



## Pedagogical project

*updated to October 2, 2019*

### Introduction

Etre & Savoir School is a place of life and learning for children aged 3 to 15 and their families. Basing its educational approach on active pedagogies, the structure offers a space, and a context allowing everyone to be supported in their approach to learning, whether formal or informal.

Children and families are invited to play, reflect, work, learn, share ... or do it all at the same time, in a place where traffic is free; around a non-compulsory schedule structuring the days of those who need it; in an educational community where children, parents and educators have a role to play.

Our school is intergenerational, we have chosen to welcome together children of all ages with different needs. These differences in appetites, development, and interests are all opportunities for learning. Our guarantee is that each of the children accepted at the school is accompanied to meet his/her physiological, psychological and emotional needs.

**For us, education is what allows us to transmit knowledge, skills, values and to make them evolve towards a more conscious, open, responsible and happy mode.**

**Etre & Savoir is a space for children to explore and develop their relationship with themselves, with others and with the world. Trust is at the center of practice, awareness is an axis of development for a harmonious collective life.**

## Intention

Our intention is to create in the school, with the children and their families, a serene atmosphere, welcoming concentration, stimulating creativity and the exploration of oneself, of others and of the environment. The school is a common base for exploration. We intend to offer within our structure tools and landmarks, including permanent corners, ritual times, Montessori material ... The school is not an end in itself! It is a tool to host children, parents, ideas, guests; a secure exchange place.

Our aim is to promote the children's development in a living environment that supports cooperative work and autonomy: to allow children to take time in hand, to take control of their actions, their explorations and their learning. For this, play\* has a central role as a need and a natural means of development for the child.

\* 'Play' here includes any self-sufficient activity, play is a state of mind, a coming into action in the present of all that constitutes the life of the child.

## Support the taste of effort and work ... because it makes sense

We call "work" everything that is part of a process aimed at a conscious evolution (we work in our movements in sports, we work in our art). To live together, children must consider themselves and take themselves into account. It is also about being able to succeed when one embarks on a project. Persevering and succeeding require a lot of effort, and the fact of being able to live them gives references and strong skills. Just as when we mobilize our body to play, dance, walk, we increase our endurance gradually ...

Work makes sense when our actions are focused and take into account expectations and social norms; work is a consequence and a stage of development. We want to allow children to make this value their own, at their scale.

Maria Montessori invites us to "let the fountain that is the child spring", and we should be prepared to see the children splash us ...

## Learning

Our idea is allowing children and parents to be in a virtuous circle connecting self, others and the context:

- Self: who am I? What do I want? How do I work?
- The others: what makes us different and brings us closer? What can we do together?
- The context: how does this world work?

Once launched, this circle allows us to evolve confidently and consciously on all these plans by living them concretely ... Learning makes reference to the new data and references acquired as well as to the process of acquiring them.

The intention here is to make learning reproducible in autonomy. For this we have an especial organization with equipped corners, and a time organization with workshops and courses open to everyone.

## Learning domains

All that follows takes into account the fact that we have very different modes of understanding and acting (multiple intelligences). Moreover, the transversality of learning is something natural. When we learn with pleasure, we open ourselves and being more open, we are all the more receptive to what can make the link: if I am happy to learn to read, any reading opportunity will be a gift.

Living together and expressing oneself : living in a group aiming at freedom and personal fulfillment requires learning and practicing codes and modes of communication. Expressing yourself is to discover what you like, what you think and to be able to make that understandable to others ... while retaining the power to evolve and adapt. This flexibility is possible only in the context of a benevolent approach that allows everyone to evolve avoiding judgments.

The human sciences : these sciences show us our condition, how to read our environment and how to influence it. They relate to what influences us socially and are a tool to influence our social and physical world. Philosophy, sociology, psychology, history, geography are intimately linked and give relief, density, complexity to our actions and influences.

Mathematics : Mathematics is used to count, measure and predict. It generates a quantifiable approach to the world and at the same time as it emanates from it; it is also one of the doors to generalization and abstraction.

Languages : languages express a vision of the world. Naming and formulating is already a point of view on reality. A language is living history linked to a territory. A language is also alive with codes and rules, its purpose to be able to tell, to allow imaginary and collective creativity, to make oneself as well understood as possible. Orality must be complex and richness of vocabulary allows an opening of the field of expression and comprehension.

Written communication is what gives civilizations continuity, because it gives the power to dialogue with men of the past and the future (as well as cinema and the arts in general). If an environment rich in written material and reading opportunities can foster progress in these skills, it is also necessary to tame the codes through a guided practice ...

The arts : to express with or without words, to combine materials and colors, have a significant influence on the material and the world, share a point of view, an emotion ... This field of learning involves the transmission and sharing of techniques as well as the multiplication of opportunities for practice.

Nature : to understand, preserve, and experience nature is, again, not something one can decree, it requires multiplying the experiences of nature.. For this, we go every afternoon to the park to explore our physical abilities around free or regulated games. In addition, every Thursday we spend the afternoon in the forest to make huts, observe plants and animals and enjoy outdoor activities. Once a month, we spend a whole day outdoors.

In addition, we organize school trips ('Classes vertes') that lead us to experience with the travel and management of community life in new spaces of nature.

## Geographical and temporal spaces

The school espace is defined by areas that are planned and arranged to allow children free movement. This free circulation gives the possibility of positioning oneself physically and making choices through one's movements.

In their layout, spaces meet to accommodate several areas of activity and offer opportunities for informal and spontaneous activities. At the same time, these corners can accommodate proposals made by educators, parents, children.

**Library.** To read, relax, enjoy a moment for oneself around books.

**Kitchen.** To participate in a cooking workshop, develop an active and conscious relationship to what we eat.

**Games library.** Because play is the natural way to learn how to do and how to do together

*building games* → In search of balance and creation (Kapla, Lego, wooden bricks, fabrics for huts...)

*board games* → To practice the rules, enjoy a moment of challenge or playful cooperation

*invented games* → To practice the games of mimicry or complex relationships situations as one pleases, to play roles in games created in the moment by the children.

**Dormitory.** From 12:30 until everyone wakes up, to sleep and enjoy a moment of rest.

**Room of motor skills.** Gym mats, music ... to develop your physical skills.

**Music room.** To play instruments, sing, search for melodies around a piano or percussions  
...

**Language and French language.** To learn to read and write through pedagogical and training materials, and gradually master the conventions via grammar, conjugation, spelling.

**Math space.** To know how to name and combine numbers, get in contact with geometry and practice it.

**Space history / geography.** To develop a vision of space and time beyond what we live in the moment, with common references that go beyond the school boundaries.

**Languages spaces.** To learn and practice English and Spanish, both orally and in writing, and discover other cultures.

**Arts spaces.** To learn and practice techniques of drawing, painting, modeling ...

**Science spaces.** To learn and practice a relationship to biology and physics through experimentation.

**Space '3 years'.** So that the youngest have a cocoon to turn to when needed.

**College area.** So that the less young practice the management of a territory and have their privacy.

Time is also fractionned, composed of rituals and appointments. Rituals structure the day and the week; they give stable benchmarks to the advance of time. Appointments have the intention of offering interaction and learning opportunities that are less spontaneous and require the sharing of knowledge or know-how held by a person. other than oneself or one's close friends.

## The rituals

**8h30-9h. Gradual arrival and individualized welcome.**

**9am. Life of the class and spaces**

**Individual and collective presentations, individual work, projects.**

**12:00. Meal**

**12:30 / 45. Outing or activities**

**14h30 / 16h. Life of the class and spaces**

**16h. Tidying up**

**16:15. Snack**

**16:30. End of the school day, optional extracurricular time**

**18h30. End of extracurricular time**

In addition, on Thursday afternoons we go out to the forest, Friday is the day of the council of collective life and of the visit to the public library. Two afternoons per week, a native English speaker comes to talk, play and practice in English.

## **Presentations**

They are contained in an accessible and mobilizable schedule. Participation is free, it can also be the choice of the child and families since the children who want it have their own schedule.

**Presentations are made around elements of the common core, others around punctual themes. They are lively appointments in an active pedagogy, with an oral, visual, sensory transmission.**

**These presentations can sometimes take the shape of individual and / or group classes. They take place through a class schedule, upon request or at the initiative of an educator who makes the proposal.**

## **Collective life**

**Collective rules are a living process, a dialogue between the fields of action and responsibility. Rules come to normalize and code relationships, so they must be minimal, fair and clear. The rules are co-constructed with the children, the team and sometimes the families.**

**There are 4 non-negotiable rules:**

**-Respect others and the material.**

**-Do not run or scream inside.**

**-From 6 years on, each child is entitled to 20 minutes of screen per day.**

-Removing one's shoes when entering the school.

## Mechanisms of regulation and animation of the collective life

Meeting of the Council: a box for notes is available at the school. The notes placed in this box constitute the agenda of the Friday Council, which is a moment for assessment, projection, expression ...

Most learning of the collective life is done through practice. A communication mode based on "I" messages is developed, peer mediation stimulated. Children form a heterogeneous group in the sense that the appetite for social relations is very diverse, from the youngest discovering collectivity, to the older ones entering a phase of deep exploration of otherness.

When there are tensions, a pathway is offered to the children to enable them to gain autonomy in the management of their relationships, which implies clarity, support and sense of responsibility.

In case of difficulties, necessary steps are planned.

### Here's what happens:

1 / Children try to regulate their conflicts with each other by directly expressing their emotions and feelings.

2 / They call on an adult to support them in mediation in case of difficulty.

3 / The group can be involved if the tension concerns several people.

4 / If the class cannot make progress, the parents are called to support the team via the process defined in the school rules.

## Conflicts

Conflicts are an opportunity to measure one's place in the relationship with oneself, others and the world.

In case of conflict, that is, of difference between what I wish and what is, I have three levers of action:

1 / I can act on me, by evolving my expression, my point of view ...

2 / I can act on the environment, by arranging places and time differently.

3 / I can act on the other, on his perspective and his behavior.

To make sure these relationships are right is important for the good functioning of the group, and the adult surveys that the safety and integrity of everyone is guaranteed. Conflict is part of the learning and adaptation process.

## Setting goals with parents

Personalized schedule. For this, in consultation with the child, the parents and the team, we set learning and development goals. This consultation is not intended to address the concerns of everyone, it is focused on the needs and will require of everyone that they position themselves clearly with a partnership aim. This tool cannot be exhaustive and does not represent an order from the family to the school! It represents a tailor-made organization of time to provide children and adults with a form of concerted educational strategy.

The assessment is a meeting time that allows to qualitatively address what makes the life of the child. Sometimes an evaluation in the form of a test is contemplated, but only as a tool for measuring progress in relation to an "objective", never as a support for a ranking and competition approach ... For this, we use tests produced by educational institutions, or tools such as PIDAPI. The evaluation may also go beyond what has been defined in the objectives.

## Children monitoring

It is based on the quality of listening and observation: to support children towards their autonomy, a follow-up that is reassuring but not stifling or excluding is needed. It's all about knowing and respecting the children. To know them, you have to share moments with them, identify their habits, read their behavior, reach a relationship where frankness is possible and normal.

For educators, it is about being aware of oneself and one's practice, of being coherent without trying to manipulate, remaining attentive to the children's wishes and reluctances.

The follow-up is a living dialogue, it leads to exchange within the team to understand what is happening for the children, and with the parents. It also leads to taking notes, being both in and out of the group to be fair and responsive.

## Parents' Involvement

At the School Etre et Savoir, we seek to support an educational community. Families are those for whom this project is developing and evolving. To make community is to give ourselves the means to collaborate and to exchange on what we consider to be good for the children; not by deciding for them, but by inviting them to participate in decisions. Formally, parents intervene at different levels in this project:

- At individual appointments in each period : the parents are received by the referring adult of their child for a half-hour interview to which the child is invited . During this meeting:

\* we discuss what happened at the school, what the child has experienced, what parents think, what is happening at home, and what the member of the teaching team saw or noted.

\*If relevant, we talk about the objectives and their evaluation.

\* a timetable, new objectives can be decided.

In any case, we search for balance, and children are not forced to do anything: they are encouraged to take into account different points of view on their educational journey.



**-Visites at school** : on request, parents can spend time at school, they are welcome!

- Parent-initiated workshops : Parents know how to do many things. By inviting them to the school, we have the opportunity to welcome more skills and to give more opportunities to the children. Moreover, by sharing the educational missions within the structure, we show the children that we can collaborate between adults by putting ourselves at the service of a collectivity.

- Accompanying outings around lunchtime, during the day, or extracurricular time

- Participation in the management of the school and the associative life

- Regular meetings (educational evenings) around questions of education ...

## Educational approach and temporality

Finding the right time to intervene "in an educational way" is a central issue in this approach which aims to transmit without constraining, or rather to avoid constraining just for the sake of transmitting. The time for sustainable and conscious learning is not that of the school calendar dictated by result pressures. Choosing an alternative school like this one is also experiencing the child's time (a time of great moments of concentration and great moments of explosion, convergence and divergence) and respecting his personal rhythms (emotional, cognitive, psychological, biological). It is also to share with the children the questions of educational strategies and prioritization of learning.

A strong challenge of our school is to give the children most chances of taking charge of their personal lives in a spirit of cooperation and respect; we try to offer an environment that works on these values.

## Conclusion

Transmission is a process in which children must be actors in their own way in order to explore and learn according to patterns adapted to the world of today and tomorrow. A world where it will be necessary to develop new ways of living, consuming, deciding, interacting. Who can know today what skills will the adults of tomorrow need? What if children, by their behavior, expressed part of the answer? We aim with this school to give life to a relationship with oneself, others and the world that gives tools through experience to children and families. Useful tools for life in society and self-determination. An experience of living together by which we promote trust in ourselves, in others and in the world.