THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN THE PROCESS OF TRANSITION OF CHILDREN FROM FAMILIES TO NURSERIES

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Abstract

The family and institution for an early and preschool education provides the primary educational environment for the child. The transition from family to the institutional context presents a specific transition period, sometimes accompanied by difficulties. It is thought that the diversity of these environments poses a challenge in the process of adaptation not only to the children but to the parents and educators as well. The interaction between the child and family members is a possible indicator of success in the process of adaptation in which the child interacts with peers and adults inside the educational institution. Different models of interaction between families and educational institutions emphasize the importance of establishing quality relationships between parents and educators. These models work in the function of successful transitioning of children from families into the nurseries.

This paper presents the results of tests related to the opinions of parents and educators about the transition of children from the family environment to the context of institution for early and preschool education. The sample of the study included a group of parents of children aged from 12 to 36 months (N = 60) as well as the group of early childhood educators (N = 14). The results of surveys indicate the need to improve the quality of relations between parents and educators in a sensitive period of adaptation of children in the new environment. It is these relationships which can be a significant factor in further development and children’s achievements.

Keywords: child, parent, family, nursery, transition, preschool education and education.

1 INTRODUCTION

Child development is observed in the context where it is taking place, and in whose center is a family, which is in a constant interactive relationship with the broader social environment. The Bronfenbrenner [1] and Lerner [2] explained the importance and impact of the environment on child development and its psychosocial adaptation. The ecosystem or environment through its transactional, interactive route acts on a child through a micro system, consisting of: family, school, church, playground [3]. [4] also considers that the understanding of the family environment and the provision of adequate support need to be aware of the impact of the immediate environment, socio-cultural and economic environment.

2 IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY CONTEXT IN EARLY AND PRESCHOOL AGE

Contemporary education is based on the child's adoption of various skills from the earliest age. This is the most sensitive period for a child's development, because it needs a lot of love, attention, constant care and meeting different needs. Therefore, parents and close friends [5] play the most important role in early childhood development. By birth the child is directed exclusively to the family in whose environment they can and should meet their basic development needs. Growth and development of the child is reinforced by the activity of external educational factors, such as pre-school institutions, schools, peers, mass media, which leads to the weakening of the influence of family upbringing. Relationships that the child has established with parents and family members are the model that they (child) later would establish with others in the wider community. A healthy and stimulating family environment, the strong bond that the child establishes with their parents provides them with the support and the necessary attention until their full independence.

Emotional safety is a prerequisite for the child's mental and physical health, and is based on their association with his or her parents. At this stage of child development, a family needs give a permanent, structured environment that simultaneously offers a variety of experiences and explains external events [6].

Social development of the child and its socialization in new social situations and environments under the influence of its primary family affects relations with people in the wider environment.
3 THE PROCESS OF TRANSITION FROM A FAMILY TO AN EXTENSIBLE CONTEXT

During life we move from known to the unknown area. The first transitional experience is gained at birth. One of the most significant transitions for a child is the transition from family home to a kindergarten classroom. Kindergarten, in this context, is different for each child and the experiences encountered by the child manifest differently. This is due to how the child's behavior and influence by previous experiences. [7] emphasize that different temperaments play an important role: some children easily overcome changes and new situations while vulnerable children need additional support during transition. The authors also state that the adaptation process requires time, patience, regular exchange of information and experience between parents and educators to meet the specific needs of a child. The task of the expert is to recognize the differences between children, to accept each child's individuality, to open up the opportunity for participation and interaction with the environment.

[8] state that the first years of life children depend upon to meet their psychological needs and the satisfaction of living in the immediate vicinity. Bowlby, the founder of the theory of attachment, believes that the most important for the child's mental health is the warmth, intimacy and uninterrupted relationship with the mother or with someone who adopts the role of the mother [10]. [11] claim that the human for attachment needs to establish close interpersonal relationships, feelings of security and association with others, while the need for knowledge, expertise and learning arises for the desire to interact with the environment.

In order for the child to adapt to the nursery, it is necessary for educator to detect with sensitivity, ability and readiness the signals in the child's behavior, to properly interpret them, in a fast and appropriate way. The child expresses sensitivity, especially when in a new situation with new people in a new unfamiliar space. However, under the aforementioned conditions, the child is likely to develop security if it is properly matched to its need. The child’s special sensitivity is in contact with a person who is inconsistently responsive to the connect image, causing behavioral changes to the person with whom it related.

[12] emphasizes that an important role during the adaptation has a so-called goal-finding object because in this way the child receives the message: my family is still there, even if I'm in kindergarten and I do not see them. [13] consider how successful adaptation can be seen from the child's behavior: whether it enjoys daily in kindergarten, is interested in space and materials in kindergarten, is actively interacting with other children. They, also consider that the child gains security through successful acquaintance and gradual building of relationships while simultaneously developing a sense of belonging to the kindergarten community.

[14] lists two applied and tested models of nursery adaptation: the Berliner model and the "Munchen model". Both models differ in three stages of the process:

- The phase of acquaintance - acquaintance with the child and the parents
- The phase security - in which a child care expert takes care for a child, when it allows after the first separation of a parent from a child
- Self-confidence phase when a child learns, explores, and interacts with another child.

These models emphasize the importance of the presence of family members during the adjustment period, which is also significant at the later stage of separation of parents and children and in the regulation of stress. For each child it is important to have enough time and support when adjusting to establish a trusted emotional connection. The presence of family during adaptation is useful in building a professional relationship between parents and educators [15]. Shy or anxious children are less likely to accept the experience of separation from their parents, their adjustment lasts longer, so it should be planned. During the adaptation, it is important to gradually introduce the child into a group of children and their joint activities. The process of adapting the child is easier if an educator is is introduced in advanced with the child's needs, and then transferred the needs to associates [16]. When joining a kindergarten, it is important for experts to gradually adapt the child and parents to a new situation in which the child feels most vulnerable [17].

Problems of adaptation and transition processes from the family environment to the institutions for early and pre-school education are the subject of numerous studies. Some of the studies were investigating how to improve the child's transition to different levels [18]; [19]; [20]; [21]. The research results are shown to confirm that adaptation of a child to a new environment is associated with
numerous characteristics of the child: psychological maturity, temperament, social skills, intelligence and learning ability [22]; [23]; [24]. The experiences the child acquired when moving from a family to an institutional educational context can have a lasting effect on his or her further educational achievement. [25] investigated the importance of the relationship between the educational institution and the child's social behavior when entering the kindergarten. The results that they have reported speak about the importance of preparing the child for the nursery. Also of importance is the educator's knowledge of the child and their behavior in interaction with others.

[26] emphasizes that parents or guardians and their children should receive support during any transition process that causes deep feelings and insecurities. The same author points out that the child's experience gained in early childhood during a transition process affects its further development. Therefore, the requirement for healthy early development in primary setting that places quality on care, and which is associated with a range of effects, including better cognitive, linguistic and social development.

Quality care, which depends on all the above characteristics, is the relationship that the "guardian" creates with the child [27]; [28]. She also states that the quality of the relationship between teacher and child influences its development, emphasizing the importance of teacher-child-parent relationship. The quality of child care depends on the quality of the relationship with the whole family. The author says that if the political goal is a prior visit to the home, the teacher can do that before, establishing first contact with the child, reminding him of that meeting when he enters the kindergarten. As a welcome sign, Balaban suggests a teacher to offer a child's toy and incorporate family members into playing with the child. When a educator is not familiar with the child's language, the suggests the educator learning the keywords that the family uses when talking to a child. In this way, the teacher shows that their goal is to help the child feel comfortable, safe and welcome in kindergarten.

4 PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE CHILD'S TRANSITION PROCESS TO NURSERY

The family is the foundation of the child's educational process. [29] we find an explanation that parents, ie child custodians (and other close family members), and the educators be the instigators of the most intensive care of the child and his / her well-being. Therefore, it is necessary to provide direct, quality and encouraging communication between them so that information about the child can be smoothly communicated. Communication and high-quality partnerships, as stated in the same document, can be done through parents' permanent information (brochures, leaflets, internet communications, various documentation of the child and its activities, workshops, discussion groups, etc.).

Here it is also important to emphasize that the presence of parents in the child's educational group is recommended because they are accompanied by a child, actively participating in their activities, resulting in a better understanding of the child in a different context from the family. [30] states that research in the field of family and school partnerships has undergone significant changes, and today the term "family engagement" is promoted instead of the term "parental involvement". Involvement implies individual participation, while engagement implies joint work, because parents are not sufficiently observable solely through the prism of volunteering, participation in humanitarian activities [31] by active participation in kindergarten activities.

[32] states that due to the many obligations facing the modern family, the greater need for inclusion of children in early and pre-school institutions is expected. Recognizing the needs of children and parents, as well as motivating and involving parents in partnerships is also a task that falls on the institution of education. [33] lists six basic forms of partnership: parent parenting, parents and educators communication, volunteering parents in pre-school institutions, helping parents encourage home child learning, parental inclusion in making decisions, and involvement of parents in cooperation with the local community.

However, the aforementioned authors point out the considerations of [34] which as reasons of parental involvement in collaborative relations: overemphasis and lack of time, negation of problems and need for co-operation, lack of knowledge about the importance of establishing cooperative relationships, shame and insecurity, and previous bad experience in cooperation. In order to encourage parents to participate in the life of the [34], they emphasize the need to organize parents' lectures or workshops on the child's development potential and needs and its activities in shelters; the interests of the
educator regarding the characteristics, interests and needs of the child; parental meetings, individual interviews with parents, telephone and e-mail communications, and children's worksheets in dormitories. The precondition for successfully establishing partnerships in the mutual readiness of parents and educators, as well as other professional staff of preschool institution, quality communication and exchange.

By studying theoretical approaches to the involvement/co-operation/partnership of parents and institutions of early and pre-school education, little research has been observed in the area of early education. This paper sought to examine the opinions of parents and parents about the process of transitioning the child from the family to the nursery.

5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objective and task of research:

The aim of this study was to examine the parents' view on the transition and expectations of nurses and educators, and the opinion of the transgender educator and the importance of parental parent involvement during the adaptation process.

The following tasks were the result of the research:

1. Examine the parent's opinion on the transition from the family to the nursery
2. Examine Parents' Opinion on the Transition of a Child from a Family to a Nursery
3. Comparison of the opinions of parents and parents about preparedness for nursery and forms of co-operation

5.1 Instrument

For the purposes of research, two survey questionnaires were created to collect the data. The survey questionnaire for parents collected data on their involvement in various forms of transitional activities (meetings before the start of the year, meetings at the beginning of the working year, individual meetings with educators, information package for parents, e-mail communication, reception of children in the institution according to a certain plan, parent's stay in the group, shortened living room for the child ...). Also, information on parental opinions on communicating with educators during transitional activities was collected. The survey questionnaire for the educators sought to examine the level of involvement of the educator in the process of transitioning the child from the family to the nursery, then the expectations of the parental relative to the parents and the child during the adaptation. They also wanted to examine the teacher's preparedness for the child's nursing adaptation process, forms of co-operation with parents, forms of co-operation with the expert during the adjustment period, and the parent-teacher's quality of communication with the quality of communication

The Questionnaire for Educators was composed of 10 questions, of which 2 were open type, while the Parent Questionnaire consisted of 20 statements, most of them were offered answers that the respondents could round up at their own discretion, of which 5 were open type questions.

5.2 Sample of research

A sample of the research consisted of educators in the groups: 14 educators from 5 regional facilities in 7 educational groups and parents of children from the cluster groups of 60 from 5 district facilities in 7 educational groups.

5.3 Method of research and method of data processing

The pilot study was conducted in the pedagogical year 2016/17. Namely, it is a smaller number of educators and parents because research was conducted only in the kindergarten of Joy. For the purposes of research, a quantitative method was used to provide a deeper insight into the quality of interaction within the educational system.

The questionnaire sought to explore the satisfaction of the parents or the educators through mutual cooperation in the transition of the child from the family to the institution of early and pre-school education. This instrument of a questionnaire was selected to give more precise responses to the participants about their vision of co-operation.
The frequency / descriptor method was used to process the questionnaires, which showed the following results:

6 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Long-term monitoring of work in parenthesis and involving parents in adapting the child to the new situation have been identified with numerous difficulties (fear, discomfort, lack of communication, lack of information) which occasionally resulted in the print of a child from a nursery. The aforementioned difficulties have led to a study of the problem to make it easier for children, parents and educators to adapt to new environments and to achieve collaborative relationships.

7 OPINION OF THE CHILD TRANSITION EDUCATOR ON THE FAMILY IN THE NURSERY

By analyzing the questionnaire, it was concluded that the parents are expecting co-operation during parental adjustment, which will be manifested through: consistency, sincerity, open communication during which the school/educators provide regular information to parents regarding their child, respecting the agreement, respecting the counsel of the educator, trusting the educator, and mutual support. The educators consider that the quality of the child's adaptation process to the nursery is an important preparation for the nursery. 43% of the nursery educators have fully developed the action plan of the activities during adaptation, and 57% have partially prepared the plan of activities. The design of the activity plan considers it important for parents to meet, to adapt to new situations, to research and make positive changes. Also, 86% fully and 12% partly collect relevant information from parents about the characteristics, behaviors, and particulars of their child. Interestingly, we showed the results that show the assessment of the educator how the institution is prepared to accommodate children in nurseries. Namely, 64.2% of educators believe that the institution is prepared while 35.7% think that the institution is partially prepared.

The results obtained show the need to change the process of adopting children in nurseries. By asking the satisfaction of co-operation with professional associates during the adjustment period, they wanted to get an insight into the thinking of the educator about the support they have from the expert service during the adjustment period. Interesting results have been obtained that undertake further consideration and change of access to work. Thus, 50% of the educators are satisfied with co-operation, 35% are partially satisfied, while 15% of the educators are not happy with the co-operation with the professional associates during the adjustment period. The processed data indicate insufficient involvement of the expert service in the process of adaptation of the child to the nursery. Advisory assistance to educators by the expert service during the adjustment process is extremely important. Namely, professional associates and educators, when they meet with the parents to go over the family needs and the needs of the child. They, the educators and professional associates, receive the information necessary for adequate and quality work with both a child and its parents. If the educator does not receive the necessary information regarding the needs of the child and his or her parents, it is possible to initiate mistakes that may effect the child's interaction with the new environment. This too may also effect establishment of co-operation between the parent and the educator, which is necessary to develop the child’s attachment and trust to the new person - the educator and the socio-emotional development.

8 PARENT'S OPINION ON THE TRANSITION OF A CHILD FROM A FAMILY TO A NURSERY

In order to examine parents' opinion on different forms of transition activities, 20 questions were asked in the questionnaire. The results showed the following: Parents 96% of nurses and nurses expect accommodation, safety, health care, enjoyable stay and socializing, education and learning, socialization and dating new friends. Most parents (88%) expect of the nurse to provide safety, to take care of the child, to put the baby in the room, to stay in the air enough, to be warm and smiling, patient, empathic, to properly guide the child, to approach their child as an individual. They also expect good communication, transfer of information about their child's progress, whether the child has socialized at the same time expecting the nurse to take care of the child's interaction with other children, to encourage him to play and participate in the activities. Parents want to be involved in the transition and planning of adaptation [35] to their nursing child.
This process of transition is an opportunity for educational professionals to create partnerships with the family, including sharing family routine information, planning meetings with parents, etc.

Data processing found that 80% of parents thought they were preparing a baby for nursing, while 15% of parents did not prepare a baby for nursing. The other parents did not prepare a child to go to the nursery, or 1 parent pointed out that the child was clearly difficult to explain to the child and prepare him for going to the nursery. Parents say how the children were preparing for the nursery: by talking; experience with older brother / sister; a story about kindergarten; reading a picture book on the topic of kindergarten; visits to kindergarten; together with their parents brought the older brother / sister to the kindergarten. Data processing revealed that parents from nursery schoolchildren are expecting their child's education and training and gradual preparation for school. Most parents (82%) trust the educator, and 11% say they are mostly trusted, suggesting that parents have trust in the educator.

[36] and some authors [37] believe that a constructive partnership between parents and parents should be based on the knowledge and understanding of parents' expectations and wishes. Researching parental preferences, knowledge and expectations from various types of preschool programs, they concluded that parents are primarily expecting child safety and care during their preschool stay. Expectations of parents and educators often do not match, different (though complementary) roles and different knowledge, skills and experience. Differences in expectations arise as a result of the influence of the various socio-cultural contexts to which the participants belong.

Some parents (46%) think that their child had no difficulty adjusting or showed few signs of inadequacy during the adaptation period, while 20% of parents said their child had difficulties like crying, especially when separating, refusing food and sometimes drinking, and one child and a baby other children. The cause of the child's insecure behaviors is often manifested in the manner of his adaptation and the behavior, and procedures of a person important to the development of the attachment. As [38] point out, it is important for a child, especially during the adjustment process, to have a close person who will represent a "safe base" when regulating negative emotions [39] states that the child's anxiety or anxiety is related to his separation from his parents, especially if separation is associated with an unknown space and / or with unknown people. [40] based on research, conclude that children need emotional safety and knowledge of the person they will care about. Therefore, the authors during the adaptation suggest the presence of the parent / guardian in the nursery.

9 COMPARISON OF PARENTING AND PARENTAL OPINIONS ON PREPAREDNESS FOR NURSERY AND FORMS OF CO-OPERATION

In this part of the paper will be presented the results of the comparison of the opinion of the parent and parent on the preparation of the child for the parents and the forms of mutual cooperation. With regard to the preparedness to go to the nurseries, the parents and the educators are statistically significantly different where the parents in relation to the nurses generally consider that the children are prepared to go to the nursery (z = 5.1, p <0.001), while the nurses, unlike parents, partly think (z = 3.4, p <0.001). Both parents and educators agree (z = 1.6, p> 0.05) that children are not completely prepared for nursery. We may conclude from the aforementioned results that parents believe that they have given the maximum contribution to preparing a child for going to a nursery, but child-rearing educators and degree of adjustment have a different picture. It is possible that the practice of educators demonstrates the need for greater work on the activities of preparing the child for going to the nursery.

Educators, unlike their parents, statistically significantly less problems / signs of inadequacy are estimated in the adjustment period (z = 5.5, p <0.001), although the existing evaluated problems by parents and educators overlap overwhelmingly. The results obtained could be explained in a way that parents are more emotionally approaching the estimates of child adaptation, as opposed to educators approaching problems of inadequacy with more rational or emotional dislocation.

Parents and educators generally have a different view of co-operation during the period of adaptation of the child to the nursery. Individual conversations and ppt presentations (z = 1.91, p <0.05), individual conversations and information meetings (z = 1.91, p <0.05), and individual conversations, information meetings and ppt (z = 1 , 91, p <0.05) are statistically more important for parents than parents. It is statistically important for parents to have more options available (z = 3.9, p <0.001) than educators. Parents and educators are equally important individual conversations (z = 0.70, p> 0.05), and no ppt presentations or informational leaflets are important at all. From the results obtained it is
evident that it is important for both individuals and others to have individual contacts and to exchange information about the child.

10 CONCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS

The role of kindergartens and the wider community is to respond to the needs of children and their parents. Therefore, the imperative of early and pre-school education should create partnerships between educational institutions - kindergartens and families. The paper explored the opinion of the parents and the parents about the transition from the family to the nursery. The transition from a family to kindergarten context should be gradual with the possibility of parental attendance and preparation of the child to a new environment. This research problem is particularly important due to the increasing involvement of early-stage children in the educational system, as well as parents’ awareness of the importance of their involvement in this very important part of the child’s life.

During the research of this issue, very few studies have been observed in the Croatian pedagogy of early and pre-school children dealing with this topic. We can find researches that mostly relate to the spatial-material context. A newer date is a study by [41] examining the attitudes of preschool and preschool teachers about meeting the needs of children in nurseries. Therefore, we believe that our work will contribute to the pedagogical and pedagogical research of early and pre-school education especially with regard to the impact of the interaction between all participants in the educational process on the development of early childhood, especially in the process of transitioning the child from the family to the ecclesiastical context.

It should be noted that this work also has some limitations, first of all a small number of respondents, and it is not possible to make general conclusions. Also, research was conducted only in one institution, and certainly the results would be more complete than the research carried out in a number of preschool institutions at the level of the Republic of Croatia. The obtained results stimulate further research on this issue, precisely because of its importance in working with early-school and pre-school children.

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