



Emotional Development in Children with Computer Games

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Preschool development is a very short period of a person's life, only the first seven years. Nevertheless, they play an important role. A completely helpless and unable to do anything baby becomes a relatively independent, active person. All aspects of the child psyche have some development, laying the foundations for further growth. One of the main directions of mental development in the preschool age is the formation of the foundations of personality, which includes the moral development and upbringing of the child, and this should begin with the development of the emotional sphere¹.

The development of the emotional sphere is facilitated by all kinds of children activities and communication with adults and peers, and nowadays – also by communication with the "computer"².

The computer may also serve as a powerful technical tool for learning, and play the role of an indispensable assistant in the education and general mental development of preschool children.

The communication of preschool children with a computer begins with computer games. One of the most important functions of computer games is teaching. Computer games are designed so that the child would not only imagine a single concept or specific situation but get a generalized idea of all such objects or situations. This is how thinking and generalization develop.

Computer activities of children are of great importance not only for the development of their intelligence but also for the formation of the

emotional sphere of the child.

Communication with a computer arouses great interest in children, at first as a play activity, and then as an educational one.

Does the computer have a positive effect on the development of pupils' emotional intelligence? Some computer games may have a positive effect on the formation of the emotional sphere in preschool children.

The emotional sphere is an important component in the development of preschool and primary school pupils because no communication or interaction would be effective if the participants are not able, to "read" the emotional state of the other person in the first place, and to control their emotions in the second place. Understanding emotions and feelings is also an important moment in shaping the personality of a growing person.

Research by psychologists shows that older preschoolers are usually able to correctly perceive a person's emotional state (95% of the children aged 5-7 surveyed usually correctly identify other people's emotions). At the same time, children can easily distinguish joy, admiration, fun and find it difficult to recognize sadness (this emotion is correctly named by half of the surveyed preschool children), fear (only 7% of the children gave correct answers), surprise (only 6%).

Children pay attention to facial expressions in the first place, not paying attention to the pantomime (posture, gestures). Thus, even older preschool children have insufficient understanding of a person's emotional, inner states, and manifestations. By the senior preschool age, the child develops basic personal characteristics. Emotions, especially positive ones, determine the effectiveness of the child's education and upbringing.

¹ Baltadjieva, Y. Psychology of Communication in Primary School Age, 2010

² Ivanov, S., Emotional Development in Children with Computer Games. Research of the Institute of Cultural Heritage, 2020



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Features of emotional development in the preschool age:

- the child masters social forms of expression of feelings;
- the role of emotions in the child's activity changes, the emotional expectation is formed;
- feelings become more conscious (in which the role of an adult is important), generalized, reasonable, arbitrary, extra-situational;
- higher feelings are formed – moral, intellectual, aesthetic.

The whole system of assessments is based on what and how much the child knows.

For the pupil to realize his/her emotional reactions and states, it is important for the teacher to accept or not accept these reactions and states. By accepting the child's emotional reactions and condition, the teacher recognizes his/her right to experience exactly the feelings he/she is experiencing, which further contributes to the child's awareness of his/her own emotions.

Every preschool teacher in his/her daily practice constantly faces the problem of the development of the emotional sphere in older preschool children. The educational process in a preschool educational institution must provide emotional comfort, strong-willed behaviour of the child, psychological, stable-positive climate, humane relations, and personality-oriented communication, which indicators are: cheerful, active, emotionally positive state of the child, his/her successful adaptation in the future to a school institution and a

high level of willpower efforts.⁴

A brief classification of computer games

Computer games have become so entrenched in our lives that it is now almost impossible to imagine a personal computer without at least one of them.

All computer games may be roughly divided into role-playing and non-role-playing. This division is fundamental, as the nature and mechanism of the formation of a psychological dependence on role-playing computer games have significant differences from the mechanisms of formation of dependence on non-role-playing computer games.

Role-playing computer games are these in which the player enters the role of a computer character, i.e. the game itself obliges the player to play the role of a specific or imaginary computer character.

Role-playing computer games give rise to a level of a psychological dependence on a computer, rather than computer games without a role or any kind of computer activity that does not play. Psychological dependence on role-playing computer games is most powerful in terms of the degree of its influence on the player's personality.

Computer games without a role. The basis for distinguishing this type is that the player does not take on the role of a computer character, as a result of which the psychological mechanisms of addiction formation and the influence of games on a person's personality have their specifics and are generally less powerful. The motivation for gaming activity is based on the excitement of "passing" and (or) gaining points. All a player has to do is move fast, shoot and collect various prizes while driving a computer character or vehicle. These games are in most cases

³ Stamanov, R. Child psychology, 2008

⁴ Petrova, E, Preschool pedagogy, 2018



very harmless in terms of influencing the player's personality, as the psychological dependence on them is usually short-term.

Puzzles are another example. This type of game includes computer versions of various board games (chess, checkers, backgammon, etc.), as well as any puzzles performed in the form of computer programs. The motivation based on passion is related here to the desire to beat the computer to prove the person's superiority over the machine.

How do computer games affect the formation of the emotional sphere in preschool children?⁵

In their games, children usually show events, phenomena, and situations that have attracted their attention and interest. Reflecting on life, the child relies on well-known patterns: the actions, deeds, and relationships of the people around him/her. At the same time, the child's play is not an exact copy of what he/she observes.

It is known that the child's attitude to the world around him/her is influenced by the assessments of adults and their emotionally expressive attitude to events, phenomena, and people. The attitude of an adult and his/her example largely determine the development of the child's needs, his/her value orientations, his/her aspirations and desires, as well as the ability to react to the situation of people around him/her, to empathize with them. And this determines the content of his/her inner world and the content of the game activities.

The role of computer games in this process of emotional development is significant because there is no external coercion for the emergence or expression of certain emotions. Children's emotions

happen with the computer game itself. In this regard, the role of games is to apply psychological and pedagogical techniques that should normalize the emotional sphere, remove emotional barriers and lead to more developed, progressive forms of emotional behaviour.

Taking into account the specifics of emotional behaviour, different types of computer games should be used: role-playing games, dramatized games, rules games, and the game should be managed in such a way that the child's unwanted personality traits or negative emotions are successfully overcome.

The child gets great pleasure from computer games. He/she establishes himself/herself in his/her role, he/she feels sincere pride. Realization of creative possibilities in a computer game, improvisation, realization of ideas, cause the emotional inspiration of the children, their wild joy, the requirement to repeat the game, which is overgrown with new details. The emotional upsurge in a computer game helps preschoolers to overcome negativity towards other children, to accept them as partners.

Role-playing computer games have a different effect on the children's emotional expressions when the roles are assigned but the qualities of the characters' partners are not specified. In these cases, the child interprets the norms and rules of human relationships depending on his life experience.

Computer games are very important for the development of preschool skill. The use of computers in the classroom creates an emotional mood, which in turn has a positive effect on children's development. This arouses great interest in children.

Computer games are similar to traditional

⁵ Aljoriz M. Dublin, Qualitative Study: Video Games and Intelligence, 2014



games in many ways, but they also have major differences.

In the first place, many computer games are based on the principles of gradually complicating game and didactic tasks.

Secondly, there is a "phasing" that does not allow the transition to the next stage without completing the task of the previous level. In some games, the program itself adapts to the child and offers him/her new tasks, taking into account his/her previous answers: more difficult if the tasks are completed successfully, or easier if the opposite is true.

Third, many games, unlike traditional ones, contain elements of chance. In computer programs, this technique is widely used to give the game novelty, surprise, and miracle. It is as if new characters, new situations, unexpected phenomena, and relationships can suddenly appear.

The child masters the ability to independently and actively solve game problems, which gradually become more complex in terms of control, the content of knowledge, the degree of generalization of actions, rising in his/her development to a higher level.

Computer games have a special focus. They not only stimulate children's activities, their creative potential, but are also a wonderful tool that unites children in interesting group games, encourages their informal communication if two or three children play simultaneously on one computer.

Some games are aimed at developing children's ability to set goals on their own and achieve them on their own. In the course of such experimentation, children act as creators of new objects. They set new and increasingly complex goals and try to achieve them.

The various forms of children's creative

experiments contribute to the development of children's curiosity, a curiosity of mind, and form intellectual abilities.

Computer games teach children to overcome difficulties, control the implementation of actions, and evaluate the results. Thanks to the computer it becomes effective to teach goal setting, planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the results of the child's independent activity, through a combination of game and non-game moments. The child enters the plot of the games, learns their rules, subordinating his/her actions to them, striving to achieve results. Also, almost all games have characters who need help to complete the task. In this way the computer helps to develop not only the intellectual abilities of the child but also cultivates strong-willed qualities such as independence, composure, concentration, perseverance and also introduces the child into empathy, helping the characters of the games, thus enriching his/her attitude to the world around him and forms his/her emotional sphere.