Model of excellent kindergarten learning for excellent pupils

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Background

Child – home – school:
• Child’s innate abilities – differences between children in nature, level and pace of developments
• Interaction person (child) and environment (home, school) resulting in cognitive, social, and emotional development (Magnusson & Allen, 1983)

Giftedness vs. excellence:
• Giftedness = innate, absolute standard IQ of 130
• Excellence = achievement, norm standard of best 10% in certain domain (Gagné, 2011)
• CEP = cognitively excellent pupil

Optimal kindergarten learning leading to excellence (Figure 1):
• Personal and environmental catalysts can facilitate or hinder the CEP’s development (Gagné, 2011)
• Misfit – underachievement (innate abilities ≠ actual achievement)
• Optimal fit – excellence, best 10%

Results

The literature review resulted in a model with a total of 12 catalysts for CEP’s cognitive, social, and emotional development during kindergarten (Table 2).

Table 2. Characteristics of the model for excellent kindergarten learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Catalysts</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupil</td>
<td>Pupil</td>
<td>Cognitive ability</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Pupil</td>
<td>Family support</td>
<td>+/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>Pupil</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Internal class differentiation</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>Internal school differentiation</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Effects on kindergarten learning:
+ = positive
- = negative
+/- = positive or negative

Conclusions

• Positive catalysts for CEP’s development can be found in the home environment and in kindergarten at several levels.

• The complex interaction between catalysts and abilities gives insight in underachievement and excellence processes.

• Kindergartens should optimise their class and school differentiation possibilities, as these are strong positive catalysts for CEPs’ developments.

Take-home messages

• Underachievement of CEPs begins in kindergarten.

• Preventing underachievement in primary school is too late.

• Directly at the start of kindergarten CEPs’ advanced developments should be supported.

• To do so, enhancing internal class and school differentiation seems promising as they are strong catalysts.

References