

# **DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODEL 'RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITY' FOR THE PREVENTION OF AGGRESSION AMONG KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN**

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**Summary:** This article presents an intervention program for the promotion of a 'culture of rights and responsibility' for the creation of an optimal climate and the prevention of aggression among the kindergarten children. The difficult reality in which children in Israel and around the world today live may harm their sense of security and their relations with others. This fact may be significant, since it was found that the social and emotional ability at an early age is related to the nature of the social relations and to the quality of life in the continuation (Lawhon & Lawhon, 2000).

**Key words:** Prevention, Sense of Security, Social and Communicational Abilities, Aggression, Human Dignity

Social understanding and empathy were found to be related to positive behavior and to normal development. The relations with the peer group during early childhood are especially important since they are equal situations of communication that enable cooperation and/or competition. The researchers are divided in their opinions regarding our ability as adults to influence the social and emotional development of children. There is evidence that intervention programs may help in the exchange of patterns of communication of aggression or avoidance for more effective patterns. The existing programs for the promotion of social understanding during early childhood engage primarily in emotions, self-image, and reduction of violence.

## **Characteristics of the Intervention Program 'Culture of Rights and Responsibility'**

Review of the research literature indicates that it is necessary to develop comprehensive treatment of the problem of aggression, to position the treatment in the development of the community in which there is a respectful climate, to develop

communicational and social skills, and to increase the parents' involvement (Chen, 2003; Lawhon & Lawhon, 2000). On the basis of these principles, I built the intervention program of 'Culture of Rights and Responsibility'. The approach upon which I based is the systemic-developmental approach, which addresses all areas of development and the multidirectional reciprocal relations between the child's personality components and the environment components. In Israel a number of programs that encourage educators to promote social and communicational abilities already during early childhood are implemented. The DOSO Program (Dinkmayer, 2002) and the 'Wisdom of the Heart' Program (Levy, 2002) focus on the understanding of emotion and its expressions. The 'Magic Keys' Program (Cohen & Avorman, 2000) addresses the reduction of violent communication, and the ARYA<sup>1</sup> Project (Israelashvili, 2004) and the Magic Circle Program (Boll, 1985) act to improve the self-perception. As a rule, there are few programs intended for 'regular' children during early childhood and addressing in an active manner the topic of social understanding. A program that focuses on the structured inculcation of communicational skills, such as attention, creation of dialogue, conflict resolution, culture of speech, inclusion of another, and attempt to understand another person's needs and emotions during early childhood, was not found. Therefore, in the framework of the present research study a program that focuses on the communicational skills and the improvement of the social understanding among the children was built.

The present program, "A Culture of Rights and Responsibility for the Prevention of Aggression", in addition strives to create effective and secure communication and provides children with tools and skills for the creation of effective and secure communication, the creation of a dialogue in which the children listen to the other side and express empathy and attention.

A total of 120 children aged five to ten years from ten kindergartens in the south of the country participated in the research study. These children are in kindergartens where the program was implemented and in kindergartens where the program was not implemented. During the school year, the children in the intervention kindergarten participated in activities related to the intervention program, in small groups and all

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<sup>1</sup> ARYA is an acronym standing for Advancement of Resilience at a Young Age.

together. The sessions were instructed by the researcher, who wrote the program, which addressed topics such as resolving conflicts, culture of speech, respect, empathy, emotions, and communication among children, and empowerment of the child. The children were evaluated using a semi-structured questionnaire that enables reporting on the social emotional field.

### **Guiding Principles of the Model**

- **Integrity.** A comprehensive educational perception that assimilate the values in all areas of life in the kindergarten: contents, skills, experience, and involvement.
- **Consistency.** Persistence and consistency of the kindergarten staff in the preservation of principles, values, and processes in the kindergarten.
- **Personal example.** Commitment of all the partners to the educational activity in the kindergarten to provide a personal example in the implementation of the learned values and principles.
- **Behavioral codes.** A fair and respectful attitude to all those who come to the kindergarten, without discrimination, prevention of aggression and humiliation of any type, and preservation of society's laws. Construction of agreement about the rules of behavior appropriate in the kindergarten and in society.
- **Open climate.** Encouragement of a productive discourse through the creation of circles of speech and dialogue based on culture of attention.
- **Experiential learning.** Personal and group experience in the implementation of the learned values, by making the values and principles into a part of the lifestyle in the kindergarten.
- **Partnership.** Partnership through the learning together of all the partners in the educational activity in the kindergarten. Partnership in the shaping of the chosen values and the ways of implementing them in the kindergarten, partnership in the implementation of the values in the kindergarten, and ongoing involvement in the educational activity.
- **Involvement and volunteering.** Encouragement of attachments and involvement of the partners in the kindergarten for activity for another, the group, and the community at large.

- Documentation. Documentation of the learning and experience and the presentation of the products in the learning environment, as a means of the reflection of the learning and the activity and the reflective learning.
- Measurement and assessment. Measurement of the meeting of objectives and evaluation of the objectives, as a means for the improvement of the process.

After the intervention program, I performed a research study to examine the effectiveness of the model.

### **Research Study**

#### **Research Objective**

The objective was to examine the influence of the ‘Culture of Rights and Responsibilities’ Model on the reduction of the violence and the improvement of the social interaction among the kindergarten children.

#### **Research Hypotheses**

1. The group of children who will participate in the ‘Culture of Rights and Responsibilities’ Model will see a greater improvement in their ability to solve conflicts.
2. The group of children who will participate in the ‘Culture of Rights and Responsibilities’ Model will see a greater improvement in their culture of speech.
3. The group of children who will participate in the ‘Culture of Rights and Responsibilities’ Model will see a decline in the tendency to respond with violence in comparison to children who did not participate in the program.
4. The group of children who will participate in the ‘Culture of Rights and Responsibilities’ Model will see a significant change in the cooperation among the children and there will be better interaction among them.

## **Research Population and Sample**

The research population consists of children in the kindergarten. The sample includes 120 children, 60 children from the experimental group and 60 children from the control group, all who learn in the compulsory kindergarten<sup>2</sup> and are four-five years old. The characteristics of the children in the two groups are similar and all on an equal socioeconomic level. The experimental group consists of ten kindergartens, six children from every kindergarten, where the program is implemented. The control group consists of ten kindergartens, six children from every kindergarten, where the program is not implemented.

## **Research Variables**

- Independent variables: the intervention program in the kindergarten
- Dependent variables: report of the children regarding the level of violence, culture of speech, awareness of rights and responsibility, solving conflicts, social interaction.

## **Research Instruments**

The research instrument is a semi-structured interview for children. The interview is an instrument of measurement that is composed of questions that address areas of behavior expected to change following the model. Interviews will be held for children in the compulsory kindergarten with experts with whose help we will build the questionnaire for the children. The interview was composed of questions that address the areas of behavior expected to change following the intervention model. These areas include problem solving, speech culture, respect, and empathy, social interaction, and respect of others. The validity of the instrument will derive from the experts in the field of early childhood and psychology.

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<sup>2</sup> In Israel the kindergarten refers to the educational frameworks for children aged three to five, in essence encompassing the preschool period. The compulsory kindergarten is the year before first grade, and attendance is mandated by the government.

## **Implementation of the ‘Culture of Rights and Responsibility’ Intervention Program**

The program was implemented on four levels of intervention. First, the learning contents were developed. Stories relevant to the structuring of the knowledge on the topic of rights and responsibility were chosen. For instance, the book *The Laws of the Green Forest* by Miri Tselzon was chosen. These stories provide a platform for the identification of a wide variety of rights and responsibilities that the children can translate into binding laws/rules of play in the kindergarten. These are stories such as *The Poor Hippo* (the right for protection), *The Garden of All of Us* (the right to property and the responsibility for public property), and *The Choir of Frogs* (freedom of expression and responsibility to accept the majority decision). The rights that arise we translate with the children into laws agreed upon in the kindergarten and in the process of construction we clarify in the dictionary the meaning of the concepts of ‘compact’ and ‘laws’. We present to the children different compacts, including the Declaration of Independence, we synthesize between the kindergarten compact and the Declaration of Independence, and we discuss the differences.

The second stage focused on the assimilation of values. From every story children derive a suggestion for a law (it is necessary to maintain the public garden) and adjust it to the kindergarten (it is necessary to keep a vegetable garden and cultivate it). From the total laws proposed, an agreed upon compact is developed, which includes statements of rights alongside statements of responsibilities, such as the following statements. My right is to have friends, and my responsibility is to be a good friend. My right is to play, and my responsibility is to play and then organize the games after me. My right is to health, and my responsibility is to be careful and keep safe. My right is to education, and my responsibility is to listen. My right is to cleanliness, and my responsibility is to maintain cleanliness. My right is to be listened to, and my responsibility is to listen to another person.

In the third stage, social skills were developed. In this stage, skills of respectful dialogue are practiced, such as use of pleasant words ‘thank you’, ‘please’, and ‘sorry’; speech in a normal tone of voice and not in shouts; and use of persuasion and not force.

There is the practice of skills of dilemma management “I want to play on the computer now, but I know that now it is your turn”; the practice of skills of responsibility – obeying the kindergarten compact; the practice of skills of leadership and teamwork – the hat of the week; and the practice of skills of conflict management, in which the kindergarten teacher can be involved as an instructor or as an observer of the process.

In the last stage, there is clarification of the rights and responsibilities, in close connection to the personal world of every child. The construction of a respectful climate in the kindergarten is built on the creation of balance between the child’s rights and his responsibility, and it obligates teaching the children that alongside every right there is a responsibility.

After the intervention program based on the research material was constructed and attempts were made to deal with the multidirectional reciprocal relations in the child’s life, the ‘Culture of Rights and Responsibility’ was implemented among kindergarten children in the south of the country. To examine the effectiveness of the program, the research questions were formulated.

The educational process developed in stages, when one stage leads to the next.

### **Clarification of the Personal Identity and the Professional Identity of the Kindergarten Staff and the Partners in Educational Activity**

What is the level of readiness, preparation, and availability of the kindergarten staff to lead the process? The first stage in the experimental process obligates open conversation sessions between all the partners in the educational activity in the kindergarten.

The discourse on the topic of the personal and professional identity of the kindergarten staff enables the staff to find their common denominator as educators who are interested in combining between education for values and learning and promotion of achievements. The discourse enables them to realize their personal interest: to create an open and harmonious climate, in the framework of which they can lead to significant and

experiential learning from a place of emotional availability – both theirs and the children's.

Data from international research studies showed that when education institutions made the education for human dignity (and additional humanist values) into an organizing axis of all areas of life in the education institution, there was a decline in the levels of aggression, a rise in the level of scholastic achievements, a rise in the level of partnership and social involvement, and a rise in the feeling of satisfaction with the educational process.

The supervisors and manager of the kindergarten department in the Ashdod Municipality joined the extended discussion. It was agreed upon by all the partners that our vision and basic professional identity are that of the educators who act to assimilate values of 'being a person' and courtesy, since education for rights and responsibility is the basis for the creation of a tolerant climate and a tolerant climate enables the promotion of achievements, alongside personal empowerment and the increase of the depth of education for values.

### **Involvement of the Parents in the Clarification of the Desired Values and the Definition of the Kindergarten Vision**

The value-oriented clarification opens the opportunity to clarify the question what are the joint values that the staff and the parents want to emphasize in the kindergarten. The partnership with the parents, already in this early stage of the process, creates trust, reinforces the feeling of belonging, and opens before the parents a door to essential involvement in the educational process.

We began the discussion with the value of human dignity. We found that according to the liberal perception the person is found at the center and "at the basis of human dignity there is freedom of the free will – the freedom of choice and the freedom of action of the person ... to shape his life and to develop his personality as he sees fit" (Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty) and the Jewish religious tradition attributes considerable importance of the central position of the person: "And God created mankind



in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (*Genesis* 1:27). We found that according to the liberal perception, human dignity refers to the respect of the very existence of the person (Kamir, 2004) and in the religious perception, this is because man was created in God's image. In other words, we can agree that according to the two perceptions there is agreement about the sanctity of life and basic human dignity.

We found that the liberal reference to human dignity includes the perception of respect as the evaluation of the person's ability, action, or lifestyle and the perception of honor, in the sense of outside prestige given to those with a high status, power, and strength. In religious Jewish tradition there is significant reference to the perceptions of dignity, as expressed in the statements of the Jewish Sages. "The dignity of your friend must be liked by you as much as your own" (*Avot* 2:10). "Work that honors its owners is great." (*Nedarim* 49:72). "The person desires respect." (Popular adage according to the *Jerusalem Talmud*, 15: 73). "Who is respected – one who respects others." (*Avot* 4:1). "It is not his place that respects the man but the man who respects his place." (*Tanit* 21: 72). In other words, the value of human dignity is in essence the main basis of human rights, since these rights are given to people not because a certain society chose to give them to people but because they deserve these rights because of their natural human dignity (Gabizon, 2001).

It seems that we have found the common denominator: we have agreed that the humanist values in Judaism and in democracy present the person as an individual who has natural dignity and he deserves to be addressed with respect.

To summarize the process of the value-oriented clarification, the vision was agreed upon in short: The Topaz Kindergarten educates for human values (which are supported by sources from Jewish heritage), first of all, human dignity, and then tolerance, involvement, and responsibility, freedom, and equality.

## **Construction of a Dynamic Curriculum Based on a Value-Oriented Organizing Axis of Human Dignity: Rights and Responsibility**

The annual curriculum we presented in the form of an organizing table, which is divided according to objectives for the short term and for the intermediate term and its summary in an annual program and in coordination with the standards of the Ministry of Education. The table is divided into a column of the month of the year (for instance, October), the focus of the topic – the target (for example, emotions), the value-oriented focus (for example, the right to respect, attention, and consideration), and in the continuation a column of the assimilation of the topic through the curriculum (sources of knowledge and learning material), a column for the assimilation of the topic through the development of skills and abilities, a column for the assimilation of the topic through the encouragement of partnership, experience and involvement.

### **Illustration of the Assimilation of the Values through the Curriculum**

We chose relevant sources of information that will provide the best solution for the engagement in the topic through books, songs, sayings, dictionaries, maps, films, Internet websites, music, pictures, statues, theater presentations, photographs, newspaper clips, symbols, objects, and so on.

An example on the topic of emotions is that we engage in the declamation of *The Child with Restraint* of Zippi Krivosha. In the discussion questions such as the following questions are brought up. What is restraint? Why is restraint necessary? Who needs restraint? What would happen if we were not to act with restraint?

We practice examples from the everyday life. “If I am not restrained and I do not wait in line, then I will start an argument.” “If I take a game from my friend, then I will be disrespectful and I will start an argument and then both of us will be angry and we cannot participate in what is happening in the kindergarten.” “If somebody insulted me and I am angry, I will learn to be restrained and I will attempt to solve the problem in a respectful manner.”

The discussion is summarized with the insight of children that restraint is a basic necessity for the existence of a shared society, since life in a complex society, in which there are different needs and interests, requires the construction of a social compact, agreed-upon rules and laws that should direct behavior.

The stories of *The Laws of the Green Forest* (Miri Tselzon) provide a platform for the identification of a wide variety of rights and responsibility that the children can translate into binding laws/rules of play in the kindergarten. The analysis of the stories awakens a discussion on the questions such as the following. Why are laws necessary at all? Who is helped by them? Do we want laws and a compact in the kindergarten? Do we prefer to use positive or negative literacy? (“The opening hours are” as opposed to “No entry”) How should we act for the laws in the kindergarten to work?

We clarify in the dictionary what the meaning of the concepts of ‘compact’ and ‘laws’ is.

From every story the children produce a proposal of a law and adjust it the kindergarten and cultivate it. Rights and responsibilities, such as ‘my right is to have friends and my responsibility is to be a good friend’ and ‘my right is to play, and my responsibility is to play and then organize the games after me.’

We present to the children different compacts, starting with the Declaration of Independence. We synthesize between the kindergarten compact and the Declaration of Independence, and we discuss the differences.

#### *Assimilation through Activities*

The children write/draw/glue every law proposal separately. They accumulate the proposals of laws in a binder and hang it on a prominent board in the kindergarten. They prepare a declaration that includes all the laws that the children formed and every child signs his name to the compact (ratifies it). The declaration is hung at the entry to the kindergarten. The child who deviates from the behavior determined there returns to the declaration, identifies his signature, and is asked if he wants to remove his signature or to change the law. Generally the child is embarrassed of his behavior and apologizes.

### *Assimilation through the Development of Skills and Abilities*

In the everyday behavior of the children in the kindergarten, use is made of the kindergarten laws with emphasis placed on respectful dialogue, use of dialects and sayings, and conflict management. When a child complains ‘she is not right’, then the matter is clarified. Did she violate a right? “There is the right to make a mistake and the responsibility to think.” Is there an appropriate saying? “Think before you act.”

### *Assimilation through Experience, Volunteering, and Involvement*

The parents are partners in the determination of the kindergarten compact. They are invited to an evening of activity of the staging of a story from *Laws of the Green Forest*. After the story is read, the parents suggest laws for the kindergarten compact and form an agreed-upon compact written in large letters and hung on the wall. The parents divide the roles, stage the story, prepare the costumes and setting, and present the play. The entire process (from the story to the staging) is filmed in video and inspires waves of laughter and a sense of partnership. The next day the film is shown to the kindergarten children, and the children get to see their parents being playful but agreeing with them on the kindergarten rules. A shared value-oriented language is created between the parents, the children, and the kindergarten staff, and it eases the continuation of the educational process.

Another way of the construction of the compact is to create the laws (rules of play) in the kindergarten from situations that exist in the kindergarten and not to bring prepared rules. For instance, two children quarrel and after the discussion in the kindergarten the children agreed (majority decision) that the rule needs to be ‘it is necessary to wait for the friend to finish the game and then to take it’. The children will write down the guideline as a law that will be entered into the collection of the kindergarten laws and gradually the laws will be accumulated, step by step.

### *Hat of the Week*

The activity of the ‘hat of the week’ enables the empowerment of the self-image and sense of self-efficacy of the child, the encouragement of abilities and initiatives, the

development of his sense of responsibility, the encouragement of the child to be a partner in the teamwork, and the development of leadership abilities. It enables the child (and his parents) to realize the dream, to realize a hobby, and to plan a positive formative experience.

Added value of this process is that the child persists in being the ‘hat of the week’ at home as well and thus is empowered in the family framework too. The parents learn to evaluate the work of the kindergarten staff and the partnership is strengthened.

### *Organization of the Educational Environment*

The kindergarten is built as a learning environment that changes according to the child’s needs, through the imitation of the reality and the coping with the reality in a complex space and through the encouragement of respectful and humane behavior.

### *Conflict Management*

When a conflict arises – expressions of insult and inattention, crying, aggression (Yuval is crying) – then all the activity for that group of children is immediately halted. The arbitration committee (a group of five children, under the leadership of the hat of the week child, chosen once a week) is summoned to manage the conflict.

Despite the initial tendency of young children to respond towards their peers with physical or verbal aggression, they can learn to use more effective ways to resolve conflicts and can broaden their repertoire of social behaviors (Browning, Davis, & Resta, 2000). Children aged five-six, who were diagnosed as aggressive-impulsive, succeeded in deriving benefit from the coaching program that focuses on the development of verbal abilities and problem solving. The idea is taken from a program developed in the United States by Speback, when the main point is daily lessons under the kindergarten teacher’s guidance on topics of language concepts and interpersonal problem solving. Following this coaching, the subjects’ abilities in the area of social cognitive, cooperation with other children, and verbal expression improved and their aggressive-impulsive behaviors lessened. (Snir, Izkovitz, & Shpiner, 1979).

## **Characteristics of the Optimal Climate as a Culture of Respect, Rights, and Responsibility**

The educational process enables us to implement the district objectives: “to promote the scholastic achievements of the children, with the emphasis on the reduction of gaps, the fulfillment of abilities, and the leadership to excellence”. To realize the abilities, we act to strengthen the child’s positive self-image and sense of efficacy, through the construction of an optimal climate that will allow an optimal environment for learning. According to the perception of Hendricks (1997), it is important to assure aware and effective communication, even with children under the age of six. Hendricks (1997) addressed the fact that small children do not have an extensive vocabulary or the ability to express abstract ideas, and yet he found from clinical experience that it is possible to hold with them an intelligent dialogue that includes reflection and empathy. The reflection of the child’s statements will provide validity to his statements and will help him develop the awareness and the skills required so that he too can hold with his environment secure interaction.

### **Reinforcement of the Personal Image and Sense of Efficacy**

**Relation of respect.** The kindergarten staff speaks in a quiet voice and does not raise their voices. All the staff members smile to the children, touch them to encourage them, hug them with necessary, and express warmth and love through body language. As a personal example, the staff members maintain this attitude in the relations among themselves, the adults.

**Open climate.** Ongoing dialogue, between the children and the kindergarten staff, is based on full trust and open relations. Every child has a voice, and we ask to hear it and to emphasize his contribution to the educational process. We encourage a dialogue of questions and answers, of the children’s initiatives and the staff’s response to help them realize the initiatives. We encourage research questions and self-experience, enable a space for personal choice of activity. We care about the children, and we show them this. The program coaches the children in effective communication and enables them to learn and to understand their own motives and those of their friends for responsive behavior or

considerate behavior. In addition, the ‘Culture of Rights and Responsibility’ Program is different from other programs in that it is structured (organized as a series of sessions built gradually) and implemented in small groups. The children are coached in the program contents in the framework of the small group (six children). Shonkoff and Meisels (2000) noted in the beginning of their book *Handbook of Early Childhood Intervention* that while the general effectiveness of the intervention programs in early childhood have been proven, there still is insufficient evidence about the necessary components that make one program more effective than another and it is necessary to add and research the topic. However, the authors write that there is support of the effectiveness of the methodical work in small groups during early childhood.

We encourage the parents to be full partners in the kindergarten (in the choice of values, in the planning, in the implementation of part of the curriculum). The general atmosphere enables discourse, personal development, and growth.

**Positive reinforcements** are a means of the reinforcement of the positive self-image of the child and the strengthening of the child’s sense of efficacy. Every question has many answers. We encourage the children to answer and positively address every answer. We praise the creative ideas and respect the weaker answers. We also turn to the quiet children and encourage them to answer. We give every child an equal opportunity to express himself. We encourage consistently positive behavior and ignore the non-positive behavior.

**Differential reference to children.** To the shy child we say “She is allowed to speak in a quiet voice not because she does not know but because she has a pleasant and special voice.” To the quiet child we provide verbal and physical encouragement.

**Habits and manners.** We maintain aesthetics, a nonviolent body language, spoken language. We encourage words that are pleasant to hear: sorry, thank you, please.

### **Coping with Deviation in Behavior**

Since one of the goals is to build self-meaning, which originates in the understanding of the rules of play in the kindergarten (rights and responsibility), to direct

to appropriate behavior, we do not direct to punishment but to coping over time. We act to cope with the unusual behavior in an in-depth conversation for the clarification of the reason of the behavior, in cooperation with the children to help the child clarify his emotions and cope with them. Children in the kindergarten learn to understand issues of justice, relativity, and norms, and this knowledge has importance in the interactions they hold among themselves (Campbell, 2002). In parallel, the activity in the peer group increases the child's awareness of the social processes and contributes to the development in this field.

Researchers from the field of the theory of the mind maintain that already at a young age (three to five) children can understand the existence of different emotions, thoughts, and desires in the other person and that this ability is related to the interactions among the children (Astington & Jenkins, 1995; Slomkowski & Dunn, 1996; Sodian, 1991). The theory of the mind addresses the awareness of the other person's inner world and greatly promoted the research in the cognitive-social field among young children. In the framework of this theory, the topic of social understanding was examined among children aged three to five, and it was found in the observations and reports of the kindergarten children that it is related positively to the behavior of cooperation and assistance among the children (Wright, Stetson, Rourke, & Zubernis, 2003).

The ability to experience the emotions of the other person and to respond in an emotional response that better suits the other person's situation than the situation of the self is first and foremost an emotional response but like other emotional responses it is related to different levels of cognitive development (Saroufe et al., 1998). According to Hoffman (2000), empathy develops in three stages in childhood: from global empathy through egocentric empathy to empathy for the emotions of others.

The intervention program described was developed especially for the purpose of the present research and was approved by the Ministry of Education and the parents of the children who participated in the research. All the kindergarten teachers in the ten kindergartens expressed their willingness to participate in the program. Five of the kindergartens were randomly chosen to serve as the kindergartens where the intervention



program was implemented, while the other five kindergartens served as the control group. The program sessions were held by the kindergarten teachers in the intervention kindergartens as a part of the overall curriculum in the kindergarten.

Before the implementation of the program, the kindergarten teachers (in the intervention group) participated in in-service training in a workshop of ten sessions of two and a half hours. For the purpose of the learning of the basic contents of the ‘Culture of Rights and Responsibility’ Program, they raised questions about the theory and implementation and were active and important partners in the building of the program and primarily in its adjustment to the world of the kindergarten children. In addition, during the school year monthly meetings were held with the kindergarten teachers who are implementing the program in their kindergartens, for the purpose of the theoretical clarification of the contents, feedback on the activity, and consultation on topics that arose during the activity. Regular telephone conversations were held for the purpose of follow-up and guidance. In addition, in the five intervention kindergartens a meeting was held with the parents, in which they were given a detailed explanation on the program implemented in the kindergarten.

### **The Achievements of the Implementation of the Model**

It would seem that there is nothing new in the dimensions that were mentioned. Most of the education institutions engage in value-oriented education and encourage partnership and involvement. Nevertheless, they do not succeed in indicating a systemic output of improvement in the level of the achievements or in the educational climate. What, therefore, is missing?

A research study of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) conducted among educators from 28 countries indicated that a value-oriented change can be realized only when it is assimilated in all the educational strata. It was found that the highest achievements were attained only when in the education institution an overall perception is implemented that assimilated the education for values in the learning contents (knowledge), in the culture of the education institution (skills), and in the

extension of the circle of partners (experience and involvement), and this in an integral manner (Torney-Purta et al., 2001).

In other words, positive systemic outputs can be expected when the following occur:

1. We will create collaborations with the children, the kindergarten staff, and the parents, and we all will speak in a respectful common language.
2. We focus the entire educational process on a value-oriented organizing axis of human dignity (rights and responsibilities): the child will learn about rights and responsibility through the curricula (he will know and internalize that it is necessary to be respectful), will acquire skills that will translate the awareness into rules of behavior in everyday life (he will speak in respectful language, will listen to others, will manage conflicts in peaceful ways, etc.), and from a place of belonging and appreciation will be involved in the community and will act to improve his life and environment. Thus, the discourse on rights and responsibility will be a part in every educational program in the kindergarten.
3. We will hold a consistent and continuous process while providing a personal example.

Education for rights and responsibilities, alongside the encouragement of the social involvement in the kindergarten, has become essential in modern society because of the increase of the violence and the feelings of alienation. Education for rights and responsibilities empowers the child not only in that it instills in him values (respect, tolerance, fairness, equality, and self-meaning) and builds his personality (reference with respect, self-control, consideration of others) but is expressed in the child's everyday conduct: obedience of the law, respectful language, respectful behavior, volunteering, and help of others.

A positive outcome is expected in an environment where the education for rights and responsibilities becomes the organizing axis of the educational program in the kindergarten, involves the entire population of the kindergarten, and is maintained consistently and from a personal example.

The systemic outcome expected from the education for rights and responsibilities, respect, cooperation, and involvement is the construction of a respectful climate, in the framework of which the empowered child is emotionally available for meaningful learning and the increased depth of value-oriented education.

### **Conclusions of the Assimilation of the Model among the Kindergarten Children**

In this model, communicational and social skills were conveyed to the kindergarten children through the construction of a dynamic curriculum based on a value-oriented organizational axis of human dignity, “rights and responsibility”. Following the teaching of the model and the research study I performed, we obtained positive outcomes that we focused the educational process on the value-oriented organizing axis of human dignity: the child learned about rights and responsibility through the curriculum (he knew and internalized that it is necessary to give respect), acquired skills that would translate the awareness into rules of behavior in the everyday (speak in a respectful language, listen to another, managed conflicts in peaceful ways, etc.), and from a place of belonging and appreciation became involved in the community and would act to improve his life and his environment. Second, collaborations were created with the children, the kindergarten staff, and the parents and they all spoke a shared language of respect. Third, we held a consistent and continuous process while providing a personal example.

The scope and quality of the sense of dignity of the child in the group are what motivate the child’s behavior and determine whether he turns to harmonious cooperation or aggression, and in this field it is necessary to invest most of the efforts.

A value-oriented change can occur only when it is assimilated at all levels of education. It was found that the highest achievements were obtained only when the education institution implemented a general perception that assimilated the education for values in the learning contents (knowledge), in the culture of the education institution (skills), and in the broadening of the circle of partners (experience and involvement), and this is an integral manner (Torney-Purta et al., 2001).

## **Additional Achievements**

In light of the changes that occurred among children who participated in the 'Culture of Rights and Responsibility' intervention program, it was proposed to implement the intervention program in the educational system and it was adopted by the system. Until now, in-service training courses were held and are being held for kindergarten teachers in different places around Israel.

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