

VOICE

Voicing children Opportunities
Interaction Collective decision
making Education

Pedagogical approaches & practices

**to support and enhance children's participation
in the educational process**



H.F.R.I.
Hellenic Foundation for
Research & Innovation

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Questions

- What do we mean when we say "approaches and practices to enhance children's participation"? What exactly is it about?
- What is it that distinguishes practices as participatory?
- What are the characteristics of these practices?

Teacher Strategies

1. They focus on the result and test the knowledge

2. Impose strict rules

3. Take into account the interests and needs of children

4. They do not show confidence in children

5. Pay attention to the opinions and feelings of children

6. They maintain distant relationships with children

7. Observe and enhance the action of children

8. Know the abilities and children's preferences

9. They require discipline

10. Guide the action of children

11. They check compliance with the rules

12. They give children choice

13. They are based on children's ideas and suggestions

14. They negotiate a variety of issues with children

Which of the above strategies support participation and which do not? Why?

The participation of children in the educational process depends on the teacher-child relationships and in particular on the opportunities that teachers give to children to actively engage in specific practices that take place in the daily school reality

(Bae, 2009)

What teachers do in terms of participation?

Research has shown that exist both:

Limited scope - barriers to participation

Widening margins - opportunities to participate

What teachers do in terms of participation?

Limited scope - barriers to participation

- Controlling-distant relationships between teachers and children, strict rules, imposition of power, lack of initiatives of children, guidance of children's action (Bae, 2009· Sheridan & Pramling Samuelsson, 2001· Eriksson, 2006· Bowden-Clissold, 2011· Horwath, 2011).

Restrictions to the participation of younger children – discrimination – differentiated treatment (Westlund, 2009).

Non-encouragement - sharing of thoughts, ideas, feelings of children. Closed questions, information recall, one-word answers (Bae, 2009; Lemke, 1990· Licomitrou, 2015; Likomitrou & Avgitidou, 2017).

What teachers do in terms of participation?

Widening margins - opportunities to participate

- Teachers know the preferences of children. The children have an opinion about the program. Flexibility – negotiation. Assumption of responsibility by children (Sheridan & Pramling Samuelsson, 2001·Eriksson, 2006· Sandberg, & Eriksson, 2010).
- Involvement of teachers in free play, communication, expression of thoughts, ideas and feelings by children (Bae, 2009).
- Children as researchers, actors & participants in the evaluation of their decisions and actions (Clark & Moss, 2010; Jong et al., 2009).
- Observation of children's action, open dialogue, possibilities for children to choose, expression of the needs of younger children (Westlund, 2009; Riddersporre, 2009· Prout & James, 1997).
- Design – implementation of programs and projects based on the interests, desires and choices of children. Open dialogical practices, active listening (Balias et al., 2011; Vrinoti & Griva, 2015· Vrinoti 2016· Licomitrou, 2015; Likomitrou & Avgitidou, 2017).

What teachers do in terms of participation?

Limited scope - barriers to participation

- Control-distant relationships between teachers and children.
- Lack of children's initiatives
- Strict rules, imposition of power, guidance of the action of children.
- Non-encouragement - sharing of thoughts, ideas, feelings of children.
- Commitments to the participation of younger children – discrimination – differentiated treatment.
- Closed questions, information recall, one-word answers.
-

Widening margins - opportunities to participate

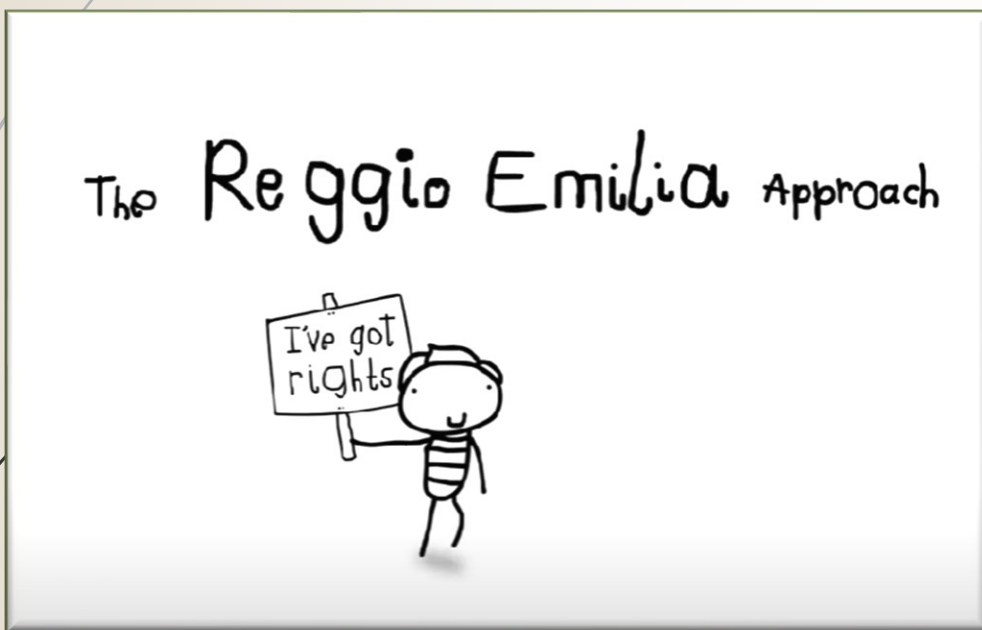
- Teachers know the preferences of children.
- Assumption of responsibility by children .
- The children have an opinion about the program.
- Action & evaluation of programs by children.
- Involvement of teachers in free play, communication expression of thoughts, ideas, feelings by children.
- Observation of children's action, open dialogue, possibilities of choices by children, expression of needs of younger children.
- Design – implementation of a project based on the interests, desires and choices of the children.
- Open dialogical practices, active listening.

➤ **How is the scope for children's participation interpreted in the above cases?
How do they affect it?**

Questions

- In which specific educational approaches are participatory practices applied?
- What are they? How do they work?

The participation of children in educational approaches and pedagogical practices



Reggio Emilia: in a nut shell –
YouTube

In the preschool schools of Reggio Emilia (Italy)

The primary principle: the image of the child as a unique individual, with rights and not just with needs (Rinaldi, 1998).

The participation of children in educational approaches and pedagogical practices

In the preschools of Reggio Emilia (Italy)

Children's rights are manifested through meaningful participation, constructive communication, social interaction and creative cooperation. Thus, children are able to construct their knowledge based on their experience of their own participation in the process.



Reggio Emilia: in a nut shell –
YouTube

The participation of children in educational approaches and pedagogical practices

In the preschools of Reggio Emilia (Italy)

The role of the pedagogue comes - and cannot be separated - from the image of the child (Bredekamp, 1993). Educators at Reggio Emilia consider themselves partners in the co-construction of knowledge with children. The whole class realizes that every participation is valuable.



Reggio Emilia: in a nut shell –
YouTube

The participation of children in educational approaches and pedagogical practices

- **The pedagogical practice of listening (Dahlberg, & Moss, 2005· Rinaldi, 1998)**
- **Listening gives a voice to the children and highlights the need for the teacher to listen, to be receptive to what the children say, to respect the differences of opinion and to support them.**
- **The pedagogy of listening includes many forms of communication as it requires a verbal or non-verbal interaction with children and is always based on careful monitoring of what they say, but also of what they mean. Through the hearing, participation is ensured because it is a continuous process that includes dialogue, reflection and negotiation.**

The participation of children in educational approaches and pedagogical practices

Exploratory dialogue (Mercer 2000; Birbili 2015; Likomitrou, 2015)

Open, complementary and **exploratory questions**.

Encourage children to **express what they want or think**.

Encourage children to **explain their way of thinking**.

Encouragement to **exchange views and compare ideas** with dialogue between children

Encouragement to **formulate an agreement/discrepancy, alternatives, proposals**

Synopsis of what the children say – **specific feedback**.

Support to **reach a common acceptable solution and how to implement it**

Rewarding children's way of thinking and their ability to participate in dialogue.

Participatory research approaches

The Mosaic approach is:

a form of **participatory research** that recognizes the **active role of young children** in the research process (Clark & Moss, 2010),

multi-methodological procedure, which combines different techniques and methods, in order to collect the opinions of young children about their life in an early childhood education setting,

young children are involved in a research process that enables them and their teachers to **participate jointly in the formation of meaning** (Clark, 2008).

Therefore....

- ✓ the commitments or room for choice that teachers give to children determine the degree of their participation;
- ✓ the more opportunities teachers give to children for initiatives and responsibilities in the educational process, the more children's participation is enhanced

Questions

- What are the conditions for enhancing the participation of children in various educational activities?

GOOD KNOWLEDGE OF CHILDREN

I get to know the children in my class – I recognise their interests, experiences and take them into account in the educational process.

RELATIONSHIPS

I create relationships with children that are based on dialogue and the values of democracy.

Conditions for enhancing participation (1)

INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN

I count on children's knowledge, interests and opinions to solve problems, develop an action and/or conduct a process.

TRUST AND OPPORTUNITIES

I trust the abilities and capabilities of children and provide them with opportunities for initiatives in the context of consultation, cooperation and research.

SPACE

Children must be offered safe and inclusive opportunities to form and express their views

VOICE

Children must be facilitated to express their views

Conditions for enhancing participation (2)

AUDIENCE

Children's views must be listened to

INFLUENCE

Children's views must be acted upon as appropriate

Lundy, 2007

Reflective questions for the analysis of the following examples

- What is the type of children's participation that you find in the examples below?

- What opportunities are given to children to participate?
How do you evaluate them?

- What does the kindergarten teacher emphasize?
Why?

- What are the alternatives to the organization of the activities that follow?

Example for reflection

Participation in a painting competition

- What is the type of involvement of children that you find in the examples below?

- What opportunities are given to children to participate? How do you evaluate them?

- What does the kindergarten teacher emphasize? Why?

- What are the alternatives to the organization of the activities that follow?

The kindergarten teacher announces to the children that there is a painting competition on the subject of the coronavirus and the pandemic and urges them to participate by sending their own drawings.

Children paint and give the drawings to the kindergarten teacher. The kindergarten teacher asks each child to tell her what he/she has painted. After collecting all the drawings, she rewards the children for their effort.

The kindergarten teacher then puts the drawings in an envelope and writes the sender and the addressee, explaining to the children the process.

Then, she shows the children similar drawings from the work of children of other kindergartens that she found posted on the blogs of their schools and asks the children for their opinion about them.

Finally, she asks the children to guess the prize of the competition.

1

Example for reflection

- What is the type of involvement of children that you find in the examples below?

- What opportunities are given to children to participate? How do you evaluate them?

- What does the kindergarten teacher emphasize? Why?

- What are the alternatives to the organization of the activities that follow?

Dialogue between kindergarten teacher and children after reading a fairy tale

Teacher: Did you like the fairy tale?

Children: Yes!!!

Infant: What exactly did you like?

Child 1: I liked that the dog found company.

Child 2: I liked the dog, it was very beautiful.

Child 3: And I want one like this...

Teacher: Don't talk together! George, what did you like?

George:.....

Teacher: Didn't you like anything?

George: Yy the dog...

Teacher: You, Mary?

Maria: I liked the doggy that wasn't left alone

Teacher: So what does the fairy tale tell us? How should we treat animals?

Child 1: Treating them well, not hitting them

Child 4: and not to drive them away!

Teacher: And what else? Only these?

Child 2: Protect them

Teacher: Yes! Correctly! That's why we read this fairy tale today. Because it is world animal protection day. Now you will go to the tables and make a drawing related to the fairy tale

2

Participatory practices in the classroom - Questions for the analysis of participatory practices that follow

What is the role of the kindergarten teacher?

What opportunities do children have?

Where does the involvement of children appear? What exactly is their participation?

What opportunities for participation are given to children?

How feasible – easy or difficult do these classroom practices seem to you? Why?

Participatory practices in the classroom

A poster in our school

A mother brings to school a poster for voluntary blood donation and asks the kindergarten teacher to post it at the entrance of the kindergarten. The children observe the poster and express their questions to the kindergarten teacher: "-What is it?", "-Why did they bring it to us?", "- What does it show?", "- Why should we put it in our school?".

The kindergarten teacher listens to the children's questions and asks their opinion about all this. Children share experiences, ideas, opinions, and the kindergarten teacher encourages them to express themselves, justify their opinions and come to conclusions. After discussion they come up with the term "poster" and its usefulness. Then the kindergarten teacher asks the children at what point to post the poster. Children propose solutions and co-decide.

1

What is the role of the kindergarten teacher?

What opportunities do children have?

Where does the involvement of children appear? What exactly?

What opportunities for participation are given to children?

How feasible – easy or difficult do these classroom practices seem to you? Why?

Participatory practices in the

Computer play

Some children complain to the kindergarten teacher because on the computer of the class at the time of free activities the same children constantly play for a long time. As a result, the other children do not have time to play. The kindergarten teacher gathers all the children and raises the specific problem with them by asking for their opinion. Children express their opinions and arguments. Then, the kindergarten teacher motivates them to find a solution so that many children can play on the computer. After many suggestions and ideas the children decide to use a timer and make a table where they will note which children play on the computer each time. The kindergarten teacher troubles children about how these will be carried out. Children make specific suggestions and take action.

What is the role of the kindergarten teacher?

What opportunities do children have?

Where does the involvement of children appear? What exactly?

What opportunities for participation are given to children?

How feasible – easy or difficult do these classroom practices seem to you? Why?

A. Welcome Spring...

The children in the group while dealing with the routines and the calendar discuss spring and decide to go out to the kindergarten yard to observe relevant changes, to collect relevant information / data (eg to collect materials, to take pictures) in order to use them in the action they will implement.

A. Welcome Spring...

What approaches – practices can enhance the participation of children?

1. at the beginning of activity;
2. in dialogue with the kindergarten teacher;
3. in the actions of children;
4. the opportunities and scope for action of children?

Exercises...

1. at the start of activity



A. Welcome Spring...
We foster participation when we encourage children to think/discuss/understand (about) spring through changes in nature, and people. When we listen to the opinions, suggestions, ideas of children.

2. in the dialogue with the kindergarten teacher:



When formulating open questions that give the opportunity to children to think, to suggest, to decide.

Exercises...

A. Welcome Spring...

3. in the actions of children:



When we have a dialogue to make decisions about how we will work and what we will do.

4. children's opportunities and scope for action:



When we have a dialogue to define/co-decide the groups and responsibilities they will undertake...
When we give the opportunity to each group to organize and implement its action.

Exercises...

B. Treasure from the old times...

The kindergarten teacher brings to class an old box with old coins...

- How can a participatory activity be initiated and developed?

- What is the approach of the kindergarten teacher?

- What is the role of children?

Exercises...

B. Treasure from the old times...

- What is the approach of the kindergarten teacher?



IT GIVES A REASON TO CHILDREN TO EXCHANGE THEIR VIEWS AND IDEAS ABOUT CURRENCIES, TO MAKE ASSUMPTIONS, TO PROPOSE SOLUTIONS, TO MAKE FINDINGS.

- What is the role of children?



TO ASCERTAIN ON THEIR OWN THE TYPE OF COINS, THEIR USE & USEFULNESS THROUGH THEIR POSSIBLE EXPLOITATION.

(e.g. They are different from today's money; they look old because... We can't buy anything with them. Possible visit to a nearby store for if we can shop with them).

CHILDREN DECIDE ON THE FATE OF COINS.

Summarizing...

Supporting and enhancing participation depends on...

The types of opportunities that teachers provide to children.

The degree of involvement of teachers in children's actions.

The effort of teachers to understand the children's way of thinking.

The type and magnitude of the trust teachers show to children.

The tendency of teachers to impose or negotiate rules and limits in the educational process.

The type of relationships that are formed between teachers and children and significantly determine the communication between them.

The internal needs and motivations of teachers related to their experiences, opinions, desires, feelings and disposition for professional progress.

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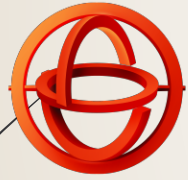
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