Green tools for a bright future

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Handbook of Green Education and Sport Methodologies for Young Children (Aged 6–13) with Learning Disabilities

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Introduction

Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook is designed to provide practical methodologies that blend green education and sports activities as inclusive tools for primary education. Special attention is given to children with learning disabilities, promoting engagement, cognitive development, and socio-emotional growth.

Target Audience

- Primary school teachers
- Physical education trainers
- Volunteers in community/educational projects
- Parents and caregivers

Core Principles

- **Inclusion:** Every child, regardless of ability, can benefit from sport and nature-based learning.
- **Integration:** Sports and outdoor activities are integrated with academic subjects.
- **Sustainability:** Outdoor and environmental education instils eco-consciousness.
- **Holistic Development:** Focus on physical, cognitive, social, and emotional growth.

Understanding the Learners

Learning Disabilities in Focus

Learning disabilities (LD) such as dyslexia, ADHD, and dyscalculia affect how children process information. This handbook promotes methods that are:

- **Multisensory**
- **Movement-based**
- **Repetitive and structured**
- **Emotionally supportive**

Why Sport and Outdoor Learning?

- Enhances **executive function** and **motor coordination**
- Improves **attention span** and **behaviour regulation**
- Boosts **social skills** through cooperative play
- Provides **concrete learning experiences** in real-life contexts

Green Sport Pedagogy Overview

What is Green Sport Pedagogy?

An interdisciplinary approach combining physical activity, environmental education, and academic learning, done outdoors or in nature-integrated settings.

Key Elements

1. **Physical Literacy:** Fundamental movement skills for all abilities.
2. **Eco-literacy:** Understanding ecosystems, climate, and sustainability.
3. **Curricular Tie-ins:** Math, science, language, and art through movement and nature.
4. **Adaptability:** Adjusted for inclusive participation.

Methodological Guidelines

1. Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

- Multiple means of engagement (games, storytelling, visuals)
- Multiple ways of expression (movement, drawing, group work)
- Multiple ways of representation (auditory, tactile, visual)

2. Structured Flexibility

Use clear routines and signals (colours, symbols) while allowing choice in activities.

3. Peer Collaboration

Pair neurodiverse children with peers in buddy systems.

4. Reflection and Routine

Each session ends with feedback, reflection, and a short calming ritual.

Integrated Activity

An **integrated activity** combines **academic learning**, **physical movement**, and **green/environmental elements** in a single structured session.

Why Use Integrated Activities?

- Children with learning disabilities benefit from **multisensory** input (movement, sound, visuals).
- Physical activity increases **attention**, **memory**, and **motivation**.
- Outdoor contexts make academic content **real**, **concrete**, and **memorable**.

Characteristics of an Integrated Activity

- **Cross-curricular design** (e.g., math + physical education + nature).
- **Movement-based tasks** that support cognitive processes.
- **Hands-on tasks** using natural materials (leaves, rocks, sticks).
- **Differentiation** built in: visual instructions, simplified steps, choice-based participation.

Example Components

- Learning objective (math concept, grammar rule, ecology topic)
- Physical element (running, hopping, balancing)
- Nature/environment element (tree ID, weather observation)

Integrated Activity 1 – "Math Trail Adventure"

Objective: Teach basic arithmetic and geometry outdoors

Age Group: 7–10
Setting: School garden or park
Duration: 45 minutes

Materials:

- Number cards
- Chalk
- Measuring tape
- Recycled objects

Activity:

1. Set up a "math trail" with stations (e.g., "Jump 5 times + 2 =?").
2. Children solve problems by moving from one station to another.
3. Use physical actions to represent numbers (claps, steps, skips).
4. Incorporate environmental content (e.g., count trees, measure leaves).

Learning Outcomes:

- Addition/subtraction through movement
- Spatial awareness
- Nature appreciation

Integrated Activity 2 – "Green Grammar Relay"

Objective: Improve language skills through sport

Age Group: 8–11
Setting: Playground or school field
Duration: 40 minutes

Materials:

- Word cards
- Color-coded grammar tags
- Baskets

Activity:

1. Children run in teams to collect word cards.
2. Sort them into categories: nouns, verbs, adjectives.
3. Use words to form eco-themed sentences ("Trees grow tall").
4. Discuss sentence meanings related to sustainability.

Adaptation:

- Use pictures for non-readers
- Provide tactile cards for children with visual challenges

Integrated Activity 3 – "Eco-Science Obstacle Course"

Objective: Learn basic biology and ecology through movement

Age Group: 9–13
Setting: School yard or local forest
Duration: 50 minutes

Setup:

Create an obstacle course with thematic stations (e.g., "Photosynthesis Jump", "Animal Habitat Crawl").

Tasks:

- Perform physical tasks while answering eco-questions.
- Use nature clues to find the next station.

Learning Outcomes:

- Enhanced memory recall via movement
- Kinaesthetic and experiential learning
- Introduction to ecosystems and biodiversity

Outdoor Transition and Planning

This refers to the **process of shifting the teaching environment from the classroom to outdoor spaces** while maintaining structure, safety, and learning goals.

Why Outdoor Transition?

Outdoor settings provide:

- Reduced sensory overload compared to classrooms
- Natural calming stimuli (light, wind, plants)
- More space for movement-based learning
- Greater engagement for children with LD

Key Planning Steps

1. **Site Selection**
    - Safe, familiar, accessible space
    - Low hazards, good visibility
    - Nearby natural features (trees, soil, garden beds)

2. **Preparation**
    - Pre-teach rules using visuals (stay in boundary, safe movement)
    - Create “job roles” (line leader, nature helper) for inclusion
    - Pack a mobile “outdoor learning kit” with tools, first-aid, visuals, sensory items

3. **Session Structure**
    - **Opening circle** (5 minutes; intentions, warm-up, expectations)
    - **Active integrated lesson** (30-45 minutes)
    - **Cool-down** and reflection (5 minutes)
    - **Environmental care task** (collect leaves, check garden, water plants)
    - **Eco Story or Journal** (10 minutes; writing or drawing)

4. **Support for Learners with LD**
    - Clear predictable routines
    - Sensory accommodations (noise-cancelling headphones, fidget items)
    - Visual schedules and step-by-step picture instructions

5. **Risk Management**
    - Use safety checklists
    - Assign adult volunteers to small groups
    - Prepare for weather and sensory sensitivities

Tools for Inclusion

These are **supports, strategies, and resources** that ensure all children—including those with learning disabilities—can **access**, **participate in**, and **benefit from** activities.

Categories of Inclusion Tools

A. Sensory Supports

- Texture objects for tactile learners
- Visual cue cards (colours, shapes, icons)
- Noise-reduction options
- Break spaces (quiet corner outdoors)

B. Communication Supports

- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
- Gesture-based instructions
- Color-coded directions
- Buddy interpreter system (peer explains steps)

C. Physical Supports

- Modified movement options
- Larger, lighter, or tactile equipment
- Soft or natural materials (rope, sand, leaves)

D. Motivation & Emotional Supports

- Eco-themed reward systems
- Social stories (simple illustrated scripts)
- Nature mascots (characters like “Green Guardian Owl”)
- Predictable routines to reduce anxiety

Collaboration

- Involve therapists, special educators, and families in planning
- Encourage parent-child outdoor projects (e.g., tree planting)

Why They Matter

- Allow children with LD to access content without frustration
- Reduce behavioural challenges
- Improve participation, confidence, teamwork, and joy

Conclusion and Resources

Benefits Recap

- Improves physical and academic development
- Supports inclusive and differentiated instruction
- Builds environmental consciousness
- Encourages stronger teacher-student-family-community bonds

Suggested Resources

- “Teaching Green: The Elementary Years” by Tim Grant
- Forest School Association Guidelines (UK)
- Special Olympics Unified PE Resources
- National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE)

Appendices

- Activity template
- Daily planner sheet
- Assessment checklist for inclusive participation
- Examples of activities from partner countries

1. Activity Template: "Eco-Math Hopscotch"

Title: Eco-Math Hopscotch
Subject Focus: Math (Addition & Multiplication)
Target Age: 6–9 years
Duration: 30 minutes
Setting: Playground or outdoor paved surface

Objectives

- Practice basic addition and multiplication
- Develop motor coordination and balance
- Promote eco-awareness through play

Materials Needed

- Chalk
- Number tiles or laminated cards
- Recycled materials (e.g., bottle caps, leaves)
- Whistle or bell (for transitions)

Instructions

1. Draw a hopscotch grid with numbers (1–12).
2. Prepare eco-themed math questions (e.g., "If you plant 2 trees each day for 3 days, how many trees?").
3. Children jump to the correct answer square after solving each question.
4. Add environmental prompts: "Hop like a frog to the answer," or "Plant a bottle cap by the right number."

Adaptations

- Allow sitting and pointing instead of hopping
- Use larger visuals for low vision learners
- Pair with a peer for support

Reflection

- Group discussion: "What did you learn today?"
- Let children draw or write their favourite part

2. Daily Planner Sheet for Outdoor Green Learning Day

Time	Activity	Objective	Materials	Adaptations for LD
09:00	Welcome Circle & Mindful Breathing	Set tone, emotional regulation	Yoga mat, emotion cards	Visual emotion cards, breathing guide
09:15	Eco-Math Hopscotch	Math skills through movement	Chalk, number cards	Use visuals, allow alternative movements
10:00	Nature Walk – Leaf Count	Observation, counting, nature exploration	Leaf ID guide, bags	Tactile exploration, guided walk
10:45	Snack & Social Circle	Social bonding	Water, healthy snacks	Structured peer interaction
11:15	Art from Nature	Creativity, fine motor skills	Leaves, sticks, glue	Larger tools, sensory-friendly options
12:00	Reflection & Journaling	Language & emotional expression	Nature journals, crayons	Drawing allowed in place of writing

3. Inclusive Participation Assessment Checklist

Date: _____

Child's Name: _____

Activity: _____

Observer: _____

Indicator	Yes	Somewhat	No	Notes / Comments
Child engaged in the activity willingly	☐	☐	☐	
Able to follow instructions with/without help	☐	☐	☐	
Interacted with peers cooperatively	☐	☐	☐	
Demonstrated enjoyment or interest	☐	☐	☐	
Used adapted materials or supports	☐	☐	☐	(E.g., visuals, peer support)
Showed understanding of the academic content	☐	☐	☐	(Verbal, movement-based, or drawn)
Showed awareness or care for the environment	☐	☐	☐	(Picked up litter, talked about nature)

4. Examples from partner countries

INCORPORATING SPORT IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

TREND PRIMA

1. Slovenian Language Through Dodgeball ("Slovenščina med dvema ognjema")

Class / Subject:

Slovenian Language

Description (expanded, detailed, fully replicable):

This practice transforms a traditional physical game **"med dvema ognjema"** (dodgeball) into a dynamic Slovenian language learning activity. It is designed to make linguistic knowledge "usable" in a fast-paced physical environment, increasing motivation and memory retention.

1. Preparing the Lesson

- The teacher selects or creates **Slovenian language questions** based on current learning objectives.
  These may include:
  - identifying parts of speech
  - analysing sentence structure
  - defining literary terms
  - recalling reading material
  - spelling and vocabulary tasks

- Questions vary in complexity depending on what the class has recently learned.
- Rules are prepared in collaboration with students, enhancing their engagement and sense of control.

2. Setting up the Game

- The class moves to the gym or outdoor playground.
- Students are divided into **two teams**, positioned on opposite halves of the playing area.
- A soft ball is used to ensure safety.
- The teacher explains the special integrated rule: **knowledge protects you.**

3. Playing the Game with Knowledge-Based Rules

- Teams attempt to hit players on the opposite side with the ball, just like in the classic version.
- When a student is hit:
    1. They stop and remain where they are.
    2. The teacher immediately asks them a Slovenian-language question.
    3. The student must respond quickly (thinking under mild pressure stimulates engagement).
- **Correct answer:**
    - The student **remains in the game**, symbolically “saving their life.”
    - They return to play immediately.
- **Incorrect answer:**
    - The student leaves the field temporarily or permanently (depending on the pre-agreed rules).

This creates a direct, memorable link between **knowledge and survival**, which students find motivating and fun.

4. Inclusion of All Students

- Students who cannot participate physically are fully included through other active roles:
    - posing questions to peers
    - verifying answers
    - tracking score or “lives”
- These roles ensure that every student, regardless of their physical ability, contributes meaningfully to the learning process.

5. After game Reflection

- Once the game ends, the class returns to the classroom or sits together on the court.
- The teacher reviews typical mistakes or especially good answers.
- Students discuss:
    - which types of questions were hardest
    - how movement influenced their thinking
    - what strategies helped them succeed
- This reflection links the physical experience back to academic goals, reinforcing the learning.

6. Documented Pedagogical Effects

Teachers observed that:

- Students were significantly more engaged, even during “difficult periods” of the day like last-hour classes.
- The combination of movement and cognition supported **better memory retention**.
- Students who usually stay quiet during traditional lessons participated more actively.
- The social atmosphere improved — laughter, team cooperation, and shared challenges strengthened classroom relationships.
- Students experienced a sense of competence: **their knowledge had immediate value**, which boosted confidence and intrinsic motivation.

Source:

Nataša Muršec, **Osnovna šola Trnovo**
Articles published on *SrednjeŠole.si*:

- *https://srednjesole.aktualno.si/prispevek/z-gibanjem-do-znanja-1-del/*
- *https://srednjesole.aktualno.si/prispevek/z-gibanjem-do-znanja-2-del/*

2. Knock-Out With Knowledge Questions ("Knock-out z vprašanji iz slovenščine")

Class / Subject:

Slovenian Language

Description (expanded, detailed, replicable):

This practice adapts the popular basketball elimination game **"knock-out"** for Slovenian language learning.

1. Preparation

- Teacher prepares a list of **Slovenian language questions**, such as:
    - identifying sentence types
    - naming literary periods
    - distinguishing parts of speech
    - determining poetic devices
- Students line up in a single row, each waiting for their turn.

2. Rules of the Game

- The first two students in line each receive a basketball.
- The first player shoots; as soon as they shoot, the second player is allowed to shoot.
- If the second player scores **before** the first player, the first player would normally be eliminated.

3. Integration of Knowledge

- Instead of immediate elimination, the "losing" player receives a **question from Slovenian language**.
- If they **answer correctly**, they stay in the game.
- If they answer incorrectly, they **leave the game** as in the traditional version.
- This provides high motivation: students know that knowledge can save them.

4. Inclusion of All Students

- Students unable to play physically act as:
    - referees
    - question readers
    - correctness checkers
- This ensures the entire class participates.

5. Educational Value

- Students are highly motivated due to the combination of competition and knowledge.
- They think not only when they shoot but also while observing, because they want to know the answers.
- The teacher reports strong engagement, improved recall, and increased teamwork.
- The activity can be adapted to any linguistic content currently being taught.

Source:

Nataša Muršec, **Osnovna šola Trnovo**
Articles published on *SrednjeŠole.si*:

- https://srednjesole.aktualno.si/prispevek/z-gibanjem-do-znanja-2-del/

3. Pantomime for Slovenian Language Learning ("Pantomima za utrjevanje slovenščine")

Class / Subject:

Slovenian Language

Description (expanded, detailed, replicable):

This method uses **pantomime** (charades) inside the classroom when outdoor conditions do not allow movement activities.

1. Preparation

- Teacher writes Slovenian-language terms or expressions on small slips of paper:
  Examples mentioned or suggested:
    - literary concepts
    - grammatical terms
    - vocabulary items
- Slips are placed in a container.

2. How the Activity Works

- One student draws a slip of paper.
- They must **act out the term using only body movements, gestures, and facial expressions** (no speaking).
- Classmates try to guess the term.

3. Turn-Taking

- The student who guesses correctly becomes the next performer, or
- The performer may choose who performs next.

4. Why This Method Is Effective

- Even abstract linguistic concepts must be broken down into **visual and physical interpretation**, which deepens understanding.

- Classroom becomes lively and energetic, yet the activity requires concentration and careful observation.
- Students collaborate, discuss, and learn from each other's interpretations.
- The activity promotes creativity and multiple learning modalities (kinaesthetic, visual, and social).

5. When It's Used

- Especially when weather prevents outdoor games.
- Suitable for small indoor spaces because it requires **minimal movement** but retains physical engagement.

Source:

Nataša Muršec, **Osnovna šola Trnovo**
Articles published on *SrednjeŠole.si*:

- *https://srednjesole.aktualno.si/prispevek/z-gibanjem-do-znanja-3-del/*

4. Day–Night Game for Parts of Speech ("Dan Noč: Besedne vrste v gibanju")

Class / Subject:

Slovenian Language

Description (expanded, detailed, replicable):

This practice adapts the children's game **"Dan Noč"** to help students quickly recognize linguistic categories, mainly **parts of speech**.

1. Preparation

- Teacher selects categories the class is currently studying, e.g.:
    - nouns vs. verbs
    - conjunctions vs. prepositions
    - content words vs. function words
- Students stand in a free area (classroom, hallway, gym).

2. Rules

- Teacher calls out a word.
- Students must **stand** or **sit**, depending on which category the word belongs to.
  Example rule:
    - stand = noun
    - sit = verb

3. Variation

The teacher may also call out **pairs of similar words**, such as:

- *za* (preposition)
- *ter* (conjunction)

Students respond based on the agreed rule (e.g., sit on prepositions, stand on conjunctions).

4. Elimination

- A student who makes a mistake gets "out."
- Optionally, just like in the other physical games, the teacher may allow a **question for re-entry**, although the article mainly describes elimination.

5. Learning Effects Noted

- Highly fast-paced → forces students to recall grammar quickly.
- Ideal for memorization of parts of speech and function words.
- Very little equipment or space needed — can be done in nearly any classroom.
- Fun and helps maintain alertness, especially when students are tired or unfocused.

Source:

Nataša Muršec, **Osnovna šola Trnovo**
Articles published on *SrednjeŠole.si*:

- *https://srednjesole.aktualno.si/profesorji/z-gibanjem-do-znanja-4-del/*

PRIMARY SCHOOL KORENA

English through movement

Goals – English

- Students know how to count to ten and recognize numbers up to ten in spoken and written form.
- Students understand simple English instructions supported by gestures, visual cues, and demonstrations.
- Students gradually develop passive and active vocabulary related to movement, counting, body parts, and basic classroom instructions.
- Students associate English words with meaning through repeated movement-based practice.
- Students gain confidence in listening to and using a foreign language in a playful, low-stress environment.
- **For students with disabilities**:
    - Recognize numbers using multisensory materials (large-print cards, textured numbers, and coloured numbers).
    - Follow simplified or individually adapted instructions (e.g., one-step commands).
    - Communicate understanding through alternative methods: pointing, showing, choosing, eye-gaze, or using AAC if needed.

Goals – P.E.

- Develop endurance, coordination, balance, and speed through structured play.
- Perform natural forms of movement: running, crawling, jumping, walking, rolling, and hopping.
- Correctly perform selected gymnastic and skill-based tasks.
- Strengthen spatial orientation, rhythm, and body awareness.
- Encourage cooperation, turn-taking, and teamwork.
- Learn to respect rules and accept outcomes of games.
- **For students with disabilities**:
    - Adapt physical tasks to individual motor abilities (e.g., walking instead of running, assisted movement, stabilizing aids).
    - Participate using alternative movements if original ones are not accessible (e.g., rolling a ball instead of carrying it).
    - Develop fine motor and gross motor skills through simplified or slower-paced tasks.
    - Experience success through achievable goals and supportive peer collaboration.

Learning Purposes

- Experience English learning through movement, play, rhythm, and repetition.
- Develop precise counting skills while physically active.
- Strengthen cooperation and group problem-solving in a playful environment.
- Experience enjoyment and motivation through interactive language learning.
- Encourage intuitive, natural listening of a foreign language.
- Provide inclusive learning opportunities where each child can participate meaningfully, regardless of ability.

Performance Criteria – English

- The student counts from one to ten in correct sequence.
- The student recognizes, names, or otherwise identifies the given number.
- The student understands and follows simple English instructions supported by gestures or demonstrations.
- **Adapted criteria for students with disabilities**:
    - The student gestures, points, or selects the correct number card.
    - The student attempts verbalization, imitation, or uses AAC to express numbers.
    - The Student responds to simplified, one-step instructions.

Performance Criteria – P.E.

- The student participates in games and follows rules.
- The student cooperates within the group.
- The student performs the selected movement tasks with age-appropriate accuracy.
- **Adapted criteria for students with disabilities**:
    - The student participates using adapted movements.
    - The student attempts tasks with assistance (verbal, visual, physical support).
    - The student engages safely and meaningfully at their level of ability.

Joint Performance Criteria

- The student counts aloud in English while moving.
- The student performs the exercise the required number of times.
- **Adapted joint criteria**:
    - The student participates in counting at a comfortable pace (verbal, gestural, visual pointing).
    - The student completes reduced or alternative repetitions if needed.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

Hello Song

Students greet each other and the teachers through a simple, repetitive English song.
Purpose: warm-up, emotional connection, transition into English.

Optional adaptations:

- Students with hearing impairments: visual cards with song lyrics or gestures.
- Students with mobility impairments: hand motions or clapping instead of movement.

2. Main Part (30 minutes)

FIRST ACTIVITY: Chasing Game (Freeze & Answer)

Children run freely. When someone is tagged, they freeze. They can only be freed if they correctly name a number shown on a card.

Teacher roles:

- present number cards,
- give encouragement,
- support children who struggle with naming numbers.

Adaptations:

- For children who cannot run: they may walk, roll a ball toward another player, or move with the help of a peer.
- For children who cannot speak**:** they may point to the correct number, use sign language, or use a vocalization device.
- For children with cognitive difficulties**:** use color-coded or large-icon number cards and allow more time for answers.

SECOND ACTIVITY: Gymnastic Exercises & Counting

Each child demonstrates one stretching or gymnastic exercise and counts to 10 in English.
Examples: toe touch, overhead stretch, side bend, simple balance poses.

Teacher attention:

- correct execution,
- safety,
- pronunciation and counting.

Adaptations:

- Children with limited mobility may perform exercises seated or with support.
- Children with balance issues may use a wall or chair for stability.
- Children with speech difficulties may count together with the teacher or class.

THIRD ACTIVITY: Stop in the Circle

Rings are placed around the gym. Each ring contains:

- sketches of a movement (jump 5×, crawl 3×, hop 4×, etc.),
- a number.

Children move around the gym (running, hopping, crawling) until hearing the whistle. Then they find a ring, observe the task, and perform it with counting aloud.

Teacher focuses on:

- understanding instructions,
- correct movement technique,
- counting accuracy.

Adaptations:

- Provide simplified movement options:
  - walking instead of hopping,
  - gentle stretching instead of crawling,
  - rolling a ball instead of jumping.
- Provide visual cues with clear, high-contrast images.
- Allow a peer helper to demonstrate the task.
- Allow fewer repetitions or slower pace.

FOURTH ACTIVITY: Relay Games

Children form small groups and perform a relay task of carrying balls to hoops. Each hoop has a number; students must place that many balls inside, counting aloud.

Focus: teamwork, counting, accuracy.

Adaptations:

- Students with motor difficulties may:
  - roll the ball,
  - push it with a stick or noodle,
  - carry fewer balls,
  - work as “counter” instead of runner.
- Students using wheelchairs may transport balls on a tray or in their lap.
- Students with cognitive or attention challenges may work with a partner.

FIFTH ACTIVITY: Ball in the Circle – Relaxation

Children sit in a circle and pass a ball to each other using their feet while counting aloud.

Purpose: coordination, relaxation, teamwork.

Adaptations:

- Students may pass the ball with hands instead of feet if needed.
- Students with low motor control may tap the ball or push it gently.
- Students in wheelchairs may pass the ball from lap to lap.

3. Conclusion (10 minutes)

Self-Evaluation Activity

Children place their name tag on a self-assessment chart, choosing statements about:

- counting,
- movement,
- cooperation,
- listening.

They reflect briefly on what was easy or difficult.

Adaptations:

- Students with reading difficulties may use smiley-face icons.
- Students with communication challenges may point or use color-coded choices.
- Teachers may conduct the evaluation verbally with individual students.

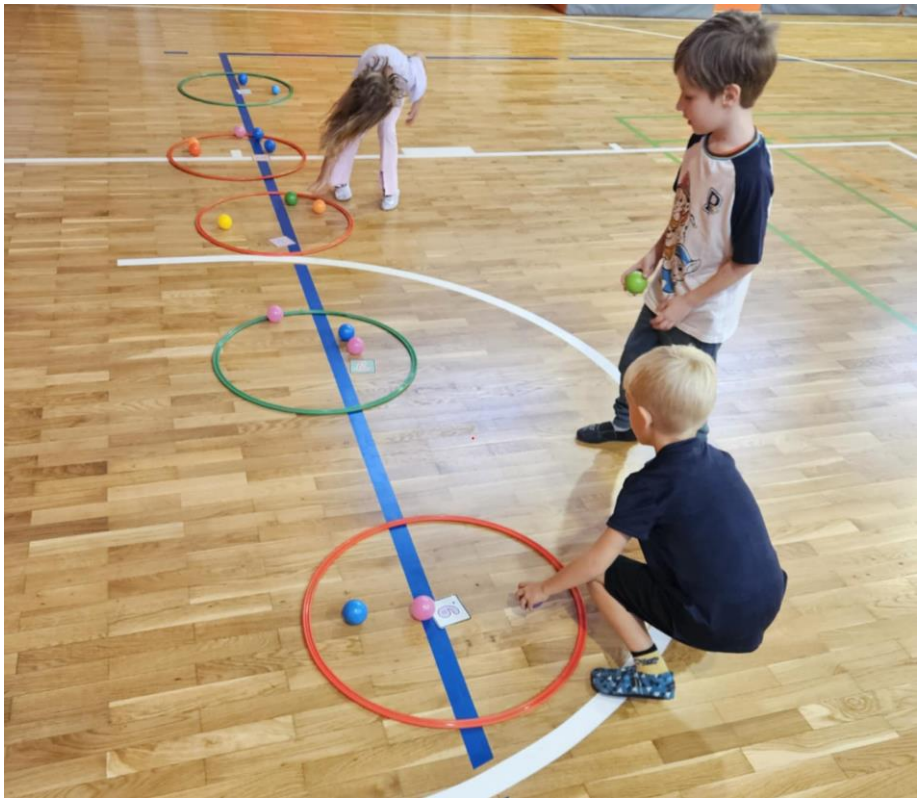
Examples of self-evaluation

1. My counting
I counted out loud and correctly.
Sometimes I made mistakes.
Counting was difficult for me.

2. My movement
I completed all the exercises correctly.
I managed some of the exercises, but others were harder.
I had trouble with the exercises.

3. My cooperation
I always participated and helped my classmates.
I participated, but not always.
I didn't want to participate.

4. My listening
I understood most of what the teacher said in English and knew what I had to do.
Sometimes I understood, sometimes I didn't. Sometimes I had to look at others to know what to do.
I found the instructions difficult to understand. I would prefer the teacher to speak only in Slovenian.




BELLINGHAM
5

SPORT VIV

Activity: “Čitaj i trči” – Read-and-Run Relay

Inspiration & fit in Croatia: This integrates classroom literacy with physical activity and draws on the **Universal sports school** approach promoted by the Croatian School Sports Federation, which develops fundamental motor skills for pupils in grades 1–4 across Croatia.

https://skolski-sport.hr/projekti/univerzalna-sportska-skola/

It mirrors Croatian school sports association’s emphasis on multi-sport fundamentals and broad participation, adapting those principles inside the school day to reinforce core subjects.

Target group: Ages 6–10 (adaptable to 11–13); inclusive of pupils with learning disabilities (LD).
Duration: 35–45 minutes.
Group size: One class (18–26 pupils) split into 4–6 teams.
Space: School gym or playground (20×10 m minimum).

Equipment:

- 24–40 laminated phoneme/word cards (e.g., letters, syllables, sight words)
- 6 cones, 6 hoops, tape
- Clipboards, pencils, large poster paper
- Optional: picture supports for key words; timer

Learning objectives

- Literacy: decode and compose words/sentences aligned to the week’s phonics/sight-word set.
- PE: agility, acceleration/deceleration, spatial awareness, fair play.
- Social–emotional: teamwork, turn-taking, encouragement.

Setup (5–7 min)

Mark a **start line**; 10–15 m away place a **card station** (hoop) for each team. Place one **task board** at the start for each team (poster + clipboard). Put one set of mixed cards (letters/syllables/words/punctuation) in each hoop.

How it works (relay rounds, 20–25 min)

Round A: **Build a word** – First runner sprints to the hoop, picks a letter card that fits the teacher's prompt (e.g., *make "MAČKA"*), returns, tags the next runner. Repeat until the team builds the word on the task board.

Round B: **Sentence maker** – Upgrade to joining two nouns and a verb (with picture prompts).

Round C (Math crossover for 9–13): **Word problems in motion** – Teams fetch number and operation cards to complete a target equation the teacher reads aloud.

Between rounds, teams read their word/sentence aloud together.

Differentiation & LD supports

- Visual schedule of the three rounds; color-coded teams and cards.
- Choice board at the hoop (three picture options per prompt).
- Buddy system / peer scribe for pupils with dyslexia or dysgraphia.
- Reduced distance lane or walking option; balance-beam line instead of sprint for motor planning challenges.
- AAC-friendly: picture exchange cards for core vocabulary (e.g., *go, finish*).
- Executive-function scaffolds: one "job card" per pupil (runner, picker, placer, checker).

Assessment (5–8 min)

Quick rubric: accuracy of word/sentence (0–2), teamwork (0–2), safe running (0–2).

Snapshot notes on decoding and phonological awareness to feed back to the class teacher/parents.

Safety & organization

- Warm-up (2 min): joint circles, ankle/hip mobility.
- Clear lanes; cones at turns; no overtaking inside hoops.
- 1 adult per 10–12 pupils; whistle stop rule.
- Hydration and rest spot with a calm-down stool and noise-reducing headphones if needed.

Source: sportokracija.com - Univerzalna sportska škola NK Pomorac 1921 - Sportokracija

CUS PALERMO

Activity: “The Skills Relay”

Description

The pupils, divided into teams, must complete a relay race consisting of stations that combine physical and cognitive activities.

Materials

Cones, light balls, cards with questions, stopwatch.

Skills developed

Motor coordination

Problem solving

Collaboration

Environment

Park, school garden, urban woodland, school gym.

Detailed description of the activity

Set up 4 stations:

Station A – Balance & Logic: walk along a straight line while balancing a bag of beans on your head or something else; upon arrival, solve a small logic puzzle.

Station B – Coordination & English: bounce a ball 10 times and put scattered words in order to form a correct sentence.

Station C – Speed & Science: mini-slalom between cones, then answer a question about bodily functions during physical exertion.

Station D – Shooting & Civic Education: hit a target with a soft ball; pick a card with a theme related to coexistence and propose a class rule.

Each team completes the circuit in the shortest time possible, but the final score depends more on correct answers than speed.

GREEN LEARNING METHODOLOGIES

TREND PRIMA

1. EKOŠOLA – Whole-School Green Education System

Ekošola is Slovenia's most prominent and widely adopted program for integrating environmental sustainability into school life. Unlike isolated projects, it is a **comprehensive system** that transforms school culture, teaching, and daily routines through a **7-step methodology** supported by a national library of practical resources. It aims to develop environmentally conscious students who apply knowledge across subjects and act responsibly both inside and outside the school.

1. Eco Team and School Organization

The program begins with the creation of an **Eco Team**, a dedicated group of teachers, student representatives, school leadership, technical staff, and parents. This team is the central coordinating body responsible for planning, executing, and monitoring all sustainability initiatives. Meetings are scheduled regularly, often monthly, and documented for accountability. Students play active roles as eco-monitors for energy, water, and waste management, while teachers guide them and integrate results into classroom learning. The team's activities are often made visible in the school through an "Eco Board," where achievements, charts, and updates are displayed to motivate the entire school community.

2. Environmental Review (Baseline Assessment)

An environmental review provides a data-driven foundation for the year's activities. Students measure school-wide waste, monitor water and energy consumption, observe biodiversity on school grounds, evaluate transportation patterns, and assess cafeteria food waste. They record their observations; weigh trash, track meter readings, and survey classmates and staff. The collected data is analysed to identify key areas for improvement, such as excessive single-use plastics, high energy use, or low biodiversity. Ekošola provides structured **templates, worksheets, and manuals** to standardize the assessment and make it replicable for any school.

3. Annual Eco Action Plan

The next step is developing a detailed **Eco Action Plan**. Based on the environmental review, the Eco Team sets concrete goals with measurable indicators, assigns responsibilities, identifies required

materials, and links each activity to specific curricular objectives. The plan covers both classroom integration and school-wide initiatives. For example, a school might aim to reduce food waste by 30%, increase tree planting, or introduce energy-saving measures. Responsibilities are distributed among students and teachers, ensuring ownership and accountability. The Action Plan also includes timelines and evaluation methods, allowing continuous monitoring throughout the year.

4. Curriculum Integration

Sustainability learning is embedded across subjects. In **Slovenian language**, students create eco-stories, participate in debates, or write environmental articles. **Mathematics** lessons involve analysing data from waste audits or calculating energy and water savings. **Science and biology** classes explore composting, soil testing, and biodiversity studies. **Art** lessons focus on up cycling, poster creation, and land art, while **technology** lessons may involve building birdhouses or designing simple waste-sorting systems. This cross-curricular approach ensures that environmental knowledge becomes both practical and theoretical, reinforcing concepts across disciplines.

5. Practical School Activities

Schools implement a variety of hands-on activities to make sustainability tangible. Examples include establishing school gardens, composting stations, biodiversity zones (e.g., insect hotels, pollinator areas), and energy-monitoring systems. Students lead initiatives like Zero-Waste Lunch Days, Plastic-Free Weeks, and clothing swap events. By actively participating in these projects, students connect abstract concepts with real-world environmental impact, fostering responsibility, teamwork, and problem-solving skills.

6. Monitoring, Documentation, and Evaluation

Monitoring is continuous and detailed. Students maintain logs and visual charts of energy usage, water consumption, and waste generation. Classes track progress month-to-month, and results are displayed publicly to motivate participants. At the end of the year, the Eco Team compiles an evaluation report with measurable outcomes, documenting improvements such as reductions in mixed waste, increased recycling, energy savings, or expansion of green areas. This process ensures that the school can measure progress and refine strategies in subsequent years.

7. Community Engagement and Eco-Code

Community involvement is integral to Ekošola. Schools collaborate with local waste-management services, environmental NGOs, municipal authorities, and farmers. Students organize eco-fairs, exhibitions, workshops, and awareness campaigns for parents and the broader community. The program culminates in the creation of an **Eco-Code**, a concise, student-written statement reflecting the school's sustainability values and commitment. This code is displayed in classrooms and hallways, reinforcing a culture of environmental responsibility that extends beyond the school.

Replication Notes:

Because of its structured methodology, readily available resources, and national support network, Ekošola can be replicated in any school or kindergarten. Its cross-disciplinary approach allows adaptation to different grade levels and school sizes, while documented good practices provide practical guidance for teachers and administrators.

Sources:

https://ekosola.si/predstavitev-ekosole/sedem-korakov/
https://arhiv.ekosola.si/

2. INSTITUTE FOR FOREST PEDAGOGY – Forest Learning Model

The Institute for Forest Pedagogy promotes a structured, curriculum-linked model of **outdoor experiential learning** in which forests and natural environments serve as continuous educational spaces. Used widely in Slovenian kindergartens and schools, the model develops cognitive, physical, social, and emotional skills while fostering ecological literacy.

1. Organizational Setup and Safety

Schools establish a **forest-learning team** composed of teachers, school leadership, and parent representatives. This team selects safe forest areas within walking distance or reachable by short transport, develops weekly or biweekly forest-day schedules, and prepares clear behaviour and safety guidelines. Boundaries are marked, buddy systems established, and emergency procedures

planned. Materials such as ropes, tarps, and basic first-aid supplies are prepared to ensure a secure outdoor learning environment.

2. Teacher Training and Support

Professional training is essential. Educators learn how to manage groups in outdoor settings, conduct risk assessments, structure exploratory and thematic activities, and integrate outdoor learning into national curriculum objectives. Training emphasizes the use of natural materials, observation and reflection, child-led inquiry, and developmentally appropriate pedagogical methods. The Institute provides guides, activity cards, journals, and checklists that make implementation systematic and replicable.

3. Structure of Forest Days

Forest days follow a predictable structure to maximise learning and engagement: an **opening circle** introduces the day's theme and conducts sensory warm-up activities; a **guided exploration walk** allows students to observe flora, fauna, tracks, and natural phenomena; **activity stations** provide curriculum-linked tasks in multiple subjects; **free play** promotes creativity, problem-solving, and teamwork; and a **reflection circle** encourages students to document discoveries and discuss experiences. Each segment is designed to foster independence, curiosity, and engagement with nature.

4. Curriculum Integration

Forest pedagogy naturally supports integration across subjects. In **Slovenian language**, students create stories from natural objects, write reflections, or expand vocabulary. **Mathematics** activities include measuring tree shadows, counting natural elements, and constructing geometric shapes from sticks. **Science** tasks involve observing ecosystems, documenting seasonal changes, studying soil layers, and identifying species. **Art** projects use land art, texture rubbings, and sculptures from natural materials. **Physical education** emphasizes balance, coordination, and cooperative movement in uneven terrain.

5. Methodological Tools and Materials

The Institute provides schools with comprehensive resources: laminated species cards, activity cards for each season, rope kits, journals, observation templates, risk-assessment forms, and developmental frameworks. These tools allow teachers to structure learning, maintain safety, and adapt activities to different ages and abilities.

6. Documentation and Communication

Student learning is documented through forest journals, photo portfolios, seasonal observation charts, and school displays. This documentation is shared with parents and school administrators to make learning visible and support reflection. Teachers can evaluate progress and adapt activities based on student responses and observations.

7. Network of Forest Schools and Kindergartens

Participation in the national network provides schools with access to shared activities, mentorship, workshops, professional gatherings, and peer collaboration. Membership ensures adherence to quality standards, facilitates knowledge exchange, and promotes the sustainable expansion of forest pedagogy practices.

Replication Notes:

Forest pedagogy is adaptable to urban and rural schools, requires minimal equipment, and supports multi-age learning. Its structured methodology, supported by training and resource materials, allows schools to integrate outdoor education systematically into the curriculum.

Source:
https://www.gozdna-pedagogika.si/

PRIMARY SCHOOL KORENA

AUTUMN (Observational walk)

Learning Objectives

- Understand seasonal changes through observation and discussion.
- Learn to describe and compare habitats (field, forest, meadow).
- Connect animals and plants with appropriate environments.
- Develop sensory awareness (seeing, listening, touching natural objects).
- Practice respectful behaviour outdoors.
- **For students with disabilities:**
    - Participate in observation using multisensory tools (touch, smell, visual aids).
    - Experience nature at an accessible pace and through supported movement.

Teaching Methods

- Verbal textual – explanation, conversation, storytelling, listening, reporting, graphic work,
- Reading, writing, observation
- Demonstrative and illustrative – display or demonstration
- Experiential learning – play, practical work

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

1. Motivational Activities – My Chest of Knowledge

- Students examine autumn-themed photos (leaves, mushrooms, fields turning brown, animals preparing for winter).
- Students choose a picture representing something they already know.
- They mark their choice by colouring a circle on the worksheet.
- Volunteers can share their knowledge.

Adaptations:

- Provide large-print or high-contrast photos.
- Provide tactile objects (real leaves, bark, seeds) for students with visual impairments.
- Allow non-verbal students to point or use gestures.

2. Observational Walk

- Visit nearby natural environments (ideally multiple habitats).
- Students observe colours, shapes, natural materials, and seasonal changes.
- They listen to natural sounds (wind, leaves, and birds).
- Students receive a “treasure hunt” worksheet with pictures of items to find.
- They mark findings with a checkmark.

- They collect three fallen leaves they find most interesting.
- Back at the school yard they choose a tree to observe throughout the year.
- Students draw the chosen tree in their workbook.

Adaptations:

- Use accessible routes where possible.
- Students with motor impairments may use mobility aids or be paired with a peer helper.
- Provide sensory alternatives:
    - identify objects by touch,
    - smell certain plants or soil,
    - listen instead of walking farther distances.
- Children who cannot walk long distances may explore a smaller area more deeply.

3. After the Walk

- Group discussion: What did we see? Which habitat was most interesting?
- Compare collected leaves, shapes, and colours.
- Leaves are pressed between newspaper sheets for future lessons.

Adaptations:

- Students with fine-motor challenges may receive assistance arranging leaves.
- Students with communication challenges may use visual cards to indicate preferences or observations.

SPORT VIV

Activity name: “Eko-orijentacija: Mini BioBlitz u školskom dvorištu/obližnjem parku” (Eco-orientation: Mini BioBlitz in the schoolyard / nearby park)

Inspiration & fit in Croatia: Builds on the long-standing “school-in-nature” model for Croatian primary schools and on outdoor experiential programs used by **Outward Bound Croatia** (navigation, map & compass, reflection) to foster ecological awareness and transferable life skills. Forest pedagogy is increasingly present in Croatian practice and partnerships https://www.skolskiportal.hr/kolumne/skola-u-prirodi/

School-in-nature is recognized as a multidimensional program (educational, sports-recreational, and cultural) recommended by the Ministry; OBC programs explicitly combine navigation, camping skills, and ecological awareness—practices you can scale down for primary pupils on local grounds.

Duration: 90 minutes (can extend to a half-day).
Location: Schoolyard + adjacent green space (park/arboretum).

Equipment:

- Printed **simple site map** (or hand-drawn) with 6–8 checkpoints
- 6–8 laminated **eco-task cards** (tree leaf match, “find a decomposer,” “measure shade,” “listen-and-count birds”)
- Clipboards, soft pencils; magnifiers; measuring tape; compass (optional)
- ID aids: **leaf/pictorial keys** with photos; tactile cards
- Large tarp or groundsheet as a **base camp**; first-aid kit
- Optional: tablets for photos; sample pots for non-living finds only

Learning objectives

- Science: identify 5 local species/structures (leaf shapes, bark, invertebrates, fungi traces).
- Geography/Math: orient to a simple map; estimate distances; tally biodiversity counts.
- PE: steady-state locomotion, balance on uneven ground, safe risk taking.
- Citizenship: care for local habitat; leave-no-trace routines.

Pre-classroom primer (20 min, previous day)

- Review leaf shapes and common species using a **picture key**; practice symbols used on the simple map.
- Co-create **rules of care** (stay on paths, look with eyes/hands gently, no picking living plants, return all logs to place).
- Demonstrate **checkpoint routine** (arrive → read card → observe/record → quick reflect).

Field session structure (90 min)

1. **Base camp briefing** (10 min): roles, safety, visual route; distribute maps and color-coded lanyards.
2. **Team loop to 3–4 checkpoints** (35 min): pupils move at walking pace; at each checkpoint an **eco-task** blends observation with movement (e.g., "Shadow Stretch: find a leaf larger than your hand; trace its shadow; measure the shadow length in steps").
3. **Sensory pause** (5 min): eyes-closed sound map (mark 3 sounds on paper).
4. **Second loop to remaining checkpoints** (25 min).
5. **Plenary & reflection** (15 min): sit on the tarp, share one "wow," one "why," and log class species count on a big chart.

Eco-tasks (examples)

- **Leaf Match & Move:** match collected fallen leaves to the key; do 5 "leaf lunges" per correct match.
- **Micro-habitat Peek:** lift a dead twig, count decomposers, sketch one; replace twig.
- **Bark Rubbings Station:** make a rubbing; compare patterns (math: which has more "ridges per cm"?)
- **Compass Walk:** face N/E/S/W; take 10 steps; note light/soil differences (supported with arrows for non-readers).
- **Pollinator Patrol:** find a flower; count visits for 60 seconds.

Differentiation & LD supports

- **Visual/tactile map** with high-contrast icons; checkpoint numbers match lanyard colors.
- **Choice per station** (one easy, one stretch task).
- **Sentence frames** ("I notice… I wonder… It reminds me of…") on cards; symbol-supported versions.
- **Motor planning:** walking rope, trekking poles; reduce number of checkpoints for some teams.
- **Sensory regulation:** ear defenders, break card, safe adult at base camp.

Assessment

- Team **species tally charts**; quick conferring at base camp.
- Photo evidence of tasks; optional mini-poster back in class.
- Exit ticket: place a sticker under "I can use a map / identify 3 species / name a habitat rule."

Safety & permissions

- Obtain parental consent; check park rules.
- 1 adult per 8–10 pupils; pre-walk route; dynamic risk assessment (weather, dogs, water).
- Hand hygiene on return; tick-check reminder in the parental note.

Source: Outward Bound Croatia - Outdoor Education Programs for Schools - Outward Bound Croatia

CUS PALERMO

Activity: “Classroom without Walls – Ecosystem Explorers”

Educational objective

Apply ecological learning methodology, where students transfer concepts acquired in the classroom to real situations in the external environment.

Recommended age

7–14 years old

Skills developed

- Scientific observation
- Systemic thinking
- Linking theory and practice
- Environmental responsibility

Environment

Park, school garden, urban woodland, beach.

Materials

- Notebooks or printed worksheets
- Pencils, coloured pencils
- Magnifying glasses (optional) and waste collection bags (for a brief ecological action).

Detailed description of the activity

1. Preparation in the classroom (15 min)

   The teacher introduces the concepts of ecosystem, food chain, and environmental indicators.

   Students receive a worksheet with:

   - 'Find a producer, a consumer, and a decomposer.'
   - 'Identify a sign of human impact.'
   - 'Draw an ecological relationship.'

2. Phase 1: Guided outdoor exploration (20–25 min)

   - Students quietly explore a natural area.
   - They observe plants, insects, animal tracks, and microhabitats.
   - They must use the worksheet as an observation guide.

3. Phase 2: Data collection and mapping (15 min)

   - In small groups, they draw a map of the ecosystem: where plants, insects, shaded areas, water, litter, etc. are located.
   - Discussion on how the elements interact with each other.

4. Phase 3: Mini ecological action (5–10 min)

   - Collection of small pieces of rubbish found along the route.
   - Brief reflection: "How can we improve this ecosystem?"

5. Return to the classroom (10 min)

   - Comparison between what was studied and what was actually observed.
   - Creation of a class poster.