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**EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AS THE CONDITION OF SUPPORTING THE WORLD OF CHILDHOOD**

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**Annotation.** State educational standards introduction at the level of pre-school and elementary education among the most important aims defines educational environment creation, which will provide not only an effective pedagogical process realization, but also will support the world of childhood. The article presents the main approaches to childhood understanding, problem aspects and the principles of modern educational environment organization. Moreover, educational environment of the establishments should provide continuity between the stages of education, in particular during the transfer from pre-school to junior school. In this case pedagogical functions of adults (teachers and parents) are very important. **Materials.** Educational environment of kindergartens and schools analysis, the teachers’ opinions about the problems and achievements of modern childhood study. **Research methods:** scientific-methodical and methodical literature analysis, interview with the teachers of kindergartens and elementary schools, the results of the
interview analysis, observation over children at a kindergarten interpretation. Results. The research results show that modern childhood needs support and the traditional elements of children’s subculture preservation. The interview among teachers analysis leads to some problems determination in the sphere of childhood – playing and physical activity decrease, tendency towards individuality, traditional games, children’s folklore disappearance, great interest in virtual communication among children. Also insufficient equipment of pedagogical process is underlined.

At the same time, teachers from educational establishments, where there is enough modern equipment, say about new qualitative development of education content. Observation over children at an innovative kindergarten showed, that an adequate use of technical equipment in upbringing-educational process doesn’t lead to the interest in computers increase among children. Conclusion. The held research helped to formulate the definition “childhood support” and the model of childhood support in terms of educational environment. We came to the conclusion that an effective educational environment equally depends on objective-spatial environment, interests and activity of children and pedagogical activity of an adult organization.

Keywords: educational environment, the world of childhood, childhood support, child, pedagogical conditions

Changes at all levels of general education, in terms of its modernization, influenced all aspects of educational establishments activity: educational process organization, staff training and re-training, educational environment creation. The necessity of these changes is conditioned by the state educational standards introduction, which set the objectives, connected with educational environment enrichment, different forms of interaction between a student and an adult and other children organization, social-cultural environment formation.

Educational environment, according to the definition given by V.A. Yasvin, presents a system of personality formation conditions and the opportunities for its development, which are in social and spatial-objective surrounding [9]. In other words, not only material conditions are important, but also the skills and personality of people around: teachers, parents and other children. G.A. Kovalev considers 3 structural components in educational environment of a school analysis: physical surrounding (school building architecture, the opportunity to transform it and etc.); human factors (social peculiarities of the educational-upbringing process subjects, statuses and roles distribution and national peculiarities of students and teachers and etc.); syllabus (the structure, style of teaching, forms of teaching, content of educational programs and etc.) [6].

Educational environment of elementary school as an integrative generalizing notion of a conceptual content of a child’s interaction with society provides the content of childhood development, accumulation and enrichment (a personality’s experience). The process of social experience realization and mastering goes in parallel with own position formation, personal qualities development, demonstrated ideal and axiological essences acceptance or rejection.

Educational environment is teaching-upbringing and development environment integration. Educational and upbringing environment is mainly structured activity of a child under the direction of an adult, directed at social experience assignment, personality development conditioned by the content of educational process and the character of interaction with adults. Development environment is determined by us as the environment of abilities, creativity and acknowledgement. This segment of educational environment in our interpretation means independent activity of a child in needs for movement, communication, cognition and creativity satisfaction. Environment of teaching and upbringing has its aims and objectives, connected with material mastering, the definite skills production, which are necessary in life. The opportunities of the developing influence are in the functions of these processes. The developing
component of educational environment gives more opportunities for personal needs of children satisfaction, creating the conditions for variability of education.

The effectiveness of educational establishment functioning will be possible in case of a harmonious combination of all structural elements. However, we are more interested in the peculiarities of space, objective-developing environment and teachers’ personality: how much do they provide the world of childhood support and enrichment.

The content of the notion “childhood”, characteristics of its social, cultural-historical, philosophic, psychological aspects is reflected in the works of many native and foreign scientists, the representatives of different scientific directions (L. S. Vygotskiy, D. B. Elkonin, E. Erikson; D. I. Feldshteyn, V. V. Abramenvkova, I. S. Kon, V.T. Kodryavtsev, T.D. Popkova and others). Russian pedagogical encyclopedia (1993) defines childhood as the stage of a person’s development, which precedes adulthood, which is characterized by an intensive growth of an organism and higher mental functions formation.

In the scientific research works the world of childhood is considered from the position of cultural anthropology, which forms the notion of the of childhood world, as a unique social-cultural phenomenon, which has its own history, own environment and which exists in unity with society. Axiological approach helps to realize the uniqueness of childhood and acknowledge a child as supreme value. Social-cultural context of childhood is conditioned by the sphere of its activity: playing, creative, research and etc.; ontological approach reveals potential connections of a child with environment. Scientific literature analysis helps to define the world of childhood as a unique original period in a person’s life, the development in which is realized according to own laws in interaction with environment, as the space of self-actualization, development and creativity. In this research we take into account the period of childhood till 11-12 years-old, pre-school and junior school period. Educational standards declare taking into consideration the defined positions while educational process organization at the stages of pre-school and elementary education.

The state educational standard of pre-school education is based on the principle of inherent worth of childhood support, appeals to consider it not as the stage of raining for school life, but as the most important part of personality formation. The main objectives at this age stage are the following: physical health preservation and strengthening, equal opportunities provision all children in getting education, taking into account their individual needs and continuity provision between the stages of education, objective-developing environment organization. The content of childhood in the standard of pre-school education is presented in the leading kinds of early and pre-school age children activity support: game, communication, interaction with the objects, physical activity. Educational environment study at pre-school establishments showed, that the less it is structured and if the teachers are often at the position of equal interaction, the more free are children in their games, they spend more time with coevals, are more initiative, prefer active playing actions. Children, included into the other educational environment are more composed, more often play table or developing game, the opinion of an adult is very important for them. Pre-school education unification, its strict structural character can lead to the resources decrease for unique personality development and communication of pre-school children [4].

The state educational standard of elementary education among important objectives defines the problem of continuity from the stages of pre-school education, the personality of a real citizen upbringing. In accordance with the standard psychological-pedagogical conditions of the main educational program of elementary education realization should provide the following: communicative skills formation in different age environment and among coevals;
children’s unions and pupils’ self-government support.

At the same time developing educational environment should provide pupils’ physical, psychological and social health strengthening. However, the main attention of teachers is paid to the results of teaching. And here appears the contradiction between the stages of education: continuity of educational material and technologies of teaching is provided, but childhood support, the opportunity “to be a child” remain mainly at pre-school stage. The main reason for this, in our opinion, is the peculiarities of educational environment organization. School provides more clear differentiation of space (zone of a teacher, zone of a pupil, blackboard), which teaches discipline, shows the meaning of education and at the same time, is oriented at individuality; in school classes there is no sufficient place and equipment in order to let pupils do what it interesting for them during the breaks or after lessons; at school teachers usually don’t let pupils play active games during the breaks; sport equipment is usually in a sports gym or in the yard and can be used only during the lessons.

The opportunity to preserve own interests, express the need for movement is very important during the first months at school, when a child adapts to new conditions, as educational environment of elementary school is an important factor of development, children “are sensitive” to it because of age-related peculiarities [5].

At the same time, adults (both teachers and parents) don’t pay much attention to it, restricting “childhood”. It should be noted that many experimental schools organizing their educational environment, first of all, pay great attention to equipment for activities, free activity and less to strict discipline control.

I.M. Ulanovskaya classifies schools according to their goal settings and defines two groups: schools oriented at children (teaching, upbringing, humanistic, developing) and schools not oriented at children (“school of prestige”, innovative school, “baggage room”). Undoubtedly, the school of the second group are considered as a negative example, where almost no attention is paid to children’s personality, but they still exist. More effective are the schools of the second group, very often their combinations can be met. The author of the classification mentions, that in such kind of schools educational environment takes into consideration the needs and abilities of children, teachers and demands of society [9].

In foreign pedagogics, especially oriented at junior age, great attention was paid to free development of a child in terms of fertile environment, his relations with other people. Interesting are the research works by professor Susan B. Neuman, who created the rating of educational environment estimation at a pre-school organization. In this rating she defines the following aspects: atmosphere (appropriate furniture, cleanliness, space), planning and documents, opportunities for children’s different kinds of activity during the lesson (kinds of children’s activity integration), chancery and didactic material, books and computers availability. Separately is estimated the unit “Interaction”: psychological climate in a group, the ability of a teacher to ask questions and have an adequate reaction to children’s behavior, the ability to set the rules, but at the same time, support a child’s initiative and interests, interaction with parents, involvement of parents into educational process. It should be noted that special attention in the rating was paid to the interest in books and reading upbringing, to the opportunities of children creative realization (music, painting, dancing), mathematically oriented thinking development. Logical distribution of the materials in the corners of activity and non-standard approach of a teacher to the tasks were highly estimated [10].

Educational environment, which helps to form educational-upbringing process successfully, according to Susan B. Neuman, is not only material-technical equipment, but also the ability of a teacher to the relations with children, when their skills are revealed and best qualities are formed.
We held the interview among the teachers of pre-school organizations (120 people) and elementary schools (23 people) in order to determine their attitude to the problems and peculiarities of modern childhood. On the basis of the results analysis we can define the following moments:

- physical and playing activity decrease;
- general health level decrease, great number of children with arrested development, especially with speech delay;
- less mutual games, both in kindergarten and at school, very often children spend time alone during the breaks or in small groups of 2-3 people;
- no traditional games, dances, children’s and national folklore;
- interest in reading decrease;
- refusal to have real communication in favor of virtual communication even among pre-school children;

Moreover, the last two items are ambiguous. Almost the third of respondents don’t agree with the position concerning books. In the kindergartens, where there are a lot of books, teachers hold special organized events, connected with reading and as a result, children have high level of interest in traditional books. The problem of education virtualization and life in general, is very urgent. However, only half of the teachers speak about its negative influence. Many teachers mention, that modern technical equipment in the life of children, increased and varied content of the received information provided educational environment reorganization. In kindergartens and schools with good digital equipment it is harmoniously included into educational-upbringing process in accordance with hygienic requirements, the content of educational activity got renewed – children get acquainted with new professions, with gadgets, new playing situations and didactic tasks.

As an example we analyzed technically rich educational environment in the kindergarten “U-znayki”, which functions at Ulyanovsk Pedagogical University. The kindergarten has modern equipment: digital tablets, playing tables, notebook computers and interactive boards, which is actively used in pedagogical process, however children don’t demand constant activity with these gadgets [2]. Only during the first demonstration the interest in these gadgets is high, then children turn their attention to other toys, such as construction kits, blocks, when a child himself creates something, demonstrates physical activity. In the evening senior age children may ask a digital tablet to play or play with an interactive table in groups. As these gadgets have special range of developing programs (children can switch them independently and work with them) in terms of the set regimen children can study. Children know that they can use these gadgets, but most of time they spend with traditional playing and didactic material, as even at home they have a lot of modern technical means. That is why adults, teachers and parents should not only provide developing environment, they should estimate own actions, take the position of a child’s partner and the position of “non-interference” into the world of childhood, realizing pedagogical support. This position characterizes support of a child’s individuality, subjectivity and first of all, considers overcoming the appearing problems and drawbacks in personality, skills development, “situations of success” creation (Gazman O.S.) [3]. We consider childhood support as the conditions for development creation, the elements of children’s subculture (the world of childhood) preservation, taking into account individual peculiarities and needs of children for interaction with the culture of the developing society.

Thus, psychological-pedagogical research works and educational practice analysis helped us to project the model of the world of childhood support in educational organization of children. The theoretical base of the model includes the following:

Aim – the world of childhood support

Objectives:
1. conditions creation for personal development, cognition
2. the skills of interaction formation
3. taking into account the specificity of age
4. psychological and physical health protection and strengthening
5. the elements of children’s subculture preservation and cultivation.

Methodological approaches – axiological, which states the importance of a child’s personality, value of knowledge, communication; system approach, which considers educational environment, as a system, all components of which interact with each other.

Principles: principle of humanization, cultural conformity, newsworthiness, children’s age-related and individual peculiarities and needs taking into consideration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Space</th>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Adult (teacher, parent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>– playing (availability of toys, including</td>
<td>– initiative;</td>
<td>- maintenance;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interactive ones, space for games);</td>
<td>– participation in the rules creation;</td>
<td>- children’s initiative support;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– creative (musical, imitative, scenic</td>
<td>– following the rules;</td>
<td>- traditional children’s values preservation;</td>
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<tr>
<td>equipment);</td>
<td>– taking part in the space organization;</td>
<td>- playing, cognitive, creative activity stimulation;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– sports (equipment and space for</td>
<td>– reflexion.</td>
<td>- consulting;</td>
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<tr>
<td>activity with it);</td>
<td></td>
<td>- communication;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– research (materials for experiments,</td>
<td></td>
<td>- environment organization;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>projects, encyclopedias);</td>
<td></td>
<td>- “non-interference” into the world of childhood;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– library (books, albums on different</td>
<td></td>
<td>- reflexion.</td>
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<td>topics);</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>– educational (equipment for educational</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>process, including interactive equipment,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>the zone of a teacher, the zone of a</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>pupil);</td>
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<td>– “personal” with the opportunity to stay</td>
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<tr>
<td>alone (screen, soft carpets, cushions,</td>
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<td>small tents).</td>
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Diagnostics provides observation over children during their independent activity in the space of developing environment (which elements are used more often, how interpersonal communication is held), teachers’ behavior in educational environment is analyzed (microclimate creation, interaction with children and parents, environment organization), the components of school maturity among pre-school children, readiness for mid school among junior-age schoolchildren is estimated, productive activity results analysis, sociometry, the method of interview use; psychological methodologies of environment safety and intellectual qualities estimation use (I.A. Baeva, T.I. Ustalova, M.Y. Stozharova) [1;7;8].

Thus, educational environment at pre-school establishments and elementary schools is an important condition for pedagogical process effectiveness. It should be safe (including psychological aspect), integrative and polyfunctional, it should provide different functions and kinds of children’s activity realization, take into account the tendencies of society development and should be created on the basis of children’s interests and with their participation. The role of an adult in this case is pedagogical process maintenance, educational environment modernization and program objectives realization, taking into account the demands placed upon the world of childhood support.

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