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The importance for a child of emotional intelligence in achieving educational success

Znaczenie inteligencji emocjonalnej w drodze do osiągnięcia przez dziecko sukcesu edukacyjnego

A child that lives with encouragement learns confidence.

A child that lives with truth learns justice.

A child that lives with praise learns to appreciate.

A child that lives with sharing learns to be considerate.

A child that lives with knowledge learns wisdom.

Ronald Russell

Abstract

Aim. The article aims to introduce the concept of emotional intelligence and present an alternative view of educational success, emphasizing the role of parents and then the school

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environment in supporting students from an early age on their way to acquiring knowledge and achieving positive results in the educational process, as well as in adult life.

Methods and materials. The article discusses the concept of emotional intelligence and its role in children achieving educational success. This article presents a synthetic approach to the topic by reviewing and analyzing the content contained in available, selected examples of scientific literature. This publication defining emotions and emotional intelligence, explaining their importance in the individual and collective contexts, and focusing on childhood and education (especially taking into account the roles of, among others, emotions, self-regulation, and self-esteem in the process of acquiring knowledge and functioning in the school space). It mainly focuses on childhood, an essential period in a child's development, to stimulate their social skills, teach them how to deal with emotions, and develop emotional intelligence.

Results and conclusion. Next to general intelligence, emotional intelligence is one of the essential contemporary factors influencing a child's broadly understood success (school and professional). It is a factor that optimizes the educational process and helps the individual cope with many everyday personal, educational, and, in the future, professional situations. In this context, EI plays the role of a catalyst influencing the positive functioning of students in the school space, after completing education, and in the subsequent years of their functioning in the professional space.

Keywords: children, emotional intelligence, education, development, family, school.

Abstrakt

Cel. Celem artykułu jest przybliżenie pojęcia inteligencji emocjonalnej oraz przedstawienie alternatywnego spojrzenia na sukces edukacyjny, podkreślając rolę rodziców, a następnie środowiska szkolnego we wspieraniu uczniów od najmłodszych lat na drodze do zdobywania wiedzy i osiągania pozytywnych wyników w procesie edukacyjnym, jak również w życiu dorosłym.

Metody i materiały. W artykule omówiono koncepcję inteligencji emocjonalnej i jej rolę w osiąganiu przez dzieci i młodzież sukcesu edukacyjnego. W niniejszym artykule zaprezentowano syntetyczne ujęcie tematu dokonując przeglądu i analizy treści zawartych w dostępnych, wybranych przykładach literatury naukowej, związanej z podjętym zagadnieniem. Niniejsza publikacja rozpoczyna się od zdefiniowania emocji i inteligencji emocjonalnej, wyjaśnienia ich znaczenia w kontekście indywidualnym i zbiorowym oraz skupienia się na dzieciństwie i edukacji (szczególnie biorąc pod uwagę rolę m.in. emocji, autoregulacji oraz poczucia własnej wartości w procesie przyswajania wiedzy i funkcjonowania w przestrzeni szkolnej). W sposób szczególny skupia się ona na okresie dzieciństwa, który stanowi ważny moment w rozwoju dziecka, aby stymulować jego umiejętności społeczne, uczyć radzenia sobie z emocjami i rozwijać inteligencję emocjonalną.

Wyniki i wnioski. Inteligencja emocjonalna obok inteligencji ogólnej stanowi jeden z istotnych współcześnie czynników wpływających na osiągnięcie przez dziecko powodzenia edukacyjnego, a następnie szeroko rozumianego sukcesu (szkolnego i zawodowego). Stanowi ona czynnik optymalizujący proces edukacji i pomagający jednostce radzić sobie w wielu codziennych sytuacjach osobistych, edukacyjnych, a w przyszłości zawodowych. IE odgrywa w tym kontekście rolę swoistego rodzaju katalizatora wpływającego na pozytywne funkcjonowanie uczniów w przestrzeni szkolnej, jak również po ukończeniu edukacji, w kolejnych latach przypadających na jej funkcjonowanie w przestrzeni zawodowej.

Słowa kluczowe: dzieci, inteligencja emocjonalna, edukacja, rozwój, rodzina, szkoła.

Introduction

When discussing educational success, the focus is often on the child's individual arithmetical and literacy skills, knowledge, experiences, and achievements, referring mainly to general intelligence and IQ. The child's potential is analyzed, and numerous ways are proposed to optimize the educational process so that the effects of teaching and educational work are as sound as possible and children are as well-educated as possible. Their abilities, skills, and individual predispositions are supported. However, the question arises as to what extent the educational and then professional success of students results mainly from their talents and opportunities, and to what extent it is (or can be) related to the social and emotional sphere of the child. Howard Gardner already devotes two of the seven types of intelligence he distinguished (in his proposed model of multiple intelligence) to personal abilities of an intra- and inter-personal nature, *i.e.*, social competencies and knowledge of the internal world (Goleman, 1997, 1999). He believes that general and emotional intelligence can be separated but emphasizes their connections and correlations (Gardner, 1983). According to Kathryn Jane Gardner and Pamela Qualter, "Interpersonal intelligence is the ability to understand the perception and desires of other people, whereas in intrapersonal intelligence, it is the capability to control and understand oneself. This ability helps in building effective work environment" (Gardner, Qualter, 2010, p. 5, in: Srivastava, 2013, pp. 97–99). Daniel Goleman, one of the researchers on the emotional sphere of our lives, notes that apart from intellectual intelligence, emotional intelligence and its development are equally important in achieving complete educational and life success because they significantly influence the use of the knowledge and skills an individual acquires. The role of emotional intelligence may be confirmed by the fact that often, what was best remembered in a given person's memory was related to the emotions he or she experienced. Usually, an individual perfectly remembers events in which the person was happy, moments that filled him with pride, joyful moments, and situations

full of personal satisfaction. However, he also experiences failures, sadness, and disappointment. Various emotions accompany people constantly; they are with them in every moment and situation of life.

Drawing attention to the issue of emotional intelligence in the context of children is also possible. Children learn to understand themselves and others from an early age, starting with primary socialization in the family and then as part of secondary socialization in the educational space (starting with preschool education) and at higher levels of education at school (first primary and then secondary). The ability to recognize names and then adequately express one's thoughts, feelings, and experienced emotional states, as well as broadly understood cooperation or coexistence in a social group (*e.g.*, peers). Of course, this is a challenging thing, considering the uniqueness of each individual and their differences in temperament, personality, self-confidence, and sensitivity. Already at the stage of preschool education, we can notice that for example: "Antek is spontaneous and joyful, while Basia is extremely shy and usually plays alone." Individual differences are visible during social contact when some children, *e.g.*, respond dynamically to each task set before them, cooperate willingly, are active and motivated to undertake all activities (including new tasks), and others, *e.g.*, are reluctant to participate in collective activities and do not like to share anything. As we know, the first six years of life are a precious period for development because it is then that a child develops the first habits, attitudes, and behaviours that determine his later life. The preschool period is a prosperous time for emotional development and extremely valuable for developing emotional intelligence. Therefore, this period will be the central area of the following considerations devoted to the issue of emotional intelligence and its impact on achieving educational success.

This article presents a synthetic approach to the topic by reviewing and analyzing the content contained in available selected examples of scientific literature related to the issue, including taking into account the perspective and referring to the narratives of John Mayer and Peter Salovey, as well as D. Goleman – who is responsible for popularizing the term "emotional intelligence." An attempt was made to organize the existing knowledge on this subject, with particular emphasis on the place of emotional intelligence in children's education, to raise awareness of its importance and role in the development of the youngest.

Emotions – definition and types

Considering the analyzed issue, we should first focus on explaining what emotions are. Sam Reddington points out in his book that "emotion comes from the Latin word *emovere* meaning "to move out, remove, or agitate." In the *Oxford English Dictio-*

nary, emotion means “any agitation of mind, feeling, passion.” In short, emotion is “mental feeling” (Reddington, 2017). According to the *Pedagogical Encyclopedia of the 21st Century*, an emotion is: “[...] a reflection of an individual’s attitude to objects and phenomena of the surrounding world that activate his needs, as well as phenomena occurring within him” (Twardowska-Rajewska, 2003, p. 1035). The psychological dictionary, in turn, defines it as: “[...] the state of the organism caused by a disturbance of its balance in relations with the environment, with a positive or negative value, beneficial or unfavourable for the organism, reflecting the attitude of a given individual to acting stimuli” (Szewczuk, 1985, p. 76).

The life of every human being is accompanied by a multitude of emotions, their shades and intensities. D. Goleman distinguishes eight primary emotions, to which he assigns related ones: anger (rage, resentment, indignation, fury, hostility, reluctance, and irritation), sadness (displeasure, melancholy, discouragement, regret, and depression), fear (concern, nervousness, anxiety, horror, and panic), contentment (pleasure, relief, pride, joy, satisfaction, bliss, and delight), love (acceptance, adoration, devotion, trust, and kindness), surprise (surprise, shock, stupefaction, and astonishment), disgust (aversion, contempt, disgust, disregard, revulsion, and disfavour), and shame (embarrassment, humiliation, sense of guilt, embarrassment, and remorse) (Goleman, 1997).

Initially, the child’s knowledge about emotions is expressed through action, and they are treated as certain forms of activity, not features or states (Stępień-Nycz, 2012). Then, as they gain experience, they learn how to name them and what they mean. “Already in the second year of life, children understand that emotions can be an expression of desires or intentions, but only in the preschool period do they begin to become aware of these relationships” (Stępień-Nycz, 2012, p. 7). This period is the mental stage of the development of understanding emotions. They then learn that emotions depend on desires and our individual beliefs and that the expressions of emotion we may observe do not always reflect a person’s feelings. It is worth mentioning that a preschool child is characterized by high emotional lability and many short-term, changing emotions with a high intensity of experiencing them. Using these resources optimally during upbringing and education is essential (Wiatrowska, 2009, p. 99). Moreover, the so-called “emotional memory” significantly influences the child’s emotional development. This type of memory is hidden in human consciousness (Wiatrowska, 2009). That is why making such memories as pleasant as possible is so important.

Emotional intelligence – the meaning of the concept

So, what is emotional intelligence? At the beginning, it is worth noting that this concept was first described and conceptualized by P. Salovey and J. Mayer. They understood

emotional intelligence “[...] as an ability-based construct analogous to general intelligence” (Bru-Luna, Martí-Vilar, Merino-Soto, & Cervera-Santiago, 2021; O’Connor, Hill, Kaya, & Martin, 2019, p. 1). P. Salovey and J. Mayer defined EI as “[...] the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thoughts and actions” (Salovey, Mayer, 1990, p. 189). In other words, it is “[...] the ability to carry out accurate reasoning about emotions and the ability to use emotions and emotional knowledge to enhance thought” (Mayer, Roberts, Barsade, 2008, p. 511). They believe that it is “[...] the capacity to process information accurately and efficiently, including that emotional information relevant to the recognition, construction, and regulation of emotion in oneself and others” (Mayer, Salovey, 1995, p. 197). It is true that “[...] the term was first coined in 1990 by researchers J. Mayer and P. Salovey, but was later popularized by psychologist Daniel Goleman” (Landry, 2019). Emotional intelligence, according to D. Goleman, is “[...] the ability to recognize our own feelings and the feelings of others, the ability to motivate and manage the emotions of both our own and those of people with whom we have some ties” (Goleman, 1999, p. 439). Kalpana Srivastava believes that: “Emotional intelligence can best be described as the ability to monitor one’s and other people’s emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behaviour” (Srivastava, 2013, pp. 97–99). As we can see, what is important here is the awareness of felt emotions, the ability to respond appropriately, adequately, and appropriately to the emotions of others, and, above all, to express one’s emotions appropriately.

In addition to the D. Goleman, P. Salovey, and J. Mayer models, there is a third model in the literature in research and analysis on IE – the Bar-on model. “When defining emotional intelligence, Bar-on refers to its importance in effectively coping with the demands and pressures of the environment by using a range of non-cognitive competences, skills, and abilities” (Bar-on, 2001, 2005, in: Skrzypczyńska, 2020, p. 69). It can help an individual in everyday functioning, provided that he or she has appropriate skills, indicating an elevated level of competence.

Emotional intelligence usually consists of 4 competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Landry, 2019; Goleman, 2020). However, D. Goleman draws attention to five components of EI, namely: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social skills, and empathy (Goleman, 1999).

Thanks to self-awareness, an individual can determine and express how he feels. It is also expressed in the ability to objectively assess what a person can afford; in her belief that she can do something, that she knows and can – it is nothing else than self-confidence (Wiatrowska, 2009). Already at the stage of preschool education, children learn what certain emotions mean, how to express them, and when and on what occasions they are shown. During this period, children characterized by self-awareness are

willing to undertake and invent new tasks because they internally believe that they can cope with them. They are not afraid to act; they see available opportunities and use them fully. Because “[...] the greatest probability of success is when the child is fully convinced that he can do it” (Kossakowska, 2012, p. 17). Self-esteem becomes the foundation for dealing with problems, overcoming difficult situations, and the driving force for taking up new challenges and achieving further successes (Seligman, 1997).

Self-regulation is the ability to control emotions and cope with stress. Preschool children learn, for example, that a failed drawing does not mean long-lasting sadness or a “[...] storm of emotions” in the form of anger or rage but an opportunity to notice and understand one’s mistakes and improve oneself during the next attempt at drawing. Self-regulation means not giving in to failures, not focusing on difficulties, and the ability to see the positive aspects of every situation.

Positive thinking is a psychological disposition conducive to ordering and organizing the perceived reality in such a way that, by triggering positive experiences – starting from enthusiasm and commitment, ending with hope – it allows us to act in such a way as to gain some benefits from the existing situation, to experience good experiences or even reduce pain (Majewska-Opielka, 2011, p. 88).

Children with an elevated level of self-regulation do not feel ashamed for an extended period because of their wrong answers – they can accept praise and attention. They have positive self-esteem.

Motivation is the internal desire to complete a task, strive to achieve a goal, and not give up despite failures and setbacks. It is necessary to change the child’s negative behaviour, stimulate positive attitudes, and achieve the desired results (Kossakowska, 2012). Motivation is children’s passion for learning new things and acquiring skills, even if not everything works out immediately. We distinguish positive and negative motivation, as well as internal and external (acquired) motivation. The first two types refer to positive and negative reinforcements and the desire to avoid the consequences of one’s actions, constituting an incentive to undertake specific activities. The division into internal and external motivation corresponds to satisfying one’s needs or taking specific actions based on orders, prohibitions, et cetera, concluded contracts (Kossakowska, 2012). Intrinsic motivation is the source of perseverance, which, according to theorists, is considered a “predictor of success” (Franken, 2006, p. 21). It is perseverance in striving for a goal and overcoming difficulties that becomes an incentive for continuous improvement and development, which is treated as a reward for the effort undertaken (Franken, 2006).

Empathy (emphasized many times by D. Goleman (2020) but now considered by him to be part of social awareness) is the ability to understand what others feel, recognize emotions, empathize with another person, and put oneself in their shoes. It is not

children causing pain to friends, not calling each other names; it is the belief that they will not fight with their friends because they would not be happy if someone hit them. It is also the ability to admit mistakes and say – “I am sorry.” It appreciates other people’s actions, sensitivity, and positive perception - the ability to praise a friend even if she is better than us and sincere congratulations to a friend who turned out to be better in a given competition. Empathy can be divided into three types: cognitive empathy (*i.e.*, understanding the emotional states of other people and the ability to see someone else’s perspective), emotional empathy (the ability to empathize with another person’s emotional states), and empathic concern (the ability to perceive someone’s interests, expectations and needs towards us (Goleman, 2017).

Within the components of emotional intelligence mentioned above (recall: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management), twelve skills and features that best show what EI is have been distinguished. These include emotional self-awareness (as part of self-awareness), emotional self-control, adaptability, achievement orientation, positive outlook (within self-management), empathy, organizational awareness (within social awareness) and influence, coaching and mentoring, conflict management, teamwork, inspirational leadership (as part of relationship management) (Goleman, Boyatzis, 2017).

K. Srivastava notes that “Salovey *et al.* have proposed three models of EI. The «ability model»,” focuses on the individual’s ability to process emotional information and use it to navigate the social environment. The “trait model” as developed by Konstantin Vasily Petrides *et al.*, “[...] encompasses behavioural dispositions and self-perceived abilities and is measured through self-report.” “The «mixed model» is a combination of both ability and trait EI. It defines EI as an array of skills and characteristics that drive leadership performance, as proposed by Goleman” (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004, pp. 197–215; Petrides, Pita, & Kokkinaki, 2007, pp. 273–89; Goleman, 1998, in: Srivastava, 2013, pp. 97–99).

As we can see, social skills are the ability to establish and maintain relationships with others, control one’s emotions in relationships with other people, problem-solving skills, cooperation, and “collision-free” relationships (Goleman, 1999). An important skill to acquire from an early age in children’s education, starting from the preschool period, when kindergarten is often the first such large group that the child is a member of and in which he or she has to function. They then learn to adapt to others, fulfil specific roles in a group, follow rules, perform tasks together, empathize, and share responsibilities. It also develops a sense of independence and responsibility. Thanks to the developed social competencies of children, among others, they make friends with peers, are included in the group, are accepted, and sometimes function as leaders. “Good social relationships always give a lot of satisfaction, a sense of emotional security, trust, increase self-esteem, and develop creativity and cognitive skills” (Lubowiecka, 2012, p. 5).

A child with high emotional intelligence is open in expressing his or her feelings, can name and distinguish them, and responds appropriately to the feelings of others. Such a person is characterized by respect for himself and others, objective self-assessment (knowledge of his strengths and weaknesses, advantages and disadvantages), and can admit guilt when necessary. Such a person is unafraid of challenges and copes with complex, unusual, and unpredictable situations. It is characterized by open communication with the environment and the courage to take new actions and challenges (Łada, 2011).

Emotional intelligence and learning

As already mentioned, emotions model our behaviour to a considerable extent. Thanks to them, we can willingly undertake new activities or stop them altogether; they regulate our relations with the environment. They can motivate us to do new activities, stimulating, pushing, and directing our activity, provided they are adequately controlled (Twardowska-Rajewska, 2003). It has been proven that people who have developed emotional skills are more satisfied with life and act effectively while maintaining the objectivity of their assessment and clarity of mind. “To date, numerous studies have shown that EI can help change employee attitudes and behaviours in jobs involving emotional demands by increasing job satisfaction and reducing job stress” (Wen, Huang, & Hou, 2019, p. 120; Miao, Humphrey, & Qian, 2017b, p. 177; Sanchez-Gomez, Bresso, 2020, p. 3; Miao, Humphrey, & Qian, 2017a, pp. 281–288, in: Bru-Luna et al., 2021, Martí-Vilar, Merino-Soto, Cervera-Santiago, 2021). Undoubtedly, EI can support children’s positive functioning in school conditions, where they are also exposed to stress, anxiety, and numerous tensions. Emotional intelligence can help them overcome educational difficulties and motivate them to continue working while maintaining good spirits. This can be confirmed by the words of Lluna María Bru-Luna, Manuel Martí-Vilar, César Merino-Soto, and José L. Cervera-Santiago, who point out that

[...] on the one hand, it has been found that certain psychological variables, including EI and social competence, are related to less psychological distress. On the other hand, the acquisition of emotional and social skills can serve to develop resilience, which is a protective variable against psychological distress (Bunce, Lonsdale, King, Childs, Bennie, 2019, pp. 2092–2111, in: Bru-Luna et al., 2021, Martí-Vilar, Merino-Soto, Cervera-Santiago, 2021).

It is commonly believed that this ability to become emotionally attuned in a specific situation is an equally important skill, next to cognitive intelligence, that is responsible for the functioning of our personality social functioning and influences the tasks and

goals we carry out. Importantly, emotional intelligence is not innate, *e.g.*, it is the result of our learning and experience and can be shaped all the time – but the earlier, the better.

What is essential in educating children due to their considerable emotionality is their polysensory development, rich in various types of sensory and emotional stimuli – so that thanks to various types of experiences, they slowly learn to express them appropriately, control them – and deal with them. It aims to fully utilize the intellectual potential of pupils by constantly stimulating their minds, discoveries, interests, and passions and learning tolerance, optimism, patience, and coping with difficulties and emerging problems. And all through joint action, play, dialogue, and coexistence (Dymara, 2012).

It was found that success in life is determined by three groups of factors: rich sensory environment – numerous sensory impressions during the child’s everyday functioning; freely exploring and experiencing the environment; as well as the presence of parents, time devoted to the child and positive answers to the questions they ask (Lotkowska, 2011). As Palena Neale (2020) says, “Certain EI qualities play into the top 10 vital skills for the future workforce, as defined by the World Economic Forum. Furthermore, 71% of hiring managers say they value high EI over IQ.” The author also points out, “As leaders, emotionally intelligent people are proven to be more effective. Research also says that, in terms of performance, EI is more important than IQ when people with equivalent academic backgrounds — say MBAs — are compared” (Neale, 2020). The above data confirms the role that emotional intelligence can play in the educational process, in the fight for school success, and more broadly – professional success, but also in life (private – taking into account the relationships and interactions established with other people).

Another confirmation of the importance of emotional intelligence on the way to achieving success (educational, professional) can be the words of D. Goleman, who emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence in the effective use of our cognitive skills and notes the relationship between what we feel and what we think. According to him, about 20 percent of the factors determining success are IQ-related. This means that 80 percent depends on other variables – including emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1997). It was concluded that “Ability EI has been linked to better academic performance [...] and may be particularly evident in humanities courses” (MacCann *et al.*, 2020, pp. 150–186, in: Robinson, Asad, Irvin, 2023, p. 1).

Taking the school perspective into account, it is worth sorting out the advantages of emotional intelligence, including better anger management, coping with failures, and coping with stress; better concentration and attention when performing tasks; persistence in striving for a goal; greater sensitivity and ability to listen and read the emotions of others; better recognition, naming, and understanding of experienced emotions; the ability to share, cooperate, and help others—less inappropriate behaviour

(e.g., aggression); greater responsibility; more frequent attempts to resolve conflicts and problems on their own; greater self-confidence and openness in contact with other children. (Goleman, 1999). The article by Olivier Serrat entitled “Understanding and developing emotional intelligence” reads:

By developing their emotional intelligence, individuals can become more productive and successful at what they do, and help others become more productive and successful too. The process and outcomes of emotional intelligence development also contain many elements known to reduce stress – for individuals and organizations – by moderating conflict; promoting understanding and relationships; and fostering stability, continuity, and harmony. Last but not least, it links strongly with concepts of love and spirituality (Serrat, 2017, pp. 329–339).

Failure to develop emotional intelligence may have many negative consequences in the form of low internal motivation in children, a chronic and constantly felt sense of uncertainty, and low value, which may be accompanied by constant anxiety and stress in constantly changing circumstances. Children who do not believe in their abilities may quickly become discouraged and afraid of taking on new challenges, resulting in withdrawal or a passive attitude (Kossakowska, 2012). In addition, they may tend to withdraw into themselves and show features of social maladjustment, manifesting themselves in alienation, lack of, or a small number of peer friendships, and a tendency to play and work alone. Other repercussions include problems with attention and thinking, difficulty concentrating, nervousness, aggressiveness, hyperactivity, short temper, and disobedience (Goleman, 1999).

Developed emotional intelligence does not guarantee educational success, but it contributes to achieving it. “Through emotions, we prepare children to explore the world properly, learn to count, write, and read [...]. When a child learns to acquire new knowledge with pleasure early in life, he will associate each new situation with something interesting and joyful” (Lotkowska, 2011, p. 23). As Hannah Owens points out, “While being book-smart might help you pass tests, emotional intelligence prepares you for the real world by being aware of the feelings of others as well as your feelings” (Cherry, 2024).

The role of the social environment in EI development

The role of parents and educators is invaluable in developing emotional intelligence. It has been proven that the family is the foundation for developing children’s personalities and plays a vital role in shaping their emotional attitudes. Every interaction

between parents and children is emotionally charged and influences the development of the child's worldview and emotional skills (Goleman, 1997). However, it is essential that adults recognize other people's emotional states before they start dealing with children's feelings, have empathy, and teach it to others because they are the models of emotional behaviour (Rojkowska, 2011). The values conveyed are not only words but, above all, deeds. It is a person's attitude towards himself, another person, and the surrounding reality (Michnik, Szulta, 2012). It is about practicing the values one preaches (Kruczkowska, 2012). As H. R. Schaffer writes:

No matter how strong genetic conditions underlie the emergence of new properties and to what extent they are responsible for the transition to a higher level of functioning, no abilities will be able to develop if the caregiver does not support, confirm and encourage the child to make efforts (Saramowicz, Wójcik-Zdyb, 2012, p. 54).

The counterbalance to the recommendations mentioned above is neglect, abuse, and child abuse. It can take many forms, from the more visible – physical ones (bruises) to the “more subtle” ones in the form of verbal aggression, *i.e.*, humiliation, degrading use of insults, as well as ridicule, embarrassment, etc. They often cause long-term traces in the child's emotional sphere and his thinking about themselves and functioning in social reality (Kwaśny, Kłobukowska, 2011). In the most common terms, parents and guardians' inappropriate emotional behaviour is disregard for the child's feelings, excessive indulgence, and lack of respect (Goleman, 1997). That is why it is so important that our actions and influences are well-thought-out and, above all, conscious.

Conversation is the foundation for shaping emotional attitudes. It is during this time that children's feelings are understood and accepted. We provide undeniable proof that he is essential by listening to the child and his problems until the end and being open and non-stigmatizing (Stępień-Nycz, 2012). It is free from denial and repression of what the child feels, but the child and their problems are treated seriously (Godlewska, 2013). It allows us to determine the causes of difficulties and the child's poor emotional state. Also, it allows us to jointly seek opportunities to change and improve the current state of affairs. Participants in the conversation learn to understand emotions and also take part in developing emotional resilience to cope with the most diverse and unusual situations in the future and overcome failures. Conversation is a kind of “scaffolding” between an adult and a child (Kuszak, 2013, p. 7). It must occur in a safe and child-friendly atmosphere, exemplifying trust and acceptance and confirming the sincere relationships between the entities participating (Zielińska, 2011). During it, the adult should not be afraid to express what he or she is learning to the child and to name the specific emotions he or she has to face. It is also a posi-

tive attitude and faith in the child despite difficulties, initial misunderstanding, and complexity of problems. It is positive reinforcement, making people aware of their causative power and motivating them to discover the world and consciously and actively participate in it (despite unusual, complex, and unexpected situations) (Majewska-Opiełka, 2011).

Another issue is clearly defining the rules of cooperation and everyday functioning between the child and adults. It is the clear and unambiguous setting of boundaries (and consistency in observing them – also by an adult [Zielińska, 2011]) and defining what is good (can and should be done) and what is wrong (should not be done). Rights and obligations are essential from the point of view of building a value system and, more generally, constitute the foundation of the educational process. They are usually accompanied by setting expectations for the child, which should not be too high to be still achievable by the child. It is provoking, initiating, and creating all kinds of situations (including those of a team nature) in which the child can take a step forward and achieve even the slightest success. This will allow him to strengthen his self-confidence and develop the ability to cooperate and cope with problems and difficult situations. It is worth it for an adult to appreciate every effort a child makes (Kossakowska, 2012) and motivate him to make further attempts and successively increase expectations towards himself. To constantly make attempts, gain new experiences, and improve skills (Lipowska, 2013).

Group games and activities are essential in children's emotional development, during which they can take on new roles, gain new experiences, and learn how to function in a social group (Dymara, 2012). In order, they should include recognizing and naming emotions, their impact on one's behaviour and that of other people, analysis of specific behaviours, their consequences and methods of controlling emotions (*e.g.*, dealing with anger), overcoming difficulties and resolving conflicts, as well as developing cooperation and empathy (Skwarka, 2010). Children's literature is also invaluable, and during reading it together, questions about the characters' feelings, conversations about their actions, and anticipation of the consequences and consequences of given events. Another idea is to create a feelings corner in the kindergarten, a place to share and calm emotions. To sum up,

Well-organized work and group work, attentiveness and cordiality of the educator have a kind of magical power – after some time, children renounce selfishness and complaining, they willingly cooperate, obey the principles of teamwork, praise not only their victories, and learn to notice the progress and talents of other children (Dymara, 2012, p. 32).

As L. María Bru-Luna, M. Martí-Vilar, C. Merino-Soto, and J. L. Cervera-Santiago say:

[...] from educational and business institutions and from family and community organizations it is necessary to promote activities, support and commitment towards actions oriented to EI under the consideration that this construct can be improved at any age and that it increases with experience (Bru-Luna et al., 2021, Martí-Vilar, Merino-Soto, Cervera-Santiago, 2021).

Conclusion

Emotional intelligence is one of the current topics related to a child's education and is part of the broadly understood issue of educational success. Already, Edward Lee Thorndike "in 1940 found that there are two types of intelligence, «intellective» and «nonintellective,» under the theory of intelligence quotient" (Thorndike, 1920, pp. 227–235). Since the 1990s, an increasing number of researchers have been focusing on this topic, wanting to determine its roles and significance, its usefulness in the process of development and upbringing of children and adolescents, as well as their functioning in adult life (Anand, 2019). Let us recall that emotional intelligence is: "[...] the ability to (a) perceive emotions, (b) use emotions to facilitate thought, (c) understand emotions, and (d) manage emotions, to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, 2004, p. 199, in: Issah, 2018, s. 2).

Most tasks that influence a child's emotional development occur almost constantly during everyday functioning at home, in the peer space, and in kindergarten. The most important thing is that children, with our help, gradually learn to get used to what they feel and to believe in themselves and their abilities, which will make their learning, cognitive development, and, consequently, educational and life success more enjoyable and more straightforward to be achieved by being guided by both the mind and the heart. So that, apart from themselves and their person, they can also see other people as an equal partner, see their potential and value, and learn tolerance and social kindness.

The discussed topic is crucial considering the functioning of children in the school space and sheds a different light on the category of broadly understood success (both educational and professional). It is not without reason that increasing attention is paid to the issues of understanding and the meaning of emotions, as well as to social contacts and integration. Over time, increased schools include TUS classes (social skills training), which pay special attention to the emotional sphere and social skills of children so that they can cope with the challenges of the modern world. Knowledge about emotional intelligence is challenging for all entities involved in the educational process – students, parents, and teachers. It is therefore important to spread knowledge about its role and impact on the life and fate of an individual, as well as to make teachers and parents aware (through training, workshops, and meetings) of what to do to teach these skills

to children successfully. They must realize that, apart from cognitive skills, a critical area influencing broadly understood educational success is emotional intelligence, the development of which is influenced by appropriately designed (engaging and liberating) educational activities, the atmosphere in the classroom, and the home space, open and honest communication with others, cooperation skills, as well as a generally understood environment conducive to experiencing and expressing emotions. Classes developing emotional and social competencies (such as the above-mentioned social skills training) should become an integral part of the educational offer of facilities and institutions aimed at the care and development of the youngest.

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