

## Children's Participation in the Everyday Life of the Early Childhood Institution - Action Research

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**Abstract :** The increasing interest of ECCE policy and practice in the issue of children's participation in their own lives is a consequence of the changing image of the child and the shift in focus to the child as an active participant in socio-cultural reality instead of the earlier focus on the child's individual development. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) strongly supports the image of the child as a competent participant in education - capable of forming opinions, with the right to express themselves on all matters affecting them and with the right to have adults around them respect this. Notwithstanding the contemporary paradigm of ECCE, however, achievements in this area are still in their infancy. This is evident in the practices of ECCE, where early years and pre-school children are still seen as users of systems and services rather than agents of change in their social communities. Recent literature identifies the need for lifelong, continuous learning of preschool teachers through research into their own pedagogical practice as an effective way of bridging the gap between theory and practice and continuously improving the quality of ECCE institutions. Notwithstanding the contemporary paradigm of ECCE, however, achievements in this area are still in their infancy. Recent literature identifies the need for lifelong, continuous learning of preschool teachers through research into their own pedagogical practice as an effective way of bridging the gap between theory and practice and continuously improving the quality of ECCE institutions. This paper presents the process of action research aimed at increasing children's participation in (co-)designing the kindergarten curriculum and participation in decision-making on issues affecting their stay in the institution. This action research took place in 2 facilities of the institution ECCE - DV Rijeka. In this research participated 5 preschool teachers working in 4 pedagogical groups, where children from 2 to 7 years old are enrolled. Also, the process of development of reflexive practice of preschool teachers who participated in this research is presented.

**Keywords :** action research, co-construction of curriculum, participation of children, reflexive practice

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