

Welcome

Play issues, portraying their beneficial features and aspects in life of children, youth and adults are extremely important. In the history of pedagogical, psychological and ethnographical thought we can find numerous research of many authors devoted to the subject of play and their role in upbringing and education.

The deliberations of our conference are taking place in the vicinity of Henry Jordan's Park. Jordan's Park was founded about 115 (one hundred and fifteen) years ago as the first one in Poland and Europe, public garden of games and plays for children and youth. This park is the best example of combination of the theoretical thought with the practical action as well as the highest form of popularization of play. For this reason I will quote the words of this Polish doctor and educator as a motto of this conference: "To be respected at all times and work constantly nobody is able to achieve.

Tired body requires rest, forced mind looks for relaxation and the soul desires cheerfulness, the mood, which makes life more pleasant. Play provides all of these needs in their broad meaning; therefore, it is what the human being desires, almost like the air, or food. Everybody wants to have a good time; young or old, cheerful, or the one almost always serious. Well, even animals play! And if the need neither voluntary nor compulsory one cannot smother without the detriment of physical or moral health of the human being. Then plays aren't trivial. On the contrary - they are very important for the physical and the moral health and every thinking creature should consider and ponder if and how they respond to the need of play."

I hope that the 23-rd (twenty third) discussion of the world deliberations will enrich the thoughts devoted so far to the play, since a lot of remarkable experts on this subject arrived here. I express my satisfaction that we can assemble here at the Faculty of Education of Pedagogical University of Cracow, so many people of distinction, who are sincerely interested in the theoretical basis of play.

We are truly honoured, that it was Cracow that has been chosen by ICCP (International Council for Children's Play) as the place for the conference. In this place I would like to mention, that we have already organised two conferences on the subject of play, in which participated the scientists

from all over the world. Some of them are here now. In 1995 (nineteen ninety-five) the subject matter of the conference was:

"Stimulating and therapeutic function of play". And in 1998 (nineteen ninety-eight) we discussed the subject of "Children's receptive plays"

I would like to cordially welcome everybody:

1. Rector Magnificus of the Pedagogical University of Cracow Michal Sliwa
2. Ex-dean of the Faculty of Education - Jozef Kuzma.

I would like to give a warm welcome Mr. Rimmert van der Kooij, the chairman of the (ICCP) International Council for Children's Play, as well as The Scientific Advisory Board:

1. Prof. James E. Johnson of Pennsylvania State University
2. Prof. Dr. James F. Christie of Arizona State University
3. Prof. Dr. Waltraut Hartmann of Charlotte-Buhler-Institut
4. Ass. Prof.. Arne Trageton of Stord / Haugesund College

I wish all of the participants of the Conference fruitful deliberations as well as a nice stay in Cracow.