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Role of the Game in the Development of Preschool Child

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Abstract

A child's play is the meaning of its life in preschool age. It was his refuge from fears, field of battles, the polygon of game, achievements and successes, soothing and dreams. There come to the fore desires, aspirations, feelings, thoughts and needs of the child for active action in the environment in which it lives. The game satisfies the biological and psychological needs of children and contributes to their mental, emotional, social and moral development. Different roles in the games, although the product of a child's fantasy, allow the child to gain personal experience of good and bad, about what is positive and what is not in behavior. Games are an important form of entertainment for children and adults, through which children organize independently and they have special educational significance. They are a powerful tool for education because through games children acquire knowledge, enrich their experience, and develop skills and habits.

The goal of our research is to investigate how the game is implemented in the educational work of preschool institutions, and at the same time to determine which of the traditional games are used in kindergartens, and how modern games enable and assist the process of coming to self-knowledge.

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1. Literature review

The game is a constitutional part in every child's life. The game is enjoyed by both children and the adults, because the game is a human's natural need. It brings joy and happiness, it offers satisfaction, and at the same time it represents a way through which children learn about themselves, about others, and the world that surrounds them; they acquire skills and create social relations. That is why it is extremely important that every

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child has enough time for play and to make sure that the game is an essential part in its life. The way the child plays and the person it plays with, change the way of the child's development.

Children created games a long time ago. They are creating them today, for themselves and tailored for their needs. Games are their natural need and one of their primary activities. Now comes the question what games children love most and why.

- Games that offer role-play, the main character that permits self-affirmation and self-acknowledgment.
- Games that are dynamic, whose content has enough action (motor skills) and fast intellectual reaction to solving the task.
- Games that offer a spark of children's healthy humor and create a good mood.

The most useful games are the ones that have the combination of the above-mentioned qualities.

There are numerous studies that indicate the role and importance of the game for the development of the physical, moral, intellectual, social and emotional characteristics of a child. Through it the interests of children and adults are satisfied, especially in those areas where traditional games for centuries have been treated as a separate institution for organized socializing and spending leisure time. Numerous generations grew up with those traditional games transmitted from generation to generation, cherished, used and perfected (Obradović 2012).

The games attract and keep children's attention with their content which educates and creates good mood. Some of them offer various ways and solutions such as the ones that lead children towards creating new contents intended for the inventive children. The game is an activity that dominates children's lives and has a special meaning in the development and education of children, especially in the pre-school period. That is why in children's educational process great attention is paid to the creation of conditions for spontaneous playing of games or directed games, and games with rules pre-established by adults for the purpose of accomplishing certain pedagogical effects.

Didactic and mobile games represent merely elements of intentionally organized and directed educational process. Most commonly an adult gives the content of didactic and mobile games to children as well as the rules of their performance. He/she organizes, leads and directs the playing, but with national games that is the task of an older child or one of the peers who knows the game's content and has mastered the way of playing.

National games are played most commonly when the children have free time. Today, the play and the educational process are connected taking into consideration the fact that the game must not lose its soul, because playing as an activity which greatly interests children and motivates them. The teacher should cooperate with children in the game; he/she should help them by suggesting the problem and not by giving final solutions. Also, he/she should help them become conscious about their opportunities – becoming a partner in the game. The education through playing means directing the psychophysical potentials of the child, but at the same time the game should be considered as the creativity foundation and the child's spontaneity. Through the activities of didactic games the children get motivated in an organized and creative way, according to their own abilities they get to know the world that surrounds them, and their mental and other capacities and characteristics.

The didactic game represents a form through which the children in an interesting way renew, spread, check and establish their experience and its capacities, and the acquired knowledge, experience and impressions are expressed and applied in new live and educative situations. Didactic games contribute to the overall development of the child; they direct their attention when perception and object observance are in question when comparing similarities and differences, encouraging fantasy and creativity. The content of didactic games broadens the general picture of the world that children have, directs their curiosity, encourages their speaking activity, enriches the vocabulary and stimulates oral communication. With the application of specially structured games (logical-mathematical), the child develops logical thinking and creates special educational situations where he/she masters intellectual processes: serialization, classification, numerical construction, construction in time and space etc.

Besides these contemporary didactic games there are numerous indicators that appoint the value and the importance of the application of old, traditional children's games. When talking about their favorite childhood games adults have the need to tell about how they experienced them and to what extent that helped them enter the

peer circle and show their physical and intellectual achievements, show their preference and love to a friend or a girlfriend and have a good time along the way. These kinds of games were learnt from older children (primarily from brothers and sisters), and then from adults (family members and teachers). Even today children play old traditional games with joy despite the appearance of computer games (which can restrain some spheres of children's development and their creativity).

Keeping folk tradition through games is necessary for the preservation of our nation, the young generation, and our posterity, their upbringing based on checked, good and preserved traditional values. Traditional games are a treasure that we should cherish and keep. They are a powerful tool for education, because through them we acquire knowledge, cultures experiences, develop habits and skills.

Through traditional games children realize their need to move, acquire some important experiences, develop and experience emotions, experience impressions of what is beautiful, ugly, what makes them happy or unhappy, activate all their senses. Through these games social needs are satisfied, such as contacts with peers and adults; they become their role models, players acquainted with their group or opponents, they socialize, self-organize, discuss and agree in the game, they learn to democratically choose their leader (captain), they collectively rejoice, fit into the group, activate all their senses, develop imagination and abstract opinions ... (Obradović, 2012).

2. Methodology of work

2.1. Object and purpose of the research

The main objective of this research is the views and opinions of nursery school teachers about the role of games for the development of children and their application in the educational activity in the kindergarten. At the same time, we wanted to determine what games (traditional or contemporary) nursery school teachers practice in everyday educational practice, which they are, and to discover the reasons for their preference. The research is based on the descriptive-analytical method. It was conducted in two kindergartens in Veles and Stip, on a sample of 35 teachers (20 from Stip, and 15 from Veles).

For the purposes of the survey unstructured interview was used as an instrument for which a special protocol for interviewing was prepared. In it nursery school teachers were asked to give their opinion on how much and in which activities were applied in everyday practice games, if there were appropriate spatial and material conditions for the realization of such activities in kindergartens premises, what traditional and modern games they apply in their educational work, as well as what games children preferred more in their everyday activities.

3. Interpretation of results

The results obtained showed that all of the teachers who were included in the sample answered positively when asked if they rely on the working plan of the kindergarten when planning the daily playing activities. The game as an activity is included in every education area (environment, maths, drawing, speaking, music and gym). They all agree that there is enough space for playing and realization of playing activities in the kindergarten. Most of them agreed that there are enough didactic materials in the kindergarten (appropriate for stimulating the children's development), and that if something is needed, they make it on their own.

The question about the influence of spatial conditions in kindergartens on the application of certain traditional games in the classroom was answered with low influence by the major part of teachers (71%), whereas 29% of them think that the spatial conditions have great influence on the placion of certain traditional games in the classrooms.

Regarding the question what type of games is used in everyday educational practice, all nursery school teachers said that they equally apply both traditional and contemporary games, depending on the educational activity and goal.

They have stated the following as commonly applied traditional games: Daj mi babo ogance, Crveno-belo-sino, Leta leta, Parice, Neka bie, Klip klap, Prstence, Rasipan telefon, Den-nok, Siri siri veseli peskiri, Malata Kate, Na ti go-daj mi go prstenceto, Postarce, Frli go obracot, Balnot se naduva, Toplo-ladno, Topkata na mesto, Gluv telefon, Dzamljia, Koj me vika.

These games are an especially important tool for the development and education of children because they encourage motor abilities and deftness; they act upon emotional and social development, communication and especially on children's speech development. At the same time, these games allow both the development and the acquisition of knowledge, learning, entertainment, competition, enjoyment, humor, as well as the preservation and transmission of folklore.

For these traditional games, it is important to allow the development of children's curiosity, competitive spirit, develop strategies for success in competition (although there are elements of this in contemporary games). Through them they grow muscle mass (especially dorsal), ankles and hands, they develop senses - the sense of balance, endurance and perseverance, they perfect certain movements, balance, and posture.

Beside traditional games, teachers use contemporary games daily in their work. When asked which games they use they answered with the following ones: Pantomime, Guess the instrument, logical-mathematical games, Butterflies and flowers, Computer games, Intellectual and creativity games, Puzzles, Drama, Who will be first, Guess the voice, Alpinists, Magical bag, Games with didactic toys and objects, Attention stimulating games, memory and repetition.

Nursery school teachers responded that they used such games equally in all educational activities. They (games) enable children to develop tiny motoric, precision and the ability to identify, solve problems and their presentation. They are suitable for the development of language and literacy (especially computer games that allow learning the English language), they develop children's competitive spirit, children are placed in the situation to explore and come up with a solution to the problem.

At the same time we wanted to determine the opinion of the nursery school teachers in terms of what games (traditional or contemporary) children require more. To this question all nursery school educators agree that both types of games are almost equally required by and interesting for children - "Diversity is important for children" (AM, SR;)

Finally we wanted to determine the attitudes of nursery school teachers as to which of the following games are more acceptable for children of this age, and why they think this is so. From the responses we pulled out those that are typical (for better clarity of the answers they were divided into two groups).

Opinions for traditional games:

- Traditional, because beside in kindergarten these games can be played at home with adults, they develop skills in playing the game and children want to assert themselves through successful performance of it.
- These games generally involve role playing, children are highly motivated by the opportunity to be someone else (other than a child) - butterfly, doctor and so on.
- Most of traditional games include physical activities, require cooperation, and intellectual engagement (memorization). This stratification also motivates children to choose these games.
- Through these games children are active in all seasons (games in the meadow, grass, forest, on fresh air, driving in a sledge, skating, making a snowman.) It brings children joy, a feeling of happiness and satisfaction, favorable effect of the sun's rays as well as durability and immunity.
- Children develop responsibility and obligation to keep their things and requisites (stick, rope, bow and arrow, sledge, skis ...), and to understand and accept the established or agreed upon rules of the game.

Opinions for contemporary games:

- The contemporary ones are more dynamic, they allow children to solve problems, strengthen confidence, develop awareness of self, as well as critical and creative thinking.
- Encourage children to construct their knowledge themselves.

- Encourage and assist the development of literacy (vocabulary development, differentiation of letters, words and reading preparation).
- Introduce mathematical symbolism and issue through the introduction of numbers, geometric shapes and figures, measurement, presentation etc.
- Children are introduced to modern technology; they acquire skills and abilities to use it (different tools and their application and benefits).
- Through these games children learn how to process data (observe, solve problems, organize, communicate and present data).
- Children are placed in a position to choose to explore, learn by following their goals and interests.

From the answers obtained it can be easily established that there is a division in the opinions of teachers about which games are more appropriate for children. There are teachers who think that old traditional games are more acceptable for children of this age because they are more relaxing after some directed activity. On the other hand, the majority of teachers consider contemporary games more acceptable for children because they learn that way, they think, develop creativity, stimulate the research factor in children in finding solutions and results, and at the same time strengthen their self-confidence and develop self-consciousness about themselves and the world that surrounds them.

Conclusion

The game contributes to more healthy childhood, intellectual development of children and at the same time speaking abilities stimulation. Through games children show their interests in what surrounds them, they are stimulated to keep researching and investigating so as to find their own solutions in a particular situations. That way, they get to know the environment better as well as human relations, they build their own behavior and world and life attitude, they get answers to many questions and feed their curiosity, enrich imagination, develop precision and reflexes etc.

Games positively influence the upbringing and development of each individual. They are a form of entertainment that positively affects socialization (friendship, tolerance, close friends...), moral, emotional, physical development and health of children.

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