

# Supporting Children with Different Needs

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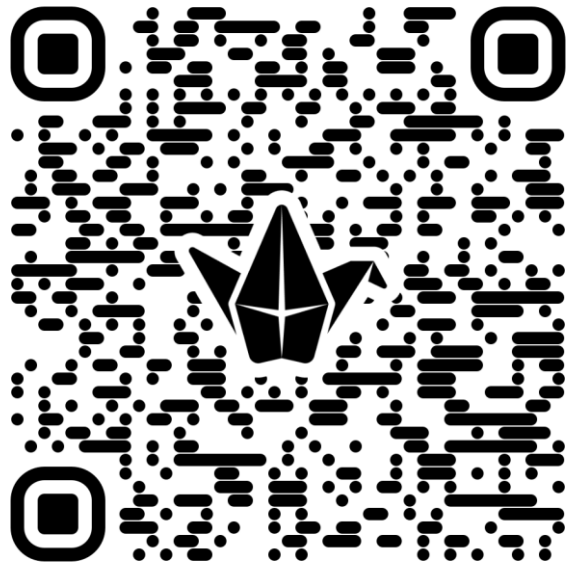
**Inclusive Learning for All**

# Table of content

- Understanding Inclusive Learning
- Strategies for Supporting Diverse Learning Needs
- Inclusive Practices in Action: Learning Through Play
- The Teacher's Role in an Inclusive Environment
- Key Message and Takeaways

## Main objective of the workshop

The main objective of this workshop is to equip educators with practical strategies to create inclusive learning environments that support diverse needs through play-based approaches.



In a couple words, what does inclusive learning mean in Early Childhood Education?

→ Notice how inclusion is described more as a *feeling* than a strategy.

# Content

## Inclusive Learning for All

Inclusive learning ensures that all children, regardless of abilities or needs, can fully participate in play and learning. Teachers adapt the activities, materials, and environments so every child feels valued, capable, and engaged.

## Strategies to Support Different Needs

Adapt the materials. Use larger blocks, textured toys, or visual aids for physical or sensory challenges.



Ensure spaces accommodate flexible mobility aids and sensory preferences.



Differentiate Instructions: Provide clear, simple instructions with gestures, demonstrations, or peer support.

Visual & Auditory Supports: Use picture schedules, symbols, or songs to support understanding and routine.



Encourage collaboration between children with different abilities to promote social learning and empathy.



## Same activity, different tools





Discussion: What opportunities for growth and exploration do you see here?



# Examples in play

Role Play: Props or gestures allow all children to participate.



## Sensory Play: Water tables or tactile bins for diverse sensory engagement.



## Creative Play:

Art and music activities offer multiple ways to express ideas.



## Teacher's Role

Observe each child's needs, provide support, encourage participation, and adapt activities. Create a safe, welcoming environment where children feel confident to explore, interact, and learn.

## Key Message

Inclusive play-based learning allows every child to grow, explore, and develop. With thoughtful adaptations, teachers help children of all abilities become confident, curious, and capable learners.

### Actions, not words

Show 👍 if inclusion means *everyone being the same*

Show ❤️ if inclusion means *everyone belonging*

**“Inclusion in early years means every child feels safe, valued, and able to learn through play.”**

# Ending

# Kahoot!

## Get Ready for the Quiz!

Grab your phone and challenge yourself!



Test your **knowledge!**

Let's see what you've learned!



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## Learning station concept

### “Nature weaving”

Age group: 3–6 years, Finnish ECEC (play-based, phenomenon-based, child-led exploration)

#### Overview

This learning station invites children to explore weaving using frames made from natural materials (sticks, twine). Through hands-on play, children engage in rhythm, movement, early coding concepts, mathematics, creativity, and cultural appreciation. The activity emphasizes process over product, encouraging exploration, collaboration, and sensory discovery.

#### Learning objectives

##### 1. Pre-coding & rhythm awareness

- Children create repeating patterns (e.G., Over–under, colour–colour–pause).
- Recognition of sequences and order (AB, AAB, ABC).
- Development of rhythmic thinking through movement and repetition.
- Early algorithmic thinking: “what comes next?”

*Finnish ECEC link: learning through play and experimentation rather than instruction.*

##### 2. Fine motor development

- Pinching, pulling, threading, tying, and wrapping materials.
- Bilateral coordination (using both hands together).
- Hand–eye coordination and finger strength.

##### 3. Gross motor skills

- Collecting natural materials outdoors.
- Stretching arms across the weaving frame.
- Whole-body movements while weaving on larger frames.
- Balance and coordination when working collaboratively.

##### 4. Early mathematics

- Sorting materials by colour, length, texture, or thickness.
- Counting strands or rows.

- Comparing sizes and quantities.
- Understanding patterns, symmetry, and order.

#### 5. Creative expression & imagination

- Open-ended design - no “right” or “wrong” outcome.
- Personal storytelling through colour and texture choices.
- Exploration of texture, contrast, and composition.

#### 6. Cultural & sustainability awareness

- Introduction to traditional weaving as a cultural practice.
- Use of natural, sustainable materials reflecting Nordic values.
- Respect for nature and understanding where materials come from.
- Discussions about traditional crafts across cultures.

#### 7. Social & emotional learning

- Turn-taking and collaboration when sharing materials.
- Problem-solving together (“how can we make this stay?”).
- Building confidence through self-directed creation.
- Expressing pride and ownership in one’s work.

#### 8. Language & communication

- Vocabulary development (over, under, tight, loose, pattern).
- Storytelling about their weaving (“this is a forest / river / rainbow”).
- Peer discussion and explanation of choices.
- Educator scaffolding through open-ended questions.

#### 9. Sensory exploration

- Feeling different textures (rough sticks, soft yarn, smooth bark).
- Observing colours, contrasts, and movement.
- Listening to sounds made by materials moving.

**Materials:**

- Stick frames tied with natural twine
- Yarn, wool, fabric strips, grasses, leaves, reeds
- Natural fibres and recycled textiles
- Clips or clothespins
- Optional: rhythm cards, colour cards, pattern examples (as inspiration only)

**Educator's role** (*Finnish approach*)

- Observe and listen rather than direct.
- Ask reflective questions:
  - “What pattern are you making?”
  - “What happens if you change the colour?”
  - “How does your body move when you weave?”
- Support child agency and curiosity.
- Document learning through photos and child voice.

This learning station demonstrates how one simple, natural-material activity can integrate multiple learning domains while honouring children's autonomy, creativity, and joy – the cornerstones of Finnish ECEC.

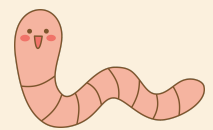


# NATURE WEAVING





DEVELOPMENT OF  
RHYTHMIC  
THINKING  
THROUGH  
MOVEMENT AND  
REPETITION.





# OBJECTIVES



1

Pre-coding & rhythm awareness

2

Fine motor development

3

Gross motor skills

4

Early mathematics

5

Creative expression & imagination

6

Cultural & sustainability awareness



7

Social & emotional learning

8

Language & communication



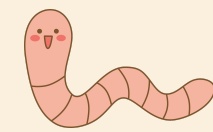


Personal storytelling through colour and texture choices.

Open-ended design - no "right" or "wrong" outcome.



# CHILDREN CREATE REPEATING PATTERNS (OVER-UNDER, COLOUR-COLOUR-COLOUR-PAUSE).



EARLY ALGORITHMIC THINKING:  
“WHAT COMES NEXT?”





HAND-EYE COORDINATION  
AND FINGER STRENGTH.



RECOGNITION OF SEQUENCES AND  
ORDER  
(AB, AAB, ABC).





COUNTING STRANDS OR ROWS.

COMPARING SIZES AND QUANTITIES.

BILATERAL COORDINATION  
(USING BOTH HANDS TOGETHER).

UNDERSTANDING  
PATTERNS,  
SYMMETRY, AND  
ORDER.





Through hands-on play, children engage in rhythm, movement, early coding concepts, mathematics, creativity, and cultural appreciation.



The activity emphasizes process over product, encouraging exploration, collaboration, and sensory discovery.

