

FRIENDSHIP AS GOAL IN EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

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Abstract

One of the most important things for every child is making friendships in school, regardless his/her intellectual or physical ability. We, as teachers must contribute to realization of quality relationship between school children, relationships based on friendship which will continue after school lessons and which will be incorporated in children's attitude toward making friends and accepting differences.

Students with mild intellectual disability because of limitations in their intellectual capacity have difficulties in realization of social interaction with other children, i.e. their peers accept them in their company much harder.

The aim of this research is to explore the ways of social interaction of children with mild intellectual disability within school settings, and to show some positive examples of activities in which beside development of children's creativity and learning, we express the way of help from teachers in social interaction - making friendships as goal in educational process.

We used questionnaire and half-structured interview on 50 students with mild intellectual disabilities.

In this research we try to find out what are the most common activities of students with mild intellectual disability during their spare time, and in which way and how long they participate in organized forms of social activities within their larger community. Also, we present some appropriate ways of giving support to students with mild intellectual disability for properly and fulfilled use of their spare time in order to make friendships.

Keywords: friendship, sparetime, students with mild intellectual disabilities

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Introduction

According to Law for elementary education in Republic of Macedonia (Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia, no. 145/2015), elementary school is mandatory for all 6-years old children, i.e. children which are 5 years and 8 months old must be enrolled in first grade of elementary school, regardless their socio-economic and psychophysical status. In the Republic of Macedonia, elementary education for children with mild intellectual disabilities is realized as follows:

- in special schools
- in special classes in regular schools
- and in inclusive classrooms in regular schools.

In all of this forms of education of children with mild intellectual important thing is making friendships, and one of the most difficult ways is socialization of students which learn in special school. Therefore, we must provide activities which will enable them interaction between themselves and interaction with other children of the same age. We, as teachers, can contribute a lot in making quality relationships between children and developing friendly tiles which will continue in the future and will be incorporated as children's attitude toward accepting and appreciating differences, and making friendships with all children. Teacher's success in recognition of appropriate resource for directed educational activities through which friendship will be supported, depends on his ability to detect barriers and supports for realization of that activities, i.e. what can be identified as barrier in process of friendships encouragement, how to be minimized, which support resources are available, how can additional resources be mobilized (Todorova S, 2016).

Spare time is time when children have most opportunities to please themselves, their needs and interests, and also time for socialization with others. If spare time, i.e. socialization is direct properly and consists educational component, then spare time activities can have wider social value. Otherwise, if spare time is not organized, then that brings feelings of boredom, alienation, isolation etc., which can lead to unacceptable forms of behavior among students in return (Uzelac, 1995). Teachers, in collaboration with parents and the wider community, must provide encouraging activities that allow children socialization and making friendships.

Research methodology

The subject of our research is getting knowledge about the way students with mild intellectual disabilities who attend classes in POU "Idnina", Skopje, use their spare time in the function of friendship.

The goal of this research is to determine the most common leisure activities of students with mild intellectual disability, and the extent of their active participation in organized forms of spare time within the wider community.

The sample in the survey consists of students with mild intellectual disabilities, 50 students from POU "Idnina", Skopje, aged 12 to 19 years.

Tools: questionnaire for students with mild intellectual disabilities, half-structured interview.

Results

Asked how and with whom students spend their spare time, the majority of respondents answered that they helping at home with family members (figure 1 and 2).

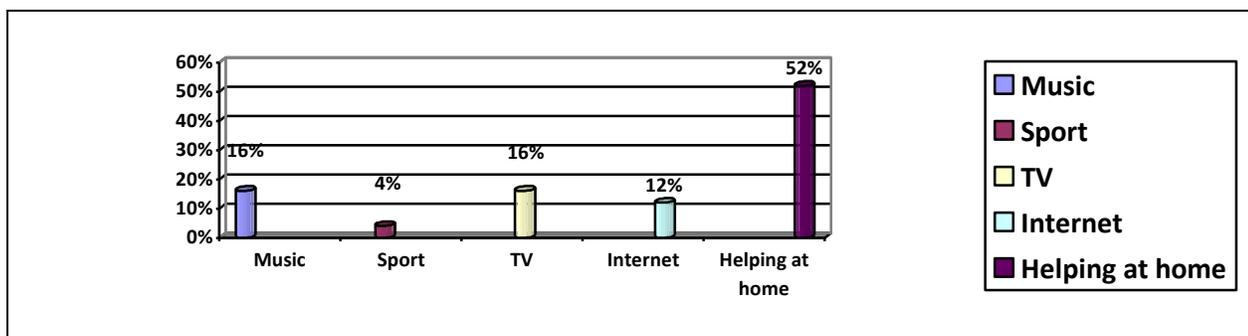


Figure 1. How you spend your spare time

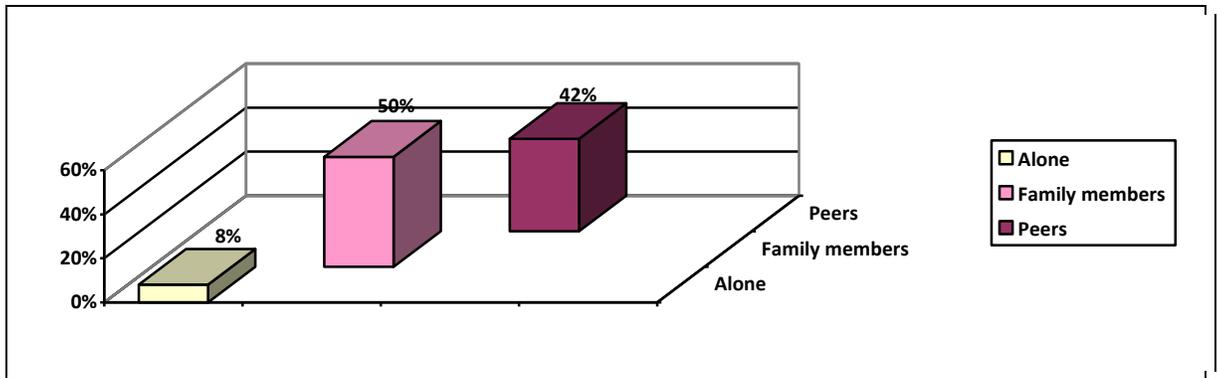


Figure 2. With whom you spend your spare time

Asked whether they have visited cultural and entertainment or sporting event and with whom (figure 3 and 4), 46% of respondents answered that they visited the theater, and 40% of respondents have visited a children's festival, and the largest number of respondents (86%) said that the school organizes such visits. When interviewing respondents, all of them have said that visits were fun and enable mutual friendship and socializing with other children.

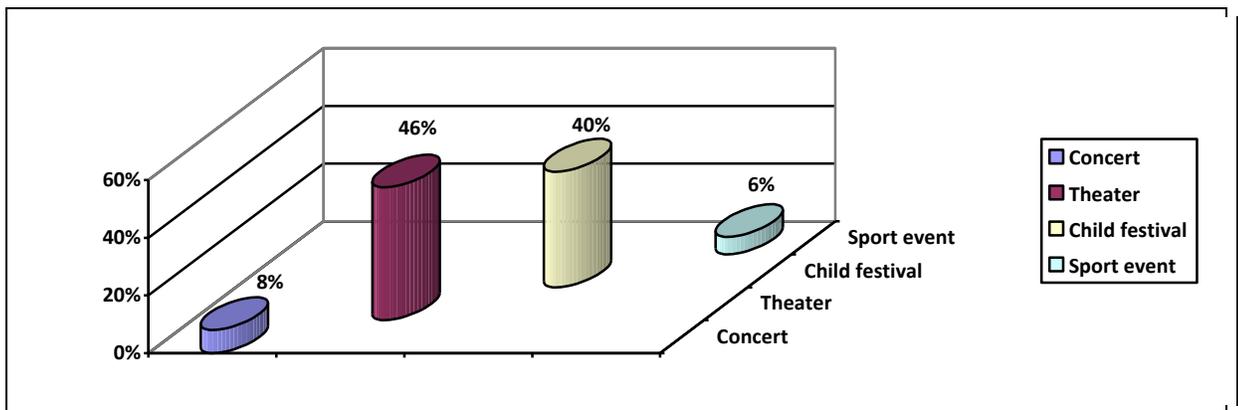


Figure 3. Do you have visited some cultural or sport event until now

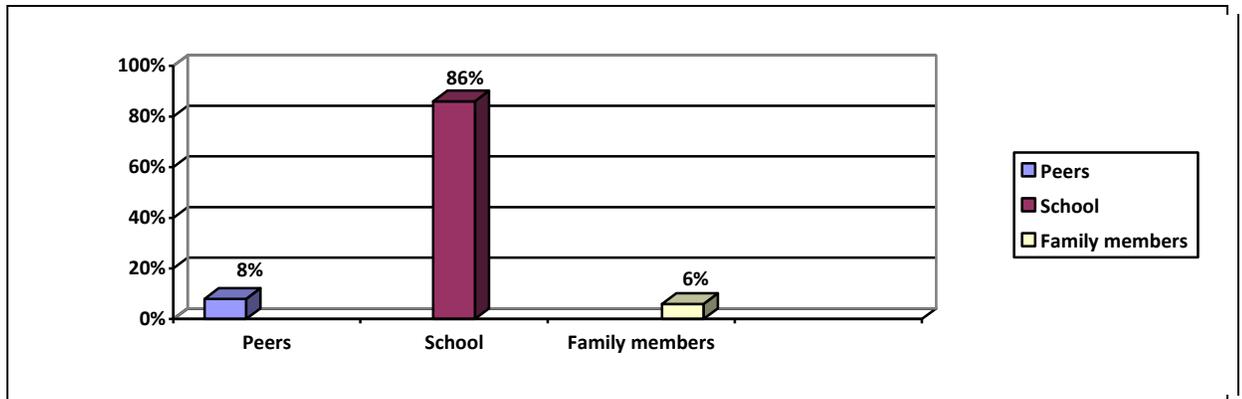


Figure 4. With whom were you on those events

Respondents were asked to indicate some organized forms of association, and students cited several institutions and festivals, including:

- Museum of Macedonia
- Museum of the Macedonian Struggle
- International festival in Turkey
- International Festival in Poland
- Sports Olympics in Edirne, R. Turkey
- Memorial House of Mother Teresa
- Book Fair etc.

Table 1. Who directed you how to organize your spare time

Who directed you how to organize your spare time	Respondents	
	Number	%
Teacher in school	21	42%
Family members	11	22%
Peers	3	6%
Representatives of children and youth associations	3	6%
Alone	12	24%
Total	50	100%

According to the results of Table 1, we conclude that the teachers of the school are the ones who in most cases (42%) guide students on the organization of leisure time, family members in 22% of cases and 24% of students had organized their leisure time by themselves.

Discussion

From the results we have obtained in our research, we have noticed that the majority of students with mild intellectual disabilities (52%) spend their spare time in their homes with their families while helping housework.

The most common events that these students have attended are theater, museums and Children's Festival, and in 86% of cases the school occurs as organizer of these visits.

Students with mild intellectual disabilities are not able to properly organize their leisure time alone, and most (42%) receive guidance from the teachers in the school.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this survey, the following conclusions were made:

- The school must be a comprehensive community and must continue to proceed organizing various forms of extra-curricular activities and visits for students with intellectual disabilities in and out of the place of residence;

- Intensive cooperation relationship school – parents - students, in order to provide guidelines for the use of students' spare time, and to point to the negative phenomena that might occur if the students' spare time is not properly directed and purposeful;

- Presentation of the activities of children and youth associations, sports clubs and groups to the students with intellectual disabilities and their parents and the benefits of membership in them;

- Active inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in various events and events organized by the wider community.

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