

THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the problems of education and training of young children. Particular importance is given to building a unified system of preschool and primary school education. From the authors' point of view, it is the point of "junction" of these two educational levels that is critical and, in many respects, a test for determining the "face" of the entire national system of early childhood education in different countries. A general analysis of existing preschool education programs and their impact on the development of children of this age is presented.

Keywords: preschool education, two early childhood education and care (ECCE) models, continuity of preschool education and school, "framework" and "compendium" programs.

INTRODUCTION: In modern education systems of most developed countries, early education has recently been given increasing importance. Awareness of the importance of systematic education of children from a very early age (from several months) to 7–8 years (usually the age when children enter school) is based on the results of numerous studies and in the practice of some countries. In particular, this is evidenced by the recently extremely popular data obtained in a study of the effectiveness of the international educational program "High/Scope" [1].

MATERIALS AND METHODS: These data show the effectiveness of financial investments in different educational levels in terms of their payback for society and for each person, and measurements were made throughout the entire human life cycle. The graph shows that the highest efficiency is typical for preschool education programs, i.e., the more heavily funded preschool education is in a country, the better life results people demonstrate throughout their lives. These data caused a deafening resonance throughout the world and became almost a mandatory subject when discussing almost any issue related to education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: These data are certainly impressive: modern research in the language of finance (one of the authors of this study is a Nobel Prize laureate in economics) confirms what progressive domestic and foreign psychology has always asserted. Namely, that in preschool childhood all the basic parameters and characteristics of a person's personality and psyche are laid down, and the direction and quality of further development of his intellectual, emotional and physical abilities, interests and capabilities are largely determined. Ignoring the developmental characteristics of a child at this age is fraught with serious, deep-seated problems in his future life, including in school education immediately following preschool childhood.

When considering specific approaches to building this system, it makes sense to pay attention to two opposing trends when answering the questions: "What should the education of young children be like? What should they be taught before they go to school?" These trends are now present in most developed countries and give rise to two opposing models of organizing preschool education in relation to school. It is the point of "junction" of two educational levels – preschool and primary school – that turned out to be critical and in many respects serves as a test for determining the "face" of the entire national system of early childhood education in different countries.

So, in order to create a developmental, age-appropriate preschool educational program, you need to know exactly [2]:

- 1) the main developmental tasks at this age;
- 2) the real capabilities and interests of a preschool child.

Classic psychological research and recent research provide an answer to the first question. The main achievement of preschool age is the development of the basis of the child's personal culture, his emotional well-being, the development of individual abilities and inclinations, the development of his

independence, initiative, creativity, voluntariness, curiosity, responsibility, communicative and intellectual competence [3].

As for the real capabilities and interests of a preschool child, they vary depending on the individual inclinations of the child, which must be taken into account, but they also have age specificity. This specificity is determined by the fact that the main (in terms of the domestic psychological theory of activity - leading) activity of a preschool child is play. This fact, on the one hand, is well known to teachers, and on the other, has a specific interpretation in modern education.

In preschool play, it makes sense to distinguish two types: play as a form of learning and free play of children. It must be said that, from the point of view of the child's development and his real (and not artificial forced) learning, it is difficult to give priority to any of these two types. Free play (free for the child, but not for the teacher, who must skillfully organize it, leaving it free), of course, is at least no less important than playful forms of learning. It has long been known that it is in the context of children's free play that all the main achievements of preschool age appear and receive further development - the child's imagination and creativity, his acceptance of rules, which will then give him the opportunity to control himself [4].

CONCLUSION: Thus, we have identified the main trends in the development of early childhood education in different countries. The scope of one article does not allow us to provide a detailed analysis of all important topics related to ECCE issues, or even simply list them; Nevertheless, we have tried to outline in general terms the key, in our opinion, problems characteristic of this area. It seems clear to us that many of these problems have international roots and are related more to the setting of priorities in the ECCE system than to the characteristics of national educational systems in different countries.

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