

EXAMINING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS AND ABILITIES BEFORE AND DURING EARLY EDUCATION

Chair: **Csaba Gáspár**
Doctoral School of Education, University of Szeged

Discussant: **Risto Hotulainen**
University of Helsinki

SYMPOSIUM ABSTRACT

Our social relations, interactions and even our performance is mainly determined by the developmental level of our social and emotional skills and abilities. Several international research projects can prove that it is important to develop these consciously and purposefully from a very young age. It is essential not only for parents to help children's development in the early ages of life but also for teachers do so at every level of education as well. In this process, both parents and teachers have a great role because they serve as role models for their children and students. In the case of teachers, it is also essential to have excellent social competences, which is indispensable for both the direct and indirect social development of students. The first step for successful development is to find the appropriate methods to examine the skills and abilities involved. The primary goal of this symposium is to show the most important theoretical models of different aspects of social development, to present the methods and tools developed for assessing these fields of social competence and to discuss the opportunities for developing social and emotional skills and abilities. The first presentation is about infants' prosocial development from birth to three years. The presenter clarifies the concept of prosociality by giving a literature review about the main models and international results, which shows how it develops during the first 3 years of life. The second presentation continues to discuss prosociality in a kindergarten context. The presenter examined parents' and nursery school teachers' opinions about how a child reacts to other children's distress. The next level of education, elementary school, was examined by the third presenter. The presentation gives a universal model of school attachment and presents an assessment tool which aims to determine its dimensions. The final presentation covers all levels of education, but this time from the point of view of the educators. Teachers' emotional and social competences are also very important if we want to consider what factors influence students' developmental process. The last presentation is about different ways of assessing teachers' empathy and the importance of this skill.