

Professional article

**DOSSIER ANALYSIS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD
IN PRESCHOOL INSTITUTIONS**

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Abstract. *Educators in preschool institutions monitor the development and progress of each child, which leads to keeping a dossier for the child (development portfolio). This paper presents an appropriate approach for keeping a dossier of the child in the preschool institution: coordination between preschool and primary education with the aim of achieving an appropriate holistic development of the child. The subject of this research is to study the monitoring of the children's progress. The scientific goal is to analyze the way of monitoring the children's progress and to determine a system of recommendations for the transmission of relevant data from the child's dossier to the primary school. According to the objective, several operational tasks are defined. One of the tasks refers to the study of the ways and forms in which the dossier for monitoring the child's progress is kept in the preschool institutions. In the study we use the following research methods: the theoretical-analytical method for studying the theoretical basis of the research and the analytical-descriptive method to determine the state of the pedagogical reality. The research was conducted using documentary analysis techniques and by interviewing the opinions and attitudes of the educators (who represent the sample), using a list of records and a questionnaire as instruments. Some of the conclusions are: Need for coordination between the pedagogical and psychological facilities of the kindergarten and the primary school; restructuring of the children's records with individual approaches and recommendations, etc.*

Key words: *analysis, dossier, progress, monitoring*

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1. NEED TO MONITOR CHILDREN'S PROGRESS AND COMPETENCE OF THE EDUCATOR TO MONITOR

The development of preschool children is a process that moves along an ascending line. Proper development requires the influence of external factors: the family as the first and most important factor, genetic factors, preschool institutions, environmental influences, mass communication media influences, and more. In this work, we study the impact on the progress of children from preschool institutions.

The need to monitor children's progress is directly related to their development. This means that we need to monitor children's development to determine the extent to which their behavior and development meet the standards that are expected to be achieved at a certain chronological age. Children's progress should be monitored through daily activities of a different kind. This type of monitoring is continuous. Children's development is followed by appropriate procedures and instruments adapted to the age of a particular population. The child's file (development portfolio) is one way of recording the knowledge gained in monitoring the child's progress.

During monitoring, teachers observe children and document whether children are mastering the expected developmental phases in the physical, cognitive, language, emotional, and social domains of development. In particular, teachers are tracking a child's speech and language development, problem-solving skills, fine and gross motor skills, social skills, and behavior. In this way, teachers can better meet the individual needs of each child.

2. RELEVANT RESEARCHES RELATED TO THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THIS WORK

The problem of documenting the child's development in the preschool institution is a significant process and an appropriate approach is needed. In different countries, monitoring the observation of the child's development is recorded differently. In essence, this is regulated by keeping a type of dossier in which relevant data on different types of development are recorded. One way is shown in the study by Kristina Drini (2019, pp. 169-173), when the papers are documented on the development of children in New Zealand. As Kristina Drini states, Margaret Carr, along with colleagues, practitioners, children, and their parents, developed an approach to documenting children's learning through a learning story during a scientific research project in preschool settings in New Zealand. Learning stories promote collaboration, sharing of experiences with other children, parents, practitioners and enable: 1. Empowerment - children are involved in monitoring and evaluating their learning, thus empowering them to further plan their own learning and activities in the preschool and develop self-confidence; 2. holistic development - connects significant learning episodes in children's portfolios; 3. Family and community - develop learning stories involving family members and other members of the community; 4. Relationships - define context as the basis of mutual relations with people, places, and things (Carr and Lee, 2012, p. 88).

In the study, "Data collection and use in early childhood education programs: Evidence from the Northeast Region," Jacqueline Zweig, Clare W. Irwin, Janna Fuccillo Kook Josh Cox (2015) examine how early childhood education programs collect and use data, how they choose to use data, how they might use existing data, and the challenges they face in these efforts. Administrators and teachers from seven preschools in a mid-sized city in the Northeast Region were interviewed about their data practices. Participating preschools used a variety of

externally and internally developed systems to collect data on early learning outcomes, dosage (the amount of time children spend in early childhood education), and classroom quality. Preschools also provided parents with data on early learning outcomes and dosage, but some administrators and teachers had concerns about effective strategies for communicating findings from the data. Preschools reported collecting sufficient data and generally did not want to collect more data.

This study examined the data collected by administrators and teachers in a mid-sized city in the Northeast Region; how they use the data they collect, and the challenges they face in collecting and using data. Based on previous research that has shown that dosage and quality are positively associated with early childhood learning outcomes, this study focused on early childhood learning outcomes, dosage, and classroom quality.

In Veličković's (2013) work, emphasis is placed on the portfolio as a way to track and document children's development. The management of pedagogical documentation includes various ways of recording observations about the educational process and the process of child development. As labor emphasizes, a portfolio is only one way of collecting data and documenting the child's developmental and learning processes. Accordingly, "the content of an individual portfolio can be: selected, creative, children's products, relevant to a specific task or topic, illustrate the achievement of a child - what he can, what he is at that moment - stage, the process of mastering: artworks, testimonies, questions, comments, conversations with other children, intentions regarding activities, reactions in conflict situations, social communication with peers - adults; as he analyzes, it concludes, produces, creates, interacts; intellectually, emotionally, social; photos. The second part of the portfolio content consists of watch lists and scales of assessments that educators more accurately demonstrate the state of development in the group."

In the study "Documenting Educational Work as a Way to an Understanding of the Child and Childhood" (Valjan Vukić, Zrilić, i Tomić, 2022), the focus is on development folders/individual portfolios of the child, inspired by the program Step by Step (ISSA). The paper discusses the positive implications of monitoring and documentation at different levels, concerning the child, parents and team cooperation, as well as 44 significant changes that affect the quality of the educational process and the overall curriculum of the early and preschool educational institution. The development map serves in different ways all those involved in the educational process - children, parents, educators. The development map represents an individual, comprehensive documentation of the child and serves to monitor the development.

3. THE COMPONENTS OF THE CHILD'S DOSSIER (DEVELOPMENTAL PORTFOLIO) IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

In the Republic of North Macedonia to record the development of children in preschool institutions, we use a *Child's Dossier (developmental portfolio)*.

Each instrument in the file monitor and evaluates the achievements of the child according to certain criteria in the field of the following categories:

1. Health and motor development,
2. Socio-emotional development,
3. Language, communication and literacy development,
4. Cognitive development and gaining general knowledge and
5. Access to learning.

1. Health and motor development are very important for children during the growing period. Health is preserved with healthy habits and physical activities. Preschool institutions as a place where children spend much of the growing period should provide situations and content for gradual and secure creation and nurturing habits for healthy living. Motor development is also significant in the preschool period. Appropriate care is needed to encourage and develop control of body parts and establish coordinated movements, as well as sensomotor coordination. Motor development is combined to other types of development, such as cognitive development, speech development, socio-emotional development. Therefore, the activities organised and implemented by educators are often designed to allow for multiple development.
2. Socio-emotional development is basically a more subtle type of development. Very often this type of development is considered the basis of other types of development. The social and emotional component is closely linked and complemented by. Socio-emotional development is very important for preparing the child for school. Therefore, appropriate transfer of relevant data from the child's file to primary school is necessary.
3. Language, communication and literacy development are also categories that are necessary for the proper and successful development of the child and prosperity in the environment where he lives. Language culture, communication, literacy begin to form during the period of early childhood development. Educators, in accordance with the program basis, carry out educational activities for the development of language, communication and literacy.
4. Cognitive development and general knowledge acquisition is a process aimed at developing a complex of mental activities such as thinking, remembering, judgment, conclusion, research, detection, sorting, classification, etc. In preschool period, cognitive development is realized through a variety of activities and situations where children learn criticalness, problem solving, understanding rules and processes, causal relationships, etc.
5. Access to learning should also be monitored in the progress of children. During this period, children learn how to learn, use their own creativity, form their own experience, be initiative and persistent. The approach to learning opens the door to the intellectual development of the individual. Children are curious and explore in different ways. The educator continuously monitors the progress of children in the preschool institution.

Improving the process of monitoring the child's progress in preschool institutions by maintaining a file (developmental portfolio), as well as elaborating a recommendation system for transferring relevant data from the child's file to the primary school in which it will be enrolled will be in function:

- Increasing the level of quality of educational activities in preschool institutions;
- A higher level of applicability of the data collected in the child's file;
- Appropriate use of the data collected in the child's file for the proper development of the child;
- Improving the quality of the file for monitoring the child's progress;
- Strengthening the child's self-confidence;
- Proper adjustment of the child to the primary school and its development.

4. METHODOLOGICAL COMPONENTS OF THE RESEARCH

The subject of the research was to monitor the progress of children in preschool institutions. The aim of the research, which is consistent with the subject of the study, is to analyze the existing way of monitoring the progress of children in preschool institutions. Accordingly, the aim is to determine a system of recommendations for the transfer of relevant data from the child's file to the primary school in which it will be enrolled.

According to this aim, we define the following operational tasks:

1. To examine the situation in the pedagogical reality from the point of view of whether the monitoring of the children's progress is realized;
2. To examine what way and in what form in preschool institutions the file on monitoring the child's progress should be kept;
3. Examine the opinions and views of educators on whether and how the file for monitoring the child's progress is kept, as well as their suggestions and recommendations for improving the file;
4. To adopt a system of recommendations for the transfer of relevant data from the child's file to the primary school in which the child will be enrolled.

The population of the survey consists of all preschool educators in the Republic of North Macedonia. The sample, consisting of a total of 53 preschool educators, was randomly selected.

In the study we use the following research methods:

- Theoretical-analytical method, with the help of which we study the theoretical basis of the research;
- Analytical-descriptive method to determine the state of pedagogical reality, which is the subject of our study.

In the research we use the following techniques: Analysis of pedagogical documentation and interviewing preschool educators.

According to the techniques we use the following instruments of the research: protocol list for the analysis of pedagogical documentation and interview of preschool educators.

5. ANALYSIS OF DATE OBTAINED IN THE RESEARCH

5.1. Analysis of part of the pedagogical documentation - the child's file (developmental portfolio) in preschool institutions

In the introductory part, at the beginning of the dossier, in a separate model it is necessary to specify generalizations of date and place of birth, citizenship, etc., in a separate template. This is also followed by a kindergarten application, which contains general data about the child and is filled out by a parent/guardian. They should then provide data on the child's health status (through the registrar). Next comes the running dossier section for the child's health and social profile, as well as health status while in the building/early childhood center development.

The professional part of the dossier for the child, which is the main part of the file, is completed by the educator. We point out that the educator fills in this part when monitoring the progression of the child's multi-faceted development.

The child's file is a way to record the child's progress at a certain age according to the predefined main categories and standards. The data on the child's progress is obtained by

monitoring its development based on the above-mentioned categories and standards. The expert part of the file for the child, which is also the main part of the file, is filled in by the educator. We note that the educator fills in this part in order to monitor the child's progress in his multifaceted development.

The Standards for Early Learning and Child Development for children 0-6 years of age form the basis for the child's dossier. These are the following categories, i.e., developmental domains (as described above), and each domain is divided into standards. It is important to note that each standard is divided into sub-standards depending on which adult category (2-3, 3-4, 4-6) the child belongs to. Due to space limitations, only the standards that apply generally to all adult categories are listed here.

A) Health and motor development

In this category, indicators of changes in terms of development are following standards:

1. Standard – maintains balance
2. Standard – body parts control
3. Standard – coordination
4. Standard – mobile and stationary obstacles
5. Standard – palm and finger control
6. Standard – handles items for general use
7. Standard – personal care and hygiene
8. Standard – recognition of harmful and dangerous situations
9. Standard – regulation of movement with minds.

B) Socio-emotional development

In the socio-emotional development category, indicators of change in terms of development are the following standards:

1. Standard – distinguishes between familiar and unknown adults
2. Standard – can develop social skills in interaction with other children
3. Standard – can develop social skills in interaction with adults
4. Standard – can notice and respect their similarities and differences in people
5. Standard – develops the term for itself
6. Standard – can recognize and appropriately expresses his emotions
7. Standard – proud of its achievements and believes in their abilities
8. Standard – can control your own feelings.

C) Language, communication and literacy development

In the category of language, communication and literacy development, indicators of changes in terms of development are the following standards:

1. Standard – can listen and understand spoken language
2. Standard – can talk and communicate
3. Standard – can enrich its vocabulary and show progress in proper speech
4. Standard – shows interest in printed materials
5. Standard – can recognize written symbols and letters
6. Standard – can be involved in activities related to by writing
7. Standard – can express its ideas through written symbols and letters.

D) Cognitive development and acquisition of general knowledge

In this category, indicators of changes in terms of development are following standards:

1. Standard – demonstrates the ability to explore and reveals
2. Standard – demonstrates knowledge of quantity, figures and counting
3. Standard – demonstrates the ability to classify and series

4. Standard – acquires information about the environment through observation and manipulation
5. Standard – observes and describes the characteristics of the living world
6. Standard – observes and describes the characteristics of the inanimate nature
7. Standard – aware of the person as alive and social being
8. Standard – different sounds/voices
9. Standard – demonstrates interest in participating in music activities
10. Standard – demonstrates interest in participating in various forms of visual creativity.

E) Approach to learning

In the category of approach to learning, indicators of changes after development are the following standards:

1. Standard – can learn new things and acquire new experiences
2. Standard – can take an initiative
3. Standard – shows perseverance in the activities
4. Standard – can use its creativity in daily activities
5. Standard – can learn in different ways from own experiences.

In general, the dossier consists of three instruments to assess the degree of achievement of standards. The three instruments refer to three adult groups: 1. from 2-3 years; 2. from 3-4 years; and 3. from 4-6 years. At the beginning of the instrument, the dates of the child's first and last name and age should be recorded, as well as the dates of the first and second entries. Records should note changes at three levels: first step toward meeting the standard (shows interest in the activity, attempts to perform it without precision and accuracy), progress (shows progress toward meeting the standard - occasionally performed with certain precision and accuracy), and achieved (shows interest in the activity, performed with great precision, accuracy, and persistence).

The developmental domains and standards are identical for all adult groups, but it is noted that the expected performance varies according to the level of complexity. Therefore, we also see a gradual increase in the demands aimed at children in terms of developing appropriate skills as they get older. Space for notes is provided at the end of each category for all instruments. In the note, the educator can add something that relates to the child's development in the given category, depending on what is not specified in the notes provided. Since there is significant individual differences in children's achievement of the standards, the educator can add what he or she thinks is worth mentioning in the notes box.

Space is provided at this point for a description of the child's significant individual accomplishments according to the Early Learning and Development Standards. This section may be particularly important for transferring data from the child's file from kindergarten to primary school. In the last part of the child's file, there is an opportunity to enter a special anecdote about the child, a report of an incident, a report of the occurrence of an illness, and a report of the child's behavior.

5.2. Analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from the survey of educators

The survey was conducted to explore the opinions and views of educators about the children's file as an official, current document of pedagogical records for monitoring children's progress. With the survey, we realized the tasks of the research and tested the above hypotheses. It is noted that the majority of educators (94.3%) declared themselves

to be monitoring children's progress. No significant concessions are observed in the answers about the different substructures of the educators. We can note that the majority of educators (96.2%) indicated that they monitor children's progress by filling out the children's file (developmental portfolio).

We can note that educators are divided on whether development is adequately monitored through the use of the child's file. Namely, 49% declared themselves "in favor", 45.2% declared themselves "partially", while 5.7% considered that the Dossier did not meet the real needs.

Analyzing the answers of the different substructures of educators, we can note that the educators with the best professional experience declared with the highest percentage (60.8%) that the dossier corresponds to the real needs for monitoring the child's development.

We note that the majority of educators (79.2%) believe that a system of recommendations should be implemented for the transfer of relevant data from the child's file to the primary school.

In the responses to the open-ended questions, we note that a portion of the educators believe that the dossier should be completely revised to more effectively monitor children's progress. Some believe that the dossier is not appropriate for the age of the children. Some educators believe that the recording methods should be clarified, correlated with the conditions, and the indicators generalized. Most of them believe that the child's dossier (developmental portfolio) meets the real needs to record the monitoring of the child's development.

Educators directly involved in keeping the dossier expressed their opinions and views regarding several relevant aspects related to the dossier. Based on their answers, we concluded that the following is needed:

- Revision of instruments for assessing and changing the format;
- To cover more specific aspects than those listed;
- To generalize indicators for monitoring the development of the child through standards;
- To have better co-operation between preschool and school education;
- When enrolling in school, the file should be handed over to the educator at the school
- Regulate by certain acts mandatory downloading of a dossiers of children by the school.
- Pay more attention if there are any difficulties in certain areas or aspects of development.
- Adapt (if necessary) – the instruments according to the opportunities at the institution's disposal.

We note the opinions of educators focused on the need for co-operation between preschool institutions and schools, the need for a transfer on the file, the possibility of electronic connectivity, opinions on what to contain the instrument, parents to transfer the file.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TRANSFER OF RELEVANT DATA

Analyzing the child's file and evaluating the results of the interview with the educators, we conclude that recording the monitoring of children's progress in preschool institutions is appropriate, but for improvement and greater functionality, all the indications we received during the interview should be taken into account and stated in the analyzes.

We should always focus on the child's needs, taking into account their interests, abilities, and genetic predispositions. The voice of educators should also be heard and respected, as they can initiate any change in preschool practice from their own experience. They believe that the current Dossiers meet the real needs for progress monitoring, but a large number of them believe that they only partially meet the real needs. Therefore, continuous revision of the child progress tracking documents is necessary, with the aim of making the development of the child in general more efficient.

In order for the data to reach the primary school through the file in a transparent way, we offer some recommendations for the transfer of relevant data from the child's file to the primary school where they are to be recorded:

- Coordination between the pedagogical and psychological services of both institutions (kindergartens and primary school);
- If necessary, restructuring of data from the dossier with individualized approaches and recommendations;
- To supplement the dossier with children's works;
- Recommendations should not be subjective;
- Recommendations should be based on objective and how measurable indicators are possible;
- To have the opportunity for additional consultations between the department teacher and the educator, if necessary;
- For children in need of inclusion, to have the opportunity to consult with defectors from both institutions;
- To have specific recommendations from the educator for gifted children whose talent is identified in kindergarten;
- The possibility of organizing a visit of children from a large group of kindergartens in the school environment to feel the school atmosphere.

The recommendations should be interpreted as a basis for an individual encounter with each child. They should not be used as an unchangeable attitude in relation to the child's development, because we know that each individual development is specific and variable.

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ANALIZA DOSIJEJA ZA RAZVOJ DETETA U PREDŠKOLSKIM USTANOVAMA

Vaspitač u predškolskim ustanovama prati razvoj i napredovanje svakog deteta ponaosob i odgovarajuće podatke unosi u dosije svakog deteta (razvojni portfolio). U radu se daju odgovarajuće preporuke koje se odnose na načine vođenja dosijea deteta u predškolskoj ustanovi i koordinaciju predškolskog i osnovnog vaspitanja i obrazovanja. U skladu sa tim, cilj rada bio je da se izvrši analiza načina praćenja napredovanja dece i na osnovu toga odredi sistem preporuka za prenošenje relevantnih podataka iz dosijea deteta koji se vodi u predškolskoj ustanovi koju je dete pohađalo u njegov dosije koji se vodi u osnovnoj školi. Korišćene su sledeće metode istraživanja: teorijsko-analitička metoda za proučavanje teorijskih osnova istraživanja i analitičko-deskriptivna metoda za utvrđivanje stanja pedagoške stvarnosti. Istraživanje je sprovedeno istraživačkim tehnikama analize dokumentacije i anketiranjem vaspitača radi utvrđivanja njihovog mišljenja i stavova uz korišćenje odgovarajućih evidencionih lista i upitnika. Na osnovu sprovedenog istraživanja zaključeno je da je potrebno izvršiti odgovarajuću koordinaciju pedagoško-psiholoških usluga koje nude predškolske ustanove i osnovne škole, restrukturirati podatke o dečjim dosijeima sa individualizovanim pristupima i preporukama, i dr.

Ključne reči: *analiza, dosije, napredovanje, posmatranje*