

THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATOR IN DEVELOPING SOCIAL COMPETENCE IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

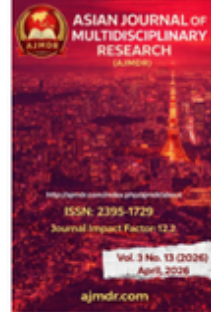
This article examines the role of the educator in developing social competence in preschool children. In modern educational conditions, the formation of social competence is considered one of the key tasks of preschool education. The study analyzes the structural components of social competence, highlights the pedagogical functions of the educator, and determines effective methods for fostering social skills in children. Special attention is given to communication, emotional development, cooperation, and behavioral regulation. The findings confirm that the educator plays a crucial role in creating a supportive environment that promotes the social development of preschool children.

Keywords: social competence, preschool education, educator, communication skills, emotional development, child development.

Introduction: Preschool education is the initial stage of lifelong learning and plays a decisive role in shaping a child's personality. At this stage, children acquire basic social skills, learn to interact with others, and develop emotional responsiveness. Therefore, the development of social competence in preschool children is one of the most important objectives of modern pedagogy.

In the context of rapid social changes, globalization, and increasing demands on education systems, children must be prepared for active participation in society from an early age. Social competence enables children to communicate effectively, cooperate with peers, resolve conflicts, and adapt to various social situations. The educator is a central figure in this process. Through professional activity, personal example, and pedagogical interaction, the educator creates conditions for the formation and development of social competence in children.

Theoretical background. Social competence is understood as an integrative quality that includes knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for effective interaction in society. In preschool age, it encompasses communication abilities, emotional regulation, empathy, cooperation, and adherence to social norms. Researchers emphasize that social competence is formed through active interaction



with the social environment. Therefore, the role of the educator is not limited to instruction but extends to organizing meaningful social experiences for children. From a psychological perspective, the development of social competence involves emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills. From a pedagogical perspective, it includes the organization of educational activities that promote communication, collaboration, and social behavior.

The educator performs several important functions in the process of developing social competence in preschool children:

Organizer of Social Interaction. The educator creates situations in which children interact with each other through play, group activities, and collaborative tasks. These interactions help children learn social rules and develop communication skills.

Model of Social Behavior. Children often imitate adult behavior. Therefore, the educator serves as a role model, demonstrating respect, empathy, politeness, and cooperation in everyday interactions.

Facilitator of Communication. The educator supports children in expressing their thoughts and emotions, encourages dialogue, and teaches active listening. This contributes to the development of verbal and non-verbal communication skills.

Emotional Support Provider. A psychologically safe environment is essential for social development. The educator helps children understand and regulate their emotions, supports them in difficult situations, and fosters a sense of security.

Mediator in Conflict Situations. Conflicts are natural in children's interactions. The educator guides children in resolving disagreements peacefully, teaching negotiation, compromise, and respect for others.

Methods of developing social competence. Effective development of social competence in preschool children requires the use of various pedagogical methods:

- Role-playing games that simulate real-life situations;
- Group activities that promote cooperation;
- Storytelling and discussions that develop empathy;
- Situational tasks that teach problem-solving;
- Reflective conversations that help children understand their behavior.

These methods create opportunities for children to practice social skills in a safe and supportive environment.

Discussion and results. Practical observations show that children who are actively involved in interactive and cooperative activities demonstrate higher levels of social competence. They communicate more effectively, show empathy toward peers, and are better able to regulate their emotions. It was found that the educator's professional competence, communication style, and ability to create a positive emotional climate significantly influence children's social development. Children in

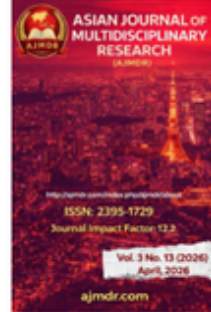


supportive environments are more confident, socially active, and adaptable. However, some challenges were identified, such as difficulties in emotional regulation and conflict resolution among certain children. This indicates the need for systematic and purposeful work by educators in this area.

Conclusion. The development of social competence in preschool children is a key task of modern education. The educator plays a decisive role in this process by organizing social interaction, modeling appropriate behavior, and creating a supportive environment. Effective development of social competence contributes to children's successful adaptation to society, improves their communication skills, and supports their overall personal development. Therefore, enhancing the professional competence of educators in this field should be a priority in preschool education systems.

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