



# *Chapter 5*

Play in Curricular Contents



## 5.1 Forms of Play in Kindergarten and School

In modern psychology, play is assimilated by the training and development process of human personality. Childhood games are included in the psychogenetic evolution. The psychologist Jean Piaget calls preschool period, the stage of intuitive thinking, which lasts between 4 and 7/8 years of age. It is the period when the relationships between phenomena are developed and the young schooling period is the stage of concrete operations (7-11/12 years of age), when the abilities of preserving the substance are developed. After the age of 12, children experience the period of formal operations, when judgements are chained based on relevant arguments.<sup>37</sup> Piaget's research proves that mental structures and psychical phenomena have a special and different organization in the child's psychic compared to the adult's. Normal evolution and intellectual development begin in the preschool period through the children's primary activity: the play. This habit overlaps perfectly the theory of psychogenesis which is developed on the general biological notion of adaptability. It considers intelligence the product of sociocultural environment in which the child evolves and that it reflects the maturity stage of the central nervous system. The role of social, cultural and economic environment in the child's evolution is stressed out. Genetic studies based on intelligence tests have proven (according to some authors) that 65 % of one's intellectual level is the result of hereditary factors and the rest is linked to the environment in which the person evolves. Therefore, we consider kindergarten an important factor in the evolution of preschool children. Play, as concrete, direct and noticeable activity in kindergarten is for educators and specialists a valuable, formative and evaluative asset, which can

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<sup>37</sup> U., Goswami, & P. E. Bryant, *Children's cognitive development and learning. The Primary Review*, University of Cambridge / Esmee Fairbairn, 2007, p.43.

be used in shaping the child's personality. Play is in kindergartens a guided and controlled activity which takes into account the biological and psychological development of children. In the sensorimotor period, games are easy exercises called by Jean Chateau and Charlotte Bühler "*functional games*", which help in the development of motor abilities by movement of body parts and catching and throwing objects; development of speaking abilities by gurgling and vocalizing. The activities, though easy and without significance at first sight, allow each function to explore and develop one field which later on will be expended. Therefore, at the age of one, the toddler spends two thirds of his time moving and gurgling. These aspects are forms of spontaneous play. We have to mention that the object of play is not important at this age, but the "*practice of the function*". Spectacular acquisitions at biological, physiological and psychological level occur now. Once this stage of functional play is overrun, the child will search for novelty, which is sometimes produced even by himself. Then he integrates the new element in his life through mechanisms of assimilation/adjustment, thus showing the first signs of experience. One of the essential principles for the activity of normal human mind is the principle of obtaining pleasure, which guide most of the human actions. If in the beginning the child likes the result of sensory action, later on he will like doing the action. According to Maslow's<sup>38</sup> pyramid of human needs (physiological, safety, belonging and love), the child completes the first level and moves on to the second one. It is the level of superior needs (self-actualization, esteem, self-achievement). Now it's the moment when the awareness of action is foreshadowed and actions become a voluntary act. The child trains his superior abilities now, such as motivation, desire and achievement, which make the child feel proud, although results are not always as expected. In the symbolic thinking

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<sup>38</sup>Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) was an American humanist psychologist. He is known for his proposal on the theory of the hierarchy of human needs.

period, the child develops his speaking skills, movement and action autonomy, due to the development of specific analysers. The much better developed neuro-motor system allows him to perform more complex and accurate actions. The development of mental processes is favourable for the child's psychological development. The child is now aware of who he is, recognises his image in the mirror, his name and the people from his environment. The child's play acquires new values, the play time is longer, and the games are differently structured and performed. Games are more complex and the child uses objects which are part of the action. The child acquires from now on multiple experiences which are represented in his games. The imaginary level is more evolved, the fantasy is free, and the child imagines situations and characters which he uses in his games. Play becomes a way of assimilating reality and knowledge, but also a manner of enhancing the child's latent qualities. The imitation of adults' actions becomes a projection of the child's personality in development. The child drives cars, trains, sail, flies planes, spaceships; he is Batman or Princess Xena. The games involve symbolism, which is frequently and multivalent used at this age, because infantile games are fantasy and hyperbole. Children rebuild reality and shape it according to their wishes. When playing, the chair turns into a rail engine, a pair of glasses turns him into Zorro, and a cape has magical powers.

In the period of intuitive thinking, games are more diversified, given that the child starts making connections between phenomena. The child wants to assert his own value. According to Charles Bühler: *The child believes that everything that has been done by him is more beautiful than something that has been done by someone else.*

The enrolment of children in the formal educational system, i.e. the preschool education represented by kindergartens, will gradually introduce the child into the learning process, which is stimulating, diversified, oriented towards his primary need and interests: play and movement. Kindergarten uses play to teach

children the values of their society through specific activities and methods appropriate for their age. Activities are organized by skilled, dedicated and well trained teachers. Teachers know that children express themselves through play at this age and all educational strategies, techniques and methods are based on play. The child is confronted with issues related to socializing in the beginning, because kindergarten is a formal environment structurally different from family environment. Children come with certain behaviours, attitudes, ways of interaction which are shaped and improved by the organized educational environment. The educational process is controlled and carefully guided by teaching staff and other specialists (counsellors, psycho-pedagogues) who try to shape desirable behaviours. This endeavour should be natural, stress-free and it shouldn't put pressure on the children. Play by its nature will provide specialists from kindergartens with strategies used for the achievement of their educational goals according to the preschool syllabus. The main task of kindergartens is the development of social relationships. Though young pre-schoolers don't feel the urge of playing with other children, gradually as they develop psycho-physically, their need of belonging and affiliation (the third level of Marlow's Pyramid) increases and becomes obvious around the age of five. From this age, children feel good only together with other children. Their plays are more and more elaborate, plays with subjects and role are better assimilated by children, the rules are followed and behaviour is adapted to the role. The topics of role play become more varied, children play together with a lot of dedication, but they can also play alone because role plays involve sometimes playing with imaginary characters and children are capable of handling more roles at once. Games with topics have inner strength and operational - -symbolist - instrumental structure. Most roles are taken over from real life, as seen by children in their social interactions. Games have rules, and along with other games such as didactic games, are very important due to their educational character. The child has access to behavioural models, types of interaction,

proper language. Games, by their structure, content and methods are tools used to train and develop attitudes or correct behaviours. Children are subjected to behavioural restraints, which shouldn't be imposed but developed through play. Children learn how to react properly, to assume their role in from of the group and behave as the role demands it. Kindergarten prepares the child for school. When the child goes to school, he begins the period of concrete operations. Therefore, he understands better the aspects of the surrounding world, and the level of thinking allows him to operate with abstract notions, such as conservation of substance. From now on, the child has all cognitive abilities which are necessary for the understanding of object properties: quantity and number. Mental development favours the observation of quantity and number conservation. The child understands that they remain unchanged when subjected to changes related to shape, position or other specific attributes. Mental operations have more mobility and flexibility, which allows the child to understand complex operations such as mathematic relations of volume and weight. Weight is conserved mentally only toward the age of 10 and volume and probability toward the age of 11-12. The children's play is tinted and diversified; young pupils like collections of all sorts. Psychologists have studied these issues for many years now. They believe that 100% of boys and 91% of girls 11-12 years of age collect something. After the age of 12, when the period of formal operations begins, thinking is focused on abstract reasoning and hypothesis which assume all possible aspects. The teenager operates now with classes and relations, thanks to the development of processes and functions. Thinking and intelligence start reasoning through operations which involve internalizing external actions with objects. The non-linear character of thinking should be signalled at this stage. Therefore, educational actions will always take into account the psychological development of pupils. Learning should fulfil the pupils' need for action, for handling real or imaginary objects, for projecting themselves in various roles and situations and of course the need for playing.

Play is the link between school, life and the child's personality. *The child is a being, whose main need is playing (...). The need for play is the one thing which allows us to conciliate school with life, to provide the pupil with those reasons for action which cannot be found in the classroom.*

Alternating school activities with didactic games gives a dynamics of performance to instructive-educational activities. The combination of teaching methods in such a manner that it would improve the educational process is one of the main directions of contemporary reform in education. The implementation of play in teaching-learning activities helps the assimilation, practice and consolidation process as well as retention and transfer of knowledge. The introduction of play elements in the stages of a serious and dry lesson, relaxes the atmosphere and gives children confidence. These play elements are beneficial for the development of children. It has been proven that play helps the mental development of preschool children and of pupils, who issue more and more balanced cognitive structures. Pedagogues admit that the usage of play in the teaching-learning process makes the teaching act more attractive and also meets the children's requirements.

Didactic games can be successfully organized in school education for all school subjects, at any stage of the lesson. The objectives are: acquisition of new knowledge and skills, practice and reinforcement, evaluation and assessment of pupils' level of training. Play elements stimulate the children's creativity, develop their freedom of thinking and action, forms the character and its traits, initiative, courage, willingness, perseverance, combat, correctness, discipline, cooperation and civilized behaviour.

The reform of education has moved the emphasis from intellectual factors on motivational and affective ones, and the play gives teachers the opportunity to use efficient methods for pupils' affective-emotional integration. An activity



should contain play elements such as surprise, guessing, racing, exploration and expectation if it wants to become an attractive, stimulating and motivating didactic activity.

## 5.2 The Integration of Play Elements in the Contents of Preschool Curriculum

The Romanian preschool education is organized according to educational policies for preschool level, namely the preschool education curriculum. In a broader sense, the curriculum designates the learning experiences that a child has to go through during his schooling period and in a narrow sense, the curriculum is represented by all school documents which regulate preschool activity: curriculum plan (see Tables no 1 and 2), syllabus, application guides, textbooks, etc.<sup>39</sup>

*Table 1. Kindergartens with regular schedule.*

Not.	Type of activity	Level I 3-5 years of age	Level II 5-7 years of age
I.	Joint activities	7	10
A.	Speaking development activities	1	2
A.	Mathematic activities.	1	2
B.	Environment knowledge	1	1
B.	Education for society		1
	Practical and household activities	1	1
A.	Musical education	1	1
B.	Visual art education	1	1
A.	Civic education	1	1
II.	Selected activities, games and other activities with the children	17	14
III.	Extensions	0-1	1-2
IV.	Optional activities	0-1	1-2
	Minimum number of activities/week.	24	26
	Maximum number of activities/ week	25	28

<sup>39</sup>Gabriela Kelemen, *Pedagogie preșcolară*, Editura UAV, 2007.

**Tabel 2. Preschool Curriculum.**

No	The place of activity in the daily schedule	Type of activity	Level I - 3-5 years of age Number of activities	Level II - 5-7 years of age Number of activities
I	Morning	Joint activities	7	10
A	"	Speaking development activities	1	2
A.	"	Mathematic activities.	1	2
B.	"	Environment knowledge	1	L
A.	"	Education for society	1	1
B.	"	Practical and household activities	1	1
B.	"	Musical education	1	1
	"	Visual art education	1	L
A.	"	Physical education	1	1
II.	"	Selected activities, games and other activities with children	17	14
III.	"	Extensions	0-1	1-2
IV.	"	Optional activities	0-1	1-2
V.	Afternoon	Recreational and leisure activities	10	5
VI.	"	Activities for the development and training of individual abilities	15	15
VII.	"	Recovery activities	-	5
Minimal number of activities/week			49	51
Maximum number of activities/week			51	53

Kindergartens with prolonged and weekly programme.

The curriculum plan is a compulsory curriculum document, which stipulates the types of activities on two age levels: level I for children 3-5 years of age and level II for children 5-7 years of age.

The curriculum plan gives details on the activities for two types of kindergartens: regular schedule and prolonger or weekly programme; it stipulates the minimum and maximum number of activities per week for both levels and disseminates the daily activities on stages.

The curriculum plan for preschool education contains also a range of topics

which could be used in optional classes. The curriculum plan corresponds to both age levels 3-5 years of age and 5-7 years of age. Kindergarten activities are different according to the children's age and the age level; the first level is concerned with socializing activities and the second one with the children's preparation for school. The timetables are drawn up based on the curriculum plan. The groups are either age homogenous or combined. The timetables are subjected to the Board's approval. They have to be completed before the beginning of the school year and displayed in a visible place.

The kindergarten is the institution which educates and fosters preschool children, namely children between 3 and 6-7 years of age. Its goal is to encourage the development of children's personality in their own pace and based on their innate abilities. These goals can be achieved only by play and not randomly, kindergartens have been called *the house of play*.<sup>40</sup>

Preschool education ensures the free, complete and harmonious development of child's personality in his own pace, based on his needs and supports his autonomous and creative training through activities specific for children 3-7 years of age.

Preschool activities respect the children's right to play as part of their activities and as method, technique and manner of education, based on the curriculum for preschool education.

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<sup>40</sup>G.Kelemen, Pedagogia preșcolară, Editura UAV, Arad, 2007, p.87.

Play is used in all daily activities. The activities differ according to the type of kindergarten. A daily timetable in kindergarten contains the following activities:

Stages	Hours	The daily timetable of a kindergarten	Teaching activities
Morning	7-8,30	The children's arrival to kindergarten	The teacher welcomes the children and discusses with the parents.
I	8,30-9	Breakfast	Plays and selected activities for various types of activity.
II	9,30-10,30	Joint activities	Compulsory group activities.
III	10,30-12	Complementary activities	Different games: musical, movement, outdoor games, entertainment games etc.
Afternoon	12-13	Lunch	Development of skills and behaviours
IV	13-15	Afternoon nap	-II-
	15-15, 30	Afternoon nap	-II-

Morning teaching activities are divided into three stages:

- stage I contains Games and activities selected by children and Activities on areas of activity,
- stage II contains Joint activities performed in groups according to the timetable,
- stage III contains Complementary activities.

Stage I begins with the children's arrival to the kindergarten. Then they play or chose the activities they want to perform; usually they organize themselves or the teacher slowly guides them to the interest centres. *The games and selected activities* are conducted individually or in small groups and their role is the children's socializing and initiation into the social and cultural environment they belong to. Oral and written communication is also goal of these activities. The teacher will divide the group on areas of interest for a better organization of the activity: *Library, The Nature's Corner, Constructions, The Doll's Corner* etc. She will also prepare teaching materials which will be distributed to each sector. The aim of these activities is to prepare the child in terms of teaching for

the joint activities.

Stage II contains joint activities which are compulsory for all children in a group. They are organized either as whole group activities or as activities on small groups. The main objectives of instructive-educational syllabus for kindergartens are achieved during these activities.

Joint activities vary in terms of timing according to the age of children; from 15-20 minutes with children 3-5 years of age and 30-35 minutes with children 5-7 years of age. The activities can last for 40-45 minute with the preparatory group, especially towards the end of preschool period. The aim is to accustom children to school activities. Joint activities are organized systematically, in detail and they are the most appropriate ways of achieving the instructive-educational objectives from the syllabus.

The curriculum plan details the areas of knowledge and they are divided into the following types of activity:

- speaking development activities,
- mathematic activities,
- environment knowledge,
- education for society,
- practical and household activities,
- musical education,
- visual art education,
- physical education.

The objectives of joint activities are regulated by the syllabus for kindergarten instructive-educational activities. Teachers select the weekly topics

and contents in order to meet the regulations of the syllabus but also based on the children's interests.

Stage III contains complementary activities and their role is to practice what has been learnt during joint activities, but in a recreational manner. Therefore, teachers use activities such as entertainment games, outdoor movement games, sport games, drama, puppet theatre, movies, computer games, walks, visits, etc.

Optional activities are selected by the teachers after discussing with the parents. They are conducted in groups of 10-15 children under the guidance of a kindergarten teacher or any other trained teacher (gymnastics, drawing, etc.), who works with the kindergarten teacher.

Extensions are extra activities, which are not compulsory. They are conducted according to the teacher's choice, based on the level of the group. These activities have to be planned in advance by the teacher and approved by the school inspector in charge with primary school education. One extension can be conducted with the level 3-5 years of age and two extensions for the level 5-7 years of age.

The statistical weight of activity types throughout a day is 50% frontal activities, 25% individual activities and 25% small group activities. They are organized the following manner:

- frontal and in small groups,
- individual and in small groups,
- frontal and individual.

Small group activities are predominant with selected activities, when children work on stimulation areas. The groups are built according to the children's options.

### 5.3 The Reggio Emilia Method in Early Education

The Reggio Emilia method stands for a philosophy that approaches preschool pedagogy, namely preschool and early school children's education in a different manner, where community and environment play an important role in child education.<sup>41</sup> This method joins child education, child well-being, children's fundamental rights with the support given to families. But where does this method come from? After World War II when the whole society was suffering, in a small Italian town, called Reggio Emilia, the community led by Loris Malaguzzi (1920-1994), teacher, philosopher and poet, set the basis of an association that would support children. They built schools with their bare hands and set the bases of a new philosophy on child education where community would play an important role. The Reggio Emilia Method is centred on the community and its culture but a fact worth mentioning is that its ideas are based on preschool education principles developed by researchers like John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, David Hawkins, Jerome Bruner, Howard Gardner.

Over time, Reggio Emilia approach developed and came to be known throughout the world as a viable method with highly formative qualities for children. Thus, in 1994 a non-profit organization was founded, called *Friends of Reggio Children International Association*<sup>42</sup> aiming at continuing Loris Malaguzzi ideas. At the annual conference *National Association for the Education of Young Children*, in Chicago, the USA, *North American Reggio Emilia Alliance (NAREA)*<sup>43</sup> was founded, aiming at: “Education and research

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<sup>41</sup>C.Rinaldi, *Documentation and assessment: What is the relationship? In, Making learning visible. Children as individual and group learners* (pp. 78–93). Reggio Emilia, Italy: ReggioChildren and Project Zero, 2001, p.64.

<sup>42</sup><http://zerosei.comune.re.it/inter/amici.htm>.

<sup>43</sup><http://www.reggioalliance.org/>.

*to improve the lives of people and communities in Reggio Emilia and in the world*'.<sup>44</sup>

### **5.3.1 Loris Malagutti's Philosophy**

In his philosophy, Loris Malaguzzi started from the belief that a child's education should start from the idea that each child is curious and creative. The child is not an individual with an empty memory that waits to be filled up with facts, data, figures and information. According to Reggio Emilia Method, the curriculum for early education and young schooling should be flexible and focused on child's needs. The curriculum design should be centred on child's needs and should be adjustable. The Reggio Emilia Method has as main objective the development in each child's consciousness the desire to learn and explore reality throughout his life.

### **5.3.2 Principles of Reggio Emilia Method**

The Reggio Emilia Method promotes the community's involvement in child's education. In some respects this method has similarities with Montessori and Waldorf alternatives. For many parents, the moment the child starts school, preschool or primary school is an important but also concerning moment. Family will move to the second place while education will be taken over by an educational institution. This fact brings about a lower involvement of family in child's education, a separation within which different responsibilities are passed on from the family members to the pre/school institution. Hence the idea of community involvement to improves conditions for educating children.

Reggio Emilia school has a leader that informs the local council about all

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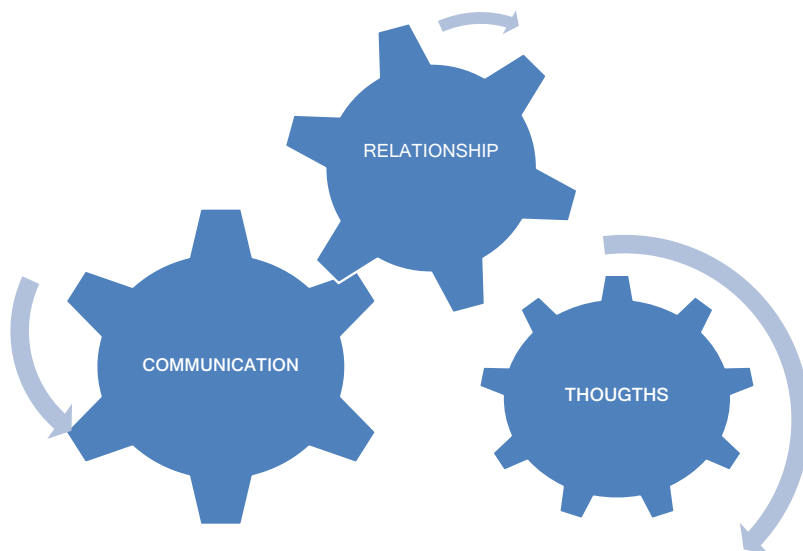
<sup>44</sup><http://reggiochildrenfoundation.org/>.



school's problems and objectives. All members of the teaching staff lead the educational act according to the children's interests which are carefully considered through different methods. In order to achieve this desideratum, there are two teachers in each classroom who complement each other in everything that education means: care, supervision and work with children. There is also a trained art teacher (at least two art branches) that is responsible for a workshop. In a workshop, children find many and different materials from those found in nature to the ones in the media. They are free to make experiments with them, to use them as they want to because their aim is to develop the child's creativity and imagination. The teachers, the workshop responsible and all teaching staff are a team that works together for the child's benefit. The main orientations of Reggio Emilia Method are:

- child centred education,
- the need to prepare children for a free and democratic life,
- social responsibility towards the uniqueness of each child and openness towards his educational needs,
- emphasize the importance of triple relation: family, school, community,
- stimulation of communication and interrelating,
- progressive thinking,
- openness for research and experimenting performed by dedicated teachers;
- workshop activities,
- the need to maintain a real and mutual collaboration between school and community,
- stress on metacognition,
- conscious learning based on acceptance of the need to improve performance.

## LEARNING BY DOING



Reggio Emilia Method places great emphasis on the child's ability to recognize his formation, by developing innate potential and by revaluing the child's aspirations. The child is not an empty entity that waits for the educational factors to fill in that hole, the child is a personality in development, with interests, aspirations and a certain, non-recurring individuality, capable of following his own path in life, if helped by parents, teachers and society. In order for the child to achieve something, it is necessary to put an emphasis on child's communication and socializing abilities, to show affectionate care and to build confidence in their own forces.

## VISION ON GAMES



Parents, school and community must create an educational environment where the child has the opportunity to communicate and relate to other children. They should create an environment that develops the communication and relating abilities, where he feels free but at the same time protected and loved, stimulated to explore and learn.

The three educational factors: parents, school and community collaborate and take part in children's education. Parents are actively involved in the life of the educational institution and participate in everything that means improvement and development of a proper educational environment. Therefore, they are encouraged to participate effectively in indoor and outdoor school activities. Family is regarded as a partner not as a consumer; it is part of the school's educational activity.

The teachers are those who set the contents of learning, the objectives that would be followed and fulfilled and the context in which they will be carried on.

The main goal is the child's benefit and the observance of his interests and fundamental rights.

The educational institution is designed to be an educational environment adapted to the requirement of child education according to his needs for exploration and learning, where special architecture is conceived as functional, challenging and open to exploration and learning. As Reggio Emilia Method lays emphasis on the learning space, it should offer children a feeling of safety and well-being and then be a cognitive stimulus that gives them the opportunity to interrelate, to motivate and develop their desire to explore new learning opportunities. Reggio Emilia Method aims at promoting speech development under a cognitive, symbolic ethical, metaphorical imaginative and relational aspect. The educational environment has to contribute to the promotion of these objectives, therefore we can compare the educational environment to a community in miniature that highlight culture and social ethics, prosocial attitudes and standards promoted by school curricula, as stated by the founder of this method: Loris Malaguzzi: *The environment should act as an aquarium which reflects the ideas, ethics, attitudes and culture of the people who live in it. This is what we are working towards.*<sup>45</sup>

Children are individuals with different paces of development, with different action and information process paces, with different pace of world understanding, therefore educational factors have to take into consideration these aspects and respect them. Adults mostly regard children as their equals in what concerns world understanding and act consequently. They put too much pressure on their shoulders, rushing them all the time, not having patience to listen and guide them, making them grow up too fast.

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<sup>45</sup> [http://www.reggioemilia.org.nz/pdf/PRINCIPLES\\_OF\\_REGGIO\\_EMILIA\\_APPROACH\\_TO\\_EARLY\\_CHILDH](http://www.reggioemilia.org.nz/pdf/PRINCIPLES_OF_REGGIO_EMILIA_APPROACH_TO_EARLY_CHILDH), p.33, (accessed on 24th April 2013).

The Reggio Emilia Method focuses on the community, that is why it is so important that all educational factors: parents and teachers to communicate with children in all possible manners, to contradict each other, to argument and share their emotions through games: to laugh, to cry, to fight. Socializing and communicating in this way, children and parents will develop relations based on mutual trust, where everyone feels safe and not in a strong competition. Children feel good in a warm and harmonic environment. It leads to the development of positive feeling, animated by empathy. The preschool and primary school teachers' role is to give children the opportunity to take part in activities that make them aware of their capacity to acquire new knowledge. Educators must encourage children in being creative, to constantly learn even when facing error, to help them make connections between information, between what they know and want to know.

In each classroom there are two teachers, one of them registering observations on children's activity and the other one is the partner, the supervisor. The teacher's role is to coordinate children's activities, being:

- the child's co-partner in discovering the surrounding world,
- to challenge children to find answers, to solve the problem and to relate friendly,
- to elaborate educational projects starting from the child's ideas,
- to organize the educational environment in a pleasant and useful manner,
- to lead children towards new explorations and a proper understanding of the surrounding world.

As an important educational factor in a child's education, the teacher has to follow certain principles regarding child education. He will team up with the parents and they will follow the child's evolution and progress. The teacher will

record on sheets, video or audio support the child's progress, will maintain a close and open relation with the parents, all in the child's best interest. These documents that will contain observations, recordings discussions, deficiency in knowledge are a basis for the teacher in planning his future educational objectives. The whole teaching staff along with the parents will discuss the educational projects necessary for the children's proper development and they will decide together their educational path. The teacher will be the link between the institution, family and community. The idea of unity in educational requirements is challenging, this aspect of co-work involves responsibility from all factors.

*The Reggio Emilia Method does not want to set a model, as Millikan stated in 2003: The preschools and infant-toddler centres of Reggio Emilia do not provide a model, but rather the opportunity to reflect on our own educational theories, practices, and methods of organization<sup>46</sup>.*

It is desirable to be an aspiration for teachers, parents and society in creating a better school for children, an educational environment according to the child's nature that would follow his best interest and desire to acquire education, a place that would reflect the ideals, beliefs and ethics of the society we live in.

The philosophy of Reggio Emilia Method raises some questions that we need to reflect upon. One concerns the amount of information that we take from this educational philosophy, how we adapt it to the Romanian educational system and how will we be able to apply it. The ideas advocated by Reggio Emilia Method are worth to be followed because they aim at the child's best interest and progress<sup>47</sup>:

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<sup>46</sup>Ibidem, p.34.

<sup>47</sup>Lella Gandini, Lynn Hill, Louise Cadwell, Charles Schwall, *In the Spirit of the Studio: Learning from the Atelier of Reggio Emilia (Early Childhood Education Series)*.

- it promotes everlasting values of society,
- it promotes the best ideas for education,
- it applies the child's right to education, like children with special educational needs that have the right to education in any institution they want to,
- it encourages games and team activities,
- teacher and child are viewed as partners in playing and learning,
- learning is not seen as a lineal process but a curl one, as a progressive process where teacher supervises the child's interests and assures necessary resources for a proper exploration and learning.

It is worth reflecting upon the Reggio Emilia Method that managed to create a real connection, a partnership between pre/school institution, family and community and which asserted the educational environment as the 3<sup>rd</sup> teacher.

The Reggio Emilia Method is an example on how teachers can involve children in their own formation through creative and motivating activities. Adults and children can learn together in a pleasant and useful manner, where everyone takes part in his own pace, using the resources he wants to. Children are regarded as members of the community with full rights and are encouraged to think freely and act autonomously.

## Seminar Activities



### *Tasks and Applications*

1. —

Write an argumentative essay of 150 words starting from Seneca's statement: *"Life is long enough if we know how to use it – and we have to use it for the achievement of the most important things"*.

Working time 10 minutes.