



Guidelines for conducting focus groups with kindergarten children

(materials developed within the national research on ensuring smooth transition of children from kindergarten to school)

Implementation of the focus group (by the kindergarten teacher)

You need to ensure suitable time and space for conducting the focus group with children. This should be the key activity (or part of it) on that day. Please, keep in mind that the focus group should be done before lunch/afternoon nap. Ensure space in your classroom (or outside) which allows you to have undisturbed conversation with children. Try to lead the discussion with children as spontaneously as possible, like having a usual conversation in your classroom.

It would be most suitable to conduct several focus groups with a lower number of children (maximum 5 children in each group). We advise you to carry out this conversation as one of the activities in your activity centres (or in any other appropriate room in the kindergarten), where one small group of children can talk to you and the rest do other activities.

You should record the conversation with a voice recorder machine or an application on your mobile phone. Please, make sure that there are no loud noises around you during your discussion with children in order for you to have no difficulties with preparing transcripts of the focus groups.

Use the questions below to obtain information from children. Please, set all the listed questions in the same order as written in the table. Do not set any further questions or sub-questions and do not comment on any of children's answers. It is very important that we do not imply any answers to children.

Note: make sure that only children with a written parents' consent can participate in focus groups.

Questions for conducting focus groups with kindergarten children

A suggestion on how to start with the conversation: "We are going to talk about your next year when you will be in school. I would like to hear your answers to the questions which I will be asking you. Just answer what comes to your mind."

<i>Daily routine – activities</i>
Do you know what your school day will look like?
<i>(ask children who answer YES additional question):</i> If YES, how will the day in school look like?
What do you think will be the same in school as it is in kindergarten (regarding the daily routine)?
What do you think will be different in school as it is in kindergarten (regarding the daily routine)?
What are you looking for the most that you will be doing in school?
Do you have any concerns regarding what you will be doing in school?
<i>(ask children who answer YES additional question):</i> If YES, what exactly are you concerned about doing in school?
<i>Learning environment</i>
Do you know what the building of the school looks like and how the school's surroundings look?



<i>(ask children who answer YES additional question):</i> If YES, tell me how the school and its surrounding look like.
Do you know what rooms in the school look like?
<i>(ask children who answer YES additional question):</i> If Yes, tell me which rooms are in school and describe them for me.
Do you know how your 1 st grade classroom next year looks like?
<i>(ask children who answer YES additional question):</i> If YES, please describe this classroom.
What do you think will be different in the 1 st grade classroom to our kindergarten classroom?
What do you think will be the same in the 1 st grade classroom to our kindergarten classroom?
What are you looking forward to regarding the 1 st grade classroom?
Do you think there will be anything you won't like in the 1 st grade classroom?
<i>(ask children who answer YES additional question):</i> If YES, tell me what you think you won't like.
Interactions
a) With classmates
What are you looking for the most regarding your new classmates in the 1 st grade?
Do you have any concerns regarding the new classmates?
<i>(ask children who answer YES additional question):</i> If YES, describe which concerns do you have regarding the new classmates in the 1 st grade.
b) Teacher
How do school and kindergarten teachers differ one from another?
What is it similar with the school and kindergarten teacher?
What kind of a teacher would you like to have? Please, describe her/him.

After the focus group

When you are finished talking to all the children, you should make a transcript of all conversations. It is very important that you write down the **exact wording** of your discussion with children. Do not use any children's names, but identify them with numbers (children 1, children 2, children 3, etc.).

Original Source

Navodila za izvedbo fokusne skupine z vrtčevskimi otrokoma temo tranzicije iz vrtca v šolo. TIM project