

ReED Handbook

ReED: Red noses in Early Childhood Education. Methodology and tools for new educational approaches



Co-funded by
the European Union



Welcome to ReED Handbook

Why this handbook:

This Handbook is the result of the Erasmus+ KA210 project Red noses in early childhood education: innovative educational approaches for ECEC teachers and educators (ReED) - project code: 2024-1-IT02-KA210-SCH-000251002. The volume is primarily intended for teachers, educators and parents, with the aim of strengthening social-emotional education and inclusion in educational contexts. Through the ReED Methodology based on clown pedagogy in particular, it aims to: support professionals in their daily work with practical tools and operational guidelines for designing activities; involve families through ideas and tools that can also be used at home; and encourage the involvement of the entire educational community, promoting awareness, a common language and opportunities for collaboration between schools, families and the local area.





CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: THE ReED METHODOLOGY.....	4
1. The ReED project.....	5
2. Needs Analysis: Where Did We Start?.....	6
3. Storytelling the steps of our project.....	11
4. The Comic-Relational Education Methodology of Teatro C'art.....	15
5. The ReED Methodology.....	17
ReED METHODOLOGY FOR TEACHERS AND EDUCATORS.....	20
1. Introduction to the use of classroom sessions.....	22
2. The sessions.....	23
3. Guidelines for organising a micro event for parental engagement event.....	24
ReED METHODOLOGY FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES.....	25
Introduction to the tools.....	26
CONCLUSIONS.....	29
APPENDIX.....	30
SESSIONS.....	32
GUIDELINES FOR MICRO EVENTS.....	54
TOOLS FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES.....	58





INTRODUCTION: THE ReED METHODOLOGY



1. THE ReED PROJECT

Red noses in early childhood education: innovative educational approaches for ECEC teachers and educators (ReED) is a European Erasmus project that aims to strengthen the quality and inclusiveness of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) by introducing innovative educational approaches inspired by clown pedagogy.

ReED's objective is to create a methodology that combines the non-formal education experience of the arts organisation C'ART, with the formal expertise of ECEC teachers from Italy, Germany and Greece. This project supports children's social-emotional development and the creation of inclusive classroom environments. ReED focuses on the professional development of educators, the promotion of inclusion and respect for diversity, and the active involvement of families. It focuses on the 3-6 age group (ISCED 020) and its key outcomes include a co-created and tested methodology handbook, parental engagement activities and tools, and a final international conference to disseminate results and foster long-term cooperation across ECEC and cultural sectors.

The project ran from October 2024 to February 2026 and involved the Teatro C'art APS (IT) as lead partner and the Castelfiorentino Comprehensive School (IT), Pestalozzi-Fröbel-Haus (DE) and Akata Makata (EL) as partners.



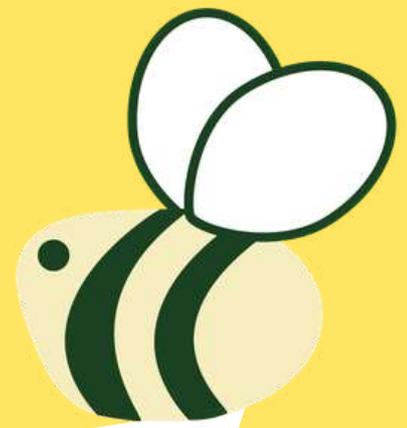


2. NEED ANALYSIS: WHERE DID WE START FROM?

The project Red Noses in Early Childhood Education: Innovative Educational Approaches for ECEC Teachers and Educators (ReED) was conceived to address shared challenges in European ECEC systems: the necessity to enhance quality and inclusion via innovative pedagogical methods and cross-sector cooperation.

In Italy, Germany, and Greece, ECEC professionals confronted similar difficulties: overcrowded classrooms, absence of personalised and inclusive approaches, and rising emotional and relational problems among children following the pandemic. Teachers suffered high levels of stress and required continuous professional development, opportunities for exchange, and practical tools to strengthen socio-emotional education.

Recent data underlined persistent challenges at the project's outset. Participation in ECEC for children aged 3 and over stood at 91% in Italy, 93.1% in Germany, and 68.8% in Greece (2023 Eurostat), below the EU 96% target for 2030, with quality gaps particularly for disadvantaged children—23.5% of EU children under 6 at risk of poverty or social exclusion. For under-3s, EU participation reached only 38%, with Greece below 5% in certain indicators, indicating unmet needs. TALIS 2024 confirmed teacher stress from administrative workload (around 50% across OECD), classroom discipline, and ongoing changes, while over two-thirds of European countries reported shortages of core practitioners; maximum child-staff ratios frequently doubled from age 2 to 4.



Public expenditure on ECEC had increased EU-wide from 0.67% of GDP (2014) to 0.71% (2021), yet per-child spending at pre-primary level equalled or trailed primary education in most countries. Fewer than half of systems mandated bachelor's-level qualifications for all core staff, and one-third allocated no specific CPD time for assistants.

From these starting conditions, ReED promoted collaboration between cultural and educational sectors, engaging families, schools, and artists to advance inclusion and social cohesion. The initiative aligned fully with the European Quality Framework for ECEC and Principle 11 of the European Pillar of Social Rights, which emphasise children's right to affordable, high-quality early education. By integrating non-formal arts expertise with formal education systems, ReED successfully co-created and tested a clown-inspired methodology empowering teachers, reinforcing communities, and establishing equitable, emotionally supportive early learning environments across Europe.

In the initial phase of the project, the partners shared the critical issues and specific needs of each school context and conducted a survey for teachers, educators and parents, involving 78 teachers and parents, to gather information on social and emotional learning.



2.1 ITALY



Istituto
Comprendivo di
Castelfiorentino
(IT),

In Italy, ECEC is a structural component of the education system and is divided into two segments: educational services for 0–3-year-old (nurseries and supplementary services, not compulsory) and pre-school for 3–6-year-old (first stage of education, not compulsory). The 0–6 framework aims to provide educational continuity between the two segments through a common pedagogical framework and national guidelines.

One of the main objectives is to promote play as a pedagogical, relational and discovery resource; inclusion is a widely recognised principle, but its effectiveness often depends on concrete conditions (available space, resources, class composition).

This is the context in which the Castelfiorentino Comprehensive School operates, active in a multicultural environment and oriented towards the idea of a 'school for everyone and for each individual', with a focus on the centrality of the person and respect for differences, promoting common ground for diversity.

The main barriers are mainly structural: language barriers, lack of space and limited economic resources. School-family dialogue is perceived as a strength: communication is rated as good, and face-to-face meetings and joint workshops are particularly effective.

Non-formal approaches, such as clown pedagogy, are considered 'realistic' because they engage with real human behavior, emotions, and social dynamics rather than focusing only on abstract theory or rigid instruction.

The survey conducted as part of the ReED project shows that current practices do not always succeed in supporting all pupils effectively and reiterates the need for a school that actively promotes inclusion, together with a constant need for updating on innovative methods and tools for overcoming language barriers and supporting social and emotional skills.



2.2

GERMANY

In Germany, ECEC is not part of the school system, but falls under the area of Child and Youth Welfare (SGB VIII) and includes services until entry into primary school. The provision is divided into Kindertagespflege and Kindertageseinrichtungen with responsibilities and rules defined by the Länder and often implemented at local level. In Berlin, ECEC services operate within the framework of the Berlin Education Program for Daycare Centers and Child Day Care, which adopts a broad concept of inclusion, which means not only disability, but all forms of diversity that affect educational and life opportunities and values participation and co-determination.

The Pestalozzi-Fröbel-Haus is part of this system, where parents are considered key educational partners and education is seen as an active, social and 'enjoyable' process, in which emotional and social learning is essential even when not explicitly defined as SEL (socio-emotional learning). The survey of educators and parents highlights that the main critical issues mainly concern limitations in human and structural resources; lack of support from families does not emerge as a major problem. Practices of collaboration with parents are widespread, but not all are perceived as equally effective.

Socio-emotional learning is known to most professionals and is unanimously considered essential for successful learning; at the same time, there is a need for simple, everyday, low-threshold methods that can be implemented in realistic conditions, as well as further training to strengthen relational and inclusive skills.



2.3

GREECE



In Greece, ECEC is organised into two systems: provision for children 0–4-year-old, such as municipal infant, infant/child and child care centres, which are more care-oriented and often lack uniform national educational guidelines, and pre school for 4–6-year-old, which is compulsory nationwide. Inclusion and parental engagement are recognised as crucial issues, but implementation is uneven and strongly influenced by resources, training and access to specialist support.

The Greek partner Akata Makata is a nursery and preschool in Larissa, Greece. A national needs assessment was conducted, gathering perspectives from both educators and parents/guardians. The survey, which engaged 40 participants, revealed a shared recognition of the paramount importance of SEL.

National trends reveal a dual movement: on one hand, the promotion of inclusive policies aligned with EU directives; on the other, structural and cultural barriers that hinder full implementation. These include insufficient resources for children with special needs, gaps in teacher training, and inconsistent support for families across different socio-economic backgrounds.

The survey shows a shared recognition of the importance of inclusion and SEL, together with a strong demand for training to effectively integrate SEL into educational practice. Recurring barriers include a lack of resources and time, specialist support that is not always available, and difficulties in making inclusive practices systematic in everyday life. The production of accessible 'parent-facing' materials is identified as a priority in order to reduce the gap and support families at home. Finally, a low-resource approach is recommended, which can be integrated into routines and co-created with teachers and parents through testing and feedback, strengthening the school-family partnership for a sustainable impact.



3. STORYTELLING THE STEPS OF OUR PROJECT



The ReED project was initiated by our need to identify existing practices in the participating schools, that actively involved parents and families in school life and exchange good practices by sharing, sectoral cross-fertilisation and international comparison. Building on this strong foundation, the partners identified the need to further strengthen social-emotional learning and inclusion through innovative, arts-based approaches in order to promote inclusion and respect for diversity. This need met the aim of the project for fostering the professional development of ECEC staff and to create an opportunity for international cooperation between partners, which will be the basis for future projects involving wider ECEC networks.

This need led us to the ReED Learning, Teaching and Training Activity (LTTA), which took place in Castelfiorentino, Italy. During this training, the cultural partner C'ART introduced ECEC teachers to the Comic Relational Education Methodology, clown pedagogy and physical theatre practices, drawing on their long-standing experience in educational contexts. Through hands-on workshops, group work and reflection, participants explored how these practices could be adapted to early childhood education. Together, arts professionals and teachers brainstormed and co-created a series of educational sessions, which laid the foundations of what would later become the ReED methodology.



Co-funded by
the European Union

Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.



3. STORYTELLING THE STEPS OF OUR PROJECT

ReED LTTA in Castelfiorentino, Italy.

Learning, Teaching and Training Activity



Comic Relational Education



Clown pedagogy



Educational contexts



Physical theatre practices



3. STORYTELLING THE STEPS OF OUR PROJECT



Following the LTTA, partners continued their collaboration through virtual meetings, where they jointly developed the first draft of the ReED handbook, translating the ideas generated in Castelfiorentino into a structured and usable methodology.

The draft ReED methodology was tested in classroom settings in all partner countries (Germany, Greece and Italy). Teachers implemented the proposed sessions with their students, while being guided and supported by the project team and overviewed by the art professionals. The testing phase was documented by all partners and the results were collected in a shared report, providing feedback for further feedback and refinement. At the same time, partners co-created tools, games and activities that were specifically designed for parental engagement, recognising families as key actors in children's social-emotional development.



These tools were then put into practice through small-scale Parental Engagement Micro-Events. The first was organised in Germany, where families were invited to participate and trainers from Teatro C'art were directly involved, creating a joyful and inclusive atmosphere. Building on this experience, similar micro-events were subsequently implemented in Italy and Greece, adapting the format to local school contexts while maintaining the core ReED principles.

Finally, the consortium focused on consolidating and sharing the project's results. This included ongoing communication and dissemination activities, the finalisation of the ReED handbook, and the organisation of a final blended dissemination conference, open to local and international stakeholders. Through these actions, ReED ensured that its innovative methodology, tools and experiences reached a wider European audience and laid the groundwork for future cooperation between ECEC and cultural sectors.



Co-funded by
the European Union

Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.

4. THE COMIC-RELATIONAL EDUCATION METHODOLOGY OF TEATRO C'ART

The ReED Methodology originates from the Comic Educational methodology devised by Brazilian clown and Artistic Director of Teatro C'art André Casaca, with whom the project teachers received training in the context of the project's LTTA.

The Comico Relazionale Methodology focuses on the development of individual identity and relationships and is used in training courses throughout the Company, in all artistic, social and educational fields. It has been applied in Italian schools and comprehensive institutes for over twenty years and has involved more than 30,000 children and young people and contributed to the training of thousands of teachers and educators.

It is a method that focuses on individual diversity, working on the development of individual identity and interpersonal relationships, believing these to be constructive elements of a pedagogy aimed at enhancing the search for meaning in the activities proposed by educators.

It is therefore a method that changes the educational approach and promotes a methodology that focuses on the child, their desires, motivations and personal growth. The choice of non-verbal language during most of the activity stimulates work at the level of sensations, where emotions are always dealt with in a light-hearted way, thus opening a window to trust in group play and creating understanding and trust between children and teachers, consequently removing judgement and fear of exposing oneself both emotionally and rationally. The clown mask, 'The Red Nose', due to its small size, is a mask that reveals rather than conceals what each student essentially is: the clown represents our instinctive side, the 'natural stupidity' that each individual expresses unconsciously.

In school, teachers' conscious use of 'stupidity' stimulates students' interest and intelligence, becoming a channel that allows a compromise to be struck between the formal and informal during learning.

4. THE COMIC-RELATIONAL EDUCATION METHODOLOGY OF TEATRO C'ART

The teacher maintains authority, but changes the 'frequency' of the educational relationship, basing it on horizontality, equality, smiles and participation. The clown does not imitate children: he recovers his naivety while remaining an adult, and therefore does not 'pretend', but plays with them, identifying with them and creating common ground.

Through clowning, the teacher establishes play and humour as a relational and learning tool, constantly stimulating students to learn with pleasure, freedom and interest, while maintaining the awareness that humour in the educational environment does not detract from attention or authority.

In school, understood as a 'place of natural learning' at a relational level, it is essential that the content conveyed to pupils is the result of a direct and truthful relationship, since the interlocutors (adults and children) are people who must relate to and coexist within the school. In this context, the clown works on horizontality, listening and acceptance of others. These elements promote genuine exchange, as well as fostering the cognitive development process.

The clown acts foolishly because he is amazed, because he is astonished, and not because he lacks intelligence. On the contrary, children's discovery of the clown figure is that a foolish being becomes fascinating, because his intelligence becomes creativity, and his ignorance, confusion or mistakes become comically appropriate, which indirectly stimulates him intellectually. The clown therefore proposes an elementary language, accessible to all, a language of body and emotions where reason and words are of great importance and for this very reason should be used with moderation.

A few years ago, in a nursery school in Borgo San Lorenzo (Florence, Italy), at the end of a course in which he had become a clown, a five-year-old boy said: 'I realised that the red nose preserves words'. With that sentence, he expressed a naturally developed insight: in clowning, the funny and clumsy body can communicate effectively even without speaking. This observation led to the recognition that words are not unnecessary, but it is important to preserve them and use them sparingly, because that is how they acquire value and become truly meaningful.



5. THE ReED METHODOLOGY

The ReED Methodology is an innovative educational approach that connects clowning, play, and body-based learning to support inclusion, empathy, and emotional development in early childhood education. Developed within an Erasmus+ partnership among European organisations, ReED seeks to bring back to education its human dimension, where learning is a shared, joyful, and relational experience. It reimagines the classroom as a space of shared humanity, where educators and children connect through presence, curiosity, and joy rather than formal instruction.

ReED draws inspiration from the Comic-Relational Education Methodology of Teatro C'Art, which uses physical theatre and clowning to activate emotional awareness and connection. This approach works beyond verbal barriers: it is accessible to all children, including those with disabilities or different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, by working directly with the universal languages of the body - movement, rhythm, gesture, and laughter - to foster emotional awareness, group connection, and socio-emotional skills.

ReED methodology follows a clear yet flexible structure designed for small groups, ensuring emotional safety and inclusive participation and build around **three foundational principles**:



- **Body and play as educational languages** – Movement, rhythm, and shared laughter create connection before words are needed.
- **Trust in the process** – Freedom to experiment without performance pressure, welcoming the unexpected.
- **Reflective observation** – Educators facilitate as witnesses, not judges, observing natural learning emerge.

The educator embodies the clown's qualities: vulnerability, active listening, and curiosity about mistakes. The red nose serves as a simple symbol of imperfection and openness, inviting everyone to enter a playful space where roles suspend and humanity connects.

5. THE ReED METHODOLOGY

Key Educational Principles

From practice, seven interconnected principles define ReED's approach:

1. **Body as language of inclusion.** Gestures, imitation, and rhythm build belonging universally, accessible regardless of language, culture, or ability.
2. **Humour as bridge to learning.** Laughter dissolves tension, fosters empathy, and turns frustration into collaboration — a form of emotional intelligence.
3. **Trust in process.** Releasing rigid control allows creativity and mutual trust to flourish in relational flow.
4. **Error as resource.** Mistakes become discoveries; laughing at falls builds resilience and collective courage.
5. **Reciprocal listening.** Mirroring emotions through body and gesture teaches empathy as lived experience.
6. **Flexible inclusion.** Participation adapts to individual comfort — active, observational, or symbolic — valuing all forms of presence.
7. **Care and tenderness.** Gentle acts of support (helping a “sad clown”) make empathy playful and reciprocal.

Joy weaves through all elements, aligning emotion with cognition: happy children engage more deeply, and educators' pleasure amplifies group connection.

ReED offers concrete **activities and tools** co-created by educators that can be integrated easily into daily routines, requiring minimal resources, and emphasise low-pressure adaptation to group needs. The methodology supports family involvement by providing accessible home annex, strengthening school-community ties.

ReED is not mere activities but a pedagogy of presence where there are educators as clowns, children as protagonists in relational discovery. By weaving body, humour, and empathy, it crafts classrooms where diversity thrives, emotions flourish, and learning celebrates imperfection. In Europe's diverse schools, **ReED invites a return to education's heart: curiosity, connection, and laughter together.**



5. THE ReED METHODOLOGY

Key Educational Principles

01 Body as language of inclusion

Gestures, imitation, and rhythm build belonging universally, accessible regardless of language, culture, or ability.

05 Reciprocal listening

Mirroring emotions through body and gesture teaches empathy as lived experience.

02 Humour as bridge to learning

Laughter dissolves tension, fosters empathy, and turns frustration into collaboration — a form of emotional intelligence.

06 Flexible inclusion

Participation adapts to individual comfort — active, observational, or symbolic — valuing all forms of presence.

03 Trust in process

Releasing rigid control allows creativity and mutual trust to flourish in relational flow.

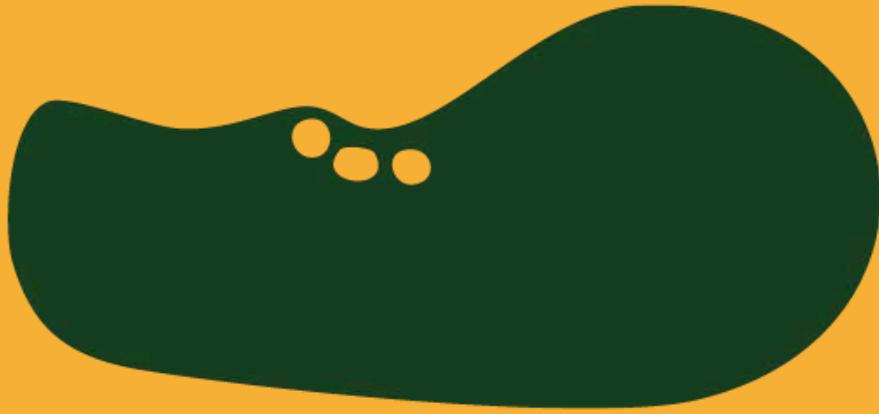
07 Care and tenderness

Gentle acts of support (helping a “sad clown”) make empathy playful and reciprocal.

04 Error as resource

Mistakes become discoveries; laughing at falls builds resilience and collective courage.





ReED
METHODOLOGY
FOR TEACHERS
AND EDUCATORS
(sessions)



1. INTRODUCTION TO THE USE OF CLASSROOM SESSIONS

Classroom sessions are structured yet flexible learning experiences designed to support children’s holistic development through active participation, play, and reflection. In the ReED – Red Noses in Early Childhood Education project, classroom sessions are used as a methodological framework to introduce innovative, inclusive, and child-centred practices inspired by clowning, movement, and non-verbal communication.

These sessions are not traditional lessons. Instead, they are experiential learning moments where children learn by doing, feeling, observing, and interacting with others. Each session is carefully designed to create a safe, playful, and inclusive environment, allowing every child—regardless of language level, ability, temperament, or background—to participate meaningfully.

Purpose of the Classroom Sessions

The classroom sessions aim to:

- Foster inclusion and belonging through shared playful experiences
- Support body awareness, emotional expression, and self-confidence
- Encourage social interaction, cooperation, and empathy
- Promote non-verbal communication as an equal and accessible language for all children
- Strengthen children’s ability to face challenges, adapt, and build resilience

How the Sessions Are Used

Each classroom session follows a **clear but adaptable structure**:

- a welcoming introduction to set a playful and trusting tone
- a sequence of activities combining movement, imagination, and clown-inspired play
- moments of calm and reflection to help children process their experiences

While some activities seem to be *fixed* to ensure methodological consistency, educators are encouraged to **adapt the flow, timing, and intensity** of the session according to the group’s needs, mood, and dynamics on that day.

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE USE OF CLASSROOM SESSIONS

Role of the Educator

The educator takes on the role of a facilitator and playful guide, often using clown elements (such as exaggeration, curiosity, or gentle confusion) to lower performance pressure and invite participation. The focus is not on achieving a “correct” result, but on:

- valuing every form of expression
- observing children’s responses
- adapting activities to ensure accessibility and emotional safety

Observation, Reflection, and Monitoring

Each session includes tools for documentation and reflection, such as:

- teacher diaries
- activity tracking sheets
- photos, videos, drawings, or voice feedback

These elements support educators in reflecting on their practice, understanding children’s responses, and monitoring the impact of the methodology over time.

In Summary

The classroom sessions serve as a practical and reflective space where play becomes a powerful educational tool. Through clowning, movement, and shared imagination, children are invited to explore themselves and others—learning that diversity, mistakes, emotions, and cooperation are all essential parts of growing together.



2. THE SESSIONS

The ReED methodology sessions are the result of classroom testing carried out by Italian, German and Greek teachers as part of the project. Each session is included in the appendix of this handbook so that every educator can download them and use them as a guide or inspiration for their own classroom work. Below is a brief summary of the sessions to illustrate the topics they cover:

SESSION 1 – “THE SILLY BODY PARADE!”

Theme: body awareness and inclusion

Keywords: movement, trust, joy

SESSION 2 – “THE INVISIBLE STRING OF FRIENDSHIP”

Theme: empathy and non-verbal connection

Keywords: empathy, trust, connection → Silent listening as the basis of the relationship.

SESSION 3 – “WORKING WITH EMOTIONS – PRACTICING TO EXPRESS YOURSELF”

Theme: emotional education and self-expression

Keywords: emotions, regulation, self-confidence, self-expression

SESSION 4 – “BUILD UP THE RESILIENCE THROUGH OBSTACLES”

Theme: resilience, humour and cooperation

Keywords: resilience, creativity, humour

SESSION 5 – “SIT DOWN, NO YOU SIT DOWN!”

Theme: mutual care and trust

Keywords: care, empathy, trust

SESSION 6 – “THE LITTLE CLOWN STAGE”

Theme: group cooperation and celebration

Keywords: cooperation, trust, celebration

SESSION 7 – “SELF AWARENESS. CLOWN COLLABORATES WITH OTHERS”

Theme: acceptance of error and freedom of expression

Keywords: inclusion, self-acceptance, compassion

SESSION 8 – “TRUST YOURSELF”

Theme: celebration and awareness

Keywords: celebration, belonging, gratitude

3. GUIDELINES FOR ORGANISING A MICRO EVENT FOR PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

The guidelines for organising a micro event for parental engagement, are based on the experience of the ReED project on parental engagement in ECEC contexts: the partners co-designed formats and activities, comparing needs and practices in different contexts. The process began with a pilot micro event carried out at the Pestalozzi-Fröbel-Haus partner school in Berlin, which allowed the structure, timing and level of accessibility for families and children to be tested. Based on that experience, three other micro-events were then held in the partners' schools/contexts, adapting them to their respective audiences and contexts. The shared analysis of the results led to the drafting of these guidelines, designed to be replicable and easily adaptable to the needs of schools, families and the educational community.

In our case, during the micro-events, tools for parents were also presented "Clown school for the home": a dice that offers quick ideas for clown improvisation exercises (emotions, movements, relationships, small non-verbal "challenges") and a deck of cards with clown games to play as a family, designed to encourage listening, complicity and emotional dialogue through short, repeatable activities. Participants tried out the tools live and were shown how to use them step by step, so that they could easily reproduce them at home. The ready-to-use tools are available in the Appendix; alternatively, teachers, educators and parents can use them as a model and invent new tools adapted to their own needs.

The following guidelines can support the successful organisation of a micro-event for parental engagement, especially within Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) contexts and socio-emotional learning frameworks. Educators can follow the guidelines but also extend them according to the specific needs of the schools, the families and the community.



ReED
METHODOLOGY
FOR PARENTS
AND FAMILIES
(the tools)



1. INTRODUCTION TO THE TOOLS

Clown School for Home – Play Impulses to Promote Emotional and Social Skills

"What if we didn't act and react in everyday life as we are used to? If we leave out words and instead let facial expressions, gestures and movement speak?"

These questions form the basis of the "Clown School for Home", which was distributed to parents and guardians as part of the Parental Engagement Micro Events. The collection transfers approaches from clown pedagogy into everyday family life and opens up playful, low-threshold access to emotional expression, relationship design and a change of perspective.

The focus is on the figure of the clown: curious, present, persevering and open to failure. The clown acts in the moment, tries things out and takes all feelings seriously – without judging them. His behavior is not hurtful, but connective. To get involved in this game as an adult, you don't need a red nose, but the willingness to let go of control and get involved in doing things together.

The material consists of ten A6-sized maps (20 pages), 7 cards and one template for a soft dice and is available as a PDF. It includes seven play impulses that specifically promote emotional and social skills. Basic emotions play a central role here, as well as coincidence, which always gives rise to new, unplanned situations. These prompt us to express, perceive, name and regulate emotions.

As in social interaction, emotions also fulfil an important function in play: children and adults alike are called upon to recognise their own feelings and the emotions of their counterparts, to classify them and to react appropriately to them. The impulses encourage us to do comic things, to break through familiar reaction patterns, to act upside down or to temporarily do without language altogether. This enables a conscious change of perspective.

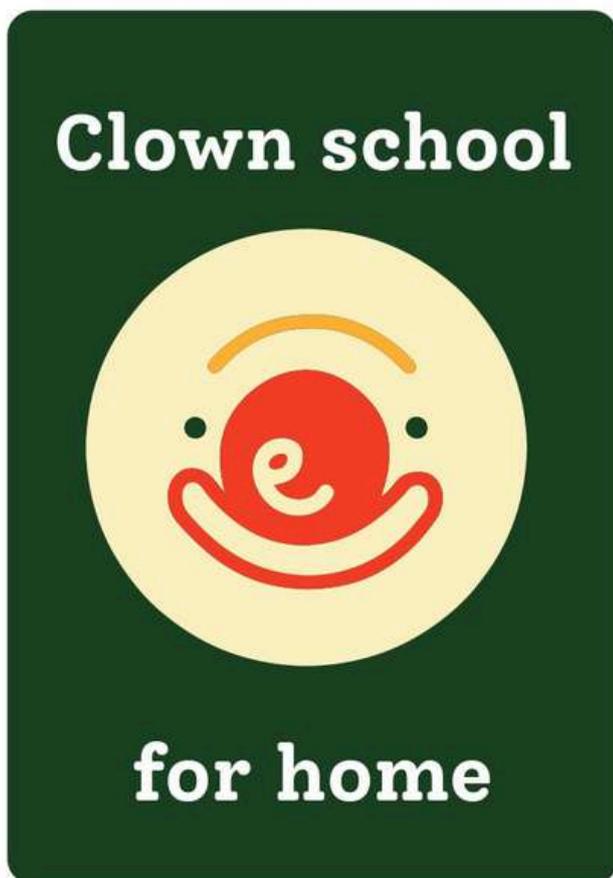
The aim of the impulses is to encourage parents and children to try out new forms of encounter and expression. Everyday life is deliberately interrupted, while body language, facial expressions, gestures and movement come to the fore. This sharpens the perception of feelings, moods and needs and supports the social and emotional development of the children, especially in the areas of empathy, self-regulation and perspective-taking.

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE TOOLS

At the same time, the play impulses strengthen the parent-child relationship: playing together, laughing and trying things out create trust and connection. Mistakes are allowed and are understood as part of the learning process. Parents do not experience themselves as guides, but as players and learners – with the aim of promoting an open, appreciative and inclusive learning and living environment.

The following content refers to tools (activities and practices) for parents and families, which you can find in the appendix , ready to be printed or consulted.

Download your cards here: [Link for cards](#) OR print them!





CONCLUSIONS



CONCLUSIONS

This handbook brings together the vision, practices and shared learning that shaped the ReED project, reaffirming its core purpose: to strengthen the quality and inclusiveness of Early Childhood Education and Care through a methodology that places relationships, emotions and embodied learning at the centre. By integrating clown pedagogy with everyday educational practice, ReED provides teachers, educators and families with accessible tools to nurture empathy, connection and joy in early learning environments.

The methodology offers a distinctive pedagogical approach grounded in the body as a universal language, humour as a catalyst for learning, and error as a creative resource. Its principles (trust in the process, reciprocal listening, flexible inclusion and care) give educators a coherent and adaptable framework. By emphasising presence, curiosity and relational play, ReED supports children in developing socio-emotional skills essential for their well-being and lifelong learning.

The impact observed across partner contexts highlights the potential of this approach: children participated with greater confidence, educators discovered new relational strategies, and families shared meaningful moments of playful connection. The methodology's simplicity and low-threshold nature make it suitable for diverse educational settings, encouraging further experimentation and adaptation. In a time when schools face increasing challenges, ReED offers a sustainable, human-centred pathway for strengthening participation and educational cohesion.

The journey that led to this methodology was deeply collaborative. Partners from Italy, Germany and Greece began by analysing their contexts, identifying common challenges and exchanging practices, demonstrating how shared European values of cooperation, inclusion and mutual learning can turn diversity into strength. This outcome would not have been possible without the transnational dialogue that allowed different perspectives, cultures and educational traditions to meet. Despite the geographical distance (and in many ways thanks to it) the process unfolded with remarkable harmony, creativity and trust.

ReED is not only a methodology, but a common ground that reflects a wider European perspective: schools that learn from one another, communities that grow together, and educators who recognise themselves as part of a shared educational horizon. This experience shows that when we work across borders, we create models capable of inspiring schools and educators throughout Europe to embrace collaboration, openness and the joy of building something truly shared.

APPENDIX

SESSIONS..... 32
GUIDELINES MICROEVENT..... 54
PARENTAL TOOLS..... 58



SESSIONS



SESSION 1

Download the sessions [HERE](#) 
Or print them

SESSION 1 - 'THE SILLY PARADE OF BODIES!'

Title: 'The stupid parade of bodies!'

Theme: Clowning for body awareness and inclusion

Age: 3–6 years

Duration: 50–60 minutes

Setting: Indoor or outdoor open space

General objective of the session:

Promoting inclusion by improving children's body awareness, self-expression and social connection through playful movements inspired by clowns.

Specific objectives of the session:

1. Body awareness:

Help children explore the movement potential of different parts of the body (head, arms, legs, torso, etc.).

2. Emotional inclusion and trust:

Create a safe and fun space where every child feels recognised, appreciated and free to express themselves without being judged.

3. Communication without language:

Use non-verbal cues (clowns, gestures, sounds) to engage children who may have difficulty with verbal language or who come from different linguistic backgrounds.

4. Social inclusion:

Encourage peer interaction, imitation and cooperation through fun, non-competitive group games.

Required materials:

- Red clown nose (for the teacher/educator)
- Fun music (instrumental, light, cheerful)
- Optional: scarves, hats, or ribbon wands to add a bit of fun

STEP-BY-STEP ACTIVITY FLOW

Welcome and introduction (2–3 minutes)

- The clown teacher enters the 'confused' space and begins to walk in a strange and clumsy manner.
- He asks the children: "Hmm, how do you walk?" He invites them to show you!
- Break the ice and encourage everyone to participate actively.

SESSION 1

Download the sessions [HERE](#) 
Or print them

SESSION 1 - 'THE SILLY PARADE OF BODIES!'

1. Exploration of body movement (10–12 minutes)

The teacher/educator says:

"Let's see what our bodies can do! Follow me!"

2. Walking and freezing game (5 min)

Walk, jump, tiptoe or slide... Suddenly you find yourself stuck in a funny pose!

3. Wave of body parts (5 min)

"Can your elbow wave hello?" (children move only their elbows, then their knees, nose, etc.)

4. Move slowly / Move quickly (5 min)

Children imitate their teacher/educator: slowly like a tortoise, then quickly like a rocket.

5. Playing with opposites (5 min)

- Big steps / small steps
- Light as a feather / heavy as an elephant
- Strong beats / calm beats
-

6. Group connection: Circle "Copy the clown" (10 min)

- One child becomes the 'mini clown' and performs a movement.
- The others mirror it.
- Promotes respect, observation, inclusion, and peer leadership.

Cooling down and reflection (5-10 min)

The children sit or lie down and place their hands on their stomachs.

They breathe in and out with a gentle clown-like hum or soft music.

Ask them:

"Which part of your body did you enjoy moving today?"

"How did your body feel when you moved quickly? Slowly?"

Tips for inclusive practice:

Always celebrate all movements (there is no "wrong" way to move).

Respect children's unique gestures if they are shy: give them confidence.

Include children with motor or developmental difficulties by adapting the movement (e.g., moving the hands instead of the whole body).

SESSION 1

Download the sessions [HERE](#) 
Or print them

TEACHER'S DIARY

Guiding questions for teachers approaching the ReED methodology

1. How did you feel about doing this activity with the children?
2. What worked best?
3. Did you encounter any difficulties or challenges? What were they?
4. Was there a moment when you felt surprised?
5. Did the children enjoy themselves? How did you figure that out?
6. Were there children who needed more support?
7. How did you adapt the activities to the needs of the group?
8. Which activities would you repeat? Which would you avoid or change?
9. How did you feel at the end of the session?
10. What would you like to remember next time?

Activities carried out:

Collected materials:

SESSION 2

Download the sessions [HERE](#) 
Or print them

SESSION 2 – ‘THE INVISIBLE STRING OF FRIENDSHIP’

Title: ‘The Invisible String of Friendship’

Theme: Empathy and non-verbal connection

Age: 3–6 years

Duration: 50–75 minutes

Setting: Open classroom, playroom, or gym hall

General objective of the session:

To **promote inclusion** through joyful, clown-inspired **non-verbal communication and physical connection**, supporting body awareness, empathy, and co-presence in a playful way.

Specific objectives of the session

1. Non-Verbal Expression:

2. Enable children to communicate feelings and intentions using body movement and facial expressions.

3. Peer Connection:

4. Encourage children to **trust, cooperate, and physically engage with each other** in a safe, consent-based way.

5. Emotional & Social Inclusion:

6. Create joyful shared experiences where all children—regardless of language level or ability—can **participate equally**.

7. Body Awareness & Respect:

8. Help children become aware of personal and others’ bodies through fun and respectful physical play.

Materials needed

- Clown noses or hats (optional)
- Soft music for movement
- A gentle instrument like a bell or tambourine (for “freeze” cue)

STEP BY STEP ACTIVITY FLOW

1. Warm-Up Circle: “Hello Without Words” (3–5 min)

- Invite each child to greet the group using only body or facial gestures (wave, jump, nod, wiggle, etc.).
- Clown facilitator mirrors them dramatically and lovingly.

Sets tone for playfulness, validation, and non-verbal interaction.

SESSION 2

Download the sessions [HERE](#) 
Or print them

Main Activities (20 min)

2. Nose-Follows-Finger

- In pairs: one child gently leads with their finger, the other follows with their nose, like an invisible string connects them.
- Switch roles.

Develops trust, fine motor control, and playful cooperation.

3. Freeze When They Stop

- One child leads a movement across the room.
- The other follows closely. When the leader suddenly stops, the follower must freeze like a statue.
- Swap roles with music between rounds.

Promotes body control, focus, and attunement to others.

4. Point & Pull

- In pairs, one points at a part of the other's body (e.g., knee, shoulder, elbow).
- The other reacts by gently pulling back that part, as if tickled or magnetized.

Fosters awareness of own and others' bodies while creating playful boundaries.

5. Back-to-Back Mirror

- Children sit or stand back-to-back.
- One makes small movements (wiggling shoulders, turning neck).
- The other must feel and mirror the movements without seeing.

Enhances tactile awareness, empathy, and deep listening.

6. Invisible Balloon

- Partners pretend they're holding a shared invisible balloon between them — belly to belly, hand to hand, forehead to forehead.
- They must move around the space together without “dropping” it.
- Use slow, exaggerated clown movements.

Builds focus, shared rhythm, and a gentle sense of touch & balance.

SESSION 2

Download the sessions [HERE](#) 
Or print them

7. Spotlight Meeting

(You meet each other, look into each other's eyes, then face the audience)

- Two children start from opposite sides of the space.
- They walk toward each other slowly (clown-style: wobbly, curious, tiptoeing, or exaggerated).
- When they meet in the middle, they:
 - Look at each other in the eyes for 2–3 seconds (with big clownish curiosity!).
 - Then turn together toward the rest of the group (the 'audience') and strike a funny pose (hands up, arms open, etc.).
- The audience gives a joyful clap or silent laugh.
- Repeat with new pairs.

Fosters recognition, presence, and confidence. Supports children in being seen and seeing others in a safe, inclusive, joyful way. It's also great for building empathy and positive social visibility.

Cool-Down & Reflection (3–5 min)

Lie down or sit in a circle.

Ask children:

- “How did it feel to move together?”
- “Which part of your friend's body made you smile?”
- “Was it easier or harder to play without talking?”

Use a soft clownish voice or prop (a hat, puppet, or nose) for storytelling.

Tips for an inclusive practice

- Allow touch-free adaptations (e.g., “mirror me with your eyes”).
- Encourage and validate all responses, including slow or subtle ones.
- Pair children across language or behavioral barriers gently, always with consent and support.

SESSION 3

Download the sessions [HERE](#) 
Or print them

SESSION 3 – ‘WORKING WITH EMOTIONS – PRACTICING TO EXPRESS YOURSELF’

Title: Working with emotions - Practicing to express yourself

Theme: Emotional education and self-expression

Age: 3–6 years

Duration: 50–75 minutes

Setting: Open classroom, playroom, or gym hall

General objective of the session:

Emotions as a shared language! The third session highlights the power of clowning as a tool for fostering empathy and emotional regulation. It promotes inclusion and social connection through playful exploration of emotions and the expressive potential of the clown’s body language.

The activities support inclusion by strengthening children’s body awareness, self-expression, and social connection through movement and relationship-building. By exaggerating emotional expressions, children experience freedom and heightened awareness, learning that all emotions are valid, shareable, and transformable into theatrical gestures.

Specific objectives of the session

1. Emotional expression

Encouraging children to express, embody, and recognise different emotions through movement, facial expression, and body language.

2. Empathy and inclusion

Helping children understand how others may feel and creating a space for emotional empathy, including for children who are not yet able to express emotions verbally.

3. Peer bonding

Creating an atmosphere in which children feel safe to express vulnerability, joy, sadness, or frustration without fear of judgement.

4. Non-verbal communication

Reinforcing the idea that emotions can be felt, shared, and supported without words, while supporting children who face challenges related to language, neurodiversity, or emotional regulation.

Materials needed

- Soft music for the final reflection

SESSION 3

Download the sessions [HERE](#) 
Or print them

STEP BY STEP ACTIVITY FLOW

Welcome and Introduction: “Good Morning, Emotion Face” (2–3 min)

- Standing in a circle, each child shows an emotion using only their face.
- The teacher/educator mirrors the expression in an exaggerated way and names it:
- “Is that your sad face?”

Builds connection and emotional vocabulary in a playful, low-pressure way.

1: Frozen Giggle (10–12 min)

- Children move freely around the room. When the clown claps, everyone freezes in a silly pose.
- The teacher/educator (and later the “chosen” children) tries to make others laugh using facial expressions, clown noises, or funny walks — without touching.
- When someone laughs, they become the next “joker” and try to make others laugh.

Promotes emotional release, shared joy, and inclusion through laughter.

2: Changing Moods While Moving (8–10 min)

- Children run, dance, or move freely around the room.
- The clown calls out emotions: “Happy! Sad! Sleepy! Furious! Afraid!”
- Children intuitively change their entire body to reflect the announced emotion.

Strengthens the connection between emotion and body, fostering expressive flexibility.

3: Emotion Exchange(10–12 min)

- Children walk through the room carrying an emotion in their body (e.g. sad = crooked, slow, hesitant; happy = springy, fast, upright).
- When they meet someone with a different emotion, they make eye contact and “exchange” emotions — taking on the other person’s mood and moving on.

Teaches empathy, reciprocity, and emotional adaptability through playful interaction. The rapid emotional changes encourage high levels of attention and engagement.

4. Couples & Audience: Emotion Flip (12–15 min)

- Children walk across the space in pairs, holding hands or walking side by side, embodying an emotional state (angry, sleepy, joyful, etc.).
- The remaining children watch as an audience.
- In the centre, the pairs turn toward the audience and dramatically switch to a different emotion, as if on a clown stage.

Encourages peer confidence, shared achievement, and the experience of having one’s emotions seen.

SESSION 3

Download the sessions [HERE](#) 
Or print them

5. Emotion Orchestra (10–12 min)

- Each child is assigned a sound or movement representing an emotion
- (e.g. sniffing for sadness, “Wheee!” for joy, stomping for anger).
- The teacher/educator becomes the conductor, pointing to individuals or groups to activate their emotional sounds or movements.
- Highlight: all emotions at once — joyful, chaotic fun.

Enhances emotional recognition and values all forms of expression equally, strengthening enthusiasm and group belonging.

6. The Changing Heart of the Clown” (10–12 min)

- The teacher/educator holds a red balloon — the “clown’s heart” — and walks around looking sad.
- The children approach the clown and try to change their mood using only gestures, facial expressions, or movement.
- When successful, the balloon floats “high” and the clown becomes happy again.

Encourages empathy, prosocial behaviour, and emotional support through a shared, almost magical experience.

Cooling Down and Reflection (3–5 min)

- Children sit in a circle, hugging their knees or resting their heads on the floor.
- Soft music plays.
- The teacher/educator gently asks:
 - “Which feelings felt strong in your body today?”
 - “Was it easy or difficult to show feelings without words?”
 - “How did it feel when someone gave you their emotion?”

Using a doll or prop (clown heart, balloon, mirror) can help create a warm and safe reflection space.

Tips for Inclusive Practice

- Validate all expressions — big or small, quiet or energetic.
- Offer alternatives for children with reduced sensory tolerance (e.g. slower movements, softer sounds).
- Model emotions clearly for children who need additional visual cues, especially neurodivergent learners.
- Allow shy children to take on observer roles; watching is also a form of participation.
- Insert short breaks and reflection moments between activities to maintain balance between excitement and calm.
- Let children choose their level of engagement and value every contribution equally.
- Some children prefer to observe from a distance, while others participate more actively or quietly. All forms of presence are valid ways of contributing to a shared emotional atmosphere.

SESSION 4

Download the sessions [HERE](#) 
Or print them

SESSION 4 - 'BUILD UP THE RESILIENCE THROUGH OBSTACLES'

Title: Build up the resilience through obstacles

Theme: resilience, humour and cooperation

Age: 3–6 years

Duration: 50–75 minutes

Setting: Open classroom, playroom, or gym hall

General objective of the session:

The activities in the fourth session combine imagination, humour, and problem-solving through playful movement. They strengthen children's ability to face challenging and unexpected situations in a light and constructive way. Through play, comedy, and collaboration, children learn to respond with flexibility, humour, and cooperation.

Humour is a form of emotional intelligence that transforms mistakes into learning opportunities and makes resilience tangible and experiential. The activities demonstrate that resilience grows through play, shared laughter, and the freedom to make mistakes together.

Specific Objectives

- **Resilience and humour**

Practising as a group how to deal with difficult, surprising, or confusing situations in a playful way.

- **Creativity and flexibility**

Using unexpected ideas to solve problems, turning mistakes into opportunities for fun. Encouraging cooperation, positive reactions to the unexpected, imagination, and the creation of individual ideas and variations within the games.

- **Self-efficacy**

Supporting children in understanding the connection between action and reaction, and strengthening confidence in their own abilities.

- **Optimism**

Developing the ability to overcome challenges through a positive attitude. Learning to “laugh at the unexpected” and to respond with curiosity rather than frustration.

- **Emotional regulation**

Practising together how to recognise, control, and process one's own emotions.

Materials Needed

- Large sheets of paper
- Coloured pencils

SESSION 4

Download the sessions [HERE](#) 
Or print them

STEP BY STEP ACTIVITY FLOW

Welcome and Introduction: “Somehow Different” (3–5 min)

Children move freely around the room.

- The teacher/educator gives movement instructions.
- The children do the opposite of what is said, or what they interpret as the opposite (fast–slow, tired–awake, sad–funny, forward–backward, on two legs–on one leg and one arm, alone–together, etc.).

Acknowledge and praise the children’s different interpretations of “opposites.”

1. What’s in the Box? (12–15 min)

- The teacher/educator, acting as a clown, enters with an invisible, very heavy suitcase.
- They open it and pull out imaginary objects with exaggerated reactions (“Oh no! A feather!”).
- The box is passed around; each child takes out an object that no one can see, but everyone can feel.

Builds shared attention and collective imagination. Develops focus, concentration, creativity, and improvisation.

2. Changing (10–12 min)

- Children form pairs.
- They begin by walking freely through the space.
- The teacher/educator claps and gives instructions, such as:
 - “One follows the other!”
 - “Doing sports!”
 - “Embarrass each other!”
 - “Try to distract each other while pretending to insult!”

Strengthens shared awareness, adaptability, and quick group reactions.

3. Living Object Parade (10–12 min)

- The group collects ideas for familiar objects together.
- Each child chooses one object to become.
- They move through the room as their object, adding sounds and movements (e.g. a drawer, a washing machine, a mobile phone).
- At the end, the teacher/educator, as a clown, gives playful awards such as “the loudest television” or “the saddest lamp.”

Builds presence, imagination, and self-expression, while offering validation through playful identities.

SESSION 4

Download the sessions [HERE](#) 
Or print them

4.I Am... the Room! (12–15 min)

- Children form pairs or small groups.
- Using their bodies, they create objects found in a room (lamp, clock, sofa) and hold their positions.
- The teacher/educator, as a clown, enters and begins to “use” the room — playful chaos ensues.

Encourages teamwork, inclusion, creativity, and adaptability through embodied storytelling.

5. Working Time (10–12 min)

- The teacher/educator, acting as a clown, assigns work tasks.
- The children pretend to work and clean the room (cleaning windows, sweeping the floor, vacuuming, etc.).
- The clown checks whether everyone is working.
- When the clown looks down (e.g. tying their shoe), the children chat, dance, or relax.
- When the clown looks up again, everyone returns to working busily.

Demonstrates how time pressure can create stress and how play, awareness, and cooperation can reduce it. Encourages self-control and group coordination.

Cooling Down and Reflection (3–5 min)

- The children sit on the floor around a large sheet of paper, each with a pencil.
- The teacher/educator invites them to draw the paths they experienced during the session.
- Each child has the opportunity to explain their drawing.
- Together, the group tries to connect all paths and end at the same point on the paper.

Drawing supports and documents children’s emotional learning processes. The finished map can be displayed.

Tips for Inclusive Practice

- There is no right or wrong.
- Allow yourself and the children to play with absurd and funny ideas.
- Encourage creativity and “craziness.”
- Offer visual and verbal examples, or collect ideas together with the children.
- Use strategic pairing: match more outgoing children with quieter peers.
- Dim the lights and use calm voices to create a sense of safety.
- Understand inclusion as flexible participation, not as an obligation to perform.

SESSION 5

Download the sessions [HERE](#) 
Or print them

SESSION 5 – “SIT DOWN, NO YOU SIT DOWN!”

Title: Sit down, no you sit down!

Theme: Mutual care and trust

Age: 3–6 years

Duration: 50–75 minutes

Setting: Large open space with one chair center stage

General objective of the session:

To explore inclusion through role-play and physical storytelling, supporting children in embodying boundaries, leadership, playfulness, and non-verbal negotiation in a humorous and safe environment. The activity also aims to develop imagination, physical collaboration, and spatial awareness as key tools to promote inclusive interaction.

Specific objectives of the session

- Emotional Literacy & Role Awareness

Understand and feel the dynamics of “telling” and “resisting” — authority vs freedom.

- **Safe Conflict Play**

Give children space to experiment with boundaries and expression in a guided, silly, non-threatening way.

- **Empathy & Social Skills**

Promote peer observation, turn-taking, and understanding how different personalities interact.

- **Cultural Clown Literacy & Inclusion**

Use the White vs Auguste clown archetype as a symbolic tool — where each child can identify with different ways of being (structured vs wild, shy vs bold, etc.).

Materials needed

- Red noses
- Music

SESSION 5

Download the sessions [HERE](#) 
Or print them

STEP BY STEP ACTIVITY FLOW

Introduction (3 min)

Facilitator explains:

“In the old days, two clowns played together: the White Clown, who always wanted things to go perfectly... and Auguste, who was very silly and never did what he was told!”

Show a quick skit:

- White Clown: “Sit down here. Be serious.”
- Auguste: sits backwards, stands on the chair, hides under it, etc.

Model the dynamic with humor and safety.

Main Activity (12–15 min)

1. Game: 1, 2, 3... STAR! (Clown Relationship Version)

- Pairs play the classic movement game — but in character!
- One is the STAR (turns around after calling “1, 2, 3, STAR!”)
- The other is the MOVER (advancing toward the STAR in a clownish relationship, freezing when STAR turns)

Each round, the MOVER acts out a different clown dynamic:

- Following the other – like a shadow or admirer
- Doing sports – e.g., clownish running, skiing, lifting weights
- Insulting – exaggerated mime insults, clown faces
- Embarrassment – shy, awkward, bashful movements
- Distracting while insulting – switching between charm and mischief

Play with rhythm, contrast, and clarity. Movement should tell a story!

After each round, switch roles.

Possible questions after play:

- “Which dynamic was the funniest to watch?”
- “Did you feel more like a White Clown or an Auguste while moving?”

2. Game: “Sit Down, No You Sit Down!”

One pair performs in the center:

White Clown tries to politely or strictly get Auguste to sit on the chair.

Auguste playfully resists — creatively and non-verbally. He might:

- Sit on the floor instead
- Sit on White Clown’s lap
- Turn the chair upside down
- Freeze dramatically

SESSION 5

Download the sessions [HERE](#)



Or print them

Use body, mime, and facial expression only — no speaking (or just clownish sounds).

Each pair plays 1–2 minutes max. Then switch.

Afterward, invite audience reflections:

- “What did Auguste do that made you laugh?”
- “Was the White Clown frustrated or funny?”
- “Who would you like to try next time?”

2. Cool-down (3–5 min): “White & Red Breathe”

Children lie down.

- “Breathe like the White Clown: slow, calm, very serious...”
- “Now like Auguste: silly, jumpy, messy...”
- “Now mix them both in your belly — can you feel your serious side and your silly side together?”

3. Cool-down (3–5 min): “White & Red Breathe”

Children lie down or sit quietly.

Guide them with voice and body:

- “Breathe like the White Clown... slow... serious...”
- “Now breathe like Auguste... bouncy... messy...”
- “Now mix them in your belly — feel the serious and the silly living together.”

Let them sigh, stretch, and smile to close the session.

Tips for an inclusive practice

These games welcome every kind of personality:

- Quiet leaders
- Goofy rebels
- Shy watchers
- Bold performers

Children learn:

- How to say no or be playful
- How to lead or follow in different roles
- That mistakes are fun in clown play
- Everyone has a place in the game



SESSION 6

Download the sessions [HERE](#) 
Or print them

SESSION 6 – ‘THE LITTLE CLOWN STAGE’

Title: The Little Clown Stage

Theme: Group cooperation and celebration

Age: 3–6 years

Duration: 50–75 minutes

Setting: Classroom or any space with a clear “stage area” and a sitting audience spot

General objective of the session:

To promote inclusion, improvisation, and self-awareness through clown performance and gentle peer appreciation.

Specific Objectives

- **Foster Self-Expression & Confidence**

Give children space to explore and show their unique way of being silly, curious, emotional, or imaginative.

- **Build Improvisation Skills**

Encourage quick thinking, non-verbal creativity, and responding to the unexpected in a joyful way.

- **Promote Group Support & Belonging**

Create a safe environment where every child is celebrated, and feels they contribute to the group’s energy.

- **Encourage Active Observation & Appreciation**

Help children learn to watch with kindness, laugh with each other (not at), and recognize the beauty in each clown’s style.

Materials needed

Props (e.g. ball, scarf, stool)

Chair or table

STEP BY STEP ACTIVITY FLOW

Warm-Up (5 min): “Team Balloon”

Children pretend the group holds a giant invisible balloon together.

They walk/move around the room synchronizing their rhythm (slow, fast, floating...) If one drops it, all react clownishly.

Builds group rhythm and mutual awareness.

SESSION 6

Download the sessions [HERE](#) 
Or print them

Main Activity (25 min): “The Little Clown Stage”

1: Form Clown Teams (pairs or trios)

Each team is given:

A simple scenario (e.g., “There’s a chair but no one wants to sit,” “Looking for something under the table,” “Trying to bake a cake with invisible ingredients”).

Or a prop (ball, scarf, stool).

They have 2 minutes to prepare a short improvisation — without words, just clownish movement, sounds, and emotions.

Low-pressure, high-play setup. The point is to create moments together — not to be “funny.”

2: Perform on the “Clown Stage”

Each team comes up, performs their scene in front of the rest of the class.

Audience’s role:

Watch with “clown eyes”: noticing the feeling, not judging

At the end of each performance, they do:

“Silent Clown Claps” (waving hands in the air)

One positive sentence: “I liked how you...” / “That was very [funny/gentle/surprising/etc.]”

Facilitator models this feedback and creates safe, joyful vibes.

Cool-Down: “Clown Mirror & Gratitude” (5 min)

Children pair up.

They take turns mirroring each other’s clown face — one makes a face, the other copies it lovingly.

Then whisper: “I see you. You’re a great clown.”

Builds self-worth and peer affirmation.

Tips for an inclusive practice

Children who don’t want to perform can:

Be “clown cheerleaders”

Do sound effects

Be the “clown lighting technician” (imaginary spotlight with a scarf)

Improvisation allows for neurodiverse expression, non-verbal play, and no right/wrong outcome

Appreciation ritual gives each child a moment of being seen and celebrated by peers.

SESSION 7

Download the sessions [HERE](#) 
Or print them

SESSION 7 – ‘SELF AWARENESS. CLOWN COLLABORATES WITH OTHERS’

Title: Self awareness. clown collaborates with others

Theme: Acceptance of error and freedom of expression

Age: 3 - 6 years old

Duration: 50–70 minutes

Setting: Indoor or outdoor open space

Overall objective of the session:

Achieving a common goal by working together in a difficult situation in a playful manner.

Specific objectives of the session:

Children learn to interact and collaborate with their peers.

1. Development of individual potential:

Every child has the opportunity to express themselves and contribute through pairing up and playing.

2. Cooperation and collaboration:

Children understand the importance of teamwork and helping each other.

3. Self-confidence and trust in others:

Through collaboration and achieving goals, children increase their confidence in themselves and others.

4. Creativity and problem solving:

The game stimulates creativity and the ability to find solutions together, using non-verbal communication and stimulating empathy.

Materials required:

- Clown noses (optional)
- Pop music
- Ribbon, coloured balls, containers, spoons

STEP-BY-STEP ACTIVITY FLOW

Introduction (3 min)

1. Welcome and introduction (2-3 min)

- The clown teacher enters the space and begins to walk around.
- He/she asks the children: "How do you walk?"
- They break the ice and invite everyone to participate actively.

SESSION 7

Download the sessions [HERE](#) 
Or print them

2. Two in one (10-12 min)

The clown teacher forms pairs and then ties one child's right leg to another child's left leg with a ribbon, inviting the children to try walking together in a funny way.

3. OK, the colour is right (10-12 min)

The clown teacher asks the children, still tied to their partners, to take coloured balls from a large basket and place them in containers marked with a colour.

4. The joint arms race (10-12 min)

Movement in space and body awareness. The clown teacher ties his right arm to another child's left arm. The children must reach the baskets, take a spoon, place a ball on it and, holding it together with their arm tied to their partner's, return to the starting point.

5. Guide me! (15-17 min)

The teacher swaps the pairs of children and places some obstacles. One child wears a blindfold and the other takes them by the arm and quietly guides their blindfolded partner to move safely, avoiding obstacles.

6. The ant trail (10-12 minutes)

The children must crawl in pairs, one behind the other, holding the ankles of the child in front of them.

Cool-Down: (3-5 minutes)

- The children form a circle, holding hands, sitting on the floor with their legs crossed and their eyes closed.
- Holding hands, they breathe in and out for a few minutes, maintaining physical contact with others through their hands.

Use your body as a means of getting to know yourself and others.

SESSION 8

Download the sessions [HERE](#) 
Or print them

SESSION 8 – ‘TRUST YOURSELF’

Title: Trust yourself

Theme: celebration and awareness

Age: 3–6 years

Duration: 50–75 minutes

Setting: Classroom or any space with a clear “stage area” and a sitting audience spot

General Objective

The final session concludes the ReED journey by celebrating both individual and collective progress. It strengthens trust, empathy, and group spirit, while reinforcing awareness of one’s own role within the group.

The red nose becomes a symbol of personal and shared growth, common humanity, and the power of sharing as an expression of gratitude, connection, and mutual recognition. The simplicity and festive rhythm of the session make it both intense and harmonious.

Specific Objectives

- **Openness**

Encourage children to practice openness. Give each child the space and time to express their thoughts and enjoy sharing with the group.

- **Teamwork**

Shared remembrance strengthens cooperation. Encourage children to express and share their experiences in the form of feelings and wishes, and reinforce group cohesion.

- **Changing Perspectives**

Practicing putting oneself in another person’s shoes strengthens empathy and perception.

- **Development**

Support children in becoming aware of their previous social and emotional learning experiences through performance.

- **Reflection**

Help children understand their learning processes, process their experiences, and recognize their own abilities. Children learn to understand themselves better and become aware of their needs.

Materials Needed

- Costumes
- Rope to divide the room
- Paper and pencils for making tickets
- Music to create breaks between performances
- Red noses for each child (or red face paint)

Welcome and Introduction: “Favorite Ice Cream” (8-10 min)

- A rope divides the room into two sides.
 - The educator asks the children to choose between two options (e.g. vanilla ice cream / chocolate ice cream, swimming pool / zoo).
 - Children move to the corresponding side of the room.
 - They are invited to suggest new choices themselves.
 - The final question asks them to choose between “Augusto” and “White Clown.”
- Encourage children to express their honest opinions, even when they differ from the majority.*

2: Clown School (12–15 min)

- Children form small clown teams.
- Two children perform as clowns while the others watch.
- The educator, acting as a clown, welcomes everyone:
“Welcome to our clown school. Let’s discover what you have learned!”
- The educator asks questions from the audience; children respond using movement, gestures, facial expressions, and sounds — without speaking.

Examples:

What can clowns do...

- when they are hungry?
- when they get wet?
- when they can’t see anything?
- when they miss the subway?
- when they find money on the street?

Encourages experimenting with different actions and reactions in a low-pressure, playful setting. The focus is on sharing ideas and creating moments together — not on being “funny.”

3: Clown Parade of Joy (12–15 min)

- Children form clown teams again.
- Each team chooses a simple scenario, for example:
 - “There is a chair, but nobody wants to sit down.”
 - “You are under a table searching for something.”
 - “You are baking a cake with invisible ingredients.”
- All pairs perform simultaneously in the room, using only clownish movements, sounds, and emotions — no words.
- After a few minutes, the educator asks which situation each team would like to present later in the show.

This activity generates material for the final performance in activity 4.

SESSION 8

Download the sessions [HERE](#) 
Or print them

4: Red Nose Ceremony (20–25 min)

- Use the rope to create a stage and seating area for the audience.
- All clowns stand on one side of the stage. They cross the stage pretending not to see the audience.
- In the middle, they suddenly notice the audience, feel embarrassed, then playful, and exit on the other side.
- Each team performs the scenario chosen in Activity 3.
- When the music starts, the teams leave the stage and rotate.
- At the end, all children come on stage together. One by one, they receive their red nose as a symbol of belonging and growth, accompanied by a small gesture or word of appreciation (e.g. “for your contagious laughter,” “for your imagination”).

Whether there are guests or not, conclude the ReED journey with a celebration and a show.

Cooling Down and Reflection (5–8 min)

- Children form a circle.
- One after another, a child steps into the circle, turns once, bows, and is applauded by everyone.
- Each child receives an invisible flower from the educator for their “work.”
- The educator asks: “What does your flower smell like?”

Tips for Inclusive Practice

- Give equal attention to all children.
- Use gentle music, pauses, and slow movements to allow space for deeper emotions and ensure no one feels excluded.
- Balance positive and constructive feedback.
- Offer alternative roles for children who do not want to perform in front of others.
- For children who prefer not to receive the red nose publicly, create more private and intimate moments.

GUIDELINES FOR ORGANISING A MICRO EVENT FOR PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT



GUIDELINES FOR ORGANISING A MICRO EVENT FOR PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

1. Define a Clear Purpose and Pedagogical Framework

- Clearly communicate why the event is taking place and what parents and children will gain from it.
- Connect the micro-event to a wider educational vision (e.g. socio-emotional development, inclusion, play-based learning).
- Use accessible language so that parents feel confident and welcome, even if they are unfamiliar with educational terminology.

2. Create a Safe, Playful and Inclusive Environment

- Design the space so that movement, play and interaction are encouraged (open room, no obstacles, flexible seating).
- Establish simple shared rules (respecting space, no judgement, participation is voluntary).
- Ensure activities are adaptable to different ages, abilities and comfort levels.

3. Use Short, Structured and Progressive Activities

- Plan short activities (3–15 minutes) to maintain attention and energy.
- Start with warm-up and low-risk activities (walking, mirroring, simple movement).
- Gradually move towards more expressive and imaginative tasks (emotions, role play, group creation).
- Alternate between high-energy and calmer moments to support emotional regulation.

4. Encourage Parent–Child Collaboration

- Design exercises where parents and children act as equals (mirroring, copying, building together).
- Avoid positioning parents as observers; instead, make them active participants.
- Use pair and small-group formats to strengthen bonding and shared experiences.



GUIDELINES FOR ORGANISING A MICRO EVENT FOR PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

5. Focus on the Body and Non-Verbal Communication

- Prioritise movement, facial expressions, posture and rhythm rather than verbal explanations.
- This helps overcome language barriers and allows children and adults to connect emotionally.
- Non-verbal play supports empathy, attention, emotional expression and mutual understanding.

6. Integrate Emotional Awareness Naturally Through Play

- Introduce emotions (e.g. joy, sadness, anger) through embodied exploration, not theory.
- Use games that allow children and parents to recognise, express and exchange emotions safely.
- Avoid “right or wrong” interpretations—validate all emotional expressions.

7. Use Music and Simple Props to Support Engagement

- Music helps structure time, signal transitions and shape emotional atmosphere.
- Simple props (e.g. clown noses, chairs, dice) enhance imagination without overwhelming participants.
- Keep technical needs minimal to maintain flexibility.

8. Facilitate Rather Than Direct

- Facilitators should model participation, curiosity and playfulness.
- Give clear instructions, demonstrate first, then allow participants to explore freely.
- Move among groups to support, not correct.



GUIDELINES FOR ORGANISING A MICRO EVENT FOR PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

9. Plan for Reflection and Take-Home Value

- Close the event with a **circle of sharing** (one word, gesture, or drawing).
- Offer simple ideas or games that families can **repeat at home**.
- Collect feedback through informal tools (post-its, short forms) to value participants' voices.

10. Keep the Event Short, Meaningful and Replicable

- A micro-event works best when it is **time-limited but emotionally rich**. An approximate time of 1 hour and a half to two hours would be enough.
- Aim for quality of interaction rather than quantity of content.
- Design the structure so it can be easily repeated, adapted or scaled in other contexts.

In summary, a successful micro-event for parental engagement is playful, embodied, inclusive and emotionally meaningful. It strengthens relationships, empowers parents, and demonstrates that learning can happen through shared joy, imagination and connection.



Co-funded by
the European Union

Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.



PARENTAL TOOLS

Download your cards here: [Link for cards](#)

Print your cards!

The format is Din A 6 (105 × 148 mm).

We suggest printing on 350 g/m² paper



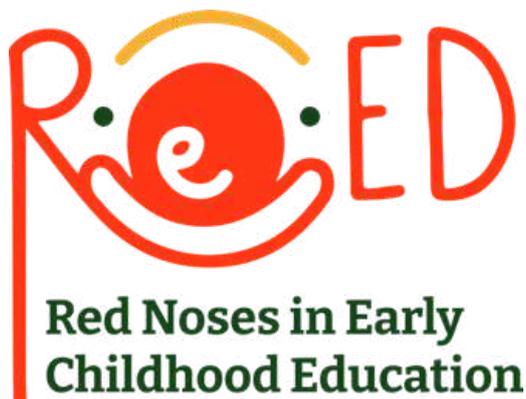
Co-funded by
the European Union

Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.

Clown school



for home



How would it be if we didn't act and react in everyday life as we usually do? If we leave out words and let only facial expressions and gestures speak? The figure of the clown tries out all kinds of things, never gives up, doesn't think back and forward, just does it. The clown may not be the smartest, but he has all the feelings we have. His behavior does no harm to anyone. On the contrary, he wants everyone to be on his side. To make yourself a clown as an adult, you don't necessarily need a red nose, just fun playing! In the Erasmus+ project „Red noses in Early Childhood Education: innovative educational approaches for ECEC teachers and educators“, new methods and games inspired by clown pedagogy are being tested with the aim of promoting social-emotional development of children aged 3-6 years and creating an inclusive learning environment.

Project code: 2024-1-IT02-KA210-SCH-000251002

Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



Co-funded by
the European Union

Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.

Imprint and design: ReED; 2025.



Joy

Anxiety



Anger

Grief



The basic motion

We show joy, anger, sadness and fear in our first months of life. As we evolve, emotional expressions become more refined and expanded by more complex emotions. From birth, we increasingly learn self-regulation and the ability to empathize.

(Possible) Development steps

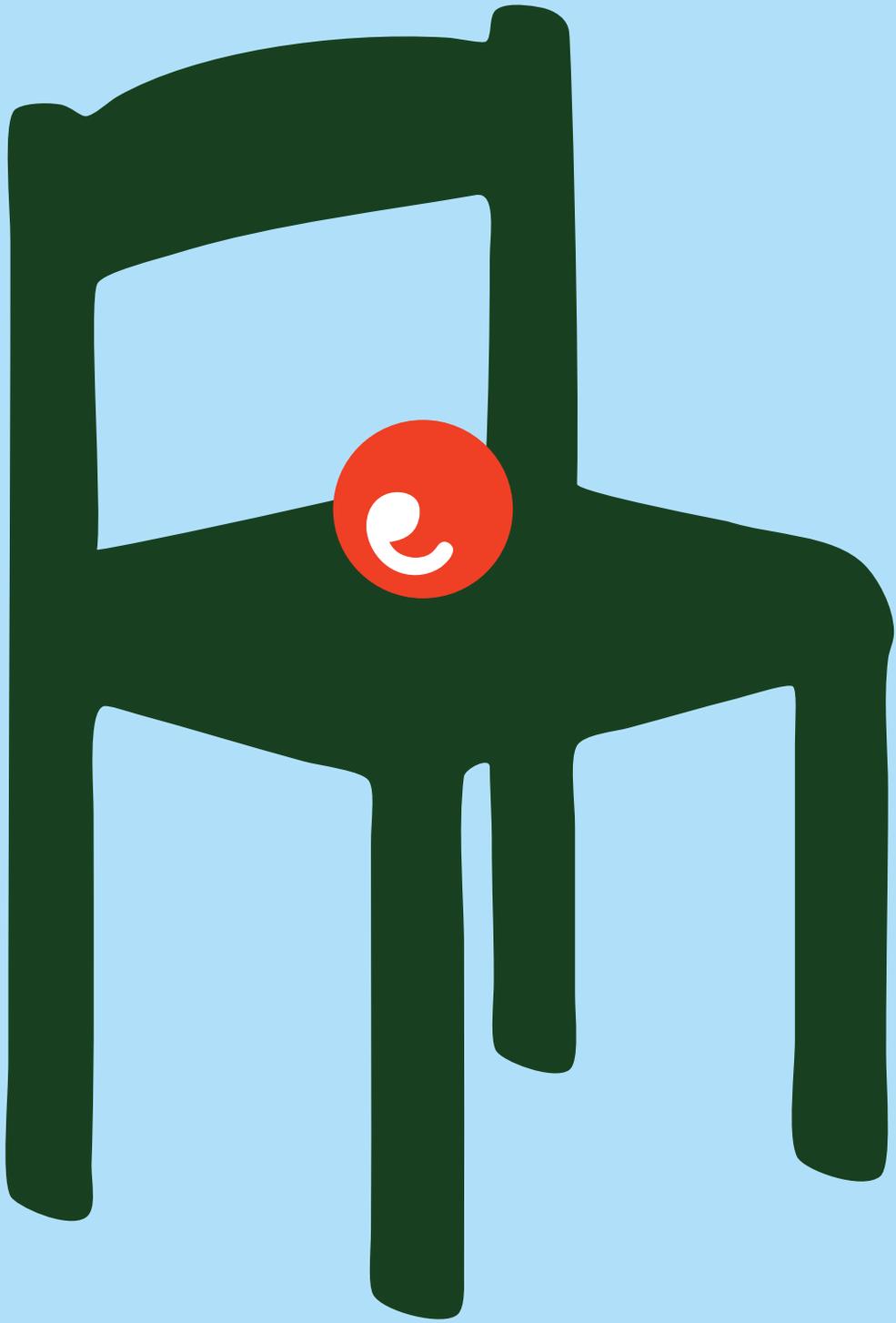
0-1 year We express primary emotions such as joy, anger, sadness, fear and interest through facial expressions and gestures. We can mirror and imitate the emotions of our caregivers.

1-2 years Our expression of emotion can be expanded through words and sentences. We get to know feelings such as pride, shame, embarrassment, envy or guilt. The ability to regulate emotions develops.

2-3 years As we become more independent, we also experience increased inner conflicts and boundaries, which leads to emotional challenges.

4-5 years We develop empathy and can better understand and respond to the feelings of others. The ability to independently regulate negative feelings increases.

From the age of 6 Depending on the prerequisites, we achieve a high level of emotional and social competence. We can express complex feelings and deal with conflicting emotions.



My, your, our chair

#1

A "white clown" is a specific type of clown characterized by an often more intelligent and authoritarian clown, while the "August" (also called "red clown") is a clumsy and chaotic character who is tried to suppress by the "white clown".

White Clown

I always want to decide.
Never tires of telling
"August" what he has
to do.
Without words, he
orders him to sit down
on the chair.

August Clown

He does everything
possible, but not what
the "White Clown"
wants him to do. He
has so many good ideas
about what he could do
with the chair instead!

- * Place a chair in the middle of the room and move the other things aside.
- * Which of you would like to be the "White Clown" first, who would like to be "August"?
- * Switch roles!
- * Think about which role you enjoyed the most.

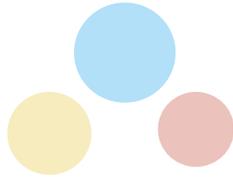


Makes a funny face



Find your lost nose

Juggles with invisible balls



Runs in a silly way



Move in slow motion



Mirror your partners

Clown Cube

#2



Make a funny face Pull the funniest and stupidest face you can – just like a clown! Use your eyes, mouths and cheeks!



Find your lost nose Oh no! Your red clown nose is missing! Look for them everywhere – under your arm, in your pocket, on your head! Be as dramatic and silly as possible!



Juggle invisible balls Imagine juggling three big clown balls – but they're invisible! Move your hands and eyes as if you were really catching and throwing them.



Move in slow motion Do something simple (like walking, waving, or sitting) – but do it very slowly. As if you were in a dream! Don't try to laugh!



Run in a silly way Show off your funniest walk!

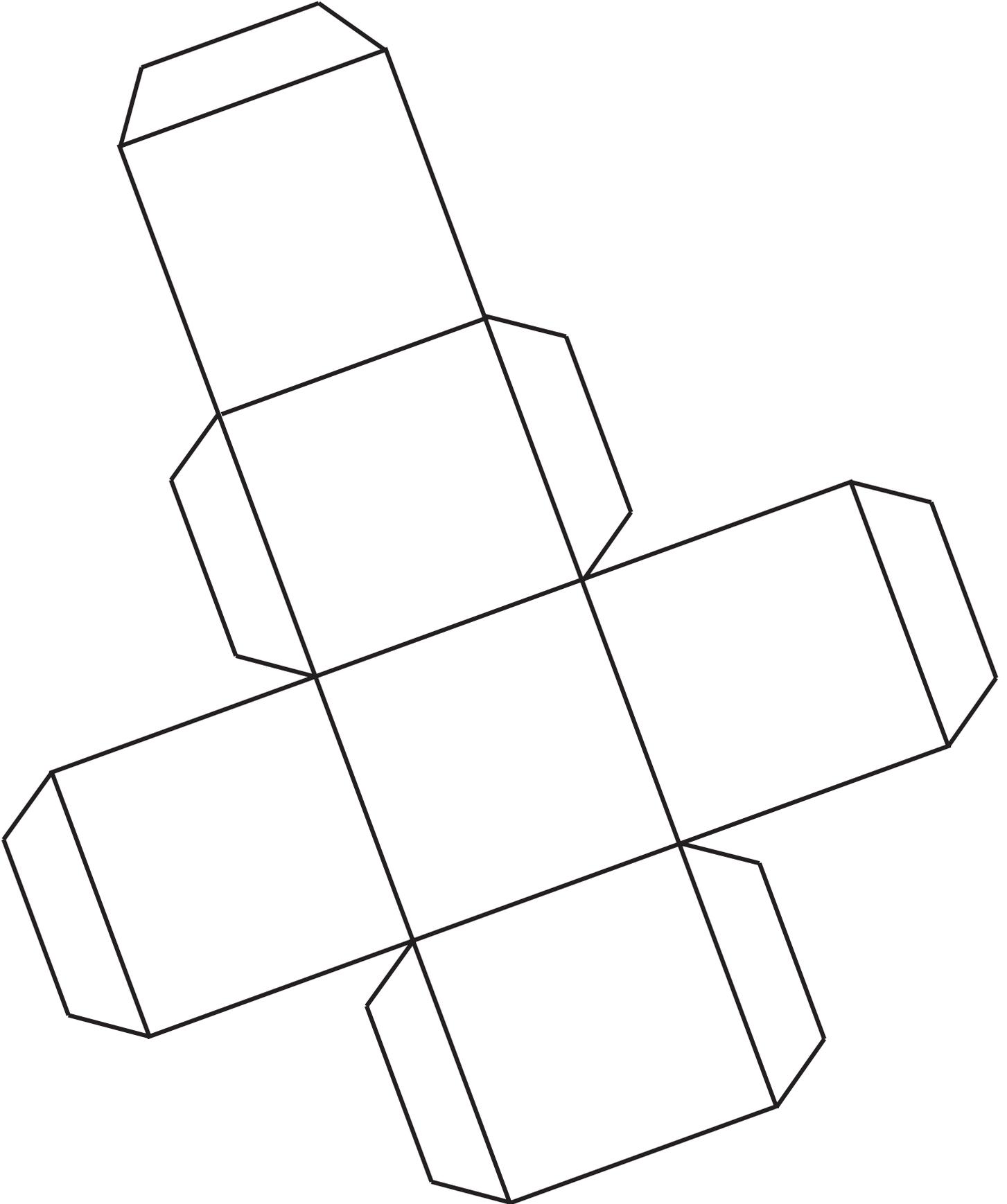
Maybe your shoes are too big, your legs feel like jelly or the floor is sticky! Make everyone laugh with your clown gang!



Mirror your partners Stand up opposite each other. One person moves slowly – the other copies, like a mirror! After a while, switch roles so that everyone has a turn.

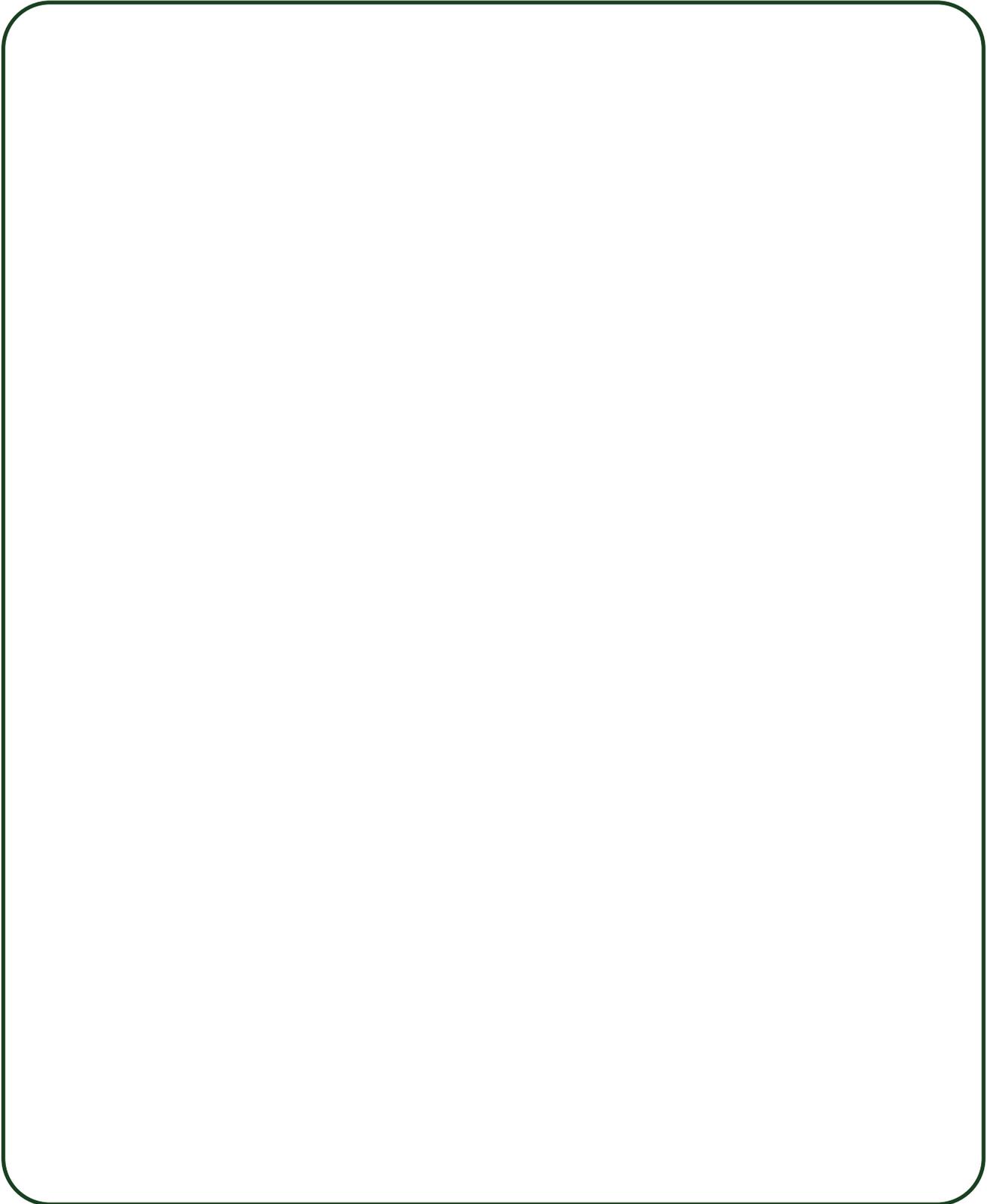
Invent your own cube

#2



**Draw your
clown story**

#3

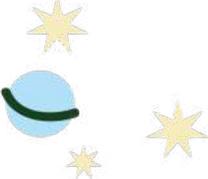


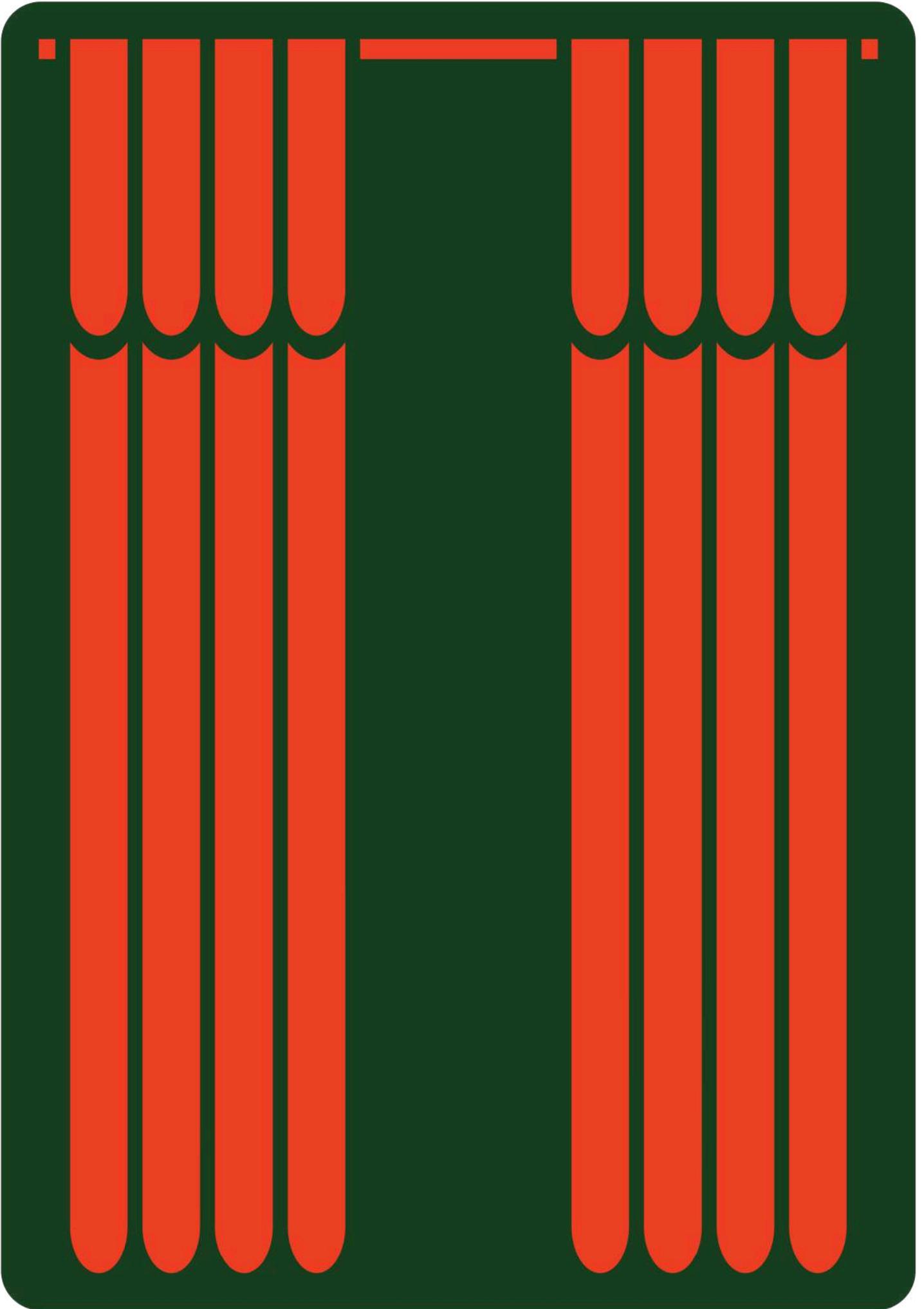


Clown Stories

#3

Work together to invent your own clown story!
Choose an idea from each column and play with big movements and fun sounds!

Where?	In what mood?	What happens?
 Circus		Meet a funny animal 
 Playground		Catch a balloon 
 Kitchen		Carries an invisible gift 
 Road		Drop a cream cake 
 Space		Slips on a banana peel 
 Garden		Lose your clown shoes 



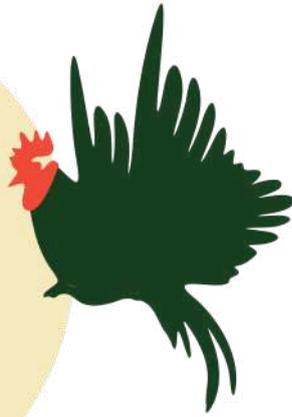
Curtain up for the animals!

#4

Surely you have a string and a fabric somewhere with which you can build a curtain in the middle of the room!? Or you can even use one that is already hanging?

If you've built a small stage, think of a song and play it. Once everything is prepared, perform one by one, as if ...

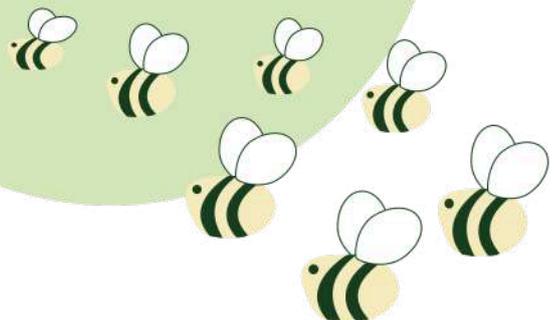
... you want to catch a chicken!



... you are being chased by a tiger!

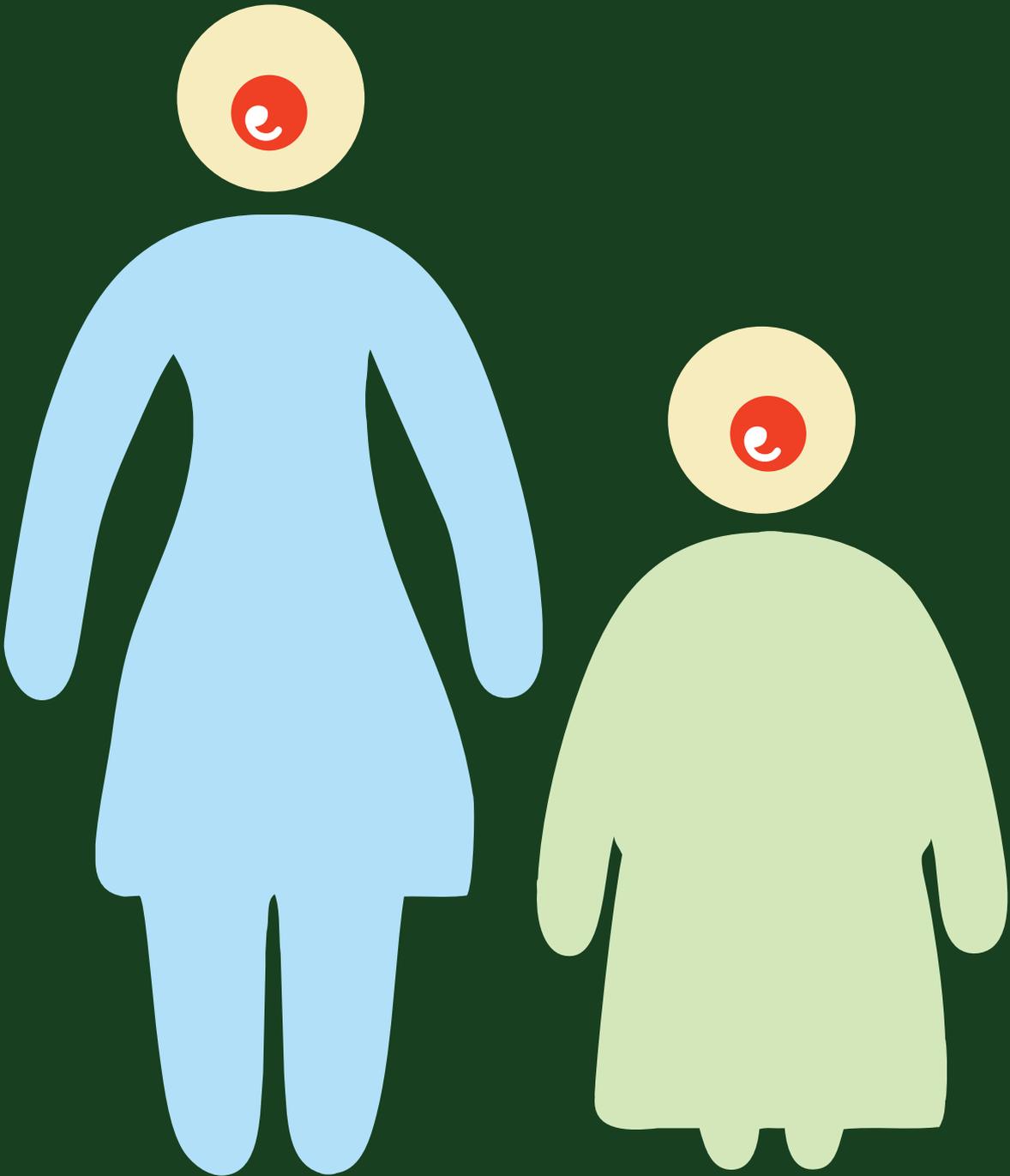


... a swarm of bees is chasing you!



... a dog pulls you on a leash!

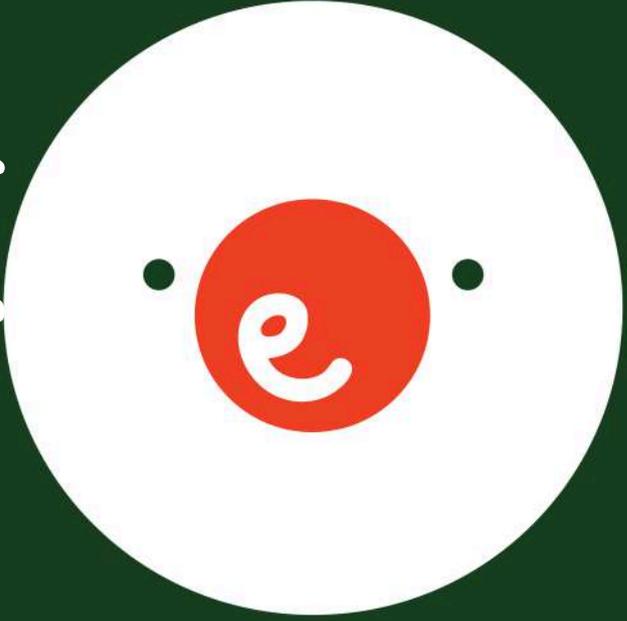
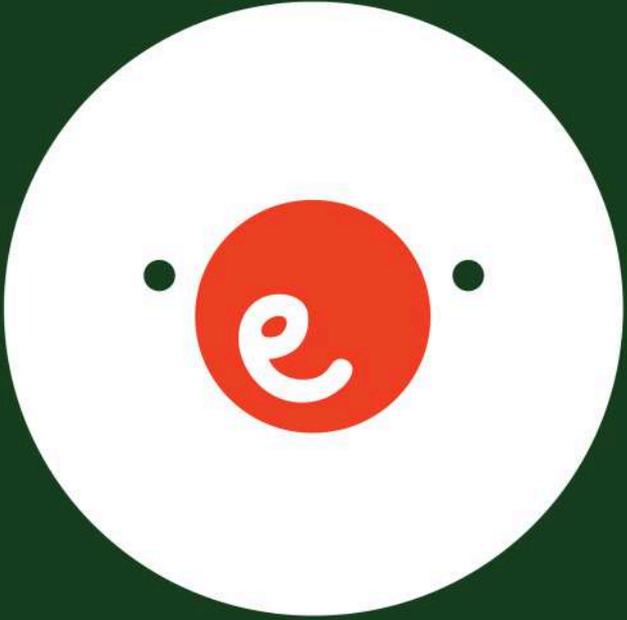




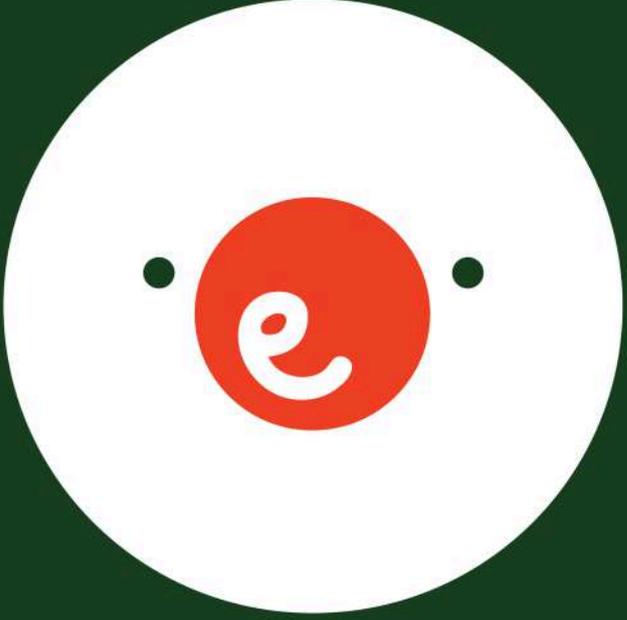
Swapping clothes #5 and feelings

Swap one piece of clothing at a time and put it on. Choose an activity and a mood change from the table. Play what happens! Try not to speak! Noises are allowed!

Activity	Feelings
You walk through the snow.	From anxious to tired  → 
You hang up laundry.	From sad to angry  → 
You swim in the lake.	From confused to happy  → 
You play in the sandbox.	From happy to sad  → 
You are standing in line at the supermarket.	From angry to in love  → 



What other feelings do you know?



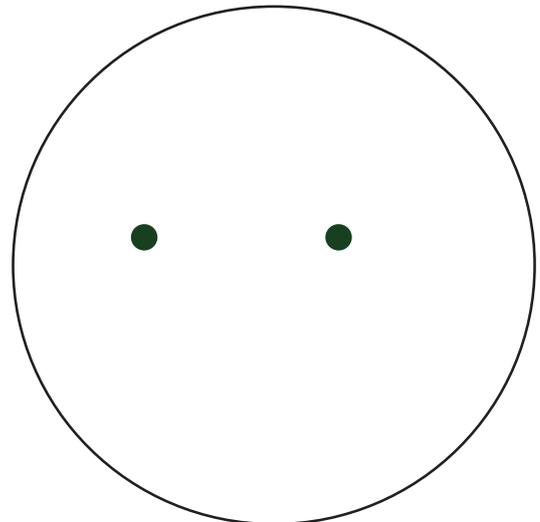
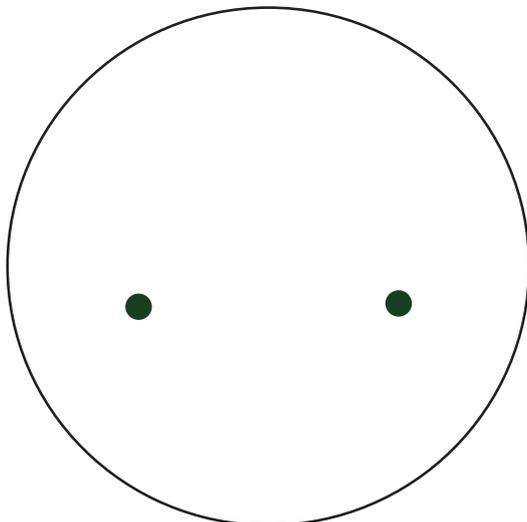
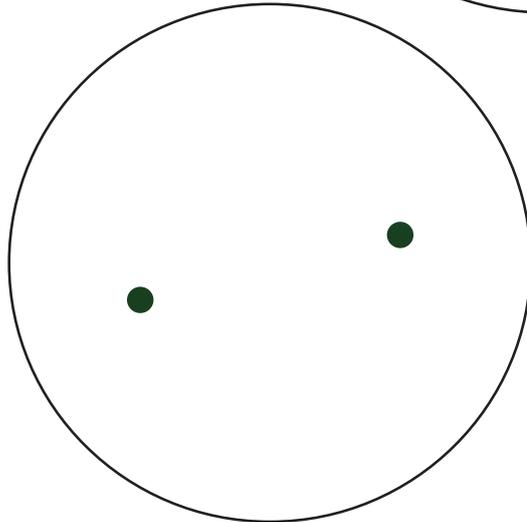
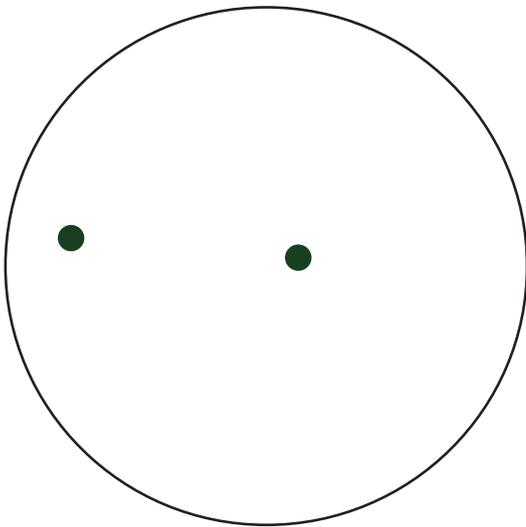
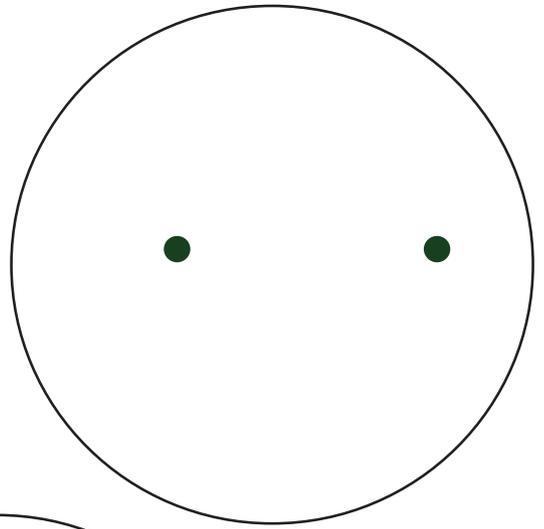
How do you feel when ...

#6

... watch you all?

... you have lost something?

... you are in nature? ... you should hurry? ... It's raining?





Charades Fun

#7

Play something for each other and guess it.

Here are a few impulses that the children can choose with their finger and the adults read aloud.

Play ...

... something
you love to do!

...
a place!

...
Something
to eat!

... something
you have
experienced!

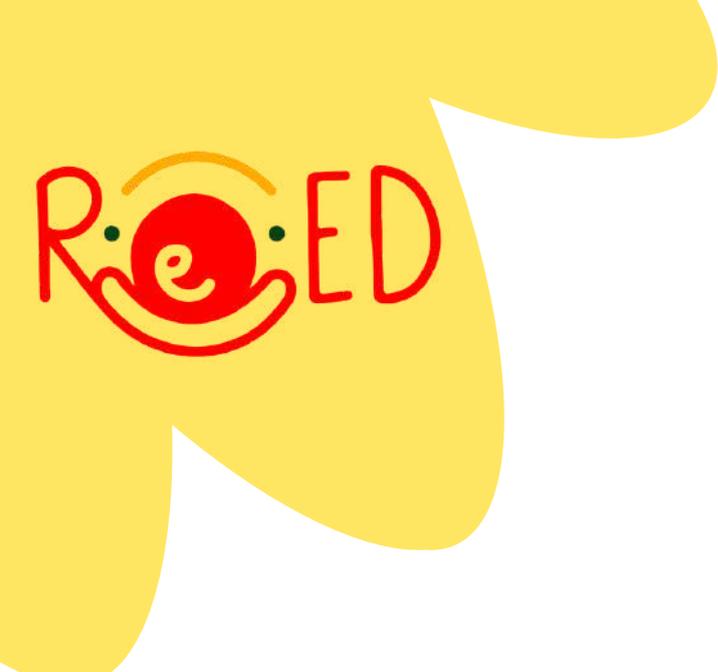
... something you
do in the morning!

... Someone
you both
know!

... Something
that can fly!

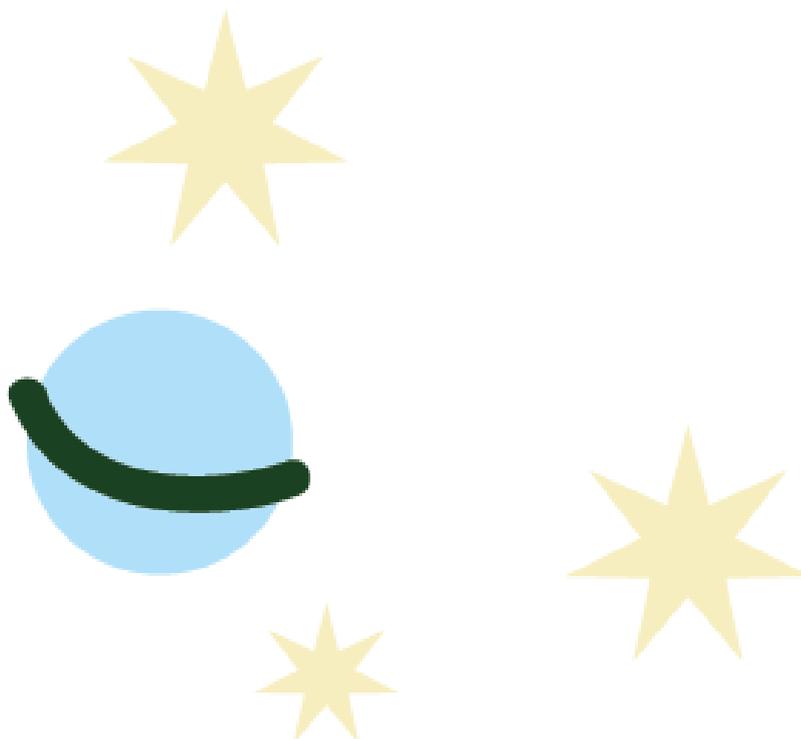
... a place

...
a sport!



ReED

The end



Co-funded by
the European Union

Co-finanziato dall'Unione europea. Le opinioni espresse appartengono, tuttavia, al solo o ai soli autori e non riflettono necessariamente le opinioni dell'Unione europea o dell'Agenzia esecutiva europea per l'istruzione e la cultura (EACEA). Né l'Unione europea né l'EACEA possono esserne ritenute responsabili



Co-funded by
the European Union

Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.



Red Noses in Early
Childhood Education