Parent kindergarten cooperation in the light of special pedagogical principles of Reggio Emilia concept

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ABSTRACT

The authors analyze co-operation between the kindergarten and parents in Slovenian kindergartens in the light of specific pedagogical principles of the concept of Reggio Emilia. The basic task of kindergartens in Slovenia is to help parents with comprehensive care for children, improving the quality of life for families and children and creating conditions for the development of children's physical and mental abilities. Reggio Emilia kindergartens on the other hand built primarily on the participation of children and parents in the life and work of kindergarten, while exposing the children through research, their interests, knowledge, and experiencing different activities with the assistance of educators (and parents) involved in all stages learning, ie. planning, development and evaluation. In the Reggio Emilia kindergartens educational management organization is in terms of participation, democracy, collective responsibility, problem solving and decision-making (Katz 1993, Spaggiari 1993, Malaguzzi 1993). This paper presents the results, gathered in Slovenian kindergartens participating in the project "Professional training of professional staff to implement specific elements of teaching the principles of Reggio Emilia concept in pre-school." In the context of empirical work, we wanted to explore and acquire a deeper insight into the educational work in pre-school education in Slovenia from the preschool educators and parents. The objective of empirical research was to determine the representation of elements of the special educational principles of Reggio Emilia concept in pre-primary education in Slovenia. Empirical survey involved preschool educators (N = 331) and parents (N = 1485). In this paper, we highlighted the following elements of participation: (1) planning pre-primary education, (2) the position of children in kindergarten and their role in the children’s play, (3) the impact of parental involvement in planning activities and (4) the impact of parents on the quality of work in kindergarten. Through research we determined that most preschool educators make their work plan together with their coworker, and that the planning educational work also includes children. Most parents believe that the management of the kindergarten, more or less account of their ideas in the preparation of the program so we can say that parents are involved in the design of the program. This is a welcome fact, because this is the evidence that the adoption of the Kindergarten law (1996) and Curriculum for kindergartens (1999) set a good 'building blocks' for the partnership. The results have also shown that kindergarten involves parents in decision-making
particularly in the planning of additional activities, but they are not too involved in the process of determining quality in kindergarten. We believe that a profound reflection on the involvement of parents in the process of assessment and quality assurance services will be required.

**Keyword:** preschool education, kindergarten, parent kindergarten cooperation, special educational principles, Reggio Emilia concept

1. INTRODUCTION

In the child's life preschool period is particularly sensitive. We are aware that pre-school education can make a significant difference in children's personality development potentials in various areas, as well as to educational gaps. In doing so, various factors play an important role and there is no doubt, that parent - preschool teacher collaboration in kindergarten is an important element of preschool educational success. Through historical paradigm of pre-school education, we can see that there were two main orientations: one has emphasised the importance of cultural transmission model of preschool education and the traditional programs in kindergartens which have insisted on the so-called teaching-oriented programmes and the client relationship between parents and educators, and the other policy, which derives from the notion of postmodern science and education of children, which emphasizes more open, child-oriented programmes and partnership relationship between parents and educators. This contribution deals and examines contemporary views on pre-primary care and education as to the importance of cooperation between parents and the kindergarten in the light of the pedagogical concept Reggio Emilia and Curriculum for pre-school education in Slovenia and analyzes the role of parents in the life and work of kindergarten, in the implementation of the preschool curriculum and parent participation in the decision-making bodies of kindergarten.

1.1. Theoretical propositions

In the history of pre-school education we can recognize the different views on childhood and care and education of children. Until the present day, two opposite tendencies have changed place. They were namely the search for planned, systematic and effective learning of children and a tendency to enable children to live free and playful childhood. (Batistič Zorec and Krnel, 2009). In this context extreme views are presented on one hand by highly structured teaching-oriented programs that are set out in advance (in the 1960s and 1970s), and have insisted on preparing the children for school and on the other side the search for less structured, more open programs, which some authors (Kamenov 1987, Badekamp 1996, Bruce 1997, Batistič Zorec 2003) name as "child-oriented" or "relevant" curriculum development. These contemporary curriculums implicitly (in the form of recommended approaches, forms and methods of work) or explicitly (e.g. high/Scope High/S Curriculum in the USA, Curriculum for kindergarten in Slovenia) stress the principle of active learning.

B. Marentič Požarnik (2000) says that active learning is the learning, that gets children comprehensively, mentally and emotionally activated, that it is important for them and spanned in real life situations. In addition, modern pedagogical concepts stress the importance of cultural context: for
effective learning children interaction with their peers and adults is important, as well as the active involvement in the environment in which the child belongs. M. Batistič Zorec and Krnel (2009) see a substantial difference between modern pedagogical concepts according to whether they are derived from "modern" or "postmodern" concept of science and education of children. The postmodern concept points out that science is not something that you adults use and pass on to the children. Educators are trying to move away from a set of beliefs and judgments about which educational contents and conducts are correct and appropriate. Instead, educators "in dialogue and team collaboration with the children, their parents and local environment together not only discover the scientific knowledge, but are also critical and innovative towards it (Batistič Zorec and Krnel, 2009: 74) Such approach is also found in the pedagogical concept called Reggio Emilia.

When we are talking about the pre-school care and education in the present day and when we are tracking the achievements of pre-school education in the world, we cannot overlook the Reggio Emilia pedagogical approach, which goes back to the beginning of the year 1963. This is a pedagogical approach, which came to life in the city of Reggio Emilia (hence the name of the concept) in the province of Reggio Romania in Italy. This approach is a practical response to new scientific paradigms, social and professional changes in the area of pre-school care and education in the second half of the 20th century. This concept is one of the so-called approaches, which stress the importance of the integrated development of children, taking into account individual differences between children, depending on the interest and ability. Approaches stress the importance of stimulative educational environment to the development of the child, which provides a sense of security and promotes children's learning. Reggio emilia approach builds on the participation of children and highlights two elements: the interaction between the child and preschool teacher and social interaction with other children in the department or group. However parents and local community also have an important role. As partners they cocreate life and work in kindergarten (Devjak at al., 2009).

The Reggio Emilia pedagogical concept is a modern (postmoderen) concept of pre-school education, which aims to educate children in critical thinkers and guardians of the democracy (Malguzzi, 1998; Rinaldi, 2006). Among the foundation of the concept we count the following: (1) engagement of kindergarten in the culture of the environment; (2) taking into account the diversity of children; (3) the importance of the development and use of all senses in the cognitive process; (4) promote and facilitate different forms of expression; (5) the advantage of learning before teaching; (6) quality interaction and communication; (7) teamwork between educators and other workers in kindergarten, (8) the project work; (9) the importance of documenting and archiving products and life and work in kindergarten and (10) the importance of space as a "third" educator (after the parents and preschool teachers). Among the features or characteristics of the Reggio Emilia pedagogical concept in the field of pre-school education, we must also mention: pedagogy of listening and expression; participation of children in the life and work of kindergarten and mutual interaction between kindergarten and local communities (Devjak at al. 2009).

The advantage of Reggio Emilia pedagogical concept in comparison to other concepts is its openness (emergent curriculum) which constantly builds and fulfills itself. Its openness is also seen
in implementing different scientific theories and knowledges and also in their relationship towards environment and changes in their own pedagogical practices. G. Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2000) point out the comprehensive work of all included in educational process when searching for the best, they can offer to children, without ever claiming their understanding and work to be done.

When implementing individual elements of a specific educational concept in another concept (and the environment), it is important to think it through and integrate only those items that are in conformity with the basic philosophy of the concept (in our case in the Curriculum for kindergarten). A similarity between Slovene Curriculum for kindergarten (1999) and Reggio Emilia pedagogical concept is that they are both based on human and children's rights, democratic values and the rule of law and that they to defend pluralism of knowledge and conceptual integration of the various sciences. Instead of a child centred approach and the necessity to derive from the children's needs, they both emphasize childrens rights.

Curriculum for kindergartens (1999) in Slovenia is prepared after described principles. The fundamental task of kindergartens in Slovenia are to help parents with comprehensive care for children, to improve the quality of life for families and children and the creation of conditions for the development of children's physical and mental abilities. In the Law on kindergartens (1996) and the Law on the organisation and financing of education and training (1996) there are defined articles that define parent – kindergarten cooperation and the rights and duties of parents. Thus, for example, the Law on kindergartens (1996) states that the kindergarten must determine the organization and detailed life and work with the annual work plan in which they must also define the cooperation with parents. Kindergarten must also present itself to parents in a publication which presents current programs, their objectives, contents and methods of work. Three representatives of the parents are at the level of public kindergarten also included into so called Council of public kindergarten, whose jurisdiction includes the appointment and dismissal of the principal of kindergarten, adoption of the programme of the development and adoption of the annual work plan, and reports on its implementation, consideration of reports on educational issues, as well as deciding on appeals of parents in relation to detention and educational work in the public kindergarten or school. For organised exercise of parental interests in public kindergarten there is also a Counsil of parents in which each section of kinderagrten has one representative that the parents elected in parental meetings. The Council of parents suggests above standard programs, gives consent to the principals proposal of the above standard services, gives suggestions on the proposal for kindergarten development programme and the kindergartens annual work plan, discusses reports on educational issues, hears parental appeals and electes parent representatives to the Council of kindergarten.

On the first pages of the Curriculum for kindergartens (1999) we can trace the principle of cooperation with the parents and the principle of cooperation with the environment. The principle of cooperation with parents specifies the conditions of cooperation, which in our opinion already indicate the elements of the partnership relationship. Parents have in kindergarten not only the right to information about the programs and the right to exchange information and in-depth talks about their child, but also the right to participate in the planning of the life and work in kindergarten as well as in sections of the kindergarten (individual group) and even the right for active participation in educational work, of course, in regard to the professional autonomy of kindergarten. Moreover,
parents have the right to the progressive establishment of children in different programs of kindergarten. Kindergarten should also work to ensure parents systematic introduction with their rights and responsibilities. Cooperation with parents in curriculum is set out as an important aspect of the quality of pre-school education and in that relationship importance of the division of responsibilities and powers is particularly stressed. This is a fact, that we will later show as a basis for the development of the partnership relationship. In cooperation between the parents and the kindergarten the provision of services is in the forefront and not invasion of privacy. Kindergarten must take into account and respect the culture, identity, language, world opinion, values, beliefs, habits and customs of the children's parents, parents must also take into account the limits of their participation, without prejudice to the professionalism of the institution. Active cooperation with parents brings the preschool teacher not only additional professional obligations but also a range of professional benefits – mutual exchange of information and insight into the child's individual needs and development efforts help parents as well as preschool teacher and build a basis for joint action and problem-solving in the child's development and growing up.

According to the principle of cooperation with parents and with regard to the communication between educators and parents we can talk about the indirect and direct relationship. In an indirect relationship preschool teacher uses his leading role and gives directions, makes requirements, estimates, assess and in direct relation, the parents are equivalent partner (Pšunder, 1998). Depending on the relationship between the educational institution and the parents, authors (Macbeth 1993, Whalley 1997) speak about partnership, clients and paternalistic relations (and sometimes also "manager" relationship). When we speak about client relationship there is usually the right of parents to choose a preschool institution for their child in the forefront. Parents as "managers" are mentioned in those countries (e.g., Portuguese) where representatives of parents are represented in all major committees. Resman (1991) talks about paternalistic relationship where experts "teach" parents — for example, in mixed school bodies where parents and experts sit together, the experts are often losing time explaining their views and convincing parents about the importance of decision-making in the professional way. Such an attitude does not impose an equal position for parents and parents cannot be equivalently integrated into the debate and decision-making in situations where it is necessary to draw on the expertise. However, when there is talk about partnership relationship, authors highlight different elements. Bastiani (1993) considers that in most cases, partnership relationship includes division of responsibility, power (of course, in the case of kindergarten and school this power cannot be equally distributed), demonstrating affection, setting common objectives and joint action. Raab (1993) includes in partnership the possibility of a formal decision-making, duties and interaction. The achieved objectives are, in his view, the result of the common articulated contributions by the partners, which are not necessarily strictly equivalent. When we look at any definition of partnership or partnership relationship we can conclude, that they all involve a certain degree of active participation in setting and achieving goals. Macbeth (1993) in this view points out, that it is essential to determine the right power distribution between the two actors. In the process of life and work of kindergarten preschool teachers, children, parents, local community and other experts should participate on an equal footing.
2. PROBLEM DEFINITION AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of research is to find the answers to different research issues, but the objective of discussed contribution is to seek the views of parents on three sets of issues such as:

(1) INFORMING PARENTS: Are parents sufficiently informed about the contents/the program/the curriculul of work and organisation of work? Are they informed with the formal and informal forms of work in kindergarten? Do they know the regulations and rules, in particular those about exercising their rights and the rights of their child? Is the information in timr, and understandable?

(2) PARENT PARTICIPATION: Do parents play an active role in forming the life and work in kindergarten? Are they involved in the proces of forming the rules and regulations of the kindergarten? Is there, in their opinion, a link/cooperation between kindergarten and local environment? Do children, according to parents, learn respectful attitude towards others and are preschool teachers systematically promoting various forms of expression?

(3) PARENTS VIEWS: Are parents satisfied with the work of professionals in kindergarten? Which responsibilities are, in parents opinion, priority tasks of preschool teachers today?

Empirical research is based on the quantitative determination of pedagogical research, we used the descriptive and causal-noneksperimental method. The survey included 1485 parents of pre-school children in 96 kindergartens in Slovenia. The questionaire was partly closed, partly open type, data collection took place in april and may 2009. The questionare was distributed to the first five parents of children in the group (children from 2 to 6 years of age) in alphabetical order. The data were processed by statistical software package SPSS-X PC and EXCEL.

2.1 Interpretation of the results

*Informing parents about the content and organization of work*

Table 1: Parents views on information about content and organization of work in kindergarten

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>f(1) (%)</th>
<th>f(2) (%)</th>
<th>f(3) (%)</th>
<th>f(4) (%)</th>
<th>f(5) (%)</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>St</th>
<th>KV (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of the information relevant to the life of my child in a kindergarten.</td>
<td>1578</td>
<td>0,3</td>
<td>0,7</td>
<td>8,6</td>
<td>34,2</td>
<td>56,3</td>
<td>4,46</td>
<td>0,11</td>
<td>2,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I inform preschool teachers with information relevant to the life of my child in a kindergarten.</td>
<td>1577</td>
<td>0,3</td>
<td>0,6</td>
<td>4,6</td>
<td>31,1</td>
<td>63,5</td>
<td>4,57</td>
<td>0,12</td>
<td>2,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of the rules and regulations, which must be respected in kindergarten.</td>
<td>1572</td>
<td>0,3</td>
<td>0,4</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>33,3</td>
<td>61,1</td>
<td>4,55</td>
<td>0,12</td>
<td>2,6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of the rules and regulations by which I can exercise my or my child's rights.</td>
<td>1572</td>
<td>1,0</td>
<td>3,1</td>
<td>15,7</td>
<td>37,7</td>
<td>42,7</td>
<td>4,19</td>
<td>0,10</td>
<td>2,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of the work programme of kindergarten.</td>
<td>1578</td>
<td>0,4</td>
<td>1,0</td>
<td>10,0</td>
<td>35,8</td>
<td>52,8</td>
<td>4,40</td>
<td>0,11</td>
<td>2,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of the possible forms of formal cooperation with the kindergarten.</td>
<td>1565</td>
<td>1,5</td>
<td>3,6</td>
<td>18,3</td>
<td>38,3</td>
<td>38,3</td>
<td>4,08</td>
<td>0,10</td>
<td>2,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of the possible forms of informal cooperation with the kindergarten.</td>
<td>1560</td>
<td>1,4</td>
<td>4,8</td>
<td>22,6</td>
<td>39,4</td>
<td>31,8</td>
<td>3,95</td>
<td>0,10</td>
<td>2,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of the work of the Council of the parents.</td>
<td>1578</td>
<td>9,2</td>
<td>12,0</td>
<td>24,0</td>
<td>27,3</td>
<td>27,5</td>
<td>3,52</td>
<td>0,08</td>
<td>2,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of the work of the Council of kindergarten.</td>
<td>1577</td>
<td>12,7</td>
<td>13,9</td>
<td>25,4</td>
<td>26,9</td>
<td>21,1</td>
<td>3,30</td>
<td>0,08</td>
<td>2,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information submitted by the kindergarten is understandable.</td>
<td>1580</td>
<td>0,5</td>
<td>0,7</td>
<td>44,2</td>
<td>54,0</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>3,53</td>
<td>0,08</td>
<td>2,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information submitted by the kindergarten is timely</td>
<td>1580</td>
<td>0,1</td>
<td>2,1</td>
<td>3,4</td>
<td>45,8</td>
<td>48,9</td>
<td>4,42</td>
<td>0,11</td>
<td>2,6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend:**
- 1/5/very poor to very good  
- n — total  
- P-average  
- S-standard deviation  
- KV – coefficient variation, in%

The principle of cooperation with parents is defined in the Law on kindergartens (1996) and in Curriculum for kindergartens (1999). According to the majority of parents, that graded this statement with 4 or 5, the information obtained in kindergarten is timely (94.7%) and understandable, to more than half of parents (54.6%). The law stipulates that each kindergarten must at the beginning of the school year issue a publication of kindergarten work for the current school year. Publication must include a description of the programme, human resources, a supplemental program (foreign language courses, computer, dance or drama courses) and other important information about life and work of kindergarten, such as celebrations, vacations, visits to museums, galleries, theatres, homes for the
elderly, etc. On daily, weekly or monthly basis kindergarten informs parents through bulletin boards (in the lobby of kindergarten and before each group), written notes (at home or at the hands of parents, when they come to pick up their child), over the telephone and/or via the internet site of kindergarten. Information regarding individual child are provided to parents personally by the preschool teacher in »talking« hours, however information regarding all children are presented on parent teacher meetings for an individual kindergarten group as well as in the common parent teacher meeting for all parents of kindergarten.

The results of the research suggests elements of the partnership relationship. Parents in kindergarten have the right not only to information about Curriculum and on the progress/development of their child, but also the right to participate in the planning of the life and work in kindergarten, in individual groups they even have the right to active participation in educational work. Kindergarten must also systematically inform parents about their rights and responsibilities. Cooperation is seen as an important aspect of the quality of pre-school education, in the parent teacher relationship, we particularly stress the importance of the division of responsibilities and powers, which we will later point out as a basis for the development of the partnership relationship.

The results show that for most parents it is very important to have timely and substantive information about life and work in the kindergarten as well as, it's important that they (63.5%) inform preschool teachers with information, relevant to the life of their child in kindergarten. 80.5% of parents estimate, that they are quite well informed about the rules and regulations in the kindergarten, just as they estimate that they are familiar with the rules and regulations they need to exercise their rights and the rights of their child. 56.0% of the respondent parents believe that they are aware of the information that is relevant to the life of the child in a kindergarten. Nearly 53.0% of parents estimate that they are perfectly familiar with the work programme of kindergarten, good familiarity with it estimated 33.0% of the respondents. 38.0% of parents are excellent and well aware of the possibilities of formal cooperation with the kindergarten. On the possibilities of informal cooperation with the kindergarten, 32.0% of parents are perfectly familiar, 39.0% of them assesses this cooperation with the assessment good. 28.0% of the parents are perfectly introduced to the work of the Council of parents, 27.0% of respondents estimates pairment with good and partly by 24.0% of parents. Familiarity with the work of the Council of parents 26.0% of parents estimate with perfect, 27.0% estimate familiarity with assessment well and 23.0% of respondents assessed it with partly. Familiarity with the conclusions adopted by the Council of parents 20.0% of the respondents assessed with excellent, 26.0% of respondents with an assessment good and 27.0% with the assessment partly.

On the basis of the obtained results, we estimate that the most important thing for parents is familiarising kindergarten with information relevant to the life of the child in kindergarten (average rating 4.57), followed by information on the rules and regulations to be observed in kindergarten (average rating 4.55) and information about rules and regulations for understanding and exercising their rights and the rights of their child (average rating 4.55). Slightly lower average rating (4.46) got the statement »I am aware of the information relevant to the life of my child in a kindergarten«.

The lowest average rating (3.26) got the statement regarding parents familiarity with the conclusions adopted by the Council of kindergarten. In the Council of parents only one parent representative from each age group is included, and yet even they do not have the right to vote. Parents only forward comments on the work of kindergarten, but they do not have the right to vote.
This right is given only to the three representatives from all parents, which are incorporated into the Council of kindergarten, which also includes five representatives of the employees and three representatives of the founder – the local community. In this Council there are usually interests of individual groups and individual problems in the foreground, which often push school issues because of financial or other, more acute problems, into the background.

**Parental involvement in the preparation of the life and work in kindergarten**

**Table 2: involvement of parents in the work of kindergarten**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENTS</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>f(1) (%)</th>
<th>f(2) (%)</th>
<th>f(3) (%)</th>
<th>f(4) (%)</th>
<th>f(5) (%)</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>St (%)</th>
<th>KV (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents are involved in the design of the living and working in kindergarten.</td>
<td>1577</td>
<td>2,3</td>
<td>24,1</td>
<td>19,8</td>
<td>41,6</td>
<td>12,0</td>
<td>3,37</td>
<td>0,08</td>
<td>2,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten management takes into account parents ideas when preparing the programme of life and of work in kindergarten.</td>
<td>1577</td>
<td>1,1</td>
<td>11,1</td>
<td>23,6</td>
<td>48,1</td>
<td>16,1</td>
<td>3,67</td>
<td>0,09</td>
<td>2,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents are involved in the design of the rules and regulations in force in the kindergarten.</td>
<td>1580</td>
<td>2,8</td>
<td>24,8</td>
<td>21,1</td>
<td>37,6</td>
<td>13,6</td>
<td>3,34</td>
<td>0,08</td>
<td>2,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten cooperates with the environment in which it operates.</td>
<td>1580</td>
<td>0,1</td>
<td>1,8</td>
<td>7,0</td>
<td>49,2</td>
<td>41,6</td>
<td>4,30</td>
<td>0,11</td>
<td>2,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in kindergarten learn tolerant and respectful attitude towards others.</td>
<td>1580</td>
<td>0,1</td>
<td>0,3</td>
<td>3,4</td>
<td>43,0</td>
<td>53,4</td>
<td>4,50</td>
<td>0,12</td>
<td>2,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten professionals deliberately promote various forms of expression of children, such as for example: movement, facial expression, drawing, symbolic game, rhythm, music, speech, etc.</td>
<td>1580</td>
<td>0,3</td>
<td>1,8</td>
<td>32,9</td>
<td>65,2</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>3,63</td>
<td>0,09</td>
<td>2,4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend:**
- from 1/does disagree to 5/totally agree
- N — total
The results of the parent research suggest that 37.4% of parents agree with the argument that they are included in the formulation of rules and regulations in force in the kindergarten but only 13.5% of parents fully agree with this statement. (For a total of 50.9% of parents). Only 21.0% of parents only partly agree with this statement. This is the lowest estimated statement. Probably the reasons for such a small percentage of agreement lies in the parents opinion, that they are not able to influence the legislative and regulatory provisions and acts in the state, as was the case in the following statement – whether they are involved in the planning of the life and work in kindergarten, where a trend of consensus is achieved. More than 73.0% of parents (partly to completely) agree with this statement. Parents are involved in the formation of the programme and even 87.0% of parents believe that the management of kindergarten, more or less takes into account their ideas in the preparation of the programme. This information is pretty exhilarating. Why? With the adoption of the Law on kindergartens (1996) and Curriculum for kindergartens (1999) in Slovenia we prepared "the Foundation" for the partnership relationship between parents and the kindergarten, for mutual cooperation and active role of parents in the preparation of the programme of the life and work in kindergarten. Successful realization of the objectives, principles and Curriculum for pre-school education depends on the active participation of parents with kindergarten. This is not to reduce the autonomy of preschool teachers or kindergarten, but for »something more in education", for uniformity of the educational approaches, for openness and democratic nature of the curriculum, as well as pluralism in pre-school education. The fact that parents estimate, that children learn tolerant and respectful attitude towards others (average is here at the highest -4.5), is welcomed, because there are almost no parents, that would not agree with this statement. Parents are less satisfied with the systematic promotion of different forms of expression (a statement agreed upon by around 65.0% of parents). This is an educational element of Reggia Emilia educational concept, which needs to be strengthened in our kindergartens. The information supplied by the kindergarten are understandable in the statements of around 55.0% of respondents and 94.3% of parents claim, that are timely, which is also very encouraging information.

Interpretation based on the Curriculum for kindergartens (1999), where on first pages we can trace the principle of cooperation with the environment, we can see that, at a fundamental level over 90.0% of parents agree with the statement that the kindergarten is associated with the environment in which it operates – compliance with the principle of cooperation with the environment can be traced. In the forefront of the cooperation with the environment is taking account the diversity and possibilities of natural and socio-cultural resources nearest to the kindergarten environment and the specifics of the environments from which children come.
Parents views on the work of professionals in kindergarten

Table 3: Views of parents on professional work of pre-school teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENTS</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>f(1) (%)</th>
<th>f(2) (%)</th>
<th>f(3) (%)</th>
<th>f(4) (%)</th>
<th>f(5) (%)</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>St</th>
<th>KV (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionals in kindergarten must take into account childrens ideas when</td>
<td>1214</td>
<td>0,7</td>
<td>7,0</td>
<td>19,2</td>
<td>53,1</td>
<td>19,9</td>
<td>3,85</td>
<td>0,11</td>
<td>2,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>planning the project work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals in kindergarten must state to children to work independently.</td>
<td>1493</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>0,1</td>
<td>0,5</td>
<td>26,1</td>
<td>73,2</td>
<td>4,72</td>
<td>0,13</td>
<td>2,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional in kindergarten must often commend the children</td>
<td>1489</td>
<td>0,1</td>
<td>1,3</td>
<td>4,8</td>
<td>46,7</td>
<td>47,0</td>
<td>4,39</td>
<td>0,12</td>
<td>2,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals in kindergarten should indicate to children to evaluate</td>
<td>1489</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>0,3</td>
<td>1,7</td>
<td>29,5</td>
<td>68,5</td>
<td>4,66</td>
<td>0,13</td>
<td>2,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their own work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In kindergarten, children learn tolerant dialogue with others.</td>
<td>1492</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>0,5</td>
<td>19,1</td>
<td>80,4</td>
<td>4,80</td>
<td>0,13</td>
<td>2,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In kindergarten, children learn about resolving conflicts.</td>
<td>1492</td>
<td>0,1</td>
<td>0,5</td>
<td>1,5</td>
<td>25,7</td>
<td>72,3</td>
<td>4,70</td>
<td>0,13</td>
<td>2,7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- from 1/no agree to 5/totally agree
- N — total
- P- average
- St-standard deviation
- KV – koefficient variations in%

If you look at the average estimates, we can see that in parents opinion one of the most important "tasks" of today's preschool teachers are learning children tolerant dialogue with others. We came to the same conclusions when interpreting the results in the first chapter of interpretation (see Table 1: The involvement of parents in the work of kindergarten). 80,0% of parents completely agree with this statement. The second most important task of pre-school teachers (according to parents) is to state to children to work independently, which is followed by the statement that "children in kindergarten should learn to resolve conflicts". Tolerant dialogue in a multicultural society is today of
a great value and an objective in the work in the field of education - from pre-school level to higher education level. In kindergarten, children learn tolerant communication from play, pleasant employments and interacting with the different but also the same. All are children. In order for children to feel comfortable in kindergarten, preschool teachers must know and take into account individual differences in children's development and learning, have knowledge of child's way of accessing and experiencing environment and kindergarten as an institution must provide equivalent conditions for optimal development of each individual, where they must take into account individual differences and provide the conditions for the inclusive community which takes into account the diversity and multiculturalism.

It is interesting that the statement "the professional must, when planning project work, take into account children's proposals" was the worst estimated statement (average 3.85) and only 20.0% of parents completely agreed with it. It is interesting that in Reggio Emilia educational concept parents consider the other way around: a preschool teacher must, when planning project work, take into account the proposals of children. This raises the question of realization of the objective that parents consider to be important – professional in kindergarten must state to children to work independently, while ignoring its proposals, knowing that children will be highly motivated and ready to learn only if they are interested.

Parents also estimate that the professional in kindergarten/preschool teacher must state children for the evaluation of their own work (fairly high average – 4.66), since it is almost two thirds of parents whose opinion is, that this is a very important task of kindergarten and at the same time important preparation for subsequent responsible work in later life. If you know, what you're doing well and where you could be better, then it is easier to grow personally and develop. Evaluation of the work today is no longer a flash in the pan, but a necessity and requirement from the knowledge society.

Educational projects in Reggio Emilia educational approach have a significant importance. Projects emerge in large or small groups of children, some children are more interested in the work of a given project, others less. Preschool teachers must take into account children's proposals, discuss it with them, in short, a teacher must be with the child. Child needs his teacher to believe in him, to be happy with him and to detection innovations. Project work helps children deepen and improve a sense of events and phenomena in the environment. This helps them to gain experience, which are worthy of their attention. Project work presents a part of life in kindergarten and this way preschool teachers encourage children to accept decisions for themselves, to decide alone or in together with fellow pupils what to do. This helps them to build confidence in their own intellectual power and develop a wide range of abilities. We draw from children's proposal an immense array of ideas, which can help preschool teacher when planning his work.

3. CONCLUSION

Already teaching classics highlighted the relationship between the child's parents and professional educators as a precondition for the possibility care and education of children outside the family. Cocreating the life and work in kindergarten is a task for all participants — children, parents and preschool teachers. We can point out, that the participation between kindergarten and parents is an important topic in both, expert theoretical discussions and in the deliberations of the lay and political public. From this subject many researches have been derived (especially on the theme of "quality of
pre-school education"), abroad and in Slovenia. On this topic, we also have examples of good practices, such as: partner relationship between parents, local community and the kindergarten in Reggio Emilia educational concept in Italy and cooperative relationship with elements of the partnership in Slovene kindergartens, which was also showed through this survey, in which we explored the status quo, expectations and parents templates for ensuring higher quality of educational work and cooperation build on the elements of the partnership relationship in both formal and informal forms of cooperation in Slovene kindergartens. If we collapse the findings of the research, we see, that Slovenian parents (87.0%) feel, that the management of kindergarten mostly takes into account their ideas in the preparation of the life and work in kindergarten, especially in the case of additional activities, most of them (94.3%) are satisfied with the information they obtain in the kindergarten for which they believe is timely, but not always understandable (average 3.53). Parents are aware that the professionals in kindergarten obtain relevant information and a lot of data for optimal and successful work from parents themselves. Parents feel that the role of informal forms of cooperation (workshops, common excursions, picnics, etc.) is not as important and they enhance the role of the formal forms (contact hours, parent teacher meetings, the Council of parents and the Council of kindergarten). Research has also shown a "short-circuit" between parents in individual groups of kindergarten, representatives of the parents in the Council of the parents (which is a consultative body of the Council of the Institute), and then in the representatives of parents in the Council of kindergarten, where decisions are made. They wish for more feedback. Parents are however very satisfied with the professional work of preschool teachers and they feel that nowadays one of the important tasks of preschool teachers is preparation for tolerant dialogue with others (average 4.80), preparation for independent work (average of 4, 72) and learning about resolving conflicts (average of 4, 70). Regarding the educational concept Reggio Emilia, where children's project work is the "alpha and omega", we will, according to the results of research, need to put more attention to the area of children participation, project work, promoting and facilitating different forms of expression through continuing education and training of professional workers. This finding has a framework in the objectives and tasks of kindergarten (Law on kindergartens, 1996), which state, that professional workers must know and take into account individual differences in children's development and learning, knowledge of child's way of accessing and growing environment, while kindergarten as a preschool institution must ensure equal conditions for optimal development of each individual, must take into account individual differences, provide conditions for the inclusive community and taking into account the diversity and multiculturalism.

REFERENCES


