

Preschoolers' Socialisation at the Intersection of Educational Multi-Environments and Kindergarten-Family Partnership

Diana ANTOCI, Full Professor, Doctor Habilitatus, Chair of Psychopedagogy and Special Psychopedagogy, “Ion Creanga” State Pedagogical University of Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, e-mail address: antocid@yahoo.com, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7018-6651>

Vasilica ANDRASCIUC BIRTOK, Preschool teacher, PhD, Romania, e-mail address: vasilicaandrasciuc@yahoo.com, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8143-5801>

Abstract

The socialisation of preschoolers is a multidimensional process requiring an integrated approach. This article advances an *original conceptual model* that synchronises formal, non-formal, and informal educational settings. Moving beyond traditional boundaries, the study explores how the partnership between educators and parents acts as a catalyst for social competence. By introducing specific structural figures and definitions, the research demonstrates that structured collaborative interventions significantly enhance rule compliance and prosocial behaviour in children aged 4-6.

The findings demonstrate that this integrated, collaborative approach, implemented through the structured kindergarten-family partnership, significantly enhances preschoolers' social competencies. Children not only acquired and consolidated knowledge of social rules and group behaviour but also developed positive character traits, relational skills, and cooperative behaviours. This synergy between educational settings and active parental involvement proved pivotal in fostering responsible and prosocial conduct.

Keywords: preschoolers' socialisation, educational partnership, kindergarten-family collaboration, formal education, non-formal education, informal education, prosocial behaviour, social competence, early childhood development.

Introduction

Personality socialisation is a fundamental pillar of educational sciences, being the process by which the individual internalises the system of values and norms necessary for active integration into the community. In the current social context, marked by accelerated digitalisation and profound shifts in the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, the preschooler socialisation paradigm requires reevaluation through the lens of educational continuity. If the previous period highlighted the vulnerabilities of social distancing, the present stage emphasises the reconstruction of social capital and the development of socio-emotional skills as resilience mechanisms.

Preschool age constitutes the critical “window of opportunity” for the formation of relational skills. In this sense, the efficiency of the pedagogical approach can no longer be limited exclusively to the kindergarten group. The development of socialisation skills is prioritised as a means of transcending institutional barriers, requiring a convergence of formal, non-formal and informal influences. This educational triad functions optimally only when

supported by an authentic educational partnership between the educational institution and the family, generating a secure and stimulating environment for the child's development.

The active involvement of the family in this partnership is not just an administrative option, but a pedagogical necessity. The coherence between the expectations of educators and parental practices optimises the socialisation process, ensuring the transfer of behavioural acquisitions from the directed context to the spontaneous one.

The purpose of this study is to analyse the multidimensional role of the kindergarten-family partnership in strengthening the social profile of the preschooler. The research aims to demonstrate how the synergistic use of formal, non-formal and informal learning environments contributes to the acquisition of social autonomy and prosocial behaviours, providing an experimentally validated theoretical and applied model.

1. **Conceptual Framework of Preschoolers' Socialisation through Educational Partnership**

Socialisation is a multidimensional process of internalising norms and values, being approached from sociological, psychological and pedagogical perspectives. From a sociological point of view, Émile Durkheim (2003) emphasises the intrinsic social nature of the individual, the process being one of cultural integration and transmission. This vision is complemented by Popescu Neveanu (1970), who defines socialisation as a relationship between social integration and a person's identity, a process that follows an ontogenetic evolution influenced by traditions and the level of civilisation.

A reference analysis belongs to Vlăsceanu (1988), who proposes a triple perspective on the process:

- *Anthropological perspective*: socialisation as enculturation (internalisation of cultural aspects) or acculturation (re-socialisation in new contexts).
- *Psychological perspective*: focused on the control of instincts and the development of personality. Sigmund Freud (cited in Vlăsceanu, 1988) highlights the conflict between the structures of consciousness (id, ego, superego) and the role of society in the "civilization" of the individual by learning the distinction between "good" and "bad".
- *Sociological perspective*: the process of preparation for group life, where the individual acquires the knowledge necessary to participate in specific groups (family, school).

In the context of cognitive and social development, constructivist theories provide the foundation of modern pedagogy. Jean Piaget (1968) demonstrates the active role of the child in exploring the environment, progress being conditioned by the assimilation of mental operations specific to each stage of development. This approach supports the principle of individualisation (Cucoş, 2006).

In addition, Erik Erikson (2015) proposes a stage of psychosocial development, emphasising the interaction between the self and the social environment.

Social constructivism, represented by Lev Vîgotski, emphasises the social nature of knowledge through the "zone of proximal development", where language and prosocial interactions become tools for enriching experience (as cited in Joiţa et. al., 2007). In this sense, Howard Gardner (as cited in Jinga et al, 2008) introduces the theory of multiple intelligences, highlighting that an educational process planned from the perspective of these intelligences favours child-centeredness and individualisation of learning, facilitates

interaction with the environment, supports success in self-expression and strengthens the student's self-image and sense of competence.

Within social ontogenesis, the succession of psychosocial development stages plays a fundamental role, as theorised by Erik Erikson (2015) and analysed in a pedagogical context by Glava (2002). For the age segment targeted by this study, the 3-6-year period is marked by the ontogenetic conflict between initiative and withdrawal, in which the family is the determining social factor. At this stage, the child expands his horizons beyond the simple autonomy previously acquired (1-3 years), starting to plan his activities and actively interact with the environment. Success at this stage depends on striking a balance between encouraging curiosity in adults and establishing clear boundaries, thus preparing the ground for the diligence stage, specific to early schooling (6-12 years), and initiating interpersonal intelligence as a unique ability to understand and interact with others.

The effective socialisation of preschoolers requires the convergence of three forms of education (Văideanu, 1988; Cuceș, 2006; Joița, 2003):

- A. Formal education: systematised and institutionalised in kindergarten.
- B. Non-formal education: extracurricular activities with differentiated objectives.
- C. Informal education: spontaneous influences from family, media, and everyday life.

According to Ballantine (1993), socialisation is a central function of education, facilitating the learning of social roles (as cited in Jinga et al, 2008). This culminates in the formation of social competences. D. Goleman (2001) defines these skills as the ability to form functional relationships. The operationalisation of the concept of socialisation at an early age is reflected in the formation of specific, hierarchically structured skills. According to the analysis carried out by C. Ștefan et al (2010), the social profile of the preschooler is defined by three essential behavioural pillars:

- 1) Adaptive Conformity (Rule Compliance): This is not simple obedience, but the child's ability to internalise instructions and follow social norms without external coercion (e.g., picking up toys or being quiet when asked by an adult).
- 2) Active Social Relation: it is manifested by the ability to initiate and maintain interactions, using active listening, sharing resources, and negotiated resolution of interpersonal conflicts.
- 3) Integrated Prosocial Behaviour: it represents the higher level of cooperation, in which the child offers voluntary help, shows care for common goods, and actively participates in group tasks (such as practical household activities).

This generalisation highlights that socialisation is not a finished product but a dynamic process of balancing individual needs with group expectations, facilitated by the combined intervention of the educator and the family.

Within the framework of the present study, socialisation is conceptualised through three core components: the cognitive-behavioural, affective-volitional, and communicative-social dimensions, as detailed in the theoretical model of socialisation (Figure 1).

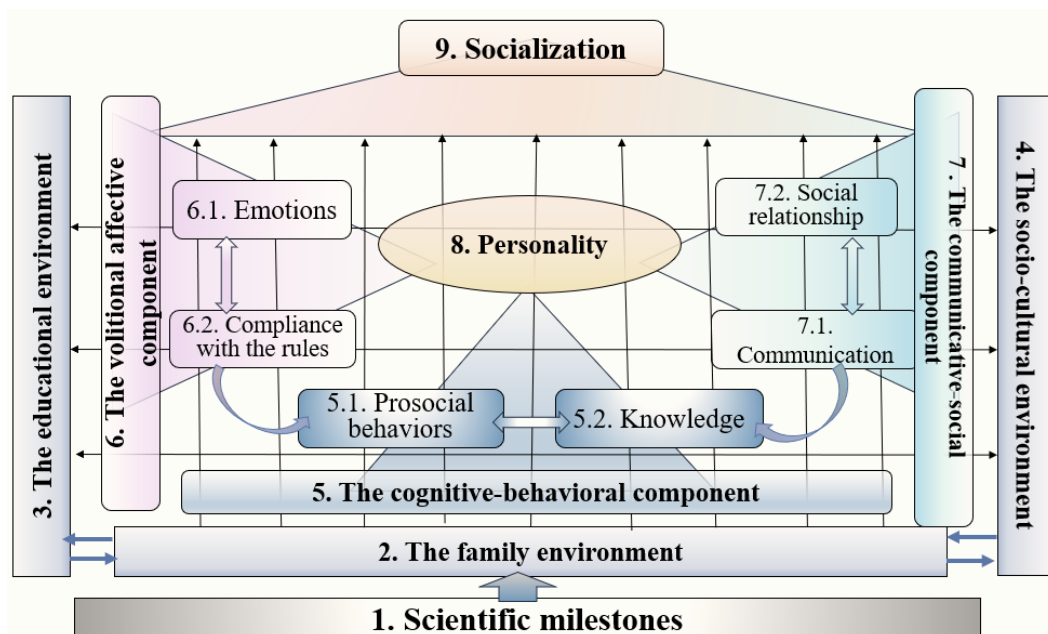


Figure 1. Theoretical Model of Socialisation (by Antoci & Andrasciuc Birtok)

The *cognitive-behavioural component* encompasses the acquisition and understanding of knowledge about the natural and social environment, as well as the ability to apply this knowledge across diverse practical and cognitive contexts. It also includes engagement in creative and exploratory activities, the capacity to interpret and assign meaning to surrounding realities, an understanding of various contextual situations, and the ability to approach and solve problems creatively.

The *affective-volitional component* refers to the emotional sphere and the internalisation of social norms and rules, including cultural and moral values. It involves developing prosocial attitudes, taking responsibility for one's actions, adhering to accepted norms, and forming a positive, responsible relationship with society and the environment.

The *communicative-social component* reflects the individual's capacity to establish and maintain social relationships, demonstrate prosocial behaviour, and express ideas effectively through both verbal and non-verbal means across diverse social contexts. It also includes active participation in social interactions, as well as the ability to manage and resolve conflicts through communication oriented toward cooperation and collaboration.

From the perspective of the competence-based approach, socialisation can be understood as the foundation for the development of **social competence**, which represents a key outcome of this process.

According to N. V. Bekker, social competence is an integrated personal construct encompassing interrelated cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components, enabling individuals to adapt effectively and achieve self-realisation in contemporary society.

The educational partnership "teachers - parents" constitutes the basis for the realisation of the entire educational process, and through this vision, we consider that the **educational partnership** constitutes an educational approach which, through communication, conformity, creativity, cohesion, coherence and efficiency, ensures the socialisation and cooperation of partners in solving a problem of common interest and creates a state of safety and comfort.

The analysis of various scientific approaches allows us to come up with the definition of the concept of **socialisation**: *a dynamic, integral process, oriented towards adapting the subject to the changes and demands of contemporary society through the cooperation of educational actors, focused on the development of affectivity, knowledge, compliance with rules, communication, social relationships, and prosocial behaviour.*

Based on the substantiation of the theoretical model of socialisation and the structural model of educational partnership, as well as the conceptual clarification of these notions, *the legal basis for ensuring the effectiveness of pre-schoolers' socialisation by valorising the educational partnership* was formulated and presented in Figure 1. The identification of this law was achieved by analysing and correlating scientific data regarding the structural components of the two processes.

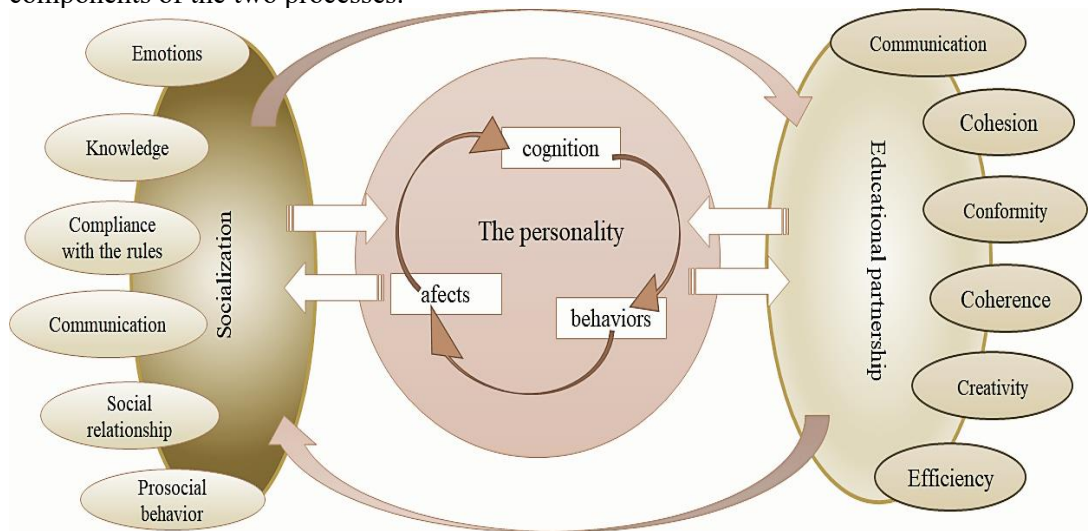


Figure 2. The regularity of ensuring the effectiveness of socialisation pre-schoolers by valorising the educational partnership (by Antoci & Andrasciuc Birtok)

The interdependence between the components of the socialisation process and the structure of the kindergarten-family educational partnership produces a synergistic effect, facilitating the development of preschoolers' socialisation within the dynamic interaction among formal, non-formal and informal educational environments (Figure 2).

Thus, the analysis of the theoretical framework highlights that the development of preschoolers' socialisation is a complex process, supported by interactions among formal, non-formal, and informal educational environments, in which the kindergarten-family partnership plays an essential integrating role.

2. Research methodology

To validate this Model, we implemented a rigorous experimental design involving a sample of 62 preschoolers (ages 4-6) and 62 parents during the academic year.

The formative stage aimed to implement the Strategic Project dedicated to capitalising on educational partnerships to develop preschoolers' socialisation, entitled "With small, with big, towards socialisation". Within the framework of this project, designed and implemented to support and strengthen the efficient collaboration between teachers and families, in order to ensure the continuity of the preschoolers' socialisation process, three distinct formative programs were developed and implemented: the program for teachers "Together for a more

sociable future”, the program for parents “Together we explore and socialize”, as well as the program for preschoolers “Childhood, friendship, empathy”.

The project included a series of activities for the direct beneficiaries – teachers and parents – to develop professional and parental skills relevant to supporting children’s socialisation. At the same time, joint activities were organised to strengthen cooperation among educational partners and optimise educational interventions in this area.

The project's efficiency was validated through a comparative analysis of results from preschoolers in the experimental and control groups across the three dimensions of socialisation (affective-volitional, cognitive-behavioural, and communicative-social) during the stages of observation and final evaluation.

Intervention strategies at levels:

- For parents: moving from “spectator” to “active partner” through webinars, roundtables, and case studies focused on age psychology.
- For teachers: workshops on interactive methods and assertive communication with the family.
- For preschoolers: using role-playing, therapeutic stories and outdoor (non-formal) activities to practice social skills in various contexts.

The following research tools were applied at the observation and control stage: Preschoolers' Socialisation Observation Sheet; Social Competence Screening, form for parents and educators (SCS-E 4/5, SCS-P 4/5) from the PEDa Test Battery (M. Miclea et al, 2010); Questionnaire for identifying parental involvement in the child’s education (Antoci & Andrasciuc, 2022).

3. Research results

Following the implementation of the Strategic Project aimed at capitalising on the educational partnership to stimulate the socialisation of preschoolers at the formative stage, significant improvements in their social behaviours were noted. Collaboration between parents, teachers and children facilitated the achievement of positive and relevant results.

During the formative program, parents were actively involved in supporting the development of preschoolers' social skills and were informed about the importance of this process. At the same time, the partnership relationship between the family and the preschool institution was strengthened.

In this context, the positive experience accumulated by parents from interacting with their own children was capitalised on by drawing on relevant practical examples. At the same time, cooperation between the kindergarten and the family was encouraged to support the socialisation process of older preschool children and to stimulate parents' interest in actively involving themselves in activities organised in this regard (Figure 1).

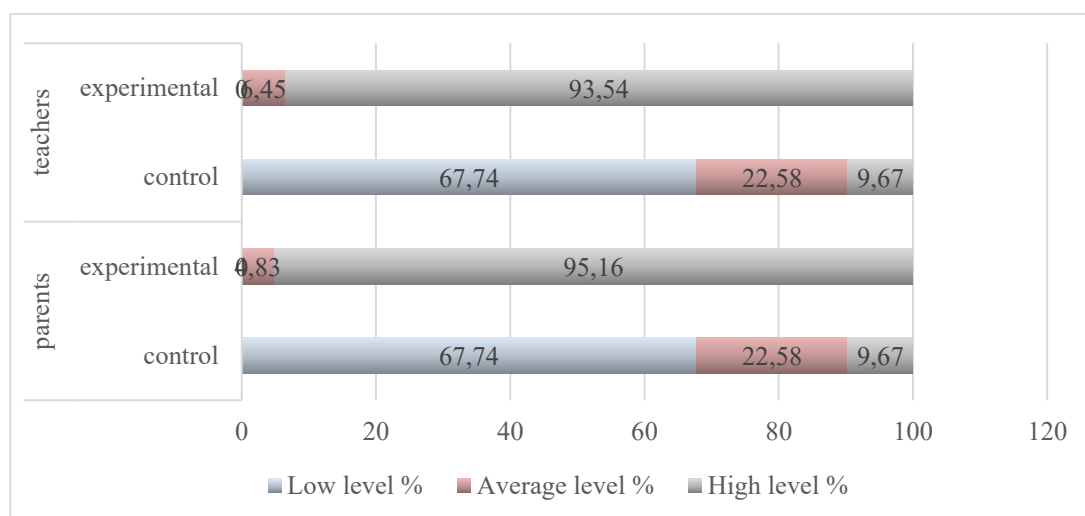


Figure 1. Distribution of subjects on the preschoolers' socialisation observation sheet (parents, teachers) at the control stage (%)

Communication between teachers and parents was also strengthened, with the aim of streamlining the educational partnership aimed at developing the social competences of preschoolers. Within this framework, various forms of collaboration (round tables, consultations, meetings, workshops, and training sessions) were initiated and conducted, focusing on the issue of socialisation, with the active participation of all educational actors involved. At the same time, parents were supported in understanding the specifics of the socialisation activities carried out in kindergarten and how they can be continued in the family environment. The importance of reading at home by parents, as a factor favouring social development, as well as the role of play in the family, was also highlighted, underscoring its formative value and providing useful resources for practical application.

Within the program for teachers, the proposed objectives were achieved, with educators benefiting from support in the process of awareness and assumption of their educational role, as well as in active involvement in the formation and development of the child's personality, with a view to their integration into social life. At the same time, understanding of the importance of preschoolers' social development was strengthened through activities conducted in the kindergarten, capitalising on the formative influence of the educational environment. Also, fundamental principles necessary for shaping the child's personality were outlined, along with appropriate strategies to prevent and correct inappropriate behaviours. At the same time, the training program aimed to deepen children's individual knowledge by observing their manifestations in the educational environment, using effective methods for psycho-emotional development, and identifying common solutions for the design of instructional-educational activities. The activities also included the analysis of specialised sources (books, studies, magazines), the organisation of thematic debates, the capitalisation of personal and professional experiences, as well as the exchange of good practices, accompanied by the expression and argumentation of the participants' opinions regarding the steps implemented within the program.

As for the educational program for preschoolers, it aimed to provide a psychoeducational framework oriented towards children's social development. The approach aimed at forming appropriate social orientations and behaviours, such as respecting rules, developing interpersonal relationships, and demonstrating prosocial behaviours.

At the same time, the program aimed to develop children's ability to put theoretical acquisitions in the social sphere into practice, as well as the progressive and systematic assimilation of new knowledge (Figure 2). At the same time, favourable contexts were created for the formation and consolidation of feelings and beliefs, as essential elements of the development of the preschooler's social personality.

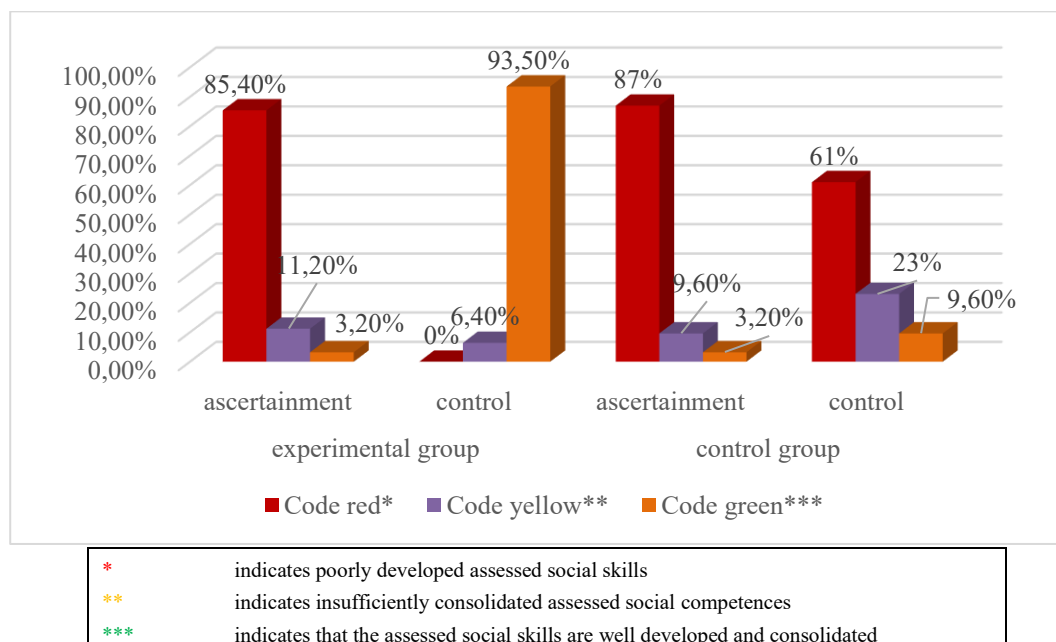


Figure 2. Distribution of preschoolers according to SCS-E codes, comparative presentation

Following the implementation of the training program, preschoolers made significant progress in social skills, as evidenced by the acquisition and consolidation of knowledge about the rules, relationships, and behaviours specific to group life. The development of the capacity for appropriate interaction with both peers and adults was highlighted, as well as the development of skills to respect social norms.

At the same time, the educational intervention contributed to the cultivation of positive traits of will and character, the structuring of a favourable attitude towards oneself and others, and the optimisation of relationship skills. Preschoolers demonstrated responsible behaviours in various contexts, became aware of the importance of self-knowledge in adopting a responsible lifestyle and developed relevant skills for cooperation and teamwork.

5. Conclusions

The application of the training program generated significant developments in the social development of preschoolers, highlighted by the assimilation and stabilization of knowledge regarding the rules, relationships and behaviours specific to group life. At the same time, improvement in the ability to relate appropriately with both peers and adults was noted, as well as the development of functional skills for respecting social norms.

Additionally, educational intervention supported the development of positive volitional character traits, the formation of a balanced attitude towards oneself and others, as well as the consolidation of interaction skills. Preschoolers demonstrated responsible behaviour in

various contexts, internalised the importance of self-knowledge for adopting a responsible lifestyle, and made progress in developing cooperation and teamwork competencies.

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