

Online gaming parent club as a means of transforming the interaction between teachers and parents of preschoolers

Liliya Goryunova, Olga Boldinova, and Nadezhda Markova*

Southern Federal University, 344006, Rostov on Don, Russia

Abstract. The issues of effective interaction between parents and educators are relevant to modern theory and practice of preschool education. In 2020, pre-school education in the Russian Federation was forced to operate under the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to a massive shift of institutions of this type to a remote format of operation and had a significant impact on the livelihoods of both preschoolers and their parents. The aim of this study was to identify the range of problems parents faced when being isolated during the pandemic and establishing an online gaming club as a means of transforming the interaction between parents and educators in remote access using remote educational technologies. As the main tool of the study, questionnaire methods were used to clarify the problematic experience of parents of preschoolers and their attitude to such a format of interaction with teachers as the Online Gaming Parent Club. The authors found that the creation and operation of the Online Gaming Parent Club is the best way to transform the interaction between teachers and parents of preschoolers in modern conditions and allows to solve the problems of organizing joint play activities of parents and children in the conditions of home education and education.

1 Introduction

The emergency transition of pre-school education to online education during the COVID-19 pandemic occurred without prior preparation and recommendations from educational subjects [1]. This transition was particularly difficult for parents of preschoolers, as it was most often carried out in conditions of limited resources and obstacles to their counselling, accompanied by teachers. The emergency transition to online learning meant that parents did not have time to prepare for their child's life and education at home. Social distancing limited various types of interactions by the type of "parents-teachers," "child-teachers," "children-children," which led to the elimination of social and educational support for families. The implementation of extracurricular activities and special programs of education were interrupted. The so-called "buffer" between children's stay in the family and in educational organizations has disappeared. In the conditions of self-isolation and social landing, the burden of organizing both the child's leisure activities and his education fell on the shoulders

* Corresponding author: lnacs@springer.com

of parents, which became the most relevant for parents of preschoolers, who demand greater parental participation in their activities. A U.S. study on the extent to which parents participate in the lives and activities of their children while at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic found that they were more likely to participate in the majority of their children's activities. Parents were more likely to play games with their child (68.7%), watched TV and various media with their child (65.1%), and played with them more often in toys (56.9%). Parents also noted that in the context of the COVID pandemic-19 their children felt the need for active social contacts, games, entertainment and physical activity [2]. It should be noted that the decrease in physical activity of people during the period of restrictions on movement in the pandemic has influenced the process of building relationships in the family. Collaborative play activities based on intergenerational activity will strengthen relationships between children and parents, not only in isolation [3]. Teaching parents about the organization of play activities related to physical activity becomes the key to the health of both a person and a family. The extent of the impact on children of the COVID-19 pandemic has not yet been fully understood, but it is already noted how the social sphere of life of the child has changed during the closure of the family at home, the cognitive and emotional sphere of child development, which depends on the integration of family and educational spaces and the physical sphere of healthy growth and mental well-being of the child. Restrictions imposed on these spheres lead to sedentary lifestyle, excessive use of gadgets, which hinders the physical and mental development of children. In this regard, the role and importance of children's play activities in the family is increasing. In many countries, recommendations have been developed for parents to organize children's play activities in the family. Most of the recommendations focus on finding positive ways to interact with family members by involving a child in play activities [4]. Encouraging children's playful behavior improves their adaptation to stress, promotes the development of their cognitive, social, emotional, and psychomotor functions, thus strengthening the basis of their health in the future [5]. To be able to play, children often need others to participate in this activity with them. It is important to understand that in a family environment, this practice of interaction between its members is the most common [6]. Joint play activities can meet the deficit of social interaction of the child in isolation during the pandemic.

Social media has great potential to help educate parents. It has been found that teaching parents to play as children is important because their knowledge of the game affects the quality of the game in home learning environment [7]. In recent years, information and communication technologies have become a tool for innovation in education, a means of improving its quality and a way of communication between parents and educators. The demand for information and communication technologies has now increased as they provide flexibility and accessibility at the individual, group, and social level [8].

It should be noted that both Russian and foreign scientists were involved in the organization of parental education. Until recently, however, the full potential of the digital environment has not been fully realized. Expanding the use of digital resources to transform the parent education model creates an environment in which it functions effectively.

In accordance with this purpose, the study was to develop the most effective format of interaction with parents, which could be used not only during distance learning (online mode), but also in the hybrid format (online and offline) of preschool educational institutions.

2 Materials and methods

To achieve this goal, the study used survey methods based on receiving verbal responses from respondents to events and phenomena that happened to them. The choice of survey methods in the study is justified by the fact that they allow you to quickly get the necessary information from a significant number of respondents, as well as to get information in a wide

range of specified topics. The survey methods allowed the study to identify the main problems that appeared in parents during the period of isolation, to establish the attitude of parents to the organization of interaction with them teachers of preschool educational organizations in the conditions of the club and to provide them with assistance, support, support in using platforms and services of the Internet information and communication network. The study took place over three months from September to December 2020. The data for the current study were collected through an online survey, which was launched five months after major measures were taken to prevent the spread of the new COVID-19 coronavirus infection and to move educational organizations into a remote mode of operation. The study involved 43 parents, children who are enrolled in the Municipal Budget Preschool Educational Institution of Rostov-on-Don "Children's Garden No.19" (Russian Federation).

3 Results

In 2020, in the spring, Russian education switched to a remote format of work. This decision was prompted by measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus infection in the country (COVID-19). The institutions of pre-school education have also changed the way they function. Under these conditions, the degree of parental participation in the educational and upbringing of preschoolers has changed. Pre-school institutions in the shortest period moved to work with children and parents online. After two months of work of pre-school educational institutions in a remote mode, the study was conducted. The aim of the study was to identify the problems that parents faced in fulfilling new roles related to the education, upbringing, and leisure activities of their children during the period of self-isolation. The study was conducted in Rostov-on-Don, Russia. The study involved 2,250 parents of preschoolers. The results of the study are presented in a report at the Virtual International Conference «New Perspectives in Science Education» in 2021 (Florence, Italy, https://conference.pixel-online.net/NPSE/UT_ABS_view.php?id_abs=4974).

The study showed that the effectiveness of the process of providing teachers with information to parents was significantly low, and in some cases was completely absent (86% of parents noted that up-to-date information for them from preschool teachers was not available, 14% of parents noted that access to up-to-date information from teachers was completely lacking). The study finds that preschool teachers are most likely to use email or messengers in mobile phones (34%), social networks (22%) and social media (22%) to advise parents. and only one-quarter of teachers use different services (22%) (see Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Data on the frequency of use of various forms of counseling for parents of preschoolers during distance learning

More than half of preschool parents (62%) those who participated in the study as the main problem they encountered in the first place identified the issue of the organization of

children's play and learning activities while at home, as well as the lack of advice of preschool educational organizations in solving these problems. Since 42 per cent of parents said that their involvement in the process of organizing their children's cognitive and playful activities increased, so did the need for parents to help, support and accompany their teachers. In this regard, the main problem was formulated, which was related to the search for the most effective format of interaction between teachers and parents of preschoolers using information and communication technologies, as well as e-learning.

During the study, an online "Game Parent Club" was organized based on a pre-school educational institution. The club activity of parents is one of the modern interactive forms of interaction between teachers and parents. Since all parents are active users of the Internet, we have concluded that information and communication technologies, as well as Internet space, should be used extensively when organizing work with preschool families. So, it was decided to create a parent club, which operates in an online format. This form of interaction with parents allows to use dialogue technologies in the process of interaction with parents, to minimize the time of parents' access to new organizational, pedagogical, methodical information, creates an opportunity to demonstrate different techniques, methods, technologies, implement individual work, counseling with parents of preschoolers, promptly receive feedback from parents. "Playing Parent Club" is designed to introduce parents of preschoolers to the basics of organizing play activities with their children. For parents the club created conditions that allow them to organize gaming activities, as well as to become its active participants, which allows them to further independently design and implement joint play with their children on the basis of effective interaction in the family environment.

The main tasks of the club were: providing informational advice to parents of preschoolers during distance learning and switching to the model of hybrid education; increased parental activity in the distance learning of their children and their leisure activities in the home environment; creating a space for sharing experiences between parents and implementing joint project activities of parents and educators. At the preparatory stage of the club's creation, a range of major problems was defined, information was systematized, and the main areas of the club's activities were defined. 43 parents of preschoolers took part in the club's work. The club's meetings were held in the format of video conferencing using the platform Zoom, the project activities of parents were organized using the service Trello. The club's program was formed based on the results of the parents' survey. The results of the survey showed that 75% of children prefer to spend time at the TV or with gadgets, with almost all parents noting that during the isolation and closure of preschool educational institutions, the time their children spend watching TV has doubled. Parents noted that their children love active play (61%). Almost all parents noted that they tried to play with the child at weekends (75% of respondents) but noted that it was mostly happening on the street.

Many parents have recorded (81%) that they have difficulty in organizing joint play activities with their child while at home, so most often resort to joint games on the computer or game consoles. Only 52% of parents surveyed indicated that they had board games in their home, but almost 87% of parents said that they had different designers among their children's toys. So, during the "Game Parent Club" between September and December 2020, there were meetings that were both theoretical and practical in several areas: methods of studying the game interests and preferences of children; Technology to organize children's play activities at home; Co-designing games Playing as a means of cognition opportunities for information environment in conducting educational and gaming activities. As an example, we will give the name of some meetings of the parent club: "Game in the life of a child," "Views and types of children's games. Children's toys, "How to attract a child to the cleaning of toys?", "How to design games for the development of children's thinking?", "Play with the child: difficult or easy?" etc.

During the club's work, a cardboard library of joint games with parents was formed, a memo "Useful Tips" was developed, a catalogue of online resources to help teach children to play. After three months, we conducted a survey of parents. Results, which showed that parents want to continue to take part in the work of the club in the online format (87% of respondents). Parents noted that they began to plan joint play activities with children (68% of respondents). Many of the parents (52%) noted that they were able to increase the time of joint games with children, including increasing the time of joint mobile games (42%). Gadgets have ceased to be the main gaming activity of children and have become a means and resource of educational and developing games (44% of respondents). Thirty-one percent of parents surveyed began to design board games on their own, sometimes involving children.

4 Discussion

The issues of finding the best forms of interaction between the educational institution and the preschooler's family have always been the focus of pedagogical science and practice. It is club activity [9] that allows to build partnerships between teachers and parents of preschooler [10].

It should be noted that this form of work has been most actively used in working with parents of children with disabilities [11], with parents to form health-saving and safe behavior of preschoolers [12], with parents during the preparation of preschoolers for secondary school [13], as well as to provide psychological-pedagogical support and support to parents of preschoolers [14]. Many pre-school educational organizations have parent clubs [15], which mostly carry out their work in a face-to-face format or using the capabilities of social networks and mobile phone messengers. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the functioning of pre-school education, from the complete closure of institutions to remote operation and the transition to hybrid learning. All this determined new problems associated with building the process of interaction between teachers, parents, and preschoolers. The issues of organizing preschoolers' education at home and organizing both individual and joint gaming activities have become new. The online gaming parent club is the most optimal and effective form of working with parents, both individual and group. The results of the study confirmed the fact that for parents this form of work with teachers and other specialists of preschool educational organization is most convenient and effective.

Conclusion

Thus, working with parents of preschoolers based on the use of information and communication technologies, using modern platforms and services of individual and group activities becomes the most acceptable for both parents and the team of preschool educational organizations, as it allows to inform parents as soon as possible about all innovations in the preschool education system, to implement the educational activities of parents on a continuous basis, to respond promptly to their educational requests. It is necessary to explore the possibilities of this format of work in terms of the formation of the pedagogical competences of parents, their readiness to participate in the education of their own children at home and the development of playing with children.

References

1. V. Abou-Khalil, S. Helou, E. Khalifé, M.A. Chen, R. Majumdar, H. Ogata, *Educ. Sci.* **11**, 24 (2021). DOI: 10.3390/educsci11010024

2. Shawna J. Lee, Kaitlin P. Ward, Olivia D. Chang, Kasey M. Downing, *Children and Youth Services Review* **122**, 105585 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105585>.
3. K. Freire, J. Coyle, R. Pope, *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport* **18 (1)**, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsams.2014.11.367>.
4. S. Haleemunissa, Siyaram Didel, Mukesh Kumar Swami, Kuldeep Singh, Varuna Vyas, *Children and Youth Services Review* **120**, 105754 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105754>.
5. Sanne L. Nijhof, Christiaan H. Vinkers, Stefan M. van Geelen, Sasja N. Duijff, E.J. MarijkeAchterberg, Janjaap van der Net, Remco C. Veltkamp, Martha A. Grootenhuis, Elise M. van de Putte, Manon H.J. Hillegers, Anneke W. van der Brug, Corette J. Wierenga, Manon J.N.L. Benders, Rutger C.M.E. Engels, C. Kors van der Ent, Louk J.M.J. Vanderschuren, Heidi M.B. Lesscher, *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews* **95**, 421-429 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neubiorev.2018.09.024>.
6. Darcey K. de Souza, *Language & Communication* **74**, (130-140) 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2020.05.005>.
7. K. McLean, S. Edwards, H. Morris, *Computers & Education* **115**, 201-210 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2017.08.004>.
8. María del Carmen Ramírez-Rueda, Ramón Cózar-Gutiérrez, Manuel J. RoblizoColmenero, José Antonio González-Calero, *Teaching and Teacher Education* **100**, 103300 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103300>.
9. V.M.. Alla, *Raising and educating young children* **7**, 361-362 (2018).
10. T.I. Yurchenko, T.V. Petrochenko, *Management of a pre-school educational institution* **8**, 12-17 (2020).
11. E.A. Volkovskaya, *The problems of Pedagogy* **2 (47)**, 48-49 (2020).
12. T.A. Ryumina, N.V. Sobolenko, T.I. Plotnikova, A.O. Samogenova, S.L. Ryndina, *Issues of preschool pedagogy* **9 (36)**, 63–66 (2020).
13. L.L. Dimitrieva, A.Yu. Romanova, *Science and education: a new time* **3 (10)**, 84-88 (2018).
14. A.V. Mlechko, *Preschooler* **2**, 43-47 (2020).
15. I.A. Volkova, S.N. Mumladze, N.A. Tolocek, *A young scientist* **46–2 (232)**, 28–30 (2018).
16. E.B. Mettus, E.I. Germodenova, *Management of a pre-school educational institution* **1**, 78–85 (2021).