IMPACT OF STORYTELLING
ON SCHOOL READINESS
AND SOCIO EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
OF PRESCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

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Abstract

The aim of the present study was to compare the social and emotional adjustment of preschool children prior and after the implementation of storytelling in a preschool classroom. The sample of the study consisted of 12 preschool children to whom five stories about emotions were narrated during a five week period. Participants’ levels of socio emotional adjustment and school readiness were assessed prior and after the experiment so that differences that could be attributed to the impact of storytelling could be defined.

The results indicated that storytelling impacts positively on participants’ understanding and management of emotions as well as their social skills. By so doing, it increases their school readiness. An important finding of the present study is that this improvement occurs independently of the participants’ level of learning difficulties. Subsequently the level of preschoolers’ school readiness could increase, even in populations with learning difficulties and/or socioeconomic disadvantage.

Furthermore, the findings of the present study assist practitioners and parents to gain a better understanding of the value of storytelling as a didactic approach to increase pupils' emotional and social skills especially in societies facing socioeconomic crisis.

Keywords: storytelling, school readiness, emotional understanding
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INTRODUCTION

This section describes the need for the study and its significance. Additionally, it defines the basic terms used in the thesis i.e., Emotional Adjustment, Emotional Competencies, Emotional Learning, Emotional Management, Emotional Regulation, Emotional Understanding, Children’s Picture Books, Conduct (Behavioural) Problems, Preschool Education, School Readiness, Oral language skills, Pro-social Behaviours, Social Skills and Social adjustment and explores the links between the three pylons of the present study: storytelling, school readiness and socio emotional development.

Need for the study

The idea about this study came from my work engagement as preschool teacher. Having been working as a preschool teacher for the last fifteen years I have noticed an increase in emotional and behavioural problems in preschool age children in Athens Greece, which can be attributed to the dysfunction the current socioeconomic crisis in Greece causes to economically disadvantaged families. Economic uncertainty, debt and the fear of unemployment generates mental health problems, which limit the amount of time parents spent with their children and reduce the quality of interactions between them. Subsequently, children experience an increase of negative emotions, which they are unable to manage.
The ability to manage negative emotions can help them to attain social success in their adult life (Howse, Calkins, Anastopoulos, Keane, & Shelton, 2003).

However, if the ability to manage emotions remains limited the development of the social skills, which would enable them to develop and maintain social relationships, will be impeded. In addition, children with levels of social and emotional skills below their age appropriate level are prone to school failure because they are unready to face the demands of the transition from the infant school to the primary school (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004).

Storytelling might be a valuable tool for children who are emotionally and socially unprepared to face the challenge of the transition to the primary school. It might increase their ability to understand and to manage emotions and subsequently the chances of coping effectively with the process of transition. However, research paid more attention on the comparison between story reading and storytelling (Current, & Craig, 2009; Current, Craig, & Flanigan, 2008; Danis & Leproux, 2000) than on the impact of storytelling on socially disadvantaged preschoolers.

Considering too that drawing is not only a valuable tool for children to express their emotions but also a reliable means to assess changes in their emotions, the researcher tried to explore the impact of storytelling on the
development/alteration of participants’ emotional states by assessing the differences in their drawings prior and after the experiment.

Thus the present experimental study focused on determining the impact of the storytelling activity on the expression and understanding of emotions in preschool children. In essence, it assessed whether the storytelling could enable participants to develop the skills needed in order to cope with negative emotions like sadness, anger, distress and increase their school readiness. In this way, additional evidence about the impact of this didactic procedure on preschoolers’ socio emotional development could be provided. Also, its implications for parents and practitioners could be defined.

**Significance of the Study**

The appearance of emotional problems during the preschool period might predict later anxiety and depressive disorders (Zahn-Waxler, Klimes-Dougan, & Slattery, 2000). Symptoms of anxiety and depression, which appear during the preschool period, affect at least 18% of children and adolescents (Costello & Angold, 1995). Nevertheless, despite the long-term negative side effects of early symptoms of anxiety and depression, in the preschool period, research places more emphasis on the detection of early behavioural problems than of emotional problems in children (Green, Gesten, Greenwald, & Salcedo, 2008; Odgers et al., 2007). Beyond that, more research is needed on the association between language and behavioural problems in preschoolers. The few studies that have been carried so far indicate the appearance of problems [8]
in pro-social behaviours at an early age. Dimitra Hartas attempted to find out whether language and gender are related with the social and emotional difficulties of toddlers and preschoolers on a UK community-based sample. Her findings underlined the importance of the early years’ provision (Burchinal, Roberts, Nabors & Bryant, 1996).

Considering the aforementioned it can be suggested that the present investigation is important for the following reasons. First, because it investigates the correlation between the children’s picture books and the emotional learning, which as Chen (2000) suggests is an important line of research. Second, because it aims to evaluate the influence of children’s books on the ability to regulate emotions. In this way, it may contribute to the design of appropriate activities for the learning of emotions. Third, because it attempts to determine whether storytelling has a positive impact on the development of emotional understanding. In this way, storytelling might be a valuable mean to prevent the occurrence of depression, violent outbursts, and anxiety in adulthood (Denham, 1998; Goleman, 1995). Fourth, because, its results can be used as a guide to inform practitioners and parents about the importance of picture books and storytelling for the emotional and social development of preschoolers.
Definition of Terms

Emotional Adjustment
This is a constructive element of the “personality structure” and is included in most of the theories about personality (e.g., Cattell & Scheier, 1961; Eysenck, 1947; Guilford, 1959).

Emotional Competencies
Preschoolers’ emotional competencies include self-awareness and self-management (Denham, 2005) as well as the expression, understanding, and regulation of emotions (Denham, 1998; Goleman, 1995). According to Goleman (1995) people with high levels of emotional competencies are at low risk of experiencing emotional problems.

Emotional Learning
This is an educational process, which fosters the development of basic emotional competencies that enable a person to understand and to manage his/her emotions (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, n.d.).

Emotional Management
This allows the control of emotions, especially the negative ones. Via the process of emotional management a person thinks before reacting instead of
expressing negative emotions without second thoughts, asks for guidance and tries to replace negative thoughts and emotions with positive ones.

**Emotional Regulation**

The term emotional regulation refers to the person’s ability to control and show his/her emotions within the limits of social tolerance. In addition, it refers to the persons’ ability to alter the reactions of others. It is also described as the process resulting in monitoring, evaluating, and modifying emotional reactions. This ability influences the development of children’s social skills (Greenberg, Kuschâe, Cook & Quamma, 1995) and is developed through the process of emotional learning (Kostelnik, Whiren, Soderman, & Gregory, 2006).

**Emotional Understanding**

In addition to the use of words in order to express their emotions (Denham, 1998) young children can recognise theirs and others’ emotions through the process of emotional understanding, which is a part of knowing themselves (Denham, 2005).

Persons who are able to understand their own emotions as well as the emotions of others are considered to be emotionally intelligent (Douglas, 2015). There are three models of emotional intelligence i.e. the ability model, the trait model and the mixed model. The first, which was created by Mayer [11]
and Salovey (Mayer, Salovey & Carusol, 2004a), places emphasis on the
skills a person has to have in order to show emotional information and use
this information accordingly in order to manipulate his/her proximal social
environment. The second, which was created by Konstantinos Vasilios
Petrides (Petrides & Furnham, 2003), includes behavioural dispositions and
skills of self-awareness, which can be counted with the use of a self-report
list. The third, which was created by Daniel Goleman (Goleman, 1995) is
called the mixed model because it combines the other two models. In this
emotional intelligence is perceived as an array of skills and characteristics
that drive leadership performance.

**Children’s Picture Books**

These include the pictures, the story, the plot, the actions, the expressions of
the characters, and the settings (Huck & Kiefer, 2004). Pictures are equally
important with the text as they both create the story that attracts children's
interest and stimulates their thinking.

**Conduct Problems**

Conduct problems in young children are positively correlated with behavioural
disorders like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (Hinshaw, 1994)
and/or with specific learning difficulties (SLD), mainly in the area of reading
comprehension (Bishop & Adams, 1990; Morris, 1988; Rutter & Yule, 1975;
Whitehurst & Fischel, 1994). Thus, teachers' understanding of the behavioural
and emotional problems children experience during the preschool period is a top priority for the development of the preschool inclusive practices.

**Preschool Education**

Early childhood education plays a vital role in the development of oral language skills. The participation in meaningful activities at an early age increases the possibility of language development (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Genishi, 1988). Thus preschool teachers should provide children with a wealth of opportunities that will allow them to learn the sounds and the meaning of words as well as to use their language skills during play activities (Rubin & Wilson, 1995).

**School Readiness**

This term refers to the extent that a pupil is prepared to deal with the next state of his/her education. Pupils who are not ready for schooling often have difficulty in reading, and this problem follows them until the end of the third grade. By estimating the levels of social, emotional and cognitive abilities of pupils teachers might define a gap, between expected and actual readiness, which differentiates pupils in advantaged and disadvantaged ones.

Already, from the age of 18 months, children coming from low-income families start experiencing difficulties in language development, which impede the development of the communicative skills that contribute to school readiness.
Thus parents and teachers should cooperate in order to provide adequate support.

**Oral language skills**

Their development occurs during the first five years of life (Genishi, 1988). By the age of four or five years, children have already developed a wide vocabulary (Rubin and Wilson, 1995) and their oral language can be complex enough to include sentences (Genishi, 1988). However, at this age, children are able to understand more than what they are able to express through their receptive and expressive language skills (Genishi, 1988; Rubin & Wilson, 1995; Snow, 2001).

**Pro-social Behaviours**

These refer to the tendency a person has to help others (Spinrad, & Eisenberg, 2009). As pro-social can be considered actions like becoming a volunteer, risking one's life in order to save someone else, sharing of personal belongings with friends, providing emotional support to the persons most in need of it. Since they often lead to social rewards for the pro-social persons too, a preschool environment characterized by pro-sociality is beneficiary both for the emitters and the receivers of these behaviours.

**Social Skills**

These are used by a person in order to interact and communicate with others either in verbal or nonverbal ways. A socially skillful person is able to
communicate effectively his/her needs and to recognise the needs of others. Thus s/he might be able to build strong and lasting social relationships and consequently experience feelings of happiness and success.

The acquisition of social skills is the key to the development of the social readiness. Therefore, special emphasis should be given to the implementation of educational activities for the teaching of social skills.

**Social adjustment**

Social adjustment leads to social readiness i.e. the foundation of school readiness and academic achievement (Blair, 2002; Brigman, Lane, Lane, Lawrence, & Switzer, 1999).
Chapter 1 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter is devoted to the literature review and it incorporates definitions, theories and models of the three constructs of the study, i.e. storytelling, school readiness and socio emotional development. At the end of this chapter with the analysis of each one of these terms, a link is attempted between these terms through previous studies that have investigated their possible relationships.

Preschool Education

This is the education children receive during their early years. Preschool education ends when they start attending the primary school. The names and the characteristics of the preschool institutions around the world vary (e.g., infant school, infant center, day care, day nursery, crèche).

The most common names are the "mother school", which caters for children between 3 to 5 years of age, and the kindergarten, which caters for children between 6 to 7 years of age and follows the mother school. However, in some countries children go directly from the mother school to the primary school. In Germany, after the kindergarten, there is the Schulkindergarten (school kindergarten), which caters for children who are ready to attend the primary school while in the United States, kindergarten is a part of primary education (www.britannica.com). In Greece the term “nipiagogio” (meaning “kindergarten”, but not verbatim) was in use since 1865 (Haritos,1998; Hatzistefanidou, 2008).
The term kindergarten indicates that the nursery school is a garden in which children are treated like flowers. The kindergarten provides an environment which offers to children the opportunity to interact with their peers and to learn basic social skills through play. In modern societies, due to the increasing numbers of working mothers and/or single-parent families, many children start having group experiences in a child day care programme at a very young age.

**History of Preschool Education**

The term "preschool education" was introduced for the first time by Johann Friedrich Oberlin. He was a pastor in Alsace Lutheran Waldersbach where in 1767 he founded the first *sale d’asile* (literally "room of the shelter") or infant school, which took care of young children when their parents were doing their rural works. Other teachers followed him in Lippe-Detmold, Berlin, Kaiserswerth, Paris, and elsewhere. At the beginning, the *salles d’asile* were operating in private but in 1833 they started supporting state institutions and became part of the national educational system. Later their name changed to "écoles maternelles".

In 1816 the Scottish reformer Robert Owen founded a separate institute for the configuration of character, in which the children spent half of their time engaged in learning activities and the other half engaged in recreational activities. This was catering for children between two to five years of age. The
success of this school led to the establishment of England’s first infant school in London in 1818, which cared for children between one to six years of age. The educational programme of this school included simple physical education activities (e.g. arm movements, hands clapping), movements’ counting, use of arithmetical tables, singing of hymns and simple lessons with objects, which paid emphasis on the development of the ability to communicate, to notice and to describe.

In Italy, the first kindergarten was established in Cremona in 1829 by Ferrante Aporti who was a Roman Catholic priest, while in Germany the first kindergarten was established in 1837 by Friedrich Froebel (Doliopoulou, 2006), who developed the first systematic theory of early childhood pedagogy. According to this theory, early childhood is a special phase during which the child is expressed through play. Play is perceived as a process of discovery and recognition, which trains the child in defining the unity and the diversity of things in nature (www.britannica.com; Hatzistefanidou, 2008).

In 1892 in Italy again, Rosa and Carolina Agazzi, created a mixture of the Aporti’s and the Froebel’s kindergarten and produced a prototypical Italian mothers’ school in which the children were encouraged to search for the instruments of their own education.

When Maria Montessori was appointed director of the Orthophrenic School, in Rome she tried to exploit the young children’s natural impulses. In 1907 she
broadened her methods with a sample of 60 children of typical development, aged between three to six years and founded her first casa dei bambini (Babes’ House). The Montessorian philosophy is characterized by the development of the skills of self-direction and initiative within a framework of action, which allows the teacher to supervise the use of “didactic materials” (Montessori, 2013). The teacher supports children’s independent learning process by deciding which learning materials will be available, how they will be organised by allowing free exploration, and by offering guidance and help.

These materials were developed by Montessori and included lacing frames, number rods, map puzzles, and sandpaper letters. The children worked either alone or in groups and they were taught social skills, reading, counting and writing skills as well as to express themselves artistically.

In Belgium, Ovide Decroly created his École de l’ Ermitage near Brussels. The main difference between Montessori’s and Decroly’s systems is that the latter is a live system because in this children grapple with real things while in the former children learn to observe, to express themselves and to find the link between space and time. In addition, Decroly considers the food as a means of self-protection against the risks and self-esteem as the fundamental need of children (Hatzistefanidou, 2008; www.britannica.com).
During the first decade of the 20th century the Jewish settlers in Palestine established the kibbutzim. These were having separate homes for the children and their families so that the mothers could work in the commune. Due to their work engagements parents were obliged to give up some of their authority over child rearing and to share parental power with outside agencies (Iram, 1993).

Now all children of the kibbutz stay in an “infant house”, during their first year of life where they are fed by their mothers. After that, the children go to the “toddler house”, which places emphasis on socialization, until they are three years old. All children visit their home for few hours daily. In the next stage of their education, they attend kindergarten, until to be seven years old. In this they are under the care of a teacher and her three assistants, in order to be prepared for the first grade of the primary school (www.brittanica.com).

In Russia, N.K. Krupskaya introduced the preschool education, in 1919, which she considered to be the first step in the creation of the new Soviet citizen. She emphasized that parents should participate actively in the running of preschools and that teachers should visit homes frequently in order to cooperate and consult with parents (Skatkin & Cov’janov, 1994). During the Soviet era, children from two months to three years of age attended the crèches and then, until the age of seven the kindergarten. In this, only didactic materials were used and children were taught social skills, self-discipline and
self-reliance skills, as well as to respect authority and subordinate their individual needs to the needs of the team (www.britannica.com; Skatkin & Cov’janov, 1994).

**Evolution of Preschool Education in Greece**

The development of preschool education in Greece has been rather slow since its first beginnings in the early 1830s, due to the political instability of the country and the frequent wars which have been leading to high numbers of refugees (Doliopoulou, 2006). In addition, due to the delayed industrialization of the Greek economy, the scarcity of women in the working force and to lack of knowledge of the research findings about the importance of preschool education (Doliopoulou, 2000).

In 1831, in the island of Syros, the German missionary August Frederik Hildner set up an informal group-schooling establishment for two- to six-year-olds. In the same year in Athens, the American missionary couple Mr. and Mrs. Hill, founded a private school which provided education for children aged two to eight. (Doliopoulou, 2006). In 1872 another school, which provided free education, opened in Athens. At the same time, many kindergartens started to appear in the large cities of Greece (Doliopoulou, 2000).
The official recognition and institutionalization of preschool education in Greece, is the outcome of the efforts of the director of the Hill school of Athens Ekaterini Laskaridou (Doliopoulos, 2000). There was no reference of preschool education in the Greek Constitution until 1895, when due do the efforts of Laskaridou, which have started in 1864 (Doliopoulos, 2006), a law was passed that recognised the provision of preschool education in private institutions for children aged three to six. In 1897, Laskaridou opened the first kindergarten in Athens, which was based on Froebelian principles (Zaharenakis, 1996) and she named “nipiakós kípos” (verbatim “children’s garden” in Greek) (Doliopoulos, 2006). At the beginning of the 20th century, most kindergartens in Greece were private and only few belonged to the state. In 1901, thanks to Laskaridou, the first day care center opened in Athens. Soon, private day care centers opened in several Greek cities with names like home, garden, nest or shelter of children (Doliopoulos, 2006). These were officially recognised by the Greek state in 1926 when few state day centers opened. With the law of 1929, kindergartens became integral part of primary education. They had a two-year attendance period and they were under the care of the Ministry of Education, which placed the guidelines about the number of children assigned to each teacher, the aims of preschool education and the ways to achieve them. With simple and enjoyable activities these kindergartens promoted the physical growth, cognitive and social development of children, and provided children with an academic background for the primary school (Doliopoulos, 2000; Haritos; 1998).
Greek Preschool Education

Preschool education in Greece is available for children from the age of three to six years old, in provided by state and private kindergartens, as well as by municipal and private day care centers for children of working parents, from the age of two (Dimitrakopoulos, 2004; Zaharenakis, 1996). In addition, non-governmental organisations like the Society for the Development and Creative Occupation of Children (EADAP), take educational initiatives to develop the preschoolers’ potential during preschool education and to promote acceptance and awareness of cultural differences (Dimitrakopoulou, 2004).

The first official curriculum for the Greek kindergarten was designed in 1962 and remained unaltered until 1980. The second was designed in 1989 and is still in use, together with the newest of 2002, known as Cross-Thematic Curriculum Framework (Doliopoulou, 2006).

According to the law in force the aim of kindergarten education in Greece, is to promote the children’s physical, emotional, intellectual and social development. The kindergarten aims to initiate children into the school system, and to foster relationships with their peers within a supportive and stimulating environment that will prepare their successful social integration (Greek Ministry of Education and Culture, 2011; Pedagogical Institute [23])
The curriculum retains elements of the normal way of family living, and places emphasis on the implementation of activities that increase children’s learning readiness and their ability to manage their emotions and behaviours. Thus, the activities of oral readiness, psycho-motor readiness, intellectual readiness, and emotional organisation are considered to be important prerequisites for the development of children’s socio emotional adjustment and school readiness (PIMNERA 2002b).

Kindergartens complement the family’s role, by paying respect to the children’s personal uniqueness, by providing comfort, love, support, trust, acceptance and safety within an highly experiential environment so that the socio emotional and academic skills of the children are developed. In essence, they enable children to become aware of their potential and to increase their self-esteem. Kindergartens also focus on developing children’s social skills by motivating them to interact with their peers, to engage in interpersonal relationships, and to develop a strong sense of self-confidence by showing them how to take initiatives freely (Doliopoulou, 2006).

More analytically, kindergarten encourage and help children to sharpen their senses through creative play, to learn how to organise their thoughts, to coordinate their actions in order to reach results, and to enrich their experiences from their physical and social environment (Doliopoulou, 2006). Furthermore, children start to realize the symbolic nature of language,
mathematics, and art by getting acquainted with the alphabet, numbers and colours. Thus their school readiness increases.

**School readiness**

This term refers to the level of development children have reached at the time they start attending kindergarten. A high level of readiness enables them to successfully adapt to the challenges of formal schooling. Thus, it is important to ensure that the children have reached the recommended level of readiness before entering primary education. However, this is a difficult task to be achieved especially for children who already face difficulties in adapting to the kindergarten.

School readiness is affected by differences in children’s rearing conditions, health, inherited characteristics, and to the combination of these factors. Parental perceptions about school readiness differ and often are unclear. Diamond *et al.* (2000) found that parents’ perceptions about school readiness depend on their level of education, children’s characteristics, gender and behaviour. The research of Piotrkowski *et al.* (2000) indicated that parents’ perceptions about school readiness were correlated with their command of the English language, while Barbarin *et al.* (2008) found that parental beliefs and ethnicity were not highly associated. Although the Greek preschool education system is struggling to provide an adequate intercultural education and to meet the needs of immigrant children and their families [25]
Dimitrakopoulos (2004) research on the relation between parental beliefs and ethnicity is missing. However, it can be supposed that due to the increased number of immigrants in Greece, parents’ perceptions might differ with reference to their ethnic origins.

According to Pianta & Cox (2002) school readiness is not a property of the child but the outcome of the interaction of the key agents in the child’s life (e.g. teachers, peers, parents). The provision of early learning experiences by parents and teachers is critical for the development of school readiness. In essence this relies on the close collaboration of parents, preschool teachers and schoolteachers (Graue, Kroegger, & Brown, 2003).

According to Howlett (1970):

**Kindergarten Readiness is...**

A child who listens

- His/her teacher carefully when describing
- His/her teacher reading poems or stories for efficient time (up to ten minutes)

A child who hears

- Words that rhyme
- Words that begin with the same sound or different sounds

A child who finds

- Similarities and differences in images
- Similar words and letters

A child who understands
• How related are word like up and down, top and bottom, little and big
• How we divide words that describe people, places, and things
A child who speaks and can
• Participate in class discussions
• Tell a story or poem that had been told before in correct sequence
• Narrate an experience he/she had or a story
A child who thinks and can
• Describe the meaning of a story
• Give fresh ideas and important details
• Support his/her opinions
A child who can
• Adjust when everyday thing changes without being afraid of them
• Handle losing crying
• Ask for help if is needed
A child who plays
• Together with peers
• And waits for his/her turn, shares things and considers of his/her responsibility in a group
• And is able to run, jump, skip, and bounce a ball efficiently
A child who works
• Without anything else catching his/her attention
• And obey to classroom rules
• And come to the end of each activity
• And feeling proud of their achievement
*Adapted from Howlett, (1970).

Unlike Howlett who places more emphasis on emotional skills the current view of kindergarten readiness places more emphasis on children’s learning and
motor skills than the aforementioned one. This is shown in Brigance K test* according to which kindergarten readiness is:

- general knowledge and comprehension (identification of body parts, color recognition, following directions)
- speech and language (personal data responses, picture vocabulary, syntax and fluency)
- gross motor skills (standing, walking, hopping)
- fine motor skills (draws a shape, draws a person)
- math (counts by rote, numerals in sequence)
- alphabet readiness (visual discrimination, recites alphabet, recognition of lower case letters)
- basic reading (auditory discrimination) manuscript writing (prints personal data). (Cited from Williams, 2002, p.39).

**Social Adjustment during the preschool period**

Social adjustment and school readiness are highly associated with the ability of preschool children to manage their emotions and their behaviours. Thus the determination of the level of children’s behavioural difficulties and the assessment of possible changes in their behaviour during the preschool period of education are a top priority for the development of relevant preschool inclusive practices.

**School Adjustment**

Social competence and emotional wellbeing in young children have attracted the attention of research as they are highly associated with language development, early school adjustment and learning (Phillips, Lonigan, & Catts, 2013).
School adjustment is affected by the level of academic skills and social competence (Ladd & Price, 1987; Ladd, 1990). Social competence, i.e. the ability to interact with peers and adults, follow instructions, and work independently contributes to a successful school experience (Brooks-Gunn et al., 1997).

Children who perform poorly and have negative attitudes towards schooling are often rejected by their peers. Peers’ acceptance is influenced by the children's behaviour in the games, by their ability to enter playgroups and by their level of communicative skills (Maxwell & Eller, 1994). Thus, though preschool teachers should feel free in teaching academic skills, they should focus too on the development of childrens’ socio emotional skills (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

Research (e.g., Ladd, 2000; Parker & Asher, 1987) indicates that unless children achieve minimal social competence by about the sixth year of age, they are at risk of developing behavioural problems later into adulthood. On the other hand, the provision of opportunities, which are related to the development of social skills in early childhood, increases the person's long-term social and emotional adaptation, academic and cognitive development, and successful citizenship (Hartup & Moore, 1990; Kinsey, 2000; Ladd & Profilet, 1996; McClellan & Kinsey, 1999; Parker & Asher, 1987; Rogoff, 1990).
According to Hartup (1992), the relationships with peers contribute immensely to the social and cognitive development in adult life. More analytically, he claims that "the single best childhood predictor of adult adaptation is not school grades, and not classroom behaviour, but rather, the adequacy with which the child gets along with other children. Children who are generally disliked, who are aggressive and disruptive, who are unable to sustain close relationships with other children, and who cannot establish a place for themselves in the peer culture are seriously at risk" (Hartup, 1992, p. 1). As far as the risks are concerned, these may include poor intellectual health, dropping out of school, low achievement and poor employment history (Katz & McClellan, 1997).

Consequently the early childhood programmes should encourage children to initiate social play activities, and they should provide them with opportunities for social development via symbolic/pretend play. Since symbolic/pretend play assists preschool children to develop both their social and intellectual skills, it is necessary to assess regularly how children progress in the acquisition of social competence (Berk & Winsler, 1995).

Several studies (e.g. Katz & McClellan, 1997; Ladd & Profilet, 1996; McClellan & Kinsey, 1999), which compared the behaviour of popular children with the behaviour of less popular children indicate that the way children confront their peers (i.e. offensive, willing or demanding) influences the quality
of the relationship they develop (Ladd, 2000). The problem is not the quantity but the quality of the relationships. For example, even children with a narrow circle of friends have developed positive attitudes towards schooling (Ladd, 1999). However, some children are timid and unwilling to be involved in social relationships, which make them feel uncomfortable (Katz & McClellan, 1997). This sensitivity impedes them to experience even enjoyable activities like a birthday party.

In sum, the ability to handle emotions, behaviours and to develop healthy social relationships affects the levels of school readiness and subsequent school success.

Social adjustment and social readiness

Children who live in poverty have limited social and emotional capabilities. Thus, their successful transition to the typical learning environment is uncertain (Rimm-Kaufman, Pianta & Cox, 2000). In addition, children’s emotional and social skills are linked to their early academic performance (Wentzel & Asher, 1995). Thus well emotionally adjusted children have a significantly higher chance to succeed in school. Their high ability to regulate emotions in pro-social ways allows them to build healthy relationships either with teachers or peers and subsequently experience school success (Ladd et al., 1999). On the other hand, children who have antisocial behaviours are not likely to be accepted by classmates and teachers (Shores & Wehby, 1999). Actually, children who have difficulties in paying attention, in building
relationships, in obeying rules and in controlling negative emotions have no success in school (Arnold et al., 1999; McClelland et al., 2000). They do not achieve well enough in school, in comparison with more emotionally positive and pro-social children (Ladd et al., 1999).

Children’s preparation for formal schooling focuses on increasing their social, emotional, and academic competence. The implementation of relevant educational programmes might alter the way children think about different emotional and social situations. Teachers should teach children how to recognise feelings, to express their emotions and to resolve arguments, by using group discussions, modeling, and role play (Quinn et al., 1999). Such programmes can be implemented in a person centered fashion without high cost in time and resources. However, they may affect children’s social and emotional behaviours for short time periods (Quinn et al., 1999).

Since parents play a significant role in the development of their children’s emotional adjustment, they should be supported in order to increase the range of their positive interactions with their children. In this way, the children’s risk to experience emotional difficulties will be reduced since parents will learn to control their emotions for example when they feel angry or upset with their children (McEvoy & Welker, 2000). However, concern has been expressed about the effectiveness of this training and the maintenance of its results (Corcoran, 2000).
The transition process

The stage of transition from preschool to the primary school is one of the most important stages in a person’s life. During this stage behaviours and attitudes that will influence children throughout their education are shaped (PTA & Head Start, 1999). Children’s home environment, their school readiness and the quality of the preschool education provided affect their transition (Riedinger, 1997).

In 1998, the National Center for Early Development and Learning carried out a study in which nearly 3,600 kindergarten teachers participated. It emerged that almost half of their pupils (48%) were experiencing serious problems in matters of school readiness. Participants reported that they were mainly interested in developing the children’s academic skills and their ability to work independently. However, school readiness, is more than a matter of academic skills' development. As stated in a National Education Goals Panel in 1998 the dominant view is that readiness has a range of dimensions, including the child’s health and physical development, social-emotional development, cognitive skills and communication skills (California Department of Education, 2000).

However, as the following indicate this is not only a teachers’ duty but a parents’ duty as well.
Preparing Parents for the Transition

Parental expectations of how well their children will do at school influence their children’s performance. Parents who expect their children to succeed are very supportive and encouraging. Thus their children are likely to be self-confident and subsequently more successful at school. As Dweck (1991) suggests children who believe in themselves are highly successful in school.

Thus parents should be encouraged to participate actively in their children’s transition either at home or in the classroom with the help of relevant preschool programmes of high quality. In the classroom they could read stories during the story time activity, they could describe their customs or they could participate in the lunch time as guests. National PTA suggests that when parents take part in school activities they help children to succeed. Thus preschool teachers should encourage parents to participate actively in their children’s education by making them realize that their help in the classroom is both valuable and important.

However, some parents might be anxious about their children’s entrance in the primary school due to the negative experiences they had during their school years. Thus they may feel frightened by teachers and/or uncomfortable to appear at school events (Reidinger, 1997). Some others, especially those with financial problems might avoid to be involved. As the study of Rathbun and Hauskin (2001) indicates low-income families have a petty involvement in
school. Thus preschool teachers should place more emphasis on actively involving stressed or unmotivated parents by arranging frequent parents' visits to the school and by inviting them to attend parent meetings aiming to encourage them to increase the quality and quantity of interactions with their children. Also, they should keep parents informed about the progress of their children and they should suggest ways to prepare their children at home for the kindergarten, which as Howes (1988) suggests is the first step to learn to adapt in later environmental changes.

**Transition Activities for Parents and Children**

Parents who know what is appropriate and expected in school are more likely to prepare accordingly their child (Welch and White, 1999).

In the past the responsibility for the preparation of children to the transition to the kindergarten lied entirely to their parents. This is evident in the following guidelines of Howes, 1988) who suggests that parents should:

- visit the school, introduce the kindergarten teacher to their children and see what kindergarten is really like.
- get to know what the lunchtime is, in case they stay at school for lunch.
- read books about kindergarten.
- answer children’s questions about what they will do in kindergarten.
- make children understand how long the kindergarten day is and how the daily routine will be.
- talk to them with honesty about racial and ethnic differences and difficulties.

[35]
• discuss the safety rules for the school bus.
• ensure their children that they will be picked up from school every day just as they are in preschool.
• make sure that the pre-kindergarten children have the basic kindergarten “readiness” skills.

Now preschool teachers are expected to be actively involved in the transition process. As Bohan-Baker, & Little (2002) suggest they should:

• contact the families, in order to gain information about the child and their routines.
• prepare and disseminate home-learning activities, booklists and literacy activities for the summer months prior to kindergarten entry.
• organise family meetings prior to the onset of kindergarten to discuss teacher expectations.
• inform parents about the transition to kindergarten and on how they can be involved in their child’s kindergarten setting and connect new families with families currently enrolled in the school.
• organise support groups for parents as their children transition to kindergarten.

Especially for the children of immigrants these strategies should include the provision of parents training in matters of preschool education and of staff training in dealing with cultural differences (Naughton, 2004).
In this way, children could be easily adapted and they would feel free to express their emotions.

**Emotions in the Preschool period**

According to Piaget (1972), during early childhood, children focus more on external aspects of human actions, while later they pay more attention to internal aspects, like intentions and emotions. However, studies based on the theory of Mind have identified that it is much earlier that children get interested in other people's intellectual states and begin to explain human behaviour based on their interpretation of these states than Piaget suggested (Harris, 2006).

Studies on infants' perceptual skills (Woodward, 1998’ 2009) indicate that they can understand some aspects of intentional human action even before they present significant gains in language. These results suggest that children at that age already distinguish between human beings and inanimate objects and seem to prefer actions performed by human agents. For example, Woodward (1998) observed that six months old babies looked for long at an object when that was being pulled by a human hand, but not when it was being pulled by a mechanic claw. Also, that they were habituated to an event during which a hand tried to reach an object that was lying next to another object. If the hand moved in the same direction, reaching a new object, while on the second one the hand moved in a new direction, reaching the same object. All the infants, even the five-month-old ones followed for more time the
event that included a change in intention than the event that included only physical change. These results prove that infants already separate human beings and objects and seem to prefer actions performed by humans (Woodward, 2009) may be because they are more familiar with people than with objects. Furthermore, there is evidence that they have different expectations of a person's intentions or actions, between the age of five to eight months (Meltzoff, 1995).

In addition, it has been observed that infants have an initial understanding of how actions and emotions can be directed towards a given object. These skills are essential and are considered to be the basis for the development of children's ability to understand different intellectual states (Legerstee, 2005). Children, therefore, are more likely to prefer intellectual descriptions, i.e. descriptions of intellectual states, than behavioural descriptions of human actions (Lillard & Flavell, 1990).

Infants' readings of other peoples' intentions begin to emerge between about 9 and 15 months of age. However, though children appear to follow the adults gaze from early infancy it is not until their second year when they move beyond simply coding of other people’s physical actions to understand their significance as a means of referencing a particular object or event (Meltzoff, 2004).
Meltzoff (2004) found that at 18 months, infants would imitate correctly acts that were demonstrated unsuccessfully, due to their ability to perceive the underlying intention of the act. Instead they did not imitate the failed attempts of an inanimate device performing the same movements. That led Meltzoff to suggest that 18 month olds interpret a person’s actions by differentiating between the overt behaviour and the underlying intention. Also to suggest that infants have the ability to imitate from memory and to correct their imitative movements.

The aforementioned indicate that preschool children tend to focus their attention on the emotional states of other people in order to describe events and that they are able to recognise the emotional aspects of a situation as well as to identify the relationships between inner psychological states and overt behaviours.

**Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties**

The term “emotional and behavioural difficulties” is not a cut-off term. According to the UK Department of Education (Circular 9/94, DfE, 1994a), emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) belong to a continuum of severity from milder to more severe problems.

In this way, there can be classified three categories of children with EBD.
The first refers to problems that are a response to recent stresses and strains in a child’s life. The second refers to children who are likely to have long standing problems, which may derive from more serious causes. Thus a more detailed assessment of their needs is required and other agencies may become involved since these children may be referred for statutory assessment. The third includes a small minority of cases and refers to seriously emotionally disturbed children whose EBD might be the attributed to serious psychological disorders. It is worthy to mention that teachers are most likely to come across to children from the first two categories.

As far as the causes of EBD are concerned, they may be the outcome of the interrelation of different determining factors. As stated by Cooper (1993) EBD result from “the interaction between contextual factors and aspects which the individual brings to the situation” (p.9).

The quality of the home and the school environment determine the social and emotional adjustment of children. These factors interact with the child’s own genetic predisposition.

More analytically children with EBD may experience:

- lack of parental interest in schooling
- inconsistent and ineffectual parental discipline
- lack of overtly displayed parental affection
- parental indifference, hostility or rejection
- violent displays of temper from the parents
- parental use of corporal punishment
- parental cruelty or neglect
- parental absence (Cooper, 1993)
- rejecting and violent parents (Herbert, 1993; Reid, 1987)

However, even children coming from supportive home environments may also display EBD but of lesser severity. In these cases, EBD may be attributed to genetic or organic factors. However, even if the cause is innate i.e. ‘within the child’ the problem might be influenced by the home and/or the school environment.

The school environment plays a significant role in causing and preventing EBD. As Reynolds and Sullivan (1981) and Ruter et al. (1979) state schools of similar catchment areas may have different rates of EBD.

**Autonomy**

The development of autonomy and flexible learning is considered the ultimate goal of education. However, as Benson (2009) argues, the idea of autonomy has been neglected both by researchers and teachers. Although autonomy is not a new concept in pedagogy and despite the fact that there is a general consensus on its value in education, there is disagreement about its definition. Holec (1981) for instance argues that autonomy is an ability that is not inborn but must be cultivated systematically by formal education, while Dickinson [41]
(1987) states that autonomy equates to a total responsibility for learning and does not involve teaching and pedagogical material. This study adopts a broad definition of autonomy that is widely accepted and which states that autonomy is the ability of pupils to take control of their own learning (Benson & Voller, 1997; Little, 1991).

Then, the advent of technology and the dissemination of information via the Internet have altered the scene in education and provided a means to develop autonomy and flexible learning like the process of computer mediated communication. This refers to the communication or interaction via computer, between two or more people and is defined as a process through which people can create, offer and receive information through telecommunication networks which encode, transmit and decode messages (Hiltz & Turoff, 1978).

**Emotional development**

Emotional development describes how children's experiences, expression, understanding, and regulation of emotions develop from their birth to puberty. Obviously, emotional development can not appear in isolation, but the people have to interact in order to have neural, cognitive, and behavioural development too. Emotional development and social development are strongly correlated and often are studied together. Parents, caregivers and people in the approximate social environment of the child play a significant role in the emotional development of the child.
As previously mentioned, emotions appear in early childhood first the positive ones and then the negative ones. Emotions like pride, shame, start to develop together with self-recognition and help children to achieve a strong sense of independence. Self-recognition helps children to respond to negative attitudes and show empathy. It occurs around 1 – 3 years. The child begins to look in the mirror and realizes that she is looking at herself. Also the child begins to know her own name, to refer to herself by her name and to also make clearer her needs, wishes, likes and dislikes (Hollinger, 2012).

According to the theory of Hoffman self-recognition occurs in the first half of the second year (Bischof-Köhler, 1991), while according to Stern (1985) at 18 months of age. Stern (2005), suggests that at this age children start to recognize their reflection in the mirror and to use verbal labels for themselves.

Before the age of eighteen months, infants do not recognise their reflection in the mirror even if their face is marked with colour. They point to the mirror and not to themselves. After the age of 18 they touch the colour on their faces. This indicates that they realize that what they see in the mirror is their self (Stern, 2005). In addition they begin to use personal pronouns to refer to themselves and to use to use names, including their own (Hollinger, 2012).

By enabling children to recognise their emotions self-recognition opens the pathway to empathy. Empathy is the ability to understand another's feelings.
and have an emotional response that reflects that of the other. This ability and understand emotions of others is essential in managing successfully human relationships (Dziobek et al., 2008).

Newborns express their emotions through crying and facial expressions. As their verbal skills start to develop the expressions of emotions become more verbal. Emotions become important for children and they start specifying them during the preschool period when they start speaking about them rather constantly. Preschoolers start to understand social rules within the home and school environments and to express their emotions in socially appropriate ways. In addition, they can recognise nonverbal signs of emotions (e.g. sadness, anger, and fear) via the process of social learning. At the age of 3, children begin to identify some emotions.

Feshbach used picture books to see whether children could recognize the emotion of the hero child of the story and feel the same emotion. Children were more able to recognise the emotion of the hero but less able to feel it. Following the Feshbach's experiment empathy could not appear in children younger than 5 years of age (Bischof-Köhler, 1991). Similarly Wiggers & VanLieshout (1985) suggest that at the age of 3, children start identifying some emotions properly, but their performance remains limited until the age of 6. Following Piaget (1972) empathy is related to decentering in contrast to egocentric thinking (i.e. indifference for the perspectives of others), which is not expected to develop prior to the concrete operational phase. However, [44]
there is empirical evidence that empathy appears at three years of age (Bischof-Köhler, 1991).

Although infants have the capacity to recognise the emotions of others, they understand only the needs of familiar persons. The development of this capacity depends on the exchange of positive emotions with familiar persons, while negative emotional influences from the family environment can lead to problematic emotional development and/or to mental health problems.

In approaching school age, children start to understand how a situation or an event can trigger more complex emotions. By understanding the emotions of people around them, children realize that emotions are not as simple as they might have once thought. At the age of six, children are able to recognise contrasting emotions. Thus the preschool period is an important part of their socio emotional development.

Appropriate socio emotional development, and school success are highly correlated, especially during the first years of schooling, while EBD are associated with poor academic performance (Raver, 2002). Thus good socio emotional adjustment is related with academic success and high school readiness.

The prerequisite to improve their behaviour is to assess children’s emotional development. The main aspects to take into account are the levels of [45]
emotional behavioural difficulties (EBD) (Faupel, 1990; Wood et al., 1993). In a priority preference, first the most challenging behaviour i.e. the one that interrupts learning and impedes the development of positive social relationships is defined and then with the help of functional assessment, which includes both direct and indirect observation methods like interviews with significant agents of the quality of life of the child, the cause and the consequences of the behaviour challenge are determined. Based on the data collected hypotheses can be made about the function of the behaviour and functionally relevant interventions can be implemented (www.education.com).

For the recognition of emotions we can rely on the basic feelings’ indicators.

**Basic feelings’ indicators**

When the verbal expression of the emotions is not very frequent, we can detect emotions from non-verbal signs. Although the signs are not always clear (Matsumoto, Keltner, Shiota, Frank & O'Sullivan, 2008) the following indicators assist to the assessment of emotions.

- **Anger**: This is related to the frustration a person experiences when his/her aims are not reached. Children may express anger by clenching their fists, leaning forward, baring their teeth, snarling or by using aggressive body language. Furthermore, their neck or face might be red or flushed.

- **Fear, anxiety and nervousness**: Fear occurs in situations of threat and is expressed at levels of different severity from mild anxiety to blind terror. Children who are afraid of something may avoid eye contact, make speech errors or sweat. Furthermore, their voice or lips may tremble, their face might...
be pale, their eyes may be dumb, their muscles tense and their mouth dry. They might also gasp and hold their breath, have various speech tones, and present a defensive or ready for fight body language.

- **Sadness:** This is a depressive state, which can be identified by tears, trembling lips, a flat speech tone or a drooping of the body.
- **Embarrassment:** Children may feel embarrassed when feeling guilty for example. They may avoid eye contact, and their face might blush.
- **Surprise:** Children get surprised when unexpected things happen to them. Then, they may open their mouth, widen their eyes, raise their eyebrows or make a sudden backward movement.
- **Happiness:** When children reach their goals, they feel happy and they express this emotional state with smiling, relaxation of the muscles and generally with an open body language.

The aforementioned indicate that the face is the most indicative part of the body with reference to the expression of emotions. Table 1 presents the most common facial emotional indicators.
### Facial Emotional Indicators

**Table 1: Emotional indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Mouth</th>
<th>Nose</th>
<th>Eyes</th>
<th>Eyebrows</th>
<th>Chin</th>
<th>Head</th>
<th>Face</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>trembling lower lip</td>
<td>Damp</td>
<td>Slightly pushed together</td>
<td>possibility wrinkle d</td>
<td>slightly tilted down</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>open or corners turned down</td>
<td>wide, closed or pointing down</td>
<td>Raised</td>
<td>pulled in</td>
<td>down</td>
<td>white</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>flattened or clenched teeth</td>
<td>Flared nostrils</td>
<td>wide and staring</td>
<td>pulled down</td>
<td>jutting</td>
<td>wrinkled forehead</td>
<td>red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>smiling (possible laughter)</td>
<td>crows-feet wrinkles at sides of sparkling eyes</td>
<td>Slightly raised</td>
<td>head level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>lips pinched</td>
<td>cast down and possibly damp or tearful</td>
<td></td>
<td>down or to the side</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Envy</td>
<td>chin turned down</td>
<td>turned in sneer</td>
<td>staring</td>
<td>jutting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire</td>
<td>lips slightly parted or puckered or smiling</td>
<td>wide open with dilated pupils</td>
<td>slightly raised</td>
<td>tilted forward</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>lips slightly pressed together</td>
<td>Steady gaze of eyes at item of interest (may be squinting)</td>
<td>slightly raised eyebrows</td>
<td>erect or pushed forward</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boredom</td>
<td>Corners turned down or lips pulled to the side</td>
<td>looking away</td>
<td></td>
<td>propped up with hand</td>
<td>generally immobile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>dropped wide open</td>
<td>wide open</td>
<td>raised high</td>
<td>Lowered chin</td>
<td>held back or tilted to side</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief</td>
<td>either tilted down or smiling</td>
<td></td>
<td>tilted outwards (lowered outer edges)</td>
<td>tilted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Environment and heredity

The emotional development is the outcome of both hereditary and environmental factors. From their birth, children have innate mechanisms to express emotions, which follow a specific course of development. More specifically, there are biologically determined regions of the brain that activate positive or negative emotional regions. Consequently, the emotions the baby develops in order to communicate with the environment (cry, malaise, anger) are partly innate. On the other hand, the environment plays a significant role on the development and expression of emotions. The quality of the proximal environment and of the socio emotional experiences this provides to babies influences their development. Thus even if the initial emotions of babies are innate they get developed due to the experiences and the education they receive from their environment. A common example is that though blind babies present the same emotional expressions as the non-blind babies with the passing of time this ability ceases to evolve.

(Kaiser & Wehrle, 2001, pp 285-300)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Disgust</th>
<th>Shame</th>
<th>Pity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>closed, possibly with tongue</td>
<td>turned down</td>
<td>turned down at corners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>protruding</td>
<td>held low</td>
<td>in extended gaze and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nostrils flared, nose</td>
<td></td>
<td>possibly damp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>twisted in sneer</td>
<td></td>
<td>slightly pulled together in</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>middle or downwards at edges</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tilted to side</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Kaiser & Wehrle, 2001, pp 285-300)
Furthermore, the fact that emotions like joy, sadness, anger, fear are expressed in similar ways in different cultures supports the existence of innate signs while the different expressions of the same emotion indicate the impact of the environment (Geladari, Parashou, Paulidou, 2009).

The relationship with their siblings, plays an important role too since children spend twice as much time in interacting with them rather than with their parents (Dunn, 1993). In stressful situations, when their mothers are absent, infants rely on their older siblings as attachment figures. Stewart & Marvin (1984) observed the behaviour of 57 mothers, their preschool age children and their infants. Results indicated that 51% of the preschool age children exhibited caregiving behaviours toward their infant siblings.

Positive emotional interactions are observed in pleasant contacts with other children and these lead to the establishment of companionships. During the preschool period the emotional relationships with other children are strengthened. Children tend to imitate the behaviours of their peers and to offer their emotional support to them with smiles, praise and exhibition of care. Often, they imitate others in order to be accepted or simply to make friends (Geladari, et al., 2009).

The emotional development can be affected by the presence of a serious health problem. Being separated from their parents for a long time period in a
hospital, children might experience an affective disorder. Also, if their parents are overprotective their smooth reintegration at home might be impeded. Furthermore, challenging emotional situations like adoption, which is particularly challenging for parents too since they experience the abolition of the narcissist continuation of their self through their own biological child, influence the emotional development of adopted children. Furthermore, a divorce that ended after intense and violent conflicts of the parents and/or the break of the emotional bond with the parent who leaves the home environment influences negatively the child's emotional stability. The emotions observed e.g. stress, loss, lamentation and anger are intensely similar to those observed after the death of a parent (Geladari, et al., 2009). In such situations, teachers are expected to provide additional emotional support acting as parents substitutes. In the United Kingdom teachers have a duty to take the same reasonable care of the pupil that a parent would take in those circumstances (in loco parentis). In loco parentis derives from the nineteenth century common law principle that a teacher’s authority was delegated by a parent so far as it was necessary for the welfare of the child (National Union of Teachers). According to the Children Act 1989 the level of the teachers’ duty to care about the safety and welfare of their pupils in their care is measured as being that of a ‘reasonable parent (Elliot, 2017). In Greece, teachers are not held in loco parentis but in the nineteenth century, when punishment was considered an appropriate procedure both by teachers and parents, teachers were expected to act as reasonable parents. This is reflected in the statement of the father of Kazantzakis to his teacher that the
meat of his son belongs to the teacher but the bones belong to the father (Kazantzakis, 1965).

**Teachers**

Children’s emotional development is positively influenced by their attendance to the kindergarten. This facilitates their ability to adapt in new circumstances, their sense of autonomy and their expressive communicative skills. Thus, kindergarten attendants are more autonomous and self-confident in comparison with their peers who do not attend kindergarten.

Then the attitude and the personality of preschool teachers, as well as the quality of their relationship with the child act as a substitute for a dysfunctional home environment. Thus, the school becomes an island of emotional protection (Geladari, *et al*, 2009) especially if parents are unable to fulfill this role.

**Parents**

The development of children’s personality is affected by the socio-economic and educational level of the family and by the quality of the emotional interactions between the family members. The dynamic interaction between the family members generates a continuum of mutual interdependence, since each member influences the other members and in the meantime is influenced by them. The size of the family influences also the development of the child’s personality (www.aspe.gr). [52]
Babies who grow under the care of both parents have higher socio emotional skills than babies who develop bonds with only one of the parents. Thus it can be said that the emotional state of children mirrors the quality of emotional interactions in their family environment.

All that indicate that children are the recipients of the emotional interactions of their family and that the way parents treat them has a deep and permanent effect on their emotional development. Actually, the quality of the interactions with their parents influences their emotional development since their internal working models depend on the security of their relationship with their parents (Laible & Thompson, 1998). Conflicts and competitions between parents generate a negative psychological climate for children (http://www.aspe.gr/).

In addition, parental emotional problems influence negatively the normal course of children's emotional development. For example, if a mother is depressed her child experiences an emotional environment which is overwhelmed with feelings of sadness, despair and desperation (Geladari, et al., 2009).

Fathers might contribute positively to the healthy emotional development by playing not only the role of game-partners but the role of the teammates too. Their understanding of the social frame in which the emotions are expressed, specifically in cases of behavioural outbursts, contributes positively to the management and prevention of emotional problems. Mothers may develop [53]
and maintain a healthy relationship with their children if instead of simply satisfying the basic needs of their children, care about their emotions by showing continually their affection and tenderness so that the bonding is strengthened.

At home good parenting is characterised by the presence of a secure and stable home environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child interactions and high aspirations of parents (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). Although the level of parental involvement is associated with factors like social class, income, health, parents’ perceptions of their role, at home good parenting has a more significant positive effect on children’s achievement than these factors (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Feinstein, 2003).

Parents’ involvement in their children’s learning can limit the impact of socioeconomic disadvantage on children’s underachievement by providing a richer home learning environment. Thus the quality of the home learning environment is more important for the cognitive and socio emotional development of children than the socio economic status or the education of their parents (Feinstein, 2003).

The existence of a positive family climate, which is characterized by continuous and positive interpersonal relationships between parents and children affects positively the children’s emotional development. The negative
impact of the absence of such an environment on emotional development has been observed in babies that grew up in institutions under the care of different nurses or with babies that have lost both their parents (Geladari, *et al.*, 2009). Their ability to understand and regulate emotions was limited.

**Emotional understanding**

This is the ability to understand and explain the emotions of others. Its development leads to the development of empathy. In order to enable children to increase their emotional understanding, we should encourage them to talk openly about how they or other people feel. During the preschool period, children increase their abilities to understand emotions, to master the emotional language, to use the emotions in play, and to recognise the emotions of other persons (Laible & Thompson, 1998). Between three to four years of age they can offer plausible explanations about the antecedent and the consequent events influencing theirs and others' emotions.

Emotional understanding is positively correlated with the adaptive social behaviour, and negatively correlated with introvert behaviours, which may provoke feelings of anxiety, depression, and loneliness. It affects positively the development of the expressive language and pro-social skills, which open the pathway to the development of academic skills. For instance, children who do not know how to regulate their emotions and behave disruptively in school do not spend sufficient time on learning activities and so they get less help.
and praise from their teacher. Thus teachers should provide them with the opportunity to discuss openly their emotions and to realise their emotions.

As far as the mothers are concerned, the emotional understanding of their children is highly correlated with the way they express their emotions and with their responses to their children's expressions of emotions. Since experiences within the family environment provide ways to understand emotions, it is expected that the quality of interactions in the family will affect the development of children's emotional understanding (Laible & Thompson, 1998).

Children interact daily with attachment figures and this helps them to associate overt behaviours with internal states (Thompson, 1997). Preschool children who are securely attached to their parents have a better understanding of emotions and are more confident in their social interactions than children coming from dysfunctional families. Nevertheless they may not have a wide and sophisticated understanding of all the emotions, or they may not be sensitive enough to the negative emotions of others (Laible & Thompson, 1998). Thus they may not be able to regulate their emotions.

**Emotional regulation**

In order to develop social relationships and to adapt in different social situations children need to know how to regulate their emotions and to modify
them in accordance with the circumstances they encounter (Thompson, 1994).

Infants tend to deal passively with emotions, while preschoolers develop active policies to deal with their emotions (Feng et al., 2008). The socialization practices affect the emotional regulation of children. Positive parenting assists children to be emotionally positive with their peers and to act in a socially competent manner. On the contrary, parents with mental health problems are unable to interact properly with their children and so they influence negatively their children’s ability to regulate emotions (Feng et al., 2008). Subsequently the support of teachers plays a very crucial role in the development of the emotion regulation strategies of children (Feng et al., 2008).

**Strategies to Increase Emotional Competence**

Aggression occurs in 10% of preschoolers and at 25% of socio-economically disadvantaged preschoolers (Webster-Stratton, 1998; Webster-Stratton, Reid, & Hammond, 2001a). Children’s socio emotional and behavioural adjustment is related to school success (Raver & Zigler, 1997). Children who face difficulties in concentrating and paying attention to the learning activities, to follow teacher directions, to communicate with others and to control negative emotions do less well in school than children who are able to manage their emotions and subsequently are more likely to be more accepted by classmates and teachers (Ladd, Kochenderfer, & Coleman, 1997) . Also, they
are likely to be rejected by their classmates and to get limited feedback from their teachers (Shores & Wehby, 1999; Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004).

Thus the provision of early intervention is necessary so that the emotional, social, and behavioural problems do not lead to poor school readiness (Webster-Stratton, & Reid, 2004). Consequently both parents and teachers should be trained to increase the quality and the amount of their interactions with children in order to develop the children’s academic and socio emotional competencies (Feinstein, 2003; Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004). With training in positive parenting strategies parents could be enabled to increase the emotional understanding and decrease the challenging behaviours of their children (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004).

Teachers should be trained in classroom management strategies which increase children’s social competence. As the study of Webster-Stratton & Reid (2004) indicated trained teachers, were using more positive teaching strategies than untrained teachers and consequently their pupils were more socially competent.

Children’s social skills and problem-solving training

The development of adequate communicative, problem solving, and anger management skills could help children to increase their social and emotional

[58]
skills. On the other hand, children with a difficult temperament are more likely to have poor social and emotional skills.

The frequency of socially unacceptable behaviours might decrease as long as children are taught consistently functionally competitive and socially acceptable skills that serve the same communicative function with socially unacceptable behaviours within a framework of action which offers ample opportunities to interact with peers in pro-social ways like the preschool environment. The best periods to provide early intensive behavioural intervention are the preschool and the early school period (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004). The use of relevant children’s books assists teachers in modeling to children the socially acceptable behaviours.

**Children's Books**

There has been an attempt to provide a distinct definition of children's literature, which is autonomous despite its reciprocity with the literature for adults. The definitions take into consideration specific characteristics of children's age (Kanatsouli, 2007).

According to Lukens (1990), the literature for children differs from the literature for adults in the degree and not in the type of experiences. Children's literature offers the same enjoyment as the one offered by the literature for adults. Children tend to enjoy a story, but the sources of this enjoyment are limited, because their experiences are limited. For this reason,
children books should be simple both in language and form. The stories should be clear so that confusion is avoided and the relation between the characters and the action is evident. Also the relationships between the characters should be obvious. Then it should be taken into account that children prefer the literal speech more than the adults, and they are more prone to imaginary situations (Kanatsouli, 2007; Natsiopoulou, 2011).

Children's literature relies on aesthetically decorated texts that contribute to the entertainment of children and allow the development of the ability to understand the beauty in the maturing of the personality and in the configuration of a free conscience. It includes critical or original texts in an explanatory and instructive way (Kanatsouli, 2007; Natsiopoulou, 2011; Zeece, 1997).

Children's literature has expanded as a distinctive part of literature at an international level. Thus, we can discriminate between children's literature or better literature for children, as it would be preferable to be called, and literature for adults. On the other hand, it appears that these two sections are interrelated, since the books for children are read by adults who often operate as censors by restricting access to stories they consider unsuitable for their children. In addition, the one complements the other, since texts written for children are possible to be transformed in texts for adults and vice versa (Kanatsouli, 2007; Natsiopoulou, 2011).

[60]
In order to develop the understanding of emotions and increase the imagination of children, teachers and parents should place emphasis on the reading of fairy tales and stories. As Albert Einstein is credited to have said: *If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be very intelligent, read them more fairy tales* (www.brainpickings.org).

Children’s books offer aesthetic information of high quality, wake up and enrich children’s imagination, cultivate and refine the emotional world of the children by enabling them to live emotions, which are not always offered by their proximal environment. They allow a child to feel joy, sympathy, solidarity and satisfaction for the success of good and the defeat of the evil. The reading of high quality children’s books prompts children to effortlessly realize their social environment and to familiarize themselves with the relations that are developed between individuals and social groups. In essence, children’s books are tools to develop a balanced personality, to overcome anxiety and personal weaknesses. Thus they can become an irreplaceable companion for children (Kanatsouli, 2007; Natsiopoulou, 2011).

The content of children’s books should satisfy their basic intellectual and emotional needs. It should offer joy and optimism for the future, models of appropriate behaviour, inspire love, solidarity, collaboration between people and cultures, cultivate the spirit of peace, respect for people and the natural environment (Kanatsouli, 2007; Natsiopoulou, 2011).
Value of Children’s Books

These provide several opportunities to children to develop their independent thinking, their cognitive and emotional skills and appreciate their cultural herititage. .

More analytically as Norton & Norton (2010) highlight children books enable children to:

- develop their personality and social skills
- become transporters of high-quality literature
- evolve their verbal and written language skills
- express themselves for example when summarizing the plot of the story.
- develop their creativity and broaden their imagination
- enhance their emotional intelligence
- learn their culture and this of other people.

In this way they contribute to the development of a personality characterised by moral integrity, tolerance and high emotional intelligence i.e the prerequisites for the formation of a responsible citizen in the future (Norton & Norton, 2010). High emotional intelligence increases social interactions and contributes to the psychological stability of the person, to a good quality of life and to success in professional life (Douglas, 2015).

In essence the children’s literature offers children the opportunity to reflect on their emotions and to come in terms with theirs and others’ cultural heritage (Norton & Norton, 2010). Thus teachers and parents should select high quality
books that serve these values and respect the cultural differences so that the perpetuation of cultural stereotypes and inaccuracies is avoided.

**Storytelling**

Although the impact of storytelling in children with EBD has not been widely searched several studies (e.g., Kaderavek & Justice, 2002; Rubin & Wilson, 1995; Snow, 2001) indicate that children accomplish significant gains in many areas of development through shared storybook experiences.

Several authors (e.g. Bus & vanJzendoorn, 1997; Danis, Bernard, & Leproux, 2000; Scarborough & Dorbrich, 1994) state that the joint book reading behaviour should be a common form of interaction between parents and young children so that learning, communication and the strengthening of relationships takes place.

Curenton (2010) suggested ways for narratives to be used as learning tools to promote school readiness, both at home and school. She suggested that dialogueic reading at home, in which parents ask open-ended questions on each page to get children involved was most effective with younger preschoolers, middle-class families, and European Americans, and less effective with elder children coming from low-income families, or families from other cultures (Mol, Bus, De Jong, & Smeets, 2008). By experimenting narrations at school, it was proved that when traditional aspects of narrative
ability were controlled, the artfulness of children’s narratives was still a unique and significant predictor of standardized measures of vocabulary and morphology but not of grammar (Currenton, 2010).

Through storytelling children gain the opportunity to elaborate, to ask questions, to describe and label pictures, and to paraphrase what is going on in the text. In this way parents expose their children to intellectual states that can be incorporated into book reading routines (Bruner, 1986). Symons et al (2005) claim that children who are asked what about the storybook characters are thinking and their feelings may develop the same routines. More particularly, they may ask and answer similar questions. Therefore, through storytelling young children acquire meaningful habits and make genuine strides in developing a Theory of Mind (Symons et al., 2005).

The impact of story reading on language development has been widely investigated (e.g., Kaderavek & Justice, 2002; Rubin & Wilson, 1995; Snow, 2001). Snow (1983) suggests that story reading increases children vocabulary while Wells (1986) claims that the reading of stories during early childhood opens the pathway to the subsequent reading achievement of children at school.

However storytelling is positively correlated too with the development of literacy skills as well as addition with the increase of the listening and speaking skills (Ferreiro & Taberosky, 1982; Kontos, 1986; Wells, 1986). [64]
Beyond that, storytelling provides children with the opportunity to communicate by discussing about the text and the pictures (Kaderavek & Justice, 2002). Unlike story reading where children focus on the text in storytelling children look at the teller and the teller looks at them (Zeece, 1997; Malo and Bullard, 2000). In addition, in the storytelling events the words are not memorized but they are recreated through the active participation of the listeners.

In essence, storytelling is a two-way communication (Roney, 1996) the most important elements of which are the story itself and the relationship between the teller and the audience (Sobol, 1992). However, as Ellis (1997) suggests its greatest benefit is the development of the imagination.

According to Alna (1999) storytelling of high-quality children's literature can enhance children's imagination and encourage them to build pictures in their minds. The study of Sanders (2006) indicated that storytelling has a positive impact even in children with high functioning autism (ex Asperger's syndrome) i.e. children with deficits in empathy and social skills. The implementation of storytelling helped them to increase their empathy skills. More specifically, after storytelling they were more willing to play with other children and more accepted by them. In addition, after storytelling they could control their emotions about losing a game (Sanders, 2006). So as Sanders (2006) suggests children with high functioning autism should be understood and treated positively, in order to be accepted both in school and society.
Curenton and Craig (2009) compared the effects of shared-reading and storytelling on preschoolers’ pro-social skills and problem behaviours. Results revealed that mothers used more positive emotion talk during shared-reading, but more negative emotion talk during storytelling. Mothers used the storytelling context as a socialization tool by taking the opportunity to make more comments and judgments about children’s misbehaviour. These findings led to conclude that talking about a past event of misbehaviour has a higher modifying effect than reading a book about misbehaviour. The same research showed that though mothers used the same amount of talk about emotions with both boys and girls they were more judgmental about the behaviour of their sons rather than of their daughters. Also, they were more judgmental during storytelling than during shared-reading with their sons. This finding was similar to previous studies which found that mothers were more likely to discuss negative emotions and events with their sons rather than with their daughters (Bird & Reese, 2006; Dunn et al., 1987; Fivush, 1989). Concerning the importance of shared-reading to the development of social skills, Curenton and Craig (2009) found that self-reported aspects of shared-reading, namely the weekly frequency of shared-reading and the age at which the dyad began reading, were associated with increased levels of pro-social skills. Furthermore, the amount of both positive and negative emotion talk and use of evaluative judgments was correlated with children’s pro-social skills. However, further analysis revealed that this association was an outcome of language and literacy skills acting as mediators between shared-reading and
pro-social skills. Thus none of the aspects of shared-reading was related to children’s scores on problem behaviours. The only family narrative practice, which was associated with problem behaviours was storytelling. Such results suggest a strong link between framing a negative past event by using positive emotion terms and the decrease of problem behaviours in storytelling.

Storytelling is a reliable means to enhance children’s cognitive development, along with emergent reading (Curenton, Craig & Flanigan, 2008) and a way of to increase children’s literacy skills by introducing decontextualized language at home (Dickinson & Tabors, 1991; Reese, 1995; Snow, 1983). In the study of Curenton, Craig & Flanigan (2008), mothers’ and preschoolers’ oral language skills (decontextualized discourse) across an emergent reading, shared reading, and storytelling interaction were tested. It was concluded that mothers with advanced literacy skills were more likely to make decontextualized comments/questions and use intellectual/linguistic verbs during the interactions. Unlike similar studies (e.g., Curenton & Justice, 2004; Greenhalgh & Strong, 2001; Pellegrini, Perlmutter, Galda, & Brody, 1990; Reese, 1995), which assessed only one measure of decontextualized language this one included two measures of it.

However, the reading context plays an important role too. The findings demonstrated that the emergent reading context enhanced children’s contributions to the interaction in a moderating fashion. Children produced
more decontextualized discourse during story creating than in story reading and storytelling (Curenton, Craig & Flanigan, 2008).

Curenton (2010) examined the relationship between preschoolers’ narrative comprehension and production skills and cognitive abilities. She found that children performed better in questions addressing the character’s actions than in questions addressing the characters’ motives. Also, that narrative and cognitive skills were linked. Olver & Ratner (1994) found no differences in children’s performance if children were asked social cognitive questions in a narrative format or in a puppet format, while Chen & Lin (1994) found that embedding social cognitive questions in narrative tasks were harder for children to answer. However, Lewis, Freeman, Hagestadt, & Douglas (1994) found that theory of mind tasks embedded in narratives are easier for children to understand than tasks which use a doll / puppet format. Preschoolers are able to identify the protagonist’s perspective in the story (Rall & Harris, 2000).

Isbell et al., (2004) indicated that both storytelling and story reading are beneficial for the development of oral language complexity and story comprehension in young children. Since storytelling is a traditional activity in early childhood programmes, the aforementioned study indicates the benefits of adding a storytelling component to literacy programmes. The inclusion of storytelling would assist children in expanding story comprehension, oral retelling, and to recognise the elements of a story. The combination of these elements could provide powerful literature experiences to young children that
will influence their oral language development and story comprehension abilities, which are critical factors for their literacy development.

Gallets (2005) compared the effects of story reading and storytelling in children attending the first and second grade kindergarten. Half of the children read the stories aloud while the other half were told the same stories by a storyteller. Data was collected regarding participants' ability to recall the facts they had heard, and in using formal story elements. The children’s interpretations of the meaning of the story were also assessed. Children of both the story reading and storytelling groups improved on most measures. However, on some measures, notably those regarding recalling ability, children of the storytelling group improved more than the children of the story reading group.

The aforementioned indicate the positive impact of storytelling. However this depends too on the quality of the books used as the following indicate.

*Definitions of Children’s Picture Books*

Picture books are art objects in which pictures and ideas are combined in order to shape a unique result. In picture books of high artistic quality, the pictures support the aims of the story and offer to the readers an aesthetic experience of high class.
A picture book consists of words and pictures. Is a combination of text and pictures, which aims to provide a rich and rewarding reading experience. Although pictures play the most important role, the text is essential too, because it is the source of inspiration for the pictures. The placement and the style of the text as well as the selection of the appropriate typeface attract the interest of children. The small size of the book makes it perfect for their small hands while the woven threads used throughout the book increase its appeal to children.

Usually, the picture books have 32 pages, a text of at maximum of 500 words with reference to children’s age, and distinct covering so that they can be easily classified with reference to their format and content (Martin, 2005).

With reference to their format they can be classified in picture story books, wordless books, easy readers and informational picture books.

- Picture storybooks combine words and pictures on each page in order to narrate a story while the pictures complement the story. Text and pictures are equally balanced and pictures complement the story.
- Wordless books i.e. picture books without words assist children to develop their language and narrative skills, since they enable them to understand the story by its pictures. An advantage of wordless books is that the story can be retold countless times in a more or less complex fashion.
- Easy readers. These are the first transition books for children moving from picture books to chapter books. Children can read them without
any help from adults, due to their larger typefaces, short sentences, sight words, and the extra space between words and lines.

- Informational picture books can be used as encyclopedias or other information sources. They have bright and colorful pictures and photos, table of contents, accurate titles and are easy-to-read and can reduce threat to young readers.

With reference to their content they can be classified in animal stories, realistic stories and traditional literature.

- Animal stories are realistic stories with animals or inanimate objects as main characters and they behave like humans. They might have a sense of magic because the animals or objects have human characteristics and the settings can be imaginary or contemporary.
- Realistic stories have sympathetic characters to make children feel comfortable and empathize with them. Authors use them to explore timely, somber topics, like cancer, death, adoption and AIDS. These books may refer to a contemporary or historical setting.

Traditional literature includes all kinds of tales, such as fairy tales, folktales, trickster tales, myths, legends, beast tales, creation stories, etc. These books have storytelling patterns, rich language, and elements of fantasy and imaginary or contemporary setting (Martin, 2005).

**Picture and Emotional Learning**

Pictures enhance the emotions described in the story and help children to discover the world by using their imagination and by associating characters with events. In this way, picture books become a source of reality for them.
The illustrators connect the stories with pictures by using various techniques to depict mood, characters and the plot, while the authors rely on pictures in order to depict high emotions, which are related to the action scenes. Pictures, which present people, objects, and familiar situations to children, help them to strengthen their emotions and experiences (http://www.rif.org/).

**Applications of Books in the Classroom**

When the children read repeatedly the same book, their familiarity with the story increases (Melissa-Halikiopoulou & Natsiopoulou, 2008). By becoming more familiar with the stories, they increase a range of skills like predicting, understanding of causal and temporal sequences, retelling of stories, recalling of details, answering complex questions about the stories, and learning new dialogues or social scripts (Early Childhood Care and Education Group Bremerton, 2007). Repeatedly reading the same storybook to preschoolers should lead to aesthetic reading of the literary text and to children’s enthusiasm for stories and literature (Melissa-Halikiopoulou & Natsiopoulou, 2008). In parallel, children acquire pre-reading abilities, as they increase their understanding of the story and the text (Crowe, 2000).

According to the Early Childhood Care and Education Group Bremerton (2007) teachers should organize the following areas and activities in the classroom in order to promote story reading and storytelling.
a. The Library Area. This provides children with the opportunity to engage in interactive learning with an adult. In addition, pupils can familiarize themselves with the story to be taught learn new words, and focus on the meaning of the story when this will be taught during the circle time. If enriched with a wealth of books and other materials like magazines, memory books, writing materials, pupils’ pictures, the Library Area can become an important part of the process of literacy development.

b. The circle time. This provides considered the perfect opportunity in order to increase literacy development. By taking into account the importance of several phonological awareness activities (e.g., *listening, rhyming, alliteration, segmenting and blending*), the teacher should intentionally provide additional learning opportunities for children during circle time. This increases the possibility to go to kindergarten by having reached the required level of readiness to start receiving reading instruction. The teacher should provide additional support to children with attention deficit disorders or reading difficulties in order to increase their active participation in story reading.

c. Learning centers
These allow children to independently explore the learning materials and should provide activities that would allow children to experience success. The teacher can adjust the level of difficulty of each task and select the appropriate materials in order to enable children to experience feelings of success and achievement within small groups. Working in small groups helps children to feel comfortable with literacy activities. Children will be also helped
by taking part in literacy activities which include all areas of phonological awareness.

d. Art projects
Art projects are very meaningful activities for preschoolers and they can be linked with the story narrated during the story time activity. For example the pupils can be asked to draw the characters of the story.

e. Sensory Table
This provides literacy opportunities to children, in order to increase both their literacy experience and the amount of time they spent with sorting, matching, rhyming, and beginning sounds. An alphabet chart can be posted near the table and objects in the table can be matched with the sounds of the letters.

f. Writing center
This includes different materials, such as mini clipboards, journals, notepads, magnetic letters, stencils, different writing instruments and papers as well as the alphabet in order to help children to create models for letter formation.

In this way the classroom could become an intellectually and socially stimulating environment, which promotes the development of pro-social behaviour.

**Pro-social Behaviour**

The term pro-social behaviour highlights the socially appropriate and cooperative behaviour as well as the ability to regulate social manners. It is directly associated with school readiness and success (McClelland, Morrison [74].)
& Holmes, 2000). Since the limited social competence is a strong predictor of school failure teachers should identify the factors, which influence the pro-social behaviour of their pupils in order to increase it (Webster-Stratton, Reid & Stoolmiller, 2008).

Empathy preceeds and motivates pro-social action. Children who display empathy are likely to behave in pro-social ways, such as helping, sharing, and volunteering (Spinrad, & Eisenberg, 2009).

**Social Development in Young Children**

Since their birth, children participate in the world and socialize, primarily via the interactions with their parents. If their social exchanges are healthy, attachments i.e. connections and relationships with people are created (Pruitt, 1998). The theory of attachment (Bowlby, 1982) highlights the importance of early relationships for young children socio emotional development. According to Bowlby (1982) attachment is an evolutionary based and innate process leading to the development of a strong emotional bond between mother and child during early infancy. By 7-9 months it is well established and is evident in the anxiety that infants of this age display when separated from their mothers. A strong attachment between mother and child affects the development of emotional understanding (Kochanska, 2001a; De Rosney & Harris, 2002), pro-social behaviours, self-regulation (Kochanska, 2002; Kochanska et al., 2004) and school readiness (Belsky & Fearon, 2002). In
addition, it provides children with a safe emotional base, which may influence their future socio emotional development (Ainsworth et al., 1978).

Actually the first year of life is very critical for creating secure attachments with parents, which lead to language, social and emotional development (Raikes, 1996). Otherwise, children may experience problems in matters of socialization in their adult life (Wardle, 2003). In essence, the attachment relationship is an emotional bond a child forms with a particular attachment figure who serves as a source of comfort and security (Ainsworth, 1989). The attachment figure provides the child a secure base from which to explore the environment and to which to retrieve in times of distress (Seibert & Kerns, 2009). In an attachment relationship, a child may experience feelings of distress if separated from the attachment figure and grief if the attachment figure is permanently lost (Seibert & Kerns, 2009).

Following Bowlby (1982) all children form attachments to their mothers even if they do not receive proper care. Given the important role that attachment plays, the allocation of “key persons” to each child in preschools allows for the building of strong dyadic relationships, which in turn support children’s socio emotional development.

Attachment relationships change between early childhood and middle childhood (Bowlby, 1982; Mayseless, 2005) as the children begin to develop relationships with their peers and to spent less time with their parents.
(Mayseless, 2005). Children form multiple attachments, in a hierarchy fashion from the more important to less important (Bowlby, 1982). Although their primary attachments are to their parents, multiple attachments already exist in most children by 12–18 months of age (Webb, 1984 cited in Seibert & Kerns, 2009). Several studies (e.g., Howes, 1999; Howes & Hamilton, 1992; Howes & Oldham, 2001) have shown that children in fulltime daycare use teachers as attachment figures.

**Pro-social Skills**

During early childhood, children start becoming more independent and they learn to work together as well as to interact with other people (Berk, 2002). Their play tends to be more cooperative and so the development of social skills is facilitated (Wardle, 2003). Cooperative play is a way of interaction between children, which helps the development of pro-social, emotional, and cognitive skills (Bredekamp & Copple 1997). In addition, it allows the development of companionships, which increase the ability to understand thoughts and emotions (Berk, 2002).

Pro-social skills are the means that enable a child to interact successfully with adults and children (Wardle, 2003). Exchange, assistance and cooperation are the three forms of pro-social behaviours according to Marion (2003). Following Kostelnik *et al* (2006) the pro-social skills can be classified with reference to the areas of cooperation and helpfulness. Teachers can play an [77]
important role in the development of children’s pro-social skills. They can promote the formation of attachments by creating small groups of classmates that would allow children to develop a stable relationship with teachers and peers (Raikes, 1996). Also they can make the learning environment more friendly and attractive by providing pleasurable and interesting activities.

Developing Pro-social Skills
Vygotsky believed that language, social commitment and socialization are important tools of communication (Berk & Winsler, 1995) while Marion (2003) believed that the development of cognitive and emotional competencies is vital for the child's development

The emphasis on cooperation and not on competition facilitates the development of positive play interactions for children, and promotes the creation of adequate classroom areas where literature is used in order to enhance the care and encouragement of social interactions, even if the children have different abilities (Honig & Wittmer, 1996). Children benefit from the efficiency and the positive state of the play since this helps them to interact and stimulates their cognitive development. It is proved that preschoolers who spend more time at pretend play have an advanced intellectual development, a higher capacity for empathy, and are perceived by their teachers as socially competent (Berk & Winsler, 1995).
The development of the pro-social skills can be divided into three parts. In the recognition stage, a child should be able to understand if someone needs help. After that, the child must decide whether to help or not. Finally, a child has to act by selecting and performing an appropriate behaviour for that situation (Kostelnik et al., 1988).

Another model is the model of information processing, which focuses on the child’s intellectual abilities. According to Berk (2002) for the solution of a problem, in addition to be able to understand social rules and recall previous experiences, children must do the following activities:

- Communication from social cues
- Interpretation social cues
- Wording social objectives
- Creation possible problem solving strategies
- Assessing the probably effectiveness of strategies
- Enact response.

**Teachers’ Role**

Teachers can help children to develop the skills and the behaviours needed in order to act in a pro-social manner, by providing them with the opportunity to play and work with others, to make choices, to realize the consequences of their actions and to increase their ability to resolve conflicts (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).
Subsequently they should implement activities, which enhance the social skills of children and encourage the development of pro-social behaviours (Johnson & Johnson, 2000). In order to enable children to interact in a positive manner when playing they could promote cooperative and not competing activities, read relevant stories and encourage all children to engage in social relationships (Honig & Wittmer, 1996). As Howes and Stewart (cited in Honig & Wittmer, 1996) found children who had high-quality support by their teacher learned how to recognise and regulate emotions during play. Furthermore, teachers could provide learning activities through which the children would develop their problem solving skills. These activities should be repeated consistently, so that children realize that there are different solutions for each problem (Kostelnik et al., 2006).

Some children might need to be encouraged in order to participate in playing activities with their peers. Usually, preschoolers tend to enter groups by approaching and watching but without trying to participate. They start the activity on their own and later they start blending into the existing group, making invitations, giving or asking information, asking to join or approaching and trying to be the leader of the group (Ramsey, 1991). Thus, the teachers should form playgroups, in order to prevent anxiety and to help shy children to participate. Also, they should ensure that all children participate equally and have a distinct role in the play group (Ramsey, 1991).
Beyond that, they should help children to learn how to handle arguments, negotiate and deal with situations in a socially acceptable way (Berk, 2002). Below are presented the six steps for teaching conflict resolution, according to Marion (2003):

- Identify and define the conflict.
- Invite children to participate in solving the problem.
- Work together to resolve the problems more easily.
- Examine how well each idea might work.
- Help children to implement the solution with a plan.
- Evaluate each solution.

Furthermore, they should mediate the interference of peers in order to negotiate conflicts, since peer leaders are perceived as credible by other children. In case of conflicts they should move the children to a neutral area, and guide the conflict resolution process (Wardle, 2003).

In addition, they should encourage children to develop their self-control skills. Self-control, i.e. the ability to internally regulate our behaviour instead of depending on others (Kostelnik et al., 2006), is considered essential for the children’s social development (Marion, 2003). Children with high self-control skills are able to control their impulses, to await, to suspend action, to tolerate frustration, to put off immediate satisfaction, to start and finish a plan on time (Marion, 2003). [81]
Teachers could increase the ability of self-control by:

- using direct instruction so that the children understand how they should behave and which behaviours are considered to be inappropriate and unacceptable.
- using appropriate examples in order to enable children to distinguish right from wrong.
- enabling children to understand the consequences of their demands or actions.
- helping children to develop an internal map of emotions and experiences which would help them to respond properly to different situations (Kostelnik et al., 2006).

In essence, teachers should provide, within a curriculum that places emphasis on pro-social themes and concepts, optimal pro-social learning opportunities activities and experiences in order to increase self-esteem and respect for others (Herr et al, 2004). It is worthy to note that the Greek Preschool curriculum (e.g., PI-MNERA 2002a; PI-MNERA 2002b) places substantial emphasis on the development of pro-social themes and activities. The opportunities for pro-social skills development should be obvious to all classroom areas and emphasis should be given in the drawing activities, which are a means to express emotions but also to identify the existence of emotional problems.
Drawing/Art work

Drawing in preschool period

According to Piaget & Inhelder (1958), children's painting follows the same evolutionary course as the optical perception and the ability of the hands. The optical perception is part of the wider perceptual ability of children, the ability to recognise, comprehend and classify in their existing experiences what they have, they hear, and feel (www.ergotherapy.gr).

The development of the drawing ability with reference to the optical perception and the evolutionary course of the hand-eye coordination ability is as follows:

A. 18-month to 3-year olds infants.
   • The children recognise and distinguish colours.
   • They improve the mobility of the wrists.

The recognition of colours and their optical differentiation is a prerequisite, in order for children to start learning, at the age of 3, their names. The contact with colours starts in the same period with the development of the mobility of wrists. This mobility is an important condition for the implementation of drawing activities. Therefore children at this age, increase their ability to recognise colours and to move skillfully their wrists and fingers.

B. Age of 3-4 years.
   • The children understand optically the significant forms.
   • From the doodles in the drawings.
At this stage they start developing an important optical ability, which allows them to identify differences in forms. At the same time they start learning how to keep the pencil. The pencil is guided in ichnography by the whole arm or by the whole body. That is why it appears to turn around the page. Later they start to move properly their wrists and fingers.

C. Age of 4-7 years.
- Children develop their optical perception of space.
- Adapt their hands to moved objectives.

Initially the children learn to connect the place of an object with themselves. Slowly, through learning processes, they start to recognise the relations of various objects in the space. This ability of the optical perception of space requires the adaptation of the hand. In this stage the children ichnography details about their relations.

D. Age of 7-12 years. The children develop the:
- optical perception of the sequence of representations.
- path to writing.

However, only when the hand responds to the requirements of the activity, they are able to master the ability of writing. Painting is advisable in this age, in order to enhance the writing ability of the hand (Steele, 1997).

Recently the perceptions about disability have been shifted towards a more progressive approach, which stresses the social aspects of the construction of
disability (social model) rather than on personal limitations, as does the traditional disability approach (medical-individual model). Drawing upon the socio semiotic approach as developed by Kress and van Leeuwen, Eleftheriou et al. (2013) examined from a comparative perspective the representations about disability, which emerged from the drawings of 4th grade Greek primary school children. The sample consisted of two groups of children. Group A was not in the same school environment with children with special educational needs, while group B was at the same school environment with children with special educational needs. The comparative analysis of their drawings indicated that children of both groups reproduced the stereotypes about disability they received from their school environments.

**Drawing depicting emotions in children**

Drawing can depict several emotions of children, according to the way they draw, where they place the drawing, how much they push the pencil or the size of the drawing (Kroti & Mani, 2003).

1. Very intense and repeated fading
   - Insecurity.
   - Possible stress.
   - Possible result of chronic illness.
2. Place of drawing
   a. On the centre
      - Normal and sure individual.
      - Insecurity and rigidity when it is found precisely in the centre, particularly in the interpersonal relations.
• Tendency for self-focusing.
• Tendency for emotional behaviour
  b. On the right side of the page
• Relatively stable and checked behaviour.
• Possible tendencies for intellectualisation that may suspend the emotional expression.
  c. On the top of the page
• Possible high levels of tendency of achievement.
  d. On the bottom of the page
• Emotions of insecurity and insufficiency.
• Possible neurosis.
  e. On the top left corner
  o Intellectual delay.
• Often in the children it is used at the first classes of the primary school.
  f. On the edge of the paper top or bottom
• Possible intellectual delay.

3. Pressure on the paper
• Normal at children and particularly at boys who usually tend to press the pencil much more than the girls.
  a. Extraordinarily minimal pressure, faint lines
• Low level of energy.
• Regression.
• Likely background of deprival or rejection.

4. Size of drawing
  a. Extraordinarily big drawings
• Normal and expected by the children, unless they are above nine inches on paper with maximum size the 11 inches.
• In this case there is a possible emotional problem.
  b. Extraordinarily small drawings
• Stress
• Tendencies of withdrawal and shyness.
c. Normal for the very young children, although they can be connected with difficulties in reading. If the human figure is shorter than 2 inches, then perhaps there is an emotional problem.

5. Excessive shadowing
- Problems of emotional adaptation, even if it is considered to be normal in very young children.

6. Details
- The strange details in children imply disorganisation of personality.

7. Small disturbance of symmetry
- Is met in the children that are found in conditions of pressure and it is considered to be normal, while it is also met in children with poor adaptation and poor school success.

8. Significant disturbance in symmetry
- Obvious aggressiveness with possible neurological disturbance.
- Transparencies (Poor connection with the reality)
- Normal for young children, although in older children they imply immaturity and problems of adaptation. They have also appeared in children with organic symptoms.

The drawing of person/head

The characteristics of a person work as a basic source of aesthetic satisfaction or dissatisfaction, while are also the means of interpersonal communication (Kroti & Mani, 2003).

The head is considered to be the part of intellectual action and imagination. This is connected with the control of impetuses and emotions, with the needs of interaction with others and with communication. Adults give usually less
emphasis in the head than in other parts of the body. The elements that are being assessed are the following:

1. Extraordinarily big heads
   - Aggressive tendencies.
   - Poor emotional and social adaptation in children with school difficulties.
   - Possible stress.

The appearance of extraordinarily big heads is an expected phenomenon in the drawings of children younger than 7 years old.

2. Extraordinarily small heads
   - Are possible clues of adaptation problems in the environment.

Other elements related to the face are:

3. The exclusion of face characteristics while the rest of the body is painted is a clue of poor adaptation with possible coercions and stress.
4. The absence of the eyes shows poor adaptation with possible coercions and stress, while it has been found in cases of depression.
5. The closed eyes are a clue of emotional disturbance for children at the age of 5 or more.
6. The emphasis on the nose is normal and expected for the children of preschool and school age.
7. The emphasis generally in the face is expected by the children and particularly by the young ones. It is a clue of normal dependence of children on an adult and a hint which shows their emotional immaturity as a result of their young age.
8. The absence of mouth is a clue of possible coercions and stresses or differently it reveals shyness and tendencies for social withdrawal.
9. The teeth it is likely to exist in pictures of children with aggressive behaviour.
10. The absence of neck is expected by the younger children and a clue of poor adaptation in older children.
11. The intense shading in the neck in drawings of children older than 5 years old is a clue of emotional disturbance.

Body
1. The body in the drawing is connected with the basic impetuses. The lack of important details (shoulders, breast, middle etc.) is a clue of poor adaptation of the children in the environment during the given period.

2. The elements that are being evaluated are the following:

3. The absence of the whole body in the children of school age is a clue of poor adaptation and poor school success.

4. The drawing of genital parts in an obvious way is a clue of obvious aggressiveness, while they have also been drawn by children with serious intellectual disturbance.

5. The long, strong arms are a clue of competitive ambitions, need for achievement or need for natural strength. They also are a clue of energetic contact with the environment that possibly has also elements of aggressiveness.

6. On the contrary, the absence of arms is a clue of passive tendencies in children with poor adaptation.

7. Similarly, the very short arms show poor adaptation of child in the environment.

8. As for the fingers, the children of school age usually draw the fingers and in particular the precise numbers of these. The children with organic disturbance it has been found to draw less than 5 fingers and this is a clue of emotional insufficiency that is related with the organic problem they face.

9. The legs usually are absent in drawings of children which are shy, aggressive or present certain emotional disturbance.

10. The linked legs or these which are not clearly separated is a clue of possible emotional disturbance.
11. The emphasis given in the buttons is a normal reaction in the children of small age, while in older children it reveals dependence from the mother.

12. In the drawing of a person from children there are not expected elements of sex discrimination. However, most of the children draw the woman's head longer that the man's.

Recognition of emotional problems

1. Small drawing (dimension) shows low self-confidence. The child fears the comparison with the others and with the environment generally.

2. Big dimension (if it covers more than half the page) shows certainty and self-confidence and outgoing.

3. Regular dimension (from 8 to 18 centimeters). The increase of dimensions in the girls remains constant, while in the boys it has two critical periods, those of age 5-6 and puberty that has direct relation with the search of identity.

4. Big head is clue of self-assertion tendencies.

5. Small head is clue of painful experiences during the period of the first feed, such as feeding habits, restricted diets, gastric disturbances.

6. Longneck is a clue of need for exploration of what surrounds the children in order to be able afterwards to create with his imagination a world full of their impetuses satisfaction.

7. Long arms are a clue of need for communication, but also emotional fullness and conciliatory character, to the extent that elements of indicative aggressive tendency are absent.

8. Short arms are a clue of insecurity and shyness as for their contact with the others.

9. Big hands are a clue of need for intense and frequent (social) exchange. Possibly, however, it is also a clue of aggressiveness.
10. Long legs are a clue of need for stability and safety. If they are very long it can mean the wish of the children to grow fast in order to reach some adult they admire.

11. Short legs are a clue of robustness, certainty and natural resistance.

12. Big eyes are a clue of wish for sovereignty, curiosity even for the emotions of others. The child possibly receives negatively messages from the others.

13. Curved lines are observed in children with skills of adaptation, extrovert disposal, but also dependence on their environment acceptance.

14. Sharp lines and corners, while the child underlines the outline is a clue that the will and the insistence predominate the improvisation and the spontaneity that possibly is owed in education that gives importance in the order. Possibly, however, it is also a clue of aggressive temperament. This tendency can come in the surface by facts or situations that undermine the children’s status quo.

15. Minimal pressure is a clue of sensitivity in correspondence to the stimuli of the environment which easily are incorporated in children’s development, an element which is very important for their development, but also suspending their ability to face the cancellations.

16. Medium pressure is a clue of children’s forces balancing that is intended for the achievement of their objectives.

17. Continuous and clear management (the whole drawing has the same pressure and the same shading) is a clue that the children are available and sure for their emotions. Ability of adaptation and an open, social and calm character.

18. Alternation in the management is a clue of easy lassitude and tendency of child to be absent-minded.
Interpretation of family drawing

1. The person that is presented first in the drawing is also the person, for whom the child feels great admiration, and tries to imitate. When in the first place is the child itself, it is important to see the age of the child. As an example, when the child is at the age of 4-6, which is a phase of intense egocentricity, this is expected to happen. In other ages, it expresses a wish of child to be loved, which remains unsatisfied or insufficiently satisfied.

2. On the contrary, the placement of itself in the last place can mean either a depreciation of self or that is the place the child feels that it possesses within the family.

3. The omission of a person declares this is unacceptable by the child, while the addition of a person with whom the child does not come in daily contact, implies the need for communication in order to cover an emotional gap created by the existing familial relations.

4. The absence of the child from the picture reveals, apart from the low self-esteem of the child, a sense of isolation by the family.

5. The depiction of a person with dimensions smaller than regular implies that the child wants to decrease this person and has negative emotions towards the person mainly envy or fear.

6. The increased distance of a person concerning the proximity the others have, is related with the place of this person in the family, as perceived by the child.

7. When the hand of a person embraces the child near the neck a sense of isolation is expressed by the child.

8. The buttons in the clothes of a person can be connected with the emotional importance that this person has for the child.

9. The deletion of a person reveals an emotional conflict between the child and this person i.e. that the child feels adversity or that is maltreated and is afraid to express these emotions.
10. If a person has excessively big dimensions in comparison to the other persons in the drawing it emerges that the child considers this person to be the sovereign figure in the family or even in the heart of the child.

11. The omission either of hands or arms is a way to punish someone who the child considers to be threatening.

12. The addition of a hat in one of the persons implies the oppression the child feels to have by this person and the malaise the child feels.

13. The addition of animals that do not exist in the house indicates possibly the tendency of the child to withhold the aggressiveness that feels against certain people within the family environment.

14. The depiction of self with different sex can be a clue of that his sexual role is not acceptable and he does not feel well with his sexual identity.

15. The designing of a family consisting of animals instead of people reveals that the child does not feel member of this family or that he experiences an intense intellectual pain he does not want to revive.

16. The refusal of the child to draw the family in general is a clue of his malaise and the possible absence of emotional communication that characterizes it.

17. The depiction of the family in a frame shows that the child experiences in a very strict way the education he receives and very intensely the control on his intellectual world (sentiments, compulsions, thoughts).

Bonoti & Metallidou (2010) investigated possible age differences in the drawing performance of preschool and primary school children, as well as differences in the metacognitive experiences that are activated prior and after the process of drawing. The sample consisted of 222 participants of both genders, aged between 4 to 12 years. They were asked to produce four drawings, with different levels of complexity and to rate each drawing on a four-point scale the frequency of drawing similar themes and their sense of
difficulty. After the drawing activity they were asked to estimate again the degree of difficulty they experienced and the degree of satisfaction about their drawing and the accuracy of it. The results indicated that drawing performance was positively correlated with age. This was not the case thought for the metacognitive experiences. Quite on the contrary, it was found a significant decrease in their satisfaction with the drawing and with their assessment of accuracy of the drawings, especially after the second grade.

Another study of Bonoti & Misailidi (2015) examined the children’s ability to convey social emotions in their human figure drawings. One hundred children aged 4, 6 and 8 years were asked to draw a person experiencing shame, pride, jealousy, happiness, sadness and fear as well as a baseline figure ‘feeling nothing’. Drawings were rated in terms of overall emotional expressiveness and variety and types (i.e. face, body posture and context) of graphic cues used to convey emotion. The effect of age on overall expressiveness and use of these graphic cues was also investigated. The results showed that drawings depicting social emotions were rated as less expressive and presented fewer graphic cues than those conveying basic emotions. Children’s developing ability to depict pride, shame and jealousy was largely driven by an increased use of contextual cues in their human figure drawings. As far as the effect of age is concerned, it was found that 6 and 8 years old produced more expressive drawings containing a larger range of graphic cues than the 4 years old.
Drake and Winner (2013) examined two ways in which drawing may function in order to elevate mood in children venting (*expressing negative feelings*) and distraction (*expressing something unrelated to the negative feelings*). They examined the effectiveness of drawing as an emotion regulator when drawing is used to vent versus distract (Study 1) and tested whether the effects found are specific to the activity of creating one’s own drawing or generalizable to a drawing activity in which children had to copy another’s drawing (Study 2). To induce a negative mood, they asked children to think of a disappointing event. Mood was assessed before and after the assigned activity. In both studies, mood improved significantly more in the distract rather than in the vent or copy condition. Study 1 demonstrated that drawing improves mood in children via distraction and not via venting. Study 2 demonstrated that this effect is specific to a drawing task in which an image is freely constructed. When a copying task was used, the effect disappeared.
Synopsis

In sum, from the present literature search it emerges that poor socio emotional adjustment impedes the development school readiness. In addition, it emerges that storytelling might increase their socio emotional adjustment and subsequently their school readiness. Since the impact of storytelling has not been widely searched especially in children of different levels of ability the following investigation has been carried out in order to gain more evidence about the impact of storytelling in preschoolers of diverse levels of learning difficulties and abilities.
Chapter 2 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the aim and rationale of the study and the research questions are presented. Further the method of the study, as well as the research tools, their strengths and weaknesses, are discussed. The last sections of this chapter describe the research procedure, the time frame and also ethical issues specific to the current study.

Aim

The aim of the present investigation was to assess the impact of the storytelling on children of preschool age with different levels of emotional and behavioural skills and cognitive abilities.

Research questions

The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Does storytelling contribute to the development of participants’ emotional understanding and management?

2. Does storytelling have a positive impact on participants' social adjustment regardless of the level of their school readiness?
3. *Does storytelling have a positive impact on the socio emotional organisation of participants regardless of their academic ability?*

4. *Does storytelling have a positive impact on participants regardless of the level of their learning difficulties?*

**Hypothesis**

The main hypothesis guiding this study is that storytelling (independent variable) has a positive impact on the aforementioned independent variables (e.g. emotional understanding, socio emotional organization)

H₀ Storytelling has no impact on the dependent variables

H₁ Storytelling has a positive impact on the dependent variables

**Method**

The chosen method for the present study is the quasi experimental research design. This allows the researcher to define changes at the individual level and is considered an appropriate method when a study aims to assess the impact of a didactic activity (Papanastasiou & Papanastasiou, 2014) like storytelling. The use of the experimental design secures the credibility and reliability of the results (Mellon, 2007) drawn from the data collected about the ability levels of the participants prior and after the experiment.

The credibility of the results of this experimental procedure is considered to be high because it compares the individual performance of each participant prior and after the experiment (Cooper *et al.*, 2007). Thus the impact of the independent variable (i.e. storytelling) on the dependent ones (e.g. emotional
management, emotional organisation) can be assessed (Kazdin, 1982). In this way, this procedure certifies the fact that the modification of the depended variable is real and that each participant is subject to the influence of the independent variable and not to the influence of parasitic variables (Kazdin, 1982).

The absence of a control group, i.e. a group of children to whom the experiment did not take place, for comparison purposes, is not a problem since the data collected during the pre experimental phase play the same role as the control group in the real experimental design i.e. an objective measure about the impact of the independent variable after the experiment (Cooper et al., 2007).

However, there are the following problems to consider when doing research with young children. The first problem is that young children tend to show more interest and enthusiasm in order to please the researcher (Papanastasiou & Papanastasiou, 2014). As part of their social development often display the wish to please adults and therefore may give answers accordingly (Hughes and Greive, 1981). In order to avoid that, the researcher followed in the interviews the recommendations of Spencer and Flin (1990).

The second problem is that at this age children mature very quickly (maturation variable). Thus if the procedure is time consuming one is not certain if progress can be attributed entirely to the didactic activity or to the
maturation variable (Papanstasiou & Papanastasiou, 2014). The impact of this parasitic variable in the present experiment was limited since the time needed to carry out the experiment (five weeks) was reasonably long.

Data collection tools

Qualitative data was collected with interviews and drawings and quantitative with the evaluation lists.

Interviews

Both in the pre and post experimental phase semi-structured interviews were carried out with close questions. Participants were asked to state how they managed each one of the emotions depicted in the stories prior and after the storytelling for each emotion. In this way it could be assessed whether storytelling had an impact on their management of emotions. In harmony with the recommendations of Spencer & Flin (1990) for optimizing responses from children the researcher used unambiguous and comprehensive instructions at the start of the interview, avoided leading questions, and allowed I do not know responses.

Drawings

In order to assess whether storytelling had an impact on the understanding of emotions participants were asked to draw the relevant emotions prior and after each storytelling activity.

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Evaluation lists

In order to collect the quantitative data regarding the participants’ age levels the following data collection tools, which are supplied by the Cross Thematic Curriculum of the Greek Ministry of Education (PI-MNERA, 2002b):

1. Systematic Empirical Observation: These are observation protocols, which refer on the personal, family and educational history of participants, were filled.

2. Informal Pedagogical Evaluation:
   a) Basic Skills Checklists – Learning Readiness: Oral skills, Psychomotricity, Intellectual abilities and skills, Emotional self management.
   b) Curriculum Framework for Special Education – CFSE: School Readiness, Basic Academic Skills, Social Skills, Creative activities and Skills, Pre-Professional Readiness.
   c) General Learning Difficulties: Language Skills, Readiness Skills, Mathematical Skills, Behaviour Skills.

3. Individual Educational Programme (IEP).
4. Evaluation of the individual educational programme (IEP).

These lists are used in order to provide quantitative data about the children’s level of attainment. In addition, the researcher was given access to documentary evidence i.e. the participants’ portfolios, which included previous drawings and documents about their learning difficulties and behavioural problems.
However, instead of collecting the information needed solely from the teachers’ own assessments of the children’s progress the researcher chose to collect authentic data by observing children directly against the set criteria of the lists. As Cohen et al (2008) suggest with the observation the researcher is allowed to gather ‘live’ data in a naturally occurring situation and so to look directly at what is happening in situ rather than to rely on second-hand accounts. As Robson (2002) suggests with observation the researcher is enabled to focus on what is actually happening rather than on what may be expected to be happening.

The process was the same across each participant and the assessment criteria were the same according to the curricular framework being used.

In terms of children reaching particular targets of attainment there may be assumptions about what they ‘can do,’ which are only clearly identified through means of observation. For this reason observation is an inherent part of assessment within the protocols of the Greek Ministry of Education and is recommended to continue across the preschool years.

In order to fill these lists the researcher relied on participatory observation. In the experimental research design reliability of observations is secured by the presence of an independent observer. If the agreement of the observers’ ratings is high then procedure is considered highly reliable (Gena, 2002). This rule can be followed in the highly sterilized clinical settings where two
researchers observe in parallel one child with the use of a mirror room. But in a real life setting like the one in which the experiment took place such optimal conditions do not exist. Thus the researcher had to follow closely the guidelines of participatory observation in order to secure the reliability of her observations.

The evidence being observed was that provided by the assessment criteria from the curriculum. These provided a structure to the observation method since the researcher knew in advance what to look for. In addition, it allowed a prepared observation schedule to be created so that observations were recorded at the time of occurrence rather than at a later date.

A participant observer technique was adopted by the researcher whereby she was seated at work tables, playing, and painting alongside the children and participating in their activities, allowing conversation to flow naturally. This was accommodated by moving around the ability group tables that children were working at.

Participant observation was deemed to be particularly suitable since the researcher’s prime interest was in gathering detailed information over a period of time and recording what was happening whilst taking an active role in the situation. In the school environment the researcher role was similar to that of other professionals in the classroom who work alongside children to record levels of attainment.
For these reasons the observations took the following format:

- working with small groups of participants (individual attainment was recorded)
- all observations took place in the classroom environment since this is not a threatening environment for the participants
- the researcher adopted a participant role in line with the role of the teacher
- children were prompted to interact with each other as is the normal practice in classroom activities
- at the beginning of the first observed session participants were informed that the researcher would be working with some of them.

All of this corresponded to suggestions made by Patton (1990) that the researcher should enter and understand the situation being observed.

**Participants**

Twelve preschool pupils (aged 4.9 years) coming from different socioeconomic backgrounds participated in this experimental study. Six were boys and six girls.

**Panagiota**

Family background

She has a twin sister (Dimitra), who attends the same class and participated in the experiment too. Both her parents are employed. Her father is a freelancer, and her mother a private employee. Unlike the father who never came to the school meetings the mother was very willing to cooperate and highly informative.
Difficulties
Panagiota has difficulties in her psycho-motor skills. Only her rough movement is at the level that it should be according to her age, while her orientation, rhythm and time, siding and optical memory skills are limited. Her intellectual abilities and her emotional organisation should be at higher levels as well. Only her focusing is at a satisfying level.

**Elisabeth**

Family background
Both her parents are employed. Her father is a freelancer and her mother an employee in the private sector. I have never had the opportunity to meet the father, and the mother never gave me any important information about the quality of life of the child at home. Elisabeth has no brothers or sisters.

Difficulties
All her skills, except her cooperation skills, are sufficiently developed. This might be attributed to the fact that being the only child in the family she is accustomed to be the constant centre of attention but she lacks the opportunity to play with other children, to share and to cooperate.

**Konstantinos**

Family background
Konstantinos has one sister and both his parents are working as employees in the private sector. I met his mother only during his first day at school. I never
met his father though since he never came to the school in order to see how the child is doing.

Difficulties
Konstantinos has difficulties in following instructions and in taking part in discussions.

Dimitra
Family background
Dimitra is Panagiota’s twin sister. As aforementioned, her father is a freelancer has never come to meet him and her mother is very willing to cooand informative.

Difficulties
Dimitra faces difficulties in the areas of oral speech and psycho-motor abilities.

Christina
Family background
Both her parents work. Her father is a psychotherapist and her mother a private employee. Her mother never came at school, but her father is very kind and informative. Christina has one younger sister.
Difficulties
Sometimes she becomes very aggressive. However, she has no problem at cooperating and she is very helpful. Her father attributes her aggression at home to the fact that she is very jealous of her little sister. Similarly she becomes aggressive at school when I speak to another child near to her. Thus it can be suggested that her aggression serves a communicative function i.e. attention seeking behaviour.

_Nestoras_

Family background
Both his parents are employed. His mother is an English teacher and she is not very willing to discuss about her son and offer information. His father is a civil servant and is more cooperative and discussable than his mother. Nestoras has three siblings.

Difficulties
Nestoras faces difficulties in the area of emotional organisation.

_Pinelopi_

Family background
Both her parents are working. Her father is a private employee and her mother is a teacher. They are both cooperative and willing to discuss the problems of their daughter. Pinelopi has a younger sister.
Difficulties
Her only difficulties are in the ability to separate the right from the left.

**Alexandros**

Family background
Both his parents are employed. His mother is a civil servant and his father is a freelancer. They are both cooperative and willing to discuss. Alexandros has one brother.

Difficulties
His intellectual level is at the same level with his age but his ability to concentrate is limited.

**Victoria**

Family background
Her father is a freelancer and her mother is unemployed. Victoria’s mother did not offer any important information while her father is willing to discuss and cooperate. Victoria has a younger sister.

Difficulties
Victoria sometimes becomes violent, but she hasn’t any other problems.
**Aris**

Family background

Aris has one sister. His father is a painter and his mother is unemployed. Both parents are cooperative and willing to discuss the problems of their son.

Difficulties

Aris has difficulties in oral speech, psycho-motor and intellectual abilities.

**Stavros**

Family background

Stavros has no siblings. His father is a freelancer and his mother is unemployed. His mother is very friendly and discussable, while his father never came to the meetings.

Difficulties

Stavros has difficulties in the areas of oral speech, psycho-motor and intellectual abilities as well as in emotional organisation.

**Panagiotis**

Family background

Panagiotis has no siblings. His father is a private employee, while his mother is occasionally employed. His mother is friendly and discussable but very worried about him, while his father never came at school.
Difficulties

Panagiotis has difficulties in the areas of emotional organisation, oral speech and intellectual abilities.

In sum as is shown in Table 2 the parents of five participants work both in private sector. Three families have a mixed income while four participants have one parent unemployed.

It has to be noted that parents who worked in the private sector do not have a lot of time available to spend with their children. As far as parents who are unemployed are concerned due to economic constraints and stress experienced they might not be able to pay the necessary attention to their children or even to behave appropriately towards them.

Table 2 indicates too that parents were not equally willing and interested about the development of their children. It is worthy to mention that, Nestoras’ mother was very unwilling until the end of the experiment while Panagiotis’ mother remained very worried and unwilling to apply the procedure at home to help her child. Both mothers avoided to explain why they were unwilling.

Table 2: Family background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PARENTS’ JOB</th>
<th>PARENTS’ INTEREST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PANAGIOTA</td>
<td>Father: freelancer</td>
<td>Mother: very willing and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother: private employee</td>
<td>informative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Father: never came</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As far as the presence of siblings in the participants' families is concerned as is shown in Table 3, all participants except three have siblings. From those without siblings only Elizabeth is very ego-centric maybe because being the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELISABETH</th>
<th>Father: private employee</th>
<th>Mother: freelancer</th>
<th>Father: never came</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KONSTANTINOS</td>
<td>Father: private employee</td>
<td>Mother: private employee</td>
<td>Mother: came only the first day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIMITRA</td>
<td>Father: freelancer</td>
<td>Mother: private employee</td>
<td>Father: never came</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHRISTINA</td>
<td>Father: physiotherapist</td>
<td>Mother: private employee</td>
<td>Father: very kind and informative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NESTORAS</td>
<td>Father: public employee</td>
<td>Mother: English teacher</td>
<td>Mother: not willing for discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PINELOPI</td>
<td>Father: private employee</td>
<td>Mother: teacher</td>
<td>Both are cooperative and willing to discuss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALEXANDROS</td>
<td>Father: freelancer</td>
<td>Mother: public employee</td>
<td>Both are cooperative and willing to discuss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICTORIA</td>
<td>Father: freelancer</td>
<td>Mother: unemployed</td>
<td>Father: discussable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARIS</td>
<td>Father: painter</td>
<td>Mother: unemployed</td>
<td>They are both cooperative and willing to discuss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAVROS</td>
<td>Father: freelancer</td>
<td>Mother: unemployed</td>
<td>Mother: very friendly and willing to discuss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANAGIOTIS</td>
<td>Father: private employee</td>
<td>Mother: occasional job</td>
<td>Mother: very worried, but friendly and discussable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[111]
only child in the family she is accustomed to attract her parents' attention in order to get what she wants. Thus her cooperative skills are not developed at an appropriate level.

Table 3: Siblings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>SIBLINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PANAGIOTA</td>
<td>1 twin sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELISABETH</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KONSTANTINOS</td>
<td>1 sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIMITRA</td>
<td>1 twin sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHRISTINA</td>
<td>1 sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NESTORAS</td>
<td>3 siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PINELUPI</td>
<td>1 sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALEXANDROS</td>
<td>1 brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICTORIA</td>
<td>1 sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARIS</td>
<td>1 sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAVROS</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANAGIOTIS</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As far as the difficulties are concerned as is shown in Table 4, all participants face difficulties, which range from severe to moderate. Five participants have difficulties in all their abilities, while two i.e. Elizabeth and Victoria have only behavioural difficulties.

Table 4: Difficulties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DIFFICULTIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PANAGIOTA</td>
<td>In oral speech, psycho-motor skills, intellectual abilities and emotional organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELISABETH</td>
<td>Sufficient development in all of her skills, except the cooperative skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KONSTANTINOS</td>
<td>In following instructions and in taking part in discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIMITRA</td>
<td>Difficulties in oral speech and psycho-motor skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHRISTINA</td>
<td>Very aggressive sometimes, no problem at cooperation, very helpful, jealous of her sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NESTORAS</td>
<td>Difficulties in emotional organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PINELOPI</td>
<td>Difficulties only in separating right and left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALEXANDROS</td>
<td>Sufficient development in all of his skills except the cooperative ones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICTORIA</td>
<td>Behaviour outbursts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARIS</td>
<td>Difficulties in oral speech, psycho-motor skills and intellectual abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAVROS</td>
<td>Difficulties in oral speech, psycho-motor skills, intellectual abilities and emotional organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANAGIOTIS</td>
<td>Difficulties in emotional organisation, oral speech and intellectual abilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Procedure**

During baseline the researcher interacted individually with each participant, observed their behaviour and assessed all participants in the following areas:

1. Oral speech skills
   1.1 Listening comprehension
   1.2 Participation to dialogue
   1.3 Expressive abilities (accuracy and precision).
2. Psycho-motor skills
   2.1 General and final motor abilities
   2.2 Spatial Orientation
   2.3 Time organisation
   2.4 Laterality
3. Intellectual Abilities and skills
   3.1 Visual Memory
   3.2 Auditory Memory

[113]
3.3 Working Memory

3.4 Attention & Concentration

3.5 Mathematical Reasoning

3.6 Perceptual Skills

4. Emotional Organisation

4.1 Level of pro-social and emotional skills (a sense of self-esteem and self-confidence)

4.2 Interest towards learning

4.3 Cooperation with others (this was assessed mainly by observing the participants’ cooperative skills during play activities e.g. toy sharing, respecting the rules of cooperative games)

This phase lasted one week. It was repeated too after the experiment took place to see if there were any differences.

**Experimental phase**

The experimental phase lasted 5 weeks. During this time period all participants attended the storytelling in groups of six. Thus there were held two sessions every week. This is 10 sessions in total. Each session lasted 45 minutes.

In the experimental phase five stories (see Appendix 1) were narrated to participants and relevant pictures and classical music accompanied the
The researcher thought of using the music as a way to signal the beginning and the end of the storytelling activity. In her previous experience music helps children to concentrate and to feel more at ease with novel activities. The music used was familiar to participants and it was the same for all the five stories in order not to influence participants’ moods in relation to each story. During the 15 minutes of storytelling, the participants were listening carefully and were observing the pictures of each book, recognising sometimes themselves in the stories.

The first story that was narrated to the participants was the “When I am Jealous”. This taught them the emotion of jealousness. The second week, the book “When I am angry”, which refers to anger was narrated. The third book was the “When I am sad”, explaining sadness, the fourth was “When I am scared”, which refers to fear, and the last one was “When I miss you”, which refers to the feeling of missing a person or a thing.

It is worthy to note that participants selected the story they wanted. Most selected the story that fitted to their emotions.

During the conduction process each child had 40-45 minutes available in order to familiarize with the story. Each child was given a blank page to draw a picture prior and after the experiment.
Discussion

After the end of each storytelling we were discussing the plot and the participants were trying to understand the meaning of each emotion. They were trying to express each emotion with their face and body language and they were giving examples based on their own personal experiences and vocabulary. After the discussion, all participants were asked to draw a picture about each emotion. They were given the same instructions and they were asked to draw pictures about each emotion two times in each week, since we were talking about the same emotion twice. It is interesting to note that many participants drew different pictures each time. This indicates that they had been influenced by the story.

Activities

Before the experiment they were asked to draw something related to the title of the story and write the title on the top of the page if they wanted (15 minutes). After the drawing, the storytelling followed (15 minutes). This process was ending with one more drawing, which was related with the story (15 minutes). Moreover, there was a variety of group activities, such as finding pictures related to the emotion in old fairy tales, music and dancing with songs about emotions, creating faces with plasticine, painting of emotions with different colours, imitation of emotions, free dance on their own (shyness) or with other participants (friendship). All these activities aimed at the better comprehension of the emotions and their value in their everyday life.
Every time we were all sitting in the circle for the storytelling. Sometimes it was difficult to keep quiet, due to some participants that were ignoring me and wanted to be the centre of attention. When everyone was ready, I was starting reading the story and I was showing the relevant pictures simultaneously. With the end of the storytelling, I was asking questions about the story. Then, I was asking them to draw a picture about each emotion by using the same instruction regardless of their level.

**Assessment**

In the pre experimental phase participants were asked about the following emotions prior and after the experiment: jealousy, anger, fear, sadness and the emotion of missing someone. In addition, prior to each session each participant was asked to draw a picture based on the emotional concepts that were used (5 in total).

For example, for the assessment of the perception of the emotion of ‘jealousy’, which is described in the book named ‘When I am jealous, each participant was asked to draw a picture about jealousy prior to the experiment. Each participant had 15 minutes available to her/his disposal in order to draw the picture. After the collection of the drawings, the story related to jealousy was read to all participants. Emphasis was given on the plot of the story since the heroes of the story are encountering situations related to jealousy. It has to be noted too, that each participant was given the opportunity to watch the pictures of the story while listening to it. The storytelling activity lasted [117]
approximately 15 minutes. Then, each participant was given the same instruction, i.e. in the present case ‘Draw a picture about jealousy’ and had 15 minutes available in order to complete the post storytelling drawing.

After that, changes in the individual pre and post storytelling drawings were searched in order to determine whether storytelling had an impact on the participants’ perceptions of emotions. The pre and post storytelling drawings were assessed in harmony with the criteria of Mani and Kroti (2003), which are mentioned in the review of the literature.

**Setting**

The particular study took place in a state preschool, where the researcher works as preschool teacher and six of the selected participants were among her pupils in the class she was newly appointed. It has to been noted that the use of new technologies was not allowed in this school. Thus, the researcher had to rely on the use of books about emotions.

**Time frame**

The data were collected during the school year 2011-2012 in sessions with the preschool participants, in groups of six, twice a week with the help of new
technologies (video). The data were registered arithmetically with respect to private issues protected by ethics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>Collection of the pre-experimental quantitative data</td>
<td>one week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Experimental phase</td>
<td>five weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Collection of the post-experimental quantitative data</td>
<td>one week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ethical issues**

Obtaining voluntary and informed consent is a necessary component of all research (Agre & Rapkin, 2003) and not a time-limited event but a continuous process to all stages of the research (van den Hoonaar, 2002). This ensures that parents understand the aims of the research project, its potential risks and benefits as well the expected outcomes (Agre & Rapkin, 2003; van den Hoonaar, 2002).

The researcher took all reasonable steps to ensure that participants were not placed into substantial disadvantage for the purpose of the experiment. Both parents of each participant were informed about the aim of the research and gave their consent by signing the ethics approval form (see Appendix 5). The children had the right to withdraw at any time and in this case their data will not be included in the investigation. Confidentiality of information, research findings and results were a top priority and both parents were not forced to provide information about their children.

[119]
Chapter 3 Results

The fourth chapter, Results, presents the results, prior and after the experiment, with reference to each research question. The results are presented in tables and in graphs in order to ease their visual control. Following Brossart et al., (2006) the results of the experimental designs can be assessed reliably with the visual control of the graphic presentation of the data as long as the researcher tries to be objective and to avoid subjective judgments or desires. The researcher tried to follow this guideline in the following analysis of the results.

Research question 1

*Does storytelling contribute to the development of participants’ emotional understanding and management?*

In order to define the contribution of storytelling, the potential changes in the participants’ replies and in their drawings about emotions were assessed.

Management of emotions

Pre experimental replies

Table 5 summarises participants’ replies (*see Appendix, 3*) to the five emotions prior the experiment. It is worthy to note that both Christina and Victoria were jealous of their little sister, while Stavros and Konstantinos did not reply to all the emotions.
Table 5. Pre experimental replies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHEN I'M JEALOUS</th>
<th>WHEN I'M ANGRY</th>
<th>WHEN I'M SAD</th>
<th>WHEN I'M SCARED</th>
<th>WHEN I MISS YOU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIMITRA</td>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>I don’t talk to anyone</td>
<td>I feel sad</td>
<td>I want my dad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANAGIOTA</td>
<td>Of mum</td>
<td>I go to mum</td>
<td>I want my mum</td>
<td>I hug my mum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHRISTINA</td>
<td>I'm jealous of the baby</td>
<td>It is baby's fault</td>
<td>Because grandma is missing</td>
<td>I'm in the living room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICTORIA</td>
<td>The baby is ugly and is crying all the time</td>
<td>I throw baby's toys</td>
<td>It is baby's fault</td>
<td>I'm not scared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELISABETH</td>
<td>I’m the best and the prettiest</td>
<td>I scream</td>
<td>I don’t care</td>
<td>I have my doll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PENELOPE</td>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>I am sad</td>
<td>I cry</td>
<td>I turn the light on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARIS</td>
<td>Dad’s tattoo</td>
<td>I cry a lot</td>
<td>I go to dad</td>
<td>I have guns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALEXANDROS</td>
<td>The airplanes</td>
<td>I rip my books</td>
<td>I play with my toys</td>
<td>It is not my fault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NESTORAS</td>
<td>The big brothers</td>
<td>I get mad</td>
<td>I want my little toy-boy</td>
<td>I call my mum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAVROS</td>
<td>The gun I saw</td>
<td>I sit down</td>
<td></td>
<td>I want my mum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KONSTANTINOS</td>
<td>Danae</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANAGIOTIS</td>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>I get mad</td>
<td>I get sad</td>
<td>I’m scared</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Post experimental replies

As shown in Table 6, all participants have changed their answers after the experiment. The comparison of the pre and post experimental replies of the 12 participants indicates significant changes in the management of emotions. Most participants can now control their emotions with doing something else instead of being jealous or mad and Elisabeth appears to be less selfish.
Table 6. Post experimental replies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>WHEN I'M JEALOUS</th>
<th>WHEN I'M ANGRY</th>
<th>WHEN I'M SAD</th>
<th>WHEN I'M SCARED</th>
<th>WHEN I MISS YOU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIMITRA</td>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>I call my mum</td>
<td>I don't play</td>
<td>I want a hug</td>
<td>I draw you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANAGIOTA</td>
<td>Your blouse</td>
<td>I don't play any more</td>
<td>I go to bed</td>
<td>I listen to thunders</td>
<td>I cry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHRISTINA</td>
<td>I think of a big fire</td>
<td>I don't talk to mum</td>
<td>I play with the dolls</td>
<td>I want my dad</td>
<td>I want to hug you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICTORIA</td>
<td>I don't play with the baby</td>
<td>I want what I want</td>
<td>I don't like it</td>
<td>I'm not scared</td>
<td>I think of my mum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELISABETH</td>
<td>I don't care</td>
<td>I don't get mad anymore</td>
<td>I help my mum</td>
<td>I have my mum</td>
<td>I think of you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PENELlope</td>
<td>I'm not jealous</td>
<td>I tell it to mum</td>
<td>I tell it</td>
<td>I tell it to my aunt</td>
<td>I draw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARIS</td>
<td>I play with my balls</td>
<td>I fight with Athena</td>
<td>I don't talk</td>
<td>I want the light</td>
<td>I phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALEXANDROS</td>
<td>The toys</td>
<td>I shout it</td>
<td>I play with my ball at the garden</td>
<td>I will call dad</td>
<td>I cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NESTORAS</td>
<td>I play at the garden</td>
<td>I tell it to dad in the evening</td>
<td>I remember my granddad</td>
<td>It rains heavily</td>
<td>I don't want to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAVROS</td>
<td>A baby</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>I am very sad</td>
<td>It has a rainstorm</td>
<td>I am not alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KONSTANTINOS</td>
<td>The colour pens</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>Dad who is working</td>
<td>I stop playing</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANAGIOTIS</td>
<td>I'm not jealous</td>
<td>I don't play</td>
<td>For the sweet it fell down</td>
<td>I cry a lot</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, progress was noted in the ability to control the emotions. For example, Elisabeth stated that she does not get mad anymore and Christina stated that she can control her jealousness by thinking something else. All that indicates that storytelling helped them to handle their emotions. [123]
The parents of the participants reported that their children enjoyed the storytelling experiment. Also, that they were pleasantly surprised because their children wanted to engage at storytelling with them at home.

Understanding of emotions

The assessment of the pre and post experimental drawings (for an example of drawings see Appendix 4) with the criteria of Kroti and Mani (2003), indicated positive changes for all participants. These were sustained in a follow up drawing, which was carried out three months later.

Research Question 2

Does storytelling have a positive impact on participants' social adjustment regardless of the level of their school readiness?

Phase I Pre experimental data

Table 7 presents the data collected prior the experiment and refer to the knowledge, behavioural and emotional level of participants, according to which come out three different groups of participants. The yellow colour in the tables refers to skills at a level according to child’s age, the blue colour refers to below average levels and the red colour refers to higher levels. In accordance with the colours are the numbers in the tables which show how many semesters below or higher than participants’ age level are their skills.
As is shown in Table 7 (see below) Panagiota’s oral speech is about 2 semesters below average. Konstantinos, are below average too. Aris’ oral speech and psycho-motor skills are below average but his intellectual abilities and emotional organisation are at a better level and only his auto-emotion, his logical and mathematical thinking and his working memory need to be improved. Dimitra needs to improve her oral speech and psycho-motor skills, which are below the average level. However, her intellectual abilities are at an appropriate level and that her auto-emotion skills are higher than average.

Stavros needs to improve his oral speech, psycho-motor and emotional organisation skills. His intellectual skills are at an age appropriate level. Panagiotis’ optical memory, his listening memory, his logical-mathematical thinking and his auto-emotion are at a sufficient level. The rest of his skills are 2 or 3 semesters below his age. Christina’s skills are at a sufficient level and only her orientation, siding and working memory are a little below average.

Nestoras has problems on his rough movement, his rhythm and time and his siding, but not at a serious level. However, he has some more serious problems in the participation to dialogues, auto-emotion, and cooperation skills as well as to his interest for the lesson. Alexandros’ skills are at a satisfying level. He has some problems though at the siding ability, the working memory and the ability to focus. However, a declination of a semester is not considered a problem that it cannot be resolved. Elisabeth’s participation in dialogue, expression of herself, rough movement and auto-

[125]
emotion skills are above the average level, while her logical and mathematical thinking and cooperation with others have to improve.

Pinelopi’s skills are above her age level. Only her siding has a declination of one semester. Victoria’s skills are to a level similar to Pinelopi’s except her oral speech and psycho-motor skills. Her intellectual abilities and emotional organisation skills have a declination of 2 or 3 semesters.

**Table 7: School readiness’ level prior to the experiment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EMOTIONAL ORGANISATION</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1) oral speech</td>
<td>(2) psycho-motor skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Participation in dialogue</td>
<td>Express themselves with clarity</td>
<td>Rough movement</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Rhythm and time</td>
<td>Siding</td>
<td>Optical memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANAGIOTA</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELISABETH</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KONSTANTINOS</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHRISTINA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NESTORAS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARIS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALEXANDROS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PINELOPi</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICTORIA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Listening memory</td>
<td>Working memory</td>
<td>Focusing</td>
<td>Logical-mathematical thinking</td>
<td>Auto-emotion</td>
<td>Interest for the lesson</td>
<td>Cooperation with others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIMITRA</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAVROS</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANAGIOTIS</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) intellectual abilities

(4) emotional organisation
As it can be seen in Table 7, most participants have their listening memory (9) and optical memory (8), as well as their ability to focus (8) at an age appropriate level. On the other hand, almost all participants have limited skills in the areas of siding, participation in dialogue and cooperation with others. Additionally, most participants have limitations in the areas of orientation, rhythm and time.

In harmony with their level participants were classified in three groups, the below average group, the average group and the above average group.

The below average group includes six participants namely Panagiota, Konstantinos, Dimitra, Stavros, Aris, and Panagiotis. The average group includes three participants namely Christina, Nestoras and Alexandros and the above average group includes three participants: Elisabeth, Penelope, and Victoria.

**Average group**

As is shown in graph 1 participants skills are a little under the expected level. More specifically, Alexandros’ skills are at a good point, with his siding, working memory and focusing being 2 semesters below average than his age and his rough movement 1 semester below average.
Christina’s skills are sufficiently developed but she needs to improve her orientation, siding (as she can’t recognise right and left) and working memory skills. In general Nestoras’ skills are at a good level. However, his participation in dialogue, auto-emotion, interest for the lesson and cooperation need to increase.

Graph 1: School readiness pre experimental data for average pupils
Below average group

The six participants of this group have most of their skills well below average. Aris’ most skills need improvement and priority should be given to his auto-emotion which is his less developed skill.

Panagiota's level of skills is similar to that of Stavros. Stavros' participation in dialogue and self-expression is limited. This could be attributed to his bilingual background. His mother is Italian and she tries to make him learn both Greek and Italian. Consequently, he doesn’t speak clearly both languages.

They both need improvement in almost all of their skills. Only their rough movement and their interest for the lesson are at the appropriate level which is higher than the level of Konstantinos whose skills are at a level below average. Dimitra’s auto-emotion, interest for the lesson and ability to cooperate with others are sufficiently developed, while her self-expression is at a very low level, having a declination of 3 semesters. This may be attributed to the fact that both her parents have highly demanding jobs, which do not allow them to have enough time to interact with her in order to enable her to express herself. Panagiotis’ developmental level is similar to Aris’ and slightly higher than the level of Konstantinos. His has more than half of his skills below average, with a declination of 2 or 3 semesters. Only his optical memory, listening memory, logical-mathematical thinking and auto-emotion are at an age appropriate level.
Graph 2: School readiness pre experimental data for below average pupils

**Above average group**

This includes the participants whose skills are more developed than they are expected to be according to their age. Pinelopi, for example is the participant with the most developed skills. Half of her skills are at a higher level than they were expected to be. Elisabeth’s development is almost equal to Pinelopi’s. Victoria’s skills are at a satisfactory level with the exemption of her ability to cooperate.
Graph 3: School readiness pre experimental data for above average pupils

Research question 2 post experimental data

Table 8 summarises the data collected after the experiment. As is shown in Table 8 there has been an improvement. Specifically, Elisabeth has improved her listening ability and her optical memory, Christina has some improvement in her listening ability, in participation in dialogue, in optical memory, in expressing herself with clarity, in cooperation with others and in the interest for the lesson. Alexandros improved his siding ability.

Table 8: School readiness post experimental data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMOTIONAL ORGANISATION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) oral speech</td>
<td>(2) psycho-motor</td>
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### (3) intellectual abilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Working memory</th>
<th>focusing</th>
<th>Logical-mathematical thinking</th>
<th>Auto-emotion</th>
<th>Interest for the lesson</th>
<th>Cooperation with others</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PANAGIOTA</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELISABETH</td>
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<td>+1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KONSTANTIN OS</td>
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</table>

### (4) emotional organisation

<p>| | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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</table>
More analytically with reference to each group of participants there can be noted the following.

Average group

After storytelling the members of this group, were more willing to participate in dialogue and they could express themselves with much more clarity. Also their cooperation skills improved.
Graph 4 School Readiness post experimental data for average group.

Below average group

Storytelling has been particularly effective for all members of this group and helped them to improve their skills. It is especially worthy to note that Panagiotas’ ability at focusing increased by four semesters. This indicates that storytelling attracted her attention.
Graph 5. School Readiness post experimental data for below average group.

The logico-mathematical ability of Stavros increased too, by two semesters.

Above average group

Even these more able participants were influenced positively by the storytelling.

In sum, the results indicate changes in all groups. For example, Elisabeth had an increase in orientation and siding by six semesters while Penelopi had an
increase of one semester in the interest for the lesson and in the participation to dialogue.

Graph 6. School readiness post experimental data for above average group.

**Research question 3** Does storytelling have a positive impact on the socio emotional organisation of participants regardless of their academic ability?

**Pre experimental data**

**Special education activities**

As is shown in Table 8 almost all participants have problems in the areas of emotional organisation, psycho-motor, arts and writing skills, while more than [137]
half of the participants need further developing their mathematical, oral and reading skills.

Panagiota’s skills are two semesters below average and Konstantinos’ skills are under the age level. Aris’ basic academic skills and learning readiness need to be improved. Dimitra needs to improve almost all of her skills since they are below average with the exception of her social skills. Stavros needs improvement at all his skills, as they are at a below average level. Panagiotis needs to improve all his skills except the autonomy in the environment and the engagement in free time activities skills. Christina’s skills are at an appropriate with the exception of her psycho-motor skills and emotional organisation skills, which are a little below average. Nestoras lacks on oral speech, psycho-motor skills, emotional organisation, reading, social behaviour and arts. Alexandros’ skills are at a satisfying level and he faces difficulties in his emotional organisation, his writing and arts skills, but the declination is very small. Elisabeth’s skills are at an age appropriate level while her oral speech, social behaviour and adaptation to the environment skills are above average. However, her emotional organisation skills need to be improved. Penelope’s skills are more developed than average while Victoria’s skills are at a satisfying level. Only her emotional organisation and mathematical skills are a little below average.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Emotional organisation</th>
<th>Learning readiness (1)</th>
<th>Basic academic abilities (2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oral speech</td>
<td>Psycho-motor skills</td>
<td>Intellectual ability</td>
</tr>
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<td>-3</td>
<td>-3</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>Autonomy in the environment</td>
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<tr>
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</table>
Below average group

Graph 7 shows the participants whose skills are less developed than they should be. As it can be seen Stavros and Panagiota's skills are three or four semesters below average. It is clear that Stavros has a problem in language skills. Konstantinos autonomy is sufficiently developed, since it is only one semester below average. Dimitra’ skills are more developed than the skills of

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>ELISABETH</th>
<th>KONSTANTINOS</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Table 8: Special education pre experimental data**
the three previous participants, but her oral speech, her psycho-motor skills, her writing, mathematics and free time skills need improvement, as they are 2 semesters below average. Aris is almost as developed as Dimitra, but his skills in oral speech, psychomotoroticy, emotional organisation, writing and mathematics, social behaviour need to be improved. As for Panagiotis, his development is similar to Aris and better to Konstantinos and Stavros. He needs to improve his oral speech, psycho-motor skills, emotional organisation, understanding, writing, social behaviour and his adaptation on the environment since they all are 2 semesters below average.

Graph 7: Special education pre experimental data for below average group
Average group

Graph 8 shows participants whose development is in accordance with their age. Nestoras’ level of emotional organisation and social behaviour is well below than the rest of the group. Christina and Alexandros have a normal development and at a higher level than Nestoras. Christina needs to improve her psycho-motor skills and her emotional organisation, as often she can not control her aggressiveness. Alexandros’ ability of emotional organisation needs to be improved, since it is 2 semesters below his age level.

Graph 8: Special education pre experimental data for average group

Above average group

Graph 9 shows the participants whose skills are more developed than they were expected to be according to their age. Elisabeth’s skills are at an age appropriate level, but her oral speech, her social behaviour and her adaptation to the environment are at a higher level. However, her ability of
emotional organisation needs to be improved, since it is 2 semesters below her age level. Victoria’s development is almost as equal to Elisabeth’s. However, she needs to improve her skills in mathematics. Also, as it was anticipated by the researcher's observations about her behaviour tantrums, she needs to improve her ability in the area of emotional organisation. Last but not least, Pinelopi is the child with the greatest development in all of her skills. Most of them appear to be 1 or 2 semesters higher than expected and none below average.

![Graph 9: Special education pre experimental data for above average group](image)

**Special education activities post experimental data**

These activities are called so by the Greek Ministry of Education and are used in order to assess the possible existence of learning difficulties. Elisabeth
improved her skills in free time activities and arts. The psycho-motor skills, intellectual ability and arts’ skills of Pinelopi improved too. Aris has improved his autonomy in the environment, his social behaviour and artistic skills while Alexandros has improved his intellectual ability, his emotional organisation, his mathematical skills and his autonomy in the environment. Victoria has improved her oral speech, her emotional organisation and her autonomy in the environment. Dimitra has improved her oral speech, her psycho-motor skills, her mathematical skills and her free time activities’ skills, while Stavros and Panagiotis have a general improvement.

Table 8: Special education post experimental data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Emotional organisation</th>
<th>Learning readiness (1)</th>
<th>Basic academic abilities (2)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oral speech</td>
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<td>Intellectual ability</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Creative Activities</td>
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<td>+1</td>
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<table>
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<th>Name</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAVROS</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More analytically with reference to each group there can be noted the following.

**Average group**

Graph 10 shows the participants whose development is in accordance with their age. Nestoras’ development is generally good, but he lacks on emotional organisation. Christina and Alexandros development is greater than this of Nestoras. Christina needs to improve her psycho-motor and emotional organisation skills, as she can’t control her aggressiveness. As the graph shows there is a significant increase of one semester in Christina’s autonomy and social behaviour and of Alexandros’ autonomy.

![Graph 10 Special Education post experimental data for average group](image-url)
Below average group

As Graph 11 indicates the emotional organisation, social behaviour and adaptation to the environment abilities of this group were improved after storytelling. Particularly impressive is the progress of Panagiota who had an increase of two semesters in her ability of emotional organisation. Considering that Panagiota is the less able pupil of the group this is an important finding about the effectiveness of storytelling. Stavros had an increase of one semester in social behaviour and Panagiotis an increase of two semesters in the adaptation to the environment.

Graph 11 Special Education post experimental data for below average group.

Above average group

[147]
Elisabeth had a decrease of two semesters in the area of emotional organisation due to a family problem. On the other hand, Victoria and Elisabeth had an increase of one semester in their social behaviour while Pinelopi had an increase of two semesters in the areas of social behaviour, autonomy, and emotional organisation. These results indicate the positive impact of storytelling even on highly able pupils.

Graph 12 Special Education post experimental data for above average group

Research Question 4

Does storytelling have a positive impact on participants regardless of the level of their learning difficulties?

Learning difficulties pre experimental data

[148]
Table 9 shows the data collected about learning difficulties prior to the experiment. It is worthy to note that all of Panagiota’s skills are two semesters below average. Also that Konstantinos’ skills are under the expected level.

Aris’ intellectual abilities, positive and negative behaviours are at a sufficient level, but his oral and readiness skills need to improve. Dimitra needs improvement at more than half of her skills, which are below average that they should be. However, her behaviour skills are at an appropriate level. Stavros and Panagiotis need to improve all their skills, as they are at a below average level. On the other hand, Christina’s skills are at a satisfactory level and only her psycho-motor skills, emotional organisation and negative behaviour are a little below average. Alexandros’ skills are at a satisfying level and he has some problems only at his writing, his intellectual abilities and his negative behaviour skills, but the declination is very small. Victoria’s skills are satisfactory too. Only her psycho-motor skills are a little below average. Nestoras has difficulties in reading, writing, oral speech and psycho-motor skills. On the other hand, the skills of Elisabeth are at an age appropriate level, her oral speech is at a high level but her emotional organisation and her behaviour skills need to improve.

Table 9: Learning difficulties pre experimental data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSYCHO-MOTOR SKILLS</th>
<th>ORAL SKILLS (1)</th>
<th>READINESS SKILLS (2)</th>
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</thead>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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</table>

**BEHAVIOUR SKILLS (4)**

<table>
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<th>Solving problems</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>KONSTANTINOS</td>
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<td>-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In sum, almost all participants have problems in the areas of fine motor skills, psycho-motor skills, oral speech and negative behaviours. On the other hand, the majority of participants have adequate positive behaviours and intellectual abilities.

**Average group**

Nestoras needs to increase his oral speech, behaviour, reading, writing and psycho-motor skills, which are 1 semester below the age level. Christina’s development is almost identical to Nestoras’ one. Her negative behaviours are 3 semesters below average, while her psycho-motor skills are 1 semester below average. Victoria’s level is a little better than the levels of Nestoras and Christina. She needs to improve though her psycho-motor skills, and her negative behaviour skills. Alexandros’ skills are at a better level in comparison [151]
with the rest of the group. His writing, intellectual abilities, and negative behaviours are only one semester below the age level.

Graph 13: Learning difficulties pre experimental data for average group

Lowest group

Graph 12 shows the participants whose skills are in high need of improvement. Dimitra’s reading skills, emotional organisation and positive and negative behaviour skills are well developed but her writing and production skill, oral speech, psycho-motor skills as well as her ability to solve problems are 2 semesters below average. Aris’ development is similar to Dimitra’s development. His writing and production skills, his oral speech, his psycho-motor skills and his ability to solve problems need improvement. Konstantinos’ development is below average at all of his skills by 2 or 3 semesters. Panagiota and Stavros’ level of skills is identical and below the rest of the group.
group. Their oral speech, solving problems, positive and negative behaviour skills are 4 semesters below average. Stavros poor oral speech is due to his bilingualism since his mother is Italian. Panagiotis’ skills are all below average too and at similar level to Aris.

Graph 14: Learning difficulties pre experimental data for below average group

Above average group

Elisabeth’s skills are at an appropriate level, with the exception of her oral speech which is more developed than her age level and her behaviour which is below her age level. Penelope’s most skills are overdeveloped. Her comprehension, writing, production and oral speech skills are 2 semesters higher than her age level.
Learning difficulties post experimental data.

Table 10 summarises the data collected after the experiment for the learning difficulties of the children. In this are noted significant improvements. Specifically, Panagiota has improved her reading ability, emotional organisation, solving problems skill and positive and negative behaviour skills, Elisabeth improved her comprehension, emotional organisation and behaviour skills while Konstantinos had an increase in his psycho-motor, emotional organisation and behaviour skills. Christina, Nestoras and Aris had an increase in almost all of their abilities while Alexandros has improved his writing, intellectual abilities, emotional organisation and behavioural skills. Penelope has improved her reading, psycho-motor and intellectual abilities, Victoria her comprehension, oral speech, psycho-motor, emotional
organisation and behavioural skills while Dimitra, Stavros and Panagiotis had an increase in almost all of their skills.

Table 10 Learning difficulties post experimental data

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PSYCHO-MOTOR SKILLS</th>
<th>ORAL SKILLS (1)</th>
<th>READINESS SKILLS(2)</th>
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<td>writing</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>+2</td>
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<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANAGIOTIS</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
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</table>
More analytically with reference to each group the following are noted.

Below average group

Graph 16 presents the participants whose skills need substantial improvement. Dimitra has some of her skills efficiently developed, but her
psycho-motor skills are 2 semesters lower than expected. Aris’ development is similar to the development of Dimitra. His writing skill, his oral speech and his psycho-motoric skill need improvement as they are 1 semester lower. Konstantinos development is lower at all of his skills. All of them are 1, 2 or 3 semesters lower than his age. Panagiota and Stavros’ development are almost the same. Their reading, writing, oral speech, and emotional organisation are 2 semesters lower than expected, so they absolutely need improvement. Stavros negative behaviour skills are 3 semesters lower than his age. Finally, some of Panagiotis’ skills are at a lower level too. They are at a level similar to Aris’ generally, and they need to improve. Their social skills and their emotional development are at low levels too, but it is clear that they are better than they were prior to the experiment.

Graph 16 Post experimental data of learning difficulties for the below average group

[157]
Average group

In this group belong the participants whose development is at the appropriate age level or nearly to it. Nestoras seems to need improvement in his production and emotional organisation skills, which are 1 semester lower than expected. Christina’s development is better than Nestoras’ level, with all of her skills being at the appropriate or a higher level. Alexandros’ skills are at a good level as well. His intellectual abilities are only one semester lower than they were expected to be. Their psycho-motor skills and emotional organisation need further improvement, but they are at a better level that they were prior the introduction of the storytelling activity.

Graph 17 Post experimental data for learning difficulties for average group
Above average group

This includes the participants who have their learning skills well more developed than the rest of the sample. Elisabeth and Victoria have most of their skills at a sufficient level. Elisabeth and Victoria’s had an increase of one semester in their comprehension. Elisabeth’s behaviour and emotional organisation still need to improve, but they are better than they were before the experiment while Penelopi’s most skills are over-developed. Her comprehension, writing, and oral speech skills as well as her emotional organisation and positive behaviour skills are 2 semesters above average. Her social skills increased after the storytelling by two semesters.

Graph 18 Post experimental data for learning difficulties for the above average group.
In sum, the results indicate that the main hypothesis of the study i.e. that storytelling has a positive impact on the dependent variables is met.

This positive impact is evident even in participants with abilities below average. Furthermore participants’ emotional understanding, self control, and social behaviour increased. These abilities contribute positively to the socio emotional adjustment of participants and subsequently to their school readiness. Thus it be suggested that storytelling is a valuable activity for the socio emotional development of preschoolers and their school readiness.
Chapter 4 DISCUSSION

This chapter includes a summary and discussion of the findings, compared to findings of previous research. Additionally, it refers to the limitations this study had and the Conclusions sub-section focuses on the implications and limitations of the study and on proposals for further research.

Summary and Discussion of Findings

Conclusions

Preschoolers may face difficulties in the areas of emotional management and social adjustment. This means that they may not easily manage their emotions and that they may have difficulties in interacting in socially acceptable ways with their peers and teachers. Ideally parents and teachers should help them both at school and home. However, parents may not be always available. On the other hand, the present study indicated that a rather costless in time and resources didactic activity provides a valuable tool to increase the socio emotional development and ultimately the school readiness of preschoolers. In other words, storytelling might play an important role in preschooler’s socio emotional development and academic success.

Comparison with previous research

The close examination of the data gained before and after the experiment indicated that storytelling facilitated the social adjustment of participants and contributed positively to the development of the emotional adjustment. [161]
Similarly to previous research (e.g. Kaderavek & Justice, 2002; Rubin & Wilson, 1995; Snow, 2001), which indicated that storytelling facilitates social adjustment the participants of the present study were more social after the experiment and they got closer to their classmates and their teacher. Positive changes were noted too in participants with limited social skills, who increased their adaptive expressive, communicative and cooperative skills. With reference to the recognition of emotions, similarly to the study of Mello (2001), which indicated that storytelling affects positively pupils’ empathy and ability to develop interpersonal skills, the results of the present study indicated that participants learned to recognise signs of emotions both in themselves and in others.

Furthermore, storytelling increased the emotional organisation skills, even in participants who had significant problems in this area. These findings support the position of Norton & Norton (2010) that storytelling can increase language skills and facilitate the emotional and moral development of preschoolers.

Isbell et al., (2004) indicated that storytelling has a positive impact on the development of the oral language complexity and story comprehension in young participants, which agrees with the results of the present study, while Curenton, Craig & Flanigan (2008) suggested that storytelling can improve participants’ literacy skills. The present study provided additional supportive evidence for these areas. As far as the school readiness is concerned similarly to the study of Wells (1986) the present study indicated that storytelling is linked to school readiness.
Strengths and limitations

On the one side, the strengths of the present study are the use of objective criteria both for the assessment of the drawings and the quantitative data collected. Also, that for the interviews the authors followed the guidelines of Spencer & Flinn (1990) but as Panastasiou & Papanastasiou (2014) note the risk that children might reply in a fashion that pleases the researcher always remains.

Of course the bias of subjectivity always remains (McLeod, 2008) especially in research with young children (Papanastasiou & Panastasiou, 2014) but considering the measures the researcher took it might be said that this was limited. On the other side, the socio educational validity of the results is limited to the preschool setting. Ideally, the socioeducational validity of the results would be higher if parents participated actively by telling for example the same stories to their children.

However, this was outside the aim of the study, which focused on assessing the impact of storytelling in the preschool. On the base of this the following implications are noted.

Implications for teaching

According to the results of the present study, storytelling helps preschoolers to increase their social adjustment, emotional management and school readiness. Thus, teachers should take advantage of storytelling. There are
several strategies, which can assist them to implement storytelling in a consistent fashion. For example, a teacher could rely on direct instruction which can be used in a small group, large group, or in a one-on-one situation (Beaty, 2009). In this the teacher stands in front of the pupils showing them how to hold a book in the right way. She points at the cover picture and ask them to tell what the book may be about. She shows the title of the book and points to each word as she reads it showing one to one correspondence. Then she opens the book and starts reading it.

Another way to implement storytelling is with the use of circles. In this the teacher separates the classroom into themed areas which participants can choose and she can include thematic instruction as the literacy content is presented (Morrow, 2004). The circles allow pupils' to engage further in the learning activities, to become active members of the classroom community, and to progress at their own pace by taking part in activities, which they consider suitable for them (Pate, 2009). In this way, they are given the opportunity to explore, to cooperate, to interact and ultimately to develop their language and literacy skills. The circles allow them to increase their vocabulary, practice effective expression, describe, compare, relate, create stories, resolve conflicts, increase their self-esteem (Rockwell et al., 1999). The thematic centres provide a rich and abundant source of literacy development opportunities while the free play activities allow participants to practice their motor and oral language skills. Through this type of self-
exploratory play, objects and materials assist children in developing their own sense of the world and their learning styles. Small group instruction is a useful strategy too. In this, the teacher sits on the floor with a small group of participants in front of her, discussing a story. The teacher models how to read print from left to right, then she discuss about what is happening on each page and how the story may end and why. This strategy is suitable for open-ended learning opportunities that are meaningful and relevant to the interests of children (Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2007). Small group instruction is effective because teaching is tailored on the individual needs of each pupil (Iaquinta, 2006). Last but not least, teachers could use the approach of guided learning. In this four pupils and one teacher are sitting around in a horse shoe shape, engage in story reading and storytelling activities and then they discuss the story. This practice increases pupils’ comprehension and fluency and offers them the chance to learn how to read analytically (Fisher, 2008). Ideally, teachers should be trained in implementing these strategies and they should train parents too.

Implications for parents

The present study indicated that storytelling is a valuable means to increase the socio emotional skills and the school readiness of preschool children. Thus parents should be trained and supported in using storytelling.
Previous research indicates that the quality and the quantity of the oral language interaction between Greek parents and their children during story reading activities is influenced by the parents’ educational background and socioeconomic status. Greek parents with high socioeconomic status and education are more involved than parents of low socioeconomic status and education in reading stories more often to their children and in discussing the stories with them (Natsiopoulou, Souliotis, Kyridis & Hatzisavvides, 2006b; Natsiopoulou, 2011). They use abstract speech during reading and give emphasis on the affective aspects of the story more than parents of lower socioeconomic status (Natsiopoulou, 2011). Similarly, Greek parents with tertiary education talk to their children and use abstract speech more often than parents with a lower education (Natsiopoulou et al., 2006b, Natsiopoulou, Souliotis & Kyridis 2006a). Also (Natsiopoulou, Souliotis, & Kyridis 2006a; Melissa-Halikiopoulou, & Natsiopoulou, 2008) during shared reading Greek parents with tertiary education use more extra textual utterances than parents with a lower education.

Subsequently teachers should focus primarily on disseminating the use of storytelling to parents of a low socioeconomic status and education background. The parents’ with low socioeconomic status familiarization with effective storytelling techniques could stimulate preschooler’s interest for books and could promote the child’s language and early literacy development (Natsiopoulou, 2011).
However, the major obstacle to the dissemination of storytelling is the increased time Greek children spent in TV and computers at home. Ideally, parents should tell stories to preschoolers two to three times a day (Huck, Hepler, Hickman, Kiefer 1997). However this is hardly the case. The survey of Natsiopoulou & Bletsa (2011) with a sample of 190 children aged 3.5 to 5.5 years showed that in Greece TV and home computers are integral parts of young children’s life. Although children liked storybooks and asked from their parents to read to them most children watched TV cartoons and played computer games without their parents’ surveillance. As Natsiopoulou & Bletsa (2011) state, between media and books children prefer the media. Furthermore, parents in the Natsiopoulou & Halkiopoulou (2007) study widely reported that they would suspend reading a story to preschoolers in order for their children to watch TV.

This indicates that teachers should place a substantial effort in order to convince parents to increase the amount of storytelling activities at home. Rather interestingly, the survey of Laloumi-Vidali (1998) with a sample of 589 Greek parents showed, that parents expect preschool teachers to solve their personal problems with their child at home, to ensure the best care provision for their child in the preschool and to keep their child happy at the preschool with fun activities. Subsequently teachers should simply highlight to parents that they expect too that the children should be happy at home with fun activities, and that they will have the best care provision at home. Thus in order to attract their parents’ interest for storytelling they should highlight that
storytelling is a fun activity, which by increasing their interaction with their children increases the quality of care provision at home and reduces the personal problems they may have with their children.

Social Implications

Kazdin (1982) suggests that regardless of the objectivity of analysis of the results and of the method used the effectiveness of an experiment depends on its impact on the quality of life of the person. Thus he mentions that is very important to search whether this experiment and its results respond to the needs of the society in which the person lives and participates.

Currently Greek society faces socioeconomic decline due to economic austerity. Socioeconomic decline in societies in economic crisis leads to financial difficulties and subsequently to mental health problems (Berk, Dodd & Henry, 2006; Skapinakis, Weich, Lewis, Singleton, & Araya, 2006; Brown, Taylor, Price, 2005; Jenkins, Bhugra, Bebbington, Brugha, Farrell, Coid, Fryers, Weich, Singleton & Meltzer, 2008). Unemployment and debt are likely to precipitate mental health problems (e.g. depression, alcoholism), which reduce the quality of family life (Agerbo, 2005; Dooley, Catalano, Wilson, 1994; Jenkins, Bhugra, Bebbington, Brugha, Farrell, Coid, Fryers, Weich, Singleton & Meltzer, 2008).
What is particularly alarming though is the fact that a socioeconomic crisis can have a transgenerational effect (Christodoulou & Christodoulou, 2013) by affecting negatively and permanently the socio emotional development and mental health both of parents and children (Anagnostopoulos, & Soumaki, 2012; Marmot, & Bell, 2009; Paananen, & Gissler, 1987). This negative side effect may remain unaltered even if the financial circumstances improve (Laaksonen, Martikainen, Lahelma, Lallukka, Rahkonen, Head, & Marmot, 2007). Thus, investing in the emotional wellbeing of parents and their children can have a positive long term collateral effect on the family’s quality of life (Mcdaid, & Park, 2011). Consequently evidence-based practices to increase the quality of life of family members and to protect the mental health of children are highly needed (Christodoulou & Christodoulou, 2013).

The evidence gained from by the present study, indicates that storytelling is such a practice since it provides a means to increase interactions between parents and children and it allows children to escape from a harsh home reality. In addition, is a rather costless way of engaging parents in sharing activities with their children the more so if the school provides free picture books to parents.

Consequently, the Greek Ministry of Education should assist both teachers and parents by providing facilitators’ guides for the former and informational
material for the latter. Also, EADAP could be involved and provide parents’ training. In this way at home good parenting could be strengthened.

**Implications for further research**

Further research is needed in order to determine whether the positive outcomes of this study can be replicated. Ideally this could involve parents too. In this way the external validity of the results would be higher. Additional research in societies facing economic austerity could provide a wealth of comparative data for the value of storytelling and ways to increase its implementation at home.

Last but not least further research should provide new perspectives and techniques to enhance both the enjoyment and educational value of the storytelling process, as well as to enrich the interactions between parents and preschoolers, especially in families with less exposure to books and storytelling activities.
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## Appendix 1 Books narrated to participants

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### Appendix 2 Research tools

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Learning difficulties

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</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix 3 Learning interaction

## Alexandros' learning interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Alexandros</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>03/09</td>
<td>Miss, may I tell you were I was in summer?</td>
<td>Tell me Alexander! You had a great time, did not you?</td>
<td>Alexandros what full of excitement during the narration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>04/09</td>
<td>Miss Elina where is my glass?</td>
<td>Oh, Alexander! Look carefully! It is at its place, with your drawing!</td>
<td>He looked me trickily, took his glass and went to fill it with water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>05/09</td>
<td>Alexandros during the free play in classroom started pushing a boy.</td>
<td>Alexander, why are you pushing Panagiotis? Do you want to hurt him?</td>
<td>He answered me “NO”. He went to Panagiotis and apologized to him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>06/09</td>
<td>Miss, miss... Victoria crinkled my drawing! Miss...</td>
<td>Alexander, Victoria come tell me, please, what happened!</td>
<td>Alexander and Victoria disagreed on who had started the fight! They stayed with me for 5 minutes and after making up with each other, they went back to their positions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Elisabeth’s learning interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Elisabeth</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>04/09</td>
<td>Good morning miss!</td>
<td>Good morning Elisabeth How were your holidays?</td>
<td>Full of excitement, she started narrating several events of her holidays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>05/09</td>
<td>Miss, are not my high heels perfect?</td>
<td>Yes, Elisabeth! Your shoes are very nice!</td>
<td>She seemed bothered for not commenting her “high heels” in the way she was expecting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>06/09</td>
<td>Miss, you are very beautiful!</td>
<td>Thank you very much, Elisabeth! You are very beautiful girls too!</td>
<td>She turned and left.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>07/09</td>
<td>Miss Elina, may I be the driver on the train?</td>
<td>Of course my girl! Since you want it so much!</td>
<td>Full of joy, she took her position as a driver and shouted to the children to go behind her.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Konstantinos’ learning interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Konstantinos</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>03/09</td>
<td>He just looked at me.</td>
<td>Konstantine, tell me how were your holidays? Did you go somewhere?</td>
<td>Initially, he did not understand that I was talking to him. I had to repeat the question and he just looked at me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>04/09</td>
<td>He continued his play.</td>
<td>Konstantine, please, bring me the tissues.</td>
<td>I repeated my order for a second and a third time and finally another child did it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>05/09</td>
<td>He looked at the children and me.</td>
<td>Konstantine, would you like to tell us what is your favorite food?</td>
<td>He seemed that he wanted to answer but he did not manage to do it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>06/09</td>
<td>He waited for his turn and was looking at me all the time.</td>
<td>Konstantine, would you like to choose your drawer?</td>
<td>I repeated my order and he went to choose a drawer, but neither that time he formulated his desire.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Christina’s learning interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Christina</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>03/09</td>
<td>Good morning, miss Elina!</td>
<td>Good morning, my sweet Christina. How were your holidays? Did you play a lot? Did you go to the</td>
<td>Christina said goodbye and kissed her dad and happy as</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. 04/09 Miss Elina, shall I be your assistant? May I distribute the crayons?

   beach?

   she was, she fell in my hug immediately.

   Good morning, baby! Of course you can be my assistant today. Thank you very much for your help!

   Wiiling and happy as she was, she distributed crayons to all the groups when the time of free drawing came.

3. 05/09 Miss, may we go out to the yard today?

   Good morning, Christina! Definitely! The weather is perfect!

   Christina got into my hug and started fondling my hair.

4. 06/09 Hello, miss! What are we going to eat for breakfast today?

   Good morning, Christina! We have corn flakes today!

   She waved at her dad happily and got in our classroom!

**Dimitra’s learning interaction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Dimitra</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>04/09</td>
<td>Hi!</td>
<td>Good morning! I am your teacher and my name is Elina. What's your name?</td>
<td>She looked at me with a secret smile and answered: Dimitla.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>05/09</td>
<td>Hi! Good?????</td>
<td>Good morning, Dimitra! What a nice dress!</td>
<td>Dimitra left her mother and twin sister’s hands and held mine, waiting to be hugged.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Welcome, Dimitra! Good morning, my girl! May we go in the classroom together with Panagiota?

She looked at her sister and she was pulling her from her blouse to follow us.

Good morning, Dimitra! How are you?

She hugged me and was looking at her sister who was crying, since she did not want to leave her mother again.

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<th>ID</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Nestoras</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>06/09</td>
<td>Hi!</td>
<td>Welcome, Dimitra! Good morning, my girl! May we go in the classroom together with Panagiota?</td>
<td>She looked at her sister and she was pulling her from her blouse to follow us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>07/09</td>
<td>Good morning!</td>
<td>Good morning, Dimitra! How are you?</td>
<td>She hugged me and was looking at her sister who was crying, since she did not want to leave her mother again.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
remember the names of our new friends? came, he did not introduce himself.

3. 05/09 He waved his head and he smiled trickily. I suggest you to be my assistant, Nestora! Do you agree? He came next to me, he was waiting for instructions but he still wasn’t answering to what I was telling him.

4. 06/09 With his head bowed, he was watching the choices of the other children until his turn. Nestora, which drawer do you want? Finally, he stood up and showed me the drawer he wanted, but he did not formulate his desire.

**Aris’ learning interaction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Aris</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>03/09</td>
<td>He is sitting on his chair and waiting speechless for the next activity.</td>
<td>Aris, do you want to distribute some papers to your friends to draw?</td>
<td>He obeyed, but he did not answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>04/09</td>
<td>Miss…</td>
<td>Tell us, Aris! What do you want?</td>
<td>He kept playing with his plasticine.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. 05/09 Miss Lina, may I sit next to you? Aris, it is better not to stand up while eating. He remained at his position, but he did not eat the rest of his food.

4. 06/09 He came in the classroom smiling, but he did not say good morning. Good morning Aris! Are you fine? He did not answer my question, but he was in a good mood.

Stavros Learning Interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Stavros</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>10/09</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Good morning! I am your teacher and my name is Elina. What's your name?</td>
<td>Stavros did not talk when we first met and we had only a small eye contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>12/09</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Stavros, good morning! I am glad to see you again! You are very handsome today!!!</td>
<td>Stavros looked at me cowardly, he smiled at me and he bowed his head without answering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>14/09</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Stavros, happy birthday! You are very handsome today!!! Do you</td>
<td>Stavros smiled and held my hand without talking again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>want to be my assistant today?</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>17/09</td>
<td>Have a nice week, Stavros! How was your weekend?</td>
<td>Stavros hugged me and answered “la”.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Penelope's learning interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>03/09</td>
<td>Good morning, miss Elina. Do you remember me?</td>
<td>Good morning, my sweetheart! You are Penelope, Eve’s sister. Right? How big you are!</td>
<td>She hugged me and gave me two kisses! One is from Eve, she said and smiled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>04/09</td>
<td>Miss Elina, I am happy we are together!!!</td>
<td>Me too, Penelope. I think we will have a great time this year. You will meet new friends, too…</td>
<td>Conveniently, she moved to the library corner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>05/09</td>
<td>Miis Elina, may I help Stavros to open the faucet?</td>
<td>It is very kind of you to think about it! Well done, my sweetheart!</td>
<td>She helped Stavros and asked whether any other child wanted some help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>06/09</td>
<td>Good morning, miss Elina! Hat are we going to learn today? Are we going to go at the yard, too?</td>
<td>Good morning, Penelope. How are you? Comein the classroom to discuss these all together!</td>
<td>She held my hand and jocundly said “good morning” to all the children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Panagiotis' learning interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>04/09</td>
<td>Panagioti.</td>
<td>Can you remind me your name, please?</td>
<td>He answered with one word, without any expression on his face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Data</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<td>----</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>04/09</td>
<td>She did not talk at all when we first met.</td>
<td>Good morning! I am your teacher. My name is Elina! What's your name?</td>
<td>She did not tell me her name, but she was looking at me with curiosity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>05/09</td>
<td>Good morning, miss!</td>
<td>Good morning, Victoria! I am so glad to see you again. Will you?</td>
<td>She kissed her mum and asked her to come</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Victoria's learning interaction

2. 05/09 With his pencil he started bothering the child next to him. Panagioti, could you please not bothering your friend? He is drawing. After a while he doodled the drawing of the same child.

3. 06/09 He was playing in the yard with his shovel and suddenly he started throwing gravels. Panagioti, we do not throw gravels. Do you want your friends get hurt? He did not mind and kept doing it. A second remark followed and finally he agreed to come and discuss.

4. 07/09 Miss, may I be the leader? Panagioti, Penelope won this time and it's her turn to be the leader. Keep trying and you will achieve it as well. He stopped trying and left his team. After a while he wanted to continue his play with us.

[219]
### Panagiota' learning interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Panagiota</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>04/09</td>
<td>She was crying and hiding behind her mother, pulling her clothes to leave.</td>
<td>Good morning, my doll! I am your teacher and my name is Elina. What's your name?</td>
<td>She did not talk to me. She was crying all the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>05/09</td>
<td>She was holding her mum's hand and she was crying and screaming that she wanted to leave.</td>
<td>Good morning, Panagiota. Why are you sad? Do you want to tell me what's happening to you?</td>
<td>She looked at me, but she was hiding behind her mum again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>06/09</td>
<td>She was crying and looking at her mum, but she did not ask to leave.</td>
<td>My sweet Panagiota, good morning! I am glad to see you again? What about you? Do you want to go to the classroom? Your friends are waiting.</td>
<td>Her sister, Dimitra, was pulling her of her blouse to follow us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>07/09</td>
<td>Hi!</td>
<td>Good morning, Panagiota! How are you?</td>
<td>She was crying, as she again didn't want to leave her mum.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4 Aris' pre experimental drawing
Aris' post experimental drawing
Aris' follow up drawing
Appendix 5 Parental Consent

Αθήνα, 01/09/2011

ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ ΠΡΟΣ τους Γονείς

Θέμα: Διεξαγωγή επιστημονικής έρευνας

Αγαπητέ Γονέα,

Θα θέλαμε να σας ενημερώσουμε ότι στο πλαίσιο της μεταπτυχιακής έρευνας με τίτλο: Επίδραση των ιστοριών στη σχολική ητέτοια και την κοινωνικο-συναισθηματική ανάπτυξη παιδιών προσχολικής ηλικίας,

σημαντικό θα μας επιτρέψει να συνεργαστούμε στη διαδικασία συλλογής των ερευνητικών δεδομένων με το παιδί σας. Σκοπός της έρευνας είναι να αξιολογήσουμε την επίδραση των ιστοριών σε παιδιά προσχολικής ηλικίας που είχαν διαγνωστεί ή είχαν μειώσεις συναισθηματικών και συμπεριφορικών προβλημάτων και να καθορίσουμε τοποθετήσεις στο πεδίο της πρακτικής.

Θα εκτιμούσαμε ιδιαίτερα τη βοήθεια σας γιατί η συμμετοχή και η συμβολή του παιδιού σας στη συγκεκριμένη έρευνα είναι καθοριστική για τη διεξαγωγή της.

Η διαδικασία είναι φιλική και ευχάριστη και σε καμία περίπτωση δεν θα αποβεί σε βάρος της εκπαιδευτικής διαδικασίας. Η συμμετοχή των παιδιών στη συγκεκριμένη έρευνα είναι προαιρετική, ενώ έχει εξασφαλιστεί και η ανωνυμία τους. Όπως θα
μπορείτε να διαπιστώσετε— δεν αναφέρεται κανένα προσωπικό στοιχείο των μαθητών. Επίσης, σε ότι αφορά τη διεξαγωγή της, η συγκεκριμένη έρευνα θερέτρει πλήρως την επιστημονική μεθοδολογία και τα πρότυπα που υιοθετούνται διεθνώς, σε σχετικές μελέτες.

Για οποιαδήποτε επιπλέον πληροφορία και διευκρίνιση, παρακαλώ μη διστάσετε να επικοινωνήσετε μαζί μας, οποιαδήποτε στιγμή, στα τηλέφωνα που αναγράφονται στο επάνω μέρος της σελίδας.

Σας ευχαριστούμε εκ των προτέρων για τη συνεργασία σας.

Με τιμή
ΔΗΛΩΣΗ ΣΥΓΚΑΤΑΘΕΣΗΣ

Ο/Η κάτωθι υπογεγραμμένος/η κηδεμόνας του /της 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