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Child Personality Development at the Stage of Preschool and Primary School Age as a Meaningful Reference Point of Continuous Professional Development of a Teacher

Tamara T. Shchelina*

Lobachevsky State University of Nizhny Novgorod (Arzamas branch), Arzamas, Russia

Abstract

The problem of providing the continuity of psychological and social development of children at the stage of transition from kindergarten to primary school needs the reorientation of continuous education programs of pre-school and primary education teachers with an emphasis on improving their psychological and pedagogical competence concerning to provide child's personality development and socialization. The aim of the research is to develop profound and technological support of professional development programs for pre-school and primary education teachers based on the analysis of their psychological and pedagogical competence and readiness to implement the continuity of preschool and primary education during the children's preparation and subsequent adaptation to school. In the study the methods of theoretical analysis of scientific and methodological literature on the problem, questioning, survey, designing, modeling and pedagogical situations' analysis and experiment are used. The article presents the analysis of the results of the survey and questioning the teachers attending development courses, characterizing the essential understanding the question of continuity of preschool and primary education, the difficulties of didactic, organizational, methodological, psychologic and pedagogical plan. The results are the basis for designing the content and development of technological support for the implementation of training programs for pre-school and primary school education teachers. The program is based on the teachers' understanding and subsequent use of the interrelationship between the children development and socialization, starting from infancy to primary school period and during the period of education, including preparation for the transition to basic education. The chosen strategy of creating the program is due to the fact that the formation and development of educational activity as leading and independent is based on initiative, independence, creativity, curiosity, arbitrariness, formed in previous periods.

Key words: preschool childhood, preschool educational institution, primary school, primary school, teachers continuous professional development.

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* Corresponding author. E-mail address: arz65@mail.ru

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Introduction

1.1. Relevance of the study

The problem of teachers' continuous education and development in modern conditions acquires a special psychological representation in connection with the peculiarities of the nature of the subject and the process of the professional activity. The subject of the teacher's activity is a person who is formed and develops through internal refraction of the effects of the surrounding reality, which emphasizes the deep meaning of self-knowledge and self-consciousness, self-determination, self-realization and self-affirmation of a growing person. The process of influence and interaction of the teacher, the teacher with the child is largely due to the teachers' ability to understand adequately the features of the personalities of their pupils, to predict and, if necessary, adjust the possible options for development, to neutralize the negative consequences.

On the one hand, it means an initially unfinished result of professional activity, flexibility and constant search for optimal, effective strategies and ways of influencing and interacting with children, their parents and people around. On the other hand, this feature of the professional activity suggests that the personality, culture (general, personal and professional) and the value-content, as well as pace should be ahead of the nature and level of the social environment development.

The appeal to the personality of the teacher in the context of the continuous education from such positions historically originates from the first years of the Soviet school formation (Lunacharsky, 1924), developed the 30th (Makarenko, 2018), 50th and 60th (Sukhomlinsky, 1981) years of the XX century. Active development is carried out by Soviet scientists in 1986-1990 ("Teacher of the Soviet school" research program by Slastenin, Isaev, & Shiyanov, 2013). The direction towards the system-integral approach to the personality of the teacher and its development process was adopted in 1988 at "the Concept of pedagogical education" All-Union Congress of national education specialists aimed at its continuity is fixed.

Thirty years that passed since the adoption of the concept which influenced the situation of development of the education system, professional activity and personality of the teacher, his or her status in society and among students significantly. The modern teacher is working in terms of reduced social and financial status, the backlog of system of training and methodological equipment from the rapidly changing social order in education, qualitative changes in the psychology of childhood and parenthood. The current situation is particularly acute actualizes the problem of continuous education of the teacher from the standpoint of the development of his or her personality not only as the main means of professional activity, but also the most important tool for maintaining psychological and physical health, prevention of emotional burnout and professional and personal deformities.

1.2. Modern trend

The problem of continuing education of the teacher is most acutely highlighted in modern conditions in connection with several circumstances and signals the increasing need of teachers in

knowledge of the psychology of different categories of children, ways of constructive interaction with colleagues, students, parents, representatives of social partnership organizations, Supervisory and other structures.

Firstly, the rapid democratization of education, ensuring access to and equal opportunities for quality education has led to the emergence in mass schools of different categories of students (children with disabilities, migrant children, with behavioural disorders, with various disabilities and mental development disorders, etc.), requiring special conditions for the organization of training, professional assistance of various specialists (Shchelina, 2012). In the conditions of unpreparedness and unpreparedness of the school to the necessary competent organization of pedagogical activity (in fact – to correctional (Mudrik, 2003) education) revealed the problem of experiencing teachers of professional incompetence and personal inferiority.

Secondly, the increase of requirements to the organization and results of the activities of the teacher in the absence of methodical and psychological help and support, a constant feeling of insecurity from the state and from the immediate direction of create the prerequisites to emotional burnout (Zborovskaya, 2001; Formanyuk, 1994; Pak, 2016), as well as threats to psychological safety and health of the teacher (Baev, 2006).

Thirdly, the significantly changed psychology and social situation of the development of modern childhood (Feldstein, 2011; Boyakova, 2011) contributed to the crisis in the minds of teachers, the search for new meanings and values of professional activity and personal and professional development (Mitina, 2004; Mitina & Efimova, 2003).

As shown by content analysis of issues identified in the basis of lack of psychological and pedagogical competence of teachers who are forced today, both empirically learn the realities of other psychological characteristics of today's children and to choose the method of trial and error acceptable professional activities and interaction.

Preschool and primary education teachers were the first to experience the difficulties of working in the new conditions. By the mid-1990s, and in the early 2000s steadily went to kindergarten and primary school unfamiliar to teachers children (Shchelina, 2011) with the underdevelopment of the internal plan of action and a reduced level of curiosity and imagination, lack of social competence, helplessness in relations with peers, the inability to resolve simple conflicts. Fixed psychologists by 2010 the low level of communicative competence, including the incompleteness of the explanation of communication, collaboration and cooperation have a significant proportion of children and adolescents, has led to the impoverishment and limitation of communication of children with peers. There was an increase in the number of children with emotional problems, with manifestations of emotional disorders (anxiety, affective tension, insecurity, helplessness) (Feldstein, 2011). The situation is aggravated by the growth of children who have not learned to speak by the age of 3, who cannot play, many are not developed motor skills. In these circumstances, the problem of ensuring the continuity of psychological and social development of the child at the stage of transition from kindergarten to primary school necessitates the reorientation of programs of continuous education of teachers of preschool and primary education with an emphasis on improving their psychological and pedagogical competence in ensuring the development of the child's personality and its socialization.

Methods

Purpose of the research

The purpose of the study: based on the analysis of psychological and pedagogical competence and readiness of educators and teachers to implement the continuity of preschool and primary education in the period of preparation and subsequent adaptation of children to school to develop a meaningful and technological support of the program of professional development of teachers of pre-school and primary school.

Methods

The study used the following methods: theoretical (analysis of scientific and methodological literature on the problem, design), empirical (questioning, survey, observation), pedagogical experiment using modeling and analysis of pedagogical situations, elements of training and role-playing, methods of quantitative and qualitative data processing.

The experimental base of the research

Experimental base of research: Center of additional professional education and advanced training of Arzamas branch of the national University. N. So. Lobachevsky. The study for the period from 2009 to 2019 was attended by about 2000 preschool and primary education teachers of the Nizhny Novgorod region.

Stages

The study was conducted in three stages. At the first stage (2009 – 2011) the formulation and scientific understanding of the problem, the study of psychological and pedagogical literature, the development of the research program, the definition of the experimental base, the selection and testing of diagnostic tools were carried out.

During the second phase (2012 – 2015) the collection and analysis of the empirical data, the concept of training programmes, tested in separate fragments, corrected, completed the design was conducted.

At the third stage (2016 – 2019) the program of professional development of teachers, collection, processing, analysis and discussion of the results was carried out.

Results

Programme's structure and content

The program of training teachers of preschool and primary education to ensure the continuity of psychological and social development of the child at the stage of transition from kindergarten to primary school is designed to improve the psychological and pedagogical competence of teachers and educators in the field of personal development of the modern child and his socialization.

The main objectives of the developed training program:

- expanding the horizons of teachers about the trends and problems of development of preschool and general education, training and professional development of teachers;
- updating and supplementing the knowledge of teachers and educators about the qualitative changes in the psychology of modern childhood, their causes and features of the transition from kindergarten to primary school;
- awareness of the essence and importance of the problem of continuity of psychological and social development of the child of preschool and primary school age in terms of qualitative changes in the psychology of childhood and the functioning of the system of national education;

- development of the basic ideas of system, personal and activity approaches in the modern practice of education and their implementation in the methodology and technologies of the educational process;

- understanding and implementing a developmental and educational potential of the communication game, the subject-practical activities in the preparation of the child to the school and its further successful socialization;

- awareness of the role and capabilities of the teacher in improving the psychological and educational literacy of parents, psychological assistance to children;

- training in productive technologies of professional interaction of the teacher in various situations of communication with colleagues, parents, pupils;

- updating the resources of personal and professional development of teachers, promoting the prevention of their emotional burnout in the changing conditions of professional activity.

The total amount of 108 hours, 80 of them involve classroom classes, 28 hours are allocated for the development of the teacher and the initial testing of their own methodological developments.

In accordance with the purpose and objectives of the program, the main sections (topics) reveal:

- tendencies and problems of modern preschool and general education development, teachers' professional training and advanced training in the context of implementation of Federal state educational standards of preschool and primary General education;

- the essence and objectives of ensuring the continuity of preschool and primary education in the context of ensuring positive development and successful socialization of the child;

- analysis of the problems of development and education of the child's personality at the stage of transition "preschool childhood – primary school age" in terms of qualitative changes in the psychology of modern childhood and the development of the education system;

- the relationship between the results of development and socialization of the child, from infancy to primary school and during the period of study in it, including preparation for the transition to the main link;

- developing and educational potential of communication, games, subject-practical activities in the preparation of the child for school and successful socialization in the subsequent stages of life;

- the role and capabilities of the teacher in improving the psychological and educational literacy of parents, psychological assistance to children;

- features and prospects of personal and professional development, opportunities for the development of productive and correcting inadequate styles of pedagogical interaction, coping strategies.

Stages of program implementation

The implementation of the developed program was carried out in three stages: diagnostic, formative and reflexive.

Diagnostic stage

At the stage of diagnosis, the level of teachers' psychological and pedagogic competence in relation to ensuring the continuity of psychological and social development of the child at the stage of transition "preschool childhood-primary school age" was studied. To do this, we used the following methods: survey, survey and observation.

The study involved 190 teachers of preschool and primary education of the Nizhny Novgorod region – students of the Center for additional professional education and advanced training (Lobachevsky State University of Nizhny Novgorod, Arzamas branch and Nizhny Novgorod Institute for Education

Development. Directly in the formative experiment involved 90 teachers – participants of refresher courses held at the initiative of educational organizations of the Nizhny Novgorod region. The results are shown in Fig.1.

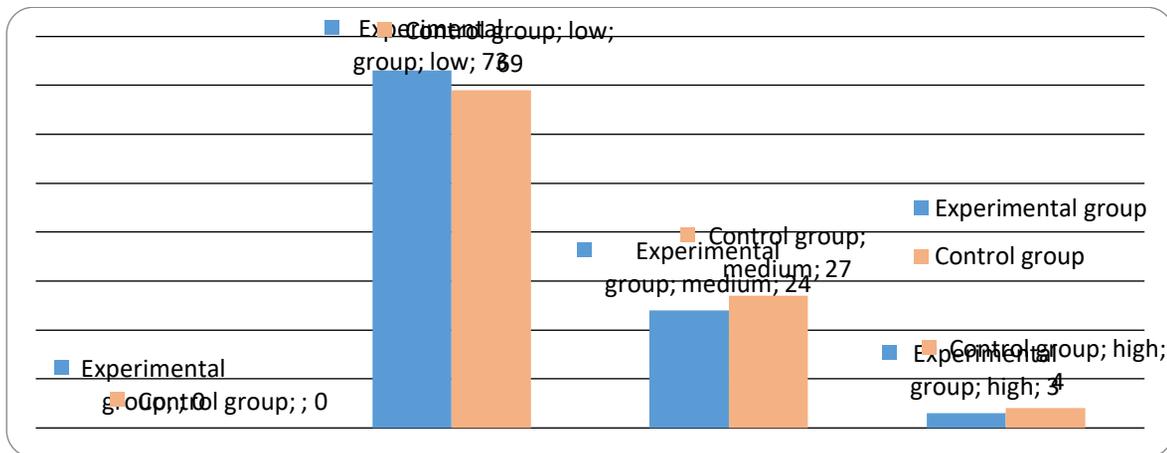


Fig. 1. Results of psychological and pedagogic competence formation concerning teachers at the diagnostic stage of the experiment

Analysis of the results showed that the distribution of levels of psychological and pedagogic competence formation concerning teachers in the experimental and control groups does not differ significantly. At the same time, in both groups, the number of teachers with a low level of psychological and pedagogical competence in ensuring the continuity of psychological and social development of a child of preschool and primary school age significantly exceeds the average level (73% and 24% in the experimental group, 69% and 27% in the control group). A very small percentage of teachers with a high level (3% in the experimental group and 4% in the control group).

The content characteristic of various levels of psychological and pedagogical competence of teachers in ensuring continuity of psychological and social development of the child of preschool and primary school age is presented as follows.

Teachers with a low level of psychological and pedagogic competence do not realize the relationship of personal development and socialization of the child at the stage of preschool and primary school age as a starting point for the analyzing the pedagogical characteristics of children, their difficulties concerning studying and adapting to school in general; considering sufficient available didactic and methodological tools for ensuring the continuity of the stages of preschool and primary education; in fact, rejecting the need for additional psychological training in ensuring the development and successful socialization of children, although they recognize that children and parents have become different and it is difficult, sometimes impossible, to work with them.

Teachers with an average level of psychological and pedagogic competence understand that preschool childhood and primary school age are closely linked, but both kindergarten has its own tasks, and primary school cannot solve what colleagues failed, and must carry out its program; can formulate some difficulties in ensuring the continuity of preschool and primary education, in interaction with children

and parents; feel the need to Supplement the knowledge of psychology of children, but do not yet understand how it will be useful in practice, fear of failure.

Teachers with a high level of psychological and pedagogical competence consider it important to create conditions in pre-school childhood, so that the child intellectually, psychologically, personally matured to the development of the school program, which largely depends on the success of its further socialization, understand the role of the family, parents and teachers themselves in this; are able to analyze the psychological causes of children's learning difficulties, interact with parents and colleagues in eliminating these causes and their negative consequences; are interested in self-education and improving psychological literacy, are aware of their capabilities and resources in the development of children's personality, adequately perceive the limitations.

The generalized analysis of the results confirmed the need to develop and implement additional training of teachers for psychological and pedagogical support of the child's personality development at the stage of transition "preschool childhood – primary school age".

The forming step

The implementation of the developed program at the stage of the formative experiment involved discussion of the stated problems during lectures, talks, discussions, development and testing of effective methods and technologies of communication with pupils and their parents in various situations, interaction with colleagues and specialists of the support service in the classroom with elements of training and business games.

Special attention was paid to the issues of psychotherapy of pedagogical activity (concerning children, parents and teachers themselves) in the process of modeling and analyzing the solution of complex situations of professional activity with access to the prevention of emotional burnout, ensuring psychological safety and preserving the psychological health of participants in the educational process. This was facilitated by the development by teachers of the proposed algorithm of three-vector analysis of the stages of development and socialization (Erikson, 1996), which includes the definition of the child's problem and its causes; the definition of tactics and strategies of interaction with his or her parents; the definition of tasks and directions of correctional work with the child, parents, peers.

Individual-group differentiation of the offered exercises and pedagogical tasks, tasks for independent work taking into account the level of psychological and pedagogical competence of teachers, and also change of roles and participants in groups allowed to expand significantly and enrich substantially and technologically personal and professional experience of participants.

Presentation and protection of self-made and tested methodological developments of classes, homeroom hours, parent-teacher meetings, holidays, competitions, meetings, pedagogical living rooms contributed to the self-esteem of teachers, confidence in the adequacy of the technologies, the resolution of doubts and the acquisition of positive experience of self-development and self-education.

The reflective stage

At the stage of reflection, the data of the control section were collected and processed using tools similar to the diagnostic stage, statistical analysis and understanding of the results (Fig.2 and 3).

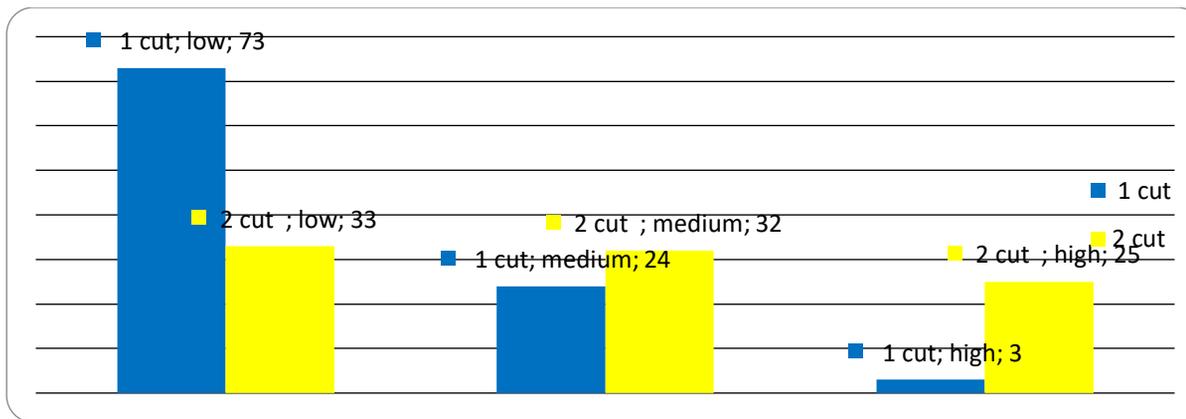


Fig. 2. Distribution of teachers of the experimental group according to the levels of psychological and pedagogic competence formation at the reflective stage of the experiment

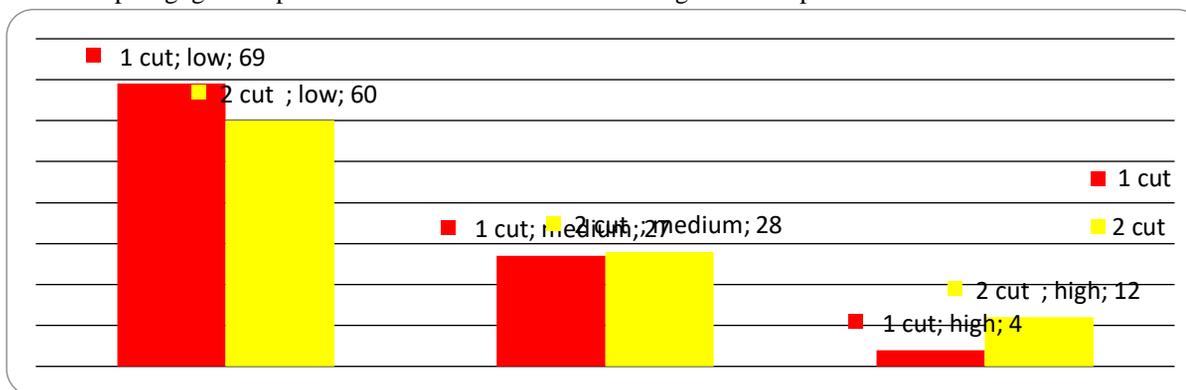


Fig. 3. Distribution of teachers of the control group according to the levels of psychological and pedagogic competence formation at the reflective stage of the experiment

The comparative analysis of the results at the beginning of the experiment and at the time of its completion allows us to note significant changes in the experimental group, although in the control group due to the natural course of professional development, the acquisition of new experience, comparison of failures and successes, changes are also observed. In the experimental group, the implementation of the program helped to reduce more than twice the number of teachers with a low level of psychological and pedagogical competence (73% compared to 33%). The percentage of teachers with an average level of competence increased slightly (24% and 32%). The number of teachers with a high level of psychological and pedagogic competence in ensuring the continuity of psychological and social development of a child of preschool and primary school age increased significantly (3% and 25%).

A substantial analysis of the changes shows that the majority of teachers (especially in preschool institutions) share the opinion that the early development of the first class program, the “artificial” acceleration of the child's development, excessive enthusiasm for school technology while ignoring or underestimating the play activities of the preschooler do not contribute to an easier adaptation to school, do not help to study properly.

Teachers, according to their estimates, understand the reasons of the unwillingness of the children to do training activities, which are in reality based on initiative, independence, creativity, curiosity, randomness generated in previous periods. This has shifted the emphasis in the work of teachers on the development of initiative and independence of children, both in families and in preschool institutions, as well as in the process of adaptation to primary school and preparing for the transition to the main link. In general, the presented experience of analysis and discussion of its results with teachers indicates the relevance of this approach in the practice of pedagogical activity based on psychological and pedagogical support of the development of initiative and independence of children as ensuring the continuity of preschool and primary education.

Statistical processing of the results of the study using Pearson's χ^2 - test showed that the changes occurred in both groups, but in the experimental group they are more significant than in the control group. In the experimental group the value $\chi^2_{\text{exp}} = 44,03$ exceeds χ^2_{contr} ($\chi^2_{\text{contr}} = 5,991$ while $p \leq 0,05$; $\chi^2_{\text{contr.}} = 9, 210$ ($p \leq 0,01$)), which indicates a significant shift in this group and confirms the statistical significance of the results of the experiment.

Discussion

The problems identified in the course of the study were regarded by us as prerequisites for the development of a program for training teachers of preschool and primary education for psychological and pedagogical ensuring the continuity of psychological and social development of the child at the stage of transition from kindergarten to primary school.

The first problem is related to the understanding the essence of continuity of preschool and primary education, and hence – the relationship of personal development and socialization of the child at the stage of preschool and primary school age. A significant part of teachers take the position of rejection, emotional protest about what does not fit into the available range of available means of pedagogical influence, even more often interaction with children, parents, leadership.

The second problem reveals the conservatism of the content characteristics of the understanding the continuity of preschool and primary education, which reflects the traditional ideas and directions of interaction: the coordination of areas of work on the continuity of preschool and primary education goals and objectives; the selection of the content of education in preschool and primary school; expanding the set of teaching methods, search and testing of new forms of work. This understanding the continuity (as one of the psychological and pedagogic conditions for the implementation of the Federal State Educational Standard) indicates a simplified reading of the Federal State Educational Standard of preschool education in terms of the specifics of preschool childhood and system features of preschool education, underestimating or ignoring the psychological meaning and significance of the goals of preschool education as a pre-primary education stage.

The third problem reflects the teachers' clearly formulated main objectives and goals of ensuring the continuity of pre-school and primary education in accordance with the Federal State Education Standard as "teach how to learn". This requires the relationship and continuity of the content of training and education, forms and methods of educational work, pedagogical requirements and conditions of education in kindergartens and primary school. This particular didactic understanding of teachers justifies the need for children to master universal educational activities (personal, communicative, regulatory, cognitive). However, the emergence of a conservative group of teachers, which believes that for a smooth transition from kindergarten to school is important, first of all, the development of the child: his or her

ability and willingness to master educational activities, gives hope for the possibility of reorientation goals, objectives and content of professional activities.

The fourth problem makes it possible to state insufficient psychological and pedagogical literacy and competence in interaction with children and parents at detection of psychological unavailability of the child to training at school, intellectual, emotional or behavioral types of school disadaptation.

The fifth problem indicates the lack of work with teachers in educational organizations aimed at providing them with psychological support in the development of new forms of organization of the educational process, constructive ways of interaction with its participants, productive methods of solving difficult professional problems, conflict or crisis situations and preventing emotional exhaustion.

The revealed features and problems of modern teachers' readiness to ensure the continuity of psychological and social development are partly indicated in the studies of the continuity of preschool and primary education. Methodological and theoretical foundations of the study of the problem are laid in the works of many researches of concrete scientific level practically all consider organizational and pedagogical, didactic or methodical aspects of a problem. In particular, the gradual transition from one stage of education to another, expressed in the preservation and gradual change of content, forms, methods, technologies of education (Dolzhikova, Fedosimov, Kulinich, & Ishchenko 2008; Beloshistaya, 2008). The gradual transition to understanding the importance of the psychological component in solving the problems of continuity in the context of children development appears in the works since 2010.

Analyzing the possibilities of solving the problem, Byvsheva (2011), draws attention to the study of Gazman (1996) and Mikhailova & Yusfin (2001), in which pedagogical support is offered as an effective technology during the transition of a child from one stage of education to another. Attempts of practical application and description of experience as recommendations are presented by psychologist teachers in the materials posted on the websites of schools, kindergartens or on the Internet. The experience of studies of targeted training of preschool and primary school teachers is practically not presented. Teachers really in the mode of continuous self-education master Federal State Educational Standards by trial and error. The results of the research significantly fill the gap.

Conclusion

The study identified the need to reorient the programs of continuous education of teachers of preschool and primary education with an emphasis on improving their psychological and pedagogical competence in ensuring the development of the child's personality and its socialization; identified and characterized the main difficulties of teachers in the implementation of the continuity of preschool and primary education in the period of preparation and subsequent adaptation of children to school; determined the levels of formation of psychological and pedagogical competence of teachers in ensuring the continuity of psychological and social development of the child at the stage of transition "preschool childhood – primary school age", the analysis of their dynamics on the results of the forming experiment.

The practical result of the study is the developed and implemented in the system of advanced training program for teachers of preschool and primary education to ensure the continuity of psychological and social development of the child at the stage of transition from kindergarten to primary school.

The analysis of the obtained results confirms the expediency of the development and implementation in the changing conditions of childhood development and education programs of teachers' professional development with a focus on improving their psychological and pedagogic competence.

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