



Narrative paper: *Playful learning – ready, steady, go!* New narrative for Early Childhood Education and Care

Guide to support communication in the field of ECEC

For the project “Improving staff working conditions for better quality in early childhood education and care in Austria”.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This guide provides recommendations on how a common constructive narrative on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) can be strengthened in Austria. It is intended for anyone who works in ECEC or communicates about it. Together, it is possible to establish an understanding and awareness that ECEC is essential for the future of our children and society. This guide is based on workshops and online sessions with experts in ECEC. It is part of a project initiated by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF [*Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung*]) and funded by the European Commission in cooperation with UNICEF, targeted at improving staff working conditions for better quality in ECEC in Austria.

2. WHAT IS A NARRATIVE?

A narrative consists of a collection of stories which together convey a common worldview or meaning – it is a shared interpretation of the world and how it works.¹

In strategic communication, narratives are conveyed and strengthened through stories and key messages adapted to the target groups' life realities and the specifications of the communication channels.

This guide is based on a method called **Hope-Based Communications² (HBC)**. It is used to develop narrative strategies supporting processes of change in society. HBC focuses communication on the aspired changes and is based on five principles supported by the latest neuroscientific research.

3. PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON ECEC

Every child must have the same preconditions in order to be able to develop in the best possible way: a secure home, stable, loving relationships and an environment that supports and stimulates them in the important stages of their development.³ This is the core element of ECEC: promoting and stimulating children. But some children in Austria do not have access to this. The public discussion is dominated by traditional concepts of elementary education institutions as primarily care facilities in order to enable parents and legal guardians to go to work. The potential of ECEC for children's development, as well as for society, is therefore often ignored or remains unfulfilled – to the disadvantage of both Austrian children and

¹ McBeth, 2015 and Fisher, 1984, <https://www.socialchangeinitiative.com/narrative-change>
McBeth, M. K., Shanahan, E. A., & Jones, M. D. (2015). Narrative policy framework. In M. Dubnick & D. Bearfield (Hrsg.), *Encyclopedia of Public Administration and Public Policy*, (3rd ed.). Taylor and Francis.
<https://www.eashanahan.com/publications>

² www.hope-based.com https://medium.com/@the_hope_guy/hope-not-fear-a-new-model-for-communicating-human-rights-d98c0d6bf57b

³ <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/272604/WHO-FWC-MCA-18.02-eng.pdf>;
<https://www.unicef.org/media/67196/file/Build-to-last-framework-universal-quality-pre-primary-education-Summary.pdf>

society. There is evidence⁴ that investments into ECEC have an extremely positive effect and are determinates for social and economic well-being. The consequent change of terms used (in the past: *Kindergarten*, now *Elementare Bildungseinrichtung* [elementary educational facility]) has also not yet been adopted by the public. It is apparent that there is a discrepancy between the public image of ECEC teachers as caregivers and their actual role as pedagogues with high-quality education and training. The current shortages in ECEC services and lack of pedagogic expert staff combined with challenges related to working conditions bring ECEC into the focus of the public interest, resulting the public discourse on ECEC being largely negative.

In order to tap the potential of ECEC for children in Austria, more investments and harmonised, scientific-based framework conditions are necessary. The discussions, however, take place in a very tense atmosphere between political representatives, the civil society and stakeholders. Breaking through the negative discourse and perceptions is needed to get to a point of recognising the important role of the ECEC teachers and to implement specific improvements in the sector. This can successfully be done by representatives of the ECEC teachers jointly introducing a new, positive and solution-orientated narrative into the public discussion.

4. CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

In order to permanently switch to a new narrative, it must be told, heard and perceived repeatedly by as many people as possible. A narrative is similar to a mosaic: its stories are the individual stones. It is crucial to be inclusive and authentic in this. A successful narrative draws its power from being told from different perspectives. It is not about just developing a joint slogan to promote the profession, but to put certain aspects into the spotlight in order to make systemic changes happen, for example:

- Recognition of ECEC as a basic step in the educational career of a child within society.
- Improvement of working conditions based on scientific standards.
- Increased appreciation of the work done by ECEC teachers.
- Recruitment of new staff to the profession.
- A campaign for education, training and continuing education in order to counteract the workforce shortage and to strengthen the professionalization of the profession.

A successful narrative changes a story into a self-evident fact for all. Every opportunity must be used, from public presentations to websites to individual dialogues. Every channel, every story, every public moment counts. Everybody can contribute to the mosaic, and the more often people hear about it, the more likely it is that they will spread it themselves. This way, the value of ECEC will be increased in society at large, and the image of ECEC as mere caregiving will be pushed to the background. Additionally, it is important that the different

⁴ <https://heckmanequation.org/resource/lifecycle-benefits-influential-early-childhood-program/>

institutions and fields of this new narrative are continuously strengthened by joint initiatives and campaigns. Together we stand for a strengthened ECEC sector, which is recognised by everyone as the foundation of a successful educational career and optimal development for all children.

5. FIVE STEPS TOWARDS SOLUTION-DIRECTED AND CONSTRUCTIVE COMMUNICATION

The public discussion is often almost exclusively focused on problems. This is partly due to media dynamics, especially through mass media, as well as the tendency of many stakeholders to concentrate primarily on pointing out problems in their public relations work.

In order to achieve changes, however, it is also necessary to make solutions and progress public. It is not about either/or, but about creating balance. Pointing out problems is important. But if you do not communicate any solutions or positive changes, you will not be perceived as constructive.

This switch in communication is a big challenge for many people and organisations. In order to break through the negative spiral in the public discussion on ECEC, more constructive voices and clear images of solutions are necessary, which can then also be successfully promoted.

The following exercise should help to change your own communication and narrative, and to develop your own constructive mindset. It is based on the Hope-Based Communications (HBC) approach, which is based on the latest neuroscientific findings.

Hope-Based Communications is a deliberate move away from fear-driven reaction to crises and problems and instead to continuously communicate solution-orientated strategies. Broken down to five practical steps, Hope-Based Communications is a simple way to strategically focus on your own ideas, narrative and solution approaches for existing societal problems, and to foster positive change. The goal is to send out hope that change is possible, and not to exclusively show the problems that exist.

Hope-Based Communications is also a very helpful tool⁵ when preparing for public discussions such as interviews or speeches, as well as when writing texts for websites, social media posts and the development of communications and campaign ideas. As a first step, you need to analyse your own way of communicating. How much do you focus on fear, risks and problems? Speaking about these issues is much easier than talking about hope, chances and solutions. The goal is to include these aspects in the communication, and to give them as much space as possible. On the one hand, this way you strengthen your own solutions, which will then receive broader support. On the other, you also put yourself in a position as a constructive part of finding a solution without whitewashing the problems, per se.

⁵ Worksheet in Hope-based Communications workshop



NB: The left column should not be ignored, however it's about finding a good balance by putting the problems you are facing into the context of your solution.

6. COMMON VALUES

In order to convince others of the desired outcomes and changes in perceptions, it is important to demonstrate common values. This paves the way to a common ground for a constructive conversation. In many conversations, the common goal is overlooked. This then



results in a conflict rather than a co-operation. The following messaging structure⁶ should help to strengthen your own ideas and to put the problems in the context of a starting point for finding solutions.

COMMON VALUES



PROBLEM



SOLUTION



CALL-TO-ACTION

7. TIPS FOR COMMUNICATION

This structure for narratives starting with shared values was developed and tested by the American linguist and communications consultant Anat Schenker-Osorio⁷. It has proven to be especially useful when you need to create convincing messages and to strengthen support for new measures and changes. The goal is to win over those who do not yet have a firm opinion on an issue.

In the case of ECEC, this means:

Lead with shared values, not problems:

→ Define what is it that we all want:

... that the potential of all children in Austria is recognised, that they are promoted in their development in a stimulating and loving way.

... to have good working conditions enabling us to use our skills and also to develop them further.

- **Describe the problem in as much detail as possible:**

→ Explain what consequences the problems will have:

What do challenging framework conditions such as limited preparational time, groups that are too big, too few pedagogues, insufficient education and training, etc. mean in detail for the children, the parents and legal guardians, as well as for qualified staff? They

⁶ <https://communitychange.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/C3-Messaging-This-Moment-Handbook.pdf>

⁷ <https://communitychange.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/C3-Messaging-This-Moment-Handbook.pdf>

will have an impact on the quality of and access to services as well as on the perception of the professional field.

- **Describe the solutions in the most straightforward way possible, without using any jargon:**

→ Describe the solutions at hand:

In order to promote children in their development, you need well-trained ECEC teachers who are adequately paid and are proud of the work they are doing.

8. CHANGES IN THE NARRATIVE ON ECEC

ECEC refers to providing optimal early stimulation, promotion and care to young children during a critical phase of their development. It enables every child in Austria to have the same chances to lead a self-determined life. It is the foundation for a society of social cohesion and equal opportunities.

Core narrative: All developed messages, solutions and storytelling are based on this core. In order to strengthen this narrative, the following changes should take place in the public discussion:

Change in narrative I – ECEC means education foundations for children

The benefits of ECEC for children and the value that ECEC has for enhancing education outcomes for children is not a part of the predominant public discussion on ECEC. Yet it is precisely this interest that unites everyone involved, and at which the purpose of ECEC is targeted. The key is therefore to interweave the concept and term of ECEC more closely with the concept of education and its added value for children. This is the foundation for all discussions to build upon.

→ Studies clearly show that every euro invested into elementary education has significant benefit in terms of education and social outcomes. Data show that you can gain a Return on Investment (ROI) of 13%⁸.

⁸[https://www.neboe.at/projekte#:~:text=Studien%20belegen%20deutlich%2C%20dass%20jeder,\(Heckman\)%20erzielt%20werden%20kan;Original source link: https://cehd.uchicago.edu/?page_id=276#abccba](https://www.neboe.at/projekte#:~:text=Studien%20belegen%20deutlich%2C%20dass%20jeder,(Heckman)%20erzielt%20werden%20kan;Original%20source%20link%3A%20https%3A%2F%2Fcehd.uchicago.edu%2Fpage_id%3D276%23abccba)

→ "[...] attending a quality ECEC setting increases the likelihood of a full-time job and is positively correlated with higher pay."⁹

→ "The meta study by Melhuish et al. shows that ECEC strengthens the cognitive, linguistic and academic skills of children, and contributes to their success in school, as well as to social and professional success."¹⁰

→ "A high-quality ECEC is an essential basis for development, life-long learning and social participation, as well as for equal opportunities for children."¹¹

For communication, this means:

Less of:

View kindergartens merely as caregiving facilities

Children only play and do handicrafts in kindergartens

A place in an elementary educational institution is primarily seen as a necessity, to enable parents and guardians to be able to go to work.



More of:

View ECEC facilities as places for learning and growing



Children learn in an elementary educational institution through play and receive individual support so that they develop and unfold in the best possible way



Elementary educational institutions create equal opportunities through a strong foundation for a successful educational career and joy and self-confidence for lifelong learning.



Change in narrative II – The ECEC teacher as the first chaperone on a successful educational path

There is a link between ECEC teachers being seen as "just child minders" and the low levels of value often given to their role by society. The developments in ECEC and the profession of

⁹ <https://www.elementarbildung.at>

¹⁰ <https://www.elementarbildung.at>

¹¹ Charlotte Bühler Institut (2024). QualitätsRahmenPlan für das Personal in elementaren Bildungseinrichtungen in Österreich

ECEC teachers has not yet sufficiently reached the public discussion. Whilst problematic working conditions and staff shortages are in focus, the public discussion misses out on the important role that ECEC teachers play for children and for society. Similar to primary school teachers who are a symbol for the start of their school career, ECEC teachers must be publicly recognised and made visible as the children's first guide on a successful educational and development path.

Federal Minister Martin Polaschek: "The value of the work that ECEC teachers do every day cannot be appreciated enough"¹²

"ECEC teachers establish a relationship with children based on a climate of appreciation and trust, respecting their needs and interests. They accompany and moderate the children's strategies to make this world accessible to them. They create a stimulating environment, enabling a balance between the children's self-controlled learning processes and the diverse impulses and educational offers of the pedagogical experts."¹³

For communication, this means:

Less of:	→	More of:
"auntie"	→	ECEC teacher
ECEC teachers take care of children.	→	ECEC teachers guide children in their learning and individual development.
ECEC teachers do not need time to prepare and follow up for their work.	→	Highly qualified ECEC teachers prepare for their pedagogical working days and plan for targeted learning moments and the individual promotion of every child.
ECEC teachers are responsible for looking after children before they go to school.	→	ECEC teachers are the first experts guiding the education and development of the children, and see to their successful transition to primary school.

¹² <https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Ministerium/Presse/20240124.html>

¹³ <https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/bef/sb/bildungsrahmenplan.html>

Objective of the TSI project "Improving staff working conditions for better quality in early childhood education and care in Austria ":

"The goal of this project is to work on tools to improve the working conditions and the situation of staff, and therefore increase the quality of ECEC (Early Childhood Education and Care) in Austria. The tools will be developed jointly with all Federal Provinces and other relevant stakeholders. This should lead to strengthening the quality, availability and stability of educational staff in Austria and a reduction in staff shortages. This will contribute to better access to and quality of ECEC services in the country".¹⁴

Change in narrative III - Kindergartens as educational facilities: A safe place for children where they can reach their potential

ECEC settings such as kindergartens are trusted, emotionally charged places. First and foremost, for parents who entrust their children to the pedagogues. Whilst the traditional image of the caregiving facility with "aunties" playing with the children is still predominant, it is important that the ECEC facilities are perceived as important and safe places for the development of the children. A place to learn, interact and a place of diversity where the foundation for a successful educational career and a self-determined life is laid.

For communication, this means:

Less of:



More of:

In kindergarten, children can play with other children.



In kindergarten, children playfully learn from and with each other every day, and they are promoted in their development.

ECEC groups are too big, they should be smaller and they should have more caregivers.



The size of the group and a staff-child ratio based on the latest research are decisive for the promotion and development of the children.

Education starts in primary school, symbolised by the school cone.



Education already starts in kindergarten. This is the first station of the child's educational career.

¹⁴ <https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Ministerium/Presse/20221201a.html>

"Children are curious and exploring personalities. Their high learning potential is the basis for their entire educational biography. Appreciating and nurturing early educational processes correspond to a pedagogical demand and a sociopolitical assignment.

[...]

Children come into this world as competent individuals, perceiving and exploring the world they live in with all senses right from the beginning. They develop their competencies and their personality by interacting with familiar people and their environment. From birth, children show curiosity and a desire to learn. Curiosity, creativity and spontaneity are important drivers for their development. Children have different interests, talents and needs, as well as diverse ways of expression and various competencies. Every child, therefore, experiences their own unique educational biography. They have the right to be respected in their individuality and to develop in their own rhythm of learning and living."¹⁵

As babies we learn by using all our senses when exploring our environment. Touching different fabrics, for instance, like the soft fur of an animal soft toy, or the smooth surface of a toy helps us to understand the world around us. Hearing the voices of our caregivers or the melodies of children's songs helps us to get used to sounds and language. Babies learn to imitate sounds, they try them and with the help of their caregivers, they learn to give meaning to sounds, words and sentences.

Our interaction with caregivers is decisive for our development. When a caregiver, for instance, reacts with a soothing embrace and calming words to our cries, we learn that we are safe and loved, which builds a foundation of trust and safety. When the caregiver plays with us, a feeling of attachment and joy is nurtured, which strengthens our emotional connections.

Repetition and reinforcement also play an important role in learning. For instance, by grabbing a toy repeatedly and seeing it move, we start to understand the connection between our actions and their results. Practising crawling and standing with assistance helps us to develop motor skills and to gain trust in our skills.

¹⁵ Bundesländerübergreifender BildungsRahmenPlan für elementare Bildungseinrichtungen in Österreich
(Federal educational framework plan for elementary educational institutes in Austria):
<https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/bef/sb/bildungsrahmenplan.html>

9. TARGET GROUP-SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION

In order to convince as many people as possible, communication must be adjusted to the respective target group. These differ in their values, needs and requirements. The messages are different, but the target always remains the same: It's all about strengthening ECEC and optimising the framework conditions in order to provide every child with education and care in accordance with the latest scientific knowledge.

a) ECEC teachers

Set of expectations: Give me the possibility to be there for each and every child in my group, to accompany them individually, to live an educational partnership and to organise our everyday life in our kindergarten in a professional way.¹⁶

It is important for ECEC teachers that their work is seen and its impact on society is recognised. They need adequate framework conditions in order to enable good pedagogical quality. Their goal is to provide as many educational and supporting offers as possible as part of a multi-professional team.

What ECEC teachers want to have:

- *Broad understanding and appreciation for their profession as ECEC teachers and their pedagogical work in kindergartens.*
- *Better working conditions in order to keep qualified staff in the profession longer and to be able to provide high-quality pedagogical work.*
- *Recognition of preparational and postprocessing work and supervision as working time.*
- *Establishing multi-professional teams in order to be able to fulfil the different needs of the children.*
- *Continuing and advanced education opportunities based on the latest scientific findings.*

Messages:

- *The ECEC teacher is the first guide on a child's successful educational path.*

¹⁶ Persona worksheet, developed by the core group "Communication" at their workshop on 18th and 19th January 2024.

- *ECEC teachers are strongly committed experts in early childhood education.*
- *ECEC teachers are the explorers of children's potential, and support parents and legal guardians in the child's development and education.*
- *School starts with the primary school teacher; the child's educational path starts with the ECEC teacher. The time of the "aunties" is over. The profession has developed.*

Example of messaging structure

We all want to ensure a safe future for every child, they should learn with joy and self-esteem, and be able to live their lives in a self-determined way. At the moment, some children are denied this, since they do not receive the necessary professional accompaniment and support in early childhood. This is why we now need better framework conditions and supportive group sizes and staff-child ratios that allow us pedagogues to do exactly what we were trained for – to lay the foundation for a successful educational path for every child.

b) Parents and legal guardians

Set of expectations: The well-being of our children is most important to us. We want that our children like to go to the kindergarten, and that we can count on their best possible education and care.¹⁷

It is also essential for parents and legal guardians that they can reconcile their family and work life, and can be sure that their children are well, supported in their development and continuously learning and thriving.

What parents and legal guardians want to have:

- *A guaranteed place in an ECEC facility for their children.*
- *Individual promotion and support for their children.*
- *High-quality education and care of their children based on the latest scientific knowledge and provided by well-educated pedagogues.*
- *Trusting and co-operative relations with pedagogues.*

¹⁷ Persona worksheet, developed by the core group "Communication" at their workshop on 18th and 19th January 2024.

Messages:

- *ECEC teachers support parents and legal guardians in the development and education of their children.*
- *All parents and legal guardians should have access to the promotion and support of their children by an ECEC teacher.*
- *Well-educated ECEC teachers can promote the individual potential of every child and support their development. They are partners for the parents and legal guardians in the early childhood education and care of their children.*
- *When parents and legal guardians bring their children to the kindergarten, they need to be sure that their children are in good hands there and are individually supported and promoted. The time at the kindergarten is playful educational time!*
- *ECEC teachers are a child's first educational partners.*
- *The skills children learn at the kindergarten and the promotion of their individual development are their reliable foundation for everything they will learn in life.*

Example of messaging structure

All of us want our children to be well cared for, to have the possibility to develop and be lovingly accompanied and supported on their educational path. But at the moment, they are not always receiving this high-quality support, because there are not enough pedagogues who can take good care of them in the group and promote them individually. We therefore need more kindergarten places with sufficient ECEC teachers whose workload is not too high in order to be able to really concentrate on our children.

c) Politicians, journalists, the public

Education of the youngest children from the first to the sixth year, has not been covered much in the media; it seems like this topic lacks catchy headlines. Right now, however, ECEC is in the public focus. The reason for this is the voices who request better working conditions for this profession, as well as politicians who make it a subject of discussion, and initiate reform processes like the TSI project. It is essential for everyone involved to classify early childhood education as education and promotion of the youngest in the public discussion. Education that not only prepares children for school, but also for life-long learning, which they will be missing out on if they do not have access to.

What politicians, journalists and the public want:

- *Raise and maintain pedagogical standards at the latest level of scientific knowledge.*

- *Ensure that there are sufficient pedagogues available.*
- *Clarity about how to organize education in the field of ECEC.*
- *Implement harmonised working conditions and become a pioneer in this field.*

Messages:

- *In ECEC facilities, the latest scientific knowledge is applied for the best possible development of the youngest.*
- *Updating ECEC, catching up and investing in children means providing them with a good basis for their future.*
- *We all have the responsibility to provide those who are responsible for the education and promotion of our children with the best framework conditions.*
- *A successful ECEC setting provides children with self-confidence in their skills and promotes equal opportunities and social cohesion.*
- *Learning together starts in the kindergarten. If we want our children to live self-determined lives in the future, we need to invest into ECEC today.*
- *ECEC teachers are highly trained educational and development professionals for the youngest, who playfully and in a child-orientated way lay a strong foundation for their successful educational career, for self-determined adults and a stable society.*
- *Elementary education is the key to participation in society and equal opportunities for every child.*
- *Elementary education is an investment in an economically successful future, improving everybody's quality of life.*
- *Investing in ECEC leads to a healthier society and better educational success in the long term.*

Example of messaging structure

We all want our children to become part of a society in which everybody takes care of each other and sticks together. The foundation for the above is laid in the kindergarten, where children learn together with the support of ECEC teachers. At the moment, not every child has this opportunity. This is why we as a society must invest into ECEC today in order to provide our children with a shared good future.

10. STRATEGY FOR BECOMING VISIBLE – PATHS TO A SUCCESSFUL NARRATIVE



Narratives gain strength through repetition, reach and resonance until they are finally recognized by the public discourse. This needs many different voices – local, regional and national ones. Every organisation and each facility is an important mosaic stone for the success. The following ten ways show possibilities for making a narrative visible. Let's use every opportunity!



Together we can do it

10 ways to manage a breakthrough of our narrative

1. Share it with your communications department
 - The communications department is central for the distribution of the narrative.
 - The narrative paper provides a solid foundation for consistent communication.
2. Make the narrative visible on your website
 - Use your own website as a central communication channel.
 - Position the guide prominently to immediately inform anyone who is interested.
3. Be active on social media
 - Social media effectively and rapidly reaches a broad public.
 - The guide should be the basis for all social media posts.
 - Consistent messages on these platforms strengthen the narrative.
Tip: Share, like and comment posts from third parties that strengthen the narrative as well.
4. Make use of the power of media work
 - Media are decisive in influencing the public opinion.
 - Press releases containing the narrative often reach a broad public.
 - They provide a platform to integrate the narrative into news.
Tip: Strong quotes in a press release often have an especially good chance to be included in media posts.
5. Share the guide with colleagues and with other organisations
 - Distribute the guide to as many partners as possible – broad usage strengthens its impact.
 - This nurtures a harmonised communication amongst many stakeholders.
Tip: Think about the narrative as a mosaic, and the authentic stories are the stones – together they make up a shared narrative.
6. Make use of interviews and public presentations
 - Interviews and discussions are key moments to present the narrative.
 - The guide supports the preparation and provides a clear line of argumentation.
Tip: Think about what you definitely want to say before the interview or presentation and make use of your time to say it.
7. Day of ECEC



- Make use of the attention that is given to the topic on this particular day in order to make the narrative public. The guide supports you in planning events and activities.
- A broad participation strengthens visibility and reach.

8. Integrate the narrative in campaigns

- Local and national campaigns are important for dissemination.
- The guide facilitates the development of campaign messages. It makes sure that the messages are consistent and targeted.

9. Include the guide in briefings for communication agencies

- The use of the guide by agencies integrates the narrative into all campaigns.
- It provides essential information for the development of effective communication strategies.

10. Nurture the narrative in private and professional conversations.

- Every conversation is an opportunity to share the narrative.
- The guide provides strong arguments and discussion points.
- These conversations promote general acceptance and dissemination of the narrative.



Ideas for implementation and communication formats

At a workshop on strategic communication and narratives in the course of the TSI project for several days, experts in ECEC and students from the *PH Wien* (Vienna University College of Teacher Education) have contributed to narratives with their valuable experience and important expert knowledge, which are included in this paper.

The following suggestions and ideas for the dissemination of the narrative were developed by the participants.

1. Develop entertaining and informative video concepts
 - **Film "Die ELPäd-Soap"**: Inspired by the caregiver soap "Nicht wieder Mary" (*Not Mary again*), short clips for social media integrating everyday situations in the working life of pedagogues.
 - **"Dingsda"**: Children explain terms or answer questions from their point of view.
 - **Promotional film**: Depicting realistic everyday routines in an ECEC facility for newcomers and returnees in this profession.
 - **Tutorial**: A pedagogue describes how children younger than 6 years old learn and how this differs from the school learning methods.
2. Make use of the potential of testimonials and ambassadors
 - **Testimonials, ambassadors**: Development of an Austria-wide network of students and graduates for events, fairs and school visits, for instance at the "Boys Day".
3. Strengthen the presence at fairs and events
 - **Symposia and fairs**: Participating in events such as Interpädagogika, BeSt, job information days and LandeselementarpädagogikreferentInnenkonferenz (LERK) (*Conference of State Elementary Education Officers*), symposia.
 - **Events**: Openings of facilities, awarding quality seals or prizes, open door days, parents' evenings
4. Update and maintain content on online communication channels
 - **Educational platforms**: Platforms such as EduCare, Charlotte Bühler Institut, etc.
 - **Websites**: Information sites by BMBWF, NEBÖ, ECEC facilities, etc.
 - **Petitions**: Online petitions, e.g. "Elementare Bildung ist mehr wert" (*Elementary education is worth more*).
 - **Social media**: Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, etc.
5. Extended campaigns and public relations

→ **Campaigns:** e.g. campaigns by federal provinces or providers, "Klasse Job" campaign: Interviews show ECEC teachers with different career paths.

→ **Advertising material:** Flyers, posters, adverts, etc.

6. Inform by communicating on a regular basis

→ **Newsletter and letters to parents and legal guardians:** Regular information and updates on ECEC.

7. Initiate expert conversations:

→ **Podcasts:** e.g. "Frauen Fragen" [*Women Question(s)*] with Mari Lang, interview with an ECEC teacher, etc.

