



# ALLiES eGuide

## 4<sup>th</sup> Principle - Material

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**Our aim is to offer options for play and simple study material, where creativity and imagination are predominant in the multifaceted experience of every child at the school. In this way, self-sufficient individuals create their own studies and settings of play, with their own solutions, where projects based on their reality are at the forefront.**

The materials for play and study serve an independent pedagogical role in children's lives. In a world characterized by an overflow of toys, children's books and music in all children's rooms in their homes, school takes its own route, and offers material that is supplemental to the upbringing that takes place at home. Thus, there are no toys present, but rather so-called play materials, or materials that can be used for play in any way that suits the children. The toys at home remain interesting and desirable. They have a many-faceted value for the development of the children, and the experience at home and at school is supportive to many facets of their personal development.

The play materials at the school encourage the harnessing of imagination and creative thinking. The children are given a valuable experience in trusting their own fantasy and abilities, and taught not to rely on factory-made things. Playing with traditional toys and working with handicrafts can strengthen their capability for seeking solutions based on the object itself, and has been thought out in advance. It is important for children to become experienced in the entrepreneurial thinking that no solution automatically exists and it is their job to create many things from the simple material that is available at the school.

The play material hampers rivalry, as there are no exciting objects about which to quarrel. This also lessens the need to compare and compete when the children are playing with base material that has no predetermined outcome. The play material will encourage communication and teamwork, and is thus very suited for groups of children.

Solution focused thinking, visible in the use of play material and base material without pre-determined form, also influences the teaching material for children and teachers. Training in finding your own way, and not waiting for someone else to sort things out, strengthens independence and belief in one's own abilities. Creating their own outcomes gives the children self-confidence, and the longing to try and improvise. This experimental attitude gives increased courage to face a mistake, and simply to practice more and more.

Among the approaches that are used to encourage creativity and imagination are:

- Play material for the children's playtime is solely material that they can work with without the help of a teacher. This makes them believe in their own abilities, and such play material supports them as they become independent and self-confident people.





- The greatest aspect of the so-called fixed play material is that it can be used in very diverse ways. Their usage, or outcome of the playing, hasn't been thought out beforehand, so no predetermined solutions are in the way. Building blocks, mattresses and pillows, clay, simple artist's materials and tools to play with outdoors are among the play material at a play school. At elementary schools, more complex things to use in play are added, in addition to tools for diverse types of artistic creation, woodworking and sewing, as well as making homemade board games or playing cards.
- To enrich the play time, additional tools and new materials enrich the child's world of experience through sensing, touching, creating and developing, both at an individual level and when interacting with others. Each school ensures diversity in the provision and usage of materials in each play area. The older children also have access to new and fresh material, so that the play time is alive and creative.
- There is not an overflow of play material, in accordance with the idea that "less can be more". The amount of items is chosen so that it is either very easy to split it evenly between those present, or that the amount calls for it being swapped between children with fairness.
- The simple materials, and the rule of moderation and contentment, puts great demands on both the children and teachers when it comes to orderliness and maintenance. This is to ensure that the school always keeps its checks and balances while providing the children with all the experience they need.
- The children are always allowed to bring toys to school from home to show their friends. The teachers take care of their use and storage during the school day. In this way, the children connect their home and private life with their school life.
- The materials used in group work by teachers are chosen according to the tasks that the age of the children calls for, and the school's emphasis at any given time. The same goes for both children and teachers when it comes to creative work. The teachers must be creative in their approach, as they are the role models for the children when directing the work, having simple materials with which to work.
- The teacher puts her/his life and soul into her/his work. S/he participates in all projects with the children and is always guided by the interest and delight of the children, even if it means that predetermined plans must be rethought.
- Chosen projects have a connection to reality. They are real assignments for the school, the home or the environment. This empowers the children to influence their world.
- The use of books is carefully thought out. Conventional children's books are not bought in school, except as reading material at the elementary school stage. Text books are chosen diligently and only used in parts of the school work. Reading from illustrated books is not practised in the conventional way. Rather, the emphasis is on poems, recitations and stories, primarily adventures, folktales and children's stories. The school aims to cultivate the nation's folktales heritage, and also to give the children the chance to enrich their imagination, as the stories haven't been interpreted by others with pictures. There is also an emphasis on spinning stories by children and teachers, and original stories created by each child. Homemade books are used to a great extent, both those originally made by individual children as well as picture books from the school's surroundings for the younger children. The teachers make a point of letting their groups visit libraries, and through that practicing a respect for books and reading, as well as appreciating the world of wonders that books can open. The parents are also encouraged to read to their children every night.



- Singing is held in high regard in school, and a great selection of song verses are very prominent. Diversity is also at the forefront when it comes to music. Classical music, world music as well as the musical heritage of their own country is played, rather than children's pop music. The music is carefully chosen, and monotonous music is not played in the background. The perception and understanding of music is enlivened by musicians visiting occasionally to perform their music live.
- This principle strengthens the gender based curriculum, especially the first stage of individual abilities; independence, self-confidence, self-awareness and -expression, as well as the initial stages of social competence, respect, courtesy and general conduct.

