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## **GAME ACTIVITY AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

The development of emotional intelligence in primary school students is an essential part of their education, as it affects academic success, social interactions, and psychological well-being. At a young age, children are particularly receptive to emotional skills and best absorb them in a relaxed play-based format. Play allows children to freely express their feelings, explore their own emotional reactions, and better understand the emotions of others. Through play situations, students learn to show empathy, develop the ability to manage their own emotions, and find common ground with others [1, p. 74]. The use of play-based methods in the educational process creates favorable conditions for the emotional development, promotes a positive classroom atmosphere, and enhances children's ability to self-regulate and understand others.

The purpose is to study effective methods and techniques of play activity that contribute to the development of emotional intelligence in young students. The set of tasks also includes analyzing the impact of play techniques on children's ability to develop empathy, understand their own and others' emotions, and control their feelings in various situations.

Each stage of development corresponds to a specific primary type of activity. Play, as the main activity in preschool age, allows children to understand different aspects of life, the nature of adult relationships, and deepen their knowledge of the surrounding world. Through play, a child perceives reality. Play actions, assigned to specific roles, are illustrative in nature, giving meaning to interaction. An important element of play is rules, which enable children to experience the joy of following game conditions. In primary school age, the significance of play does not diminish, although its content and goals change: the number of rule-based and didactic games increases. In such games, children learn to follow rules, develop attention, motor skills, and the ability to concentrate – qualities that are especially important for successful learning in school [3, p. 35].

The development of emotional intelligence at an early school age is an important part of personality development, as emotions help children understand their role in society and interact with others. Through play, children internalize the value of harmonious relationships in social groups and society as a whole. Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize one's own and others' emotions, manage them, and understand others' motivations.

Role-playing during play activities can influence children's interests and, ultimately, their choice of future profession. The transition from kindergarten to school is an important period of social development, and the integration of play into the

educational process helps make this transition smoother and less stressful. Play not only increases interest in learning but also contributes to the development of new emotional qualities necessary for a child's successful growth [2, p. 131].

Victories and defeats in games are a significant part of a child's life. Play serves as a lens through which a child perceives the world and at the same time acts as a bridge between childhood and adulthood. A child's emotional state and mood largely depend on the results of the game: a loss can cause discouragement, loss of motivation, and disappointment, while a win inspires, boosts self-esteem, and instills confidence, motivating the child toward new achievements. The results of games, which are part of the educational process, can either encourage self-improvement or lead to discouragement and reluctance to continue learning.

It can be argued that a child's emotional world is enriched through participation in various games. While at early stages emotions are quite simple and concrete, they become more vivid and complex with age, often forming during play. For example, team games help children develop the ability to rejoice or worry not only for themselves but also for their team; victory brings joy and pride while also fostering compassion for opponents. A child gradually learns to recognize their emotions, establish connections between events and mood, and control their state – an invaluable skill in adulthood. For instance, a low result in a classroom game may bring tears, but the understanding that others might laugh helps the child restrain excessive emotional expression.

Thus, the diverse emotions a child experiences during play help them develop a rich and conscious emotional world. The child understands what triggers certain feelings, learns to cope with negative emotions, and appreciates joyful moments. The use of play in primary school ensures a smooth transition from kindergarten conditions to a formal learning environment. This provides the child with a comfortable adaptation to new conditions, reducing stress at the beginning of school life. Primary school also shapes students' individual activity styles, and games play a particularly important role in this process. Intellectual development and emotional state are crucial conditions influencing self-regulation in activities.

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