

Period 6: Audacity; Courage, Energy, Activity, Initiative

When the 6th period begins, the school year has moved on to springtime. It is a time to enjoy with full force. This period is demanding for teachers because it allows them to go a little crazy, releasing energy by screaming in nature, walking outdoors barefoot, doing unusual things and taking a step outside of their their comfort zone.

1. Doing something unusual

- One of the most rewarding things about the 6th period is the opportunity to do unusual projects. It really does not make a big difference what the project is, but if it's really challenging for the children and hopefully for the teachers as well, the whole group shares a new life experience that makes children more confident to try new things.
- New things are best enjoyed when they are related to different forms of sensory experience (e.g. hearing, touching, seeing, smelling). Walking barefoot in mud and enjoying it is a great project.

2. Physical exercises and sports

- During springtime, it is natural to focus on physical activity and sports. Although movement is a part of the daily challenges, the teachers now need to pause and reassess what is needed to help the children further develop their endurance.
- It is ideal to teach children as wide a range of sports as possible at school. There is no need to feel that all sports are boring if the children have difficulties with football. Just try something else with a positive attitude. Any kind of group game played outdoors can be a great sport.

3. Expression, dance and music

- Although these three great tools accompany us at all times, it is fun to focus on the creation. The children can try to write their own song, dancing to it and moving in front of others, which actually requires great courage (also for teachers to be a good role model and enjoy).
- These projects have proved to be successful when integrated with a spring trip. It will be kind of a harvest with good evening entertainment, prepared by the children.
- Challenge the children to use really big movements while dancing. One way to do that is to use silk ribbons that can be bought for little money at, for example, JYSK. To make the ribbon fly requires big hand movements, and when performed to classical music, it can be a real adventure for the children.

4. Being a leader, developing leadership skills

- Making decisions and having responsibility is an important project; begin by putting the children in charge of small things and then increase the responsibility with time. Examples of these responsibilities are controlling a game, seeing to it that meals are relaxed and peaceful, being in charge of cleaning after meals, deciding what activity to do during group time.
- Be a project manager and choose for the group. With young children the decision does not have to be "a big one", but the teacher's attention is on the child having the power to choose for the group. "As our friend N.N. has decided, we will be doing this in the group time today. Thank you for making this decision, dear N.N." For example, if the group is making a paper shuttle, are we first going to make a shuttle out of paper and then use crayons to colour it, or are we first going to colour the paper and then make a shuttle?

5. To stand by one's beliefs and have a debate, discussion or a dialogue

- Invite children to stand up and ask them questions about their lives. “What did you do this weekend? What food do you like and why?” This is a good way to build their courage and initiative, and can easily develop into a debate where the children describe their opinions and listening to the opinions of others. These exercises need to be going on all the time, so the children don’t lose their courage. As with everything else, practice makes perfect.

6. Initiative

- How can you solve this issue on your own? This is the key question in promoting initiative. To solve something on your own can of course mean having someone assist you, but the main thing is for the child to find the solution on her/his own. This question can help in small issues such as having the children to decide to tie their own shoelaces. This question can make children take more responsibility and come up with innovative ideas.
- It is necessary in a friendly relationship to transfer the responsibility over to the “passenger”. Sometimes it’s enough to remind the children that everyone chooses for himself or herself, and in some cases teachers might have to rearrange the order in which they choose.
- Projects that involve two different roles. For example, if one child is telling the other what to write, the teachers have to be aware of the need to mix up the roles so everyone has the opportunity to try out both roles.

7. Use power tools

- Using power tools that the children have seen grown-ups use gives them the feeling of “I can do anything”. This can be done while taking care of our own environment, using drills, lawn mowers and other equipment under proper supervision of adults.
- Building a little cabin on their own is a great opportunity to make something big from scratch, use plenty of unfamiliar tools and at the end have someplace to play. Building its own house, a group can have the great feeling of sharing and experiencing what a group can accomplish through teamwork.

8. The possibilities of making a difference in our environment.

- Many alternatives are possible, such as visiting the municipality’s school committee or writing them a letter about some issue that has to do with the school. Visiting an old persons’ home and/or inviting them to school is a great project.
- Everything that has to do with nature is also great for making a difference in your environment. Planting trees and taking good care of them, checking on them regularly to measure them“. Picking up garbage from the schoolyard and neighbourhood is also a good way of making a difference.

9. School trip

- If possible, children can go on a trip for 1-3 days. Before the trip children will learn a lot about the area they will be visiting and plan all kinds of projects, songs, plays and more to do in the evening. Many parents say every year that the children have grown “one size“ bigger during such a trip.
- In connection with the spring trip it is ideal to let the kids gather information and facts about the area that they have gone to, even to practise a little geography, and learn about the history of the place.

Period 6 – Compliments and encouragement

Using appropriate compliments that focus on children's responsibility and initiative is the most effective way to achieve success. Here are some ideas for encouraging the children during the 6th period.

Courage – “You dared to.... GREAT!”

Energy – “Good – you are using your power!”

Activity – “Keep going! You are doing great!”

Initiative – “Can you feel how well you do when you use your own methods?”



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