

**‘Specialization in ICTs and Special Education: Psychopedagogy of Integration’
Postgraduate Program
DEMOCRITUS UNIVERSITY OF THRACE Department of Greek Philology
in collaboration with
NCSR DEMOKRITOS Informatics and Telecommunications Institute**

**DEVELOPMENT OF SYMBOLIC PLAY IN CHILDREN WITH AUTISTIC
SPECTRUM DISORDER**

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POSTGRADUATE
THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Symbolic Play helps children to practice in symbols using, in the primacy of thought against external reality, and in enactment of social rules, among people. It is associated with cognitive abilities including planning, organization, and language skills. Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder performed significantly less Symbolic Play than their typically developing peers. This issue has not been systematically investigated in our country. The aim of the present study is to identify possible differences between teachers' observations and attitudes/views, about the Symbolic Play of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, depending on the demographic and other data of the pupil, the years of the teacher's experience with children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, teacher's educational level and the type of school. The sample of the survey was made up of 113 teachers, who had a pupil with Autistic Spectrum Disorder in their classroom, at the Kindergarten or in the first three classes of Primary School. The questionnaire was used as research tool. The data was analyzed using the SPSS Statistical Social Science Program. The results showed relevance between teachers' observations and attitudes / views on the Symbolic Game of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, which is limited. Teachers support the pursuit of development of Symbolic Play and after the Kindergarten, while the differences in the observations relative to pupils' level of speaking, their educational level and the type of School Framework were particularly important. Further investigation of the issue is considered necessary.

Key words: Symbolic Play, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, teachers' observations. teachers' attitudes / views.

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