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### Professional Culture of the Specialist of the Future

#### CIRCUS-THEMED ACTIVITIES OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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#### *Abstract*

This article states the empirical study results of circus-themed activities selection for preschool children and their parents. The majority of Russians consider the leisure of preschoolers is the gaming pastime. Almost half of the educators of preschool educational institutions adhere to the same point of view. The comprehension of the importance and unique features of leisure time activities will allow bringing up the generation capable to deal with modern world challenges. Child health issues, approaches to physical education as an investment, a desire to foster interest in physical education are convincing reasons to help children choose the right physical activities for them. Circus centers of additional education attract parents by variety of types of circus art, individualized attention on child's potential, preschool programs, possibility to take part in performances, festivals and competitions. Physical activities without extra pressure, great results and comprehensive child development help your child with socialization, that is why circus-themed activities have become more popular.

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**Keywords:** Preschool program, types of circus art, socialization, additional education, physical education, child health.



## 1. Introduction

The digital development of modern society gives rise to new problems (Gashkova, Berezovskaya, & Shipunova, 2017; Pozdeeva, Trostinskaya, Evseeva, & Ivanova, 2017) and redoubles existing ones (Alexankov, Trostinskaya, & Pokrovskaya, 2018). The key elements of modern civilization are dynamic changes in all life domains, they change the common way of family living and affect the process of child rearing, its goals and approaches. The content and organization of leisure time activities underwent changes as well, new trends in culture, new hobbies and interests came into existence.

Leisure time is a complex social phenomenon and an essential part of a civilized society. The leisure time of an adult is the time away from work such as personal chores, commuting, sleeping and eating. Leisure time can be truly fulfilling and rich in different activities such as interacting with friends, art and reflexing or in other words, doing things that bring pleasure. Diversity of leisure activities consists of the integration of resting, entertainment, self-education, creative activities and holidays. The choice, content and approach of leisure organization depend on the age. Adults organize the leisure time of preschool children and it is closely related to play activities and children led activities.

Due to the research of Zatsepina, Efremenko and Murzakova (2018) the existence of preschool children leisure time phenomenon is proven. There is a social tendency to change the quality of using leisure time from entertainment to personal development. Preschool learning of personal attitudes to leisure time shapes a worldview or phase into national culture. Extensive leisure activities of children satisfy communication needs, besides sport features provide a physical development and promotion a mental health.

The problem solving of the efficient arrangement of leisure time is additional education, provided by the Russian education system for preschool children. Every year, growth of this kind of organizations and the leisure time services for preschool children recorded. Museums, fitness-clubs, youth clubs and other centers of additional education show the most active involvement in that matter.

## 2. Problem Statement

The tendencies of children's leisure time entertainment are still very strong in Russian society. Parents (approximately 60%) and nursery teachers (45%) share this opinion. St. Petersburg and Moscow research (Dang Lan Phuong, 2006; Sozinova, 2016) reveal the lack of the preschool children's leisure time variety, particularly during the weekdays. Making the child educational centers responsible for the child development, parents allow their children time to rest and play in the evenings, even don't get children involved in household chores. In addition to that, parents do not allow their children to choose leisure time activities independently. Parents who respond to additional education centers offers usually choose the leisure time activities for their children. Only 8% of parents want their children to make their own choice of preschool activities.

Regardless of the dynamic development of human societies, adults don't have enough leisure time and as a result, they don't have enough time to provide organized leisure time of their children. That is why nowadays children's leisure time becomes a complex socio-educational problem. The teacher's lack of core competencies to work with preschool children is another problem.

### **3. Research Questions**

One of modern leisure time activities for preschool children is circus-themed activities. This leisure time activity is quite new for our society but it attracts more and more followers day by day. What is the parents' motivation to involve their children in circus-themed activities? Within the framework of a questionnaire-based surveys and interviews, we have found answers for all these questions.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the research is drawing of preschool children education experts' attention to the problem of leisure time organization. The comprehension of the importance and unique features of leisure time activities will allow bringing up the generation capable to deal with modern world challenges. The circus-themed activities research allows discovering the leading tendencies of a child's socialization.

### **5. Research Methods**

The research is based on empirical and theoretical approaches. Methodologically the research is based on the conception of Zatsepina et al. (2018), who have approved the existence of preschool children leisure time activities. On the ground of the Russian researchers' (studying the organization of children leisure time), the conception of the personal empirical research of circus-themed leisure time activities for preschool children was created.

The empirical basis is the applied sociological research 2018/2019 using unstructured interview approaches and the questionnaire-based survey of parents of preschool children, who are involved in two circus-themed centers in St. Petersburg.

### **6. Findings**

Human socialization develops under national culture. Social experience is not inherited genetically, but it is the result of socialization and education, coming along with the process of growing-up. During the preschool period, the inner world of a child begins to develop, a principled framework of cultural behavior and leisure time activities are provided. A child is under the influence of family traditions, the approaches of leisure time activities are accepted subconsciously. Preschool childhood is also the period of 'cultural integration', when a child's development takes place in the cultural context and fills leisure time with educational activities in the family and education centers.

One of the key aspects of additional education of children is health and fitness and popular children sports. The whole network of physical education and sports centers of additional education aims to prepare the national sport reserve and raise the healthy development of children. Researches note that usage of sport aiming to the highest results allow to deal with the challenges of healthcare, a highly topical issue because the health of the younger generation causes concerns. According to the data of Federal Service for Supervision in the Sphere of the Protection of Consumer Rights and Human Welfare, the number of healthy children in Russia is only 12%, more than half of school children have chronic diseases. In the past decade, the frequency of functional diseases in all age groups has increased by half and the frequency of chronic

diseases has increased twice. More than half of school children (7-9 years old) and 60% of seniors have chronic diseases (Borovik, 2017). Physical activities, sporting competitions and training have much positive impact on all aspects of physical condition including health, physical well-being, motor abilities, constitution and developmental skill, along with, knowledge, interests, needs and values. Effectively, this develops a healthy lifestyle, a physical education and a health culture. The majority of people in the survey preferred the circus-themed leisure time activities based on the health improvement considerations (58%), by comparison 9% of respondents had a goal to develop the physical education of their children.

It is necessary to extend the number of developing sports, involving non-traditional exercises to draw attention to the physical activities in additional education centers. The circus-themed activities gain popularity among them over recent years.

The politics of the Soviet Union had an impact on sports and its traditions that is why we inherited the universal and pragmatic physical education. During the transition toward the market economy and the democratic transition, the society has acquired new comprehension of the physical activity. Sociocultural determinants of the physical activity innovations are transition to the human civilization; the human being and the health are supreme values; the transition from the monolithic society to the variable, having many structures society; the social requirement of the harmonious development of human beings; the humanization of physical education.

One other modern characteristic is consumerism, along with the transformation of society to 'the leisure society', the value of spare time is increased whilst leisure time activities become indispensable to life. The significant aspect of leisure time activities is linked to the physical development and activities connected with them. According to the Fund of Public Opinion Analysis, 30% of social innovators and 10% of respondents, aged 18-35 work out in fitness-clubs. Social innovators admit that working out to make use of spare time strengthens health, develops persistence, courage, discipline, motivation and leading skills (Abramov & Zudina, 2012). These qualities are the most popular in a modern society. The physical well-being is the foundation of professional and personal success. The summary of the received data allow concluding that the leading motivation of physical activities is the ambition to 'invest in your physical health'. The health, the appearance and the physique are a sort of modern commodity, which demand time and expenses. By the research data, 33% of respondents take the circus-themed activities as an investment in the children's future, an opportunity to receive competitive strengths.

According to the conception of Bourdieu (1980), an inseparable characteristic of personal attributes is its convertibility to other kinds of life skills. Consequently, physical attributes may be converted in the economic capital through the help of career progress. A potential employer may value a good-looking appearance and unimpaired health of a candidate, since those are factors of high tolerance for stress and working efficiency. Baudrillard (2006) includes the health in the social imperative, based on attaining a social status. Native researchers Gladarev and Zinman (2007) approved the importance of investing in health, as a way to attain a social status and improve a standard of living.

An important factor of the development of daily activities of school children is parents' community, it is a leading factor of the socialization and child-rearing practices. According to the research of Antonova (2014), health comes in second place in the structure of parental values, right after the family values. The third place parents gave to their children. The meaning of health and children in the parents' life involve

some effort to save and develop children's health to their fullest potential. A genetic background determines only general facts of children health but then the environment affects the health too. A child grows and develops long with easily conceives and reproduces daily pursuits. Developed skills transform the future for the better (Malozemova, 2016).

According to recent research (Firsin & Maskayeva, 2014), interest towards physical education and sport is not leading among school children and students. 52% of school children and 49% of students are not interested in sports and the physical education at all, while 43% of school children are engaged in amateur sports, when the most active age is 9-12 years (56%). Only 25% of Russian people continue to engage in sports activities up to 18 years. From 18 to 24 years the attention to sports of young people increases, the statistical analysis verified the results (40%). According to the data of the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center (Nizkodubov, 2018), 55% of adult respondents noted that their children were engaged in sports. Under the supervision of parents, the children's and teenagers' interest toward the sports life develops. Approximately 62% of parents send their children off to additional education centers, moreover, 73% of them prefer sports schools. When parents engage their children in the physical education, they pursue the aim to bring up a healthy and morally responsible person or to achieve high competitive goals in the sports career of their children. In addition, parents in the survey were aware that high-performance sports and mass sports are different levels of challenges. If a family makes a choice in favor of high-performance sports, a child and parents will be involved in the same sporting interests. The aspect to choose circus-themed activities is the lack of muscle loading and increased exercises.

Important factors include the distance to the sports center from home, coaching staff and the price. The experts of the 'Ula' (Lutovinova, 2019) service held an opinion poll among their users, they found out that the majority of Moscow residents were looking for the additional education in close propinquity to their houses, (75% of reviews were within a 1 km radius from their homes). However, gymnastics, dancing and hockey are reviewed even if located further from homes.

Parents aim to choose a sports class that their child will be interested in. The circus-themed activities include various unique activities such as acrobatics, balancing acts, juggling, clowning, choreography, physical preparedness, acting skills and many other disciplines that develop a child's skillset and help him or her to create their own performance (Shcherbakova, 2019).

During the lessons within the circus-themed activities center, children are engaged in rehearsals and staging acts to create an individual solo performance or a circus show. The performance includes a set of tricks as well as creative communication between the artists during the action and in the pauses, during the transition from one set of tricks to another, leaving the arena, a musical accompaniment and decorations. A concert's activities is another integral part, the participation of pupils in competitions, festivals, different festive concerts. Teachers along with children and their parents attend circus performances and museums where elements of a circus art are represented. Artists of various genres are invited to present master classes. Communication with other circus children's groups is maintained. Pupils of circus groups take part in socially significant activities.

Equally important in determining the type of leisure activities is the age of a child. Sensitive periods in the development of the basic physical qualities of preschool children attending educational centers are the 5th-6th years. When children develop rapidly and moderately during the 5th year, two basic movements

(running, climbing) and six physical qualities (endurance, speed and static strength, agility, speed strength, dynamic strength); the 6th year is appropriate for all movements and five qualities (agility, static strength and speed strength, endurance, dynamic strength) (Kiryash, 2018; Webster, Martin, & Staiano, 2019). Forcing the development of a child may lead to injuries and the discontinuation of the studies. According to the Resolution of the Chief Sanitary Doctor of the Russian Federation, the earliest age to start the professional training is 8 years (Korotaeva & Svyattseva, 2016). However, some centers, including the circus-themed centers, agree to take children before the recommended age. They may take a 3 year old child but children will learn the technique of movements, develop flexibility and improve coordination. Growing up, a child will change difficulty levels, learn new movements, prepare for competitions and performances. A chance to develop a child, introduce them to the physical education from a preschool age attracts parents who choose circus-themed activities. The easy playing forms of education, many types of sports equipment and a professional approach to the training process gives a guarantee to the harmonious entry of physical education.

Parents should be guided by the individual characteristics of their child to choose the sport. Parents need to take into account the body type and temperament of their child. Some children will be able to achieve results if they are engaged in a team whilst other children prefer to train in a small group or individually. Circus-themed activities will be great for each child. The teachers of circus-themed activities will focus attention on each pupil's abilities to choose the most appropriate program (individually or on a team, putting attention on strength or flexibility, fast or slow rhythms). Taking into account the strengths of a child is an important advantage of circus-themed activities.

The body of a child is actively growing and developing. Development does not always occur equally, some muscles are more developed, others are weaker. Sporting activities smooth uneven development, build a strong muscular corset and the spinal column (McNeill, Howard, Vella, Santos, & Cliff, 2018). The alternation of mental and physical activities allow a child to master new knowledge and to memorize information faster. Circus-themed activities teach a child to communicate with other children and to be a team player, develop discipline and responsibility (Gao, Zeng, Pope, Wang, & Yu, 2019). A child is busy almost all the time, they do not have time for unnecessary activities or concerns. If a pupil participates in competitions, he or she is challenged and develops an ability to defend a point of view. The opportunity to perform at festivals, concerts and competitions was noted by the respondents of the research as a characteristic that has had a positive influence on the choice of leisure time activities.

Recently the level of children's preparedness has significantly increased, their results have improved at various levels: All-Russian, international festivals, competitions, and expanded international relations. The desire of children and their teachers to improve results and excel is a natural process, as circus-themed activities are associated with sports and circus art.

## **7. Conclusion**

Active, expressive, filled with reasonable and interesting activities, leisure time activities of preschool children allow them to socialize and learn the values of culture. Due to age, specific, preschool children are not able to organize their own leisure time, the leading role of their organization belongs to their parents. Perceiving the physical education as a certain capital and caring about the health of children,

the majority of modern parents choose sports leisure time activities for their children. The desire to give a child an additional education at a preschool age, as well as to take into account child's individual characteristics and the opportunity to perform, lead parents to choose circus-themed activities for their preschool children. The value of a child development through leisure activities is obvious. Being engaged in circus-themed activities allows a child to express themselves, be active, assertive, discover new impressions, be ready for changes and various situations of a real life.

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