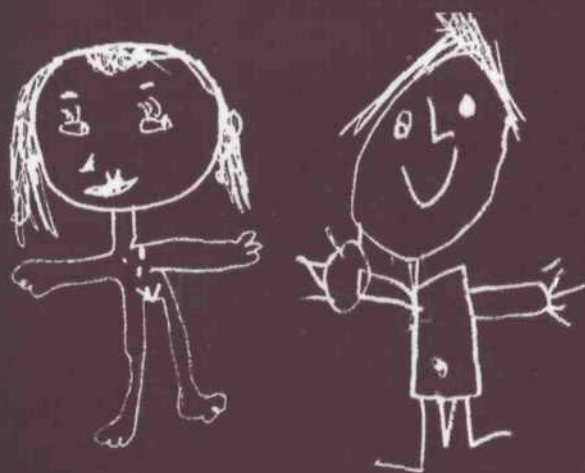
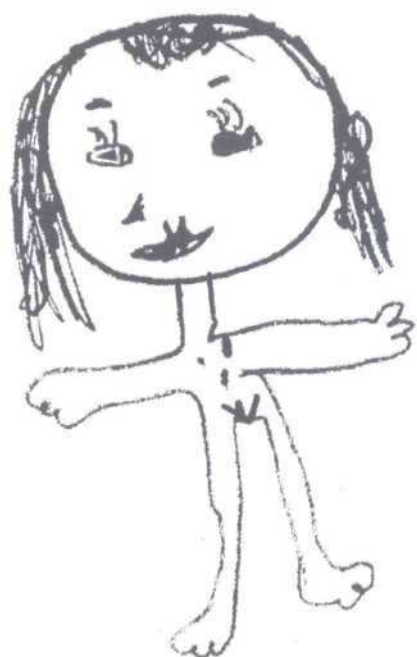


Evaluation Model for Pre-Primary Education



EVALUATION MODEL FOR PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION



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Juana M^a Sáez Nieto

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[CP - State School; CC - Maintained School; CEIP - Pre-Primary School]

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FOREWORD

The majority of national and international studies have shown that the total amount of time that pupils attend school in Pre-Primary Education is a decisive factor in young people's expectations of success at school and that it is essential in order to make equality of opportunity a reality for those from economically disadvantaged environments.

In September 2002 the management of the National Institute of Quality and Evaluation decided to set in motion an evaluation project for Pre-Primary Education, in accordance with the long-term plan of activities approved by the Board of Governors of the Institute. This was an original initiative because large scale evaluations of early education aged children were very scarce. The Institute was fully aware of the difficulty of administering evaluation instruments to five-year-olds, the age-group chosen for the project, and especially, of doing it with a sufficiently large number in a systematic and uniform way in order to obtain meaningful results and correlations. Whilst all of the above is difficult with older children, at such an early age the difficulty increases not only quantitatively but, especially, qualitatively.

Furthermore, the project began at a time when the teaching profession was engaged in a debate about the very nature of Pre-Primary Education, in the context of the statutory review of this stage. This situation, which did not seem very favourable, has been taken into account in the preparation of this work which, it is hoped, will be a starting point towards a stable framework for the evaluation of Pre-Primary Education and serve as a reference for future studies.

The preparatory work of the pre-primary evaluation project was directed towards the development of a set of evaluation instruments. In May 2004 these instruments were trialled in a field administration carried out in educational institutions which represented the different sectors of the population to be evaluated. Although the final phase of the project was not carried out, the National Institute for Evaluation and Quality of the Education System considered that the field test was sufficiently outstanding to contribute to an evaluation of this stage of education in Spain. It therefore decided, with the agreement of the Board of Governors, to prepare this publication, which contains a description of the planning and the development of the evaluation instruments, the administration of the field test and the conclusions drawn.

This study contributes the theoretical reflection that went into choosing the most appropriate evaluation model, an analysis of the decisions taken about which evaluation instruments could be considered the most suitable, and the most notable aspects and conclusions of the field test carried out. In addition to this reflection, the study reveals something that the teaching profession knows only too well: the extraordinary dedication and the high level of commitment of the teachers in Pre-Primary Education. The education system must recompense this commitment by providing the teachers of this stage with the appropriate means to enable them to analyse their work and achieve the goals they have set out. All of the above is based on the conviction that the successes and failures of the system in the early years will also be the successes and the failures of education as a whole.

Carmen Maestro Martín
Director of INECSE

1. INTRODUCTION

INECSE's long-term evaluation plan for the six-year period from 2001 to 2006, which was approved by the Education Sector Conference, includes an evaluation of Pre-Primary Education. This is the first time the Institute has considered an evaluation of this stage and, as in the case of other projects, the initiative responds to the objectives of the evaluation of the Education System, which is continually adapting to the social demands and educational needs of pupils, teachers, schools, educational processes and the respective Education Authorities.

The evaluation of Pre-Primary Education is considered necessary in order to complete the overall evaluation of the education system, to find out to what extent this stage contributes to improving the quality of the system, and to draw up indicators for this level of education which support the development of new education policies. The challenge for this project is to put forward an open evaluation which continually encourages the development of external evaluation during the period of early years education.

It might be appropriate to refer to the current difficulties in relation to carrying out evaluations of this stage of education, as they determine the evaluation model that is defined. They include, on the one hand, the characteristics of the age-groups of the pupils to be evaluated, and on the other, the complexity of a curriculum which is designed for the comprehensive development of the child, that is to strengthen the cognitive, emotional, social and motor aspects, etc. It should be remembered that the curriculum for this stage defines the final year objectives in terms of abilities, and only within the context of this complex framework can the content of this publication be understood.

In May 2004 a field test was carried out with an appropriate sample whose main objective was to verify the feasibility of this evaluation, and not so much to gather data about the level of attainment of the pupils. For this purpose, a group of specialists in pre-primary education produced the following evaluation instruments: attainment tests for the pupils, a questionnaire and an observation guide for the evaluation of the educational processes and context questionnaires. Finally, an analysis was made of the evaluations carried out and the suggestions put forward by the form teachers and the external evaluators with regard to the evaluation instruments and the administration of the same.

This publication describes the development process of a proposal for the evaluation of Pre-Primary Education, as well as the materials and specific procedures to be used to carry out the evaluation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This aim of this evaluation is to research the level of attainment of the Pre-Primary Education goals, and to find out which factors in the teaching and learning process might be connected with the results achieved in this stage. This study, therefore, should provide important relevant information in order to improve the quality of the education system.

In the current system, the stage of Pre-Primary Education is for pupils up to age of six, and is divided into two cycles of three years each. The purpose of this stage of education is to contribute to the children's physical, intellectual, emotional, social and moral development.

Further to this general purpose, the objectives of this study are to:

- a) ascertain the level of development of the children's learning abilities in the final year of Pre-Primary Education
- b) obtain information about the characteristics of the educational processes set out in the curriculum for this stage and about the nature of the context factors which affect the pupils' learning process
- c) carry out an evaluation of the overall situation of the education provided to pre-primary age-groups.

EVALUATION MODEL

Although the concepts of what is involved in educational evaluation are very similar, the evaluation models or processes vary enormously, depending on the different variables involved in the process, such as the agents, the purpose, the areas which it is designed for, the instruments to be used, etc.

In relation to the agents that intervene, this evaluation model has a marked external character, as will be seen subsequently.

This evaluation model is quite similar to summative assessment in that it focuses on results, and that its purpose is to verify what the pupils have already learned, "the children's learning", at the end of a stage of education. However, this does not mean the conclusions of the evaluation cannot be used from a clearly formative perspective to develop new proposals designed to improve the stage evaluated.

Furthermore, the difference between evaluating from a variable point of reference and an evaluation criterion should be pointed out. As the quality of the evaluated object must be checked against something else, it is common in education to use quantitative and/or qualitative "Indicators" as points of reference in the evaluation process. The curriculum objectives are then incorporated into the indicators which are used, to a greater extent, not only to evaluate how a stage of education functions, but also the quality of the design of the curriculum on which they are based.

In this study, the curriculum objectives defined for the final year of the stage of Pre-Primary Education have been chosen as the point of reference for the evaluation model. As mentioned above, this is the most appropriate point of reference given the purpose and the characteristics of this evaluation.

In accordance with the curriculum plan, the objectives have been specified in the form of "evaluation criteria". This has enabled a more meaningful and clearer description of the point of reference to be provided.

Finally, it should be noted that although this model is designed for the results of the learning achieved by the pupils, the educational processes used to develop this learning must also be taken into account. Even though the purpose is clearly summative, the information provided by these processes enables a better understanding of the results. Thus, the model includes a brief evaluation of the variables which revolve around the teaching and learning processes.

EVALUATION TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS

Every evaluation process requires instruments and techniques for the purpose of obtaining the information which is required. These instruments and techniques are, therefore, tools used in the evaluation itself, and the choice of tools depends on the type of evaluation decided on. If the instruments used for obtaining information, and consequently for measuring, are not suitable for the purpose, the evaluation will be worthless, even though the instruments have been well defined technically.

The basic evaluation technique in the stage of Pre-Primary Education is observation, but other opportunities such as conversations or interviews should not be underestimated. It must be taken into account that many of these pupils' learning results involve aspects of their personal behaviour, which cannot be verified by means of an isolated event, or in a single situation.

Furthermore, the information to be obtained is essentially qualitative and, in many cases, focused on situations of interaction with classmates, the teaching materials, and the areas created, etc. Information about personal, emotional and social behaviour, motor skills, etc. also has to be gathered very frequently.

It is quite difficult, therefore, to define the techniques and instruments for the evaluation of this stage of education, and even more in a summative, external evaluation.

In general, the instruments used in this type of evaluations place more emphasis on the measurement characteristic. Thus, the most typical are the pupils' learning context questionnaires and attainment tests in the different areas or subjects.

In the case of Pre-Primary Education, the context questionnaires do not have to be qualified in any way with respect to those used in the evaluations of other stages of education. This does not occur in the case of the pupils' level of attainment tests. As shown below, the characteristics of these tests and the particularity of the object to be evaluated require certain qualifications regarding the preparation of the tests.

One of these is the requirement that in external evaluations the information must be observed and gathered with the highest possible level of objectivity. Therefore, care must be taken to:

1. *choose the most typical situation of the learning object which is evaluated, so that the evaluator checks that which he/she is sure will provide the information required*
2. *define clearly the questions which the evaluator must focus on, so that the evaluator has no doubts about what aspects of behaviour or answer they should give most attention to*
3. *record the information obtained on a scale which is compatible with the object to be verified, so that the evaluator has no difficulty in associating the variables of the scale with what has been observed.*

In accordance with the above guidelines, the instruments which have been prepared for this evaluation are the following:

- * Tests to evaluate the pupils' level of attainment: one for the external evaluator and one to be completed by the form teacher.
- * An observation guide and an evaluation questionnaire of the educational processes: to be completed by the external evaluator and by the form teacher, respectively.
- * Questionnaires about the social, economic, school and family context: for the parents, teachers and headteachers of the educational institutions.

The above evaluation instruments are described in detail in Chapter 2, *Design of the evaluation*.



2. DESIGN OF THE EVALUATION

OVERVIEW

In this study, the design of the evaluation is based on the following aspects:

1. The main objective is to ascertain to what extent children in the final year of Pre-Primary Education have achieved the objectives of the stage, and to what degree the results obtained are connected with social and cultural factors, the time spent in education together with the type of education, and the educational processes organized in the educational institutions.
2. The design of the evaluation should provide a basis for valid tests which are viable and appropriate for five-year-olds in all the Autonomous Communities, taking into account the characteristics of Pre-Primary Education as well as the schools, and the special characteristics of the respective Autonomous Communities.
3. The curriculum guidance used to develop the evaluation instruments incorporates the regulations in force for the period the evaluated pupils¹ attended this stage,

¹ The design of this evaluation is based on the Curriculum framework established by Organic Law 1/1990 of October 3rd, on the General Planning of the Education System (LOGSE) (Published in the Official State Gazette on October 4th). It specifically forms part of the regulations in Royal Decree 1330/1991 of September 6th, which establishes the basic aspects of the Curriculum for Pre-Primary Education (Published in the Official State Gazette on September 7th), as well as the regulations of the Curriculum Decrees of the different Autonomous Communities regarding the common aspects for this stage.

as well as the principles established in international practice and in the scientific community in relation to this stage of education.

4. The evaluation is carried out by means of the following instruments:
 - a) Observation tests for the children, corresponding to the three areas of learning of the curriculum: *personal identity and autonomy, physical and social environment, and communication and representation*.
The tests should evaluate the level of conceptual, procedural and attitudinal knowledge attained in the above three areas and consist of oral questions asking the children to do physical, manipulative, plastic, musical, drawing, mathematical tasks, etc.
There are two types of tests: tests administered externally, that is, the person who administers the test is not involved in the pupil's education, and other tests which are completed by the form teacher of the group of pupils who are evaluated. The answers and results are noted down by the external evaluators in the forms designed for this purpose.
 - b) Observation guide for the external evaluator and a questionnaire for the form teacher for the purpose of learning about the educational processes carried out in the classroom.
 - c) Questionnaires for the parents, teachers and the headteachers of the educational institutions who are directly involved in the children's educational process.
These questionnaires should allow the variables of a sociocultural context to be dealt with in depth, and the pupils' development in the years corresponding to the stage to be identified. In addition, they inquire into the educational processes organised in the schools in this period of education.
5. These evaluation instruments were developed by groups of specialists in this stage of education under INECSE's direction. They come from different backgrounds and from different Autonomous Communities.

The results of the evaluation planned should provide information about:

- a) The background of the pupils who complete Pre-Primary Education: socioeconomic profile, distribution in the different types of schools, percentage of children who attend school at this stage, development covered within the stage (years, types of school, etc.).
- b) Information about children with special educational needs, from disadvantaged social or cultural backgrounds, or from the immigrant population.
- c) The educational objectives achieved in different areas of learning.
- d) The effect of the educational processes and the different context factors on the results.
- e) The reality of the educational processes in the classrooms.
- f) The opinions of the teaching profession regarding Pre-Primary Education.

EVALUATING PUPILS' LEVEL OF ATTAINMENT

DEFINITION OF THE EVALUATION CRITERIA

As stated above, the evaluation of the pupil's level of attainment, especially in Pre-Primary Education, is an activity of maximum importance and, at the same time, exceptionally difficult. The teaching and learning processes in this period of education have a strong all-inclusive character. This should not be an obstacle to carrying out the evaluation, although it means, in many cases, evaluating abilities in the middle of the development process, with all the particularities involved, rather than precise results. It is clear that the purpose of the evaluation is to check that the objectives for this stage of education have been achieved, and to obtain the results or level of attainment at the end of the stage in situations that are essentially dynamic and procedural. Consequently, on many occasions, the evaluations will show the level of development of the educational processes set out in the curriculum for the stage, and the nature and effect of the factors associated with these results.

As the object of this study is to ascertain the real level of attainment of the pupils within the context of the precise curriculum framework provided by the LOGSE, it has been designed taking the three areas of learning defined in the curriculum guidance as the points of reference. These three areas of learning are far removed from traditional epistemological organisation, and much closer to the areas of learning and development in young children. These areas are closely interrelated, both from the point of view of their content, and from the abilities which are developed through them.

The characteristics of the Pre-Primary Education areas have a direct influence on the design of the mechanisms used to evaluate the level of attainment of the pupils. The design of the evaluation should focus more on general areas of learning, rather than on precise areas of knowledge. Hence, the most suitable way to obtain the most inclusive, important information about what the children have learned at the end of this period of education is to evaluate the abilities to be developed in this stage and the appropriate conceptual, procedural, and attitudinal contents in the abovementioned areas.

In accordance with the above, the points of reference for the present evaluation are the general objectives of the stage, expressed in terms of abilities based on direct observation and not behaviour.

This set of general objectives was the first element to be analysed for the purpose of identifying the abilities that form part of the same. These abilities were then analysed in order to clarify the significance of the objectives and to reach a consensus regarding the level of importance they have for the final year of the stage of Pre-Primary Education.

The second step was to establish the relationship between these abilities and the contents in the three areas of the curriculum which develop them and to check to what extent each area contributes to their² development. From this analysis, it can be ascertained which abilities are developed in more than one area, even though from different perspectives and in different contexts. Finally, it can be stated which are the most important abilities in this stage, given that in one way or another they are present in more than one area of learning.

² As the tests are designed from the perspective of the areas in the curriculum, this process of checking is essential, since the abilities stated in the general objectives, which is a clear reference for the final year of the stage, should not be omitted.

When the most important abilities stated in the objectives have been determined, the next step is to analyse the exact contents which appear together in each one of the areas and the ideal instrument to develop these abilities. It is necessary to specify "Which precise content do I want to show develops this ability?" The contents which allude to what one is working on in order to achieve the abilities appear in more than one area on some occasions, even though from different perspectives. It is, therefore, necessary to analyse the contents in order to select those which are considered most relevant.

When the abilities to be evaluated and the contents which focus on them have been decided, the corresponding evaluation criteria are defined, which become the direct and precise reference points in the evaluation process. Although this evaluation has a clearly summative nature, the use of criteria as a reference contributes to the objectivity of the evaluation itself. It also allows the level of development of the ability to be checked, which is a basic element in the final goals for the stage.

The type of evaluation criteria used in this evaluation process is set out in the curriculum framework which is being evaluated; it has been designed for the compulsory stages and includes the type and level of learning to be achieved by a pupil with respect to certain abilities. In short, the criteria is equivalent to a teaching aim where the pupil displays the level of attainment of the abilities, in relation to certain contents, at a precise moment in his or her development. Planning the design of the evaluation based on this concept requires a clear knowledge of the abilities to be developed in this stage and the contents to achieve this development. For this reason it was necessary to carry out the curriculum analysis process described above.

Thus, the evaluation criteria applied in this external evaluation were defined by matching up the abilities expressed in the objectives for each area with the corresponding contents.

The definition of the evaluation criteria is an extremely important step in the evaluation process, not only because they are connected with the results obtained, but as they are also difficult to explain. Considerable care must be taken, especially with regard to the description of the evaluation criteria and the number for each area.

The evaluation criteria for the three curriculum areas were the following:

CURRICULUM AREA OF *PERSONAL IDENTITY AND AUTONOMY*:

1. Recognises and identifies the body as a whole, and distinguishes the different body parts.
2. Builds a positive sense of self-identity and accepts own identity.
3. Expresses own feelings, experiences, emotions and is sensitive to those of others.
4. Identifies perceptions and sensations.
5. Demonstrates coordination and control of body movement, his/her motor skills, and awareness of objects and everyday activities.
6. Controls behaviour for the group of people and integrates into the group independently showing respect for others.
7. Solves everyday life situations on his/her own and shows initiative, collaborates with tasks and accepts the rules.
8. Displays healthy habits, regarding food and personal hygiene, and uses the areas and materials appropriately.
9. Identifies dangerous situations and acts appropriately in them.

CURRICULUM AREA OF *PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT*:

1. Forms good relationships with the different groups he/she belongs to: the family, school and friends.
2. Moves with confidence and shows awareness of space, of self and others.
3. Is aware of the recurrent acts in everyday life and the time of day.
4. Observes and forms relationships with the surroundings, noticing the effects and changes which occur.
5. Identifies jobs and basic services for the community pointing out its usefulness and purpose.
6. Looks after and respects natural surroundings, and displays positive attitude and behaviour towards the same.
7. Knows about the different types of living things and their relationship with the environment.
8. Knows about and appreciates own cultural events and how to take part in them.

CURRICULUM AREA OF *COMMUNICATION AND REPRESENTATION*

1. Uses oral language as a means of communication with others: with different speakers, in different contexts, and with different content.
2. Understands and reproduces traditional culture texts, and is aware of its importance.
3. Shows an interest in written language, and is aware that it is a means of communication, information, and enjoyment.
4. Distinguishes writing from other forms of graphic expression; notices the similarities and differences between written words and can identify some very important ones.
5. Shows interest in experimenting with the basic plastic arts, and expresses enjoyment in response to own work.
6. Follows the rhythm and the tune of songs, playing simple musical instruments or acting them out through dance or gestures.
7. Creates representations of events, characters and simple stories using body language.
8. Responds to the artwork of classmates and the artwork of own cultural environment.
9. Understands mathematical language by performing simple operations, is aware of and appreciates its usefulness in everyday situations.
10. Identifies the relationships which are formed between objects, is aware of similarities, differences, features, and position in space and time.

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS AND ITEMS

The formulation of the majority of the evaluation criteria involves a high degree of generality, and therefore it can be assessed in very different ways. In this context, it is necessary to define some indicators, for the purpose of identifying the aspects or traits which should be observed and assessed by the evaluator in the different tasks and tests performed by the pupils.

In general, the evaluation of each criterion requires the evaluation of several indicators. Below is an example of a criterion and the corresponding set of indicators defined for the same:

CRITERION No. 4: DISTINGUISHES WRITING FROM OTHER FORMS OF GRAPHIC EXPRESSION; NOTICES THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WRITTEN WORDS AND CAN IDENTIFY SOME VERY IMPORTANT ONES.
Indicators
Forms relationships between pictures and words Is aware of differences and similarities in the written words Identifies important written words used in own surroundings Uses some conventional knowledge of the written language system Produces and uses systems of simple symbols to send simple messages Builds new words in writing from others



We do drawings of the story and write the title.

As each indicator can be checked in different ways, it is necessary to define the items. Generally, the item describes what the pupil has to do correctly and how he/she should do it, with regard to that shown in the indicator. The item thus becomes the instrument which is used to check the ability described in the indicator.

The items are constructed from the field of behaviours implied by the indicator. Thus, some indicators can be checked by means of a single test, where only one item is defined for the indicator. For example, in the case of one of the abovementioned indicators:

Indicator	Item
Produces and uses systems of simple symbols to send simple messages	Write down something simple, in a conventional way: your name, title of a story, a rhyme...

On the other hand, some indicators need to check the level of achievement by asking the children to perform several actions. In the case below, it is necessary to define several items for each indicator. For example:

CRITERION No.3: EXPRESSES OWN FEELINGS, EXPERIENCES, EMOTIONS AND IS SENSITIVE TO THOSE OF OTHERS	
Indicator	Items
Identifies emotions and feelings and expresses them appropriately	1. Displays with gestures and/or words a range of moods, joy, annoyance, anger, sadness, fear... using gestures of understanding and questions.
	2. Recognises his/her moods and the reasons for them, with support from his/her teachers (gestures of understanding, questions...).
	3. Displays control of inappropriate displays of annoyance, joy, anger, fear... when asked to do so and supported by gestures of understanding, messages, expresses in words his/her feelings and emotions, the reasons for them and consequences.

In short, the majority of the evaluation criteria are assessed by more than one indicator which are, in turn, verified through more than one item.

The items must maintain their relationship with the established criteria on which the tests are based, given that if they stray from the criteria, this would question the validity of the process that has been defined. Thus, once the applicable items have been specified, they have to be linked up to the criteria again, in order to confirm whether they are suitable to check the parameters therein described. Likewise, it is very important that the terms used to describe the items do not lead to confusion when the observation has to be classified within the *grading scale*.

GRADING SCALE

The grading scale is the tool used to gather the scores of the test results. The qualitative aspect of this evaluation model is very important; this means that the score is reflected in a scale which is made up of qualitative expressions that show the level of attainment achieved by the pupils and not numerical criteria.

The following qualitative expressions or evaluation criteria have been defined in accordance with the type of test administered:

- * *very good, good, not satisfactory, in the test for pupils administered by the external evaluator;*
- * *always, sometimes, never; or, much, something, nothing; or, no difficulty, some difficulty, a lot of difficulty, are the types of expressions that appear in the test for pupils to be completed by the form teacher.*

It should be observed that in both types of tests the grading scale has three levels, which cover all the behaviours or observations to be evaluated. For some items, correction guidance is included with the *grading scale* in order to make the evaluation more efficient and reliable.

Although a wider range of levels in a scale is usually recommended in order to achieve greater accuracy in the scoring, an analysis of the defined items showed that more levels did not necessarily lead to more information, and even made the appraisal of the results more difficult. It was also shown that the final score did not allow significant differences to be established between one level and the next, for example between the second and the first, within a scale of five.

However, it was shown that great care needed to be taken over the terminology used, as this is what really decides the quality of the score.

It was decided to proceed in this way because it is the scale itself which should provide a clear description of the level of attainment and comply with the type of evidence it is hoped will be gathered with each test. Taking into account the characteristics of the evaluation indicators, (*Displays self-assurance...*, *Collaborates in the tasks...*, *Acts independently...*, *Expresses his/her emotions appropriately...*, etc.), it is essential that the scores refer to variables of an effectively qualitative nature and allow for a descriptive appreciation of the frequency, the perseverance, the degree and the enthusiasm. For example, for the indicator *Coordinates and manages delicate handling skills*, it is necessary to use scores which describe how difficult it is for the pupil to display this ability. In contrast, for the indicator *Acts independently, with self-assurance and self-confidence in school tasks*, it is important to check the frequency or the keenness with which he/she performs this ability. Only in the case of external tests, which are based on direct observations at a particular moment in time, is it possible to use the type of levels: *very good*, *good*, *not satisfactory*.

Nonetheless, the latter type of tests can be used for quantitative questions (number of correct answers, responses, etc.), for the purpose of providing the corresponding criteria of clarity and objectivity. This aspect is an essential component in a summative evaluation process and accordingly, the scale which applies to each item accurately describes what is considered *very good*, *good*, and *not satisfactory*. So, for example, for an item which has two questions: a) and b), in general, a *grading scale* such as the following is required:

- * *very good*, when the answers to questions a) and b) are both correct;
- * *good*, when only answer a) or answer b) is correct;
- * *not satisfactory*, when other answers different to the above are given.

TYPES OF ATTAINMENT TESTS FOR THE PUPILS

Once the indicators had been specified, it was observed that some of them could be evaluated by means of appropriate, straightforward observations by an external evaluator, but others, basically those dealing with behaviour, required evidence from ongoing assessment in the normal classroom situation. Therefore, it

was necessary to go back to the information gathered by the teacher through the daily assessment and observation instruments.

As a result, the following two types of tests appeared, both of which were classified as instruments based on establishing criteria, as mentioned above:

1. *Pupils' test administered by the external evaluator*, consisting of tasks that the pupils have to do in front of him/her.
2. *Pupils' test completed by the form teacher*, which shows the indicators, and the corresponding items, that have to be evaluated by the teacher, using the information he or she has gathered about each pupil through the continuous assessment process.

It is clear that the design of this evaluation is the first type of test, given that it is an external evaluation. The second type of test is only used when the indicators cannot be evaluated by means of a particular test or it is necessary to reduce the number of tests or items, so that the test can be administered in a relatively short period of time.

Each one of these tests is described in greater detail below:

DESCRIPTION OF THE PUPILS' TEST ADMINISTERED EXTERNALLY

As described above in a general way, the elements which define the items or the tasks of the Pupils' test administered externally are the following:

1. The *criterion*, which is the object to be graded.
2. The *indicator*, which specifies the criterion.
3. The *item*, which describes the activity the pupils have to do.
4. The *administration conditions and instructions for the item*.
5. The *grading scale*, consisting of three scores: *very good, good, not satisfactory*.

The external evaluation items can be administered either individually, to each pupil separately, or collectively, that is to the group of pupils in the class at the same time, for example:

* ADMINISTERED INDIVIDUALLY:

CRITERION No.2:					
MOVES WITH CONFIDENCE AND SHOWS AWARENESS OF SPACE, OF SELF AND OTHERS					
Indicator	Items	Administration conditions and instructions	Scale		
			Very good	Good	Not satisfactory
Places objects in limited spaces: in front of - behind, on top of - under, near - far.	You have to do the following: a) Put the horse in front of the box. b) Put the cow on top of the box. c) Put the dog far from the box. d) Put the tiger behind the box. e) Put the stork beside the box. f) Put the dolphin under the box.	Individual activity. Materials: a box (the front and the back must be clearly defined) and 6 animals (a horse, a cow , a dog, a tiger, a stork, a dolphin). They can be substituted for other similar animals.	6 correct answers	4 or 5 correct answers	Other cases

* ADMINISTERED TO A GROUP:

CRITERION No.3:					
SHOWS AN INTEREST IN WRITTEN LANGUAGE, AND IS AWARE THAT IT IS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION, INFORMATION, AND ENJOYMENT.					
Indicator	Items	Administration conditions and instructions	Scale		
			Very good	Good	Not satisfactory
Active listening, enjoys and understands a story read by an adult.	Sheet with 5 drawings: a) Little Red Riding Hood in the wood, on the way to her grandmother's house with a basket, talking with a bear. b) A hunter walking through the wood to the house of Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother. c) Little Red Riding Hood in her house and her father gives her the basket. d) Little Red Riding Hood in her grandmother's house talking with the wolf dressed up as the grandmother and in the bed. e) Little Red Riding Hood with the basket walking along a path with a view of the sea. It could be a beach. Circle the drawings which appear in the story I have just read and cross out those that do not appear in it.	Group activity Materials: - Story of "Little Red Riding Hood" without illustrations (see attached text). - Sheet with 5 drawings (2 related to the story and 3 not related to it). The evaluator reads the story to all the class. He/she should get the children's attention by creating the right atmosphere: for example placing them in a circle where the evaluator can see all of them. Then he/she shows the sheet with the drawings and starts the activity.	Circle drawn round drawings b) and d). Cross through a), c) and e)	One or two mistakes	More than two mistakes

The majority of the items are closed answers with three options, but only one is correct.

In general, the items engage the children in the following types of tasks:

- recognition or identification
- positioning
- choosing
- putting in order or arranging in order of importance
- associating, pairing or matching noises, smells, shapes, sizes, concepts relating to time, situations, sensations,...
- expressing ideas, feelings, emotions...
- handling skills in which basically procedural contents are used: movements, and motor skills exercises, awareness of spaces, observation, putting in order, forming groups, arranging in a series, distributing or sharing, calculating, etc.

A section which describes the **administration conditions and instructions** has been incorporated into the design of the items administered externally. This section provides details about the administration of the items, in order to ensure the test is carried out correctly and that the results obtained from the administration comply with the objectives for which they were defined.

The administration conditions and instructions describe the following aspects:

- * Type of administration for the item: group or individual, as described above.
- * A description of the materials to be used in the administration of the test: This is an important aspect because in this stage interaction with the objects constitutes a very important source of learning and consequently, it is an essential tool for checking and evaluating. It should be noted therefore, that almost all the tests involve the use of one type of materials or another. It is appropriate therefore, that the description of the materials should specify which aspects are considered relevant to the administration, as the characteristics of the same determine, in many cases, the reliability of the test.

Thus, for example, when drawings are used to check the indicator *"forms relationships between words and pictures"*, the administration of the materials is subject to the following condition: *"...on the sheets there are drawings of the title pages of the stories and the corresponding title written in large capital letters enclosed in a box..."*.

- * Description of how the item is to be administered: The administration for each item is unique, and requires a complete set of instructions, in many cases, on how to present the materials, how to describe them to the pupils, whether or not an explanation can be repeated, whether the pupils can sit together at the same table to do the test, whether it is necessary to clarify a particular term used in the test, or simply how to explain to the pupils the content of what they are going to do.
- * Time for administration of the item: It is recommended to say how long the test is going to last. This may vary a lot: the time taken to explain the activity to the pupils, the time the pupil has to give his/her reply, the time taken to perform the test, for example: hop on one leg along a gymnasium bench for a minute, etc.
- * The place where the item is to be administered: in the normal classroom, in the room or area for physical development, etc.



We enjoy listening to the story told by the teacher.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PUPILS' TEST TO BE COMPLETED
BY THE FORM TEACHER.**

These test items are graded by the form teacher, in accordance with the evidence gathered during the learning process of the group of children evaluated. It consists of the following elements: the criteria, the indicator, the item, and the grading scale, and has the following types of scores: *always, sometimes, never, or a lot, something, nothing, or no difficulty, some difficulty, a lot of difficulty.*

This test deals with the evaluation criteria concerning the results of the learning in the area of attitude and behaviour, which are connected with the sense of self-identity displayed by the pupil (for example: identifying emotions and expressing them appropriately, expressing feelings, needs, etc.), acting independently (for example: the order in which he/she does things, the way he/she manages own personal hygiene and the objects he/she handles, perseverance in the tasks he/she does, etc.), social development (for example: works as part of a group or class, collaborates with others, takes into account the needs of others, etc.).

The indicators which were developed describe the most common or usual situations which are used in this stage to develop the type of abilities set out in the evaluation criteria. There are numerous situations, but in this case it is necessary to select those which draw together the most common and important behaviours for children of this age.

The diversity of situations in these indicators, together with the fact that there can be many, variable circumstances in each one, made it necessary to define several items for the majority of them, in order to check the indicator properly. For example, to evaluate the indicator '*Identifies own emotions and feelings and expresses them appropriately*' (which describes behaviours which require a sequence of actions), involves the administration of three items, as described below:

Indicator	Items	Scale		
		Always / A lot	Sometimes / Something	Never / Nothing
Identifies own emotions and feelings and expresses them appropriately.	1. Displays with gestures and/or words a range of moods, joy, annoyance, anger, sadness, fear... using gestures of understanding and questions.	3	2	1
	2. Recognises his/her moods and the reasons for them, with support from his/her teachers (gestures of understanding, questions...).	3	2	1
	3. Displays control of inappropriate displays of annoyance, joy, anger, fear... when asked to do so and supported by gestures of understanding, messages, expresses in words his/her feelings and emotions, the reasons for them and consequences.	3	2	1

Finally, it should be pointed out that the items to be graded by the form teachers require a detailed description about what really has to be evaluated. This description may involve closed lists of what the teacher has to observe, for example: *Identifies and understands the family relationships between brothers and sisters, parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts, and cousins*; or open-ended lists, which only describe in a general way some of the aspects which have to be observed, such as: *Tries to achieve the goals set and accepts new challenges: in games and motor exercises, in everyday classroom tasks, in personal hygiene, etc.* In both cases, it should be made perfectly clear what precise actions of the pupil have to be graded with respect to the description in the indicator.

The example shown below is an item to be filled in by the form teacher using the grading scale: *no difficulty, some difficulty, a lot of difficulty*.

CRITERION No. 5: DEMONSTRATES COORDINATION AND CONTROL OF BODY MOVEMENT, HIS/HER MOTOR SKILLS, AND AWARENESS OF OBJECTS AND EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES				
Indicator	Items	Scale		
		No difficulty	Some difficulty	A lot of difficulty
Coordinates and controls delicate handling skills	Do you know how to tear paper? Can you cut paper? Can you paste? Can you make a model? Can you thread, fold paper, etc?	3	2	1

The following items are described using a grading scale of: *always/a lot, sometimes/something, never/nothing*:

CRITERION No. 1: USES ORAL LANGUAGE AS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION WITH OTHERS: WITH DIFFERENT SPEAKERS, IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS, AND WITH DIFFERENT CONTENT.				
Indicator	Items	Scale		
		Always / A lot	Sometimes/ Something	Never/ Nothing
Knows how to express himself/herself orally correctly, adapting to the different contexts and speakers	1. Interacts with his/her classmates in the role plays and representational play.	3	2	1
	2. Recalls and talks about events and experiences.	3	2	1
	3. Expresses himself/herself orally using a variety of extra-linguistic signs (intonation, body language, facial expressions) in order to reinforce the meaning of the messages.	3	2	1
	4. Likes to take part in dialogues which arise in class.	3	2	1



We buy medicine in the chemist's corner.

EVALUATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES

The reality of teaching in Pre-Primary Education is so complex that it needs to be explored from more than one perspective, given that a whole series of

organizational, structural, and functional aspects of the school, in general, and the classroom, in particular, have a greater or lesser influence on the teaching and learning process which, in turn, has the most direct effect on the pupils' results. Thus, the results of the pupils' learning should be linked to and interpreted on the basis on the information obtained from these variables.

In this study, the fundamental objective of the evaluation is not to assess or to make a judgement about the quality of the teaching, but to find out what it involves, so that this information can be used in the interpretation of the pupils' results, as mentioned above.

This evaluation model uses a clearly summative approach to check the levels of learning achieved at the end of a cycle of education. Thus, the criteria for choosing the variables must refer to those aspects of teaching which have a clear and direct effect on the results achieved by the pupils in the final year of Pre-Primary Education. The information obtained in this way can then be used to appreciate the children's progress in the learning process.

DIMENSIONS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

As shown above, the dimensions chosen are those which have the greatest effect on the work carried out in the classroom, the place where the teaching comes alive, where the majority of academic decisions materialize and, consequently, where the immense majority of the teaching and learning processes takes place. However, some more general decisions in relation to the context of school or the teaching profession are also taken into account. These dimensions are listed below:

1. Planning the teaching
2. Methodology:
 - general approaches
 - classroom atmosphere
 - groups
 - teaching materials
 - classroom areas
 - planning
3. Evaluation
4. Meeting the needs of diversity
5. Relationships with the family

Even though each one of these dimensions provides valuable information on its own, what is really significant are the interactions that occur among them. For example, the right choice of materials contributes positively to the learning because the classroom areas can be clearly defined which, in turn, makes it easy to label the appropriate materials and to put them in the best areas. It can also be said that a suitable choice of materials has a incidental effect on the measures for dealing with diversity given that the areas are well organised, which makes them more functional.

A brief analysis of the information to be obtained from each one of the dimensions is made below:

1. Planning the teaching

This is the most basic and inevitable teaching task. Teaching always begins by planning the goals to be achieved, the strategies to be developed and the instruments to be used. The information which describes how to plan and organise the decisions that have the most impact on the teaching in the classroom can be drawn from the documents which the educational institutions use for the teaching plan of the Pre-Primary Education stage, such as the Curriculum Project for the Stage and the Teaching Programmes or the Classroom Programmes. The indicators listed below have been chosen for this purpose:



We look for information about shellfish.

- The Curriculum Project as a reference for classroom planning
- Preparation of the classroom planning
- Content of the planning
- Degree of flexibility in the administration of the planning.

2. Methodology

This is an extremely complex dimension as it covers a whole set of aspects which try to answer the following question: How do you teach? The answer to this question will provide information about those decisions which, to a greater extent, determine how the interactions, which characterize the teaching and learning process, occur between the pupils, the teacher and the contents of the learning. In brief, this dimension provides very valuable information about the day-to-day teaching that goes on in the classroom, which is the object of the evaluation.

The contents of this dimension are determined by the general methodological approaches established by the different Autonomous Communities in the corresponding curriculum decrees for the stage of Pre-Primary Education.

The complexity of the methodology makes it necessary to define a number of intrinsic variables. These variables provide access to information which can then be structured and analysed and, consequently, used. It is also necessary to know the influence of the general principles of education policy endorsed by the curriculum on the teaching in the classroom. Thus, a number of indicators have been defined which provide information about the main types of activities, the motivational strategies relied on by the teacher, the comprehensive work procedures, etc., which are described below:

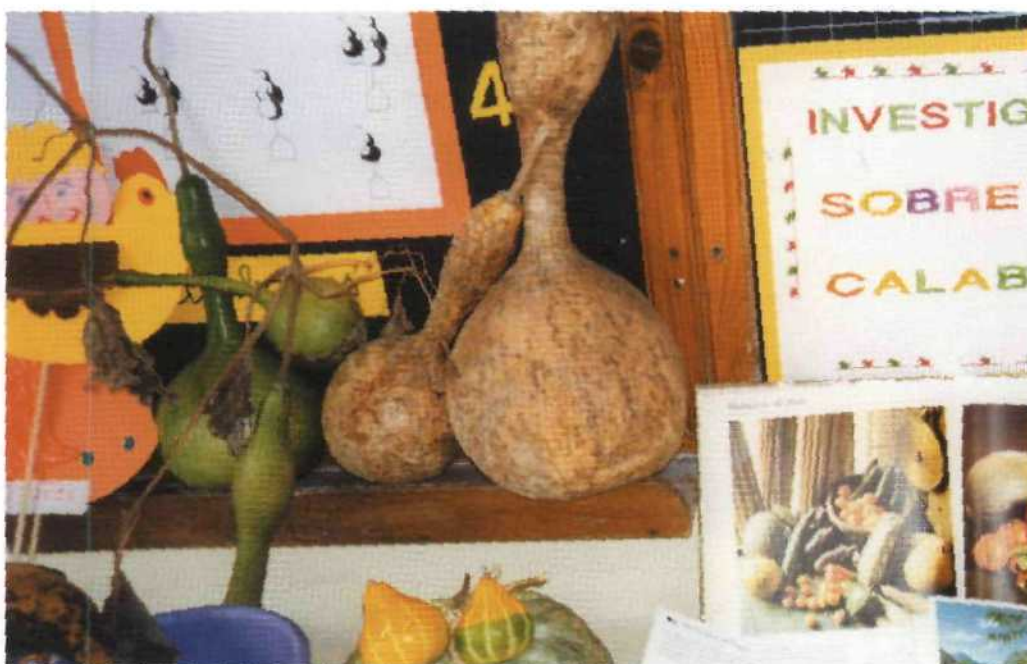
a) Main types of classroom activities:

- of a comprehensive nature, affecting the three areas
- which take in the three types of contents
- for pupils working on their own
- working in the different corners
- working with worksheets from publishing companies
- working with worksheets made by the teacher.

- b) Use of resources outside the school:
- excursions to surrounding areas: parks, farms, museums, theatres, markets, shops, libraries, other places.
- c) Use of motivational strategies:
- suggested by the pupils themselves
 - previously acquired knowledge of the pupil
 - proposed by the teacher
 - suggested by one the publishing companies used.
- d) Use of comprehensive work procedures:
- places of interest
 - work projects
 - workshops
 - corners
 - those recommended by a publishing company.



Medical examination in the doctor's surgery corner.



We do a project on pumpkins.

Another important aspect is the *classroom atmosphere* from the perspective of the relationships formed between the persons who work there together. It was therefore necessary to gather information about these relationships: the nature of the pupils' participation in the teaching and learning process and to what degree pupil autonomy is strengthened and the basic needs are catered for and developed. The indicators defined are the following:

- a) Evidence regarding the relationships and the atmosphere in the classroom:
 - The children feel safe, cared for, and respected.
 - The children show a relationship of trust with their teacher.
 - The children talk freely among themselves and with the teacher: they express their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
 - The children display attitudes of collaboration, friendship, helpfulness, and respect among themselves.
 - The children take part freely and spontaneously when engaged in the activities.

- The children understand and accept there needs to be norms in the classroom.
 - They mix with children from other classes.
 - The teacher supports children making suggestions.
 - It appears there are difficulties with behaviour in the classroom.
- b) Measures applied in the classroom by the teacher to encourage the pupils to get involved and to take part in the learning process:
- Fosters and stimulates the relationships among the pupils themselves.
 - Fosters and stimulates the relationships between pupils and teacher.
 - Guides, helps, suggests, etc., the pupils in the development of the activities.
 - Suggests different rhythms of work.
 - Suggests different areas in order to do different tasks at the same time.
- c) Measures applied in the classroom by the teacher to encourage the pupils to be independent:
- Creates and establishes rhythms and routines.
 - Suggests group activities and games which encourage collaboration and decision making.
 - Thinks about the decision of the pupils.
 - Spends time on reflection and talking with the pupils.
 - Allows the pupils to collaborate in taking certain decisions in the classroom. For example: making rules, deciding on what activities to do, etc.
 - Encourages pupils to act independently, both physically and intellectually, and socially and morally, such as for example, dressing and undressing, managing their own personal hygiene, using dialogue as the normal means of communication, thinking about the situations which arise in the normal everyday life of the classroom, using logic and being coherent, being critical, solving disputes peacefully by talking, taking responsibility for certain tasks, sharing school materials, working in groups, being polite using appropriate conventions, etc.

d) Incorporates the basics needs of the pupils into the normal everyday tasks:

- Eating
- Personal hygiene
- Managing the toilet alone
- Play



We kiss and say 'Good Morning' at the start of each school day.

Closely connected with the *classroom atmosphere* are the different types of *groups* which are used to organize the everyday work in the classroom:

- *Working alone*: all the children do the same activity on their own at the same time.
- *In a large group*: all the children do the same activity together.
- *In small groups*: the children work in small groups; each group does a different type of activity.

Finally, the decisions taken in the classroom with regard to the *teaching materials*, the *allocation and use of the areas in the classroom* and the *organization of the time* must be considered, as they determine, to a greater extent, both the type of abilities that are developed, and the type of contents and the way to use them.



We measure the volume of water using bottles

The *teaching materials* are analysed by means of a number of indicators which include aspects which focus on the choice and on the use of the same:

- a) Ways of choosing the materials; according to
 - the characteristics of the pupils
 - the objectives in the Curriculum
 - the type of activities to be developed
 - the proposals put forward by publishing companies.

- b) Types of materials used for:
 - writing and reading (worksheets, picture books, story books, alphabets, comics, photographs, etc.)
 - mathematical logic (rulers, logic problems, puzzles, for measuring solids and liquids, balances, cash registers, tape measures, numbers for counting, beads for threading, Plasticine, etc.)
 - motor skills (rings, gymnasium benches, ropes, balls, mats, mirrors, wall bars, etc.)
 - musical expression (xylophone, tambourine, castanets, maracas, popular instruments, triangles, little bells, harpsichords, cassettes, classical music, modern music, etc.)
 - representational play (costumes, materials from the house, the shops, different professions, etc.)

- empty containers of everyday use (foodstuffs and cosmetics, cleaning products, personal hygiene, pharmaceutical products, etc).

c) Types of worksheets used by the pupils working on their own:

- Activities provided by a publishing company
- Activities prepared by the teacher
- Both.



We try to balance the scales using bottle tops.

With regard to the organization and the quality of the classroom areas, the following indicators were chosen:

a) Types of *areas* in the classroom:

- Large area for working with the large group (a carpet, for example).
- An area for mathematical logic
- A reading area
- A plastic arts area
- A separate area for motor skills
- A separate area for games
- A separate area for representational play
- No separate areas available.

b) Quality of the definition of these areas:

- Clearly defined by furniture such as shelving, bookcases, folding screens, etc.
- Defined only by a line drawn on the floor.
- Well-defined areas, in the sense that each one of them has the appropriate specific material.
- Identified by means of labels, signs with symbols showing what the areas are for, etc.

The following indicators provide information with regard to how the *time* is organized and distributed throughout the school day:

- There is a pre-planned timetable which is followed daily.
- The timetable provides appropriate alternating periods of work and rest.
- There are established routines with predictable sequences of activities.
- The timetable can be modified for a justifiable reason, for example an event, an activity the children are interested in, etc.
- The timetable is flexible depending on the work rhythms of the children.
- The timetable provides opportunities for children to work alone and in small and large groups.
- The timetable is organised according to the comprehensive list of activities planned and not depending on areas.

3. Evaluation

As shown above, the importance of evaluation in the Pre-Primary stage of education is due to its essentially formative character. The way the teacher carries out the evaluation process will have a marked effect on the results of the pupils' learning. According to the type of information gathered, the way it is obtained and, especially, how it is used, will decide whether the teaching process is reviewed or not.

It is, therefore, considered necessary to collect information about the type of general mechanism which defines the way to evaluate, as well as the procedures and tools to be used by the teacher. The indicators selected are the following:

- a) Evaluation mechanisms used:
- Initial evaluation
 - Self-assessment of the pupil
 - Global evaluation
 - Continuous assessment (formative)
 - Summative assessment
 - Information from other teachers about the group of pupils
 - Adjustment of evaluation criteria to the characteristics of the group of pupils.
- b) Procedures used by the teacher to obtain information about the learning process of the pupils:
- Observation of performance of the tasks
 - Observation of the work of each pupil
 - Proposal of specific evaluation tasks.
- c) Instruments used to record the information that is observed:
- Class register
 - Folder for observation notes or notebook
 - Questionnaire or observation register.
- d) The information gathered is used to:
- review the teaching process
 - share it with the parents (news sheets, personal interviews, etc.)
 - incorporate it into the individual evaluation reports
 - complete the official administrative documents.

4. Meeting the needs of diversity

Diversity, which is inherent to any human group, is present in the classrooms and in the teaching and learning process. In this case, the teacher will need to plan for the learning requirements of each individual pupil, with regard to his or her ability, motivation, style of learning, interest, etc.

Diversity becomes more noticeable when there are pupils in the classroom who have special educational needs, and appropriate measures need to be taken so that later difficulties will be avoided. The final level of attainment of the pupil depends on the correct choice and application of these measures. It is, therefore, a dimension which must be taken into account.

The information to be gathered in this regard focuses on the following aspects:

Teachers should take specific action to help children with special educational needs to make the best possible progress by adopting some of the following solutions:

- Individual attention
- Curriculum modifications adjusted to the needs of the pupils (adapting access to the curriculum, adjusting the curriculum components: objectives, contents, etc.)
- Educational support measures, such as designing other activities, using other types of materials, etc
- Providing additional support within the classroom (with specialised teachers: assistant teachers, Therapeutic Educator, language and elocution teacher, etc. and with support personnel, such as childminders, etc.)
- Providing additional materials and resources to design activities which adjust to the different rhythms and interests which arise in the classroom
- Providing organizational measures in the planning which allows the pupils to work according to the different interests, abilities and rhythm of work.

5. Relationships with the family

Pre-Primary Education is partly considered as an extension to the family context. Throughout this stage, the teacher frequently requests the collaboration of the parents for the purpose of sharing information and achieving a partnership with them in certain activities and projects which take place in the school.

Consequently, a number of indicators have been identified which enable the most relevant information about these relationships to be gathered:

- a) Types of activities of the teacher with the parents:
 - General meeting of the parents at the beginning of the academic year
 - General meeting of the parents at the end of autumn and spring terms
 - *General meeting of the parents at the end of the academic year*
 - Individual meetings in the tutorial period
 - General or partial meetings of the parents to deal with and discuss, and decide on the particular matters referred to below.
- b) Type of collaboration between the teacher and the family:
 - classroom workshops
 - when the pupils come out of school
 - teaching them to be independent (eating, hygiene, dressing, etc.)
 - in the learning process
 - in the preparation of teaching materials.
- c) Instruments used by the teacher to keep the family fully informed about the results of the evaluation of their child:
 - News sheets
 - Individual reports
 - Personal interview.



We work with the mothers in the plastic arts corner.

PROCEDURE FOR GATHERING INFORMATION

The instruments used to obtain information about the educational processes should provide guidance on the observational activities, and on how to record and analyse the results. The instrument chosen as the means to gather information was the questionnaire not only on account of its usefulness, but because it allows the information to be systematized and presented clearly to the evaluators, and the assistance and guidance it can provide in the evaluation itself.

The questionnaire organises the different dimensions, and the corresponding variables which make up each one of them. Each variable contains the indicators which define the parameters to be observed and checked.

Some indicators can be evaluated by means of straightforward, observations carried out by an external evaluator, but others require information from the form

teacher. Furthermore, the need to contrast the information (data triangulation for greater objectivity and more extensive information) recommends the use of more than one source. Therefore, the information about the educational processes is provided by both the form teacher of the group of pupils evaluated, and by the external evaluator.

The information provided by the form teacher is connected with the indicators which can only be assessed after giving careful thought to the questions raised. These indicators gather information with regard to: how often the teaching materials are used, the evaluation instruments, the motivational strategies of the pupils, the level of participation of the pupils, the meetings with the parents, the measures taken to respond to the diversity, etc.

The information provided by the external evaluator is connected with the indicators which can be evaluated by means of the systematic observation of the school and the classroom, as well as the processes which take place; an analysis of the planning documents of the school (Curriculum Project for the school and the stage, Programmes), the evaluation of the pupils (observation, recording and information instruments), as well as an interview with the form teacher of the group of pupils evaluated.

The information provided by the form teacher and the external evaluator, contained in the respective questionnaires, seek to complement each other. Furthermore, the information from the external evaluator can be compared and contrasted with the information provided by the form teacher.

Each one of the items defined in the observation guide and the questionnaire for obtaining information about the educational processes has its corresponding **grading scale** of the aspects to be evaluated. Not all the items are graded in the same way, rather in each particular case the description which best fits the indicator is used. The evaluation can either be an affirmative or a negative answer, or a scale of three variables for the level of frequency, or intensity, etc., such as the following: (*never, sometimes, always*) or (*none, some, almost all*), etc. The examples below show the different grading scales.

Examples of items in *the external evaluator's observation guide*:

1. Items for obtaining information about the different types of group work used in the classroom. The grading scale is: *never, sometimes, always*.

State how often the different types of group work are organised.			
	Never	Sometimes	Always
A. Individually (all the children do the same activity on their own at the same time).....	1	2	3
B. Large group (all the children do the same activity together; for example, assembly).....	1	2	3
C. Small groups (the children work in small groups; each group does different activities; for example, working in corners).....	1	2	3

2. Items for obtaining, after an analysis of the planning documents of the school, information about the different decisions taken with respect to the planning of the educational processes. The grading scale is: *no, partially/sometimes, yes*.

Are the following statements taken into consideration in planning the teaching process?			
	No	Partially/ Sometimes	Yes
A. The classroom planning uses as a reference the Curriculum Project of the School (PCC) as well as the Curriculum Plan for the stage of education (PCE).....	1	2	3
B. The teacher follows the plan of a publishing company.....	1	2	3
C. Classroom planning is made by the team of teachers.....	1	2	3
D. The planning guarantees the teamwork of the teaching staff.....	1	2	3
E. Etc.			

Examples of items in the *form teacher's questionnaire*

1. Items for obtaining information about whether the teacher, in the day-to-day classroom routine, has included activities designed for certain needs which are considered essential for children in Pre-Primary Education. The grading scale is: *never or hardly ever, sometimes, very often*.

Do you include the following essential needs of the pupils in the daily classroom routine?			
	Never or hardly ever	Sometimes	Very often
A. Eating.....	1	2	3
B. Rest.....	1	2	3
C. Personal hygiene.....	1	2	3
D. Manages toilet on his/her own.....	1	2	3
E. Play.....	1	2	3

2. Items where the form teacher can provide information about the type of curriculum materials he/she prefers to use (no grading scale).

State the type of teaching materials you prefer to use in the classroom	
A. Materials from a publishing company.....	1
B. Materials made by the teacher.....	2
C. A mixed method (Own and publishers' materials).....	3
D. None.....	4

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE EXTERNAL EVALUATOR ON HOW TO FILL IN THE OBSERVATION GUIDE

Given the complexity of completing the external evaluator's observation guide, the first page includes instructions on how to use the document, and a brief description of the procedures which the evaluator should follow to make it easier to fill it in. These procedures are described below:

- * To analyse the documents it is sufficient to use the observation guide and, in particular, the items which contain the information to be checked.
- * For classroom observations, it is recommended to hold two sessions, choosing different learning situations for each one.

- * To check the classroom atmosphere, different types of activities should be observed, such as: the work on the carpet (very useful for checking the level of participation of the pupils), situations which involve advanced motor skills interaction (the motor skills session), or tasks which the pupils usually do on their own (entering the classroom, breaks, etc.).
- * To check how independent the pupils are in the classroom: the ways the teacher provides for the different rhythms, styles of learning and interests, and whether the quality of the areas defined for the activities of the pupils working in small groups is appropriate.

Observation during the teaching activity, not only allows the organizational model of the teaching process to be checked, but also whether it is effective or not. For this reason, even though an important number of indicators may be observed without the pupils, such as for example the evaluation of the resources and materials in the classroom, it is always more efficient to carry out this observation while the teaching and learning process is going on. However, the external evaluator must take care, not only not to take part, but to distance himself/herself so as not to hinder the normal development of the class.

The interview with the form teacher of the group of pupils should take place after having carried out the classroom observation. The interview can help to clarify any doubts which arise regarding the observation of the classroom work or the analysis of the documents, or just to contrast the information gathered by these instruments. In some cases, it can also be used to gather additional information which could not be obtained in any other way.

SCHOOL AND FAMILY CONTEXT

An important aim of this study on pre-primary evaluation is to learn about the school context in which the children develop their learning, as well as their social and family environment, the aim being to obtain information which contributes to understanding the results of the children's learning, and to know more about how this stage of education functions in general.

The variables to be taken into account in the evaluation of any educational environment such as, for example, a stage of education, a school, an educational

programme, etc., should not just be classified as "output elements" or "a product" of the system. It is essential to complete the evaluation process with the "input" variables, that is, those aspects which precede or accompany the process which has provided the results. As Pérez Yuste correctly pointed out, *"it is not possible to make a value judgement of the results, unless the starting point and the characteristics of the persons who achieved them are known."* (R. Pérez Juste L. Martínez Aragón. 1989).

It is considered essential for the design of the present evaluation that the contextual dimensions to be evaluated are the school and the family.

DIMENSIONS OF THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

The school is the institution which tries to achieve the objectives in the curriculum and where the children's learning processes are developed. However, the school is also a structure which comprises a complex system of personal interactions and materials. Therefore, any aspect of the school which is to be evaluated must be linked to the other aspects.

Taking into account that the school is an integrated system, in which every action or policy has a direct effect on all of its parts and, therefore, the results, this study has chosen some of the dimensions which could most affect the children's learning process and, consequently, the results.

Any evaluation which focuses on the children's achievements must ensure they are consistent with all the means at the school's disposal, both from an organizational and functional point of view. The infrastructure of the school, the human resources and materials, the services and the facilities it offers, etc., are the basic elements which the school has in order to fulfil its function. In addition, other dimensions which should be taken into account in judging academic results are the management's educational strategies, the different members of the teaching profession involved, or the individual teaching arrangements, to mention just a few relevant examples.

Consequently, we have defined a number of dimensions, in order to get close to the contextual reality of the schools evaluated. The dimensions which focus on the stage of Pre-Primary Education and, especially, the classrooms to be evaluated, are particularly relevant.

Each dimension is defined by means of a number of indicators which describe the context itself. The dimensions that are considered important for this evaluation model are shown below:

1. Context of the school
2. Human Resources
3. Meeting the needs of diversity
4. Teacher training
5. Partnership between the family and the school
6. Involvement of the management team

1. Context of the school

The information gathered covers the general characteristics that define the school evaluated, both from an organizational and a functional perspective. Information with regard to other particular aspects of the school are also obtained. The indicators which stand out are the following which focus on the stage of Pre-Primary Education:

- a) Characteristics of the school:
 - Owner (state, private-maintained, private)
 - Number of groups and pupils in each stage of education in the school.
 - Number of options, groups and pupils in the final year of Pre-Primary Education
 - Socio-economic profile or environment of the school
 - Timetable, and time the school starts
 - Number of class hours in the week for the pupils in the final year of Pre-Primary Education
 - Foreign languages taught in the final year of Pre-Primary Education.
 - Number of pupils in the classroom evaluated, specifying how many are immigrants and pupils with special educational needs
 - Computers in the Pre-Primary Education classroom.

b) Classroom and the areas used by the pupils evaluated:

- Access of the pupils to the school and to the classroom
- Classroom conditions (surface area, ventilation, children's safety, etc.)
- Conditions of the outdoor areas used by the pupils in this stage of education (playground, etc.)
- Conditions of other areas in the school used by the pupils in Pre-Primary Education (school library, motor skills room, music room, etc.).

2. Human resources

This dimension includes information about all the personnel who belong to the organization of the school in general, and to the stage of education evaluated in particular, using the following indicators:

a) Personnel in the Pre-Primary stage of education at the school:

- *Number of people classified according to the type of work they perform: childminders, teachers, educators, specialists (speech therapists, pedagogues, psychologists, therapeutic educator, etc.), non-teaching staff (cooks, cleaners, etc), administrative staff*
- Teaching staff turnover
- Support staff for this stage
- Professionals who are connected with the classroom evaluated (psychologists, speech therapists, etc.).

b) Teaching staff in charge of the group of pupils evaluated:

- Gender
- Date of birth
- Years of teaching experience
- Years of teaching experience in the Pre-Primary Education stage
- Number of academic years with the group of pupils evaluated
- Administrative details or type of work contract (supply teacher, state teacher, contracted teacher, etc.)
- Qualifications and specialist teaching areas

- Positions held in the school (headteacher, director of studies, coordinator, etc.)
- Training courses attended.

3. Meeting the needs of diversity

- Number of pupils with special educational needs in the final year of Pre-Primary Education
- Mechanisms of the school to meet the pupils' special educational needs
- Internal support staff for pupils with special educational needs (including the Professional Guidance department)
- External support personnel for pupils with special educational needs (Sector team or other).

4. Teacher training

- Teacher training plan of the school
- Special or innovative educational projects.

5. Partnership between the family and the school

- Means of participation
- Means of communication
- Parents' associations
- Involvement of the parents.

6. Management participation in the Pre-Primary Education stage.

- Relationships between the management and the Pre-Primary education team
- Evaluation of the stage of Pre-Primary Education by the management.

DIMENSIONS OF THE FAMILY CONTEXT

It is necessary to obtain information about the family context given that, as stated above, the starting point must be taken into account in any evaluation process. It should be remembered that schools belong to communities in which families play a very important role. The partnership between the parents and the school is guaranteed by the Constitution and, more precisely, by the 1985 Organic Law on the Right to Education (LODE, August 3rd, 1985), which requires more than keeping the family fully informed about the academic results of their children.

Furthermore, in this stage of education the relationships between the family and the school are especially important, given that it should be understood that the Pre-Primary Education provided by the school complements that provided by the family.

In addition, part of the success of the early years education provided by Pre-Primary Schools lies in the quality of the relationships achieved between the family and the children and the form teacher. It must be taken into account that in order to achieve some of the early years goals such as "acts independently in normal situations", "develops the abilities of initiative and self-confidence", etc., requires a close collaboration between the family and the form teacher. Thus, in the design of this evaluation it has been considered necessary to obtain information from the family with regard to certain habits, attitudes, and accounts of their child's development.

Furthermore, the pupils in Pre-Primary Education, the same as in any other stage of education, come from different family environments and with different experiences. Evaluation studies of other stages of educations have shown that certain family environment variables are connected with the achievements of the pupils. These variables include indicators such as the socio-economic standing of the family, the parents' attitude and involvement in their children's education.

Consequently, a number of dimensions have been defined for the family context whose purpose is to obtain by means of a set of indicators whatever information is useful for the abovementioned aims. Some of this information will reflect the opinions of the parents which is of great help to understanding the

family environment and, especially, the educational component of the same. In brief, the dimensions which are considered especially important are the following:

1. School information
2. Information about the pupil
3. Information about the pupil's family
4. Maturity of the pupil
5. Relationship between the family and the school

1. School information

- Reasons for choosing the school
- School services used
- Evaluation of the 'running' of the school
- Evaluation of the stage of Pre-Primary Education.

2. Information about the pupil.

- Gender
- Mother tongue
- Age started school
- Number of hours of sleep
- Number of hours watching television
- Distance from the school
- Person in charge of taking the child to school
- Characteristics of the pupil's life, such as his/her attitude to learning, habits and way he/she behaves in the family environment.

3. Information about the pupil's family

- Information about the parents or legal guardians
- Economic, social and cultural status
- Materials and resources at home
- Relationships between the parents and their child

- Expectations of the family with regard to the highest level of education
- Attitude of the parents regarding the stage of Pre-Primary Education
- Evaluation of their child's learning in Pre-Primary Education.

4. Maturity of the pupil.

- Skills
- Independence in everyday situations
- Eating habits
- Behaviour at home.

5. Relationship between the family and the school.

- Involvement in the life of the school (procedures, frequency, aspects in which they participate)
- Level of satisfaction with respect to their involvement
- Relationship with the teacher.

The information about the school and family contexts which we have just described, is obtained by means of questionnaires given to the teachers and the headteachers of the schools, and the parents of the pupils evaluated. The format of these questionnaires is similar to that used in the evaluation questionnaire of the educational processes.

These questionnaires were not included in the field test, as the majority of the questions were retrieved from INECSE's databank of questions, from questionnaires already administered in other studies, and checked sufficiently. However, new questions were introduced for the characteristics of the stage of Pre-Primary Education.



3. FIELD TEST

The methodology used in administering this test is the central part of this study, because the quality of the research depends on its precision and efficiency.

As stated in the Introduction, the evaluation instruments used in this study, with the exception of the school and family context questionnaires, have been subject to a field test for the purpose of checking the difficulties which could arise in the process of administering the tests to the pupils, as well as to gather information from the teachers and the external evaluators about the validity and suitability of some innovative, pre-primary evaluation instruments.

A group of teachers who specialise in Pre-Primary Education was selected by INECSE from those proposed by the Autonomous Communities. They worked on the development of some evaluation instruments which were administered to a certain number of pupils.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

In order to try out the evaluation instruments, a convenient sample was selected in eight Autonomous Communities. The number of Autonomous Communities who could take part was limited, as it was necessary to be directly in contact with the persons who carried out the test and an excessive number of them would have made this contact difficult.

A sample of 23 educational establishments was drawn up, 16 state schools and 7 private schools, from throughout the eight Autonomous Communities and a group of pupils was selected from each school. A total of 466 children in the final year of Pre-Primary Education were evaluated.

The sample included the following four categories which were considered as covering the majority of the schools in the study:

- * high socio-economic level, 4 state schools and 1 private ³
- * average socio-economic level, 4 state schools and 2 private
- * low socio-economic level, 4 state schools and 2 private
- * rural schools with an average level, 4 state schools and 2 private.

EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

The evaluation instruments tested correspond to the evaluation of the pupils' level of attainment and the teaching in the classroom and were developed in accordance with the description in Design of the Evaluation.

In order to *evaluate the pupils' level of attainment*, 115 questions were designed, 40 of them administered externally and the remaining 75 to be completed by the form teacher. The table below shows the distribution of the indicators and items, according to the area of learning and the type of administration:

Pre-Primary Education Areas of learning	Evaluation criteria	Number of indicators according to type of administration		Number of items according to type of administration	
		External evaluator	Form teacher	External evaluator	Form teacher
Personal identity and autonomy	9	12	18	13	23
Physical and social environment	8	12	16	12	16
Communication and representation	10	13	27	15	36
Total	27	37	61	40	75

³ Maintained schools are also included under the heading of private schools.

For the evaluation of the teaching, 90 questions were designed for external administration and 94 questions to be completed by the form teacher.

The following materials were used to administer the evaluation instruments:

1. For the evaluation of the pupils' level of attainment which were either administered externally or completed by the form teacher of the group of pupils, the following were used:
 - *The pupils' test administered by the external evaluator and a folder of the pupils' files to record the results, and to be filled in by the external evaluator.*
 - *The pupils' test completed by the form teacher and a folder of the pupils' files to record the results, and to be filled in by the form teacher.*
2. For the evaluation of the teaching in the classroom, the following questionnaires were used:
 - *The external evaluator's observation guide*
 - *Form teacher's questionnaire*

The abovementioned instruments are described below:

1. The pupils' test administered by the external evaluator

This is the evaluation instrument for the pupils' level of attainment, which should be completed by the external evaluator, during the observations. It includes instructions on how to use the document, and 40 closed questions with three possible answers, only one of which is correct. Nine of them are for collective administration and the rest, for individual administration.

As stated above, each one of the questions in the test includes the following sections in this order: Administration conditions and instructions, the grading scale for the answer and the answer guide.

The format of the questions is shown in the following example:

AREA OF PERSONAL IDENTITY AND AUTONOMY

CRITERION No.1: RECOGNISES AND IDENTIFIES THE BODY AS A WHOLE, AND DISTINGUISHES THE DIFFERENT BODY PARTS.					
Indicator	Items	Administration conditions and instructions	Scale		
			Very good	Good	Not satisfactory
Draw the parts of the human body.	Do a drawing of your naked body	<p>Group activity</p> <p>The whole group of pupils sit at tables which are separated from each other.</p> <p>Materials for each child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 sheet of blank paper - 1 pencil. - 1 rubber. <p>The evaluator tells the group that we want to have a portrait of them.</p> <p>The material is distributed and they are asked to draw their naked bodies, pointing out that it is important to draw all the parts of the body.</p>	Draws at least the head and hair, eyes, nose, mouth, ears and eyelashes, the neck, the trunk with arms attached to it, the hands, the legs and feet, as well as other parts of the body such as fingers, nails and genital organs.	Draws at least the head with eyes, nose, and mouth, the trunk with arms attached to it, and the legs.	Other possibilities. The head is missing, or the trunk or some of the limbs (arms or legs).

2. Folder of the pupils' files completed by the external evaluator

The folder is used to record the results obtained by each one of the pupils in the *Pupils' test*. It contains instructions on how to use the folder and an evaluation file for each pupil in the group evaluated, with the pupil's number, gender and a list of the 40 Items, in numerical order, and the grading scale for the three possible answers. The format of each of the files is the following:

Results for Pupil No.....	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Gender	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Boy</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Girl</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table>	Boy	1	Girl	2																							
Boy	1																														
Girl	2																														
	<table border="1"> <tr> <th rowspan="2"></th><th colspan="3">Scale</th></tr> <tr> <th>Very good</th><th>Good</th><th>Not satisfactory</th></tr> <tr> <td>Item 1</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td>Item 2</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td>Item 7</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td>Item 8</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td>...</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr> </table>					Scale			Very good	Good	Not satisfactory	Item 1	3	2	1	Item 2	3	2	1	Item 7	3	2	1	Item 8	3	2	1	...	3	2	1
	Scale																														
	Very good	Good	Not satisfactory																												
Item 1	3	2	1																												
Item 2	3	2	1																												
Item 7	3	2	1																												
Item 8	3	2	1																												
...	3	2	1																												

It can be observed that the numbering of the items is not consecutive. This is because the set of items for evaluating the pupils' level of attainment were numbered in accordance with the area of learning and the evaluation criteria, and each criterion contains items for the external evaluator and items for the form teacher. Thus, the numbers of the items which do not appear in this file correspond to the items for form teacher.

3. The pupils' test completed by the form teacher

This is the evaluation instrument of pupils' level of attainment to be completed by the form teacher of the group of pupils evaluated.

It includes, in addition to the instructions on how to use the document, 75 closed questions with three possible answers. The format of the questions is shown in the following example:

AREA OF PERSONAL IDENTITY AND AUTONOMY

CRITERION No. 2: BUILDS A POSITIVE SENSE OF SELF-IDENTITY AND ACCEPTS OWN IDENTITY				
Indicator	Items	Scale		
		Always/ A lot/ No difficulty	Sometimes/ Something/ Some difficulty	Never/ Nothing/ A lot of difficulty
Displays confidence and self-assurance in his/her abilities and limitations.	Moves with confidence and in safety in the classroom activities and motor exercises, in the everyday tasks, and in unusual school situations...	3	2	1
Shows interest in overcoming his/her limitations.	Makes an effort to achieve the goals set and accepts new challenges: in the games and motor exercises, in the usual classroom tasks; in personal care and hygiene...	3	2	1



We try hard and are eager to learn a game.

4. Folder of the pupils' files to be completed by the form teacher

The folder is used to record the scores for the questions set out in the *Pupils'* test described above.

It includes instructions on how to use the folder, an evaluation file for each pupil with the pupil's number and gender, and a list of the 75 Items, in numerical order, together with the grading scale for the three possible answers. The format of these files is the following:

Results for Pupil No.....		<input type="text"/>		Gender.....		Boy	1
						Girl	2
	Scale						
	Always/ A lot/ No difficulty	Sometimes/ Something/ Some difficulty	Never/ Nothing/ A lot of difficulty/				
Item 3	3	2	1				
Item 4	3	2	1				
Item 5	3	2	1				
Item 6	3	2	1				
...	3	2	1				

As explained above, the numbers of the items which are missing in this file correspond to items administered by the external evaluator.

5. The external evaluator's observation guide

This document is used to gather information about some aspects of the teaching and learning processes in the classroom of the group of pupils who are evaluated by a person not directly involved in the educational process, in this case, by the external evaluator.

It comprises 90 closed questions with different types of answers.

6. The form teacher's questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is also to gather information about some aspects of the teaching and learning in the classroom, although in this case, it is the form teacher of the group of pupils evaluated who provides this information.

It includes 94 closed questions with different types of answers.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION FOR EVALUATING THE INSTRUMENTS

The main objective of the field test was to evaluate the design of the instruments and the administration of the test itself, in order to detect any difficulties which could arise. It was also important to obtain supplementary information which could contribute to improving the evaluation study. Thus, a number of questions were incorporated into the evaluation instruments, for the purpose of collecting the evaluators' assessments and comments about the test as a whole.

The supplementary information was obtained from:

- * The *pupils' test administered by the external evaluator*, which included the following questions after each item:

1. Importance of the Item	Not much	1
	Average	2
	A lot	3
2. Average time taken to prepare the group of pupils	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> minutes
3. Average time taken by the group to do the activity	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> minutes
4. If you consider too much time was taken, please give your reasons		
5. Child's understanding	Easy	1
	Doubtful	2
	Difficult	3
6. Grading scale of the item	Fail	1
	Pass	2
7. Specify any difficulties with regard to the quality of the material used		
8. Specify any difficulties with regard to the administration of the test		
9. Other comments		

- * The *pupils' test to be completed by the form teacher*, which included an open-ended question for each evaluation criterion, allowing the form teacher to evaluate the set of questions for each criterion.
- * The *external evaluator's Observation Guide* and the form teacher's Questionnaire, which included two openended questions for the administrators to evaluate the evaluation instrument with regard to the content and the administration itself.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

In addition to the abovementioned instruments, it was necessary to use the following list of materials in the external administration of certain items:

- * The *Evaluator's Handbook*, for both evaluators, which provides clear guidance on how to administer the tests and the questionnaires and the steps to follow, in order to avoid any problems or difficulties which could arise during the administration.
- * A *tape recording* of 4 sounds, an original recording by INECSE.
- * *Pupil's folder* containing 9 simple drawings, where the pupils marked the answers to the items administered to the whole group.
- * *9 separate charts with simple drawings*, used with the items administered individually as visual aids for the questions and answers.
- * A *copy of the story Little Red Riding Hood* (adaptation of J. and W. Grimm's version).
- * An *envelope* with several cards with one word written on each one.

PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MATERIALS

The external evaluators took responsibility for checking the delivery of the materials used in the administration. They were also responsible for returning the materials, together with the results of the test, at the end of the evaluation, in accordance with the instructions in the *Evaluator's Handbook*.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE TESTS

The administration of the evaluation instruments was carried out in the middle of May 2004. In this phase of the study, the collaboration of the eight Autonomous Communities involved in the field test was very important.

In accordance with the design of the evaluation established in this project, the external evaluators have to be specialists in Pre-Primary Education and have no connection with the school whose pupils they are going to evaluate. These features presented several drawbacks. Whilst the process required a careful selection and training of the evaluators, it could happen that the pupils felt inhibited with a person from outside the school environment, and consequently, it would not be possible to achieve the main objective of this field administration, which was evaluate some innovative evaluation instruments as well as the administration process, and less so, the results achieved by the pupils.

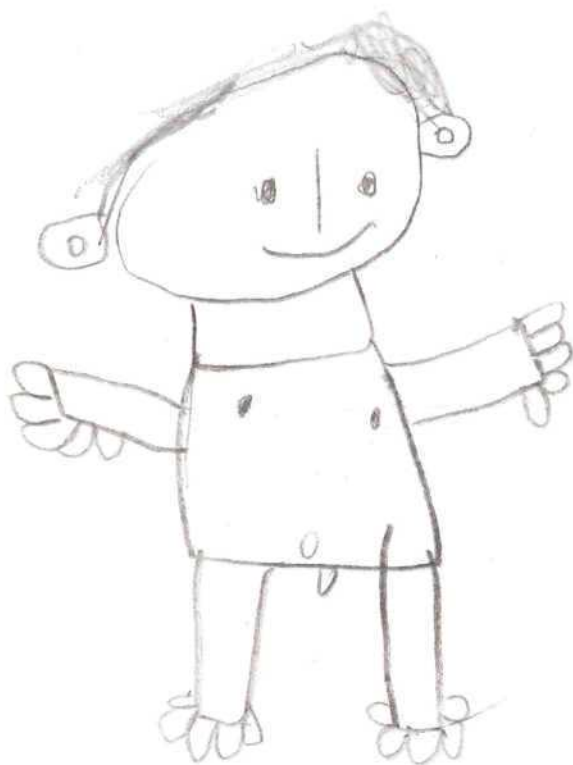
After taking the foregoing into account, it was considered that by abandoning the external nature of the evaluation, not only would it be easier to administer the tests, but the main aim of the field test would remain unaltered. Thus, it was decided that the role of the external evaluator would be carried out by a person close to the environment of the children he/she was going to evaluate, so that the test could be administered with the least possible interruption to the teaching activity. In the majority of the schools, the role of the external evaluator was carried out by another Pre-Primary teacher in the same school, and in some cases, by the academic adviser, by a member of the management team or by the team of educational psychologists.

Given the difficulties involved in testing pupils in this stage of education, it was essential that the evaluators were familiar with the materials and the evaluation process, in order to ensure the instruments were correctly administered and to obtain accurate information which could contribute to improving the design of this evaluation.

Therefore, the materials were sent directly to the teachers involved in the field test in advance of the start date of the administration. They included the Evaluator's Handbook which has a detailed, systematic description of how to administer the tests.

Prior to the administration of the tests, the Study Representative in the Coordination Committee and the Project Coordinator in INECSE organized a training course for both the external evaluators and the form teachers in the main offices of the respective Autonomous Communities which took part. The aim of the meetings was to sort out any problems and to guarantee the correct administration of the evaluation instruments. If it was necessary to consult with somebody during the administration process, the Evaluator's Handbook included the contact details of those in charge of the study, both in their own Autonomous Community and in INECSE.

The time allowed for the administration process was not planned; this depended mainly on the number and the characteristics of pupils in the group to be evaluated, given that all the items had to be administered to all the children. Besides, the availability of the external evaluators had to be taken into account. The time allowed for the administration of the test was one of the variables to be decided on according to the results of the administration of the field test.





4. EVALUATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE TESTS AND QUESTIONNAIRES

As stated above, what it was hoped to achieve with the administration of the field test was to carry out a trialling of the evaluation model from an essentially experimental perspective. The main aim was not to find out the children's level of attainment at the end of the stage of Pre-Primary Education in the different Autonomous Communities, but to carry out two checks on the model designed by, and of great interest to, this Institute. One focuses on evaluating the quality of the evaluation instruments designed for this study, and the other checks the viability of the administration of the test itself, given that it is very different from the studies carried out by INECSE to date. In brief, to verify the level of viability of the referential framework described in Chapter 2.

The teachers and the external evaluators provided a vast wealth of information about the evaluation instruments, both regarding the contents of the tests and questionnaires, and the way the administration itself was carried out. This has contributed enormously to improving the quality of these evaluation instruments, and therefore, to an improvement in the evaluation study.

From all of this information, one can appreciate an excellent evaluation of the test, in the sense that all the suggestions were concerned with improvements, with no negative observations. Some difficulties were found with regard to the conditions for administering the items but not the design of the test.

Some of the most notable aspects of this information are described in detail below, as well as some other points that should be taken into account regarding the administration, as they may have affected the results.

In the majority of the schools, the external evaluator and the form teacher worked as a team, which had a positive effect on the administration process. The efforts made by the evaluators to create the right atmosphere, so that the children could do the tasks as well as possible, are greatly appreciated.

The administration of the tests lasted between three and five days, depending on the number of pupils in the class. In general, the evaluators consider that this is sufficient time, but it should be taken into account that this is a field test and therefore the administration time includes the additional time taken by the evaluators, during the administration process, to complete all the questions regarding the evaluation of the items.

In addition, the information provided by the evaluators shows they took part in carrying out the activities with the children and that, therefore, they spent too much time on:

- making sure the pupil had understood the activity to be done. It is assumed, therefore, they did not take into account the recommendations or guidance in the Evaluator's Handbook that the maximum time allowed was half a minute, and that the activity to be done by the pupil should only be explained twice;
- some activities with the children, as the evaluators allowed the children to expand on their explanations. They also gave them time to make sure of the answer.

There seems to be a general agreement among the evaluators who consider the test is very appropriate; the evaluations for most of the items are very important and easy for children of this age to understand. However, difficulties were encountered with a small number of items which were incorrectly expressed.

The glossy type of paper used in *the pupils' notebook*, in which the children did the group activities, does not seem to be suitable for this type of activity, which consists in matching, marking or circling drawings with crayons and colouring pencils.

The time between one sound recorded on the tape and the next was too long, which caused the children to become distracted while waiting for the next sound.

After the evaluators has completed analysing the evaluation of the test as a whole, the conclusion was that the evaluation instruments did not require any substantial modifications. However, at the suggestion of the evaluators, some changes were introduced, which are described in detail below:

- * In the questionnaires for evaluating the teaching process, with a total of 184 questions, the modifications introduced were limited to including 6 questions in the form teacher's questionnaire, 4 of them in relation to the instruments used by the teacher to gather information about the pupils' learning process, and the other 2 in relation to the participation of the families in the classroom. The wording of some items was also improved.
- * In the evaluation tests of the pupils' level of attainment, with a total of 115 items, the following modifications were introduced:
 - The wording of those items that had led to mistakes was improved.
 - Those items which evaluated contents clearly below this level of education were removed.
 - Those items, to be completed by the form teacher, which included a number of contents to be evaluated, were divided up, in order to make the evaluation clearer and more significant.
 - The instruction about the area or place where the pupils had to do the activity, in the Administration Conditions and Instructions for the item, was removed. The evaluator could decide the most suitable place so that the children were not distracted while doing the activities, taking into account the characteristics of the pupils and the resources of the classroom and the school.
 - The variable "approximate time for the activity" was deleted in order not to lead to confusion. The activity should only last for the time allowed.

- The grading scale was adjusted to the answer guide or criteria so that all possible results were included.
- The items which require materials difficult to obtain were to be evaluated by the form teacher.
- The drawings which had created confusion were improved or replaced.

Finally, it should be noted that the evaluators showed a lot of enthusiasm and a positive attitude with regard to the test, even though it meant a lot of work for them as they had to combine administering the test with their own teaching activities. Some of the evaluators consider that the battery of items in the study, of which the teachers in Pre-Primary Education are aware, can contribute to a unification of the common minimum criteria for all the stages. They have also said that the experience has encouraged them to give serious consideration to, and to learn more about, some aspects of their pupils' learning, given that by doing the activities with them, they were able to confirm that some learning activities had not been worked on sufficiently in the classroom.

DEFINITIVE COMPOSITION OF THE EVALUATION TESTS

When the field test evaluation was completed, the corrections suggested by the evaluators were incorporated into the evaluation instruments, which have been configured so that they can be used for different purposes such as a model for an evaluation study of Pre-Primary Education, as described below:

- * The pupils' test administered by the external evaluator's comprising 36 questions, 9 of which are administered collectively and 27, individually. Of these, 13 questions relate to the area of personal identity and autonomy, 11 to the area of physical and social environment, and 12 to the area of communication and representation.
- * The external evaluator's folder of files.

- * The pupils' test to be completed by the form teacher comprising 86 questions. Of these 32 correspond to the area of personal identity and autonomy, 16 to the area of physical and social environment and 37 to the area of communication and representation.
- * The form teacher's folder of files.
- * The external evaluator's observation guide, with 90 questions.
- * The form teacher's questionnaire, with 100 questions.
- * The pupil's folder, with 9 activities to be done collectively.
- * Nine charts for individual administration.
- * Questionnaires for the headteachers of the educational establishments.
- * Questionnaire for the families.



5. CONCLUSIONS OF THE FIELD TEST

After the trialling of the evaluation model which has been described in this publication, some conclusions were drawn, which address not so much the valuable aspects of the model designed, but put in order a number of observations about its administration. Putting the model into practice has allowed a number of aspects to be detected which should be taken into account when it is administered. In brief, the aim is to increase the validity of the administration.

The conclusions are the following:

- * There is no doubt about the importance of evaluating the stage of Pre-Primary Education, not only because it is a separate period of education in its own right, but it is on the threshold of Primary Education. In that respect, Pre-Primary Education is a useful reference, to record the real situation of the pupils for their future progress in compulsory education.
- * Given the lack of tradition in external evaluations of Pre-Primary Education, this study provides some innovative evaluation instruments, or rather facilitates the development of others, which will contribute to our knowledge about the teaching and learning process in this period of education and the achievements of five-year-olds, and encourage reflection about Pre-Primary Education. However, this evaluation design is not devoid of defects. The design of these evaluation instruments should be subject to subsequent readjustments, both in form and in content.

- * It has been shown that external evaluation can become a powerful incentive for encouraging and strengthening internal evaluation of this stage of education in Pre-Primary schools. The design and the content of the tests provide schools with evaluation parameters, and the questionnaires provide useful guidance and assistance to teachers in order to analyse and think about the teaching process.
- * The evaluation instruments designed for this study can be used for evaluating the early years stage from an external perspective. The field test has shown that:
 - this evaluation is viable, in the sense that it is easy to implement, given that it is appropriate for the real situation of children, teachers and schools.
 - the evaluation instruments can provide results which are reliable and close to the reality of each group, since the evaluation is controlled by the form teachers, who really know the children. The results are completely objective as external evaluators have taken part in the evaluations.
 - the evaluation instruments are valid for all the Autonomous Communities.
- * The reliability of the results is partially due to the way the evaluation model is administered. Taking into account the characteristics of the type of tests in the model, the following precautions should be taken in the administration process:
 - a) The external evaluator should be a specialist in Pre-Primary Education and have no connection with the school to be evaluated.
 - b) The external evaluation of the pupils' level of attainment test should be carried out in one of the following two ways:
 - The form teacher administers the level of attainment Test to the pupils to be evaluated in accordance with the established conditions, and an external observer records the scores obtained by the pupils, without taking part in the administration process.

- The external evaluator administers all the tests, that is, in addition to recording the results, he or she carries out the activities with the children. In this case, the external evaluator must get to know the children prior to administering the test.

In any case, the collaboration of the form teacher is essential, so that the children do not feel inhibited when they are with the external evaluator and can respond in accordance with their abilities. Likewise, the external evaluator must only evaluate the children on the results obtained, leaving aside the opinion of the form teacher who must not interfere, nor know the results.

- c) The evaluators must be trained prior to carrying out the administration. For this purpose, two meetings are required, one with the form teachers and the other with the external evaluators, so that they can be prepared for and given advice about the administration. Likewise, they should be reminded that to preserve the validity of the results obtained, the activities should be carried out in accordance with the guidance in the section Administration Conditions and Instructions which is next to the items, and the instructions provided in the Evaluator's Handbook.
- * In accordance with the above it should be pointed out the important role played by the schools where the test is to be administered. There should be maximum transparency with the educational institution so that the evaluation is carried out without any type of distrust on the part of those involved. The school must receive information about the objectives of the evaluation, the evaluation process and to what extent they can collaborate in its development. All of the above contributes, without doubt, to making the administration itself more efficient.
 - * If an evaluation of this stage is carried out, it is recommended to carry out the tests in the months of April or May, by which time the form teacher will know the pupils very well, as well as what they have done and how they have worked. Furthermore, the children feel more secure and, it is assumed, there is a good relationship between them and the teacher. It is considered that these factors will contribute to the evaluation results providing more and better information.

The time taken for the administration clearly depends on the number of pupils to be evaluated and the number of items to be administered. It can be deduced from the information gathered by the evaluators in relation to this aspect that, in general, the complete administration, as it was designed, can be carried out in three or four days at most.

THE FUTURE OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN THE XXI CENTURY

Early years education is gaining more and more recognition and is the subject of studies and research all over the world. Improvement in the quality and access to Pre-Primary Education has become a top policy priority for most countries, and in particular, for the member States of the European Union.

The fact that this stage is seen as a period of education is, in itself, a huge quality incentive. Politicians have recognised that access to quality Pre-Primary Education can reinforce the foundations of a child's learning for all his or her life.

It is known from experience that children in this stage of education are young investigators with an enormous, creative potential capable of reasoning and thinking. The implications underlying this belief pose great challenges to Pre-Primary Education on how to support, contribute to, and foster the full development of their basic abilities, as active, competent human beings who are capable of dealing with their future.

The fact that international bodies, such as the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) and the IEA (International Evaluation Association (for Educational Performance)), consider that pupil performance is a relevant indicator to make comparisons between the education systems in different countries, means that this evaluation model can be used in the European context. In that respect, it is planned to present this design for the evaluation of Pre-Primary Education to the members of the European Network taking advantage of the interest shown by those responsible for evaluation policy in the different education systems. This is also a commitment which is shared by INECSE (National Institute for Evaluation and Quality of the Education System).





6. ANNEXES



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ANNEX I

Examples of questions in the pupils' level of attainment test administered by the external evaluator.

ANNEX II

Examples of questions in the pupils' level of attainment test completed by the form teacher.

ANNEX III

Examples of external evaluation questions in relation to the educational processes in the classroom.

ANNEX IV

Examples of evaluation questions for the form teacher in relation to the educational processes in the classroom.

ANNEX I

EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS IN THE PUPILS' LEVEL OF ATTAINMENT
TEST ADMINISTERED BY THE EXTERNAL EVALUATOR

A) AREA OF PERSONAL IDENTITY AND AUTONOMY

CRITERION No. 9: IDENTIFIES DANGEROUS SITUATIONS AND ACTS APPROPRIATELY IN THEM					
Indicator	Items	Administration conditions and instructions	Scale		
			Very good	Good	Not satisfactory
Uses the instruments and the installations appropriately to prevent accidents and avoid dangerous situations.	<p>Poster with 4 drawings showing the following scenes:</p> <p>a) A child goes down a slide head first.</p> <p>b) Another child points a metal tool at the eyes of a classmate.</p> <p>c) Another child is playing with a box of matches and lights one.</p> <p>d) A child puts his fingers in a socket</p> <p>Ask the following questions: Do you do this? Is it dangerous? Why?</p>	<p>Individual activity.</p> <p>Materials: 4 drawings.</p> <p>The evaluator gives the child the poster with 4 drawings so that he/she can look at them. Then he or she asks the child the question.</p>	Identifies the 4 actions as dangerous and provides coherent reasons why	Identifies the 4 actions as dangerous but some reasons given are not very coherent.	Other cases



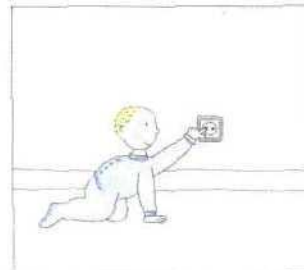
a)



b)



c)



d)

CRITERION No.4: IDENTIFIES PERCEPTIONS AND SENSATIONS					
Indicator	Items	Administration conditions and instructions	Scale		
			Very good	Good	Not satisfactory
Recognises some living things and usual objects in the nearby surroundings by means of the sound they make.	<p>Listen carefully and say what it is you hear on this cassette.</p> <p>The recorded sounds are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Car horn. b. A bird singing. c. Running water. d. Siren of an emergency vehicle. 	<p>Individual activity.</p> <p>Materials:</p> <p>A CD or a cassette player with a recording of the aforementioned sounds.</p> <p>The evaluator shows the CD or cassette player to the child and says some sounds have recorded on it.</p> <p>Then, the evaluator says to the child:</p> <p>"I am going to play the cassette. Listen carefully and tell me what you hear".</p> <p>When the child has heard the first sound, the recording is stopped and the child is asked: "What did you hear?"</p> <p>The same is done with the rest of the recorded sounds.</p>	4 correct sounds	3 correct sounds	Other cases

B) AREA OF PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

CRITERION No. 6: LOOKS AFTER AND RESPECTS NATURAL SURROUNDINGS, AND DISPLAYS A POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS THE SAME.					
Indicator	Items	Administration conditions and instructions	Scale		
			Very good	Good	Not satisfactory
Identifies positive attitude and behaviour with respect to the environment.	<p>Poster with the following 4 pictures:</p> <p>a) A child up in a tree, breaking a branch.</p> <p>b) A child eating a sandwich throwing the wrapping to the ground.</p> <p>c) A child throwing a paper in the wastepaper basket.</p> <p>d) A child helping an adult to plant a tree.</p> <p>Circle the actions which are good and cross out the ones that are bad.</p>	<p>Group activity. □</p> <p>Materials: 4 pictures and a pencil.</p> <p>The evaluator tells the pupils to position themselves in front of their respective posters for a preliminary observation.</p> <p>When appropriate, the evaluator explains the activity to be done.</p>	4 correct answers	3 correct answers	Less than 3 correct answers



a)



b)



c)



d)

CRITERION No. 7: KNOWS ABOUT DIFFERENT FORMS OF LIVING THINGS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ENVIRONMENT					
Indicator	Items	Administration conditions and instructions	Scale		
			Very good	Good	Not satisfactory
Recognises characteristics of some animals and knows some of their habits	<p>Observe the animals in the box and do the following activities:</p> <p>a) Put to one side of the table the animals which have feet and to the other side of the table those that do not have feet.</p> <p>b) Answer this question. Do the animals with feet live in water or on land?</p> <p>c) Now, put all the animals back together and then put the animals that can fly to one side of the table and those that can not fly to the other side of the table.</p> <p>d) Answer this question. Why can the animals I point to fly (stork, dove, canary)?</p>	<p>Individual activity.</p> <p>Materials:</p> <p>A box with the following 9 animals: a stork, a dove, a canary, a dolphin, a shark, a whale, a cow, a dog, and a horse. (The above animals can substituted by 9 pictures or photographs or other similar animals.)</p> <p>The evaluator puts the 9 animals on the table and allows the child to look at them. After a while the evaluator starts the activity.</p>	4 correct answers	3 correct answers	Less than 3 correct answers

C) AREA OF COMMUNICATION AND REPRESENTATION

CRITERION No. 4: DISTINGUISHES WRITING FROM OTHER FORMS OF GRAPHIC EXPRESSION, NOTICES THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WRITTEN WORDS AND CAN IDENTIFY SOME VERY IMPORTANT ONES					
Indicator	Items	Administration conditions and instructions	Scale		
			Very good	Good	Not satisfactory
Establishes relationships between words and pictures	<p>Wall chart with the frontispiece of the following stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little Red Riding Hood. - Puss in boots. - Snow White. - Three little pigs. <p>The titles of these stories are on cards in large capital letters.</p> <p>Join each frontispiece of the story and the corresponding title with an arrow.</p>	<p>Group activity.</p> <p>Materials: Wall chart with the frontispiece of the following stories and the titles of these stories are on cards in large capital letters.</p> <p>The evaluator distributes the material and explains the activity to be done, making sure the children know the titles of the stories by asking, "Do you know what stories are these?"</p> <p>The evaluator also checks whether the children know how to read the cards with the titles of the stories. If not the evaluator reads them.</p> <p>The evaluator tells the child to join each title to the corresponding story with an arrow. If the child can read the titles, he can do it by himself. If not, the evaluator reads them and the child does in steps.</p> <p>Note. This item tries to evaluate whether the child can establish a relationship between the words and the picture, not whether he or she can read the cards.</p>	4 correct answers	3 correct answers	Other cases



BLANCANIEVES



EL GATO CON BOTAS



LOS TRES CERDITOS



CAPERUCITA ROJA

CRITERION No.9:

UNDERSTANDS MATHEMATICAL LANGUAGE BY PERFORMING SIMPLE OPERATIONS, IS AWARE OF AND APPRECIATES ITS USEFULNESS IN EVERY DAY SITUATIONS

Indicator	Items	Administration conditions and instructions	Scale		
			Very good	Good	Not Satisfactory
Carries out simple series following a given criterion.	<p>With the building blocks:</p> <p>a) Make a series which alternately has a large piece, a medium-sized piece and a small piece. Start with the big piece.</p> <p>b) Are there any pieces left over? Are they large or small?</p>	<p>Individual activity.</p> <p>Material:</p> <p>A set of 10 building blocks (3 a large blocks, 3 medium-sized blocks and 4 small ones) or similar material such as logical blocks, spaces, etc..</p> <p>Before starting the activity the evaluator gives the child time to become familiar with the building blocks.</p>	a) and b) correct answers	a) correct answer	No correct answer

ANNEX II

EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS IN THE PUPILS' LEVEL OF ATTAINMENT TEST COMPLETED BY THE FORM TEACHER

A) AREA OF PERSONAL IDENTITY AND AUTONOMY

CRITERION No.3: EXPRESSES OWN FEELINGS, EXPERIENCES AND EMOTIONS AND IS SENSITIVE TO THOSE OF OTHERS.				
Indicator	Items	Scale		
		Always / A lot	Sometimes / Something	Never / Nothing
Is sensitive to the feelings of others and helps them if they are distressed	Knows the states of happiness, worry, anger, sadness... of his/her classmates with whom they are usually with, and wants to know the reasons which caused it, displays understanding, tries to console.	3	2	1



We console Luis with our hugs and kisses.

CRITERION No. 8: DISPLAYS HEALTHY HABITS, IN RELATION TO FOOD AND PERSONAL HYGIENE, AND USES THE AREAS AND MATERIALS APPROPRIATELY				
Indicator	Items	Scale		
		Always / A lot	Sometimes / Something	Never / Nothing
Displays healthy eating habits and personal hygiene.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arrives at school rested - Chews properly - Wipes mouth after eating something - Cleans nose 	3	2	1



Each day we have something healthy and different for lunch.

B) AREA OF PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

CRITERION No. 1: FORMS GOOD RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE DIFFERENT GROUPS HE/SHE BELONGS TO: FAMILY, SCHOOL AND FRIENDS.				
Indicator	Items	Scale		
		Always / A lot	Sometimes / Something	Never / Nothing
Displays trust towards the teacher.	Does he/she display trust towards the teacher?	3	2	1



We have a very good time with our teacher.

CRITERION No. 6: LOOKS AFTER AND RESPECTS NATURAL SURROUNDINGS, AND DISPLAYS A POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS THE SAME.				
Indicator	Items	Scale		
		Always / A lot	Sometimes / Something	Never / Nothing
Respects the environment.	The pupil adopts a critical attitude to practices which hinder the conservation and the care of the environment (waste into rivers, fires, cutting down trees, mistreatment of animals... or other aspects which have been covered in class).	3	2	1



We put the white paper in the recycling container.

c) AREA OF COMMUNICATION AND REPRESENTATION

CRITERION No. 3: SHOWS AN INTEREST IN WRITTEN LANGUAGE, AND IS AWARE THAT IT IS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION, INFORMATION, AND ENJOYMENT.				
Indicator	Items	Scale		
		Always/ A lot	Sometimes/ Something	Never/ Nothing
Uses the classroom library (school) for different purposes.	Likes to look at and read books-stories in the classroom/ school library and often uses this area.	3	2	1



The Reading Corner is our favourite place.

CRITERION No. 9: UNDERSTANDS MATHEMATICAL LANGUAGE BY PERFORMING SIMPLE OPERATIONS, IS AWARE OF AND APPRECIATES ITS USEFULNESS IN EVERYDAY SITUATIONS				
Indicator	Items	Scale		
		Always/ A lot	Sometimes / Something	Never/ Nothing
Points to, names and draw s the basic geometrical shapes.	Points to, names and draw s the shapes of the rectangle, triangle, square, sphere and cube.	3	2	1



We learn to distinguish the names of some geometrical shapes.

ANNEX III

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNAL EVALUATION QUESTIONS IN RELATION
TO THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES IN THE CLASSROOM

HOW DOES THE FORM TEACHER PLAN HIS/HER TIME?

	No	Yes
A. Do you have fixed timetable which you keep to everyday?.....	1	2
B. Does the timetable provide for appropriate periods of work and rest?.....	1	2
C. Are there established routines in the classroom?.....	1	2
D. Do the children know what the next activity is?.....	1	2
E. Can the timetable be changed for a reasonable cause (children's interest in a particular activity, special event, etc.)?.....	1	2
F. Is the timetable flexible to the work rhythms of each child?.....	1	2
G. Do the periods of time allow for work in different groups: on their own, small groups, large groups?.....	1	2
H. Do you plan the timetable for "global activities" (that is, not by areas)?.....	1	2



Large group: We all work on the story the teacher acted out for us.

DO YOU AGREE OR NOT WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS
REGARDING THE CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE?

	No	Yes
A. There appears to be a "good atmosphere" in the classroom. The children feel safe.....	1	2
B. There is a relationship of trust with the teacher.....	1	2
C. The teacher talks with the children in a kind and friendly way.....	1	2
D. The children talk among themselves (they talk about experiences, feelings, needs).....	1	2
E. The children display attitudes of collaboration, friendship and solidarity with their classmates.....	1	2
F. The pupils take part freely and spontaneously in the classroom when they need to.....	1	2
G. The pupils act independently (sometimes choosing the activity to do, have enough time to do the activities planned).....	1	2
H. The children understand and accept there needs to be norms in the classroom.....	1	2
I. The children mix with children from other classes.....	1	2



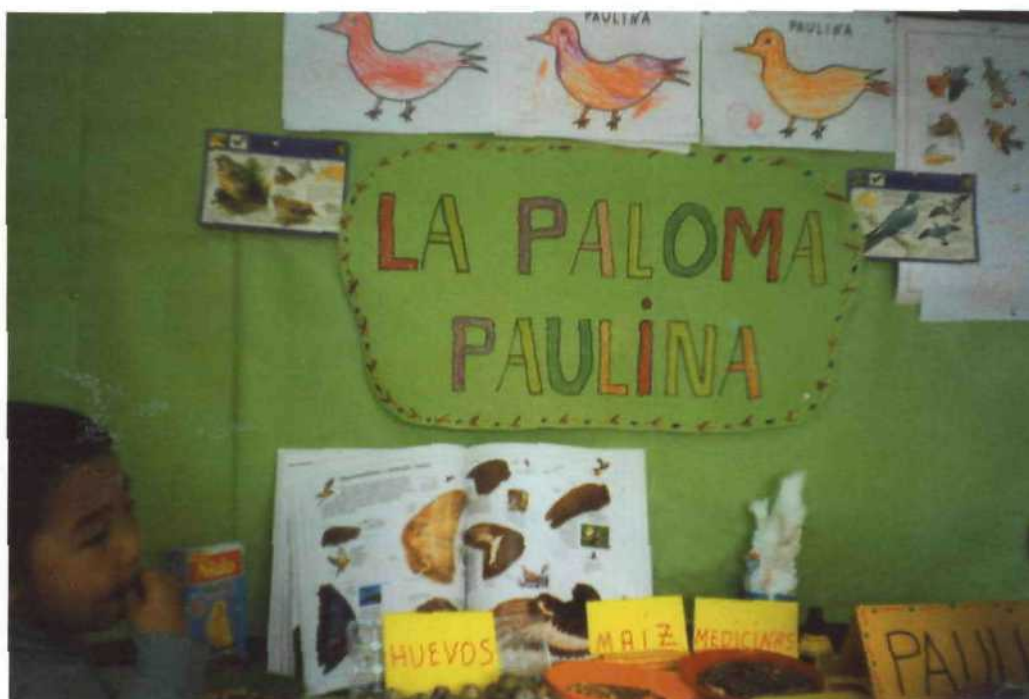
We enjoy ourselves a lot telling jokes and making up rhymes.

ANNEX IV

EXAMPLES OF EVALUATION QUESTIONS FOR THE FORM TEACHER
IN RELATION TO THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES IN THE CLASSROOM

SAY HOW OFTEN YOU CARRY OUT THE FOLLOWING METHODOLOGICAL
PROCEDURES EVERY DAY:

	Never or seldom	Sometimes	Frequently
A. The global activities proposed.....	1	2	3
B. Those recommended by a publishing company.....	1	2	3
C. Those of interest.....	1	2	3
D. The projects.....	1	2	3
E. The workshops.....	1	2	3
F. The corners.....	1	2	3
G. Other (please specify).....	1	2	3



Project with an injured dove; we treat her and learn a lot.

STATE HOW OFTEN THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATION INSTRUMENTS AND RECORDS ARE USED FOR MONITORING THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE CLASSES.

	Never or Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently
A. Class register.....	1	2	3
B. Folder for observation notes.....	1	2	3
C. Observation register.....	1	2	3
D. Notebook.....	1	2	3
E. Other (please give details).....	1	2	3



The teacher makes a note in her class diary about what the children tell her.



