# THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SOCIALIZATION PROCESS FOR THE INTEGRATION OF THE CHILD IN THE SOCIETY

**Maria PESCARU**, Associate Prof. PhD.
University of Pitesti
mariapescaru@yahoo.com

**Abstract:** *Socialization is an interactive communication process that involves both individual development and personal influences, namely the personal reception and interpretation of all social messages, but also the dynamics and content of social influences. Thus, socialization is a complex process that is based on the theory of social learning, learning which a fundamental mechanism of assimilation of social experience is. Although retaining certain autonomy, man and society form an indissoluble unity, and society is generated by the relationship between its members. The socialization term is expressed in the literature by social learning, culture, etc. All these terms have the meaning of a process through which the little child is humanized by acquiring human behaviors. In order for the socialization process to prove its efficiency, it must develop the individual's ability to self-educate, to manage himself to discern between good and evil, to know how to choose between the moral attitudes that are assessed by society negatively and those which allow for adequate social cohabitation.*

**Keywords**: socialization; integration; education; social skills; social learning.

## 1. Introduction

Socializing means broadly transforming an individual into a social being, instilling gradually different ways of thinking, feeling and then acting. All these things are accomplished through a psychosocial process of transmission, but also by assimilating attitudes, values, concepts or models specific to a group or community, for the formation, adaptation and social integration of a person.

In terms of defining the concept of socialization, sociologists and psycho-pedagogues have different opinions. Thus H.Wallon (1959) considers that the whole relationship between humans and all forms of emotional communication is a social behavior, and the "term socialization" is improper because the child is born and grows in a social environment.

The human being has since birth the need of communication in one way or another and by its essence, man is a social being. Its existence is only possible in a social environment, in cohabitation with other peers.

Ursula Şchiopu points out that both the whole development and the human condition itself are flooded and stimulated by the socialization processes through which the social integration and identity of the person are formed. Because it belongs natively to the human species and the child is born

in a particular society in which to integrate, the newborn feels the need for a community.

"People live side by side with each other as human individuals and not as simple objects, and society does not appear as a mere sum of the individuals that make it up, but as an organic whole of the individual components." (Şchiopu, 1995: 83).

The child can humanize and develop normally as a human being only integrated into a group, in human collectives, due to their socializing effect. The need for community is for the human being an expression of its original nature, and a solitary existence of the human individual is unimaginable, beyond human collectivity.

## 2. The *socialization* concept

According to J. Piaget, the child starts from a purely individual state, that of the first months of existence, in which no exchange is possible with others, after which socialization that develops progressively and which will never end. At the starting point, "he does not know any rules or signs and must conquer through a gradual adaptation formed by assimilating others and accommodating others, two essential properties of the outer society: mutual understanding, based on the word, and common discipline, based on reciprocity rules." (Piaget apud Tomşa, 2007: 85).

The fundamental task of education is to form people who will be able to integrate socially (in kindergarten, school, society) and then take on responsibilities in the groups they belong to (Petrovai, 2012: 11).

The socialization of the individual is accomplished throughout his life, going through different stages, in an upward direction. Experience in childhood is essential in the socialization process. J.Piaget supports the idea that "the child starts from a purely individual state, that of the first months of existence when no exchange is possible with others, and then a progressive socialization that will never end" (Piaget, 1980: 132).

The socialization process starts from the youngest age when first social contacts and life experiences take place throughout the man's life.

Erickson (1950) argues that "every stage of the human development is characterized by a certain type of socialization".

Socialization has as main purpose the realization of the ability to obey the exigencies of social norms and ideals materialized in the cultural values of the group to which man belongs.

The content of socialization has not only a psychological significance (the maturing of the young person), but also a culturological (internalizing social norms and values) and sociological (social role-playing and development of appropriate behaviors).

The socialization process is based on a set of variables that include:

• individual characteristics (age, gender, maturity, development, intelligence);

• methods and forms of transmission (language, control mechanisms, rituals, child raising practices and social integration, forms of imitation, identification, substitution, inhibition or reinforcement)

• Structures of attitudes, values, actions and behaviors (roles and social status, morality of social relations, ethics of work, political-civic orientation, performance, altruism, integration, conformation, etc.)

## 3. The importance of social skills for child integration

School and family are the two resistance poles of education that contribute by specific means to the formation of children's personality.

In any type of society, the family is the main factor of socializing and forming the child, because within it both the stages of growth and development are fulfilled, as well as its psychological and social needs. Family is the first integrative community to support all subsequent acquisitions.

The first nucleus in which the child is socialized is the family. The first socialization (relations with mother, close people, conduct) is acquired in the family, parents' influences on children being loaded with socialization. Generally, parents impose certain rules, and so the child learns to evaluate their facts and form their awareness of social responsibility.

At the young age of children socialization has a strong maternal character, but associated with the strong influence of the father. Mother is the first model from which the child acquires language, certain skills, knowledge, teaches the first means of autonomous behavior.

In childhood, the most important agent of socialization is the family, who realizes socialization through a family-specific educational style. It uses certain parental sanctions and permanent control over children's behavior. For the children's orientation and the values accumulation, family life is essential, it is a true school of socialization, and "the family is an affectionate environment, a school of feelings." (Osterrieth, 1973: 134).

Sociologists argue that there is even a family sociology in which it is backed up, being considered an important nucleus. They also claim that the family has its unmistakable and irreplaceable imprint on the human spirit, the way people relate to themselves, their peers and, of course, the society in which they live.

The family is the one that influences the individual's moral profile most, and family life is significant in assessing the degree of a society development.

Generally, children who are raised in the family by their parents in a loving atmosphere have a positive development from a psychological and social point of view.

If parental conduct is appropriate and succeeds in stimulating the child in a normal direction, the child will succeed in socializing very well and have great chances of success in life. If the parents' models are not positive, the child will have great difficulties in the socialization process, which in the long run may have serious repercussions on the development of his/her personality, especially if he/she is not helped in time to overcome them.

The family environment, by its nature, implies diversity, with various determinants such as: the family type, its structure, its socio-economic and cultural status, its status and beliefs. Family diversity helps children to socialize by discovering basic social behaviors and at the same time individualizing it, giving it the chance to self-define. There are authors who claim that parents belonging to different social categories give their children different values. Thus, in popular classes, emphasis is on order, cleanliness, obedience, respect for age and outside rules, respectability, ability to avoid problems, and in the case of middle and higher classes, value and creativity, autonomy and self-control are valued. So the favorable nature of the conditions of the family environment: education, appreciation, stimulation, will certainly influence the skills' structuring and manifestation. Thus, by stimulating the child permanently, parents can develop not only sensory-motor skills, but also intellectual skills which can help the child adapt to the universe characteristic of every age, and in the future he/she will form his/her ability to relate and to understand with their fellow men and to deal with themselves in different social situations.

Thus, primary socialization also involves an affective dimension in addition to the cognitive dimension. The family socialization function can be performed in several specific situations, as M.Voinea (1993) shows:

- the cognitive learning situation (moments when the child acquires the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills in life);
- the situation of "psychological communication" through which the affectivity that is needed for a moral and psychological balance develops;
- the situation of moral education through which the child is given moral rules, notions regarding debt, responsibility and interdiction;
- the situation that develops creative capacity and imagination.

The advantage of socializing in the family is that it takes place in a climate of affectivity that helps to transmit and appropriate social norms and values, and the positive role of the family in the socialization process is demonstrated by the affective link that unites its members. The family as an affective environment is considered to be the "psychological vitamin necessary to raise the child, and non-payment of this spiritual nutritional function is one of the great defects of the parents". (Berge, 1977: 16).

Thus, the family is so important that it determines the future trajectory of the child, and integration is largely influenced by socialization acquisitions in

childhood. The society exerts a maximum influence on the family, the child being totally cultured in relation to the society he/she is part of. The family has to convey the language, customs, beliefs, values, knowledge and concepts of the world and also develops the basic personality. "Ability to empathize with the needs of others is a child's innate abilities, but it will only be maintained if the adult in his or her life, the parent, exhibits empathy behaviors". (Petrovai, 2012: 9)

By respecting the society rules, the family can create the foundation of adapting the child for its future integration, achieving a complete and unitary development of its attributes, to its own individuality with a unique behavior, specific to the balanced personality. But if parents do not respect the set of norms and values elaborated socially, they will form a child with a deficient personality system and this will become the source of many adaptation impediments.

Even if the family role changes as the child grows, its responsibility is not diminished, because it is constantly underlined by other socializing agents, and the child will always feel the need for a family who should constantly show their support for the child to overcome the possible "dramatic episodes" in adolescence.

One of the most important moments that helps to develop language skills and socialization is family meals during which children learn to politely interact, tackle various topics during the meal, which helps cohesion and family unity, development the sense of belonging, a critical sentiment for the development of children. "Eating with the family goes far beyond nutrition. This valuable time is a perfect opportunity to communicate, change opinions, jokes, laughs. Meals in the family are moments that can express affection, emotions, states in which the bonds between parents and children can be strengthened, in which each of the messengers can enjoy the presence of others", all accomplished by socializing (Liiceanu, didactic.ro).

There is a misunderstanding and persuasion of some parents who believe that once their children went to school their role is over or the conviction of some teachers who claim that school is the only one child can socialize within, and without family support, but these are all wrong. Only if there is a close collaboration between the two factors, the maximum efficiency of the educational work will be achieved.

No matter how many valuable merits and preoccupations the family has in connection with children socializing, it will never be able to get positive results if it does not work with the school in the same direction.

**4. The factors of the social skills' development**

Alongside the family, the kindergarten and then the school are important socializing agents that facilitate the children and young people learning the conduct rules accepted by society.

First, kindergarten, then school uses various ways and means of systematic socialization, by developing and substantiating young people with attitudes and persuasions that facilitate their integration into society, because socialization is not just accumulation of representations and notions about family, friends, homeland etc.

Preschool education is one of the life stages in which freedom must be lived to the maximum, because only in this way the future adult can feel free and able to conquer his freedom through his forces. Most of the time, an inhibited, tense childhood, accompanied by blasphemy alters the construction of self-generating foundations of "Me" thus creating a dependent and very weak human being.

The socialization process represents the social integration and identity of the person. "The process, as such, has an ontogenetic evolution that obeys the social-historical one through the traditions, mentalities, the level of culture and civilization transmitted from generation to generation" (Şchiopu, 1995: 125).

The child's socialization as Osterrieth argues is very well done in kindergarten and school, and some works emphasize "the indisputable superiority in terms of independence, self-esteem, social adaptability and intellectual curiosity proven by children who have attended this institution, are maintained for many years after the child has left them" (Osterrieth apud Tomşa, 2007: 79).

After social psychology research, it was concluded that a massive socialization occurs around the age of five when the child's personality foundations are fixed. The discovery of similarity with the other is a factor of mental comfort and security that greatly facilitates the integration process.

At the pre-school age, "the child is emotionally identified with the significant people in his/her life taking on their roles and attitudes and transforming them into their own roles and attitudes" (Stănciulescu, 1996: 153).

The first contact of the child with a pleasant environment of the kindergarten creates the necessary premises for all socialization processes. Kindergarten will become the child's place where daily surprises and joy await him/her, he/she feels free, finds playmates and satisfies his/her thirst for knowledge. Here, among other children, he/she will more clearly identify his/her place in the family, in the kindergarten, in the children's groups, he/she will gain autonomy in his/her daily activities.

With the integration into the kindergarten, the child goes from home to the kindergarten by coming into contact with street ambience, which offers him/her a real "social show" that he/she has to learn to select with a socially charged environment. All of these influence the pre-school child's behavior, constituting a much wealthier information experience than that acquired in the family environment. In addition, age-specific curiosity causes them to observe the behavior of others and to constantly ask questions.

In the education process, the subject becomes aware of social relations, assimilating the norms and roles that will allow them to integrate into society.

At school, the child is in a position to say "we" instead of "I", to adhere to some generally accepted rules. He/She will learn that his/her free actions must not disturb the free actions of others, that it is necessary to respect certain principles. Asking him/her to motivate each action, he/she will come to act on an inner motif in which he/she will take account of himself/herself and of others. In the child's life, a series of changes arise from the new types of social relationships he / she enters, from the new social groups into which they integrate.

The institutional framework helps the child to know himself/herself and others, to establish relationships, to make appreciations. Here the child learns to subordinate the group's desire, to act in the sense of collective will, sometimes giving up their own desires. In a word, "adapting to the requirements expressed to the child is represented by the adaptation to the following conduct plans: the plan of service, the plan of compulsory activities and the plan of integration in the community" (Şchiopu, 1995: 127).

In a social group, the more a child learns to socialize faster and respects the rules of a harmonious cohabitation, the easier it will be for him/her and for others when he/she becomes an adult. The institutional framework is ideal for making changes at the level of group interaction, and it helps to communicate better with those who are equal. Many children do not know how to behave with other children; they only communicate with adults with a lot of affection and tend to always be the focus of their attention. In an institutional setting the child learns the surprises of social relationships, learns to listen and listen to others.

This communication makes them altruistic and open to the needs of others, in a significantly improved way, towards a child who is grown without interacting with his or her own age and used to get from the adults around. It helps them to open themselves to others and renegotiate the selfish dimensions of their personality. "Ability to empathize with the needs of others is a child's inborn ability, but it will only be maintained if the adult in his or her life, parent and educator manifests empathy behaviors." (Petrovai, 2012: 9). Most of the time, the family is a place where there are more adults, but in kindergarten there are more children, they are equal and have equal rights.

**5. Conclusions**

The child's socialization appears as a continuous process of structuring, restructuring and internalization of adult-child and child-child, socio-emotional behaviors and relationships. Only effective, and not apparent, participation in collective game play, the acceptance of norms, the mutual control of their observance by everyone, first on a practical level, of action, then transforming into internal requirements, will lead to the elimination of egocentrism, to understanding and accepting the views of others, to the assessment of situations that are more and more objective, so that the child will acquire the authentic psychological basis of subordinating the individual interest to the collective one.

So, the child gains new experiences in relationships with others, experiences to which they have to adapt and act not only according to their wishes but also to take into account the needs of others. Through educational games the child will learn to cooperate, comply with group rules, harmonize their requirements with those of the group and act accordingly. Such inter-relational behaviors have the significance of child's socializing and capitalizing on its potential in the personality plan, which is in continuous development and expansion. In order to integrate and cooperate effectively with others, the child must reach a certain level of socialization, which involves a way of perceiving and considering the qualities of those with whom he/ she come into contact.

Social education is a set of approaches, a complex socio-emotional, cognitive, aesthetic, psychomotor approach, with emphasis on formative elements, so that the child is able to acquire the unanimously accepted human values. Didactic activities, play, are components with formative valences that structure the development of the child's personality, which is given the chance of an optimal integration, translated by the ability to solve tasks that require effort, will, co-operation, perseverance, respect for interests and work to the people around them, the formation of positive attitude towards work and the education of moral and aesthetic feelings.

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