

**WAYS TO DEVELOP EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN PRESCHOOL  
CHILDREN**

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**Abstract:** This article examines the issues related to the development of emotional intelligence in preschool children. It analyzes ways to positively influence children's social and psychological development through recognizing and managing emotional states, expressing one's own feelings, and fostering empathy toward the emotions of others. The article presents practical recommendations based on pedagogical and psychological approaches, game-based technologies, and interactive methods that contribute to the development of emotional intelligence in preschool educational institutions. In addition, cooperation between parents and educators is highlighted as a key factor in ensuring the effectiveness of this developmental process.

**Keywords:** emotional intelligence, preschool education, child psychology, emotional development, empathy, game-based methods, social skills, educator, parent-educator cooperation.

**Introduction.** In the modern educational context, developing not only children's intellectual potential but also their emotional and social competencies is considered one of the key priorities of the preschool education system. Emotional intelligence is a complex set of psychological skills that enables a child to recognize and manage their own emotions, understand the feelings of others, and successfully engage in social interactions. Research findings indicate that children with a well-developed level of emotional intelligence experience fewer difficulties in communicating with peers, demonstrate constructive thinking in challenging situations, and are capable of regulating their emotional states. Such children are able to clearly express their thoughts and emotions and show empathy toward others' feelings.

The preschool period is regarded as a decisive stage in the formation of emotional intelligence. During this stage, essential psychological processes such as emotional sensitivity, self-awareness, emotional responsiveness, and self-regulation begin to develop. Psychological and pedagogical studies confirm the effectiveness of targeted approaches aimed at fostering emotional intelligence at this age. Moreover, emotional intelligence lays the foundation for the development of social competencies in children, including communication culture, teamwork skills, and a sense of social responsibility. These competencies ensure children's successful growth and adaptability at subsequent stages of education.

**Literature Review.** The term emotional intelligence was first introduced into scientific discourse in the 1990s by American psychologists **Peter Salovey** and **John Mayer**. The concept was later widely popularized by **Daniel Goleman**, who identified its core components as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Goleman, 1995). According to Goleman, emotional intelligence is no less significant than IQ in determining an individual's life success.

In **Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of development**, emotional and cognitive development is shaped through social interaction, particularly through communication with adults and peers. This approach emphasizes the importance of play activities in supporting emotional development in preschool children. Vygotsky argued that psychological development,

especially emotional and cognitive processes, does not occur in isolation but rather under the influence of social environments.

Vygotsky explained this process through the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, according to which children begin to perform tasks they cannot accomplish independently with the assistance of adults or more competent peers. Over time, these skills become internalized, allowing children to perform them independently.

From this theoretical perspective, emotional intelligence develops through social interaction, where children learn to recognize and express their emotions and understand others' feelings, including empathy. Vygotsky emphasized that emotional development is not purely natural but rather a socio-cultural process. This highlights the crucial role of educators and parents in creating a supportive emotional environment.

In accordance with Vygotsky's theory, play is considered the primary tool for supporting emotional development in preschool children. Play serves as a natural social communication space where children learn to express and regulate emotions, experiment with social roles, and understand others' perspectives. For instance, role-playing games (such as doctor-patient, family, or school games) allow children to experience various emotional states and respond to them appropriately, directly contributing to the formation of emotional and social competencies.

#### **Research Methodology**

The main objective of this study was to identify pedagogical and psychological methods that promote the development of emotional intelligence in preschool children, assess their effectiveness, and develop practical recommendations. The research was conducted using the following methodological approaches:

- **Theoretical analysis** – A review of existing scientific literature, psychological theories, advanced practices, and practical methods was carried out. In particular, the theoretical foundations of emotional intelligence development were analyzed based on the works of L. S. Vygotsky, D. Goleman, and J. Piaget.
- **Experimental methods** – Practical activities were conducted with children using methods such as role-playing games, fairy-tale therapy, and emotional cards, and their effects were observed.
- **Psychological diagnostics** – Adapted psychological tests, observations, and interviews suitable for preschool children were applied to assess their level of emotional development, including emotion recognition, regulation, and emotional responses toward others.
- **Empirical data analysis** – Observation results, children's activities, and feedback from educators and parents were analyzed to identify factors influencing emotional intelligence development.
- **Pedagogical experiment** – The proposed methods were tested in small group settings to evaluate their practical effectiveness and applicability.

Based on the research findings, effective approaches for fostering emotional intelligence in preschool children were identified and practical recommendations were developed.

#### **Analysis, Results, and Discussion**

During the research process, various psychological and pedagogical methods aimed at developing emotional intelligence in preschool children were implemented and their effectiveness was evaluated through practical activities. Emotional intelligence reflects a child's ability to recognize and manage their own emotions, understand others' feelings, and behave appropriately in social interactions. Targeted work on each of these components had a positive impact on children's psychological well-being, self-awareness, and peer relationships.

The experimental sessions primarily focused on role-playing games, expressive activities such as drawing emotions, fairy-tale therapy, emotional cards, facial expression exercises, and

group communication. These methods enhanced children's ability to recognize emotional states, express feelings verbally, and respond empathetically to others. Observations showed that in environments where such activities were regularly organized, children demonstrated increased self-confidence, openness, and communication skills.

Furthermore, children whose parents and educators maintained a high level of cooperation exhibited greater emotional stability and social adaptability. This can be explained by the fact that consistent emotional approaches in both family and preschool settings foster a sense of safety and trust, enabling children to express their emotions freely.

However, the study also identified certain challenges. For example, in some preschool institutions insufficient attention was paid to children's emotional states, and educators lacked specialized training in emotional intelligence development. This negatively affected children's ability to understand themselves and establish emotional connections with others.

The role of parents is particularly significant in this context. Children feel most secure and confident in the family environment, where emotional development begins at an early age. Parents' emotional responsiveness, communication style, affection, and patience play a decisive role in shaping emotional intelligence. Effective cooperation between educators and parents ensures emotional consistency and strengthens children's emotional stability.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the preschool period represents one of the most critical stages in a child's emotional, psychological, and social development. During this time, children begin to develop essential skills such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, emotional communication, and recognition of their own and others' feelings. The successful development of these skills requires a purposeful, systematic, and professional approach to fostering emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence directly influences children's psychological stability, social adaptability, communication culture, learning motivation, and overall personal development. Through role-playing games, fairy-tale therapy, expressive activities, psychological exercises, and emotion-focused practical methods, children learn to understand and express their emotions and develop sensitivity toward others.

Despite existing challenges in preschool education institutions, prioritizing emotional intelligence as a central component of the educational process and strengthening meaningful cooperation between educators and parents remain key tasks of modern preschool education. Ultimately, developing emotional intelligence in preschool children lays a strong foundation for their holistic, healthy, and balanced personality development and supports their successful integration into society in the future.

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