

Domain: Sanitation
Subjects: School sanitation, hygiene, water

Age group: 2-14 years

2.1 My beautiful school

Learning goals:

Knowledge:

- Children become aware of safe and unsafe methods of storing and drawing drinking water in general and in their homes.
- They can visualise their home environment (geography).
- Enhancement of spelling, language, writing, speech.

Attitude:

- The children want to promote healthy home environments.

Practical skills:

- Older children look after the drinking water storage reservoirs in class.

Psychosocial life skills:

- Children can communicate with adults (parents) about home sanitation.
- They build analytical skills, free speech, observation skills, communication skills, evaluation skills, skills to generate alternatives.

Participatory methods:

Drawing, modelling, using real objects; voting/scoring; participatory planning and monitoring

Materials:

Pieces of cardboard, or paper and carton, or clay as locally available; (finger)paint, brushes, scissor/knife/razor blade, paper

Activities:

Puzzle

- For the younger ages, prepare four or more drawings on a firm background, using local materials depicting good practices in using the school toilets, water supply and handwashing facilities, e.g. a boy urinating in a latrine, a girl defecating in a latrine.
- Cut the drawings up into puzzles of 4-6 pieces for the youngest children, increasing the number of pieces by age. Alternatively, students in the upper forms can make the puzzles for younger children.
- Divide the children in small groups (one per puzzle).
- Ask the groups to make the puzzle and give it a name.
- Tour the classroom with the groups to look at the different puzzles, invite comments on the practices and reinforce the good practices shown in the drawings.
- In plenary, have a discussion about what the children saw and learned.
- With older children, facilitate a discussion about what good practices are, why they are not always followed, what may happen and what can be done.

Environmental walk

- Take the children on an environmental walk to visit the school facilities.
- Stimulate them to observe the conditions carefully and to note any bad smells. Alternatively, pair off younger and older children, so that the older child can help the younger one observe.
- In class, ask the children to describe what they have seen and smelled. In the case of older children, they can first write down their observations before expressing them.
- Facilitate a discussion about:
 - the reasons why the facilities/services are in the present state;
 - the risks that such facilities/services represent;
 - what can happen to children who use facilities/services in such conditions;
- Assist them to reflect on the bad and the good practices and on how they could move from the bad to good practices.

Application:

- Use the activities to help the class prepare and implement a simple plan for hygienic use and maintenance of facilities.
- Young children can make drawings on good practices for display at the facilities, the older ones can make written messages.
- Older ones also make a plan for cleaning. In the plan, all children of the same age will share the work equally - no discrimination against girls, ethnic or religious groups.
- Older children can play a role in guiding younger ones and in helping them to make their own commitments and plans.

Learning indicators:

- Young children can tell the proper use of the water, sanitation and hygiene facilities.
- They can mention three characteristics of a clean school environment.
- They can mention 2-3 consequences of bad hygiene conditions.
- Children show signs that they feel responsible for their own hygiene and that of others.
- They use the facilities properly to the extent that repeated environmental walks show sustained improvements to the extent possible.
- There is equity in participation in maintenance for both sexes and all races and religions.

What if the school has no toilet?

In pre-school, it may be possible to use potties and bury the excreta. A latrine for small children is better. Potties may be a risk if there is no communication with the parents, however. In one country, a pre-school teacher taught the children to use a potty. Lacking a potty at home, one child used a regular pot to defecate in. The mother was very upset and punished the child. When the child told what had happened to the teacher, she realised that it was her fault and she went to the child's mother to explain.

What if there is no larger maintenance plan?

Schoolchildren cannot do all the maintenance for school latrines. Maintaining, repairing and improving facilities requires cooperation between the school, the parents, the local authorities, the Ministry of Education and the local health centre.