

Svetlana Sysoieva

Academician-Secretary of the Department of General Pedagogy and Philosophy of Education of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor, Full Member (Academician) of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine, ORCID ID 000-0003-2499-732X 2099823@gmail.com

Olga Reipolska

Head of the Laboratory of Preschool Education and Upbringing of the Institute of Education Problems of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor, Kyiv, Ukraine, ORCID ID 0000-0002-5524-7110 odrplsk@ukr.net

THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATION OF EARLY AND PRESCHOOL CHILDREN: CHALLENGES AND WAYS OF SOLUTION

Abstract. *The main statements of the draft Concept of Early Childhood and Preschool Education are presented; it was considered at the Meeting of the Presidium of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine on February 27, 2020 and published for discussion on the NAES of Ukraine official website. The Concept's aim is to ensure the systemic changes in early childhood and preschool education, preschool education administration at its various levels in order to develop the country's strategic resource – the qualitative human capital. The Concept's relevance is grounded; its structure is presented; its five chapters are characterized: "The State of Early Childhood and Preschool Education in Ukraine", "Strategic Directions of the Early Childhood and Preschool Education Development", "Legislative and Administrative Prerequisites of the Concept Realization", "Financing", "Expected Outcomes", "Risks" and a Glossary. Conceptual bases of the system of preschool education modernization are developed on the initiative of the NAES of Ukraine researchers with the lawmakers assistance, as well as with participation of academic staff and educators.*

Keywords: childcentrism; early childhood; preschool education institutions; parent partnership; preschool education quality; pedagogical and psychological support.

Relevance of research. Early child development is seen as one of the most cost-effective investments in human capital, leading to sustainable development. Economic analyzes of developed and developing countries show that investments in the first years of a child's life lead to an increase in family income, contribute to the well-being of society and countries [19].

In this context, the report of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, OECD) on the state of education and care for young children (The early childhood education and care, ECEC), which was conducted in early childhood development centers in 9 countries (Chile, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Korea, Norway and Turkey). This is the first international survey to confirm that "quality early education and care are important for children, families and societies", while identifying a number of issues regarding the resource provision of early childhood education practices [18].

According to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), the zero level of education (level 0 - Early childhood education) - "education of young children" covers two strategically important periods for all subsequent human life: early age (from birth to the age of three) and preschool age (from three to six to seven years), in which a special place is occupied by the preschool period, which coincides with the senior preschool age [16 p. 26- 29].

Article 179 of the Labor Code of Ukraine has been in force in Ukraine since 1992, which determines the right of a woman to be on childcare leave for up to three years [5]. Since the adoption of this legislative initiative in our country, the network of groups for young children has begun to shrink rapidly. Social (partially paid) leave is perceived in society as a state guarantee of additional social assistance to the mother (family) to care for a child under three years of age. However, care is not always appropriate for

the health of the child, and home care, due to the low general and insufficient pedagogical culture of some parents, does not ensure the full development of children of early and preschool age.

Analysis of recent research and publications.

In the XXI century, not only the general structure of the world is changing, but also views on the importance of preschool education as an educational service that should be accessible, high quality, highly professional and effective for every citizen, community, state and society. Scientists and educators pay attention to the existing crisis phenomena in the process of early childhood development, which is brought up at home without proper pedagogical support.

Even a prosperous family does not take into account the peculiarities of the pace of life of children. Excessive use by parents of various electronic devices as a means of children's entertainment makes children addicted to gadgets and complicates their orientation in the real world. According to the Law of Ukraine "On Preschool Education" (2001), preschool education is a mandatory primary component of the system of continuing education in Ukraine. The basic stages of physical, mental and social development of the child's personality are determined by the age of the baby (up to one year, early age (from one to three years) and preschool age [14]. Tasks of preschool education, the implementation of which by law is entrusted to the family, parents, preschool educational institutions, puts on the agenda the issue of quality assurance and professional support of children's development in the system of preschool education. At the beginning of the third decade of the XXI century, domestic preschool education, as a synergetic system, needs systemic transformations and changes associated with new requirements for the education of children of early and preschool age and the activities of preschool education.

Therefore, the state of Ukraine needs a new strategy for the development of young and preschool children, which should be the subject of consensus of society, scientists, preschool teachers, children and their parents. Important for the construction of the concept were new

philosophical approaches in education, which emphasize the principles of child-centeredness, humanization of pedagogical interaction, the need to introduce personal, activity and competence approaches in the educational process [9; 11; 15]. Working on the concept, the author's team took into account: psychological and pedagogical principles of personality formation in preschool age [2; 3; 6; 12]; theoretical platform for building an educational environment in the preschool as a space of the child's life, the most important for the period of early ontogenesis of the conditions in which his life takes place in ZDO [1; 6; 8; 13; 17].

Formulation the goals of the article. To reveal the content of the main provisions of the draft Concept for the Development of Early and Preschool Children (2020) to understand the national strategy of preschool education, taking into account the preconditions and risks to ensure the quality of preschool education.

Results of the research. According to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, as of January 1, 2019, there are 14.0 thousand preschool education institutions (legal entities) in Ukraine, which educate 1.3 million children. Of these, 5.8 thousand institutions (39 %) operate in cities, with 970 thousand children (75.9 %). In rural areas - 9.1 thousand institutions (61 %), which educate 309 thousand children (24.1 %) [7]. Recognizing the positive dynamics of preschool education (expanding the network of different types of preschool education; modernization of content and implementation of pedagogical technologies on the basis of child-centeredness, environmental compliance; updating software and methodological support, etc.), we can not ignore socio-economic, cultural and other challenges. processes of change. Among the main authors of the Concept we note the following: inconsistency of legal, economic, socio-psychological aspects of the functioning of the education system of children of early and preschool age; underdevelopment of the private sector; overload of groups of children of early and preschool age in most preschool institutions.

"A significant gap in modern preschool education in Ukraine is the lack of a system of

social influences on the early development of the child from birth to three years" [7]. Early childhood education is almost not covered by preschool education, in particular, only 20 children under one year of age attend preschool education institutions. Indicators of coverage of young children (from 0 to 2 years) are 14.6 % of the total population of this age. Coverage of preschool children (3-5 years) - at the level of 74.4 percent (in cities - 83.7 %, in rural areas - 56.2 %).

Despite the increase in the ZDO network during 2016-2017, the problem for many communities is the long queues for places in preschool education. According to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, as of the end of 2018, there is a shortage of preschool specialists. In the 2017-2018 academic year. 137.7 thousand people worked in preschool education institutions; 64.5 percent of teachers received higher education at the first (bachelor's), second (master's) levels or at the educational and qualification level of a specialist. Therefore, statistics show that almost a third of the total number of pedagogical staff in the field of education need to improve their education [4]. The concept has a clear structure and consists of five sections ("The state of education of early and preschool children in Ukraine"; "Strategic directions of development of education of early and preschool children"; "Legislative and administrative prerequisites for the implementation of the concept"; "Funding"; "Expected results "; "Risks associated with the implementation of the concept ") and a list of terms used. New guidelines and values of preschool education.

The theoretical and methodological core of the Concept consists of: philosophical understanding of education as a socio-cultural phenomenon in which the values of humanism, humanity, tolerance, social responsibility are a priority; personal, activity and competence approaches; child-centered model of educational space. The slogan of the Concept of education of children of early and preschool age (further - the Concept) - availability and quality of education for children of early and preschool age - a way to sustainable development and high-quality human capital of Ukraine. The high purpose, responsibility of the

state, emphasized in the Concept, is to provide conditions for comprehensive and harmonious development of children of early and preschool age, their socialization on the basis of consolidation of efforts of all social institutions. In the vision, the authors-developers laid a comprehensive idea of preschool education as a starting platform for further education throughout life, the first mandatory step in the system of continuing education, the foundation of the formation of human capital in society.

The mission, values and vision of preschool education are a guide for all actors on the way to the development of quality education for young and preschool children, provided that the child is active in the educational process and taking into account other priorities.

The authors of the Concept define the axiological dominants of preschool education as prerequisites for the full further development of a person at all stages of his life: recognition of the self-worth of early and preschool childhood; happy living by a child of preschool childhood; physical, mental and social health of the child; respect for the child and the peculiarities of his development. The axiological modality of preschool education in the Concept unfolds when it comes to the values of age periods of child development:

- the development of a child from birth to three years is a unique, most intense and defining period of human development; occupies a special place in the general course of psychophysical and social development of the child; is most favorable to social and pedagogical influences, intensive development of speech, memory, figurative imagination and thinking;
- preschool education (from three to six to seven years) is aimed at personal growth of the child, the acquisition of preschool maturity in various types of children's activities, the formation of basic competencies: communication, creativity, critical thinking and more. The concept of education of young and preschool children: a strategy for change. The concept covers the main directions of development of education of children of early and preschool age: ensuring equal access and development of the network of

preschool education institutions; public-public and public-private partnership in the management of preschool education, social support of parental partnership; ensuring the quality of preschool education in accordance with certain standards, one of the conditions of which is called the professional competence of teachers; ensuring the physical, mental and social health of children; scientific support for the development of preschool education.

One of the priorities of the Concept is to ensure equal access to quality education for all children of early and preschool age, including children with special educational needs (gifted children and those with mental or physical disabilities). To achieve this goal, it is proposed to introduce mechanisms for the development of the private sector of preschool education in parallel with the state system of preschool education. The development of non-formal preschool education, expansion of forms of organization of preschool education: opening of additional groups in functioning preschool education institutions, in particular groups with short-term stay, etc.

The concept also provides for the legal provision of inclusive education for young and preschool children in accordance with Ukraine's international human rights obligations, as well as the introduction of a system of financing additional services for children with special educational needs, including through special subventions. The organization of the educational process and educational environment focused on the integration of children with special educational needs into the children's community, psychological and pedagogical support and comprehensive medical and pedagogical assessment of children's development are proposed as measures to ensure the constitutional right to education and equal access to quality preschool education. The updated integrated content of preschool education in the context of the tasks of the New Ukrainian School requires such models of the educational process (play, project, environment, etc.), based on the principles of priority of experience over information, partnership, activation of the child's own efforts, dialogue format.

The authors of the Concept point out the importance of using a wide range of forms and methods of organizing children's activities (cognitive, speech, motor, productive, artistic and aesthetic, play, etc.). Involving the child in various activities provides opportunities for self-knowledge and selfdetermination in different socio-cultural communities, such as peer groups, age groups, friends, adults. Active participation in polylogues, experiments and experiments, excursions, creative teamwork, interactive teaching methods direct to the formation of the child's basic personal qualities (activity, independence, initiative, creativity, responsibility, etc.). Preschool education: partnership of expanded opportunities of the state, society and parents. The intensity of nanotechnology, digital and IT technologies, modern trends in continuing education (including preschool as part of it) require well-established cooperation and effective communication between different groups through partnership, constructive dialogue and understanding in the implementation of educational policy.

Public-public, public-private and parental partnership is defined by the authors of the Concept as one of the strategic directions of development of education of children of early and preschool age. The key in the partnership is the point of intersection of common interests - a healthy, happy and harmoniously developed child. Cooperation of government and local self-government bodies with civil society organizations is a sign of a democratic society in which its needs for the diverse development of young and preschool children are the basis of state educational policy.

Public-private partnership in the system of preschool education, especially in the organization of early childhood education - is a new experience of forming a market of preschool education services, new opportunities to expand the rights of citizens to choose a service that meets their needs and takes into account their capabilities. The impetus for the new quality is healthy competition between the public and private sectors of preschool education. Given the establishment of constructive interaction

between government, public and private sectors, we can talk about social partnership in the management of preschool education. The formation of a culture of responsible parenthood is also a new task that requires the support of the state and civil society, scientific and pedagogical support and proper information support. Establishing partnerships with parents of children is becoming one of the most important approaches in the activities of institutions to achieve common goals, the key to qualitative changes in the system of preschool education and society as a whole.

The Concept identifies incentives for the development of partnership between the state and parents, which provides for: restoration of psychological and pedagogical patronage of children who for various reasons do not attend preschool education, in order to identify family needs to support early childhood development and education; expanding the participation of parents in public associations, boards of trustees, public associations; psychological and pedagogical education of parents, in particular with the use of information and communication technologies, etc. A high-quality, progressive partnership in the field of education of children of early and preschool age is based on the interest of each of the parties as a result of joint activities within the scope of their responsibility.

Ensuring the quality of preschool education: conditions and assessment tools. The multifunctionality of the concept of quality is that it has three dimensions (as given in the List of terms used): the quality of preschool education, the quality of the educational process and the quality of the result of preschool education. The quality of the educational process is determined by the level of compliance of the educational process with state requirements, norms and standards. The quality of the result is evidenced by the personal achievements of the child and indicators of his personal growth. The quality of preschool education is a multifaceted and multilevel concept, which is determined by a set of criteria: goal setting (assessment of goals and objectives at all levels of educational activities); conditions for effective solution of educational

tasks (material and technical, staffing, methodological support of the educational process, created subject-game environment, etc.); management of the educational process, during which the child develops vital skills and basic personal qualities (evaluation of mechanisms and tools for optimal organization of educational services to meet the needs of parents, society and the state); result as a level of personal achievements of the child, etc. The benchmark for the quality of preschool education results in Ukraine, as stated in the Concept, is the Basic component of preschool education as a state quality assurance standard. Institutional audit is the main tool for external quality assessment, which ensures the implementation of state educational policy and compliance with the standard, as well as directs preschool education institutions to continuous improvement.

The condition and well-being of children in the educational process, the dynamics of personal achievements of older preschoolers and the formation of basic competencies important for further development at the next levels of education should be monitored for quality of early and preschool age groups (primary and secondary school age). Ensuring the physical, mental and social health of children is another area of development of preschool education, a condition for the organization of the educational environment for children of early and preschool age, as well as the result of an effective and efficient domestic system.

The function of preserving the health of the child should permeate the educational process, which maintains a balance between physical, emotional, social and intellectual development, the authors of the Concept emphasize. Creating an atmosphere of security, psychological comfort, comprehensive use of traditional means of physical education, non-traditional hardening procedures and special treatment and prevention measures lead to the implementation of the health-preserving function of education.

The Concept proposes to conduct a psychological, pedagogical and hygienic examination of educational programs for compliance with the scope, content, organization

of the educational process to the age and individual capabilities of children. Media products, game equipment and didactic support also require additional psychological examination. The concept envisages the organization of healthy nutrition and constant monitoring and control over its quality, compliance with the requirements of sanitary and hygienic and anti-epidemic regimes in ZDO; modernization of technological equipment of food units; renewal of diets that meet the needs of children in quality nutrition. The formation of professional competence of teachers is also identified by the authors of the Concept as an important condition for quality preschool education. Construction of educational space in preschool education, consistent with the values of humanistic philosophy and pedagogy, active and purposeful involvement of children in design, play, research activities, the use of a wide range of forms and methods of their organization are possible with the professionalism of teachers. The professionalism of a teacher is identified with his theoretical and professional training, professional competence, moral and personal qualities. The authors of the Concept emphasize that the humanistic values of education, the ideas of personality-oriented pedagogy, pedagogy of understanding and partnership, technology of psychological and pedagogical support are the basis for professional training of future teachers of preschool education. The introduction of changes in education will largely depend on the motivation of educators.

The concept proposes the reform of the system of postgraduate pedagogical education in terms of content and formal-procedural characteristics, demonopolization and diversification of its forms of acquisition. The authors of the Concept also emphasize the need for special psychological and pedagogical training of employees to work with children with special educational needs. The practice of mentoring as a mechanism of support for young teachers at the stage of adaptation to activities in the conditions of preschool education needs to be restored. Synergy of pedagogical science and practice of preschool education.

The importance of pedagogical science for the theory and practice of preschool education is

indisputable. However, the results of modern scientific achievements in the field of medicine, pedagogy and psychology are not fully implemented in the real life situation of a child of early and preschool age.

The Concept proposes to create an interdisciplinary center for the education of children of early and preschool age in the system of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine, the activities of which will contribute to the implementation of scientific achievements in the field of practical activities of ZDO. These activities of the center are aimed at consolidating the joint efforts of the family, the state and research institutions: preparation of the necessary regulatory framework; scientific and methodological support of psychological, pedagogical and medical patronage of the family where children of early and preschool age are brought up; development of the quality standard of preschool education and the state standard of preschool education of Ukraine - the Basic component of preschool education.

Expected results of the Concept implementation and risk management. The expected results are concrete positive changes that will take place in the field of preschool education as a result of the implementation of the Concept, subject to the adoption of relevant regulations, adequate resources and maximum identification of possible risks to further minimize or eliminate them. The fourth section of the Concept indicates qualitative changes that are projected to indicate the success of reforming the education of children of early and preschool age: affordable, quality preschool education; a balanced system of family and social upbringing of a child of early (from birth to three years) and preschool age; effective psychological and pedagogical support of children of early and preschool age with special educational needs; continuity between preschool and primary education in the New Ukrainian school.

The effectiveness of the implementation of the Concept is also measured by the level of legal, medical and psychological and pedagogical awareness of parents about the care and educational development of children of early and

preschool age; an effective system of control and prevention of children's health; expanded access to the latest tools and educational technologies in preschool education; quality system of training and retraining of pedagogical staff of preschool education institutions. Risk management involves a comprehensive analysis of the totality of existing risks, their identification, assessment and development of control mechanisms. Preschool education as a complex synergetic system can be in a state of imbalance, sustainable or dynamic development, determined by a number of external and internal factors.

When reforming pre-school education in Ukraine, which is what the Concept is aimed at, we must take into account the risks associated with its adoption, as well as assess their impact on the preschool education system as a basis for human capital formation. The first group of risks lies in the responsibility of the state and executive authorities for sufficient funding of the industry, ensuring the quality of preschool education. Indicators of another risk group are the state of readiness of the family and public, in particular pedagogical communities, to strengthen the requirements for the quality of education of children of early and preschool age. This group also includes the low social status of teachers and the lack of their readiness to organize work with different age groups of children. According to the authors, it is necessary to develop a plan for the implementation of the Concept of education of children of early and preschool age, which will take into account the stages of its implementation, ways of financial support and the need to pilot certain provisions. At the stage of preparation of the "Road Map", and especially at the stage of its implementation by the subjects of preschool education management it is necessary to specify a set of measures aimed at improving the effectiveness of their activities and minimizing (eliminating) possible losses (losses) in the implementation of certain activities. **Conclusions.** In the period of globalized high-tech information society, the main provisions of the Concept of education of children of early and preschool age (project) determine the strategic directions of educational development on the basis of child-

centered children from birth to school age. Preschool education is a valuable, primary link in the system of continuing education, which lays the foundation for the cognitive, social, emotional and physical development of the child's personality for his lifelong learning. Coverage of young children with preschool education on the basis of the values and principles defined in the Concept will correct the current situation regarding the insufficient use of cognitive, physiological, psychological capabilities of a child from one to three years for its full development in later life.

Ukrainian society and citizens of Ukraine expect the state to support preschool education as a cost-effective sphere of providing and consuming educational services. The vector of preschool education, aiming at the plane of values of child development, accessibility, social responsibility of all subjects necessitates effective investment in early child development.

Decent investment in early childhood education and financing of teachers' salaries is an investment in human capital, which should ensure the economic development of our country, improve the level and quality of life of the population. The social significance of the Concept of education of children of early and preschool age is its focus on creating a common socio-space of joint responsibility of parents, teachers and civil servants for the quality of preschool education as a strategic resource for sustainable development.

References:

1. Артемова Л. Реалії та перспективи розвитку дошкільної освіти України в контексті ключових позицій Болонської декларації. Вісник Глухівського державного національного педагогічного університету ім. О. Довженка. 2010. Вип.16, 10–14.
2. Бех І. Д. Особистість у контексті орієнтирів розвивального виховання. Інноватика у вихованні. 2015. Режим доступу: http://nbuv.gov.ua/UJRN/inuv2015_1_4
3. Воронов В., Гавриш Н. Азбука лідера. Київ: Mr.Leader. 2016.
4. Державна служба статистики України. URL: <http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/>

5. Кодекс законів про працю України: Закон України №22-VIII від 10.12.71; із змінами і доповненнями 1972-2020 рр. Режим доступу: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/322-08>
6. Кононко, О.Л. Психологічні основи особистісного становлення дошкільника (системний підхід): монографія. Київ: Стілос. 2000.
7. Концепція освіти дітей раннього та дошкільного віку (проект). Укл. В.А.Воронов, Н.В.Гавриш, Л.В.Канішевська, Т.О.Піроженко, О.Д.Рейпольська, С.О.Сисоєва. НАПН України. Київ. 2020. Режим доступу: <http://naps.gov.ua/ua/press/announcements/1763/>
8. Костюк, Г.С. Методологические и теоретические проблемы психологии. Москва: Просвещение. 1969.
9. Кремень, В. Інноваційна людина як мета сучасної освіти. *Філософія освіти*. 1, 7-22. 2013. Режим доступу: http://nbuv.gov.ua/UJRN/PhilEdu_2013_1_3
10. Крутій К. Освітній простір дошкільного навчального закладу: монографія: у 2-х ч. Київ: Освіта. 2009. Ч. 1.
11. Огневюк В.О. Освіта в системі цінностей сталого людського розвитку: монографія. Київ: Знання України. 2003.
12. Піроженко Т.О. Ігрова діяльність дошкільника: навчально-методичний посібник. Київ: Генеза. 2013.
13. Поніманська Т. Готовність до педагогічних інновацій у контексті гуманістичної педагогіки *Зб. наук.праць Оновлення змісту і методів дошкільної освіти в Україні* Вип.5. Рівне: РДПІ, 10-15.
14. Про дошкільну освіту: Закон України від 11.07. 2001. № 2628-III; зі змінами і доп. Режим доступу: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2628-14>
15. Сисоєва С.О. Освіта і особистість в умовах постіндустріального світу: монографія. Київ. 2008.
16. International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 2011. (2012). UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 88 p. Режим доступу: <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf>
17. Якименко С. Формування світогляду у старших дошкільників та молодших школярів в освітньо-інтегрованому середовищі: теорія і практика: монографія. Київ: ВД «Слово». 2017.
18. OECD. Providing Quality Early Childhood Education and Care. Results from the Starting Strong Survey 2018. Published on October 25, 2019. Режим доступу: <http://oecd.org/>
19. UNICEF. Evidence for ECD Investment. Updated: 16 July 2013. UNICEF.org. Режим доступу: https://www.unicef.org/earlychildhood/index_69851.html