

## Recent Changes in the Czech Republic's Pre-school Education System

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### Preschool education

- has a long tradition in the Czech Republic reaching back to **the beginning of the 19th century**.
- The system has always had a strong **educational** basis.
- Kindergartens have been **incorporated into the network of schools** and other educational institutions.

- 'General Educational Programme for Preschool Education'
- 96% of 3-5-year-old children attend the kindergarten.
- 89.1% of 5-year-old children out of the whole 5-year-old cohort go to the kindergarten.
- There are 4,931 kindergartens in the country + 108 special kindergartens, which means that the total number of children in kindergartens at present is 342,521, and the annual increase is 4.2%.

During the first year of Primary School, the most frequently noted problems are:

- lack of independence
- lack of concentration
- disrespect of rules
- speech problems
- problems in communication
- faulty grasp of the pencil
- specific learning problems.

## Recent Change

- From September 2017, kindergarten has been made compulsory for all 5 year olds.
- Implementation will be financed through the **Research, Development and Education Operational Programme (RDEOP)**, which is supported by EU Structural and Investment Funds.
- The main aim is to help children from socially disadvantaged families to prepare for entering formal primary education at the age of 6.

## We Read to Children Since Childhood

1. We make it a point that reading is always a pleasant experience.
2. We read to children since early childhood.
3. When reading, we focus our attention on the child and his/her needs only; we are maximally responsive to the child's perception, way of thinking, feelings, reactions and questions.
4. We always discuss what we have been reading with the child.
5. We read often, regularly, and as long as the child shows interest.
6. We offer children books of different types/genres.
7. We encourage children to pay attention to the design of the book.
8. We show the child the process of reading, i.e we read from left to right, we may name letters, etc.
9. We support children in games on the basis of the read stories, such as playing the school, inventing other stories, etc.
10. We surround children with other written or printed materials.

### Some recommendations for acquainting the child with simple school mathematics

- 1. **Games with rules.** The aim is to teach children to observe rules, to correct mistakes, to cope with failure.
- 2. **Games with plasticine, sand, ceramic clay, plaster.** The child forms, copies, enlarges, reduces, cuts out, rolls, rams down, paints the surface, compares, describes the procedure. The aim is to prepare the child for learning geometry concepts, developing algorithms for activities, etc.
- 3. **Games with paper** – transfers, drawing, folding, tearing, cutting. The aim is dividing, putting together, part/whole relationships.
- 4. **Games practising hearing.** After hearing a story, the child acts it out with toys or other objects, or perhaps with other children. He/she can also draw a picture illustrating some aspect of the story and recognise the concept of numbers (3 kids, 2 princesses, 7 dwarves). The aim is to extract quantity from a verbal description and to recognise and remember the sequence of events in the story.

### *„Teddy Bear NIVEA Helps Children in Their Preparation for School“*

- It is sponsored by a commercial company, but is not simply a spin-off from a product promotion project.
- It involves **400** kindergartens in Czechia and **100** in Slovakia and teaching materials include copy books, exercises for pre-schoolers, letter games, jigsaw puzzles etc, as well as advice for teachers on teaching reading and natural science literacy.

