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**IMPORTANCE OF NATURE GAMES FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN**

БАШТАЛГЫЧ МЕКТЕП ЖАШЫНДАГЫ БАЛДАР ҮЧҮН ЖАРАТЫЛЫШ  
ОЮНДАРЫНЫН МААНИСИ

ВАЖНОСТЬ ИГР НА ПРИРОДЕ ДЛЯ ДЕТЕЙ МЛАДШЕГО ШКОЛЬНОГО ВОЗРАСТА

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## IMPORTANCE OF NATURE GAMES FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN

### Abstract

The article explores the positive aspects of school-age children's relationships with nature. Nature games offer children the opportunity to explore the environment, experiment, use their imagination and create new situations. When children play in nature, they encounter a variety of obstacles and challenges that require them to use creative strategies to solve problems. The article discusses how play activities in nature contribute to the cognitive, behavioral and social-affective development of children. This includes the ability to generate new ideas, find innovative solutions, think flexible and adaptive, and try different approaches to problem solving. The natural environment also stimulates children's imagination and the ability to see connections and relationships between different objects and phenomena. The article also looks at methods and strategies that educators and parents can use to support the development of school-age children with outdoor play. This may include creating a structured environment for play, encouraging free exploration, supporting children's initiative and providing opportunities for independent problem solving. In general, the scientific article emphasizes the importance of nature games and activities for school-age children. It contributes to the formation of critical thinking, determination skills and innovative thinking ability, which is an important factor in the development and learning of children.

**Keywords:** Games for School Age Children, Nature Games, Games and Development.

### **БАШТАЛГЫЧ МЕКТЕП ЖАШЫНДАГЫ БАЛДАР ҮЧҮН ЖАРАТЫЛЫШ ОЮНДАРЫНЫН МААНИСИ**

#### **Аннотация**

Бул макалада кенже мектеп курагындагы балдар үчүн жаратылыш оюндарынын мааниси талдоого алынган. Жаратылыш оюндары балдарга айлана-чөйрөнү изилдөөгө, эксперимент жасоого, фантазиясын колдонууга жана жаңы жагдайларды түзүүгө мүмкүнчүлүк берет. Балдар жаратылышта ойногондо ар кандай тоскоолдуктарга жана кыйынчылыктарга туш болушат, алар көйгөйлөрдү чечүү үчүн чыгармачылык стратегияларды колдонууну талап кылат. Макалада жаратылыштагы оюн иш-аракеттери балдардын когнитивдик, жүрүм-турумдук жана социалдык-аффективдүү өнүгүүсүнө кандай салым кошоору талкууланат. Бул жаңы идеяларды жаратуу, инновациялык чечимдерди табуу, ийкемдүү ой жүгүртүү жана көйгөйлөрдү чечүүдө ар кандай ыкмаларды сынап көрүү жөндөмүн камтыйт. Жаратылыш чөйрөсү ошондой эле балдардын фантазиясын жана ар кандай предметтердин жана кубулуштардын ортосундагы байланыштарды жана мамилелерди көрө билүүсүнө түрткү берет. Макалада ошондой эле педагогдор жана ата-энелер мектеп жашындагы балдардын сыртта ойноо менен өнүгүүсүн колдоо үчүн колдоно ала турган ыкмалар жана стратегиялар каралат. Бул оюн үчүн структуралаштырылган чөйрөнү түзүү, эркин изилдөөгө дем берүү, балдардын демилгесин колдоо жана көйгөйлөрдү өз алдынча чечүүгө мүмкүнчүлүктөрдү камтышы мүмкүн. Дегеле илимий макалада мектеп жашындагы балдар үчүн жаратылыш оюндарынын, иш-аракеттердин маанисине басым жасалган. Ал критикалык ой жүгүртүүнү, чечкиндүүлүктү жана инновациялык ой жүгүртүү жөндөмүн калыптандырууга өбөлгө түзөт,

### **ВАЖНОСТЬ ИГР НА ПРИРОДЕ ДЛЯ ДЕТЕЙ МЛАДШЕГО ШКОЛЬНОГО ВОЗРАСТА**

#### **Аннотация**

В данной статье анализируется значение игр на природе для детей школьного возраста. В статье исследуются положительные стороны взаимоотношений детей школьного возраста с природой. Игры о природе предлагают детям возможность исследовать окружающую среду, экспериментировать, использовать свое воображение и создавать новые ситуации. Когда дети играют на природе, они сталкиваются с множеством препятствий и проблем, которые требуют от них использования творческих стратегий для решения проблем. В статье рассматривается, как игровая деятельность на природе способствует познавательному, поведенческому и социально-эмоциональному развитию детей. Это включает в себя способность генерировать новые идеи, находить инновационные решения, мыслить гибко и адаптируемо, а также пробовать разные подходы к решению проблем. Природная среда также стимулирует детское воображение и способность видеть связи и отношения между различными предметами и явлениями. В статье также рассматриваются методы и стратегии, которые педагоги и родители могут использовать для поддержки развития детей школьного возраста посредством игр на свежем воздухе. Это может включать создание структурированной среды для игры, поощрение свободного исследования, поддержку детской инициативы и предоставление возможностей для самостоятельного решения проблем. В целом в научной статье подчеркивается важность игр и занятий на природе для детей школьного возраста. Это способствует формированию критического мышления, решимости и способности к инновационному

бул балдардын өнүгүүсүндө жана окуусунда маанилүү фактор болуп саналат. Мектеп курагындагы 1-4-класстардын окуучулары үчүн негизги жүрүм турум жана айлана чөйрө эрежелерин табийгый атмосферада үйрөтүү үчүн ыңгайлуу шарттарга ээ десек орундуу болот. Жаратылыш оюндары менен мектеп курамы балдардын, жаратылыш менен болгон тыгыз байланышын калыптандырса болот. Бул учурда ушул жаш курамы балдарда, жаратылыш тууралуу алгачкы философиялык түшүнүктөр пайда боло баштайт.

мышлению, которые являются важными факторами развития и обучения детей.

**Ачкыч сөздөр:** Кенже мектеп курагындагы балдар үчүн оюндар, жаратылыш оюндары, оюндар менен өнүктүрүү.

**Ключевые слова:** игра детей школьного возраста, игры на природе, игра и развитие.

## **Introduction**

In today's technology-intensive, fast-paced and stressful world, children's connection with nature is gradually weakening. Children who grow up among reinforced concrete buildings and in front of the magical screens of the virtual world are far from the benefits of the open air. However, more and more researchers and parents are recognizing the critical role that interaction with nature plays in children's development.

In this article, we will focus on the importance of nature play for school-age children, especially in the face of the challenges of stressful modern life. We will examine how play activities, especially those that take place in natural environments, support children's creativity, problem-solving skills, social interactions and emotional balance.

Nature games offer children the opportunity to explore and experience using their own imagination. Playing outdoors allows children to get to know and internalize nature. Additionally, the obstacles and challenges presented by the natural environment help children develop problem-solving skills. For example, physical challenges such as crossing a bridge made of trees, climbing a high climbing wall, or crossing a puddle require children to use their creativity to come up with solutions.

Additionally, nature games encourage social interaction among children. Natural spaces offer children the opportunity to play together, work as a team and communicate. In these environments, children can explore together, play roles, and create a common story by combining their imaginations. This process helps them develop their empathy skills and sharing skills.

As a result, nature games are of great importance for the spiritual and physical development of children. The natural environment provides an environment that supports children's imagination, problem-solving abilities, social interactions and emotional balance. Therefore, parents and educators should strive to encourage children to interact with nature and provide natural play areas.

Studies conducted by archaeologists have revealed that the history of games and toys is as old as human history. There are documents, findings and artifacts showing that many games known today were also known in ancient times. The antiquity of toys dates back to the time when humans existed. The development of civilization in every field such as science, art, architecture and clothing were also reflected in children's games and toys (Dönmez, 1992).

Among children's games, games played with stones and loaves (bones coming from the hind foot knee area of animals such as sheep and goats) are generally accepted as the oldest games (MEB, 2007b).

In prehistoric times, human ancestors unknowingly created the game by imitating what they saw around them and telling each other what they were doing through movements. The man who hunted his prey told other people how he hunted his prey through imitations. Over time, these movements turned into consciously performed magical and religious ceremonies, and the game gained a cultural feature at this stage (MEB, 2007b).

According to Onur (1992), in prehistoric times, people lived by hunting or collecting fruits and spent all their time protecting their lives. Due to the wildness of nature, adults and especially children did not feel safe. At that time, leisure, comfortable and fun time were unknown concepts. The conscious play and leisure time management we know today did not exist back then. The paintings of these ages had only a religious meaning rather than a play (Onur, 1992).

During their excavations and research, archaeologists have found reliefs and cave paintings depicting games played with stones and lovers. B.C. in the British Museum. A clay sculpture made in the 800s shows two girls playing in love. In the murals of the Middle Kingdom period in Ancient Egypt, games played on the game board and jumping games are shown, again dating back to B.C. In the murals found in the Ak-Hor tomb in Egypt in the 2600s, a girl is shown playing a game of fighting (MEB, 2007b).

In Egypt, B.C. The board and pieces of the game of senet, which date back to the 1300s and are still in Brooklyn Muesum, are considered to be the ancestors of the game known today as chess. In tomb paintings from the same period, it is seen that Pharaoh Tuthankamon is playing the game of senet with his wife (Hacıhaliloğlu, 2007).

Many babies have been found in Egyptian tombs. Although the main reason for this is thought to be religion and magic, the presence of rattles filled with seeds, small babies and animals made of terracotta, and small horse statues with wheels show us the existence of games in that period (Onur, 1992).

Physical development, games and sports had a very important place in Greek civilization. It was tolerated for children for playing and they were encouraged to play. In many paintings and ruins reflecting this period, it is seen that Greek children had dolls made of baked clay, hoops driven with sticks, spinning tops, and played games using balls. Additionally, a game similar to backgammon was found in Greek pottery paintings (Onur, 1992; Poyraz, 2003).

In the ruins of Ephesus, three stone and nine stone playgrounds dating back 2000 years were identified on marble blocks from the Roman civilization. Studies show that Roman children played with marbles as well as hopscotch (Onur, 1992; Poyraz 2003).

Throughout the war-filled years of the Middle Ages, games always remained in the background. For thousands of years, ball games were considered a useless endeavor and were banned by the kings during this period. The most common game among the socioeconomically well-off bourgeois children of the age is the "billboke" game. On the other hand, workers' children play with small knight figures made of clay, small toys made of wood and ordinary dolls made of cloth. In addition, string dolls for puppet games were also common in this era (Onur, 1992).

The information we have obtained from these historical data proves to us that the human race has actively included games and toys in its life since ancient times. Regardless of the age, the fact that an individual begins his life with the concept of play, directs it, and designs games and toys since childhood is evidence that he is actually preparing for the next phase of life in a cyclical manner. Yes, play is a source of life and an element of life if it is done in nature.

## **Method**

To understand the effects that nature play on children's development, it is important to examine how these games support and develop different aspects of children. Nature games provide an ideal environment for children to develop their cognitive, behavioral, social emotional and motor skills. In terms of cognitive development, natural games encourage children's problem-solving and logical thinking skills. Children have to develop new strategies to cope with the obstacles they encounter outdoors. Tasks such as jumping over a tree, finding a way through a maze, or building a structure

using natural material help children develop analytical thinking skills. Additionally, nature games increase children's observation skills and support their desire to explore their environment. This helps children develop a deeper artistic and philosophical understanding of the world.

Game is a game that is performed in an environment different from real life in order to develop physical and mental abilities, social harmony and emotional maturity, does not provide any financial benefit at the end, has its own specific rules, lasts in a limited place and time, creates a social group through voluntary participation and affects the participants completely. It is a fun activity that keeps you under control (Işılak and Durmuş, 2004).

Play is an activity that has an important place in the lives of people of all ages. Entertainment, recreation, leisure activity, etc. for adult. Play, which has meanings such as, is a tool for the child to know and understand the world he lives in and the people around him. For this reason, play should not be considered a leisure activity, but a serious endeavor that takes up a large portion of the child's time (Oktay, 1987).

In terms of emotional development, nature games increase children's self-confidence and support emotional balance. Activity in nature makes it easier for children to trust their own skills and discover their own limits. Natural environments offer children the opportunity to take some risks and deal with failure. For example, physical challenges such as balancing on a tree or walking on slippery ground allow children to develop their courage and endurance. Additionally, interaction with nature helps children relieve stress and achieve natural relaxation and relaxation.

It is appropriate to say that there are favorable conditions for teaching basic behavior and environmental rules in a natural atmosphere for students of 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades of school age. With nature games, school members can form a close relationship with nature. At this time, the first philosophical concepts about nature begin to appear in children of this age group. In terms of social development, nature games allow children to develop cooperation, communication and empathy skills. Playing outdoors encourages children's skills in working together and team building. Activities such as setting up a tent together, exploring nature, or playing a game as a team allow children to interact with each other and learn to achieve goals together. Additionally, nature games strengthen children's empathy skills. Interacting with other creatures in nature and observing the delicate balance of nature is an important area of education that helps children understand the needs of others and respect others.

In terms of motor skills, nature games improve children's physical health and movement skills. Activities such as running, climbing, jumping and balancing outdoors increase children's muscle strength, balance abilities and coordination. These types of physical activities provide children with the opportunity to burn off their energy and help protect them from health problems of our age, such as obesity.

### **The Need for This Study**

Today's children are introduced to information technologies, one of the innovations of the age, at an early age and interact with them at an early age. Developmental children are sometimes disproportionately exposed to these media products. It would not be an exaggeration to say that parents use cognitive technology in the place of a caregiver. This process creates many developmental problems. Unfortunately, instead of primarily nature and interactive games with nature, children are

introduced to computing technology and computer games. Children of this age group, whose senses are maturing, cannot resist the magic of the screen and may even become addicted to it. This process can also make the job of educators difficult. Students starting primary school may appear to be seriously addicted to computer games. Parents who have difficulty in fighting addiction look for the solution in the teacher and the education system. As children progress towards becoming slaves of the technology given to them, nature and nature games, which are the friendliest and closest to us, are being postponed or even remain in the background. This scientific study proposes solutions to parents and educators by addressing innovative and pragmatic educational approaches to reintroduce children who are addicted to computer games, which is the most current problem of today, to nature and nature games.

Starting from early childhood, play gives children the opportunity to learn by seeing and experiencing the consequences of actions. For children of this age group, play is a mandatory need for the discovery and development of their senses. Nature, which has goodness in its essence, is the field of therapy and education that responds to this need appropriately.

Nature offers diversity, liveliness, and a learning experience that forces you to ask questions that are not rushed to answer, and that attracts attention and interest. Children who spend time interacting with nature or playing in nature, in environments where unexpected possibilities arise, are more prepared for the unexpected events they will encounter in life. As they understand the thoughts and feelings of others and themselves, their resilience to the unknown and uncertainty increases with their strengthened intuition, and they begin not to settle for ready-made solutions. They can take small steps with play and develop with nature in order to learn to create solutions together with others, to reconcile the needs of others with our own, to learn to exist without destroying or ignoring others. It is imperative that parents and educators who value independence and self-confidence understand the importance of this. Time spent outside in nature, starting from childhood, makes it possible to encounter differences, to learn that life may not always be the way we want and how to adapt to it, to accept obstacles, to be open to innovations and to learn.

It is easy for children who grow up afraid of nature to turn into individuals who are hostile to nature in adulthood. Adults' relationship with nature is directly proportional to how intertwined they were with nature in their childhood. In order for children to establish a healthy relationship with nature and gain insight, natural resources must be at the center of their living spaces and included in their daily activities. Parts of nature that children, especially the youngest ones, need, such as bread and water, should be in the city, between the houses. Areas reached by travel can only be a tourism object. It is possible for children to establish a healthy relationship with nature by being in a relationship with nature in their games. There should be unpretentious, simple and safe playgrounds in parks where they can taste and enjoy nature regardless of rain or mud, and where they can meet and play with stones, soil, water and air. Then nature begins to become, at least, a part of life itself, beyond being the natural products on a supermarket shelf or the scene of crazy sports during the holidays (Prof. Dr. Yankım Yazgan).

## **Results**

There are three main obstacles that are effective in the imbalance in gaming habits: parents' overly controlling approach, children spending more time on screens with computer games, and

disproportionately busy daily schedules. Parents who do not have sufficient information about the games and activities that children need during their developmental periods may see digital technology as a necessity of the age, act controlling in order not to take risks due to their lack of knowledge and find the home environment safer for children. For them, the house is an element of protection and a castle against uncertainties, accidents, cold, heat and many other risks that may occur outside. However, there is not enough stimulation in this castle and shelter, and the children have little to no chance of learning their share of the difficulties they must face. For these reasons, it is imperative that families provide their children with the opportunity to learn by doing, living, making sense of and experiencing, by creating appropriate conditions, without directly intervening in their children's games and activities, but of course, taking into account their safety (Рахманали кызы, Батыралиев, 2022).

We must accept the fact that we are raising a generation born into the digital world. Preventing children from growing up with digital technology is against the innovations of the age. At this point, it is important to use information technology and screens not as a babysitter, but to use them in a way that is appropriate for children's ages and development. As addiction to the screen increases and the screen becomes both a place to play and a playmate, play imbalance occurs in children. The responsibility of parents is to guide and even educate their children in order to establish a time balance between games played in open areas that are at peace with nature and suitable for development, and games played on and off the screen.

A balance needs to be established in children's lives between activities that have defined frameworks, such as academic or sports activities, and activities that they are free to do. Because children can develop their self-management through activities that they can experience freely, are not limited by rules, and are left to discover. Problem-solving, decision-making, planning, taking some risks, noticing their thoughts and emotions and controlling them appropriately, learning by exploring, and their different abilities develop more effectively and usefully when they are free.

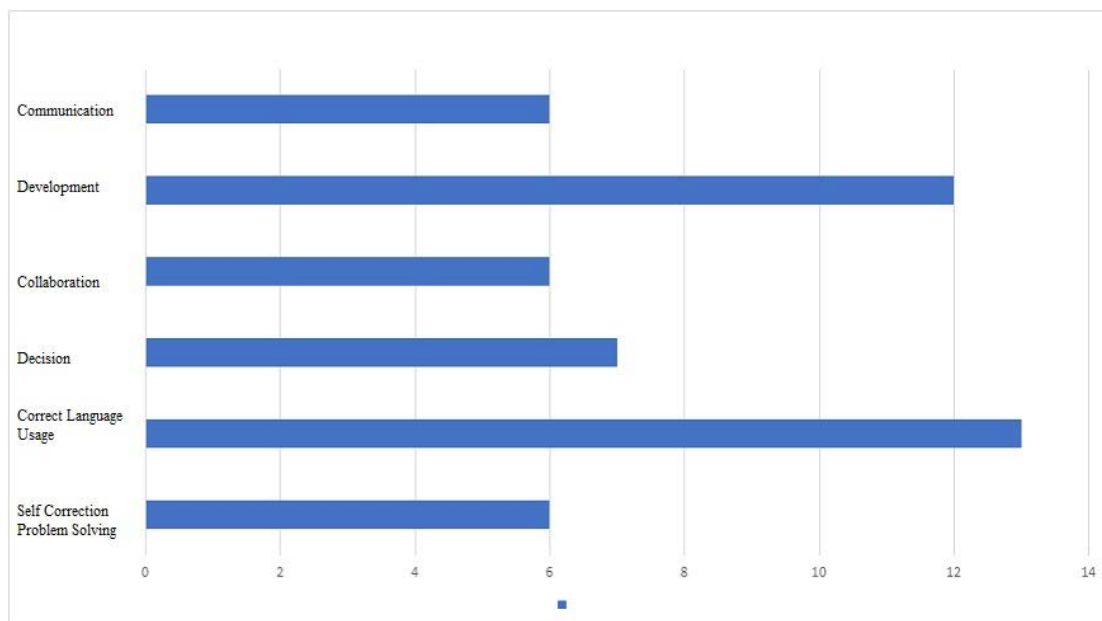
According to Gestalt theory, it is based on the individual who sees the problem to think about the solution of this problem, to perceive the real aspect of the problem and to verify it structurally. The more creative this verification is, the more confirmed the Gestalt theory is. The biggest criticism of Gestalt creativity theory is that they limit the external world to perceptions. While Gestalt expects the individual to be unique, the person tries to give meaning to his perceptions and attempts to verify something (Yalçın and Acar, 2006).

We can make the following inference from Gestalt theory: There is a close connection between the individual's personal experience of the external world in problem solving and systematically organizing his creative side in the form of a game, and even his critical approach, organization and perception of the external world.

The nature games discussed in the article should be open to target achievements in terms of their content.

In this context, the following data was obtained by examining the content of 50 games implemented by the Turkish Ministry of National Education within the framework of formal education:





**Chart 1. Benefits of Play**

Source: <https://www.onceokuloncesi.com/hareketli-oyun/hareketli-oyun-50-tane-30964.html>

38 of the 50 games examined are interactive games with nature in terms of name content and the content of the area played. The materials used in the design of the games are almost obtained from nature. The game heroes are inspired by living creatures and plants in nature, both in name and character. The target achievements were analyzed to be suitable for children's cognitive, behavioral and social-emotional development.

### **Educational Programs on the Development of Nature Games in Developed Countries**

In developed countries, various educational programs are implemented to improve the cognitive, behavioral and social-affective aspects of school-age children through nature games. These programs aim for the all-round development of children by increasing their interaction with the natural environment. Here is some information about such training programs:

**Nature-Based Education Programs:** These programs include nature-based learning approaches implemented by schools and children's centers. Students interact with nature outdoors, exploring a variety of natural materials and playing creative games. These programs encourage children to observe the natural world, experiment with natural materials, and produce creative projects. The motto "There is no such thing as bad weather, only dressing correctly" is the expression that best describes forest schools. (Pash Ayşe Merve Nature-Based Education in Scandinavia and the Example of Swedish Forest School 2019).

**Nature Discovery Programs:** These programs include activities focused on exploring and researching nature. Students are offered activities such as discovery trips in nature, examining natural life, and getting to know plant and animal species. These programs nourish children's curiosity, improve their observation skills and enable them to acquire new information.

**Adventure-Based Programs:** These programs offer adventure- and teamwork-focused activities that take place in natural environments. Students are given the opportunity to engage in activities such

as forest trips, mountaineering, camping and nature sports. These programs support children's creative thinking by developing their risk-taking, leadership, collaboration and problem-solving skills.

These educational programs aim to increase the creativity and love of nature of school children by providing them with the opportunity to interact with the natural environment. The aim of these programs is to strengthen children's creative thinking skills by encouraging them to explore the natural world. In developed countries, such programs have been adopted as an educational approach that supports children's cognitive, emotional and social development. The Forest Program in schools, whose original name was "Learning about Forest-LEAF", started to be carried out as "Forest School" in Norway, Sweden and Finland in 1999 by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). In the Spring of 2000 It started to be implemented worldwide in cooperation with the International Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). Today, the Forest in Schools Program is coordinated by FEE in 27 countries internationally through its Head Office. Our country joined the program in 2004 as one of TÜRÇEV's programs (<https://www.leaf.global/>).

While the educational programs of Finland, a Scandinavian country in particular, exhibit a trending approach in our age, we observe that the curriculum of school-age children is mostly activity-oriented, and these activities are carried out in nature. Camping areas set up in the forest and prepared for primary school children are ecological, and they make the greatest contribution to formal education due to their structure in instilling love of nature and environmental awareness in children starting from primary school age. As children adapt to geographical conditions, it instills the philosophical basis of a holistic life in harmony with nature through nature games at an early age.

In recent years, the interest in nature games among school-aged children has been visibly increasing in Turkey. Activities such as interacting with the natural environment, playing outdoors and exploring with natural materials attract children's attention and direct them to nature games.

#### *Exploration of the Natural Environment*

Turkey's diverse natural beauties and rich biodiversity are one of the important factors that increase children's interest in nature games. School-age children want to explore the colorful and exciting environments offered by nature, and these discoveries form the basis of nature games. Different natural areas such as mountains, forests, rivers, beaches should trigger children's desire to explore and interact with nature.

#### *Reducing Technology*

Increasing use of digital technology in recent years has led children to move away from natural environments and spend more time indoors. However, in order to find a solution to this situation, parents and educators need to direct children to nature and encourage nature games. With the reduction of technology addiction and increased awareness of outdoor activities, children can discover the joy of playing in natural environments, allowing for their versatile development.

#### *Understanding the Value of Healthy Living and Natural Activities*

With the increasing awareness of healthy living in Turkey, the demands of school-age children for physical activities and playing in natural environments should be taken into consideration immediately. Families and schools should emphasize the importance of nature games for children to live a healthy life and develop physical activity habits. This nourishes children's curiosity in nature games and encourages them to spend more time outdoors.

### *Training Programs and Awareness Studies*

In recent years, various educational programs and awareness activities have been carried out in Turkey to increase interest in nature games. Activities such as nature camps, nature discovery activities and nature-themed workshops organized by schools, children's centers and nature associations increase children's interest in nature games and raise awareness in this field. In addition, seminars and informative studies held among parents and educators about the importance and benefits of nature games also contribute to increasing this curiosity.

Author observed that Non-Governmental Organizations take an active role in this field. The encouragement of TİF scouting clubs, which are being spread throughout Turkey, and the World Nomad Games contribute to the development of nature games, the traditional games of nomadic peoples. Of course, it is meaningful and pleasing that these activities are supported by the state. Introducing our nature games to our school-age children and contributing to their cognitive, behavioral and social-emotional aspects are great investments made in our children, who are our future (<http://worldnomadgames.com/en/> - <https://tif.org.tr/>).

### **Conclusion**

Increasing interest in nature games among school-age children in Turkey can be achieved through the discovery of the natural environment, reduction of technology, increased awareness of healthy living and the influence of educational programs/awareness studies. Increasing this curiosity enables children to discover the joy of playing in natural environments, helping them to develop in a holistic way and adopt a healthy lifestyle. Parents, educators and society in general in Turkey should attach importance to nature games, and maintaining and supporting the interest is an important duty.

Taking advantage of nature games is an important strategy for the healthy development of school-age children. Nature play offers children the opportunity to explore, use imagination, problem solve and develop social skills. These games support children's ability to think flexibly, develop original approaches and find alternative solutions. In Turkey, it is important to organize educational programs, awareness studies and nature activities to increase the interest in nature games among school-age children. Thus, children can develop their creative thinking and adopt a healthy lifestyle by experiencing playing in natural environments.

Since we are in the age of technology, we, adults, as well as our children, need serious transformations in gaming. It is clear that the new generation technologies we use are the focus of attention of adults as well as our children. Of course, the reunion of our children, who are our future, with nature is possible with the guidance and help of parents and educators. The content of nature games, enriched with innovative methods and techniques suitable for their development, should be designed in accordance with the target achievements. It is a necessity to reshape our concept of nature games. These nature games should be applicable to children of this age group who are stepping into formal education, both in the academic environment and in the formal environment.

## Discussion and Recommendations

### *The Effect of Nature Games on Creative Thinking*

Nature games provide an ideal environment for school-age children to develop their all-round skills. Natural environments allow children to use their imagination and explore. Children playing in nature encounter various difficulties and try to find creative solutions to overcome these difficulties. For example, they may try different strategies when climbing a tree, or find alternative crossing routes when crossing a river. This process helps children develop flexible thinking, problem-solving and creativity skills.

### *Discovery and Imagination*

Nature games support children's exploration and imagination skills. Natural environments offer children the opportunity to interact with different materials, objects and creatures. Children make new discoveries in nature, examine plants, and use their imagination by observing animals. These discoveries and observations enable new ideas to emerge in children's minds. Additionally, nature games expand children's imagination and allow them to create alternative scenarios.

### *Collaboration and Social Skills*

Nature games also help children develop cooperation and social skills. While playing in nature, children use social skills such as working together, communicating, problem solving and leadership. For example, a group of children make plans and share roles to complete a task together in a nature play. In this process, discussion of different ideas, teamwork and empathy skills are developed. These social interactions support children's creative thinking and enable them to benefit from different perspectives.

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