



# **PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION**

**(study texts)**

Zora Syslová, Lucie Grůzová

Faculty of education, Masaryk university

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# 1. Changes in the curriculum for preschool education

The curriculum for Czech preschool education is undergoing vast changes that need to be seen in a societal context, determined by economic, political and social conditions. It should be noted that public education is always subject to a contract, which is determined by the economy or rather the economic competitive ability of the country and the socio-political order. Put simply, the state formulates "what a citizen needs" and expects schools to fulfil this contract (Krejčová, 2010).

The current requirements for preschool education vary significantly from the requirements of a totalitarian society, as was the Czech Republic from 1948 to 1989. The education system, methods and forms of work and the attitudes of teachers and parents persist significantly to this day. Although the type of citizen the state wanted to produce was never formally formulated, a detailed analysis of the educational programme of the time shows that it was an "obedient citizen" without their own opinions, easily manageable, average, loyal, and conscientious...

The second half of the twentieth century can be characterized by terms such as: **school uniformity, preparing the child for school, educational components, autocratic style, fixed time schedule for the day, frontal way of working, and separation of children with special educational needs.**

Uniformity of schools was established under the Education Act of 1948. It was considered to provide a prospective type of school (all schools of the same grades and type worked according to unified educational programmes). It was strictly unified; differentiation in education was lacking or almost non-existent. In 1990, the principle of a uniform school was abandoned.

Within the educational programme for crèches and preschools (1984) tasks for the teacher were formulated through which the child would acquire the ability and interest to participate in activities with others, to learn to subordinate their needs and spontaneity in favour of collective activities and to gradually apply their own initiative for the good of the group.

Although play should be respected as the main activity of preschool children, it was pushed into peripheral parts of the daily routine and targeted activities were pushed to the forefront. If play was assigned to the main programme, it was an organised game, which cannot replace

spontaneous play. The reason for the predominance of controlled activities, usually conducted frontally, was the large number of children in classes (usually around 35). Homogeneous groups were created as these were more easily organised.

The day was divided up nationwide by a fixed time schedule in which collectively organised activities prevailed. The current curriculum recommends giving greater space to spontaneous activities and complementing this with controlled activities usually organized on a group and individual basis. This type of activity allows the needs of individual children to be respected more, especially their psychomotor tempo.

In the totalitarian period insensitivity to the needs of not only children but also their individual capabilities prevailed, and preschools were mistakenly understood only as a service to primary schools, i.e. as preparation for entry into the first year of primary school. Preparing a child for school meant that education was focussed primarily on the intellectual field - knowledge and understanding, which, rather than focussing on the child's development, facilitated the work of the teacher in the first year of primary school. Currently, great emphasis is placed on developing children's personalities, especially their emotional intelligence, with a focus on lifelong learning.

Previously an autocratic style of education was used. Threats, warnings and punishments were typical. This style does little to respect the wishes and needs of children. It gives children little opportunity to act independently and to find solutions to problems themselves, etc. Within this style of education, children are not led towards independent, initiative-taking and creative problem-solving, decision-making and action. It is a style of education which corresponds to preparation for a subordinate role in an undemocratic society. In contrast, the style that characterizes the Framework Educational Programme for pre-school education (2004) emphasises children's human rights and dignity, respects their personality, takes them seriously, and does not degrade them. It supports their independence and initiative. It works through example rather than with lots of commands and prohibitions. It uses suggestions, questions, and topics for children themselves to think about and to participate in decision-making.

The dangers which hinder the optimal development of children in the school environment are dealt with in a longitudinal study from the years 1980 - 1989, which included a survey in preschools (Šulcová, 1989). From observation, interviews and studying the Programme for Crèches and Preschools (1984) in comparison with the developmental needs of children and

their actual fulfilment the likely dangers and sources of excessive and disproportionate stresses in pre-school teaching were identified.

Twelve of them were formulated – a lack of gradual adaptation, the high number of children in classrooms and lack of individual work with children, educational activities which do not respect the individual tempo of children, resulting in a chronic situation of always being in a hurry, mistaken understanding of preschools as preparation for primary school, controlled activities prevalent with a forced pace instead of spontaneous activity, and excessively stressing the development of intellectual function at the expense of the others, especially the emotional.

All these dangers were reflected in the creation of the new curriculum. In 2001, the first version of the Framework Educational Programme for Pre-School Education was created, and amended in 2004 in accordance with the requirements of lifelong learning and a democratic society.

## **2. Framework Educational Programme for Pre-School Education (its philosophy, structure)**

The Framework Educational Programme for Pre-School Education (FEP PE) is based on the White Paper (2000), which formulates the requirements for education in the Czech Republic in general. The current educational policy in the Czech Republic is based on the belief that people have to learn throughout their lives and should have an interest in their education, learning and knowledge, which allows them a better and richer interaction with the world. Pre-school education is considered to be an important outset of this process. It occupies a very specific and important position in the educational system.

It contributes significantly to the socialization of children, to their basic intellectual development and to their relationship to learning. One of its vital functions is to help and support children and parents in lessening the differences caused by different social backgrounds. The family is considered to be the most important educational environment. In the family, the child learns basic patterns of behaviour, habits, skills and strategies that are crucial for being able to find their way in society, especially in interpersonal relationships. And this is in both the positive and negative sense. In the family children learn basic social and cultural values and norms and work out a hierarchy for them. Pre-school is considered to be a service which can supplement or offset the impact of this environment on children's development.

The FEP PE is a basis for schools to develop their own educational programmes. It is general enough to provide space for the creation of autonomous school curricula. However, these must respect the privileged position of the family and create a school educational programme in conjunction with it. In creating their own educational programmes preschools may work on the basis of three options:

- alternative programmes from different countries (Montessori, the Dalton plan, Waldorf education)
- innovative programmes (Preschools supporting health, Step by step)
- their own foci and philosophy

The main objective of pre-school education is to adapt as much as possible to the physiological, cognitive, social and emotional needs of children in this age group and to

ensure that the specifics of this development are fully respected in the education of children. If the teacher wants to fully respect the specifics of each child it is important that they base this on pedagogical diagnosis, which is built on regular monitoring and evaluation of the individual needs and interests of the child and on knowledge of his/her current state of development and specific life and social situation.

One of the tasks of preschools is to provide special educational care for children with special educational needs (uneven development, disabilities, social disadvantage...). Likewise, preschools should prepare an individual educational programme for gifted children.

The Framework Educational Programme for pre-school education recommends providing enough space for spontaneous activity and children's own plans. These can then be linked to controlled activities where the methods of experiential and cooperative learning are applied.

From physicians, psychologists and educators we know that what a child learns from their experiences and stimuli in the first years of life is permanent. That is why it is so important for a preschool-age child to acquire the basic key competences. In the current education system these are formulated as a set of expected knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and values that are important for the personal development and success of each individual.

Key competences are acquiring a central position in all general educational programmes - for pre-school, primary, secondary school and further education and they thread their way through all levels of education. They link educational goals so that they work together towards the development of an adult who will have the skills for **learning, problem solving, communication, social and personal issues and civic activity**. These competences were implemented in the second version of the Framework Educational Programme for pre-school education in 2004.

Among the key competences in the Framework Educational Programme for pre-school education the competences which preschool age children should reach, based on their abilities, are formulated. The competences are developed through sub-objectives contained in five areas. They correspond to the evolving structure of the child's relationship to him/herself, other people and the outside world. They are *biological, psychological, interpersonal, socio-cultural and environmental*. The areas are in accordance with the interactive and holistic concept that is reflected throughout the Framework Educational Programme for pre-school education, leading to a definitive shift away from separate educational components.

A new area is the formulation of the dangers that could jeopardize the fulfilment of educational goals – i.e. the development of skills. Dangers may be, for example *lack of understanding and appreciation of the efforts and success of the child; unreasonable demands on the child, regular negative evaluation when a child repeatedly experiences a sense of failure; hurrying and stress, reducing the potential for the child to finish work at their own pace, inappropriate interventions and interruptions of children's activities by adults; inappropriate behaviour patterns and models (tactless communication, lack of social empathy, consideration and tolerance, insensitive relationships and attitudes to one's surroundings); lack of empathy, failure to provide empathic responses to the problems of the child; authoritative guidance, directive treatment of children ...*

Another area that the Framework Educational Programme for pre-school education deals with is the creation of appropriate conditions for learning. These are *material conditions, diet, psychosocial conditions, organization, management of preschools, provision of personnel and teaching staff, participation of parents*. The requirements for the staff are also reflected here, such as being supportive, being friendly, empathic and understanding communication between the teacher and the child, avoiding any manipulation of the child.

A separate chapter is devoted to the duties of the pre-school teacher, characterized as a guide for children on their journey of discovery whose job is to awaken in children an active interest in monitoring what is happening around them, listening and exploring. The teacher cannot simply be one who gives the child "tasks" and checks up on how these tasks are carried out. His/her major role is to prepare a stimulating environment and thereby offer children opportunities to learn and think. The basis of teaching is to be a model for children as they learn social skills. The teacher is the one who influences the child's self-image, so he/she should strengthen children's self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities.



### 3. Early child care for children under three years in Czech republic

20th century called Keyová as "Century of Child". The position of the child is finally seen as an adult status (confirmed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989). Czech researcher Opravilová called this age as the age of the support and the help the child. The society takes a lot of changes, especially in socio-economic relationships that lead to significant changes in the family and subsequently in child care.

Changes that affect the conditions of education in early childhood:

- Reducing the number of children in the family, the family is shrinking,
- The position of women in society and in the family is different.
- Men take care for children as well as women.

Also changing attitudes to upbringing. At present, we can classify these three (Opravilová):

1. **Traditional (child-centered) approach** the parent prefers the child's needs at all levels. Parents devote time and interest in the child feels responsible, the main thing is for them to uncritically required satisfaction of the child. In education is governed more by intuition than intellect.
2. **Modern (rationally realistic) approach** sees a child as part of the presentation of the family. Parents expect a smooth development and try to purposefully support. They are used to raise a child professional services to clients that place as claims (foreign languages, sports). Follow new trends (intelligent toys) use information (test your child) think and act rationally.
3. This creates a **variety of alternative approaches** (seeking approach). Parents are trying to return to all natural (breastfeeding), inspired by the natural Nations (carrying a child, listening communication instincts), changing their own lifestyle (leaving the city) to which incorporating the children (vegetarianism, alternative medicine, bio-style).

In connection with the support of children and families, we must also mention the family policy of the state. In 2005, there was the National Concept supporting family policy, social

policy which seeks to create opportunities for families with children and also to provide parental education. View State to parenthood and family is as follows:

"Family and Parenthood must stop being seen as a private matter only to the extent that this attitude of indifference legitimizes the state (society) to the interests and needs of families with children and misunderstanding of their importance to the future prosperity of Czech society. The family absolutely necessary should be seen as a source of human capital, which is a further development of the state."(MPSV, 2005, p 11).

There were some instruments how to do it:

- Promoting financial awards families
- Support for the family climate in society
- Support the creation of a safe environment for families with children
- Popularization of parenthood in society and research in the field of family

In year 2014 Czech republic family support policy did not much change.

The emergence of the first manger dates back to 1832, when Prague commenced the operation of the first two day-care for poor children, where they were given an education and basic education. The Education Act of 1869, which laid the foundation for the school system, which was maintained until 1948, included a regulation relating to pre-school institutions. An important role for the functioning of these institutions should Riegrová Marie - Palacká, who contributed to the establishment of nurseries caring for the youngest children (Kuchařová, 2006). Prague was the first city nurseries launched in March 1884 (Bahenská, 2005).

The 1960 law for the pre-designated nursery education for children from birth to three years of age kindergarten for children from three to six years of age and common institutions of nurseries and kindergartens. At the same activities were initiated for the development of a comprehensive educational-educational system for children from birth to six years of age. The plan of education - the education system in 1976, it is stated that the institution of pre-school (nursery and kindergarten) have a common educational and social aspects, to ensure the children all-round and harmonious development, and offer them the option of continuing education.

The decrease in the birth rate meant that the number of children in day care between the years 1980 - 1989 fell from more than 52,000 to just over 36,000 children (Statistical Yearbook,

1990). Since then, the number of nurseries has fallen significantly, while currently housed about 0, 5% of children (Hašková, 2007).

Legal ensure manger - MZ Decree no. 242/1991 Sb., On the system of health care facilities established by district authorities and municipalities, § 21 establishes a creche facility caring for the overall development of children under three years of age when this care continues the care of children in the family. Nursery constituted as territorial, racing or joint and provide their services on a daily, weekly mode exclusively.

New changes in society make parents to use day care for children udder three years old, the capacity is not enough. So children above two years old are accepted into kindergartens, for children from three years old to six years old.

According to Law no. 455/1991 Sb., On business can pay private care for children under three years of age realized as bound trade "Caring for a child under three years of age mode" or free trade "Services for children and household" (so-called. baby-sitting). In this case, provides assistance primarily in domestic work and offers only short-term childcare.

Founder of paid care - private pay care for children aged up to three years may establish a natural or legal person (eg. Ltd.), which owns the trade authorization to carry out this activity (Štěpánková, Jaklová, 2006). Since this is a trade hardcover, is necessary competence, which is a degree in nursing or higher professional education study pediatric nurse or nurse with a focus on pediatrics or full secondary vocational education in the field of pediatric nurse

## 4. Project for the Support of Health in preschools

The model programme called Healthy Pre-school was created in 1994 (Havlíková et al., 1995). It was created based on the needs and requirements of teachers, head teachers, psychologists and other professionals in the field of education and followed on from the idea of the European project for health promotion in schools which originated in the late 1980s and was supported by the World Health Organization. It stated that "*every child and young person in Europe has the right and should have the opportunity to be educated in a health-promoting school*" (Resolution of the First International Conference of Health Promoting Schools 1997).

The programme was further developed and based on the needs and experience of nearly a hundred preschools operating in a network named Schools Promoting Health, the model programme was upgraded, expanded and from Healthy Preschools was renamed to Preschools Promoting Health. The new Curriculum for Health Promotion in Preschools (2000, 2006, 2008) reflected in particular the need to develop the content of education in preschools.

Preschools Promoting Health (hereinafter PPH) aim to teach children to respect their health, understood as a subjective feeling of well-being. However, this is different for each person. If we want to achieve this goal, we must learn to respect the needs of individuals within society and the world. This assumes that we can mutually discuss and agree on various issues. For this reason PPH adopted *respect for the natural needs of the individual and the development of communication and cooperation* as basic, integrative principles of the philosophy of health promotion which complement each other. As a rule, preschools base their philosophy on Maslow's hierarchy of human needs.

As well as these two principles 12 health promotion tenets necessary for creating optimal conditions for formal education are formulated. These are viewed from a holistic and interactive perspective. They do not stand alone, but each individual policy is part of a systematic and coherent approach to planning the development of a healthy individual. The tenets are:

1. Teachers supporting health
2. Mixed-age classes
3. Regular rhythm of life and day

4. Physical well-being and freedom of movement
5. Nutrition
6. Spontaneous play
7. Stimulating material environment
8. Secure social environment
9. Participatory and team management
10. Partnerships with parents
11. Cooperation of preschools and primary schools
12. Incorporating preschools into community life

The model programme Promotion of Health in Preschools (2000, 2006, 2008) was created before the Framework Educational Programme for pre-school education (2001, 2004). The main researcher for this programme was simultaneously a member of the research team for the Framework Educational Programme for pre-school education. That was probably the reason why the educational content of both programmes is almost identical. Both programmes include competences developed through sub-objectives from five educational areas.

The competences contained in the Curriculum for health promotion, however, are based on the philosophy of health promotion, of which there are seven – **1. Understanding a holistic approach to health, the concepts of health promotion and disease prevention, 2. Recognizing that health is a priority value, 3. Being able to solve problems 4. Having a well-developed responsibility for their own behaviour and way of life, 5. Strengthening mental endurance, 6 Having communication and cooperation skills, 7. Participating actively in creating the conditions and environment for the health of all people.**

The curriculum for health promotion in preschools has its goals of education formulated in the first set of tables (Havlínová et al., 2006). Unlike the FEP PE the first set of tables can be used for work directly in the classroom. For the individual competences possible sub-goals are suggested in the table, through which competence can be developed, and at the same time indicators of educational attainment are given, based on which we can verify that children really attained the sub-goals.

With its amount of detail, the FEP PE cannot work in the classroom. It is only a general guide for the development of school curricula (not class) so that each preschool can freely choose the path they want to follow and maintain their autonomy.

The curriculum for health promotion in preschools has also more conditions for formal education than FEP PE. The differences in both the content and conditions of both programmes are due to the fact that the FEP PE contains only general objectives for pre-school education in the Czech Republic. The curriculum for health promotion in preschools is a specific model programme useful for working in preschools, and even in the classroom. It is a goal-directed, systematically elaborated approach to the development of a healthy individual.

## 5. Play as the fundamental basis of the education of children of preschool age

Children's play is now widely recognized as the main activity of children. Children are given the right to it, enshrined in the Declaration on the Rights of the Child, adopted in the Czech Republic in 1991. People in developed societies try to provide children with the best possible playing conditions. This positive attitude to play is the result of a relatively long-term development in the evaluation of play.

Despite all the complexity and diversity of opinions on play it is true that it is one of the most basic needs of children at any age, although it is joined later by school and other work. To exaggerate the point a little, it can be said that the way a child plays as a pre-schooler will be reflected in the way they later study and work as an adult.

The term play has been and still is dealt with by a number of experts in various disciplines and fields (Hartl 1993, p. 64; Huizinga, 1971, p. 33; Opravilová 1998, p. 11; Prucha et al., 2006, p. 82). All the definitions (psychological, educational, and cultural) are based on the fact that play is a basic human activity, alongside learning and work. Among pre-school children it is a specific activity that is at the same time a way of learning for children and can even feel like work. This is how Příhoda (1966) understands it, stating that play in childhood is about "pretending" – to be something or someone real.

When watching children playing it could often be said that play is a serious job for them. They have real goals, learn to overcome difficulties, gain practical experience, distinguish the essential from the less important, get into new social roles, and they do all this with great pleasure, enjoying their play time. On the basis of these facts some characteristics of play in preschool children can be deduced in accordance with the concept of Huizinga (1971). Play is characterized by **freedom of action**, from which comes joy and pleasure; it is not "normal" life, but temporary "withdrawal" from this life to the sphere of **activities with their own tendencies**. Another feature is **closeness and boundaries**, which means that play starts and ends at some point - it takes place. Play has its own order and harmony, which can be summarized in the concept of **suspense**.

From all this it follows that play at pre-school age is **spontaneous and anything that is externally motivated should not be called play**. The term spontaneous is defined as

*"manifested spontaneously, without external impulses, arising without conscious effort, governed by internal laws* (Reference Dictionary Czech language 1948-1951, p. 611). We come across similar definitions in psychology: *"natural, spontaneous, sudden, unintentional, not planned in advance, not always fully aware"* (Hartl 2004, p. 260).

Play involves children's relationship to reality, which they transform and adjust to form a bridge between their needs, desires and reality. Children sometimes act out events not as they really happened, but as they would have liked them to happen. They try to somehow specify or represent situations that they find something mysterious. Through action the child literally verifies that which they do not understand. It is usually a matter of playing or repeating what the child has experienced. It seems that it is part of their effort to understand the world (Miller, 1978).

Through play, they learn to understand human relationships to subjects and how to handle them. Play becomes a model situation in which a child learns about relationships between people, but also about themselves in certain situations. This all leads to the fact that through play a child gains necessary sensory experiences, motor skills and develops the social aspect of their personality. At the same time, however, learning, thinking and independent behaviour also develop.

Children are motivated to play by the specific needs of their development, which **provide the function of learning**. Sometimes play is called a **self-developmental need**. If children are not allowed to play, they cannot even develop. This method of learning is called **spontaneous learning**. It is widely known that the spontaneity with which children approach play is a guarantee of the interest and concentration which they show in this activity, and often of the permanence of knowledge and skills that they get through play. This is the reason for looking for ways to ensure that children approach continuous learning analogically. Already in the works of J.A. Comenius we find an effort to prepare children for school work and learning so that they approach it with the same interest and enjoyment as they do for play.

However, there are also games that are not related to learning. They have other functions in a child's life **such as relaxation or therapy** and are motivated by other needs. This type of play is characterized by a tendency towards monotonous repetition of themes. It is linked to problems in some areas of the child's life, which are then reflected in their play. For this reason, it is possible to use children's play as a diagnostic and psychotherapeutic technique. For play to become play in the true sense of the word, firstly the problems of life which the child faces must be resolved.



Through play children gain information and learn different skills spontaneously and voluntarily, according to their individual tempo and ability. Simply stated, they learn from the circle of those stimuli that attract and surround them. But at the same time it means that some experiences in the field of human life may remain mysterious to children unless provided for them by adults. And so here we find room for so-called **Deliberate Learning**. In preschools, deliberate learning is done through directed activities. Their purpose is to prepare experiences for children of those areas of life which they did not have a chance to come across in their families. In the records of individual children one may discover what these areas are. They will certainly vary with individual children.

## 6. A teacher's competence and professional development

The term "teacher" is defined as *"professionally qualified member of the teaching staff, responsible for the preparation, organization and results of this process. For the teaching profession certain educational qualifications are necessary."* (Průcha et al., 2008, p. 261) The definition has a definite emphasis on the pedagogical competence of teachers. This is currently seen as a necessary requirement for the knowledge and skills acquired in initial training. It is usually used as a synonym for qualifications.

Qualifications have two aspects (Vašutová, 2001) - **professional and legal**. The professional aspect can be defined as professional competences that a preschool teacher needs to exercise his/her profession. The legal aspect is the given legal requirements for qualified teachers in preschools (Act no. 563/2004 Coll. Educational personnel, Catalogue of work, etc.). Preschool teachers currently receive their qualifications in three ways:

- In secondary teacher training schools, i.e. at the level of secondary education finishing with a secondary-school examination (according to the international classification of education ISCED level 3A)
- In additional studies at higher vocational colleges (ISCED level 4)
- In undergraduate studies, i.e. tertiary education ISCED level 5B in all faculties of education in the Czech Republic (9). At the Prague and Olomouc Faculties and in Hradec Králové there is also a master's degree at ISCED level 5A.

Due to the demanding requirements that arise with the implementation of FEP PE into the life of preschools and the educational work of teachers (teamwork, self-assessment, diagnosis of children, individualization of learning, the use of activation methods, etc.) higher education seems to be a necessity.

The quality of the teacher is becoming a central issue in contemporary educational policy. Teachers of all types and levels of schools are part of the creation of a value system of children and pupils, influence their interests and develop their overall personality. Preschool teachers have a much stronger influence on children in this respect than teachers of other levels of education - primary and secondary, as preschool-age children learn skills of a permanent nature.

Improving the quality of teachers in the context of efforts to improve the quality of school education is one of the key objectives of education policy in most developed countries. Evidence of this can be found in international documents of UNESCO, OECD, etc. Teacher quality and improving the system of preparation of teachers are considered a key tool of educational reform. In many EU countries, but also for example in the USA and Australia, professional standards have been created. The basis of their creation is the numerous studies that identify key elements of teacher quality. Professional standards generally describe the competency requirements or characteristics of professional activities which are essential for the quality or performance standard of the profession in a particular country. They are considered a basis especially for teacher training, professional development, and self-evaluation of teachers. In the Czech Republic professional standards have not yet been officially defined.

However, there are two models of professional competence. One is used primarily by universities to define the profile of a graduate of the Teaching in Preschools programme (Vašutová, 2001). The model is based on Delors' four pillars of learning model (1996) - learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. Vašutová assigned the functions of a school to these aims - qualifications, socialization, integration and personalization. She then defined the competences which can be implemented through the objectives and functions of schools:

1. Subject Competence
2. Pedagogical and psycho-pedagogical competence
3. Teaching Competence
4. Diagnostic and Interventional Competence
5. Social, psychosocial and communicative competence
6. Managerial and normative competence
7. Professional and character-cultivating competence

The second model is a *Framework of Professional Qualities of a Preschool Teacher* (Syslová, 2013). It was created by modifying the evaluation tool of the Framework of Professional Qualities of a Teacher aimed at teachers in primary and secondary schools. It was worked on by a team of authors in the framework of a national project, the Ministry of Education's Path to Quality, whose goal was to create supporting materials for school self-evaluation.

It is a comprehensive tool designed primarily for teachers and head teachers of preschools for long-term self-assessment and evaluation of teacher quality. The basis of the Framework of Professional Qualities of a Preschool Teacher is professional activity. These activities are reflected in a teacher's professional competence, understood as a set of professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and personality characteristics. It consists of a set of criteria and indicators in eight areas of the professional activity of teachers. The areas are:

1. Planning lessons
2. Learning environment
3. Learning Processes
4. Assessment of students' work
5. Reflection on Teaching
6. School development and collaboration with colleagues
7. Working with parents and the wider community
8. Professional development of teachers

Components of the tools are also professional knowledge and the ethics of teachers, which are considered essential for the quality of the teaching profession. The criteria (indicators) are a basis for observing the educational work of the teacher and the subsequent reflection/self-reflection and discussion. The tool also serves to create a **professional portfolio**.

## 7. Children from socially disadvantaged environments

**At first we should ask: „Who is child from Socially Disadvantaged Environment?”** There are some nuances or deficiencies towards to majority.

Characteristics of socially disadvantaged child:

- Limitation in general informedness,
- Inadequate using and knowing language
- Cultural nuances in values and attitudes
- Unknowing of majority rules
- Non-challenging environment
- Non challenging environment usually causes deprivation (Matějček) in early years and it causes later problems in:
  - Visual and oral distinction
  - Vizuo-motorical coordination (hand eye coordination)
  - Intelligence
  - Perception of context
  - Bad orientation in new situation
  - Tending to stereotype thinking and rigidity
- Children have problems in:
  - Emotionality
  - Quick excitability
  - Impulsivity
  - Control of free motion
  - Bad concentration
  - Short term attention

There are theories about cultural capital (Bourdier) and language code (Bernstein). **Cultural Capital** is a very general theory, that it attempts to construct explanations for things like differential educational achievement in a way that combines a wide range of differing influences.

Basil Bernstein makes a significant contribution to the study of Communication with his sociolinguistic theory of language codes. “Forms of spoken language in the process of their

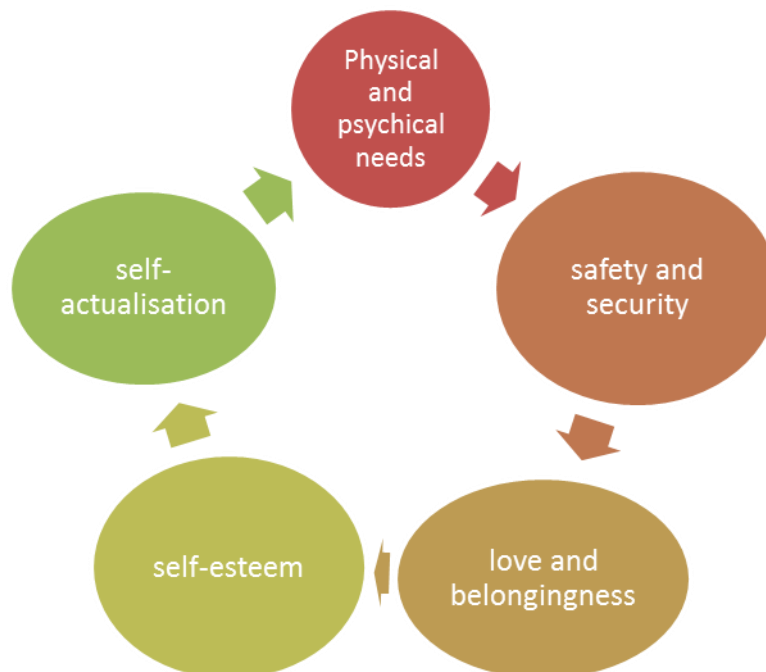
learning initiate, generalize and reinforce special types of relationship with the environment and thus create for the individual particular forms of significance” (Class, Codes and Control, 1971, p.76). That is to say that the way language is used within a particular societal class affects the way people assign significance and meaning to the things about which they are speaking.

Why should we work with parents?

The challenge of preschool teacher is compensation of development imbalances. (before entrance primary school). Preschool teacher has to work with child and parents, but teacher should be careful about big ambition! Small part of parents are used to cooperate.

What can help?

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and work with it



Tolerance to child’s environment Children and parents should feel safe and accepted. It is like They say: *Don ’t try to change us!*

They need to feel teacher’s interest and empathy. It is like They say: *Sing our songs!*

Let ’s to create a partnership. It is like They say: *Do not abase anybody neither overtop anybody!*

**Empathy and intuition** are very important for understanding equality between teacher and child.

If teacher behaves **same approach to everybody**, children feels accepted and their parents too.

If there is problem, child knows, that he **can go and say to teacher** and they will solve problem in new way.

Let's help to child to get know...

Environment (rules, names of things, doings).

Their feelings - **help to child to find the way of solving problems, way of living.**

What competences can be support?

### **Basic child needs (by Z. Matějček)**

- 1. The need of stimulation*
- 2. The need of meaningful world (learning)*
- 3. The need of life assurance (emotional relationship)*
- 4. The need of positive identity (self-esteem, social statues)*
- 5. The need of open future*

For kindergarden age, teacher should give to child support in:

#### **1) Visual Stimulation**

Optical differentiation of background and figure – virtue to see one part from whole, holistic perception.

#### **Deficits you can see in:**

They can not interrupt attention from visual stimulus, which are around the child and pay attention for important stimulus in this moment differentiation of shapes– – virtue to see different shapes (square, circle) and understand differences or recognise the same shapes.

**Deficits you can see in:** perception shape of alphabets, problems with classification of objects in visual memory. Difficulties in memorizing alphabet and with writing words, he can drop some alphabets.

#### **2) Hearing stimulation**

Hearing differentiation of background and figure – virtue to hear one part from whole, holistic perception.

**Deficits you can see in:** pay attention on one acoustic stimulus (mummy word, one teacher direct) and do not be disturbed with other sound.

Acoustic differentiation – virtue to hear different sound, speech sound, and understand differences or recognise the same sound.

**Deficits you can see in:** analysis and synthesis of words.

Acoustic memory – virtue to remember content and form of hearing.

**Deficits you can see in:** difficulties in memorizing alphabet and with writing words, he can drop some alphabets.

### **3) Place orientation**

Tactile sense – is very important for exploring world in early years - is connected with developing hard and soft movements, grafomotor, motor of vocal organs.

Body scheme – perception of their own body, virtue of right left orientation.

**Deficits you can see in:**

Difficulties with get dressing by their own, right left orientation you can see in reading, writing, counting, orientation on number axe.

Place orientation – orientation in environment, to develop walking, children learn to guess height, depth..

**Deficits you can see in:**

In writing – child cannot keep shape and size of alphabet, put sentence in one line.

### **4) Intermodality**

Intermodal coding – switch over one by one ways of perception make possible to name things, to connect word with hearing sound.

**Deficits you can see in:**

Difficulties with writing, when child does not know which speech sound is connected to alphabet.

He is not able to connect the visual and acoustic stimulus.



## **5) Serialization**

Function of serialization is important for virtue of prediction.

Everything happens in time serialization (day and night changing, days in week, year seasons, question and answer).

Our action brings reaction.

Our behaviour brings consequence.

### **Deficits you can see in:**

Difficulties in behaviour problems (Child don't think about consequences).

Classification of numbers, alphabets.

## 8. Working with parents

Czech law no. 561/2004 Sb., On preschool, primary, secondary, tertiary professional and other education (Education Act) (8) in § 33 defines the objectives of preschool education:

*"Preschool education promotes personal development of preschool age, contributes to its healthy emotional, intellectual and physical development and learning the basic rules of conduct, the fundamental values of life and interpersonal relationships. Pre-school education helps to remove inequalities development of children before entering elementary education and special education provides care for children with special educational needs "*.

Czech law is already talking about cooperation between home and kindergarten as follows: *"Kindergarten is working with children's legal guardians and other individuals in order to develop and organize activities in the development of children and deepen the education provided by the nursery school, family and society."* (2006, p.1)

Framework educational program for pre-school education talks on cooperation between legal representatives and kindergarten specifically. Family education should go together with institutional education. "Institutional pre-primary education is to supplement the family education and in close connection with it help ensure the child environment with plenty of versatile and adequate incentives for active development and learning. Pre-school education has meaningfully enrich the daily program of the child during his preschool years and provide professional child care. It should strive to make the first educational child steps. Education is built on a sophisticated, professionally supported and humanly and socially valuable basis, and that time spent in kindergarten was the baby joy, pleasant experience and a reliable source of good basics in life and education." (2004, p.7)

### **Declared condition for involving parents in pre-school education**

In relations between teachers and parents, there is mutual trust and openness, friendliness, understanding, respect and willingness to cooperate. Cooperation is working on a partnership basis.

Teachers monitor the specific needs of individual children, respectively. families, trying to understand and comply.

Parents have the opportunity to participate in events in kindergarten, to participate in various programs according to their interests here enter into the games their children. They are

regularly and adequately informed about everything that is happening in kindergarten. When there is an interest, they can participate in the program planning kindergarten, when solving problems, etc...

Teachers regularly inform parents about their child's well-being as well as their individual progress in development and learning. They work with parents on a common procedure for his education.

Educators protect the family's privacy and maintain confidentiality in its internal affairs entrusted. They treat parents thoughtfully, tactfully, knowing that they are working with confidential information. Does not interfere with family life and privacy; warn the overzealous and providing unsolicited advice.

Kindergarten promotes family education and helps parents in childcare: parents offers consulting services and a variety of educational activities on issues of upbringing and education of preschool children. (5, 2004, p. 35)

**Duties of teachers:**

- strive to create partnerships between the school and parents
- responsible for ensuring that parents have access for your child to class and to participate in its activities
- enable parents to participate in the creation of the school program and its evaluation
- lead to the child's parents ongoing dialogue about the child's well-being, development and learning
- empathy
- listening
- professional reasoning
- respect without prejudice

This topic is discussed in nowadays. Some researches say that graduated students of kindergarten studies are afraid of communication with parents.