



GOLDEN CUBES AWARDS

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AWARD CATEGORY:

NAME OF THE PROJECT:

Children's encounters with their city

TEAM MEMBERS:

Children, parents and teachers of Djäknebergets Preschool and politicians and public officials of Västerås City.

AGE GROUP OF AUDIENCE:

Children of 3-6 years plus citizens of the city.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING CHILDREN:

32

DURATION OF ACTIVITY:

1,5 year

COUNTRY / CITY:

Sweden / Västerås

NAME OF THE ENTRANT:

Djäknebergets Preschool

FREE EXPRESION:

Children of the preschool have been studying their city and its architecture to later build up their own miniature city from their own thoughts.

During the project the children have learned to use new material such as gypsum, clay and grouting. The building of the miniature city has also required a lot of mathematic calculations such as how to work in scales.

The project has increased the children's understanding of what a city actually is and how it can be built up. It has also opened their eyes for details in architecture such as the zig-zag pattern on the city church or how the street lights affect the town.

Through the project the children have comprehended how buildings are built – that someone first draws them and then builds them up with floor, walls and ceiling and how to make them stable. The understanding of how buildings are built – and how much money, time and effort that is put on every single building have also led to that the children are more careful of their surrounding buildings – they can no see their social, economic and ecological worth in a different light.

The project has emanated around the children's own ideas and interests which made sure it stayed relevant, fun and challenging for the children. The miniature city has been an active part of the preschool; available for all the children to look at and play with. This active approach for architecture has made even the youngest children (1-3 years) think about buildings and architecture in a way they wouldn't have done without this project.

When the children's work where done they met with politicians and public officials to tell them about their City. Many of the city officials have been impressed by these younglings consideration for other people, such as how they wanted backrests of the city benches for the elders or to have clear linings in the cross walks so no one would get hurt. We therefore believe that this project have changed the city's view of children – perhaps heightened their credence for children's competence as co-creators and future citizens.

A local paper heard about the project and came to visit us at the preschool. They talked to teachers and children and photographed the miniature city for an article. After the publication we received a lot of positive feedback from both other preschools and citizens of our city.

Before the project started with the children, we involved the parents, letting them be a part of the project start-up. We let the parents sit in small groups discussing their city in terms of what a city needs to be a good place to live now and for future generations. In the discussion the parents expressed their appreciation of their city's landscape architecture – perhaps that is why parks and watercourses where so important to the children whilst creating their own miniature city. The realization among the children that they are allowed to think about their city hasn't only strengthened their creativity but also themselves as individuals and as members of the society. They have become aware of that they have a right to their own standpoints about their city and that adults wants to listen.

OUTCOMES & EVALUATION:

During the project the teachers repeatedly documented the children's learning process by taking photos and notes. Photos and notes where continuously used by the teachers for further reflections, evaluations and planning of the project.

If we would do a similar project in the future we would try to involve the public even more, possibly by collaborating with the local library to have an exhibition.

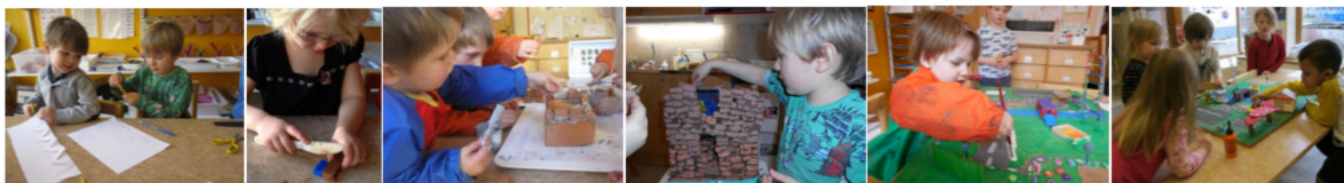
IMAGES:



The Children studied their city both by computer and foot to later draw up their own ideal version.



In enormous detail the children worked with different materials and methods to create their miniature city such as paper, colour, gypsum, clay, grouting and glue gun.



The children learned the basics of architecture, such as how buildings are constructed and made stable, their worth to the community and how to think in scales with landscape architecture.



When the children were done with their miniature city they visited the city hall to learn more about architecture. They later met with politicians and public officials to talk about their vision for their town. The officials continued with a public meeting discussing their own and the children's thoughts about the town.