

**PARENTAL PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL COUNSELLING  
FOR EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN  
AND ADOLESCENTS TO ACHIEVE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE  
IN PANDEMIC CONTEXT**

Elena Anghel Stănilă <sup>1</sup>

*"Titu Maiorescu" University of Bucharest  
Romania*

We live difficult times. Children, teenagers, adults all are going through new life context. Restrictions enforces during the state of emergency and the state of alert, the collapse of the economy and its consequences spread over many months have certainly affect everyone. A number of new threats have arisen: illness, human loss (of self or of loved ones), loss of the job or decreased income with inherent implications on the management of bills, bank loans, education and school for children. People are thus overwhelmed by a lot of anxieties and stresses that can activated for some people resilience mechanisms, natural capacities of adapting in a positive way to unfavorable situations. Thus, those with a more balanced psychological structure managed to have a greater capacity for resilience. On the contrary, people with a less balanced structure, associated with some symptoms or a mental structure with serious disorders have developed a lower resilience with a negative impact on personal, family, professional and community life. As are in a close emotional connection with adults, children and adolescents have also accessed the resilience mechanisms, succeeding to adapt more or less efficiently to the new and difficult situation of life.

Therefore, the uniqueness of human being and the individual reaction to the context caused by the pandemic are important elements to consider in education, one of the most impacted sectors during this year. All actors involved in the educational process – children and adolescents as well as adults (parents, teachers, non-teaching staff) - are strongly affected. The specific psychological age peculiarities that shape human behaviors in school activities also taken into account. It is therefore necessary to consider thus a multidirectional educational process which should pay attention to the complete person, with all personality levels: well-being, family, professional (for students / - academic) and community.

---

<sup>1</sup> Associate professor, PhD, Faculty of Psychology, "Titu Maiorescu" University of Bucharest, Romania; E-mail: [elenaanghel2001@yahoo.com](mailto:elenaanghel2001@yahoo.com)

An important solution to create opportunities for a more attractive school environment for children, reassuring for parents and satisfaction and professional accomplishments generator for teachers and non-teaching staff should be built upon good organization, a transparent communication focused on both school issues and everything else. aspects that ensure the satisfaction with the life and well-being of children, parents, teachers and non-teaching staff. The solution must be considered in terms of advantages for all educational actors involved. The challenges the pandemic brought to us have become important sources of knowledge and self-knowledge, increasingly outlining human's need for personal development and optimization.

Preschoolers, young schoolchildren, middle school and high school students need to know that things they learn are useful to them, they need attractive and modern learning methods that capture their attention and motivate they to learn, discover, study, deepen and use the information and skills developed in kindergarten and school. Information technology must become an important source for knowledge and development in the formal learning environment, but not the only one. It must be intertwined with passionate reading, the joy of developing and implementing team projects, presenting and capitalizing the results of their own activities. And all this should happen in a beautiful, comfortable and attractive setting arranged according to psychological age peculiarities. The duration of the school activities should be reasonable to give children the opportunity to recharge their batteries. This can be done in the numinous family environment, within a community of strongly emotionally and positively charged relationships (e.g., playing, having fun with friends), as well as in individual activities that satisfy one's passions.

But before this necessary rethinking of the education, we are still facing these new, transformative times in which parents should support the extremely challenging educational approach in the context of the covid-19 pandemic.

Parents who will access the educational psychology or psychological counseling services in order to obtain a better and adapted involvement in the psycho-educational process with their children have a certain profile. They are loving, involved and responsible, eager for knowledge and lifelong learning and development supporters. They are also successful parents, who want their children to become valuable people. And especially, there are parents who believe in the uniqueness of their child and in the ability to activate personal resources to support them achieve school performance even in extremely difficult circumstances.

Being interested in efficient involvement in the learning and development process of their children and adolescents, such parents have their own learning and education experiences in their family of origin as

essential reference point. They have specialized training themselves and a good knowledge on their children. They hold a specific vision about their child's developmental needs in the context of the general evolution of the world. They also have their own expectations in relation to the academic performance of their children and in connection with the development of the educational process (science / teacher's behavior). They own their own strategies in guiding children to achieve performances at cognitive, emotional and socio-relational level. And they are living in specific family environment.

Psychoeducational interventions for these parents can be organized both as individual consultations and / or in meeting groups between parents, organized on age levels or not. Individual consultations have the advantage to allow customization of the educational process as a result of a thorough psychodiagnosis. Parents' groups have the advantage of reduced costs that can weigh heavily in parents' decisions to access them, especially in the context of the economic crisis. The steps to carry out such psychoeducational interventions will focus on informing and training parents on effective ways to intervene in school activities of their children and adolescents, while (Re) - training will focus on changing patterns of behavior inherited from the relationship with their parents or personally practiced over time, but which do not have a good effect on the performance of the child or adolescent in relation to school activities.

Parental information should take into consideration the following:

1. *The features of the educational system*: private / state; facilities; staff and its specialized training; school curriculum – Romanian / British; implementation strategies – school, before-school, afterschool, home-school (learning activity and extracurricular / extracurricular activities) and all in a pandemic context;
2. *The psychological peculiarities of children / adolescents* are also essential information that we have to discuss with the parents. They will pay attention to:
  - Identifying aspects of uniqueness by collecting anamnestic data and psychodiagnosis of the child and the family system of origin as well as the specific difficulties encountered in educational activities in the case of individual consultations;
  - Highlighting the psychological age peculiarities (first 3 years of life, pre-schooling, early schooling, middle school years, high school years) at cognitive, emotional, socio-relational level;
  - Knowledge of effective psychoeducational methods to motivate children / adolescents for learning and development activities and for obtaining academic performance.
3. *Psychological aspects relevant for the parental role*:

- Essential information on the psychology of family system and the development of children and adolescents;
- Information on parental skills - cognitive, emotional, socio-relational;
- Information on time and stress management, about well-being and the effects of parental availability on the child's / adolescent's responsibility for performing academic training;
- Information on the management of restrictive situations imposed by the pandemic and on the responsible behavior for maintaining one's own health and that of others.
- *Parent training can start from a few basic psychological premises:*  
The child is born to learn. The plasticity of the brain is very high during the first five years of life, but then it is maintained throughout life. Nothing is static, everything is transforming - changes are happening these days faster than ever. Parents define their expectations in relation to their child's development and strive to create the best opportunities for their upbringing;

The training may focus on the development of the following skills of parental involvement in obtaining the academic performance of children and adolescents:

1. Communication and relationship skills:

- Parental / marital;
- Parental - filial;
- Parental – community: with educational actors (teacher, staff and management team of the school) as well as with other parents. Basically, there are skills related to developing their own emotional intelligence.

2. Skills for motivating children and adolescents for learning:

- Presenting and modeling parents' behaviors;
- Availability and active involvement of the parents in learning activities (formal / school activities of children / adolescents as well as informal activities – cultural, events, courses);
- Highlighting the qualities / resources used within the learning activity;
- Providing positive feedback;

3. Pedagogical skills:

- Skills for knowing the contents of school curricula and educational objectives by age levels;
- Learning effective psychoeducational methods and techniques for
- High-performance learning (goal setting, focused learning, day / week learning activity planning, techniques for consolidation and recapitulating learning material etc.);
- Skills for dealing with difficult learning situations;

4. Time, stress and workspace management skills:

- Creating the personal agenda and the agenda of the child / adolescent (daily / weekly / monthly) - personal, family, professional / school, community activities are considered;
- Management of stressful situations;
- Organizing the workspace as a motivating one for learning activities and obtaining academic performances simultaneously with the organization of the workspace of parents who are in telework and of other children / adolescents in the house.

(Re) - Training allows awareness on the origin of deficient / maladaptive parental behaviors in relation to their own children / adolescents by exploring the family tree over three generations and the psychological recovery of relationships with their own parents. This analysis facilitates the gradual adoption of compassionate behaviors in relation to their own parents and / or other significant people involved in their own process of growth and development. In this context, the change / replacement of old behavior patterns with effective intervention strategies in the process of obtaining the academic performance of children / adolescents will be fast. This (Re) training of behaviors process is successfully done in individual consultations for parents as is an extremely personal process.

So, it's hard for everyone! However, we can learn to live differently at any age! We develop resilient behaviors, reacting in a positive way to unfavorable situations to adapt actively and creatively in all areas of life: personal, family, professional, community! Educational psychologists can make an extremely beneficial contribution. Their interventions at group or individual level aim at helping children, adolescents and parents to build an attractive, efficient, useful educational approach even in these harsh conditions created by the pandemic.

Received  
September 2020

Accepted  
November 2020