

PSYCHOLOGY

UDC 159.922.7

DOI: 10.23951/2782-2575-2025-2-59-73

THE EFFECTS OF EMOTIONAL INTERACTIONS BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN ON THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract. The implementation of the Federal State Educational Standard for primary education emphasizes the central importance of moral development and highlights the cultivation of ethical foundations, kindness, emotional intelligence, and empathy. As psychologist Lev Vygotsky noted, learning and emotions are closely linked. Such holistic development enhances children's cognitive abilities and social adaptation. Today's socio-economic and educational changes have led to increasingly complex interpersonal dynamics and greater demands on emotional competence. Therefore, it is particularly important to understand the predictors of emotional intelligence development in primary school students. Mother-child interactions characterized by emotional connectedness, acceptance, and support promote emotional initiative, empathy, and self-regulation in children. This process is not a mere transfer of knowledge but a dynamic collaboration – mothers share emotional experiences while children actively develop new ways of responding.

This study aims to examine the development of emotional intelligence in primary school children concerning the mothers' emotional background, focusing on maternal sensitivity, emotional acceptance, and emotional expressions of emotional interaction.

Diagnostic instruments included: 'Emotional identification Method' by E. Izotova; 'Emotional pictogram Method' (modified by M. Kuzmischeva); 'What – Why – How?' projective method by M. Nguyen; 'Child-Parent Emotional Interaction Questionnaire' by E. Zakharova.

The results indicate that maternal emotional sensitivity, warm physical affection, and consistent emotional support positively influence children's ability to recognize emotions, the development of empathy, and the ability to self-regulate. Low maternal attention to the child's emotional state and lack of empathy may contribute to children's emotional development difficulties, emphasizing the importance of mindful and attentive parenting. The study results have practical implications for the design of psychological and educational family support programs aimed at improving parents' emotional competence and fostering an environment conducive to balanced emotional development in primary school children.

Keywords: *child-parent interaction, emotional development, psychological well-being, emotional competence, primary school children*

Funding: This work was financially supported by the Russian Science Foundation, Grant No. 22-18-00356.

For citation: Bayanova L.F., Shishova E.O., Volkova S.V. The Effects of Emotional Interactions Between Parents and Children on the Emotional Intelligence of Primary School Children. *Education & Pedagogy Journal*. 2025;2(14):59-73. doi: 10.23951/2782-2575-2025-2-59-73

Introduction

During primary school, children's emotions become more complex and stable. As they interact more with others and develop self-awareness, their emotions become more stable and complex. They become better at recognizing and understanding emotions and, at the same time, learn to control their emotional reactions [1]. Children's social and emotional development helps to prevent future emotional and behavioral problems. As psychologist L. Vygotsky stated, "emotions are the 'core element' of mental life, especially in children" [2]. Emotional intelligence helps children recognize and understand their own emotions, identify emotions in others, learn to express emotions appropriately, develop self-control over emotional responses, and learn from experience, which leads to success [3–5].

Research shows that low emotional intelligence has a negative impact on academic achievement, critical thinking skills, interpersonal relationships, decision-making abilities, and overall social well-being [6–11].

Emotional intelligence in children develops under various influences, with the family playing a central role [12–16]. Prominent psychologists such as L. Vygotsky, A. Zaporozhets, and A. Kosheleva emphasize the crucial importance of an authoritative adult figure (especially parents) for children's emotional and moral development. Parent-child interactions fundamentally influence personality formation, as this primary relationship provides children with their first communication skills, tools for emotion regulation, and the foundations for meaningful emotional relationships with others.

Parents help children recognize, identify, and understand their feelings. They explain where emotions come from, their consequences, and how to deal with them constructively. Children gradually learn about the full spectrum of human emotions through this process. Some parents divide emotions into 'good' and 'bad'. They encourage positive feelings and suppress negative feelings. With this approach, parents want to promote a positive worldview in their children. However, studies indicate that this strict categorization of emotions hinders emotional development, preventing children from experiencing the full range of emotions [17, 18].

As a result, children's emotional sensitivity may be suppressed, which can lead to psychological instability. When parents ignore certain emotions that they deem unacceptable during children's emotional development, this can lead to relationship difficulties, difficulties in adapting to new situations, and confusion between personal desires and responsibilities due to weak personal boundaries. It may also lead to psychosomatic problems. If a child does not experience the full range of emotions, including negative emotions, they may have difficulty recognizing and responding to the emotions of others, making social interactions difficult.

Parents should not protect their children from negative emotions but allow them to experience the full range of emotions. This expands their emotional world and helps them understand themselves, recognize their true wants and needs, set clear personal boundaries, respect the boundaries, and develop effective communication skills.

An effective emotional bond with a child, characterized by an unconditionally positive context of the parent, significantly enhances the child's development, especially emotional development. Studies by M. Lisina, J. Langmeier, and Z. Matejček confirm that negative attitudes toward children do not go unnoticed and often lead to psychological deprivation. Low levels of emotional sensitivity or excessive parental overprotection can lead to difficulties in emotional development, such as emotional distancing or the inability to empathize [19, 20].

According to these researchers, children need to receive positive behavioral signals from their environment during infancy and early childhood, and unconditional acceptance forms the basis for harmonious future development. While relationships develop with the specifics of preschool and early school age, a continuous positive attitude from close adults remains the fundamental factor in forming a balanced personality.

Several studies examine the components of emotional interaction with a child and the different approaches to parenting practice. According to

E. Zakharova, a mother's positive attitude largely depends on her ability to understand her child's needs and emotional states. Such understanding supports the development of the child's emotional sphere and promotes harmonious relationships. Research shows that a mother who responds correctly to her child's emotional signals lays the foundation for healthy self-esteem, self-regulation, and empathy. The link between maternal sensitivity and a child's emotional resilience underlines the importance of a conscious and attentive parenting style, which positively impacts children's psychological well-being [21].

The study by L. Komlik and V. Merenkova confirms that the emotional intelligence of parents is closely linked to the nature of the parent-child relationship. The results show that fathers have higher emotional intelligence than mothers in all measured parameters. The predominant parenting style among the participants was identified as indulgent overprotection. Correlation analysis revealed a significant relationship between parenting style and emotional intelligence of parents in families with primary school-aged children ($k = 0.585$, $p \leq 0.001$), supporting the hypothesis that these factors are related [22].

Despite the considerable number of studies on emotional intelligence and parent-child relationships, there is still a lack of research on how specific aspects of emotional interaction, such as sensitivity, support, and empathy, influence the development of each component of emotional intelligence in children.

This study aims to investigate the development of emotional intelligence in primary school children in the context of their mothers' emotional backgrounds, focusing on maternal sensitivity, emotional acceptance, and behavioral expressions of emotional interaction.

Psychological research confirms the importance of maternal emotional state for children's emotional intelligence development and shows significant correlations between the emotional intelligence level of children and their mothers [22]. Mothers, therefore, play an especially important role in this process. A strong emotional bond with the mother lays the foundation for a child's healthy personality development. By providing emotional support and security, she creates a stable basis for the child's development.

The methods used

An empirical study on the development of emotional intelligence of primary school children in relation to their emotional interaction with mothers was conducted on a sample of 120 participants. The sample included 60 children aged 9 to 10 years (28 boys and 32 girls) without

developmental anomalies and 60 mothers aged 32 to 41 from Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan.

The following methods listed in Table 1 were used for diagnosis.

Table 1

Methods Used in the Study

Diagnostic Instruments	Objectives
For children of primary school age	
‘Emotional Identification method’ (Izotova, 2004) (Diagnostic Series No. 2) [23]	This method assesses the perception of expressive (facial) signs, the understanding of emotional content, the identification of emotions, the verbalization and reproduction of emotions (expressiveness and control), the activation of emotional experiences and representations, and individual emotional characteristics
‘Emotional Pictogram method’ (modified from Kuzmishcheva, 2002) [24]	This method is used to identify characteristics of emotional development, especially the cognitive-affective components of emotional intelligence in children of primary school age
‘What – Why – How?’ method (Nguyen, 2008) [25]	This instrument analyzes a child’s ability to consider another person’s emotional state, show empathy and caring, and assess emotional intelligence
For the mothers of the children	
‘Parent–Child Emotional Interaction Questionnaire’ (Zakharova, 2002) [21]	This questionnaire is used to assess the emotional background of mothers in relation to their children. It includes the following blocks: – Empathy – Emotional acceptance – Behavioral effects of emotional interaction

Results and Discussion

The data obtained from the methods used for diagnosis show that most primary school children studied have an average level of emotional intelligence development and its components (Figure 1).

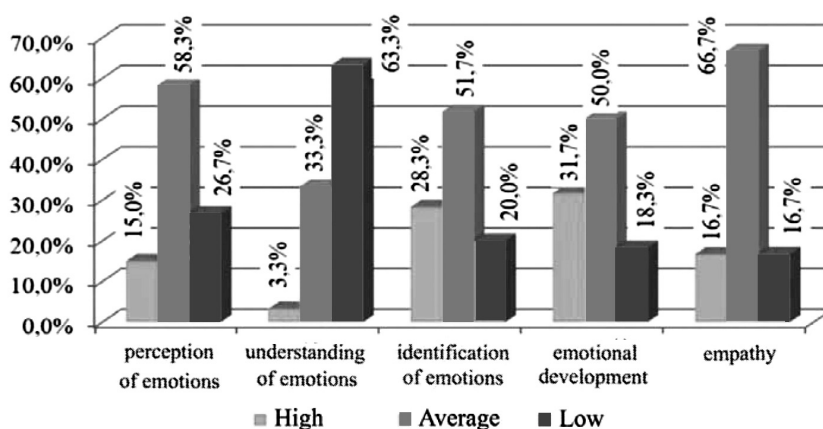


Fig. 1. Results of the assessment of emotional intelligence in primary school children

The emotional interaction between parents and children was analyzed using I. Zakharova's questionnaire includes 11 variables divided into three main categories: Empathy, emotional acceptance, and behavioral expressions of emotional interaction [21].

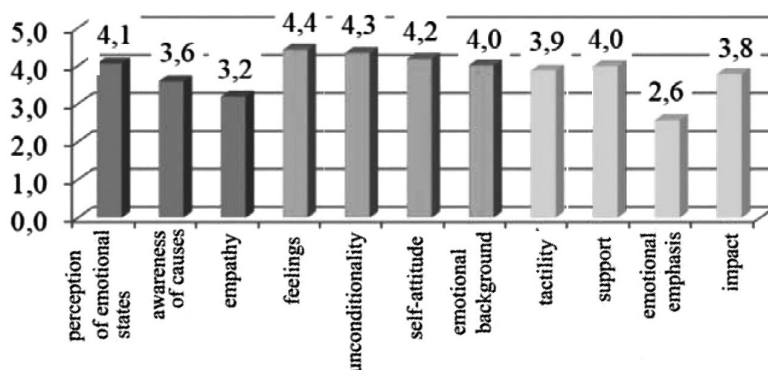


Fig. 2. Average values of the emotional interaction of mothers with their children, based on the 'Questionnaire on emotional interaction between parents and children' by E. Zakharova

According to the results of the mothers' responses, the highest scores were found in the area of emotional acceptance (see Fig. 2). This dimension reflects the emotions experienced by the mother during interactions with her child, the unconditional acceptance of the child, and the mother's self-perception in her parental role.

All of these variables belong to the emotional acceptance block, which had the highest values among the mothers surveyed and was significantly higher than the average values of the other interaction blocks. These results indicate that the mothers in the study can be emotionally responsive and open, showing a high degree of acceptance towards their children and an appropriate perception of their parental role. However, despite their high sensitivity, these mothers are not always able to fully understand the underlying causes of their children's emotional experiences. Their limited capacity for deep empathy may be due to a heavy workload, which can negatively impact their emotional engagement in their children's daily lives. If a mother is unable to spend enough time with her child due to her work commitments, the risk of emotional alienation between parents and children increases.

The lowest score in the study was achieved on the emotional emphasis scale. This suggests that mothers cannot accurately perceive their children's emotions or establish an emotional interaction based on these emotional markers. This finding suggests that many mothers have difficulty recognizing and understanding their children's emotional experiences.

Similar results were found in the study by A. Petrova, “*Maternal Perceptions of the Child’s Individual Psychological Characteristics as a Factor in Parent-Child Emotional Interaction*,” where the emotional emphasis scale also had the lowest mean score – 2.0 [26].

In our study, although the mothers showed an average ability to recognize their child’s emotional state, the low scores on the Emotional Emphasis Scale may indicate that although they understand their child’s emotions, they do not always consider them in their interactions. Instead, they often rely on their emotional state, mood, or assumed normative expectations. This could be because mothers who focus heavily on their parenting goals do not always consider the children’s age-specific or individual emotional needs in the communication and parenting process.

Although mothers recognize their children’s emotional states, they often do not consider them significant and do not actively try to resolve them. The low scores on the empathy scale also confirm this. While mothers can understand and influence their children’s emotional experiences, they rarely consider the specific nature of these physical and emotional states when setting expectations for the child. This may be due to the influence of societal and school expectations that lead parents to prioritize the outward appearance of successful parenting over the actual emotional needs of their child.

A comparative analysis was conducted using the Mann–Whitney *U*-test to determine significant differences in the indicators measured. The results showed statistically significant gender differences: the scores for empathy were significantly higher in the girls’ group than in the boys’ group ($p = 0.002$). This indicates that girls show a greater capacity for empathy than boys. Researchers often explain the higher empathic ability of women compared to men with traditional gender roles – women are expected to be caring and emotionally oriented, while men are often encouraged to be independent and competitive. These patterns are reinforced by the socialization of children according to gender norms [27].

Significant differences were also found in relation to family structure. In particular, scores on the support scale were significantly higher for mothers raising their children without a partner than for mothers from two-parent families ($p = 0.004$). This suggests that single mothers tend to be more emotionally involved in their children’s lives, possibly to compensate for the absence of the father. In addition, children from single-parent families scored significantly higher on the scales for emotional development ($p = 0.019$) and empathy ($p = 0.050$) than their

peers from two-parent families. This could indicate that children who grow up in households with only one parent have greater emotional sensitivity and empathy.

We applied the Kruskal–Wallis test to investigate how different indicators influence the variability and degree of expression of emotional traits and assess the differences between them. In addition to the clear differences, some less obvious correlations were also found. For example, several core variables related to mothers' emotional state – empathy ($p = 0.002$), emotional reactivity ($p = 0.007$), self-perception as a parent ($p = 0.028$), and tactile interaction ($p = 0.027$) – were stronger in mothers whose children had a low level of emotion identification. This may suggest that children with difficulty recognizing emotions need more emotional support, causing their mothers to respond more empathically, show more sensitivity, display more physical affection, and show a greater sense of parental responsibility. However, when maternal control becomes too strong, children may have fewer opportunities to manage emotionally difficult situations themselves. These findings are consistent with previous studies on mothers' attitudes toward preschool children, which found that modern parenting methods lead to more control and overprotection. This trend is often associated with increased maternal anxiety [28].

The non-parametric Spearman's rank correlation method was used to identify correlational relationships between indicators of emotional intelligence in younger schoolchildren and the emotional state of their mothers (see Table 2).

As shown in Table 2, significant correlations were found between the components of emotional intelligence in primary school children (perception of emotions, identification of emotions, emotional development, and empathy) and various indicators of their mothers' emotional state (perception of emotions, awareness of causes, empathy, emotional expression in interaction, tactfulness, emotional support, sensitivity to the child's emotional state, and influence on the child's emotional state).

Regarding children's empathy as a component of emotional intelligence, there were statistically significant positive relationships between maternal empathy (Spearman's $r = 0.276$, $p \leq 0.05$) and maternal emotional support (Spearman's $r = 0.302$, $p \leq 0.05$). This suggests an expected correlation: The higher the mothers' level of empathy and emotional support, the more empathic their children tend to be.

Table 2

*Correlation Between the Emotional Intelligence of Primary School Children
and the Emotional Interaction Between Mother and Child*

Emotional mother-child Interaction		Components of emotional Intelligence in primary school children									
		Standard score					Raw score				
		understanding of emotions	perception of emotions	identification of emotions	emotional development	empathy	understanding of emotions	perception of emotions	identification of emotions	emotional development	empathy
Perception of emotional states	rs	0.106	-0.112	0.231	0.361**	0.151	0.160	-0.115	0.116	0.313*	0.084
	p	0.422	0.396	0.075	0.005	0.249	0.222	0.380	0.376	0.015	0.524
Awareness of causes	rs	-0.135	-0.027	0.120	0.364**	-0.196	-0.104	0.050	-0.010	0.399**	-0.243
	p	0.303	0.836	0.360	0.004	0.133	0.429	0.702	0.937	0.002	0.061
Empathy	rs	0.187	-0.242	0.041	0.019	0.276*	0.198	-0.155	0.137	0.061	0.190
	p	0.153	0.063	0.757	0.885	0.033	0.129	0.238	0.298	0.641	0.147
Feelings	rs	0.096	-0.034	0.371**	0.230	0.090	0.156	-0.159	0.257*	0.140	0.071
	p	0.464	0.796	0.003	0.077	0.492	0.233	0.226	0.047	0.287	0.590
Unconditionality	rs	0.020	-0.191	0.240	0.170	0.050	0.009	-0.176	0.178	0.221	0.066
	p	0.878	0.143	0.065	0.194	0.705	0.945	0.178	0.173	0.090	0.615
Self-attitude	rs	0.135	0.092	0.177	0.162	0.003	0.044	-0.054	0.142	0.078	0.005
	p	0.305	0.483	0.176	0.217	0.980	0.737	0.685	0.278	0.553	0.972
Emotional background	rs	-0.029	0.003	0.184	0.161	0.179	0.036	-0.114	0.177	0.124	0.172
	p	0.824	0.983	0.160	0.218	0.170	0.784	0.386	0.177	0.343	0.188
Tactility	rs	0.091	-0.134	0.349**	0.459**	0.006	0.112	-0.089	0.303*	0.451**	0.081
	p	0.488	0.306	0.006	0.000	0.964	0.395	0.497	0.018	0.000	0.541
Support	rs	0.085	-0.023	0.292*	0.348**	0.229	0.139	-0.005	0.289*	0.350**	0.302*
	p	0.517	0.863	0.024	0.006	0.079	0.289	0.969	0.025	0.006	0.019
Emotional emphasis	rs	0.004	0.267*	0.007	0.149	0.181	0.112	0.283*	0.009	0.150	0.071
	p	0.976	0.039	0.956	0.255	0.167	0.393	0.029	0.944	0.253	0.591
Impact	rs	0.092	0.006	0.336**	0.006	0.114	0.177	-0.165	0.181	-0.108	0.123
	p	0.485	0.964	0.009	0.965	0.386	0.175	0.209	0.167	0.410	0.348

Notation hereinafter: rs – Spearman correlation coefficient, p – significance level.

*. The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-sided)

**. The correlation is significant at the level of 0.01 (two-sided)

Emotion identification in primary school children was also significantly correlated with several maternal emotion indicators: emotional expression in interaction ($r = 0.371$, $p \leq 0.01$), tactility

($r = 0.349$, $p \leq 0.01$), emotional support ($r = 0.292$, $p \leq 0.05$) and influence on the child's emotional state ($r = 0.336$, $p \leq 0.01$). These results suggest that children's ability to recognize emotions is better developed when their mothers are emotionally expressive, physically affectionate, highly involved, and sensitive to their children's emotional state.

Elementary school children's emotional development showed significant positive correlations with several aspects of their mothers' emotional state: awareness of children's emotional state ($r = 0.361$, $p \leq 0.01$), awareness of causes ($r = 0.364$, $p \leq 0.01$), emotional support ($r = 0.459$, $p \leq 0.01$), and ability to influence the child's emotional state ($r = 0.348$, $p \leq 0.01$).

A high level of emotional development in children is associated with emotionally empathetic mothers who accurately recognize and understand the causes of their children's emotions, consistently support them, and effectively respond to their children's emotional needs. In other words, a child's emotional development is equally shaped by the mother's emotional sensitivity and behavior.

Conclusion

Mothers' emotional state can strongly influence children's emotional development. Children who feel rejected, ignored, or overly controlled often exhibit negative behaviors to get the attention they lack – they seek connection by any means necessary. In contrast, the mother's emotional availability, sensitivity, responsiveness, and physical affection help to foster the child's ability to empathize, self-regulate, and deal effectively with emotions. The family is a child's 'miniature universe' and shapes their first steps into the wider world. In this space, children pick up patterns of behavior and often mirror the actions of their parents. When parents take their role seriously and are aware of the power of their example, they naturally pass on the traits and values they wish to impart through their daily actions and interactions.

Such parenting is intentional and conscious. It is characterized by consistent self-awareness, respectful communication, emotional awareness, and an active interest in the emotional atmosphere of the family. These factors promote a caring atmosphere in which the child's personality can develop harmoniously and sustainably.

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ПСИХОЛОГИЯ

ВЛИЯНИЕ ДЕТСКО-РОДИТЕЛЬСКОГО ЭМОЦИОНАЛЬНОГО ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЯ НА ЭМОЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ ИНТЕЛЛЕКТ МЛАДШЕГО ШКОЛЬНИКА

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Аннотация. Внедрение федерального государственного стандарта начального общего образования определяет высокое значение нравственного воспитания, развития этических чувств, эмоционально-нравственной отзывчивости, доброжелательности, понимания и сопереживания чувствам других людей. Согласно положениям Л.С. Выготского о синергии интеллектуальной и эмоционально-волевой сферы личности, нельзя рассматривать процессы познания в отрыве от эмоций, что безусловно отражается в повышении эффективности функционирования и успешной социализации ребенка. Процесс социально-экономических и образовательных преобразований на современном этапе сопровождается усложнением межличностных взаимодействий и повышением требований к эмоциональной компетентности личности, особую актуальность приобретает исследование предикторов, влияющих на развитие эмоционального интеллекта в младшем школьном возрасте. Взаимодействие матери и ребенка, основанное на чувствительности, эмоциональном принятии и поддержке, создает условия для формирования у ребенка инициативности в эмоциональной сфере, способности к эмпатии и саморегуляции. Однако это взаимодействие не сводится к простой передаче знаний или навыков, а представляет собой сложный процесс сотрудничества, где мать выступает как носитель эмоционального опыта, а ребенок – как активный участник, осваивающий новые способы эмоционального реагирования. *Цель исследования* заключается в изучении особенностей развития эмоционального интеллекта детей младшего школьного возраста в сопряженности с эмоциональным фоном матерей по отношению к своим детям через оценку их чувствительности,

эмоционального принятия и поведенческих проявлений эмоционального взаимодействия. В диагностических целях использовались: методика «Эмоциональная идентификация» Е.И. Изотовой; «Эмоциональная пиктограмма» (модификация М.А. Кузьмищевой); проективная методика «Что – почему – как?» М.А. Нгуен; «Опросник детско-родительского эмоционального взаимодействия» Е.И. Захаровой.

Установлено, что высокий уровень эмоциональной чувствительности, тактильности и поддержки со стороны матерей способствует развитию у детей способности к идентификации эмоций, эмпатии и эмоциональной саморегуляции. При этом низкие показатели ориентации на эмоциональное состояние ребенка и эмпатии у матерей могут приводить к трудностям в эмоциональном развитии детей, что подчеркивает важность осознанного и внимательного подхода к воспитанию. Результаты исследования имеют практическую значимость для разработки программ психолого-педагогической поддержки семей, направленных на повышение эмоциональной грамотности родителей и создание условий для гармоничного развития эмоциональной сферы младших школьников.

Ключевые слова: *детско-родительское взаимодействие, эмоциональное развитие, психологическое благополучие, эмоциональная грамотность, младшие школьники.*

Финансирование. Работа выполнена при финансовой поддержке гранта РНФ № 22-18-00356.

Для цитирования: Bayanova L.F., Shishova E.O., Volkova S.V. The Effects of Emotional Interactions Between Parents and Children on the Emotional Intelligence of Primary School Children // *Education & Pedagogy Journal*. 2025. Issue 2 (14). P. 59–73. doi: 10.23951/2782-2575-2025-2-59-73

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Submitted March 3, 2025