

**DEVELOPING EMPATHY IN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS OUTSIDE
CLASSROOM TIME**

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Abstract: The article examines the development of empathy among primary school students during extracurricular activities. It highlights the psychological and pedagogical foundations of empathy formation, analyzes the role of teachers and family, and presents modern methods and practices that help develop the ability to understand and share the feelings of others.

Keywords: empathy, primary school students, emotional development, extracurricular activities, pedagogy, moral education, personal growth.

Аннотация: В статье рассматриваются особенности развития эмпатии у учащихся начальных классов во внеурочной деятельности. Раскрываются психологические и педагогические основы формирования эмпатических способностей, анализируется роль учителя, семьи и образовательной среды. Представлены современные методы, формы и практические приемы, направленные на развитие способности к сопереживанию, взаимопониманию и гуманным отношениям между детьми.

Ключевые слова: эмпатия, младшие школьники, эмоциональное развитие, внеурочная деятельность, педагогика, нравственное воспитание, личностное развитие.

Introduction

Empathy is the ability to feel and understand the emotions of others. An empathetic person can put themselves in another person's shoes and understand what they are feeling: sadness, joy, sorrow, pain. Empathy allows us to show concern and compassion for others, interact better, and build relationships with others.

The term "empathy" was introduced into scientific literature in the early 20th century. It comes from the Greek word *empathia*, which can be translated as "inner experience" or "sympathy." Initially, the term was used in the context of philosophy and aesthetics to describe the ability to perceive and understand works of art.

Later, psychologists and sociologists began to use the term to describe the ability to understand and experience the feelings of others. One of the first researchers to actively study empathy was the German philosopher Theodor Lipps. He viewed empathy as the ability to "see oneself in another," experiencing their feelings.

Over time, the understanding of empathy has broadened, and it is now considered a complex process that includes both emotional and cognitive components. Empathy allows one to read and respond to another person's feelings.

Modern education is aimed not only at imparting knowledge but also at developing a spiritual and moral personality capable of understanding, respect, and empathy. One of the key qualities that shapes a harmonious personality is empathy—the ability to understand the emotional states of others and respond appropriately. Developing empathy in younger students is especially important, as it is at this age that the foundations of interpersonal communication, moral convictions, and emotional responsiveness are laid. Extracurricular activities, with their free, playful, and communicative nature, create favorable conditions for the development of empathic qualities.

Theoretical Foundations of Empathy Development

The problem of empathy has been widely studied in psychology and pedagogy. L.S. Vygotsky noted that the emotional sphere is an integral part of a child's personality development, and that experience is a "unit of consciousness." K. Rogers considered empathy a central element of humanistic pedagogy, associating it with unconditional acceptance and attention to the inner world of another person. D.B. Elkonin and A.N. Leontiev emphasized the importance of joint activities and communication in the development of a child's personality, where the manifestation of empathy serves as the foundation of moral relationships.

Empathy is formed at the intersection of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components. The cognitive component involves understanding the feelings and motives of others. The emotional component involves the ability to empathize and share emotions. The behavioral component involves the expression of compassion through actions, support, and assistance.

The Role of Family and Teacher in the Development of Empathy

The family is the first school for feelings and relationships. It is in the family that children learn to distinguish emotions, understand others, and express kindness and compassion. Parents who show attention, care, and respect for their children instill trust and the ability to understand the feelings of others. Teachers play a key role in reinforcing and developing empathic skills. An atmosphere of respect, fairness, and support in the classroom fosters students' emotional safety.

It is important for teachers to demonstrate empathic behavior (understanding, attention, patience), maintain positive relationships between children, create situations of cooperation and mutual support, and use role-playing and game-based learning.

Modern Methods and Forms of Work Outside of School Hours

Extracurricular activities offer a wide range of opportunities for developing empathy. These include the following:

1. Game technologies – role-playing, role-playing, and communication games (e.g., "Role Swap," "Help a Friend," "Mirror of Emotions").
2. Project activities – joint social projects ("Let's Give Kindness," "Help Nature," "Animal Friends").
3. Volunteer events – participating in good deeds helps children experience the joy of helping others.
4. Art therapy methods – drawing, fairy tale therapy, and theatrical performances promote the expression and understanding of feelings.

5. Social and discussion circles – the teacher creates a safe space for expressing emotions and sharing experiences.

Practical Implementation of Empathy Development

Practical development of empathy in primary school children outside of school hours is achieved through systematic and targeted work by the teacher. Effective forms of this include classroom hours, communication clubs, clubs, and game-based training sessions. For example, in classes such as "Others' Pain" or "Kind Heart," children discuss situations requiring compassion and assistance. This gradually develops emotional responsiveness and the ability to put oneself in someone else's shoes.

Conclusion

Developing empathy in elementary school students is one of the most important tasks of modern pedagogy. Empathy contributes to the development of a humane personality, a culture of communication, and moral values. Extracurricular activities provide unique conditions for this process, bringing children together in creative collaborations. Thus, a teacher's systematic work aimed at developing empathy contributes to the formation of emotionally mature and morally resilient individuals.

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