

**NEW SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE CHILD'S  
PLAY: IN DIALOGUE WITH E.O. SMIRNOVA**  
**НОВЫЙ СОЦИОКУЛЬТУРНЫЙ КОНТЕКСТ ДЕТСКОЙ ИГРЫ:  
В ДИАЛОГЕ С Е.О. СМОРНОВОЙ**

**Introduction to the Rubric  
“New Socio-Cultural Context of Child's Play:  
in Dialogue with E.O. Smirnova” (for the 75th anniversary)**

The rubric is devoted to the perspectives of studying contemporary children's play in the framework of the Cultural-Historical Scientific School. The articles, presented in the rubric, discuss the evolution of the ideas about play and ways of its development in preschoolers. A brief overview of scientific approaches, based on the ideas of L.S. Vygotsky about children's play, is presented. A particular place among these approaches belongs to the concept, elaborated by Elena Smirnova, who studied the development of will and arbitrariness in early ontogenesis, as well as the role of the adults in the formation of these processes in children.

Elena Smirnova founded the first “Center for Psychological and Educational Expertise of Play and Toy”, which is unique in Russia, and where under her guidance a method of psychological and educational expertise of play and toys was elaborated. Based on this unique method, a series of research works were conducted, focusing on the analysis of contemporary children's play, as well as on assessing the impact of play materials and surrounding environment on children's play. Today the Center, founded by Elena Smirnova, continues its work in the structure of the “Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Contemporary Childhood” of Moscow State University of Psychology and Education, which develops the scientific tradition of Elena Smirnova.

In the last years Elena Smirnova paid much attention to the problems of digitalization of play and to the transformation of children's play interactions under the influence of new technologies. Based on her ideas, the staff of the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Contemporary Childhood have been recently elaborating a new direction of research, focusing on the peculiarities of digital play, in which the boundaries between online and offline modalities are blurred and where real and virtual objects co-exist and interact in real time mode. Some aspects of the conducted research are discussed in the articles published in the issue.

The rubric is prepared for the 75th anniversary of Elena Smirnova. The staff of the Center created a virtual page, where Elena Smirnova's works, published at different periods of her scientific career, are available. There page also offers a collection of video recordings, including her lectures and interviews: Смирнова Елена Олеговна — ЦМИСД ([childresearch.ru](http://childresearch.ru)). Readers and followers of Elena Smirnova keep enriching the collection by materials and photos, which they send via email. A commemorative lecture hall is expected to be opened in the University for preserving Elena Smirnova's scientific heritage and making it available for all those, who are interested in challenges of contemporary childhood.

*Rubtsova Olga, PhD, Head of the Centre for  
Interdisciplinary Research on Contemporary Childhood*