

Report on the "Artis" project and the visit to the Polletrara site of the 5-year section of children of the "Legno Verde" Nursery School

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Our kindergarten consists of 4 sections of children from 3-5 years divided into three classes by homogeneous age. One class is with heterogeneous age of the three years: 3-4-5. We have a strong concentration of children with disabilities 3-4 children for each class. This was also one of the reasons for which we wanted to implement the outdoor school project. The project started with a nice trip at the end of the school year at the "VoloAlto Nature Park" of Rome where we proposed to the park managers our project. The educators of the Park welcomed our idea and wanted to give their contribution to implement it showing a great enthusiasm. The wonderful experience has been going on for 5 years 2015-2019. We shared the educational objectives and the organization of the plans we elaborated. Once a week from October to May the whole school moved to the Park, the children were accompanied and taken back directly by their parents. The school hours were adjusted to the need of the children. The first years we developed laboratories of various activities always aligned with the annual project of the school with themes that ended in the day and took place at various times of the day. We proposed activities aimed to learn the relationship with the animals in the park, without neglecting moments of free. There was the opportunity to play leaving children to organize themselves in an autonomous and very imaginative way. This was possible because of the outdoor space available in the Park. Last year we decided to design and implement single-theme educational choices. We developed the theme "The prehistoric village" and everything was deepened by tackling the theoretical part with stories and explanations. Children learned how the primitive man was living. The manual and interactive outdoor learning has been built in the very large space of the Park. Children built various houses and reproduced the way of living of the prehistoric man in real dimensions. Children could experiment the prehistoric model of life. This thematic project allows us to properly participate in the "ARTIS" project proposed by Prof. Sandra Cristolini. It was a unique experience for children in the 5-year class. We could implement the teaching and learning section going to visit the archeological site called "La Polletrara di Cecanibbio – The elephants cemetery". The visit was possible because of the three-year cycle of outdoor education of the same group of children. From 2015 to 2018 our children experimented the outdoor school project. They developed broader skills appreciated by parents, local authorities and community in terms of inclusion and sustainability. It has also be evident how children with different level of disabilities received a new positive impulse in their learning process.