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## DEVELOPMENT OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION IN DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING PRESCHOOL CHILDREN\*\*\*

*Abstract:* This paper discusses the development and specifics of artistic expression in deaf and hard-of-hearing preschool children. We analyzed the significance of the stages of artistic development and the therapeutic effect of artistic expression. A drawing made by a deaf or hard-of-hearing child provides the opportunity to assess their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development, the development of perception, a sense of beauty, and creativity. Through expressive and aesthetic development, children expand their knowledge and skills in nonverbal, visual, auditory, sensory, and verbal experiences. The artistic expression of deaf and hard-of-hearing children does not lag behind that of a hearing child. Visual representations of children with hearing impairment are much more realistic than those of hearing children. Visual perception of deaf and hard-of-hearing children contains many details related to physiognomy, movement, facial expression, body posture, and color. Children use art to communicate with themselves and the environment. In deaf and hard-of-hearing preschool children, it is necessary to develop all functions of nonverbal and verbal communication through artistic expression.

*Key words:* artistic expression, development, deaf and hard of hearing children, preschool age.

### INTRODUCTION

Visual arts are very important for the knowledge, learning, and holistic development of preschool children. Children develop imagination, flexible thinking, curiosity, and creativity. They are encouraged to communicate, express their thoughts and feelings, and build their own understanding of the world (Pavlović, Sarvanović 2022).

Diversity and different ways of thinking, learning, and communicating with oneself and the environment are significant values in the education and upbringing of children with specific learning and communication difficulties (Đuković, Mrvoš, Radovanović 2020).

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Artistic expression reflects the entire development of a child's personality. It is a form of communicating with oneself involving the environmental elements these children identify with and which they organize in new meaningful units.

Artistic expression depends on mental and psychomotor development, the development of perception, socioemotional development, and the development of creativity and a sense of beauty. Children's drawings and paintings reflect the progress in each of these developmental aspects, as well as their preoccupations, psychological state, experiences, attitudes toward the social and natural environment, and many other characteristics. Preschool children use art to communicate with themselves, others, and the world around them. The creative process of art activities and games is the best way to get to know children, their developmental abilities and needs, individual preferences, desires, interests, fears, etc. It is the way to enter a child's inner world and discover further steps in education and upbringing.

Art education is a segment of the educational process that encourages and directs all cognitive activities used for acquiring, improving, shaping, and expanding the experiences of those being educated in visual arts (Filipović 2011).

Education based on the contents and processes of visual arts enables the acquisition of valuable experience in forming personal attitudes toward the world and the development of numerous child activities (Gibson 2003).

Art education satisfies the basic need for creative interaction and communication for the purpose of being included in the cultural context of the environment.

## DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

The educational approach involving visual arts is a research subject of artists, philosophers, psychologists, and pedagogues. The first empirical studies of children's drawings appeared at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Farokhi, Hashemi 2011). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, early-age art education was based on developing drawing skills, improving eye-hand coordination, and accurately presenting motifs on paper.

An Italian philosopher and poet, Corrado Ricci, was the first to consider a child's drawing as a separate phenomenon. He published the book „L'Arte dei Bambini”, which was entirely devoted to children's art (Anning, Ring 2004). That was the first book to deal with the analysis of children's artwork with special emphasis on children's drawings. Ricci analyzed the emotional component and characteristics of children's artistic expression (Balić, Šimrak 2010; Hjužak 2013).

An Austrian painter, Franku Cizek, recognized the importance and authenticity of children's artistic expression. In 1897, he opened an art school for children where he encouraged their imagination, creativity, and artistic expression (Hubin, Schneider 2019).

In Italy, Reggio Emilia and Loris Malaguzzi promoted a preschool pedagogy program based on children's spontaneous expression and creativity. They presented the program in their traveling exhibition – *The Hundred Languages of Children* (Malaguzzi 1997).

Luquet (1913) was the first author to identify the stages of art development in his book „Children's Drawings” (*Dessin d'un Enfant*). These early studies developed several theories that were the basis of further research on the dynamics of drawing

development and the drawing process itself (Freeman 1980; Luquet 1913, 1927; Piaget 1956; Willats 1977; Maley 2009, according to Cvetković 2014).

Many authors emphasize the significance of art in the education and upbringing of preschool children. Art education encourages the development of children's imagination, creativity, perception, and expression. It also contributes to general knowledge – the development of language, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills (Pavlović 2016).

Visual arts are one of the most natural ways for children to advance in their development and learning.

#### ARTISTIC EXPRESSION AS A DEVELOPMENT INDICATOR IN DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING CHILDREN

The study of artistic expression indicates different aspects of children's development: the development of perception, motor skills, and cognitive, social, and emotional functioning (Del Giudice et al., 2000; Jolley, Knox, Foster, 2000; Kayacan, Keser & Eren, 2015; Picard, Durand 2005).

Hearing and speech impairment leads to certain specifics and difficulties in the development of deaf and hard-of-hearing children. Deaf children require early involvement in the hearing and speech rehabilitation process, which is a prerequisite for their progress in speech-language, cognitive, emotional, and social development (Kovačević, Isaković 2019).

A drawing of a deaf and hard-of-hearing child enables the assessment of cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development, the development of perception, a sense of beauty, and creativity.

Artistic expression at preschool age is related to cognitive development (Yu, Nagai 2020). It should be used for stimulation and optimal child development. Cognitive development is best observed through children's growing awareness of themselves and the environment. Zečević (2020) points out the importance of connecting cognitive and emotional processes. Children should be provided with an educational process that is in accordance with their developmental needs and that will further deepen and encourage their cognitive and emotional balance through scientifically based approaches and methods. Art and related learning processes are nowadays increasingly recognized as cognitive areas vital to the harmonious development of children (Hadži, Jovančić 2012).

Erić (2010) points out that a drawing also provides information about cognition, conception, perception, and expression.

The level of cognitive development is reflected in children's experiences while drawing and painting. The *Draw-a-Person* test is one of the intelligence tests used when limited verbal abilities hinder communication with a child. As children develop, so does their awareness of the world around them and its contents (Kamenov 2006). The results of numerous empirical studies indicate that hearing impairment selectively affects specific aspects of cognitive functioning: verbal intelligence, abstract thinking, discovering logical meaning and using symbols, adopting the principles of conversation, memory (verbal, numerical, conceptual, delayed), and certain aspects of visual perception such as perception speed, distinguishing the shape of objects that are similar or

in an unusual position, synthesis difficulties, and shortcomings of analysis. Other areas of cognitive functioning are not affected. Moreover, their development is accelerated, and thus, drawing and muscle memory are more developed than in hearing children. Visual perception of deaf and hard-of-hearing children is very detailed. They are very good at perceiving physiognomy, movement, facial expression, body posture, and color (Radoman 1996; Kovačević, Đoković 2020).

Many deaf and hard-of-hearing children have specific problems with communication and interaction. Children's speech relies on cognitive and social development, and the way in which children communicate indicates their level of socialization.

Social development, which starts at birth, can be noticed in a very small child who begins to draw other people immediately after the scribbling stage. Children's drawings and paintings reflect their increased awareness of the social environment with age. As a means of communication, drawing represents projecting oneself into the surrounding world. As they grow up, children start including other people in their drawings, reflecting their attitudes toward them. The development of awareness of the social aspect of reality is also reflected in the way children present a child playing, participating in family relationships, and characters and occupations that have social significance to them (Kamenov 2006).

Age-appropriate acquisition of speech and language gives a child the opportunity to play, learn concepts, and be involved in social interaction with peers. A child's inability to play and communicate with other children over time leads to isolation and greater difficulties in emotional, social, and overall development (Kovačević 2012; Kovačević, Isaković 2019). Children who lag in social development draw unrelated scattered figures of people from whom they are spatially or in some other way separated.

Limitations in language development negatively affect cognitive and social development in children. There is also a significant relation between communication difficulties and exhibiting inappropriate behavior. Some children develop inappropriate behavior when they are communicatively frustrated, while others give up activities and withdraw in such situations. Establishing positive social interactions between deaf and hard-of-hearing preschool children and their hearing peers leads to better social, emotional, and cognitive development, the development of communication and self-confidence (Batten, Oakes, Alexander 2014).

Visual art activities allow deaf and hard-of-hearing children to express emotions, especially those they are unaware of. Expressing emotions and the inner world is important since it affects children's emotional balance.

Deaf and hard-of-hearing preschool children are often impulsive and expressive. They have difficulties adapting to socially acceptable behavior, often involving a set of prohibitions and rules. Children need to channel aggression and frustrations in a socially acceptable way. Visual art play activities enable the regulation of emotional outbursts and contribute to emotional balance.

Art education influences emotional development. Artistic expression involves the process of a child's emotional liberation. Children's emotional engagement is reflected in the degree to which they are engaged in artistic creation. Children have a special way of presenting objects that have a special meaning to them. Frequent stereotyped repetitions are observed in children who have difficulties adapting and whose way of thinking is

characterized by rigidity. Constant repetition of the same shape or detail indicates children's tendency to avoid new experiences and withdraw into a familiar world where they feel safe. Such drawing does not involve experience and is sometimes the consequence of using coloring books and encouraging the child to copy and imitate someone else's models. The described stereotyped repetition of shapes should be distinguished from children's tendency to draw variations on the same topic in some cases, which may be an indicator of their creativity and openness to new experiences (Kamenov 2006; Nikolić 2012).

Children who are not emotionally engaged are not involved in what they are doing, even when drawing. Their representations are objective and do not express personal attitudes toward what they have drawn. Their drawings usually do not present people, and if they do, they are not shown in action. Emotional engagement involves a more free and subjective expression. A tree or a house a child drew is not any tree or house, but the one with special and important features because of which the child depicted it. Such children are freer in using various materials in different ways without being afraid of making mistakes, and they constantly change the content and method of their artistic expression (Filipović 2011:31).

Some research shows that emotions and emotional stability affect cognitive processes such as attention, concentration, decision-making, and learning (Brouillette 2010).

In their social and emotional development, deaf and hard-of-hearing preschool children exhibit the following: social and emotional maladjustment and immaturity, egocentricity, reduced empathy, and impulsivity. Preschool children have problems expressing their needs, do not understand the situations they are in, and often experience feelings of frustration and isolation (Kovačević, Isaković 2019; Kovačević, Đoković 2020).

Preschool children feel emotional satisfaction while participating in any form of artistic creation (drawing, painting, modeling).

Children have creative freedom and thus express their thoughts and feelings. Encouraging children to have opinions and express their feelings is a part of good education and upbringing. When praised for their work, children build self-confidence. Self-confidence is mainly reflected at an older age in children's readiness to learn from their own and other people's mistakes and to be better prepared for social life. Self-confidence is very important for children with developmental disabilities.

Physical development is reflected in children's artistic expression through eye-hand coordination, achieved movement control, and dexterity. Art activities at preschool age always involve using different materials or objects, which is related to the development of senses (primarily the sense of touch) and fine motor skills of hands and fingers (Večanski, Vasiljević Blagojević, Marinković 2017).

Through playing and becoming familiar with different types of visual art, the physical aspect of child development is associated with using and applying tools and materials. Applying different techniques (drawing, painting, sculpting, or combined) contributes to the development of graphomotor skills, i.e., fine motor skills of arms and hands (Nasković 2017).

Artistic talent does not often appear at preschool age due to insufficiently developed motor skills of fingers. It is first observed in increased interest and self-initiated, independent, and free work – through art activities children do in their free time at home and preschool institutions (Nikolić 2012).

Children's drawings with recognizable art creations and planned meanings do not exist at an early age (Manojlović, Mladenović 2001).

At the scribbling stage, children's drawings range from random, aimless lines to controlled scribbling, which is achieved relatively quickly. In addition to the quality of physical activity as an indicator of physical development, drawing one's own body, depending on a child's notion, is also indicative. Physically active and developed children will draw their movements and pay more attention to their achievements in this regard. Difficulties in making movements children may not be aware of will affect their artistic expression. Constant emphasizing or omitting some body parts in a drawing may be caused by the state of physical development of a child with developmental disabilities.

The perceptual development of deaf and hard-of-hearing preschool children should be monitored in their artistic expressions based on the acquired perceptual experience in drawing, painting, and modeling. Children develop the ability to perceive colors, shapes, and spatial relations due to their visual experience. While naming basic colors and enjoying them is typical of early developmental stages, recognizing shades and color differences under different lighting develops later on. With regard to the sense of touch, children start by simply kneading clay or playdough and progress to modeling various shapes and enjoying different surfaces and textures. Perceptual development is also reflected in perceiving complex spatial relations. While small children know and understand only their immediate surroundings, this gradually changes with age and new experiences (Kamenov 2006).

Visual art activities improve perceptual skills, including the perception of sizes, color shades, details, and lighting. Through visual creativity, deaf and hard-of-hearing children learn to observe, describe, analyze, and interpret (Lindström 2009). All this activates their visual and tactile learning abilities.

Children with poor perceptual experiences lag in the development of the ability to perceive shapes, colors, spatial relations, textures, and other characteristics of objects around them, nor are they able to perceive finer differences between them. This may be the consequence of various unfavorable influences and circumstances, and is a likely indication of lagging behind in some other aspects as well.

Using signs-gestures, words, and objects stimulates the development of some forms of perception, memory, and thinking in deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

The development of a sense of beauty is reflected in the way thoughts and feelings are organized and communicated to others. This developmental aspect can be evaluated based on the ability to integrate personal experiences into a harmonious whole with a personal touch. Chaotically scattered shapes at a certain age can indicate developmental personality problems.

Drawing is also a semantic function of communication ability. The semantic aspect of this functional communication is reflected in its relation to other abilities, from the perceptual ability to turning that material into an apperceptive art form and content described as a line. What is drawn as a line has been seen, which means it has been experienced (Erić 2010:16).

Children's artwork can be observed as a creative expression containing expression and communication. A drawing carries a message. It is a means through which children

express their emotions. Drawings and paintings are not subject to evaluation, and their content is authentic. When children ask for paper and wish to spend much time drawing, we know they are on a developmental path. Through artistic expression, children shape their ideas of the world, express their experience, and convey it to the people around them. Children successfully communicate through visual arts with or without verbalizations.

One of the benefits of artistic creation is the development of creativity (Lindström 2009). Creativity is the primary goal of visual art activities. Deaf and hard-of-hearing children express their ideas through visual arts (Omatseye, Emeriewen 2010). The development of creativity in children's drawings and paintings is reflected in their imagination and originality. It does not depend on the acquired skills but rather on the feeling of freedom to explore, experiment, and fully engage in these activities. Children whose creativity development was hindered in some way lack this feeling of freedom and thus prefer to imitate and copy the artwork of others. They are not self-assured and constantly ask for help. They usually refuse to draw or paint something new without a model or demonstration. Creativity stems from multiple experiences. It is supported by personal resources and involves a sense of freedom and courage to step out of the familiar.

During their growth and development, it is necessary for children to express what they experience, see, or hear in the environment in their specific, unique way. Thus, children express their thoughts, emotions, and experiences freely and spontaneously, which contributes to the overall development of their potential in the process of forming active and creative individuals. It is necessary to support and develop child creativity at an early age so that it does not irretrievably disappear in the critical developmental period, and it is also necessary to support and encourage it further at older ages. It is important to create conditions in which children will have the opportunity to express their potential. However, it is difficult to distinguish whether their achievements result from talent or a stimulating environment. When studying the nature of the relationship between a child and their environment, Vygotsky (1996) considers the environmental influence during child development, pointing out that each step in a child's progress changes the environmental influence, i.e., it changes the child's perception of reality (Kopas, Vukašinović 2012).

Deaf and hard-of-hearing preschool children must be allowed to express creativity, imagination, and self-expression through their artwork (Malley, Silverstein 2014; Lloyd 2017).

#### STAGES OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION IN DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING CHILDREN

Lazarević (2015) points out four basic stages in the development of children's drawings: fortuitous, failed, intellectual, and visual realism (Luquet 1927; according to Willats 2005). The age limits of the mentioned stages of drawing development are not fixed but flexible, and thus the elements of one stage can also be found in another. Intellectual and visual realism should be analyzed from the aspect of different drawing styles

or systems rather than fixed chronological hierarchical sequences (Jolley et al. 2004). Cvetković (2014) points out that Luquet's theory is based on the idea that children go through four stages of drawing development, with graphical elements progressing from the earliest scribbling to representational forms with increasing visual realism (Willats 2005).

There are two basic initiators of children's artistic creation. They include the inner psychophysical functions of a child and a stimulating environment. The development of motor skills and perception, i.e., how children understand the world around them, is among the most significant psychophysical functions that stimulate children's artistic creation. Until the age of three, children's insufficiently developed and coordinated hand movements only allow scribbling. Early-age scribbling reflects a child's need for expression (Manojlović, Mladenović 2001). Environmental stimuli, such as providing art materials and colors and encouraging a child to use them, contribute to the development of artistic creation.

After the sensorimotor stage (i.e. the end of the second year of life), children have the need to depict the world more directly. Drawing and artistic creation at preschool age satisfy children's need to express their knowledge about the world around them. They do not aim for aesthetic creation but rather the product of that creation. When children's perception becomes more developed and more discriminating, they start noticing the imperfections of their drawings. This can reduce their drawing self-confidence, which is why the environment (parents, family members, and educators) should encourage children's art activities even more at this stage.

The spontaneity and directness of artistic expression are mostly conditioned by freedom of choice related to objects, methods, and techniques of artistic expression.

A child's first drawing experience occurs spontaneously by using a pencil to draw lines on paper. It does not result from a conscious intention to depict a certain object but from the feeling of satisfaction that arises from such kinesthetic activity. In the scribbling stage, a drawing is not depictive but rather serves for practicing visuomotor coordination.

Around the age of two, children satisfy the need to move, explore space, get to know objects from the environment, and use them. Through scribbling, they experience the joy of a motor game, noticing that some objects leave traces. They hold a pencil using their whole hand and make sharp, energetic movements. Children scribble by using their whole hand, and even body, without the intention to depict something. In this stage of "aimless" or "meaningless" scribbling, vertical and horizontal lines appear first. These lines are most often crossed, and soon bundles of crossed lines appear. Children also often scribble by hitting a pencil on a surface. Intentional and conscious scribbling occurs when it implies shapes that mean something to children. That is most frequently a shape that we recognize as a circle.

After drawing lines that are the expression of uncontrollable energy and movement, a circle is the first shape a child draws. This makes much sense since the circle is the essence of existence and movement, symbolizing wholeness, perfection, and unity of the finite and the infinite. Mother is also depicted as a circular shape at the beginning of a child's drawing experience (Panić, 2005).



Arm movements from shoulder to hand become more differentiated, controlled, and perfected. Thus, the circle appears as the simplest form for depicting general characteristics of an object or phenomenon. Children's circle is irregular because their motor skills and eye control are not sufficiently developed. Squares and other angular shapes rarely appear before the circle. Lines and shapes depend on the child's temperament and mood. Personality traits can be seen in speed, rhythm, regularity or irregularity, movement, and intensity. Apart from the differences arising from children's individuality, we should also consider the materials used. This stage is significant for further development since it enables children to come into contact with different materials, which are also important stimuli for children's activities (Nikolić 2012: 254).

The initial scribbling period is followed by the stage of fortuitous realism (2-4 years of age), when children start to notice the similarity between randomly drawn lines and familiar objects, subsequently naming them. During the stage of failed realism (4-6 years of age), children know what they want to draw and are able to formulate and express their intentions. The main barriers to achieving visual similarity with real-life objects are insufficiently developed visuomotor coordination, fine motor skills of the hand, and limited and unsteady attention (Cvetković 2014).

After the age of four, children can draw spiral, oval, circular, and square shapes and straight lines (long and short, in different positions). Children combine and experiment with shapes and colors. They depict objects and phenomena using simple diagrams, signs, and symbols.

Koks (2000) points out that the human figure is the most popular topic in children's drawings at preschool age (3-7 years of age). A drawing of a human figure is very simple at this stage („cephalopod" or „tadpole"). The head is drawn as a circle with straight lines emerging from it to represent the torso, arms, or legs. Other objects are depicted in a similar way: using simple symbols around a circle or a quadrilateral combined with different lines. A schematic drawing of a human figure sometimes includes facial parts (most often eyes and mouth, later nose and other details), while details such as hands and feet are usually not drawn.

The next most frequent type of child drawing is a house, followed by a tree, which is also the first plant a child depicts. Preschool children can give information about themselves, their families, and their immediate surroundings through drawing and painting.

The symbols of home and family are frequent topics in children's drawings.

At the preoperational stage of cognitive development, children's cognitive processes are characterized by egocentrism. Because of that, children face difficulties in analyzing several characteristics of an object simultaneously, while their insufficiently realistic drawings reflect their mental imbalance. This mental imbalance is reflected in children's inability to set clear boundaries between their perception of characteristics, mental representation, and graphic representation of the same object (Piaget, Inhelder 1996). Children's drawings become recognizable. They start to include details and use patterns for drawing different characters. They use different shapes to depict different topics and start to use specific shapes for specific topics. Their drawings are, at this stage, characterized by difficulties in positioning elements on paper, inadequate proportions, and the inability to integrate elements into a coherent whole (Willats 2005).

## SPECIFICS OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION IN DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING CHILDREN

At preschool age, art education is the process of acquiring art as a culture, which is different from the process of creativity in art. By participating in various visual art activities, deaf and hard-of-hearing children acquire the elements of art. In deaf and hard-of-hearing children, artistic expression is initially guided by intuition. Children gradually get acquainted with the means of artistic expression.

Art education includes drawing, painting, elements of graphics, sculpture, elements of applied arts, multimedia, and the basics of aesthetic assessment. The contents of artistic areas are structured in such a way that they follow the development of artistic abilities and the continuity of their development, and allow for a child's artistic expression to be cultivated by planned and organized work in the process of creation (Filipović 2011: 264).

Visual art activities at preschool age are playful, play-like, and productive since they involve using different materials to create artwork: drawings, paintings, prints, three-dimensional objects, and sculptures. Duku & Kemevor (2013) point out that children's visual art refers to artifacts created by themselves: scribbles, drawings, paintings, modeled objects, and sculptures. Children's creativity stems from special abilities and preferences, actualized in the stimulating atmosphere of their immediate environment. Deaf and hard-of-hearing children create interesting and unusual artwork through play-like activities.

Children make gestures and movements, jump, draw, and paint before developing speech communication skills. Art is a visual language with receptive and expressive components, where ideas are communicated without needing to be expressed verbally (Eubanks 2011; Obosu, Adu, Agyem & Opoku, Asare 2013).

Various forms of artistic expression (scribbling, drawing, painting, sculpting) are inherent in the daily activities of deaf and hard-of-hearing children (Arijaf 2016). Preschool children explore the world around them and communicate their ideas, hopes, emotions, and experiences through art (Farokhi, Hashemi 2011).

Within their artistic expression, preschool children express their perceptions, beliefs, relationships in the environment, interpersonal relations, and experiences in a specific way. Drawing and scribbling are biological needs of each child, including deaf children. They are forms of child expression that frequently replace speech. Drawings follow children's psychological development (Savić, Ivanović 1988).

Drawing engages basic mechanisms of attention, executive functions, and visuo-perceptual and visuospatial abilities, and the level of their functional maturity is directly related to children's achievements (Lazarević 2015). The quality of drawing depends on the organizational level of praxiognostic abilities, whose most important components are visual attention, visual perception, visual memory, and visuospatial, visuoconstructive, and motor abilities (Gligorović, Vučinić 2011).

Visual memory and artistic expression of deaf and hard-of-hearing children do not lag behind the artistic expression of a hearing child. Visual representations of deaf and hard-of-hearing children include more details and are much more realistic than those

of hearing children. By drawing, children express what is on the surface of their perceptual abilities at that moment. Thus, their drawings are often symbolic rather than object copies. Children draw what they know about an object and not what they see. Artistic expressions of deaf and hard-of-hearing children reflect an object with its individual features, many unnecessary details, special characteristics, qualities, and specificities typical of drawings in this population of children (Savić, Ivanović 1988). Using visual art forms, drawing and painting, and demonstrating moves and gestures within art activities carry important messages (Obosu, Adu, Agyem, Opoku, Asare 2013).

Preschool children learn and acquire art concepts through body movements, descriptive and demonstrative gestures, signs, and spoken and sign language. For deaf and hard-of-hearing preschool children, art can be a helpful tool in learning and playing, a hobby, or a means of communication. Visual art activities stimulate all forms of nonverbal and verbal communication in deaf and hard-of-hearing children (Eubanks 2011). Communication in deaf and hard-of-hearing children can be verbal (spoken or written) and nonverbal (including sign language, dactylology, mime, and lip reading).

Although we cannot use speech to easily explain the ways and movements needed for drawing and coloring to a child with hearing impairment, due to the nature of their disability, they easily notice these movements and master the skills of artistic expression. A demonstration is enough for a deaf or hard-of-hearing child to learn the procedures and techniques of artistic expression.

Children learn to distinguish between different forms and concepts by using signs. A special educator (speech and language therapist) air-draws a shape, and then deaf and hard-of-hearing children imitate that procedure or draw the same shape on paper or some other surface (Ferrara, Napoli 2019).

It is wrong to assume that deaf and hard-of-hearing children have natural talents for artistic and aesthetic expression, and thus leave art education activities to the free will of a deaf child under the excuse that they “draw beautifully”. Such an approach does not have the significance of systematic drawing instruction and is thus in contrast with today’s view that preschool children must be guided in art education.

Children need guidance, support, sharing experiences, and opportunities for gaining independent experience to develop creativity in the right way.

Deaf and hard-of-hearing children should be observed in play and art activities. A special educator (speech and language therapist) should pay attention to their body postures and facial expressions, whether they enjoy the process or are bored, what they find difficult, or what hinders their creative expression. Deaf and hard-of-hearing preschool children receive a lot of information visually. During art activities, a special educator (speech and language therapist) can instruct and demonstrate by using descriptive or demonstrative gestures, signs, dactylology, speech, lip reading, appropriate facial expressions, and body language. While creating their artwork, children need to be supported not only with words but also gestures, mimes, or a smile, which further motivates the child to continue with work. Through various art games and activities, children discover, learn about, and confirm themselves as creative beings. They get to know their artistic possibilities and expressions, their feelings, ideas, thoughts, perceptions, needs, imaginations, fantasies, and creative experiences (Kayacan, Keser, Eren 2015).

Children discover both their own inner world and the inner world of others. The pace of development of each child is different, and thus the possibilities of artistic expression are also different.

Artistic expression (drawing, painting, sculpting, the basics of graphics, and the basics of applied arts) is very important for the development of motor, sensory, and psychological abilities and functions in deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

Kovačević (2012) indicates that interaction can occur without communication, especially verbal communication. Over time, children learn to interpret and respond to other people's gestures, facial expressions, and movements. They also become aware of their own nonverbal expression and begin to use it adequately. Many word-based interactions involve direct exchange of gestures, objects, and materials. Children often exchange toys and tools they need for various activities or participate in different types of games that involve joint activity, coordination, and reciprocal action without being accompanied by verbal communication (Kovačević, Isaković 2019).

There are certain pedagogical rules in teaching artistic expression to children: mastering specific drawing and modeling movements and methods in sequence, learning certain ways of artistic expression in a specific order, and applying specific art education techniques in sequence.

Deaf and hard-of-hearing children should be taught how to use space by drawing on paper. Children usually draw in the upper left corner, the middle, or the bottom right corner of a piece of paper. They need to be instructed to evenly distribute different shapes on paper so that the drawing is symmetrical and evenly filled.

In the initial stages, children copy, mechanically trace, and later draw by observing the objects in their surroundings or from their memory. Children should also be taught to color finished drawings according to a given model to practice precision, combining colors, coloring techniques, and how to dissolve colors. Supplementing or completing a started drawing should be practiced as a separate stage of artistic creation in deaf and hard-of-hearing children. This includes distinguishing and finding two identical drawings in a sequence and spotting differences between two similar drawings.

Children should also learn about the drawing size, i.e., how big their drawing should be on a piece of paper: enlarged, natural size, or reduced.

Topics of children's drawings should be carefully considered. These should include contents from children's immediate environment, familiar objects, and events from their own lives and the lives of other children. Children should also depict content from their imagination and make drawings of their choice. Drawing tools and materials are also important issues. A child should first use a pencil, then wooden crayons, felt-tip pens, watercolors, wax colors, colored chalk, and tempera. They should use paper, a sketchpad, and cardboard as the drawing surface. It should be insisted that children finish the drawing completely. Young deaf children often paint with their fingers dipped in paint. They mix colors with their hands and then spread them on paper or make prints. Children should experiment with different tools and materials. Art education is not a goal in itself for deaf and hard-of-hearing preschool children. The task of art education is to develop the potential possibilities of a deaf child in artistic and aesthetic expression and create satisfaction because of achieved creative abilities.

Art education should be a tool for developing sign and spoken language in deaf and hard-of-hearing preschool children.

Different fields of art (drawing, sculpting, and modeling) should contribute to the development of cognition and speech, vocabulary enrichment, and the development of knowledge and creative abilities of a deaf child.

Drawing and painting can be used to work on many concepts related to different educational areas: speech development, forming basic mathematical concepts, learning about the environment, and physical education. Deaf and hard-of-hearing preschool children require specific treatment adapted to their individual abilities and possibilities (programs, work-play tools, methods, and forms of work optimally adapted to each child). The structuring of educational work involves differentiation through dosed, guided activities for processing and acquiring different contents within different educational areas. The correlation between educational areas is very significant.

In deaf and hard-of-hearing preschool children, it is especially important to develop specific concepts and related word categories, such as the concept of color, shape, features, size, space, self, time, number, and quantity. Children can acquire many concepts belonging to different lexical areas through artistic creation.

While drawing, painting, or gluing applications on paper, we should talk about the position of objects on a drawing and draw or demonstrate what that word-concept means. Children understand all words literally and perform activities related to their meaning. This is vital for a deaf child to understand the functional meaning of words. Drawing is not a goal in itself, but a tool for developing speech and language in deaf and hard-of-hearing children since their drawings provide opportunities for nonverbal and verbal communication. Each drawing should be discussed and designed by a deaf or hard-of-hearing child. The conscious aesthetic taste should be developed in young deaf children from their earliest drawings.

## THERAPEUTIC EFFECT OF ART ACTIVITIES

Drawing is often considered a direct reflection of a child's psychological state. Thus, drawing and painting are basic expressions of a child's personality. Children often draw what they cannot express verbally or are hindered by their environment. Therefore, a child's drawing is considered a significant tool for expressing children's needs, feelings, thoughts, and inner experiences in general (Zečević 2020).

Children's creative expression has a therapeutic effect. Children who are able to objectify their inner conflicts by depicting them can distance themselves and master them, which is a type of catharsis (through drawing, using dolls, pantomime, etc.) (Kamenov 2006).

Preschool children have difficulties articulating their feelings and states but easily express and present them (materialize them) by using art materials: kneading play-dough or clay, sprinkling paint, scribbling, or gently dragging a pencil on paper. In this way, by using different materials to make their emotions visible, children get to know their inner world, their feelings, and the environment (people, things, and events) to which they react. By expressing their reactions through different materials, children

learn about themselves and the world around them (Venčanski et al. 2017). Edwards (2006) believes that children are perhaps the closest to their inner and outer world during the creative process.

Children learn about the world by reconstructing it in their expressions. They become confident that they are able to control even those situations in which they usually feel helpless and frightened, which later transfers to real life. To achieve therapeutic effects, children should be given as many opportunities as possible to choose topics independently and express what is important to them. When they complete their work, it is advisable to discuss the contents of their creation with them, allowing them to express their thoughts and feelings and enhancing the therapeutic effect. The creative process itself has the same effect since the act of scribbling, modeling, or smearing colors provides satisfaction and relieves tension in children. The condition is that children are relaxed and not worried about getting something dirty or not meeting some predetermined criteria (Kamenov 2006).

Art activities have a therapeutic effect. Bullard (2010) describes how preschool children use art materials (for drawing, painting, and sculpting) to reconstruct certain traumatic events.

Many traumatic life events, such as death, sickness, divorce, abandonment, and abuse, which affect children's cognitive, social, and emotional development, are directly reflected in their drawings and sculptures. Art therapy techniques can alleviate children's psychological difficulties (Kayacan, Keser, Eren 2015). Reconstructing traumatic scenes gives children a sense of control and the opportunity to face their fears or other unpleasant feelings and safely relive that traumatic event in a safe environment (Večanski et al. 2017).

Art therapy often helps children who need psychological help due to the experienced trauma. Art therapy is a form of expressive psychotherapy that deals not only with problems and negative aspects of a person but also with discovering inner potentials and creative resources, developing positive strengths and qualities that help a person face problems, see them in a new light, better understand them, and cope with them in a more constructive way (Šarančić, 2014: 99). Art therapy uses the creative self-expression of a deaf or hard-of-hearing child through drawing, painting, sculpting, or some other form of artistic expression. It can be implemented individually or in a group. It is intended for children who have an affinity for this type of expression and wish to release their creative potential (Radoman 1996). Creative therapy is based on the idea that children's characteristics are reflected in their artwork. The creative art process can be a means of expression and therapeutic communication (Balić, Šimrak 2010). Therapeutic work with children is particularly complex because children's drawings are multidimensional and reflect their experiences, feelings, level of development, sociocultural influences, and the context in which they create.

Creative therapy involves recognizing unconscious feelings and thoughts expressed in drawings or other artistic creations of deaf people. In deaf and hard-of-hearing children, art is a type of symbolic communication that helps them express and interpret unacceptable and unpleasant feelings. Deaf and hard-of-hearing children face

many problems related to their mental health. Art therapy reduces anxiety, depression, and loneliness in deaf children and can be used as an educational-therapeutic method (Faramarzi, Moradi 2017).

## CONCLUSION

Art activities of preschool children should be viewed both as a game and a specifically expressive creative activity. Artistic expression reflects the psychophysical development of deaf children and their perception of reality. The task of art education is to develop the potential of deaf children in their artistic and aesthetic expression.

Artistic expression influences various developmental aspects: cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development, the development of perception, a sense of beauty, and creativity.

Visual perception of deaf and hard-of-hearing children is very detailed. Their perception of physiognomy, movement, mime, body posture, and colors is very good. Limitations in language development adversely affect children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. Creative play activities regulate impulsivity and expressiveness.

Using signs-gestures, words, and objects stimulates the development of some forms of perception, memory, and thinking in deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

Preschool children learn and acquire art concepts through body movements, descriptive and demonstrative gestures, signs, and spoken and sign language.

Visual memory and artistic expression of deaf and hard-of-hearing children do not lag behind the artistic expression of a hearing child. Visual representations of deaf and hard-of-hearing children include more details and are much more realistic than those of hearing children.

It is necessary to develop the thinking, sign and spoken language, vocabulary, and cognitive and creative abilities of a deaf child through different art fields (drawing, painting, sculpting, and modeling).

As part of art therapy, drawing allows deaf and hard-of-hearing children to express their feelings, stimulates their imagination and creativity, and improves their communication skills, self-respect, and self-confidence.

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## РАЗВОЈ ЛИКОВНОГ ИЗРАЗА ГЛУВЕ И НАГЛУВЕ ДЕЦЕ ПРЕДШКОЛСКОГ УЗРАСТА

### РЕЗИМЕ

У раду се разматра развој и специфичности ликовног изражавања глуве и наглуве деце предшколског узраста. Анализиран је значај фаза ликовног израза и терапеутско дејство ликовног стваралаштва. Путем цртежа глувог и наглувог детета може се проценивати: когнитивни, социјални, емоционални и телесни развој, развој опажања, развој смисла за лепо и развој креативности. Изражајним и естетским развојем дете проширује искуства и вештине у невербалном, визуелном, аудитивном, сензорном и вербалном доживљавању. Ликовно изражавање глувог и наглувог детета не заостаје за ликовним изразом чујућег детета. Визуелне представе деце оштећеног слуха су много реалистичније него код деце која чују. Визуелна перцепција глуве и наглуве деце је пуна детаља, они добро учевају физиономију, покрет, фацијалну експресију, положај тела и боју. Уметност је начин комуникације детета са собом и околином која га окружује. Код глуве и наглуве деце предшколског узраста, кроз ликовну изражавања неопходно је развијати све функције невербалне и вербалне комуникације.

Пристап васпитању и образовању кроз ликовну уметност предмет је проучавања уметника, филозофа, психолога и педагога. Прва емпиријска проучавања дечјих цртежа јавила су се крајем друге половине 19. века. Ликовно образовање је на раном узрасту, било засновано на развоју вештина цртања, усавршавању координације ока и руке и верном преношењу задатог мотива на папир.

Ликовна подручја или медији у ликовном васпитању су: цртање, сликање, елементи графике, вајање, елементи примењене уметности, мултимедији и основе естетског процењивања.

Садржаји у ликовним подручјима су тако структурирани да поштују законитости развоја ликовних способности, континуитета њиховог развоја и омогућавају да се у процесу стварања, смишљеним и организованим радом култивише ликовни израз детета.

Дечија ликовна уметност, односи на артефакте које су деца сама креирала: шкработине, цртежи, слике, моделовани предмети и скулптуре. Дечје стваралаштво проистиче из посебних способности и преференција, актуализованих у подстицајној атмосфери непосредне средине. Кроз игролике активности деца стварају занимљиве и необичне продукте.

Глува и наглува деца предшколског узраста су често импулсивна и експресивна. Ликовне игровне активности, омогућавају регулisaње еруптивних емотивних излива и доприносе емотивној равнотежи. Кроз визуелно стваралаштво глува и наглува деца уче да посматрају, описују, анализирају и интерпретирају. На тај начин активирају им се визуелне и тактичне могућности учења.

Учествујући у различитим ликовним активностима глува и наглува деца стичу елементе ликовне културе. Процес ликовног израза глуве и наглуве деце, у почетку је вођен интуицијом. Деца се постепено упознају са средствима ликовног израза.

Деца предшколског узраста уче и усвајају ликовне појмове кроз покрете тела, описне и показне гестове, знакове, говорни и знаковни језик. Глувој и наглувој деци, уметност може бити помоћно средство у учењу, сазнавању и игри; хоби или један од начина комуникације. Уметнички изрази у различитим облицима (шкрабање, цртање, сликање, вајање) су својствени свакодневним активностима глуве и наглуве деце. Деца предшколског узраста истражују свет око себе и преносе своје идеје, наде, емоције и различита искуства кроз уметност.

Уметност се код глуве и наглуве деце, користи као тип симболичке комуникације, која помаже изражавању и тумачењу неприхватљивих и тешких осећања. Ликовне активности имају терапеутско и катарзично дејство.

Неопходно је да се у оквиру различитих ликовних подручја (цртање, сликање, вајање и моделовања), остварује развој: мишљења, знаковног и говорног језика, обогаћује речник глувог детета, развија сазнање и стваралачке способности детета.

Цртање у оквиру арт терапије омогућава глувој и наглувој деци: изражавање осећања; подстицање маште и креативности; побољшавање комуникацијских вештина, самопоштовање и самопоуздање.

*Кључне речи:* ликовно изражавање, развој, глува и наглува деца, предшколски узраст.