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”Promoting The Emotional Wellbeing of Preschoolers”

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Abstract

This article underlines the educational aspects that are the most relevant for the emotional development of preschoolers. The emotional and social wellbeing of a preschooler refers to the way that a child thinks of itself and of others, and of the way he feels about other people and himself. Positive emotional experiences that occur between the child and the teacher represent the foundation for the social and emotional development. This concept also includes a child’s individual characteristics, but also it includes characteristics of the environment, family and community.

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1. Introduction

Recent theories regarding the correlation between emotions and behaviour emphasize the fact that the way an individual behaves socially is influenced by emotional experience and the expectation of it.

Social and emotional competence can hinder or assist children to succeed in life, depending on the degree to which it develops. Social competence and emotional competence have distinct attributes, they are strongly interrelated (Denham et al. 2009).

Childhood is the time of outlining the first elements of self-awareness and socialization . Broadening the relational field and diversifying relationships with their peers, relatives , other adults facilitate the process of self-

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knowing and helps the child to know his own capabilities and limitations. However, at this stage, takes place the initial development of intrapersonal reflection and the basic social behaviors . These two major acquisitions allow him not only to integrate externally imposed requirements, but also to realize their individual needs and characteristics. At this age, the child acquires for the first time some social roles and he learns the patterns of interaction .

This new perspective has introduced a new educational approach that emphasizes the importance of emotional and social wellbeing for the children.

1.1 The emotional and social wellbeing

The emotional and social wellbeing of a preschooler refers to the way that a child thinks of itself and of others, and of the way he feels about other people and of itself. It also includes a capacity of adapting to daily tasks while at the same time maintaining a satisfying life. Where as there are some good aspects while dealing with this concept, there are also negative ones.

Positive emotions that children might feel: happiness, optimism, love, self-trust, curiosity, inspiration, amusement, inner-peace, play an important part in emotional and social wellbeing.

The social and emotional wellbeing of preschoolers is reflected in their thoughts, feelings and behaviour. The concept encloses a certain number of competences that are required for the children to grow and adapt to school and to the social environment for the rest of its life. These competences include the capacity of identifying and understanding one’s feelings and other’s, understanding and expressing them, behavior regulation and the capacity to empathise with other people. Among all these, there are other important factors, such as:



Fig. 1 Factors in social and emotional development

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An ecological model of social and emotional well-being is based on interactions between multiple environments, such as home, school and community, but also on the individual and relational characteristics of the child.

The child lives in an environment of influences. Family, school and education represent the most important environments for the child’s social and emotional wellbeing. These factors also influence the child’s individual characteristics, such as self-esteem, learning capacity and the sense of school-belonging. The child’s relationship with these environments is fundamental for its development.

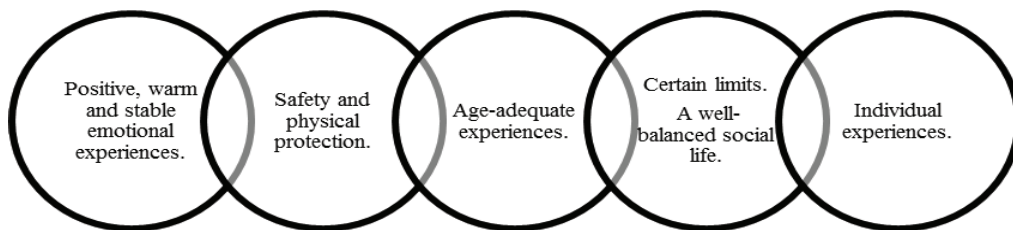


Fig. 2 The needs for a normal development of a child, by Brazelton and Greenspan (2001)

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