

## Why from early environmental education?

*Helena Maria Sabo*

*(Department of Teacher Tutoring (DPPD), Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences,  
Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca 447112, Romania)*

**Abstract:** Nature protection is increasingly becoming one of the most important concerns of contemporary society and of 3 major issues: deterioration prevention, environmental remediation actions and environmental reconstruction, which mainly consist of remedies, and preservation or maintenance of the de-polluted areas. Interest and love for nature are instinctive for the most children. In addition, attitudes and beliefs of children formed an early age are those retained for a better life. Therefore, the education made in kindergarten has to start from children's natural interest for plants and animals, for what is in general nature to them. This project is supported by Reithmeier (Germany), having in mind that Germany was the first that has implemented such guidelines at the international conference in Stockholm—under Agenda 21—introduced in school curriculum.

**Key words:** ecology; love; instinct; interest; involvement

### 1. Introduction

The preschoolers must realize that environmental problems are worldwide, of everyone and of each of the people and their every negative action, however, insignificantly it may affect in a destructive way the nature.

The alarm signals released by experts, the explanations and statistics compiled by them undoubtedly have a role, but effective action involving training in sensitive environment reaches through awareness and training emotional and volitional components of children.

Therefore, environmental education activities must be conducted in a relaxed atmosphere, where the interest and communication to encourage the initiatives, but also each one's options.

The main purpose of environmental education is to give every individual the opportunity to express a personal attitude, responsibility towards the environment they live. Environmental education is as a specific skill and a way to understand the relationship between men and their living environment, which is not only theirs, but of plants and animals.

The starting point of this exercise is the optics people need to express their respect for the natural environment that benefits all and they will inherit the future generations. So it is important that people have the task of educating the little ones to have a better environmental conscience, so that the actions people are carrying out to be effective and credible in front of children.

### 2. Material and method

The preschoolers must realize that environmental problems are of the entire world, of each of the people, and every action of them can negatively affect the nature.

---

Helena Maria Sabo, Ph.D., Department of Teacher Tutoring (DPPD), Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Babeş-Bolyai University; research field: didactic of geography.

Environmental education activities must be conducted in a relaxed atmosphere, where interest and communication can encourage initiatives.

Given that the “forest” is the environment where they spend all their lives, here are protected and safeguarded and that almost all stories, poems and songs in the planned joint action occur in the forest—in all seasons—people have proposed, and have agreed with parents and children from the group, to achieve the optional: “the small ecologists” (Project developed by the Clearing Forests Nursery, Satu Mare county, conducted in 2007-2008).

Thus, children will be educated and directed into the mysteries of the forest—as a group—to do so that their powers remain fresh forever in environmental powers and can stop the damaging of giving laboratory of air, life, health, recreation and good humor.

Through stories, readings, poetry, readings after pictures, songs, talks, practical work of planting trees, flowers, plays, dramatization, hiking and mountain tours in various locations close or distant, environmental education will seek objectives, this optional involves not only children and parents, but also the community. The involvement of this has made a partnership with the Sylviculture Department from Crucisor village, to complete the green space in the period: March 15 to April 15 (forest moon) with juveniles of various species: pine, spruce, larch and realization of flower roundels.

Addressing the environmental education in kindergarten has certain methodological features, the ultimate goal of this approach is the adequate training and sequencing of environmental behavior of concrete actions to protect the environment.

### **2.1 Objectives**

The logic diagram approach to environmental education has certain formative stages that describe a route that can be followed by any teacher, making use of careful disciplines specific content and methodology:

(1) Perception and observation of nature. This first step may be best achieved through the exits in nature, excursions and camps. The first step of direct contact with environmental elements constitutes the premises of the next steps.

(2) Determination of living and awareness of sensations and feelings on their children. Following collection of environmental issues, children are attracted to pay attention to the pleasure of looking at the clear sky, to inspire fresh air of a forest, listening to the murmur of a brook, etc.. At this stage it is the role of teacher to discuss and draw attention to these issues and to highlight the benefits of cleanness, health and membership in the natural systems of life and communication between people and the natural environment.

(3) Involvement. Through discussion, having established the place and role of each one in space and time in class may be relevant ways of involving the individual, how they can help.

(4) Accountability. This step is essential in forming an appropriate behavior structure. If there is involvement, there must be accountability. The steps refer to environmental education conduct at this level show the environmental performances. The default reason is that information accompanies and supports the sensory perception, sensations analysis, employment in natural living system, defining the role of staff, respectively, individual involvement and accountability.

(5) The composition of a strategy for action. This step is a next move to a concrete action. The fact that, as teachers, organizing various activities with children is not enough. Achievement, indeed important, would form that interest of the children and those skills which enable them to understand how to organize such actions and to act on their impulse.

In order to form an environmental conduct to children as people start from a simple idea but quite effective in terms of emotions and feelings: the transposition of the element instead of the wild child who has suffered from human aggression. The child is put in the position of the assaulted one and of that which can not defend himself, the child will realize that he has to give “right to exist” to all the environmental elements around him. Gradually, he will understand that any action of destruction or extermination of any kind is very damaging, because it spoils the balance of nature.

Given that at least in the area, the forest starts “at the side of the house begins and ends at the edge of heaven”, the motivation is strong and people have proposed that in an organized manner, “to penetrate the mystery of the forest” and try to stop the mutilation of the “laboratory of the Earth”.

To preserve and improve the environment for the whole society is a primary goal, a task whose performance should be coordinated and harmonized well in education.

### **2.2 “Eco-Kindergarten” program**

In support of this educational behavior comes educational program “Eco-Kindergarten”, which has the aim to increase children’s awareness on environmental issues, thereby, putting the foundation aims to clarify the development of children belonging to the environment. The author is encouraged for discussions and group work, and any initiative taken to protect the environment. This program outlines the strategy for action in environmental education, children’s unit level. The benefits that people believe that kindergarten in the area of Clearing Forests (the continuation of Eco-Kindergarten program) are:

- (1) Raising children in the problem of maintaining a clean, healthy and aesthetically environment;
- (2) Growing in children’s the love for earth, for all elements entering into its composition: water, plants, animals, etc.;
- (3) Educating children for the purpose of preserving the health of the environment in which they live;
- (4) Acquiring specific rules of conduct to ensure balance between human health, society and environment;
- (5) Forming disapproving attitudes toward those who violate the rules specific to preserve environmental hygiene;
- (6) Promoting the kindergarten to the rank of Eco-kindergarten, according to EU standards as a result of educational activities carried out and running the said program.

Purpose:

To educate children’s and local community to maintain a cleaner and healthier environment for rational use of natural resources and to maintain ecological balance and to preserve nature for future generations.

Objectives:

- (1) To sensibly awareness the local community, children and parents towards environmental issues;
- (2) Creating in the kindergarten and in his surroundings of a pleasant ambient environment, through planning and landscaping;
- (3) Formation of ethical behavior, citizenship;
- (4) The formation of some conservation habits;
- (5) Involve children in the collection of recyclable materials—paper and bottles.

### **2.3 Example of a didactic project:**

Groups: large

Category of activity: integrated activity

(environmental knowledge, education language, mathematics activity)

Unit content: nature—wild animals

Theme: little explorers

Means of implementation: Training Game

Type of business: better knowledge

Fundamental objectives: the assessment of skills acquired by children in the project “wild”.

Operational objectives:

Cognitive:

- (1) To describe a wild animal.
- (2) How to classify animals after feeding.
- (3) To narrate briefly about loved pet.
- (4) To guess a animal by a description or a riddle.
- (5) To count the animals and to compare them quantitatively through the mail.

Psycho-motor:

To handle the materials properly for the duties.

Affective:

To love and protect animals.

Teaching strategy:

Methods and procedures: conversation, explanation, the cube method, brainstorm, riddles and role play.

In computer education: Plane with wild animals, plastic cube, plush animals and coins.

Forms of organization: individual, side by group.

Game rules:

- (1) Children respond to teacher questions;
- (2) They handle the teaching material (divided into 3 groups);
- (3) Wins the team that accumulates the most points.

Teaching load:

Children will group animals by the place where they live, then describe the animals, they do count and make up sentences about their pets.

Elements of game: surprise, race, applause, riddles.

Framework objectives:

- (1) Training and exercise habits of care, protection and environment protection in order to foster a positive attitude towards it.
- (2) Develop interest in achieving a balanced environment.
- (3) Acquiring rules/rules aimed at ensuring an ecological balance character of human health, society and environment and an attitude disapproving training than those who violate these rules.

Reference objectives:

- (1) To know the components of the surrounding world: plants, animals, birds, wind;
- (2) To conduct some simple experiments to discover the operations side of the environment pollution factors (natural and artificial);
- (3) Identify forms of relief—hills, valleys;
- (4) Charge/differentiate the existence of interactions between humans and the environment;
- (5) To explore reactions of plants, animals in different situations under the influence of environmental

factors;

- (6) To observe a period of time—a specific topic—the development of a plant, to investigate;
- (7) To collect and observe nature through tours, trips in the wild;
- (8) You live in a natural sensations and feelings;
- (9) To become personally involved in the protection and conservation;
- (10) To take responsibility;
- (11) To develop an interest in such shares.

### 3. Conclusion

In extension, the fundamental “equation” to life on this planet is to find a balanced ratio between economic needs and ecological capacity of the planet, which is understood as a real capital of nations, clearly limited and easily perishable in terms of poor management. The man is an active factor in the spatial and temporal dynamics of the biotic environment in general and forests in particular. Anthropogenic factor actions can only be positive conclusions, especially today the growing number of scientists consider environmental degradation in general, and forests in particular, as the most dramatic crisis of mankind.

The curiosity of children leads to the accumulation of knowledge about the environment and his protection, which contributes to the development of children to think logically and correctly and to interpret the issues around them.

#### References:

- Ciubotaru, M.. 2005. *Environmental education in kindergarten (Educatia ecologica in gradinita)*. București: CD Press.
- Drucker, P. F.. 1999. *Tomorrow’s realities (Realitățile lumii de maine)*. București: Ed. Teora.
- Johann, D.. 2006. Sustainable development. (Report of *the IUCN Renowned Thinkers Meeting*, 29-31).
- McKercher, B.. 2003. Sustainable tourism development: Guiding principles for planning and management. (Presentation at the *National Seminar on Sustainable tourism Development*, Bishkek, Kyrgystan, November 5-9.)
- Sabo, H.. 2008. *Umwelterziehung—Environmental education in schools*. Cluj-Napoca (Ed.). Casa: Cărții de Știință.
- Sabo, H. & Mac, I.. 2009. *Umwelterziehung—Environmental education in the university of applied sciences*. Nürnberg: Druck Zentrum.

(Edited by Chris and Suky)