNTU is an African philosophy and worldview that emphasizes interconnection, mutual respect, and collective well-being. The term "Ubuntu" comes from the Nguni Bantu languages of Southern Africa and roughly translates to "I am because we are." This concept suggests that our individual identity is shaped by our relationships with others, and it highlights the importance of community, empathy, and shared humanity. In the context of education, Ubuntu offers valuable insights and practices that can positively influence teachers' well-being and their effectiveness in the classroom. The core principles Ubuntu are Ethics of Care, Building Bridges, Servant Leadership and the five pillars of Ubuntu are:

- *Self-awareness*, which emphasizes understanding one's own identity and purpose;
- *Self-confidence*, fostering trust in oneself and one's abilities;
- *Resilience*, the strength to overcome challenges and adversity with grace;
- *Empathy*, the ability to understand and share the feelings of others;
- *Service*, the commitment to helping others and contributing to the collective good.

Teaching is often an emotionally demanding profession. Teachers face the pressure of managing classrooms, meeting educational standards, and supporting students with diverse needs. Over time, these stressors can lead to burnout, isolation, and a sense of being undervalued. The application of Ubuntu principles in educational settings can provide teachers with a refreshing and supportive framework to manage these challenges.

The Ubuntu philosophy offers a transformative approach to teaching that can enhance the well-being of educators. By fostering a sense of community, empathy, and shared responsibility, Ubuntu helps to mitigate the challenges that teachers face, from burnout to isolation. Through its emphasis on collective care and mutual respect, Ubuntu encourages teachers to see themselves as part of a greater whole, where their well-being is interwoven with the well-being of others. In adopting Ubuntu, educators can create more supportive, collaborative, and compassionate learning environments, not only for their students but for themselves as well.

## TARGET GROUP

This initiative was designed specifically for all school staff, including teachers, helpers and school psychologists and therapists working closely with our students.

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

- to promote self-awareness and personal reflection among educators, helping them reconnect with their values, purpose, and identity;
- to strengthen emotional resilience and self-confidence in teachers, educators, and psychologists, enabling them to better manage stress and professional challenges;

- to foster empathy and compassionate communication within educational teams, encouraging deeper understanding and stronger relationships;
- to introduce and explore the core principles of Ubuntu as a framework for collective care, collaboration, and community building;
- to encourage a culture of servant leadership, where professionals support one another and lead with humility and purpose;
- to create a safe and reflective space for sharing experiences, promoting mutual support, and reinforcing a sense of belonging within the educational community.

## HOW WE DO IT

We organized a series of sessions for the teachers, helpers, psychologists and therapists in our community to instill the principles of Ubuntu into practice. These sessions consist of multiple interactive sessions designed to introduce and explore the principles of Ubuntu—an African philosophy centered on human connection, empathy, and mutual care. Ubuntu offers a powerful framework for teachers to reflect on their practice, nurture well-being, and foster a stronger sense of community within schools. Each session in the series focuses on a specific theme inspired by Ubuntu’s core values and pillars:

**Session 1:** Introduction to Ubuntu in education - Teachers will gain an understanding of the origins and meaning of Ubuntu, and reflect on how its principles can reshape educational environments to be more compassionate, inclusive, and collaborative.

**Session 2:** Self-awareness and purpose - This session invites teachers to explore their identity, values, and sense of purpose. Through reflective activities, participants will connect more deeply with their motivations and strengths as educators.

**Session 3:** Building confidence and resilience - Educators will learn strategies to develop self-confidence and resilience, crucial qualities for navigating the emotional and professional challenges of teaching.

**Session 4:** Cultivating empathy in the classroom -Focusing on emotional intelligence and empathy, this session helps teachers enhance their relationships with students and colleagues, creating more caring and responsive learning environments.

**Session 5:** Leadership through service - Grounded in the Ubuntu idea of “servant leadership,” this session encourages teachers to lead with humility, care, and a focus on the well-being of others.

**Session 6:** Creating a culture of care and connection - Bringing the series together, this final session focuses on building sustainable, supportive school cultures rooted in mutual respect, collective responsibility, and shared humanity.

Throughout the series, teachers will engage in reflection, dialogue, storytelling, and practical exercises. These sessions are not only professional development opportunities—they are spaces for personal growth, emotional renewal, and community building. By embracing Ubuntu, educators are empowered to transform their schools into places where everyone—teachers, students, and staff—can thrive together



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# **TEAM BUILDING - STRESS REDUCTION ACTIVITIES**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Team building activities offer valuable opportunities for teachers in the 2nd and 3rd cycles of education to strengthen their professional relationships and improve collaboration. These moments outside the usual classroom environment allow educators to connect on a more personal level, build trust, and enhance communication skills.

In a profession that often involves high levels of stress and isolation, team building promotes a sense of unity and shared purpose. It helps teachers feel supported, increases morale, and encourages a more positive and cooperative school culture. When teachers work well together, the entire educational community—including students—benefits from a more harmonious and effective learning environment.

Moreover, team building activities can inspire creativity and problem-solving by encouraging teachers to step out of their routines and engage in collaborative challenges. These experiences help uncover individual strengths and foster a spirit of mutual respect and appreciation. For teachers of the 2nd and 3rd cycles, who often face demanding classroom dynamics and diverse student needs, feeling part of a cohesive and supportive team can significantly enhance motivation, job satisfaction, and overall well-being.

## **TARGET GROUP**

The activity was designed for a group of 22 teachers from the same school, working across different subjects and grade levels, to strengthen their professional relationships and overall team cohesion.

## **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

- to provide moments for stress relief through fun and engaging activities, that can help teachers find balance and maintain mental well-being;
- to promote a sense of belonging and appreciation within the team;
- to promote professional development that is relevant to personal well-being;
- to encourage positive social interactions and strengthen interpersonal bonds among colleagues through shared experiences;
- to create a supportive space where teachers can relax, recharge, and reflect away from the pressures of their daily responsibilities;
- to enhance emotional intelligence and self-regulation through activities that promote mindfulness and emotional awareness;
- to foster a culture of open communication and mutual support, contributing to a healthier and more resilient school environment;
- to empower teachers with practical strategies and tools they can apply in both their professional and personal lives to manage stress and maintain well-being.



## HOW WE DO IT

Over determined moments, teachers from the same school gathered for a specially designed team building retreat aimed at strengthening collaboration, enhancing well-being, and fostering a deeper sense of connection among staff. Held in a relaxed and natural setting away from the school environment, the retreat offered a valuable opportunity for participants to step back from their daily routines and invest time in personal and professional growth.

The group engaged in a variety of dynamic and engaging activities—including cooperative games, reflective workshops, outdoor challenges, and moments of informal sharing. These experiences were designed to promote trust, communication, and team spirit, while also offering space for stress relief and emotional renewal.

The retreat not only helped participants get to know each other better on a personal level, but also reinforced a sense of unity, belonging, and shared purpose within the school team. Teachers returned feeling re-energized, supported, and inspired—ready to bring this renewed motivation and positive energy back into their classrooms and daily work.



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## **END-OF-YEAR SCHOOL FESTIVAL – A CELEBRATION FOR SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND FAMILIES**

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

To mark the end of the school year, our school organized a joyful and vibrant End-of-Year Festival, bringing together students, families, and staff to celebrate a year of learning, growth, and community. Parents were warmly invited to attend and take part in the festivities, strengthening the home–school connection and reinforcing the spirit of collaboration that defines our educational community.

Each class prepared a special performance to showcase on stage—either a short theatre play or a musical number. These creative presentations allowed students to express themselves artistically, work as a team, and proudly share their talents with families and friends. The atmosphere was festive and full of excitement, with laughter, applause, and plenty of proud moments as each group took the stage.

The teachers also joined the celebration by performing as a school choir, singing together in a spirit of unity and joy. Their participation not only highlighted their dedication but also reminded everyone that school is a place where learning, collaboration, and creativity are shared by all. This event was a wonderful way to end the academic year on a high note, strengthening bonds and creating lasting memories for the entire school community.

### **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

- to celebrate the end of the academic year by promoting a sense of unity and shared achievement within the school community;
- to strengthen the relationship between the school and families by encouraging active parent participation in a joyful and inclusive event;
- to provide students with an opportunity to express their creativity and teamwork through performances such as songs and theatrical presentations;
- to foster a school culture where collaboration, celebration, and emotional connection are valued alongside academic success;
- to create meaningful and lasting memories for students, teachers, and families through shared experiences and performances;
- to highlight the role of teachers not only as educators but as active members of the school’s cultural and social life;
- to encourage student confidence, public speaking, and artistic expression in a supportive and festive environment.

### **HOW WE DO IT**

The teachers also joined the celebration by performing as a school choir, bringing an extra touch of warmth and unity to the event. Their performance, prepared with enthusiasm and care, included a mix of joyful songs that resonated with both students and families. Seeing

their teachers on stage, not as instructors but as performers and collaborators, created a sense of closeness and mutual respect that extended beyond the classroom walls.

This musical moment was more than just entertainment—it was a symbolic gesture that reflected the values we uphold as a school: teamwork, creativity, and shared joy. The teachers' involvement demonstrated their commitment to building strong relationships within the school community and showed students that learning can be joyful, expressive, and collective. Their participation helped create a positive, inclusive atmosphere where everyone—regardless of role—was celebrated and valued.

Ending the academic year with such a vibrant, collective experience allowed the entire school to reflect on the achievements of the past months while looking forward with renewed energy. The choir performance, along with all the other student and family contributions, turned the event into a true celebration of community. It was a moment of connection and gratitude, leaving lasting memories for all who attended and reinforcing the strong bonds that make our school so special.



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We also learned and implemented new methods from our partners... 😊

Implementing ARASAAC in our school... after LTTA in **Spain**



Implementing ART THERAPY in our school... after LTTA in **Cyprus**





Implementing *COOKING* in our school... after LTTA in *Cyprus*



Implementing *JEWELLERY* in our school... after LTTA in *Greece*





Implementing PHOTOGRAPHY in our school... after LTTA in *Greece*



Implementing ORFF in our school... after LTTA in *Türkiye*



*Implementing YOGA in our school... after LTTA in **Romania***







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# SPAIN

# **TEACCH METHOD AND ARASAAC APPROACH TO MOTORIC DISABILITIES AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT IMPAIRMENTS OF CREATING WELL BEING FOR SEN STUDENTS**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The TEACCH method, which stands for the “Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children”, was specifically developed for children with autism spectrum disorder. This teaching technique started in 1960 at the University of North Carolina by Dr. Eric Schopler and Dr. Robert Reichler; its methodology delivers a structured form of visual learning and is sometimes referred to as Structured Teaching.

Based on TEACCH foundations, the department of Education, Culture and Sport of the Government of Aragon (Spain) coordinated by the General Board of Innovation and Vocational Training, researched and developed the ARASAAC pictographic reference system, “Aragonese Center for Augmentative and Alternative Communication”. Augmentative Communication is considered when the medium used by the student complements and accompanies their oral communication. Alternative Communication is considered when the means used replace oral communication

Arasaac offers pictographic resources (signs that, through a figure or a symbol, allow to develop the representation of something) and materials adapted with a Creative Commons license (BY-NC-SA) to ease communication and cognitive access to those who, due to different factors (autism, intellectual disability, language acquisition retardation, the elderly, etc.), face serious difficulties in these areas, which hinder their inclusion in daily life.

## **TARGET GROUP**

SEN & average students due to different factors: autism, intellectual disability, and language acquisition retardation show a range of disabilities such as those with visual information processing and those who have difficulties with social communication attention.

## **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

Besides the fact that it is implemented mainly for children with autism, visual cues usage for teaching makes learning more accessible, especially for children who are non-verbal. Visual aids make learning a universal tool.

The main repercussion in ASD children is to acquire social skills and to help change their perception of social settings in a positive way. Recent studies have also shown its effectiveness, when it comes to autistic childrens adaptative behaviours, plus social reciprocity, including parents stress levels and parent-child interactions. Similar research has shown accuracy in self-injurious behaviours.

## **HOW WE DO IT**

This method promotes structured learning environments with a focus on visual learning for children with disabilities in visual information processing and difficulties in social communication, attention and executive functioning.



### *1. Physical structure*

The physical structure is the first part of this resource. It refers to the individuals surroundings or environment (fabric coverings, room dividers, containers, bins, tape on the floor...). Clear physical boundaries are in place for all of the days tasks. For instance, playing takes place in one part of a room and having lunch in the canteen. Having organized areas that each have their own function is important when working with younger students and also with those with autism or developmental disability. Space in the classroom must be updated throughout the year because of ongoing needs.

### *2. Consistent schedule*

Consistency in timing of events is established through verbal communication, written communication, and drawings or pictures. For example a schedule for an autistic primary school mate might include a board with pictures of the day,s schedule. Those would include a picture of crayons for art, a picture of a book for story time. The second row could feature a picture of a dish for lunchtime, a picture of a playground for break time and a picture of a ball for P.E. lessons.

### *3. Establishments of expectations*

These ones may be behavioral, activity-based, academic, or for communication. Having a clear set of expectations makes it easier for an educator, teacher or therapist to set up consequences or interventions when the expectaions are not reached. This also includes activity measurements. The goal is to set up the child for independent work and functioning. SEN students with ASD need clear instructions, visuals and a lot of practice to learn what is expected of them. Generally, those with autism thrive on clear boundaries and rules. One nice way to help establish classroom expectations is to use a social story or visuals that are reviewed every day. When a student comes into the classroom, read a story on the board together as a morning routine. Switch over to computer expectations when pupil is about to use technology devices, and go over rules about walking in the hallway right before as well.

### *4. Maintenance of a routine*

Setting up and maintaining a routine is essential for someone with autism. Children typically thrive on consistency. When something that is outside of their routine occurs, this may cause them to withdraw or become non cooperative for the event.

This could be a step by step routine:

- Identify each step of a task you'd like your student to complete, and list the steps
- Use the steps to make whatever form of schedule that Works for the kid, like a picture essay, task list.
- Use timers to signal when schedule will begin.
- Refer to schedule throughout routine. Provide positive reinforcement for completing steps.
- Be consistent. Complete every step of the routine every time.

### *5. Implementation of visual-based cues*

The visually-based cues that are a part of the method are designed to supplement the verbal information provided by teacher or therapist. The visual support could be written on paper or on a computer screen. It might contain drawings or graphics. Visuals are quite helpful so they are used for any reason, such as when going over expectations, as reminders, for students to

use when asking for a break, to allow students to express their feelings, to show that it is time to change activities, or as a behavior incentive.



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# **PHYSICAL EDUCATION AS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL IN CREATING WELL BEING FOR SEN STUDENTS. PILATES, A HELPFUL RESOURCE IN WELL BEING**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Physical education is a crucial part of a child's growth and well being. That goes for every kid, including those with special needs. In general, physical exercise carried out with students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and other development impairments in the field of Physical Education curriculum, will enhance the variables below.

*“Pilates consists of moving through a slow, sustained series of exercises using abdominal control and proper breathing “*

It is assumed that students enrollment in monitored sessions increases their participation in cooperative learning based strategies, and peer to peer socialization skills.

Different types of psycho-motor activities, such as balance, self-awareness, visual motoric coordination or lateral movement expected to reduce stereotyped behaviour. Pilates will report improvements in students' behaviour and emotional balance as well.

Because of Physical education routines, it is also found remarkable benefits in social functioning, mainly in those kids with larger social impairment before the intervention. Finally it is spotted a degree of social inclusion due to the use of pilates based tasks or other stretching which involve basic motor abilities and body language.

These range of activities will encourage participation in motoric based sessions. An appropriate verbal interaction by teacher, focused on positive reinforcement, slows down stereotyped mood and improves emotional control. It will enlarge cooperation and interpersonal relationships too.

## **TARGET GROUP**

Primary and kindergarten students; S.E.N. children and those with different kinds of disabilities, average pupils are also get involved at regular PE schedule, teachers and school staff.

## **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

Physical based tasks will target towards fine and gross motor skills and go above and beyond to check child's posture, mobility, body awareness, transitions, playing skills, daily routines, and how they physically interact with others.

Pilates physical tasks development will help to reach learning teaching goals as they boost

- Engagement in daily habits at home and school;
- Acquisition of new movement skills;
- Development of better concentration and a more balanced posture;
- Breathing skills improvement;
- Development of motor imitation skills;
- Self-esteem improvement;
- Enhancement of balance, coordination and gross motor skills;

- Self confidence in social interaction;
- Support better behaviour and mood;
- Provide resources and support to parents.

## HOW WE DO IT

Pilates includes intense exercises that focus on correcting the posture and strengthening the core muscles. These exercises also improve mental focus. Introducing your children to these tasks is a subtle way to motivate them towards a healthy, active lifestyle. Pilates at school includes simple and comfort routines. Suitable average session at PE timetable is enough not to lead exhaustion or cramped muscles. When teaching exercises to kids, it is important to incorporate play and make it fun. Keep the language simple by using words and phrases that students will understand.

The exercises below are easy to do. Make sure the students are performing them safely and effectively. Educator, caregiver or teaching technician support is often required.

### *The Bridge*

This helps to build abdominal strength by focusing on the abdomen and using other limbs to work with:

- Let children lie on their back with knees bent and feet flat on the mat
- Tell them to keep the arms by their side so that their hands lie parallel to the abdomen.
- Place a ball at their feet and let them hold it steady by keeping their legs over the ball.
- Encourage them to inhale and exhale for five counts each.

### *Plank*

Pilates planks strengthen core while engaging upper body muscles. Contract your abdominal muscles when doing planks and avoid letting your lower back arch to prevent injury. Use a mat not to let students harm:

- Let students start in a push-up position with feet apart, nearly shoulder width.
- Roll a rubber ball back behind her feet and help them lift the feet over the ball.
- Hold them and they can either roll backwards over the ball or lower into a low push-up position.

### *Single leg Stretch*

It Works on the abdominals by increasing core stability and flexibility:

- Have the kids lay face up and with pelvic region in neutral alignment.
- Help them bring one knee up to the chest region while breathing in/out.
- Inhale, grab the right knee using both hands. Exhale, straighten the left leg.
- Then, in the next turn while inhaling, take the left knee to the chest.
- Repeat 3 times with each leg.





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# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL IN CREATING WELL BEING FOR TEACHERS. TRAMPOLINE WORKOUTS, A HELPFUL RESOURCE IN MENTAL HEALTH AND STRESS RELIEF

## GENERAL INFORMATION

With regard to mental health and well being, exercise is an essential part of self-care. Trampoline workouts have so many health benefits for your mental state. It can help alleviate stress, reduce anxiety, and raise overall happiness because it releases endorphins and serotonin into your brain. A trampoline workout can enhance your mental health for the better.

It's enjoyable to bounce. You'll probably find yourself smiling during a trampoline workout. If you hadn't noticed it yet, look out for a happy demeanor and a smile in your next trampoline session. Besides making you smile, rebounding has other significant psychological benefits.

Among such benefits are feelings of well-being and relaxation that is reached after a trampoline workout. Through physical activity, the release of endorphins from fun exercise can help you improve attitude and consciousness, yielding more efficient mental presence.

A trampoline workout can not only improve feelings of well-being, but will also improve your memory and learning abilities. This is a result of better oxygenation of your cells and brain. You'll be able to retain information and enhance learning capacity.

## TARGET GROUP

Teachers and school staff in special or inclusive schools.

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

Rebounding, or the act of jumping on a rebounder or trampoline is a full-body workout that impacts your entire body.

Here are some objectives that contribute to teachers well being in various ways

- *Build strength* . When you jump, it forces your entire body muscles to work simultaneously, building a strong core and beyond.
- *Bone density improvement* . As we get older our bones become more fragile. Regular trampolining can help strengthen the bones, lessens chances of osteoporosis.
- *Balance well being* . Trampolining is linked to better balance, coordination and motor skills.
- *Cardio strength* . Cardio activity decreases the amount of work your body has to do to pump blood. It also lower resting heart rate, and Cholesterol levels.
- *Stress relief* . “Jump for joy”, is associated with stress relief because it releases endorphins –natural substances that help you feel better and maintain a positive attitude. When you are jumping the muscles are loose and relaxed

## HOW WE DO IT:

- Maintain your balance . If you're worried about slipping on the rebounder, try jumping barefoot or in a pair of grippy socks, which will help stabilize you
- Begin with the basics . Simple but impactful moves like “jumping jacks” and “jogging in place” can help suit you to the mini-trampoline”
- Find a class . Depending on school facilities and teacher training, you may be able to take an in-person group fitness class, sometimes listed as mini-trampoline or rebounding classes in a nearby gym.
- Keep away from large trampolines . Like big, outdoor trampolines, large rebounders can pose a danger.
- Monitored activity . Work out must be supervised by well trained teacher or gym coach in order to avoid injuries.



## References:

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# **YOGA AS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL IN CREATING WELL BEING FOR STUDENTS / TEACHERS - BREATHING TECHNIQUES ROUTINES**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

In today's educational environment, stress and burnout are common challenges faced by teachers. These yoga based routines are considered as a powerful resource to enhance mental and physical balance within school setting. Teachers and school crew will explore how breathing techniques can reduce stress, Foster a positive and mindful approach to daily schedule and improve overall health. These tools are implemented not only to teach yoga practices but also to provide insights to integrating them into school settings.

Teachers will learn how to handle a harmonious educational environment inside school and in the classroom where students and teachers can thrive using yoga as a tool to improve concentration, reduce stress, build trust, improve self-esteem and breed a supportive learning community

## **TARGET GROUP**

Teachers, students and administrative staff in school.

## **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

- Gain knowledge of yoga practices and their benefits for mental and physical health;
- Learn how to incorporate yoga into the school routines to enhance concentration and emotional balance;
- Deepen self-awareness and awaken physical and psychological potential;
- Develop strategies for using yoga to reduce stress and anxiety;
- Explore methods to build trust, teamwork and a positive atmosphere through yoga based activities;
- Understand how breathing techniques increase creativity, self-confidence and a mindful and well being approach to teaching.

## **HOW WE DO IT**

This calming breathing technique for stress and anxiety takes just a few minutes and can be done anywhere. You will get the most benefit if you do it regularly, as part of your school daily or weekly routine. Choose a standing or comfortable upright sitting position such as sitting on a chair, sitting cross-legged, or sitting on your heels. Close your eyes if that is comfortable and begin to tune in to the sound of your breath, while listening and/or watching videos as a background.

- Let your breath flow as deep down into your belly as is comfortable, without forcing it.
- Try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Breathe in gently and regularly. Some people find it helpful to count steadily from 1 to 5. You may not be able to reach 5 at first.



Some examples:

*“Take a deep breath in then slowly exhale for five counts. On your next exhale, think of filling yourself with love. Imagine the color red enveloping your body. On the next exhale, think of sending love and kindness to someone close to you.” “Kindness Breath”*

*“Imagine you are holding a flower. Imagine the color and smell of that flower. Then take in a deep breath, pretending to smell that flower. Then exhale and pretend to blow the flower petals. Repeat the cycle.” “Flower breath”*

*“Sit down comfortably with a tall spine and your shoulders back. Close your eyes or gaze gently down in front of you. Take a few deep breaths to calm your mind and body. Come to the present moment. Breathe in and out through your nose with your mouth closed. As you exhale, keep your mouth closed and make a long “mmm” sound, pretending to buzz like a bee around the garden. Then inhale through your nose, keeping your mouth closed, repeat the bee humming sound on the next exhale.” “Bee breath”*



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2. <https://www.kidsyogastories.com/breathing-exercises-for-kids/>
3. <https://www.erasmustrainingcourses.com/yoga.html>
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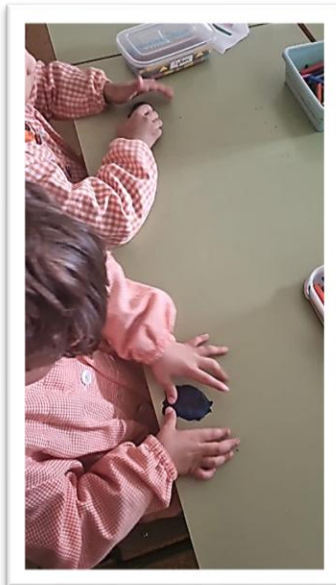


We also learned and implemented new methods from our partners... 😊

Implementing *MORNING EXERCISE WITH PIANO* in our school... after LTTA in *Greece*



Implementing *PENTATONIC MUSIC* in our school... after LTTA in *Türkiye*





*Implementing BIM in our school... after LTTA in **Cyprus***



*Implementing COOKING in our school... after LTTA in **Cyprus***





*Implementing KADANS in our school... after LTТА in **Romania***



*Implementing YOGA in our school... after LTТА in **Romania***





*Implementing BOCCIA in our school... after LTTA in **Portugal***



*Implementing UBUNTU in our school... after LTTA in **Portugal***





*Implementing TERAP. CONTACT WITH NATURE in our school... after LTTA in **Greece***





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**TÜRKİYE**

# ORFF MUSIC THERAPY METHOD

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The Orff approach is a creative learning method that enables children to express themselves freely by using the basic elements of music—rhythm, melody, movement, and speech. Developed by Carl Orff, this approach is particularly effective in supporting the development of sensory integration, attention, communication, and social interaction skills in students with special educational needs (SEN).

Orff Music Therapy is structured around active participation through direct musical experiences. Musical engagement contributes to both emotional release and the development of self-expression skills. Additionally, rhythmic activities support motor coordination, while group interaction enhances social skills.

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

- to improve the attention, listening, and rhythmic abilities of SEN students;
- to support self-expression, emotion regulation, and social interaction skills;
- to provide a safe environment for students to explore and express their creative potential;
- to enhance motor coordination, hand-eye coordination, and body awareness;
- to foster a sense of belonging and group identity through collaborative musical production.

## TARGET GROUP – students with :

- mild intellectual disabilities;
- learning difficulties;
- attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder;
- autism spectrum disorder;
- emotional/behavioral difficulties.

## HOW WE DO IT

### Stage 1: Warm-up – Introduction to body and rhythm (15 - 20 min.)

- Students sit in a circle. The facilitator uses simple body percussion (e.g., patting knees, clapping, stomping) to capture attention.
- A game called “Catch the rhythm” is played where the facilitator gives a rhythm, and students repeat it.
- By imitating each other, students improve group attention and listening skills.

### Stage 2: Practice with Orff instruments (30 min.)

- The facilitator introduces various Orff instruments (e.g., maracas, bells, bongos, xylophones, small percussion instruments) to engage the children.
- Students take turns trying the instruments and identifying their sounds.
- The “Emotions and rhythm” activity is conducted: the facilitator reads an emotionally themed story. Students are asked to find appropriate rhythms for each emotion (e.g., fast and strong for anger, slow and soft for sadness).
- Students create their own short rhythm patterns, and the rest of the group follows them.

### Stage 3: Creating a musical story (30 min.)

- A simple story is created as a group (e.g., “A walk in the forest”).
- Each student represents a sound or emotion.

- While the story is narrated, students create sound effects using instruments (e.g., bells for rustling leaves, drums for walking).
- This activity offers a powerful experience in collaboration, focus, and emotional expression.

**Stage 4:** Relaxation and closure (10 min.)

- All students lie down or sit upright in their chairs.
- With soft nature sounds playing in the background, the facilitator guides a short relaxation: “Close your eyes. How did you feel with the instrument you played?”
- Students are encouraged to share their experiences. This final stage supports self-reflection and emotional release.



**References:**

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# PREVENTING PEER BULLYING WITH EDUCATIONAL GAME METHOD

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Peer bullying is a serious and common social issue encountered by students with special educational needs (SEN) during their academic lives. This problem affects not only the academic performance and psychological well-being of the victimized students but also negatively impacts the school climate, classroom trust, and social interactions. Inclusive students, in particular, become more vulnerable to exclusion, mockery, and both physical and emotional violence due to their differences.

Within the scope of this workshop, the approach titled “Preventing peer bullying with educational game method” provides an engaging learning environment where students gain awareness while having fun. Gamification techniques make it easier for students to distinguish between types of bullying, develop empathy, and learn effective coping strategies. This method offers an active learning model that goes beyond passive information transfer and fosters decision-making and group collaboration skills among students.

## TARGET GROUP

- students with learning disabilities;
- students with mild intellectual disabilities;
- students with autism spectrum disorder;
- students with emotional/behavioral difficulties;
- students with attention deficits and poor social skills.

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

- to teach SEN students coping strategies that they can use when encountering bullying;
- to develop students' skills in empathy, saying no, seeking help, and peer support;
- to provide knowledge on types of bullying (e.g., physical, verbal, relational, cyber);
- to create a safe environment where students can express their own experiences of bullying at school;
- to help students establish secure relationships and develop social awareness within the classroom.

## HOW WE DO IT

**Phase 1:** Introduction to types of bullying – Interactive card game (20 min.)

- Students receive cards describing various bullying behaviors (e.g., “Taking a friend’s pencil without permission,” “Mocking someone by imitating them,” “Excluding someone from a group game”).
- Each student reads their card aloud, and the class discusses whether the behavior constitutes bullying.
- Then, bullying types are classified on a bulletin board.
- This activity helps develop students’ ability to recognize and categorize bullying behaviors.

**Phase 2:** “Is it bullying or just a joke?” Gamified scenario activity (30 min.)

- The facilitator presents a series of short scenarios (e.g., “Ali pulls his friend’s hair and laughs.”).
- Students decide whether the behavior is a joke or bullying and explain their reasoning.

- Students are encouraged to contribute their own scenarios.
- The game can be played individually or in groups, with points awarded using cards.

**Phase 3:** Role play and empathy workshop (30 min.)

- Students are divided into groups of three: one bully, one victim, and one observer.
- Scenarios provided by the facilitator are acted out (e.g., arguing in the cafeteria line, being excluded during recess, not being invited to play).
- After each roleplay, students rotate roles.
- Within their groups, they discuss the following questions:
  - “How did you feel in this situation?”
  - “What would you do if you were the victim?”
  - “Would it help if someone stepped in to support?”

**Phase 4:** “I am the hero!” solution wall activity (20 min.)

- Students write their own positive sentences and solutions on a poster (e.g., “I would tell my teacher if someone is bullied,” “I won’t leave my friend alone.”).
- These statements are displayed on a shared class solution wall.
- Finally, the group creates handprints together and decorates the wall with the title “We stand together against bullying.”

**References:**

1. Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*. Blackwell Publishing.
2. Craig, W. M., & Pepler, D. J. (2007). *Understanding bullying: From research to practice*. Canadian Psychology.
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# **WELL-BEING METHODS FOR TEACHERS : GAINING ANGER MANAGEMENT SKILLS WITH THE IMAGERY TECHNIQUE**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Teachers working with students with special educational needs (SEN) frequently encounter emotional challenges in classroom management. Among the most common difficulties are emotional exhaustion, a lowered threshold for frustration, and issues related to anger control. Enhancing teachers' abilities to recognize, express, and regulate their anger not only supports their personal well-being but also positively influences the relationships they build with their students.

The imagery technique is an effective method that helps individuals cope with intense emotions such as stress, anxiety, and anger by visualizing calming, positive, and directive images in the mind. The structured imagery exercises used in this workshop aim to help teachers find inner balance, develop alternative perspectives toward difficult situations, and establish healthier boundaries in the classroom environment.



## **TARGET GROUP**

This activity is designed for teachers, particularly those working with students with the following needs:

- intellectual disabilities;
- autism spectrum disorder; (ASD)
- emotional and behavioral disorders;
- learning disabilities;
- attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; (ADHD)
- hearing or visual impairments.

## **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

- to help teachers recognize the emotion of anger and identify its triggers;
- to improve emotional regulation skills through the use of imagery techniques;
- to support teachers in responding to stressful classroom situations in a more composed and constructive way;
- to enhance teachers' personal sense of well-being and improve the quality of teacher-student interaction;
- to reduce the risk of professional burnout among educators.

## HOW WE DO IT

### Stage 1: Anger awareness workshop (20 min.)

- Distribute small cards titled “My anger triggers” to each participant.
- Each teacher writes down two situations that commonly trigger anger in their professional or personal lives.
- Volunteers are invited to share their examples, and the group reflects on common patterns and differences.
- The facilitator emphasizes that anger is a natural emotion, and the key is in how we manage and respond to it.

### Stage 2: Guided Imagery practice (25 min.)

- Prepare a calm and dimly lit environment with comfortable seating.
- The facilitator reads a structured visualization script slowly and gently (e.g., “*Imagine yourself walking through a quiet forest. With each step, you feel the weight lifting off your shoulders...*”).
- Participants are asked to close their eyes and fully immerse themselves in the imagery using all their senses.
- After the exercise, each person notes their reflections:
  - “*What did you feel during the visualization?*”
  - “*Which image was most comforting for you?*”
- A group debrief follows, where experiences are voluntarily shared.

### Stage 3: Using Imagery in classroom situations (25 min.)

- Distribute new cards asking:
  - “*Write down a classroom situation that typically makes you angry*” (e.g., student rule-breaking, conflicts with parents etc.).
- Then, guide participants through the following questions in a reflective activity:
  - “*What kind of image would help soothe me in that moment?*”
  - “*What breath or visual cue could I use to calm myself down?*”
- Teachers describe or draw their personal calming image (e.g., ocean waves, a forest path, golden light, a peaceful sound).
- Everyone pins their “inner calming image” to a board as a personal and shared resource.

### Stage 4: Integration into daily life – mini planning (10 min.)

- Teachers commit to mentally using this image for 3 consecutive days whenever they experience stress.
- A small “Imagery Card” is created with:
  - a brief description of the chosen image
  - a motivational sentence.

*Example: “With the sound of the waves, I find balance again.”*





**References:**

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2. Kabat-Zinn, J. (1994). *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life*.
3. MEB (2021). *Teacher Well-being Guide*, Turkey.
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6. *Imagery Techniques in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy* – Psikoloji Yayınları.

# **PENTATONIC MUSIC THERAPY METHOD**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Pentatonic Music Therapy Method is a music-based relaxation technique specifically designed to help reduce the emotional burden, provide mental relaxation, and enhance self-awareness of teachers working with students with special educational needs (SEN). This method is grounded in the five-note pentatonic scale, a natural and universal structure in Western music. Its simplicity allows for participation regardless of musical background—both professionals and those with no prior music experience can easily engage in the sessions.

The method is especially structured to support teachers experiencing stress due to workload and emotional exhaustion, helping them regain motivation and establish more mindful interactions in the classroom. The calming effect of pentatonic sounds provides participants with a sense of inner peace and physical relaxation.

Moreover, music therapy facilitates emotional bonding within the group, enhances empathy, and helps teachers recognize and express their emotions more clearly. In this sense, it targets not only individual well-being but also fosters social well-being in professional environments.

## **TARGET GROUP**

- All teachers working with students with special educational needs (SEN)
- Especially recommended for those working with students with:
  - Intellectual disabilities
  - Autism spectrum disorders
  - Emotional and behavioral difficulties

## **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

- to reduce teachers' stress levels and support their emotional well-being;
- to provide an experience of inner awareness and relaxation through music;
- to help teachers develop calmer, more focused, and empathetic classroom management styles;
- to strengthen emotional resilience in the work environment;
- to promote social bonding and emotional sharing within groups.

## **HOW WE DO IT**

### **1. Preparation**

Participants are asked to sit in a semicircle in a quiet room. The environment is prepared to be calming—low lighting, aroma therapy, or candles may be used. Pentatonic musical instruments such as glockenspiels, xylophones, koshi bells, or soft percussion instruments are arranged. No prior music knowledge is required from participants.

### **2. Warm-up:**

The facilitator begins with a brief breathing awareness exercise (e.g., deep breathing for 3 minutes) to help participants become mentally present and grounded in the moment.

### **3. Introduction**

Participants are introduced to the pentatonic scale and the reasons behind its use. It is explained that these tones, when played together, never produce dissonance, allowing participants to engage freely without the fear of “doing it wrong.”

### **4. Free expression**

Participants take turns (or together) playing the instruments to create rhythms or melodies that reflect their emotional states. This process may be guided or fully improvised.

5. Group interaction  
Teachers engage in theme-based rhythmic sharing, such as: “What would I like to say to myself today?” They follow each other’s melodies and create a shared musical flow within the group.
6. Guided meditation  
A guided imagery exercise is performed in the background of live or recorded pentatonic music. For example: “Imagine yourself walking through a forest, with each step your tension melts away...”
7. Closing  
After the experience, each participant shares their feelings in a few sentences. Those who wish can reflect on the emotions evoked by the music they played.
8. Suggestions for follow-up  
Participants are provided with music tracks and guidance so they can repeat the practice individually on a weekly basis. Regular group applications are encouraged.



## References:

1. Bruscia, K. (2014). *Defining Music Therapy*. Barcelona Publishers.
2. Pelletier, C. L. (2004). *The effect of music on decreasing arousal due to stress: A meta-analysis*. Journal of Music Therapy, 41(3), 192–214.
3. Sacks, O. (2007). *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain*. Knopf.
4. Altenmüller, E. et al. (2013). *Neurologic Music Therapy: Theory and Practice*.

# AEROBIC AND STRESS REDUCTION ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHERS WORKING WITH SEN STUDENTS

## GENERAL INFORMATION

„Aerobic and Stress Reduction Activities" is a holistic approach designed to support the physical and mental well-being of teachers working with students with special educational needs (SEN). It is structured to combat burnout symptoms arising from daily professional responsibilities, emotional burdens, and classroom management challenges.

In this practice, rhythmic movement, breathing exercises, and relaxation techniques are combined to balance physical energy and achieve mental relaxation. Aerobic movements boost endorphin and serotonin levels in the body, thereby reducing stress, while relaxation techniques (e.g., muscle relaxation, deep breathing, stretching) help teachers release daily accumulated tension.



By the end of the session, teachers report feeling both more energized and mentally clear, approaching classroom interactions with increased patience and empathy. When practiced regularly, it enhances emotional resilience and reduces the risk of burnout.

## TARGET GROUP

- all teachers working with SEN students
- especially recommended for teachers working with students exhibiting severe behavioral problems or requiring high attention

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

- reduce stress hormones through physical activity;
- provide emotional relaxation by strengthening the body-mind connection;
- support the prevention of teacher burnout;
- enhance group interaction;
- establish easily applicable pre/post work routines.

## HOW WE DO IT

1. *Environment*  
Choose an open area (garden, gym) or spacious indoor hall. Participants should wear comfortable sportswear. Ensure the floor is safe.
2. *Warm-up exercises* (5 - 7 min.):



- light-paced walking or stepping in place
  - circular movements targeting shoulders and neck
  - arm movements synchronized with breathing
  - gentle body tapping with hands (stimulating)
3. *Aerobic-based exercises* (10–15 mins):
    - performed with rhythmic music (e.g., 120 - 140 BPM)
    - simple, repetitive arm-leg coordination moves (side steps, cross steps, squats)
    - participants may take turns suggesting moves to boost interaction
    - low-impact jumping jacks can be added for advanced participants
  4. *Breathing and relaxation techniques* (10 min.):
    - breath awareness: inhale 4 sec., hold 4 sec., exhale 6 sec.
    - progressive muscle relaxation: tensing and releasing each muscle group from toes to head
    - guided relaxation with closed eyes
    - "body scan" exercise: focus breathing on areas with tension
  5. *Calm closure and reflection* (5 mins):
    - Participants share brief feedback: "Right now, I feel... because...".
    - Volunteers express their experience with a single word.
    - Suggestions shared for integrating the routine into daily life.
  6. *Repetition of the practice*:
    - recommended twice a week
    - a 10 minutes version can be implemented during morning check-ins or recess time at school

#### **References:**

1. Ratey, J. J., Hagerman, E. (2008). *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*, Little, Brown and Company
2. Salmon, P. (2001). *Effects of physical exercise on anxiety, depression, and sensitivity to stress: A unifying theory*. Clinical Psychology Review.
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## **DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL AWARENESS SKILLS TO STUDENTS WITH SEN**

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Emotional awareness includes the ability to recognize one's own emotions, regulate them, and express them appropriately. These skills often require developmental support in individuals with special needs. Therefore, structured practices aimed at improving emotional awareness enhance both psychological resilience and social interaction.

In this workshop, students play an active role in recognizing emotions, expressing them, and noticing others' feelings. The activities are enriched with storytelling, emotional expression cards, creative drama, and body language exercises. This approach allows students not only to acquire conceptual knowledge but also to gain learning through experience.

### **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

- supporting students in distinguishing basic and complex emotions;
- facilitating the expression of personal emotions through verbal and non-verbal ways;
- enabling the ability to recognize others' emotions by interpreting social cues;
- helping students develop strategies to cope with emotions;
- enhancing students' insight, self-regulation, and self-awareness.

### **HOW WE DO IT**

#### **Step 1: Recognizing emotions (30 - 40 min)**

- Show students large cards prepared with emotional facial expressions. The cards contain basic emotions (happiness, anger, fear, sadness, surprise, etc.).
- Ask students to match, name, and give examples from their own experiences.
- Read short stories for each emotion and interact with reflective questions such as "What would you feel in this situation?"

#### **Step 2: Expressing emotions physically and verbally (40 min)**

- Apply the "Emotion Statue" activity: an emotion is announced, and students express it using their body like a statue.
- Practice acting the same emotion with appropriate tone, facial expression, and gestures.
- Distribute emotion role cards and have small groups prepare a short scene related to the emotion.

#### **Step 3: Relating emotions to daily Life (40 min)**

- Prepare an "Emotion Box" that contains cards of positive and negative emotions.
- Each student picks a card, tells a story about when they felt that emotion or draws a picture.
- Finally, apply the "emotion diary" activity: Students keep a short record with drawings or writing about their feelings during the day.

Activities are adapted according to the individual differences of students with special needs. Teachers use observation forms to track the development of emotional expression.

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## **DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL AWARENESS SKILLS FOR WELL-BEING OF TEACHERS WORKING WITH SEN STUDENTS**

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

“Developing Emotional Awareness Skills” is a psychoeducation-based workshop aimed at enhancing teachers' capacity to recognize, regulate, and understand both their own and others' emotions. It is particularly vital for teachers working with SEN students, who often face intense emotional situations in the classroom and must maintain healthy self-awareness and boundaries in teacher-student interactions.

Emotional awareness involves recognizing one's own emotional states and understanding how these emotions manifest in the body and mind. In this workshop, teachers gain skills in naming their emotions, identifying emotional triggers, and developing healthy coping strategies. Practices also include empathic listening, recognizing emotional tones in the classroom, and reflecting emotions effectively. This makes the workshop a multi-layered tool to nourish both personal and professional well-being.

### **TARGET GROUP**

- all teachers working with SEN students
- especially for those working with students with emotional-behavioral difficulties

### **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

- increase teachers' levels of emotional awareness;
- equip them with internal tools to manage the emotional climate of the classroom;
- help teachers recognize their own reactions to challenging student behaviors;
- teach ways to cope with intense emotions such as burnout, anger, and anxiety;
- introduce positive emotion regulation tools such as empathy, self-understanding, and self-compassion.

### **HOW WE DO IT**

1. Opening and group warm-up (10 min.):
  - Begin with: “What are you feeling today?”
  - Participants choose a feeling card to express themselves
  - Establish a safe and trusting sharing environment
2. Emotion recognition practice (15 min.):
  - Color-emotion matching: participants are given colors and discuss emotions associated with each
  - Guess the emotion from facial expressions
  - “Emotions and body map”: identify where sadness, anger, and anxiety are felt in the body
3. Emotional trigger awareness (20 min.):
  - Participants write about a recent classroom challenge
  - Analyze emotions felt, their intensity, and their origin
  - Identify triggering thoughts and beliefs (based on CBT forms)
  - Practice reframing and developing alternative thoughts
4. Empathy and reflection practice (15 min.):
  - Paired work: Person A shares a 2-minute emotional experience; Person B responds using “I hear your feeling...”
  - Switch roles

- Group discussion about difficulties experienced during reflective listening
5. Emotional first aid kit (15 mins):
- Each participant creates a metaphorical “emotional first aid kit”
  - Items may include:
    - a small sample of a scent you like
    - a comforting affirmation card
    - a template for a breathing exercise
    - a photo/object that makes you smile
  - Can be created physically or as a digital album on a phone
6. Closure and emotional intention setting (5 mins):
- Each participant answers: “What did I learn today, and how do I feel leaving?”
  - Optionally, set an emotional intention: “Tomorrow I will feel more compassion toward my student.”

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4. CASEL – Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning - [www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)





We also learned and implemented new methods from our partners... 😊

