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Original Contribution

PARENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN KINDERGARTEN – SATISFACTION, TRUST, PARTNERSHIP, SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

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Abstract: *This article examines the interaction between the family and the kindergarten as a key factor in early childhood development, socialization and emotional well-being. The kindergarten is analyzed as a dynamic social environment in which parents are positioned not as external consumers but as equal partners. Particular emphasis is placed on the transformation of relationships from a formal institutional level to a shared community and responsibility built on mutual trust and constructive dialogue. The study highlights the exploration of parental perspectives as an essential indicator of the quality of preschool education and as a tool for institutional reflection. In this context, the main objective of the present research is to provide an in-depth assessment of the quality of the communication process, the channels of information sharing, and the level of parental satisfaction. Parents and guardians participated in the survey, and their responses provide a rich empirical basis for analysis. The findings outline both the strengths of the established practices and the potential areas for further development of the dialogue between the institution and the home.*

Key words: *Pre-school education, Kindergarten, Partnership „family – institution", Trust, Parents'satisfaction, Communication.*

The interaction between the family and the kindergarten is one of the most important factors influencing early childhood development, socialization, and the emotional well-being of young children. The transition from the family environment to the first public institution is often accompanied by intensive processes of adaptation, not only for the child but also for the parents themselves. In the contemporary pedagogical and psychological discourse, the kindergarten is no longer perceived merely as a place for "care" or "supervision". Rather, it is viewed as a dynamic social environment in which the two primary spheres of security in a child's life, the family and the educational institution, come together. The modern kindergarten can increasingly no longer be viewed as an institution whose activities are carried out solely within the professional domain of educational specialists. It operates within

a complex system of relationships involving the child, the family, the teaching staff, the local community, and the institutional environment. Within this system, parents are not merely consumers of an educational service or external observers of pedagogical processes; rather, they are important participants, partners, and providers of a unique perspective on the quality of preschool education. Consequently, parental opinion can be regarded as a significant indicator of how the quality of a kindergarten is experienced, recognized, and evaluated by the family. The importance of this assessment stems from the parent's distinctive position between two closely interconnected realities. On the one hand, parents do not have direct and continuous access to all pedagogical interactions that take place within the kindergarten setting. On the other hand, they observe their effects on the child on a daily basis, including the child's willingness or reluctance to attend kindergarten, emotional well-being, the way they talk about their teachers and peers, the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, social confidence, independence, and sense of belonging. Milena Ilieva outlines specific strategies for engaging and retaining parents' involvement in the educational process [4]. Communication processes between families and pedagogical teams are often challenged by a variety of factors [8]. According to Evgenia Topolska, both parents and professionals can be empowered to develop relationships based on trust, which would contribute to maintaining and further strengthening their partnership [7]. For this reason, parental evaluation represents a distinctive form of an "outsider's perspective from the inside" – it is formed outside the immediate pedagogical situation, yet it is deeply connected to its outcomes.

In this context, trust is of particular importance. It may be regarded as a central concept linking the functional characteristics of the institution with the family's emotional attitude toward it. Trust becomes a fundamental mechanism for establishing successful interactions [1, 5, 6]. Trust does not arise solely from a declared belief that the pedagogical team is professional. Rather, it is built through the repeated confirmation of that belief in everyday situations - when parents receive timely information, when their concerns are taken seriously, when they observe a sensitive and caring attitude toward their child, when the institution responds predictably and competently, and when there is consistency between the values it proclaims and its actual practices. As such positive experiences accumulate, trust can evolve into partnership. It is at this point that a significant shift occurs in the way parents position themselves in relation to the kindergarten. The institution ceases to be perceived as "they", who care for and educate the child, and gradually becomes "we" - a community of adults who share responsibility for the child's development. This transition from "they" to "we" is one of the most important markers of a mature relationship between the family and the educational institution. The next possible stage is the sense of belonging - the experience that the kindergarten is not merely a place the child attends but a social community with which the family identifies and within which it has a meaningful role. Within such a context, shared responsibilities for children's education, upbringing, and socialization can be effectively communicated and collectively embraced. In a time of rapid social and technological change, effective partnership between the kindergarten and the family is no longer simply a formal requirement. Instead, it has become a crucial factor in ensuring the child's emotional well-being, successful socialization, and overall development.

Preschool age is a critical period during which the foundations are laid not only for a child's cognitive and personal development but also for enduring patterns of social interaction [3]. As noted above, in this process the kindergarten and the family do not function as isolated environments; rather, they represent two complementary partners within a unified process of care, education, and socialization. The success of this collaborative approach depends, to a great extent, on the quality of the dialogue between educators and parents [2]. When the institution recognizes the parent community as an equal partner, and when families place their

trust in the professional expertise of the educational team, a secure and stimulating environment is created in which children can develop with confidence and emotional well-being. Contemporary concepts of quality in preschool education associate family involvement not merely with keeping parents informed, but with building relationships grounded in reciprocity, trust, dialogue, and shared responsibility. In this regard, the study of parental opinion is both valuable and has a dual function. It provides information about the level of satisfaction with the institution's activities while simultaneously revealing the quality of the partnership itself between the family and the kindergarten. When parents feel heard, respected, and actively involved, their feedback ceases to be merely an individual reaction and becomes an element of the culture of institutional reflection. Within this context, conducting empirical observations and studies of parental satisfaction with kindergarten-family partnerships acquires strategic importance. Such research extends beyond the boundaries of formal accountability. It serves as an important monitoring mechanism that enables educational institutions to identify, in a timely manner, both their strengths and any deficiencies in communication practices. Regular assessment of parental attitudes creates a sustainable platform for constructive dialogue, transforming shared expectations into concrete policies aimed at improving the educational and developmental process.

The present study aims to provide an in-depth assessment of the quality of the communication process and the level of parent satisfaction in preschool education in a selected group of kindergartens in the Shumen District. The research seeks to obtain an objective picture of the existing communication channels, the frequency of feedback, and the degree of mutual trust between the pedagogical staff and the parent community. Parents and legal guardians participated in the survey, and their responses provide a rich empirical basis for analysis. The research instrument consists of a total of 32 questions and is structured into five thematic sections covering a broad range of issues - from preferred forms of communication and evaluations of professional and emotional support to willingness to engage in active cooperation and the provision of personal recommendations. The data presented below highlight both the strengths of the established practices and the potential areas for further development of the dialogue between the institution and the family. The survey was conducted among 138 parents and guardians of children attending three kindergartens in Shumen District - "Proletna Daga" and "Zlatnata Ribka" in the town of Shumen, and "Dobri Lyutskanov" in the village of Dibich. The sample consisted predominantly of mothers (84.8% of respondents or 117 individuals). Fathers accounted for 13.0% (18 individuals), while other guardians (such as grandparents) – 2.2% (3 individuals). The respondents were characterized by a relatively high level of educational attainment – more than half of them (55%) held a higher education degree (Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctoral degree), 35.5% had completed secondary education, and the remaining participants had graduated from a vocational college or completed primary education. The majority of parents were employed – 82%. Their professional backgrounds were highly diverse, ranging from occupations in the service sector, commerce, and administration to specialized professions such as physicians, teachers, engineers, economists, IT specialists, and others. The survey included parents of children from all preschool age groups.

Regarding the language environment at home, it is noteworthy that for the majority of families, Bulgarian is the primary or sole language used for communication (Bulgarian was indicated in 146 responses and was the only selected response in 106 families). The study also includes bilingual and multicultural families – the most common combination of languages spoken at home is Bulgarian and Turkish (26 families), while a smaller proportion of respondents indicated the use of Bulgarian and Romani, or combinations involving foreign languages such as Russian and English.

The first block of questions: "Information and Communication Channels" of the study examines the flow of information between teachers and families. Particular emphasis is placed on the communication channels used, the regularity and content of feedback provided about the child, as well as parents' subjective evaluations of the clarity, adequacy, and consistency of the information they receive.

1.1. How do you most often receive information from the teachers? (The parents have given more than one respond.)

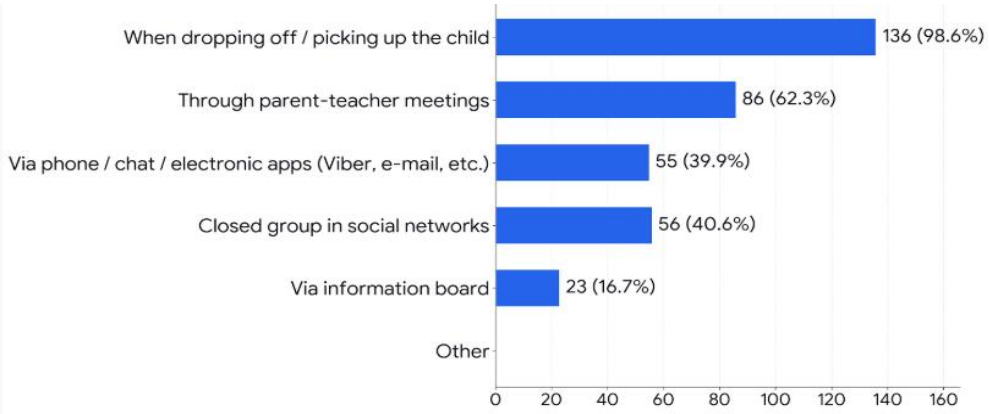


Fig. 1. Reasponses to question 1.1. How do you most often receive information from the teachers?

The data (Figure 1) show that direct face-to-face contact during the morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up of the child is the practically universal channel of receiving information. It is used by almost all parents (98.6%). Parent-teacher meetings rank second as an established means of providing general information (62,3%). Di gital communication channels - closed social media groups (40.6%) and mobile applications/chats (39.9%) - have become firmly integrated into practice and occupy an equally important position as fast, day-to-day operational communication tools. At the same time, the traditional information board located within the kindergarten records the lowest share (16.7%), indicating a shift in focus toward direct and digital forms of communication. Overall, communication is based primarily on personal, everyday face-to-face interaction, supplemented by digital channels such as closed groups and chats, which facilitate the rapid exchange of operational information and announcements.

1.2. How often do you receive information about your child's development and behavior?

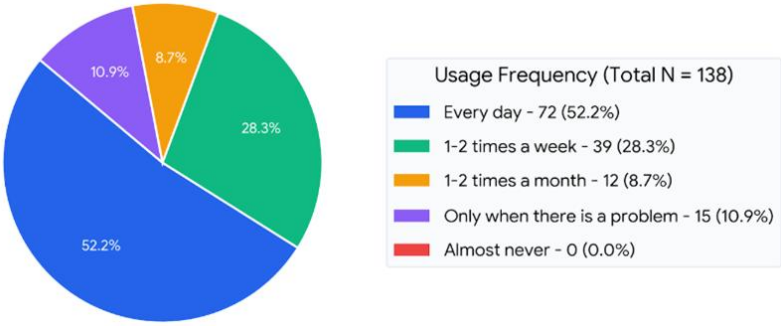


Fig. 2. Responses to question 1.2. How often do you receive information about your child's development and behavior?

The data (Figure 2) reveal an exceptionally high level of communication intensity, with more than 80% of parents receiving feedback at least once or twice a week. The dominant group consists of those who are informed on a daily basis (more than half of all respondents), which, together with the preference for direct personal contact, indicates a very close and active relationship between families and the educational institution. The fact that only about 10% of respondents receive information about their child "only when a problem arises" is a positive indicator of preventive and systematic communication rather than communication that is merely reactive in nature.

1.3. How often do you receive information form the teachers about your child's strengths?

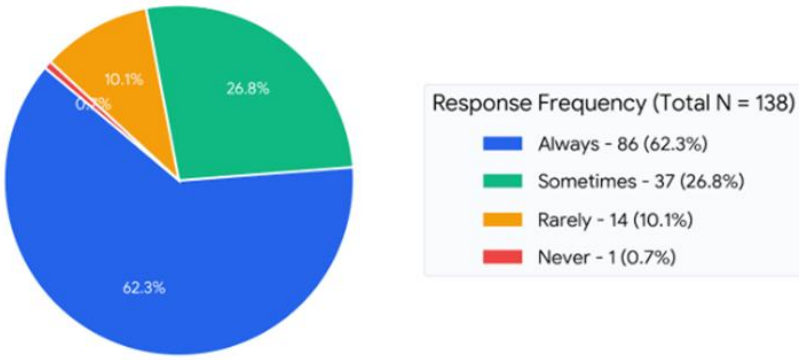


Fig. 3. Responses to question 1.3. How often do you receive information from the teachers about your child's strengths?

This question overlaps to some extent with the previous one, but with an important detail – the quality of the information and its focus. Parent-teacher interaction appears to be oriented toward positive support, with the majority of parents (86 respondents, or 62%) reporting a consistent exchange of information regarding their children's potential and talents. This tendency to emphasize achievements rather than focusing solely on shortcomings is a key factor for building trust within the educational environment. When these findings are considered alongside the previous data, it becomes evident that frequent communication is enriched with constructive content, while the negative responses, "rarely" and "never," remain isolated cases, accounting for only about 10% of the total responses.

1.4. How often do you receive timely feedback if the child is experiencing difficulties?

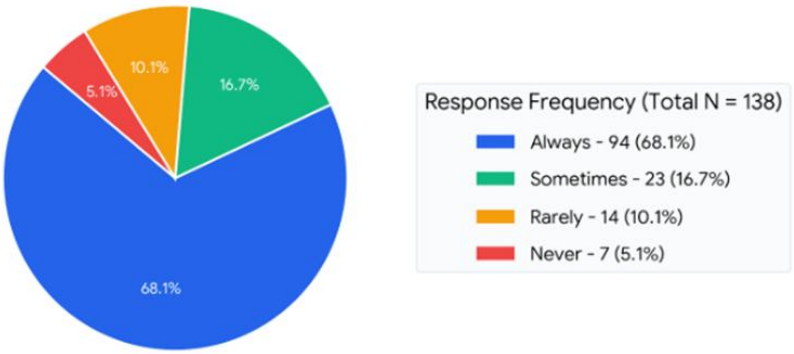


Fig. 4. Responses to question 1.4. How often do you receive timely feedback if the child is experiencing difficulties?

The data (Figure 4) indicate an exceptionally high level of institutional responsiveness, with nearly 70% of respondents reporting that they always receive timely support when difficulties arise. The large number of positive responses (94 participants) confirms the presence of active monitoring by teachers and their readiness to intervene promptly when challenges are identified. Negative responses were few (7 participants) and may be interpreted as an indication of minor, localized gaps in the communication process.

1.5. To what extent is the information you receive clear? (scale from 1 to 5, where 1 – completely unclear, 5 – completely clear)

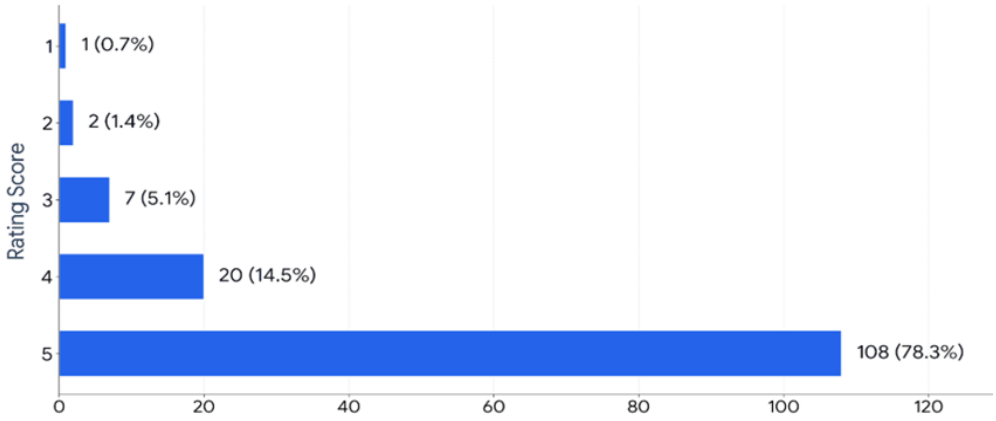


Fig. 5. Responses to question 1.5. To what extent is the information you receive clear?

The mean response score is 4.68, which is very high on a five-point scale. The results for this question are unequivocal – communication is perceived as highly transparent and easy to understand. An overwhelming majority of respondents (over 78%) assigned the highest possible rating, which indicates that teachers use accessible language and present information in a clear and unambiguous manner. Ratings of 4 and 5 combined account for nearly 93% of the sample, which is a strong evidence of a very low risk of misunderstanding or misinterpretation of messages exchanged between parents and teachers. Neutral or negative ratings (points 1 to 3) were reported by only 7.2% of respondents (10 participants in total). This suggests that the pedagogical staff are largely successful in communicating their messages clearly and without ambiguity to the vast majority of families.

1.6. Do you think that the information you receive is sufficient?

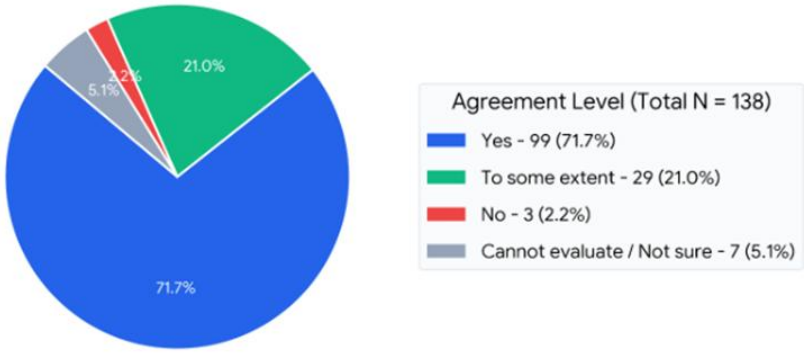


Fig. 6. Responses to question 1.6. Do you think that the information you receive is sufficient?

The overwhelming majority of respondents (99 participants) consider the flow of information to be comprehensive. When the group that reported receiving sufficient

information "to some extent" is also taken into account, the overall share of positive perceptions reaches nearly 93%. Critical opinions are minimal (only 3 respondents), which provides a strong indication that the current communication model successfully meets the expectations and needs of almost all families included in the sample.

The analysis of the first set of questions “Information and Communication Channels” reveals a high level of parental satisfaction, supported by the everyday exchange of information about children's development and the use of clear, understandable language by teachers. The predominance of positive feedback regarding children's strengths, combined with prompt responses when difficulties arise, helps create an environment of transparency and trust between families and the kindergarten. Overall, these findings indicate that more than 90% of respondents experience a high level of informational comfort and satisfaction, with only a very small proportion of cases requiring a more individualized or in-depth dialogue.

The second set of questions, “Quality of Communication” explores parents’ subjective perceptions of partnership, mutual respect, and the extent to which their opinions are valued in everyday interactions with the kindergarten staff. The focus is placed on teachers’ accessibility, the emotional climate of communication, and the situations in which parents feel most comfortable engaging in dialogue. The findings reveal whether this two-way relationship is merely formal in nature or is genuinely based on trust and openness.

2.1. How do you rate the accessibility of teachers for communication with parents?

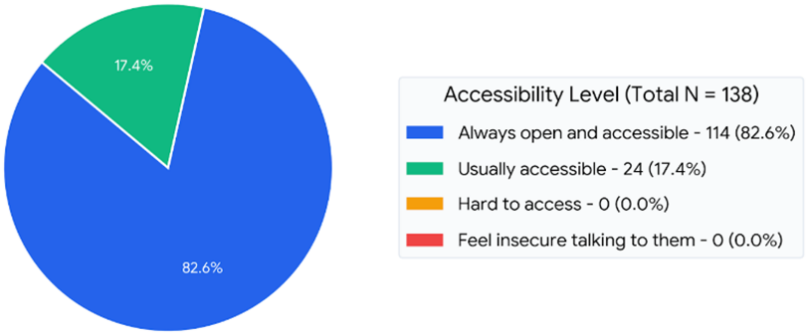


Fig. 7. Responses to question 2.1. How do you rate the accessibility of teachers for communication with parents?

There appears to be a complete absence of communication barriers, with the sample demonstrating 100% satisfaction regarding the accessibility of teachers. The prevailing perception of “constant accessibility” (114 responses) provides a strong foundation for collaboration, while the absence of parental hesitation or uncertainty suggests a well-established culture of mutual respect. This high level of openness is an important factor in making the kindergarten a supportive, welcoming, and partnership-oriented environment.

2.2. How would you describe the overall tone and atmosphere of communication with the staff at the kindergarten?

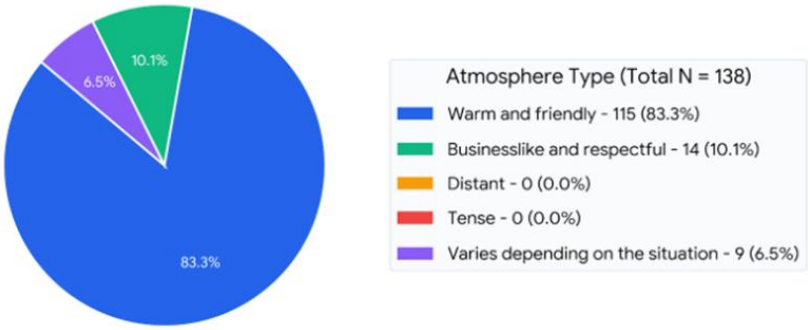


Fig. 8. Responses to question 2.2. How would you describe the overall tone and atmosphere of communication with the staff at the kindergarten?

The data (Figure 8) reveal an exceptionally positive psychological climate characterized by strong emotional connectedness. Nearly 83% of parents describe the atmosphere as "warm and friendly," which goes beyond purely formal relationships and suggests a high level of trust. It is also important to note the complete absence of perceived tension or distance, which is an indicator of the strong empathy and professional ethics of the kindergarten staff.

2.3. Do you feel that your opinion is taken into consideration when discussing matters related to your child or the group?

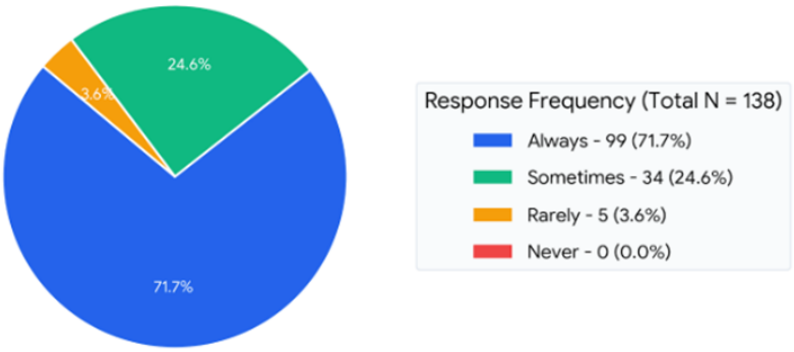


Fig. 9. Responses to question 2.3. Do you feel that your opinion is taken into consideration when discussing matters related to your child or the group?

The study indicates a high level of inclusiveness and respect for parental opinions. The fact that nearly 72% of respondents feel that they are "always" heard is a clear sign of a partnership-based approach in which parents are not merely passive observers but active participants. The overall proportion of parents who feel that their opinions carry weight (combining the responses "always" and "sometimes") exceeds 96%, which minimizes any sense of institutional exclusion. Only 3.6% of respondents (5 participants) reported feeling that their views were not adequately taken into consideration. These findings confirm that the institution successfully maintains a democratic and equitable dialogue in which parents are not simply observers, but active participants in the decision-making process.

2.4. In which situations do you feel most comfortable communicating with the teachers? (The parents have given more than one respond.)

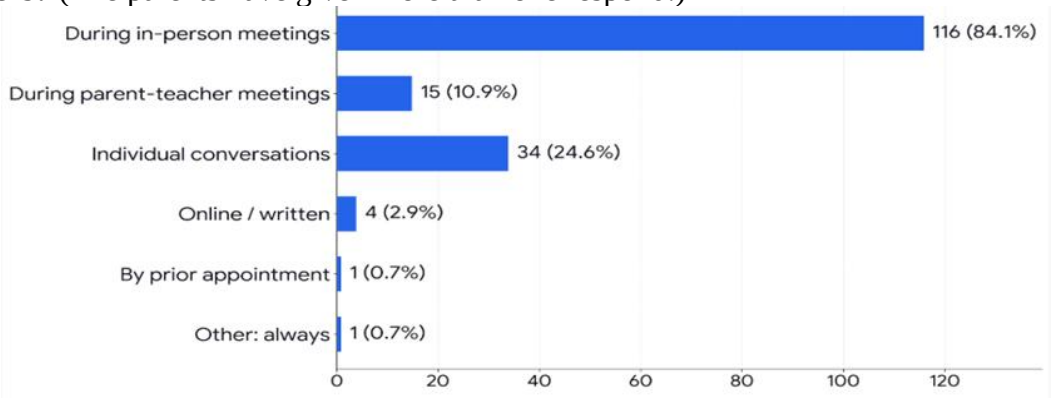


Fig. 10. Responses to question 2.4. In which situations do you feel most comfortable communicating with the teachers?

These findings confirm a consistent trend – the direct, face-to-face contact remains irreplaceable for parents. The overwhelming majority of respondents (116 participants) prefer in-person interactions, likely because they allow for immediate feedback and benefit from the informativeness of non-verbal communication. Interestingly, individual conversations are preferred over formal parent-teacher meetings, suggesting that parents value personalized attention and discretion more highly than group-based communication. Despite their convenience and accessibility, digital communication channels play a secondary role when it comes to comfort and trust. This indicates that the natural, informal interactions that take place at the beginning and end of the day are perceived by parents as the most useful and effective form of communication.

The data reveal an exceptionally strong culture of openness and empathy, при която with 100% of parents considering teachers approachable and more than 83% describing the atmosphere as warm and friendly. Trust is further reinforced by the fact that over 96% of families feel that their opinions are taken into account when decisions concerning their children are made. Personal, day-to-day face-to-face interactions emerge as the most effective and comfortable setting for this dialogue, clearly preferred over both formal and online forms of communication.

The third section "Satisfaction and Trust" examines the foundations of the institutional relationship – the level of trust in the pedagogical staff, the perception of genuine partnership, and the mechanisms for addressing emerging issues and challenges. Through this section, the analysis explores the extent to which cooperation between families and the kindergarten goes beyond the boundaries of formal information-sharing and evolves into a relationship characterized by mutual support, trust, and satisfaction with the communication process.

3.1. Do you trust the pedagogical staff with regard to the care and upbringing of your child?



Fig. 11. Responses to question 3.1. Do you trust the pedagogical staff with regard to the care and upbringing of your child?

The responses to this question provide an outstanding endorsement of the teachers' work, as they are the individuals to whom parents entrust not only their children's physical well-being but also their intellectual and emotional development. The results indicate an exceptionally high level of trust in the teaching staff, with more than 80% of parents expressing complete confidence in their professional competence and approach. When the positive responses ("completely" and "to a great extent") are combined, nearly 99% of respondents report feeling confident and reassured about the care and upbringing of their children. Only two respondents (1.4%) expressed some degree of reservation ("partially"), while the complete absence of responses in the category "I find it difficult to trust them" serves as a clear indicator of the authority and credibility that the educational staff have built through their daily work.

3.2. Do you feel that there is a partnership between your family and the kindergarten staff?

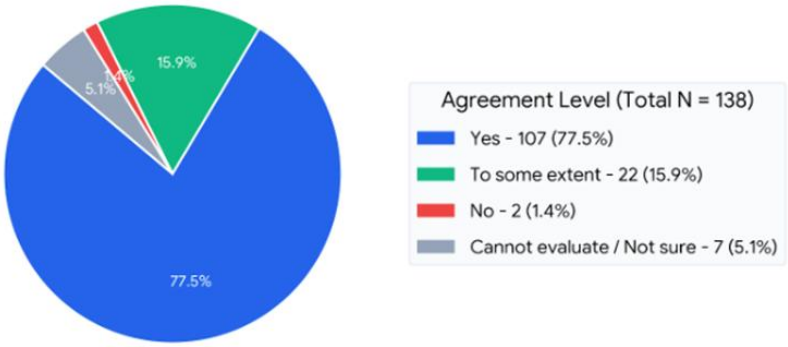


Fig. 12. Responses to question 3.2. Do you feel that there is a partnership between your family and the kindergarten staff?

This question measures the highest step in the educational relationships – the transition from simple information-sharing to genuine collaboration. The data confirm that the kindergarten's approach is strongly partnership-oriented. The results show that 77.5% of respondents view their relationship with the staff as a true and meaningful partnership. When the group that perceives this collaboration "to some extent" is included, the overall share of positive responses reaches 93%. Only 1.4% of respondents (2 individuals) gave a negative answer, while 5.1% were uncertain in their assessment. These figures demonstrate that parents do not see themselves as outsiders but rather as partners working alongside the staff to identify the best paths for their children's development. Only two respondents did not

perceive the existence of such a partnership, making negative perceptions statistically insignificant in the context of the overall high level of satisfaction.

3.3. How would you describe the way in which misunderstandings or problems are resolved when they arise?

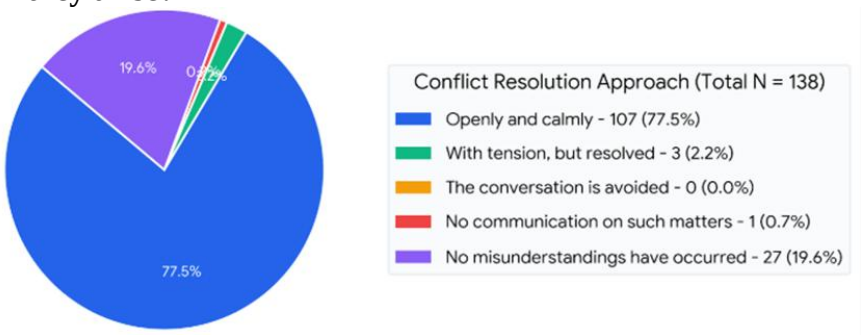


Fig. 13. Responses to question 3.3. How would you describe the way in which misunderstandings or problems are resolved when they arise?

This question is particularly important because the quality of a relationship is revealed most clearly not during periods of harmony, but when conflicts arise. The results are unequivocal and demonstrate a high level of maturity in communication. The data indicate the existence of a healthy and constructive environment for problem-solving. The fact that 107 respondents (nearly 78%) described the approach as "open and calm" combined with the 27 respondents who reported that no conflicts had arisen at all, suggests that in more than 97% of cases either tensions are absent or issues are handled professionally. Only 2.2% of respondents (3 individuals) perceived some degree of tension in reaching a resolution, while a single respondent (0.7%) reported a lack of dialogue. The complete absence of the response category "the conversation is avoided" is a remarkable endorsement of the staff's openness and integrity. Rather than avoiding difficult topics, they address them through constructive dialogue. The relationships are characterized by a high level of emotional intelligence, with the overwhelming majority of parents feeling confident that any potential concerns or problems will be met with understanding and composure. The lack of recurring communication difficulties in conflict situations further highlights that the institution has established effective feedback mechanisms that operate proactively.

3.4. What brings you the greatest satisfaction from your communication with the kindergarten?

The question is open-ended, allowing respondents to freely express their opinions. Out of a total of 96 responses (from 138 surveyed parents), a qualitative analysis of the answers reveals four main sources of parental satisfaction:

Emotional well-being and progress of the child – the leading factor contributing to parental satisfaction is the confidence that their child enjoys attending the educational institution, feels „at home" and is able to develop their potential in a calm and supportive environment.

Staff attitude and professionalism – respondents explicitly highlight the high level of empathy, kindness, responsiveness, and positive attitude demonstrated by both the teaching and support staff.

Constructive and accurate feedback – parents greatly value open, timely, and collaborative conversations, through which they acquire a realistic understanding of their children's socialization, progress, and achievements.

A sense of security and partnership – the perception that the family and the kindergarten work together as a team fosters trust and mutual respect.

In summary, the responses indicate that satisfaction with communication is closely linked to seeing a happy, well-cared-for child, supported by a professional, approachable, and caring team.

3.5. Besides, what do you find challenging or lacking in this communication? (What would you like: more communication, clearer information, more regular feedback, etc.?)

The question provides some guidance, but respondents are free to answer without any restrictions. This question offers valuable direction for future improvement. Although the vast majority of parents are fully satisfied, several specific areas emerge in which a small proportion of respondents see room for enhancement. Analysis of the responses reveals two main groups of attitudes: complete satisfaction (the predominant view) and specific constructive suggestions.

Lack of difficulties – for the overwhelming majority of parents, communication is smooth and problem-free. Phrases such as *"nothing is missing," "everything is at a high standard" and "I have no comments"* appear repeatedly. Many parents also use this section to reaffirm their complete trust in both the staff and the management team.

Desire for more regular feedback – this is the most frequently mentioned specific request. Although parents are generally satisfied with the quality of communication, some would appreciate more frequent and detailed information about *"their child's progress"* and daily experiences within the group.

Clarity and specificity of information – a small group of parents express a need for *"clearer instructions"* and *"more precise explanations"*, including from the administrative leadership. Some respondents note that there is occasionally room for improvement in the clarity of information related to organizational matters.

Confidentiality and communication environment – an important issue concerning privacy is also raised. Some parents mention that the presence of third parties (other parents or children) during information exchanges can sometimes make it difficult to discuss more personal or sensitive matters.

Desire for greater involvement – a constructive suggestion that emerged from the responses was to involve parents more actively in the life of the kindergarten through initiatives such as *"story-reading sessions"* and *"open lessons"*, which could further strengthen the sense of community.

Personal factors – some parents acknowledged that the difficulties they experience are primarily on their own side, such as a lack of time for conversations, rather than shortcomings in the kindergarten's communication practices.

The main conclusion is that the current communication model is effective and successful. Opportunities for further development lie in providing more regular individualized feedback and ensuring a more private and secure environment for confidential conversations.

The results from this section of the survey confirm an exceptionally high level of trust in the pedagogical staff (98.5%), built upon a strong sense of genuine partnership and calm, open dialogue when addressing issues and concerns. Parents' greatest sources of satisfaction include the children's visible emotional well-being, the warm and caring attitude of the staff, and the consistent feedback provided. Nearly half of the respondents reported no communication difficulties whatsoever, while among the small number who offered recommendations, the only recurring suggestion was a desire for even more regular and frequent communication.

The fourth section, "Participation and Engagement" examines the extent to which families are genuinely involved in the life of the kindergarten and the degree to which educational and developmental activities are extended into the home environment. The analysis focuses on parental proactivity, willingness to participate in joint events, and preferred future forms of collaboration aimed at strengthening the community. This section serves as an indicator of whether the kindergarten has evolved into a true community or remains merely a service-providing institution.

4.1. How often do you discuss with the teachers initiatives for supporting your child at home?

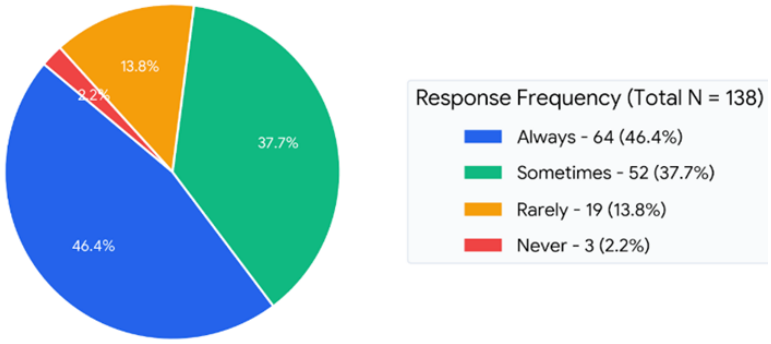


Fig. 14. Responses to question 4.1. How often do you discuss with the teachers initiatives for supporting your child at home?

The data (Figure 14) indicate that the majority of parents strive to maintain consistency between the home and educational environments. More than 84% of respondents ("always" and "sometimes") actively seek or receive guidance on how to continue supporting their child at home. This transforms the educational process into a continuous cycle that does not end when the child leaves the kindergarten. The findings reveal a strong interest in shared educational responsibility and collaboration. A large proportion of parents make use of teachers' professional expertise to further develop their child's skills in the home setting. A total of 64 respondents (46.4%) reported that they "always" discuss home-based support with teachers, which is indicative of a strong sense of conscious and engaged parenting. However, compared to the previous questions, there is a noticeable increase in the proportion of "rarely" responses (19 respondents). This may suggest that, while general information about the child is communicated effectively, more specific methodological guidance for supporting learning and development at home represent an area that could be further developed and encouraged, where parents express interest.

4.2. Do you have the opportunity to get involved in initiatives of the kindergarten (celebrations, projects, volunteer activities, etc.)?

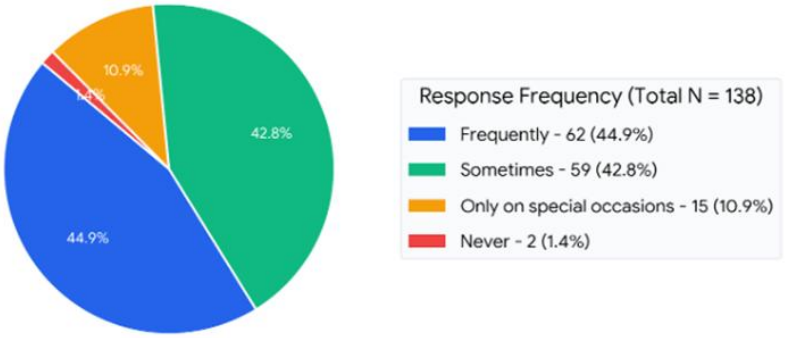


Fig. 15. Responses to question 4.2. Do you have the opportunity to get involved in initiatives of the kindergarten (celebrations, projects, volunteer activities, etc.)?

This question measures the extent of parents' actual physical and emotional presence in the life of the kindergarten community. The results reveal a high level of engagement – more than 87% of parents participate in initiatives "often" or "sometimes." This is a clear indication of strong social cohesion within the group. The group of 15 respondents who participate only on special occasions or do not participate regularly is likely constrained by professional commitments rather than a lack of interest. Overall, the fact that only two respondents do not participate at all demonstrates that the kindergartens provide meaningful and engaging opportunities for involvement that motivate families to become active members of the community. The kindergartens appear to successfully balance their initiatives in a way that makes them both accessible and appealing to a broad range of people, turning joint activities into a tradition rather than an exception.

4.3. If there are invitations to participate in joint activities, would you be willing to get more actively involved?

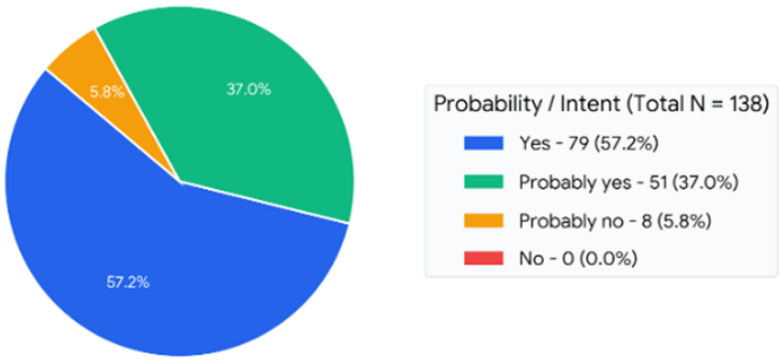


Fig. 16. Responses to question 4.3. If there are invitations to participate in joint activities, would you be willing to get more actively involved?

This question is aimed at assessing parents' future potential for involvement and participation. The data reveal a high level of willingness within the parent community. The results portray a highly motivated parent community who are ready to move from passive observation to active participation. The overwhelming majority of respondents (130 parents) expressed an interest in becoming more engaged in the future, representing a significant resource for the organization and implementation of various events and activities. that there was not a single unequivocal refusal ("no"). The minimal level of skepticism (only 8 respondents) suggests that parents feel valued and believe that their time and efforts would be meaningfully invested in the life of the kindergarten.

4.4. What forms of communication or collaboration would you like to see used more often? (The parents have given more than one respond.)

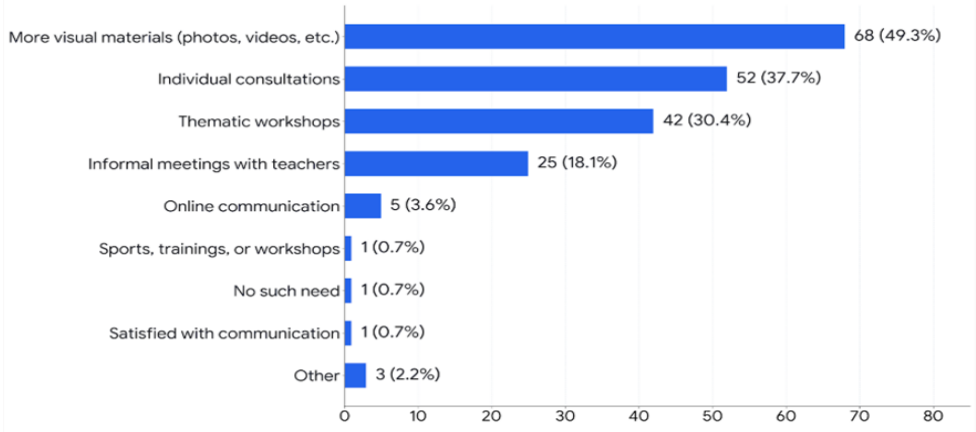


Fig. 17. Responses to question 4.4. What forms of communication or collaboration would you like to see used more often?

This question provides insight into parents' expectations for the future development of teacher-parent relationships. The data highlight three main directions for future collaboration: digital transparency, individual consultation, and shared creative activities. The strongest need expressed by parents (68 responses) relates to the visualization of the educational process. Parents want to "see" their children's experiences through photographs and videos. The second most common preference is for a more individualized approach (52 responses), confirming that general forms of communication are not always sufficient – parents highly value professional guidance tailored specifically to their own child. Thematic workshops also attract considerable interest (42 responses), providing a clear indication that families are willing to engage in learning through experience activities with their children. Only 3.6% of respondents identified digitalization ("online communication") as insufficient, suggesting that current communication channels adequately meet technical information-sharing needs but the focus is shifting towards the quality and depth of interactions, as well as the shared experiences.

The final section of the study **Open-ended questions and suggestions** provides valuable qualitative feedback by giving parents the opportunity to reflect freely on their experiences. These open-ended questions make it possible to capture authentic emotional evaluations of the partnership between families and the kindergarten, while also identifying specific ideas generated by the families themselves for improving communication channels, models and practices.

5.1. If you could describe the relationship between the kindergarten and the parents in one sentence, what would it be? (83 responses)

A total of 83 parents responded to this challenging open-ended question: *"The relationship between the kindergarten and parents in one sentence"*.

„One big family" – this is the most frequently used definition. Parents overwhelmingly perceive the kindergarten not as an administrative institution, but as a community where children feel as though they are in their *"second home."* Words such as *"love", "warmth",* and *"connectedness"* appeared repeatedly throughout the responses.

Trust and security – the relationship is described as *"secure"* and *"built on mutual respect"*. For the parents this trust is a source of reassurance, knowing that their children are in the care of professionals who surround them with affection and support.

Partnership and shared responsibility – many respondents defined the relationship as one of *"joint effort"* and *"close cooperation"*. They emphasized that teachers and parents function as *"one team"* with a common goal: the development, education, and well-being of the child.

Openness and professionalism – communication was described as *"excellent", "smooth"* and *"two-way"*. Parents expressed appreciation for the balance between a professional approach and genuine human warmth.

Ако If these positive reflections were to be summarized in a single sentence, it would read: „**Our relationship is a partnership built on complete trust and warmth, through which, together as one big family, we create a happy future for our children**."

5.2. What would you suggest to improve communication between teachers and parents? (please provide specific suggestions regarding communication models, channels, or frequency)

The question is open-ended and provides an opportunity for the parents to express their opinions, as they are even encouraged to be more specific in heir suggestions. A total of 61 parents responded to this question.

Parents are highly satisfied with the current level of communication, but they would appreciate a shift from general information-sharing towards more structured individual dialogue and greater visual insight into their children's daily life in the kindergarten. Their suggestions can be grouped into three strategic areas that could make the partnership even more effective:

1) Individualized feedback – this emerged as the strongest need identified by parents. They suggested:

- proactiveness – teachers could take the initiative to share highlights from a child's day without waiting for parents to ask.
- scheduled consultations – introducing fixed consultation times (weekly or monthly), preferably in a separate room, to ensure privacy and a calm environment for discussion.
- focus on progress – providing more detailed information about each child's specific challenges and achievements, rather than only general updates.
- time and sincerity – a small number of parents emphasized the need for more time for conversations and encouraged even greater openness and directness in communication between both parties.

2) Forms of „live" communication and shared experiences – parents are looking for opportunities for informal interaction that can strengthen trust:

- meetings in the form of a game – organizing gatherings that include joint activities and games.
- open lessons and celebrations – creating more opportunities for parents to be physically present in the classroom and observe the educational process firsthand.
- meetings outside the kindergarten – organizing informal meetings to foster stronger connections within the community.

3) Communication channels and visual content – to increase transparency, parents suggested:

- digital updates – regular sharing of photos and videos from children's daily activities.

- a Facebook group – using a private group to publish important events, and announcements in a timely manner.
- brief newsletters – sending regular, concise summaries of activities and developments within the group.

Based on the empirical study conducted, the following **conclusions** can be drawn:

The survey of parents clearly confirms that the kindergarten functions as a highly effective and secure educational environment.

The teaching staff enjoys an exceptionally high level of trust (over 98% positive perceptions), providing a strong foundation for a stable and productive partnership.

The processes of information sharing and conflict resolution are perceived as open and constructive. The institutions have successfully eliminated barriers to communication, creating a feeling of "second home".

With regard to parental engagement, the results indicate a clear readiness to move from passive observation to active participation. Parents demonstrate an interest in new forms of collaboration.

Initiatives for improvement:

Based on the suggestions provided by parents, digitalization of the feedback is recommended (more photos/videos).

Introduction of structured individual consultations to ensure confidentiality and facilitate more in-depth discussions regarding each child's development.

Summary:

Parents' shared assessment of the kindergarten's work carries significance that extends beyond the conventional measurement of satisfaction with the educational service provided. It represents an important source of information about how families perceive the quality of pedagogical interactions, the organizational climate, the treatment of children, the professionalism of the pedagogical staff, and their own role within the life of the institution. In this regard, parental feedback can be viewed as one of the most sensitive indicators of the actual quality experienced within the kindergarten setting. Importantly, parents' evaluations are not formed solely on the basis of visible organizational characteristics. Rather, they are shaped daily through concrete interactions – the way teachers welcome children, their willingness to engage in dialogue with parents, the timeliness and transparency of information shared, their responses to emerging issues, their respect for each child's individuality, and the institution's ability to foster a sense of security and belonging. For this reason, parental evaluations naturally encompass not only rational judgments but also strongly expressed emotional dimensions – trust, peace of mind, gratitude, joy, affection, friendship, respect, and a sense of belonging. In the responses analyzed, these themes define the rich emotional spectre of the relationship between families and the kindergarten.

A central place within parents' evaluations is occupied by trust. Trust may be regarded as a form of intangible capital for kindergartens, accumulated gradually over time yet playing a decisive role in the sustainability of relationships. Trust does not arise solely from declared intentions to build partnerships; rather, it is established through consistency between stated values and actual practice. When parents receive accessible information, when their opinions are respected, when teachers demonstrate both professional competence and human sensitivity, and when children feel safe and accepted, a solid foundation is created for trusting relationships and shared responsibilities. In the data analyzed, trust is closely associated with emotional stability, security, and reduced anxiety, highlighting its significance not only for parents, but also for children and the pedagogical staff. On this foundation, partnership develops – one of the most essential characteristics of contemporary relationships between families and preschool institutions. A genuine partnership involves moving from one-way

information sharing towards meaningful dialogue; from formal presence towards active participation; and from expecting parents merely to follow recommendations towards recognizing their experience, competence, and responsibility. Significantly, in the responses examined, partnership is linked to a sense of unity between the home and the kindergarten, equality in relationships, and the active involvement of families in the life of the institution. Such an understanding demonstrates that quality is increasingly perceived as a shared responsibility and a shared achievement, rather than a result attributable solely to the professional efforts of the pedagogical staff.

The sharing of parental evaluations also carries significant value from a management perspective. When feedback is collected systematically, analyzed thoughtfully, and incorporated into improvement planning, it becomes a powerful tool for organizational learning. Positive evaluations highlight the practices that should be maintained and further developed, while critical feedback can reveal areas that may remain invisible from the institution's internal perspective. For this reason, the maturity of a kindergarten is demonstrated not by its ability to receive only high ratings, but by its capacity to listen to, understand, and use parents' voices as a resource for development. In this context, a unique interdependence exists among quality, trust, feedback, and partnership. High-quality practice generates trust, trust encourages open communication and sharing, shared feedback creates opportunities for improvement, and improvement, in turn, strengthens both partnership and quality. In this way, a positive cycle of interaction is established, in which the family is not positioned outside the quality assurance system but becomes an active participant within it. Therefore, the parent's voice is important not only when it contains praise or criticism, but above all when it is heard and translated into meaningful action. A kindergarten that creates space for such a voice demonstrates openness, professional confidence, and a commitment to continuous improvement. Within this framework, shared parental evaluation can be described as a bridge between the institution's understanding of quality and the way quality is actually experienced by families and children. It is upon this bridge that sustainable trust, equitable partnership, and a child-centered community are built, and these are among the most reliable foundations of high-quality contemporary early childhood education.

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