



# **FORMATION OF SPEECH CULTURE OF CHILDREN WITH MENTAL AND SPEECH RETARDATION: INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION**

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## **Abstract**

The article analyzes the cases of mental and speech development lag in preschool children and pedagogical methods of formation of their speech culture. Speech-oriented programs, inclusive and early intervention approaches will be considered based on international and local experiences. The study shows that the use of playful activities, communicative training, and digital speech therapy devices significantly improves speech culture and social adaptation. These approaches are effective in increasing students' speech activity and strengthening the level of school readiness.

**Keywords:** Preschool education, speech culture, mental development delay, inclusive education, early intervention, speech therapy, communicative approach.

## **Introduction**

The speech culture of preschoolers includes not only vocabulary and pronunciation, but also the logical expression of thought, the correct transmission of emotions and effective communication with others. Children who do not have a speech culture will not only fall behind academically after entering school, but also have difficulty adapting to the social environment. Therefore, pedagogical approaches to speech development should begin with preschool education.

International and local experiences show that systemic, individual, and inclusive approaches to working with children with mental and speech development delays deliver effective results. Early intervention programs include a system of diagnosing children aged 0–6 years in the United States, Canada, and a number of European countries, drawing up an individual plan, and working in



collaboration with a speech therapist and psychologist. This process is manifested as a key factor in the formation of speech culture.

An inclusive education model pairs children in the same classroom with healthy peers, enhancing their need for communication and helping to naturally form a culture of speech. In Finland and Australia, this approach has significantly improved children's speaking skills. At the same time, playful methods are an important tool in the speech formation process. Children learn speech expression through role-playing games, posture exercises, drama therapy, and musical-rhythmic exercises, and their social activity increases.

Digital technologies and speech-based mobile apps can improve pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar skills in children with delays. Through interactive stories and virtual games, children will increase their motivation to start communicating, strengthen the culture of speech.

In the context of Uzbekistan, the national program "First Step", adopted in 2022, is aimed at modernizing the preschool education system, creating an inclusive environment and improving mechanisms for supporting children with speech and mental retardation. The program serves to improve the quality of preschool education through the comprehensive development of children, improving the skills of teachers and involving families. Within the framework of the programme, together with speech therapists and defectologists, an individual plan is being developed, a diagnostic and monitoring system is introduced, and retraining teachers in SEL and speech culture.

The process of formation of speech culture involves several stages. The first stage is diagnostics, in which the child's phonetic, lexical, morphological and syntactic skills, as well as social and communicative skills are determined. The second stage is the creation of an individual plan, which involves child-appropriate activities, ongoing exercises at home, and interaction with parents. The third stage is game-based teaching, where simulated games, musical-rhythmic exercises, role-playing dialogues are used. The fourth stage is communicative activity, in which children develop communication skills through the exchange of ideas, storytelling and dialogues in small groups. The fifth stage involves strengthening the pronunciation and vocabulary through the use of digital speech therapy tools. International studies show that children who are educated in inclusive environments have a highly developed speech culture compared to their healthy peers. Playful methods increase a child's need for communication, working with

digital tools improves speech pronunciation and structural correctness. At the same time, active participation of parents and teachers allows the formation of children's speech skills more effectively.

Thus, the formation of a culture of speech is one of the most urgent pedagogical tasks in the system of preschool education. International and local experience shows that the integration of early intervention, inclusive education, playful methods and digital technologies significantly improves children's speech skills. The introduction of the "First Step " program will systematize this process and increase the effectiveness of preschool education in the country.

**1. Early Intervention: Programs to** detect and compensate for speech development delays in children aged 0–6 years are widely used in the United States, Canada, and European countries. Children's speech and mental development are diagnosed at an early stage, and an individual work plan is developed by speech therapists and psychologists.

**2. Inclusive preschool education:** In Finland and Australia, children with speech defects are brought up in the same classroom as their healthy peers. This will allow children to immerse themselves in a real speech environment, increase the need for communication and natural development of speech culture.

**3. Play and communicative approach:** In the UK and US experience, game training, musical and rhythmic exercises, role-playing games are the main tools in the formation of speech culture. At the same time, through the communicative approach, children develop the skills to be able to dialogue, express their own opinion and understand the opinion of other children.

**4. Digital speech therapy tools:** Speech development with mobile applications and interactive stories effectively forms vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar skills in children with speech development delays.

- Coordination of individual and group classes with children with speech development.
- Extensive use of play, simulated exercises, and communicative situations.
- Involve parents in the process and recommend continued speech exercises at home.
- Systematic diagnosis of children's development on speech culture.

- The application of digital tools and speech therapy applications.

Identification of mental and speech delays in preschool children and the formation of speech culture is today considered as a priority issue in the international education system. Early intervention, inclusive education, and playful communicative approaches significantly increase children's speech activity and social adaptation. At the same time, the active participation of parents and teachers, as well as the use of digital speech therapy tools make the results more effective.

These approaches are important in preschool education in strengthening children's academic preparation and adaptation to later stages of education.

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