



INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (IECE) PROJECT

EXAMPLE OF IECE PROVISION: MALTA (1 OF 2)

1. Abstract

The IECE provision at San Andrea School includes children aged 3 and 4, split into two groups – Nursery (children aged 3 to 4 years) and Grade 1 (children aged 4 to 5 years).

Children attending San Andrea School come from all over Malta. The main languages spoken at school are Maltese and English. Some children have one or both parents who are not Maltese nationals. These families might only be in Malta for a short period of time and their children sometimes come to the school with no Maltese or English, which makes inclusion with the rest of the group more of a challenge.

There are four classes in each group, with twenty children in each class.

In each Nursery class there is one play leader and an assistant, while in the Grade 1 classes there is one class teacher and a support teacher shared between the four classes.

The curriculum is based on learning through play, encouraging children to be inquisitive and participate in class activities.

2. Inclusive features

San Andrea School welcomes children with diverse and additional needs. When children have particular needs, the State appoints a Learning Support Assistant (LSA), who works hand-in-hand with the play leader or class teacher to ensure that these children are participating in all class activities and integrating with their peers.

All play leaders, class teachers and LSAs meet for a weekly planning session, in which they review and evaluate the activities carried out in the previous week and plan for the following week. Here particular attention is paid to how best to involve the children with special educational needs. On some occasions, input from the family is required to prepare the child from home and working with the family is very important. For this reason an open-door policy is in place, where parents can come to school whenever they have a query.

3. Inclusive highlight

The open-door policy also includes keeping in touch with other professionals working with children with diverse and additional needs after school hours.



Meetings are held to discuss the child's individual education plan (IEP) as and when needed and not at stipulated intervals, in order that once a child has reached a goal or is showing problems in certain areas, all personnel working with the child and the parents can get together to understand the way forward for the child's holistic development.

4. Other evidence of quality IECE

Staff are all fully qualified within the early years area of specialisation. LSAs also attend specially designed private courses or courses provided by the Education Department.

As already mentioned, all practitioners working with the child are invited to IEP sessions. This includes play therapists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, etc., depending on the child's needs.

Peer preparation programmes are carried out in the classes. These are always designed to be age-appropriate to the children in the class.

The school website (<http://www.sanandrea.edu.mt>) and Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/sanandreaschool?fref=ts>) portray various inclusive practices and initiatives that cater for a wide spectrum of different abilities.