



## THE TEACHER: CONDUCTOR AND DEFENDER OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

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### **Abstract:**

Democracy requires citizens able to recognize and understand their rights and responsibilities they have towards themselves, the community and the state. If children learn to respect the rights of others, they show respect for themselves, also show the value of citizenship. Education of children's rights aims to prepare children for a world where every individual is valued, free and able to participate in personal development and a sustainable society. Education on children's rights aims to encourage the acquisition of knowledge, forming democratic attitudes and habits. This education is highly influential in the formation of individuals for what each of us can change things and each of us can choose what we can do, what not to do and how to act.

Knowledge, attitudes and experiences are cultivated in pedagogical situations. Therefore, to have a successful teaching of human rights we should have a kindergarten that is based on values of democracy, equality, justice, individual freedom, responsibility. The teacher should develop in children the necessary knowledge and skills to facilitate their combination in the world of tomorrow, confidence and tolerance, cooperative and interdependent behaviour.

The education of rights is introduced everywhere in teaching, extracurricular activities, excursions etc. The concepts of rights and responsibilities, the child learns only through concrete provisions. When the child performs a task, he is also exercising a right. Every child needs trust and confidence. To respect the freedom of the individual, to ensure equality, trust in justice, to protect the diversity is very important the adaptation of features and circumstances created, by exploring space, but also set limits to not affect the freedom and rights of another, so my freedom ends where another's freedom begins. Within the group in addition to individual freedom, it should be guaranteed the freedom, security and trust of all the children.

**Keywords:** kindergarten, children, teacher, rights

## Purpose

In a democratic environment it is important the education and the respect of human rights, but such an education and respect does not come automatically, it must be learned and practiced.

## The teacher: Conductor and Defender of Children's Rights

Democracy requires citizens able to know and understand their rights and responsibilities that they have for themselves, for the community and the state. For this education to be as productive, it should start in the family later in schools and to continue further throughout life. The role of educational institutions is not self-formation and the release of specialists of different sectors, but also the development of children's individual skills, their responsibility that they are active participants in society, affected in some way by basic human issues. The education of the children's rights should be started at a time when children are in the age of the formation of attitudes and thoughts and this time is related to creating a democratic and educated climate in kindergartens<sup>i</sup>. Teachers are responsible for creating a physical and emotional stimulant environment for personal and social growth of children. The ways in which teachers respond to the requirements of the child, can really encourage or diminish their emotional development and practically creating a favourable or unfavourable environment for the education of children's behaviour.

In the kindergarten ethical code it is written: "*I want you to respect me, because I'm a human, I have my personality, my rights and values*"<sup>ii</sup>. Children require that we, the teachers, should respect them, regardless of gender, age, race, religion, region, language, culture, ability; because they are different, but have equal rights, the right to be respected regardless. Using a polite language when interacting with children demonstrates this respect and is one of the most powerful tools to encourage equality. Teachers have the duty for equality and helping to create balanced relations within the group by helping each child. Class is the laboratory where children experiment on the role of explorers, artists, scientists. The teacher respects the points of views of children and these thoughts are embodied in teaching programs. Making decisions is fundamental in democratic processes. The selection of activities, materials, helps children in a safe decision-making process.

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<sup>i</sup> John Dewey - "*Democracy and Education*", 1916

<sup>ii</sup> The code of ethics of teachers in the public and private pre-university education Ministry of Education and Sports 2012, Tirana

They learn to take responsibility for their choices. Informal environment allows children to learn in varying degrees without comparing with each other and without the pressure that everything should be done correctly. Take into consideration that the individuality of each child is important, but you should never allow this individuality, which carries with it the cultural influence of the family, to violate the rights of other children. The teacher sets such a rule "*Everyone deserves respect and compassion. I will not let anyone harm you and you are not allowed to harm others*". The game is the essential essence of good programs in early childhood education<sup>iii</sup>. Thus environments for young children should provide regular opportunities for free play. It is an important part of a child's life. Children do not accept separation from the group, as this makes them feel different from the others and downgrades themselves and their abilities. The teacher should intervene when some children out others from the game and here, the rule is valid. The teacher should help children who are left out, win some self-evaluation skills and interaction and ask other children to find a place in the game for them.

Education should help develop the personality and talents of the child, preparing him for a responsible life when he grows up, learning to respect human rights and cultural values.<sup>iv</sup>

Every child needs trust and confidence. To respect the freedom of the individual, to ensure equality, trust in justice, to protect the diversity, is very important to adapt with features and circumstances that are created, but also setting limits not to affect the freedom or the rights of another human. So my freedom ends where the freedom of another begins, my rights end where the rights of others begin. Teachers do not allow a child or small group of children to exercise excessive power over other children. Not everyone likes each other, but each one must respect human nature.

Within the group in addition to individual freedom, it should be guaranteed freedom, security and trust of all children. The teacher is the model that prevents the transmission of negative feelings in children, being restrained in the imposition of negative comments. She should detect and change her prejudices and ensure that they are not transmitted to children and their families.

Families transmit to the child culture, religion, cultural level etc. The teacher should focus on improving the existing behaviours and teaching new behaviours and attitudes, education of their freedom and rights, but also social coexistence with the group of other children. New behavioural lessons given by the teacher should be linked mainly with socialization, life in the community, where all demand the respect of their rights and freedom. In the family, a child is treated in a special way of course. Living in

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<sup>iii</sup> "*Play an early childhood development*" - Johnson, Christie, Yawkey, 1987

<sup>iv</sup> Simplified Version of the Convention on the Rights of Children. The first steps.

a community requires that many habits and routines are unified. Teachers should establish balance by teaching each individual to respect themselves, but also others.

The example of teaching children with a sense of respect for a friend and the community is the respect that we give to a colleague or the child's family, even for those behaviours or actions that are not the same as ours because of the culture, religion. Children are sensitive to the relations that the teacher builds with their families and these relations obviously mark them. So teachers with their examples give a positive or a negative lesson. Teachers, who know and practice tolerance, educate children patience and respect.

Through every experience young children learn values and that they are valued and respected.<sup>v</sup> They learn that their individual needs and desires will be accomplished and that their rights will be protected

It often happens that teachers differentiate one child from other children of the group for one reason or another. Completing the individual needs of a child is a duty, but without harming the fulfilment of needs of other children in the group, because each child is an individual and all individuals compose the community that besides having something in particular they also have something in common that is socialization. It is necessary that socialization in early childhood ages to be educated positively, supporting everyone individually, but also filling the needs of the group.

Children are helped to interact effectively to balance in this way the rights, needs and feelings with those of other children in the group.<sup>vi</sup> Every child needs to feel close to the educator to orient and support, to establish relationships with other children in the group. He needs to feel involved in the group, even when he has physical or psychological difficulties, without prejudice. They demand to be respected for what they are and the skills and values they possess. Of course this requires the teacher to be attentive to each child in particular and to include him within the group. So it harmonizes the needs and desires of individuals within the group.

A child feels safe when the teacher ensures the compliance of activities, schedules and routines. A child wants to do himself all the services for which he is capable in accordance with their age and ability. It happens that the teacher, to set rules in their own way, doesn't allow children to fulfil their own needs. This creates in children a sense of discord, dissatisfaction and opposition, qualities that will be carried when they grow up. Children educated in this way become addicted and disappointed. The teacher is a model of positive behaviour for children, a model which they want to look like. Any behaviour of the teacher, positive or negative, the child traces. Asking for

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<sup>v</sup> Dr. Carol Seefeldt, Nita Barbour - "Early Childhood Education and Introduction", 1994

<sup>vi</sup> "Intercultural education of human rights in school, a world waiting to be discovered"- Training Manual for teachers of primary school, Mato E, Markja A, Gjedia R, Xhanari V, Hasinj I.

forgiveness is a positive lesson for the child after learning that making a mistake is human. In dealing with children you should exclude lies and especially not keeping promises.

Children need to communicate through words, as an indispensable communication tool and using a regular language and communicating in a low voice.

### **Conflict prevention and solution**

In a kindergarten with cultural diversity, conflict is highly encountered. Acts of intolerance of children and incidents of behaviour represent a challenge, even a dilemma for the teacher. Achieving positive attitudes from preschool experiences often requires the direct intervention of the teacher.

It is important to act, if a child acts in an intolerant way against another and this requires leadership and intervention of a skilled teacher. She helps children to accomplish needs in a way that does not affect others.

The teacher in the classroom sets such a rule:

*"Everyone deserves respect and compassion".*

*"I will not let anyone harm you and you are not allowed to touch anyone".*

*"Criticism of misbehaviour does not help children learn to behave well".*

It is clear that the punishment does not help children. The teacher's task is to establish skills that children don't have.

When among children occurs negative behaviour or verbal assault, cruelty, the teacher must perform several tasks:

#### **1. To determine possible causes of bullying behaviour**

All have causes for their behaviour. However, sometimes it is difficult to determine the causes. Some children behave negatively for many reasons, such as:

- behaviour has effect, it provides children what they want, eg a coveted toy;
- it is a habit that appears frequently, unconsciously, accepted and formed custom at home and in the child's group;
- it is a way of expressing anger, fear or other emotions;
- children feel powerless and insignificant. They often want to strongly affirm their personality.

#### **2. The teacher should work with parents for the detection of circumstances that may cause provocative behaviour**

It is important for the teacher not to blame parents, but to approach them as partners. Using the information of parents, teachers, and parents should set an

applicable timetable. Understanding the possible causes of provocative behaviour helps the teacher to enter the inner world of the child. The refusal of love and other punishments are harmful to children because they do not help in determining the causes of behaviour. Entering in the feelings and the inner world of the child may be the most important thing that is required to help the child.

### 3. Prevention

The most effective strategy to help children with harassing and aggressive behaviour is the growth of their abilities. They should be able to choose, put into leadership roles, maintain proper responsibility, exercise their positive impact on the others, show competence, they should be evaluated and supported, treated seriously and tested. Program strategies that include positive social interactions and practice of conflict resolution are extremely helpful. Teachers offer positive ways to fill the needs. First they consider the feelings of children and then help them exercise different behaviour as often as possible. Some children require more oriented assistance. This requires time and effort, but there is not a shorter way to achieve that. The teacher should use various intervention strategies.

### 4. Interference

When children misbehave, most adults react by punishing the child in one way or another. Unfortunately, this is way less effective and less likely to help a child change his behaviour. Punishments such as child verbal humiliation (various cursing), physical injuring of a child (slapping, pinching, etc.) or removing the rights and privileges have never a good response. Punishment transmit to children the message that the strongest, loudest and worst person is always right, at a time when the teacher wants to transmit a very different message, "*conflicts can be resolved peacefully and no one should have endless power on the other*". So the best strategies of intervention admit the ignorance but not the malice of a child.

## Conclusions

- The education of children rights is a new field and a difficult process in which all together, teacher, parents and children, should contribute to enable its implementation. Rights should be viewed as "recognized standards" that create sustainable capability for a peaceful community and society. Educational institutions are the best place where rights are learned and applied.
- Unlike other subjects, education of children's rights, more than the acquisition of new knowledge, requires the application of this knowledge, the education of

children with human values of respect, dignity and tolerance, making them aware that although they are different they are also equal.

- The establishment in a kindergarten of a teaching in form and content, in order to put into practice the rights of children. The determination of the curriculum, policies that ensure the equality of all group, conscious and stable efforts to make the square of the class and game a place where children's rights are respected and encouraged, are examples of that right of action the kindergarten environment offers.
- Issues of human rights must be explained in an understandable way for children, in accordance with age, experience and skills that they have to acquisition these concepts. The concretization of different situations will serve simultaneously in reaching the conclusion that we have no right to do everything, but we need to know or learn what to do and what not to do and why we shouldn't do it. So nobody has only rights, but he has rights and responsibilities. Such knowledge and skills should be taught and practiced consistently.

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