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PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL BASIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF COGNITIVE ACTIVITY IN THE CHILDREN OF SENIOR PRESCHOOL AGE IN THE PROCESS OF FAMILIARIZATION WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Introduction. Modern preschool education is focused on the development of an active, independent and inquisitive personalities capable of learning the world around them. One of the leading tasks of pedagogical activity is the formation of cognitive activity in the children, which ensures their readiness for further learning and promotes harmonious development.

The natural environment acquires special importance in this process. Direct contact with natural objects creates conditions for sensory enrichment of the child's experience, development of thinking, speech, emotional and value attitude to the world. However, the effectiveness of using natural potential depends on a scientifically sound psychological and pedagogical approach.

The purpose of the article is to theoretically substantiate the psychological and pedagogical foundations of the development of cognitive activity of children of senior preschool age in the process of interaction with the natural environment.

In psychological and pedagogical science, cognitive activity is considered as an integrative characteristic of a person, reflecting his internal readiness and desire for knowledge. It is not only about interest in the new, but also about the ability to act, seek answers, test assumptions and experience positive emotions from the process of discovery. Thus, cognitive activity combines motivational, intellectual, emotional and activity aspects [1, p. 59].

This phenomenon is based on natural children's curiosity. However, at the initial stages it has an unstable and situational character. The task of the teacher is to transform situational interest into a stable need for knowledge. This is possible only if an educational environment is created in which the child does not receive ready-made answers, but has the opportunity to act, experiment and make his own discoveries [2].

Senior preschool age is characterized by significant changes in the development of the cognitive sphere. The child's thinking gradually moves from visual-action to visual-figurative with elements of verbal-logical. Children begin to establish cause-and-effect relationships, compare objects, classify them according to certain characteristics, and make assumptions about the results of observations. The number of cognitive questions increases, and a desire for independent action appears [5].

An important condition for the development of cognitive activity is the emotional saturation of activity. It is the experience of joy from one's own discovery, a sense of success, and support from an adult that contribute to the formation of internal motivation for cognition. On the contrary, excessive regulation of activity or orientation to the reproduction of ready-made knowledge inhibits the development of research behavior.

The natural environment has unique opportunities for stimulating the cognitive activity of preschoolers. Unlike artificially organized learning situations, nature offers a variety of objects and phenomena that are constantly changing and arouse natural interest in children. Direct contact with plants, animals, and natural materials creates conditions for the accumulation of sensory experience, which is the basis of intellectual development [2].

Observing seasonal changes, plant growth, or animal behavior, a child learns to notice patterns, establish connections between phenomena, and draw elementary conclusions. It is important that knowledge in this case is acquired not by memorization, but in the process of one's own activity, which increases their awareness and strength [5].

No less significant is the emotional impact of the natural environment. Nature evokes in children feelings of surprise, admiration, and joy, and contributes to the formation of an aesthetic perception of the world. It is the emotional experience of the beauty of the environment that becomes the basis for the emergence of a value-based attitude towards it [1, p. 45].

Interaction with nature also has a positive effect on speech development. During observations and discussions, children learn to describe objects, convey their own impressions, and clarify the meaning of words. Speech gradually becomes a means of understanding what is seen.

Natural and cognitive activity plays a special role in the formation of moral qualities. By caring for plants or observing living beings, children gain experience of a responsible attitude, learn care and compassion. It is important that such qualities are formed not through instruction, but through personal experience of interaction [3, p. 44].

Modern preschool pedagogy is oriented towards activity-based and personality-oriented approaches. The main attention is paid to creating conditions in which the child can act as an active researcher, independently obtain knowledge and apply it in practice [4].

An important condition is the organization of a developing natural environment: corners of nature, mini-laboratories, research centers. Such an environment stimulates independent activity and supports interest in knowledge.

Conclusions. Theoretical analysis has shown that the development of cognitive activity in senior preschool age is a complex and multi-component process that depends on both the age characteristics of the child and the conditions of the educational environment. The natural environment is a powerful pedagogical resource capable of ensuring the intellectual, emotional and value development of the individual.

The effectiveness of natural and cognitive activity is determined by the organization of active forms of interaction with nature, the creation of conditions for independent

research, the support of children's initiative and the formation of a positive emotional experience of cognition.

The formation of a cognitive attitude towards nature is manifested in a combination of knowledge, interest and practical behavior. It is the comprehensive development of these components that ensures the formation of natural and ecological competence and creates the prerequisites for the formation of a harmonious, active personality.

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