Abstract

Teaching children’s literature is a daily, seemingly simple, task; however, it reflects the complexity of the kindergarten teacher’s work. Reading a story in kindergarten involves an aspect of literacy, as well as ethical and emotional dimensions for the children, but the very choice of a particular story depends on the teacher’s professional judgement. The purpose of this study is to examine these aspects in the work of the religious kindergarten teacher as they come to light in the course of her selection of the literature intended to be read to the children in her kindergarten. The article describes a study in which a qualitative methodology was applied amongst ten religious kindergarten teachers from Religious Zionism employed in the public religious education system (Hemed). The chosen methodology is a collective case study: the analysis of a collection of specific cases that enable general insights (Stake, 2006). Data collection was conducted by way of a semi-structured interview (Shkedi, 2012). The interviews indicated that the daily activity of reading stories in the religious kindergarten embodies a dynamic that is comprised mainly of dialogic discourse, which often involves conflicts as well. The discourse and the conflicts are sometimes internal, generated between the kindergarten teacher and herself, and sometimes, between the teacher and external factors: teacher – parents – supervision. Thus, the complexity of the kindergarten teacher’s work in Hemed comes to light as it is reflected in the choice of books she intends to read to the children in her kindergarten.

Key words: teaching literature in kindergarten, Hemed kindergarten, children’s literature