

Alternativa para la preparación a las familias en educación nutricional

Alternative for the preparation of families in nutritional education

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Resumen

El trabajo aborda la temática relacionada con la preparación de la familia, en la educación nutricional de sus hijos mediante el programa Educa a tu hijo. Ello obedece a la necesidad de solucionar la insuficiente preparación teórico - práctica que poseen las familias en este sentido, por lo que se plantea como objetivo: ofrecer una alternativa educativa para el trabajo con la familia en educación nutricional de sus hijos. Para ello se utilizaron métodos teóricos, empíricos y matemáticos, corroborándose las insuficiencias que se presentan en este orden. Los resultados revelaron mayor nivel de preparación y participación de las familias en aras de una mejor salud y calidad de vida de sus hijos.

Palabras clave: Preparación; Familia; Educación nutricional; Programa Educa a tu hijo.

Summary

The work deals with the subject related to the preparation of the family in the nutritional education of their children through the Educate your child program. This is due to the need to solve the insufficient theoretical-practical preparation that families have in this sense, so the objective is: to offer an educational alternative for working with the family in nutritional education of their children. For this purpose, theoretical, empirical and mathematical methods were used, corroborating the insufficiencies presented in this order. The results revealed a higher level of preparation and participation of the families in order to improve the health and quality of life of their children.

Keywords: Preparation; Family; Nutrition education; Educate your child program.

Introduction

The Educative social program Educate your child, arises as a non-institutional educative model, as a result of research carried out in Cuba, which aimed to prepare preschool children in rural areas and the Turquino plan, which lacked appropriate spaces in their communities. One of its fundamental characteristics is its intersectoral nature, with the family as its basic nucleus. Starting from the family, the program carries out educational actions at home with boys and girls.

Studies carried out at the international level, reveal that socio-emotional development and cognitive skills are closely related, and that health and nutrition in the first years of life are linked to the proper development of the child, which demonstrates, the comprehensive approach from where to ensure compliance with the basic principles of nutrition; thus, it was established in the II International Conference on Nutrition sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2014), the need to provide nutritional food education with adequate treatment.

In the nutritional education of children, agents such as public health personnel, educational institutions and the family are involved, however, they do not always plan their educational influences in a coordinated manner, hence the importance of correctly guiding the agents involved in this process.

Nowadays, the problem of family preparation is of interest and a motive for analysis, since it constitutes a social need, of interest and concern for everyone, since it marks a qualitative leap in the psychic, social and physiological development of the child's personality; This is considered a right that encompasses health care, nutrition, intellectual, moral, socio-affective and physical motor development, in order to achieve the maximum possible integral development for each child; that is, it must be maximized by the irreplaceable role of the family, which must be constantly prepared based on its knowledge and experiences.

A study carried out by the author on the results achieved in the preparation of the family to raise the quality of the integral care of children and the pedagogical practical experience in the coordination of the Educate your child program, allowed to identify insufficiencies that affect the preparation of families for a nutritional education of children from 2 to 5 years old in areas of the Turquino plan of the Niceto Pérez García municipality. Among them:

- In the theoretical and practical preparation on nutritional education to families in the program Educate your child.

- In the use of the potentialities offered by the nutrition manual in correspondence with the current events in the work with the family.
- In the optimal use of natural resources on nutrition in correspondence with the current context.

The mentioned insufficiencies reveal the need to contribute to the preparation of families on nutrition education in children from 2 to 5 years old through the program Educate your child. That is why the article is aimed at offering an educational alternative for the work with the family in nutritional education of their children, based on pedagogical, psychological and sociological theories and conceptions, in correspondence with the current educational improvement in Early Childhood Education.

Development

It is recognized that the place and decisive importance of the family in the education of the new generations is a universally shared scientific and social truth. An approach to the main conceptions about the functioning, education and orientation of this important educational agency, would allow understanding its place in the system of educational influences, necessary for the contribution to the development of the nutritional education of their children during early childhood.

In this regard, Blanco (2001) distinguishes the role of the family as:

One of the factors that has the greatest impact on the education of the personality of their children, from the first years of life, essentially and with transcendence, with greater or lesser force, throughout life, vital for the conditions with a view to the continuity of education in other ways. (p. 87).

To this, it is added the fact that such role, concretized in the functions of the family are considered as "obligations", they even appear collected and regulated in the Legal Codes of most of the countries, in Cuba, in the Constitution of the Republic (2019), in the Code of Families (2022), and in the Code of Childhood and Youth (1978).

Undoubtedly, the concerns and occupations concerning the family, as the basic cell of society, have been the object of investigation by many researchers in different areas: sociological, medical, psychological, pedagogical, among others. In this sense, the study of the family, its structure, functioning, as well as its interrelation with educational institutions and their regularities, constitutes an essential basis for a better understanding and deepening of situations that in educational practice, that

is, in early childhood, need to be solved. These ideas have their origin in the contributions of: (Arés, 1990; Álvarez, 1999; Blanco 2001; Castro, 2004; Daudinot, 2013 and Núñez, 2005), among others.

For these purposes, it is considered important to assume that the family is:

(...) an institution formed by a group of people united by blood and/or affective ties, who live together in a common space for a significant time, where material and spiritual needs are satisfied, stable affective relationships are established; it is the group where important psychological motivations are manifested, with which a strong feeling of belonging is identified and developed where the problems of living together are faced and dealt with. (Castro et al., 2004, p. 29)

Therefore, it is assumed that the different activities carried out in the family are grouped in the functions performed by this human group. Consequently, and taking into account the essence of most of the criteria, there is a coincidence in three basic functions, which are: the biological-social, the economic and the spiritual-cultural. The educational function is developed to the same extent as the other functions. Thus, among them there is an interrelation and interconditioning, so that a dysfunction in any of them would alter the system, there must be coherence and harmony in it.

These valued elements allow us to understand how in Cuba, the conditions are guaranteed so that all children can benefit and a healthy development is propitiated. Therefore, the need arises to prepare the family to be able to cultivate it systematically, where nutritional education is an important way for the development of children's personality, since the formation of nutritional habits in preschool children is of significant importance for their further development. This is corroborated in the studies of researchers such as: (Collado, 1988 and Labato, 2011), which highlight the essential role of the family in this regard.

In this order, Castro (1985), Cuban, agreed that the family becomes the space where the process of personality development begins and therefore it is necessary to ensure the most appropriate conditions for the welfare and full development of their children, since "it is within the family where human life is reproduced" (p. 35).

According to Lobato (2011), it is necessary to provide adequate and timely guidance to the family and other adults responsible for the attention and care of children, related to the best way to proceed so that they can consciously develop the best nutritional habits and thereby ensure the health care and welfare of children, since what is well or poorly learned, will last into adulthood.

From this point of view, it is necessary to work to achieve in children the richness of what later will be their spiritual life and this is not possible if the family does not play an essential role, this is possible

through scientific and pedagogical preparation, such is the case of nutritional education in the children of the Educate Your Child Program.

According to a study by Lobato (2011), food and nutrition are linked to the health goals that the country intends to achieve, since they constitute an important support for their attainment. It has been shown that proper nutrition is a major factor in reducing infant mortality and increasing life expectancy, and has an impact on physical and intellectual growth and development.

As can be seen, it is evident that nutrition is relevant as one of the conditional factors that have an important influence on children's health, because if adequate nutrients are lacking at the right time, their psychological development will be arrested; therefore, nutritional education is an important means to correct erroneous information, as well as to transmit other true information about food and its nutritional values. Hence, the consequences of malnutrition are especially severe if it occurs at a very early age.

It means that the supply of nutrients for proper growth and development is the basis for the prevention of various disorders in adulthood, that is, throughout life, hence the teaching of proper nutrition from childhood. This aspect cannot be alien to the functioning of the family environment. However, the family does not always have the optimal level of preparation in these contents and it is necessary to direct this orientation from the educational institutions.

The problems that are evident in the educational environment, with respect to the process of preparing the families of the Educate Your Child Program, in nutritional education, have as background the preparation that the personnel received in the educational institutions, however, in Cuban education and, particularly, in preschool education, the process of preparation of the families is beginning to take place. However, in Cuban education, and particularly in preschool education, the preparation of the family began to take off in the 1970s, taking into account the important changes and transformations that took place after the Second Educational Revolution (1972), of which preschool education was not exempt.

There are institutions in the country that provide systematic attention to part of the child population, but they are still insufficient. For this reason, the Educate your child program was created to attend to children up to five years of age who do not attend these institutions. This program is characterized by the joint work of the family and the community, through the application of different variants that promote the formation and development of these being one of the priorities.

In the educational orientation for the feeding process, the adult plays an essential role, in this case, the family, which guides and controls the child's behavior, requiring in a timely manner in correspondence

with what is desired and what is being executed, seeking the achievement of development in the formation of nutritional habits and thus the development in the feeding process, achieving self-validism.

The above is justified, when it is recognized that:

The family, for its members, is the human group in which they live, satisfy and develop complex material and affective processes closely related, where they acquire habits of conduct, norms of life and values, which is why it is a mediating institution between society and the individual, with an educational potential that the children's circle, the school and the rest of the social institutions cannot underestimate. (Castro, 2004, p.1)

In this sense, one of the aspects to be taken into account by the educational institutions in which the child is involved, such as the Children's Circle or another non-institutionalized channel, is the attention offered to nutritional education, as it is a process aimed at the formation of correct eating habits. That is why children must learn to consume all foods, whether of the type, form or variety in question, because they must be taught to understand how important it is for them to grow strong and healthy. That is why the family must be ready or consequently receive the corresponding levels of help.

Nutrition education has numerous benefits for people, both in terms of vital knowledge and skills development, as well as prevention of future problems that bad habits can bring. It is known that learning to prepare and cook healthy foods benefits the increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, the acquisition of better cooking skills, assuming a more conscious attitude and behaviors about food and thus preventing childhood obesity.

On the other hand, it is important that the family becomes aware that the child needs to learn how to eat. Feeding programs are aimed at achieving better nutrition through educational efforts, taking into consideration the importance for each age group to establish their nutritional recommendations, to educate properly from birth, which is essential for them to grow up healthy, cheerful, active, happy and thus to promote their fuller development.

It is known that there are several diseases that, although they are not caused by inadequate intake of nutrients, they can be improved or prevented with a proper diet. It means that the consumption of food products such as: milk, vegetables, meats, vitamins, minerals, etc., provide the body with the indispensable substances for nutrition, such as: proteins, fats and carbohydrates, which provide the necessary energy for children to be able to perform different activities without difficulties both physically and mentally.

Therefore, it should be noted that nutrition education is a process aimed at the formation of correct eating habits. Therefore, children must learn to consume all foods and understand that a varied diet is necessary for them to grow strong and healthy. To this end, it is necessary to follow a schedule, that is, to follow a dietary regimen.

In this way, Collado (1988) considers it as:

The correct distribution of the different meals during the day, so that these are related and allow the creation of a dynamic stereotype that adjusts to the most convenient feeding rhythm in the course of the day taking into account age, sex and the predominant activity performed, among other factors. (p. 3).

In this sense, it is agreed that a good nutrition during childhood is essential for the child to have a correct growth and development. Although heredity is the key to the final size that a child will reach, nutrition determines to a large extent the proximity that he or she may have with respect to his or her genetic potential. Therefore, a child who does not receive a correct nutrition will get sick more easily and will perform less well than one who receives it in correspondence with his or her needs.

In the feeding of children should not make mistakes, it must be kept in mind that the best diet for him is one that ensures a balanced and correct diet every day with which you get to meet their needs as an indispensable condition for their normal growth and development. The diet should be differentiated according to the physiological needs and age characteristics of the children, that is to say, that they receive daily all the nutritional components that correspond to the particularities of their organism and their state of health.

On the other hand, when analyzing the pedagogical process from this position, it leads to consider the integral development of families as educational agents, which facilitates an understanding of the need for adequate nutritional education in the preparation of the family in the education of their child.

In correspondence with the above, and taking into account that family education from the school, is "the pedagogically directed system of influences, aimed at raising the preparation of its adult members at home and stimulating their conscious participation in the education of their children, in coordination with the educational institution" (Castro, 2004. p. 51).

On the other hand, we agree with Daudinot (2013), who considers that family education work is:

The system of intentional and orienting activities consciously structured, directed to parents and close relatives with the purpose of raising their pedagogical preparation and stimulating their

active and transforming participation in the formative process of their children that favors professional reaffirmation. (p. 42).

The criterion of the aforementioned author is shared, when developing the work of family education, the teaching center, in the case of the promoters, must have an educational program, containing a system of learning actions, aimed at helping and stimulating the active participation of the latter in the education of their children, where the unity of efforts is sought, the integration of objectives, the correct articulation of the different modalities that can be used (group and individual), and above all, under a scientific conception of the role of the family in the education of their offspring and their relationship with the school.

The use and combination of different modalities, both individual and group, which have traditionally been used: parents' meetings, family education schools, home visits, interviews, murals, mailboxes, school-home correspondence, video-debates, conferences, among others, should characterize the school's actions with the family.

A diagnosis was made in order to verify the current state of the object of research, which is based on the educational practice, experiences of the author in the work with the family through the Educate your child program, in the Casimba Popular Council, Niceto Pérez municipality. For this purpose, different research methods and techniques were used. The following indicators were established:

- Level of preparation that families have to treat the nutritional education of their children.
- State of the children's nutritional habits.

The main results are summarized as follows:

- The level of preparation that families possess to treat the nutritional education of their children is generally low.
- The preparation they receive is scarce, as there is a lack of promoters to attend them systematically.
- The topics covered in the training are not always related to their children's nutrition.
- More than 80% of the families do not contribute to stimulate the development of adequate nutritional habits in their children.

After having delved into the level of theoretical-methodological scientific information on the subject, as well as ratifying the results achieved in the diagnosis, the following alternative is proposed:

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For a better understanding and as a result of the theoretical systematization, the alternative is assumed as "an action option for the search of a solution to a problem, which is concretized in the postulation of a set of ordered actions, with a determined purpose, since each moment of the process has its particularities" (Daudinot, 2007, p.64).

In this sense, it was considered to assume the workshop as the fundamental way of organizing the process of the alternative to develop the preparation of families. This has been used in different ways and therefore has led to the existence of many definitions around it. This name is assigned to many activities, which are developed with different methods, using numerous contents and with different work conceptions.

Workshop 1

Theme: Nutrition education: a treasure to promote eating habits from early ages.

Goal: To argue about nutrition education with respect to eating habits for the proper health of children.

Participants: Families, teachers, health specialist.

Reference materials: Feeding manual. Regulations for diet planning and food preparation for children from 0 to 6 years of age

Suggestions for the development of the workshop

The health specialist will start the activity by communicating the objective and the way to proceed.

She will motivate the families by reading a phrase from La Rochefoucauld:

"Eating is a necessity, but eating intelligently is an art". After discussing the meaning and interpretation of the quote, ask the following questions: - What do you know about nutrition education, - What habits can we create and at what time, - How to do it, - How to achieve in children the proper formation of eating habits, - What importance do you attribute to proper nutrition?

These questions will serve to motivate the audience and provide a pleasant and facilitating environment where dialogue and understanding prevail. From the analysis of these questions, they will be able to reach conclusions related to the need to promote in our children, from an early age, correct eating habits for a healthy growth and development, as well as the importance of the example of families in the formation of eating habits at home. They will specify the concepts of nutrition and nutritional education.

Then, they will briefly explain the eating habits on how to mix food in the established order, use the cutlery well (spoon, spoon, and the use of the fork), chew well and with the mouth closed and do not talk with the mouth full.

The health specialist will divide the families into two teams, the members of team one will select cards containing the objectives of the Dimension Education and Personal Social Development, referring to eating habits. The members of team two will select cards that present the contents of the Dimension Education and Personal Social Development, also referring to eating habits. Subsequently, they will proceed to analyze each objectives and contents of the Dimension Education and Personal Social Development from what is referred to on the formation of eating habits.

Evaluation: The families will make a debate on what they have learned in the activity, where the health specialist will have the possibility to listen to answers that will allow her to know if they acquired enough knowledge about food habits formation to promote these from home.

Workshop-2

Topic: The formation of eating habits through play.

Objective: To exemplify how to contribute to the formation of eating habits through play.

Participants: Promoter, families, art instructor.

Reference materials: Franco (2011). The family: a community of love, Education and development. Pueblo y Educación.

Brochures of the program " Educate your child " Esteva (2001). The game in the preschool age. People and Education

Suggestions for the development of the workshop

The promoter will begin the activity by communicating the objective of the activity, and then encourages the families to share an idea about the importance of play at preschool age.

What do you know about play in early childhood? What games can we play with children to encourage good eating habits?

Creative games for good nutritional habits: Create rhymes, elaborate cards with fruits, vegetables and greens.

They can play: the family is told to present a basket in the form of surprise to the child where there are varieties of fruits, vegetables and greens, the child will be asked to reach in and pull out a card and say what it represents, how is its color, its shape and what is its utility, then the mother chooses a card addressing all the characteristics of what is represented. In the game the family is asked to say some rhymes that have to do with the card they chose and ask the child to repeat the rhyme Example:

I eat the fruits the tasty mango

I eat the okra it's tasty and tasty

Because they provide minerals it is rich and tasty

I'm telling you it has vitamin A
On your plate I am the orange and the guava
Eat my dough they give vitamin C
How fatty I am also the fruit bomb
I am the pumpkin I tell you that to you

Conclusions

The preparation of the family in the nutritional education of children from 2 to 5 years of age in the "Educate your child" Program constitutes the theoretical-methodological nucleus that has occupied the attention of various researchers, centered on the contributions of the Historical-Cultural School of Vigotsky and other Cuban pedagogues. The diagnosis carried out on the problem in question evidenced the existence of insufficiencies in the level of knowledge and educational practices of the family on nutritional food education in children from 2 to 5 years old. The alternative is conceived as a way to treat nutritional education in children from 2 to 5 years old essentially from the work of preparation to the family.

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