

**THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS
OF THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL COMPETENCE
IN SENIOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN
WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES**

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Abstract. The paper reveals the theoretical and practical aspects of the formation of social competence in senior preschool children with intellectual disabilities. In the course of the theoretical research different approaches to the definition of the concept of “social competence” and its structure are described. It is found out that one of the means of effective formation of social competence in children of the senior preschool age with intellectual disabilities is the role-playing game. During the research work, a comprehensive diagnostic methodology was developed, which was aimed at studying the levels and characteristics of social competence development in children of the senior preschool age with disorders in mental development, consisting of three units: social-motivational, social-cognitive, social-developmental. A set of test tasks was selected for each unit in order to assess the levels of development of highlighted indicators of structural components of social competence. The evaluation of the results of the diagnostic test was carried out according to a four-level system with developed criteria for high, sufficient, medium and initial levels. The obtained results of the ascertaining stage of the study indicated the need for searching effective correctional means for the affected components of social competence in senior preschool children with intellectual disabilities. Within the framework of our research, the role-playing games of social orientation have been selected and systematized, which are aimed at developing the interest of children with intellectual disabilities in activities,

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expanding the range of social knowledge (about themselves as a unit of society, a family as a microcosm, gender-social roles, social phenomena), skills and abilities (to fulfill social roles, to adhere to the rules of social behavior, formation of sanitary and hygienic skills as a social requirement for a person) and formation of social qualities of a person (verbal communication, independence, activity, emotional development, interaction with others, social regulation of behavior). The results of the molding stage of the study showed improvement of all indicators in the experimental group compared to the control group. The qualitative characteristic revealed that children of the experimental group began to show selective interest in the classes, learned to tell their name, surname and names of relatives, to define gender according to external characteristics and perform social roles in accordance with it. They have expanded the range of social holidays and phenomena, and improved social behavior skills. They have learned to build a simple dialogue and to focus on non-verbal means of communication (emotions), to demonstrate fidelity and goodwill in relationships with people; they have acquired autonomy, confidence and a higher level of activity. Children enjoyed participating in joint games and other collective forms of work, tried to control their behavior. Consequently, the theoretical analysis (theoretical aspect) and developed role-playing games of social orientation that had been introduced in the educational process of the institution of preschool education for children with intellectual disabilities (practical aspect) proved to be effective.

1. Introduction

At each stage of his life, a person acquires social knowledge and skills that influence his further socialization. One of the components of person's socialization is social competence, which needs development from preschool childhood and is associated with formation of appropriate behavior settings, value orientations, norms and patterns of human interaction with the environment. At the present stage of special education development, the issue of socialization of people with special educational needs, in particular, with violations of intellect, their full inclusion in public life on the basis of the acquisition of social experience remains relevant.

Formation of social competence in preschool children with intellectual disabilities occurs with considerable difficulties related to the specificity of

the violation and perception of such a child, impossibility of self-assimilation of social experience and its subsequent transfer into his own life.

Some aspects of this phenomenon are investigated in the works of Soviet (L. Vyhotskyi, M. Doktorovych, N. Morozova, M. Pevzner, S. Rubinstein et al.) and foreign (K. Gros, M. Makljen, D. Maichenbaum, J. Piaget, F. Frebel, R. Hishn et al.) scientists and teachers-practitioners.

Formation and development of social competence in children with disorders of psychophysical development of various categories was the subject of study in a number of works of Ukrainian scholars: with visual impairments (V. Kobylchenko, L. Nafikova, O. Telna et al.), with hearing impairments (S. Kulbida, O. Kruhlyk, L. Fomichova et al.), with delayed mental development (V. Bondar, M. Dmitriieva, T. Illiashenko, V. Nechiporenko, T. Sak, V. Syniov et al.), etc.).

M. Basov, D. Elkonin, O. Zaporozhets, D. Mendzherytska and others emphasized the importance of using the role-playing game as a means of gaining social experience.

Scientific-methodological works of A. Vysotska, S. Myronova, V. Syniov and others focus on the use of the role-playing game as a means for the formation and development of social competence in children with intellectual disabilities of different age groups, but in scientific sources there was no research on the use of these games in the comprehensive development of components of the social competence in senior preschoolers with intellectual disabilities which led to the choice of the subject of our study.

Therefore, the **purpose** of the study is to develop and test the effectiveness of the use of role-playing games as a means for the formation and development of social competence in senior preschool children with intellectual disabilities.

The objectives of the study are:

- 1) to analyze the problem of social competence in the theory of education;
- 2) to analyze the use of role-playing games as an effective means of forming social competence in preschool children with special educational needs;
- 3) to develop a methodology for studying the levels of social competence development in senior preschool children with intellectual disabilities;
- 4) to prove the effectiveness of using role-playing games in the formation and development of social competence in senior preschool children with intellectual disabilities.

2. Theoretical analysis of the problem of social competence in the theory of education

In reference literature competence is defined as a range of issues on which the person has knowledge, experience or ability to perform any tasks. Competence can also be considered as an opportunity to establish relationships between knowledge and the situation or, more broadly, the ability to go through the procedure in order to solve a problem. We speak about competence when it is necessary to determine the educational result, which is manifested in the readiness for a certain activity or such a form of combinations of knowledge and skills that allow to set and achieve the appropriate goal.

One of the structural components of competence in Western European countries is social competence, i.e. the ability to be responsible, active, and ready for cooperation. This concept implies openness to the world and responsibility for the environment, the ability to work in a team (covering the traditional concept of working ethics) and the ability to communicate. Such an understanding of competence can be specified as the ability to act in a society taking into account the positions of other people;

For us, it is important to consider in detail the notion of social competence, which D. Maichenbaum relates to the implementation of a social role, with perception of himself and another, effective communication and behavior in social situations [20]. According to M. Shure, social competence should be considered in the light of how people behave, argue, interact, as well as solve a problem that influences their successful adaptation in society [21].

H. Bilytska understands social competence as a personality trait, which has reached a higher level of awareness of social problems and ways of interaction with society. In her studies, H. Bilytska draws attention to the fact that the level of formation of social competence in the individual depends on the internal correlation of the processes of awareness of social reality and value orientations towards social phenomena [2].

In psychological literature, social competence is associated with communicative abilities and skills, with individual characteristics and behaviors that make a person capable of building social relationships successfully. It is emphasized that a person is socially competent if he can behave properly in one or another situation. Social competence includes the ability of a person to change quickly and flexibly his behavior in accordance with the requirements of life situations [19].

In his studies A. Petrov considers social competence as a component of professional competence of the teacher, which ensures realization of various social positions that are significant for every modern person [14].

In German professional and social pedagogy, social competence is considered as the key qualification required in any profession. In this sense “social” refers to its orientation on interpersonal relations, and “competence” provides a qualitative assessment. In professional activity, social competence manifests itself as the ability to interact successfully with leaders and colleagues in social situations, in the personal, professional and general human contexts – as the ability to act independently, predictably and with appropriate benefit. Abilities and qualities associated with the concept of “social competence” include collegiality, openness, honesty, empathy, contact, initiative, social responsibility, diligence, communicability, self-confidence, discipline, sensitivity, criticality, self-reflection [20].

V. Miasnykov and N. Naidionova, in their studies, define social competence as “determining political and activity correctness in the social field, protection of their own rights and interests. Independence in the social aspect is the ability of a person to identify, assess, and protect sources of life and law, readiness for reasonable restrictions. Accordingly, a person must be able to: work individually and in groups; analyze the situation; be prepared to cooperate and participate in various leadership and passive roles in the group; take part in democratic organizations; resolve conflicts; follow the rules of joint operation; tolerate the social and cultural differences” [13, p. 150].

In our opinion, the most concise definition of social competence was given by H. Selevko, who noted that social competence means to be able to live and work with people, with relatives, in the collective, in the team [15].

In domestic and foreign studies a significant place is given to considering the structure of social competence. According to P. Wellhofer, social competence covers the following components: motivation, social intelligence, ability to give moral judgment, interactivity, communication, social interests, cognitive processes of implementation, self-confidence, compassion, social perception, etc. [22]. In scientific-methodological works it is determined that social competence should include such abilities and qualities as contact, ability to negotiate, achieve the set goals, ability to adapt and study, personal initiative, readiness to assume responsibility.

D. Maichenbaum in the structure of social competence includes the system of interests of the individual, cognitive processes and human behavior, and these components are in continuous interaction with each other and with the social environment. Important components of social competence, in his opinion, are empathy, perceptual and communicative skills, etc. [20].

S. Honcharov in the structure of social competence distinguishes the following components:

- 1) axiological, which involves a hierarchy of the main vital values;
- 2) epistemological, which includes social knowledge, necessary for the interaction of man with himself and with other people, in order to optimally solve socially significant problems;
- 3) subjective, that is, readiness for self-determination and self-government, self-activity and creativity, and to be responsible for the received and done;
- 4) praxiological (technological) provides for the ability to implement humanitarian and social technologies and communications in the system of social norms, institutions and relations [5].

In the studies of S. Bakhtieieva the following structural components of social competence are described: individual-personal, sociological, life-futurological. S. Krasnokutskaya describes two structural components of social competence: content-activity and personal. The content-activity component is represented by a balanced combination of social knowledge, skills and abilities, and personal component includes formed position of a person, his/her awareness of the need for acquiring social knowledge for the future independent life [11].

According to N. Kalinina, the structure of social competence also consists of two components: cognitive-behavioral and motivational-personal. Cognitive-behavioral includes: social intelligence (social knowledge, their structuring, adequacy), social skills, social behavior skills, which include productive techniques for performing socially meaningful activities, ability to interact effectively, and skills of constructive behavior in difficult life situations. The motivational-personal component is represented by the motives and values of self-realization in society (motives of achievement, self-realization in socially meaningful activity, meaningfulness of life), as well as personal qualities that ensure self-realization of the personality [10].

T. Samsonova in the structure of social competence, in addition to the value and executive-activity components, includes reflexive. The author motivates it by the fact that the decision to overcome social problems requires a constant self-reflection of a person that promotes an adequate perception by the personality of himself and his actions. She emphasizes the need for people to perceive and understand each other in communication, that is, communicative reflection, as well as the vision of the prospect, the forecast of development of the social situation and the analysis of the already completed event [17].

A common feature of all the studies is that social competence is an integrative quality of the individual, which enables him to perform successfully a social role and to carry out vital activity in a society, harmoniously and effectively combining his own positions and interests with other members of society. We believe that formation of social competence is also necessary for persons with special needs for successful self-determination in the world of labour, continuous education, interpersonal and social relations.

With the rapid changes taking place in modern society, the problem of socializing children of preschool age with special educational needs is acute. An important task of its solution is formation of social competence in children with violations of psychophysical development in accessible types of children's activities.

3. Role-playing games as an effectively means of social competence formation in preschool children with special educational needs

Social competence is associated with peculiarities of development of appropriate behavioral settings, value orientations, norms and patterns of interaction of a person with environment, formed in the leading activities of the corresponding age and is one of the indicators of personal maturity. The leading activity of children of preschool age is game, in which the ways of understanding reality, gaining social experience are reflected. A special place is given to role-playing games, which are an effective means of shaping the social competence of children of preschool age with intellectual disabilities, lay a social motive and allow the child to find his place in society. Modern practice proves that without specially organized game activity preschoolers with intellectual disabilities cannot independently acquire social skills, form a social motive and interact with peers.

Formation of social competence in children with intellectual disabilities is manifested in the difficulties of their socialization, which involves the process of assimilating individual patterns of behavior, psychological settings, social norms and values, knowledge and skills that allow successful functioning in society [1]. Solving this task requires overcoming three groups of problems. H. Androsova in the study of the social development of children with disabilities suggested to define the qualities of the personality that impede social development of children in the context of “I and self-worth”, “I and you”, “I and the world”. The first group includes inadequacy of self-esteem, lack of a stable hierarchy of motives, a leading type of activity and failure to focus on activities. The second group includes personal characteristics that are related to interpersonal communication and the specifics of behavior manifestations. The third group combines personal and professional orientation, peculiarities of representations about the surrounding world and concepts of value orientations [1].

According to researchers B. Bondar, Yu. Kartava, S. Myronova, V. Syniov and others, for the acquisition of social competence by children with intellectual disabilities, it is important to stay from an early age in a social environment, since in isolation they cannot gain a certain social experience. Necessary for socialization of children with intellectual disabilities is a socializing environment, communication with parents and peers, the immediate environment, and especially – involving them in various activities. In this aspect, it is important to use the socio-cultural games in work with preschoolers with violations of intellectual development. Socio-cultural games are defined as a method of reproduction and learning of social experience, fixed in socially fixed ways of carrying out subject actions and playing social-role situations. A special place among them belongs to role-playing games, in which from the very beginning a social motive is laid down and they are an effective means of forming and developing social competence not only in preschool children with a developmental norm, but also in preschool children with intellectual disabilities.

In our opinion, formation of social competence is relevant for senior preschool children with mental development disorders and involves development of a system of social motives, skills of joint activity, communication, controlling their behavior, reflection skills. In this context it is necessary to create pedagogical conditions that allow using role-playing games, in particular their corrective potential. The main work on

the formation of social competence in children with intellectual disabilities is conducted under the guidance of a teacher-defectologist in the process of group and individual classes with the use of a role-playing game, during which children acquire knowledge, experience about the activities and relationships of people, rules of social behavior and interaction.

4. Methodology for studying the levels of social competence development in senior preschool children with intellectual disabilities

In order to form a certain level of social competence of children of the senior preschool age with intellectual disabilities, we have introduced into the practice of special preschool education institutions the system of role-playing games aimed at formation of the components of social competence. In the experiment took part 102 children of the senior preschool age with intellectual disabilities. During the molding stage of the study, they were divided into control and experimental groups of 51 children in each. The bases of the study were institutions of preschool education in Ukraine: CE Sumy Special Rehabilitation Educational Complex: “Secondary School of the I Stage – Preschool Education Institution № 34”, Sumy; Communal organization (institution, establishment) “Shostka preschool education institution (nursery school) № 9 “Desnianochka” of Shostka city council of Sumy region of Shostka; Poltava preschool education institution (nursery school) of combined type № 41 “Hnizdechko”, Poltava; CE “Pryluky Educational and Rehabilitation Center” of Chernihiv Regional State Administration of Pryluky.

During the research, we had developed a comprehensive methodology for studying the levels and characteristics of social competence development, consisting of three units.

The first unit – social-motivational, is aimed at revealing interest in the activities of preschoolers with intellectual disabilities.

The second unit – social-cognitive, is aimed at studying formation of social knowledge, skills and abilities according to the following indicators: 1) knowledge of: oneself as a unit of society, the family as a microcosm, sexual and social roles, social phenomena; 2) the ability to perform social roles, to adhere to the rules of social behavior; 3) formation of sanitary-hygienic skills as a social requirement for a person.

The third unit – social-developmental, is aimed at the study of the levels and characteristics of the individual’s social qualities development

according to the following indicators: verbal communication, independence, activity, emotional development, interaction with others, social regulation of behavior.

Evaluation of research results was carried out according to a four-level system with developed criteria for high, sufficient, medium and initial levels. Finding of the generalized levels of social competence development for each unit of diagnostic tasks took place in the form of arithmetic mean, followed by a comparative analysis of the results of the control and experimental groups.

5. Results of the study of the levels of social competence development in children of experimental and control groups

The results of ascertaining stage of the study have shown that social competence in children of the senior preschool age with intellectual disabilities is almost at low level. Children did not show interest in activities, they lacked knowledge about themselves, their relatives, social phenomena and ability to perform social roles. They avoided contact both with strangers and acquaintances, they did not use emotions as a means of non-verbal communication, there were manifestations of introversion and even autism, in various social situations they were helpless, it was difficult for them to regulate their behavior in society.

The worst developed is knowledge of the family, sexual and social roles, social phenomena and the ability to perform social roles, as well as such qualities as verbal communication, autonomy, emotional development, regulation of behavior in society, with some focus on activities that are interesting for them. Therefore, taking into account the revealed violations and deficiencies in the development of the phenomenon under study, we have developed and systematized role-playing games aimed at overcoming identified shortcomings in each component of social competence.

The results of the molding stage of the study have shown improvement of all indicators in the experimental group compared to the control group. Thus, the data of implementation of the first unit of diagnostic tasks – “social-motivational” – have shown that the difference at the initial level between EG and CG was 18% (EG – 10%, CG – 28%), at the medium – 5% (EG – 57% of CG – 52%), at the sufficient level – 13% (EG – 33%, CG – 20%) in favor of EG. The high level was not found in any group, which was 0% (EG 0%, CG – 0%).

The improvement of the results of the first task unit was facilitated by introduction the following Ukrainian games in the educational process: “Getting to Know the Teddy Bear”, “Teddy Bear Brings Gifts”, “Welcome a Guest”, “Little Kitten”, “Who Does What?”, “The Magic Pointer”, “TVset”, “New story of Kolobok”, etc. After introducing these games to preschoolers with intellectual disabilities of the experimental group, compared to the control group, a selective interest in classes, games and toys began to appear, they began to carry out independently previously assimilated subject-game actions, to participate in group activities.

The results of research of the second unit of diagnostic tasks – “social-cognitive” – have shown positive changes in all components of social competence. The difference in the levels of knowledge *“about themselves as a unit of society”* has shown that in children of EG compared to CG at the initial level it constituted 11% (EG – 8%, CG – 19%), at medium – 9% (EG – 86%, CG – 77%), at sufficient – 2% (CG – 4%, EG – 6%). The high level was not recorded in both groups, which was 0% (EG – 0%, CG – 0%). Improvement of this indicator was facilitated by introduction into the educational process of the experimental group of the following role-playing games: “Breeze whispers the leaves’ names”, “Let’s get acquainted!”, “Newbie”, “Let’s get acquainted with the teddy bear”, “Welcome a Guest”, “Little Kitten”, etc.

Identifying the levels of knowledge of preschool children with a mental retardation *“about the family as a micro-society”* has revealed 34% difference between the EG and the CG in favor of the experimental group at the initial level (EG – 25%, CG – 59%), 17% – at the medium (EG – 49%, CG – 32%), and sufficient (EG – 26%, CG – 9%). The high level remained unchanged with 0% difference (EG – 0%, CG – 0%). In order to improve the results the following role-playing games were used: “Daughters and mothers”, “Katrusia woke up”, “Doll was brought to the kindergarten”, “Let’s give Katrusia tea”, “Take the doll for a walk”, “Tania Doll’s Birthday”, “Doll makes a visit”, etc.

The study of peculiarities of representations of preschoolers with intellectual disabilities *about sexual and social roles* has proved that at the initial level, the difference between EG and KG was 32% (EG – 26%, CG – 58%), at medium – 15% (EG – 47%, CG – 32%), at sufficient – 17% (EG – 27%, CG – 10%). There was no high level in EG and CG, its difference was 0% (EG – 0%, CG – 0%). The improvement of this

indicator is due to the use of the following role-playing games: “Girls are preparing dinner, boys are repairing furniture”, “Who does what?”, “One day from family life”, “Let’s put a doll to sleep”, “Let’s make doll a haircut”, “Family buy food”, “We prepare dinner together”, etc.

The analysis of the results of the formation of knowledge of preschoolers with mental retardation *about social phenomena* (New Year, Birthday, Easter, March 8, etc.) has shown a positive trend in the experimental group, the difference between EG and CG at the initial level was 25% (EG – 36%, CG – 61%), at medium – 24% (EG – 51%, CG – 27%), at sufficient – 12% (EG – 24%, CG – 12%), at high – 0% (EG – 0%, CG – 0%). This positive dynamics is connected with introduction into practice of such role-playing games as: “Good Elves”, “Petryk’s Birthday”, “Tanya Dolls’ Birthday”, “Festive Supper”, “Let’s decorate the Christmas tree for the holiday”, “We’re going to grandmother’s birthday party”, “Gift for Mom”, etc.

The results of the test for development of the *ability to perform social roles* have shown a 31% difference between the EG and the CG at the initial levels (EG – 43%, CG – 74%) in favor of the first, 23% at the medium (EG – 49%, CG – 26%), 8% – at the sufficient level (EG – 8%, CG – 0%), 0% – at the high level (EG – 0%, CG – 0%). The positive changes, noted at this stage in the experimental group, are related to the introduction of a number of role-playing games: “Hospital”, “Chemist’s shop”, “Shop”, “Bus”, “Polyclinic”, “Café”, “Visit to the doctor”, etc.

In the study of behavior of children with mental retardation *in the community*, the following difference was found among the representatives of the EG and the CG: at the initial level – 24% (EG – 24%, CG – 48%), at the medium level – 18% (EG – 67% CG – 49%), at the sufficient level – 7% (EG – 10%, CG – 3%). The difference between EG and CG was not found at the high level – 0% (EG – 0%, CG – 0%). Positive results in the experimental group have been revealed due to the use of such role-playing games: “In the shop”, “At the hairdressing salon”, “In the café”, “In the polyclinic”, “Bus”, “Library”, “Mail”, etc.

The results of the research on *sanitary and hygiene skills* have shown that the difference between the EG and the CG was 18% at the initial level (EG – 16%, CG – 34%), 8% – at the medium level (EG – 59%, CG – 51%), 10% – at the sufficient level (EG – 25%, CG – 15%), 0% – at the high level (EG – 0%, CG – 0%). Improvements within this indicator are associated with introducing in the experimental group of such games as: “Washing of

doll's clothes”, “We bathe Tania doll”, “Katrusia woke up”, “Tania doll's morning”, “Our Petryk came home”, “Doll needs to go to the toilet”, etc.

The generalized results of the second unit of diagnostic tasks have shown the difference between EG and CG: at the initial level – 26,6% (EG – 23,9%, CG – 50,4%), at the medium level – 16,3% (EG – 58,4%, CG – 42,0%), at the sufficient level – 12,0% (EG – 19,3%, CG – 7,3%). The high level remained unchanged with the difference of 0%. Qualitative analysis has shown that after introducing role-playing games into the educational process of preschoolers with intellectual disabilities in the experimental group, in contrast to the control group, the knowledge of themselves and their family was formed, the children learned to tell their name, surname and names of relatives; they also learned to orient in sex according to external characteristics, to perform social roles in accordance with it; they expanded the range of social holidays and phenomena; skills of social behavior improved, although sometimes the children demanded stimulation by the teacher; they mastered the majority of sanitary-hygienic skills, sometimes needed reminders of an adult.

The results of the third unit of diagnostic tasks – “social-developmental” – have shown positive changes in all its indicators. Evaluation of the levels of *verbal communication* has shown 5% difference between EG and CG at the initial level in favor of the experimental group (EG – 12%, CG – 17%), 14% – at the medium level (EG – 53%, CG – 67%), 12% – at the sufficient level (EG – 25%, CG – 13%), 7% – at the high level (EG – 10%, CG – 3%). The positive dynamics at this stage is a result of introduction of such role-playing games in the experimental group as: “Who Wakes Better?”, “Mail”, “Library”, “How does elf feel?”, “Zoo”, “School”, “Street”, etc.

Comparing the data of the levels of *independence* of preschool children with intellectual disabilities, there was a marked difference between the EG and CG within the initial level – 20% (EG – 24%, CG – 44%), at the medium level – 6% (EG – 53%, CG – 47%), at the sufficient level – 14% (EG – 23%, CG – 9%), at the high level – 0% (EG – 0%, CG – 0%). Improvement of the results was facilitated by the use in the experimental group of such role-playing games as “Let's treat a guest”, “Grandma got sick”, “We are laying the table”, “In search of treasures”, “Products on the list”, “Doll is going on a journey”, “Household duties” etc.

According to the measurements of *activity* development in preschoolers with mental retardation of EG and CG, 11% difference was observed at the

initial level (EG – 6%, CG – 17%), 12% – at the medium level (EG – 47%; CG – 59%), 15% – at the sufficient level (EG – 39%, CG – 24%) and 8% – at the high level (EG – 8%, CG – 0%). The positive trend in the experimental group is related to the use of such role-playing games as: “Bring a doll for a walk”, “A long-awaited meeting”, “Newbie”, “Teddy Bear brings presents”, “How was I lost?”, “Find the same as you are”, “Squirrel invites to the party”, etc.

Study of the *emotional development* of preschool children with intellectual disabilities has revealed 25% difference between EG and CG at the initial level (EG – 33%, CG – 58%), 17% – at the medium level (EG – 51%, CG – 34%), 6% – at the sufficient level (EG – 16%, CG – 10%). At a high level, the difference between EG and CG was 0% (EG – 0%, CG – 0%). The positive changes in the experimental group are related to the introduction of role-playing games: “Offended cat”, “I have a new doll”, “Birds have a painful wing – show pity for the bird”, “How was I lost”, “Who is better to wake up”, “Gnomes-twins”, “No need to cry”, etc.

The study of the ability of preschool children with intellectual disabilities to *interact with others* has revealed significant changes between representatives of EG and CG in favor of the experimental group, as evidenced by this difference: 5% – at the initial level (EG – 20%, CG – 25%), 10% – at the medium level (EG – 51%, CG – 61%), 15% – at the sufficient level (EG – 29%, CG – 14%), 0% – at the high level (EG – 0%, CG – 0%). The development of the ability to interact with others is associated with the use of such role-playing games in the experimental group: “No need to cry”, “Wanted!”, “Clock”, “Good mood”, “Fairy and Assistants”, “We are builders”, “Wind and leaves” and others.

According to the results of the analysis of the *social regulation* of the behavior of preschool children with intellectual disabilities in everyday situations, the following difference was found between participants in the EG and the CG: at the initial level – 14% (EG – 29%, CG – 43%), at the medium level – 8% (EG – 53%, CG – 45%), at the sufficient level – 6% (EG – 18%, CG – 12%), at the high level – 0% (EG – 0%, CG – 0%). Improvement in the experimental group of the investigated indicator is associated with application of the practice of such games as: “Shop”, “Hairdressing salon”, “Street”, “Traffic light”, “Welcome to the table”, “How to give and how to receive gifts”, “Telephone conversation”, etc.

Implementation of the third unit of diagnostic tasks showed positive changes in all the studied indicators in the experimental group in comparison

with the control with 12,8% difference at the initial level (EG – 21,2%, CG – 34,0%), 0,8% – at the medium level (EG – 51,3%, CG – 52,2%), 11,3% – at the sufficient level (EG – 25,0%, CG – 13,7%), 2,8% – at the high level (EG – 3,3%, CG – 0,5%).

Qualitative characteristic of the studied indicators according to the third unit of diagnostic tasks has revealed that children of the experimental group became more selective in establishing social contacts, could communicate; learned to build a simple dialogue and to focus on non-verbal means of communication (emotions); in interaction with people they manifested fidelity and benevolence, sometimes there were aggressive reactions to inadequate actions of others in relation to them. Children gained independence, confidence and a higher level of activity; they were pleased to participate in joint games and other collective forms of work, they tried to control their behavior.

6. Conclusions

Theoretical analysis has shown considerable interest of Ukrainian and foreign researchers in the issue of formation of social competence in general and special education. It is determined that role-playing game is an effective means of forming social competence in children of the senior preschool age with intellectual disabilities.

Results of the ascertaining stage of the study according to the developed three-unit diagnostic methodology have revealed underdevelopment of the studied components of social competence in senior preschool children with intellectual disabilities and the need for effective measures of corrective impact.

Within the framework of the study, the role-playing games of social orientation were selected and systematized, which were aimed at developing the interest of children with intellectual disabilities in activities, expanding the range of social knowledge, abilities and skills, and formation of social qualities.

Results of the molding stage of the research have shown improvement of quantitative and qualitative indicators in the experimental group compared to the control group.

Consequently, the theoretical analysis (theoretical aspect) and developed role-playing games of social orientation that had been introduced in the educational process of the institution of preschool education for children with intellectual disabilities (practical aspect) proved to be effective.

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