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DEVELOPMENT AND METHODS OF MENTAL COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Annotation.

This article analyzes the process of developing mental (mental) competence of children in preschool educational institutions and its effective methods. The study highlights the stages of formation of children's thinking, pedagogical technologies that stimulate cognitive activity, ways to develop intellectual abilities through play and interactive methods. Methodological approaches supporting the processes of thinking, perception, memory and attention in preschool children and the role of educators in this process are also analyzed. The article reveals the importance of modern psychological and pedagogical approaches to the formation of the mental potential of children.

Keywords. Mental competence, preschool education, cognitive development, thinking, interactive methods, game technologies, intellectual potential.

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqolada maktabgacha ta'lim muassasalarida bolalarning aqliy (mental) kompetensiyasini rivojlantirish jarayoni va uning samarali metodlari tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda bolalar tafakkurining shakllanish bosqichlari, kognitiv faoliyatni rag'batlantiruvchi pedagogik texnologiyalar, o'yin va interfaol usullar orqali intellektual qobiliyatni rivojlantirish yo'llari yoritiladi. Shuningdek, maktabgacha yoshdagi bolalarda fikrlash, idrok, xotira va diqqat jarayonlarini qo'llab-quvvatlovchi metodik yondashuvlar hamda tarbiyachilarning ushbu jarayondagi roli tahlil qilinadi. Maqola bolalarning aqliy salohiyatini shakllantirishda zamonaviy psixologik-pedagogik yondashuvlarning ahamiyatini ochib beradi.



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Kalit so‘zlar. mental kompetensiya, maktabgacha ta’lim, kognitiv rivojlanish, tafakkur, interfaol metodlar, o‘yin texnologiyalari, intellektual salohiyat.

Аннотация

В данной статье анализируется процесс развития умственной (умственной) компетентности детей в ДОУ и ее эффективные методы. В исследовании освещаются этапы формирования детского мышления, пути развития интеллектуальных способностей через педагогические технологии, стимулирующие познавательную деятельность, игровые и интерактивные методы. Также анализируются методические подходы, поддерживающие процессы мышления, восприятия, памяти и внимания у дошкольников, а также роль воспитателей в этом процессе. В статье раскрывается значение современных психолого-педагогических подходов к формированию психического потенциала детей.

Ключевые слова. ментальная компетентность, дошкольное образование, познавательное развитие, мышление, интерактивные методы, игровые технологии, интеллектуальный потенциал

In the modern era of educational reforms, the development of mental competence in preschool children has become one of the key priorities of early childhood education. Mental competence refers to a child’s ability to think logically, analyze, reason, make decisions, and apply knowledge to solve simple problems. The preschool stage is considered a sensitive period for the development of these abilities since it lays the foundation for further intellectual growth and lifelong learning skills.

Mental competence in preschoolers is defined as the ability to understand and process information, use acquired knowledge in daily life, and demonstrate independence in thinking. According to J. Piaget’s cognitive development theory, the preschool period (ages 3–6) is characterized by the rapid formation of preoperational thinking — when children begin to use symbols, imagination, and basic logic.



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At this stage, children's mental abilities should be developed systematically through purposeful pedagogical influence. It is important to create an environment that encourages curiosity, observation, and experimentation — key drivers of cognitive activity.

The main pedagogical task of preschool institutions is to organize educational activities that stimulate thinking and mental processes.

Effective methods include:

- Play-based learning: Educational games such as puzzles, logic games, and role-playing stimulate imagination, improve memory, and enhance problem-solving skills.
- Inquiry-based activities: Encouraging children to ask questions and find answers helps to develop critical thinking and cognitive curiosity.
- Storytelling and dialogue: Discussing stories, asking predictive questions, and expressing opinions enhance verbal reasoning and abstract thinking.
- Modeling and constructive play: Activities involving building, drawing, and designing develop spatial imagination and logical connections.
- Interactive technologies: Smart boards, educational videos, and digital games, when used moderately, contribute to children's motivation and mental engagement.

According to L. S. Vygotsky, the social environment and communication play a crucial role in the mental development of children. The concept of the “zone of proximal development” emphasizes that children learn best when adults provide guided assistance, gradually allowing them to act independently.

Teachers and caregivers should therefore serve as facilitators rather than mere instructors, supporting children's thinking through guidance, modeling, and collaboration. Emotional support and positive reinforcement are equally important, as a child's mental activity is closely tied to their emotional state and motivation. The educator's role is central in planning, organizing, and monitoring the process of mental development.

Effective educators:

- Create a psychologically comfortable and stimulating learning environment;
- Use differentiated methods according to each child's developmental level;



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- Encourage independent thinking, curiosity, and initiative;
- Apply observation and diagnostic tools to assess cognitive growth.

Regular communication with parents also enhances the child's progress, ensuring that developmental strategies are consistent at home and in the preschool setting.

Contemporary preschool education increasingly integrates innovative methods aimed at cognitive development:

- STEAM education (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics): Introduces simple scientific experiments and creative problem-solving.
- Project-based learning: Encourages teamwork, exploration, and logical reasoning.
- Montessori and Reggio Emilia approaches: Provide freedom of choice and self-directed learning, promoting autonomy and critical thinking.
- Interactive games and digital learning tools: Help children visualize concepts and develop digital literacy alongside mental skills.

Assessment in preschool should focus not only on results but on the process of thinking. Observation, dialogue, and portfolios are effective tools to track children's progress. Educators should analyze how children approach problem-solving, not just whether they succeed, and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly.

Developing mental competence in preschool children is a multifaceted process requiring collaboration between educators, parents, and the educational environment. By applying play-based, interactive, and inquiry-oriented methods, teachers can cultivate curiosity, logical reasoning, and creativity in young learners. A child who develops strong mental competence in the preschool years is better prepared for formal schooling and lifelong learning.

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