Chapter 10
Childhood Prosocial Behavior in the School Environment

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Although the study of childhood prosocial behavior is not new, there has been a recent surge in the number of studies on this topic due to increases in violence and aggression in all social environments. According to the principles of Positive Psychology, the promotion of prosocial behavior involves strengthening a repertoire of alternative behaviors that inhibit negative and antisocial behaviors in children while providing an adequate remedy to the expression of aggressiveness, violence, and indifference towards others.

As previous studies have suggested, there are many positive effects that produce prosocial behavior throughout childhood development at the social, emotional, and cognitive levels. In this chapter, we will analyze why schools provide an appropriate context to promote helpfulness, giving and sharing, verbal comfort, positive appreciation of others, and cooperative behavior. A literature review on this subject will be compared to the results obtained following the implementation of a program directed at promoting childhood prosocial behavior in a school context. These results support the possibility of strengthening prosociality in this environment through the implementation of adequate strategies and models.

Teaching children to cooperate and help others, to share and be altruistic, to accept and forgive others' mistakes, and to show sympathy, empathy, and compassion should be part of any school's objectives to foster children's harmonious and integral development.

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10.1 Theoretical Background

Interest in prosocial-altruistic behavior has a large tradition in the philosophical study of human nature. Plato, Aristotle and other philosophers tried to explain the causes and motivation of prosocial-altruistic behaviors.

The psychological study of prosocial and altruistic behavior is relatively recent. Early on, psychology, along with philosophy, was concerned with the conflictive and negative psychological aspects of a single individual and the feelings that others provoke in that person. Only recently, at the beginning of the 1970s, psychology has begun to focus on positive psychological resources as prosocial aspects.

Taking into account the generalized social concern for approaching the problems of delinquency, aggression, and social indifference that characterized American society in the 1960s, the birth of a new research field had been established (Calvo, 1999; González Portal, 1992; Molero, Candela, & Cortés, 1999). As a result, the 1970s were characterized by advances in research on prosociality, and in the following years new perspectives were developed on the study of altruistic behavior (Calvo, 1999; González Portal, 1992; Molero et al., 1999).

At present, because aggressive and competitive models are becoming increasingly abundant in our society, both researchers and leaders in the fields of education, society, and politics have agreed on the importance of promoting prosocial behavior as a way of inhibiting negative and antisocial behaviors (Roche Olivar, 2011).

10.2 Concept Definitions

There seems to be little consensus on a common definition of prosocial behavior (Calvo, 1999; Fuentes, 1988; Garaigordobil, 2003; González Portal, 1992; López, 1994; Roche Olivar, 1995; Silva, 1998), and the specific differences between prosocial, altruistic, and prosocial-altruistic behavior remain unclear.

López (1994) defined altruism as "the disposition or orientation towards the good of others that is manifested in a number of behaviors" (p. 10) and understood these behaviors as "those that benefit others to elicit or maintain positive effects. Whoever conducts these behaviors does so voluntarily with the intention of helping others and without anticipating short-term or long-term rewards. Lastly, the behavior must carry more external costs than external benefits" (p. 10).

Given the above definition, there remains the problem of considering the benefit produced by such behavior or the motivation that must exist to display altruistic behavior (Ruiz Olivares, 2005). According to Silva (1998), motivation centered on the needs of others is fundamental for determining whether it is in fact an altruistic behavior.

Despite these difficulties, these previous authors adopted two points of view: one position considers that it is necessary to include motivational aspects while the other centers on observable aspects and is operationally defined as "behavioral"

(Ruiz Olivares, 2005). Chacón (1986) established that authors who support a more behavioral definition consider that this type of behavior is defined by its consequences and observable facts rather than by the supposed intention of the individual who performs the behavior. Thus, in this case, the ultimate motivation of the individual is not taken into account because it is an assumed and hypothetical fact rather than an observation (Darley & Latané, 1968; Lumsden & Wilson, 1981; Rushton, 1982; Sorrentino & Rushton, 1981).

The inconvenience of operationalizing the motivation of an altruistic behavior is evident, as these behaviors are not directly observable and it is difficult to establish an objective criterion that discriminates an altruistic motivation from one that is non-altruistic. For this reason, upon evaluating the efficacy of programs promoting prosocial behavior, we chose to work with a construct that omits the altruistic motivational criterion; this approach is broader and covers any type of helpful behavior that creates a positive benefit in another individual, i.e., prosocial behavior (Bastón & Powell, 2003; Roche Olivar, 1997). In other words, we agree with the assumption that all altruistic behavior may be considered prosocial but that not all prosocial behavior may be considered altruistic (Garaigordobil, 1994; González Portal, 1992; López, 1994).

Prosocial behavior is linked to another related construct: the prosocial moral reasoning, which refers to dilemmas where the needs or desires of one person are in conflict with the needs or desires of another people and occur in a context in which the role of laws, norms, authority mandates, prohibitions, and punishments are minimized (Carlo, Eisenberg, Koller, Da Silva, & Frohlich, 1996; Eisenberg, Lennon, & Roth, 1983; Eisenberg, Miller, Shell, McNally, & Shea, 1991).

One definition of prosocial behavior that is generally accepted among different authors is termed "positive social behavior" (Osorio Peña, 2009) and refers to "any action that benefits others and is conducted voluntarily", independently of the motivation that leads to such conduct (Guijo Blanco, 2002).

Roche and his research team (2011) have developed a more extensive definition that not only includes the simplicity of the unidirectional focus of previous studies but also includes the complexity of human actions concerning relational and systemic aspects. This definition tackles more cultural and susceptible dimensions of its application in the social and political field and can be stated as including "those behaviors that, without the search for external, extrinsic, or material rewards, favor other persons or groups (according to certain criteria) or objectively positive social goals and increase the probability of generating reciprocity and solidarity in consequent interpersonal or social relationships, which serves to protect the identity, creativity, and initiative of the individuals or groups involved" (Roche Olivar, 1991). This definition includes the role of the receptor as a criterion of validity and efficacy of prosocial behavior. According to this definition, an action may be considered prosocial if the receptor of the same action has accepted and approved it. In this manner, those actions that can harm rather than benefit another person are excluded. These harmful behaviors include generating relationships of dependence, unintentionally making the other person feel undervalued, or simply when the receptor does not perceive the other's behavior as helpful.

10.3 Classification of Prosocial Behaviors

There have been several attempts at classifying the science behind prosocial behaviors (Ruiz Olivares, 2005), and one of the first authors to classify the different behaviors mentioned in previous research was Chacón (1986). This author reviewed different research studies on this topic and classified, in a very exhaustive list, 26 specific behaviors according to the type of help presented in the studies. The findings demonstrated some overlap in many of the categories where broader behaviors are included with others that are more specific.

Considering the most commonly studied prosocial behaviors, Eisenberg and Fabes (1998) categorized prosocial behaviors as instrumental help, donation, sharing, comforting, and amiability-consideration. Based on previous studies, Masnou (1994) indicated the following as the most frequent prosocial behaviors in children: generosity, goodness, altruism, resistance to lying or the temptation of cheating, and consideration of the wellbeing of others.

Furthermore, González Portal (1992) established a typology based on a situational criterion. Examples of situational criteria include the following: (a) direct vs. indirect help, when the observer, in an emergency situation, offers his help or sees that someone else provides help; (b) solicited vs. unsolicited help, when there is a response to a call for help or an unsolicited initiative is taken; and, (c) in emergency or non-emergency situations, where the limiting situation modulates the explanation more than the personal cost involved in the helping behavior.

Guijo Blanco (2002) proposed a classification of prosocial behaviors based on different studies conducted in children, in which he included broader categories and more specific behaviors (see Table 10.1).

The examples mentioned above are only some of the many attempts at classification, and each contributes data of interest to the clarification and delimitation of the construct.

Last, we present the classification of specific behaviors proposed by Roche Olivar (1998, 2007, 2010, 2011), on which the design of our programs for the promotion of prosociality in the school environment was based due to its suitability for this objective.

1. Physical help, which involves a non-verbal behavior that procures the physical assistance of a classmate to accomplish a determined objective; the beneficiary does not necessarily ask for help, but approves this helping conduct.
2. Verbal help, which consists of a verbal explanation or instruction that is useful and desirable for other people or groups to reach a specific goal.
3. Give and compare, which involves behaviors of giving objects, ideas, vital experiences, food, or possessions to others.
4. Verbal comfort, which involves verbal expressions that reduce the sadness of persons afflicted or in trouble and increase their spirits.
5. Confirmation and positive evaluation of others, which involves verbal expressions to confirm the value of other people or increase their self-esteem, even in front of third parties (positively interpret others' behaviors or excuses and intercede through words of sympathy and praise).

Table 10.1 Types of prosocial behaviors proposed by Guijo Blanco

Category	Specific behavior
Instrumental help	Collaborating with others in an activity
	Looking for a lost object, organizing the classroom, school materials, facilitating the continuity of the activity of a classmate or adult
Non-instrumental help	Offering information
	Teaching skills
	Explaining strategies for successfully performing a task or game
Comfort	To accompany
	Caressing, hugging
	Finding help for another child
	Encouraging verbally
	Expressing concern for others' problems
Donation	Behaviors of giving one's own resources such as toys, food, money, etc.
Cooperation	Offering adequate support (physical and emotional) for the development of a task or reaching a common goal
Sharing	Utilizing communally or offering a scarce resource such as school materials, a snack, toys, etc.
Sharing of benefits	Relinquishing to others part of a prize or reward received for a performed task
Defense	Non-aggressive behaviors that try to avoid mocking, fighting, or take things away from another child

6. Cooperation, which, in contrast to the previous behaviors where there is an initiator or someone who is convinced that the first step must be taken without considering the advantages that such behavior will cause, assumes the expectation of a benefit awarded by the individual with whom he/she cooperates. For this reason, many authors do not include cooperation within prosocial behaviors. If the motivation of the person who cooperates is focused on the good of others, it would be correct to regard this behavior as prosocial behavior. The reciprocity generated from the prosociality would constitute true prosocial cooperation.

10.4 Why Promote Prosociality in the School Environment?

The increased level of violence in schools is a problem that concerns practically all Latin American countries (Krauskopf, 2006). Several studies have shown a high prevalence of aggression in countries such as Argentina, Colombia, Chile, and Mexico (Aguilera, Munoz, & Orozco, 2007; Chaux & Velásquez, 2008; Kornblit, Adaszko, & Di Leo, 2008; Madriaza, 2008). Moreover, the aggression that many students exhibit could have both short-term and long-term academic and psychological consequences (De-Luca, Pigott, & Rosenbaum, 2002; Forero, McLellan, Rissel, & Bauman, 1999; Gladstone, Parker, & Malhi, 2006).

The results of a study conducted by the International Corporation for the Development of Education (ICDE) indicated that Argentina was the leader in school violence among 16 countries in Central and South America. In Argentina, 37.18 % of students were recognized as having received insults or threats, followed by students in Peru (34.39 %), Costa Rica (33.16 %), and Uruguay (31.07 %). With respect to physical abuse, Argentina is also at the top of the list, as 23.45 % of children reported they have suffered from physical abuse, followed by Ecuador (21.91 %) and the Dominican Republic (21.83 %). In all cases, Cuba demonstrated the best results among the entire region. This study also established that such violence negatively influences student performance. Based on a study conducted in Argentina, which included 6,696 students from 167 schools, it was concluded that Argentinean students who are victims of school violence perform 13 % worse on their exams compared to unaffected students.

Violence in the school environment is related to social factors, such as family, community, culture, and the socioeconomic structure of the country. Violence negatively impacts the institutions in charge of facilitating success for future generations, and these institutions are ultimately responsible for contributing resources for the inclusion of youth in world development.

The role of education is fulfilled when education is established as one of the fundamental components for the formation of personal, social, ethical, and citizen groups. Education plays a critical role in the formation of human and cultural capital during childhood development and is an important space for the creation of identity and self-worth (Krauskopf, 2001).

According to the principles of Positive Psychology, which involve generating positive resources before trying to alleviate negativity, schools need a broader and more articulate, contextual way of developing and sustaining constructive patterns of behavior and interaction rather than simply providing measures to handle and prevent the emergence of violent expressions. Such violent experiences occur rarely, and few cases have developed a well-defined approach to address the adequate registry of evidence in an attempt to define which tactics have achieved positive impacts in the development of prosocial behavior.

From the perspective of positive psychology, we considered an approach based on the psychological resources associated with intra and inter-individual well-being, such as prosocial behaviors, in the school context. This approach provides an alternative that does not focus on negative aspects but may revert and inhibit undesirable, disruptive, violent, and aggressive behaviors. The core of this approach then becomes the strengthening and promotion of attitudes, values, and positive actions, displacing the focus of the correction of conflictive behaviors and aiming instead at the development of positive attitudes towards others by promoting behaviors of collaboration and help. There is mounting evidence that behaviors of solidarity and helpfulness may be stimulated and learned. For this reason, they should be promoted within the education system, where children spend a great part of their lives. It is therefore essential to study those aspects that are linked to the development of the education system and to provide teachers with the tools necessary for their efficient promotion.

Schools represent a space where primary connections are made, and these are fundamental for strengthening integral personal development. Furthermore, schools constitute a large context of socialization and an appropriate scenario for children to assimilate their own social values and those social values expected in the environment in which they interact (Gonzáles Almagro, 1993). The development and learning of prosocial behaviors are achieved within the specific conditions of interaction offered by the school, i.e., the interactions with peers and adults. In the school context, professors and peers are figures of great influence over the solidarity and altruistic behaviors of children (Garaigordobil, 2003).

Teachers and classmates are models and agents of reinforcement of the child's social behavior. "The influence of both has been confirmed in several research studies showing that a powerful role model such as a professor, who can reward and who has a close relationship with the children, can positively influence the generosity of the children towards others who are less fortunate" (Garaigordobil, 1995, p. 55). It has also been demonstrated that classmates can influence the will to donate, participate, cooperate, and help others. A group of peers in a school is a source of prosocial behavioral influence, and different studies have found that this environment can be adequate for the implementation of programs for the promotion of positive behaviors. "Teaching children to help, share, and cooperate is one of the goals of the school that aims to foster integral development" (Garaigordobil, 1995).

Today, the promotion of prosocial behavior is not only considered the best strategy for preventing and confronting the growing expression of social aggression and violence, but it also offers protection and serves to optimize mental health (Palau del Pulgar, 2006; Roche Olivar, 1998).

There are many effects of prosocial behavior on the development of a child at the social, emotional, and cognitive levels.

In the social context, prosocial interactions provide the following benefits: (a) prevent and even extinguish violent behaviors; (b) promote group cohesion; (c) stimulate solidarity behaviors in pairs; (d) decrease negative social behaviors; (e) increase the acceptance of group members' tolerance towards individuals of different races and those with physical and intellectual disabilities; (f) improve the classroom climate and interpersonal relationships; (g) increase social abilities; (h) increase the capacity for solving problems; (i) promote moral development; and (j) stimulate and improve communication attitudes and skills.

In the emotional context, prosocial behaviors achieve the following outcomes: (a) positive interpersonal evaluation and attribution; (b) empathy; (c) emotional decentralization; (d) self-esteem; and, (e) enhanced mental health by increasing positive emotions and decreasing negative emotions.

In the cognitive context, activities that promote cooperative learning allow for the following benefits: (a) increase academic performance and memory; (b) promote a more positive perception of the task; (c) increase intrinsic motivation; and (d) stimulate creativity and initiative.

All of these effects are further enhanced because prosocial actions tend to occur reciprocally, demonstrating multiplied results in different interactions (Roche Olivar, 1998).

10.5 An Intervention Proposal Conducted in Schools

At the beginning of 2007, a program was developed in Entre Ríos and Buenos Aires provinces of Argentina to promote prosocial behavior in the school context, with the goal of generating collaboration in a social process of change rather than establishing a simple diagnosis and analysis of reality. This program integrates basic research and intervention. Along with the theoretical development of the prosociality construct, different training programs have been implemented, and many of them have shown positive impacts via their interventions (Garaigordobil, 1995). However, these programs are generally sporadic, developed by a non-teacher professional, and implemented in specific sessions. In addition, there are studies that indicate that external, sporadic, and discontinuous programs produce results that are lost with time (Karoly et al., 1998; Richaud, 2008). The pioneering aspect of the program that we developed is that the majority of the intervention strategies were designed to be integrated in the school curriculum, and many activities were focused on strengthening and promoting prosociality in teacher planning. This approach aimed to assist the teacher with promoting the resource while introducing the curriculum content (e.g., mathematics, language, social sciences, natural science, ethical and citizen formation, etc.). With this strategy, however, the intervention is not circumscribed to the child because it involves parents or caregivers and teachers; without this approach, the results attained in school are diminished, if not lost, when the child returns home (Brooks-Gunn, Byely, Bastiani, & Graber, 2000). The research team works together with teachers inside and outside of the classroom in the form of meetings to advise and coordinate the insertion of activities intended to strengthen and promote prosocial behavior in school planning while also fulfilling curricular content in the classroom. The teacher is first shown how to apply the various strategies and is then observed, supervised, and assisted technically in the implementation of the program.

The work with parents and caregivers is conducted in school rooms through group workshops of a psychoeducative nature. The goal is to strengthen and develop competency in facing problems related to parental function through the delivery of novelty information, feedback from their peers (other parents), homework, and modeling adequate behaviors. Interventions with parents occurs biweekly, and the workshops last 60–90 min. Each session opens with a few minutes of socialization with the participants, with the goal of creating a climate of trust and dialogue. The workshop is then divided into two phases. The first phase comprises the theoretical presentation of the topic by the moderator, which stimulates participation, reflection, and exchange spaces with the parents; and the second phase features practical activities for the application of the presented topic. For example, the promotion of prosociality is elaborated upon to stress the following goals: (a) encouragement of helpful behavior in parents, with the goal that this encouragement will teach and model prosociality for their children; and (b) training parents to promote the development of prosocial behavior in their children (Oros & Vargas Rubilar, 2010; Vargas Rubilar & Lemos, 2011; Vargas Rubilar & Oros, 2011).

Regarding teachers' work, our model proposes that teachers reinforce and stimulate the prosocial behaviors of physical and verbal assistance, giving and sharing, comforting, positively valuing others, and cooperating. Fostering these behaviors depends on three types of simultaneous intervention conditions: direct, indirect, and incidental. Despite this formal distinction, these three modalities are combined throughout daily work inside the classroom.

Direct or focalized intervention consists of weekly didactic activities to promote prosocial behaviors. These activities are carried out in sessions of approximately 40 min each. The activities may or may not be integrated into curricular contents (concepts, attitudes, and/or procedures). Each session is structured according to the following four phases or stages.

1. Psychoeducative stage: Here, students are informed of the goal of the specific behavior to be promoted through the use of the following techniques: (a) explanation of the objectives; (b) analysis of the advantages of the desired prosocial behaviors; (c) brainstorming; (d) debates; (e) readings (e.g., news related to "heroic" figures); (f) analysis of alternatives; (g) oral presentations by the students; (h) idea-sharing sessions; (i) hands-on activities including drawings and murals; (j) activities of written expression including writing and word puzzles; and, (k) true stories or biographies of characters that have demonstrated prosocial behaviors.
2. Central activity: This stage relates to the activity that is used to promote the development of the desired prosocial behavior. Emphasis on cooperative play and storytelling provides the basis to implement the following: (a) activities with objects in which behaviors such as offering, giving, sharing, exchanging, or trading objects with other children are included; (b) cooperative activities; (c) tasks and games involving help, in which the goal is not to contribute to a group goal but rather to help or be helped by another; and (d) activities that evoke empathy, such as looking at or approaching a child with a problem, consoling a child, or comforting a child using various strategies.
3. Final reflection: The goal of this stage is to explore the feelings that were elicited by the central activity and to analyze the costs and benefits of different behaviors and the reactions created in others. The teacher directs the intervention and encourages communication. The teacher also contributes social reinforcement and verbal affirmation of observed behaviors of help, cooperation or dialogue.
4. Tasks of generalization: The goal of this stage is to promote the internalization of prosocial behaviors, extending what has been learned in class to the family and community. In this stage, homework involving prosocial registries or the collection of anecdotes or interviews is assigned.

Next, an example of direct intervention is presented. The objective of direct intervention is to promote prosocial behavior confirmation and the positive evaluation of others, and this action is referred to as "I discover you". In the first psychoeducative stage, a moment of dialogue is established with the children to identify prosocial qualities. This dialogue also explores how giving or receiving a compliment produces satisfaction in ourselves and others and how it is necessary to be

Table 10.2 Example of direct intervention for promoting prosocial behavior of confirmation and the positive reevaluation of others

Activity	"*I discover you*"
1st stage	"Today we are going to work on recognizing the qualities of others. What is a quality? What qualities can someone have? Does everyone have the same qualities?
Presentation of prosocial behavior to be promoted	As an introductory activity, it is proposed that everyone make a list on the blackboard of potential compliments The teacher guides the dialogue, which enriches the correct forms of expression"
2nd stage Description of the activity	The children form a circle, and each one receives a blank sheet of paper. The child's name is placed on the top. After all the children have written their names on the paper, each piece is passed to the classmate on the right. Then, each student writes down a quality belonging to the classmate whose name is on the paper. Only positive adjectives may be used. After this exercise, each child folds the paper so that only the classmate's name is visible and again passes the paper to the right until the paper once again reaches its owner. The teacher takes the papers and, without saying the name of the child, reads the qualities that the classmates wrote. The classmates should guess the name belonging to the qualities. When all the names are discovered, the teacher gives back the paper with the written qualities to the child. Each child then attaches this piece of paper to their notebooks
3rd stage	"Let's take a few minutes for each one of you to read in silence his/her list of qualities
Reflection after the activity	How did you feel during this activity? Was it difficult to think of nice things to say about each classmate? Did you find new qualities about that classmate that you had not thought about before? Were you surprised about the qualities that your classmates saw in you?"
4th stage Generalization	A double task is then requested of the students. Someone in the child's family (dad, mom, brother/sister, grandfather/mother, uncle/aunt, etc.) should add three qualities to the list, and each child should write the nicest quality of each family member and then read the list back to them

attentive to the positive things that others do and the importance of expressing gratitude. The following table shows a summary of the proposed intervention stages (Table 10.2).

Another proposed intervention modality is called indirect intervention. In contrast with the aforementioned modality, indirect intervention is structured according to curricular content. This approach consists of inserting brief strategies for prosocial behavior stimulation in parallel with the development of specific curricular content. This intervention is conducted uninterrupted during the school year, and it requires a greater amount of creativity and flexibility.

An example of indirect intervention includes reinforcing and stimulating cooperation during a language activity that is necessary to meet the 3rd grade Common Basic Contents of encouraging and promoting. Strategies that implement this type of intervention are focused on promoting the following: (a) respect and interest in

the oral and written productions of others; (b) confidence in the child's oral and written expression abilities; (c) participation in different listening and oral production situations; (d) writing non-fiction texts with the specific communication purposes of having a narrative to present characters (while respecting the temporal and causal order of actions and including descriptions); (e) using correct punctuation (e.g., periods at the end of a sentence or a paragraph, commas for clarification and enclosing appositions, and colon usage), spelling, the use of appropriate connectors, and adequate vocabulary for the topic while avoiding unnecessary repetitions.

The purpose of this activity is to write a story in groups. When each group finishes writing their story, each team will designate a team member to read it and share it with the rest of the class. The reflection moment led by the teacher includes questions of the following type: What was it like working as a team to write a story? Was it more difficult or easier than doing it alone? What aspects of writing the story as a group were easier? The purpose of this exercise is for the teacher to continuously reinforce a climate of listening and dialogue.

Last, the incidental intervention is implemented in an opportune manner, which emerges spontaneously in the daily routine either inside the classroom or at recess. The intervention serves as a trigger to strengthen, stimulate and/or promote prosocial behaviors. This intervention modality differs substantially from the other two, given that it is not planned but rather arises from different situations that occur in the school and require the ability of an adult to intervene and detect the appropriate moments to do so. As an example, the adult could positively recognize a child's spontaneous act of help towards a classmate. As noted by Charney and Kriete (2003), "the best teaching, along with that which is planned, is that which is attentive to the opportunity. It does not only use direct instruction, e.g., leading by example and practical structures, but also capitalizes upon the opportunities that arise spontaneously" (p. 86).

Systematic evaluations are conducted prior to, during, and at the end of the program. The purpose of these evaluations is to establish a baseline and develop a precise diagnosis of the specific behaviors that require additional work for each group, to evaluate and adjust the intervention process, and to determine the impact and efficacy of the program. Prosocial behaviors and their negative counterparts (disruption, violence, and aggression) are evaluated through a multi-part evaluation. Different evaluation techniques are used, such as scales, interviews, and observation cards, keeping in mind that obtaining traditional verbal information is often difficult with children (Lemos, 2006, 2010; Silva Moreno, 1995). Information is provided by the child, the teacher, and the person who coordinates the intervention because it is fundamental to include the perspectives of all involved parties.

In a consistent manner, the results continue to support the efficacy of the intervention program, as the results often demonstrate an increased incidence of prosocial behaviors and a decrease in aggressive behaviors among children who participate in the program as compared to those in control groups (See Lemos, 2008, 2009, 2011; Lemos & Richaud de Minzi, 2009). The results are not only quantitatively significant, but the observed qualitative changes are also important, especially with respect to the quality of relationships and the classroom climate, as expressed by the teachers participating in this experience.

10.6 Summary

In this chapter dedicated to prosocial behavior in children, we presented a brief summary of its philosophical theoretical background followed by different conceptual definitions. These definitions addressed the differing perspectives about the inclusion, or lack thereof, of the altruistic/non-altruistic motivational criterion of prosocial behavior. The opinions of the authors who consider prosocial behavior at the margin of motivational aspects were described (Eisenberg, 1982; Roche Olivar, 1998, 2007, 2010, 2011), along with the opinions of those who support including the motivation of the behavior in the definition. The existence of differing opinions was considered to be a differentiating criterion that justifies the use of different terms (Weir & Duveen, 1981; Wispé, 1978). It was clarified that including the motivational criterion does not imply a dismembering of the construct, given that all altruistic behavior is prosocial but not all prosocial behavior is altruistic. Thus, the concept of prosocial behavior was described as a more general term that includes, among different specific interpersonal behaviors, altruistic behavior.

Next, different taxonomies were presented. These taxonomies were proposed for the study of prosocial behavior; some imply more general categories and others are based on more specific behaviors. Other classifications were also described according to motivational and situational criteria. Last, within a taxonomy based on specific behaviors, Roche Olivar's (1998, 2010) proposal was presented, which was considered adequate for promoting certain prosocial behaviors within the school environment.

The importance and adequacy of the promotion of prosocial behaviors in the school setting were indicated, which served to highlight the particular influence that this environment has on the socio-emotional development of children. The school has a social function that is not circumscribed to a teaching-learning process of conceptual contents but rather involves an ideological transmission of values and models of social behavior.

Last, an intervention proposal was presented to promote prosocial behaviors in the school environment. This approach urges the school to assume its potential for social change and transformation and encourages teachers to fulfill their role as leaders in this process. The central focus of this proposal is the strengthening of positive attitudes, values, and actions, and this approach displaces the correction of conflictive behaviors and is aimed at the development of positive behaviors towards others, which reinforces behaviors of collaboration and help.

The results of our study highlight the potential to strengthen prosociality through continuous, controlled, and theoretically founded work aimed at developing adequate strategies and models. This approach requires schools to train teachers with the tools necessary for the efficient promotion of prosociality by working together with children, teachers, and families. Such partnerships are necessary, given that the most effective way to alleviate aggression is the internalization of prosociality. This type of assimilation not only requires a school context that propitiates prosociality but also a society and family that experience prosociality at its core.

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