

THE ROLE OF FAMILY FOR FORMATION OF KEY COMPETENCES IN CHILDREN

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Abstract. The purpose of the research is to acquaint preschool teachers and parents with current problems of education and specifics of early-age communication for the formation of a behavioural culture. Ideas are introduced for adequate parental support in affirming children's personality in society.

Keywords: child; family; upbringing; competence

Introduction

Every society has its own expectations from adolescents and young people. An ever-increasing requirement to young children today is that they be well-mannered, tolerant, and compassionate towards others and possess skills for successful integration into the new times. These are also challenges to education, with the latter being focused on teaching and learning key competences for lifelong learning.

Early childhood is an important period laying the foundations for the initial mastery of communication skills. Specialists in the field are faced with the question of who should be supporting children and creating conditions for the initial mastery of methods and means of knowledge, communication, and activity. There are two answers to the question:

- Families as the first formative and socializing factor.
- Pedagogical specialists and parents who should share the responsibility and conduct an educational dialogue about a new type of socially motivated behaviour in children.

Methodology

The research aims at characterizing the main parameters of impact of family education on the formation of key competences in young children. Attention is directed to clarifying the following tasks:

1. Specifying the main characteristics of the concept of competence.
2. Revealing the content and structural characteristics of family education as the basis for forming competent individuals.

The issue of competences in education is not a new one. In 2008, it found a wide public response and competence was presented as one of the learning outcomes defined as “statements of what a learner knows, understands, and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence”¹. Competence is more focused on external activities such as skills. The use of the competence approach is related to the new knowledge learned as a prerequisite for skills. There is a relationship between knowledge and skills as elements of competence when they are manifested in a certain behaviour. It is perceived as a value bringing personal benefits and contributions to others. It enables children to be the creators of their own world and actively participate in the intellectual, spiritual, social, and subject culture. Competences in education represent “a series of skills structured in a system and following a certain sequence, which enable the independent activities of individuals” (Kostova 1999, p. 41). They are interpreted as dynamic behavioural manifestations of personality, united around the emotional, cognitive, and volitional spheres. The full-fledged growth of young children and the formation of key competences is the result of purposeful interactions in the conditions of social environment, first in the family, and then in the institutions (nursery, kindergarten, school). Every child is unique, and personality begins to form at an early age. The first contact of adolescents is with their families. Families are bearers of social experience, values, and norms of behaviour transmitted through educational interactions and helping to learn about the world.

Parents are mediators of various cultures through which the individual characters of children are formed. Children’s social behaviour and underlying personality traits are believed to be diverse and dynamically changing. Family education helps for the mastery of certain social skills that contribute to the growth of adaptable, mobile, and competent individuals and are a prerequisite for the effective development and successful adaptation to the requirements of the age periods that follow. Such are the skills for communication, playing together, dealing with problems, sharing and controlling one’s feelings and showing empathy for others. Their mastery favours the successful cultivation of values.

Results

Having received initial ideas about the world from their parents, children are taken over by teachers. Between personal development and education, there is synchronicity, and they are mutually bound. It is known now that children’s education needs to start from the “zone of proximal development” (Vygotsky). Teachers begin to support children from the moment functions and processes are about to develop. Targeted actions and individual activities in the learning process support development, but learning also depends on development, on the formation of mental processes and the level of physical growth reached. In this sense, in the complex relationship between learning and development, learning has the leading role, i.e. it is a source

of manifestation of development. Children are bearers of all individual information, specifics in actions, skills and behaviour, which they have acquired in the process of development and communication with their families, with peers and adults.

Communication is seen as an important condition for children's mental development. It is the basis for forming skills for reciprocity with children and adults. Initially, children communicate with their parents. In the family, educational impact is manifested, influenced by the social environment and various value, cultural, educational, and material factors. This interaction follows the parents' specific educational ideas about the personal formation of their children.

In preschool age, children communicate most successfully through and in games. They are a basic tool for mastering various skills and developing accessible activities that become the basis of leading competences. Through games, children get to know the world, and "in the various game context, growing individuals feel safe, protected, free to choose, change, and improve their experience" (Tsaneva 2022, p. 256). Children's society is formed in games where both game and real relationships are manifested. Very often, as carriers of different family educational influences, peers treat each other differently. The ability to communicate without allowing conflict is indicative of the educational influence children have received in their families and bring it into the game environment. Mastering good relationships in games without aggression towards other children is a skill that is necessary for the successful positive relationships as adults, too. Here, during collective activities, social and moral relations are best formed.

It is necessary that families encourage children's activities and introduce children to family, national, and universal human values. To successfully raise their children, parents need to stimulate and provide support. Opportunities for free expression, initiative, and creativity are necessary to be provided, too. Such an educational interaction achieves independence and development of children's own activities. A culture of behaviour is formed, which will encourage the self-expression of children's own individuality and will establish them in society.

Parents are the first to shape the aspects of children's behaviour that favour the further cultivation of positive personal qualities. Culture in family relationships carries over into everyday behaviour. Children who are respected and brought up in a humane environment are virtuous, learn to respect the authority of adults and their opinion and honour traditions. The respect felt by children will be carried over in the relations with their friends. Such children are cooperative and show mutual help and understanding.

Art. 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child specifies goals relating to the creation of favourable conditions for the flourishing of children's personality, for children to be helped to develop respect for human rights and the rights of their parents, to be respectful of their own cultural identity and that of others, to protect the environment, to prepare them for responsible life in a free society².

Childhood sensitivity allows children to develop empathy through observation and imitation. Families are bearers of specific and emotionally saturated communication. Educational attitudes and models of behaviour are transmitted from parents to children that provoke an approach of cooperation as well as rules and obligations in the direction of empathy, mutual help, and care for others. More and more researchers believe that the beginning of children's education is set even before their birth. Parents are creators of their children and first show them models of behaviour through their own example and manifestation of empathy and compassion. They preserve and promote the self-expression of children's individuality.

According to R. Hristova, "the social-emotional competence of parents largely influences and determines the social-emotional competence of their children. That is why it is important that they recognize children's emotions and teach their children to express their feelings and control their behaviour" (Hristova 2023, p. 49).

In preschool age, children are brought up in democratic principles. Decision-making skills are formed in games.

Discussion

As a result of the research conducted, the public's interest can be directed to as follows:

The key competences – preschool age children – primary school age children relationship. The analysis of the relationship between the competences of young children and those of the primary stage of education gives reason to differentiate the real expectations for their preparation; what model of behaviour is required for successful interaction in different educational and social contexts. The preparation of children must meet the modern needs of preschool education followed by school education. The traditionally interpreted "unity of knowledge and skills" viewed through the prism of competence acquires a different orientation and purpose in the educational process. Attention is paid to practical application and what people need to master to develop in a certain area. Competence is not only the possession of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, but also being skilfully involved in the effective performance of a given practical or educational duty by meeting the standards set for them.

Affirming the right of families to a unified educational process for the formation of behavioural competence in their children. Some scientists assume that it is individual for each person. Dora Levterova defined "competence" as "putting into action", actualization, and applicability of certain skills in a combined, complex model in specific situations. This is fundamental for the formation of the concepts of "competent behaviour" and "competent individual". If individuals do not have the necessary skills (competences) to perform a given activity, they will not be able to act adequately and competently in new situations. Referred to the early age periods, the interpretation of behavioural competence is associated with behaviour problems and "suggests solutions to improve skills and opportunities for active life functioning" (Levterova 2009, p. 5).

According to B. Dimova, “acquiring a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for the future adults to become active citizens, their ability to make personal choices, their successful implementation in society and active and responsible participation in public life require that mastery of key competences start from the earliest childhood” (Dimova 2023, p. 64).

The specificity of family relations is determined by the coexisting different generations. As a result, each family forms its own circle of competences and values. Children have the right to be educated in universal human values.

It is necessary for families to be encouraged to exert positive educational impact for the cultivation of emotional, motor, cognitive, social, and aesthetic skills in the formation of their children’s personality. It is important to show patience, goodwill, and respect in communication. This will allow for positive relationships to be built in perspective of adult behaviour. Age-specific sensitivity and curiosity allow adolescents to engage in education and competence. The behavioural culture formed will provide an opportunity to improve quality of life.

Modern parents need support and training to deal with the challenges of cultivation behavioural competence in children. Some of them need a base to expand the content of communication with their children (ideas for different topics, approaches, types of activities to involve children). This will give security and will serve as an incentive to positive actions and behaviour.

Interaction between parents and teachers in the form of training and educational cooperation is necessary. According to P. Konakchieva, “jointness at the institutional level and supporting activity and involvement on the part of the family as an educational non-institution having the right and responsibility to actively participate in the process of realizing a unified educational process for the child” is necessary (Konakchieva 2015, p. 17). “The partnership between families and kindergartens means to open up to each other, have transparent educational work, and cooperate for the benefit of the children” (Chuhovska 2017, p. 282).

It is important to increase the awareness of teachers of the needs for a competent approach to preschool and primary education and upbringing, as well as to their future educational priorities. It is essential for teachers to develop skills to deal with challenges in education and increase their own experience.

Conclusion

Parents are an extremely important factor for the cultivation of key competences for communication and behaviour in their children. They are the first with whom children meet, they set the direction of their development through acquiring basic knowledge about the world necessary for each subsequent period of development. Enriching educational interaction with children is necessary from an early age for them to grow up and become successful and positive individuals and bearers of universal human virtues.

NOTES

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