

Simple Dolls created by the “Big Ones” in Kindergarten

Svitlana Eks



In February we begin to sew dolls out of a piece of fabric. The children who have already been in kindergarten for several years want to begin right away, as they have been dreaming of this moment. It is very interesting to observe how some children have been expecting “their child” for a long time, with others the child is already on its way, and still others have still not had a single thought of a child. Just like in the adult world!

Gradually little arms and legs appear, the torso is filled with wool, and the doll slowly comes to life. From this moment on the children no longer want to leave their doll alone. As a next step it must be decided if it will be a boy or a girl, and also how old the doll child should be, because our further activity depends on this. I give the children some time to experience their doll as a newborn, which means that we don't make hair for it yet. The children all care for their dolls very carefully, wrap diapers around them and feed them.



I have often observed that children then want to make shoes and a cap as the very first clothing. When the doll child is a bit older, we choose the length, structure and color of the hair. Often the doll looks like its parents. Now the creative fantasy of the children comes into motion and they consider what they can do with their doll children. Some want their doll child to remain a baby. Then we make a little sleeping sack with arms stitched closed so that the baby cannot scratch its face.



Other children would like their doll to be a girl. For the first dress, their fantasy knows no boundaries - skirts with lace appear, outfits with handbags, vests, various stylish ladies' hats and jewelry. - For the boy dolls, a plaid shirt and pants or jeans are made. All the clothes have buttons. And the doll children then develop very diverse activities in the kindergarten - one has a sport shirt and plays soccer (like his doll father). Another has a backpack and book, like a school child. Some boys want to have doll daughters and are very motivated to sew clothes for them. Most of them work with motivation and industriousness and become quite skilled.

The big children in kindergarten develop into consciously responsible parents, choose particular names for their child, "take it to the kindergarten", play finger games and ring games with their child, celebrate its birthday, and so on. And at our closing festival before the summer holidays each doll even receives its own birth certificate.



And the 4- to 5-year-olds observe this whole process and naturally they say, "I also want to have a child!" Then eventually I take a scrap of rose-colored cloth, tie on a head of wool, make a cap out of an old sock and make knotted arms and legs. A dress appears from a colorful rag with a hole in it, and then a belt is made of string. In 15 to 20 minutes, the doll is complete. The children are happy, and their eyes shine.

Is a commentary necessary about the competencies that arise through these activities? The most important thing is that a soul connection is formed with the image of the human being, and love for the human being arises. Isn't that of particular significance in our times?

At our last IASWECE council meeting in in Tartu (Estonia) in October, I visited a museum on the history of toys. Most of the toys are imitations of human work and living conditions, a miniature of the real world in which human beings have lived at various times in history.

Only with contemporary toys is it different: monsters, transformers, and machine-like beings reflect an inhuman and virtual world. How is it surprising that it is so difficult today to transform hard-heartedness, indifference, and aggression and to develop harmonious social relationships?

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