

DEVELOPING COGNITIVE AND SOCIO-EMOTIONAL SKILLS THROUGH READING

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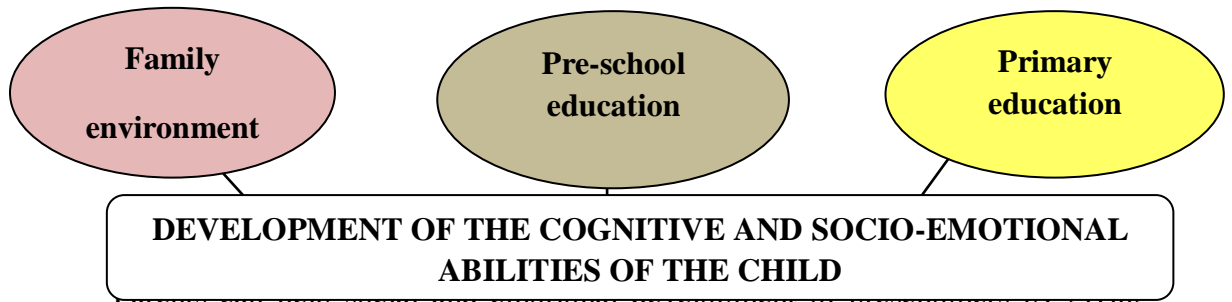
Abstract: Reading involves the whole person: intelligence and feelings will and fantasy, past and present, memory and hope. People who open a book are willing to travel through unknown worlds, be protagonists of the incredible adventure of rewriting with their imagination or their thoughts. At all psycho-physical levels characteristic of child development, reading seems to have a full impact. By extension, addressing all ages, one can assert that the story is probably one of the few cultural ways of transmitting and inoculating moral values, independent of the stages of human understanding. Thus, if stories signify something in general, their message is differentiated qualitatively, depending on the ability of understanding and the way of interpretation of the person to whom it is addressed.

Therefore, promoting the education of children through reading seems to be an objective of all those who, implicitly or explicitly, assume pedagogical responsibilities. The statement that children's education through stories is no longer responding to the expectation horizon the child's curiosity develops is inconsistent if he has to formulate at least two considerations to justify his / her functions and role in the educational process: on the one hand, the story has the extreme function of fertility in cultivating the child's mental faculties (taking into account the aspect of the development of its inner nature); and, on the other hand, the story is equally active when it comes of knowing the individuality of the child by pedagogues responsible for child formation in the spirit of a chosen education.

Keywords: reading, cognitive, skills, emotional development, didactics.

It is not a secret that a connection exists between the parents and the baby since the pregnancy, and more and more people are aware of it. Children are capable to perceive sounds, moods, caresses, voices, music and words in the gestation process. Reading during pregnancy brings many advantages at the cognitive level: it increases vocabulary, facilitates learning and generates early intellectual development. On an emotional level there are also advantages: the baby recognizes the voices of his parents more easily, which in his first months of life will help him to calm down when he hears them. Many of the studies conducted on the development of the foetus from ultrasound and prenatal diagnostics show that the baby experiences a variety of sensations in the uterus, responds to external stimuli and even dreams. A significant fact of these studies reveals that the ear is the sense that reaches a greater intrauterine development. In the maternal womb there is a sound intensity between 50 and 60 decibels, which is equivalent to the sound produced by a conversation in normal tone. The baby distinguishes the voice of his mother from that of other women that is the importance of speaking and reading from the womb. So, the process of acquiring knowledge begins from the intrauterine life and continues outside the mother's womb. (Moon, C., Lagercrantz, H., & Kuhl, P. K., 2013)

The three pillars responsible for harmonious development in early age, both in cognitive and social emotional terms, are family, pre-school education and primary education. (fig. 1)



Parents can help social and emotional development of preschoolers by giving them the opportunity to participate in daily domestic activities, setting limits to respect each time, providing the child with a social environment to play and develop their creativity, giving the child self-confidence by highlighting the activities the child is doing well, helping the preschool to be responsible and trying to look at things from the child's perspective. From an emotional point of view, at the age of 5 - 6, the preschool is stable and well adapted to the environment; it is possible to fear darkness or dogs, although phobias are not specific for this age. Parents have to give preschoolers the opportunity to initiate conversations and consider their point of view. With the help of parents, the child learns to appreciate individual differences. Try not to trivialize things that children fear or feel ashamed of. Occasionally, children at this age are lying, wanting to please adults. These lies are not so severe as to be severely punished; rather, the parent must help the preschool to take responsibility. Not many are today who believe that stories as constructive assets in the education of the school child have lost ground and that a number of other instructive ways have replaced them in order of attractiveness and real content with a formative role for the normal evolution of child. Under such conditions, the "story-telling" might be considered a tentative attempt to recover a significant horizon for the child's plenary development, thus failing to be assured. It is not a more beautiful art than the art of education. The painter and sculptor are only figures, without life, but the teacher creates a vivid image. And if we have to talk about stimulating the child's interest in reading, we firmly affirm that educators have a decisive role in enriching and embellishing the child's soul with reading from books.

Literature has the role of raising the level of culture of children from the earliest age through the knowledge of everything that has created more valuable humanity in the sphere of spiritual life. True treasures of the soul, literary readings maintain an affectionate affection for everything that is more beautiful, purer, wonderful and unprecedented in this charming world of childhood. The fantasy of knowledge, felt from early ages, is gradually emerging. According to Pascariu (2018) the child acquires new and new learning experiences, which he transfigures in high-moral and aesthetic behaviours. Reading is one of the basic purchases from the beginning in the kindergarten and then in the school. Thus, by familiarizing the child with the youngest age with his practice, we base the adaptation for his future in any situation that involves reading. We know that reading is the main link that binds together all the objects of study. Reading is of particular importance in the child's development at all levels, for correct oral and written expression, basic tools of intellectual work without which their intellectual development cannot be conceived. The most common way to stimulate interest in reading at this age is and must be the story. We follow by introducing the child into the world of stories, cultivating the taste for beauty, for aesthetics and implicitly for reading. The literary creation for children, through its content, participates in the development of intellectual, imaginative and motivational processes and capacities, the affective side maintaining constant throughout the reading. In 1983,

Professor Howard Gardner drafted the theory of multiple intelligences and contradicted the idea that intelligence is a single entity, that it can only be measured on the basis of IQ tests. Professor Gardner argues that all human beings have multiple intelligences and identified seven types of intelligence: linguistic intelligence, mathematical logic intelligence, musical intelligence, kinaesthetic, physical intelligence and spatial intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, and interpersonal intelligence. (fig. 2) The first two were associated with the classical process of knowledge accumulation, the next three are usually associated with the arts, and the last two are what Howard Gardner calls "personal intelligence."

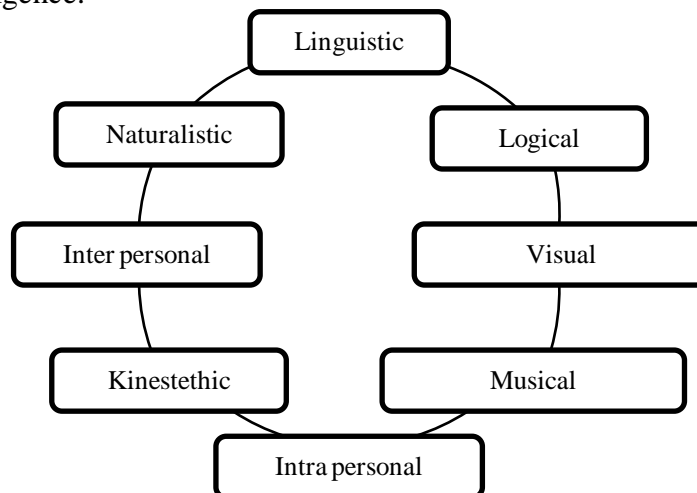


Fig. 2 Gardner's multiple intelligence panel

Family environment

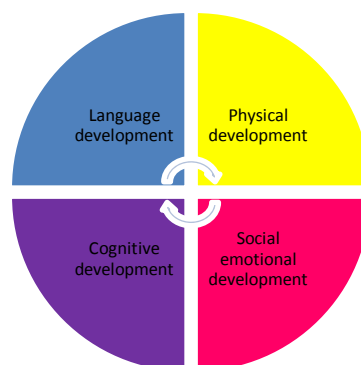
The child lives immersed in the cultural universe specific to human society, from a young age he becomes familiar with the surrounding world, a world constituted mostly by objects of significance, a world whose fragile existence depends on - any knowledge is related to an action. The stories help the little ones to observe the environment, learn how to think, enrich their knowledge of nature, world, and life, cultivate their sensitivity and imagination, shape characters, contribute to their moral-civic education.

Given that the formation of intellectual skills is a basic feature in the first years of life, and the family has an extremely important role, the active and positive involvement of the parent is recognized as beneficial in the child's education, Perțe (2017) states. The taste for reading does not come by itself, it is formed by the family from the first days of life, the kindergarten and then especially the school and it can be stimulated and cultivated from the earliest age so that the book becomes a constant friend of the child, a source of understanding and knowledge. Parents can spend pleasant moments with their child and at the same time help they get into the magical world of books. In the meetings with parents we must approach this topic and made them understand that in order for the book approach to become a daily experience and moreover for the pleasure to read to become a desired and lived necessity, cultivated before even learning the alphabet, through the constant preoccupation of parents to get used to the unparalleled beauty of fairy tales and stories. The family is therefore the first social and cultural environment of the child and, through the values it transmits, laid the foundations for its intellectual, moral and aesthetic development. The awakening, education, and development of the taste for reading is achieved when the book responds to an intellectual and emotional need of the child, and the parents are given the task of choosing the right books for each child's personality. This action does not require a certain level of parental education, but requires all conscious awareness of the

importance of reading in the full development of the child and the concern to raise interest in it. At pre-school age, reading mothers or fathers, grandparents or siblings at certain times of the day, especially before bedtime, is the best way to establish the first contacts with the book world. Stories, stories in the world of birds or animals, or those of heroes of near-age children, with which the child can often be identified, represent the genre of literature meant to delight in childhood.

Preschool Education Development

Pre-school is the age at which it is imperative to stimulate the creative potential of children, unknown or not yet expressed. Teaching creativity is a form of teamwork (educator - child) through which the educator uses an innovative teaching strategy that induces the child a state of producing new products and ideas in a given context, says Barth (2010). As soon as it comes to kindergarten, the life experience of the child is enriched, which stimulates the desire for communication and knowledge. "Why?" Is more and more common between children, on the one hand, and educators and parents, on the other hand, after information and understanding, the child feels the need to reproduce, demonstrate what he has taken, manifestation that places him, he believes, on a higher level of age, in front of those who listen and converse with him. Stimulating this desire to communicate is particularly important since the kindergarten and is required as the child grows up. Successes in this direction also influence the formation of children's personality; those who have the skills of communication at their age are more active, they are more confident, they have confidence in what they do. Others are retired, shy, listening internalized. The development of creative strategies necessarily requires primarily the development of speech, because language is not only a process that develops spectacularly, but the tool that assimilates personal experience and influences and is influenced by all psychic processes. Language acquisition is always related to children's direct personal experience. Language education activities offer varied forms of children's vocabulary enrichment, oral expression, stimulating their creativity, which places them among the important activities in the formation of children in their preparation for life. But not only through the activities of language education as a means of communication and thinking, to develop their observation spirit, to cultivate their knowledge of thinking, to develop their reproductive and creative imagination and, implicitly, to develop their creativity. According to Florescu (2001) preschool teachers need to adapt to each child, encouraging creativity. The educator will become the "coach" and the "learning experiences" activities. Of course,



until the development of creativity we can act on its components: novelty, spontaneity, ingenuity, flexibility, etc. Activities must be stimulating, challenging, exciting, enjoyable, and even funny. Children enjoy great pleasure in participating in these activities, and the results are great. With a minimum of effort, but some kind of goodwill and an ingenious design of activities, all categories of activities can at all times

become a ground for the development of creative thinking. (fig. 3 Whole child development) Knowing the individuality of the child is, on the other hand, the decisive stake that everyone involved, directly or indirectly, in educating the child. The possibility of allowing the teacher access to the intimate moments of child's individuality through the stories is not negligible, the cultivation of stories thus becoming, from a pedagogical point of view, the explicit way in which the educator fills an educational content.

The assumption that stories would allow the child's psychic attributes to be observed externally (noticeable in response, feelings, gestures, questions and answers, insistences, sympathies and preferences, etc.) can be validated by a series of assumptions that the educator they are committed to constructing the child's educational process: for example, the child's interest in the details of the stories will be a clue given to the educator about the good intuition of the child; so the interest in the unreal elements of the stories is the sign of a good imagination of the child, and the way to interpret, ask and replicate the child gives a suggestive indication of the level of intellectual development of the child, its ability to judge. In summary, the pedagogue can capitalize on the various ways of psychological incidence of stories about the child, in the sense of observing the evolution of the child's mental faculties.

Why reading matters?

The term "read" refers to the process of understanding the material that is written, with the purpose of finding its meaning. To become a skilled reader, the child must learn to use the letters or codes they use in their culture, which in the form of visual sequences represent dialogues. For this reason, learning to read demands the assignment of a sound for each of the visual symbols represented in a text. Unfortunately, there is a fairly generalized criterion in our society. Adults, both parents and teachers must know strategies to get the most out of reading, for example, that children read aloud the stories, fables or stories that appeal to them and like them; listeners should ask questions about what they read to catch children in the world of books and make this a hobby and not a terror.

At present it is required that the teaching of reading be taught more broadly than in the past, if you want to meet the increasingly higher demands of modern life. The improvement in the domain of reading is a process of double orientation, evolutionary and continuous, so that a reading program, despite being based on it, cannot be limited to the development of basic techniques or skills for the interpretation of symbols, it is necessary that the pupil's ability to read more complex material progresses, also demanding that he expand his knowledge and ability to organize them.

The acquisition of reading and writing are experiences that mark the child's life; hence the importance of having access to them in a natural and calm way. Reading and writing become fun and enjoyable interactions, in which the child can enjoy their achievements and learn from their mistakes. Reading and writing have a social and cultural function. That is why a book begins by giving the child the importance it has as a unique being, and relating it to its immediate environment where important and important aspects of his life are involved. Reading makes us more tolerant, less prejudiced, freer, more resistant to change, more universal and more proud of our own. Reading is a hobby that lasts a lifetime that can be practiced at any time, place, and circumstance. It frees us from the evils of our time: loneliness, depression and compulsive consumerism.

An essential aspect to achieve an optimal academic performance is the ability to read comprehensively. Reading is the main skill for learning. It consists of coordinating, sequencing and simultaneously performing perceptual processes of graphic information,

with the lexical, syntactic and semantic processing of said information. Only the practice allows evolving from the acquisition of reading at its basic levels, towards the definitive conversion into expert readers. Therefore, if we can improve the reading ability of our students, the direct effect on their performance would be extraordinary. The way of life that our children have goes completely away from the level necessary to produce thoughtful and efficient reasoning. Reading is a process that requires time and effort, for a society that has been born and used to live too fast. The book has been and will remain a true feast of thoughts, a feast to which everyone is invited. It offers to the person who, besides the satisfaction of any new fact, passes through unique reflection and meditation opportunities. It urges introspection, contributes substantially to the formation and modelling of the personality and behaviour of the reader. The book must remain even in the life of the modern man who tends to stand more in front of the TV or the computer. Reading remains one of the most intense, educative and widespread activities. The closer the child approaches to reading, the more important and more sustainable its effects will be in the field of language, communication and behaviour and socialization. Becoming the child's boyfriend from the preschool stage, continuing in the school, the book will help him easily navigate the paths of knowledge, from concrete to abstract, from intuition to representation and then to fantasy. With the help of books, the child is in possession of the many tools that can satisfy his desire to discover the surrounding reality, the book itself being a whole world.

In the current context of educational reform, school and kindergarten, as key institutions, play an important role in bringing the child closer to the world of the book and, implicitly, to reading. Reading and writing skills gained through reading activities make it possible to acquire new knowledge, help to build and develop other skills and abilities offered by the curriculum. The quality of these purchases depends on the success or failure of the child's training process. One of the fundamental objectives of education reform refers to the development of the personality of the child integrated into the educational system, the components of creativity, freedom of thought and action. We the teachers, have the task of targeting the organization of the activity, giving them information and suggestions, encouraging them to participate or provide their help when necessary.

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