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CITIREA UNEI POVEȘTI CA INSTRUMENT PENTRU INSTALAREA VALORILOR, ÎNTĂRIREA IMAGINII DE SINE ȘI CREȘTEREA RESPECTULUI DE SINE ÎN GRĂDINIȚĂ

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Rezumat: *Principalul rol al profesorului de grădiniță în grădinița obligatorie este de a pregăti copilul pentru clasa I și de a-i permite să dobândească instrumente de învățare și abilități sociale care să-l ajute să facă față dificultăților pe care le poate întâmpina de-a lungul vieții. Expunerea copiilor preșcolari la citirea poveștilor este de mare importanță în asimilarea valorilor sociale în această etapă și de-a lungul vieții lor. Mai mult, colaborarea dintre profesorul de grădiniță și părinții care manifestă implicare și își expun copiii la lectura de povești acasă va continua cu ei în școala primară și poate duce ulterior la schimbarea socială. Prin urmare, aceste concluzii întăresc importanța lecturii bazate pe valori sociale și abilități emoționale, asupra cărora programa de grădiniță cere profesorilor de grădiniță să acționeze pe tot parcursul anului.*

Cuvinte cheie: citirea unei povești, valori sociale, imagine de sine, stima de sine.

READING A STORY AS A TOOL FOR INSTILLING VALUES, STRENGTHENING SELF-IMAGE AND RAISING SELF-ESTEEM IN KINDERGARTEN

Abstract: *The main role of the kindergarten teacher in compulsory kindergarten is to prepare the child for first grade, and to enable him to acquire learning tools and social skills that will help him cope with difficulties that he may encounter throughout his life. Exposure of preschool children to story reading is of great significance in assimilating social values at this stage and throughout their lives. Furthermore, collaboration between the kindergarten teacher and the parents who show involvement and expose their children to story reading at home will continue with them in elementary school and may later lead to social change. Therefore, these conclusions reinforce the importance of reading based on social values and*

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emotional skills, which the kindergarten curriculum requires kindergarten teachers to act on throughout the year.

Keywords: reading a story, social values, self-image, self-esteem.

Introduction

The main role of the kindergarten teacher in compulsory kindergarten is to prepare the child for first grade, and to enable him to acquire learning tools and social skills that will help him cope with difficulties that he may encounter throughout his life. One of the most prominent tools in kindergarten to achieve these goals is reading a story to children. Through the story, the kindergarten teacher exposes the children to social values and learning abilities, and this is done by imitation, which is part of the tools that the child uses to communicate with the world around him.

The importance of imitation [18] stems from the fact that children need to integrate into the social group and behave like their friends. Imitation affects social integration in the group inside and outside the kindergarten and allows children to learn new habits and adopt them until they become an integral part of them. Reading a story is one of the ways that the kindergarten teacher uses to allow the child to act while imitating the central character in the story and to behave as she does, which may strengthen the self-image and self-esteem that he needs.

Kindergarten in Israel, known as Gan, is an essential part of the education system and serves as the foundation for children's learning and social development. From age 5, kindergarten is part of Israel's compulsory education system, meaning all children must attend. Types of Kindergartens:

1. Public Kindergartens: Operated by the Ministry of Education and local municipalities.
2. Religious Kindergartens: Orthodox and National Religious frameworks.
3. Private Kindergartens: May follow alternative education models like Montessori or Waldorf.
4. Arab and Druze Kindergartens: Arabic-language kindergartens serving Arab and Druze communities.

Arab and Druze kindergartens in Israel operate within the broader framework of the Israeli education system but with distinct characteristics influenced by culture, language, and community traditions.

Reading a story in kindergarten

There is much evidence in the research literature [5] regarding the im-

portance of reading in kindergarten, which is different from reading at home with parents. Reading by the kindergarten teacher is of great importance in teaching the basics of reading, as it promotes thinking, exposes children to new content, strengthens cooperation and promotes social discourse between the children, and constitutes an important opportunity for each of them to learn how to manage discourse and dialogue with their friends.

The kindergarten teacher's role is to exploit her influence and make the children listen to the story again and again. Repeated reading to the children, which was found to be preferred by children in kindergarten [2] constitutes a golden opportunity for the kindergarten teacher to examine the children's knowledge, their thinking ability, and what they have learned. At the same time, the children will be happy to discover that they remember what they learned. The great importance of repeated reading in kindergarten is not limited to acquiring social skills and learning values but is also reflected in discovering difficulties among the children. Thus, during reading, the kindergarten teacher can identify difficulties among children who are dealing with various disabilities, for example, language difficulties, difficulty with cognitive abilities or developmental delay [21] and offer treatment before they enter school.

The research literature also shows the contribution of children's literature to instilling values, heritage and religion [16, [5] . These studies show that reading books to children in kindergarten is an important means of instilling social values, establishing a connection to cultural tradition and deepening the connection with the spoken and literary language that the child acquires in kindergarten. Researchers have emphasized the role of the kindergarten teacher as a mediator between the story and the child and between the transmission of the values inherent in the story. [13] argued that language is a unifying factor, strengthening and building social and national identity, and that specifically children's literature serves as an agent of friendship and an available means for instilling values. Indeed, the Ministry of [8]adopted this concept and made it part of the activities in kindergartens. This activity is expressed in projects to encourage reading in which kindergarten teachers read stories to children that are selected every month, and through which they teach the children values. In addition, the ministry encourages parental participation and their involvement in reading with children.

Social Values in Children's Literature

The concept of children's literature emerged in the first half of the 20th century, and today children's literature has become an important tool that supports language development, encourages creativity, and educates kindergarten and elementary school children in values. Children's literature can be defined as high-quality professional books that vary from prose and poetry to fiction and non-fiction and are written for children from birth to adolescence according to the developmental characteristics of children in each age group [11].

The value of children's literature is expressed in both the personal and educational aspects. In addition to providing children with enjoyment, it also includes a variety of values such as acquiring learning skills and increasing imagination and creativity. Many researchers [20] have argued that children's literature has an important educational value, which is expressed in the fact that reading in kindergarten with the kindergarten teacher and at home with parents allows them to acquire the basics of reading and social values that they need in kindergarten and later in life. Therefore, children's books are perceived as educational materials, since exposing children to reading in kindergarten or at home by their parents also exposes them to social and educational values [19]

The term value is a complex and abstract concept, and there is no agreement among researchers regarding its clear definition [11] and as a result, there are many definitions. However, among educators, psychologists and philosophers, there is agreement that the concept of value generally expresses "the presentation of the good, the desirable and the proper in the doctrine of virtue, truth, morality in the cognitive and religious realm [7] According to [11] the debate is around education for values, with a change in the educational concept in the education system leading to the adoption of values in accordance with the current education. Therefore, through the "New Horizon" reform, the Ministry of [8] decided that in all the streams under its responsibility, including the kindergartens belonging to these streams, several values that the Ministry defined as important and fundamental would be taught. pointed out the great importance of values education in Israel as a country that absorbs immigrants, one of whose goals is nation-building, and as such is also included in the goals defined in the education system. Combining Jewish and national values has been the foundation of values education since the establishment of the state. In this context, [3] argued that since educational institutions in Arab society also

had to meet the goals of the education system, they were forced to teach universal values, while disconnecting from their religious and national values, and that this fact made it difficult for children to define their identity.

According to Lem [4] teaching is based on three cornerstones: imitation, design, and development, which are part of three goals in [7] definition of the essence of teaching: socialization, acculturation, and individualization. In describing the cornerstones, [4] pointed out that the imitation process is intended to prepare children so that they can live as adults and integrate into society in a way that does not conflict with its values, that is, to instill social values of creating a unified society. In the context of design, Azulay argued that the role of education is to shape the learner according to values that are formed in the culture in which he grows up. As for development, he pointed out that the role of the education system is to develop the personal skills of children and raise independent citizens. [7] argued that teaching is one of how the state in the modern era educates the younger generation in the values it believes in through various institutions. Accordingly, the kindergarten teacher's role is to implement the principles of education that the state instills, while thinking about strengthening the child's self-image in the social environment in which he finds himself.

Strengthening self-image

The concept of self-image reflects the way a person values themselves and believes in their personal abilities, and the meaning they give to themselves [15]. The concept is relevant for children who are influenced by their environment, as this may shape their self-image, which allows them to develop a gradual process of positive self-image, while integrating with the environment. The response that the child receives from the environment, positive or negative, builds the way in which he perceives himself. In this context, the kindergarten teacher's role is to strengthen the child's self-image, while cooperating between the kindergarten staff and parents [5] [6] In the same context, [11] argued that reading encourages children, for example, to eat breakfast, exercise, or any other activity, has a positive effect on internalizing values and making them an inseparable part of them.

According to another explanation based on social comparison theory [5] the child sees those around him as influencing the way he perceives himself. Reading may be an important means of acquiring abilities, skills, and social skills that children perceive from their surroundings. Moreover, reading a story may allow the child to connect with the character in the story and behave similarly to him ,[6] [6] argued that reading a story has

a significant contribution to strengthening the child's external appearance and interaction with his environment, which allows him to build a social identity.

In [16] study, which was based on studies examining the strengthening of self-image among children with learning disabilities who are integrated into regular classrooms, the researchers concluded that the environment protects these children and has a positive effect on creating a sense of caring and responsibility among the children that is acquired from being in the presence of regular children. In this interpretation, the researchers based themselves on various social and feminist theories according to which the process of friendship is a central factor in the acquisition of social values and norms, including gender norms, and argued that in the process of exposure to these norms, of which the story is a part, the child learns how others value him as part of the social group.

Self-esteem

Self-esteem is a very important factor in the emotional development of the individual and is expressed in the way we see our personality in the eyes of others [10] Self-esteem develops over the years and does not exist in infants. The significant factors for developing self-esteem are cognitive and motor development, acquiring skills, allowing the child to express himself, listening to the child by those around him in kindergarten and at home, and understanding his emotions [9] There is much evidence in the research literature [16] that indicates the role of the kindergarten teacher in strengthening self-esteem.

Reading to children in kindergarten is part of a broad context of interaction that children have with their environment. Reading a story by the parents or kindergarten teacher allows the child to express emotions and invites a discussion about emotions with the reader. [13] argued that reading is a means of strengthening the child's self-esteem, in addition to the social connection he creates with his friends in kindergarten. The researchers also claimed that talking to the children allows the kindergarten teacher or parents to address difficulties that the child is facing, such as fears, anxieties, and more, and that the conversation allows him to express emotions, regulate them, and acquire the moral values he needs.

Reading at a young age also helps the child's moral development, as it begins with learning social values, which the child becomes a part of. [17] [22]claimed that exposing children at a young age to reading stories effectively develops their thinking ability, vocabulary, and the ability to construct sentences, which is the beginning of the literacy they need. This

study also found that early reading not only contributes to the beginning of literacy, as it also serves as a tool for learning, especially social values, and strengthens self-image and self-esteem in early childhood and later in life.

Summary and Recommendations

Based on the studies presented, several recommendations can be made that will allow kindergarten teachers to turn story reading into an important tool through which they can instill social and cultural values in children. First, it is advisable that story reading in kindergarten be done at least once a week, as it enriches children's vocabulary and allows them to learn the basics of reading in kindergarten [17] [22] Second, for children to connect with the content of the story, it must be made tangible. For example, reading a story before breakfast may encourage children to eat healthy food, and making it part of the corners in kindergarten may contribute to children's understanding that the story is an integral part of their lives. In addition to the fact that making the story a part of children's lives in kindergarten [17] [22] strengthens their language, it exposes them to social skills and learning important social values for the rest of their lives.

In conclusion, exposure of preschool children to story reading is of great significance in assimilating social values at this stage and throughout their lives. Furthermore, collaboration between the kindergarten teacher and the parents who show involvement and expose their children to story reading at home will continue with them in elementary school and may later lead to social change. Therefore, these conclusions reinforce the importance of reading based on social values and emotional skills, which the kindergarten curriculum requires kindergarten teachers to act on throughout the year.

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