



# Pre -Curriculum Activities: Focus Groups on Resilience

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## ABOUT THE RESCUR PROJECT

- A group of experts from six countries (Malta, Croatia, Sweden, Portugal, Greece and Italy) joined in a specific task to develop a European resilience curriculum for early years and primary school children. Along with the curriculum, a manual for parents will be written.





## PRE-CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES

- **The purpose:** to find out what parents, teachers and children think about resilience; to identify the skills and protective factors they consider important
- To elicit parents and kindergarten teachers' expectations from the curriculum





## RESILIENCE IS:

- Personality trait
- Dynamic process
- Something else?



# CHILDREN'S RESILIENCE

- The ability to rebound from crises through strengths under stress.
- „Things never get easier, but you become better and stronger!“





## FOCUS GROUPS

- Parents N= 10
  - (60 minutes)
- Kindergarten teachers: N = 9
  - (60 minutes)
- Children (5 – 6) years old: N = 11
  - (30 minutes)





## RESILIENT PEOPLE, IN PARENTS' OPINION

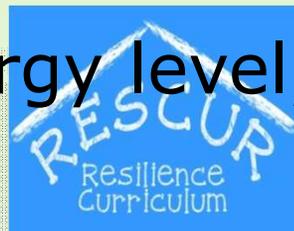
- Do not bring problems from work to home.
- Resolve problems on the spot.
- Know how to let go.
- Are mature cognitively and emotionally
- Live here and now.
- Do not avoid, but cope with problem.





## NON RESILIENT PEOPLE, IN PARENTS' OPINION

- Process problems too long.
- Make those problems even bigger.
- Are not present here and now.
- Lack self-confidence.
- Suffer from cumulative effect of different stressors.
- Have low level of expectation from children.
- Have low energy level, fatigue.





## Examples

- “My husband is resilient. He has a demanding, responsible and difficult job but he does not bring his work home.”
- “They are living here and now. I think that they can sense what the important things are.”
- “We have a problem? Please, tell me what the problem is. There is no gas in the car? Come on, fill it up! But talking about it ... there is no time for that. We do not have two hours for discussion. Let's solve it!”





# EXPECTATION FROM KINDERGARTEN: TO DEVELOP THEIR CHILD'S

- Assertive behaviour
- Ability to “Strongly stand on his/her feet” (avoid suggestibility)
- Proper behaviour
- Coping with failure
- Life skills (not academic knowledge)
- Safe environment





## Examples

- “For me, it is important that my son is not suggestible. I would like him to be able to stand up and advocate for his needs.”
- “I believe that it is more important to build child’s character than to learn mere information.”
- “Public performance, testing, school - just ask me, because I have a great opinion of myself. On the other hand, my son is not resilient to failure ... This is one thing that is very important, resilience to failure; Even I can not develop it.”





# RESILIENT PEOPLE IN PRESCHOOL TEACHERS OPINION

- Each educator has to be resilient.
- Should distinguish between private and professional
- Are oriented to children.
- Emotionally stable
- Intrinsically motivated
- Have good defensive mechanisms
- Learn from difficulties





# WHAT INTERFERES WITH RESILIENCE

- Criticism, bad evaluation from authorities
- Disregard for kindergarten teachers (some theoretical approach with no respect of practitioners)
- Pressure (psychosomatic consequences)





## Examples

- “.....We are exposed to a great stress. We recognize that we have learned to cope well with all of that over time because it is really hard to endure....”
- “I think that we are very emotionally stable persons. That is very important because if you are not emotionally stable, you are not able to work here. My opinion is that if you are emotionally stable, than you are resilient, too.”
- “We say that we are resilient because we would like to be. But, our colleagues get ill very often because of the pressure. So, even though we would like to be resilient, we are living under a great stress and we do not want to admit that we are not able to deal with all that pressure. That is why a lot of educators are often ill. I believe that the main cause is psychosomatic.”





# EDUCATORS OPINION OF CHILDREN'S RESILIENCE

- Content
- Satisfied
- Socialized
- Assertive (very important because there are quite a lot of children and just one educator)
- Self-assured
- Emotionally mature
- Stable home, family environment





# EXPECTATION FROM KINDERGARTEN

- Concrete help
- Team work
- Respect (from parents, from society, from local and kindergarten authorities ...)
- Professional support
- Right to make mistakes – nobody is perfect
- Better financial position (salaries, conditions in kindergartens)



## Examples

- “It is the most important that we treat the children with respect. But, when we have to cooperate with the kindergarten authorities, they do not do the same. They approach us from the authority position, which disturbs us a lot. We have to be devoted, but our kindergarten experts do not respect it.”
- “We should complement each other better. We should cooperate better, agree and make plans together. Team work. But, I have the biggest problem with the attitudes of parents who think that we just need to look out for their children. They do not perceive us as experts; they perceive us as guardians of their children.”





# RESILIENT CHILDREN, IN CHILDREN'S OPINION

- Good
- Help each other
- Lot of friends
- Openhearted with many friends
- “When you are sad, than it is good to have a lot of friends to make you happy.”





# NOT RESILIENT CHILDREN IN CHILDREN'S OPINION

- Shy
- Lonely
- Mean and angry
- Divorced/divorcing parents





# COPING STRATEGIES (BY CHILDREN)

- Forgive
- Tell "I am sorry"
- Talk to someone
- Educator can help (with advise)
- Parents can help (by talking, by playing, by loving, by giving model of good behaviour)
- Having friends
- Drawing





## Examples

- “They are greedy. They think only of themselves.”
- “They never fight with each other, care about each other, help each other. When you're good - it means you hang out with everyone and have a lot of friends.”
- “The teacher can explain to her ... that she does not have reason to be shy ...”
- “I think that she will behave better if we could be her friends. I think that she is mad because her parents are divorced. That is why she is really sad, and she hides her sadness.”





## IMPLICATIONS

- Collected data will guide experts to chose basic themes for the resilience curriculum and the parents' manual.

