

THE GLACIER IN THE NURSERY SCHOOL

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By means of Montessori-Education children aged from 4 to 6 years were introduced in the basics of earth-sciences in general and glaciology in detail. Therefore a one-year-program was established under the principles of cosmic education (*sensu Montessori*) beginning with some basics of the history of earth, planetology (how heavy are we on different planets, what are planets made of?) including a visit at the Museum for Natural Sciences in Salzburg, Austria (Haus der Natur). After this there was some time to teach the children some basics about (quaternary) ice-ages including the first conversational contact with glaciers. At the same time the children could do some tests about ice (freezing and remelting of salted water and tap water).

After this period of pre-information, a story about a “personified” glacier was introduced which tells details about the “life” of a glacier over a whole year, trying to teach the children the basics of glaciology and the interaction of glaciers and climate. The story is written by a geologist/glaciologist and is illustrated by a professional artist with the aim of wrapping all the facts in a good read- and understandable story and to illustrate all these facts in a proper way to be interesting for kids aged four to six years.

The next step was a oral presentation of a glaciologist in the nursery school which turned into an interactive talk over almost two hours where the children could watch lots of slides, see and test the equipment needed to move on a glacier like crampons, ice-picks and a rope and of course ask all questions about glaciers.

The last step of this one-year-program was the painting of pictures of glaciers and building up a glacier and the surrounding mountains with papier-mâché and other materials to let the children show their new gained knowledge.

After this one-year-program the children were able to tell the basic principles about climatology and glaciology in a simple way, thus maybe being more careful and respectful with the environment.