CHAPTER 1

The Importance of Sportıve Play in Preschool Education

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1. Introduction

Education is the basis for preparing children for life. The education given is to explain life as it is, without separating them from their childhood, and to do this by going down to the level of the child. Education is a rehearsal that prepares children for life, so this rehearsal should be very close to reality (Yavuzer, 2000).

The 0-6 age range in children is a period in which they will gain all kinds of movement skills permanently, and this period is a critical period for children, a period in which their whole life is directed. Therefore, preschool children should develop well in every aspect (Evridiki et al., 2004). All kinds of pre-school physical activities correct and protect the physical structure of the child both today and in the future (Özbar et al., 2004).

Considering that children are as active as they need to be, it is almost a necessity for them to do physical education and sports in order to meet these needs and develop healthily. Physical education and sports support muscle coordination, endurance, strength and flexibility in children as they cover basic movements and skills. It is not only limited to these, but is also very effective in the respiratory and circulatory system (Yarımkaya & Ulucan, 2015).

Play is generally considered as voluntary behaviors that can be performed by individuals of all ages, that occur in the inner world of the individual and arise from the instinct of movement, that enable the development of physical, moral and social personality skills, that are shaped over time based on certain rules, and that are voluntary in accordance with the socio-economic structure and developments in societies (İnal, 2000).

It is emphasized that play is an important tool that contributes to the child's recognition and understanding of the world and the environment in which he/she lives, because play is seen as the most serious occupation of children and therefore it is stated that it would be wise to use it within the education system. Because, it is stated that the child learns by using all his/her emotions in the game, by experiencing and doing, and that a more permanent and natural learning takes place by internalizing his/her behavioral knowledge and skills through play (Uskan & Bozkuş, 2019). Education through games contributes to better memory of what has been learned, development of comparative thinking ability, development of decision-making mastery and also positive behavior (Öztürk, 2016).

Pre-school sports and physical education, which affect all these developmental processes, when combined with play, puts the child in a natural and active learning environment. Because play plays an effective role in children's movement, affective and cognitive skills. Many skills; decision-making, retention, observation, problem solving, creative thinking are skills learned through play (Özyürek & Çavuş, 2016). Therefore, it is not possible to separate play and learning. Play serves as a bridge between theory and practice and is the most important assistant of educators (Akın & Atıcı; 2015).

Although it is stated that the skills that are not acquired in preschool cause children to be unable to acquire more complex skills in later ages, it is stated that in order to prevent the emergence of the so-called sportive competence barrier, basic needs such as jumping, leaping, running, catching, rolling, throwing, crawling should be given to children in the form of games and entertainment in the preschool period, so that it is thought that the child will be more willing and equipped to enter the sportive skills that the child will do in later ages (Ketelhut et al, 2011; Oliver et al., 2010; Pate et al., 2004; Sanderock, 2010; Schneider, 2008; Vale et al., 2010).

In recent years, changes in technological fields have caused individuals to spend a lot of time in digital environments with devices such as computers, phones or tablets, and children to turn to digital and virtual games (Digital Games, E-sports) (Parisod et al., 2014; Horzum et al., 2018). In fact, it is known that digital sportive games have emerged (Kretscmann, 2010). However, if we evaluate the comparison of these digital sportive games with sportive games involving physical activity through the results obtained by Cihan and Ilgar (2019) in their study, they state that digital sportive games have more

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positive effects on young individuals in cognitive, social, affective and psychomotor categories, and that they support concepts such as happiness, positive psychology, quality of life, optimism, and self-esteem for the psychological well-being category. Although they could not reach the results that it contributed to their physical development, they stated that playing digital games for a long time revealed different problems.

Therefore, the interest in these games causes people to lead a more sedentary life in the eyes of society. However, one of the most important factors in leading a healthy life is movement and the main source of movement is seen as sports. Sports should be a necessity in human life. As it is known, one of the most important features of sport is that it is a cultural concept and in many societies, sport has become one of the cultural elements in life and has turned into a lifestyle. However, although there has been an increase in both facility and organizational efforts to increase the interest in sports in our country in recent years, the proportion of individuals who do sports in our country is considered to be quite low compared to the population.

In the light of the information given above, this study aims to reveal the effects of sportive play on children in preschool education, which we see as the most important step in the formation of sports culture in our country, and its contributions to their physical, cognitive and psycho-social development.

2. Games and Sportive Game

Although the history of games is as old as the history of mankind, available documents and sources date back to 3000 BC. Artifacts and hieroglyphs obtained from excavations depict Senet and Mangala games played in Ancient Egypt, and it is known that marbles, spinning tops and minnows belonging to Greek and Roman civilizations are among the oldest findings of games (Onur, 1992; Fox, 2002). Information about traditional games played or played in the Turks can be seen in Kashgarlı Mahmut's Divanü Lügat-it Türk, Evliya Çelebi's Seyahatname and Dede Korkut Stories (And, 2003). To summarize, we can say that play has always been an important concept in human life throughout history.

Lazarus, on the other hand, defined play as an activity that arises spontaneously, has no goal and brings happiness. In general terms, play is a part of real life and the most effective learning process for the child, which is the basis of physical, cognitive, language, emotional and social development, which may or may not be for a specific purpose, with or without rules, but in any case, the child willingly and enjoyably takes part (TDK, 2017).

Suits (2004) states that play is not a random human activity, but an important human activity that takes place for a specific purpose. Suits (1973) also clarified the concepts of game and sportive game in his study titled "Elements of Sport". In his study, he stated

that not every sport activity is a game, but sports can be categorized as sportive games according to their purposes. However, Sutton-Smith (1997) also included the category of "Sportive Games" among the classifications he made about game types. Again, Parlett (1992) mentions that the game has a winner, tools and rules used to win (Sezgin, 2016).

Play contributes positively to the development of the child with many phenomena it contains. "Play has direct effects on the development of the child. These effects differ according to the game played. It is an undeniable fact that play affects the development of the child in various aspects" (Erdem, 2003). Also the game; from ritual origins to the present-day existence, conduce the relevance of very different behaviors and the reasons that cause it (Alıncak and Tuzcuoğulları, 2016). In this process, the meaning, definition and of course the achievements of the game may change over time.

As a result of many scientific studies on play, it has been seen that play has positive effects on different developmental areas of the child such as affective, cognitive, psycho-motor, and none of these studies have found any negative findings or comments about play. Many researchers have proven that play is very important for children's mental, social, emotional and physical development (Jansma, 1999).

Therefore, "sportive play" can be defined as playing a game with certain rules and equipment with the aim of defeating and establishing superiority over another individual or group. In this sense, as it can be understood from the definition, we can say that the implementation of rules or the use of tools contributes not only to physical development, but also to mental (cognitive), social-emotional development, along with the inclusion of elements involving high levels of physical activity in sportiv

3. The Effects of games on Physical Development

Many scientific studies have shown that play contributes to the physical development of children (Küçükkaya 1989; Kerkez 2006; Özdenk 2007; Sarı 2012; Gül 2012; Akın 2015; Ongül et al., 2017).

The biggest indicator of development in children is bone development. Studies have shown that there are periods when children's bone development develops rapidly and slowly from time to time. Incomplete bone development in childhood leads to posture disorders. It is known that bones are difficult to break because they have a flexible structure. This leads to difficulties in fine motor development in young children. Bone development varies according to the individual and this is most clearly manifested by the difference in height growth (Tepeli, 2011). At this point, we can say that education that includes physical activity has an important place, and therefore sportive games are one of the most important education that affects the physical development of children (Ünlü & Aydos, 2007).

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Thanks to games, the child gets rid of excess energy, his/her sleep becomes regular and his/her appetite increases. Especially games played outdoors contribute to development thanks to fresh air. Motor development such as strength, speed, attention, coordination and flexibility develop through play. The game also plays an important role in controlling the child's movements. In short, it contributes greatly to the child's psychomotor development (Dilekmen & Bozan, 2018).

In the game, players jump, run, push, etc. They struggle with their opponent, their own body weight, gravity, and the tools in the game by making movements. While these struggles contribute to muscle tendon development, the development of strength is also realized. At the same time, due to the structure of sportive games, acting according to the command (voice commands, auditory; visual commands) contributes to the development of reaction times (Mengütay 1999; Hazar 2000; Özen et al., 2014). In addition, while the desire to continue the game increases the individual's resistance to fatigue (endurance), the flexibility of pulling, pushing, stretching, bending, twisting, etc. in the game, the necessity to perform a series of movements in a fluent and harmonious manner also contributes to the development of coordinative abilities (Mengütay 2005; Açak 2006; Aksoy and Çiftçi 2014). In summary, while the elements contained in sportive games contribute to the development of children's basic motoric characteristics, they also contribute significantly to their physical development.

Another contribution of preschool sportive games is the fight against obesity. Weight problems at an early age are dangerous. According to studies, it has been proven that 25% of people who are obese in adulthood are overweight at a young age and that children who are overweight before the age of 8 are predisposed to become obese in adulthood (Freedman et al., 2001). A sedentary life from an early age causes many diseases, especially cardiovascular diseases, to be a risk factor (Mengütay, 1999; Saygın & Mengütay, 2006).

The body that gets used to inactivity at a young age brings along obesity, which is officially recognized as a disease today, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, arteriosclerosis and arteriosclerosis in later ages (Yoshinaya et al., 2004; Özer, 2001).

Active life in preschool may prevent obesity, but this does not mean that children who lead an active life will have good motor skills. In some studies, the development of motor skills was compared between preschool children who engaged in free play activities and children who received planned motor skill instruction, and significant differences were found in children who received instruction. Therefore, planned instruction is of great importance in preschool children (Rutledge, 1993).

Such studies have emphasized the importance of movement in child development in our

country and preschool education has been included as compulsory education since 2009-2010. For this reason, children should be supported to participate in physical activities, and they should be provided with an activity habit throughout their lives. It should be transferred to children as a natural fact of life (Oliver et al., 2010).

4. The Effects of Sportive Game on Mental-Cognitive Development

Play is an indispensable occupation for children and is intertwined with the preschool period. Considering that the child's intellectual development is in the 0-6 age range, the effect of play is of great importance in order to raise healthy, happy and creative people in the future. The way to gain these behaviors, knowledge and skills comes spontaneously through play (Öztürk, 2001).

While playing games, the child's cognitive development is supported, he/she experiences the social skills necessary for his/her daily life and is given the opportunity to express his/her emotions. Most importantly, the child spends this process having fun and play provides the necessary environment for the child to reveal his/her creativity (Türkoğlu, 2016). During the play process, children develop their personality and character structures by using their body and cognitive functions effectively, and experience social roles and behaviors by making sense of unwritten rules in society (Arslan & Dilci, 2018).

Play is a learning environment for the child. As the child plays, his/her senses increase and his/her abilities and skills develop. Because play is an environment where children develop what they hear and see (Özer et al., 2008).

The child spontaneously learns the knowledge and experience required for the continuation of life while playing. Play is as important as nutrition and sleep for the healthy development of preschool children (Kaytez & Durualp, 2014). Play behavior both contributes to the child's individual developmental areas and mediates the transfer of cultural elements between generations. Play is also used by developmental psychologists to collect the necessary information in the diagnostic process in the context of characteristics such as mental development, psychosocial development, thought structure and schemas (Özdoğan, 2014).

Sportive games contain many rules and complex situations due to their structure and enable children to face different problems. The child who encounters any problem will try to solve this problem and thus produce different solutions. Especially in the preschool period, the child's learning is very fast. The most natural way to give information to children in this period is play. Information taught through play can be more permanent. The reason for this is that the child learns actively and practically in the game. In addition, since the child's senses are constantly working during the game, skills such as curiosity, comprehension skills, intelligence and reasoning will also develop (Kıldan, 2001).

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The Effects of Sportive Game on Social-Emotional Development

The foundations of social development are laid during childhood. Sportive games are environments where social and emotional development is provided by nature. Children, who can easily achieve what they want in the family environment, have to act as required by the rules of the game rather than what they want during sportive games, so they learn to act with the group and obey the group. In addition, game rules ensure the development of behavior, and the behaviors acquired in the game are transferred to social life. Individuals who learn honesty, solidarity, putting themselves in someone else's shoes, respect for others, good manners and responsibility in play reflect this in their lives. Children who do not expect anything in return learn to sacrifice (Hazar 1996; Poyraz 2003; Koçyiğit et al., 2007; Çankaya 2014; Bektaş 2015). Again, we can say that children can learn to respect the rights and freedoms of others, protect their own rights and freedoms, cooperate, share, be a leader, win and lose in sportive play activities (Akandere, 2004).

Sportive play helps the child interpret himself/herself and what he/she has learned and teaches him/her to live by rules. The child recognizes life in play. He/she tests and shapes the characteristics he/she has brought from the family in the game (Hazar 1996).

We can say that sportive games play an important role in children's learning social skills. Many emotional reactions are learned through play and the gamification of these reactions contributes to the child's self-knowledge. The game, which helps the child to socialize, distances him/her from self-centeredness (Durualp & Aral, 2010). At the same time, the child engages in mental work during play and develops skills such as interpretation, perception, evaluation and decision-making (Özer et al., 2006). Talents and skills emerge in every field in which the individual is a direct participant. Since there is effective participation during play, the child is directly affected, influences, changes, changes, and learning continues in a natural process, allowing the child to be encouraged and show his/her abilities (Engin et al., 2010).

5. Conclusion

In line with the studies conducted in the literature, it can be said that the concept of play can be played by individuals of almost every age group and has positive contributions to individuals in many ways. If we make an evaluation within the scope of the importance of sportive play in preschool education, which is discussed within the scope of the study;

It is stated that many behaviors that adults try to teach their children will be taught to children through play. Because if the child spends time having fun and enjoying himself/herself, he/she has the opportunity to learn more by experiencing and experimenting. The child experiences and keeps alive the society and family through play. It can be

said that play makes great contributions to the child's mental, physical, emotional and social development (Yavuzer, 2000). Sag et al. (2022a), in their study on classroom teachers, also stated that the game; It has come to the fore that it is a need, a means of communication, preparation for real life, personality building and socialization.

The first periods of human life are defined as critical periods by educators. Especially in these periods, it is very important to direct children correctly and to guide them correctly. Children's recognizing and making sense of the outside world generally begins in this period, and the child harmonizes this process through play (Sağ et al., 2022b).

Studies show that conscious sports education given before school contributes significantly to both physical and cognitive development of the child. While its contributions to bone development and thus growth are undeniably important from a physical point of view, from a cognitive point of view, it can be said that it positively affects the child's lifelong development, from language development to intelligence development, from being able to express himself more easily to socialization.

As a result, games are generally considered as voluntary behaviors that can be performed by individuals of all ages, that occur in the inner world of the individual and arise from the instinct of movement, that enable the development of physical, moral and social personality skills, that are shaped over time based on certain rules, and that are voluntarily performed in accordance with the socio-economic structure and developments in societies. Play is actually indispensable for all humanity from birth to death. It can only change shape. For preschool children, play can also be seen as starting life, getting to know themselves and meeting their needs. Play is seen as the most important phenomenon that supports both the physical and mental development of the child and enables them to demonstrate their skills. Because play affects the child's bone development and growth development. For this reason, we can say that it has become a necessity to include sportive games in pre-school education curricula in order to increase the habit of planned active life of our society and to create a culture of doing

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