Steering Documents and Types of Activities

The main issues concerning pre-primary education are regulated by the Public Education Act (1991) and the acts for its amendment, The Regulations on the Implementation of the PEA. The Public Education Act provides for creation of both preparatory groups and classes, for the purpose of better preparation of children for their education at school.

A step forward in the direction of granting equal start at school for all children has been made in the Act of Amendment and Supplementation of the Public Education Act of 2002. By virtue of this amendment of the 2003/2004 school year, all children over 6 years of age must attend the preparatory group. After subsequent amendment of the Act of 2010 the age was increased and currently includes preparatory group from 5 years old to 6/7 years old children in III and IV groups in kindergartens. This means that the preparatory group began two years before children entering the first grade in primary school.

The latter act entitles parents of children with special educational needs to choose which institution should educate their child amongst the mainstream kindergartens or the special kindergartens. The state educational requirement (Regulation N 4/2000 for the pre-primary education and preparation and amendment from 2005) defines the study content of pre-primary education, presented by the attainable knowledge, skills and relations, which are assessed as a result of the education and training of children at kindergartens according to educational fields.

Preschool education lays the foundation for lifelong learning by providing physical, cognitive, linguistic, moral, social, emotional and creative development of children, taking into account the importance of the game in the process of pedagogical interaction.

Competences are defined as expected results from education, training and socialization of children for each age group in educational areas:

- Bulgarian language and literature
- Mathematics
- Environment
- Arts
- Music
- Construction and Technology
- Physical Culture.

The competences have been defined as expected results from education, training and socialization of children for any age group according to the following educational areas:

**Bulgarian language and literature** - The content of the educational direction is structured in six
Mathematics - The educational content of mathematics is consistent with the overall aim of the pre-school education and training purposes in mathematics at the first grade. Educational field provides elementary notions about basic mathematical concepts that are studied later in school. Educational content includes specific quantitative, geometric, spatial and temporal ideas and skills, organized into five educational cores: quantitative relations; measurement; spatial relations; time relations; geometric shapes and forms;

Environment - The priority here is to develop the social and cognitive skills of children in exploring the world;

Arts - The purpose is for children to develop their cognitive and pictorial skills in three main cores - artistic perception, visual materials and techniques, and fine arts;

Music - The aim is to develop the musical and performing skills of children as well as appreciation for the art of music.

Construction and Technology - The goal is for children to understand their role in people's lives as well as some safety rules. There are some opportunities for the initial development of the initiative, entrepreneurial and digital competences.

Physical Education - The expected learning outcomes are achieving comprehensive child development, good health and physical development.

Teaching Methods and Materials

The education of children at kindergartens aims to develop vital concepts and practical skills and habits, which are very important for further studying. The successful acquisition of these concepts, skills and habits is guaranteed by a variety of interactive methods and contemporary pedagogical technologies within the expertise of pre-primary teachers.

A basic form of organizing pedagogical interaction is the pedagogical situation. In the preparatory groups the pedagogical situations are instructive and are either fixed in time - in terms of duration and week day, or non-fixed in time (but still compulsory) in terms of duration and week day.

Another well suited method useful for children's development is playing. By playing, children become familiar with the world around them, and simulate that world in their games. This, in turn, enhances their knowledge and allows them to express themselves in various ways.

Kindergartens use teaching materials and learning aids approved by the Ministry of Education and Science, as well as various audiovisual materials.

Parental engagement

According to the Public Education Act (1999) trusteeships shall be independent voluntary associations to support the development of and provision of facilities to schools, kindergartens. Trusteeships shall be established as not-for-profit legal entities acting for public benefit.

With a view to attaining their objectives, trusteeships shall:
- discuss and make proposals to the respective authorities for the development or resolving of current problems of kindergartens;
- assist the raising of additional financial and material resources for the establishment and support of the facilities of kindergartens;
- participate in the selection of textbooks by the Teachers’ Council to be used in the education of the children in kindergartens and provide, if possible, for their purchase;
- assist the organisation of the supply of food to pupils, the provision of transportation and the resolving of other social problems of children, pupils and teachers kindergartens;
- assist the development and implementation of educational programmes geared to the problems of children and pupils;
- assist the implementation of extracurricular forms, organised recreation, tourism and sports events with children and pupils;
- assist the involvement of parents in the organisation of leisure time of children and pupils;
- propose measures for the improvement of the activities of kindergartens;
- organise the general public to assist kindergartens;
- report violations in the public education system to the competent authorities;
- organise and support the training of parents on issues related to the upbringing and development of their children;
- assist socially disadvantaged children and pupils;
- assist commissions for combating anti-social behaviour of minors.

**Support for children with special educational needs and their parents**

One of the main goals is - the children with special educational needs to be integrated in kindergartens and schools so that they can be completely socialized in a real educational environment.

Resource centers are created to support integrated education of children with special educational needs, state units - extracurricular educational institutions in the education system. The Resource centers function in all 28 regions in the country.

The Resource Center carries out activities in accordance with the state policy in the field of integrated education by supporting the successful integration and socialization of children and pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in the educational environment.

Specialists Resource Center support full integration of children and pupils with special educational needs in the educational and social environment by implementing corrective therapeutic activities with them, consulting with parents and teachers in consultation with teaching teams, implementation of activities to support the full inclusion of these children and students in public life.

Resource centers are funded by:

1. the state budget;
2. own incomes.

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