

RWL Case Study

Country: Czech Republic

Name of the programme: Garden Therapy

Programs with elements of Garden Therapy (Programy s prvky zahradní terapie)

Age of the children involved: 6-15 years

Children with physical, mental or multiple disabilities.



Teaser / Short introduction:

- Garden therapy method in provider prospective (EE centre “Ostrůvek”) is a set of programs on the base of Garden Therapy definition focused to children/learners with physical, mental or multiple disabilities.
- *Garden therapy is a process focused on the participant, in which trained professionals define and control the individual goals and plans and implement activities related to work in the garden or work with plants as a therapeutic agent for the purpose of promoting health and other important aspects of the participants.*

What is the frame?

Garden is a man-made environment - useful and interesting to show us how the nature works and great place to enjoy being outdoors, move, use our senses and cooperate with others.

What are the goals of the programme?

Goals: Activation of memory, attention, thinking, learning, creativity and orientation through spending time in the garden and being in contact with plants and natural materials.

Improve fine and gross motor skills, muscle strength, grip, balance and support the body's own perception.

What values are promoted in the programme?

- according to the hand model: respect for nature, care for the state of our planet
- according to the PIRC: curiosity, protecting the environment, responsibility
- according to the Ostruve (provider or the programs): enjoying time spend in the garden, respect, personal responsibility for a local environment.

Which competences are promoted that empower learners to shape a sustainable future?

Learners will be able to recognize their relationship to nature, thanks to the programmes which develop basic practical skills of working with natural materials and of environmental sensitivity.

Which of the specific scientific concepts does the programme relate to?

- Work with nature materials relate to cycles in nature and changes of the nature during whole year.
- Biodiversity as a source of Health and Wellbeing,



- Sense of Place (garden),
- Primary Production and Food Webs or Biodiversity 's provisioning as a source of Food.

Transferability: Which different areas of learning are included and how?

- Related to the nature environment
- Relation to the living nature – programme takes place in a natural part garden field. Real objects (fruits, vegetable, nuts, animals) are used in the program.
- Relation to man-made environment – programs used gardens, playing grounds and their environment. The programs show the natural products and their use to humans through practical activities.
- Encourage an active transfer during or after the experience

The program works with the active involvement of children in the program all the time. By working with natural materials and products are constantly confronted with their own senses and experience. Program promotes communication and cooperation during the execution of individual tasks.

What educational strategies (learning models, methods, etc.) are used in your programme?

The idea of garden therapy as a whole originated in England and the United States, and spread into Europe in the 1980s. This particular programme is in cooperation with, and follows on from the ideas of, Austrian educators and projects.

Partial methods especially designed for children with physical, mental or multiple disabilities come from the Ostruvek Environmental Education Centre, Velké Meziříčí, Czech Republic.

The structure of the programme:

- Common initial motivation,
- Homework tasks given to participants with support from lecturers and assistants
- Working together
- Common conclusion with feedback for the whole programme.

Used methods

- Sensory activation
- Gardening - sowing, planting, plant care, harvesting crops...
- Work with natural materials - processing of crops, arranging
- Working with nature photos

How is the programme evaluated? How do you know the programme achieved its educational goals?

In garden therapy the main aims are pursued and evaluated continually. Tutors monitor the programme, especially aspects such as the active engagement of the children in the activities on offer. Depending on the target group the most important feedback of the programme is that of the target group, their enthusiasm and their interest in further participation within the programme.

Describe the programme:

Here is a general format for the construction of activities in a programme. The specific construction for each programme, however, is modified according to the needs and abilities of the participants.



1. Initial motivation – story telling with an apple in the hand.
2. Individual work with prepared activities.

For example:

- Using our senses: selecting apples from a covered basket with fruit and vegetables by touch, sorting apples by color, exploring the fruit according to taste, sorting seeds, sound game with seeds
 - Music: simple counting and reading - rhymes on apples,
 - Art: sorting photos by apple seasons / by the year, art creation with apple stamps / arranging
 - Practical work: Harvesting apples using special tools, picking apples and making your own cider, tasting.
3. Conclusion – a special treat, for example tasting of self-made cider or self-made apples in caramel.

Included resources :

The program are a product of the international project The Garden - A Place for Lifelong Learning. The project lies within the framework of "education for sustainable development in gardens" which aims at enabling people to actively shape an environment which is ecologically sound, economically efficient and socially equitable, while taking into consideration global aspects.

Six institutions from Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Netherlands, Poland and Spain formed the learning partnership. Staff and volunteers from these organizations want to address and explore issues of the environment and environmental education. The EU-countries are all facing similar challenges and the exchange of experiences is therefore of great importance to all partners.

The discussion and exchange of experiences as well as the getting to know other projects and learning locations will allow all partners to reflect critically on their own programs and projects. The shared motivation of the institutions involved is to develop programs and offerings for disseminators, teachers, NGO-staff and garden 'activists' to further open gardens as places for cultural encounters and for informal, cross-generational learning.

<http://www.chaloupky.cz/cs/1-projekty-zahradni-terapie-gartentherapie.html>

www.ggut.org, www.iggt.eu, www.naturimgarten.at

Photos, videos, logos:





OSTRŮVEK The Centre for Ecological Education

The Centre for Ecological Education Ostrůvek was established in 2002 under the auspices of Chaloupky, Public Service Company. It is located in the former kindergarten on a symbolical island formed by the junction of the creeks Balinka and Oslava at the edge of the centrum of Velké Meziříčí. The background of the centre consists of 3 rooms and a garden which is being transformed into an open-air classroom.

Ostrůvek uses the nearby manor park, the valley of the river Balinka and Nesměřské valley for its programs. The centre offers free use of internet for public, a library specialized in the environment and eco-consultancy.

