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**COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS OF JUNIOR PUPILS  
WITH MILD INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY:  
TO THE PROBLEM OF RESEARCH**

**Abstract.** The article presents theoretical and practical significance of the results of the studies of various scholars of peculiar features of means of communication and the formation of communication skills in primary school children with mild intellectual disability. Particular attention is paid to the inclusion in the scope of investigation of verbal and non-verbal means of communication facilitating the formation of communication skills. The article presents an analysis of approaches to this problem of domestic and foreign authors, both from the field of special pedagogy and psychology. The author considers the problem of practical work with children with mild intellectual disability as a means of developing the necessary skills of communication both in adults and children.

**Keywords:** special educational needs, communication, alternative communication, communicative facilities, correctional work, speech therapy work, mild intellectual disability (ID).

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The problem of modernization of special education in the Russian Federation is being actively discussed in the scientific community at present. One of the main tasks of modernization of the system of special education consists in the search of optimal models of education of children with different levels of psycho-physical development, including children with mild intellectual disability. The realization of this task is possible through organization of a system of corrective support of children with deviations in their development. Domestic scholars regard complex support of children with special educational needs (SEN) as a combination of the systems of health protection, special education

and social support. This position is based on the cultural-historical conception of L. S. Vygotskiy and his scientific school.

In the course of analysis of the terms “*obshchenie* (intercourse)” and “*kommunikatsiya* (communication)” significant for our research, it was established that they are interpreted differently. We keep to the interpretations which disclose the differences between these terms. *Kommunikatsiya* (communication) is a kind of *obshchenie* (intercourse) [5]. The terms *obshchenie* and *kommunikativnye navyki* (communicative skills) are synonymous [1; 3; 5; 11]. At the same time differentiate the interpretation of these terms as synonyms in certain

contexts, because we treat them in relation to the development of abilities a formation of means of establishing contacts of the children with surrounding people and the world; and these means are in the process of constant change and development. The means of intercourse (communicative means) are interpreted by us as means of coding, transfer, processing and decoding information which is transferred in the process of communication and shared activity both verbally and non-verbally. Coding information is a means of its transfer.

Communicative ability is a unique property of man which is formed practically from the very beginning of the person's life, and children's communication is a specific kind of communication characterized by an activity with objective-practical content [3]. Communicative abilities include three major components: 1) wish to get in contact with surrounding people; 2) ability to organize communication, including the skill to listen to the interlocutor, emotionally sympathize with him or her and find way out of conflict situations; 3) knowledge of rules and norms of communication with other people.

By the age of 7 communicative skills play the role of important universal abilities characterizing the wholesome development of the child. They are important indicators of his or her preparation to taking part in education process, getting and passing information while learning a subject and forming learning habits. Cognition of the surrounding world is an inseparable part of the child's devel-

opment; the cognition takes place in the process of non-verbal and verbal activity in conditions of active interaction with adults in education and corrective and logopedic work, and the level of his or her development possibilities is characterized by the formation of communicative activity.

Studying possible deviations in the development of children's abilities to communicate, scholars single out the following factors: insufficient motivation of the child to communicate and inadequate acquisition of communicative means.

Children with mild intellectual disability represent a group heterogeneous in the degree of expression of various disorders and possible prospects of development. But marked underdevelopment of all speech components – lexical, grammatical and phonetical-phonemic – is typical of all children with mild intellectual disability. It is characteristic of children with mild intellectual disability to have disorders of the speech regulating function [2; 6; 7]. On the background of systemic speech disorders, deficiency of communicative function manifests itself most vividly, which has a negative effect on the formation of the child's personality and his or her socialization. Children of this category are characterized by restraint, limited number and selectiveness of contacts, inadequacy of communicative relations in the form of aggression and importunity and qualitative and quantitative inferiority of communicative means. Children can hardly master various forms of communication even in case they possess

enough knowledge of language means. Senior preschool children and junior schoolchildren with mild intellectual disability do not experience the need to transfer and get information. Poor formation of communicative activity in children with mild intellectual disability leads to serious difficulties and obstacles in real communication and education, insufficient development and absence of concentration on prospective communication in various kinds of activity [3; 7; 11]. The modern pedagogical literature defines theoretical approaches to the development and formation of communicative habits of children with SEN.

The views of Russian scholars on the role of support of children with SEN and their families [3; 4; 10] are in accord with foreign research in the field of special education [8; 12].

Special pedagogy and psychology have collected considerable experience in formation of communicative skills and habits in children with visual impairments (S. K. Amirova, M. Zaorska, S. A. Pokutneva, etc.), auditory disorders (P. M. Boskis, L. P. Noskova, E. F. Pay, etc.), severe speech disorders (L. B. Baryaeva, M. A. Vinogradova, O. E. Gribova, B. M. Grinshpun, O. G. Prikhod'ko, L. G. Solov'eva, E. L. Cherkasova, etc.), cerebral palsy (E. F. Arkhipova, I. Yu. Levchenko, O. G. Prikhod'ko, etc.), disorders of psychological development (O. V. Vol'skaya, E. E. Dmitrieva, S. Yu. Serebrennikova, E. S. Slepovich, R. D. Triger, U. V. Ul'enkova, S. I. Chaplinskaya), intellectual disability (O. K. Agavel-

yan, I. A. Ambrukaytis, D. I. Augene, L. B. Baryaeva, D. I. Boykov, O. P. Gavrilushkina, A. V. Zakrepina, G. V. Kuznetsova, V. I. Lubovskiy, E. A. Strebeleva, L. M. Shipitsyna, N. N. Yakovleva, etc.), and multiple structure defects (M. V. Zhigoreva, E. T. Loginova, A. I. Meshcheryakov, I. A. Sokolyanskiy, A. M. Tsarev, etc.). This problem is widely represented in foreign literature (K. Cunningham, J. Miller, H.H. Rye, N. Sereto, M.D. Skortten, etc.).

Scholars have assembled data about successful dynamics of corrective activity which makes special adaptation of children with intellectual disability possible (L. I. Akatov, A. A. Eremina, S. D. Zabramnaya, N. A. Zadumova, T. N. Isaeva, T. P. Kuntsevich, A. R. Maller, E. I. Nikolaeva, O. Shpek). L. B. Baryaeva states that the aim of the modern educational activity of adults with children is the formation in children of habits of independent communication, social responsibility, ability to empathize, understand oneself and other people [2].

Domestic experience of work in the sphere of organization of interaction of children with SEN is reflected in the present Federal State Educational Standard for children with mild intellectual disability and allows active participation in the process of international integration: acquaintance with the leading foreign theoretical conceptions and popular methods, and specification of the possibilities of their creative application in the system of education of the Russian Federation [9]. Researchers stress the ur-

gency of creation of such a system of communication that would help children with mild intellectual disability understand others, get into verbal contact, exhibit initiative and engage in common activity. Certain interest is attracted to the approach to the system of diagnostics of communicative development of children with mild intellectual disability based not on the specificity of speech/language underdevelopment of these children connected with the degree of intellectual disability, but depending on the quality and quantity of the corresponding corrective measures for development and socialization of the child, absence or deficit of formation of certain functions and habits, and taking into account the necessity and need of their formation in each particular case [12]. And it is stressed that it is necessary to involve parents (or persons substituting them) into the corrective pedagogical process, and train them in adequate methods of interaction with the child with mild intellectual disability in everyday and educational situations, which facilitates formation of communicative habits and socialization in general [8]. Thus, deficit of communicative means may be compensated by the use of alternative communication. The selection of non-verbal communication as an initial, basic or temporary means of interaction with the child is effected on the basis of careful evaluation of the resources of the latter in accordance with the degree of formation of speech comprehension and potential abilities to master impressive and expressive speech.

Notwithstanding considerable interest to the problem and rich content of the collected materials, they could be little used for the analysis of the specificity of formation of communicative activity and means of communication of children with mild intellectual disability as they contain only occasional references and leave open the problem of ability of preschool children and junior schoolchildren of the given category to solve communicative tasks of increasing complexity, especially at initial stages of special education. At present, educationalists feel the deficit of experimental data about the peculiarities and practical methods and techniques of alternative means of communication for children with mild intellectual disability including materials about the formation of alternative reading as one of the main channels of getting learning information. Thus, the question of communication of children with mild intellectual disability remains to be underinvestigated. Application of the psycho-pedagogical method of research in reference to the children of this category for solution of differential-diagnostic, prognostic and correctional logopedic tasks is characterized by inconsistent use of various heterogeneous methods in combination with intuitive-empirical evaluation of research outcomes.

Turning to the main aspects of the draft Special Federal State Educational Standard for children with mild intellectual disability, it is necessary to take into account the fact that learning results of such children radically differ from the requirements to learn-

ing outcomes of normally developing peers by the moment of secondary education completion and are defined by individual abilities of children with severe and multiple deviations of development: the academic component is reduced to elements of academic knowledge and the area of development of their life competence is maximally extended. Development of accessible communicative habits and everyday and social adaptation prepares children with SEN to active life in the family and society as extensively as permitted by their individual developmental potential. This perspective of development and education of children with mild intellectual disability brings the importance of formation of various communicative means to the forefront in the process of corrective work with children with mild intellectual disability.

On the basis of what has been said, it is possible to come to the conclusion that though there are a considerable number of works about the peculiarities of formation of communicative means in children with mild intellectual disability there is no satisfactory generalization of the content of the data about such children. A compensatory-correctional approach actualizing natural potentials of the developing personality with the priority of children with mild intellectual disability appears to be productive in terms of correctional work with children.

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