

Why should we fight for the education of our children?



(Source: Johana Ryšavá)

My visit to the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie was filled with interesting exhibits, lots of children, and school trips. The diverse Parisian museum aims to popularize and enhance knowledge about science and technology, particularly among children and youth. Thanks to Professor Gratier from the University of Nanterre, I also learned that the institution houses a special educational center, which, however, is currently facing some challenges.

During my time in Paris, I primarily explored the BabyLab, a specialized facility at the University of Nanterre dedicated to studying the cognitive functions of infants and young children. During my internship, thanks to Professor Gratier, I also had the opportunity to visit the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, a museum designed to popularize science among young children.

The main purpose of our museum visit was to arrange a conference to be held at the institution. This conference was intended to provide an opportunity for graduate students in psychology at the University of Nanterre to present their scientific findings to the public.

Arranging the conference date was challenging due to the museum employees – in a typical French fashion - planning a strike. "*They are protesting against complicating access to the children's exhibition, advocating that all children should have free access to education,*" Professor Gratier explained to me.

The Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie provides a special exhibition for small children. The permanent exhibition, now open to children ages 2 to 7, is a special place for adults too. "*Scientists from other BabyLabs in France, who specialize in child development, often come*

her and present their findings to parents," Gratier continued.



For the enjoyment of children, this unique space offers a series of fun and educational activities divided into five thematic areas. The three major themes focus on the development of the child and their physical, cognitive and spatial skills. Children can test their flexibility and their senses, watch themselves in the mirrors, listen to their emotions, play with balance, sounds and letters, and explore pathways and mazes, setting their body in motion.

The entire program fascinated me greatly; it looked fantastic. I also hold the opinion that parents with children should have free access to it, so they can educate themselves about their children's development. Reflecting on my experience, I can't help but wish for more places like Babylab in the Czech Republic. Having dedicated research centers focused on child development would undoubtedly contribute to our understanding of early cognitive processes and enhance the well-being of our children.

Johana Ryšavá