



**INTERNATIONAL WEEK &  
CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION**

**PROFESSIONAL MESSAGE OF PARTICIPANTS**

FROM **CROATIA, GREECE, HUNGARY,  
NORWAY, POLAND, ROMANIA, SERBIA, SLOVAKIA,  
SLOVENIA, SPAIN, THAILAND, UKRAINE AND THE USA**

In this time of global challenges that include migration, economic and political uncertainty, terrorism and even war, a peaceful, healthy and happy childhood can be jeopardized or completely unattainable for millions of children. The advocates for Education Diplomacy target a future that depends upon education as a means to promoting peace, prosperity, and sustainable solutions to these complex challenges. This requires leaders in academia, politicians, teachers and parents to come together to ensure that access to education is a priority. International study visits such as the one that recently took place at the University of Sopron and hosted participants from three continents and 13 countries, allow participants to share best practices and to promote cross-disciplinary and intercultural understanding. These are the findings of the participants from this study visit:

*High-quality, early childhood education needs continued support*

High-quality, early childhood education, such as that which is already occurring in many nations around the world needs vigorous and sustained support. These high-quality programs include a curricular focus on socio-emotional development, the integration of the arts, physical development, good nutrition, and emerging citizenship skills. The high-quality programs that embody these developmentally, individually and culturally appropriate components consistently nurture children that have a firm foundation for lifelong learning.

*Early childhood teachers need to be well trained in implementing developmentally appropriate practices and curricula.*

The development of well-educated, knowledgeable early childhood teachers that are skilled at implementing developmentally appropriate curricula is paramount as well. Many European nations, for example, continue to educate their pre-service teachers on the importance of developmentally and culturally appropriate practice including the incorporation of play as a means for social and emotional development, the arts, physical exercise and good nutrition in early childhood classrooms. Even in the

United States where the early childhood curriculum has become almost entirely academic and now often excludes physical education, art and music, Colleges of Education continue to prepare new teachers to employ developmentally appropriate practices because it is so wholly important to the future success of each child. Researchers, teacher educators and practitioners worldwide collaborate on initiatives using effective pedagogical practice that focuses on age and psychologically appropriate development, and leads to the most successful outcomes for both students and teachers.

It is the position of the participants from the Erasmus Study Week, therefore, that we endorse the continued support of developmentally appropriate early education and high quality teacher preparation programs. We also find it important to note that cross-country collaboration is a necessary and timely component of this effort as well, so that our children will become global citizens, cognizant of their place and responsibilities in the world – and that of others.

On behalf of the group

Yours sincerely,

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