



DIGITAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR THE ADAPTATION OF YOUNG PRESCHOOL CHILDREN TO PRESCHOOL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

This article examines the psychological support of young preschool children during their adaptation to preschool educational institutions in the context of the digital world. The paper focuses on emotional security, separation anxiety, social communication, teacher-child interaction and the role of family participation in the adaptation period. Particular attention is given to the pedagogically justified use of digital tools: parent-teacher communication platforms, digital adaptation diaries, short visual routines, emotion cards and developmental games that do not replace direct human contact but help adults observe, understand and support the child more accurately. The study is based on theoretical analysis, observation, interviews with educators and parents, and comparative interpretation of adaptation indicators. The results show that the combination of a safe psychological environment, play-based interaction and careful digital monitoring can reduce emotional tension, improve communication with peers and strengthen children's positive attitude toward preschool education. The article argues that digital psychological support must be age-appropriate, ethically organized and subordinated to the child's emotional well-being.

Keywords: Preschool education, psychological adaptation, young children, digital tools, emotional security, separation anxiety, socialization, parent-teacher cooperation, child psychology, play activity, digital observation, preschool institution.

Introduction

Annotatsiya:

Mazkur maqolada raqamli dunyo sharoitida kichik maktabgacha yoshdagi bolalarni maktabgacha ta'lim tashkilotiga moslashtirish jarayonida psixologik qo'llab-



quvvatlash masalalari tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda bolalarning emotsional xavfsizligi, ota-onadan ajralish bilan bog‘liq xavotiri, tengdoshlari bilan muloqoti, tarbiyachi bilan munosabati hamda oilaning moslashuv jarayonidagi ishtiroki yoritilgan. Maqolada ota-ona va tarbiyachi o‘rtasidagi raqamli aloqa, elektron moslashuv kundaligi, qisqa vizual kun tartibi, emotsional kartochkalar va rivojlantiruvchi o‘yinlardan foydalanish imkoniyatlari ilmiy asosda bayon etiladi. Natijalar qulay psixologik muhit, o‘yin faoliyati va ehtiyotkor raqamli monitoring uyg‘unligi bolalarda emotsional zo‘riqishni kamaytirishi va ijtimoiy moslashuvni kuchaytirishini ko‘rsatadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: maktabgacha ta’lim, psixologik moslashuv, kichik yoshdagi bolalar, raqamli vositalar, emotsional xavfsizlik, ajralish xavotiri, ijtimoiylashuv, ota-ona va tarbiyachi hamkorligi, bolalar psixologiyasi, o‘yin faoliyati

Аннотация:

В статье рассматриваются вопросы психологической поддержки детей младшего дошкольного возраста в процессе их адаптации к дошкольной образовательной организации в условиях цифрового мира. Особое внимание уделяется эмоциональной безопасности ребенка, тревожности при разлуке с родителями, общению со сверстниками, взаимодействию с педагогом и участию семьи в адаптационном периоде. В работе обосновывается целесообразное использование цифровых инструментов: коммуникационных платформ для родителей и педагогов, электронного дневника адаптации, визуального режима дня, эмоциональных карточек и развивающих игр. Результаты показывают, что сочетание благоприятной психологической среды, игровой деятельности и осторожного цифрового мониторинга способствует снижению эмоционального напряжения и развитию социальной адаптации детей.

Ключевые слова: дошкольное образование, психологическая адаптация, дети младшего дошкольного возраста, цифровые инструменты, эмоциональная безопасность, тревожность, социализация, сотрудничество семьи и педагога, детская психология, игровая деятельность



INTRODUCTION

Preschool education is the first institutional environment in which a child begins to experience stable social rules, collective routines, communication with peers and emotional separation from the family. For a young preschool child, this transition is not a simple change of place. It is a psychological restructuring of daily life: the child meets unfamiliar adults, learns to follow a group rhythm, accepts temporary separation from parents and gradually forms trust toward the preschool community. Therefore, adaptation to a preschool educational institution should be understood as a complex emotional, social and behavioral process rather than as a short administrative stage at the beginning of attendance.

In contemporary society this process is increasingly influenced by the digital environment. Families and preschool institutions communicate through messengers, electronic platforms, video materials, photo reports and digital observation tools. These technologies can make cooperation faster and more transparent, but they can also create methodological risks if they are used mechanically or if screen-based activity replaces live emotional interaction. The central problem is not whether digital tools should be used in preschool adaptation, but how they should be used without harming the child's natural need for direct communication, play, movement, attachment and tactile-emotional support.

The relevance of the present study is determined by the growing need to combine traditional psychological-pedagogical support with carefully selected digital instruments. A young child cannot independently explain all inner experiences; anxiety may be expressed through crying, refusal to eat, sleep disturbance, aggression, passivity or excessive dependence on an adult. In such cases, digital adaptation diaries, structured observation forms and parent-teacher communication channels may help adults identify changes earlier and choose a more individualized support strategy. However, the ethical and developmental limit is clear: the digital tool must serve the child, not manage the child. Preschool adaptation remains a human-centered process in which the educator's emotional responsiveness is irreplaceable.

The aim of this article is to analyze the psychological conditions of young preschool children's adaptation to preschool educational institutions and to determine the pedagogically justified role of digital psychological support in this process. The objectives are to clarify the essence of adaptation, examine the influence of emotional



security and family cooperation, describe the possibilities of digital observation, and formulate recommendations for educators and parents.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The psychological interpretation of preschool adaptation is closely related to theories of social development, attachment, play and ecological influence. L. S. Vygotsky emphasized that a child's mental development is formed through social interaction and mediated activity; therefore, a new educational environment becomes a source of development only when the child is included in meaningful cooperation with adults and peers [1]. D. B. Elkonin considered play the leading activity of preschool age, because through play the child masters social roles, emotional self-expression and behavioral regulation [2]. These ideas are especially important for adaptation, since the child accepts new rules more easily when they are introduced through emotionally safe play rather than through rigid instruction.

Attachment theory also offers a significant explanation of adaptation difficulties. J. Bowlby showed that a child's sense of security depends on stable emotional bonds with close adults [3]. When a young child enters preschool, temporary separation from parents may activate anxiety. This does not mean that the child is unprepared for education; rather, it indicates that the transition must be gradual and emotionally supported. M. Ainsworth's studies demonstrated that secure attachment helps children explore new environments more confidently [4]. Consequently, preschool adaptation should include not only work with the child but also cooperation with the family, because the emotional message transmitted by parents directly affects the child's attitude toward the institution.

U. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory provides a broader framework. The child develops at the intersection of family, preschool institution, community and cultural expectations [5]. Adaptation becomes successful when the microsystems surrounding the child act coherently. If the parent tells the child that preschool is safe and interesting, while the educator receives timely information about the child's habits, fears and interests, the transition becomes less stressful. If these systems contradict each other, the child may experience tension even in a well-equipped institution.

Modern research on digital childhood emphasizes a balanced approach. Digital communication can strengthen cooperation between educators and parents, provide



documentation of behavioral changes and help identify children who need additional support. At the same time, early childhood researchers caution that digital technologies should not dominate the child's daily routine, because preschool development depends on sensory experience, movement, face-to-face communication and free play [6]. Therefore, digital psychological support in adaptation should be indirect and adult-mediated: it is primarily a tool for observation, communication and planning, not a separate digital curriculum for the child.

The reviewed literature suggests that the most effective model of adaptation integrates three dimensions: emotional security, social inclusion and consistent adult cooperation. Digital tools may enhance this model when they help educators collect information, visualize daily routines, communicate with parents and monitor emotional changes. They become problematic when used as entertainment substitutes, disciplinary instruments or excessive reporting mechanisms. This distinction is critical for preschool psychology in the digital era.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a qualitative-diagnostic approach aimed at identifying the psychological features of adaptation among young preschool children and evaluating the supportive role of digital tools. The research logic combined theoretical analysis, naturalistic observation, structured conversations with educators and parents, and comparative interpretation of adaptation indicators. The methodological basis was formed by sociocultural theory, attachment theory, play-based learning and ecological systems theory.

The empirical component was organized in a preschool group of children aged three to four. Observation focused on four groups of indicators: emotional reactions during arrival and separation from parents; participation in play and routine activities; communication with peers and educators; and signs of physiological or behavioral tension such as crying, passivity, irritability, refusal to eat or avoidance of group activity. Educators recorded brief daily notes in a digital adaptation diary. Parents provided information through short electronic questionnaires and individual conversations about the child's sleep, mood, appetite and attitude toward preschool at home.

The digital component was limited and age-appropriate. Children were not exposed to long screen sessions. Instead, educators used visual routine cards, simple emotion



cards, photo-based familiarization with the group environment before attendance, and secure parent-teacher communication for exchanging adaptation information. The purpose was to support adult understanding of the child's condition, not to replace live interaction. The collected data were summarized by descriptive comparison at the beginning of adaptation and after four weeks of systematic support.

RESULTS

The initial observation showed that the most frequent adaptation difficulties were separation anxiety, emotional instability, reluctance to participate in group activities and limited communication with peers. Some children entered the group room quietly but remained passive during play; others reacted openly through crying or refusal to let go of the parent. These behaviors were most visible during the first week. The children who had previous experience of short-term separation from parents or regular communication with peers adapted more quickly.

The use of digital adaptation diaries improved the quality of parent-teacher cooperation. Instead of relying on general impressions, educators recorded specific indicators: arrival mood, duration of crying, participation in meals, sleep, play involvement and communication attempts. Parents, in turn, informed educators about changes at home. This exchange helped adults detect repeating patterns. For example, a child who cried in the morning but later played actively required a different support strategy from a child who remained passive throughout the day.

Table 1. Dynamics of adaptation indicators during four weeks

Adaptation level	Beginning of observation	After four weeks	Main psychological features
High	4 children / 13.3%	13 children / 43.3%	Stable mood, active play, free communication with educator and peers
Medium	11 children / 36.7%	12 children / 40.0%	Periodic anxiety, selective communication, gradual involvement in activities
Low	15 children / 50.0%	5 children / 16.7%	Persistent crying, passivity, avoidance of peers, strong dependence on adult support

The data indicate a positive shift in children's adaptation after four weeks of coordinated psychological support. The number of children with low adaptation indicators decreased considerably, while the number of children with high adaptation



indicators increased. This change cannot be attributed only to the passage of time. Observation showed that children responded better when educators used predictable routines, warm greeting rituals, emotionally supportive speech and play-based inclusion. Digital tools were useful mainly because they helped adults maintain consistency.

Visual routine cards had a calming effect on children who were anxious about what would happen next. When the child could see a simple sequence of arrival, play, meal, rest and parent return, the day became more predictable. Emotion cards helped some children express their inner state without complex verbal explanation. Parent-teacher messaging was most effective when it was concise, respectful and focused on the child's actual needs rather than on excessive reporting.

Table 2. Digital support tools and their psychological functions in adaptation

Digital or visual tool	Function in adaptation	Necessary limitation
Digital adaptation diary	Records emotional and behavioral changes; supports individualized decisions	Must not become formal paperwork without psychological analysis
Parent-teacher communication channel	Ensures continuity between family and preschool institution	Should be confidential, concise and child-centered
Photo familiarization with classroom	Reduces fear of the unknown before attendance	Should not replace real gradual introduction
Visual routine cards	Makes daily rhythm predictable and emotionally safe	Should be simple and understandable for the child
Emotion cards	Helps the child express feelings through images and words	Should be used with adult empathy, not as testing pressure

DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that adaptation is not only the child's individual task but also the result of organized cooperation among adults. A child may appear "difficult" in the first days of preschool, but in many cases the behavior is a natural reaction to uncertainty, separation and loss of familiar routine. The role of the educator is to translate this behavior psychologically: crying may mean fear, aggression may mean overload, passivity may mean insecurity, and silence may mean the need for more time. Such interpretation protects the child from unfair labeling.

Digital tools are useful when they increase the accuracy of adult observation. In the present study, the adaptation diary made it easier to distinguish temporary emotional reactions from stable difficulties. For instance, a short morning protest followed by



active play did not require the same intervention as prolonged isolation or refusal to communicate. This distinction is important because excessive intervention can sometimes intensify anxiety, while insufficient support can prolong maladaptation. The results also support Vygotsky's idea that development occurs through social mediation. The child adapts not because rules are explained abstractly, but because the educator creates a meaningful emotional bridge between the known family environment and the new preschool environment. Play becomes the main bridge. Digital support may prepare, record or structure this process, but the transformative psychological experience occurs in live interaction: being greeted kindly, invited into play, helped during conflict, comforted after separation and praised for small independent steps.

At the same time, the digitalization of preschool psychology requires ethical caution. Parents may request constant photos or messages, but excessive reporting can increase adult anxiety and indirectly affect the child. Educators may also become overloaded by digital documentation. Therefore, institutions should establish clear rules: what information is recorded, who has access, how privacy is protected and how digital data are used for psychological support. A digital record has value only when it leads to a better human response.

CONCLUSION

The adaptation of young preschool children to preschool educational institutions is a multidimensional psychological process involving emotional security, separation from parents, social communication, acceptance of routine and trust toward educators. The study showed that adaptation difficulties are most intense in the initial period and are expressed through anxiety, crying, withdrawal, unstable mood or resistance to group activities. These reactions should be regarded as meaningful psychological signals rather than as discipline problems.

The combination of a supportive educator, play-based inclusion, family cooperation and limited digital monitoring can significantly improve adaptation. Digital tools are effective when they help adults observe the child more carefully, exchange relevant information and organize a predictable environment. They are ineffective or even harmful when they replace emotional contact, increase formal control or expose children to unnecessary screen time. The psychological principle is simple:



technology may support the adaptation process, but it cannot substitute attachment, empathy and live communication.

Thus, preschool institutions should develop a balanced model of digital psychological support. Such a model must include an adaptation diary, confidential communication with parents, visual routines, play-based emotional development and regular analysis of each child's individual progress. Successful adaptation at this age creates a foundation for later learning motivation, social confidence and emotional resilience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Preschool institutions should introduce short-term individual adaptation plans for children entering preschool for the first time.
2. Educators should use digital adaptation diaries to record concrete emotional and behavioral indicators rather than general impressions.
3. Parent-teacher digital communication should be organized ethically, with respect for confidentiality and the child's psychological well-being.
4. Visual routines, emotion cards and photo familiarization may be used to reduce uncertainty, but they should not replace direct communication and play.
5. Children with persistent anxiety, withdrawal or behavioral tension should receive additional support from a preschool psychologist in cooperation with the family.
6. Screen exposure during adaptation should be minimized; the main developmental tools must remain play, movement, speech, emotional contact and peer interaction.

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