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Mental Development in the Early Childhood

A.N. Leontiev

This is the first English translation of the paper of the prominent Soviet scholar Alexey Nikolaevich Leontiev (1903–1979) published in 1948. The paper introduces the author's ideas on mental and personality development in preschool children based on the research results of his close colleagues under his leadership during the 1930-s and 1940-s. It embraces the conditions and features of the development of the hierarchy of motives in preschoolers which underlies the emergence of volitional behaviour at this age. Evidence is provided for the role of the motivational structure in the volitional regulation of such cognitive processes as perception, memory and in the emergence of children's control of their motor processes. It demonstrates that the motives of the child of the preschool age get subordinated when the child is engaged in the social interaction with the participation of an adult. In a brief preface to this publication, E.E. Sokolova highlights the context of the author's work, the continuity of his ideas of the activity theory with Vygotsky's approach, and emphasizes a nontrivial approach in Leontiev's school to mental development as rooted in the total activity of the subject rather than in the brain processes.

Keywords: activity theory approach, personality development, the hierarchy of motives, volition, mental development, preschool age.

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Funding: The publication was funded by the Russian Science Foundation (RSF), project # 20-18-00028.

For citation: Leontiev A.N. Mental Development in Early Childhood. *Kul'turno-istoricheskaya psikhologiya = Cultural-Historical Psychology*, 2020. Vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 118–124. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17759/chp.2020160213>

Preface

This paper does not belong to the most cited works of A.N. Leontiev, and has never been translated into English. Nonetheless, it contains important highlights of the activity theory approach in psychology. It was developed by A.N. Leontiev and the fellow members of his school who innovatively interpreted many ideas of Lev Vygotsky.

The paper was first published in 1948 as an introductory chapter in the book “The Issues of the Psychology of the Child of the Preschool Age” edited by A. Leontiev and Alexander Zaporozhets. The book included also chapters written by Alexander R. Luria, Daniil B. Elkonin, Alexander V. Zaporozhets, Lidia I. Bozhovich and other Leontiev's associates. At that time, Leontiev was the Head of the Department of Child Psychology at the Institute of Psychology of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic. The studies mentioned in the text were performed under his supervision during the 1940s. In this paper, Leontiev referred also to some earlier studies.

The paper discussed the mechanisms of personality formation in the early childhood, during its “first birth”, as Leontiev would call it later. Leontiev observed the mechanisms of the gradual emergence of a socially determined hierarchy of motives at this age. For example, A.N. Leontiev referred to the “bitter candy” phenomenon: an adverse reaction to the reward obtained through cheating indicated that the hierarchy of motives was taking shape in the childhood. However, this process is fully developed only by the age of 6–7 years old.

Leontiev further analysed the experimental research on volitional actions by Konstantin M. Gurevich who explored the subordination of a “negative” motive to a “positive” one. This referred to a child who had to do first something unpleasant or boring (activity with a “negative motive”), e.g. distributing multiple pieces of a mosaic into different boxes, for the sake of receiving a funny toy thereafter (a “positive motive”). A.N. Leontiev concluded that the subordination (hierarchy) of motives proceeded most effectively when the “positive” motive had been presented to the child rather only in the imagination than in the real perceptual field. This is why the subordination of motives appeared only at the preschool age when the imagination was developing in the course of narrative and role-playing games. It was also shown that the hierarchization of motives in preschool children emerged rather in communicating with an adult than in performing the task on their own.

Leontiev also raised the issue of the child's readiness for school. First of all, this referred to the child's capacity for self-control, that is, for the voluntary behaviour. The volitional regulation of behaviour and mental processes was associated with L.S. Vygotsky's concept of their mediation by psychological tools (signs). In A.N. Leontiev's school, it was shown that voluntary regulation would occur only if a required action was incorporated into the significant activity of the child with the corresponding motive. The experiments of Zinaida V. Manuilenko showed that younger preschoolers were able to voluntarily maintain their posture (stand still) for a while when this action was included in the sentry post game, i.e., the game which was significant to them. They failed to perform such a task beyond the context of that activity,

Based on similar studies of memorization (Zinaida M. Istomina), A.N. Leontiev asserted that the development of voluntary memory at the preschool age was conditioned by the development of the child's activity. A child set and achieved a mnemonic goal more effectively when its meaning directly grew from the motive of activity that was significant for him or her (e.g. play). The same pattern was detected in the research of perception in preschool children that was conducted with the same methodology.

Thus, in the preschooler, voluntary control of his or her mental and motor processes does not occur as a result of the maturation of specific nervous processes (as Leontiev calls it). It is rather a result of the development of various forms of a socially determined activity. According to Leontiev, that activity, develops initially "on the old neurological basis", and then, this basis gets rebuilt in the course of the child's activity. Hence there is an important theoretical conclusion common to the entire school of A.N. Leontiev, though quite uncommon to the Soviet science of that time: mind is not a function of the brain as it is but rather a function of the integral activity of the subject. This statement may seem nontrivial also to many neuroscience scholars today and makes this publication still up to date.

Elena E. Sokolova

Usually, there are two age periods specified in the context of child development containing the psychological changes that are crucial for personality development. The first is preschool childhood¹ and the second is adolescence and youth. The importance of these periods for personality development has been stressed by such significant scholars of the domestic pedagogy and psychology as Ushinsky², Lesgaft³ and others.

Each of the two periods is of paramount importance in the development of a child's personality, and has its peculiarities. Adolescence is characterized by the work on oneself; it is the period of the formation of moral consciousness, ideals, the period of emerging self-consciousness.

Preschool childhood is different. This is the period of an initial essential formation of the personality, the period of the development of personal "mechanisms" of behaviour. During the child's development in preschool years, the first motivational "nodes" are fixed and the first connections and relationships are established, which constitute a new, higher activity and, at the same time, a new higher structure of the subject, that is, the unity of the person. The period of preschool childhood is much important even because it is the time of an actual formation of the psychological mechanisms of personality.

What is the essence of the formation of the psychological mechanisms of personality at the preschool age? What are those new established connections and relationships which form the bases of personality? These emerging relations are set between separate processes of the child's activity, and they have a special nature. They differ from those that characterize the biological essence of any individual, as they are social. They can only emerge as a result of life in the social environment, that is, only in humans and only at a particular stage of development. They arise and develop under the influence of education.

It is mentioned above that the life of every individual is a coherent system of processes. Some processes of activity regularly change to others; some of them become prevailing (dominant); others seem to fade into the background. This is a manifestation of the natural fluctuation of the organism's needs determined by its biological organisation and typical *cyclic nature* of life. That change of needs and the cyclicity of life processes is clearly observed in infants, for example.

Strictly speaking, it occurs very early, within the first year of life, when the infant's behaviour begins transforming. More and more behavioural processes occur in the child's life due to social circumstances and the educational influence of surrounding people. A child masters the human ways of acting with objects, the forms of human communication and language. New, specifically human needs develop in him or her which have been created by the entire mode of living from the very first days of his/her existence in multiple ways. He gradually learns to respond to the adult's demands: following instructions, obeying prohibitions, and understanding praise and encouragement.

By the age of 2–2.5 the child has made quite a progress in this direction. He not only moves freely and treats familiar and accessible objects correctly, but he speaks and mindfully follows what he sees and hears from adults. He also shows considerable initiative and autonomy. In short, his or her behaviour is already characterized by almost all psychological features that characterize the child also at later stages of development.

There is, however, one important feature that distinguishes the behaviour of a child under three years from the behaviour of older children. This well-known feature has been described many times in the scientific literature on child psychology. It is manifested in the fact that the child of pre-preschool age is in the grip of surface impressions. It is thus easy to attract him

¹ In the Soviet Union in the 1940s school education started at 7 years. Preschool age often refers to the age 3–7 years. (This and other notes are authored by the translators).

² Ushinsky Konstantin (1823–1871) – Russian scholar in pedagogy.

³ Lesgaft Peter (1837–1909) – Russian doctor, pedagogue, and civic leader.

to something, but equally easy to distract. He/she is very emotionally responsive to what happens, but the emotions are unstable. If, for example, a child cries of grief, it is very easy to console him: it is enough, for example, in exchange for a lost toy to give him another one or propose a different activity. It is said not without reason that children at this age are “easily comforted”. Indeed, one can see that in no longer than 2–3 minutes after any failure suffered by a toddler he is already smiling, ready to engage in what is shown or told to him. Only occasionally he might look sobbing. This is a remarkable phenomenon: the external expression of the emotional response, its, so to say, external aftereffect, is still there, while internally, on the psychological plane, the emotion has already disappeared.

What is hidden behind this feature of pre-preschool children? What can explain this specific internal instability of their behaviour in general?

Psychological analysis of this type of evidence like the above one allows us to discover a possible general explanation. One can see that the very *structure* of activity at this age has one crucial feature. Specifically, though the child’s activity is urged by motives relevant to relatively advanced needs and includes already complex and diverse conscious goal-directed processes (conscious actions), these motives are not yet internally subordinated to each other. In other words, the motives driving the child are not yet in the relations of subordination, in which some are central and more important for the child, while others are less essential and secondary. This means that there are no corresponding relations between more important and less important meanings of various events and various types of his or her activities. Rather, these relations may be established, but only from outside, in the course of the actual development of the child’s behaviour and as a result of the adult’s direct educational influence.

Of course, at this stage of development, there are still internal connections that determine the subordination of motives, but these are still primitive and of an organismic nature. These are the connections of natural needs. For example, a hungry child would not react equally to everything, to be sure. A child who needs to sleep does not care about anything, being just capricious. This amendment, which we must add to our understanding of the general structure of activity of pre-preschool children, in no way cancels its above-mentioned characteristics. Their behaviour does not yet make a remotely developed system, defined by the subordination of motives of the highest type, though the motives which drive their activity are very complex by nature, highly developed. Therefore, a child of 2–3 years of age can not consciously bargain away an attractive thing for another, still more valuable one. At the same time, even a strong disappointment can be dispelled in him by some trifle.

Only at the preschool age can we discover for the first time these higher types of subordination of motives. These types are established by more important motives standing out and subjugating other ones. A few years ago we had a chance to observe it in one experimental

study. A child who had failed in the task offered to him and was very sad about it was told that he was still good. Like other children, he received a small gift — a candy. However, he took the candy without pleasure and resolutely refused to eat it, and his grief was not diminished; due to the failure, the candy he received became a “bitter candy” for him. In our laboratory, we have been long calling such phenomena in children, and not only in them, “bitter candy phenomena”.

Later, K.M. Gurevich (1938) specifically investigated, when and in which succession the subordination of children’s motives emerged. He used the following method. In an everyday communication with a child he created a situation like this: when a child had got tired of unfolding a mosaic, with which he was busy for some time, he was offered an attractive mechanical toy. However, he was immediately told he would be allowed to play with it only after the pieces of mosaic (many of them) were carefully sorted by colour in boxes as they had been before. Thus, the child had to execute a long action that he did not want to do in order to be allowed to play with a new amusing toy. In other experiments a child was involved in a game which involved a very exciting moment but required painstaking preparation for it. This game was built on a principle similar to, for example, sliding down from the board which is very exciting, but first you are to climb effortfully to the sliding board with your sleds.

These and other similar experiments not only demonstrated that conscious and autonomous subordination of one action to another one is shaped only in the preschool age, but also allowed us to outline the development of the process. First, an opportunity to independently execute an unattractive (*negatively* motivated) action emerged earlier in the course of development if the objective (what constitutes its *positive* motive) was mentally represented rather than immediately perceived by the child. When the promised toy was left in the child’s view, it was much harder for the child to complete disassembling the mosaic than when the toy was not in his visual field. In the first case, a child was not yet capable of forcing himself to engage in uninteresting mosaic folding — even for a chance to play with a toy that attracted him. It got easier if the toy was removed from the external “field” of the child’s activity. In this case, the child is not only distracted from the attractive toy but acts for it: having finished disassembling the mosaic, the child immediately reminds the adult of the promised toy.

First, this observation revealed that the possibility of conscious subordination of one’s action to a more distant motive is in fact a product of a higher stage of development. This subordination initially suggests the possibility of an “ideal” (mental) motivation of the child’s behaviour, and only later embraces also the relationships between the urges immediately present in the field of activity. Then the child’s behaviour turns from the “field-driven”, as it is in the pre-preschool age, into the “will-driven” one.

Secondly, these experiments demonstrated that doing something for the sake of another action emerges in a child primarily in the process of *communication*, under

the influence of education, when the subordination of motives is established by the requirement of an adult. Only later this comes from the requirements of the objective circumstances of the child's activity *themselves*. Thus, it happens earlier that a child copes with a puzzle in order to get a toy when it is requested by an adult. It is however very hard for the same child to set up tabletop targets in order to have an exciting game of capturing them with a top, though the necessity of the former action is absolutely evident for him. Hence, the subordination of motives develops first in a communication with the tutor in an obviously social situation, and only later it occurs, when the child acts independently in the conditions which require it.

So, from about three years of age, children begin to develop a more complex internal organization of behaviour and general structure of their activity at large. The child's activity becomes driven not by separate motives that succeed each other, reinforce each other, or conflict with one another, but rather by the subordination of motives of single actions as described above. The child is now capable of pursuing a goal that is not in itself attractive for him for the sake of something else or, conversely, abandoning something immediately pleasing in order to obtain something more important or to avoid something undesired. As a result, his individual actions may acquire a more complex kind of reflected meaning for him, depending on the motive to which these actions are subordinated. For example, placing mosaic pieces into boxes consciously commenced by the child in order to play with steam trains obtains a new conscious meaning, depending on that to which it is now subjugated to. In this example the meaning of placing mosaic tiles is for the child his anticipation of getting to play with the trains.

All of these are however just signs or symptoms of the emergence of the first nodes that tie together the separate processes of the child's behaviour on a new basis, the basis of the more complicated human relationships into which he is entering. The effective involvement of the preschool child into these relationships takes place in various forms. One form is the practical mastery of the rules of behaviour in the process of upbringing, as described by V.A. Gorbacheva (1945). Another remarkable form is the process of the creative gameplay when a child takes this or that role. Doing this, he or she also takes on those internal structures of behaviour, which are comprised by this role as well as by other forms of the child's activity.

We consider the emergence of these first nodes in the child's activity of paramount importance from the viewpoint of personality development. It is from these nodes, which connect separate intentional processes into a subordinate relationship, that the general pattern begins to weave that serves as a background for the gradual appearance of the main lines of meaning of the person's activity, characterizing his *personality*.

Speaking about one's personality, we always imply primarily a specific directionality of a human being, created by the leading life motives. They subjugate other motives that start, so to say, to shine with the reflected light of these main leading motives. If otherwise there is

no such subordination of motives and individual urges simply interact with each other, we see a personality disintegration, a return to a purely "field-driven", purely reactive behaviour. That is why the period of the child's development is so important when these first subordinations in his activity are formed, when the "mechanisms" of these subordinations are being construed. This period falls at the beginning of preschool childhood. While at the age of about three years only its first signs appear, by six or seven years of age the subordinations already reach their full development.

The development of mind in the preschool age is a complex and multiform process. It would be therefore erroneous to think that the content of this process is exhausted by the change in the general structure of activity described above, which occurs as a result of the emerging connections of motives of an advanced type. On the contrary, this change characterizes the development only one-sidedly and, moreover, only in the most general form.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to highlight this change in the overall structure of the child's activity. It opens the way to understand and to establish connections between specific psychological changes observed through the preschool age and to approach these changes as the whole process of the psychological development of the child's personality. This is the only way to approach the issue, because the *true* subject of the development is the child, rather than his or her separate mental processes by themselves.

It is impossible in a short article to cover all the multiform psychological changes, manifesting the mental development of a preschool child. Therefore, we will focus only on some issues related to particular changes associated with the above general transformation of the structure of the child's activity, in particular, on the issues of the development of *voluntariness* of separate processes.

The pedagogical urgency of these issues is due to the fact that the development of the ability to manage one's behaviour is crucial for a *child's psychological readiness for school*.

Studying at school does not only require that the child possesses a certain range of ideas and knowledge and a certain level of physical fitness. It also imposes requirements on his mental development, e.g. on his memory, perception and other processes. From the very first days at school, a child should control his or her behaviour, for example, correctly lining up and sitting at the desk, obeying rules during breaks. All this suggests the ability to restrain their impulsive motor reactions, control their behaviour, and rule their movements.

Obviously, these requirements are not always easy to meet for a seven-year-old child. It is also known that these skills are taught rather than emerging by themselves. It is necessary, therefore, to properly educate a child at the preschool age to prepare him or her for school in this aspect.

At first glance, it may seem that this task does not deserve the attention of a psychologist, does not raise any significant psychological issues. However, it is not so. The purely mechanical skill training or drilling

is not in question here. This was emphasized already by K.D. Ushinsky. We view the capacity to control one's motor behaviour as a relatively complex process. "Controlled" behaviour is not just a fixed skill, but rather a consciously managed behaviour, with this control requiring no special attention. The student should behave properly in the class: sitting properly at the desk, not spinning, not manipulating manually the objects lying in front of him, not waiving his legs – in one word, "not switching off" for a single minute, no matter how absorbed his attention is in the teacher's words.

An experimental study specifically devoted to the study of the voluntariness of the child's motor behaviour was conducted in our laboratory by Z.V. Manuilenko (1948). She showed that the formation of voluntary control, starting in early preschool years, comprises a number of qualitatively peculiar stages. The development of the voluntariness of motor behaviour illustrates the change of the general structure of activity of the child discussed above.

In this study, children were given a task to keep a certain posture (a "sentry" posture). Children aged 3 to 7 years approached the same task in very different conditions, which made it possible to reveal not only the actual course of development of the capacity to control their behaviour, but also some important psychological prerequisites of this process.

It turned out that if the task of voluntary maintenance of the posture was set to the child in the form of a direct instruction, the youngest preschoolers were essentially unable to manage it, even when they accepted the task eagerly. This task had a particular motive for them related to their relationships with the adult which made the requirements quite meaningful for them. So, the reason that they involuntarily break the posture in a few seconds was not their internal lack of acceptance of the task. As a more detailed analysis shows, they were not able to control their movements for a long time. Their lack of control referred not to the externally proposed result to be achieved, but rather to the motor process itself, to its performance.

Things were different for older children. Children as old as middle preschool-age⁴ subordinated their activity to this task easily. For them, however, maintaining a posture was indeed a *special* task that required internal activity, so they totally concentrated on it. That is why any distraction interrupted the task: maintaining the immobility could not be fulfilled, and the required posture was broken.

The process of managing the posture in older preschool-age children was different. They were capable of controlling their posture even when they were distracted by something: their motor behaviour could become truly *controlled*, they were truly free to "master themselves".

What are the central psychological moments that determine the development of the process of voluntary control over their behaviour? We find the answer to

this question in another series of studies. They were constructed in such a way that the task of voluntarily keeping the same "sentry" posture arose from the play role accepted by a child. Under these conditions, even children of 4 years old, who could not execute the task of voluntary retention of the posture in the first series, performed perfectly. This was explained by the fact that while playing, it was easier for a child to establish a relation between the goal of retaining the posture and the motive to which it was subordinated. For a child, the task to act "like a sentry" already contained the task to stand "well", excluding sudden posture-breaking movements, etc. The one directly followed from the other. At the same time, the task of retaining the posture and the motivation to perform the adult's instructions as well as possible stood psychologically in more intricate relationships with each other. This explanation has been carefully tested through comparing experimental data from other studies specifically designed for this purpose.

It should, however, be specially emphasized that it is only at the stage of *initial* shaping of the voluntary motor behaviour that the immediacy of the relation between the motive underlying task fulfilment and the new goal of self-monitoring that stands out for him plays a crucial role. This is not decisive for older children for whom the mechanism of voluntary behaviour has already taken shape. Managing their own behaviour becomes a free act for them not only because this does not occupy all their attention, but also because it is not restricted by the frames of specific relations between objects and meanings.

Investigation of the development of the voluntariness of motor behaviour in the preschool age reveals two-way inner associations of this process with the general development of the child.

First of all, it is related to the development of higher mechanisms of *movement* proper. Studies of the motor sphere by A.V. Zaporozhets and his associates allow to conclude that its general transformation observed during the preschool age is not the result of independently autonomously proceeding maturation of relevant nervous mechanisms. It rather comes about because a child begins to consciously specify and set special "motor goals" in his behaviour. In other words, higher motor mechanisms develop specifically in connection with the progress in managing one's motor behaviour.

This connection came forward clearly in Z.V. Manuilenko's study discussed above. For example, in younger children who consciously directed their activity to the goal of maintaining the required posture, the very mechanism of self-control was still organized analogously to the management of external actions with objects, under almost permanent visual control. This, by the way, explains why the child is so strongly "tied up" and immediately loses control as soon as something distracts him from outside. Thus, initially conscious and voluntary control of his posture relies also on the mechanism of conscious control of movements directed

⁴ About five years.

at external objectives, which has developed much earlier. At the next stage of development, self-control is being transferred to other nervous mechanisms. It is performed under the control of motor (proprioceptive) sensations. Of course, these sensations have already previously played a decisive role in movements, in their coordination, but now they begin to serve the voluntary, conscious control, although in a particular way. So we see that first the actual development of new internal connections and relations occurs in the activity on the former neurological basis, and only thereafter this very basis is reconstructed. And this, in turn, opens up new possibilities for further development of managing one's behaviour. While still under the control of consciousness and completely voluntarily regulated, this behaviour begins to display features of an automatically occurring process. Now it does not require continuous effort and, figuratively speaking, "does not occupy consciousness". This is exactly how senior preschoolers manage themselves, and this is what is required of the child at school.

There are also linkages of another kind, the ones between the ongoing restructuring of motor behaviour and the changes that occur in the child's mental processes through the preschool period – changes in his memory, perception and other processes.

Consider the study by Z.M. Istomina of memory development in preschool children. It showed that *the main* change in memory processes in this period is that the processes of memorizing and remembering turn from involuntary to intentional and voluntary ones. And it means that the child now sets a conscious goal to remember, and he learns to actively attain this goal. N.L. Agenosova's research shows a similar transformation in the processes of perception, which also become manageable at this age and acquire features of true volition.

The mere fact of the formation of voluntary memorization in preschool age was to be expected, but what is important is how this process proceeds and what determines it.

Z.M. Istomina studied memory in preschool children from the youngest to the oldest groups by manipulating their motivation. She showed that the transformation of children's memory is due to the development of the general structure of the child's activity discussed above. The turning point usually falls at the age of about four years. She showed further that children could consciously specify and set the goal to memorize or remember something earlier if the meaning of this goal directly followed from the motive of their entire activity. In her study, the advantageous condition was a game which required memorization of the assignment and its recollection, which directly followed from the playing role adopted by the child. Other conditions referred to other meaningful activities. It was more difficult for children when the goal stood in more abstract relations to the motive, as in the case when memorization was done in a typical laboratory experiment.

Thus, we conclude that the changes in diverse processes occurring through the preschool age are internally connected with each other and have a common nature. Obviously, this commonality of changes is due to the fact that they are related to the same circumstances. All the studies included in this book highlight the connection of these changes to one central fact.

The fact is that the child in the course of his or her development actively intrudes into the surrounding world of human relationships, learning the social functions of people (initially in a very specific and practical form), socially developed norms and rules of behaviour. This initially *mandatory* specificity and efficacy of the form, in which a child is mastering higher processes of human behaviour, certainly requires that the tasks that the educator sets for the child were meaningful to him or her. It means that the connection between *what* the child must do, *what* he or she acts *for*, and the conditions of his or her activities were not formal, not conditional and not too complicated, but rather as direct and proximal as possible. Only under this condition new higher internal connections and relations in the child's activity can initially emerge as a response to the complex tasks that the social and historical conditions of the child's life set for him.

We want to emphasize this thesis because there is one simple but important pedagogical issue related to it. During the initial stages of a child's mastery of a new task (for example, the task of managing his or her behaviour), should the education go, so to speak, along the lines of strengthening the motive itself? Our data show that this path does not lead to success at the initial stages of development. It is not the *strength* of the motive and the desire produced by it in the child that is decisive at these stages. What really matters here is the conscious, meaningful connection between the motive of a child and the action that he or she needs to subdue to the given motive. This becomes evident from all the material in the cited experimental studies.

This thesis, however, applies only to the initial stages of the process. Further development goes in the direction of overcoming such limitations, and this also must be taken into account in education. At the first stages of development of the voluntary motor sphere of a preschool child the object and role tasks ("to walk like a bear", "to gallop like a horse", etc.) are used with good reason. Nevertheless, at the next stage motor tasks should be given also in a much more abstract form, i.e. tasks of free gymnastic type. The same is true for other domains of education. After all, a child will face much higher requirements at school in the future. The school will set such tasks and will require the child strive to attain such goals which will not always directly follow from the child's natural desire to learn, and are not always directly connected for him with specific motives of learning.

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Психическое развитие ребенка в дошкольном возрасте

А.Н. Леонтьев (1903–1979)
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Впервые на английском языке публикуется статья Алексея Николаевича Леонтьева (1948), в которой представлены некоторые результаты проведенных под его руководством в 1930–1940-е гг. исследований психического и личностного развития детей дошкольного возраста. Раскрыты условия и особенности формирования у дошкольников иерархии мотивов, которая лежит в основе первых волевых действий в этом возрасте. Приводятся экспериментальные доказательства роли определенных мотивов в произвольной регуляции таких психических процессов, как память и восприятие, а также в возникновении управления детьми своей двигательной сферой. Текст статьи А.Н. Леонтьева предваряет краткое предисловие Е.Е. Соколовой, в котором освещается контекст написания работы, прослеживается преемственная связь развиваемых в статье положений теории деятельности с идеями Л.С. Выготского, подчеркивается нетривиальность понимания в школе А.Н. Леонтьева психики как функции всей деятельности субъекта, а не мозга как такового.

Ключевые слова: школа А.Н. Леонтьева, структура деятельности, развитие личности, иерархия мотивов, воля, развитие психики, дошкольный возраст.

Публикацию подготовили:

А.А. Леонтьева, Д.А. Леонтьев, М.Н. Немцев (перевод на английский), Е.Е. Соколова (предисловие).

Финансирование: Работа выполнена при финансовой поддержке Российского Научного Фонда (РНФ), проект № 20-18-00028.

Для цитаты: *Леонтьев А.Н.* Психическое развитие ребенка в дошкольном возрасте // *Культурно-историческая психология.* 2020. Том 16. № 2. С. 118–124. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17759/chp.2020160213>

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Получена 20.05.2020

Received 20.05.2020

Принята в печать 01.06.2020

Accepted 01.06.2020