THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL SITUATIONS RELATIONAL PHENOMENA IN YOUNG CHILDREN: A REVIEW OF RECENT EVIDENCE

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Abstract:

This literature review studies the recent research conducted in many countries. The purpose of this article is to review the recent literature regarding the ways children aged 3 to 5 understand and interpret social situations and if socialization is important at this age. This question is at the heart of the present research, especially in a COVID-19 era that still keeps children in their home without any interaction with their peers. The search strategy resulted in total of 24 articles that were selected for the final quality check. A sizable body of research concluded the importance of children's early experiences for later cognitive, academic, and social development.

Keywords: socialization in early childhood, social situations in young children, social development, COVID-19 and socialization

Περίληψη:

Η παρούσα βιβλιογραφική ανασκόπηση εξετάζει την τρέχουσα έρευνα που διεξήχθη σε πολλές χώρες. Ο σκοπός του παρόντος άρθρου είναι να συγκεντρώσει τις έρευνες που αφορούν στην κατανόηση των κοινωνικών σχέσων των παιδιών ηλικίας 3 ως 5 ετών και να εξετάσει αν η κοινωνικοποίηση είναι σημαντική σε αυτήν την ηλικία. Αυτή η ερώτηση είναι μείζονος σημασίας κι επίκαιρη, καθώς διανύουμε την εποχή της πανδημίας COVID-19, η οποία κρατάει τα παιδιά στο σπίτι, χωρίς να έχουν πολλές φυσικές επαφές με τους συνομήλικούς τους. Η έρευνα συγκέντρωσε 24 άρθρα τα οποία επιλέχθηκαν για την τελική αποτίμησή τους. Ένα μεγάλο μέρος της ερευνητικής κοινότητας συμφωνεί στην τεράστια επίδραση που έχουν οι πρώτες εμπειρίες των παιδιών στην προσχολική ηλικία κι επηρεάζουν την μετέπειτα γνωστική, ακαδημαϊκή, και κοινωνική τους ανάπτυξη.

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Λέξεις Κλειδιά: *κοινωνικοποίηση στην προσχολική ηλικία, κοινωνικές σχέσεις στα μικρά παιδιά, κοινωνική ανάπτυξη, κορονοϊός και κοινωνικοποίηση*

1. Introduction

1.1 Theoretical Background
Early socialization is a learning process that consists of values, social rules, forms of behavior, etc. (Bandura, 1977). Using social interactions as the main vehicle, socialization results to the development of social relationships and relational networks. The relationship of the individual with society is very important, because as the sociologist Durkheim argued, it is not possible to know something outside the social environment, not even its existence (Mead, 1934). Therefore, every social behavior is a need for communication. Practicing social skills creates in children, a conscious way of communicating with their friends and those around them, a personal development, since when children learn to behave properly in a social situation, they expand your feelings and thoughts. According to Rubin et al. (2006), the human being is a social being that must acquire all the social skills that will contribute to his functional adaptation to the demands of his daily life. This process starts in infancy, peaks and consolidates during school and adolescence and is fed back by daily contact. Hence, a literature review regarding this topic can contribute to a more holistic understanding of the findings of recent studies.

Bassetas (2009) states that learning is the change in a person's behavior that is the result of the influence of the environment or his experience. For this reason, the environment of each child is very important for the socialization that each child will receive (Gregoriadis, Grammatikopoulos, Tsigilis, & Zachopoulou, 2020; Aslanidou, 2019). Feldman (2009) reports that children in the first preschool period see, care and feel the protection in the eyes of adults, while they spend time with their peers and generally have common interests. According to Eisbach (2004) play is the most well-known activity of children at this age and through it, the children learn how to connect with others, to understand that they see the world differently and look for its motives or reasons of their behavior. The research of Schneider et al. (2001) showed that there is a correlation between a person's ability to form social relationships and the quality of relationship he had in the first years of his life with his parents. The kind of attachment he experienced in the first years of his life is related to the relationships he will have in his adult life. If safe attachment is not made during the first years of a person's age, then this can manifest antisocial behaviors in adulthood.

In the very first years, play is mainly solitary and it has various categories like physical play and drama play (Grammatikopoulos, Gregoriadis, & Zachopoulou, 2012). This type of individualistic play is magnified even more because of the increased screen time children are having due to the covid-19 pandemic, where millions of children are experiencing lockdowns and they have to remain at their houses (Hatzigianni, Gregoriadis, Karagiorgou & Chatzigeorgiadou, 2018). As children grow older, it expands

into parallel play, where children play at the same room and they observe each other. The next phase of play includes a more symbiotic and companion play, until they reach the end of preschool age, where they gradually realize the cooperative play (Feldman, 2009). The earlier they become familiar with the complex types of social play, the easier it will be for them to understand the meaning of cooperation. However, it is worth noting that children of this period prefer solitary play. In order for children to benefit and understand the concept of cooperation and competition, they must attend preschool programs (Boyd et al., 2005). Promoting socio-emotional competence in preschool programs is the foundation. Teachers need to draw their teaching from a range of their previous experiences as creative individuals, musicians and teachers and engage with the students in the activity of creative music making (Dogani, 2004). In this way kids are socialized and they play while they create. According to Germanos (2005), play is a "*coaching of the child for his subsequent serious occupations in the adult world*" (p. 60).

At this age children compare behaviors, understand right and wrong, resolve conflicts and express their joy and frustration (Vatou, Gregoriadis, Tsigilis, & Grammatikopoulos, 2020). Stocker & Dunn (1990) pointed out that at the end of this age children begin to reduce their aggressive behaviors, find increasingly effective ways to regulate their negative emotions, and develop complex social skills and communication strategies. These children are also likely to be socially adequate.

According to Bradley et al. (2009), developmental goals for infant social behavior relate to the following skills: a) to adapt to new situations, b) to use thinking skills to resolve conflicts, c) to show confidence in adults, d) to control more effectively his own behavior, e) to respect the environment of his class and his educational material, f) to respect the rights of others, but also to defend his own, g) to understand how important the rules of his class are, as well as the habits he has, and finally h) to play nicely with the other children. Zins et al. (2004) report that social skills are acquired when the individual recognizes and manages their emotions, cares about others, builds good relationships, makes responsible decisions, and resolves difficult situations in a constructive way.

1.2 Methodological Issues Regarding on How to Interpret Social Situations, Relationships, Relational Phenomena in Young Children Aged 3-5 Years

T. Parsons distinguished five phases in the process of social integration of the child:

1) In the first phase, the dominant form is the form of the mother and their binary relationship.
2) In the second phase, the relationships expand to all members of the family (integration into the family environment).
3) In the third phase comes school socialization (shaping the role of gender and age).
4) In the fourth phase, peer groups prevail.
5) In the fifth phase is the professional socialization (as stated at Pyrgiotakis, 2006).

Therefore, it is very important to know how children perceive their social relationships with other people, since if an infant withdraws and isolates himself and does not come into contact with any human being or little, then the next phases of

socialization, the social element is not developed and the individual remains evolutionarily at a subhuman level (Kapsalis, 1981).

Anders, Rossbach, Weinert, Ebert, Kuger, Lehrl & Von Maurice (2011) have showed that the predictors of social, numeracy skills and their development are: a) several child and family background factors (e.g., gender, maternal education, socioeconomic status), b) measures of the home learning environment (e.g., literacy- and numeracy-related activities), and c) measures of preschool structural and process quality (e.g., ECERS-E, ECERS-R).

1.3 Main Goals

The purpose of this article is to understand in what ways children aged 3 to 5 understand and interpret social situations and if socialization is important at this age. This is theoretically important because in order to understand how children develop and what factors influence their development, we should not only examine the children's abilities, but also the environment in which they are growing (Ciping, Silinskas, Wei, & Georgiou, 2015). Also, a sizable body of research documents the importance of children's early experiences for later cognitive, academic, and social development (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Researchers have reported that parent-child interactions, specifically stimulating and responsive parenting practices, are important influences on a child's academic and social development (Committee on Early Childhood Pedagogy, 2000). The specific main questions are as follows:

1) In what ways do children aged 3 to 5 perceive, understand and interpret social situations?
2) In what ways do children aged 3 to 5 understand and interpret relationships and relational phenomena?
3) Is socialization important at this age or not?
4) In this way, the focus of this review is to collect all the articles from 2000 and examine how important is the socialization in young age for a child's development.

2. Method

2.1 Search Procedure

This review is a social study, a systematic literature review. For this reason, its' method is based on Petticrew & Roberts's (2006) method for executing systematic reviews "*of mapping out areas of uncertainty, and identifying where little or no relevant research has been done, but where new studies are needed. Systematic reviews also flag up areas where spurious certainty abounds. These are areas where we think we know more than we do, but where in reality there is little convincing evidence to support our beliefs*" (p. 2). The steps which were followed are:

1) Main questions were formulated.
2) The search terms were defined and relevant databases were selected.

3) Inclusion and exclusion criteria were identified and used for the literature research.
4) Only studies that met the quality criteria were included in this review, which makes it legitimate.
5) Data answering the research criteria and questions were extracted.

In order to explain this phenomenon, a qualitative approach was chosen, because the whole process wanted to have a more interpretive character (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000, p. 456).

2.2 Search Criteria

A systematic review was conducted using the Hellenic Academic Libraries Link (HEAL LINK), which includes the scientific database "Scopus". Also, another database which was used is "Google Scholar". These databases were chosen, because they have a variety of scientific journals involving educational research. According to Petticrew & Roberts's (2006), *"the type of information being sought will depend on both the review question and the inclusion criteria"* (p. 80). Hence, we combined many many search terms, until we find the right research. At the beginning, we used several combinations of search terms, like "social skills in preschool", "social situations in young children", "perceptions in relationships in young age", "social skills at 3 to 5 years old". Then, one more term was added which was "social perceptions in preschool age". The search was limited to Greek, English and French, because these are the three languages the researcher can speak fluently. Journals and ebooks were searched and the focus was on research into all taxonomic numbers. The research was also focused from 2010 to 2020 and whether the research was illustrated or not was irrelevant. This strategy revealed 79 posts, 8 of which were completely relevant. The term "peer relationships in preschool" was then searched. There were 8 researches, the 4 of which were related to our subject. Finally, the term "social skills in preschool" was applied in journal articles (2010-2020), and 46 surveys emerged. The relevant ones were selected from them. In total, 24 studies were selected for the final checklist and discussed in the present literature.

2.3 Literature's Review Process-Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria

In the protocol of a systematic review, the criteria for inclusion and exclusion of the various studies are clearly defined and then precisely applied, so that, finally, the most appropriate studies emerge, the results of which will be used in the meta-analysis. The criteria applied must be objective and scientific and not intended to facilitate researchers (Cohen et al., 2000).

All the abstracts of the publications which were obtained with the search terms described above were studied. However, only the articles which were published in scientific peer-reviewed journals were taken under consideration. Also, publications from 2000 to present (as of 1st of January 2020) were only included, because the current and the newest studies in this field was in the main research of this review. These articles had to be published in English, even though the empirical studies concerned bilingual

kids. However, the focus wasn't on a special population (e.g., children with special needs) and articles like them weren't included.

After applying all these inclusion and exclusion criteria to all the publications, the search strategy resulted in a total of 79 articles. The criteria were again applied to the full-text versions of these articles, which resulted in a total of 24 articles that were selected for the final quality check. The data of these studies were drawn from studies such as the Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey.

2.4 Initial Data Extraction and Quality Check

A study quality for a systematic review means "internal validity", the extent to which a study is free from the main methodological biases, such as observer bias (Petticrew & Roberts's, 2006, p. 127). To evaluate the scientific quality of the studies, the data extraction that was used included the following sections:

1) General information: Study title, author, year of publication (2000 and after), country, research context, and journal
2) Topic: Qualitative research showing the social relationships of children aged 3 to 5 years and their perceptions of them.
3) Research design: Research question, description of the study, research design, research method, length of the intervention in home learning activities, and data analysis method
4) Research population: Number of parents and their children, gender, and age of the children.
5) Results: Findings that are related to the research question.

Table 1: Quality criteria

Category	Quality criteria
General orientation questions	1. What question is the study aiming to answer? 2. Is the research done using the chosen method capable of finding a clear answer to the research question?
Selection of the sample	3. Are the study participants adequately described (age, sex, country etc)? 4. Is the sample surveyed representative?
Method	5. Do the researchers state the research methods used? 6. Are the measures used in the study the most relevant ones for answering the research question? 7. Are they objective and reliable?
Data analysis	8. Are the results clear presented? 9. Did formal test for change in trend (such as ANOVA) use an appropriate method?
Conclusion	10. Is the research question answered using empirical evidence from the research that was done?

All the articles were checked using 10 quality criteria drawn from Petticrew & Roberts (2006) (p.142-143) (see Table 1).

2.5 Home Learning Environment & Child Outcomes: A Young Field of Study

In addition, most of the studies examined used qualitative methods such as interviews and observations in reading behavior and comprehension, verbal ability, etc. If one looks at Figure 1, one will realize that in 2019 there is an interest in this growing field, but because of COVI-19 there is no newer research. According at the publication dates of the 24 articles reviewed in this study (see Figure 1), it becomes apparent that all the articles published 2010 and after. Also, these articles are not many and this field of the study is really young in the scientific society. In Table 2, there is an overview of these studies. Although the 66 eligible studies were found, it is obvious that studies on the social skills of preschool children, as well as the benefits of this socialization, have been conducted all over the Earth. In addition, most of the studies examined used qualitative methods such as interviews and observations in reading behavior and comprehension, verbal ability, etc. If researchers look at Figure 1, they will realize that in 2019 there is an interest in this growing field, but COVID-19 affected the research of the educators and the scientists and there is no newer research.
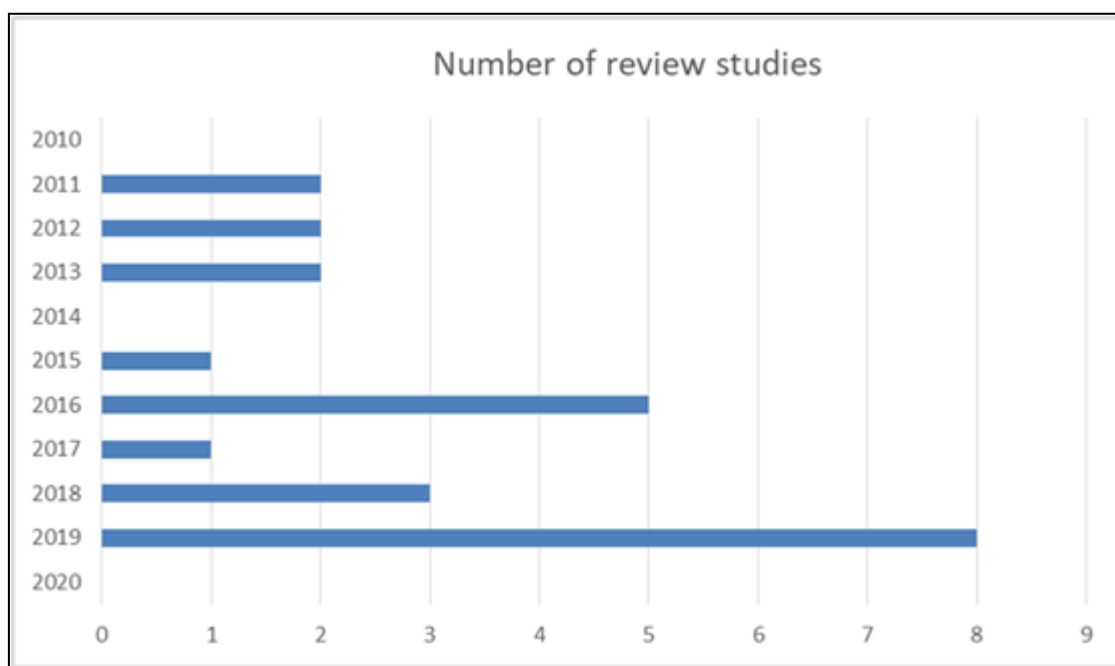
Figure 1: Frequency distribution for year of publication for reviewed articles

2.6 Data Analysis

2.6.1 What is Measured

The term 'social skills in preschool' is used to represent a range of learning and educational based activities that parents and children engage in together, providing opportunities for communicative exchange and interpersonal interaction between adults and children that facilitate learning (Melhuish, Phan, Sylva, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart, 2008). Most of the times, these activities include in-home parent-child activities, such as shared reading, teaching letters and numbers, and doing arts and craft, as well as

family activities outside of the home, such as visiting the library and going on outings to the museum (Aslanidou, 2019).

This section discusses the ways social skills and communication have been researched in the empirical literature. First, there is a review of how social activities and parent-child participation in these activities has been measured. This participation is typically measured through maternal self-report questionnaires that assess how often parents and children engage in the various learning activities. Secondly, we propose underlying dimensions that represent family engagement in measures home learning activities. In the research literature there have been several different ways in which home learning activities have been categorized. These are analyzed in the current literature review.

2.6.2 Dimensions of Social Skills and how They Affect Children

The majority of the articles recognized the importance of the early social experiences that young children received in their homes (e. g. Fleer, 2019; Van Bergen, 2017; Boerma et al., 2017; Barnes et al. 2017). The dimensions that have been measured are the educational challenges, the parental beliefs, the family environment, the children's social relationships and the children interaction and social relationships-developments. Parent-child interaction affects social development and cognitive development. Much of the research that has measured these broader home learning activities has come from secondary data analysis of large scale population representative studies or Longitudinal research (Dogra & Chaudhary, 2019). These studies include the Social Practice Theory, Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (Holland & Lave, 2019). Furthermore, some studies have used 'case studies' (Tulviste, Best, Gibbons, 2019; Maynard, 2019; Kristy, Raschke, & Kohler, 2011). Information is obtained through direct observations of Head Start programes (Stanton-Chapman, Walker & Jamison, 2013) or Sampling protocol (Jiayao & Hestenes, 2015) and showed how they affect a child's socialization. Some of the research extract their results from Quasi-experimental comparison-intervention (Laua, Rapeea & Coplanb, 2017; Silvia & Ivelina, 2016) and others use surveys and standardized measures, factor analyses and path models (Rhoades, Greenberg & Warren, 2011; Hindman, & Morrison, 2012). Also, interviews were used to extract information about children's social behavior (Sung-Yun & Cheah Charissa, 2016).

3. Results

Parents can engage with their children's social skills by practicing related activities. In this section, our findings in relation to the research main goals are presented. We have subdivided the results into two themes. An overview of these two themes and the supporting studies can be found in Table 2.

3.1 Socialization as a Learning Process for Preschool Kids

All the research presented in Table 2 concludes that preschool children 3 to 5 years old, in order to socialize properly and have a positive outcome in adulthood, must come into contact with a quality preschool program and get in touch with their peers. Our database shows that socialization in early age is crucial for academic achievement. Family environment is also vital for a child's social skills development. This article has been written to show that this research exists. The purpose was to do a literature review about social skills in a young age and how it influences a child's outcome.

3.1.1 The Effects of Early Socialization on Child Outcomes

Kuhns, Cabrera, Hennigar, West, Acosta (2018) studying 206 children aged 3 to 5 years whose parents are either African American or Latino, concluded that if the mother, but especially the father is concerned with the child at the age of 3, then it acquires better reading, math and social skills. Maich, Levine, & Hall (2016) emphasize that with appropriate practices, children's negative behaviors (social and non-social) can change. Tõugu (2019) also examined preschool boys and girls and concluded that games with preschool peers play a very important role in their social development. Taumoepeau (2019) adds that social development in preschool helps the child's personal and cognitive development, while Hedegaard (2019) stated that with the holistic approach of the child we can understand his social potential and use them for its social and cognitive development. In addition, Sad, Konca, Ozer & Azar (2016) observed that parents who supervised their children in terms of academic, personal or social well-being helped their children to increase their technology literacy, to enable easy and quick access to information sources, and enhance their children's autonomy and academic achievement (Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2016; Dove et al, 2015; Di Santo et al., 2015).

Researchers Holland & Lave (2019) concluded that the more a family deals with its child at a young age, the easier it is socially for the child to develop his social skills. In fact, Fleer (2019) studying four brothers of an Australian family concluded that children's interaction helps significantly in their social development. Dogra & Chaudhary (2019) studied a preschooler and stressed that when the child is exposed to social environments and socializes with children of their preschool age, then he is ready for school socially, but also cognitively.

Also, the researcher Maynard (2019) studied preschool siblings and found that the bond that siblings have and the socialization they have with each other helps a lot in their socio-emotional development, as well as in building their personality later, in their independence and cooperation with other people. Tulviste, Best, Gibbons (2019) examined preschool children from all over the world and concluded that the more contacts a preschool child has with people, the more properly socialized he becomes. The culture of each child plays an important role in his social development. In fact, Davies & Christensen (2018) stressed the importance of the child's relationship with family and peers, but also his privacy, which leads to his gradual independence.

Windzio (2018) also studied children of immigrants in Europe. He concluded that individual or family decisions play a key role in this model, but also national boundaries, which are closely related to mixed national or segregated social networks. Hinkley, Cliff, Lum, Hesketh (2016) conducted a study with fourteen preschool children and thirty-two families. It has once again been found that the more time parents spend with their children outside the home, the less time children spend in front of a screen. Weekly activities improved children's cognitive and social skills. In addition, Stanton-Chapman, Walker & Jamison (2013) studied eight "Head Start" classes and found that nine out of ten children increased their social contact with their peers. It is worth noting that nine out of ten children showed a decrease in individual play and an increase in group play. The program had only positive results for the participants.

Other studies such as Laua, Rapeea & Coplanb (2017), which looked at seventy-two children (3-5 years old), found that shy children can more easily acquire anxiety and depression later in life. But if their parents take care of them and socialize them in preschool, then this possibility decreases. Hindman, & Morrison (2012) examined two hundred and twenty-nine middle-class families with preschool children. Once again, it has been shown that the family environment can significantly help a child's development in mathematics, language and social behavior.

Multiple studies show that the earlier a child spends time with peers, the more confident he or she feels about himself or herself later in society. Silvia & Ivelina (2016) examined seven hundred nine children 4-6 years old from 40 villages in 5 regions of Bangladesh. The children who participated in a quality program surpassed the other children who participated in simple public education programs in all areas (cognitive, social). Also interesting is the research of Morris & Jones (2013) which examined preschool children belonging to poor families. After the intervention it was found that the problematic behaviors improved and the teachers managed to create a positive social and emotional atmosphere in the classroom.

Additionally, Kristy, Raschke, & Kohler (2011) took children who had not been in contact with their peers. Each came in contact with two other children who had been properly socialized. After the program was done, the results were quite encouraging, because the children's cooperation, exchange of views and play between them increased. In fact, Rhoades, Greenberg & Warren (2011) examined preschool children from low socioeconomic backgrounds and found that an early intervention program helps in the overall development of the child. The cognitive and socio-emotional development of the preschool child helps in his / her academic success later. For this reason, they propose to create early intervention programs.

In addition, Wenz-Gross & Upshur (2012) associated with preschool children and provided a curriculum for teachers in a school to implement. This program attached great importance to the social development of the child. The educators implemented it for three years and were very satisfied with the education, as they felt that the curriculum improved the children's social skills and stated that they would continue to use the curriculum. The results support the implementation strategy and suggest that attention

to teacher morale, overall skills development and a period of ongoing support for training is important and will lead to sustainable and high implementation rates.

Other investigations follow the same pattern. Craig-Unkefer & Kaiser (2016) examined six children (3 twins) of preschool age who are at risk of language delays and behavioral problems. After completing their research, it was found that the number of socio-communicative behaviors by each child increased after the introduction of the intervention condition, as well as the use of descriptive and utterance requests during play sessions. Increases in language complexity and game diversity and complexity were also associated with intervention. Sung-Yun & Cheah Charissa (2016) took one hundred and sixteen mothers from Seoul, Korea, and looked at their socializing beliefs about preschoolers' social skills (sharing, controlling negative emotions, and helping others). These mothers rated controlling negative emotions as less important than sharing and helping others, and were less likely to attribute the importance of social skills to socially conventional reasons and provide different ratings and reasons for the importance of their skills. Children depending on the sex of their child. This study highlighted the importance of cultural ideologies for children and the family in the study of maternal beliefs about children's socialization.

It is worth mentioning that Jiayao & Hestenes (2015) had as a sample for their research twenty-eight high quality preschool children. They studied the relationship between social skills and play in preschool. The children were studied for 45 minutes to an hour for 2 consecutive weeks. The results showed that children who play and imitate from a young age have a high development of their social skills. Aslanidou (2019), with her literature review concluded that when parents deal with their children at a young age, then the learning outcomes and academic performance of their children in mathematics, language and social skills are very more advanced than other children whose parents did not deal with them at this tender age.

Table 2: Summary/Overview of Papers found in the Systematized Literature Search

	Author, date	Study Population Number Ages at data collection Sample information	Measure of family engagement in home learning activities Dimensions Measure/Items	Measure of socio-demographic predictors and/or child outcome (if applicable)	Type of analyses	Results
1	Kuhns, Cabrera, Hennigar, West, Acosta, 2018	N = 206, Ages: 3 to 5 years old with Afroamerican or Latinamerican parents.	Dimensions: Educational challenges, parental beliefs, family environment. Measure: Social development of children.	Child outcome: If parents are involved with their childrens' growth, it will benefit them.	Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey.	If the mother, but especially the father, is involved with his child at the age of 3, then he acquires better reading, math and social skills.
2	Maich, Levine, Hall, 2016	N=50 in total, but only 5 of them were	Dimensions: Behaviors of individuals	Child outcome:	Applied Behavior	With appropriate practices, children's

		preschool kids.	(evaluation and suggestions).	Childrens' social behavior.	Analysis (ABA).	negative behaviors (social and non-social) can change.
3	Tõugu, 2019	Preschool boys and girls.	Dimensions-Measures: Children interaction and social relationships-developments.	Child outcome: Better social relationships.	Empirical and bibliographic research-Interviews with children.	Preschool games play a very important role in kids' social development.
4	Taumoepea, 2019	Parents and their children (preschool age).	One dimension: Parent-child interaction. Measures: Kids' social and cognitive development.	Child outcome: Positive relationships and better cognitive development.	Literature review.	This study showed that social development in preschool helps the child's personal and cognitive development.
5	Hedegaard, 2019.	Preschool children.	Dimension: Interactions between parents and their preschool children.	Child outcome: Positive interactions between parents and their children in a young age using the holistic approach of the child bring a good social and cognitive development to them.	Bibliographic research - holistic approach.	With the holistic approach of the child we can understand his social potentials and use them for his social and cognitive development.
6	Holland & Lave, 2019	Children from the USA and children from Porto (different socio-economic families).	Two dimensions: How a person's culture and background affect his personal and social development. Measures: culture and background.	Child Outcome: Well socially developed.	Social Practice Theory, Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT).	The more a family is involved with their child at a young age, the easier it is for the child to be well socially developed and without facing any difficulties.
7	Fleer, 2019	N = 4 (preschool children to school age), Australian family.	One dimension: home learning environment (HLE). Measures: How the collective development of the child in a family helps in its	Child outcome: children's social development when they interact with their peers.	Empirical analyses.	The interaction of children with each other helps significantly in their social development.

			all-round development.		
8	Dogra & Chaudhary, 2019	N=1. Age: preschool child.	Dimensions: How a child's psychological and social development helps him to be ready for school. Measure: psychological and social skills.	Child outcome: cognitive achievement when the child interacts with his peers.	Longitudinal research.	When a child is exposed to social environments and socializes with children of their age in preschool, then he will be ready for school cognitively.
9	Maynard, 2019	Siblings of Preschool Age.	Two dimensions: Socio-emotional and cognitive development. Measures: home literacy environment and siblings interactions they have with each other.	Child outcome: Social-emotional development, building siblings personality, independence and cooperation.	Case Studies.	The bond that siblings have and the socialization they have with each other helps a lot in their socio-emotional development, as well as in building their personality later, in independence and cooperation.
10	Tulviste, Best, Gibbons, 2019	Preschool children from all over the world.	Three dimensions: How does the financial situation of the parents, the education they receive and in general the environment in which a child grows up affect his social development. Measure: Home Learning Environment.	Child outcome: Kids socialization.	Case Studies.	The more contacts a preschool child has with people, the more properly socialized he becomes. The culture of each child plays an important role in his social development.
11	Davies, Christensen, 2018	Preschool kids and their families.	Two dimensions: How important is the privacy of the individual, even at a young age.	Child outcome: Child's gradual independence when parents respect their kids privacy.	Qualitative research.	The child's relationship with his family and peers is important, but he also seeks his privacy, which leads to his gradual independence.
12	Windzio, 2018	Immigrants in Europe.	Dimension: Relationship between integration, multiculturalism, spatial	Child outcome: academic, personal or social well-being depends	Micro & macro analysis.	Individual or family decisions play a crucial role in this model, but also national boundaries,

			marginalization and social relations. Measures: academic well-being and technology literacy.	on every individual family.		which are closely related to mixed national or segregated social networks.
13	Hinkley, Cliff, Lum, Hesketh, 2016	N = 14 preschool children and N = 32 families. (Average age: 4.8 years old), 60% Australian boys.	Two dimensions: How to reduce children's time in front of a screen and how to improve their social relationships. Measure: the influence of social relationships by reducing the screen time.	Child outcome: Improvement on children's cognitive and social skills.	Skills rating scale.	The more time parents spend with their children outside the home, the less time children spend in front of a screen. Weekly activities improve children's cognitive and social skills.
14	Stanton-Chapman, Walker & Jamison, 2013	8 Head Start Classes.	Dimension: Peers interaction in social development. Measure: Evaluation of children who come in contact with their peers.	Child outcome: Social contact with other kids in the same age improve the kids social skills.	Head Start Program.	Results indicated that 9 out of 10 children increased their social contact with their peers. 9 out of 10 children showed a decrease in individual play and an increase in group play. The program had positive results for the participants.
15	Laua, Rapeea & Coplanb, 2017	N = 72 children (3-5 years old). Their parents had signs of anxiety.	Dimension: home learning environment. Measure: Social achievement.	Child outcome: A parent's involvement with his child at a young age canlead to positive developments in their social behavior.	Quasi-experimental comparison-intervention (6 sessions for each child and each parent).	Results showed that shy children may find it easier to get stressed and depressed later in life, but if their parents take care of them and give them the opportunity to be socialized in preschool, then this possibility is decreased.
16	Hindman, & Morrison, 2012	N = 229 (families with preschool children).	Two dimensions: family background and home literacy experiences.	Child outcome: literacy and numeracy achievement.	Quasi-experimental comparison-intervention (6 sessions for	The family environment can significantly help the child's development in

		Middle class families.	Measures: How parents associate with their children in preschool and how much it helps their language, cognition and social development.	Social development.	each child and each parent). Survey and standardized measures. Factor analysis. Path models.	the child's mathematics, language and social behavior.
17	Silvia & Ivelina, 2016	N = 709 (children 4-6 years old from 40 villages from 5 areas of Bangladesh).	Dimension: What is the effect of having a child participate in a quality preschool program. Measure: Comparison of children who participated in the program with those who lived nearby, went to public school and did not participate in such an advanced and quality program.	Child outcome: cognitive and social skills.	Quasi-experimental design. Pre-post measures.	The children who participated in the quality program surpassed the other children in all areas (cognitive, social).
18	Morris & Jones, 2013	Preschool children from poor families.	Two dimensions: Do social and emotional interventions at a young age help prevent problem behaviors later in school? Measure: behavior.	Child outcome: improved social and emotional climate in the classroom.	Foundations of Learning (FOL) Demonstration, a place-randomized, experimental evaluation conducted by MDRC.	Problem behaviors improved and teachers were able to create a positive social and emotional climate in the classroom.
19	Kristy, Raschke, & Kohler, 2011	Children who had not come in contact with their peers. Each came in contact with two other children who had been properly socialized.	Dimensions: The effect of socializing with peers in preschool. Measure: social achievement.	Child outcome: Social improvement.	3 sessions / child (Strategy: "I live, play and talk with my friends").	The cooperation of the children, the exchange of views and the play between them increased.
20	Rhoades, Greenberg & Warren, 2011	Preschool children from low socio-economic strata.	Dimension: Does an early intervention program help a child's academic progress? Measure: children's	Child outcome: academic and soci-emotional achievement.	Survey.	The cognitive and socio-emotional development of the preschool child helps in the academic success of. Early intervention

					academic achievement.		programs need to be set up.
21	Wenz-Gross & Upshur, 2012	Preschool children (3 years of study).	Two dimensions: social skills and problem behaviors. Measure: How a customized curriculum increases children's' social skills and how it reduces problem behaviors in preschool.	Child outcome: literacy, numeracy and social achievement.	Adapted Second-Step curriculum.		The teachers were satisfied with the educational changes, felt that the curriculum improved the children's social skills and stated that they would continue to use the curriculum. The results support the implementation strategy and suggest that attention to teacher morale, overall skills development and a period of ongoing support for training is important and will lead to sustainable and high implementation rates.
22	Craig-Unkefer & Kaiser, 2016	N = 6 children (3 pairs) of preschool age who are at risk of language delays and behavioral problems.	Dimensions: language complexity and game diversity. Measure: communicative skills and interest.	Child outcome: social skills.	Multiple baseline design.		The number of socio-communicative behaviors by each child increased after the introduction of the intervention condition, as did the use of descriptive and utterance requests during play sessions. Increases in language complexity and game diversity and complexity were also associated with intervention.
23	Sung-Yun & Cheah Charissa,	N = 116 mothers from Seoul, Korea.	Three dimensions: Korea's socializing beliefs about	Child outcome: social skills.	Interviews.		These mothers rated the control of negative

	2016		preschool children 's social skills (sharing, controlling negative emotions, and helping others). Measure: social and emotional achievement in preschool.			emotions as less important than sharing and helping others, and were less likely to attribute the importance of social skills to social conventional reasons. They also provided different ratings and reasons for the importance of their skills depending on the sex of their child. This study emphasizes the importance of cultural ideologies for children and their families and the importance of maternal beliefs about children's socialization.
24	Jiayao & Hestenes, 2015	N = 28 preschool children. High quality education.	Dimension: What is the relationship between social skills and play in preschool. Measure: social skills.	Child outcome: improving social skills.	Sampling protocol (45 minutes to an hour / 2 weeks).	The results showed that children who play and imitate from a young age have a high development of their social skills.

3.2 Discussion

The purpose of this article was to review the recent literature regarding the ways children aged 3 to 5 understand and interpret social situations and if socialization is important at this age. This question is at the heart of the present research, especially in a COVID-19 era that still keeps children in their home without any interaction with their peers. They are kept in front of a screen and they pass many hours without even talking to somebody. This subject is important for the whole society due to the difficulties that every family faces regarding their child cognitive and social development. There is definitely a correlation between a person's ability to form social relationships and the quality of relationship he had in the first years of his life with his parents. If safe attachment is not made during the first years of a person's age, then this can manifest antisocial behaviors in adulthood.

The findings showed that preschool children 3 to 5 years old, in order to have a positive outcome in adulthood, must come into contact with a quality preschool program and get in touch with their peers. The database shows that socialization in early age is crucial for academic and social achievement. Family environment is also vital for a child's social skills development. Parents' engagement in their child academic and social performance is crucial. Not only can parents help and support their child's social skills, but they can also boost their children for cognitive achievement. The key is to get involved with their kids' activities and support them by doing extra projects. It is not only school that can give the opportunity to a child to create his one bright future, but the confidence that a parent gives to their child.

Multiple studies show that the earlier a child spends time with peers, the more confident he or she feels about himself or herself later in society. This literature review has shown that children's early home learning experiences are significant predictors of their later reading, mathematics and social achievement at school. If a child receives the attention that it needs in this tender age (early childhood), then they become strong adults with self-esteem, ready to conquer life and cope with all the difficulties that will appear. Children who play and imitate from a young age have a high development of their social skills.

Also, when children attend Head-Programs or more intensive programs then it is better for their cognitive and social development. Children attending intercultural schools reported lower self-concept and lower global self-worth (Chatzigeorgiadou & Bablekou, 2010). This means that we should embrace our differences and other cultures. When children are exposed with more cultures, then it affects them positively and they learn that interacting with other people helps them in a macro scale. Education is not made for a micro scale, but for the future.

All these findings conclude in one and only result; children build their character, their socialization and their academic achievement from a young age. The earlier they become familiar with the complex types of social play, the easier it will be for them to understand the meaning of cooperation. The sooner the parents understand this fact, the better for their child's cognitive and social development. Children are like clay; you have to mold them from the beginning. Otherwise, it will be more difficult for any positive change later on in their life. Humans are social beings and if they are not socialized properly, the human evolution will be declined. Each and every research showed that children need to interact with their peers. Unless, they will stay for their rest of their lives unsocialized and they will have negative effects in their relationships with others in their adulthood life.

This research in reality proves that children 3 to 5 years old can associate with their parents positively, but contact with their peers is of a major importance too. The present research is very important, because the past months (March-December 2020) kept many preschool children at home, without having any contact with other peers. What is certain is that these children who did not come in contact with other children, will have low social skills, which will affect them in their later adult life. This literature review puts a

small stone to the crucial research of socialization in early age. Every teacher hopes that the state and the educational policy of each country will find a way quickly, so that this low socialization does not continue, because it will certainly not have good long-term results both in advanced and third world countries.

Conflict-of-interest statement

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare. The author has seen and agree with the contents of the manuscript and there is no financial interest to report. This is to certify that the submission is original work and is not under review at any other publication.

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About the Author

Eftychia Aslanidou, M. Sc. completed her first studies at the School of Primary Education at the University of Crete. She was distinguished by the State Scholarship Foundation for her ethos and her academic performance for each and every year of study 2008-2012 as the "top of the graduate student in Greece". She was also awarded the "Triantafyllia Kriezi" scholarship as the top Macedonian student. Eftychia left her homeland to see what more she could learn and consequently bring back to offer to the children of Greece. She continued her studies of bilingualism abroad, in New York. There she attended the prominent universities City University of New York, Long Island University, and Westchester College while also teaching at the Greek-American school Plato. When she returned to Greece she continued her studies at both the European University for Special Inclusive Education and at the Aristotle University for Preschool Education. As a member of the Greek Special Education Teachers she presented her findings on inclusive education to several national conferences. She taught in public schools in Zakynthos until cofounding "THE HELLENIC AMERICAN ACADEMY" with Steve Krause. She designed the model learning center as a means to offer the most effective excellent education, tailored to the individual needs of children in Zakynthos. Eftychia, along with THE HELLENIC AMERICAN ACADEMY, and its partners envision a bright future for the next generation. In the demanding environment of modern education, she promises to support children and their parents' educational needs with cutting-edge methods, child-centered teaching practices and the development of parental relationships.

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