

**TRANSITION FROM KINDEGARDEN TO SCHOOL***Zada BADARNE, Carolina PLATON**Moldova State University*

Transition to School is a crucial step that influences the child's behavior and personality. Many researches sees the transition as a process that includes many players: children, families, educators, community, professionals and the whole system. Transition is the time when everyone has to be involved and take responsibility.

**Keyword:** *challenge, anxiety, complexity.*

**TRANZIȚIA DE LA GRĂDINIȚĂ LA ȘCOALA PRIMARĂ**

Trecerea de la grădiniță la școală este un pas crucial care influențează comportamentul și personalitatea copilului. Mai mulți cercetători consideră că acest proces vizează nu doar însuși copilul, dar și familia, educatorul, întregul sistem educațional, comunitatea. Este perioada de trecere de la o instituție la alta în care fiecare trebuie să se implice și să-și asume responsabilități.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *provocare, anxietate, complexitate.*

The transition from kindergarten to school gained great interest, which rises all the time in the research literature. This interest appears in large number of researches, instruction and guidance books dealing with the nature of this transition and that of the child's entrance to school life. Additionally a lot of material regarding the requested readiness, identifying the partners for a more successful transition, strategies for integration with other children, parents and the community through recommendations to teachers, parents, policy makers, schools, key persons and others. The transition from kindergarten to school is relevant for both educational and political arenas. The educational arena has to do with the academic success, way of carrying out programs, quality of teaching, and quality of shaping the relationship among the educational personnel, the environment, parents and children. While from the political aspect, the transition has to do with providing a support net for the pupils while maintaining an educational equality, taking responsibility and commitment for providing an equal opportunity to reach the educational results, as well as allocating resources and budgets. The political arena deals also with shaping policy, legislation and procedures of the educational system [2].

In the research literature there is a large amount of studies dealing with the transition, the conditions for seamless adjustment of children to school, like

- What is the best age to start school?
- In which developmental stage the child is ready to study at school?
- At what age children are nature for formal learning?
- In what age does the social, emotional, motor, and cognitive maturity reach a level of readiness to be pupil at school?

The answers to these questions bother many education people, policy makers, parents, and scholars.

Our life is a chain of transitions, moving from one situation to another, some of the transitions are more formal, more important, even considered as turning points that can change a person's functioning, behavior and development, The transition to school is a good example for a transition that considered a long process that starts in young age. It is dynamic and critical for the child's development and further studies at school.

There is consent in the research literature that each transition from one framework to another is most important, but the transition from kindergarten to elementary school is considered unique and significant. That is the most important step during the institutional process not only for the children, but for their families as well regardless at what age the child begins the transition.

The transition from kindergarten to school is important because it involves changes, like changes in moving from one place to another, or from one educational stage to a different one.

The transition represents new period and a new beginning. The child moves from the kindergarten to another and different environment, an environment that involves essential changes in the physiological, psychological, social and academic aspects. Many researches referred to the changes in the physical and the

educational-academic environment, and especially to the size of school, wondering how can young children find their way in the big building [1]. There are also changes in roles and relationships, in learning strategies, fields of knowledge and expectations. This transition indicates involvement of changes in teaching methods and learning, in managing time, educational perception, responsibility for learning and demands, changes in pedagogical approaches. There are changes in rules and values, as well as a change in the educational climate.

The school period involves indeed challenges for children and their parents, mainly for children with difficulties, or those who are expected to have difficulties [5]. When children confront a difficulty, it sometimes becomes a challenge for some of them. The difficulty is to follow rules, regulations and values, and sometimes it challenges the children and makes them worried. Many parents deal with questions as well, and for them the problem is more complicated, especially parents of children with low capability or children with limitations and special needs [4]. The transition symbolizes a new era and separation, separation from the kindergarten teacher, who symbolizes the figure that is closest to the motherly figure and the home-class teacher. The teacher shows a more formal attitude to the child regarding his academic achievements, his reading, writing and arithmetic. In all these there is a change in the model of interaction and in the nature of bonding between teacher and pupil. The child leaves the sandbox and playing in general, and moves to do his homework, learn and show responsibility for his studies.

Kindergarten is perceived as a place of playing, while school is perceived as a place of formal study and responsibility. The assessment of the child is structured and defined and can be measured by grades and academic achievements. Researches that examined children's attitudes to kindergarten and school showed that the kindergarten was the place for playing, and school was the place for learning and make homework and less for playing [8].

The importance of the transition is in the involvement of anxiety and uncertainty for the child and his family. He may suffer from different kinds of fears, problems, anxieties and tensions and his parents as well, who are flooded by questions of their child, questions which are the source of anxieties, uncertainty and pressures. The children feel fears and anxieties in the new place, which can influence their behavior and academic achievements not only in the short range, but may influence in the long-run [8]. (Fabian & Dunlop, 2006). Anxiety influences the emotional and social wellbeing of the children, which might cause difficulties in social and emotional adjustment, and indirectly on academic achievements.

Furthermore, the child confronts a different kind of friendship from the friends he used to have in kindergarten. In many researches, which examined the attitudes of children towards friendship in the transition to school, children reported on difficulties, because they did not find their friends from the previous year, with who they said they would be happier to be and play. The group dynamics and friendships are essential in facilitating the process of transition [2].

Louis transition [6] analyzed the transition psychologically as a process of adjustment. According to him there are three common structures in transition's experience and adjustment:

- *Change*: when there is an objective difference. For example, between the old building and the new one; between an existing situation and a new and unfamiliar situation.
- *Surprise or contrast*: when an individual has expectations, which are not compatible with reality.
- *Significance*: the significance of the experience the child builds and shapes. The main question in significance is the one of the individual's coping, and how he translates the new experience into something more significant for him.

The three structures appear in the process of transition adjustment and influence in individual level and in the child's adjustment socially, emotionally and academically.

- ***Differences in the Experience of Transition:***

All researches about transition to school agree that there are differences in the ways the transition is experienced and in the experience of being introduced to school, both in the level of open signs and the hidden signs of social, emotional, cognitive and motor skills [7]. The individual differences are among children and parents in their expectations, positions and the support parents provide their children. Some children would need a longer period of time to integrate and adjust than other children. For some of them the transition is a natural stage and they go through it and cope accordingly, while for others the new situation poses difficulties and challenges, and for them this is a stage of shaping their personal and academic identity, meaning they have to reorganize their identity.

The transition varies from one country to another, meaning different things for different people and groups in each country. Each country has its policy for obligatory studies for young children, and there are different assumptions about the way in which children begin to study at school.

- **For a Successful Transition:**

In the research literature is written about the requested readiness for the transition from kindergarten to school. Many researches deal with identifying the variables and formulating a new definition of the requested readiness for the child, the family, and the policy of the system in order to make the experience of the transition a positive and successful one for the children and their families.

- There is disagreement about how to go about the transition process, what are the preparations for the child?
- What are the procedures the educational institute has to take in kindergarten or in school?
- What is the role of the parents in this process?
- Who are the key figures in the transition?
- Many other issues dealing with the question how to go through the process successfully and make the child have a positive beginning as much as possible on a constructive developmental sequence.

The answers for these questions reflect the circumstances according to the educational policy and the culture of the community in each location.

The literature presents different meanings and definitions of what is a successful transition, but there is an agreement that a positive experience and a good organized beginning provides good indication about a positive attitude towards school, which in turn predicts an academic success in future studies.

**Balance between the child and the school.** A successful process of transition from kindergarten to elementary school including acceptable level of adjustment is balanced between the child and school. It means that the child is adjusted to school and the school is adjusted to the children and their needs. This kind of adjustment guarantees success. A successful transition is when the child has a positive attitude to school, senses belonging, and has a positive relationship.

**Planning the transition.** Therefore it is very important to plan the transition. The literature encourages investing universal education in infancy since it leads to long-range educational results. It has been found that investing in this period in planning a program has a social and emotional advantage. The program should be flexible and give an answer to the complexity of the local community, show respect, logic and answer all relevant parties. These findings have been supported by researches in Europe with 3000 children aged 3-7, researches which examined the influence of a qualitative investment in Early childhood, transition programs and an educational sequence that start in kindergarten and goes on to first grade (Sammons et al., 2002). These researches showed positive results regarding the development of the children during their years at school, a high level of performance, and increase in standards and achievements.

**Quality of education.** Researchers show a great interest in the quality of education, especially in young age before entering school. The researches of the young age examine the influence of various factors that take care of children, like educational institutions, the environment, the family and the child's personality.

**Interaction between variable.** Variables such as: personality, environment, familial experience and quality of the family and institutional education. The variable of the quality of education is a multi-dimensional variable which encompasses the physical educational environment, the academic contents, and the training of the educational team, in addition to the relationship between the child, the teacher and the child's self-image. Continuous involvement is important for the development of the transition as a process that involves organizing the experience of introduction to school, a program of accepting and blessing the children, elongating the period of the transition, and good communication. The main thing is coordination and cooperation within the process of analyzing the transition program and an efficient communication between educators in kindergartens and school, getting to know the children and a continuous involvement of the families are essential for a successful transition ([8]).

**A qualitative education.** Predicts success and improvement in social and communication skill, helps in solving problems in the young age. Many researches refer to the quality of education in three levels of comparison of the interaction between the child's variables, the environment and the quality of education, with an emphasis on the social and emotional development through bonding theories. The first comparison is between children who have been educated at home and those who have been educated in an educational institute. The

second compares the care taking institute and the environment in relation to the children's development and progress. The third focuses on the interaction between all the characteristics, including skills, knowledge, and level of development of the child and the experience of education and environmental influence.

**Level of skills-** strengthens adjustment and level of skills in the social, emotional and cognitive fields.

**The child's Readiness for School** – consists of the level of development, motor development, being able to copy, the child's social and emotional development, cooperation and empathy, self-expression, cognitive development (knowledge and skills: knowledge of the letters, numbers, spatial relationships and concepts, motivation, curiosity, concentration and perseverance [10]. In addition there are language skills as part of intellectual capability, the use of language as a tool that enables communication, in a way it would influence learning. Therefore language is an important part of readiness for school, and it is important for social communication with others. Language is also an important criterion in intellectual development, language and literacy in a good level, and especially self-expression, is an important basis for a successful transition, On the other hand, if there are language difficulties, readiness might be low or absent.

**School's Readiness to the Child.** Many researches emphasize the readiness of school for receiving the children who are in different developmental stages, getting organized to receive the children for first grade. The school has to adopt differential teaching methods, that is, adjusting the teaching method to personal needs of the children. The focus is on increased parents' involvement and cooperation among all factors, aiming to have a follow-up, continuity and transition programs between kindergarten and school, between family and school, using adjusted teaching to the child, showing interest and answering the children's needs as socioeconomic status, age and so on. School should be committed to success, take responsibility and refer equally all children.

**School has to provide space and an opportunity for pupils.** To express their positions and feelings to school, enable them speak about their difficulties, needs and positions. This is an important strategy that enables educators understand and get to know the children, and this information can be a basis for planning and reorganizing, while considering needs, help, a sense of belonging and concern, The children need to have an opportunity to express their opinion, to have a space for asking questions and raise ideas or suggestions, and it facilitates and helps them to adjust. It is also welcoming the new pupil at school, accept him and enabling him feel he belongs, enabling cooperation and involvement between the institute and the parents as a source of support for the child. It is important that the adjustment and encounter with school will be as early as possible, since it plays a critical role in shaping the academic, social and emotional skills of the children.

**Prepare the parents.** The school has to prepare the parents for the transition, to get to know school, and have transition programs prior to the introduction to school. The parents should get an opportunity to express their positions about the relationship with school, about the programs and about parents' fears. The parents need to have an opportunity to communicate with the teachers.

**Preparing the Family and the Community.** Pamela [10] speaks about the support of the family, a treatment with no negligence, dedicating quality time for the child. The research literature showed a great interest in the role of the parents and the extent of their influence on the level of readiness. Many schools adopted programs and suggestions for parents as part of the preparation of the family.

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