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Formation of legal knowledge in pre-school children

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Abstract

The present study aims to develop techniques to form notions about human rights in pre-school children via qualitative research techniques such as intensive individual interviews. We found that few children knew their rights and had knowledge of inaccurate content. When the Rights and Duties program was developed, the number of children with a high level of knowledge of human rights increased drastically. In conclusion, the process of shaping legal notions has to begin at the senior pre-school age. This process will be effective if the objective-spatial environment of an educational establishment is organized in the right way.

Keywords: Pre-School Children, Child's Rights, Legal.

Formación de Conocimientos Legales en los Niños en Edad Preescolar

Resumen

El presente estudio tiene como objetivo desarrollar técnicas para formar nociones sobre los derechos humanos en niños en edad preescolar a través de técnicas de investigación cualitativas, como entrevistas individuales intensivas. Encontramos que pocos niños conocían sus derechos y tenían conocimiento de contenido inexacto. Cuando se desarrolló el programa de Derechos y Deberes, el número de niños con un alto nivel de conocimiento de los derechos humanos aumentó drásticamente. En conclusión, el proceso de conformación de nociones legales debe comenzar en la edad preescolar superior. Este proceso será efectivo si el entorno espacial-objetivo de un establecimiento educativo está organizado de la manera correcta.

Palabras clave: Niños en edad preescolar, derechos del niño, legal.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social, political and economic change going on in our society leads us to the idea that the role of the child in it has to be revised. In modern society, the ideal personality is free, socially mature, having knowledge of personal, civil, social and cultural rights of man. As early as in pre-school years, a child is beginning to shape his/her first ideas of norms and rules of behaviour, his/her life stance and motives/patterns of social conduct. An adult individual's behaviour in respect of law and order largely depends on which concept of law and

attitude towards it are ingrained in a personality in the pre-school years (Abdallah-Pretceille, 1989; Gan, 2002; Levin, 1989; Tarrow, 1990).

Legal education consists in conveying, gathering and digesting of knowledge, principles and norms of law, and in shaping an appropriate attitude towards law and its enforcement, in the ability to exercise one's rights, respect adopted taboos and carry out one's public duties (Halvorsen, 1989; Law and Rendei, 1992; Zaporozhets and Elkonin, 1965; Shnekendorf, 1995). At the same time, we must admit that in our society we have not created well-balanced conditions for a child's self-realization as a full-fledged citizen, for development of his/her individual talents and personal traits (Tarrow, 1990). In this respect, a very important task today is a search for methods, techniques, forms and means of pre-school children's legal education. This study objective is to determine the educational conditions necessary for shaping legal knowledge in pre-schoolers. The hypothesis we started from was an assumption that the process of shaping this knowledge in the defined population would be efficient if we define the content, methods and techniques of shaping legal knowledge and awareness in pre-schoolers. The tasks set for the study were:

- (1) To reveal and define criteria and levels of maturity of legal knowledge in pre-school children.
- (2) To develop and specify the content, methods and techniques of shaping legal knowledge in pre-school children.

Law has a special role in education and upbringing. It empowers us to act and behave in a specific way, and it also demands from us to observe legal norms and standards.

As early as in the 5-4 cc BC, ancient philosophers referred to the idea of an individual upbringing with an emphasis on its legal aspects: leading children to the way of thought that is regarded to be rightful under law, of whose rightfulness, besides, the most respectable and dignified people have become certain (Plato, 1968:125). Aristotle, Plato's disciple, thought that in education and upbringing the key aspect is not submission of a man to the state, but regard for the interests and inclinations of the person him/herself (Aristotle, 1997). Cicero, in Ancient Rome, believed that the chief duty of an ideal citizen was to follow the path of virtue, perform good deeds, to be useful to other people and never trespass on someone's property (Cicero, 1966). The views of French materialistic philosophers had a special influence on the development of pedagogy. The French Enlightenment writer Jean-Jacque Rousseau proclaimed new principles of education and upbringing (Rousseau, 1981). For instance, the principle of continuity in education meant that the process of forming moral values in a person was to start from the emergence of moral senses through exercises in the skills of legal behaviour and then in moral views. A major concern for upbringing and education is to teach a child do good, avoid evil, anticipate others' wishes and be a positive example.

The French philosopher Claude Adriane Helvetius elaborated moral teaching based on naturalistic premises. According to him, a basis for ethics is man per se with his needs and wishes. Major principles of moral upbringing, in Helvetius' view, are to be illustrative and accessible in form. C.A. Helvetius suggested setting up of children's courts of law where children might gain experience in moral behaviour, learn to reason and argue and to solve legal problems (Helvetius, 1938). A Swiss pedagogue J.H. Pestalozzi believed that the basic methods of moral upbringing were: mastering the skills of good behaviour, exercising virtue, shaping one's habits of moral conduct, a positive example of an adult, incentive, reward and punishment (Pestalozzi, 1961). Pestalozzi's ideas were taken up in the works by Diesterweg who insisted that members of the society must display moral virtue and righteousness. His advice to educationists was to try to unite all that is common to humanity with what is specifically national and translate all this into education; he also noted that human is a name while German is a soubriquet. An important task in the education of the rising generations, according to Diesterweg, was to educate respect and love towards national customs and traditions (Diesterweg, 1956).

In Russia, study and teaching of laws began at the period when the system of budget-funded schools was shaping itself. Empress Catherine II in 1783 decreed that a brochure on positions of a man and a citizen must be read at schools as a part of moral upbringing (Catherine, 1786). In the 18th c., Novikov, a Russian humanist, wrote that children have the same rights as the adults, but a child needs help and care to a much larger degree (Novikov, 1951). Ventsel believed that

both children and adults must have equal rights in respect of their personal growth and development. He also held that children may have the right to set up children's organizations and choose their teachers (Ventsel, 1993). Unfortunately, these advanced ideas of the Russian thinkers concerning the protection of children's rights won no support and went no further.

According to such colleagues as Galperin et al.(1978), Zaporozhets and Elkonin (1965), Zaporozhets and Elkonin(1965), Galperin et al.(1978), Galperin et al.(1978), Poddyakov(1973), Veraksa(2003) and others, senior pre-schoolers have the ability to become aware of and perceive lies and injustice towards themselves, their close ones and peers, or fairy-tale characters. Possessing a sense of justice, a child is capable of comprehending not only other people's rights and duties, but also his/her own ones. In the late 20th – early 21st cc, the issues of legal/civil education and upbringing of schoolers and pre-schoolers were studied by (Gan, 2002; Maydankina, 2004; Morozova, 2000; Nikitin, 1993; Pevtsova, 2003; Schnekendorf, 1995; Tubel'skiy, 2001).

Upbringing is an indispensable and powerful tool in the democratic society. States have different systems and forms of upbringing in the sphere of human rights, within which one can trace the presence of the national policy in upbringing schoolchildren in the spirit of human rights. The most progressive democratic governments take responsibility for upbringing children for their future life in a democratic society. In this respect, very significant is the experience of

France, which has quite a stable system of teaching human rights (Antonova, 2013; Kurilskiozhvenet al., 1996). The national system of upbringing in the spirit of human rights represents the consistent policy of the French government. Ministry of Education closely cooperates with the Committee on human rights in the aspects of upbringing. Since 1983, the National research institute in pedagogy performs a large-scale work in the sphere of human rights teaching. In 1989 this allowed launching official curricula on human rights in French colleges (secondary schools), emphasizing the importance of topics related to human rights in all disciplines of the curriculum, as well as their implementation both in and out of class.

When designing these curricula, the scholars of the institute collaborated with groups of teachers, paying much attention to the content of the programs. In 1987, Minister of Education and Secretary of the Committee on human rights proposed highlighting the issues of revising the pre-school educational program, and to introduce lessons in human rights as a formal and full-fledged part of civil education, including organization of the training courses and appointing a position of a regional inspector on the new curricula; integrating human rights into the curricula; taking part in national creative competitions (Kurilskiozhven et al., 1996).

The issues of researching the universal values were raised in a work by Peters (1973). The author highlights the values topical for the modern society: the value of education; self-respect and care about oneself; respect and care for others; the sense of belonging; social

responsibility. The major milestone of the early 20th c. in the fight for children's rights was the establishment by the League of Nations, in 1919, of the Committee on Children's Well-being that provided help and assistance to abandoned, orphaned and enslaved children. The Committee spoke out against child trafficking and juvenile labour. An Englishwoman Eglantyne Jebb founded the International Save the Children Union where the Declaration of the Rights of the Child was drafted to be later adopted by the League of Nations in 1923. The Declaration – the first ever international instrument for the protection of children's rights – emphasized that care for children is the responsibility not only of the family or an individual nation-state, but of the whole international community.

Looking back, analysing the philosophy and pedagogy of past times, drawing on their lessons is what empowers us to realize how important it is to further develop ideas pertaining to the moral upbringing of the rising generations. In the modern period of social evolution, the ideas of legal education of children are becoming ever more important; their gist and essence are to shape legal consciousness and awareness, teach ways and patterns of social conduct, develop the ability to make conscious choices and decisions, accept the law and respect it. The necessity and possibility of legal education of pre-schoolers are determined or limited by their intellectual abilities – the ones that empower them to form ideas and notions in which substantial relations between various entities and objects are reflected. In this study, we tend to view the issue as a socially-culturally-pedagogically and the personally conditioned process of

children's gaining knowledge of their rights and duties, learning to assess one's own and other people's conduct in the legal aspect, and gaining practical experience of legally acceptable conduct in various areas of social life(Nurullinaet al,2018).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the experiment, we developed and suggested a set of key criteria and indicators of the maturity and defined the levels. For pre-schoolers the criteria were:knowledge of one's rights and duties; child's assessment of his/her own and other people's conduct from the perspective of the law.Indicators of legal knowledge maturity in senior pre-schoolers were:the scope of knowledge; willingness to acquire new knowledge of rights and duties; ability to assess adequately one's conduct, display emotional attitude towards one's own legally un/acceptable conduct; ability to explain and assess the behaviour of other people and have emotional attitude to their legally un/acceptable conduct(Gan, 2002). In line with the above-mentioned criteria, we defined the levels of legal knowledge maturity as follows:

A low level of legal knowledge is manifested in incomplete and isolated, occasionally uncertain knowledge of social reality; fragmented, scarce knowledge of rights and duties.A pre-schooler has difficulties with defining and differentiating between the notions of right and duty and shows no active willingness to learn better and more about them.A child is in trouble explaining or assessing his/her own

conduct and the behaviour of other people. In his/her emotional attitudes we observe indifference towards legally un/acceptable conduct of other people. A medium level of legal knowledge is characterized by children's understanding of important social phenomena and human rights. A child finds it difficult to define such notions as liberty, equality, law, duty. Helped by his/her teacher, a child can show some knowledge, but it is incomplete, abstract, and no particular interest in it is expressly shown. Children display interest in social realities and can reason about good and evil, justice and injustice, truth and lies, etc. What causes trouble is an adequate assessment of one's own conduct and that of other people; children need adults' help.

A high level of legal knowledge and awareness can be defined by children's systematized ideas of personal, civic, social and cultural rights of man. A child can freely handle such notions as law, order, right, duty. Some pre-schoolers show interest in gaining this knowledge and understanding its importance for one's life. The knowledge is concrete, specific and precise. A child is able to assess his/her own conduct and the doings of other people around, and is willing to help those who are in need of it. He/she realizes the importance of legally acceptable conduct in public and private life.

To identify children's knowledge of people's rights and duties, we used individual interviews with the following list of questions: 1. what is someone's right? 2. What are human rights? Do you know of any of them? 3. Do you, your parents, brothers and sisters have any

rights?4. Do you have any idea of what is law, equality, liberty? 5. What are the duties?6. Do you, your parents, brothers and sisters have any duties(Gan, 2002)?The interview results demonstrated that children have very vague ideas of rights; this knowledge was fragmented and imprecise.The most difficult questions of all were those about right, liberty and equality.Some children could not give any answer to these:Mariya K.:A right is something people must not violate, if they do they violate the law; Maksim M.:Liberty means that a person is free and may do anything he/she wants; Olga S.:Equality is when all the people are equal among themselves, for example, all kids are equal under the tutor in the kindergarten.To the question:Do you, your parents, brothers and sisters have any rights? The interviewed children replied as follows:Aleksandr S.:A right to go the kindergarten; Sofiya P.:A right to life; Pyotr B.:I have the right to stay overnight at grandpa and grandma's, to play and make friends with whoever I want; Oleg V.:I have the right to look after a parrot, and to buy food for it.These findings allowed us to make the following conclusions:

- (1) Only a part of the interviewed children did have knowledge about their own rights, could name them, but they could not define them precisely and specifically.
- (2) The task to give definitions of legal notions was the hardest of all for the children.
- (3) The social aspect of legal norms and rules is only vaguely seen by pre-schoolers.

Thus, we can infer that pre-schoolers do have prior knowledge of the rights and duties; these, however, need to be both extended and further specified, to be organized into a system of notions. In accordance with the above-defined criteria, legal knowledge may have three levels of maturity (low, medium and high) (Table 1).

Group	Number of children in the group	Levels, %		
		High	Medium	Low
Experimental	40	9.2	46.9	43.9
Control	75	10	49.2	40.8

Table 1. Maturity level of children's knowledge about their rights (%) in experimental and control groups (initial experiment).

Data in Table 1 show that children from experimental group 1 know more about rights than others, since in this group legal upbringing was going for some time already. To determine the level of children's knowledge about their duties, we carried out another series of individual interviews using the following set of questions: 1. what are duties? 2. in your view, what sort of duties may children have? 3. Do you have any duties at home? Which sorts/types? 4. What duties do you have and perform in the kindergarten? Our analysis of what children replied has shown that their knowledge of their duties surpasses that of their rights. Daria N.: Duties are, sort of, tasks you have to do; Maria P.: My duties are to dust, vacuum-clean, water flowers; Andrey D.: I go shopping to buy food, etc. In Table 2 you can see quantitative data from the experiment.

Group	Number of children in the group	Levels,%		
		High	Medium	Low
Experimental	40	21.7	46.2	32.1
Control	75	24.2	48.5	27.3

Table 2.Maturity level of children's knowledge about their duties (%) in experimental and control groups (initial experiment).

To determine the level of self-assessment of one's conduct, we used the method of problem solving when a near adult is in need of help. For instance, a child is challenged with the following situation: Your parents have asked you to go to a food store to buy something. You have lost the money. What would be your reaction and actions? Or your mom asks you to help her with cleaning the house. But your friends have come round to see you, to play a computer game. What would you do? Analysis of the replies gave us grounds to judge that the majority of children would provide help to the near adults, but their respective motives were different. I do help because I am told to, Mom promised to buy me a PC if I help her, I will help her later because I am very rarely invited to play PC games. In their replies to the question what would you do if you lost the money you were given to buy food? 22% of the children said they would confess the loss, 44% would try to shift the blame onto another person, 34% would not admit that was their fault.

Quantitative data on the levels of one's conduct self-assessment are shown in Table 3.

Group	Number of children in the group	Levels, %		
		High	Medium	Low
Experimental	40	23.8	41.3	34.9
Control	75	24.6	45.3	30.1

Table 3. Maturity level of children's self-assessment (%) in experimental and control groups (initial experiment).

From Table 3 we can see that all the children in experimental and in control groups display more or less the same level of self-assessment maturity. This is caused, in our view, by the fact that in educational programs prepared for these groups there are no specific tasks with the aim of revealing the adequacy of the pre-schoolers' self-assessment and, consequently, no work is being done in this direction. In order to determine the level of maturity of one's ability to assess other people's conduct in terms of rules and norms of law, we used illustrated situations from the book *Your Rights* that help children express their understanding of and attitude towards the behaviour of a familiar fairy-tale character. The children were shown five fairy-tale illustrations:

Mangafuoco is sitting at a table in a room, with Pinocchio hanging in front of him at a coat-hanger (from Aleksey Tolstoy's Russian adaptation of Carlo Collodi's *The Adventures of Pinocchio*). Barmaley has tied children up, Doctor Aybolit is racing to rescue them. (From Korney Chukovsky's *Doctor Aybolit* – a Russian adaptation of Hugh Lofting's *Doctor Dolittle*). Ivan the Prince holds a

needle in his hand in which the life and death of TzarKoshchey the Immortal is hidden; the latter is on his knees beside him, very frightened (Russian folk fairytale TzarKoshchey the Immortal). Thumbelina is flying away on a Swallow, while the Field Mouse and the Mole are staring after her (H.Ch. Andersen's Thumbelina). The Cat and the Fox, disguised as robbers, have tied Pinocchio, upside down, to a tree to shake coins out of him (Aleksey Tolstoy's Russian adaptation of Carlo Collodi's the adventures of Pinocchio). A teacher asks the children to examine the pictures and answer the questions: Who is portrayed on the picture? What happened to the characters? In your view, do the fairy-tale characters act in the right way? Is this behaviour acceptable? Explain why.

Analysis of children's answers demonstrated that pre-schoolers have difficulties with understanding the general sense of the situation and assessing their actions in terms of the rules of law. Pre-schoolers' answers fell under three categories, i.e. levels. The high maturity level of the ability to assess other peoples' behaviour in terms of law was manifested in the answers that revealed the contents of the story and provided explanations as for why the character acted this or that way and why this is improper. Barmaley wanted to eat the children. He is very bad. One must not do this. It is against the law (Mariya K.); Thumbelina is flying away on the Swallow to southern skies. The Mouse and the Mole were going to keep her under the ground all the time. This is wrong. No one can live without the sun (Sofiya P.). To the medium level of maturity we classed the answers where the content of the story was revealed but the characters' conduct was assessed not in

line with their respective rights. For instance: The Cat and the Fox wanted to shake coins out of Pinocchio and therefore hanged him on the tree. This is wrongdoing. This causes him pain. He may fall down and break one of his bones (Pyotr B.)

The low level of maturity was characterized by revealing the story and by some reasoning. Barmaley was going to eat the children for dinner. But no one may eat children, they are non-edible (Dariya B.); Thumbelina is flying away with the Swallow. This is good. In warmer lands, she will not get cold (Dariya N.). Quantitative data are given in Table 4.

Group	Number of children in the group	Levels, %		
		High	Medium	Low
Experimental	40	18.4	43	38.6
Control	75	19	47.4	33.6

Table 4. Maturity level of the ability to assess the conduct of fairy-tale characters in terms of law (%) in experimental and control groups (initial experiment).

Table 4 shows that the majority of children are at the medium maturity level of the ability to assess other people's behaviour in terms of the law. Table 5 shows the summarised data on maturity levels of children of all groups.

Criteria	Experimental group			Control group		
	H	M	L	H	M	L
1. Children’s knowledge of rights	4(10)	9(47.5)	17(42.5)	7(10)	35(50)	28(40)
2. Children’s knowledge of their duties	9(22.5)	18(45)	13(32.5)	13(18.5)	31(44.2)	26(37.3)
3. Pre-schoolers’ assessment of his/her own conduct	10(25)	17(42.5)	13(32.5)	15(21.4)	31(44.2)	24(34.4)
4. Pre-schoolers’ assessment of other person’s conduct in terms of law	10(25)	17(42.5)	13(32.5)	15(21.4)	36(51.4)	19(27.2)
5. General maturity level of legal notions in	8(20)	18(45)	14(35)	14(21)	34(48.6)	22(30.4)

Table 5. Frequency and percentage¹ distribution of children from experimental and control groups across maturity levels of legal knowledge (%) (Initial experiment).

¹ Percentage is given in brackets.

Table 5 shows that by the percentage of maturity of legal knowledge the children of experimental and control groups do not differ significantly. Statistical estimation of the qualitative homogeneity of the subjects in experimental and control groups in the initial experiment was made with non-parametric χ^2 -criterion, and showed the error probability of non-homogeneous selection more than 90% ($p < 0.9$).

In the course of the experiment, which aim was to shape pre-schoolers' ideas of legal norms, we developed the program my rights and duties and implemented it in the form of the following types of activity:

- (1) Educational activities under the heading my rights and duties with the goal of making the children aware of and acquainted with the law as a universal human value regulating social relations and determining the life of each person. The activities

were: moral talks, discussions, reasoning, journey-games, individual work with children.

(2) Various forms and elements of educational activities (observations, walks, excursions, games, problem-solving, etc.) – theories that contribute to specification and elaboration of children's views of the law and its notions.

(3) Joint activities of teachers, children and their parents. We developed, prepared and implemented projects which aim was to tell about family traditions, festivals, code of behaviour, protection and enforcement of rights and freedoms in pre-schoolers' families. The projects' titles were: Traditions of our grandmas and grandpas, Young parents club, we are different, we are alike, etc. The projects were directed at building awareness of legal traditions in different countries of the world, at learning more about moral values, at sharing family education and upbringing experience and practices. For instance, the content of the project Each and every one has the right to work was related to making children aware of and learning more about their parents' occupations and their social significance.

(4) Building up a library, multimedia library and a collection of games. At a pre-school educational establishment we founded and built up a library with methodological and legal support, a collection of games and a pool of multimedia that help in broadening the minds of children and their parents, in shaping

their knowledge of the law, and promoting a friendly psychological climate in a family.

(5) Arranging various types of independent activities (games, arts, work, communication, etc.) where children had an opportunity to independently consolidate legal and moral knowledge and awareness they have gained.

We shall dwell a little bit longer on the methods for shaping legal notions and ideas in pre-schoolers. An important element of our work was introducing the children to the history of law, explaining to them what it is about. We developed a series of fascinating stories and tales about law and how it originated. Below is a fragment from the story how the law was borne: Very long ago, when people lived in their clans and tribes, families were large. At nights they would gather around a big camp-fire and talk about their things and problems. In each tribe, there were seniors – the chiefs. Everybody in the tribe listened to them and respected them. At counsels of the elders, they fixed new rules of behaviour, norms and regulations for the rest of the tribe. These rules were to be obeyed by everybody. When people invented letters and writing, they put these rules down for everybody to execute them. Later in time, it was these rules that became the law. This is how the law arose.

In the context of different activities, children learned about international instruments in the form abridged and adapted for pre-schoolers. In discussions about the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, they were introduced to the rights and duties of a person, with explanations why these documents were drawn up and adopted and what their purpose is today. The senior pre-schoolers were told about personal rights (the right to life, to a name, family, equality, freedom, property, personal opinion); about civil rights (the right to safety, personal inviolability, the right to travel, etc.); and socio-cultural rights (the right to medical care, to education, to work, to rest and leisure, etc.). For consolidation of the obtained legal knowledge, we offered individual talks with the children about the right of each and every person to be free in what he/she says and does, about the right to be protected from humiliation, about the prohibition of offense to human dignity. These talks were carried out in quiet corners of the kindergarten - a simulated sitting room, library and mini-museum. These were the places for rest, contemplation, discussions and peaceful games. In these corners we placed national symbols of the children's own and other countries, books, dictionaries, albums and sketch-books titled my name, family traditions, and the rules of our group, Children's rights and duties. Here a child could repose, find some fun thing to do, where nobody distracted him/her, nobody hurried up or disturbed him/her, which collectively is what makes up the sense of protection in a child.

An important prerequisite for shaping legal ideas is the awareness of the fact that there exist certain rules of public behaviour. A kindergarten group is a model of society, consequently the first ever acquaintance with the norms of social conduct must take place in there. Children, together with their tutor, formulated the rules

of their group, e.g., Each kid has a name, therefore everyone must be referred to by his/her name; Children must not offend or insult or cry at each other, tease or call bad names; Each child has his/her own favourite occupation and can do it freely without disturbing other children and adults; Each child in the group has his/her own property which cannot be touched without his/her permission. Children were told how and why these rules arose and for what reason everyone must obey them. One of the most effective methods for shaping the legal notions was making of the so-called child's albums or sketch-books, together with parents. Filling their albums with information and pictures was efficient for the development of the sense of self-esteem, of their awareness of their own significance in this world, for establishing peaceful, no-conflict relations with their peers and adults. Children did this together with their parents: they entered their name, address, funny stories which happened to them, wrote about their wishes, duties and various events. In the group, children viewed their own albums and those of other kids, thus consolidating their notions about each person's right to the name, family, pastime, work, etc.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to consolidate the data on the results of shaping legal notions/awareness in pre-schoolers, we conducted the final experiment with the aim of revealing how legal notions develop in this age group over time. For this final experiment, we relied on the same methods as in the initial phase. Based on the results of the final testing, we

compiled an integrated table of all maturity levels of legal knowledge and awareness in the experimental and control groups (Table 6).

Criteria	Experimental			Control group		
	H	M	L	H	M	L
1.Children's knowledge of rights	19(47.5)	17(42.5)	4(12)	15(21.4)	41(58.5)	14(20.1)
2.Children's knowledge of their duties	24(60)	13(32.5)	3(7.5)	26(37.3)	36(51.4)	8(11.3)
3.Pre-schoolers' assessment of his/her	22(55)	17(42.5)	1(2.5)	15(21.4)	39(55.7)	16(22.9)
4.Pre-schoolers' assessment of other person's conduct in	19(42.5)	13(32.5)	8(20)	15(21.4)	44(62.8)	11(15.8)
5.General maturity level of legal notions in senior pre-schoolers	21(52.5)	15(37.5)	4(12)	17(24.4)	41(58.5)	12(17.1)

Table 6.Frequency and percentage¹ distribution of children from experimental and control groups across maturity levels of legal knowledge (%) (Final experiment).

¹ Percentage is given in brackets.

Comparing the data in experimental and control groups before the experiment (Table 5) and after the experiment (Table 6), we can see that in both groups the number of children with a high level of maturity rose. However, in the control group, where no experimental work was carried out, the growth was less pronounced than in the experimental group. This manifested itself in the fact that a decrease in the number of low-level children to 17.1% (initially 30.4%) took place mainly due to a transition of low-level children to the group of those with a medium level (58.5% of all), whereas only 3 children grew to the high level compared to the initial measurement. In the experimental

group, 13 children moved to the category of high level, which is 32.5% of all group.

Statistical estimation of the qualitative homogeneity of the subjects in experimental and control groups in the final experiment was made with non-parametric χ^2 -criterion, and showed the error probability of homogeneous selection less than 5% ($p < 0.05$). Comparison of findings from the control and experimental groups gives us a general idea of qualitative change that occurred to the level of legal knowledge in pre-school children. On the other hand, in the process of the study we singled out several children who demonstrated only fragmentary and incidental improvements in the level of knowledge. There were 6 such children. In our view, the reasons for this insufficient increase in the maturity level of legal knowledge could have been due to poor group attendance by these children because of health problems and parents' indifference to the project.

4. CONCLUSION

As a result of this experimental study, we proved the effectiveness of the program *My rights and duties*, of the suggested methods and techniques for engraining legal knowledge into senior pre-schoolers, to which fact testifies a significant rise in the maturity levels of legal notions in children from experimental group 2 (if compared with the control group), which was shown by mathematical

processing of the obtained data. Proceeding from the findings, we can put forward several recommendations that will allow us to better solve the problem of the legal upbringing of children at the pre-school age:

(1) The process of shaping legal notions has to begin at the senior pre-school age.

(2) This process will be effective if the objective-spatial environment of an educational establishment is organized in the right way.

(3) The content of this work with children must be arranged along three main lines: teaching personal rights, civil rights and socio-cultural rights.

(4) In the educational process, active methods and techniques must be employed (games, projects, problem situations), along with joint work of tutors, parents and children.

(5) In order to improve the tutors' competence in the issues of legal education, it would seem reasonable that a specialized course titled the child and the law is incorporated in the programs for re/training of tutors and teachers.

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