



PEDAGOGICAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPING SOCIAL AND DAILY LIVING SKILLS IN ADULTS WITH SPECIFIC MENTAL DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS

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Abstract

The development of social and daily living skills is one of the central conditions for improving independence, community participation, self-determination, and quality of life among adults with intellectual and developmental support needs. This article examines the pedagogical opportunities for developing functional social and daily living skills in adults who require specific support due to characteristics of mental development. The study is based on theoretical analysis, comparative analysis, systematization, generalization, and pedagogical modeling of contemporary approaches to adult special education, adaptive functioning, person-centered planning, and community-based support. Social and daily living competence is interpreted as an integrated system that includes self-care, household management, communication, social interaction, community orientation, safe behavior, functional use of money, time management, decision-making, and participation in everyday activities.

Keywords: Adults with intellectual and developmental support needs, social skills, daily living skills, adaptive functioning, functional independence, special education, person-centered support, self-determination, community participation, functional learning.

INTRODUCTION

Adulthood introduces a range of social and practical demands related to independent living, household responsibilities, interpersonal communication, community participation, employment, personal safety, decision-making, and



self-management. For adults with intellectual and developmental support needs, successful participation in these activities may require systematic educational and pedagogical support.

Historically, educational interventions for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities were frequently concentrated on childhood and school-age periods. However, human development and learning do not end when formal schooling is completed. Adults continue to acquire new competencies, adapt to changing social environments, develop autonomy, and learn to perform everyday tasks.

This makes lifelong pedagogical support particularly relevant.

Contemporary understanding of intellectual disability also emphasizes adaptive functioning rather than relying exclusively on intellectual performance. Conceptual, social, and practical domains of adaptive behavior directly influence how independently a person can function in everyday life.

Accordingly, the pedagogical objective should not be limited to increasing the amount of information an adult knows. It should support the person's ability to use knowledge in meaningful everyday situations.

This distinction can be expressed as: knowing how an activity should be performed $\neq$ being able to perform it independently in real life.

For example, a person may know that money is required to purchase an item but may experience difficulty selecting the correct amount, communicating with a cashier, checking the purchase, or managing change.

Similarly, an adult may verbally describe personal hygiene procedures but require continuous assistance to organize and complete them.

Therefore, social and daily living education should focus on functional performance, participation, self-determination, and the gradual reduction of unnecessary dependence.

The purpose of this article is to identify and theoretically substantiate the pedagogical opportunities for developing social and daily living skills in adults with specific mental developmental needs and to propose an integrated mechanism for increasing their functional independence.



DISCUSSION

The findings indicate several important methodological considerations.

First, pedagogical work with adults should not simply reproduce teaching models developed for children. Adult learners have life experience, established preferences, personal rights, social roles, and individual goals that should be respected.

Second, the development of social and daily living skills requires a shift from academic orientation toward functional orientation.

Knowing the steps of an activity does not necessarily indicate the ability to perform it in a natural environment.

Therefore:

knowledge → simulation → supported performance → independent performance
→ generalization

should become a central instructional trajectory.

Third, independence should not be interpreted as the complete absence of support. Some adults may require long-term assistance in particular areas while remaining highly independent in others. The goal is therefore not “zero support” but optimal support.

This distinction can be formulated as: independence ≠ doing everything alone; functional independence = making and performing as many meaningful actions as possible with the least necessary and most appropriate support.

Fourth, generalization represents one of the most important indicators of pedagogical effectiveness. A skill demonstrated only during a structured session cannot automatically be considered functional.

The adult should have opportunities to use the skill:

with different people + in different places + with different materials + under different everyday conditions.

Fifth, self-determination should be regarded as both a method and an outcome. Adults should not only learn daily living tasks but should increasingly participate in deciding which tasks matter to them and how they want to perform them.



CONCLUSION

The development of social and daily living skills among adults with specific mental developmental needs is a multidimensional pedagogical process aimed at increasing functional independence, self-determination, safety, social participation, and quality of life.

The study demonstrates that effective pedagogical intervention should be based on functional assessment, person-centered goal setting, task analysis, adapted instruction, modeling, visual and digital support, guided practice, systematic prompt fading, community-based learning, and interdisciplinary cooperation.

The educational process should move from: “I know how it is done” → “I perform it with help” → “I perform it with a prompt” → “I perform it independently” → “I use it in a new situation” → “I make my own functional choices.”

Consequently, the central criterion of correctional-pedagogical effectiveness should not be the amount of information acquired by an adult but the extent to which acquired skills increase meaningful participation in everyday life.

The proposed mechanism: functional assessment → individual need → meaningful goal → adapted teaching → practical activity → gradual reduction of support → independent performance → generalization → social participation can serve as a methodological basis for designing individualized programs for adults with intellectual and developmental support needs.

Ultimately, correctional-pedagogical work should move beyond the objective of teaching a person to perform isolated household tasks. Its broader purpose is to create pedagogical conditions in which the adult can participate, choose, communicate, act safely, exercise greater control over everyday life, and achieve the highest possible level of functional independence and social inclusion.

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