

# PROBLEMS DISCONTINUITY ON THE FIRST LEVEL OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

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**Abstract:** In this paper, the author points out the problems that arise as a consequence of the discontinuity between kindergarten and school discusses, some aspects of discontinuity with which the children often face the transition from one level of education to another and provide guidelines to overcome them.

**Keywords:** discontinuity, kindergarten, school, social relations.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A study of the problems that arise as a consequence of the discontinuity in the educational system of, is not possible without the knowledge of the most common causes that lead to it, but also, and knowledge of the area, or the area in which it is usually expressed and manifested. However, in order to better understand the problem we are discussing some attention, first, we must devote terminological origins and etymological meaning of the word discontinuity, ie. first necessary to determine the notion of discontinuity in the educational system.

Word of discontinuity comes from the Latin language and the words *dis* – *continuitas*, which means termination intermittency. (Vujaklija, 2003: 238). In accordance with the above terminology origin and etymological meaning of the word discontinuity is determined by the notion of discontinuity in the educational system, the essence of which lies in the disconnect between certain degree of education. Any change in the environment leads to a sense of discontinuity, ie. break with familiar surroundings, people, children, treatment, or certain habits that were formed as a result of the development of appropriate skills at a certain level. This

feeling also occurs during the transition from one level of education to another, and he has a very important role in the development of the young child.

## 2. THE NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF ACHIEVING CONTINUITY BETWEEN KINDERGARTEN AND SCHOOL

Starting school is one of the crucial events in the life of a child. The transition from one level of education to the next placed huge demands on the child, such as adapting to new conditions and work methods which are not at all similar to those in kindergarten. For a child it's a new life situation that involves a change in the physical environment, meet with adult strangers, to recognize the authority of the new teachers, meeting with a number of unfamiliar peers, adapting new collective acceptance of new roles and responsibilities. In this situation, the child must be formed to change behaviors in order to comply with the new conditions of life which needs to be adjusted, which is not always easy. Extreme discontinuity have caused adaptation problems of children at school, anxiety and stress, which has negative effects on learning and behavior in children, especially at the beginning of their education. Practical examples show that the transition causes anxiety and childhood stress or confusion and boredom. (Woodhead to Kamenov, 1982: 55-56). Therefore, schools should take into account what the child has achieved up to this point in its development, and to her to be the basis for

further work. Educational work with children in preschool and elementary school must be continuous, ie there must be a connection between these two levels, because continuity leads to the achievement of effective educational results in the further education of children.

As much as that in pedagogical science points to the need and importance of achieving continuity between kindergarten and school, it was confirmed that he was in pedagogical practice does not realize fully how states Arsic,"even though it is in education, psychology, and other sciences that deal with the problems of child development indicates the importance and necessity of the continuation of the educational system in practice there are problems indicating that it does not achieve a satisfactory manner"(Arsic, Z. 2012:33).

The issue of continuity/ discontinuity in education between kindergarten and school with us dealt with, (Marjanovic, A. 1977; Kamenov, 2006; Kopas, Vukašinović, 2010; Stanislavljević-Petrović, Z. 2011), indicating that the discontinuity complicates the transition from pre-school child school to school, and from lower to higher levels of education. If this transition is inadequate"... Children who have academic and social difficulties in the early school years and probably will continue to have problems during their school careers, and throughout their adult life"(Docke & Perry, 2007).

In order to overcome the existing discontinuities and adaptive problems of children in the transition to school is recommended to work in the first grade must be similar to the organization of activities in pre-schools from which the children come. This view is supported by research conducted in Greece during the period since 1992. so in 1993. Year, which had among other things, aim to determine whether it is possible to reduce the existing discontinuity between pre-school and school upbringing and education, and to alleviate the transition of children from

preschool to school (Kakavulis,1998:78). A significant degree of agreement among the attitudes of teachers, teachers and parents, in terms of requirements to work in the first grade must be similar to the organization of activities in pre-schools from which they come.

The transition from one institution to another should run smoothly and seamlessly, in order to achieve this it is essential that the whole educational work as flexibly organized in both institutions. It involves the gradual introduction of new applications, content and organizational forms in the school and especially the characteristics of teaching in schools, especially at the beginning, should not be substantially different from what the child is accustomed to in kindergarten. The teacher must have an understanding of the habits that children are brought from the nursery, and should be entered into the spirit of the game and continue as both physical and social environment of the kindergarten and elementary school should not be greatly different.

In the past few years, particularly the increased interest of researchers on this issue, but from the perspective of the child, and there are few studies that deal with the study of the attitudes of children on the transition from preschool to elementary school. (Levine, 2005; Colic & Nišević, 2011).

Literature review and analysis of the attitudes of children revealed that first graders showed numerous complaints to school work and learning. For illustration, we will present a statement from a eight year old:"The worst part of school is constantly sitting. It kills. My brain hurts when I have to sit, listen, for hours. I can sit, but often want to jump up and rush past the hallways"(Levine, 2005:104).

The paper"Going to school - from the viewpoint of a child,"the author (Colic & Nišević, 2011:450-456), are the results of the way children see and experience the transition from kindergarten to school and what they expect from it. The results show

that children are burdened by unrealistic expectations of adults, and the authors argue for a change in the usual approach to this problem, dominated by emphasizing the preparation of the child and his adaptation of institutions and programs, rather than attempting to go to school as painless as possible for all participants and primarily for children.

On the basis of research and thinking about the experience of discontinuity during the transition from kindergarten to school, can be considered some aspects of discontinuity with which the children often face the transition from one level of education to another. We believe that they occur most often in the following areas: a discontinuity in the organization of space and time, the social environment, the discontinuity in the programming sense....

### **3. DISCONTINUITY IN THE ORGANIZATION OF SPACE AND TIME**

The organization of space and time is an important aspect of the life and work both in pre-school, and at school. Arrangement of space, physical environment, and time organizing activities significantly impact the quality of life for children and adults. The organization of space and time is determined by the general atmosphere in which to place educational work of educational institutions. The kindergarten orientation on the development of socio - emotional aspects of personality, the fostering creativity, encouraging self-expression activities through games and activities for the children's choice, at odds with the demands imposed by the organization and its directionality in school subjects and forcing cognitive development.

Spatial organization of kindergarten when it comes to interior design when it comes to orderliness exterior, is very different from the spatial organization of

the school as a physical learning environment. Flexible spatiotemporal organization of the educational process in the nursery decorated by individual initiative, respect for diversity,"situational approach,"open and less ritualized planning, various flexible forms and methods of educational work versus rigid spatiotemporal organization and implementation of the system of teaching activities according to strict guidelines coffee at school. Tells us about the current discontinuity in our educational system.

Changing the physical environment is one of the most obvious changes that occur during the transition from preschool to elementary school. Feelings of insecurity and maladjustment child who starts school, contributing to large differences between objects, interiors and exteriors preschool that your child is accustomed, and schools. Coming from kindergarten as well-known object, the child is faced with changes that require learning and adapting the physical specifics of the institution. The child is in kindergarten used to the layout and organization of the building, which by all standards adapted for preschool children, taking into account not only pedagogical and psychological characteristics of children, but also aesthetic and health and hygiene criteria. The building of the institution is its attractive arrangement for children. Well-structured environment in kindergarten through materials, accessories and toys for the work creates an atmosphere conducive to the overall growth and development of children.

Many professionals who deal with issues of preschool education Miljak (2009); Slunjski (2006); Petrovic - Sočo (2007), emphasize the importance of physical and material environment of educational institutions and the connection between learning environment with quality teaching. The issue of quality of physical and material environments kindergarten necessarily associated with reviewing the educational culture of educational

institutions. The room is a mirror of culture, that is evidence of what adults think about children, their learning about what they can and what is the role of the adult in their learning, development and education (Petrović- Sočo 2007).

According to Reggio pedagogy purposefulness space is of great importance, is the best indicator of the thinking and lifestyles of those who stay. The author Rinaldi (Rinaldi, 1998), which has made a great contribution to the Reggio approach, states that the environment should be designed to allow the child a permanent dialogue with other children, teachers and the environment and that his environment is a challenge for learning). Another author from Reggio pedagogy (Taguchi, H. L. 2010), emphasizes the importance of the material equipment of pedagogic environment for continuous learning and development of all participants in the educational- education process.

Summarizing these authors, it is clear mutually action theory and practice. However the gap between theory and practice suggests that not enough emphasized the importance of the learning environment under the age of school children which clearly shows the existing spatial organization and physical discontinuity between kindergarten and primary school.

In contrast to all that was known at the kindergarten, coming to school brings big changes in the perception of objects. School buildings are mostly large, with long corridors and rows of classrooms, which are quite uniform and unimaginative regulated, reduced to a bench, chair and table where the schedule completely different than working in a kindergarten room.

Given the uniformity of the classroom, the child is usually forced to stay with the other children and to deal with the same (orchestrated) activities that apply to everyone equally. It is normal that in such a drab offer children often have a „feeling of anxiety, inhibitions, maladjustment,

abandonment.”(Stanisavljević - Petrović, 2011:127).

If all this is added the noise and clutter of older children in long hallways during the holidays, for children first grade frightening, with the result that they are unsafe, scared.

Its uniformity schools not only expressed in the physical and environmental context, but also in the organization of school time, which leads to the fact that children experience a discontinuity in this regard. The organization of life and work in the school, from the aspect of the time, is completely different from the temporal organization of kindergarten.

According *Basics of preschool programs* in Serbia, working with children should be conducted continuously, without sharp boundaries in teaching and activities, taking into account that no activity is not neglected. So insist on the possibilities of absolute agreement, without strictly fixed timetable for the organization of activities. There is no strict time limit, because it is based on the fact that children in many activities that they were interested and motivated volunteer and participate as much as they need to meet their primary needs and interests. The flexible schedule of different kinds and types of activity, characteristic of work in kindergartens replaced largely orchestrated activities in school hours, with a planned and systematic organization leaves little opportunity for adjustment the needs and interests of children.

The system of education and the requirements placed teacher, in its implementation, often do not offer the possibility of a flexible approach to children in terms of spatial and temporal organization. Duration of classes is strictly defined, as well as daily and weekly schedules.

The kindergarten orientation on the development of socio - emotional aspects of personality, the fostering creativity, encouraging self - expression activities through games and activities for the

children's choice, it is different from the requirements imposed by the organization and its directionality in school subjects and forcing cognitive development.

Although discontinuity in physical terms does not significantly affect the child's progress, and therefore it is not too extreme, though the regular cooperation of both institutions and especially visiting children nursery school, the negative impact that new space brings can be mitigated (Edit.A., 2004: 27).

Different environments leads to difficulties in the adaptation of the children, and the emotional development and socialization of students there are problems in terms of adjustment of children in the transition from preschool to elementary school. The transition from one institution to another should be made easier by preparing children, visit schools, learning about life and work in the school acquisition in use, and this is achieved by the cooperation of all employees in both institutions.

#### **4. DISCONTINUITY IN SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Given the importance of social experiences for growth and development of the child is of particular importance studying the continuity of social relationships in the family, pre-school and primary school as well as areas in which a child enters into an asymmetric interaction with adults (teachers, teachers and parents) and symmetric interaction with peers. However, during the transition of the child from preschool to school there has been a discontinuity in the social environment. Changes occur to the quality of relationships between children, as well as different; adult - child relationship.

Transition from kindergarten to school children primarily through changes of identity and as a child of preschool institution in which it had a

certain "reputation" and the position of students in school, which means they are expected to behave in a certain way, to understand the rules of the classroom, to learn the language of the classroom and that "reading teacher. Arrival at the school the child becomes a member of a new collective, which is only a small part. In pre-school in the familiar social environment it is the youngest and is forced to refer to older children.

The school social environment is much more complex, there is a growing number of children in relation to the number of children in kindergarten, and in addition there is also more competition. At school there is more interaction with adults than before, but have less autonomy, so that they must discipline their behavior and movement. Arrival at the school the child must accept new forms of behavior, to refrain from satisfying the desires of many, that for a long time to be still and to adapt to a situation where the individual is in a group of peers. From common games, meetings, collaboration that exist in the activities, and a close relationship with "his aunt" come to a formal environment where they do not have the option of dealing with the activities of their choice. Children sit as they turned their backs to each other, there is no possibility to communicate with each other during class time, cooperation among children is quite limited, reduced to a period of rest time.

Perception of the teacher as a person who dominates all activities affecting the quality of the emotional relationship to him which also means a change in the behavior of Champions, in relation to the quality of the relationship with the kindergarten teacher in kindergarten. The relationship of partnership and respect is gradually turning into a relationship "awe". At school, all the activities conducted by the teacher, as the dominant people. Thus, the quality of the adult - child relationship changes from an adult who organizes, facilitates and promotes engagement in different activities, to the adult who dominates in

every activity. An interesting parallel between the current relationships in school and relationships in kindergarten Glaser says in the book "Schools without coercion." The author makes a distinction between the traditional, hierarchical relationships, and relationships that are based on the principles of partnership. In regard to this, it is stated that the partnership "head of water, relies on cooperation, creates trust, showing how something works, motivate, correct mistakes, work turns into something interesting. In contrast, in the hierarchy of government relations stiffness boss who drives to work, expressing dissatisfaction, fixes and work in an effort converts" (Glasser, 2005:11).

Therefore, the children are more comfortable staying in the nursery than in school, just because of the fact that the atmosphere is more relaxed in kindergarten. relations between teachers and children are more natural as children more before a less formal, as opposed to the school, where the quality of the relationship changes and becomes a little colder.

Staying in kindergarten children have acquired a certain autonomy, but nevertheless can count on the help of kindergarten teachers or other adults in the kindergarten. At school, the child expects greater independence in daily school activities in which the child and not used. Unlike preschool, where activities are voluntarily accepted by the children, and contact with adults, mainly depends on the type of activities that children engaged in school, all activities are guided by the teacher, as the dominant person (Edit. A., 2004: 27). This causes the changes the quality of the relationship between child – teacher. Perceptions of the adult as someone who dominates all activities affecting the quality of the emotional relationship to it, which is a big change compared to the quality of the relationship that the child had a kindergarten teacher in preschool. In addition to changes in the

quality of the relationship between a child – teacher, starting school there is a change in the quality of relationships among the children, because unlike the preschool where children play together, socialize and cooperate in activities in school with their backs facing each other, so that is unable to communicate in class, and cooperation is significantly limited, but is born of jealousy, desire for domination in getting more.

Case Study (Brostrom, 2003) has shown that many children still have difficulties in learning and social interaction in school although teachers and elementary school teachers during latter-conducted the so-called transitional activities, as well as mutual visits before children start school. This study describes slightly preschool children who are independent, curious and establish good communication and social interaction with peers. However, the transition from preschool to school back in the beginning of the change. They were positive, they were less active and exceptionally uncertain. Although these children tested demonstrated the required level of readiness for school, they felt "unfit" for the school. This has hampered their sense their commitment to active learning in a new environment and the (temporary) loss of competence can be put in low self-esteem and insecurity in themselves and their new environment.

It may be noted that the discontinuity in the social environment can be mitigated by careful alignment of attitudes of employees at both institutions in relation to important issues concerning the independence of children and social relations, especially in changing the existing traditional school practice. Based on rigid and hierarchical relationship between student – teacher. Action research educational practice it is possible to change not only educational practices, but also the people involved in the process. According to the author Miljak... "direct participation in educational research and educational

practice is gradually changing its approach to the child as it deepens its understanding of the child. Difficult that a researcher educators (without coercion or control) on its own initiative changing educational practices, living conditions and learning at the institution". (Miljak, 2007: 229). Consequently, teachers as responsible in early school steps must change the existing practice, the conditions of living and learning in the school (in the early grades), and assist in the timely and adequate access to the child who needs to go to school.

## 5. DISCONTINUITY IN THE PROGRAM DETERMINATION

In practical educational work is one of the most common causes of discontinuity that children face when moving from kindergarten to elementary school represents just a discontinuity in its programming. In this sense it is possible to speak about the discontinuity at the level of the program - a document, and the level of real programs within schools and preschool. Terminological definition programs such document in educational institutions, kindergartens, and schools are different, which may indicate the existence of other differences. In fact, while in pre-school educational activities based on a document called the basics of educational work in schools are implemented program of primary education, the term curriculum, and the school program. Already in this first assertion clearly see the different orientations of the program goals of the institution and therefore the differences in the approach to children's developmental aspects. And in terms of the very basics of the program and come to a difference that is not only the terminology, but the essential nature. The essential difference concepts, program, and, basic programs, parole refers to the degree of sophistication of the program. School programs are

structured, and elaborate, each class has its own program that is taught throughout the year and even during the first quarter of the year has its own theme, its third - quarter... In contrast to the basics of the curriculum is characterized by flexibility, creativity and spontaneity, and the greater ability of teachers in the process of working with children.

Children in pre-school have the opportunity to comply with the *Basic program*, diverse range of activities available to them, choose those that are in line with their interests. It may be noted that the program of the kindergarten program is child that corresponds to characteristics of his thought and emotional interests. The work is individualized measure of the child, his ability and individual needs, the dominant activities of free choice, directed and combined activities in any residential area or outdoors. Because the kindergarten program flexible and methods depart from child interest and certain spontaneity.

It is believed that children who lived in such an environment, it can be hard to get used to the obligations that await them in school, where far fewer opportunities for free choice activities, because in school they are required to teaching classes, whose content is regulated and not subject to changes to children's interests and needs. Therefore, children who start school arise various problems: it is difficult to get their attention, it's hard for them to do their school work and they forget what they have just heard, not Focus on long enough, soon they get bored activities in class, squirm is,make careless mistakes, constantly repeating the same mistakes (Kopas –Vukašinović, E 2006:178-179). The above problems that children face when the preschool their educational activities teaching a departure in the first grade of elementary school, show that there is no programmatic connection between these two levels of education, which affects the occurrence of discontinuities in the programs. While

preschool programs have a (playful approach to learning) playful approach to learning according to the developmental abilities of children, traditional school programs are strictly structured and directed by the teacher. Analysis of the available literature where more closely analyzed the problems related to the discontinuity between pre-school and primary level of education, points to the need for their program to connect. In this sense, stands out preparatory functions institutional preschool education, which is also an essential prerequisite for overcoming the discontinuities between preschool and primary level of education. The proper preparation of children for school implies continuity in the implementation of program tasks for the oldest children of preschool age and first grade students. Content and methods of preparation are determined by starting with, on the one hand, the development needs and capabilities of the child, on the other hand, the system requires that the training set in front of the child (Kamenov, E., 2002: 211).

Based on the previously imposed observation, we can conclude that the content of the preschool education must be on what 's next for the elementary school, which, in turn, should accept and amplify the effects of educational work at the preschool level. This is primarily emphasizes the application for vertical continuity, which implies a level of the education system with the other, whose meaning lies in the preparation and facilitation of the transition from a lower to a higher level in line with the evolving capacities of children.

## 6. CONCLUSION

To kindergarten and school as close as possible, above all there must be continuity in the entire education system, especially taking into account the age

characteristics of children with whom you work, and accordingly build a program that will build on previously learned and serve as preparing for the next step. The results achieved in pre-school children must be the basis for the work of the elementary school. So, the connection must be two-way. That means the program requires synchronization, search points of contact in the program, and the harmonization of working methods, learning environment and the development of which requires the cooperation of teachers, educators, principals and associates of these institutions.

As of the nursery should not serve solely preparation for school, so that a school should have at least the first year, the organization closer to its nursery and experience that the child was in it. This requires reform of the entire system of educational institutions, awareness of the need for continuity between levels of the system, and above all requires an educated and competent professionals who know the problems faced by children who practice know how different institutions work and who are willing to reform present meticulously and quality, based on the facts.

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