



# ALLiES eGuide

## First set of Workshops

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The training course is the preliminary platform to help parents and teachers work together. These workshops tighten the collaboration between families and preschool around the issues introduced in the training course. These workshops, like the training course, have been piloted in Italy and organized once a month.

### 1st Workshop

The first workshop has been dedicated to warm the group up, get to know each other and build the working groups.

- Any activity should be repeatable in a classroom with small pupils.
- Care about the atmosphere and put the chairs in a circle, with drinks and candies on a table for everyone.
- On some papers on the wall, parents and teachers have to stick a post-it with "reasons", "problems" and "desires" to motivate them to participate.
- The coordinators of the meeting read all the posts and copy them on another paper, to make everybody aware of the objectives and to collect situations to analyze the workshop afterwards.
- Still in a circle, present yourselves in some nontraditional way: everybody has to say her/his name, favorite colour, favorite book, favorite movie and favorite tree. Then, they are asked to perform (represent) the tree. Then, inside the circle, a couple of people still need to perform the tree, while someone performs the wind that passes through the trees.
- After this a motion-centered game, take a little break and go through a simple debriefing about the activities; everybody could say how s/he feels.
- Work on a "social" activity: divided into 4 groups, each one has to defend a statement (such as "all the kids can do anything they want" or "all the kids must do anything their parents want" and so on), writing down their reasons. A leader should recite these opinions and discuss them with other leaders. Each group can help the leader without saying anything but writing and giving her/him a post-it.
- At the end, everyone had a small folder to collect the papers with activities and draw a self-portrait on the title page.



*"This activity made some parents feel bad (some felt a gap with the better debating skills or cultural readiness of others, some felt there was too much competition, some didn't understand the statement they were supposed to defend, some felt embarrassed or silly talking like that), but for the most part they felt good about the game process and enjoyed playing. In any case, the activities showed that it is not easy to make people work together (or just support a leader), especially when someone shows an extremist point of view; the activity reproduced many classroom situations, where some feel weaker than others, and this bad*





*feeling prevails over rational attention and some leave the discussion, while others feel fine about working together and talking about an interesting topic. We could say in this respect that another aim of the game was to understand that we have no definitive pedagogical rule for any situation, as the approaches change according to the needs and context.”*

## 2nd Workshop

In the second workshop we should focus on some typical “social” problem situation (at school, above all).

- A warming up (and trust building!!!) game – some couples have to overcome a set of obstacles on a path where one of them gives instructions and other one, blindfolded, walks on the floor.
- Then, we start to approach the situations with a role-playing method. Four groups have to fill in speech balloons on a comics page: they're typical school strips, like students stealing things from classmates, or teasing the weak ones, or breaking things, or not inviting someone to a party, etc.
- Parents and teachers perform the strips in a short role play.
- Then they have a short debriefing and anybody may comment on or ask about the feelings of the characters. The aim is, when a problem arises, to attend first to investigating the exact feelings of the people involved and to understand its importance and the importance of caring.
- In this workshop as well all the activities are repeatable in a classroom with the pupils.

## 3rd Workshop

The third workshop also focuses on some typical “social” problem situations and is approached with the role-playing method as well.

- Parents and teachers finished to play the last two dramas (not finished in the previous meeting).
- It is important to put the need to solve the problem behind the need to recognize the emotions of all the people involved in the situation.

## 4th Workshop

In this meeting the group talks about gender stereotypes.

- The groups cut pictures of men and women from magazines and show what kind of message of being men and being women is cultivated by our mass-media culture.
- Then the group uses those pictures to make a poster with images of the men and women they feel they are. The comparison between what kind of gender “mask” our society wants us to wear and what gender identity we really have has been a good way to promote discussion and an interesting example of a didactic method as well.
- Discuss the whole course, verify your objectives, compare the aims you indicated in the first meeting and aims you feel you have gained at the end.



*“At the end, all the participants said they wanted to stay in touch and keep on being ‘allies’ and maybe by working together in the next school year, there will be very good outcomes for everybody.”*