

A few words about parents

The context of parents' participation in the innovation of the introduction of the English language in pre-primary schools.



The importance of introducing the English language in pre-primary schools

- Proficient use of the mother tongue and communication in other languages is a key success-factor for children's learning and socialisation, in a society characterized by great upheavals, extensive flow of information and constant movement of populations for various reasons.
- Today's multicultural society renders multilingual awareness and appropriate and effective communication necessary, while intercultural competence is an important skill of successful 21st century citizens (Penderi, 2022).
- On this basis, the European Commission has prioritised language learning, while in many countries the familiarisation with a foreign language, the English language in most cases, has been introduced in preschools (Alexiou, Penderi & Serafeim, 2022).



What is happening in our country

- The introduction of the English language in preschools started in a pilot phase in 2020-21 in 58 preschools.
- The first data collected by parents and teachers show the success of the project and its benefits to children's comprehensive development (Alexiou & Penderi, 2021).
- During the school year 2021-22, the introduction of the English language in the preschool is generalised
- The introduction of the English language, both methodologically and pedagogically is supported by the EAN programme which is implemented by 3 bodies: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and the Institute of Educational Policy. Aristotle University is the leading institution responsible for the design and coordination of the project (Alexiou, 2022).



Parents' role

- Parents play a vital role in their children's education and socialization.
- Their participation in the educational process is defined by the term parental involvement and describes the attitudes, perceptions, expectations and relationships that parents develop in relation to school (Penderi & Petrogiannis, 2013).
- Parental involvement takes place in three contexts:
 - A. at home, B. at school and C. in the community
- It can take many forms, each of which is of particular importance for the development and education of children, while their combination leaves the final imprint on children's progress and well-being.
- In relation to English in preschool, parental involvement can enhance children's motivation and self-confidence and increase their eagerness and love for language learning (Alexiou & Penderi, 2022).



Involvement and familiarisation with the English language

- Parental involvement in no way refers to systematic or explicit teaching.
- By providing materials, stimuli and patterns, parents contribute significantly to children's development of a positive attitude towards the foreign language and to the improvement of relevant skills.
- Equally important is the way parents interact with children and teachers creating a positive atmosphere in which contact with the English language acquires a positive meaning and emerges as a dynamic area of interaction and a unifying element between the school and the family.



But what can parents do?

- They try to create an environment at home where children use stimuli and materials in relation to English, such as:
 - cartoons and songs in English, e.g., episodes from 'Peppa Pig' in English*
- Activate children to observe their environment and detect stimuli in English, such as:
 - locate signs with English words or printed material in English (e.g., a restaurant menu)*
- Talk about their school experience, such as:
 - show interest in what the children did during their English lesson*

(for more information about the forms of parental involvement, see Penderi & Papanastasiatou, 2021)



But what can parents do? cont'

- They play with their children and make constructions that contain stimuli in English, such as:

-play a memory game with animal cards and words in English (orally as children at this age are not expected to write or read in English)

-make a construction by watching a video in English

-cut English words from magazines and make a collage

- They are involved in activities related to the English language assigned by the school, such as:

-take the English-speaking class mascot at home for the weekend

-make a painting for the English-speaking class mascot



But what can parents do?

- They participate in school activities and events, such as:

-accompany the class on a walk to learn the colours in the neighbourhood (colour-finding and vocabulary repeating game)

-participate in an activity with the English teacher in the classroom (e.g., make a recipe)

-cooperate with the school in an event along with other participants (e.g., take part in caroling in English along with the first grade of primary school for charity)

- They communicate with teachers to stay informed and be informed about the children's progress in English, such as:

-record the experiences that the children brings home from their contact with the English language and inform the teachers

-discuss the childrens progress and achievements or desires in relation to their familiarisation with the English language



But what can parents do?

- They discuss with the children the importance of language learning, such as:
 - discuss with the children about the use of English while travelling or when they meet people from other countries*
- they share their own experiences of learning a foreign language
- They express to the children how proud they are that they are interested and engaged in English
- They discuss with their children what they would like to be when they grow up and how knowing English can help them in their lives.



Here's an idea to activate our children's interest!

When I look around me closely, look how many Greek and English words I find!

- We observe and comment on printed words around us (e.g., while taking a walk in the neighbourhood, we observe signs, product labels in the supermarket, etc.)
- We encourage children to notice similarities and differences (e.g., are all the signs written in the same language? What similarities / differences do I notice)?
- In which cases are some words (e.g., signs) around us only in English? Why is that?

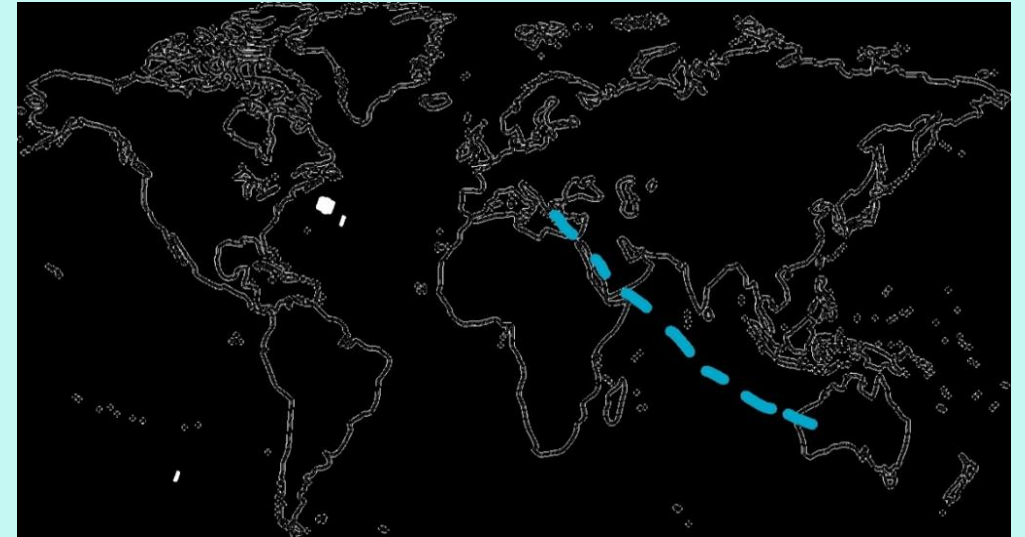


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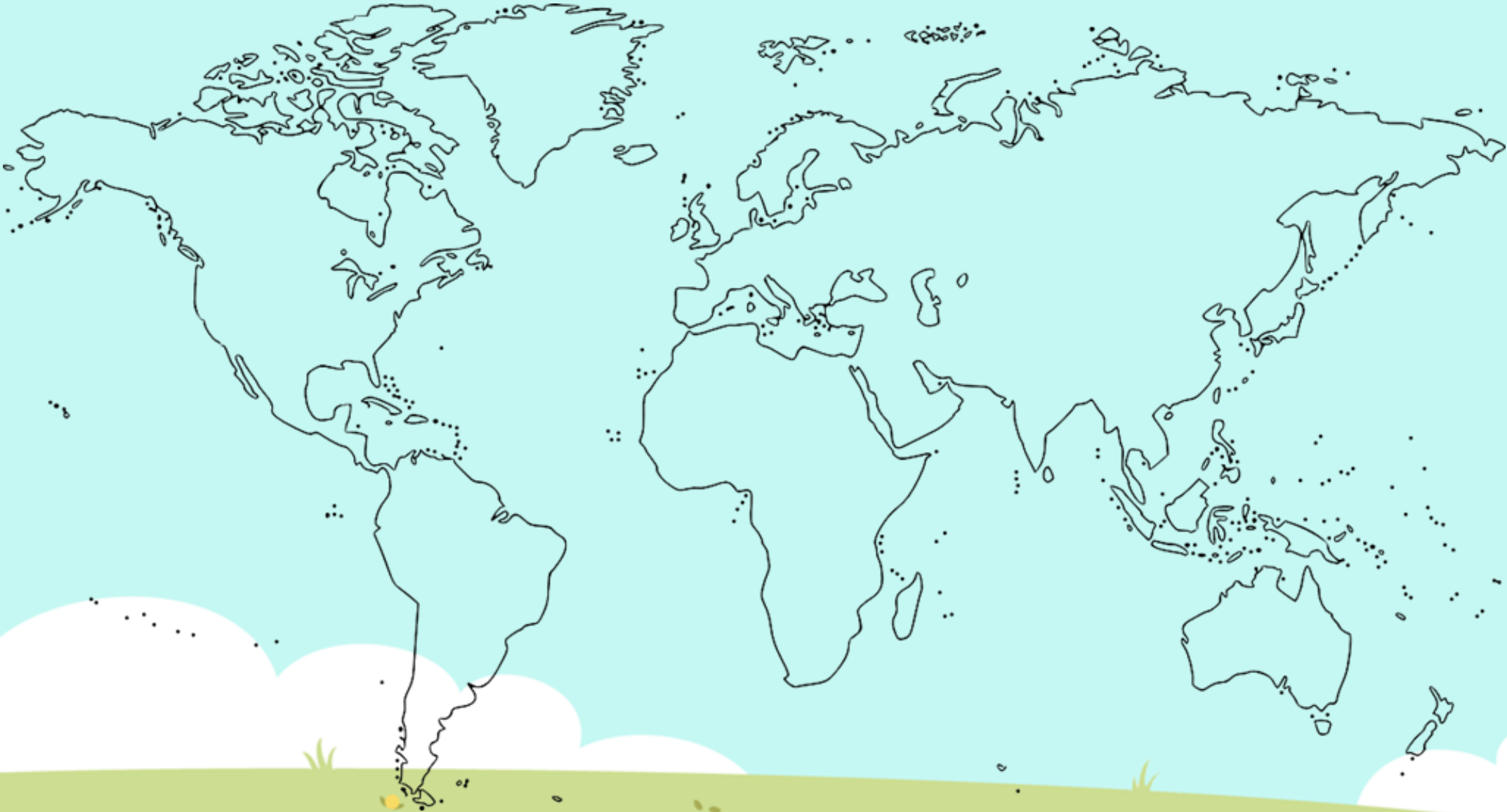
I'm going on a long trip...

I'm drawing on the map the route I will follow to get to Kiki's homeland.

- Children with the help of their parents or older siblings look for information and other material (e.g., photos, videos) about their new friend's country (Kiki the koala).
 - What are the habits of the people there?
 - How can one travel there?
 - With the help of their parents, they search for Kiki's homeland on the map.
 - They can use Google Earth and "visit" Australia!
- The children make collages with the material they find, draw, etc.



Indicative map to use in the previous activity.



Get inspiration from our material!

Visiting our website, you can find various ideas for activities and materials to engage with your children.

Use these ideas to spend creative and quality time with your children.

The benefits are significant for the children's emotional well-being and their contact with the English language.



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