

The Thoughts and Feelings of 60-72 Month Old Children about School and Teacher

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Abstract : No matter what level of education it is, starting a school is an exciting process as it includes new experiences. In this process, child steps into a different environment and institution except from the family institution which he was born into and feels secure. That new environment is different from home; it is a social environment which has its own rules, and involves duties and responsibilities that should be fulfilled and new vital experiences. The children who have a positive attitude towards school and like school are more enthusiastic and eager to participate in classroom activities. Moreover, a close relationship with the teacher enables the child to have positive emotions and ideas about the teacher and school and helps children adapt to school easily. In this study, it is aimed to identify children's perceptions of academic competence, attitudes towards school and ideas about their teachers. In accordance with the aim a mixed method that includes both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods are used. The study is supported with qualitative data after collecting quantitative data. The study group of the research consists of randomly chosen 250 children who are 60-72 month old and attending a preschool institution in a city center located West Anatolian region of Turkey. Quantitative data was collected using Feelings about School scale. The scale consists of 12 items and 4 dimensions; school, teacher, mathematic, and literacy. Reliability and validity study for the scale used in the study was conducted by the researchers with 318 children who were 60-72 months old. For content validity experts' ideas were asked, for construct validity confirmatory factor analysis was utilized. Reliability of the scale was examined by calculating internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach alpha). At the end of the analyses it was found that FAS is a valid and reliable instrument to identify 60-72 month old children's perception of their academic competency, attitude toward school and ideas about their teachers. For the qualitative dimension of the study, semi-structured interviews were done with 30 children aged 60-72 month. At the end of the study, it was identified that children's perceptions of their academic competencies and attitudes towards school was medium-level and their ideas about their teachers were high. Based on the semi structured interviews done with children, it is identified that they have a positive perception of school and teacher. That means quantitatively gathered data is supported by qualitatively collected data.

Keywords : feelings, preschool education, school, teacher, thoughts

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