

DEVELOPING NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND SPATIAL FEATURES FOR CHILDREN'S STAY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to look for possibilities of more quality constructing, i. e. a better organization and materialization of pre-school premises, and also to deal with the problem which comes up considering children's developing needs, based on the psychological aspect and features that space has to have as children's residence.

In this study, a systematization of the possible features of the space in pre-school premises has been done, where children can spend time considering the level of positive influence that space can have on the development of their abilities, as well as their cognition process and socialization.

Key words: children, psychological needs development, residence features.

INTRODUCTION

One of the space functions in pre-school premises, as a constructed and built physical environment in which a child spends time, is its contribution to a child's abilities. That contribution of the space is, above all, to the child's abilities at a certain point of its development and its efficient interaction with the environment. The contribution should be seen in providing a balance between the individual capacities of a child and the challenge of the environment, i. e. a balance between the level of the child's capacity at a certain age and the possibilities of the environment for providing new challenges.

The child's abilities, considering the influence of the space as the constructed and built environment, in this case of the space for children's residing in pre-school premises, can be defined as a possibility for an efficient interaction with the environment, i. e. environmental residing space. Besides that, if a child needs to achieve some level of independence, at its existing level of physical and cognitive capacities, the inner resources of the space are used.

The way the environment provides both physical and cognitive development is defined following the Vygotski concept, i. e. the zones of perception development and its use in communication... According to Vygotski, efficient learning starts only when a child is given challenges which are slightly beyond its existing functioning level. Physical environment is to provide accessory devices which can enable a child to participate in more difficult activities than those it has already had. Constructed elements of the space can support a child and help with its functioning within limits of its own abilities, and at the same time, they should provoke processes which will lead towards improvement. Thus, if some space is constructed and equipped in the right way, the development of a child's increased abilities gets supported, and that allows a child to confirm itself at the existing level of its capacities.

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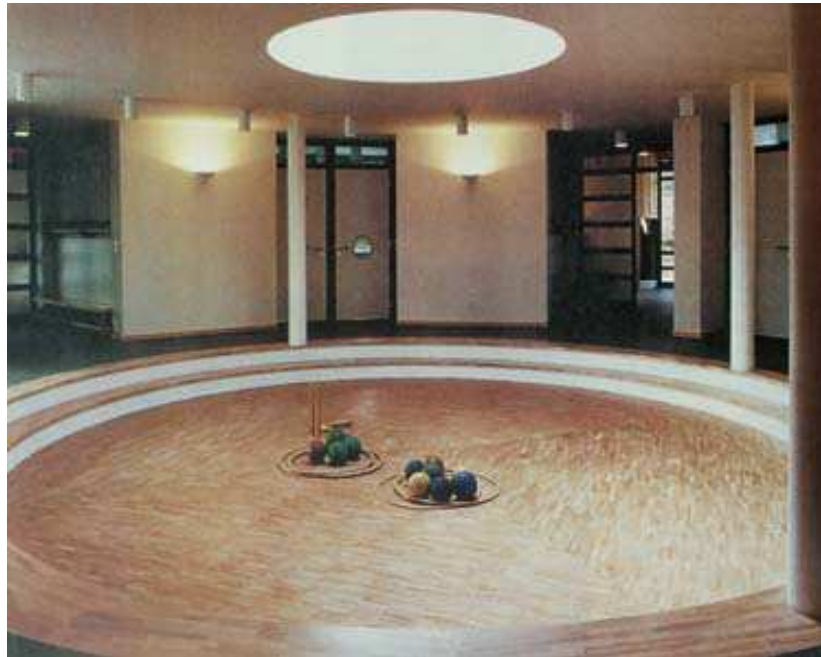


Fig. 1: Kindergarten "Birkenam"



Fig. 2: Kindergarten "Nido Stelia", Odenwald (German), 1993 Modena (Italia), 2004

CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND RESIDING SPACE

Features of space, pre-school premises, in which a child can reside and which can provide the improvement of their abilities, are all the characteristics of the space which meet a series of children's needs necessary for their development.

The most important needs of a child within the space are the following:

- The need to feel safe, secure and superior in the space;
- The need to be active-mentally and physically, and to be surrounded by various devices which will provoke creativity ;
- The need to achieve an emotional relationship with the space-to be close to it and to identify itself with it, as well as to find its own place for being alone and in private.



Fig. 3: Kindergarten in Oegstgeest (Nederland), Herman Hertzberger, 2000

For the space to be able to meet those needs, it is necessary that it has certain features. The features of the space in the pre-school premises which follow a child's development needs are those which have been created with the applying of the matching architectural and constructing activities, which can, by introducing the same elements, contribute to the environment and its response to the physical, cognitive and social needs of a child and its development.

The constructing of the components of the environment which enable a child to get its needs for achieving skills and new challenges includes a certain group of features, which the space should have.

The following features are considered important for the development of a child:

- Safety;
- Simplicity in use;
- Availability;
- Complexity;
- Encouragement;
- Re-construction;
- Identity
- Privacy.

The space should offer the possibility for meeting all needs of a pre-school child, following the changes and the appearance of new needs, responding to them, and to contribute to it all, challenging a child. However, those constructing characteristics can be treated as separate micro-entities which are correlated and have a common influence on the development of a child's abilities. Thus, the common safe and various environments can only improve a child's imagination and its urge to research, for a child wants to discover only when it does not feel scared and lost in space.

The complete surroundings in which a child resides, understand the complexes of physical and social environment, which are also separate entities, but which have a common influence on a child's cognitive and physical development.

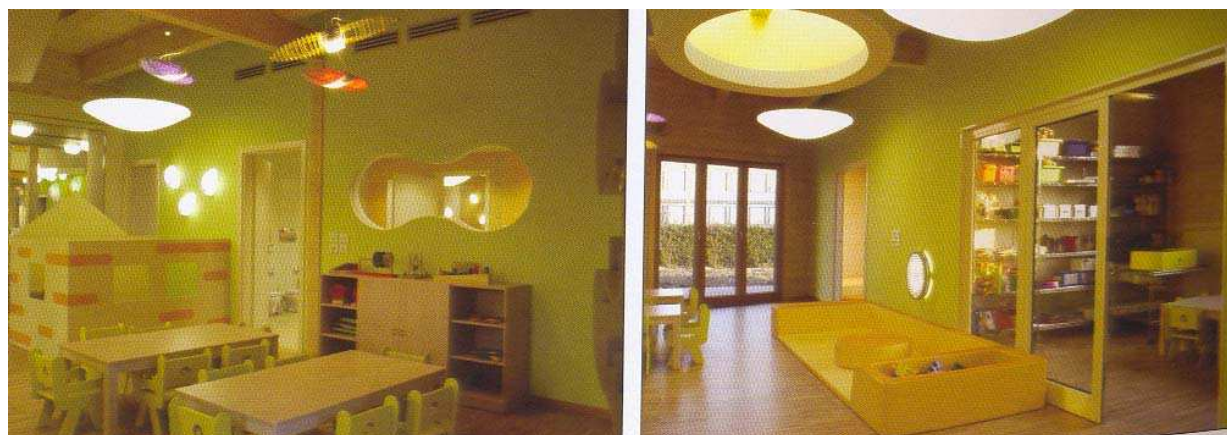


Fig. 4: Kindergarten "Nido Stelia" Modena (Italia), 2004

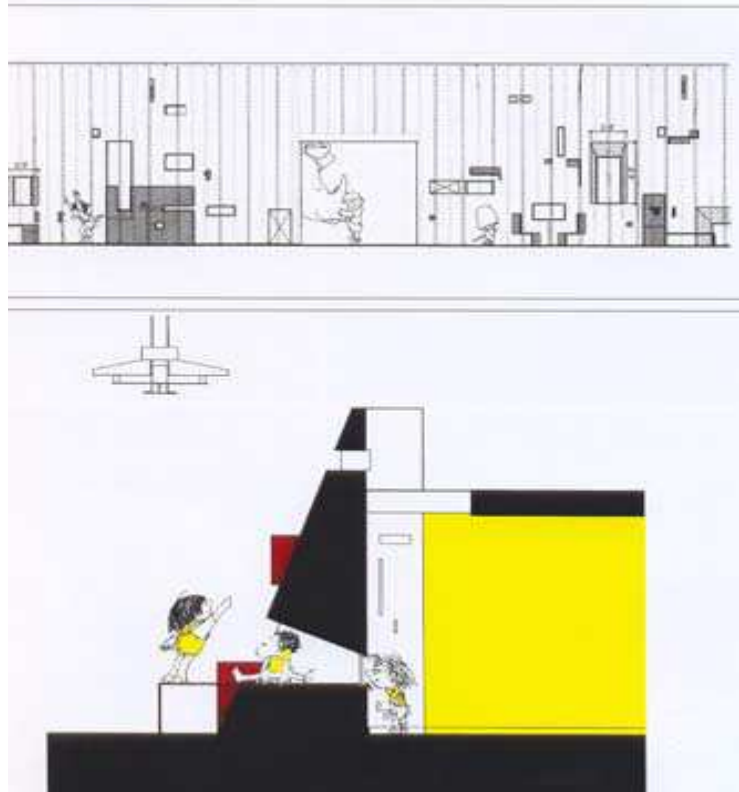


Fig. 5: The Little School in San Francisco, Mark Horton, 2005

CONCLUSION

The capacity and features of the total pre-school premises space, which define the development needs of a child as the definition of the quality of the pre-school upbringing, go partially for the quality of the architectural constructing, i. e the quality of organization and materialization of the constructed and built pre-school premises space.

Analysing the psychological needs of a child considering the space of their residing, there have been certain groups of needs differentiated, which understand a child's safety and its being superior to the space, then a group which goes for the child's needs for the devices within the space, the possibility to encourage a child, to reconstruct the space, as well as the group of needs for a child's identity and privacy in the space.

Taking such defined needs into consideration, among those factors of a physical environment in the pre-school premises important for the educational processes and socialization of children, the following have been found to be very important: safety, simplicity in use, availability, complexity, encouragement, re-construction, identity, privacy and certain features of the space.

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