



**A handbook for non-violent conflict
management using *the Litigare bene* method
– an example of good practice-**



OŠ Ivana Gorana Kovačiča Vrbovsko, 2024.



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Review

The handbook for non-violent conflict management using the Litigare bene method – an example of good practice is aimed at providing support primarily to children, students, and parents in acquiring essential emotional and communication competencies. The handbook briefly presents the topics it deals with. Then, through a series of clearly structured workshops, the issues of emotions, non-violent conflict resolution, and communication are addressed concretely. The workshops are primarily focused on the importance of recognizing, expressing, and self-regulating emotions, which is the basis for understanding the importance and role of emotions in everyday life, but also for acquiring further skills necessary for non-violent conflict resolution, quality communication, and building a positive attitude towards oneself and others. In the context of the topic of non-violent conflict resolution, which is the central part of this manual, the steps of the *Litigare bene* method of conflict corners are clearly and concretely described, which provides children with a simple and effective way of resolving conflicts on their own without the direct involvement of adults. Finally, a series of workshops will be presented to help students and parents understand and use basic communication techniques that they can use in everyday communication and building positive relationships. Although it is primarily focused on students, the manual indirectly (through continuous communication between students and parents implied by workshops for students) and directly (through workshops for parents) actively involves parents in reflecting on their own emotional and communication competencies and their children's emotional and communication competencies. In addition, the manual represents valuable support in the work of professional associates, educators, and class teachers who want to focus on developing the emotional and communicative competencies of children, students, and parents. In this way, the activities presented in the manual, in addition to offering concrete ways to acquire relevant competencies, also open up space for an open conversation between essential stakeholders in the educational process about emotions, conflict, violence, and (non-) supportive ways of communication.

Bojana Vignjević Korotaj, University of Rijeka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Teachers' reviews

I have been working with 1st class students for many years. The method is very efficient and effective in resolving everyday conflicts that occur in the classroom. Through workshops on recognizing feelings, students learn to verbalize their feelings. By expressing their feelings and thoughts, they resolve minor conflicts very effectively. As a teacher, I have shifted the responsibility to the students and am no longer in the role of a person who makes decisions or final judgments about the event. Students come up with a solution in a very short time. This method teaches students to take responsibility for their actions and stand up for themselves nonviolently.

The method is very effective with students up to 3rd class. I recommend it to all educators and teachers because practice has proven to be a valuable and effective tool.

Vesna Trope, primary school teacher

The Conflict Corners (*Litigare bene*) method proved to be extremely useful in resolving student conflicts. Empowered to express emotions through workshops and letting fellow students know how they feel, students find resolving conflicts easier. From the beginning of the use of Conflict Corners, when some intervention by the teacher is needed to respect the basic steps, students become so liberated and empowered over time that they do not need the teacher's intervention. It often happened that students, while the teacher was not at school or was on a break, would sit in the Conflict Corner on their own initiative and try to resolve the conflict. After that, they feel incredibly proud. They also become aware that sometimes they cannot solve the problem, but it is pointed out.

Marijana Simčić, primary school teacher

Introduction

This *handbook* is the second and updated edition of the *Curriculum for the Development of Emotions and Communication Skills in Children*. It was created for the Erasmus+ project *Arguing at School*, which brings together ten partners from Italy, Croatia, Malta, Romania, and France. The project's primary goal is to provide children and young people aged 2 to 18 with independent and non-violent conflict management tools. By doing so, they develop essential life skills and learn how to deal with quarrels that are an inevitable part of everyday life. The *Arguing at School* project focuses on three methods of non-violent conflict management in children and young people: peer mediation, *Litigare bene*, and *Friendship Cards*.

This handbook aims to present the many years of practical experience of Ivan Goran Kovačić Vrbovsko Elementary School in applying the *Litigare bene* method. This method was systematically introduced in the lower grades of the school during the implementation of the previous KA1 Erasmus project, *How Children Can Argue in a Good Way*, and with the *Arguing at School* project, it became an integral part of the school curriculum. The *Litigare bene* method, or "to argue well," is also called conflict corners by the Ivan Goran Kovačić Vrbovsko Elementary School teachers since children's quarrels are resolved in a specially arranged part of the classroom. The author of the *Litigare bene* method is the Italian pedagogue Daniele Novara, who, based on many years of research, has concluded that children aged 2 to 9 can resolve conflicts with each other entirely independently if an adult does not interfere. It is a majestic method in which adults (teachers, educators, and parents) no longer play an active role in resolving children's quarrels but teach children emotional literacy and communication skills to use and develop their natural potential for non-violent conflict management. By not interfering, adults show that they have confidence in children and can resolve their disagreements independently, thus learning how to be with others. The *handbook* is intended primarily for educational workers, educators, teachers, professional associates, parents, and anyone who deals with children's mental health.

The purpose of this *handbook* is to develop children's, students', and their parents' awareness of the importance of recognizing and regulating emotions and to train them for nonviolent conflict management.

The handbook consists of the following five units:

1 Recognizing and expressing emotions

-learning outcome: *recognize one's own and others' emotions and regulate one's own emotional states*

-activities:

1st workshop: Emotions

2nd workshop: Anger

3rd workshop: Happiness

4th workshop: Fear

5th workshop: Sadness

2 Communication

-learning outcome: the student will use non-violent communication

-activities:

1st workshop: Message

2nd workshop: The language of the snake – the language of the giraffe

3rd workshop: Verbal and non-verbal communication

4th workshop: Active listening

5th workshop: Building relationships with each other through communication

6th workshop: Golden book

3 Conflict Recognition and Nonviolent Conflict Management

- learning outcome: use nonviolent conflict management techniques

- activities:

1st workshop: Conflict recognition

2nd workshop: Nonviolent conflict settlement

4 Litigare bene method (peace corner)

-learning outcome: practical application of the *Litigare bene* method (conflict corner)

-activities:

1st workshop: Steps in conflict corners

2nd workshop: Practicing nonviolent conflict settlement

5 Workshops for parents

- learning outcome: *Parents will become aware of the importance of expressing their own emotions and the emotions of their children*

- activities:

1st workshop: The importance of expressing emotions

2nd workshop: Nonviolent conflict settlement

3rd workshop: Relaxation techniques

6 What do teachers do

- learning outcome: Teachers will become aware of their own beliefs about children's arguments by keeping a Conflict Diary

- activities:

1 theoretical knowledge of the *Litigare bene* method

2 practical application of the method

3 work on one's own beliefs by keeping a Conflict Diary and personal development

1 Recognizing and expressing emotions

One of the most common definitions of emotions is that they are “feelings from within.” We often associate them with pleasure and discomfort and we can recognize what arises within us in certain situations.

From birth, a child gradually develops not only motor skills and cognitive processes but also empathy. A child gathers information from their environment and based on this, learns how to relate to themselves and others, as well as how to express emotions, which are fundamental to the development of empathy.

It is important to know that a child surrounded by favorable developmental conditions will grow into an emotionally mature individual. Parents play the most crucial role in this process. Nowadays, many parents struggle with expressing emotions. As a result, many children have no a quality role model to help them become aware of their feelings and learn how to express them.

Educational institutions also play a significant role in a child's development. These settings provide children with opportunities to develop empathy, enabling them to form meaningful relationships with others and build a positive self-image.

Through this unit, children will be introduced to basic emotions, which can be pleasant or unpleasant. Anger is an attempt to defend ourselves, others, or values that matter to us. Fear is a natural reaction that signals a type of threat. Sadness conveys what is truly important to us and what we are missing. Happiness is a pleasant emotion that motivates us.

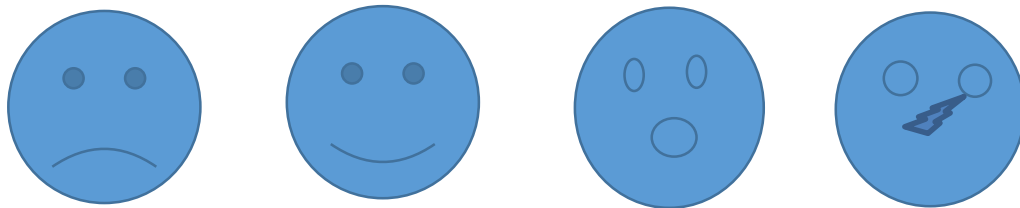
Using techniques for working with emotions is an excellent support for every educator and parent. There is a wealth of quality literature and resources that facilitate understanding children's emotions and provide valuable tools for working with them. These include various children's stories that address different emotional states. Through these stories, children often identify with the characters and recognize their own life situations. Such stories help children to release and process suppressed feelings. They are often useful for relaxation or relieving accumulated tension. Their application is indispensable in any preventive program for working with children, as emotional health is the foundation of children's mental health.

WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS: Emotions	
Workshop title:	<i>Getting acquainted with emotions</i>
Aim of the workshop:	Students' awareness of certain emotional states
Outcomes:	The student will recognize and define the four primary emotions - anger, happiness, fear, and sadness.
Working methods:	Talk and demonstration

Required resources:	Poster paper, felt-tip pens
Associates:	Class teacher, expert associate
Duration:	class period

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

Children are seated on their chairs set in a circle. The presenter draws four faces on the board.



The presenter asks the question: *How are you feeling right now?* Children show their feelings and comment on them. (possible students' responses: sleepy, happy, cheerful, I'm not well, ...)

TALK:

On the board, the presenter writes the words for four primary feelings under each face:

SADNESS

HAPPINESS

FEAR

ANGER

The presenter asks: *What would you call anger, sadness, fear, and happiness by one name?* Some children will know how to name it - a FEELING. If this is absent, the presenter says it and writes it on the board below the feelings, explaining that we actually call these states feelings.

Then, the presenter asks the children how they most often feel. After a few answers, the presenter asks again:

- 1 *When are you sad?* - students' responses
- 2 *When are you happy?* - students' responses
- 3 *When are you afraid?* - students' responses
- 4 *When are you angry?* - students' responses

Note: Every child needs to express their feelings. It is important to emphasize that we are all different, and everyone is entitled to their feelings. It is also essential that the presenter does not allow other students to comment or make fun of someone else's feelings.

The presenter places poster paper on the floor and selects one child who lies down on the paper. The presenter (who can also help children with instruction) draws the contours of the student's body . After this activity, he sets a task:

You will write (or the teacher will do it if the children do not know how to write) when you feel good, and the answers will be written within the body contours. After this activity, with a different color, you will write when you feel bad, but outside the contours.

The resulting picture is placed on the school billboard with the instruction that they can enter their good and bad feelings throughout the week.



Children writing when they feel good

LAST ACTIVITY:

Each child says how they felt during the implementation of the activity.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION: Students point at the emotional scoreboard to show how they felt during the workshop.



Workshop evaluation using the emotional scoreboard

THE TASK FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS:

Draw the contours of a man on poster paper and write with your parents the situations in which they feel good and bad.

Parents get acquainted with the activities of the workshop and the key concepts: FEELING or EMOTION; HAPPINESS; ANGER; FEAR; SADNESS.

Teacher: During the following days, the teacher integrates the workshop's contents into everyday situations in the classroom.

Note: If a conflict breaks out at the workshop or one of the children needs to recount their conflict, it is essential to focus on the feeling.

WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS: Anger	
Workshop title:	<i>Getting acquainted with the emotion of anger</i>
Aim of the workshop:	Raising awareness in students of the emotional state of anger
Outcomes:	The student will recognize and define the emotion of anger and recognize it in other people. They will be able to use relaxation techniques.
Working methods:	Talk, storytelling Techniques of relaxation, drawing
Required resources:	Board and chalk, computer, poster paper, felt-tip pens, children's meditations Picture book: Kušec, M. <i>Don't Get Angry</i> , Extrade, 2014 or a story from a link https://hrvatskaudrugazamirenje.wordpress.com/2017/11/15/djecak-i-ograda/
Associates:	Class teacher, expert associate
Duration:	One class period

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

The presenter asks:

What did we talk about in the last workshop?

What feelings did we mention?

When do you get angry? What part of your body do you feel anger in?

TALK:

The presenter: *What is anger?*

You should explain to students that children, like everyone else, can hurt themselves or others with their actions, such as fighting, insulting, hitting, etc. Such violent behavior is not acceptable. It's okay to feel angry and get angry, but the difference is being angry or hurting someone.

TELLING A STORY:

The presenter expressively reads or retells the story of Mladen Kušec *Don't Get Angry* (Kušec, M. *Don't Get Angry*. Kastav, Extrade, 2014) or the story *The Boy and the Fence* available at the link <https://hrvatskaudrugamazamirenje.wordpress.com/2017/11/15/djecak-i-ograda/>

ATTACHMENT: story *The Boy and the Fence* taken from the

link <https://hrvatskaudrugamazamirenje.wordpress.com/2017/11/15/djecak-i-ograda/>

There was a little boy who had a bad temper. After years of torture, his father persuaded him to try to change. He handed him a box full of nails and told him he should stuck one in the fence every time he lost control.

On the first day, the boy nailed 37 mails, but he learned to control himself over time, and the number of nails he stucked into the fence decreased. The boy realized it was easier to control his anger than to stuck nails into the fence daily.

Finally came the day when he did not stuck a single nail into the fence. He proudly told his father the news, and his father replied: Well done, son! Every day, when you manage to control your behavior, pull a nail out of the fence.

Days passed, and the boy finally told his father the nails were gone. The father brought his son to the fence.

You did a great job, my son, but look at all those holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same again. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar, such as these holes in the fence.

When you hurt a man, you can apologize to him for the rest of your life, but the wound will remain forever.

THE TALK ABOUT THE STORY: *What feeling did it awaken in you? What happens to the person we hurt with our behavior or words?*

TALK:

The presenter introduces students to important **three rules of anger**:

- 1 We must not hurt ourselves.
- 2 We must not hurt others physically or by insulting them.
- 3 We can't tear or damage things.

Through talk, the presenter introduces students **to techniques for dealing with anger**. Students themselves list the examples of how to deal with anger, and the presenter complements them and explains each technique.

- 1 If we're angry, we should say it. Anger accumulates energy that must be released.
- 2 We can relax by breathing – learn to breathe correctly.
- 3 Anger can be alleviated by counting.
- 4 It is essential to recognize the feeling of anger and sometimes walk.
- 5 We can meditate.
- 6 If anger ends in conflict, we resolve the conflict by mediation or in the conflict corner.

LAST ACTIVITY:

Make a box of anger, and children can insert pieces of paper on which they write or draw reasons for anger, who they are angry with, and so on. In the end, somebody empties the box.

The presenter draws the outlines of the palm on the poster or board. On each finger, he writes one technique with which we can solve or express anger. Following the presenter's model, each child on A4 piece of paper outlines his palm. Each finger is painted differently (each color represents one technique).

WORKSHOP EVALUATION: Students show how they felt during the workshop on the emotional scoreboard.



The emotional scoreboard

THE TASK FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS:

The presenter instructs children to talk to their parents about anger. They should ask parents what they do when they feel anger.

Teacher: During the following days, the teacher integrates the workshop's contents into everyday situations in the classroom. It is recommended that the teacher expresses his feelings in words during regular work with students, e.g., *I'm angry that you interrupted me, I'm happy because you wrote the test well, etc.* It's good for students to reread the story.

WORKSHOP FOR STUDENT: Happiness	
Workshop title:	<i>Getting acquainted with the emotion of happiness</i>
Aim of the workshop:	Recognize the feeling of happiness in yourself and others and know how to express and share this feeling with others.
Outcomes:	The student will be able to: -recognize one's own sense of happiness as well as feelings of happiness in other people -self-regulate his feelings -become aware of what makes him happy
Working methods:	Talk and game
Required resources:	Mirror, music
Associates:	Class teacher, expert associate
Duration:	One class period

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

We should repeat what we did the last time. Anger... What do your parents do when they're angry?

GAME: TREE

Today we will play an exciting game called *TREE*. The presenter invites students to get up and find a place in the classroom where they will have enough space. He warns students that it is essential to listen carefully to the instructions and not to talk during the exercise but to pay attention to their bodies and feelings. It is recommended that students close their eyes during the training. Imagine that you are a tree. Your feet are roots that bind the tree tightly to the ground. The torso is a tree, and the hands are branches. Stretch your arms (*branches*). Pay attention to how you feel. The wind

begins to blow slightly, and the branches (*hands*) gently swing in the wind. A cloud has appeared in the sky, and the wind intensifies and rocks the branches more strongly. (*How does that feel?*). It begins to rain slightly (*students snap their fingers, imitating rain*). Rain falls harder (*students accelerate snapping*). Suddenly it thunders (*students stamp their feet*). The wind blows heavily and threatens to blow off the branches. It thunders again. The rain slowly calms down, as well as the wind, until it completely stops. The sun shines in the sky. Students rub their palms vigorously and press them against their faces to feel warmth and comfort. In the end, the students open their eyes.

TALK:

- ✓ What emotions did this exercise evoke in you?
- ✓ In what situations did you feel happiness?
- ✓ Close your eyes. Remember one specific situation when you were delighted.
- ✓ Remember the feelings in your body, your thoughts.
- ✓ What do you feel in your body? What do you think about it?
- ✓ How do you behave? What do you look like? (**take a mirror**- let the students look at what they look like when they are happy)

Continue the talk using the following questions:

- ✓ Why is it important to become aware of situations when we are happy? Last time we talked about feeling angry and a few calming techniques. One of those techniques is to redirect our thoughts. So, when we are angry or sad, we can recall some situations when we were happy.
- ✓ What do other people (friends, parents) look like when they are happy?
- ✓ Why is it important to recognize how other people feel?
- ✓ Think back to a situation where you helped someone. How did you feel then?
- ✓ What can you do today to make your parents, aunt, sister, or brother happy? Helping others/volunteering also makes us happy.
- ✓ Draw your happiness.

LAST ACTIVITY:

Dance of Happiness on the theme song "Life is not grey." Students will stand in a circle and each will make a moving to express his happiness. Other students will repeat that movement and connect it into one whole.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION: Students show how they felt during the workshop on the emotional scoreboard.

THE TASK FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS: Find a mirror at home. Look at yourself and say something nice to yourself.

WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS: Fear	
Workshop title:	<i>Getting acquainted with the emotion of fear</i>
Aim of the workshop:	Awareness in students of the emotional state of fear
Outcomes:	The student will recognize and define the emotion of fear and how to help to alleviate it. The student will be able to recognize real and unrealistic fears.
Working methods:	Talk, demonstration, storytelling, technique of relaxation
Required resources:	Board and chalk, picture book, papers
Associates:	Class teacher, expert associate
Duration:	One class period

The presenter asks: *What did we do in the last workshop? Who did the task? (Look in the mirror and say something nice for yourself.) I would like us to do it again. Here's the mirror. What do you see in it? (each looks at himself and says what he sees).*

TALK:

The presenter plays music related to fear, e.g., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Svc2H3AEeJ4>

How did you feel?

What is fear?

Fear is an unpleasant feeling. We feel it when we find ourselves in danger. It occurs regardless of whether it is a real or imagined danger.

Write on the board: FEAR HAS BIG EYES.

Question: *What would that mean?*

Write on the board :

REAL FEARS

UNREAL FEARS (IMAGINED)

Write students' responses.

What's fear for?

Fear is not a pleasant feeling, but it serves something. Fear helps to move our bodies to protect ourselves from something dangerous or some threat. Fear serves to be vigilant.

Reading the story: Kušec, Mladen: *I'm not afraid*. <https://extrade.hr/pricice-za-emocionalni-razvoj-djece/141-m-kusec-ne-bojim-se.html>

How can we be less afraid?

- ✓ The first step is to realize that it is not a real danger, but something invented by our brains.
- ✓ The second step is to help the brain think of something pleasant.
- ✓ The third step is to share our fears with trusted people; then, we will be less afraid.

The presenter shares three pieces of paper on which students write or draw their fears. After writing, they will crumple it into one big ball and throw it in the recycle bin. This will remove their fears. They can also draw their fear, name it, and make friends with it. Fear is just a feeling, and it is part of us.

LAST ACTIVITY:

Let children meditate, e.g., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcWzLjzhM4> or use some other relaxing techniques, e.g., anchoring technique.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION: Students point at the emotional scoreboard to show how they felt during the workshop.

THE TASK FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS: Talk to parents about their fears:

What are your parents afraid of? How do they deal with fear?

WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS: Sadness	
Workshop title:	<i>Getting acquainted with the emotion of sadness</i>
Aim of the workshop:	Awareness in students of the emotional state of sadness
Outcomes:	The student will recognize and define the emotion of sadness and how to help to alleviate it.
Working methods	Talk, demonstration, storytelling, technique of relaxation
Required resources:	Board and chalk, picture book, papers
Associates:	Class teacher, expert associate
Duration:	One class period

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

The presenter asks: *What did we do in the last workshop? Have you talked to your parents about the emotion of fear? What did the parents say? How do parents overcome it?*

TALK:

The presenter invites the students to stand in a circle. The task is for each of them to show what he looks like when he is sad. Others repeat his body language or what they see.

After the demonstration, students sit in their seats.

The presenter asks: *What does our body look like when we are sad? (cringed...)*

When are we sad?

What makes you sad?

What is sadness?

Sadness is an unpleasant feeling. It's not bad because this feeling is here for a reason, too. It wants to tell us something. It provides us with information about the situation we are in. The feeling helps us to reflect on the event that led us to it and to find a solution. Just as when we get injured

(cut or break a leg); after the initial shock, we have to rest so that our wound heals. The same is with sadness; it helps us to calm down and come to terms with the loss.

How to deal with sadness?

- ✓ Recognize why we are sad and talk about it with someone
- ✓ The feeling of sadness is normal, and it happens to all living creatures.
- ✓ It takes some time for the feeling of sadness to go away.

LAST ACTIVITY:

The presenter asks students: *How can we help each other when we are sad?*

(possible students' responses: conversation, a hug, a kiss, a game, a drawing, breathing)

The answers are written on the board.

After the last activity, offer children different relaxation techniques, e.g., anchoring technique.

Anchoring technique

We can also show students the anchoring technique . Explain to them what an anchor is. Anchors allow ships to be in place and would be swept away by the sea without them. So this technique can help you to calm down and *get over* sadness. In this technique, our brain plays a crucial role. Hold one part of your body (e.g., hand, shoulder, elbow) and imagine something beautiful that creates a feeling of comfort. Close your eyes and hold that part of your body while you think about comfort. When we find ourselves in a situation where we feel sadness or fear, we have to hold that part of the body, and our brain will recognize it as a pleasure and slowly calm us down.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION:

Say one word about how you felt in this workshop.

THE TASK FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS: Talk to parents about how they cope with sadness.

2 Communication

In communication, two or more persons exchange information and influence each other's opinions and behaviors. **There is verbal and nonverbal communication.**

Verbal communication consists of words that are spoken or written. Nonverbal communication is communication, gestures, and body language. We communicate more nonverbally (70%).

Communication aims to attract attention, express feelings, establish social contacts, and meet your different needs. **Communication is essential in everyday life.** It is necessary for mutual understanding. To communicate well (verbal communication), **it is crucial to use I messages and avoid YOU messages as much as possible.**

I message (or the language of the giraffe) is based on feelings and acceptable words and does not offend the person we communicate with (e.g., *I feel lucky that you gave it to me, or I feel fear because you often disrespect me in front of others.* .) .

YOU messages (or the language of the snake) are based on the condemnation of the interlocutor and most often lead to conflicts, quarrels, and violence. This language is short and very sharp (e.g., *You're wrong; You have nothing in your head; I'm going to hit you now; You're stupid; You're a monkey.*)

Why is it important to teach children how to communicate appropriately?

Children need to socialize with other children. During socialization, talking about the child's emotions and creating warmth and support from parents is essential.

Adopting social norms and rules of conduct is necessary in the socialization process.

For all the above, proper communication is required through which we give messages to the child and thus shape him. **The messages we send to the child should be stimulating and understandable** (I messages) because only in this way can we build the child's self-confidence and self-esteem.

It is essential to teach the child active listening! By listening (not being quiet), the child participates in the communication process and feels involved. It's a process we all need to work on together.

WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS: Message	
Workshop title:	<i>Message</i>
Aim of the workshop:	The aim of the workshop is for students to become aware of the importance of the messages we send and receive from our friends in the development of self-confidence.
Outcomes:	The student will know how to use messages that strengthen their personality and the personality of others. They will know how badly the bad messages they receive or give to others affect self-confidence.
Working methods:	Talk, writing, work in pair
Required resources:	Paper and pencil
Associates:	Class teacher and pedagogue
Duration:	One class period

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

Students sit in a circle. The presenter repeats the four primary feelings in a way that he asks them: *What feelings do you use, and which do you see in other people?* Following the student's answers, the question arises: *Which feelings are good and bad?* The answer should be: *There are no bad feelings, all feelings are important to us, and it is good to recognize them.* If most children responded this way, we would confirm the result. Suppose most students respond that there are bad feelings (anger, fear, and sadness). In that case, it is necessary to repeat to them why all emotions are important. Sadness calms the body; anger re-examines our attitudes; fear warns us of danger.

After the introductory activity, write on the blackboard: MESSAGE.

TALK:

The presenter asks: *What does the word message mean?*

He writes students' responses on the board and they discuss them so that everyone understands what is written.

Possible students' answers: conversation, cell phone, piece of paper, bad news, good news...

From the students' responses, it is evident that there are good and bad messages.

The presenter gives instructions for the following activity. Each student should take a small piece of paper to write a bad message to their classmate (without using a name).

When they write a message, they insert the piece of paper into the box provided by the presenter. After collecting the messages, students read a random message from the box aloud. That's what all the students in the circle do. After this activity, the presenter asks them how they felt while writing the message and when they got the bad message.

Most students will express a sense of sadness, anger, or fun. All answers are acceptable because they are theirs.

Conclusion: When you start writing a bad message to someone, remember the feeling you experienced today (both when you wrote the message and when you got the message and when you read it.)

The following exercise is repeated but with the task of writing a positive (nice) message to your classmate (without using a name).

When they write a message, they insert the piece of paper into the box provided by the presenter. After collecting the messages, students read a random message from the box aloud. That's what all the students in the circle do. After this activity, the presenter asks them how they felt while writing a nice message and how they felt when they got a nice message.

Conclusion: When you start writing a nice message to someone, remember the feeling you experienced today (both when you wrote the message and when you received the message and when you read it.)

LAST ACTIVITY:

The presenter asks the question:

- *What messages do you send the most to your classmates?*
- *What messages do you get the most from your friends?*

The presenter should repeat the children's answers so everyone can hear what dominates in the class.

Then he asks the question: *What have we learned today?*

WORKSHOP EVALUATION: Students show how they felt during the workshop on the emotional scoreboard.

THE TASK FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS:

Give students the task of observing which messages there are most between their parents.

WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS: I-YOU messages	
Workshop title:	<i>The language of the snake – the language of the giraffe or I-YOU messages</i>
Aim of the workshop:	The aim of the workshop is for students to learn the difference between I messages and YOU messages.
Outcomes:	The student will know how to recognize and use I messages when talking to other students. The student will know how to recognize YOU messages when talking to other students.
Working methods:	Talk, demonstration, work in group
Required resources:	Cards
Associates:	Class teacher and pedagogue
Duration:	One class period

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

Students sit in a circle. The presenter revises with them what they learned last time. He asks them the most common messages their parents use in communication and conversation.

Can they assess what kind of messages parents are sending them and what messages they are sending to their parents?

Discuss students' responses.

TALK:

Students sit in a circle. The presenter instructs everyone to find their pair and sit beside each other. Then he goes from one to the other and says: *I will divide you into parrots and fish*. Each in a pair is given one of the roles (it is essential that in a couple, one student be a parrot and one fish). Then he invites the fish to leave the classroom. In the hallway, he gives them instructions: *Each of you should come up with a story (e.g., how to bake pancakes or retell a football match or Little Red Riding Hood...) that you will tell your partner when you come back to the classroom*. While they are figuring out what to say, the presenter enters the classroom and tells the other students (parrots) that the fish will tell a story, and they have the task of asking, *Why?*

After this instruction, he invites students to return to their place and start telling the story.

The presenter monitors the conversation process. After 5 minutes, he interrupts the conversation and asks them how they felt.

Fish will describe their partners' feelings, and parrots will be angry because they were constantly interrupted.

The presenter asks the question: *Where do they see this situation?*

The answers are: in class, at home...

The exercise would conclude that listening to each other and using nice words in conversation is essential.

Today we will learn the language of the snake and the language of the giraffe.

The presenter asks the question: ***What kind of animal is the snake?***

The students' answers: dangerous, murderous, fast, ugly, we are all afraid of it...

And what would be the ugly words we know how to use: short, sharp, ugly, murderous, stinging another...

Give an example of murderous sentences:

E.g., *You're stupid.*, *You're a monkey.*, or *You're a jerk.*

What word is at the beginning?

The answer: YOU.

YOU messages (or the language of the snake) are based on the condemnation of the interlocutor and most often lead to conflicts, quarrels, and violence. This language is short and very sharp.

The presenter asks the question: ***What kind of animal is the giraffe?***

Students' answers: tall, classy, eating leaves, beautiful, lovable...

And what would be the nice words we use: long, full of feelings, fancy speech.

Can you give me an example of such a speech?

E.g., *I feel bad because you called me a monkey; I don't feel good because you think I'm a jerk; I'm sorry you think I'm stupid...*

What word is at the beginning of the sentence?

The answer: I.

I messages (or the language of the giraffe) are based on feelings and acceptable words and do not offend the person we communicate with.

Conclusion:

What language would be most valuable to you in communicating with each other?

We'll do a few exercises in pairs. First, you will use the language of the snake in communication with each other. Then you will turn that language into the language of the giraffe.

The presenter asks: *Which speech was easier for you to devise?*

The student's answer is: *The language of the snake.*

Why do you think it's easier to use the language of the snake?

Students' response: *Because it's shorter, and we use it.*

So what should be done?

Students' response: *Practice the language of the giraffe.*

Communication is essential in everyday life. It is crucial for mutual understanding. To communicate well, it is necessary to use I messages and avoid YOU messages as much as possible.

LAST ACTIVITY:

The presenter asks the question: *What have we learned today?*
 Students' responses are directed to the outcomes of the workshop.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION: Students show how they felt during the workshop on the emotional scoreboard.

THE TASK FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS:

Give students the task of explaining the language of the snake and the language of the giraffe to the parents and discussing it with them.

WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS: Verbal and nonverbal communication	
Workshop title:	<i>Verbal and nonverbal communication</i>
Aim of the workshop:	The aim of the workshop is for students to learn the types of communication and to learn the importance of nonverbal communication.
Outcomes:	The student will know the difference between verbal and nonverbal communication. The student will know the importance of nonverbal communication (mime, gestures, facial expressions, body language).
Working methods:	Talk, demonstration
Required resources:	-
Associates:	Class teacher and pedagogue
Duration:	One class period

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

Students sit in a circle. The presenter repeats with them what they have learned last time. He asks about the types of communication they remember and whether they talked to their parents about I – YOU messages.

The presenter motivates and repeats the contents of the last workshop related to acceptable and unacceptable mutual communication.

Continuing the introductory part, he asks the question: *What do you think communication is?*

Students' responses: talk, when we talk, when we say something to each other...

The presenter concludes:

Communication is a means by which two or more person exchange information and influence each other's opinions and behaviors.

TALK:

Students sit in a circle. The presenter asks the question: *How do we talk? And what are we talking about?*

The students' answers: we speak in words, use voice and mouth...

The presenter concludes: *If I understood correctly, you believe we communicate exclusively by voice.* Students confirm.

Then the presenter leaves the classroom and closes the door behind him. After a few seconds, he enters the classroom with an angry face, saying nothing. He looks at the class briefly and asks: *How do I look to you?*

The student's answers: angry, grumpy, someone made you mad...

The presenter continues: *How do you know that if I haven't told you anything?*

We see, reply students.

Then the presenter leaves the classroom again and closes the door. After a few seconds, he enters the classroom with a cheerful, smiling face and open arms and looks at the class for a few seconds. He asked: *What do I look like to you now?*

The students' answers: cheerfully, safe for us...

The presenter asks again: *How do you know that if I didn't say anything?*

We see on your face that you are cheerful and waving your hands cheerfully, the students observe.

The presenter asks: *What can we conclude? How do we communicate with each other?*

Students' answers: with body, gestures, facial expressions, and speech.

The presenter says **that there is verbal and nonverbal communication.**

Verbal communication consists of words, spoken or written. Nonverbal communication is communication, gestures, and body language.

Do we speak more verbally (speech) or nonverbally (body and gestures)?

Students will respond that we communicate more through verbal communication.

The presenter says that they have explored ways of communication and realized that we communicate more through nonverbal communication (70%).

The presenter then proposes the following activity:

Everyone finds their pair and turns to him. The task is as follows: One student will tell one of the events that happened to him but without a word, and the other student will, when finished, guess what it is and will guess the feelings he saw on his interlocutor. After completing the activity, students will switch roles.

LAST ACTIVITY:

The presenter asks the question: *What have we learned today?*

Students' responses are directed to the outcomes of the workshop.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION: Students show how they felt during the workshop on the emotional scoreboard.

THE TASK FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS:

Give students the task of observing the nonverbal movements of their parents and writing down interesting facts.

WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS: Active listening	
Workshop title:	<i>Active listening</i>
Aim of the workshop:	The aim of the workshop is for students to learn listening techniques and to know how to recognize disruptive factors in communication.
Outcomes:	The student will know how to recognize when someone is listening to him. The student will know how to recognize when the interlocutor is not actively listening to him.
Working methods:	Talk, demonstration
Required resources:	-
Associates:	Class teacher and pedagogue
Duration:	One class period

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

Students sit in a circle. The presenter repeats with them what they learned last time. He asks about the types of communication and which curiosities they saw in their parents' nonverbal communication.

Continuing the introductory part, the presenter asks: *Do you think we always listen to what someone is saying? How do we know someone is listening to us? What do we do if we don't listen to someone?*

The presenter writes the students' responses on the board.

TALK:

Students sit in a circle. The presenter counts 1, 2, 1, 2... and tells all 1s to enter the hallway. He gives the following instructions to students who have remained in the classroom.

You will also play the role of a non-listener in a way that:

- *while the interlocutor is talking, you will turn his back*
- *while the interlocutor is talking, you will stare at him with your mouth open*
- *while the interlocutor is talking, you will constantly touch your ear, hair, neck*
- *while the interlocutor talks, you will go around in circles*
- *while the interlocutor talks, you will sit quietly and look at one point.*

While the interlocutor talks, the student will ask him something unrelated to his story.

If there are more than two pairs, the two of them will play the same role.

After dividing the roles, students in the hallway are instructed to tell their interlocutors about exciting life events. They come to the classroom, and each goes to their couple and starts telling their experiences. A conversation follows communication. The activity lasts 5 minutes.

The presenter asks the students who told their experiences: *How did you feel when talking? Did the interlocutor listen to you?*

The students' answers: they felt disappointed, bad, and funny (examine why they felt that way), and no one listened to them...

The presenter then asks: *What did your interlocutor do?*

The presenter writes the answers on the board next to the previous answers and compares them, and then concludes:

If the interlocutor, while we speak,

- turns his back
- *stares* at us
- is restless and touches his body parts
- is spinning and not standing still
- is looking past us
- examines us without genuine interest

he DOESN'T LISTEN to us, so we must stop and warn him.

After this activity, the presenter moves on to the next one. It changes the roles of students, and students who told the story in the previous workshop remain in the classroom. Students who have

been in the classroom leave it. The presenter gives them the task of designing an event to tell their pair who is in the classroom.

Students in the classroom are given the following task:

You will have the role of an active listener as follows:

- while the interlocutor is talking, you will look into his eyes (without *staring*)
- while the interlocutor is talking, you will nod affirmatively
- while the interlocutor is talking, you will say "aha" several times
- while the interlocutor is talking, you will repeat a few words from the story several times
- while the interlocutor is talking, you will ask a few questions about the story you hear.

If there are more than two pairs, the two of them will play the same role.

Students come to the classroom, and each goes to their pair and starts talking about their experiences. The activity lasts 5 minutes. A conversation follows communication.

The presenter asks the question to the students who told their experiences: *How did you feel when you were talking, and did all the interlocutors listen to you?*

The students' answers: I felt good because the interlocutors listened to me...

The presenter then asks: *How do you know that the interlocutor listened to you? What was he doing?"*

The presenter writes the answers on the board next to the previous ones and compares them, and concludes:

If the interlocutor, while we speak,

- looks us in the eyes
- affirmatively nods his head
- asks questions about what we are saying
- he speaks affirmatively and uses some words from our story

then the interlocutor ACTIVELY LISTENS to us.

The presenter can continue the conversation with the students by asking where they had a particular experience: *When did someone listen to them, and when did they not?*

LAST ACTIVITY:

The presenter asks the question: *What have we learned today?*

Students' responses are directed to the outcomes of the workshop.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION: Students show how they felt during the workshop on the emotional scoreboard.

THE TASK FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS:

Give students the task of observing how much parents actively listen to each other and how much they listen to them.

WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS: Building Relationships with Each Other through Communication

Workshop title:	<i>Building relationships with each other through proper communication</i>
Aim of the workshop:	It is important for the student to understand how important it is to use proper communication in relation to other children.
Outcomes:	The student will use I messages in relation to other students.
Working methods:	Talk, demonstration
Required resources:	-
Associates:	Class teacher and pedagogue
Duration:	One class period

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

Students sit in a circle. The presenter repeats together with students specific techniques of recognizing active listening.

Continuing the introductory part, the presenter asks: *How do we know we are on good terms with our friend? How do we know we're in a bad relationship with our friend?*

TALK:

Students are divided into groups of three. Each group is given a piece of paper with one relationship. (E.g., mom-dad, teacher-student, parent-child...).

The presenter gives instructions: *Talk to each other about what makes good relationships between the two people you got (remember the beginning of this lesson when we discussed relationships with others). Write it down on paper. Then select a group representative who will say what you have agreed on.*

The presenter writes the groups' answers on the board.

They jointly conclude what constitutes good relationships between people.

The presenter gives instructions again: *Talk to each other about what makes bad relationships between the two people you got* (remember the beginning of this lesson when we discussed relationships with others). *Write it on paper. Then select a group representative who will say what you agreed on.*

The presenter writes the groups' answers on the board.

They jointly conclude what constitutes good relationships between people.

Conclusion of the exercise:

Students need to realize that regardless of any relationship, positive words (caring behaviors) always lead to building relationships, and negative words (killer behaviors) break relationships. We have a choice. Will we be supportive of our children and our environment or a burden? (a bridge)

LAST ACTIVITY:

The presenter asks the question: *What have we learned today?*

Students' responses are directed to the outcomes of the workshop.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION: Students show how they felt during the workshop on the emotional scoreboard.

THE TASK FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS:

Give students the task of observing how much parents relate to each other as well as them, what words they use, and what their nonverbal communication is like.

WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS: Golden book	
Workshop title:	<i>Golden book</i>
Aim of the workshop:	Each of the children needs to understand how much he is worth and how important he is in his classroom and beyond.
Outcomes:	The student will understand that he is essential within the class. The student will be empowered by positive values.

Working methods:	Talk, work in pair
Required resources:	-
Associates:	Class teacher and pedagogue
Duration:	One class period

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

Students sit at their desks. The presenter repeats with the students about supporting and non-supporting relationships.

In the continuation of the introductory part, the presenter gives each student as many pieces of paper as there are students in the class (e.g., ten pieces of paper).

TALK:

The presenter gives instructions: *Write one positive message on each piece of paper that will be addressed to one of your friends in the class. (e.g., Marko, you are a good friend because you help me when I need something). Keep one paper to yourself (it will be empty).*

After about 20 minutes, the presenter says that students distribute pieces of paper with messages to the people they are intended for. Each student should receive nine messages. The blank paper should serve as an envelope to other papers; they should draw something on the front page and write *GOLDEN BOOK*.

Conclusion of the exercise:

Each student will receive his *message booklet* to take home. It is optional to read it in front of the class. Students need to see how much they are worth in their class.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION: Students show how they felt during the workshop on the emotional scoreboard.

3 Conflict Recognition and Nonviolent Conflict Management

Conflict is a regular and inevitable part of our lives, and we must distinguish it from violence. Violence is the systematic and intentional infliction of psychological and/or psychological harm on another person. This requires adult intervention because violence cannot be tolerated. Unlike violence, conflict is a collision of opposing beliefs, values, and needs. It arises because other people are not like us. We evaluate other people by how much they fit into our value system. *If I think something is right, then your way of looking is wrong.* Conflict can exist concerning other people and that is external conflict while we are talking about internal conflict which happens with ourselves. In conflict, people do not deal with the impact of their behavior on others or their needs but with the satisfaction of their needs. A person in conflict starts from their beliefs and moral values being correct. They believe that something is wrong with others and use tools such as making diagnoses, criticizing, persuading, insulting, ridiculing, belittling, impaling feelings of guilt, etc. And so, they're convinced they're right.

In different ways, we deal with conflict– some can't wait for the opportunity to quarrel, compete and win (*You see, I'm right! or I'm good, you're no good! or You have to see it and start thinking and feeling like me!*), while others run away from conflict because it awakens fear, sadness, and suffering in them, and they suffer in themselves without expressing their feelings.

Conflict can be seen as wrong because it is associated with aggression, quarrel, confrontation, suffering, pressure, and powerlessness.

However, we can also use conflict as an opportunity for change, personal growth, and development. We can examine ourselves and look deep inside ourselves (instead of pointing the finger at other people) and discover our “wrong” beliefs. There is no guilty part in a conflict because everyone has the right to express their own needs and beliefs. Therefore, it is important to develop skills such as active listening and mutual communication.

The following section of the Handbook contains two workshops for students.

WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS: Conflict vs violence	
Workshop title:	<i>Conflict recognition</i>
Aim of the workshop:	The aim of the workshop is for students to distinguish conflict from violence.

Outcomes:	The student will be able to recognize the conflict as well as to recognize verbal and physical conflict. The student will know the difference between a conflict and violence.
Working methods:	Demonstration, talk, work in pair
Required resources:	Computer, scene of violence
Associates:	Class teacher, expert associates
Duration:	One class period

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

Presenters show physical and verbal conflict. – role-playing (situations from class - e.g., taking other people's things, coaxing, mocking, who will be the first in something, etc.)

CONFLICT

TALK:

- 1 What happened in the first situation (physical conflict) – students recount their experience.
- 2 What happened in the second situation (verbal conflict) – students tell their experience.
- 3 Do you know whether this happened in your class, at home, etc.?
- 4 What do you think conflict is?

The presenters write children's answers on the board.

Then they say: *Conflict results from diversity in opinions, desires, perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes. (They explain each of the terms.) It happens every day, and we can't avoid it.*

Do you think conflict is something good or bad?

- ✓ The conflict is neither positive nor negative.
- ✓ The conflict is an opportunity for progress; it can end if the involved parties get something for themselves (win-win).
- ✓ There is no culprit in the conflict.
- ✓ Children can solve the conflict on their own.
- ✓ We use a variety of methods to resolve conflicts.

What do you need to know for a conflict to be resolved nonviolently?

It is required:

- accepting that it is normal to have different desires and needs
- having mutual respect – we disagree, but we accept that the other thinks differently
- practicing nonviolent conflict resolution methods
- having self-control (using relaxation techniques)

VIOLENCE

The presenters show a scene of aggressive behavior (violence) on the computer. (video clip Pink T-shirts)

How do you feel after what you've seen?

What is this type of aggressive behavior called?

Violence is a form of aggressive behavior towards another person, oneself, or property. Aggressive behavior is intentionally hurting or trying to injure someone or inflicting pain or embarrassment.

In case of violence, it is necessary to seek the help of adults.

LAST ACTIVITY:

Repeat:

- 1 What is a conflict?
- 2 What kinds of conflicts have we seen today?
- 3 What is violence?

WORKSHOP EVALUATION: Students point at the emotional scoreboard to show how they felt during the workshop.

THE TASK FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS: Every conflict can be resolved. Think at home about how we can resolve conflicts and violence between people. Talk about it with your parents.

WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS : Nonviolent conflict management	
Workshop title:	<i>Nonviolent conflict management</i>

Aim of the workshop:	The aim of the workshop is for students to become aware and adopt ways of nonviolent conflict management
Outcomes:	The student will be able to use various ways of nonviolent conflict management in his environment.
Working methods:	Talk, demonstration
Required resources:	Board, chalk
Associates:	Class teacher, expert associates
Duration:	One class period

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

The presenter asks: *What did we do last time?*

Children give answers. We repeat what they remembered (conflict-violence difference, nonviolent conflict resolution, expression of feelings)

TALK:

Have you talked to your parents about how they resolve their conflicts?

The presenter writes the answers on the board. (e.g., by talking, punishing, shouting, silence, and anger, we ask for help from friends and adults)

Which of the above is a good, and which is a bad way to resolve conflicts?

Name some situations in which you have resolved a conflict well.

We ask them for an explanation for the written answers on the board.

1 Conversation – they show how they can resolve the conflict by talking

2 Ask for help from friends and adults – they offer how to do it

It is essential to distinguish asking for help from complaining (you need to conduct a conversation with students about that).

The presenter says that various methods of nonviolent conflict resolution involve talking and expressing emotions, and we use them in school. Show films about the conflict corner and mediation.

TALK:

1 What's different? (Another person is involved in mediation. In the corner, children solve the conflict on their own.)

2 *What's similar?* (talking, nonviolent communication, collaboration, listening, expressing emotions)

- ✓ A conflict corner – a place in the class where you can resolve your conflict.
- ✓ Mediation- a method by which you resolve a conflict with the help of your friend or an adult. You'll learn all about it in the 4th grade.



Conflict corner in the classroom in Branch school Severin na Kupi

LAST ACTIVITY:

The presenter: *One of the most effective nonviolent conflict resolution techniques is the conflict corner, which we will talk about next time.*

WORKSHOP EVALUATION: Students point at the emotional scoreboard to show how they felt during the workshop.

THE TASK FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN:

Hold a family meeting in which a particular situation or conflict will be resolved jointly (e.g., household chores, watching TV, playing games, using a mobile phone, etc.)

4 The Litigare bene method

After many years of research, Italian pedagogue **Daniele Novara** conceived the *Litigare bene* method. It is suitable for nonviolent conflict resolution in children from 2 to 10 years of age. After the age of ten, children can continue using the method, and at that point, the two steps back and two steps forward apply to them not to adults. It is based on the Montessori philosophy that children of that age can resolve conflict independently without an adult's interference. Adult intervention is unnecessary and can harm the child's development, self-confidence, and independence.

The application of the method is quite simple for children and adults. It consists of two steps back and two steps forward.

Two steps back

1. Not looking for the culprit in conflict
2. Do not impose conflict resolutions

Two steps forward

1. Encourage conversation (both sides)
2. Encourage agreement

It is essential **not to look for the culprit** in the conflict because he is not there. Teachers or parents often ask children in conflict: *Who started first? Who is to blame?* which is entirely unnecessary because it does not lead to a solution to the conflict, and the imposition of guilt has a detrimental effect on the development of the child's self-confidence.

The second step forward is **to avoid imposing a solution to the conflict**. People are different and have different needs and ideas. What seems reasonable to us doesn't mean it suits others. Children in conflict can come up with the solution that suits them best. The imposed solutions provoke resistance, and children will not abide by them.

Instead of *judging* and determining guilt, children in conflict should be **encouraged to express feelings and talk** with questions like *What happened? How do you feel?*, and similar. In doing so, it is crucial that both sides in conflict are heard equally. To achieve this, some soft light object is usually used, which like a microphone, serves as a sign that the child holding it has the right to speak. When he is finished, he hands over the subject to his interlocutor. An adult is present and observes what is happening. This way, the parties involved in the conflict can hear each other and try to understand someone else's position. It can help with the above questions to encourage smaller children to talk. Once everyone has presented their side of the story, children can propose solutions and negotiate a mutual **agreement**. Sometimes it will seem to adults that the agreement reached by the children is not fair or that one child has yielded to another. Adults, in this case, should resist the need to intervene because children of that age do not care about the value of justice or injustice. They want to fulfill their most important need: to continue the game with friends. The role of adults is solely to encourage agreement (*What can you do?*). However, they must not impose their proposals. There is a greater chance that the children will stick to the agreement they reached on their own in less than two minutes. Sometimes children will not agree because it is enough for them to express their

emotions or side of the story, and they don't need to come up with a solution. Adults do not need to insist on an agreement because there is no more conflict, and the children continue to play. To use this method, arranging a space in kindergarten or school where children can come to talk and resolve their conflicts is good. It can be called *a Peacemaking Corner* or *a Conflict Corner* or leave it to the children to give the name to the corner themselves. A conflict corner to many teachers is an invitation to argue. But we must be aware that conflict is an everyday part of our lives and that arguing is okay. Before that, explain to children how to do it nonviolently. In the corner there are two chairs and a table with a soft object, so children do not get hurt. It serves as a sign that whoever holds it has the right to speak. On the walls can be placed images of feelings that children can use as a reminder to express themselves more easily.



Conflict corner in Grade 2 of Elementary school Ivan Goran Kovačić Vrbovsko

Conflicts usually occur during a break at school or during time spent outside in the kindergarten, so the corners can be arranged quickly and outdoors, for example, two stumps can be used instead of chairs.



Conflict corners in the school's courtyard and the entrance hall to the Elementary School Ivan Goran Kovacic Vrbovsko

After children practice resolving conflicts using *the Litigare bene* method, they will quickly begin to apply it in everyday socializing with peers and when adults are absent. This is an important life tool that will be useful to them in their further growth and development.



Conflict corner in kindergarden DV Bistrac from Ogulin

Therefore, we must teach our children the importance of expressing emotions and methods of nonviolent communication and relaxing techniques. It is essential to teach our educators, teachers, and parents to make the development process of children as quality as possible.

WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS: Conflict corner

Workshop title:	<i>Steps in conflict corners</i>
Aim of the workshop:	Getting students familiar with the method of peaceful conflict resolution – conflict corner <i>Litigare bene</i>
Outcomes:	The student will be able to use the conflict corner for nonviolent conflict resolution in his environment.
Working methods:	Conversation and demonstration, role-playing, poster making:
Required resources:	Paper, felt-tip pens, crayons, poster paper, glue Small table and two chairs, a ball of yarn
Associates:	Class teacher, expert associates
Duration:	Two class periods

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

The presenter repeats with students what conflict is and what violence is. Emphasize to students that conflicts are daily and that we should resolve them by agreement. Violence is not acceptable, and this is where the help of an adult should be sought (e.g., when older class students plant their legs to the first graders in the school hallway)

TALK:

-Teachers play a situational game based on examples from the class (persuasion: e.g., Marko persuades Ivan to hide a pencil case)

They conduct a talk after the activity: *What happened here? How did each feel? How would you handle the situation?*

After receiving the answers, the presenter explains the method of nonviolent conflict resolution through *the conflict corner*.

Description of the work methodology for teachers: Children aged 2 to 9 can resolve the conflict independently within 2 minutes. The adult is (teacher, parent) an observer and eventually helps with the questions such as *What happened? How do you feel? What do you want to tell your friend?*

Encourage expressing emotions and talking. Using this method reduces teacher stress and the amount of complaining because it leaves responsibility for the conflict to the children. Teachers are no longer in the role of judge and do not determine who is to blame because there is no culprit in the conflict. At the same time, they raise children and teach them essential life skills: active listening, talking, standing up for themselves, expressing and recognizing emotions, and nonviolent conflict resolution.

1 Description of the situation – The teacher is an observer if he is present and encourages children to talk using questions: *What happened? How do you feel? What do you want to tell your friend?*

2 Listening – The teacher is an observer.

3 Agreement - The teacher doesn't insist on an agreement or offer solutions.

Teaching students how to release their emotions with relaxation techniques is essential. Emphasize that they should not be directed at another person or things. Why is it necessary to calmly start resolving the conflict?

The presenter explains to the students the steps in the corners:

1 Description of the situation: *What happened? How do you feel? What do you want?*

Here it is essential to recognize your feelings and needs and pronounce them. In this way, children learn how to stand up for themselves. It is important to emphasize that there is no culprit in the conflict and that both sides have the right to share their story equally.

2 Listening: *Why do we have two ears and only one mouth? What does it mean to listen to someone?*

State the rule that the other listens while one is talking (holding a ball of yarn); only when a friend hands over a ball of yarn can the other talk. In this step, children must hear the other side and try to understand the situation from *someone else's shoes*. Getting shoes several numbers larger than theirs would be a good idea to show children how to observe a conflict from someone else's perspective. It's perfectly okay for two kids to look at the situation differently.

3 Agreement: What is the agreement?

After a talk where the children shared their feelings and views, the students tried to reach a mutual agreement. In doing so, adults should not impose their proposals but leave it to children to devise a solution independently. Sometimes children do not agree because it simply does not matter to them. This should be respected. The emphasis here is on conversation, i.e., practicing expressing and recognizing their and other people's emotions, active listening, understanding

someone else's position, negotiating, standing up for themselves, and seeking solutions that suit all parties.

Making posters

Each student is tasked with doing 1 step (e.g., write a title, and draw pictures of 4 primary emotions). We glue all their work together on the poster. It is best to leave it to students to name the place.



An example of a poster and billboard that can serve as a reminder for children

LAST ACTIVITY

The situational game, according to the example from the class (Luka decides when Ivana can and when she is not allowed to leave the classroom to go to the toilet because it is his birthday).
The talk after the activity: *What happened here? How does each feel? How would you resolve this conflict?*

Task: Practice conflict resolution in a corner.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION: Students point at the emotional scoreboard to show how they felt during the workshop.

THE TASK FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS:

Students talk to their parents about the method of conflict corner with the help of a leaflet they received at school.

WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS: Conflict settlement exercise in conflict corners	
Workshop title:	<i>Practicing nonviolent conflict settlement in conflict corners</i>
Aim of the workshop:	Train students with the method of peaceful conflict resolution in conflict corners in class.
Outcomes:	The student will be able to use the conflict corner for nonviolent conflict resolution in their environment.
Working methods:	Conversation and demonstration, role-playing, poster making
Required resources:	Small table and two chairs, a ball of yarn
Associates:	Class teacher, expert associates
Duration:	One class period

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

Scenario 1

Teachers enter the classroom, and through a role-play show a conflict that has not occurred in the class (e.g., student 2 had a birthday, and she gave herself the right to decide who could leave the classroom and who was not allowed. Student 1 needed to go to the toilet, but student 2 didn't let him go.)

TALK:

It is about how to resolve this conflict through a conflict corner. The demonstration of how to solve it is based on what students learned previously.

Scenario 2

Student 1 drew a picture on a given theme. The teacher put the image on the billboard in the classroom. Student 2 commented on the work in a gruesome way.(role-playing)

The solution to the conflict was through *the conflict corner*.

In the continuation of the activities, the children develop various conflicts according to the situations from the class and resolve them in a conflict corner.

It is important to emphasize that steps in resolving conflicts are respected and to highlight the present feelings.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION: Students point at the emotional scoreboard to show how they felt during the workshop.

THE TASK FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS:

Students are tasked with conducting nonviolent conflict resolution through a conflict corner with their parents.

5 Workshops for parents

Parents are team members and partners of the school in achieving a common goal: to help children develop their abilities, potential, and a good self-image. Well-developed cooperation between school and parents is one of the essential determinants of a pedagogically effective school, which is crucial for the successful realization of the goals of education. Quality cooperation between parents and the school enables continuous monitoring of the work and development of students.

Parental participation in school activities positively affects students, their overall better behavior, and school achievement.

Therefore, we suggest that the workshops on the development of empathy be carried out with parents at a parent-teacher meeting. We suggest activities:

- 1 the importance of expressing feelings
- 2 differences between violence and conflict and nonviolent conflict resolution
- 3 relaxation techniques

6 What Do Teachers Do?

The Ivan Goran Kovačić Vrbovsko Elementary School teachers first encountered the *Litigare bene* method in 2017 in France at a pilot training as part of the Erasmus project EduCATE. Upon their return from France, they presented the method to the Teachers' Council. Several teachers accepted the idea and formed conflict corners. However, it turned out that teachers had difficulty accepting that children at such an early age could resolve conflicts independently. Traditional pedagogy, in which teachers have an active role in determining children's disagreements, requires them to control children's conflicts, and it is not easy for them to get out of the role of judge. There was a fear among teachers that parents would accuse teachers of doing nothing if they left students to solve their own quarrels.

At the very beginning, a great controversy was caused by the name *Conflict Corner* for a place where students resolve disagreements. Most of them insisted on changing the name to a peacemaking corner because they were convinced that **conflict was not good and should be avoided. They did not distinguish between conflict and violence. They thought they were bad teachers if their students argued.** We concluded that it is necessary to work on the teacher's beliefs and get better acquainted with the overall philosophy of conflict.

Therefore, in 2021, Ivan Goran Kovačić Vrbovsko Elementary School, as the project holder, launched the Erasmus KA1 project, *How children can argue in a good way*, in cooperation with partners CPP and Sassolino. Our teachers and professional associates gained theoretical knowledge about the *Litigare bene* method with this project. Through education led by invited experts from the Centre mentioned above, they worked on their personal development and changed their beliefs related to conflicts. Teachers had the opportunity to see the practical application of the method in the Italian Montessori school Il Sassolino.

Through education, teachers have adopted the basic steps of the *Litigare bene* method:

- 1 Do not look for the culprit.
- 2 Not to offer solutions to the situation.
- 3 Encourage children to talk.
- 4 Encourage agreement.

Instead of asking *Who is to blame?*, *Who started it first?*, *Why did you ...?* teachers encouraged students to talk by using the following questions:

- 1 What happened?
- 2 How do you feel?
- 3 What can you do?

After the training, the teachers kept a **Conflict Diary**. The CPP devised a pattern in which teachers recorded their observations about specific conflicts in their classes, writing down their feelings and thoughts. 12 primary school teachers and 4 subject teachers who teach in primary school (computer science, English, religious education, and a teacher of the Serbian national minority) participated in the realization and introduction of the Peacemaking Corners or Conflict Corners. A total of 42 conflicts were recorded during the one-year duration of the project in 12 classrooms with a total of 52 students.

Conflicts were related to everyday situations such as who would be the first, throwing a ball at other students in PE class, during recess at the persuasion of the first student, the second student hit the third student, ridiculing the works of other students, a student taking things from another student without asking, and a student kissing other students in the class without asking.

The situations that were solved were:

- 1 Who will be the first
- 2 Who is better
- 3 Decision
- 4 Persuasion
- 5 Possession

These situations are part of growing up and the educational process that children need to overcome. Still, the question is always how we will handle these situations with students. How can we give them information about a nonviolent approach? Until then, we were always looking for the culprit in the conflict and punishing that person using various habits of criticizing, bribery, blaming, and, in the end, pronouncing pedagogical measures.

By introducing the *Litigare bene* method, we encouraged teachers to change their beliefs about conflict and its resolution among students.

Teachers observed the process and dynamics of children's conflicts by keeping the conflict diaries. They became aware of their early childhood quarrels and how these experiences and education in traditional pedagogy influenced their beliefs and reactions to children's conflicts.

Excerpts from the Conflict Diary kept by our teachers

Below are excerpts from the Conflict Diary. The diaries are kept anonymously, so the numbers are listed instead of the teacher's name.

Teacher (1): *It was difficult not to get involved in the conflict and wait for them to come to a solution. It was even harder for me when they didn't come to a solution..., I was encouraged to see that they were continuing to play and that the reason for the conflict was no longer important to them.... I asked myself: Where am I? And she gave herself the answer: Where I need to be ... an OBSERVER. This type of change of beliefs empowers both the teacher and the children. Children solve their own situations and are given the opportunity to learn to make decisions, express feelings, and finally, be taught responsibility. The teacher puts himself in the role of an observer and has no control over the students' decisions in resolving conflicts. Teacher control is a bait for failure! We replace control with leadership! I feel much calmer and more relaxed.*

Teacher (2): *I have always given advice and thought my life experience was the most important. I also had the right to offer solutions to conflicts in children. After observing children's conflicts and their successful resolution (which is not what I would offer them), I realized that by providing students solutions, I only complicate things because they remain in conflict. I realized that they last much longer by a teacher getting involved in children's conflicts.*

Teacher (3): *I often solved situations in children's conflicts by punishment and control. When the children were arguing about who would be the class monitor that week, I chose the solution that there would be no one or they will both be for one more week, or I asked for help from the parents. I wasn't satisfied with the solution but didn't know otherwise. Now, it is much easier for me because the students who come into this situation solve their conflicts independently. It is enjoyable for me to participate/not participate in it.*

SUBJECT	Traditional conviction	Convictions after teacher's training (KA1 project)	Convictions after creating conflict corners (<i>Litigare bene</i> method)
Conflict	Conflict is bad Blaming (victim)	Conflict is an inevitable part of our everyday life No guilty part in the conflict	An opportunity to learn Everybody has right to express their side of story
Conflict resolution	Conflict cannot be resolved without intervention of an adult	Students can resolve their conflicts by themselves	Students resolve their conflicts in the conflict corners very successfully.
The role of the teacher in conflict resolution	The teacher should resolve the student's conflict	I observe how students resolved their conflicts I guide them with questions through conflict resolution	students go to the conflict corners to resolve their conflicts independently
Feelings	It's not important to express the feelings <i>-a male child must not cry</i> <i>- it's not good to be angry</i> <i>-do not be sad; it's nothing</i>	- it is important to show feelings - it is important to recognize other people's feelings	- students talk about their feelings in the conflict and listen to how others feel.
Control	- control over children during conflicts	- I need to be an observer and manager in children's quarrel	- I observe a conflict between students; I feel relief

The table shows the change in teachers' beliefs before and after education and after creating conflict corners

Conclusion

For the application of the *Litigare bene* method to be successful, teachers need to work on themselves and become aware of their experiences and beliefs about conflicts. An excellent tool for this is keeping a *Conflict Diary*, which has shown that applying the *Litigare bene* method brings

mutual benefits for teachers and children. Teachers feel relieved that they have no responsibility for children's arguments. In contrast, children can learn essential life skills – living with others.

Summary

For most people, the word conflict or quarrel has a negative connotation and should definitely be avoided. But what if we take the conflict as an opportunity to clear up disagreements and consolidate relationships with other people? Can you argue in a good way? To make this possible, it is necessary to work with children from an early age on the development of emotional literacy: how to recognize your feelings and the feelings of others, stand up for yourself and express your needs, practice active listening and trying to understand the position of the other, talking, negotiating and coming to an agreement that suits all sides. On the other hand, adult teachers, professional co-workers, and parents must work on their personal development and become aware of how their beliefs, childhood experiences, feelings, and needs influence their reactions to children's quarrels. The Second Revised Edition Manual for Nonviolent Conflict Resolution using the *Litigare bene* method was created as part of the Erasmus project *Arguing at School*. It is based on the practical experience of teachers and professional associates of Ivan Goran Kovačić Vrbovsko Elementary School in the application

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