

# **THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIALIZATION OF PRESCHOOLERS THROUGH THE PRISM OF THE KINDERGARDEN-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP IN THE CONTEXTS OF FORMAL, NON-FORMAL, INFORMAL EDUCATION**

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## **Abstract**

Developing the socialization of a preschooler involves dedication and a harmonious relationship between the implicit educational environment with the educator and the family environment with the preschooler's family.

If in kindergarten, the teaching staff plans activities for formal, non-formal, informal education with the aim of developing the social competence of preschoolers, thus stimulating the progress of preschoolers and respecting the Curriculum for preschool education, at home the family, continuing to carry out activities related to the development of social behaviors and thus contributing to the social development of one's own child, the main actor, the child, has nothing

but to gain and his development will be in continuous growth, respecting the natural educational path.

By creating a favorable atmosphere and a collaborative relationship between the educational environment (kindergarten) and the family environment (home), the preschooler will not feel the break between these two environments that work together to meet their needs and to help them develop optimally, to adapt in society.

**Keywords:** socialization, preschool, partnership, formal, informal, non-formal education.

## **1. Introduction**

The problem of personality socialization has always been a concern among theorists, but also practitioners, who work in the field of education and education sciences. Moreover, now, given the current context created by the Sars Cov 2 virus and the worldwide pandemic that came with social distancing restrictions and more, the social benefits of humanity in general are being felt.

Whether we are talking about an education that is based activities of formal, informal or non-formal education, the development of the socialization of preschoolers is imperative to highlight in the educational activities carried out in the kindergarten. Moreover, if their parents are also involved in these activities through an educational partnership, the results will not be long in coming.

## **2. Theoretical approaches regarding socialization**

In specialized literature, the notion of socialization has several definitions. Durkheim's definition, which considers socialization a property of human nature, of personality, has been in place since ancient times (Montessori, 1977). Emile Durkheim (2003) stated that all societies are „born from other societies, without

interruption, we can be sure that throughout the course of social evolution, there has not been a moment when individuals have really deliberated, to know whether to enter or not into collective life, and whether to enter a particular association rather than another”(Durkeim, 2003).

Ralf Linton (1968) specified that: „socialization is the process by which the human individual learns what he must do for others and what he can legitimately expect from them” (Linton, 1968).

Also interesting is the definition of the researcher Popescu Neveanu (1970), who points out that „the socialization process represents social integration and the identity of the person”. The process as such has an ontogenetic evolution that is subject to the social-historical one through traditions, mentalities, the level of culture and civilization transmitted from generation to generation (Popescu Neveanu, 1970).

According to Vlăsceanu (1988), socialization can be defined from several perspectives:

- from an anthropological perspective, where anthropologists use the term enculturation, which represents a process of acquiring new members of a community internalize aspects of their own culture, such as customs, traditions, language, legends, myths, folklore. Also, the term acculturation is used, where it is defined the way in which people move from one society to another and „re-socialization” takes place. The role of mass media here is to instruct the child about the nature of the social order or the immigrant about the customs of the host society, for example.
- from a psychological perspective, socialization is the way to teach the child to control his innate instincts and is an aspect of personality development. Freud, the main representative of this perspective, emphasizes that socialization starts from the idea that the three parts of

human consciousness (id, ego, superego) constantly compete for control over individual behavior. Therefore, socialization encourages the individual to accept society's values such as „good” and „bad”. Socially unacceptable startups must be controlled. The moral norms of society must be learned, and daily behavior involves resolving conflicts between the two.

- from the sociological perspective: socialization is seen as a process that prepares the individual for participation in group life. The focus is on two issues, one is how people acquire the knowledge they need to become members of special groups such as the family, a school, a work group, etc. and the other that ensures a broader understanding of the different types of groups that make up society (as cited in Vlăsceanu, 1988).

At the same time, sociologists emphasize the interaction society - social group - individual, that is, socialization is, first of all, a process of acquiring different social roles, of the formation of competence that give the individual the opportunity to acquire new roles and behaviors, according to the expectation of those around.

We cannot fail to notice the constructivist theories regarding the development of the child's socialization.

The Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1968), faithful follower of constructivism, established himself through the stage theory of the child's cognitive development, according to which the child's intellectual development goes through several successive stages or stages. It should be noted that he claims that children go through the same stages in their development, but they do so with different steps, therefore age does not overlap with the stage. With each stage the child learns certain operations as organized mental structures. The new stage does not exclude the previous one, the new conditions overlapping the previous ones.

If certain operations were not assimilated at one stage, learning difficulties will be inherent in the next stage. By following in particular the mistakes that children make in solving problems and in applying various models of exploration, Piaget demonstrated the active role of the child in exploring people and things, thus progressing in his cognitive and moral development. According to Piaget's theory, the child interacts with external forces actively rather than passively: he carries out an extremely intense mental activity, while he tries to find an explanation for the events and the world around them (Piaget, 1968).

Piaget's ideas, regarding the impact of learning through discovery and exploration on the development of young children, constitute the basis of early childhood education. Here we find the principle of individualization with a major impact on the child's development, namely by organizing activities that take into account the child's own pace of development, his needs, ensuring the children's freedom to choose activities and tasks according to their needs (as cited in Cucoş, 2006).

Erik Erikson through the theory of psychosocial development complements the theory of cognitive development of J. Piaget (Erikson, 2015).

Significant for this research is Erikson's theory of personal and social development, which proposes the staged approach to personality formation on the socialization side. If child psychology describes the child's cognitive development together with Piaget, Erikson's theory proposes a staged development of self-knowledge in interaction with others, respectively, emphasizes the social environment of the child's development (as cited in Glava, 2002).

*Table 1.* The stages of social-emotional development E. Erikson, 1963 (Glava, 2002).

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>The determining social factor</b>
Trust vs distrust	0-1 year	Mother
Autonomy vs dependence	1-3 years	The parents
Initiative vs withdrawal	3-6 years	The family
Diligence vs the feeling of inferiority	6-12 years	School and playgroup
Identity vs confusion	12-18/20 years	Peers/models
Intimacy vs isolation	20-30/35 years old	Friends, couple relationship
Achievement vs routine	Adult age	The family, the socio-professional environment
Fulfillment vs despair	The age of senescence	Retirement, social withdrawal

The socio-emotional development model offered by Erik Erikson was initially inspired by Freud's theories on emotional development.

We cannot fail to remember the social constructivism where the mark was left by Vygotsky, which complements the other forms, by emphasizing the social nature of knowledge, based on social interactions, of language, as a means of communication and enrichment of the individual cognitive experience, to which adds the role of culture, of the cultural context, of the group (Joița, 2007).

True knowledge is in authentic reality, not only at the mental level, and mental activity progresses based on the use of various forms of language, prosocial interactions, of different individual interpretations, which have become tools (Joița, 2003).

Interpersonal relationships, negotiations, confrontations, debates, group solutions mediate the construction of individual knowledge and make everyone aware of the „area of proximal development”, which can be the remedies and solutions to achieve it, the appropriate roles for the affirmation of competences (Joița, 2007) .

Therefore, according to Lev Vygotsky with reference to the social character of learning: new information is acquired daily, embedded in everyday events and acquires meaning by virtue of its relevance through its importance, complexity, interactive nature and the social character of experiences (as cited in Joița, 2007 ).

Studying the way children process and assimilate information, we recall the psychologist Howard Gardner (2006) who identified several ways of learning, also called multiple intelligences: social (interpersonal), personal, spatial, linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, corporal- kinesthetic, naturalistic and existential. Gardner, believes that a large part of the child's potential is lost, if we do not give him the opportunity to develop a wide spectrum of mental abilities. Gardner's theory draws attention to the unique talents of each child. The merit of this approach is that it helps parents recognize the child's strengths and those abilities that may develop later than others, taking into account the fact that development in different areas/domains occurs at different rates (as cited in Jinga, 2000).

Starting from the idea that any uniform way of teaching is obviously unsatisfactory, since every child is different, Gardner (2006) considered that the educational process planned and carried out from the perspective of multiple intelligences: conditions child-centeredness and individualization, facilitates interaction with the world, ensures and supports success in self-expression, strengthens self-image and sense of competence.

Jerom Bruner observes that, while children manipulate the social environment, they acquire the ability to communicate through language (as cited in Joița, 2003).

Kaminsky's educational philosophy aims to keep the child, the needs/needs, particularities (physical, cognitive, socio-emotional), rhythm and

individual level of development, in the central position in thinking and planning education (as cited in Jinga, 2000).

Thus, we can list among the strong points of constructivism in the Romanian education process the fact that learning and development are social, collaborative in activities; each student builds his own understanding, at the mental level; learning in context requires the provision of relevant and authentic situations for students; The curriculum and training are centered on the student (Joița, 2003).

Therefore, education is structured into three major categories: formal (official) education; non-formal education (extracurricular); informal education (involuntary, spontaneous). We consider useful here the brief presentation of the defining characteristics of the three forms of education, presented in the specialized literature (Văideanu, 1988; Cucuș, 2002; Joița, 2003; Oprea, 2003):

- *Formal education*: represents the set of systematic and organized actions, designed and carried out in specialized institutions, pursuing explicit goals, with the aim of training and developing the human personality. Formal (or official) education is „institutionalized education, hierarchically structured, chronologically graded, run from the center” (Jinga, 2000).
- *Non-formal education*: represents the set of educational influences structured and organized in an institutionalized framework but carried out outside the education system. Non-formal education and/or education carried out outside the explicitly stated forms, as school institutions, with a degree of independence, with differentiated objectives, with the participation of other social factors, with compensatory functions in relation to the school, directed according to the specifics, but in a partnership

relationship with the school. Non-formal education refers to all systematically organized activities outside the formal system to meet a wide variety of learning needs

- *Informal education*: represents the totality of non-systematic, unorganized educational influences, not subordinated to explicit objectives and purposes, which are exerted on the individual. Informal and/or unorganized, spontaneous, diffused education, present through information received unintentionally, coming from the environment (natural, social, cultural), but in relation to the level of organization, culturalization, awareness of the individual. It is the product of the individual's life experience. Informal education includes lived experiences or values tried in everyday life. The most significant informal influences are those exerted by the mass media, by some aspects of family life (the example of parents, their attitudes), the influences exerted by groups of friends, colleagues, but also by various cultural institutions (e.g. museums, theaters, libraries, etc.), religious, political, military, trade union etc.

If we are to conclude, in our view, for the entire process of learning, educating preschoolers' and implicitly the development of their socialization, it is imperative that the organized activities be in addition to the formal and informal and non-formal ones.

Among the functions of education is also the function of socialization, which in the view of the researcher Ballantine J.H. (1993) is supported by the fact that by learning social roles, the child learns how to interact with others and integrate into society. That is, „the educational system socializes students to become members of society, to fulfill significant roles in the complex network of

social interactions. Sociologists have found, however, that the socializing experiences experienced by children in schools differ depending on their social origin, racial affiliation, the community in which they live and other variables that influence their education” (as cited in Jinca, 2000).

Socialization is a process of continuous interaction and social adaptation through which the competence and habits necessary for the activity specific to each individual possessing defined social statuses and roles are assimilated. The formation of value attitudes and value systems is an organic part of the socialization process (Antoci, 2018).

We consider the kindergarten-family educational partnership an important factor in the development of preschoolers socialization.

According to Mîsliṭchi, the partnership between the teaching staff and the family aims at the well-being of the child, the respect of the child’s rights. In order for educational interventions to be successful, they should be based on coherence, consistency, continuity. If educational influences and decisions are characterized by the same milestones in the child’s education, then the child’s development and learning will experience significant progress. Thus, the collaboration of the teaching staff with the family is essential (Mîsliṭchi, 2015).

If we are to talk about the social competence that the child can develop within the education system, we cannot fail to note the opinion of Goleman (2001), who claims that social competence refer to the ability of children to form functional social relationships with the other children and adults in their lives. Social competence facilitate positive interactions, corresponding to cultural norms, in such a way as to allow the achievement of one’s own goals and at the same time respecting the needs of others. Any social behavior is the result of a learning process of what is valued by society; for example, greeting or introducing ourselves to strangers are considered polite ways to initiate an

interaction. Because such behaviors are perceived as appropriate, their manifestation will be encouraged and as such repeated in similar contexts (Goleman, 2001).

Catrinel Ștefan (2010), defines social competence as the ability of children to form functional social relationships with other children and adults in their lives. In other words, social competence facilitate positive interactions, corresponding to cultural norms, in such a way as to allow reaching one’s own goals and at the same time respecting the needs of others. According to the above definition, any social behavior is the result of a process of learning what is valued by society (Ștefan, 2010).

The social competence of preschoolers are divided into two categories in the specialized literature:

- A. Interpersonal competence: initiating and maintaining a relationship
- B. Intrapersonal competence: integration in a group.

*Table 2.* The main social competence developed in preschool according to Catrinel Ștefan (2010).

<b>No. crt.</b>	<b>Specific social competence</b>	<b>Examples of behaviors</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Compliance with the rules</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- follows instructions without being told;</li> <li>- keep quiet when asked;</li> <li>- responds adequately to the adult’s requests;</li> <li>- collects the toys at the end of the game, without being told;</li> <li>- easily accepts the change of game rules;</li> <li>- respects the rules related to a social situation</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Initiating and maintaining a relationship (social relationship)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- initiates and maintains an interaction with another child;</li> <li>- listens actively;</li> <li>- share objects and share experiences;</li> <li>- gives and receives compliments;</li> <li>- invites other children to play together;</li> <li>- effectively resolves conflicts that arise.</li> </ul>

<b>3</b>	<b>Integration into the group of friends (prosocial behavior)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-cooperates with others when playing;</li> <li>- cooperates with others in solving a task;</li> <li>- offers and asks for help when needed;</li> <li>- takes care of other people's toys;</li> <li>- helps in different contexts (eg sharing supplies, sharing snacks).</li> </ul>
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Thus, compliance with rules, initiating and maintaining a relationship as well as prosocial behavior are the main social competence that can be developed at preschool age according to Ştefan (2010) and how they could be developed better than in a group with educators and at home with by parents and family.

### **3. The purpose of the research**

The purpose of the study was to develop and implement the socialization program for preschoolers through the kindergarten-family partnership.

The objectives proposed in the research:

1. Evaluation of the initial level of socialization of preschoolers.
2. Development and implementation of the Socialization Program for preschoolers in the experimental group.
3. Determining the impact of the Training Program on the level of socialization of preschool children.

### **4. Research methodology**

The planned research was carried out on three stages: ascertainment, training, control. In the first stage, the observation stage, we diagnosed the level of socialization of preschool children.

The experimental group consisted of 62 preschoolers aged between 4 and 5/6 years, 62 parents and 3 teaching staff involved in the experimental and control groups.

For the development of socialization, the Screening of social competence-form for parents and the Screening of social competence-form for educators applied in the control stage and the observation stage, developed by Miclea Mircea (2010), were used.

At the time of the research, the parents' and teachers' consent was obtained for the children's involvement in the experiment.

## **5. Didactic technologies used in the Socialization Program**

In the training program for parents, the planned topics were carried out in various ways, namely: webinars, round tables, debates, case studies, examples of good practices, lectures, trainings. Thus, through activities for formal, informal, non-formal education, the goal of the parents' program was: family involvement in the development process of preschoolers' socialization; informing and familiarizing parents with the benefits of preschoolers' social development; cultivating and developing the partnership between the family and the kindergarten.

The purpose of the program for teaching staff was: to support educators in order to become aware of and assume the educational role and involve them in the formation and development of the child's personality for his integration into social life; awareness of the importance of social development in preschoolers through kindergarten activities; knowing and educating preschool children through the positive influence of the kindergarten, establishing some basic principles that must be respected in the formation of children's personality, as well as some procedures for correcting some behavioral deviations. In order to achieve the goal within the training program for teachers, the themes planned within the activities for formal, non-formal, informal education were held in the form of webinars, debates, round tables, lectures, case studies, workshops.

Regarding the training program for preschoolers, the planned activities were both formal and informal and non-formal education: movement games, role-playing games, exercise games, stories, artistic and plastic activities, practical-household activities, excursions, hikes. Thus, the goal was: psychoeducation regarding social development among preschoolers; the formation of the child's social orientations and behaviors: compliance with rules, social relationships, prosocial behavior; training and shaping the ability to apply in practice the theoretical social knowledge acquired by children, the systematic acquisition of new social knowledge; the opportunity to form and consolidate feelings, beliefs.

## **6. Research results**

Following the implementation of the kindergarten-family educational project, the training program for preschoolers and the program for teaching staff, progress was made in terms of the socialization of preschoolers. Thus, both the parents and the teachers together with the preschoolers, working together, obtained beneficial results.

The experimental group benefited from the training program based on the development of social competence and thus obtained the following results: no child has poorly developed social competence, 3 children have insufficiently consolidated social competence, 4,83% and 59 preschoolers have well-developed social competence and consolidated 95,17%.

The experimental program applied in the group of parents proved to be effective following the analysis of the results presented in table 3.

*Table 3. Final results Social competence screening - form for parents in the ascertainment stage, the control stage, the experimental group, the control group*

Group	The code					
	red*		**yellow		green***	
	The stage					
	ascertainm ent	contr ol	ascertainm ent	contr ol	ascertainm ent	contr ol
<b>control</b>	57 children 91,93%	42 childr en 67,74 %	4 children 6,45%	14 childr en 22,58 %	1 child 1,61%	6 childr en 9,67%
<b>experiment al</b>	57 children 91,93%	0 child 0%	3 children 4,83%	3 childr en 4,83%	2 children 3,22%	59 childr en 95,16 %

\* indicates poorly developed assessed social competence

\*\* indicates insufficiently consolidated evaluated social competence

\*\*\* indicates well-developed and consolidated assessed social competence

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In table 3, you can see the final results obtained at the *Screening of social competence - the form for parents* in the control stage and in the ascertainment stage, both for the experimental group and for the control group. The results demonstrate that in the control group where the training program based on the Pedagogical Model for the development of social competence was not applied, 57 children have poorly developed social competence 82,30%, 14 children have insufficiently consolidated social competence 22,58% and only 6 children, 9,67%, have well-developed and consolidated social competence.

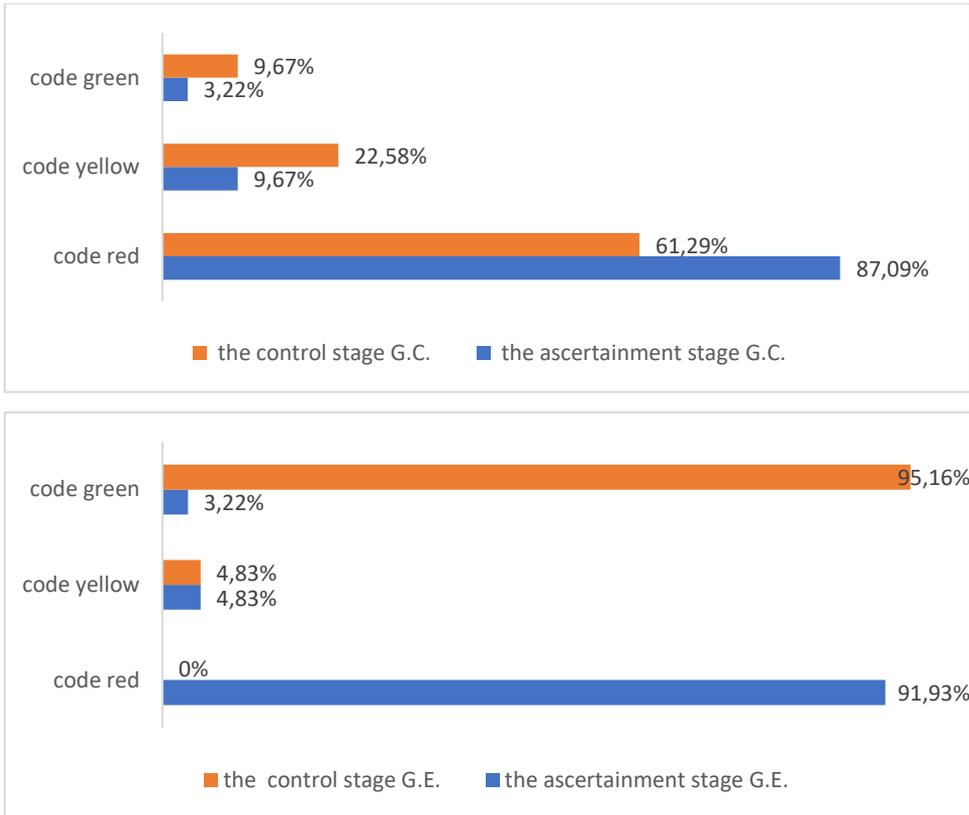


Fig. 1 Final results *Screening of social competence-form for parents*, control stage, ascertainment stage, experimental group and control group

According to fig. 1 the results from the *Screening of social competence-form for parents*, demonstrate that well-developed and consolidated social competence predominate in the experimental group, over 95% of preschoolers having well-developed and consolidated social competence. No preschooler in the experimental group has poorly developed social competence. In contrast, preschoolers in the control group, who did not benefit from the training program, more than 80% have poorly developed social competence, and only slightly more than 9% have well-developed and consolidated social competence.

According to the results in table 4 and fig. 2 it can be observed that at the *Screening of social competence - the form for educators*, the control group did not benefit from the training program and thus 38 children have poorly developed social competence, 61,29%, 14 children have insufficient social competence consolidated 22,58% and 6 children have well-developed and consolidated competence, 9,67%. The experimental group, following the completed training program, obtained the following results: no child is in a situation where social competence are not developed, 4 children, 6,46%, have insufficiently consolidated social competence and 58 preschoolers, 93,54% they have well developed and consolidated social competence. According to the analysis of the table and the figure, it is confirmed that the experimental program carried out with the children proved to be effective.

*Table 4.* Final results in the ascertainment stage and the control stage at the *Screening of social competence - the form for educators*, the control group and the experimental group

Group	Code					
	red*		yellow**		green***	
	the stage					
	ascertainm ent	contr ol	ascertainm ent	contr ol	ascertainm ent	contr ol
<b>the control</b>	54 children 87,09%	38 childr en 61,29 %	6 children 9,67%	14 childr en 22,58 %	2 children 3,22%	6 childr en 9,67%
<b>the experimen tal</b>	53 children 85,48%	0 child 0%	7 children 11,29%	4 childr en 6,46%	2 children 3,22%	58 childr en 93,54 %

- \*indicates poorly developed social competence
- \*\* indicates insufficiently consolidated social competence
- \*\*\* indicates well-developed and consolidated social competence

By comparing the results obtained in the ascertainment stage both in the experimental and in the control group, the red code predominates, with over 85% of the preschoolers, and the green code is very low, just over 3%.

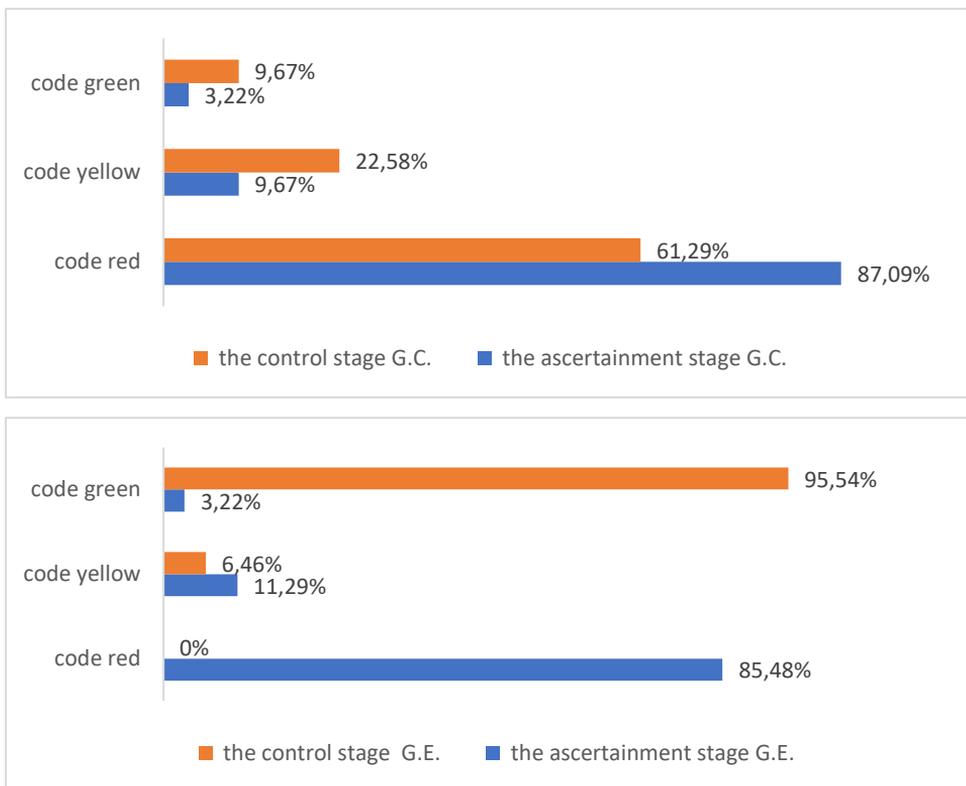


Fig. 2. Final results *Social competence screening-form for educators*, the control stage and the ascertainment stage, control group, experimental group

The purpose of the training program for parents was achieved: being informed and familiar with the benefits of preschoolers' social development,

parents got involved in the development process of children's socialization, therefore, the partnership between the family and the kindergarten was developed.

Thus, the positive experience acquired by parents in their relationships with their children was capitalized, by example; the cooperation between the kindergarten and the family was promoted in order to develop the socialization of children of high preschool age; the parents' interest in participating in the activities for formal, non-formal, informal education carried out in the kindergarten was stimulated; communication between educators and parents has improved in order to capitalize on the kindergarten-family partnership focused on the development of the socialization of preschoolers; various forms of partnership were organized and carried out (round tables, consultations, meetings, workshops, trainings, etc.) aimed at the development of children's socialization with the active involvement of parents and teachers; the parents' understanding of the socialization development activities carried out in the kindergarten, their specifics and how to ensure their continuity in the family environment was facilitated; to promote the necessity and need of preschoolers to be read to at home by their parents for their social development; the valorization of the game in the family with the aim of the social development of preschoolers was highlighted; shared with parents the importance of play at home and presented relevant resources.

Within the program for teaching staff, its goal was achieved, educators were supported in order to become aware of and assume the educational role and their involvement in the formation and development of the child's personality for his integration into social life; awareness of the importance of social development in preschoolers through formal, informal, non-formal education activities from kindergarten; knowing and educating preschool children through the positive

influence of the kindergarten; establishing some basic principles that must be respected in the formation of children's personality, as well as some procedures for correcting some behavioral deviations.

Therefore, within the training program for teaching staff, it was aimed to emphasize the individual knowledge of children, following their manifestation in kindergarten; the use of effective methods for psycho-affective development; finding common solutions in planning instructional-educational activities of formal, non-formal, informal education; studying books, documentaries, specialized magazines in order to hold debates on given topics, capitalizing on personal and professional experiences, exchange of experience, expressing the opinion of the participants regarding the actions undertaken within this program.

Regarding the training program for preschoolers, its purpose was to provide psychoeducation regarding social development among preschoolers; to form the child's social orientations and behaviors: compliance with rules, social relationships, prosocial behavior; to form and model abilities to apply in practice the social theoretical knowledge acquired by children; to systematically acquire new social knowledge; the opportunity to form and consolidate feelings, beliefs.

Therefore, preschoolers following the training program acquired knowledge about rules, relationships and behavior; they developed their ability to establish interactions with other children and adults; they formed skills to know and respect norms of behavior in society; they educated their positive traits of will and character of a positive attitude towards themselves and towards others; they developed their competence to enter into a relationship with those around them; they developed their responsible behaviors in kindergarten and outside it; they became aware of the importance of self-knowledge in adopting a responsible lifestyle, and developed the necessary competence for teamwork.

## 7. Conclusions

As Jinga (2000) specifies, the human being can act on his own being, having the ability to develop, he can develop those adaptive capacities considered necessary and valuable; „from everything that the culture and civilization of the age in which he lives (the social environment) offers him, he will select only what he considers to be in agreement with his needs and ideals. These, in turn, are strongly influenced by the value orientations existing in the society of which it is a part. Education consists precisely in the deliberate influencing of personal value options in accordance with what is considered, in a certain society, to be desirable to be adopted as a personal ideal to be achieved”(Jinga, 2000).

Teaching staff, through the educational activities they plan both formally, non-formally and informally, develop among preschoolers, beneficial capacities and attitudes for a natural adaptation in today's society; and collaboration with parents through an educational partnership increases and completes the family-kindergarten relationship.

The research results obtained within the pedagogical experiment carried out in three stages confirmed the effectiveness of the program, regarding the socialization of preschoolers.

Significant differences were established in all dimensions of the Screening of social competence: the dimension of compliance with rules, social relations and prosocial behavior. A significant positive increase is found in all dimensions of *Screening social competence* (experimental group). Preschoolers who demonstrated low results in some of the variables at the detection stage also obtained low results at the control stage of the pedagogical experiment. And the preschoolers who had high results in the first measurement, also have high results in the second measurement.

In conclusion, we can say that the training program designed both for parents and teachers, but also for preschoolers, led to an optimal, adequate social development, necessary for society.

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