



HANDBOOK

Helping the parent

Contract number 2019-1-BG01-KA201-062561

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

Learn and Play project is targeting a common problem within the educational systems in all European countries: the reading literacy barrier in early childhood education. The lack of reading skills for primary schools students is directly linked with the dropout rates among children with special needs and minorities but is also vital for the overall attainment in school in next educational levels.

The project is transnational initiative that will be implemented in Bulgaria, Ireland, Spain and Turkey by organisations with significant experience in teachers training, family trainings, methodology development and educational research. Their joint efforts will develop innovative methodology for extensive language learning, based on gamification of learning content with variety of interactive resources and visualized on a platform, where all project target groups are actively involved - students, teachers and parents.

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INTRODUCTION

The manual „Helping the parent“ has been developed within the project “Learn and play” and it aims to support the parents in effectively using the platform and its corresponding resources. The platform is based on the reading program, created for children aged 4 – 10, whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian. As parents, you can benefit from the program, since it is user friendly and an excellent addition to the school work.

There are ready-to-use educational resources on the platform that support acquiring new knowledge and skills. The tasks are in the form of games. They aim to diversify the screen time of students and, at the same time, to reinforce learning with the help of the three senses – hearing, vision and touch.

How to use the platform

Every child has a different relationship to reading. Some children are interested in letters and books from a very early age, others prefer running and playing to reading, and for others reading could be a torture. As adults, we understand the importance of reading literacy and why children should read with comprehension. Here are some tips and tricks that you can use to raise the child's interest into the platform "Learn and play":

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES, EMBEDDED IN THE PROGRAM

The platform is based on the game approach and puts the student in the focus of education. Through her/his active role of an explorer, the child experiments and finds the right answers instead of just receiving knowledge. The use of the three senses – hearing, vision and touch - is stimulated. It has been proven, that people learn best when using all the three senses.

The program objectives are acquisition and development of the following knowledge, skills and competencies by the child:

- Improvement of listening / auditory skills
- Increase of active vocabulary
- Successful manipulation of sounds and letters
- Formation of syllables, words and sentences
- Reading texts of different genres with comprehension

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH THE PLATFORM

Tell your child about the platform. Explain to her/him that there are various games on it, which will make learning the Bulgarian language much easier and fun. Together, make the first step – registration. Suggest that the child figures out her/his own password and writes it down in a notebook. In this way, the child will be involved in exploring the platform from the very beginning. You will stimulate her/his memory and suggest a proven method for saving information – note taking.

For a start, choose the Diagnostic test, which will determine the language level of your child. After making the test, you will receive a recommendation how to proceed with the program. Be there for the child! Show her/him the buttons on the mouse and the keyboard, with which s/he can enter the responses. Encourage the child's independence.

After the test it's time for a break. Show the child how to alternate computer time and rest. Screens strain the eyes due to the electromagnetic waves they emit. Therefore, it is important that the child takes a break after 15-20 minutes. Suggest a different setting – outdoor games, eye gymnastics and movement.

Make sure that the child is comfortable, when working on the computer. S/he should be well seated, with her/his legs set firmly on the ground and with a straight back, leaning on the chair. It is preferable that the room has natural light which does not strain the eyes.

On the next day, or after a suitable break, you can continue with the games from the recommended learning path.

Setting goals for the child. Each lesson consists of 3 to 5 games. Together, make a strategy and set reachable goals. Define how many lessons per day is optimal for your child. Bear in mind that the platform will not let her/him continue if the success rate for the previous skill or set of skills is less than 85 percent.

The games in the platform allow you to be creative and build your child's knowledge.

BONUS IDEAS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF ADDITIONAL SKILLS THROUGH THE GAMES

You will find additional tasks and ideas for each type of game, which will help you engage your child. In this way s/he will build and deepen the following skills:

- **Random attention and its switching**
- **Abstract-logical thinking**
- **Figurative thinking**
- **Operating and long-term memory**
- **Imagination**

SUGGESTIONS FOR GAME ADDITIONS

- ❖ **„FLASH CARDS“ GAMES** - Provoke the child to create a short oral story based on exemplar questions for the thematic lessons:
 - Which is your favourite colour?
 - What do you like most about your appearance?
 - Which is your favourite fruit/vegetable?

- Which is your favourite animal?
- Which of your relatives do you want to resemble? In what?
- Which is your favourite season?
- What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?
- Which is your favourite sport?

After each question, ask the child “Why?”. In this way you will provoke her/his spontaneous argumentation.

❖ **“YES” OR “NO” GAMES** - Complete the questions and encourage the child to ask his own ones.

- Is the sea white?
- Is the tomato blue?
- Is the lemon yellow?
- List three red vegetables.
- Tel me three things that are usually yellow.
- Can you tell me three animals, that are very small? What about three very big ones?
- What do we put on our hands when it’s very cold in winter? What do we put on our head in summer to protect us from the sun?
- List three team sports? What about individual ones?

❖ **“Listen and choose” games** - Invite the child to match adjectives and nouns, according to their gender and number.

The instruction for the colours game is “Please, point to the red colour”, while the child sees blue, green and red colours on the screen. You can provoke the child’s imagination by asking her/him to match the colour with a suitable noun. For example:

Blue trousers, green notebook, red tomato, etc.

You can deliberately make mistakes, while combining adjectives and nouns, so that the child can correct your mistakes.

- ❖ **“Odd one out” games** - The child could point to the odd object, as well as name the categories of the objects.

For example, at the picture „gloves, hat and eyes“, we should expect that s/he will tell us that the gloves and the hat are clothes, while the eyes are part of the body.

- ❖ **“What figure comes next” games** - The child could match the figures, according to a characteristic, set by you.
 - How many sides does the square have?
 - How many angles does the triangle have?
- ❖ **“Put the story in order” games** - Provoke the child’s imagination by asking her/him to make assumptions before listening to the story:
 - What are the names of the heroes?
 - What are their professions?
 - What is the story about?

Let the child think of a continuation of the story.

- ❖ **“Choose the right word” games** - The child could either make sentences or ask questions, based on the pictures.
 - The gift is decorated with a red ribbon.

- We hammer nails with the hammer.
 - My mom works in a pastry shop.
- ❖ **“Memory“ games** - When the child opens cards, encourage her/him to name the objects on the cards.
- ❖ **“Sound pattern“ games** - Invite the child to think of another word with the same sound pattern as the model.
- ❖ **“Put the sentence in order“ games** - Encourage the child to transform the reporting sentences into interrogative sentences and vice versa. Example:

Misho is listening to the teacher. -> Is Misho listening to the teacher?

BENEFITS FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

- I. The platform “Learn and play”, as well as all attached resources, are with free access.
- II. After an instant registration, you can use the platform quickly and easily.
- III. Children learn Bulgarian through interactive games.
- IV. The child undergoes initial diagnostic, which gives an instant feedback and helps the parent to choose a learning level.
- V. The child develops his/her digital skills, parallel to learning Bulgarian.
- VI. It is a shared and fruitful activity for children and parents.

HOW TO USE THE WORKSHEETS

The learner's interest and motivation to do the tasks are very important requirements for the effectiveness of the study process. Therefore, the program includes worksheets, which break the usual patterns. Play is the leading activity of the child. In the suggested activities /games, special attention is paid to phonemes and graphemes and the development of the phonemic hearing, as precursors of good reading technique and comprehensive reading.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

By performing the activities in the suggested worksheets, the child learns through play. The new knowledge remains in the long-term memory due to the inclusion of the senses – touch, vision and hearing - together with movement and emotions. Below are some skills and competencies that the child acquires by learning through experience:

- can follow instructions
- manipulates letters, sounds, syllables and words
- reads with comprehension
- reads and speaks with emotional intonation
- defines and expresses his/her own feelings and emotions
- uses body language

TIPS FOR USING THE WORKSHEETS

- You can find the working sheets in the “Educational resources” section under the name “Working sheets for parents”.
- There are more than 30 worksheets on the platform, which could be used both in class with a group of children or at home for individual work.
- You might or might not need additional materials for some of the resources. We suggest that you read the instructions for the worksheet first, and then adapt the activities according to the materials you have. Almost all the materials could be substituted by others, available at home.
- The suggested activities in the worksheets are suitable for all age groups and could be easily performed by all members of your family.
- The games require at least two participants. In some of them the parent is a mentor, while in others s/he is a learner, together with the child.
- Try to select activities from the worksheets that correspond to the new skill acquired from the platform. For example, after the lesson about the sounds at the beginning and at the end of the word, you could suggest the game “Let’s find the initial sound”.
- You have absolute freedom. You can approach the games creatively and adapt them according to your child’s needs..

BENEFITS FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

- The knowledge remains in the long-term memory, as it is acquired through senses and emotions.
- The new knowledge is easily adopted, as it is presented through games.
- The activities are based on the knowledge and skills acquired through the program “Learn and play”, while they build on them through exercises and repetitions.
- The activities could include the whole family.

VOCABULARY OF TERMS USED

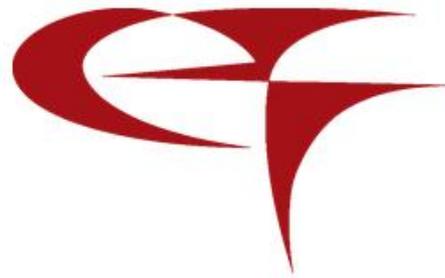
- ❖ **Reading literacy** – the skill to understand, make sense of and use written texts for achieving different goals, which enables people to gain knowledge, solve real problems and participate actively in public life.
- ❖ **Learning path** - thematic section in the program. The learning paths in the program are 4 altogether – Pre-reading period, Letters, Reading literacy 1 and Reading literacy 2.
- ❖ **Random attention** – arises purposely, with volitional efforts and is aimed at and concentrated on an external object.

- ❖ **Abstract-logical thinking** – it allows the person to go beyond the boundaries of prescribed norms and codes of rules, which leads to new discoveries.
- ❖ **Figurative thinking** – form of thinking, which operates with images.
- ❖ **Operating memory** – a variety of short-term memory. It provides memorizing of information, necessary just for performing a certain action or operation.
- ❖ **Long-term memory** – keeps track of received information for a long time. It depends on the power of sensitive reactions and the completeness of perceptions.
- ❖ **Imagination** – a cognitive mental process, in which reality is reflected in the mind in the form of new, unusual and even impossible images, ideas and concepts.
- ❖ **Flash cards** – cardboard sheets, used for educational purposes. Mainly used for learning of new words, terms and facts.
- ❖ **Phonemic hearing** – the ability to understand speech, to hear and distinguish the right from the wrong pronunciation of the sounds.

PROJECT PARTNERS



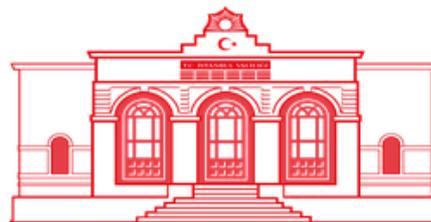
**Primary school "Anton
Strashimirov"**



**Educational Cooperation
Foundation**



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