



Original Contribution

THE SOCIAL COMPETENCE OF PARENTS AND THE INTERACTION OF THEIR CHILD WITH PEERS

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ABSTRACT

Among the main socialization factors in the primary school age are parents and peers. Finding the healthy balance between the interactions with them is a criterion for happy life of the child and for success of the running process of socialization. The aim of our study is to search for opportunities for promoting social competence of parents and pupils. We make the following conclusion: when children and parents learn together social skills, this increases the quality of their understanding, respect each other and communication. This provides child's popularity in the group of peers, its successful interaction and opportunity to form his identity adequately to the world of now-a-days.

Key words: parents, social competence, peers, adolescents, interaction

Among the main socialization factors for the primary school age are parents and peers. The desire to reach autonomy, searching for the own identity, interesting in new and different things, feeling of growing up – all those things plunge the child to the group of peers. From the other side, the need of security, defense and confidence return him to family. Finding the healthy balance between the interactions with both of them is a criterion for happy life of the child and for success of the running process of socialization.

The aim of our study is to search for opportunities for promoting social competence of parents and pupils of primary school age. The main tasks of the study are connected with proposals of adequate strategies for intervention in parents – pupils' interactions and in peers' interactions.

The social – emotional skills are of main importance in anybody's life. This thesis began to dominate in science as a result of many empirical researches in that direction (E. Thorndyke, H. Gardner, R. Sternberg, D. Goleman, L. Shapiro, W. Dyer, J. Fast, D. Viscott, P. Alexandrov, L. Andreeva, R.

Feldman, D. Karnegy, etc.) Basing on this we accept that the social competence is possessing and using the ability for integration of thoughts, feelings and behaviour for reaching positive and effective interaction with the social environment and results, valuable in the context of the concrete community and culture (K. Topping)

The importance of parents' social competence for the successful social interactions of the adolescent is first – rated and determining. "The competence evolves from the feeling of being capable to finish the action that has been undertaken . . ." [3,39] but often parents frustrate the chance to give their children the feeling of competence.

According to the words of A. Adler, parents' task consists of doing their best for preparing children for the life. The aim is children to be able to take care of themselves later, when they grow up. This requires understanding, avoiding mistakes and permanent encouraging the child to decide his/ her own problems by his/her own efforts and to develop the sense of community.

Social competent parents are helping their child to build up an adequate self- evaluation, they show him/ her their respect, esteem and their relation is personally and humanly oriented. Those parents know that their child

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deserves interest and attention. When there are deficits in the social competence of parents the result is the opposite. They have not enough time and energy to devote to constructive partnerships with children because they have no protection against the stress provoked by the rhythm of the contemporary life. They are hurrying up in their daily tasks and they can not pay attention to the changes that are happening in the tender age of their children. According to F. Dolto's words the adolescents "are turning red, they hide their face by their hair, they are waving away and wondering how to win their embarrassment, shame or some wound -may be for the whole life' [4,15].

So the social competence of parents defines the effect of education and socialization in the family.

The adolescent's interactions with parents and peers are connected and depend each other, and this motivates us to work on the actual strategies for intervention in those interactions. Our conception is based on the idea for parallel training for parents and students in social skills. Very important for the parents are: knowledge about individual features and the characteristics of the age of the children, listening skills, showing empathy and understanding, decreasing the tendency to criticism, encouraging the enterprising and autonomy of their children. For the adolescents very important are the skills for managing the conflicts in a constructive way, equipment working, to manage their emotions and to form their identity in the context of the requirements of the present days.

When the parents and pupils are included together in the roles of educating persons, at the first place appears the position of equality between them and the opportunity to know each other by playing different roles and by other ways of social interaction. This is a way for creating important conditions for promoting the understanding each other, the respect and the effective and positive communication.

Some of strategies for developing social skills of the students are in the following directions:

- recognizing the feelings that are standing behind the behaviour in interpersonal interactions;
- comparing different types of behaviour and relating them to the asocial or prosocial behaviour;

- reacting and responding to the asocial and prosocial behaviour;
- studying different points of view and trying to take another's perspective;
- sharing personal experience of the social interactions;
- thinking about the intentions and the consequences and decision making ability, to make a social choice;
- sex differences in motivation and realization of some types of behaviour;
- dramatization and playing roles for prosocial and asocial behaviour [5]

The activities described above are not the only possible ways for developing the social competence of pupils. They mean to encourage children to acquire and practice positive experience in social interactions and provide the basis for many other activities in this context. In the space of a classroom so many things are happening and they may become an example or a reason for a social interaction and to create a concrete task for resolving. Respectively they may provoke teaching a lesson for social competence. Essentially, the pupils must accept the prosocial behaviour like reasonable, useful and positive choice. They have to practice their social skills in a funny and entertaining way, giving their own efforts to create the positive classroom climate. This is the easier way for transferring those knowledge and skills in the interactions with parents and peers.

The lessons for parents contain short information about different themes that are interesting for them. This information is a reason for discussion and provokes sharing of personal experience.

The project of working with parents consists of several problematical spheres. Necessities, attitudes and specifics of the concrete families and school communities determine their frames. The themes are:

- The features of the age of the primary school students and the specifics of the age of the parents. Some problems and the ways of resolving them;
- The principals of the positive interaction, recognizing the aims behind the problematical behaviour and some effective strategies for their modification;
- Communicating with adolescents – problems, stereotypes and non- standart approaches for resolving them;

- Skills for constructive managing the conflicts – the key element of the positive interaction;
- Skills for expressing social interest by involving in social activities as a way of forming the individual responsibility and civil engagement of the pupils.

Parts of this project are realized and the results let us make the conclusion that there is a real necessity of such activities in the contemporary school. Some objective barriers are the overloaded school programs, the lack of time for the students and also for the parents.

We make the following conclusion: when children and parents learn together social skills, this increases the equality of their understanding, respect each other and the positive communication.

When parents know what to do and how to react, when they make a choice among different models of behaviour and they choose the most effective one; when they know how to communicate and relate to the children, all those things help pupils to form their identity.

Those strategies provide child's popularity in the group of peers, its successful interaction and opportunity to make a social choice and to be adequate to the world of now a day.

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