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CHILDREN'S GAME AS AN INTEGRAL COMPONENT OF UKRAINIAN ETHNOPELAGOGY

Introduction. From ancient times any children's gatherings in Ukraine were accompanied by games. Children competed in throwing snowballs, sledding, skiing, and skating. Folk educational wisdom empirically presupposed the solution of important technological tasks of forming a child's personality. By means of folk games a small child was taken out of his real everyday life. Games also helped to prevent forming stereotypes of doubt and distrust in his own strength. The child was given the opportunity to declare his positive potential to the environment through the games. They enabled the child to activate mobility, develop thinking processes, and evoke positive emotions as well.

Today, the game is controlled by the system of social education. At the same time, there exist a subjective freedom for the child in the game. Children are able to independently (without adults' assistance) assign roles, control each other, monitor the accuracy of performing this or that task. The child fulfils the role assumed, taking into account and relying on his/her experience. Today, children's play becomes a school of social relations for every child. Because during the gaming process the child gets acquainted with a wide range of human feelings and relationships, learns to distinguish between good and evil. Thanks to it, the child develops the ability to identify their own characteristics, to determine how they are perceived by others, and there arises a need to build their behaviour taking into account the possible reaction of others.

Main material. The game is an important educational tool that is available to everyone and has a close connection with life. While playing, the child explores the world, learns to communicate with others, performs everyday activities, and fantasizes. A game is life for a small child.

The educational significance of games, as emphasized by renowned educators and ethnologists, cannot be overstated. The game serves as a versatile tool encompassing various forms of education, from literacy and numeracy to self-care and communication skills. In the words of V. O. Sukhomlynskyi, the game acts as a "a huge bright window, through which a nourishing flow of ideas, concepts about the surrounding world flows into the child's spiritual world."

According to K.D. Ushynskyi, all available forms of education are present in the content of the folk game. It is in the playing process that children learn literacy, learn to count, distinguish colours, perform everyday activities, acquire self-care and communication skills.

The outstanding doctor and ethnologist Ye. Pokrovskyi called children's games "a free expression of the child's mental and physical strengths". The family events, actions of family members as well as the whole surrounding world find their reflection in the game. Folk games are a source of comprehension and education of universal human values, they are viewed as a powerful means of educational influence on children.

While playing children form the habit of concentrating, thinking independently, and developing attention. Being engrossed in the game, children do not notice that they are learning, even the most passive students are involved in activities. The game requires children's imagination, the ability to quickly find the right solution. It is in the games that the children's casual communication with the team begins. During the game children develop the habit of concentrating, being thoughtful, independent, they also develop attention, memory and thirst for knowledge. Satisfying the natural insatiable need for activity, in the process of playing they "finish constructing" in their imagination everything that is inaccessible in the surrounding reality: Children learn and remember new things, orient themselves in various situations, deepen previously acquired experience, compare a number of ideas, concepts, as well as develop imagination. Children's individual characteristics, intellectual capabilities, inclinations, and talents are completely manifested in the game.

The game belongs to the traditional and recognized methods of teaching and educating preschoolers, younger schoolchildren and teenagers. The value of this method lies in the fact that the educational, developmental and educational functions work in a close relationship in fun activity. The game being a training method organizes and develops children, expands their cognitive abilities, and nurtures personality.

As for the folk games concerned, their authorship is unknown. People were composing these games for many generations, and their content comprised everything necessary for the child's comprehensive development. Folk games are extremely diverse according to their content-procedural component and functional purpose, which constitutes grounds for their division into subtypes – tongue twisters and rhymes, drawing lots, moving games, round dances with folklore elements, callings invocations, humorous sayings and jokes, etc. They play a pivotal role in children's national and cultural upbringing. The intrinsic value of these games lies in their ability to provide a sense of belonging, connecting children to their cultural heritage. They serve as a dynamic link between generations, transmitting not only entertainment but also shared values and traditions.

However, it is crucial to recognize that the true educational potential of these games lies in the hands of the children themselves. Research has shown that when adults take a back seat during mobile games, allowing children to independently manage and conduct the activities, the positive educational impact is maximized. The organic development of leadership skills, self-management, and social adaptation occurs naturally in these settings, providing children with valuable experiences for navigating the complexities of the social environment.

Conclusion. The tradition of children's games in Ukraine, deeply rooted in historical and cultural contexts, has served as a significant and timeless method for the holistic development of young individuals. From ancient times, these games have not only provided a platform for physical activities but have also played a crucial role in shaping the personality, social skills, and cognitive abilities of children.

Throughout the history folk games have been a source of joy, learning, and cultural transmission. They acted as a portal, temporarily removing children from the constraints of everyday life, allowing them to express their positive potential and engage with their environment in a constructive manner.

As society has evolved, the educational landscape has incorporated these traditional games into a structured system of social education. However, the essence of

play remains deeply rooted in the child's subjective freedom, allowing them to explore, communicate, and imagine. The game becomes a dynamic school of social relations, enabling children to comprehend a spectrum of human emotions and relationships, thereby developing a strong foundation for ethical decision-making.

The continuation of these traditional folk games, handed down through generations, remains an invaluable resource for the comprehensive development of children. As we navigate the complexities of modern education, there is much to be gained from embracing the inherent educational and cultural richness embedded in the simple act of play.

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