

Education of two years old children in Czech educational system

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Abstract

The article presents Czech preschool education. Preschool education is still in a transforming process. Czech Republic has been dealing with some recent problem with placing of two years old children kindergartens.

Contemporary pre-primary education is for children from three until six or seven years old in Czech Republic. There is economic and social pressure for receiving two years old children into kindergartens. The article brings research for this topic and presents problems of teacher in practise.

The research deals with kindergarten teacher approach on current problems. And it brings findings of observation in topic of placing two years old children in Czech kindergartens.

Key words: pre-primary education, curriculum reform, early educational policy, social policy supporting families, pedagogical quality, grounded theory.

1. Introduction

Approaches and philosophies of contemporary preschool education open up among of issues which are related to the quality of the preschool teacher's work. Diversification of kindergarten teacher's skills and qualification will give an idea whether it is possible to provide well prepared kindergarten teacher education in such a wide scale for such a demanding profession as kindergarten teacher undoubtedly is. There are shown the requirements and demands that the profession of kindergarten teacher are placed on. From historical view since the year 1990 Reform of the educational system 1990 (law number 29/1984) was created amendment of act like the basis for first important systematical change in Czech education system. Changes were in: at first cancelling uniform „comprehensive“ school and possibility for differentiation of education along abilities and interests of children, for second ending of state foundering monopole - start of private schooling (church schools, private schools). Reform of the educational system continued in documents: in the year 2000 by publishing „White book“ (the National Education Development Programme for the Czech Republic), in the year 2004 by publishing Education Act (on Pre-school, Basic, Secondary, Tertiary Professional and Other Education).

It was specific a new curricular system for children, pupils and students from 3 to 19 years of age. Curricular documents are developed at two levels: the national level and the school level.

„White book“ (2000) for pre-primary education brought emphasis to ensure to every child in the pre-primary age the claim for pre-primary education and for real possibility to complete it. It was completed national curriculum for pre-primary education and to formulate the frame aims, intent and supposed results of education (competences). It was discussed to the need to manage the wide spectrum of the professional, special pedagogical and social competences of pre-primary educators to ensure their university degree.

There are some studies (Horká, Syslová, 2011) what evaluated preparing education for kindergarten teachers at the Pedagogical Faculty of Masaryk University in Brno. The faculty is trying to implement a new concept called Realistic training of teacher. The basic building block is experimental learning. In practice, this means gaining experience through teaching experience in kindergarten and consistent reflection in comparison with the theory in seminars. Reflection of student experiences carried out either training teachers in kindergarten or college teachers in Pedagogical Faculty. The evaluation of field of study preparing education for kindergarten teachers at the Pedagogical Faculty of Masaryk University in Brno makes clear that in some subjects has been used certain reflective techniques and linking theory with practice. At the same time, however, it shows that some development of professional competencies is oversized and brings opposite results for example, at the same time development of communicative and personal professional competences is not sufficient.

The central theme of these days is professionalization in mentoring, which is currently the most commonly associated with the support of professional development. It has an important position in supporting the development of professional skills. The topic is closely related to pedagogical practices.

Analog process to professionalization was decentralization (2003), there were established three FINANCIAL RESOURCES OF KINDERGARTEN: Budget for salaries (MINISTRY)

Budget for operation (municipality), Payment from parents = it is possible to use it for salaries and for operation. Czech contemporary preschool education is financing by MINISTRY in salaries, Teachers training, School utilities. On the other hand municipalities finance energy, reparations, services, material, and property. School law (2004) established principles of education: mutual respect, tolerance of opinions, consensus and decorum of all participants of the education; development of the educational process on the base of the results of the science, research and development; Using of the actual pedagogical accesses and methods; comprehension an using the principle of democracy and legally consistent state, basic human rights and responsibility and sense of the social solidarity.

Programmes was published by the school law for every level of educational system. Programme for pre-primary education is based on a new education strategy, stressing key competencies, their interlinking with educational contents and the application of acquired knowledge and skills in practical life; it formulates the expected level of education that should have been attained by all students who have completed the educational stage in question; promotes the educational autonomy of schools as well as teachers' professional responsibility for the outcomes of the educational process.

Framework Educational Programmes for pre-primary education has specified aim of education through competences¹:

1. Competence for learning
2. Problems solving competence
3. Communications competence
4. Social and personal competence
5. Working and civic competence

The competences are specified in five educational areas: biological, psychological, inter-personal, socio-cultural, environmental. The progress is this Framework Educational Programmes for pre-primary education deals with responsibilities of the educator, to adapt for developmental physiological, cognitive, social and emotional needs of children and to mind this specifics would be respected in full scale, to use the pedagogical analyse – to observe and evaluate the needs and interests of the child, to use „promoting“ style of work with helpful, empathy and listening communication without manipulation with the child, to be a attendant of child on his way to knowledge. (School law, 2004 s. 7).

Theoretical framework

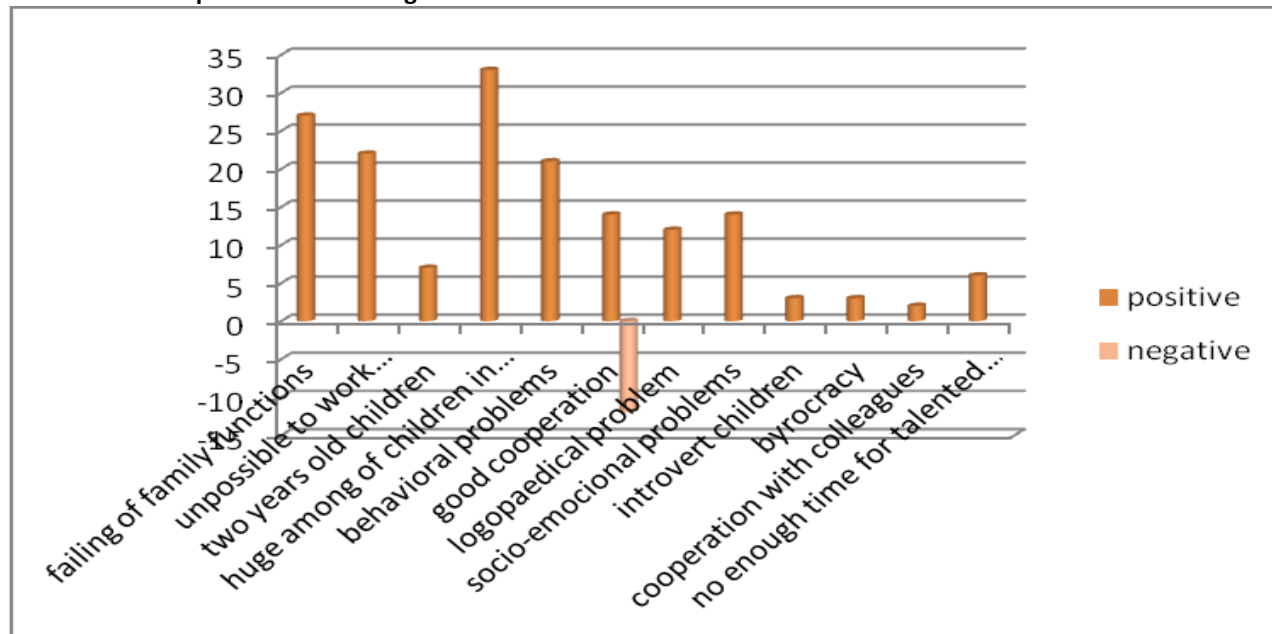
Research methodology

Research is small study. The topic is new to the Czech discourse in pedagogy and policy too, however it is better to use qualitative design. The participants are from seven parts of Czech Republic, it is good to study how much is ever phenomenon stands. The study is created in combine design, quantitative qualitative methodology. The main research question was “What pre-primary teacher deals with in daily process in kindergartens?” There were forty five participants, who answered questionnaire concerning on dealing current problems. Questionnaire had six opened questions. Second part of research was analyzing of current conditions in Czech pre-primary system to two years old children by observing in kindergarten.

Findings

Teachers said they face up to problems as you can see at table 1.

Table 1: Teacher problems in kindergarten



Participants saw problems in family, its function of socialisation. This problem is connected with cooperation between school and parents (and it is good cooperation (28.9%) and bad cooperation (26,7%). Family cooperation is connected with other topics as behavioural problems, logopaedical problems. And family cooperation is connected with communication. (Rabušicová, 2011) spoke about different expectation of parents and teachers.

Participants spoke about problems with huge among of children in one class. There are to twenty eight children in one class for one teacher. Quality of preschool work depends on number of children.

Teachers spoke about problems what it has to be solved for preparation of conditions for two years old children.

At the base assessment of the proposal to adopt children from two years old to kindergarten is expressed in the proposal. Under the present circumstances the inclusion of children under three years old in kindergarten is inappropriate and simultaneously in conflict with the concept of pre-school education, which is specified for the age group 3 to 6 (7) years and defined in the current educational documents (RVP PV, 2005). Currently, kindergartens are completely filled and part of the children who for reasons of capacity could not be admitted to pre-primary school (about 20%). For reasons of demographic situation in recent years in the Czech Republic has increased the number of children in each class, the number of children 28 and it would be appropriate to reduce this number again. To ensured the quality of education according to current curricula for pre-school education it is necessary to try to create the best possible conditions.

¹¹ Framework educational programs define core competencies as "sets of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that are important for the personal development of the individual, his active participation in society and future success in life." (RVP PV, 2005, s. 4)

Inclusion of children aged 2 years and under current conditions is not possible for the following reasons:

First Grounds conceptual

- Currently there are no qualified personnel to work with children under three years
- Current training programs at secondary pedagogical schools prepare future teachers of kindergartens to work with the age categories 3-6 (7) years
- Accredited programs in faculties of education are focused on working with preschool children (3-6 (7) years), graduate profile is also created for educational work with children from three years
- Currently children under three years are not included in any category in the responsibility of the Ministry of Education

Second Reasons biological

- In terms of the biological development of the child (locomotion, motor skills) the child is at two years old situated at period toddler age and their needs are very different from pre-school children (walking speed, certainty when running, balance, walking up the stairs, the development of children's teeth)
- Number of children is not prepared for inclusion in such a large group of children. Both because of the psychological and social development of the child, but also in terms of the development of the immune system (autoimmune diseases, allergies)
- Regime needs of children under three years of age may be significantly different (need for sleep, relaxation, increased need for food)

Nutritional requirements are different, and currently are not created so. Consumer basket for food for children is prepared for children from three years of age.

It is required a certain degree of maturity to stay in the group (controlling secretion, chewing solid food, hygiene)

Third Psychological Reasons

The child is not ready for educational activities, as defined in Framework for pre-primary education

The child is not ready for kindergarten current environment (higher accident rate, giving small objects in the mouth, nose, ears, failure to cope with the necessary hygiene)

Speech development - child in two years using the vocabulary of 50-300 words and phrases used on three and four words
Between the second and third year is coming period defiance when the child copes with feelings of helplessness - in this period are tantrums highs (during a seizure can not be with the baby talk)

Fourth operational reasons

In kindergarten are not prepared conditions for children's needs in terms of hygiene (diapers, changing tables, showers)

Kindergarten are equipped with toys and educational tools that are appropriate for the age of three (often these devices contain a warning - not suitable for children under 3 years)

For all self-care activities for children under three years adult assistance is required, the frequent occurrence of accidents is frequent (urination, dripping).

When working with children under three years are to be reckoned with high temporal workload of teachers (or auxiliary teacher) for each child under three years

Kindergarten does not have sufficient financial resources to increase the number of teachers (or other staff) to appropriate care and education of children from two to six years of age. Teachers have the negative opinion of the admission of children under three years of age in the current kindergarten, however they knew there is the need to provide care for children in this age category. It is necessary to cooperate in creating the conditions for ensuring quality care for children younger than three years with the Ministry of Education. We are looking at creating a heterogeneous group of children from 2 to 6 (7) years in the kindergarten very positively. We recognize that the demographic, economic and social situation in the country it requires market the wider group of preprimary education. But it is necessary to create suitable conditions. In the front row to create training for preschool teachers to develop the concept of a training program for this age group and subsequently adapted to the specific conditions in kindergarten.

Conclusion

We can see that there is a lot of phenomenon to solve. The problem of two years old in kindergarten is just fragment that is connected with others and should be solving systematically. There are a lot of projects for teachers how to work with children and cooperate with parents, but it is needed to create better conditions on nation level.

Pre-school education is very important for the child, it is important to increase the requirements for the preparation of teachers and parents in this period. "Windows of exploring and developing" are wide open in the preschool time. It is an extraordinary period for the development of various aspects of the child's personality and it is the task of science to point them and the task of the state to ensure the conditions and the responsibility of each teacher to ensure quality education.

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