

Small size A Space to Grow

edited by Jo Belloli

This compendium offers cultural comparisons exploring the patterns, strengths and challenges facing theatre and performing arts practitioners and early years educators in maintaining and enriching the space within early childhood and education to live, learn and develop through the performing arts.

Featuring six articles from researchers in Italy, Belgium, England, Slovenia, Romania and Germany, it presents a range of perspectives addressing issues in relation to the legislation, provision, practice and professional development concerning all who work in early years and arts education.

Small size - A Space to Grow is part of a series published by Small size, the European Network for the Diffusion of the Performing Arts for Early Years.

Small size - A Space to Grow

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S m a l l s i z e b o o k

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SMALL SIZE

Small size, the European Network for the diffusion of performing arts aimed at early childhood (0-6) provides a structure through which to meet, share expertise and exchange knowledge, develop collaborative projects and disseminate information and research.

Research is just one of the many activities promoted by Small size and this publication is the culmination of a project involving six commissions that explore and present aspects of early years education in relation to the performing arts in Italy, Belgium, the UK, Slovenia, Romania and Germany.

www.smallsize.org

SMALL SIZE – A SPACE TO GROW

European opportunities for policy and practice in supporting creativity in early education from 0-6 years

Jo Belloli

Preface

Some small things can be perfect as they are, intended by nature to be of a particular and diminutive size. Others are simply small as a temporary state of their development and will, given the right nurturing conditions, grow into something larger – perhaps maintaining some recognisable trait or essence of their earlier existence, perhaps transforming into something quite different as a result. But as human beings, we are always growing, needing space and time in order to do so effectively.

As a European network that focuses on the cultural offer afforded to early childhood through engagement with the performing arts, Small size aims to champion and promote the expertise and inspiration of teachers and educationalists, theatre and arts practitioners, researchers and academics, policy-makers and funders at all levels who, across a widening network within Europe, work for the interest and needs of our youngest, most precious and vulnerable members of society.

“Small size – A Space to Grow” is a collection of articles and research undertaken by six individuals in six countries, Italy, Belgium, England, Slovenia, Romania and Germany. It serves as a reflection of the situation, aspirations and challenges experienced amongst practitioners and observers in the support of early childhood and the cultural welfare of the very young in relation to their entitlement to a rounded early education. In the last twenty to thirty years we have witnessed the shifting trends in attitudes and legislation towards children's rights and child protection, developments in educational guidelines, frameworks and curricula for pre-school and nursery children, and changing patterns in the social and economic lifestyle of families, near and extended. Alongside this has been an undercurrent of artistic vision and action research

into recognising ways to engage with the inherent creativity of very young babies, toddlers and children, their teachers and parents. More recently, and very much so at the time of writing, we are experiencing major fluctuations in our economies. It's evident that cultural differences exist within Europe in relation to legislations and regulations, with differing prioritised timescales within which these are implemented. There are different sets of political, cultural, and financial restraints, with no common trend save that in economic terms, we are all challenged. But it appears there is a shared vision.

What do we mean by "space?" We've taken a combination of three interpretations; the physical space and related resources, meaning the environment which children aged 0-6 inhabit during their day-care hours beyond the family home; the opportunity within formal structures of education to support and nurture children's creativity and recognition, at policy level, of what this truly entails; and the time for educators and early years practitioners to engage in continuing professional development that allows them the chance to recognise and utilise their own creativity through their practice.

Some of the key themes to emerge through the articles were prompted by the following initial considerations. Within the crèche or the nursery, cultural experiences, and the expectation of these, can change everyday life in the nursery. But what is this "space for early years" and how might this be enriched? What are the cultural and political trends in supporting or constraining the child's space to be creative? What space do we give within early childhood for children and their professional carer/teacher adults to develop their creative potential through the performing arts? How do you share creative space? How do adults share, rather than impose, a space for and with their children? How is it perceived as an entitlement and to what extent is this supported, profiled, and celebrated?

The chapters from Italy, England, Slovenia and Romania offer some detailed accounts of current frameworks of provision, policy and practice. Some of this is already being initiated, some – significantly in **Carmen Anghelescu's** account of the situation

in **Romania** – is pending. Her highly detailed article, which draws upon her extensive and authoritative experience as a psychologist and researcher, presents some revealing data that supports the validity and strength of her case in the light of new legislation. Reflected in these articles is a united conviction that an holistic approach to early education needs to start from birth. The extent to which current provision embraces the cultural enrichment offered throughout early childhood in relation to the performing arts, and how this is embedded within current legislation and practice, varies. As examined by **Kathy McArdle** through her thorough account, there have been positive and far-reaching changes within **England** but questions still need to be raised. The approach taken by **Slovenian** student **Maja Kozmos** reflects her interest in the use of drama and theatre in pre-school education, whilst highlighting in some detail the current movement towards addressing children's learning needs through the Curriculum for Kindergartens. Featured within Maja's article is some intriguing conflict of opinion expressed by the teachers interviewed (their anonymity was requested and respected) with the two Slovenian theatre directors. Although this has not been further explored or challenged, it nonetheless highlights the fact that, as most likely in every country, there are teachers whose outlook and practice varies. So, whilst we might be hoping to suggest that, at policy level, there is now some shared vision behind the overall development of early education, this is a notable reminder that teachers can, and will, carry their own set of principles, values and standards. **Italian** educationalists **Marina Manferrari** and **Anna Paola Corradi** explore the particular ethos and development of early education with specific reference to the history and practice of their region, Emilia Romagna. But where does this leave the professional practitioners authorised with the responsibility of caring and educating our youngest members of society? A recurring theme within the book identifies certain issues including the historical use of health-care personnel, questionable levels of specific qualification and training, and a need to embrace continuous professional development within early years education and childcare. The Italian article goes on to enthusiastically articulate some innovative work and use of resources that support teachers' skills in their use of the performing arts within early years. The theme of professional enrichment through further training is the basis

of the **Belgian** chapter, by psychologists and trainers, **Isabelle Chavepeyer** and **Carine Lesage**, who advocate the specialist work of an early years training and research organisation that inspirationally supports the needs of early years teachers and practitioners. **German** researcher, **Kirsten Winderlich**, presents an academic argument for the value of “performative play” and the need to recognise aesthetic education that, rather than being compartmentalised, underpins all aspects of a child’s socialisation and learning from the very earliest age.

It is possible to detect within these articles a sense of implicit determination, urgency, frustration, commitment, optimism and advocacy, of varying degrees. Factored into this, and of prime consideration with regard to the context of Small size as a pan-European network, is a suggestion of the historical, social, political, economic and cultural background from which these articles have been addressed. Whereas questions may remain unanswered, the thinking behind the facts and opinions expressed in this compendium reveals a united recognition of the significance of the arts in the social, cultural and educational well-being and development of our young children.

Editorial note

The authors of the articles were commissioned by the Small size co-organising partners of each of the countries featured here. They include highly experienced early years teachers, child psychologists, educationalists and trainers, a researcher of aesthetic education specialising in early childhood, a theatre producer, director and dramaturg with a specialism in early years, and a psychology student. The resulting articles provide an eclectic mix of style and content through the diversity of approaches taken, ranging from the academic to the conversational, with some considerable detail in between, demonstrating an economic alongside an ebullient use of language. Whilst some editorial decisions have been made to address the fluency of the translation in English, care has been taken to maintain the authors’ intended meaning and a deliberate choice has been made to observe the original style and to respect the translators’ significant skill in presenting this.

Needless to say, there have been some illuminating challenges that have emerged through this editorial process with regard to some bold attempts to safeguard words and phrases from being misinterpreted or lost in translation.

One of the aims of *Small size* is to open up possibilities for exchange and to engage in debate, discussion, shared documentation and comparison of practice, and implicit to this is the cross-cultural dimension within an early years European community, which in part is reflected in this collection of work.

Although care has been taken to maintain a consistency of terms of reference within each article, readers will note a variety of terminology throughout the book as a whole. For example, whilst FRAJE's use of the term "continuing education" is kept as a direct translation, the alternative "continuous professional development", "CPD" or "continuous educational development" are also used to mean the same thing in relation to the chapters from Italy and the UK. The diverse terminology to denote institutions and phases within early childhood education, such as "pre-school", "nursery", "crèche", "kindergarten", "early years settings" and so forth have been left within the context of each country's description and account of its own systems or structures.

The articles can be found in their original language at the back of the book. Astute bi- or multi-lingual readers will, however, detect some editorial amendments from the translation into English.

Bordering Lands

Training and performative arts in the educational services for early years

**Anna Paola Corradi and
Marina Manferrari**

translated by Letizia Olivieri

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

To talk about performative arts for children, with children and of children is a cultural challenge, a project, a provocation, a hope, a utopia.

Words create worlds and make them possible; they create structures that did not exist before being named, states Juan Mata, literature scholar, sensitive to children's needs. We therefore like to think and talk about an educational model for nursery and primary schools that carries within it - not as an appendage but as a cornerstone - the aesthetic dimension, the approach to the arts, the growth of artistic sensibility, the development of the ability to perceive the poetic qualities of things. An educational model cultivating and focusing on the human qualities that give sense to life and that may be able to stem the current decline and standardisation of taste and habits.

In a world inhabited by indifferent adults in a flat cultural scenario, children conform to the dominant aesthetic taste, that of TV shows, those imposed by the power and the logics of the "market", displaying low-quality, dull and monotonous visual and musical commercial products. Original, unconventional or alternative products are experienced as "difficult", "dissonant", "destabilising" and run the risk of being rejected. It may simply be an early form of conformism caused by a limited set of experiences - filtered by adults neither careful nor challenging - that raises barriers and closes the door on possibilities. As a matter of fact, that which is not conventional and obvious is a source of emotion and curiosity for children, especially when there are no looks of disapproval or derision cast over their encounter, because these are their first approaches to how to see and interpret reality.

We therefore think that it is very important to talk about performative

arts for the early years, and by early years we mean the first six years of age, the golden years of the first achievements with the mind and body; the years during which we start to recognise smells, voices, faces, expressions, give meanings, speak, walk, perceive sensations, feel emotions, understand that we are part of mankind. It is extremely important because during this stage of life everything happens for the first time, the first memories and the "imprinting" process shape the very personal ways in which we approach and react to new and unknown things. These are "newborn" ways of relating to experiences, ever influencing the ones that, slowly, will be built in life thanks to personal experiences, family, school, work, friends, society and the media.

An open or closed attitude towards what is new will also depend on whether we have experienced happiness, joy, spontaneity, naturalness or well-being during the earliest stages of life and in the relationships between ourselves and others, ourselves and the world. This is the reason why early and diverging experiences with artists and art are so necessary.

This is the reason why it is essential to make young children experience the symbolic and metaphorical dimensions and to make their willingness to consider things from other points of view stronger and stronger.

Artistic experiences are deep, existential experiences, able to give immediate sense and meaning to different aspects of a child's personality and to later enrich it.

Actors, dancers, musicians and story-tellers bring shapes, signs, symbols, metaphors, possible meanings, messages, ideas and thoughts, delivering them to young boys and girls. These young children, so curious and sensitive in response, get closer to experiencing and understanding their sense of the world through such stimuli. Children pick them up, keep the memories of them alive and are able to re-elaborate them, to build new, challenging meanings: this is a gift for artists, if they are attentive, sensitive, listening. Children are able to move them with their words, comments, reactions, which reveal the unpredictability of the links occurring in their minds: assonances, contrasts and references to previous experiences close to them or very far away from the ones they possibly imagine.

The artist who addresses an audience of very young children has to be in a "state of grace", that is, a state of absolute and free

willingness to make the most of their sensibility, of the emotional ability and the symbolic power of their art. At the same time, they have to be extremely open to welcome the children's impalpable and intense feedback. It is a careful way of using our own communicative and expressive skills; it is a sensitive way of being in harmony with children, a special willingness to share artistic communication in a "give-and-take" dialectic. To give our own visions and to receive feedback, fresh thoughts that children return to the artist in a real circle of communication and that open doors to new meanings and provide the artist with new horizons, offer new territories to explore, suggest new subjects and new ideas to work on, in order to create new stories, new dances, new sounds.

It is difficult to say why artists decide to devote themselves to young children. They reach this point in the strangest and most varied of ways, guided by an urge to represent and portray their visions of the world, for ideal and political reasons, perhaps spontaneously by personal choice. Whatever the reason, the communication between artist and child can be conveyed only if a genuine empathic contact between them is created.

As messengers of art and life, artists offer their performances to the little ones as precious bits of art, gifts, symbols of human culture, beauty and creativity.

How can we tell an artistic message is good? We would like to use Hundertwasser's words – who was a painter, performer, architect and representative of the Austrian artistic "vanguard" of the 20th century – to define a good painting:

"... When it is full of magic, when it makes you feel happy, when it makes you laugh or cry, when it is able to trigger something inside of us¹. [...] Art should be positive, free, romantic; beautiful as a jewel, something we should always need."²

Knowledge about performative arts cannot, in our opinion, be "taught"; it should instead be "cultivated". We think it can be acquired by children if there are offers, proposals, challenges that can support the children's potentialities with the right space, timing and substance; potentialities that are innate in children enabling them to build and discover symbolic and expressive forms. This can happen if there is an adult able to take them by the hand and

1 H. Rand, *Hundertwasser*, Taschen, Köln, 2007, p. 154.

2 *Ibid.*, p.197.

guide them through a personal exploration into expressive and communicative possibilities; offers, proposals, projects, challenges able to connect with the ways and rhythms of construction of thoughts and knowledge typical of the early stages of life – which are in constant evolution.

If special attention is paid to relational and emotional aspects, this can facilitate empathy, mutual listening and shared participation – which are vital while entering the world of performative arts, as well as of live communicative and artistic performances, where the essence is the meeting of one subject with another, and the approach and integration of two worlds.

We are referring, here, to an adult subject, i.e. the artist, but also the educator, whose training has allowed them to cultivate sensibility and knowledge in the field of expression and who offers an artistic kind of communication, made of meaningful, new and out-of-the-ordinary content. In this case, the recipient of the message is a young child, experiencing listening, watching and participating in an artistic performance for the very first time. It is their “première” of theatre, dance, live music.

For children, this means entering a completely unexplored land, discovering signs never seen before, side by side with others that remind them of known meanings: it therefore implies expanding their view of the world.

In a new communicative situation – as the one of an artistic performance may be – the fact of being close to a “reference adult” (the educator, the teacher, a parent) and of sharing the show together with a group of equals, makes them feel more confident, producing pleasant and amazing situations that allow children to accept novelty, even though it has a strong emotional impact.

For these reasons, we believe that cultural novelties – experiences “different” from the usual and daily ones – and unexpected “meetings” can contribute to the enrichment of personality and the development of creativity.

And, with regard to the meaning of creativity, we would like to quote Piero Bertolini’s thoughts, theoretician of phenomenological pedagogy and founder of the magazine “*Infanzia*”: “...creativity is the ability of the individual to go beyond the “already given”, the “already done”, the “already conquered” and in this perspective their real existential horizon is represented by that which is possible,

by the future, by transformation, by change. In this context, it is also the ability to build novelty in any field or in specific fields of knowledge and culture, taking what already exists as a starting point; ... it is the ability of the individual of not being satisfied with what is at their disposal, and of seeing the limitations and qualities of such things. It is therefore the ability to follow alternative and unconventional routes – that may sometimes be unexpected and unpredictable - in their thoughts, behaviours, feelings."³

According to Bertolini, the history of mankind and its constant evolution makes us think that every single human being has innate creative skills, but only as an "existential possibility": "... these skills can, in fact, fully develop or not, they can develop only partially or with low intensity; or the individual can give up on using it, lose it, let someone else take it from them... Creativity is something real, and is strictly related to education... to develop fully, it must be educated..."⁴

THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF EDUCATIONAL AND SCHOOL SERVICES IN ITALY

If we take a general look at the Nidi d'infanzia⁵ and Scuole dell'infanzia⁶ in Italy, we can say that in our country we can find state-of-the-art and backward situations coexisting, and this is symptomatic of strong contradictions and different ways of interpreting and putting into practice what we call "politics".

We will focus on the Emilia Romagna region, where we live and work; it is an Italian region offering one of the widest ranges of educational and cultural services for children.

We believe that respect and attention to childhood, the acknowledgement of children's needs and potentialities, the visibility of scientific research, the scope of childhood policies, the organisational and pedagogical models of educational services, the training activities for educators and teachers, team work, pedagogical co-ordination and the participation of parents and

3 P. Bertolini, La nascita della creatività nel bambino, in "Infanzia", n° 3, November-December 1991, p. 16.

4 Ibid., p. 17.

5 Nido d'infanzia (literally "infancy nest") is the Italian educational service for children from 0 to 3 years old.

6 Scuola dell'infanzia (literally "childhood school") is the current Italian name for the educational service for children from 3 to 6 years old.

citizens in the management of services (and these are all basic aspects of the education system in Emilia Romagna) are amongst the most significant indicators for the quality of a social system. And we think that now in Italy, more than ever and after another change of government, it is necessary to re-design a synergy in the “public system” – among state, regional and local authorities – in order to implement institutional frameworks, make laws and provide guidelines that will welcome, promote, integrate and value the contributions that “private entities” can make – associations, organisations, subjects – to build a society in which it is possible to create places where children can live and grow up; in which it is possible to create educational and cultural services designed for children and, as a consequence, the future of society. .

Nidi d'infanzia and educational services from 0 to 3 years. Main national regulations

Nidi d'infanzia are educational services for the youngest children, those from age 0-3.

They are usually organised in sections, divided by age: in the “Junior” section there are children from three to 12 months of age; in the “Intermediate” one there are those from 12- 24 months and the “Senior” section those from 24 -36 months.

The situation is actually more complicated than this: not all the Nidi have a “Junior” section, and in this case children do not enter the school before turning the age of one. Moreover, depending on the different Municipal Regulations, in the “Junior” section there can be children older than three, six or nine months. The organisation of the sections can be different from the one described above; in some cases there are four groups: Junior, Junior/Medium (“toddlers”), Medium and Senior, or there might even be mixed sections.

Apart from the organisational differences, Nidi d'infanzia have built up their own pedagogical identity, becoming the most requested “traditional” educational service amongst families with children under the age of three. Over the past few years, Nidi d'infanzia have been supported by several “experimental” educational services which, however, do not replace traditional Nidi.

As we have already mentioned, internal organisation depends on the different Municipal Regulations. Other parameters, for example those regarding structural standards and equipment

for staff, instead follow the different Regional Regulations. It can therefore be useful to make reference to the institutional and legislative framework.

The national law governing Nidi d'infanzia (Law no. 1044 dated 6.12.1971) is called "*Piano quinquennale per l'istituzione degli asili nido comunali con il concorso dello Stato*" ("Five-year plan for the establishment of municipal crèches with the participation of the State"). It is the first time that the law has ratified the involvement of the state in the sphere of early education, thus acknowledging both the social value of motherhood and the right of every child to access Nidi. The same law gives the regions the power to establish the criteria for building, managing and controlling the facilities. However, their internal management is entrusted to the municipalities - local entities closer to the citizens and therefore better able to meet their needs – seeing decentralisation as a strong and innovative element.

This law represents a key point in the policy regarding the institutions for early years in our country; yet early education has not acquired the social value it deserves. For this to happen it would require action at both an institutional and collective level. On the other hand, a strong and constant political will is needed to ensure that the law is applied. And, in fact, the enactment of Law no.1044 immediately produced very different effects in the country, and these differences were visible mainly in the north and the south.

Let us now take into consideration some recent data, taken from research carried out by the National Centre of Documentation and Analysis for Childhood and Youth.

In 2006, the total number of Nidi d'infanzia in the whole country was 4,885, increasing considerably over the past ten years. The number of children attending Nidi equals 10% of the potential attendance, and it is constantly increasing.

Despite the considerable increase in services, there are still some critical factors:

1. territorial inequalities, that strongly influence the opportunity to access Nidi d'infanzia in the various Italian regions (with percentages of availability that range from 24% in Emilia Romagna to 2% in Calabria)
2. the system's lack of efficiency, which results in waiting lists that are longer where there is a larger number of services; i.e. where they are more accessible to families

It is therefore clear that the Lisbon Objective, which aimed at reaching 33% of potential attendance by 2010, is difficult to attain, as it requires a very strong political and financial commitment.

It needs to be said, however, that if the Lisbon Objective is a quantitative type of objective - surely important to enhance the European development policies for early childhood services - it should be supported by qualitative objectives.

In this respect, we think we can say that the Nidi of our country are, on the whole, high standard services with some peaks of excellence, in particular in some regions where the pedagogical model is cited in reference by scholars and experts.

Along with the reference standards we have briefly summarised, a more recent Law (no. 285 dated 2.08.1997) has to be mentioned. It is called "*Disposizione per la promozione di diritti e opportunità per l'infanzia e l'adolescenza*" ("Provisions for the promotion of the rights and opportunities for childhood and youth") and it has fostered the innovation and experimentation of socio-educational services for early childhood.

Thanks to this law, several services (that included educational, ludic, cultural and social aggregation activities) have been implemented in the whole country for children from 0-3 years and their families, organised in different ways according to regional criteria that allow for flexibility.

The system of 0 - 3 childcare services in Emilia Romagna

To further the view we would like to present, this paragraph focuses on Emilia Romagna, the region widely regarded as the national leader in relation to its educational services. Over time it has developed good educational theories and practices in order to engage with the most significant outcomes that have emerged in other countries.

Considering the complexity of the offers, and the developments of the past few years, we can easily speak of a system of 0 - 3 childcare services: back in 1989, thanks to the regional Law 27 (long before the already mentioned national Law 285 dated 1997), our region saw the birth of the so-called "new typology" services, which supplemented Nidi d'infanzia, initially called Centri Gioco (Play Centres), and often offered families the opportunity for part-time childcare within their infrastructure.

These services were designed in response to the deep changes

in the families' structure over those years: isolation, families with fewer members, growing numbers of families with one child, single parents, women having children at a later stage, high investment and high expectations towards children, lack of reference from older generations and a sense of deficiency from parents; with the result that families now look to the educational services not only as being a safe place for their own children but also as a space in which to meet, share and consult on their role as parents.

In this context, the current regional Law 1 dated 2000, modified within the Law 8 dated 2004, provides regulations for the introduction of services for early childhood, unifying all 0–3 services, both publicly and privately managed, into one framework. Through this regulation, the whole structure of services for early childhood is reorganised, embracing the most recent innovations but also introducing a system of rules that takes into account the history of thirty years of local culture⁷.

It is a complex and strict regulation whose summarised key points are the following:

- to define the structural and organisational criteria that are necessary in order to manage Nidi and integrated services
- to acknowledge the legal role of pedagogic coordinator as guarantee of the quality of the system of services
- to validate a culture and a pedagogy of integration aimed at preventing any form of disadvantage
- to promote a system of public and private services rotating around a system of rules that applies to both
- to implement procedures that allow private schools to access regional funds and join public schools in the system that measures quality according to various methods of evaluation

The mixed integrated system of kindergartens. Evolution at a national and regional level

Scuole dell'infanzia, once called Scuole materne (literally "mothering schools"), welcome children aged 3 - 6. Each class is composed of 25 children of the same or different ages and is managed by two teachers who take turns in the morning and

⁷ Cfr. Sandra Benedetti, *L'arte di sostenere un sistema di servizi educativi oltre che progettarli e realizzarli...*, in *Infanzia* n. 12, December 2005.

afternoon over a period of time that is generally between 8 am and 4.30 pm.

Scuole dell'infanzia, although not compulsory, represent the first step in the primary school system. They are spread across almost the entire country and are attended by 96% of children in that age group.

They have their own didactic and pedagogic autonomy and their aim is to promote the development of the children's identity, autonomy, competence and social skills, in continuity with the Nidi d'infanzia and primary schools.

Schools for children aged three to six years old have a complex but rich and interesting history: it has its roots in the actions of philanthropic intellectuals at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it starts expanding through the work of parishes and municipalities, and reaches its peak between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century with the high profile educational models of the Agazzi sisters and Maria Montessori⁸.

After the war, new types of Scuole dell'infanzia were founded, thanks to local authorities that were strongly involved in the social and cultural sectors, and with the Law 444 dated 18th March 1968, the first real national regulation, the state Scuole materne were instituted.

Today, schools for early childhood are an evolving public integrated system, composed of a variety of institutional and organisational models promoted by different entities: the State, local governments, private organisations (either religious or not).

Data from 2003 show the presence, at a national level, of 54.7% of state schools and 43.3% comprising public schools managed by local authorities and private schools, mainly religious ones.

⁸ Rosa Agazzi. At the end of the nineteenth century, in Brescia, Rosa and sister Carolina, founded a garden for early childhood aimed at improving the Italian experience of crèches inspired by Froebel. Founding values of the Agazzi method were: close relationship between the child and their natural and family environment, children's education through practical everyday life experiences, use of a variety of materials brought in and shared by children, which were also used for didactic aims, linguistic and musical education.

In 1907 Maria Montessori founded the first "Children's home" in Rome, a purpose-built space with the interior designed to meet and enable the required and the growing developmental needs of the children. It supported a "do it yourself" philosophy of learning, encouraging children to dedicate themselves to serious tasks that require effort and concentration. It was from here that the use of structured material was developed, scientifically studied in relation to the perceptive-sensorial development of young children.

From September 2007, new regulations have been introduced; they regulate the so called "bridge" or "spring" sections which include children between the ages of two and three; they are part of the Scuole dell'infanzia as per agreement reached at the Unified Conference of State and Regions.

This new educational initiative is supported by the State, the municipalities and by the private sector, and should be considered as a socio-educational integrative service to the current structures of Scuole dell'infanzia and Nidi d'infanzia.

As far as Emilia Romagna is concerned, we can talk about "management pluralism" which is balanced in terms of the number of schools for children between three and six years of age.

The first municipal schools started in the '60's, sometimes through a transformation of those schools that were formed after the war through citizens' initiatives.

Thanks to the political and cultural history of this region, and in particular to the active presence of the left-wing government, constant debate was encouraged at local level amongst scholars, university professors, administrators, teachers, parents, representatives of women's movements, civil society associations and organisations. This gave rise to the creation of municipal schools.

These schools, defined as "experimental", draw inspiration from the pedagogical thoughts and ideals of great scholars and experts in matters of education (above all, Bruno Ciari and Loris Malaguzzi) and design educational models of very high quality, known and admired at an international level⁹.

Besides the schools managed at local level, state Scuole materne have developed since 1968, together with the "old tradition"

9 Bruno Ciari was a primary school teacher in the 1950s. He later became Councillor for Education in Bologna and in 1996, director of the schools of the same municipality. He was inspired by Freinet's principles of popular pedagogy and by the revisited activism of the Marxist pedagogy, taking part in the Movement for Educational Cooperation. In the 1960's his ideas formed the foundation of the "new typology" kindergartens, and were also at the centre of the new elementary school system that introduced afternoon classes.

Loris Malaguzzi, teacher, pedagogue and psychologist, founded eight self-managed "people's crèches" in Reggio Emilia in the 1950's. These were later taken over by the municipality and the municipal pedagogical Centre. Introducing the pedagogical system used by crèches and kindergartens in Reggio Emilia, he was amongst the founders of the National Group for crèches and kindergartens in the 1980's, and has organised many conferences throughout Italy. The experience of Reggio Emilia, studied and imitated all over the world, is based on the need to explore "the one hundred languages of children" within the school.

private schools, mainly Catholic. The Agazzi model is the most common pedagogic inspiration, together with the Montessori one in state schools.

Over the last decade the “mixed integrated system” has become increasingly widespread and widely accepted, mainly because of the continuous and mounting economic problems which have resulted in a cut of resources and have limited the investment of local authorities in public spending.

As a consequence, there has been growing demand to shift sections from local authorities to the State, and new conventions have been signed between local and private bodies with consequent funding and local support (canteens, transport) to private schools. Despite all this, in the biggest cities of our region which have a long educational history and tradition, municipal schools are still the most widespread.

0 - 6 educational and school services in Bologna

Starting with the national, and working through to a regional context, we have analysed the educational system here in Bologna, a city with 373,000 inhabitants, capital of the Emilia Romagna region. We look at the number of places offered both for the 0 – 3 services and the Scuole materne¹⁰.

Available places in the services for early childhood in Bologna

Type of Service	Number of Services	Number of places
Full-time municipal Nidi d'infanzia	50	2.259
Part-time municipal Nidi d'infanzia	4	341
Full-time state-recognised Nidi d'infanzia	16	530
Municipal centres for children and parents	10	245
Municipal spaces for children	2	36
Municipal “spring” sections	1	20
Private “spring” sections	12	147
Family educators	4	12
Door-to-door educators (Small educational groups)	8	30

¹⁰ Data from the year 2007.

The total public offer for Nidi d'infanzia is 3,130 places for children.

405 families avail themselves of economic contributions towards early childhood (contributions for enrolling in private educational services and for baby-sitting services).

As far as the Nidi d'infanzia and other 0 – 3 services are concerned, the percentage of offer against the potential demand is nearly 45%.

Available places in the integrated council system of Scuole dell'infanzia in Bologna

Type of School	Number of sections	Number of enrolled children
Municipal Scuole dell'infanzia	204	5.060
State Scuole dell'infanzia	58	1.385
State-recognised private Scuole dell'infanzia	71	1759
Total	333	8.204

As for the Scuole dell'infanzia, all requests from residents are accepted within the offer of the integrated system.

THE PEDAGOGICAL PROJECT OF NIDI D'INFANZIA AND SCUOLE DELL'INFANZIA

The educational model of the Nidi d'infanzia

As an example of the foundations of the pedagogical model of Nidi d'infanzia in our country, we refer to the educational Regulations of the crèche in the Municipality of Bologna.

This is a document approved by the City Council in Bologna in 1993 and still very significant in our times.

According to this document, the key words that characterise Nidi are:

- entirety, as an idea of the development of the child where affections, knowledge and exercise evolve together;
- play, recognised as the main way children express themselves, gain knowledge and act upon reality;
- project development, to allow educators to achieve

- a shared working method, characterised by common thoughts and intentions;
- relation, because children learn and grow thanks to the quality of their relationships, and attention to relations is at the heart of the educational work (Nidi d'infanzia as a system of complex relations);
- flexibility, as a relational and organisational ability of the educators to adapt their actions to the rhythms and needs of the children, through observation and a cooperative communicative style;
- difference, in its broadest meaning of difference of culture, sex and evolution paths involving skills and competences.

Many later documents, produced by the municipal pedagogical co-ordination, gather thoughts and theories about the development of the Nidi as pedagogical project. Many of them underline the central role of children's expressivity, of the multiple languages in communication and the importance of imagination as a real dimension of knowledge.

All publications are available at the local Laboratorio di Documentazione e Formazione¹¹ (Laboratory for Documentation and Training), a specialised and dedicated venue for technical pedagogical debates, that provides support to a variety of training programmes. The Lab hosts school visits, organises presentations and training, and cooperates with other organisations and institutions to promote initiatives that highlight the educational role of pre-school and school services within the community.

Reference standards for the curriculum of Scuole dell'infanzia

Since 1968 - when the state Scuole materne were founded through Law 444 - various governments and ministers of education from different political backgrounds have been in power; therefore, the laws they have introduced have led to legislative changes expressing different priorities.

In terms of curriculum too, the "*Orientamenti delle attività educative*" ("Regulations governing educational activities") dated 1969 have been followed by other national laws, that demonstrate elements of both continuity and discontinuity. In some cases, because of the speed with which they were enforced and

¹¹ Email address: LabDocFormIstruzione@comune.bologna.it
Online catalogue: www.comune.bologna.it/istruzione/laboratorio/index.php

then replaced, they did not lead to real changes in the schools' curriculum. National regulations have not only represented a point of reference for the state Scuole dell'infanzia, but have also inspired the regulations of local and private schools.

If we look at all the documents that defined the curricula for the Scuole dell'infanzia – the *Orientamenti per la Scuola materna*, dated 1969, *Orientamenti programmatici* dated 1991 and *Indicazioni per il curriculum per la Scuola dell'infanzia* dated 2007 (Regulations for the curriculum of the Scuola dell'infanzia) – we can see how they pay particular attention to the multiple dimensions of the child's personality, and underline the importance of play and creativity in the educational process. As far as expressive languages are concerned, on the other hand, communication and art are often subject to contradictory interpretations. Therefore, within the educational processes of the different schools, many different approaches have been trialled.

In the *Orientamenti per la Scuola materna*, dated 1969, expressive activities are included in the area of "free expression", with an affectionate-emotional connotation. Those were the years of theatrical animation. Pedagogical and didactic values of freedom from social influences were given to theatre; being involved in theatre meant taking part in dramaturgy, but also painting, music, singing, playing.

In the *Orientamenti programmatici* of 1991 considerable space is dedicated to the definition of experiences, areas of knowledge that were broader than the mere disciplines. The experience field called "Messages, forms and media" includes: "...all activities that relate to communication and expression with hands, sounds and music, drama and theatre, audiovisual supports and their constant interaction."

In this respect: "Schools are committed to embrace and use the visual, body and sound language that are most accessible to the children in the most conscious way..."

In terms of theatrical language, it is stated: "Dramatic and theatrical activities are aimed at developing regulated processes of identification through actions that, involving children through participation, enrich their experiences on different levels... The activities to be introduced involve free and guided symbolic games, games with masks, the construction and use of puppets, theatrical shows, narrations and everything that can help children

in the process of identification and their control of sensibility."

As far as the adults' role is concerned, it is important that enough space is left to the children's fantasy and creativity: "It is not about teaching how to act but to create situations whereby the child's own playing experience has the shapes and substance of "doing theatre". A very important role is therefore played by the teacher's availability, their competence in the use of animation techniques and their ability to involve the children in every step of the narration, from the verbal to the actual theatrical one."

Great attention is also paid to the language of sound and music: "Activities related to sound and music are aimed at developing musical sensibility, at encouraging the use of natural resources and at stimulating personal and direct exercises, also providing the basics of choral music."

The suggested work paths are articulated and detailed: "...awareness of their own sound image; exploration of the sound environment; use of the sounds produced by the voice and by the body as a whole; use of objects and traditional and electronic instruments; use of recording and amplifying instruments; songs learning; invention of simple melodies; sonorisation of tales and stories; rhythmic activities (dance); basic, ludic representations of sounds; games aimed at learning and using musical rules." Finally, going through the paper published by the Ministry of Education in September 2007, *"Indicazioni per il curricolo per la Scuola dell'infanzia e per il primo ciclo"* ("Suggestions for the curriculum of Scuola dell'infanzia and primary school"), you can see how the foundation is similar to the one in the *Orientamenti* dated 1969.

In the latest national regulations, the educational path from 3 to 14 years is characterised by a unified approach. The aim of the school is "to encourage children's curiosity, surprise of knowledge, tendency to mix knowledge with fantasy, creativity, ingenuity...". With regard to Scuole dell'infanzia and to the topics we are especially interested in, the following statement appears: "The body has an expressive and communicative potential that is revealed in a language characterised by its own structure and rule, which the child learns through specific learning paths: mimic gestures substitute or support words, keep the conversation or finish it, express feelings and emotions, accompany musical activities." In the paragraph called "Languages, creativity, expression" it

is underlined that: "Children tend to express their emotions and thoughts with imagination and creativity: art gives this tendency an orientation, educates towards aesthetic appreciation and pleasure for beauty."

TRAINING FOR EDUCATORS AND TEACHERS

Basic professional training and continuous professional development

The professionalism of Nidi d'infanzia educators and Scuola dell'infanzia teachers is undoubtedly related to the quality of basic professional training on the one hand and to continuing education on the other, both aimed at a permanent kind of training, conceived as a process that accompanies educators and teachers during their entire professional activity, and as a tool for implementing changes in the school system.

In Italy, basic professional training has been characterised by a lack of homogeneity.

In the past, staff working in Scuole dell'infanzia had a diploma issued by a high school specialising in education, which lasted three years (sometimes four) and was often private.

On the other hand, those working in Nidi d'infanzia were often paramedics and had a technical high school diploma or simply an upper secondary school diploma and a certificate of eligibility obtained by attending specific regional training courses.

Sometimes, both in Nidi and in Scuole dell'infanzia, there were graduate teachers who had attended high schools specialising in pedagogy or science; some of them attained their degree while they were already working.

The scientific debate that has followed the cutting-edge pedagogical research since the '70's has, for years now, focused on the need for a university training for all teachers, including those dealing with the 0-6 age group.

The most important point was that the courses should not be separate, and the creation of a common, initial phase of studies was followed by a two-year specialised course.

We actually had to wait until 1999 to finally see a reform of the university system that introduced three-year university courses, among them being the "*Corso di Laurea in Educatore di Nido e di Comunità infantile*" ("Degree Course for Educator for Nidi d'infanzia"). In 2003, after the success of the courses that some universities had started at the end of the '90's, a four-year

university education was finally made compulsory for Scuola dell'infanzia and primary school teachers. The degree course in Primary Education is divided into a common two-year period and a specialised two-year period, and it includes a compulsory practical training period, so as to achieve a closer relationship between academic education and fieldwork.

Both degree courses are aimed at training experts in disciplines like psychology, pedagogy, sociology and anthropology, focusing mainly on the children's growth and developmental processes. They also aim to standardise the job titles of Nidi d'infanzia educator and Scuola dell'infanzia teacher, trying to respect and keep differences clear: the different ages of children, in fact, are constantly evolving, requiring the adults involved to adopt different approaches and knowledge, yet share the same sensibility, attention, willingness, curiosity, training and professionalism.

The degree courses also focus on the themes of body language, emotions, affection and their importance in building thoughts and identity, as well as on educational and play activities, to acquire linguistic and communicative knowledge, motor skills, musical and graphical education.

It is not about training "know-it-alls", but rather professionals able to interact with artists and people involved in the sphere of culture.

As far as training in the field of performative arts is concerned, a very significant experience we would like to mention is the one undertaken by the University of Bologna for the Degree Course in Primary Education. It is called "Music and Movement Workshop" and its objectives are to acquire knowledge about music, dance and their possible interactions. From a methodological point of view, it offers interdisciplinary approaches that combine listening and producing music; observing and producing movement; the creative pair music/movement to combine the two languages.¹²

Since the '70's, when public Nidi and Scuole dell'infanzia were established, continuous professional development has been seen as a means by which to fill in the gaps of basic professional training. In other words, it had the objective of redesigning educators and teachers, providing them with creativity and dynamism, making them aware of the children's needs and fostering their interest

12 M.R. Addressi, *Musica e danza: formazione degli insegnanti e curriculum*. In S. Borroni, M. Colombini, *La danza nella scuola fra arte e educazione*, Conference proceedings, Teatro Giuditta Pasta, Saronno, 25/26 March 2004.

in research and experimentation. It has also made professionals more willing to assess and document their work, to bring it outside the school, to interact with parents.

We also think it important to mention the role played by pedagogical journals in our country, especially as far as continuous training is concerned: they are precious tools for the diffusion of the scientific debate that took place in a few universities (in particular, the University of Bologna) and of the ideas that enlightened and oriented the cutting-edge experiences carried out in the kindergartens and crèches of several Italian towns (Reggio Emilia, Bologna, Modena, Carpi, Ravenna, Ferrara in Emilia Romagna; Turin, Milan, Rome, Pistoia, etc...).

Ideas, inspirations, discoveries, educational practices were illustrated, compared, discussed at international events and conferences, and were then published in the national journals. The basic elements of those pilot experiences became starting points for reflection, discussion and investigation for single teachers and for teams during didactic planning, thus introducing innovation into Nidi d'infanzia and Scuole dell'infanzia.

Over the past few years, constant professional updating and continuous professional training have been fostering the creation of events and experiences on psycho-pedagogical themes, focusing mainly on its methodological aspects, languages, scope and didactics.

Along with lessons and conferences, action-research workshops have also taken place aimed at positively influencing educational practice. The purpose was, and is, to turn school into a culturally creative environment and to make teachers fond of research, to make them carry out "experiments" and invest their energies in their work, combining professional skills with reflection upon didactic practice.

Continuous professional training is a complex cultural and organisational process that involves institutions at a national, regional, provincial and local level.

Recently, in order to create continuity, networking has been enhanced, involving municipal, public and officially recognised Scuole dell'infanzia and Nidi d'infanzia belonging to the same municipal and provincial area.

Law number 53/2003 entrusts the teachers' continuous professional training to universities, though in a dynamic relationship with

schools.

The important role played by Regional Institutes for Educational Research is also worth mentioning, especially with regard to its monitoring and promotion of developments made through research. These institutes (formerly called "Regional Institutes for Educational Research, Experimentation and Updating") were created by the Ministry of Public Education in 1974 – one for each Italian region – and have undertaken research and documentation, in order to create a "database", a sort of memory for the future, making all the material collected available. These institutes, once independent, have been under the control of the National Agency for the Development of School Independence since 2007.

Continuous professional training in the field of expression and art. The Bologna experience

In our town, the municipality formulates an annual plan for reviews and training activities, based on the needs expressed by teachers and educators.

Along with the courses and working groups on psycho-pedagogical themes regarding the relationship with children and families or professional team-working, there is a wide range of offers, among which educators and teachers can choose, according to their needs and interests.

Some of the training courses promoted last year included:

- Writing workshop: creative writing workshop led by Francesca Ricci, based on the Ateliers d'Ecriture of Elisabeth Bing
- The rite of storytelling: multi-year workshop led by Milena Bernardi on the complex function of narration in educational relationships
- From breath to voice: workshop led by Miriam Bardini on the expressive potential of voice and body, to rediscover the pleasure of telling and listening to stories
- Communicating without words: workshop on non-verbal communication led by P. Naldi and M. Zunarelli
- The five senses: workshop on sensory exploration (tactile room, footsteps and traces, map of smells, in the heart of sounds, sounding animals,...), organised by the Association "Artebambini"

- Between the sounding pages... the space of silence: workshop by Nicoletta Zuccheri, to explore and play with the rhythm of sounds and silences
- Scribbles in childhood and art: by C. Valentinuzzi, on the evolution of graphic sign
- Actions on a white sheet: workshop led by painter Albert Barreda, with theoretical and practical activities on the language of images in the 20th century
- A theatrical alphabet: multi-year and multi-level workshop led by Roberto Frabetti of Teatro Testoni Ragazzi (1st level: personal research to make one's own gestural and sound-related alphabet; 2nd level: organisation of theatrical workshops with children)

They are all proposals aimed at strengthening the educators' and teachers' cultural and artistic sensibility, at raising their awareness about what is offered to children.

As Juan Mata reminds us, mankind has, over the centuries, produced great artistic treasures; as teachers and educators we have to choose what is best and give it to the children, we have to create a dialogue between all the best languages of the adult world and childhood.

The world we create while "doing" art, theatre and literature is a world full of meanings. We have to "load our knowledge on our backs" and transfer it to childhood. To communicate with children, we need to use our best language, not the easiest.

What kind of training is therefore needed for teachers and educators in order for them to make this come true? Should we combine specific professional training with artistic experience (trying to avoid, however, pretending to be artists ourselves) or run the risk of confusing our roles? We do not believe that artistic training can be kept separate from workshops. In order to find the expressive power of body language inside us, we need to experiment and challenge ourselves, without giving up at the first hurdle, since workshops represent a context that is, by definition, experimental. This is our experience in the field of theatre and we cannot imagine anything different.

What we find especially interesting is the approach adopted in workshops, that involves being open to an exchange of ideas and opinions, as well as to dialogue (from the Greek word *dia*: through, let something through). Workshops should be conceived

as meeting points, sometimes as clashing points, as places where things are built and destroyed, where boundaries are pushed, to finally see where an idea may lead us. Some “final products” are kept, some others thrown away, and particular attention is paid both to the product and to the whole process. It is a good training for human and professional relationships.

We think that the theme of training and its influence on professional activity is crucial. In particular, if the kind of training carried out does not simply “teach” techniques, but is rather aimed at producing changes in the subjects being trained, then the path will be longer, less straight, less controllable.

The workshop involves teachers and educators, but children are always present; they are in the teachers’ heads, in their eyes, in their hands... we do not need to remind them of this. It will be up to them to decide when it is time to bring what they have “learnt” to the children and they will do it with all the communicative power that comes from that experience.

On the other hand, if the training programme is effective, then it will be transferred to our daily practice, naturally, almost without being noticed. It may be that we are able to pay more attention to a movement, a tone of voice, a sign on a piece of paper, to any of the many forms (often non-verbal) that children use to communicate with us.

The most important point is the less obvious: as we said, a wider culture and a higher artistic sensibility will make educators more aware of the “products” to be offered to children and of how to offer them. Teachers with a strong artistic background will be a very important resource for the school they work in, as they will be able to offer the children high-standard products on a regular basis, and not just occasionally.

To conclude, we believe that the most crucial aspect is that children should live close to adults able to filter the tremendous amount of information children are exposed to; adults able to “clean up” the perceptive universe that surrounds them, to critically evaluate the world of objects, images and activities relating to childhood. A child safeguarded by an educator who is concerned about the “quality of daily life” will perhaps be less surprised when experiencing art; however, if it is true that the “sense of beauty” is a matter of education, they will be able to enjoy it, and we hope that this will be so.



Photos by staff Nido San Donato - Bologna

Examples of training experiences for educators and teachers in the field of performative arts

While describing a few training experiences, we would like to focus on the aspects that aim to expand and enrich the inner creative space of the adults who work in Nidi d'infanzia and Scuole dell'infanzia. We have noticed how personal research and fieldwork can help teachers and educators develop a greater awareness of the joy and energy performative arts can provide.

When daily practice is influenced by a meaningful training programme, then the creative space (real or symbolic) shared by children and adults can only be richer.

Performative languages can only be approached through a direct contact with art and the professionals who practice it.

In training, it is essential that the artist, the actor, the dancer, the musician has something to offer, but also that they collect and re-elaborate suggestions, ideas, reasons, and ensure that workshops are made of images, actions and movements created by the participants.

We think that teachers and educators experience personally the pleasure of telling something with words, movements, voice and body, face expressions, sounds and music, producing images that belong to their inner world. An original, simple and poetic expression. They will create situations in which to explore, together with children, the expressive potentialities of individuals and groups.

Storytelling

At the last Festival "Visioni di futuro, visioni di teatro"¹³, actress and storyteller Miriam Bardini from the company Nautai Teatro explained that her growing fascination in exploring what it feels like to enter into a state of amazement and wonder – a typical characteristic of early childhood – influenced her decision to devote herself to creating theatre for the very young.

In her shows, storytelling plays a major role: it is an essential kind of narrative that deals with simple and real topics. Before creating the show "Birth Canticle", Miriam Bardini had attended a Nido d'infanzia for three years. She wanted to get closer to young children, observe their patterns of behaviour, how they touch objects, how they relate to their educators, in order to reflect and transform her observations more truthfully on stage.

In 2000, she created a three-year training project for Nidi d'infanzia educators in the Municipality of Florence. It included different stages (Fairytale, Enchantments, Dreams) and in 2004 it was awarded a prize by ETI (Italian Theatre Board) in recognition of its high quality.

Among the workshops Miriam Bardini created, the Hansel and Gretel Fairytale is worth mentioning for its evocative power and the care of aesthetic research.

Bardini maintains that training workshops are, both for those who lead them and those who take part in them, occasions for re-positioning ourselves at the centre of our existence: her workshops are mainly focused on how to listen to our inner voice, how to listen to silences, whispers, blows; to voices telling stories. They aim to approach and elaborate our personal feelings and emotions, as well as re-discover storytelling and its function within popular tradition.

For participants, to work with fairytales allows them to revisit the memory of their childhood, deep within them, to the stories they were told when very young, and thanks to this "full immersion", to become more aware of children's imagery.

13 "Visioni di futuro, visioni di teatro" is the Festival of theatre and culture for early childhood promoted by La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi of Bologna since 2004. In 2008 the fourth edition took place.

Dance

Sofia Quagiotto started her artistic career in Chorea, a dance company that was founded in Bologna at the end of the 1980s. For many years, she has shared and contributed to the development of the artistic research of this historical group, which combined contemporary dance with a specific methodology, called Modern-Creative Technique. It draws inspiration from principles that are oriented towards the development of body, mind and personality openness, towards movement creativity and interaction between arts. According to Quagiotto, in contemporary dance it is possible to work on physical aspects that differ from those of the classical dancer: each body has its own potential and every individual characteristic, lack of perfection itself, becomes of great interest for the creation of a group performance.

She is a woman who loves her art and is very authentic on stage. She believes that dance can transform bodies and teach them to be communicative, through a deep listening and a technique based on research, improvisation and composition. The body of the artist-trainer and the body of the trainee join a common path of internal analysis of gestures and movements, promoting creative uniqueness and respecting the interpretative level of the individual within the complexity of the group.

Sofia Quagiotto offers training programmes to educators and teachers of young children that approach the language of dance in a simple and natural way.

One programme aimed at educators of Nidi d'infanzia, for example, rediscovers lullabies and works on the act of cuddling, which is fundamental for those who work with young children. The singing of lullabies encourages you to listen to the body's potential, so that adult bodies change and learn how to communicate the pleasure of contact in a direct and natural way. Small children can immediately feel if a body welcomes them, rejects them, or is having fun, and instinctively know if they can trust it and abandon themselves to it.

As a dancer and performer in the field of visual arts, she is also involved in some research in the training sector, research that explores mail art, a free art popular all over the world and accessible to everybody, artists, housewives, children and teachers. Sonata per timbro, for example, is a workshop for educators and teachers working with early years that was presented at the 2007 festival

"Visioni di futuro, visioni di teatro". It is based on contemporary music, which takes as a starting point the sampling of the rhythms produced by mail stamps and poetic words, gestures, movements, photographs, messages, prints. The final performance involved both the use of particular stamps created by visual artists and the creation of original stamps from the participants. According to Quagiotto, each workshop's culminating performance essentially belongs to that particular group creating it, and in doing so leaves its participants with emotions of joy and satisfaction alongside the pleasure of performing in public, overcoming the fear of appearing in front of an audience.

Singing

A tiny infant is playing in his bed with a syllable he has recently learnt to pronounce, his open eyes seem to follow the sounds coming from the mouth.

A three year-old girl is cuddling her doll and whispers a lullaby, adapting intonation, rhythm and gestures, engaging in the symbolic game.

A small group of children are running around a garden imitating the sound of a siren so that the game is more realistic, simply because every part of their body wants to move: not only legs and arms, but the diaphragm too, with a powerful sound effect and aural response amongst the children which involves all the vibrations of their body.

Franca Mazzoli, pedagogue, passionate expert in children's vocal abilities and their sound and musical explorations, has recently published a paper titled *Cantar giocando*¹⁴, "Singing while playing", which documents an interesting training programme for educators and teachers and an action-research programme with children, carried out in Nidi d'infanzia and Scuole dell'infanzia in Bologna.

In childcare centres, it is possible to observe the vocal activities described above on a daily basis, because small children love singing and producing informal rhythms and melodies while playing. These vocal expressions are different from the singing activities that are guided by adults. In this respect, Franca Mazzoli points out: "If *Recitar giocando* ("Acting while playing") defines

¹⁴ Dossier "*Cantar giocando*", supplement no.1 to the magazine *Bambini*, June 2008.

a specific musical genre, opera, where the recitation of words is based on a specific intonation, Cantar giocando highlights how the voice is used in a particular way that is linked to the act of playing, a very frequent element of childhood".

The paper comments upon many experiences that are focused on the voice as a means of expression. Two significant projects cited in the paper include the VivaVoce, a two year training programme based on a concept of accordage (tuning of affections), suggested by Daniel Stern as a fundamental empathic process that is created from birth between mother and child through vocal dialogue, and that Michel Imberty highlights as an important component of musical education during childhood; and Canzoni per Pico, "Songs for Pico", a programme featuring a little bear character who visits children to collect, listen and record their own songs, with an outcome that includes some research on children's vocal abilities.

It is very difficult to sum up and describe the richness of these proposals and ideas, which are designed for educators and teachers to pay more attention to the significance of the specific vocal universe that children build on a daily basis, not only to communicate but also to play. A universe that, significantly, reveals a personal sound trace in the environment, because singing during play can tell us a lot about children's intimate and deepest feelings.

Theatre

Theatrical scribbles is an innovative research programme, included in the framework of a project with a wider scope that has, over the past 20 years, involved the childcare services of our town. The project is promoted by the Municipality of Bologna and Teatro Testoni Ragazzi and its members are artists, pedagogues and educators.

Roberto Frabetti - actor, writer, trainer - is the artistic supervisor of the project. For years, he has been carrying out theatrical research work for early years with competence and passion, characterised by unprecedented innovation. The main project activities involve the production of shows for children, training workshops on theatrical communication for educators and theatrical workshops with children.

The company started creating productions for very young

children in 1987. At the same time, they introduced the training workshops for educators. These were designed as opportunities or "training moments" for educators to meet and work together, practically. The training follows the basic principle that developing theatrical communication skills necessarily involves the willingness to challenge and discover an expressive physical body language. The initial group of educators with a shared passion have built, over time, very good inter-relational skills and they are now able to offer their children high quality theatrical experiences. These workshops continue, with new groups of practitioners more recently introduced to the programme.

In theatrical workshops for children, adults perform a short theatrical show and then children are "invited" - often implicitly - to join them and explore, touch, re-elaborate what they have just received. Adults encourage them trying not to dissolve the theatrical atmosphere. This kind of work is very complex and requires the right balance between action and waiting, the ability to observe and to give attention. It requires deep empathy with children and harmony amongst adults.

The main idea is that even a very young child can have something to say in such a challenging context. It is original and personal research of theatrical signs, or, during this stage, of theatrical scribbles.

These environments provide privileged points of view from which to observe the interaction between game and theatrical game, to reflect upon the difference between the two, to investigate the relationship between very young children and theatrical language.

"Theatrical action originates from the expressive need of an individual, which is a common element of any artistic action, and from the receptive need of another individual (or group). The actor's needs have to meet the audience's needs. Both subjects have to be aware of this mutual necessity and of the seriousness of their intentions"¹⁵. This is "the intentionality of the theatrical action, that is, the awareness that in that theatrical moment the

15 Roberto Frabetti, in: M. Manferrari, R. Frabetti, *Un alfabeto di 21 lettere. Appunti da un percorso tra il nido e il teatro*, Pendragon, Bologna, 2006.

Cfr. also Scarabocchi *teatrali dall'esperienza degli atelier con i bambini dei nidi d'infanzia*, edited by M. Manferrari, in collaboration with N. Fornasari and with the "Laboratorio di Documentazione e Formazione" of the Municipality of Bologna, supplement to no.10, December 2006, of the magazine "Bambini".

gazes, gestures and sounds that blend are not accidental but intentional.”¹⁶

Can this need, intentionality and expressive research belong to a very young child; a child aged two or three?

It is difficult to answer this question, but our experience tells us many things about the willingness of children to let themselves go in an environment that may be unusual, but that is surely close to their language and emotions; about their unexpected receptiveness, their willingness to challenge themselves, to welcome the adults' suggestions, to look for sounds, gestures and interactions that have the expressive power of a scribble.

Theatrical workshops are dynamic and constantly evolving: during the past few years, research has been focusing on simplicity and on the evocative and expressive power of voice and gestures. And the encounter with young children has been, once again, amazing because of their ability to take in the possible worlds adults offer them, and to return, often suddenly and unexpectedly, fragments of those worlds, transformed by a shared imagery.

There is still a long way ahead: we have to continue and develop the experiment, from a theoretical level to practice, and then back again, enriched. It is a long way, but we believe it is the best way to do research...



Photos by staff Nido San Donato - Bologna

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How can we develop the young child's creativity through the continuing education of adults?

Isabelle Chavepeyer and Carine Lesage

from F.R.A.J.E a.s.b.l.

translated by Muriel Réginster

The F.R.A.J.E.

The F.R.A.J.E. (Centre de Formation permanente et de Recherche dans les milieux d'Accueil du Jeune Enfant¹) is a non-profit-making organisation whose mission is to train professionals working in childcare organisations (0-12 years) and to research and create tools relating to childcare. The F.R.A.J.E. was created in 1982 by the French Commission for Culture (currently Commission Communautaire Française) of the Brussels Region.

Every year, the F.R.A.J.E. offers a series of seminars on childhood including conferences and/or study days, as well as morning meetings.

Finally, the F.R.A.J.E. devotes much time to themed group activities and supporting teams in their fieldwork.

Introduction

The present work is drawn from our experience of continuing education that we, at the F.R.A.J.E., have been carrying out for thirty years with early childhood professionals.

We will look into the question of the space allocated in childcare organisations to the young child's creativity and imagination, by looking at the adult to whom the child relates: we will investigate how early childhood professionals use their own imagination and creativity and how, in continuing education, we work towards that objective.

Indeed, our **basic assumption** is that **in order to respect the child's creativity and the development of his imagination, it is necessary for him to meet adults whose own imaginations are alive.**

¹ Centre for Continuing Education and Research in organisations dedicated to the care of young children – F.R.A.J.E. Rue du Meiboom, 14, 6^e étage, 1000 Brussels. Tel : 00 32 2 800 86 10. www.fraje.be

After setting the context of early childhood care and that of continuing education, we will touch on how we try to make the professionals aware of the creativity of the child. We will then consider the limitations which prevent many of these professionals from letting themselves join the child in his creative project. Finally, we will propose two possible paths to try and overcome these limitations. On the one hand by addressing the place offered to the adult's creativity and imagination in the framework of education, and on the other hand, by looking at the contribution of art and encounters with artists. Then will come the time for conclusions.

Context: 30 years of continuing education for early childhood professionals

Some thirty years ago, the F.R.A.J.E. was the first body to offer training for early childhood professionals. Since then, others have come to broaden the available choice.

It can be said that the F.R.A.J.E. holds a specific place in relation to other bodies. Indeed, not only is it a pioneer in the field, but having been created and funded by the Service de l'Enfance et de la Culture de la Région Bruxelloise², we can assert that all training has this double objective: the child is always considered with respect for his culture.

Knowledge about child development has constantly evolved over the last fifty years and so has the interest of researchers in the development of the 'nurtured' child.

Therefore, childcare organisations have been faced with a multitude of perceptions on the well-being of the nurtured child; each perception favouring certain practices.

When the F.R.A.J.E. was created, the 'hygienist' model was still very much dominant (the child was above all considered as an 'object of health care'), even if an interest in the child's play was beginning to emerge.

Trainers then took an approach towards paediatric nursing which was more geared towards perceiving the baby as a person. The attitudes concerning the needs and abilities of toddlers were redefined: babies do have relationship abilities and their basic needs also include the need for relationships, continuity and play.

In the field, however, this notion of 'relational ability' was ill-understood and often confused with 'learning abilities'. In

childcare organisations, the 'hygienist' model was replaced by a 'pre-school' model: it was the era of 'coloured stickers, cotton buds do-it-yourself and colouring' where the child was taken by the hand to accomplish his activity. The achieved result was what mattered to the professionals.

The training offered by the F.R.A.J.E. therefore had the objective of focusing on what happens to the child in the relationships surrounding this or that activity and on the process of experimentation, discovery, creation, reflection or expression of the child. We advocate observation as a favoured tool to allow professionals to understand the child's play. Training is therefore centred on the attitude, the how-to-be, of the nursery nurse, rather than on the know-how. However, little attention was paid to the emotions of the professionals; we were asking them to enter further into the relationship, without listening enough to their feelings. Many therefore continued their work on a very operational³ model, favouring the 'doing' to the 'being'.

Towards the end of the '80s, "Loczy"⁴ came into the nursery field, bringing many positive elements: continuity in the care of the toddler allowing for a better sense of basic security, more attention paid to observational work, and reflection on the autonomy of the child.

However, if the importance of the relationship is highlighted, little (if anything) is suggested to the nursery nurses in terms of working out what is going on in this relationship. Moreover, they are subjected to a paradoxical request that can be formulated as follows: "become attached to the children but not too much". A message which makes professionals feel particularly guilty because it is impossible to accomplish. The educational approach of the E. Pikler Institute has often been integrated in childcare organisations as a paediatric nursing method, with the consequence that encounters and care of babies are still considered on an operational mode. We consequently became very interested in the professionals' feelings, both during our conferences and in our work groups.

Another element in the nursery field was the arrival in 2000, of the

3 An 'operational model' consists in the detailed description of the actions needed to obtain a result. It is also called process. The operational model usually describes the detailed unfolding of operations done on a fixed post but it can also describe the linking of operations from one post to another.

4 The E. Pikler day-nursery work (Hungary) became known in Belgium under the name of 'Loczy Method'.

so-called 'quality code of care'⁵, inviting childcare organisations to present, through their project, how they were meeting the key points of the code (respect, well-being, daily routine, autonomy). Since then, the quality code has been reformulated and has become more of a requirement than an invitation. Every childcare centre (from 0 to 12) has to prove to the O.N.E.⁶, through their childcare project, that it meets the objectives of the code⁷. The issue of creativity is not mentioned as such in the code; and neither is culture or art. The objectives of the code are based on scientific knowledge of child development. However, it has to be noted that 'the nursery protects and encourages the desire of the child to discover, by organising living spaces that are adapted to his needs, by putting material at his disposal and by giving him access to diversified activities' (art. 2) and also 'the nursery allows the child to express himself personally and spontaneously and encourages the development of self-confidence and autonomy' (art. 4) or else 'the nursery makes sure when planning its activities, to make room for the initiative of each child and to protect the notion of free time'... (art. 7).

Because of the compulsory nature of the care project, it can be said that many teams perceive the quality code as a way to standardise practice. A few more years are probably needed in order for teams to use it as a support basis, as a framework within which it is possible to invent, rather than a restriction tending towards standardisation. Continuing vocational training is offered with that aim.

In 2000, a new experiment also took place in some crèches when actors came in to play theatre; and, indeed, the theatre company, Théâtre de la Guimbarde, created Belgium's first show for toddlers. In 2001, the Ministry for Childhood decided to encourage this initiative by allocating a subsidy. In 2005, 'artistic awakening' was officially inscribed as one of the missions that the O.N.E. has to support. In practice, it means a subsidy granted to four theatre companies⁸.

5 Quality Code of Care : order (17.12.2003) from the French Community of Belgium.

6 O.N.E. :Office de la naissance et de l'Enfance (Office for Birth and Childhood of the French Community of Belgium)

7 The objectives of the quality code include psycho-educational principles, organisation of activities and health, accessibility, executive staff, relationships between the nursery and the people who entrust the child, and the environment.

8 The théâtre de la Guimbarde, the Nuna théâtre, the Théâtre Plume et the non-profit «La Lucina»

Currently (in 2008), nurseries can ask the O.N.E. for one of those companies to come to their premises for a ¼ of the price, the subsidy taking charge of the remaining costs. It has to be noted however, that this financial contribution only covers the artistic performance; there is no provision as yet to address the preparation and follow up of the performance which are crucial in order for such an experience to make sense in the life of a community.

Finally, the last point we wish to highlight is that of our current society, a society which is very much geared towards what is profitable, useful and competitive. Childcare organisations (nurseries, day-care centres, crèches ...) are one of the last 'social pockets' where other values can exist (joy of play, respect for the child's own rhythm,...), hence the difficulty in maintaining these values within these structures.

CONTINUING EDUCATION, CREATIVITY AND ART

Building an awareness of children's creativity

In our training, we try to make childhood professionals aware of the toddler's sensory world and of the building of his imagination; with the following principles as background:

- To respect the toddler in his own way of understanding the world through his senses, his emotions and his thought
- To respect his culture, his sense of belonging, in order to favour his 'continuity of being' feeling
- To be interested in the process that the child puts into place in his discovery of an activity, rather than in the result produced
- To consider the child from every angle: we position ourselves at the opposite end of an educational approach that aims to stimulate the child in the development of one of his competences (for instance: stimulating speech by making him sing, stimulating fine motor skills by making him colour in...)
- To denounce all forms of activism: the aim is not to animate the child or make him effective, but rather to start from the relationship and from what interests the baby on the one hand, and on the other, from what the adult wants to share

and pass on to him. Hence, we think that music, reading, modelling... should not be considered as 'educational activities', but as experiments and discoveries which take place in the encounter and make sense for the child in his relationship with others



Photo: A de Spiegelaere

Caption if required: *Accompanied by her grandmother and three nursery nurses, Zoé discovers the joys of painting with chocolate*

In concrete terms, the following examples illustrate some experiments of continuing education which highlight how we have attempted to make childhood professionals aware of the toddler's creativity.

The playcrèche

A theoretical reflection on the importance of play in the child's development has led the team to think over what play material to put at the child's disposal. The latter had to meet two requirements: to be inexpensive and to inspire creativity and ingenuity in the child. The answer came with the use of objects of no specific use such as tactile face gloves, yogurt containers, buckets, costumes, sensory books, 'tetra-pack'-made bricks, a life-size cloth doll, corn trays... The "playcrèche" was created in 1981 and was made available upon request. A brochure called 'And if we played?...' summarises the activities and games offered by the playcrèche.

The playmotor

In the early '90s, the F.R.A.J.E. perfected the "playmotor". It is a play structure built from waste material which engages the senses of the child (face gloves filled with different materials bringing various tactile, auditory, olfactory, kinaesthetic sensations) and his global motor functions (truck inner tubes, tractor, bicycle... that could be assembled in various settings with bright colour straps, as well as bowls into which the children could sit and put objects). The "playmotor" was mobile and entirely flexible which enabled the various day-care centres to install it for a few weeks in the children's playroom, in spite of its structure and size.

The following examples illustrate how two teams could combine education, art and project to result in concrete achievements offering space to the imagination, discovery and creativity of the toddlers. While one team member participated in one or several of the F.R.A.J.E.'s work groups, another team member collaborated on a workshop organised by the Théâtre de la Guimbarde. Finally, the team gathered the contributions of one and the other and linked them to their project...

Teachers' continuing education at a paediatric nursing school

Recently, a school from Brussels¹⁰ was awarded the prize for innovation in education by the non-profit organisation 'SCHOLA' of the U.L.B.¹¹, for their project called 'Theatre for Children under 3 years old'.

A professional teacher from that school participated in a working group of the FRAJE which aimed at highlighting the importance of awakening the toddlers' senses, in particular through music, reading... She brought her reflections back to her school. One thing led to another and the school started collaborating with the Théâtre de la Guimbarde on a theatrical project in which the pupils worked on the creation of a show for toddlers, which was awarded the above-mentioned prize. This experience opened the pupils to the possibility of touching on their sensitivity within a given framework.

They then engaged in a project aimed at making children sensitive to painting, with a crèche deeply involved in this project

10 Ecole De Mot - Couvreur

11 Université Libre de Bruxelles (Free University of Brussels)

and which sent a nursery nurse especially for this project. Video documents (special training was provided) were made of these workshops. They are used as a basis for a conference organised by the trainees to inform parents of the work accomplished.

The teachers from that school find this 'cultural project' very positive in raising the pupils' self-image.

Team experience detailed by Annick Donnay at a conference during our study day: "Culture in the country of the curious".

A nursery nurse from a crèche in Arlon participated in a working group on the theme "Play and self construction" at the F.R.A.J.E. Another nursery nurse from the same crèche followed a training called 'Earth' organised by the Théâtre de la Guimbarde. Together, they brought back their reflections and concretely created:

- a space specifically designed for the material workshops (well defined, empty space, without tables or chairs...);
- a time (approximately 1 hour) which provides for sufficient debriefing of the activity, considered as an activity in itself (to wash hands, feet, the children being barefoot and wearing only underclothes)
- a non-interventionist setting where the adult is available, but does not incite, stands back and observes the free expression of the child's creativity which can blossom in this well-defined frame, the adult not waiting for any finished product.

Limitations

Despite a series of very positive experiences aimed at making professionals sensitive to the toddler's creativity and imagination, we have to admit that at present, a huge amount of work still needs to be done. Indeed we still notice many signs which, according to us, prevent the possibility of children developing their imagination and creativity; these signs themselves show the professionals' difficulties in displaying their own imagination.

What are they? We notice that in many childcare organisations:

- Nursery nurses still continue to propose do-it-yourself activities to children for the special days (Halloween, Christmas, Mother's Day, Father's Day,...). If in the do-it-yourself process, a bigger part is left to the child, we are still in a logic of 'doing an activity' in which the end result is rated more highly than the process

- Children are more often offered the opportunity to colour something rather than given big empty sheets of paper on which they could leave any sort of traces. The colouring is made sitting at a table, on a little sheet of paper (A4)
- More often than not, when modelling clay is offered, it is in small quantity and on a table
- The interest in daydreaming is very limited in day-care centres; it is often confused with idleness, laziness or withdrawal into oneself
- By the same token, professionals will more easily perceive the sense of their work with the children in everything that concerns the production of, the preparation of... (tidiness, school,...) rather than in the importance of the joy of playing
- When a day-care centre opens its doors to an artist, it is not always in relation to the team's reflections about their childcare project; it is more often with the aim to entertain, to break the routine: once the artist is gone, nothing follows on, only the memory stays

However, progress has been made:

- In the continuing training, we see more and more professionals with good basic knowledge about child development; their questions therefore are less about the 'how to do' than about the 'how to be'
- More and more childcare organisations collaborate with bodies offering musical awakening, or with public libraries

We wonder about the reasons which could explain why professionals are so resistant to displaying their imagination and have difficulties offering space for the toddler's imagination and creativity.

We first think of their initial education: occupational education is a type of education which is based on the know-how, where the pupil's imagination and thinking are challenged very little. Education in general is still geared towards the production of pupils all 'cast in the same mould' as early as nursery school, an objective which is reached through the reproduction of models, exercises to be done, the use of procedures which are identical

for all... Criticism is little taught and even less so is aesthetics, the art of the beautiful, body, artistic, theatrical expression,... Emotions are reined in, controlled, rarely expressed.

Secondly, it can also be said that an operational model for paediatric nursing is more reassuring for the adult because it requires less important emotional involvement. Controlling the relationship with the toddler (by proposing activities which are not necessarily the child's project or wish) enables them not to feel overwhelmed from an emotional point of view.

Finally, it should also be noted that some childcare organisations cruelly lack staff, which leads to work 'on an assembly line' and gives little room to the relationship and the sharing of experiences. Moreover, a tremendous number of professionals express their fear to be judged by their colleagues, by their management, or by the parents if they engage in the relationship with the toddler through discoveries such as music or reading.

Proposals to overcome the limitations

TAKING THE PROFESSIONALS' EMOTIONS INTO ACCOUNT

Up until a few years ago, while highlighting the importance of the relationship and play, we continued to say in our training that 'Being a professional is to keep one's emotions at bay'. It expressed a representation shared by many in the field, accepting that professionalism required keeping away from emotions.

The psychic pain which quickly appeared with numerous nursery nurses when they were asked to work according to the "Loczy method" was probably the trigger which allowed the team from the F.R.A.J.E. to consider differently the issue of the professionals' emotions.

As a result, we now try to offer a framework through our training whereby it is possible to lay down the emotions at stake in the professional bond, to give them meaning, to elaborate on them, to transform them, to offer them means of sublimating them. Emotions are indeed the main tools the nursery nurses have to be in tune with the toddlers, to understand their needs, to answer their desire to grow and it seems of the utmost importance to us to take care of them.

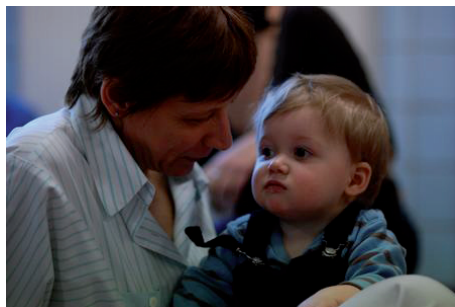


Photo: G Réginster

Caption if required: *It's so good to feel close together when watching a theatre performance*

ENCOURAGING ADULT CREATIVITY

Like Russian dolls which fit into each other, we think that in order to welcome the child's creativity without bullying it, it is necessary first to have been able to express your own, without having been confronted with value judgements.

Some people are spontaneously very creative; others need to revive their imagination, their thinking.

How can we stimulate the imagination of the participants?

Progressively, we started considering the structure of our working groups¹² in a different way. From the very beginning, training rested on the participants' questions and reflections. What changed is that from an 'expert' position of transmitting knowledge to the trainees, we now give more space to exchanges between participants and trainers regarding the set of themes we investigate; training is more open to 'otherness'.

We envisage the training as a time and a space in which together we will build a common reflection and experience. The training space is to be considered in the same way as the 'potential space' as defined by D. W. WINNICOTT¹³ : issues and lines of work are defined at the beginning of the session, then together we build a reflection, we create, and together invent answers to

¹² Every year, we offer about thirty work groups of 24 or 36 hours, divided up over several days and stretching over several weeks; they are themed groups: on the relationship between parents and professionals, the relationship in the diet, the game, the discovery of the world, the emotional life of the baby...

¹³ Winnicott Playing and Reality

situations brought by the participants; these answers are not the fruit of our contribution, nor is it the sole result of the participants' contribution; it is what we have been able to put together, share, invent. As trainers, we make sure that "thoughts containers"¹⁴ are offered in the course of the sessions, where a common thinking can be built.

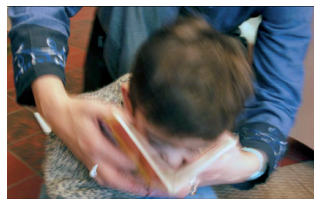
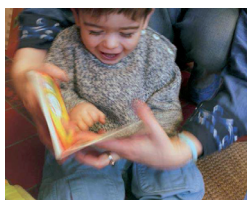
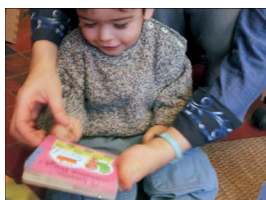


Photo: P. Papadimitriou

This approach to training enables us to give more space to the participants' creativity in order for them to progress in their reflections, to invent solutions to the problems they meet. We therefore conceive our training more as a creative space where they will be able to expose their thinking without fear of being judged; where the imagination of some grows from the encounter with the imagination of the others.

To arrive at this type of work, some conditions have to be met:

- To define clearly the group's operating rules (respect for the others' speech, non-judgement, presence at every session...)
- To guarantee respect for the so-defined framework
- To conduct the sessions with two trainers, one looking after the "thoughts container", the other bringing 'content' (in the same way as the other participants)
- To identify the group's emotions and offer a container adapted to sublimate them, give sense and allow the thinking to continue spreading
- To give positive reinforcements (support to the professionalisation)
- To 'start from where the participants are in their reflection'
- To propose games, exercises, mediums stimulating the participants' imagination: for instance, create sayings

in relation to the subject on which they are working, invent haikus... This requires synthesising, in a sentence or a metaphor, a group of ideas, real-life experiences, emotions, reflections carried by the participants, granting them a degree of freedom that varies according to one's sensitivity and capacity to symbolise

- To favour clear rules where the exercise's limits are perceptible: for instance ask the participants to create a haiku - and not a poem – whose structure is intrinsically limited (3 verses, 1 short, 1 long, 1 short). It is indeed this limitation which allows the creativity to develop
- As trainers, nourish our own imagination, keep our thinking in movement, work on our ability to contain the emotions of the group
- To give ourselves time

In this framework, our role is to gather the reflections, raw impressions, experiences and give them a "thinkable" form. This is also made possible through the periodicity of the sessions, which gives time for the reflection to develop.

ENCOUNTERS WITH ART AND ARTISTS

In childcare organisations

An artist is not a leader, he is a giver. He passes on his poetry, stages small slices of life which echo the feelings and first representations of the baby. An artist goes and meets the other – however small he may be.

As a childcare professional, meeting artists is often a good opportunity to give more space to relationships at work; to be less 'functional'. Meeting an artist, his (her) work, enables one to touch on one's own sensitivity, to let oneself be moved by a shared emotion, by a child.

In order for the meeting to take place, to avoid entering a (art) consumption or (child) activism logic, it seems important to us for the following principles to be respected:

- **the relationship**

It is important when considering the encounter between artist(s) and baby(ies) to envisage the toddler in the relationship with his parents and/or nursery nurses. The toddler indeed finds his security base in the relationship with his privileged partners. Therefore, when

a show is on, it is important that it takes place with the presence of a reassuring adult, well known to the child, and who is physically and psychically available.

Parents are the first to pass on culture, their culture. The approach led by the early childhood professionals and the artists can only be considered in the acknowledgement and respect for this 'cultural nest' in which the baby is born.



Photo: G Réginster

Caption if required: *The pleasure of playing with sand, following a performance of "Bach à sable" (by Théâtre de la Guimbarde) in a crèche*

- **respect for the baby's singularity**

As soon as art is addressed to toddlers, it is of utmost importance to take the specificity of this 'public' into consideration. To consider the ability that the young child has (or hasn't got yet) to transform (on the emotional, symbolic level) what is received to make it his own. What possibility has the toddler to act on what is offered to him and therefore discover new representations and adapt them to his nascent thinking?

It is also a question of showing him respect by offering him a show or a work that is rich and accessible. It really is a question of ethics. Eye-catching shows or shows displaying a distressing content can only induce fascination or daze the young child; the actor, his acting and the production of the show have to be authentic and not seductive towards the child and the adult caring for him.

- **addressing the encounter's preparation and follow up**

To respect the toddler in what makes him unique also requires

preparation for this encounter, to prolong it so that the artists don't burst into the young child's life in a fleeting way, but rather their encounter takes place with a sense of continuity.

Once these conditions are met, then the artists' work can start in the crèche, everything is in place for the experience to be rich and make sense for everyone: children, nursery nurses, parents, artists.

ENCOUNTERS WITH ART AND ARTISTS

In continuing education

The F.R.A.J.E. has long collaborated with artists. At the beginning it was mainly through music and reading to toddlers. **Working groups** were proposed (they still exist even though their content has changed) to the childcare professionals in collaboration with the 'Jeunesses musicales'¹⁵, or the storytellers from the 'Ligue des Familles'¹⁶. We are currently collaborating with artists to lead working groups.

Example:

« When the door of childcare organisations opens to artists»

In 2006, a new working group called "When the door of childcare organisations opens to artists" was set up in collaboration with Charlotte Fallon, producer at the Théâtre de la Guimbarde. This group has the distinctive feature of gathering childhood professionals and artists together. Led by an artist and a psychologist, it supports opportunities to exchange views and allows us to tackle questions such as: Why propose bringing artists in to crèches? What needs to be addressed in order for such an encounter to respect the different partners? What is art, culture, creativity? What is beautiful? What is an aesthetic emotion? Can a baby feel it?

There is a reciprocal view of everybody's different situation and needs and, from this, participants can see the bigger picture.

On the other hand, our **study days** have mostly been designed to offer a balance between lecturers and artists.

These various spaces given to artists range from welcoming a musician, a storyteller, a magician, improvisation artists... to

¹⁵ Jeunesses musicales du Brabant Wallon: musical youth, a cultural operator aimed at young people. They promote the awakening, initiation and listening of all music for the young people.

¹⁶ Ligue des Familles : pluralist movement gathering families

presenting an exhibition of pictures or other material related to the subject of the study day.

These moments are unavoidable breaks in any intellectual work. They allow for daydreaming moments that are necessary for the integration of new knowledge. But in particular they allow time to put "one's spirit, one's reasoning" at rest and to let oneself listen to one's body, emotions and to be in contact with oneself, with one's inner world. An experience that can only be done if given the time; this time is free, aimed only at pleasure and here, it is given to them during an education time!

By meeting the artist's imaginary world, participants somehow feel empowered to display their own imagination, to link their reasoning to their emotions.

Since 2005, we go even further in our approach by programming a **show** as part of our cycle of seminars.

The idea behind this project is that art is, above all, a question of encounter and handing down. When we decided to programme art and culture as themes for the working groups, we didn't want to risk intellectualising these questions too much. Moreover, our working groups' participants don't often take the "risk" of going to the theatre, to a show, or a museum; as if those places were meant for a public other than them. We therefore felt the need to share with them a time dedicated to an artist's work: to invite them and offer the chance to "thrill" together to the sound of music or to the words of a storyteller.

Another way for us to give art a place in continuing education is to use a large range of artistic resources during our training (children's books, picture reproductions ...) to discover, diversify our points of mental reference and bring a sensitive approach to a subject.

Finally, in 2007, we edited an **album** called "Un bébé, un livre, une voix" ("A baby, a book, a voice") in collaboration with the publisher "Grandir" (Nîmes). This book is the result of a collaboration between trainers (Isabelle Gillieaux, Isabelle Chavepeyer), participants in a working group called "Books at sixes and sevens" and a photographer (Pascalina Papadimitriou). This book is addressed to adults; it touches on the relationship around the book with the toddler in the form of a picture album. It is neither a theoretical nor a fiction book but a concept attempting to gather thoughts and emotions in a single piece of work.



"Un bébé, un livre, une voix", I Chavepeyer & I Gillieaux, photos by P Papadimitriou, coéditions FRAJE & Grandir

Putting childcare professionals and artists, and their work, in touch with each other allows them to discover or rediscover this plunge into the heart of our emotions, this pleasure in sharing our feelings, this suspended time where one leads another into his imaginary world, into his vision of reality.

Conclusion

To conclude, we are convinced that supporting the development of the child's creativity entails the adult's capacity to activate his own ability to dream, to keep his thinking alive, i.e. connected to feelings and symbolism.

In this sense, we continue to think about how to offer adults a space for it in our various forms of training.

We trust that by having experienced what is invented in that space, the participants on their part will open up a greater space for their children's creativity.

We also think about how to support the professionals' sensitivity through art and collaboration with artists. There is therefore a clear interest to reconcile art with continuing education for a new approach to the adult and child's creativity.

According to us, sharing our views and experiences among psychologists and artists in our training in order to reveal one's sensitivity within a secure framework, is a very rich exercise.

At present, crèches are essentially thought of as places of care for the child, even if their socialisation role is recognised. But when functioning in a vacuum, crèches also become a place of acculturation. It therefore seems important to us that artists have a place in the childcare organisations.

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(Footnotes)

- 1 Ecole De Mot - Couvreur
- 2 Université Libre de Bruxelles (Free University of Brussels)

Appendix

**Charlotte Fallon, Gaetane Réginster &
Noemi Tiberghien**

Translation by Mureil Réginster

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CHILDCARE ORGANISATIONS (for 0-3 years) AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL

Statistic data for Belgium regarding the following:

1. Number of private and state crèches in urban and rural areas
 - 859 collective-type childcare centres (private crèches, state crèches, and pre-schools) in 2006
 - 3.332 childminders looking after children at home (family type childcare) in 2006
2. Number of nursery nurses for the 0 to 3 years old
 - 3.649 nursery nurses or similar, in collective-type childcare organisations in 2005, for an equivalent of 2824 full-time employments
3. Type of training given to the early childhood (0-3 year old) professionals
 - Social staff: social workers, social nurses, community health nurses
 - Medical staff: nurses, social nurses, community health nurses
 - Childcare staff: nursery nurses, paediatric nursing students, assistants, educators, educators specialised in secondary school
4. Official ratio of staff to children
 - 1 full-time for 7 children in private crèches
 - 1 full-time for 9 children in pre-schools
 - 2 full-time for 9 children in state crèches + 1 part-time per 3 children

5. Allocated space

In childcare organisations, each crèche has an inside area of minimum 6m²: 4m² for inside activities and meals, 2m² minimum for naps/sleep.

6. Budget allocated to

- furniture such as tables, chairs, armchairs, cushions, carpets
- games for global psychomotricity
- games for refined manipulation

State crèches receive a global sum of 4000 euros per year for the didactic material and a global sum of 4000 euros for training.

Private crèches don't receive any subsidy from the state for this type of expenses, but spend on it on average 3500 euros per year of their own funds.

7. Examples of types of games and equipment

- furniture: tables, chairs, armchairs, cushions, carpets
- games for global psychomotricity: large size objects allowing the movement of the whole body: slides, tubes, structures for climbing, gliding, hiding
- games for refined manipulation, games allowing to shake, fit, pile up, fill, empty: rattles, cubes, puzzles

8. Examples of the type of learning, educational and creative activities organised by crèches.

A law was passed in Belgium in 2004 for childcare organisations no longer to be considered as caretaking places. Each childcare centre was asked to work on a care plan, according to criteria defined in the "quality code of care", in order to obtain a quality certificate. This care plan is divided into chapters: a chapter on children, a chapter on staff and a chapter on parents.

- Chapter on children: to acknowledge the child as a person, to work with respect for the child's autonomy and own rhythm, for example, not to force children to eat and sleep when the adult wants. The challenge to be addressed is to find the right balance between respecting the group and each individual. To organise the space in such a way that the child can freely explore within a given structure. To lead

group activities which are only partially directed: singing, storytelling, sitting in circles, without obliging the child to participate. To propose activities more geared towards sensorial exploration, with material such as water, clay, painting, without any expected result

- Chapter on staff: to acknowledge nursery nurses as professionals who need to be trained, to acknowledge them as persons in their relationship with the child and the parents
- Chapter on parents: to avoid developing a dichotomy in the child, i.e. a division between his two main living environments, the day-care centre and the family; to create opportunities to meet the parents; to consider them as active partners

What spaces exist for creative performing arts practice within the new early years foundation stage curriculum?

Kathy McArdle

This is an exciting time to be involved in creative practice and the early years in England. The current Labour government has made a strong commitment to early years education and pulled childcare from the shadows towards the forefront of policy-making. The care of children, pledged the then Chancellor (now Prime Minister) Gordon Brown in 2007, would become a 'new pillar of the welfare state', providing a positive educational and developmental start in life for young children. The National Childcare Strategy Every Child Matters: Change for Children ¹ laid out the national policy for the development of childcare services and education. This was detailed in the strategy Choice for Parents: the best start for children: a ten year strategy for childcare², which sets out the government's long-term vision to ensure that every child gets the best start in life, to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged children and others, and to enable parents to have a greater level of choice to help them balance the demands of work with those of family life. Choice for Parents promised to establish a single coherent development and learning framework for all young children from birth to the age of five. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provides that framework and will be introduced in September 2008. In 2007, following our change of Prime Minister, the newly created Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) took over responsibility for the delivery of these strategies and published The Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures ³ which builds on previous strategies by putting children's needs at the centre of integrated service delivery. At a local level these changes are being delivered by new Children's Services in local authorities who have been bringing together education and children's care

¹ Every Child Matters Green Paper (2003), www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/publications/

² Choice for Parents: a ten year strategy for childcare www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/earlyyears/tenyearstrategy/

³ The Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures, www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/childrensplan/downloads/Childrens_Plan_Executive_Summary.pdf

services. They have also been managing the new programme of building children's centres, which will function as a 'one-stop shop' for parents providing childcare, education, health, job centres, ante-natal, and parenting support while catering for special needs and diverse communities. This investment in what Ruth Churchill Dower has described as a 'visionary early years infrastructure' ⁴ offers a key interface for arts and creative practitioners working with early years children.

In parallel with these developments in the last five years, arts policy in England ⁵ has actively engaged with children and young people, not simply as audience members but as active participants in a creative and artistic process. Arts Council England's national publication in 2005 of the Children, Young People and the Arts Strategy states that 'We believe that everyone in England, through early childhood to young adulthood and beyond, should engage with the highest quality of arts and creative experiences'.⁶ The strategy made strong statements about the inspirational and transformational power of the arts in the lives of young people and children and their entitlement to high-quality cultural experiences which contribute to their quality of life, enhance teaching and learning and develop skills for future living. In tandem with this, Arts Council England (ACE) also produced occasional guidance documents on arts practice in early years, including 'Reflect and Review', ⁷ regional development plans for creativity in early years in some areas⁸ and funded initiatives such as 'Stimulating Creativity through Family Learning' (2006) ⁹. Arts Council England fund a wide range of performing arts companies, agencies, organisations and venues across the country to deliver on its aims and all of these to some extent carry a responsibility for ensuring access to

4 Churchill Dower, Ruth (2008), 'Arts and Early Years in England', published by Early Arts, <http://www.earlyarts.co.uk/resourcesresearchandevaluation>

5 Arts policy in the UK is different than in most European countries in that it commissions various national agencies with a national policy mandate to deliver arts and cultural policy at 'arms length' from government. Such agencies include The Arts Council of England (responsible for the Arts) and MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council).

6 Children, Young People and the Arts (2005), The Arts Council, p.5, www.artscouncil.org.uk/publications/publication_detail.php?browse=recent&id=478

7 Belloli, J and Woolf, F. (2005), Reflect and Review, the arts and creativity in early years. Arts Council England, www.artscouncil.org.uk

8 For example Imagination for Life and Learning – an early years creativity development plan for Yorkshire (2006), www.artscouncil.org.uk

9 Available to download at www.artscouncil.org.uk

artistic experiences by young people and children (including early years). From 2002 to 2006 the Arts Council has also funded one significant arts and early years resource organisation in Earlyarts (about which more later). From 2002 – 2007, Creative Partnerships¹⁰, a national initiative funded by the DCFS and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), ran a series of programmes to foster creative learning practice in the school setting. While the primary focus of their work was the school environment there was a significant amount of variation between Creative Partnerships in different regions and some also engaged with creative learning with early years children. In 2008, Creative Partnership entered a new phase of development and it is likely that their new programme of development will include more early years children in school settings. Finally, a recent initiative entitled 'Find Your Talent' which will run from 2008 to 2011 has been launched in ten pilot areas throughout the country. The 'Find Your Talent'¹¹ pathfinders will involve partnerships between local authorities and cultural organisations to deliver 'five hours a week' of high-quality cultural experiences to children and young people both in and out of school. Some of the regions have identified early years as a key priority in their programmes and as one of their strategic target groups but it is not clear yet whether the focus will be on young people and children attending cultural spaces and events or whether this will also be balanced by participatory arts practice in their own settings.

It is against this backdrop of change in policy-making and delivery mechanisms, pilot initiatives, and new investment and commitment that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)¹² Learning Framework is being introduced. In the midst of all this change, it represents a key shift in the way early years education and care is governed and managed. This article explores the core approach of the framework, asks what space there is for holistic learning experiences to be generated through the performing arts within it and what opportunities it presents for the embedding of creative performing arts practice in the early years.

10 www.creative-partnerships.com/

11 Find Your Talent, more info at www.findyourtalent.org/

12 EYFS, www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/eyfs/

The Early Years Foundation Stage: An outline

The EYFS sets out the standard for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. Its purpose is declared as follows:

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know that provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The EYFS is the framework that provides that assurance'.¹³

The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children to achieve the five Every Child matters outcomes of staying safe, being healthy (which includes emotional health and well-being), enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, and achieving economic well-being. It constitutes a central plank of the ten-year childcare strategy and is built upon and rooted in current practice. From September 2008 it is mandatory for all schools and early years providers¹⁴ in Ofsted¹⁵ registered settings attended by young children – that is children from birth to the end of the academic year in which a child has their fifth birthday.

The EYFS is underpinned by four guiding principles and themes:

- A unique child – 'every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured'
- Positive relationships – 'children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and / or a key person'
- Enabling environments – 'the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning' – the learning environment and the wider context
- Learning and development – 'children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of

13 EYFS (2007), Statutory Framework, DFES, p.7

14 There is a huge diversity among early years providers in England. Providers include voluntary, private, maintained and independent schools, nurseries, children's centres, playgroups, crèches, and childminders

15 An independent, non-ministerial government department, responsible for the inspection and regulation of all early years provision and registered childcare

learning are equally important and inter-connected'¹⁶ The EYFS also sets out the learning and development requirements that all early years providers must by law deliver, regardless of type, size or funding. It lays out six key areas of learning, as follows:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – includes the development of personal identity, self-esteem, social skills and emotional well-being
- Communication, Language and Literacy – includes speaking and listening skills, developing an interest in reading and writing
- Problem-solving, Reasoning and Numeracy – supporting children to develop these skills in a broad range of contexts
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World – includes encouraging children to explore the natural world and the built environment, as well as nurturing their curiosity for knowledge
- Physical Development – developing the skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement
- Creative Development – extending children's creativity by supporting curiosity, exploration and play. This also includes providing children with the chance to explore and share thoughts, ideas and feelings through a range of creative media (listed as art, music, movement, dance, imaginative and role-play activities, mathematics, and design and technology)

The EYFS requires ongoing assessment which is carried out through observations of children undertaking activities. There are 13 assessment scales, each of which has nine points, and towards the end of the child's time in early years education, a full profile is to be completed outlining the child's progress against those scales. A lot of concern has been expressed about the assessment of very young children against these criteria and in this way¹⁷ but the DCFS are keen to stress that assessment is formative and rooted in everyday observation which is recognised good practice in early

¹⁶ EYFS (2007), Statutory Framework, *ibid.*, p.9

¹⁷ One organisation which advocates this viewpoint in a critical and well-argued manner is Open Eye, which was set up specifically in response to the EYFS. For more info on the organisation and their February 2008 conference Report 'Too Much Too Soon' see www.savechildhood.org

years settings at present.¹⁸

EYFS: A Response from a Creative Performing Arts Perspective

The EYFS aims to take a holistic view of children's development. It stresses the importance of meeting individual needs and setting standards to enable early years providers to reflect the rich and personalised experience that many parents give their children at home. 'Providers should deliver individualised learning, development and care....every child should be supported individually to make progress at their own pace....provision should consider what a child's individual needs are....' ¹⁹ It reiterates the need to tap into children's needs and interests: 'Children are competent learners from birth and develop and learn in a variety of ways. All practitioners should, therefore, look carefully at the children in their care, consider their needs, their interests and their stages of development and use all of this information to help plan a challenging and enjoyable learning experience across all Areas of Learning and Development'. It reminds us that the six areas of learning are interdependent and of the importance of play in the life of the child; 'none of the areas of learning and development can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. All the areas must be delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities'. ²⁰ This recognition that 'play underpins all development and learning for young children' is a fundamental principle of the EYFS and is drawn from the good practice it is based on. 'Most children play spontaneously, although some may need adult support, and it is through play that they develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally' ²¹

18 Ruth Pimentel, National Director for Early Years, National Strategies Programme, Department of Children and Families, articulates this view: 'The assessment of very young children is based on observation... practitioners own observations of children at play in a range of situations, to ascertain where they are in their learning and to actually use that information to plan their next steps, to plan where they're going to take the children in their learning and development over the next few weeks and months', 'Need to Know – the Early Years Foundation Stage', television documentary, www.teachers.tv. There are also a range of documentaries available here for those interested in further research into responses to the EYFS curriculum

19 EYFS, Statutory Framework, *ibid*, p.9

20 EYFS, Statutory Framework, *ibid.*, p.11

21 EYFS, Practice Guidance, DFES, p.7

The Framework also advocates an environment that provides a myriad of play opportunities, atmospheres and approaches. What is most interesting is that, compared to other curricula and learning frameworks, it is not defined by its content. Its strength is that it doesn't prescribe content for exploration and emphasises that content needs to be derived from the child's curiosity and desire for knowledge and mastery. In this way it defines the environments and atmospheres in which children learn and are cared for, as well as the dispositions and attitudes they should have on completion of their early years education. It defines the preferred destination but not the journey or the map.

In this regard the framework is welcomed by arts practitioners. 'It recognises the need to nurture creativity in the care and education of young children and has already opened up huge opportunities for the arts sector to interact with early years. There is widespread recognition that through storytelling, markmaking, denmaking, movement, music and other forms of imaginative play, young children can find so many ways of expressing themselves, establishing their own identity, understanding other cultures, communicating in several different languages, building self-esteem and confidence, making friends with other children and adults, and learning all about the world and their place in it.'²²

However, as with all frameworks its holistic aims may potentially be diluted by the mechanistic process of carving the development of the child into a set of outcomes and behaviours to be achieved. From a creative learning point of view, it is a source of regret that Creative Development is viewed as one strand of the child's development and learning, rather than taking the more radical approach of highlighting creative practice as a fundamental methodology to support the entire framework. Those who are familiar with arts and creative learning practice in the early years will know how it contributes to personal and social development, to the development of speaking and listening skills as well as problem-solving skills, and to the child's emerging understanding of the world around him/her. The centrality of introducing creative environments in which social, emotional, cultural and physical competencies can be developed is a vital part of good early

years practice and an area in which early years professionals need ongoing professional development to maintain their imaginative approach to supporting the learning of children in their settings. Some of the most effective learning takes place in early years settings when the practitioners have a child-centred approach focussed on the needs of the child and can develop in negotiation with the child a series of play-based experiential activities and processes that extend the child's learning and knowledge in a creative and fun way. The role of creative practice in contributing to the other learning areas of the framework is not fully acknowledged and could benefit from being more explicit across all strands. This could have far-reaching consequences for the perception of creative practice in early years in the future.

Readers of this article will also be interested to know that, even in the Practice Guidance notes, there is not a great deal of discussion of the performing arts. There is some consideration of dance or movement in the 'Creating Music and Dance' and some suggestions with regard to music-making and singing, but there is little or no appreciation of the sophistication children bring to constructing their own dramatic play and the different processes they use in their play (e.g. functioning as a writer who generates the story from moment to moment, the actor who 'lives through' the experience of the character from moment to moment, the designer who organises the space with objects, the director who collaborates and negotiates with everyone where the drama might go). Equally there is little said of the ways in which children can engage with music-making and movement to develop their motor, musical and mathematical skills as well as contributing to cross-disciplinary learning. This is not to say that children in early years settings should be enacting conventional 'plays', performing dances with steps or doing music concerts. These more formal approaches are less appropriate for this age-group and are better being introduced later in the child's development. Such formal approaches in early years are antithetical to a child-centred learning approach where the child determines the content, story and space in which their unique stories drama / music-making / dance might happen.

There is provision in the EYFS framework for children to experience dancers and musicians in the 'Creating Music and Dance' section but no real recognition of the value of performance created

specifically for very young children. For children to engage with performance that expresses their unique perspective on the world is a vital part of all learning, informs their own dramatic play and helps in the process of locating themselves in the world. This element of cultural education needs to be amplified in the delivery of the framework. It is to be hoped that performing arts companies will collaborate with the early years structures to ensure this aspect of the child's learning is met.

It has to be said that the understanding of the role of theatre and drama in the Practice Guidelines is fairly simplistic, with a focus being placed on the performance element and the idea of 'placing a spotlight to suggest a set'.²³ And performing artists are viewed more as occasional visitors to the settings rather than potential co-learners with whom children and practitioners can interact. There is however a good understanding of narrative and story in the curriculum and this could be used as the starting point for a range of dramatic interactions with children, for example the use of the bear who arrived in the post as a stimulus for a fictional experience that involves caring for the bear in the 'Developing Imagination and imaginative play'.²⁴ The fundamental problem with the framework is that it is not sufficiently clear about the role of creative methodologies in the teaching of the framework. The understanding of how music-making, movement and dance contributes to the development of the child in a holistic way is not elaborated. It still views the arts and creative practice as a separate area of teaching and learning rather than an integral part of the 'tool-kit' the early years professional has at his/her disposal in order to support the child's own curiosity and learning journey, enable the child to explore and engage with the material of life, and 'scaffold' learning experiences that have the child's needs at their centre.

What is clear, however, is that performing arts and drama practitioners should be able to engage positively with the new framework. The fact that it is not prescriptive with regard to content makes it easier to develop project-based and themed learning which is already central to early years practice. The EYFS focus on the individuality of children and their needs is a value which is shared by artists, as is the key aim of developing

23 EYFS, Practice Guidance, *ibid*, p. 112

24 EYFS, Practice Guidance, *ibid*, p.113

the personal and social skills of children, which is one of the key objectives of drama, dance and music as collaborative social artforms. The emphasis on imagination and affective learning will be welcomed by performing artists who will be able to project themselves into the learning framework it offers and engage with it because it speaks a language which is not dissimilar to theirs. Fundamentally the aims of the framework across the six different areas of learning and development are akin to those of all good artistic and creative practice, and thus it has the potential to embrace high-quality performing arts practice as one of the processes which can potentially assist early childhood workers in its delivery. The role of performing artists in delivering continuous professional development (CPD) and working alongside early years practitioners to develop their own creative practice is potentially a vital one. In doing this, early years settings and performing arts practitioners can draw upon the many exciting models of practice that exist already and those networks and national agencies who see creative practice in the early years as a key part of their remit.

Key national initiatives which demonstrate the potential to integrate performing arts work with early years practice include the "Small size" network, The Birmingham Rep / Assitej UK 'Let's Pretend' Conference, Youth Music's early years programme of work and the dance-based practice offered by the network of national dance agencies across the country. These key initiatives are described here in an attempt to summarise their significance.

Small size²⁵ is a network of arts and education organisations, practitioners and theoreticians across the field of early childhood development in relation to the performing arts. It aims to promote the political importance of the significance of performing arts for early childhood 0 – 6, with objectives that include increasing children's creative potential and the comparison of different European cultural traditions. It also aims to give value to festivals and events that support the development of programmes and productions for the early childhood 0 -6 while also encouraging new opportunities for collaboration.

'Let's Pretend'²⁶ was a unique conference for early years educators,

²⁵ www.smallsize.org

²⁶ 'Charting Antarctica', the conference report for Let's Pretend is available for download at <http://www.birmingham-rep.co.uk/mmlib/includes/sendfile.php?id=545> or <http://www.smallsize.org/dl.php?iddl=34>

theatre practitioners, children and families which took place in April 2007 and which explored early years theatre and drama. It showcased a wide variety of early years theatre work from the UK (including the innovative work of Oily Cart and Birmingham Rep Theatre Company) as well as offering a range of creative drama-based processes by which to engage with the Every Child Matters agenda. **Youth Music** ²⁷ is a national agency in England set up in 1999 to fund and facilitate music-making for young people. One of their key objectives is to ensure that every child aged 0 – 5 has access to music-making opportunities. Their core philosophy is that children in early years universally enjoy music-making and that music-making is a unifying activity that brings communities together. Their early years programme offers a new online resource for early years music-making²⁸. They also have Melody Monkey's Marvellous Music Box²⁹ a highly successful early years practical music-making resource with an accompanying CPD programme, the First Steps early years project fund, and 'Tuning into Children', ³⁰ a training handbook for early years practitioners and music specialists offering guiding principles for collaborative working. Finally, there is a strong network of **National Dance Agencies** and smaller dance agencies in England, which support, develop and promote dance for all and provide space, classes, performances, information and events on dance. Many of these agencies offer classes for early years children and families and are collaborating with children's centres and early years practitioners on delivering regular dance work in early childhood settings³¹. All of this amounts to a strong national infrastructure supporting the embedding of performing arts work into early years settings.

On a more local and regional level, there is a myriad of examples of artists and early years practitioners co-collaborating on projects with a performing arts element. In 2007 and 2008, Liverpool, the European Capital of Culture took early years as one of its key foci, and delivered Little Acorns, four projects where artists worked in early years settings to explore the children's sense of place,

27 www.youthmusic.org.uk

28 www.bongoclub.org.uk

29 www.youthmusic.org.uk/Early_years/general.jsp?ID=784

30 www.bongoclub.org.uk/Early_years/general.jsp?ID=784

31 An example of one such dance agency is Dance 4, based in Nottingham, who have produce 'Small Steps: Big Moves', an early years dance resource pack, available for purchase at www.communitydance.org.uk

identity and their perceptions of home. Two of these projects were performing arts based.³² Many performing arts companies are adopting a long-term approach to their work with early years children, for example the company Dynamic New Animations (DNA) who have engaged in 'Imaginary Leaps' a three-year programme of work using well-established early years children's texts to explore creative play and imaginative learning with children and early years workers in the Lancashire area³³. 'Babies and Toddlers call the Shots'³⁴ is a movement-based training programme with nursery nurses, teachers and childcarers with children in their settings, led by dance teachers from Woldgate Community College in East Yorkshire. This programme worked to create a movement-based play environment that gave children the chance to express themselves through movement, build self-esteem and discover their own physical languages. Another project which is an excellent model of practice is 5x5x5=Creativity which involved a partnership between the early years setting, the Bath Area Network for Artists and the Arts Development team in Bath. The project drew on the principles of Reggio Emilia and worked with children through a series of five residencies with five visual artists and five galleries to engage the children in philosophical enquiries about contemporary art.³⁵ The research-based rather than output-driven approach adopted by the organisation can offer a lot to the performing arts sector while working in early years settings. These are all examples of exciting engaging practice where artists are working alongside early childhood workers as well as parents and guardians to create a climate of co-learning and co-construction of meaning in the artistic and creative process. Ultimately, the success of the EYFS in nurturing and developing a creative learning climate in early years settings where the arts are seen as central to the child's development will depend on:

- The flexibility accorded to early years practitioners with regard to their approaches to facilitating learning
- The efficacy of the conditions and the richness of the

32 Churchill Dower, Ruth (2008). Little Acorns: an evaluation of an early years programme for European Capital of Culture 2008, Liverpool Culture Company.

33 Murtin, Miriam (2007), 'Imaginary Leaps', evaluation for Dynamic New Animation (DNA) of their early years creativity programme

34 For more info see report on www.earlyarts.co.uk

35 For an interview with Penny Hayes, from 5x5x5=Creativity, see www.earlyarts.co.uk, and for more info see www.5x5xcreativity.org.uk

- environments in which they work
- The level of confidence of early years practitioners in working with arts and creative methodologies
- The resources and training available to enable them to do so
- The depth of engagement and quality of those interactions between artists and early years practitioners which can take place within the spaces offered by the EYFS and how they are valued at the early stages of delivery

As with all learning frameworks, the real test will be in the delivery, and the real challenges are for those early years practitioners and pioneering artists who choose to work alongside them. Some practitioners have expressed the view that the EYFS pays little attention to the welfare and needs of the early childhood workers themselves and issues such as this will inevitably impact on the quality of the delivery, and the creative arts strand. This brings us to the question of training and nurturing early years practitioners. For the last three years the Early Years Professional Qualification training has been implemented throughout many UK universities to prepare Early Years professionals for the EYFS being rolled out. In addition, many other early years & childcare qualifications have also incorporated the EYFS as they have been required to do so for the last two years in preparation for the transition to EYFS. But there is still a big discrepancy with the majority of the workforce that were trained in old methods and there is an ongoing need for arts and creativity CPD for professionals. As Ruth Churchill Dower articulates it: 'The new learning framework has the potential to open many doors to creative early learning journeys, but again it will be restrained by the limitations of a workforce that is badly paid, suffers poor retention, a low employment profile and a lack of time and money for ongoing professional development, especially with any creative input'.³⁶

Peter Moss (Professor in Early Childhood Provision at the Institute of Education) elaborated on this issue in more detail in his lecture for the Early Childhood Forum in April 2007 where he discussed issues around the roles of early years and childcare workers, drawing on theories from Reggio Emilia.³⁷ The lecture outlined his

³⁶ Churchill Dower, Ruth (2008), 'Arts and Early Years in England', *ibid*.

³⁷ Moss, Peter (2007), 'The Early Childhood Worker: Current Understandings and Future Directions', a public lecture delivered at the Early Childhood Education Forum, notes available on www.earlyarts.org.uk

thinking that the early childhood worker is negatively affected by three key splits within early years in England: split thinking, split structures and a split workforce (divided between Nursery/Primary teachers and nursery workers). In his view there needed to be a shift away from competence-based learning, which is based on 'performance to prescribed standards' and a view of early childhood workers as 'an enclosure for applying technologies', to achieve predetermined and normative outcomes. He argued for a move away from this 'positivistic / modernistic' paradigm (rooted in 19th century thinking) towards a 'post-modern' paradigm based on democratic dialogue and a view of early childhood institutions as 'children's space and public forum' (with many nascent possibilities) and the early childhood worker as critical thinker, researcher and learning partner. Artists are very familiar with the new paradigm that Moss advocates and tend to operate within that paradigm at all times, so there is a good argument for the artist and the early years practitioner functioning as a model for this new paradigm in the future. To some extent this is the ideal to be aspired towards, but may prove difficult to achieve while those constraints and splits are still in place. The Foundation Stage Forum states very clearly: 'For the EYFS to raise standards and quality in the early years, training must be made available, tailored to the needs of the workforce.'³⁸

In the midst of all this change, it is vital that there is strong advocacy for artists and early years practitioners collaborating in early childhood settings, genuine opportunities for training and professional development and a dynamic climate of research, discussion, dialogue, exchange and sharing of practice which takes place across regional boundaries and adopts a national strategic and creative overview. Earlyarts³⁹ is a professional development network set up by Isaacs UK in partnership with the Arts Council in 2002, who funded the research into its development as an organisation. Its membership is made up of those working with young children and families in the arts, cultural, early years, family, health and social care sectors and its main focus is 'to help develop an understanding towards and the appropriate skillset for building creative learning environments and embedding a playful learning

³⁸ Edwards, Helen, Response to the EYFS consultation, Early Years Foundation Stage Forum, www.foundation-stage.info/newfsf/articles/news/FSFArticle_179.php

³⁹ www.earlyarts.co.uk

culture within educational, childcare, social care, arts or cultural settings.⁴⁰ Full details of the work of Earlyarts can be found on their website but what is most pertinent here is that the organisation recently received funding from a well-regarded British foundation for a national programme of research and development, with a possible view to becoming a national network rather than a regional one (which it is at present). Should this become a reality, it would help link the arts, cultural and education sectors, and further expand some of the exciting possibilities inherent in the EYFS through advocacy, opportunities for ongoing professional development, conditions in the sector for artists and early years workers and fundamentally for enhanced learning through creative practice for early years children nationally.

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Pre-school education in Slovenia

Maja Kozmos

Translated by Maja Kozmos

Preschool education in Slovenia is organised for children from the age of one to six years old and is not obligatory. At the age of six, children go to primary school, which is obligatory and lasts for nine years. Preschool education is intended to support parents with their overall care for their children, offer possible improvement to the quality of family life and create possibilities for a child's complete development. Preschool education is undertaken by public and private kindergartens. The former practise the public programme called "Curriculum for Kindergartens" (the national curriculum for preschool institutions) while the latter carry out a programme chosen by the founder of the private kindergarten and conceived in accordance with the law for kindergartens. Before being put into practice, the programme has to be evaluated by a professional council for general education in order to meet certain requirements. Those private kindergartens carrying out a programme based on particular pedagogic principles (e.g. Steiner, Decroly, Montessori), are only awarded their operational licence once the programme has been accepted by an appropriate international association, as well. Those private kindergartens offering the same programme as public kindergartens can be given a franchise by a municipality. The amount that parents have to pay for a kindergarten is determined on the basis of family income; and it also varies according to the programme selected by the kindergarten (Appendix: Reference source 3).

Parents can choose either a public or a private kindergarten, which can be in their own municipality or outside the locality. They can also choose between different programmes offered by that kindergarten. These programmes vary according to duration and organisation.

Daily and half-daily programmes are meant for one to six year-olds and include education, childcare and meals. They can be offered for the morning, the afternoon or for an alternate combination, with sessions running for either 6 – 9 hours daily, or 4 – 6 hours daily. *The Shorter programme* takes 240 - 600 hours a year and is designed for children from remote and demographically disadvantaged

areas. This programme accepts 3-6 year olds and includes education and childcare, with optional provision of meals.

Educational-custody family is a form of education and upbringing, which takes place at home and can be carried out by a trained educator or his assistant with experience of working in either public or private sector kindergartens. Accessing this type of preschool programme depends on parents' need and interest for it, alongside a lack of available places in public kindergartens.

The fourth form is *Occasional upbringing of children at home*. This is a special type of service, just beginning in our country, and is being offered by different organisations and associations, including educators and social workers. This multi-agency service, now accepted under the new law for kindergartens, is intended for children who are unable to attend kindergarten due to chronic illness. This provision is paid for by parents, but in exceptional circumstances can be organised through their kindergarten.

Curriculum for kindergartens

"Curriculum for Kindergartens" is a national document which, on the basis of its goals and principles, enables professional planning and quality preschool education. In relation to the term "programme" its meaning is broader, representing a shift from the traditional emphasis on the content, to the process of preschool education and the overall experiences through which a child learns at kindergarten. Therefore, the curriculum also includes the conditions that enable the delivery of prescribed content.

"Curriculum for Kindergartens" presents a series of goals – overarching aims to be achieved through the delivery of the curriculum. These goals include:-

- diversification of the offer of activities in all aspects of preschool education
- greater encouragement for individuality
- improvement in conditions to support social and cultural diversity
- greater respect for the child's rights to privacy
- reorganisation of the physical structure and equipment of kindergartens
- increased autonomy and professional responsibility of kindergartens and their employees
- improvement in structures to support better management,

planning and evaluation of the work undertaken in kindergartens

- improvement in communication and cooperation with parents

In addition to the curriculum, the new law for kindergartens (1996, Appendix: Literature/Reference, 2) states its own goals for preschool education to support the child's development. These include

- to build self-esteem
- to develop social skills
- to develop emotional well-being, self-awareness and self-expression
- to nurture curiosity, imagination and intuition
- to develop autonomous thinking
- to encourage linguistic skills for creative expression through speech, and subsequently, literacy
- to encourage aesthetic appreciation of the arts
- to impart knowledge and encourage understanding of the sciences and the everyday world around us
- to support physical development of motor skills
- to support developing independence in personal care and hygiene

As a means to achieving these goals, the curriculum presents a range of principles in relation to child development and learning through the preschool years.

Among **curriculum principles**, the following are worth mentioning:-

the principle of democracy and pluralism which assumes diversity of programmes, theoretical approaches and models, variety of methods and ways of working with preschool children with a diversity of activities.

the principle of curriculum's openness, which supports the teacher's autonomic judgement in implementing goals and principles of curriculum, based on his/her professionalism

the principle of equal chances and consideration of diversity among children and principle of multiculturalism, which includes

enabling equal opportunities for the optimal development of every child, considering characteristics of age and individual differences in development and learning, assuring conditions for permanent or occasional inclusion of preschool children with special needs into kindergartens, considering group differences and provision of a wide variety of activities, content and materials, among which children could choose according to their wishes, interests and abilities

the principle of balance, which stresses the educators' need to ensure activities from all fields of activities and to encourage all aspects of the child's development, whilst supporting the right to make choices, be different and have the opportunity for a deepened development within a certain field

the principle of horizontal cohesion points out, besides choice of activity, the connection of different fields of activities in the kindergarten and, with it, a connection of different aspects of the child's development and learning

the principle of vertical cohesion demands continuity between the first and the second age period and between the kindergarten and the elementary school

the principle of developmental-process anticipates the process of learning as a goal of learning in the preschool period; it does not place value on answers being right or wrong but in the encouragement of the child's own strategies for understanding, expressing and thinking, which are developmentally specific.

the principle of active learning and circumstances for different ways of expression highlights the meaning of encouraging children to verbalise and express themselves in different ways and to stimulate them for using different strategies and resources while searching for answers to various questions (Appendix: Reference source 1).

In order to plan the activities for preschool children appropriately we have to know the process of child development. The "Curriculum for Kindergartens" therefore includes some of the most

important characteristics of child development, e.g. the so called "critical periods" (periods that are most appropriate for a child to learn something in the most effective way). Principles of preschool education, derived from the developmental characteristics, are also interesting. They emphasise setting meaningful challenges that include active learning, expressing and experiencing; they stress the way of learning by direct manipulation of objects and of learning by gaining concrete experiences with people and things. Child's play is considered as an especially valuable activity; namely, it unites all the basic principles of preschool education in the most natural way, enables learning in various fields, develops imagination and offers feelings of freedom, safety and satisfaction (Appendix: Reference source 1).

Children and art education

One of the six fields of activities in curriculum is art. Its key purpose is in implementing children's creative potentials. A child expresses himself and communicates through art; along with that he also develops the ability for representational use of symbols through art. Thus, through art, he can portray his secret feelings and emotions, describe an event or simply experiment with artistic language. While creating these first pieces of art, the child perceives himself as a designer of symbols and, as the creator of these works, sees them as lasting and significant products through which he helps to shape the environment. Because of the connection between experiencing and creating, art is an important element of the child's development. Global goals of this area are experiencing, realising and enjoying art, developing the aesthetic perception and artistic awareness, realising different kinds of art, developing expression and communication through art, developing creativity and specific art skills. Children need to have an opportunity to use and develop artistic skills, to research and experiment with their own art resources (body, voice, materials, objects, techniques, instruments), to develop skills for expressing the same feelings in various artistic languages, to experience different art media and, most important, to retain a sense of curiosity and enthusiasm regarding art and artistic activities.

Comparison of works of art, interpretation of signs and symbols represented in life and art, experience of theatre performances, concerts and exhibitions and an understanding of the process

and nature of live performance arts are all cited in the curriculum as suggestions for meeting described goals.

Examples of artistic activities are further divided according to art forms and age periods. Drama is one of the five art forms in the curriculum. For younger children (1-3 year olds), the listed examples of drama activities are animation of toys, puppets and objects; use of objects in a representational way; use of simple props, scenery and costume, and opportunities to attend or participate in simple puppet performances at the kindergarten. Drama activities for older children (3 - 6 year olds), include representational use of puppets and objects and puppetry animation; acting using voice, body language, puppets, objects, costume and mask; collective cooperation in presenting invented scenarios and plays using lighting, sound and costume; creating a story inspired by drawing or photography; observing speech, body language, spatial language, dramatic chronology (dynamics of happening within the time, in which the story is going on), and watching live theatre performances (Appendix: Reference source 1).

Theatre education in practice

In order to find out in what way and to what extent the suggested drama activities from the curriculum are put into practice, interviews were conducted with some teacher/educators from Ljubljana. Two Slovenian directors, Jaka Ivanc and Marjan Bevk, expressed their opinions about the possibilities for creating performing arts for today's and future children

Regarding the question of how much children nowadays enjoy going to the theatre and how much they like the performances they see, educators and directors differ in their opinion. Namely, educators say that children not only love the theatre but also need it. They think that children are fed up with computers and television and that it is the very nature of theatre being a live experience that really enraptures them and leaves a lasting memory.

With this view, there is no reason to fear that technology could ever cause a decline of children's interest in performing arts. Director J. Ivanc is of the opposite opinion and says that nowadays, when children are bombarded with visual images, it is difficult to make them satisfied with shows in the theatre. Children rapidly follow the progress of technology so it might be worth thinking of modernising the whole stage technique to create more possibilities

when preparing the show, so making theatre more interesting for children. Regarding the negative side effects of technology, director M. Bevk shares the same opinion. He says that today's stultifying serials contribute to the increasing level of low-quality commercialised shows. Like Ivanc, he adds that the audience have somehow transferred this perception from the television to the theatre venue and they expect to experience the same event in the theatre as in their living-room. That is why children often expect the same character to appear on stage as that embodied by the actor in some serial on television. When this does not happen, they are quite disappointed; they do not evaluate the performance itself but are instead entirely preoccupied with the disappointment that they did not see the figure they had expected to see. And this, says Bevk, is damaging live theatre.

Amongst other things, educators say that before going to the theatre, they always talk to their children about the culture of behaving in the theatre, about the show they are going to see; the children also talk about their previous individual experiences with theatre, so making the rest of the group interested in it as well. After the performance, educators talk to the children again. The discussion is important because otherwise the experience can go by too quickly for those children who cannot follow the entire show and who thereby miss something. Furthermore, discussion supports children's developing communication skills whilst talking about their feelings in relation to the performance. One of the educators adds that she is very bothered by the fact that a whole day can go by between seeing the show and discussing it, during which time most of the children's feelings vanish. She does not get the response she could, were they to talk right after the show. Educators also say that children love to draw what they have seen, sometimes they even re-enact the show by themselves.

Besides watching shows, children also love to make their own performances. These are often prepared and performed to parents and other children from the kindergarten.

Younger children (four and five year-olds) are more or less directed by their educator, as first of all they need to get the experience of how the performance is actually made. She will generally choose an appropriate fairytale with simple dialogue that enables all the children to take an acting role (it may have to be presented

repeatedly in order to include all the children). Braver children are invited to take on the more challenging roles, as their confidence can encourage the shy ones. Less confident children receive more direction and support. Initially, all children try acting parts to find out if they enjoy this, then those not so keen can participate in subsequent performances by making scenery, puppets and so on. However, as stressed by one educator in conversation, it is important for children to try different roles and express their creativity, since varying a child's experience - even though the result might not be the best - significantly contributes to their development.

While younger children have more precise intervention, the older ones (five and six year-olds) can already organise themselves. One of the educators suggests that once children get to know the story well, they do not need any additional support with rehearsing lines and directing; they enjoy improvising and making up the lines spontaneously, according to the story they have heard. On the contrary, another educator insists that the dialogue gets repeated several times so that children can learn it, and that the show itself is acted as many times with various casts so that all children master all the roles.

Although all aspects of the curriculum have to be evenly covered, enabling children to experience all kinds of art forms, some remaining time can be allocated as desired. Some educators, therefore, afford greater time for music or fine arts, others for theatre. The level of participation in theatre arts therefore depends to some degree on the interest of the individual educator.

Concerning the quality of children's theatre provision, opinions differ. Director J. Ivanc says that there are a number of children's theatre companies in Slovenia; puppet theatre is far more developed and also more available in comparison to acted performances but, overall, the quality of children's shows is quite good. Director M. Bevk warns that what we lack most are acted shows, since GOML¹ in Ljubljana is the only children's theatre specialising in these kinds of performances. He is also cautious about praising the quality of the shows. In his opinion the shows produced by those theatres, specialised in producing work for children, are truly qualitative, whilst performances by theatres that produce shows

¹ (GOML – Gledališče za otroke in mlade Ljubljana; Theatre for children and youth Ljubljana)

for children as a side-line to their general work, are often under the desired level of quality. Bevk is also disappointed with the State's attitude towards theatre production. Ivanc adds that the main problem is the lack of financial support. He further explains that if financial resources were greater, combining this with all the possibilities that theatres offer today, performances could be even better. In relation to the future of children's theatre, Ivanc thinks the potential development lies in technological improvement, whilst Bevk optimistically adds that having technical shortfalls can also be seen as an advantage, as they heighten the director's creativity and ingenuity by forcing him to find new solutions to enable him to maintain the high quality of the performance.

Influence of theatre on child development

As an art form, theatre has an important influence on children from the developmental point of view as well. Advantages come either from watching performances or by making their own shows.

Visiting theatre performances above all represents a form of *fun and relaxation from everyday life*. A child simply enjoys watching visual images that are changing in front of him, while listening to music which often guides the events on the stage, and to humorous dialogues which create a lively atmosphere. Paramount to this is enjoying the expectation of how the story will continue and conclude.

All this is accompanied by *emotions*, which can be very intense, given that children at this age are still working on the ability to control them. In particular, their reactions in the theatre are proportional to this; we quite often notice that at any one moment children can laugh out loud at some character's jocular remark but in the very next instant can become completely scared stiff when their fairytale hero is in any way threatened; they can also cry inconsolably when somebody experiences injustice. All these strong emotional responses are connected with growing empathy.

This new knowledge can be used in everyday life where emotions do not vanish as quickly as in theatre - when the curtain falls.

Children's shows enable children to solve their own *problems and doubts* as well. Namely, heroes on stage are quite often faced with similar concerns that burden children in the early years; while the character in the performance is solving his problem, the child

finds out firstly, that he is not the only one with this problem, and secondly, possible ways to solve this problem effectively.

One of the most important functions of children's theatre is observational learning or modelling, by which children observe, remember and later reproduce the behaviour they have seen. Besides its developmental function, *learning* in the theatre has an educational function as well. While visiting theatre performances, children get to know the theatre environment, come into contact with professional actors and others working in the theatre and learn how to behave in a cultural institution. Furthermore, while thinking about the content of the show, they reach new understandings and, on the basis of the performances seen, gradually form criteria for recognising quality theatre art.

Another important function is the influence on the child's *verbal development*. While listening to the performers, a child is unconsciously learning new words thereby enriching his vocabulary; this may include a first experience of hearing new forms of speech, such as different dialects.

Creating performances also has important positive influences, mostly on gaining various skills – creative, communicative, social, motor and, especially, performing skills.

In the meantime, when a child helps to plan and make puppets, costumes and scenery, he develops his *hand skills*, *releases creativity* and *increases imagination*. He learns to differentiate between the ideas that can be put into practice and those that can only live in his imagination. Creativity, the key factor of his own creation, can also be expressed through the way he interprets lines, choreographs dance, arranges singing parts and finds solutions for various staging problems. What is important is that activities are not strictly defined to every single detail, but that within the framework that performance requires, a child can seek his own way for realising intentions. In this way, not only can creativity grow, but also a sense of *self-efficacy*. A child first has to try an activity by himself and experience success, and only then can he begin to evaluate himself realistically and to appreciate his abilities and skills.

Throughout the creative process there is constant social interaction among children. In contact with others, a child develops useful *social skills* – from cooperation, listening, negotiation, implementation of his own interests, consideration of the wishes

of other children and problem-solving. Along with that, the child develops communicative skills as well; he is learning to choose the right words to achieve his intention. Word skill also develops through learning and presenting lines on stage, through which he is learning to adapt the way of speech to fit the performance whilst becoming acquainted with new words through learned lines. A child also gains the first experience of performance, how to beat nerves and gain confidence in public speaking.

Finally, it is significant that acting can have a *therapeutic effect*; educators say that children quite often choose parts contrary to their own personality. More aggressive children, for instance, want to be rabbits, while the shy ones want to play wolves. As one of the educators says, acting enables you to experience another kind of life. It shows you what it would be like if you were somebody else. But for children, acting somebody else is also important from the point of view that it enables them to explore and reveal various parts of their personality which in everyday life often stay inaccessible to them.

Appendix

1. Terminology/definition

Preschool education in Slovenia is run by a kindergarten or by private care. Kindergartens accept children from the age of 1 – 6 years old and offer education, childcare and nutrition. They operate on the basis of curriculum for kindergartens and can be implemented in various forms, described in the first chapter.

2. Statistics (Reference source 5, below)

Number of kindergartens in Slovenia:

- public: 105
- private: 20
- elementary schools with kindergartens: 186

Number of children in Slovenia in 2007:

- age 0: 19.595
- age 1: 18.605
- age 2: 18.303
- age 3: 17.841
- age 4: 17.730
- age 5: 17.828
- age 6: 18.253

Number of children attending kindergartens (public and private) in Slovenia in 2006/2007:

- age 1: 5.200 (public), 81 (private)
- age 2: 9.448 (public), 171 (private)
- age 3: 12.054 (public), 187 (private)
- age 4: 14.404 (public), 253 (private)
- age 5: 15.203 (public), 255 (private)
- age 6 or more: 843 (public), 28 (private)

Number of children attending various programmes of public and private kindergartens in Slovenia in 2006/2007:

- daily programme: 55.318
- half-daily programme: 2.670
- shorter programme: 139

3. Number of professional educators (Reference source 5, below)

Number of educators in kindergartens in Slovenia in 2006/2007:

- first age period: 2 (male), 1.197 (female)
- second age period: 14 (male), 2.312 (female)

Number of educators' assistants in kindergartens in Slovenia in 2006/2007:

- first age period: 14 (male), 1.289 (female)
- second age period: 55 (male), 2.139 (female)

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The grass roots

Carmen Anghelescu

Translated by Florentina Rahira and Corina Chelmus

INTRODUCTION: EARLY EDUCATION Historical context

Up until the last two decades of the 20th Century the concept of Early Education referred to the education of children from the ages of 3 – 6 years old, before entering school at the age of six or seven. Early Education was considered to be organised activity taking place in specialised kindergarten-style institutions and was known as pre-school education or training.

The World Conference in Thailand, at Jomtien in 1990 – Education for All – introduced a new dimension, that of “life-long learning” which begins at birth, expanding the concept of Early Education by going under the age of three years. This was expressed through the phrase “Early Childhood Development” (ECD), which includes Early Education (Early Childhood Education and Care), encompassing the child’s protection, education and healthcare. This led to further discussions on the policies relating to children through a convergent social and educational approach, including healthcare and nutrition.

Generally, for children under three years of age, care had always covered just their hygiene, sanitary and medical needs.

Recent theories on child development helped determine this new perspective which, alongside an acknowledgement of changing patterns in family evolution and woman’s role in society, resulted in renewed discussion at government level in several countries in relation to the challenges that arise from this new concept of Early Education.

EARLY EDUCATION In Romania

In Romania, the characteristic of Early Education existed within the formal framework established by the Education Law no. 85/1995, through which education is free and guaranteed, but for children aged 3 and over.

Very recently, the new Kindergarten Law, no. 236/July 2007 has been adopted. This is still a draft law that follows a strategy for Early Education (2006) and includes education as the key purpose

of kindergarten units.

Consequently, there are two periods for early education:

I. From birth to 3 years: in specialised institutions – nurseries, day care centres, weekly nurseries.

II. From 3 to 6/7 years: in pre-school education – normal day programme kindergartens, extended day programme kindergartens, weekly kindergartens.

PART I EARLY EDUCATION FROM BIRTH – THREE YEARS IN ROMANIA

Romania is engaging with a new process in its approach to early childhood generated by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and incorporating new educational tendencies.

Early Education has been a concern for specialists and policy-makers over recent years, especially when, in 2005, it put forward the idea of expanding Early Education by introducing the birth – 3 years age-range into the education system and, with this, specific education regulations designed to meet the needs of children entering the system from the age of one.

The framework for the changes in Early Childhood Education follows new regulations. **Global Movement for Children**, which establishes 10 priority imperatives for all the UN member states, includes:

- **Elimination of social exclusion and discrimination** of children, of any sort, respecting children's rights, ensuring the best start in life for all children, stopping child labour, enabling access to education for all children - boys and girls, the fight against HIV/AIDS, children and young children's right to self expression and participation in the decision-making process which concerns them, children's protection from war, earth protection, the fight against poverty through children investment.
- **National Strategy for Early Education**
- **Law concerning parental leave** for childcare as of 1997 provides that mothers or fathers can take a two-year leave to care for the child.

- Also worth mentioning is the proposal for the new law concerning pre-university education, in which the formal education system is defined with the extension of Early Education from the age of one.
- **Law no. 236/July 2007 concerning the establishment, organisation and functioning of nurseries** defines the nursery in the following way: *Nurseries are structures which provide specialised social services for the raising, care and early education of children up to 3 years of age.*

Currently, early education services are functioning according to regulations which were elaborated more than 30 years ago. These regulations are no longer up-to-date, neither from an administrative point of view, nor as a friendly environment for the promotion of early education. Through the State Budget Law no. 216/2001, the early education services have passed from the control of the public health department to that of the local town halls. This has resulted in the change of financial provider, name and personnel structure of early education services, causing incompatibilities which have led to disrupted activity, since this transfer from the health service (where nurseries were defined as health units) to local public administration was not supported by the new mandate to enable its restructuring and re-organisation. The new law (**no. 236/July 2007**) has not been implemented yet, and specifications of how this will be enforced have not yet been made public. Nevertheless, there is concern amongst the institutions involved in services for children and families, which gives hope to a new understanding of early childhood education. Here we refer to: the Ministry of Labour and Family (Ministerul Muncii si Familiei) through the National Authority for Children's Rights (Autoritatea Nationala pentru Drepturile Copilului), the Ministry of Education and Research (Ministerul Educatiei si Cercetarii), the Ministry of Health (Ministerul Sanatatii), and a number of NGOs, like UNICEF, all of which include early childhood education as part of their remit.

Currently, the education and care of the child under three years of age have the characteristics we mention below and which have been highlighted by a study conducted between August and November 2007.

The number and type of nurseries at national level

Total	Day nurseries	Weekly nurseries	Mixed nurseries
287	218	33	36

- Nurseries receive children from 10 or 11 months to the age of 3.
- A pre-natal leave of four months is granted to mothers, and, through subsequent childcare leave, they can stay at home until the child is two years old. Each mother receives an indemnity equivalent to the minimum wage, if she chooses to take childcare leave.
- The day nurseries programme is from 06.00 hrs to 18.00 hrs
- The weekly nurseries programme is from Monday to Friday and children have to remain in the unit throughout these hours.
- There is pressure from early education professionals to give up this programme and to organise the nursery's hours in a flexible way, according to the parents' working patterns, in order to maintain the child's connection with the family.
- Mixed nurseries are those units which have both weekly programmes and day groups.
- Nurseries have a capacity of between 75 to 150 children.

The number of nurseries has decreased very much from 1990, when there were 840, to the 2007 figure totaling 287 nurseries. The number of children has also decreased from 77,000 in 1990 to 13,000 in 2007.

Three major factors contributed to this decline:

- The decrease of the birth rate.
- The childcare leave and the indemnity granted to mothers.
- Change of the workplace structure and of the phenomenon of female workforce migration to the other EU countries.

A study of nurseries conducted in 2005 indicated that most of the nurseries were located in the central and western part of Romania,

notably Cluj, Sibiu and Arad counties, which also have the lowest birth rate. However, according to HDI (Human Development Index), they are among the most developed areas in Romania. Yet, in the north eastern part, where there is the highest birth rate in Romania, and which is also among the poorest, there are the fewest nurseries. For example, Cluj municipality has 10 nurseries, while Botosani has only one.

In relation to the number of children, it is hard to tell how many nurseries would be required. Parents have the right to choose whether to educate their children within the family, or in nurseries. There are some characteristic trends worth noting, including:

- A tendency amongst young parents to continue their studies or professional development and to enlist the child in a nursery, even before the age of two.
- The fact that childcare leave is granted to the mother or father until the child is two years of age, with a gap from the age of two to three, when some parents wish to take their children to nurseries.
- The continuing custom to have children temporarily cared for by grandparents in the countryside, with children returning to their parents in the year prior to starting a pre-school institution.
- The practice, in some poorer areas, of taking children out of nursery during the winter months, when they are sent away to their grandparents, and brought back in the summer. This happens because of the high maintenance costs of city-living during the cold season and the pattern of agricultural labour that often results in grandparents working, thus being unavailable during the summer months.

With regard to the distribution of nurseries throughout Romania, it is worth mentioning that there are no nurseries in the rural areas, except for the nursery in Buzau County, Berca Commune. Here the nursery is supported by Berca Oil Field, in connection with the kindergarten for the children of the oil field's employees.

This fact also reflects the social values in rural areas where there is a mentality that continues to view traditional care as sufficient, despite the possibility that many parents with young children might well benefit from kindergartens in their locality.

Age structure of children attending nurseries

- Most children are aged between 19 – 36 months.
- In weekly nurseries 6% of children are under eight months and 18% are aged over 18 months.
- 76% are children over 18 months and some of them are slightly over three years of age. We remind you that the education system, the nurseries, receive children who have turned 3.

The structure of the team working in nurseries

Personnel in nurseries are still specific to healthcare units, since, historically, independent nurseries have always been organised under the healthcare system:

- The largest percentage of the personnel, at 42%, go under the title Caregiver.
- Caregivers do not have specific qualifications.
- Medical nurses with post high-school training in specialised schools for average medical training, represent 32.5% of the workforce.
- The number of teachers is very small, at 0.8%.
- Nursery management is ensured by doctors, up to 3%, and medical nurses at 97%.
- The view regarding the organisation of the nursery is still one of caring for the child on a “medicalised model”, which is limited to hygiene and nutrition norms, where education is implicit and not falling under any national or regional educational programmes or regulations.

It should be noticed that over 45% of the personnel working with children in the nurseries have more than 25 years' experience in this capacity, maintaining a traditional method in their approach to children under three years of age.

These two aspects are also supported by the Education Law, yet to be amended (when the new law is finally implemented) and which specifies that formal education in Romania starts from the age of 3. All this highlights the lack of a professional category with a basic training in the education of children under the age of 3, and there is no school, college or university which can offer initial or continuous training courses for the birth – 3 years age-group.

COMMENT

Pilot programmes, co-ordinated by NGOs (such as Centre for Education and Professional Development Step by Step) have taken place in some nurseries and have informed Early Childhood Education in Romania. These programmes serve as a means to find solutions and bring about possible changes pending the amendment of the Education Law and the implementation of the new Nursery Law.

One such programme has introduced teachers into the team working in nurseries. The teachers trained for the educational approach of working with children under the age of 3 have required specific training, with another perspective on children. This includes aspects such as; competences of the new born; prenatal and new born learning potential and mechanisms; sensorial stimulation activities of children from birth - 3 years of age; socialising and communication. The training courses are based on the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child and the theory of child development and highlight one of the principles of educating the small child: "The child is competent to learn from birth, but it is essential for the adult to give the meaning of the learned things." The NGOs have delivered training programmes for existing employees, including introducing a teacher into team units to support some in-situ training. However, from an administrative point of view, this practice is not formally accommodated by the current system that has no official structures or regulations for nursery units to hire or remunerate teachers employed in this training capacity.

Nursery cost

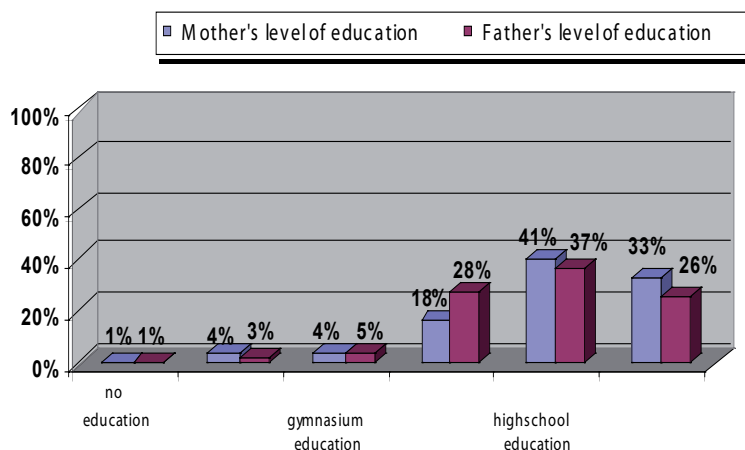
The functioning costs within the public system are subsidised by the State; the parents only pay the food costs. These differ from one region of the country to the other, although there is a "Government Decision" which establishes food costs. On average, it varies from Lei 3.5/day/**0.96 euro** to Lei 5.0/day/**1.37 euro**, and in weekly nurseries, from Lei 5.5/ **1.50 euro** to Lei 6.5/day/**1.77 euro**.

Who are the parents of the children attending the nursery?

Most of the parents both in day nurseries and in weekly nurseries have a relatively high level of education. Over 70% of the mothers and 60% of the fathers have high school, post-high school and

university education. The percentage of parents with gymnasium education (up to the age of 14) is up to 10%.

Parents' education level: image 1



There aren't any differences between the education level of parents in the weekly nurseries towards the parents who use day nurseries (the data is not presented).

Most of the parents work in industry (constructions, textiles, food industry), followed by those in the service industry (salespeople/dealers, waiters, bartenders) and in public service (doctors, medical nurses, educational personnel, officers, etc.). (*ref budgetary field, in Parents' workplace, Image 2 below*)

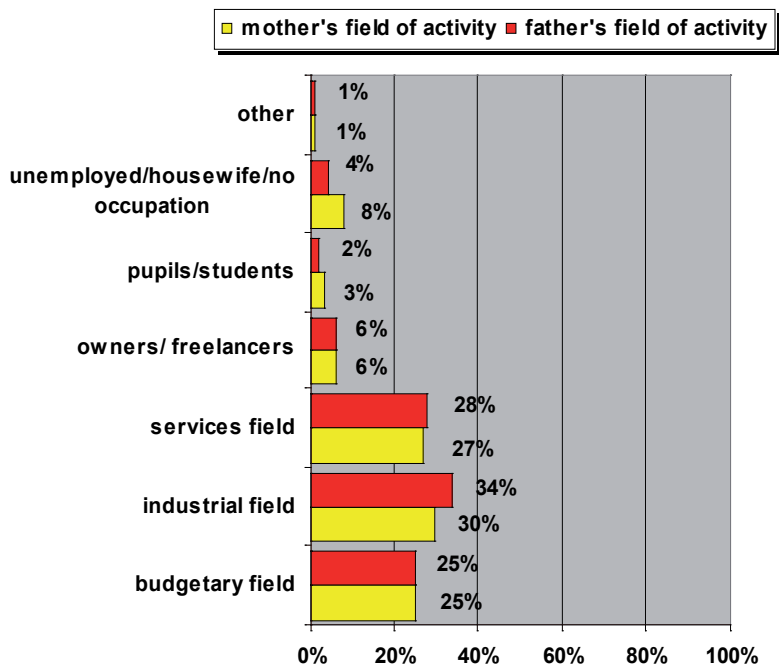
In day nurseries, the percentage of parents working in public service is 10% higher than weekly nurseries. The number of student parents using the weekly nursery is 7% higher than those using the day nursery (the data is not presented).

Parents' ethnic structure

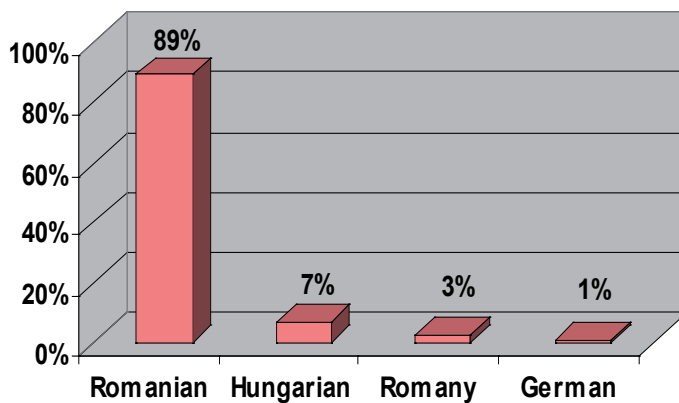
On the whole, the parents who use day and weekly nurseries are 89% Romanian, 7% Hungarians, 3% Romany, and 1% other nationalities. This ethnic structure is very close to the data provided by the official statistic.

Analysed separately in the weekly nurseries, the percentage of Hungarian and Romany children has not exceeded 1.5%.

Parents' workplace: image 2



Parents' nationality: image 3

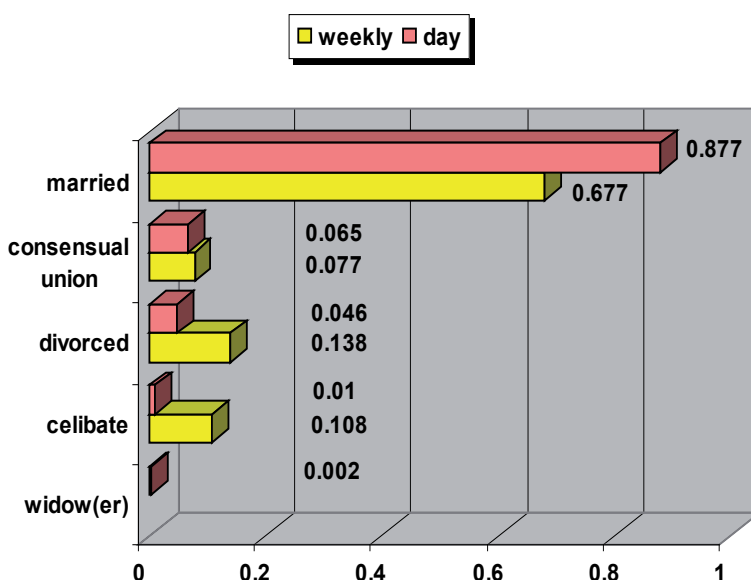


Parents' marital status

Regarding the parents' marital status, 85% of them are married, 7% live in consensual status, 6% are divorced/separated and 2% are celibate, ie lone parents (the data is not presented).

This structure is different in day and weekly nurseries (image 4). The percentage of single parents (divorced/separated, lone parents) in weekly nurseries is at least 10% higher than the number of parents using day nurseries.

Parents' marital status: image 4



Living conditions

The living conditions have been classified on 3 levels: bad, good, very good. Bad living conditions have been deemed houses in which the number of living rooms was at least two smaller than the number of people living in that house. Good living conditions have been categorised as houses where the number of rooms was smaller by one than the number of people living in them. Very good living conditions are houses where the number of rooms was

at least equal to the number of people in the house. The living conditions have been accounted as bad in proportion of 33%, good 46% and very good 21%.

Living conditions: image 5



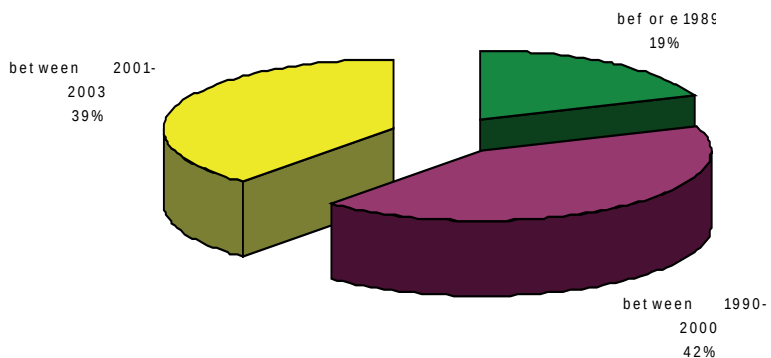
Almost half of the parents designate a room to their child. On the whole, the living conditions do not influence children's entry into nurseries; 67% of the families using nurseries have good and very good living conditions.

Physical characteristics of nursery buildings and children spaces ***Evaluation of the building and equipment status***

The status of the buildings, interior and exterior spaces; nursery equipment.

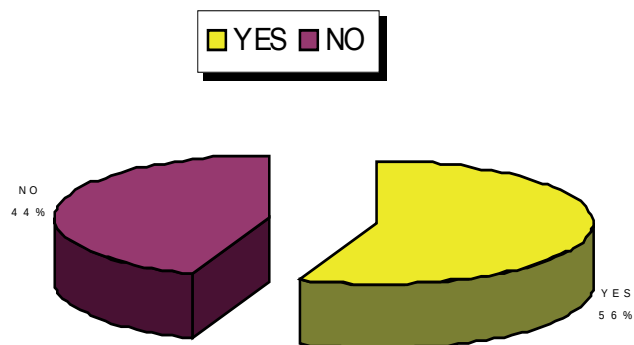
It has been observed that 40% of the nurseries have been renovated within the last 2-3 years (image 6) and 58% of them have the building repainted on the exterior as well. Regarding the interior space, nurseries usually have 2 rooms. One is for sleeping, the other for daily activities.

*Last renovation of nurseries - distribution by percentages:
image 6*



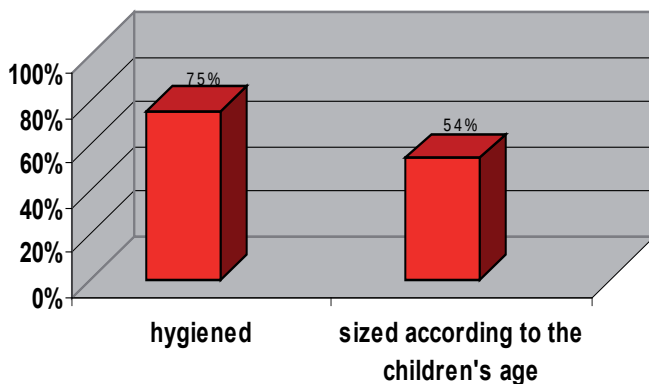
Regarding the utilities, it is noticed that the **kitchens** are equipped accordingly in 56% of these nurseries.

*Is the kitchen equipped with furniture and appliances adequate for the preparation of food according to the age of the children?:
image 7*



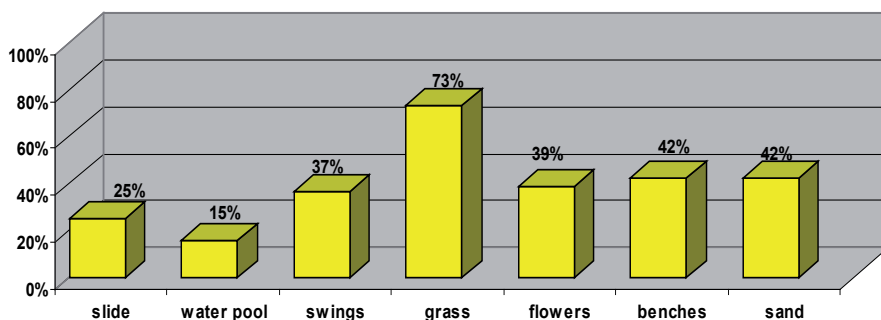
Regarding **sanitary rooms**, it is noticed that only in 54% of the cases are they sized in connection with the child's age.

Sanitary rooms are sized in connection with the child's age:
image 8



For the development of the child, outdoor experiences are very important. These experiences are quite limited in nurseries, given that once the cold settles in, the children are not taken out at all. There are also nurseries where, regardless of the season, the children are not taken out because of the lack of space allotted to the nursery, the lack of an arranged space for the comfort and safety of the children and personnel. Unfortunately, offering outdoor experiences to children is not a requirement, therefore it is possible for staff not to satisfy the children's needs. In image 9, the exterior arrangements of nurseries are illustrated (day and weekly nurseries). In many cases, the arranged exterior is used only by the children in the nurseries.

Distribution of nurseries according to the arrangement of the exterior space: image 9



Weekly nurseries are far less equipped with the above-mentioned elements than day nurseries, the differences being from 10% to 30% smaller than in the case of day nurseries for each element separately (the data is not presented).

Nursery supply

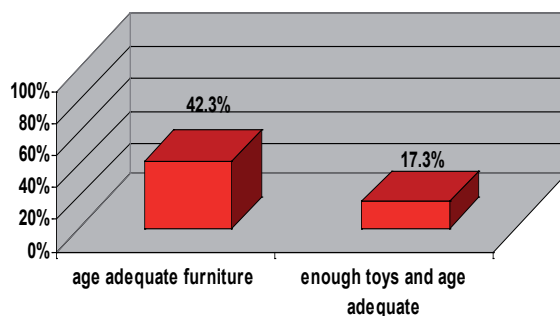
Nurseries have to be equipped so as to represent an environment focused on the child's needs. This environment has to be arranged to allow the child to explore. Also, it has to be varied enough to encourage creativity, experimentation, the capacity to discover and solve problems, and to support the individual aspects like children's interests, talents and aptitudes.

From the earliest age, children learn while playing. They learn better when they have the opportunity to acquire knowledge following their own experiences and interactions with the surrounding world.

They need to play with the thing they are focused on and test its qualities: by grabbing, pulling, twisting, turning and arranging it.

The furniture is appropriate for the child's age in only 42 % of the nurseries. The most severe situation is in relation to toys; only 17% of nurseries provide enough and adequate toys suitable for the child's age.

*Is the furniture supply age adequate for the children?
Are there enough age adequate toys for the children?
- percentage distribution: image 10*



There is no adequate furniture to create a learning environment: shelves, tables, chairs, soft furniture like sofas, armchairs, mattresses, pillows, carpet, rocking chair etc.

Children's daily schedule is dictated by the daily routines: toilet, sleep, meals - there is no curriculum to organise the learning activities or a weekly or monthly plan for each unit or age group. The staff's focus is more on looking after than on educating.

Play is a spontaneous activity which children do without being guided to learn specific skills - other than basic habits of hygiene and personal care.

There is now a strategy for Early Education which includes the elaboration of a curriculum for children from birth to the age of 3 and relates to areas of child development through the activities available in the nurseries.

They will be prepared for the next stage: kindergarten - just like kindergarten prepares children for school. The strategy for Early Education includes services of quality education. This implies setting up appropriate places in units for a maximum number of 40 children in order to avoid the risks of over-crowding and to make it possible to coordinate and organise the unit for the specific benefit of the children as opposed to the institution.

The strategy foresees the establishment of some forms of specialised education at university level in relation to children's education

from birth to the age of 5/6. It is worth mentioning that Romania, as a member of the EU, has signed the Declaration from Bologna according to which 33% of education personnel must undertake courses at university.

The strategy foresees a curriculum of learning and education for children from birth to the age of 3. This curriculum follows the child's developmental stages on development domains (cognitive, motor, sensorial, communication, socialising, emotional). The domains of development are concepts of didactic-pedagogical nature as tools for evaluating the child's progress. The child's development is a holistic process and a domain which influences the child entirely. The child's creativity is in his potential and his capacity to find solutions for situations he has never encountered before. A balanced educational approach is based on the educational principle sustained by Maria Montessori, that of handing the child a space and objects he can explore and handle in order to acquire more experiences. In order to rationalise the objects offered to the child, they are grouped according to the targeted domain. For example, objects of motion for the motor domain or manual coordination; coloured objects for sensorial reception, objects which trigger verbal expression and exposition (etc), sustaining communication and the building of self-awareness and self-esteem. All these are organised within the curriculum, which follows overarching aims with specific objectives. Through this, the child develops his own creativity which suits his own personality.

PART II PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FROM THE AGE OF 3 TO 6/7 YEARS OLD

As stated previously, Early Education was provided in kindergartens for 3–6/7 year olds, and known as pre-school learning or education. This pre-school learning in Romania had been in existence since the early twentieth century when the first “schools for little children” were established for children from the age of 4.

A number of studies have highlighted the fact that the greatest advantage of early education appear at a non-cognitive level. Many positive and significant relationships have been identified between attending kindergarten and the child's resulting

behaviour, centred on task, socio-emotional development, motivation and positive attitudes towards school.

Nowadays, according to the data released by the Institute of Statistics, there are

- 13, 000 kindergartens with 35, 000 employed educators
- 660, 000 children attending kindergartens
- Of these children, 79.9% are from the urban area and 67.9% from the rural area

The objectives of pre-school education

The following points highlight some of the key objectives and characteristics of pre-school education

- Pre-school education supports the social development of the child from a physical, emotional and cognitive point of view
- Pre-school education is provided free of charge
- Within the public system, education in kindergarten is free
- There are two types of kindergarten
 - Kindergartens with the normal programme, from 08.00hrs to 12.00 hrs at no cost to the parents.
 - Kindergartens with the extended programme, from 08.00 hrs to 16.30 hrs, for which parents pay for the meal.
 - NB There are some kindergartens with a weekly programme, where only the meals are paid for
- Other optional activities, as requested by parents, are charged for – such as music, dance, foreign language activities
- The rate of children enrolled in 2005 was 71% with a visible increase for the children in the preparatory group, which is of 90%
- In addition to public-sector kindergartens, there are also private kindergartens
- In both the public and private sector, there are also kindergartens which practice pedagogical systems alternative to the traditional system, the most popular pedagogical alternatives being the Montessori system, the Waldorf system, the Frenee system and the Step by Step system

The educational alternatives have had an influence in stirring up the traditional system, mostly in arranging the learning environment which allows the development of the child's autonomy and creativity, as an individualised approach. For example, the class is organised with zones of activities for small groups of children. In this way the education can be personalised by the individual potential and learning rhythm of each child.

Another influence has been to grant more importance to learning by playing and thematic learning, enabling children to have a better understanding of their world and the world around them. There is a national curriculum for the pre-school system which targets the child's preparation for school. Pre-school learning has been using a curriculum for over 15 years, the one currently in practice emphasising the acquirement of knowledge.

The syllabus supports learning through play, with the child's creativity put in motion through the activities he develops by playing. He learns numeric operations and the concept of size and shape by playing or searching for himself the consequences and results of the phenomena he produces during the game. He learns how to express himself through role-playing "families". He learns how to mould clay and plasticine and how to coordinate the smooth gesture by drawing. He learns letters and numbers by playing with letters, books and numbers.

This type of learning is organised on a theme. For example, "the rabbit" which integrates learning mathematic concepts, with smooth manual coordination, use of imagination, and ecological discovery. So, introducing the rabbit who lives in the woods, the child builds the rabbit's house, reads and acts out stories about the rabbit and the wolf, moulds carrots and other vegetables for rabbit to eat, and so on. In this way, the child can relate to the world and the environment. This themed learning can be extended and varied according to the child's curiosity and creativity.

The specialised and qualified staff in kindergartens have graduated from training courses attended at either regular schools or schools that follow certain pedagogic principles and practice. In the last five years, many educators have completed their education taking courses at the university or faculties of Pedagogy or Psychology; this being the difference between kindergarten and nursery staff.

The educators, the qualified staff for the education of the child

from 3 to the age of 6/7, take various courses under the system of continuous training organised by the The Board of Education and the Teaching-Staff Resource Centre.

Kindergartens depend on this education system, which are organised through the Territorial Boards of Education (districts and sectors for Bucharest) and coordinated by the Ministry of Education.

Each kindergarten is managed by principals, chosen from amongst the educators. There is a majority of female educators in the pre-school educational system.

A unitary curriculum is being developed within the Ministry of Education and Research for the period from birth – 6/7 years old in order to adopt a new Law of Education. An essential modification of this project is the introduction of formal education from the age of 1.

The curriculum promotes:

- The use of a formal document, the first in our country, to establish the background and principles through which learning activities for nursery children will take place
- The understanding that the child's physical and psychological development is strongly determined by the experiences in the first years of life
- A coherent plan both for the group of children and for the individual child, with short- and long-term objectives
- Guidance and support for professionals from the specialised services for young children, to assure the child's harmonious development through a unitary pedagogical framework across the whole country, guaranteeing quality educational services and equal opportunities for every child
- The convergent approach of the child's well-being by covering the needs for hygiene and health, physical, cognitive and social-emotional development
- Pedagogical guidance in accordance with the child's development based on three significant principles that
 - Acknowledge childhood as a fundamental stage in human development, with its own and specific tasks
 - Acknowledge the child as a person with his own needs for development and not as a small-sized adult
 - Acknowledge the child as an agent of his own

development

- The family and the parents playing an essential part
- Placing the child at the centre with an active role in his own acquisitions and experiences through his interaction with adults, which will provide him with the sense of the world around him and a sense of self-identity
- Techniques which offer the child physical and emotional security as a basis for learning and forming positive social attitudes
- Activities which promote the feeling of success, of personal competence and the joy of learning for understanding and the acquisition of knowledge
- The evaluation of each child to be done through the dynamic of daily activities in conjunction with information collected from the parents in order to draw the individual objectives and to eliminate failure induced by the formal background

The educational outcomes intended by the curriculum affirm and sustain that every child should be capable of being autonomous, to communicate with the adults and the children in the group, to feel protected within the nursery and accept the absence of the parents, to satisfy his curiosities and enjoy his knowledge, to feel like a capable, dignified and respected person. He should be educated to cope with school.

The curriculum

Pre-school curriculum takes into consideration:

For a child there is no difference between playing and learning.

Play has a fundamental role in his development. Play:

- satisfies the child's need to know by exploring and handling objects
- encourages the motion which stimulates the body and the sensory organs
- gives the opportunity to imitate everything he records and to understand the causal connections
- helps him to express emotions and to control them and

to know himself. Thus he will succeed in focusing his attention, to follow the development of the events he is experiencing and to acquire the information proposed by the adult during the educational process included in the curricular objectives

- gives every child the opportunity to express himself and act within the space he is in; it supports the adult to identify his potential , including children with special educational needs or those from disadvantaged families

The child learns by imitating, exploring and experiencing; playing allows him to practise all these in a natural and, at the same time, an attractive way, keeping the child's curiosity and desire for knowledge stirred up. Early Education involves a new approach towards the child and his needs, where learning is the central part.

Redoing an activity and its operations until perfection and refinement is also a characteristic of teaching the young child. The most visible examples are "rereading " the stories all over again. Setting up an age-adequate space guarantees a coherent development of the activities.

Following L.S.Vagotski's theory, "the zone of proximal development" refers to the context of the human relationships whilst incorporating the following principles in arranging the class:

- To promote the child's health: luminosity, ventilation, heating
- To be a safe place, free from any risks of accident
- To encourage motion and exploration
- To display didactic materials alongside children's own work in order to support visual perception
- To allow collaboration and interaction between children
- To divide the class into activities zones: table games; the quiet zone and books; the construction zone; the water and sand zone
- To have equipment that allows flexibility in arranging the space
- To be comfortable and cosy for child and educator
- To be easy for handling

- To have enough and varied materials to incite and stimulate thought and creativity
- To avoid over-crowding of display surfaces that might infringe on the child's safety and limit the identification of the objects in that environment
- To encourage the child to make choices, to practice skills in thought-processing: analysis, comparisons – building on their understanding of the cause-effect relationship
- To have adequate materials displayed in specific places for art activities, role-playing and imitating, science, writing and construction activities
- To facilitate the activities and the interactions of the children with special learning needs and their interaction within the group of children (for example bar-rails on the walls, stable chairs, adapted manipulative toys)
- To ensure predictability by setting up a table with the day's activities which the child can visualise, understanding his daily routine
- To set up the exterior space maintaining the same demands, with special attention to the kinds of plants and other details characteristic to the open air, emphasising the freedom of safe mobility by eliminating the risks for accidents of any kind
- To ensure that the open-air activities are considered: the curriculum appropriate to very young children specifically includes open air learning activities, which, besides presenting learning objectives about nature and the natural phenomena, mould the ecologic spirit of the child in his relation to nature

In addition to this proposal of environmental organisation is the principle of team-working amongst the staff, supported by the curriculum and the framework within it, uniting the team to work collectively.

We should mention here the particular situation regarding the number of places in kindergartens. As stated earlier, the number of children attending pre-school units has increased, whereas the number of places in the kindergartens has not. Solving this

is a complex matter and obviously goes beyond the proposal of this material. Yet we can comment that solving this situation, namely the insufficient number of kindergartens, rests with local administration and other institutions, whose problem it is. It is also up to the parents to mobilise, organise and lobby for the education of their own children. According to the UN Convention of Children's Rights, every child has the right to education.

CONCLUSIONS

The concern for the child and childhood and for Early Education is obvious and distinguishes itself both by governmental interventions and by those of Romania's civic society.

This was proved at governmental level through the Law for Nurseries (2007). The project for the new education law has been put under public discussion by releasing it on the Ministry of Education and Research's website and foresees that education starts at the age of 1; the strategy for Early Education and the introduction of nursery vouchers or tickets to support young families

Furthermore, the preoccupation for Early Education has expanded at civic level by organising events for young children. For example, The Minilibri Book Fair, in which many public institutions participate; The Ion Creangă Theatre and media partners, who are sponsored by many companies; the Fairs for Babies and the increased number of websites addressing young parents (eg Nounascuti.Scoalaparintilor.Copilul.ro)

In this context, we note the initiative of the Ion Creangă Theatre, which in collaboration with CEDP (Centre for Professional Development, www.stepbystep.ro) Step by Step has promoted Early Education through seminars and workshops addressed to the media, parents and representatives of governmental institutions: The Ministry of Education and Research/ Ministerul Educatiei si Cercetarii, The Authority for Child's Rights Protection/Autoritatea Nationala pentru Protectia Drepturilor Copilului and The Ministry of Health/Ministerul Sanatatii, Presidency.

The interest in early childhood, and in the proposed introduction of alternative approaches in education to develop the formal traditional ones, has been heightened by Ion Creanga Theatre's performances of productions specifically created for children under the age of 3, *Coloured Balloons/Balane colorate*, and, most

recently,

Cuckoo-Bow with ham and Miaow/Cucu Bau cu Hamsi Miau. Both were created with a certain vision in accordance with the age-range they were addressing and in developing the productions in response to the children's active interactions. Adding this to the previously mentioned context of Romania's entry into the EU, which itself resulted in expanding knowledge of educational practice within early education, gives hope that Early Education stretches beyond theory and fulfils concrete expectations in organising nurseries and kindergartens.

Education from the Beginning On the Overall and Comprehensive Importance of Performative Action for the Initiation of Educational Processes in Early Childhood

Kirsten Winderlich

Translated by Sönke Horn

In their individual formal curricula, the German Länder provide guidelines on education in childcare centres. Through these the respective curricula and childhood education schemes distinguish and describe separate areas of education. In most cases, the aesthetic education has been explicitly treated as a separate area. It should be noted that theatre played for and by young children is apparently widely regarded as of minor importance in comparison to music and the fine arts. This truly astonishing fact leads to the legitimate claim for an equal recognition of the performing arts, i.e. the theatre, within the areas of education. Such a claim appears even more justified as, undoubtedly, play constitutes the theatre's very basis. Furthermore, it is equally incontestable that play is a fundamental act of creation, starting at a very early age indeed.

This article is not intended to plead for a fixed position of the performing arts/ theatre within the wide domain of education. Instead, it is the author's concern to argue for the need to clear a space for wide-stretching, performative playing, staging, and dramatics within the field of education right from the beginning. As a consequence, I advocate a comprehensive integration of aesthetic education as a crossover between different educational areas into the formal curricula under special consideration of performative aspects. In this respect, it strikes me that the "ab initio" education is closely interconnected with a grave misconception. In the following, this misconception shall be clarified by problematising the concept of aesthetic education in the context of the different areas of education. This part of the text is completed by a consequential analysis of the overall and comprehensive significance of the performative arts for the initiation of educational processes in early childhood.

THE EDUCATIONAL SITUATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN IN GERMANY

In recent years, the basic problems and questions concerning children growing up have been discussed as a "public concern" in Germany. The related discussion is linked to an international discourse, which is governed by the following standpoints:

- child education has to be considered as the most important resource of our society
- children are regarded as individuals equal to adults, who educate themselves from birth onwards
- the quality of child education particularly depends on the professional qualification and working conditions of the qualified employees in this field
- research, education, and the academic qualifications of specialist employees/experts at colleges and universities are eminently important for child education and the furthering of our children's personal development

The offers of German childcare institutions to parents and families are still merely regarded as means to ease the gainful employment of the parents. But here exactly lies the crux of the matter, as the term "care" appears ambiguous in the educational context because it emphasises the adults' needs only. Any concept of "education", however, refers to self-educational processes organised and controlled by the children themselves, in particular against the background of early childhood education. Consequently, such early childhood education takes place as part of a process of reflection on oneself, others and the world. With this in mind, education not only refers to rational cognition, but to the interaction of rational, aesthetic, and emotional forms of perception as well. Thus the opening of educational opportunities for children implies that we adopt the children's perspective and "look over their shoulders" while they have specific experiences within their social environment. This method should enable adults to encourage and stimulate the children's self-education process. Against the background of the eminent importance of education from early childhood onwards, specific guidelines and formal curricula concerning the educational work in childcare centres have been developed for the different Länder. In addition to basic concepts for early childhood education, the formal curricula partly provide obligatory specifications about possible

standardisation measures regarding the educational offer in each German federal state. These standards should be understood as normative specifications and control aids in view of the realisation of educational targets.

THE MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT “AESTHETIC EDUCATION” IN CONNECTION WITH EDUCATIONAL AREAS

The determination of different areas of education is meant as an initial step to standardise children's education in daycare institutions. As a rule, the different areas of education in the formal curricula are defined by varying characteristics:

- language acquisition, communication and writing
- education in mathematics, science and technology
- aesthetic education
- physical education and health
- ethics and religious education
- the world around us
- emotional and social learning

The diverse formal curricula often emphasise the fact that the areas of education focus on the notion of children as self-active individuals who constantly attempt to educate themselves by interacting and dealing with their environment. For this, they should be allowed an appropriate level of freedom for their own spontaneous activities. Moreover, they need well-directed impulses on the adults' part. Therefore it is essential to regard the above-mentioned areas of education as specific spaces of experience and to realise them according to their basic nature.

It is true that the related structuring of children's educational potential facilitates the comprehension of the complex spectrum of an “ab initio” education. In the course of this process, however, the focus of attention usually lies more on the educational content and less on the self-active processes which culminate in education itself. In order to open up new spaces of experience and education to children, a keen sense of “active” educational processes is indispensable whenever children confront themselves, others and the world or when they experience moments of “friction” between themselves and the world. Thereby the division into single areas of education will soon result in the misconception that education can only be conveyed in the form of teaching lessons. Here one

important factor is frequently overlooked: the environments which are prepared for the self-educational processes of children are often linked too closely to the children's pre-expected behaviour. In other words, these environments degenerate from open educational spaces (as the very basis of education they provide manifold possibilities for surprising or unexpected experiences) into mere reservations. Oskar Negt summarises this misconception as follows: "Both the children's self-discovery and adoption of reality is never promoted by the reservation and the permanent waiting state which the adults hold ready for them [author's note: *the children*], but only the discovery and use of their very own means of expression, consisting in their physique, space, time, movement, the visual and tactile senses, speaking and shouting" (Negt 1983, 39).

The children's specific modalities of acquainting themselves with the world, as well as their means of expression, are strongly interlinked with their sensual and physical perception. It is becoming clear that aesthetic education in (early) childhood demands special attention regardless of the specificity of the respective area of aesthetic education.

In the formal curricula, aesthetic education is mostly divided into the following artistic disciplines: music, artistic creation, physical action and theatre.

However, the fact that aesthetic education not only implies a preoccupation with the aforesaid specific artistic disciplines but co-exists alongside the related artistic activities is too often neglected.

In point of fact, aesthetic education initiates a child's intensive confrontation with the world on the physical/sensual as well as on the scenic/situational level. In early childhood, any educational process differs significantly from comparable processes of adult education. "In contrast to adult environments, the world is a completely new experience for newborns. They are totally absorbed in perceiving their environment with its reoccurring, recognisable and reassuring patterns. Since children are not able to understand the meaning of their environment yet, they have to use their senses to identify all important and significant factors which are beneficial to their development. Consequently, growing infants discover new areas of experience only gradually. [...] Sensual perception and all matters that can be derived from it

are thus a kind of entrance gate to worldly experience; it is the first educational task of every child to get acquainted with the world around it" (Schäfer 2003, 37 et sqq.).

In the course of these processes, the sensual perception, absolutely indispensable and linked to the human body, requires the active participation of every human being because "it is not the eye which sees, but the human being, who 'entirely' becomes an eye and sees. It is not the ear which hears, but the human being who has entirely become an ear. Not the body, but the human being moves while being moved as well" (Kükelhaus/zur Lippe 1982, 44). In this connection, activity should be considered as a process started and kept up by the subject in a self-determined manner, a process that leaves essential traces both in body and mind and that conveys thought-provoking impulses.

In conclusion, processes of aesthetic education, according to their original significance, are based on the reality perceived by the senses. This includes all forms of appearances, i.e. not only beautiful objects of perception but also objects generally perceived as ugly, boring, or even cruel. In this respect, the concept of aesthetic education comprises the development of the human sensorium, imagination, fantasy, taste, the capability of playing, and the aesthetic power of judgment (cf. Klafki 1986, 469).

In summary, it can be stated that aesthetic education is essential for educational processes in early childhood because infants tend to educate themselves by their sensual perception and by opening up spaces of aesthetic experience self-actively. The arts, and especially the contemporary performing arts, can disclose specific access ways to such experiences.



Photo: Walter G Breuer
Children on stage after performance of
HOLZKLOPFEN (WOODBPEAT),
HELIOS Theater

In order to promote educative measures prior to the children's entry into school age, which is tantamount to an "ab initio" education, it is necessary to realise the children's specific ways of acquiring their environment and to support them in finding their own access to the world. In all areas of education, the specific aspects of childhood education processes are represented by aesthetic methods which encourage children to confront, conquer and form their environment step by step.

Norbert Neuß (2007) found a structuring form for the areas of education derived from the children's own aesthetic and cultural practices. His description and classification of the different areas of education is based on the children's methods of self-education. In other words, Neuß's approach focuses on the children's own aesthetic and cultural skills. Amongst others, he distinguishes the following categories of education: collecting and organising, creating and playing games, drawing and artwork. This series may be completed by the description of specific infantile practices, e.g. the actions of "producing sounds and noises", "moving", "leaving traces", or "animating/looking at pictures" (cf. Neuß 2007, 123 sqq.).

The Importance of Performative Action for Early Childhood Education from the Children's Perspective

The aesthetic practices which children use for their self-education from the beginning are interconnected with complex processes of perception and action on the physical/sensual and the scenic/situative level. They distinguish themselves by their performative character. By aesthetic experiences centred on their own body, children are steadily moving into new educational spaces. Consequently, the performative aspects of such educational processes in early childhood refer to children's experiences which are created by individual actions and aesthetic practices and – following the etymological aspect of the root word "formare" – result in the formation of interior and exterior images.

If we consider the significance of such performative actions for children's educational processes, the limits of the said aesthetic areas, the visual and the performing arts seem to shift and open up. Irrespective of children's actions like moving around, playing or scribbling, all educational processes during early childhood

are always influenced by various sensual levels of perception and forms of expression, as well as by the very actions of exploration and performance.

Whenever infants play during early childhood, they do this partly in order to explore their environment and partly to experience themselves in another manner and to create their own unknown world within the "big" one, a world which they can influence by themselves and which they can form by their own means.

An example: a one and a half year-old girl repeatedly puts a mixing bowl on her head. For this action, she will get amused applause from her parents. For them, her action is a preliminary step to a role play. But for the girl, the bowl on her head is part of a more far-reaching game. It fits her head exactly, lengthens her body, changes her physical sensation, makes her feel her head, gives her a feeling of protection, be it from above or in her face. What is more, the action of putting a bowl on her own head represents a ritual initiated by the girl whenever she starts to confront different objects belonging to the kitchen as a location and whenever she starts to clear objects, in this case mostly food, in and out before she arranges and sorts them. On this note, her action is to be understood as an act of disguise, helping the girl to concentrate on a specific exploration in a certain location.

However, we find another example of the comprehensive phenomenon of performative action in the process of early childhood education when children begin to leave their traces by scrawling and scribbling. In these situations which, at first sight, appear as acts of visual creation, the child performs an aesthetic, trace-leaving practice, connecting the practices of leaving traces, scrawling, scribbling, gestures, postures and vocal articulations. In this moment, gestures, movements and voices are inseparably connected to the visual act (cf. Baum and Kunz 2007). In this process, such repetitions of actions should be considered as performances, which result in the intensification and expansion of a child's aesthetic experience.

These examples illustrate the concept of performativity by Derrida (1988).

In characterising the performance as a unique act, Derrida links the concepts of performativity and quotation. Within the act of quoting, we find the event, repetition and difference entangled. In fact, the aesthetic experience can only happen

with repetitions which must never be identical to the repeated actions themselves. In this way, difference becomes perceptible (cf. Derrida 1999, 291sqq.). On their part, children educate themselves by actions, by means of their own aesthetic practices, which they carry out and perform repeatedly. When children play, hide, leave traces, collect and arrange different objects before discovering significant moments in these actions, engaging on an aesthetic level, they will perform the said action never just the once, but always repeatedly, in variations. These actions lead to discoveries referring to themselves, to others, and to the objects in their environment, which – finally – lead to interactions with adults. Thereby the infants' performances centered on their own aesthetic experiences often appear as marginal experiences to adults. Often, parents experience the repeated games of their children as endless, redundant, and – in connection with the increasing number of left traces – as an outrageous burden. Here it becomes clear that the performative actions related to early childhood education can soon result in psychological stress for adults.

ON THE PERFORMATIVE ACTION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AS A PEDAGOGICAL CHALLENGE

Against the background of children's self-educative potential in their early years, the conveyance of educational content can not be of primary importance. On the contrary, the question should rather be how we can provide children with the possibilities to do what they want and need to do in order to confront and acquaint themselves with the world. Already in the beginning, the initiation of educational opportunities by means of impulses on the physical/sensual and the scenic/situative level is less directed to educational didactics than to the perception and production of the self-educational processes which enable children to apprehend the world, and which they perform in their games again and again. On the basis of the performativity of the children's self-education processes, early childhood education can be encouraged by stimuli which prompt the constant repetition of the children's individual aesthetic experiences in an appropriate space. This perception of an education from the beginning reveals a

certain affinity to the concept of reading as described by Michel de Certeau. According to his theory, reading can only take place within a pre-defined system. In this line of thought, the system is equivalent to a whole variety of educational opportunities. De Certeau compares the activity of reading with a walk through the pre-designed structure of a modern city. Following this comparison, educational opportunities open up spaces of aesthetic experience to the children. Within these, they wander around freely, off the tracks that have been pre-determined by adults. De Certeau emphasises the fact that during this process, the reader never takes up the author's position. If we transfer the meaning of this comparison to the possibilities of childhood education provided by adults, this means that children do not always take the educational opportunities according to the grown-ups' expectations. On the contrary, de Certeau's reader deals with texts in a different manner. "[The reader] invents something different, something that hasn't been originally intended in the texts. He dissolves them from their lost or accidental origin. He recombines their fragments and creates unknown elements within the space created by their ability to make an endless variety of meanings possible." (de Certeau 1988, 300). Children, however, deal with educational opportunities in their own special way, separate them from the context, i.e. the adults' context, and bring them into interplay with their own context and meanings.

In the style of the above-mentioned notion of "education", the promotion of early childhood education appears as an initiation of spaces of aesthetic experience which children are allowed to access and utilise in the most various ways. As part of this concept, adults should back the children by always enabling this access. In doing so, the initiation is supported by additional impulses, which should not be meant as a certain pre-determined offer on the adults' part. Consequently, these impulses do not make a definite offer which the children are expected to accept in the way intended by the adults, but open up new spaces of aesthetic experience which children are invited to enter in order to transform this space into countless possibilities of their own.



Photo: Walter G Breuer
HELIOS Theater. Mother and child
watching theatre performance

With regard to the task of initiating spaces of aesthetic experience and education, the following implications for the pedagogical work can be derived:

The educationalist or pedagogue should give the stimuli that trigger processes of interaction between the children and their environment. At the same time, they anticipate the infants' current aesthetic and cultural practices. In addition, the educationalist's impulses create different atmospheres which provoke memories, ideas and fantasies in the children's minds. These stimuli find their expression in purposive actions on the levels of speaking, movement, material and space. It can be expected that they stimulate children to pause for a moment so that the young minds can confront one object or another using their own means and to enable the children's involvement with the ideas and mental images triggered during this process.

Another possibility to initiate early childhood education is to observe the children's actions and ensuing performances or "staging". In this context, Martin Seel (2001) describes the term "staging" as a purposefully initiated sensual process performed in front of a (at least) potential audience (cf. Seel 2001, 61). Thereby the educationalist stages the aesthetic situation of experience, gets involved in the child's game and clarifies the experience to the infant by repeating it from a different perspective. After all, this mimetic transformation of the perceived aesthetic experience

has a procreative effect. In order to create an impulse, the educationalist imitates an aesthetic practice or game of the child's. Finally, such imitation stimulates the infant to continue playing and developing his/her own action.

In this process, the performing or "staging" act has to be evaluated as a renewed impulse for the expansion of the aesthetic experience. With regard to the staging of infantile aesthetic experiences, the unfocused form of observation is essential (cf. Schäfer 2004). Focused observation, on the other hand, directs the attention to behavioural fields of children which are already known, whereas unfocused observation can be seen as an attempt to visually capture everything that attracts the attention of the perceiver. As a consequence, this process can result in unexpected and surprising momenta.

In general, the above-mentioned impulses initiate infantile aesthetic experiences on three levels, which result in different self-active educational processes. They can be described as follows: experiencing the unexpected, perceiving and doing the unusual, and creating one's own actions (cf. Winderlich 2005, 286 sqq.). By means of stimuli and impulses, children feel a direct activation on the physical and sensual level. As a consequence, feelings, experiences, images, and actions are effected. The impulses change the habitual and usual way of perception and demand a non-routinely perceptive behaviour. Moreover, they also stimulate the children's inward perception and, thereby, involve the infant's own power of imagination.

In conclusion, these impulses stimulate children to express their new and different way of perception by performative means, a process that finally results in interaction with others.

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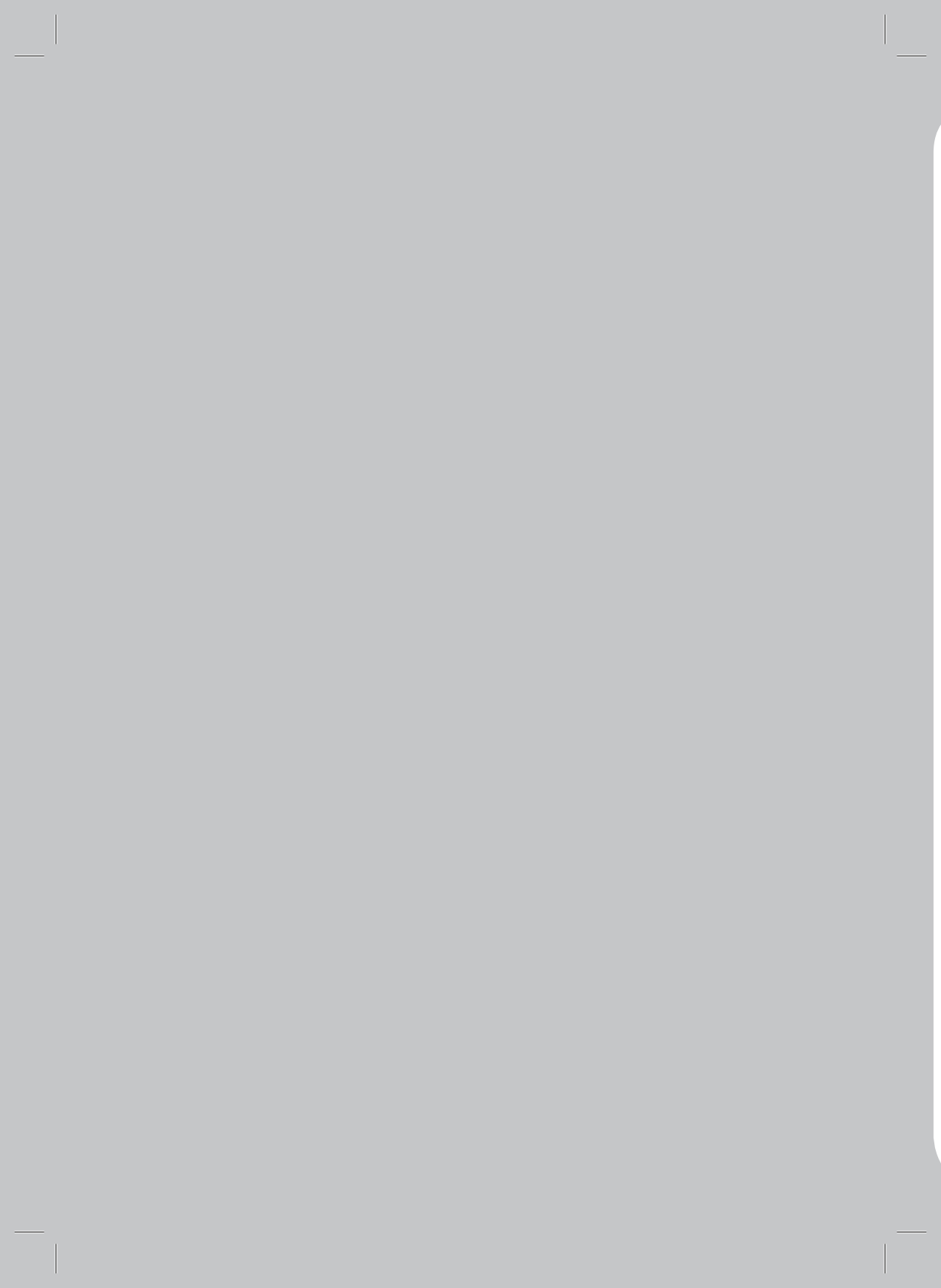
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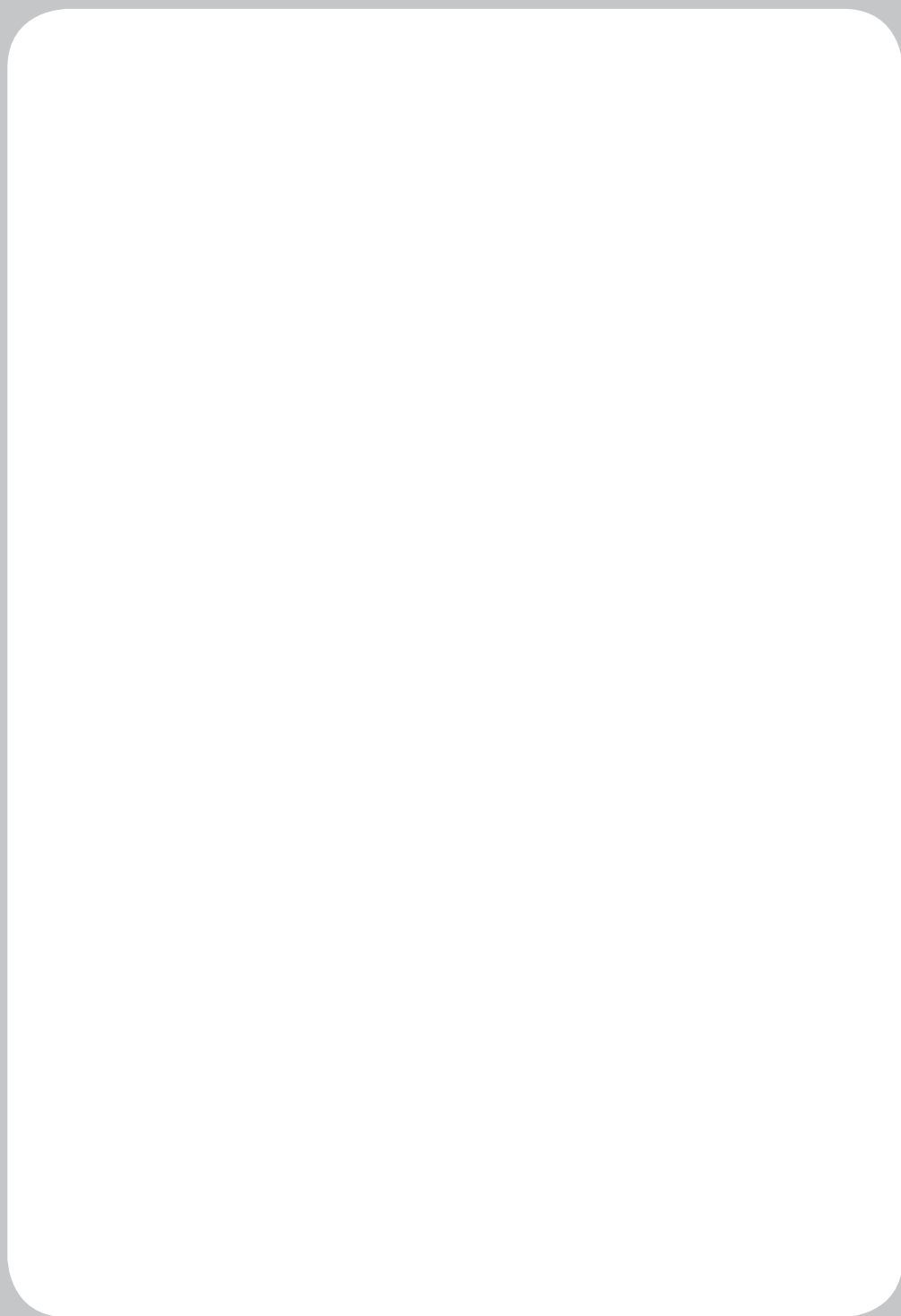
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ORIGINAL TEXTS



**Terre confinanti
Arti performative e formazione nei
servizi educativi per la prima infanzia**

Anna Paola Corradi e Marina
Manferrari

PREMESSA

LA CORNICE ISTITUZIONALE DEI SERVIZI EDUCATIVI E SCOLASTICI IN ITALIA

- Nidi d'infanzia e servizi educativi 0 – 3. Principali riferimenti normativi a livello nazionale
- Il sistema dei servizi 0 – 3 nella Regione Emilia Romagna
- Il sistema misto integrato delle scuole d'infanzia. Evoluzione a livello nazionale e regionale
- I servizi educativi e scolastici 0 – 6 a Bologna

IL PROGETTO PEDAGOGICO DEI NIDI E DELLE SCUOLE D'INFANZIA

- Il modello educativo del nido d'infanzia
- I principali riferimenti per il curriculum della scuola d'infanzia

LA FORMAZIONE DEGLI EDUCATORI E DEGLI INSEGNANTI

- Formazione di base e formazione in servizio
- Formazione in servizio nell'ambito espressivo artistico. L'esperienza di Bologna

ESEMPI DI ESPERIENZE SIGNIFICATIVE DI FORMAZIONE
PER EDUCATORI E INSEGNANTI NELL'AMBITO DELLE ARTI
PERFORMATIVE

- Narrazione...
- Danza...
- Canto...
- Teatro...

PREMESSA

Parlare di arti performative per i bambini, con i bambini e dei bambini è una sfida culturale, un progetto, una provocazione, una speranza, un'utopia.

Le parole creano mondi, li rendono possibili, creano strutture che prima di essere nominate non esistevano, dice Juan Mata, studioso di letteratura sensibile ai bambini. Ci piace pensare, allora, e parlare di un modello educativo per le scuole dei piccoli e dei piccolissimi che abbia in sé, non come appendici ma come capisaldi, la dimensione estetica, l'avvicinamento alle arti, la crescita della sensibilità artistica, l'affinamento della capacità di percepire il bello e il poetico. Un modello educativo che coltivi e si prenda cura di quelle qualità umane che arricchiscono di senso la vita e che possono arginare il fenomeno di impoverimento e di omologazione del gusto e del costume.

In un mondo di adulti poco curiosi e appiattiti nella dimensione culturale, i bambini si conformano ai messaggi e al gusto estetico dominanti, quelli degli show televisivi, quelli dettati dal potere e dalle logiche del "mercato" che esibiscono prodotti visivi e sonori commerciali di bassa fattura, banali, monocordi. Il nuovo, l'insolito, l'alternativo vengono vissuti come difficili, dissonanti, destabilizzanti e corrono il rischio di essere rifiutati. Ma si tratta forse di un conformismo precoce indotto da esperienze limitate, filtrate da adulti poco attenti e poco stimolanti, che innalza barriere e chiude possibilità. Il non convenzionale, infatti, il non ovvio, l'assurdo sono fonte di emozione e di curiosità per il bambino, quando li incontra senza il timore di sguardi di disapprovazione o di derisione, perché sono vicini alle sue prime modalità di vedere e di interpretare il reale.

Pensiamo, dunque, sia di straordinaria importanza parlare di arti performative per la prima infanzia, intendendo sia la prima che la seconda infanzia: i primi sei anni di vita, gli anni d'oro delle prime conquiste con il corpo e con la mente, gli anni in cui si comincia a conoscere e riconoscere odori voci volti espressioni, attribuire significati, parlare, camminare, percepire sensazioni, provare emozioni e sentimenti, capire di far parte del genere umano. Di straordinaria importanza perché in questa fase della vita tutto avviene per la prima volta e si sedimentano i primi ricordi e gli

imprinting che danno forma ai modi personali di accogliere e reagire alle cose nuove e sconosciute. Modi "allo stato nascente" di relazionarsi alle esperienze, che condizioneranno per sempre quelli che lentamente verranno costruiti lungo il corso della vita grazie ad esperienze personali, familiari, scolastiche, lavorative, amicali, sociali, mediatiche.

L'atteggiamento di apertura o di chiusura al nuovo dipenderanno anche dall'aver sperimentato o meno felicità, allegria, spontaneità, gratuità, benessere nelle prime esperienze di vita e di relazione fra sé e l'altro, fra sé e il mondo. Per questo sono così necessarie esperienze precoci divergenti, di vicinanza con gli artisti, di contatto con l'arte, di stupore per gli sguardi di sbieco e capovolti.

Per questo è indispensabile far sperimentare le dimensioni simbolica e metaforica e accrescere la disponibilità a vedere le cose da altri punti di vista.

Le esperienze artistiche sono profonde esperienze esistenziali, capaci nell'immediato di dare senso e pienezza di significato a molteplici dimensioni della personalità del bambino, ed in prospettiva di arricchire lo spessore della sua personalità futura.

L'attore, il danzatore, il musicista, il narratore portano forme, segni, simboli, metafore, ricerche di significati possibili, messaggi, idee, pensieri e li porgono ai bambini piccoli, i quali si avvicinano ad essi curiosi del mondo, sensibili a ogni cosa come le foglie al vento che le muove. I bambini li raccolgono, ne fanno memoria, sono capaci di rielaborarli, di costruire nuovi significati e di rilanciarli: un regalo per gli artisti, se attenti, curiosi, sensibili, in ascolto. I bambini riescono ad emozionarli con parole, commenti, reazioni che fanno scorgere e rivelano l'imprevedibilità dei collegamenti che avvengono nelle loro menti: assonanze, contrasti e richiami ad esperienze precedenti vicinissime o del tutto lontane da quelle immaginabili.

L'artista che si rivolge ad un pubblico di bambini piccoli deve essere in uno "stato di grazia", ovvero in uno stato di disponibilità assoluta e gratuita a dare il massimo della propria sensibilità, il meglio della capacità evocativa e della potenza simbolica della propria arte, e allo stesso tempo deve avere un'apertura estrema ad accogliere i ritorni impalpabili e palpitanti dei bambini. Si tratta di uno stile, di un modo molto accurato di utilizzare le proprie capacità comunicative ed espressive, di una modalità sensibile di

essere in una relazione di sintonia con i piccoli, di una particolare disponibilità a condividere la comunicazione artistica per dare e per ricevere. Dare proprie visioni e ricevere ritorni. E i pensieri freschi che i bambini restituiscono in una vera circolarità comunicativa sono pensieri "appena pensati", che aprono nuovi significati e regalano all'artista nuovi orizzonti di pensiero, nuovi territori da esplorare, nuove idee da approfondire per creare nuove storie, nuove danze, nuovi suoni.

Difficile a dirsi perché gli artisti giungano a dedicare la propria opera ai bambini piccoli. Vi giungono per le vie più strane e nei modi più disparati, per il bisogno di raffigurare e rappresentare proprie visioni del mondo, per ragioni ideali e politiche, per caso, per scelta intenzionale. Qualunque sia la motivazione di partenza, la comunicazione fra artista e bambino passa solo se si crea un autentico contatto empatico fra loro.

Messaggeri d'arte e di vita, gli artisti porgono ai piccoli le loro performance, preziosi pezzetti d'arte, come doni, testimonianza di cultura, bellezza e creatività umana.

Come riconoscere un buon messaggio artistico? Ci piace rispondere con le parole che usò Hundertwasser - pittore, performer, architetto esponente dell'"avanguardia" artistica austriaca del XX° secolo - per definire un buon dipinto: "Quando è pieno di magia. Quando ci fa provare un senso di felicità, quando muove al riso o al pianto, quando riesce a far scattare qualcosa dentro di noi. Dovrebbe essere come un fiore, come un albero. Come la natura. Dovremo sentirne la mancanza."¹ E ancora: "L'arte dovrebbe essere positiva, libera, romantica, bella come un gioiello, qualcosa di cui non si possa fare a meno."²

Le competenze legate alle arti performative, a nostro avviso, non possono essere "insegnate": devono piuttosto essere "coltivate". Riteniamo possano essere conquistate dal bambino se esistono offerte, proposte e stimoli capaci di dare spazi, tempi, sostanza alle potenzialità che egli, in quanto essere umano, possiede di scoperta e costruzione di forme simboliche, di forme espressive. Se esiste un adulto capace di prenderlo per mano e di accompagnarlo nella ricerca delle personali possibilità espressive e comunicative.

Offerte, proposte, progetti, stimoli, interventi capaci di entrare in contatto, in relazione, in comunicazione con le modalità

1 H. Rand, *Hundertwasser*, Taschen, Köln, 2007, p. 154.

2 Ibid, p. 197.

e i ritmi di costruzione dei pensieri e dei saperi propri, specifici, continuamente in evoluzione delle prime epoche della vita.

L'attenzione per gli aspetti relazionali e per la dimensione affettiva facilita la creazione di stati di empatia, di reciproco ascolto, di partecipazione condivisa indispensabili quando ci si incammina e ci si addentra nei territori delle arti performative, degli atti comunicativi e artistici dal vivo, laddove l'essenza, il fatto principale, è dato dall'incontro di un soggetto con un altro, e dalla possibilità di avvicinamento e integrazione fra due mondi.

Parliamo di presenza di un soggetto, nello specifico di un adulto, l'artista ma anche l'educatore la cui formazione ha permesso di coltivare sensibilità e competenze in ambito espressivo, il quale porge una comunicazione artistica, composta di contenuti significativi e di forme particolari, nuove e insolite ad un altro soggetto. Nel nostro caso il soggetto che riceve la comunicazione è un bambino piccolo, alle sue prime esperienze di ascolto, di visione e di partecipazione ad una performance artistica. È alla sua "prima" di teatro, di danza, di musica dal vivo.

Per il bambino significa addentrarsi in un territorio sconosciuto, scoprire segni mai veduti prima accanto ad altri che rimandano e richiamano significati conosciuti, ampliare la propria visione del mondo.

In una situazione comunicativa nuova, come è quella della performance artistica, il rapporto di contenimento e di vicinanza affettiva con un adulto di riferimento - l'educatore, l'insegnante, il genitore - e la condivisione della fruizione con il gruppo dei pari danno sicurezza, producono la sensazione di stare bene, di provare stati di piacevolezza e di stupore e consentono al bambino di accettare la novità anche se di forte impatto emotivo.

Per queste ragioni riteniamo che le novità culturali, le esperienze "altre" da quelle abituali e quotidiane, gli "incontri" imprevisti diventino stimolo per l'arricchimento della personalità e per lo sviluppo della creatività.

E sul significato di creatività vogliamo citare le riflessioni di Piero Bertolini, teorico della Pedagogia fenomenologica e fondatore della rivista "Infanzia": "La creatività è quella capacità dell'individuo di andare al di là del già-dato il già-fatto il già-conquistato, in una prospettiva per la quale il suo più autentico orizzonte esistenziale è rappresentato dal possibile, dal futuro, dalla trasformazione, dal cambiamento. In questo senso, è anche

la capacità di costruire del nuovo in qualsiasi ambito o in ambiti specifici del sapere e della cultura, partendo da ciò che già c'è; [...] è la capacità dell'individuo di non accontentarsi di quanto si trova già a sua disposizione, nonché di vederne tutti i limiti accanto alle indubbie validità; quindi, di percorrere nel pensiero nel comportamento persino nei sentimenti, vie alternative, non contenute nella consuetudine e, talvolta almeno, inaspettate e imprevedibili".³

Secondo Bertolini, la storia dell'umanità e la sua continua evoluzione fanno pensare che ogni essere umano possieda costituzionalmente la capacità creativa, ma solo come "possibilità esistenziale": "L'uomo è per costituzione "segnato" dalla creatività, ma questa può non svilupparsi adeguatamente e dunque può essere esercitata solo parzialmente o con un'intensità estremamente bassa, oppure egli può addirittura rinunciare ad esercitarla, può perderla per strada, può accettare che gli venga espropriata, e così via. [...] ecco perché la nascita che si conferma nel tempo della creatività è una realtà che richiama l'educazione, [...] la creatività, per svilupparsi in modo soddisfacente, ha bisogno di essere educata".⁴

LA CORNICE ISTITUZIONALE DEI SERVIZI EDUCATIVI E SCOLASTICI IN ITALIA

Osservando il panorama dei nidi e delle scuole dell'infanzia esistenti in Italia, si può affermare che nel nostro Paese convivono realtà e progettualità all'avanguardia accanto a situazioni ancora contrassegnate da arretratezza, segnale dell'esistenza sul territorio nazionale di forti contraddizioni e di differenti modi di intendere e realizzare il "fare politica".

Dedicheremo maggiore attenzione alla Regione Emilia Romagna, in cui viviamo, operiamo e che meglio conosciamo, una delle regioni italiane più ricche di servizi e di esperienze educative e culturali rivolte ai bambini.

Crediamo che il rispetto e l'attenzione all'infanzia, il riconoscimento della complessità dei bisogni dei bambini e delle loro potenzialità,

3 P. Bertolini, *La nascita della creatività nel bambino*, in "Infanzia", n. 3/4, novembre-dicembre 1991, p. 16.

4 Ibid, p. 17.

la visibilità della ricerca scientifica, la portata delle politiche per l'infanzia, i modelli organizzativi e pedagogici dei servizi educativi, l'utilizzo delle risorse culturali presenti nel territorio, la formazione degli educatori e degli insegnanti, la progettualità collegiale, il coordinamento pedagogico, la partecipazione dei genitori e dei cittadini alla gestione dei servizi, tutti aspetti fondanti ed elementi di spicco, questi, del sistema educativo esistente in Emilia Romagna, siano fra gli indicatori più significativi dello spessore della qualità di un intero sistema sociale.

E pensiamo che oggi più che mai in Italia, di fronte ad un nuovo ennesimo cambiamento di governo, occorra riaffermare la necessità di una sinergia progettuale del "sistema pubblico" - Stato, Regioni ed Enti Locali - capace di costruire quadri di riferimento istituzionali, di fare leggi e di indicare linee guida di intervento in grado di accogliere, promuovere, integrare e valorizzare il contributo del "privato" - Associazioni, Enti, Soggetti - in direzione di una società in cui si creino e moltiplichino i luoghi di vita e di crescita per i bambini, servizi educativi e servizi culturali pensati per l'infanzia, pensati, dunque, per il futuro dell'intera società.

Nidi d'infanzia e servizi educativi 0 – 3. Principali riferimenti normativi a livello nazionale

I nidi d'infanzia sono servizi educativi rivolti ai bambini più piccoli, fino a tre anni.

Sono organizzati al loro interno in sezioni generalmente omogenee per età: la sezione Piccoli, che accoglie bambini da 3 a 12 mesi, la sezione Medi da 12 a 24 mesi, la sezione Grandi da 24 a 36 mesi. In realtà la situazione è più sfaccettata: non tutti i nidi comprendono anche la sezione Piccoli, in questo caso accolgono bambini al compimento dell'anno; a seconda dei differenti Regolamenti comunali poi, la sezione Piccoli può iniziare dai 3 oppure dai 6 o dai 9 mesi. Anche le sezioni possono avere articolazioni diverse da quella descritta, prevedendo in alcuni casi quattro gruppi omogenei: Piccoli, Piccoli/Medi ("traballanti"), Medi e Grandi o ancora prevedendo sezioni miste Medi/Grandi.

Al di là delle differenti organizzazioni, il nido d'infanzia si è costruito nel tempo una propria identità pedagogica divenendo il servizio educativo "tradizionale" più conosciuto e richiesto dalle

famiglie con bambini al di sotto dei 3 anni di età. Al nido si sono affiancati, in particolare negli ultimi anni, numerosi servizi educativi "sperimentali", non sostitutivi bensì integrativi al nido, volti a rendere più flessibile e differenziata l'offerta per le famiglie.

Come già accennato, organizzazioni diverse del servizio nidi dipendono dai differenti Regolamenti comunali. Altri parametri, in termini ad esempio di standard strutturali e dotazioni del personale, sono legati alle differenti normative regionali. Può essere utile allora qualche riferimento al quadro legislativo ed istituzionale.

La legge nazionale istitutiva del nido è del 1971, più esattamente la legge 1044 del 6 dicembre 1971 "Piano quinquennale per l'istituzione degli asili nido comunali con il concorso dello Stato". Viene qui sancito per la prima volta il dovere di intervento da parte dello Stato nell'ambito dell'educazione della prima infanzia, riconoscendo insieme al valore sociale della maternità il diritto di tutti i bambini di accedere al nido. La medesima legge affida alle Regioni il compito di programmare la realizzazione delle strutture e di determinare i criteri generali di costruzione, gestione e controllo con proprie leggi. La gestione del servizio viene invece affidata ai Comuni quali Enti locali più vicini ai cittadini e in grado quindi di recepirne i bisogni, valorizzando la prospettiva del decentramento come forte elemento innovativo.

La legge istitutiva dei nidi, come dicevamo, ha segnato un passaggio importante nella politica delle istituzioni per la prima infanzia nel nostro Paese; tuttavia l'educazione della prima infanzia è ancora lontana dall'essere riconosciuta come valore sociale, che esige quindi risposte a livello istituzionale e collettivo. D'altronde per garantire l'applicazione delle leggi occorre una volontà politica forte e costante. Di fatto la promulgazione della 1044 ha prodotto da subito sul territorio nazionale effetti estremamente differenziati, con uno scarto molto forte fra Nord e Sud. Vediamo allora qualche dato recente, utilizzando come fonte le ricerche del Centro nazionale di documentazione e analisi per l'infanzia e l'adolescenza.

Prendendo come anno di riferimento il 2006, i nidi d'infanzia sul territorio nazionale risultano essere 4.885, con un dato di incremento consistente relativo all'ultimo decennio. La percentuale dei bambini che frequentano il nido in rapporto all'utenza potenziale

è pari al 10% circa, anche questa in costante aumento. Nonostante il significativo incremento del numero di servizi permangono forti fattori di criticità:

1. le disparità territoriali, che continuano a discriminare fortemente le opportunità di accesso al servizio da parte di bambini che vivono in differenti regioni (con percentuali dell'offerta che variano, ad esempio, dal 24% in Emilia Romagna al 2% in Calabria);
2. la persistente insufficienza del sistema dell'offerta, con un dato di liste d'attesa più rilevanti proprio dove vi è maggior presenza di servizi e dunque dove questi risultano conosciuti e accessibili da parte delle famiglie.

È evidente che l'Obiettivo di Lisbona, secondo cui i posti nido a disposizione delle famiglie dovrebbero raggiungere entro il 2010 il 33% dell'utenza potenziale, risulta difficile da perseguire, richiedendo un fortissimo impegno a livello politico e finanziario.

Va detto tuttavia che se l'Obiettivo di Lisbona si configura come obiettivo di tipo quantitativo, sicuramente importante come stimolo per un rilancio dalle politiche europee di sviluppo dei servizi per l'infanzia, è necessario che questo non sia disgiunto da obiettivi di tipo qualitativo. Su questo piano crediamo di poter dire che i nidi d'infanzia nel nostro paese si configurano complessivamente come un servizio di buon livello, con punte di eccellenza, particolarmente in alcune realtà regionali, considerate un modello pedagogico preso a riferimento da studiosi ed esperti.

A completamento dei sintetici riferimenti normativi che sono stati ricordati, va indicata anche la più recente legge 285, del 28 agosto 1997, "Disposizione per la promozione di diritti e opportunità per l'infanzia e l'adolescenza", che ha favorito l'innovazione e la sperimentazione di servizi socio educativi per la prima infanzia.

Con il sostegno di questa legge sono stati attivati sul territorio nazionale numerosi servizi con caratteristiche educative, ludiche, culturali e di aggregazione sociale per bambini da 0 a 3 anni e per le loro famiglie, organizzati con moduli differenziati secondo criteri di flessibilità.

Il sistema dei servizi 0 – 3 nella Regione Emilia Romagna

Per avvicinarci sempre più alla realtà che intendiamo presentare, restringiamo il campo in questo paragrafo alla Regione Emilia Romagna. Com'è noto la nostra Regione registra il primato nazionale nell'offerta di servizi educativi ed ha elaborato nel tempo buone teorie e buone pratiche educative in grado di interloquire con le esperienze più significative maturate in altri paesi.

Anche in termini di articolazione dell'offerta possiamo parlare ormai da diversi anni di sistema educativo dei servizi 0 - 3: già nel 1989, infatti, grazie alla legge regionale 27 (molto prima dunque della già citata legge nazionale 285 del '97) sono stati aperti nella nostra Regione i cosiddetti servizi a nuova tipologia, integrativi ai nidi d'infanzia, inizialmente definiti Centri Gioco, che spesso prevedevano nella stessa struttura anche un'opportunità di affidamento temporaneo (nidi part time solo al mattino oppure due mattine la settimana)⁵. Sono servizi che nascono in risposta alle forti trasformazioni che investono in quegli anni le famiglie: nuclearizzazione, isolamento, aumento di famiglie monogenitoriali, aumento di figli unici, spostamento in avanti dell'età della procreazione, alto investimento ed alte aspettative verso il proprio figlio, mancanza di riferimenti generazionali, disorientamento e senso di inadeguatezza dei genitori che sempre di più cercano nei servizi educativi non solo un luogo a cui affidare con tranquillità il proprio bambino ma anche uno spazio di incontro, condivisione, consulenza sul proprio ruolo genitoriale.

In questo quadro la vigente legge regionale 1 del 2000, modificata nella legge 8 del 2004, introduce le norme per la realizzazione dei servizi per la prima infanzia riportando all'interno di un'unica cornice tutti i differenti servizi 0 – 3, siano essi gestiti da soggetti pubblici o privati. Con questa legge l'intero disegno dei servizi per la prima infanzia viene ri-sistematizzato, accogliendo le più recenti innovazioni ma anche introducendo un sistema di regole per riconoscere la storia maturata in trent'anni di cultura locale.⁶ È una legge articolata e rigorosa di cui ricordiamo, in estrema sintesi, i principali punti di forza:

⁵ Per usare la terminologia prevista dall'attuale normativa regionale: Centri Bambini e Genitori con annessi Nidi d'infanzia part time o Spazi Bambino.

⁶ Cfr. Sandra Benedetti, *L'arte di sostenere un sistema di servizi educativi oltre che progettarli e realizzarli...*, in "Infanzia", n. 12, dicembre 2005.

- una puntuale definizione dei criteri strutturali e organizzativi necessari per realizzare nidi d'infanzia e servizi integrativi;
- il riconoscimento giuridico della figura del coordinatore pedagogico a garanzia della qualità del sistema dei servizi;
- la valorizzazione di una cultura e di una pedagogia dell'integrazione che prevenga qualsiasi forma di svantaggio;
- la promozione di un sistema di servizi pubblici e privati raccolti intorno ad un sistema di regole valide per entrambi;
- la messa a punto di procedure di autorizzazione al funzionamento e di accreditamento che consentono ai privati di avere accesso ai finanziamenti regionali oltre ad entrare insieme ai pubblici nel sistema della misurazione della qualità secondo processi di auto ed etero valutazione.

Il sistema misto integrato delle scuole d'infanzia. Evoluzione a livello nazionale e regionale

La scuola dell'infanzia, denominata in passato scuola materna, accoglie i bambini dai 3 ai 6 anni. Ogni sezione è formata da 25 bambini di età omogenea o misti per età, ed è affidata a due insegnanti che si alternano nei turni del mattino e del pomeriggio in un arco orario che va generalmente dalle 8 alle 16.30.

Primo gradino della scuola di base, pur non essendo obbligatoria, è quasi generalizzata sull'intero territorio nazionale ed è frequentata da circa il 96% dei bambini in età.

Dotata di una propria autonomia didattica e pedagogica, si pone la finalità di promuovere lo sviluppo dell'identità, dell'autonomia, della competenza, della socialità dei bambini in continuità educativa con il nido e con la scuola primaria.

La scuola per i bambini di tre/sei anni ha una storia complessa, molto ricca e interessante: ha radici nell'azione di intellettuali filantropi all'inizio dell' 800, comincia a estendersi con carattere assistenziale e scolastico ad opera di parrocchie e di comuni, e vede il fiorire tra la fine dell'800 e i primi del '900 di modelli educativi di grande rilievo con le sorelle Agazzi e Maria Montessori.⁷

⁷ Rosa Agazzi, insieme alla sorella Carolina, fonda a Brescia alla fine dell'800 un giardino infantile orientato a superare l'esperienza italiana, ormai esaurita, dei giardini d'infanzia ispirati a Froebel. Nuclei fondanti del metodo Agazzi sono: il rapporto stretto tra il bambino e il suo ambiente naturale e familiare, l'autoeducazione dei bambini attraverso gli esercizi di vita pratica, il museo delle cianfrusaglie ovvero la gran varietà di materiale

Nel dopoguerra nascono le scuole dell'infanzia "a nuovo indirizzo", a cura di alcuni Enti Locali fortemente impegnati in campo sociale educativo culturale, e con la L. 444 del 18 marzo 1968, primo fondamentale riferimento legislativo di carattere nazionale, viene istituita la scuola materna statale.

La scuola dell'infanzia è oggi un sistema pubblico integrato in evoluzione, costituito da una pluralità di modelli istituzionali e organizzativi promossi da diversi soggetti: lo Stato, gli Enti Locali, le Associazioni Private religiose e non. I dati relativi al 2003 individuavano sul territorio nazionale il 54,7% di scuole statali e il 43,3% tra scuole pubbliche gestite dagli Enti Locali e scuole paritarie, per lo più religiose.

Dal settembre 2007 sono entrate in vigore le norme per la sperimentazione delle sezioni primavera o ponte che accolgono bambini di età omogenea compresa fra i due e i tre anni d'età, aggregate alla scuola dell'infanzia, in base all'accordo raggiunto in sede di Conferenza Unificata Stato e Regioni.

La nuova offerta formativa si avvale del concorso di Stato, Comuni e del sistema privato paritario, ed è da intendersi come servizio socio-educativo integrativo alle attuali strutture degli asili nido e delle scuole dell'infanzia.

Per quanto riguarda la Regione Emilia Romagna, si può affermare l'esistenza di un "pluralismo gestionale" sostanzialmente equilibrato dal punto di vista quantitativo delle scuole per i bambini di tre/sei anni.

Le prime scuole comunali nascono negli anni '60, talvolta attraverso la municipalizzazione delle scuole nate nel dopoguerra per iniziativa popolare. Nascono grazie alla storia politica e culturale di questa Regione, alla presenza attiva e di governo locale delle forze di sinistra, all'intreccio di progetti, riflessioni, visioni di uomini di cultura, docenti universitari, amministratori, insegnanti, genitori,

"d'uso comune" portato dai bambini da utilizzare anche a fini didattici, l'educazione linguistica e quella musicale.

Maria Montessori, prima donna medico e pedagogista italiana di fama internazionale, fonda a Roma nel 1907 la prima "Casa dei Bambini", spazio a misura del bambino, il cui arredo è progettato in relazione alle sue possibilità, e in cui vengono riconosciuti alcuni suoi bisogni profondi: il fare da sé, l'apprendere, l'applicarsi a un lavoro serio che richieda sforzo e concentrazione. Di qui l'uso di materiale strutturato, scientificamente studiato per lo sviluppo percettivo- sensoriale e la predilezione di un fare individuale e silenzioso.

esponenti dei movimenti delle donne, della società civile, di forme associative e cooperative. Definite "sperimentali" o "a nuovo indirizzo", si ispirano al pensiero pedagogico e agli ideali di grandi uomini di scuola e studiosi di educazione (fra tutti Bruno Ciari e Loris Malaguzzi) e disegnano modelli educativi di altissima qualità, conosciuti e ammirati a livello internazionale.⁸

Accanto alle scuole degli enti locali, a partire dal 1968 si diffondono le scuole materne statali, oltre a quelle private per lo più cattoliche di antica tradizione. Ispirazione pedagogica più diffusa in queste scuole è quella agazziana, in quelle statali è presente anche quella montessoriana.

Se anni addietro ciascuna gestione ha sviluppato e tentato di difendere la qualità del proprio modello educativo individuando e sottolineando i limiti dell'altro, nell'ultimo decennio, anche per i continui e crescenti problemi economici nazionali che hanno tagliato le risorse e limitato gli investimenti degli enti locali nel campo della spesa pubblica, si è passati ad atteggiamenti tesi a definire logiche di accettazione/utilizzo del sistema misto. Questo ha comportato da un lato la richiesta di passaggio di sezioni dai Comuni allo Stato, dall'altro la stipula di convenzioni tra Enti Locali e Privati con conseguenti assegnazioni di contributi e di servizi comunali (mensa, trasporto) alla scuola paritaria. Ciononostante nelle città più grandi della nostra Regione, con una lunga storia e tradizione in campo educativo, le scuole a gestione comunale restano le più diffuse.

I servizi educativi e scolastici 0 – 6 a Bologna

Partendo dallo scenario nazionale e passando per il contesto regionale, siamo arrivati alla realtà educativa di Bologna,

8 Bruno Ciari, maestro elementare, diventa negli anni '50 Assessore alla Pubblica Istruzione del Comune di Bologna e nel 1966 direttore delle Scuole dello stesso comune. Si ispira ai principi della pedagogia popolare di Freinet e dell'attivismo rivisitato alla luce della pedagogia marxista, e partecipa alla vita del Movimento di Cooperazione Educativa. Negli anni '60 esprime le idee fondanti il modello di scuola dell'infanzia "a nuovo indirizzo" e i principi alla base del modello del "tempo pieno" per la scuola elementare.

Loris Malaguzzi, maestro, pedagogista e psicologo, negli anni '50 fonda a Reggio Emilia otto "asili del popolo" autogestiti, poi assorbiti dal comune e il Centro medico psicopedagogico comunale. Padre del sistema pedagogico su cui si basano gli asili nido e le scuole dell'infanzia di Reggio Emilia, è tra i fondatori negli anni '80 del Gruppo Nazionale Nidi-Infanzia, con il quale organizza numerosi convegni in tutta Italia. L'esperienza reggiana, studiata e imitata in tutto il mondo, sostiene la necessità di sperimentare nella scuola "I cento linguaggi dei bambini".

città di circa 373.000 abitanti, capoluogo della Regione Emilia Romagna.

Vediamo il dato dei posti offerti sia per i servizi 0 – 3 che per le scuole d'infanzia.⁹

Posti offerti nei servizi per la prima infanzia

Tipologia di servizio	Numero servizi	Numero posti bambino
Nidi d'infanzia comunali a tempo pieno	50	2.259
Nidi comunali a tempo parziale	4	341
Nidi in concessione e in convenzione a tempo pieno	16	530
Centri per bambini e genitori comunali	10	245
Spazi bambino comunali	2	36
Sezioni Primavera comunali	1	20
Sezioni Primavera private	12	147
Educatrici familiari	4	12
Educatrici Domiciliari (Piccoli Gruppi Educativi)	8	30

Complessivamente l'offerta pubblica di nido è pari a 3.130 posti bambino. 405 famiglie fruiscono inoltre di contributi economici a sostegno della prima infanzia (contributi per iscrizione ai servizi educativi privati e per servizio di baby sitter). Per quanto riguarda il nido e gli altri servizi 0 – 3, il tasso di copertura della domanda potenziale si attesta su valori vicini al 45 %.

Posti offerti a livello di sistema cittadino integrato di scuole d'infanzia

Tipologia di scuola	Numero sezioni	Numero iscritti
Scuola d'infanzia comunale	204	5.060
Scuola d'infanzia statale	58	1.385
Scuola d'infanzia paritaria privata convenzionata	71	1759
Totale	333	8.204

Relativamente alla scuola dell'infanzia è garantito l'accoglimento di tutte le domande di residenti all'interno dell'offerta del sistema integrato.

IL PROGETTO PEDAGOGICO DEI NIDI E DELLE SCUOLE D'INFANZIA

Il modello educativo del nido d'infanzia

Ad esemplificazione delle linee portanti che definiscono il modello pedagogico dei nidi del nostro Paese, facciamo riferimento agli Orientamenti educativi dei nidi d'infanzia del Comune di Bologna. Si tratta di un documento approvato dal Consiglio Comunale di Bologna nel 1993, che ancora conserva una sua attualità e pregnanza.

Secondo tale documento le parole chiave che caratterizzano il servizio nidi sono:

- globalità, secondo un'idea di sviluppo del bambino dove le componenti affettiva, cognitiva e motoria evolvono insieme e dunque di una strategia educativa che esclude proposte di apprendimento parcellizzanti;
- gioco, nel riconoscimento della dimensione ludica come modalità principale dei bambini per esprimersi, conoscere ed agire sulla realtà;
- progettualità, per evidenziare lo stile di lavoro degli operatori, caratterizzato da intenzionalità e pensiero condiviso;

- relazione, perché i bambini imparano e crescono grazie alla qualità delle relazioni che instaurano e l'attenzione alla relazione è il cuore del lavoro educativo (nido come sistema di relazioni complesso);
- flessibilità, intesa come capacità relazionale e organizzativa delle educatrici di adattare il proprio intervento ai ritmi ed ai bisogni dei bambini, facendo ricorso all'osservazione e ad uno stile di comunicazione non direttivo;
- differenza, intesa nella sua accezione più ampia come differenza di culture, di genere, di percorsi evolutivi, di capacità e competenze.

Numerosi sono i documenti successivi, a cura del coordinamento pedagogico comunale, che raccolgono riflessioni ed elaborazioni sull'evoluzione del progetto pedagogico del nido. Molti di questi mettono a fuoco la centralità dell'espressività infantile, la molteplicità di linguaggi nella comunicazione e l'importanza dell'immaginario inteso come vera e propria dimensione della conoscenza.

Tutte le pubblicazioni prodotte sono reperibili presso il Laboratorio di Documentazione e Formazione¹⁰ cittadino, sede privilegiata di confronto tecnico pedagogico, supporto a percorsi formativi, spazio di visibilità di esperienze educative documentate, realizzate sul territorio. Il Laboratorio accoglie inoltre visite di studio, organizza stage e tirocini, collabora con altri enti ed istituzioni alla promozione di iniziative che valorizzano il ruolo educante dei servizi prescolastici e scolastici all'interno della comunità.

I principali riferimenti per il curriculum della scuola d'infanzia

Dal 1968, anno di istituzione con la L.444 della scuola materna statale, ad oggi, nel nostro Paese si sono succeduti con una certa frequenza Governi e Ministri della Pubblica Istruzione di diverso orientamento politico; le leggi che hanno emanato hanno pertanto portato cambiamenti normativi ed espresso differenti priorità.

10

Posta elettronica: LabDocFormIstruzione@comune.bologna.it
Catalogo on-line: www.comune.bologna.it/istruzione/laboratorio/index.php

Anche per quanto riguarda il curriculum, agli Orientamenti delle attività educative del '69 sono succedute altre direttive nazionali, all'interno delle quali è possibile rilevare elementi di continuità, ma anche di discontinuità. In alcuni casi, anche per la velocità con cui sono state emanate e poi sostituite, non hanno portato reali modifiche all'impianto curricolare della scuola. Le indicazioni legislative nazionali non solo hanno rappresentato un riferimento per la scuola dell'infanzia statale, ma hanno anche indirizzato i regolamenti delle scuole comunali e paritarie.

Scorrendo i principali documenti nazionali che si sono occupati della ridefinizione dei saperi e dei curricoli per la scuola tre/sei anni - gli Orientamenti per la scuola materna del '69, gli Orientamenti programmatici del '91 e le Indicazioni per il curricolo per la scuola dell'infanzia del 2007 - possiamo affermare che tutti mostrano molta attenzione alla molteplicità delle dimensioni della personalità del bambino e sottolineano l'importanza del gioco e della creatività nel processo di formazione. Nell'affrontare i linguaggi espressivi, la comunicazione e l'arte lasciano invece spazio a contraddittorie interpretazioni. Nella pratica educativa delle scuole, pertanto, in questi ambiti sono stati sperimentati percorsi molto differenti fra loro.

Negli Orientamenti per la scuola materna del '69, le attività espressive vengono contenute nell'area della "libera espressione" in una connotazione fondamentalmente affettivo-emotiva. Erano gli anni, quelli, dell'animazione teatrale. Al teatro si attribuivano valori pedagogico-didattici di liberazione dai condizionamenti sociali; fare teatro significava fare attività di drammatizzazione, ma anche di pittura, modellaggio, musica, canto, gioco.

Negli Orientamenti programmatici del '91 viene dedicato largo spazio alla definizione dei campi di esperienza, ambiti della conoscenza più aperti e dinamici rispetto alle discipline. Nel campo di esperienza denominato "Messaggi, forme e media" confluiscono "tutte le attività inerenti alla comunicazione ed espressione manipolativo-visiva, sonoro-musicale, drammatico-teatrale, audiovisuale e mass-mediale e il loro continuo intreccio".

A tal proposito: "La scuola si adopera affinché i linguaggi corporei, sonori e visuali più accessibili ai bambini vengano accolti ed usati

il più consapevolmente possibile".

Relativamente al linguaggio teatrale si afferma: "Le attività drammatico-teatrali sono finalizzate allo sviluppo di processi regolati di identificazione-proiezione mediante interventi che, coinvolgendo i bambini nella partecipazione, ne arricchiscono l'esperienza su diversi piani [...]. Le attività da realizzare comprendono i giochi simbolici liberi e guidati, i giochi con le maschere, i travestimenti, la costruzione e l'utilizzazione di burattini e marionette, le drammatizzazioni, le narrazioni e tutto ciò che può facilitare i processi di identificazione dei bambini e il controllo dell'emotività".

Per quanto riguarda la funzione dell'adulto si ricorda che deve lasciare spazio alla fantasia e all'inventività del bambino: "Non si tratta di insegnare a recitare, ma di creare le situazioni in cui la stessa esperienza ludica del bambino assuma le forme e la consistenza del 'far teatro'. Sono quindi fondamentali la disponibilità dell'insegnante, la sua competenza nell'impiego delle tecniche di animazione e la sua capacità di coinvolgere i bambini in tutte le fasi di elaborazione della narrazione, da quella verbale a quella teatrale vera e propria".

Altro linguaggio cui è dedicato ampio spazio è quello sonoro-musicale: "Le attività sonoro-musicali mirano a sviluppare la sensibilità musicale, a favorire la fruizione della produzione presente nell'ambiente, a stimolare e sostenere l'esercizio personale e diretto, avviando anche alla musica d'insieme".

Le piste di lavoro suggerite sono molto articolate e dettagliate: "scoperta e conoscenza della propria immagine sonora; ricognizione esplorativa dell'ambiente sonoro; uso dei suoni della voce e di quelli che si possono produrre con il corpo; uso di oggetti e strumenti tradizionali ed elettronici; uso di strumenti di registrazione ed amplificazione; apprendimento di canti; invenzione di semplici melodie; sonorizzazione di fiabe o racconti; attività ritmico-motorie (la danza); forme elementari e ludiche di rappresentazione dei suoni; giochi per la scoperta e l'uso di regole musicali".

Infine, scorrendo il testo pubblicato dal Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione nel settembre 2007, Indicazioni per il curricolo per la scuola dell'infanzia e per il primo ciclo, si può affermare che l'impianto non si discosti da quello degli Orientamenti del '69, ma anzi cammini in quei solchi.

Nelle ultime Indicazioni nazionali emerge un approccio unitario e in continuità del percorso educativo dai tre ai quattordici anni. Obiettivo della scuola è “far nascere ‘il tarlo’ della curiosità, lo stupore della conoscenza, la voglia di declinare il sapere con la fantasia, la creatività, l’ingegno”.

Relativamente alla scuola dell’infanzia e ai temi di nostro interesse, compare l’affermazione: “Il corpo ha potenzialità espressive e comunicative che si realizzano in un linguaggio caratterizzato da una propria struttura e da regole che il bambino apprende attraverso specifici percorsi di apprendimento: i gesti mimici, sostituiscono o sottolineano la parola, mantengono la conversazione o la sospendono, esprimono sentimenti ed emozioni, accompagnano la fruizione musicale”.

E nel paragrafo “Linguaggi, creatività, espressione” si sottolinea: “I bambini sono portati a esprimere con immaginazione e creatività le loro emozioni e i loro pensieri: l’arte orienta questa propensione, educa al sentire estetico e al piacere del bello”.

LA FORMAZIONE DEGLI EDUCATORI E DEGLI INSEGNANTI

Formazione di base e formazione in servizio

La professionalità degli educatori di nido e degli insegnanti di scuola dell’infanzia ha senza dubbio a che fare con la qualità e con lo spessore della formazione di base, da un lato, e della formazione in servizio, dall’altro, in direzione di una formazione permanente intesa come processo che accompagna l’educatore e l’insegnante lungo tutto l’arco della vita professionale e come strumento di azione e di cambiamento del sistema scolastico.

La formazione di base nel nostro Paese è stata caratterizzata, nel passato, da una forte disomogeneità. Nelle scuole dell’infanzia accedeva personale in possesso di diploma rilasciato dalla scuola magistrale, istituzione di durata triennale, spesso privata, con percorsi condensati talvolta in una sola annualità, oppure di diploma di istituto magistrale quadriennale. Nei nidi entrava personale fornito di una preparazione parasanitaria, con diploma di istituto professionale triennale o diploma di scuola secondaria superiore più attestato di idoneità in corsi di formazione regionale specifici. Presenti, anche se non frequenti, sia nella scuola

dell'infanzia sia nel nido, insegnanti provviste di laurea provenienti da scuole secondarie quinquennali a indirizzo pedagogico o scientifico, alcune laureatesi mentre già erano in servizio.

Il dibattito scientifico scaturito dalla ricerca pedagogica più avanzata fin dagli anni '70, argomentato dagli studiosi di alcune Università italiane anche all'interno di commissioni ministeriali, ha sostenuto per anni la necessità di una formazione iniziale a livello universitario per tutti i docenti, a partire da chi opera nella fascia 0-6.

L'indicazione più significativa era di non separare i corsi di studio, ma di prevedere un percorso formativo composto di un primo spezzone comune e di un successivo biennio specialistico.

In realtà si è dovuto attendere il 1999 per vedere venire alla luce, dopo accese discussioni e lunghe mediazioni, una riforma universitaria che ha istituito i corsi brevi di laurea triennali, fra i quali il Corso di Laurea in Educatore di Nido e di Comunità infantile, in cui è confluita la formazione iniziale degli operatori di nido. Nel 2003, poi, anche a seguito della spinta propositiva dei corsi di laurea avviati da alcune Università alla fine degli anni '90, è finalmente stata resa obbligatoria per legge la formazione universitaria quadriennale per gli insegnanti di scuola dell'infanzia e di scuola primaria. Il corso di laurea in Scienze della Formazione Primaria è articolato in un biennio comune ed un biennio specialistico, completo di tirocinio obbligatorio e di laboratori, in un rapporto più stretto tra formazione accademica e formazione su campo.

I percorsi formativi di entrambi i corsi di laurea si muovono in direzione della costruzione di figure professionali competenti sul piano delle discipline psicologiche, pedagogiche, sociologiche e antropologiche relativamente ai processi di crescita e di sviluppo del bambino. Si muovono in direzione di un avvicinamento fra le professionalità di educatore di nido e insegnante di scuola dell'infanzia, pur rispettando e facendo emergere in positivo differenze e specificità. Le diverse età del bambino piccolo, infatti, mondi in un continuum evolutivo, richiedono adulti capaci di mettere in campo approcci differenti e competenze particolari ma identiche sensibilità, attenzione, disponibilità, curiosità, preparazione e serietà professionale.

All'interno dei corsi di laurea è riconosciuto largo spazio alle tematiche della corporeità, delle emozioni, dell'affettività e alla loro importanza nel processo di costruzione del pensiero e

dell'identità. Sono inoltre previsti insegnamenti sulle metodologie del gioco e dell'animazione, per l'acquisizione di competenze linguistiche e comunicative, per l'educazione motoria ed espressiva, l'educazione al sonoro, l'educazione grafico-pittorica.

Si delineano dunque profili professionali competenti, capaci di coltivare sensibilità e capacità nei campi della comunicazione e dei linguaggi; non si tratta tuttavia di formare dei "tuttologi", ma dei professionisti capaci di dialogare e intrecciare progettualità con artisti, operatori culturali, altre professionalità.

Per quanto riguarda la formazione nell'ambito dei linguaggi performativi, ci è parso significativo l'esempio del Laboratorio di Musica e Movimento proposto nel corso di laurea in Scienze della Formazione Primaria dell'Università di Bologna. Il laboratorio ha per obiettivi l'acquisizione di alcune competenze di base relative alla musica, alla danza e all'intreccio profondo e non stereotipato tra i due linguaggi. Dal punto di vista metodologico, propone percorsi didattici interdisciplinari che mettono in relazione l'ascolto e la produzione per la musica; l'osservazione del movimento e la produzione per il movimento; la composizione creativa musica / movimento per la combinazione tra i due linguaggi.¹¹

La formazione in servizio si è delineata fin dagli anni '70, con la nascita delle scuole dell'infanzia "sperimentali" o "a nuovo indirizzo" e dei nidi pubblici, come un processo teso a colmare le lacune della formazione di base, orientato a prefigurare e disegnare insegnanti ed educatori preparati, creativi, dinamici, attenti ai bisogni dei bambini, con il gusto della ricerca e della sperimentazione, aperti al confronto e alla valutazione del proprio operato, capaci di documentarlo e renderlo visibile all'esterno della scuola, portatori di novità in un continuo dialogo con i genitori e altri interlocutori, attenti a quanto di interessante esiste sul territorio in termini di risorse culturali cui attingere.

Riteniamo importante ricordare il ruolo delle riviste pedagogiche nel nostro Paese, nell'ambito della formazione permanente: strumenti preziosi per la diffusione del dibattito scientifico che avveniva all'interno di alcune Università, in particolare quella di Bologna, e delle idee che illuminavano e orientavano le

11 M.R. Addessi, *Musica e danza: formazione degli insegnanti e curriculum*. In S. Borroni, M. Colombini, *La danza nella scuola fra arte e educazione*, Atti del Convegno, Teatro Giuditta Pasta, Saronno, 25/26 marzo 2004.

esperienze più avanzate delle scuole dell'infanzia e dei nidi dei grandi comuni italiani (Reggio Emilia, Bologna, Modena, Carpi, Ravenna, Ferrara in Emilia Romagna; poi Torino, Milano, Roma, Pistoia, ecc...).

Idee, ispirazioni teoriche, scoperte, pratiche educative che venivano illustrate, confrontate, dibattute in occasione di manifestazioni e convegni pubblici di livello internazionale circolavano poi fra gli insegnanti in tutto il territorio nazionale attraverso le pagine delle riviste. Gli elementi fondanti delle esperienze pilota diventavano spunto di riflessione, oggetto di discussione e approfondimento per i singoli insegnanti e per i collettivi nel momento della programmazione didattica, contribuendo così alla propagazione dell'innovazione all'interno di scuole dell'infanzia e di nidi più periferici.

L'aggiornamento continuo e ricorsivo e la formazione in servizio hanno visto negli anni il moltiplicarsi di iniziative sia di breve sia di medio e lungo respiro su tematiche psicopedagogiche, su diversi aspetti metodologici, sui linguaggi, sui campi di esperienza, sulla didattica.

Accanto a lezioni e conferenze frontali sono stati sperimentati laboratori, nel segno della ricerca-azione con l'obiettivo di ottenere una ricaduta nella pratica educativa. L'intento era, ed è tuttora, quello di trasformare la scuola in un ambiente di produzione culturale e di dare agli insegnanti il piacere della ricerca, l'emozione dello sperimentare e dell'investire energie creative nel proprio percorso professionale, in uno stretto legame fra la costruzione di significative competenze professionali e la riflessione sulla pratica didattica.

La formazione in servizio è un'operazione culturale e organizzativa complessa che coinvolge istituti sia a livello centrale, sia a livello regionale, provinciale e locale.

Negli ultimi tempi si è intensificato il lavoro in rete che coinvolge, in direzione della continuità educativa, le scuole dell'infanzia comunali, statali e paritarie ed i nidi afferenti ad uno stesso ambito territoriale comunale o sovracomunale.

La Legge 53/2003 affida ora alle sedi universitarie la formazione permanente degli insegnanti, in un rapporto dinamico, ancora in via di definizione, con le scuole.

Da non dimenticare è l'importante ruolo svolto nell'attività di promozione e di monitoraggio dell'aggiornamento su campo

e della formazione in servizio dagli Istituti Regionali di Ricerca Educativa. Gli IRRE, in precedenza IRRSAE, (Istituti di Ricerca Regionali, di Sperimentazione e Aggiornamento Educativi), promossi dal Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione nel 1974 e istituiti uno per ogni Regione d'Italia, hanno operato nei campi della ricerca e della documentazione, in direzione del creare memoria per il futuro e di rendere possibile la consultazione e la trasmissibilità delle esperienze e delle buone pratiche educative, funzione svolta anche da altri centri di documentazione territoriali, soprattutto in alcune grandi città. Nel 2007 gli IRRE sono stati assorbiti nell'Agenzia Nazionale per lo Sviluppo dell'Autonomia Scolastica, di cui nei prossimi mesi si vedrà con maggiore chiarezza il profilo.

Formazione in servizio nell'ambito espressivo artistico. L'esperienza di Bologna

Nella nostra città il coordinamento pedagogico comunale predispone ogni anno un articolato quadro di opportunità di aggiornamento e formazione, sulla base dei bisogni formativi rilevati dal confronto con educatori ed insegnanti.

Ai corsi cittadini rivolti a tutti i gruppi di lavoro, su tematiche psicopedagogiche legate alla relazione con i bambini, con le famiglie o al lavoro di gruppo, si affiancano numerose proposte, che gli operatori possono scegliere secondo le predisposizioni, le esigenze, gli interessi individuali.

Venendo alle tematiche che intrecciano competenze educative relazionali e competenze espressive artistiche, possiamo citare alcuni esempi di corsi di formazione promossi quest'anno:

- Atelier di scrittura, percorso di scrittura creativa condotto da Francesca Ricci sulla base degli Atelier d'Ecriture di Elisabeth Bing;
- Il rito del racconto, percorso pluriennale condotto da Milena Bernardi sulla funzione complessa svolta dalla narrazione all'interno della relazione educativa;
- Dal soffio alla voce, laboratorio di Miriam Bardini sulle potenzialità espressive della voce e del corpo, per riscoprire il piacere della narrazione e dell'ascolto di storie;

- Comunicare senza parole, laboratorio espressivo sulla comunicazione non verbale condotto da Patrizia Naldi e Marzia Zunarelli;
- I cinque sensi, laboratorio di esplorazioni sensoriali (tattiloteca, impronte e tracce, mappa degli odori, occhio al colore, nel cuore del suono, animali sonanti...), a cura dell'Associazione Artebambini;
- Tra le pagine sonore... lo spazio del silenzio, laboratorio di Nicoletta Zuccheri per esplorare e giocare con il Tempo dei Suoni e dei Silenzi;
- Lo scarabocchio nel mondo infantile e nell'arte, di Cinzia Valentinuzzi, sull'evoluzione del segno grafico;
- L'azione ristretta al foglio bianco, del pittore Albert Barreda, immersione pratica e teorica nel linguaggio dell'immagine del '900;
- L'alfabeto teatrale, percorso pluriennale su più livelli coordinato da Roberto Frabetti de La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi (1° livello: ricerca personale per portare alla luce il proprio alfabeto gestuale e sonoro; 2° livello: progettazione di laboratori teatrali con i bambini).

Si tratta complessivamente di proposte volte a rafforzare la cultura e la sensibilità artistica di educatori e insegnanti, a rendere più alta e selettiva la loro attenzione verso ciò che viene offerto ai bambini.

Come ci ricorda Juan Mata, l'essere umano ha prodotto nei secoli una grande ricchezza in ambito artistico; come educatori ed insegnanti dobbiamo scegliere il meglio e darlo ai bambini, tutto il linguaggio migliore del mondo adulto dobbiamo farlo dialogare con l'infanzia.

Il mondo che creiamo durante il tempo dell'arte, del teatro, della letteratura è un mondo carico di significati. Dobbiamo "caricarci sulle spalle" le nostre conoscenze e trasferirle "seriamente" all'infanzia. Per i bambini dobbiamo utilizzare il nostro miglior linguaggio, non il più semplice.

Che tipo di formazione è allora richiesta agli educatori e agli insegnanti perché possano fare tutto questo, contaminando la propria formazione professionale specifica con una competenza in campo artistico senza tuttavia improvvisarsi artisti o cadere in una pericolosa confusione di ruoli?

La formazione in campo artistico non crediamo possa prescindere da percorsi laboratoriali in cui sperimentarsi e mettersi in gioco personalmente, per ritrovare innanzitutto dentro di sé tutta la forza espressiva dei propri linguaggi corporei. Senza forzature e senza stancarsi di provare, in un contesto – il laboratorio – che per definizione è sperimentale, artigianale, "lavorabile". Questa almeno è la nostra esperienza in campo teatrale e non riusciamo a vedere strade diverse.

È la metodologia di lavoro del laboratorio che ci sembra interessante: l'essere disponibili allo scambio di opinioni e al confronto di idee, al dialogo (dia: attraverso, lasciarsi attraversare). Il laboratorio come luogo di incontri, a volte di scontri, di strutturazioni e destrutturazioni, come spazio per provare e riprovare, fare e disfare, senza stancarsi, per vedere in che cosa può trasformarsi un'idea. In un'alternanza in cui si produce a volte di getto, altre volte lentamente o a sbalzi e poi si sceglie cosa tenere e cosa buttare. Raccogliere le cose che funzionano e con pazienza ricomporle in strutture significative. Dare senso a un gesto, dare concretezza a un'intuizione, con una tensione alta verso il prodotto e altrettanta tensione al processo: un processo che consente di divagare, di fare ricerche personali e di gruppo, pur apprendendo tecniche e regole in modo rigoroso.

È un bell'allenamento, una bella palestra, umana e professionale.

Il tema della formazione ci sta particolarmente a cuore. In specifico l'aspetto della ricaduta dei percorsi formativi nel contesto lavorativo ci sembra cruciale. La ricaduta è importante, è la ragione stessa dell'investimento formativo, e tuttavia preoccupazioni di trasferibilità immediata nel lavoro con i bambini rischiano di impoverire il percorso, di fargli perdere efficacia.

Se il percorso si caratterizza come veramente formativo e dunque non si limita ad "insegnare" tecniche ma, più ambiziosamente, prova a produrre cambiamenti nei soggetti in formazione allora la strada sarà più lunga, meno diretta, meno quantificabile e controllabile. L'intensità del percorso, la piacevolezza ma anche la fatica a cui il laboratorio sottopone hanno tempi e riscontri personali, diversi in termini di permeabilità, di elaborazione, di sedimentazione. E dobbiamo rispettarli.

Nel laboratorio ci sono prima di tutto gli educatori, gli insegnanti, anche se la presenza dei bambini non è molto lontana, è nella

loro testa, nei loro occhi, nelle loro mani... non abbiamo bisogno di ricordargliela. Saranno loro a sentire quando è il momento di portare ai bambini quello che hanno "appreso" e in quel momento lo faranno con tutta la forza comunicativa che viene dall'avere sperimentato quegli stessi linguaggi su di sé. Nel frattempo, se l'esperienza formativa è risultata efficace passerà comunque nella pratica quotidiana del nostro lavoro. Senza segnali eclatanti forse, senza proposte formalizzate, senza quasi che ce ne accorgiamo. Potrà trattarsi di un'accresciuta capacità di prestare attenzione a un gesto, a un tono di voce, a un segno sul foglio, ad una qualsiasi delle tante forme, spesso non verbali, che i bambini usano per comunicare con noi.

Quello che è più importante è proprio il risvolto meno evidente. Come dicevamo, una più forte cultura e sensibilità artistica porterà gli educatori ad avere un'attenzione più alta e selettiva verso i "prodotti" da offrire ai bambini e a come offrirli. Insegnanti con una robusta formazione in campo artistico diventano risorse importanti per la scuola in cui operano, ne arricchiscono la progettualità, sono in grado di offrire ai bambini proposte qualificate in maniera non episodica come invece sarebbe se ci si dovesse affidare solo ad esperti esterni o ad occasioni che non fanno parte della quotidianità. Avere accanto ai bambini adulti capaci di selezionare la valanga di informazioni e stimoli che si riversa su di loro, capaci di pulire l'universo percettivo in cui sono immersi, di valutare criticamente tutto quel mondo di oggetti, immagini, attività che circonda l'infanzia e rischia di sommergerla: crediamo che questo sia più importante di tutto il resto. Un bambino tutelato da un educatore attento alla "qualità della quotidianità" sarà forse meno sorpreso dall'incontro con un evento artistico ma, se è vero che il "piacere per il bello" si educa, saprà comunque gustarselo o almeno ci auguriamo che sia così.

Esempi di esperienze significative di formazione per educatori e insegnanti nell'ambito delle arti performative

Nell'illustrare alcune esperienze di formazione è nostro intento soffermarci sugli aspetti diretti ad ampliare e ad arricchire lo spazio interiore creativo degli adulti che abitano i nidi e le scuole dell'infanzia. Abbiamo potuto notare come l'esperienza diretta,

la ricerca personale comportino in educatori e insegnanti una maggiore consapevolezza della felicità e dell'energia che si ricavano dal praticare e dal fruire le arti performative.

La ricaduta nella pratica educativa quotidiana di un percorso formativo significativo non può che apportare nutrimento allo spazio reale e simbolico di creatività condiviso dai bambini e dagli adulti. Può rappresentare una possibilità di espansione e dilatazione degli interessi. Può indicare direzioni originali da seguire, sentieri da percorrere, saperi antichi da riscoprire, nuovi azzardi da intraprendere con audacia, attenzione e serietà.

I linguaggi performativi possono essere incontrati solo attraverso il contatto con le arti e con i professionisti delle arti. Nell'esperienza formativa è essenziale che l'artista, l'attore, il danzatore, il musicista sappia proporre, ma anche cogliere e rilanciare suggerimenti, idee, motivi, e far sì che nel contesto laboratoriale si producano immagini, azioni e parole emotivamente pregnanti nate dai partecipanti.

Pensiamo che se l'educatore, l'insegnante sperimenta in prima persona il piacere di coltivare la capacità di raccontare con le parole, con i gesti e i movimenti, con la voce e il corpo, con gli sguardi e le espressioni del volto, con i suoni e il canto, immagini evocative che appartengono al proprio mondo interiore, potrà e saprà poi intraprendere percorsi di ricerca e di scoperta dell'espressività infantile. Un'espressività originale, semplice, poetica, non bamboleggiante o imitativo-caricaturale. Potrà e saprà creare occasioni, situazioni, spazi vuoti in cui esplorare insieme ai bambini le potenzialità espressive dei singoli e del gruppo.

Narrazione...

Presentandole poetiche e le visioni teatrali della propria compagnia, Nautai Teatro, durante il festival "Visioni di futuro, visioni di teatro"¹² del marzo scorso, Miriam Bardini, attrice e narratrice, ricordava come per lei fare teatro ragazzi, e negli ultimi anni dedicarsi ai bambini piccoli e piccolissimi, abbia rappresentato una scelta di vita, una scoperta continua, una ricerca sempre più profonda di

¹² "Visioni di futuro, visioni di teatro" è il Festival di teatro e cultura per la prima infanzia promosso da La Baracca-Testoni Ragazzi di Bologna dal 2004. Nel marzo 2008 si è svolta la 4° edizione.

avvicinamento a quella capacità di stupirsi, di incantarsi tipica della prima infanzia.

Negli spettacoli da lei realizzati la narrazione ha un peso determinante: narrazione essenziale, che parla di argomenti semplici e veri, capaci di toccare il bambino perché diretti al nucleo centrale dell'uomo.

Prima di allestire lo spettacolo *Cantico del nascere*, Miriam Bardini ha vissuto per tre anni un'esperienza di immersione in un nido. Voleva conoscere da vicino i bimbi piccoli, e osservare i modi di fare, di toccare gli oggetti, di relazionarsi ai bambini propri del sapere delle educatrici, al fine di trasformarli con la propria sensibilità di artista e portarli sulla scena.

Miriam Bardini ha una lunga esperienza nel campo della formazione per educatori di nido e insegnanti di scuola dell'infanzia sulla narrazione e sulla fiaba. Nel 2000 ha ideato e condotto un progetto di formazione triennale per operatori di nido e spazi gioco del Comune di Firenze articolato in tappe: Stanze di fiabe, Incanti, Sogni, premiato dall'ETI (Ente Teatrale Italiano) per la sua qualità nel 2004. Dei laboratori di narrazione-ambientazione contenuti all'interno del progetto, ricordiamo in particolare un esito finale, Stanza di fiaba Hansel e Gretel, percorso teatrale condotto dalle educatrici "formate", allestito con grande cura e ricerca estetica, di forte potere evocativo, da esplorare attraverso la sensorialità. Bardini ritiene che i laboratori di formazione siano, sia per chi li conduce sia per chi li frequenta, occasioni per ricollocarsi al centro della propria esistenza in modo più ampio e creativo. Propone laboratori di educazione all'ascolto interiore, ascolto dei silenzi, dei fruscii, dei soffi, della voce che narra, di più voci che narrano. Sono percorsi di conoscenza e di elaborazione delle emozioni personali, oltre che di riscoperta della narrazione e della sua funzione popolare.

Il lavoro di formazione sulla fiaba è diretto al recupero del senso e del valore della fiaba tradizionale come strumento d'indagine del quotidiano, e diventa occasione per sperimentare e condividere emozioni e sentimenti legati alla simbologia della fiaba e al suo potere evocativo. I partecipanti si riappropriano della memoria dell'infanzia che è dentro di loro, delle storie sentite raccontare quando erano piccoli, dei propri ricordi d'infanzia e dall'immersione profonda all'interno delle proprie radici possono trarre maggiore attenzione per l'immaginario del bambino.

Danza...

Sofia Quagiotto ha iniziato il proprio percorso artistico nel Chorea, compagnia di danza fondata a Bologna alla fine degli anni '80. Per molti anni ha condiviso e contribuito a sviluppare la ricerca artistica di questo gruppo storico, che ha dato vita all'interno della danza contemporanea ad una particolare metodologia, denominata Tecnica Moderno-Creativa. I principi a cui si ispira sono orientati a sviluppare l'apertura del corpo, della mente e della personalità, la creatività nel movimento, l'interazione fra le arti. Nella danza contemporanea, secondo la visione di Quagiotto, è possibile lavorare su di una fisicità diversa da quella del danzatore classico: ogni fisico ha delle potenzialità e ogni diversità individuale, la stessa mancanza di perfezione, diventano interessanti per la creazione di una performance di gruppo.

Danzatrice che ama la propria arte e dona autenticamente la propria presenza in scena, pensa che la danza possa trasformare i corpi e possa insegnare a renderli comunicativi, attraverso un ascolto profondo e una tecnica basata sulla ricerca, l'improvvisazione e la composizione. Il corpo dell'artista-formatore e il corpo di chi si forma si incamminano lungo un percorso di analisi interiore del gesto e del movimento, promuovendo l'unicità creativa e curando il livello interpretativo del singolo nella complessità del gruppo.

I percorsi di formazione che la danzatrice Sofia Quagiotto propone a educatori e insegnanti di bambini piccoli avvicinano al linguaggio della danza in modo semplice e naturale.

Un'esperienza rivolta alle educatrici di nido, ad esempio, riscopre le ninna nanne e attraverso il cullarsi, il cullare, favorisce la capacità di accogliere, capacità fondamentale per chi lavora con i piccolissimi. Il canto delle ninna nanne accompagna l'ascolto delle possibilità di avvolgimento del corpo e i corpi adulti lentamente cambiano, imparano ad ammorbidirsi, ad allungarsi, a comunicare in maniera diretta e naturale il piacere del contatto. I bambini piccoli avvertono immediatamente, a pelle, se un corpo accoglie, se un corpo respinge, se un corpo prova divertimento e riconoscono se si possono fidare, se si possono lasciare andare.

I bambini amano muoversi, scoprire che il corpo si può sciogliere, piegare, accartocciare e un educatore formato può facilitare le scoperte dei bambini in questa direzione.

Danzatrice e performer legata alle arti visive, anche nel campo della formazione Sofia Quagiotto propone una ricerca che esplora la mail art, l'arte postale, arte libera, antesignana di internet, diffusa in tutto il modo, accessibile a tutti, artisti-casalinghe-adulti-bambini. Sonata per timbro, ad esempio, laboratorio per educatrici e insegnanti per la prima infanzia proposto nella penultima edizione del festival "Visioni di futuro, visioni di teatro", ha visto l'intreccio di musica contemporanea composta sulla campionatura dei ritmi dei timbri postali e di parole poetiche, gestualità, movimenti, fotografie, messaggi, impronte. La performance finale nata dagli stimoli provenienti dal gruppo e dalle potenzialità di ciascun partecipante, ha previsto sia l'uso di timbri particolari realizzati da artisti visivi, sia la creazione di timbri originali da parte dei partecipanti. Ogni performance, secondo Quagiotto, deve appartenere al gruppo che l'ha creata, portare i segni di quel gruppo e lasciare in ogni partecipante emozioni, felicità, gratificazione insieme al gusto di mettersi alla prova e di superare il timore di mostrarsi al pubblico.

Canto...

Un bambino di pochi mesi, nel suo lettino, gioca con una sillaba che ha da poco imparato a pronunciare, i suoi occhi aperti sembrano seguire le evoluzioni sonore provenienti dalla bocca.

Una bambina di tre anni culla la sua bambola e canta sottovoce una ninnananna, adattando intonazione, ritmo e gesto alla situazione del gioco simbolico.

Un gruppetto di bambini corre in giardino imitando il suono di una sirena per rendere più realistico il gioco o solo perché il loro corpo si vuole muovere in modo completo: insieme alle gambe e alle braccia anche il diaframma, con un risultato sonoro potente ed un sentire dei bambini che interessa tutto il corpo in vibrazione.

Franca Mazzoli, pedagoga, studiosa appassionata delle condotte vocali dei bambini e delle loro esplorazioni sonoro-musicali, ha di recente pubblicato un Dossier dal titolo *Cantar giocando*¹³, che documenta un interessante percorso di formazione per educatori e insegnanti e di ricerca-azione con i bambini, condotto nei nidi e nelle scuole d'infanzia di Bologna.

¹³ Dossier "*Cantar giocando*", supplemento n. 1 della rivista "Bambini", giugno 2008.

All'interno dei servizi educativi è possibile osservare ogni giorno condotte vocali come quelle descritte, perché i bambini piccoli spesso accompagnano con il canto e le produzioni ritmiche e melodiche informali i loro giochi. Sono espressioni vocali diverse dalle attività di canto guidate dagli adulti. A questo proposito Franca Mazzoli precisa: "Così come il Recitar giocando definisce uno specifico genere musicale, la lirica, nella quale la recitazione dei testi viene innestata su un'intonazione, il Cantar giocando indica uno specifico ambito di utilizzo della voce legato al gioco, molto frequente nell'età infantile".

Il dossier raccoglie e documenta numerose esperienze tutte centrate sulla voce come strumento di espressione e di relazione: il progetto VivaVoce, un percorso formativo biennale, seguito da un'interessante sperimentazione con i bambini, basata sul concetto di accordage (sintonizzazione affettiva) indicato da Daniel Stern come processo empatico fondamentale che fin dai primi giorni si costruisce fra madre e bambino attraverso il dialogo vocale, e che Michel Imberty sottolinea come componente importante dell'educazione musicale nei primi anni di vita; la progettazione di pomeriggi di gioco e canto con i genitori; e, ancora, il progetto Canzoni per Pico, un orsetto che ogni tanto lascia il bosco e va a trovare i bambini per raccogliere le loro canzoni... una strategia che utilizza questo personaggio mediatore fantastico per registrare e riascoltare il canto dei bambini, consentendo al tempo stesso di fare ricerca sulla vocalità infantile.

Una ricchezza di proposte difficile da sintetizzare e descrivere, rivolte agli educatori e agli insegnanti perché considerino con più attenzione il valore di quel particolare universo vocale che i bambini costruiscono quotidianamente, non solo per comunicare ma anche per giocare e lasciare una traccia sonora personale nell'ambiente, perché il cantar giocando dei bambini ci può raccontare tanto del loro sentire più intimo.

Teatro...

Scarabocchi teatrali è un percorso di ricerca particolarmente innovativo, parte integrante di un progetto più ampio che da oltre vent'anni coinvolge i servizi educativi per la prima infanzia della nostra città, promosso dal Comune di Bologna e dal Teatro Testoni Ragazzi, coordinato da un gruppo misto composto da

artisti, pedagogisti ed educatrici.

Roberto Frabetti, teatrante, scrittore, formatore, è il supervisore artistico del progetto; con competenza e passione sostiene da anni una ricerca in campo teatrale per i piccolissimi che non ha precedenti per l'innovatività e la sistematicità che la caratterizza.

Negli anni le principali piste di lavoro sono stati la produzione di spettacoli per i bambini, i laboratori di formazione sui linguaggi teatrali rivolti alle educatrici e gli atelier teatrali con i bambini. Tre strade confluite spesso una nell'altra, con intrecci, arricchimento reciproco e scambio di idee.

I laboratori teatrali intesi come momenti formativi per le educatrici sono iniziati con la nascita del progetto, a partire dalla convinzione che un lavoro centrato sulla comunicazione non potesse prescindere dalla disponibilità delle educatrici a mettere in gioco la forza espressiva del proprio linguaggio corporeo. Insieme agli spettacoli per i bambini sono nati quindi i laboratori, parti integranti della ricerca. Dal 1987, data di produzione del primo spettacolo, esiste al Testoni un laboratorio di formazione permanente che consente alle educatrici di sperimentare la propria teatralità. Via via questo spazio è cresciuto, come luogo di ideazione, di scambio e fiducia tra professionalità diverse attraversate da idealità comuni.

È un percorso formativo aperto, ogni anno c'è chi si avvicina per la prima volta, chi ci passa dentro ma anche chi sceglie di rimanerci. Un gruppo di educatrici, accomunate da una stessa passione, ha maturato nel tempo una competenza particolare per quell'intreccio di capacità di stare nella relazione educativa con i bambini e di proporre loro momenti narrativi e teatrali di qualità. Condizioni che hanno consentito di far evolvere l'esperienza: il laboratorio, pur restando prioritariamente un luogo formativo, ha assunto anche carattere progettuale, diventando una fucina di altri laboratori, in questo caso rivolti ai bambini.

Quando parliamo di atelier teatrali con i bambini pensiamo ad una struttura che prevede un primo momento in cui l'adulto propone una breve performance teatrale ed un secondo momento nel quale i bambini sono invitati, anche se non esplicitamente, ad entrare in gioco, potendo esplorare, toccare, rielaborare immediatamente quello che hanno ricevuto. L'adulto li incoraggia e li sostiene senza mai forzare e senza guidare troppo

ma con l'attenzione a mantenere il clima e l'atmosfera della comunicazione teatrale. È una struttura complessa, che richiede equilibrio nel bilanciare attesa ed intervento, capacità osservativa, attenzione a raccogliere e a rilanciare, a tenere senza trattenere. Richiede delicatezza con i bambini e intesa tra gli adulti.

La proposta si basa sulla convinzione che anche un bambino molto piccolo possa "dire" qualcosa di "suo" in un contesto che lo contiene e lo sollecita senza forzare. Un "dire" inteso come espressione corporea carica del suo mondo interno. Una ricerca originale di segni teatrali o meglio, in questa fase, di precursori di segni e dunque di scarabocchi teatrali sollecitati e sostenuti da intenzionalità comunicativa. È questo il cuore della ricerca che ha negli atelier teatrali un osservatorio privilegiato.

Questi contesti, così intensi sul piano relazionale e comunicativo, sono spazi preziosi per osservare l'intreccio tra gioco e gioco teatrale, per riflettere su cosa differenzi l'uno dall'altro, per raccogliere ogni traccia di teatralità prodotta dai bambini ed indagare sul possibile rapporto tra bambini molto piccoli e linguaggio teatrale.

"L'atto teatrale nasce dalla necessità espressiva di un soggetto, elemento che accomuna tutti gli atti artistici, e dalla necessità recettiva di un altro soggetto (individuo o gruppo). Il bisogno dell'attore deve incontrare il bisogno del pubblico. Entrambi i soggetti devono avere coscienza del bisogno dell'altro. E della profondità delle rispettive intenzioni".¹⁴ È questa "l'intenzionalità dell'atto teatrale, ovvero la coscienza che in quell'attimo teatrale si sommano sguardi, gesti e suoni non casuali ma intenzionali. Segni voluti e cercati per esprimersi e trovare un contatto specifico che rispecchi o riveli un frammento intimo".¹⁵

Questo bisogno, questa intenzionalità e questa ricerca espressiva possono appartenere anche ad un bambino molto piccolo, di 2-3 anni?

È difficile dare risposte ma le esperienze realizzate ci dicono già molte cose: sulla disponibilità dei bambini a lasciarsi catturare su un

14 Roberto Frabetti, in: M. Manferrari, R. Frabetti, *Un alfabeto di 21 lettere. Appunti da un percorso tra il nido e il teatro*, Pendragon, Bologna, 2006.

Cfr. anche *Scarabocchi teatrali dall'esperienza degli atelier con i bambini dei nidi d'infanzia*, Documentazione a più voci a cura di M. Manferrari, collaborazione di N. Fornasari e del Laboratorio di Documentazione e Formazione del Comune di Bologna, Dossier supplemento al n.10, dicembre 2006, della rivista Bambini, edizioni Junior.

15 Ibidem.

terreno inusuale ma evidentemente molto vicino ai loro linguaggi e alle loro emozioni, sulla loro inaspettata recettività, sulla loro voglia di mettersi piacevolmente alla prova, di riprendere le suggestioni dell'adulto, di rifletterle su di sé, di cercare suoni, gesti e interazioni che hanno la carica espressiva di uno scarabocchio, che saggia ed esplora lo spazio e nello spazio lascia traccia di sé.

L'esperienza degli atelier è dinamica ed in continua evoluzione: negli ultimi anni la ricerca si è orientata in direzione di strutture di performance aperte, a carattere modulare, in grado di offrire spunti ripetibili ai bambini. Le proposte si sono fatte più essenziali, spogliate di materiali e allestimenti, centrate sulla capacità evocativa ed espressiva della voce e del gesto. E l'incontro con il bambino piccolo è stato ancora una volta sorprendente per la sua capacità di raccogliere i mondi possibili che l'adulto gli porge e di restituire, all'improvviso e inaspettatamente, frammenti di quei mondi, trasformati da un immaginario condiviso.

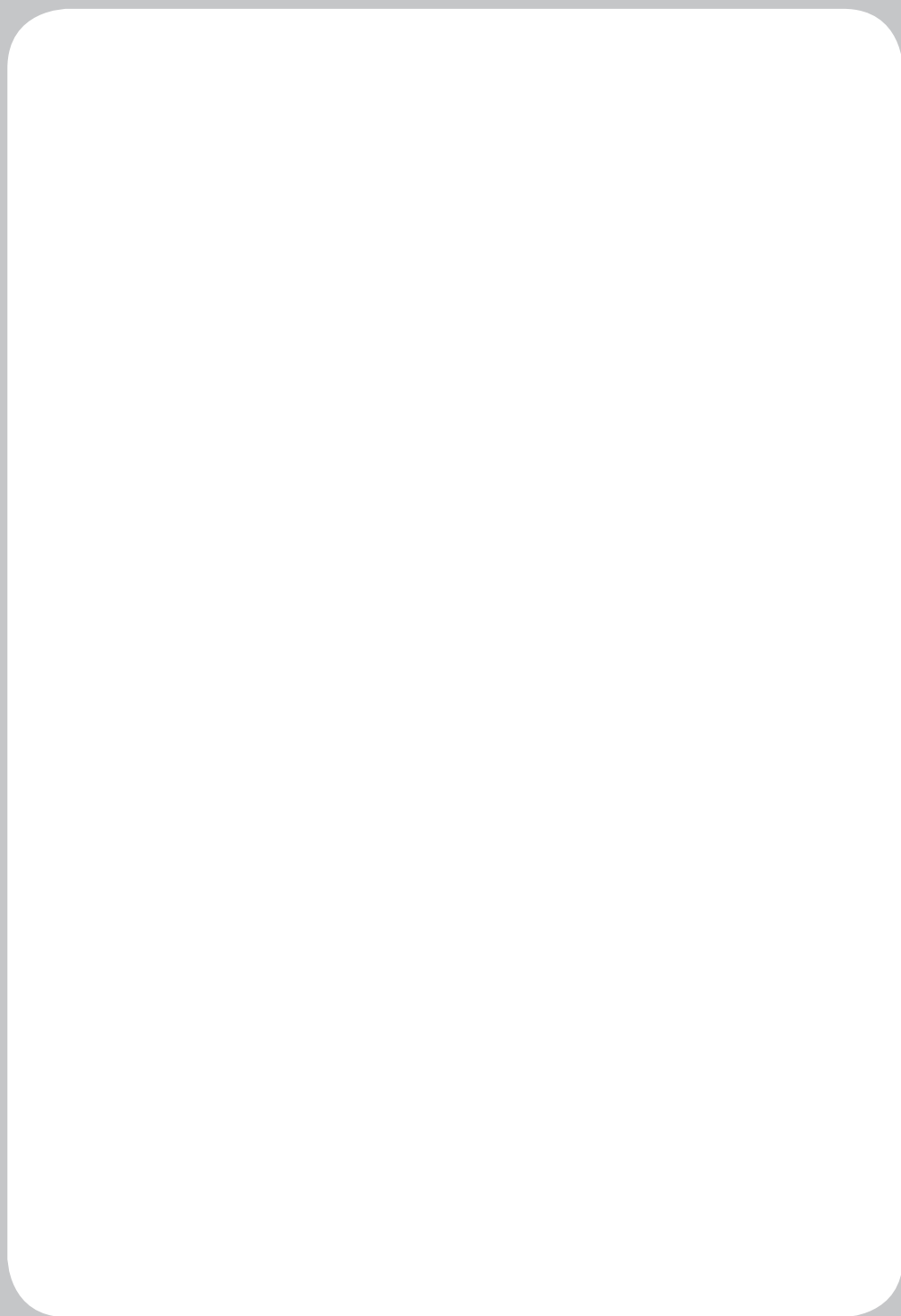
C'è ancora tanta strada da fare: proseguire l'esperienza ed elaborarla, dalla teorizzazione dell'esperienza tornare poi – arricchiti – all'esperienza stessa. È un percorso lungo ma anche, crediamo, l'unico modo serio per fare ricerca.

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Quel déploiement possible à la créativité du jeune enfant au travers de la formation permanente des adulte

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Présentation du F.R.A.J.E.

Introduction

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PRÉSENTATION DU F.R.A.J.E.

Le F.R.A.J.E. (Centre de Formation permanente et de Recherche dans les milieux d'Accueil du Jeune Enfant) est une a.s.b.l.¹ dont la mission consiste en la formation continuée des professionnels des milieux d'accueil (0 – 12 ans) d'une part et la recherche et création d'outils en matière d'enfance, d'autre part. Le F.R.A.J.E. a été créé en 1982 par la Commission française de la Culture (actuelle Commission communautaire française) de la Région de Bruxelles – Capitale.

Chaque année, le F.R.A.J.E. propose une session de séminaires-rencontres de l'enfance comprenant des conférences et/ou des journées d'études ainsi que des matinées - rencontres.

Enfin, le F.R.A.J.E. consacre beaucoup de temps à l'animation de groupes de travail à thèmes et à l'accompagnement des équipes dans leur travail sur le terrain.

INTRODUCTION

Le présent travail s'appuie sur l'expérience de formation permanente que nous menons au F.R.A.J.E., depuis une trentaine d'années auprès des professionnelles de l'enfance.

Nous envisagerons la question de l'espace laissé à la créativité et à l'imaginaire du jeune enfant dans les milieux d'accueil en faisant un détour par l'adulte avec lequel l'enfant est en relation : nous investiguerons comment les professionnelles de l'enfance déploient leur propre imaginaire et créativité et comment, dans les formations permanentes, nous travaillons en faveur de cet objectif.

En effet, notre **postulat de base est que pour favoriser le respect de la créativité et le déploiement de l'imaginaire de l'enfant, il est nécessaire qu'il puisse rencontrer, en regard de lui, des adultes qui aient leur propre imaginaire vivant.**

Après avoir situé le contexte de l'accueil de la petite enfance

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et de la formation permanente, nous aborderons comment nous tentons de sensibiliser les professionnelles à la créativité de l'enfant. Ensuite nous nous interrogerons sur la question des freins qui empêchent beaucoup de professionnelles à se laisser aller à suivre l'enfant dans son projet créatif. Enfin, nous proposerons deux axes de réflexion en vue de tenter de dépasser ces freins : en abordant, d'une part, la place offerte à la créativité et à l'imaginaire de l'adulte dans le cadre de la formation et d'autre part, en se tournant vers l'apport de l'art et la rencontre avec les artistes. Viendra enfin le temps des conclusions.

CONTEXTE : 30 ANS DE FORMATION PERMANENTE DES PROFESSIONNELLES DE L'ACCUEIL DE LA PETITE ENFANCE

Il y a une trentaine d'années, le F.R.A.J.E. a.s.b.l. était le 1^e organisme à offrir des formations aux professionnels de la petite enfance. Depuis, d'autres organismes élargissent l'offre.

On peut dire que le F.R.A.J.E. tient une place spécifique par rapport à d'autres organismes car d'une part, il est pionnier en la matière et donc, fort d'une expérience de plus de 30 ans ; d'autre part étant créé et subventionné par le Service de l'Enfance et de la Culture de la Région bruxelloise depuis 1975, l'on peut affirmer que toutes les formations s'ancrent dans cette double appartenance.

Les connaissances sur le développement de l'enfant évoluent de manière constante depuis une cinquantaine d'années, de même que l'intérêt des chercheurs pour le développement de l'enfant « gardé ».

Aussi, les milieux d'accueil ont été confrontés à une multitude de conceptions du bien-être de l'enfant accueilli ; chaque conception privilégiant certaines pratiques.

Lorsque le F.R.A.J.E. est né, le modèle « hygiéniste » était encore très dominant (l'enfant était avant tout considéré comme un « objet de soin ») même si l'intérêt pour le jeu de l'enfant commençait à poindre.

Les formatrices invitaient alors à envisager une approche de la puériculture davantage orientée vers la rencontre du bébé en tant que personne. Les représentations concernant les besoins et les compétences du tout-petit sont travaillées : le bébé est doué de compétences relationnelles et ses besoins primaires comprennent aussi le besoin de relation, de continuité et de jeu.

Cependant, sur le terrain, cette notion de « compétence relationnelle » était mal comprise et souvent confondue avec les « capacités d'apprentissage ». Dans les milieux d'accueil, au modèle « hygiéniste » succédait alors un modèle « préscolaire » : c'était l'ère des « gommettes, bricolages au coton-tige et coloriages » où l'on tenait la main de l'enfant pour lui faire faire son activité. Le résultat achevé était l'objectif des professionnelles.

Les formations du F.R.A.J.E. se devaient donc de mettre l'accent sur ce qui se passe pour l'enfant dans la relation autour de telle ou telle activité et sur le processus d'expérimentation, de découverte, de création, de réflexion ou encore d'expression de l'enfant. Nous prôtons l'observation comme outil privilégié pour permettre aux professionnelles d'appréhender, de se rendre compte du jeu de l'enfant. Les formations sont donc axées sur le savoir-être de la puéricultrice plutôt que sur le savoir-faire. Cependant, peu d'attention était portée aux émotions des professionnelles ; nous leur demandions d'être davantage dans la relation sans toutefois offrir une écoute suffisante à leur ressenti. Dès lors, beaucoup ont continué leur travail sur un modèle très opératoire², privilégiant le « faire » plutôt que « l'être ».

Fin des années 1980, « Loczy³ » est arrivé dans les milieux d'accueil apportant beaucoup d'éléments positifs : une continuité dans l'accueil du tout-petit favorisant une meilleure sécurité de base, une attention plus grande accordée au travail d'observation et une réflexion à propos de l'autonomie chez l'enfant.

2 Un « mode opératoire » consiste en la description détaillée des actions nécessaires à l'obtention d'un résultat. On parle aussi de *process* ou de *processus*. Le mode opératoire décrit généralement le déroulement détaillé des opérations effectuées sur un poste fixe, mais il peut également décrire l'enchaînement des opérations de poste à poste.

3 Le travail de la pouponnière E. Pickler (Hongrie) s'est fait connaître en Belgique sous l'appellation « méthode Loczy ».

Toutefois, si l'importance de la relation est davantage mise en évidence, il est proposé peu de choses (voire, rien) aux puéricultrices pour travailler ce qui se vit dans cette relation. De plus, elle sont soumises à une injonction paradoxale que l'on pourrait formuler comme : « attachez-vous aux enfants mais ne vous y attachez pas trop ». Message particulièrement culpabilisant pour les professionnelles car impossible à atteindre. L'approche pédagogique de l'institut E. Pikler, a souvent été intégrée par les milieux d'accueil telle une méthode de puériculture, contribuant à continuer d'envisager la rencontre et l'accueil avec les bébés sur un mode opératoire.

Il s'agissait dès lors pour nous, à ce moment, de s'intéresser aux émotions des professionnelles, que ce soit lors de conférences ou dans les groupes de travail.

Un autre élément du paysage de l'accueil du tout-petit est l'apparition, en 2000, du « code de qualité de l'accueil⁴ ». Ce décret invitait les milieux d'accueil à présenter au travers de leur projet comment ils rencontraient les points incontournables du code (respect, bien-être, rythme, autonomie) et comment ils se définissaient plus singulièrement par rapport à un point particulier du code en regard duquel ils pouvaient présenter leur originalité. Depuis, le code de qualité a été reformulé et tous les milieux d'accueil doivent se conformer aux articles de celui-ci ; il n'y a pas autant d'espace de liberté, dans cette seconde version, pour définir ce qui fait l'originalité de chacun. Chaque milieu d'accueil (0 – 12 ans), doit donc prouver auprès de l'O.N.E⁵, au moyen d'un projet d'accueil, qu'il rencontre bien les objectifs du code⁶. La question de la créativité n'est pas évoquée telle quelle dans le code ; on n'y parle pas non plus de culture, ni d'art. Les objectifs du code reposent sur des connaissances scientifiques relatives au développement de l'enfant. Toutefois on peut pointer que « le

4 Code de qualité de l'accueil : décret (17.12.2003) de la Communauté française de Belgique.

5 O.N.E. Office de la naissance et de l'Enfance en Communauté française de Belgique.

6 Les objectifs du code de qualité concernent des principes psychopédagogiques, l'organisation des activités et de la santé, l'accessibilité, l'encadrement, les relations entre le milieu d'accueil avec les personnes qui confient l'enfant et avec l'environnement.

milieu d'accueil préserve et encourage le désir de découvrir de l'enfant en organisant des espaces de vie adaptés à ses besoins, en mettant à sa disposition du matériel et en lui donnant accès à des activités, le cas échéant, diversifiées » (art. 2) ou encore, « le milieu d'accueil permet à l'enfant de s'exprimer personnellement et spontanément et favorise le développement de la confiance en soi et de l'autonomie » (art. 4) ou encore « le milieu d'accueil veille, dans l'organisation des activités, à faire place à l'initiative de chacun des enfants et à préserver la notion de temps libre, ... » (art. 7).

Nous pensons pouvoir dire que beaucoup d'équipes perçoivent le code de qualité comme une manière d'uniformiser les pratiques. Sans doute faudra-t-il attendre quelques années encore pour que les équipes puissent l'utiliser comme une base d'appui, un cadre dans lequel il est possible d'inventer plutôt que comme une contrainte qui tend à l'uniformisation. Des formations continuées sont proposées dans ce sens.

En 2000, se déroulait également, au sein de quelques crèches, une expérience nouvelle : des comédiens venaient y faire du théâtre. En effet, une compagnie (Le Théâtre de la Guimbarde) crée le premier spectacle pour les tout-petits, en Belgique. En 2001, le Ministre de l'Enfance décide d'encourager cette initiative en octroyant une première subvention. C'est en 2005 que l'éveil artistique est inscrit officiellement comme l'une des missions que l'O.N.E. devra soutenir. Pratiquement, cela se traduit par une subvention pour quatre compagnies de théâtre⁷. Actuellement (2008), les milieux d'accueil peuvent faire la demande auprès de l'O.N.E. pour faire venir une de ces compagnies et cela, à un coût réduit au 1/4 du prix puisque la subvention prend en charge la différence. Notons cependant que cette intervention concerne uniquement la prestation artistique ; rien n'existe encore pour les temps de l'avant spectacle ni de l'après spectacle qui sont eux aussi importants pour qu'une telle expérience prenne sens dans la vie d'une collectivité.

Enfin, le dernier élément du contexte que nous désirons souligner est celui de notre société actuelle, société très axée sur le

rentable, l'utilitaire et le compétitif. Les milieux d'accueil (crèche, halte-garderie,...) deviennent une des dernières « poche sociale » où d'autres valeurs peuvent exister (gratuité du jeu, respect du rythme,...). D'où, la difficulté de maintenir ces valeurs au sein de ces structures.

FORMATION PERMANENTE, CRÉATIVITÉ ET ART

Sensibiliser les professionnelles à la créativité de l'enfant

Dans les formations, nous tentons de sensibiliser les professionnelles de l'enfance au monde sensoriel du tout-petit et à la construction de son imaginaire ; avec, en toile de fond, les principes suivants :

- respecter le tout-petit dans sa façon propre d'appréhender le monde au travers de ses sens, de ses émotions, de sa pensée ;
- respecter sa culture, son appartenance afin de favoriser son sentiment de « continuité d'être⁸ » ;
- s'intéresser aux processus que l'enfant met en place dans sa découverte d'une activité plutôt qu'au résultat produit ;
- envisager l'enfant dans sa globalité : nous nous positionnons à l'opposé d'une approche pédagogique qui viserait à stimuler l'enfant dans le développement d'une de ses compétences (exemple : stimuler le langage en le faisant chanter, stimuler sa motricité fine en le faisant colorier,...) ;
- dénoncer toute forme d'activisme : le but n'étant pas d'animer l'enfant ou de le rendre performant mais plutôt de partir de la relation et de ce qui intéresse le bébé d'une part, et d'autre part de ce que l'adulte a envie de partager avec lui, de ce qu'il veut lui transmettre. Ainsi, nous pensons que la musique, la lecture, les manipulations plastiques,... ne sont pas à envisager comme des « activités pédagogiques » mais comme des expériences et des découvertes qui s'opèrent dans la rencontre et prennent sens pour l'enfant, dans sa relation à l'autre.

Concrètement, voici en vignettes, quelques expériences de formation permanente qui illustrent comment nous avons tenté de sensibiliser les professionnelles de l'enfance à la créativité du tout-petit.

La ludocrèche

Une réflexion théorique sur l'importance du jeu dans le développement de l'enfant a amené l'équipe à réfléchir sur un matériel ludique à mettre à la disposition de l'enfant. Celui-ci devait répondre à deux exigences : être peu coûteux et solliciter au maximum l'esprit d'invention et de création de l'enfant. La réponse se trouvait dans l'utilisation d'objets sans destination précise tels des gants de toilette tactiles, des pots de yaourt, des seaux, des déguisements, des livres sensoriels, des briques faites avec des « tetra-pack », une poupée grandeur nature en tissu, des bacs à maïs ... Voici ce qui constituait la « ludocrèche » créée en 1981 et qui « circulait » dans les crèches qui en faisaient la demande. Une brochure « Et si on jouait ?... » reprend les activités et jeux proposés dans la ludocrèche.

Le ludomoteur

Début 1990, le F.R.A.J.E. a mis au point le « ludomoteur ». Il s'agit d'une structure de jeu construite à partir d'un matériel de récupération et qui porte particulièrement l'accent sur la sensorialité du jeune enfant (gants de toilette remplis de matières différentes amenant des sensations tactiles, auditives, olfactives, kinesthésiques différentes) et sur sa motricité globale (chambres à air de camion, tracteur, vélo... que l'on pouvait assembler dans des montages divers et variés avec des sangles de couleurs vives, ainsi que des bassines dans lesquelles les enfants pouvaient se mettre ou y mettre des objets). Le « ludomoteur » était itinérant et entièrement modulable ce qui permettait aux différents milieux d'accueil de l'installer pour quelques semaines dans la salle de jeux des enfants quelles que soient sa taille et son architecture.

Les vignettes suivantes illustrent comment deux équipes ont pu mettre en synergie formation, art et projet pour aboutir à des réalisations concrètes qui offrent un espace à l'imaginaire, la découverte et la créativité des tout-petits : d'une part, une personne de l'équipe a participé à un ou plusieurs groupes de travail du F.R.A.J.E. D'autre part, une autre personne de l'équipe collabore à un atelier proposé par le Théâtre de la Guimbarde.

Enfin, l'équipe rassemble les apports des unes et des autres et les relie à leur projet...

La formation permanente des professeurs d'une école de puériculture

Dernièrement une école bruxelloise¹ a reçu le prix de l'innovation en éducation décerné par l'a.s.b.l. « SCHOLA » de l'U.L.B². pour leur projet « Théâtre destiné aux moins de 3 ans³ ».

Une professeure de pratique professionnelle de cette école avait participé à un groupe de travail du FRAJE qui traitait de l'importance à accorder à l'éveil des sens du tout-petit, notamment au travers de la musique, de la lecture,... Elle a ramené ses réflexions au sein de l'école. De fil en aiguille, l'école a collaboré avec le Théâtre de la Guimbarde pour un projet théâtral où les élèves ont travaillé à la conception et à la réalisation d'un spectacle destiné aux tout petits, spectacle qui a donc reçu le prix. Cette expérience a donné la possibilité aux élèves de toucher à leur sensibilité, dans un cadre donné.

Ensuite, elles se sont lancées dans un projet de sensibilisation de l'enfant à la peinture avec une crèche qui était très partie prenante de ce projet et qui y déléguait une puéricultrice systématiquement mobilisée par cette activité. Des documents vidéos (une formation donnée par un spécialiste leur était procurée) sont réalisés sur ces ateliers. Ils servent de base à une conférence faite par les stagiaires pour informer leurs parents du travail réalisé.

Les professeurs de cette école trouvent ce travail par « projet culturel » très positif pour « rehausser » l'image que les élèves ont d'elles-mêmes.

Expérience d'une équipe évoquée par Annick Donnay lors d'une conférence à notre journée d'étude : « La culture au pays des curieux ».

Une puéricultrice d'une crèche d'Arlon a participé à un groupe de travail sur « Jeu et construction de soi » au F.R.A.J.E. Une autre puéricultrice de cette même crèche a suivi une formation « Terre » organisée par le théâtre de la Guimbarde. Ensemble, elles ont ramené leurs réflexions dans leur crèche et concrètement, elles ont réalisé :

- un espace pensé différemment pour des ateliers-matières (espace bien délimité, vide, sans table ni chaises ...) ;
- un espace-temps (durée de +/- 1 heure) et qui comprend un aménagement non bâclé de la fin de l'activité considérée comme une activité en soi (se laver les mains, les pieds, les enfants étant en body et pieds nus) ;
- un cadre non-interventionniste où l'adulte est disponible mais « non-incitant », qui est en retrait mais observateur de la libre expression de la créativité de l'enfant qui peut s'épanouir dans ce cadre bien délimité, l'adulte n'attendant aucune production finale.

Les freins

Malgré une série d'expériences très porteuses pour sensibiliser les professionnelles à la créativité et l'imaginaire du tout-petit, nous devons reconnaître qu'à l'heure actuelle, un énorme travail reste à faire. En effet, nous constatons encore beaucoup de signes qui, selon nous, sont des freins à la possibilité d'offrir aux enfants de déployer leur imaginaire et leur créativité ; ces signes étant eux-même les témoins des difficultés qu'ont les professionnelles à déployer leur propre imaginaire.

De quoi s'agit-il ? Nous constatons que, dans de nombreux milieux d'accueil :

- les puéricultrices continuent de proposer aux enfants de faire un « bricolage » pour les fêtes (Halloween, Noël, fête des mères, des pères,...). Si dans la réalisation du bricolage, une plus grande part est laissée à l'enfant, nous sommes toutefois, encore et toujours, dans la logique de « faire une activité » où le résultat final prime sur le processus ;
- il est plus souvent proposé aux enfants de « faire un coloriage » plutôt que de déployer des grandes feuilles vierges où l'enfant pourrait laisser des traces en tout genre. Le coloriage se fait assis à une table, sur une petite feuille (A4) ;
- si la pâte à modeler est proposée, c'est le plus souvent en petite quantité et sur une table ;
- l'intérêt pour la rêverie est peu présent dans les milieux d'accueil ; il est souvent confondu avec l'oisiveté, la paresse ou le repli sur soi ;

- dans le même ordre d'idée, les professionnelles percevront plus facilement le sens de leur travail auprès des enfants dans tout ce qui concerne la production, la préparation à... (à la propreté, à l'école,...) plutôt que dans l'importance de la gratuité du jeu ;
- lorsque un milieu d'accueil ouvre ses portes à un artiste, cela ne prend pas toujours sens par rapport aux réflexions de l'équipe sur leur projet d'accueil ; c'est plus souvent dans le but de se divertir, de « casser la routine » : une fois l'artiste parti, rien ne prend le relais, seuls restent les souvenirs.

Toutefois, des avancées existent aussi :

- Dans les formations permanentes, nous voyons de plus en plus souvent des professionnelles qui ont de bonnes connaissances de base concernant le développement de l'enfant ; dès lors, leur interrogations portent moins sur le « comment faire » mais davantage sur le « comment être ».
- De plus en plus de milieux d'accueil collaborent avec des organismes proposant un éveil musical, avec des bibliothèques publiques ...

Nous nous interrogeons sur les raisons qui expliqueraient que les professionnelles rencontrent tant de résistances à déployer leur imaginaire et sont aussi en difficulté pour offrir un espace à l'imaginaire et la créativité du tout-petit.

Nous pensons d'abord à leur formation initiale... : l'enseignement professionnel est un type d'enseignement axé sur le savoir-faire où l'imaginaire et la pensée de l'élève sont peu sollicités. Plus globalement, l'enseignement est encore très orienté vers la production des élèves, tous « fondus dans le même moule » et cela dès la première maternelle. Objectif atteint par le biais de modèles à reproduire, d'exercices à refaire, de l'emploi de marches à suivre identiques pour tous ... on enseigne peu la critique et encore moins l'esthétique, l'art du beau, l'expression corporelle, artistique, théâtrale... On brigue l'émotion, on la contrôle, on l'exprime rarement.

Ensuite, on peut aussi se dire, qu'un modèle opératoire de la puériculture, a quelque chose de plus rassurant pour l'adulte car il demande une moins grande implication émotionnelle.

L'impression de contrôler d'avantage la relation avec le tout-petit (en proposant des activités qui ne sont pas nécessairement le projet ou le désir de l'enfant) permet de ne pas se sentir débordée sur le plan émotionnel.

Enfin, notons également que certains milieux d'accueil manquent cruellement de personnel, ce qui amène à être dans un travail « à la chaîne » et laisse peu de place à la relation et le partage d'expériences. De plus, énormément de professionnelles témoignent de leur peur d'être jugées par leurs collègues, par leur direction ou par les parents si elles s'engagent dans la relation avec le tout-petit autour de découvertes telles que la musique , la lecture ...

Propositions pour dépasser les freins

1. PRENDRE EN COMPTE LES ÉMOTIONS DES PROFESSIONNELLES

Jusqu'il y a quelques années, dans nos formations, tout en suggérant l'importance de la relation et du jeu, nous continuions à garder le discours « être professionnelle, c'est laisser ses émotions au vestiaire », exprimant par là une représentation largement partagée dans le secteur, admettant que le professionnalisme nécessitait la mise à distance des émotions.

La souffrance psychique qui est apparue très vite chez bon nombre de puéricultrices lorsqu'il leur a été demandé de travailler selon la « méthode Loczy » est probablement l'élément déclencheur qui a permis à l'équipe du F.R.A.J.E. d'envisager la question des émotions des professionnelles différemment.

Ainsi maintenant, nous tentons d'offrir, au travers des formations, un cadre où il est possible de déposer ses émotions en jeu dans le lien professionnel, de leur trouver du sens, de les élaborer, les transformer, de leur offrir des moyens de les sublimer. En effet, les émotions sont les outils principaux des puéricultrices pour être en accordage avec les tout-petits, décoder leurs besoins, répondre à leur désir de grandir et il nous semble primordial d'en prendre soin.

2. DÉPLOYER LA CRÉATIVITÉ DE L'ADULTE

A l'image de ces poupées russes qui s'emboîtent les unes dans les autres, nous pensons que pour pouvoir accueillir la créativité de l'enfant sans la brimer, il faut avoir pu exprimer la sienne propre sans avoir été confronté(e) à des jugements de valeur.

Certaines personnes se révèlent spontanément très créatives, d'autres ont besoin de remettre en mouvement leur imaginaire, leur pensée.

Comment mettre en mouvement l'imaginaire des participantes ?

Nous avons progressivement envisagé l'animation de nos groupes de travail⁹ différemment. Si de tout temps, la formation a pris appui sur les questions et réflexions des participantes, ce qui s'est transformé c'est que d'une position « d'expert » qui transmettait son savoir aux « formés », nous donnons maintenant plus de place aux échanges entre les participantes et les formatrices à propos des thématiques abordées ; ce sont des formations plus ouvertes à l'altérité.

Nous envisageons les formations comme un espace – temps où l'on construira ensemble une réflexion et une expérience commune. L'espace de formation, est à envisager de la même manière que « l'espace potentiel » définit par D. W. WINNICOTT¹⁰ : des questions et axes de travail sont définis en début de groupe, ensuite, nous construisons ensemble une réflexion, nous créons et inventons ensemble des réponses aux situations amenées par les participantes ; ces réponses ne sont pas que le fruit de notre apport, ce n'est pas non plus uniquement le fruit de l'apport des participants mais c'est ce que nous avons pu mettre en commun, partager et inventer ensemble. En tant que formatrices, nous veillons à offrir, au fil des séances, des « contenants de pensée¹¹ » où la réflexion commune peut se construire.

9 Nous proposons chaque année une trentaine de groupes de travail de 24 ou 36h réparties en plusieurs journées, sur plusieurs semaines ; ce sont des groupes à thèmes: la relation entre parents et professionnelles, la relation dans l'alimentation, le jeu, la découverte du monde, la vie émotionnelle du bébé,

10 Winnicott Jeu et réalité

11 Contenant de pensée : Gibello

Cette approche de la formation permet de donner davantage de place à la créativité des participantes pour avancer dans leurs réflexions, pour inventer des solutions aux problématiques rencontrées. Nous concevons donc les formations davantage comme un espace créatif où elles pourront déployer leur pensée sans peur d'être jugées ; où l'imaginaire des unes s'enrichira de la rencontre avec l'imaginaire des autres.

Pour parvenir à ce type de travail, un certain nombre de conditions sont à respecter :

- bien définir les règles de fonctionnement du groupe (respect de la parole de l'autre, écoute de l'autre, non - jugement, présence à toutes les séances...) ;
- garantir le respect du cadre ainsi défini ;
- animer à deux formateurs(trices), l'une veillant plus au « contenant de pensée », l'autre apportant du « contenu » (au même titre que les autres participantes) ;
- identifier les émotions déposées dans le groupe et offrir un contenant adapté pour sublimer celles-ci, mettre du sens et permettre à la pensée de continuer de circuler ;
- prodiguer des renforcements positifs (soutien à la professionnalisation) ;
- « partir de là où les participantes se situent dans leur réflexion »,
- proposer des jeux, exercices, supports permettant la mise en mouvement de l'imaginaire des participantes : ex. créer des dictons en rapport avec le sujet travaillé, inventer des haïkus ... Cela oblige à synthétiser en une phrase ou une métaphore un ensemble d'idées, de vécus, d'émotions, de réflexions véhiculés par les participantes en s'octroyant un degré de liberté variable selon sa sensibilité et sa capacité à symboliser ;
- favoriser des consignes claires où les limites de l'exercice sont perceptibles : ex. demander aux participantes de créer un haïku –et non une poésie- dont la structure est intrinsèquement limitée (3 vers dont 1 court, 1 long, 1 court). C'est bien cette limitation qui permet à la créativité de se mettre en mouvement ;
- en tant que formatrices, nourrir notre propre imaginaire, garder notre pensée en mouvement, travailler notre capacité

- à contenir les affects du groupe ;
- s'octroyer du temps .

Dans ce cadre, notre rôle est de récolter les réflexions, impressions brutes, vécus, expériences et de leur donner une forme « pensable ». Cela est également rendu possible grâce à la périodicité des séances, donnant du temps pour que la réflexion puisse s'élaborer.

3. RENCONTRER L'ART ET LES ARTISTES

Dans les milieux d'accueil

L'artiste n'est pas un animateur ; l'artiste est un passeur. Il transmet sa poésie, met en scène des petites tranches de vie qui font écho au ressenti et aux premières représentations du bébé. L'artiste va à la rencontre de l'autre – aussi petit soit-il.

En tant que professionnelle de la petite enfance, la rencontre avec des artistes est souvent une belle occasion pour (re)donner plus de place, dans le métier, au relationnel ; d'être moins « fonctionnelle ». La rencontre avec un artiste, son œuvre, permet de toucher à sa propre sensibilité, à se laisser émouvoir par une émotion partagée, par un enfant.

Pour que la rencontre se passe, pour éviter d'entrer dans une logique de consommation (de l'art) ou d'activisme (de l'enfant), il nous semble important de veiller au respect de quelques principes :

- *la relation*

Il importe de considérer la rencontre entre artiste(s) et bébé(s) en considérant le tout-petit dans la relation à ses parents et/ou aux puéricultrices. En effet, le tout-petit trouve sa base de sécurité dans la relation à ses partenaires privilégiés. Dès lors, lorsque spectacle il y a, il est important que cela soit en présence d'un adulte sécurisant, bien connu de l'enfant, qui soit disponible tant physiquement que psychologiquement.

Ce sont les parents qui sont les premiers à transmettre la culture, leur culture. La démarche des professionnels de l'enfance et des

artistes ne peut s'envisager autrement que dans la reconnaissance et le respect de ce « nid culturel » dans lequel le bébé naît au monde.

- *le respect de la singularité du bébé*

On le sent bien, dès l'instant où l'art s'adresse aux tout-petits, il est primordial de prendre en considération la spécificité de « ce public ». De considérer la capacité qu'a (ou n'a pas encore) le jeune enfant de transformer (sur le plan émotionnel, symbolique) ce qui est reçu, pour le faire sien. Quelle possibilité le tout-petit a-t-il d'agir sur ce qui lui est offert et ainsi découvrir de nouvelles représentations et les accommoder à sa pensée naissante ?

Il s'agit également qu'il lui soit marqué du respect en lui proposant un spectacle, une œuvre,... riche et accessible. C'est là, véritablement, une question d'éthique. Les spectacles racoleurs ou évoquant un contenu angoissant ne peuvent que susciter de la fascination et/ou de la sidération chez le jeune enfant ; le comédien, son jeu de scène, la mise en scène du spectacle se doivent d'être authentiques et non séducteurs vis-à-vis de l'enfant et de l'adulte qui l'accompagne.

- *penser l'avant et l'après rencontre*

Respecter le tout-petit dans ce qui le singularise demande également de préparer cette rencontre, de la prolonger, de manière à ce que les artistes ne déboulent pas de façon fugace dans la vie du jeune enfant mais que leur rencontre puisse s'inscrire dans une continuité d'être.

Dès lors que ces « balises » sont rencontrées, il nous semble que le travail des artistes à la crèche peut se déployer, que tout est en place pour que l'expérience soit riche pour tous : enfant, puéricultrice, parents, artiste, et prendre du sens pour chacun.

En formation permanente

La collaboration avec des artistes existe depuis longtemps au F.R.A.J.E. : au départ, essentiellement, au travers de la musique et de la lecture aux tout-petits. Des **groupes de travail** étaient proposés (il en existe toujours même si le contenu s'est transformé) aux professionnelles de l'enfance en collaboration avec les « Jeunesses musicales¹² », ou encore avec les conteuses de la « Ligue des Familles¹³ ». Actuellement, nous continuons de collaborer avec des artistes pour l'animation de groupes de travail..

Quand la porte des milieux d'accueil s'ouvrent aux artistes
En 2006, nous avons créé, en collaboration avec Charlotte Fallon (metteur en scène au Théâtre de la Guimbarde) un nouveau groupe de travail intitulé « Quand la porte des milieux d'accueil s'ouvre aux artistes ». Ce groupe a la particularité de réunir des professionnelles de la petite enfance et des artistes. L'animation étant portée par une artiste et une psychologue, cela favorise les échanges, permet de croiser les regards sur des questions telles que : Quel sens à proposer la rencontre avec des artistes dans les crèches ? A quoi doit-on veiller pour que cette rencontre se passe dans le respect des différents partenaires ? C'est quoi l'art, la culture, la créativité ? Qu'est-ce qui est beau ? C'est quoi une émotion esthétique ? Le bébé peut-il ressentir cela ?... Les réalités des uns et des autres peuvent s'envisager dans la réciprocité. Les participants en ressortent avec des représentations plus larges.

D'autre part, nos **journées d'études**, ont la plupart du temps été conçues en proposant une alternance entre des conférenciers et des artistes.

Ces différentes places laissées aux artistes vont de l'accueil d'un(e) musicien(ne), d'une conteuse, d'un magicien, de comédiens de l'improvisation ... à l'accueil d'une exposition de photos ou autre matériau en rapport avec l'objet de la journée d'étude.

12 Jeunesses musicales du Brabant Wallon : opérateur culturel à destination des jeunes. Font la promotion de l'éveil, l'initiation et l'écoute de toutes les musiques auprès des jeunes.

13 Ligue des Familles : mouvement pluraliste réunissant les familles.

Ces moments constituent des pauses incontournables lors de tout travail intellectuel. Ils permettent des moments de rêverie indispensables à l'intégration de nouveaux savoirs. Mais ils permettent surtout de mettre « son esprit, son raisonnement » au repos et de se laisser aller à écouter son corps, ses émotions, à être en contact avec soi-même, avec son monde interne. Expérience que l'on ne peut faire que si l'on s'en donne le temps ; ce temps est gratuit, n'est destiné qu'au plaisir et, ici, il leur est proposé dans un moment de formation !

En rencontrant l'imaginaire de l'artiste, les participants se sentent, en quelque sorte, autorisés à déployer leur propre imaginaire, à relier leur raisonnement à leurs émotions.

Depuis 2005, nous allons encore plus loin dans notre démarche en ce sens que nous programmions dans notre cycle de séminaires - rencontres un **spectacle** à part entière.

L'idée qui se glisse derrière ce projet est que l'art est avant tout une question de rencontre et de transmission. Dès lors que nous programmions l'art et la culture comme thèmes de groupes de travail, nous ne voulions pas risquer de trop intellectualiser ces questions. De plus, notre public des groupes de travail ne prend pas souvent « le risque » de se rendre au théâtre, au spectacle, au musée ; comme si ces lieux étaient réservés à un autre public qu'elles. Dès lors, nous avons tout de suite senti la nécessité de partager avec elles un temps à part entière autour de l'œuvre d'un(e) artiste : les inviter et avoir la possibilité de « vibrer » ensemble au son d'une musique, aux paroles d'un conteur,...

Une autre manière, pour nous, de donner une place à l'art dans la formation permanente, est d'utiliser un large éventail de supports artistiques lors de l'animation de nos formations (livres de littérature jeunesse, reproductions picturales,...), pour découvrir, ouvrir son champ de représentations mentales et amener une approche sensible sur un sujet.

Enfin, en 2007 nous avons édité un **album** illustré : « Un bébé, un livre, une voix » en collaboration avec les éditions « Grandir » (Nîmes). Ce livre est le fruit d'une création commune entre formatrices

(Isabelle Gillieaux, Isabelle Chavepeyer), participantes au groupe de travail « Les livres sans dessus dessous » et photographe (Pascalia Papadimitriou). Ce livre s'adresse aux adultes ; il évoque la relation autour du livre avec le tout-petit ceci sous la forme d'un album illustré qui n'est ni un livre théorique, ni une fiction mais un concept qui tente de rassembler en une seule œuvre, pensées et émotions.

Mettre en contact les professionnelles de l'enfance avec les artistes et/ou leur oeuvre leur permet de découvrir ou de redécouvrir cette plongée au cœur de nos émotions, ce plaisir de partager son ressenti, ce temps suspendu où l'autre nous entraîne dans son imaginaire, dans sa vision de la réalité.

CONCLUSION

En conclusion, nous sommes persuadées que le soutien au déploiement de la créativité de l'enfant passe par la capacité de l'adulte de mettre en mouvement sa propre capacité de rêverie, de garder sa pensée vivante, c'est à dire reliée aux affects et au symbolique.

Dans ce sens, nous continuons de réfléchir à comment offrir aux adultes, dans nos différentes actions de formation, un espace pour cela.

Nous faisons le pari, qu'ayant pu expérimenter ce que l'on invente dans cet espace, les participantes ouvriront à leur tour des espaces de créativité aux enfants sur ce mode de l'ouverture d'un espace potentiel.

Nous réfléchissons également à la façon de soutenir la sensibilité des professionnelles par le biais de l'art et de la collaboration avec des artistes. Il y a donc un intérêt certain de concilier art et formation permanente pour une nouvelle approche de la créativité de l'adulte et de l'enfant.

Selon nous, c'est une richesse de croiser nos regards et nos expériences entre psy et artistes dans nos formations pour dévoiler sa sensibilité dans un cadre suffisamment sécuritaire.

Actuellement, la crèche est encore essentiellement pensée comme un lieu de garde et un lieu de soin pour l'enfant même si on lui reconnaît un rôle de socialisation de celui-ci. Mais, lorsqu'elle fonctionne en vase clos, la crèche se retrouve aussi être un lieu d'acculturation. Dès lors, il nous semble important que les artistes prennent une place dans les milieux d'accueil.

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(Footnotes)

- 1 Ecole De Mot - Couvreur
- 2 Université Libre de Bruxelles
- 3 Projet soutenu dès son démarrage par la Cocof dans le cadre du programme « Anim'action et projets d'écoles »

DEMANDEUR : THEATRE DE LA GUIMBARDE

OBJET : *ETUDE COMPARATIVE DU MILIEU D'ACCUEIL DES TOUT-PETITS (ZERO à TROIS ans) AU NIVEAU EUROPEEN*

DEMANDE : Données statistiques au niveau belge relatives à :

1°) Nombre de crèches privées et publiques dans les régions urbaines et rurales.

-859 maisons d'accueil de type collectif (crèches, préguardiennats, maisons communales d'accueil de l'enfant et maison d'enfants) en 2006

-3.332 accueillantes d'enfants à domicile (maisons d'accueil de type familial) en 2006.

2°) Nombre de puéricultrices pour les 0-3 ans.

-3.649 puéricultrices et assimilées (personnel de puériculture), dans les maisons d'accueil de type collectives, en 2005, lesquelles prestaient à concurrence de 2.824 temps pleins.

3°) Type de formations données aux professionnels du 0-3 ans.

-Personnel social: Assistant(e) social(e), infirmier(ère) gradué(e) social(e), infirmier(ère) gradué(e) spécialisée en santé communautaire

-Personnel infirmier: infirmier(ère) gradué(e), infirmier(ère) gradué(e) social(e), infirmier(ère) gradué(e) spécialisée en santé Communautaire

-Personnel en puériculture: puériculteur(trice), aspirant(e) en nursing, agent d'éducation, éducateur(trice), auxiliaire de l'enfance (promotion sociale), éducateur(trice) spécialisé(e) (enseignement secondaire supérieur).

4°) Normes d'encadrement

- 1 temps-plein pour 7 enfants dans les crèches.
- 1 temps-plein pour 9 enfants dans les préguardiennats.
- 2 temps plein pour neuf enfants, dans les maisons d'accueil+1 mi-temps par tranche de 3 enfants.

5°) Espace alloué :

Dans les structures d'accueil, chaque place d'accueil dispose d'une surface intérieure minimale de 6 m²: 4 m² pour l'espace d'activités intérieures et les repas, 2 m² minimum pour l'espace sommeil-repos.

6°) Budget alloué aux

- équipements d'ameublement: tables, chaises, fauteuils, coussins, tapis
- jeux de psychomotricité globale
- jeux de manipulation plus fine

Les crèches communales reçoivent une enveloppe globale pour le matériel didactique de quatre mille euros par ans, ainsi qu'une enveloppe de quatre mille euros pour les formations.

Les crèches privées ne reçoivent aucun subside d'état pour ce type de dépenses, mais y consacrent en moyenne, sur fond propre, 3500 euros par an.

7°) Donner des exemples pour chacune des catégories : type de jeux, et d'équipements.

- équipements d'ameublement: tables, chaises, fauteuils, coussins, tapis
- jeux de psychomotricité globale: objets assez gros mettant tout le corps en mouvement: toboggans, tubes, structures permettant de grimper, glisser, se cacher en-dessous.
- jeux de psychomotricité plus fine, jeux de manipulation servant à secouer, encastrier, empiler, remplir, vider, mettre dedans: hochets, cubes, puzzles

8°) Donner des exemples des types d'activités d'apprentissage, éducationnelles et créatives pratiquées en crèche.

Une loi est passée au moniteur belge en 2004, pour que les milieux d'accueil ne soient plus considérés comme des lieux de gardiennage. Chaque structure d'accueil s'est vue dans l'obligation de travailler à un projet d'accueil, d'après des critères définis par un « code de qualité de l'accueil » et ce en vue de l'obtention de l'attestation de qualité. Ce projet d'accueil est subdivisé en différents chapitres: le chapitre enfant, le chapitre, personnel encadrant et le chapitre parent.

-Chapitre enfant: reconnaître l'enfant comme sujet, travailler dans le respect de l'autonomie et du rythme des enfants, ne pas obliger les enfants à manger et dormir quand l'adulte le veut par exemple. Toute la difficulté résidant dans le fait de trouver un juste équilibre entre le respect de la collectivité, du groupe et le respect de l'individu. Aménager des espaces pour que l'enfant ait accès à une forme d'exploration libre, non-dirigée mais structurée. Mener des activités de groupes semi-directives: chants, histoires, rondes, sans obliger les enfants à y participer. Proposer des activités plus dirigées d'exploration sensorielle, à base de matières: eau, argile, peinture-, sans objectif de représentation...

-Chapitre personnel encadrant: reconnaître la puéricultrice comme professionnelle qui a besoin de se former, la reconnaître comme sujet dans sa relation à l'enfant et aux parents...

-Chapitre parents: Pour éviter de développer une dichotomie chez l'enfant, une rupture entre ses deux milieux principaux de vie, le milieu d'accueil et le milieu familial; créer des espaces de rencontres avec les parents, et les considérer comme partenaires actifs.

Predšolska vzgoja v Sloveniji

Predšolska vzgoja v Sloveniji poteka za otroke od prvega leta starosti do starosti 6 let, pri kateri so otroci vključeni v obvezno devetletno osnovnošolsko izobraževanje. Predšolska vzgoja ni obvezna, namenjena je kot pomoč staršem pri celoviti skrbi za otroke, kot možnost izboljšanja kakovosti življenja družin in otrok ter kot priložnost za ustvarjanje možnosti za otrokov celostni razvoj. Predšolsko vzgojo izvajajo javni in zasebni vrtci. Prvi uresničujejo javno veljavni program, imenovan *Kurikulum za vrtce*, medtem ko program zasebnega vrtca določi ustanovitelj vrtca na podlagi 13. člena Zakona o vrtcih, pri čemer pa se lahko odloči tudi za program javnih vrtcev. Pred začetkom uresničevanja programa mora zasebni vrtec pridobiti pozitivno mnenje Strokovnega sveta RS za splošno izobraževanje. Zasebni vrtci, ki izvajajo program po posebnih pedagoških načelih (Steiner, Decroly, Montessori ipd.), dobijo dovoljenje za izvajanje programa, če program priznava tudi ustrezno mednarodno združenje. Zasebnim vrtcem lahko občina podeli koncesijo v primeru, ko izvajajo enak program kot javni vrtci. Višina plačil staršev za vrtec je določena glede na višino dohodka na družinskega člana, odvisna pa je tudi od vrste izbranega programa vrtca (vir 3).

Starši se lahko sami odločijo, ali bodo otroka vpisali v zasebni ali v javni vrtec. Pri izbiri vrtca niso vezani na vrtec v občini stalnega oziroma začasnega prebivališča, ampak lahko izberejo katerikoli vrtec v katerikoli občini. Izbirajo lahko tudi med različnimi programi, ki jih izvaja vrtec. Programi v vrtcih se razlikujejo glede na trajanje in organizacijo. *Dnevni in poldnevni program* sta namenjena otrokom od 1. leta starosti do vstopa v šolo in obsegata vzgojo, varstvo in prehrano otrok. Potekata lahko dopoldne, popoldne ali izmenično, prvi 6 – 9 ur, drugi pa 4 – 6 ur. *Krajši program* traja od 240

- 600 ur na leto. Namenjen je otrokom iz odročnih in demografsko ogroženih krajev in sicer od 3. leta starosti do vstopa v šolo, obsega pa vzgojo in varstvo, lahko pa tudi prehrano otrok. *Vzgojno-varstvena družina* je oblika vzgoje in varstva, ki poteka na domu in jo lahko opravlja vzgojitelj ali pomočnik vzgojitelja, ki je zaposlen v vrtcu, ali zasebni vzgojitelj. Pogoja, ki morata biti izpolnjena za organiziranje vzgojno-varstvene družine, pa sta potreba in interes staršev ter premajhno število prostih mest v javnem vrtcu. Četrta oblika je *Občasno varovanje otrok na domu*. Gre za posebno obliko storitve, ki se pri nas šele uveljavlja, ponujajo pa jo različne gospodarske organizacije in društva. Novi zakon vrtcem odslej omogoča izvajanje tudi te oblike vzgoje, opravljajo pa ga lahko vzgojitelji, pomočniki vzgojiteljev in svetovalni delavci, pa tudi zunanji sodelavci, vendar zakon določa, da morajo imeti najmanj srednjo izobrazbo ali pet let izkušenj v vzgojno-izobraževalnem delu. Opisano storitev v celoti plačajo starši (vir 3). Izjemoma lahko za otroke, ki zaradi bolezni ne morejo biti vključeni v vrtec, ta organizira tudi *Predšolsko vzgojo na domu* (vir 2).

Kurikulum za vrtce

Kurikulum za vrtce je nacionalni dokument, ki s svojimi cilji in načeli izvedbe omogoča strokovno načrtovanje in kakovostno predšolsko vzgojo v vrtcu. Njegov pomen je širši od pojma program in predstavlja premik od tradicionalnega poudarka na vsebinah k poudarku na procesu predšolske vzgoje, na celoto interakcij in izkušenj, iz katerih se otrok v vrtcu uči. Kurikulum tako vključuje tudi pogoje, ki omogočajo uresničevanje zapisanih vsebin. V njem so predstavljeni **cilji** in iz njih izpeljana **načela**, temeljna **védenja o razvoju otroka in učenju** v predšolskem obdobju ter globalni cilji in iz njih izpeljani cilji na posameznih področjih, predlagani primeri vsebin in **dejavnosti** na posameznih področjih pa ta področja med seboj povežejo ter pokažejo možne načine uresničevanja ciljev v praksi (vir 1).

Cilji kurikula za vrtce se nanašajo na naslednje vsebine: pestrejšo in raznovrstnejšo ponudbo na vseh področjih dejavnosti predšolske vzgoje, večje omogočanje individualnosti, drugačnosti in izbire v nasprotju s skupino, oblikovanje pogojev za večje izražanje in

ozaveščanje skupinskih razlik (nediskriminativnost glede na spol, socialno in kulturno poreklo, svetovni nazor, narodno pripadnost, telesno in duševno konstitucijo), večje upoštevanje zasebnosti ter intimnosti otrok, povečanje kakovosti socialnih interakcij med otroki in med otroki ter odraslimi v vrtcu, rekonceptualizacijo in reorganizacijo časa, prostora in opreme v vrtcu, večjo avtonomnost in strokovno odgovornost vrtcev in njihovih strokovnih delavcev, povečanje vloge kritičnega vrednotenja pri načrtovanju dela v vrtcu ter izboljšanje informiranja in sodelovanja s starši (vir 1). Zakon o vrtcih pa kot cilje predšolske vzgoje navaja razvijanje sposobnosti razumevanja in sprejemanja sebe in drugih, razvijanje sposobnosti za dogovarjanje, upoštevanje različnosti in sodelovanje v skupinah, razvijanje sposobnosti prepoznavanja čustev in spodbujanje čustvenega doživljanja in izražanja, negovanje radovednosti, raziskovalnega duha, domišljije in intuicije ter razvijanje neodvisnega mišljenja, spodbujanje jezikovnega razvoja za učinkovito in ustvarjalno uporabo govora, kasneje pa tudi branja in pisanja, spodbujanje doživljanja umetniških del in umetniškega izražanja, posredovanje znanj z različnih področij znanosti in iz vsakodnevnega življenja, spodbujanje telesnega in gibalnega razvoja in razvijanje samostojnosti pri higienskih navadah in pri skrbi za zdravje (vir 2).

Izmed **načel kurikula**, izpeljanih iz ciljev, bi bilo vredno omeniti *načelo demokratičnosti in pluralizma*, ki se zavzema za različnost programov, teoretskih pristopov in modelov, za različnost metod in načinov dela s predšolskimi otroki ter za pestrost vsebin dejavnosti. Pomembno je tudi *načelo odprtosti kurikula*, ki zagovarja avtonomnost vzgojiteljeve presoje, temelječe na njegovi strokovnosti, kar zadeva način uresničevanja ciljev in načel kurikula. Potrebno je omeniti tudi *načelo enakih možnosti in upoštevanja različnosti med otroki* ter *načelo multikulturalizma*, ki vključuje omogočanje enakovrednih pogojev za optimalni razvoj vsakega otroka, upoštevanje značilnosti starostnega obdobja ter individualnih razlik v razvoju in učenju, zagotavljanje pogojev za stalno ali občasno vključevanje predšolskih otrok s posebnimi potrebami v vrtec, upoštevanje skupinskih razlik ter čim večja raznolikost dejavnosti, vsebin in materialov, med katerimi bodo otroci lahko izbirali glede na svoje želje, interese in sposobnosti. Eno važnejših načel je tudi *načelo uravnoteženosti*, ki poudarja, da

morajo vzgojitelji zagotavljati aktivnosti z vseh področij dejavnosti in spodbujati vse vidike otrokovega razvoja, hkrati pa tudi spodbujati pravico do izbire in drugačnosti ter možnost za poglobljen razvoj na določenem področju. *Načelo horizontalne povezanosti* pa poleg izbire dejavnosti poudarja tudi povezovanje različnih področij dejavnosti v vrtcu in s tem povezovanje različnih vidikov otrokovega razvoja in učenja. *Načelo vertikalne povezanosti* zahteva kontinuiteto med prvim in drugim starostnim obdobjem ter med vrtcem in osnovno šolo. Med pomembnejšimi načeli sta še *načelo razvojno-procesnega pristopa* ter *načelo aktivnega učenja in možnosti različnih načinov izražanja*. Prvo načelo predvideva kot cilj učenja v predšolski dobi sam proces učenja, katerega cilj niso pravilni in napačni odgovori, temveč spodbujanje otrokovih lastnih strategij dojemanja, izražanja in razmišljanja, ki so zanj značilne v posameznem razvojnem obdobju. Drugo načelo pa poudarja pomen spodbujanja otrok k verbalizaciji in drugim načinom izražanja ter spodbujanja uporabe različnih strategij in pripomočkov pri iskanju odgovorov na različna vprašanja (vir 1).

Da pa bi lahko ustrezno načrtovali **dejavnosti** za predšolske otroke, moramo dobro poznati zakonitosti razvoja otroka. Kurikul za vrtce tako vsebuje tudi nekaj pomembnejših **zakonitosti o otrokovem razvoju** kot so t.i. kritična obdobja (obdobja, ki so najbolj primerna, da se otrok nečesa nauči na najbolj učinkovit način), velika individualnost razlik v razvoju ter zakonitost vzporednosti in povezanosti med različnimi psihičnimi funkcijami. Zanimiva pa so tudi iz razvojnih zakonitosti izhajajoča načela predšolske vzgoje, ki predpostavljajo postavljanje smiselnih zahtev oziroma problemov, ki vključujejo otrokovo aktivno učenje, izražanje ter doživljanje, poudarjajo način učenja preko neposredne aktivnosti s predmeti in preko pridobivanja konkretnih izkušenj z ljudmi in stvarmi, kot posebno ustrezno dejavnost pa navajajo otroško igro, saj ta na najbolj naraven način združuje vsa temeljna načela predšolske vzgoje, omogoča učenje na najrazličnejših področjih (jezikovno, socialno, matematično, motorično), razvija domišljijo ter nudi občutke svobode, varnosti in zadovoljstva (vir 1).

Otroci in umetnostna vzgoja

Eno izmed šestih področij dejavnosti v Kurikulumu za vrtce je tudi umetnost. Njen pomen je predvsem v udejanjanju otroških ustvarjalnih potencialov. Otrok se skozi umetnost izraža in komunicira, s tem pa tudi razvija svojo sposobnost uporabljanja simbolov, ko v risbi, plesu, glasbi ustvari nekaj, kar predstavlja nekaj drugega. V umetnosti lahko predstavi svoja skrita počutja in čustva, opiše dogodek, ali pa preprosto eksperimentira z umetniškim jezikom. Otrok pri ustvarjanju otroških umetniških del zaznava sebe kot oblikovalca simbolov in ustvarjalca, svoja dela pa kot trajne in pomembne produkte, s katerimi sooblikuje okolje. Izkušnje v umetnosti so zaradi enovitosti doživljanja in ustvarjanja pomemben element otrokovega razvoja. Globalni cilji tega področja tako predvidevajo doživljanje, spoznavanje in uživanje v umetnosti, razvijanje estetskega zaznavanja in umetniške predstavitljivosti, spoznavanje posameznih umetnostnih zvrsti, razvijanje izražanja in komuniciranja z umetnostjo, razvijanje ustvarjalnosti in specifičnih umetniških sposobnosti. Otrokom moramo tako omogočiti, da uporabljajo in razvijajo sposobnosti umetniškega izražanja, da raziskujejo in eksperimentirajo z lastnimi umetniškimi sredstvi (telesom, glasom, materiali, predmeti, tehnikami, instrumenti), da razvijajo sposobnost izražanja istih doživetij v različnih umetniških jezikih (plesnem, dramskem, likovnem, glasbenem, filmskem), da doživljajo in spoznavajo umetniške jezike različnih umetniških zvrsti in da predvsem spodbujamo v njih radovednost in veselje do umetnosti in do umetniških dejavnosti.

Kot predloge za udejanjanje opisanih ciljev navajajo pisci Kurikula za vrtce primerjanje umetniških del, interpretiranje znakov in simbolov iz življenja in umetnosti, obiskovanje predstav, koncertov in razstav, nastopanje pred publiko.

Primeri umetniških dejavnosti so nadalje razdeljeni v posamezne umetniške zvrsti in glede na starostna obdobja. Eno izmed petih obravnavanih umetniških zvrsti v kurikulumu je tudi dramska umetnost. Kot primere dramskih dejavnosti za otroke prvega starostnega obdobja (od 1 do 3 let) kurikulum navaja animiranje igrač, lutk in predmetov, uporabljanje predmetov tako, da predstavljajo nekaj drugega, uporabljanje enostavnih rekvizitov

ter scenskih in kostumskih prvin, pa tudi prisostvovanje pri preprosti lutkovni predstavi v vrtcu. Dramske dejavnosti za otroke drugega starostnega obdobja (od 3 do 6 let) pa vključujejo igranje, vživljanje in posnemanje živali, oseb, odnosov med njimi z uporabo glasu, telesa, prostora, lutke, predmeta, kostuma in maske, opisovanje objekta, situacije ali okolja s pomočjo geste, zvoka ali besede, uporabljanje predmetov tako, da predstavljajo druge predmete, zamišljanje in izvajanje animacije z različnimi vrstami lutk in predmetov, sodelovanje v igri z drugimi, ustvarjanje zgodbe na podlagi branja risbe ali fotografije, izmišljanje in uprizarjanje zgodbe, opazovanje besednega govora (monolog, dialog, zbor), govorice telesa (gibanje, gesta, izraz obraza), govorice dogajanja v prostoru (oseba usmerjena bodisi proti ali stran od druge osebe), časovnega dogajanja (dinamika dogajanja in organizacija časa, v katerem se zgodba dogaja), gledanje predstave, uporabljanje in razlikovanje gledaliških sredstev (scena, kostum, razsvetljava, zvok, maska, lutka), doživljanje, zamišljanje in izvajanje različnih napetosti v dramskem dogajanju, pa tudi zamišljanje in režiranje dogajanja v predstavi ali prizoru (vir 1).

Gledališka vzgoja v praksi

Dabise prepričali, koliko in na kakšen način vrtci izvajajo predlagane dejavnosti s področja odrske umetnosti, smo med vzgojiteljicami ljubljanskih vrtcev izvedli anketo, o možnostih ustvarjanja otroške uprizoritvene umetnosti danes in v bližnji prihodnosti pa sta svoje videnje podala tudi gledališka režiserja Jaka Ivanc in Marjan Bevk.

Izkazalo se je, da imajo vzgojiteljice drugačno mnenje kot režiserja, kar zadeva vprašanje, kako radi otroci danes hodijo v gledališče in koliko so navdušeni nad tem, kar vidijo. Vzgojiteljice so namreč povedale, da imajo otroci gledališče izredno radi in da ga tudi potrebujejo; zdi se jim, da so naveličani televizije in računalnikov in da jih živo dogajanje v gledališču veliko bolj prevzame in jim ostane v spominu, tako da je po njihovem mnenju skrb, da bi tehnologija na kakršenkoli način zmanjševala zanimanje otrok za odrsko umetnost, odveč. Prav nasprotno pa meni režiser J. Ivanc, ki pravi, da je otroke v času, v katerem so bombardirani z različnimi

vizualnimi podobami, v gledališču težko zadovoljiti. Vejo namreč, do kod segajo zmožnosti tehnologije, in zato bi bilo po njegovem mnenju pametno, da bi tudi v teatru začeli razmišljati o tem, da bi posodobili celotno odrsko tehniko, na ta način pridobili več možnosti pri ustvarjanju predstave ter jih s tem naredili za otroke še bolj zanimive. Glede nespodbudnosti sodobne tehnologije se z Ivancem strinja tudi režiser M. Bevk, ki pravi, da današnje poneumljajoče nadaljevanke vplivajo na to, da narašča obisk nekakovostnih, komercializiranih predstav. Podobno kot Ivanc dodaja, da je publika to percepcijo s televizije nekako prenesla v gledališče; pričakuje, da bo v gledališki dvorani doživela isto dogajanje kot v domači dnevni sobi. Tako se nemalokrat celo zgodi, da otroci pričakujejo, da bo v predstavi nastopil isti lik, kot ga nek igralec igra v kakšni nadaljevanki, in potem so temu primerno tudi razočarani, ko se to seveda ne zgodi. S tem pa se, kot pravi Bevk, dela na nek način škoda gledališču, saj otroci ne ocenjujejo več predstave same po sebi, ampak jih popolnoma okupira to razočaranje, da niso videli lika, ki so ga pričakovali.

Vzgojiteljice so povedale tudi, da se z otroki pred obiskom gledališča vedno pogovorijo o kulturi obnašanja, o predstavi, otroci povejo o svojih dotedanjih gledaliških izkušnjah in s tem navdušijo še ostale. Prav tako pa tudi po predstavi obvezno sledi pogovor, saj gre sicer doživetje nekako mimo. Pogovor je pomemben zato, ker lahko kakšnemu otroku, ki med predstavo ne more tako hitro slediti, kaj uide, poleg tega pa se s tem, ko izražajo svoje občutke glede predstave, učijo tudi komunikacijskih veščin - verbalnega izražanja in poslušanja drug drugega. Pri tem pa ena izmed vzgojiteljic dodaja, da jo zelo moti predvsem to, da med ogledom predstave in pogovorom o tem mine cel dan, v katerem se večina občutkov že malo porazgubi in zato od otrok ne dobi takega odziva, kot bi ga takoj po predstavi. Otroci potem to, kar so si ogledali, zelo radi tudi narišejo, včasih pa po svoje celo še enkrat odigrajo.

Zelo radi in zelo pogosto pa tudi otroci sami ustvarjajo gledališke predstave – tako lutkovne kot igrane, s katerimi potem nastopijo pred starši in pred otroci drugih skupin v vrtcu.

Mlajše otroke (4-5 let) pri tem še precej usmerja vzgojiteljica, saj

morajo najprej dobiti izkušnjo, kako se predstavo sploh ustvari. Vzgojiteljica tako najprej izbere pravljico, ki bodisi vsebuje toliko likov, da lahko igrajo vsi otroci naenkrat, bodisi izbere tako kratko zgodbo, da jo lahko zaigrajo tolikokrat, da pridejo vsi na vrsto. Za prvo predstavo skušajo vzgojiteljice navdušiti predvsem bolj pogumne otroke, da lahko potem s pohvalo nastopajočim dajo spodbudo še ostalim. Tistim, ki so pri tem manj spretni, vzgojiteljica pomaga tako, da jih umerja pri gibanju, jim prišepetava besedilo in podobno. Pri prvi uprizoritvi se v igranju načeloma preizkusijo vsi otroci, da ugotovijo, ali jim je všeč, in komur nastopanje ni blizu, lahko pri naslednjih predstavah sodeluje bodisi tako, da pomaga pri izdelavi scene, lutk, kostumov, ali pa ima kakšno manj izpostavljeno vlogo (je drevo, potok ipd.). Pri tem pa vzgojiteljica poudarja, da je zelo pomembno, da se otroci preizkušajo na ta način in sproščajo svojo ustvarjalnost, saj vsaka tovrstna izkušnja, četudi rezultat morda kdaj ni prvovrsten, pomembno prispeva k njihovu razvoju.

Zastopanost vseh področij kurikula mora biti sicer enakomerna in raznolika, da otroci spoznajo vse oblike umetnosti, vendar pa lahko preostali prostor izkoristi vsaka vzgojiteljica po svoje. Tako nekatere dajejo večji poudarek glasbi, druge likovnemu ustvarjanju, tretje pa gledališču. Pogostost gledališkega udejstvovanja pa je odvisen tudi od interesov vzgojiteljice.

Kar pa zadeva kakovost otroške gledališke ponudbe, pa so mnenja deljena. Režiser J. Ivanc meni, da je otroških gledališč v Sloveniji veliko, da sicer po zastopanosti in razvitosti izstopa lutkovno gledališče, da pa so predstave na sploh precej kvalitetne. Režiser M. Bevk opozarja, da primanjkuje predvsem igranih predstav, saj je GOML¹ edino otroško gledališče v Sloveniji, specializirano izključno za to zvrst uprizarjanja. Previden je tudi pri ocenjevanju kakovosti, saj meni, da so predstave tistih gledališč, ki so posvečena otrokom, večinoma res kvalitetne, medtem ko so otroške predstave repertoarnih gledališč, ki imajo otroške predstave bolj za dodatek, pogosto precej neakovostne. Bevk je razočaran tudi nad odnosom države do gledališke produkcije. Ivanc dodaja, da je problem predvsem v pomanjkanju finančnih

¹ (GOML – Gledališče za otroke in mlade Ljubljana; Theatre for children and youth Ljubljana)

sredstev, saj bi se dalo z malo več finančne podpore in vsemi gledališkimi sredstvi, ki so nam danes na voljo, ustvarjati še boljše predstave. Kar pa zadeva prihodnost otroškega gledališča, Ivanc meni, da bi razvoj lahko šel predvsem v smeri tehnologije, medtem ko Bevk optimistično doda, da so lahko tehnične pomanjkljivosti po svoje tudi prednost; ravno to je namreč po njegovem mnenju tisto, kar pri režiserju ohranja ustvarjalnost in iznajdljivost, saj je prisiljen v danih pogojih poiskati nove rešitve, s katerimi bo uprizoritev lahko prav tako kakovostna.

Vpliv gledališča na otrokov razvoj

Odrska umetnost ima pomemben vpliv na otroka tudi z razvojnega vidika. Nanj pozitivno vplivajo tako obiski tujih predstav kot samostojno ustvarjanje otrok, pri čemer pa omenjeni obliki gledališkega udejstvovanja s seboj prinašata nekolike različne prednosti.

Kar zadeva obiskovanje gledaliških predstav, te otroku v prvi vrsti predstavljajo predvsem zabavo oziroma sprostitvev. Otrok preprosto uživa ob vidnih podobah, ki se menjajo pred njegovimi očmi, ob glasbeni spremljavi, ki neredko vodi dogajanje, ob humornih in navihanih dialogih, ki ustvarjajo živahno vzdušje, in predvsem v pričakovanju, kako se bo zgodba nadaljevala in končala.

Vse to pa spremljajo čustva, ki so pri otrocih zaradi komaj razvijajoče se sposobnosti kontrole nad njimi lahko zelo intenzivna. Temu sorazmerne so tudi njihove reakcije v dvorani in tako lahko nemalokrat opazimo, da se otroci v tem trenutku na ves glas smejiijo ob kakšni hudomušni pripombi nastopajočega, so v naslednjem vsi trdi od strahu, ko je njihov pravljični junak na kakršenkoli način ogrožen, lahko pa tudi neutolažljivo zajokajo, kadar se komu zgodi krivica. Vsi ti močni čustveni odzivi so povezani tudi s starostjo razvijajoče se zmožnosti empatije, vživljanja v položaj druge osebe. Gledališče tako predstavlja otroku med drugim varen prostor, ki v njem sicer zbujaja najrazličnejša, tudi neprijetna čustva, vendar ga po drugi strani tudi ščiti s svojo iluzionistično naravo in katarzično funkcijo. Vsa ta nova znanja pa lahko s pridom uporabi tudi pri vsakodnevnih pripetljajih, pri katerih čustva ne izzvenijo najkasneje

takrat, ko se ponovno prižgejo luči v dvorani.

Otroške predstave otroku omogočajo tudi *razreševanje lastnih dvomov in problemov*. Junaki se v njih nemalokrat srečajo in spopadajo s podobnimi stiskami kot obremenjujejo otroke v mladih letih; ob tem, ko lik na odru rešuje svojo težavo, otrok po eni strani spoznava, da ni edini, ki ga ta težava obremenjuje, po drugi strani pa se od nastopajočega tudi uči, kako lahko problem učinkovito razreši.

Ena izmed pomembnejših funkcij otroških gledaliških predstav je tako tudi modelno učenje, pri katerem otroci opazujejo, ponotranjijo in kasneje tudi uporabljajo prikazane oblike vedenja. Poleg vzgojne pa ima učenje v gledališču tudi izobraževalno funkcijo. Otroci tako z obiskovanjem predstav spoznajo gledališko okolje in igralski poklic (in pri nekaterih predstavah celo dejavnosti vseh ostalih, zaposlenih v gledališču), naučijo se kulturnega obnašanja, ob razmišljanju o vsebini predstave prihajajo do novih spoznanj in na podlagi videnih uprizoritev postopno oblikujejo kriterije za prepoznavanje kakovostne gledališke umetnosti.

Ena pomembnih funkcij gledaliških predstav je med drugim tudi vpliv na otrokov *verbalni razvoj*. S tem, ko otrok posluša nastopajoče, se nezavedno uči novih besed in s tem širi svoj besedni zaklad. Lahko pa tudi pridobiva prve izkušnje o različnih socialnih zvrsteh jezika - bodisi zbornem, bodisi narečnem, slengovskem ali žargonskem jeziku.

Samostojno otroško ustvarjanje gledaliških predstav pa ima v primerjavi z obiskovanjem tujih uprizoritev pomembne pozitivne vplive predvsem na pridobivanje najrazličnejših spretnosti – ustvarjalnih, komunikacijskih, socialnih, motoričnih in predvsem veščin nastopanja.

Ob tem, ko otrok pomaga načrtovati in izdelovati lutke, kostume in sceno, razvija svoje *ročne spretnosti, sprošča ustvarjalnost in spodbuja domišljijo*. Uči se razlikovati med tem, katere zamisli so uresničljive v praksi, katere pa lahko živijo le v njegovi domišljiji. Ustvarjalnost, ta poglavitni dejavnik lastnega ustvarjanja, se lahko izrazi tudi pri načinu interpretacije besedila, pri sestavljanju plesnih

in pevskih točk ter pri reševanju različnih uprizoritvenih problemov. Pomembno je, da otrokom vseh njihovih dejavnosti ne določimo do najmanjše podrobnosti, ampak da lahko znotraj okvira, ki ga določena uprizoritev zahteva, sami iščejo poti za njihovo realizacijo. S tem, ne razvijamo le njihove kreativnosti, ampak krepimo tudi njihov občutek *samoučinkovitosti*. Šele ko se namreč otrok sam preizkusi v določeni dejavnosti in pri tem doživi uspeh, začne realno ocenjevati in ceniti svoje sposobnosti in spretnosti.

Tekom ustvarjalnega procesa med otroci poteka tudi stalna socialna interakcija. V stiku z drugimi otroki se razvijajo koristne *socialne spretnosti* – od sodelovanja, poslušanja, pogajanja, uveljavljanja svojih interesov, upoštevanja želja drugih in reševanja morebitnih konfliktov. Ob tem otrok razvija tudi komunikacijske spretnosti – uči se izbirati ustrezne besede, da bi te dosegle svoj namen. Besedna kompetentnost se razvija tudi ob usvajanju in pripovedovanju teksta na odru, pri čemer se otrok uči prilagajati način govora odrskemu nastopanju, poleg tega pa skozi posvojena besedila spoznava in usvaja nove besede. Pridobiva tudi prve izkušnje pojavljanja pred publiko, spopada se s premagovanjem treme in usvaja veščine javnega nastopanja (jasno in dovolj glasno govorjenje, ustrezno gibanje, stik z občinstvom).

Igranje pa ima nenazadnje lahko na otroka tudi terapevtski učinek; vzgojiteljice so namreč med drugim povedale, da si otroci nemalokrat izbirajo vloge, ki so v nasprotju z njihovim karakterjem. Agresivnejši otroci si tako na primer želijo igrati zajčka, plahi pa nepričakovano posežejo po lutki razbojnika. Kot pravi ena izmed vzgojiteljic, ti igranje omogoča, da zaživiš neko drugo življenje. Pokaže ti, kako bi bilo, če bi bil nekdo drug. Otrokom pa vživljanje v vlogo drugega med drugim pomaga, da raziskujejo in odkrivajo različne dele svoje osebnosti, ki v vsakodnevnem življenju ostajajo nedostopni njihovemu zavedanju.

Viri:

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Introducere. Perspectiva istorică asupra conceptului și domeniului educației timpurii

Până în ultimele două decenii ale secolului trecut (XX), conceptul de educație timpurie se referea la educația dinaintea de școlarizarea copiilor și avea în vedere intervalul de la 3 ani la 6/7 ani.

Educația timpurie era considerată ca aceea activitate sistematizată, efectuată în instituții specializate de tipul grădinițelor și era cunoscută prin denumirea de învățământ/educație preșcolară.

Conferința Mondială din Thailanda, de la Jomtien, din 1990, – Educația pentru toți – a introdus un nou aspect: “longlife learning”, ce începe la naștere, și astfel, conceptul de educație timpurie s-a lărgit, coborând sub vârsta de 3 ani.

Conceptul a fost exprimat prin sintagma “dezvoltarea timpurie a copilului” - Early Childhood Development” (ECD) care include educația timpurie (Early Childhood Education and Care), în sfera sa înglobând protecția, educația și sănătatea.

Acest fapt a condus la alt discurs în politicile asupra copilului, printr-o abordare convergentă: socială, educațională și incluzând sănătatea și nutriția.

În genere, pentru copiii sub 3 ani era consacrată perspectiva igienico-sanitar-medicală, care guverna cele mai multe modele de îngrijire a copiilor sub trei ani.

Această nouă perspectivă bazată pe evoluția familiei și a rolului femeii în societate ca și pe noile descoperiri și teorii asupra dezvoltării copilului a condus la un alt discurs al guvernelor multor țări și la provocările ce decurg din această nouă concepție: Dezvoltarea timpurie a copilului.

Dezvoltarea timpurie în România

În România, specificul educației timpurii a constatat în special în viziunea cadrului formal trasat de Legea Învățământului Nr 85/1995, prin care educația este gratuită și garantată, dar are ca limită inferioară vârsta de 3 ani.

De foarte curând, a fost adoptată noua lege a creșelor care include educația ca obiectiv al unităților de tip creșă.

În consecință, sunt două intervale pentru Educația timpurie:

I De la naștere la 3 ani: în unități specializate – creșe, centre de zi, creșe săptămânale.

II De la 3 ani la 6/7 ani în educația pre-scolară – grădinițe cu program normal, grădinițe cu program prelungit, grădinițe săptămânale.

1. DEZVOLTAREA TIMPURIE A COPIILOR DE LA NAȘTERE LA 3 ANI ÎN ROMÂNIA

România se înscrie într-un proces de abordare nouă a copilului generat de Convenția Națiunilor Unite pentru Drepturile Copilului și noile direcții educaționale.

Educația timpurie preocupă specialiștii și factorii de decizie ai ultimilor ani, cu precădere din 2005, când se avansează ideea de a lărgi educația timpurie introducând și intervalul naștere–3 ani în sistemul de educație și reglementările specifice, astfel ca educația începe la vârsta de 1 an și este proiectată să intre în sistemul formalizat al educației.

Cadrul schimbărilor în domeniul dezvoltării timpurii a copiilor este trasat și în România de noile reglementări:

Miscarea Globală pentru Copii (Global Movement for Children) care fixează zece imperative prioritare tuturor țărilor membre ale ONU:

- **Eliminarea excluziunii sociale și discriminării** de orice formă a copiilor, respectarea drepturilor copiilor, asigurarea tuturor copiilor cel mai bun start în viață, stoparea exploatarea copiilor, accesul la educație al tuturor copiilor băieți sau fete, lupta împotriva HIV/ SIDA, dreptul copiilor și tinerilor la exprimare și în luarea

deciziilor care ii privesc, protejarea copiilor de razboaie, protejarea pamantului, lupta impotriva saraciei prin investirea in copii.

- **Strategia Nationala pentru Educatie Timpurie**
- **Legea privind concediul maternal/paternal** pentru ingrijirea copilului din 1997, stipuleaza ca mamele sau tatii au posibilitatea de a-si lua 2 ani de concediu pentru ingrijirea copilului.

(Este de mentionat si proiectul noii legi a invatamantului preuniversitar in care se defineste sistemul formal de educatie cu extinderea educatiei timpurii, de la varsta de 1 an).

- **Legea nr 236 din 19 iulie 2007 privind infiintarea, organizarea si functionarea creselor** defineste cresa astfel:

Cresela sunt structuri care ofera servicii sociale specializate pentru cresterea, ingrijirea si educarea timpurie a copiilor de pana la 3 ani.

În prezent, serviciile de educație timpurie funcționează după reglementări care au fost elaborate în urmă cu mai bine de 30 de ani. Aceste reglementări nu mai sunt actuale nici sub aspect administrativ și nici ca mediu prielnic pentru promovarea educației timpurii. Prin Legea bugetului de stat nr. 216/2001, serviciile de educație timpurie au trecut din subordinea direcțiilor de sănătate publică în aceea a primăriilor în raza cărora se aflau amplasate. Această trecere a modificat finanțatorul, denumirea și structura de personal a serviciilor de educație timpurie, provocând inadvertențe și incompatibilități care au dus la perturbarea activității, deoarece transferarea serviciilor de educație timpurie (serviciul de educație timpurie) din sistemul sanitar (unde erau definite ca unități sanitare) în subordinea administrației publice locale nu a fost însoțită de redefinirea mandatului și a modului lor de organizare și funcționare.

Noua lege încă nu a fost implementată și nu are încă specificațiile de aplicare prin norme metodologice, care încă nu au fost date publicității.

Există însă o preocupare a instituțiilor implicate în problema copilului și familiei care da speranța unei noi înțelegeri a dezvoltării timpurii a copilului. Numim aici: Ministerul Muncii și Familiei

prin Autoritate Nationala pentru Drepturile Copilului, Ministerul Educatiei si Cercetarii, Ministerul Sanatatii si un numar de ONG uri care au ca obiect educatia si dezvoltarea timpurie a copilului, cum este UNICEF.

Actual, educatia si ingrijirea copilului pana in 3 ani are caracteristicile pe care le vom mentiona mai jos si care au fost evidentiata de un studiu efectuat in 2007, in intervalul august – noiembrie.

Numarul si tipul creșelor existente la nivel national

Total	Creșe de zi	Creșe săptămânale	Creșe mixte
287	218	33	36

Creșele primesc copii de la 10/11 luni pana la varsta de 3 ani. Mentionam ca in Romania se acorda concediu prenatal de 4 luni si mamele pot sta acasa pana la varsta de 2 ani a copilului prin concediu de ingrijire a copilului. Fiecare mama primeste o indemnizatie echivalent cu salariul minim pe economie daca a optat sa stea acasa in perioada concediului pentru cresterea copilului.

Programul creșelor de zi este de la ora 6,00 la ora 18,00.

Programul creșelor săptămânale este de luni pana vineri si copiii raman in unitate tot acest interval.

Exista o presiune a profesionistilor in dezvoltarea copilului pentru a se renunta la acest program si a mentine legatura copilului cu familia si de a se organiza programul creșei flexibil in functie de orele de munca a parintilor.

Creșele mixte sunt acele unitati care au atat grupe pentru copii cu program săptămânal cat si de zi.

Creșele sunt unitati care au o capacitate intre 75 copii si 150 copii.

Numarul creșelor a scazut foarte mult din 1990, cand erau 840 creșe, de asemenea a scazut si numarul copiilor de la 77 000 in 1990 la 13 000 in 2007.

La acesta scadere au contribuit 3 factori mai importanti:

-Scaderea natalitatii

-Concediul pentru cresterea copilului si indemnizatia acordata mamelor

-Modificarea structurii locurilor de munca si a fenomenului de migrare a fortei de munca feminine in celelalte tari UE.

Intr-un studiu efectuat in 2005 cu privire la crese s-a remarcat ca cele mai multe crese se afla in regiunea centrala si vestica a Romaniei, respective in judetele Cluj, Sibiu, Arad, care au si rata cea mai scazuta a natalitatii. Dar sunt printre cele mai dezvoltate zone din Romania dupa IDU (Indicile de Dezvoltare Umana). Iar in regiunea de nord-est, unde este cea mai mare rata a natalitatii din Romania, si printre cele mai sarace, sunt cele mai putine crese. Ex: municipiul Cluj are 10 crese, iar Botosaniul o singura cresa.

Este dificil de apreciat cate crese ar fi necesare daca gandim aceasta in functie de numarul de copii. Parintii, familia au dreptul de a opta pentru ingrijire si educarea copiilor lor in familie sau in afara cadrului familial si utilizarea cresei. Totusi, in ultimul an se remarca o tendinta a tinerilor parinti de a opta pentru continuarea studiilor sau a dezvoltarii lor profesionale si de a inscrie copilul la cresa, inca inainte de varsta de 2 ani.

Alt fapt de remarcat: concediul pentru cresterea copilului se acorda mamei sau tatalui pana la varsta de 2 ani a copilului si apare un hiatus de la 2 la 3 ani, cand unii parintii doresc sa-si duca copilul la cresa.

Alta remarca este insa si mentinerea traditiei de a duce copiii la bunici, in mediul rural, si copiii sunt luati de cele mai multe ori, acasa, de catre parinti, in anul premergator inceperii scolarizarii. In unele zone mai sarace se practica intreruperea frecventarii cresei de catre copii pe anotimpul iernii, cand sunt dusi la bunici si readusi vara. Fenomenul este determinat de costurile ridicate de ale intretinerii in anotimpul rece, ca si de muncile agricole care ii fac pe bunici indisponibili pentru nepoti.

Legat de repartitia creselor pe teritoriul Romaniei, este de mentionat faptul ca in mediu rural nu exista crese. Exceptie este cresa din judetul Buzau, comuna Berca, unde cresa este sustinuta de Schele petroliera Berca si este cuplata cu gradinita pentru copii a salariatilor schelei. Aceasta repartitie a serviciilor de tip cresa infatiseaza si o filozofie asupra copilului si in special a copilariei mici, conform careia unui copil mic ii este suficienta ingrijirea traditionala (hrana, igiena, aer curat).

Structura pe varste a copiilor cuprinsi in crese

Cei mai multi copiii sunt cuprinsi in intervalul 19 luni – 36 luni. In crese saptamanale sunt copii sub 8 luni in proportie de 6% si 18% cei de pana in 18 luni. 76% sunt copii de peste 18 luni si unii trec cu putin peste 3 ani.. Reamintim ca in sistemul educational, gradinitile primesc copii care au implinit 3 ani.

Structura echipei care lucreaza in crese

In crese este inca un personal specific unitatilor sanitare, ramas in functii de cand cresele erau dependente de sistemul sanitar. Ponderea cea mai mare este a personalului fara o calificare specifica si care are denumirea de infirmiere(caregiver) 42%, urmat de asistente medicale,cu pregatire postliceala in scoli speciale pentru categoria de pregatire medie medicala, 32,5 %. Un numar foarte redus de educatoare- 0,8%. Conducerea cresei este asigurata de medici in proportie de 3% si asistente medicale in proportie de 97%. Viziunea asupra organizarii cresei este inca una de ingrijire a copilului "pe model medicalizat", care se limiteaza la normele de igiena si de nutritie, educatia este implicita si nu se utilizeaza un program educational national, nici regional.

Este de remarcat ca peste 45% din personalul care lucreaza cu copiii in crese are o vechime mai mare de 25 de ani mentinand modelul traditional al abordarii copilului sub 3 ani.

Aceste doua aspecte mentionate sunt sustinute si de Legea invatamantului, care inca nu a fost modificata, si in care este afirmat ca educatia formala in Romania cuprinde copiii de la varsta de 3 ani .Toate acestea fac sa nu existe o categorie profesionala cu o formare de baza in educatia copilului sub 3 ani si nu exista nici o scoala/colegiu/universitate care sa furnizeze cursuri pentru formarea initiala sau continua pe intervalul de varsta nastere – 3 ani.

O serie de programe pilot, coordonate de către ONG-uri (precum Centrul pentru Educație și Dezvoltare Profesională Step by Step),

s-au derulat în câteva creșe și au vizat Dezvoltarea Timpurie a Copilului în România. Aceste programe constituie mijlocul de a găsi soluții și de a genera posibile schimbări, până la introducerea modificărilor pentru legea educației și a implementării noii legi a creșelor. Un astfel de program a introdus în echipa care lucrează în creșe educatoare. Acestea, pregătite numai pentru abordarea educațională a copilului de peste 3 ani, au necesitat o formare specifică, cu o altă perspectivă asupra copilului mic. Aceasta include aspecte precum: competențele nou născutului; potențialul și mecanismele învățării prenatale și la nou născut; activități de stimulare senzorială a copilului de la naștere la 3 ani, socializarea și comunicarea. Cursurile de formare au la bază Convenția ONU a Drepturilor Copilului și Teoria domeniilor de dezvoltare a copilului și pune în evidență unul dintre principiile învățării copilului mic: „Copilul este competent să învețe de la naștere, dar este necesar ca adultul să-i dea sensul, semnificația celor învățate”. ONG-urile au efectuat formări ale angajaților existenți incluzând în echipă o educatoare, pentru a încuraja formarea la fața locului. Cu toate acestea, din punct de vedere administrativ, această practică nu este, în mod formal, recunoscută de către sistemul actual, care nu deține structurile oficiale sau reglementările pentru a permite creșelor să angajeze sau să remunereze educatoare angajate în acest program de formare.

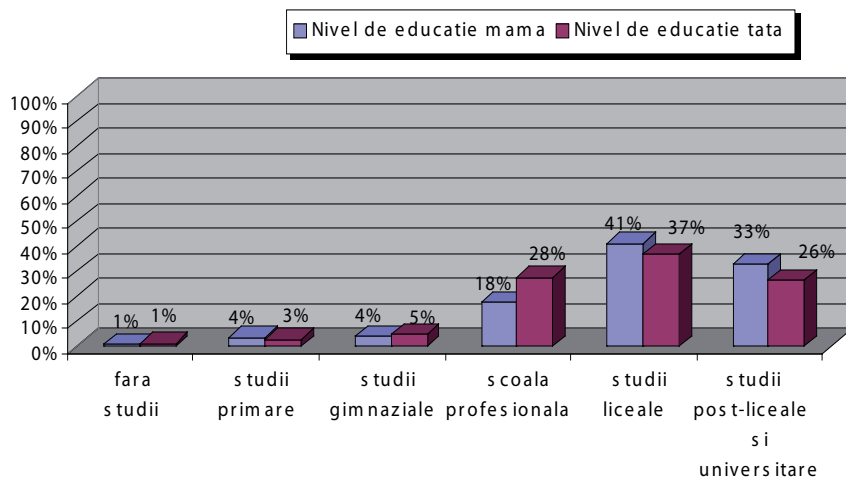
Costul cresei

Cheltuielile de funcționare din sistemul public sunt suportate de stat, părinții achită numai costurile hranei care diferă de la o regiune la alta a țării, cu toate că există o Hotărâre de Guvern care fixează cuantumul de hrană. În medie variază între 3,5 lei/zi la 5,0 lei/zi, iar în creșele săptămânale acest cost variază de la 5,5 la 6,5 lei/zi.

Cine sunt părinții copiilor care frecventează creșa?

Majoritatea părinților au o educație relativ înaltă atât în creșele de zi cât și în creșele săptămânale. Peste 70% dintre mame și 60% dintre tați au studii liceale, post-liceale și universitare. Procentul părinților cu studii gimnaziale este de până la 10%.

Nivelul de educatie al parintilor - figura 1



Nu exista diferente intre nivelul de educatie al parintilor din cresele saptamanale fata de parintii care utilizeaza cresele de zi (datele nu sunt prezentate).

Majoritatea parintilor lucreaza in sectorul industrial (constructii, textile, industrie alimentara), urmat de cel in sectorul serviciilor (vanzatori/dealeri, ospatari, barmani) si sectorul bugetar (medici, asistente medicale, infirmiere, cadre didactice, functionari etc.)

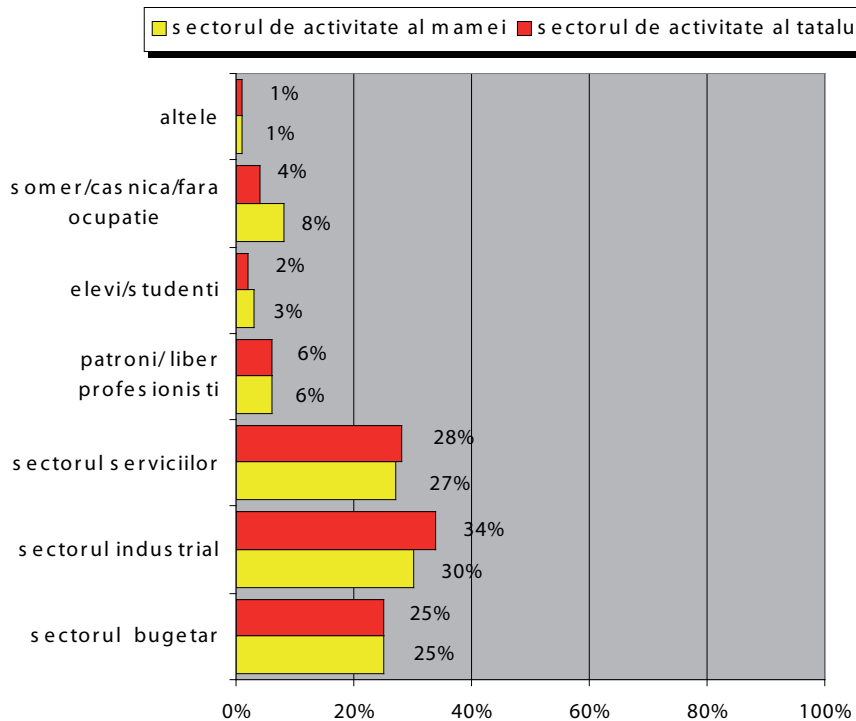
In cresa de zi ponderea parintilor care lucreaza in sectorul bugetar este cu 10% mai mare decat in cresele saptamanale. Parintii studenti care utilizeaza cresa saptamanala au o pondere cu 7% mai mare decat a celor care utilizeaza cresa de zi (datele nu sunt prezentate).

Structura etnica parintilor

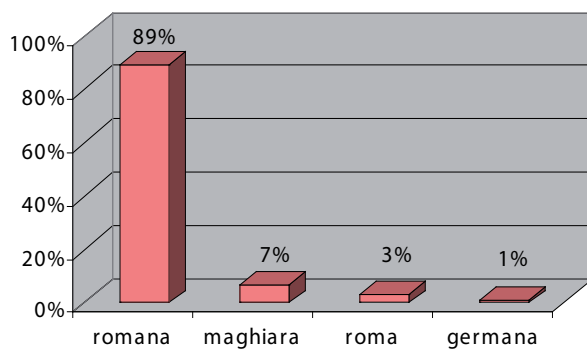
Pe ansamblu, parintii care utilizeaza cresele zi si saptamanala sunt in proportie de 89% romani, 7% maghiari, 3% romani, 1% alte nationalitati. Acesta structura etnica este foarte apropiata de datele oferite de stitistica oficiala

Analizata separat, in cresele saptamanale ponderea copiilor maghiari si romi nu a depasit 1.5%.

Locul de munca al parintilor - figura 2



Etnia parintilor - figura 3

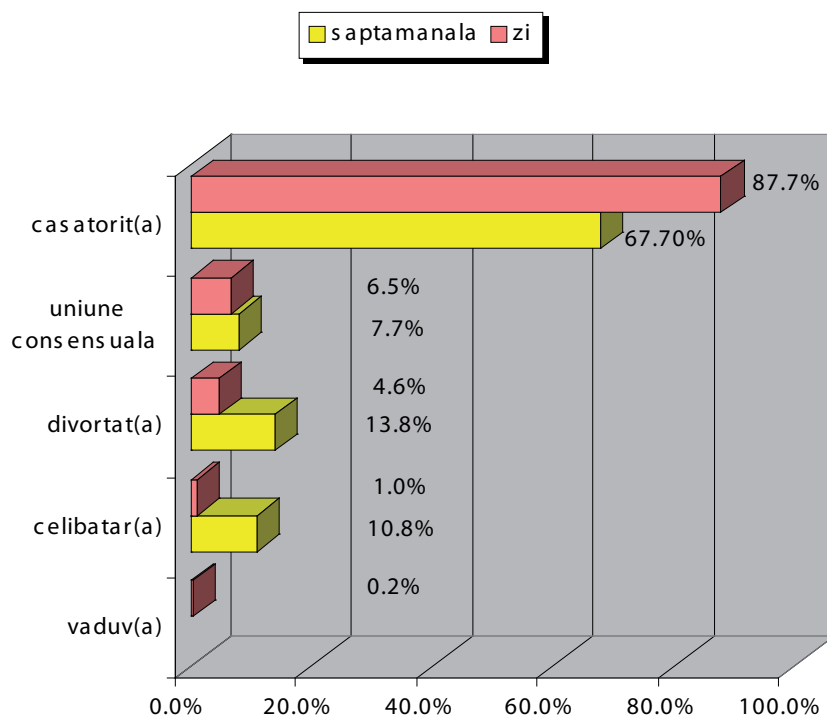


Starea civila a parintilor

Referitor la starea civila, rezulta ca 85% dintre parinti sunt casatoriti, 7% traiesc in uniune consensuala, 6% sunt divortati/separate, iar 2% sunt celibatari(e) (datele nu sunt prezentate).

Aceasta structura este diferita in cresele de zi si saptamanale (**figura 4**). Ponderea parintilor singuri (divortati/separati, celibatari) din cresele saptmanale este cu cel putin 10% mai mare decat in cazul parintilor care utilizeaza cresele de zi.

Starea civila a parintilor - figura 4



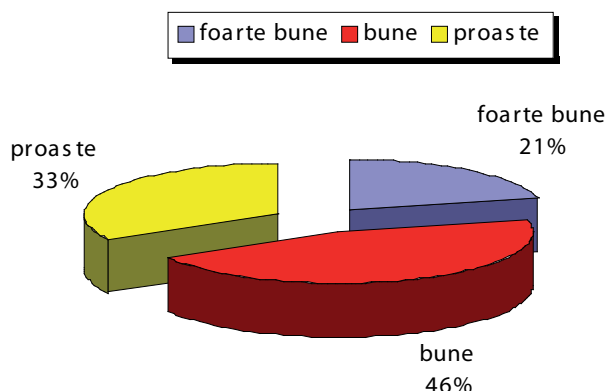
Conditiiile de locuit

Conditiiile de locuit au fost apreciate pe 3 niveluri: proaste, bune, foarte bune. Conditiiile de locuit proaste au fost considerate locuintele in care numarul camerelor de locuit este de cel putin 2 ori mai mic decat numarul persoanelor din locuinta. Conditiiile

de locuit bune au fost considerate locuințele în care numărul camerelor este mai mic cu unul decât numărul persoanelor din locuință. Condițiile de locuit foarte bune au fost considerate locuințele în care numărul camerelor este cel puțin egal cu numărul persoanelor din locuință.

Condițiile de locuit au fost apreciate ca fiind bune într-o proporție de 46%, proaste 33%, foarte bune 21%

Condiții de locuit - figura 5



Aproape jumătate dintre părinți asigură copilului o cameră. Condițiile de locuit în ansamblu nu influențează înscrierea copilului în creșă; 67% dintre familiile care utilizează creșă au condiții bune și foarte bune de locuit.

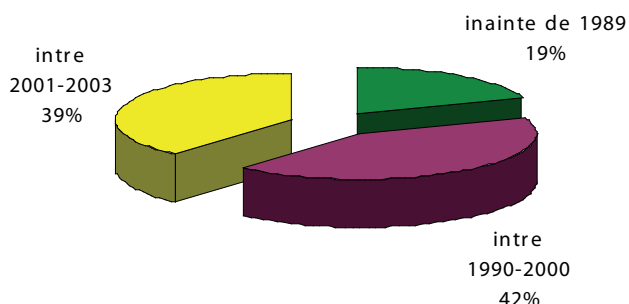
2. CARACTERISTICILE FIZICE ALE CLADIRILOR CRESELOR ȘI A SPAȚIILOR PENTRU COPII

Evaluarea stării clădirilor și a dotărilor

Starea clădirilor a spațiilor interioare și exterioare; dotarea creșelor.

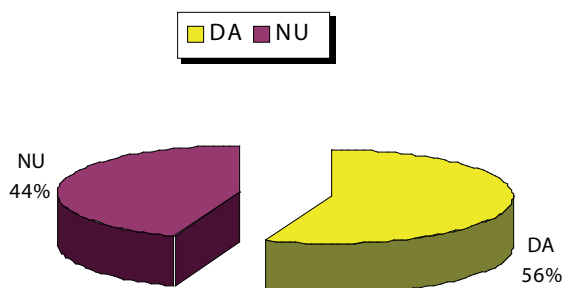
S-a constatat faptul că 40% din creșe au fost renovate în ultimii 2-3 ani (figura 6) și 58% dintre acestea au clădirea zugrăvită și în exterior. Referitor la spațiul din interior creșele dețin de obicei 2 încăperi. Una este destinată dormitului, iar cealaltă activităților zilnice.

*Ultima renovare a creșelor
-distributie procentuala- figura 6*



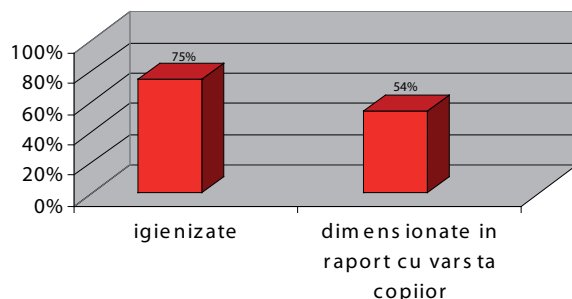
In privinta utilitatilor, se constata ca **bucatarile** sunt utilizate corespunzator la 56% dintre crese

Bucataria este dotata cu mobilier si aparatura corespunzatoare pregatirii hranei conform varstei copiilor? - figura 7



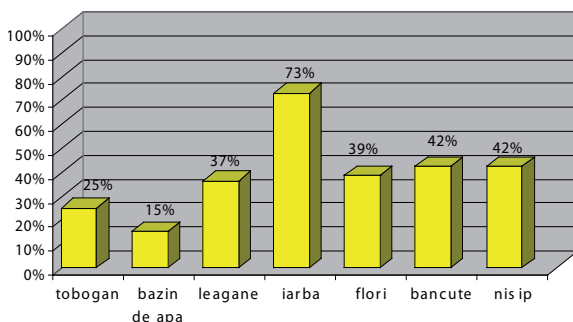
In privinta **grupurilor sanitare** se remarcă faptul ca doar in 54% din cazuri sunt dimensionate in raport cu varsta copilului

Grupurile sanitare sunt dimensionate in raport cu varsta copilului
- figura 8



Pentru dezvoltarea copilului sunt foarte importante experientele in aer liber. Aceste experiente sunt destul de limitate in crese tinandu-se cont de faptul ca odata cu instalarea frigului copiii nu sunt scosi deloc in aer liber. Exista si crese in care, indiferent de anotimp, copiii *nu sunt scosi afara* din lipsa unui spatiu arondat cresei, lipsa unui spatiu amenajat pentru confortul si siguranta copiilor, dar si al personalului. Din pacate, oferirea de experiente copiilor in aer liber nu este stabilita prin reglementari, de aceea este posibila neimplicarea personalului in satisfacerea nevoilor copilului. In figura 9 sunt ilustrate amenajarile de care se bucura cresele in exterior (zi si saptamanale). In multe cazuri, de exteriorul amenajat se bucura doar copiii din gradinite .

Distributia creselor in functie de amenajarea spatiului exterior
figura 9



Cresele saptamanale sunt mult mai putin amenajate cu elementele mentionate decat cresele de zi, diferentele fiind de la 10% pana la 30% mai mici decat in cazul creselor de zi la fiecare element in parte (datele nu sunt prezentate).

Dotarea cresei

Cresele trebuie sa fie amenajate ca sa constituie un mediu axat pe satisfacerea nevoilor copilului. Acest mediu trebuie amenajat pentru a permite copilului sa exploreze. De asemenea, el trebuie sa fie suficient de diversificat pentru a incuraja creativitatea, experimentarea, capacitatea de a face descoperiri si de a rezolva probleme; ca, de asemenea, si aspecte individuale cum ar fi interesele, talentele si inclinatiile copiilor.

Inca de la cele mai mici varste, copiii invata prin joc. Ei invata cel mai bine atunci cand au ocazia sa-si cladeasca cunostintele in urma unor experiente proprii si a interactiunii cu lumea inconjuratoare.

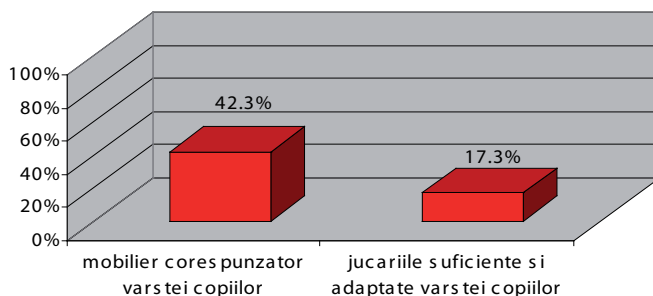
Ei au nevoie sa se joace cu lucrul asupra caruia se concentreaza sa-i testeze calitatile: apucandu-l, tragandu-l, rasucindu-l, intorcandu-l, aranjandu-l.

Mobilierul este corespunzator varstei copilului numai pentru 42% dintre crese. Cea mai grava situatie o reprezinta jucariile, care doar pentru 17% dintre crese sunt suficiente si adaptate varstei copilului.

Dotarea cu mobilier este corespunzatoare varstei copiilor?

Jucariile sunt suficiente si adaptate varstei copiilor?

-distributie procentuala- figura 10



Nu exista un mobilier adecvat pentru crearea unui spatiu de invatare: rafturi, mese, scaunele, mobilier moale gen canapea, fotolii, saltele, pernute, mochete, scaun balansoar etc.

Programul zilnic al copiilor este dictat de rutinele zilnice: toaleta, somn, alimentatie si nu exista un curriculum care sa organizeze activitatile de invatare ori un plan saptamanal sau lunar pe fiecare unitate sau grupa de varsta.

Personalul este focalizat pe ingrijiri si foarte redus pe educatie.

Jocul este activitatea spontana pe care o desfasoara copiii fara obiective zilnice de achizitii, in afara deprinderilor de igiena (control sfincterian, autoservire mancat, imbracat).

Exista in prezent o strategie pentru educatie timpurie care include elaborarea unui curriculum pentru copii de la nastere la 3ani si care urmareste ariile de dezvoltare in activitatile ce vor fi desfasurate in unitatile pentru copii mici. Acestia vor fi pregatiti pentru etapa urmatoare: gradinita, asa cum gradinita ii pregateste pe copii pentru scoala. Strategia pentru educatie timpurie include servicii de educatie de calitate. Aceasta implica amenajarea unor spatii corespunzatoare in unitati pentru un numar de maxim 40 copii pentru a se evita riscurile date de aglomerare si pentru a se da posibilitatea unei coordonari si organizari in favoarea copilului in special, si nu a institutiei.

Strategia prevede infiintarea unor forme de invatamant specializat in universitati, pentru educatia copilului de la nastere la 5/6 ani. Mentionam ca Romania ca membra a Uniunii Europene a semnat Declaratia de la Bologna conform careia personalul din educatie trebuie sa urmeze cursuri universitare, iar rata angajatilor sa fie de 1 : 3 (la 3 angajati unul trebuie sa fie cu studii universitare).

Strategia prevede un curriculum de invatare si educatie pentru copii de la nastere la 3 ani, acest curriculum urmeaza stadiile de dezvoltare a copilului pe domenii de dezvoltare (cognitiv, motor, senzorial, comunicare, socializare, emotional). Domeniile de dezvoltare sunt concepute de factura didactic-pedagogica ca instrument de evaluare a evolutiei copilului. Dezvoltarea copilului este un proces holistic si un domeniu are influente asupra copilului in totalitatea lui. Creativitatea copilului consta in potentialul si capacitatea lui de a gasi solutii la situatii neintalnite de el inca. O abordare educationala echilibrata are la baza principiul educational sustinut de Maria Montessori, de a pune copilului la indemana un spatiu si obiecte pe care sa le poata explora si

manevra obtinand cat mai multe experiente. Pentru o coerenta a obiectelor oferite copilului, acestea se grupeaza in functie de domeniul vizat. Ex: obiecte de miscare pentru domeniul motor sau a coordonarii manuale. Obiecte pentru receptie senzoriala, obiecte colorate, obiecte care emit sunete, care au texturi diferite si consistente diferite. Obiecte care expun la expresia si expunerea verbala, etc. Sustinerea comunicarii si a formarii constiintei de sine si a stimei de sine. Toate acestea sunt organizate gradat in curriculum, care, evident, urmeaza tehnica obiectivelor de referinta si a obiectivelor specifice. Prin acest « joc » al educatiei copilul isi dezvoltă propria lui creativitate care este proprie personalitatii sale.

Educatia copiilor de la 3 la 6/7 ani. Sau prescolara

Până în ultimele două decenii ale secolului trecut (XX), conceptul de educație timpurie se referea la educația dinaintea de școlarizarea copiilor desfășurată în intervalul de la 3 ani la 6/7 ani. Educația timpurie era considerată ca acea activitate sistematizată, efectuată în instituții specializate de tipul grădinițelor, și era cunoscută ca învățăământ/educație preșcolară.

Învățământul prescolar în România exista din primul deceniu al secolului trecut, când apar primele „școli pentru copii mici”, respectiv de la 4 ani.

O serie de studii pun în evidență faptul că cel mai mare beneficiu al experiențelor de educație timpurie apare în planul non-cognitiv. Au fost identificate multe relații pozitive și semnificative între frecventarea grădiniței și comportamentele centrate pe sarcină, dezvoltarea socio-emoțională, motivație și atitudini pozitive față de școală..

În prezent, conform datelor anunțate de Institutul de Statistică, exista 13 000 de grădinițe, în care sunt angajați 35 000 de educatoare și 660 000 copii care frecventează grădinițele.

79,9% copii din mediul urban frecventează grădinița și 67,9% copii din mediul rural.

Este de semnalat situația particulară a numărului de locuri din grădinițe. După cum am semnalat, a crescut numărul copiilor care frecventează unitățile prescolare, iar numărul de locuri din grădinițe nu a crescut.

Educatia prescolara are ca obiective:

Socializarea copiilor si dezvoltarea din punct de vedere fizic,emotional si cognitiv.

Participarea copiilor la invatamantul prescolar este gratuit.

Educatia in gradinite este gratuita in sistemul public.

Gradinitele sunt de doua tipuri:

Gradinite cu program normal,respectiv 8 – 12,nu implica nici un cost.

Gradinite cu program prelungit 8 – 16,30, se achita de catre parinti costul mesei

Exista si cateva gradinite cu program saptamanal, in care de asemenea nu se achita decat costurile pentru masa.

Alte costuri pentru activitati optionale:muzica,dans,limbi straine, care se platesc si sunt la cererea parintilor.

Rata de inscrieri a copiilor in 2005 a fost de 71%, cu o crestere deosebita pentru copiii din grupa pregatitoare, care este de 90%.

Exista pe langa gradinitele din sistem public si gradinite in sistem privat.De asemenea, exista gradinite care practica sisteme pedagogice alternative la sistemul traditional atat in invatamantul public, cat si in cel privat. Cele mai des intalnite alternative pedagogice sunt:

Sistemul Montessori

Sitemul Waldorf

Sitemul Frenee

Sistemul Step by step

Alternativele educationale au influentat si au dinamizat si sistemul traditional mai ales in amenajarea spatiului de invatare care permite dezvoltarea autonomiei si creativitatii copilului, ca si o abordare individualizata. Spre exemplu: clasa este organizata pe zone de activitat pentru grupe mici de copii si in acest mod poate fi individualizata si personalizata educatia dupa potentialul si ritmul de achizitie a fiecarui copil.

O alta influenta a fost in acordarea unei importante mai accentuate invatarii prin joc si a invatarii tematice, astfel s-a reusit ca sa se inteleaga de catre copii „de ce lumea si lucrurile sunt asa cum sunt”. Pentru sistemul prescolar exista un curriculum national care are ca finalitate pregatirea copilului pentru scoala. Invatamantul prescolar utilizeaza de peste 15 ani un curriculum, cel care este

elaborat în prezent pune accent pe achiziția de cunoștințe. Programul implică învățarea, creativitatea copilului este pusă în funcțiune prin activitățile care le desfășoară în joc. Învăță relații numerice și conceptul de mărime și formă jucându-se sau cercetând el însuși efecte și consecințe ale fenomenelor pe care le produce în joc.

Învăță să se exprime în joc de rol jucându-se de-a mama și copiii

Învăță să modeleze cu lut și plastilină și să-și coordoneze mișcările fine desenând.

Învăță litere și cifre jucându-se cu litere, cărți și cifre.

Acest tip de învățare este organizat pe o temă. Ex: iepurele care integrează învățarea conceptelor matematice, coordonare manuală fină, imaginație, ecologie.

Va construi casa iepurelui din pădure. Va citi povești cu iepurele și lupul. Va juca povestea iepurele și lupul. Va modela morcovi și alte legume pentru iepuri sămânță. Astfel învață legume, caracteristicile animalului, etc. Acest mod face ca să pună copilul în legătură cu o realitate a lumii: mediul și vietuțioarele. Aceasta este învățarea tematică care se poate extinde și diversifica după cum copiii își manifestă curiozitatea și creativitatea.

În grădinițe există un personal calificat și specializat în școli pedagogice, sau școli normale. În ultimii 5 ani multe educatoare și-au completat studiile urmând cursuri universitare la facultăți de Pedagogie sau Psihologie, aceasta fiind diferența dintre personalul grădinițelor și cel al creșelor.

Educatoarele, personalul calificat pentru educația copilului de la 3 ani la 6/7 ani, urmează diferite cursuri în sistemul de formare continuă organizate de ISJ-Inspectoratul școlar și Casa Corpului didactic.

Grădinițele depind de sistemul de educație prin Inspectoratele Școlare Teritoriale (județe și sectoare pentru București) care sunt coordonate de Ministerul Educației.

Fiecare grădiniță este condusă de directoare, care sunt recrutate din rândul educatoarelor. Este de menționat existența unei pondere majoritar feminine în sistemul educațional prescolar.

Se lucrează în cadrul Ministerului Educației și Cercetării la un curriculum unitar pentru intervalul naștere – 6/7 ani în perspectivă

adoptării unei noi legi a învățământului.

O modificare esențială a acestui proiect este introducerea educației formale de la 1 an.

Acest curriculum promovează:

- Pentru prima oară în țara noastră va exista un document formal care va stabili principiile și cadrul în care se desfășoară activitățile de învățare pentru copiii din creșe.
- Dezvoltarea fizică și psihologică a copilului este puternic determinată de experiențele primilor ani de viață.
- Va exista un plan coerent al grupului de copii și al fiecărui copil în parte cu obiective pe termen scurt și termen îndelungat.
- Curriculumul este necesar ca orientare și sprijin pentru profesioniștii din serviciile specializate pentru copiii mici, pentru a asigura dezvoltarea armonioasă a copilului printr-un demers pedagogic unitar în toate zonele țării garantând servicii educaționale de calitate și șanse egale pentru fiecare copil.
- Curriculumul promovează abordarea convergentă a copilului prin acoperirea nevoilor de igienă și sănătate, dezvoltare fizică, cognitivă și social-emoțională.
- Curriculumul oferă o ghidare pedagogică în acord cu evoluția dezvoltării copilului având la bază cele mai actuale teorii de dezvoltare a copilului, în care familia și părinții lui au un rol esențial.
- Curriculumul pune în centru **copilul** care are un rol activ în propriile lui achiziții și experiențe în interacțiune cu adultul care îi vor da sensul lucrurilor și a lumii și sensul propriei lui persoane și identități.
- Curriculumul include tehnicile care oferă siguranța fizică și emoțională copilului ca bază pentru învățare și formare de atitudini sociale pozitive.
- Curriculumul conține activități care promovează sentimentul succesului, competenței personale și bucuria învățării pentru cunoaștere.
- Evaluarea fiecărui copil se va face în dinamica activităților cotidiene în acord cu informațiile obținute de la părinți pentru a trasa obiectivele individuale și a elimina eșecul indus de cadrul formal.

Finalitățile educaționale urmărite de curriculum afirmă și susțin ca fiecare copil să fie capabil să fie autonom, să comunice cu adulții și copiii din grup, să obțină abilități motorii coordonate, să se simtă în siguranță în spațiul creșei și să accepte absența părinților, să-și satisfacă curiozitățile și să se bucure de cunoștințele lui, să se simtă o persoană capabilă, demnă și respectată. Sa fie instrumentat pentru a face fata scolii.

Curriculum tine seama de:

Pentru copil nu există diferență între joc și învățare.

Jocul are un rol fundamental în dezvoltarea sa. Jocul:

- o satisface copilului nevoia de cunoaștere prin explorarea și manevrarea obiectelor.
- o încurajează mișcarea, prin care se stimulează corpul și organele de simț.
- o îi dă prilejul să imite tot ceea ce înregistrează și să înțeleagă legăturile de tip cauzal.
- o îl ajută să-și exprime emoțiile și apoi să-și controleze emoțiile și să se cunoască pe sine. Astfel va reuși să-și concentreze atenția, să urmărească desfășurarea evenimentelor la care asistă și să achiziționeze informația propusă de adult în procesul educațional inclus în obiectivele curriculare.
- o dă posibilitate oricărui copil să se exprime și să acționeze în spațiul în care se află și sprijină adultul să-i identifice potențialitatea, inclusiv copiilor cu nevoi educaționale speciale sau celor care provin din familii defavorizate.

Copilul învață prin imitare, explorare și experiențe, iar jocul îi permite practicarea acestora într-o modalitate naturală și în același timp atractivă ținând vie curiozitatea copilului și dorința lui de cunoaștere. Educația timpurie implică o nouă abordare a copilului și a nevoilor acestuia în care învățarea are un loc central.

Caracteristica învățării copilului mic este și aceea a reluării unei activități și a operațiilor acesteia până ce o perfecționează și o rafinează. Exemplele cele mai vizibile sunt „recitirea” povestilor de nenumarate ori.

Amenajarea unui spatiu adecvat varstei copiilor garanteaza o

derulare coerenta a activitatilor.

Urmând teoria lui L.Vâgoțki, "zona proximală de dezvoltare" se referă la contextul relației umane și în egală măsură la următoarele principii în aranjarea clasei:

- Să promoveze sănătatea copilului: luminozitate, ventilație, căldură,
- Să fie un spațiu sigur care înlătură riscurile de accidente
- Să încurajeze mișcarea și explorarea
- Să fie expuse materialele didactice ca și produsele realizate de copiii astfel ca să permită percepția vizuală de către copii.
- Să permită colaborarea și interacțiunile dintre copii
- Împărțirea clasei în zone de activități: jocuri de masa; zona liniștită și cărți; zona construcții; zona apă și nisip;
- Să aibă echipamente ce permit flexibilitate în aranjarea spațiului
- Să fie confortabil și comod pentru copil și educatoare
- Să fie ușor de manipulat
- Să existe materiale suficiente, diverse care să incite și să stimuleze operațiile gândirii și creativitatea.
- Să se evite supraaglomerarea suprafețelor de expunere care induc inhibiția de protecție a copilului și limitează identificarea obiectelor în mediul respectiv.
- Să încurajeze copilul să facă alegeri, copilul exersând operațiile gândirii: analiza, comparațiile, asumarea deciziei pentru înțelegerea relației cauză-efect.
- Să existe materiale adecvate amplasate în locuri specifice pentru activități de artă plastică, joc de rol și imitare, știință, scriere și construcții.
- Să faciliteze activitățile și interacțiunile copiilor cu nevoi speciale de învățare și de interacțiune cu grupul de copii. (Ex.: bare tip mână curentă pe pereți, scaune stabile, jucării manipulative adaptate.)
- Să se asigure predictibilitatea prin amenajarea unui tip de tabel cu activitățile zilei, pe care copilul le poate vizualiza și poate înțelege ordinea desfășurării zilei (utilizarea cartoarelor cu

imaginile simbol ale activităților). Predictibilitatea programului are un rol esențial în organizarea mentală a percepției temporalității și reglementează coerența desfășurării activităților zilnice, ca zona proximală de timp.

- Amenajarea spațiului exterior menține aceleași cerințe, cu o atenție specială pe soiurile de plante și alte detalii caracteristice spațiului în aer liber, cu accent pe libertatea de mișcare în siguranță prin eliminarea riscurilor de accidente de orice fel.
- Să asigure activitățile în aer liber, care sunt reconsiderate. Curriculumul adecvat vârștelor mici cuprinde, în mod expres, activități de învățare în aer liber prin care, pe lângă obiectivele de cunoaștere a naturii și a elementelor fenomenelor naturale, se modelează spiritul ecologic al copilului în relația lui cu natura.

La aceasta propunere de amenajare a spațiului se adaugă o pregătire inițială și continuă a personalului care lucrează cu copilul.

Se susține lucrul în echipă care să participe la procesul de educare a copilului.

Este de semnalat situația particulară a numărului de locuri din grădinițe. După cum am semnalat a crescut numărul copiilor care frecventează unitățile preșcolare, iar numărul de locuri din grădinițe nu a crescut. Rezolvarea este complexă și depășește evident propunerea acestui material. Dar putem comenta că rezolvarea acestei situații, a numărului insuficient de grădinițe, este o problemă a administrației locale și a altor instituții. De asemenea, ține și de mobilizarea părinților de a se organiza și a face presiuni, a face lobby pentru educația propriilor copii. Conform Convenției ONU a Drepturilor Copilului, orice copil are dreptul la educație.

Concluzii

Preocuparea pentru copil și copilărie și pentru educația timpurie este evidentă și se remarcă prin intervenții guvernamentale și de asemenea ale societății civile din România.

Acesta este dovedit la nivel guvernamental de Legea creșelor; Proiectul pentru noua lege a învățământului supusă discuției publice prin difuzarea ei pe site-ul Ministerului Educației și

Cercetarii si care prevede ca educatia incepe de la varsta de 1 an. Strategia pentru educatie timpurie. Lansarea tichetelor de crese care sprijina familiile tinere.

La nivelul societatii civile se remarca o extindere a preocuparii pentru educatia timpurie prin organizare de evenimente pentru copiii de varste mici

Ex:Targul de carte Minilibri la care participa si institutii publice (Teatrul Ion Creanga) si parteneri media, fiind sponsorizat de multe companii.

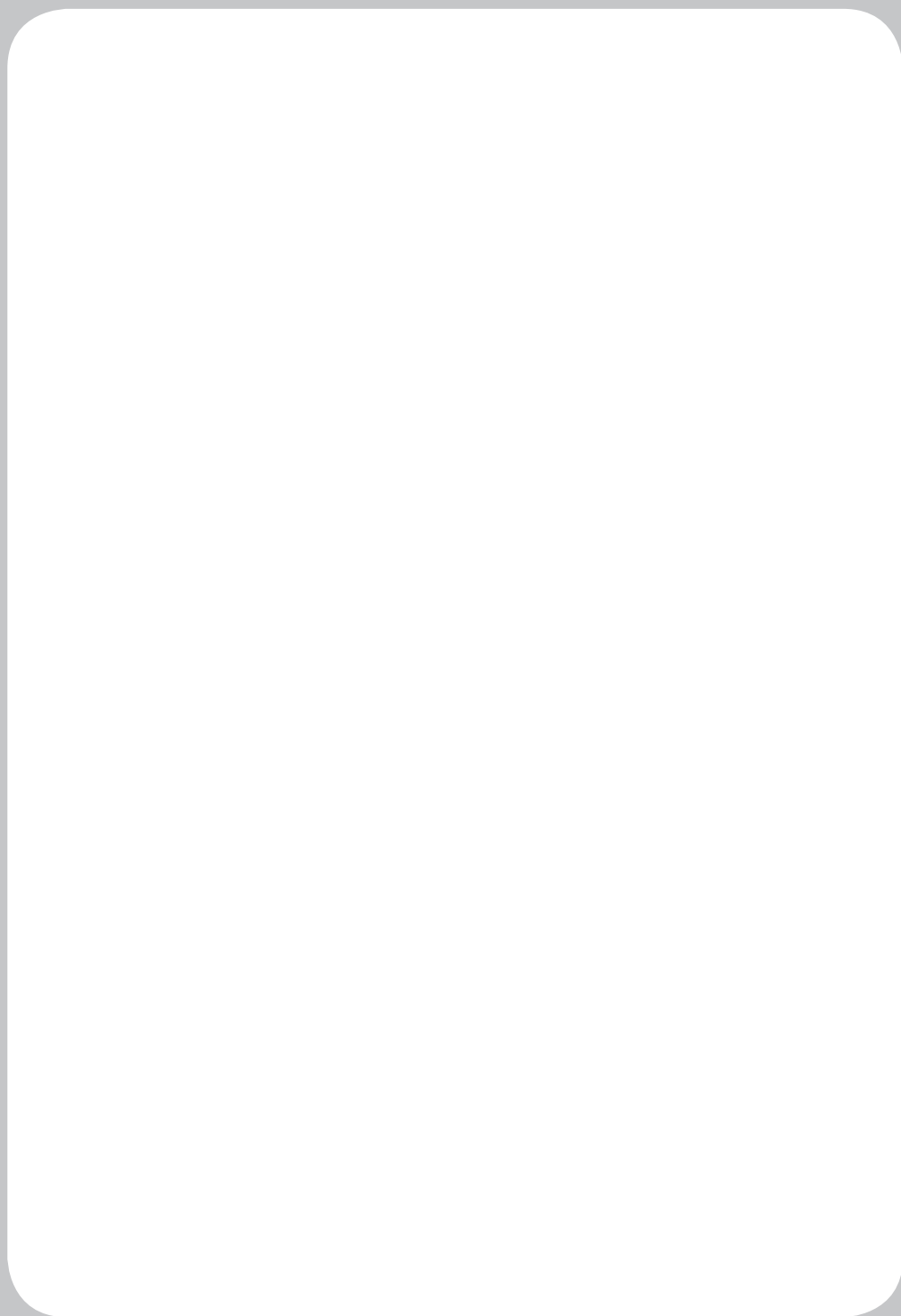
Targuri pentru bebelusi.

Cresterea numarului de site-uri care se adreseaza tinerilor parinti (Nounascuti. Scoalaparintilor, Copilul.ro sa)

In acest context este de marcat initiativa Teatrului Ion Creanga care in colaborare cu Centrul Pentru Educatie si Dezvoltare Profesionala Step by Step a promovat educatia timpurie prin seminarii si workshopuri adresate media, parintilor si reprezentantilor institutiilor guvernamentale (Ministerul Educatiei si Cercetarii, Autoritatea pentru Protectia Drepturilor Copilului, Ministerul Sanatatii, Presedintie).

Interesul pentru mica copilarie, pentru diversificarea interventiilor educationale prin educatia alternativa care o completeaza pe cea traditional formala cu o noua abordare a fost realizarea la Teatrul Ion Creanga a spectacolelor pentru copiii sub 3 ani: Baloane colorate si recentul spectacol Cucu-Bau cu Ham și Miau. Spectacolele au fost realizate intr-o viziune ce a avut in vedere varsta publicului pentru care se adresa si a implicarii copiilor in desfasurarea spectacolului prin relatia interactiva cu acestia.

Contextul mentionat la care se aduga aderarea Romaniei la Uniunea Europeana, care a facut sa fie o mai buna cunoastere a practicilor educationale pentru copiii mici si dau speranta ca educatia timpurie sa depaseasca teoria si sa implineasca asteptari concrete in organizarea creselor si gradinitelor.



**Bildung von Anfang an
Zur umfassenden und übergreifenden
Bedeutung des Performativen für die
Initiierung von Bildungsprozessen in der
frühen Kindheit**

Kirsten Winderlich

Für die Bildung in Kindertagesstätten geben in Deutschland die Bildungspläne der einzelnen Bundesländer eine Orientierung. In den Bildungsplänen und Rahmencurricula werden dabei einzelne Bildungsbereiche abgesteckt und beschrieben. Für die ästhetische Bildung ist in den meisten Fällen explizit ein eigener Bereich vorgesehen. Dem Theater für und mit kleinen Kindern kommt in diesem Rahmen im Vergleich zur Musik und der bildenden Kunst eine merklich geringere Rolle zu. Dieser Sachverhalt erstaunt und lässt begründet einfordern, dass für die darstellenden Künste, für das Theater, in den Bildungsbereichen ein ebenbürtiger Platz gefunden werden muss, baut das Theater doch auf dem Spiel auf, und ist das Spiel doch als erster basaler schöpferischer Akt von klein auf an zu verstehen.

Ich möchte in meinem Beitrag nicht für einen festen Ort der darstellenden Künste und des Theaters in den Bildungsbereichen plädieren. Vielmehr möchte ich argumentieren, dem Raumgreifenden des Spiels und des Performativen, der Inszenierung und der Aufführung in einer Bildung von Anfang an Platz zu machen. Ich möchte demzufolge für eine umfassende und bildungsbereichsübergreifende Integration der ästhetischen Bildung in die Bildungspläne, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Performativen, plädieren. In der Zuweisung der ästhetischen Bildung auf einen eigenen Bildungsbereich sehe ich bezüglich einer Bildung von Anfang an ein massives Missverständnis. Dieses Missverständnis werde ich über eine Problematisierung der ästhetischen Bildung im Kontext der Bildungsbereiche verdeutlichen und daran anknüpfend die umfassende und übergreifende Bedeutung des Performativen für die Initiierung von Bildungsprozessen in der frühen Kindheit herausarbeiten.

ZUR BILDUNGSSITUATION KLEINER KINDER IN DEUTSCHLAND

In den letzten Jahren werden in Deutschland grundlegende Probleme und Fragen des Aufwachsens von Kindern in „öffentlicher Verantwortung“ diskutiert. Dabei knüpft die Debatte in Deutschland an einen internationalen Diskurs an, der von folgenden Positionen ausgeht:

- die Bildung von Kindern wird als wichtigste Ressource unserer Gesellschaft gesehen
- dabei werden Kinder als vollwertige Individuen verstanden, die sich von Geburt an selbst bilden
- die Qualität der Bildung von Kindern hängt in besonderer Weise von der beruflichen Qualifikation und den Arbeitsbedingungen der Fachkräfte ab
- Forschung, Lehre und akademische Qualifizierung von Fachkräften an Hochschulen und Universitäten hat für die Bildung und Förderung von Kindern einen besonderen Stellenwert

Problematisch ist, dass Kindertageseinrichtungen in Deutschland immer noch lediglich als Angebote an Eltern und Familien verstanden werden, die Kinder zeitweise zu betreuen und die Eltern für die Erwerbstätigkeit zu entlasten. Der Begriff der Betreuung ist im Kontext von Bildung missverständlich, weil er die Bedürfnisse der Erwachsenen in den Vordergrund stellt. Bildung, insbesondere im Kontext früher Bildung, ist hingegen auf Selbstbildungsprozesse der Kinder bezogen, die von den Kindern selbst organisiert und gesteuert werden. Bildung in der frühen Zeit findet demnach in der Auseinandersetzung der Kinder mit sich selbst, den anderen und der Welt statt. Bildung in diesem Sinne bezieht sich jedoch nicht nur auf rationales Erkennen, sondern immer auch auf ein Zusammenspiel von rationalen, ästhetischen und emotionalen Aneignungsformen. Bildungschancen für Kinder zu eröffnen bedeutet demnach, die Perspektive der Kinder einzunehmen, ihnen bei ihrer spezifischen Auseinandersetzung der Welt gewissermaßen „über die Schulter zu blicken“ und aus dieser Perspektive eine Vielfalt an Anregungen und Impulsen zu geben, sich selbst zu bilden.

Vor dem Hintergrund der immensen Bedeutung einer Bildung von Anfang an sind in den letzten Jahren Bundesland spezifische Orientierungsrahmen und Bildungspläne für die Bildungsarbeit in

Kindertagesstätten entwickelt worden. Neben grundsätzlichen Überlegungen zum Bildungsverständnis in der frühen Kindheit werden in den Bildungsplänen teilweise verbindliche Angaben gemacht, die die Bildungsangebote im jeweiligen Bundesland standardisieren sollen. Die Standards sind hierbei als normative Vorgaben zu verstehen, die helfen sollen, die Steuerung von Bildungszielen umzusetzen.

MISSVERSTÄNDNIS ÄSTHETISCHE BILDUNG IM KONTEXT DER BILDUNGSBEREICHE

Die Festlegung von Bildungsbereichen ist als Einstieg zu der Standardisierung in den Kindertageseinrichtungen zu verstehen. In der Regel sind in den Bildungsplänen folgende Bildungsbereiche in unterschiedlicher Ausprägung beschrieben:

- sprachliche Bildung, Kommunikation und Schrift
- mathematisch-naturwissenschaftliche Bildung und Technik
- ästhetische Bildung
- Bewegung und Gesundheit
- ethisch-religiöse Bildung
- Lebenswelt
- emotionales und soziales Lernen

Die Bildungsbereiche, so wird es in den einzelnen Bildungsplänen immer wieder betont, orientieren sich an dem Bild vom Kind als einem eigenaktivem Individuum, das sich in Auseinandersetzung und Interaktion mit seiner Umwelt selbst bilden will und hierfür sowohl Freiräume für eigene spontane Aktivitäten als auch gezielte Impulse durch Erwachsene benötigt und erhalten soll. Die Bildungsbereiche sollen aus diesem Grund als spezifische Erfahrungsräume begriffen und umgesetzt werden.

Eine derartige Strukturierung der Bildungspotenziale von Kindern hilft zwar, das komplexe Spektrum einer Bildung von Anfang an zu greifen. Der Blick wird jedoch stark auf die Bildungsinhalte und weniger auf die selbsttätigen Prozesse, die zur Bildung führen, gelenkt. Um Kindern Erfahrungs- und Bildungsräume zu eröffnen, muss ein Gespür für die Bildungsprozesse entwickelt werden, die „passieren“, wenn sich Kinder mit sich, den anderen und der Welt auseinander setzen, wenn sie sich an der Welt „reiben“. Die Aufteilung in einzelne Bildungsbereiche führt schnell zum

Missverständnis, Bildung in Form von Unterricht zu vermitteln. Übersehen wird dabei häufig, dass die Umgebung, die für die Selbstbildungsprozesse der Kinder vorbereitet werden, zu stark mit dem erwarteten Verhalten der Kinder verknüpft sind, d.h. eher zu einem Reservat verkommen als zu einem offenen Bildungsraum, in dem sich auch dem Wesen von Bildung entsprechend Unerwartetes und Überraschendes ereignen kann. Oskar Negt fasst dieses Missverständnis mit folgenden Worten zusammen: „Nicht das Reservat, das die Erwachsenen für sie (die Kinder K.W.) bereithalten, und der permanente Wartestand, in dem sie von den Erwachsenen gehalten werden, befördern die Selbstfindung und die Wirklichkeitsaneignung der Kinder, sondern allein die Entdeckung und der Gebrauch ihrer eigenen Ausdrucksmittel: Körper, Raum, Zeit, Bewegung, Sehen, Tasten, Sprechen, Schreien“ (Negt 1983, 39).

Die spezifischen Weltaneignungsweisen und Ausdrucksmittel der Kinder sind stark an die sinnlich-körperliche Wahrnehmung gebunden. Es wird deutlich, dass der ästhetischen Bildung in Hinblick auf die frühe Bildung eine besondere Aufmerksamkeit, unabhängig eines spezifisch ästhetischen Bildungsbereiches, geschenkt werden sollte.

Ästhetische Bildung wird in den Bildungsplänen meistens in die unterschiedlichen künstlerischen Disziplinen unterteilt: Musik, bildnerisches Gestalten, Bewegung, und Theater. Dabei gerät schnell aus dem Blick, dass ästhetische Bildung sich nicht nur auf die Beschäftigung mit spezifisch künstlerischen Disziplinen und den entsprechenden künstlerischen Tätigkeiten bezieht. Vielmehr wird durch die ästhetische Bildung eine intensive Auseinandersetzung mit der Welt auf der körperlich-sinnlichen und szenisch-situativen Ebene angebahnt. Die Bildungsprozesse der Kinder in der frühen Zeit unterscheiden sich dabei stark von der Bildung Erwachsener. „Anders als für den Erwachsenen, ist die Welt dem Neugeborenen erst einmal neu. Er ist gänzlich damit beschäftigt, die Welt, die ihn umgibt, wahrzunehmen; Muster in ihr zu entdecken, die sich wiederholen, die er wiedererkennen und auf die er sich verlassen kann. Weil man ihm die Welt noch nicht erklären kann, ist er darauf angewiesen, aus seinen sinnlichen Erfahrungen zu erschließen, was wichtig, bedeutsam und für seine Entwicklung förderlich ist. Das heranwachsende Kleinkind erschließt sich auf diese Weise

Schritt für Schritt neue Erfahrungsbereiche. [...] Die sinnliche Wahrnehmung und das, was sich daraus erklären lässt, ist also das Eingangstor der Welterfahrung; sich mit ihr vertraut zu machen, die erste Bildungsaufgabe des Kindes“ (Schäfer 2003, 37 f.).

Das notwendige sinnliche an den Leib gebundene Wahrnehmen in diesen Aneignungsprozessen setzt hierbei voraus, dass der Mensch tätig ist. Denn „nicht das Auge sieht, sondern der Mensch, der ‚ganz‘ Auge ist, ist es, der sieht. Nicht das Ohr hört, sondern der ganz Ohr seiende Mensch ist es, der hört. Nicht der Körper, sondern der sich bewegende und bewegte Mensch ist es, der sich bewegt“ (Kükelhaus/zur Lippe 1982, 44). Tätigsein muss in diesem Zusammenhang als ein Prozess verstanden werden, der von dem Subjekt selbstbestimmt in Gang gesetzt und gehalten wird, der unverzichtbare Spuren im Leiblichen und Psychischen hinterlässt und Anstöße für sein Denken vermittelt.

Ästhetische Bildungsprozesse basieren also im ursprünglichen Bedeutungszusammenhang auf der durch die Sinne wahrgenommenen Wirklichkeit. Damit sind alle Erscheinungsformen gemeint, d.h. nicht nur das Schöne, sondern auch Erscheinungsformen, die als hässlich, langweilig oder sogar grausam wahrgenommen werden. Zentrale Aspekte der ästhetischen Bildung sind hierbei die Bildung des Empfindungsvermögens, die Entwicklung der Einbildungskraft und Fantasie, die Ausprägung des Geschmacks, die Fähigkeit zum Spiel und die Befähigung zur ästhetischen Urteilskraft (vgl. Klafki 1986, 469).

Zusammenfassend lässt sich sagen, dass ästhetische Bildung eine grundlegende Bedeutung für die frühkindlichen Bildungsprozesse hat, da Kinder sich insbesondere in den frühen Jahren über ihre sinnliche Wahrnehmung, das selbsttätige Eröffnen eigener ästhetischer Erfahrungsräume selbst bilden. Die Künste, insbesondere die zeitgenössischen performativen Künste, können hierfür spezifische Zugänge ermöglichen.

Soll Bildung auch schon vor der Schule, gewissermaßen von Anfang an, gefördert werden, ist es unerlässlich, die spezifischen Weltaneignungsweisen von Kindern wahrzunehmen und die Kinder in ihren eigenen Zugängen zur Welt zu unterstützen. Das Spezifische

der Bildungsprozesse von Kindern sind in allen Bildungsbereichen die ästhetischen Praktiken, mit deren Hilfe sich Kinder Schritt für Schritt mit ihrer Umwelt auseinandersetzen, sie Schritt für Schritt erobern und gestalten.

Norbert Neuß (2007) hat eine Form der Strukturierung der Bildungsbereiche gefunden, indem er an die den Kindern eigenen ästhetischen und kulturellen Praktiken anknüpft. Bei der Beschreibung und Klassifizierung der Bildungsbereiche geht er von dem aus, was Kinder tun, wenn sie sich selbst bilden. Er setzt also bei den den Kindern eigenen ästhetischen und kulturellen Praktiken an und unterscheidet u.a. folgende Bildungskategorien: sammeln und ordnen, Spiele erfinden und Spiele spielen, zeichnen und Zeichnungen. Die Reihe wäre erweiterbar mit der Beschreibung der spezifischen Praktiken von Kindern, etwa durch die Handlung des „Geräusche und Klänge Produzieren“, des „Sich Bewegen“, des „Spuren Hinterlassens“ oder des „Bilder Betrachten und Animieren“ (vgl. Neuß 2007, 123ff.).

ZUR BEDEUTUNG DES PERFORMATIVEN FÜR DIE FRÜHE BILDUNG AUS DER PERSPEKTIVE DER KINDER

Die ästhetischen Praktiken, durch die sich Kinder von Anfang an bilden, sind an vielschichtige Wahrnehmungs- und Handlungsprozesse auf der körperlich-sinnlichen und szenisch-situativen Ebene gebunden. Sie zeichnen sich durch einen performativen Charakter aus. Durch ästhetische Erfahrungen ausgehend vom eigenen Körper entstehen immer wieder neue Bildungsräume. Das Performative der frühen Bildungsprozesse bezieht sich also auf eine gegenwärtige ästhetische Erfahrung der Kinder, die durch die individuellen Handlungen und ästhetischen Praktiken der Kinder hervorgebracht wird und in Anlehnung an den etymologischen Aspekt des Stammwortes „formare“ zur Gestaltung innerer und äußerer Bilder führt.

Berücksichtigt man die Bedeutung des Performativen für die Bildungsprozesse von Kindern, verschieben und öffnen sich die Grenzen der ästhetischen Bildungsbereiche, der Bildenden und der Darstellenden Künste. Unabhängig davon, ob Kinder sich bewegen, spielen oder kritzeln, sind an den Bildungsprozessen der frühen Zeit immer unterschiedliche sinnliche Wahrnehmungsebenen und

Ausdrucksformen und immer sowohl die Handlung der Erkundung als auch die der Aufführung beteiligt.

Wenn Kinder in der frühen Zeit spielen, dann tun sie dieses zum einen um ihre Umwelt zu erkunden aber auch, um sich selbst auf andere Weise zu erleben, eine eigene Welt in der „großen“ immer wieder auch unbekannten Welt zu schaffen, auf die sie selbst Einfluss nehmen, die sie mit ihren Mitteln gestalten.

Ein eineinhalbjähriges Mädchen setzt sich zum Beispiel immer wieder eine bestimmte Rührschüssel auf den Kopf. Sie erntet für diese Aktion amüsierten Beifall der Erwachsenen. Für die Erwachsenen ist die Aktion eine Vorstufe des Rollenspiels. Für das Mädchen gehört der Topf auf dem Kopf zu einem umfassenderen Spiel. Der Topf passt direkt auf den Kopf, verlängert den Körper, verändert das Körpergefühl, macht den Kopf spürbar, gibt das Gefühl von Schutz, sowohl von oben als auch im Gesicht. Darüber hinaus ist die Handlung, sich selbst einen Topf aufzusetzen, ein Ritual, das dieses Mädchen immer dann initiiert, wenn es beginnt sich mit Dingen auseinander zu setzen, die zum Ort der Küche gehören, wenn das Mädchen beginnt die Dinge, vornehmlich Lebensmittel, aus- und einzuräumen, zu ordnen und zu sortieren. In diesem Sinne ist die Aktion als Verkleidung zu verstehen, die dem Mädchen verhilft sich auf eine spezifische Erkundung an einem bestimmten Ort zu fokussieren.

Ein weiteres Beispiel für das übergreifende Phänomen des Performativen in der frühen Bildung finden wir, wenn Kinder anfangen Spuren zu hinterlassen, zu schmieren und zu kritzeln. In diesen vordergründig bildnerisch gestaltenden Situationen vollziehen Kinder diese Handlungen und ästhetischen Praktiken des Spuren hinterlassen, Schmierens und Kritzeln immer auch in Verknüpfung mit Gesten, Körperhaltungen und stimmlicher Artikulation. Gestus, Bewegung und Stimme sind in diesem Moment untrennbar mit dem bildnerischen Akt verwoben (vgl. Baum und Kunz 2007). Die Wiederholung der Handlungen ist dabei als Aufführungen zu verstehen, die dabei zu einer Intensivierung und Erweiterung der ästhetischen Erfahrung führen.

Die Beispiele verweisen auf das Konzept der Performativität von Derrida (1988). Während Derrida mit der Performance den einzigartigen Akt kennzeichnet, bezieht er den Begriff der

Performativität auf den Akt des Zitierens. In dem Akt des Zitierens sind Ereignis, Wiederholung und Differenz ineinander verschränkt. Das Ereignis der ästhetischen Erfahrung kann nur über Wiederholung aktualisiert werden, die niemals identisch mit dem Wiederholten ist. Auf diese Weise wird Differenz erfahrbar (vgl. Derrida 1999, 291ff.). Kinder bilden sich durch die Handlungen, durch ihre eigenen ästhetischen Praktiken, die sie wiederholt vollziehen und zur Aufführung bringen. Wenn Kinder spielen, sich verstecken, Spuren hinterlassen, sammeln und sortieren, in diesen Handlungen für sich bedeutsame Momente entdeckt haben, ästhetische Erfahrungen gemacht haben, dann vollziehen sie diese Handlung nie nur einmal, sondern immer in Folge, in Variationen. Sie führen ihre Entdeckungen, die sie mit sich, den anderen und den Dingen ihrer Umgebung gemacht haben, auf und treten so in Interaktion mit den Erwachsenen. Die Aufführungen der ästhetischen Erfahrungen der Kinder sind dabei für die Erwachsenen häufig Grenzerfahrungen. Erwachsene erleben das wiederholende Spiel der Kinder häufig als endlos, bzw. redundant, die zunehmenden Spuren der Kinder als Zumutung. An dieser Stelle wird deutlich, welche Herausforderung das Performative der Bildung in der frühen Zeit für die Erwachsenen darstellt.

ZUM PERFORMATIVEN IN DER FRÜHEN BILDUNG ALS PÄDAGOGISCHE HERAUSFORDERUNG

Vordem Hintergrund und im Hinblick auf das Selbstbildungspotenzial der Kinder in der frühen Zeit kann nicht die primäre Frage sein, wie vermittle ich bestimmte Bildungsinhalte. Es sollte eher gefragt werden, wie ermögliche ich den Kindern zu tun, was sie tun wollen und müssen, um sich die Welt anzueignen und mit ihr auseinanderzusetzen? Es geht bei der Initiierung von Bildungschancen von Anfang an durch Impulse auf der körperlich-sinnlichen und szenisch-situativen Ebene weniger um eine Didaktik von Bildungsinhalten als vielmehr um eine Wahrnehmung und Inszenierung der Selbstbildungsprozesse, durch die Kinder sich mit der Welt auseinandersetzen und die sie in ihren Spielen immer wieder zur Aufführung bringen. Vor dem Hintergrund der Performativität der Selbstbildungsprozesse der Kinder kann frühe Bildung durch Impulse gefördert werden, die Wiederholungen der individuellen ästhetischen Erfahrungen der Kinder immer

wieder aufs Neue anregen und ihnen für diese immer wieder Raum geben.

Dieses Konzept zur Förderung einer Bildung von Anfang an weist eine besondere Nähe zu Michel de Certeaus Verständnis von Lesen auf. Lesen bedeutet nach de Certeau, sich in einem vorgegebenen System zu bewegen. Das System entspricht in diesem Bild einer Vielfalt von Bildungsgelegenheiten. De Certeau vergleicht die Tätigkeit des Lesens mit dem Herumwandern in der gebauten Ordnung einer Stadt. In Anlehnung an dieses Bild eröffnen die Bildungsgelegenheiten den Kindern ästhetische Erfahrungsräume, in denen sie sich unabhängig einer von Erwachsenen vorgegebenen Route bewegen können. De Certeau betont, dass während dieses Prozesses der Leser nicht den Platz des Autors einnimmt. Übertragen auf die von den Erwachsenen bereitgestellten Bildungsgelegenheiten für Kinder bedeutet dieses, dass die Kinder mit den Bildungsmöglichkeiten nicht zwingend nach den Erwartungen der Erwachsenen umgehen. Vielmehr macht de Certeaus Leser mit dem Text etwas anderes. „Er erfindet in den Texten etwas anderes als das, was ihre ‚Intention‘ war. Er löst sie von ihrem (verlorenen oder zufälligen) Ursprung. Er kombiniert ihre Fragmente und schafft in dem Raum, der durch ihr Vermögen, eine unendliche Vielzahl von Bedeutungen zu ermöglichen, gebildet wird, Un-Gewusstes“ (de Certeau 1988, 300). Die Kinder gehen mit den Bildungsgelegenheiten auf ihre je eigene Art und Weise um, lösen sie aus ihrem Kontext, aus dem Kontext der Erwachsenen, und bringen sie ins Wechselspiel mit ihrem Kontext, ihren Bedeutungen.

In Anlehnung an dieses Verständnis von Bildung kann die Förderung von Bildung in der frühen Zeit als Initiierung ästhetischer Erfahrungsräume verstanden werden, die von Kindern auf ganz vielfältige Weise betreten und auf ganz unterschiedliche Weise genutzt werden können. Den Erwachsenen kommt in diesem Bild die Aufgabe zu, den Kindern Zutritt zu diesem Raum zu ermöglichen. Die Initiierung wird dabei durch Impulse unterstützt. Die Impulse machen also nicht ein bestimmtes Angebot, das auf eine bestimmte von den Erwachsenen intendierte Weise von den Kindern angenommen wird. Vielmehr eröffnen die Impulse einen ästhetischen Erfahrungsraum, der Kinder auffordert einzutreten

und diesen in unzählbare Möglichkeitsräume zu verwandeln.

Im Hinblick auf die Aufgabe der Initiierung ästhetischer Erfahrungs- und Bildungsräume lassen sich folgende Implikationen für die Arbeit der Pädagogen ableiten:

Die Pädagogen machen Impulse, die Interaktionsprozesse zwischen den Kindern und ihrer Umwelt auslösen. Dabei antizipieren sie die aktuellen ästhetischen und kulturellen Praktiken der Kinder. Die Pädagogen erzeugen durch ihre Impulse unterschiedliche Atmosphären, die bei den Kindern Erinnerungen, Vorstellungen und Phantasien auslösen. Die Impulse liegen als pointierte Handlungen auf den Ebenen Sprache, Bewegung, Material und Raum und regen die Kinder an, inne zu halten, sich intensiv mit ihren Mitteln, mit einer Sache oder den anderen auseinanderzusetzen und ihren dabei ausgelösten Vorstellungen und inneren Bildern Gestalt zu geben.

Eine weitere Möglichkeit, Bildungsprozesse in der frühen Kindheit zu initiieren liegt in der Beobachtung des Tuns der Kinder und einer daran anknüpfenden Inszenierung. Der Begriff der Inszenierung wird in diesem Kontext mit Martin Seel (2001) als absichtsvoll eingeleiteter sinnlicher Prozess vor zumindest einem potenziellen Publikum verstanden (vgl. Seel 2001, 61). Pädagogen inszenieren die ästhetische Erfahrungssituation des Kindes, indem sie sich in das Spiel des Kindes einbringen und ihm gewissermaßen die Erfahrung des Kindes zeigen und auf diese Weise aus einer anderen Perspektive wiederholen. Hierfür ist eine mimetische Transformation der wahrgenommenen ästhetischen Erfahrung fruchtbar. Für die Gestaltung eines Impulses ahmt der Pädagoge die ästhetische Praxis oder das Spiel des Kindes nach und regt das Kind durch die Nachahmung an, die eigene Handlung weiter zu spielen und zu entwickeln.

Die Inszenierung ist dabei als erneuter Impuls zur Erweiterung der ästhetischen Erfahrung zu verstehen. Für die Inszenierung ästhetischer Erfahrungen von Kindern ist die Form der ungerichteten Beobachtung (vgl. Schäfer 2004) unerlässlich. Die gerichtete Beobachtung lenkt die Aufmerksamkeit auf Verhaltensbereiche von Kindern, die bereits bekannt sind. Ungerichtetes Beobachten hingegen versucht all das zu erfassen, was die Aufmerksamkeit

des Wahrnehmenden erregt. Es ist für Unerwartetes und Überraschungen offen.

Die Impulse initiieren bei den Kindern auf drei Ebenen ästhetische Erfahrungen, die zu eigensinnigen Bildungsprozessen führen. Sie lassen sich folgendermaßen beschreiben: Unerwartetes erleben, Ungewohntes wahrnehmen und tun und Eigenes hervorbringen (vgl. Winderlich 2005, 286ff.). Die Kinder fühlen sich durch die Impulse direkt und körperlich-sinnlich angesprochen. Sinnhafte Gefühle, Erlebnisse, Bilder und Handlungen werden ausgelöst. Die Impulse verändern die gewohnte alltägliche Wahrnehmungsweise und fordern ein nicht-routiniertes Wahrnehmungshandeln. Die Impulse lenken die Wahrnehmung der Kinder auch nach innen und binden so die eigene Vorstellungs- und Imaginationsfähigkeit mit ein. Die Impulse regen Kinder an, ihrer anderen und neuen Wahrnehmung Ausdruck zu verleihen, sie aufzuführen und sich dadurch mit den anderen überhaupt erst austauschen zu können.

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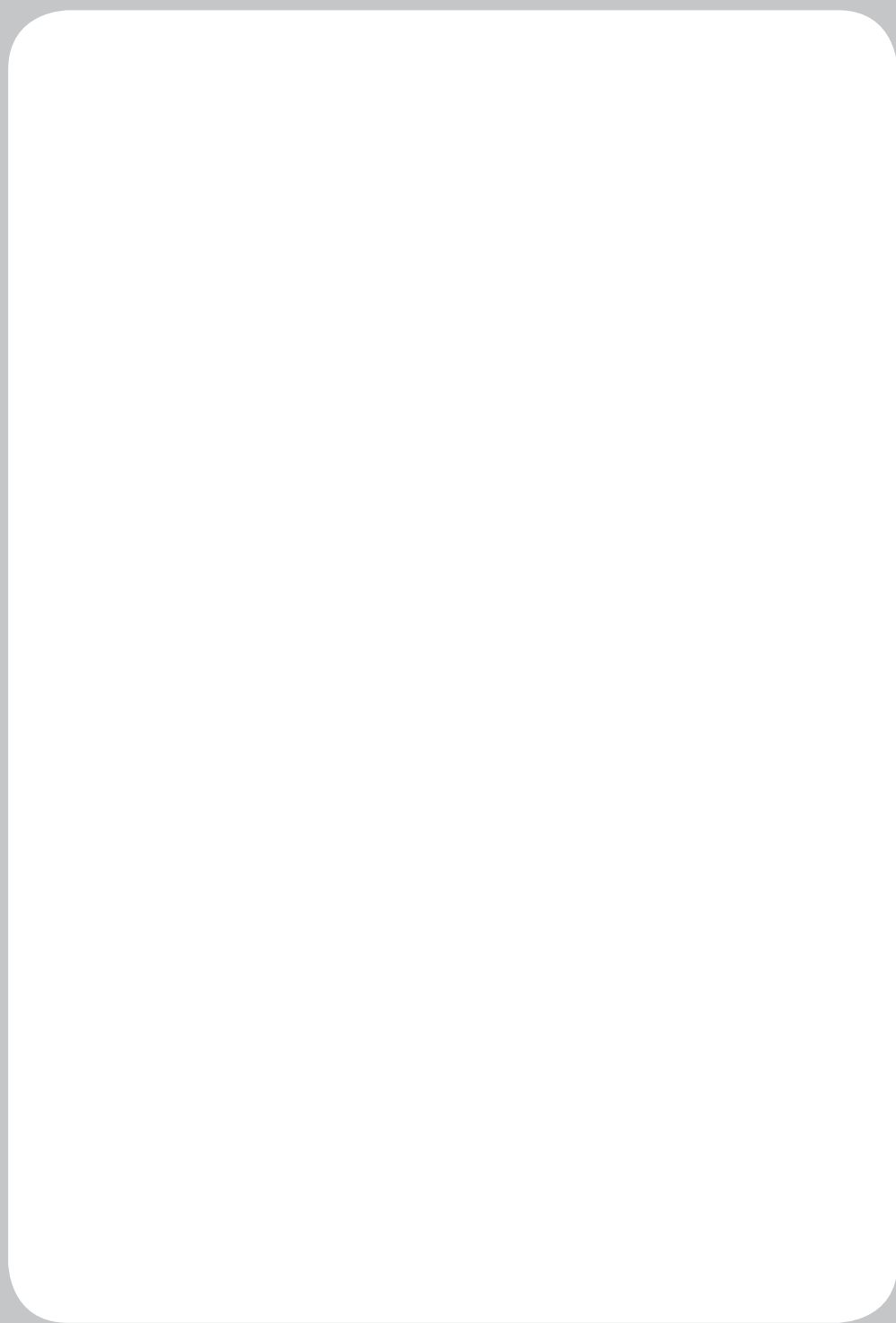
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Biographies

Jo Belloli

Jo Belloli is Associate Producer and Programmer at Polka Theatre in London with specific experience in early years theatre spanning twenty five years. Additional freelance work has included research and evaluation, programming and management, training and arts consultation across a range of theatre, arts and early education organisations. Jo currently serves the UK partnership of Small size, and is a member of TYA UK (the UK branch of Assitej).

ITALY

Anna Paola Corradi, a graduate in Pedagogy from the University of Bologna, is a teacher in a state crèche. She is a member of the Cultural Association "Tapirulan", which deals with theatrical research and training and has been cooperating with La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi for many years.

Marina Manferrari graduated in Pedagogy in 1980 and has since worked in the early years educational services for the Municipality of Bologna as a teacher, manager and regional advisor. She is a member of the "National Group Nursery Schools and Crèches", and, like Anna Paola, is closely associated with *Tapirulan*. Her work with La Baracca, Testoni Ragazzi of Bologna gave rise to the research project "Theatre and nursery school", aimed at producing theatrical shows and workshops for two- and three- year -olds.

BELGIUM

Isabelle Chavepeyer is a psychologist and a trainer at the F.R.A.J.E. She is interested in and curious about issues linked to the cultural awakening of toddlers, art and encounters among cultures. She has co-written the album "Un bébé, un livre, une voix" ("A baby, a book, a voice") published by the F.R.A.J.E. and Grandir publications.

Carine Lesage is a psychologist and a trainer at the F.R.A.J.E.

Fascinated by the world of babies, she brings her knowledge and her critical and kind view to the early childhood professionals she meets and trains.

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Charlotte Fallon, director; **Gaetane Réginster**, administration and marketing & **Noemi Tiberghien**, performer, work with Théâtre de la Guimbarde, Charleroi.

UK

Kathy McArdle is currently the Artistic Producer with Fuse: New Theatre for Young People, (formerly Merseyside Young People's Theatre), an innovative theatre company based in Liverpool, England producing professional theatre work for and with young people and children.

She is a key member of the Merseyside Children's First Forum, which is taking a strategic view of arts and cultural provision for early years across Liverpool and Merseyside. A director and dramaturg specialising in drama and theatre in nursery and early years settings, she also has experience in working with libraries, galleries and museums in relation to the development of innovative early years learning programmes.

She is carrying out this research in association with Early Arts, the only organisation in the UK dedicated to the arts and creativity in early years.

Ruth Churchill Dower / Isaacs UK

Ruth Churchill Dower is the Director of Isaacs UK, a cultural learning consultancy working across the arts, cultural and early educational communities. Isaacs UK provides specialist support in areas of early years, arts in education, networked learning partnerships, professional development, online learning, evaluation and impact assessments, research and evaluation. One of the main networks run by Isaacs UK is Earlyarts, a professional development network for arts, cultural and early years professionals working creatively with young children and families.

www.isaacsuk.co.uk

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SLOVENIA

Maja Kozmos is an undergraduate student in her final year of psychology in Filozofska fakulteta, Ljubljana. She is interested in developmental and educational psychology, as well as in theatre, where she has been working occasionally for the last two years. After graduation she wishes to devote time to puppetry and to unite the two fields of work – psychology and theatre.

ROMANIA

Carmen Anghelescu is a highly qualified clinical psychologist with a career spanning thirty years. She has a breadth of expertise, nationally and internationally, as a researcher, trainer and inspector in the fields of public health and child welfare, child protection and early childhood education. Over the last ten years she has had direct involvement in social welfare and educational reforms in Romania, and is currently a consultant for UNICEF, Cabinet CARAN, based in Bucharest.

GERMANY

Kirsten Winderlich is a teacher and researcher in the field of aesthetic education, specialising in contemporary arts and early childhood.

University teaching positions include Berlin University of Arts/DE, and Free University of Bozen – Bolzano/IT

She has collaborated in the development of the degree course "Education in Childhood BA" at the University of Applied Science, Potsdam, and is the scientific consultant and partner in the German project "Theatre from the beginning" (Children's and Young People's Theatre Centre in the Federal Republic of Germany).

Small size, the net... a short presentation

Small size, the net is a three-year project (2006-2009) for the development of the European Network for the diffusion of performing arts for early childhood (0-6 years, with particular attention given to the 0-3 age-group).

The Network "Small size" was founded in 2005 with the support of the European Commission and the Culture 2000 programme. It was established by four professional theatre and educational arts organisations, La Baracca (Italy), Théâtre de la Guimbarde (Belgium), Acción Educativa (Spain) and GOML – (Slovenia). Later in the same year, three additional partners were invited to become co-organisers to support the development of Small size: Helios Theater (Germany), Polka Theatre (UK) and Teatrul Ion Creangă (Romania). Further funding from the European Commission and Culture 2000 programme was subsequently awarded in July 2006 for the three-year project, to allow an extension of the network across Europe and beyond.

Small size provides a structure through which to meet, share expertise and exchange knowledge; to develop collaborative projects and disseminate information and research. Through its networking, it aims to promote an awareness of the significance of performing arts for early childhood with objectives that include increasing children's creative potential along with the comparison of different European cultural traditions. In addition, it aims to give value to projects and events that support the development of training and educational programmes for early years educators and artists, and for producers and artists creating productions for the early childhood audiences, through widening opportunities for research and collaboration.

The principal inspiration of Small size rests in the children themselves, and our value of them. Through the network we trust the beneficiaries will be these children, alongside artists, teachers, early years educators, carers and service managers, parents and grandparents... in effect, everybody involved in performing arts, education and care of young children.

SMALL SIZE ACTIVITIES

The Small size project organises and promotes several activities which can be grouped into three areas: **production, training and diffusion-exchange.**

Productions and artistic research play a lead role. During the project, the partners have realised many productions, co-productions and artistic performances for children 0-6 years, and supported the production of new pieces of theatre for children 0-4 years by other European companies through a "Small size seeding fund". In addition, a piece of shared Artistic Research was commissioned and undertaken last year. This workshop-based research has been led by three directors from three of the partner companies (Helios Theater-Hamm, Germany, La Baracca-Bologna, Italy and La Guimbarde-Charleroi, Belgium).

The various training activities differ in content and structure – workshops, research groups, internships – addressing artists, teachers and children. These activities are fundamental, especially when thinking about an improvement in expertise and a wider advocacy of the arts as a basic right for the very youngest children

Amongst these activities are the "Small size workshops" addressing young artists and playwrights, or nursery nurses and teachers from several European and non-European countries - workshops designed and intended to offer them the opportunity to share a common artistic experience

Diffusion-exchange activities are of key importance to an expanding network, and this because of their capacity to nurture relationships, provide opportunity for sharing and, in doing so, help create an active memory. These activities include publications, multimedia documentation, research and exchange amongst the partners, alongside events such as festivals and showcases. The experiences and knowledge developed over these almost-three years of the Small size project are gathered into three books, one of which is in your hands now.

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