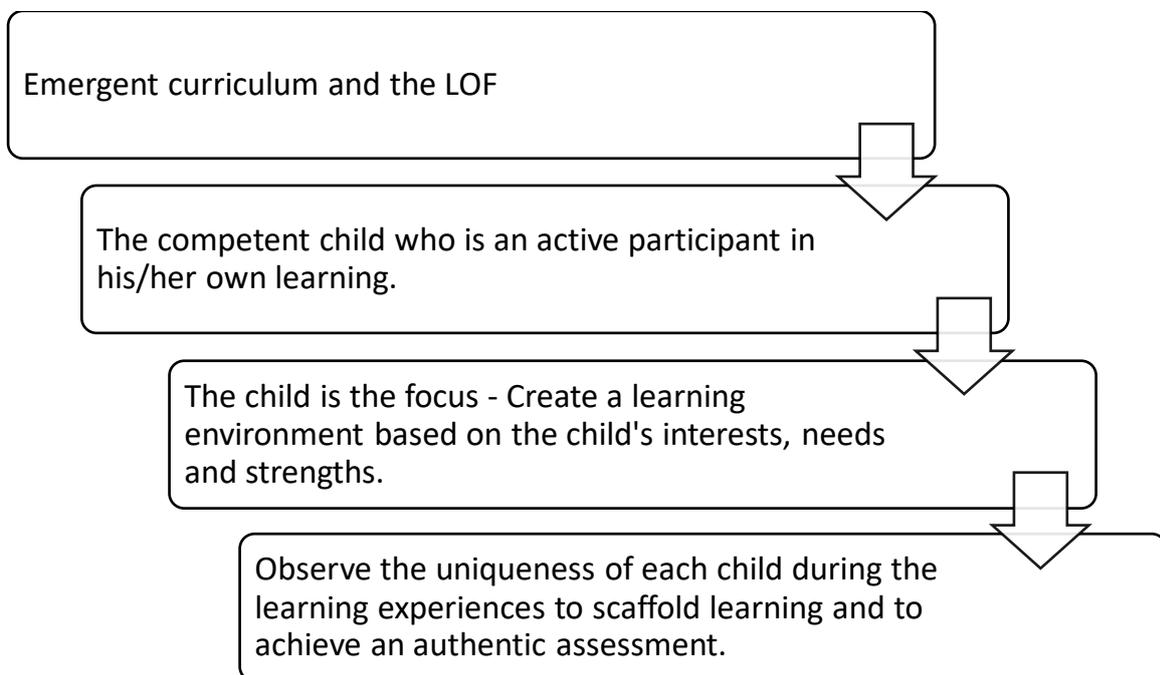


Following Children’s Interests and Planning

The image of the child

The image of the child is that of a competent human being with rights for **active participation**. Base all work on the curiosity, strengths, interests and needs of the child so that each child will feel empowered and valued. When a child’s voice is listened to, respected and acknowledged, the child’s self-esteem, confidence and identity are strengthened and built upon. This will enhance the child’s personal and social skills.

The emergent curriculum



Planning for Scenario 1: Schools open as usual and all children attend:

Take time to observe the children in class to see if there are any particular interests, strengths or needs (refer to the Early Years website - link: <https://bit.ly/NotesKGEs>). Write down your observations to prepare learning invitations, sensory bins, games and other experiences. These are meant to fuel the interest and motivation of the children, strengthen their abilities, address their needs and scaffold their learning process. Once an interest is identified, inform the parents and create the web with the children. Use the Project Plan (pg. 4) to brainstorm ideas that reflect the children’s interest. Involve the parents and draw upon their expertise while planning learning opportunities around the chosen project. Give time to the children to share, display and talk about their work. Seek support from Senior Leadership Team and EOs Early Years. Use the learning note as a form of authentic assessment of the children (refer to the Early Years website - link: <https://bit.ly/NotesKGEs>).

Planning for Scenario 2: Schools open with alternating groups of children:

Take time to observe the children in class to see if there are any interests, strengths or needs (refer to the Early Years website - link: <https://bit.ly/NotesKGEs>). Write down your observations in order to prepare learning invitations, sensory bins, games and other experiences. These are meant to fuel the interest and motivation of the children, strengthen their abilities, address their needs and scaffold their learning process. Once an interest is identified, inform the parents and create the web with the children. Use the Project Plan (pg. 4) to brainstorm ideas that reflect the children's interest. Involve the parents and draw upon their expertise while planning learning opportunities around the chosen project. Give time to the children to share, display and talk about their work. Seek support from SLT and EOs Early Years. Use the learning note as a form of authentic assessment of the children. (refer to the Early Years website - link: <https://bit.ly/NotesKGEs>).

Planning for Scenario 3: Schools do not open, and teaching is online:

- At the beginning of the scholastic year it is important to get to know the children. For this to be achieved follow the points written hereunder. Work in close collaboration with the parents and with the SLT.
- Tell parents that during these times, the home will be the learning environment for the children and that their cooperation is of utmost importance given the young age of the children. Explain the importance of their continuous input in online communication.
- Agree on a time schedule that would be ideal for all.
- Identify a theme which you think interests the children in your class and introduce it.
- Work on the theme with your children.
- Create the web and follow the Project Approach (pg. 4 & 5).
- While meeting the children online, try to discover their strengths, interests, and needs.
- Make sure to take time to create initiatives by really listening and observing the children. These initiatives will help you eventually to get to know your pupils and their interests so that right after the mid-term holidays in November (unless an interest is identified before), you will be able to respond to the learners' interests, strengths and needs.
- Once an interest is identified, create the web with the children.
- Use the Project Plan to brainstorm ideas that reflect the children's interest.
- Plan learning opportunities around the children's interest.
- Work to build a relationship with the children and get to know them by meeting them online on a daily basis. Carry out your planned opportunities for the day, observe and listen to the children.
- Give time to the children to share, display and talk about their work.
- Guide and encourage the parents/guardians to carry out at home other opportunities that you might suggest.
- Be available to give advice and support during school hours.
- Seek support from SLT and EOs Early Years.
- If you wish, you can seek the parents' consent to record the session and send it to those who could not attend the live session.
- Try to contact non-respondents with the support of the SLT.

- The observations may be used to create the learning note as a form of authentic assessment of the learners.

Additional information:

The following websites may help you get ideas on how to carry out online sessions, how to address the children online and elicit their interests:

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/making-learning-home-work-preschool-students>

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/why-ages-2-7-matter-so-much-brain-development>

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/why-learning-home-should-more-self-directed-and-less-structured>

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/empowering-families-distance-learning-early-childhood>

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/4-tips-using-stories-early-grades>

<https://www.edutopia.org/video/60-second-strategy-pom-pom-jar>

<https://www.brighthorizons.com/family-resources/e-family-news/stem-education-activities-preschoolers/>

<https://digitallibrary.io/en/books/read/1858/63666>

<https://meganzeni.com/imaginative-play-anywhere-artist/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StPb5QfZERk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AcBdbbCmWTs> (please note that all tips related to Zoom, can be applied to Microsoft Teams)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W14VxDV9_OI

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_2tDrcSeyk

<https://teleskola.mt/>

Early Years' website: <https://education.gov.mt/en/early-years/Pages/default.aspx>

| | |
|--|---|
| Project Plan | |
| Title of Project | |
| Starting date | |
| List of learning experiences/opportunities (ensuring a holistic approach to education – focusing on the whole child - using the 5 broad outcomes as the overall guide for educator’s pedagogy) | <p>Circle time:</p> <p>Technological learning experiences (+ E twinning):</p> <p>Arts & Crafts:</p> <p>Investigation & exploration:</p> <p>Cooking:</p> <p>Sensory:</p> <p>Music:</p> <p>Physical:</p> <p>Visits to/by experts to school:</p> <p>The environment – natural & built:</p> <p>Stories:</p> <p>Outdoor experiences:</p> <p>Spiritual/religious/moral:</p> |

Guidelines for KGEs – 2021-2022

| Weekly Plan <i>(a living plan – be flexible and follow the rhythm of each child in your group; let your observations inform your planning to scaffold learning)</i> | | | | | |
|--|---------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Project title | | | | | Week: |
| Learning experiences / opportunities | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| Learning experience / opportunity 1 | | | | | |
| Learning experience / opportunity 2 | | | | | |
| Learning experience / opportunity 3 | | | | | |
| Learning experience / opportunity 4 | | | | | |

Glossary:

Scaffold: In education, scaffolding refers to a variety of techniques used to move students progressively toward stronger understanding and, ultimately, greater independence in the learning process. It is a process in which educators model, question, discuss or demonstrate how to solve a problem, step by step, and then step back, offering support as needed.

Learning invitations/provocations: Provocations use a range of items that can be linked together by children or provide a jumping off point for where their imaginations can take them. The focus is more on developing learner dispositions rather than teaching narrower skills. There is no “wrong” as a result of a provocation.

Sensory bins: Sensory bins are hands-on tools for children to explore their world through senses. They are containers, like tuff trays, or spaces, that are filled up with various materials that promote learning through the senses.

Web: Webbing is a form of brainstorming used to visually collect children’s ideas, perceptions, questions and thoughts from a group. The ideas are written down in the form of a web to be investigated. The web is a living resource to be referred to throughout the project.

Project Plan: it is a plan, based on an interest, strength or need, elicited or emerging from the children. The Project Plan includes the starting date of project and a list of learning opportunities that are based on the holistic development of the children.

Learning note: The learning note is like a page in a success story of an individual child. Such documentation can also be done by taking a picture or using the children’s representations (children’s drawings, models, recordings, etc) to be used in such a note so that learning is documented as it happens. This is authentic assessment.

Circle time: it is a teaching strategy which allows the educator to discuss, propose ideas, elicit children’s interest, explore, hypothesise, observe, assess, investigate and solve problems. The aim of circle time is that all participants have an equal opportunity to express themselves freely. The experience is led by the educator who sits in a circle with his/her pupils. The circle encourages unity, respect, turn-taking and working together.

Sensory: pertaining to the senses (vision, hearing, taste, smell, touch, direction of movement). Sensory processing refers to the brain's ability to receive, interpret, and effectively use information provided by all these senses. Children use their senses to explore and make sense of the world around them. They learn best and retain the most information when they engage their senses.