

## Strategies for developing communication skills in children with intellectual disabilities through the dynamic games

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### Abstract

Young school-age for children with intellectual disabilities is rightly considered a period of major importance in the process of human personality formation. National and international experts in the field demonstrate, with theoretical and empirical arguments, that, at this age, the child's various abilities are intensely developed, character traits are formed, the foundations of health are laid, taking place an upward evolution of the physical abilities so necessary for the effective involvement of the person in various forms of motor activity. In this context, starting from the socio-economic particularities of the modern society, namely the physical education has the mission to ensure the practical realization of the right of every child to an unhindered, multilateral, full and continuous development.

**Keywords:** communication, physical education, intellectual disabilities, games, young school-aged children.

### Introduction

Communication skills and abilities are a defining factor of success in any sphere of human activity. The lack of basic communication skills is at the root of many conflicts when people are involved in collective activities (A. Burlakov, 1997; P. Degtyarova, 2000; N. N. Kogan, 2000; M. E. Vainer, 2004; E. A. Smirnova, 2005).

An overwhelming importance in affirming the system of communicative interrelation belongs, at a young school age, to the game which, in this period of childhood, is imposed as a priority kind of activity. When playing and assigning various playful roles, children, in fact, learn to look at events and phenomena from different positions and points of view, to take into account the actions and interests of others, to respect the rules and regulations imposed by the context. Being the reflection of social life, game has a considerable influence on the development in all aspects of the child. The playful community is, in essence, a social organism, in which the collaboration relations, the interpersonal communication skills are nurtured and developed (LI Bojovici, 1981; A. A. Lyublinskaia, 1985; E. A. Smirnova, 2005, and others).

As an effective means of physical education, dynamic games include in themselves possibilities that are hard to underestimate in the effort to form and strengthen human character. During the game, children, especially those with disabilities, learn to integrate into the community, to build small communities based on solidarity and good understanding, to respect the common rules of the game, to identify problems and ways to overcome them, no matter how varied and complex would be the motor challenges required for this purpose.

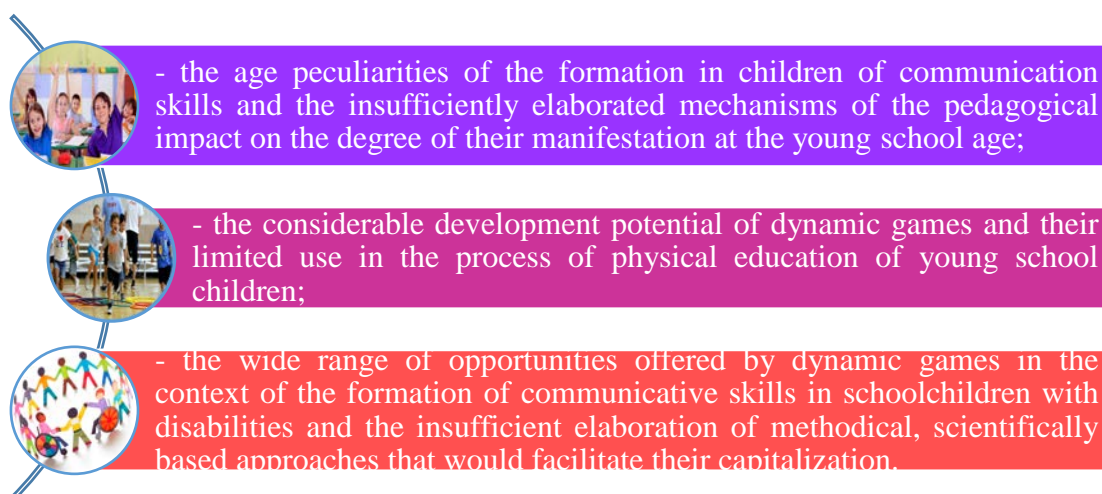
In the daily activity of early education institutions, dynamic games are practiced in the physical education curricula, during the outdoor walks, as well as in sports and leisure events.

### Background

Dynamic games, as a rule, aim, as a fundamental purpose, to satisfy the urgent needs of schoolchildren to move and, implicitly, to strengthen the techniques of applying motor skills.

However, such an approach does not always allow the full developmental potential of dynamic games to be taken into account (IM Korotkoi, 1984; N. Ia. Mikhailenko, 1999; LI Penzulaeva, 2001; LN Volosina, 2005; NV Kliueva, 2006; NN Dvorkina, 2007). However, this potential also includes training children involved in game activities the need and ability to discuss with each other in order to identify collective solutions, to agree on further actions, to give up their own positions, accepting compromise, and subordinate personal desires to general rules. Being put in the concrete situation of solving such problems, the child with intellectual disabilities learns to understand and respect those around him, to face the prohibitions when the collective goal demands it.

The analysis of the current state of physical education in the school environment allowed us to identify a series of main contradictions, seen through the prism of the research object, such as:



**The object of the research refers to the means, methods and forms of organizing activities oriented towards the impact of dynamic games on the development of communication skills of young school-aged children.**

**The aim of the research is to theoretically substantiate the methods of influencing dynamic games on the development of communication skills in young school-aged children.**

**The research hypothesis** refers to the conditions under which the proposed methodology - of oriented action of dynamic games on the development of communication skills of young school children - will be justified and effective in terms of pedagogy. The hypothesis will come true if:

- the proposed methodology will be designed based on the gradual transition from dynamic games with a predominantly individual character to dynamic team games, with a competitive character, based on the active interrelationship between the participants.

**Research objectives.** Achieving the proposed goal involves reaching the following objectives:

- identifying theoretical approaches for solving the problem of targeted use of dynamic games, so that they ensure a considerable impact on the development of communication skills through physical education activities for children with intellectual disabilities of early school age;
- determining the level of physical training of young school-aged children and the reciprocal link between them and the development of their communication skills.

**The methodological and theoretical basis of the research** consists of the following elements:

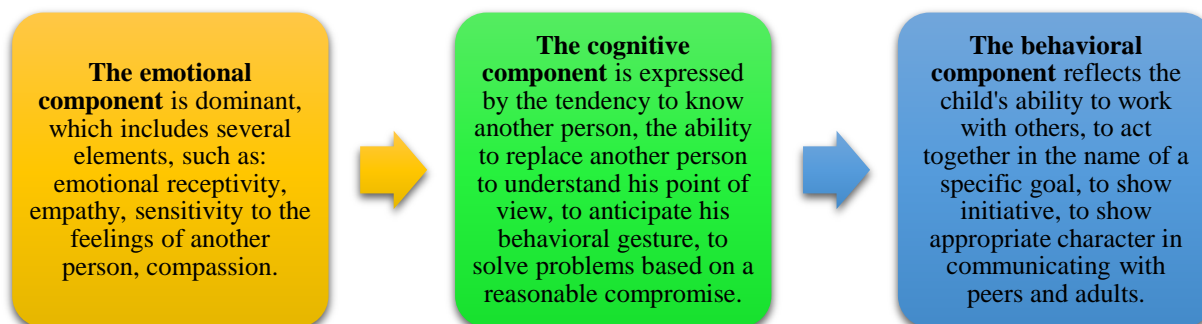
- ⇒ theory of developmental training (V. V. Davydov);
- ⇒ the theory regarding the development of the infantile personality (B. G. Ananiev, L. S. Vygotski, S. L. Rubinştein, A. N. Leontiev);
- ⇒ theoretical concepts regarding the unity of the intellectual, moral and physical elements in the formation of the human personality, the role of major importance of physical culture in this process (V. I. Stolearov, V. K. Balsevici, L. I. Lubyşeva and others);
- ⇒ the theoretical bases of the methodology of organization and development of dynamic games (P. F. Lesgaft, N. N. Kilpio, L. V. Byleeva, L. N. Voloshina and others);
- ⇒ the set of theoretical concepts related to the physical education of schoolchildren as an integrated process, consisting of a multitude of components aimed at coordinating child development activities (E. A. Arkin, VV Gorinevskaaia, A. V. Keneman, TI Osokina and others).

**Research methods:** analysis and generalization of information contained in the literature; didactic monitoring.

The structure of communicative skills of young school children is represented by three components: emotional, cognitive and behavioral. These components are closely linked. We will specify that at the age of schooling, the emotional component is the dominant one. The analysis of the manifestations of each of the components of communicative skills demonstrates the non-uniformity of their development in school-aged children. The highest degree of stability is attested in terms of the deficit of communicative activism in relationships with peers.

The use in the physical education process of young school children of dynamic games differentiated according to the degree of mutual interaction of participants ensures a positive and complex impact on the level of development of motor skills and on the indices that characterize various aspects of communication skills of students.

Communication skills are an extremely important, multi-aspective and complex field of human personality, requiring specific knowledge, consistent skills. The human being acquires knowledge and forms communication skills in the process of accumulating social experience, either personal or taken from previous generations. In other words, we are dealing with an integrative capacity of the personality, which is formed in the process of exchanging social information and is expressed by the potential for the assumed activity of communication and also by self-development and self-improvement of the information interaction subject. With reference to the community of children, as a successful communicative parameter:



## Data collection

The period of schooling is the most favourable for the formation of communication skills. At this stage of childhood there is an urgent and permanent need to establish mutual social relationships with peers and adults. Alienation from the social environment generates disorders of the affective-emotional and behavioural spheres of the child with disabilities.

In accordance with the topic of the current research, we considered it important to know the issue of how to apply dynamic games at school age, determining the time reserved for dynamic games at the current stage and, mainly, about the possible prospects for improving this activity. In order to obtain the answers to the proposed questions, we organized an opinion poll through a questionnaire of a maximum possible number of respondents, students from primary schools in the Republic of Moldova.

The questionnaires were methodologically substantiated, establishing first off all the conditions of use, which require special attention when determining the samples, applying all the principles and techniques of the questionnaire.

Regarding the form of the questions, factual questions were formulated in the questionnaire: related to certain behaviours or situations known by the subjects; opinion: the attitudes of the subjects towards the researched problem; closed and open. In the process of conducting the given survey, the appropriate methodology was followed.

## Data analysis

*The results of the survey will be used for scientific purposes only*

Dear student!

In order to develop communication skills through physical education activities, we come with the request to answer the questions of the questionnaire. Your answers will be taken into account for the optimization of the curriculum in the discipline "Physical Education".

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

You are a student at IP TL \_\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> grade \_\_

## Questionnaire data

N=28

Nr./o	Question	Answer options	Data in numbers	Data in %
1.	Do you enjoy communicating with those around you?	<b>Always</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>46,43</b>
		<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>28,57</b>
		<b>Rarely</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>25</b>
2.	What's your easiest way to communicate?	<b>Through games</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>50</b>
		<b>Written form</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>17,86</b>
		<b>Oral form</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>32,14</b>
3.	What are your favourite partners to discuss?	<b>Peers and friends</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>50</b>
		<b>Parents</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>35,71</b>
		<b>Unknown persons</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14,29</b>
4.	How do you express yourself more easily?	<b>Written</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>25</b>
		<b>Drawing</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>32,14</b>
		<b>Dance, movement</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>42,86</b>
5.	Do you encounter blockages in communication?	<b>Often</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>46,43</b>
		<b>Rarely</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>25</b>
		<b>Never</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>28,57</b>
6.	Do you convince your communication partners?	<b>Always</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>21,43</b>
		<b>Rarely</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>46,43</b>
		<b>Never</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>32,14</b>
7.	Do you encounter blockages in the way of communication with the teacher?	<b>Often</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>39,28</b>
		<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>42,86</b>
		<b>Never</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>17,86</b>
8.	Where do you most often find the necessary information in addition to the information received at school?	<b>Books</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14,29</b>
		<b>TV</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14,29</b>
		<b>Internet</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>71,42</b>
9.	What do you prefer to do in	<b>To reqd</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10,72</b>

	your free time?	<b>To play outdoors</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>60,71</b>
		<b>To play computer games</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>28,57</b>
10.	Were you honest in all the answers given in this questionnaire?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>82,14</b>
		<b>No</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>17,86</b>

Thus, young school age is the period when the influence, oriented towards a concrete goal, on the child's development must target all types of activity. The basic forms of physical education activities, which include dynamic games aimed at developing communication skills, are physical training exercises, morning gymnastics, moving games during walks, active rest, sports competitions.

## Results

- ⇒ From the range of means capable of contributing to the formation of communication skills in children with disabilities of young school age, playful activity is required as a priority. Dynamic games have a multilateral impact on the children who practice them, beneficially influencing their physical development, strengthening the body, forming remarkable personality qualities.
- ⇒ Through the dynamic games, favourable conditions are created for collective feelings, and they contribute to the formation of common interests. Thus, children learn to act in solidarity, to plan and distribute their roles, to correctly calculate their strengths, available time, and abilities.
- ⇒ The playful activity organized in order to achieve a well-defined goal includes in itself a considerable number of opportunities, diverse in form and content, able to fully contribute to the formation of communication skills.

Currently, specialists are undertaking intensive research to identify various and effective ways to improve the principles of physical education among school-age children. The process in question will be organically part of the child's life, if, of course, the developmental characteristics of each student are taken into account.

## Conclusions

The experimental methodology regarding the action of dynamic games oriented towards the development of communication skills in young school children includes in itself three groups of games:

- a) individual dynamic games;
- b) dynamic games in pairs;
- c) dynamic team games with a competitive character.

During the experiment, the application of dynamic games is performed on the principle of gradual transition from dynamic games with a predominantly individual character of the actions undertaken by participants in dynamic team games with a competitive character based on actions taken jointly by team members.

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