

Psychological-pedagogical Aspects of Solving Social-cultural Problems of Socialization among Gifted Preschoolers

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Abstract

Modern Russian and foreign academic literature offers a significant number of authorial approaches which reveal gifted children's peculiarities and difficulties, features of their personal and social development.

Analyzing difficulties in social development that gifted children face, the authors suppose that the category of children have peculiarities and even complications in duly solutions of socialization problems at any age, which frequently leads to victimization. The argumentation is based on A. Mudric's theory that necessitates duly solution of the three groups of socialization problems: natural-cultural, social-cultural and social-psychological. Their retarded solution or lack of the solution may cause a victimization process, thus preventing a gifted child from having successful future with achieving set goals and built according to the "Winner" pattern. A child with great expectations may come to the pattern "Not a Winner" or even "Loser" (Berne, 2015). Solving the above mentioned socialization tasks matters at any age stage starting from preschool period. The indicators of solving socialization problems were formulated. Each group has its own features and figures of successful personal and social development of a child. The authors consider the following indicators of solving social-cultural socialization problems: awareness of ethical norm, independence, interests and hobbies. Empirical data were obtained via interviewing and testing preschool children aged 5-7 years old (senior and preparatory groups) from 7 preschool educational organizations in Kostroma (n=186); and through questioning and testing parents and pedagogues.

Keywords: giftedness, gifted child, socialization, socialization problems.

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Introduction

Nowadays a special attention is paid to work with gifted children. Effective fulfillment of the task became possible due to governmental support on the Federal level.

Early detection of gifted children is a strategic state task in general (Belova, 2016). A range of documents are passed on the Federal level in the sphere of development and education of gifted children. Among them the following papers can be mentioned: the President's Decree No. 607 from 7.12.2015 "On Measures of State Support for Persons who have Shown Outstanding Abilities", Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 474 from 21.07.2020 "On National Development Goals of Russia until 2030".

The tasks of forming an effective system for identifying, supporting and developing abilities and talents among children and teenagers are set as a part of the national project "Education", the State Program of the Russian Federation "Development of Education" for 2019-2025 and others.

The analysis of numerous Russian and foreign researches enables us to speak about several peculiarities and difficulties related to gifted children's development and necessity of conducting specific social-pedagogical work.

Scientists and practitioners pay special attention to development of gifted children's abilities and realization of their potential. The empirical data and research results demonstrate that educational organizations are mainly focused on children's success and their victories in contests and Olympiads. At the same time, creating conditions for social development and duly solving socialization problems are not a priority for many pedagogues (Shcherbinina, 2019).

Regardless extensive experience in dealing with gifted children, work effectiveness of several federal and regional organizations, we find it complicated not only to identify and support gifted children but also to conduct successful socialization.

Studying the issues of gifted children's social development has enabled us to see that the source of the problem for this category is often the lack of a solution or untimely solution of socialization tasks by gifted children. These tasks mainly affect the sphere of self-development, self-realization, self-affirmation and self-identification of a gifted child's personality, the sphere of social-cultural and gender identity, the value-notional sphere, and the sphere of social relationships.

A retarded solution of socialization problems (natural-cultural, social-cultural, social-psychological) causes victimization features to appear, which has a negative impact on a gifted child's life and influences the choice of a life scenario of a gifted grown-up.

At present, modern educational practice in working with gifted children is focused mainly on the development of special abilities, while social-pedagogical work, aimed at creating conditions for duly solution of natural-cultural, social-cultural, social-psychological socialization problems and at overcoming difficulties that a gifted child faces at various age stages, is not conducted properly (Petrovici & Masari, 2014). We see an exterior of a successful child who is the pride of an educational organization, but at the same time may suffer from difficulties in self-identification, inability to present oneself and one's achievements, who is burdened by a lack of meaning in life, complex relationships with a micro society, etc.

Existent researches and our practical experience suggest that many gifted children have problems in solving a number of socialization tasks which sometimes remain unsolved, or can be solved with a delay.

At the same time, there are no age stages at which the solution of socialization problems is less significant. Regarding this, we study the peculiarities and difficulties of solving all the blocks of socialization tasks among gifted children at all age stages.

We have worked out a set of criteria and indicators of effective solutions of socialization problems for preschoolers, primary school students, teenagers and adolescents. We have offered the research diagnostics.

This set of the criteria and indicators serves as the basis for studying features of solving natural-cultural, social-cultural and social-psychological socialization problems among preschoolers with signs of giftedness.

Basic development of a gifted child takes place at the stage of preschool childhood. In this regard, we started our research from preschool age.

Each stage of ontogenetic development is characterized by acquiring a number of personal qualities which later become the foundation for personality formations (Mazunova & Gubaydullin, 2017).

The first abilities appear in the preschool period of development, when a child demonstrates an irresistible craving for a specific activity. At this age, the most intense period is the age from 2 to 5 years old. This is the time when personality basis is set. At the age of 6-7, achievements in the sphere that interests a child become vital.

In the period of preschool age, successes may pass due to sensitivity of this period (Kulikovskaya & Andrienko, 2016). Moreover, we must not forget about the social situation of a child's development and possibility of his training. In this regard, (especially up to 5 years old) in the period of preschool age it is necessary to avoid a long-term prognosis of a child's development and talk about their giftedness. The most appropriate term is "a child with signs of giftedness".

Signs of giftedness are the characteristics of a child that can be noticed in every day activity of this child in comparison with their peers and can be evaluated while observing the nature of their actions.

A child with signs of giftedness is a child who stands out with bright, noticeable achievements (or has internal prerequisites for such achievements) in a particular sphere, acts and thinks in a divergent way when solving practical problems.

The presented statements determined our interest in the problem of identifying the features and difficulties of solving social-cultural socialization tasks by preschoolers with signs of giftedness.

Purpose and objectives of the study

The purpose of the research is to characterize the psychological and pedagogical aspects of solving social-cultural socialization problems among preschool children with signs of giftedness.

In the present work, we have identified preschoolers with signs of giftedness, studied the peculiarities of solving social-cultural tasks of socialization among the respondents and defined the specifics of psychological-pedagogical work conducted among preschoolers with signs of giftedness in accordance with detected features of solving social-cultural tasks of socialization.

Literature review

In modern Russian and foreign scientific literature, periodicals, thesis materials there is a significant number of authorial approaches, revealing gifted children's peculiarities and difficulties, specific character of their personal and social development.

The social component of gifted children's life raises scientific interest in foreign psychologists since long ago. Among foreign researches, we may highlight the approaches of Joyce and Schwanenflugel to the problem of children's giftedness and difficulties in their development (1996). In their researches Davis and Robinson confirm that gifted children are more susceptible to bullying and the authors emphasize necessity of special work in their psychological-emotional sphere to be conducted.

All this requires high competence of specialists working with gifted children (Davis & Robinson, 2018). Guez, Peyre, Le Cam, Gauvrit and Ramus consider possible risks of school failure among gifted children in comparison with their peers (2018).

The results of Russian researchers make a great contribution to the study too. Thus, the works of Bogoyavlenskaya (1996) and Yurkevich (2018) and others depict a deep analysis of developmental peculiarities of gifted children; and they review some approaches to solving the problems in their education and upbringing.

The results of Kazarina's research are of great importance. The work is devoted to the problems of psychological-pedagogical assistance while developing gifted teenagers' social competence (Kazarina, 2012). Furthermore, in their works Leutina, Litvak and Bondarchuk study the innovative strategy of psychological and pedagogical assistance which is conducted to gifted pupils in the socialization process (Leutina, 2014; Litvak & Bondarchuk, 2012).

Analyzing peculiarities of solving socialization problems among preschool children with signs of giftedness, we rely on the socialization theory by Mudric (2000).

From the author's point of view, social-cultural tasks (cognitive, moral and value-notional) have specific features at each age in every social situation and certain cultural and historical conditions. The content of these tasks is determined by society and dictated by ethnic regional characteristics and a person's micro society.

The block of socialization tasks is solved by a person at each age while participating in the life of society. Regarding this, a person demonstrates his membership in a specific level of social culture, a certain amount of knowledge, skills, achievements and a certain level of value perception in accordance with their age capabilities.

It is vital to say that the social-cultural tasks of socialization have two sides. One side is supposed to transmit culture, traditions and values from the social institutions of education, society and the state. The other side characterizes the tasks that come from social practices, morals, customs and psychological stereotypes of the close surrounding. These two sides may not coincide with each other and even contradict to a certain extent. At the same time, a person may not always be fully aware of these influences or perceive them in a distorted way (Mudric, 2000).

In questions of working with gifted children, the authors decline to the approaches considered in the psychological and didactic system "Gifted children: identification-training-development" under Panov's guidance (2014). The authors represent a conceptual perception of the giftedness phenomenon: the concept of an age-related approach to the phenomena of intellectual giftedness (Leites, 2009); the approach to giftedness as a creativity feature (Matyushkin, 2004), dynamic theory of giftedness (Babaeva) (Babaeva, Maryutina & Leites, 2000).

We have studied theoretical and methodological approaches to socialization in the social-pedagogical and psychological-pedagogical aspects and in the works, where the socialization patterns of gifted children are described (Litvak & Bondarchuk, 2012).

The authors' approaches, we have analyzed, highlight an important role of organizing specific social-pedagogical work which is conducted in educational organizations of various types; the researches also necessitate creation of specific conditions for the successful solution of socialization problems. These are the statements that have become the starting point of our study.

Methodology

The first stage of the study was to obtain empirical data by interviewing, observing, and testing preschool children with signs of giftedness, teachers and parents. 540 preschool children aged 5-7 years old were tested. The research was conducted in 2020.

At the second stage of the empirical study, methods of interviewing and testing preschool children aged 5-7 years old (senior and preparatory groups) from seven preschool educational organizations in the city of Kostroma (n=186), methods of questioning and testing parents and teachers were applied.

Diagnostic set of the research:

- Observing gifted children;
- Testing gifted children and their pedagogues;
- Savenkov's "Pattern of giftedness" (2000);
- Studying a preschooler's cognitive need (Yurkevich, 2018) ;
- Analyzing individual traits of imagination;
- Method "Incomplete Situations" by Shchetinina 2000);

- “Pattern of independence ” by Shchetinina (2000).

The experiment stages:

1. Identifying potentially gifted preschool children.
2. Analyzing peculiarities and difficulties preschoolers with signs of giftedness experience while solving social-cultural problems of socialization.
3. Formulating specificity in psychological-pedagogical work with potentially gifted preschool children, basing on the identified features of solving social-cultural problems of socialization.

In our research we rely on the age approach in social upbringing as a condition for human development, taking into account and applying the characteristics and capabilities of each age group. This approach enables us to conduct psychological and pedagogical work in a preschool educational organization so that pedagogues could create conditions for an effective solution of age-related tasks of socialization by a gifted child.

The ideas of the existential approach are utilized in the methodology of the study. They orient us in organizing work with preschoolers with signs of giftedness, aimed at finding oneself, the meaning and way of existence in the sophisticated world, properties of one’s unique personality. The solution of these problems is reached while applying situations of social choice in a working process with gifted children.

In the research we used the elements of the reflexive-compensatory approach, which involves a child assessing oneself, identifying problems and building a program of compensatory work with the help of an adult. The aim of it is social self-development.

The way psychological and pedagogical work with potentially gifted preschoolers is organized will be based on the obtained results.

Results

The first research stage was to identify preschool children with signs of giftedness.

In the process of identification we applied the following methods:

- Savenkov’s “Pattern of giftedness” (2000);
- Studying a preschooler’s cognitive need by Yurkevich, modifications and adaptation for kindergarten by Baranova (2018) ;

- Analyzing individual traits of imagination.

540 preschool children aged 5-7 years old (senior and preparatory groups) from 7 Kostroma preschool educational organizations were tested.

The method to study a preschooler's need in learning depicts that 34% of the testees (183 children) have a high level of a cognitive need. These children's diagnostics results are not lower than 27 (according to the criterion offered by the author).

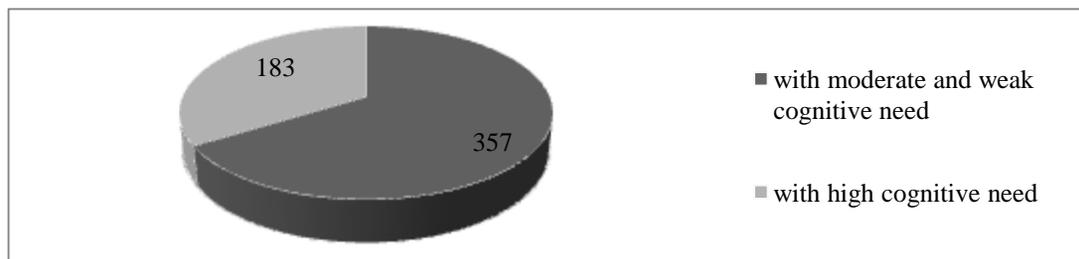


Figure 1. The research results of preschoolers' cognitive need (n=540)

The method of analyzing individual traits of imagination proved only 3% of preschool children (18 people) to have a high level of creativity.

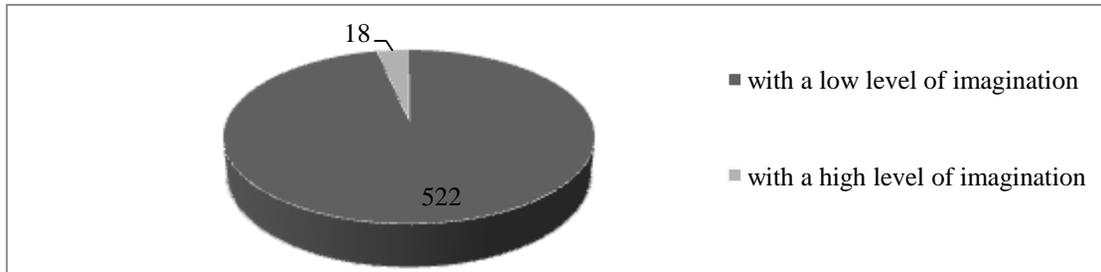


Figure 2. The research results of preschoolers' imagination (n=540)

The obtained data depict a low percentage of preschool children with a bright imagination and creativity. In addition to these diagnostic methods, we applied the method "Pattern of giftedness" by Savenkov which was conducted among children who demonstrated a high level of cognitive needs and creativity (2000).

The method allows to identify the child's propensity for success in a certain sphere (the author has identified 10 areas). Savenkov does not indicate the minimum score that would say what particular type of activity a child is predisposed to (2000). However Yurkevich suggests that the results in 11 points and more should be considered high (2018).

Based on this, 98 children out of 186 people (18% of the initial number) showed a high propensity for one or another type of activity. These are the children who demonstrate high cognitive needs and a propensity for a particular type of activity. Among them there are children with high rates of creativity. In our opinion, these children (98 preschoolers – 18% of the total number) can be regarded as preschoolers with signs of giftedness.

The diagnostic results enabled us to see the following inclinations of preschoolers to certain areas of behavior and activity.

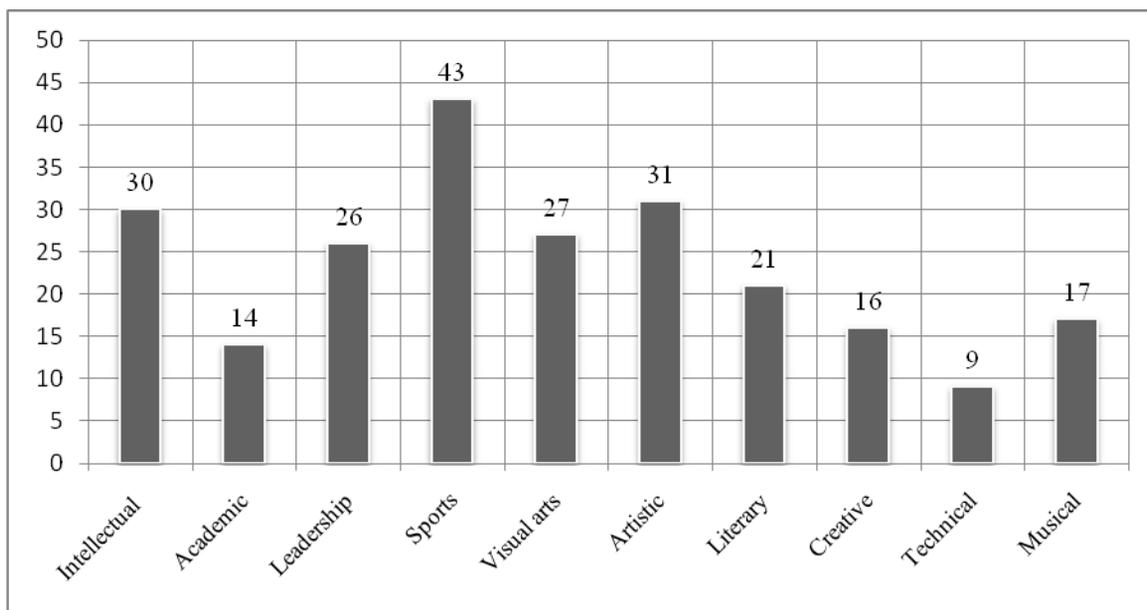


Figure 3. The testees' inclinations to specific areas of behavior and activity according to Savenkov's method

The children who had high cognitive needs and creativity (186 people) took part in the study of the peculiarities and difficulties of solving socialization problems.

It was this group of preschoolers that we covered in the process of studying features and difficulties of solving social-cultural tasks of socialization.

We conducted the research diagnosing the following indicators:

- awareness of the moral norms;
- independence;

- interests and hobbies.

We applied the technique "Incomplete situations" to study specific features of children's acceptance and awareness of the moral norms (Shchetinina, 2000).

Table 1. The diagnostic results based on "Incomplete situations" (n=186)

Level	Potentially gifted children	Control group
A high level of children's acceptance and awareness of the moral norms	40,5%	35%
A mid-level of children's acceptance and awareness of the moral norms	22%	16%
A low level of children's acceptance and awareness of the moral norms	0,5%	1%

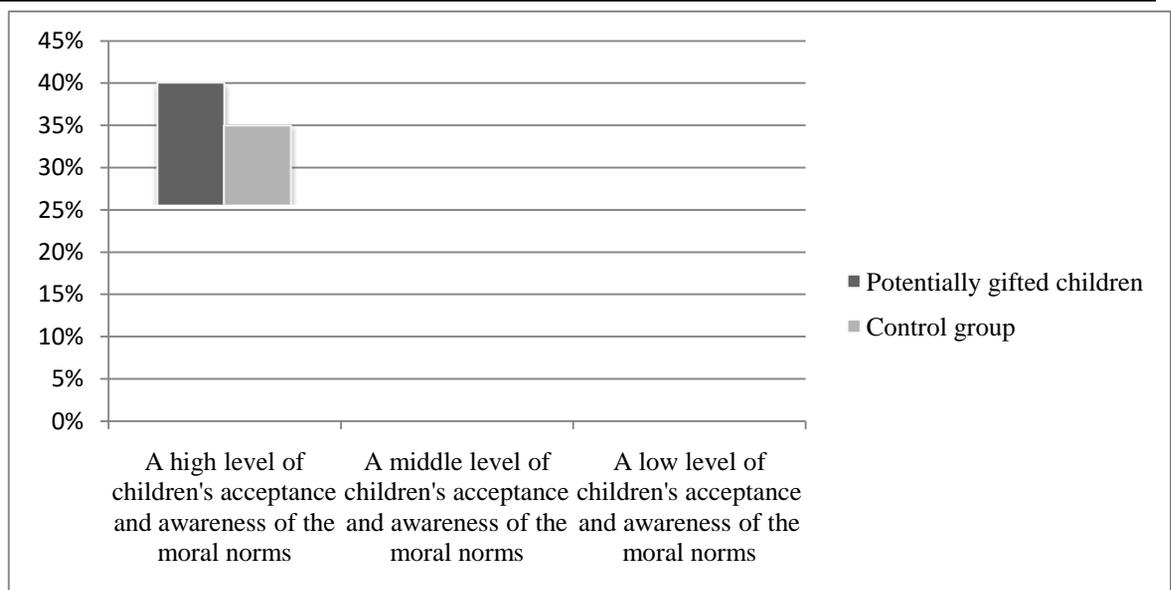


Figure 4. The diagnostic results based on "Incomplete situations" (n=186)

The results show little difference between the gifted children and their peers. However, the preschoolers with signs of giftedness demonstrate slightly higher rates in accepting social norms.

Shchetinina's technique "Pattern of independence" (2000) allows to see not only a level of a child's independence, but also need for it, which is seen in the degree of initiative, inclinations to a particular activity and a desire to be engaged in it when an external or internal goal of the activity is achieved.

Table 2. The diagnostic results of preschoolers' independence, n=186

Level	Potentially gifted children	Control group
A high level of independence	48%	39%
A middle level of independence	4%	9%
A low level of independence	-	-

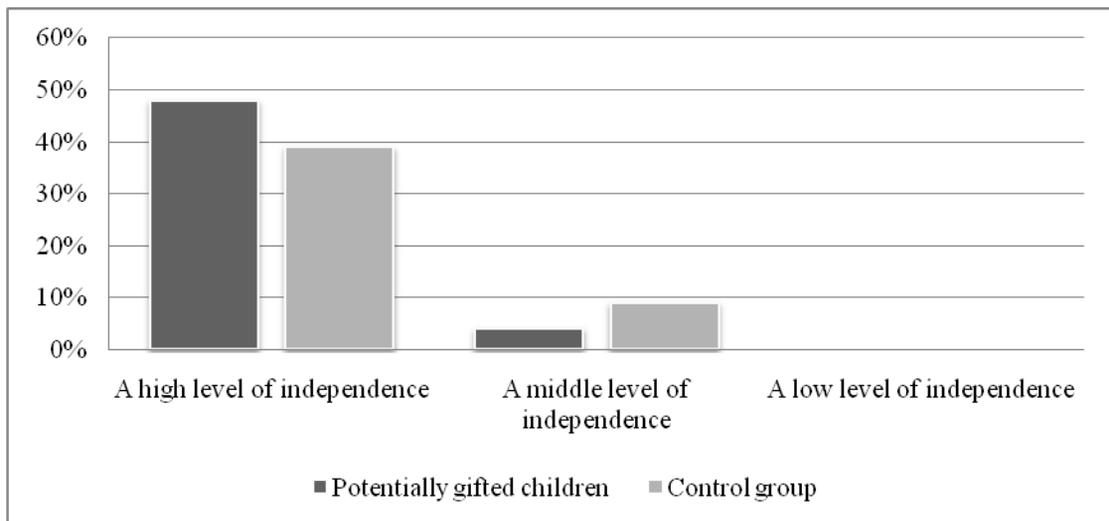


Figure 5. The diagnostic results of preschoolers' independence, n=186

The results demonstrate a high level of independence among all preschoolers, but potentially gifted children show a significantly higher level. This characteristic is considerable as the state of independence in a child is closely connected with such psychological traits as activity, initiative, and self-control.

The results of applying method "Pattern of Giftedness" by Savenkov were analyzed above.

The obtained data feature the following solutions of social-cultural tasks of socialization made by potentially gifted preschoolers:

- While solving the socialization tasks potentially gifted preschoolers show results that are close to the results of their peers. However, the results of potentially gifted preschoolers are higher if to diagnose the level of acceptance and awareness of the moral norms and to identify the level of independence. In the first case by 6%, in the second by 9 %.

- Potentially gifted preschoolers demonstrate a high level of independence, which can indicate their activity, motivation for activity and initiative.

- According to the results of Savenkov's method "Pattern of giftedness"(2000), it can be said that children at this age are most active in sports, arts, intellectual sphere, leadership, artistic activities and visual arts (in a descending order of values). Success of our children in the sports field is pleasing. Interestingly, the artistic sphere is one of the leading areas. However, this can be explained by the age characteristics of the older preschool age when children like to imitate, they still act spontaneously and with the appropriate assistance of pedagogues they can achieve serious success. The intellectual area takes the third place. We suppose that the hierarchy of areas depicting giftedness will change at other age stages.

Discussion

The analysis of the peculiarities of solving social-cultural problems of socialization by potentially gifted preschoolers enabled us to obtain curious and sometimes unexpected results. The obtained data and their analysis make it possible to formulate a number of recommendations how to organize psychological-pedagogical work with preschool children with signs of giftedness:

1. Diagnostics aimed at identifying potentially gifted preschoolers showed a low percentage of children who demonstrate creativity. Educational work in kindergartens and schools is initially targeted at developing a convergent way of thinking. However, creativity requires advancement and a possibility to be fulfilled, that is why in work with preschoolers it is vital to focus on development of divergent thinking for them to apply it in the process of solving tasks and studying.
2. It is important to create a safe and comfortable environment for preschoolers with signs of giftedness to develop properly, avoiding stress and shocks; a child should have opportunities to show initiative and independence.
3. Working with preschoolers with signs of giftedness, it is important to develop motivation of achievements in them. Motivation is formed and develops to a greater extent under direct or indirect influence of the child's environment, primarily of parents and pedagogues.
4. Psychological-pedagogical work in a preschool educational organization should create conditions for children's self-discovery and self-presentation to appear (successful and currently unsuccessful, obedient and naughty, active and shy). Abilities can be hidden and it is necessary to let them get disclosed.

Conclusion

The conducted research, aimed at studying children's cognitive needs and creativity, enabled us to detect 18% of preschoolers with signs of giftedness.

1. The analysis of the way preschool children with signs of giftedness solve social-cultural problems of socialization depicted specific features of independence, acceptance of moral norms and mastering certain activities.

2. Revealed peculiarities let us formulate psychological-pedagogical aspects of solving social-cultural socialization problems among preschoolers with signs of giftedness:

- The obtained results indicate that the majority of potentially gifted children accept the existing social norms and their adaptability. At the same time, it becomes important to learn how to present one's point of view, create conditions for self-realization.

- Potentially gifted preschoolers demonstrate a high level of independence, which may speak about their activity, motivation and initiative. It is practically proved that this category of children demonstrates a high level of independence in individual work, while work in pairs and in a group requires special attention of pedagogues.

- The activities in which potentially gifted preschoolers achieve the greatest success, in our opinion, can change their hierarchy with age. At the same time, it is vital to create conditions for potentials, abilities and social development to appear.

Thus, we have identified the specific features of solving the social-cultural block of socialization tasks by potentially gifted preschoolers. These peculiarities determine psychological- pedagogical aspects in working with this category of children. In our opinion, the issue is insufficiently regarded in modern kindergartens. The mentioned psychological-pedagogical aspects enable us to solve the problems of psychological and pedagogical assistance for potentially gifted preschoolers more effectively.

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