

BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY

**The Impact of an Educational Program on the Knowledge and Behavior of Preschoolers
in the Area of Intelligent Consumption and Waste Reduction**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's
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Abstract

In this study, I connected to the educational approach of the Italian early-education researcher Loris Malaguzzi, emphasizing respect for the child, mutual attentiveness and dialogue with the child. According to this method, the curriculum is constructed to respond to the children's creativity. The content and purpose are a means of exposing the child's learning processes, namely - the essence of the method is how to learn and not what to teach. This approach fosters children's natural curiosity and helps develop initiative and inquiry skills. In this research, the intervention program addresses specific issues - smart consumption and waste reduction; however, emphasis is put on a dialogue with the children and on listening to one another.

The research question examined the way in which an educational program on prudent consumerism and waste reduction affects the attitudes and behaviors of preschoolers.

The study participants were children from two kindergartens aged 5-6 years. The intervention group included 35 children: 17 girls and 18 boys. The control group included 29 children: 13 girls and 16 boys from a second kindergarten.

The intervention program comprised eight sessions. Each session in the program lasted 45 minutes: the first 20 minutes were devoted to an experiential introduction and a conversation with the children about the topic being studied. The next 25 minutes were spent on an experiential activity on the subject taught at that session. Each session of the intervention program also included experiential activities, such as disposing of organic products and plastic inorganic material. After several weeks, we checked what the materials looked like when we dug them out.

The research tool included a questionnaire aimed at ascertaining the subjects' stated knowledge and behavior regarding waste reduction and prudent consumption. The questionnaire included 14 closed questions and 2 open-ended questions. In addition, the discourse in the sessions was recorded in order to monitor the internalization of knowledge and content learned during the activities, and the implementation of the materials learned.

According to the findings based on the children's responses to the questionnaire, there was no significant statistical difference between the intervention group and the control group in the knowledge and declared behavior. However, after the intervention program, the children from the intervention group showed a significant increase in knowledge and proclaimed behavior in the areas of waste reduction and prudent consumption, compared with the control group. The qualitative data collected and analyzed in this study also support the quantitative findings.

This study contributes at the pedagogical, methodological and theoretical levels, with practical implications described as well.

We have a purpose in life, which is to give the environment an abundance of love and to keep it clean. We will look for new solutions to protect the environment, and we will change habits until we reach the goal.