Education and Science

Vol 41 (2016) No 183 305-318

# Investigation of the Effect of Story-Based Social Skills Training Program on the Social Skill Development of 5-6 Year-old Children

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**Abstract**

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of Story-Based Social Skills Training Program on the social skill development of 5-6 year-old children. In the study, the pre-test/post-test and retention test experimental design with a control group was used. 5-6 year-old 60 (30 experimental, 30 control) preschool children participated in the study. Story-Based Social Skills Training Program was administered to the children in the experimental group twice a week for 5 weeks. Social Skills Evaluation Scale developed by Avcıoğlu (2007) was used for data collection. ANCOVA and t test were used for data analysis. The study showed that the difference between the social skill scores of experimental group and control group was significant ($p<0.05$) and the training program had a continued effect.

**Keywords**

Preschool education

Children

Social skill

Story

**Article Info**

Received: 22.04.2015

Accepted: 25.01.2016

Online Published: 17.02.2016

DOI: 10.15390/EB.2016.4618

## Introduction

Social skills are complex skills that involve positive interactions at the highest level and negative interactions and ostracization at a minimal level (Schneider, 1993). Additionally, social skills involve individuals expressing positive and negative emotions and thoughts to other individuals without losing their social support (Sergin and Giverts, 2003). Social skills are learned behaviors that help individuals to acquire positive social outcomes. In another definition, social skills are classified either as verbal or as non-verbal: non-verbal elements include elements such as posture, gestures and body movements, interpersonal proximity, touching, eye contact, smiling, and facial expressions; verbal elements include elements such as the characteristics of speech and voice, voice volume and speech clarity (Collins and Collins, 1992).

Social skills comprise qualities necessary for social competence, and hence should include definable and overt behaviors: Acquisition of social skills affects the overall social development of individuals (Johns, Crowley and Guetzloe, 2005). Social development is multi-dimensional and, therefore, definitions of social skills vary. Michelson, Sugai, Wood and Kazdin, (1983) examined the definitions of social skills and identified their common properties. These properties are: acquisition through learning, containing verbal and nonverbal behaviors, helping to initiate communication effectively and appropriately and helping to respond to the interaction, being more effective when rewarded with social awards, being shaped by individuals' interactions with their environment, being

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influenced by age, sex and characteristics of individuals'' environment, and showing deficits that can be overcome with evaluations.

Due to these properties, social skills contain cognitive, behavioral and environmental elements (Ogilvy, 2000). The preschool period is of primary importance in social skill development and these factors have further effects on the social skill development of children. Problematic behaviors due to failed peer relationships, especially during the schooling period, lead to further problems in the following stages of life (Namka, 1997; Johnson et al., 2000 as cited in Gülay and Akman, 2009). Concordantly, acquisition of social skills during the preschool period helps children to be happier and well-adjusted individuals in their future life. In view of the fact that the social skills are certain behaviors that cater to social, physical and intellectual needs of children without facing problems in their social environment, improving the social and emotional behaviors of children with social skills-based education programs has a positive impact on children's academic success and readiness to school (Webster-Stratton and Reid, 2004). Preschoolers get acquainted with the society other than their families for the first time in schools. In this environment, children need to acquire new social skills, which they have not yet needed in their home environment, to utilize in their relationships with teachers and other children. To improve a child's social relationships, necessary social skills should be identified and enhanced with education (McClelland and Morrison 2003).

Importance of social skill development and observations on the frequency of social skill deficits necessitated developing social skills training programs. Social skills training programs aim to provide individuals with new social skills and help individuals to reveal their developed social skills and, therefore, to help individuals to receive more positive responds from their environments (Bilbay, 1999). Social skills training helps individuals to properly manage skills such as organizing relationships, problem-solving, self-control and developing academic skills (Caldarella and Merill, 1997). Providing preschoolers with appropriate materials and education programs will promote the development of social skills and contribute to raising high-achieving, well-adjusted individuals.

Social skills training programs vary depending on the nature of the problem, the age group of children, the scope of the program, and participants. Basic steps of the programs comprise discussions on social skills, exemplifying positive and negative behaviors to participants, reenacting these behavior examples, and establishing a discussion environment regarding these reenactments (Choi and Kim, 2003). In their study to investigate the effects of drama activities integrated into preschool education programs on 6 year-old children's social skills, Çetingöz and Günhan (2012) observed significant differences in the social skills of children included in the training program. Similarly, inspired by Covey's format in "7 Habits of Highly Effective People", Muskett (2008) studied the effect of social skills training that involves behaviorist interventions on the primary schoolers with emotional/behavioral problems. Taking part in education, children's literature, discussion activities and games were used. The participant children stated that they had enhanced social skills at home and schools, had an elevated sense of security in groups and had more friends. Ekinci Vural's (2006) study aimed to support and improve 6 year-old preschool children's basic social skills including interpersonal skills, self-control skills, verbal expression skills and listening skills with a social skills training program that incorporated family participation and was developed by the researcher: The program involving parents to perform the given activities at home resulted in enhancement in determined social skills.

A review of literature reveals that social skills training programs use various methods including dramatic activities and games, being a role model, family participation, and group training. Children's literature works are also used in social skills training programs. One of these works is stories. Storytelling is frequently used by teachers to introduce a new subject. Storytelling period enables children to express their emotions and ideas easily and, hence, renders story-telling an

effective method (Elias et al., 1997; Cited by; Alisinanoğlu and Özbey, 2011). Stories help children to shift from fantasy to reality and compare daily life to the events in stories. Through stories, children can discuss the situations in stories with each other and teachers, and learn how to behave in similar situations (Hong, 2004; Propp, 2001).

Storytelling to children in the preschool period creates physical and emotional intimacy between the children and the story-teller. Stories introduce children to the human relations in the society and help children to perceive socially accepted, unaccepted or opposed attitudes and behaviors. Additionally, the child starts to gain new experiences through the linguistic and visual inputs from the stories. Well-constructed literary works will enable children to reach their potential and will contribute to their upbringing as conscious and perceptive individuals instead of individuals who fail to comprehend and question the situation before decision making (Sever, 2012). Neda, Ashkan, Sirous and Taher (2013) investigated the effects of the story-based social skills training program on aggressive behaviors of children and found that the administration of the program decreased aggressive and maladaptive behaviors while enhancing communication skills. Storybooks that center around children, show slices of children's lives and contain pictures encouraging children to think will open new worlds to children. Thanks to these storybooks, children will acquire abilities such as kindness, awareness, common courtesy, communication skills and love of nature and animals, developing perception and interpretation skills (Çetindağ, 2011). Considering the importance of social skills training and contribution of stories to children's lives, promoting the social skills of 5-6 year-old children with a story-based training program will enhance social skills including coping with difficulties, finding creative solutions to problems, developing empathy, helping, and collaborating.

***Aim of the Study***

Social skills are noticeable and learned behaviors, and therefore, stories and their properties can provide children with new acquisitions and contribute to their upbringing as healthy individuals. Although there are various studies from our country on social skills during the preschool period, none of those studies contain training program implementations that involve presenting story based activities with different activities. This study aims to investigate the effects of the training program that was developed by integrating art, drama, music, and preparation for reading and writing via a general storyline on 5-6 year-old children attending preschool.

***Assumptions***

- It's assumed that the Story-Based Social Skills Training Program improves the social skills of 5-6 year-old children.

***Limitations***

- The study is limited to 5-6 year-old children who showed normal development and were attending preschool education institutions during the data collection period.
- The study is limited to the effect of the Story-Based Social Skills Training Program on the social skills of 5-6 year-old children.

## Method

### *Study Model*

The study aimed to promote the social skill development of 5-6 year-old children and children will be trained via the "Story-Based Social Skills Training Program", and, therefore, the pre-test/post-test and retention test experimental design with a control group was used. The pre-test/post-test and retention test design with a control group gives the researcher a strong statistical power, enables interpretation of findings within the causation context and is frequently used in behavioral sciences (Büyüköztürk, 2009; 27). Table 1 shows the symbolic representation of the model.

**Table 1.** Symbolic Representation of the Model

| | | Pre-Test | | Post-Test |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GD** | **R** | **O1** | **X** | **O3** |
| **GK** | **R** | **O2** | | **O4** |

GE: Experimental Group, GC: Control Group, R: Unbiasedness of Grouping; X: Independent Variable Level (Micro-Teaching Practices); O1, O2: Pre-Test Implementation, O3, 4: Post-Test Implementation

The dependent variable of the study consists of the social skills of 5-6 year-old children, whereas the independent variable consists of the "Story-Based Social Skills Training Program".

### *Study Population and Selecting Samples*

Five-six year-old children attending independent preschools affiliated with Turkish Ministry of National Education were included in the study. The school in which the study was conducted was determined with simple random sampling. A total of 60 children were included in the study and were selected among morning and afternoon students of the same school to avoid an interaction between the experimental group and the control group. Morning and afternoon groups were randomly selected to form the experimental group and the control group. Thirty children from the morning group were selected for the experimental group and thirty children from the afternoon group were selected for the control group. Similarities between children in separate groups were taken into consideration. Statistical results regarding this issue are given in Table 2. The researcher administered "Story-Based Social Skills Training Program" to the children in the experimental group. The children in the control group continued their daily education with their teachers. Caution was given to select children that had no social skills training prior to the study and showed development in the 5-6 year-age range.

### *Data Collection Tool*

Data collection was performed with "Social Skills Evaluation Scale" (SSES) developed by Avcıoğlu (2003) and "Story-Based Social Skills Training Program" developed by the researcher.

### *Social Skills Evaluation Scale*

Social Skills Evaluation Scale (SSES) is developed by Avcıoğlu (2007). The scale is in the form of five point Likert scale and contains social skills that the children aged 4 to 6 years are expected to have. In the scale, social skills are divided into 9 sub-categories. These are; Interpersonal Skills (IS), Anger Management and Adjustability Skills (AMAS), Coping with Peer Pressure Skills (CWPPS), Self-Control Skills (SCS), Verbal Expression Skills (VES), Accepting Consequences Skills (ACS), Listening Skills (LS), Goal Setting Skills (GSS) and Task Accomplishment Skills (TAS). SSES is a measuring tool that contains 62 items and 9 subscales. Total number of items in each scale are: 15 for IS, 11 for AMAS, 10 for CWPPS, 7 for VES, 4 for SCS, 3 for GSS, 5 for LS, 3 for TAS, and 4 for ACS. All of the items are organized based on positive statements. Reactions to the items are graded as "always", "frequently", "usually", "seldom" and "never". Teachers read the statements and then marks the appropriate score for the evaluated skill of the children, and leave empty the skill that they cannot observe.

Reliability can be defined as the consistency of individuals' responses to an assessment tool. Two key criteria for the reliability of an assessment tool are the consistency of scores obtained in different periods and the consistency of scores obtained in the same period. Reliability of an assessment tool can be tested via test-retest reliability, parallel form reliability, two semi-test reliability, Kuder Richardson-20 (KR- 20) and Cronbach alpha reliability (Büyüköztürk, 2009, p. 169-171). Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the Social Skills Evaluation Scale.

Avcıoğlu (2007) performed a reliability analysis for SSES. Based on the analysis, Cronbach Alpha ($\alpha$) value was calculated as $\alpha$=.95 for IS subscale, $\alpha$=.94 for AMAS, $\alpha$=.92 for CWPPS, $\alpha$=.91 for SCS, $\alpha$=.85 for VES, $\alpha$=.95 for ACS, $\alpha$=.87 for LS, $\alpha$=.78 for GSS, $\alpha$=.88 for TAS, and $\alpha$=.98 for overall SSES. Prior to the study, reliability analysis was also performed by the researcher. Our literature reviews showed that according to Cattell (1978), item and responder ratio should be 3 to 6 people for each item (Cattell and Gorsuch as cited in McCallum et al., 1999). Based on these information 201 children that were in the 5-6 year-age group and attending independent preschools were included in the reliability research.

Based on the reliability analysis, Cronbach Alpha ($\alpha$) value was calculated as $\alpha$=.97 for IS subscale, $\alpha$=.96 for AMAS subscale, $\alpha$=.97 for CWPPS subscale, $\alpha$=.89 for SCS subscale, $\alpha$=.96 for VES subscale, $\alpha$=.95 for ACS subscale, $\alpha$=.96 for LS subscale, $\alpha$=.97 for GSS subscale, $\alpha$=.95 for TAS subscale and $\alpha$=.96 for overall SSES. 0.70 or higher reliability coefficient for psychological tests and a reliability coefficient approximate to 1 are sufficient for the reliability of test scores (Büyüköztürk, 2009, p.171). According to these results, the evaluation tool can be considered as highly reliable.

***Developing the Story-Based Social Skills Training Program***

"Story-Based Social Skills Training Program" is aimed to promote the social skills of 5-6 year-old preschool children and it was constructed by going through several phases. Basic properties of the program were determined by reviewing the theoretical bases of social skills training programs and literature regarding social skills. These properties are as follows:

- Social skills deficits of children were determined via semi-constructed interviews with teachers.
- Methods and techniques that will be used for children were specified.
- Specified methods and techniques were joined with the deficit social skills of children and integrated into stories.
- Stories were constructed by addressing social skills including peer relations, solving emotional problems, problem solving, abiding by the rules of society, communication problems.
- The program was designed to allow active involvement of children. Simple to complex, concrete to abstract, immediate to remote principal was regarded to prepare the training set.

Considering the acquisitions and indicators defined in the Ministry of National Education's Preschool Education Program, a training program containing 10 sessions was prepared. The training program aims to achieve permanent learning of social skills via selected tools; it is integrated with daily life elements that support the entire development grounds of children; and it involves activities that are grounded on stories centered around contemporary learning and include art, Turkish language learning, drama, playing, music, and preparation of reading and writing activities. The program took its final form after editing in accordance with 5 expert opinions. Activity example for the program is given below.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Activity Example</td></tr>
<tr><td>Acquisition and Indicators<br>Cognitive Area<br>K19: Finds a solution for the problem<br>G7: Suggests creative solutions to the problem<br>Social Emotional Area<br>K10: Fulfills his/her responsibilities<br>G2: Fulfills his/her assumed responsibility</td><td>Concepts: Emotions<br>Activities: Art activity, Turkish language learning activity, Drama.<br>Materials: Puppets, Crayons, Craft Papers</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Preparation Stage<br>Educator prepares the child puppet and places craft papers and crayons on tables.<br>Implementation and Evaluation Stage<br>Educator places the child puppet on his/her finger and enters the classroom. Voices the puppet: “Hello Children (Converses with children according to their responses) Today I am very upset because my grandfather is very sick. My mother won’t let me play in the house, she said I was making noise. What should I do? Should I go to the park? Or play with my friends? Should I watch TV? Or play with my computer? I couldn’t decide, I am very bored".<br>Craft papers and crayons are placed on the table. Educator tells children: “Your friend is upset because his/her grandfather is sick. He/she couldn’t play at home. What would you do if you were him/her? How do you feel when you can’t play in your home? Now, draw what you would like to do on the papers.”<br>At the end of the activity children are asked to describe their drawings. Educator asks the following questions to children:<br>Where would you like to go or what would you like to do?<br>How do you feel when you can do what you want?<br>How would you like to be treated if you were sick?<br>How should we behave if someone is sick?<br>Opinions of children are noted on their drawings. Then educator asks children to improvise what they would like to do. After the improvisation, children are given the word “Sick”: Educator uses the word in a sentence and children continues the sentence and create a story.</td></tr>
</table>

***Implementation Process***

In our study, participation was based on voluntary basis. Teachers of the children in the experimental and control groups were informed about the purpose, content and period of the training program. Prior to the implementation of the training program, the researcher participated in some of the children’s activities and communicated with the children. Children were informed about the activities. Before the implementation of the training program, SSES was administered to the children in the experimental and control groups by their teachers to perform the pre-test. The pre-test was administered in a comfortable and quiet environment. Following the pre-test administration, “Story-Based Social Skills Training Program” was administered to the children in the experimental group. Thirty children in the class were included in the administrations. The children in the control group carried on with their usual education program. The training period lasted for 5 weeks and comprised 30-40 minutes long sessions administered twice a week. Following the completion of the training program, the SSES was administered to the children in the experimental and control groups by their teachers. Four weeks after the completion of the training program, the retention test was administered to the children in the experimental and control groups.

***Data Analysis***

Test of normality was used to choose the statistical process that will determine the effectiveness of the experimental process. As the statistical process showed that the skewness-kurtosis values of the data for the experimental and control groups were between the -1, +1 range, using parametric techniques was considered appropriate. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used in the pre-test - post-test comparisons. ANCOVA enables the statistical evaluation of the variable or variables that are other than the investigated factor or factors and related to the dependent variable (Büyüköztürk, 2009). The t test was used for the related samples in post-test/retention test comparisons. "The related samples t test is used to analyze the significance of the difference between the means of two related samples" (Büyüköztürk, 2009, p. 67).

## Findings

"Story-Based Social Skills Training" is developed for improving the social skills of the children participating in the study. We sought an answer to: "Are there any significant difference between the SSES pre-test scores, which was obtained prior to the implementation of the training program, of the experimental group and the control group?". Referring to this question, we used the independent sample t test to compare the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups. The independent sample t test is used to compare the significance of the difference between the mean values of two sample groups (Büyüköztürk; 2009). The t test results for the SSES pre-test scores of the children in the experimental group and children in the control group are given below.

**Table 2.** The t Test Results for Pre-test Scores Obtained from the Overall Social Skills Evaluation Scale and its Subscales by the Children in the Experimental Group and Children in the Control Group

| Subscales | Group | N | $\bar{X}$ | SS | sd | t | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **IS** | Experimental | 30 | 35,7 | 13,6 | 58 | -1,747 | **,086** |
| | Control | 30 | 41,5 | 12,1 | | | |
| **AMAS** | Experimental | 30 | 25,0 | 8,61 | 58 | -1,962 | **,055** |
| | Control | 30 | 29,5 | 9,14 | | | |
| **CWPPS** | Experimental | 30 | 23,1 | 7,57 | 58 | -1,808 | **,076** |
| | Control | 30 | 27,0 | 9,06 | | | |
| **VES** | Experimental | 30 | 17,5 | 6,50 | 58 | -,302 | **,764** |
| | Control | 30 | 18,0 | 6,34 | | | |
| **SCS** | Experimental | 30 | 11,26 | 3,80 | 58 | -,413 | **,681** |
| | Control | 30 | 11,66 | 3,69 | | | |
| **GSS** | Experimental | 30 | 7,30 | 3,03 | 58 | -,890 | **,377** |
| | Control | 30 | 7,90 | 2,10 | | | |
| **LS** | Experimental | 30 | 9,93 | 4,51 | 58 | -,212 | **,833** |
| | Control | 30 | 10,16 | 4,01 | | | |
| **TAS** | Experimental | 30 | 6,40 | 2,52 | 58 | -1,081 | **,284** |
| | Control | 30 | 7,06 | 2,51 | | | |
| **ACS** | Experimental | 30 | 7,66 | 2,82 | 58 | ,420 | **,676** |
| | Control | 30 | 7,36 | 2,70 | | | |
| **SSES Total** | Experimental | 30 | 144,0 | 41,15 | 58 | -1,496 | **,140** |
| | Control | 30 | 160,0 | 43,37 | | | |

p>0,05

Table 2 shows a statistically non-significant difference between the SSES subscales and overall SSES scores of children in the experimental group and children in the control group. Considering the

similar scores obtained by children in different groups, children can be regarded to have similar features. "In studies with the pre-test and post-test model, mean values for the pre-test scores of experimental and control groups should be similar" (Kaptan, 1998, p. 85). Obtaining similar pre-test scores from the experimental group and the control group is important to determine the effectiveness of the training program.

The results for the ANCOVA that was performed to demonstrate whether the social skills of children in the experimental group and social skills of the children in the control group differ due to the implementation of the "Story-Based Social Skills Training Program" are given in the table.

**Tablo 3.** The ANCOVA Results for the Post-test Scores Adjusted Based on the Social Skills Evaluation Scale's Subscales and Overall SSES Pre-test Scores of the Children in the Experimental Group and Children in the Control Group

| Sub Scales | Variance Source | Sum of Squares | sd | Mean of Squares | F | P | η2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **IS** | Pre-test | 7975,559 | 1 | 7975,559 | 482,542 | ,000 | ,894 |
| | **Group (experimental/ control)** | **1431,818** | **1** | **1431,818** | **86,629** | **,000** | **,603** |
| | Error | 942,108 | 57 | 16,528 | | | |
| | Total | 115430,000 | 59 | | | | |
| **AMAS** | Pre-test | 3890,857 | 1 | 3890,857 | 697,249 | ,000 | ,924 |
| | **Group (experimental/ control)** | **1027,921** | **1** | **1027,921** | **184,206** | **,000** | **,764** |
| | Error | 318,077 | 57 | 5,580 | | | |
| | Total | 60926,000 | 59 | | | | |
| **CWPPS** | Pre-test | 3476,222 | 1 | 3476,222 | 271,936 | ,000 | ,827 |
| | **Group (experimental/ control)** | **1681,061** | **1** | **1681,061** | **131,505** | **,000** | **,698** |
| | Error | 728,645 | 57 | 12,783 | | | |
| | Total | 57330,000 | 59 | | | | |
| **VES** | Pre-test | 1626,872 | 1 | 1626,872 | 125,229 | ,000 | ,687 |
| | **Group (experimental/ control)** | **4841,119** | **1** | **4841,119** | **372,648** | **,000** | **,867** |
| | Error | 740,495 | 57 | 12,991 | | | |
| | Total | 46883,000 | 59 | | | | |
| **SCS** | Pre-test | 870,875 | 1 | 870,875 | 44,765 | ,000 | ,440 |
| | **Group (experimental/ control)** | **4622,135** | **1** | **4622,135** | **237,590** | **,000** | **,807** |
| | Error | 1108,891 | 57 | 19,454 | | | |
| | Total | 28943,000 | 59 | | | | |
| **GSS** | Pre-test | 201,469 | 1 | 201,469 | 13,864 | ,000 | ,196 |
| | **Group (experimental/ control)** | **8520,048** | **1** | **8520,048** | **586,315** | **,000** | **,911** |
| | Error | 828,297 | 57 | 14,532 | | | |
| | Total | 30831,000 | 59 | | | | |

**Tablo 3.** Continue

| Sub Scales | Variance Source | Sum of Squares | sd | Mean of Squares | F | P | η2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LS | Pre-test | 427,241 | 1 | 427,241 | 25,336 | ,000 | ,308 |
| | **Group (experimental/ control)** | **5738,886** | **1** | **5738,886** | **340,324** | **,000** | **,857** |
| | Error | 961,193 | 57 | 16,863 | | | |
| | Total | 35567,000 | 59 | | | | |
| TAS | Pre-test | 55,310 | 1 | 55,310 | 2,563 | ,115 | ,043 |
| | **Group (experimental/ control)** | **6378,564** | **1** | **6378,564** | **295,610** | **,000** | **,838** |
| | Error | 1229,924 | 57 | 21,578 | | | |
| | Total | 26783,000 | 59 | | | | |
| ACS | Pre-test | 244,565 | 1 | 244,565 | 11,032 | ,002 | ,162 |
| | **Group (experimental/ control)** | **4458,730** | **1** | **4458,730** | **201,130** | **,000** | **,779** |
| | Error | 1263,601 | 57 | 22,168 | | | |
| | Total | 28189,000 | 59 | | | | |
| SSES Total | Pre-test | 74700,082 | 1 | 74700,082 | 395,180 | ,000 | ,874 |
| | **Group (experimental/ control)** | **301688,668** | **1** | **301688,668** | **1596,002** | **,000** | **,966** |
| | Error | 10774,585 | 57 | 189,028 | | | |
| | Total | 3404454,000 | 59 | | | | |

p<0,001

Table 3 reveals that the mean values for the post-test scores that were adjusted for the pre-test scores from the SSES' Personal Skills subscale [F=86.629; p<0.001; η2=.603], Anger Management and Adjustability Skills subscale [F=184.206; p<0.001; η2=.764 ], Coping with Peer Pressure Skills subscale [F=131.505; p<0.001; η2=.698 ], Verbal Expression Skills subscale [F=372.648; p<0.001; η2=.867 ], Self-Control Skills subscale [F=237.590; p<0.001; η2=.807 ], Goal Setting Skills subscale [F=586.315; p<0.001; η2=.911], Listening Skills subscale [F=340.324; p<0.001; η2=.857 ], Task Accomplishment Skills subscale [F=295.610; p<0.001; η2=.838 ], Accepting Consequences Skills subscale [F=201.130; p<0.001; η2=.779] are in favor of the experimental group. The difference between the mean values for the post-test scores adjusted for children's pre-test scores in the overall Social Skills Evaluation Scale [F=1596.002; p<0.001; η2=.966] is statistically non-significant. Correspondingly, social skills of the children are associated with the children's groups, and, therefore, children in the experimental group that were included in the "Story-Based Social Skills Training Program" scored significantly higher than the children in the control group.

After four weeks, the SSES was re-administered to the children in the experimental group to determine the retention of "Story-Based Social Skills Training Program". The related sample t test was used between the post-test scores and retention test scores. The related sample t test results are given in Table 4.

**Tablo 4.** The t Test Results for the Post-test and Retention Test Scores from the Subscales of Social Skills Evaluation Scale of Children in the Experimental Group

| Sub Scales | n | Tests | $\bar{X}$ | SS | sd | t | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **IS** | 60 | Post-test | 42,06 | 12,52 | 59 | 1,762 | **,083** |
| | | Retention | 42,01 | 12,53 | | | |
| **AMAS** | 60 | Post-test | 30,66 | 8,73 | 59 | 1,000 | **,321** |
| | | Retention | 30,60 | 8,79 | | | |
| **CWPPS** | 60 | Post-test | 29,53 | 9,20 | 59 | -,465 | **,643** |
| | | Retention | 29,58 | 9,24 | | | |
| **VES** | 60 | Post-test | 25,78 | 10,88 | 59 | ,489 | **,626** |
| | | Retention | 25,71 | 10,78 | | | |
| **SCS** | 60 | Post-test | 19,38 | 10,41 | 59 | 1,941 | **,057** |
| | | Retention | 19,18 | 10,16 | | | |
| **GSS** | 60 | Post-test | 18,91 | 12,59 | 59 | ,409 | **,684** |
| | | Retention | 18,86 | 12,50 | | | |
| **LS** | 60 | Post-test | 21,91 | 10,69 | 59 | ,275 | **,784** |
| | | Retention | 21,90 | 10,67 | | | |
| **TAS** | 60 | Post-test | 17,75 | 11,55 | 59 | 1,734 | **,088** |
| | | Retention | 17,61 | 11,56 | | | |
| **ACS** | 60 | Post-test | 19,21 | 10,11 | 59 | 1,000 | **,321** |
| | | Retention | 19,18 | 10,04 | | | |
| **Total** | 60 | Post-test | 225,96 | 76,00 | 59 | 1,426 | **,159** |
| | | Retention | 225,90 | 75,97 | | | |

p>0,05

Table 4 shows that the difference between the mean values for post-test – retention test scores of children in the experimental group from the Interpersonal Skills subscale [t(59)=1.762; p>.05)], Anger Management and Adjustability Skills (AMAS) subscale [t(59)=1000; p>.05)], Coping with Peer Pressure Skills (CWPPS) subscale [t(59)=-.465; p>.05)], Verbal Expression Skills (VES) subscale [t(59)=-.489; p>.05)], Self-Control Skills (SCS) subscale [t(59)=1.941; p>.05)] Goal Setting Skills (GSS) subscale [t(59)=-.409; p>.05)], Listening Skills (LS) subscale [t(59)=.275; p>.05)]; Task Accomplishment Skills (TAS) subscale [t(59)=1.734; p>.05)]; Accepting Consequences Skills (ACS) subscale [t(59)=1000; p>.05)] of SSES and overall SSES [t(59)=1.426; p>.05)] is statistically non-significant. These results indicate that the experimental process is retained and the training program has a continued effect.

## Conclusion and Discussion

The preschool period is the optimum period for learning required social skills. From this point of view, the study aimed to investigate the effect of storytelling-based social skills training program on the social skills of 5-6 year-old children. The results of the study showed that, when compared to the control group, the difference between the experimental group's pre-test and adjusted post-test scores from the Interpersonal Skills (IS) subscale, Anger Management and Adjustability Skills (AMAS) subscale, Coping With Peer Pressure Skills (CWPPS) subscale, Verbal Expression Skills (VES) subscale, Self-Control Skills (SCS) subscale, Goal Setting Skills (GSS) subscale, Listening Skills (LS) subscale, Task Accomplishment Skills (TAS) subscale, Accepting Consequences Skills subscale (ACS), and overall of the Social Skills Evaluation Scale (SSES) was highly significant (p<0.001), (Table 3). These results show the positive effect of "Story-Based Social Skills Training Program" on the social skills of children: The training program aimed to improve various skills to be utilized by children in their development grounds and, therefore, it also improved the social skills of children. Due to the fact that

the story-based social skills training program also enables children to solve problems in their daily lives and shows children the connection between events, it can be deemed effective.

Studies support the notion of improving social skills with appropriate training programs. Villares, Brigman and Peluso (2008) developed a training program that promotes problem-solving and collaboration studies in addition to activities based on storytelling to improve the social and academic skills of children aged 4 to 7 years. According to their results, social skills, problem-solving behaviors and collaborative works of children were significantly improved. Kim, Doh, Hong and Choi (2011) gave social skills training to 4-5 year-old children with social skill deficits. In this experimental study, aggressive behaviors of the children were significantly reduced, while prosocial behaviors, emotional control and social skills of the children improved; in the study, aggressive behaviors of the children in the control group increased. DiPrete and Jennings (2009) implemented a training program for improving the social-behavioral adaptation of 5-11 year-old children. As a result of their implementations, social-behavioral adaptation of the children and, therefore, their academic skills improved. Durualp and Aral (2010) investigated the effect of play-based social skills training program on 6 year-old children. In their study containing experimental and control groups, the play-based training program improved the communication skills of the children in the experimental group, while reducing withdrawn and maladaptive behaviors.

In this study, social skills of the children were promoted with various activities including games, drama, art, preparation for reading and writing, and through these activities, children were encouraged to internalize these skills. Training in a supportive environment where children know the expectations on when and how to behave has an important effect on child behavior (Alisinanoğlu and Özbey, 2011). Accordingly, in this study, children were provided with a supportive environment and, following their training, evaluations were conducted with the children. Systems that help children to interact comfortably and provide age appropriate materials, environments and education have significantly positive effects on the social skills of children (Kemple, 2004).

In the preschool period, children rapidly acquire social skills; a decrease in extroversion and introversion problems and behavioral problems of the children who received social skills training is observed (Herrera and Little, 2005). Merrell, Juskelis, Tran and Buchanan developed the Strong Kids" program and administered a part of their program called the "Strong Start Pre-K" to 103 children and then investigated its effects. The program aimed to increase the social and emotional competence of children, to enhance emotional regulation, to reduce internalizing behaviors and to increase prosocial behaviors to peers. In their study with experimental design, internalized behaviors of the children in the experimental group considerably decreased and children's interaction with their peers and social circles increased (Cited by; Gunter, Caldarella, Korth and Young, 2012). Due to the fact that the more the social skills are used the more they improve, "Story-Based Social Skills Training Program" improved anger management, coping with peer pressure, and self-control skills of children in our study as well.

Training programs based on different activities also affect the social skills of children. Eldeniz Çetin and Avcıoğlu (2010) stated that the administration of drama-based social skills training program contributed to children's skills including the basic social skills, advanced communication skills, coping with aggressive behaviors, accepting consequences and group work. This is due to the strong effect of basic cognitive and behavioral elements of social skills on preschool children. In our study on the "Story-Based Social Skills Training Program", children acquired cognitive and behavioral skills during the process. Similarly, between 1981 and 1990, Beelman, Pfingsten and Lösel (1994), within the framework of meta-analysis, investigated the studies that measured the effectiveness of training for the social skills of children from preschool to middle-school. The results showed that the social skill training programs are more effective in short periods. These studies support the effectiveness of our experimental process.

Four weeks after the implementation, retention test was administered to the children in the experimental group. Findings indicate the continued effect of the training program on children (Table 4.). Social skills are verbally and nonverbally expressible and learned behaviors. While displaying their pre-acquired social skills, children also acquire new social skills with growing social circles. Children may have introduced the behaviors that they learned from the Story-Based Social Skills Training Program to their school and family life. Durualp and Aral (2010), Dereli İman (2014) conducted follow-up studies after completing their studies on improving the social skills of children. Their results imply the continued effect of training programs. These studies also support our findings.

## Suggestions

Story-Based Social Skills Training Program was deemed beneficial to the social skills of 5-6 year-old children. We have some suggestions based on our findings.

- Based on the positive effect of Story-Based Social Skills Training Program on the social skills: The same method and techniques can be administered to children from different socio-cultural backgrounds and to different sample groups, and results can be evaluated.
- Training programs to improve social skills can be adapted for younger children, new implementations can be used to test retention.
- The training program can be improved to be administered in longer periods.
- Families can be included in the training programs for children, and acquisitions of the parents and children can be dually evaluated.
- Training programs and materials to improve the social skills of children can be developed for administration by their families in order to help families to evaluate their children.
- Training programs can be developed for teachers to determine the social skill levels of children at regular intervals and to eliminate negative behaviors.

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