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## THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S MUSICAL ABILITIES THROUGH SPECIFIC TYPES OF MUSICAL ACTIVITIES

**Resume:** The goal of the conducted research was to explore how much preschool teachers value certain types of musical activities, which positively influence the development of preschool children's musical abilities. The assumption in the research was that preschool teachers would choose musical games as the most prominent activity type in their educational work, as well as consider them to be the most important type of musical activity. The research results gave completely unexpected and different results from the expected. Namely, preschool teachers use sung songs the most, and do not consider musical games the most important musical activity type. Musical games are in the fourth place on an importance list of five items.

**Key words:** musical abilities, musical games, musical activity types.

### Introduction

Today, on their professional, journey pedagogues and psychologists come across the problems and questions: Why are counting rhymes being heard less and less in preschool and school hallways? Why are child games disappearing? Why are there less and less child choirs in elementary and high schools? Why are learners' vocal abilities on a low level? What contributed to a small number of youths in cultural-artistic associations? The answers to these questions can be sought in as early as the preschool education. Preschool education forms the foundation of the students' future personality and on its quality depends the successfulness of further development and learning. The social education of preschool children is achieved through the combined action of family upbringing and preschool education (Kamenov, 1995). The development of musical abilities in children, the fostering of love for music and musical taste, should be gradual and professionally developed by the preschool teachers through collaboration with preschool teachers, preschool institutions and the family. In order to fulfill these goals, the preschool teacher should become familiar with musical abilities and ways of their development.

### Theoretical basis and terminology clarification

Many authors consider musical abilities to be the same thing as musicality. The Russian musical psychologist and writer Boris Mihailovic Teplov considers that musicality consists of a number of musical abilities, which enable a person to be a musician. *The main sign of musicality is experiencing music as a reflection of a certain context* (Radiceva, 2008: 91). Teplov adds to this that *if a child reacts emotionally, and is simultaneously not able to recognize intonational and rhythmic mistakes in the performance, its emotions reflect musical content of the piece only in*

the most general way (Radiceva, 2008: 91). Therefore, musicality would represent an emotional reaction to music, but also an active and sophisticated listening and acceptance of music. The American music psychologist Carl Seashore considers musicality to be a collection of special abilities (25 abilities exist). In the preschool education practice the focus is on the development of the following abilities: A feeling for pitch, loudness, tone duration, a feeling for harmony and tone agreement, memory efficiency and a feeling for rhythm (Kojov-Bukvic, 1989:22). Each of the musical abilities should be developed through certain musical activities which are a key element of musical activities. Types of musical activities are the same for all age groups, but having in mind the differences in psychophysical development, they differ in regards to task complexity and demands for their execution. In the preschool education of children the following types of activities are used: singing, listening to music, playing instruments for children and musical games (Durkovic-Pantelic, 1998).

Musical games, as a type of musical activities, represent games in which musical thought is the initiator and carrier of all actions which are happening in the game. *Musical games significantly contribute to the conscious development of character and intellect, enrich the psychological life, contribute to esthetic upbringing and the development of various movements with a special role in refining the rhythm of movement, the functioning of important organic functions and a plethora of other characteristics and abilities necessary for everyday life* (Durkovic-Pantelic, 1998: 139). Adequate implementation of musical games can positively influence the development of musical abilities, which will contribute to the synchronization of movements to the music. Consequently, children will develop their motoric skills, the coordination of arm and leg movement as well as influence the posture. By correctly choosing musical games children can develop the ability to notice, develop a feel for the collective performance, tolerance, the ability for an emotional experience through quality music, while simultaneously developing the musical taste of the children. Hence, musical games influence the whole development of a child's personality.

Many authors had the tendency to enrich the literature on musical games, where apart from expressing the importance of musical games and presenting musical examples, they suggested divisions of musical games. Perhaps the most detailed division of musical games was proposed by the author Milena Đurković-Pantelić in the book *Preschool Children Musical Education Methodology*<sup>1</sup>(published in 1998). The author separated the first games through movement and music, which can be performed with children in the first three years of life. In the chapter *Musical games*, Đurković-Pantelić defined the concept of musical game, described its importance and gave the division. She highlights that musical games are the starting point in the work of all preschool teachers and that the whole child personality development depends on them (Durkovic-Pantelic, 1998). The author mentioned that the basic division of musical games is on games with singing and games with instrumental music, but also suggested a more precise division on: counting rhymes, games with singing, games with instrumental music, national dances, creative games (dance improvisations), games in the field of theory of music (which represent musical-didactic games) and dramatizations (Durkovic-Pantelic, 1998). Musical games which the author Đurković-Pantelić did not mention, but which are very important for the preschool children's musical development, are games with familiar songs, counting rhymes and compositions. The mentioned games were emphasized by Nadežda Vukomanović, who published a collection of musical games for preschool children and primary school children, with Olga Komnenić in 1981.

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<sup>1</sup>Original title: Metodika muzičkog vaspitanja dece predškolskog uzrasta

It can be concluded that musical games are an important form of musical activity, which positively influence the development of musical ability in preschool children and whose importance is expressed through their implementation in the educational process with the youngest children, and even before that, from birth, from the inclusion in the school preparation program, including the preschool preparation program. By examining the preschool educational program of the Autonomous province Vojvodina (published in 1988), it was deduced that games were an important part of musical activities. In the program, for each age group, the proximal number of musical games which need to be implemented during a school year is given, with the note that in everyday activities teachers should encourage children to engage in their implementation. In the aforementioned program instructions were given for the development of musical abilities in preschool children through musical games, but not criteria for their selection (as well as examples of certain musical games). By examining the program *The model for program foundations of educational work with preschool children*<sup>2</sup> (published in 1995) and *Regulations on the basics of preschool programs*<sup>3</sup> (published in 2006), which is currently the only official program, it was concluded that 4 musical activity types can be found in preschool musical education: listening to music, singing, playing a musical instrument and dancing activities. It is noticed that musical games are omitted as an important type of activity. In the regulations it is also indicated that all activities should be realized through games, which can justify the omission of musical games, but not the reason why they are no longer officially in the program.

It has already been foregrounded that the cooperation between preschool teachers, preschool institutions and parents is necessary. Furthermore preschool teachers need to be familiar with types of musical activities and possibilities of developing musical abilities; we cannot be certain whether children listen to music appropriate for their age at home. We cannot be certain whether parents sing with children songs, perform counting rhymes etc. This is why it is important for the preschool teachers to be familiar with family circumstances in which the child is raised, and parents should become familiar with the goals, content and way of work of the preschool institution so as to become involved in its work (Kamenov, 1995). Preschool teachers should be aware of the importance of the musical education of children and the knowledge of musical activity types, as a basis for further development of the preschool children's musical activity. This research gives information on the preschool teachers' importance assessment of certain forms of musical activities for the development of preschool children's musical abilities. Sladana Jovanovic conducted a similar study titled *The characteristics of musical games and their implementation in work with preschool children*. Hence, the results of the aforementioned study will be compared with the results of our study.

### Research subject and problem

The research subject is the preschool teachers' opinion on the importance of certain musical activity types, with the role of preschool children musical ability development, as well as the expressed need for assistance in the realization of musical education activities. The research problem is based on the questions: do preschool teachers recognize the importance of certain music activity types, which positively influence the development of preschool children's abilities; how do they assess the musical activities value; how often do they use certain aids

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<sup>2</sup>Original: Model osnova programa vaspitno-obrazovnog rada sa predškolskom decom

<sup>3</sup>Original: Pravilnik o opštim osnovama predškolskog programa

for musical games; do they express the need for support in musical education realization and in what segment of work is it needed.

### **The research goal and tasks**

The goal of this research is to determine whether preschool teachers recognize the importance of certain musical activity types, which positively influence the development of preschool children's musical ability development, as well as to find out whether there exists a need for support in the implementation of musical education. In order to reach the defined goal of the research the following tasks must be completed:

1. Investigate which type of musical activity preschool teachers' use the most in age groups with which they work.
2. Investigate the opinions of preschool teachers on the importance of musical activity types which positively influence the development of musical abilities in preschool children.
3. Investigate to what extent the educational differences among preschool teachers influences the expressed need for support in the implementation of musical education.
4. Investigate whether a difference exists between the evaluation of the preschool teacher's own musical competency and the need for support in the musical education activities.
5. Investigate in which segment of work preschool teachers need support in the implementation of musical education activities.
6. Investigate how often musical instruments (e.g. pianos, accordions, guitars) are used in musical games which are performed during musical education activities.

### **Research hypotheses**

On the basis of the research subject and the indicated importance of the same, as well as the posed research goal and task, the following hypotheses, which acted as a starting point, were posed.

#### **The general hypothesis:**

**HG** – It is assumed that preschool teachers recognize and highly value the importance of the implementation of certain musical activity types, which positively influence the development of preschool children's musical abilities, and that a need exists for support in the implementation of musical education activities.

Separate hypotheses:

**H1** – It is assumed that musical games, as a type of musical activity, are used the most, by preschool teachers, in age groups in which they work.

**H2** – Assumes that preschool teachers consider musical games the most important type of musical activity, which positively influences the musical development of preschool children.

**H3** – It is assumed that a significant difference does not exist between the preschool teachers' level of education and the expressed need for assistance in the implementation of musical education activities.

**H4** – It is assumed that there exists a significant difference between the preschool teachers' self-assessed level of musical competence and expressed need for support in the implementation of musical education activities.

**H5** – It is assumed that, in the preschool teachers' opinion, the most support is needed in the playing of musical instruments (e.g. piano, guitar, accordion).

**H6**–It is assumed that preschool teachers who in their institutions have a musical instrument (e.g. piano, guitar or accordion), use it occasionally for musical games, which are implemented during musical education.

#### **Research variables, population in the research sample**

In accordance with the research goal, tasks and hypotheses, the following variables were posed: age group, preschool teachers' educational level and preschool teachers' musical competencies. The sample was adequate, it consisted of 115 employed preschool teachers.

#### **Research methods, techniques and instruments**

During the research the descriptive method was used, which was chosen in accordance with the nature of the problem, the subject, goal, tasks and the hypotheses of the research. In the paper the poll technique was implemented, and the instrument was a poll in the form of an anonymous Questionnaire intended for employed preschool teachers. The questions were in the written form, as well as the answers. In the paper a questionnaire was used which comprised of twelve carefully formulated questions, eleven of which were closed ended questions while one was a combined type. The statistical data processing, of the data collected with the questionnaire, was conducted using SPSS.20. FOR WINDOWS statistical packet, with an accent on descriptive statistics (which incorporated frequency, average, standard deviation, ranking) and a nonparametric Chi-Square test and correlation (Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, which represents nonparametric measure of the connection between two subjects' variables, was calculated).

#### **Research results**

Firstly, the structure analysis of the subjects will be described. The subjects (in the following text preschool teachers) were asked to circle the age group in which they work. From the total number of preschool teachers, 18 (15.7%) worked in the toddler group, 17 (14.8%) worked in the younger group, 34 (29.6%) worked in the middle group, 23 (20.0%) worked in the older group and 23 (20.0%) worked in the preparatory group. It can be concluded that the largest number of preschool teachers worked in the middle group, followed by a smaller number in the older and preparatory groups, while the smallest number and approximately the same was in the toddler and younger groups. The second task was for them to circle their educational level. From the total number 115 (100%), 16 (13.9%) indicated that they were working with a high school education, 47 (40.9%) with a vocational college education, 43 (37.4%) with a college education (with or without specialist studies) and 9 (7.2%) with a university (with the completed master studies or without them). It can be concluded that the largest number of employees had a completed vocational college education, and a little smaller number with a completed college education (with or without specialist studies), a considerably smaller number of employees completed high school, while the smallest number completed university (with the completed master studies or without them).

After the preschool teacher structure analysis, the tasks, hypotheses and research results are analyzed. In order to fulfill the first research task, to investigate which type of musical activity is implemented the most, regarding the age group in which the preschool teachers work, the preschool teachers were asked to note which of the given musical activity types they implement the most during musical education activities. The offered answers were: 1. performing counting rhymes, 2. singing songs, 3. listening to music, 4. musical games (e.g. games with singing, musical didactic games, folk games), 5. playing on instruments of Orff's instrumentation. In the first hypothesis it was assumed that preschool teachers most

frequently implement musical games, as a type of musical activity. The gathered data was viewed in relation to the age group which was taught. It was concluded that most teachers who worked with toddlers implemented the musical activity of singing songs, while musical games were very rarely implemented. A similar situation can be noticed with preschool teachers of the younger, middle and older groups of children, and that most preschool teachers implement singing songs the most, while musical games are implemented by a very small number of preschool teachers. In comparison to the preschool teachers who work with the aforementioned age groups, the ones who work with the preparatory groups also implement singing songs the most, but a larger number implements musical games.

Table 1. A tabulation of the implementation of musical activities in reference to the age group in which the preschool teacher works:

		The application of musical activities					Total
		1. performing counting rhymes	2. singing songs	3. listening to music	4. musical games	5. playing instruments of Orff instrumentation	
Age group	toddler group	1	13	3	1	0	18
	younger group	3	12	1	1	0	17
	middle group	1	20	8	4	1	34
	older group	0	19	1	3	0	23
	preparatory group	1	14	0	8	0	23
Total		6	78	13	17	1	115

On the basis of the gathered, analyzed tasks and the first posed hypothesis, divergence from the first hypothesis can be concluded. Furthermore, preschool teachers in accordance with the age groups used singing songs the most and that musical games, as an important type of activity, were implemented less.

In order to accomplish the second task of the research, to investigate the preschool teachers' opinion on the importance of musical activities which positively influence the development of children's musical abilities, the preschool teachers were asked to, in their opinion, rank the musical activities, which positively influence the development of musical abilities in preschool children, according to their importance, by writing a number between 1 and 5 (starting from number one as the most important form of musical activity) under the offered answers. The following types of musical activities were offered: 1. performing counting rhymes, 2. singing songs, 3. listening to music, 4. musical games, 5. playing on instruments of Orff's instrumentation. In the second hypothesis it was assumed that musical games would be evaluated as the most important type of musical activity which positively influences the development of preschool children's musical abilities. The results are as follows: in the first place, as the most important type of musical activity, singing songs was chosen, on the second place listening to music, on the third place performing counting rhymes, on the fourth place musical games and on the fifth place playing musical instruments of the Orff instrumentation. It can be concluded, that musical games are not highly valued by preschool teachers, which is contrary to the proposed hypothesis that in preschool teachers' opinion musical games are the most important type of musical activity which positively influences preschool children's musical abilities development.

Table 2. A tabulation of the preschool teachers' opinion on the importance of musical activity types and their ranks:

Activity type	N	Mean*	SD*	Rank*
1. performing counting rhymes	115	2.84	1.367	3
2. singing songs	115	2.19	1.191	1
3. listening to music	115	2.66	1.256	2
4. musical games	115	3.10	1.192	4
5. playing inst. of Orff's instr.	115	4.21	1.232	5
Total	115			

\*N- number; Mean- arithmetic mean; SD – standard deviation (it indicates how much elements together deviate from the arithmetic mean of all the elements);

The third task was to investigate to what extent preschool teachers' education influences their expressed need for support in the implementation of musical education activities, where it was assumed that a statistically significant difference does not exist between the level of education and the expressed need for support.

On the basis of the gathered results of the total number of preschool teachers with a high school education (16), 12 (75.0%) expressed a need for help in the implementation of musical education activities, while 4 (25.0%) did not express the need for help. From the total number with a vocational college education (47), 24 (51.1%) expressed a need for help in the implementation of musical education activities and 23 (48.9%) did not express a need for help. From the total number with a college education (with or without specialist studies) (43), 23 (53.5%) expressed a need for help in the implementation of musical education activities and 20 (46.5%) did not express the need. From the total number with a university (with the completed master studies or without them) (9), 3 (33.3%) expresses a need for help in the implementation of musical education activities, and 6 (66.7%) did not express the need.

Table 3. A tabulation of differences between the preschool teachers' education level and the expressed need for support in the implementation of musical education activities:

			Is help needed?		Total
			1. yes	2. no	
Preschool teachers' education level	1. high school	number of preschool teachers	12	4	16
		preschool teachers' educ. level	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
		if help is needed	19.4%	7.5%	13.9%
		total	10.4%	3.5%	13.9%
	2. vocational college	number of preschool teachers	24	23	47

		preschool teachers' educ. level	51.1%	48.9%	100.0%
		if help is needed	38.7%	43.4%	40.9%
		total	20.9%	20.0%	40.9%
	3. college	number of preschool teachers	23	20	43
		preschool teachers' educ. level	53.5%	46.5%	100.0%
		if help is needed	37.1%	37.7%	37.4%
		total	20.0%	17.4%	37.4%
	4. university	number of preschool teachers	3	6	9
		preschool teachers' educ. level	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
		if help is needed	4.8%	11.3%	7.8%
		total	2.6%	5.2%	7.8%
	Total	number of preschool teachers	62	53	115
preschool teachers' educ. level		53.9%	46.1%	100.0%	
if help is needed		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
total		53.9%	46.1%	100.0%	
		$\chi^2 (3) = 4.55, P = 0.21$			

The conclusion is reached that 62 (53.9%) of preschool teachers need help, while 53 (46,1%) do not need help.

Table 4. A tabulation of the expressed need for the implementation of musical education activities:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1. yes	62	53.9	53.9	53.9
	2. no	53	46.1	46.1	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

*Frequency*- answers frequency; *Percent* – the frequency of answers expressed in percentages; In order to complete the third task a *nonparametric statistical procedure* used to examine the compatibility of two distributions – Chi-Square test, needed to be implemented (Miskovic, 2008:156). It did not show a statistically significant difference between the preschool teachers' educational level and the expressed need for support in the implementation of musical education activities,  $\chi^2 (3) = 4.55 p = 0.21$ . It can be concluded that everyone needs help, regardless of the educational level.

From the given results it can be concluded that the third hypothesis was confirmed, that a statistically significant difference between the preschool teachers' educational level and the expressed need for support in the implementation of musical education activities does not exist. The aforementioned conclusions can be connected to the inadequate acquisition of preschool teachers' professional musical competencies in certain areas of musical education,



as well as a need for their further development. Professional competencies form certain musical education areas (i.e. the area in which the preschool teacher needs help) can be gained by attending organized seminars dedicated to the musical education of preschool children or the cooperation of musical assistants and the preschool teachers (if the institution has a professional in the aforementioned area of expertise), as well as independent practice and further development of the acquired professional musical competencies.

The fourth research task was to investigate whether a difference exists between the evaluated level of one's own musical competencies and the expressed need for support in the implementation of musical education activities. It was assumed that a significant difference exists between the evaluated level of the preschool teachers' own music competence and the expressed need for support in the implementation of music education activities.

Table 5. The table showing the difference between the self-evaluated level of preschool teachers' music competence and the expressed need for support in order to carry out music class activities:

			Self-evaluation of knowledge					Total
			Very low	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent	
Is help needed?	Yes	Number	2	17	25	10	8	62
		Is help needed	3.2%	27.4%	40.3%	16.1%	12.9%	100.0%
		Self-evaluation of knowledge	100.0%	65.4%	64.1%	31.3%	50.0%	53.9%
		Number	1.7%	14.8%	21.7%	8.7%	7.0%	53.9%
	No	Number	0	9	14	22	8	53
		Is help needed	0.0%	17.0%	26.4%	41.5%	15.1%	100.0%
		Self-evaluation of knowledge	0.0%	34.6%	35.9%	68.8%	50.0%	46.1%
		Total	0.0%	7.8%	12.2%	19.1%	7.0%	46.1%
Total	Number	2	26	39	32	16	115	
	Is help needed	1.7%	22.6%	33.9%	27.8%	13.9%	100.0%	
	Self-evaluation of knowledge	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	Total	1.7%	22.6%	33.9%	27.8%	13.9%	100.0%	
							$X^2(4) = 11,430, p = 0.02.$	

By looking at the presented results we can conclude that there is a difference between the preschool teachers' self-evaluated music education knowledge and competence and the expressed need for support in order to carry out music class activities. In order to ascertain whether there is a statistically significant difference, it was necessary to calculate Chi-Square. The calculated Chi-Square shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the preschool teachers' self-evaluated music education knowledge and competence and the expressed need for support in order to carry out music class activities,  $X^2(4) = 11,430, p = 0.02$ . The abovementioned affirms the fourth hypothesis – that there is a significant difference between the preschool teachers' self-evaluated music education knowledge and competence and the expressed need for support in order to carry out music class activities – and concludes that those preschool teachers who evaluate their own music education knowledge and

competence as good, have the greatest need for support in order to carry out music class activities.

The next task was to examine which area of work needed the support in order to carry out music class activities. It was presumed that the preschool teachers' opinion was that they needed support the most for playing musical instruments (e.g. piano, guitar, accordion). The preschool teachers were given the following answers: 1. playing musical instruments (e.g. piano, guitar, accordion), 2. vocal reproduction of songs 3. listening to music (e.g. processing of music tempo and dynamics by listening to music), 4. playing Orff's instruments 5. they were also given the option to indicate what kind of help they needed. Since no one specifically stated what kind of help they needed, and that they rather opted for given answers, it was not possible to consider other answers. The results of the research give us the conclusion that the majority expressed the need for support for playing musical instruments, which confirms the given fifth hypothesis – that the preschool teachers' opinion is that they needed support the most for playing musical instruments (e.g. piano, guitar, accordion).

Table 6. The table depicting the areas of work in which preschool teachers require assistance:

Activities Answers	Playing musical instruments	Vocal reproduction of songs	Listening to music	Playing Orff's instruments
<b>YES</b>	<b>56 (48.7%)</b>	<b>3 (2.6%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>9 (7.8%)</b>
<b>NO</b>	<b>59 (51.3%)</b>	<b>112 (97.4%)</b>	<b>115 (100%)</b>	<b>106 (92.2%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>115 (100%)</b>	<b>115 (100%)</b>	<b>115 (100%)</b>	<b>115 (100%)</b>

The sixth task was to examine the frequency of musical instrument usage (e.g. piano, guitar, accordion) in musical games which are performed during music classes (games with instrumental accompaniment, national Kolo circle dance etc.). Taking into consideration that both auditory and audio-visual devices can be used with them, a hypothesis was formulated which presupposes that preschool teachers, who possess an instrument on the premises, occasionally use that instrument in music games which are conducted during music class activities. The results show that out of the total number (115), 69 teachers answered that they possess a musical instrument, and 46 that they do not possess a musical instrument on premises. Taking into the account that those who answered that they do not possess a musical instrument on the premises responded to the second question by stating that they do not use one, we will take into consideration the answers of those who do possess instruments on the premises. Out of the total number of those who answered that they possess a musical instrument on the premises (69), 25 individuals answered that they often use it in music games which are conducted during activities, 36 occasionally and no less than 8 that they do not use it, even if they have one. The fact that the preschool teachers do not use musical instruments which they own on the premises may indicate that they do not know how to use it well. After all that has been said, we can conclude that the sixth hypothesis has been confirmed – that the preschool teachers, who possess a musical instrument on the premises (e.g. piano, guitar, accordion), occasionally use it in music games which are conducted during music class activities.

Table 7. The table depicting the frequency of musical instrument usage (e.g. piano, accordion, guitar) in music games which are conducted during music class activities (games with instrumental accompaniment, national Kolo circle dance etc.):

		How often do you use a musical instrument?			Total
		Frequently	Occasionally	Never	
Do they own a musical instrument?	1. yes	25	36	8	69
	2. no	0	0	46	46
Total		25	36	54	115

### Interpretation of research results

The conducted research was based on a profound interest in the process of preschool children music education with an accent on the importance and types of music games, their characteristics and influence on the music development of children. By analyzing studies of various authors who dealt with music games, it can be concluded that music games undoubtedly occupy an important place in the life of preschool children, and that they have an important role in education. By analyzing old education programs and by comparing them with the new official program (Regulations on the basics of preschool programs published in 2006.), it can be concluded that this program, in comparison to the 1988. program, does not identify music games as music activities. Regarding this piece of information, a question arises: „should preschool teachers implement music games in their educational work even if they are neither included nor recognized in the official education program?“ Regarding this question, the only answer that can be given now is that in the aforementioned education program it was highlighted that all child activities should be conducted as games.

The results of this empirical research indicate a fact, which is probably linked to the lack of music games as a type of musical activity in the official education program. Taking into consideration the importance of music games, their multifaceted and widespread application in education, as well as the fact that they can be used with the youngest children, the research presupposed that, in their educational work, the preschool teachers would decide to employ music games the most, which are in their opinion the most important type of a music activity. The results of the research have brought various and completely unexpected conclusions, in comparison to those that were presupposed: the preschool teachers do not apply music games the most (but instead, singing songs) and music games, according to their opinion, are not the most important type of music activities, and what is more, they are in the fourth place of importance out of five given answers. The reasons why this research produced such results can be numerous. The first reason, as was already mentioned, may be the omission of music games from the official education program, which would consequently include the absence of their application. The second reason may be linked to the insufficient knowledge of types of music games by preschool teachers, which could be redressed by organizing professional development seminars about music games which they would attend and thus obtain professional competences from the aforementioned fields. Preschool teachers would in this way familiarize themselves with the importance, varieties, ways of application and reviews of relevant bibliography from the authors who dealt with the above-mentioned field of research. The gathered results, the conclusions from the first and second research tasks, as well as the deviation from the hypotheses, can be compared to the research by Slađana Jovanović, on the topic Characteristics of musical games and their implementation in the work with preschool children. In the aforementioned research, on the basis of preschool teachers check lists in the work books, the number of minimum and maximum implemented musical games per month

was presented (Jovanovic, 2014: 140-141). A conclusion was reached that in the preschool group which had the least implemented musical games, musical games hadn't been implemented during two months (September and January), while in the group with the maximum number of implemented games, the minimal number of four musical games was in January and the largest number of ten musical games was in December. It can be concluded that musical games are not widely implemented during musical education activities, although they represent an important type of musical activity which positively influences musical ability development of preschool children.

The data that preschool teachers equally need support in conducting music education activities, regardless of their level of education, may indicate the need for more intensive organization of seminars where they will acquire professional competences from various fields of music education, as well as signing up associates who would "make up for" professional competences from music education which they "lack".

The fact, proven through the undertaken research, is that preschool teachers need support in conducting music education activities, regardless of education level. Those who evaluated their own music education knowledge and competences as good, have the greatest need for help, which indicates the need for more intensive organization of seminars where they will acquire professional competences from various fields of music education, as well as employing music assistants.

The obtained results show that the majority of preschool teachers expressed the need for support in playing musical instruments (e.g. piano, guitar, accordion) and that, out of 69 who own a musical instrument on the premises, 8 of them do not use it, which indicates the possible necessity for employing music assistants. The questions arise: "are sufficient professional competences acquired in the field of playing musical instruments in preschool teacher training colleges or universities?" If they are acquired: "how much do they invest in refreshing, furthering their skills and continuous practicing"? At this point in time, answers cannot be given about the posed questions, but we should have in mind further exploration of the mentioned topics, which for now remain just posed questions. The results shown here can be linked to the results of the aforementioned research of Sladana Jovanovic. By analyzing the questionnaire responses of preschool teachers and music assistants, where suggestions for the improvement of music games within the field of education were presented, one of the suggestions was the inclusion of an instrument while practicing a song (because children acquire melodies more easily with instrumental accompaniments). Another suggestion was to dedicate more time to playing instruments during studies at preschool teacher training colleges, as well as putting more emphasis on playing in classes. These results indicate the need for teachers to acquire new professional competences in the field of playing instruments. Besides the suggestions for the improvement of education, the teachers stressed the objections about how music activities are conducted. They expressed the need for the support of a music pedagogue and explained that teachers are sufficient for some exercises and music games, but explained that not every teacher is sufficiently gifted for all activities and that a music assistant is needed. Another objection concerned the lack of work materials: Orff's instruments, CD players, computers, video projectors, instruments (pianos, accordions and guitars) and professional development seminars, which once again indicates the need for assistance and acquisition of professional music competences (Jovanovic, 2014: 174-175).

Based on the interpretation of the research results, we can conclude that the general hypothesis has been partially confirmed – that preschool teachers highly regard the importance of specific varieties of music activities which positively influence the development of music competence in preschool children (in this case music games), as well as that there is a need for support in conducting music education activities.

### Conclusion

From the previously mentioned it can be concluded that musical games are important for the development of preschool children musical ability, but that in the opinion of preschool teachers they are not the most important type of musical activity. Through the usage of all types of musical activities through games, the development of preschool children's musical ability can be positively influenced.

Preschool education represents an important part of children's lives because foundations for a further psychophysical development (which also includes the musical one) are then laid, and which are then improved upon in elementary and high schools, and in higher education. Certainly, for a successful development of an individual, every "link in the chain" is important, but the greatest influence in this process comes from preschool teachers who "initiate" that development. Thus, pedagogues and psychologists have to look for the answers to the posed questions in each one of those "links", by beginning the research with the first one, and that is the period of preschool education. Everyone who stands for music education, therefore also for a musical development of every individual, has to invest even more effort, in order to improve the current situation, while also bearing in mind the future of music education.

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**Biographical note**

**Jasmina Stolić** graduated from the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad in music pedagogy in 2011, and in September 2014. she successfully presented her Master's thesis on the topic of *Music games and movement with music accompaniment in the preschool period*. She completed her Master's studies with a GPA of 9.50 and thus gained the Master of Arts degree. She works at the Preschool Teacher Training College "Mihailo Palov" in Vrsac as a teaching associate. She is a conductor in three choirs: *City choir "Zora"*, *Church choir* in Srbobran and women choir of the Preschool Teacher Training College "Mihailo Palov" in Vrsac and Teacher Education Faculty in Belgrade, the department in Vrsac.