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## **MOVEMENT GAMES AS A MEANS OF OVERCOMING AGGRESSION IN PRESCHOOL AGE**

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**Abstract.** Physical education influences the development of moral, volitional, and personal qualities in individuals. The formation of behavioural culture is an essential component of the personal characteristics of preschool children. It is the result of the impact of educational and social relations and the activities related to them. Emphasis is placed on movement games as a factor in overcoming aggressive behaviour in childhood.

*Keywords:* children; preschool age; aggression; physical education; movement games; behavioural culture

### **Introduction**

Changes in modern society have an impact on the education system, too. A requirement for educational interactions is to have a humanistic orientation, where individuals are involved in the social tasks of the time, consciously bear responsibility for their behaviour, and accept it as a moral necessity.

Preschool age is a period in which the foundations of civic education are laid and new positive competencies are formed, necessary for successful inclusion in various types of activities, for full communication and various relationships in the XXI century. It is at this age that preconditions arise and determine the process of forming an active positive attitude towards people, events, and life, of building an active positive attitude towards one's own self.

In preschool age, there is a strong desire for independent actions and manifestations, for personal transformation. When this desire is not satisfied, it leads to growths associated with changed behaviour, which sometimes turns into socially unacceptable and aggressive. The need for realization and affirmation of one's own self is dominant. The formative influence of adults reduces its power and gives way to the need to prove oneself to peers. At the same time, adults are role models, so the presence of parents and teachers in stimulating children's activity

in the system of various life relationships, in certain social and motor activities, should be discreet. It presupposes natural, casual guidance without imposing an opinion and expands the children's opportunities for activity. Games, as children's own independent activity, have a special relation to taking a new life position. Movement games, as part of physical education, are an integrative connection in the mastery of specific educational content by children and awareness of the importance of socially oriented behaviour, rights, and responsibilities.

### **Methodology**

Many factors impact the formation of the behaviour of individuals. The social environment sends various messages that influence social development and have difficult-to-explain human manifestations in society. The same factors can give rise to a variety of behaviours and lead to different personality formations: much in a person's behaviour depends on what significance one or another social situation acquires for them and what personal meaning one or another value system has (e.g. social good and evil, moral good and evil reflected in the actions of people, attitudes towards natural and social objects, etc.). In turn, values acquire a personal meaning for individuals when, in their individual consciousness, they become orientations expressed in the form of normative notions of good and evil, just, beautiful and ugly.

Value orientation, on the one hand, finds expression in the value standards of a nation, a group of people, a social system, and, on the other hand, it is related to the motivational orientation of individuals.

Modernity has imposed its own version of a value system, which also influences value orientation. It can be achieved not only through the impact of the word, but also through the restructuring of the activities and attitudes of individuals to the society. The education of individuals takes place on two levels. The first is the level of behaviour and the second one is that of worldview. The level of behaviour is determined by the nature of relationships between people, and the level of worldview – by the value orientation of individuals.

There can be various reasons for aggressive behaviour in children. On the one hand, the disintegration of traditional values in society, as a result of socio-economic realities, has led to increased aggression associated with a sense of impunity. There was also a breakdown in family structures – conflicts and bad relationships, which led to reduced parental authority, and hence, to antisocial behaviour in children. On the other hand, one of the first social contacts of children outside the family environment, having a formative significance for the entire preschool period, is entering kindergarten. Adaptation to the new conditions is accompanied by a number of stressful situations, some of which remain invisible to one's relatives and, therefore, cannot be responded to in a timely manner. This can lead to severe consequences in children's behaviour: in addition to unwillingness to attend kindergarten, there is nervousness (crying, screaming), lack of interest in

games, frequent illness, loss of appetite, sleep disorders. Adaptation is seen as a social problem that refers to the socialization of children, to their integration into the world of the people around them. The reason for the difficult behaviour may be the development of orientation related to the norms of relationships between people and the development of orientation related to the norms of interaction of the subject with objects from the world of permanent things. Getting into a new situation, children begin to learn a system of values through interaction with adults. The motive for success in the activity and recognition by adults becomes the first value orientation.

According to P. Konakchieva, "orientation in the social world in preschool childhood is associated with the education of fundamental social skills" (Konakchieva, 2011). Most often, in the communication with adults, and later with peers, positive results occur. Where there are no skills for adequate relationships with others, aggressive behaviour is manifested. From the point of view of pedagogy, adaptation is associated with the effectiveness of education and training. Uncontrolled in time, it can have lasting consequences in children's behaviour and grow into aggression. In the adaptation process, aggression can also be a manifestation of self-defence, due to lack of social experience and insecurity in communication.

Aggression in the age period considered can be physical or verbal, active or passive, direct or indirect. Within these categories, various actions are possible: physical, active, direct, verbal, passive, indirect, etc.

Boys are more likely to use physical aggression, while girls prefer indirect forms. The various forms of aggression always manifest themselves in combination, and are not mutually exclusive (Petermann, Petermann, 2017). Young children are unpredictable in their behaviour. Children's conflicts are especially characterized by toy conflicts, opposition to adult instructions and refusal to follow rules, separation of a child from the group, deliberate teasing of children from the group, threats to younger or physically weaker children, etc.

Physical activity, and in particular movement games, in conjunction with other activities, contribute to the overall formation of individuals. Emotionally saturated, they support intellectual, social, moral, and motor development. They allow for a variety of motor activities in an ever-changing game situation. They are also suitable for the formation of behaviour by influencing the children's psyche, accustoming them to voluntary obedience to the rules of the game. This determined the purpose of our study: to study the role and place of movement games in the educational process in preschool age for the formation of behavioural culture as a component of active life position and for the prevention of aggressive behaviour.

We assumed that the use of certain methods and game technologies in the physical activity in games in preschool children can have positive results on their behaviour.

We set ourselves the following tasks:

1. To analyse the specifics of the relationships in a children's group.
2. To study the possibilities of movement games to form a socially acceptable behavioural culture devoid of stress and aggression.
3. To determine the role of preschool pedagogues in the management of movement games for creating a lasting need for physical activity and for correcting children's behaviour.

The object of our study was movement games in situations and in the independent activity of children.

For two years, a group of 32 children aged 5 – 6 and 6 – 7 from a kindergarten in the town of Veliko Tarnovo was studied. The specifics of the issue and the age characteristics of the children led us to use different scientific research methods and technologies (mathematical and statistical analysis, surveys with the teachers, observation of movement games as an independent activity, conversation, talks).

## **Results**

The results of the research work can be systematized as follows:

1. Age specifics require the use of means that create an emotional climate and stimulate mental development. Such a tool with a complex impact on children's development are games. In the process of communication in movement games, children show their social characters. Contacts with peers and adults help to master social roles, and from there, individual and communicative experience is enriched. The unity of movement and speech in movement games and exercises provides real opportunities for a smooth transition from situational to contextual speech (Chuhovska, Petrova, 2017). In addition to increasing motor activity, organization and education of relationships is achieved, and an understanding of correct actions and rationalization of actions is formed. This process of connection between the knowledge of how to act in a given situation and the real action, rewarded with the approval of adults, becomes essential for the connection between mental development and social behaviour (Borisova, 2001). Leading for the socio-cultural development of individuals is the formation of sociability, i.e. a behavioural stereotype that supports the social integration of individuals (Gyurova, 2009). Children aged 6-7 are much better aware of and motivate their actions and deeds.

2. In preschool age, children are able to learn an elementary set of social norms that are remembered, mastered, and become a guide for action in many situations of ordinary life. Movement games are one of the most powerful factors for the formation of behavioural culture in preschool age. It was established that through purposeful pedagogical interaction at the end of the preschool period, the children were able to set a goal, choose appropriate means for its realization, and act in a coordinated way to achieve the common goal. The most difficult was the exercise of mutual control and the focus on self-control in the course of the game in both age periods.

The children who behaved aggressively were initially isolated from the group due to their coercion and setting their own rules of the game. The general group managed to oppose the aggressive actions of individual children. The behavioural culture in the real relations with the peers developed in the direction of awareness of one's own claim for role significance and the ability to become aware of the possibility to realize such a claim. This was very evident in determining a group leader in the game and obeying the leader. Of interest was the group behaviour in the next stage, in 6-7-year-olds; when joining the game, the aggressive children were removed, but this time due to non-compliance with the rules of the game. They accepted the fact relatively calmly, as they were removed not by adults, not by the reluctance of the other children to play with them, but because the rules of the game required it. The game and the real relationships intertwined and led to a positive change in the children's behaviour. More and more children were becoming desirable teammates, i.e. the circle of those wishing to play together expanded.

Movement games affect the formation of certain mental processes, exercise and increase their strength. The result was a conscious management of the children's own actions and behaviour in accordance with the game goal set. The process was gradually transferred to other types of games and, later, to non-game activities. The communication enriched and influenced consciousness and self-awareness, and, through them, assessment and self-assessment.

This fact posed significant tasks before the pedagogical specialists:

- To use and monitor for quality the performance of all forms of physical activity in the daily organization;
- To work on raising the children's game culture;
- To use physical activity and, more precisely, movement games to prevent aggressive behaviour;
- To encourage the inclusion of children with aggressive behaviour in physical activity.

3. Through physical education, children develop intellectually, master new motor actions, create a lasting need for systematic physical exercise. The competitive element in sports has a dominant role. In this sense, it has a corrective effect on individual and group behaviour. Through movement games, an ability to coordinate actions with those of others is formed. Children who are hyperactive, do not control their emotions and behaviour or do not obey the general rules, are rejected by the group. Over time, they realize that the victory of the team or group is the result of the correct behaviour of each individual and the obedience to common rules. Teamwork in movement games replaces aggression in real relationships. Conflicts diminish and give way to initiative, cooperation, and mutual assistance. There is involvement and empathy for the other in the name of common victory.

4. The experiment confirmed that adults are a constant catalyst for children's activity. Pedagogues act not only as teachers, but also as organizers of children's

lives. They skilfully manage them and give certain social guidelines. Work should be done to achieve mutual respect and motivation for better results in competitive games by complying with the conditions and achieving victory; restraint and ability to overcome difficulties; ability to fulfil all requirements conscientiously; showing modesty, politeness, and positive attitude towards peers. The successful development of children is accompanied by the expectation of recognition and approval by adults. When pedagogues set certain requirements, children strive to meet them in order to receive recognition. This need is later transferred to peer relationships. On the one hand, children strive to be “like everyone else” and, on the other hand, they want to be “better than everyone.” In the course of the game, there is often a need for mutual assistance, expression of attitude to the mistake or success of a mate. The pedagogical techniques used in this case are approval, encouragement, and praise. In physical education, symbolic rewarding – with flags, badges, and points – also has a positive effect on children's behaviour. Pedagogical mastery is also important, and description, instruction, and assessment or self-assessment are used.

### **Discussion**

The results of the study provoke a discussion aimed at:

1. The significance of physical education in the formation of socially acceptable behaviour, suitable for the independent activity of children. Movement and competitive games create great opportunities for solving important educational tasks related to the formation of a responsible attitude to activity. Teamwork also implies the formation of a positive attitude towards peers: paying attention to their difficulties, being willing to help.

2. Through the forms of physical education, does modern preschool education succeed to respond to the needs of society for modelling individuals and for their civic socialization? According to R. Hristova, “in order to form the future citizens of democratic society from preschool age, we must teach them tolerance to the stereotypes and individuality of each member of the team, i.e. the right to be different: education of tolerance and respect (with its elements being self-esteem and respect for others), empathy (developing the ability to put oneself in someone else's place), respect for and recognition of others” (Hristova, 2009).

### **Conclusion**

Physical education has a positive effect on modelling the behaviour, harmonious development, and health of individuals. Movement games are a form and a specific means of organizing and managing children's relationships. They are one of the most effective methods for moral education, for forming behavioural culture, and for preventing aggressive behaviour. The independence and voluntariness of children in the game process ensure active positions in mastering social experience. As a dominant activity in the preschool period, they determine the conduct of a

kind of learning process, the emergence and development of educational activities. The value models formed during childhood as a result of learning are, in some respects, the most stable and lasting ones. They are not subject to major change during the course of life and are important for the successful development and realization of adults.

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