

SEXUAL EDUCATION OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

The topic of sexual education is relevant and extremely important, but this issue causes many contradictions and misunderstandings due to the erroneous interpretation of the term itself. One of the reasons for the controversy is the aspect of age and the content of sexual education, namely, when and what a child should know about. The importance of sex education is explained by its goal – to raise a complete personality, who is adequately aware of his physiological and psychological characteristics, establishes optimal relations with people of his own and the opposite sex.

Sex education is a system of measures of pedagogical influence on children and adolescents with the aim of creating in them the correct ideas about the essence of the relations between the sexes, educating the norms of sexual life behavior and optimizing their personal development in all spheres of life related to the relations of the sexes [3].

The peculiarities of the personal development of preschoolers are awareness and separation of one's own "I", that is, the emergence of personal consciousness, and the formation of self-esteem, which depends on the quality of the child's communication with parents or significant adults. According to Z. Freud, the preschool age coincides with the phallic stage of psychosexual development, which is characterized by a high level of the child's sexuality and an extraordinary interest in the genitals. During this phase, the formation of the personality structure is completed [4, p. 41].

Based on these data, we can say that preschool age is optimal for starting sex education. It is extremely important that the proposed form and content of sexual education meet the actual needs of the child and his/her age. The limits of the child's intimacy are established, they must be taught that if they do not want physical

communication of any kind, they have the right to refuse it (if it is not included in the necessary medical examination). A child should not tolerate hugs or kisses from strangers if they do not want them and they are unpleasant to them. The role of significant adults is also educational. The child expects clear, complete, but not too detailed answers to his questions related to sexuality. It is important for a child that, in a relevant situation, an adult they trust speaks honestly, openly and simply [2, p. 226-227].

The Polish sexologist Kazimir Imelinski singled out four main principles of sexual education of children:

1. Duration: explanations are not limited to one conversation, they should be carried out throughout the child's upbringing. Sexual education of a child begins from the moment of their birth and lasts at least until the age of 16.

2. Truthfulness: the explanation must be truthful, false answers lead to inflaming even greater interest in gender issues, and at the same time, children's mistrust of other information provided by adults.

3. Individuality of explanations: this does not mean that the child should be taken aside and talked to face to face. In this case, one may get the impression that the topic raised is "shameful" and "delicate". Accordingly, other children can also be present, but group discussions should not be specially organized, especially with younger children. If a child accidentally witnessed a conversation between adults discussing sexual issues, do not stop the conversation, it should be adapted to the child's level of development.

4. Correspondence of the explanations to the level of physical and mental development of the child: it is necessary to answer "childish" questions as soon as the question arises, the main thing is not to go beyond the scope of the question [1, p. 20-21].

A child's sexual education begins with an explanation of the structure and phenomena of one's own body. It is important to teach the child the correct names of the genitals, which will help him, in case of problems, pain or discomfort, to describe their localization and nature, as well as to prevent sexual violence.

The child will have the same calm attitude to the genitals as to other parts of the body, which contributes to the development of adequate self-esteem. It is important to remember that many things in a person's life depend on the first childhood impressions. The key to the success of sex education is the creation of such an atmosphere in the family, when the child can freely ask questions to his parents, without fear of hearing an instructive lecture instead of an answer. Usually, children are satisfied with short and truthful answers, because their interest in sexual problems is purely theoretical. A special role is played by the parents' relationship with each other, the emotional atmosphere in which the child grows up [5].

So, we can say that sex education occupies an important place in the upbringing of a preschool child, contributes to the positive formation of self-esteem and the formation of one's own "I". It depends on the closeness of the relationship between the child and adults, honesty and trust are important aspects of harmonious communication.

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