

PARENTAL EVALUATION OF PRE SCHOOL EDUCATION QUALITY: IS IT A PROBLEM OR AN OPPORTUNITY?

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In accordance with the new legislation of the Russian Federation, pre-school education is recognized as a separate level in the system of education. New demands have been imposed on pre-school educational institutions, in particular, on the quality of their work. An independent expert evaluation of the services they provide is among the forms of such demands. For many years, the right to an external evaluation of the quality of educational institutions' work has been reserved for the heads of various levels of educational management. Currently the state suggests involving direct service consumers - pupils' parents or their legal representatives in the procedure for such independent evaluation. An anonymous survey among experts (parents) was conducted using special questionnaires with subsequent statistical processing of the material. The questionnaire included questions concerning the conditions created in pre-school institutions, parental involvement in the lives of pre-school organizations, parental evaluation of the relationship between the participants of the educational process in pre-school organizations, parental evaluation of the quality of educational services provided by pre-school organizations. This study has made it possible to confirm the basic hypothesis, according to which public assessment of pre-school education quality helps identify the condition of pre-school education and determine the trends in its development.

Keywords: quality of education, an independent assessment of education quality, public examination of pre-school education quality

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, the right to an external evaluation of the quality of educational institutions' work has been reserved for the heads and specialists of higher authorities. In assessing the performance of organizations providing social services, modern management is increasingly looking to public opinion.

Pre-school educational institutions are actively switching to a different kind of independent expert assessment of services they provide by encouraging representatives of the parent community, who are direct consumers of the services, to take due initiative.

However, a question arises - whether students' parents or their legal representatives are willing to objectively and competently express their opinion about the quality of the services they are provided with and how "useful" it is for the development of pre-school educational institutions.

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In this connection, we have set the following objectives in this study:

- to conduct a study involving the parents of pupils in pre-school institutions in Magnitogorsk and Verkhneural'sk in Chelyabinsk Region aimed at assessing their satisfaction with the services of the institutions;
- to define the role of public assessment of pre-school education quality in identifying the condition and significant trends in the development of pre-school education.

The current state policy in the field of pre-school education is aimed at creating conditions for ensuring availability and quality of pre-school education. Regarding the issue of quality, it should be noted that there is always a consumer behind this concept. It is the consumer who chooses the most preferable properties. This is evidenced by the legal, ideological and organizational documents of the recent years.

For example, "The list of indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of the activities of the local authorities in urban districts and municipal districts" (The list of indicators..., 2008) includes the evaluation of people's satisfaction with the quality of education, healthcare and other spheres of social services.

The Decree of the Russian Federation's Government of March 30, 2013 No. 286 approved the "Rules for the formation of an independent system of evaluating the performance of organizations providing social services" (RF Decree No.286, 2013). This document stipulates that the bodies, performing the functions and powers of the founder of organizations providing social services, "... carry out the study of public opinion, the results of evaluating the quality of the organizations' work and ratings of their activities received from non-governmental organizations, professional associations, the media, specialized rating agencies and other experts ... send proposals to organizations for improving their work".

The Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation", elaborates the concept of "management of educational system" (article 89, paragraphs 2.6 and 2.7), including "an independent assessment of the quality of education, social and socio-professional accreditation", along with "the state regulation of educational activity" (procedures for licensing educational activities, state accreditation of educational activities, the state control (supervision) in the sphere of education) (FZ-273, 2012). Thus, it is necessary to note a trend in education policy such as the shift of emphasis towards supporting public and independent evaluation procedures determining the quality of education.

In this regard, when designing the State program of the Russian Federation "The Development of Education for 2013-2020" there has arisen a pressing need for creating an institution for socio-professional expert assessment of education quality - "involving consumers of educational services in the evaluation of education system activities through the development of -mechanisms for external evaluation of the quality of education and state-public administration" (State Program ..., 2013).

The Federal State Educational Standard for Pre-School Education (FSES PE, 2013) is undoubtedly an important document, reflecting the socio-cultural, public and state expectations about the level of pre-school education, acting as a benchmark for development, a tool and, at the same time, as a criterion for assessing the quality of pre-school education for the founders of pre-school organizations, professionals of the education system, pupils' families as well as the general public.

Therefore, its implementation presupposes the active involvement of the public and the education community in the procedures for assessing (examining) the quality of pre-school education through establishing the compliance of the basic educational programs being implemented and the psycho-pedagogical conditions of realization of these programs created by members of the teaching staff of pre-school organizations with the public and professional expectations about solving the problems of a child's socialization and individualization in the pre-school childhood period (Levshina *et al.*, 2016).

In the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation "On the National Strategy of Actions in the Interests of Children for 2012–2017" it is indicated that childhood policies must be based on "technologies of social partnership, social and professional expert evaluation" in order to protect children's rights and interests (On the National Strategy ..., 2012). Parents' satisfaction with the activities of educational organizations and their children's achievements acts as a leading criterion for assessing the quality of pre-school education. Parents' involvement in the educational space of institutions is a compulsory requirement for the development of the modern society (Barkauskaitė, 2016).

The methodological basis of the study lies in the following:

- the concepts of education quality (V.P. Bepal'ko, T.M. Davydenko, V.A. Kal'nei, V.S. Lazarev, A.N. Mayorov, V.M. Polonsky, M.M. Potashnik, A.I. Subetto, P.I. Tretyakov, T.I. Shamova, S.E. Shishov, etc.),
- studies in the field of pre-school education quality management (S.F. Bagautdinova, K.Y. Belaya, N.A. Vinogradova, E.S. Komarova, O.A. Safonova, L.I. Falyushina, etc.),
- educational qualimetry as an area of scientific knowledge that studies the problems of quantitative assessment of education quality (A.I. Subetto),
- studies focusing on the public and professional expert assessment of education quality (V.I. Zakharova, Y.V. Novoseletskaia, A.N. Popov, M.S. Taratukhina, L.N. Khananashvili, etc.).

In general, however, despite the importance of the issue of social and professional expert assessment of education quality, there are comparatively few specific sociological and managerial studies on parental evaluation of preschool education quality.

HYPOTHESIS

Being the object of our study, the quality of education is treated by the Federal Law No. 273 “On Education in the Russian Federation” as a comprehensive feature of students’ educational activities and training, which expresses the degree of their compliance with the federal state educational standards, educational standards, the federal state requirements and (or) the needs of individuals or legal entities, benefitting from educational activities, including the degree of achieving the expected results of the educational program (FZ-273, 2012).

The quality of education in pre-school educational organizations is regarded by scholars as meeting the consumers’ (the state, society, children and their parents) need for educational services, and corresponding to certain standards or specifications.

Independent social and professional expert assessment in the field of pre-school education is a process whose leading characteristics are self-regulation and voluntariness of its organization.

According to A.G. Gogoberidze and V.A. Novitskaya, among the variety of tasks that are being successfully solved by carrying out social and professional expert assessment, the most important are the following: “intensification of strategic development processes and improvements in the quality of pre-school educational institutions; an increase in the responsibility of preschool educational institutions for the quality of solving organizational problems; a growth in the competitiveness of kindergartens, which determines the quality of education; ensuring public awareness and informing all concerned parties and the governmental body about the quality of education in pre-school educational institutions; implementation of mechanisms for creating associations of parents and professionals, organizations and communities included in the process of assessing the quality of pre-school education; ensuring compliance of the requirements for the quality of preschool education in kindergartens with the expectations of educational service consumers; creating the tools for implementing the principles of state-public pre-school education management” (Gogoberidze & Novitskaya, 2013).

METHODS

For the pilot study, we used the guidelines developed by the federal state autonomous institution “Federal Institute for the Development of Education” (FSAI FIDE) and questionnaires. We also analyzed parents’ educational requirements and educational expectations about pre-school education.

Recommendations for the use of tools in conducting social and professional assessment of the quality of pre-school education have been developed by the FSAI FIDE in terms of working towards “modernization and implementation of modern assessment system and improving the quality of pre-school education in pre-school educational institutions in accordance with the federal educational

standards of pre-school education within the framework of supporting the programs for development of regional and municipal pre-school education systems”.

The authors of the recommendations have defined the mechanism presupposing a two-step quality assessment system, where self-evaluation of a pre-school educational institution serves as the first step (the first stage). The “Delphi” method proves to be the most affordable and effective one for performing parental assessment of pre-school education quality. This method presupposes an anonymous survey of experts (parents) using special questionnaires, followed by statistical processing of the material.

A study of parental evaluation of pre-school education quality was held in December 2015.

In total 31 pre-school educational institutions of Magnitogorsk and Verhneuralsk were analyzed of which:

- 29% were of a general development type,
- 39% were child development centers,
- 9% were of a combined type,
- 6% were health care centers
- 17% were other pre-school institutions.

314 parents of pre-school children attending kindergartens of Magnitogorsk and Verhneuralsk were selected as the focus of the study. The sample size amounted to 538 people.

The questionnaire included questions concerning

- the conditions created in pre-school educational institutions,
- parental involvement in the lives of pre-school educational institutions,
- parental evaluation of the relationship between the participants of the educational process,
- parental evaluation of the quality of services provided by pre-school educational institutions.

During the process of completing the questionnaires, the parents were asked to assess their satisfaction with the quality of pre-school education using a three-point scale: a) fully satisfied, b) partially satisfied, c) unsatisfied. The respondents completed the questionnaire on their own.

Based on the fact that evaluating the performance of pre-school educational institutions ranged from +2 to 0 within each item, it is possible to draw conclusions about the degree of parental satisfaction with different aspects of employees’ activities.

Of the total number of respondents:

- 49% of the respondents were parents of children under school age (5-7 years old),

- 34% were parents of preschool children aged 3 to 5,
- 17% were parents of children attending early child development groups (from 2 to 3 years old).

In order to obtain the parents' generalized views on the quality of pre-school education we analyzed the data we had received. In the study, we focused on the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of parental evaluation of pre-school education quality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First of all, the percentage of the total number of parents handed in the questionnaire was noted. This figure (97%) serves as an indirect evidence of the quality of the pre-school educational establishments' work with parents and the parents' interest in cooperating with the pre-school educational establishments.

Analysis of the results of the questionnaire makes it possible to assert that most parents love and care for their children; they are focused on their upbringing and education.

What is the parents' idea of an ideal model of a kindergarten? What do parents see as the purpose, functions and the main role of pre-school education? The results of the survey are shown in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION AND RANKING OF FUNCTIONS (ROLE) OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

<i>Possible answers to the question "What is the purpose of pre-school education?"</i>	<i>Percentage of the total number</i>	<i>Range of answers</i>
Child development	58%	1
Preparing children for school.	49%	2
Development of the children's interests and abilities.	48%	3
Children's socialization.	34%	4
Taking care and looking after children	31%	5
Maintaining and improving children's health.	29%	6
Other	–	–
It is hard to say	–	–

Note: Participants of the survey were asked to choose three options

It is noteworthy that, according to A.V. Merenkov, in the mid 90-ies of the XX century 28% of respondents were unable to determine the goals of education for the younger generation whatsoever (Merenkov 2013). Parents of today's generation are quite pragmatic.

Analysis shows that 58% of parents associate the main purpose and function of the kindergarten with the development of children while 49% - with the preparation of children for school. Approximately the same number of parents (48%) believe that a kindergarten should ensure the development of children's

interests and abilities. This suggests that parents consider kindergartens, primarily as a resource for educating and training children as well as forming their cognitive abilities and skills. Modern parents are focused on “good education for their children” (Bezrukova, 2014), starting from the pre-school stage of education.

On the one hand, they see education and development as a prerequisite for success and a decent human life. On the other hand, the ability to be a successful student at school releases parents from having to take care of the child, to help them and to control the child’s every step while starting school. Parents associate good preparation for school, as well as a high level of development with a high level of children’s autonomy and self-sufficiency. However, children’s autonomy is often interpreted in an excessively limited way, it is seen as a guarantee of the parents’ freedom while the children can go about their business, play or watch TV. Thus 80% of parents of children aged 3-6 indicate that preschoolers watch TV or cartoons with adults for 1-2 hours every day.

According to a third of the respondents (34%), the main purpose of pre-school education is to create conditions for children’s socialization. However, parents find it difficult to specify what qualities should be formed in the child during the process of socialization. In general, there is a clear underestimation of the value of education. Only every tenth respondent pointed out the importance of the forming such qualities as kindness, mercy, compassion, conscience, duty, responsibility, self-confidence, the ability to communicate with adults and peers. Teachers should convey to parents the idea that the modern world affirms the value of an individual’s continuing education as well as their permanent training.

Interestingly, 31% of parents believe that the kindergarten, first and foremost, is obliged to ensure taking care and looking after children. Child care is determined by the Federal Law No. 273 “On Education in the Russian Federation” as “a set of measures for organizing catering and domestic services for children, ensuring they maintain proper personal hygiene and keep regular hours” (FZ-273, 2012). Perhaps, parents associate child care not only with the formation of cultural and hygienic habits, self-organization skills, which in itself is very important for children, but to a greater extent with ensuring the children’s safety.

Surprisingly, only 29% of respondents pointed out such factors as maintaining and improving children’s health as the main goal of kindergartens. This choice was made primarily by the parents of younger children, given that health traditionally occupies the leading position in the hierarchy of the vital values for Russians (Noskova, 2015).

Assessment of the conditions created in pre-school educational institutions

During the survey, the parents were asked to assess their satisfaction with the conditions for child development created in pre-school educational institutions (Table 2).

TABLE 2: THE RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE CONDITIONS CREATED IN PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (IN %)

<i>Q-n No.</i>	<i>Questions</i>	<i>completely satisfied</i>	<i>partially satisfied</i>	<i>unsatisfied</i>
1	Are you satisfied with the meals in the kindergarten?	59%	35%	6%
2	How do you assess the material and technical equipment of the kindergarten premises?	62%	35%	3%
3	How do you assess the material and technical equipment of the kindergarten's gym?	54%	39%	7%
4	How do you assess the material and technical equipment of the kindergarten's music hall?	74%	25%	1%
5	How do you assess the material and technical equipment of the sports ground on the territory of the kindergarten?	44%	45%	11%

Analyzing the responses to this group of questions, the following conclusions can be drawn. Parents are most satisfied with the material and technical equipment of pre-school educational institutions. Parents are happy to point out the variety of toys, construction kits, materials for graphic activity, engineering and cognitive activities.

The equipment of classrooms, music halls and gyms is evaluated much highly than the equipment of playgrounds on the territory of the kindergartens. One should agree that the sets of sports equipment for the realization of children's physical activities in the kindergarten sportsground area are somewhat limited.

The survey showed that 59 % of the parents were completely satisfied with food in kindergartens, while 35% of respondents were partially satisfied. However, 6% of parents stated that they were not satisfied with the food. Parents listed plain food and not enough fruits and vegetables on the menu as the reason for their dissatisfaction.

Evaluation of parental involvement in the lives of pre-school educational institutions

Paragraph 3 of Article 44 of Federal Law No. 273 states, "Parents (legal representatives) of underage students have the right ... to participate in the management of the organization, carrying out educational activities, in the form determined by the charter of the organization" (FZ-273, 2012).

Therefore, the questionnaire for parents included questions related to parental involvement in the lives of pre-school educational institutions. The respondents found these questions sufficiently complicated and therefore hard to answer (Table 3).

The public component in the management of pre-school educational institutions is rated low by parents. Only 38% of the respondents are satisfied with their

TABLE 3: ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE PARTICIPATION OF PARENTS IN THE LIFE OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

<i>Q-n No.</i>	<i>Questions</i>	<i>Answers</i>		
		<i>yes</i>	<i>rarely, partially</i>	<i>no</i>
1	Does the pre-school educational institution create the conditions for your participation in matters related to the organization of your child's life in the kindergarten?	61%	13%	26%
2	Is your opinion taken into account in the organization of educational activities in the pre-school educational institution (visiting theaters, concerts, festivals).	53%	23%	24%
3	How often do you attend meetings for parents?	66%	30%	4%
4	Do you attend the events organized for children (holidays, tours, presentations of projects)?	59%	35%	6%
5	Is your opinion taken into account while making decisions on the issues related to the management of the pre-school educational institution?	19%	23%	58%
6	How satisfied are you with your participation in the management of the pre-school educational institution (dealing with financial problems, the choice of the range of additional services, the implementation of topic-related and financial projects)?	38%	15%	47%

participation in the management of the pre-school educational institution, while 47% of the respondents are not satisfied with it. 58% of parents believe that their opinion is ignored during the process of making decisions in the management of the pre-school educational institution.

At the same time, the question “Does the pre-school educational institution create the conditions for your participation in matters related to the organization of your child's life in the kindergarten?” is rated quite highly (61% of positive answers). This suggests that some work is carried out in order to involve parents in the activities of pre-school educational institutions, but probably it is not sufficiently effective.

Parents are more involved in the educational process of the kindergarten. Their opinion is taken into account in the organization of educational activities (53% of positive answers). The majority of parents attend the events organized for children, of them 59% stated that they always did it and 35% did it rarely). It should be noted that parental involvement in these activities is of a passive and watchful character. Such parents are interested in many aspects, but they do not actively participate in the life of the kindergarten. However, they may carry out certain recommendations and instructions of tutors.

Meetings for parents serve as a form of interaction and cooperation between the kindergarten and the family. It is here that the most important questions are

solved with regard to the kindergarten life and activities, management issues and the development of the institution. The parents' active position can be best shown at the meetings for parents. However, 2/3 (66%) of parents regularly attend meetings, 30% attend them from time to time, while 4% do not attend such meetings whatsoever. The following causes of non-attendance of meetings are mentioned: a tight work schedule or grandmothers attending the meetings, etc. It should be noted that the delegating role of parenting, when everyday care of children and the responsibility for their upbringing are delegated to other people (grandmothers, babysitters) and this is the case more and more often.

The Federal State Standard for Pre-school Education (FSES PE, 2013) puts forward the principle of partnership between pre-school educational institutions and families as one of the principles of preschool education. However, it can be assumed that parents have little awareness of the issues related to the management of the pre-school educational institutions, they are insufficiently involved in this activity and, therefore, do not participate actively in the work of these institutions as equal partners.

Parental evaluation of the relationship between the participants of the educational process in pre-school educational institutions

The problem of the relationship between the participants of the education process is one of the most acute problems these days. The fact that only 1% of the parents determine the relationship with the teachers of the class, attended by their children, as a conflict one, demonstrates the teachers' professional competence and the managers' attention to this issue (Table 4).

TABLE 4: ISSUES RELATED TO THE PARENTAL ASSESSMENT OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS IN PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

<i>Q-n No.</i>	<i>Questions</i>	<i>business-related, constructive</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>conflict</i>
1	How can you evaluate your relationship with the teachers?	60%	39%	1%
2	How can you evaluate your relationship with the administration, teachers and staff of the pre-school educational institution?	46%	54%	0%
3	How can you evaluate your relationship with the parents of other pupils in the group attended by your child?	32%	67%	1%

The results of the evaluation lead to the conclusion that most educators (60%) manage to establish cooperative relationships with parents. It is these relationships that determine the comfort of the child's stay in the group and make it possible to overcome many problems, using the resources of human interaction.

However, despite their professional duties and responsibilities, some teachers tend to have certain opposition in their relationships with parents, skepticism and distrust of the educational opportunities of the family. This is evidenced by a relatively large proportion of neutral relationships (39%) between parents and class teachers. On the other hand, the reason for such relationships lies in the parents' unwillingness to be partners, which requires activity and initiative from all participants of education process.

It should be noted that there are always some parents who are proactive, active and willing to collaborate with teachers of pre-school institutions. There are also parents, who are potentially willing to cooperate: they find it difficult to show initiative first, to make a contact with the teacher, to have trusting and honest communication and to become partners in the child's upbringing. Teachers should remember that it is their professional duty to establish the relationships of partnership with parents.

Noteworthy is the proportion of neutral relationships (67%) among the parents of one group. It also demonstrates a lack of teachers' work in developing the team spirit in the parents' community and the teacher's formal attitude to the task of interacting with the family.

The question of transparency and feedback is important for the interaction between the kindergarten and the family. Parents were asked to select two sources, where they receive information about the results of the child's acquisition of the content of the educational program, the specific features of the educational process organization. The respondents answered the question in the following way: 87% of parents receive information from group teachers; 27% of them - from the news feed on the official website of the kindergarten; 27% - from parent meetings; 6% from meetings with specialists of the pre-school educational institution. None indicated that they receive information through SMS-messaging.

It is encouraging that parents prefer to receive information from teachers. This demonstrates that parents trust the teachers and recognize their professional competence.

Parental evaluation of the quality of the services provided by pre-school educational institutions

Analysis of the responses shows that the problem of the quality of educational services has been put forward as a top priority (Table 5).

Only every second parent (52%) is fully satisfied with the quality of education and training in the kindergarten. Every tenth parent is not satisfied with the quality of the educational process. Most parents are not aware of the psychological and pedagogical issues related to the child's upbringing and development; they do not understand the significance of their influence on the child at a pre-school age. Parents willingly shift the solution of the immediate tasks of training and education

TABLE 5: ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS RELATED TO PARENTAL EVALUATION OF THE QUALITY OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

<i>Q-n No.</i>	<i>Questions</i>	<i>completely satisfied</i>	<i>partially satisfied</i>	<i>unsatisfied</i>
1	Are you satisfied with the quality of education and training in the kindergarten?	52%	37%	11%
2	Are you satisfied with the quality of additional educational services (clubs, interest groups and workshops) provided by the pre-school educational institution?	58%	37%	5%
3	Are you satisfied with the professional qualities of the teachers working with your child, their interest in your child achieving positive results in the acquisition of the educational program?	58%	33%	9%
4	Are you satisfied with system of developing resistance to cold in the kindergarten?	49%	43%	8%

of pre-school children to pre-school teachers. Only about 36% of parents are willing to bring up their children themselves.

One needs to be a professional in order to assess such factors as the content of educational services. Parents are often unhappy not so much with the content of the educational services for their children, as with the indifference, negligence and rudeness of the staff. Moreover, parents' dissatisfaction is not always caused by objective factors. Much depends on the parents' expectations, which are often extremely unrealistic.

The quality of additional educational services provided by pre-school educational institutions was rated quite highly by parents, 58% of parents indicated that it was of a high level and they were completely satisfied, 37% praised it less highly and noted that they were partially satisfied, while 5% characterized the quality of additional educational services as low and expressed dissatisfaction with it. Why are additional educational services in high demand? Parents believe that it is this activity that provides the development of children's interests and abilities. However, parents appreciate the availability of interest clubs as well as the quality of the teachers in these clubs.

Most parents are of the opinion that the quality is primarily determined by the skills and efforts of the teacher. The professional qualities of teachers are evaluated ambiguously by parents. 58% of parents are completely satisfied with the professional qualities of the teachers who work with children. Parents find it difficult to assess the teachers' professional knowledge. They mostly evaluate behavioral characteristics, such as a gentle, friendly and caring attitude to the child as well as friendly, respectful and courteous communication with parents. Respondents appreciate the teachers' speech culture, the ability of educators to support, reassure

and encourage frustrated children. Parents place quite high demands on the teachers' appearance and their ethical behavior.

At the same time, 33% of parents of preschoolers are partially satisfied with the teachers' professionalism; they do not completely trust their teaching abilities and competence in solving problems related to children's upbringing and education. For this reason, parents rarely turn to teachers for help. Only 18% of parents tend to seek advice and guidance from teachers of pre-school educational institutions. Parents prefer to receive information about the child's upbringing from friends (64%), the Internet (12%); they also read specialized literature (10%). This fact is alarming, as, according to some scholars, parent uncertainty is one of the most common psychological problems of modern parents (Bezrukova, 2014). From 45% to 65% of parents of preschool children are unsure of the correctness of their educational position - whether they choose the right methods while seeking obedience, punishing and praising their child, encouraging or preventing the child's independence.

In summary, it should be noted that 84% of parents have a positive attitude towards pre-school educational institutions attended by their child, 8% of parents have a neutral attitude to them, while the attitude of 8% of parents is negative.

CONCLUSION

The study confirmed the basic hypothesis, according to which public assessment of the quality of pre-school education makes it possible to reveal the condition and significant trends in the development of pre-school education, both at the institutional and municipal levels. Analysis of numerous regulations in the sphere of education has shown that it is customer satisfaction that serves as the leading criterion of pre-school education quality

The study shows the following:

- the analysis of parental assessment by group turns out to be more informative and gives more substantial information than the average rating of a pre-school educational institution, though it is also of some value for establishing communication with parents and involving the family in the educational process of a pre-school educational institution;
- the average rating of pre-school educational institutions on the whole loses its informativity and specificity. At the same time, educational authorities need parental assessment of the quality of pre-school education for taking certain decisions;
- parents' pedagogical culture is low, they do not have a clear idea of the aims and meaning of pre-school education. Parents' claims are often unreasonably inflated;

- the content of the questionnaires needs to be adjusted. Parents find it difficult to answer open questions. General questions are not informative (“Are you satisfied with the quality of pre-school education?”);
- surveys involving parents must be accompanied by the study of teachers’ views on similar issues.

Analysis of the problems which, according to parents, exist in kindergartens becomes relevant to kindergartens. Parental evaluation of the quality of education enables pre-school institutions to generate action plans for improving the quality.

In general, an independent public expert examination, including the participation of professionals, which makes it socio-professional, is apparently a very promising business. It is very important that public and professional assessments do not presuppose a search for a single solution to the problem – any subjective views, opinions and statements are a valuable source of possible ways for the development and improvement of pre-school education.

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