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RESEARCH ARTICLE

CONCERNS AND EXPECTATIONS OF GREEK PARENTS REGARDING THEIR CHILDREN'S TRANSITION FROM DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT TO THE NURSERY SCHOOL

***Maria Sakellariou, Rodokleia Anagnostopoulou and Panagiota Strati**

Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Ioannina, Ioannina, Greece

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ABSTRACT

In spite of the great interest of the international educational community regarding the issue of transition during pre-school age, only a limited amount of research regarding such has been conducted in Greece. In our current study we set our goals on detecting the preoccupation of parents concerning the matter of their children's transition from the domestic environment to the nursery school as well as their expectations regarding the school environment since, as proven by the research, the participation of the family in the transitional curricula is crucial for a successful outcome of a child's transition to a new pre-school environment no less for the backing of the school preparedness itself. On the hereunto study the semi-structured interview was opted as a basic tool for recording the parents' views on issues of transition in order for valid data and profound information to be gathered concerning the subject of scrutiny. Our research sample consisted of 55 families all from the Region of Epirus. The interviews were carried out from early March until late May, 2017. Based on the findings of our research, the primary concern that occurred, with regards to the child's transition to the nursery school, was -on the parents' side- the separation and acclimation on the new context which seems to be quite hard not only for the kid but for the parents themselves. Conclusively, the activation of parents regarding the nursery school educational work shall facilitate the transitional process of the child from one context to the other by creating familiar surroundings for them, offering them security and enhancing their confidence and self-esteem.

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INTRODUCTION

The intake of a child from the domestic environment to the nursery school identifies with the gradual evolution of its independence (Davies, 2011) and provokes mixed feelings within the family such as joy, anticipation, doubt, anxiety or even guilt (Corsaro & Molinari, 2005 Kreider, 2002). Some parents experience their child's admission in pre-school education and training facilities as a procedure of separation or even loss, accompanied with an intense worry about their child's security and well-being, probably due to their own or other family members' negative pre-school experiences, which results in them having difficulties accepting the newly-formed circumstances (Dockett et al., 2011 Riedinger, 1997). Others feel secluded or "left out" from the process (Bohan-Baker & Little, 2004). Some are overwhelmed by whether their child will be able to live up to the new environment's expectations, whether they shall seek the adults' help when needed, whether

they shall make friends, whether they will be loved, whether they will participate or keep pace with the instructions applying to the team (Dockett et al., 2011 Gialloet al., 2010). The above preoccupations can be reduced if the families are provided with adequate information regarding the transition process, guidance and support towards the clarification of their own concerns or, probably, difficulties as well as practices of dealing with such matters (Deyell-Gingold, 2008 ▪ Fowler et al., 1991). The families themselves should be prepared for the oncoming changes, realize that their stress, their worries, their insecurity are all directly transmitted on the kids through verbal and non-verbal signals that are emanated from their internal attitude (Bohan-Baker & Little, 2004 ▪ DeCaro & Worthman, 2011 ▪ Griebel, & Niesel, 2000). It is therefore essential for the families to primarily process their emotions and consequently support their child towards the imminent change. Discussion on the curriculum to be implemented, and the routines which shall constitute the new framework (Copland, 2000), formation of realistic expectations in relevance to the facility, acquaintance with the new environment and the Educator, faith in the personnel, prompting to interact with other kids, stable and decisive behaviour, respect for the children's personal developmental rate, expressing the parents' pride for the new beginning and

*Corresponding author: Maria Sakellariou,

Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Ioannina, Ioannina, Greece.

manifestation of love contribute on reducing children's stress, fill them with security and optimism, no less allow them to take a pleasant first step in pre-school life, away from the previous state of consistency in the family environment (Casper *et al.*, 2015; Garrett, 2001). Research has established that daily domestic routines such as narrating a story, singing, sleep and meals routine on a regular basis constitute a key element for preparing children towards their transition into the pre-school learning environments. Therefore, they have a positive impact on academic, socio-emotional development and physical health (Ferretti & Bub, 2017). Regardless their child's level of development, parents are in dire need of constant and precise updating about the pre-school education institutions, caretaking and training curriculum as well as about the basic abilities and social skills required for their child (Conn-Powers *et al.*, 1990; Johnson *et al.*, 1986; Fenlon, 2005). Communication as well as positive interaction between the parents and the pre-school educators, form relations of trust and unbreakable bonds which result in facilitating the outcome of the transition itself (Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 1999). In Kreider's (2002) research, the parents reported that involving themselves with the school events was the corollary of a positive atmosphere; in other words their participation depended on how welcomed they would be feeling in the pre-school education and training facilities. According to Rimm-Kaufman and Pianta (1999, 2004) inclusion of parents in the transitional activities tends to reduce when the child enters Kindergarten.

Parents seem to seek for more information not only prior to, but during the transition of their child into pre-school learning environments, as well (Krieder, 2002 ▪ McIntyre, 2007 ▪ McIntyre *et al.*, 2007) and strongly desire for their own inclusion in the transitional curricula. According to Barnett and Taylor (2009) people that have a strong reminiscence of their own parents actively participating in the process of transition, when they were toddlers, seem to take part in much more pre-academic activities along with their children with aims to preparing them for pre-school education and training centres. The purpose of the present study is to approach the issue of transition with relevance to ecosystem-based theory from the aspect of Nursery Teachers and parents (N:55) of pre-school aged children from the Region of Epirus, Greece as well as to pinpoint the concerns and expectations of families towards Nursery School. Also, it aims at bringing forward the prerequisites to a successful transition. For our research the semi-constructed interviewing was opted as the basic tool for recording the parents' views regarding the matter of transition in order for valid data as well as in-depth information to be gathered with regards to the matter under scrutiny.

METHODOLOGY

Pilot Investigation: Preliminary investigational approach of an issue is considered as an important part of the research since it provides the conductors the ability to inspect on the quality of the procedures required prior to the commencement of the research, locate variables and sections that are to be included on the study, which had previously failed to be taken under account, avoid possible deficiencies during the interviews and proceed to all adjustments necessary (Borg & Gall, 1989 ▪ Cohen & Manion, 1989). As reported by Paraskevopoulos (1993) preliminary research is a "small scale investigation that takes place only for tracing, exploratory purposes and its findings are used as guidelines for moving forward, with a

higher degree of certitude, on planning and conducting the main research" (p.23). During the last trimester of the 2015-2016 academic year informal discussions were held in the form of free interviews with the group of researchers in order for information to be collected, concerns regarding the matter of children's transition from the domestic environment to preschool education and training centres to be articulated and for the outline of the overall interview to be designed. The suggestions made by the group of researchers were utilized on designing the research and constituted the basis on which the posing of the final inquiries of the interview was actualized. For the current study the probationary implementation of questionnaires was deemed as necessary as well as the trial conduction of the interviews (Vamvoukas, 2006 ▪ Papanastasiou, 1996) since it contributed on:

- reassuring the validity of the inquiries' content,
- the formation of a practical picture over the issue for which as yet we possessed but a theoretical view,
- the selection and order of inquiries that we evaluated as interesting and exploitable,
- checking in terms of clarity of the instructions as well as the comprehension of the inquiries towards the formation of the interview structure,
- defining the duration of the interviews (forty minutes each),
- the manner in which the families were approached and,
- the degree of the conductor's familiarization with the tools used for this purpose.

Investigational tool for qualitative research: Interview: Interviewing is one of the most widely accepted forms of qualitative investigational methods, constituting a rich pool of data regarding people's views (Vamvoukas, 2006; Cohen & Manion, 1994; Mason, 2003). As an investigational technique it includes the extraction of evidence via direct verbal exchange of aspects among the participating individuals (Mason, 2003) hence it allows deepening and correlating of complex no less indistinguishable elements of a problem, since through those, issues are posed instead of posing off-the shelf questions of steadfast and solid options (La Rossa & La Rossa, 1981; Kvale, 1996). An important point in our exploratory study was the designing of the interview; more specifically, as far as the qualitative investigational designing is concerned, we took under account the stages proposed by Isari and Pourkos (2015) (Fig.1). Based on our experience as well as on the literature review on the issue of transition, the bulletin of the interview was carefully formed. An a priori planning of inquiries in order for the conversation between the researcher and the parents to be facilitated took place, so that they would feel free to express their thoughts concerning the investigational inquiries without the necessity of any prolonged discourse which could cause fatigue and reluctance to involve oneself with a substantial dialogue. For planning and conducting the interview we took under account specific key elements regarding its form and type by selecting suitable inquiries as well as the relation that seems to be developed between the interviewer and the interviewee. More particularly, in terms of the interviews' form the sort of "direct", face to face one was chosen, which builds a harmonious relation between the conductor and the subject promoting thus an interactive communication which, as Miller (1986) states, is more suitable for investigating on families. With regards to the type of the interviews, the "semi-structured open type" interview was favoured on which the conductor is

highly versatile, sensitized and responsible about the content, order and posing of the inquiries.

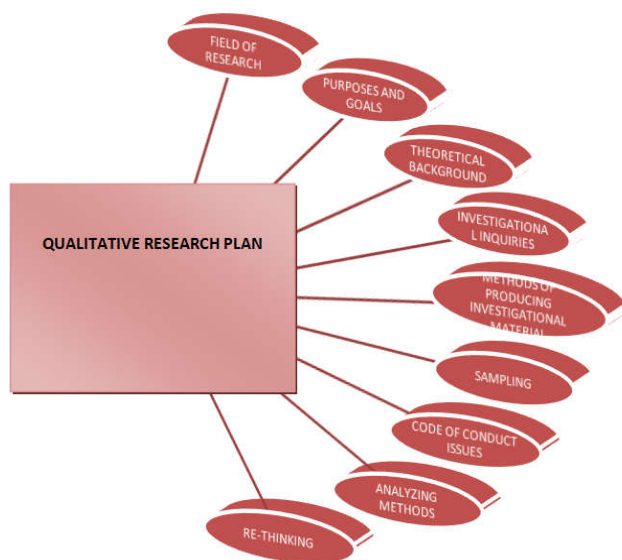


Fig. 1. Stages of conducting the qualitative research

The sample: The sample of our research consisted of 37 families from the Prefecture of Ioannina, 8 families from the Prefecture of Preveza, 5 families from the Prefecture of The sprotia and 5 families from the Prefecture of Arta, Epirus Region, Greece, whose children were to be admitted at the Nursery School the following year. All the interviews (N:55) were carried out from early March until late May, 2017.

Demographics of the families: On the Tables (1-3) the educational level of the participating parents is presented. By majority (N=42) they are Senior High graduates. 21 parents have graduated Technological Educational Institution (TEI), 31 have graduated University (AEI) while one mother holds a Master’s degree. 9 parents have a Junior High educational level while 4 parents have graduated Elementary School. As it is demonstrated on Table 4 the majority of families have two children (N=32). 17 families are of one child, while limited is the amount of families who have three children or more.

Table 1. Distribution of sample regarding father’s level of education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Elementary School	4	7,3	7,7	7,7
	Junior High School	6	10,9	11,5	19,2
	Senior High School	19	34,5	36,5	55,8
	TEI	11	20,0	21,2	76,9
	University	12	21,8	23,1	100,0
	Total	52	94,5	100,0	
Missing	System	3	5,5		
Total		55	100,0		

Table 2. Distribution of sample regarding mother’s level of education

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	3,6	3,6	3,6
	3	5,5	5,5	9,1
	23	41,8	41,8	50,9
	10	18,2	18,2	69,1
	19	34,5	34,5	100,0
	Total	55	100,0	

Table 3. Distribution of sample regarding mother’s level of further education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Master’s degree	1	1,8	100,0	100,0
Missing	System	54	98,2		
Total		55	100,0		

Table 4. Distribution of sample regarding the number of children

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	One	17	30,9	30,9	30,9
	Two	32	58,2	58,2	89,1
	Three	5	9,1	9,1	98,2
	Four or more	1	1,8	1,8	100,0
	Total	55	100,0	100,0	

Table 5. “Quantitative of total results on the question: Which are your concerns towards your child attending Nursery School?”

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Child’s positive approach by the Educator	10	10,8%	18,2%
Separation- Adaptation	46	49,5%	83,6%
Child Diseases	4	4,3%	7,3%
Safety/Accidents/Hygiene	5	5,4%	9,1%
Nutrition	4	4,3%	7,3%
Socialization	18	19,4%	32,7%
Separation of twins	1	1,1%	1,8%
Verbal communication of child	1	1,1%	1,8%
Autonomy	2	2,2%	3,6%
None	2	2,2%	3,6%
Total	93	100,0%	169,1%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Limitations of the research: For the purposes of the present exploratory study the following limitations were posed:

The study was only restricted within families residing on the Region of Epirus whose children would be enrolled at Nursery School. In addition, the duration of carrying out the interviews was determined to be of three months, from March to May that is, since that period roughly coincides with the enrollments in the Daycare Centres, so the preoccupations would be greater and probably the concerns would be more intense, on the parents’ side. We do consider that further investigation on a national level would be purposeful in order for our findings to be more widely and securely generalized. Regarding the qualitative study, in the absence of an arithmetic determination, (Iosifidis, 2008; Morse, 2002; Patton, 2002), the number of fifty five (55) subjects is taken as adequate and satisfying towards extracting useful data but also towards avoiding “the repetition of information which has already been taken on account” (Kallinikaki, 2010).

PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

Next we present the statistical results which have been collected after interviewing the families on thematic arrangement which we interpret by verbatim citation of excerpts:

- What were your concerns about your child attending the Nursery School?
- What were your expectations from the Nursery School towards your child?

According to Coolican (1990) “the final report of the qualitative findings usually contains word for word excerpts of the participants’ actual responses, which can convey the reality of the under investigation issue on the reader” (pp. 235-236) and allow to preserve the authenticity of the presentation itself.

Table 6: “Quantitative of total results on the question: What are your expectations from the Nursery School towards your child?”

Expectations ^a		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Socialization	Socialization	39	37,1%	70,9%
	Developing social skills	14	13,3%	25,5%
	Cultivating educational purposes	9	8,6%	16,4%
	Basic concepts on learning	21	20,0%	38,2%
	Security/Accidents/Hygiene	8	7,6%	14,5%
	Positive adaptation	4	3,8%	7,3%
	Nutritional habits	2	1,9%	3,6%
	Love/Respect towards child's personality	7	6,7%	12,7%
	Positive/Pleasant atmosphere	1	1,0%	1,8%
Total		105	100,0%	190,9%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

At the beginning of each excerpt the serial number of the interview it originates from, is noted.

Concerns of families regarding the child's transition into the Nursery School: As shown on Table 5, out of the total N:93 of the recorded responses, 49,5% regard the concern of the parents about their child's separation from them and their positive adaptation to the new, school environment. This specific concern was reported by the vast majority (83,6%) of the parents, followed by socialization (19,4%) about which a 32,7% of the parents reported to be preoccupied. A smaller amount of parents seem to worry about the educator's approach towards their child (18,2%) a concern that was reported on a 10,8% percentage. Even smaller is the amount of parents (9,1%) who show guardedness about their children's safety within the Nursery School facility as well as about their hygiene, a concern that was confirmed by 5,4% of the parents. Child diseases along with the child's alimentation in the Nursery School preoccupies a 7,3% of the parents and it was reported by 4,3% of the families. A limited amount (3,6% that is) of the parents worry about their child's autonomy whereas the exact same percentage seem to exhibit no such worry whatsoever. Finally, one of the parents expressed their concern about the separation of their twins while another pointed out their worries concerning their child's verbal communication. The parents exhibited concerns about their child's transition to the Nursery School as it is insinuated on the excerpts below. The majority of parents experience intense emotions regarding their child's adaptation in the new pre-school environment but also regarding separation which seems to be hard not only for the kid but for the parents as well:

I1 “...my only worry is whether my child will stay in school because up until now we had never been separated for a long period...”, I30 “I am preoccupied about my kid on the issue of separation from motherly arms”, I2 “...this is the first time they go to school...”, I43 “...will they easily adapt to an environment different than home?”, I19 “As a matter of fact I am worried...whether our child will be able to deal with the new routine of the Nursery School without us by their side...they had never been away from us for so many hours before”, I29 “...how shall my child be separated from me and how shall I be separated from my child”, I50 “...whether their adaptation will be immediate coping with my absence easily, as well with the fear that no one will come to get them back home...” I46 “I am deeply concerned about them being outside the domestic environment, the weaning...”. High is the number of parents who seem to worry about their children's interaction with their peers and adults, their integration into the Nursery School team and their involvement with activities:

I45 “I am worried...about how easy will their communication be towards their peers or towards their educators”, I37 “...what shall my child's relationship be with the other kids and with the educator”, I22 “Whether my child will be happy without me and will be able to make friends”, I36 “...whether they will socialize with the other kids in class”, I38 “Whether they socialize relatively fast...” I35 “Whether my son will be able to incorporate among the other kids since he's been really shy and restricted and whether he will participate in all the activities without any problems”, I34 “Since they are an only child, I wonder if they shall integrate in the class, taking part in group activities”.

In addition to the above, among the parents are those who are deeply concerned about the attitude of the educator towards their child, in other words about the way the educator shall approach their child. Here is what they report:

I2 “...I am also worried about how the teachers will treat my child and whether they will love them or not...”, I48 “...will they approach him affectionately in order to stay at school?”, I47 “...what will his relationship with the educator be? Will he be feeling secure next to them? Will he love her?...”, I44 “...my child's adaptation to be well-tempered, to feel security, trust, love by their teachers as they do by me. Also, to be provided with all the care required for their age...”.

There are also parents who seem to be concerned about not only their child's everyday care, their nutritional habits, but about child diseases and security of their kid within the Facility, as well.

I19 “I am primarily worried about...whether their basic needs such as lavatory and alimentation will be met...”, I18 “...I am concerned about the sphincter control and nutrition”, I25 “...I have worries concerning their food...”, I51 “...whether my child will accept to share the same table with other kids during lunch”, I13 “...their adaptation to an unknown school environment, accidents is what stresses me...”, I14 “...such as hitting and biting”, I53 “My worries are on my child's transition to the new environment as well as their safety”, I42 “Whether they will pay attention to him not to get hurt”, I3 “I am aware of the fact that when children go to school for the first time, they are susceptible to frequent illness. For us this is the first time indeed, so I am worried about diseases”, I9 “...my greatest fear has to do with diseases-infections that are most common...”.

Only a few parents are those who state that they have no worry whatsoever or those who are only concerned about their child's gradual autonomy building up.

I5 “I have no worries at all, since this is my third child”, I18 “...I am just wondering if they will grow autonomously regarding their personal hygiene and nutrition”, I19 “I am basically worried about...whether my child will be allowed to act by their own...”.

One parent points out their worries about their twins while another seems to be concerned about their child's verbal communication skills:

I14 “...being twins, whether they will be attending the same class...”, I19 “I am mainly worried whether my child will be

able to communicate...whether they will get used to the new Nursery School routine...”.

Families' expectations from the Nursery School: On the following section we present the views of parents regarding their expectations from the Nursery School (Table 6). From a total of N:105 recorded answers 37,1% concern socialization and 20,0% learning of basic concepts in the nursery school, which were reported by respectively 70,9% and 38,2% of the parents. A certain amount of parents consider nursery school as the domain on which children's social skills are developed (13,3%) as well as a place where the purpose of education is cultivated (8,6%). A smaller percentage (7,6%) of parents anticipate their child's security in terms of avoiding accidents inside the Nursery School but also the regular janitorial of the facility so that their child resides in a clean environment, while an even smaller amount (6,7%) of parents anticipate love and respect of the teachers towards their child's personality.

Limited is the amount (3,8%) of parents who expect positive acclimation of their child into the newly experienced preschool environment and are interested on the acquisition of proper nutritional habits (by 1,9% that is). Finally, one of the parents considers of high significance the fact that the new preschool environment should be pleasant and positive for their child (1,0%). The above reported findings allow us to assert that the parents hold high expectations from the Nursery School and the excerpts collected from the parents' interviews confirm how important the contribution of the Nursery School towards socialization, acquisition of social skills, learning and growing educational values, is considered by the families:

I39 “*First of all, to help my child be integrated within a team, grow independent and secondly, creative activities and learning*”, I14 “*I expect...my child to obtain social skills...*”, I43 “*To help my child realize that human beings work as a team, teach them to share with no discriminations...*”, I36 “*...my kid to be taught of how to abide by the basic rules that bind a team*”, I4 “*...to socialize and also play with other kids...*”, I48 “*...to make friends and have a good time, learn to do certain things by himself, watch and obey his teacher...*”, I34 “*to be instilled with a smooth and peaceful coexistence with the other children*”.

I44 “*To acquire new stimuli on a wide range of interests certainly different than those of home. To be creatively occupied, to work in a team surrounded by a pleasant environment and evolve their cognitive fields...*”, I1 “*...take up their first knowledge, basic concepts, to 'learn'*”, I24 “*To follow activities appropriate for a child's correct evolution - both cognitive and social...*”, I14 “*...the activities to be creative, intriguing for the kids...*”, I49 “*...to learn basic stuff that will help them in their life's course*”, I35 “*The nursery school must help a child... to form a positive image regarding school...*”, I29 “*...to learn how to behave properly...*”, I11 “*... to acquire good manners...*”.

With regards to children's safety within the preschool environment, possible accidents and the facility's janitorial, the parents anticipate the following:

I8 “*...proper and safe minding of my child...*”, I41 “*...to look after my kid...*”, I21 “*...high weightiness to a clean facility...*”, I47 “*...to take good care of hygiene issues,...*”.

Parents who lend weight on love and respect towards their children's personality, report:

I50 “*My child to be embraced and understand that they will have a great time during their sojourn in the facility*”, I16 “*...the educator to treat them with equality and justice, providing the kid with safety and creating a positive ambient as well as pleasant stay conditions*”, I22 “*...the children to have tender and sweet-tempered teachers who will approach all of them with patience, understanding, and with no discriminations*”.

Several parents expect their child to joyfully embrace their new beginning in life, their admission into the Day care Center or Nursery School that is.

I9 “*To enter in joy and to walk out in joy...to share, to unwind, to play and to receive love*”, I6 “*To be happy, to play and to ease off their energy*”.

There are others who expect the existence of a preschool environment in which the child can acquire proper nutritional habits.

I21 “*I do lend more weight on a clean environment, right food... and, of course, I expect from the educators to look after my child, to assist them sit down at the table, to eat with the other kids, to teach them to make correct nutritional choices*”.

A limited amount of parents expect but the existence of a child-positive and pleasant preschool settings.

I30 “*I expect that my child resides in an appealing environment...*”.

Interpretation of the results and conclusive discussion: On a global level, the transition of children from the domestic environment to the preschool centres of education and training is acknowledged as highly significant for all those who are involved with childcare and education. The role of family is crucial for the children's developmental outcome, for their education, for designing and implementation of transitional curricula, on the purpose of contributing in an effective outcome of children's adaptation from the natural to the preschool environment. Parents hold their own concerns regarding how shall their child's adaptation take place in a new environment away from them but also, how they shall themselves manage to deal with a new situation with which they are coming head-on for the first time. Based on the findings of our research it was established that the parents' primary concern regarding their child's transition into the nursery school is separation and adaptation of the kid into a completely new context; a quite hard situation for both, the parents and the child alike. Several are the parents who are preoccupied about their child's socialization, their interaction with peers and adults, their integration in the actual team of the nursery school, and their involvement with various activities.

The parents also manifest their preoccupations regarding the educators' attitude towards their child, the day-to-day caretaking, the nutritional habits, no less possible child diseases and safety in the preschool facility, whereas only a few parents report that they hold no worry at all. One could claim that this is mainly due the demographics of the family (families with three or more children) or due to the parents'

recent similar experience which could result in them being fully aware of the transitional process or even due to a really elevated level of trust towards their child and towards the preschool centre of education and training. Similarly, in a research conducted by Wildenger and McIntyre (2011), parents report but a few concerns which are related with the child's acclimation to the new environment and their connection to the educator, their interaction with peers, the separation from the parents, behavioral problems, and abiding by rules and following instructions. According to the international literature the importance of the family's involvement into the process of transition is determining towards its effective outcome (Sakellariou, 2008; Bohan-Baker & Little, 2004; Caspe, Lopez, & Chattrabhuti, 2015; DeCaro & Worthman, 2011; Gill et al., 2006; Kang et al., 2016; Krieder, 2002; La Paro et al., 2003; Machida et al., 2002; McIntyre, 2007; McIntyre et al., 2007; Morrison-Gutman & McLoyd, 2000; Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 1999; Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 1999; Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2004; Sheridan et al., 2020). For this reason a vivid discourse has been raised regarding the development of a range of transition curricula which aim at the collaboration between families and preschool centres of education and training in the context of transition, as well as at training parents so that they can prepare their child and the families in general for the upcoming changes. (Head Start, HIPPIY, Thrive in Five, Care-Info Connect Child Care, Around About, Smooth Sailing into Kindergarten, Ready! Set! School!, The Kindergarten der Zukunft in Bayern-KiDZ, Parents as Partners).

Findings of studies demonstrate that involvement of all those who have to do with childcare and education is vital in order for appropriate transition techniques to be sought for. Hence, towards this purpose, the «School Readiness Task Force of Focus On Our Future» hosted a pilot event under the title «A, B, C: beginning of a debate on transition to the Kindergarten». In this study nursery school teachers (N:32) kindergarten educators (N:23), principals (N:11) and parents (N:14) took part, who all acquiesced that in order a successful transition of children to be achieved in the Kindergarten, all the entities involved should be fully aware of which abilities-skills the kids must have gained prior to their admission to the Kindergarten, have common anticipations, a substantial communication between the Nursery Schools and the Kindergartens to exist, as well as collaboration and participation of the parents into the overall transitional process (Gill et al., 2006).

Regarding the parents' expectations from the Nursery School we establish that parents emphasize particularly on socialization, development of social skills but also on learning basic concepts through play, which is an asset for children's learning literally from their birth until the end of their Primary Education (Sakellariou, 2016 ▪ Brock, 2016). This is the most important form of physical and unforced learning process and preparation of a child to confront life itself (Kogkouli, 2005). The aforementioned findings allow us to allege that parents have in general high expectations from the learning environments since they deem these environments' contribution to their child's development and growth as crucial, same as to the reassurance of conditions that promote their positive adaptation in order for them to ameliorate and acquire social skills and pre-academic abilities in terms of adopting proper behavioral manners, emergence of interests, inclinations, talents. According to Sakellariou (2008), greater are the educational expectations of parents who have a high

educational level, which seems to be the case for our own, present study since the majority of parents are of superior University or Technological education. In addition, Dweck (1991) has claimed that parents who hold such great expectations support, encourage and praise their child on a higher degree, enhancing thus their confidence and self-esteem.

Proposals

Our suggestions towards the parents whose child are to be admitted from the Nursery School into the Kindergarten would be that:

- They discuss with their child about the first day at the Nursery school.
- Pay a visit to the Facility, accompanied by their child, before the beginning of the School Year.
- Teach their child of several basic skills.
- Gather as much information as possible concerning the facility, their child's teacher as well as the teachers' expectations.
- Fully comprehend the roles, obligations and duties of everyone working in the facility.
- Purchase, along with their child, materials that shall be useful to them in the Nursery School.
- Provide their child with as many opportunities as possible to interact with kids of the same age as well as groups of kids prior to their admission into the Nursery School.
- Encourage their child and show a lively enthusiasm regarding the first day at the Nursery School.

Conclusively, the conductors of the present study assert that in order transition to be well-tempered and to constitute an exciting experience for the child, the Nursery School should acknowledge the importance of the following features, as those have arisen by analyzing the qualitative data gathered from interviewing with the parents: "love, safety, trust, stability, positive relationship, friendship, respect, independence, autonomy, understanding, positive approach, collaboration, nutrition, creative activities, personal care, play, equality, pleasant ambience, peaceful coexistence, learning, Nursery School Teacher, Kindergarten Educator, family, child, together".

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