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THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF THE NATURAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT ON CHILDREN'S BODIES

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Abstract

This article examines the impact of the environment on children's health and development. It analyzes the main environmental factors affecting children's physical, mental, and intellectual well-being. Particular attention is paid to air, water, and soil pollution, as well as the role of the social environment and the family in shaping children's health. The importance of a favorable ecological environment for the healthy development of the younger generation is emphasized. The article reviews modern environmental problems, their consequences for children, and ways to improve the ecological situation. It can be concluded that preserving children's health and ensuring environmental safety require the joint efforts of the state, society, and the family.

Keywords: Ecology, environment, children's health, air pollution, water pollution, environmental safety, physical development, mental health, social environment, healthy lifestyle, protection of children's health, sustainable development.

Introduction

The environment plays an important role in shaping a child's health and development. It includes not only natural conditions — air, water, soil, and climate — but also the social, economic, and psychological factors necessary for

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a child's growth and development. From the earliest stages of life, including the prenatal period, a child's body is exposed to numerous external factors that can have both positive and negative effects on its physical and mental well-being.

Early childhood is the most vulnerable period in a person's life, since all the organs and systems of the body are actively developing. Any negative environmental impact during this period can lead to developmental delays, a weakened immune system, and the development of chronic diseases. Children are especially sensitive to air and water pollution, exposure to toxic substances, noise, stress, and social difficulties.

A favorable environment, on the other hand, promotes the harmonious development of a child. Clean air and water, environmentally friendly food, a calm family atmosphere, access to green spaces, and opportunities for physical activity have a positive effect on children's health, cognitive development, and emotional well-being.

The relevance of this topic is one of the key problems of today. The rapid development of industry, the expansion of cities, the increase in transport, and the unsustainable use of natural resources are leading to environmental degradation in many regions of the world. Under these conditions, children are becoming one of the most vulnerable groups. Therefore, studying the impact of the environment on children's health and finding ways to improve the ecological situation are important tasks for modern society.

1. The concept of the environment and its importance for child development

The environment is a combination of natural, social, and man-made factors that surround a person and affect their life. For a child, the environment is the main field of development in which physical, intellectual, and personal qualities are formed.

The natural environment includes climatic conditions, the quality of air and water, the state of the soil, and the presence of green spaces. The social environment

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encompasses the family, educational institutions, the social circle, and the cultural and moral values of society. The man-made (technogenic) environment is associated with human activity — industrial enterprises, transport, living conditions, noise levels, and pollution. Each of these components has its own specific impact on a child's health. For example, a lack of clean air and physical activity can lead to a weakened immune system and reduced performance, while an unfavorable social environment can lead to the development of anxiety and emotional instability.

2. Modern environmental problems

Modern society faces a number of serious environmental problems arising from human activity. The main ones are air, water, and soil pollution, the accumulation of waste, the loss of green spaces, and climate change.

Air pollution is one of the most pressing environmental problems. Vehicle exhaust, industrial emissions, and fuel combustion products enter the atmosphere. The most dangerous pollutants include carbon monoxide, nitrogen and sulfur oxides, lead, mercury, and fine dust particles. These substances negatively affect the human respiratory system and are especially dangerous for children.

Water pollution occurs as a result of the discharge of industrial and domestic wastewater and the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in agriculture. In many regions, the problem is aggravated by insufficient purification of drinking water, which poses a threat to public health.

Soil is also polluted with heavy metals, petroleum products, and chemicals. These substances can enter the human body through food, accumulate, and lead to various diseases.

3. The impact of environmental pollution on children's physical health

Environmental pollution has a serious negative impact on children's physical health. Under unfavorable ecological conditions, morbidity rates increase significantly, especially respiratory diseases. Children living near industrial zones and major highways are more likely to suffer from bronchial asthma, chronic

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bronchitis, and allergic rhinitis. Constantly breathing polluted air leads to reduced lung function and a weakened immune system.

Water pollution creates conditions for the spread of intestinal infections, viral hepatitis A, and parasitic diseases. Drinking poor-quality water can lead to diseases of the gastrointestinal tract, kidneys, and liver. Water pollution with heavy metals and toxic chemicals is particularly dangerous.

The use of pesticides and nitrates in agriculture also poses a threat to children's health. Accumulating in food, these substances can cause toxicity, metabolic disorders, hormonal disruptions, and increase the risk of cancer.

4. The impact of the environment on a child's mental and intellectual development

The environment affects not only a child's physical health but also their mental health. Unfavorable environmental conditions, constant noise, and air and water pollution can lead to chronic fatigue, irritability, and reduced concentration and memory.

Children growing up in a negative environment are more likely to experience stress, anxiety, and emotional instability. This can have a negative impact on academic performance, learning, and socialization.

The social environment also plays an important role. The emotional atmosphere in the family and relationships with parents and peers have a great influence on the development of a child's personality. Support, care, and a sense of security contribute to the development of self-confidence and positive self-esteem.

5. The role of family and society in creating a healthy environment for children

The family is the first and most important element of a child's environment. It is in the family that basic habits, values, and attitudes toward health are formed. Caring parenting, adherence to a daily routine, proper nutrition, and attention to a child's emotional state play an important role in their development.

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Educational institutions also play an important role in creating a healthy environment. Kindergartens and schools should create a safe learning environment, encourage children's physical development, and raise environmental awareness.

Society and the state are responsible for creating conditions that ensure environmental safety. This includes monitoring pollution levels, developing healthcare systems, and improving the quality of drinking water and air.

6. Ways to improve the state of the environment and protect children's health

Reducing the negative impact of the environment on children's health requires comprehensive measures. One of the most important areas is environmental education — fostering a responsible attitude toward nature in both children and adults.

The introduction of environmentally friendly technologies, the development of public transport, and the reduction of harmful emissions into the atmosphere play an important role. The rational use of natural resources and waste recycling also contribute to improving the ecological situation.

At the family level, attention should be paid to the quality of nutrition, the cleanliness of drinking water, organizing outdoor recreation, and creating a favorable psychological atmosphere.

The environment has a multifaceted impact on a child's health and development. Favorable natural and social conditions promote harmonious physical, mental, and intellectual development, whereas unfavorable ecological conditions can lead to serious diseases and developmental disabilities.

In today's world, the issue of preserving children's health is especially important. Solving environmental problems requires the joint efforts of the state, society, and every family. Only through a responsible attitude toward the environment can we ensure a healthy future for the younger generation and preserve natural resources for future generations.

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Conclusion

Summing up the above, it can be said that keeping the environment clean is the key to human health and longevity. This requires comprehensive measures: developing environmental education, introducing green technologies, using natural resources rationally, and promoting a healthy lifestyle. Only in this way can harmony between humans and nature be achieved.

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