



Report

International Development and Early Learning Baseline Assessment of children 5-6 attending the kindergartens supported by the project “ECCD for Roma Children in Albania”

March 2017, Tirana, Albania

Report

Baseline Data Collection on International Development and Early Learning Assessment of children 5-6 attending the kindergartens supported by the project “ECCD for Roma Children in Albania”

Project “ECCD for Roma Children in Albania”

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Implemented by: Save the children in Albania

Report compiled by:

Eni Tresa
Program Quality Officer

Arbëresha Mushani
Project Implementation Officer

Ema Kasapi
Education Specialist

Approved by:

Besnik Kadesha
Program Quality Manager

Refik Çela
Senior Program Implementation Manager

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Report

Introduction

Main outcomes of the project (brief)

The Project's objective is to provide equitable access for 506 Roma children and 127 disadvantaged non-Roma children between the age of 0-6 to inclusive and integrated ECCD services & quality education by the end of 2018.

The expected results of this project are:

R1: Roma children 0-3 & their families in the targeted areas are provided with improved health, civic and education services which are safe, protective & holistic.

R2: 300 Roma children age 3-6 enrol/attend & reach their full potential through participation in mainstream kindergarten program.

R3: 300 Roma parents have increased their knowledge and skills through participation in parenting program to foster positive child rearing practices

The project is a three year intervention that supports the development and early learning outcomes of marginalized children and will facilitate their successful transition into primary school.

The Project will be implemented in two settlements in the municipality of Elbasan (Rrapishte settlement & Abdyl Paralloi school neighborhood) and two settlements in Fier Municipality (Fshati Rom (Roma Village & Levan) in Albania. The selected settlements/neighborhoods in the target localities are characterized by a significant number of Roma resident population (*above 65 %, in three settlements even above 99%*), living in poverty, with high unemployment rates among adult population, moderate to low participation of Roma children in education, including preschool education and extremely low to zero participation of children 0-3 in crèches.

The project will reach out to the intended beneficiaries through *outreach work* that includes identification, referral and integration. It implies collaboration with state structures (schools/kindergartens, municipal services, child protection services), Roma community based structures (informal/formal structures) and the use of cultural mediation. The project will address the issue of *no access/lower access* through encouragement of parents of disadvantaged families (Roma) to enrol their kids to kindergartens and work with *LGU's to ensure their inclusion & overcome the financial barriers* in accessing kindergartens. This will be associated with a *powerful parenting education program* in regard to positive & healthy child rearing practices that takes into account the local culture of the targeted communities and ensures that learning takes place since birth (*focus 0-3*). To ensure that Roma & other most deprived children (3-6) are accessing kindergartens, the project will tackle their *retention rate as an indicator for attendance*. We will rely on previous experience of parenting with confidence interventions, which proved to be successful among Roma communities.

The project will work with *preschool teacher trainings and add elements of inclusion and child centred approaches* to help children reach their full potentials. In order to implement the intervention effectively and efficiently, the project will assure the *ownership of the local stakeholders and the (Roma) community in the implementation* by partnering with Roma grass root organizations and community based informal organizations. These will have the lead of the implementation and management of the project activities in the field.

This project will be an *integral part of Save the Children's Advocacy and lobbying initiative*, where the education component will follow a two pronged intervention strategy:

1) Empowerment of local communities and institutions to address barriers (un-affordability,

¹ LGU – Local Government Unit – or municipalities

Report

institutional, cultural, etc.) and to access quality education.

2) Lobbying and advocacy for policy changes at central level.

Purpose of conducting the baseline

The aim of conducting the baseline is to establish the conditions at the onset of the project against which future changes will be measured amongst the targeted beneficiaries. Our targeted beneficiaries comprise identified Roma children 0-6 years old residents in Elbasan (Rrapishtë and Abdyl Paralloi) and Fier (Levan and Roma Villange):

Objectives for the conduct of baseline

To gather information through previous records or collect primary data specifically to measure the starting point/ initial status of the following indicators:

The data collected would link directly to the following indicators listed in the indicator framework

- **Expected Result 2.1:** Improved school readiness among the targeted Roma children in preschool age as measured by an ECCD diagnostic tool
- **Expected Result 2.4:** Learning outcomes (cognitive skills –literacy/numeracy skills)
- **Expected result 3.5:** Improved parenting practices among the targeted Roma as measured by increased frequency of parent-children interaction

Data collection methodology & analysis

Tools use for the Baseline:

Evidence presented in this report on children's learning and development uses the International Development and Early Learning Assessment, or IDELA. This metric is a holistic, rigorous, open source, direct child assessment that is easily adapted and used in different national and cultural contexts. Save the Children began developing IDELA in 2011 and the tool was released for public use in 2014. There is a consensus

among ECCD experts that readiness for school should be understood more broadly than cognitive skills, and instead is best formulated as a holistic concept involving several developmental areas, including motor, language and early literacy, math and problem solving, socio-emotional development, and approaches to learning⁴. Competence in all these areas will ensure that children are ready to benefit from educational activities offered in the school environment IDELA is a direct child assessment, (as opposed to relying on parent or teacher report of children's skills), and constitutes a core of 22 items that span the five developmental domains mentioned above. These areas of development represent key early learning and development competencies that most often appear in national ECCD curricula and standards. IDELA is a skill-oriented assessment, tapping into the degree of mastery of specific skills and as such items were developed in way that allows us to see progress over time in all skill areas. Scoring is continuous in most instances (rather than a yes/no response) and a number of items contain integrated stop rules that allow for questions to be answered meaningfully by children of varying abilities and ages.

The core assessment can be used with children ages 42-78 months and takes 30 minutes to administer, on average. Application of IDELA requires a minimal set of materials: a pencil, blank paper, small items for counting (such as beans or buttons), nine picture cards related to eight items on the assessment, and a storybook that contains pictures and text. Save the Children Albania has validated IDELA instrument and piloted during 2016.

Together with IDELA questionnaires for children, a caregiver questionnaire was used to gather information about parenting practices and home environments.

Data collection: Took place during February 2017.

Geographic areas: Data collection for the baseline assessment covers 2 geographic areas of Fier (Roma Village and Levan) and Elbasan (Rrapishtë and Abdyl Paralloi).

The number of interviews conducted in each location were as below mentioned:

- **Elbasan:** 22 children in Rrapishtë and 15 children in Abdyl Paralloi
- **Fier:** 15 children in Drizë and 16 children in Levan

Report

Out of 68 interviewed children, 44 were girls and 24 boys. In Fier 22 were girls and 7 boys, meanwhile in Elbasan 22 of the interviewees were girls and 15 boys. All children 5-6 years old attending the project kindergartens on the day the interviews were conducted, were included in the study. The permission of the parents and their consent was taken in advance. The interviewees were students from REF Roma Versitas programme in Albania.

They have received a 3-days training in advance on how to administrate to questionnaire and how to approach the child during the interview. Beside the interviewees, one SC staff was present in the project location kindergartens in order to insure the quality of data collection. Parents of the children were interviewed using the caregiver questionnaire. Then the parents and children questionnaires were matched.

Findings

The overall baseline findings of the International Development and Early Learning Assessment show that only 50% 5-6 years old attending project kindergartens are able to achieve the milestones and answer correctly to the questions. “Approaches to learning” show the highest score among children where 73% of children are able to answer correctly, meanwhile the motor development is the area where only 36% of children in total are able to answer correctly.

There is evident a difference among the project locations and the ability of children to answer correctly to the certain questions regarding the development areas. Children in Roma Village show fewer skills than children in other locations to answer correctly. Only 40% of children in Roma village answer correctly comparing ty 70% in Abdyl Paralloi. Meanwhile children in Rrapishte and Levan show the same level of correct response of 44%. Please look at table 2 for more information

Table 2: IDELA results expressed in % of children who achieve the milestones

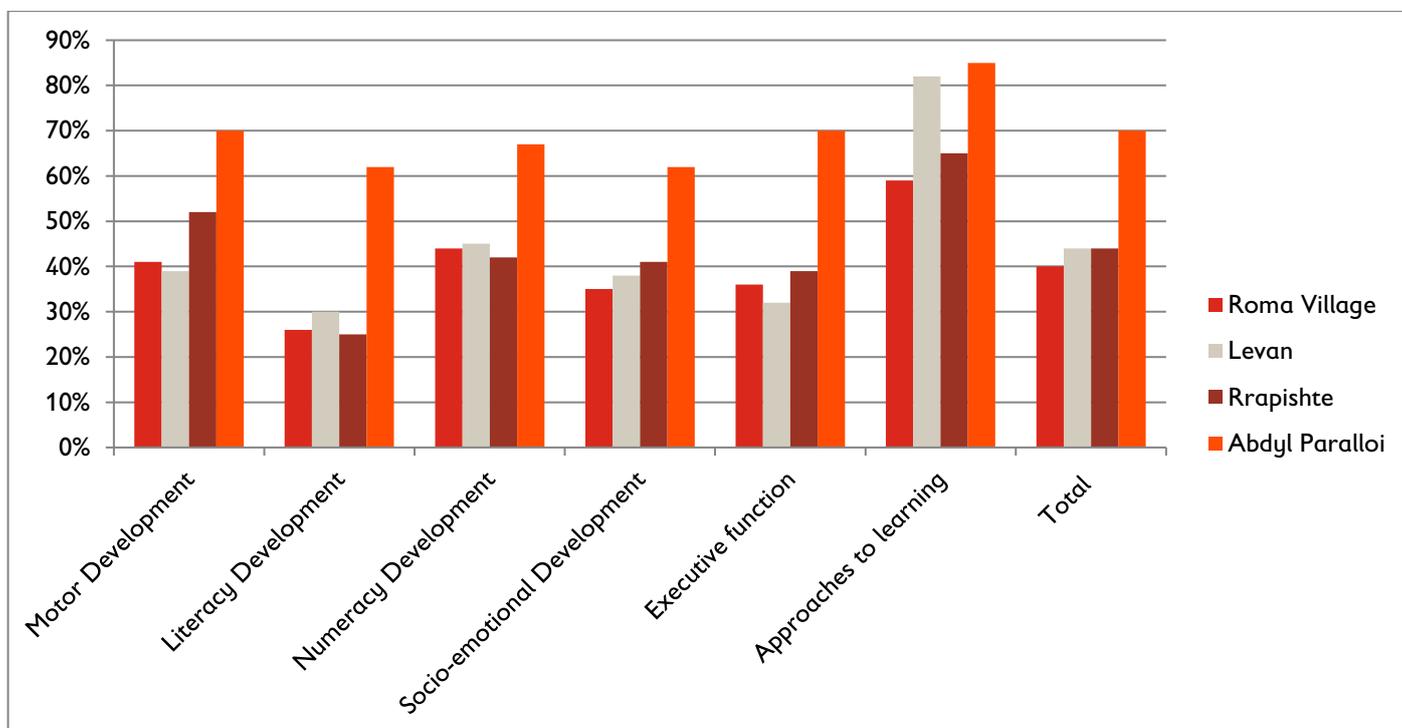
	Fier		Elbasan		Total
	Roma Village	Levan	Rrapishte	Abdyl Paralloi	
Motor Development	41%	39%	52%	70%	50%
Literacy Development	26%	30%	25%	62%	36%
Numeracy Development	44%	45%	42%	67%	49%
Socio-emotional Development	35%	38%	41%	62%	44%
Executive function	36%	32%	39%	70%	44%
Approaches to learning	59%	82%	65%	85%	73%
Total	40%	44%	44%	70%	50%

Graph 2 shows that Roma children attending kindergarten in urban area (Rrapishte and Abdyl Paralloi) shows better results than other children living in rural areas. This result indicates that children living in rural areas should receive more dedicated ECCD services in kindergartens, family and community to

perform better. “Abdyl Paralloi” is a City, integrated kindergarten and the kindergartens in other locations (Roma Village, Levan, Rrapishte) are segregated kindergartens.

Report

Graph 2: Information about children according to the development areas and the location of the kindergarten



The analysis of parent’s questionnaire shows that only 9 % of parents engage in activities with their children. Parents living in Paralloi settlement, are more engaged in organizing activities with children (26%). Out of Total, 32% of parents in Abdyl Paralloi read books and tell stories to the children. Meanwhile in Roma village, Levan and Rrapishte, parents are less involved in activities with children at home, respectively 4%, 3% and 4%. In Roma Village and Rrapishte, 0% of parents read books and tell stories to the children. The activity that is more likely to happen among Roma parents in

the project location is “singing songs to the children” (12%). The activity that is less likely to happen “Name objects or draw thing” (6%). Please look at table 3 for more information.

Table 4 shows the baseline values for each indicator as per MEAL Plan. The schools readiness among the targeted Roma children is 50%. Regarding the learning outcomes 49% of children show numeracy skills, 44% show cognitive skills and 36% show literacy skills. The baseline value of the parent –children interaction is 9%.

Table 3: Parents questionnaire results expressed in % of parents who are engaged in activities with children

	Fier		Elbasan		Total
	Roma Village	Levan	Rrapishte	Abdyl Paralloi	
Read books with child	0%	7%	0%	32%	10%
Tell stories to the child	0%	7%	0%	32%	10%
Sing songs to the child	7%	0%	7%	33%	12%

Report

Take the child outside the home	7%	0%	7%	23%	9%
Play simple games	7%	0%	7%	23%	9%
Name objects or draw thing	0%	7%	0%	18%	6%
Show or teach your child something new	7%	0%	7%	23%	9%
Total	4%	3%	4%	26%	9%

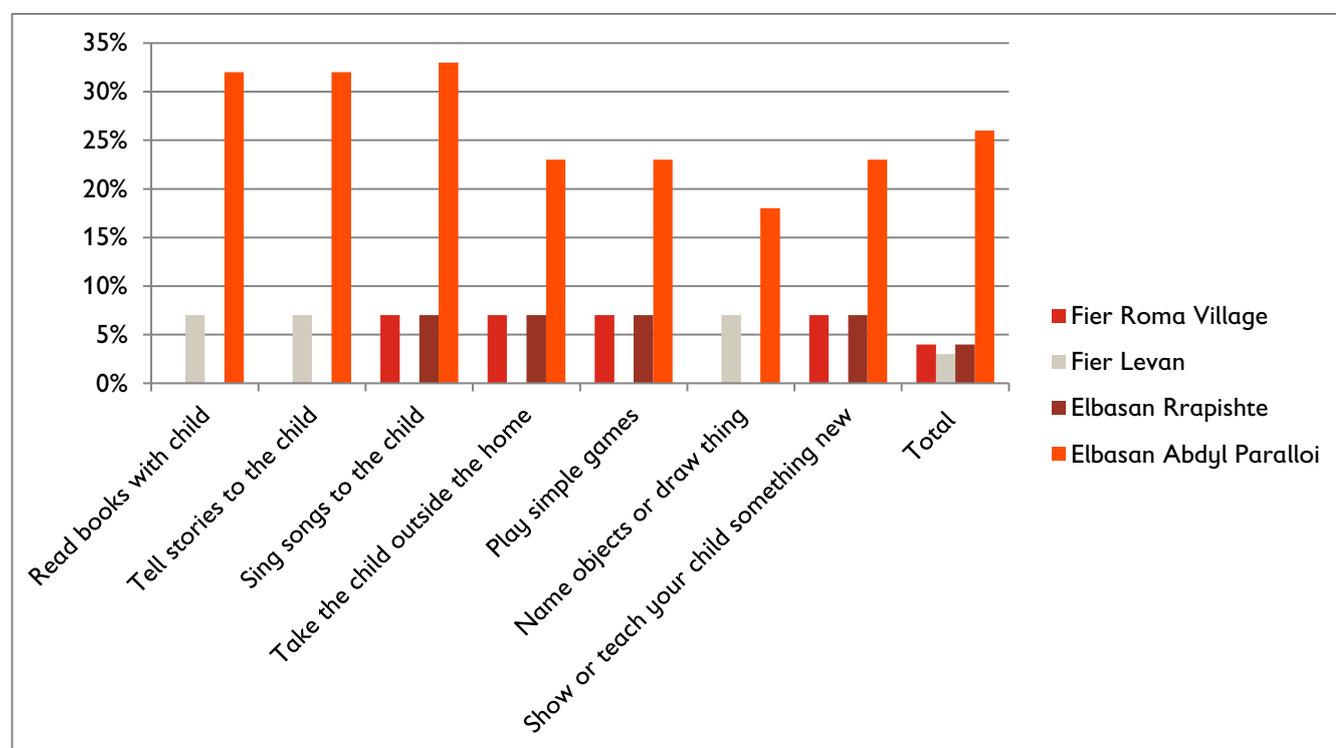


Table 4: Baseline values for pre-established indicators

	Fier		Elbasan		Total
	Roma Village	Levan	Rrapishte	Abdyl Paralloi	
ER 2.1 Improved school readiness among the targeted Roma children in preschool age as	40%	44%	44%	70%	50%

(% of interviewed children who answer correctly)

Report

measured by an ECCD diagnostic tool

ER 2.4 % Learning outcomes

<i>Numeracy skills</i>	44%	45%	42%	67%	49%
<i>Socio-emotional Development (cognitive skills)</i>	35%	38%	41%	62%	44%
<i>Literacy skills</i>	26%	30%	25%	62%	36%

ER 3.5 Improved parenting practices among the targeted Roma as measured by increased frequency of parent-children interaction

4%	3%	4%	26%	9%
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Conclusion:

1. Comparing to other sites children of Roma Village has the lowest results in regard to all domains. The project intervention needs to be more intensified to that area.
2. Teachers should increase capacities in emergent literacy, language and emergent numeracy, as well as fine motor skills.

3. Social – emotional activities should be carried out in kindergarten and community with children.

4. Having a strong home learning environment has been shown to be a strong predictor of children's early learning and development.

5. Literacy development is the area where more intervention is needed as the interviewed children in all project locations show weaker skills.

Plan for dissemination & sharing the learning:

1. Share with members and donors – ASAP
2. Round table with main project stakeholders for dissemination & sharing the learning – TBD after finalisation of the baseline.
3. Share with SC staff working in education – TBD after finalisation of the baseline.
4. Share with SCUS, the member who has the main contribution with IDELA.

5. Revise plan of activities based on findings – 15th April 2017.

Sample of data collection instrument

Report



IDELA data entry
sheet SC REF projec



IDELA Final.xlsx



Copy of IDELA data
template_2016_pivoi

Annex 1:

Table 5: Literacy and home activities

Report

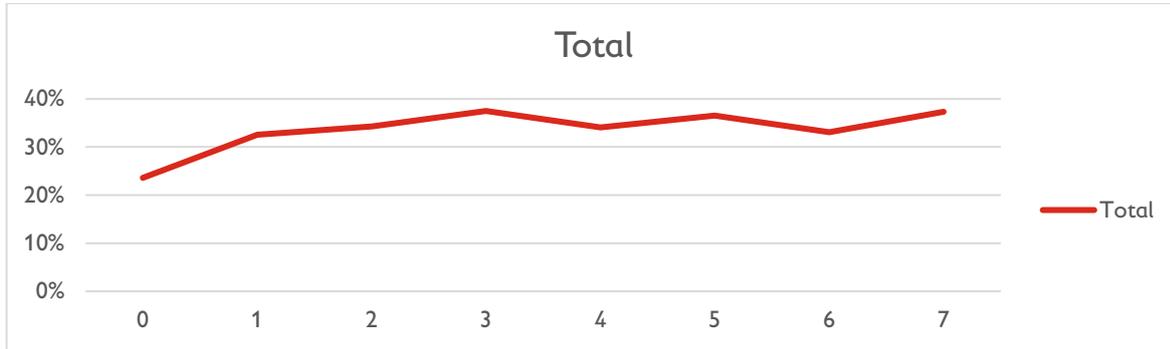
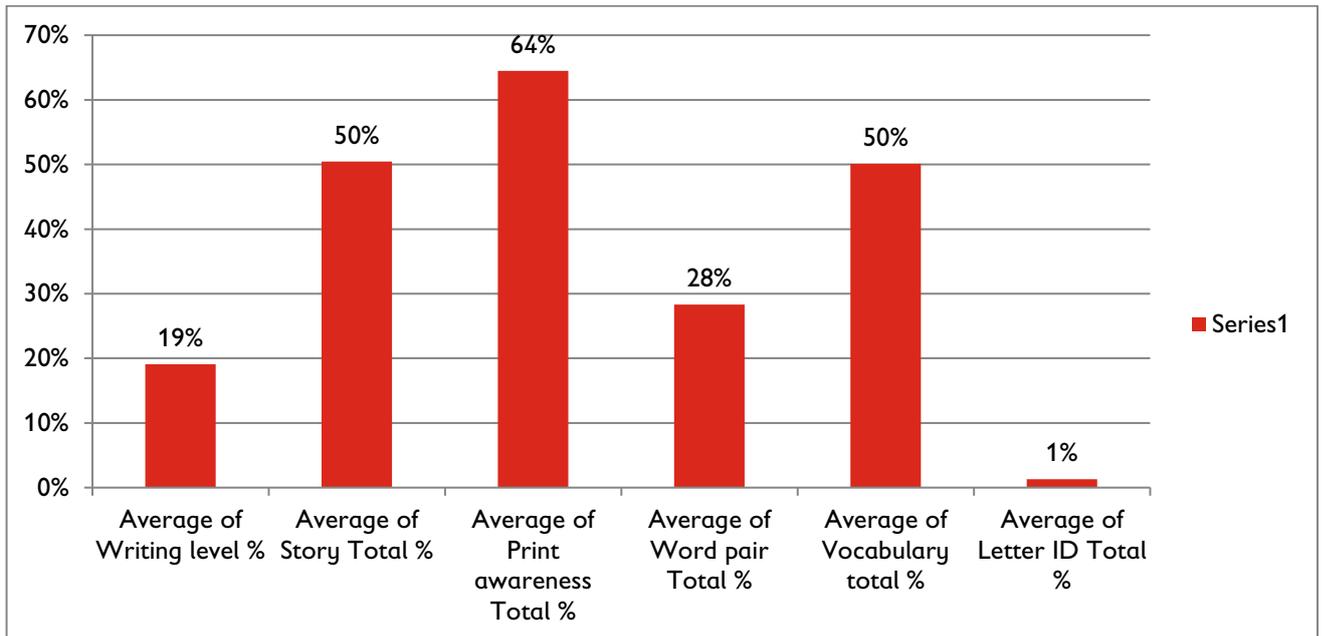


Table 5 shows that literacy skills of children increase with the increase of number of learning activities at home.

Table 6: Emergent Literacy and Language:

As shown by table 5, the work of teachers in kindergarten and parents at home on Emergent Literacy and Language field should be concentrated in Letter sounds and writing, which are very low for 5-6 year olds. The data in this field shows that children have any familiarity/access to writing materials.



Report

Table 7: Emergent Numeracy

As shown by table 6, the work of teachers in kindergarten and parents at home on Emergent Literacy and Language field should be concentrated in knowing numbers.

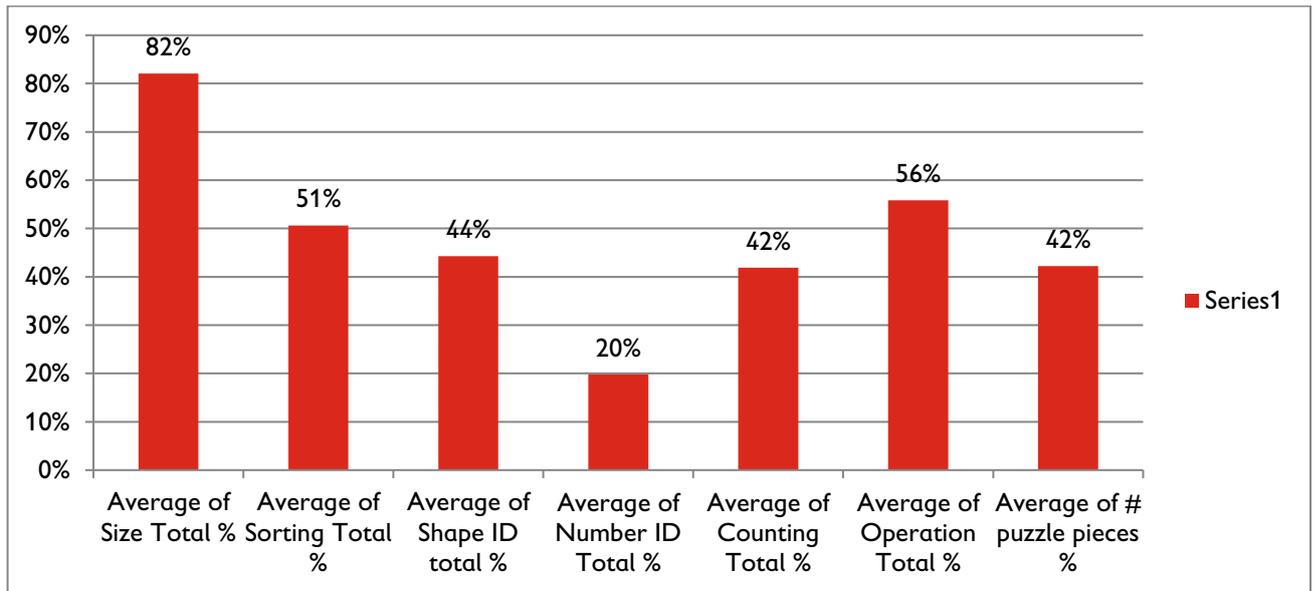
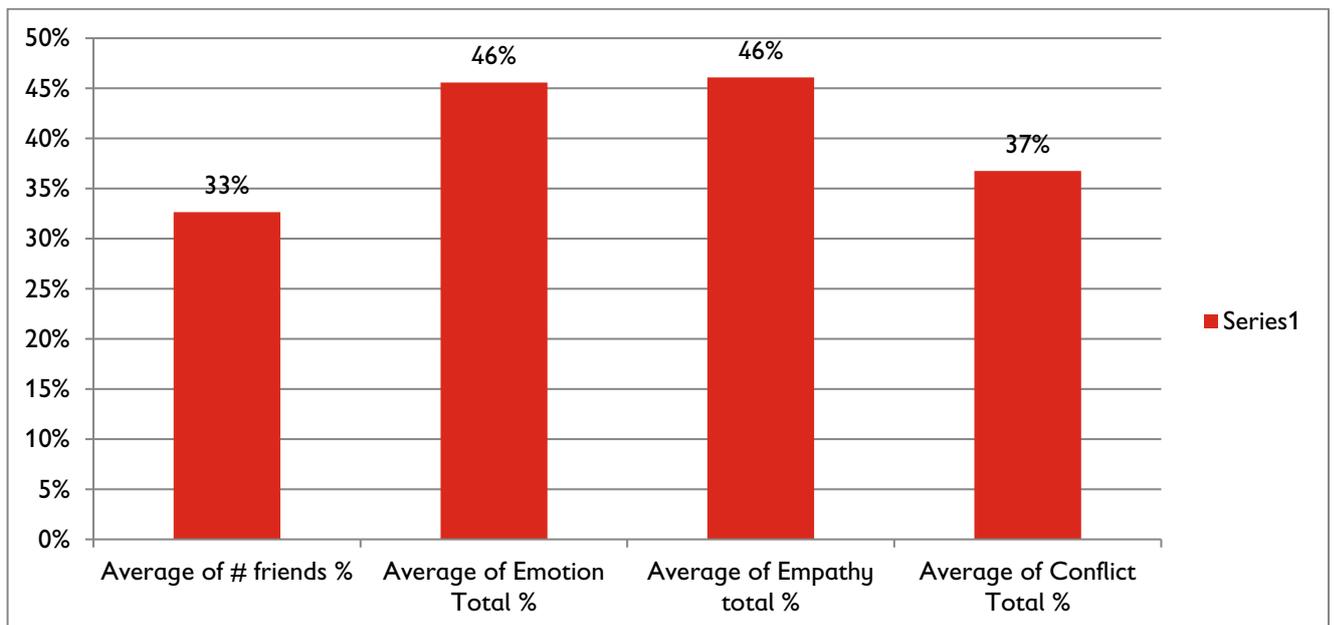


Table 8: Social-Emotional development

Social-emotional skills is the field that asks for more attention, as the average in each activity and the total is lower than other fields.



Report

Table 9: Gross and Fine motor development

The results in table 9 shows that the work with children should be focused in fine motor development activities.

