



METHODS FOR DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN OLDER PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the internal and external factors that influence the development of emotional intelligence in preschool-aged children. Emotional intelligence is a key psychological and social competence that determines an individual's personal maturity and social adaptability. Its formation is directly related to the family environment, the educator's professional activity, play-based learning, and communicative experiences. The article presents practical and methodological recommendations aimed at enhancing emotional awareness, empathy, self-regulation, and readiness for social interaction among children.

INTRODUCTION In modern pedagogy and psychology, the concept of “emotional intelligence” is regarded as one of the key determinants of an individual’s social and personal success. Older preschool children are in an active stage of emotional development, during which they acquire the ability to recognize, regulate, and respond to emotions - both their own and those of others. Therefore, in the preschool education system, it is of particular importance to organize educational and developmental activities aimed at fostering children’s emotional intelligence on a scientifically grounded basis.

The development of emotional intelligence in older preschool children lays the foundation for their future social, psychological, and intellectual growth. Emotionally mature children are capable of understanding and managing their own feelings, as well as perceiving and empathizing with the emotions of others. Such children are able to adapt easily to social environments, establish sincere and cooperative relationships with peers and adults, and demonstrate emotional resilience in various social contexts.

The process of emotional intelligence formation is complex and multifactorial, occurring under the combined influence of family, pedagogical, and social environments. The family environment serves as the primary foundation for this process: parental love, attention, the quality of communication, and emotional support make the child feel safe, valued, and understood. This emotional security fosters stability, positive feelings, and self-confidence - essential components of emotional well-being.



The pedagogical environment, in turn, provides opportunities for children to express emotions appropriately in social settings, maintain emotional balance in communication, and develop empathy and tolerance. The educator's professional competence, psychological sensitivity, and personal example play an irreplaceable role in this process. Teachers should help children understand that every emotion is a natural state, guide them toward positive expression, and teach constructive strategies for managing negative emotions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS This research was based on a qualitative–analytical approach supported by elements of pedagogical experimentation. The study focused on identifying, testing, and analyzing effective methods for developing emotional intelligence in older preschool children, aged five to six years, within the context of modern preschool education. The participants of the research were preschool children enrolled in several kindergartens, as well as their teachers and parents, who were directly involved in the developmental process. The educational environment was designed to encourage emotional expression, empathy, and social communication among children through structured pedagogical activities.

To ensure the reliability of the results, the research utilized an integrated methodology combining observation, experimental work, diagnostic testing, and pedagogical analysis. At the initial stage, children's baseline emotional development was assessed using standardized observation protocols and emotional intelligence diagnostic tools adapted for preschool age. The indicators evaluated included the child's ability to recognize emotions, express feelings appropriately, demonstrate empathy, and regulate emotional responses during social interactions.

In the main experimental stage, several pedagogical methods were implemented, including play-based learning, storytelling and dramatization, art- and music-therapy elements, reflective exercises, and hypnopedic techniques. Each method was aimed at developing a specific component of emotional intelligence - such as emotional awareness, emotional control, empathy, or social interaction skills. Play-based activities included role-playing scenarios ("The Theater of Emotions," "The Dream of Colors," "Understanding My Friend") designed to simulate real-life situations and enhance children's understanding of emotional diversity. Art and music sessions encouraged self-expression and emotional release through drawing, singing, and rhythm exercises, while dramatization and dialogue-based exercises fostered communication culture and perspective-taking abilities.

Additionally, mindfulness-based practices and short coaching sessions were integrated into daily routines to cultivate calmness, attention, and emotional self-regulation. The hypnopedia method was applied in the form of gentle storytelling and positive affirmations during relaxation periods, enhancing the children's subconscious reception of positive emotions. Reflection exercises were included to strengthen self-awareness and meta-emotional thinking.

All educational interventions were conducted under the supervision of trained preschool educators, who received prior instruction on the theoretical foundations of emotional intelligence and the use of modern pedagogical technologies. The analysis of



results was carried out through comparative observation and expert evaluation, with attention to qualitative changes in children's emotional expression, empathy, and social adaptability.

The collected data were subjected to content analysis and pedagogical interpretation. Findings were verified through repeated observations and interviews with teachers and parents to ensure consistency and validity. The integration of multi-modal methods-cognitive, artistic, communicative, and emotional-enabled a comprehensive evaluation of emotional intelligence development in the preschool context. The results obtained form the empirical foundation for recommendations on fostering emotional intelligence among preschool children and contribute to the further improvement of preschool educational programs.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS The senior preschool stage is a decisive period in a child's personal, emotional, and social development, during which the formation of emotional intelligence takes place most intensively. Methods aimed at developing emotional intelligence help children recognize and regulate their own feelings, understand the emotions of others, and behave appropriately in social interactions.

Play-based methods are considered the most effective approach in fostering emotional intelligence. Through role-playing and story-based games, children simulate various real-life situations, experience both positive and negative emotions, and learn to comprehend others' emotional states. For instance, activities such as *"The Theater of Emotions," "The Dream of Colors,"* and *"I Understand My Friend"* help cultivate empathy, cooperation, tolerance, and positive communication.

Artistic and musical methods: art therapy, music therapy, color therapy provide children with opportunities to express their inner emotional experiences. Through drawing, singing, listening to music, or working with creative materials, children externalize their emotions, which facilitates emotional release, reduces tension, and helps restore internal balance.

Communicative games and dramatization exercises play an essential role in developing emotional intelligence. Through dramatized stories, fairy tales, scenes, and dialogue-based play, children learn the culture of communication, the ability to verbalize their feelings, and to understand the moods of others. These activities also develop empathic thinking and the capacity to see situations from another person's perspective.

The hypnopedia method strengthens children's subconscious perception of positive emotions. Soothing words, gentle melodies, or bedtime stories delivered in a calm tone stabilize the child's emotional background and reduce anxiety and aggression. This approach contributes to emotional education by creating a sense of security and inner calm.

Reflection exercises (such as *"How did I feel today?"* or *"What is my mood right now?"*) teach children to analyze their emotions and express them verbally. This method fosters self-awareness and self-regulation - key components of emotional intelligence.

In the educational process, modern pedagogical technologies such as *coaching techniques, mindfulness practices, and interactive communication methods* play a vital role in enhancing emotional intelligence. Through these approaches, children develop the



ability to recognize their own emotional states, maintain positive thinking, and live harmoniously with others.

The systematic application of emotional intelligence development methods enhances emotional stability, self-confidence, empathy, communication culture, and social activity among older preschool children. Moreover, these approaches strengthen children's psychological readiness for school and contribute to their formation as socially successful and emotionally mature individuals.

CONCLUSION The conducted research has demonstrated that the development of emotional intelligence in older preschool children is a crucial pedagogical and psychological task that directly influences their future social adaptability, communication skills, and emotional well-being. The study confirms that emotional intelligence is not an innate ability but rather a complex construct that can be purposefully nurtured through educational interventions. The application of integrated pedagogical methods - including play-based learning, dramatization, art and music therapy, reflective exercises, mindfulness techniques, and hypnopedic approaches - significantly enhances children's emotional awareness, empathy, and self-regulation. These methods create a positive emotional environment where children feel safe to express their feelings, understand the emotions of others, and manage their behavior in socially acceptable ways.

The findings reveal that emotional intelligence develops most effectively in an environment characterized by emotional warmth, mutual respect, and supportive communication among educators, parents, and children. The educator's professional competence, emotional sensitivity, and personal example play a determining role in guiding children toward emotional maturity. Furthermore, systematic use of emotionally oriented pedagogical strategies strengthens not only emotional and social competencies but also prepares children for successful adaptation to school life and future interpersonal relationships.

Thus, emotional intelligence development should be recognized as an integral part of preschool education, incorporated into daily pedagogical practices and curriculum planning. The study provides a scientific basis for implementing innovative methods and technologies that foster emotional and social growth in early childhood. Continued research in this field is essential for refining methodological approaches and developing culturally adaptive models of emotional education in preschool settings. The overall conclusion emphasizes that the nurturing of emotional intelligence at the preschool stage forms the foundation of a child's lifelong personal, emotional, and social development, contributing to the creation of emotionally resilient and socially competent individuals.

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