

# Play with Fori

## Program Overview

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## **Author of this description**

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## **Program name**

Play with Fori

## **Country of Origin**

Bulgaria

## **Implementation level of the program**

The educational program "Play with Fori" is implemented in kindergartens in 6 administrative districts in Bulgaria, and it is attended by over 1000 children of preschool age. The educational program began to be actively implemented in 2020.

## **Type of Program**

Evidence-based

## **Description**

"Play with Fori" has a clearly defined educational structure and a minimum of activities and competencies that are expected to be acquired by preschool children. Teachers working on the program have undergone prior training. The program is intended to be implemented by teachers in kindergartens, but can also be implemented by other professionals working with children such as social workers, speech therapists and psychologists.

The program lasts 10 weeks, with one module presented each week. The activities are in accordance with the organization of work in kindergartens and the legislation on preschool education in Bulgaria. The duration of the activities for one module is from 20 to 30 minutes, depending on the age group in the kindergarten.

## **Age Range**

3-7 years

## **Group Size**

20-25 children, this is the average number of children in one kindergarten group

## **SEL Skills Targeted**

Relationship skills, Self-awareness, Self-management

## Sequenced Activities

There is one module for introduction in the programme and another one for finalizing the educational activities. During these two modules teachers conduct pre- and post-assessment of the emotional vocabulary of children using picture test. There are eight main modules, one for each emotion in the programme. Every module is based on the story of the main character, the hedgehog Fori and his friends who help him to recognize and name his emotions. During different didactic games children learn not only the words for different emotions but also develop their self-awareness and also, they learn a special technique to regulate their emotions and behavior during social interactions. The activities of the programme are mostly related to self-awareness, self-management and relationship skills.

Each of the modules in the program includes games, as well as activities to strengthen the knowledge and skills of a given emotion - recognizing the emotion, connecting with a particular facial expression, naming and understanding the meaning of emotion and self-regulation skills and skills to help others. Each of the teachers who works with children in the program has undergone prior training. The main modules begin with the story and situation in which Fori the hedgehog finds himself, the emotion he feels and the related facial expression, as well as his attempts to deal with the situation. Children play and learn through a variety of didactic opportunities - psychomotor exercises, imitation of emotion, drawing facial expressions, role-playing games, constructing a cube of emotions, arranging puzzles and more. Didactic materials are also suitable for bilingual children. Once a week after applying the module, parents receive information about the activity, as well as have the opportunity to see materials made by their children, which is an additional opportunity to discuss at home important topics related to emotions, behaviors and relationships.

## Active Learning

"Play with Fori" not only improves children's vocabulary in terms of emotions, but also makes it easier for them to manage various difficult emotional states and behaviors. Through didactic materials, visual stimuli - posters, cards, emotion cube, digital puzzles, children easily remember how Fori feels in similar situations and how he copes with some difficult moments of anger, sadness and disappointment, for example. Teachers report an improvement in language skills in relation to emotions, which corresponds to the data from the pilot study, as well as a reduced incidence of aggressive behavior and improved social skills of children.

## Outcomes / Results

The main goal of the program and the expected result is to improve emotional literacy by enriching the emotional vocabulary. As a result of the "Play with Fori" educational program, children are expected to be able to name emotions correctly, this includes recognizing facial expressions for each emotion, recognizing the emotion in themselves and others, and naming the emotion correctly. The data from the pilot study on the program showed differences in the initial and final assessment in favor of learning more words about emotions after the participation of children in the program.

## Quality / Effectiveness

Currently, the only evidence of effectiveness is the reports of teachers who work with children in kindergartens. A more in-depth and detailed analysis is forthcoming after summarizing and obtaining all the data.

## Strengths and Weaknesses

A strength of the program is that it is designed for the specific linguistic and cultural context in Bulgaria. "Play with Fori" is a program available to every child in the mainstream education system. It can also be applied to children with special educational needs, but group activities must be preceded or alternated with individual work in order to fully involve the child.

## Additional Information

[www.playwithfori.com](http://www.playwithfori.com)

<https://bit.ly/32u8ITg>

<https://bit.ly/3v7Wo20>

<https://bit.ly/2PaNMIC>

## References

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