



Evaluation of the Milat Program

Executive Summary

July 2014

Program Description

Milat (Hebrew acronym for Supplementary Educational Day Program) is a national program for educational and social advancement of pupils, with an emphasis on communities in the geographic-social periphery and on populations in need of extra support. The program extends the school day with educational reinforcement, enrichment activities and individual treatments as needed.

Purposes of the Research

The research was intended to provide indications regarding the quality of the program's activities and its contribution to the schools and kindergartens, as well as to the children.

Methodology

The research used questionnaires answered by kindergarten teachers, home room teachers, school principals and Milat coordinators. The teachers' questionnaires were distributed at the beginning and at the end of the 2013/4 school year and related to the effectiveness of the individual treatments. Responses were received for 110 pupils at the beginning of the year and 59 at the end of the year. The kindergarten teachers answered questionnaires at the end of the year that related to the social, emotional and physical functioning of 94 children. Questionnaires that examined the quality of service implementation were answered by 134 school principals and 325 program staff.

Main Findings

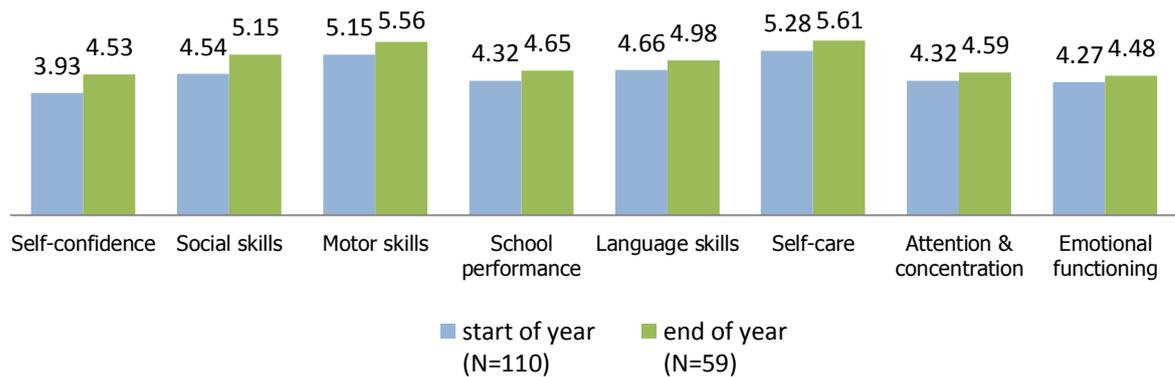
- Analysis of the teachers' questionnaire showed a significant improvement in the performance of most of the pupils who received individual treatments through the program, especially in the indicators for self-confidence and social functioning (an increase of 15% and 13% respectively).
- The home room teachers reported an average improvement of 12.5% during the school year in educational achievements¹ of pupils who received individual treatments. An average improvement of 26% was found in the achievements of pupils who

¹ Based on teachers' reports with respect to four core subjects: Hebrew, English, math and science, on a scale of 1-10

received remedial teaching through the program. At the same time, 92% of the school principals and 92% of the Milat coordinators stated that the program contributes to improving the pupils' achievements in the core subjects.

- 75% of the teachers reported that the individual treatments given to children suited their difficulties and needs.

The functioning of pupils before and after receiving the treatments, as perceived by the home room teachers*



* On a scale of 1-7

- The kindergarten teachers reported that following the intervention there was significant improvement in the functioning of the children with respect to the main problem for which they were treated. For example, before the intervention the situation of the pupils with respect to the main problem was ranked at 3.18 (on a scale of 1-10), while at the end of the intervention it was ranked at 6.38 - an improvement of 100%.
- As perceived by the kindergarten teachers, the intervention has a positive impact on the teaching-learning processes in the kindergarten as a whole. For example, they reported an improvement in the social atmosphere of the kindergarten (average of 4.2 on a scale of 1-5), in their availability for the rest of the children (average of 3.9), and in the reduction of referrals to special education committees (average of 3.1).
- The analysis of the questionnaires for principals and staff shows that Milat is implemented to a very great extent in accordance with the standards set by the Ministry of Education. For example, it was found that the program staff is highly involved in the intervention; that systematic monitoring of content and activities takes place (such as observations in classes); that pedagogic discussions are held with regard to pupils; and that the program is adapted to different target populations. Nevertheless, the level of parental involvement and the integration of technologies in teaching are relatively low.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The program was found to be effective in improving the educational achievements of the pupils and their educational-emotional functioning. It also appears that the program is implemented to a great extent in accordance with the standards that were set by the Ministry of Education. The satisfaction with the program and its contribution as perceived by the educational staff are very high.

It is recommended to take steps to strengthen parents' involvement, increase the independence of principals in the budget management, and enhance the ability to provide responses that are adapted to diversity. Moreover, it is recommended to introduce into the program activities that develop skills and abilities for independent learning, in order to equip the pupils with significant tools for the future.