

# Social-Emotional Prevention Program

## Program Overview

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**Program name**

Social-Emotional Prevention Program

**Country of Origin**

Romania

**Implementation level of the program**

Organization

**Type of Program**

Evidence-based intervention

**Description**

The main aim of the intervention is to promote the development of social and emotional competencies for pre-school aged children.

Development of adequate social and emotional competencies at this age is important for school adjustment and protective against mental health issues and behavioural conduct issues later in life (Engels et al., 2001; Hastings et al., 2000).

The meaning of social and emotional prevention is that in this practice both children and parents and teachers must participate. This condition is necessary for there to be a real improvement in children's social and emotional competencies. The program is a hybrid that combines the provision of targeted and universal elements covered throughout the program. The targets are those related to high-risk children, and the universal ones are for all other children. The group program has three components:

Curriculum;

compulsory teacher training;

compulsory training and work with parents.

There is also evidence of the effectiveness of the program, which is made through a process implemented in Romania.

They are usually held 2-3 times a week regularly.

**Age Range**

0-3 years, 3-7 years

**Age Range Information**

0 - 5 years of age

## Group Size

20 – 25 children

## SEL Skills Targeted

Responsible decision-making, Relationship skills, Social awareness, Self-awareness, Self-management

## Sequenced Activities

The activities included in five modules are focused on:

children learn to recognize emotions and regulate them, thus developing their emotional competencies;

to build an understanding of the socio-cultural environment around them and everything related to:

acceptance and observance of the rules of conduct in different social contexts;

prosocial norms - "When I take something that belongs to another person - I return it!"

cooperation with adults and peers, in group activities.

The activities are most related to self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship skills.

Teachers are trained in eight group seminars, followed by consultations. Parents love each other both in groups and individually. Their love goes through 4 group sessions lasting 90-120 minutes each. Individual training for parents are carried out only if the parent wishes, they last 20-30 minutes.

The teacher conducts 37 activities in the classroom.

## Active Learning

Following rules

The main goal of this aspect is for children to learn to follow the rules in the classroom of 3-4 year old children. Through visual support with pictures depicting the rules and the behavior expected of them. For example: to wait in line, to wait for permission before talking, how to put their toys away after a game, etc.

Emotion recognition

In this module, the activities aim to develop child's ability to name and recognize emotions such as happiness, anger, sadness and fear. Through a range of different activities, such as story reading, mime games and drawing games, children gradually learned to identify and recognize different emotions.

Emotion regulation.

An established goal in the model is to introduce children to the "turtle technique" (Robin et al., 1976). The technique helps prevent outbursts of anger in children and teaches them how to find adequate solutions when they get into frustrating events. By telling stories in which the characters get angry and misbehave. The plays are played by puppets, for a more impressive effect on children. The children's task is how the little turtle could cope in these situations, as the children have the opportunity to play the decisions themselves through role play.

Problem solving.

Again, reading different stories and just replaying them with dolls is used. By introducing a series of common conflict situations between children, such as (refusing to share a toy, being excluded

from group play, being hit) or adults (refusing to do something that the teacher / parent asked, lying, not following rules).

Play cooperation.

The aim of this module is for children to learn how to build behaviors through which they can establish and maintain friendships with their peers.

## Outcomes / Results

The effectiveness of the program has been proven by a study (Stefan & Miclea, 2012, 2014) after it was tested in Cluj-Napoca, Romania in 2009. The results report high values of increased social and emotional competences in children.

In the final sample, two groups are selected - an intervention group and a comparison group. The intervention group includes a total of 89 children, 47 of whom are girls and 42 are boys. The comparison group includes 9 children, 40 girls and 29 boys. In the end, the children from both groups were assigned to three risk categories, depending on the level of development of their social and emotional competencies, which their teachers assessed. The three categories are: high-risk, moderate-risk and low-risk. As in the screening for social competences, the distributions were as follows:

In the intervention group:

16 high risk children;

34 children at moderate risk;

39 low risk children

In the control group:

11 high-risk;

26 moderate-risk

32 low-risk.

In the screening for mastering emotional competencies, the distributions are respectively:

In the intervention group:

17 high risk children;

30 children at moderate risk;

42 children at low risk.

In the control group:

12 high-risk;

22 moderate-risk;

35 low-risk.

## Quality / Effectiveness

The summary of the results of the study (Stefan & Miclea, 2012, 2014) proves that the effectiveness of the intervention has increased, depending on the degree of risk in children in the starting position i.e., the increase of social and emotional competencies increases in children with high medium risk than in children at low risk.

In some cases, and in particular those related to emotional competences, greater and consistent effects have been observed for children of moderate height compared to children at high risk. This confirms the growing need to expand social and emotional development programs for children, which include children at medium rather than high risk.

## References

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