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How to help children understand and respect nature?

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Abstract

Analysis of the natural environment as a source for understanding and creation of environmental awareness and consciousness among children of pre- school and early school age, as well as methods for the formation of ecological culture among children in particular especially should be emphasized the application of the same educational process because they allow the teachers to encourage creative activity among children in the pedagogic activity. Educator is confronted from one side with the age of children who work, and the other with the characteristics of natural phenomena from which he derives various findings that children should be accepted as an important component of ecological culture.

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1. Introduction

The theory and practice of preschool education confirm the thesis that the positive relationship of child to nature includes and individual range of emotions that have special influence on the behavior of children to nature. Regardless of the formation of ecological culture is related to the enrichment of the emotional sphere caused by contact with nature, has not yet been asked about the direction in which teachers should focus their contents? The significance of this issue is particularly evident when we take into account the emotions that are considered not only as the primary motivating system, but as a process of personality that would give sense and meaning of human existence.

In more recent time is more obviously the pedagogic need for seeking new forms of contact with nature, which would give the child not only information but also emotional saturation. The man understands that the fate is in their hands, so he sees that in front of him is revealed distant future and the first basic reaction often jumps on the request of his finish. Man notes that "the man as the subject of awareness" is the key to the whole nature, notes how the world has been formed and how it continue to be formed.

Formation of ecological culture among children of preschool age should begin with the formation of the relationship of the child to itself and to its nature as a center of many influences and relations with the rest of the world that it can play a special role. (Kitaev-Smik, M. Chernoushek, Sv.Dimitrova, E. Yanakieva) It matched with

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the period of the first and fundamental understanding of their own persons and first and primary individual experience of contact with nature and interpretation of those experiences as one of the factors that affect the processes of building self-kognition.

Every child and every man with his existence have the right of a clean and healthy environment that allows proper growth and development.

Environmental awareness among children has been developed as much it is present in adults because they teach in "model", ie If a child sees adults as they respect nature he will act the same way. Children often will not want to hear, but will not miss the opportunity to imitate adults.

Young children in the first years of his life show interest in exploring the world. They explore their environment with observation using their senses of hearing, sight, smell, touch and taste.

2. The world's children to nature

The child simply not believe in anything, he wants to investigate everything, to examine their own experience. In what at first view seems glance its perfectly clear that he will see the hidden. It has many issues and questions hidden in him that will sparks rage into the flame of thinking. With these sparks actually, starts what every educator seeks, to persuade his student to think independently, to comprehend and investigate.

"The most beautiful and deepest emotion we desire is the sense of mystery. It is the source of any real knowledge. To whom this emotion is stranger, the one that lost the ability to ask, we should consider dead "(Einstein). As children grow and become more mature their research activities are becoming more complex. Children are interested in properties of water, air, soil, and they can participate in various activities in kindergartens and family who help development with ecological approach to life.

For development of environmental awareness and culture among children most important is to develop a love of nature. Knowledge in the child's head arrive in a very complex way: through interaction with objects, living beings and other individuals, through the senses and thinking operations, through the emotions and experiences.

For development of environmental awareness and culture among children especially important is teaching to be open to the environment, and children to be drawn directly to learn the nature, particularly where for the recognition of natural phenomena we need answers to many questions or problems. Some authors believe it is so important, that direct contact of children with nature should be formulated as a pedagogical principle for environmental education (HE Yanakieva (2006)-avtorezime). To encourage and satisfy the curiosity of children, to occur numerous questions which require answers among them, teachers with children should stay in the nearby natural environment: in the woods, in the field, the grass, despite demands etc. Immediate stay of those who learn the nature will allow to create a "healthier and more natural and humane relationship between man and nature" (Supek, R, 1989). In this regard Supek further writes: "Man should live in nature, including plants and animals, not plants and animals live among the people."

"Very interesting and exciting are the walks in the field in one spring day when the soil is waking up from winter sleep. It is the only day of the year which should not be missed. This mysterious phenomenon occurs in a warm sunny day. In the mysterious cells of the soil something is happening that awakes the nature. Children noted that in this day when the soil is waking up in the transparent sky lark raises and sing his first spring song, and while the soil sleeps, she will not sing - why is that? This phenomenon attracts the mind of a child with his poetry and some hard understanding links are hidden in it. Namely, in this day when the soil wakes up the children feel the smell of grass as a living being - the grass begins to breathe. Something odd is happening with tulip trees, they begin to emit its unique flavor, and garden immediately begins to "smell life". We should help children to see and feel how one of the most interesting natural phenomena which depend on others "(A. Suhomolinski Tues, School and Life, 1970, pp. 40).

3. Calls for action

This paper calls for action in the part of adults to make an oath to protect the promotion of children's interaction with nature. To support the experience of learning about nature in school, and societies require deliberate examination of all possibilities. To implement these enriching, experience both inside and outside, the following principles should take action and decisions of adults:

1. Children will have time out-of-doors in nature that is spontaneous and unstructured, with peers or family. Such settings should promote observations and discovery and foster creativity and imagination.
2. Adults will create opportunities to promote learning about nature that may be at least semi- structured, using the nature as source of learning and testing (i.e. the formation of foundations of various arts and sciences.
3. Children will have daily opportunity to explore the soil, water and living organisms in their environment. Through this natural experiences which they will develop in addition and understanding their world and other species.
4. School and community project work will include an active, hands-on approach to nature and the opportunity to develop integrated natural science knowledge. Engagement in the natural environment will allow for exploration and meaning-making experiences since both intentional learning and spontaneous activities build awareness and observational skills in children when outdoor spaces are rich with things to experience. (Faber Taylor, *et al*, 1998; Kirby, 1989).
5. Nature learning experiences will be developmentally appropriate recognizing that young children (prior to age nine) need experiences that support their natural affinity with nature and which are directly accessible to them (e.g., learning about birds in the neighborhood rather than those in a far off jungle). Without an opportunity to experience, children will not have an opportunity to develop appreciation or connections. Children should not be flooded with only negative facts and concerns about the earth before having a chance to develop their own sense of place. In middle childhood, children can begin to address more complex concepts such as loss of species (White, 2001).
6. The culture and native environment of the community will be honored and cherished. Nature-rich curriculum and projecwork will link learning standards to the real life experiences of children and families, their cultures, their oral and written traditions, stories and art, and their common experiences of growing up.
7. A common sense approach by adults will support children in the challenges of their out-of-doors learning. Children will be allowed both direction and freedom to investigate and explore with reasonable safety considerations and toleration for messiness (Chawla, 1994).
8. Community and school leaders will consider the preservation of natural environments in their approach to land development and building design. Centers and schools will be beautiful, engaging, and amazing places.
9. Community and school leaders will build green schools□ that are energy efficient, sustainable, and provide healthier learning environments for both children and those who work with children in those settings.
10. Adults will take care not to allow the lure of technology to override the allure of nature. The unprecedented opportunities technology offers to learn more about nature should be used to supplement real nature experiences.

4. Natural Benefits for Children, Adults, and their Communities

Where these principles guide planning and development and nature learning becomes a part of the child's life, there are many positive benefits.

Children who have more positive and enriching experiences in the natural world are more likely to become better-informed adult consumers and savers who are environmentally alert to their own lifestyles and practices.

If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in (Rachel Carson in *The Sense of Wonder*)

Children develop and cultivate an understanding of fellow creatures. (Louv, 2005)

Spending time in nature aids in stress reduction and in the treatment of depression and ADHD. (Faber Taylor, et al, 2003; Louv, 2005; Wells, & Evans, 2003)

Both boys and girls develop the courage to handle challenges, problems, investigations, and just manageable risk.

Children are encouraged to build a sense of caring about the earth and the need to act responsibly toward it. E.O. Wilson describes this innate need for connection as *biophilia*, finding a place for your-self in the world (Wilson, 1984).

Natural environments offer greater opportunities for unfettered physical movement, thus decreasing the likelihood of obesity (Moore, *et al*, 2003).

Children who experience the natural world and have opportunities to play and learn within it are more likely to choose science or related fields as careers.

Nature learning brings an expanded view of aesthetics. The fusion of the arts, music, history, and literature is also made possible when the nature and culture that surrounds children is documented and guided through their self expression (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998).

5. Building the Capacity to Change

Based upon literature in a variety of fields relating to children and nature, there are common threads that support this Call to Action. Building the capacity to make the necessary changes crosses multiple disciplines. There is not one path. We can build capacity for change by examining the way each of us responds in our own work and life—as parents, caregivers, educators, health professionals, community developers, or policy makers. We all make daily decisions that may influence how we and the community’s children will or will not have the opportunity to interact with the natural world. Those in the Field of Early Care and Education can:

Become better informed about nature learning and the benefits it offers to children.

Strive to provide children with access to the out-of-doors for significant amounts of time every day for both intentional learning experiences and unstructured play.

The most obvious thing schools can do in this regard is give children experiences with real things toward which symbols are only dim pointers. Unless emotionally connected to some direct experience with the world, symbols reach kids as merely arbitrary bits of data. A picture may be worth a thousand words, but to a second grader who has held a squiggly night crawler in her hand, even the printed symbol Worm resonates with far deeper meaning than a thousand pictures or a dozen Discovery Channel videos. (Monke, 2007)

Enact policies (e.g., standards) that support a broad and nature-integrated curriculum that is multi-disciplinary, multi-sensory, and emergent.

Plan specific activities related to learning about the natural world every day.

Expose children to men and women who work in scientific or related fields (e.g., naturalists, geologists, biologists, nature writers).

Plan nutrition education experiences that help children see the roots to table connections of the food they eat.

Include families and elders to share their oral traditions, cultural histories, and experiences to offer children stronger links.

To the land and to their families.

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