

A KALEIDOSCOPE OF CHILDHOOD –
RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES IN CROATIA

PROGRAMME AND BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Scientific conference

Zagreb, February 15-16, 2024.

Organisers

Research project CSF Childhood in protohistory in southern Carpathian Basin (RP-2019-04-2520)

Institute of Archaeology, Zagreb

Institute for Anthropological Research, Zagreb

Organisation board

Daria Ložnjak Dizdar

Petra Rajić Šikanjić

Matea Zajc Petranović

Scientific board

Iris Biškupić Bašić

Daria Ložnjak Dizdar

Jasminka Najcer Sabljak

Dejana Nikitović

Petra Rajić Šikanjić

Katharina Rebay-Salisbury

Matea Zajc Petranović

Dates

15th-16th February 2024

Venue

Zagreb, Institute of Archaeology, Zvonimirova 6

About conference

Childhood is one of the most important periods in the development of every human being, which represents the experience of observing the world, playing, exploring, imitating, learning and developing the skills necessary for life in adulthood in different spatial, temporal and cultural contexts. Each society has its own definition of childhood and its own age category due to historical and geographical peculiarities.

Children as a distinct group in society began to interest scholars during the 20th century, and interest in their role in the community grew. The possibilities of studying childhood are various, depending on the source of data, and the perspectives from which children's worlds are discussed are also important. Various professions deal with the study of children and their interaction with the world around them. Ethnology, archeology and art history research the heritage of childhood, while history, literary history and sociology study the social role of children; psychology, anthropology and biology study their growth and development. The dialogue between them can help design future research and possible models of response to the various challenges of our times.

Such initiatives exist in the western world (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Childhood_studies), while the Central European research tradition was more cocooned in individual disciplines with rare exceptions (projects: Theoretical and Methodological Approaches to an Archeology of Children https://forschdb2.unibas.ch/inf2/rm_projects/object_view.php?r=6207, BIRTH <https://www.ercbirth.com/>, The value of mothers to the society <https://www.oeaw.ac.at/en/oeai/research/prehistory-wana-archaeology/prehistoric-identities/the-value-of-mothers-to-society>). The specificity of regional research developments and initiatives that have already indicated the way (eg Ethnological research 18/19 <https://hrcak.srce.hr/broj/10795>) offer the potential of stronger connections between different disciplines dealing with childhood.

The goal of this scientific conference and round table is the gathering and dialogue of disciplines that have children and childhood as the subject of research and work, the development of multidisciplinary approaches in the study of the topic and the implementation of scientific research in everyday life.

15th February 2024

9.00 - 9.30 welcome speeches, introduction

9.30 – 10.10 Sofija Stefanović

Bioarchaeology of childhood: ERC Birth and Infano Project

10.15 – 11.00 Katharina Rebay-Salisbury

The gender of childhood in Bronze Age Central Europe

11.00 – 11.30 coffee

11.30 – 12.00 Lidija Balj

Traces of childhood on prehistoric ceramics

12.00. – 12.30 Daria Ložnjak Dizdar

Childhood in protohistory in southern Carpathian Basin

12.30 – 14.30 lunch

14.30 – 15.00 Petra Rajić Šikanjić

Childhood in protohistory - bioarchaeological analysis

15.00 – 15.30 Matea Zajc Petranović

Growth and development of adolescents in the City of Zagreb 1950-2010. years

15.30 – 16.00 Sanja Nekić

The educational role of toys in childhood and growing up in the 20th century through the Toy Collection of the Croatian School Museum

16.00 – 16.40 Dejana Nikitović

All faces of childhood: Bioarchaeology of childhood

16th February 2024

9.00 – 9.30 Goran Budeč, Suzana Simon

**Following in Children's Steps: Equipment and Toys for Children
According to Late Medieval Sources**

9.30 – 10.00 Jelena Marković

**Mnemonic, narrative, genre and affective locating of the "child's
voice": a view from the perspective of ethnology, cultural
anthropology and folkloristics**

10.00 – 10.30 Jasminka Najcer Sabljak

Portraits of children in noble collections of Eastern Croatia

10.30 – 11.00 coffee

11.00 -11.30 Gordana Keresteš

**Research on children's psychological adjustment during the
coronavirus pandemic within the project "How are we? Life in
Croatia in the age of corona"**

11.30 – 12.00 Narcisa Buczynski

Comparative analysis of the Montessori view of education

12.00 – 12.30 Nikolina Kolić Antolović, Ivana Jurić

**Challenges of growing up in modern times. Childhood today -
experiences and challenges**

12.30 – 14.00 lunch

14.00 – 15.30 round table

Keynote lectures

Sofija Stefanović

Laboratory for bioarchaeology, Department of Archaeology,
Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade
sofijastefanovic17@gmail.com

Sofija Stefanović is a professor at the Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, and her scientific research is focused on topics related to prehistoric bioarchaeology of the Balkans. She deals with areas of research that are also relevant for today's people, such as fertility or the influence of the length of breastfeeding on growth and development. She publishes works in journals with a high impact factor (Cell, Current Biology, Scientific Report, PNAS, Journal of Archaeological Science, Journal of Anthropological Archaeology), in international collections (publishers: Wiley Liss and British Archaeological Report); in monographs and at national and international conferences. Her publications were cited 1280 times, and the H index is 19 (Google Scholar). Her research on fertility in prehistory was supported by the European Research Council (ERC), and she became the first scientist from Serbia to receive this prestigious project. Since 2015, she has been a member of the Young Academy of Europe and, at the proposal of the European Research Council, in the same year, she became a member of the Academic Network.

Bioarchaeology of childhood: ERC Birth and Infano Project

We have yet to understand the causes of the marginalization of children and childhood in the research of the past, because it is certain that "adultism", which has long prevailed in research topics, says a lot not only about the history of science, but also about the social values of the modern world and the place of children in it. Fortunately, during the last decades there has been a paradigm shift and an increasing number of researchers are trying to give ancient children their "own voice" and to study and understand their place in former societies. Together with the marginalization of childhood, scientists did not deal with motherhood until recently, because it did not represent the sphere of research of early archaeologists, but the appearance of feminist archeology did not contribute to the appearance of interest in the life of mothers and babies in the past. This is why we entered the 21st century with almost no data on prehistoric motherhood, even though it is, without any doubt, one of the pillars of humanity's survival. In order to contribute to change and open a new direction of research, the fact that the European Research Council (ERC-European Research Council) supports innovative scientific endeavors was used, and we are glad that the ERC recognized the relevance of prehistoric motherhood research that we were engaged in

between 2015 and 2015. and in 2020 through the project BIRTH Births, mothers and babies: prehistoric fertility in the Balkans during the Early and Middle Holocene (10000-5000 B.C). The fact that the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia recently supported the research project INFANO Girls and Boys in the Bronze Age Europe-Influence of biological sex on health, growth, nutrition shows that there have been certain changes in the recognition of the relevance of the topic of childhood at the regional level. and social position 2100-1500 BC, in which we will deal with the life of boys and girls during the Bronze Age. The aim of the presentation is to show the methodological and theoretical approaches that we used in the BIRTH project and that we will use in the INFANO project in order to particularly emphasize the possibilities of researching motherhood and childhood with the application of bioarchaeological methods.

Katharina Rebay-Salisbury

Department of Prehistoric and Historical Archaeology (IUHA), University of Vienna, Austria
Austrian Archaeological Institute, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, Austria

Katharina.Rebay-Salisbury@oeaw.ac.at

Katharina Rebay-Salisbury is professor of Prehistory of Humanity at the University of Vienna and directs the research group 'Prehistoric Identities' at the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Enthusiastic about the European Bronze and Iron Ages, her research focusses on combining interdisciplinary approaches for insights into people's lives, identities and social relations in prehistory. Her current research explores themes such as sex and gender, motherhood, kinship, mobility and migration through ERC and FWF-funded projects analyzing burial contexts and human remains from Central Europe.

The gender of childhood in Bronze Age Central Europe

Early Bronze Age communities in some regions of Central Europe buried male and female bodies in different ways. Women were buried lying on their right side with their heads to the south, while men were buried on their left side with their heads to the north. The dead were often accompanied by grave goods typical of their gender.

Between around 2200 and 1600 BC, it was apparently extremely important for people here to categorise people according to the binary gender model and to bury them accordingly. But did this gender-based social order already apply to children? And was it possible to live gender roles other than those prescribed by biological sex?

A new method of gender determination, in which gender-specific protein fragments in human tooth enamel are analysed using nano-liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry (nanoLC-MS/MS), makes it possible to answer these questions. While the skeletal morphology of adult men and women usually differs sufficiently for osteological sex determination, this is not the case in children before puberty.

By comparing the gender-specific treatment of the dead with the biological sex of the buried individuals, it is possible to investigate how and from what age children were seen as women or men by Bronze Age communities. Furthermore, differences in the state of health, frequency of injuries and mortality of girls and boys can be analysed. The results of these analyses allow conclusions to be drawn about gender relations and power relations, i.e. about social value systems of the past.

Dejana Nikitović

Alberta Children's Hospital, Cumming School of Medicine
University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada
dejana.nikitovic@ucalgary.ca

Dejana Nikitović graduated in archeology (University of Belgrade), gained a master's degree in anthropological biology (University of Zagreb) and PhD in biological anthropology (University of Toronto). Since 2017, she has been employed at the Alberta Children's Hospital, Cumming School of Medicine, University of Calgary, Canada. In his scientific work, she deals with the health, growth and development of children and investigates how the physical and social environment affects the growth and health of children in the past and today.

All faces of childhood: Bioarchaeology of childhood

The early years of human life are accompanied by significant biological changes, physical growth and development. These physical changes are present in all human communities, with minor individual and population differences. The way communities interpret these biological changes and the significance they attribute to them varies significantly from community to community. The way in which communities interpret these biological applications is one of the foundations of childhood as a social category. Although childhood as a social identity exists in all communities, each community will build this category based on traditions and beliefs about how children should behave and how they should live. Therefore, biological changes cannot simply be identified with a social category, but for each community one must investigate what childhood, as a social category, meant for them.

The focus of the presentation is on determining the boundaries between skeletal, chronological and social age in archaeological populations where age is determined on the basis of skeletal remains. In addition, the ways in which childhood can be reconstructed as a social identity based on the analysis of skeletal remains will be considered, using examples from different archaeological sites.

Lectures

Lidija Balj

Muzej Vojvodine, Novi Sad, Srbija

lidijabalj@gmail.com

Traces of childhood on prehistoric ceramics

My research in the field of the Archaeology of Childhood began with the interpretation of archaeological finds from museum collections. These are miniature objects made of ceramics that imitate the shape of objects that were in use at that time. Whether it is the Neolithic period, the Eneolithic, the Bronze Age or the Iron Age, the shapes of these miniatures almost unmistakably indicate the culture from which they originate. The most numerous are small vessels that look like kitchen utensils, and besides them, we also find miniature figures of animals and people, ritual objects, rattles, various tools, etc.

Finds like these are present at most prehistoric sites in the south of the Carpathian Basin, but not all researchers agree on their possible purpose. While some attribute them to a ritual purpose, others believe that they are children's toys, and not so rarely they are marked as finds of unknown purpose.

Based on many years of experience and comprehensive research, I believe that most miniature objects can be interpreted as children's toys. The term toy is broadly understood to include objects with the help of which children play and learn, develop as persons and become familiar with the culture in which they grow up. Therefore, regardless of whether it is a game that imitates the daily activities of adults, or whether they are reduced tools for acquiring skills or miniature objects that are related to ritual activities, they are all covered by the term toy. Their careful analysis can provide valuable data on the upbringing of children in prehistoric times.

Toys are very important for a child's development, and they are an integral part of childhood, which is given great attention not only in pedagogy, but also in anthropology, ethnology, sociology, history, etc. In recent years, this topic has attracted increasing attention from archaeologists, which is very significant since archeology has the potential to explore children's worlds in the distant past and to provide insight, into children's upbringing through different eras. Knowledge of what childhood looked like in prehistoric times greatly expands our knowledge, while the study of toys between 2,000 and 7,000 years old allows insight into both their development and changes that occurred during different time periods, as well as their diversity within the framework of different cultures.

Daria Ložnjak Dizdar

Institut za arheologiju, Zagreb

dldizdar@iarh.hr

Childhood in protohistory in southern Carpathian Basin

Childhood as the beginning of the journey of life marks every person. Personal memories and some objects shape the story of childhood and, most often, nostalgic memories. Material traces are photographs, drawings, preserved toys, clothes, school books and certificates and various personal documents (e.g., health records). The study of childhood in the past is a fairly young discipline (Aries 1960) and in archaeology it is only 35 years old (Lillehammer 1989). One of the biggest challenges is shaping the methodology according to the available material sources, which depends on the data from which the topic of childhood can be studied in different communities, societies and times.

The aim of this lecture is to present the methodology and selected examples of the study of childhood in protohistory in the southern Carpathian basin, which is the subject of the project of the same name funded by the Croatian Science Foundation. The basic source of data is the preserved material traces, which are very fragmentary compared to later historical periods. The possibilities of applying multidisciplinary analyses that have developed very quickly in the last 10 years in the study of archaeology reveal more and more data for the study of childhood. How did children live in the area of Posavina in the 9th century BC, at the beginning of the Early Iron Age in the Danube or in the 2nd century BC. in Podravina will be presented through several personal stories, archaeological sources and applied methodology. The universal value of children is the transmission of knowledge, skills and values through generations.

Petra Rajić Šikanjić

Institut za antropologiju, Zagreb

petra@inantro.hr

Childhood in protohistory - bioarchaeological analysis

Children are an important part of every society since they actively participate in the everyday life of the community. Therefore, in order to fully understand a society, it is necessary to include its youngest members in the research. This particularly applies to archaeological populations where research has shown that sometimes more than 50% of the people were children.

Important sources of information about archaeological populations are the skeletal remains of the deceased, most often found in graves. Precisely by analysing the remains, data can be gathered about the conditions and way of life, as well as the health and illnesses of not only the individual but also the community to which they belonged. The presentation will show how basic biological data on gender and age can be obtained through analysis, as well as data on the state of health, diet and social status of a person. As an example, the data collected during the project on childhood in prehistory in the south of the Carpathian Basin will be used. These are the burnt remains of people under the age of 18 from graves in northern Croatia from the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. In addition to the fact that the analysis of children's remains can gather valuable information about the entire population, they provide us with an opportunity for a better understanding of children and their role in prehistoric societies in the south of the Carpathian Basin.

Matea Zajc Petranović

Institut za antropologiju, Zagreb
matea.zajc@inantro.hr

Growth and development of adolescents in the City of Zagreb 1950-2010. years

Childhood is the earliest period in a person's life; it begins with birth, continues with growing up (changes associated with growth and development), and ends with the individual becoming a fully functional adult. The growing-up period that lasts approximately from 10 to 19 years of age (WHO), the most distinctive feature of which is sexual maturation, i.e., pubertal changes that occur in girls approximately two or three years earlier than in boys, is called adolescence.

In the context of growth and development research, growth is defined as an irreversible, constant increase in body size, and development as physiological and emotional maturation, which also implies an increase in psychomotor abilities. Both of these processes are highly dependent on genetic and non-genetic (environmental) factors, both of which can positively or negatively affect growth and development. It is important to point out that genetic and environmental factors are not mutually exclusive, but due to phenotypic plasticity, a specific genotype has the potential to express diverse phenotypes in response to different environments.

Anthropometry, that is, the measurement of morphological features, is the gold standard in monitoring growth and development. This method is very helpful in determining the state of health and nutrition, whereby continuous, normal growth and development indicate good health and nutrition of the child, while in the case of abnormal growth or stunted growth, the cause needs to be determined and eliminated. Furthermore, in addition to determining deviations in growth and development, anthropometric studies help to detect secular trends both within and between contemporary populations, as well as in relation to previous generations. Observed secular changes, in addition to obtaining the information that different populations differ in the time of onset of the adolescent growth spurt and reaching adulthood, simultaneously open questions about the causes of these changes, as well as the question of what is optimal for the human species.

In this presentation, I will present the results of research on the growth and development of adolescents of both sexes in the area of the City of Zagreb in the period between 1950 and 2010. I will interpret changes in the timing of the onset of the adolescent growth spurt and changes in the speed with which adolescents change in relation to previous generations or contemporaries in the context of socioeconomic indicators, given that the mentioned 60-year period includes economically very different policies and trends: the socialist period (1951 - 1990), war (1991-1995) and the transition to a capitalist economy (1996-2010).

Jelena Marković

Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku, Zagreb

jelena@ief.hr

Mnemonic, narrative, genre and affective locating of the "child's voice": a view from the perspective of ethnology, cultural anthropology and folkloristics

The goal of the presentation is to place my own recent ethnological, cultural anthropological and, above all, folkloristic research in a broader context of an interdisciplinary understanding of childhood experiences. There are two focuses that I want to highlight.

The first is the focus on the network of narrative, reminiscence, cognitive and genre co-creations of children and adults through which childhood experiences are (re)constructed in everyday communication. Based on my own research on talking about childhood in everyday communication, that is, by analyzing narrative environments in which children participate in shaping their own experience, by detecting different genres and narrative modes of oral communication, different forms of memory and recollection that participate in self-construction, I will try to show the complexity of the path to so called "child's voice", narrative manifestations of the experience of being a child.

The second focus is on the emotional regimes that today shape contemporary constructions of childhood from the perspective of the theory of affects and emotions. The child today, more than any other entity, is the one that evokes strong emotions. The starting assumption is that the attention focused on emotions in everyday storytelling about children and childhood can offer a new perspective of observing the "child's voice" and actions and offer insight into the deviations of the social status of the child in modern times as well as the deviations in the experience of the child's social, cultural and emotional competences.

Goran Budeč, Suzana Simon

Odsjek za povijesne znanosti, Zavod za povijesne i društvene znanosti
Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, Zagreb
goranbudec@gmail.com, suzana.miljan@gmail.com

Following in Children's Steps: Equipment and Toys for Children According to Late Medieval Sources

Despite the progress of Croatian historical historiography in researching the concept of childhood on the Eastern coast of the Adriatic from the Middle Ages to the modern era, historical documents still give us insight into a wide range of topics that can be approached from many other aspects of the methodologies of other scientific disciplines. European historiography has made much greater progress in this regard. However, due to the nature of written historical sources, Croatian cases can also be nicely integrated into comparative research by foreign historians. We investigated the issue of children's equipment and toys based on an inventory of goods originating from Šibenik from the second half of the 15th century. We examined the question of what the old people of Šibenik actually considered children in that Dalmatian commune on the basis of the Šibenik statute, and we compared this data with research from other Dalmatian communes. However, the greatest focus was placed on the material objects found in the inventory of goods, from cradles to clothes and even toys. The question of gender-based use of the object was also raised, whether we can find differences in the case of some objects, whether it is a male or a female child, that used the object.

Sanja Nekić

Croatian School Museum, Zagreb

snekic@hsmuzej.hr

The educational role of toys in childhood and growing up in the 20th century through the Toy Collection of the Croatian School Museum

Number of phenomena and concepts related to memory (individual memories and collective memory), the preservation and protection of historical heritage and the change of paradigms in history as the primary scientific discipline in the study of the past are defined and re-examined through the humanities and social sciences in the 20th century.

More and more important knowledge of the importance of play and toys for the child's cognitive, emotional, psychological and social development is reached in accordance with the newly emerging contemporary historical paradigms of the study of the history of everyday life, including the history of children's everyday life, growing up and childhood.

The world of games and toys is slowly becoming an interesting area of interdisciplinary research.

In our region, the awareness of the need and use of toys in the educational development of a child at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century is more in hints and theory than in practical action. However, greater attention to the popularization of the toy and its role in the upbringing and education of children began to be paid immediately after the Second World War, when various actions and institutions were created that began to deal with the development and use of children's toys as an educational tool and aid in the child's growth.

The improvement of economic and social conditions opens up a large room for actions are taken to popularize the child's need for different types of toys, regardless of the material condition and the place where they lives. In practical terms, this is best seen through the establishment of the first domestic children's toy factories, but also through the establishment of playrooms/centres whose mission is to ensure the availability of toys to a wider circle of children, regardless of financial means or place of residence.

The collection of toys of the Croatian School Museum was created as a result of the collecting and the urgent need to protect toys and games as a cultural asset for the purpose of documenting, but also their historical value as a source for the interdisciplinary study of childhood, growing up and the culture of life. The Toy Collection houses the first toys that came to the Museum in 1901, as well as contemporary toys played by today's children. The heterogeneity and large time span of the collected and processed toys clearly show the changes in the concept of game and toy in the educational process of growing up, childhood and the culture of living in general.

Jasminka Najcer Sabljak

Akademija za umjetnost i kulturu u Osijeku, Osijek

jnajcersabljak@uaos.hr

Portraits of children in noble collections of Eastern Croatia

The art collections of the noble families of Eastern Croatia have recently been the subject of intensive research, especially in the light of the question of the provenance of materials in Croatian museum institutions. The most important art collections of this type were created at the beginning of the 18th century and developed until the Second World War, when most of their works were transferred to numerous institutions and museum collections throughout Croatia. In a wide range of artists and works of art, we encounter portraits of children painted independently, in pairs or as part of a family. They were executed most often as oils on canvas, but also miniatures, pastels, watercolours on ivory, and even as reliefs. These are mostly representations, in which the children's figures are independent or integrated into scenes with the figures of their parents, and sometimes they are accompanied by an interesting prop or animal.

In all the collections I have researched so far (Odescalchi, Elz, Pejačević, Normann-Ehrenfels, Hillebrand von Prandau, Khuen families) children's portraits are represented, although due to the degree of preservation of these collections, it is not possible to give a precise overview of their original number. According to the material available today, the oldest children's portraits can be found in the Pejačević family's collection in Našice (mid-18th century), and they were created in the workshops of Austrian or Hungarian painters, which is identical to the time and manner of presentation of the oldest portraits of adults in this collection. The heritage of the Pejačević family is also interesting as a model for researching the representation of children's portraits in noble collections, so we point out that 16 of the 179 works of art (about 9%) represented in the catalogue of the exhibition *Art heritage of the Pejačević family* depict children's figures, if we leave out sacred and similar scenes with depictions of angels in the form of children or Jesus as a child. These are certainly the oldest depictions of children's characters in general in art depictions in the area of eastern Croatia.

Children's portraits require virtuosity and artistry in painting and presented a challenge to the artists at the level of interpretation and artistic approach, in order to faithfully depict the specificity of the age and psychology of childhood. In addition to this aspect, portraits in noble collections of Eastern Croatia can, as part of historiographical and sociological research, contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon of childhood in the time and space of its origin.

Gordana Keresteš

Odsjek za psihologiju, Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu

gkerestes@ffzg.hr

Research on children's psychological adjustment during the coronavirus pandemic within the project "How are we? Life in Croatia in the age of corona"

The coronavirus pandemic has brought enormous changes to the daily life of all segments of the population. Due to their intensive growth and development, children are one of the most at-risk groups for possible harmful consequences of the pandemic. Within the project "How are we? "Life in Croatia in the Age of Corona", two extensive online surveys were conducted (the first in May, the second in December 2020) whose goal was to examine the psychological adaptation of school-aged children in the newly created circumstances. The results of the project showed that the psychological functioning of a large number of children during the pandemic was impaired, more so in the later than in the initial stages of the pandemic. Different correlates of children's mental health during the pandemic were also determined. The obtained results showed that children need psychological support and help in coping with the changes caused by the pandemic and were used in advocating children's rights to mental health protection.

Narcisa Buczynski

Osnovna Montessori škola Barunice Dedee Vranyczany, Zagreb
omontess@gmail.com

Comparative analysis of the Montessori view of education

The presentation of different perspectives from which the child is studied, as the theme of this gathering, in an educational sense unites the concept of upbringing and education that is the basis of Montessori pedagogy, and is called cosmic education. For those of us who educate and raise children every day, pedagogy can only be convincing if it can offer a practical profile. This is evidenced daily by the application of Montessori pedagogy, from which we "grow" together with our children. Maria Montessori said that education can create a better humanity, but it requires hard work, and building peace is the ultimate goal of education. Peace among people in everyday life as well as international dimensions, peace with nature in all its diversity and maintaining balance in nature is the cosmic task of man. It is our direct contribution to everything that surrounds us. If changes are needed in society, then work and persistence are required skills. Education understood as the development of an individual who progresses towards greater independence. History and cosmic education teach us that the changes we strive for cause resistance and that we have to swim upstream if we want to implement these changes, and only independent and self-confident people can withstand it. The development of successful people, today called "masterminds" in the business world, has its beginnings in education, where the ability to think and work in a team is turned into an advantage. These are the key aspects that will be discussed in this presentation.

Nikolina Kolić Antolović, Ivana Jurić

Centar Izvor, Zagreb

nikolina.koliczg@gmail.com

anavijuric@gmail.com

Challenges of growing up in modern times. Childhood today - experiences and challenges

Growing up in modern social and economic conditions is a big challenge for parents and children. The image of the child in all developmental ages (from early preschool, through school to adolescent age) has been significantly changed. Some of the challenges that a child of today's age faces is: growing lack of interest in the world, boredom, loneliness, an increase in various developmental difficulties, global communication and technological innovations that contribute to the "standardization" of children's play, and stressful experiences in childhood. Children stay less and less in a family environment, and more and more in institutional acquisition of competences.

Modern childhood is characterized by closed spaces that offer a multitude of specialized activities, while free space for children's play is disappearing. In the children's world, play is both a stimulus and an activity and a reward: it is an end in itself and is rewarded with play. However, placed in the sphere of adult culture, the game becomes an 'exercise' (learning through play, through play to knowledge) and is rewarded with something external, a substitute for the original pleasure. It is precisely in this deprivation of children's freedom, voluntariness and joy during spontaneous play that its extinction is reflected. The status and meaning of childhood and children's, spontaneous play as we once knew it is dying out today.