



# **FUNDACIÓN CENTRO SAN JUAN DE JERUSALÉN**

## **ORIENTACIÓN PEDAGÓGICA EN EDUCACIÓN INICIAL DURANTE LA CUARENTENA**

**QUITO-ECUADOR**

**2020**

## THIRD DISCUSSION GROUP

**TOPIC:** "Educational guidance in early childhood education during the lockdown"

**DATE:** Thursday 4 June 2020

**AIMED AT:** Early childhood education teachers and parents

### Objectives:

- To explain the importance of early childhood education in order to develop the required skills for learning.
- To provide pedagogical strategies to manage virtual classes during the pandemic.
- To describe the importance of emotional education at home and the need to express emotions and feelings.



### 1. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

#### ❖ What is early childhood education?

It's a continuous and permanent process of quality social interactions and relationships, which help the child to develop their abilities and life skills.

At Fundación Centro San Juan de Jerusalén, early childhood education is characterised as being inclusive, equitable and supportive whilst also respecting ethnic, cultural and social diversity and the needs of children living with or without a disability.

#### ❖ Reverse inclusion model



We work in an environment where typical children are integrated with children living with disabilities and are able to socialise with them. This inclusion helps the child and their family to be sensitive, supportive and to respect diversity.

This is an integral educational model as its key principle is to see the child as a whole. This means that Fundación San Juan has a transdisciplinary programme that addresses all of the child's and their family's educational, therapeutic (physical,

occupational and language therapy) and socio-emotional (psychological) needs.

## ❖ Work methodology at Fundación Centro San Juan de Jerusalén

Learning must be meaningful and experiential, therefore we use the learning through play methodology. This methodology revolves around creating different spaces or learning environments called corners. It's a flexible methodology that allows us to better address the diversity of the classroom, respond to individual interests, develop the children's skills and allow them to learn spontaneously and according to their needs.

The main feature of learning through play in the corners is to provide autonomy and an opportunity to learn by playing. Through this methodology, play is recognised as an authentic and important activity for children, as play is a fundamental and essential activity for the emotional, social, physical and cognitive well-being of children.



## ❖ Corner Spaces

### - Home corner

This corner provides children with real spaces in which they can learn from their own interactions by developing patterns and rules which represent their reality, and which they understand and learn. The activities they carry out should be experiential and related to real life, for example:



- Role play (child chefs): The children are first shown big pictures of the ingredients they are going to need and then they carry out the activity experientially with the supervision of an adult.
- Using a picture of a house: photos of their parents are placed in different parts of the house, the child is asked to say where they are and what each family member is doing in their house.

To carry out these activities with children with a physical disability, with impaired upper limb mobility, the teacher should use relaxation techniques for the upper limbs in order to be able to mobilise the child's arms and hands, so that they can also participate in the activity

## - Building corner

This corner promotes the development of spatial orientation, pre-mathematical thinking, language, creativity and visual perception skills by distinguishing the shapes, sizes and characteristics of objects through building. Additionally, it stimulates fine motor skills, visual-motor coordination and laterality.

- The structures will depend on the child's age. For example, towers can be built with cubes, where the child does this using their creativity or also by copying the model that the teacher asks them to make,
- Jigsaws with figures and images known to the child, such as animals, fruits or modes of transport, can also be used.
- The teacher will facilitate movement and guide the activity when working with children living with a disability.



## - Reading corner

The reading corner helps the development of the children's verbal and non-verbal language. It also promotes the children's creativity and encourages them to express their ideas, feelings and interests.

It also stimulates the neurofunctions of attention, memory, language and temporal structuring.



- The child learns to play with their friends by putting together simple dramatisations.
- Puppet shows can be used where the teacher guides the activity and all the children participate
- Children can also be stimulated through presentations on subjects or stories with images that are related to the content learnt that month.

## - Logical mathematical corner

In this corner, the children will be able to play games related to reasoning, attention, memory, gross motor skills, fine motor skills and spatial and temporal structuring.

- o Children can be stimulated through games, such as painting macaroni different colours, sorting them and then making necklaces with short colour sequences. For example, first we add the blue macaroni, then the yellow one, then the blue one again, and the child will continue to follow this sequence. We can also build simple towers with cubes of the primary colours.



## - Moulding corner



- o In this corner, children can let their imagination and creativity run wild
- o The neurofunctions of spatial structuring, body scheme, fine motor skills, visual-manual coordination are stimulated



## - Music corner

- o This helps children experience sounds, rhythms and melodies. It also helps them develop their auditory perception, motor skills, attention, language, general dynamic coordination and rhythm.
- o This can be done by imitating sounds or imitating body movements and dances which correspond to each rhythm.



## ❖ Therapeutic groups

At Fundación Centro San Juan de Jerusalén, we have a transdisciplinary approach, therefore in the area of pedagogy we use group stimulation exercises for the learning areas. These groups are aimed at all children, whether they are living with a disability or not. Therapists, who work in the areas of occupational therapy and speech and psychological therapy, are in charge of organising and developing the group activities. The content covered in the groups is linked to the academic content imparted in the area of pedagogy. Furthermore, the implementation of these groups meets the needs of each child, and therefore the therapists carry out the groups activities with the support of the teachers. The therapeutic groups are:

### - Speech stimulation group



This group is led by speech therapists with support from the teachers. The aim of this group is to stimulate language skills and increase receptive and expressive vocabulary through stories, games and songs.

The child should perceive, distinguish, and identify different sounds, whether sounds of their own body or sounds in their surround



### - Preschool group

This group is under the care of occupational therapists and is also supported by teachers. In this group they stimulate the acquisition of pre-calculation and pre-writing abilities and neurofunctions



### - Sensory-motor group



The occupational therapists direct this group with teacher support with the objective of stimulating the senses through bodily experiences that allow basic neurofunctions to develop for learning.

## - Psychomotricity group

This group is under the guidance of the psychology area. It works on the socio-affective development of children, their behaviour based on respect for themselves and for others, using psychomotricity as a tool.



## - Adaptation of furniture

The FSJJ counts on furniture adaptation to meet the needs of children with disabilities. These adaptations are guided or carried out by the foundation's therapy team (physical and occupational therapy). We have:

- o High or low plaster cast chairs
- o Foam posture chairs
- o Insoles for bimalleolar support
- o Pelvic casts
- o Successive casts
- o Hand splints etc.

These adaptations help look after the posture of children with disabilities, as well as stimulating their physical development and improving their visual field, so that they can participate in learning by way of socialisation, handling, and class participation

The teachers are trained and guided by the therapeutic team in the correct use of the adaptations and in how to manage feeding and relaxation manoeuvres for children with disabilities.



## 2. VIRTUAL EDUCATION DURING THE PANDEMIC

Albita, a teacher at the school, mentions that due to the pandemic situation and to isolation, the Foundation and the teaching team have had to adapt teaching activities, adapting to the physical space of each home and the resources of each family.

She states the importance of creating dedicated learning zones for children, which allows them to organise themselves and their routines and to recognise learning time as distinct from other activities carried out at home.

To establish home learning spaces, the following considerations should be taken into account



- Choose a space with good lighting, preferably natural light.
- Have as large a space as possible, and remove distracting objects like toys.
- Organise materials in fixed spots that are easy to reach.
- Provide a table and chair that are the right size for the child and that allow them to maintain good posture.
- Create an environment that is tailored to each child's needs
- Establish a routine with large, clear images, which will help to reduce their anxiety, stimulate understanding, and promote independence.

Routines are customised habits that are acquired by repeating the same task or activity several times.

It is simple to create a routine, since daily activities are reflected in images placed on a board in the form of a calendar, which will be positioned in a visible place and at a suitable height for the child's visibility.

It is important that the routine is developed with the child as a way of ensuring that it is carried out.

Albita mentions that it is important to avoid constant changes to established routines and, if a change is necessary, to explain the reason for the change or cancellation of an activity. The benefits of routines are:

- Provide children with security in knowing what activities will take place during the day





- Stimulate independence
- Facilitate communication within the family
- Help the child to develop responsibility.

## ❖ Carrying out activities

Activities to be carried out should include: a "warm-up" development activity, and a closing activity; additionally, clear rules should be set before starting each activity. At Fundación San Juan de Jerusalén, establishing this order has allowed children to feel more comfortable and relaxed in the teaching space.

### - Warm-up activities

To start activities it is important that the child feels comfortable, happy, and prepared to learn; in "warm-up" activities, the following recommendations could be implemented:



- They could be done through greeting songs or songs incorporating movement that engage and prepare the child to carry out activities
- Albita mentions that music actively contributes to children's overall development (cognitive, linguistic and sensory)
- Go through the calendar to mark holidays, significant events, and birthdays; this will help to develop concepts of time and organisation
- Open a space for conversation and ask children how they feel, working on recognising emotions through images for children to express their current mood.
- Additionally, relaxing music could be played since this can improve children's moods, improve their memory and focus, and reduce stress levels.

Activities, the recognition of emotions can be carried out through a communication board, where language therapists have educated the children to express their state of mind through a look, smile, gesture or signal.

### - Developmental activities

Before starting, you should inform children what will take place since this increases the children's inclination to carry out the activity. Furthermore, you should explain the rules of the activities using clear, simple language.



- Activities should be carried out through experience, exploration, and relating sensations to the child's own body; for example, when teaching the concept of up and down, ask the child: where are your feet? The child will touch their feet and feel the sensation of going down in their body
- Activities can be developed using puppets, which can increase children's interest by making the activities more playful.
- Albita speaks of her own experience with floor-based activities, mentioning that it is beneficial for children's experiential learning. Amongst the activities that attract the most interest from children are:

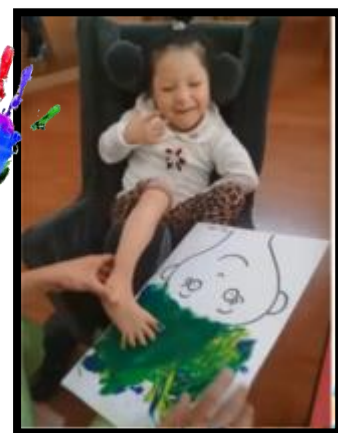


### finger painting:

Helps children to express themselves freely, discover colours, shapes, and strokes. Painting stimulates communication, creativity, sensitivity, and increases concentration. At Fundación San Juan de Jerusalén, teachers adapt activities to boost children's skills and minimise their weaknesses.



The teachers are trained in the area of physical and occupational therapy. This is for the natural care of children with cerebral palsy, as well as for carrying out relaxation manoeuvres. These allow the child with motor limitation to move their limbs better and to be included in the same activities as their peers.



### - Building activities:



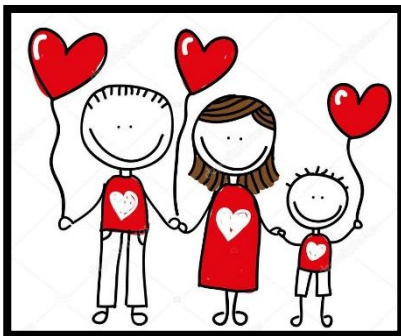
They allow the child to identify the world around them, acquire spatial notions and develop their skills of planning and the ability to block things out. They are part of the executive functions and contribute to the child being organized

- Games with dough or plasticine:

Children bring to life figures or images that they have in their imagination, developing their creativity and fine motor skills



- Activities of closure.



At the end, you must say motivating and positive phrases to the child, congratulate their effort and encourage them to improve. You must exchange the phrases "it's bad", "it's ugly" for positive reinforcements like "it looks good, but we can do it better".

It is important to talk with the children by giving feedback on what they did and what they felt like when they touched the objects or textures. We can finish it off with a song.

❖ Virtual classroom

In Ecuador, preschool is not compulsory; however, the participation of the child at this stage is fundamental. This is because children have a greater capacity for learning and brain plasticity

Albita mentions that this stage should be used to guide and stimulate properly, since it is fundamental for the integral development of the child. In addition, it allows them to strengthen their abilities and skills.



Before the pandemic, I create virtual classrooms in the Pedagogy Department. This had the aim of continuing with learning activities; giving recommendations to parents in the same way. These virtual classrooms are adapted to the needs of each child

In addition to the virtual platforms such as Classroom or Zoom, the Pedagogy Department makes PowerPoint digital presentations. This is because this tool has animations, transitions and facilities to adapt and customize the activities for each child and their needs.

Forming part of the task of joint-responsibility, parents are asked to upload videos, and photos of their children carrying out the activities. This way, the teacher will be able to make recommendations and will know what needs to be reinforced.

In addition to the virtual classes, spaces were created for socializing with their peers. Children can talk to each other in this space, expressing how they feel. They can cut down on anxiety through communicating with other people outside the family.



### 3. EMOTIONAL STABILITY IN PRESCHOOL

The cross-disciplinary work of the Fundación San Juan de Jerusalén has continued during this pandemic. This is why, even during this healthcare crisis, that the Psychology Department continues to have constant meetings with teachers and parents. More thorough follow-ups of the children's work have been carried out with their parents at home.

When we speak about pedagogical orientation, we also speak about the psychological orientation that is carried out for the support of teachers, children and families. This is since children should not only have their knowledge stimulated, but also work on the recognition and management of their emotions. This is in order to complete the overall learning process

#### ❖ Emotional Intelligence



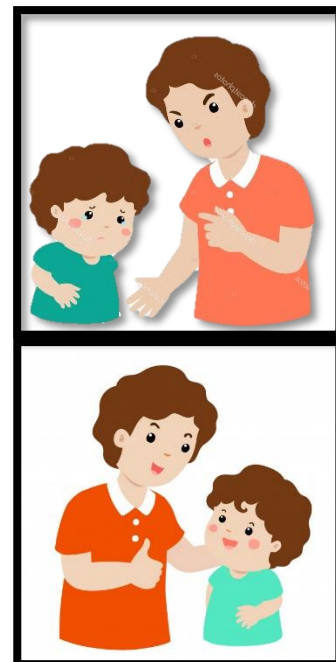
It is the ability to monitor the feelings and emotions of oneself and others. In addition, to discriminate between them and use this information for the sense of direction of one's action and thoughts

During these times of isolation, emotional intelligence is very important. This is since both adults' and childrens' emotions have undergone a change

### ❖ The importance of a good emotional education



When the basic norms for the expression of affection are not developed, children become trapped in their emotional world. This usually happens when the adult does not allow the child to express their own emotions such as crying, sadness and anger. Words are sometimes used that shut off or interrupt that emotion. For example, "are you going to cry again, are you going to get angry again, is that the only reason you get sad? That's not so scary, don't exaggerate". These feelings can be part of an adult's emotions. However, for children, now at home, they can be a demonstration of something major bottled up. They express it through crying, shouting, irritability or sadness. By mentioning these phrases, what the adult does is to inhibit or stop the expression of the emotion. At that moment, they do not respect the child's emotion.



In addition, a child with a physical disability and limited verbal communication, will demonstrate their emotions through their facial gestures. These will demonstrate well-being or unease.

David mentions that children need to feel confident in themselves. A good education that promotes their emotional intelligence will allow them to channel their emotions and express them to others. This emotional education relies on the adult (mother, mother, teachers, etc.).

The principle of emotional education must start from example. That is to say, the adult must be able to express their feelings, not to shut them off or deny them. This will be

reflected in the scant expression of emotions by their children. If parents begin to work on their own emotions and express them, it will be easier for their children to be able to express their emotions with others.

It is very important that parents establish bonds of trust with their children. This is so that they can find a safe place where they can express themselves and say what they feel.

Educating a child emotionally means:



- Giving value to the emotions that they feel; no matter how variable these are. This is because all emotional responses are a demonstration of their feelings. The adult must explain to the child why they are acting that way.
- Empathizing with others and respecting the emotions of others. These will sometimes not be the same as ours.
- To help identify and name what the child is feeling, the adult should explain what the child is feeling and the emotion that they present. If it was an inappropriate reaction, explain to the child alternatives to demonstrate their emotion. This is especially through dialogue.

