

The aims and tasks of the Complementary Program

Smoking Prevention Program in Kindergartens - aims

A child of kindergarten age is an active recipient of the world. Not a single child can avoid to receive the stimuli surrounding him. He discovers the world asks, replies, observes, tests and continuously experiences. He gets the mastery of the various behavior patterns by imitation irrespective of the fact whether they represent positive or negative values. Thus he reproduces the models produced by others and by doing so he acquires new behavioral patterns. The reach of imitation is greater than it seems, because there is also the so called delayed imitation when the person is seemingly passive, later however follows the obtained model. Imitation is especially intensified by rewarding reinforcement.

Such models may appear not only in reality but also in image forms, therefore, it is worth to investigate what kind of identification models are offered to children by the heroes of cartoons, television serials and by advertising. Against these direct and indirect negative effects counterpoles have to be provided. The subject and source of imitation is determined to a great extent by what children can see and learn at home and by the persons they meet most frequently and to whom they are bound emotionally. Since the common motif in every identification is the emotional relationship, therefore it is important that a small child should meet in his direct environment behavior models that reject smoking and/or that these models consider smoking (but not the person who smokes) as repulsive.

Based on the above we have the right to say that the formation of opinion and values on smoking is opportune already in kindergarten age.

Health promotion appears in the family and in the kindergarten both in direct and indirect forms. The basic behavioral models are imprinted, of course also the smoking-related ones. One of the most efficient form of prevention is that children get hold of information on the basis of which an attitude that disapproves smoking can develop.

An essential condition of health promotion is that the child should know those harmful effects which later he can take into consideration against the influences that encourage smoking. The most important consideration in developing the Program was to produce, by taking the children's age-group characteristics into account, a kindergarten training material by means of which smoking-related information can be conveyed and behavior can be formed successfully. The Program, which suits the age characteristics of 5-6-7-year old children, at the same time is a "vehicle" between the children, the kindergarten teacher, the district nurse and the parents. Built into the annual education plan, its continuous use helps the intensification of knowledge.

Smoking-related knowledge can be widened, the concepts related to smoking can be clarified, and the factors of cause and effect can be explored more efficiently if they take on a playful form corresponding to the age group of the child. The efficiency can also be increased by the tale „The four lives of Squirrel Cleansy". The utilization of the program requires the mutual co-operation of the

teacher, the children and the parents.

By constantly observing and respecting the fact that each person has the right to decide independently on his/her lifestyle and to choose his/her life conduct at his/her own responsibility, it has to be accepted that the success of the Program is greatly influenced if the kindergarten teacher running the program smokes in the presence of children.

In kindergarten age emotions play a determining role in the manifestations of behavior and in the activities. They blend with the life of the children and form their behavior as a peculiar motivation. The emotions of higher order develop during the experience of the children. Therefore, in their development a decisive factor in the family is the role of the parents, in the kindergarten the signals, impacts and the example of the teacher, which may play an important role in the formation of the child's personality and also in the formation of the child's attitude towards smoking. The peers and the employees of the kindergarten with their signals and evaluations mold the picture the child has formed of himself. The child learns to know himself, the rules of living together, the modes of behavior expected in social life. The quality of emotional relationship developing between the child and the teacher influences his social sensitivity and urges him to follow the model of the beloved adult. While in kindergarten age the most important motive of model selection is love, later the social attractive force of peers prompts him to follow the model. The kindergarten teacher supporting the development may influence this process with his/her considerate work that pays attention to the children.

The tasks of the Complementary Program are:

- _ To make an inventory of personal knowledge on smoking.
- _ To provide information on the topic on the level corresponding to age-group characteristics.
- _ To form an attitude to smoking that facilitates the choice for health promotion
- _ To make an effort to develop an active behavior against the compulsion of passive smoking.

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The national basic program for kindergarten education contains the general psychological and pedagogical principles that have to be enforced in the interest of the child. The characteristics of the complementary program are the educational objectives and tasks that are emphasized. By taking into account the different set of values in the families, and by supplementing them, it tries to prepare the children for the co-operation, for making choices and for making decisions. The involvement of the families, the co-operation with the parents is of great importance regarding the success of the program.

This sub-program is built on the age characteristics of 5-6-7-year old children. By the end of the development period it is expected that the children will have adequate knowledge on smoking, and this knowledge can favorably influence their future decisions. The continuous expansion of knowledge, the clarification of concepts related to the topic and the exploration of the factors of cause and effect can help the children to develop a smoking-disapproval attitude.

For the child, owing to the newly obtained knowledge, not to get into a conflict that seems unworkable and insolvable for him, it is very important that the parents are also informed about the information given to the children. It is not the aim of the Program that parents (or other family members, and in general, the adults) quit smoking, on the other hand it can be expected that in some form the children will have an influence on the smoking habits of the adults around them. In many cases they have a favorable influence on the uncertain „cessation intention" of the parents, their support, encouragement and understanding may have a stimulating effect on the adults' decision and perseverance.

Our aim is that , with the required educational impact, by the end of the development period the need for an active behavior against passive smoking should develop in the children.

EDUCATIONAL AREAS AND CONTENT OF THE SMOKING OR HEALTH COMPLEMENTARY PROGRAM FOR KINDERGARTENS

The cognitive processes of children are characterized by their incomplete experience and their unconnected imperfect knowledge of the world. 5-6-7-year old children already have realistic knowledge that is more or less corresponds to reality. They have a remarkable body of knowledge and they can mobilize it too. The child's knowledge is enriched by the world around him, in kindergarten-age orientation is controlled much more by the understanding of meanings saturated with emotions and fed by his position, experiences and observations. He can obtain the most amount of information by means of the "current experience" using individual sensory experience. Smoking-related knowledge can also be widened more efficiently when the topics of sensation, personality, health promotion, and smoking take on a playful form corresponding to the age group characteristic of the child.

The adaptation of the recommended topics allows the clarification of smoking-related concepts and the exploration of the factors of cause and effect which may greatly influence future behavior. The child acquires knowledge such as unpleasant sensations, health damaging effects, "disturbance" of other people and smoking initiation. These are important parts of prevention.

Of the educational tasks of kindergartens, the Program prominently deals with HEALTH PROMOTION (more precisely with one special area of it), however it has a tangential impact on all areas of kindergarten education (emotional education, socialization, mental development). The extent of this depends on the development indicators and the interestedness of children and on the attitude of the teacher regarding implementation.

Health - also in kindergarten age - means somatic, psychic and social satisfaction and harmony.

Health education includes:

- the protection of physical (somatic) health
- the protection of mental (psychic) health, the psychohygiene,
- the protection of social health.

The Smoking or Health complementary program may deal with the whole area of health development (its extend will depend on the kindergarten teacher), but it will deal especially with the prevention of this harmful addiction.

Every form of kindergarten activity can be used as a stage for the implementation of the Program (playing, artistic activities, motions, active knowledge of the outside world, work-type activities, learning).

During the smoking-related games the child can live through situations and roles that he has not yet experienced earlier. Besides the tale and the playing activities, discussions can also be very important where the group members and the teacher will make remarks not only about their own activity but

also about the activity of the others.

ORGANIZATION AND TIMING, EVALUATION

The Smoking or Health complementary program for kindergartens can be implemented in groups consisting of children of various age; in groups both partially or fully divided by age groups. By knowing the age characteristics and by building on individual differences, the kindergarten teachers will decide how to process the topic. The selection of games, activities and methods that help implementation is also built on the methodological freedom of the kindergarten teachers.

Certain activities, games connected with the topic can be made attractive also for the younger age group. The full adaptation of the topics is recommended for the 5-6-7-old age group.

The Program in its methods and means are close to the age group, can be easily built into the everyday life and activities of the children, into their daily and weekly routine activities.

The evaluation of the efficiency of the program would be useful also for the purpose of further improvements. Also for the planning, organization and implementation of the activities it would be useful to survey, before and after the introduction of the program, the smoking-related knowledge and attitude of the children, and the motivation background that would compel them to imitate. The information obtained from the drawings and during the games of the children can be feedbacks regarding efficiency.

The success of conviction and of the applied methods can be confirmed by the trust and co-operation of the parents, and later on by society and the growing up generation.

Emphasizing the independence of kindergarten teachers, we stress the importance of self-evaluation, since this way we can get an even more accurate picture regarding efficiency. The summation and possible feedback of experience gained during the use of successfully selected activities, games and methods can help the further improvement of the program.

CONNECTIONS

The kindergarten, as an institution, is a complex system, with all its components working in interaction. The concepts have an impact on the whole system. The openness of the kindergarten, as a principle, influences the development of the connections of the kindergarten, from the families to the co-operation with the school.

The implementation of the program does not require significantly different connections from those usual in the life of kindergartens. An important aspect is however the harmonious co-operation of the team members and the reconciliation of their views on smoking.

Contact with the members of the family is of great importance for successful co-operation, since the introduction of the sub-program is inconceivable without the approval of the parents.

Characteristics of approaching the family:

The kindergarten teacher is to strengthen the sense of responsibility of the parent by emphasizing the irreplaceable nature of the family. The parent is a partner in education, who may have demands. There is no prejudice towards the family members.