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## Gender Education Addressed to Preschool Curriculum System

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### Abstract

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Current Romanian education system aims as organizing principal equity and equality. The emphasis on the personality formation, respect for individual features and differential treatment is a constant priority but the current system of education, thus promoting respect for gender peculiarities.

Kindergarten teachers in the whole teaching approach which they take, go through concrete several stages both in projecting activities and in carrying out them properly, having as a starting point curriculum for pre-school which outlines four main areas for change, namely: diversification of teaching strategies as learning, teaching and evaluation; educational environment; role of the family; global child development perspective with a focus on areas of development (the motor area, cognitive - sensory, language and communication, autonomy and self-service skills).

Thus, gender education at preschool age can be an important tool in the process of installing a civic equality in children, in which cooperation and mutual respect constitute basic dimensions.

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**Keywords:** Gen; gender role; gender stereotypes; gender differences; gender equality.

### 1. Introduction

Kindergarten, as an institution in which the formal education environment takes place, guarantees safety and ensure children's health and taking into account the psychological characteristics of child development involves both the family and the community in learning process. Scientific research shows that for every problem that arises in the psycho-physical and social development of a child, as the intervention is early, the chances are higher for remediation. However, since interference occurs later, the associated costs are higher and prognosis may be unfavorable. Current Romanian education

system aims as organizing principal equity and equality. The emphasis on personality formation, respect for individual features and differential treatment is a priority but the current system of education, thus promoting respect for gender peculiarities.

"In these times in which we grow as girls and boys should be identical, science shows that are extremely different in thinking. Neurologists and researchers conclusion from all over the world is that we are what we are because of hormones." Allan & Barbara Pease, "Why Men watched match and women looked into mirror / Why are we different and what should be done", Fourth Edition, Curtea Veche Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006, p. 75.

The kindergarten teachers in their whole teaching approach go through concrete several stages both in design activities and in carrying out them properly, having as a starting point curriculum for pre-school which outlines four main areas for change, namely: diversification of teaching strategies – learning -evaluation; educational environment; role of the family; global child development perspective with a focus on areas of development (the motor area, cognitive-sensory, language and communication, autonomy and self-service skills). Thus, gender education at preschool age can be an important tool in the process of installing a civic equality in children, in which cooperation and mutual respect represent basic dimensions.

To achieve education on gender issues, teachers have as a starting point the study of materials with themes of gender and completion of school documents according to preschool curriculum, respectively:

- Explanation and selection of themes and annual study correlate with specific topics of gender education;
- Consultation legislation / study official documents / study specific preschool documents;
- Correct identification of curriculum elements -types of curricular projecting , the annual study program , the annual study theme , thematic project with weekly themed, weekly topic of interest outside the thematically project ;
- Planning a consistent teaching approach based on the age of preschool children both during the courses and during holidays in and between the semesters;
- The annual study program will be designed based on the six major annual themes (such as: Who are they / we?; When, how and why does it happen ?; How is , was and will be here on earth ?; How do we plan / organize an activity?; what and how do we express what we feel and what and how I want to be?);

Based on these six annual themes are designed maximum of 7 projects/year with a maximum duration of 5 weeks / project or a larger number of projects lasting between 1-3 weeks or weekly topics of interest to children outside the projects.

## **2. Subjects Semester Planning**

- Respecting educational Plan by type of the kindergarten program (normal hours, overtime program and weekly program) in semestrial planning on discipline;
- Identify the learning needs of preschool children and their correlation with the setting and reference objectives of curriculum for pre-school education to establish operational objectives.

**Table 1.** Curriculum explanation for each age level

Group Level		Normal Programm	Prolongue Programm/ Shift I	Prolongue Programm/ Shift II
<b>Small group</b>				
1.	Activities in experiential areas	7	7	7
2.	Games and educational activities chosen	10	10	5
3.	Personal Development Activities	5	5	10
Total		22	22	22
<b>Middle group</b>				
1.	Activities in experiential areas	7	7	7
2.	Games and educational activities chosen	10	10	5
3.	Personal Development Activities	5	5	10
Total		22	22	22
<b>Big group</b>				
1.	Activities in experiential areas	10	10	10
2.	Games and educational activities chosen	10	10	5
3.	Personal Development Activities	6	6	11
Total		26	26	26

➤ Plan activities conducted with community representatives

Designing specific educational preschool activity in collaboration with some institutions in the local community involves establishing some links / signing some protocols / agreements in partnership with community representatives to address topics of interest or equality. These activities are recorded briefly in the given chart of the book of record of teaching - educational activity in kindergarten as it follows: title of activity, date / duration, period of the partners involved

**3. Weekly methodical activity plan**

"Didactical activity of the preschool teacher consists of 5 hours per day of activity with the group of minimum 10 to maximum 20 children and 3 hours of methodical activity (design and preparation of activities for the next day, individual study, making teaching material, creating and writing of some worksheets, taking part in training courses, methodological commissions pedagogical meetings, methodical meetings, exchanges etc.). Regarding methodical Commission level, at least one day a week will be dedicated to making the 3 hours of methodical activity in the kindergarten. The entire activity of the preschool teacher will be recorded in legal document. The book of work record with children and the presence of the group and it will be illustrated in professional portfolio, which he/she prepares after doing the daily methodological activity and in children's portfolios, which are a measure of its professional value" (Curriculum for preschool teaching 2008).

It is writing under the heading Weekly methodical activity at least one activity with methodical character / day, and some notes / changes to data or content regarding this type of activity, namely the implementation of elements of gender classroom is filled in the comments section.

**4. Plan activities during holidays**

The PN /P.P. for each shift / is writing Planning activities section during intra- and intersemester holidays : Recreational activities / painting courses / modelling, Fine Arts / Theatre for children / Child

Creation workshops / chess courses / modern dance courses / majorette / initiation gymnastics courses / initiation vocal-dance music courses / Competitions / Events supported by preschool teachers with the support of teachers / coaches in order to bring to preschool children both male and female role models as teachers.

Heuristic teaching strategies according to the evolution of scientific knowledge about gender dimension in early education: "The games and toys make the difference, along with playmates and encouraging parents. Obviously we cannot change just as we want trucks with dolls. Many parents have tried to do this without much success. The girls made from trucks homes, the boys have been playing catch-up game with dolls, and both girls and boys know that something is not so fine at this stage. The trick is better to find toys and activities that will convince the boys and girls to practice their skills that otherwise they would not have the ability." Lise Eliot, *Brain Pink Brain, Blue Brain*, Trei Publishing, Bucharest, 2011, p. 219-220.

So it must increase the cognitive and psycho-emotional development of preschoolers by applying heuristic teaching strategies specific to gender education / rethinking heuristic teaching strategies considering the evolution of scientific knowledge about gender in early childhood education.

- Modern methods VS traditional methods
- Focus on: real-active character of both traditional methods and the modern ones; game; evaluation
- Application of active-participatory methods that encourage placing the child in a position to explore and become independent.
- Emphasis on the role and place of educational means in educational activities in kindergarten.

##### **5. Categories of resources involved in educational work in kindergarten:**

Proper teaching materials, purchased or made by preschool teachers and sometimes even by children themselves, which serve of carrying out the activities with direct- call-action contact with addressed content. We can identify and name some of the materials that belong to this category: concrete objects (fruits, all types of toys, domestic use objects, teaching use etc.) that are subject to observation; paintings or drawings with images used in the stories, retellings, conversations etc., counters with images, pieces - geometric shapes (LOGI kits ) for mathematical activities and not only; pencils, colors, watercolors, clay, paper, glue, cloths of various kinds etc. which is working on manual skills, plastics activities; musical instruments such as harmonicas, percussion and blowing instruments are working at music; costumes, masks dramatizations; small construction material (LEGO kits); charts of individual work with interdisciplinary tasks (sometimes in the form of special notebooks); filmstrips, slides, books with pictures and short text for children etc.

Means to support the implementation of teaching: cassette, video, TV, radio, video projector, aspect mat, projection apparatus for filmstrips , slides, magnetic board, different supports, suitable furnishing for creative games for celebrations, children's literature library etc Means of surrounding reality that is rather a framework of expanding educational act beyond kindergarten border: park, street people and its life, forest, sea, river, factory, which provides a framework observation conducted complex; movies,

puppet performances, theater actors, concerts; nature itself with its beauties, going through the cycle of the four seasons, it is a mean that preschool teacher uses during organized trips etc. Particularly important for effective educational activities is the choice of teaching methods to be linked to the means employed, and children are offered the opportunity to explore these resources through "games like".

"In another revealing study, it was found that one year children's activity level varies depending on the type of toys that have been played. If the boys normally chose more toys for boys (a train, a set of tools or a toy truck), and girls, toys for girls (a doll, a doll house, tea service) physical activity that each child was doing (climbing, running, sprawling, chasing etc.) was more influenced by the type of toy that they played with rather than the fact it was a girl or a boy." Lise Eliot, Brain pink, blue brain, Trei Publishing, Bucharest, 2011, p. 219

## **6. Implementation of gender education in kindergarten**

Implementation of gender education in kindergarten is achieved by:

- Activities on disciplines - integrated activities:
- Experiential activities on areas
- The activities on experiential disciplines are integrated activities or on subjects carried out with children in projects planned by major themes proposed by curriculum, as well as the age and needs and interests of children in the group.
- The number of these indicates mainly the maximum number of subjects which may be completed in a week (and we mean subjects / fields of learning that can be as a component of those experiential domains).
- Thus, it can carry up to 5 integrated activities per week, regardless of the age of the children
- So, the preschool teacher can plan independent activities, namely on subjects (language of education activities , mathematical activities, learning environment, education for society, physical education, practical activities, musical education or artistic activities) or integrated activities (the knowledge from several subjects can be harmoniously combined during an entire day and, on this occasion, the activity integrated into and games and activities chosen or interdisciplinary knowledge are focused on certain experiential areas , and the games and activities selected are placed outside of it )
- The integrated activities proposed by teaching plan are of 4 types according to the duration and content elements:

Integrated activity which includes all activities of one day and which takes place throughout the day;

Integrated activity which includes ALA and ADE from that specific day;

Integrated activity which includes ADE of one day;

Integrated activity in which the main activity is a certain type of ADE of that specific day, drawing together elements from many experiential fields, regardless of day schedule.

It is important to note that the order of any phase of activities (I Phase, II Phase, III Phase, etc.) is not always required, the teacher has the freedom to choose the right one and also to improve gender differences easily.

Implementation of gender education in kindergarten is achieved by:

- Thematic projects

## **7. Designing and developing thematic projects**

During a school year meeting we have: design theme based on theme project and design a theme weekly, the importance being held by design theme based on themed project, the design on a weekly theme being used only for the transition from a project theme to another. Based on these six themes are designed annual maximum of 7 projects / year with a maximum duration of 5 weeks / project or a larger number of projects lasting between 1-3 weeks or weekly topics of interest to children outside the projects. However, there may exist one day projects and / or trans-semester projects.

If thematic design based thematic project will consider:

- Mapping project
- Achievement during the project to its portfolio which will contain its map, suggestive work-models, albums, records, materials created at the final event

All thematic projects undertaken during the school year will be part of the group folder, along with the preschool teacher's notebook and other documents contained in preschool portfolio: observation sheet, evaluation sheets and children's works.

A strategy for integrated development approach of a child is learning based on thematic project that involves integrating different thematic areas of the curriculum by exploring an interesting idea that links several areas. A project is an in-depth investigation of a topic, a theme carried out by a group of children and occasionally by one child.

In this context we will keep in mind that "especially parents and early childhood teachers must work hard to meet the physical needs of boys and not to repress them constantly. Thus, boys will grow just hearing "no" and "bad" all the time, messages that girls rarely hear them."Lise Eliot Pink Brain, Blue Brain, Trei Publishing, Bucharest, 2011, p. 201

The girls are ahead of boys both in the social and language field, and due to their attraction to the games as mother, as father, as house, as family. ("The girls at the preschool are better able to identify another person's emotional expression" McClure, 2000).

### *7.1 Stages of a project*

In Stage I of the project, the children and the preschool teacher devote time to select and shape discussions subject which follows to be investigated. Criteria for selecting topics: be closely linked to the everyday experience of children; be sufficiently familiar at least a few children to be able to formulate relevant questions; allow practicing skills in all areas of development: language and communication, cognitive domain, socioemotional, physical development and learning attitudes and capacities; be rich enough to be studied at least one day not more than five weeks; to be studied at home and in kindergarten. In this stage, it can be drawn a concept map based on brainstorming with the children, map that can be completed during the project develops. During preliminary discussions, the preschool teacher and children propose questions they will try to answer by the inquiry they will do, thus taking advantage of their last experience on the subject.

Stage II is the fieldwork, consisting of a direct research that can be achieved through trips to investigate places, objects or events. In this phase children search, draw from observation, build models, observe carefully and record data, explore, make predictions, discuss and dramatize the new meanings of the analyzed subject.

Stage III completion and detailing the events, may take the form of discussions, descriptions of what they found and presentation of the products of dramatic presentations, performances or making trips.

### *7.2 Project Benefits*

For the child: acquired profound and solid knowledge; easier to identify relationships between ideas and concepts; make correlations between the themes in kindergarten and beyond; go through topics that interest him more time and study them; encourage communication; cooperative learning to solve tasks; form sense of belonging to the group; become more responsible in the learning process.

For preschool teacher: stimulates the interest to deal with new contents and methods; better organizes his/her planning; uses a variety of activities to this theme in depth; encourage children to produce original ideas for activities.

For parents: are involved in class work as volunteers; feel efficient sharing their experience; understand how to approach learning in children and can support them better.

Themes that are based on children's interests are those that improve motivation and learning success. It is necessary to allow more time for children to listen to them, to ask them questions about what interest them and we will thus find thematic ideas of doing a themed project. The preschool teacher helps children to become aware of different perspectives in the learning process, and activity centers / interest stimulate children's creativity optimizing integrated learning.

Themed projects as starting points can have a chance, a toy, a book, an idea, and an event in the family or in the community. In planning it is important to thematic projects to be initiated by children and preschool teacher; it requires a balance between sources of origin of topics.

## 8. Conclusion

In conclusion, biological thing is given, among others, but it is deeply instrumented, wide gender, social side. Gender identity, intra and inter gender relations- occur during a laborious communication process and social negotiation. A research that explores gender in preschool education, conducted in 2000, represents "Ethnic stereotypes and gender in preschool" / authors: Chiru Cristina, Cristian Ciuperca.

The methodology used by the authors is psycho-sociological and used in sense to highlight the ethnic and gender stereotypes at the level of intra-group and inter-group relations at pre-school age. The main elements related theme revealed by the study are: stereotypical expressions used differently from one age group to another, to include or exclude people from outside its own group (due to educational promoted model more cooperative in the preparatory group than in the big one); structuring gender features follow stereotyping: boys - strong, brave, and girls attentive to boys' needs, sensitive, caring, with artistic manifestations. The study confirmed the hypothesis that self-image of a child in relation to gender, it forms in early childhood, by violating social patterns of relationship between groups, as a result of parental models, but by confirming and strengthening them by co-elderly group.

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