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THE DEVELOPMENT OF COGNITIVE INTERESTS IN OLDER PRESCHOOLERS IN THE PROCESS OF GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH NATURE

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ABSTRACT

The article describes the development of cognitive interest among preschoolers in the process of familiarization with nature. In the process of cognitive research activity, we teach children to think, formulate and defend their opinion, generalize the results of experiments, build hypotheses and test them. By organizing the environmentally oriented activities of children of the seventh year of life, it is important for us educators to provide conditions for the accumulation of personal experience of preschool children in their interaction with nature. Determine the interests and preferences of children and, based on them, select didactic materials, illustrations, literature, visual aids, tools and equipment that meet children's needs.

KEYWORDS: *Ecology, Cognitive Development, Preschoolers.*

INTRODUCTION

The importance and timeliness of the development of cognitive interests in preschool age is beyond doubt. The orientation of the last years of the pedagogical process of a preschool educational institution towards the assimilation of a large amount of knowledge is unproductive. On the one hand, information in the modern world is rapidly updated and increased, so it becomes impossible to teach all knowledge and even its basics. On the other hand, the psychological and physiological characteristics of preschool children are limited in this sense; understanding and assimilation of many things, phenomena and events comes with experience. **[1]**

The knowledge of nature by children is the perception of various, bright objects and phenomena of the world of animals, plants, inanimate nature, saturated with joyful impressions, practical experimentation with them. It is at the stage of preschool childhood that the child receives emotional impressions of nature. Nature leaves a deep imprint in the soul of the child, influencing his feelings with its brightness, diversity. Children for the first time perceive nature, are drawn to it, it excites their curiosity. Interest leads a person to the endless goals of knowledge, which begin with surprise. In turn, the surrounding reality, which is the source of the awakening of cognitive interests, can be a surprise for a preschooler. **[2]**

The development of cognitive activity in preschool children through environmental education is especially relevant, as it develops children's curiosity, inquisitiveness of the mind and forms stable knowledge on their basis, which meets the standards. **[3]**

By "ecological education" is meant the education of love for nature, a developed cognitive interest, which in the future can become a stable and deep desire for knowledge of the world around. For the development of children's cognitive interest, observation, curiosity, the formation of generalized ideas about nature, the establishment of simple connections between these phenomena, it is necessary to develop a set of measures in direct educational activities and in everyday life. The development of cognitive interest goes from the manifestation of emotional responsiveness to the environment and the identification of the external qualities of objects to the identification of internal connections and relationships, to the independent setting of cognitive tasks and the first attempts to solve them with the help of observations, experiments, and reasoning. The organization of search activity is most effective when children master cause-and-effect relationships and relationships between objects and natural phenomena, their properties and qualities. The development of cognitive interests in the process of environmental education will be more effective if an integrated approach is used that involves the relationship of research activities, physical culture, games, literature, music, fine arts, viewing presentations, TV shows, excursions, hikes, conversations, as well as organizing independent activities for children. , i.e. ecologization of various activities of children. **[4]**

Ecology can be presented to children in the form of elementary information with the aim of teaching them the correct attitude towards objects of animate and inanimate nature. With the help of didactic games, environmental tasks, setting up experiments, projects, conducting experiments, you can introduce children into the complex world of the relationship between man and nature. **[5]**

At each age stage, cognitive interest has its own forms of behavioral manifestations and requires special conditions for its formation. In order to arouse interest in nature and develop cognitive interest in children, it is necessary to develop a set of measures in educational activities and in everyday life to increase the level of environmental education. Only organized cognitive and research activity gives certain positive results. In order for cognitive interest to be constantly reinforced, it is necessary to create the appropriate conditions: **[6]**

• Selection of special literature;

• Equipment selection;

• A long-term plan was drawn up reflecting the topics and content of the GCD on environmental education.

Of great importance is the educational activity of a primary familiarization nature. This type of activity is dedicated to introducing children to species of animals, plants, their living and living conditions, which are not represented in the immediate natural environment and cannot be known through observation. To make it interesting, it is necessary to use various demonstration and teaching aids, computer presentations that allow children to form clear and correct ideas. Topics can be domestic and wild animals, inhabitants of the forest and the north, tundra and hot countries, pond and sea, as well as human activities on an agricultural farm, in forestry, in the field of nature management and nature protection. For successful assimilation and development

of cognitive interest, I include game situations, elements of plot-role-playing games in the processes of cognition of nature. We compare an animal with an analogue toy and at the same time "beat" this toy, which allows children to form the first ideas about the animal, and lays the foundation for the correct handling of it. Education is carried out through viewing pictures and conversation, reading children's fiction and educational literature, watching videos. Pictures help to form ideas about the forest ecosystem, its inhabitants, about the adaptability of forest animals to life in this ecosystem. **[7]**

Observation is one of the forms of educational activity, since it is used to perceive the environment. When observing, it is necessary to rely on the curiosity of children, because children want to know everything. From an early age, I organize a developing environment for observing natural phenomena: changes in air temperature outside (warm, cold, hot); for precipitation - is it snowing (raining). At the same time, I not only state the facts, but use various techniques to keep the attention of children on a particular phenomenon. For example, snow falls in flakes; lays down calmly on the ground; you can offer to catch a snowflake on a mitten and examine it. The attention of babies is unstable, so observations are best done in subgroups. For the successful activation of cognitive activity with children of middle and older age, excursions, targeted walks, trips to various natural objects are conducted. The main task of excursions is to show children the familiar world from a new, perhaps unexpected side. During walks, excursions, activities in various educational areas (environmental, labor, artistic) are envisaged. On excursions and walks to the park, meadow, river, preschoolers admire the beauty of their native land, the diversity of the environment. This is a bright, blue sky, clouds floating across it, a bright sun and a variegation of leaves on trees, etc. A child needs to smell the grass after rain or rotten leaves in autumn; inhale a breath of fresh, spring air; hear the birds singing. All this forms the ability of children to notice the changes that occur in nature in spring, summer, autumn, winter. Thus, children observe seasonal changes in a natural setting, remember signs. They walk, relax, breathe fresh air and replenish the treasury of knowledge and skills. It is necessary to allocate time for silent observation and experience, and only after that proceed to posing pre-conceived questions: "What is the weather like today?", "What is the sky like today?" etc. Children's observations must be given an active character - to teach, if possible, not only to look, but to see all the details, to understand why this or that phenomenon occurs, to use all the child's senses, not only hearing and vision. Provide an opportunity to touch, smell the objects around him. **[8]**

With children of older groups, material is used that complements previously acquired knowledge, for example: children know that in autumn plants prepare for winter (stop growing and flowering, shed their leaves) and winter with its characteristic feature of snow in children is associated with cold and frost, which it has a detrimental effect on all living things, but on an excursion to the park they learn that plants not only prepare for winter, but also for next spring: they lay buds on the branches of trees and shrubs, from which leaves and flowers appear in spring. Children are interested to know that the snow cover protects the trees from the cold. Constant observations make it possible to uncover simple connections in the natural world; children find out that birds eat insects, the forest feeds birds, but birds also benefit trees. In the forest, ants find building material for their homes and food, becoming a kind of "forest orderlies". During a field trip, children learn that some insects, such as bees, cannot live without plants. Bees feed on the nectar of flowers and pollinate them at the same time. Drawing the

attention of children to what is happening in nature, it is constantly necessary to bring them to an understanding of the various relationships that exist between the animal and plant worlds. Animals also adapt to their environment. To expand, deepen, generalize children's ideas about familiar objects and phenomena, repeated walks and excursions to the park, meadow, river, field are held at different times of the year. This makes it possible to compare, compare facts, available information. Particular attention is paid to questions-assignments that force children to consider objects, compare, find differences and similarities, and establish a connection between natural phenomena. The posing of questions and the gradual complication of the task leads to the formation of research and search activities in children, the development of cognitive interests, which affects their mental development. An indicator of the child's interest is his questions and judgments, thanks to which children comprehend the world around them. **[9]**

The surrounding nature is a source of development not only of the mind, but also of the moral feelings of the child. With the right organization of observations of the environment, children begin to understand what is good and what is bad; experience good and evil with all your heart; learns to feel beautiful and ugly. Nature is the first aesthetic educator of the child. Observing nature, the child learns to see, understand and appreciate its beauty. Any observation is a cognitive activity that requires children's attention, concentration, mental activity, so it is not long. Here it is important to clearly ask clear, specific questions that mobilize children to search for information. Cycles of observations, accompanied by cognitive communication between the educator and children, develop in them observation, a persistent interest in nature. In the process of observation, I use a variety of techniques (taking into account the age of the children): questions, riddles, examination of the subject, comparison, game and labor actions. In the process of observation, it is necessary to explain to the children in order to help them understand everything they see. And in order to arouse interest, an emotional attitude to observation, it is better to use poetry, small forms of folklore (riddles, sayings, proverbs). Appeal to the artistic word should be natural, unobtrusive. **[10]**

I give children the opportunity to express themselves, they ask questions, wonder, admire, exchange impressions. Leading children's observations of animals, I direct children's attention, first of all, to behavior: “What is he doing? How does he move? What does he eat? How?". As well as signs of an animal: “What is the body covered with? Which legs are long or short? What eyes? and etc.". I teach children comparative analysis: comparing animals, find similarities and differences between them. I help to notice interesting features of appearance, behavior. Consideration of the plant begins with the designation and selection of the brightest, catchiest sign, and then we already determine the main features of the external structure of the plant: we consider in order the size, shape of the stem, leaves, flowers, etc. Such a sequence is necessary because the attention of preschoolers is not stable enough. **[11]**

The ecologically developing environment serves not only as an object and means of the child's activity, but also allows the formation of cognitive interests, forms the prerequisites for search activity. On the territory of our kindergarten there is a mini-garden, which is used for environmental and labor education of preschoolers. Labor activity becomes a link that ensures the interaction of a person with the natural world and the system-forming principle when introducing children to the world around them. The participation of children in the environmental project "Our Garden" made it possible to enrich their knowledge and ideas about vegetables, their taste, to develop search, research, labor activity and creative abilities. It is important that

children feel like full-fledged participants in the project. The role of adults is to strengthen the interest of children, to create an emotionally positive mood for completing the task, to emphasize the usefulness of the work done. The participation of children in the project significantly expanded the range of live communication between pupils and nature. **[12]**

Experimentation is one of the types of cognitive activity of a child and an adult. In children, interest in experiments is maintained if the result is visible immediately or after a short time. Experiments with wildlife, as a rule, are long-term and require a certain patience from preschoolers, as a result of which interest in such activities often fades, the purpose of experimentation is forgotten by children. Therefore, to develop interest in search and research activities, I use experiments and experiments with inanimate nature, introduce children to the properties of water, sand, earth, clay, air, the magnetic properties of some objects, etc. **[13]**

Already at a young age, learning about the world around them, children tend not only to examine the object, but also to touch it with their hands, tongue, sniff, knock on it, etc. are already experimenting. Young children, during educational activities at various regime moments, are happy to examine sand and clay, learning their properties; they splash in the water, revealing its secrets, send boats sailing, catch the breeze, launch airplanes, turn snow into water, and water into multi-colored ice floes, blow soap bubbles. By examining the shape, color, size, smell, taste of various vegetables and fruits, children quickly learn to distinguish, recognize and correctly name vegetables and fruits. With middle-aged children, the experiments become more complicated. Children are already able to find answers to difficult questions: "How do they clean dirty water? Steam is also water. Why are there many puddles in autumn? Some substances dissolve in water, while others do not. What is a rainbow? Frost?" etc. The range of phenomena with which older preschoolers experiment is expanding significantly. Children determine the properties of objects, learn what sound is, how to make it louder. Experimental work allows you to learn a lot about a person: "Why does a person need eyes, ears? Heart beat. Check your hearing", etc. Together, with children, I conduct experiments and experiments with objects of inanimate nature, plants and animals. Children carry out simple experiments in subgroup and independent activities, experiments can be associated with their work in a corner of nature and in a flower garden, and also include them in acquaintance with the properties of natural materials. In each experiment, the reason for the observed phenomenon is revealed, the children are led to judgments and conclusions. Experiments are of great importance for children's understanding of cause-and-effect relationships. **[14]**

In the process of conducting experiments, all children take an active part. Experiments conducted independently by children allow them to independently establish causal relationships, summarize the results obtained in an effective way, compare them, classify and draw conclusions about the value of physical phenomena for a person. Children love to experiment, in the process of experimenting bright cognitive feelings appear: surprise, doubt, joy from learning new things. They tend to experiment on their own to gain new knowledge. Knowledge that is not drawn from books, but obtained independently, is always conscious and more durable. Experimental work arouses the child's interest in the study of nature, develops mental operations, stimulates the cognitive activity and curiosity of the child, activates the perception of educational material for familiarization with natural phenomena, with the ethical rules of life in society, etc. Experiments contribute to the formation of children's cognitive interest in nature, in the process of

experimental activity, observation, mental activity, the emotional sphere of the child, creative abilities develop, labor skills are formed. **[15]**

In my work with children, I attach great importance to gaming technologies, using didactic games: “What kind of bird?”, “Nature and man”, “When does this happen?”; “Where is whose nest?”, “What tree is the leaf from?”, “Where, whose house?”, “What can we not live without?”, “Guess the plant”, “Divide into groups”, “From whose branch are the children”, "Confusion" - parts of plants, "Gifts of Autumn", etc. allow children to quickly consolidate knowledge about the characteristic features of objects, children more easily remember the names of plants and their parts. With their help, children learn to recognize individual features of objects, phenomena, group them according to certain qualities. In didactic games, cognitive tasks (determine the properties and qualities of an object, classify and group various objects) are combined with game tasks (guess, complete a task, compete), which makes a didactic game a special form of learning, thanks to which the assimilation of knowledge occurs easily, quickly and unintentionally.

When using a didactic game, you must:

• rely on existing knowledge obtained through direct perception;

• make sure that the didactic task is difficult enough and at the same time accessible to children;

• maintain interest and variety of game action;

• Gradually complicate the didactic task and game action;

• Concretely and clearly explain the rules.

Word games: “What birds did we feed”, “The fourth extra?”, “Good-bad”, “Who came to us?”, “Harvest”, “Edible-inedible”, “Droplets walk in a circle”, etc. develop children's attention, imagination, increase knowledge about the world around them. Construction games with sand and water help to solve many problematic situations, for example, why dry sand pours, but wet sand does not; where a seed will germinate faster in the ground or sand; What things benefit from water, and what harm? All these questions make kids think, compare and draw conclusions. Games must be selected taking into account the development of children and those tasks of environmental education that are solved at this age stage. The game should give the child the opportunity to put into practice already acquired environmental knowledge and stimulate the assimilation of new ones.

The content of the game should not contradict the ecological knowledge formed in the process of other activities. Game actions must be carried out in accordance with the rules and norms of behavior in nature. Among the variety of games for preschoolers, special attention is paid to competitive games that stimulate the activity of their participants in acquiring and demonstrating environmental knowledge, skills, and abilities. These include: competitions, KVN, environmental quiz, "Field of Miracles", etc. In environmental games, it is advisable to use visual artistically designed material, come up with interesting game moments, actions, and engage all children in solving a single problem. You can resort to the help of fairy-tale characters, musical accompaniment. It is necessary to create a positive emotional background for the formation of children's aesthetic feelings, using natural objects and their images in games.

In my work, I rely on the following principles:

• The principle of visibility;

• The principle of systematicity and consistency;

• The principle of accessibility - the selection of accessible, interesting material for children;

• The principle of individualization;

• The principle of integration - the solution of the tasks set through various activities;

This makes it possible to ensure the achievement of the integrative quality of a preschooler, which is defined in the Federal State Educational Standard as "... inquisitive, active ...". This quality is characterized by the fact that the child "... is interested in the new, unknown in the world around him (the world of objects and things, the world of relations and his inner world). Asks questions to an adult, likes to experiment. Able to act independently (in everyday life, in various types of children's activities). When in trouble, seek help from an adult. Takes a lively, interested part in the educational process.

Through cognitive interest, it is possible to form the fundamental principles of ecological thinking, consciousness, ecological culture. But only on one condition - if adults raising a child themselves have an ecological culture, understand common problems for all people and worry about them, show a small person the beautiful world of nature, help to establish relationships with him and gain the beginnings of an ecological worldview and culture responsible relationship with the environment and health. Only purposeful and systematic familiarization with nature in the process of environmental education of preschool children stimulates the development of cognitive interest in a kindergarten.

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