

CLASSROOM IN THE FOREST

UČILNICA V GOZDU

Nina KOROŠEC MLADENVIĆ, OSNOVNA ŠOLA GLAZIJA CELJE



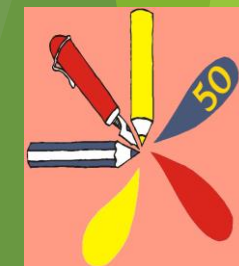
Who am I? 😊

- ▶ Special needs teacher (professor of inclusive pedagogy)
- ▶ Professor of biology and chemistry
- ▶ Therapist for equine assisted therapy
- ▶ Work area: a teacher in a special educational program, a teacher in the extended stay department
- ▶ A proud mother and nature lover



Primary School Glazija Celje, is a school for children with special needs. We implement customized program with a lower educational standard, a special program, home education, a mobile special pedagogical service and a health activity.

Our school opened its doors in 1972.



Based on the decision of the Institute of Education, children with moderate, severe and profound intellectual disabilities are included in the special education program.

Among them are many children with reduced mobility, who need additional care and adjustments at work. The program is developmentally oriented and promotes children's development in the perceptual, motor, emotional, mental, speech and social fields.



***"The world we live in is quite diverse,
there are many differences, and it is up to
us to enable people with special needs to
feel like fish in the sea in this world"***

dr. Valeria Bužan

As a **special education teacher** I am constantly researching and looking for new ideas on how to offer students in the special program opportunities for experiential, cognitive and holistic learning.

FOREST - IDEAL EDUCATIONAL SPACE

Special education teacher / a multi-practitioner teacher

SPECIAL EDUCATION
www.mrsdscorner.com
TEACHER
BECAUSE
multi-tasking ninja
isn't an official job title.

We are lucky that our school is located near the city forest and so we often exchanged the school classroom for a trip to the forest



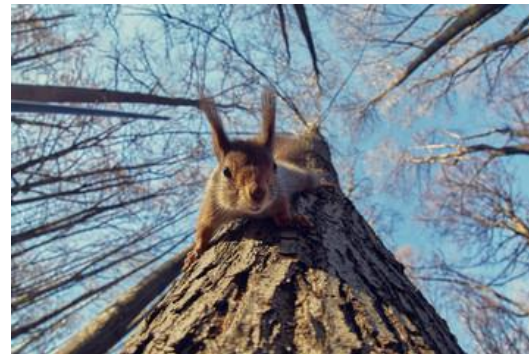
Learning in nature, with nature, is more suitable for children with special needs than learning in classrooms; through their own experience, learning from those experience, through sensory perception, movement in nature, we enable them to be treated holistically and thus learn faster.

And what is more; learning with nature is FUN!!! 😊

Let's take a look at the activities in the forest and activities related to the theme of the forest which I use and have been proven to be successful in educating children with special needs.



why FOREST



WE EXPLORERS



Learning topic: TREES

ACTIVITY 1

The activity here was rather simple: the students were given a study sheet or a picture template and had to find a tree, show a part of the tree, or find a leaf of the tree that the picture template showed.

ACTIVITY #: Seasons

Each of our visits to the forest included a visit to a certain part of the forest, where we observed how the forest changes through the seasons. We chose a particular tree, drew and photographed it in all seasons and made a poster at school. We learned how the forest changes during all 4 seasons.

ACTIVITY 2

We learned correlation big – small, under – on it, in front of – behind of, left - right.

spoznaj drevo

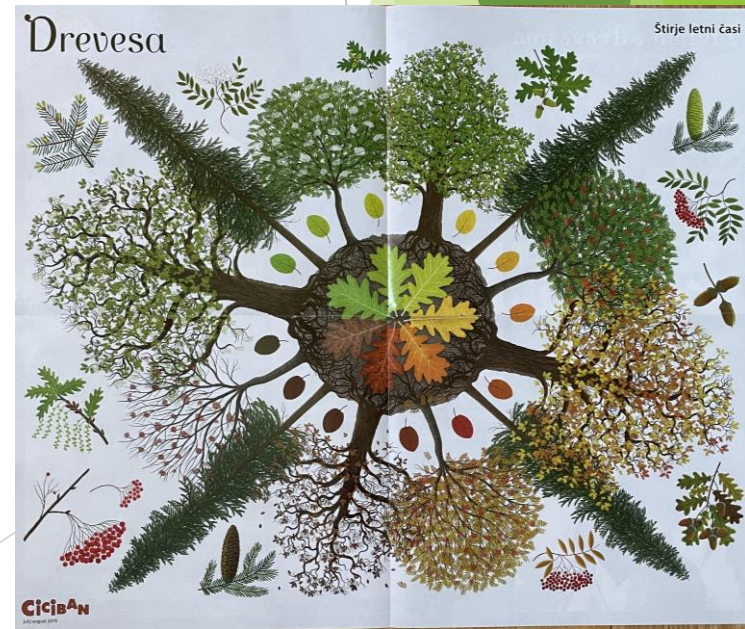
Minsta gozdniški izzivi in šoli Slovenije
The Slovenian Network of Forest Kindergartens and Schools

Institut za gozdno pedagogiko
Institute for Forest Pedagogy

SPOZNAVAMO DREVESNA! Ali najdeš ...

 drevo s suhim lubjem?	 drevesni štor?	 drevo z iglicami?	 drevo z gladkim lubjem?	 drevo z listi?
	 vejo v obliki črke V?	 mlado drevo?	 gnezdo na drevesu?	 drevo, obraslo z mahom?
	 drevesne korenine?	 drevesne gobe?	 odmrlo	

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Learning topic: FOREST ANIMALS



ACTIVITY 1: which animals live in the forest, how these animals move and how they sound

- showed a photo of the animal
- throwing a die; I made a didactic aid, a die whose faces show a photo of the animal, whose movement they had to imitate and demonstrate. The activity helps to develop cognition, motor skills, social skills and builds on a better positive attitude towards nature.

ACTIVITY 2: Insects, our friends





ACTIVITY 3: Recognizing animal tracks



Learning topic: FOREST FRUITS

We picked and learned about the fruits that the forest gives us, we prepared chestnut picnics, mushroom picking hikes, picked wild strawberries and blueberries for muffins. We played tactile games and repeated the senses, types of tastes, colors.



Learning topic: **NATURAL MATERIALS and PRODUCTS MADE OF THEM**

ACTIVITY 1: FOREST BINGO

Students had to find five things in the forest.

We upgraded the activity by looking for different things for all seasons and thus learning about the changing of the forest with the seasons.

- Upgraded activity; look for things in the forest through the diy binoculars





ACTIVITY 2: Products from branches

We collected various branches that were lying on the forest floor and made various useful products from them

ACTIVITY 2: Forest treasure hunt

I made boxes with different search templates. They then had to look for their "treasures" in the forest according to the given template.

With this activity, the students repeated colors, recognized shapes, gained independence, and developed in the cognitive, emotional and motor areas.



<https://thesilvanreverie.com/2018/05/05/egg-carton-nature-scavenger-hunt/>

ACTIVITY 4: art products on the theme of the forest

By imprinting tree leaves, imprinting fruits, using dried leaves, twigs, bark and pebbles, we made various art products throughout the school year.



Learning topic: FOREST LESSONS

In the forest and in nature, we played learning games based on the principles of forest pedagogy.

- Jumped over puddles, rocks or tree trunks
- Ran around trees
- Hide and seek
- Counting competitions
- Forest detectives
- Played social and didactic games
- Joga
- Picnics in nature
- Colloring pages





Learning topic: OTHER ACTIVITIES IN THE FOREST

ACTIVITY 1: Fairy-tale hours under the canopy.

We exchanged reading hours in the library for a classroom in the forest.



ACTIVITY 2: Sounds in the nature

Students listened to the sounds with their eyes closed and tried to place where they came from and who they belonged to. We carried out this activity every time we visited the forest, as the students really liked it.



ACTIVITY 3: Forest choir

We sang songs about the forest, about forest animals, nature. With music, students with special needs express themselves and their feelings holistically, and they move freely according to their abilities.



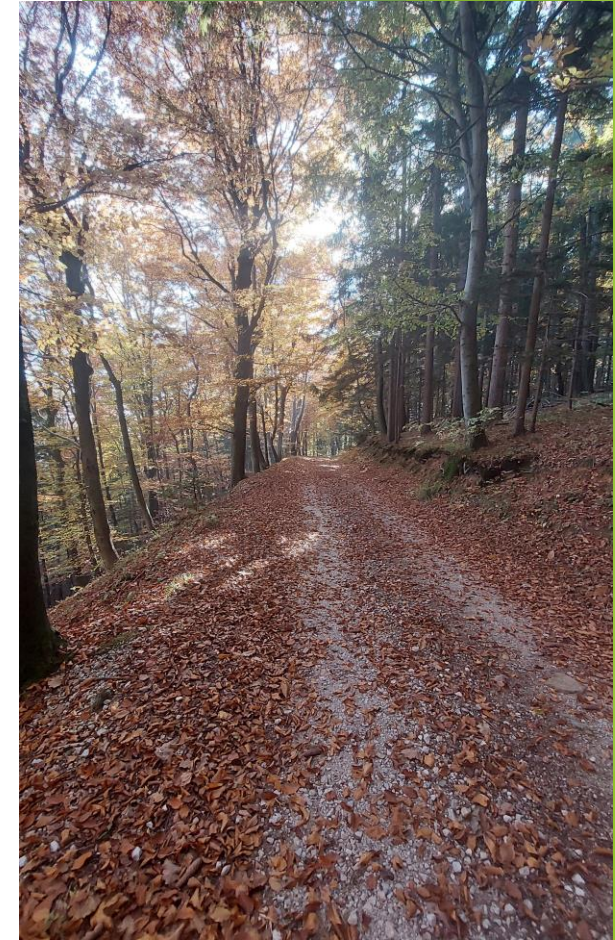
This year, we also included a group of children with mobility impairments, students in wheelchairs, which turned out to be very positive.

Unfortunately, we quickly ran into a problem; we couldn't access all the forest clearings with wheelchairs, we couldn't use the forest paths, playgrounds and other educational forest posts of our city forest, but we were forced to the flat part of the city park.

So we had to "bring" the forest to the students in wheelchairs.

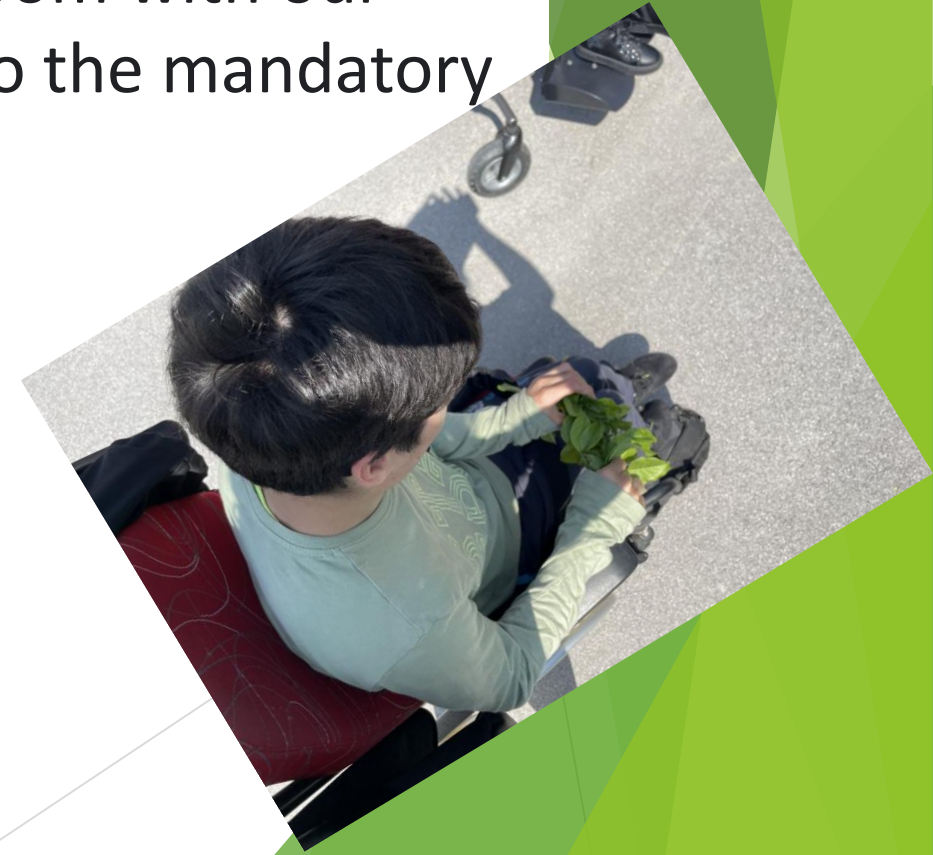


In the forest, the students learned from their own experiences (experiential learning), they could run, jump, climb, roll, jump over holes, splash in the water, sing in the forest, get to know the surroundings sensorically and thus build on cognitive, emotional and motor skills field, they worked in a group, tactilely experienced new stimuli from the environment, built their attention, tolerance and, in general, learned and developed holistically and developed sensory integrity.



From my experience, I can summarize that it is crucial for children with special needs to actively acquire sensory experiences, which the forest and learning in the forest definitely enable them to do faster than learning in school desks.

Also in the future, we will replace the school classroom with our "forest classroom" and add a pair of rubber boots to the mandatory school supplies.



Thank you!

