

Solution By Inclusion

An Educator's Manual to LINK Rituals

1. FRIENDSHIP

Developed by RVTS Sør in co-creation with students, parents and educators from GEM16+ (Malta), IAL FVG (Italy), Tradium (Denmark) and project partners under the Erasmus+ co-funded Solution By Inclusion Project, 2020-2023

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Foreword

This Educator's Manual contain guidance, skills and competencies for educators based on co-produced project results generated from the Erasmus+ project, Solution By Inclusion (WP. 5); with project partner RVTS Sør as responsible for Work Package 5. in the project.

LINK - Life mastery in Norwegian classrooms - An Introduction for Teachers

“ Friendship is a Social Immune System”

An important and interesting research has been done about children and friendship. The following question was asked: When are friendly relations created and what do they mean?

Children establish friendship earlier than we have been used to believe. Valuable relations are established already in Kindergarden. Friendship involves more than apparently feeling well together. Neither should friendship be mistaken for popularity. Many wish to socialize with the popular ones. It does not follow that the most popular one makes friends with everybody he or she socializes with. A true friendship is marked by mutual consent.

Children need various abilities to develop friendship, amongst others the ability to regulate feelings and restrain impulses. Friendship plays an important role in developing social competence. Language skill, and thereby the ability to make yourself understood, has an effect on preventing unwanted behavior. Our research also shows that socially shy children have a somewhat poorer language and fewer friends, and are less popular than other children. In consequence, language is important for shy children to make best friends. Training in talking to others is therefore social ability training.

Children who for different reasons do not get friends, face a bigger risk being dissatisfied also later on in life, says Greve.

“The highlight of the week” is worth its weight in gold to practice communication and friendship. On “klikk.no” you can amongst other read the following: To have a good friend to talk with is good for your health. It might in fact have a greater health effect than an appointment with a doctor or a psychologist. A social network is in many ways an absolute safety net, or a social immunity. Talking to a good friend can help you understand your own feelings, put incidents into a context, and evaluate what has happened, says Pål Johan Karlsen, editor of Journal for Norwegian Psychology society. (Tidsskrift for Norsk Psykologforening).

The Dane Mogens Nygaard Christoffersen has carried out a national study about bullying and social support. His conclusion is that the most destructive for your self-image is to be psychologically, sexually or emotionally abused by parents, or to be bullied by important persons such as class mates. He also claims that for the most vulnerable persons social support will contribute to reduce the risk of bad self-image and suicide ideas.

References: Christoffersen, Mogens Nygaard 2010, Department of children and family. “Children maltreatment, bullying in school and social support.”

IMPLEMENTATION IN CLASSROOM

GOAL FOR GROUP

GOALS FOR LINK

Contribute to strengthened self-image

Contribute to feeling of belonging

Contribute to mastery

COMPETENCE AIMS FOR THE GROUP

KNOWLEDGE: the students understand the importance of having friends

COMPETENCE: the ability to say something about the characteristics of a good friend

VALUE: to reflect over the fact that friendship prevents bullying and exclusion, and as such promotes health.

OPENING RITUAL

Start every group activity in the same way. Listen gladly to music, light candles, decorate with flowers, shake hands with all participants, or do other positive things. The point is to signal that this is a link-class, and that link-classes differ from other classes.

TODAY'S PRIME HAPPENING

Everybody tells about a nice thing they have experienced since last session. Remember we are looking for small and simple everyday joys, not boundless happenings.

THEME

PRESENTATION OF THEME

The teacher presents the theme of the day, shortly. Say a few words about the topic of the session. You can choose from the introduction for the teacher. The introduction is simply meant to engage the students in the themes, and should not take more than a few minutes.

WE TALK ABOUT THEMES

Alternative 1.

You may well use prepared Power Point (PP) as a starting point for dialog about the theme.

Below the PP-pictures there are support questions you can use in your dialog with the pupils. You can also make your own questions, but it is important that the questions are open. You are to facilitate for reflection and common wondering and exploration. We are not looking for a fixed answer, but wish that children /young people are able to put words to their thoughts, feelings and opinions. It is not a point to get through all the pictures. If the pupils are eager to comment on the first pictures, it is more important to spend time on these than interrupt and rush on to get through everything.

The pictures should be accompanied by a text of laughter and joy as a health offering factor.

WE WORK WITH THEME. CHOOSE, REJECT AND ADJUST

Now there are many different tasks you as a teacher can choose among. It is not the intention to do everything that has been proposed. Choose the exercises that suit the most for your group and you as a leader. Still we recommend that you choose tasks which make it possible to work with the theme in various ways, both through activity and interaction, play and laughter and not only through talking.

TASKS - GROUP WORK

Pupils are divided into groups of 3-4. Each group gets a flip-over-sheet. The groups get different tasks. For example:

1. Write down qualities with a good friend

Heading: A good friend

2. Make a recipe of a good friend

Examples: two shares of sense of humor, three shares of fidelity, one share of interest in football, and so on.

Heading: Summary of a good friend.

3. Tip poster. Heading: How to make good friends.

4. The group makes a suggestion for a bullying manifest.

Heading: Bullying manifest

5. Tip poster. Heading: Tip against bullying.

Each group presents to the class what they have come up with. What they have put down on the flip-over can be made into posters which are put up in the classroom.

GO AHEAD CARD

PURPOSE: Support each other

EQUIPMENT: Cardboards

The students make cards of encouragement. On these you might find: Get on with it, you are courageous, I support you, and the like. The cards to be handed out at suitable occasions.

SECRET FRIEND

PURPOSE: Rehearse to show you wish to be a friend

EQUIPMENT: Notes with participants' names.

The teacher has written the names of the pupils on pieces of paper. Each pupil draws one. The person they have chosen is supposed to be a special friend the coming week. You are not supposed to say who you have drawn. After some days the teacher asks who he/she believes has been their secret friend. How could they notice? Afterwards the person mentioned is asked if it is correct, and this person is asked what he/she has done to show that he/she wants to be a good friend. The exercise might be a good starting point to speak about what we can actively do to show friendship, and what you can look for as signs of friendship from others.

PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS

For those who really like to philosophize.

- There are various types of friends. What kind of friends come to your mind? (best friends, team-friends, grown-up friends and the like)
- What is your dream friend like?
- What qualities are the most important in friendship?
- Why do some bully others?
- What does it feel like to be bullied?
- What kind of problems do you think the ones who bully face?
- Why do you think those who bully do not master grown-up life so well?
- What would a school free of bullying be like?
- Do grown-ups bully?

JUST FOR FUN

It is understood that everybody is supposed to laugh during a link-session, also when we deal with difficult issues, yes, may be especially then.

THE SUN SHINES ON

PURPOSE: offer a good experience

EQUIPMENT: one chair less than participants

Everybody except one sits on a chair in a circle. One stands in the middle. This person says: The sun shines on..... The remain of the sentence he makes up on his own. F.exa. The sun shines on everybody who has been to Denmark. Everybody concerned must stand up and sit down on a different chair. The one in the middle should also try to sit down. The one who has not found a chair, is now standing in the middle and trying to figure out a new sentence.

At first It can be useful to let the sun shine on harmless things. In a confident group one can gradually agree to let the sun shine on emotions or personal qualities.

ONES AND TWOS

PURPOSE: To have fun and practice working together, and not try to throw a spanner in the works for someone.

EQUIPMENT: Two bags of peas or balls of different colors. The student stand in a circle. Every second pupil is a one or a two. A one and a two next to each other have both a ball/bag of peas. The idea is to pass on what you have in your hands around the circle and back as quickly as possible. The ones pass on to ones and twos to twos. The teams pass on in opposite direction. You are not allowed to hinder the other team.

TWO PLACES TO THE RIGHT

PURPOSE: Good experience

EQUIPMENT: One chair less than participants

The pupils sit in a circle. There is one person more than there are chairs. One stands in the middle. He says: “everybody who has....” and he has to make up something, such as “Everybody wearing a T-shirt should move.....and then he makes up something again, like: three places to the left. Those concerned move according to instruction. If the chair they move to is taken, he or she must sit down on the lap. Gradually there might be piles of pupils. The game is recommended only to classes where the pupils are confident, and where this will be good fun for everybody.

THE KING’S CHAIR

PURPOSE: Enjoy being in focus

EQUIPMENT: A nice or different chair, or a chair decorated with a nice pillow, rug or something.

The participants take turns sitting in the King’s chair, shortly presenting themselves. Tell their names, hobbies and similar. The other participants have the possibility to ask the king about various things. The king decides what he wants to reply to.

Finally all subjects should write a sentence about the king's good qualities or an encouraging regard on a paper board. The board has already an attached picture of the king and his name.

TOE AGAINST TOE

PURPOSE: Interaction and training in tolerating physical contact

EQUIPMENT: Nothing.

The pupils are divided into two groups. There should be odd numbers. When the leader calls out f.exa.: toe against toe, or knee against knee, forehead against forehead, the idea is to find a partner in the other group. The one who does not find someone is the next caller. The caller finds a new part of the body, calls it out, and tries himself to find a partner. You must find a new partner every time. Discuss ahead what parts of the body are acceptable to call out, and which ones we want to keep for ourselves in this game.

BALLOON GAME

PURPOSE: Cooperation. Important element of friendship.

EQUIPMENT: Each group one balloon, music

Recommended size of group is approx. 5. Each group gets a balloon to fill with air. Before starting the music, the group gets instruction how to dance with the balloon, f.exa. the hand on the balloon. The music plays a couple of minutes. When the music is stopped a new instruction is given, f.exa. a finger on the balloon, a shoulder, forehead, etc. The group keeps on dancing. After a few rounds the leader says: "first group to crack the balloon with your right foot". Call a winning group. And finally: "first group to throw all pieces of the balloons in the garbage".

BALLOON GAME 2

PURPOSE: Cooperation. Important element of friendship.

EQUIPMENT: A balloon to each group

Recommended size of group is approx. 5. Each group gets a balloon they are supposed to fill with air. They all make a circle and hold hands. The balloons are not supposed to touch the ground, and no one must let go hands. If the balloon touches the ground, the group loses its right to use the hands. They pick another part of the body to control the balloon. Every time it touches the ground, they lose the part of the body they used. At last it is the first group to carry the balloon to the garbage. Feel free to look for other activities in the activity booklet. Small humour presentations from DVD or youtube.com. Look for alternatives suitable for the age group.

SONGS:

- You have something no one else has, no one is like you.
- Ties of friendship
- Stop, do not bully!
- Friends (p.308 in “Songs in Norway” (Sanger i Norge)

MY BOOK

We recommend that every pupil has a book of their own to be used in link-classes. This book ought to look somewhat different from the normal workbooks. The idea is that the pupils should have one memory from each session. They can draw and/or write, put inn pictures or texts. They can also exchange greetings. One can, for example, ask everybody to pass the book three places to the left, and ask the pupils to write a nice message to the person you got the book from. Imagination is the only limit, but remember that work in the book should be pleasurable and not give an impression of control. No one should have the feeling of falling short.

We recommend that the teacher collects the books after class and keeps them at school. This to avoid anyone to forget the book at home or losing it. In this way one makes sure that all the pupils can receive the book as a nice memory at the end of school. If you use link over many years, the book can be a treasure full of good memories.

- Write down characteristics of a good friend
- Make a bully-manifest
- Write messages of friendship to each other
- Take pictures of your classmates

SUMMARY

As a summary we recommend a curl-and-throw task, or choose 3 things

CURL-AND-THROW

The curl-and-throw tasks you will find in the scheme of the session. The pupils are to answer the questions anonymously and curl the paper together. Then ask who wants to be today’s target. This person places himself with the back to the group. The others throw their paper balls at the target. The privilege of the target is that he/she gets the chance to read some of the answers, may be three is ok. If the role of the target is popular, it is important that it is done in turns. Some might like their answers to be read and want to express this, while others prefer to remain anonymous. Both are o.k. You may comment positively to what is read aloud.

THREE THINGS

Everybody writes down three things they remember from the day's session, and three things they have learned. The teacher asks some to read aloud what they have written. The pupils can choose what they will share.

NEXT TIME

Explain what will be the theme for the next time. Tell the pupils that if they find something problematic about the theme, they can tell the teacher and together they can find solutions.

FINAL RITUAL

End all sessions in the same manner. The ritual should be enjoyable and contribute to the feeling of being appreciated. A final ritual could be all the pupils in a circle together, passing the class tie around while playing a piece of music.

The class tie is made by all the pupils cutting a piece of cloth of approx. 50 cm. Each pupil can choose his piece. They could possibly have some time to decorate it. All ties are added up in a circle. We suggest that all the pieces of cloth are piled up, and then one by one, the pupils blindfolded draw the piece of cloth that should be the next. In this way the order and composition will be at random. The advantage of tying the bonds instead of sewing is that it gives room for new ties of cloth in case of new members.

The class bond symbolizes the inclusion of everybody, that everybody belongs in the group. We are tied to each other. We consequently depend on each other, and we decide to look after one another. Everybody in the group should claim a place and also offer a place. The bond circulates and ties us together.

The teacher may also stand in the doorway and hand out go ahead cards or "seigmenn" (sweet candy figure) to the pupils while leaving the session. Go ahead cards are registered as extra material. They can be printed or possibly laminated.

