



**FORMATION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCE
IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN: EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES IN THE
DIGITAL EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT**

Grigore Simona-Luiza¹

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ABSTRACT

This study highlights the importance of developing entrepreneurial competence in the process of the harmonious formation of the preschool child's personality. This educational approach should be initiated from the early education stage, as the age range of 3–6/7 years is characterized by significant cognitive and affective-attitudinal acquisitions, favorable for the development of this key competence. The shaping of entrepreneurial competence at preschool age does not aim at the early acquisition of the entrepreneur profession, but rather at the formation of a responsible personality, with initiative, autonomy, and the ability to adapt to various life situations. Considering the specificity of preschool age and the transformations generated by the digitalization of education, the process of developing entrepreneurial competence requires the use of appropriate teaching methods and strategies, materialized through interactive activities integrated into the digital educational environment, with an emphasis on play, collaboration, and experiential learning. Within this framework, this study synthesizes a series of good practice examples that utilize digital resources, aimed at shaping entrepreneurial competences in preschool children. The methodological approach of the study focuses on the analysis and identification of relevant good practice examples from the digital educational environment, taking into account the specific characteristics of early childhood education, as well as their selection based on criteria such as applicability in the preschool context, their contribution to the development of entrepreneurial competences, and their alignment with the entrecomp framework.

Keywords: Preschool children, entrepreneurial competence, good practices, digital education environment, collaboration, interaction

¹ PhD student, Doctoral School of Educational Sciences, Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University of Chişinău, Republic of Moldova, Preschool teacher, "Petre Carp" Secondary School, Tufeşti, Romania, e-mail: simonaluizam@gmail.com, ORCID: 0009-0006-3346-7653, telephone 0743852942

OKUL ÖNCESİ ÇOCUKLARDA GİRİŞİMCİLİK YETKİNLİĞİNİN GELİŞTİRİLMESİ: DİJİTAL EĞİTİM ORTAMINDA İYİ UYGULAMA ÖRNEKLERİ

ÖZET

Bu makale, okul öncesi çocuğun kişiliğinin uyumlu gelişim sürecinde girişimcilik yetkinliğinin geliştirilmesinin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Bu eğitimsel yaklaşım, erken çocukluk eğitimi aşamasından itibaren başlatılmalıdır; çünkü 3–6/7 yaş aralığı, bu temel yetkinliğin gelişimi için elverişli olan önemli bilişsel ve duyuşsal-tutumsal kazanımlarla karakterizedir. Okul öncesi dönemde girişimcilik yetkinliğinin şekillendirilmesi, girişimcilik mesleğinin erken edinilmesini amaçlamamakta; aksine, sorumluluk sahibi, girişimci ruhlu, özerk ve çeşitli yaşam durumlarına uyum sağlayabilen bir kişiliğin oluşturulmasını hedeflemektedir. Okul öncesi dönemin özellikleri ve eğitimin dijitalleşmesinin ortaya çıkardığı dönüşümler göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, girişimcilik yetkinliğinin geliştirilmesi süreci, oyuna, iş birliğine ve deneysel öğrenmeye vurgu yapan, dijital eğitim ortamına entegre edilmiş etkileşimli etkinlikler aracılığıyla somutlaşan uygun öğretim yöntem ve stratejilerinin kullanılmasını gerektirmektedir. Bu çerçevede makale, okul öncesi çocuklarda girişimcilik yetkinliklerinin geliştirilmesine yönelik dijital kaynaklardan yararlanan bir dizi iyi uygulama örneğini sentezlemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okul öncesi eğitim, iyi uygulamalar, girişimcilik yetkinliği, dijital eğitim ortamı

INTRODUCTION

At present, we live in a society dominated by multifaceted changes that also leave their mark on the development of human personality. In order to cope with these challenges, the individual must be prepared from an early age, through education, for the formation of a free, moral, and autonomous personality. This process does not take place within a fixed period of time, but unfolds gradually, depending on the specific characteristics of each age and the individual particularities of the child.

Therefore, the school cannot limit itself exclusively to the transmission of theoretical knowledge, but assumes the role of shaping human personality, by developing competences necessary for the active and responsible integration of the individual into society throughout life. Among these, entrepreneurial competence proves to be an appropriate educational response to current social dynamics, as it promotes initiative, autonomy, responsibility, and the ability to adapt to various situations.

The approach to entrepreneurial competence from the preschool stage is justified by the characteristics of this developmental period, marked by the formation of the foundations of personality, the emergence of autonomous behaviors, as well as the desire for involvement, with the aim of being useful to others, a vivid curiosity about the surrounding environment, and a growing interest in knowledge (Verza, E. & Verza, F.E., 2017: 103–104; Cemortan et al., 1996). Within this conceptual framework, the use of appropriate teaching strategies, focused on play and experiential learning, supports the early development of this competence. At the same time, in the context of the digitalization of education, the digital learning environment provides new opportunities for organizing interactive and creative activities, which can foster the development of initiative, collaboration skills, and problem-solving abilities in preschool children.

Therefore, this article aims to highlight the importance of developing entrepreneurial competences in preschool children, by capitalizing on examples of good practices implemented in the digital educational environment.

Theoretical Approaches To The Concept Of Entrepreneurial Competence

Etymologically, competence is a term originating from the french word *compétence* and has multiple meanings: skill, ability, proficiency, preparedness, seriousness, value, diligence, exercise of duties, aptitude for decision-making, as well as a set of theoretical and practical knowledge, etc. (DEX). From this analysis, it can be observed that the notion of competence does not represent an isolated construct, but encompasses various meanings that go beyond the sphere of cognitive acquisitions, extending towards the attitudinal, axiological, and experiential dimensions of the individual.

From a psycho-pedagogical perspective, competence is approached as a dynamic construct, based on the idea that being competent means not only possessing theoretical knowledge, but also involving the entire human personality. Therefore, competence can be defined as “a set of potential behaviors: affective, cognitive, and psychomotor, that an individual possesses in order to carry out an activity” (Noveanu, 2007: 180). Moreover, competence presupposes activity, as well as an appropriate educational context that highlights the individual’s potential. From a psychological point of view, competence suggests the generic potentiality of the human mind, reflecting the individual’s internal resources: intelligence, motivation, will, self-regulation, and adaptability. Thus, competence can be observed at the level of human personality, which evolves under the imperatives of learning and experience. From a pedagogical perspective, competence is expressed as “the ability to act effectively in a given situation,” through the mobilization of declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge (Perrenoud, 1998). Education plays a crucial role in this process by providing the child with learning scenarios that stimulate this mobilization, facilitating the transfer of acquisitions and their application in practical situations. Furthermore, competence is also associated with “the ability to produce behavior” (Doron & Parot, 2006: 151), which highlights the direct relationship between internal psychological processes and observable behavioral manifestations. From a psycho-pedagogical perspective, competent behavior is constructed through the interaction between the educational environment and the individual’s psychological potential.

From a psycho-pedagogical perspective, the formation of competences contributes essentially to the structuring of the preschool child’s personality, being reflected in a series of formative effects:

- the development of initiative, responsibility, and decision-making capacity, by stimulating active involvement in the learning process and encouraging the assumption of roles and tasks appropriate to age and individual characteristics;
- the mobilization and application of knowledge in problem-solving situations;
- adaptation to new learning contexts, through the development of cognitive flexibility and the ability to adjust behavior according to the demands of the educational environment;

- the development of curiosity and interest in knowledge, as premises of autonomous learning and active participation in educational activities;
- the cultivation of values, by encouraging responsible, ethical, and prosocial attitudes that guide behavior and decision-making;
- the development of personal well-being, through increased self-confidence, a sense of competence, and the ability to successfully cope with educational and social challenges.

Therefore, the analysis of competence from a psycho-pedagogical perspective can be interpreted as a dynamic structure of personality, reflected in moral, efficient, socially adapted behaviors oriented toward achieving specific goals.

The analysis of the content of the educational ideal formulated both in Romania and in the Republic of Moldova allows us to state that the comprehensive and harmonious development of personality, autonomy, initiative, the assumption of values, and active participation in society can be achieved by orienting the educational process toward the development of competences (Parliament of Romania, National Education Law no. 1/2011; Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, Education Code of the Republic of Moldova, 2014).

In the specialized literature and in curriculum policy documents, competences are classified into several categories, depending on their applicability, level of generality, and their role in personality development. Thus, we distinguish: general competences, subject-specific competences, and key/transversal competences (Ministry of Education, Culture and Research of the Republic of Moldova, Reference Framework of the National Curriculum, 2017; Ministry of National Education, Early Education Curriculum, 2019).

In early education, key competences are characterized by a high level of generality and are developed progressively, both during preschool and school periods, being formed through their integration into educational activities and various learning domains. Therefore, we identify (Ministry of Education, Culture and Research of the Republic of Moldova, Early Education Curriculum, 2019: 9-10):

1. communication competences;
2. civic, social, and moral competences;
3. interpersonal and action-strategic competences;
4. cultural, intercultural, and artistic competences;
5. entrepreneurial competences;
6. digital competences;
7. learning to learn competences throughout life;
8. basic/specific competences within activity domains.

In the context of technological progress and the evolution of contemporary society, education is also shaped by digitalization processes, which create a favorable framework for the emergence of new forms of organizing learning. Thus, according to UNESCO's strategy on technological innovation in

education, the integration of digital tools supports the improvement of the quality of the teaching-learning process, encouraging the active participation of all children and reducing inequalities in access to education, including through innovative pedagogical approaches. At the same time, the use of digital educational resources and interactive platforms facilitates the consolidation of competences required in contemporary society, fostering the development of individuals capable of using technology creatively in both learning and social life (UNESCO, 2022).

Entrepreneurial competence is one of the key competences of contemporary education, having a transversal and integrative character. It refers to the individual's ability to demonstrate initiative, creativity, and responsibility (Cristea, 2011: 55–56), by transforming ideas into actions of value both for oneself and for others. In the field of education, entrepreneurial competence does not refer to the economic sphere, but encompasses knowledge, skills, and attitudes, contributing to the formation of an active, autonomous, and engaged personality (Guidelines for the design, updating, and evaluation of the National Curriculum, Romania, 2015).

At the same time, entrepreneurial competence involves anticipating the consequences of one's actions, making decisions, and showing a willingness to communicate effectively, collaborate, and mobilize human and material resources in order to achieve common objectives.

Moreover, entrepreneurial competence implies autonomy in thinking and action, as well as the capacity for self-regulation and critical reflection on one's own actions (Bacigalupo et al., 2016). An individual who acquires this competence is able to evaluate the results of their work, learn from experience, cope more easily with failure, demonstrate strong observational skills, and adapt their strategies according to feedback and contextual changes (Official Journal of the European Union, Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, 2018). Within this framework, entrepreneurial competence integrates values such as honesty, respect, equity, responsibility, courage, and empathy, thus going beyond the strictly pragmatic dimension of efficiency.

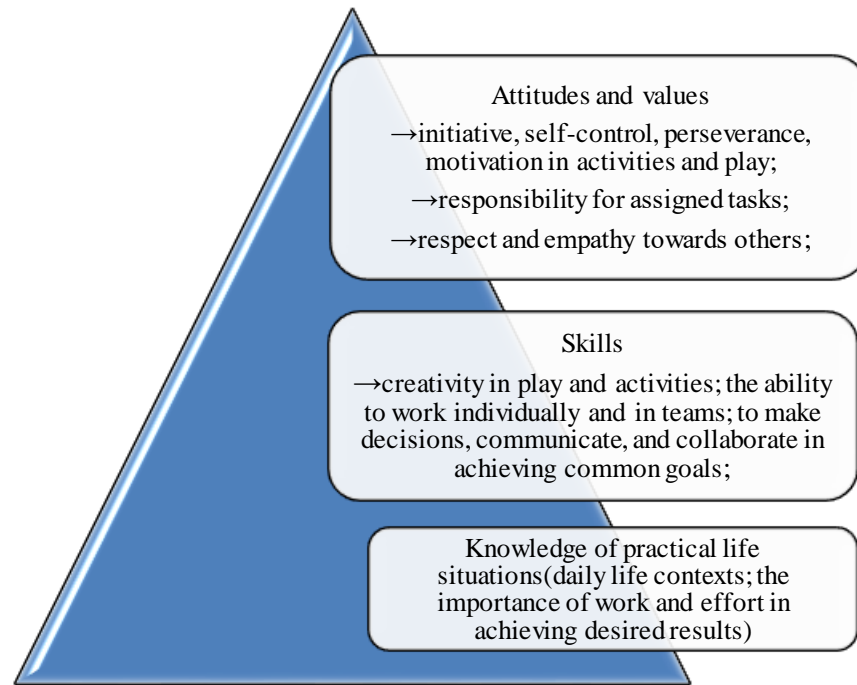


Figure 1. Structural Elements Of Entrepreneurial Competence, Adapted From The Guidelines For The Design, Updating And Evaluation Of The National Curriculum, Romania

The figure illustrates the structure of entrepreneurial competence, highlighting the functional relationship between knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values as key elements in the formation and manifestation of entrepreneurial behavior.

The development of this competence is supported by pedagogical principles that create educational contexts favorable to initiative, creativity, and responsibility. Among these are (Ministry of Education, Culture and Research of the Republic of Moldova, Learning and Development Standards for Children from Birth to 7 Years, 2019: 6–7):

- the principle of respecting children’s age and individual characteristics;
- the principle of active learning;
- the principle of a holistic approach to child development;
- the principle of family–community partnership;
- the principle of equity and non-discrimination;
- the principle of interculturality;
- the principle of diversity of learning contexts and situations;
- the principle of continuity.

By respecting these pedagogical principles, the child is actively involved in learning, interacts with peers, and has the opportunity to demonstrate initiative, negotiate, make decisions, and reflect on their own actions. Collaboration becomes a necessary condition in the operationalization of pedagogical

principles, facilitating the development of entrepreneurial competence in preschool children, as well as the formation of a harmonious personality.

From a comprehensive perspective, entrepreneurial competence is defined as an integrative educational structure, composed of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values, strengthened by pedagogical principles implemented within interactive educational environments. The development of this competence involves interaction, shared experiences, and orientation toward responsible action. Therefore, moving to the analysis of good practices allows for highlighting concrete ways in which this theoretical framework can be applied in classroom educational activities. In this context, the use of the digital educational environment supports the diversification of teaching strategies and the creation of interactive learning contexts that foster the development of entrepreneurial competence

Examples of Good Practices

Good practices in early education focus on the holistic development of the child, approaching innovative ways of working, including the use of the digital educational environment and technological resources, in accordance with individual interests, needs, and learning capacities, while also considering the social and cultural environment in which the child develops (Ministry of Education and Youth of the Republic of Moldova, Guide for Teaching Staff in Early and Preschool Education, 2008). These practices are centered on experiential and contextualized learning, through problem-solving and, above all, through the active involvement of the child (Guide of Good Practices for Early Education of Children Aged 3–6/7, 2008; Hanganu & Raclaru, 2005).

In order to illustrate the formation and development of entrepreneurial competence, it is necessary to operationalize educational good practices presented through concrete examples. In the current educational context, these can also be implemented in the digital educational environment by using technological tools and resources adapted to the specific characteristics of preschool age.

These good practices were implemented in the daily teaching activity carried out in the classroom, within a preschool group of children aged 5–6 years, at the Kindergarten with Normal Program in Tufești, Tufești commune, Brăila County, Romania. Their implementation was carried out in stages, as follows:

1. preparation stage: during this stage, the examples of good practices were selected, taking into account the age characteristics of the children and the specific features of entrepreneurial competence;
2. implementation stage: the good practices were integrated into the daily educational activities of the preschool group;
3. observation stage: throughout the activities, children's behavior was monitored, with children demonstrating collaboration, initiative, involvement, and responsibility;
4. evaluation stage: the extent to which the proposed objectives were achieved was assessed, highlighting the progress made by the children;

The criteria used for selecting the good practices were as follows:

- the age-related and individual characteristics of preschool children (5–6 years);
- children’s motivation and interest in the proposed activities;
- the level of children’s prior knowledge, in order to ensure the accessibility of the activities;
- relevance for the development of entrepreneurial competences, such as initiative, creativity, responsibility, and cooperation;
- applicability within the preschool educational context;
- integration of digital resources into the teaching activities;

alignment with the EntreComp framework, in order to support the development of the specific dimensions of entrepreneurial competence.

Table 1. Examples Of Good Practices In Developing Entrepreneurial Competence In The Digital Educational Environment

Educational activity	Digital platform	Purpose of the activity	Description of the activity	Formative impact
1.Mother's day greeting	Canva	Stimulating creativity and the expression of ideas through the creation of a digital product.	Children, together with the teacher, select images in order to create a digital greeting card.	Creativity, initiative, and the ability to freely express ideas are developed.
2.The seasons wheel	Wordwall	Developing responsibility in relation to completing a task.	Children spin the digital wheel and engage in completing the proposed activity.	Responsibility and decision-making skills are shaped.
3.Quiz-Environmental protection	Kahoot	Raising awareness of the importance of respecting rules.	Children identify appropriate behaviors in relation to the environment.	Critical thinking is encouraged.
4.Puzzle-Discover the story sequence	JigsawPlanet	Activating logical thinking and fostering cooperation among children in achieving a common goal – the digital puzzle.	Children solve the puzzle in order to discover the scene from the story.	Cooperation and problem-solving skills are developed.

Thus, the educational practices presented highlight the fact that the development of entrepreneurial competence at preschool age can be effectively implemented through interactive

activities, including the use of digital educational resources and platforms, which stimulate collaboration, initiative, creative potential, and decision-making abilities. By integrating these examples of good practice into daily activities, entrepreneurial competence is transferred from the theoretical level into concrete educational experience, leading to the shaping of proactive, responsible, and cooperative behaviors from the earliest years of life.

The advantages of implementing educational good practices, including within the digital educational environment, can be summarized as follows:

- They stimulate creativity through digital tools;
- They expand individual and collective knowledge through digital resources;
- They develop initiative through interactive digital activities;
- They facilitate understanding through multimedia resources;
- They enhance communication through digital tools;
- They support the formation of values through the responsible use of technology;

CONCLUSIONS

The theoretical-applied synthesis carried out allows for the formulation of the following conclusions:

- Entrepreneurial competence represents a complex concept, determined by the interaction between knowledge, skills, and attitudes, which can be developed from early education;
- The development of entrepreneurial competence is supported by interactive educational environments, in which collaboration, active child involvement, and the use of authentic learning situations prevail;
- The theoretical-applied synthesis demonstrates that the development of entrepreneurial competence among preschool children, through examples of good practices, including the use of digital resources and tools, represents a coherent and necessary approach, with a significant impact on the formation of proactive behaviors and learning autonomy.

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