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The technique of game skills development for parents raising young children

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Abstract

The purpose of our research was to elaborate a technique for developing gaming skills for parents raising young children. To achieve this goal we concretized the concept of "parents' gaming skills"; defined a list of skills that ensure the development of gaming activities in children at the early childhood stage; worked out a system of criteria and indicators to assess the level of development of parents' gaming skills and defined the means, basic forms and stages of developing parents' gaming skills. The methods were successfully tested at the Ural Center for Additional Education and proved to be effective.

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1. Introduction

Games are known to be highly significant for a child's personality development. They are not only pre-school children's leading activity, but also a natural form of teaching children [1]. At the same time, a game does not come by itself, nor does a child invent it. According to A.V. Zaporozhets [2], D.B. Elkonin [3], a game activity is given by adults teaching the child to play and introduces him or her to socially established ways of a game action. Game activities begin to evolve actively in early childhood and its basic elements formed in this period will have an impact on the success of game development in the future.

The leading role in the early age educational process belongs to parents. Their competent behaviour geared towards the interests of their child's developing personality is the basis for future success. At the same time, as Smirnov [4] indicates, adults do not always possess the skills enabling them to organize game interaction with

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children. In this regard, there is a contradiction between the need for developing children's gaming activities at an early age, and the unpreparedness of a significant number of parents to fulfil this role. This contradiction has defined the purpose of our research – to elaborate a methodology for developing gaming skills in parents rearing young children.

The recent decades have seen pedagogical studies focus on the issues of developing educators' gaming position (N.P. Anikeeva, V.O. Notman, A.I. Timonin, etc.). The gaming position is a complex entity, the main constituent element of which is a caregiver's gaming experience, which is construed to mean a set of practically mastered skills for operating game elements [5, 6]. The importance of the issue of developing an educator's gaming skills is raised in the manual by N.Y. Mikhailenko and N.A. Korotkova [7] so popular among practitioners. The book asserts that a caregiver cannot teach children to play unless he or she does not know "game literacy", "game culture".

Based on the analysis of the concepts "skill", "pedagogical skills" and the study of the essence of children's gaming activities, we came to the conclusion that under the term of parents' gaming skills we should understand a set of methods of action based on theoretical knowledge enabling parents to create an imaginary (describable) situation and develop it together with their children.

In mastering a game activity a younger child gradually learns conditional actions with toys and its substitute objects and makes the first steps towards the adoption of role behavior as well. The parent thus fulfills the role of an adult partner who demonstrates a working example with the substitute object, and creates conditions for further natural development of the child's play [8]. In this regard we identified the following skills in the structure of the game skills for parents raising young children: to offer a game that meets the needs of the child and the situation, to select toys and substitute objects, to take up the role and conduct a role action, to carry on a role dialogue.

To assess the level of development of parents' reproductive, productive and creative gaming skills we selected some criteria and indicators describing their performance [9]. When mastering gaming skills on a reproductive level, parents were able to play a game following the teacher's direct instructions or studying the written recommendations. In choosing a game they were guided by their own capabilities or interests. The parents prepared themselves for conducting independent games, memorizing their parts, the sequence of their actions or recommendations referring to the text in the game, which resulted in a breach of contact with the child, and might lead to his loss of interest and interrupt the game. Parents may also find it difficult to choose the means to conduct a game. The lack of a costume or toys may cause failure of the gaming activities.

When mastering gaming skills at the productive level the parents choose a game in line with their child's interests. Knowledge of a number of games, poems and nursery rhymes, different ways of attracting the child's attention allows them to diversify the game content, change its plot in the absence of recommended tools and reduce the time of preparation for the game. The ability to assume a role allows parents to animate puppets, toys and items and to support children's interest in the game for a long time.

The creative level of their pronounced gaming skills gives parents complete freedom to prepare and conduct the game. In choosing games they take into account the situation and the child's needs and develop his initiative. The knowledge of a large number of games, poems and nursery rhymes, a variety of ways of attracting the child's attention allow them to organize the process of interaction quickly enough regardless of the environment, available resources and guidelines. The ability to transform into fairy-tale characters, to lead a dialogue role makes the process attractive to the child and holds his attention for a long time. To solve educational problems effectively the parents have an opportunity to rebuild the process according to the needs and interests of their child.

2. Method

To evaluate the level of development of parents' gaming skills the following data collection methods were used - interviews, observation and conversation; a parametric technique to evaluate how effective the methods of developing parents' game skills were; scaling and ranking methods for data processing.

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