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THE VIEWS OF TEACHERS AND PARENTS ON THE TASKS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN THE SLOVENIAN PRESCHOOLS

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Abstract

In the present article we present the views of teachers and parents on the task of environmental education in preschool in socio-emotional area. We have found that both with teachers and with parents of children included in preschool it is for the most part possible to empirically identify the theoretical structure of the tasks of environmental education in preschool in socio-emotional area (cooperation, conflict resolution, self-determination, independence, and positive self-image).

On the sample of 164 teachers and 245 parents we applied the procedure of factor analysis to examine the dimensions of socio-emotional area of environmental education. We found parents prefer the following tasks: cooperation, positive self-image, subordination to adults, and orientation to success. In teachers' opinion in this area the following tasks are important: cooperation, positive self-image, encouraging independence, and self-determination.

Key words: Preschool teachers, parents, views, environmental education, tasks.

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Introduction

The term environmental education (German *Umwelterziehung*) emerged in the 1960s. The first basic concepts of education oriented towards environment or nature can, however, be traced as far back as the 18th century. In the works of Rousseau, Humboldt, and Montessori already, advice can be found how children can be brought up in the love for environment, the nature.

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At the Tbilisi conference environmental education was defined as a permanent process, in which individuals and the society are aware of their environment. In the framework of environmental education three main goals of environmental education were highlighted: promoting clear awareness of the economic, political and ecological interdependence of phenomena in urban and in rural areas; to give everyone opportunities to acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes, personal commitment, and skills needed for the protection and improvement of environment; and setting up new patterns of behaviour towards environment in individuals, groups, and the society as a whole.

The goals and tasks of environmental education in preschool

The main objective of modern age is not to solve theoretical questions but to change social values and human behaviour, specially of those involved in educational process. The key to education for sustainable development is the mentality of teachers. The society and the world have to urgently confront with the need for fundamental shift and it has to start with the change of perception of each and every one of us. Weingerl (2016) determined that our survival depends on learning principal lessons such as empathy, responsibility, self-control and humbleness.

Marentič-Požarnik (2000) estimates environmental education is a complex concept the goals of which include the cognitive, emotional-motivational, and the area of action and skills. Benedict (1991) says the goals of environmental education are multi-layered and intertwined.

In defining the tasks of environmental education we started from the classification of tasks in preschool constructed by Brönstrup-Roßbach (1987). The cited authors produced a theoretical model that contains only those tasks in which certain value can be recognised. The theoretical construction consists of ten tasks that are divided into two groups corresponding to the basic areas of child's development: the cognitive and socio-emotional.

According to Brönstrup-Roßbach's (1987) classification educational tasks in socio-emotional area are: cooperation, conflict resolution, self-determination, independence, and positive self-image.

Cooperation

Cooperation or the ability of cooperation is an important task of education. Research carried out by Johnson and Johnson (1991), Hertz-Lazarowitz (1992), O'Donnell and Danseraeu (1992), and Slavin (1992) studies the influence of interaction and cooperation of peers in the process of learning. They found learning with cooperation can be

successful if in the group the teacher assumes the role of coordinator and organiser.

Conflict resolution

With the term conflict the situation is denoted in which there are opposing developments and tendencies, behaviours, and feelings (Anderson, 1999). The most frequent causes of emergence of conflicts with children are differences and disagreements that refer to opposing wishes, tendencies that cannot be realised, attempts of mutual control, negative evaluation, and differences in the perception of a certain situation (Žižak, Vizek Vidović, Ajduković, 2012).

Self-determination

Self-determination represents the tendency of our own desires determining our behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000). The role of teacher in this is to encourage self-determination of pupils—where the latter should be consistent with the expectations of the environment.

Independence

The role of adults in this process is extremely important. Parents ought to support child's independence already in activities such as: eating, dressing, climbing, and similar. S. Irović and J. Krstović believe "positive support of child's independent attempts, especially in early stage, strengthens the development of intrinsic motivation" (Irović and Krstović, 2000:11).

Self-image

The image of oneself indicates the attitude toward (view on) individual's personality and includes the ways of assessing and evaluating oneself. It also includes self-confidence, the awareness of oneself, and self-respect. The realisation of a positive image of oneself is the basic condition in developing a satisfied personality that brings fulfilment with optimism to the end of life (Zalokar-Divjak, 1998).

The purpose of research

In the article we present part of the findings of a more extensive research on the views of parents and preschool teachers on the tasks of environmental education in preschool.

The main purpose of our work is to shed light on the views of parents and teachers on the tasks of environmental education in socio-emotional area.

We set ourselves the following research question:

Which dimensions of the tasks of environmental education in the socio-emotional area can be identified on the sample of parents and teachers?

General methodological approach and research methods

The research is based on empirical-inductive general methodological approach. The views of teachers and parents on the tasks of environmental education were investigated with the empirical-inductive approach, leant on the descriptive and causal non-experimental method of educational research.

The sample

The sample was selected on the population of teachers and parents of preschool children from randomly selected preschools in the whole of the Republic of Slovenia. Selected pattern consists of simple and random patterns of hypothetical population. 300 questionnaires were distributed among preschool teachers and just as many were distributed among parents.

After all controls (logical and with the assistance of the computer program) 164 preschool teachers and 248 parents were included in the final processing, which represents our sample.

The procedures and instruments of data gathering

In gathering data the principles of voluntary participation, anonymity, and individuality were taken account of.

The basis for the production of the instruments for determining the tasks of environmental education in preschool was the theoretical construction of goals and tasks in socio-emotional area. In preparing the instruments we leant on Brönstrup-Roßbach's (1987) questionnaires prepared for the examination of teachers' and parents' views on educational tasks in preschool in Germany and on the assessment scale of parents' views on the education of the child in the family and in school by L. Okagaki and R. Sternberg (1993). In this we considered research of K. Špoljar (1989) on the views of parents and teachers on the tasks of preschool.

Based on the above we produced the instruments in the form of two questionnaires with Likert type scale separately for teachers and for parents. For each task we prepared a few short statements about the child, the teacher, and environmental education in preschool. With each statement the surveyees ticked their agreement or disagreement on the 1 to 4 scale (1= I do not agree, 2= I do partly not agree, 3= I partly agree, 4= I agree). The instruments consist of two parts with 44 statements in total. One of the instruments consists of 24 statements (cognitive area) and the other of 20 statements (socio-emotional area). The instrument was filled in by both parents and teachers. Below only the results for socio-emotional area are presented.

The data were processed at the level of descriptive and inference statistics with the SPSS computer program package.

For all covered claims we determined the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, the kurtosis and peakedness. Factor analysis was applied to determine the common area of the covered claims. The number of factors was determined according to Kaiser-Gutman criterion and arbitrarily. In data processing and in the analysis of the results arithmetic mean and standard deviation was first computed for each individual statement, and then also the kurtosis and skewness and the intersections. This allowed us to determine the place of individual claim on the sample of parents and teachers. We thus obtained a descriptive review of the views of parents and teachers, which served us as a point of departure for a systematic computation and analysis of the research data.

With variance analysis we studied the more important effects of independent variables on the results in the survey questionnaires.

Results and Discussion

In processing and analyzing the data, we first of each claim separately calculate the arithmetic MEAN and STD, then the KURT and SKEW.

Table1: The tasks of environmental education in socio-emotional area on the sample of teachers and parents

Variable	Sample	MEAN	STD	KURT	SKEW
3...development of child's personality	Parents N=205	2,28	1,07	-1,31	0,12
	Teachers N=164	2,52	1,02	-1,09	-0,19
4...development of child's personality is prevented	Parents N=205	2,26	1,09	-1,25	0,26
	Teachers N=164	2,63	1,13	-1,34	-0,19
2... attitude to himself and to others	Parents N=205	2,16	1,10	-1,24	0,38
	Teachers	2,34	1,04	-1,25	0,00
12...without the assistance of	Parents N=205	2,62	0,96	-0,82	-0,33

adults	Teachers N=164	2,49	0,87	-0,66	-0,35
17...get involved in their conflicts when children's health and security are endangered	Parents N=205	3,04	1,02	-0,59	-0,75
	Teachers N=164	3,29	0,96	0,49	-1,24
11...children needn't be protected from unpleasant experience	Parents N=205	2,29	1,08	-1,25	0,19
	Teachers N=164	2,16	1,06	-1,24	0,30
10...adults introduce children into playing	Parents N=205	3,28	0,85	0,43	-1,05
	Teachers N=164	3,30	0,87	0,49	-1,14
9...adults introduce children into playing	Parents N=205	2,94	0,94	-0,35	-0,68
	Teachers N=164	2,76	1,00	-0,77	-0,51
6...encouraging children to achieving success	Parents N=205	2,13	1,06	-1,28	0,29
	Teachers	2,05	1,10	-1,23	0,47
16...common interest is more important 1	Parents N=205	2,76	0,93	-0,54	-0,50
	Teachers N=164	2,42	0,97	-1,02	-0,80
7...joint activities of children are more important than individual activities	Parents N=205	2,40	0,99	-1,09	-0,07
	Teachers N=164	1,90	0,98	-1,15	0,52
8...child helps another	Parents N=205	2,93	0,99	-0,90	-0,46
	Teachers N=164	2,55	1,02	-1,10	-0,12
20...develops self-confidence	Parents N=205	3,91	1,02	-0,59	-0,75
	Teachers N=164	3,91	0,38	25,46	-4,57

14...are encouraged to independently	Parents N=205	3,68	0,58	5,57	-2,13
	Teachers N=164	3,49	0,75	2,59	-1,63
15...child must be aware of his or her personal value	Parents N=205	3,74	0,58	5,93	-2,44
	Teachers N=164	3,74	0,58	8,10	-2,68
1... mutual conflicts without the assistance of adults	Parents N=205	2,04	0,91	-1,25	0,18
	Teachers N=164	2,43	0,87	-0,85	-0,55
18... teachers must often make decisions in the name of children	Parents N=205	2,57	0,94	-0,84	-0,19
	Teachers N=164	3,29	0,96	0,49	-1,24
5...adult who should have the last word	Parents N=205	2,02	1,03	-0,98	0,53
	Teachers N=164	1,76	0,95	-0,35	0,93
13... do not agree ¹³	Parents N=205	2,68	0,92	-0,60	0,42
	Teachers N=164	2,82	0,90	0,50	-0,44
19...developed pride	Parents N=205	3,22	0,83	0,22	-0,90
	Teachers N=164	3,18	0,89	-0,13	-0,84

In the Table 1 we can show claims related to the socio-emotional area of environmental education in preschool.

The dimensions of the tasks of environmental education in socio-emotional area

On the sample of parents six factors were identified in the socio-emotional area that account for 52.12% of the total variance. These are: individual approach, conflict resolution, orientation to success, cooperation, independence, and a positive image of oneself.

Table 2: The tasks of environmental education in socio-emotional area on the sample of parents

VAR	FAC1	VAR	FAC2	VAR	FAC3	VAR	FAC4	VAR	FAC5	VAR	FAC6
VV3	0.79	VV12	0.73	VV10	0.63	VV16	0.75	VV20	0.77	VV15	0.56
VV4	0.75	VV17	0.66	VV9	0.62	VV7	0.73	VV14	0.76	VV19	0.47
VV2	0.74	VV11	0.59	VV6	0.61	VV8	0.53	VV13	0.17	VV1	0.44
VV5	0.3	VV13	0.47	VV19	0.41	VV5	0.29	VV8	0.15	VV13	0.18
VV6	0.28	VV8	0.32	VV13	0.38	VV6	0.22	VV15	0.13	VV16	0.15
VV1	0.13	VV1	0.22	VV15	0.38	VV1	0.19	VV7	0.12	VV20	0.12

Legend:

VAR: variable

FAC 1,2,3,.....:factor 1,2,3,.....

Factor 1 account for 9.97% of the total variance. It is defined by three variables that point to the educational task of respecting individual approach. Emphasised orientation of the child into the group may prevent the development of child’s personality (variable 3). If environmental education regularly takes place in group, there is the possibility the development of child’s personality is prevented (variable 4). Frequent praise in the framework of environmental education has damaging effect on child’s attitude to himself and to others (variable 2). In consistence with this the factor can be explained as a definite requirement for individual approach or individualisation.

Factor 2 accounts for 9.70% of the total variance. It is clearly described by three variables. Two variables speak about how in the framework of environmental education children should resolve mutual disagreements without the assistance of adults, and that adults would only be allowed to get involved in their conflicts when children’s health and security are endangered. The third variable speaks in the framework of environmental education children needn’t be protected from unpleasant experience. Given the content, the factor was denoted as independent conflict resolution.

Factor 3 accounts for 9.36% of the total variance and likewise includes three variables: it is necessary adults introduce children into playing; in the framework of environmental education grown-ups must encourage children to fight for what they wish, and the child must constantly be encouraged to above average performance. Given that the content of the aforementioned variables directly or indirectly indicates the role of adults in encouraging children to achieving success, the factor was named orientation to success.

Factor 4 accounts for 8.27% of the total variance and is defined by three variables: common interest in the framework of environmental education is more important than the interest of individual child; in the framework of environmental education joint activities of children are more important than individual activities; and in the framework of environmental education it is more important the child helps another person than that he or she is the first. In consistence with its content, the dimension was denoted as cooperation.

Factor 5 accounts for 7.52% of the total variance and is defined by two variables: it is important for child's development in the framework of environmental education she or he develops self-confidence (and it is also important children are encouraged to independently select the activities they wish to be engaged in. This dimension was denoted independence.

Factor 6 accounts for 7.30% of the total variance and includes only one variable, namely: in the framework of environmental education the child must be aware of his or her personal value. The factor was denoted as positive image of oneself.

The dimensions of the tasks of environmental education in socio-emotional area on the sample of teachers

On the sample of preschool teachers we also identified six factors that together account for 55.58% of the variance: self-determination, cooperation, individual approach, positive image of oneself, and subordination to adults.

Table 3: The tasks of environmental education in socio-emotional area on the sample of teachers

VAR	FAC1	VAR	FAC2	VAR	FAC3	VAR	FAC4	VAR	FAC5	VAR	FAC6
VV11	0.70	VV7	0.76	VV14	0.77	VV4	0.82	VV19	0.74	VV18	0.74
VV1	0.69	VV6	0.64	VV16	0.66	VV3	0.82	VV20	0.66	VV5	0.68
VV12	0.67	VV8	0.61	VV15	0.55	VV2	0.36	VV15	0.53	VV6	0.26
VV17	0.65	VV10	0.36	VV13	0.44	VV20	0.27	VV9	0.35	VV9	0.25
VV2	0.47	VV13	0.31	VV12	0.29	VV13	0.16	VV10	0.32	VV16	0.22

Legend:

VAR: variable

FAC 1,2,3,...: factor 1, 2,3,....

Factor 1 account for 11.27% of the total variance. It is clearly defined by four variables: in the framework of environmental education children needn't be protected from bad experience; the teacher must always allow the children independent choices of their activities related to environmental problems; in the framework of environmental education children should resolve their mutual conflicts without the assistance of adults; while grownups should only intervene in their disagreements when health and security are in danger. These variables directly and indirectly address the topic of self-determination. This is why we denoted the factor as self-determination.

Factor 2 accounts for 9.75% of total variance and includes three variables. Their content points to educational role of cooperation. Joint children's activities in the framework of environmental education are more important than individual ones. In the framework of environmental education children need to be encouraged to outstanding success. It is more important in the framework of environmental education the child helps another person than himself to be the first. In consistence with this we interpret the factor as cooperation.

Factor 3 accounts for 9.27% of the total variance. It is defined by three variables. The first, the one with the greatest weight, says in the framework of environmental education children must be encouraged to independently choose their activities. The other two variables refer to emphasis on common interest in environmental education that is more important than the interests of individual child, pointing out in the framework of environmental education children must be aware of their personal qualities. The content of these variables points to encouraging independence, so we named it independence.

Factor 4 accounts for 9.18% of the total variance. It is defined by two variables: if environmental education always takes place in group, this can hinder the development of child's personality. Too strong orientation of the child into the can also hinder the development of child's personality. The content of the variables points to the need for individualisation, so we denoted this dimension as individual approach or individualisation.

Factor 5 accounts for 9.00% of the total variance and includes three variables: in the framework of environmental education the child must develop the feeling of pride; for his or her development the development of self-confidence is important; in the framework of environmental education children must be aware of their personal value. In

consistence with the content of the variables the factor was named a positive image of oneself.

Factor 6 accounts for 7.29% of the total variance and includes two variables: in the framework of environmental education teachers must often make decisions in the name of children, and it is an adult who should have the last word. The content of the claims speaks about subordination and obedience of children, the factor was thus denoted as subordination to adults.

The differences in understanding the tasks of environmental education in socio-emotional area between parents and teachers

We found in the area of environmental education in preschool it is possible to identify the following socio-emotional dimensions of educational tasks: individual approach, conflict resolution, orientation to success, cooperation, independence, positive image of oneself, self-determination, and subordination to adults. In addition to the factor of theoretical construction (cooperation, conflict resolution, independence, and positive image of oneself) with parents we also identified the factors of individual approach and orientation to success. Self-determination as a factor of theoretical construction was not identified in our research. The claims of this factor are distributed among other factors.

In the sample of preschool teachers we identified the factors individual approach and subordination to adults with the dimension of theoretical construct. Conflict resolution was not identified as an independent factor; individual claims belonging to this dimension were distributed to other factors.

Factor analysis indicates four factors are identical in the sample of parents and in the sample of teachers: individual approach, cooperation, independence, and positive image of oneself.

Both parents and teachers believe individual approach is one of the educational tasks. From the aspect of the development of an individual and the society the fact must be taken into account personality does not only consist of individual characteristics, but also of general and specific ones. The individual is a contradictory unity of the general, the specific, and the individual. The fact there are unique personalities and individual differences points to the need of individual approach in the education process. Individuality and uniqueness of personality create unique combinations of general, specific, and individual characteristics (dimensions) that form the unique human structure (Kovačević, Stančić, Mejovšek, 1998). For children, parents, teachers, and the society individualisation means more freedom and responsibility. For the

realisation of the said, children must come to their personal views on the basis of their own activity and creativity. Permanent requirements for humane relations and democratic methods of upbringing are the causes behind increasing individualisation in the education process (Strmčnik, 1987, 1993, 2001).

Cooperation was identified as a factor both with parents and teachers. For teachers this dimension of education is more important than for parents. We attribute this to the professionalism of teachers, who understand cooperation as children's developmental need. Teachers accept cooperation as one of the important communication phenomena in the context of interpersonal communication. The first step in cooperation is managing social and communication skills. In consistence with their characteristics four years old children are interested in their peers (they play in group), cooperation begins, rules are adopted, and they are still egocentric and aggressive. Unlike them, five years old children prefer groups of two to five members, they are cooperative and friendly, they strive for common goals, they take account of common interest, and are only occasionally aggressive, mostly verbally. To achieve cooperation the teacher must structure and present the goals in such a way that requires children's mutual cooperation. In this case children communicate fully among them at the interpersonal level, they help each other, motivate and complement each other, they influence each other in a positive way, and with the assistance of cooperation they solve tasks. In this way differences between children come to the fore, and children respect these differences. This is a guarantee of mutual acceptance, positive feelings, favourable atmosphere in the group and reduced fear of one's own inefficiency (Bašić, Hudina, Koller-Trbović in Žižak, 1994).

Educational dimension of independence was identified on the sample of parents and teachers. The dimension can be explained as instrumental (the competence of coping with problems and realisation of activity without assistance of others) and emotional (self-confidence, self-assertion) independence (Kamenov, 1990). Miljak (2000) underlines the importance of supporting independence in various motor activities (dressing, eating, crawling) with the youngest children already, thus assisting the child in developing their emotional independence. Parents do not pay this special attention the way teachers do. This is understandable, given the context of general life, to which also the parents who were involved in the survey belong. Due to lack of time children's parents often do not allow independent dressing, eating, etc. With their intervention parents "assist" the children in fast fulfilment of activities. Their intervention often has negative connotation. Teachers

are aware for optimal development of children encouraging independence is important. This can certainly be attributed to their professionalism.

Positive image of oneself was identified both with parents and with teachers. For the development of children's positive concept of themselves the relationship between parents and child is important (respect, trust, and love), parents' educational style concerning the basic moral rules, and limitation and observing child's initiative. Parents' desires and expectations influence the aspirational levels and the goals set by children to a large extent. J. Cvetković-Lay (2002a, 2002b) believes, preschool children acquire the image of themselves on the basis of self-perception, self-understanding, personal development competence, and the adequacy in their environment. The image of oneself provides the answer to two simple questions: "Who am I? What am I able to do?" Preschool children will define themselves based on what they look like (what I look like, what I looked like, how I describe myself) and on abilities (what I know, what I am able to do). The image of oneself develops in the course of the process of social interaction with parents and then with teachers. Children acquire information of themselves, the most frequently as comments intertwined with a number of other messages. The messages are confused if they are presented generally and the most often they become negative. In this way inconsistency arises in children between what they know (messages from the environment) and how they experience themselves (the feeling of personal activity, self-perception). Being aware of this inconsistency, teachers increasingly get educated to develop children's richer and more positive image of themselves. The identification of this dimension could be attributed to teachers' professionalism. The fact is interesting also in the sample of parents this dimension is identified, although their professional dimension is different. In reference to this, it certainly must be stated parents put the described educational task to the end of educational tasks.

The factor independent conflict resolution was identified in the sample of parents. Parents believe in conflict resolution intervention of adults is necessary in situations when children's health and safety are in danger. This leads us to the conclusion parents have trust in children and their ability to solve their own problems.

In the sample of parents the dimension of orientation to success was identified. This dimension is explained as the tendency of parents their child is successful not only in the framework of environmental education,

but also in life in general. We assume this view is related to parents' concrete experiences in everyday life.

As an educational task self-determination was identified with teachers. Self-determination is closely related to the positive image of oneself, which was also identified in the sample of teachers. For Children to be able to make decisions on their activities in the framework of environmental education on their own, certain conditions must be fulfilled. These conditions mainly refer to the hidden curriculum. It is about the balance of the provision of different activities, educational style, social and emotional climate, interpersonal communication, attitudes, empathy, and other personality characteristics of teachers and other participants in the educational process.

With teachers the dimension of subordination to adults was identified as the last. This reflects the still current teachers' views that are a result of their unfavourable professional experience in the education of preschool children in our own, yet not-so-distant history. The causes of this were primarily inappropriate level and type of education, inadequate and insufficiently equipped rooms, large number of children in groups, required programmes, everyday supervision, pressure from the side of parents and preschool leadership for children's efficiency measure in the quantity of children's production. This caused teachers' views that were reflected in their reactions and ways of treating children (guidance and control).

Conclusion

Summing up our theoretical and empirical findings about environmental education in preschool from the perspective of parents' and teachers' views on the tasks of environmental education in the socio-emotional area in preschool the following can be underlined:

- observing the child as an active agent of her or his development, as a personality able to communicate with the environment, as a unique developing personality that represents more than just a sum of physical, cognitive, and psycho-social characteristics, with an inborn need for feeling, cognizance, learning, and communication, which is a humanistic understanding of the human;
- understanding preschool as children's and adults' space of living, playing, and learning, which is open and oriented into satisfying the needs of children, parents, and the environment, in which the organisation of space, time, and education reflect in the educational process and in the development of children, which is the premise of ecological approach;

- open and goal-oriented curriculum founded on the principle of holistic understanding of educational factors as interpersonal interweaving of the elements of visible and hidden curriculum.

Kostovič-Vranješ (2009) believes that children in early childhood (from 3 to 8 years) are not old enough to understand why it is important to take care of the environment, but they are sensitive enough to perceive the environment around them. Since environmental education is a lifelong process, its success depends on many factors. The author determined that youngest children in preschool age should be motivated to develop positive feelings (empathy) towards environment and its understanding and they should be motivated to be attentive towards environment. Preschool is an environment in which children live, explore and learn in a holistic, safe and transparent way without hidden intentions. It is also an environment in which children learn through mutual relationships and conflict resolution (Wals, 2010).

Everything stated above leads us to the thinking environmental education in preschool requires significant changes in understanding the learning of preschool children and a change in the role of teachers in this process.

Considering all this, preschool children must learn how to acquire knowledge throughout their whole lives, because environmental problems are unpredictable. In future children will, as adults, approach these problems independently with the assistance of learning totally new skills.

The consequence of such learning will be empathic (Rifkin, 1985) knowledge that unites, maintains links, emphasises quality, tends towards maintaining and increasing diversity, respects the laws of life, is responsible to the future, is participative, synergic, and non-violent.

To such understanding of learning in the process of environmental education transactional (preparing children for independent problem solving) and transformational (developing children's potential in their entirety from the physical and cognitive to socio-emotional aspect, which leads to harmony between the individual and the society and between human and environment) understanding of learning is linked. Under such conditions teacher's role is no longer transmission (provision) of knowledge, but a complex development of sensibility for the environment and with this the development of environmental consciousness. Such a turnaround cannot happen from today to tomorrow, but gradually.

In this context we understand educational paradigm as a model of lifelong learning, irrespective of whether it takes place in the family, in preschool, or school—or, as Silov (1991) puts it, environmental paradigm is the philosophy of education and life, the pedagogical-environmental sense is in active cooperation of family, parents, preschool, teachers, and children in the approaches to problems linked to environment, in the environment, for the environment, and about the environment.

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