A. INTRODUCTION

Children's social skills refer to positive social behaviors that contribute to the initiation and maintenance of positive social interactions and having positive, supportive friendships is sufficient to promote children's social and emotional adjustment (LaGreca, 1993).

One of the basic social skills is assertiveness. Assertiveness is being who you really are. Being assertive is essentially about respecting yourself and others. It is a belief that your opinions, beliefs, thoughts and feelings are as important as anybody else's. It is about being in touch with your own needs but it is not about going for what you want at any cost (Rees & Graham, 1991). Rich and Schroder (1976) defined it as the cognitive, emotional and behavioral responses that maximize one's potential for reaching personal goals and gaining social approval. Lazarus (1973) divided assertive behavior into four separate and specific response patterns. Ability to say "No", ability to ask favor or to make requests, ability to express positive and negative feelings, ability to initiate, continue and terminate general conversations. Assertive communication include the spontaneous expression of feelings, greeting others, disagreement asking why, talking about oneself, rewarding others for compliments, refusing to justify opinions to habitually disputations persons and looking others in the eye (Rathus & Ruppert, 1973).

As it was explained above assertive behavior one of the effective way of expressing yourself. Children should learn this type of social skills to build healthy relationships with their peers. Socially skilled children have advantages in many areas. Socially successful children's commands more potential for solving everyday person to person problems. They have ability to imagine alternative courses of action and sensitivity to the consequences
of action (Herbert, 1996). Lack of this skill may cause isolation and poor peer acceptance in childhood is associated with a wide variety of serious later life difficulties, including dropping out of school, applying community health services in adulthood (Kelly, 1982). Moreover there is a risk for social-emotional difficulties, poor academic performance (Parker & Asher, 1987), depression, substance abuse, low academic achievement (Segrin, 1993). The children having the greatest difficulty in their peer relationships are indeed reporting the greatest degree of loneliness and social dissatisfaction (Asher et. al., 1990). Some researchers also share similar ideas about poor peer relationships and later risks of it. It is an important factor in the development of psychological disorder in adolescence and adult life. Helping children for developing their relationships has a preventive importance to overcome social inadequacy (Hardwick et. al., 1985), to increase the happiness, self-esteem and peer adjustment (Kelly, 1982).

Erwin (1993)’s suggestions support these findings. According to him to reach success in peer relationship the children are required to learn a more complex set of social skills to engage ineffective, confident and mutually beneficial interaction with other people. According to Parker and Asher (1987), to function successfully in peer relationships, children require a variety of behavioral skills, including the ability to gain entry to groups and to resolve interpersonal conflicts. The degree of social skills that are developed strongly affects a person’s adjustment. Lack of social skills may result in non-interaction and social withdrawal or may be reflected by a high rate of negative, aversive behaviors which leads to rejection by peers and these children may be maladaptive.

Fraser and Schlebusch (1997) claim that loneliness is a product of deficient interpersonal skill. According to Murphy and Kupshick (1992) loneliness involves a sense of deprivation in one’s social relationships. The source of importance of social relationship is gaining social support.

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between the loneliness and assertiveness level of fifth grade children.

B. METHOD

The sample of this study was composed of 40 students at 5th grade (22 girls and 18 boys). The data was collected by using two scales. The Assertiveness Scale which was developed by Topukçu (1982) and The Loneliness and Social Dissatisfaction Scale which was adapted by Tarhan (1996) were brought out into application.

The reliability of assertiveness scale was found as .72 by using Spearman-Brown equality. The evidence was obtained (r= .74) by comparing the teacher scores and Assertiveness Scale’s scores (criterion
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validity). It has 45 items. Students select "yes" or "no" for each item. That is, if the sentence appropriate for students, they select "yes", if it is not they select "no".

For this research the researcher reorganized and reviewed for better understanding and for updating the items. Two 5th class teachers and two literatures checked it. Then it was applied in another school in the same region to 45 (27 boys and 18 girls) 5th grade students. After application the researcher got information about understandability and also the internal consistency was calculated .83. In the light of this evident this scale was used to measure assertiveness level of students.

Loneliness and Social Dissatisfaction Scale (Asher and Wheeler, 1985) which was adapted by Tarhan (1996) was used for measuring loneliness level of children. The test-retest reliability of scale was .92 and the internal consistency was found as .89, and validity was found .85 by comparing teachers' reports with LDS scores. The scale is constituted by 24 items.

C. RESULTS

In order to determine relationships between assertiveness and loneliness the Pearson Moments Correlation is used. According to the results, there is a significant negative correlation \( r = -.37; \) \( p= 0.02 \) between the loneliness and assertiveness level of fifth grade students.

D. DISCUSSION

The results show that if a child report more loneliness he is less assertive, and report less loneliness he is more assertive. In the light of this evidence it can be said that assertiveness is important for children loneliness level. The result is supported by some other results. For instance, Wittenberg and Reis (1986) examined that the lonely subjects' relationships' properties and found that they were not only less adequate in relationship-forming skills (initiation, assertiveness, and dating skills), but they were also less component in skills which have importance to develop and maintain deeper, more intimate relationships.

Fraser and Schlebusch (1997) suggested that loneliness significantly influenced by assertiveness. Özodaşık (1989) reported similar findings about the relationship between loneliness and assertiveness. He pointed out that there was a negative correlation between assertiveness and loneliness.

As mentioned above social skills deficits during childhood is important for a variety of reasons. In early life, if a child lacks interaction skills, she will have less close interpersonal contact with others as time goes on (Kelly, 1982). But peer interaction and peer relationships are important
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forces in the development of competence during childhood (Rubin, LeMare & Lollis, 1990). In summary, childhood skill-deficits might give rise to social isolation (Kelly, 1982; Herbert, 1996) and isolated children are less mature, less assertive, and more compliant or deferential than their more sociable ages (Rubin, LeMare & Lollis, 1990). Socially unskilled children may display a variety of problems, ranging from social withdrawal, shyness and isolation to aggressive anti-social behavior. If a child lacks the interaction skills, she will have less close interpersonal contact with others as time goes on (Kelly, 1982). It is obvious that as one of the social skills assertiveness very important for building healthy relationship for children, and thus decreasing their loneliness.

REFERENCES
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