

## THE ROLE OF CHILD AUDIENCES IN MUSEUM ACTIVITIES: PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

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### ANNOTATION

This article discusses projects implemented to attract people to museums, the role and significance of exhibitions in attracting viewers to museums, the role of museums in educating the younger generation, the history of the creation of children's museums, the Brooklyn Children's Museum in the USA, various forms of work with young audiences in children's museums, the role of museum pedagogy in educating children and developing their interest in culture and art.

**Key words:** museum children's audience, physiological and psychological development of children, museum lessons, American model, pedagogical influence, education, communication, cultural information and technical innovations, children's education.

Museums are considered cultural and educational institutions whose primary mission is to collect and preserve historical documents, cultural and spiritual heritage objects, and samples of natural wealth, to study them scientifically, exhibit them to the public, and make them accessible to society. However, museum activities should not be limited solely to these functions. Museums should serve not only as repositories of unique and diverse artifacts reflecting nature and society, but also as important centers of spiritual and educational recreation, especially for children, and, when necessary, as entertaining and interactive spaces. Only under such conditions can museums truly become centers of education, enlightenment, and moral upbringing.

Museums occupy an important place in the social life of society. In particular, increasing children's interest in museums is essential for every parent.

Today, museums play a significant role in educating future generations throughout the world. Therefore, from the beginning of the twentieth century, the establishment of children's museums began to spread globally. Museum pedagogy has become an integral part of everyday life in many countries around the world.

One of the modern trends in world museums is museum pedagogy, a field whose full potential has not yet been completely realized by museum specialists and educators in our country.

Museums specifically designed for children help increase their interest in history, nature, and the history of humanity in general. From an early age, such museums contribute to the formation of children's worldview, enrich their thinking, and encourage independent reasoning.

In recent years, the number and diversity of children's museums have significantly increased. These museums serve as an important source for educating young people in the spirit of patriotism, developing independent thinking, fostering attentiveness to social events and phenomena, and, most importantly, cultivating respect for and preservation of cultural heritage. Such museums teach children to explore and understand the world through play, creativity, and communication. Unlike the school education system, which is based on a fixed curriculum and controlled learning process, museums provide children with broad opportunities to discover the mysteries of life and explore various events and phenomena more deeply. The boundaries of

time and knowledge in museums are closely connected with the child's own interests and desires. This naturally creates opportunities for free movement, independent thinking, and the expansion of worldview.

A "children's museum" differs greatly from museums intended for adults. It may not contain traditional storage collections or museum showcases, but children are often allowed to touch and interact with museum objects. The programs of children's museums are aimed at developing imagination, creativity, and communication skills. Today, there are more than 400 children's museums worldwide, and they are considered among the most dynamic and popular museums in the world. Nearly 300 of them are located in the United States, while many others operate in major European capitals.

According to surveys conducted in the United States, one of the world's most developed countries, 69 percent of Americans prefer visiting museums and historical-architectural monuments as a form of spiritual and educational recreation. Museums in the United States receive an average of 850 million visitors annually, which exceeds attendance figures for sports and entertainment centers.

Most importantly, museums in this country are not limited to providing information about the Earth and human civilization or simply displaying artifacts. They are also designed to offer engaging activities, games, and interactive communication that allow visitors, especially children and young people, to spend their time meaningfully, discover the world, and strengthen their knowledge.

Many museums in the United States regularly organize educational programs related to mathematics, history, language and literature, geography, chemistry, and physics in accordance with state educational standards.

In addition, museums actively cooperate with schools, and educational excursions are frequently organized for students. Through school-organized group visits, approximately 55 million schoolchildren visit museums in the United States every year.

It would therefore be appropriate for our national museums to adopt international museum practices, modernize their activities according to children's interests and needs, and organize regular educational and creative programs similar to those abroad. Indeed, the development of museum pedagogy contributes to the intellectual and spiritual growth of society, especially young people.

By the twentieth century, new types of museums specifically intended for children and designed to support their educational development began to emerge. The appearance of such museums was linked to the fact that children perceive and behave differently from adults. Children possess their own unique logic and ways of understanding the world; therefore, museum spaces designed especially for them became necessary.

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, the psychological and pedagogical ideas of M.Montessori, J.Dewey, and I.Pestalozzi played an important role in educational reforms. One of the practical results of these ideas was the establishment of the world's first children's museum – the Brooklyn Children's Museum in 1899. K.D.Ushinsky was also an enthusiastic supporter of innovative educational ideas. His followers and students contributed to the development of psychological and pedagogical theories. School museums and museum workshops began to appear, aiming to create innovative methods for activating the educational process.

The first such museum was established in Brooklyn, New York, in 1899. It became the first museum in the United States dedicated exclusively to children. Its collections initially included objects, minerals, shells, and other materials left for children after the Brooklyn Museum of Art

moved into a new building. The founder of the museum, history teacher Anna Gallup, believed that children should not merely observe museum exhibits but should also conduct experiments and participate actively in the learning process. Initially, the museum focused on natural sciences; however, after World War II, greater attention was paid to cultural awareness. Over time, the museum developed into a workshop and club equipped with a library, anatomical and botanical laboratories, a cinema hall, and artistic, historical, and technical collections.

As exhibitions expanded and visitor numbers increased, the Brooklyn Children's Museum underwent reconstruction and enlargement.

Today, children constitute the majority of visitors to many children's museums, which contributes significantly to the development and promotion of museum pedagogy. Lecture-based communication with children is widely practiced, and many museums now include playgrounds and libraries. The Brooklyn Children's Museum served as a pioneering example for such developments.

Introducing children to beauty from an early age is extremely important. Such children grow into intelligent, educated, and successful individuals capable of living bright and meaningful lives filled with unforgettable impressions. Yet children often become bored in traditional art galleries or fall asleep during philharmonic performances. For this reason, museums were created specifically for children where they are allowed to touch exhibits, make noise, and play freely.

The exhibition and educational activities in children's museums are organized according to children's age groups. Since children perceive the world through games, creativity, and communication, these methods are considered especially effective. The children's studio attached to the Centre Pompidou views the ability to listen and perceive as one of the most important goals of children's education. The studio believes that children should be taught to feel and experience art emotionally. Each workshop organized there aims to teach children in unconventional ways and encourage self-awareness. Art classes, for example, use colors, forms, plastic arts, and music as educational tools.

In modern society, museums are important not only as institutions preserving historical and cultural heritage, but also as spiritual and educational centers that contribute to the upbringing of the younger generation, broaden their worldview, and develop creative thinking. In particular, working with children's audiences has become one of the most relevant and promising areas of museum activity.

Unlike traditional educational systems, children's museums create a free and interactive environment that encourages independent thinking, creativity, and communication skills. Such museums foster respect for cultural heritage, strengthen patriotic values, and contribute to the formation of spiritually mature individuals.

Giving special attention to children's audiences in museum activities and widely introducing modern pedagogical approaches together with international experience contributes to the spiritual development of society. Therefore, transforming museums from simple repositories and exhibition spaces into centers of education, upbringing, and creativity remains one of the most important tasks of the present day.



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