

## Performing an Assembly – “Choice of Heart Child”

The project called “Heart over foot” was developed at the Praxisvolksschule to foster personality development. The project name was developed in collaboration with students. The heart should be a symbol for the emotional world of all those involved. On the one hand, the foot is meant to express that in this project a lot is done with body language and body parts. On the other hand, physical struggle was thematized in a class and a child named the following solution strategy: “First the heart and then the foot” (cf. Jakl, p. 104).



Figure: project logo (Grafik der Praxisvolksschule Wien)

The aim of the project is to develop, promote and strengthen the social competences of the participating pupils. The ability to cooperate, to handle conflict, to work in a team and to build self-esteem are just some of the competences to be achieved (cf. Jakl, p. 105f).

Children who show special social aptitudes throughout the month get the opportunity to be chosen as the “Herzkind” (heart child) during the assembly. Following qualities help determine which child could be chosen as heart child: Heart children are particularly helpful, appreciative, friendly, and empathetic. They recognize when someone needs comfort, are good listeners, and honest. They are committed to good cohesion in the class community. Often these children are also characterized by a high democratic understanding, for example, by often taking a mediating position in conflicts.

Every child has the opportunity to be chosen as a heart child in their own class every month. In a “heart box” the names of all nominated students are collected and in the assembly the lot decides who will be the heart child of the month. As a special honor, the heart child will be presented with a heart button, which will be pinned on with congratulations during the assembly. The joy of the classmates is very great when the “winners” come from their own class. At the same time, however, it is also important to endure disappointment if the lot has not met the desired candidate.

*Who will be a heart child?* Nomination in the classes are followed by:

- Democratic decisions on who would be particularly suitable as a heart child by his achievements or behavior this month
- Nomination of heart children by classmates in the class (Why this child in particular?)  
→ discussion/election of the heart child (outspoken or secret)