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# PEDAGOGICAL KIT/MODEL OF LIFE SKILLS

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in the collaboration with JAH, AEVA, ITPIO, TATICS, TUCEP, ARTES, EUROACCION

2019



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## 1. THEORETICAL PART

### 1.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

**Early school leaving is an obstacle to economic growth and employment for EU Countries. Early school leavers are at risk of being unemployed later in life and participating less in democratic processes.** Leaving school early deprives young people of the possibility to engage in lifelong learning and puts them at risk of exclusion from society.. Young people who leave education and training prematurely are bound to lack skills and qualifications, and face a higher risk of unemployment, social exclusion and poverty. Prevention and early intervention can be strengthened through better support for those at risk at an early age. Parental involvement and stronger cooperation in and around schools, including with local communities and stakeholders also help. **Early school leaving is typically caused by a cumulative process of disengagement as a result of personal, social, economic, geographical, education or family-related reasons.** Such reasons can be external or internal to school processes and experiences and they are typically highly specific to the individual. Young people who leave education and training prematurely are bound to lack skills and qualifications, and to face serious, persistent problems on the labor market. **Throughout life, the ability to learn continuously and autonomously is listed as a prerequisite for social inclusion.** This gives the school the task of providing students with intellectual tools, but also the beliefs and self-regulation skills throughout their lives. **The promotion of rational and emotional abilities represents a social and political significant value,** given the conditions of high unemployment of young people and the intensification of strict mechanisms of competition between people and countries.

**LIKE Project intends to develop and disseminate an innovative pedagogic method, based on the centrality of pupils and of their emotional needs and requests, aiming to prevent and to face the early school leaving phenomenon.** LIKE aims to develop an unique pattern flexible enough to be adapted to the specific contexts and conditions of the different regions and individual situations.

**ARTeS srl is a Company,** that was born in 2008 and is based in Perugia, capital city of Umbria. It deals with research, consultancy, as well as planning, projecting and realization of all step-chain of professional education. Since 2009 Artes is an accredited entity for the professional education in the Umbrian Region. The Company collaborates with trade unions and business associations and it has carried out important research work for interprofessional funds (EBIT, EBIPRO), bilateral agencies (FORTE, FONTER, etc) and public research institutes (ISFOL).

**TUCEP - Tiber Umbria Comett Education Programme,** is a non-governmental association, based in Perugia, Italy. Eleven Italian Universities and Enterprises associated to form Tucep, in 1992 under a former Comett project. The main activity of TUCEP is the organization and the management of training courses at national and European levels. Since 2003 it has been accredited by the Umbria Region to provide higher, lifelong training activities. Its mission is: analyze training needs and

translate them in effective solutions and to plan solutions both for entrepreneurial and academic world, and for youth and workers.

The partnership has been structured taking in account, within the various national contexts, both of the existing specific and differentiated needs and conditions, and of the state of art of measures – already underway or planned/tested – that are susceptible to contribute to an operational transnational convergence to combat the Early school leaving. Some of these partners realized together the SSP project to tackle ESL and they gained work experience together. Are organizations that have significant experience in the field of education, analysis of training needs, the connection between school and the world of work and also operate in the outer areas to schools to prevent social conflicts, and to encourage integration. The partnership is composed by the following organizations:

**Junior Achievement Hungary – Cordinator** - as a licensed franchisee of Junior Achievement Worldwide, has been running its programs in Hungary since 1993. As the member of Junior Achievement – Young Enterprise Europe, it is one of the NGOs that is strong on both national and EU level. On a national level JA Hungary is the largest provider of entrepreneurship education programs reaching the students in more than 600 primary and secondary schools every year across Hungary. The main goal of the organisation is to promote experiential learning in all subjects, to develop teachers as coaches/ facilitators of the learning process and to supplement the classroom with practical, hands-on experiential learning opportunities, bringing the outside world into the school.

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**TATICS GROUP S.P.A Human Evolution**, is a Company that has several offices in Umbria, Lazio, Campania and Calabria regions. It deals with design and provision of consultancy services to companies and local marketing, communication services, design and events and services for continuous and higher education. TATICS spends expertise in managing, coordinating and monitoring EU projects.

**ITPIO** is a Bulgarian, private, no-governmental organization with the status of Association. It based in Sofia and its main activities consist of consulting (of local, regional and national authorities), scientific research, vocational educational training.

**WYŻSZA SZKOŁA BIZNESU I NAUK O ZDROWIU (WSBINOZ)** is one of the first non-public higher education institutions in central Poland. It is based in the city of Lodz, and offers health-allied studies as well as business and pedagogy faculties. It conducts numerous researches and educational projects and it deals with higher education institution (tertiary level).

**ASOCIACION CULTURAL EUROACCION MURCIA** is a non-governmental, independent organization based in Spain and its activities are mainly focused on the educational field, well oriented to personal and / or professional development. It has been actively working since 2002 in the following areas of work: social inclusion and volunteering programs, (immigrants, inmates, gypsies ...), education in human rights (EDH), training of trainers in the field of Youth, group dynamics, management and implementation of European Projects.

**AEVA - ASSOCIACAO PARA A EDUCACAO EVALORIZACAO DA REGIAO DE AVEIRO** based in Portugal, was founded in 1998 as a non-profit organization. Actually, it is the present owner of EPA – Escola Profissional de Aveiro – VET School of Aveiro which started in 1992. The school offers educational and training courses, for youngsters older than 15, giving equivalence to the 9th grade and professional courses, giving equivalence to the 12th grade, and courses for adults who have not achieved compulsory education, too.

**The Regional Inspectorate of Education (RIE)**, based in Bulgaria, is the territorial administration of the Ministry of Education and Science for the management and control of the public education system. It creates conditions for full implementation of the state policy of education in Pernik region and participates in the development of strategies and programs in the field of secondary education. RIE supports educational institutions – kindergartens, schools, and school units by performing organizational, informational, training functions and coordination.

### *Aims and goals, rationale for the project*

The European school systems are placed at the center of social and economic growth, and issues such as early school leaving, completion of upper secondary and key skills should be the subject of legislation and implementation of plans of educational policies aimed at avoiding the social and economic marginalization of a significant proportion of young people.

**LIKE - Life skills for improving primary school Environment** project intends to plan and develop specific experimental actions to prevent and reduce the school drop-out through the **realisation of training, evaluation and school activities focused on life skills**.

The project partnership, intends to experiment the introduction, into the training curricula, of " life skills " as an independent content, based on a new element in the world of education, **"the emotional dimension of the curriculum"**; establishing a model for the update, the qualification and the permanent training of educators.



LIKE Project is based on the Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions **“Tackling early school leaving: A key contribution to the Europe 2020 Agenda”**. The transnational dimension of LIKE project aims to intervene in tackling early school leaving in an overall inclusive learner-centred vision of education, in which high quality education is accessible to all. The project intends to develop and disseminate an **innovative pedagogic method, based on the centrality of pupils and of their emotional needs and requests, aiming to prevent and/or to face the early school leaving phenomenon**. The aim is to develop an unique pattern flexible enough to be adapted to the specific contexts and conditions of the different regions and individual situations.

## 1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MANUAL

### 1.2.1. *What are the aims of the publication*

Education and training systems often do not provide sufficient targeted support for pupils to cope with emotional, social or educational difficulties and to remain in education and training. Responding to the different learning styles of pupils and addressing the variable needs of mixed ability groups of students is an essential challenge for education.

On the basis of these considerations, LIKE Project developed an innovative pedagogic method, based on the centrality of pupils and of their emotional needs and requests, aiming to prevent and/or to face the early school leaving phenomenon.

The pedagogic model was developed in relation with the following needs:

- taking into the account the pupils' emotional dimension, with particular regard to pupils at risk of dropping out;
- increasing the awareness of boys and girls on their talents, to make them protagonists of their lives and active creators of their future;
- making school not only an educational environment, but also a life environment, a community in which pupils could share with mates and teachers their problems and needs.

The pedagogical model was developed as follows:

- identification of specific emotional skills to be transfer to pupils within the scholastic curricula;
- in relation to the identified skills, identification and description of contents, tools and methods to teach these skills to pupils (didactic contents, didactic materials – both traditional and ICT based, innovative and participative methods, such as peer learning, informal learning, mentoring, counselling) in collaboration with teachers of schools selected.

The aim is to develop an unique pattern flexible enough to be adapted to the specific context and conditions of the different regions, schools and individual situations.

The goal is also to provide broad support in the development of life skills and emotional development of students, which takes into account both pupils, their teachers and their parents. A wide range of tools will allow to develop a full supporting path for students, especially those at risk.

### 1.2.2. *How to use the Manual*

The manual is a selection of activities that support the overall development of students, with special emphasis on supporting the development of competencies and life skills and emotional development. We hope that the prepared proposal of activities will allow both to achieve the goal, but also give pupils and teachers a chance for an interesting form of activities and good fun.



All activities were placed in the table and categorized by individual areas, e.g. Planning skills; Changing habits of thinking, changing beliefs; Motivation to act (e.x. learning); Emotional intelligence, empathy; Organizational skills; Entrepreneurship; Ability to relax and rest; Assertiveness; Coping with stress; Conflicts management; Effective learning; Interpersonal communication; Creativity and creative thinking; Teamwork; Independent and critical thinking; Personal culture. Just look in the table to choose the appropriate area and go to the described activity. Some activities develop more than just one life skill.

We recommend active participation of teachers in the proposed activities, at least in some part of them. Certainly it favours better group building and deepening the teacher-student relationship. Especially the participation of the teacher in introductory activities, warm-up is natural. Sometimes, when working with such a young group of participants, it is worth for the teacher to model, to show the proposal how to implement the activity. However, it is necessary to pay attention and remember the necessity of constant observation of the students by the teacher. Observation is a key element for further work - on the basis of it, the teacher can build further work with the group. The observation of group processes that take place between students is also of key importance.

For the proper implementation of activities it is necessary to provide appropriate conditions, e.g. a spacious room for exercising, plastic materials for exercises related to painting, etc. In each activity, the materials and resources necessary to carry out a given task have been defined. All additional materials needed for the implementation of exercises such as photos, work cards, etc. can be found in the appendices to the manual.

The manual includes exercises aimed primarily at pupils, but in the following parts there are also tasks for teachers and parents whose aim is to support pupils in their emotional development and development of their life skills.

Basic rules in the implementation of activities:

- Ensure safe working conditions (e.g. proper preparation of the room);
- Treat activities as a safe space for own (pupils') development;
- The more you get involved, the more you gain - the active action is the key to success!
- Tolerance - We are all equal - everyone has the right to their own opinion, share their ideas;
- Mindfulness for the other person - everyone in the group is important!
- Mutual respect;
- We listen to each other;
- We do not judge each other;
- We do not criticize each other;

Before starting classes in a group of students, it is possible to propose the introduction of the above-mentioned rules and / or to supplement them with other necessary ones due to the special needs of the group.

### 1.2.3. Life skills which should be developed starting from early childhood

In recent years, the world is looking for a common ground for a variety of activities on prevention and health promotion of children and young people and ways to integrate scattered activities undertaken by various organizations and institutions. One of the proposals is disseminated by the World Health Organization (WHO), approach focusing on developing life skills.<sup>1</sup>

Formation of life skills is to create such an environment in which young people can acquire knowledge and skills and develop appropriate attitudes for building and developing a healthy lifestyle. Life skills is the ability to adaptation and positive behavior that enable the individual to effectively dealing with the challenges of everyday life. In particular, life skills are psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make the right decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, identify with others, cope and manage their lives in a healthy and effective manner. Life skills may relate to the activities of individuals, actions of groups of individuals and activities on the surrounding environment to become more friendly to health. Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.<sup>2</sup>

What are **life skills**? The term is defined differently. According to WHO, these skills allow a human being positive behavior adaptation, so that he/she can effectively deal with the tasks (requirements) and the challenges of everyday life. This term refers to the psychosocial skills (competencies). It does not include skills in the "physical" side of human functioning and professional skills and earn a living that complement the life skills. It distinguishes the skill from the characteristics (properties) of man. The characteristics include, for example self-esteem, responsibility, honesty. These features can be developed or strengthened in the process of acquiring life skills.<sup>3</sup>

#### The types of life skills<sup>4</sup>

Types of human skills needed to well-functioning in life and hierarchy of importance depends on many demographic, social and cultural factors. From the point of view of health promotion and primary prevention WHO distinguishes two groups of skills:

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<sup>1</sup> Woynarowska Barbara, *Umiejętności życiowe*, Warszawa, source on-line [http://www.google.pl/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&ved=0CCsQFjACahUKEwiUo\\_CSucHHAHVjw3IKHcSoBol&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lider.szs.pl%2Fbiblioteka%2Fdownload.php%3Fplik\\_id%3D1031%26f%3Dartykul\\_1031.doc&ei=TOnaVZTNI0OGyWPE0ZqQCA&usg=AFQjCNFfoKY5tWKLWS74igQWY\\_p71xHOFg](http://www.google.pl/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&ved=0CCsQFjACahUKEwiUo_CSucHHAHVjw3IKHcSoBol&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lider.szs.pl%2Fbiblioteka%2Fdownload.php%3Fplik_id%3D1031%26f%3Dartykul_1031.doc&ei=TOnaVZTNI0OGyWPE0ZqQCA&usg=AFQjCNFfoKY5tWKLWS74igQWY_p71xHOFg), available on 18.07.2018

<sup>2</sup> V.Todorovska-Sokolovska, *Umiejętności życiowe – ważny komponent szkoły przyjaznej dziecku*, ORE, source on-line <https://bezpiecznaszkola.men.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/...>, available on 18.07.2019

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Woynarowska, *Kształtowanie umiejętności*, source on-line <http://www.psychologia.edu.pl/czytelnia/50-artykuly/155-kszaltowanie-umiejtnosci.html>, available on 18.07.2018

<sup>4</sup> After: Barbara Woynarowska, *Kształtowanie umiejętności*, source on-line <http://www.psychologia.edu.pl/czytelnia/50-artykuly/155-kszaltowanie-umiejtnosci.html>, available on 18.07.2018

**Basic skills** for everyday life for a good mood, interpersonal relationships and behavior conducive to health. These include the ten skills, combined into 5 categories contain many "specific" skills:

- Making decisions and solving problems (including the search for alternatives, risk assessment, obtain information and evaluation, assessing the consequences of actions and behaviors, putting their goals, etc.).
- Creative thinking and critical thinking.
- Effective communication and maintaining good interpersonal relationships (ie. active listening, giving and receiving feedback, communicating verbal and nonverbal assertiveness, negotiating skills, conflict resolution, cooperation, teamwork).
- Self-awareness and empathy (eg. self-esteem, identification of their own strengths and weaknesses, positive thinking, building self-image and one's own body, self-education).
- Dealing with emotions and managing stress (including self-control, coping with pressure, fear, difficult situations, seek help, time management).

**Specific skills**, in order to deal with risks such as: assertive denying drug use, making sexual relations, participation in acts of violence, vandalism, etc. They are developed in conjunction with the above basic skills.

**Among life skills, which are particularly worth developing from an early age, we distinguish:**

Planning skills	Changing habits of thinking, changing beliefs
Motivation to act (e.x. learning)	Emotional intelligence, empathy
Organizational skills	Entrepreneurship
Ability to relax and rest	Assertiveness
Coping with stress	Conflicts management
Effective learning	Interpersonal communication
Creativity and creative thinking	Teamwork
Independent and critical thinking	Personal culture

Please note that probably particular activities may affect on several skills, e.x. *ability to relax* will be combined with *coping with stress* or *interpersonal communication* can go with *teamwork* and *personal culture*.

### 1.3. PROBLEM OF ESL IN THE PARTNER COUNTRIES

#### 1.3.1. *The situation of early school leaving in the European Union. Five countries, five cases.*

The share of early drop-outs from education (aged 18-24) – generally referred to as 'early school leavers' – has consistently decreased in the European Union (EU) over past years, from 17.0% in 2002 to 10.7% in 2016. It can be stipulated that fewer young women (9.2% in 2016) leave education and training early than young men (12.2%). The Europe 2020 target is that the rates of early school leaving (ESL) in the EU will decrease to below 10% by 2020. In Figure 1, the rates of ESL are indicated along with the Europe 2020 target set by the particular country.

As far as Spain is concerned, the most recent data indicate that ESL fell under a psychological level of 20% for the first time ever since such data were collected. It must be noted, however, that it is still a long distance away from the European average of 11,1% and a 15% target that has been envisioned by the EU for 2020 but it is a reassuring piece of data that entitles the Spanish decision-makers to be confident.

As far as Italy is regarded, similar to Spain, a high rate of ESL is characteristic of its education. However, it can be pointed out that commencing from depressing figure, Italy has already achieved the EU2020 target that was 16% and the rate of ESL has been decreasing ever since. Now they stand at 14% and the number are consistently improving.

With a view to Portugal, another country that has had to face a serious rate of ESL, higher than the EU rate, but not as bad as that of Italy and Spain, they are on their way of achieving the target at 10%; however, a lot needs to be improved in the coming two years as they are currently at the same level as Italy with 14%. Portugal was one of the countries that reduced the most its early school leaving rate within the last decade. Data from Eurostat (2016) demonstrates that the ESL rate on education and training has been dropping since ten years ago, and reaching 13.7% in 2015, 24.6 percentage points lower than in 2005, but still higher than the target for Europe Strategy 2020 (10%).

As concerns Bulgaria, their current figures are very similar to that of Italy and Portugal. The rate of ESL is 14% and their set target is 11%. According to the report of the European Commission (2017) contrary to the general tendency in the EU, the proportion of early school leavers (aged 18-24) is rising since it is now exactly at 13.8 % in 2016 in comparison to the EU average of 10.7 %. In this context, reaching the national Europe 2020 target of 11 % will be difficult. The report affirms that ESL is very low in cities (2.8 %) but increases to 15.8 % in towns and suburbs and to 30.3 % in rural areas.

As regards Poland, ESL in Poland was 5.3% in 2009 and have slightly increased to 5.6% in 2013. It is below the Europe 2020 headline target of 10% (Eurostat, 2016). However, Poland has set up a national target of reducing the ESL to 4.5 % by 2020. Among the analyzed countries, the most favorable situation is in Poland but it must be pointed out that the national target has not been achieved yet.

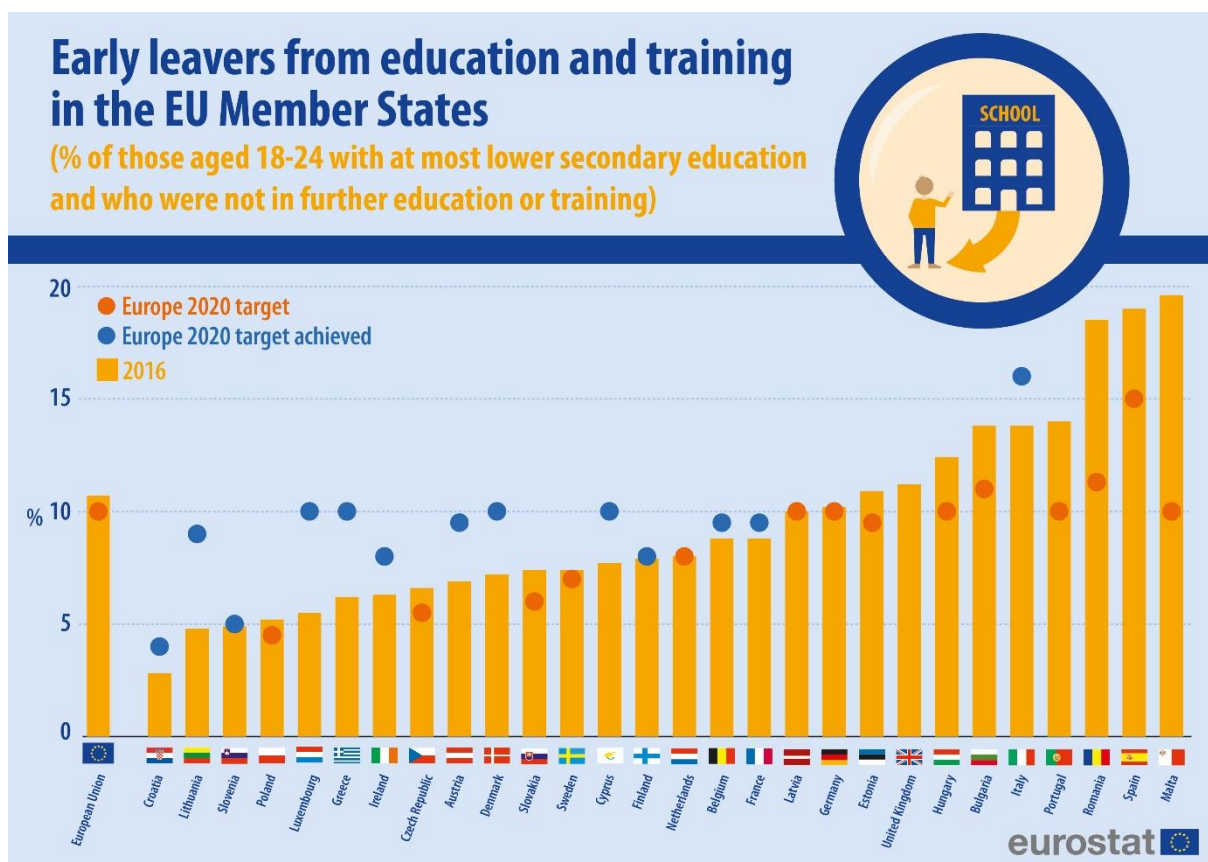


Figure 1. Early leavers from education and training in the EU Member States

Source:

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20170908-1?inheritRedirect=true>

**1.3.2. A closer look at the situation of early school leaving in Hungary. Statistics and an overview**

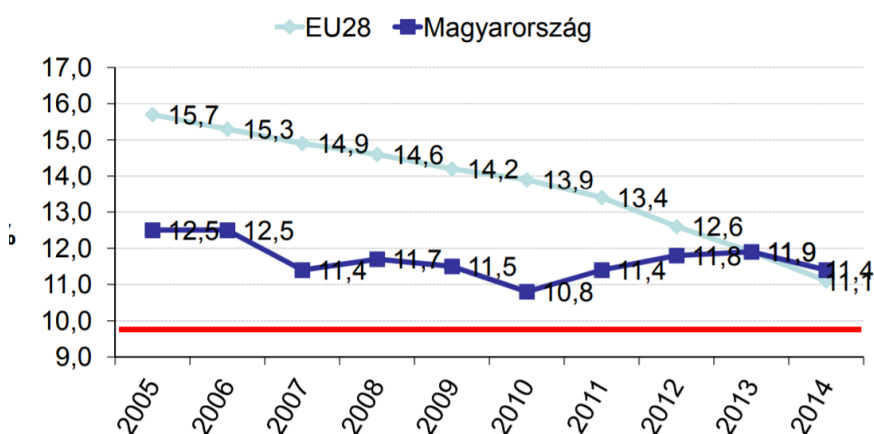
Hungary, joining the Europe 2020 strategy, has taken upon itself that until 2020 it will cut down on the number of 18-24-year-old drop-out students to ten percent. In 2017, according to Eurostat, the early drop-out rate in Hungary dropped from 11,6% to 10,85%. There are enormous differences among regions as detailed below (Thékes, 2015, Thékes, 2018).

Part of the strategy focusing on the prevention of early dropping out of school is childhood prevention in which a key role is played by obligatory kindergarten attendance and the improvement of local cooperation. An important part of the latter is the relationship between social, family care, health care, vocational, adult training, church, cultural and sports organizations but among the most important tasks one find the identification and development of institutions affected by early dropping out of school.

There are numerous reasons listed as to why students drop out of school at an early stage in Hungary. First of all, institutional factors must be taken into account: the school atmosphere, the

internal-external network of the school, the pedagogical concept and its coherence. According to Selmeczi (2017), the early drop-out rate is lower in schools that is less bureaucratic and hierarchical and in which the atmosphere is more pleasant, the teacher-student relationship is good and the family-school relationship is sufficiently good. Besides institutional factors, personal factors must also be taken into account that can be divided into assessable factors and behavioral factors (Selmeczi, 2017, Thékes 2020, Thékes, 2016b). The assessable factors are the following: family background, the highest level of education achieved by the parents, missing from school, failing in studies, previous school road (changing of school), worsening GPA and native language and mathematical skills. The behavioral factors are the following: boredom during classes, low rate of motivation, problems in learning and behavior, aggression, depression, aloofness, and passivity. Selemczi (2017) also lists the following four factors amongst the behavioral ones: low parental expectations, parental negligence and carelessness, and being dissociated from the class.

According to the most recent research of the Hungarian Office of Education (OE), as many as 82,000 children studying in public education are exposed to the risk of dropping out of school. The concept of being endangered of dropping out is defined as follows: a student's GPA has not reached 'average' in the past semester and their GPA has dropped by 1,1 grade. This figure has been taken into account by the OE since the beginning of the 2016/17 school year. It must be pointed out that there is a tendency in the EU that the rate of drop-out students is continuously decreasing. However, there is an interesting phenomenon that the drop-out rate in Hungary was decreasing from 2005 till 2010 then a slight increase took place (Figure 1). The above-mentioned figure stands for the 11% of the students; however in certain regions more students are affected whereas in some other parts of the country this does not seem to be a big problem. The areas at the most risk are Nógrád, Szabolcs and Borsod County. In these counties 17-19% of the students are at risk of dropping out.



Magyarország=Hungary

Source:

*Figure 1. The tendency of drop-out rates in the EU28 and Hungary*

At the moment Hungary stand at 11 percent; however it is still not a success story especially when one considers the relatively high level of inequalities of opportunities in Hungary. As it can be seen on Figure 1 there is a slight tendency towards a decrease in early school leaving; however a lot of efforts still need to be taken to prevent children from dropping out.

In case we take into account the different levels of education, one may affirm that the students of vocational schools are at the highest risk. These schools are maintained under the auspices of educational centers where students may take a vocational exam after three years then in the framework of optional two-year course they may take their final exam. All in all, 21% of students at vocational schools are at risk of dropping out in Hungary. To cast a sharper focus on the problem, in counties such as Szabolcs and Zala, this ratio is even more serious; it is 30 percent. Thus, it can be concluded that a lot ought to be done in Hungary in terms of preventing students' dropping out in some parts of the country.

## Socio-economic status

- Low socio-economic status of parents
- Low level of parents' education (especially mothers)
- Unemployment of parents
- Low income of parents
- Instability and family lifestyle
- Incomplete families
- Bad living conditions
- Problems with the mental and physical health of parents
- Neglect of parents (parents fail to care for children)
- Dysfunctional family (pathology in the family, violence against children)
- Alcoholism of parents
- Parent's life awkwardness

On average, 6 of 10 children in EU-28 whose parents have a low level of education are at risk of poverty and social exclusion and, consequently, risk of leaving school.

## Migrant families and ethnic minorities

- Failure to attend early childhood education and care facilities
- Difficulty in accessing high quality education
- No support from parents
- Language barriers
- Cultural barriers
- Different cultural patterns of other nations
- Minority status
- Fear of assimilation

According to a study in Hungary (Kertesi & Kézdi, 2010), about 50% of the Roma population ends upper secondary school.

The most significant reason for Roma children's dropping out of school is their socio-economic background (Fónai, 2009)

Girls have a visible advantage over boys in reading. In contrast, boys generally have better results in mathematics and exact sciences than girls.

## Gender

- In almost all countries the number of early school leavers - boys is higher than the number of girls.
- It is considered that boys are more likely to have greater difficulties than girls in adapting to the school environment.

## Early education and care

The use of high-quality early childhood education and care impacts on the success of the child's future education.

Participation in early childhood education and care from an early age can be helpful, for example in the development of language skills of immigrant children, increases the likelihood of achieving good results in learning, reduces the risk of social exclusion.

### Factors related to family, gender, migration and socio - economic status

## 1.4. Warning signals of dropping out of school

### Risk factors

### Factors related to the student

- Low level of self-esteem
- Problem behaviours
- Poor learning results
- Difficulties in learning, school failures, less able children, lack of knowledge
- Reluctance to school and learning
- Fear of school
- Truancy
- The collapse of authorities, new lifestyle, consumption, bad patterns in the media
- Bad influence of informal groups (subcultures, colleagues, bad company)
- Conflicts with peers, lack of acceptance by the group
- Juvenile delinquency, going down the wrong path, collisions with the law
- Taking up work/job by students, willingness to earn money
- Low level of aspiration, loss of faith in the sense of learning, underestimation of education
- Drug abuse
- Alcoholism
- Addictions (general)
- Health reasons - a difficult health situation
- Disability
- Disorders of students' personality
- Premature pregnancy
- Escape from home
- Far from school, the problem of commuting

### Failure in passing to the next class

Repetition of the year is perceived by students as an extremely stressful life event that negatively affects their self-esteem and thus increases the sense of failure

### Early division of students into groups according to their academic capacity

Too early division of students has a strong negative impact on students who have been directed to a path that does not match their potential and / or aspirations.

This division seems to increase differences in students'

### Factors related to the education system

#### Socio-economic segregation of schools

School systems that have a high level of segregation have worse results in terms of educational achievements.

More behavioral problems occur in schools, where a large number of students from socially and economically disfavored families are concentrated.

#### Going to upper secondary school

Too traditional teaching style.

Education programs do not support students with learning disabilities and do not respond to the needs of the labour market.

Lack of flexibility in the transition between compulsory and optional education.

Difficulties in passing between individual paths



## 1.5. EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN AT AGE OF 6-10

### 1.5.1. Child Development Theories: a background and the ESL phenomenon

The study of cognitive development, especially in school-age children, has been one of the central focuses of developmental research over the last 25 years<sup>5</sup>. There is an enormous research literature, with thousands of studies investigating cognitive change from scores of specific references.

The general orientations or investigations of cognitive development are similar for all age groups-infancy, childhood, and adulthood. The vast majority of investigations, however, involve children of school age and for those children a number of specific issues arise, including in particular the relationship between schooling and cognitive development.

Some of the major theories of child development are known as grand theories; they attempt to describe every aspect of development, often using a stage approach. Others are known as mini-theories; they instead focus only on a fairly limited aspect of development such as cognitive or social growth.

There is significant body of research evidence to show that many students who drop out of education show 'distress signals' for months, if not years. Young people give such signals at school and /or outside school. Students with more than one signal tend to demonstrate an even higher probability of dropping out. Such 'distress signals', typically known as 'early warning signals', are regarded as first signs indicating that students may be struggling with their studies, motivation or home life or are facing personal, social or emotional challenges that require attention.

There is also a significant (and still growing) consensus on this among policy makers. In fact, systems, activities and programs developed with the purpose of defining and helping teachers (and others working with young people) to identify and act upon different distress signals ESL risk factors are often referred to as 'early warning systems' (EWSs).

Experience in countries where EWSs have been in place for some time has proven to produce good results when the EWS are accompanied by a clear and timely system of support for students identified as being at risk of leaving school early.

In order to play their role in ESL prevention effectively the schools should develop and implement an internal EWS as a part of the school monitoring and management system. Such system ensures collection of information necessary for in-time identification of potential risk of dropping out of students and planning of adequate measures for limiting and overcoming the risk at school level and through joint actions with parents and professionals from other relevant institutions, when needed, in the identified particular situations.

#### 1.5.1.1. Psychoanalytic Child Development Theories

The psychoanalytic theories of child development tend to focus on the unconscious, and forming the ego. The two primary psychoanalytic theories of development are Sigmund Freud's theory of psychosexual development and Erik Erikson psychosocial theory of development.

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<sup>5</sup> W. Andrew Collins, "Development During Middle Childhood: The Years from Six to Twelve", Washington DC, National Academy Press, 1984

The theories proposed by Sigmund Freud stressed the importance of childhood events and experiences, but almost exclusively focused on mental disorders rather than normal functioning. Freud believed that children progress through a series of psychosexual stages. During each stage, the libido's energy becomes centered on a particular area of the body.

Conflicts associated with stage must be successfully resolved in order to develop a healthy adult personality.

According to Freud, personality is largely set in stone by the age of five.

He assigned to the years between ages 5 or 6 and adolescence the vital tasks of skill development and the consolidation of psychosexual achievements from earlier periods. While some other child development theories suggest that personality continues to change and grow over the entire lifetime, Freud believed that it was early experiences that played the greatest role in shaping development.

Erik Erikson was influenced by Freud's work, but his own child development theories focused on the importance of social experiences in shaping a child's psychological growth.

Like Freud's theory, Erikson's theory of psychosocial development lays out a series of stages but unlike Freud's theory, his theory covers development for the entire lifespan. Freud believed that development was largely complete by age 5, while Erikson believed that people continue to develop and grow well into old age. His eight-stage theory of human development described this process from infancy through death. The fourth stage, the psychosocial crisis, involving industry vs. inferiority, occurs during childhood between the ages of five and twelve. Children are at the stage where they will be learning to read and write, to do sums, to do things on their own. Teachers begin to play an important role in the child's life as they teach the child specific skills. Children now feel the need to win approval by demonstrating specific competencies that are valued by society and begin to develop a sense of pride in their accomplishments.

#### **1.5.1.2. Behavioral Child Development Theories**

Behavioral child development theories center on how children learn through their interactions with the environment. Learning and development are the result of associations, rewards, and punishments<sup>6</sup>.

Two important behavioral processes that influence development are classical conditioning and operant conditioning. Classical conditioning involves forming an association between a previously neutral stimulus and a stimulus that naturally and automatically produces a response. After an association has been formed, the once neutral stimulus now produces the response all in its own.

Operant conditioning involves learning as a result of reinforcement or punishment. The consequences of a behavior determine how likely it is for that behavior to occur again in the future. When a behavior is reinforced, or strengthened, then it is more likely that the behavior will occur again in the future. When a behavior is punished, or weakened, then it is less likely to occur again in the future.

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<sup>6</sup> Kendra Cherry ([September 18, 2017](#)), "5 Important Child Development Theories", (online)

### 1.5.1.3. Cognitive Child Development Theories

One of the best-known cognitive theories is Jean Piaget's theory<sup>7</sup>.

Theorist Jean Piaget suggested that children think differently than adults and proposed a stage theory of cognitive development. He was the first to note that children play an active role in gaining knowledge of the world and he concluded that the way that children think is fundamentally different from that of adults. According to his theory, children can be thought of as "little scientists" who actively construct their knowledge and understanding of the world. His cognitive theory quickly became one of the most influence child development theories. His approach focuses on four distinct stages that kids go through as they progress from birth to adulthood. The Concrete Operational Stage, which takes place between age 7 and 11, involves the emergence of more logical thought. Children begin thinking logically about concrete events, but have difficulty understanding abstract or hypothetical concepts.

### 1.5.1.4. Social Learning Theories of Child Development

Social theories of child development tend to focus on the role that parents, caregivers, peers and other social influences impact on development. Some focus on how early attachment influence development, while others are centered on how children learn by observing people around them. A few examples of these social theories of child development include attachment theory, social learning theory, and socio-cultural theory<sup>8</sup>.

According to social learning theory, behaviors can also be learned through observation and modeling. By observing the actions of others, including parents and peers, children develop new skills and acquire new information.

Bandura's child development theory suggests that observation plays a critical role in learning, but this observation does not necessarily need to take the form of watching a live model. Instead, kids can also learn by listening to verbal instructions about how to perform a behavior as well as through observing either real or fictional characters display behaviors in books or films.

### 1.5.1.5. Final Thoughts on Theories of Child Development

These theories represent just a few of the different ways of thinking about child development. Each of these child development theories has helped add to our understanding of how children grow, think, learn, and change over the years from birth until adulthood. In reality, fully understanding how children change and grow requires looking at many different factors that influence physical and psychological growth. Genes, the environment, and the interactions between these two forces determine how kids grow physically as well as mentally.

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<sup>7</sup> Piaget, J., & Cook, M. T., "The origins of intelligence in children", New York, NY: International University Press. 1952

<sup>8</sup> [Kendra Cherry](#) | Reviewed by [Steven Gans, MD](#) (Updated December 04, 2017), "Child Development Theories and Examples. Some Key Ideas About How Children Grow and Develop" (online)

### 1.5.2. Emotional development

For the development of concrete operations at age 6-7, a number of emotional changes have been suggested by Freud and others. At this point, children appear to develop a clear-cut conscience, with an accompanying surge in guilt<sup>9</sup>. They develop the capacity for social comparison, so they can compare and contrast their own behavior with that of other people<sup>10</sup>. Presumably, this capacity can lead to a surge in both anxiety and pride about one's relative social standing. One component of this new ability for social comparison may also be a spurt in identification with parents and other significant adults, since identification requires the comparison of self with the adult. Any change in how children understand themselves is likely to have emotional implications.

Formal operations and the ability to understand single abstractions emerge at age 10-12 with serious emotional consequences. The confusion and turmoil of early adolescence may result in part from this new capacity<sup>11</sup>. With formal operations, children can construct new, general concepts about themselves and other people, but they remain unable to compare one such abstraction with another. Consequently, they have difficulty thinking clearly about abstract concepts.

When the concept of Emotional Intelligence became popular also in Europe many pedagogues started to consider the personal and emotional side of the students. Many innovative educational projects focus on the emotional side of children's human growth but this approach is not as yet present in everyday teaching. Every topic can contribute to the development of a more effective emotional awareness but the emotional side of our students can also contribute to make the topic more attractive and teaching less impersonal. Generally, American authors see a strong relationship between emotional awareness and the ability to perform better and more efficiently. Social skills are considered fundamental to achieve a successful working life. This approach is nowadays very popular and many enterprises use it to obtain more efficient results.

Emotions are a stimulus to achieve more efficient and more modern way of learning. Schools have the task to provide the students with social skills. Developing social and emotional skills can also give a very relevant contribution in preventing the early school leaving.

### 1.5.3. Social development. Schools and formal program

Social development concerns the way children interact with others, and therefore the patterns of behavior, feelings, attitudes and concepts manifested by children in relation to other people and the way in which these different aspects vary during growth<sup>12</sup>. The key social event that divides middle childhood from the

<sup>9</sup> W. Andrew Collins, "Development During Middle Childhood: The Years from Six to Twelve", *cit*

<sup>10</sup> Ruble, D. N., "The development of social comparison processes and their role in achievement-related self-socialization", in E. T. Higgins, D. N. Ruble, & W. W. Hartup (Eds.), *Social cognition antisocial development: A sociocultural perspective* (pp. 134-157), Cambridge, England (1983). Cambridge University Press

<sup>11</sup> Inhelder, B. & Piaget, J., "The Growth of Logical Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence". London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1958.

<sup>12</sup> Schaffer, "H.R. Social Development". Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.

preschool period is children's entry into elementary school, where children are required a rather high level of social competence so that they can fit into the school environment and deepen friendships with their peer. This event coincides for many with participation in other formal organizations and programs outside of the family. As children enter school and join programs, they experience both increased individual freedom and heightened demands that they control their behavior. On the one hand, they are allowed to move about more freely, for instance, to ride bicycles to school, or take the bus alone to and from school or activities. On the other hand, parents, teachers, and other adults put increasing pressure on children to be "good," to show respect for adults, and to cooperate with their peers. In school, in particular, children are expected to control themselves, cultivating good "work habits," sitting quietly for long periods of time, and complying with rules and expectations for personal conduct that are set by adults. Schools and many after-school and summer programs tend to be age-segregated; that is, children of a certain age are grouped together. In such groups, the differences among the children in the group are fairly narrow, especially when contrasted with the differences among family members whose ages vary widely. The homogeneity of the school class or peer group focuses children's attention on individual strengths and liabilities, and on differences in personality or social skill. These experiences tend to focus on skills (intellectual, athletic, artistic, etc.) and tend to make a child's success and failure relatively public. The performance of an elementary school student is systematically evaluated against preset standards of excellence, progress, and acceptable style; and children earn status in school depending on their performance. They also experience failure and frustration, especially if they are less skilled than their peers. Growing up in their families, children observe that older individuals are usually more competent and may conclude that they, too, will become more proficient over time. Afterschool programs that mix children of different ages can create a family-like environment that encourages children to master new skills and try activities even if success is unlikely at first<sup>13</sup>.

Many authors consider that the school environment has a significant effect on students' future behavior. The dimension of self-awareness makes students more social-friendly and improve their level of understanding of the problems of others. In their future social and work life an effective level of social competences, developed also thanks to an appropriate environment, increases their approach to decision-making situations:

- Everyone has a role to play in building a positive school climate. Success depends on a whole school approach that includes the active involvement of school leaders, staff members, students, parents/guardians and community members who are committed to a shared vision of a safe, inclusive and accepting school community.
- Building a positive school climate requires a focus on developing healthy relationships throughout the school community among students and adults, and between adults and students.
- Building a positive school climate means embedding the principles of equity and inclusive education in all aspects of the learning environment, and in all school and board operations, to support the well-being and achievement of all students.

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<sup>13</sup> Jacquelynne S. Eccles, (Fall 1999), "The Development of children Ages 6 to 14", in *The Future of Children WHEN SCHOOL IS OUT* Vol. 9, No. 2.

- No single solution can guarantee the creation and maintenance of a positive school climate. Success requires an ongoing, comprehensive and collaborative effort on the part of everyone involved.

#### 1.5.4. Development in childhood<sup>14</sup>

	EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT
Six years	<p>Children will become more <u>aware of emotions</u>, both their own as well as those of others. They may understand sophisticated concepts such as how to be careful about not hurting someone's feelings by, say, saying something critical about them directly to that person.</p> <p>They may also increasingly express a desire to choose their own clothes, wash themselves, and comb their own hair.</p>	<p>Six-year-olds will also become more adept at navigating relationships with friends and family and will feel security and comfort from their relationships with those who are close to them.</p> <p>They will frequently enjoy sharing snacks, toys, and other things with friends at school and at home. That isn't to say rivalry and scuffles over favorite toys won't occur, but conflicts will pass and grade-schoolers will increasingly gain the social skills to one day work out differences on their own, without adult intervention.</p>	<p>They may feel an increasing awareness of right and wrong, and may "<u>tell on</u>" peers who they think are not doing the right thing.</p> <p>They are continuing to develop longer attention spans and will be able to handle more complicated projects and tasks at school and at home. The ability to have complex thoughts really starts to develop at this age, and six-year-olds' curiosity about the world around them will begin to increase exponentially.</p>
Seven years	<p>Seven-year-old children may still lack the self-control of, say, a middle-schooler, but they will be much more adept at handling transitions and surprises than younger children. They're also learning to understand other people's feelings better.</p> <p>Most 7-year-olds are better able to handle transitions and last-minute changes. Nevertheless, 7-year-olds will still need and derive comfort from routines.</p> <p>Not getting something to look exactly the way they want it to or losing a game can be crushing to their self-esteem. Parents, teachers, and other adults can help by offering frequent encouragement and helping a child focus on what she might learn from an activity rather than what didn't go right.</p>	<p>Friendships and social networks are important to continuing to form bonds with peers, teachers, and teammates. They may even start trying to handle those relationships on their own. They begin to care more about the opinions and thoughts of other people. The downside of this natural phase of child development is an increased susceptibility to peer pressure.</p> <p>Many 7-year-olds will still love playing with friends but may begin to enjoy spending more time alone, playing by themselves or reading. Alone time and downtime, can, in fact, be an important part of a child's development of a sense of self and his relations to others.</p> <p>As seven-year-olds grow up and expand their social horizons, they often naturally become attached to other adults besides their parents,</p>	<p>They are curious about the world around them. They will ask questions and seek answers about the things they encounter and the people they meet, and will take pride in sharing what they know. Kids at this age display a formidable sense of adventure and thirst for information and will love being mentors to younger siblings and other children as they show off their newfound knowledge and skills. Their math and reading skills are steadily expanding too, as is their ability to recognize words and do simple word problems.</p> <p>They take great pride in sharing their knowledge about things and often enjoy showing younger children skills that they themselves have mastered.</p> <p>Seven-year-olds will often feel a sense of pride about having achieved basic math and reading skills and may want to discuss what they learned in school with</p>

<sup>14</sup> Source: <https://www.verywellfamily.com/>

	EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT
		such as a teacher, an uncle, or even a friend's parent.	parents, friends, and caregivers.
Eight years	<p>They may show more sophisticated and complex emotions and interactions. Many 8-year-olds are able to mask their true thoughts or emotions to spare someone someone's feelings. For example, a child who doesn't like a gift may still smile and thank the gift giver.</p> <p>This is the time when child may be developing a more sophisticated sense of himself in the world. His interests, talents, friends, and relationship with family help him establish a clear self-identity. It's also the beginning of desiring privacy and flip-flopping between self-confidence and self-doubt.</p>	<p>This is the phase of social development where many children love being a part of sports teams and other social groups. Eight-year-old children are still developing an understanding of what is "wrong" or "right," and lying or other behavior requiring child discipline may need to be corrected.</p> <p>Eight-year-old children will generally enjoy going to school and will want to engage in the social world of friends and classmates. Parents should be on the lookout for any problems such as school refusal, which may indicate a problem at school such as being bullied or learning difficulties.</p>	<p>Eight-year-olds make great gains in their cognitive development. Most of them begin to have an understanding of money, both literally and conceptually. While counting money can be a difficult skill to learn, kids often begin to understand that it takes money to buy items.</p> <p>Most 8-year-olds are able to tell time and they exhibit a better understanding of how long time increments are. When you say, "You have 10 more minutes until we have to leave," or "Your birthday is 3 days away," child will have a greater understanding of what that means.</p>
Nine years	<p>Children are better able to handle conflict. Their growing independence will lead to them to seek relationships independent of their family.</p> <p>Many have a strong desire to belong to a group and establish their place within the social order of school. As result, many become vulnerable to peer pressure because they want to impress their peer group.</p> <p>At nine, children are capable of taking on a wider range of chores and responsibilities around the house and will want to start participating in decisions affecting the family. They are also becoming more aware of real-world dangers and disasters.</p> <p>A child at age 9 is better able to handle frustrations and conflicts. He will begin to</p>	<p>Social skills are particularly important this year, as peer relationships take on more importance.</p> <p>The social world of nine-year-old children is opening up in ways previously unimagined. Many will have cell phones and high-level acuity in social media.</p> <p>Children this age may have role models who are people outside of the immediate family, such as a coach or a teacher. They may look up to a famous person they don't know such as a singer or sports figure. Their friendships will take on more importance in their daily lives, and they will care more about what others think about them.</p> <p>Nine-year-old children are much more independent.</p>	<p>At school, nine-year-old children will generally work well in groups and will cooperate to work on a project or activity. They will want to work on a subject, topic, or particular part of the curriculum until they become skilled and master it.</p> <p>Those who do well may begin thrive while children who struggle may grow frustrated with the demands of the classroom.</p> <p>Nine-year-old children are curious about the world and are full of questions about how things work and why things are the way they are. They will be able to think critically and will express their own opinions about things.</p>



	EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT
	develop emotional maturity, such as an understanding of the value of delayed gratification or helping others, which will help him navigate their preteen and teen years.		
Ten years	<p>Children are developing a better sense of who they are in the world. Many are preparing for the start of middle or junior high school and are getting ready to navigate new social settings.</p> <p>For girls, who generally develop physically at a faster rate and enter puberty earlier than boys, the transition into adolescence can trigger a host of emotions: excitement, uncertainty, trepidation, and even embarrassment.</p> <p>He have more control over emotions and may see him becoming more skilled at handling conflict and negotiating solutions with friends. At the same time, you may see some volatility in his emotions.</p> <p>A 10-year-old child may be trying to keep up with ever-more difficult school work, working to fit in and socialize with friends, and dealing with the physical changes of growing up.</p>	<p>At ten, girls may become possessive of their friends and can be jealous of one another. Ten-year-old boys may have an easier time with friendships. Boys' relationships tend to be based on mutual interests rather than close, personal feelings.</p> <p>Ten-year-olds have good ability to sense the emotions of others and to read facial and body language. They feel very close to their parents, siblings, and extended family.</p> <p>Peer pressure can play a big role in social relationships of most 10-year-olds. At this age, kids will be eager to fit in by wearing the right clothes, listening to the right music, or liking and disliking the same things.</p>	<p>Children start thinking and sounding almost “grown-up”. Children this age are on the cusp of adolescence and have the language skills and cognitive ability to gather information and formulate well-organized opinions and thoughts.</p> <p>For many children, the development phase around 10 years old is packed with learning and rapid-paced cognitive growth. Learning accelerates significantly in fifth grade as children prepare for the middle-school years. 10-year-old will be transitioning toward greater independence in managing and organizing school work and homework, requiring less supervision from parents.</p>

## 2. PRACTICAL TOOLKIT – TO BE DEVELOPED

### 1. PRACTICAL TOOLKIT –

#### A. How to work with pupils

*List of activities to be able to implement in everyday work of teachers,*

*Each partner should deliver **3 practices** providing following data:*

- Title
- Objectives (life skills to be developed)
- Suggested age group (three groups: 6-7, 8-9 and 10-11)
- When to implement the practice during learning process
- Methodology (ex. drama, art activity, Edward's de Bono's methods...)
- Form of work (individual, in pairs, in groups, whole class)
- Needed materials
- Description of the activity
- Evaluation of the activity/practice
- Comments for implementation (to be added after piloting)
- Illustrations (if you have it)

*Please think about different activities for different age groups, each partner should try to deliver 3 practices, one per each age group (6-7, 8-9 and 10-11) – please give me a feedback if it is a good idea.*

*Activities should be able to implement in the school environment, please think also about such things which are possible to implement every day, for example: some exercises useful for opening the day, integration of a class, evaluation of the day in a school, management of conflicts and so on.*

#### B. How to work with parents

*List of practices to be used with parents (so-called management of parents)*

*Each partner should deliver 2 practices.*

*Suggestions:*

- Case studies of difficult situations which might happen at school
- Examples of dialogues (including some communicational tips)
- Management of conflicts
- Mediation and negotiation
- Planning of common work
- How to involve parents in a school life
- Assertiveness of a teacher vs empathy
- (Maybe) a plan of educational lesson with parents

**Please provide following data:**

- Area and objectives
- Methodology/Techniques

- *Short theoretical background if needed*
- *Description*
- *Evaluation of the practice*
- *Comments for implementation if possible*
- *Other useful resources which might help and to be checked if somebody is interested in the given topic(links and others)*

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