

FEATURES OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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It is determined that the number of children with special educational needs is increasing in preschool education institutions. It has been studied that today preschool education institutions are attended by children with the following disorders: autism, delayed speech development. It is determined that for children with special educational needs, the creation of an inclusive group and the functioning of a resource room are provided. The educational process of such children is carried out on the basis of an individual development program in accordance with the conclusion of a comprehensive psychological and pedagogical assessment of their development. It was clarified that the development of an individual program for the development of children with special educational needs is carried out by members of the psychological and pedagogical support team. It has been established that inclusive groups can be attended by one to three children, depending on the levels of support, which are from the first to the fifth. Advice to parents on the necessity of applying to an inclusive resource center is outlined. It is substantiated that children with special needs should receive from two to eight psychological, pedagogical and correctional and developmental sessions per week, depending on the level of support, their age, the degree of complexity of their disorders and taking into account their individual characteristics. It has been established that the duration of classes depends on the age of the child and the type of activity in the educational areas.

Keywords: social integration, social inclusion, children with special educational needs, resource room, inclusive group

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Introduction

The period from birth to 6 years of age - the preschool period - is one of the most important in shaping a child's personality, laying the foundation for his or her physical and mental development, and health (physical, mental, spiritual and social). Although parents are the first step in this process, an important place is given to preschool education institutions (PEIs). It is in the preschool education institution that the process of formation and development of the child's body, socialization of the child is actively taking place, which is important for his or her future life and existence in society. The current conditions of the country's development, the development of information and communication technologies, and the reluctance of parents to spend time with their children lead to a decrease in live communication, deterioration of social and public health of preschool children. And low physical activity of children, unwillingness to engage in physical education, birth defects, hereditary diseases, impaired physical and mental development of children leads to a worsening of the physical, mental and spiritual health of children. In addition, heredity, poor ecology, low economic development of

the country, problems during pregnancy, and wartime also affect the health of preschoolers. Recently, more and more children are born with various psychophysical disorders and developmental disabilities that require a special approach to the organization of the educational process.

Results and Discussion

Helping children with special educational needs begins long before the child receives a diagnosis from specialists and doctors. Parents need to pay attention to their child's developmental features or abnormalities as early as possible and seek professional help. Unfortunately, most parents, even if they notice some problems, persistently pretend that they do not «see» them and constantly claim that their child is fine, that there are no deviations in his or her development. They also ignore the educator's hints that something is wrong with their child. And when the problem becomes obvious, parents go to the doctor, but time is lost, the disease is advanced and the sensitive period of correction has already passed.

Children with special educational needs are children with psychophysical developmental disorders, including children with disabilities. Today, the number of children with psychophysical developmental disorders is only growing, with more and more children with autism, speech delays, and hyperactive children requiring special learning and developmental conditions. Preschool education institutions are required to create special conditions for the educational process of children with special educational needs.

An analysis of the scientific literature shows that scholars are actively researching the concept of social integration. In particular, H. Davydenko, I. Kuzava, I. Kalinichenko, A. Kolupaieva, Y. Mudryi, S. Omelchenko, H. Slozanska, N. Sultanova, V. Tserklevych, M. Tchaikovsky, and A. Shevtsov are interested in the organization of inclusive education. Many studies are devoted to the social integration of people with disabilities: Y. Bohinska, O. Stepanova, N. Strohova, O. Hloba, E. Klopota, I. Kohut, I. Malyshevska, Y. Mudryi, E. Prokhorenko, N. Sultanova, V. Tserklevych, and others. The works of A. Kolupaieva, N. Nazarova, S. Shevchenko, N. Shmatko, M. Tchaikovsky and others emphasize the relevance and necessity of social, cultural and educational integration and inclusion of children with special needs in the system of social relations. However, there are few studies that focus on the social integration of preschool children with special educational needs: some studies focus only on the social integration of children with generalized underdevelopment of speech (Martynchuk & Atamanchuk, 2022).

The tasks of preschool institutions are to educate, develop and improve the health of preschool children, regardless of whether the child is healthy or has a disease, physical or mental disability. Recently, not only healthy or mostly healthy children can attend preschools, but also children with special educational needs, which is very important for their development, learning and socialization. These include children with developmental disabilities: functional (sensory, motor, speech impairments: visual, hearing, locomotor system, speech impairments), intellectual (intellectual impairments), social adaptation (autism spectrum disorders) difficulties.

On July 5, 2017, the President of Ukraine signed the Law «On Amendments to the Law of Ukraine «On Education» adopted on May 23 of the same year, which focuses on the peculiarities of access to educational services for persons with special educational needs. Accordingly, on September 5, 2017, the new Law of Ukraine «On Education» was adopted, which states that children with special educational needs have the full right to receive education in all educational institutions, including free

of charge in state and municipal ones, regardless of the «establishment of disability» (Law of Ukraine, 2014).

Preschoolers with special educational needs require an individual approach to the organization and conduct of the educational process, communication, interaction with other children and adults. For better development and adaptation to society, such children need, first of all, social integration, which is possible only in the conditions of IPE. Today, as the number of such children in preschool education institutions is increasing, social integration is receiving considerable attention from both scholars and practitioners.

The Sociological Encyclopedic Dictionary defines social integration as the process and state of combining the constituent parts of society, primarily individuals and groups, into a single social integrity or system. Summarizing the definition of this concept, we can affirmatively note that it has two meanings: first, it characterizes the process and state of combining social elements of different quality into a functionally unified organism, system, and integral entity. And secondly, it fixes the process of entry into a certain system (integrity) that has already been formed by a particular social part (group, individual), which merges with the system and acquires the features of its structural, constituent element (Sociological Encyclopedic Dictionary, 2020). That is, in the second sense, social integration involves the entry and merger of children with special educational needs into a certain system.

Scientists consider social integration as a process during which, on the one hand, an individual strives to adapt to social life as much as possible, shows readiness to «join» its structure, and, on the other hand, society adequately perceives him or her, providing appropriate conditions for his or her self-realization (Martyniuk, 2018). That is, social integration implies acceptance of the child by the preschool education institution and society. It is worth noting that in each region, the state has assigned basic general education institutions for the introduction of inclusive education.

In addition, such children need social inclusion, i.e., the creation of all the necessary conditions for their successful socialization. Article 3 of the Law of Ukraine «On Preschool Education» of 2001, as amended in 2018, clearly states that the state must provide «accessible and free preschool education in state and municipal preschool education institutions for children with special educational needs, taking into account the peculiarities of their intellectual, social and physical development in the form that is most convenient and effective for them». And Article 9 of the same law states that «the requirements of the Basic Component of Preschool Education for children with special educational needs shall be met taking into account their inclinations, abilities, individual mental and physical capabilities and in the form that is most appropriate for each child» (Law of Ukraine, 2001). As we can see, preschool education institutions should create all conditions for rapid social integration and inclusion of children with special educational needs.

The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the Procedure for Organizing Inclusive Education in Preschool Education Institutions of 10.04.2019 No. 530, which states that children with special educational needs are provided with different levels of support and a resource room. Social inclusion also involves the creation of an inclusive group in a preschool education institution, the elaboration of an individual development program for each child (CMU Resolution, 2019).

As of January 01, 2017, 8892 children with disabilities were being brought up in preschool education institutions (Tretyak, 2017). According to the statistics of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, as of December 01, 2023, there are 6158 inclusive groups in preschool education

institutions with 11285 pupils with special educational needs. In addition, as of 01.12.2023, 690 inclusive resource centers (IRCs) have been established in Ukraine, which, in accordance with paragraph 4 of paragraph 8 of the Regulation on the Inclusive Resource Center, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on July 12, 2017, No. 545, cooperate with educational institutions, including preschools. They participate in the activities of teams of psychological and pedagogical support for individuals in preschool education and in the elaboration of individual development programs: 11285 of them have been created in our country for children with special educational needs in preschool education. It is worth noting that 664 IRCs continue to operate under martial law, providing comprehensive psychological and pedagogical developmental assessment, correctional and developmental services, and psychological and pedagogical support for children with special educational needs during their education, including those from among internally displaced persons. Since 2022, IRCs have been conducting a comprehensive assessment of children who have suffered psychological trauma and, if necessary, provide them with psychological and pedagogical support during the educational process. In addition, they give recommendations to teachers on the organization of education and psychological support (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2024).

In 2023, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, together with the Institute of Educational Analytics, conducted a monitoring of the organization of preschool education for children with special educational needs. During the survey, 67% of directors reported that such children receive preschool education in their institutions. Also, 97% of respondents reported the presence of these children and noted that their preschool education institution closely cooperates with specialists from inclusive resource centers. Almost three quarters of directors reported that their preschool education institutions partially created conditions for children with special educational needs, and only 21% of respondents reported that such conditions were fully created. Almost 85% of directors stated that children with special educational needs receive preschool education in inclusive groups in their institutions (units), and 63% of educators reported that there are such children in their groups (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2024).

It should be noted that in accordance with clause 2 of the Procedure for organizing inclusive education in preschool education institutions, approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of April 10, 2019, No. 530, based on the application of one of the parents or other legal representatives of a child with special educational needs and the conclusion on a comprehensive psychological and pedagogical assessment of the child's development provided by the inclusive resource center, the head of the preschool education institution creates an inclusive group and organizes inclusive education, taking into account the level of support, recommended by the center (Annex to the letter of the Ministry of Education and Science, 2022; Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers, 2019).

Based on the conclusion of a comprehensive psychological and pedagogical assessment of the development of a child with special educational needs, members of the psychological and pedagogical support team, which includes the director of the institution or his/her deputy, teachers, an assistant teacher, a practical psychologist, parents, a child's assistant and all other persons involved in the educational process, develop an individual development program for each such child once a year, which is reviewed and adjusted (if necessary) three times a year. Such a program includes the following items: general information about the child, individual peculiarities of his or her development, recommendations for organizing the educational process, the recommended level of

support (from level I to V), peculiarities of adaptation and modification of the educational environment, peculiarities of the educational process, additional psychological and pedagogical and correctional and developmental services (classes), services of a child's assistant, provision of auxiliary means for organizing the educational process, etc. An educator's assistant provides personally oriented guidance in the educational process of such children. Parental support and participation in the educational process of children with special educational needs is very important. After all, it is they who can provide the necessary information to educators about the child's potential. And vice versa, they can receive information about what needs to be addressed at home. Such joint work will be effective in the child's education and development.

In accordance with the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine «On Approval of the Procedure for Organizing Inclusive Education in Preschool Education Institutions» of April 10, 2019, No. 530, levels of support for children with special educational needs were introduced. There are 5 levels in total: I – children who have difficulties in learning and who need permanent or temporary support in the educational process; II – children who have mild difficulties, III – children who have moderate difficulties, IV – children who have severe difficulties, V – children who have the most severe difficulties (CMU Resolution, 2019).

If there are children with special educational needs in the preschool education institution, an inclusive group is created, the total number of children in it should not exceed 15 people. Such a group may be attended by 1 to 3 children with special educational needs: 1 child who has IV and V levels of support, 2 children who need III level of support, 3 children who need II level of support. However, during wartime, the number of children is unlimited. Such groups should have all the necessary content: manuals, didactic material, material for learning and development. In the group, the child is immersed in the educational process, interacts with other children, participates in joint games and entertainment, work activities, classes, which contributes to his or her socialization, mental, social and emotional development. In addition, the joint stay of children with special educational needs and healthy children helps the latter to be tolerant of such children, to accept them as they are, to show sensitivity, care, respect and support. All this helps to develop their moral and volitional qualities.

It is mandatory to equip a resource room. The resource room is a part of the group room, which is divided into functional zones and is intended for the development of children with special educational needs, harmonization of their psychological state, relief, as well as psychological, pedagogical and correctional and developmental classes with them (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2019).

Advice to parents on the need to contact an inclusive resource center: there is a delay in the psychophysical development of the infant: later started holding his/her head, reaching for toys, grabbing them, sitting, standing, walking, or choking while sucking; speech is absent until the age of three – communication through gestures or individual syllables; does not play with toys, or is interested in a new toy only for a short time; lack of concentration, refuses to listen to fairy tales, does not understand their content, poor memory; the child is either too mobile and disobedient, or slow and lethargic, constantly changing mood; difficulties in mastering the educational program or academic subjects; learning difficulties, conflicts with other children, aggression; no desire to attend kindergarten, study, do homework, feel tired; the child is hyperactive or vice versa, thinks for a long time, speaks poorly, learns poorly (Inclusive education, 2022).

In accordance with the recommended level of support specified in the conclusion of the inclusive resource center on a comprehensive psychological and pedagogical assessment of a child's development, as well as depending on the child's age, the degree of complexity of the disorder, and taking into account the child's individual characteristics of educational and cognitive activity, it is planned to conduct from two to eight psychological and pedagogical, correctional and developmental sessions per week. The duration of the sessions depends on the child's age and the type of activity in the educational areas. Classes can be conducted both individually and in groups of 2-6 children, taking into account individual characteristics and homogeneity of disorders (CMU Resolution, 2019).

Conclusions

Thus, children with special educational needs, just like healthy children, have the right to attend preschool education and receive educational services. To facilitate the social integration and inclusion of such children, an inclusive group is created in the preschool education institution, which is provided with all the necessary equipment, and has a resource room. The educational process of such children is carried out according to a previously elaborated individual development program. Close interaction between educators and parents contributes to the development of children with special educational needs, their better adaptation to society, and improvement of their health and well-being.

Conflict of interest

The author states no conflict of interest.

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