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DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DELAYED MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: This article examines the development of communication skills in preschool children with special educational needs and delayed mental development as a crucial pedagogical and psychological task for their social adaptation and successful preparation for future schooling.

Keywords: delayed mental development, communication skills, social adaptation, cognitive, behavioral, motivational, emotional instability.

Children with delayed mental development are characterized by low communicative activity, limited vocabulary, emotional instability, and fear of, or passivity in, establishing contact with peers and adults.

Communication is one of the key factors in a child's mental development. Through communication, preschool-aged children develop fully and shape their individuality. Children with delayed mental development are characterized, first and foremost, by altered forms of communication resulting from the concurrent presence of speech disorders. These children exhibit deficits in sound articulation, difficulties in perceiving and comprehending what they hear, and challenges with retelling.

Speech development disorders and poorly developed communicative skills lead to the withdrawal of these children from their peers and, at times, even from their teachers. This underscores the relevance and importance of developing communicative skills. The structure of communicative skills comprises three components: motivational-personal, cognitive, and behavioral.

The motivational-personal component encompasses the child's desire to establish communication. The cognitive component reflects knowledge regarding the communication process, its significance in human life, rules of interaction, non-verbal cues, and so forth. The behavioral component relates to the ability to act within a given situation, where the child selects an action in accordance with specific rules.

M.I. Lisina identifies the following components of successful communication: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. Criteria for the cognitive component include the ability to act in communicative situations, respond appropriately to criticism, and show interest in interaction. Criteria for the behavioral component include



independence in choosing actions, adherence to behavioral norms, and the ability to use non-verbal communication. Criteria for the emotional component include the ability to control one's emotional state, speak without anxiety, and resolve conflict situations. These skills form the foundation for the development of children's communicative abilities, helping them anticipate communicative processes, interact with others, and engage in communication.

The quality of communicative skills depends on gender, age, individual characteristics, the social environment, and the content of the educational process. Fostering the full development of communicative skills in children with delayed mental development requires meeting several conditions: creating successful communicative situations; using problem-based scenarios to build understanding of the nature of communication; conducting correctional pedagogical work to develop communicative skills; encouraging the expression of feelings; and organizing games that foster a desire to interact with peers and adults.

Working to develop a positive attitude toward themselves and others in children with delayed mental development, expanding their knowledge of ways to express various emotions and their understanding of their peers' emotional states, taking the children's individual characteristics into account, developing the ability to communicate constructively with peers, and creating a favorable emotional environment within the group can enhance the development of communicative skills.

Developing communication skills through play in preschool-aged children with delayed mental development is a key means of improving their speech, emotions, and social adaptation. For the learning process to be effective, the child must be able to experience a sense of self within the game, and the game must enable the child to accumulate their own experience.

To boost children's interest in speech therapy sessions, it is essential to incorporate various creative tasks and novel approaches to exercises aimed at reinforcing correct pronunciation. Play is inextricably linked to education, learning activities, and observations of everyday life, holding great educational and formative value. Creative play gives rise to an important process of knowledge acquisition. It engages the child's mental faculties—stimulating thought, imagination, attention, and memory—while enabling them to solve problems independently, devise better and easier ways to carry out their ideas, and learn to apply and verbally express their knowledge.

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