



**"Erasmus+ programme project "Effective Strategies in Students' Reading Education"
No.2019-1-PL01-KA201-065421**

ALYTUS DAINAVA PROGYMNASIUM
READING EDUCATION STRATEGY
IMPORTANCE AND MEANING OF READING

The importance and meaning of reading education is revealed by various studies of children's development, which confirm that regular reading stimulates the development of the brain of young children, strengthens the parent-child relationship, and develops language, social and emotional skills.¹

Neuroscience research has shown that reading and similar activities improve brain function, reduce stress and fear of the unknown.² Reading for pleasure helps to develop empathy, improves understanding of self and others, relationships, community and social inclusion, and can reduce symptoms of depression and improve well-being.³ Reading is also of particular importance for lifelong learning. It has been found that people who read have a much higher motivation and capacity for lifelong learning, and are more flexible to professional challenges.⁴ Researchers B. Gruževskis (2019) and K.Sabaliauskaitė (2020) state that it is necessary for a child to read at least 20 minutes every day, therefore it is expected that the organized reading activities at school will bring children to the world of the reader. The path to the book for the little ones is just beginning, so it is very important that children feel the joy of reading on their own and with older friends or family, getting acquainted with the most popular and up-to-date children's and youth literature. They will be given the opportunity to see screenings and performances of the books they have read. By organizing reading activities for these children, we ensure a meaningful spending of time, broadening their horizons, developing the cultural awareness of children and youth, and at the same time opening the way for children to better learning outcomes. Educational book art workshops and meetings with writers and illustrators aim to develop children's aesthetic tastes and creativity, to bring the book into their daily lives.

¹ Baliutavičiūtė, E. Skaitymo įgūdžių tyrimai: skaitytoją ugdyti verta nuo pat vaikystės. Esu laimingas, nes skaitau. – Vilnius: VšĮ „Laikas skaityti“, 2015, p. 7-9; Reading with children starting in infancy gives lasting literacy boost, Internet access: <http://www.aappublications.org/news/2017/05/04/PASLliteracy050417>

² More Scientific Evidence That Reading Is Good for You, The Atlantic, 2013-07-08. Internet access: <https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2013/07/more-evidence-reading-good-you/313575>

³ Literature Review: The impact of reading for pleasure and empowerment: The Reading Agency, June 2015. Internet access: <https://readingagency.org.uk/news/The%20Impact%20of%20Reading%20for%20Pleasure%20and%20Empowerment.pdf>

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/main/search/-/search/estatsearchportlet_WAR_estatsearchportlet_INSTANCE_bHVzuvn1SZ8J?p_auth=IoW0tZEs&text=Reading+benefits

SCHOOL EXPERIENCE IN READING EDUCATION

Alytus Dainava Progymnasium has been running various reading promotion projects since 2015. The students of the school participate in town, republican and international reading education projects. The school's 2020, 2021 and 2022 activity plans aim to improve learning outcomes and reduce the achievement gap, and include measures to improve reading skills:

- participation in school, town, national and international projects;
- participation in library initiatives to select a book of the year, to commemorate International Children's Book Day, Nordic Literature Week, Press Recovery Day, Language and Book Day;
- participate in books read-alouds;
- organising events to promote reading and writing: the Lithuanian Language Week, penmanship, artistic reading, epistolary writing, and literacy competitions.

INDICATORS OF SCHOOL STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN READING

An online survey conducted at the school in 2021 with 219 respondents shows an increase in the proportion of pupils spending their free time online. They spend the least time reading books of all leisure activities (watching TV, listening to the radio, using the Internet). While 63% of the children surveyed rate reading as a meaningful and rewarding activity, as many as 25% do not read at all, 46% read 1-3 books a year, 19% read 4-5 books, and only 10% read 6 or more books. It is clear that children lack motivation and interest and need help and guidance in choosing a good book. Children were also asked what motivates them most to pick up a book? The most frequently mentioned answers were: 1) the topic of interest, the content of the book - 48%, 2) the opportunity to share their impressions of the book they have read - 35%, 3) meetings with writers and artists - 28%, 4) interactive activities - 16%. Unfortunately, as many as 27% of students said that nothing motivates them to read. The survey also revealed that the tradition of reading within the family is still weak. Children do not have a strong role model around them.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE READING EDUCATION STRATEGY

The goal of reading education strategies is to increase the number of reading students of all ages by developing an understanding that reading is a meaningful activity.		
Reading education objectives, activity plan		
Order No.	Objectives	Means to achieve the objectives
1.	Create a reading-friendly environment and present reading as a particularly	1.1. Photo exhibition "Reading School"
		1.2. Provide reading corners in school premises
		1.3. Setting up reader's corners in primary classrooms or in areas near the classroom

	engaging and valuable activity	1.4. "Reading Morning" event
		1.5. Illustrator's photo booth
		1.6. Short-term stands from children's publishers
		1.7. The school library and spaces are decorated with illustrations created by children and quotes from the books they have read.
		1.8. Set up audio book corners in school premises
		1.9. "Summer with a book" event
2.	Acquaint children with forthcoming literary events, competitions, festivals and actions organized by libraries	2.1. Information leaflets about literary events, exhibitions, competitions, meetings with book authors, etc. in libraries and museums in Alytus
3.	In order to foster motivation to read, organise a festival at school, inviting older pupils, parents, professional book creators and theatre actors to read to the children, to tell how books are written, and to organise workshops on how a book is born	3.1. „Dads Read to Kids“ events
		3.2. Children's Literature Festival
4.	Actively involve children with special educational needs in reading	4.1. Reading with dogs
		4.2. The interactive performance "Ypatingas" (Special) for children with special educational needs by the "Pojučią" theatre
		4.3. The wordless book workshop with Ieva Babilaite
5.	Organise literary outings for children	5.1. A trip to the Vilnius International Book Fair, the biggest event for readers in Lithuania
		5.2. A trip to the children's literature event "Children's Book Island" in Vilnius

		5.3. Trips to literary escape rooms
6.	Actively commemorate republican and international literature dates	6.1. 21st March - International Poetry Day
		6.2. 16th March – Knygnešio diena (Book Carrier Day)
		6.3. 2nd April - International Children's Book Day. "Postcard from a book"event
7.	Implement project activities	7.1. Apply for local, national and international contests
		7.2. Participate in partners' projects

STAGES AND MONITORING OF IMPLEMENTATION

Order No.	Stage	Responsible persons
1.	Presentation of the strategy to the school community (school council, teachers' council, students' council)	Head of School
2.	Building a team to implement the strategy	Methodological Council
3.	Preparation of the action plan and distribution of responsibilities	Strategy Implementation Team
4.	Implementation of the Action Plan	School community
5.	Activity monitoring, feedback to the team and the school community	School leaders
6.	Planning future activities to ensure continuity of the strategy	School community

The interactive and engaging activities described in the strategy are likely to encourage children to read, and to strengthen the community's communication, cooperation, creativity and other competences. The school community will actively share good practices with teachers and students in other schools.

The strategy was prepared by the team of Alytus Dainava Progymnasium for the project “Effective strategies in students' reading education”