

POSSIBILITIES FOR MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICTS AMONG PRE-SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN BY APPLYING METHODS OF WORK WITH FAIRY-TALES

*Nijolė Bražienė, Rita Nemaniūnienė
Šiauliai University, Lithuania*

Abstract

The article introduces the qualitative research results of the pedagogical experiment which is aimed at the assessment of the impact of work with fairy-tales in development of pre-school age children's ability to constructively solve arising conflicts among children. It was found out that fairy-tales could be the means for control of conflicts among pre-school age children when the content of fairy-tales and the process of their discussion were purposively oriented towards educated children's ability to constructively manage conflict situations and strengthen social skills. When applying methods of the work with fairy-tales, it is possible to correct the attitude of children with problematic behaviour towards themselves and their relations with friends, to make impact on the internal condition of a child, i.e. to implement better self-assessment for those who are insufficiently aware of their role in group as well as to help those whose self-assessment is too high to see themselves from the point of view of others; positive changes of interpersonal social and communicative abilities (solution of problems, conflicts, initiative, tolerance, respect to each other etc.) were noticed in joint activities.

Key words: conflict, pre-school age child, fairy-tale.

Introduction

Recently, taunting has been one of the most burning issues in comprehensive schools. In Lithuania, seemingly much attention is paid to the purpose of elimination of this phenomenon; however, the volume of decrease of taunting is not so quite obvious (*Smurto mokyklose paplitimo, formų, priežasčių, prevencijos ir pagalbos priemonių tyrimas*, 2008). It is observed that taunting occurs due to postponed reactions towards conflicts arising among children. As Robichaud (2007) states, already in a pre-school group conflicts can turn into sneering starting at a subtle scale, usually by isolation, usually accompanied with taunting, abuse. If adults do not interfere, such actions in primary forms can become more diverse and painful.

Of course, according to Thériault (2009), it is impossible (and not needed) to eliminate conflicts – throughout the life a child will face such situations due to different wishes, needs, opinions. It is not always a must to strive to avoid conflicts, however, it should be learned to properly react to them: in many cases, *conflicts* can be *managed* – solved constructively when

choosing a suitable strategy for solution. In this case conflicts will be not as much the source of quarrels, anger, and stress but rather as striving to change something.

Šidlauskaitė states, around the third year of age, “a child enters the *temper tantum* (uncontrolled anger) period, features of inadequate emotions and behaviour become visible and get more intensive in the pre-school age” (quoted from Bražienė, 2009, p. 290). Thus, close attention is necessary in this period for development of the ability to constructively solve conflict situations: “to teach children independently manage conflicts is a great heritage for them because this ability will secure throughout lifetime and, no doubt, will prevent even some problems related to violence, crime etc.” (Thériault, 2009, p. 20)

No doubt, children’s lack of social skills influences arising conflict situations among pre-school age pupils: they are usually provoked by children who are not able to/cannot wait for their turn, share a toy, follow certain regulations, make a negative decision, collaborate, ask to be involved in a game etc. Even though successful formation of social skills depends on inborn capacities (Daniels, Stanfford, 2000), perhaps the most important attention of educators should be paid to development of independence of children when teaching them to manage conflicts. Pedagogues of pre-school educational institutions can employ the national programme for development of abilities for coping with difficulties entitled “Zipio draugai” (“Zippy’s Friends”). However, on the one hand, this curriculum is not compulsory in pre-school education institutions; on the other hand, financial capacities of not all institutions allow pedagogues to take part in these activities. No doubt, “The Curriculum for Development of Life Skills” (“Gyvenimo įgūdžių ugdymo” programa (2004)) is useful too; it offers worked out exercises developing various abilities that meet the peculiarities of living of children of this particular age phase. There are no other innovative educational technologies. Thus, one of the aspects of relevance of the analysed issue is to search for opportunities and ways how to achieve some effective results by employing minimal educational input when helping pre-school age children to self-develop social skills and also to master the specificity of management of conflicts.

One of such opportunities is purposeful application of methods of work with fairy-tales in the process of child’s education because, as a child’s psychologist Bettelheim states, fairy-tales teach children to think and solve many problems that raise concern even though they are not being consciously perceived (quoted from Makulavičienė, 2004). Herm (2004) also suggests searching for underlying “healing powers” within fairy-tales that could be used not only in therapy but in pedagogy as well.

In Lithuania, a single research still has been carried out; it aimed at finding out the impact of fairy-tales on tempering manifestations of aggressive behaviour of pre-school age pupils (Bražienė, Mockienė, 2008). Exactly this research emphasized that analysis of fairy-tales and additional works decreased the features of aggressive behaviour of children within a minimal period of the educational experiment (ibid).

The research problem. Under-evaluated possibilities for management of conflicts among pre-school age children by applying methods of work with fairy-tales.

The research object is management of conflicts among pre-school age pupils.

The research aim is to assess the impact of work with fairy-tales in development of pre-school age children’s ability to constructively solve arising conflicts.

Organization of the research and methods

Empirical research on the development of pre-school age children’s skills of management of conflicts by applying methods of work with fairy-tales lasted within the period February–May 2010. In total, 19 children at the age of six took part in the research.

The following methods have been applied in the empirical research:

The pedagogical experiment “An Hour with a Fairy-Tale” was applied for the purpose to estimate the efficiency of the curriculum for the development of pre-school age children’s abilities to manage conflicts when applying methods of work with fairy-tales. Classes lasted for a period of four months, once per week. The pedagogical experiment was carried out in the *linear way*, i.e. when the control group is not formed throughout the research. According to the statements by Bitinas (1998), it aimed at implementation and scientific reasoning of the introduced project as the alternative for development of pre-school age children’s skills of management of conflicts when applying methods of work with fairy-tales.

Case analysis was applied in order to qualitatively assess the impact of the experimental curriculum on personality changes of the surveyed. The results of observation were recorded in minutes.

Theoretical background

Communication for children of pre-school age is very important. When starting maintaining friendship, they try to adjust actions, play common games, reveal themselves to others, successfully solve conflicts, etc. As Monkevičienė (2004) states, researches that have been carried out show that children while playing get involved into conflicts from 10 to 20 times. The most peculiar conflict situations among children: want to press one’s opinion on others; want the same toy that is being played with by another child; want to be a leader of the game, but others object; do not follow the rules of a game; molest, annoy; accidentally hit or push. Usually, conflict situations “are caused without conscious children’s striving for that. Everything starts accidentally, because of careless hitting, pushing (Bražienė, Mockienė, 2008). Even though such situations can last for a short time, still part of conflicts are being solved by applying force: hitting, kicking, shouting, pushing, taking a toy away, ruining a construction etc. It should be noted that unpopular children among contemporaries can be singled out in the period of pre-school age – these are outcasts whose socialization or communication abilities are lower than those of others: they are not able to make impact on others by applying peaceful means, cannot collaborate, their abilities of playing are insufficient, they are less empathic, cannot control own actions (Monkevičienė, 2004). The need for communication of such children remains unsatisfied if a pedagogue does not help a child to gain needed abilities, to maintain relations with others, does not teach to recognize conflict situations and solve them properly. In order to teach a child to manage conflicts, first of all, with regard to child’s individuality, one’s independence should be developed: “To be independent means to be capable of recognizing own needs and meeting them properly” (Thériault, 2009, p. 18). Thériault (ibid) singles out five forms of independence that are related to various areas of child’s development: *social independence, emotional independence, motor independence, cognitive independence and moral independence*.

When bearing in mind the singled out forms of child’s independence which are important in finding out children’s abilities to recognize conflict situations and properly manage them to be developed, it should be stated that methods of work with fairy-tales can be quite a contributing means in this work (Table 1).

Table 1. The reasoning of development of children's independence by fairy-tales

Peculiarities of a fairy-tale	Formed value attitudes	Developed abilities
A fairy-tale encourages experiencing various emotions together with its characters, it stimulates sensitiveness towards a human being, nature, animals.	To be open, show empathy; to acknowledge and respect rights of other people, to tolerate behaviour, opinion.	To feel and understand oneself, other people, groups of people.
A fairy-tale can render an example of proper behaviour in a certain situation	To act fairly and assuming responsibly.	To foresee the models of own intentions, actions, behaviour as well as the consequences of actions.
Identification with a fairy-tale hero	To be persistent, pushing, showing initiative.	To understand what helps to communicate, collaborate, successfully act, feel good.
Interrelations of characters	To be a community member. To take care of others, to wish to be needed.	To share abilities, ideas, to solve problems together. To take part in joint activities when making decisions.
Happy ending	To believe and trust in oneself and others, to constructively solve problems, strive for a dialogue, reciprocal understanding.	To consider own moods, behaviour, intentions. To assess and control own thoughts, actions.

As Molicka (2010) states, a fairy-tale is the closest to the world view acceptable to a child and it helps understand important "things", follow various models of behaviour, perceive moral values; fairy-tales are the pieces that form child's personality because a child usually identifies oneself with characters of a fairy-tale, follows their moral attitudes, ways of thinking and acting. It is important for children that their heroes when facing difficulties do not despair but "continue going along the road of maturity and overcome occurring tasks by applying their spiritual and physical powers" (Herm, 2004, p. 100).

From the educational aspect, everyday life ideas being promoted by such fairy-tales are highly valuable:

1. *The surrounding world is animate, anyone may talk to us at any moment.* This idea is important in forming the sense of care, fostering, duty and responsibility.
2. *Everyone surrounding us is able to independently act and has the right to personal life.* This idea is important in forming the preparation to accept other one as one is.
3. *Polarization of evil and good, the victory of good.* The idea is important for maintenance of inner courage and striving for good.
4. *What easy comes, easy goes.* The idea is important in forming the striving for the goal and development of will.
5. *We are surrounded with many helpers; however, they help only then when we are not capable to cope with occurring difficulties ourselves.* This idea makes impact on formation of the sense of independence and trust in others (Зинкевич-Евстигнеева, 1998).

Research results and their interpretation

The programme of the pedagogical experiment "An Hour with a Fairy-Tale" and its implementation. The main difference between folk and literary fairy-tales is that folk tales render the "concentrated" wisdom tested throughout life experience in the metaphor form, whereas literary fairy-tales in a more concrete language reveal and develop single humanistic

values, perception of which is also important in child's understanding of the world. When working with children of the pre-school age, it is advised to choose literary fairy-tales (Ермолаева, 2001).

Themes of fairy-tales selected for the experiment, the main idea of the pieces were adjusted to relevant issues of the process of socialization of children, directed towards perception of emotions, recognition of conflict situations, development of skills for conflict management, e.g. attention paid to us by others should be acknowledged and those who help us, exhilarate, please us should not be forgotten ("Summer Colours"); to ask for help is not a shame ("A Garden Is in Bloom"); it is important to see and recognize a sad, unhappy person, do not reject others ("Cheese"); a polite person is pleasant for others, one's company is desired ("The Tea Club"); everyone is exceptional for something but not better or worse than others ("Fruit"); one should trust in oneself ("A Hedgehog and the Sea"); a friend should not be left in misfortune ("The Snow Queen"); one should not be self-estimated, everyone is beloved, respected as one is ("The Frog Went Travelling").

Much attention was paid to practising regulation of behaviour, strengthening communication skills which were related to the content of the fairy-tale listened to. Children who are ignored by their contemporaries, who experience sneering, who are not brave, do not know how to overcome a conflict situation do not dare to ask for help – they had an opportunity to identify themselves with characters of the fairy-tales. Such identification as if allowed children to concretize their experienced fears, to better understand their own wishes. It also helped to strengthen self-esteem, encouraged positive thinking: several characters of fairy-tales experienced fear or difficult emotional situations which likely could end in a sad tone – however, the end of every fairy-tale showed that hero's courage, resolution, asking for assistance could help to find the right solution in difficult situations.

For enshrining politeness, goodness, empathy of children, the fairy-tales "The Tea Club" and "Summer Colours" were suitable very much. In the first fairy-tale it is shown what discomfort was caused by an ill-mannered metal cup to other club's members. Children "learnt" from this fairy-tale that one should behave politely, in good manners everywhere and always, that only polite communication with others, sincerity form friendly interrelations. In the fairy-tale "Summer Colours", it is told that it is important to accept attention paid by others, that those who exhilarate, please should not be forgotten; that one should not be irrelevant to other people, should not be afraid to show goodness, attention, understanding.

Possible forms of sneering among children (slander, isolation, rejection) are partly reflected in the fairy-tale "Cheese". The metaphor of a "tied cheese" as if informs that the cheese does not see possibilities to change its position (and a child who is rejected would not be the outcast if one knew how to behave in order not to stay aside) – the cheese needs help which, fortunately, appears. Heroes of the fairy-tales "Fruit" and "The Frog Went Travelling" face problems of communication with others due to overestimated self-value.

During "Hours with a Fairy-Tale", attention of children is driven to heroes' ability to find the solution in a complicated situation, to solve the conflict or avoid it. Some heroes of fairy-tales find solutions themselves, others receive help from outside. In a complicated situation for children, also, "someone from outside" can help.

By employing the pedagogical observation under natural conditions, positive changes in children's social and communicative abilities (solution of problems, conflicts; initiative, tolerance, respect to each other, etc.) through joint activities were estimated. It is likely that experienced images of the fairy-tales encouraged positive children's activeness, the wish to be like those positive characters (smart, self-reliable, helpful, striving for good, beauty and truth), and vice versa – to not identify with those whose behaviour causes unpleasant feelings to others. During discussion on the fairy-tales, when singling out moral meanings of a fairy-tale, children perceived the humanistic values, pro-social norms of behaviour that were rendered (Table 2).

Table 2. The project of the pedagogical experiment “An Hour with a Fairy-Tale”

No	The topic of activities	Main activities	General characteristics of involvement of children into activities
1.	Introductory class	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of upcoming joint activities 2. I acknowledge and recognize a conflict situation: <i>can I recognize a conflict situation?</i> 	Children get involved into joint activities with difficulty, do not decide to express their opinion, do not motivate their answers to a question “Did the conflict arise?” on the ground of the told story. A prompt suggesting possible answer variants by an experimenter is needed.
2.	Feelings – Our Helpers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A dynamic fairy-tale: A. Gribachev “A Hare and a Spring” 2. I acknowledge and recognize a conflict situation: <i>proper and improper ways to control emotions</i> 3. “A Collage of Feelings” 	They enjoyed a non-traditionally told fairy-tale, a creative task to find various emotions experienced by people in magazines’ images (angry, jolly, sad, feared), to cut them and paste; however, quarrels are not avoided, the rules are not followed, etc. Children do not get involved into a discussion.
3.	To Ask for Help – Not a Shame	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listening to and discussion of a fairy-tale “A Garden Is in Bloom” by P. Mašiotas 2. I acknowledge and recognize a conflict situation: <i>respectful and non-respectful behaviour</i> 3. Group creative activities: a group drawing “A Happy Apple Tree” (some draw an apple tree in gouache on a big sheet of paper, others – cut blossoms from a colour paper and stick them with glue) 	Part of children try to get involved into discussions Few boys are not able to concentrate their thoughts, feelings. Those children who do not dare to talk are encouraged to express their thoughts, feelings. Some problems of communication in the group become obvious. Children’s interest in hours with fairy-tales is observed.
4.	We All Are Important and Needed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listening to and discussion of a fairy-tale “Fruit” by K. Kasparavičius 2. I acknowledge and recognize a conflict situation: <i>anger</i> 3. Individual activities: a drawing “How Do I Look Like When I Am Angry” 	It is observed that children are waiting for an hour with a fairy-tale. Thoughts are expressed braver, feelings are shared. All children get involved into the discussion, except A. who is waiting to be encouraged. G. pleasantly surprised – a highly reserved boy (previous attempts to get closer to the child were unsuccessful) started talking about himself. It becomes obvious that child’s self-value is low, he keeps many hard feelings inside. Conversations with boy’s mother are maintained, it is being commonly searched for the ways to help G.
5.	Let’s Not Reject Others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listening to and discussion of a fairy-tale “Cheese” by K. Kasparavičius 2. I acknowledge and recognize a conflict situation: <i>sadness</i>. 3. Group work “A Gift for Cheese” 	The fairy-tale seemed to children very funny; however, when talking about feelings, especially the sadness of the cheese, behaviour of the children altered – they became more serious and analyzed the case of the cheese as a real event. T. who has never talked about father’s death, today shared his experienced feelings for the first time. Other important “event” of this class – children initiated the topic for creative work themselves (<i>the experimenter had prepared a different task but gave up her idea and supported the children’s initiative</i>): to give socks as a present (to draw and cut out of paper) to the cheese. No conflicts arose regarding sharing of activities: G. (sad, reserved, feeling underestimated) chose to draw the brave girl, T. (grieving about father’s death) made the application of the cheese, other children – the application of socks.

Continued Table 2

6.	What Is Said by Our Small Hearts	<p>1. A dynamic fairy-tale: H. C. Andersen "The Snow Queen" (I).</p> <p>2. A discussion about a heart: explanation of sayings <i>a heart of gold, a wide heart, a heart of stone, a heart of ice</i></p> <p>3. Individual creative work: "I Draw My Own Heart"</p>	<p>All children wish to tell their opinions, bravely express own thoughts, share experienced feelings in the verbal form. During the dynamic fairy tale all of them tried to avoid the touch of "a fairy stick" – nobody wanted to become angry. However, those who were touched by "a stick" sincerely attempted to perform the assigned task – to become angry, irritable and to supplement this condition by a facial expression, gestures, moves, angry words.</p> <p>After the class, children asked to repeat separate exercises of the fairy-tale.</p> <p>Hearts of all children are merry, except the one of T. As the child wished, there was an individual conversation with him on how the father insults by calling ill-names. Some children repeated drawing hearts in order to "bring" impressions of that day home.</p>
7.	Let's Cherish Each Other – Let's Cherish Friendship	<p>1. A dynamic fairy-tale: H. C. Andersen "The Snow Queen" (II)</p> <p>2. A conversation on what strengthen interrelations among friends, help in not leaving a friend despite difficulties, disaccords, disappointments</p> <p>3. Individual work: creation of fairy-tales about flowers</p>	<p>The fairy-tale raised a great interest, children were anxiously waiting for the continuation for the whole week: were considering what happened to fairy-tale's characters, prognosticated culmination of events, talked much on hearts (golden, stone), drew them and gave as presents to mothers, friends, the experimenter. When choosing the most favourite flower (artificial) for individual creative work, each child competed to be the first, but still tried to follow the set rules: to wait for the turn, later – to attentively listen to a friend, do not interrupt one, do not comment.</p>
8.	Our Beautiful Dreams	<p>1. A dynamic fairy-tale "A Hedgehog and the Sea"</p> <p>2. I acknowledge and recognize a conflict situation: <i>joy</i></p> <p>3. Individual work: a drawing "My Dream"</p>	<p>Children become calmer, able to concentrate and retain attention.</p> <p>R. is especially interested in the fairy-tale. Behaviour of E. changes towards better (is able to listen to, manifestations of inadequate behaviour decreased). G. gets more open – this child who previously was reserved and trying to dissociate himself from others willingly expresses his thoughts.</p>
9.	I Am What I Am	<p>1. A dynamic fairy-tale "The Frog Went Travelling" by V. M. Garshin</p> <p>2. I acknowledge and recognize a conflict situation: <i>pride</i></p> <p>3. Individual creative work: "A Little Frog"</p>	<p>Ž. was worried whether children know how to fold frogs and suggested her assistance.</p> <p>Children are anxiously waiting for "the fairy-tale day", guess about the fairy-tale to be listened to. They seriously and sincerely perform creative tasks. They willingly discuss, everyone bravely expresses own thoughts, opinion, are attentive, tolerant, disciplined.</p>
10.	What Would Be it?..	<p>1. Listening to the fairy-tale "The Frog Went Travelling" (repeated without game elements)</p> <p>2. Analysis of fairy-tale situations: <i>What would be if...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>a little frog met Red Riding Hood on its journey?</i> • <i>a travelling frog met the Frog Queen?</i> 	<p>All children got involved into the creative process very actively: modelled possible consequences to the situations, while supplementing, continuing each other's ideas. They are able to listen to a friend, wait for the turn. They concentrate attention well. A. who is bound to be reserved communicates more openly; behaviour of the most conflict children – R., Ž., E. and N. – gets obviously better: in everyday activities of the group their attempts to control the unwanted behaviour were surprising, moreover, these boys notice also those who behave not according to the rules set by the group. Remarks are expressed calmly.</p>

Continued Table 2

11.	Think with Your Own Head	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listening to and discussion of a fairy-tale “A Dreadful Story” by K. Kasparavičius 2. I acknowledge and recognize a conflict situation: <i>fear</i> 3. Individual work: a drawing “New Adventures of Balls” 	<p>Children’s mood is excellent, the atmosphere of intercommunication is cosy. They actively talk about their experiences; follow set rules, remind them to a friend who “forgot” with tact.</p> <p>Children’s relaxation is felt after they share unpleasant experiences.</p>
12.	Is Fear so Dreadful Indeed?..	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listening to and discussion of a fairy-tale “A Mouse and a Monster” by K. Kasparavičius 2. I acknowledge and recognize a conflict situation: <i>fear</i> 3. Collective creation of continuation of the fairy-tale 	<p>Children created the continuation of the fairy-tale with great enthusiasm – they supplemented each other, suggested own ideas (also, they were highly attentive to experimenters writing of their every idea). The motives of strong friendship, attention, responsibility, gratitude appeared at once in the continuation of the fairy-tale: <i>A mouse was no longer afraid of a vacuum cleaner. He started friendship with a she mouse and they became good friends. They went travelling around the wide world. When travelling, the vacuum cleaner protected the she mouse from threats. They found a house, a magic box. They opened the magic box and saw a magic golden stone. They thought they were rich; however, electricity disappeared and the vacuum cleaner could no longer function. The vacuum cleaner became sad, the she mouse became sad. She tried to fix maintenance of electricity but was not able to and called for help – an electrician who was an acquaintance of the she mouse’s friend. And the vacuum cleaner started functioning again. The she mouse was happy that electricity maintenance was fixed. She gave some flowers and that golden stone to the electrician. They lived well and happily and loved each other and did not let others hurt anyone of them.</i> When analyzing the fairy-tale, children were offered to name the best own traits. For the first time, G. acknowledged: “I love myself”, and R. – “I am gifted”.</p>
13.	It Is Not Pleasant beside the Uncultured	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listening to and discussion of a fairy-tale “The Tea Club” by K. Kasparavičius 2. I acknowledge and recognize a conflict situation: <i>respectful and non-respectful behaviour</i> 3. Collective creation of continuation of the fairy-tale 	<p>When both listening to the fairy-tale and creating its continuation, children were highly involved, experienced the moods, feelings, behaviour of the characters. Children did not start condemning the metal cup – they drew the assumption that perhaps nobody taught that cup how to behave well and mannerly, maybe it did not know how to behave; however, when learning it can correct its behaviour: <i>They all went away angry and left it alone. They did not maintain friendship with the uncultured cup anymore, and that cup was sad. And then it tried to change: to eat beautifully, mannerly, do not spill tea anymore, do not crumble and champ at the table. It found alike friends. It found the friend of the tea club too and asked them pardon for ill-behaviour. It even said that it learnt from mistakes. Since then, they accepted it and they became friends and even found more friends. They were: the red, blue, motley, with birds, light blue, dark blue, with butterflies, with hearts, with tiny cars, with diverse stripes, violet. And that cup dyed itself in order to be beautiful and it looked beautiful. Now, at the tea club, they all drank tea, went swimming, in for sports, beautifully ate biscuits, outside they saw many flowers smelling fine, also, they saw birds, they stayed outside in rain under umbrellas and they all danced at the tea club.</i></p>

Continued Table 2

14.	Let's Be Grateful	1. Listening to and discussion of a fairy-tale 'Summer Colours' by D. Žilaitytė 2. I acknowledge and recognize a conflict situation: <i>disappointment</i> 3. Individual work: <i>a drawing for summer</i>	The fairy-tale moved everyone so much that they asked to repeat it a couple of times. Children wished to make the summer happy – they put much effort when drawing (four children drew for the second time because the first one was not successful). They talk about their experienced feelings without restrictions, talk not only during the special hours, are able to name them, anticipate conflict situations; properly manage emotions.
15.	I Can Recognize a Conflict Situation	1. I acknowledge and recognize a conflict situation: <i>analysis of conflict situations in stories being told</i> 2. Individual creation of stories including conflict situations when choosing an appropriate way of solution	All children easily and quickly get involved into joint activities, express their opinion without restriction, give motivated answers to the question "Did the conflict arise?" on the base of the story. Prompt variants of answers from the experimenter are no longer needed.
16.	The Final Class "Magic Lessons of Feelings"	1. "A Sand Fairy-Tale" on feelings when using figures: T. D. Zinkevič-Jevstignejeva's "A Magic Land of Feelings" 2. Reflection on classes	Children listened to the fairy-tale with great interest, friendly distributed roles among themselves for staging (nobody was "disadvantaged"). Examples of children's reflections: <i>I enjoyed playing the fairy-tale game very much; I enjoyed too; Everything was so interesting; I found out much about anger and what should be done when being angry; I enjoyed playing the game of the fairy-tale "The Snow Queen"; I enjoyed all fairy-tales very much; Also, I liked all handworks; I enjoyed conversations; We were taught to speak, not be afraid to talk; That you may tell that you are angry, it is not necessary to beat, show anger to others.</i>

The content of the pedagogical experiment's "An Hour with a Fairy-Tale" project has been worked out on the base of methodical recommendations: Hoffman, Roggenwallner, 2005; Schiller, Вургант, 2004; Thériault, 2009; Грабенко, Зинкевич-Евстигнеева, Фролов, 2002; Капская, Мирончик, 2006; Сибли, 2005; Стищенко 2006.

Expression of child's personality changes: case analysis. Efficiency of the pedagogical experiment was assessed with regard to behaviour changes of the most conflict children noticed in everyday activities in the group. Possible reasons for conflict behaviour were anticipated with regard to child's family life situation, character of education and parents' communication with a child in family.

Simas¹ grows in a full family. Parents have obtained higher education. He has a sister who is two years younger. Simas is very agile, unwillingly obeys rules set in the group, likes to be a leader over peers, sometimes cheats when playing, seldom smiles, unwillingly takes part in educational activities. The boy is alive, keen on sports, likes puzzle, dice games. Meanwhile other activities needing concentration of attention, such as hours for discussions-conversations, logical exercises and other purposive educational activities do not interest him. It was noticed that Simas does not trust his abilities quite much when performing works in fine art: even though he evaluates his own pieces positively, the child often needs "another sheet of paper" because he starts everything from the beginning. Simas almost never plays alone and, until he makes a conflict situation, is liked by friends. Usually, Simas is the initiator of conflict situations, can push or hit a peer without care. It was noticed that some children please Simas just in order to avoid conflicts.

Simas has a linguistic and speech disorder which obviously makes impact on child's communication with contemporaries, diminishes his self-esteem. His mother, when the child is present, always emphasizes his improper pronunciation of sounds, absence of interest in reading (because there some children in the group who already can read words). His father also underestimates child's endeavours: depreciates pieces of fine art, achievements and enjoys repeating the following phrase: "*You will not need much, graduation of 10 forms will be enough – you will just pass them*". It is obvious that parents simply do not accept the child as he is. Perhaps child's average abilities (not especially outstanding child among peers) do not meet the expectations of parents. Before the pedagogical experiment, Simas had little interest in various handworks, it was hard for him to sit quietly and listen to the text / fairy-tale being read. When joint group activities started, he used to wander in his thoughts or talk to peers, squirm. When observing the child during the experiment, the impression was formed that it was needed for Simas to talk. Usually, after listening to a fairy-tale, exactly he used to be the first to say his opinion, start discussions. Creation/recreation of fairy-tales (different endings, further events or "*What could be if...*") as well as creative works related to the topic of a fairy-tale received the most attention from Simas.

During "*Hours with a Fairy-Tale*", children were given complete creative freedom, their creative pieces were unconditionally accepted as perfect (parents were forbidden to comment pieces of their children, compare with pieces of other children while emphasizing "*imperfection of own child*"), a thought, an idea expressed by every child were considered as highly valuable. Perhaps such "strategy" woke the sense of Simas' self-esteem up. The boy started valuing the experimenter as a person who understands him best: during all "*Hours with a Fairy-Tale*", Simas used chances to sit next to her. During the experiment, the child became friendlier, "arranged" less conflict situations, more cases appeared when he said "*I am sorry*".

Several thoughts expressed by Simas (highlighted in the italic font): Tell how do you behave when being afraid? *I shrink*. How does a disappointed person behave? *One wishes that someone would help him*. What helps to become exhilarated? *When someone says to you: "You are good, smart"* (it can be anticipated that the child lacks sincere attention, acknowledgement, recognition of his achievements, staying together).

¹ Children's names were changed.

Naturally, all problems of Simas cannot be solved with fairy-tales – parents' wish to sincerely accept the child as he is – is a must. However, exactly during the experiment, fairy-tales “allowed” seeing the child's problems and, what is the most important, they “showed” to adults what the child was lacking. Hence, it can also be assumed that Simas mastered most of the fairy-tale-related lessons and was able to change in his behaviour at least the part which was the obstacle for constructive communication with other children and to feel good in the group too.

Vilma is the only child in the family. Her mother obtained higher education, her father – high education. The daughter was born to mature parents, i.e. they both were over 35, perhaps, that is why adults more often obeyed Vilma in the family. The girl is brave, active, striving to dominate everywhere, leading over contemporaries, “selective” to friends, expresses often changing moods, likes diminishing abilities and achievements of other children. She is best at communication with adults.

Vilma is a gifted girl: reads well, succeeds in logical exercises, easily performs arithmetical tasks, has exceptional memory, excellently acts. The girl takes part in various activities of non-formal education (dances, sings, participates in exhibitions, contests) etc. Vilma can be characterized as follows: she will fit where placed; but still communication with peers causes problems for the girl. This could be illustrated with some children's thoughts about Vilma: *I have experienced (sadness) when Vilma does not want to make friends with me; I am also sad when I do not succeed in handworks or drawing and when Vilma and Indrė say that I do not draw fine.* The girl is very proud for she can and is able to do more than others; however, she also diminishes others too. It is obvious that due to such personal traits Vilma had no friends in the group, except one: if someday the best Vilma's friend was absent the girl used to play alone.

Even though Vilma cannot fluently communicate with children, she enjoys group and collective activities, is always active, shows her initiative and if not being invited gets upset, obviously expresses dissatisfaction and, as if worrying that others can do it better, emphasises that *she* can do it *too*.

The described experimental common problematic situation of Vilma essentially meets the definition of a gifted child: when not providing needed conditions, gifted children usually play alone because there are not many people with whom they could share their thoughts. They feel being different and worry for failing to get adjusted. As their mind is more mature than others', they search for those who are older (Vilkeliėnė, 2003).

Other reason why Vilma has problems of communication with children, perhaps, – overestimated highlighting of girls achievements by parents (especially her father), her obvious worshipping when the girl is present. It can be anticipated that the child is simply afraid to disappoint her parents and allow them notice that, besides advantages, she has some “disadvantages” as well; the child tries to establish her “strength” with demonstrative behaviour, excessive boasting etc.: according to Monkeviėienė (2003), a child strives to be praised, to be acknowledged by an adult that one is good, excellent, worth loving <...> a child who acts demonstratively needs support very much. The probability that a child who always demands attention feels the lack of something is also maintained by Dreikurs and Soltz (2007). According to their opinion, such child thinks that if not receiving attention one will be worthless and will not find own place in life.

When observing the girl during the experiment, the impression that Vilma was constantly striving for acknowledgement of her importance was formed. Perhaps, this informs about her fear to stay “behind” other children for a little while. During the pedagogical experiment, Vilma sincerely expressed her thoughts, even though sometimes some time had to pass until she would start talking. It was noticed that during initial classes, she usually used to speak as

one of the last children, but she had difficulties in expressing thoughts – it seemed that the girl could hardly step over a barrier. However, as the experiment proceeded further, the girl gradually managed to express her thoughts, name feelings more fluently, she began assessing other children's works positively, e.g. *You have beautifully drawn a butterfly; Is it a Cinderella? Pretty; I will help you to write this word correctly.* This suggests that during hours on fairy-tales Vilma was learning (and learnt quite much) to perceive, understand herself and other children – perhaps not as “clever” as she was; that is why almost no sneering directed towards other children was heard at the end of the experiment.

On the ground of thoughts expressed by Vilma during discussion of fairy-tales, one can presume that the girl sensitively reacts to how other children assess her, even though she is not very much willing to make friends with all of them; that she needs to be acknowledged by other children, needs warm communication. In order for Vilma to achieve this, without hurting others, she was being carefully encouraged to help friends while presenting various tasks requiring constructive collaboration. At the end of the experiment, the conclusion was drawn stating that Vilma was capable to cope with her problems, just insightful assistance of a pedagogue was needed to support of girl's interests as well as encouragement to develop own talent and social abilities of collaboration with parents were needed.

Joris is the middle child in the family. His sister is three years older and his brother is one year younger. His mother obtained secondary education, his father – higher. Joris is not brave, speaks little, does not trust others, usually is reserved, not showing high interest in educational activities and group games (a pedagogue who wishes to raise boy's interest must try hard), usually starts playing in a small group of children (2–3 children), but quickly retreats. He is interested in cars, other technology. He tries to finish tasks, creative works as quick as possible, despite the final result. The child has a linguistic and speech disorder.

Joris avoids conflict situations: anticipating their threat he just quickly retreats and starts colouring in a colouring-book. Perhaps, due to inability (avoidance) to communicate, the boy is not very much liked by peers. Still, Joris should not be characterized as an *outcast* because other children invite him to their games.

Lack of independence skills might be one of possible reasons causing communication problems for Joris; he does not trust his own abilities: the child as if makes attempts, creates, but it seems to him to be too difficult – he would like someone to help him. As Dreikurs and Soltz (2007, p. 167) state, “when growing, a child wishes to try to do something for oneself and others. However, such one's wish can be destroyed by fear, self-defence and service of parents. In such a case, courage is taken away from a child and one quickly masters the value of own weakness. A child decides that one cannot do anything, treats oneself as a loser, does not understand own possibilities.” Joris' mother does the wrong thing by excessive care of children, tries to do everything instead of them. It is complicated that the mother does not react to suggestions of a class tutor to allow the child be more independent, does not perceives that, in Dreikurs' and Soltz's words (2007, p. 166), “we too often and insistently thrust own assistance for a child and do not consider that this is no longer needed”, that independence is not an indiscrete, hardly measurable ability encompassing many simplest actions” (Thériault, 2009, p.18).

“*An Hour with a Fairy-Tale*” was very interesting for Joris: he very quickly and seriously got involved into these activities; previously avoiding openness, he started talking much about himself. Exactly during the experimental activities, it was found out about his low self-assessment, many accumulated hard feelings, e.g. Now, put your right hand on the heart's side and listen to, what does it say? *That I am sad.* Were there any situations when you felt like outcasts? *When they say that you are bad.*

Joris' thoughts of a similar character encouraged the experimenter to search for help for the child. One more time she spoke with boy's mother, explained her that such hyper-care obstructs development of child's personality, what difficulties may occur for a child later etc.; it was decided to search for ways how to help the boy by joining efforts. It can be stated that this time communication between the class tutor and the mother was successful: the boy started expressing his higher confidence in the class tutor, "started hearing" her encouragements and praising for efforts. It seemed that finally the child started hearing "you can", "you have done well", "you succeeded", "you try and you'll succeed", "a fine drawing" etc. (before hours with fairy-tales, Joris minimally communicated with the class tutor, any attempts to find a common conversation with the boy failed.) The following game situation proved the appeared Joris' initiative, that he does not want to experience tension when playing aside anymore:

There were 12 children in the group. Vilma organized "a party". All children wished to take part in this game, except Joris. As usual, he was drawing at the desk. Children invited him to play together, but he rejected their invitation. The game started developing. Vilma: "We will fly by plane to another country, to Ireland. Children, please arrange chairs in pairs – we will have a plane. Buy you tickets from Žymantas. They are not expensive, take the money. Who will be the pilot of the plane?" Joris became attentive: "I would like to be the pilot of the plane." Children did not object and Joris was playing with them all for about 45 minutes.

During the experiment, it was noticed that Joris simply wished to talk about his feelings as much and sincere as possible, he was waiting for suggestions how to communicate with others. It can be presumed that the child's self-value increased on the ground of his brave talk during one class with a fairy-tale – "I love myself."

Observed personality changes in separate children allow drawing the conclusion that, when applying methods of work with fairy-tales, it is possible to correct the attitude of problem behaviour children towards themselves and their relations with friends, to make impact on the inner condition of a child, i.e. to implement higher self-assessment for those who are insufficiently aware of their role in the group and to help those who over-estimate themselves to more adequately perceive themselves with regard to others.

Conclusions

1. Fairy-tales can be the means of conflict control for a pre-school age child when their content and the process of discussion are being purposively oriented towards educated children's ability to constructively manage conflict situations and strengthen social abilities.
2. By employing the pedagogical observation under natural conditions, positive changes in children's social and communicative abilities (solution of problems, conflicts; initiative, tolerance, respect to each other etc.) through joint activities were estimated.
3. When applying methods of work with fairy-tales, the attitudes of problematic behaviour children towards themselves and their relations with friends can be corrected, the impact on the inner condition of a child can be made, i.e. to implement higher self-assessment for those who are insufficiently aware of their role in the group and to help children who over-estimate themselves to more adequately perceive themselves with regard to others.

References

1. Bitinas, B. (1998). *Ugdymo tyrimų metodologija*. Vilnius: Jošara.
2. Bražienė, N., Mockienė, D. (2008). Priešmokyklinuko agresyvaus elgesio profilaktika ir korekcija pasakomis. *Jaunųjų mokslininkų darbai*, 4, 93–102.
3. Bražienė, N. (2009). Pasakų terapija – ugdymo ir gydymo metodas. *VšĮ Šiaulių apskrities ligoninės gydytojų ir Šiaulių universiteto dėstytojų straipsnių rinkinys*, 284–295. Šiaulių universiteto leidykla.
4. Daniels, E., Stafford, K. (2000). Atvirų visiems vaikams grupių kūrimas. *Specialiųjų poreikių vaikų integravimas*. Vilnius: Gimtasis žodis.
5. Dreikurs, R., Soltz, V. (2007). *Laimingi vaikai*. Vilnius: Vaga.
6. *Gyvenimo įgūdžių ugdymas: ikimokyklinis amžius*. (2004). Vilnius: ŠMM.
7. Herm, S. (2004). „Sunkūs“ vaikai. *Praktiniai patarimai auklėtojams ir tėvams*. Alma littera.
8. Hoffman, K. W., Roggenwallner, B. (2005). *Programa EQ vaikams. Emocinį intelektą ugdantys žaidimai*. Vilnius: Presvika.
9. Makulavičienė, A. (2004). Pasakų evoliucija, žydrųjų ekranų revoliucija, Disney mėsmalė ir vaikystės krizė. *Kultūros savitumas ir universalumas*. Vilnius.
10. Molicka, M. (2010). *Pasakų terapija*. Vilnius: Vaga.
11. Monkevičienė, O. (2003). Vaiko socialinių įgūdžių ugdymo būdai. In O. Monkevičienė (sud.), *Mano vaikai*. Kaunas: Šviesa.
12. Robichaud, M. G. R. (2007). *Vaikas kenčia pažeminimus mokykloje*. Vilnius: Baltos lankos.
13. Schiller, P., Byrant, T. (2005). *Vertybių knyga*. Kaunas: Šviesa.
14. *Smurto mokyklose paplitimo, formų, priežasčių, prevencijos ir pagalbos priemonių tyrimas*. (2008). Tyrimo ataskaita. Vilnius. Internet access: <http://www.smm.lt/svietimo_bukle/docs/tyrimai/kiti/Smurtas%20mokyklose%202008%20tyrimas%20Vaiko%20namas.pdf>.
15. Thériault, Ch. (2009). *Vaikų konfliktai*. Vilnius: Baltos lankos.
16. Vilkelienė, A. (2003). Gabus vaikas: laimėjimai ir problemos. In O. Monkevičienė (sud.), *Mano vaikai*. Kaunas: Šviesa.
17. Ермолаева, М. В. (2001). *Практическая психология детского творчества*. Москва: Московский психолого-социальный институт.
18. Зинкевич-Евстигнеева, Т. Д. (1998). *Путь к волшебству*. Санкт-Петербург: Златоуст.
19. Грабенко, Т., Зинкевич-Евстигнеева, Т., Фролов, Д. (2002). Волшебная страна внутри нас. In Т. Д. Зинкевич-Евстигнеевой (Ed.), *Тренинг по сказкотерапии*. Санкт-Петербург: Речь.
20. Капская, А. Ю., Мирончик, Т. Л. (2006). *Планета чудес*. Санкт-Петербург: Речь.
21. Сибли, Л. (2005). *Чувства разные нужны – чувства разные важны*. Москва: Триада.
22. Стишенок, И. В. (2006). *Сказка в тренинге: коррекция, развитие, личностный рост*. Санкт-Петербург: Речь.