

EXAMINING PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S PROSOCIAL BEHAVIORS

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The right functioning of social and emotional skills is one of the most determinative factors for executing social interactions successfully. These skills should begin to develop as early as possible. Preschool is the first institutional environment where these skills could be developed. Many researches examine the development of social skills, but the different types of prosocial skills (eg. helping, cooperating, sharing, empathy) haven't received special, individual attention. The aim of our planned program is to develop preschool children's prosocial behavior with tales in a weekly system through one year. To measure children's previous development we need methods which can directly measure children's behavior and can provide appropriate information about the skills we want to develop. Mostly used methods are questionnaires with a restricted form and structural interviews mostly with adults who raise children (e.g. Waugh, Brownell & Pollock, 2015). Problems with these might be that the outcomes can be distorted by subjective opinions. The aim of our presentation is to show the methods we use in our pilot study which can assess preschool children's prosocial skills in a novel way in Hungary. We measure four forms of children's prosocial behavior: helping, calming, sharing, empathy. We create an appropriate environment for measuring the skills individually through special situations where the children's reactions can be observed. We measure the first three skills through two special situations in all the three cases: in the case of helping we use an 'out-of-reach' task and an 'across-the-room' task; in the case of calming we use a 'banged knee/finger' task and a 'broked tower' task; a 'sticker task' and a 'toy food' task for measuring sharing (by Warneken & Tomasello, 2007; Dunfield & Kuhlmeier, 2013). The children's task in the situational exercise is to notice the simulated distress of the adult. The evaluation of the children is based on their response for the particular situation. For measuring empathy, children hear different tales with affective situations and afterwards they have to talk about their feelings related to the story. The research is presently in process. In our presentation, beside the applied methods, we describe our outcomes which can give us some important information to start our planned developmental program.

G1