

Internationaler Exkurs *International Excursus*

Cooperation with parents Reports of the Associated Schools of the International Orff-Schulwerk Forum

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For the most part, contacts between schools and parents are mainly concentrated in the following areas: Parents' evenings, for information provided by class teachers or principals, as well as opinion-forming and feedback from parents or their representatives; Consultation hours in which parents are informed about the performance and behaviour of their children and possibilities for improvement are discussed; Collaboration of parents who have time to accompany school trips and similar ventures, and finally the presence or even active involvement and assistance of parents in events in which their children participate.

The International Orff-Schulwerk Forum Salzburg (IOSFS) has started to set up a network of educational institutions (kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools, music schools and training institutes) with the aim of international cooperation, mutual stimulation and presentation of model work processes. Reports on individual member institutions can be found in the following numbers of this journal ORFF-SCHULWERK HEUTE (OSH) former ORFF-SCHULWERK INFORMATIONEN (OSI):

<i>Jittamett Kindergarten, Bangkok</i>	<i>THAILAND</i>	<i>OSI Nr. 84</i>
<i>Carl Orff Elementary School Traunwalchen</i>	<i>GERMANY</i>	<i>OSI Nr. 86</i>
<i>San Francisco School</i>	<i>USA</i>	<i>OSI Nr. 87</i>
<i>Alev School, Istanbul</i>	<i>TURKEY</i>	<i>OSI Nr. 88</i>
<i>Moraitis School, Athens</i>	<i>GREECE</i>	<i>OSI Nr. 89</i>
<i>Centro Didattico Musicale Rome</i>	<i>ITALY</i>	<i>OSH Nr. 90</i>
<i>Carl Orff Elementary School Andechs</i>	<i>GERMANY</i>	<i>OSH Nr. 91</i>
<i>Carl Orff Elementary School Altenerding</i>	<i>GERMANY</i>	<i>OSH Nr. 94</i>
<i>Carl Orff Elementary and Middle School Diessen</i>	<i>GERMANY</i>	<i>OSH Nr. 95</i>
<i>Art Kindergarten Konsti, Kerava</i>	<i>FINLAND</i>	<i>OSH Nr. 97</i>
<i>Scuola Popolare di Musica Donna Olimpia, Rome</i>	<i>ITALY</i>	<i>OSH Nr. 99</i>

We wondered if IOSFS Associated Schools could possibly have developed other forms of contact and cooperation with the parents of their students, which could also provide suggestions beyond the scope of these schools. A survey of these schools has brought us many interesting answers that we would like to present here.

Alev School, Istanbul, Turkey

www.alev.k12.tr



In the ALEV School we have Orff lessons from kindergarten to 4th grade. With the children from grades one and two we choose some activities from our lessons (dances, songs, rhymes, body percussion, instrument playing or active listening etc.) and invite the parents to observe this kind of presentation. Also, students from other classes watch. After the presentation we have a workshop with our first and second grade parents. We invite them to get involved in activities similar to the ones they have seen their children doing to let them experience briefly how Orff-Schulwerk is used as a musical tool to enhance their child's progress. After some initial shyness, most of the parents enjoy these activities very much.

Elif Slater, for the teaching team

Carl Orff Grundschule Altenerding, Germany



www.carl-orff-gs-altenerding.de

Project "Parents as experts"

Our music teacher, together with a third grade group and a father who is an opera singer, performed part of the famous cantata *Der Schulmeister* by Georg Philipp Telemann. The funny piece is about a very convinced, but somewhat unskilful teacher and his students. The children who participated and the school family, to which the result was presented, enjoyed the project very much.

Making music with parents

We use the Veeh harp, a plucked string instrument that can be played without any knowledge of music, in children's classes. For the children, the Veeh harp can be a first formative approach to making music. Success is achieved quickly without a lot of practice. <https://www.veeh-harfe.de/>

Also, for adults, playing the harp fulfils a deep longing for music. Since 2017, a group of parents meet one evening per month in the school and now also play instrumental pieces from the Baroque period on Veeh harps. Some parents have previous knowledge of music, while others, after having desired for a long time to be able to play an instrument, just enjoy playing the Veeh harp.

At presentation evenings both children and parents play with this instrument – we play for each other and often accompany the monthly song of the school together.

Barbara Schock, former principal

D'Orff Werkstatt Andechs, Germany



www.dorffwerkstatt.de/dw/impressum.php

This private music school in the village of Andechs maintains close contact with the parents:

- The teacher takes time before and after the children's classes to communicate with the parents, to reflect about the contents and the reaction of the kids. Both the teacher and the director know nearly all the parents personally and expect them to take an interest in their children's experiences.
- Parents are invited to join during the last few minutes of each class to see the outcome and their own child's way of participation. Both children and parents have got used to this way of ending the class and enjoy it.
- The first two sessions of each semester are open for the parents to watch and to give them an understanding about contents, aims and methodical approach.

- Once per semester an open class takes place where parents participate actively together with the children. The aim of this activity is to inspire families to sing and dance together at home.

An intention that often shows very good results.

Isabel Galeza, director

Jittamett-Kindergarten Bangkok, Thailand



www.jittamett.ac.th

Building a relationship and a positive cooperation between school and homes is one of our most important missions. Besides creating a meaningful experience for children's learning, our mission is also to become a school for parents, as we believe that parents are the most important people in children's lives and the most influential ones for their development. The relationship and roles for school and homes are, therefore, not those of a "customer-and-business-owner" kind of relationship, but as a family bound to raise our children together, understand and trust each other, give and receive warmth and security. We need to communicate, talk and discuss with each other and learn from one another throughout the journey.

Opportunities for cooperation between school and homes:

"School for parents"

When parents plan to send their children to our kindergarten they all have to participate first in our "School for parents".

We organized it to make them understand our school's ideas and mission: the understanding of human nature and the value of being parents they need to be aware of. Parents also need to understand the importance of their own roles for their children in order to raise them and encourage them in all aspects of development.

Once their children are admitted into our kindergarten we organize numerous activities to create understanding in children's process of learning:

- There is a day for **parents' orientation** where they participate and gain the same experience as their children while learning takes place at school, and how this learning becomes a valuable and meaningful experience for children. This activity is organized through a series of **learning workshops** (Art, Music and Movement according to Orff-Schulwerk and other learning activities we normally do at school) and includes dialogue, a space for them to share what they have learned. Parents are also invited to participate twice a year in a **special meeting** that concludes the whole semester's worth of learning experience, in which we show our documents of the children's achievements that reflect their meaningful experience in accordance with children's learning nature.
- **Activities for children and parents together** take place throughout the school year to encourage a positive relationship in the family. They include learning assignments that need to be done together like making a "ME" book, a special book about a child's life.
- Different kinds of activities (such as fundraising projects and a New Year project for parents to join in to create an enormous celebrative festival for their children) with the aim to promote **relationships between families** and create a loving community within our kindergarten.
- On different topics that aim to encourage them to create all sorts of opportunities for their children through different creative activities and learning theories, like art workshops or Orff-Schulwerk Music and Movement workshops in accordance with child development, or storybook sessions that demonstrate the importance of using picture books with children in a profound way, or a session on child development and Brain Executive Functions, just to name a few.

We think it is most important for us as a school to show parents how deeply we value:

“Understanding” – as a school, we understand deeply about children's learning and their natural curiosity to learn.

“Sincerity” – we work with the children with total sincerity in everything we do.

“Seriousness/Determination” – we set a meaningful goal and we are very determined to reach that goal.

When parents see and understand that our school is able to provide those attitudes for their children, they will cooperate with us in every aspect for the benefit of their children.

Krongtong Boonprakong, director

International Bakkalaureat School Bergamo, Italy

www.isbergamo.com



At the International Bakkalaureat School Bergamo parents are active members of the school learning community.

- The school invites parents to attend workshops specially designed to explain the philosophy of the International Baccalaureate (IB) in an interactive manner. We also organise welcome meetings at the beginning of the year and open lessons that enable parents to experience our methodological approach.
- Every week, families receive a digital School Bulletin where they can read all that has been going on at school.
- Opening the school to experts from the local community is one of the aims of the IB and parent speakers are often invited to share their personal expertise in the units of inquiry throughout the different age groups during the school year. This helps teachers bring lessons to life and provides different perspectives and

learning opportunities for the children.

- As the school places importance on language learning, including mother tongue and host country language, parents are invited to read books in class in their own languages on different occasions during the school year.
- In the world of the Arts, parents are highly involved in the learning process. Although the performing aspect plays quite an important role - for instance the annual Christmas Show, we want parents to be aware of the importance of the artistic and creative process compared to the final product.
- With this purpose, we invite parents to take part in workshops with their children on different occasions. We believe that, thanks to these “hands on” activities, they will better understand the fundamental elements of the Orff-Schulwerk approach and the Bruno Munari methodology for visual arts. At the end of the workshops parents often report that they are amazed by the creativity and engagement demonstrated by our enthusiastic students.
- Our school often organises special art events after school or during weekends involving artists or special guests. Families are free to take part in these events that often are organised in collaboration with local art associations.

Virginia Longo, music teacher

Escuela de Artes Pestalozzi School Buenos Aires, Argentina

www.pestalozzi.edu.ar



Since the Escuela de Artes Pestalozzi School is a new branch we are only starting to develop our programme for parents.

- There is a choir of parents that works one afternoon per week. Its repertoire includes pieces from different periods and world cultures and it offers concerts in and around Buenos Aires.

- Music and Movement (Orff-Schulwerk) for kids age four and five offers two open classes per year with the participation of parents.
- The school also offers many concerts for parents to listen but without their active participation.

Nacho Propato, music teacher

Carl Orff – Grund- und Hauptschule, Diessen, Germany



www.c-o-v.de/i

- Parents contribute their skills and professional capacity to projects (e.g. as instrumentalist, singer, dancer, conductor) and act as contributors to performances at our school, performances in Andechs and the Carl Orff Museum (COM) in Diessen, most recently in our "Moon" project (performance at the school and exhibition in the COM) as well as in the cooperation project with the COM on "70 years of Orff-Schulwerk"
- Participation of parents in charity concerts (for example for our new grand piano)
- Parents help document performances and exhibitions (photographs / videos)
- They help creating costumes and scenery.

Christine Preißinger, music teacher

Kunstkindergarten Konsti Kerava, Finland



www.taidepaivakotikonsti.fi

Our co-operation with parents is mostly around the overall welfare of the child. We try to find new ways to include the families also in the pedagogical process.

Parents nights

Our year starts with a parents' night. We spend a couple of hours explaining the everyday life and routines of our kindergarten. We share the prin-

ciples of our pedagogy and art education, and the parents ask questions.

Sometimes we plan the event to be a workshop where the parents also get to experience a little example of the activities that we do with the kids. That kind of approach to co-operation could be increased. In this way the pedagogy would be more familiar to the families. Music teachers invite the parents to join a music lesson in the evening once a year, so parents get to experience a live lesson with the teacher. A new way of working together with both families and art institutes that work on the background of Konsti are planned to start next semester, so that the art teachers would also be better known.

Daily co-operation

Parents are a significant part of Kindergarten life in Konsti. Parents are faced twice a day, as they bring and pick up the child. Daily moods, important changes or events in the child's life are shared and the daily greetings are shared. From a very early age we teach the child to tell the parents about their day.

Individual learning plan

The children's skill development and overall growth are monitored by teachers every day. In meetings with parents, at least twice a year, an individual learning plan is created for each child. In preschool, the children also take part in the meetings. The yearly health and wellness appointment with a nurse or doctor is documented in our kindergarten files, and teachers' views are shared with the medical professionals as well.

This cooperation assures an effective support for each child. Sometimes speech or physical/occupational therapists are invited to the support network around the child. In these cases, a wider multi-professional team works together for the best of the child. Parents are mostly supporting this kind of cooperation and feel that their child is treated as an individual and not just as part of the group. During their Konsti years, children and teachers assemble

a portfolio of each child's growth with artwork, photos and stories. All the important experiences of the child's life at school will be there for the parents and children to remember for years to come.

"Homework"

Sometimes we put together a project at Konsti that includes "homework". It might be taking photos, sharing stories, going to the library or something similar. Then the work continues in Konsti.

Parents sharing their professional knowledge and skills

Sometimes parents are active in sharing their professional skills or knowledge by visiting the kindergarten groups and giving presentations of their field of work. Different professions are introduced or the children go on fieldtrips together with parents. Just recently, a father who works as a nature and wilderness guide took the children to a wild forest. They hiked, played with natural elements, made a fire, ate lunch outside etc. It was a great experience for the whole group.

Parents Organization

The parents' organization is very active in Konsti. They work separately from the Kindergarten, but a staff member is included in their board and cooperation is strong. The organization organises different kinds of events to raise funds that are used to enrich Kindergarten life. We make fieldtrips to theatres, for example, or buy new toys and games, arrange concerts or professional lectures. This organization is also an important network for the families.

The final show "Proggis", the Pre-schoolers aged six

The Annual Spring Show "Proggis" is put together with the pre-school children, parents and Kindergarten staff. The children's own interests are used as a starting point to come up with ideas for the performance. Children together with the parents and teachers choose the theme, compose songs, make the stage set up and prepare the costumes. All this is done including different art forms: music, dance,

visual arts, multi-media education (e.g. Green screen and animation) are included in the process. Most years, the music for the show is composed and performed live by parents. Preparing the show brings up a strong feeling of self-confidence, belonging and shared creativity that accompanies the children throughout their school years.

Konsti Family

We talk constantly about the "Konsti family" that includes the present and former families of Konsti and the staff. We share a strong belonging to the community that we form. That feeling is built on sharing and doing things together along the years in Konsti. Parents for us are not only there to be invited to see the children perform twice a year, though we do that as well. They are a part of everyday life, all that happens and everything we learn. It is important for them to feel that they have an impact on what we do at our Kindergarten.

Maarit Lavas for the Konsti team

Musicanto, Music School Piosasco, Italy

www.musicanto.org



The music school is preparing a summer music holiday camp for parents and children. We plan to organise the children by age groups, to offer joint music and movement activities, and possibly end with a performance that includes everyone. At the moment we are looking for a suitable location in a relaxing environment for about 25 families.

Alberto Conrado, artistic director

CDM Centro Didattico Musicale Rome, Italy

centrodidatticomusicale.it



Relationship between parents and children

Over the years the interaction between parents and

children in Orff inspired group activities at the CDM shaped itself in different ways according to the average age of the group and the pedagogic view of the teacher, trying to inspire the building up of a social community of teachers, parents and grandparents joining their resources around and for the children's cognitive, social, emotional and musical development.

1) 0 to 24 months of life

The music activities involve both parents and their kids. The aim is to create a musical environment where children are immersed in the music experience facilitated by the teacher and performed by their parents. Children move and respond freely. The music game becomes a possible pattern of encounter between the baby and the adult, which can be repeated over and over again outside the music classroom too.

2) 3 to 6-year-old

My motto is: not even one kid crying. Therefore, at the beginning of the school year, the music classes involve parents who are invited to sing, dance, play, and act together with their own kids, with other kids in the group and with other parents. The idea is to establish a sense of cohesion and therefore safety within the group through activities, which would promote different relational schemes. Over time, sometimes the activity would contemplate a moment for the kids where they would play on their own, with parents just observing them. When the time is mature this moment can take the whole duration of the class, with parents waiting for the children outside.

When children start to attend the class alone, parents are invited in at the end of each lesson in different ways:

- a) children playing/singing/dancing something with them
- b) children playing/singing/dancing something for them
- c) children playing a prank on their parents: hiding, pretending to sleep, etc.
- d) parents witnessing the assessment moment of the class, where we would enlist what we did,

how we did it, what we liked or did not like, what we want to cherish until next time we meet.

3) 7 to 10-year-old

We allow parents to stay for the first two or three classes of the year, if children need it. When the group is formed and a sense of safety well established, we ask parents usually not to enter the class. Anyhow, very often at the end of the lesson we have a moment of sharing with the parents (see point a and b above).

Moreover, we usually have two open sessions or performances during the school year to show parents the outcome of the musical journey we have been doing and to celebrate with them their kids' development. Most of the time, the performances include a moment where parents are actively involved in dancing, singing, becoming part of a scene (this last one especially in Music Theatre classes).

4) From 10 years

Kids come to music classes usually by themselves. So, we mainly see parents for the two performances that we do during the year, as in point 3). Nevertheless, if parents are in the music school and we have a highlight to show, we would invite parents in and share with them the musical experience of their children.

4) Intergenerational groups

Over the years we have had groups where children over six years and their parents worked together. We have found that one of the best settings for this type of intergenerational work is Music Theatre.

5) Parents' groups

It also happened that parents – loving the kind of experience their kids were having at the music school – asked us to offer similar musical group activities for them. Obviously, this experience fostered their understanding of the musical learning process their children were going through and their own commitment to that process.

Valentina Iadeluca, co-director for the CDM team

San Francisco School San Francisco, USA



www.sfschool.org

1. Active presentations with parents as participants. Every year we have an opportunity to show parents through sample activities what the Orff-Schulwerk music program is like for their children. Parents always come to the music room on “Back to School Night” intrigued and excited (and sometimes nervous) because they know that we will be having them sing and dance and improvise. Sometimes activities that the parents do end up supporting the work of the children – for example, Sofia had parents of 3rd graders create graphic “bird song” scores that the students interpreted the next day.

2. Parents as a support network for the performing arts program. The committee (with 6–8 members) helped around practical organization work connected with performances (e. g. hiring a truck to transport the instruments to a nearby theatre, helping to set up the stage, organizing ushers for performances, making sure that the concerts were documented with audio, video and still photography, communicating about the performances to the school community). Several members of the committee had expertise in digital audio recording, and they helped us set up and execute an annual recording project at the school. This committee is no longer active (the building of an on-site performance space made off-campus performances unnecessary).

3. Parent and faculty chorus. For many years we convened an adult chorus composed of interested parents and teachers, and we would meet weekly, usually leading up to a performance featuring the elementary chorus. Parents loved the opportunity to sing together, they particularly enjoyed experiencing the vocal warm-ups and improvisation structures that we employ with our children’s chorus. We would choose a few songs in the elementary chorus repertoire that could be amplified by the

adults singing, and often would include a song sung by the adults alone. Children were excited to hear the added sonority of an adult chorus singing with them, and they were proud/embarrassed/excited to have their own parents on stage with them in the concert.

4. Bringing parental skills into the music and movement class. We are always on the lookout for parents who can bring particular skills into class. Here are some examples:

- A father with carpentry skills helping to build wooden frames for a drum-making project with 6th graders.
- A mother who works as a film sound designer coming into 7th grade music class to show examples of the effect of film sound design on the experience of a segment of action film.
- Two parents who played in the opera orchestra came with two colleagues to perform and record a string quartet arrangement of a piece composed by 7th graders.

5. Cultural celebration partners. In recent years, families from Indian, Pakistani and Sri Lankan heritage are a growing population in the San Francisco School. An organization of parents has begun a yearly tradition of producing a school-wide celebration of Diwali, the Hindu holiday celebrating the return of Rama and Sita. In recent years a parent has led the whole audience in learning a bangra dance routine. Sofia and I created a musical drama for 3rd, 4th and 5th graders based on the story of the Ramayana, and we worked closely with parents who have a deep knowledge of the story. Other parents supplied traditional clothing, helped on the day of the show with hair, make-up and dressing techniques. One grandfather opened the show by reading a Sanskrit passage from the original written account by the sage Valmiki. Working closely with a particular cultural minority community within our school has been an exciting extension of this work, and the participation of parents (and grandparents) from this community was key to the success of the project.

James Harding, teacher, for the music department

**Scuola Popolare di Musica
Donna Olimpia,
Rome, Italy**



www.donnaolimpia.it

We believe that the relationship with parents is fundamental for the success of courses with children. Therefore, we have developed a series of strategies to intensify the relationship with parents and invite them to participate. This is particularly the case for parents of the following groups:

1. Early Childhood (Age 0 to 4)

- Meetings with parents (every four months) dedicated to sharing the pedagogical lines of our work applied to the observations of the children's progression in their musical as well as in their social development. Parents are involved in some musical activities during the meetings. Laboratories are dedicated to the creation of material (e.g. small instruments, stories or drawings) needed for the annual music programme. Each parent prepares the material for his/her child according to the child's aesthetic preferences.

INFOMIC – Quarterly This is an internal magazine concerning **INFO** about **Musica In Culla** (Music Cradle) with contributions from parents and teachers:

- explaining the activities that are carried out according to the music educational programme exposed in the first meeting
- photographic report
- stories from parents
- suggestions of children's literature (which we use in music classes)
- suggestions of scientific and popular articles on early childhood music education.

Concerts – interactive concerts dedicated to families and their children.

2. Junior classes (from 4 years on)

The courses of "Music is a Game" represent a delicate moment in the relationship with the parents: the children are already old enough to be able to take courses on their own, but they do not yet have the ability to tell what happens during the lessons. Moreover, many of them come from the Musica in Culla classes, where the parents took part with the kids, also creating another kind of link with the teachers.

Every year we schedule two open classes for the parents to observe, followed by two meetings with the parents only, to explain what they have seen during the open classes, to talk about the progress of the group and each individual child.

Moreover, since last year, parents participate in the end of the year event, proposing together with the children some of the activities done during the open classes.

With the choirs (five groups) for children and young people we organize rehearsals and some concerts in which the children sing together with their parents.

3. Inclusive Music Classes

Before a new child is included, we meet only with the parents, collect information about the child, about the therapies, the child's autonomy and needs. A meeting follows with child and parent and later with the child alone. Then we suggest what we can do for the child and the relationship between parent and teacher is mediated.

Subsequently, a follow-up of the case is activated including talks with the parents and the teacher: the psychologist answers questions of the parents and advises the teacher about the course's progress.

Checco Galtieri, director

Translated by Verena Maschat