



## THE ROLE OF KINDERGARTEN IN THE FUNCTION OF PREPARING CHILDREN FOR STARTING SCHOOL

### ULOGA VRTIĆA U FUNKCIJI PRIPREME DJECE ZA POLAZAK U ŠKOLU

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#### ABSTRACT

The partnership between kindergarten and family has a special function and importance in the upbringing and education of the child. The content of the topic refers to the introductory part, which explains what we will be researching. The partnership between family and kindergarten has a special significance and role in the function of preparing children for school. Numerous definitions of family are mentioned in the literature, but given the diversity of structure, relationships, functions, ways of formation, there are many combinations and it could be said that each family is unique or a separate definition should be made for each family. The child is the center of attention in the partnership. The results show that parents are involved in kindergarten activities, and that they are available for cooperation. This is the first prerequisite for establishing, above all, quality communication, and thus cooperation. All parents are interested in the progress of their child and want to cooperate with the kindergarten in this area. This research is of a theoretical-empirical character. We used specifically descriptive statistics, which have special significance. The educational preparation of a child refers to what we call the formation of work habits of learning, on the one hand, and the acquisition of prior knowledge, on the other. Kindergarten children do not read or write, make figurines, play, draw, learn numbers up to ten. Educators need to continuously learn and establish a partnership with the family and the child, in order for the child to feel accepted, satisfied, happy and successful. It is certainly evident, through our theoretical research, that we can conclude that educators need to be specially educated to work with the population of preschool children with a special “dose” of sensibility.

**Key words:** child, kindergarten, family.

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## INTRODUCTION

Pedagogy studies education as its main activity. The fundamental question of pedagogy is the question of raising a child. Parents' preoccupation with work nowadays requires constant "care and trust of the child", especially parents take their children to kindergarten, where the child spends more than half of the time in kindergarten, and the kindergarten becomes a "second" home for children. Continuous cooperation between kindergarten and family contributes to the development of the child and the improvement of the work of educators, as well as to the development of the parental role. The first step in planning cooperation is to get to know the possibilities and expectations of the family. The importance of cooperation between the preschool institution and the family for achieving the goals of educational work has a special impact on the upbringing of the child. The family plays a key role in a child's life. Getting acquainted with the basic characteristics of the family (social, cultural, biological) has a key character in the direction of further upbringing and education of the child. The family and the kindergarten are most responsible for the upbringing and quality of children's development. The joint work of the kindergarten and the family as a contribution to better physical and health development, development of mental abilities, as well as the development of work, moral, aesthetic, environmental and other educational components leaves a mark on children's education in the future. Kindergarten and the family should focus on creating conditions for the action of all educational factors, in order to provide the most favorable conditions for the socialization and humanization of children. The obligation of the kindergarten and the family to work together to solve all the problems and difficulties that accompany the child's development, both in the family and educational environment. Guided by this goal, the kindergarten and the family should cooperate, and the forms of cooperation between the family and the kindergarten can be direct or indirect. The direct form of cooperation between the family and the preschool institution can be meetings only with parents, and meetings with both children and parents (group). Defining the concepts and basic starting points of the role of families and kindergartens in the function of preparing children for school.

Going to school in a way restricts the freedom a child had in preschool. It brings with it new experiences. Children who have attended kindergarten certainly socialize faster and develop certain necessary skills more efficiently. Through the program of preschool education, educators instill in children forms of desirable behavior, recognize and respect children's needs and interests, and encourage activities that will help them develop their potential. All this is achieved by arranging a stimulating material environment for children for individual activities, e.g. in the workshop for the development of pre-reading skills, various picture books, posters with picture stories in a row, dictionaries, papers and writing utensils were placed. In musical workshops, musical instruments are placed, in the drama one, puppets and toys for dramatization are placed, and the like. The role of educators is also important in the adoption of discipline and respect for rules in children.

Talking to the child, creating a stimulating and motivating family environment and a positive attitude towards school and teachers, is part of preparing the child for school. At the same time, mutual trust and quality cooperation between the family and the kindergarten are important. Children in the circle of peers develop new and upgrade existing abilities and form their own personality. We must not forget that every child is an individual for himself and that everyone copes with change in a different way (some children need a shorter and some a longer time to adjust to school). Kindergarten / Preschool is an institution for the care and upbringing of children until they start school. According to the Law on Preschool Education in BiH, Pedagogical Standards for Preschool Education of BiH (Official Gazette of Sarajevo Canton), the Basic Provisions states: for future life and work ". Upbringing is a process of human formation and lasts from birth to death.

There are several stages in the process of human development that are conditioned by physiological, psychological, intellectual, social and moral maturation. Maturation and development of man are possible only with the help of upbringing. Therefore, care must be taken that the most adequate upbringing corresponds to each level of human development. With regard to the age of the pupils, education is divided into pre-school education, school education, higher education and adult education ". (Omerović, M., Music, H., Šehović, M., Tomić, R., 2009)

An educator is a person who takes care of children during their stay in a preschool institution, who nurtures, educates, socializes and directs them on the right path from the very beginning of life. His work is based on the plan and program of the institution itself, which are adapted to the age and abilities of children, and were adopted with the consent of the Ministry of Education. A child, according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 1), is any human being below the age of 18 years, unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

The obligation of the kindergarten and the family to work together to solve all the problems and difficulties that accompany the development of the child, both in family and educational environments, as well as in the immediate and wider environment. The educator and parent should act as a team. In cooperation with a pedagogue, psychologist, speech therapist, social worker, the problems of individual educators are solved, for example: "In case two or three children in kindergarten have the same problem, it is convenient to organize this form of cooperation in agreement with parents and their mandatory presence. , so that experiences can be exchanged ". The primary program (Miljak, A., 1996) is considered to be programs that include the care, upbringing and protection of children from the age of one to the beginning of school. Involvement in preschool activities is beneficial for the child, family and program, it provides emotional and physical participation. Emotional inclusion means that the child and parents are happy with themselves, productive, energetic, renewed and ready to face life again, eager to play.

A strong desire to participate with someone or something, a sense of belonging to a group are important emotional indicators for both the child and the parents, especially for the kindergarten. Physical participation implies that the child and parents are ready for the aspect of developing new skills, forgetting worries, fun and joy, relaxation, meeting new people, overcoming stress. It is useful to gather once a year teachers, educators and parents of children who go to school in order to reach an agreement, inform parents about the organization of work in school and other activities that are important for the child's further education. A quality kindergarten environment is the result of breaking the influence of various components of spiritual and material and interpersonal relationships. Especially the interactions between adults and children, emphasize the authors Males and Stričević, 1996)

The participation of parents in such activities in kindergarten can be especially useful in solving certain problems that parents face personally, as well as parents who have certain difficulties in raising their children. Preparation of programs for parents and children in kindergartens is done by the Ordinance on the general basics of preschool program, which contains:

1. Basics of care programs for children up to three years of age;
2. Basics of the program of preschool education of children from three years to inclusion in the program of preparation for school.

The institution adopts the Preschool program (in accordance with the Rulebook on the general basics of the preschool program). At the level of the educational group, a program of educational work is developed in accordance with the needs, possibilities and interests of the children of a specific group (the program is built and developed in cooperation with the parents of the children). The program is a supplement to family education. Establishing links (continuous cooperation) between the two parts of the unified system of education and upbringing (PU and OŠ) should facilitate the child's transition to a new environment and is a joint work and responsibility of educators and teachers, kindergartens and primary schools.

Qualifications and training of professional staff have the greatest impact on the quality of work and are especially related to better achievement in preparation for reading and writing. Active involvement of parents in all activities encourages the intellectual and social development of children. Involvement of children in the preschool program contributes to the development of children's cognitive skills, development of socio-emotional competencies, and literacy (Vandell et al., 2010; Loeb et al., 2007; Gormley et al., 2004). Curricular approach to the preschool program includes:

- a) Contents are dependent on children's interests and developmental abilities. With a quality and enriched spatial material environment and social incentives, the educator enables the choice of individual contents and topics.
- b) The contents of the work are related to the areas in which the child acquires competencies:

1. Speech, expression, creation;
2. The child and his environment;
3. Natural environment;
4. Social environment,
5. Elementary mathematical concepts;
6. Development of a positive self-image;
7. Physical and health education;
8. Improving the preparation of children for school.

c) Developmental tasks are indicated according to the areas of development (overview of developmental tasks can be used in planning. This approach in modern practice of early and preschool education is slowly being abandoned in the direction of competencies as expected outcomes.

### **Tasks of educational work in the year before starting school**

It is necessary, after a long time of working with the child, to determine how and in what way to present the content to the child and in what way the child will most easily adopt such content. Most often, the child adopts the content, prepared by the educator:

1. When he feels safe, well, and content;
2. When new experiences build on his personal experiences;
3. When he is encouraged in learning, when his "small" steps are noticed and supported;
4. When learning has meaning for him, when it is related to his needs;
5. When he is allowed to learn in his own way, quickly, more slowly, by manipulating the questions he asks;
6. When he is offered contents that he can master only or with the help of an adult;
7. When the demands placed on him are a little above his capabilities (the so-called zone of further development);
8. When his way of understanding the world and the environment is respected;
9. When he is given the opportunity to choose and when his choice is respected;
10. When he is given the opportunity to process his experience;
11. When his experience is expanded by events, experiences;

12. When he has the possibility of self-expression, creation;
13. When the way of work and process is such that the child actively participates in it;
14. When he has the opportunity to exchange with other peers, older than himself, younger;
15. When he is free to exchange information, learned with the educator.

Continuous cooperation and mutual exchange of information and data during the year and during preparations for enrollment in primary school (in cooperation with the local self-government unit, health centers in the municipality), there is a high probability that such a child will be more successful than a child not prepared for school. It is useful to gather once a year teachers, educators and parents of children who go to school in order to reach an agreement, inform parents about the organization of work in school and other activities that are important for the child's further education. Continuous and more frequent contacts between parents and educators (introduction to the programs, ways of their implementation) are also important for establishing a safer access of children to school and school activities. Creating opportunities for mutual socializing and various activities of children and students (compulsory visits of children to school, introduction to school space, teachers, visits to school hours, joint exhibitions of creativity, sports events) open greater opportunities for such children to more easily bury themselves in school content. Considering the possibility of joint use of facilities and resources available to the preschool and primary school have an important impression on the child before starting school and adapting the child in school activities.

### **Educator profile**

It is of elementary importance what the profile of the educator in the preschool institution is. They should be among children not as guardians, but as a stimulus for their growth and an example for their behavior. The development of a preschool child largely depends on the ability and commitment of educators. Therefore, it is not only the parents who are responsible for the upbringing of their children, together with them the educators also participate in the upbringing and education of the children. Children need not only a teacher, but also an actor, inspirer, leader, creator, screenwriter, artist, collaborator, researcher, fighter, evaluator, etc. They need a versatile educator who will put the interests, needs and abilities of children first. Such an educator will motivate, encourage and support their development. The educator should have the following characteristics:

- education in pre-school education;
- special education and interests in other sciences and activities;
- high moral characteristics;
- confident;

- cheerful and open spirit;
- to have skills for sports, music, drama activities;
- to have knowledge of IT;
- accessible for children, communicative;
- instills confidence in children;
- always ready to help and be a role model for children.

The educator (Omerović, M., Music, H., Šehović, M., Tomić, R., 2009) has the role of “conductor”, who increasingly shares his role with the participants - children, so that in the future his role will be all minor but not unimportant. He should first know: name and surname, residential address, age, colors - recognizes and names most sour / sweet / salty / bitter, hot / cold /, lukewarm, who his mother is, names of grandparents, brother / sister . Acquiring basic elements about yourself and the environment through a partnership between family and kindergarten:

1. About myself, basic concepts, temporal orientation, spatial orientation, quantities, sizes, knowledge of letters, reading letters, counting, counting, writing letters.

2. Time orientation means, seasons, days, time of day (morning, evening, afternoon, night, day, morning), yesterday / today / tomorrow / the day after tomorrow / the day before yesterday / last year / next year, days of the week, months (number, names of some).

Spatial orientation: left / right, up / down, larger / smaller / medium, higher / smaller / medium, below / above.

3. Knowledge of letters, eventually, because in kindergartens the child does not learn to read and write, through play he learns and adopts knowledge, notices, notices, eliminates, separates.

4. Counting and counting (number strings: repeat a string of 3 numbers in reverse order); repeat a series of up to 5 numbers in the given order, counting up to 10, and even up to 100 (if the child has an interest), adding up to 10.

The subject of the research is the role of kindergarten on the child's readiness for school. Within the subject of the research, we dealt with issues such as: the issue of the role of kindergarten in preparing children for school, issues related to the educator, the child and the kindergarten. The elementary goal of our research is to determine the role of educators, kindergartens in preparing children for school.

This research aims to find out more information about the contents of the curriculum of kindergartens intended for preschool group, what they are aimed at and to what extent they are implemented, and whether there are contents of kindergarten work aimed at easier adaptation of children to school. This research is based on the determination of the existing situation and its analysis. No new factors will be introduced into the existing situation, nor will their effect be measured. Therefore, the basic method of this research was a descriptive method, since the research is of a scientific nature. And the descriptive method corresponds to the set tasks. The descriptive method, of course, is not understood only as describing, recording phenomena, but implies analysis, comparison, drawing conclusions, as well as establishing connections and relationships between phenomena.

It, in fact, includes what some authors denote by the causal method in non-experimental application. Within the descriptive method, we used quantitative and qualitative analysis, and the comparative method in research comments. Survey and content analysis research techniques will be used to collect data. The research was conducted in kindergartens in the area of Sarajevo, in the kindergarten "Swans" Novi Grad, and the kindergarten Children of Sarajevo "Children's Joy" Mojnilo. The sample consists of educators and parents of kindergartens from the area of Sarajevo. The study involved 26 parents of children aged 6 to 7 years and 22 educators. The parents ranged in age from 30 to 42 years. The research was conducted in the form of an anonymous questionnaire for parents and educators. Parents were asked to answer 8 questions, of which 2 questions with a complete sentence and 6 questions with a choice of offered answers "Yes" and "No". Educators were expected to answer 10 questions, 1 of which was to be supplemented with a sentence and the remaining ones to be answered by rounding off the offered statements. We came to the information that going to school is a big step in the life of every child. The child begins to learn consciously and has to deal with all the demands of the school, new strangers and adapt to a situation where it is no longer the most important, but becomes part of a peer group where everyone is equal. . Therefore, it is extremely important that the child is mature enough to start school and to enroll in school at the right time. The child needs to be emotionally, physically, intellectually and socially mature to start school. Kindergarten and cooperation with the school have an important role in the preparation for starting school, but also parents who have been with their child since birth, this research has confirmed. It is evident that a special plan and program is implemented in the work with preschool children, kindergartens follow the plan and program for children.

Educators are trained to work with children. A large number of educators have graduated from high school, college, and some of them have master's degrees. Research has shown that educators believe that a child's preparation is much more important at the cognitive level than at other levels. We came to the conclusion that, children in preschool kindergarten do not learn to read and write, because that is the content that is adopted during schooling. The family, for the most part, expects greater involvement of educators in preparing their children for school, because they believe that educators, kindergarten, pay for it.



A large number of parents are busy with work and do not have the time to fully dedicate themselves to working with the child, so children are often left to educators and kindergarten. In practice, this is a problem, as we have been able to conclude through our research. In general, we found that the role of kindergarten in preparing children for school is of particular importance. Therefore, it is necessary for parents to be more involved in working with their children, in the sense of the overall preparation of children for starting school. In this way, they would make it easier for themselves and the children to adapt to the "school desks". In the future, it is necessary to examine, in more detail, the relationship between parents and educators in terms of preparing children for school and the adequacy of the child's adaptation to school, and their cause-and-effect relationships and competencies.

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