



Foreword

January is the month for fresh starts, resolutions, and goal setting. However, it is also a time for consolidation of previous successes and attempt to ameliorate to a next level. At FES, this includes continuing to offer a more tailored service that not only focuses on the family, but also addresses the interest of the child.

The Childcare Centres are finalising their training in the emergent curriculum pedagogy, with the second and final phase starting next month. The take-up of the extended hours services in the centres of Birgu, B’Kara, Pembroke, Naxxar, Ħaż-Żebbug and Qawra is continuing to increase, as the word is spreading amongst satisfied clients.

Training is vital across the board for all our services, and in fact the January calendar was packed with different training opportunities for FES workers in the Childcare and Klabb 3-16 sectors. As a service centred organisation, the employees are the biggest asset, and the training gives dedicated workers the opportunity to strengthen their skills and gain new ones. This training saw the staff members getting qualified to give First Aid when needed, be certified in Food Handling, and also on the proficient use of the Boardmaker, which is a special education platform that supports education, communication, access and social/emotional needs of students from an early age.

Work on Skolasajf 2023 is also at full steam ahead, with the different FES Head Office departments working on goals and deadlines to ensure the availability of premises, staff, resources, and a programme of activities packed with activities and contributing partners.

As is evident from the front page of this newsletter, In Touch has also been given a revamp, with a fresh look that includes a new colour scheme and layout, and also the addition of a new section titled Photo of the Month, giving creative contributors a platform for their artwork.

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SKOLASAJF VACANCIES



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Apply now: <https://recruitment.fes.gov.mt/>
Applications close on 23/02/2023



CHILDCARE EXTENDED HOURS

Extended Childcare Hours

Monday - Friday
06:00-18:00

Birgu	Tel: +356 2180 9285
Birkirkara	Tel: +356 2598 5561
Naxxar	Tel: +356 2598 6820
Pembroke	Tel: +356 2137 6644
Haż-Żebbuġ	Tel: +356 2598 7681
Qawra	Tel: +356 2598 6996

FES Head Office TEL: +356 22586829



The FES Childcare Centres are offering the service over a longer period of hours in six of its centres.

The centers at **Birgu, Birkirkara, Naxxar, Pembroke, Haż-Żebbuġ** and **Qawra**, are now accepting children between 6am and 6pm, from Monday to Friday.

Parents interested in using this service are encouraged to contact FES, or any of the chosen centres, or visit the service.gov hubs, for more information.

Queries to FES can be asked on telephone **22586829** or via email to fes@gov.mt

22586829

fes@gov.mt

www.fes.gov.mt

CHILDCARE GRADUATION



Some of our little ones at the Childcare Centres have reached the milestone of graduating from childcare and moving on to Kinder 1. A day full of mixed emotions as our educators bid farewell to them, during a small celebration that reminded everyone of the great strides achieved since they started childcare.

FES thanks the Childcare Educators who take such diligent care of the children entrusted in their care, and also the parents for the ongoing collaboration that makes the work easier and all the more enjoyable.

Featured here are some of the children from **Is-Sardinella at San Gwann** (above) and from **Il-Kuluri at Birgu** (below).



HOW TO APPLY FOR OUR CHILDCARE SERVICES

1. Choose your preferred centre from the list found at:

https://fes.gov.mt/en/Pages/Centres/centres_child_care.aspx.

- You can also have a look inside of the centres, by watching the videos at <https://fes.gov.mt/en/Pages/Child%20Care/Videos.aspx>.

2. You can download an application form from:

<https://fes.gov.mt/en/Pages/registrations.aspx>.

- You can also contact the chosen centre directly, ask for a tour of the place, and get the application directly from there.



Children can be registered at the centre by handing over to the Centre Coordinator, the filled-in application form together with the necessary documents. Only one application per child is to be submitted.

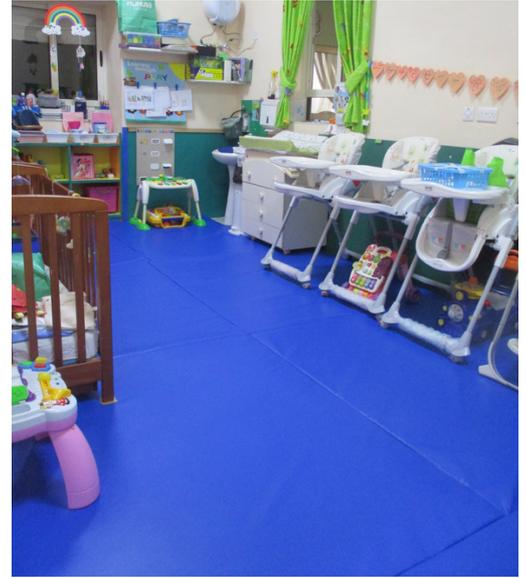
The Centre Coordinators and the FES FB Messenger service are always available to answer your queries. The Centre Coordinators will also be available to help you fill in the application form.

The childcare service is offered to children until they are eligible to move on to the government Kindergarten on the 1st of February, while children who are three years of age by the end of December are eligible for Kindergarten on the 1st of October, of that same calendar year.

ONGOING REFURBISHMENT

We strive to make sure that our centres are always up to standard, and offer an inspiring environment within safe surroundings. The safety of our children is our top priority. We make sure to always be one step ahead to avoid any unwanted accidents. Having adequate safety features is a must in ensuring the health and safety of the children in our care.

Some safety features we have recently updated are in the Baby Room at **Il-Pespus**, the FES Childcare Centre at Marsa, where soft mats were installed on the floors. Soft flooring not only provides a safe and fun sensory experience for the children, but also helps to enhance their motor skills.



Meanwhile, at **Il-Ferrovija Childcare Centre at Birkirkara**, new mirrors were installed as part of the resources to be used during the activities that help in the care and development of the children.

The use of mirrors in childcare centres has a number of benefits for babies and toddlers. Some of the benefits include prompting self-awareness and helping to recognise one's self, development of visual senses and of language skills. It also encourages babies to lift their head up during tummy time, as the reflection of different things and movements grabs their attention.



CHILDCARE ACTIVITIES

Children learn best when they are surrounded by an environment that lends itself to imagination and creativity. When children are exposed to an array of learning opportunities based on their own interests, the level of engagement is deep and meaningful and this helps them to strengthen their concentration span.

The implementation of the emergent curriculum in the FES Childcare Centres is fast becoming crucial tool in deepening the engagement of the children and eliciting their personal interests as a foundation for future activities. The Childcare Educators at Il-Bebbuxu Childcare Centre at St Venera took note of their observations of the children's interests, and the next adventure that they provided centred on using the natural sweetness of fruit to 'make a pie'.



In this learning opportunity the children were provided with different fruits and the tools needed to make a pie. The fruit and flour helped them to enhance their sensory development. As the children cut the fruit, sifted and transferred the flour from one bowl to another, they were exposed to measurement and language.

KLABB 3-16

ACTIVITIES



Have you ever thought how would it feel manoeuvring items wearing an astronaut suit in space?

Our explorative astronaut kids at **Żurrieq Klabb 3-16** had a blast experimenting with this principle. The wonderful Playworkers and CSWs at Żurrieq created a Glovebox, using a cardboard box filled with items to explore, sealed with cling film, and armed with large gloves.



The Glovebox is a tool used on space stations, that provides a safe environment for the crew to conduct research with liquids, flames, and particles used as a part of everyday research on Earth. Built-in gloves allow crew to safely manipulate samples.

However, it must not be easy to handle such delicate items with such large gloves.

Would you be able to glue two pieces of paper together wearing such large gloves? Might be challenging!



But like all Space teams, collaboration and perseverance are key!

The kids had a wonderful time practicing the challenges faced. When we try and fail, and try again, it teaches us resilience and the self-belief that we can do this!

Well done to our Żurrieq Astronauts for this wonderful and successful expedition! And thank you to our ground control Playworkers and Child Support Workers who made it possible!



MEET OUR EMPLOYEES



Name: **Katrina Spiteri Bailey**

Role: **Playworker Klabb3-16 Attard**

1. What advice would you give your younger self at age 15?

15 is such a formative age; a time when you are experiencing new challenges, new experiences and making your own decisions. I would tell my 15 year old self to take life a little bit more lightly, to expand my friendship circles, and not be so shy to voice my own opinions. I would also tell her that plans change, and that it is okay because life's unpredictability is what could make it so interesting.

2. Four weeks into 2023; have you made any changes to your lifestyle?

My lifestyle has not changed too much and I don't really believe in New Year's resolutions. I think they set you up to fail more than anything. The one thing that I am working on more is being more spontaneous and breaking up my weekly routine with more coffee breaks and catching up more with friends. I have also tried to take five or ten minutes at the end of each day to put my phone away and record one thing or event that made me smile that day. This has really helped me on difficult or boring days, even if what I have recorded might be mundane.

3. Who was/is a role model in your life?

I've been lucky enough to have a number of role models in my life. My mother is my main role model; a woman of formidable strength and determination. Also my father, for being hardworking and providing everything I could possibly need or want. I think having a combination of role models in life is a privilege and being a role model is something that we should strive to be as educators. My parents taught me that love is entirely unconditional and accepting people as they are. Even if it is difficult to understand them, it is imperative to being a good person. Those are values that I hope I bring with me into any classroom as an educator and I hope to also pass on to any student through my actions.

4. Choose between two superpowers; being invisible or flying.

I would probably choose to fly. Driving is an absolute nightmare in Malta and I tend to have quite a busy schedule throughout the week. Being able to fly would really help me cut down on travel time and it also sounds like it could be a lot of fun.

5. What is your favourite tech gadget?

My favourite gadget would have to be my phone. I use it constantly and it is like having the world at your fingertips. Having said that, my tablet is fast taking its place. Since everything education-related nowadays is so digital, I use my tablet to take notes, to scroll through presentations I use for my lessons, to mark homework submitted electronically, and as a remote control in class. It's a very multi-use gadget that has made teaching a tiny bit easier and more fun. Students also appreciate someone who is more in tune with gadgets they use everyday and exploring the ways that new gadgets could help me to help them in class has made a huge difference in the teaching and learning experience.

MEET OUR EMPLOYEES



Name: **Nadine Parnis**
Role: **Child Support Worker Klabb3-16 Mellieha**

1. What advice would you give your younger self at age 15?

Time, circumstances, all the experiences we go through in life, make us so much wiser. But what if I had a time machine that could take me back to when I was fifteen? Fifteen years of age, that tender age, full of romance, fun on the beach, laughing it out loud with my friends and cousins, living the thrill of every new adventure. Although I do not regret any of this, giving a twist and some solid advice to my fifteen-year-old self would be an interesting option, permitting myself to look at life from

different perspective. Funnily enough, by taking my own advice, I would still be doing it my own way, not to mention that I would retain my old motto. “Work hard to achieve what you want!” I would consider giving less attention to silly conflicts and useless dating and focus more in believing in myself instead of feeling peer pressured and wasting precious time in negative competition. Another advice I would give my younger self would be to be cautious whom to trust, pick healthier role models and plan better long-term goals for the future.

2. Four weeks into 2023; have you made any changes to your lifestyle?

I find it very beneficial to have drawn a structured plan for my goals for the next 12 months. Thanks to this, I am making healthier eating choices, finding time for positive experiences which can make me stronger whilst focusing to be ever more resilient. I have also embarked on a new adventure to travel around the world, trekking and camping throughout my travels. This keeps me closer to nature, another goal which I have set for myself, thus keeping me more grounded, making me feel whole and in harmony with all living beings. Apart from all this, I am also giving myself enough time to pause and meditate in my everyday life, and give myself a set time to have a healthy sleep at night, which is helping me avoid waking up in the middle of the night. Thanks to these scheduled decisions, I am finding it easier to put my bad habits behind me, and as a result I am somehow managing to meet my deadlines on time.

3. Who was/is a role model in your life?

My late mother, who was always inspired by Mother Theresa and Mahatma Ghandi, always stressed to us all that little people are the most successful people, and the ones prone to make an impact on the world around them. I believe that Ghandi’s words “Be the change that you wish to see in the world”, and Mother Theresa’s advice “Do small things with great love” were her main inspiration. Thanks to my mother’s strong convictions and beliefs, she became my one and sole role model and inspiration. Mother always believed that one has to fight for whatever one wants to achieve, and that one needs to hunger to reach one’s goal. It’s OK if you don’t make it on your first attempt, what is important is that you don’t compromise, but persevere until you get there. My mother always succeeded in her endeavours, notwithstanding the difficulties encountered, and this is why her life is inspiring and thought provoking. It showed me that success is shaped by failures, which in turn prepare you for a better life if you learn from them and move on.

MEET OUR EMPLOYEES

4. Choose between two superpowers; being invisible or flying.

The one superpower I want to have is to be invisible, I would simply be a super hero whom no one would ever notice. I don't want to be a hero who can be recognized. I don't need admirers. I just want to do good things for good people, and to protect them. I want to be like guardian angels, who are certainly amongst us protecting us in our everyday lives. And honestly, I wouldn't mind listening on to people's conversations and gossip.

5. What is your favourite tech gadget?

I do not really have a favourite Tech Gadget, since I always try to live a simple life, but a device I certainly cannot live without is my smart phone. Thanks to this I can reach my friends and my relatives anytime and anywhere. It also keeps me updated with the news and information I need to know.



ONGOING TRAINING AT FES

January was a busy month, as several courses were held at the FES Head Office for staff working at Head Office and in the Childcare and Klabb 3-16 Centres.

The purpose of training is to provide potential employees with all the necessary skills, capabilities, and knowledge. At FES, we are committed to train our workforce as we believe that with the right training, the employee will have job security and satisfaction. When properly trained, the employee will have all the skills needed prior to starting the job and this improves efficiency and productivity as well as have less supervision and fewer accidents in the workplace.



GDPR Course



Boardmaker Course

The Klabb 3-16 **Induction Course** was delivered both as a refresher for current employees and as the first step for new employees embarking on their role as playworkers or child support workers. 46 employees attended the course.

There was also another edition of the **Course for Prospective Child Support Workers**. This prepares aspiring Child Support Workers on how to work and interact with children who have different educational needs. The course covers different forms of abilities and learning styles. There were 10 attendees for this course.

FES also delivered the **Course for Prospective Playworkers with Extra Responsibilities**, where employees are trained to assist and also replace the Centre Coordinator when they are absent. For this course, there were 30 attendees.

FES staff also attended the **Food Handling Course** provided to prepare them for instances where they handle food during the course of their duty. 44 people attended this course.

The FES organised **Paediatric First Aid** training for its staff in child care centres. The aim of this training was to help staff deal with situations of emergency and accidents which can occur in child care centres. This will further ensure the safety of children under our care. This course had 47 attendees.

The **Boardmaker Course** was a refresher course about this special education platform that specialises in child education and communication for children who have communication difficulties. It enables the user to create customized material and visuals that facilitate the learning experience of these children. This was delivered to the 12 Childcare Centre Coordinators.

25 employees also received training on **data protection**, especially in relation to situations that they can come across during the course of their duties. They were also provided with basic information on the **General Data Protection Regulations** and made aware of the FES retention policy.

FOOD BANK CAMPAIGN

The Food Bank Campaign has become a staple in the FES diary. During the month of December 2022, children, parents, and staff in the centres and at Head Office, collected non-perishable items to contribute to the ongoing service given by the Food Bank Lifeline Foundation. These past weeks, the Foodbank van was busy going from one centre to another, collecting the donations by the Childcare and Klabb 3-16 Centres, and the FES Head Office.



Centre Coordinator Ms Dolores Coleiro and the FES Head of Programmes Mr David Chircop, presented the collected items to the Food Bank representative, Ms Barbara Caruana.

The Foodbank van called at the St Venera Klabb 3-16 Centre and collected over 10 boxes packed with food items that were surely a welcome addition to the shelves of the outlet in Valletta.

FES AT THE 'I CHOOSE' FAIR

The **I CHOOSE fair**, at the MFCC at Ta' Qali, gave Year 11 students from different schools the opportunity to visit the FES stand, where they got the chance to learn more about the services and job opportunities that await them, in their next step of their educational journey.

The FES Programmes Department staff Rachel Saliba and Justin Balzan interacted with the students and guidance teachers, and provided all the necessary information.



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Child Support Worker Course - REF NO: 967

Expires on 13/02/23

Playworker Development Course - REF NO: 968

Expires on 13/02/23

Playworkers Klabb 3-16 (Part-time) - REF NO: 970

Expires on 13/02/23

Tutors Klabb 3-16 (Part-time) - REF NO: 971

Expires on 13/02/23

PER Course - Playworker with extra responsibilities - REF NO: 972

Expires on 13/02/23



Click on <https://recruitment.fes.gov.mt/> to apply, and get more information, including salary rates, eligibility criteria and job descriptions. For any queries, call **22586830/35**, or write to hr.fes@gov.mt.

Photo of the month



Photo by: Rachel Ann Saliba





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