

REDUCED SOCIAL SKILLS AND COMMUNICATION ABILITIES IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN AND THEIR AGE-RELATED CHARACTERISTICS

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Abstract: This scientific study provides a comprehensive analysis of the formation and developmental stages of social skills and communication abilities in preschool children, as well as the factors contributing to their delayed development. Particular attention is paid to age-related psychological and physiological characteristics of children, individual developmental rates, the influence of the social environment, family upbringing styles, and the role of preschool educational institutions. The study examines common problems encountered in children's communication processes, including insufficient speech development, difficulties in establishing relationships with peers, emotional instability, and low levels of social adaptation. It also identifies the underlying causes of these issues, such as ineffective parenting practices, lack of adequate attention, excessive dependence on modern technologies, and limited social experience. Furthermore, the paper substantiates effective psychological and pedagogical approaches to developing social skills and communication abilities in children, including the use of interactive methods, play-based learning and upbringing, as well as the importance of cooperation between parents and educators. The findings are aimed at improving the process of children's socialization within the preschool education system and supporting their holistic personal development.

Keywords: preschool age, social skills, communication abilities, communicative competence, socialization process, psychological development, age-related characteristics, speech development, emotional development, social adaptation, peer interaction, family upbringing, pedagogical influence, educational environment, play-based activity, interactive methods, developmental environment, child psychology, social activity, communication problems, personality development, parenting methods, impact of modern technologies.

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly developing era of globalization and digital technologies, the

issue of forming social skills and communication abilities in preschool children is becoming increasingly important. Problems such as slow development of communication with peers and adults, shyness, aggressive or passive behavior patterns, and difficulties in expressing one's thoughts are becoming widespread among children. This, in turn, negatively affects the child's later stages of development, including adaptation to school education, active participation in learning processes, and the level of socialization. In addition, inconsistencies in family upbringing methods, excessive attachment to screens, and lack of real-life communication are among the main factors contributing to weak social skills.

Therefore, in-depth study of this issue, identification of its causes, and development of effective corrective approaches are of great scientific and practical importance. The modernization of the preschool education system in our country, as well as reforms aimed at ensuring the comprehensive development of the younger generation as socially active and communicatively competent individuals, require the introduction of new methods of working with preschool-aged children.

In particular, social skills and communication abilities play a crucial role in the formation of a child's personality. Socialization serves as the foundation for the child's later adaptation to education, cooperation in group activities, expression of thoughts, and establishment of healthy relationships with peers. In the current era of rapidly developing digital technologies, children's real-life communication experience is decreasing. Mobile phones, tablets, and various video contents reduce children's natural need for live communication, leading to weakened social skills.

At the same time, inconsistencies in family upbringing, parental workload, and limited interaction with peers further intensify the problem. As a result, preschool children increasingly demonstrate shyness, difficulties in self-expression, and more frequent aggressive or passive communication behaviors. The relevance of this issue lies in the fact that social skills are formed at an early age, and if not developed in a timely manner, children face significant difficulties in adapting to school education.

Therefore, the comprehensive study of preschool children's social and communicative development, identification of age-related psychological characteristics, and development of effective corrective approaches are among the key tasks of modern psychology and pedagogy.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

In our research, M.I. Lisina emphasizes that the most important characteristic



is human activity and the subject position, which is manifested through initiative in interaction with a communication partner and responsiveness to their actions. The quality of interaction, especially in early childhood, depends on the alternation of actions between individuals and their responses to each other. However, if a child becomes distracted by external stimuli, such as noise in the next room or an insect nearby, communication is interrupted and exploratory activity replaces it [1, p. 22].

This quotation describes the quality of communication, which changes depending on whether the child is engaged in independent or joint activity. Based on the activity approach and A.V. Zaporozhets' ideas on communicative activity, M.I. Lisina states: "Motives of communication should be expressed in qualities necessary for interest and evaluation in interaction with others" [5, p. 13]. She distinguishes the following groups of qualities:

1. Cognitive qualities: adults serve as a source of information about the world and organize new experiences for the child.
2. Practical (business) qualities: adults act as partners in joint activity and demonstrate correct actions.
3. Personal qualities: adults express their emotional experiences during interaction.

Age-related new formations influencing personality development include the child's attitude toward objects, other people, and themselves. Personality formation is most pronounced during crisis periods, ensuring a qualitatively new stage of interaction between the child and significant adults.

Considering communication as a special type of activity, its structure includes objects, motives, and actions. V.V. Davydov defines communicative activity components as actions and means of communication [6, p. 67]. This methodological basis made it possible to develop a scale for assessing communicative signals in children's interactions with significant adults.

At the present stage, the concept of "skill" occupies an important place in pedagogy, psychology, psycholinguistics, speech therapy, and other sciences. However, there is no single universally accepted definition of this concept. O.V. Polozova defines a skill as "an action formed through repetition, characterized by a high level of mastery, lack of conscious control, and absence of element-by-element regulation" [2, p. 7]. G.V. Belokurova describes skills as "automated components formed in the process of conscious action" [5, p. 10]. According to T.L. Pasalskaya, skills are "automated components of conscious activity resulting from practice" [3,



p. 6]. N.B. Sodnomova defines skills as “consolidated, automated methods and techniques of work functioning as components of conscious activity” [3, p. 18]. O.F. Borisova notes that a skill represents the optimal level of performing an operation or action, where attention is focused on the content rather than the technical side [1, p. 12]. S.S. Zhurovaleva defines skills as the ability to perform psychomotor actions of varying complexity, including symbolic, social, arithmetic, visual-spatial, linguistic, cognitive, and specialized skills [3, p. 9].

RESULTS

For a child, communication is not only the ability to establish contact and maintain a conversation, but also the ability to listen attentively and actively, use facial expressions and gestures effectively, and understand both oneself and others during interaction. In early childhood, communication plays a particularly important role, serving as a source of emotional experience and a fundamental condition for personality development.

One of the main tasks of preschool age is socialization, a key part of which is the development of communicative abilities, including the ability to interact with peers and adults. Early childhood communication experiences shape emotional development and personality formation.

Research shows that preschool age is a sensitive period for communication development. During this stage, a significant change occurs in the expansion of the child’s communication sphere: from interacting only with adults to engaging with peers. Children begin to recognize peers as equals, leading to identification with them and entry into a shared communicative space.

However, due to egocentrism, young children often assume that others think and feel exactly as they do, which makes understanding others’ perspectives difficult.

As the child develops, communication becomes more complex and meaningful. Older preschool children (5–7 years old) begin to form stable motivational systems, develop new social needs (recognition, respect, group participation), and acquire voluntary behavior based on mediated motivation.

They learn to coordinate their actions with peers and adapt behavior to social norms through interaction with adults, peers, and educators. The earlier this aspect is addressed, the fewer difficulties arise in the future.

Another important aspect is the development of emotional responsiveness, which enables children to understand and react to others’ emotions. Gradually,



through communication experience, children develop social sensitivity.

DISCUSSION

Currently, communication with adults continues to play an important role. According to M.I. Lisina, communication tools in child–adult interaction include expressive-mimic, object-based practical, and verbal means, which appear sequentially over time.

Preschool children become increasingly interested in social relationships, moral norms, and human behavior. At the age of 6–7, children begin to question what is right or wrong and seek explanations from adults. This marks the emergence of situational personal communication.

Such communication helps children understand social relationships, norms, and values. Children begin to evaluate their own and others' behavior and seek approval from adults. For them, being “good” and behaving correctly becomes very important.

The need for mutual understanding is a key feature of personal communication. Positive reinforcement is more effective than criticism in supporting a child's moral development.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, preschool age is a critical and sensitive period for the formation of social skills and communication abilities in children. During this stage, interaction with the environment, communication with peers and adults, and emotional expression skills develop intensively.

The research shows that weak development of social and communication skills is influenced by several factors, including insufficient family upbringing, lack of parental attention, inappropriate pedagogical approaches, and excessive use of digital technologies. Individual psychological characteristics and speech development delays also play an important role.

Cooperation between preschool institutions, teachers, and parents is essential in developing children's social skills. Effective use of play activities, interactive methods, creation of a positive psychological environment, and individualized approaches significantly improve children's socialization process.

In conclusion, the timely and proper development of social skills and communication abilities in preschool children creates a strong foundation for their future education, personality development, and successful functioning in society. Therefore, implementing systematic approaches, applying scientifically grounded



methods, and ensuring close cooperation among all educational stakeholders remain urgent tasks.

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