CHAPTER 4

HEALTH EDUCATION IN CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Protecting a child's health before being sick is much more important than regaining it after being sick. For this purpose, the first topics to be addressed should be nutrition, hygiene, self-care, sleep, physical activity, psychology and social relations. These needs are met first under the supervision of her/his family and then her/his teacher. Health education should not only aim to meet their self-care needs, but also to protect their individual rights and ensure their personal safety. In addition, a child must learn to express when they are exposed to behaviors that they do not want. Teachers play a huge role in the psychosocial development of a child both in the preschool and school-age period. They are with their teachers for almost half of their days and nearly the whole week. That's why the task of teachers is as important as that of parents in the child's health education. Health education in children includes not only the education of the child, but also the education of the family and teachers who take care of them.

Keywords: Child, Health, Education, Family

I. Health Education in Children

According to the World Health Organization, the definition of health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.

WHO has defined health education as "any combination of learning experiences designed to help individuals and communities improve their health, by increasing their knowledge or influencing their attitudes". Health education in children includes not only the education of the child, but also the education of the family and teachers who take care of them.

Society needs to be educated so that people can access their rights to health. In short, children should be educated first for a healthy society. Education begins in the family for a child. It then continues into school age. At the same time, those who educate children should be trained for example; parents and teachers. A healthy society is happy and productive. A healthy society consists of individuals who can use their full potential. Once basic needs and rights are met, science, technology and art will flourish. Civilization evolves as health improves. Today, doctors and health professionals should reach all segments of the public with the support of the government. Initiatives to protect and improve health in all kinds of platforms such as homes, schools, streets, media, internet and social media provide a lot of benefits for little cost.

Protecting a person's health before being sick is much more important than regaining it after being sick. It provides many physical and psychological contributions to individuals. At the same time, protecting an individual's health is much more efficient and also economically sound for the government than trying to restore health after an illness. In short, the first goal should be the protection of health.

For this purpose, the first topics to be addressed should be nutrition, hygiene, self-care, sleep, physical activity, psychology and social relations. These needs are met first under the supervision of the family and then the teacher. The most important thing is that the child must be able to meet their own needs during this process. Thus, they takean important step in becoming an independent and free individual.

The experiences, habits and skills that an individual acquires at an early age affect an individual's personality, habits and worldview in adulthood. If children get an effective education,

she/he is expected to develop in the same direction. You can't teach an old dog new tricks. Therefore, a child's health education is an important factor affecting their future. Another important factor is culture. There may be practices originating from false beliefs and traditions in underdeveloped and developing countries. For this reason, the health education of society should not be ignored along with the health education of the child.

The first years of childhood are of great importance physically, mentally and emotionally. At this age, all organs and systems in the body develop and change at an incredible rate, especially the brain. Correct interventions at this age are of vital importance.

First, the state should provide every mother with an opportunity to give birth under the supervision of a doctor, then tests for genetic diseases should be done. Early diagnosis can save a child's life. A strict vaccination schedule should be followed. Finally, vaccinations should be done and should not be interrupted.

The doctor should carefully inform the mother and family of possible health issues. If the family sees indications of illness, they should take the child to the nearest health institution. These are symptoms such as: fever, discomfort, decreased sucking, loss of appetite, fatigue, jaundice, bruising of the lips, pallor, prolonged vomiting and diarrhea, excessive crying, changes in respiratory sounds (such as moaning, wheezing), and excessive sweating. If it is discovered early, it can both save the baby's life and ensure that they can continue their life in full health without any problems in the future.

The family and the environment play the most important role in the development of the child in the preschool period. In this period, the more physical, mental and emotional capacity develops, the more productive a child will be at school age. On the contrary, if there are negative experiences during this period, problems that affect both the child and their environment and society may arise in the future. For this reason, projects that reach all segments of society should be implemented or increased for the health education of the family. School age is a more controllable period for the government. Children spend most of the day at school. There is also access to many children in one setting. Reaching a child means reaching a family. Schools are the ideal environment for observing and sustaining public health.

Considering that every family and child's access to a doctor is less frequent than access to school, it is a great opportunity for health professionals to provide health education in schools, both for doctors and the public. This training should continue at regular intervals and should be shaped according to feedback.

Schools are the ideal environment for children to acquire healthy habits when the right policies are applied. Because the child has many friends of the same age, a child may be more influenced by school friends as compared to older people such as a mother, father, or teacher. When an effective health education is given, it can create a domino effect among students.

What can be done by the state and various institutions is activities such as medical examination while registering, periodic physical examination, health screening, diagnosis, treatment and monitoring of students with acute and chronic diseases, first aid training against accidents, mental health studies, and sports.

School is an environment where attention should be paid to public health. Crowds schools and classrooms with students in close contact can transmit diseases very easily. This environment threatens not only their own health, but also public health. At this point, health education should be given by doctors, health professionals and teachers, then necessary precautions should be taken. If necessary, the child and family should be thoroughly informed about the benefits of vaccination.

In preschool and primary school, the child learns social rules. The skills of reasoning, questioning and establishing cause-effect relationships develop. A child learns to express themselves correctly. Learning like this prepares the child for life. It's like a mini simulation of real life. If this period is completed successfully, they are more likely to lead a successful life as an individual as well.

Health education should not only aim to meet their self-care needs, but also to protect their individual rights and ensure their personal safety. In addition, the child must learn to express when they are exposed to behaviors that they do not want.

As childhood ends, hormones and anatomy change. This period is as sensitive as childhood. They should no longer be seen as a child but as an adult. Communication should be established as if we are dealing with an adult, not a child. With this approach, many emerging problems can be solved much more easily.

Nutrition can be affected first, as the body and hormones change during puberty. Their diet can be more difficult to follow. For this reason, symptoms such as weight gain, weight loss, dental caries, acne etc. should be followed closely. Especially young girls should be taught that in order to look beautiful, it is necessary to eat not a small amount, but a sufficient and balanced diet. It should be emphasized that they should not compare their bodies with anyone. In addition, sports activities should be done for both physical health and socialization.

Sport is also a good choice to protect them from bad friendships and bad habits. It also helps reduce the time spent with electronic devices. In terms of psychological health, social media, games, ,and other factors should be considered. Attention can be drawn to all these articles with public service announcements and suggestions that can be broadcast on social media. If possible, try to find a solution by converting it into something useful without prohibiting it.

II. The Role of Parents in Health Education in Children

The health of mothers, babies and children is the most important factor that determines the health of the next generation. Their health problems help predict future public health problems. Therefore, improving their well-being should be an important public health goal.

The conditions of the places where people live affect their health. Environmental and social factors such as access to healthcare and early intervention services, education, employment and economic opportunities, social support and the availability of resources also affect maternal health. Factors affecting maternal health also affect pregnancy, infant and child health.

Above all, a child needs a mentally and physically healthy parent to be healthy. A child cannot be healthy or happy without a healthy and happy mother. It is also a great chance for the child and society that parents are conscious and willing to learn what they do not know and what needs to be done from the doctors.

Maternal and infant mortality and pregnancy-related complications can be reduced by increasing access to quality preconception (preconception), prenatal (during pregnancy), and interconception (between pregnancy) care.

Care and control before and during pregnancy are the most important steps to prevent complications. Women who are considering becoming pregnant should visit a doctor before becoming pregnant and current health risks should be determined. Evaluation of both parents in terms of sexually transmitted diseases, maternal immunization and genetic diseases before pregnancy is of great importance for child health.

In order for all these to be done by parents, it is necessary to raise the consciousness of society.

Depending on the gestational week, it is indispensable for the health of both the mother and the fetus to follow good healthcare requirements such as ultrasound examinations, blood tests and imaging tests during pregnancy. At these appointments, diseases that carry risks for expectant mothers are also determined and precautions are taken.

Women need to be sure of the safety of any medications or herbal remedies they use during pregnancy. They should not take certain medications, including some acne treatments and herbal supplements, as they may cause fetal malformations. In addition, many studies have shown that tobacco smoke and alcohol use during pregnancy increase the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Alcohol use can also cause various deformities such as abnormal facial features, small head, and mental problems. And , the recommended amount of folic acid consumption before and during pregnancy reduces the risk of neural tube defects. In addition, it is very important to educate mothers so that they can easily transition from pregnancy to motherhood. For this reason, prenatal courses should be organized. In these courses, the mother should share her pregnancy-related concerns with her healthcare professional. Mothers should be given basic information about infant care, the importance of breast milk, the importance of following the child's routine immunization schedule, and in which situations they should be concerned about an infant's health. Before leaving the hospital, mothers should be taught by healthcare professionals about breast care and how to keep the baby in a position while breastfeeding. Parents should be told when to bring the child for postnatal checkups. Especially in the first week-10 days, they should be taught which situations can be urgent and in which cases they should apply to the health institution. In addition, the parent should be told that he should not listen to hearsay information in society and that she should consult a doctor in case of a problem that they are worried about.

A cross-sectional study was done on women who visited three randomly selected PHCs in Al-Khobar over a two-week period in April 2001 by Rasheed P and friends [1]. Women of childbearing age (15-45 years) were selected. Pregnancy-related questions were asked to the 581 women selected through the prepared questionnaire. Demographic profiles and parity were noted. Their awareness of vaccination and breast care, recommended nutrition during pregnancy, safe maternal age, tobacco use during pregnancy or rubella infection, and the importance of prenatal controls and routine laboratory tests were questioned. The data show that many women are well-informed about certain aspects of pregnancy, such as dietary requirements, the importance and timing of prenatal visits, and the harms of smoking during pregnancy. However, it turned out that many were unaware of rubella infection during pregnancy, with more than half unaware of the results of a blood test and the importance of prenatal procedures such as vaccination with tetanus toxoid and breast care during pregnancy. According to this study, as the literacy level of the women in the research population increased, there was a significant positive improvement in the level of knowledge ($p<0.01$). In this study, it was revealed that doctors and nurses did not give enough information to these

mothers. The results of this research highlighted the need for intensive activation of health education programs through the mass media and local PHCs (primary health services).

In order to understand a child's problem in the best and fastest way and start the treatment process, the doctor should be able to give the parent the comfort of speaking and asking questions. Parents should take an active role during the examination. The parent should have a command of the child's health history and be able to talk clearly. They should ask the doctor what they do not understand, make sure that they understand, and bring a notebook with them and write down what they hear from the doctor. In addition, before the examination, they should write down in the notebook what they want to ask the doctor. The parent knows their child's needs best. The parent should share with their doctor what they think is best for their child. The parent should be honest with the doctor and respect their advice. If a parent still has concerns, they should not hesitate to consult another doctor ("should be able to get a second opinion"). Parents giving detailed information about the child's condition to the doctor and the doctor patiently listening cause fewer medical errors, shorter hospital stay, shorter recovery time, fewer emergency room visits, and less anxiety for children and their families. They also indirectly contribute to a country's economy.

Routine doctor visits for children are very important in terms of monitoring the growth and development stages of children and not overlooking any health problems. The importance of routine control of the child should be explained to the parent and the next appointment can be determined at the last appointment of the parent to the clinic so that it is not neglected. As soon as the appointment approaches, the secretaries can reach the parents to remind them that the child needs to come for a check-up.

Although childhood and adolescent cancers are rare, early symptoms of cancer can be mistaken for infectious disease, accidental swelling and bruising. Cancer symptoms do not heal on their own, they worsen over time and are persistent. Parents should be reminded that a single symptom alone is less likely to be a sign of childhood cancer, and parents should not be unduly worried. However, if the child have an unusual mass or swelling, unexplained paleness or worsening rash, loss of energy for no apparent reason, unusual behavior or movements, a tendency to bruise or bleed easily, pain that does not go away, unexplained fever, frequent headaches, vision changes, unexpected rapid weight loss, they should consult their pediatrician for a more comprehensive evaluation. Depending on the doctor's findings, blood tests or imaging studies may be helpful. It should not be forgotten that regular check-ups with the pediatrician help children stay healthy and get an early diagnosis which increases survival.

In fact, it is of great importance for the child's survival that not only the parents but also every individual in society know the numbers to call in case of an emergency and that they can manage the situation until the emergency team arrives. In terms of public health, every individual of society, especially parents, should be trained on what to do. Every parent and caregiver of the child should be taught to initiate CPR when the child is not breathing, to apply constant pressure with a clean cloth if bleeding is present, to lay the child on the floor with the head and torso turned to the side, and not to put anything in the mouth if the child has a seizure. Also, parents should be taught that poisons or other drugs suspected of being ingested by your child should be brought to the emergency room.

Families need to be able to incorporate healthy habits into their busy lives. It is not always easy to get children to consume healthy foods. For this reason, it is necessary not to put junk food in places where a child can see it and eat it. Healthy food should be made easily accessible. Cut up fruit and vegetable sticks can be placed in the first compartment of the refrigerator. Colorful fruits can be stored on the kitchen table. Care should be taken not to skip meals in child nutrition and color counting can be done with the child at meals. The more colors on their plate, the healthier it is, so make it a game or a contest and have them count how many colors are on their plate. (For example, two green vegetables, one orange, one yellow etc.). Research has shown that the risk of obesity increases in children who do not get enough sleep. The fact that parents do not leave their work at home until very late and create a general night mode at home makes it easier for the child to fall asleep. It is important for sleep habits that the room where the child sleeps is dark and there is no television. Children often do what they see, not what they hear. Therefore, being healthier should be a family goal.

III. The Role of Teachers in Health Education in Children

Teachers play a huge role in the psychosocial development of the child both in the preschool and school-age period. They are with their teachers for almost half of the day and nearly the whole week. That's why the task of teachers is as important as that of parents in the child's health education.

When a child starts kindergarten in the preschool period, this is a very new environment for them, it is the first time that they are away from their family and they have taken the first step to a place where they will make a lot of new friends. During this period, the child is nutritionally dependent, eating whatever is put in front of them. Consequently, it is up to the parents and teacher to develop healthy eating habits. Children are especially prone to imitate their parents' eating habits. That is why it is so important that the people around a child eat

healthy. Breakfast, which is a very important meal for growth and development, should never be skipped, teachers should definitely ask the children if they had breakfast. In preschool education, snacks should be given at the same time every day (no junk food) and this can be the first step a healthy and balanced diet. The child should never be forced to eat, children should eat their own food, and portions should be as much as they will eat. Lunches prepared for children at school should contain the five main nutrients for healthy eating: milk and dairy products, meat and meat products, as well as dried legumes, fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, bread and cereals. This scheme should always continue like this, and parents should also be taught this scheme and be encouraged to implement it at home. During this period, the child should consume three main meals and two snacks. A child's excessive sugar intake should definitely be avoided because there is a significant relationship between excessive sugar intake and tooth decay. To prevent this, it is the right choice to replace sugary foods with fresh fruit. It is very important to teach children the habit of washing their hands and brushing their teeth for a healthy life. Especially in such education places, washing hands before and after meals with friends, brushing teeth after eating allows them to make a habit of them. Habits made together in collective environments become more permanent. Unbalanced nutrition causes harm to the body, including excessive thin or fat appearance, deterioration of skin health, lack of various vitamins and minerals, loss of appetite and fatigue. In order for these results not to develop, healthy eating habits should be instilled in children and should be followed in terms of growth development.

School age and adolescence are completely different periods. The child is nutritionally independent during this period, they have already begun to move away from the family and enjoys being with friends a little more, and eating with them. During this period, the contribution of friends to eating habits has increased a lot. Friends usually want to eat whatever the other is eating. At this age, growth is very fast, so it is very important that the diet is healthy and balanced. In addition to healthy eating, young people should be encouraged to adopt a more active lifestyle, spend less screen time and lead a daily life with more physical activity. In young people of this age, fast food style eating or skipping meals is very common. Unfortunately, breakfast is also the most skipped meal. Breakfast is very important to start the day fit, to have a positive day.

Again, during this period, nutritional disorders (anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa) are especially common in girls. It is very important to detect nutritional disorders and seek psychiatric help at an early stage. In order to instill eating habits in children of this age, first of all, three meals should be regularly taken out in schools. In addition, school canteens should

be inspected regularly, and health-harmful foods should not be sold. Meals that are regularly given to students should be monitored for calorie and nutrient balance. Teachers should be told what nutrients may be lacking in the body when children are fed irregularly and what may happen as a result of this deficiency, and this issue should be constantly considered by hanging posters in classrooms and school corridors. Teachers should be able to recognize these shortcomings. The student's attendance or course success in the lesson decreases, he/she becomes sluggish, looks pale / yellow, sleeps constantly, or does not eat, weight loss / gain, etc. these can be a warning symptom. In other words, if the existing findings affect the child's daily activities, they should be taken seriously and they should definitely be referred to a health facility. Monitoring of growth and development both at preschool and school age should be monitored by teachers at intervals. If there is a pause in growth or weight loss is detected, the child should be sent to the health facility again.

In order to adopt a healthy lifestyle, teachers are required to inform parents during preschool and students if they are of school age. In this regard, seminars on this subject can be given to teachers by specialists. In order to instill this in society, informative posters can be hung in crowded environments that are constantly passed by, and public spots can be placed on televisions to encourage families to have a healthy life. In preschool periods, children can be told about it with games, theater, music etc.

If we instill healthy eating in children, we can also prevent obesity, which is a major health problem today. Preventing obesity should be done not only by eating a balanced and regular diet, but also by physical activity. Teachers should regularly detect students with an elevated body mass index or obesity during height and weight monitoring and support them with healthy eating and exercise. They need to stick to a diet that their children will follow and be aware of the possible consequences of obesity. Every time a child loses weight, his motivation can be increased by giving him small rewards. Obesity is not just a disease that goes with weight gain, it is a disease that can affect almost all systems.

Another important problem in children today is a sedentary life. Regular physical activity improves mental health, reduces anxiety, increases self-confidence, improves knowledge of responsibility, allows you to control weight, strengthens the skeletal system. It is necessary for every child to move actively every day. These are tasks for both parents and the school in establishing the habit of physical activity. Firstly, the child's digital screen time should never exceed 2 hours during the day. Physical education classes should be supported in schools and each child should be allowed to play sports in accordance with their interests. Playing games in the preschool period makes a significant contribution to the child's psychosocial develop-

ment. Communication with friends is strengthened, the child acquires a sense of responsibility, learns to be a team player and set rules. It is very important for teachers to play games with children and teach them new games for their development. In particular, a child should be given the opportunity to try various activities to discover their own abilities; football, volleyball, gymnastics, folk dances, yoga. In schools, areas should be created where children can safely play games and play sports. Various competitions and sports festivals are organized so that we can further encourage children to play sports.

Another important point for children's health is the cleanliness of the air in the environment where the child lives and breaths. Smoking should be strictly prohibited at school, which is the environment in which the child spends most of the day. Children, especially adolescents, should be told about the harm of smoking or even told by a doctor if necessary. Because exposure to or smoking cigarette smoke at this age can lead to cancer or even death in the future. Teachers can tell parents not to smoke next to the child or even refer them to a health facility if they want to quit.

In addition to a child's physical health, it is very important for the general condition that the child's mental health is also good. A child's psychology is very sensitive. It can take damage from all kinds of factors around it. Unfortunately, peer bullying in school age children is a common occurrence. Children can be very cruel at that age. Peer bullying can not only be physical, sometimes verbal, sometimes it can also manifest itself in the form of exclusion, unwillingness. The self-confidence of the bullied child may be shaken, they may have difficulty making friends. Peer bullying negatively affects the child both psychologically and academically. Teachers are supposed to direct both students to the school's guidance unit at separate times when they notice this incident. Children should be taught to honestly tell their feelings, thoughts, without fear. In particular, it should be instilled in the student who is being bullied that it is not his fault that he is being bullied. Education should also be given to parents. Another point that should not be missed is that families who find out that their child is being bullied may want to punish their children, it should be conveyed to them that this is wrong. Various activities can be planned to improve the communication skills of students with each other, a positive atmosphere should be created. As a result, teachers should be able to understand any changes in the child's mental state and intervene at an early stage, so that severe depression can be prevented. Teachers have a lot to add in the health education of a child.

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