



Children's Health Maintenance Activities of the State and the Public Organizations in Ukraine at the Beginning of the 20th Century

 Olena Ionova¹,  Svitlana Luparenko²,  Svitlana Zolotukhina³,  Liudmyla Zelenska⁴, 

Iryna Sira⁵,  Olga Kabanska⁶ and  Tetiana Kutsenko⁷

^{1,2,3,4}Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, H. S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University, Ukraine.

^{5,6,7}PhD (Candidate Degree in Pedagogy), H. S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University, Ukraine.

Abstract

The problem of development of healthy people requires analyzing and taking into consideration the theory and practice of health maintenance activities, implemented in various countries in different historical time. The article reveals children's health maintenance activities implemented by the Ukrainian state and the public organization during 1900-1917. Based on the archive materials, legislative documents of the studied period, scientific sources of university libraries, information of periodicals and original works of the scientists, memoirs and autobiographical literature, the authors have determined the reasons for children's poor health, named public organizations which were involved in medical and educational activities and specified the directions of their health maintenance activities. The reasons for children's poor health were weaknesses in organization of educational process at school, difficult living conditions in families, children's particular tendency to infectious diseases. The public organizations which provided health maintenance activities were societies of spread of literacy among people, Frebel societies, poor students' assistance societies, societies of care for homeless young orphans, physical education societies, the Society for the Promotion of Primary Education, the Ukrainian Society of School Education and charitable societies. The directions of health maintenance activities were providing hospital care for children, arrangement of children's institutions with educational materials and providing them with rationally-constructed furniture, carrying out children's medical examinations, inspections of classrooms, arrangement of school first-aid kits, conducting talks about health maintenance activities by teachers and doctors, organization of special classes at schools and shelters for children of refugees during holidays, creation of children's summer colonies. The results and difficulties which the state and public organizations faced with have been revealed.

Keywords: Health, Health Maintenance, State, Public Organization, Children, Activities.

1. Introduction

Nowadays childhood is considered to be an important period in human life, and adults are responsible for good quality of children's life. The status of childhood is going to strengthen, and the acceptance of the documents ("Declaration of the Rights of Children" and "UN Convention on the Rights of the Child") testifies to this. These documents are aimed at the protection and development of children, increased attention to children's subculture and creativity.

The problems of child care, education and upbringing are among priorities in Ukraine, too. They are revealed in Ukrainian regulatory documents (Law of Ukraine "On Education", the concept of "New Ukrainian School", National program "Children of Ukraine" etc.). The state plays the main part in solving educational, cultural and social problems of childhood, ensuring the functioning of the state educational system and the state social protection system. Besides, public and religious organizations and private initiatives complement the activities of the state in the field of socio-cultural support for children.

The main tasks of the corresponding activities of the state are taking steps to reduce child mortality, provide children with necessary medical assistance and health care, fight disease and malnutrition, provide mothers with appropriate health care services, provide all people with information on children's health and nutrition, their hygiene, sanitation of child's environment and accident prevention, ensure access to education and support in using the above-mentioned knowledge, develop educational work and activities on preventive medical care and family planning etc.

However, the situation with children's health maintenance was not the same in different historical periods. For instance, at the beginning of the 20th century the state could not always realize its functions



properly, which caused increasing the importance of the charitable pedagogical movement. As a result, public organizations and private initiatives solved most of the state problems with child care and education. And they did it successfully.

So, it is important to study positive experience in socio-cultural support for children at different stages of historical development of the country, to determine the reasons for the difficulties and the conditions of effective use of this experience under current conditions. The experience of socio-cultural support for children in Ukraine at the beginning of the 20th century is especially valuable, as at that time various steps on health maintenance of children, their education and cultural development were taken.

2. Literature Review

The analysis of publications and researches proves that some aspects of the problem of children's health maintenance activities implemented by the state and public organizations during the 20th century have been studied by the scientists. The issues of the state policy in the field of child protection have been studied by L. Kryvachuk [1], I. Kubai [2], G. Radchenko [3], N. Reznichenko [4] and others. The history of organization of children's protection has been revealed in the works of O. Artiushenko [5], M. Baran [6], A. Ryshkova [7], A. Zinchenko [8] and others. The problems of social services for families and children have become the subjects of research of I. Trubavina [9] and others. The peculiarities of health maintenance activities in retrospective have been analyzed by O. Ionova [10], O. Lukashenko [11], S. Luparenko [12], Yu. Vasyilkova and T. Vasyilkova [13], Yu. Yaroshevych [14], Ye. Zviagintsev [15] and others. However, the problem of children's health maintenance activities of the state and public organization in Ukraine at the beginning of the 20th century has not been under careful consideration yet.

The aim of the article is to analyze the experience of children's health maintenance activities implemented by the state and the public organizations in Ukraine in 1900-1917.

3. Method

A complex of methods was used to carry out this research. *The general scientific methods* (historical-pedagogical analysis, generalization, retrospective, chronological) were the basis for investigation of the procedural and substantive components of the state reforms in Ukraine at the beginning of the 20th century. *The historical and genetic method* enabled the authors to analyze the genesis of ideas of childhood, attitude to children and their health maintenance at the beginning of the 20th century. *The comparative method* provided the opportunity to compare the scientists' ideas about children and their health maintenance, to distinguish similar and different ideas. *The retro-praximetric method* made it possible to analyze the experience in implementing the health maintenance activities. *The problem-target method* enabled the authors to compare documentary sources and archive materials which revealed the development and implementation of health maintenance activities in Ukraine at the beginning of the 20th century. *The axiological method* contributed to substantiation of value attitude to children and the need for health maintenance activities. The prognostic method enabled the authors to outline the perspectives of creative use of the generalized experience in implementing the health maintenance activities of the past in modern educational practice.

The archive materials, legislative documents of the beginning of the 20th century, scientific and pedagogical sources of the funds of the state and university libraries, information of periodicals of the studied period, original works of the scientists who worked in educational and medical sectors in Ukraine at the beginning of the 20th century, memoirs and autobiographical literature were the main basis for writing this article.

4. Results

State and public organizations in Ukraine in 1900-1917

During the studied period, the state was not always able to implement its social and educational functions, that is why the role of the charitable pedagogical movement among noble people and clergy increased significantly.

During 1900-1917, there was no unified system of bodies and institutions of social protection in Ukraine. For instance, a significant number of socially vulnerable minors lived in institutions which were



mostly run by charities and existed on private charity funds. Due to the expansion of the activities of charitable societies, the net of children's educational and social institutions increased. Children could receive both material and spiritual support in these institutions.

Among all societies which existed in different towns and villages in Ukraine and contributed to solving childhood problems and health maintenance problems, the biggest and the most active societies were societies of spread of literacy among people, Frebel societies, poor students' assistance societies, societies of care for homeless young orphans, physical education societies, the Society for the Promotion of Primary Education, the Ukrainian Society of School Education and charitable societies.

The societies of spread of literacy among people were social and educational organizations which aimed at spread of literacy and general education among people. Kharkiv society of spread of literacy among people was the oldest and the most active society in Ukraine. It existed during 1869-1920 and was the first public organization of cultural-educational nature. The tasks of this society were feasible spread of literacy and useful theoretical and applied knowledge among people, promotion of public education in Kharkiv Region due to establishment of various educational institutions (schools, evening and Sunday classes and schools, museums, libraries, reading rooms etc.), organization of book stores, readings and talks, systematic courses and lectures in various disciplines, exhibitions, plays and concerts, providing students and teachers with different assistance at the schools of the society, promoting physical development and childcare, publication and distribution of useful books, tutorials and catalogues, providing educational institutions with textbooks and training manuals, discussion of pedagogical problems and activities on public education [16]. The statistic data presented in the reports of the society [16; 17] show that the quantity and people involved in the educational and cultural activities of the society increased every year.

Frebel societies had the following tasks: to raise the spiritual and moral level of children who were left unattended (regardless of their faith, nationality and origin), to learn children to work and to give them opportunities to learn crafts, help them to be healthy and beneficial to society, to promote the expansion of children's worldview, their health maintenance and physical development. In order to accomplish these tasks, the societies established nursery schools, literacy schools and work houses [18].

The poor students' assistance societies raised funds to provide all kinds of assistance (food, money, school thing etc.) to poor students. For instance, poor students' assistance society in Kharkiv Region provided various kinds of assistance: it paid tuition fees instead of students, gave them textbooks and tutorials for free or at a reduced price, provided children with medicine and beds in hospitals at the expense of the society, gave money and cheap accommodations to children, arranged canteens etc. [19].

The societies of care for homeless young orphans picked up children from the streets and sent them to shelters and families etc. [20; 21].

The physical education societies arranged children's playgrounds, organized holidays and classes in physical education and handicraft [22; 23].

The Society for the Promotion of Primary Education aimed at ensuring the successful development of primary education and organization of various educational institutions (libraries, reading rooms, Sunday schools etc.). For this purpose, the society held readings for people, repetition classes and evening classes, choral singing classes, concerts, performances which were available for people etc.

The Ukrainian Society of School Education was intended to spread education in the Ukrainian language among people through schools, providing them with methodical and material assistance [24].

The charitable societies were engaged in various types of charitable activities, mainly childcare [25].

The clergy also played a significant role in implementation of health maintenance activities in the studied period. Churches organized and kept hospitals, schools on private donations. The church was one of the social institutions which educated children and took care of them. The Christian education was focused on formation of person's spiritual qualities, moral values, patriotism, aesthetic tastes, love and respect for parents and elders, in general [133].

Moreover, guardianships at public schools were of great importance for child protection and education. The guardianships were created for strengthening the connection between local people and schools represented by selected guardians. The guardianships solved at public schools various problems connected with helping children and organization of their education and free time, namely: providing the

poorest children with warm clothes and food, providing children with hot breakfasts, organization of an overnight stay and transportation of children to school, organization of children's festivals, parties, walks, readings, educational trips and excursions, organization and improvement of activities of school libraries, helping the most capable students to enter other educational institution [15].

The reasons for poor health of children

It should be noted that during the studied period the development of statistics as a science helped to reveal data which showed "imperceptible features of national life" [14, p. 47], for instance, data on children's health and mortality.

The main problem was children's poor health and high incidence among them. In fact, many children suffered from various diseases, so their health maintenance became one of the most important child care directions. For example, according to the data of medical examinations, 91% of students suffered from anemia, 57.4% of students suffered from nervous diseases, 37.9% of children suffered from scrofula, tuberculosis, rheumatism and syphilis, 35.7% of students had physical exhaustion, 33.9% of students suffered from respiratory tract diseases, 23.8% of students suffered from diseases of the digestive system, 17.4% of students suffered from skin diseases, 7.7% of students had eye disorders and 7.4% of students had hearing disorders. Besides, children often suffered from spinal curvature, tonsillitis, rachitis; they had headaches and enlarged lymph glands. Most of children had several mentioned diseases. According to indicators of physical development, 6-14% of children significantly lagged behind the accepted development standards [26].

Children's poor health was caused by a number of reasons. The first reason was weaknesses in organization of educational process at school (children's overload and fatigue because of improper organization of classes). The second reason was difficult living conditions in families (low standard of living, improper organization of child's daily routine, his active work and rest, physical punishments by parents). It caused persistent malnutrition of children (most children seldom had suppers and only sometimes had dinners), insufficient childcare, parents' ignoring the peculiarities of children's development. The third reason was children's particular tendency to infectious diseases (measles, scarlet fever, diphtheria, whooping cough, mumps), which is typical for children age. It led to the fact that children got ill easily (because of the weakened body resistance) and spread these diseases to other children and their families in the process of communication [27].

For example, school doctors affirmed that "many children came to school being weak, ill and having physical disabilities, so they require treatment" [17, p. 39]. At the same time, they noted that school education could worsen children's health: "school and its mode causes children's increased growth with insufficient, delayed development of the chest, which, no doubt, can be considered a very unfavorable moment" [27, p. 12]. Furthermore, school doctors noticed: "Numerous data of the examinations of children and schools show that attending school causes negative changes in schoolchildren's health and physical development, and they suffer from both violation of proper growth and some kinds of diseases called school diseases" [27, p. 12].

School doctors distinguished the following groups of school diseases [27]: 1) dizziness, headaches, convulsive diseases, a general increase in nervousness and nervous fatigue; 2) circulatory disorders in head, chest, stomach, violation of proper emptying of the relevant organs, nosebleeds, eating disorders, anemia; 3) curvature of the spine, wrong shoulder position; 4) eye disorders (short-sightedness etc.); 5) speech disorders (stuttering etc.).

At the same time, family conditions of children were difficult too. It was confirmed by the data of medical-sanitary examinations of schoolchildren and schools. For instance, according to the data of examinations of schools in Kharkiv Region, "...children of public schools, city schools in particular, were children of the underprivileged class, namely: small employees, craftsmen, servants etc., and negative conditions of their life increase the negative impact of school on children's health and development. Small, dark, sometimes damp apartments of lower or basement floors, dirty yards of big streets without green trees are the environment in which they spend time after school. Besides, unfavourable hygienic conditions of children's environments, there were adverse moral defects of the environment. Poverty, quarrels, swearing,

fighting, drunken scenes and other kinds of rude attitude of uncultured people were the specific features of the environment that surrounded children. ... The adverse effects of poverty, narrow rooms and low cultural level were replaced by almost the same influence of street and older friends from the same environment" [27, p. 12]. Unfortunately, parents were often not able to care their children, and, in doctors and teachers' opinion, children's diseases severely hampered their progress in learning [17]. All these factors only aggravated the difficult position of children.

In poor families, parents did not often have an opportunity or desire to take into consideration the specific features of child's development. It caused deviations in development and even death of children [14].

Health maintenance activities implemented by the state and the public organization

In order to solve the above-mentioned problems, the state and different public organizations provided various kinds of activities, namely: provision of hospital care for children (free or for a small fee), proper arrangement of children's institutions with educational materials and providing them with rationally-constructed furniture, carrying out medical examinations of children, inspections of classrooms, conducting talks about health maintenance activities by teachers and doctors, arrangement of school first-aid kits, organization of special classes at schools and shelters for shelters for refugee children during summer holidays, creation of children's summer colonies [26; 27; 28; 29; 30; 31; 32; 33; 34].

When carrying out medical examinations of children, doctors examined indicators of children's physical development, for example, height, chest circumference, physical constitution, nutrition features, conditions of eyes, ears, nose, mouth, throat, teeth, skin, glands, heart, lungs, cleanliness of body and clothes. Doctors collected the data about health condition, morbidity and mortality of children [28].

The inspections of classrooms included medical and sanitary supervision of classrooms, construction of schools with sanitary point of view (according to corresponding requirements for floor space, cubic air content per person, the ratio of the glass area to the floor area), room lighting (kerosene, gas or electric lighting), heating (local or central heating), natural ventilation (vents) or artificial ventilation, latrines (warm or cold), quantity of correctly or incorrectly equipped desks, determining the need to redo classrooms in order to adapt them to educational goals, hygiene requirements for classrooms and identifying obstacles which hindered school opening in certain rooms before [28; 29; 30].

Moreover, teachers and doctors conducted talks about health maintenance activities with children, their parents and other teachers. These talks were about the importance to take care of health, the need to maintain health and carry out activities aimed at strengthening children's health, especially in families. It implied strict adherence to the daily routine, regulation of the mode of work, rest and sleep, improvement of children's nutrition. For example, according to the data of inspections of schools in Kharkiv Region, teachers and doctors took various steps for improving schoolchildren's health. They paid much attention to the correct organization of daily classes, their timely beginnings and endings to prevent students from physical fatigue. Also, teachers tried to give students feasible class work in accordance with their mental abilities, focused on students' useful and proper seating in classes, the sufficiency of light and air in order to prevent curvature of the spine, short-eyesight and headaches. For these purpose, teachers were recommended to change places where children sat during the academic year for places which were more comfortable for them. Teachers and doctors sought to provide students with necessary relaxation and enough moving in the open air after each lesson. Moreover, they encouraged various children's games and gymnastic movements, taking into account children's age and health, gave adults various advice about the importance and need to avoid such disciplinary measures as child's long additional staying in the classroom after lessons (for more than one hour) and corporal punishment of children, as it was prohibited under strict liability. In order to prevent various kinds of children's diseases, teachers were recommended to remind children regularly about the necessity to be careful, neat and tidy and teach them basic rules of health maintenance, using available books and pictures [34, p. 16-17].

In special classes at schools and shelters for shelters for refugee children during summer holidays, children had opportunities to use free summer time for strengthening their help and mental development [33].



Children's summer colonies were built on the outskirts of cities, and they were aimed at enabling weak children from poor families to improve their health in rural conditions and to gain strength for further intensive and unobstructed learning. The tasks of the children's summer colonies were children's direct acquaintance with nature, development of skills of observing nature, formation of love for nature and all living things, desire to take care of it, urban children's acquaintances with rural life, agricultural works, peculiarities of native land, expanding children's worldview, formation of children's teamwork skills, active cooperation, mutual assistance and communication and raising children's cultural level [27]. Children's summer colonies worked for free or for a small fee. There were children's summer colonies in Kyiv (from 1896), Zhytomyr, Ielisavetgrad, Kharkiv (from 1897), Sloviansk (from 1900), Katerynislav, Mykolaiv (from 1902), Odesa, Yalta etc. [32]. Children's summer colonies were popular and in great demand. This is confirmed by some facts. Firstly, the quantity of children who attended summer colonies grew every year. Secondly, the quantity of children who needed re-healing after summer colonies decreased every year. Thirdly, the statistic data showed that staying in summer colonies was good for children's health [32], as all children had improvements in their physical health (gain in weight, growth increase and enlargement of the chest circumference)[26] and low incidence.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

So, the problems with maintenance of children's health were among the important directions of child welfare. It was caused by high incidence of children because of difficult living conditions. At the same time, implementation of activities aimed at maintenance and improvement of children's health was mainly the matter of public organizations.

Health maintenance activities included development of a wide network of children's social and educational institutions, healing children, examination of their health and family conditions, inspections of schools and classrooms, organization of children's proper nutrition and medical service, arrangement of shelters for children and refugees, providing them with different things which were needed for living, formation of children's positive personal qualities, organization of children's summer colonies for their health maintenance. The public (clergy, public organizations and societies and a lot of people) tried to solve most problems of childcare and education and carried out this activity along with the state due to initiative and purposeful activity of the public organizations. In spite of all activities, during the studied period the state and public organizations could not provide protection and care to all children who need them, so a lot of children continued to live in poor conditions and difficult situation.

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