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Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences 15 (2011) 908–912

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**Procedia**  
Social and Behavioral Sciences

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WCES-2011

## The evaluation of parents' views related to helping pre-school children gain some universal values.

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### Abstract

Universal values continue their existence along individual's education lives beginning from pre-school period. A qualified pre-school curriculum shapes pre-school children's character, helps them improve their social and emotional skills, and gain them some social values as well as some other academic skills. This study aims to examine parents' views related to helping pre-school children aged between 5 and 6 years gain some universal values. The sampling of the study consists of the parents of 80 pre-school children. "Universal Values Teaching Family Form", which was developed by the researchers was used as the instrument for data collection in the study. The results obtained with this study suggest that parents believe that teaching of universal values should start at pre-school stage, and some of the universal values which are considered to have priority in teaching were suggested as; honesty, responsibility and respect.

*Key Words:* Değerler Eğitimi, Aile, Okul Öncesi Eğitim

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### 1. Introduction

The significance role of education for each society and country is not only to help individuals gain new knowledge, but also to help people gain values, skills and habits. One of the key roles of education is also to create value, to make individuals responsible ones helping them gain the newly created values, to make them more sensible individuals to all living creatures in their environment, to help them skillful in self-direction, by which individuals will have the chance to improve their relations within the society (Ravinger, 2006).

The development of the values at the early stages of child development happens in the following order; moral-ethic-characteristic development and social and emotional values are found to be in a hand-in-hand relation with one another. The studies related to the teaching of such values cannot be considered to be free from these developmental fields

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When teaching of such values is considered, what comes to the fore most is moral-ethical-characteristic or character education. Moral education, which can be defined as the harmony of logic with the heart starts at home and continues at school (Uyanık Balat, 2005, 2006) Before starting the studies related to teaching of such values, it is important to mention here about how moral development, social and emotional development of children occur. Social emotional development is, for children, to self- express themselves, to control their feelings, to be at peace with himself or with the environment. Cognition and skills are quite necessary in comprehension of person's feelings. Social and emotional competence are life long lasting issues (Saarni, 2001).

Pre-school period is the time when value related knowledge is given for the first time. Values have some never changing characteristics, but they may differ from one another depending on the environment in which people live, cultural characteristics, education and life experiences (Uyanık Balat, 2004; Uyanık Balat, Balaban and Dağal, 2006).

The development of the values at the early stages of child development cannot be considered as to be unrelated to social development. When we mention about education of values in general, moral-ethical-characteristic or character education concept come to the fore. Moral education, which can be defined as the harmony of logic with the heart starts at home and continues at school (Uyanık Balat and Özdemir Beceren, 2010).

A good value education also affects children's academic achievement. If a child has some problems in the field of self- control and determination when they start school, it is highly possible that they will also experience some problems in their school achievement. The values, such as compassion, bravery and loyalty are not directly necessary for children's school achievement, but they play significant role in children's relations with the others. (Uyanık Balat, 2006) Even today, many appropriate methods and goals are suggested for teaching of values (Kohn 1997; Lockwood 1991; Purpel 1997).

Viadero (2003) studied on children in five fields; cooperation, responsibility, empathy, internal control and defensive behaviour. It was reported in this study that the children on whom this study was performed were found to suffer from such problematic behaviours less and also to experience an increase in their academic achievement. The stages which contributed to the success of value teaching at school were ranked as follows; an effective value teaching programme must have more significance in detail in the school development. As students consider their schools as a community and consider themselves as members of that community, the programme functions better; in all of the value teaching related studies, children must have active roles, and they must try to internalize that. The purpose of this study is to examine the 5 and 6 year old pre-school children's parents' views related to earning of some universal values.

## 2. Methodology

### 1.1. Participants and Setting

The research is a descriptive one and based on general screening model (Karasar, 2003). The sampling of the study consists of parents whose children attend four different infant schools, two at Anatolian Side and two at European Side of İstanbul. The participants volunteered to participate in the study.

27.% of the participant mothers are graduates of primary school, 31.2% of them are graduates of high-school, 41.4% of them are graduates of university; 28.8% of the participant fathers are graduates of primary school, 22,5% of them are graduates of high-school and 48.8% of them are graduates of university. 58,8% of the mothers are 35 years old or below, 30% of them are between 36 and 40 years old, 11,2% of them are 41 and above. On the other hand, 37,5% of the participant fathers are 35 and above, 32,5% of them are aged between 36-40, 30% of them are aged 41 and above. The participant children are aged between 5 and 6. 42 of the participant children are female (52,5%) and 38 of them are male (47,5%).

### 1.2. Data Collection Instruments

The data of this study was collected through "Universal Values Teaching Family Form" which was developed by the researchers. The developed form consists of some open ended and closed ended statements evaluating parents' descriptive knowledge and their views related to teaching of universal values.

### 1.3. Data Analysis Procedure

Primarily, the obtained data was coded by the researchers, and it was then submitted for appropriate statistical analysis programme and as a consequence of that, some  $f$  values and values in percentage were obtained.

## 2. Results (Findings)

This part of the study aims to make clear the statistical analysis of the obtained data related to the examined variables and the findings obtained through this analysis.

Table 1. The percentage and  $f$  values of the universal values (character specifications) , primarily the views of parents related to where they should be presented to children (school and home)

| Values                                    | In family+<br>(firstly in family and then at school) |      | At school +<br>(firstly at school and then in family) |      |
|---|--|------|---|------|
|   | $f$  | %    | $f$   | %    |
| Regardful to himself/herself and Healthy  | 85   | 12   | 15  |      |
| Having self-confidence                    | 67   | 83.8 | 13  | 16.2 |
| Leader                                    | 36   | 45   | 44  | 55   |
| Responsible                               | 60   | 75   | 20  | 25   |
| Assertive                                 | 62   | 77.4 | 18  | 22.5 |
| Curious, interested in learning           | 51   | 63.7 | 29  | 36.2 |
| Admired by others                         | 52   | 65   | 28  | 35   |
| Independent                               | 59   | 73.8 | 21  | 26.3 |
| Broad minded -understanding               | 62   | 77.4 | 18  | 22.5 |
| Working cooperatively with other Children | 32   | 40   | 48  | 60   |
| Sensitive to others                       | 66   | 77.5 | 18  | 22.4 |
| Kind and careful                          | 69   | 86.3 | 11  | 13.7 |
| Hardworking                               | 46   | 57.5 | 34  | 42.6 |
| Considered as good man                    | 52   | 65   | 28  | 35   |
| Sympathetic- good natured                 | 68   | 85   | 12  | 15   |
| Competitive                               | 30   | 37.4 | 50  | 62.4 |
| Volunteer to develop the society          | 35   | 43.8 | 45  | 56.3 |
| Ready to take self responsibility         | 61   | 76.2 | 19  | 23.7 |
| Respectful                                | 71   | 88.8 | 9   | 11.2 |

When we examine the Table, it was found that parents rank the universal values and characteristic features which they think must be taught to children; being respectful (88.8%) to be kind and careful (86,3%), Regardful to himself/herself and healthy (85%), Sympathetic- good natured (85%), to be self-confident (83,8%) , sensitive to others (77,5%) assertive (77,4%), broad minded and understanding (77,4%), ready to take self-responsibility (76,2%) and independent (73,8%)It was found that parents rank the universal values and characteristic features which ,they think, must be taught to children; competitive (62,4%) working cooperatively with the other children (60%), to volunteer to develop the society (56,3%) and leadership (55%). The teaching of universal values start in family where the very first education starts in human life, and it goes on at school growingly.

When the Table is examined in general, it is seen that the degree of the responsibility which parents lay on themselves and school for all universal values and characteristic features differ.

Table 2. The percentage and *f* values of the views related to the values which must be taught primarily in value-character education as suggested by parents

| Values               | The values suggested most in top 5 |      | The values suggested most in bottom five |      |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|------|--|------|
|                      | <i>f</i>                           | %    | <i>f</i>                                 | %    |
| Peace                | 25                                 | 21.2 | 2  | 2.5  |
| Happiness            | 36                                 | 45   | 1  | 1.2  |
| Constancy- attempt   | 16                                 | 19.9 | 10                                       | 12.5 |
| Honesty              | 63                                 | 78.6 | 1  | 1.2  |
| Mercy                | 25                                 | 31.2 | 3  | 3.8  |
| Justice              | 28                                 | 35   | 1  | 1.2  |
| Cooperation          | 12                                 | 15.1 | 5  | 6.2  |
| Responsibility       | 50                                 | 62.4 | 3  | 3.8  |
| Respect              | 45                                 | 56.3 | 2  | 2.5  |
| Elegancy             | 8                                  | 9.9  | 2  | 2.5  |
| Compasion            | 10                                 | 12.5 | 6  | 7.5  |
| To be a good citizen | 18                                 | 22.5 | 9  | 11.2 |
| Reliability          | 20                                 | 24.9 | 4  | 5    |
| Patience             | 4                                  | 5    | 11                                       | 13.8 |
| Sharing              | 15                                 | 18.8 | 2  | 2.5  |
| Cooperation          | 10                                 | 12.4 | 7  | 8.8  |
| Bravery              | 11                                 | 13.8 | 15                                       | 18.8 |

The reserachers have examined all educational programmes related to values/character teaching and the universal values which are given place most in these programmes were revealed (Uyanık Balat and Balaban Dağal, 2006), and then they were presented to the parents. The views of the parents related to the values which they think must be taught to children primarily in value teaching are presented in Table 2.

When the frequency values and percentages in Table 2 are examined, the top 5 values which parents suggest teaching at schools are as follows; honesty (78,6%) responsibility (62,4%) and respect (56,3%), happiness (45%) and justice (35%). The bottom 5 universal values which parents suggest teaching children at schools are as follows; bravery (18,8%) patience (13,8%) constancy (12,5%) to be a good citizen (11,2%) and cooperation (8,8%).

Another significant finding of the study is that a significant number of participants (90%) suggest that schools have a significant role in teaching some basic values and that these basic values must be taught to students within a value teaching curriculum (95%).

### 3. Discussion

Bennett and et. al. (1999) lists the points which parents and educationalists should pay attention to in teaching of universal values as;

Good examples; children need to see adults' positive behaviours, and also they need to see them through their eyes so that they can learn these values. High expectations; little children enjoy their parents' expectations. That makes them feel happy and proud and the standart should be made clear well in advance. Logical rules; children

need to know the rules whose limits have been marked out. Rules are significant parts of life and children need to learn how to overcome these rules in some ways. Good manners; the rules related to behaviours are named as good manners. Children's experiences related to good manners are quite complex and families are not sufficient for that. Therefore, parents must provide their children with opportunities by which they can learn trying. The applications related to joint values; there must be some applications related to good manners in daily life. Talking about what is right and wrong; talking to the children about values does not mean giving advice to them. Rather, the talks must happen in the way to explain how values should be in the world and why people need to obey these rules. Reading books on values; the stories and poems that you read to your children are quite important, and they help children develop new values ( Uyanık Balat, 2007).

Weaver (1994) mentions about the fact that literary works may be strong instruments in personality development. The figures in the literary works always affect readers and if readers share what they read, the effect of reading task also increases. Therefore, the characters whose roles are strongly emphasized are quite important with regards to educational purposes. Brynildssen (2002) also mentions about the effectiveness of the personality education based on literary works. Therefore, the literary works should be well researched and as Otten (2002) suggests; there are many other alternatives, such as stories, novels and some other literary works.

Leaming (2000) carried out a study on personality training and this study examined some personality training programmes consisting of some books related to literary based values. 965 students from various regions of the USA, where literary based personality training programmes are applied and the classes of these students vary between the first year and the last year students. The findings suggest that these programmes have contributed positively to the target students' cognitive development, and that the emotional and behavioural findings were found to be very complex.

#### 4. Conclusion and recommendation

The findings of the study suggest that participants come up with the following values, which they think must be gained at home primarily; being respectful, being kind and careful, being self-regardful, and healthy, being sympathetic and good mannered and self confident. The top five values which parents are suggested teaching children are as follows; honesty, responsibility, respect, happiness and justice. The bottom five values which parents suggest teaching children are as follows; bravery, patience, contancy, to be a good citizen and cooperation.

Another significant finding of the study is, as suggested by the participants, that schools have a significant role in teaching some basic values and that these basic values must be taught to students within a value teaching curriculum

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