

Tetiana Kalinina
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6618-1268
Candidate of Psychological Sciences
Senior Lecturer at the Department of the Correctional Education and Special Psychology
Kharkiv Humanitarian Pedagogical Academy,
Kharkiv, Ukraine
kalinina16@gmail.com

DEVELOPMENT OF PSYCHOSOCIAL COMPETENCE FOR PRETEENS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY

The article highlights the need to study psychological readiness of preteens with developmental delay to go to secondary school, as well as psychosocial competence development during this period. It is dedicated to studying the development of components of psychosocial competence for preteens with developmental delay, defines the structural model of psychosocial competence, and describes each component of psychosocial competence. In addition, it grounds the correctional and developmental program to develop psychosocial competence of preteens with developmental delay, and describes basic issues related to the specificity of psychosocial competence formation and Psychologist's activity in the process of transition from elementary school to secondary school. The article also defines objectives, main tasks and the structure of each program activity, and analyzes the content of basic program blocks, considering the goals and objectives of studies that have been selected to form the components of psychosocial competence.

Keywords: *children with developmental delay, preteens, social and psychological components of competence, correctional and developmental program, psychological assistance, adaptation period.*

Introduction. One of the most important periods in the life of a student is graduation from elementary school and transition to secondary school, which is traditionally considered one of the most difficult psychological and educational problems.

This transition is considered as a rather difficult period. According to research held by T. Viskovatova 2010, T. Knyazeva 2004, L. Kuznetsova 1986, I. Kulagina 1999, V. Lubovskiy 1989, T. Sak 2009, R. Trigger 2008, U. Ulenkova 2004, S. Shevchenko 2001 and others, children with developmental delay usually face adaptation difficulties at the beginning of education, so that at the end of elementary school they are not personally, psychologically and functionally ready to move to the next educational level.

The problem of psychological readiness and personality formation for preteens with developmental delay during this period is a crucial issue of special psychology, since it is not paid sufficient attention in modern research.

Traditionally, special psychology is focused on studying the intelligence of children with special educational needs, while personal problems are exposed to a much lesser extent. In our research, the problem of psychological readiness to go to secondary school is associated with the formation of social and psychological competence.

Purpose: that is why the purpose of this article is to determine the components of social and psychological competence and to study the features of their formation among preteens with developmental delay, as well as to disclose the structure and the content of psychosocial competence development program.

Methods. The purpose of the study was to find out the specific features of psychosocial competence of preteens with developmental delay in the transition from primary to secondary school and compare it with one of the normal peers.

In accordance with experiment goals and objectives, we used a set of diagnostic

techniques tailored to children with developmental delay and aimed at studying the components of psychosocial competence within the indicators identified in the structural model (Fig. 1).

In order to study the personality component formation in preteens with developmental delay, we used the following techniques: a test questionnaire developed by G. Kazantseva to study the self-esteem of pupils, and a test questionnaire developed by E. Bazhin and others on the basis of J. Rotter's locus of control scale. Based on the obtained level of self-esteem and locus of control, we determined the low level of personality component in social and psychological competence among preteens with developmental delay (M. Semago, N. Semago, 2005).

To study the formation of emotional component in preteens with developmental delay, we used the following techniques: 'Emotional empathy' by V. Boyko, as modified by N. Nikishina, 'Diagnosis of rigidity' (H. Eysenck), as modified by N. Nikishina, 'School anxiety test' by B. Phillips. As a result, the overwhelming majority of preteens with developmental delay has difficulties in forming an emotional component of social and psychological competence in the face of a new situation (Mikljaeva, 2004, Nikishina, 2003).

To study the formation of the communication component in preteens with developmental delay, we used the following techniques: 'Communicative and organizational skills' (V. Siniavskiy, V. Fedorishyn) and 'Sociometric experiment' (adapted by G. Karpova, G. Artemieva). The results show that communication as the most important component of social and psychological competence cannot be formed until the teen age (Berulava, 2003).

Psychosocial competence as a key characteristic for personal formation

Over the last years we observe a strong tendency to overall education humanization and personality-based approach to the student, which leads to a gradual shift from cognitive functions research to research in the personal sphere. Studies are dedicated to the problems of motivation, anxiety, communication, self-awareness, communication skills, character, and others.

Today boarding schools for special education are aimed not only at developing high-quality knowledge and skills, but also at mastering the ability to live in the modern world, independently navigate the situations and solve problems, i.e. at developing children's psychosocial competence. The main issues constituting the subject of our research are related to the study and analysis of the specific formation of psychosocial competence among preteens with developmental delay during transition from elementary to secondary school. Due to a radical change in the social situation, there is a clear need to provide targeted assistance to students with developmental delay to form their psychosocial competence (Vinokurova, 2004).

Various Liberal Sciences are involved in the study of psychosocial competence, but it is still more common in professional psychology. The concept of psychosocial competence has been reflected in a large number of works by (Dika & K. Singh, 2002; Trainor, 2008 etc.).

The scientific literature still hasn't come to a consensus on the structure of psychosocial competence.

We believe that psychosocial competence involves the formation of skills and abilities that allow students to adequately navigate social situations, objectively evaluate themselves and the people around them, correctly identify personality traits and emotional states of others, form the desired relationships and successfully influence them, or choose appropriate ways of dealing with them, as well as to implement interaction processes.

Considering the factors of psychosocial competence for preteens with developmental delay in the structure of psychosocial competence, we highlight the following important components: **personality, emotions and communication**, which can also be regarded as competencies (Fig. 1).

We consider these components as the new mental formations of adolescence. Self-esteem becomes the central formation, complemented with the sense of maturity as the essence of personality component.

Adolescents also manifest an increased need for sensory experience. Their emotions are varied, instable and inconsistent. The desire to be or to seem adult causes internal stress and

feelings that enhance mood instability. The ability to control emotional state is an important feature of emotional component.

The main need of adolescents is the desire to communicate with their peers which, according to some researchers, is characterized by leading activities. Thus, the new formations

will include the «We concept» and the creation of peer groups. Adolescents strive for a group for self-affirmation and self-determination, to determine their status. Formation of communication skills is the main indicator of communication component.

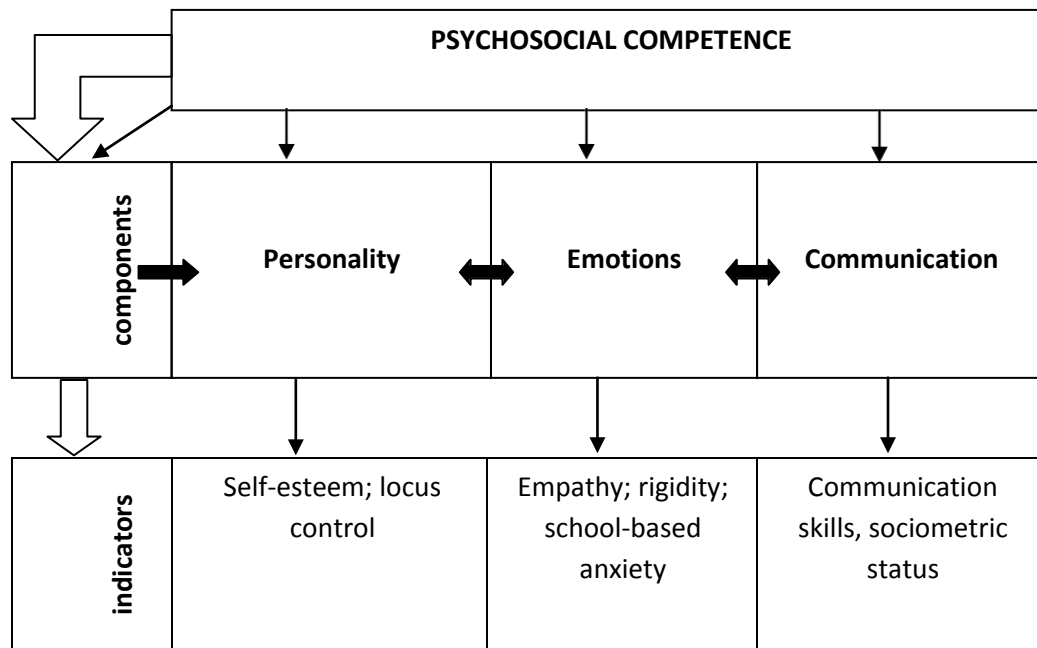


Fig. 1. Structural model of psychosocial competence

Considering the transition from primary school to adolescence as the beginning of the crisis stage and tracking the dynamics of student's personal development during this period, we carried out a pilot study with students of the fourth, fifth and sixth grades (from 10 to 12) from Kharkiv, Donetsk and Khmelnytsky regions. Each child was studied in familiar and favorable conditions of his school. The main group consisted of grade 5 children of a general educational institution for children with developmental delay.

During the pilot study we revealed certain features of psychosocial competence of preteens with developmental delay, namely: lack of capacity for flexible behavior, weak constructive interaction skills, difficulties with self-control and self-regulation. Preteens with developmental delay do not express the need for communication and show low level of empathy. Emotional immaturity of children with developmental delay leads to instable, situational and superficial contacts. Inadequate self-esteem which tends to underestimation, as well as violated level of expectations, lead to maladaptive forms of

interaction. Most students have low sociometric status and are disadvantaged in the peer group. Deficiency of proper communication with peers impoverish their emotional life. Distrust in new people or situations, increased anxiety and hostility to adults and peers, unbalanced behavior lead to a breach of interaction between preteens with developmental delay and the social environment (Kalinina, 2012).

Coming to elementary school, students are involved into a new psychosocial situation where they need to adapt. In order to get themselves comfortable in this position, students must have certain qualities for optimal psychological functioning in the new environment. The entire set of qualities required for successful interaction at elementary school can be defined as the formation of psychosocial competence. Lack of psychosocial competence is one of the major factors that negatively affect the process of socialization, individualization, social and psychological adaptation and personal development as a whole.

Practical psychologists should support preteens with developmental delay in this difficult

period, creating opportunities for an easy and safe integration to a new phase of school life, and promoting full communication with classmates and teachers.

Creating a correctional and developmental program

Based on the results of the pilot study, we have designed a correctional and developmental program based on the fundamental provisions of general, developmental and educational psychology, particularly on ideas of A. Khutorskoi about the competence approach in modern education, and J. Bech about the person-centered approach.

The program for the development of psychosocial competence among preteens with developmental delay covers the challenges and the objectives of preteens and other characteristics (Berulava, 2003), namely specific characteristics of individual preteens with developmental delay; social and psychological status of a child; development of the components of psychosocial competence.

The program provides steps for a component-wise formation of social and psychological competence among preteens with developmental delay.

In accordance with the aim of the program, we designed the following tasks:

- create a psychologically comfortable environment to work in a group (acquainting group members with the rules of interaction between each other, assisting in adapting to group work, etc.).

- develop an auto-psychological component of psychosocial competence (formation of positive self-esteem, self-confidence, develop capabilities and responsibility);

- form an emotional component of psychosocial competence (overcoming negative emotional experiences and feelings, reducing school anxiety);

- form a communicative component of psychosocial competence (developing communication skills, ability to defend their point of view, present themselves, etc.).

Methodological basis for program development and arrangement of correctional and developmental activities included the works of (Karabanova, 1990 and others).

Arranging correctional and developmental activities, we take into account such important aspects as:

- activity form. We chose group activity, as the main aim of adolescents is communication with peers.

- duration and frequency. In our case, they are sessions held twice a week (duration of each session – from 40 minutes to an hour);

- selection and acquisition of psychological instruments (both diagnostic, correctional and developmental).

To implement the program for the development of psychosocial competence among preteens with developmental delay, we chose group activity, as it allows for the use of the main adolescent aim - communication with peers, and simultaneously solves one of the major challenges of transition period - development of the components of social and psychological competence.

According to A. Prutchenkov, one of the main advantages of group work is that a group of people finds that its problems are not unique, and that other people can also experience similar feelings. Group work models real-life relationships and interactions, and allows to view and analyze safely psychological patterns of communication and behavior that are not obvious in everyday situations. It may solve problems which cannot be solved in real life (Prutchenkov, 1993).

Arranging the correctional and developmental program

We arrange activities using the following scheme: the structure of each activity consists of an introduction, main part and conclusion. Introduction includes a ritual greeting (made up by the participants), a warm-up (serves as a setting for productive group activity), a reflection of the previous activity and the topic of ongoing activity. The purpose of the greeting is to set the mood for work, establish mutual trust and unify the group (M. Semago, N. Semago, 2005).

The main part of the program includes discussions and modeled situations on suggested topics, while conclusion involves summarizing and receiving feedback from each member of the group. During activities we used various teaching methods: group discussion and conversation; role play and improvisation; techniques and methods of self-regulation,

directed imagination and self-expression methods (Rudestam, 2000).

We also included some psychogymnastics exercises and physical activity breaks before or after the main exercise. They helped to relieve stress and prepare for learning and understanding the new topic.

The final part of the event consists of group reflection, which allows assimilating the experience gained by each participant. It is necessary to analyze the results of each activity immediately after its completion. To facilitate this analysis, it is useful to make a permanent fix of important impressions and observations throughout the period of the program: most successful exercises, unsuccessful exercises, interesting cases encountered during activity, behavior of participants, etc.

During the program of psychological support we used the following list for reflective analysis: «Did you like the activity?», «What did you like most?», «What was the most interesting and the most important thing?», «Did you learn any new things about yourself or about others?», «What difficulties (if any) did you face while performing exercises?», «Was it hard to perform tasks during the activity?» and others.

The activity ends with a goodbye ritual. Summarizing the results of each group activity, we used a form which allows the psychologist to accumulate important and interesting material for program improvement. The goodbye ritual also helped to unify the group and gave participants a feeling of work completeness and integrity (Miljutina, 2004).

The program consisted of four blocks: adaptation, personality, emotions and communication.

Division into separate blocks ensures program mobility, substantial certainty and the complex nature of interaction. Each of the selected blocks has its own objectives, content, specific techniques and methods.

The **adaptation block** is implemented for informational purposes. It considers the process of entering, dipping and adapting to new conditions, while the other three blocks (personality, emotions and communication) are directly aimed at forming components of psychosocial competence.

The main purpose of adaptation program block is to facilitate the adaptation of preteens

with developmental delay in the new social conditions. We can achieve this goal using the following tasks: develop and strengthen information about the new social status of a five-grade student compared with the status of an elementary-school student; develop an active personal position for self-modification and self-correction in accordance with the requirements of the environment; active development of social behavior; develop the ability to overcome difficulties arising; create a positive attitude to student's capabilities.

Successful adaptation to transition among preteens with developmental delay allows creating a more efficient interaction with the environment, forming an active position, increasing resistance to frustrating factors and reducing school anxiety.

The key activity of adaptive block is aimed at the idea that transition to fifth grade for each student can be the beginning of a new life, new success, new personal capabilities, abilities or hidden resources (Koblik, 2003).

Personality block is the second block of the program. Its purpose is to promote self-awareness (self-identity), to disclose student's «self»; to form a stable positive self-esteem, to increase self-knowledge and self-formation.

This purpose allowed us to determine the following objectives: desire for self-knowledge, immersion in your own world; interest in self-development and internal expertise; forming your own independent system of self-assessment and self-conception standards; forming positive attitude towards themselves; reducing the number of negative self-esteems in the group; self-esteem stabilization and increase; supporting and helping preteens with developmental delay to create the ability to respect and love themselves; developing the ability to perceive and interpret the possibility of self-improvement, self-development, forming ideas about their own uniqueness and self-worth; developing the sense of responsibility.

The block consists of exercises and tasks which help participants to analyze alternative information from different positions, adequately assess and understand the changes occurring, form a sense of inner stability and credibility, develop installation on self-knowledge and master techniques aimed at creating positive «self» image (Karabanova, 1997).

The third block of the program is the **emotions block**. It includes different tasks aimed at stabilizing the emotional sphere of preteens with developmental delay. The main purpose of the emotions block is to develop confident behavior skills; reduce emotional tension and anxiety; form behavioral flexibility and emotional stability; develop the ability to speak for themselves, to understand their own feelings, be aware of their own behaviors.

The emotional sphere of children in this period undergoes significant change and has a huge impact on preteens with developmental delay, particularly on those susceptible to any influence. The need for emotional block is based on the importance of emotional well-being to preserve and strengthen mental health of preteens with developmental delay, as it helps in overcoming the negative feelings and fear; reduces anxiety; raises confidence; reduces emotional stress.

Preteens are able to get emotional support from group participants and psychologist that contributes to a sense of self-worth and importance, allows weakening the defense mechanisms, promotes openness and spontaneous activity.

The block includes exercises and tasks which allow preteens with developmental delay to positively perceive their individual and personal characteristics, assess different changes in their behavior from different points of view, choose solutions that would cause positive emotional reaction (Mikljaeva, 2004).

Communication block is the final block of the program. Its purpose is to develop effective communication skills.

The objectives of communication block are: develop communication skills, practice communication skills and the ability to listen, express their views on the situation; increase the capacity to communicate, awareness of their own attitude towards people, develop skills to argue their position; form the ability to interact with others constructively, and the ability to adjust their behavior.

Solving the challenges of communication block promotes for a harmonious development of preteens with developmental delay and reduces hostility in relationships with peers, since communication in this age is the leading activity affecting the emotional sphere and the

development of consciousness. Preteens learn to solve problems, resolve conflicts and find compromise solutions, to choose the right decisions and to shape appropriate behavior; to be active and proactive in communication in order to develop the emotional component of psychosocial competence.

This block includes specific game situations where preteens with developmental delay acquire skills of constructive communication with peers. Typically, activities are held in the form of plot-role-playing games. Performing different tasks the participants learn new forms of relationships and experiment with the forms of behavior deploying a variety of events (Nikishina, 2003).

It should be noted that the program is not limited to a list of individual exercises or games, but involves a set of methods aimed at personal development and self-development. It creates an atmosphere of acceptance and understanding, helps to build subject – subject relationship and the idea of psychological support. It is designed for psychologists at boarding schools working with preteens with developmental delay, and facilitates the transition from elementary school to secondary school, overcoming self-doubt, fear, excessive excitement in different situations, self-fulfillment in behavior and activities.

Conclusions. The unsatisfactory level of social and psychological competence among preteens with developmental delay has confirmed that at the stage of transition from primary school to secondary they experience difficulties in adapting to the new social situation. The formation of social and psychological competence among preteens with developmental delay is dependent on specific dysontogenesis (slowing rate of mastering the leading activity, delay in the formation of social relations, underdevelopment of the emotional sphere, etc.). This testifies the need to arrange a special psychological step-by-step impact for correction and development.

Practicing psychologists need to support preteens with developmental delay during this difficult period, creating opportunities that would allow every fifth-grader to enter the new stage of school life as easily and smoothly as possible, and to promote full communication with classmates and educators.

Therefore, the designed scientific and theoretically-based program of developing psychosocial competence for preteens with developmental delay defines a new approach to solving difficulties during transition from

elementary school to secondary school, acts as an important mean of psychological support and assistance and adds order, integrity and commitment to the work of a Practitioner Psychologist.

References

- Berulava, G. A. (2003). Metodologicheskie osnovy deyatel'nosti prakticheskogo psihologa [Methodological foundations of the practical psychologist] : Uchebnoe posobie. Moscow : Vysshaya shkola (rus).
- Vinokurova, G. A. (2004). Psihologicheskoe soprovozhdenie uchashihya s zaderzhkoy psihicheskogo razvitiya na etape perehoda v srednee zveno shkoly [Psychological support for students with a delay in psychological development at the stage of transition to secondary school], *Defektologiya [Defectology]*, 6, 32–34 (rus).
- Dika, S. L., & Singh, K. (2002). Applications of social capital in educational literature: A critical synthesis. *Review of Educational Research*, 72(1), 31–60. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543072001031> (eng).
- Kalinina, T. S. (2012). Psy`xologichni xaraktery`sty`ky` social`no-psy`xologichnoi kompetentnosti molodshy`x pidlitkiv iz zatry`mkoyu psy`xichnogo rozvy`tku [Psychological characteristics of socio-psychological competence of young adolescents with mental retardation]. *Naukovij chasopis: zbirnyk naukovykh prats NPU imeni M. P. Dragomanova [Scientific journal: a collection of scientific works of NPU. Dragomanov]. Seriya 19 Korekciyna pedagogika ta special`na psihologiya [Correctional Pedagogy and Special Psychology]*, 22, Kyiv : NPU imeni M. P. Dragomanova, 87–91 (ukr).
- Karabanova, O. A. (1997) Igra v korrekcii psihicheskogo rozvitiya rebenka [The game in the correction of the mental development of the child]: Uchebnoe posobie, Moscow : Rossijskoe pedagogicheskoe agentstvo. (rus).
- Koblik, E. G. (2003) Pervyj raz v pjatyj klass: programma Moscow adaptacii detej k srednej shkole [First time in fifth grade: a program for adapting children to high school]. Moscow : Genezis (rus).
- Mikljaeva, A. B. (2004) Shkol'naja trevozhnost': diagnostika, profilaktika, korrekciya [School anxiety: diagnosis, prevention, correction] : Saint Petersburg, Rech' (rus).
- Miljutina, K. L. (2004) Teoriya ta prakty`ka psy`xologichnogo treningu [Theory and practice of psychological training]: Navchal'nij posibnik, Kyiv : MAUP (ukr).
- Nikishina, V. B. (2003) Prakticheskaja psihologiya v rabote s det'mi s zaderzhkoy psihicheskogo rozvitiya [Practical psychology in work with children with mental retardation]: posobie dlja psihologov i pedagogov, Moscow : VLADOS (rus).
- Rudestam, K. (2000) Gruppovaja psihoterapija [Group psychotherapy], Sankt-Peterburg : „Piterll (rus).
- Prutchenkov, A. S. (1993). Trening kommunikativnyh umeniy [Communication skills training]: Metodicheskiye razrabotki zanyatij, Moscow : Novaya shkola (rus).
- Semago, M., & Semago N. (2005). Organizaciya i sodержanye deyatel'nosti psihologa special'nogo obrazovaniya [Organization and content of the activities of special education psychologist]: Metodicheskoe posobie, Moscow : ARKTI (rus).
- Trainor, A. A. (2008). Using cultural and social capital to improve postsecondary outcomes and expand transition models for youth with disabilities. *The Journal of Special Education*, 42(3), 148–162. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022466907313346> (eng).

ОСОБЕННОСТИ ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ СОЦИАЛЬНО-ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКОЙ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТИ У МЛАДШИХ ПОДРОСТКОВ С ЗАДЕРЖКОЙ ПСИХИЧЕСКОГО РАЗВИТИЯ

Тетяна Калинина, кандидат психологических наук, старший преподаватель кафедры коррекционного образования и специальной психологии, КУ «Харьковская гуманитарно-педагогическая академия», м. Харків, Україна, e-mail: kalinina16@gmail.com

В статье представлена необходимость изучения психологической готовности младшего подростка с задержкой психического развития к переходу в среднюю школу, формирования социально-психологической компетентности в этот период. Статья посвящена изучению

особенностей формирования компонентов социально-психологической компетентности младших подростков с задержкой психического развития. Определена структурная модель социально-психологической компетентности. Охарактеризованы содержание каждого из компонентов социально-психологической компетентности. Коррекционно-развивающая программа формирования социально-психологической компетентности у младших подростков с задержкой психического развития направлена на эффективное развитие личностных характеристик, эмоциональных паттернов и стилей поведения младших подростков. Определены цели, задачи, структуру каждого занятия программы. Освещены основные вопросы, связанные с изучением специфики формирования социально-психологической компетентности школьников с ЗПР и направлением деятельности практического психолога в процессе адаптации при переходе из начальной школы в среднее звено.

Ключевые слова: дети с задержкой психического развития, младшие подростки, компоненты социально-психологической компетентности, коррекционно-развивающая программа, психологическая помощь, адаптационный период.

ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ФОРМУВАННЯ СОЦІАЛЬНО-ПСИХОЛОГІЧНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ У МОЛОДШИХ ПІДЛІТКІВ ІЗ ЗАТРИМКОЮ ПСИХІЧНОГО РОЗВИТКУ

Тетяна Калініна, кандидат психологічних наук, старший викладач кафедри корекційної освіти та спеціальної психології КЗ «Харківська гуманітарно-педагогічна академія» м. Харків, Україна, e-mail: kalinina16@gmail.com

У статті висвітлено необхідність вивчення психологічної готовності молодшого підлітка із затримкою психічного розвитку до переходу в середню школу, формування соціально-психологічної компетентності в цей період. Стаття присвячена вивченню особливостей формування компонентів соціально-психологічної компетентності молодших підлітків із затримкою психічного розвитку. Визначено структурну модель соціально-психологічної компетентності, яка складається з таких важливих компонентів: аутопсихологічного, емоційного, комунікативного, які також можна розглядати у якості компетенції. Охарактеризовано зміст кожного з компонентів соціально-психологічної компетентності.

Теоретично обґрунтована та розроблена корекційно-розвивальна програма з формування соціально-психологічної компетентності у молодших підлітків із затримкою психічного розвитку, яка складалася з урахуванням проблем і завдань молодшого підліткового віку та інших особливостей розвитку особистості дитини.

Програма мала чотири блоки: адаптаційний, аутопсихологічний, емоційний, комунікативний. Проаналізовано зміст основних блоків програми формування соціально-психологічної компетентності у молодших підлітків із затримкою психічного розвитку. Для реалізації програми була обрана групова форма роботи, оскільки у групі відбувається моделювання системи взаємовідносин та взаємозв'язків, характерних для реального життя.

Визначено мету, основні завдання, структуру кожного заняття програми, яка складається зі вступу, основної частини та підсумків. Кожний блок складається із вправ і завдань, які допомагають учасникам у розвитку особистісних характеристик, емоційних патернів і стилів поведінки молодших підлітків. Розглянуто цілі й завдання занять, які були підібрані для формування компонентів соціально-психологічної компетентності.

Висвітлені основні питання, пов'язані з вивченням специфіки формування соціально-психологічної компетентності школярів із ЗПР і напрямом діяльності практичного психолога у процесі адаптації при переході з початкової школи в середню ланку.

Ключові слова: діти із затримкою психічного розвитку, молодші підлітки, компоненти соціально-психологічної компетентності, корекційно-розвивальна програма, психологічна допомога, адаптаційний період.

Стаття надійшла до редакції / Received 10.06.2019.

Прийнята до друку / Accepted 9.09.2019.

