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Summary

The development of autonomy in children in the pre-school educational process – a path to lifelong learning

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When establishing the educational process in a nursery school, it is necessary to start with the nature of learning in young children, which is based on acquiring direct and concrete experience, that is to say, on active participation of the child in the learning process. Such learning is created through the interaction between the child and other children, with the support from adults. Nursery school environment (both spatial and social) has a great influence on the child's learning, development and upbringing, as well as on the development of the child's autonomy, for which reason continuous improvement of the pre-school environment represents one of particularly important tasks in organizing the nursery school educational process. Qualitative improvement of the environment can lead to significant changes in children's behaviour; it influences their mutual cooperation, the way they (self)organise their own activities, the way they solve various problems, in other words, the way they think, explore and learn. Improving the quality of pre-school educational process directed towards increasing the children's autonomy also requires changing the role of pre-school teachers, that is to say, developing some new competencies enhanced by those forms of professional development that support the increase of teachers' autonomy. The development of children's autonomy through the process of their own learning, the development of their ability to manage the process of their own learning and the practice of taking responsibility for their own learning represent the qualities that pave the way to lifelong learning.

Keywords: child's autonomy, lifelong learning, nursery school educational process, autonomous exploration activities.