



DIDACTIC GAMES AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPING THE INTELLECTUAL AND CREATIVE ABILITIES OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract

The article discusses the specific features of didactic games as an effective tool for developing preschool children. It also presents the main and supplementary components of didactic games. Collectively, didactic games contribute to the formation of children's communicative skills; the development of thinking, imagination, and creative activity; and the cultivation of cognitive interests. At an early age, play becomes a type of activity that guides personal development. Through play, the child's personal qualities, attitudes toward reality, and interactions with people are shaped.

Keywords: Preschool child, didactic game, board game, verbal game, object-based games, main components, additional components, creative abilities.

Introduction

Play is the leading form of activity in preschool childhood, and therefore didactic games are considered one of the most effective means of developing children's intellectual and creative abilities [1], [2]. The planning of didactic games should occupy a significant place within the overall system of educational and developmental work with preschool children, as many scholars emphasize that structured and purposeful play enhances cognitive development, imagination, communication, and problem-solving skills [3], [4].



As an effective instructional tool, didactic games may serve as an integral part of a lesson, while in groups of younger preschool children they often become the primary form of organizing the learning process [5]. In addition, during the hours allocated for play, didactic games are planned and organized both as joint activities and as independent activities, allowing children to choose freely whether to engage in whole-group, small-group, or individual play formats [6], [7]. This flexibility ensures that didactic games contribute not only to intellectual growth but also to social-emotional competence and creative expression [8].

A substantial body of international research confirms that play-based learning—especially didactic games—significantly influences children’s holistic development, shaping early academic readiness, communication skills, and creative thinking [9], [10], [11].

Materials and Methods

When conducting didactic games, the teacher purposefully influences children, carefully selecting methodological techniques and ensuring that the didactic tasks are understood and accepted by all learners. By systematically increasing the complexity of the material in accordance with curriculum requirements, the educator provides accessible knowledge through didactic games, forms essential skills, and enhances mental processes such as perception, thinking, speech, and memory.

Incorporating didactic games into lessons makes the learning process engaging and enjoyable, increasing children’s interest in the subject matter. Through play activities, preschool children develop their cognitive abilities and creative potential. The use of didactic games during classes helps cultivate habits of concentration, unconventional thinking, attention, fluency, and flexibility. The life of a preschool child is permeated with imagination and creativity, and if these abilities are not adequately developed during this sensitive period, they may not fully manifest later in life.

The development of personality and future achievements is closely linked to individual psychological characteristics such as abilities, inclinations, and talents. Pedagogical research demonstrates that different age periods provide different



opportunities for the development of intellectual and creative capacities. Preschool age is considered the most favorable stage for their formation, since during this period significant positive changes occur across many domains: mental processes (attention, memory, perception, thinking, speech, imagination) improve, personality traits become more defined, and on this basis abilities and inclinations actively develop.

Researchers such as L. S. Vygotsky, N. V. Zakharyuta, and T. S. Komarova note that preschoolers develop skills of independent creative activity. Individual psychological characteristics enable children to master various creative techniques, cope with tasks successfully, and generate new and original solutions in different situations. Moreover, volitional qualities such as independence and initiative also play an important role, as they support the realization of creative potential.

Special attention must be given to the educational value of didactic games, which:

- provide freedom, as true play cannot be forced but only carried out voluntarily;
- offer relief from the monotony of daily routines;
- allow children to break free from social constraints;
- reduce psychological tension by replacing real-life stress with joyful voluntary mobilization of physical and mental resources;
- instill discipline, since didactic games rely on rules that cannot be ignored;
- create harmony and foster a desire for self-improvement;
- contribute to the formation and strengthening of group cohesion.

The main characteristics of didactic games include:

1. Didactic games are educational games created by adults for teaching and upbringing children.
2. For children participating in the game, its educational value is not explicit; it is realized through the game task, actions, and rules.
3. The cognitive content of a didactic game corresponds to the curriculum and is always integrated with a playful format.
4. Didactic games possess a unique structure.

This structure includes several components, each serving a specific purpose. Didactic games are an important means of upbringing and educating preschool



children. For them, play is a way of understanding the world. Through play, children learn to distinguish colors, shapes, material properties, spatial relations, and they explore plants, animals, and various elements of their environment.

Results and Discussion

The goal of the modern preschool educator is to nurture a child who is creative, initiative-driven, confident, and capable of independent cognitive activity. One of the most effective tools for achieving this goal is play, which remains a fundamental type of activity in early childhood. Didactic games, as a structured pedagogical instrument, consist of several essential elements, namely:

- a didactic task,
- content,
- rules, and
- game actions.

A well-designed game should allow the child to apply already familiar knowledge in practice while motivating them to acquire new skills and concepts. Therefore, the didactic materials selected for the game must be visually appealing, and the purpose of each item and the meaning of the questions must be clear and understandable for children.

Classification of Didactic Games

1. Didactic games with objects. These include games such as “*Find and Bring*,” “*Magic Bag*,” “*What Is Extra?*” and “*Guess What Has Changed*,” which are highly appealing to preschool children.
2. Tabletop games. These involve matching or sequencing cards, assembling whole images from parts, and working with puzzles, cubes, or domino-type materials.
3. Verbal didactic games. These are the most complex, as they require children to operate with mental representations, think abstractly, describe objects, identify them from verbal clues, and engage in reasoning.

Verbal games may be organized as:



- Journey games, which enrich children’s impressions and draw attention to familiar but previously unnoticed elements of the environment;
- Instructional games, such as “*Collect blocks of a specific color*” or “*Take out round objects from the bag,*” which require children to understand the next action and relate their knowledge to the conditions provided;
- Riddle games, which develop analytical and problem-solving skills;
- Conversation games, which involve interaction between the teacher and children, or among children themselves, forming the basis for playful learning and communicative development.

Didactic Games in Educational Planning

Planning didactic games should hold an important place within the overall system of educational activities. As an effective means of instruction, they may function as a component of a lesson or, in groups of younger preschoolers, as the primary form of organizing the learning process. During designated play hours, didactic games are organized both as group and individual activities, allowing children freedom of choice in how they participate. Game planning must correspond to the general pedagogical objectives and include careful selection of games and materials.

Didactic games represent practical activity through which it is possible to assess whether children have acquired knowledge in depth or superficially, and whether they are able to apply this knowledge when necessary. Children retain information more effectively when they are able to use it in varied contexts. It is common for a child to learn certain information during a lesson but struggle to use it in new or altered conditions. Because didactic games help overcome such difficulties in cognitive development, their use must also be planned for individualized work. The frequency and form of such activities depend on the specific needs and developmental levels of children. Individual didactic games create favorable conditions for direct teacher–child interaction, enable deeper understanding of the causes of learning difficulties, and support more active practice.



Development of Creative and Intellectual Abilities

Creative abilities are often associated with artistic forms of expression such as drawing, poetry, or music. However, creativity can manifest in any human activity, including mathematical, technical, and practical domains. Thus, *creative abilities* should be understood as individual psychological qualities necessary for successful participation in any type of creative activity.

The development of intellectual abilities is especially important for preparing children for school. These abilities are formed primarily in active engagement, with play being the leading type of activity in preschool years. Practical interaction with objects plays a central role in the child's intellectual development, supplemented by visual representations. Each preschool group should include various didactic games that support this process.

However, the availability of a large number of games is not a requirement. An excessive variety may overwhelm children and limit their ability to master the rules and content of each game. If a game is too difficult, children cannot participate meaningfully; if it is too simple, it fails to stimulate mental activity. Therefore, the selection of didactic games must always correspond to the developmental characteristics of the age group.

Conclusions

The importance of didactic games was emphasized as early as the works of the German educator Friedrich Froebel, who viewed them as an essential means of teaching and educating children. Psychologists interpret play activity as an expression of a child's positive attitude toward the content embodied in the game. Everything that appeals to children or leaves a strong impression on them is transformed into the practice of role-play or other forms of play activity.

One of the central challenges of our time is the preservation of the environment. Through didactic games and purposeful pedagogical work, it becomes possible to foster social responsibility in preschool children, develop their moral and ethical potential, and cultivate such qualities as carefulness, conscientiousness, and a sense of responsibility for their actions.

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