

The National Educational Programme
ISCED 0 – pre-primary education

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Introduction

The National Educational Programme is the supreme curricular document. It forms the first tier of a two-tier model of educational programmes. It defines the main principles and aims of the curricular policy of the State, the core democratic and humanistic values on which education and training is based. It contains the general objectives and requirements relating to the content of education and training and the key competences¹ (capabilities) as the main tools of a balanced development of children's personality. The National Educational Programme promotes a holistic approach in the development of cognitive and non-cognitive capabilities of children at a particular level of education. It constitutes the starting point and the binding document for the design of school educational programmes – curricular documents specific for the content of education and training in particular kindergartens with regard taken of their local conditions.

The National Educational Programme:

- is developed on the basis of participative democratic approach of the State (state programme) and the local region (the school programme) to education,
- it is framed by mandatory content of education by which the key competences (capabilities) are to be developed required for a particular level of education and the type of education guaranteed by the State,
- it contains the educational standards (content- and performance-related), i.e. the requirements for knowledge, skills, capabilities (competences) and attitudes that are formed from the curriculum, defined as the basic (minimum curriculum); in it only essential elements are included that are subject of education for all children completing the pre-primary level of education,
- it leaves room for adding content according to regional and local conditions and requirements, while building on the aims that the society lays with regard to the required educational level and cultural literacy of its citizens,
- it has been developed on the basis of a continual approach, particular educational programmes of levels of education (pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary) build on each other,
- it supports a comprehensive and integrated approach to education through designating thematic domains and educational areas using new activation methods of education (situational methods, project learning method, etc.) and effective modes of learning (experience, problem solving, cooperative learning and others),
- includes also cross-cutting themes (environmental, traffic education – education for road a traffic safety, human protection and health, education for a healthy way of life, education for creativity, media education, work with information, etc.), that pass through all thematic domains and educational areas, reflect the actual global or social problems, the issues of the contemporary man, country, the European Union and the world, promote the creation of values and attitudes of children, offer them opportunities to develop individual potentialities (capacities), applying the interests but also mutual cooperation and can be realized by means of a range of organisational forms and by learning by play,
- allows for modification of the content for the education of children with special needs education,
- in designing the new content of education and training it lays emphasis on stimulating and creative environment and caring social and emotional climate of the kindergarten and its overall culture,
- provides a new model of designing the content of education which gives the kindergartens a possibility to focus on individual development of personal potential of children,

¹ The notions competence, capability or in plural competences, capabilities are used in the text as equivalent synonymic expressions.

– accentuates the quality of kindergarten, its auto-evaluation and evaluation.

For the development of the content of education by particular levels of education the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) is used. It is also applied within the National Educational Programme. The cited classification is accepted by the relevant international organisations (UNESCO, OECD).

Note: two ways of denotations will be used in the material – pre-primary education and its institutionalised form – kindergarten.

Kindergarten will give the child the foundations to take pleasure in learning for the lifetime.

1 Aims of education and training

The main aim of pre-primary education is to attain an optimal perceptual and motor, cognitive and socio-emotional levels as the basis for readiness for school education and the life in the society. The starting ground is the uniqueness of the child, active learning, and integration in a group and a collective.

The aims of pre-primary education include:

- meet the need of the child for social contact with his or her peers,
- facilitate smooth adaptation to the changed environment (kindergarten and primary school),
- foster the attitude of the child to exploring and learning through play,
- develop purposefully, systematically and in a creative atmosphere the child's personality in the psycho-motor, cognitive, social, emotional and moral spheres,
- have regard for different socio-cultural and socio-economic background of the child,
- observe and protect the rights of the child in cooperation with the family, the founder and other institutions (maintaining the ethical principle of cooperation) while respecting the needs of the child,
- win the confidence of parents in individual educational counselling and focus their attention on positive manifestations in the behaviour of their child and when appropriate direct them to other specialist consultancy with other experts (paediatrician, speech therapist, psychologist, etc.).

Pre-primary education helps the child:

- foster respect for the parents, cultural and national values and traditions of the state, mother tongue, state language and the child's own culture,
- acquire and foster respect for human rights and basic freedoms,
- prepare for life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, freedom from prejudice, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among nations, national and ethnic groups, and the churches and religious communities,
- learn to develop and cultivate one's own personality, prepare for lifelong learning,
- learn to cooperate in a group, a collective and assume appropriate responsibility,
- learn to protect one's health, including the use of healthy nutrition and protect the environment,
- learn to respect the ethical principles of the humanity.

The attainment of the above aims requires a favourable educational climate **with an emphasis on the development of creativity over memorisation**, in which learning takes place through play. Positive emotional experience of the child is crucial.

Kindergarten as an institution of childcare and education differs from the family, inter alia, by its capacity to meet and satiate the child's desire for peer contact. In pre-school education the **educational community** has its invaluable place, consisting in the group of children in interaction with the teacher in a class, in a kindergarten with smaller number of children, or in the whole kindergarten. In creating the **favourable socio-emotional climate** the educational community has a significant effect on the **development of positive personality traits of each child** (the creation of the foundations for emotional literacy,

prosocial and environmental feeling and behaviour, the habits of a healthy way of life, the capability of social communication, establishment of interpersonal relations, etc.).

In pursuing the aims of pre-school education the teacher bears in mind the need for a holistic development of the child's personality and **develops harmoniously the perceptual, motor, cognitive and socio-emotional areas**. Education and training at a pre-school age is of an **activity – and process-based nature**. General and specific objectives (i.e. concrete, operationalised objectives) are designed to **develop the foundations for key competences** (capabilities).

In education and training the teacher **takes regard of children's different socio-cultural and socio-economic family backgrounds**. He or she pays appropriate attention to every child. In the pedagogical activity the teacher respects the multiculturalism of families, in which the child lives and the ensuing specificities. **The teacher is tactful and discreet towards all children, irrespective of their racial, religious or national membership**. The teacher respects that **every child has the right to a happy childhood**.

In the pedagogical process the **principle of the child's activity** is applied. Extension of opportunities for children to be active does not preordain the teacher to passivity in terms of inactivity. The teacher's activity of non-directive – democratic steering of the educational activity **consists in premeditated creation of conditions for effective self-development of the child's personality**, which is not conceivable without his or her own activity. In the pedagogic process the teacher gets in the role of a **facilitator, manager of the educational activity, an advisor, a consultant**.

The pedagogic approach in the kindergarten **draws upon positive education, based on love, and confidence in the child**. In such education, self-esteem is strengthened, the child's self-confidence increases on the basis of gradually created adequate auto-evaluation which is a prerequisite for a healthy self-confidence (neither insufficient nor excessive).

Healthy self-respect and self-confidence is the key to lifelong personality growth and determines the effectiveness of learning not only of the child but also the adult in the broadest sense.

2 Level of education

The child receives pre-primary education upon completion of the last grade of the educational programme of the education area in the kindergarten.

The legislation relating to the activity and operating of kindergartens does not taxonomically specify the way of completion of the education and training of children in the kindergarten.

As a rule, the child ends pre-primary education in the school year in which he or she reaches the sixth year of age and attains the school capability.

The child may finish preschool education also before reaching six years, where, subject to the opinion of the competent institution of educational counselling and prevention and the general practitioner for children and youth, the child is capable of complying with compulsory schooling (early schooling of the child upon the parents' request).

The document on the attained level of education is the certificate of attendance of pre-primary education, issued by the kindergarten.

Only the kindergartens included in the network of schools and school facilities (in pursuance of the Act No. 596/2003 Coll. on the state administration in education and school self-government...) can issue the certificate of attendance of pre-primary education.

3 Profile of the graduate – educational model of the pre-primary-level graduate

The pre-primary education graduate shall have the knowledge and competences that are relevant for the propaedeutic (basics) of the cultural, reading, counting and natural science literacy.

The pre-primary level graduate is ready for entry into primary education in a primary school and for further active life in the society.

The graduate profile is framed by the competences(capabilities) of the child (as given in the table below).

With regard to the developmental specificities of preschool age the competences(capabilities) include also the psycho-motor competences. Social and civic competences are integrated in the personality (intrapersonal) and social (interpersonal) competences.

The following competences (capabilities) are developed in the kindergarten:

- 1. Psychomotor competences**
- 2. Personality (intrapersonal) competences**
 - a) The basics of the awareness of self
 - b) The basics of the engagement
- 3. Social (interpersonal) competences**
- 4. Communicative competences**
- 5. Cognitive competences**
 - a) The basics in problem solving
 - b) The basics in critical thinking
 - c) The basics in creative thinking
- 6. Learning competences**
- 7. Information competences**

The definitions of competences (capabilities) are to be understood relatively, as the **preschool period involves the attainment of the basics of the child's competences.**

The competences are drawn up on the basis of the Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC).

Competences (capabilities) of the child of preschool age

<p>1. Psychomotor competences (capabilities)</p>	<p>At the end of pre-primary education the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - uses all senses in an activity, - manages motor system and bodily function, - shows desire and willingness to move, - manages basic locomotor movements, - uses the acquired way of movement activities in novel, unknown problem situations, - uses the global motor faculty through overcoming natural and artificial obstacles, - shows grapho-motor literacy, - behaves considerately towards his or her health and the health of others, - shows positive attitudes to the healthy lifestyle
<p>2. Personality (intrapersonal) competences a) Basics of the awareness of self</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is aware of his or her own identity, - in the behaviour shows the relation to the self and to others, - expresses one's own feelings and assesses one's own actual emotional state, - estimates one's own abilities and competencies, - behaves self-assuredly in different situations, - is aware of the consequences of one's own behaviour with regards to other persons
<p>b) Basics of engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is assertive with regards to the self and others, - defends the self and others, the sick, persons with a handicap, the weak and the helpless, - is interested in the events in the family, in the kindergarten and in immediate environment
<p>3. Social (interpersonal) competences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - looks at the world also through the eyes of others, - shows empathy to the neighbourhood, - behaves in the group, collective according to social rules and norms, - plays and works in pair, group, collective, - plans, organises, and evaluates the activity, - remains playing and involved in other activity and completes it, - assumes co-responsibility for the self and the activity of the group, - establishes contacts with others in a socially acceptable manner and maintains harmonious relations with them, - resolves conflicts with the help of adults or autonomously, - helps others, both with the help of an adult and autonomously, - accepts and respects multicultural differences of children and adults, - shows consideration for his or her environment

<p>4. Communicative competences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - leads a monologue, establishes and leads a dialogue and conversation with children and adults, - actively listens to and understands the ideas and information from different media, - expresses and communicates one's own thoughts, opinions, - reproduces announcements, texts, - selects adequate, creative way of communication with regards to the situation, - communicates his or her acquired knowledge, - shows pre-reading literacy, - shows understanding and recognises that some people communicate also in other languages
<p>5. Cognitive competences a) Basics of problem solving</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - seeks and discovers connections between particular information, discovers the information which facilitates problem solving, - resolves independently, or with the help of the teacher the problems in the personal and social layer, - solves simple problem tasks, - applies in play and in different situations mathematical thinking
<p>b) Basics of critical thinking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - compares similarities and differences of objects, phenomena, persons, etc., - gives reasons for his or her opinions, expresses attitudes, articulates simple judgements, - evaluates spontaneously and independently in his or her immediate surroundings his/her likes/dislikes, what is right/wrong, what is good/bad about the things, persons and opinions
<p>c) Basics of creative thinking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - applies own imagination in problem solving, - finds uncommon answers or solutions, - discovers and finds functionality of things, fantasies or thoughts, realizes their changes, - discovers the algorithm of problem solving by trial and error, or according to given instructions, removes potential error

6. Competences to learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shows curiosity and spontaneous interest in leaning new knowledge, - uses adequate notions, signs and symbols, - observes, examines, experiments, - identifies and seeks connections between one's own experience and knowledge, - applies in play, diverse activities and situations the acquired knowledge and experience, - asks questions and looks for the answers in order to understand the surrounding world of things, phenomena, events and relations, - learns spontaneously (through own curiosity) and intentionally (under the teacher's guidance), - makes willing efforts in play and other activity, - overcomes obstacles in order to learn, - plans and organises optimally the environment for the activity, - shows activity in individual and group learning, - evaluates own performance, takes pleasure in own results, recognizes also the performance of others, - masters the basics of learning on the basis of personal motivation, - learns to work with toys, the book and the learning aids, - concentrates for adequate periods of time on play and on purposeful adult-directed educational activity
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7. Information competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shows pleasure in autonomously acquired information, - makes use of different sources of information acquisition and gathering, also outside the kindergarten (from surrounding persons, from children's books, magazines and encyclopaedias, through information and communication technologies, from a variety of media)
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The set of competences serves the teachers to know where to direct their pedagogic action through purposeful, meaningful educational activity that is appropriate to the children's developmental capacities.

For children to acquire the competences (capabilities), an essential **change of the content, the way of education, the methods and educational strategies towards participative, interactive and experience-based learning** is **desirable**, one that would be based on experience and linked to life.

This aspect has been taken on board not only in the definitions of children's competences (capabilities) but also in the design of the content of education and training and its structure, and, within this content, also in developing the **educational standards**.

4 Areas of education

The National Educational Programme for Kindergartens (hereinafter referred to as the "Programme") is entitled **The child and the world**.

The Programme's philosophy is based on the knowledge of pedagogic research, practical knowledge and the experience of teacher community from the study of curricular preschool issues, from both domestic and foreign literature, Vygotský's theory, Maslow's

hierarchy of needs, Bloom's taxonomy, Anderson, Hill, Krathwohl, Williams, Massi, Harrow, Simpson, Dave, Tollinger, Zelina, Zelinová, and others.

A number of educational concepts have had an impact on the design of the Programme – **particularly the creative and humanistic concept** on which the Millennium is based too – the National Programme of the Development of Education and Training in the Slovak Republic. The child is at the core of interest in this concept – as actively learning subject, the development of his or her personality is pursued. This concept also aims to achieve that children not only learn and master but also that their education is associated with the humane aspects – taking place in a peaceful atmosphere, eliminating stress in order that children can feel happy in the kindergarten, unthreatened, accepted by teachers as they are, without judgemental differences. The emphasis is placed on the development of both, cognitive and non-cognitive functions of the individual.

Equally the concept reflects the **cognitive-psychological and socio-cognitive concepts of education**. The Programme in its design took into account that it is the child and the teacher who are the central actors in the kindergarten. For this reason, the Programme contains acceptable interactive theories of the development of personality, which involve joint work, ALWAYS WITH THE OBJECTIVE of the DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD, it is a shared activity of the child and the teacher.

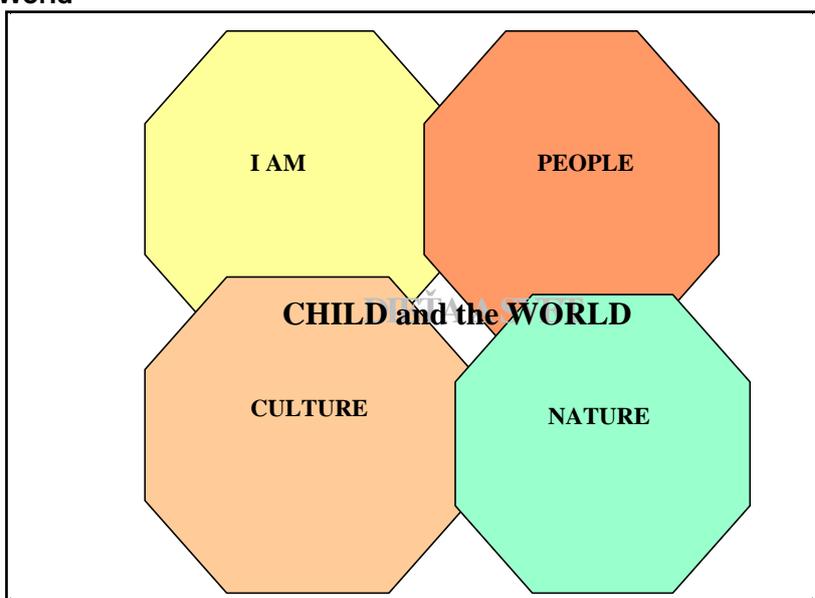
The main idea of the Programme is:

- to support holistic personality development of the child,
- to activate and motivate the psychomotor development, knowledge, emotionality and sociability,
- to promote creativity and imagination in day-to-day activities,
- to help the child form his or her uniqueness and life competences (capabilities).

Through the Programme the child's development of personality traits is realised by means of the knowledge of the self, the world of people, nature, culture in a continual interconnected daily pedagogic activity.

The Programme is integrated in four thematic domains: I am, People, Nature, and Culture (the chart below).

The chart of the National Educational Programme for Kindergartens DIEŤA A SVET/The Child and the World



Characteristics of the thematic domains

In terms of the content the thematic domains are aimed at:

I am – the development of personality competences, senses, the relation of the child to the family and the environment, knowing the self, presenting the self, social, emotional, motor and cognitive perception of the child's life (physical, mental, spiritual, social and emotional life).

People – the development of social experience and relations to the community of people, contacts with other groups of people, learning about working and other activities of people, the development of images of places where people live and create, the environments in which they are found, the multicultural, ethnic groups, races (other peoples, mankind).

Nature – the development of knowledge of elementary laws of the life on the Earth, natural phenomena, animate and inanimate objects, forming the beginnings of ecological culture, forming the view of the world of nature and the relation to nature, forming the foundations of the worldview and the acquisition of the basic knowledge of the Earth and the universe (Earth, space).

Culture – the development of the child's contacts with the world of intellectual activities of people, the development of the perception and application of musical, literary and arts culture (material world, the world of play and the world of art).

Thematic domains **penetrate and supplement each other. They are pursued in an integrated way** in the global and continuous pedagogic process.

Each thematic domain covers **three areas of the development of** the child's personality:

1. **perceptual-motor,**
2. **cognitive,**
3. **social-emotional.**

The division of educational areas is conspicuously **theoretical**. In **practical plane** they are developed **in an integrated way**, are mutually **interlinked, related to each other. The thematic domains and the educational developmental areas are interactively interconnected.**

The thematic domains and the educational developmental areas are a means to achieve the **specific (concrete, operationalised) objectives** in a process-based activity. In achieving the specific objectives **the child's personality develops holistically**, even if the formulation of a particular objective has been incorporated in one of the educational areas of development.

Educational areas in themselves comprise, to a different extent, the sub-areas – **locomotive, health, natural sciences, mathematics and logics, language, communication, ethical, patriotic, information, artistic and expressive** (musical, artistic, literary), **work**, as well as cross-cutting topics – **personality and social development, life and health promotion, traffic education – education for safety in the road traffic, environmental, media, multicultural education, education for creativity, development of pre-reading literacy and literacy in general, information and communication technologies.**

The content of the education and training is of a **framework nature. It is further elaborated**, with regards to the conditions of the kindergarten, **into a school educational programme**. It, itemised in detail on the basis of the knowledge of the actual developmental capacities of the children is **specified in the plans of educational activity.**

The Programme respects:

- the family of the child of preschool age,

- developmental specificities – developmental singularities and peculiarities of the child of preschool age,
- possibilities, aptitudes, capacities, skills and knowledge of the child of preschool age,
- individual needs, interests, attitudes of the child of preschool age,
- the natural activity and experimentation of the child,
- specificities of preschool education and training,
- mutually integrated linking of particular thematic domains and educational areas of development of the child's personality,
- activity-based, play-like nature of the pedagogical process implemented through plays, and educational activities,
- the necessity of purposeful and systematic observation, diagnostics,
- the need for evaluation of the pedagogic process (evaluation of children, teachers, auto-evaluation of the kindergarten).

5 Characteristics and organisation of pre-primary education

The kindergarten supports the personal development of children in the social, emotional, intellectual, physical, moral, aesthetic areas, develops the abilities and skills, creates prerequisites for further education. It prepares them for the life in the society, in accordance with individual and age-related peculiarities of children.

In pre-primary education, in kindergartens, are generally enrolled the children **from the age of three to six years**; if there is available capacity children aged from two years can also be enrolled. **Preference is given** to the enrolment of **children having reached the fifth year of age, children with postponed commencement of compulsory school attendance and children with subsequently postponed commencement of school attendance.**

Generally, children of the same age are placed in a kindergarten class. Children who are to start compulsory school attendance in the forthcoming year are usually placed in a separate class. Separate classes can be formed also for children that are learning a foreign language.

The kindergarten may organise school stays in nature for children, trips, excursions, sauna bathing, sports instruction, and other activities only subject to the informed consent of the legal representative of the child and upon agreement with the founder.

In the light of the specificities of pre-primary education, framework curricula are not elaborated in the kindergartens (neither in state-run, nor in school educational programmes).

In kindergartens teaching is **allowed** of **religious education, or religion**, which is provided by the registered churches and religious societies.

Pre-primary education takes place in the form of:

- a) whole day, multiyear preschool education,
- b) separate classes for children which are to start compulsory schooling in the ensuing year,
- c) separate classes for children who are to start compulsory schooling in the ensuing year with the direct participation of legal representatives in education and training (with the consent of the kindergarten director) in combination with domestic preparation of children,

- d) half-day schooling in the range of five hours in the morning or afternoon hours,
- e) individual preschool education.

6 Educational standards

Educational standards comprise the content and performance standards.

The content standards cover the content which respects the developmental potentialities of the preschool child and which draw on the child’s experience and understanding.

The content standards may be understood as the obligation for the teacher. They contain the basic curriculum that the children are expected to master, appropriate to their developmental potentialities and by means of activating methods.

The content standards are a means to educate children of preschool age and serve to develop the elementary foundations of competences (capabilities).

The performance standards are formulated in specific (concrete – operationalised) targets.

The performance standards are conceived as **the target requirements that the child is expected to achieve at the end of the preschool period** in order to acquire the pre-primary education.

6.1 Content and performance standards in the thematic domain I AM

Perceptual-motor area	
Content standards	Performance standards (specific objectives)
Muscular tension and breathing. Application of laterality in moving. Gross motor skill. Equilibrium. Spatial orientation. Basic locomotive movements (walking, running, jumping, crawling, throwing and catching). Basic positions, postures and motions (standing position, sitting position, lying position, kneeling position, etc.). Manipulation of tools. Motion on the tools. Rules, respect, and cooperation. Motion as a means to promote health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – control of the muscular tension and breathing while moving, – show one’s laterality in different motion activities – be able to maintain one’s equilibrium, – orientation in the space (in relation to oneself), – master basic locomotive movements, – take up different positions according to instructions, – know the names of basic positions, postures and motions, – imitate motion under different conditions (with tools, on the gear), – move around the axis of one’s own body (turns, rolls), – manipulate different objects, the gear (with hands, legs, knees, head, lifting up, carrying, handing, rolling, tossing, bouncing, kicking, dribbling, balancing), – observe agreed rules, cooperate, have respect for others, – take up appropriate postures for the motion and for sports activities
Work habits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Manage self-care activities (put on clothes shoes, wash, clean teeth, etc.) and the correct dining habits (use a knife and fork ,

Perceptual-motor area	
Content standards	Performance standards (specific objectives)
	<p>maintain cleanliness while eating, etc.),</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – maintain order and cleanliness in work and technical activities (tidy up after oneself, take care of one's clothes, etc.)
<p>Fine motor skill. Work with different material. Working techniques. Technical creativity. Elementary basics for work with computer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – make pieces of work from a variety of materials, including scrap, using different techniques (cut with scissors, paste, shape material, etc.), while applying technical creativity, – make pieces of work from picture puzzles and building sets made of different materials gradually, from larger parts to tiny parts, according to one's fantasy and according to the master pattern, – manage on the basis of imitation and oral instruction of the adult the work with computer at elementary level – work with children's educational programs <p>Note: the objective is pursued if the kindergarten has appropriate conditions provided for.</p>
<p>Visual-motor skill. Graphomotor skill. Basic graphical shapes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – sit correctly and maintain the inclination of the paper in drawing on the table, – use the coordination of the sight and hand, – draw with large graphic movements, – draw with the hand at ease, smoothly and boldly, – hold correctly the graphic material and exert reasonable intensity of pressure on the pad in using different techniques, – depict graphically the motivated movement coming from the shoulder joint (wagging, grinding, swaying, reeling), the wrist (vertical lines, horizontal lines, curved lines, loops) and the motion of the palm and fingers (upper and lower arch, broken line, wave, horizontal eight, fictive writing)

Cognitive area	
Content standards	Performance standards (specific objective)
<p>Name and surname of the child. The family and its members. Attitudes to members of family.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – introduce oneself saying the name and surname, – distinguish and name the members of family, – take up an attitude to the members of family, including newborn member of the family and convey it through various artistic means of expression

Cognitive area	
Content standards	Performance standards (specific objective)
Orientation in the immediate surroundings of home and the kindergarten. Attitudes to home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – find one’s way in close proximity to home and the kindergarten, – recognize the dominant features of one’s place of residence, – take up an attitude to one’s home and convey it through different artistic means of expression
Human body. Artistic rendition of human figure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – based on multi-sensory perception determine the parts of the body, and describe their function in a simple way, – perceive and determine by multiple senses certain vital organs (the heart, lungs, brain, etc.), – show positive attitudes to one’s own body and convey them through different artistic means of expression, – apply the knowledge of one’s body in depicting and creating human figure (using different artistic and working techniques)
Health state, attitudes to health. Principles of protecting one’s own health. Coping in crisis situations endangering health. Protection against drugs. Potential ways of damaging health. Healthy foodstuffs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – recognise and intuitively describe, in a simple way, the state of health and the state of sickness, – observe health protection principles (with the help of the adults), – take positive attitudes to one’s own health and to the health of others and convey them through different artistic means of expression, – call for the help from an adult in crisis situations in which the child’s life or the life of others is threatened, – recognize the danger of the contact with unknown persons (refuse sweets from unknown persons, perceive it as a danger to health), – recognize the causes of potential danger and damage to health in prohibited manipulation with certain objects, such as sharp objects, matches, medical drugs, chemicals, cleansing agents, electric appliances but also unknown products of nature, – understand, distinguish, sort and choose healthy foodstuffs
Road traffic safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – give reasons for the importance of observation of rules of road traffic with regard to safety, – recognize basic traffic signs, be guided by

Cognitive area	
Content standards	Performance standards (specific objective)
	them, – cross the road safely under the guidance of older persons

Socio-emotional area	
Content standards	Performance standards (specific objectives)
Communication of emotions. Own singularity and the singularity of others. Defending one's own position in a conflict. Self-control. Decision making. Self-image. Basic rules of civilised behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – greet, thank and ask for help, – communicate in an accepted way the positive and negative emotions and express feelings, – recognize and apply one's own singularity and own ideas with regards to singularity of other children in the group, – defend non-violently one's own stance in cases of conflict, – show self-control in games and other activities – act with consideration for the self and for others, – decide for a particular activity, – evaluate one's own abilities in different activities, – apply and respect the habits of civilised behaviour and social manners
Contact in communication. Listening with comprehension. Passive and active vocabulary. Meaningfulness of speech. Articulation of sounds and sound groups. Standard speech. Creativity in speech. Analytical and synthetic activities with words.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – establish non-verbal and verbal contact with other children and adults, – introduce oneself and one's friend, – listen with comprehension, – extend one's passive and active vocabulary, – apply active vocabulary to the content context (talk in a meaningful way about one's feelings, experiences, impressions), – be able to recognize by hearing particular sounds in a word, their quality and localisation, – pronounce correctly and clearly all sounds and groups of sound, – use the standard form of mother tongue, – use synonyms, antonyms and homonyms, create rhymes, – apply the ability of analytical and synthetic plays and activities with words

6.2 Content and performance standards in the thematic domain PEOPLE

Perceptual-motor area	
Content standards	Performance standards (specific objectives)
<p>Rules and cooperation in music and movement plays. Harmony of the movement, music and the text of the play.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – observe the rules of music and movement plays, – make use of cooperation in the group music and movement, or group music and drama play, – harmonise the movement and the musical side in a music and movement play, – render with music and drama the textual part of the play

Cognitive area	
Content standards	Performance standards (specific objectives)
<p>Human activities and their artistic depiction. The importance of work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – recognize, verbally describe and artistically depict various human activities, – know and imitate in plays the work of the parents, – understand the importance of work on the basis of various working activities, – interactively solve the tasks in the children's educational programmes <p>Note: the objective is pursued if the kindergarten has appropriate conditions provided for.</p>
<p>Colours, colour diversity in own products.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – assign, recognise and name colours of the surrounding everyday objects, – apply individual colour vision, – apply colour diversity in the artistic, working and technical products, based on one's own observation
<p>Means of transport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – identify, recognise, assign and sort the means of transport by the place of movement (ground, water, air)

Cognitive area	
Content standards	Performance standards (specific objectives)
<p>Assigning, sorting, arranging, compiling by criteria. Numerical line. Basic numerical acts in the numerical line from 1 to 10. Plane (circle, triangle, square and rectangle) and solid geometry figures (sphere, cube, block, cylinder). Plane and spatial creativity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – assign, sort and arrange objects according to certain criteria (colour, shape, size), – determine equal or different number of elements in a group, – count at least from 1 to 10, – assign the number (not the numeral) to a given number of objects from 1 to 10, – carry out simple operations in the numerical line from 1 to 10 (in connection with the manipulation of objects or toys), – know, recognise, assign, sort and identify certain plane geometry figures, – know, recognise, assign, sort and identify certain solid geometry figures, – put together from puzzle, cut up pictures, sticks, or geometric figures the diagrams and figures according to one's imagination, the pattern or to oral instructions
<p>Listening with comprehension. Non-verbal reactions (movements, gestures, facial expressions). Passive and active vocabulary in the state language – Slovak and in a foreign language (English, German, etc.). The standard form of language.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – listen with comprehension, – respond non-verbally to questions and instructions, – respond verbally to simple questions in a single-word or multiple-word answer, or a simple phrase, – communicate in simple-structured sentences in the state language – Slovak and in the foreign language, – use the standard form of the state language - Slovak, or the standard form of a foreign language <p>Note: the communication in the state language applies to the children attending the kindergartens with other language as the language of instruction and to the children of other nationalities (including foreigners); communication in a foreign language applies to all children attending the kindergartens, whose parents show interest in it.</p>

Socio-emotional area	
Content standards	Performance standards (specific objectives)
Orientation in emotions of other persons. Sharing, helping, presenting with a gift. Resolution of conflicts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – recognise positive and negative emotions of other persons, – share with somebody else, present somebody with a gift and help somebody else, – resolve a conflict with another child/children peacefully, reach a compromise, – express elementary judgmental attitudes to the behaviour of others
Open communication. Acceptance of differences of opinion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – communicate openly without barriers and prejudice, – accept in conversation with other children a difference of opinion, argue, in an acceptable way in support of one's own opinions
Variety of human traits. Foundation for the empathy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – evaluate and recognise positive and negative characteristics of people on the basis of real and fictitious situations, – take positive and emphatic attitudes to the sick, persons with disabilities, old people, multicultural and socio-economic diversity of the mankind

6.3 Content and performance standards in the thematic domain NATURE

Perceptual-motor area	
Content standards	Performance standards (specific objectives)
Movement in nature. Artificial locomotion. Hardening. Movement with different aids. Special movement skills and abilities (gliding, bob-sledding, water games, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – move in different environments (snow, ice, water) free of fear and inhibitions, – harden through water, snow, wind, sun, – modify the movements under changed conditions or in problem situations, – move in different ways between natural or artificial barriers, – use various aids for movement, – manage at elementary level special movement skills and abilities, – manage a hiking trip to the nearby natural environment
Artistic, working and technical creativity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – show skills and practical creativity in making items from the products of nature using various working and art techniques

Cognitive area	
Content standards	Performance standards (specific objectives)
Seasons of the year. Plant and animal kingdom. Significance of the natural environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – recognise the seasons of the year according to typical features, – identify some observable connections between the plant and animal kingdom, – identify the reasons for the importance of natural environment on the basis of observation and experiences of the nature
Beasts and animals. Domestic animals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – learn, recognise and identify on the basis of direct or indirect (mediated) observation some domestic animals, wild and exotic animals, birds and animals living in the open space, – give reasons for the utility of some domestic animals, – take positive attitudes to the animal kingdom, – recognise the danger following from touching unknown animals
Flowers. Care of the plants. Trees and bushes. Mushrooms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – know, describe and recognise some flowers, – realise and be able to give reasons for the significance of care of plants, – know, describe and recognise trees and bushes and give reasons for their differences, – know that there are edible mushrooms and poisonous mushrooms
Animate and inanimate nature. Weather. Elementary notions of the Earth. Elementary notions of the Sun. Elementary notion of the Moon and the stars.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – know, recognise the components of animate and inanimate nature, – know, describe, recognise the natural phenomena affected by the weather, – express with different artistic means of expression own ideas of the Earth acquired through observation and from different media, – express with different artistic means of expression own ideas of the Sun acquired through observation and from different media, – express with different artistic means of expression own ideas of the Moon and the stars acquired through observation and from different media
Social –emotional area	
Content standards	Performance standards (specific objectives)

Social –emotional area	
Content standards	Performance standards (specific objectives)
Beauties of the nature. Evaluation of natural environment. Conservation attitudes to nature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – perceive the beauties of nature, its charm and uniqueness with keen sensibilities, – evaluate natural environment, – show the relation and ecological attitudes to natural environment and depict them through various artistic means of expression, – apply practically the habits of care of nature (abstain from strewing around litter, rake leaves, etc.), – talk about feelings, experiences, impressions from the care of the nature and depict them

6.4 Content and performance standards in the thematic domain CULTURE

Perceptual-motor area	
Content standards	Performance standards (specific objectives)
Developing a sense of rhythm by playing on the body in stationary positions, walking, running. Responses to changes of the music tempo. Expressing the character of music through movement. Dance and movement improvisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – rhythmize alone by playing 2/4 time, 3/4 time on the body in different stationary positions, walking, running, – respond promptly to a change of music tempo of the musical accompaniment, – express the mood of the song and the music through natural, cultivated movement, – apply dancing elements (galloping hops, hopping step, dance spins, bows), – apply acquired skills in movement improvisation to the music

Cognitive area	
Content standards	Performance standards (specific objectives)
Toys and objects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – perceive the diversity of toys and objects in one's environment, – perceive and recognise that toys and objects are made of different materials, have different surface, shape, colour, size, etc.
Temporal relations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – orientate in different time relations of the day, week, and the year in connection with particular activities and through recognition of essential signs, – show understanding of temporal relations – what is now, today, what was yesterday, what will be tomorrow
Place of residence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – name the place of own residence,

Cognitive area	
Content standards	Performance standards (specific objectives)
Cities and communities. My mother country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – tell some names of other towns and communities, – know that the Slovak Republic is our mother country, – know that Bratislava is the capital, – know some local and state symbols
Cultural heritage, holidays and their celebrations. Artistic expression of living out the holidays.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – engage actively in the preparation of celebrating holidays and social events including keeping folk traditions, – express through different artistic means the feelings, impressions, and experiences from holiday celebrations
The world's diversity. Artistic expression of impressions from observing the world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – verify from children's encyclopaedias and other media that the world is diverse (comprising also oceans, seas, rivers, mountain ranges, forests, primeval forests, diverse animal kingdom), – express through different artistic means the feelings, impressions, and experiences from the observation of the world, or the experiences from visiting a foreign country

Social –emotional area	
Content standards	Performance standards (specific objectives)
Emotionality in play. Sociability in play. Diversity of plays and games. Creativity in play. Planning, realisation and evaluation of play.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – show the joy of play , – engage in group play and know how to cooperate, – understand diversity of games/plays, – begin, develop and finish the game, – apply creativity in play, – planning, realization and evaluation of play
Rhythmize nursery rhymes and songs. Sing songs. Express the character of the song on children's musical instruments and using dramatic means of expression. Music creativity. Listening to songs and music. Artistic expression of feelings from listening to music.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – rhythmize folk rhymes and children's folk and artificial songs by play on the body or through the Orff instruments and tools, – sing in the range of the fifth (c1 – g1) – the sixth (relatively intonationally purely), in the event of music talent also in the range of the octave (c1 – c2), with joy, and appropriately to the character of the children's folk and artificial song, with different theme, – express the character of the song by playing children's musical instruments, – convey children's songs through dramatic means of expression, – listen to children's music compositions with

Social –emotional area	
Content standards	Performance standards (specific objectives)
	emotional engagement, – convey feelings from listening to music also through other artistic means (fine art, drama, etc.), – use rhymes in play, action songs and finger songs with different themes
Experimenting with colours. Artistic creativity. Drawing, painting, modelling. Art techniques. Plane and spatial artistic rendition. Composition units. Evaluative attitudes to art works.	– experiment with the characteristics of colours and apply their creative variations, – cover the whole area with different colours, – draw, paint, model, model in different positions (lying, kneeling, standing sitting positions), – draw, paint, model, model, model according to own fantasy, imaginations and on a theme, – draw, paint, model, model by various techniques, creatively and with the use of different material, – draw, paint, model, model, express in plane and three-dimensionally the human and animal figure, – the use of different artistic techniques in a creative way, – create composition units using fantasy, – perceive and observe the beauty of art works, – evaluate progressively the art works, architectural solutions of significant edifices
Books, letters and numerals. Children’s, folk, and authored poetry and prose. Recital of literary forms. Free reproduction of literary texts. Literary and drama creativity. Artistic rendition of the content of literary and dramatic works. “Reading” and “writing” a simple story.	– show interest in books, letters, numerals, have an orientation in books, – listen with comprehension and emotional engagement to a children’s folk and authored poetry, fairy tales and stories, – perceive with emotional engagement puppet theatre and other children’s theatre (drama, musical), – remember and recite short literary forms, such as nursery rhymes, riddles, finger plays, short children’s poems, etc., – reproduce freely folk and authored fairy tales and stories, – express using different artistic means (fine art, music, drama, music and drama) the feelings and impressions from fairy tales and theatre, – “read” animated story and cartoon strip, – “write” an illustrated letter

The road to a good kindergarten is demanding, winding, full of obstacles. It calls for encouraging environment from all sides and all concerned. It is a never-ending

process, yet one that is very beneficial for the prospective success of the child in his or her further education and life.

7 The language of instruction

The state language of the Slovak Republic is the language of instruction in kindergartens. For the children belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups, beside the right to the acquisition of the state language also the right to education and training in their own language is ensured, under the conditions stipulated in the School Act.

For children belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups the education and training is provided in the kindergartens and in classes where the education and training is provided in **the language of the relevant national minority.**

In kindergartens or classes where the education and training is provided in the language of the relevant national minority, **communication in the state language – Slovak is part of the educational and training activity.**

For deaf children the right to education and training in sign language is also ensured.

Kindergarten education and training can also take place in a foreign language (hereinafter referred to as “bilingual education”). In accordance with the School Act, a foreign language is deemed to be the language of a foreign state with which the Slovak Republic has concluded an agreement under which a kindergarten or a class with a second language of instruction of this state has been set up, whose language is not a language of national minority, or an ethnic group.

In kindergartens or classes with bilingual education, communication in the state language – Slovak is also part of the education.

8 Organisational succession of daily activities in the kindergarten

The succession of daily activities, periodically recurrent in any kindergarten is processed in the form of a daily schedule. The daily schedule should be flexible enough, should allow to respond to the children’s needs and interests. In compiling the schedule it is necessary to see that it provides room for peaceful, safe and meaningful active stay of the child in the kindergarten.

In sequencing daily activities:

- provision is made for a balanced rotation of activities (optimal biorhythm, stress-free environment),
- principles of a healthy regimen (healthy lifestyle) are observed,
- time space is created for the child’s play and learning,
- fixed time spans for the activities ensuring the regimen are observed.

Daily schedule comprises:

- games and play activities,
- movement and relaxation exercises,
- outdoor play,
- rest,
- activities ensuring the regimen (personal hygiene, taking meals, setting lunch tables).

Games and play activities are spontaneous or teacher-directed games and play activities of children. **Educational activities**, planned in advance, are component parts of games and play activities. Games and play activities can be scheduled 2-3 times within the daily morning and afternoon hours.

Movement and relaxation exercises contain health, relaxation and breathing exercises. They take place **every day at a specified time**, observing the psycho-hygienic principles

(before meals /by rule not immediately after meal, in an aired room, or outdoors, etc.). They belong to pre-planned activities.

Outdoor stay contains children's movement activities, walks, educational activities, etc. In the interest of a **healthy psychosomatic development** of the child, **skipping outdoor stay** is not recommended. **It is carried out every day.** Exceptions occur when there are unfavourable climatic conditions, strong gusty wind, strong frosty weather, rain (not drizzle). In spring and summer months outdoor stays are adjusted in the light of the intensity of sunshine and are scheduled twice during the day, in the morning and afternoon hours.

Rest takes place for a minimum duration of 30 minutes, depending on the children's needs.

The regimen ensuring activities take place at a fixed time. Maintaining a **three-hour's interval** is recommended **between serving food.** Time for serving food is set according to the conditions of the kindergarten operations.

All organisational forms of the daily schedule are equal in terms of pedagogical and psychological aspects. They have an effect on the development of the child's personality in all educational areas, therefore they are **pedagogically directed by qualified teachers of pre-primary education.**

9 Organisational form of pre-primary education

Preschool education and training takes place during the entire stay of the child in kindergarten.

Pre-primary education (education is deemed to be the organic component of upbringing, upbringing is a broader term and education a narrower term) **is implemented through the organisational form – educational activity.** The name **educational activity** implies the balanced implementation of preschool education and pre-school training.

Educational activity is teacher-directed. It is a purposeful, systematic, meaningful, concrete educational and training activity.

Educational activity is an organic part of the daily schedule.

It includes **spontaneous – situation learning** and, based on the appropriate and effective motivation, also the purposeful, deliberate – **intentional learning.** In the educational activity teacher uses, in appropriate extent, **situational decisions,** which means the ability to promptly respond to the children's needs and interests, as well as their different developmental level.

The teacher can use **situational decisions** unobtrusively **also in other organisational forms of the daily schedule,** such as in games and play activities when the children familiarise with the foreign language or during the stay outdoors. The teacher decides to respond to pedagogical situations and based on her own improvisation skill will take advantage of those situations as much as possible for the development of children's personality in one of the developmental areas, or in all of them in parallel.

The teacher strives to apply all principles in the **educational activity,** particularly the principle of purposefulness, activity, illustrative faculty, appropriateness. Both the teacher and the child are in the role of the subject. The teacher's position is non-dominant. The teacher enables the child to have as much free expression as possible (positive, in particular), relating for example to speech, movement, music and movement, art, drama, music and drama, etc. In each pedagogical situation the child is given a **positive model of behaviour.** In implementing the educational activity is vital that the child could learn under all circumstances in an unimposing way and **experience success.**

Education and training related requirements should be set **moderately above the limits of the developmental capacities of children** for children to be able to meet them while perceiving learning as a reward for the efforts exerted (e.g. as satiated curiosity that is the core of any knowledge) and to be motivated for further learning.

The duration of an educational activity should respect the child's needs and the potential **duration of keeping the children's attention** with regard to the developmental specificities **and the rules of psycho-hygiene. The educational activity must not overload children.**

Education and training activity in the kindergarten (takes account of the specificities of learning in preschool time) covers various pedagogical situations:

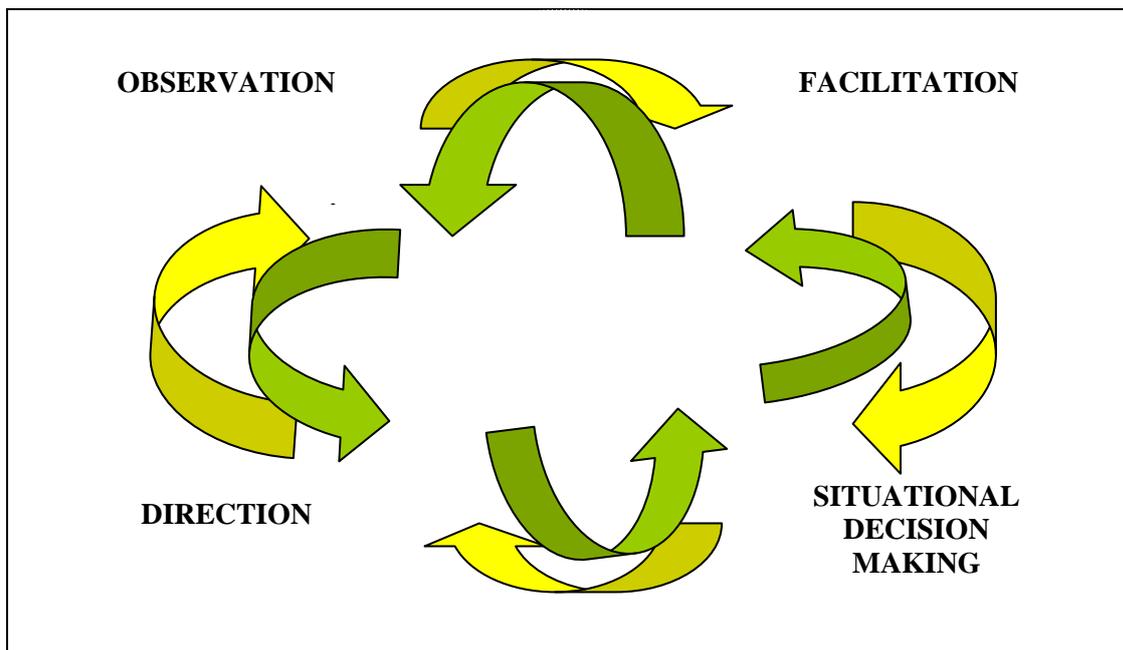
- spontaneous play activities by children,
- teacher-planned, directly directed activities, games and play activities,
- teacher-planned, indirectly directed activities, games and play activities.

The teacher directs, within her or his competences the **pedagogical process through a set of dynamic mutually interrelated educational and training activities**, which take turns in a circle (Diagram 1). **The change of their succession is not excluded.**

They include:

- observation (as a method of pedagogical diagnostics),
- facilitation (providing assistance, make easier),
- situational decision making,
- directing of the activities, including children's co-participation in directing the activities.

Diagram 1 Pedagogical process



Educational activity (planned, directed pedagogical process) **can be implemented:**

- during games and play activities,
- as a separate organisational form during the day,
- within the outdoor stay.

Educational activity takes place through the following **forms of work:**

- in a group of children (the number of children in the group is determined by the teacher according to the rules for planned educational play or activity, or at the teacher's discretion),
- frontal, simultaneously with all children,

- individually.

The planning of educational and training activity is fully in the competence of the teacher. The way, form, range and the duration of plans of the educational and training activity is determined and agreed by each kindergarten **at its first pedagogical meeting**. The existence of several forms of planning simultaneously in a kindergarten is not excluded.

Performance standards (specific objectives) are part of every plan of educational and training activity. **Other components of the plan** will depend **on the needs of the teacher** and his/her **pedagogical mastery** as **plans of educational and training activity²** are **an aid, a working material for the teacher**.

10 Staffing of pre-primary education

Educational and training activity in the kindergartens is carried out by **teachers of pre-primary education**, satisfying the conditions of professional and pedagogic qualifications in accordance with the effective legislation³.

Teaching of religious education and religion is undertaken by the pedagogic worker with professional and pedagogic qualification, having also a church authorisation in accordance with the internal regulations of the particular church or religious society.

In addition, there may be **pedagogic assistants and specialist staff** working in kindergartens who satisfy the qualification requirements prescribed by effective legislation³.

The requirements for the degree and field of education of pre-primary education teachers, including teachers in special classes and special kindergartens, are given in the legislation³.

The educational and training activity for children with special needs education is carried out by special pedagogues, speech therapists, pedagogic assistants, etc.

11 Material and technical and spatial provision of pre-primary education

The environment creates conditions for the overall well-being of the child. Kindergarten environment may have a positive effect on the personality of the child only if it can fully meet his or her psychological, emotional, and physical needs. The microclimate of the kindergarten setting affects the feelings of contentment, performance and fatigue in movement, play, learning and work.

Safety and hygienic standards apply to the kindergarten environment, the selection of its equipment, furniture, textiles. The kindergarten environment should satisfy the **aesthetic and emotional qualities**. It should be cosy, pleasant and harmonious. The harmony of environment is its variable element that can be affected. Children and the teacher jointly give it particular charm (every classroom is unique), they take care of the tidiness and the aesthetic arrangement.

The kindergarten environment is closely linked with kindergarten goals, the educational and training activity, the content of education and training, with the child's learning.

Stimulation of the environment is most dynamic if it reflects the day-to-day progress, changes and the novelties of the implemented programme. Kindergarten teachers constantly create caring social and emotional atmosphere in the classroom, purposefully

² The Plan of educational and training activity is part of the documentation pursuant to section 11 of the Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Education and Training (the School Act) and on amending of certain acts, as amended.

³ Regulation of the Ministry of Education of the SR No. 41/1996 Coll. on professional and pedagogic qualifications of pedagogic workers, as amended.

creating stimulating environment for spontaneous and intentional learning while inspiring children to actively help create such an environment.

Material environment is the basis for the internal environment. The emphasis on material equipment should not put the child in the shade. The aids, freely and visibly displayed for the children to see are component parts of material equipment. They should offer children direct, firsthand experiences, encourage children to take initiative and foster and enhance intrinsic motivation. The space in which the child moves and the events that act upon the child are equally important elements of the environment.

Toys are among the standard and irreplaceable kindergarten equipment. Their selection, quality and age-appropriateness should be given increased attention.

The kindergarten material and technical equipment includes children and specialist literature, teaching aids, sports equipment and gear, musical instruments, didactic and audiovisual technology, computers, etc.

Sufficient supplies of consumer goods for art, graphomotor, and work activities are a precondition for high-quality implementation of the school educational programme.

Tables and chairs for children are basic pieces of furniture. Parameters of their size vary with the child's growth. Tables must be placed in the brightly lit section of the room with the light coming at the correct angle.

Furniture arrangement must respect the children's needs to have adequate space for play, movement and relaxing exercises and rest. **The classroom furniture** should comply with the anthropometrical requirements (its height, size should correspond to the height of children, it should prevent weariness of children, etc.). The equipment should be as simple as possible, adjusted to the number children, made of natural materials, waxed or dipped by ecological agents, so as not to be harmful to children's health, it should be safe and develop children's aesthetic feeling.

Cots must be flexible, adequately firm and stable, thermally well insulated, easily portable and foldaway.

The classroom arrangements should

- enable children communication in joint activities in play groups,
- facilitate free contact of the child with the close surroundings,
- facilitate the child's access to toys and aids,
- enable the child to plan for and create the play environment according to his or her own intention,
- enable the child to discover his or her own work tempo and become aware of his or her capacities,
- allow the child to display his/her own piece of work in the environment,
- enable the child to make things according to his/her own imagination, on the basis of autonomous choices made in the selection of activities,
- be safe, hygienic, aesthetic and functional,
- facilitate the observance by children and teachers of the prior prescribed rules in tidying up the toys and manipulating the objects, teaching aids.

In the interior of the classroom it is necessary to specify:

- a) the free space for common movement activities and movement plays,
- b) the space for games and work activities (playrooms and workrooms, centres).

Playrooms and workrooms are located within the space that is equipped for the purpose and that serves for spontaneous play of children and the teacher-planned and directed educational and training activity. The thematic focus of the playrooms and their change is decided jointly by the teacher and the children according to the planned activities, goals, and the interest of children in the play room.

The exterior (outdoor environment) covers the overall character of the landscape in which the child lives, the architecture, etc. It will also depend on the geographic conditions, cultural habits, social factors.

Outdoor space should allow for:

- movement activities (on the gear, free movement activities),
- creative, construction and artistic activities,
- communicative activities (establishing contacts),
- special activities (teacher-created or teacher-directed).

The kindergarten grounds is made of playgrounds, the garden, enforced areas, or even the farming section of the yard. The playground equipment comprises: climbing frames, swings, sandpit, outdoor pool, traffic course, etc. The fencing of the garden is necessary for both the safety and hygienic reasons.

The equipment that is fixed in the garden for permanent use must be firm and resistant to mechanical intervention and meteorological effects.

For children with special needs education all material and technical conditions must be ensured that are necessary for their educational activity.

12 Conditions for ensuring safety and health protection in education and training

Pursuant to the Act No. 124/2006 Coll. on the Safety and Health Protection at Work and on amending of certain acts, which may be applied to the **conditions for ensuring safety and health protection in education and training**, the founder and the director of the kindergarten are obliged to take care of the safety and health protection of children and all adult persons moving in the workplace and its premises with their knowledge.

In education and training, the activities directly connected with the education and training and in the provision of services, the kindergartens are obliged:

- to have regard for the basic physiological needs of children,
- to create conditions for a healthy development of children and for the prevention of socio-pathological phenomena,
- to ensure safety and health protection for children,
- to provide the necessary information to ensure safety and health protection for children,
- keep records of the registered school injuries of children that have occurred during the education and training activity, or during the activities organised by the kindergarten.

Safety and health protection issues are also integral parts of the content of education and training provided in kindergartens. Through this content children learn how to protect their health and the health of others, and how to solve – at elementary level – the situations posing threat to health.

13 Specificities and conditions of education and training for children with special needs education

In all organisational forms of education specific conditions need to be created for children's successful education and for meeting children's special educational and training needs.

A child with special needs education is one in which additional resources need to be ensured for the support of effective education and training. "Additional resources" are deemed to be the conditions which need to be secured in addition to the typical conditions for children's education. **Special educational and training needs in a child are diagnosed by the school facility of educational prevention and counselling service.**

A special educational and training need is a requirement for the adjustment of conditions (content, forms, methods, environment, and approaches) in the child education and training. **Special educational and training needs follow out of the handicap or the talent, or from the child's development in a socially disadvantaged environment,** whose regard will secure equal access of the child to education, appropriate development of his or her capacities or personality, as well as the attainment of adequate level of education and adequate integration in the society.

A child with special educational and training needs is are a rule:

a) a child with a handicap, i.e.

- a child with disabilities (mental disability, hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical disablement, impaired communication skill, autism or other pervasive developmental disorders, with multiple disabilities, a child in the borderline area of mental retardation),
- a child that is sick or debilitated by the illness ,
- a child with developmental disorders (activity and attention disorder, retarded or irregular psychomotor development);

b) a child from a socially disadvantaged environment;

c) a child with a gift, who the educational counselling and prevention facility has diagnosed as having special educational and training needs.

Additional resources come in different forms, primarily:

- a) provision for professional approach in education – early special pedagogy, psychology, and medical diagnostics, education and training according to individualised educational and training programme, individual and group work with the child, the use of special methods and forms of teaching, the inclusion of specific content, specific procedures in the assessment of educational and training outcomes, the application of alternative forms of communication, close cooperation with the parents and others, according to individual needs of a particular child following out of the specialist diagnostics;
- b) material comprising the special teaching aids, compensatory devices, equipment adjustments to the environment (such as barrier-free access) and others;
- c) personnel – special pedagogue, school special pedagogue, speech therapist, therapist, teacher assistant, school psychologist, lower teacher/students ratio, in the case of integrated education reduction of the number of children in the class, teacher training, and others;
- d) financial to ensure special material, technical and personnel conditions.

Education standards are the same for the education and training of all children. With regard to children with special educational and training needs their implementation is adjusted to maximum extent to the special education and training needs and the developmental capacities of children. As in the case of children without special educational and training needs, teachers create conditions for effective self-development of the child's personality, play, learning, communication, etc.

Education and training of children with a handicap takes place:

- a) in schools for handicapped children; these schools are special schools,
- b) in other school:
 1. in special classes that are set up for children having the same type of disadvantage(handicap); a section of the education process may take place in a class together with the other children of the kindergarten; the child can also complete certain activities outside the special class,
 2. in classes or educational groups together with the other children of the kindergarten; if such a child has special educational and training needs, he or she

is educated according to individual education and training programme designed by the kindergarten in cooperation with the school facility of educational prevention and counselling, the child's legal representative has the right to be informed of the programme.

Individual educational and training programme includes:

- basic information on the child and the implications the diagnosis will have for the educational process,
- requirements for adjustments to the school and classroom environment,
- modification of the education content,
- application of special education procedures,
- specificities of the organisation and forms of education,
- requirements for the provision of compensatory aids and special learning aids,
- provision for specialists services – special pedagogue, therapist pedagogue, psychologist, speech therapist and others.

All specific adjustments are designed in individual range and quality so as to correspond to the special educational and training needs of a particular child. The teacher draws up the individual educational and training programme in cooperation with the special pedagogue, or other specialists, involved as appropriate. The individual educational and training programme is signed by the school director, the teacher, the special pedagogue, and the child's legal representative. The individual educational and training programme can be altered and supplemented in response to the actual special educational and training needs of the child. Changes have to be consulted with all the specialists concerned and the child's legal representative.

In designing school educational programmes the special kindergartens and the kindergartens in which handicapped children are being educated give regard to the type of disability of children.

Within the school educational programmes also specific topics are included in the content (developmental stimulation of cognitive and psychomotor functions, individual speech therapist care, individual typhlitic care, communication skills, sign language and others) .

In the education and training for the handicapped children alternative forms of communication are used (sign language, the Braille system – in the kindergarten, not its acquisition, alternative forms of communication).

The integration of children with special educational and training needs into classes together with the other children, or in special classes, **will have an impact on the design of the school educational programme.**

b) the child from a socially disadvantaged environment

Socially disadvantaged environment (disadvantage by poverty or culture)

– is defined as an environment which, in the light of the social and linguistic conditions, inadequately stimulates the development of the mental, volitional, and emotional characteristics of an individual, does not encourage his or her effective socialisation, and does not provide enough adequate stimuli for the development of personality. It causes socio-cultural deprivation, distorts the intellectual, moral and emotional development of an individual and, hence the individual is, in terms of education, deemed to be a person with special educational and training needs.

The child's special educational and training needs are the requirements for special adjustment of conditions, the organisation and the implementation of the educational process so as to correspond to the specificities of the child whose physical, mental and social development significantly differs from the standard development.

A socially disadvantaged environment (hereinafter referred to as SDE) for the child is the family:

that is provided assistance in material hardship and whose income does not exceed the amount of subsistence minimum,

- in which at least one of the parents (or the caregiver) ranks as a disadvantaged job seeker,
- in which the highest completed education of the parents is primary, or in which at least one of the parents has not completed primary education,
- has non-standard housing and hygienic conditions (i.e. the child does not have an assigned place for play, has not his or her own bed, the housing is not connected to electricity, etc).

Education and training of children from socially disadvantaged environment (hereinafter referred to as SDE)

The specific objective of the education and training of children from SDE is to achieve through the elimination or removal of handicaps following from social disadvantage (communication skills, cultural and social exclusion, hygienic habits ...) an adequate development of the abilities to prepare them for school education.

Within the educational programme, it is vital:

- to motivate for increased participation of children from socially disadvantaged environment in preschool preparation already from the age of 4 (justification: by early preschool preparation the necessary readiness of children for the entry in compulsory schooling will be achieved whereby the risks of school failure will be eliminated and the child will acquire the basic social and societal habits necessary for smooth and trouble-free inclusion in the educational process),
- to ensure compulsory preschool preparation of 5-year old children and subsequently gradually select the application of temporary equalisation measures for the education of 4-year old children,
- to ensure a teacher assistant who in the cases of children from mixed nationality environments could speak also the children's mother tongue,
- to implement programmes directed at improving cooperation of parents of the Roma children with kindergartens,
- to ensure cooperation with informal community centres that deal with the education of children, including maternity centres for future mothers and mothers with children,
- to ensure, prior to transition to school education, the testing of school readiness by exclusively pedagogical and psychological counselling centres, on the basis of socially and culturally independent tests of school readiness for 6 – 7-year old children, which respect the specificities of the knowledge and experience of children from socially disadvantaged environments, particularly those from the environment of national minorities.

Education and training of children from socially disadvantaged environment take place

- in kindergartens in mainstream classes, or in the educational groups together with other kindergarten children.

Where a child has special educational and training needs, he or she is educated according to individual educational and training programme that is designed by the kindergarten in cooperation with the school facility of educational prevention and counselling; the child's legal representative has the right to be informed of this programme.

Individual educational and training programme includes:

- basic information on the child and the implications the social and cultural environment will have for the pedagogic process,
- requirements for adjustments to the school and classroom environment,
- modification of the education content,
- application of special education procedures,
- specificities of the organisation and forms of education,
- requirements for the provision of appropriate assistive teaching aids,
- provision for specialist services – teacher assistant, special pedagogue, psychologist and other specialists.

All specific adjustments are designed on an individual basis so as to correspond to the special educational and training needs of a particular child. The teacher draws up the individual educational and training programme in cooperation with the teacher assistant and the special pedagogue, or other specialists involved, and with the children's parents if possible (legal representatives), or appropriate. The individual educational and training programme is signed by the school director, the teacher, the special pedagogue, and the child's legal representative. The individual educational and training programme can be altered and supplemented in response to the actual special educational and training needs of the child. Changes have to be consulted with all specialists concerned and with the child's legal representative.

c) a gifted child

Education and training of gifted children in the kindergarten requires a specific approach, methods, forms and the content.

Education and training of gifted children takes place in kindergartens (pursuant to the School Act) geared to develop:

- a) intellectual gift (general intellectual gift; specific intellectual gift) ,
- b) artistic talent,
- c) sports talent,
- d) practical talent.

Intellectual gift of children means high, above-average cognitive abilities in one or more areas of the intellect. **Children with general intellectual gift are children with special educational and training needs based on the diagnostics undertaken by a facility of educational prevention and counselling.**

Artistic talent of children shows in one of the artistic areas, particularly fine art, music, literature and drama, and dancing.

Sports (or generally movement) **talent** of children shows in one of the areas of individual or collective sports.

Practical talent of children shows in a high level of their manual skills in concrete practical activities.

Education and training of gifted/talented children takes place through the educational programmes designed to develop the particular talent or gift.

Kindergartens catering for special **kind of gifts** create conditions for the development of the children's relevant gift or talent, while **applying specific educational and training methods and the organisational forms of education and training.**

In order to develop gifts or talents institutional conditions are created by the founders, while the individual conditions are created by kindergartens. Individual conditions for the development of the talent or gift are created by enabling the children to: be educated in the subjects or areas of the educational programme of primary school in the kindergarten, or by enabling them to be enrolled in the primary school before reaching the age of six.

The inclusion of gifted children will be taken into account when designing the school educational programme.

Education and training of **children from socially disadvantaged environment** is implemented in accordance with the Act on Education and Training (the School Act). Kindergartens create individual conditions for the education and training of these children in the school educational programmes. The individual conditions include:

- education according to individual educational programme,
- the modification of the organisation of education and training,
- modification of the environment in which the education and training is implemented,
- the use of specific methods and forms of education and training.

14 Principles and conditions for developing school educational programmes

The **National Educational Programme ISCED 0** is binding on kindergartens, which based on it develop their **school educational programme**.

The school educational programme must be conceived **in accordance with the principles and goals of the education and training pursuant to the Act on Education and Training (the School Act) and on amending of certain acts.**

The school educational programme is, within the meaning of the effective legislation, a **pedagogic document** which is a **component part of the pedagogic documentation** of a particular kindergarten. The approved school educational programme is a **public document**. The director shall **publish** it on in an accessible place.

In developing it **regard shall be taken of the external and internal conditions** of the kindergarten. The kindergarten **director** shall be responsible for the development of this document, or, in the case of primary school with a kindergarten, it will be jointly the primary school director and the deputy director for the kindergarten. The **entire pedagogic staff** of the kindergarten shall participate in the development of the school educational programme.

The school educational programme is **issued by the director** of the kindergarten **upon its discussion in the Pedagogic Staff Meeting** and the **School Council**. **The founder may request** from the school director the **school educational programme for approval**.

If it involves a **newly established kindergarten**, the expert design of the school educational programme **shall be secured by the school founder and shall be enclosed with the application for the inclusion of the school in the network of schools and school facilities**, subject to a special regulation. (Act No. 596/2003 Coll.)

Parents of children actually attending the kindergarten **should also be informed** of the school educational programme.

The school educational programme shall include:

- a) the name of the educational programme,
- b) the definition of goals and the mission of education and training,
- c) the level of education to be attained through completion of the school educational programme or a self-contained part thereof,
- d) the school orientation,
- e) duration of attendance and the forms of education and training,
- f) curriculum,
- g) the language of instruction,

- h) the mode, conditions of completing the education and training and of issuing the certificate of education attained,
- i) personnel provision,
- j) material and technical and spatial provision,
- k) conditions to ensure the safety and health protection in education and training,
- l) the internal system of control and evaluation of children,
- m) the internal system of control and appraisal of school staff ,
- n) requirements for continual training of pedagogic and specialist staff.

The name of the school educational programme can either be general or it may be conceived creatively with regard to the developmental specificities of preschool period. For example, the school educational programme “Curious child”, etc. The name of the school educational programme can also be devised in accordance with traditional name of the particular kindergarten, such as the School educational programme of the kindergarten Lienka/Ladybird, etc.

The kindergarten pedagogic team shall define their **own aims and mission of education and training**. The general aims as set out in the National Educational Programme as well as the orientation of the kindergarten shall be the starting points for defining the kindergarten own objectives in the school educational programme. The objectives in a school educational programme shall be more specific, when compared with those in the National Educational Programme. The mission of education and training in a school educational programme shall correspond with the general mission of the kindergarten as institution.

The school educational programme shall:

- give the **level of education** which the kindergarten offers – identical with the level set out in the National Educational Programme for Kindergartens,
- characterise the **kindergarten’s own orientation**, for example, a kindergarten enriching the education and training with regional elements; having, based on the selection of children with a specific gift, its own children’s literary-dramatic or singing ensemble; presenting folk traditions; making use of the opportunities offered by the nearby natural environment; serving as a training centre for the preparation of future teachers, involved in international projects, etc.
- give the **particular duration of kindergarten attendance** (several years attendance, last year before compulsory school attendance, etc.) of the child and **the particular form of education and training** (half-day, whole-day, etc.) applied in the particular kindergarten,
- give the **curriculum** defining the educational and training objectives and the content of the educational activity; the curriculum is designed in the minimum range as stipulated by the National Educational Programme; the curriculum must be designed in consistency with the education standards,
- give the **language of instruction**, according to which the education and training is implemented in the particular kindergarten; this **must be consistent with the network of schools and school facilities and with the charter of foundation**,
- give the **mode, conditions of completion of education and training and the issue of a document** of the education received, in accordance with the diction of the School Act , and with regard to its particular conditions,

- give the actual **staffing** of the kindergarten; referring to pedagogic staff, specialist staff and non-pedagogic staff; with regard to pedagogic and specialist staff the fulfilment of qualification requirements is also given, within the meaning of effective legislation,
- give the actual **material and technical and spatial conditions** of the kindergarten in terms of their effect on the fulfilment of its objectives and the mission,
- give the **actual conditions relating to the provision for safety and health protection in education and training**, in accordance with effective legislation,
- specify **the internal system of control and assessment of children and the internal system of control and appraisal of the school staff**,
- specify the **plan of further training for pedagogic and specialist staff** of the kindergarten.

An **international programme**, which is run upon **the approval in writing by the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic** and which is consistent with the principles and goals of education and training pursuant to the Act on Education and Training (the School Act) and on amending of certain acts, can also be a school educational programme.

The School State Inspection checks compliance of the school educational programme with the National Educational Programme, the objectives and the principles of education and training, as stipulated by the Act on Education and Training (the School Act).

Educational programmes for the children with handicaps are part of the National Educational Programme ISCED 0 – pre-primary education:

- a) children with mental disabilities,
- b) children with hearing impairment,
- c) children with visual impairment,
- d) children with physical disablement,
- e) children with impaired communication skill,
- f) children with autism or other pervasive developmental disorders,
- g) sick children or children debilitated by illness,
- h) deaf-blind children.

The National Educational Programme ISCED 0 – pre-primary education was prepared by:
 PaedDr. Katarína Guziová, the National Institute for Education
 Doc. PhDr. Mária Podhájecká, CSc., Prešov University in Prešov, Pedagogical Faculty
 PaedDr. Vlasta Gmitrová, Methodological and Pedagogical Centre, the regional workplace in Prešov
 PaedDr. Monika Miňová, PhD., Prešov University in Prešov, Pedagogical Faculty
 PhDr. Viera Hajdúková, PhD., the State School Inspection
 PaedDr. Anna Portíková, Prešov University in Prešov, Pedagogical Faculty