

Parental satisfaction with work shedule of preschool institutions in Montenegro

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Abstract

On which level is parental satisfaction with work mode in preschool institution in Montenegro have been shown by survey which contained 11 questions and has been conducted in several cities. It was concluded that parents are very satisfied with preschool institutions, that they are very welcome and respected there, but that they should be more included with the activities within. Most children go to the preschool with pleasure. Preschool teachers take care of children, they are keen to connect with their families and the environment in which children grows. The most of the parents are extremely satisfied with them. Apart the cooperation with preschool teachers, parents often have consultations with the members of pedagogical professional services. There are parents who are not familiar with the work program in preschool institutions and it should be organized educational meetings for them and teachers. However, those parents who are familiar with their work gave an observation that skill exercises should be more included. It is noticed that preschool institutions in Montenegro give a great importance to quality food as well as education of children related to adoption of hygienic habits. The parents appreciate quality work of teachers with other segments related to educational work with children, which is additional quality of preschool institutions, as well as that this work is characterized as operation of diversity.

Key words: Preschool institutions, parents, educational program, children

Introduction

Today preschool children in a large percentage their leisure time spend in front of computers which are not suited to their age, and that computers slowly replace different creative games of entertaining character as well as outdoor sports games, which were, for this age of children, irreplaceable (Vasiljević et al., 2015b). Educational programs and well-designed games enable the child to experiment, research and discover, evaluate, analyze his/her strategy, exchange their experiences with other children, bring their knowledge and skills to the highest level (Gardašević et al., 2015). Also, the big issue nowadays is an excessive body weight and approaching the borderline of obesity, especially when it comes to boys. In order to deal preventively with issues that we and the children are faced with, it is necessary to act aggressively upon, above all, the reduction of hypokinesia, by raising awareness of physical activity, first of all in preschool institutions and schools, and subsequently by high-quality nutrition, and by educating children as well as their parents (Vasiljević et al., 2015a). Kinesiologists and teachers should timely recognize this issue and advise the child and their parents on the proper lifestyle necessary for maintaining the normal body weight. The most important parents' task in early development is to be the carriers of habits related to nutrition and of their changes in early childhood. Hence, the preschool education must take a very important place in every child's development.

Departure at preschool is a critical first step in the education of the child (Şahin et al., 2013). Educational programs must take into account the developmental characteristics of a child of a certain age, and in addition they must consider the needs and wishes of parents.

Cooperation between parents and preschool institutions is necessary in the educational process (Schleicher, 1989). Cooperation between parents and preschools is an important element in the preschool institution quality, because it changes inner relationships, climate and culture (Devjak & Berčnik, 2009). Expectations about cooperation in some authors' views (Resman, 1991; Schleicher, 1989; Coleman, 1998; Ryan, 1995) depend on tradition, objectives, social context, legal framework and situational demands. Because of exceptional meaning of cooperation with parents, the declaration of Council of Europe (Van der Eyken, 1982) states that all institutions (health, educational, social) that have an impact on children's development must cooperate with parents to assure the continuity of children's development.

For quality preschool educational process are essential well-designed, custom software development and their applications in work with children. An integral part of the entire process of designing and implementing programs for long-term and short-term performance of the educational process is evaluation. There was a practice that the evaluation of a program does not take into account the estimates of parents, because of the assumption that they will present a subjective judgment and evaluation, rather than expert opinions or objective observations. However, due to the fact that parents are responsible for their child, and given the fact that

educational institutions and parents themselves, to the some extent share the responsibility with regards to children, parents must be involved in the evaluation program. Many studies focused on the attitudes and expectations of parents of pre-school education have been made (Achhpal, 2000; Einarsdottir, 2010; Laloumi-Vidali, 2006; Petrie & Holloway, 2006; Weikart, 2000; Arnas, 2002; Kıldan, 2012; Özen, 2008; Sevinç, 2006; Seyfullahoğulları, 2012; Tokuç, 2007).

Numerous studies have shown that parental involvement conveniently and permanently affects not only the children but also the parents. Namely, the participation of parents in the preschool education of children improve their understanding of the adequacy of educational practice, and promote further involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of the child. Participation of parents also contribute to better relations among children and between children and teachers, and good communication between teachers and parents is a prerequisite for better quality of education of children of preschool age.

Material & Method

As the object of study, the attitudes of parents regarding certain aspects of the educational program of preschool institutions are considered.

The aim of this study is that, through the assessment of parental satisfaction with preschool institutions determine what is good and what could be done more efficiently and what changes should be made in practice. Satisfaction rating of parents should not replace the use of other criteria for the evaluation of processes and programs, but it is necessary to take into consideration, whereby alone approaches can complement each other.

Surveying was the technique which was used for data collection. The survey was conducted in several cities throughout Montenegro where 610 respondents were interviewed, the parents of preschool children. Parents were given a questionnaire that was taken and modified from preschool "Markusevac" from Zagreb (Retrieved from <http://www.vrtic-markusevec.zagreb.hr/default.aspx?id=65>) and which consists of 11 questions. The questions in the questionnaire are of closed type, i.e. the respondents were offered a list of answers from which to choose to be most closely. In order to avoid favoritism in responses, parents are guaranteed anonymity.

Results and Discussion

At this part of the paper the results (in tables) of the survey are presented, following each question individually.

(1) *As a parent, how did you feel in the preschool?*

Parents rated personal experience in preschool, i.e. at the scale of 1 to 5 they rated offered statements that related to their mood, on what basis the average satisfaction rate has been determined in accordance with offered claims (Table 1.).

Table 1. The comfort feeling parents felt during they stay in preschool.

<i>As a parent, how did you feel in the preschool?</i>						
ratings	5	4	3	2	1	average rate
satisfied	410	152	46	1	1	dissatisfied 4.6
secure	389	182	37	2	0	insecure 4.6
relaxed	347	194	64	5	0	tense 4.5
welcome	421	150	36	2	1	as "surplus" 4.6
appreciated	407	168	32	3	0	unappreciated 4.6
respected	397	180	33	0	0	non respected 4.6
active	318	189	88	11	4	passive 4.3

According to data shown in Table 1., at the scale of 1 to 5, the average rate showing the subjective feeling of parents ranges from 4.3 to 4.6. Analysis of individual items showed the highest values in terms of grades to parents feel satisfied, secured, welcomed, appreciated and respected in the preschool, and there is a slight difference with regard to the claim that parents feel actively or passively in preschool, where the average value is 4.3.

How did your child react to going to preschool?

With this question, the parents by choosing the claim which corresponds the most to their experience should describe the adaptation degree to the idea of their child going to preschool (Table 2.).

Table 2. Children responding to departure to preschool

	N	%
Almost always joyfully and happily	242	39.6
Often joyfully and happily	157	25.8
It depends—sometimes joyfully, sometimes rejected to go	165	27
Often rejected to go, been upset or sad for going to preschool	41	6.8
Almost always rejected, protested or been sad for going to preschool	5	0.8
<i>Total:</i>	610	100

As for reaction of children to go to preschool, in most cases, more specifically 39.6% of them said that their children would go to preschool almost always joyfully and happily, and 25.8% of them do so often joyfully and happily. 27% of children have divided feelings, sometimes they go joyfully and sometimes they reject to go. 6.8% of children often rejected to go to preschool, they been upset or sad, and 0.8% parents said that children almost always reject protest or are sad for going to preschool.

How familiar are you with work program of educational group of your child?

Table 3. Familiarity of parents with work program of preschool

How familiar are you with work program of educational group of your child?	N	%
To a great extent	327	53.6
Partially	264	43.3
We are not familiar with work program	19	3.1
Total	610	100

Looking at the results as whole, it can be concluded that most of the parents are familiar with the work program of the educational group of their child to the some extent, i.e. they know in which activities their children participate (Table 3.). In particular, 53.6% to a great extent know the program, 43.3% of them partially, and a small percentage, 3.1% of them are not familiar with the work program at all.

Through which forms of information you mostly receive the information of work program?

Table 4. The forms of informing parents of preschool work

Through which forms of information you mostly receive the information of work program?	N	%
Through parents' boxes	32	5.2
At parent meetings	122	20
Through communication with children	136	22.3
Through every-day contacts with teachers	233	38.2
Through professional associates	14	2.3
Through other forms	73	12
Total	610	100

Survey results presented in Table 4. show that parents mostly receive the information regarding work program of preschool their children attend through every-day contacts with teachers in 38.2% of cases, through communication with children 22.3% and at parent meetings 20%. A small number of them, 5.2% said through parents' boxes, and 2.3% through professional associates. 12% of them said that they receive the information through other forms.

In your opinion, where did your child show the best progress while been in preschool?

The question to some extent deals with the degree of achievement of basic goals of the preschool educational program, which are actually listed within the answers offered to the respondents (Table 5.).

Table 5. Progress of the children in preschool, according to parental estimation

In your opinion, where did your child show the best progress while been in preschool?	N	%
In an independent care	119	19.5
In increased emotional stability and security (easily separated from family members, rarely has outbursts of anger, rarely changes mood, less cries, less is sulky...)	158	25.9
In self-confidence, self-esteem	92	15.1
In being more sociable	141	23
In being more communicative	70	11.5
In physical dexterity	30	5
Total	610	100

The results show that the best progress with children is noticed in increased emotional stability and security 25.9%, and in being more sociable 23%. When it is about an independent care, 19.5% of parents noticed progress in that aspect. A somewhat smaller number of responses refer to the obtaining of self-confidence, self-esteem 15.1%, and being more communicative 11.5%. On the other hand, according to parents' responses, the smallest number of them thinks that their child made a progress in physical dexterity, only 5%, so this aspect should be paid much more attention.

What is your opinion of cooperation with teachers?

Table 6. Cooperation with teachers

What is your opinion of cooperation with teachers?	N	%
Satisfied	508	83.3
Partially satisfied	98	16.1
Not satisfied	4	0.6
Total	610	100

When it comes to cooperation with teachers, we again meet very positive results (Table 6.). Namely, 83.3% of parents are completely satisfied with cooperation with teachers, 16.1% are partially satisfied, while only 0.6% are not satisfied.

Do you need individual consultations with the members of professional associates (pedagogue, psychologist, speech pathologist, speech therapist, medical staff)?

Table 7. Parental necessity for individual consultations with PA members

Do you need individual consultations with the members of professional associates (pedagogue, psychologist, speech pathologist, speech therapist, medical staff)?	N	%
Yes	139	22.8
No	471	77.2
Total	610	100

A great number of parents (Table 7.), 77.2% of them said that they do not have a need for individual consultations with professional associates, while 22.8% of them need professional help.

Are you interested for educational workshops for parents?

Table 8. Interest of parents for maintenance of workshops

Are you interested for educational workshops for parents?	N	%
Yes	418	68.5
No	192	31.5
Total	610	100

As presented in Table 8., 68.5% of parents shown an interest for maintenance of educational workshops, while 31.5% was not interested.

Are you satisfied with food quality in preschool?

Table 9. Parental satisfaction with the food quality in preschool

Are you satisfied with food quality in preschool?	N	%
Yes	575	94.3
No	35	5.7
Total	610	100

From Table 9. it can be seen that 94.3% of respondents are satisfied with food quality in preschool while 5.7% are not.

Are you satisfied with adoption of hygienic habits of your child in preschool?

Table 10. Parental satisfaction with degree of adoption of hygienic habits of children in preschool

Are you satisfied with adoption of hygienic habits of your child in preschool?	N	%
Satisfied	419	68.7
Mostly satisfied	189	31
Not satisfied	2	0.3
Total	610	100

Data from Table 10. show that 68.7% of parents are satisfied with adoption of hygienic habits of child, 31% of them said that they are mostly satisfied, while only 0.3% are not satisfied.

What would you point out as a significant quality of preschool as whole?

Table 11. Quality of preschool as whole

What would you point out as a significant quality of preschool as whole?	N	%
Professional work with children	253	41.6
The variety of work content	165	27
Enrichment of program with educational-health and cultural program (visits, trips, sport programs theater performance...)	65	10.6
Equipment in preschool (the quantity of equipment, quality, functionality)	30	5
Health-hygienically conditions	35	5.7
Approach and manner of contacting with parents	33	5.4
Other	29	4.7
Total	610	100

A great number of parents, precisely 41.6% pointed out a professional work with children as significant quality of preschool (Table 11.). A smaller number, 27% as significant quality of preschool choose the variety of work content. Enrichment of program with educational-health and cultural program was a choice of 10.6% of parents. As for other offered answers percentage of answers was approximately the same.

Analyzing the survey it can be noticed that parents experience the preschool institutions with extremely high degree of satisfaction, that they feel welcome, appreciated or respected there, but that they could increase their activity in the preschool work. This would appear to indicate that the parents themselves do not have enough opportunities to participate in the preschool work, or to the institution itself do not sufficiently involve parents in their work. However, it can be said that this deviation is negligible.

Children usually go to preschool with pleasure, although there are reverse cases. If you examine the situation realistically, for children aged 3 to 4, going to preschool often represents a period of adjustment to the new environment, or the period of adaptation to conduct most of the day without parents. With the arrival of the child in the educational group its life changes, mostly against his will. No matter how strong they need

companionship of peers, the children essentially have no need for changing the security of a family environment for something new and unknown. It is clear that the process of adaptation is individual, and the flow of adjustment depends on various factors, including the child's individual characteristics, age, state of health, family atmosphere in which the child lives, and the like.

The work of teachers is not only directed towards the child, but it should strive to wider connection of institutions with family and an environment where the child grows. This fact is of a great importance, because an insight in the child's preschool work program leads to forming awareness with parents of their own possibilities to contribute to the proper development and successful learning of their children, as well as better organization of the educational environment and incentives of it in the parental home. For parents who are not familiar with the work program should be organized educational meetings with teachers, so they could be introduced with work program of educational groups their child is a part. Staying in preschools develops an emotional stability and security, sociability with children, they learn of independent care of themselves. In the study conducted by Şahin et al. (2013), a half of parents pointed out that preschool education important for improved social skills of children. This result is parallel the study conducted by Arnas (2002) where 69% of parents thinks that the main responsibility of preschools is to encourage social behavior. What should be done, in the opinion of parents, is a little more work on the physical dexterity because this very important aspect of a child's development is unjustifiably neglected. Parents express a concern for their children development, they try to influence them, and they favour athletic activities (Pereira, 2011). Given that their body is very susceptible different influences, whose effects are manifested in the later period, must be taken into account that some negative effects is not possible or is very difficult possible to fix a later age (Pantović et al., 2012). A substantial decline in children's activity levels during the last few decades has contributed to a rising prevalence of childhood obesity and related health problems (Ahrabi-Fard & Matvienko, 2005). This can be communicated to teachers without problems as an observation considering that survey has shown that most of the parents are extremely satisfied with cooperation with the teachers. The main responsibility for establishing and maintaining these relationships, according to research of Dolar Bahovec and Golobič (2004) is on teachers. Parents are well aware of significant role teachers have in preschool institutions (Essa, 2010; Morrison, 2011; Şahin et al., 2013). Besides cooperation with them parents often have individual consultations with members of pedagogical professional services, because work of professional associates is very important for conducting quality program. They are bound between parents and teachers, i.e. studying those relationships they discover factors similar or totally different from those that one or other side conducts, so they could be adjusted.

A great thing is that most of the parents recognize the importance of organizing educational workshops, even though there is still a big number of parents who do not recognize the importance of this activities, which is likely to be attributed to their lack of information. The educational workshops actually serve to broaden the knowledge of parents about the basic features of the psycho-social development of the child, in order to strengthen their sense of competence, i.e. increase efficiency in areas relevant to the fulfillment of parental roles. Preschool institutions attach great importance to quality food, as well as the work of teachers to adopt hygienic habits of children which was recognized by parents. They appreciate the professional work of teachers at other segments concerning the educational work with children, which is an additional quality of preschools, as well as the work is characterized by diversity.

Conclusions

Since preschool education setting the foundation of whole future of the child and that its quality is largely dependent on the success of later development and learning, it is crucial to build the best possible program. It is important to bear in mind the fact that these programs actually supplement the family preschool education, so it is necessary to meet the needs of children with the needs of their parents.

For this reason, the conducted research focused on the experiences of the parents with preschool institutions, their evaluation of preschool program which their children receive, in order to improve it. Looking at the results of research in general, it can be noted the high level of parental satisfaction with the program and its implementation in preschool institutions, especially those who are more familiar with it, so it can be concluded that the satisfaction and participation to some extent mutually dependent.

Plan and work program anticipate establishing cooperation through direct communication with parents (individual interviews, visits to preschool, parent-teacher meetings), direct participation of parents (stays in the group, volunteering, technical and logistics support), written communication and joint activities for children and parents (cultural, sports, leisure activities, etc.). However, practice shows that usually it is implemented the direct communication with parents in a form of interviews, technical and logistical assistance of parents in organizing trips, visits to various educational institutions, as well as participation in the events prepared by preschool itself. It is necessary to pay special attention to raising the awareness of parents on all aspects of early and preschool education, parenting skills that contribute to the realization of the full potential of the child and his preparedness for further education, as well as active inclusion of parents. Even with most satisfied and the most active parents can be encouraged greater participation, with the aim of devising a quality educational program. What these programs offer to children cannot be provided by family and vice versa. Programs of preschool education can serve as a bridge connecting the home environment and the outside world.

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