

## INTEGRATED MANUAL FOR CHILDREN AND PROGRAM FOR EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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### Abstract

Latest programming requirements adopted with the program for early learning and development imposed the need to create reference literature for children, that will provide support for successful implementation of the program in practice. The need of reference literature for preschool children is all great because it as a kind of medium that arouses particular interest among children and has a high cognitive and practical function.

**Integrated** manuals for children are a significant source of information and acquire knowledge through play and fun and take up a special place in capturing the boundary between verbal and visual communication. They transfer information and create intensive interaction. Manuals for children which includes all text books or materials that are intended for children who follow the program, are an important source of knowledge especially in increased competition of the electronic media and the Internet.

They transfer information in an integrated way, completely different apart from the computer, TV and radio. Thanks to their didactic uniqueness they are in intensive interaction and affect the child's development. They encourage various activities through active thinking, speech and artistic expression, sticking, drawing, and not just passively staining, or copy, which leads the child in a condition of pleasure and enjoying the work and games.

Manuals are "first books" for preschool children. They are usually created for children from 4-6 years of age. Tasks are sorted according to the criteria of complexity and processing of motor skills, perception, quantitative and spatial relationships, identifying sounds in words, numbers, developing self-confidence and perseverance. The manual is intended primarily for children but also as a guide-book for educators, a roadmap for the implementation of thematic contents by the teacher.

According to its concept, physiognomy, structure and content, **integrated manual** should be compatible with the Document of the **standards for early learning and development**. Goals, tasks and topics in the integrated manual make the unity. **Integrated Manual** is a book whose content links all aspects (domains) that influence the development and education of children from all areas and all projected educational topics, so that illustrations and the text as well, are networked in unity and connected with child's activities from the areas for which the child detects and learn through play.

**Key words:** *Program for early learning and development, Standards for early learning and development, Integrated Manuals, Preschool children.*

Latest programming requirements adopted with the new program for early learning and development, imposed the need to create reference literature for children as new didactic resources, new educational components that will provide support for successful implementation of the program in practice.

The need of reference literature for preschool children is all great because it as a kind of medium that arouses particular interest among children and has a high cognitive and practical function.

Manuals for children are a significant source of information and acquire knowledge through play and fun and take up a special place in capturing the boundary between verbal and visual communication.

Manuals for children which include all text books or materials that are intended for children, who follow the program, are an important source of knowledge especially in increased competition of the electronic media and the Internet.

In the modern way of communication they occupy a special place.

They transfer information in an integrated way, completely different apart from the computer, TV and radio. Thanks to their didactic uniqueness they are in intensive interaction and affect the child's development.

### **Manuals and their role in children's development and early learning**

Manuals' main aim is to develop the basic functions of preschool children and help in early learning and child development.

Manuals are useful primarily to **accustom** the child for the school activities, and seek out and develop independent thinking.

Manuals are "first books" for pre-school children (4-6 years), that encourage children's creativity, encourage exploring games and solving simple problems.

They also encourage various activities through active thinking, speech and artistic expression, sticking, drawing, and not just passively staining, or copy, which leads the child in a condition of pleasure and enjoying the work and games

Tasks are sorted according to the criteria of complexity and processing of motor skills, perception, quantitative and spatial relationships, identifying sounds in words, numbers, developing self-confidence and perseverance.

The manual is intended primarily for children but also as a **guide-book** for educators, a roadmap for the implementation of themed content by the teacher.

### **Types of reference literature**

Manuals are mainly text-illustrative materials that include various types, such as:

1. Integrated manuals that cover all the standards of the program and all themes;
2. Educational manuals, cover all the standards of the program, but only one topic;
3. Magazines for children which include all standards and part of the thematic content transmitted through the game and more fun and interesting topics;
4. Picture books with different themes;
5. Coloring books with different themes.

In this work we will focus only on the **integrated manuals for preschool children**, although other educational and thematic manuals, as children's magazines, children's picture books and coloring books are very important in the early learning and child development.

If the picture book is children's first book, which is unnecessary to discuss, and if every manual is 'the first textbook' for the child, then the magazine for children should be a picture book, textbook, manual, workbook, play, learning and fun but must to follow the complete program and allows completely different, **more interactive** communication between parents / teachers and children.

### **Integrated manual**

**Integrated manual** is the basic and most important element in the implementation of the program and the program objectives and tasks. According its conception, physiognomy and structure, as well as in content, it should be compatible with document standards for early learning and development. Goals, tasks and topics in integrated manual make unity.

**Integrated Manual** is a book in which content is being processed, is associated with all aspects (domains) that influence the development and education of children from all areas and all provided educational topics so that illustrations and text are networked in unity and related activities child of the areas for which the child detects and learn through play.

**Integrated manual aims** at an integrated way to cover all educational areas that are realized in educational work in kindergartens, and which have been implemented using multiple manuals.

Integrated manual has a **task** to provide support for the development of children, following their development needs, interests and specificities in terms of their diversity, whether development, ethnic or social.

In the integrated manual via text and more through a picture, through operational guidelines and incentives to specific activities, are represented all aspects of child development such as: **physical health and motor development, socio-emotional development, approaches to the process of learning, language development, literacy and communication and cognitive development by acquiring general knowledge through areas of logic and reasoning, mathematics, science - knowledge and understanding of the environment, art - art and musical education, which means progress in one domain affect the development of the other.**

In the integrated manual, complementary relationship and mutual conditionality of all five domains and sub domains of the development, is compulsory. That means that one sphere of the development can not be treated separately from the other. The dynamic interaction of all areas of development must be considered at the manual's content.

### **Concept, physiognomy and structure of the integrated manual**

While creating the structure and physiognomy of the integrated manual, it is primarily to cover the following components:

1. Program compatibility in outlining the structure and aspects of development and standards and to focus on the child;
2. To provide a comprehensive source of expectations of child development;
3. To anticipate terms that will be used to rename the various components of standards;
4. To find the best ways in which children show what they know and what they can learn, and all that to be associated with standards in every aspect;
5. To create a consistent understanding of the application of standards for early learning and development that is multidimensional and very interconnected;
6. To create a dynamic interaction of development in general, so that development of one domain will affect the development of another, because they are very related to each other, as, for example, language skills affect the ability of a child to engage in social interaction;
7. Children to be able show their skills in an integrated way, and not to isolate one domain because of the other one;
8. Opportunity for children to explore, investigate, discover phenomena and objects of the world around them;

9. There is a need of a holistic approach in working with children, each handbook simultaneously should satisfy developing and individual needs of each child, which in turn enables individual achievements in all developmental domains; real pedagogic effect is achieved, if the child in appropriate living situations use its acquired knowledge with help of this approach;
10. Each domain of development is particularly marked with previously specified activities.

### **Content components of the integrated manual**

The choice of content in the handbook helps children to better handle in everyday communication and to develop into a reliable person, developing the speaking skills from an early age. As content elements are the texts that contain short sentences quickly remembered or rhymed verse.

In some of them there is a short text that is in function of understanding the image-illustration. Through the illustrations, handbook offers the first illustrated dictionary, and also the first children's play. Except that, they contain instructions that guide children to compare, predict, conclude, explore, to create an atmosphere of surprise, which in turn reinforces the interest and encourages the game.

Therefore, each **integrated manual** should contain:

1. Textual elements;
2. Illustrations;
3. Instrument for orientation;
4. Instructions, questions, tasks, exercises;
5. Annex-articles;
6. Guidelines for educator.

### **Textual elements**

The texts are educational and entertaining, and emphasize the aspects of child development, such as: socio-emotional (identification with characters), cognitive development of perception, cognitive development (recognition of objects and expanding notions and concepts), development of speech (communication, play words), intellectual development (acquiring knowledge), and development of memory, creativity and critical thinking, aesthetic development (feeling good).

Used terminology contains more word formation elements with unusual, but attractive and entertaining words, allowing the interest for enriching the children's vocabulary and understanding of words meaning.

### **Illustrations**

Illustrative part is the most important component that conveys a special message from the visual code and has a cognitive function to reflect the content, conform with the age of the child. Illustrations worldwide create direct way of communicating with the child, encourage the thinking process, develop the imagination.

Emphasizing the cognitive function, they contribute to the overall development of the child by stimulating his perception and development of intellectual potential.

Modern illustrations of what a child reads instead of text through visual-perceptual recognizing and identifying, stimulate the thinking process and children's emotional, linguistic and graphomotor expression.

The humorous illustrations almost always arouse interest in children. Every child wants to be happy, joyful, fun and the laughter can be easily brought forth to other children. According to the latest pedagogical research, it is scientifically proven that a humorous element in illustrations for children is what they exactly want.

Illustrations have a high artistic value with childish, cheerful and vivid colors appealing to children and almost every situation reflected an action and transmits certain message. They have the primary role in replacing, they replenish the text - to represent concepts and captures the shown situations, not only the role of visual contributions.

They are appropriate for the child's age and experience, filled with serenity and humorous characters that positively affect the emotional development of children.

### **Instrument for orientation**

The instrument for orientation is consists, besides the page numbering, of different page colors, separating the annexes from the main structure, type and size of the letters and other components whereby we technically shape the page.

### **Instructions, questions, tasks, exercises**

All contents contain clear and concise instructions that enable a high degree of autonomy in the work of children, and the need to communicate with adults. This gives us a great opportunity for quality spent time between the educators and children, and between parents and children.

Manuals are created in a way to be attractive to children, because of the interesting questions related to the images – illustrations that initially are very simple to getting more complex later.

Some tasks include problem situations. The resolution of various problem situations through which the proposed activities every child is facing with, is provided to encourage the development and strengthening of motor, language, cognitive and socio-emotional skills as an important cornerstone in the process of development.

The tasks and exercises disposed in accordance with didactic-methodic principles offer opportunities to connect the mathematical concepts with the everyday life of the children. The exercises correlate with all developmental domains and are linked with the: language, mathematics, environment, music, art, physical education. We also have voice exercises for enrichment of vocabulary words, exercises for developing of the sentence, the voice work and understanding of the text.

Together they encourage children to be independent, caution and incisive in the work, following the signs and directions for performing the exercises.

### **Annex**

The manual may also have annexes that will allow the child to develop his/her memory, imagination, manual activities and development of the small muscles of the hand by cutting, gluing, shaping.

### **Guidelines for educator**

The manual also serves as a guide for teachers and parents with specific activities for the implementation of the relevant objectives of the program for early learning and development. It

is a guide for each educator for planning and implementation of the educational activities under the new program requirements.

Teacher's manual and its content offers an opportunity for the child in a fun way through the game, in mutual interaction (child-child, child-adult) actively to participate in research and exploring processes. Using this manual, each teacher has the opportunity to monitor and record child's development, and to make written notes.

Reference literature facilitates the work of educators and conducts the so-called "descriptive performance" - presentation of each child's progress, as well as expectations on every level of the development. There are three levels of descriptive performance: **research** (the first level, when a child is just starting to show some aspects of development), **development** (child starts to show more understanding and connected skills), **result** (third level with description of his achieved results).

Each child develops differently and shows different abilities, and educator masterfully discovers their individual opportunities, needs, desires and individual rhythm, potential, and development tempo of every child. Thus educator conducts group form of work, by encouraging new skills in all areas.

At the same time each educator has to cooperate with the parents. By that, the child will be always encouraged to work independently and in other hand to work under supervision of the educator-parent.

It is always recommended, the teacher or the parent to be involved in the work with the children and to show their appreciation, because the child will be more motivated.

### **EXPECTED RESULTS**

With the help of those manuals, child gains backgrounds of all educational areas, integrated with aspects of the development. Those precognitions prepare the child for entering in the first grade of primary school.

As for illustration, we may indicate the results that every educator should expect from the child, such as: child taking the first steps to work and activity, comparing and differentiating (similarities and differences), show some understanding and capabilities for expression, identifying, describing, engagement, research and experimentation, communication, participation in conversation and play, recognizing, naming, clustering, recitation, counting, etc...

After a year of manual implementation, each educator should receive all expected results that are actually provided and required by the program for early learning and development.

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