

5-, 6-, and 7-years-old children's mental representations of happiness

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The article is presenting results of the empiric research on subjective understanding by ninety children who is five, six and seven years old and living in Zelenograd city. The verbal and nonverbal understanding of happiness by children is analyzed. Children's answers were classified by four reasons – “the subject of happiness”, “the vector of the happiness”, “Abstraction/Specificity of the happiness conception”. Each classification contains several categories. For example, “The subject of happiness” contain materialistic, naturalistic, emotional and social category. Quantitative and qualitative analysis show that in 5-7 years old the presentation of verbal and nonverbal categories is changing. The quantity of statements from materialistic category is decreasing, but the quantity of statements from social category is increasing. It was shown that parents of these children have different understanding of what the happiness is for their children.

Key words: child, happiness, positive psychology, self-consciousness, parent.