

The Book as a Mediator in Early Intervention

a community experience in Sesimbra/Portugal

Helena Gonçalves Rocha; Helena Palma; Isabel Valente da Cruz; Cercizimbra/ELI Sesimbra (Sesimbra Local Early Intervention Team)
Sónia Ferreira - Sesimbra Municipality

Introduction

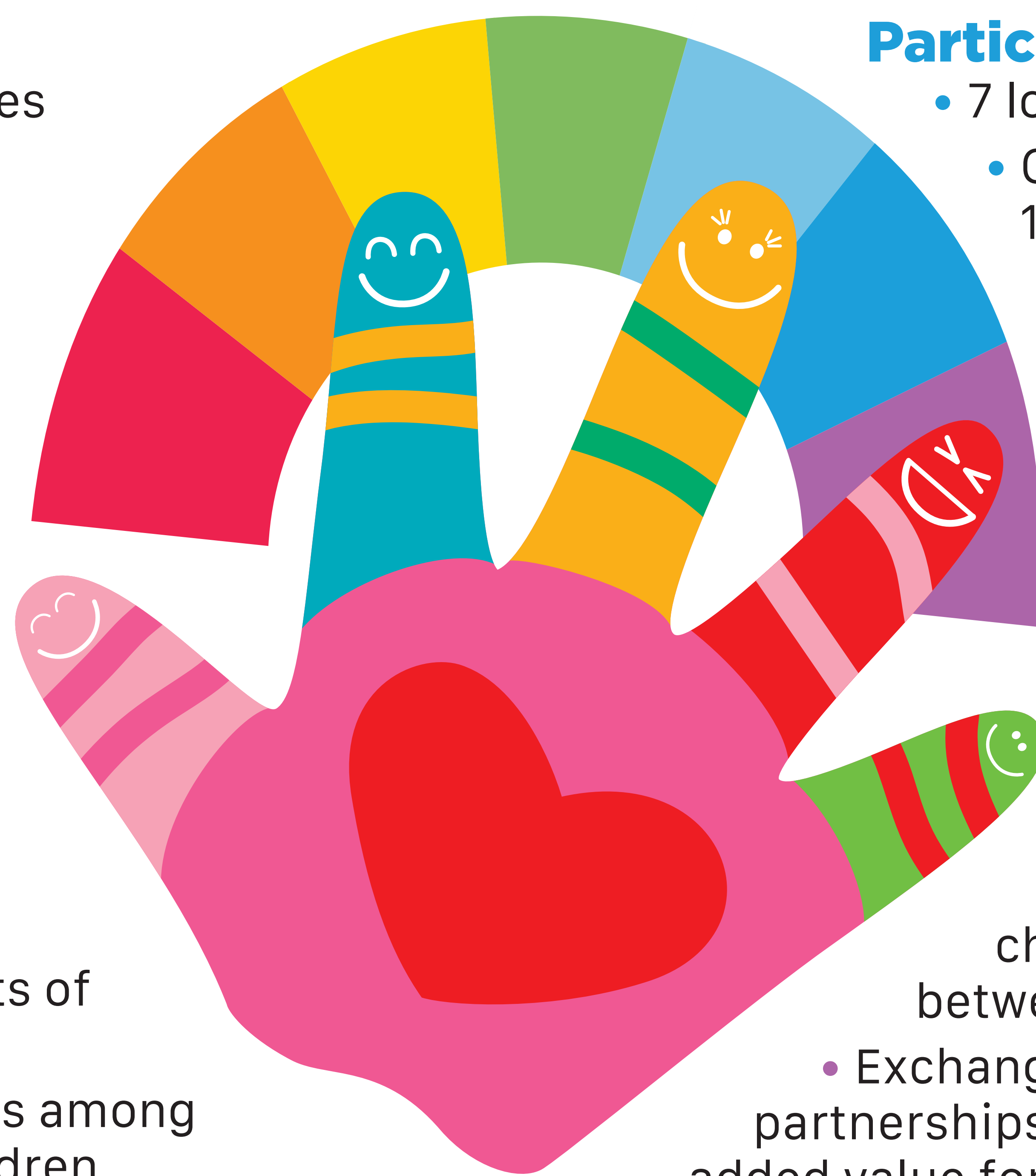
- Portuguese legislation emphasizes community involvement in early intervention
- Community-based project in Sesimbra, Portugal: early intervention team and municipal library partnership since 2007
- Annual book exhibition for families with children aged 0-6
- Focus on the use of books as intermediaries for challenging conversations such as death, divorce and disability.

Objectives

- Reinforce parents as main experts of their children
- Encourage sharing of experiences among professionals who work with children
- Promote a love for books, reading, and dialogue from an early age

Project Description

- Itinerant exhibition runs for 2 weeks at 7 local nurseries and kindergartens
- Includes activities for children, families, and professionals
- Annual theme chosen by partners based on national, European, or international years to encourage reflection on important topics affecting children and families
- Current theme: "Let's Talk About... How Together We Can" (European Year of Skills)
- Exhibitions include 60-70 books published on a flyer and on social networks
- Exhibition collection available at municipal library after tour



Participation and Reach

- 7 local nurseries and kindergartens
- On average, participation of 1,000 children and families and 150 education professionals
- Reach of almost 30,000 people through social networks

Evaluation and Feedback

- Project evaluated annually by partners and families
- Book recognized as excellent mediator in challenging conversations between adults and children
- Exchange of experiences and partnerships among institutions deemed an added value for professionals involved

Conclusion

- The use of the book as a mediator in early intervention with children and families is a valuable tool, promoting dialogue from an early age and facilitating the tackling of difficult topics.
- This community-based experience in Sesimbra, Portugal, highlights the importance of collaboration between families, education professionals, and the community in promoting child development and inclusion.
- This approach also empowers families as the primary authorities on their children, strengthening their role.
- This project serves as a shining example of how collective effort can lead to positive outcomes for children and families.