

CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING HEALTH EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

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Abstract: Health education is systemically planned, organized and controlled interaction between subjects and objects directed towards mastering the norms of healthy lifestyle, with one aim- a better health.

In early childhood it is not just a process but extremely **difficult** process dependent not only on participants but on many other conditions. And as every other process, the process of health education passes through different stages (planning, organizing, motivation and control) to be realized in practice. The choice of methods of management depends not only on the state of the subject and characteristics of the object but on the environment in which a purposeful influence is performed- by conditions.

Special attention should be paid to the planning stages on the conditions and its realization. Their disregard will lead to wrong organization and management of the process. Only considering the conditions well, the right methods and resources can be performed- realization of health education in such a frail age.

Keywords: Health education, early childhood, health care.

The greatest wealth for a person is his health. The health is a value and at same time a mean for a better life quality in a daily plan. One should invest from early age, from beginning of life. It should be protected and stimulated. Process connected with health education should take place in early childhood and continue for a lifetime. Health education is continuous and complicated process of forming subjective health culture in people. Based on the most common meaning of 'HEALTH EDUCATION' (**a process of purposeful, systematically organized interaction between subjects, oriented towards controlling the norms of a healthy way of life** [6] complying it with early childhood features, the **sides** and **connections** can be defined in implementing this complicated and continuous process, as well as **conditions**.

Subjects in purposeful process of health education at this age are the **adults**. They establish habits and skills which leads to positive health results, through purposeful interactions. In practice **children** are **object** of interaction in this process.

The purpose has long term. By education in different skills and habits children are implemented positive characters connected with preserving the health and some time later they will turn into subjects (Figure 1). The investment in health from early age will give 'its fruits' for a lifetime.

According to G. Piriov (1998) the **purpose** of education is to create conditions for physical, mental, moral, aesthetic and labor education of children from early age. [2]

Main topics of education, based in the aim are:

1. Preserving the health of children whose organ systems are still not perfected;
2. Increasing the stability of the immune system [2]

In performing this complicated and continuous process among children in early childhood, a special attention should be taken to the conditions from which the successful performance depends on (Figure 1):

1. Basic characteristics of early childhood;
2. Family;
3. Nursery;
4. Child's informal communities;
5. Organizations – governmental and non-governmental;
6. Medical specialists- doctors and nurses;
7. Resources for mass information and communication;
8. Religion [1,7]

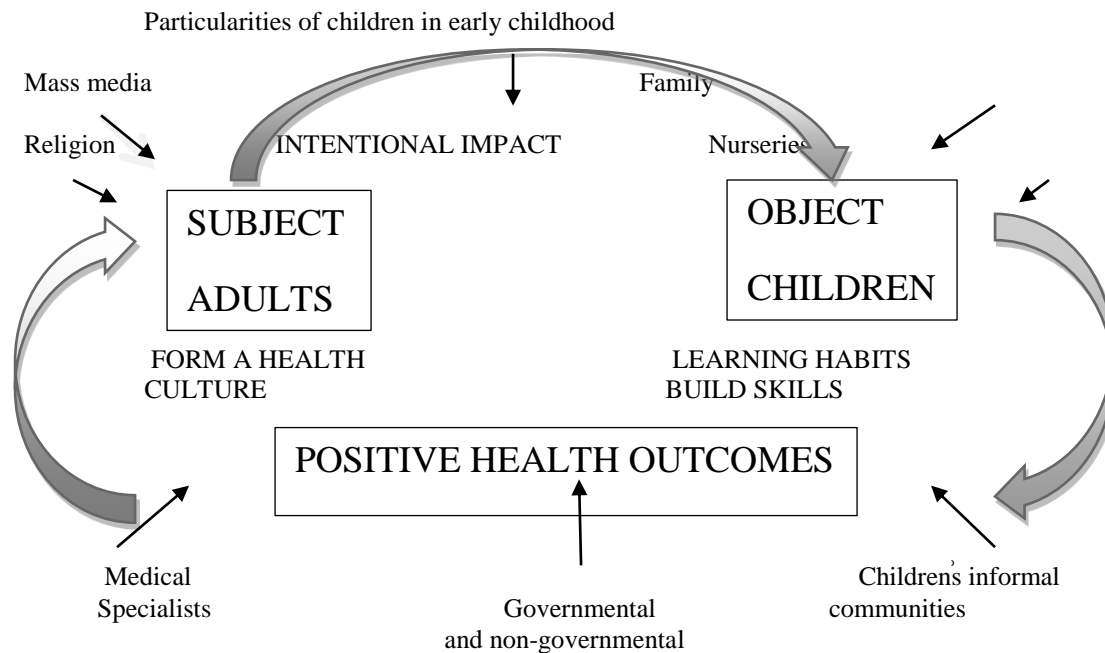


Figure 1. PROCESS OF HEALTH EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

According to Tatiuzov (1996, 1999) in implementing educating process among children in early childhood, a compliance with their individual peculiarities and mental development is necessary. [4, 5]. Before their education, the regularity of their mental development, its sides, tasks, methods and means for education and mental peculiarities should be examined well. T. Tatiuzov (1996, 1999) also states that in order to have success in the work, the real nature of the child should be known, his individualization should be performed [4, 5]

PECULIARITIES

- Intensive physical development [2];
- High motor activity but insufficient coordination in movements, insecure walking[2];
- The movements of the hands begin to be more accurate (efforts to hold cutlery (utensils) [2];
- Children are looking for communication with the adult (a source of play culture) not with his mates[2];
- They lack realized activity for controlling knowledge and skills- in order it to be stimulated, there should be used adequate methods and means of influence [3];
- The relation of the child towards environmental influence is defined by emotions which they bring out in it- in condition of positive emotional tonus in the core of the brain the excitation process is predominant. This is the most favorable process of impact [3];
- There is limited possibility of performing physical and brain activity- nerve system in this age has dynamic development and due to this reason, it is strongly vulnerable. Rapid fatigue occurs, children more distracted, easily annoyed and anxious when the intentional impact are continuous [8];
- They have little life experience [8];
- Their ideas are poor and inaccurate, their thinking has an active character, their imagination is in initial development, their memory is impermanent and their attention – non persistent – this makes the impact to be repeated more than once but never in the same type [8];
- They have surmountable interest to motor activity- immobilization of children is a big mistake that should not be allowed [8];
- Great curiosity- they ask questions very often and expect always an answer. In other case this spontaneous expression will be suppressed [8];

- Children begin to make efforts to adhere to the accepted norms and rules of behavior (character education but have still difficulties because of the mismatch between desire and rule [2])

FAMILY AS A PRIMARY SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND CONDITION FOR HEALTH EDUCATION AS A PROCESS

Health education should begin from early childhood. Family environment is the sphere where children accept their initial health skills and habits. For a good mental and physical health, the forming of personal hygiene habits, improving daily regime, hygiene of mental labour, rations feeding, hardening of the body, motor activity has big importance. The main task of the parents is **to offer their child a healthy environment**. The contact with nature is important for children. The walking outside help for supporting their mental health. Ecological consideration and behavior towards nature and environment.

Great importance for supporting the health of the children is establishing of rational daily regime. Reasonable pressure (mental and physical) and sufficient sleeps decrease the chance of a disease.

In family environment the initial eating habits are formed. The feeding of little children should be balanced and complete. This helps for their normal development. Bad habits are juxtaposition for obesity and many diseases.

Psychological atmosphere at home reflects into the health of children. Relations between children and their parents and/or other close to them people have strong influence over their nerve system and mental health. Conflicts, argues, pressure in their family lead to anxiety, lack of confidence, insecurity and fear in children and this prevents concentration and makes it difficult for them to develop.

Firstly, basic rules and norms of behavior and also health behavior are discussed in the family. Personal example of parents is important in their forming as personalities.

NURSERIES

Nurseries are one of the basic factors in forming the personality. Health education is important which is conducted in nurseries and make it an organized and permanent process. Work should be done with every child separately according to his/her needs and capabilities. Parents should be involved in the process of health education because the impact conducted in nurseries should not be interrupted. They should be practiced at home, too. There should be a collaboration between health specialists involved in upbringing of children and parents for an excellent result. This makes parents to be subject of health education and its object in some extent. Health promotion events should be organized in nurseries.

CHILDREN'S COMMUNITIES

Informal child communities also inflict to their health behavior. The little child is inclined to copy not only the behavior of the adult but his peer. Inappropriate choice of friends (made in case of parents having in mind the age of the children) could inflict negatively on child's habits.

GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL

Governmental and non-governmental organizations can help children in health education in early age. Governmental organizations should make efforts in processing regulatory framework, regulating and guarantying realization of the process of health education in early childhood. Non-governmental organizations with their human and financial resources can invest in supporting child's health.

MEDICAL SPECIALISTS – DOCTORS AND NURSES

Health and well-being of people who take care of children are important condition for realization of the process of health education. Medical specialists are one of the most favorable sources of information about protection of the health. Their professional preparation gives them the opportunity to organize and manage the process of health education, as they perform the appropriate manner for the age.

RESOURCES FOR MASS INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Resources for mass information and communication are source of information about health, its protection. It is debatable in what extent they inflict on the child during the process of health education in early childhood. Children are too little to be used this method of education. Certainly resource for mass information and communication inflict

on organizing and managing the process. Many parents rely on unworthy sources of information. They get into conflict with medical specialists and this have influence on their child's health education.

RELIGION

Religion is also a condition which with its norm encourages a person to live a healthy lifestyle. Its influence in early childhood is more indirect and unrealized performed through personal example of the adults.

IN CONCLUSION it can be stated that health education is systemically planned, organized and controlled interaction between subjects and objects directed towards mastering the norms of healthy lifestyle, with one aim- a better health. In early childhood, it is not just a process but extremely **difficult** process dependent not only on participants but on many other conditions. And as every other process, the process of health education passes through different stages (planning, organizing, motivation and control) to be realized in practice. The choice of methods of management depends not only on the state of the subject and characteristics of the object but on the environment in which a purposeful influence is performed- by conditions.

Special attention should be paid to the planning stages on the conditions and its realization. Their disregard will lead to wrong organization and management of the process. Only considering the conditions well, the right methods and resources can be performed- realization of health education in such a frail age.

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