

# INCREASING ECONOMIC LITERACY IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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## Abstract

The article presents some basic approaches related to the economic education of children in kindergarten as part of the overall educational process in this age period. Some of the momentums are mentioned, establishing the child's behavior in this area. Strategy for Economic Education was developed in preschool. Based on the fact that today's children are the future financial market participants, taxpayers, importers and borrowers. That is why financial education is appropriate to begin in early childhood. The earlier a child learns about the role of money in the private, family and social life, the faster will be formed in him good financial habits, that will help to avoid many mistakes in the process of growth and gain financial independence, but also to lay the foundation of financial security and well-being throughout life.

**Keywords:** Economic Literacy, Need, Need, Desire, Goods, Services, Price.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest problems in our educational system is that it does not cover necessary financial education of learners [3]. Life in contemporary world is an indicator to what extend society needs people from a new type, capable to think in a new, modern way, to take personal responsibility, to bravely take decisions, to manage to be leaders and to subordinate reasonably in the name of business without fear of loss, skillfully, fair to win, to possess economic and business knowledge. These qualities of a person are not random built and opportunities of every person for their acquisition are different. "Development of financial intellectuality is a process which is for life. It definitely cannot be done for a day or even a year." Indisputably is necessary special economical preparation. Reason for that is that "separate persons ....are also a constructive unit, a part of the whole of creation, accumulation and allocation of wealth" [1]. And exactly this will allow mastering necessary economical knowledge, abilities and qualities as well as developing economical thinking, economical awareness, exclusively necessary for contemporary generation.

## PRESENTATION

Contemporary reality is a convincing proof for low level of economical literacy of growing ups as well as for that little attention is paid for their economical preparation. "Existing at the moment educational system does not allow the teacher to educate in necessary way and with

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necessary content. Time is not given to pay to every child the needed attention. Educational system requires from them to keep to definite massive schedule. It does not move according to learning speed of every child and does not give necessary in life practical knowledge and skills [4]. Namely the inadequate economic situation, the lack of economic knowledge and culture for norms and rules of behaving, for business management etc. is the background on which is based the formation of new economic thinking and awareness. Modern reality persistently requires development and introduction of uniform system for economic education which to start still at the early childhood and to give children good financial start in life.

Problem of mastering elementary knowledge of economics in kindergarten is connected with general conceptual and methodical approaches in the economic education as a whole, with obligatory report of specific age peculiarities of children and characteristics of social-economic environment [5].

Economic education is a process of acquaintance of children with accessible knowledge for economic categories and attitude in society, and formation needs, motives and qualities for adequate behavior, in terms of specific economic environment. Reach of definite results from that education is defined as economic preparation. The first idea on economics child receives in the family. They are reflection on the way in which household is organized, and from that in what degree parents include children in discussion of family incomes and planning and realization of expenses. Family appears a factor of economic socialization in a couple of directions:

- Through knowledge where child receives economic influence and processes (money, purchase, income, profit, loss, expensive, cheap, profitable, unprofitable);
- Ways for addition of the economic resource of the family and the way of its inner distribution;
- Model for economic behavior;
- Formation of images for property, economy and duty [6].

Parallel with economic education in the family comes the needs of economic education in the kindergarten. The main purpose is children to be acquainted with the concepts: commodity, money, market, price, service, bank, unemployment etc. for achievement of this purpose is necessary:

- Accepting of accessible knowledge in the field of economic reality;
- Practical assimilation of mechanism and correlation with the needs and possibilities;
- Formation of positive attitude to the labor and results from it;
- Education of personal qualities with economic background;
- Formation a critical attitude to negative influences.

Purposes and tasks of economic education are done through early uniting to economics and search of means and methods for work with children from preschool age. Leading principle for

realization of tasks is the activity approach. These are all types of child's activity: a game, training, labor, individual activity of children.

Games are open system for copy of cases from reality which give a chance to participants in them to exercise and feel development and consequences of one real opportunity. They are reflection of complicated economic processes which surround children from the early childhood. That is a reason to accept that knowledge; skills and habits formed in preschool age are turned in fundament for successfully growing child and an economically literate person. This is the time when in time and organized work with children leads to formation of elementary economic competences.

Considering the exposed we did a research with one from the preparation groups in United Children Institution Zvanche, Burgas where 20 children are included from them 7 boys and 13 girls of age 6-7 years.

### **1. Purpose of the research**

The purpose of the research is to study the level of elementary economic knowledge with children age 6-7 and on that ground to be achieved higher degree of economic literacy, in particular increase the information of perspective first graders regarding some basic categories connected with their financial culture.

### **2. Methods of the research**

For the purpose we used the methods: game-situation and discussion, with which are estimated income knowledge of researched children.

First situation presents a conflict of children's wishes and parents' possibilities enough only to satisfy the needs.

*1. GAME – SITUATION: In a shop a 5-year-old boy cries and stamps in front of everybody. On the shop window he has seen a big lorry and wants his mother buy the dreamt toy. The mother firmly refuses to buy the big lorry. She explains to him that is more important and she has to buy the necessary products for dinner – bread, milk, potatoes and a little cake for which the boy has been dreaming for a long time.*

Task for children: Is it possible mother and boy to be satisfied? Using the words “need and desires” when answer and look for a way to settle the problem!

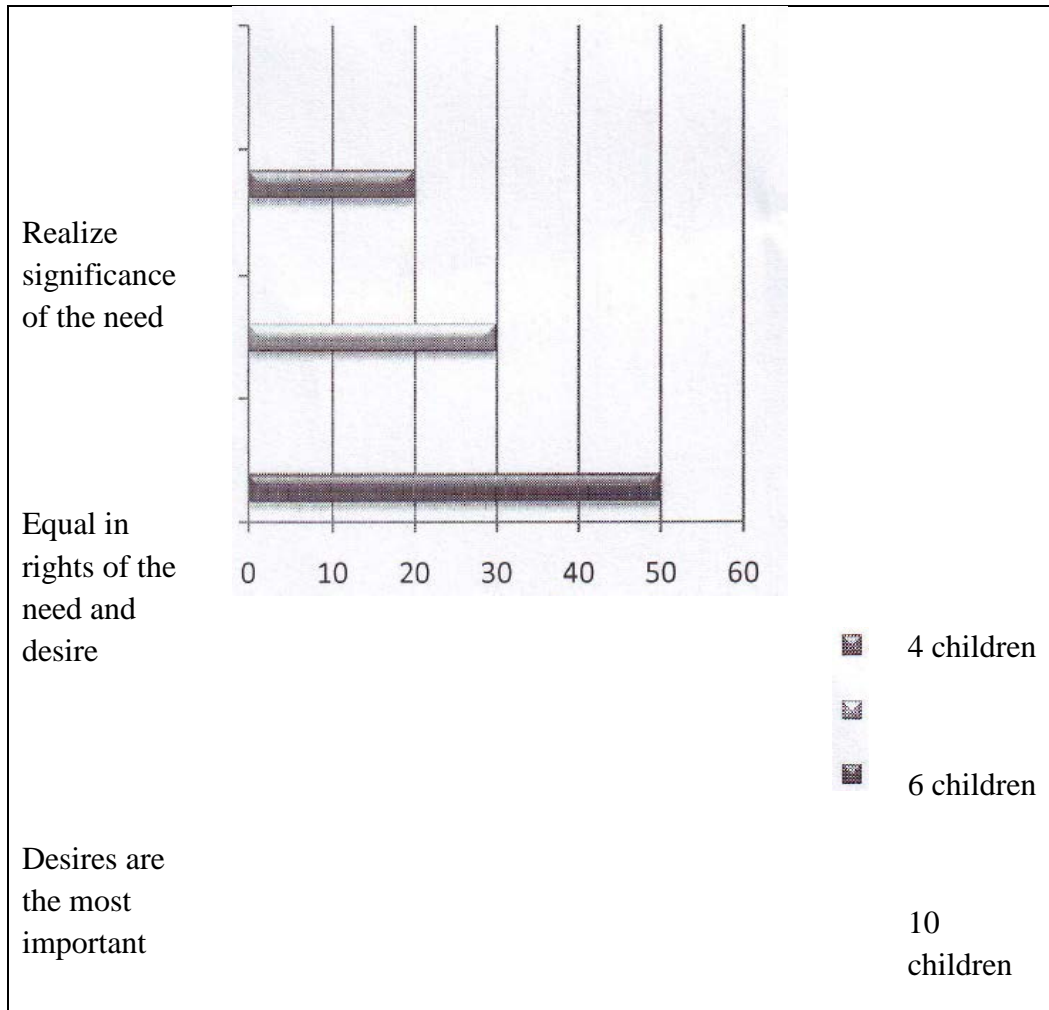
Second situation is expressed in problems between two children and looking for fair outcome when satisfy the desires.

*2. GAME – SITUATION: Vasko is a friend to Mitko and has a perfect bicycle. Mitko has been dreaming for a long time to ride such a fast and fashionable bike. He looks Vasko with sad look but he cannot find a joy.*

Task for children: can you settle the complicated situation and make Mitko happy? If possible use the word “favor”.

Results from the discussion after situation game No 1 shows that the majority of children does not make difference between needs and desires and defends their desires at all costs. We can summarize: 10 children consider that mother has to buy the big lorry (50%); 6 children suggest boy to refuse the little cake and to be bought a lorry (30%), 4 children share that it is necessary to have a dinner and the toy can be bought next time (20%).

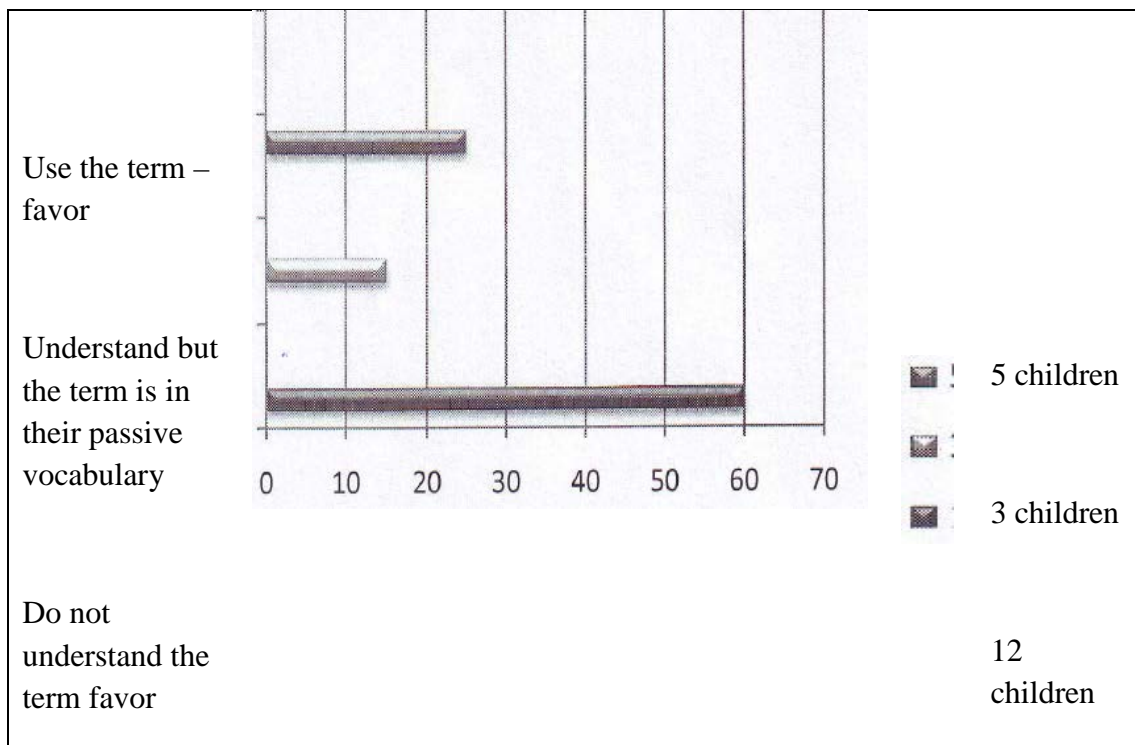
**Results from the situation game No 1 in percent**



In the answers of children the second situation the most common opinion is that he wants to ask his parents to buy him the same. This is the reply of 12 children (60%). The rest 8 children

(40%) share that he can ask the bicycle from his friend and to ride for a while. At least 20% from them used the term favour in their replies. Results from the second diagram again confirm the low level of economic culture.

**Results in situation game No 2 in percent**



For increasing the level of basic economic literacy of children we applied the system for didactic vocabulary with the purpose of concepts – need, necessity, desire, commodity, favor and price etc.

One of the games which we used is a didactic game “*Different needs*”. The purpose was activating knowledge of children for differentiation of needs on sexual sign – for girls and boys and common for the both sexes. We required also differentiation of needs on type sign: animals – people or plants – people.

Another game which we included is a didactic game “*Wealth on the market of commodities*”. Our task was enrichment of knowledge of children for diversity of commodities on the market and their differentiation on signs as – a price, quality and sizes. Also our work was pointed to give a meaning of the words and activating the vocabulary (expensive-cheap; qualitative-of poor quality; big-small). We required each participant to name the commodity with different qualities and if they succeed to win a banknote which to be saved for the next games.

Very suitable was also the didactic game “*Commodities and services*”. The idea is increase of knowledge of children for diversity of commodities and services, which people use every day as well as stimulation of observation and speed of thinking. These didactic games helped our work. Their effectiveness was tested.

After clarification of main concepts the final stage was taken, as is expressed in the use of the strategic game “*Travel to the island of surprises*” in which children had to apply the learned.

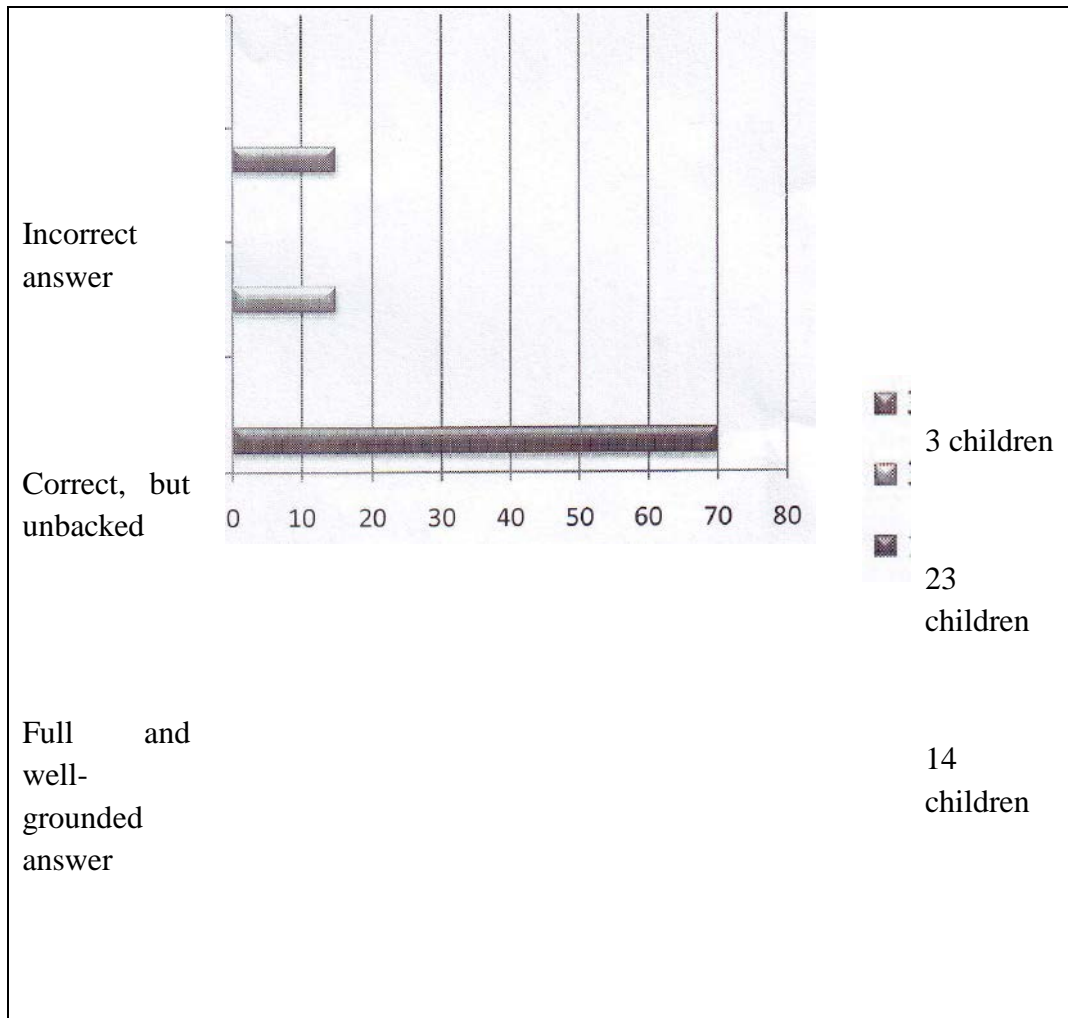
We used the game – strategy because it develops intellectual abilities, suggestion, reactions in situation and transfer of strategy with purpose of the best exit.

First children decide how to travel to the island, what belongings to take with them. Each application is grounded and discussed. The pedagogue at the very beginning can complicate the task, as: the total number of baggage cannot increase definite sum (e.g. ten leva).

In the progress of the game on different reasons (can be from extra loading of the ship, shipwrecking, possible encounter of pirates etc.) that is why they to free from their baggage. In the next step after reaching the island children point out ways of organizing the life, distribute their roles between each other, as in the progress of the game they can change their possible roles. The final surprise is receiving a certificate for mini – economist which the parents will praise with.

### **3. RESULTS FROM RESEARCH**

Final game is to transform the test of the reached degree of economic literacy of children. They have shown the following results: 14 children have clear ideas for needs from first necessity, they successfully choose the type of service which to take advantage from, which shows that 70% from children have succeed to realize the main concepts and ground their choice that 3 children (15%) choose reasonably which react chaotically and give irrational suggestions.



**Outgoing results from research in percent**

### **CONCLUSION**

The existing reality indisputably imposes still in preschool age to be imposed on the economic education of children. In the contemporary world where we live today children receive solid information for all which surrounds them from open space – television, advertisements, virtual child’s games etc. They do not distinguish television programmes from advertisements and for them everything is real. The information which they receive often is not suitable for them that’s why is necessary parents and child’s pedagogues to explain the children questions connected with economic concepts: money, labor, incomes, savings, donations and

purchases. Economic culture of children will help their appropriate development, for acquisition of valuable quantities and main skills for their integration in society as independent and responsible citizens.

Regardless of the social-economical effect, increase of financial literacy of children appears gradually and the world experience proves the indisputable necessity of realization of that activity and inadmissibility of delay and settling of the problem in question. “Good level of financial literacy is needed for each person not only for knowing of principles for understanding of the personal choice [2], for achievement of personal financial purposes, but for securing the life cycle”. Regardless of the specific purpose the need of financial literacy will be increase of life cycle, security in future and prospering of economic and society as a whole.

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